

Obi pledges to up power generation to 10,000MW if elected president **NEWS PAGE 3**

Extension on table as insurers miss May capital verification deadline **FINANCE & ECONOMY PAGE 22**

Gombe-led ADC unveils Chris Uba as presidential candidate **NEWS PAGE 3**

States reel from N13tr loss ahead of 2026 severe flooding prediction **P6**

National Risk Overview (2026 Projections)

14,118 Communities in High-Risk Zones
These communities are spread across 226 local government areas identified as the most vulnerable to severe inundation.

33 States + FCT at Critical Risk
Nearly the entire country faces significant flood threats in 2026.

Moderate Risk for 15,597 Communities
An additional 405 LGAs across 35 states are expected to experience moderate flooding.

Economic Impact Breakdown (2024-2025)
Total Loss: N13 Trillion

11%	Housing and Property: N6.2 Trillion
16%	Agriculture: N4.1 Trillion
29%	Livelihoods & Services: N1.4 Trillion
44%	Infrastructure: N2.3 Trillion

Impending 2026 Crisis Indicators

Flash Flooding Risk 19 States Warned of Flash Flooding Heavy rainfall on hardened, dry soils will trigger rapid surface runoff in Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, and 16 others.	Food Insecurity Deepening Food Insecurity Previous floods destroyed over 46,000 hectares of farmland; 2026 crisis threatens to deplete national grain reserves.	Disease Outbreaks Rising Waterborne Disease Threats Persistent stagnant water in densely populated high-risk zones creates breeding grounds for cholera and typhoid.	Population Displacement Vulnerable Population Displacement Flooding episodes historically displace millions; women, elderly, and over 142,000 children bear the heaviest burden.
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Geographic Focus (Worst-Hit Areas)

Lagos: The Megacity at Risk Unique threat of urban flash flooding and coastal inundation due to rising sea levels.	Coastal Vulnerability: Bayelsa & Delta Predicted severe tidal surges disrupt fishing and river transportation.	Northern Hotspots: Adamawa & Kebbi Remain among worst-hit areas due to riverine flooding and cross-border dams.
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Ebola: Lagos, FAAN intensify surveillance at MMIA **NEWS PAGE 4**

Jonathan's 2027 eligibility suit shifts to appeal court **NEWS PAGE 4**

Niger restates ban on graduation ceremonies in public, private schools **NEWS PAGE 9**

Oyo abduction: Teachers begin strike as Tinubu deploys specialised rescue team **NEWS PAGE 6**

"Why court is in favour of DSS operatives in defamatory suit against SERAP" **PAGE 14**

Flutterwave promotes over 100 employees, launches global cost-of-living relief package **NEWS PAGE 4**

How OPay is deepening financial inclusion, creating jobs across Nigeria **PAGE 32**

Panorama

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SPOTLIGHT

Minimum wage: Employers urge action on transport, food, housing costs

EMPLOYERS in the organised private sector have urged the Federal Government to urgently address rising transport costs, food inflation and housing pressures ahead of the next national minimum wage negotiations, warning that the talks may fail if underlying economic challenges are not resolved.

This is coming a day after the Nigeria Governors' Forum disclosed that state governors are proposing a new national minimum wage of N100,000 as part of

WHO seeks ban on flavoured tobacco, nicotine products

THE World Health Organisation (WHO) has called on governments to ban flavours and additives, including menthol, in tobacco and nicotine products to protect children and young people from addiction.

WHO Regional Director for Africa, Dr Mohamed Janabi, made the call in a statement issued on Sunday to mark World No Tobacco Day, themed: "Unmasking the Appeal: Countering Nicotine and Tobacco Addiction."

Janabi warned that rapid changes in tobacco and nicotine markets were threatening decades of public health progress across Africa and placing young people at unprecedented risk.

He said nicotine addiction was "engineered, not accidental," driven by deliberate industry designs aimed at attracting users early and keeping them dependent for life.

... DAY 4417

OUR GIRLS STILL MISSING

Tope Templer Olaiya, News Editor

@TopeTempler

42 YEARS

ongoing efforts to cushion the effects of economic hardship on Nigerian workers.

Also, the Nigeria Labour Congress had earlier announced during the May Day celebrations that negotiations for a new minimum wage would commence in July.

Reacting, Director-General of the Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA), Mr. Adewale-Smatt Oyerinde, said early engagement and decisive policy action are necessary to ensure the wage talks reflect real economic condi-

tions rather than nominal figures. Oyerinde stressed that wage negotiations must be preceded by deliberate interventions targeting key cost drivers affecting workers, especially transportation, food security and housing.

Obasanjo backs expedition, urges regular health checks to tackle cancer

From **Azeez Olorunlomu** (Abeokuta) **F**ORMER President Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday flagged off the groundbreaking "Lagos to the World" expedition, a global road journey aimed at raising awareness about early detection of cancer.

The launch took place at the Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library in Abeokuta, Ogun State, in

collaboration with Zuri Health, AXA Mansard Insurance, and BMW club Nigeria. The initiative was conceived by an entrepreneur and BMW enthusiast, Erik Nwagwu, in memory of his late mother, Prof. Helen Nwagwu, and his late sister, Mrs. Onyema Fern Eseka, both of whom lost their lives to cancer.

Speaking at the event, Obasanjo commended

Nwagwu for transforming personal tragedy into a platform for public awareness and advocacy.

He reiterated the need for Nigerians to undergo regular medical check-ups and screening to ensure early detection and management of ailments such as cancer, diabetes and other non-communicable diseases that pose a threat to healthy living.



Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde (left); consoling Prof. Wole Alamu, husband of the school principal abducted with teachers and pupils in Ahoro, Orire Local Government Area, during Makinde's visit to the community at the weekend.

Daily Times marks 100, unveils timeline of centenary celebration

DAILY Times of Nigeria (DTN), Nigeria's oldest newspaper, founded on June 1, 1926, today clocks 100.

To kick off the centenary celebrations and mark the rare milestone, DTN management will today hold a press conference at the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Secretariat in Utako, Abuja, with a theme titled: "Daily Times is 100 years—celebrating 100 years of fearless journalism, championing the future 1926-2026."

The management led by the publisher, Fidelis Anosike, will unveil a year-long calendar of activities: public lectures, exhibitions of archival front pages, and a digital archive project to put 100 years of *Daily Times* editions online for researchers and the public.

The newspaper was started by Richard Barrow and Ernest Ikoli as a four-page daily in colonial Lagos and from there, grew into the nation's newspaper of record.

In the 1950s, *Daily Times* published nationalist voices and debates on self-rule. After independence in 1960, it reported every major turning point: the First and Second Republics, the 1966 coups, the Civil War, decades of military rule, and the return to democracy in 1999.

At its peak in the 1970s and 80s, *Daily Times* had the largest circulation in West Africa. Its Kakawa Street building in Lagos became a landmark.

RANDOM FACTS

- USA plans to establish an Ebola treatment facility in Kenya for Americans exposed to the virus in DR Congo and Uganda. A Kenyan court has stopped the plan.
- Morocco has overtaken South Africa to become Africa's leading industrial economy.
- DR Congo has asked FIFA to refund the money for World Cup tickets bought by their fans who can't enter the U.S. due to Ebola-related travel restrictions.

TODAY IN HISTORY

- **Children's Day (International)**
- **2024 - Spain**
Real Madrid beat Borussia Dortmund 2-0 to win record 15th UEFA Champions League title. Real Madrid now has 15, followed by AC Milan with seven Champions League titles, while Liverpool, Bayern Munich have six titles each. Real boss, Carlo Ancelotti has won the Champions League as a manager five times.
- **2020 - Nigeria**
The ban on religious gatherings across Nigeria was lifted by the Federal Government. It was imposed two months ago, to check the spread of coronavirus.
- **2019 - UK**
Liverpool F.C. defeated Tottenham Hotspur F.C. 2-0 in the second UEFA Champions League final between two English clubs.
- **2017 - USA**
Pres. Donald Trump announced the United States' withdrawal from the Paris climate change agreement.
- **2016 - Switzerland**
The Gotthard Base Tunnel, the longest tunnel in the world, opened in Switzerland after around 20 years of building work.
- **2014 - Qatar**
FIFA, the governing body of world football, was embroiled in a corruption scandal after reports of irregularities when Qatar won the right to host the 2022 World Cup in 2010.
- **2009 - USA**
General Motors filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, the 4th largest United States bankruptcy in history.
- **2001 - Nepal**
Nepalese royal massacre: Several members of Nepal's royal family, including King Birendra and Queen Aiswarya, were killed in a massacre by Crown Prince, Dipendra of Nepal. He died of injuries on June 4 after killing some royal family members, including his father and mother.
- **1994 - South Africa**
Republic of South Africa became a republic and rejoined the Commonwealth of Nations.
- **1980 - USA**
Cable News Network (CNN) began broadcasting.
- **1979 - Zimbabwe**
The first black-led government of Rhodesia in 90 years took power, ousting Ian Smith and changing its name to Zimbabwe.
- **1962 - Germany**
Adolf Eichmann, former SS officer in Nazi Germany, was hanged in Israel for having committed crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other offenses.
- **1958 - France**
Charles de Gaulle came out of retirement to lead France by decree for six months.

TODAY'S QUOTE

A man of character finds a special attractiveness in difficulty, since it is only by coming to grips with difficulty that he can realize his potentialities.

CHARLES de GAULLE

Patriotism is when love of your own people comes first; nationalism, when hate for people other than your own comes first.

CARLO ANCELOTTI

Football is the most important of the less important things in the world.

If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.

MARK TWAIN

CROSS WORD PUZZLE

1		2		3		4		5		6
						7				
8				9				10		
						11				
12	13		14		15			16	17	
								18		
19		20		21		22		23		24
		25								
26				27				28		
		29								
30				31						

• ACROSS

1. LGA in Katsina State, (7).
5. Whole of, (3).
7. Of great size, (3).
8. And not, (3).
9. Yoruba King, (3).
10. Animal reproductive structure, (3)
11. Small tattered piece, (3).
12. LGA in Nasarawa State, (7).
16. Electronic shoplifting prevention abbr.
19. Internally-Displaced People, abbr.
21. Give in marriage, (7).
25. Accounting rate of return, abbr.
26. Extrasensory perception, abbr., (3)
27. Syrian cloth, (3).
28. Int'l. Labor Organization, abbr.
29. Eastern Daylight Time, abbr., (3).
30. Gases forming atmosphere, (3).
31. LGA in Oyo State, (7).

• DOWN

1. Orange beverage, (5).
2. Mammal with pointed nose, (5)
3. Fruit of oak, (5).
4. Town in Abeokuta North, (5).
5. LGA in Lagos State, (5).
6. Nigeria's commercial city, (5).
13. A young goat, (3).
14. Tool for cutting, (2).
15. Fossil fuel, (3).
17. Electronic braking system, abbr.
18. Depart, (2).
19. Town in Osun State, (5).
20. Academic article, (5).
21. Greek Muse of lyric poetry, (5)
22. Malayan sailboat, (5).
23. United Nations organ, (5).
24. Display exaggerated emotions, (5).

Check page 38 for solution to the puzzle

News

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Obi pledges to up power generation to 10,000MW if elected president

From John Akubo, Abuja

PRESIDENTIAL candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), Peter Obi, has unveiled an expansive vision for Nigeria's future, declaring that his dream is to build a united, secure, productive and prosperous nation where every citizen has access to opportunities and hope.

Prominent among his visions for the country is to raise power generation capacity from its present 4,000 megawatts (MW) to 10,000MW, if elected in 2027.

Meanwhile, human rights lawyer and activist, Dele Farotimi, declared that if Obi had any incriminating baggage in his past, the administration of

Why he remains untouched, by Farotimi

President Bola Tinubu would have uncovered and weaponised it long ago.

Speaking in Abuja while accepting his nomination as NDC's presidential candidate for the 2027 election, Obi said the mission before him transcended personal ambition, declaring that it "is about rescuing Nigeria from its present challenges" and restoring confidence in its future.

According to him, the dream of a New Nigeria remains achievable despite the mounting economic, social and security challenges.

Obi said millions of Nigerians were struggling under the weight of insecurity, poverty,

unemployment and poor governance, stressing that the country's future "depends on leaders who are willing to confront these challenges" with courage, competence and accountability.

He described the moment as a defining one in Nigeria's history, arguing that families across the country were worried about their safety, parents were increasingly concerned about the future of their children, while many young people were losing faith in the possibility of achieving success in their homeland.

Despite the grim realities, Obi maintained that Nigerians possess the resilience and deter-

mination needed to rebuild the country.

At the heart of his vision is national unity. He argued that Nigeria could not achieve meaningful progress while remaining divided along ethnic, religious, regional and political lines.

The former governor of Anambra State promised to raise healthcare spending to at least 10 per cent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), arguing that stronger investment was a necessity to rebuild hospitals, train healthcare professionals and improve service delivery.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

Oye slams FG's energy sector reforms celebration amid N30tr rise in NNPC's debt

FG's economic reforms yet to impact businesses, says NECA

CHAIRMAN of the Alliance for Economic Research and Ethics LTD/GTE, Dele Oye, has slammed the Federal Government's celebration of recent energy sector reforms, noting that while the figures brandished by the government were an illusion, the average Nigerian continues to suffer from expensive fuel, unreliable electricity and rising production costs.

Similarly, the Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA) says businesses across the country have yet to fully experience the expected benefits of the economic reforms.

Oye, who was responding to a

13-page report by the office of the Special Adviser to the President on Energy entitled 'Nigeria's Energy Sector Reforms: A Three-Year Review (2023-2026)', highlighting the progress in Nigeria's energy sector under President Bola Tinubu, argued that the claims in the report fail to reflect the economic realities faced by households and the productive sector.

He pointed to "a sharp deterioration in the financial position of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC), noting that its internal debt rose by about 70 per cent to approximately N30.3 trillion.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng



President Bola Tinubu (right) in audience with Vice President Kashim Shettima when the latter paid a Sallah homage to him in his Ikoyi, Lagos, residence.

APC primaries: Alia, Akume loyalists take battle to Abuja

- Tuggar denies criticising Tinubu over Bauchi outing
- Forgive our shortcomings, support APC again, Nwifuru begs

From Nnamdi Akpa (Abakaliki) and Rauf Oyewole (Bauchi)

THE political battle between the camps of Benue State Governor, Hyacinth Alia, and the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), George Akume, within the All Progressives Congress (APC) has shifted to Abuja over the final list of candidates to be submitted to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) by the National Working Committee (NWC) of the party ahead of the 2027 elections.

However, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yusuf Tuggar, dismissed reports that he criticised President Bola Tinubu over APC governorship primaries in Bauchi State, describing such claims as false and a misrepresentation of his remarks.

Acknowledging his shortcomings, Governor Francis Nwifuru of Ebonyi State appealed to the people of the state to forgive his administration and those of elected lawmakers and give the APC a second chance in 2027.

Recently, the APC national leadership conducted National Assembly and governorship pri-

maries in Benue under the supervision of INEC officials. In the exercise, Alia's loyalists emerged victorious in several key contests.

But former Benue State Governor, Gabriel Suswam, won the Benue North-East Senatorial ticket, while retired Assistant Comptroller-General (ACG) of Customs and husband of the Secretary to the Benue State Government (SSG), Benjamin Aber, clinched the Benue North-West Senatorial ticket.

Similarly, a former member of the House of Representatives, Francis Agbo, secured the Benue South Senatorial ticket.

Alia's loyalists defeated Akume's allies, including incumbent senators representing Benue North-East and Benue North-West Senatorial Districts, Emmanuel Udende and Titus Zam, respectively.

Other loyalists of Akume, who lost their bids, included incumbent members of the House of Representatives, Terseer Ugbor, Asema Achado and Dickson Tarkighir.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng

Gombe-led ADC unveils Chris Uba as presidential candidate

From Ernest Nzor, Abuja

THE factional leadership of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), led by National Chairman Nafiu Bala 'Gombe', has unveiled Prof. Chris Uba as its presidential candidate for the 2027 general elections.

This was as Justice Peter Lifu of the Federal High Court, Abuja Division, fixed June 3, 2026, for hearing in a suit he filed seeking to stop David Mark and others from parading themselves as leaders of ADC.

Meanwhile, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar held a closed-door meeting with his rival, Mohammed Hayatu-Deen, at his residence in Lagos.

The ADC leadership said the presidential ticket was zoned to Southern Nigeria in line with the principles of federal character, equity, fairness and national inclusiveness.

Gombe announced Prof Uba during the formal presentation of the party's presidential and governorship candidates, describing the process as transparent, peaceful and in line with constitutional and

- Court sets June 3 for hearing in Gombe's suit against Mark, Aregbesola
- Atiku meets Hayatu-Deen in Lagos amid ADC reconciliation efforts

electoral provisions.

The party noted that the emergence of its candidates followed the successful conclusion of its nationwide primary elections conducted under the consensus arrangement provided for in the Electoral Act 2026.

The chairman explained that three party members had initially obtained the party's Expression of Interest and Nomination Forms to contest the presidential election. They included Dr Bashir Sani, Williams Charles and Uba.

THE hearing notices for the suit have since been issued and served on the lawyers to the parties in the suit. One of the lawyers confirmed the development.

The case, filed by the aggrieved former national deputy chairman of the ADC, was earlier before Justice Emeka Nwite. It was, however, reassigned to Justice Lifu, following Justice Nwite's recent elevation to the Court of Appeal by the Na-

tional Judicial Council (NJC) at its 111th meeting on May 13.

In the suit, Gombe seeks an order restraining Mark, Aregbesola and members of their interim National Working Committee (NWC) from parading themselves as the party's leaders.

He had argued that the emergence of Mark, Aregbesola and other NWC members as the party's leaders breached the provisions of the ADC's constitution and the Electoral Act.

Consequently, he sued the ADC, Mark, Aregbesola, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and Ralphs Nwosu as the first to fifth defendants, respectively, in the suit marked: FHC/ABJ/CS/1819/2025.

Nwosu was the former ADC national chairman who stepped down for Mark's leadership of the party.

On April 14, Justice Nwite had adjourned the case sine die (indefinitely) following Gombe's request to await the

Supreme Court's judgment in the appeal filed by Mark.

However, on April 30, the Supreme Court set aside the order of the Court of Appeal in Abuja directing the maintenance of status quo ante bellum in the ADC leadership dispute, which INEC acted on by derecognising the Mark-led leadership of the party.

The apex court ordered the parties to return to the FHC for an expeditious hearing of the case filed by Gombe, an aggrieved chieftain of the party.

Meanwhile, INEC complied with the Supreme Court judgment by reversing the removal of the Mark-led leadership from the commission's official portal.

When the case came up before Justice Nwite on May 8, following the Supreme Court order, Luka Haruna (SAN), appearing for Mr Gombe, sought the transfer of the case to another judge.

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Amupitan's trip to South Korea worries HURIWA

From **Joel Oladele**, Abuja

HUMAN Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) has criticised the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Joash Amupitan, over what it described as frequent foreign trips.

It noted that the electoral body was embarking on such trips at a time when it should be concentrating on rebuilding public confidence ahead of the 2027 General Election.

Amupitan had headed a delegation to the inaugural ceremony of the International Election Observation Programme, IEOP, for the Nationwide Simultaneous Local Elections, being held in the Republic of Korea from 29th May 29 to June 5, 2026.

The IEOP, organised by the South Korean National Election Commission, was officially launched on Saturday, May 30, 2026, in Seoul.

The event has brought together election management bodies, election specialists, and international observers from around the world to witness and share knowledge about the conduct of local government elections in South Korea.

Accompanying the INEC Chairman were National Commissioner, Mrs May Agbamuche-Mbu; the Chief Technical Adviser to the Chairman, Prof. Dimis Mai-Lafia; and the Director of Training, Dr Binta Kasim Mohammed.

'Nigeria risks losing tech wealth to foreign stock markets'

From **Sodiq Omolayo**, Abuja

TECHNOLOGY and financial markets expert, Tunji David, has warned that Nigeria could lose a significant share of the wealth generated by its rapidly growing fintech sector if leading technology companies continue to pursue stock market listings abroad.

David, who spoke amid reports that fintech giant, OPay, was considering an Initial Public Offering (IPO) in the United States, said while Nigeria had become a fertile ground for building successful technology companies, the country risked missing out on the broader wealth creation opportunities associated with ownership and capital market participation.

According to him, companies such as OPay, Flutterwave, Paystack and Moniepoint have achieved remarkable growth by serving millions of Nigerian customers and businesses, but much of the financial gains from future public listings may accrue to foreign investors if the firms choose overseas exchanges.

He noted that Nigeria possessed many of the ingredients required to produce globally competitive technology firms, including a large population, a youthful workforce and increasing digital adoption.

Ebola: Lagos, FAAN intensify surveillance at MMIA

Congo, Uganda report 263 cases, 43 deaths

LAGOS State Government has advocated measures to reduce interactions between passengers arriving from high-risk countries and other travellers, to prevent the transmission of Ebola virus into the country.

This followed reports that as of May 30, 263 confirmed Ebola cases have been recorded in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. This was disclosed by the Director General of the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, Jean Kaseya said.

The Lagos State Commissioner for Health, Prof. Akin Abayomi,

yesterday, said the move in partnership with the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) was critical as the state steps up surveillance and preparedness measures at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA) to prevent the transmission of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) into Nigeria.

This, he said, was crucial as concerns grew over the resurgence of the deadly viral infection in parts of Central and East Africa.

The *News Agency of Nigeria*

reports that the move comes amid heightened vigilance by health authorities following reports of Ebola outbreaks in affected African countries, prompting Lagos, Nigeria's commercial hub and principal international gateway, to reinforce its biosecurity architecture against potential cross-border transmission.

Leading a high-level delegation on an inspection and preparedness tour of MMIA, Abayomi said Lagos could not afford to be complacent given its position as the country's

busiest entry point and its experience during Nigeria's historic Ebola outbreak in 2014.

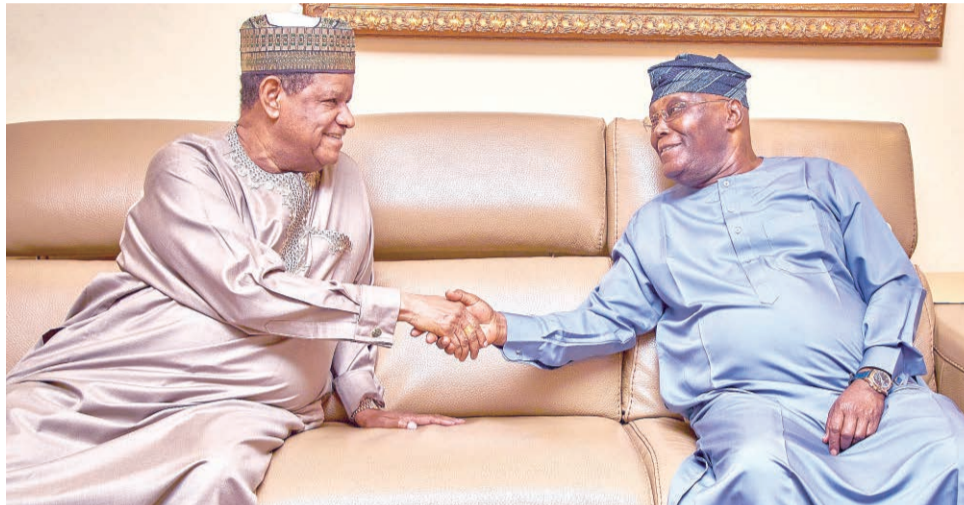
The delegation included the Special Adviser to the Governor on Health, Dr Kemi Ogunyemi, and the Permanent Secretary, Lagos State Ministry of Health, Dr Dayo Lajide.

Other delegates included the Director of Epidemiology, Biosecurity and Global Health, Dr Ismail Abdus-Salam; and senior officials of the Lagos State Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC).

The team was received by airport authorities led by the Airport Manager and Regional General Manager, South-West MMIA, Mr Olatokunbo Arewa, alongside officials from Port Health Services, the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) and other agencies.

During the inspection, both teams reviewed passenger movement systems, disease surveillance mechanisms, infection prevention and control procedures, emergency response plans and opportunities for stronger collaboration between state and federal authorities.

Read the remainder of this story on www.guardian.ng



African Democratic Congress (ADC) presidential aspirant, Mohammed Hayatu-Deen (left), and presidential candidate of the party, Atiku Abubakar, during a meeting on party unity in Lagos, yesterday.

Flutterwave promotes over 100 employees, launches global cost-of-living relief package

FLUTTERWAVE, a leading payment technology company in Africa, has announced the promotion of over 100 employees globally.

It describes the development as a company-wide employee recognition and support initiative.

The company says the exercise is equivalent to 25 per cent of total workforce, cost-of-living adjustments, tax support for employees in Nigeria, and a one-time economic relief payment for all employees worldwide.

It also says the initiative reinforces its focus on sustainable talent growth and employee well-being amid changing global economic conditions.

According to a statement by the company, the development reflects Flutterwave's continued commitment to

building one of the continent's most talent-driven and people-focused technology workplaces. The announcement comes amid evolving global economic conditions and rising living costs across multiple markets, reinforcing the company's focus on employee well-being, career growth, a robust talent pipeline, and sustainable value creation.

In the statement published on the company's website, the Flutterwave Founder and CEO,



Olugbenga Agboola, said the company's progress remained rooted in its people.

He said, the real edge we have is our people. They are the ultimate engine behind everything we build, giving us the capacity to create solutions that power businesses, unlock opportunities, and move money seamlessly across Africa and beyond.

Responding to global economic pressures, the statement disclosed that Flutterwave had also introduced a one-time economic relief payment for all employees worldwide.

"In Nigeria, additional tax adjustment support and cost-of-living updates were introduced to reflect recent regulatory changes affecting employees' take-home pay," it stated.

Head, People and Culture at Flutterwave, emphasised the

company's holistic approach to talent management, saying: "Our goal has always been to build an environment where our people can focus on doing their best work, rather than being weighed down by economic anxiety. Pairing merit-based individual growth with supporting the collective needs of the whole team are both essential parts of how we build a company culture where people genuinely want to stay and grow over the long term."

Marking its 10th anniversary in 2026, Flutterwave says it has achieved massive all-time milestones, surpassing one billion transactions processed and moving over \$40 billion in total payment value globally since inception.

Read the remainder of this story on www.guardian.ng

Stakeholders advocate accountability, warn of national systemic collapse

Coalition of scholars, governance experts and public figures has called for a fundamental shift in Nigeria's democratic culture.

They warned that accountability failures were being entrenched not only by leadership deficits but by a deeper crisis of citizenship, ethical followership and institutional purpose.

The warning came during the 2nd International Conference on Followership Studies, a virtual gathering hosted by a retired Nigerian Army officer and governance reform advocate, General Ishola Williams, over the weekend.

The conference was organised by PANAFSTRAG in collaboration with Empowered Newswire and anchored by veteran journalist and former presidential aide, Laolu Akande.

Opening the conference, Laolu Akande dedicated the session to the memory of Mallam Aminu Kano, describing him as a defining symbol of citizen-centred political engagement and principled followership in Nigeria's democratic evolution.

He stressed the urgency of bringing followership into mainstream governance discourse, arguing that democratic outcomes are shaped

as much by citizens as by leaders.

The event, themed "The Demand Side of Accountability", convened a wide range of contributors, including Dr Charles Dickson of the Tattaunawa Roundtable Initiative, Prof. Nimi Wariboko of Boston University, and Prof. Aminu Gusau. Among others.

Discussions centred on voter behaviour, civic responsibility, institutional integrity, leadership ethics, youth participation and the structural conditions shaping Nigeria's democratic trajectory ahead of the 2027 elections.

Delivering a keynote

address, Dickson described followership as an under-examined source of political power.

He argued that governance outcomes were heavily influenced by the quality and consciousness of citizens.

He warned that silence, indifference and passive consent often sustain governance failure as much as direct political wrongdoing, calling for a shift from social media outrage to sustained civic engagement.

He was supported by Dr Aminu Gusau, who argued that governance quality was directly shaped by the nature of followership within society.

Jonathan's 2027 eligibility suit shifts to appeal court

Keyamo urges ex-President to reject phantom presidential ticket

From **Ameh Ochojila**, Abuja

A legal dispute over the eligibility of former President Goodluck Jonathan to contest the 2027 presidential election has moved to the Court of Appeal in Abuja.

This followed a challenge to a recent Federal High Court judgment that cleared him to seek a return to office.

An Abuja-based lawyer, Jideobi Johnmary, has filed a notice of appeal, asking the appellate court to overturn the May 26 judgment delivered by Justice Peter Lifu, which held that there was no constitutional barrier to Jonathan contesting another presidential election.

In the appeal, Johnmary raised three grounds, arguing that the lower court's proceedings were fundamentally flawed and should be declared null and void.

A major plank of the appeal is the allegation that Justice Lifu breached the appellant's constitutional right to a fair hearing by hearing a motion seeking his recusal alongside the substantive suit and subsequently delivering a combined ruling and judgment.

Johnmary filed a motion on May 11 requesting that the judge withdraw from the case and return the file to the Chief Judge of the Federal High Court for reassignment.

Nigeria, UAE non-oil trade hits \$5b

From **Joel Oladele**, Abuja

NIGERIA'S bilateral relations with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will soon get a boost as the First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB) opens in Lagos.

This is as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, said both countries were working towards the implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which they had signed, noting that it would transform economic ties between the two nations and deliver tangible benefits for Nigerian businesses, professionals and workers.

The UAE's Ambassador to Nigeria, Salem Saeed Al-Shamsi, who disclosed this during a visit to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, also said the country's leading carrier, Etihad Airlines, would commence Abuja operations this year.

Nigeria holds its relations with the UAE in the highest esteem, and the two countries have maintained warm, cordial, and mutually beneficial diplomatic ties since 1971.

Economic relations between the two countries have remained robust and dynamic, especially in non-oil trade, driven by strong trade flows, investment partnerships, and people-to-people exchanges.

Stakeholders challenge Nigeria's June digital switchover rollout

Wam of legal, financial pitfalls

By Adeyemi Adepetun

BARELY a week after the Federal Government fixed June 17, 2026, for the nationwide rollout of Nigeria's long-delayed Digital Switchover (DSO), the rollout is already facing fierce opposition from broadcasters and industry stakeholders.

It would be recalled that the Federal Government, through the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and NIGCOMSAT, had promised citizens access to 100 free channels via a satellite-first model branded "Free TV."

Also, NBC's Director-General, Dr Charles Ebuebu, had admitted in April 2026 that N60 billion had been spent over 17 years, yet digital terrestrial signals had reached only eight states. To break the deadlock, the NBC unveiled a new satellite-first plan promising immediate nationwide coverage.

Critics argued that the plan strays from Nigeria's legally binding roadmap and risks burdening ordinary citizens with hidden costs.

The BON, in a letter dated May 19, 2026, and addressed to Ebuebu, said that the platform being prepared for commissioning does not qualify as a true digital switchover but rather amounts to a Direct-To-Home (DTH) satellite television distribution service.

It, however, warned that this pivot violates the 2012 white paper, risks wasting public funds, and creates a conflict of interest by turning NBC from a regulator to a competitor.

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

Rotary Club to give indigent students free scholarships

ROTARY International District 9111, under the aegis of District Educational and Welfare Endowment Fund (DEWEF), is set to present N10.2 million bursary funds to 51 indigent undergraduates selected across universities and polytechnics in Ogun and Lagos states, respectively.

The DEWEF scholarship cheques' presentation will be held on Tuesday, June 2, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at Rotary Centre, Ikeja GRA, Lagos, during an occasion to be presided over by the Rotary District 9111 Governor, Henry Akinyele.

The 51 students will get N200,000 each to aid in the payment of school fees, feeding allowance and textbooks for a session.

Past District Governor and Chairman, DEWEF Board of Trustees Oluwanisomo Omoniyi, who spoke on behalf of Akinyele, said that "each of the awardees would be given the money to defray academic expenses, payment of fees, feeding allowance and textbooks for a session."

Jurists seek adoption of ADR to reduce court delays

By Kehinde Olatunji

JUSTICE of the Supreme Court, Helen Moronkeji Ogunwumiju, and a Justice of the Court of Appeal, Abimbola Obaseki-Adejumo, have called for the wider adoption of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms to enhance access to justice, reduce court congestion and improve Nigeria's business environment.

They gave the charge, at the weekend, during the induction ceremony of fellows, members and associates of the Institute of Alternative Dispute Resolution Development and Conflict Management of Nigeria (iADR NIGERIA) held in Lagos.

Specifically, Ogunwumiju said that delays, procedural complexities and high cost of litigation had made ADR an

essential complement to the court system because of its flexibility, speed and outcome-oriented nature.

Ogunwumiju, while citing the Supreme Court's decision in *Rivers State AG v Bayelsa State AG*, said the apex court emphasised the need for dispute resolution mechanisms that preserve relationships, particularly in matters involving public interest.

She further referenced *Mekwunye v. Emirates Airlines*, where the court reaffirmed the binding nature of consensual dispute resolution processes and held parties accountable to mechanisms they had voluntarily adopted.

The jurist described ADR as more than a collection of dispute-settlement techniques, saying that it represents a phi-

losophy that prioritises efficiency, collaboration and practical outcomes over prolonged confrontation.

According to her, while disputes are inevitable in any growing economy, the methods adopted in resolving them determine whether they become obstacles to progress or opportunities for growth.

She also noted that ADR had expanded the role of legal practitioners beyond courtroom advocacy to include problem-solving, negotiation and facilitating mutually beneficial outcomes.

Obaseki-Adejumo disclosed that the Court of Appeal handles about 20,000 cases yearly, while the Supreme Court receives more than 1,500 appeals each year but can hear only a fraction of them.

She said that the Appeal Court's ADR programme, established under its 2014 Practice Directions, had helped to reduce the burden on the appellate system by encouraging settlements in suitable cases.

The mediation process, she explained, was conducted by trained justices, retired judges and accredited mediators at ADR centres in Abuja, Lagos and Port Harcourt, with a Kano centre nearing completion.

The Appeal Court justice revealed that in 2023, approximately 500 appeals had been resolved through the Court of Appeal ADR programme within an average period of months, compared to the three to seven years often required for a full appellate process.



Lagos State Head of Service, Olabode Agoro (left); State Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Cornelius Ojelabi; wife of the Governor, Dr Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu; Deputy Governor, Dr Kadri Obafemi Hamzat; his wife, Oluremi, and Opeluwa of Lagos, Abdullateef Aderibigbe Ajose, during the 2026 Eid-ul-Adha celebration, held at the Lagos House, Alausa, Ikeja, yesterday.

PHOTO: SUNDAY AKINLOLU

Sanwo-Olu tasks parents on responsible parenting to curb insecurity

By Opeyemi Babalola

WIFE of Lagos State Governor, Dr Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu, has called on parents and guardians to intensify efforts in instilling good morals, discipline, and spiritual values in their children, noting that the lapses in children's upbringing contribute to wider security challenges currently bedeviling the country.

Sanwo-Olu, who spoke during the *Eid-al-Adha* celebration held at the Lagos House, Ikeja, yesterday, and organised by the Lagos State Government, in conjunction with the Ministry of Home Affairs, stated that when chil-

dren are neglected and not properly trained, they may grow up to engage in acts that threaten peace in society.

She recalled the recent abduction of school children and their teachers by gunmen in Oriire Local Council of Oyo State, seeking divine intervention for their safe return.

"At this point, we remember our children who were abducted in Oyo State, these innocent children. May God help us to find them very fast," she said.

She noted that the festival offers an opportunity for reflection on the virtues of faith, sacrifice, obedience and

submission to the will of Allah, as exemplified by Prophet Ibrahim.

In his remark, Deputy Governor of Lagos State, Obafemi Hamzat, stressed the need for parents to embrace responsible parenting by emulating the exemplary life of Prophet Ibrahim.

He noted that the Prophet's life was marked by obedience to God, patience, devotion, and unwavering commitment to family values, adding that these virtues remain essential for raising morally grounded children today.

The deputy governor also stated that domestic vio-

lence, including the beating of wives and the abuse of children, is contrary to the teachings of both Islam and Christianity.

In his lecture, the Chief Imam of Lekki Central Mosque, Dr Ridwan Jamiu, urged parents to serve as good role models for their wards and stop forcing their opinions on them, especially when they are growing into adulthood.

The Permanent Secretary of the ministry, Adewunmi Ogunsanya, reaffirmed the ministry's commitment to promoting peaceful coexistence and religious harmony in the state.

Nigeria, Liberia fortify regional maritime ties to boost blue economy

By Adaku Onyenuchey

NIGERIAN Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) has intensified its partnership with the Republic of Liberia to advance regional maritime integration, cooperation and capacity development across Africa.

Director-General of NIMASA, Dr Dayo Mobereola, who received the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Liberia, Dapo Akinosun, at the agency's headquarters in Lagos, said stronger collaboration among African nations remains critical to

unlocking the continent's maritime potential, strengthening the blue economy, and promoting sustainable regional growth of the continent.

In a statement signed by the Deputy Director/Head, Public Relations, NIMASA, Osagie Edward, and made available to *The Guardian*, yesterday, Mobereola described the meeting as a reflection of the longstanding and mutually beneficial relationship between Nigeria and Liberia, particularly within the maritime sector.

Mobereola noted that African

nations must upscale maritime collaboration.

He said the partnership between Nigeria and Liberia would help the continent build capacity, strengthen regional cooperation and create opportunities for African youths within the global maritime industry.

He, however, appreciated the Liberian Government for supporting Nigeria's successful bid for the Category C seat of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), noting that both countries have sustained productive maritime relations over the years.

Earlier in his address, Akinosun said the visit was aimed at reinforcing the enduring relationship between Nigeria and Liberia while promoting stronger maritime cooperation between both countries.

The envoy described the maritime sector as a key driver of economic growth, regional integration, and blue economy development, while commending the management of NIMASA for its efforts towards repositioning Nigeria's maritime industry for sustainable growth and investment.

Ekiti, Osun, Ondo step up flood mitigation amid peak rains

Experts seek stronger wetland protection to tackle Lagos flooding

THE Ekiti, Osun, and Ondo state governments have stepped up flood prevention measures in their respective states as the 2026 rainy season reaches its peak.

Officials of the states, in separate interviews with the *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)*, said the focus includes dredging of waterways, drain construction, desilting, enforcement and community sensitisation.

In Ekiti, Chairman of the State Environmental Protection Agency (EKSEPA), Bamidele Oguntoyinbo, said that dredging and desilting of waterways were ongoing in Ado-Ekiti, the state capital.

According to Oguntoyinbo, the government has also commenced the dredging of rivers and streams in some flood-prone areas.

Similarly, the Commissioner for Environment and Sanitation in Osun, Mayowa Adejoorin, said the government had embarked on continuous dredging of waterways and drainage channels as part of measures to curb flooding.

Also, the Special Adviser to Ondo State Governor on Erosion Control and Flood Matters, Elisha Ebijimi, said the plan to prevent flood in the state is at 80 per cent, with additional focus on enlightenment of the residents on flood prevention.

According to him, the state government is already working on the major flood-prone areas in the state.

MEANWHILE, environmental experts and conservation advocates have called for stricter protection of wetlands and stronger enforcement of environmental regulations to address persistent flooding in Lagos State. The experts spoke in separate interviews yesterday in Lagos.

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

Awolowo Future Leaders Fellowship programme opens applications

THE Obafemi Awolowo Foundation has announced the opening of applications for the Obafemi Awolowo Future Leaders Fellowship Programme, a highly selective, merit-based initiative inspired by the enduring legacy of Chief Obafemi Awolowo (SAN).

The Fellowship is designed to nurture a new generation of ethical, visionary and impact-driven leaders across Africa, the Caribbean and the global Diaspora.

In a statement yesterday, the Foundation said the Fellowship is open to young people aged 20-35 and seeks to equip participants with the values, discipline, knowledge and leadership skills required to make meaningful contributions to society.

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

News

States reel from N13tr loss ahead of 2026 severe flooding prediction

By Chinedum Uwaegbulam

HEAD of the fresh round of devastating flooding in this year's rainy season, estimates show that states are still reeling from recent losses totalling N13 trillion.

Besides human lives, which are unquantifiable, the flooding episodes in 2024 and 2025 destroyed houses, infrastructure, agriculture, and the productivity of small businesses, totalling about \$9.5 billion or N13 trillion.

While these costs remain uncovered, a new concern has emerged over the prediction that 19 to 33 states nationwide are at risk of severe cloudbursts in 2026.

Stakeholders applauded the Nigerian Meteorological Agency's (NiMET) early warning alerts. They, however, said the routine nature of extreme weather requires a national emergency and strategic intervention to cushion the

- Lagos tops list of 33 states to expect severe flooding in 2026
- Housing, properties account for roughly N6.2 trillion loss
- Lagos to transfer four million vulnerable residents from flood-risk areas
- Experts seek strategic, climate-change resilient interventions nationwide

huge losses it causes.

Of note is the strategic use of the ecological funds nationwide, ecologically sensitive infrastructure, better land-use planning, enforcement of building regulations, and inadequate flood-control infrastructure.

Recall that some states, including Lagos, Adamawa, Akwa Ibom, and Benue, last year paid for the country's slow adaptation to extreme weather.

According to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), as of October 2025, at least 231 people have died, 607 have been injured, and more than 315,000 residents have been affected in 86 local government areas across 25 states.

The agency reports that 40,493 houses and 46,304 farmlands have been destroyed, with nearly 113,400 persons displaced nationwide.

While last year's rainy season impact is lower than the catastrophic 2022 floods that displaced 1.4 million people, the frequency and spread of flooding show that the underlying risks remain largely unaddressed.

In Lagos State alone, NEMA estimated that more than 57,000 residents were affected during the rainy season, placing Nigeria's commercial capital among the three worst-hit states alongside Adamawa and Akwa Ibom.

An analysis of recent reports by the World Bank, UNDP, and the Lagos Economic Develop-

ment Update (LEDU 2025) estimated that the combined average direct and indirect costs of flooding nationwide between 2024 and 2025 could exceed N13 trillion.

The breakdown by sector shows that housing and property accounted for roughly N6.2 trillion (44 per cent) in damages from collapsed or submerged structures; Agriculture and food production suffered losses of N4.1 trillion (29 per cent), following the destruction of farmlands and crops across the Middle Belt and northern states.

Also, infrastructure, including roads, bridges, schools and energy facilities, accounted for about N2.3 trillion (16 per cent); livelihoods and services, such as informal trade, trans-

port and manufacturing, accounted for the remaining N1.4 trillion (10 per cent).

The estimate reflects not only physical damage but also income losses, post-disaster reconstruction costs, and productivity declines. Analysts say these recurring shocks shave between 0.4 and 0.7 per cent off Nigeria's yearly GDP growth.

Lagos, Africa's fastest-growing megacity and home to more than 20 million people, faces a unique combination of urban flooding and coastal inundation. Last year's rainfall, projected at up to 1,900 millimetres, overwhelmed drainage systems in parts of Ikorodu, Badagry, and Lagos Island.

Dire days ahead

A FRESH NiMET warning predicted flash floods in 19 states. According to the agency, the affected states would include Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Ekiti, Edo, Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Imo, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, Kwara, Nasarawa, and Zamfara.

The agency noted that the combination of early heavy rainfall and dry, hardened soil conditions could trigger dangerous surface runoff and sudden flooding in many urban and rural communities.

The latest alert comes after the Federal Government revealed that more than 14,000 communities spread across 33 states and the Federal Capital Territory could face severe flooding in 2026.

The warning has renewed fears of widespread displacement, infrastructure damage and humanitarian challenges if preventive measures are not urgently implemented.

Women, children and the el-

derly bear the heaviest burden of the climate change crisis. NEMA data indicated that nearly 143,700 children are among the 2025 victims, many now living in makeshift camps with limited access to health services.

Public health experts fear outbreaks of waterborne diseases such as cholera and typhoid as stagnant pools persist in densely populated areas.

Agricultural economists warned that continued flooding could worsen food insecurity and inflation. The destruction of over 46,000 hectares of farmland, including rice paddies, maize and cassava fields, threatens both rural incomes and national grain reserves.

NiMet linked the extreme rainfall to changing climate patterns and ocean warming, stressing the need for improved early warning dissemination and for adaptive farming techniques such as raised beds, flood-tolerant crop varieties, and watershed management.

Urgent, strategic interventions needed

THERE are concerns that states have not utilised their ecological fund, a component of Nigeria's federal revenue allocation designed to tackle environmental challenges such as erosion, desertification, flooding, oil spills, and drought.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the 36 states received N22.90 billion as ecological fund from the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) between January and May 2025. There is little to show for these allocations.

In a strategic move to curb the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 37



Vice-Chancellor, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Prof. Joseph Ayodele (left); Ekiti State Governor, Biodun Oyeibanji; wife of the President, Oluremi Tinubu, and wife of Ekiti State Governor, Dr Olayemi Oyeibanji, during the commissioning of the state-of-the-art ICT Experience Centre at EKSU Campus, Ado-Ekiti, at the weekend.

Oyo abduction: Teachers begin strike as Tinubu deploys specialised rescue team

From Seye Olumide (Lagos), Terhemba Daka, Johnson Eyiango (Abuja), Rotimi Agholuaje (Ibadan), Ayodele Afolabi (Ekiti) and Azeez Olorunlomu (Abeokuta)

THE Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) has directed all primary and secondary school teachers in Oyo State to begin an indefinite strike today over the continued captivity of teachers and students abducted from schools in Oriire Local Government Area of the state.

The union also directed its state wings across the country to organise solidarity rallies tomorrow to demand the unconditional release of the abducted teachers and learners.

In a circular jointly signed by the National President of the union, Comrade Audu Titus Amba, and the Secretary General, Dr Clinton J. Ikpitibo, the NUT expressed concern over what it described as the horrifying, inhumane and traumatic conditions being endured by the abducted teachers and students since their

- NUT orders nationwide solidarity rallies over abducted teachers, pupils
- Tinubu approves 1,000 forest guards, considers military base
- Makinde: Over 200 Amotekun operatives killed fighting insecurity
- Oyo APC asks gov to resign over comments on security limitations
- Afenifere warns bandits better armed than Amotekun operatives
- Sowore threatens protest at Aso Rock over abducted schoolchildren
- Remi Tinubu assures Nigerians of stronger security, foreign support
- Group accuses opposition of exploiting insecurity for political gains

abduction on May 15, 2026.

The union lamented that despite previous appeals to government and security agencies to secure the release of the victims, they remained in captivity, while reports emerging from the kidnappers' den continued to generate anxiety among teachers, parents and members of the public.

According to the statement, the union was particularly disturbed by reports of the killing of some victims as well as emotional appeals allegedly made by the abducted school principal and a teacher calling on the Federal Government, Oyo State Government, the NUT, ANCOSS and well-meaning Nigerians to intervene and secure their release.

The NUT stated that the prolonged captivity of the teachers and learners, coupled with the absence of any clear indication of their imminent rescue, informed its decision to direct teachers in Oyo State to suspend academic activities until the victims regain their freedom.

Tinubu approves recruitment of 1,000 forest guards in Oyo after school abduction

THE strike came as President Bola Tinubu approved the recruitment of 1,000 forest guards for Oyo State and ordered the deployment of a specialised rescue team following the abduction.

The measures were announced yesterday when a

high-powered Federal Government delegation visited Esiele and Yawota communities, where armed men raided Community Grammar School, Baptist Nursery and Primary School, and L.A. Primary School on May 15, 2026, abducting pupils and teachers.

The delegation conveyed President Tinubu's concern over the incident and reassured residents of his administration's commitment to securing the safe return of the victims.

As part of efforts to strengthen security in the affected communities and surrounding forests, the President approved the recruitment of 1,000 forest guards in part-

nership with the Oyo State Government.

The delegation also informed community leaders and lawmakers that their request for the establishment of a military base in the area would be transmitted to the President for consideration.

In addition, Tinubu directed a specialised security unit with advanced rescue capabilities to intensify ongoing operations aimed at securing the release of the abducted pupils and teachers.

Addressing residents in English and Yoruba, Gbajabamila said Tinubu's decision to dispatch top security officials to the affected communities reflected the administration's determination to deploy every available resource to secure the victims' release.

Responding to appeals from parents and community leaders urging caution in the rescue mission, he said security agencies would rely on intelligence-driven strategies to safeguard the lives of the victims.

The delegation also paid a

condolence visit to the palace of the Soun of Ogbomosoland, Oba Ghandi Afolabi Olaoye, to sympathise with the monarch and residents of the area over the incident.

They later visited Mrs Mary Oyedokun, widow of the slain schoolteacher, and her two children.

Members of the delegation include National Security Adviser, Nuhu Ribadu; Inspector-General of Police, Olatunji Disu; and Minister of Defence, Christopher Musa.

Makinde says over 200 Amotekun operatives killed fighting insecurity in Oyo

MEANWHILE, Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State has disclosed that more than 200 operatives of the Western Nigeria Security Network, codenamed Amotekun Corps, have lost their lives in the fight against insecurity in the state.

Makinde disclosed this during a visit to the families of pupils and teachers abducted from schools in Oriire Local Government Area of the state

CONTINUED ON PAGE 37


**Alpha Morgan
Bank**

RC 7275937

ALPHA MORGAN BANK LIMITED

SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE 10 MONTHS PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

The Directors are pleased to present the summary financial information of Alpha Morgan Bank Limited for the 10 months period ended 31 December 2025. These summary financial information are derived from the full financial statements for the period ended 31 December 2025, and are not the full financial statements of the Bank. The Bank's Independent Auditors issued an unqualified audit opinion on the full financial statements for the 10 months period ended 31 December 2025 from which these summary financial information were derived.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2025

in thousands of Nigerian Naira

	31-DEC-2025
ASSETS	
Cash and balances with Central Bank of Nigeria	2,467,410
Due from banks	106,424,258
Pledged assets	1,623,252
Loans and advances to customers	10,104,272
Investments in securities:	
- Debt instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income	93,651
- Debt instruments at amortised cost	10,852,323
Other assets	5,951,857
Property, plant and equipment	18,143,426
Right-of-use asset	401,866
Intangible assets	4,371,436
TOTAL ASSETS	160,433,751
LIABILITIES	
Deposits from customers	103,058,189
Current income tax payable	432,913
Other liabilities	403,000
Deposit for shares	32,400,052
Lease liability	150,698
Provisions	1,062
Deferred tax liabilities	325,590
TOTAL LIABILITIES	136,771,504
EQUITY	
Share Capital	22,000,000
Retained earnings	743,058
AGSMEIS earnings	57,159
Fair value reserve	519,080
Statutory reserve	342,950
Total equity attributable to owners	23,662,247
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	160,433,751

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE 10 MONTHS PERIOD ENDED AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2025

in thousands of Nigerian Naira

	31-DEC-2025 (10 months)
Interest income using effective interest rate	10,301,812
Interest expense using effective interest rate	(3,433,103)
Net interest income	6,868,709
Fee and commission income	2,563,893
Fee and commission expense	(42,203)
Net fee and commission income	2,521,690
Other operating income	232,715
Operating income	9,623,114
Impairment loss on financial instruments	(213,574)
Net operating income after impairment loss	9,409,540
Personnel expenses	(1,854,276)
Other operating expenses	(4,555,326)
Depreciation and amortisation	(1,098,269)
Total expenses	(7,507,871)
Profit before income tax	1,901,669
Income tax expense	(758,503)
Profit for the period	1,143,166
Other Comprehensive Income/(loss):	
Item that may not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss	-
Items that may be reclassified to profit or loss, net of tax	-
Other comprehensive income, net of tax:	
Total other comprehensive (loss)/income for the period	1,143,166
Earnings per share	5.2k

Below is a breakdown of complaints received and resolved by the Bank during the period 31 December 2025 pursuant to CBN circular dated 16 August 2011.

Description	Number	Amounts Claimed	Amounts Refunded
Pending complaints brought forward	-	-	-
Received complaints	194	2,675,511	2,128,326
Total complaints	194	-	-
Resolved complaints	(194)	-	-
Unresolved complaints escalated to CBN for intervention	-	-	-
Unresolved complaints pending with the bank carried forward	-	-	-

The full financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 27 March 2026 and signed on its behalf by:

Tope Smart
Chairman

FRC/2013/CIIN/000000001331

Ade Buraimo
Managing Director/CEO

FRC/2014/CIBN/00000006791

Wale Abdul
Chief Finance Officer

FRC/2024/PRO/ICAN/001/202879

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

To the Shareholders of Alpha Morgan Bank Limited

Opinion

The summary financial statements of **Alpha Morgan Bank Limited** which comprise the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2025, the summary statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the period then ended are derived from the audited financial statements of **Alpha Morgan Bank Limited** for the period ended 31 December 2025.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial statements of Alpha Morgan Bank Limited, in accordance with the requirements of Section 399 of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020 for abridged reports, Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act 2020 and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria (Amendment) Act, 2023 as applicable to summary financial statements.

Summary Financial Statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the IFRS Accounting Standards as issued by the International Accounting Standards Board, Banks and Other Financial Institution Act 2020, circulars and guidelines issued by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria (Amendment) Act, 2023 and the requirements of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020 as applicable to annual financial statements. Reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, it is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements of **Alpha Morgan Bank Limited** and the auditor's report thereon. The summary financial statements and the audited financial statements do not reflect the effect of events that occurred subsequent to the date of our report on the audited financial statements.

The Audited Financial Statements and Our Report Thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on those financial statements in our report dated 25 May 2026. That report also includes the communication of the key audit matter as described in the auditor's report on the financial statements.

Key audit matters are those matters that in our professional judgment, were of most significance in our audit of the financial statements of the current period.

Directors' Responsibility for the Summary Financial Statements

The Directors are responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements in accordance with the requirements of Section 399 of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020, as applicable to abridged reports, Banks and Other Financial Institution Act 2020, circulars and guidelines issued by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria (Amendment) Act 2023 as applicable to summary financial statements.

The Companies and Allied Matters Act require abridged reports to be prepared in accordance with the framework concepts and the measurement and recognition requirements of the IFRS Accounting Standards as issued by the International Accounting Standards Board.

Auditors' Responsibility for the Summary Financial Statements

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial statements based on our procedures which were conducted in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (ISA) 810 (Revised), "Engagement to report on Summary Financial Statements".

Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements

The Bank complied with the Fifth Schedule of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020.

In accordance with circular BSD/1/2004 issued by the Central Bank of Nigeria, details of insider related credits are as disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

Joshua Ojo, FCA
FRC/2013/PRO/ICAN/001/00000000849
For: Deloitte & Touche
Lagos, Nigeria.

25 May 2026



NDC dismisses social media primary results

By John Akubo, Abuja

THE Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) has dismissed as fake and unauthorised the various primary election results making the rounds on social media, insisting that only the party's National Executive Council (NEC) has the authority to announce the outcome of its nationwide primaries.

The warning comes amid growing speculation over the winners and losers of the party's May 28 and 29 primaries, with different lists purportedly showing successful candidates for various elective positions already circulating online.

In a statement signed by National Publicity Secretary, Osa Director, the party urged members, supporters, and the public to ignore all unofficial results, stressing that the authentic outcome of the exercise remains under the custody of the NEC.

"The results of the primaries are with the National Executive Council of our great party, which is solely responsible for announcing them," the statement said.

To address issues arising from the primaries and finalise decisions on candidates, the party's National Leader, Senator Seriake Dickson, has ordered the convening of a crucial NEC meeting in Abuja.

NCAA urged to implement stricter passenger protection protocol

By Olusegun Koiki

THE Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) has been challenged to implement stronger passenger protection measures and stricter regulatory oversight following continuous severe operational disruptions by domestic carriers.

The Chief Executive Officer of United States-based aircraft Brokerage, Nigame, Olufemi Adeniji, in an interview with *The Guardian* in Lagos at the weekend, said that indigenous airlines continued to trample on the rights of the travelling public without any help from the regulatory agency.

For instance, he alleged that earlier in the month, he and other passengers were left stranded for almost 15 hours at the Lagos airport for almost 15 hours due to inadequate operational aircraft.

According to Adeniji, he had planned to board a United Nigeria Airlines flight from Lagos to Asaba on May 13, which was scheduled to depart at 7:15 a.m.

He, however, regretted that the 7:15 a.m. flight did not depart until 10:15 p.m., resulting in a delay of about 15 hours and causing significant inconvenience to passengers.



Managing Director/CEO, Planet Projects Limited, Biodun Otunola (left); Abia State Commissioner for Transport, Dr Isaac Ukaegbu; Vice Chancellor, Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Prof. Nnenna Oti; Abia State Governor, Dr Alex Otti, and his wife, Priscilla, at the inauguration of Abia Public Transport Infrastructure Projects named in honour of the professor in Umuahia, Abia State.

Rivers 2027: Rainbow coalition will decide Fubara's successor, says Wike

From Ann Godwin, Port Harcourt

THE Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, has said that the Rainbow Coalition will collectively determine who succeeds Governor Siminalayi Fubara in 2027, dismissing claims that he has endorsed any governorship aspirant, including Kingsley Chinda.

Wike, who has repeatedly stated that he would not repeat what he described as the mistake of single-handedly backing Fubara's emergence in 2023, clarified this yesterday in Port Harcourt dur-

ing a luncheon attended by candidates seeking various elective positions under the Rainbow Coalition.

The coalition comprises members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC). According to the minister, the coalition has not settled on any governorship candidate, stressing that the eventual choice would be made collectively by its leadership.

"In the Rainbow Coalition, we have not chosen who will be the governor of Rivers State. We have candidates who have emerged under the coalition, but

the only decision we have taken is that we are going to support President Bola Tinubu," Wike said. He used the occasion to invite politicians across the state to align with the coalition if they intend to remain politically relevant in Rivers State.

"If you want to be important in the politics of Rivers State, come and join the Rainbow Coalition. If you want to be governor, come here. If you want to be a senator, come here. If you want to be in the House of Representatives, come here. If you want to be in the State

Assembly, come here. If you want local government positions, come here. You must come. If you don't come, you cannot get it," he declared.

Reiterating his position, Wike said it would be unfair to members of his political family and supporters for anyone to suggest that a governorship aspirant had already secured his endorsement.

"We have not chosen who will be governor in Rivers State," he said, adding that every aspirant interested in the race should be allowed to test his popularity through the political process.

RusselSmith formally transitions to Arridex

ARRIDEX, formerly RusselSmith, today announced its formal change of name, registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission of Nigeria. The change reflects the significant expansion of the organisation's capabilities and the breadth of industries it now serves, which extend well beyond the oil and gas services with which it began operations in the early 2000s.

Founded as an asset integrity company serving Nigeria's oil and gas sector, the organisation has grown into a multi-sector industrial technology group operating across oil and gas, maritime, aerospace, defence, construction, and manufacturing. Its subsidiaries cover engineering and construction delivery, autonomous systems development, and advanced technology products, in addition to its industrial additive man-

ufacturing and asset integrity operations.

The organisation holds Pioneer Status in additive manufacturing, granted by the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC), and is the first company qualified by the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) for additive manufacturing deployment in the oil and gas sector. Both represent formal recognition of Arridex's capabilities and

its role in building indigenous industrial capacity at scale. With more than 20 years of continuous delivery, Arridex holds certification to ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 45001:2018, underpinning an integrated management system that governs its operations across all sectors, and has recorded zero lost time incidents across over seven million man-hours of operations.

Biafra Day: Soludo advocates structured dialogue over agitation

GOVERNOR Chukwuma Soludo of Anambra State has called for a structured national conversation on the place of the Igbo in Nigeria, urging stakeholders to embrace intellectual engagement and constructive dialogue rather than agitation.

Soludo made the call during a stage performance titled "The Tale of Two Nnamdis," written by Tobe Osigwe and presented by students of the Department of Theatre Arts and Film Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), at

the Government House, Awka.

The governor's remarks coincided with the May 30 Biafra remembrance anniversary, often observed by pro-Biafra groups.

Expressing concern over what he described as the absence of a coordinated intellectual discourse on the challenges confronting the Igbo and their position within the Nigerian federation, Soludo urged a shift from agi-

tation to evidence-based and structured engagement.

Commending the students for initiating discussions on the subject, he said: "I was at UNN last month and recalled that the Biafran war was literally declared there. I am glad that young people are now leading the way by insisting that this conversation must begin in a structured manner."

"I saw the war very clearly. I am a Pan-Africanist and a

proud Nigerian. Ndi Igbo need Nigerians, Nigerians need Ndi Igbo, just as we all need the wider world. Our prosperity will accelerate if we take advantage of a larger space."

The governor cautioned against methods of agitation such as the prolonged sit-at-home protests, arguing that such actions often inflict economic and social hardship on the people they are intended to protect.

Stakeholders urge stronger risk management in engineering sector

By Victor Gbonegun

WITH chemical engineering's potential to drive Nigeria's economic transformation, stakeholders in the profession have emphasised the need for practitioners to develop essential skills in risk management spanning vital sectors such as oil and gas processing, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, and renewable energy, ultimately towards boosting Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and limiting losses.

The Executive Director, Industrial Risks Protection Consultant Limited (IRPC), Jacob Adeosun, led the call at a public lecture organised by the Board of Trustees of Engineer Anthony Olufemi Shobo Foundation for Chemical Engineering Education and Research. This was under the auspices of the Nigerian Society of Chemical Engineers (NSChE) in honour of the doyen of Chemical Engineering in Nigeria, Anthony Shobo, who turns 95 this weekend in Abeokuta.

Foundation boosts South-East digital transformation with new AI-Tech hub

By Adeyemi Adepetun

TO reposition the South-East for digital transformation, the Leo Stan Ekeh Foundation (LSEF) has donated a multi-million-naira state-of-the-art AI-Tech Centre to Holy Ghost College, Owerri, Imo State, as part of the school's 77th anniversary celebration.

The tech facility, donated at the weekend, is equipped with highly integrated all-in-one Zinox computers, 24-hour iPower solar-powered electricity, and high-speed Starlink corporate Internet connectivity, fully subscribed to for the next five years.

Designed as a world-class smart learning environment, the centre also features eco-friendly integrated workstations, modern furniture, and two large AI-enabled interactive screens for real-time online tutorials and digital learning sessions. The facility instantly positions Holy Ghost College among Nigeria's emerging smart technology-driven secondary schools with the capacity to compete globally.

An alumnus of the institution, Leo Stan Ekeh, said the project was inspired by his desire to equip students with the digital skills and global exposure required to thrive in the 21st-Century knowledge economy.

HEDA, Amnesty want accountability, stronger human rights protection

From Silver Nwokoro (Lagos) and Tina Agosi Todo (Calabar)

THE Human and Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA Resource Centre) and Amnesty International have called for stronger accountability, protection of citizens' rights and improved grassroots advocacy against human rights violations in Nigeria.

HEDA, in a statement, urged protection of citizens against abuse of power, selective enforcement and unethical conduct by public officials, stressing that fairness, transparency and respect for the rule of law remain fundamental to effective anti-corruption governance.

The group also commended the Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mr Olanipekun Olukoyede, for demonstrating commitment to institutional integrity through disciplinary measures taken against officials implicated in misconduct and corrupt practices.

In the statement signed by HEDA Chairman, Olanrewaju Suraju, the civil society organisation described the dismissal of one of the EFCC's top prosecutors, Samuel Chime, and others over allegations of bribery and sabotage of cases as a bold step towards strengthening public confidence in the anti-graft agency.

NTCA advocates stronger tobacco laws amid rising youth smoking rates

No tobacco, nicotine product safe, WHO director warns

From Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze (Abuja) and Tina Agosi Todo (Calabar)

THE Nigeria Tobacco Control Alliance (NTCA) has raised concerns over the growing influence of tobacco and nicotine products on Nigerian youths, calling for stricter enforcement of tobacco control laws to protect the country's next generation.

In a statement issued to mark World No Tobacco Day 2026, the alliance said this year's theme, "Unmasking the appeal: Countering nicotine and tobacco addiction," highlights how tobacco companies deploy marketing strategies that exploit the aspirations, emotions and fears of young people.

The group noted that Nigerian youths are increasingly exposed to images of smoking, shisha and vaping through music videos, fashion trends and social media platforms, where attractive flavours and branding often make tobacco products appear appealing.

This came as the WHO Regional Director for Africa, Mohamed Yakub Janabi, in a message to mark the 2026 World No Tobacco Day, warned: "There is no such thing as safe tobacco use or a safe level of non therapeutic nicotine exposure."



Governorship candidate of Action Alliance, Ben Eke (left); Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike (right), in a handshake with the Rivers State APC governorship candidate, Kingsley Chinda, and others during a luncheon organised by the Rivers State Rainbow Coalition, held in Port Harcourt on Saturday in honour of candidates participating in the forthcoming governorship, National Assembly and State Assembly elections in Rivers State.

SERAP seeks UN intervention over worsening insecurity

From Silver Nwokoro (Lagos) and Danjuma Michael (Katsina)

THE Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has urged United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, to invoke Article 99 of the UN Charter over Nigeria's escalating insecurity, amid fresh incidents of banditry and abduction in Zamfara and Katsina states.

In an open letter signed by SERAP Deputy Director, Kolawole Oluwadare, at the weekend, the organisation called on the UN chief to bring Nigeria's worsening insecurity, marked by mass abductions, killings, attacks on civilians, displacement and other grave

- Police arrest suspected bandit kingpin, two others in Zamfara
- Gunmen abduct retired general, wife in Katsina

human rights violations, to the attention of the UN Security Council.

SERAP said the deteriorating security situation was evident in repeated attacks and violence in Oyo, Benue, Borno, Plateau, Kaduna, Zamfara and several other parts of the country.

The organisation argued that the scale, persistence and regional implications of the violence posed a threat to international peace and security, with the potential to worsen instability across the region.

According to SERAP, Article 99 of the UN Charter was specifically

designed for situations requiring urgent preventive diplomacy, sustained international scrutiny and coordinated global action.

"Our appeal is grounded in the preventive mandate of the UN Charter and the urgent need to address a rapidly deteriorating situation in the country," the organisation stated.

Citing Article 99, SERAP noted that it provides that: "The Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security."

The group added that placing Nigeria's insecurity and human rights crisis on the Security Council's formal agenda would ensure sustained international attention to attacks on civilians, including killings, abductions and displacement.

"The crisis in Nigeria is not merely a domestic law-enforcement issue. Its effects increasingly implicate regional peace and security through cross-border movement of armed groups and weapons, large-scale displacement, growing instability extending beyond Nigeria's borders, and weakening human rights protection and rule-of-law institutions," SERAP stated.

ADP dismisses Atiku placeholder claims as Accord unveils Olawepo-Hashim for 2027

From Adamu Abuh (Abuja) and Saxe Akhaine (Kaduna)

THE opposition Action Democratic Party (ADP) has dismissed suggestions that its newly nominated presidential candidate, Aliyu Bin Abass, could serve as a placeholder for former Vice President Atiku Abubakar ahead of the 2027 general election.

Bin Abass, a close ally of Atiku, emerged through a consensus arrangement at the party's 2026 National Convention held in Abuja, where delegates from the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) ratified his candidacy after extensive consultations among party leaders, aspirants and stake-

holders.

His emergence comes amid growing political realignments ahead of the 2027 elections and has fuelled speculation within opposition circles over the strategic calculations behind the ADP's early presidential nomination.

Some political observers have suggested that the ADP may be positioning itself as an alternative platform for opposition forces should legal disputes surrounding the leadership structure of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) affect the party's ability to present candidates in the next general election.

However, the ADP dismissed

the claims, insisting there was no basis for suggestions that Bin Abass would surrender the party's ticket to Atiku.

When contacted, the party's National Publicity Secretary, Dr Sani Dawop, described the reports as unfounded.

"I don't know anything about that. I'm sure this is beer-parlour rumours," Dawop said.

In his acceptance speech at the convention held in Abuja at the weekend, Bin Abass described his emergence as the beginning of a new chapter in Nigeria's political history, anchored on national renewal, inclusive governance, economic transformation and youth empowerment.

He assured Nigerians that the journey toward a stronger, more prosperous and united country had begun.

Meanwhile, chieftain of the Accord Party (AP), Gbenga Olawepo-Hashim, has emerged as the party's preferred presidential candidate following the successful conduct of affirmation primaries held across several states of the federation.

The exercise, which recorded an impressive turnout of party members and supporters, saw Olawepo-Hashim secure overwhelming affirmative votes, affirming his position as the party's standard-bearer for the 2027 presidential election.

Niger restates ban on graduation ceremonies in public, private schools

From Bala Yahaya, Minna

THE Niger State Government has reminded proprietors, directors, principals, head teachers, school administrators, parents and guardians that the ban on graduation ceremonies in public and private primary and secondary schools across the state remains in force.

The government said it had observed with concern that, despite earlier directives, some schools were still organising graduation ceremonies and compelling parents and guardians to make payments under different names, in-

cluding graduation fees, gowns, souvenirs, entertainment and other charges.

In a statement signed by the Commissioner for Basic and Secondary Education, Dr Hadiza Asabe Mohammad, and issued in Minna through a circular with reference number MBSE/CIR/2026, the government described the practice as exploitative, unacceptable and contrary to its policy of ensuring affordable and accessible education for children.

According to the statement, the organisation of graduation ceremonies in all public

and private primary and secondary schools remains strictly prohibited.

It added that no school authority should demand, collect or receive money from pupils, students, parents or guardians for graduation ceremonies or related activities.

The government also prohibited the collection of graduation fees, purchase of gowns, entertainment levies, souvenirs and other graduation-related charges.

However, schools were permitted to organise Speech and Prize-Giving Day activities as part of end-of-session pro-

grammes, provided such events were planned, funded and managed strictly by the school authorities without compulsory financial contributions from parents or guardians.

The statement stressed that Speech and Prize-Giving Day activities must not be transformed into graduation ceremonies in any form.

The government warned that any violation of the directive would be treated as a serious breach of educational policy and an act of exploitation against pupils and parents.

Youth Party conducts primaries ahead of 2027 general elections

By Joseph Onyekwere

THE Youth Party has conducted primary elections across selected constituencies nationwide as part of its preparations for the 2027 general elections, signalling a major step in the party's efforts to expand its political presence and strengthen internal democracy.

The exercise, held on May 29, attracted party officials, aspirants, members and observers, reflecting growing interest in the party's activities as it positions itself for broader participation in the next electoral cycle.

Party leaders described the primaries as a critical democratic process designed to produce candidates who will fly the party's flag in state and federal legislative elections.

Under the party's One Member, One Vote (OMOV) system, eligible members participated directly in the selection of candidates, a process the party says promotes transparency, inclusiveness and grassroots participation.

Among the notable contests was the primary election for the Idanre State House of Assembly Constituency in Ondo State, where Mr Obafusi Obatayo Johnson sought the party's ticket.

In Bayelsa State, attention focused on the Nembe State House of Assembly Constituency, where Mr Corlenius Oguara participated in the primary process.

FG, NISO seek lasting solution to persistent grid failures

FOLLOWING the frequent grid collapses in the country, the Presidential Adviser on Power, Mr Lanre Babalola, at the weekend met with the management of the Nigerian Independent System Operator (NISO) to fashion out a permanent solution to the problem.

Earlier, Babalola had emphasised the importance of prudent resource management, enhanced operational discipline and sustained efforts towards improving grid performance and reducing system disturbances across the Nigerian Electricity Supply Industry (NESI). He reaffirmed NISO's critical role in driving a more stable, resilient and efficient power sector.

In his remarks, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD/CEO) of NISO, Abdu Bello Mohammed, assured the delegation of NISO's unwavering commitment to advancing grid reliability and operational excellence. He also pledged the organisation's full support towards achieving the shared objective of a more robust and sustainable electricity supply industry.

Recall that the power sector has been working around the clock to fix the issue of persistent grid collapse, which has become an embarrassment to the country.

Gov. Yusuf approves N21.9 billion for rehabilitation, upgrade of water treatment plants

DETERMINED to restore pipe-borne water supply before the end of his first tenure in office, Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf has approved N21.89 billion for the rehabilitation and upgrading of the Challawa and Tamburawa Water Treatment Plants in the state.

According to the governor, the approval, targeted at maintaining sustainable water supply, covers N9.9 billion for the rehabilitation of the Challawa Water Treatment Plant and N11.99 billion for the upgrading of the Tamburawa Water Treatment Plant (Gidan Ruwa na Tamburawa).

Yusuf made the announcement while speaking at the Hawan Nasarawa (Sallah homage), where he reaffirmed his administration's commitment to addressing the persistent water supply challenges facing the state. The governor explained that the projects are aimed at ensuring regular and reliable pipe-borne water supply to residents across Kano me-

ropolis and surrounding communities.

Governor Yusuf stressed that access to clean water remains one of the top priorities of his administration, assuring that his government is determined to restore effective water supply before the end of its tenure in 2027.

He noted that the rehabilitation of the major water facilities would significantly improve water production and distribution across the state. The governor also announced plans by the state government to provide fertilisers to farmers at subsidised and affordable rates during the ongoing rainy season to enhance agricultural activities and boost food production.

According to him, the intervention is aimed at reducing the burden on farmers, improving yields and strengthening food security across Kano State.

Yusuf reiterated his administration's commitment to infrastructure renewal and agricultural development, describing both sectors as criti-

cal to the economic wellbeing of the people.

The new approval follows an earlier approval for the installation of solar-powered boreholes across various communities as an emergency response initiative. The initiative reflects the sustained commitment of the Yusuf administration to addressing water supply challenges and improving the wellbeing of citizens across Kano State.

Acting Commissioner for Water Resources, Dr Dahir Muhammad Hashim said the project is expected to deliver

about 4,150,000 litres of water daily, directly benefiting an estimated 830,000 residents across water-stressed communities in the state.

He explained that the governor approved 166 solar-powered boreholes, each designed to provide approximately 25,000 litres of water daily and serve about 5,000 people.

Hashim noted that the installation of the 166 solar-powered boreholes represents the first phase of the initiative, with additional boreholes expected to be approved and deployed in more communities across Kano State.



R- Secretary to the State Government, SSG, Alh. Faruq Umar Ibrahim; Deputy Governor, Alh. Murtala Sule Garo; Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf; Director State Security Service, Abubakar Hussaini; Commissioner of Police, Ibrahim Adamu among others during Eid Kabir prayers at Kofar Mata Prayer ground.

Children's Day 2026: Governor hosts orphans to special lunch in Kano...

KANO State Governor, Alh. Abba Kabir Yusuf, has reaffirmed his administration's commitment to the welfare, protection, and development of vulnerable children and orphans, describing them as an integral part of society and future leaders of the state.

The Governor made this known during a Sallah visit to the Nassarawa Children's Home where he interacted warmly with the children and shared a meal with them as part of activities marking the festive celebration and demonstrating government's care and compassion for vulnerable members of society.

This was contained in a statement issued by the Director General, Media and

They are my children too, says Governor Yusuf

Publicity, Kano Government House, Sanusi Bature Dawakin Tofa, on Sunday.

Addressing the children during the visit, Governor Yusuf assured them that they are no different from his biological children, stressing that their welfare, education, health, and overall well-being remain a priority of his administration.

"You are my children too. You should never see yourselves as abandoned or forgotten because this government belongs to you and will continue to care for you. We will continue to support you to become better citizens and responsible leaders of tomorrow," the Governor stated.

transparency, and commitment to improving the welfare of vulnerable children in the state. He praised the ministry's efforts in ensuring effective care, protection, and social support for residents of government-owned care homes.

Earlier, the Commissioner for Women Affairs, Children and Persons with Special Needs, Hajija Amina Abdullahi Sani, expressed profound appreciation to Governor Yusuf for his consistent support and special attention to residents of the Nassarawa Children's Home.

"I have delivered 90% of my promises," Gov. Yusuf declares

KANO State Governor, Abba Kabir Yusuf, has announced that his administration has fulfilled ninety per cent of the promises made to the people of the state within three years of assuming office.

He made this known on Saturday while receiving the Emir of Rano, Ambassador Muhammad Isa Umaru, who paid him a Sallah homage at the Government House, Kano. Yusuf affirmed that his government has remained committed to delivering democratic dividends through people-oriented policies and impactful developmental projects across various sectors.

Governor Yusuf explained that significant progress has been recorded in education, healthcare, infrastructure, agriculture, water supply, youth empowerment and economic development, all aimed at improving the living standards of residents and repositioning Kano State for sustainable growth.

He reaffirmed his commitment to completing the remaining promises before the end of his tenure and sustaining the pace of development across the nooks and crannies of the state.

The governor assured the Emir and people of the Rano Emirate of the timely expansion and dualisation of the Karfi-Rano Road, provision of fertiliser to farmers at subsidised rates, and the renovation of the Emir's Palace, among other projects.

Governor Yusuf expressed appreciation to the people of the Rano Emirate for their support, patience and confidence in his leadership, pledging to continue working tirelessly to justify the trust reposed in him.

Earlier, the Emir of Rano, Ambassador Muhammad Isa Umaru, commended the governor for what he described as remarkable achievements recorded within three years of his administration.

He praised Governor Yusuf for the completion of five-kilometre roads in Rano, Kibiya and Bunkure Local Government Areas, as well as the continuation of the Kaluwaiwai Water Project.

The Emir also appreciated the governor's efforts in securing the upgrade of Rano Emirate Hospital to a Federal Medical Centre and the conversion of the School of Rural Technology, Rano, to a Federal Polytechnic.

Gov. Yusuf reads riot act to commissioners, advisers

Commends youngest commissioner Dr Hashim for outstanding performance

Governor of Kano State, Alh. Abba Kabir Yusuf, has issued a strong warning to commissioners and political advisers in his administration, urging them to justify the confidence reposed in them through effective service delivery and commitment to governance.

This was contained in a statement issued by the governor's spokesman, Sunusi Bature Dawakin Tofa, on Friday.

Governor Yusuf gave the warning while speaking during the Hawan Nasarawa Sallah homage held in Kano.

The governor stressed that his administration would not tolerate negligence, poor performance or lack of commitment from any appointee, insisting that accountability and measurable results remain central to his government.

He urged members of the State Executive Council and political aides to rededicate themselves

to the service of the people and support the administration's development agenda. Governor Yusuf stated that any appointee who fails to perform up to expectation should either improve or be ready to vacate office.

The governor, however, singled out the Commissioner for Environment, Dr Dahir Hashim, for commendation, describing him as an innovative and hardworking leader despite being the youngest commissioner in the cabinet. He praised Hashim's commitment, creativity and outstanding performance in promoting government activities and strengthening communication between the administration and the public.

Governor Yusuf reiterated that his administration remains committed to rewarding dedication, competence and excellence in public service.

Kano pilgrims offer special prayers for Yusuf's re-election in Makkah

THOUSANDS of pilgrims from Kano State performing the 2026 Hajj in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Monday held special prayer sessions for the re-election of Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf, as well as for lasting peace, unity and development in Kano State and Nigeria at large.

The prayers took place at the Minna Hajj Camp shortly after the commencement of the Hajj rituals, as over 1.5 million pilgrims from different parts of the world gathered in the holy land to begin the spiritual journey.

Across the various tents occupied by Kano pilgrims, emotional scenes of worship, Qur'anic recitation and supplications filled the atmosphere, with many pilgrims passionately praying for peace, stability and prosperity in Nigeria. The pilgrims also offered fervent prayers for a peaceful and transparent election that would usher Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf into a second term in office, describing him as a leader committed to the welfare and progress of the people.

In one of the major prayer sessions attended by hundreds of pilgrims, prominent Islamic scholar, Ustaz Ya'u Dodo, who led the supplications, said the people of Kano should continue to thank Almighty Allah for blessing the state with the leadership of Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf.

According to him, the governor's humility, patriotism and determination to transform Kano State have endeared him to the masses, hence the need for continued prayers for his success.

"Kano people should continue to appreciate Allah for giving them a leader like Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf. His humility, love for the people and commitment to the development of the state are qualities worthy of support and prayers," the cleric said.



Emir of Kano, Khalifa Muhammadu Sanusi II during Sallah Homage to Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf at Government House Kano.



Kano Deputy Governor Alh. Murtala Sule Garo joins APC Governors to pay Sallah Homage to Vice President Senator Kashim Shettima in Abuja.



Emir of Gaya and Amirul Hajj Dr. Abubakar Ibrahim; Emir Karaye and Deputy Amirul Hajj Alh. Mohammad Mahras, Alh. Lawan Yusuf Chairman Kano State Pilgrims' Welfare Board while presenting gifts of 200 SAR to state pilgrims' in Makkah.

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Police recover ransom bag from Seriki Fulani's residence in Ogun

From Segun Ayinde, Abeokuta

THE Ogun State Police Command has recorded a breakthrough in its investigation into multiple kidnapping incidents across the Ijebu axis with the recovery of a bag allegedly linked to ransom collections from the residence of 67-year-old Muhammadu Abdulahi, the Seriki Fulani of Ijebu Ode.

The Fulani community leader was arrested alongside his first son, Bala Muhammadu, although both denied involvement in kidnapping activities.

Police investigators, however, claimed that a bag allegedly used for ransom payments from a kidnapping victim was discovered in the kitchen of the family residence.

Abdulahi admitted knowing that his son, Bala Muhammadu, had previously been convicted and imprisoned for kidnapping,

Arrest security guard for alleged theft of motor spare parts

but insisted he believed Bala had abandoned criminal activities after serving his jail term.

Sources said Bala and two of his brothers escaped arrest after allegedly receiving information about the presence of security operatives in the area. They reportedly fled through nearby bushes before officers arrived at the

compound.

Operatives of the Anti-Kidnapping Unit of the Ogun State Police Command, led by SP Bamidele Shirtu, had been investigating a series of kidnapping cases reported in Ijebu Ode, Imodi, Irewon, Iwode, Okun Owa and neighbouring communities. According to intelligence gathered during the

investigation, Bala Muhammadu was allegedly linked to the crimes. Police said he had recently completed a five-year prison sentence for kidnapping.

A police source disclosed that the recovery of the alleged ransom bag was one of the key outcomes of the operation.

"Following painstaking intelligence gathering and investigation, one of the bags used in the payment of ransom to secure the release of a victim was recovered in the father's kitchen. Before officers arrived, Bala and some of his brothers were alerted and escaped through the bush," the source said.

The source further alleged that Bala was not the only member of the family connected to criminal activities, adding that security operatives were also searching for other suspects identified as Ndaji and another brother.

Nine suspects arrested for drug-related offences, robbery in Yobe

From Njadvara Musa, Damaturu

THE Yobe State Police Command has arrested nine suspects over alleged drug-related offences and robbery incidents in Fika and Damaturu local council of the state.

The command said the arrests were part of ongoing efforts to rid the state of criminal elements and ensure public safety across the 17 local councils.

In a statement, spokesperson for the command, Dungus Abdulkarim, disclosed that the police recorded significant breakthroughs in the fight against organised crime, youth hooliganism, drug trafficking and substance abuse.

"On May 29, 2026, at about 5:40 a.m., operatives attached to B Division, Damaturu, conducted a coordinated raid operation at Pompomari Kan Tudu, Damaturu. During the

operation, two notorious suspected drug dealers were apprehended," he stated.

The suspects were identified as Jibrin Mohammed, 30, and Kashim Kyari, 22, both residents of the Pompomari community in Damaturu.

According to Abdulkarim, exhibits recovered from the suspects included 26 sachets of Tramadol, 23 sachets of Diazepam and two wraps of Arizona cannabis.

Other items recovered included 34 wraps of local cannabis, four pieces of crystal methamphetamine, a dagger measuring 11 inches, a pair of scissors and cash amounting to N91,950.

He said the suspects and recovered exhibits were currently under investigation and would be prosecuted upon completion of investigations.



Suspect with exhibit



Kidnapping suspect

Lekki residents seek urgent intervention over flooding linked to coastal highway project

By Victor Gbonegun

RESIDENTS of Baruwa/Igbo Efon community on the Lekki-Epe axis of Lagos State have called for government intervention to salvage the area from devastating floods.

The communities linked the flooding to the open water drainage channel directed into the area from the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway, noting that the development has resulted in persistent flooding of residential compounds and access roads, while structurally weakening and damaging buildings and perimeter fences.

Specifically, they lamented that the flooding has resulted in the destruction of household properties and personal

belongings, increased health risks arising from stagnant and contaminated floodwater, and severe disruption to transportation and movement within the community.

Speaking to journalists, the Chairman of the residents' association in the area, Atanda Mudashiru, and the Secretary, Zacheus Aladejobi, said the floodwater had led to loss of business income due to reduced accessibility and flooding of shops and commercial premises.

Besides, they added that the flooding has caused fear, anxiety, and displacement among vulnerable residents, including children and the elderly.

In a "Save Our Soul" message signed by the duo and sent to the Federal Government

through the Federal Controller of Works, Lagos, the residents called on the federal authorities to urgently intervene and stop the devastating open water discharge into the community.

They urged that this should be done before the peak of the rainy season to prevent further escalation of the damage and suffering within the community.

"We write on behalf of the residents, landlords, business owners, and families within the Baruwa/Igbo Efon community to urgently draw your attention to the worsening environmental and humanitarian situation caused by the open water discharge drain connected to the ongoing Lagos-Calabar Coastal Road project.

NDLEA uncovers illicit drugs concealed in machines

By Bertram Nwannekanma

OPERATIVES of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency have uncovered consignments of illicit drugs concealed in water purifier machines shipped to Lagos from the Netherlands.

The consignments, comprising ketamine weighing three kilogrammes and 199 grammes of MDMA, popularly known as Ecstasy, were discovered and seized at a courier company in Lagos on Tuesday, May 26, 2026.

In Kaduna State, NDLEA operatives arrested a couple, Musa Sunday and Mercy Sunday, alongside another suspect, Salomi Ezekiel, 38, following the seizure of 100 jumbo bags of skunk weighing 1,246 kilogrammes from their residence in the Goin Gora area of Kaduna on Sunday, May 24.

In another interdiction op-

eration in the state, NDLEA officers on patrol along the Abuja-Kaduna highway near Jere intercepted a 30-year-old suspect, Sunusi Musa, with 380 rounds of military-grade 7.62mm ammunition allegedly being transported to Katsina State.

The suspect and the recovered ammunition were subsequently handed over to the appropriate security agency for further investigation and

action.

Meanwhile, NDLEA operatives in Niger State, acting on credible intelligence, raided a warehouse in Gidan Kukah, Bosso Local Council, where 457 kilogrammes of skunk were recovered on Wednesday, May 27.

A suspect, Godwin Zakka, 46, was later arrested at his residence in the Gbeganu area of Minna in connection with the seizure.



Hidden illicit drugs



Musa suspect

Group condemns abduction of retired Major General, wife in Katsina

By Bertram Nwannekanma

NON-GOVERNMENTAL organisation, Prayer and Support for the Nigerian Armed Forces and Other Security Agencies, has condemned the abduction of former Director of Defence Information, Major General Rabe Abubakar (Rtd.), and his wife by suspected kidnapers in Katsina State.

Convener of the organisation, Mary Fatile, described the incident as unfortunate, disturbing and a direct attack on a patriotic Nigerian who dedicated his life to national service.

According to reports, the retired major general and his wife were abducted while travelling to Katsina through the Matazu Local Council area

of the state. Their driver reportedly escaped with gunshot injuries, while the victims' red Peugeot 406 vehicle was later recovered and taken to the Matazu Division of the Nigeria Police Force.

Fatile called on the Federal Government, security agencies and relevant authorities to intensify efforts toward securing the immediate and unconditional release of the retired officer and his wife.

"Abubakar served his country with dedication, professionalism and loyalty throughout his military career. It is therefore painful to witness such a distinguished officer and his wife subjected to this traumatic experience. We urge the government and security agencies to deploy all necessary resources to ensure their safe rescue," she said.

The organisation also expressed concern over the worsening insecurity across parts of the country, particularly the recent abduction of school-children in Oyo State.



Major General Rabe Abubakar

Rivers community raises alarm over dredging activities as teenager drowns

From Obinna Nwaoku, Port Harcourt

A 16-YEAR-OLD boy, Miebaka Akoko, has drowned while swimming with friends at Derock Waterside in Ogoloma, Okrika Local Council of Rivers State, triggering renewed concerns over the dangers posed by dredging activities in waterfront communities.

The incident reportedly occurred on Saturday afternoon when the teenager and three friends went swimming in the river. Witnesses said Koko was swept away by a strong current and disappeared beneath the water before help

could reach him.

Speaking on the incident, Sector Commander of the Civilian Joint Task Force, Igwe Godswill, blamed the increasing number of dangerous spots in local rivers on extensive dredging activities.

According to him, dredging operations by companies have significantly altered the depth of rivers across Okrika, turning previously safe swimming areas into hazardous zones.

"Most of the waterfronts in Okrika have been dredged by companies. The result is that the rivers have become much deeper, and a person can suddenly step into a very deep section close to the shore," he

said.

Godswill explained that the incident occurred at about 1:30 p.m. when four boys from the community visited the waterside to swim.

He said residents were alerted after the boys suddenly ran out of the water while a nearby woman raised an alarm that someone was drowning. "We rushed to the scene immediately. Another man also attempted to rescue the boy. At a point, we could only see his hands above the water, but the current was too strong. The rescuer could not get to him before he disappeared. Sadly, he drowned," he recounted.

Edo Security network arrests two over illicit drugs in Benin

From Joseph Kanjo, Benin

The Edo State Security Network (ESSN) has arrested two suspects with large quantities of illicit drugs at different locations in Benin City.

The Commissioner for Public Security and Safety, Festus Ebea, disclosed this in a statement yesterday, identifying the suspects as Efosa Uyi and Stella Thompson.

Ebea said the arrests reflected the state government's determination to rid Edo of illicit drug activities. He listed the substances recovered from the suspects as Indian hemp, crystal methamphetamine, popularly known as Ice, Colorado, Canadian Loud, and Scottish Loud.

According to him, the

suspects would be handed over to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) for further prosecution.

"We have arrested two suspects at different points in Benin and primarily will hand them over to NDLEA.

We are working very hard to assist the drug agency to get rid of those engaged in drug activities in the state," he said.

He added that the suspects were arrested on Friday, May 29, 2026, with large quantities of illicit drugs.

Ebea warned drug dealers and users to stay away from Edo State, stressing that the government would continue to clamp down on drug-related activities.

"We are not relenting in combing the state and getting

drug addicts and those trading in illicit drugs off the state. We are using this medium to warn those selling and dealing in illicit drugs to stop, as the state will not be safe for them," he said.

The commissioner also urged youths to avoid drug abuse, saying it had no positive impact on their lives and often led to criminal activities.

"To save our youth from these illicit drugs, we have to arrest those selling and distributing these drugs in society. Hence, these ones have been arrested and brought before the media," he added.

Ebea called on journalists to follow up the case to ensure justice is served and to deter others from engaging in drug-related offences.



Suspects with recovered illicit drugs



Police dismiss viral Ikorodu arms arrest video as outdated

By Eniola Daniel

The Lagos State Police Command has called for calm and caution over a trending video depicting the arrest of some Fulani men allegedly found in possession of arms and ammunition in Ikorodu, Lagos State.

The command noted that the incident occurred three years ago and does not reflect the current security situation in Ikorodu or any part of Lagos State.

According to the command, the recirculation of the outdated video is misleading and capable of creating

unnecessary panic, fear, and apprehension among residents.

It urged members of the public to disregard the video and refrain from sharing unverified information capable of undermining public confidence and peace.

The command also warned social media users and content creators against disseminating false, unverified, and alarmist stories capable of causing public disorder.

It added that individuals found deliberately spreading misinformation or fake news would be investigated and

prosecuted in accordance with extant laws.

Meanwhile, the Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Tijani Fatai, has directed sustained and enhanced deployment of police personnel and operational assets to identified black spots, strategic locations, and all entry and exit points across the state.

The command said the proactive security measures are being carried out in close collaboration with other security and safety agencies to ensure the continued safety and security of residents and visitors in Lagos State.

Lagos urges council chairmen to boost participation in sanitation exercise

By Opeyemi Babalola

The Lagos State Government has called on the 57 council chairmen across the state to mobilise residents within their respective jurisdictions for the monthly environmental sanitation exercise, noting that their active involvement is crucial to maintaining a cleaner and more environmentally sustainable Lagos.

Speaking while monitoring the sanitation exercise held on Saturday, May 30, at Alimosho Local Council, the Commissioner for the Environment, Tokunbo Wahab, reaffirmed the state government's commitment to promoting environmental cleanliness, stating that dedicating two hours each month to cleaning the environment is a civic

responsibility residents should willingly embrace.

The commissioner, who was accompanied by the First Lady of the state, Dr Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu, alongside other ministry officials, including the Alimosho Local Government Chairman, Akinpelu Ibrahim Johnson, and schoolchildren, commended residents and sanitation workers for cleaning their surroundings despite the low turnout in some areas.

"We recently had a major festival, but today we are cleaning our environment because we have a commitment that every last Saturday of the month is dedicated to environmental sanitation in Lagos," he stated.

He further urged local authorities to intensify engagement with residents to

strengthen participation in sanitation activities and environmental awareness campaigns.

Wahab, who was joined by a member of the Lagos State House of Assembly representing Alimosho, Lukmon Orellope; the Special Adviser on Environment, Kunle Rotimi-Akodu; and permanent secretaries, including the Permanent Secretary, Drainage Services, Olakunle Adegbite, and Dr Idowu Oyetola, said the state was making progress with the exercise despite its suspension for almost 10 years.

He assured residents that the plan to reward the cleanest local council was still on course, adding that performance figures were being collated and the results would soon be released.



Tokunbo Wahab (left) and state official during the Monthly Environmental Sanitation exercise at Alimosho Local Council...on Saturday.

LSSTF, police conduct aerial surveillance across Lagos

By Bertram Nwannekanma

The Lagos State Security Trust Fund (LSSTF), in collaboration with the Lagos State Police Command and the Nigeria Police Air Wing, has conducted an extensive aerial surveillance patrol across the length and breadth of Lagos State as part of efforts to sustain Lagos State's status as a safe and secure state.

The operation, led by the Executive Secretary/CEO of LSSTF, Dr Ayodele Ogunsan, also had senior police officers, including the Commissioner of Police, Lagos State Command, Fatai Tijani; ACP Nsikan Boniface, Pilot, Nigeria Police Air Wing Department, Force Headquarters; CSP Dazi Manga, Pilot and Admin Officer; RRS Lagos; DSP Saka Ayodele; and the LSSTF Director of Administration, Mr Degbola Lewis.

It covered key zones of Lagos across both the mainland and island corridors, providing real-time situational awareness and supporting intelligence-led security operations.

Speaking, Ogunsan described the initiative as a proactive measure aimed at enhancing public safety, strengthening rapid-response capabilities, and providing additional support for security agencies tasked with protecting lives and property across Lagos.

According to him, the aerial patrols are not a one-time exercise but will become a regular feature of the state's security architecture. He said: "We started this mission a few months ago, and we stated very clearly that we are not here to frighten anyone but to encourage Lagosians to be fully ready to support us in this move to keep Lagos safe."

Navy commissions housing, golf clubhouse projects in Lagos

By Eniola Daniel

The Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS), Vice Admiral Idi Abbas, at the weekend commissioned three key projects in Navy Town, Amuwo-Odofin, Lagos, as part of activities marking the 70th anniversary of the Nigerian Navy.

The projects include a 48-unit one-bedroom apartment block, the Dolphin Golf Club House, and a 16-unit two-bedroom accommodation facility

located in the Senior Ratings' Quarters.

The 48-unit one-bedroom accommodation was designed to address accommodation challenges facing the Nigerian Navy, particularly in Lagos. The facility is expected to provide a safe, conducive, and comfortable living environment that will enhance the morale, productivity, and operational effectiveness of personnel.

The project was awarded

Cleric extends monthly support to 300 elderly persons in Anambra

From Osiberoha Osibe, Awka

About 300 men and women aged 75 years and above from Nkwelle-Ezunaka community in Oyi Local Council of Anambra State have benefited from monthly support payments provided by a philanthropist and Spiritual Director of the Holy Ghost Adoration Ministry, Uke, in Idemili South Local Council, Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Obimma.

During this month's distribution, each beneficiary received a monetary allowance and a bag of rice.

Apart from supporting elderly persons, the Parish Priest of Blessed Iwene Tansi Church, Umudioka, Dunukofia Local Council, said he had lost count of beneficiaries of his various financial and material assistance programmes, including support extended to fellow clergymen.

The cleric also disclosed plans to embark on charity visits to correctional centres and homes for the less privileged in the coming days to support inmates and other vulnerable persons.

Speaking during the distribution exercise, Obimma said his charitable activities were driven by his passion for love, giving, and sharing to alleviate suffering in society.

The cleric, popularly known as Dada Ebube Munso, said he had supported the wellbeing of needy persons for many years and pledged to continue providing financial assistance and relief materials to the poor and vulnerable for the rest of his life.

"If you want to reach old age like the beneficiaries, you should respect them."



The District Governor, Rotary International District 9111, Prince Henry Akinyele (left); Rotary International President-Elect, Yinka Babalola; Head of Mission, Taipei Trade Office in Lagos, Nigeria, Andy Yih-Ping Liu and Rotary International District 9112 Governor, Lanre Adedoyin during a courtesy visit to Taipei Mission office in Lagos, ahead of the forthcoming 2026 Rotary International Convention scheduled from June 13 to 17 in Taipei, Taiwan.

F E A T U R E

“Why court is in favour of DSS operatives in defamatory suit against SERAP”

By Collins Olotor

MANY erroneously hold the view that public institutions and their officials are to be criticised and accountability demanded from them at will, while they are only required to provide explanations and must not complain, even where wrongly portrayed and disparaged.

As a result, it is gradually becoming a pattern that individuals and groups, claiming the exercise of their democratic and constitutional rights, impugn the integrity of public institutions and their officials in the name of criticism, with scant regard for facts and accuracy.

These worrying trends were however, recently addressed in a judgment handed down by a High Court of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in a suit, marked: CV/4547/2024, filed by two officials of the Department of State Services (DSS), who claimed to have been defamed in publications made by a group, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP).

In the judgment delivered on May 5, 2026 by Justice Yusuf Halilu, the court held emphatically that the rights guaranteed by the country's Constitution, exercisable in a democracy, under which citizens and groups could criticise and demand accountability from state's institutions and officials, do not translate to the freedom to be reckless and lawless.

*Facts of the case

The claimants - Sarah John and Gabriel Ogunleye - claimed to have visited SERAP's Abuja office on September 9, 2024 in the course of a routine official assignment, but that shortly after their visit, the group made a false post on its X (twitter) handle, claiming among others that DSS officials were unlawfully occupying its Abuja office.

They stated that the tweet was not only retweeted 4000 times by other X (twitter) users, including media organisations, it was liked by over 7000 others, making it one of the most engaged tweets ever posted by SERAP on its X account.

The claimants also stated that the group followed up with a subsequent publication on its website, which was republished by both online and conventional media houses, falsely claiming the DSS officials invaded its Abuja office and subjected its staff to intimidation, harassment and attack.

They claimed that the two false publications did not only expose their organisation to undue public condemnation and criticism, it portrayed them (claimants) as being lawless, incompetent and unprofessional.

*Effects of the publications

John and Ogunleye stated that, as a result of the false publications by SERAP, they were subjected to the internal disciplinary mechanisms of their organisation, leading to their suspension from duties pending the outcome of the investigation that was subsequently conducted.

The claimants described the publications as libelous on the grounds that they neither invade nor raid SERAP's Abuja office, adding that they also did not intimidate, harass or interrogate any member of its staff as the group claimed.

*SERAP's defence

The defendants - SERAP and its Deputy Director, Kolawole Oluwadare - denied the claimants' allegations and stood by the content of their publications. SERAP and Oluwadare stated that they were



Adeola Oluwatosin Ajayi, Director-General, Department of Security Service (DSS)

justified to have made the publications, insisting among others, that the claimants invaded and raided SERAP's Abuja office and subjected its staff to harassment and intimidation.

They queried the competence of the suit on, among others grounds, that the claimants could not claim to have been defamed because they were not identified by names in the publications, which the defendants claimed, were directed at the DSS as an organisation.

*Court's findings

In the judgment, the court found among others, that the claimants clearly established, through credible evidence, the six coterminous ingredients required to be proved to succeed in a defamation suit.

It also found that, contrary to the defendants' claim that the claimants were not identified in the publications, the description of the claimants as "a tall, large, dark-skinned woman" and "a slim, dark-skinned man" constituted sufficient identification.

The court held that "it is not the law that a claimant, as in this case, needs to be named in a publication before an action for defamation can be maintained. Defamatory words could refer to a person by description, implication, context and or circumstance.

"What is instructive is whether reasonable persons, who are seised of the relevant facts would understand the publication and link same to the claimant.

"This is innuendo, which is an indirect, often suggestive hint, insinuation, or allusion, typically intended to be derogatory, mean-spirited. It uses seemingly polite or innocent words to convey a hidden, negative, or risqué meaning."

It equally found that the claimants established the publication of the libelous materials through their second witness, who said he read the said publications and knew they referred to the claimants from the way they were described.

The court held that the defendants' argument that the claimants were not mentioned in the publications was of moment, because they (the defendants) did not deny making the publications, in which the body features of the claimants were described.

It stated that the argument of the defendants that the names of the claimants were not mentioned in the publication "is neither here nor there, as defendants seem to be blowing hot and cold at the same time.

"I say this with every sense of modesty and responsibility, because defendants have not denied the fact that they are responsible for the publication of Exhibits "2" and "3" which specifically mentioned DSS and the description of the personnel that allegedly invaded SERAP's office in Abuja."

The court said it took judicial notice of the features of the claimants when they appeared before the court, in line with the provision of Section 122 of Evidence Act 2011.

It said SERAP's description of the visiting DSS officials as "a tall, large, dark-skinned and a slim dark-skinned woman and man" in its publications, suits the claimants me," following which it held "that the claimants have been able to prove that the said publication referred to them."

The court also found that the resultant subjection of the claimants to their employer's disciplinary mechanisms, which led to their suspension as a result of the publications, constituted injuries to them in many forms, including to their profession.

It equally found that the defendants' allegations that the claimants invaded their office, subjected staff to intimidation and harassment were not supported by the evidence they led. The court noted that the first witness of the defendants, who interacted with the claimants, admitted that their conversation was casual, while the second witness (Oluwadare) admitted that they (the claimants) did not force their way into SERAP's Abuja office and did not brandish any weapon to intimidate anyone.

It added: "Falsity of the defamatory words is the last ingredient to establish the tort of defamation." He found that the defendants failed to support their claims with any evidence as required.

The court said: "It is the law that once claimants, as in this case, have established the existence of written publication, which referred to them, with defamatory meaning, which is false, the evidential burden of proof shifts to the defendants to prove that what they published is true by way of justification.

"The defendants, who relied on justification as

their line of defence, have a responsibility to prove the truth of the words contained in Exhibits "2" and "3" in their ordinary and natural meaning. This, I must say, the defendants have woefully failed to do from their evidence before the court.

"Defendants' defence of justification of the published inciting defamatory words has been left in limbo to wither away as judicial gate-crasher that has, by settled case laws, been consigned to a forlorn heap of legal fossil.

"It is the law, as it relates to libel, that once it is published against a named person and without any justification, the cause of action is complete. The law cannot command impossibility. The essence of justice is to do what is true and correct. I say no more," the court said.

*The verdict

The court upheld that case of the claimants, as made out by their lawyer, Oluwagbemileke Kehinde of the law firm of Kehinde and Partners LP and held that John and Ogunleye successfully proved their case.

It further held that the defendants were reckless in their handling of the situation, particularly the publications, which were found to be replete with false claims.

As a word of caution for the defendants, the court said: "It is therefore most necessary for care and diligence to be SERAP's watchwords," adding that, in the exercise of their rights, SERAP and its staff must always remember that others also have rights that must be protected. The court awarded N100 million damages against the defendants; ordered them to tender an apology to the claimants through SERAP's website and X handle, two national daily newspapers and two television stations "for falsely accusing the claimants of unlawfully invading the first defendant's (SERAP's) office and interrogating the first defendant's staff." It also ordered the defendants to pay interest on the N100m at the rate of 10 percent per annum from the date of the delivery of the judgment until the judgment sum is paid. The court equally ordered the defendants to pay to the claimants, N1m as costs of the action.

*Implications of the judgment

Law experts have continued to commend the erudition displayed by the court in the determination of the case. They have also commented on the decision's implication for the activities of individuals and groups, who have now found a profession in the criticism of state's institutions and their officials.

Among such law experts is Peter Mrakpor (SAN), who noted that the decision carries broader institutional implications for public discourse involving security agencies in the country.

According to him, the judgment affirms the principle that security personnel deserve equal protection under the law and cannot be subjected to reputational attacks simply because they serve in state's institutions.

He added that the decision "underscores the need for responsible advocacy and fact-based reporting, especially in matters involving national security institutions.

"It reinforces judicial willingness to protect public officers from

defamatory narratives, where such narratives are unsupported by evidence. It demonstrates that courts will carefully scrutinize publications, capable of creating public hostility against identifiable officers of state institutions," Mrakpor (SAN) said.

•Olotor is a public affairs analyst.

PRESIDENT TINUBU'S THREE YEARS OF OUTSTANDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT THROUGH NASENI



His Excellency, President **Bola Ahmed Tinubu**, GCFR, President, Federal Republic of Nigeria

Signed: **Khaili Suleiman Halli**
The Executive Vice Chairman/CEO
National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI)



NASENI Tractors at the Launch of Asset Recovery Programme, Borno State.



NASENI Zedon X pro Laptop.



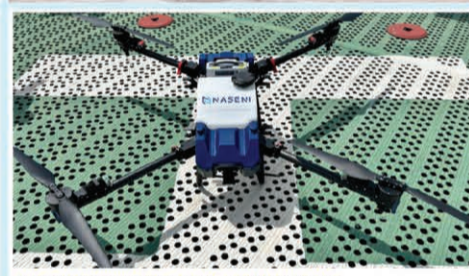
NASENI - Portland Gas CNG Conversion and Training Centre at, Kubwa Abuja



NASENI Solar Irrigation Pump



NASENI Electric Vehicles (EV)



NASENI Drones for Pesticides and Herbicides



3D rendition of the NASENI Renewable Energy Industrial Park, Gora, Nasarawa State



NASENI Keke

On May 29, 2023, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu assumed office as the 16th President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria with a bold vision encapsulated in the Renewed Hope Agenda, a comprehensive policy framework built around eight Presidential Priority Areas designed to reposition the nation's economy, strengthen institutions, and improve the lives of Nigerians.

These priority areas were further refined during the high-level cabinet retreat held from November 1–3, 2023, bringing together Ministers, Presidential Aides, Permanent Secretaries, and top government officials to align Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) toward measurable national outcomes. The priorities include economic reform, national security, food security, energy sustainability, infrastructure development, industrialisation, innovation, education, healthcare, social investment, and governance reform.

Three years into the Tinubu administration, Nigeria is witnessing a deliberate transition from policy conception to strategic implementation. The administration has pursued bold structural reforms aimed at repositioning the economy for long-term resilience and inclusive growth. At the centre of this national transformation is the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI), an institution playing a pivotal role in translating the Renewed Hope Agenda into tangible socio-economic outcomes through science, technology, engineering, and innovation.

As Chairman of the NASENI Governing Board himself, President Tinubu provides direct strategic oversight to the Agency, ensuring that NASENI's programmes remain aligned with national development priorities. This unique relationship between presidential leadership and institutional execution has strengthened policy coordination and accelerated the Agency's transformation into a key driver of Nigeria's industrialisation agenda.

Under the leadership of the Executive Vice Chairman/CEO, Mr. Khaili Suleiman Halli, NASENI has embraced a "New NASENI" vision anchored on the principles of Creation, Collaboration, and Commercialization — popularly known as the 3Cs. Through this approach, the Agency has shifted from a purely research-focused institution to one committed to commercialising innovations, localising technologies, promoting manufacturing, and building an economy driven by production rather than consumption.

One of the most visible areas of NASENI's impact over the past three years is renewable energy and energy security. In alignment with President Tinubu's vision to unlock Nigeria's energy potential for sustainable development, NASENI established NASENI Solar Energy Limited (NSEL) in Karshi, Abuja, to deepen local manufacturing of renewable energy technologies. Complementing this effort is the Renewable Energy Industrial Park in Gora, Nasarawa State — a landmark project designed as a multi-energy industrial hub on over 40 hectares of land.

The industrial park is expected to generate approximately 3,000 direct jobs and over 50,000 indirect jobs across the renewable energy value chain. Through local production of solar panels, mounting systems, wind technologies, and biomass solutions, NASENI is significantly reducing dependence on imported energy products, conserving foreign exchange, and expanding access to clean energy solutions for millions of Nigerians,

particularly in underserved communities.

Further reinforcing Nigeria's energy transition strategy is NASENI's establishment of two Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Reverse Engineering Centres in Abuja. Beyond converting petrol-powered vehicles to CNG systems, these centres serve as innovation and training hubs where Nigerian youths and technicians acquire practical skills in alternative energy technologies. This initiative reflects NASENI's commitment to combining technology deployment with capacity building while supporting the Federal Government's clean energy objectives.

In the area of industrialisation and manufacturing, NASENI has continued to champion local content development and technology domestication. Through strategic investments in engineering infrastructure and manufacturing ecosystems, the Agency is helping to reduce Nigeria's reliance on imported products while boosting indigenous production capacity. This directly supports the Renewed Hope Agenda's emphasis on economic diversification and industrial growth.

NASENI's interventions are equally transforming Nigeria's innovation ecosystem and empowering young people across the country. Through programmes such as HatchBox/STEM, InnovateNaija, DELT-Her (Developing Engineering Leaders Through Her), Delta-2 Programme, SheFly, and FutureMakers, the Agency is creating opportunities for young innovators, startups, engineers, and entrepreneurs to develop practical solutions to national challenges.

These initiatives provide mentorship, funding opportunities, technical support, and commercialisation pathways for innovators, particularly women and youths in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The result is the emergence of a new generation of Nigerian innovators capable of competing in the global knowledge economy while contributing meaningfully to national development.

Agriculture is another sector where NASENI's contributions under President Tinubu's administration have become increasingly significant. Recognising the importance of food security to national stability and economic growth, the Agency has deployed innovative agricultural technologies aimed at boosting productivity and improving farmers' livelihoods.

Through the IrrigateNaija Project, NASENI is deploying affordable solar-powered irrigation systems that enable all-season farming, reduce dependence on rainfall, and improve rural incomes. The project is helping farmers increase crop yields while supporting the Federal Government's broader agricultural transformation agenda.

Similarly, the NASENI-AMEDI Lafia climate-resilient hydroponic farming initiative has recorded remarkable success, producing more than 17 tonnes of fresh produce within its first year of operation. This modern farming model demonstrates the Agency's commitment to climate-smart agriculture, sustainable food production, and technology-driven farming systems.

In deepening agricultural mechanisation and innovation, NASENI is also establishing Agricultural Machinery and Equipment Development Institutes (AMEDI) across the six geopolitical zones, alongside Agricultural Incubation Centres in tertiary institutions. These centres are expected to drive research, mechanisation, knowledge transfer, and capacity development within the agricultural sector.

Further strengthening food security efforts is NASENI's initiative to develop Africa's first coal-based fertilizer and liquid fertilizer plants. These projects are strategically positioned to reduce Nigeria's dependence on imported fertilizers, improve farmers' access to affordable agricultural inputs, and support increased food production nationwide.

In healthcare, NASENI has also demonstrated its commitment to national self-reliance through the establishment of the NASENI-Troment Biotechnologies Rapid Diagnostic Kits Production Plant in Abuja. With an annual production capacity of up to 600 million diagnostic kits, the facility is expected to reduce Nigeria's dependence on imported medical consumables by as much as 80 percent.

This intervention not only strengthens Nigeria's healthcare system and emergency preparedness but also opens new opportunities in biomedical manufacturing, research, and employment generation. It reflects NASENI's growing role in supporting critical sectors through local innovation and industrial capacity development.

The Agency's expanding footprint in clean technology and transportation is equally noteworthy. NASENI's production of electric tricycles and electric vehicles demonstrates a forward-looking approach to sustainable mobility and environmental protection. In addition, NASENI Powerstoves are providing cleaner, safer, and more efficient cooking solutions for households while contributing to efforts aimed at reducing carbon emissions and deforestation. Equally important is NASENI's increasing focus on commercialisation, strategic partnerships, and investment mobilisation. By collaborating with local and international stakeholders, the Agency continues to attract technical expertise, investment opportunities, and market access that are critical to scaling innovation and accelerating industrial development.

This collaborative approach aligns strongly with President Tinubu's broader governance philosophy, which prioritises institutional revitalisation, strategic partnerships, and sustainable development over bureaucratic expansion. Rather than creating new structures, the administration has focused on strengthening existing institutions and empowering them to deliver measurable results for Nigerians.

Indeed, NASENI's growing visibility, expanding project portfolio, and measurable socio-economic impacts stand as strong evidence of the effectiveness of this governance model. Across renewable energy, agriculture, healthcare, manufacturing, transportation, youth empowerment, and innovation, the Agency has emerged as one of the clearest examples of how strategic leadership and institutional reform can drive national development. As President Bola Ahmed Tinubu marks three years in office, NASENI proudly celebrates his visionary leadership, unwavering commitment to industrialisation, and dedication to building a technologically advanced and economically self-reliant Nigeria. The Agency remains committed to supporting the Renewed Hope Agenda through innovation, engineering excellence, strategic partnerships, and transformative projects that continue to improve the lives of Nigerians.

The progress recorded so far demonstrates that with purposeful leadership, institutional synergy, and sustained investment in science and technology, Nigeria is steadily advancing toward a future defined by productivity, industrial growth, and shared prosperity.

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

Editorial

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AfDB's warning on rising debt risks in Nigeria, others

THE latest report by the African Development Bank (AfDB) on rising debt levels across African countries is a clear warning to leaders across the continent to live within their means or face severe economic consequences. Titled "Africa's Macroeconomic Performance and Outlook," the report warned that Africa's debt burden remains significantly elevated and is posing a growing threat to economic stability and long-term development.

It indicates that the African debt situation has remained unchanged despite modest fiscal consolidation efforts by the various countries. It has become quite alarming to the extent that, unless something drastic is done, the fate of African economies in stabilising their economies and enhancing economic growth is greatly challenged.

The report, which indicated that the economic outlook of the continent faces strong headwinds from persistent debt distress and shrinking fiscal space, went further to identify seven African countries in debt distress and 13 of the countries at high risk, which include large economies such as Nigeria, Ghana, and South Africa. These issues are critical as borrowing costs remain high, given that sovereign spreads exceed pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels and that rising refinancing requirements may force governments into pro-cyclical austerity or

costly short-term borrowing.

While these issues raised by the AfDB are generally applicable across the multiplicity of African economies, their particulars differ. As the report has identified, countries such as Nigeria and South Africa are under the "high risk" category. Therefore, a country such as Nigeria needs to watch it and keep its house in order, in order to avert the looming danger in the unbridled borrowing that has been taking place under the Bola Ahmed Tinubu administration.

Nigeria, under Tinubu, is currently on a borrowing spree, an undesirable trend that should be arrested. Since the current administration came into power in May 2023, its mantra, apart from its well-known removal of fuel subsidy and the harmonisation of rates in the foreign exchange market, seems to be that of borrowing from any available source. Sadly, explanations, if any, regarding the use of the loans are scanty and inadequate.

Moreover, the National Assembly, whose duty it is to vet the loan requests and subject them to thorough public-interest scrutiny, has consistently failed to discharge this onerous duty, preferring to almost automatically approve the requests by the executive. This has invariably left many Nigerians worried as to whether the government is actually on a rescue mission or is unwittingly or otherwise mortgaging the financial future of the country. The level of borrowing in the current administration

has far surpassed that of the late Muhammadu Buhari administration. In all these, it is obvious that the interests of the next generation are not being taken into consideration. People have wondered whether the authorities in Abuja are concerned about the repayment of these loans.

Most of the developing economies, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, have, over the years, been reported to have resorted to fiscal stimulus to sustain macroeconomic stability as well as economic growth. However, the prolonged state of uncertainty and the accumulation of deficits and public debt have limited the continuing usefulness of these fiscal stimuli. This has been part of the narrative for the accumulation of public debt by many African countries in recent times.

In Nigeria, this is a simple representation of the situation of the growing debt burden, particularly in the past three years, since the Bola Ahmed Tinubu administration came into power. Nigeria's total debt has increased from about N12.5 trillion in 2015 when Goodluck Ebele Jonathan left office to about N87 trillion in 2023 when the late Muhammadu Buhari left office and Tinubu came on board, to about N159.28 trillion as at December 2025, according to the country's Debt Management Office (DMO). These debts are made up of N74.4 trillion for external debts and N84.8 trillion for domestic debts. Under Tinubu, the 2026 budget debt service is estimated at N15.81 trillion, with the borrowing plan raised to N29.2 trillion. These are accentuated by a massive spending plan, which includes the servicing of the debts.

In view of these, there is an urgent need for the government to have a functional debt management strategy. Nigeria needs to revamp its current debt management strat-

egy. One way of assisting to ameliorate the growing debt burden is to maximise the benefits of the currently increasing price of crude oil in the international market. It is important to build a strong financial buffer through enhanced savings of the revenue implications of the difference in the crude oil price pre and during the current Iran and USA/Israel conflict.

It is disturbing that the government has continued to procure more liabilities despite reservations expressed by different stakeholders, as well as the equitable spread of the projects, possibilities of a seamless repayment plan and viability of some of the projects for which the loans are being sought. The usual response by the authorities is that, following the debt-to-gross domestic product (GDP) ratio criteria, the country is currently under-borrowed. It, however, fails to inform the public that the debt service-to-revenue ratio is not favourable to the growth of the economy.

The borrowing experience of other countries may not follow the same pattern as that of Nigeria's, but the core issue, as indicated in the AfDB report, is that there is "fire on the mountain" for most African economies in the area of excessive and unbridled borrowing. These anomalies could derail the current growth momentum of a number of these countries, impair long-term development, and thus increase the risk of social and political fragility, as clearly stated in the AfDB report. Fiscal sustainability has been a recurring challenge for African countries and the leadership on the continent needs to know that they are endangering the economic progress of their economies if these uncontrolled borrowings continue unabated.

LETTER

Ogun 2027: Adeola's grassroots machinery, towering goodwill

SIR: The dust has settled on the All Progressives Congress (APC) primaries in Ogun State, ending months of speculation, anxiety, and back-room negotiations that gripped the party's structures from the wards to the state secretariat. When the process was concluded, Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola, popularly known as Yayi, emerged as the party's flag bearer for the 2027 governorship election.

The exercise, conducted across the 20 local government areas, attracted unprecedented participation and was widely adjudged peaceful, orderly, and devoid of violence or disruptions. Speaking after participating in the governorship primary at Ward 3, Iperu 1, in Ikenne Local Government Area, the Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun said the outcome formalises what party stakeholders had signalled earlier: broad acceptance of Adeola as consensus candidate.

"In Ogun State, we have done things differently. We ensured extensive consultations with the leadership of our party across the state constituencies and local governments to build consensus around candidates, even while acknowledging that we have many brilliant and eminent party members capable of occupying those positions," Abiodun said.

He disclosed that more than 700 aspirants had initially indicated interest in contesting for various elective positions under the APC ahead of 2027. The party adopted extensive consultations and consensus-building mechanisms to ensure the emergence of credible candidates while sustaining unity within its ranks. "So, we undertook a rigorous exercise to screen over 700 aspirants and engage with their leaders. The idea was to identify the best candidates for each election. Having done that, we reached out to those who were not eventually selected and ensured they were accommodated politically," the governor added.

Unlike other states where similar arrangements collapsed under the weight of rival ambitions and accusations of imposition, Adeola's support base held across divides. The result gives the APC a rare sense of unity heading into 2027, at a time when internal fractures have weakened opposition and ruling parties alike in other parts of the country. That unity is not accidental. It reflects a deliberate process of negotiation and a recognition that the party's best chance rests on presenting a candidate with statewide credibility.

Adeola didn't emerge out of nowhere. His formidable grassroots machinery and towering goodwill cleared the

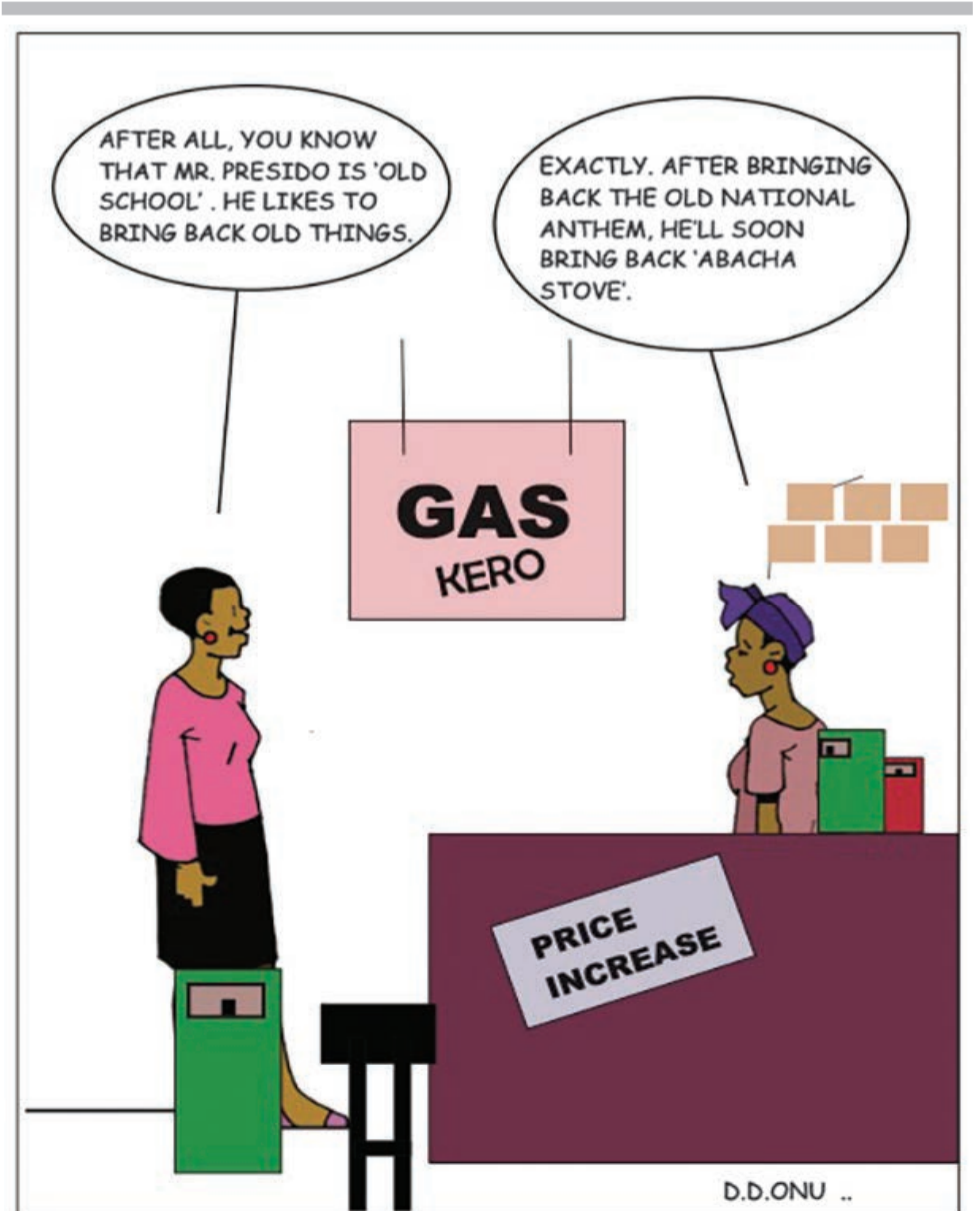
hurdles long before the first ballot was cast. For more than a decade, he has built a reputation as one of the most accessible federal legislators from Ogun State, leveraging constituency projects, empowerment programmes, and consistent engagement with local communities to maintain visibility.

His interventions in education, health, and small business support have made his name familiar far beyond his senatorial district. From classrooms renovated in Yewa to medical outreaches in Ijebu and skill acquisition programmes in Egba land, the footprint of his constituency outreach is visible across the state. Ward leaders, youth groups, market associations, artisans and traditional rulers cited his presence on the ground as a key reason for backing him early.

While consensus in some states is seen as imposition, his candidacy did the opposite, sparking widespread excitement and raising expectations of fresh ideas to consolidate the socioeconomic foundation laid by Governor Abiodun's administration. Party members who initially pushed for an open contest said they shifted support once they weighed Adeola's statewide acceptance against the risks of a divisive primary.

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

Olanrewaju Fatunmbi wrote from Okeagbade in Imeko-Afon Local Council of Ogun State.



Opinion

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Anatomy of reform (9): Making banking sector's reforms work for everyone

By **Olusola Aliu, Olajumoke Familoni, and Oyewole Sarumi**

In the anatomy of an economy, the banking sector functions as the cardiovascular system. It pumps the lifeblood, capital, to the vital organs of industry, infrastructure, and trade. If the heart is weak, no amount of fiscal exercise (Week 1) or monetary adjustment (Week 2) can sustain the body.

The ninth and final pillar of the "Tinubunomics" reform architecture, The Financial Fortress, addresses this critical infrastructure. The directive by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) requiring commercial banks to significantly increase their capital bases is not merely a regulatory update; it is a structural reset.

THIS article interrogates the mechanics of this recapitalisation. Is the push for "Mega Banks" a necessary evolution for a \$1 trillion economy, or is it a defensive reaction to the devaluation of the Naira? Does bigger capital guarantee better lending to the real sector, or does it merely create "Too Big to Fail" institutions that engage in lazy banking?

The pre-condition: The devaluation erosion
To understand the necessity of this pillar, one must look at the balance sheets of Nigerian banks through the lens of the 2023 devaluation. Before the unification of the exchange rate, a Tier-1 bank with a capital base of N500 billion was capitalised at roughly \$1.1 billion (at N460/\$). Post-devaluation, that same N500 billion capital base shrank to roughly \$350 million (at N1,400/\$).

In global terms, Nigerian banks shrank overnight. While they reported record Naira profits due to FX revaluation gains, their capacity to underwrite dollar-denominated risks evaporated.

This "Capital Erosion" created a mismatch. The Nigerian economy has dollar-sized needs (refineries, rail lines, power plants), but its banks have naira-sized capacities. A bank with a \$350 million capital base cannot finance a \$10 billion petrochemical plant. It would hit its Single Obligor Limit (the regulatory cap on how much a bank can lend to one borrower) almost immediately. Thus, the recapitalisation is not an ambition; it is a correction. It is an attempt to restore the real value of banking capital to its pre-2023 levels.

The logic of scale: Financing the \$1 trillion ambition

The administration's explicit goal is to grow Nigeria into a \$1 trillion economy by 2030. Standard development economics suggests that banking assets should be at least 50-70% of

GDP to support such growth. Currently, Nigeria's banking penetration is significantly lower.

The "Tinubunomics" logic posits that you cannot build a G20 economy with microfinance-sized commercial banks. You need "Financial Fortresses", institutions with the balance sheet stamina to fund long-gestation infrastructure projects without needing to syndicate every loan with foreign banks.

By mandating higher capital thresholds (e.g., N500 billion for international authorisation), the CBN is forcing a consolidation. The theory is that fewer, stronger banks are better than many weak ones. This echoes the 2004/2005 consolidation era, which reduced 89 banks to 25. The difference today is the focus: 2005 was about *safety* (stopping bank failures); 2024 is about *capacity* (funding industrialisation).

The mechanism: Equity, not accounting
Crucially, the CBN's directive excluded "Retained Earnings" from the calculation of the new capital. Banks must raise *fresh* equity. This is a profound regulatory choice. It forces banks to go out and find new money—either from the Nigerian stock market or, more likely, from foreign investors.

The Mechanism: Rights issues, public offers, and private placements.
The Goal: To attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the financial sector. If a bank raises \$500 million from international equity partners, that is \$500 million of *supply* entering the FX market (Week 2), helping to stabilise the Naira.

Thus, the banking recapitalisation is also a covert FX stabilisation strategy. It uses the banking sector as a magnet for foreign capital.

Critique: The oligopoly risk
However, our forensic inquiry highlights a significant structural risk: Concentration and Oligopoly. Consolidation inevitably leads to the survival of the fittest. The Tier-1 banks (FUGAZ: FBN, UBA, GTCO, Access, Zenith) have the brand power to raise this capital easily. Smaller Tier-2 and Tier-3 banks do not.

The likely outcome is a wave of Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A), resulting in a banking sector dominated by 4 or 5 behemoths. While "Mega Banks" are safer, they are also dangerous. Systemic Risk: A bank that is "Too Big to Fail" often becomes "Too Big to Jail." If one of these super-banks falters, the fiscal cost of a bailout would bankrupt the state.

SME Exclusion: Large banks prefer large transactions. It costs the same administrative effort

to process a \$10 million loan as a \$10,000 loan, but the profit is vastly different. An oligopolistic banking sector may ignore the SME sector entirely, focusing only on blue-chip corporates and government debt. We took notice of the structural levels for this recapitalisation based on international, regional, national and others.

Critique: The "lazy banking" trap

The second critique is the phenomenon of "Lazy Banking" (or Financialisation). Nigerian banks are currently enjoying a "Golden Era" of profitability, not because they are lending to factories, but because they are trading government securities and profiting from FX volatility. With the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) at record highs (Week 5), a bank can earn 20%+ risk-free by buying Treasury Bills.

Why would a bank lend to a manufacturer (with all the risks of power failure and logistics) when it can earn risk-free yields from the sovereign?

Raising the capital base to N500 billion does not guarantee that this capital will flow to the real sector. Without "Developmental Regulation" (e.g., Loan-to-Deposit Ratios enforcement or sector-specific lending quotas), the new capital may simply be deployed into the bond market. We risk building a "Financial Fortress" that protects the bankers but starves the industrialists.

Critique: Sovereignty and foreign ownership
Finally, there is the question of Ownership Sovereignty.

Given the size of the capital raise required, domestic capital may be insufficient. Banks will turn to foreign private equity and institutional investors.

If a significant portion of the Nigerian banking sector becomes foreign-owned, the "transmission mechanism" of monetary policy changes. A foreign-owned bank may be more risk-averse, quicker to withdraw capital during a downturn, and less aligned with national development goals (such as the "Naira-for-Crude" agenda). The CBN must balance the need for capital with the need for sovereign control over the financial levers.

Lesson: Capital is necessary, but not sufficient

The overarching lesson from Week 9 is that Capital is a fuel, not a destination. A well-capitalised banking sector is a prerequisite for growth, but it does not cause growth. The "Financial Fortress" must be equipped with the right gates to allow capital to flow to the productive sector.

Lesson: Regulation must shift from "Prudential"

(safety) to "Developmental" (direction). The CBN must ensure that the "Mega Banks" do not become "Mega Rentiers."

Strategic implications for business

For the business community, the recapitalisation signals a turbulent 24 months: Cost of Credit: As banks scramble for capital, they will be aggressive in deposit mobilisation, potentially driving up deposit rates. However, lending rates will remain high until the inflation fight is won.

M&A Opportunities: We will see the disappearance of weaker banking brands. Should corporate treasurers assess their counterparty risk: Is your bank a likely acquisition target? The Big Ticket: For large corporates (Dangote, BUA, etc.), the recapitalisation is excellent news. It means domestic banks will soon have the capacity to fund billion-dollar expansion plans without the headache of foreign syndication.

Conclusion: A fortress for whom?

Ultimately, the recapitalisation of the banking sector is the final structural block in the economic edifice of Tinubunomics. It correctly diagnoses that a significantly devalued currency requires a supersized capital base to underwrite meaningful industrial growth. However, a fortress can serve two distinct purposes: it can serve as a base to project power outward, or it can merely protect those inside.

If the regulatory framework allows these newly capitalised mega-banks to retreat into the safety of high-yielding government securities, the "lazy banking" trap, the fortress will serve only to isolate the financial elite from a struggling real sector. The success of this ninth pillar depends entirely on developmental regulation that forces this fresh capital out of the vaults and into the factories and farms.

We have now deconstructed the nine-core economic and institutional pillars of this reform architecture. Yet economic models do not operate in a sterilized vacuum; they are continually subjected to the chaotic gravity of democratic politics.

Next Week: We zoom out from the domestic scene to the global stage. In Week 10, we analyse Comparative Emerging Market Lessons, contrasting Nigeria's trajectory with the historical experiences of Indonesia, Brazil, and India.

Professors Aliu, Familoni, and Sarumi are faculty members and researchers at the ICLED Business School in Lekki, Lagos, specialising in entrepreneurship, macroeconomic policy, political economy, and strategic leadership.

New U.S. Green Card Policy 2026: What Nigerians must know

By **Eddie Onyeka**

JUST when Nigerians thought things couldn't get harder in America, the Trump administration has served another major blow. On May 21, 2026, the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a Policy Memorandum that fundamentally changes how immigration officials are expected to treat Green Card (permanent residence) applications from foreigners already living in the U.S. This new policy comes on top of Presidential Proclamation 10998, which had already severely restricted the issuance of a wide range of U.S. visas to Nigerians. **What the New DHS Policy Memorandum actually says and what it does not.**

It is critical to begin with what this policy is and what it is not. This is not a new law. Section 245 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), which authorises Adjustment of Status, the process by which a foreigner already in the U.S. can apply for a Green Card from within the United States remains fully in operation and is entirely unchanged. Congress has not repealed it. No Executive Order has suspended it.

What the DHS has issued is an internal Policy Memorandum an advisory to officials of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) about how the law should be understood and applied. It does not create new law. It instructs officials on the approach they should take when exercising their existing discretionary powers. Nobody is forbidden from applying for Adjustment of Status within the United States.

Understanding the discretionary nature of adjustment of sta-

tus.

This is, perhaps, the most important thing for any Nigerian in this situation to understand. A grant of Adjustment of Status under Section 245(a) of the INA is discretionary. This means it is not an automatic entitlement. The burden is on the applicant to demonstrate why discretion should be exercised in his or her favour.

In exercising that discretion, the USCIS official is required to consider all relevant factors both positive and negative. These include: Violation of immigration laws; violation of any conditions of non-immigrant status; fraud or misrepresentation in any immigration matter; moral character concerns; family ties in the United States and national interest considerations.

This balancing exercise is not new. It has always been the framework. What the Policy Memorandum does is sharpen and formalise the weight to be given to certain negative factors, particularly for applicants who were never expected to remain in the U.S. long-term. Crucially, the USCIS evaluates each applicant on a case-by-case basis. There is no automatic disqualification. Every case is assessed on its own facts.

The Congressional Expectation: Who was expected to leave?
The Policy Memorandum draws attention to an important statutory and Congressional expectation embedded in U.S. immigration law. Certain categories of migrants particularly those admitted into the United States as non-immigrants (e.g. on student, visitor, or work visas) and those paroled into the U.S., for example on humanitarian grounds were always expected, as a matter of law and policy, to leave the U.S. at the end of the purpose for which they were granted entry.

Under the new policy framework, remaining in the US beyond that purpose—even if the person is currently lawfully present is treated as a contravention of this expectation. It is a factor that will weigh against the applicant in the discretionary assessment. **What "Discretion and Administrative Grace" Means in Practice**

The Policy Memorandum is explicit: while all those who are eligible for immigrant status can apply for Adjustment of Status, it must only be granted as "a matter of discretion and administrative grace."

For applicants who are ordinarily expected to apply for permanent residency from outside the United States that is, those who entered as non-immigrants the bar is now formally higher. Such applicants must: Demonstrate "extraordinary" circumstances to justify why they should be allowed to adjust status from within the U.S. rather than from abroad; and offset any adverse immigration history by a "showing of unusual or even outstanding equities."

This is a high bar. But it is not an impossible one. And it applies to discretion not eligibility.

The Finality of USCIS Decisions

A decision by the USCIS in an Adjustment of Status application is not reviewable and stands as a judgement. This underscores the importance of getting the application right before it is filed and why submitting a poorly prepared application can be fatal to your prospects.

To be continued tomorrow.

Onyeka is a regulated immigration consultant and founding partner, Harvard Consults.

Opinion

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Why digital Ifá and healing gardens belong in modern medicine

By Ojo Ademola

ACROSS the world, intensive care units stand as the pinnacle of technological achievement in medicine. Machines monitor vital signs with extraordinary precision, and clinicians intervene at the edge of life itself. Yet something profoundly human is often absent: the presence of nature, and the deeper wisdom traditions that have long guided how we understand healing.

As healthcare systems confront rising costs, prolonged recovery times and increasing mental distress among patients, it is time to rethink what healing environments should look like. A compelling new direction lies in an unlikely yet deeply coherent convergence: the integration of digitally modelled Odù Ifá knowledge with therapeutic herbal gardens in critical care settings.

This is not a nostalgic return to tradition, but a forward-looking synthesis of artificial intelligence, ecological design and indigenous African epistemology. It challenges the assumption that cutting-edge medicine must remain detached from nature and culture, and instead proposes a model where technology amplifies, rather than replaces, holistic wisdom.

At the heart of this idea is the recognition that Odù Ifá, the 256-part corpus of the Ifá divination system, is not merely spiritual literature but an advanced knowledge architecture. Each Odù encodes patterns of human experience, including health, imbalance, restoration and resilience.

When viewed through a computational lens, these patterns bear a striking resemblance to modern data structures, particularly binary logic systems that underpin digital computing.

In effect, Odù Ifá can be interpreted as an indigenous knowledge graph, one capable of informing algorithmic reasoning. Each Odù can

be digitally represented with attributes such as thematic meaning, associated herbal remedies and contextual guidance. When integrated into an artificial intelligence framework, this structure allows for the development of systems that respond to real-time clinical data with culturally informed, ecologically grounded insights.

To understand the practical implications, one must look at the physical environment of care. Intensive care units are typically enclosed, sterile and dominated by mechanical systems. While necessary for infection control and acute intervention, such environments can heighten patient anxiety, disrupt circadian rhythms and prolong recovery.

Introducing a carefully designed herbal healing garden into or alongside critical care transforms this landscape. Plants such as neem, moringa and basil are not merely decorative; they possess antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory and respiratory-support properties. More importantly, they contribute to a sensory environment that soothes, stabilises and reconnects patients with natural rhythms.

From an Ifá perspective, the proverb that there is no medicine without herbs captures a foundational truth. Healing is not confined to pharmaceutical intervention; it is sustained by the living systems that surround us. In this sense, the garden becomes a therapeutic interface, a living extension of the clinical environment.

What elevates this concept into the digital age is the integration of cyber-physical systems. Sensors embedded within both the ICU and the garden can capture data on patient vital signs, air quality, temperature, humidity and even behavioural indicators such as sleep patterns. This data can then be processed through an AI model informed by encoded Odù Ifá principles.

The result is a dynamic system in which pa-

tient conditions are continuously interpreted through both biomedical parameters and indigenous knowledge frameworks. A patient experiencing inflammation, for example, may trigger associations with Odù that emphasise cooling and balance.

The system could then recommend increased exposure to specific herbal zones, subtle environmental adjustments and complementary clinical considerations for the attending physicians.

Crucially, this approach does not seek to replace evidence-based medicine. Rather, it augments it with an additional layer of intelligence, one that recognises the interconnectedness of body, environment and meaning. It is an attempt to move from a purely reactive model of care to one that is anticipatory, responsive and deeply humane.

There are also broader implications. The incorporation of digitally modelled Ifá knowledge into healthcare challenges long-standing hierarchies that have marginalised indigenous systems as unscientific. On the contrary, when properly structured and analysed, these systems reveal sophisticated approaches to pattern recognition, decision-making and ecological balance.

For the United Kingdom and other advanced healthcare systems, such an approach offers an opportunity to rethink design principles in hospitals, particularly as conversations around wellbeing, sustainability and patient-centred care grow more urgent.

Healing gardens informed by computational intelligence could form part of a new generation of hospital architecture, one that is as attentive to psychological and environmental health as it is to clinical precision.

Moreover, this model resonates with ongoing efforts to integrate artificial intelligence responsibly into healthcare. Rather than treating AI as a purely technical tool, it positions it as a bridge between knowledge tra-

ditions. In doing so, it opens up new forms of interdisciplinary collaboration involving clinicians, technologists, botanists and scholars of indigenous knowledge.

The philosophical foundations of this approach are equally compelling. Within Ifá, illness is often understood as a disruption of balance between the individual and their environment.

Recovery, therefore, requires restoration, not only of biological function but of harmony. The integration of herbal ecosystems into critical care reflects this principle in tangible form, while digital modelling ensures that such interventions are guided by structured knowledge rather than intuition alone.

At a time when healthcare systems are under strain, innovation must extend beyond new machines and pharmaceuticals. It must also encompass how we think about care itself.

A critical care unit that incorporates living plant systems, guided by intelligent algorithms rooted in ancient wisdom, may appear unconventional. Yet it may also be precisely the kind of bold reimagining needed for the future.

The convergence of digital Ifá intelligence and ecological design points towards a more integrated vision of medicine, where technology, nature and culture are not in competition but in conversation. In such a system, healing is not imposed; it is cultivated.

As we look ahead, the question is not whether such models are possible, but whether we are willing to rethink our assumptions about knowledge, healing and innovation. The answer may well determine how humane and effective our healthcare systems become in the decades to come.

Pro. Ademola is the first African Professor of Cybersecurity and Information Technology Management, Global Education Advocate, Chartered Manager.

Bello, Okowa and the crisis of public ethics

By Bode Babatunde

THERE are moments in the progression of a state when legality is inadequate - when the real test is not what the law permits, but what morality demands. Nigeria now stands at such a moment - precisely the kind Chief Awolowo warned against.

Awolowo was clear: leadership is, above all, a question of character. Public office, in his view, is a moral trust - not a reward for political survival. It is against that standard that Nigeria must judge the unfolding spectacle surrounding former Kogi State Governor, Yahaya Bello - and, increasingly, other actors within the political system.

The decision by the All Progressives Congress (APC) to clear Bello to contest for the Senate is not just politically questionable; it is ethically indefensible. It exposes the gulf between Nigeria's anti-corruption rhetoric and its political practice.

The facts are not in dispute. Bello is standing trial over alleged money laundering alongside related proceedings reportedly exceeding 190 billion. These are live cases. Judicial determinations are ongoing. Yet, in the midst of this, his party has endorsed him for legislative office.

This episode reflects a broader distortion in Nigeria's political system. I have argued earlier in this same newspaper that the now familiar pattern of governors exiting office only to populate the Senate is itself unhealthy. It reduces the legislature to a retirement corridor for executive actors. But Bello's case goes further. It does not merely recycle power; it attempts to sanitise controversy - to convert political liability into legislative ambition.

However, Bello is not alone. The case of former Delta State Governor, Ifeanyi Okowa, reinforces the same troubling pattern. Okowa is under investigation over alleged mismanagement and diversion of approximately 1.3 trillion in oil derivation funds, alongside accusations of abuse of office and acquisition of assets linked to public resources. Despite these unresolved allegations, he has emerged as the APC senatorial candidate for Delta North.

Here again, legality has prevailed over propriety. The elevation of individuals under active investigation into legislative authority reflects not isolated lapses, but a systemic erosion of ethical standards in public life.

Awolowo would have found this deeply disturbing. He insisted that those holding public office must be above reproach, not merely within legal bounds. In his philosophy, a leader facing credible suspicion cannot command public trust.

In sane political cultures, the expectation is straightforward: step aside. Allow the law to take its course. Preserve the dignity of the office and the credibility of the system. What we see instead is the opposite - defiance framed as entitlement, resistance reframed as privilege.

There is something fundamentally wrong when individuals answering to allegations of this magnitude can, without hesitation, present themselves as candidates for public trust. This is not normal. It is a symptom of moral erosion, a marker of ethical decay, a reflection of institutional catastrophe, a sign of normative breakdown, and an indicator of systemic dysfunction.

Nigeria's defenders retreat to constitutionalism: presumption of innocence, absence of conviction, legality of candidacy. These arguments are not incorrect - but they are insufficient.

Democracies are not sustained by law alone. They depend on shared ethical boundaries - on a collective understanding that there are lines one does not cross, even when the law permits it. The law sets the minimum standard; public morality imposes a higher obligation. This aligns with Awolowo's principle of the highest standards of integrity in public life.

Other democracies have acted on this principle. In South Korea, former presidents - Park Geun-hye and Lee Myung-bak - were investigated, convicted, and imprisoned for corruption. In Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's conviction once halted his presidential ambitions. In Peru, Alejandro Toledo and Ollanta Humala have faced prosecution and detention, while Pedro Pablo Kuczynski resigned under pressure. In France, Nicolas Sarkozy was convicted and sanctioned for corruption. Across these systems, credible allegations interrupt political ambition. Nigeria, by contrast, allows ambition to prosper by weaponising claims of injustice.

But the greater danger lies not only in the candidacies of Bello and Okowa - it lies in what they symbolise. By approving their bids, along with those of others facing similar clouds of suspicion, the system sends a troubling signal: that allegations, no matter how serious, no longer constitute any meaningful barrier to political advancement.

That signal will not be lost.

It invites imitation. It creates a bandwagon effect. Others with tainted records - those investigated, indicted, or disgraced - will take note. The conclusion will be obvious: if Bello or Okowa can contest, so can we.

Nigeria has already seen this pattern emerge. Figures such as Joshua Dariye and Jolly Nyame, once convicted of corruption, have re-entered public life following pardon. Their return has quietly shifted the boundaries of acceptability. The line between accountability and rehabilitation is becoming dangerously thin.

If this trajectory continues, the consequences will be severe: a political culture in which disgrace is temporary, accountability is negotiable, and public office becomes a refuge rather than a responsibility.

What becomes of the anti-corruption fight in such a system? What signal does it send to those in positions of trust? What lesson does it teach the next generation?

The answer is stark: the state begins to lose its moral authority.

The EFCC will argue - correctly - that it has fulfilled its legal duty by prosecuting these cases. But legality is only one side of the equation. Justice must not only proceed; it must resonate. A prosecution that drags on while the accused seeks higher office sends the opposite message.

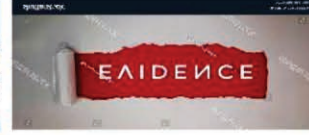
This is not about denying Yahaya Bello or Ifeanyi Okowa their rights. They are entitled to due process. But public life is governed not only by rights - it is defined by responsibility. And one of those responsibilities is knowing when personal ambition must yield to the integrity of the system. This is the line that has been crossed - and the line Awolowo would have insisted upon. Nigeria must now decide whether that line still exists - not in theory, but in practice.

For the question before us is no longer whether they can contest.

It is whether they should. And as Awolowo once warned: "The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership."

If that warning still holds true, then moments like this demand not silence, but clarity. For a nation that excuses everything will ultimately stand for nothing.

Dr Babatunde, a legal practitioner, lectures at London South Bank University, UK.



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COVID-19 lockdown unlocked my business acumen, says TechAvenue Systems Limited CEO, Elliot Ibiyeapuye Owanate

Mr Elliot is, certainly, a young business entrepreneur to meet! This is because both new and experienced entrepreneurs and the general public have one lesson, service or the other to grab from him. He is the CEO of Techavenue Systems Limited, a technology venture and product company focused on building and scaling digital platforms across Africa. His beginning is interesting; his vision is as sharp as it is pointed; and more importantly, his products and services are addressing rising challenges both within and outside Nigeria. All these are revealed in this interview with The Guardian

Tell us how your venture into business began?

My business journey began during the COVID-19 lockdown. I spent considerable time watching entrepreneurial content on YouTube, particularly from Tai Lopez and Manny Khoshbin. Their success in e-commerce and real estate inspired me to seriously consider building something of my own.

Initially, I intended to venture into e-commerce by creating a marketplace for goods. However, in 2023, my perspective shifted. A cousin who visited Lagos struggled to find a reliable and trustworthy hairstylist within her budget. Around the same time, I experienced plumbing issues but lacked access to trusted contacts. These experiences made me reflect on the ease, convenience, and reliability of ordering food online. I began to wonder: why couldn't services be accessed in the same way?

I realised that many skilled individuals existed in the informal sector, yet lacked visibility and consistent demand. This insight led me to create PASKII, a service marketplace designed to connect customers with trusted service providers, making everyday services as accessible as ordering food.

In the early stages, I had no team, no partners, and no external funding. The idea was solid, but resources were scarce, and many around me were not in a position to take such a risk.

Eventually, I received support and investment from my family, which helped bring the vision to life.

This journey also led to the creation of Techavenue Systems Limited, a company that goes beyond building products. We partner with founders who have strong ideas but lack the resources to execute them, helping them to develop and scale their ventures in exchange for equity. In essence, we provide an opportunity for innovation to thrive, turning strong ideas into reality through strategic partnerships.

Exactly when did you start?

I officially started in 2025. There's no better time to take risks than when you're young, with the freedom to experiment, learn, and build without major constraints.

What truly drove me was urgency. The problems I wanted to solve—making services more accessible and reliable—couldn't wait. I strongly believe that if you don't act on an idea, someone else will. That mindset pushed me to move early, take initiative, and start building rather than just thinking about it.

Tell us more about initial challenges and how you overcame them?

One of the biggest challenges I faced as a young entrepreneur was not being taken seriously. I was often addressed as a "student", a label I found dismissive. And people would try to go through my parents rather than deal with me directly, even though I was leading the business. Among peers and older professionals, my age was often perceived before my work. I also found the label "tech bro" inaccurate; I wasn't just chasing trends but rather a businessman focused on solving real problems.

My strategy was to focus on execution. I let the progress, structure, and results speak for themselves. Over time, consistency shifted perception; people began to respond to the value I brought, not my age.

Another challenge was the isolation inherent in being a first-time founder. I didn't always have experienced, neutral people to talk to about the realities of building a company. To overcome this, I actively sought knowledge from other founders, learning from their journeys and building my own support system.

These experiences forced me to grow quickly, strengthening my resilience, decision-making, and leadership.

In all this, can you identify any role model, mentor, or counsellor?

In the beginning, I didn't have direct, one-on-one access to a mentor or counsellor. Instead, I learned by studying founders and entrepreneurs I admired. People like Markus Villig, founder of Bolt, and Manny Khoshbin stood out to me for how they built and scaled their businesses from early stages. I paid close attention to their decisions, mindset, and how they handled challenges. That became a form of indirect mentorship.

Your company, Techavenue Systems Limited, what is it about?

Techavenue Systems Limited is a technology venture and product company focused on building and scaling digital platforms across Africa. We work closely with founders and organisations to transform ideas into structured, scalable technology products. We also develop our own proprietary platforms, such as Paskii, a real-time service marketplace designed to improve trust, transparency, and efficiency in the on-demand economy.

At its core, Techavenue is about building lasting digital infrastructure tailored to the African market.

Tell us more about the vision and mission behind Techavenue Systems Limited?

Techavenue Systems Limited was founded on a simple but deeply personal belief: that in Africa, great ideas should not die due to a lack of funding, technical skills, or access to the right support system.

Our vision is to become a leading technology partner in Africa that empowers early-stage founders and businesses by building, scaling, and managing impactful digital solutions that can grow sustainably across the continent.

Our mission is twofold. First, we work with individuals who have viable and scalable ideas but lack the technical resources to execute them. In such cases, we invest our technical expertise—covering software development, product design, and system management—to build these ideas into functional products. We often operate as long-term partners, sometimes through equity-

ty-based arrangements, because we believe in shared growth.

Second, we also support existing tech businesses by managing and maintaining their digital systems and applications. Many start-ups struggle after launch, not because the idea is weak, but because they lack the technical capacity to scale and sustain it. We step in to handle product management, system stability, and technical operations so founders can focus on growth and strategy.

Ultimately, Techavenue Systems Limited exists to bridge the gap between ideas and execution, and between execution and scale. Our focus is not just on building technology, but on creating sustainable solutions that thrive in Africa's evolving digital economy.

Would you say that your focus on building, managing, and scaling digital products across Africa and the world has not shifted?

No, our focus has remained entirely consistent.

From its inception, Techavenue Systems Limited has always been dedicated to building, managing, and scaling digital products across Africa and beyond. This core vision remains unchanged.

Currently, our primary focus is our own product, Paskii, which embodies everything Techavenue stands for. Paskii is a service marketplace designed to connect individuals who need tasks done with reliable service providers in a structured, trusted, and efficient manner. It reflects our belief in leveraging technology to solve everyday problems while simultaneously creating economic opportunities.

Developing Paskii has also allowed us to fully implement our philosophy: designing the product, developing its underlying systems, and rigorously considering scalability, user trust, and long-term growth within the African market.

Therefore, rather than shifting our focus or diversifying, we are currently intensely product-focused. Techavenue is actively building and scaling Paskii as its flagship product, all while upholding our long-term vision: to create and grow digital solutions that can operate successfully across Africa and eventually globally.

How far have you run with the vision, especially in reaching Africa and the world?

We have only just begun, but the direction is exceptionally clear.

Our vision has always been to build and scale digital products that can operate successfully across Africa and eventually globally. In practical terms, we are currently executing this through Paskii, our first major product.

At present, progress is less about immediate geographic expansion and more about establishing a robust foundation. We are focused on developing a product with sufficient structural integrity, trust, and usability to thrive first in a market like Nigeria. We believe that if it can succeed here, it possesses the potential to scale effectively across the rest of Africa.

What we've achieved so far is the crucial transition from vision to execution: we are no longer merely discussing the idea; we are actively building, testing, and refining a tangible product that embodies that vision.

Regarding reaching Africa and the world, we envision this as a phased journey. The initial phase involves perfecting the model locally with Paskii. Subsequent phases will focus on scaling within similar African markets, ultimately adapting the product for broader global application.

Therefore, while we haven't "arrived" at the full realisation of our vision yet, we are firmly in the execution phase, and Paskii represents the inaugural, tangible expression of that long-term ambition.

What makes you different from other traditional software agencies?

At Techavenue Systems Limited, we differentiate ourselves from traditional software agencies by not operating with a "project delivery" mindset. Instead, we are built around ownership, long-term product thinking, and real operational involvement.

Unlike a traditional agency that builds a product and moves on, we approach everything as a long-term product partnership. In many cases, we align ourselves through structured arrangements or equity partnerships, meaning we are directly invested in the product's success or failure. This direct investment changes how we think, design, and execute from day one.

A good example of this approach is our own product, Paskii. While building Paskii, we are not just acting as developers; we operate as product owners. We handle everything from product strategy, system design, and technical architecture to ongoing iteration and operational decision-making. This gives us real-time experience in building for scale, user trust, and market fit in an African context. We apply this same mindset to everything we do: building systems that are not only functional but also sustainable and scalable.

So, the key difference is that traditional agencies build software, while Techavenue builds and grows

products. We think in terms of ownership, scale, and longevity, not just delivery.

Tell us about your products and services, starting with Paskii?

Paskii is a service marketplace that connects individuals needing tasks done with verified service providers in their local area. The focus is on making it easy, fast, and reliable for users to access trusted help for everyday needs. The platform is designed to facilitate real-world services requiring physical execution and accountability, such as home services, repairs, cleaning, beauty services, skilled trades, and personal services. It also supports structured, task-based services where reliability, timing, and trust are important.

What makes Paskii different is its emphasis on verification, trust, and structured service delivery. Providers are not just listed; they are onboarded into a system designed to ensure accountability, facilitate ratings, and maintain consistent service quality.

At its core, Paskii is about solving very practical problems anchored on helping people get things done in their immediate environment while also creating steady, accessible opportunities for service providers. It is being developed as a reliable, real-world service network designed for African cities, starting in Nigeria and engineered for long-term scalability.

What would you say about feedback from your clients?

We actively collect and rely on customer feedback as a crucial part of building Paskii.

As we are still in an early stage, feedback directly influences how the product is shaped and improved. The main insights we've gathered so far revolve around trust, speed, and simplicity of the user experience, as well as ensuring that service providers have a smooth and fair onboarding process and job allocation.

Overall, feedback is not treated as an afterthought; it is integrated into the development process and continuously guides Paskii's evolution.

Where would you want to see your company in the near and far future?

In the near future, PASKII aims to be a strong, trusted, and widely used service platform in Nigeria, becoming a household name and the first choice for finding reliable service providers. Our focus will be on building a solid foundation of users and service providers who depend on the platform to seamlessly address their everyday needs.

Looking ahead, the goal is to expand PASKII across multiple African countries, adapting to different local markets while maintaining a consistent standard of trust, quality, and accessibility at its core.

For Techavenue Systems Limited, the vision is to be recognised for building and scaling real-world digital solutions that address practical, everyday problems. We aim to consistently transform ideas into scalable systems—not just within Africa, but also in global markets where those solutions are needed.

Do you have any words for your customers?

Paskii is being built for you, for your everyday needs, your convenience, and your peace of mind when getting things done. Every decision we make is guided by real experiences and feedback from people like you, and we do not take that trust lightly.

We are committed to continuously improving the platform so that it becomes more reliable, more efficient, and more valuable with time. Your feedback, patience, and usage play a direct role in shaping what Paskii becomes.

At the end of the day, our goal is simply to make it easier for you to get things done, with trust and confidence. Paskii can be downloaded on both Apple's App Store and Google Play Store.



Elliot Ibiyeapuye Owanate

CRUDE OIL PRICE UPDATE

Brent crude: \$91.12 | WTI crude: \$87.36

FOREX MARKET UPDATE

I&E Window: N1,371.70

Cowry Asset projects 4.03% output growth in Q2

By Helen Oji

COWRY Asset Management Limited has projected Nigeria's real gross domestic product (GDP) to grow at between 3.98 per cent and 4.03 per cent in the second quarter, citing the resilience of key sectors of the economy as support.

The investment firm stated that economic activities are expected to remain moderately strong, supported by continued growth in telecommunications, financial services, agriculture, transportation, water supply and selected manufacturing segments.

However, it warned that rising energy costs, global economic uncertainty, insecurity and weak infrastructure investment remain major risks to economic growth.

The projection comes as the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported that Nigeria's economy expanded by 3.89 per cent year-on-year in the first quarter, higher than 3.13 per cent recorded in the corresponding period of 2025.

According to Cowry Asset Management, the first-quarter performance underscored the resilience of the domestic economy despite global uncertainties and lingering structural constraints.

The firm noted that growth during the period was largely driven by sustained expansion in major non-oil sectors, including telecommunications, agriculture, trade, manufacturing, financial services, construction, real estate and transportation.

A breakdown of the GDP report showed that the agricultural sector grew by 3.15 per cent in real terms, compared with 0.07 per cent in the first quarter of 2025. The improvement was attributed to stronger crop production activities and relative stability in the food supply chain.

Similarly, the industrial sector recorded a growth rate of 3.5 per cent, slightly higher than the 3.42 per cent achieved in the corresponding period of last year, supported by improved manufacturing and construction activities.

The services sector maintained its position as the largest contributor to economic growth, expanding by 4.31 per cent, although marginally lower than the 4.33 per cent recorded a year earlier.

Analysts at Cowry noted that the non-oil sector remained the major driver of economic expansion, growing by 3.94 per cent in the first quarter and contributing 96.08 per cent of total real GDP.

According to the firm, the performance highlighted the increasing role of domestic non-oil activities in driving economic growth, with telecommunications, crop production, trade, cement manufacturing, financial institutions, construction, real estate and road transportation emerging as key contributors.

The report also linked the sector's performance to improved business activity, relative stability in exchange rates, and the gradual impact of ongoing economic reforms.

Within the mining and quarrying sector, growth slowed to 1.89 per cent year-on-year, although the sector's contribution to GDP rose to 4.14 per cent from 3.16 per cent in the preceding quarter.

The oil sector grew by 2.57 per cent, higher than the 1.87 per cent recorded in the first quarter of 2025 but below the 6.79 per cent achieved in the fourth quarter of 2025. Average crude oil production stood at 1.55 million barrels per day, reflecting continued production challenges within the upstream segment.



Stanbic IBTC Holdings Board member, Babs Omotowa (left); Independent Non-Executive Director, Kunle Adedeji; Executive Director, Chuma Nwokocha and Chief Executive, Sola David-Borha, during the company's 14th yearly general meeting in Lagos.

Extension on table as insurers miss May capital verification deadline

By Bankole Orimisan

THE National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) may have extended the deadline for the ongoing capital verification exercise following the expiration of the May 31 deadline and the large volume of applications awaiting regulatory review.

However, as of press time, no official communication was issued on the regulatory requirement.

A source close to the commission told *The Guardian* that more than 25 insurance operators have submitted applications for capital verification out of the industry's 58 licensed insurers, prompting speculation that additional time may be granted to enable NAICOM and four auditors engaged for the purpose to conclude their assessment process and allow affected firms to complete outstanding requirements.

The recapitalisation verification exercise forms part of the implementation frame-

work of the Nigerian Insurance Industry Reform Act (NIIRA) 2025, which seeks to strengthen operators' capital base, enhance underwriting capacity and position the industry for greater competitiveness.

The development comes amid heightened regulatory efforts to deepen market stability and ensure that operators meet the new capital requirement prescribed under the reform law.

The issue featured prominently at the 21st meeting of the insurers' committee held in Lagos, where regulators and industry stakeholders reviewed the progress of the recapitalisation, consumer protection and strategies to position the industry for opportunities under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Although NAICOM has yet to make an official announcement on a possible extension, industry stakeholders said the volume of submissions

and ongoing verification processes may necessitate additional time to ensure a transparent and orderly implementation of the exercise.

Speaking during a briefing after the meeting, Chairman of the Communications and Stakeholders Engagement Sub-Committee of the Insurers' Committee, Ebelechukwu Nwachukwu, said the Commissioner for Insurance, Segun Omosehin, reminded operators that only a few weeks remain before the deadline.

According to her, auditors appointed by NAICOM were conducting verification exercises across insurance companies, while firms are expected to formally invite the commission for verification before May 31.

"The commission stressed the importance of treating the recapitalisation exercise with urgency, noting that compliance remains a key requirement for strengthening the industry," Nwachukwu said.

The committee also reviewed enforcement efforts surrounding compulsory third-party motor insurance, particularly NAICOM's collaboration with the Nigerian Police to curb the proliferation of fake insurance policies.

Nwachukwu revealed that the commissioner expressed concern over the activities of illegal operators in the market and commended the Association of Registered Insurance Agents of Nigeria for supporting efforts to eliminate fake insurance practices.

The meeting further examined NAICOM's travel insurance guidelines, which are aimed at ensuring effective regulation and improved protection for subscribers.

On consumer protection, the committee reviewed the inauguration of the Insurance Policy Protection Fund Committee, expected to safeguard policyholders and ensure that valid claims remain protected.

Rate convergence strengthens as Naira closes week at N1,373/\$

By Helen Oji

THE naira closed the week at N1,373.25/\$ against the dollar at the official foreign exchange market, appreciating by 0.16 per cent, as external reserves rose by 0.57 per cent to \$49.26 billion.

At the parallel market, the local currency weakened slightly, depreciating by around 15 basis points to settle around N1,372 per dollar. Last week's trading suggested a continued consolidation of the convergence of the different segments.

The report noted that the foreign exchange market recorded mixed perform-

•N3.35 trillion fresh inflow to aid market

ance during the week, with rising reserves providing support for the naira despite continued liquidity challenges and demand pressures.

In the global oil market, Brent crude futures traded largely flat at \$93.84 per barrel early on Friday, while West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude slipped by 0.12 per cent to \$88.94 per barrel. Later in the session, Brent fell by 1.74 per cent to \$92.08 per barrel, while WTI declined by 1.52 per cent to \$87.55 per barrel.

Analysts attributed the recent weakness in oil prices

to market adjustments following April's sharp rally, which was driven by supply disruptions.

They projected that the naira would likely maintain a mixed trend in the near term, supported by stronger external reserves but constrained by foreign exchange demand and liquidity shortages. While the official market is expected to remain relatively stable, the parallel market may continue to experience volatility due to unpredictable dollar supply.

Meanwhile, liquidity conditions in the money mar-

ket remained strong throughout the week. System liquidity opened at N3.84 trillion on Monday, recovering from the preceding Friday's post-open market operations (OMO) auction level of N2.79 trillion and later rose to N6.02 trillion at the close of the week.

The increase was largely driven by higher placements at the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) standing deposit facility (SDF), reflecting reduced borrowing needs from the market and lower funding pressures.

A major boost came on Tuesday when N1.97 trillion OMO instruments matured,

pushing system liquidity sharply higher to N5.92 trillion.

Despite the significant liquidity injection, interbank rates remained stable. The open repo (OPR) rate closed at 22 per cent, while the overnight (O/N) rate remained unchanged at 22.19 per cent throughout the week, indicating comfortable liquidity conditions in the banking system.

The Nigerian Interbank Offered Rate (NIBOR) recorded mixed movements but generally declined across longer tenors. Overnight NIBOR remained unchanged at 22.25 per cent,

while the one-month, three-month and six-month tenors fell by 17 basis points, 70 basis points and 88 basis points respectively to 22.65 per cent, 22.97 per cent and 23.28 per cent.

Similarly, the Nigerian Treasury Bill True Yield (NITTY) curve traded mixed. The one-month and three-month tenors increased by 24 basis points and 16 basis points to 16.04 per cent and 16.53 per cent, respectively.

However, the six-month and 12-month tenors declined by 13 basis points and eight basis points to 17.19 per cent and 18.85 per cent.

Economy moving from reforms to growth, says Oyedele

By Abigail Ikhaghlu

THE Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyedele, said Nigeria is moving from a

phase of economic stabilisation to growth, arguing that the volatility triggered by the removal of petrol subsidy and foreign exchange reforms was an unavoidable consequence

of efforts to correct long-standing distortions in the economy.

Speaking in an interview with The African Report published on Friday, Oyedele said the government had anticipated the immediate impact of the reforms, including higher fuel prices, increased transportation and logistics costs, and rising inflation.

According to him, the distortions created by fuel and foreign exchange subsidies could not have been removed without a period of economic disruption.

"If you think about where we started, about three years ago, it was a situation where there was a lot of economic distortion, particularly coming from fuel subsidy, FX subsidy and a lot of other market distortions. To be able to deal with that, you would necessarily have to get into a situation of volatility," he said.

He noted that the government was aware that removing subsidies would trigger higher fuel prices and inflationary pressures in the short term but maintained that the reforms were necessary to address structural imbalances and lay the foundation for long-term economic growth.

Oyedele said the economy has now largely moved beyond the initial adjustment phase, pointing to signs of improving macroeconomic conditions.

"And then after that was the stability. Now we have had that economic stability," he said, adding that recent indicators show moderating inflation, a more stable foreign exchange market and gradual growth in economic activity.

"We have seen moderation in inflation, we have seen the foreign exchange rate stabilise and, in fact, steady appreciation over the past couple of years.

We have also seen growth, modest growth, but increasing."

He, however, acknowledged that recent geopolitical developments had created fresh pressures on the economy.

The Minister said the government's attention is now shifting towards unlocking growth by addressing structural constraints that continue to limit productivity and investment. According to him, improving power supply, expanding infrastructure, developing skills and reducing regulatory bottlenecks will be critical to sustaining economic expansion, while the tax system must support investment and growth.

"So we believe that we are now at a point where we are moving from stability to growth. To be able to achieve growth, we need to unlock some factors.

"One of them has to do with power, infrastructure more

broadly. You need skills. You need to deal with issues around over-regulation. Your tax system must be investor-friendly and growth-promoting," he said.

Oyedele expressed confidence that the administration has made substantial progress in laying the foundation for growth and is now focused on ensuring that reforms produce tangible results for businesses and households.

"We have done that to a very large extent. We are quite proud of the progress we have made, but this is the point where we are now, where we begin to translate those reforms into results," he said.

On taxation, Oyedele said the government is intensifying efforts to expand the tax net and improve compliance, stressing that no individual or organisation should be beyond the reach of the law.

Linkage Assurance's profit soars 746%, insurers see high yields

By Bankole Oromisan

UNDERWRITING firms are reaping the benefits of high-yield investment portfolios amid a challenging economic environment, with Linkage Assurance Plc posting a 748 per cent increase in first-quarter profit, reinforcing signs of broader earnings rebound across the industry.

The underwriting firm posted a 748 per cent increase in profit after tax (PAT) to N6.25 billion for the quarter ended March 31, 2026, compared with N736.3 million recorded in the corresponding period of last year.

Profit before tax (PBT) rose sharply by 689 per cent to N6.57 billion from N833.2 million, placing the company among the strongest performers in the insurance sector during the review period.

The performance comes as insurance operators intensify efforts to strengthen earnings, improve capital buffers and reposition for expected industry consolidation ahead of ongoing recapitalisation and regulatory

reforms.

A breakdown of the company's unaudited results showed that investment and other income surged by 425 per cent to N8.6 billion from N1.64 billion in the prior year, reflecting insurers' increasing use of high-yield investment opportunities to offset inflationary pressures and rising operating costs.

The revenue, however, recorded moderate growth of six per cent to N6.4 billion. In comparison, insurance service expenses climbed by 73 per cent, driven largely by higher claims obligations and rising operational costs across the industry.

Industry analysts said the result highlights the widening importance of investment income in sustaining insurers' profitability amid weak consumer spending, foreign exchange volatility and elevated inflation.

They noted that many operators are now balancing underwriting operations with stronger treasury and asset management strategies to protect margins and improve shareholders' returns.



Independent Non-Executive Director, FirstHoldCo, Kofu Dosekun (left); MD/CEO, FirstBank Group, Olusegun Alebiosu; Group Managing Director, FirstHoldCo, Wale Oyedele; Group Chairman, FirstHoldCo, Olufemi Otedola; Group Company Secretary, FirstHoldCo, Abiola Baruwa; Independent Non-Executive Director, FirstHoldCo, Dr. Alimi Abdul-Rasaq; Non-Executive Director, FirstHoldCo, Dr. Abiodun Oluwole Fatade and Independent Non-Executive Director, Dr. Peter Aliogo, at the 14th yearly general meeting of First HoldCo Plc held in Lagos.

Capital market at crossroads as investors gain N60 trillion in five months

By Helen Oji

ROBUST corporate earnings, enhanced investor engagement and surge in liquidity have continued to sustain increased activities at the capital market, with investors gaining over N60 trillion in five months.

The stronger-than-expected performance consolidates on the robust growth the market has witnessed in the past three years. With political risk rising, there are rising concerns that the market could flip for a major correction in the months ahead, even as some analysts believe equities have merely regained part of what they lost to the 2008/2009 crash.

At the beginning of the year, the market capitalisation stood at N99.937 trillion. It had appreciated by N60.121 trillion to close at N160.094 trillion as of Tuesday, representing a 60.2 per cent increase.

Similarly, the all-share index, a key benchmark for market performance, also recorded significant growth during the same

period, adding 93,246.48 points or 59.6 per cent from 156,492.36 to 249,738.84 points.

Data from the exchange also showed that several stocks listed on the Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) achieved remarkable returns with significant capital appreciation across banking, insurance, industrial, consumer goods, aviation, logistics and energy sectors amid renewed bullish sentiment in the equities market.

A look at the price movement of 21 selected stocks showed that their share prices appreciated remarkably between January 2 and last week, with gains across the banking, healthcare, oil and gas, industrial, aviation, consumer goods, insurance and technology sectors.

Industrial and conglomerate-related stocks led the rally during the period as John Holt Plc emerged as the highest price gainer with its share price rising by 251.4 per cent from N5.35 kobo at the beginning of the year to N18.80

kobo by May 26.

Similarly, Red Star Express Plc posted a 256 per cent increase, increasing from N9.55 kobo to N34, while McNichols Plc appreciated by 120.6 per cent from N3.59 kobo to N7.92 kobo.

In the oil and gas sector, Aradel Holdings Plc recorded a strong gain of 145 per cent as its share price rose from N720.30 to N1,764.50 kobo, showing sustained investor confidence in energy stocks. Eunisell Interlinked Plc also advanced significantly by 65.9 per cent from N126 to N209.

The healthcare sector witnessed one of the strongest rallies as Fidson Healthcare Plc gained 148.2 per cent, rising from N55 to N136.50 kobo amid heightened investor interest in pharmaceutical companies and expectations of stronger earnings growth.

Banking stocks also recorded positive performance during the review period. Zenith Bank Plc rose by 104.7 per cent from N64.50 kobo to N132, while Access

Holdings Plc appreciated by seven per cent from N23 to N24.60 kobo. United Bank for Africa Plc posted a modest increase of 2.7 per cent from N43 to N44.15 kobo.

Insurance and financial services stocks also posted significant gains as DEAP Capital Management & Trust Plc rose by 160.8 per cent from N2.09 kobo to N5.45 kobo, while Mutual Benefits Assurance Plc appreciated by 31.1 per cent from N3.41 kobo to N4.47 kobo. NPF Microfinance Bank Plc increased by 44.9 per cent from N3.96 kobo to N5.74 kobo.

In the consumer goods sector, FTN Cocoa Processors Plc advanced by 61.8 per cent from N5.50 to N8.90 kobo, while Tantalizers Plc rose by 69.2 per cent from N2.66 kobo to N4.50 kobo as investors increased their positioning in food and agro-related counters.

Mining and extractive industry stocks also recorded impressive gains during the period

as Multiverse Mining and Exploration Plc appreciated by 75.1 per cent from N14.65 to N25.65, while Japaul Gold & Ventures Plc rose by 55.6 per cent from N2.43 kobo to N3.78 kobo.

In the aviation and transport segment, ABC Transport Plc gained 88 per cent from N4.51 to N8.48, while Caverton Offshore Support Group Plc increased by 20.3 per cent from N5.90 kobo to N7.10 kobo.

Technology-related counters also witnessed renewed investor interest as Omatek Ventures Plc appreciated by 66.9 per cent from N1.18 to N1.97, while Legend Internet Plc recorded a moderate increase of 3.8 per cent from N5.81 kobo to N6.03 kobo.

Media stock Daar Communications Plc also joined the rally, surging by 104.1 per cent from N0.98 to N2 during the five months.

Recall that in the first seven months of 2025, the market gained N25.7 trillion from January to the end of July 2025.

Surprisingly, just in five months into 2026, the market had appreciated by over N60 trillion, indicating the remarkable pace of wealth creation and heightened liquidity that have continued to redefine trading activities on the nation's bourse.

Operators expressed optimism that this bullish sentiment, improved market liquidity and increased appetite for fundamentally strong stocks would extend into the coming trading sessions, considering sustained investor confidence, expectations of stronger corporate earnings, easing macroeconomic concerns and renewed positioning by both institutional and retail investors.

According to them, the rally, which cut across virtually all sectors, underscored improving investor confidence on the exchange in 2026 as market participants continue to reposition toward fundamentally strong stocks with expectations of stronger corporate earnings and sustained market momentum.



FEDERAL COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE ISHIAGU, EBONYI STATE.

P.M.B. 7008, ISHIAGU IVO LGA

INVITATION TO TENDER/EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR YEAR 2026 CAPITAL PROJECT

1.0. INTRODUCTION

The Federal College of Agriculture Ishiagu, Ebonyi State as an institution under Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and the Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria hereby invites applications to tender from reputable and Competent Companies/Registered Dealers/Consultants for its 2026 Capital Projects as approved.

2.0. SCOPE OF WORKS, GOODS & SERVICES 2.1. CATEGORY A (WORKS)

LOT NO.	PROJECT NAME
CAP_W_001	REHABILITATION OF OGWENIOCHA ADAZI-ENU/ORAERI ROAD, ANAOCHA LGA, ANAMBRACENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT.
CAP_W_002	ASHPHALTING OF UMUONUMOHA, UMUDURUEZE ROAD BY ST PETERS ANGLICANCHURCH ROAD, UMUOZU, NWANGELE LGA, IMO STATE
CAP_W_003	COMPLETION OF VARIOUS ONGOING CONSTRUCTION OF 6 CLASSROOM BLOCKS IN COMMUNITIES IN ANAMBRACENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT
CAP_W_004	CONSTRUCTION OF FARM ROAD LINKING OFIA NDONSI, AGBAMKUPU, NGENE OSONWU, ANI-AGU AND WAEC BUS STOP AT ISIAKPU VILLAGE NISE, ANAMBRACENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT.
CAP_W_005	CONSTRUCTION OF SOLAR POWERED BOREHOLES IN VARIOUS COMMUNITIES IN ENUGU NORTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT, ENUGU STATE
CAP_W_006	CONSTRUCTION OF UMUOGBU-UMUIDA ROAD IN ENUGU NORTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT, ENUGU STATE
CAP_W_007	COMPLETION OF REGINACAEI COLLEGE OF NURSING ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING AWKA, ANAMBRA STATE
CAP_W_008	SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF TRANSFORMERS IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN ANAMBRACENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT
CAP_W_009	CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS AND DRAINAGES TO EASE TRAFFIC IN VARIOUS CITIES OF THE NATION (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_010	CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS AND DRAINAGES TO EASE TRAFFIC IN VARIOUS CITIES OF THE NATION (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_011A	CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS AND DRAINAGES TO EASE TRAFFIC IN VARIOUS CITIES OF THE NATION (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_011B	CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS AND DRAINAGES TO EASE TRAFFIC IN VARIOUS CITIES OF THE NATION (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_011C	CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS AND DRAINAGES TO EASE TRAFFIC IN VARIOUS CITIES OF THE NATION (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_011D	PROVISION AND INSTALLATION OF DIFFERENT SIZES OF TRANSFORMERS TO BOOST ELECTRICITY IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN SOUTH WEST. LOT 1 - 5
CAP_W_011E	PROVISION AND INSTALLATION OF DIFFERENT SIZES OF TRANSFORMERS TO BOOST ELECTRICITY IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN SOUTH WEST. LOT 1 - 5
CAP_W_012A	PROVISION AND INSTALLATION OF DIFFERENT SIZES OF TRANSFORMERS TO BOOST ELECTRICITY IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN SOUTH WEST. LOT 1 - 5
CAP_W_012B	PROVISION AND INSTALLATION OF DIFFERENT SIZES OF TRANSFORMERS TO BOOST ELECTRICITY IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN SOUTH WEST. LOT 1 - 5
CAP_W_012C	PROVISION AND INSTALLATION OF DIFFERENT SIZES OF TRANSFORMERS TO BOOST ELECTRICITY IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN SOUTH WEST. LOT 1 - 5
CAP_W_012D	CONSTRUCTION OF INTERNAL ROADS IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN OGUN STATE (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_012E	CONSTRUCTION OF INTERNAL ROADS IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN OGUN STATE (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_013A	CONSTRUCTION OF INTERNAL ROADS IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN OGUN STATE (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_013B	CONSTRUCTION OF INTERNAL ROADS IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN OGUN STATE (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_013C	DEVELOPMENT AND MAJOR CONSTRUCTION OF EDUCATIONAL EDIFICE WITH FURNITURE IN SELECTED SCHOOLS OF THE NATION - (LOT 1 - 5)
CAP_W_013D	DEVELOPMENT AND MAJOR CONSTRUCTION OF EDUCATIONAL EDIFICE WITH FURNITURE IN SELECTED SCHOOLS OF THE NATION - (LOT 1 - 5)
CAP_W_014A	DEVELOPMENT AND MAJOR CONSTRUCTION OF EDUCATIONAL EDIFICE WITH FURNITURE IN SELECTED SCHOOLS OF THE NATION - (LOT 1 - 5)
CAP_W_014B	DEVELOPMENT AND MAJOR CONSTRUCTION OF EDUCATIONAL EDIFICE WITH FURNITURE IN SELECTED SCHOOLS OF THE NATION - (LOT 1 - 5)
CAP_W_014C	DEVELOPMENT AND MAJOR CONSTRUCTION OF EDUCATIONAL EDIFICE WITH FURNITURE IN SELECTED SCHOOLS OF THE NATION - (LOT 1 - 5)
CAP_W_014D	FULL REHABILITATION/CONSTRUCTION OF FARM LINK ROADS IN DIVERSE FARMING COMMUNITIES (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_014E	FULL REHABILITATION/CONSTRUCTION OF FARM LINK ROADS IN DIVERSE FARMING COMMUNITIES (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_015A	FULL REHABILITATION/CONSTRUCTION OF FARM LINK ROADS IN DIVERSE FARMING COMMUNITIES (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_015B	FULL REHABILITATION/CONSTRUCTION OF FARM LINK ROADS IN DIVERSE FARMING COMMUNITIES (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_015C	RECONSTRUCTION OF ROADS THAT LINK AGRI - BUSINESS COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH WEST - (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_015D	RECONSTRUCTION OF ROADS THAT LINK AGRI - BUSINESS COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH WEST - (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_016A	RECONSTRUCTION OF ROADS THAT LINK AGRI - BUSINESS COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH WEST - (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_016B	RECONSTRUCTION OF ROADS THAT LINK AGRI - BUSINESS COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH WEST - (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_016C	CONSTRUCTION OF ALTERNATIVE ENERGY POWERED WATER SCHEME PROJECTS IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS OGUN STATE - LOT 1 & 2
CAP_W_016D	CONSTRUCTION OF ALTERNATIVE ENERGY POWERED WATER SCHEME PROJECTS IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS OGUN STATE - LOT 1 & 2
CAP_W_017A	CONSTRUCTION OF SPORTS FACILITY (MINI-STADIUM) IN UTURUCENTRAL SCHOOL IN ISUIKWUATO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, ABIA STATE.
CAP_W_017B	CONTINUATION OF NTIGHACIVICENTRE IN ISIALA NGWA NORTH/SOUTH FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY OF ABIA STATE.
CAP_W_018	CONSTRUCTION OF NGWA YOUTHS SKILL ACQUISITION CENTRE ISIALA NORTH IN ISIALA NGWA NORTH /SOUTH FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, ABIA STATE.
CAP_W_019	ANCHOR POINT FOR YOUTHS RELAXATION AT MCC ROAD ABA, IN ISIALA NGWA NORTH/ SOUTH FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, ABIA STATE.
CAP_W_020	CONSTRUCTION OF CULVERTS TO PROVIDE ACCESSIBILITY TO RURAL FARMLANDS IN OHAOZARA/ONICHA/IVO FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, EBONYI STATE.
CAP_W_021	CONSTRUCTION OF SOLAR POWERED BOREHOLES ACROSS OHAOZARA/ ONICHA/ IVO FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, EBONYI STATE.
CAP_W_022	RURAL ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT IN OHAOZARA/ ONICHA/IVO FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, EBONYI STATE.
CAP_W_023	RENOVATION AND FURNISHING OF SELECTED SCHOOLS IN OHAOZARA/ONICHA/IVO FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, EBONYI STATE.
CAP_W_024	ERGP1246226 - COMPLETION OF CONSTRUCTION AND EQUIPPING OF AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING DEMONSTRATION FARM FOR REARING GOATS, BIRDS, FISHERY, PIGGERY AND SNAILS WITH FEED MILL IN AMANZE, OBOWO, EHIME MBANO, IHITTE UBOMA AND OBOWO FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, IMO STATE.
CAP_W_025	CONSTRUCTION OF FIRE STATION IN ISIALA MBANO/ONUIMO/OKIGWE FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, IMO STATE.
CAP_W_026	COMPLETION OF POLICE STATION IN ISIALA MBANO, OKIGWE FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, IMO STATE.
CAP_W_027	PERIMETER FENCING OF FEDERAL HOUSING EZIAMA-ISIALA MBANO/ONUIMO/OKIGWE FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, IMO STATE.
CAP_W_028	COMPLETION OF OPEN MARKET STALLS IN ISIALA MBANO/ONUIMO/OKIGWE FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, IMO STATE.
CAP_W_029	PROVISION AND INSTALLATION OF SOLAR STREET LIGHTS IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN AKOKO-EDO FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY IN EDO STATE.
CAP_W_030	CONSTRUCTION OF 2 Nos FLEA MARKET IN ESAN NORTH EAST LGA EDO STATE FLEA. ESAN NORTH EAST/ESAN SOUTH EAST FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, EDO STATE.
CAP_W_031	CONSTRUCTION OF BLOCKS OF TWO (2) CLASSROOMS EACH WITH FURNITURE IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN UROMI ESAN NORTH EAST LGA EDO STATE. ESAN NORTH EAST/ESAN SOUTH EAST FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, EDO STATE.
CAP_W_032	CONSTRUCTION OF BLOCKS OF TWO (2) CLASSROOMS EACH WITH FURNITURE IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN UBIAJA ISAN SOUTH EAST LGA EDO STATE. ESAN NORTH EAST/ESAN SOUTH EAST FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, EDO STATE.
CAP_W_033	EXPANSION OF IDUMU-OKOJIE PRIMARY HEALTHCARE CENTER WITH MALE AND FEMALE WARD EQUIPPED WITH BEDS, DOCTOR'S OFFICE, NURSES CHANGING ROOM, DISPENSARY/PHARMACY ROOM IN ISAN NORTH EAST LGA EDO STATE. ESAN NORTH EAST/ESAN SOUTH EAST FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, EDO STATE.
CAP_W_034	CONSTRUCTION OF A 10 (TEN) UNIT LOWCOST HOUSES OF TWO(2) BEDROOM FLAT EACH FOR THE ELDERLY IN ESAN NORTH EAST/ESAN SOUTH EAST FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, EDO STATE.
CAP_W_035	CONSTRUCTION OF A HALL (OVU NDI EZE) FOR TRADITIONAL RULERS OF ISIALA NGWA SOUTH L.G.A

CAP_W_036	CONSTRUCTION OF SOLAR MINI GRIDS, SOLAR HOME SOLUTIONS AND SOLAR STREET LIGHTS IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN NIGERIA (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_037	CONSTRUCTION OF SOLAR MINI GRIDS, SOLAR HOME SOLUTIONS AND SOLAR STREET LIGHTS IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN NIGERIA (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_038A	CONSTRUCTION OF SOLAR MINI GRIDS, SOLAR HOME SOLUTIONS AND SOLAR STREET LIGHTS IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN NIGERIA (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_038B	CONSTRUCTION OF SOLAR MINI GRIDS, SOLAR HOME SOLUTIONS AND SOLAR STREET LIGHTS IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN NIGERIA (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_038C	CONSTRUCTION OF SOLAR MINI GRIDS, SOLAR HOME SOLUTIONS AND SOLAR STREET LIGHTS IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN NIGERIA (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_038D	CONSTRUCTION OF SOLAR MINI GRIDS, SOLAR HOME SOLUTIONS AND SOLAR STREET LIGHTS IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN NIGERIA (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_038E	CONSTRUCTION OF SOLAR MINI GRIDS, SOLAR HOME SOLUTIONS AND SOLAR STREET LIGHTS IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN NIGERIA (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_038F	CONSTRUCTION OF SOLAR MINI GRIDS, SOLAR HOME SOLUTIONS AND SOLAR STREET LIGHTS IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN NIGERIA (MULTIPLE LOTS)
CAP_W_038G	CONSTRUCTION OF RECREATIONAL/ENTERTAINMENT CENTRES IN SUPPORT OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN NIGERIA
CAP_W_038H	CONSTRUCTION OF RECREATIONAL/ENTERTAINMENT CENTRES IN SUPPORT OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN NIGERIA
CAP_W_039A	CONSTRUCTION OF RECREATIONAL/ENTERTAINMENT CENTRES IN SUPPORT OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN NIGERIA
CAP_W_039B	CONSTRUCTION OF RECREATIONAL/ENTERTAINMENT CENTRES IN SUPPORT OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN NIGERIA
CAP_W_039C	CONSTRUCTION OF RECREATIONAL/ENTERTAINMENT CENTRES IN SUPPORT OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN NIGERIA
CAP_W_039D	CONSTRUCTION OF RECREATIONAL/ENTERTAINMENT CENTRES IN SUPPORT OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN NIGERIA
CAP_W_039E	CONSTRUCTION OF RECREATIONAL/ENTERTAINMENT CENTRES IN SUPPORT OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN NIGERIA
CAP_W_039F	CONSTRUCTION OF RECREATIONAL/ENTERTAINMENT CENTRES IN SUPPORT OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN NIGERIA
CAP_W_039G	CONSTRUCTION AND ASPHALTING OF RURAL FARM ROAD FOR EASY COMMUTING AND TRANSPORTING OF FARM PRODUCE IN VARIOUS COMMUNITY IN SOUTHWEST LOTS 1-10
CAP_W_039H	CONSTRUCTION AND ASPHALTING OF RURAL FARM ROAD FOR EASY COMMUTING AND TRANSPORTING OF FARM PRODUCE IN VARIOUS COMMUNITY IN SOUTHWEST LOTS 1-10
CAP_W_040A	CONSTRUCTION AND ASPHALTING OF RURAL FARM ROAD FOR EASY COMMUTING AND TRANSPORTING OF FARM PRODUCE IN VARIOUS COMMUNITY IN SOUTHWEST LOTS 1-10
CAP_W_040B	CONSTRUCTION AND ASPHALTING OF RURAL FARM ROAD FOR EASY COMMUTING AND TRANSPORTING OF FARM PRODUCE IN VARIOUS COMMUNITY IN SOUTHWEST LOTS 1-10
CAP_W_040C	CONSTRUCTION AND ASPHALTING OF RURAL FARM ROAD FOR EASY COMMUTING AND TRANSPORTING OF FARM PRODUCE IN VARIOUS COMMUNITY IN SOUTHWEST LOTS 1-10
CAP_W_040D	CONSTRUCTION AND ASPHALTING OF RURAL FARM ROAD FOR EASY COMMUTING AND TRANSPORTING OF FARM PRODUCE IN VARIOUS COMMUNITY IN SOUTHWEST LOTS 1-10
CAP_W_040E	CONSTRUCTION AND ASPHALTING OF RURAL FARM ROAD FOR EASY COMMUTING AND TRANSPORTING OF FARM PRODUCE IN VARIOUS COMMUNITY IN SOUTHWEST LOTS 1-10
CAP_W_040F	CONSTRUCTION AND ASPHALTING OF RURAL FARM ROAD FOR EASY COMMUTING AND TRANSPORTING OF FARM PRODUCE IN VARIOUS COMMUNITY IN SOUTHWEST LOTS 1-10
CAP_W_040G	CONSTRUCTION AND ASPHALTING OF RURAL FARM ROAD FOR EASY COMMUTING AND TRANSPORTING OF FARM PRODUCE IN VARIOUS COMMUNITY IN SOUTHWEST LOTS 1-10
CAP_W_040H	CONSTRUCTION AND ASPHALTING OF RURAL FARM ROAD FOR EASY COMMUTING AND TRANSPORTING OF FARM PRODUCE IN VARIOUS COMMUNITY IN SOUTHWEST LOTS 1-10
CAP_W_040I	CONSTRUCTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND WASTE DISPOSAL OFFICE WITH MINI WASTE DISPOSAL TRUCKS IN SOME SELECTED MARKETS IN EHIME MBANO IHITTE UBOMA AND OBOWO FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY IMO STATE
CAP_W_040J	CONSTRUCTION OF URBAN AND RURAL ROAD NETWORKS WITH DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE ACROSS SOUTHWEST STATES
CAP_W_041	REHABILITATION OF STRATEGIC COMMUNITY ROADS WITH CULVERTS AND DRAINAGE SYSTEMS ACROSS SOUTHWEST STATES
CAP_W_042	CONSTRUCTION OF MARKET ACCESS AND FEEDER ROADS WITH DRAINAGE FACILITIES IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES
CAP_W_043	RECONSTRUCTION OF TOWNSHIP ROADS WITH ASPHALT OVERLAY AND DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS IN SOUTHWEST STATES
CAP_W_044	CONSTRUCTION OF INTER-COMMUNITY LINK ROADS WITH DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE ACROSS SELECTED REGIONS
CAP_W_045	REHABILITATION OF RURAL ACCESS ROADS TO ENHANCE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY ACROSS SOUTHWEST STATES
CAP_W_046	CONSTRUCTION OF INNER-CITY ROADS WITH STORM WATER DRAINAGE SYSTEMS IN MAJOR URBAN CENTRES
CAP_W_047	RECONSTRUCTION OF DETERIORATED ROADS WITH CULVERTS AND DRAINAGE FACILITIES ACROSS SELECTED COMMUNITIES
CAP_W_048	CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE TO IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY ACROSS THE SIX GEOPOLITICAL ZONES
CAP_W_049	REHABILITATION OF FEDERAL AND STATE LINK ROADS WITH DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS NATIONWIDE
CAP_W_050	CONSTRUCTION OF COMMUNITY-BASED ROAD NETWORKS WITH SIDE DRAINS ACROSS RURAL AREAS
CAP_W_051	INTEGRATED ROAD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME WITH DRAINAGE SYSTEMS ACROSS SELECTED REGIONS
CAP_W_052	CONSTRUCTION OF MODERN SCHOOL BUILDINGS WITH LEARNING FACILITIES ACROSS SOUTHWEST STATES
CAP_W_053	REHABILITATION AND UPGRADE OF EXISTING SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE ACROSS SELECTED COMMUNITIES
CAP_W_054	CONSTRUCTION OF CLASSROOM BLOCKS AND ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDINGS NATIONWIDE
CAP_W_055	RENOVATION AND REHABILITATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITH IMPROVED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
CAP_W_056	CONSTRUCTION OF MODEL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS ACROSS THE SIX GEOPOLITICAL ZONES
CAP_W_057	REHABILITATION OF DILAPIDATED SCHOOL STRUCTURES WITH MODERN FACILITIES ACROSS RURAL COMMUNITIES
CAP_W_058	CONSTRUCTION AND EQUIPPING OF SCIENCE LABORATORIES IN SCHOOLS ACROSS SOUTHWEST STATES
CAP_W_059	UPGRADE OF EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO ENHANCE TEACHING AND LEARNING NATIONWIDE
CAP_W_060	CONSTRUCTION OF INCLUSIVE SCHOOL FACILITIES WITH BASIC AMENITIES ACROSS SELECTED REGIONS
CAP_W_061	REHABILITATION AND EXPANSION OF SCHOOLS TO ACCOMMODATE GROWING STUDENT POPULATION
CAP_W_062	CONSTRUCTION OF MODERN PUBLIC LIBRARIES WITH DIGITAL LEARNING FACILITIES ACROSS SOUTHWEST STATES
CAP_W_063	DEVELOPMENT AND FURNISHING OF COMMUNITY LIBRARIES ACROSS SELECTED REGIONS
CAP_W_064	CONSTRUCTION OF E-LIBRARIES WITH ICT INFRASTRUCTURE NATIONWIDE
CAP_W_065	UPGRADE AND MODERNIZATION OF EXISTING LIBRARIES WITH CONTEMPORARY FURNISHINGS
CAP_W_066	CONSTRUCTION OF ACADEMIC RESOURCE CENTRES ACROSS THE SIX GEOPOLITICAL ZONES
CAP_W_067	ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNITY READING HUBS WITH MODERN FACILITIES ACROSS RURAL AREAS
CAP_W_068	CONSTRUCTION AND FURNISHING OF KNOWLEDGE CENTRES TO PROMOTE EDUCATION NATIONWIDE
CAP_W_069	INSTALLATION OF SOLAR POWERED STREET LIGHTS IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN EBONYI CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT.
CAP_W_070	CONSTRUCTION AND FURNISHING OF MODERN CLASSROOM BLOCKS WITH ICT FACILITIES ACROSS SOUTHWEST STATES
CAP_W_071	REHABILITATION AND DIGITAL UPGRADE OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES ACROSS SELECTED COMMUNITIES
CAP_W_072	CONSTRUCTION OF MULTI-PURPOSE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTRES NATIONWIDE
CAP_W_073	CONSTRUCTION OF RURAL AND SEMI-URBAN ROAD NETWORKS WITH DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE ACROSS SELECTED COMMUNITIES
CAP_W_074	REHABILITATION OF COMMUNITY LINK ROADS WITH CULVERTS AND DRAINAGE SYSTEMS ACROSS SOUTHWEST STATES
CAP_W_075	RECONSTRUCTION OF ECONOMIC CORRIDOR ROADS TO ENHANCE TRADE AND MOBILITY NATIONWIDE
CAP_W_076	CONSTRUCTION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE EVACUATION ROADS WITH DRAINAGE FACILITIES ACROSS RURAL AREAS
CAP_W_077	INTEGRATED ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE PROGRAMME WITH DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS ACROSS THE SIX GEOPOLITICAL ZONES
CAP_W_078	CONSTRUCTION OF A "STATE OF AN ART" COLLEGE LECTURE HALL/THEATRE WITH OFFICES
ZIP_W_001	COMPLETION OF CONSTRUCTION AND FURNISHING OF UMENWEDO KINDRED HALL, IFITE VILLAGE, AGULUZIGBO, ANAOCHA LGA, ANAMBRACENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT, ANAMBRA STATE.
ZIP_W_002	CONSTRUCTION OF HOUSES FOR INDIGENT FAMILIES IN OHAOZARA/ ONICHA/IVO FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, EBONYI STATE

2.2. CATEGORY B (GOODS)

LOT NO.	PROJECT NAME
CAP_G001	SUPPLY OF GRAINS (RICE) TO SOME RURALCOMMUNITIES IN EBONYI SOUTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT OF EBONYI STATE
CAP_G002	PROVISION OF TRICYCLES FOR YOUTHS IN ANAMBRACENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT.
CAP_G003	PROVISION OF MOTORCYCLES FOR YOUTHS IN ANAMBRACENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT
CAP_G004	SUPPLY OF EMPOWERMENT ITEMS: GENERATORS, GRINDING MACHINES, REFRIGERATORS, SEWING MACHINES FOR WOMEN AND YOUTHS IN ANAMBRACENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT
CAP_G005	PROVISION OF ALL-IN-ONE SOLAR STREETLIGHTS IN SELECTEDCOMMUNITIES IN ANAMBRACENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT
CAP_G006	SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF SOLAR POWERED STREETLIGHTS AT UKABI UMUJAGBADAGWO, IKWUANO AUTONOMOUSCOMMUNITY, IDEATO NORTH LGA, IMO STATE
CAP_G007	PURCHASE AND DISTRIBUTION OF TRICYCLE FOR EMPOWERMENT YOUTHS IN EDO SOUTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT.
CAP_G008A	SUPPLY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN FOR SELF SUSTAINABILITY IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN SOUTH WEST - MULTIPLE LOTS
CAP_G008B	SUPPLY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN FOR SELF SUSTAINABILITY IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN SOUTH WEST - MULTIPLE LOTS
CAP_G008C	SUPPLY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN FOR SELF SUSTAINABILITY IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN SOUTH WEST - MULTIPLE LOTS
CAP_G008D	SUPPLY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN FOR SELF SUSTAINABILITY IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN SOUTH WEST - MULTIPLE LOTS
CAP_G008E	SUPPLY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN FOR SELF SUSTAINABILITY IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN SOUTH WEST - MULTIPLE LOTS
CAP_G008F	SUPPLY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN FOR SELF SUSTAINABILITY IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN SOUTH WEST - MULTIPLE LOTS
CAP_G008G	SUPPLY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN FOR SELF SUSTAINABILITY IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN SOUTH WEST - MULTIPLE LOTS
CAP_G008H	SUPPLY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN FOR SELF SUSTAINABILITY IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN SOUTH WEST - MULTIPLE LOTS
CAP_G008I	SUPPLY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN FOR SELF SUSTAINABILITY IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN SOUTH WEST - MULTIPLE LOTS
CAP_G008J	SUPPLY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN FOR SELF SUSTAINABILITY IN SELECTED LOCATIONS IN SOUTH WEST - MULTIPLE LOTS
CAP_G009A	SUPPLY OF BRANDED TEXTBOOKS, EXERCISE BOOKS AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL TO STUDENTS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN SOUTH WEST. - MULTIPLE LOTS
CAP_G009B	SUPPLY OF BRANDED TEXTBOOKS, EXERCISE BOOKS AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL TO STUDENTS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN SOUTH WEST. - MULTIPLE LOTS
CAP_G009C	SUPPLY OF BRANDED TEXTBOOKS, EXERCISE BOOKS AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL TO STUDENTS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN SOUTH WEST. - MULTIPLE LOTS
CAP_G009D	SUPPLY OF BRANDED TEXTBOOKS, EXERCISE BOOKS AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL TO STUDENTS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN SOUTH WEST. - MULTIPLE LOTS
CAP_G009E	SUPPLY OF BRANDED TEXTBOOKS, EXERCISE BOOKS AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL TO STUDENTS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN SOUTH WEST. - MULTIPLE LOTS
CAP_G010	PROVISION OF ESSENTIAL TOOLS TO ARTISANS IN EDE NORTH/ EDE SOUTH/ EGBEDORE/ EJIGBO FEDERALCONSTITUENCY, OSUN STATE
CAP_G011	PROVISION OF TRACTORS, TRANSFORMERS TO BOOSTCOOPERATIVE FARMING IN RURALCOMMUNITIES OF ISUIKWUATO/UMUNNEOCHI FEDERALCONSTITUENCY, ABIA STATE.
CAP_G012	PROVISION OF MINI-PICK-UPS, BUSES, TRICYCLES, MOTORCYCLES TO EASY MOVEMENT OF AGRICULTURE PRODUCE IN ISUIKWUATO/UMUNNEOCHI FEDERALCONSTITUENCY, ABIA STATE.
CAP_G013	SUPPLY OF FERTILIZER FOR FARMERS IN ISIALA NGWA NORTH/SOUTH FEDERALCONSTITUENCY OF ABIA STATE.
CAP_G014	PURCHASE AND DISTRIBUTION OF MINI-BUSES/MINI-FARM TRUCKS TO EMPOWERCONTITUENTS IN OHAOZARA/ONICHA/IVO FEDERALCONSTITUENCY, EBONYI STATE.
CAP_G015	SUPPLY OF GRAINS FOR THE PEOPLE OF ISIALA NGWA NORTH/SOUTH FEDERALCONSTITUENCY
CAP_G016	PURCHASE AND DISTRIBUTION OF MOTORCYCLES AS EMPOWERMENT ITEMS TOCONSTITUENTS IN OHAOZARA/ONICHA/IVO FEDERALCONSTITUENCY OF EBONYI STATE
CAP_G017A	SUPPLY OF VARIOUS EQUIPMENTS TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY IN VARIOUSCOMMUNITIES IN SOUTHWEST GEOPOLITICAL ZONE LOTS 1-10
CAP_G017B	SUPPLY OF VARIOUS EQUIPMENTS TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY IN VARIOUSCOMMUNITIES IN SOUTHWEST GEOPOLITICAL ZONE LOTS 1-10
CAP_G017C	SUPPLY OF VARIOUS EQUIPMENTS TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY IN VARIOUSCOMMUNITIES IN SOUTHWEST GEOPOLITICAL ZONE LOTS 1-10
CAP_G017D	SUPPLY OF VARIOUS EQUIPMENTS TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY IN VARIOUSCOMMUNITIES IN SOUTHWEST GEOPOLITICAL ZONE LOTS 1-10
CAP_G017E	SUPPLY OF VARIOUS EQUIPMENTS TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY IN VARIOUSCOMMUNITIES IN SOUTHWEST GEOPOLITICAL ZONE LOTS 1-10
CAP_G017F	SUPPLY OF VARIOUS EQUIPMENTS TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY IN VARIOUSCOMMUNITIES IN SOUTHWEST GEOPOLITICAL ZONE LOTS 1-10
CAP_G017G	SUPPLY OF VARIOUS EQUIPMENTS TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY IN VARIOUSCOMMUNITIES IN SOUTHWEST GEOPOLITICAL ZONE LOTS 1-10
CAP_G017H	SUPPLY OF VARIOUS EQUIPMENTS TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY IN VARIOUSCOMMUNITIES IN SOUTHWEST GEOPOLITICAL ZONE LOTS 1-10
CAP_G017I	SUPPLY OF VARIOUS EQUIPMENTS TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY IN VARIOUSCOMMUNITIES IN SOUTHWEST GEOPOLITICAL ZONE LOTS 1-10
CAP_G017J	SUPPLY OF VARIOUS EQUIPMENTS TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY IN VARIOUSCOMMUNITIES IN SOUTHWEST GEOPOLITICAL ZONE LOTS 1-10
CAP_G018A	SUPPLY OF SECURITY VEHICLES AND AMBULANCES TO VARIOUS SECURITY AGENCIES AND HOSPITALS IN ALL GEOPOLITICAL ZONES LOTS 1-10
CAP_G018B	SUPPLY OF SECURITY VEHICLES AND AMBULANCES TO VARIOUS SECURITY AGENCIES AND HOSPITALS IN ALL GEOPOLITICAL ZONES LOTS 1-10
CAP_G018C	SUPPLY OF SECURITY VEHICLES AND AMBULANCES TO VARIOUS SECURITY AGENCIES AND HOSPITALS IN ALL GEOPOLITICAL ZONES LOTS 1-10
CAP_G018D	SUPPLY OF SECURITY VEHICLES AND AMBULANCES TO VARIOUS SECURITY AGENCIES AND HOSPITALS IN ALL GEOPOLITICAL ZONES LOTS 1-10
CAP_G018E	SUPPLY OF SECURITY VEHICLES AND AMBULANCES TO VARIOUS SECURITY AGENCIES AND HOSPITALS IN ALL GEOPOLITICAL ZONES LOTS 1-10
CAP_G018F	SUPPLY OF SECURITY VEHICLES AND AMBULANCES TO VARIOUS SECURITY AGENCIES AND HOSPITALS IN ALL GEOPOLITICAL ZONES LOTS 1-10
CAP_G018G	SUPPLY OF SECURITY VEHICLES AND AMBULANCES TO VARIOUS SECURITY AGENCIES AND HOSPITALS IN ALL GEOPOLITICAL ZONES LOTS 1-10
CAP_G018H	SUPPLY OF SECURITY VEHICLES AND AMBULANCES TO VARIOUS SECURITY AGENCIES AND HOSPITALS IN ALL GEOPOLITICAL ZONES LOTS 1-10
CAP_G018I	SUPPLY OF SECURITY VEHICLES AND AMBULANCES TO VARIOUS SECURITY AGENCIES AND HOSPITALS IN ALL GEOPOLITICAL ZONES LOTS 1-10
CAP_G018J	PROVISION OF LIBRARY FURNITURE AND LEARNING MATERIALS IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS
CAP_G019	SUPPLY OF MOTOCYCLES FOR YOUTHS IN ANAMBRACENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT
ZIP_G001	SUPPLY OF FERTILIZER TO FARMERS OF ISIALA NGWA FEDERALCONSTITUENCY, ABIA STATE
ZIP_G002	SUPPLY OF MOTORCYCLES FOR YOUTHS IN ANAMBRACENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT

2.3. CATEGORY C (SERVICES)

LOT NO.	PROJECT NAME
CAP_S001	FREE MEDICAL OUTREACH. (EYECARE, MALARIA AND HYPERTENSION) IN EKITI SOUTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT OF EKITI STATE.
CAP_S002	APPRENTICESHIP SPONSORSHIP OF LOCAL ARTISANS IN VARIOUS VOCATIONS AND SUPPLY OF WORKING TOOLS TO YOUTHS IN EKITI SOUTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT OF EKITI STATE.
CAP_S003	TRAINING AND DISTRIBUTION OF ASSORTED AGRO-PRODUCTS TO SELECTED FARMERS IN EHIME MBANO, IHITTE UBOMA AND OBOWO FEDERALCONSTITUENCY, IMO STRATE
CAP_S004	CASH GRANTS TO SUPPORT BUSINESSES OF YOUTHS AND WOMEN IN OHAOZARA/ONICHA/IVO FEDERALCONSTITUENCY OF EBONYI STATE
CAP_S005	CASH GRANTS TO SUPPORT BUSINESSES OF YOUTH AND WOMEN IN OHAOZARA/ONICHA/IVO FEDERALCONSTITUENCY OF EBONYI STATE
CAP_S006	STRATEGIC TRAINING AND EMPOWERMENT OF YOUTH AND WOMEN IN AGRICULTURAL VALUECHAIN IN YOBE EAST SENATORIAL DISTRICT
ZIP_S001	EDUCATION EMPOWERMENT OF YOUTHS (UNDERGRADUATE & POST-GRADUATE THROUGH VUMEF) IN ANAMBRACENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT
ZIP_S002	EDO SOUTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT YOUTH LITERACY TRAINING WORKSHOP INCOMPUTER APPLICATION WITH CERTIFICATION AND PROVISION OF ANDROID TABLET WITH STARTER PACK

3.0. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.

Prospective bidders must possess the under-listed requirements to be eligible in this procurement process.

- Evidence of Certificate of Incorporation issued by the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) including FormCAC1.1 orCAC2 andCAC7. Business Name is also acceptable for Services;
- Evidence of Company's Income Tax Clearance Certificate (or Personal Income Tax Clearance Certificates of all the Partners in the Case of Business Name) for the last three (3) years valid till 31st December, 2026;
- Evidence of Pension Clearance Certificate valid till 31st December, 2026 (this requirement is only applicable to bidders whose number of staff is 15 and above);
- Evidence of Industrial Training Fund (ITF) Compliance Certificate valid till 31st December, 2026

(this requirement is only applicable to bidders whose number of staff is 5 and above or the bidder's annual turnover is N50m and above);

- Evidence of Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) Clearance Certificate valid till 31st December, 2026;
- Evidence of Registration on the National Database of Federal Contractors, Consultants and Service Providers by submission of Interim Registration Report (IRR) expiring on 1/1/2027 or valid Certificate issued by BPP.
- Sworn Affidavit:
 - disclosing whether or not any officer of the relevant Committees of the Federal College of Agriculture, Ishiagu, Ebonyi State or the Bureau of Public Procurement is a former or present Director, shareholder or has any pecuniary interest in the bidder and to Confirm that all information presented in its bid are true and Correct in all particulars;
 - that no Director has been Convicted in any Country for any Criminal offence relating to fraud or financial impropriety or Criminal misrepresentation or falsification of facts relating to any matter;
 - that the Company is not in receivership, the subject of any form of insolvency or bankruptcy proceedings or the subject of any form of winding up petition or proceedings;
 - that the Company does not have existing loan or financial liability with a bank, other financial institution or third party that is Classified as doubtful, non-performance, bad or whose repayment portion has been outstanding for the last four (4) months;
- Company's Audited Accounts for the last three (3) years - 2023, 2024, 2025;
- Evidence of financial Capability to execute the project by submission of Reference Letter from a reputable Commercial bank indicating willingness to provide Credit facility for the execution of the project when needed;
- Company Profile with the Curriculum Vitae of Key Staff to be deployed for the project, including Copies of their Academic/Professional qualifications (in Case of Construction: COREN, QSRBN, ARCON, CORBON etc.);
- Verifiable documentary evidence of at least three (3) similar jobs executed in the last five (5) years including Letters of Awards, Valuation Certificates, Job Completion Certificates and Photographs of the projects;
- List of Equipment with proof of Ownership/lease (for works) and
- Works: List of Plants/Equipment with proof of Ownership/Lease Agreement;
- Services: Evidence of Firm's Current registration with relevant regulatory professional bodies such as Centre for Management Development (CMD) for Training;
- For Joint Venture/Partnership, Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) should be provided indicating among others the Lead Partner (CAC, Tax Clearance Certificate, Pension Clearance Certificate, ITF Compliance Certificate, NSITF Clearance Certificate, IRR & Sworn Affidavit are Compulsory for each JV partner);
- All documents for submission must be transmitted with a Covering/Forwarding letter under the Company/Firm's Letter Head Paper bearing amongst others, the Registration Number (RC) as issued by the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), Contact Address, Telephone Number (preferably GSM No.), and e-mail address. The Letterhead Paper must bear the Names and Nationalities of the Directors of the Company at the bottom of the page, duly signed by the authorized officer of the firm.

4.0. COLLECTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS

The bidding document is to be Collected from procurement officer of the College upon evidence of payment of non- refundable tender fee of N10,000.00 per Lot paid into Federal College of Agriculture, Ishiagu, Ebonyi State Remita's account in any reputable Commercial bank in Nigeria.

5.0. SUBMISSION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS

Prospective bidders are to submit bid for each of the Lot desired, three (3) hardcopies each of the technical and financial bids with softcopy of financial bid only in MS Excel format, packaged separately in sealed envelopes and Clearly marked as "Technical Bid" or "Financial Bid". Thereafter, put the two sealed envelopes together in a bigger sealed envelope addressed to Federal College of Agriculture, Ishiagu, Ebonyi State and Clearly marked with (the name of the project and the Lot number). Furthermore, the reverse of each sealed envelope should have the name and address of the bidder and drop in the designated Tender Box not later than 12:00 noon on Tuesday, 30th JUNE, 2026.

6.0. SUBMISSION OF EOI

Interested firms in services are to submit the expression of interest (EOI) for each of the Lot desired in three (3) hardcopies each (one original & two photocopies). The EOI should be addressed as indicated above and submitted not later than 12:00 noon on Tuesday, 16th JUNE, 2026.

7.0. OPENING OF EOI AND TECHNICAL BIDS

The EOI and the technical bids will be opened immediately after the deadline for submission at Federal College of Agriculture, Ishiagu, Ebonyi State Conference Hall in the presence of bidders or their representative, as follows;

Expression of Interest (EOI)	Tuesday, 16th JUNE, 2026.	12.00 Noon
Invitation To Tender (ITT)	Tuesday, 30th JUNE, 2026.	12.00 Noon

The financial bids will be kept un-opened. Please ensure that you sign bid submission register as the College will not be held liable for misplaced or wrongly submitted bids.

8.0. GENERAL INFORMATION

- EOI/Bids must be in English Language and signed by an official authorized by the bidder;
- EOI/Bids submitted after the deadline for submission would be returned un-opened;
- Bidders should not bid for more than two (2) Lots
- All Costs will be borne by the bidders;
- The EOI/Technical bids will be opened in the presence of bidders or their representative, CSO in the area of Anti-corruption and transparency and private professional bodies and will be Covered by video recording.
- Works and Goods, all pre-qualified bidders will be Contacted at a later date for financial bid opening, while bids of un-successful bidders will be returned un-opened;
- Goods, only Registered Dealer with Accredited Local Manufactured Brand authorized are to bids for the above lot.
- Services, only shortlisted Consultants will be invited at a later date for Collection of Request for proposals,
- The Federal College of Agriculture, Ishiagu, Ebonyi State is not bound to pre-qualify any bidder and reserves the right to annul the Procurement process at any time without incurring any liabilities in accordance with Section 28 of the Public Procurement Act 2007

SIGNED
THE PROVOST
Federal College Of Agriculture Ishiagu, Ebonyi State.



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (REOI)

Subject: **Printing and supply of Training Materials**
 Date of the REOI: **01/6/2026**
 Closing Date for receipt of EOI: **15/6/2026**
 Reference: **EOI/022/2026**

Background

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

Description of requirements:

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

S/N	Description of Item	Quantity
1	MSI Counselling Flip Chart Specification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Straw Board Cover Binding Type: Wire O binding/Spiral at the top Matt Type: Matt card laminated 250gsm Dimension of straw board Height 8.2" inch, Width 11.6" inch, Base 3.8" inch Dimension of flip chart Height 7.9" inch, Width 11.3" inch, No of pages: 24(Front and back print) All prints and logos in full colour print 	1250 pieces
2	WHO Medical eligibility criteria wheel (MEC) version 2018 Specification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See link below https://shorturl.at/Ql9dy All prints and logo in full colour print.	2500 pieces

All price quoted should include all statutory deductions of 2% WHT and Vendors are also required to indicate the 7.5% Value Added Tax (VAT) amount on a separate line in their quotation. MSI Nigeria makes payment for completed transactions within 21 days.

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

Potential Suppliers

This REOI is addressed to printing vendors who must have a printing press in country. Applicable due diligence will be carried out on successful vendor before award.

Submission of EOI:

Quotation, Company Profile, Corporate Capability (copies of certificate of Incorporation, Memorandum of Association CAC Form CO2 and CO7) or Status Report, Evidence of tax clearance from 2022-2024, should be submitted to: MSI Nigeria Reproductive Choices Nigeria, Plot 59 Anthony Enahoro Street, off Okonjo-Iweala Road, Utako District, FCT, Abuja, Nigeria.

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

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

Signed:
 For MSI Nigeria Reproductive Choices
 Country Director



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (REOI)

Subject: **Supply of Medical Items**
 Date of the REOI: **01/6/2026**
 Closing Date for receipt of EOI: **15/6/2026**
 Reference: **EOI/023/2026**

Background

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

Description of requirements:

MSI Nigeria is inviting Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from eligible suppliers for supply of the items below:

Lot No	S/N	Description of Item	Quantity
1	1	Supply of 35litres Manual Autoclave Machine with Mesh	1250
	2	Medical emergency (MEM) Box See link below for picture sample https://shorturl.at/FRtoA	1250
2	3	Supply of 18litres Manual Autoclave Machine with Mesh	110
3	4	Supply of 18litres Manual Autoclave Machine with Mesh	50

All price quoted should include all statutory deductions of 2% WHT and MSI Nigeria makes payment for completed transactions within 21 days.

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

Potential Suppliers

Lot 1, 2 and 3 is addressed to vendors who are major suppliers of medical equipment. Applicable due diligence will be carried out on successful vendor before award.

Submission of EOI:

Quotation, Company Profile, Corporate Capability (copies of certificate of Incorporation, Memorandum of Association CAC Form CO2 and CO7), Status Report, Evidence of tax clearance from 2022 - 2024, and should be submitted to: MSI Nigeria Reproductive Choices Nigeria, Plot 59 Anthony Enahoro Street, off Okonjo-Iweala Road, Utako District, FCT, Abuja, Nigeria.

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

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

Signed:
 For MSI Nigeria Reproductive Choices
 Country Director

General Assembly backs ICJ's historic climate crisis ruling

'Nigeria, others legally obligated to curb emissions, protect climate'

By Chinedum Uwaegbulam

THE United Nations General Assembly has formally endorsed a landmark advisory opinion affirming that countries have a legal obligation under international law to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions driving the climate crisis.

The resolution, adopted with 141 votes in favour, eight against and 28 abstentions, capped years of legal advocacy led by a coalition of low-lying island nations threatened by rising sea levels.

It calls on Nigeria and 192 UN Member States to comply with obligations outlined in the precedent-setting 2025 advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which stated that countries have a duty under international law to protect the Earth from greenhouse gas emissions.

The court further held that where a sufficient causal link between emissions and climate harm is established, countries could be required to compensate nations suffering from rising seas, extreme weather events and other climate impacts.

Although the advisory opinion is not legally binding, the General Assembly's endorsement effectively gives political backing and moral authority to the ruling.

The Guardian gathered that the resolution does not compel countries to reduce emissions directly. However, it signals strong international political will to tackle climate change and reinforces existing obligations under international climate agreements.

Among other provisions, the resolution reaffirmed commitments under the Paris Agreement, which calls on nations to keep global warming well below 2°C while pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

Observers noted that the resolution and the ICJ opinion could strengthen climate-related litigation already progressing through courts around the world, although experts say it may take time before the decision significantly influ-

ences judicial outcomes.

Reacting to the development, UN Secretary General, António Guterres, described the decision as "a powerful affirmation of international law, climate justice and science."

According to him, the ruling clearly establishes the responsibility of Member States to protect their citizens from what he described as an "escalating climate crisis."

The resolution, spearheaded by Vanuatu and several co-sponsoring countries, was adopted after extensive negotiations and multiple proposed amendments.

Countries that voted against the resolution were Belarus, Iran, Israel, Liberia, Russia, Saudi Arabia, the United States and Yemen.

When the ICJ delivered its advisory opinion in July 2025, the decision was widely hailed as a breakthrough in global climate governance.

The court ruled that States have a legal obligation to protect the environment from greenhouse gas emissions and may be held responsible if they fail to meet those obligations.

It added that countries breaching their obligations could be required to cease wrongful conduct, provide assurances against future violations and make full reparations where necessary.

While ICJ advisory opinions are not enforceable judgments, they carry considerable legal and moral influence in shaping and clarifying international law. The General Assembly's endorsement, therefore, sends a strong signal that tackling climate change is not merely a political option but a legal duty under international law.

"The world's highest court has spoken. Today, the General Assembly has answered," Guterres said.

The resolution further urges Member States to take all necessary measures to prevent significant environmental harm, including reducing emissions generated within their territories and fulfilling existing climate pledges under the Paris Agreement.

Governments were also

encouraged to cooperate in good faith, strengthen global coordination on climate action and ensure that climate policies safeguard fundamental human rights, including the rights to life, health and an adequate standard of living.

In a statement issued after the vote, Guterres stressed that countries least responsible for climate change continue to bear the greatest burden. He maintained that the path to climate justice lies in a "rapid, just and equitable transition away from fossil fuels towards renewable energy."

According to him, renewable energy has become the cheapest and most secure form of energy, while the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C remains achievable.

Meanwhile, a 2025 report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) warned that the world is on course to exceed the 1.5°C warming threshold within the decade.

Scientists have warned that rising global temperatures are destabilising climate systems, leading to rising sea levels, prolonged droughts and more frequent extreme weather events.

Experts insist that rapid reductions in greenhouse gas emissions are essential to prevent a worsening climate catastrophe.

The ICJ ruling delivered in The Hague, Netherlands, by the Court's President, Judge Iwasawa Yuji is also expected to further energise climate litigation globally. According to UNEP, 3,099 climate-related lawsuits had been filed worldwide as of June 2025, compared to 884 cases in 2017.

Legal experts noted that courts are increasingly becoming important avenues for citizens and vulnerable communities seeking to hold governments and corporations accountable for climate commitments.

The legal campaign that culminated in the ICJ ruling began with a group of Pacific island law students frustrated by the slow pace of global climate action.

Read the remaining story on www.guardian.ng



Trinity Towers in Lagos

RCCG's Trinity Towers becomes EDGE-certified green building

By Jessica Iloakasia

THE Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG)-owned mixed-use development, Trinity Towers, which incorporates the City of David Church alongside commercial and leisure facilities, has earned EDGE certification, the green building certification offered by the International Finance Corporation (IFC).

Opened in 2023, Trinity Towers is a unique and innovative development comprising three towers, South, Central and North Towers, integrated into a single structure, the first of its kind in West Africa. The 12-floor complex is strategically located in Oniru, Victoria Island, Lagos, within one of the city's rapidly growing commercial hubs.

The development features a multi-storey car park with split levels accommodating approximately 673 vehicles, a gymnasium and wellness centre, medical centre, recreational zone, and access potential by air, land and water.

Other facilities include electric vehicle charging stations to support sustainable mobility, ATM counters for seamless transactions, tenant-dedicated external and rooftop garden terraces protected by lattice frameworks, 12 passenger lifts, two goods lifts, two escalators, and a culinary hub offering a variety of dining options.

The certification, presented in Lagos by EDGE certifier GBCI, makes Trinity Towers one of the commercial office buildings in Nigeria to

attain EDGE certification.

An innovation of IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, EDGE is an online platform, green building standard and certification system available globally. It was developed in response to the need for a measurable solution that demonstrates the financial benefits of building green while helping to accelerate the adoption of sustainable buildings.

EDGE enables building professionals to identify the most cost-effective ways to develop environmentally sustainable buildings based on occupant behaviour, building type and local climate conditions.

Commenting on the achievement, Group Chief Executive Officer of GPFI Holding, Dr MKO Balogun, who served as the EDGE expert on the project, described the certification process as highly collaborative.

"The process to achieve this was collaborative, with contributions from the church project team, GPFI and IFC teams. We are excited that we achieved the green building certification for the project," he said.

While recognising previous EDGE experts who worked on the project, Balogun commended the architects and developers of Trinity Towers for integrating efficiency and sustainability into the project from inception, noting that their technical expertise and commitment to innovation made the certification possible.

Representative of Pastor Kayode Pitan of the City of David Church, Emeka Okide, an engineer, thanked GPFI for ensuring the certification process was completed despite initial delays.

He explained that the vision of the church was to create a unique three-tower mixed-use integrated development built above the 4,500-capacity auditorium to serve multiple purposes.

Okide expressed optimism that the certification would help tenants and users appreciate the value of occupying a green-certified building.

"We believe that building green allows us to reduce our consumption of natural resources and minimise the environmental impact of our buildings. Commercially, ensuring we have a lower carbon footprint not only reduces operational costs but also lowers occupancy costs for tenants," he said.

Presenting the EDGE certificate to the Trinity Towers team, IFC's Green and Resilient Built Environment Lead for Nigeria, Mrs Temilola Sonola, commended the vision behind the development and the determination of both the church and GPFI teams to secure the certification.

She highlighted the long-term value that a certified green building would deliver to the developers, church, tenants, users and the wider community, while stressing the importance of sustaining and expanding the standard achieved.

Contractors abandon fixed contracts amid rising construction costs

By Victor Gbonegun

OPERATORS in the construction and real estate sector have expressed concern over the impact of economic shocks and government policies on the industry, saying many contractors are being forced to review contract terms to remain in business.

They noted that construction costs have risen sharply by nearly 20 per cent since December due to the surge in prices of building materials triggered largely by the Iran-Israel conflict, which has increased the cost of iron rods, cement, diesel and labour.

Speaking during a webinar entitled "What Does the Iran-Israel Conflict Mean for Africa's Real Estate and Construction?" organised by Fortren & Company in Lagos,

the Managing Director of Dutum Company Limited, Temitope Runsewe, said fixed construction contracts have become unsustainable under the current macroeconomic and geopolitical realities.

According to him, contractors have now adopted a "phase-by-phase" contract structure that allows periodic review of market indices and price adjustments.

"That strategy has worked for us. Over the last three years, we stopped signing fixed contracts from beginning to the end, except that a client is willing to pay 100 per cent upfront," he said.

Runsewe explained that contractors now adopt flexible pricing arrangements based on project milestones and prevailing market conditions.

"If a client gives me N2 bil-

lion out of a N10 billion project, we determine the extent of work that amount can cover and fix the contract only for that phase. At the point of agreement, we establish baseline prices for cement, reinforcement, diesel and petrol. Once we reach the agreed milestone, we reassess the indices and adjust pricing if there are major market shifts," he said.

He added that advanced procurement strategies have also become necessary to reduce exposure to volatile exchange rates and rising import costs, especially for finishing materials. According to him, some materials can be secured in advance, but others, such as concrete, cannot.

Runsewe stressed that contractors now require creativity, flexibility and careful

client selection to survive the economic turbulence. "Some clients may become upset when prices are adjusted, but transparency and integrity in engagement have helped us sustain projects and maintain relationships," he added.

President of the International Real Estate Federation (FIABCI) Nigeria, Akin Opatola, said developers and contractors are facing difficult times, noting that trust and credibility have become critical in navigating industry challenges.

He described the Iran-Israel conflict as a global crisis with severe implications for African economies, despite the continent having no direct involvement in the war. "The conflict is repricing construction projects, development budgets and investment decisions across

the continent," he said.

Opatola observed that luxury real estate has become more expensive, with dollar-denominated rentals and property sales rising significantly, while affordable housing has become increasingly inaccessible.

"The affordable and social housing segment has become even more unaffordable. Conversations around addressing housing shortages will now take much longer to achieve," he stated.

He added that although the property market recorded relatively strong transactions last year, activity has slowed significantly due to the combined effects of economic reforms and geopolitical tensions.

"We have seen transactions slow down from both rental and sales perspectives, while developers are struggling on

the supply side," he said.

Research Director at Fortren & Company, Martin Uche, said the economic effects of the conflict are being felt beyond construction sites.

"Even individuals who are not directly involved in construction are beginning to feel the impact through rising diesel costs, transportation expenses and higher household running costs," he said.

Uche explained that multiple economic shocks have weakened purchasing power, thereby affecting real estate transactions nationwide.

"One of the strongest impacts is the slowdown in transactions because purchasing power has already been severely affected by prevailing economic policies and shocks," he added.



Director, Waste Management, Lagos State Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, Adeoye Babajide (left); Special Adviser to the Lagos State Governor on Climate Change and Circular Economy, Titi Oshodi; Head of Corporate Communication and Public Affairs at Nestlé Nigeria, Victoria Uwadoka and Federal Controller of Environment for South West Zone, Adenike Olabimpe at the World Environment Day held in Lagos.

PHOTO: MARVELLOUS OBASA

Experts highlight obstacles to affordable homeownership

From Cornelius Essen, Abuja

EXPERTS in the housing sector have expressed concern over Nigeria's housing financing system, describing it as a major obstacle preventing estate developers and prospective homeowners from accessing affordable housing opportunities.

They said the challenge has continued to hinder efforts to bridge the country's housing deficit through innovative financing models and strategic partnerships between the public and private sectors.

Speaking at the Renewed Hope Housing Public

Private Partnership (PPP) Summit in Abuja, Elena Paranotis said Nigeria could build a sustainable and equitable economy with a strong middle class and minimal informality through effective public-private partnership housing models.

According to her, three pillars are critical to achieving this goal—property rights, mortgage finance and transparent regulation. "If we maintain them properly, they will deliver equity, efficiency, less bias and less waste. Houses on broken registry systems do not create wealth," she said.

Paranotis noted that more than 70 per cent of landlords in Nigeria reportedly lack formal title documentation, adding that the country's estimated 15 million housing deficit should be viewed as an opportunity for transformative development.

"Fifteen million housing units' deficit or inadequacy is an opportunity not to catch up, but to leap," she added.

She argued that policy designs often fail because they are created in conference rooms while reality is experienced within communities, stressing that informality remains a survival mechanism for many Nigerians.

With Nigeria's population growing at about 2.5 per cent yearly, she said the government would need stronger collaboration with developers and financiers to deliver social housing schemes.

Minister of Housing and Urban Development,

Muttaqha Darma, said the government will ensure that housing delivery claims are practical and verifiable. "We have been made to understand that more than 15,000 housing units are now available nationwide for Nigerians to move into," he said.

According to him, the Federal Government expects more houses to become available for occupation within the next three months, potentially providing shelter for over 60,000 Nigerians based on an average household size of four persons.

"We are going to move from place to place and ensure that the houses are there and not just on paper while Nigerians are being told they are available," he stated.

President of the International Real Estate Federation (FIABCI), Adele Adeniyi, described Nigeria's housing deficit as both a challenge and an opportunity. "With an estimated 28 million-unit shortfall and rapid urbanisation, no single actor, government, private sector, or development finance institutions can solve this alone," he said.

Adeniyi noted that the Renewed Hope agenda should go beyond rhetoric and focus on structuring bankable projects, de-risking investments and unlocking the estimated N21 trillion in pension, insurance and institutional funds for affordable housing delivery. "We must move from intentions to delivery and from promises to homes for citizens," he added.

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Lagos commits to global best practices in urban management

By Victor Gbonegun

THE Lagos State Government has reiterated its commitment to global best practices in urban planning and physical development as part of efforts to strengthen sustainable growth and improve the quality of life of residents.

Commissioner for Physical Planning and Urban Development, Oluyinka Olumide, disclosed this during the ministerial press briefing organised by the ministry to commemorate the seventh year of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu's administration at the weekend.

Olumide said the ministry has advanced strategic planning collaborations and knowledge-sharing initiatives aimed at strengthening long-term regional planning and sustainable urban development across the state.

According to him, the implementation of the initiatives is expected to improve urban mobility, enhance infrastructure coordination, reduce environmental degradation and support socio-economic development.

He noted that the ministry intensified efforts to ensure that all physical development activities conform to approved planning standards and international urban management practices.

"To strengthen public confidence in physical planning administration, the government intensified mediation and conflict resolution mechanisms relating to development disputes and public complaints," he said.

Olumide revealed that the ministry received a total of 987 petitions during the review period, out of which 399 were successfully resolved through mediation, 17 cases were removed through enforcement to compliance, and 52 properties were sealed. He added that 519 cases are still under investigation, representing a 47.76 per cent resolution rate.

He explained that the achievement has significantly reduced litigation burdens, minimised enforcement conflicts and strengthened public confidence in the ministry's dispute resolution framework.

The commissioner further stated that the ministry prioritised data-driven planning approaches and the integration of technology into planning administration to support evidence-based decision-making, improved spatial coordination and efficient land-use management throughout the state.

Cooperatives chart path to affordable housing through digital finance

By Chinedum Uwaegbulam

STAKEHOLDERS have called for stronger collaboration, improved regulation, digital transformation and innovative financing to accelerate affordable housing delivery in Nigeria and across Africa.

The stakeholders met at a two-day Cooperative Housing Summit Africa (CHOSA Africa), held in Abuja, themed: "Catalysing Adequate Housing for All Through Cooperatives," with a sub-theme on "Leveraging Digital Finance for Cooperative Housing."

Participants at the conference resolved that cooperative societies must embrace stronger corporate governance structures and digital operations to become more attractive to funding institutions and capable of delivering large-scale housing projects.

The conference brought together government officials, housing experts, financial institutions, developers, cooperative leaders, fintech firms and policymakers to explore how cooperatives can serve as vehicles for national economic development and affordable housing delivery.

Participants stressed that many cooperative societies in Nigeria are yet to fully prioritise housing development and urged them to restructure operations specifically towards cooperative housing schemes.

The summit highlighted the growing role of technology in cooperative operations, with digital platforms presenting solutions designed to improve trans-



Representative of the Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Pemi Temitope (left); President Agro Allied Cooperatives of Nigeria, Prof. Victoria Adeyeye; Honourable Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Security, Dr Aliyu Abdullahi, Chairman, CHOSA Africa Group, Dr Yemi Adedokun and Co-Founder, Alitheia Capital, Olajumoke Akinwunmi during the Cooperative Housing Summit Africa (CHOSA Africa), held in Abuja.

parency, operations and access to financing.

According to participants, digitalisation would help cooperatives bridge the gap between members and financial institutions while improving trust, accountability and operational efficiency.

The summit noted that flexible pay-as-you-use technology models could help cooperatives overcome the high cost of acquiring digital platforms.

Stakeholders also urged cooperatives to take advantage of opportunities provided by government agencies such as the Ministry of Finance Incorporated (MOFI) and the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN) to improve access to housing finance.

Participants, however, observed that awareness about available government

support programmes remains low and called for increased funding to enable cooperatives to meet growing housing demand.

The summit further resolved that African-centred financing models should be developed to accommodate informal sector operators and non-salary earners, who make up the majority of cooperative society members.

Delegates also advocated the use of diaspora remittances and pension funds to expand the funding pool available for cooperative housing development.

Participants encouraged cooperative members to adopt realistic housing expectations and take proactive steps towards home ownership by exploring available financing and development opportunities.

The summit also emphasised the importance of continuous education and capacity building for cooperative members to improve understanding of housing finance, governance and ownership processes.

Stakeholders called on the government to provide special concessions for land allocation to cooperative housing projects and to support infrastructure provision in designated housing locations.

They also advocated reduced funding costs and special financing arrangements to make cooperative housing more affordable. Participants stressed the need for improved regulation and stronger oversight of cooperative societies to enhance transparency, accountability and sector-wide impact.

Groups seek end to hazardous waste dumping in developing countries

By Victor Gbonegun

LEADING environmental advocacy groups, the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives and Break Free From Plastic Africa, have called for stronger measures to combat waste colonialism, the practice of exporting waste from high-income nations to lower-income countries that are often ill-equipped to manage such materials safely.

The groups lamented that the practice perpetuates environmental racism and places disproportionate harm on vulnerable communities across Africa.

According to them, communities and informal waste workers on the continent are unfairly forced to bear environmental and health burdens created elsewhere.

The organisations observed

that although waste is frequently shipped to developing countries under the guise of "recycling," the reality is that only nine per cent of plastic produced since the 1950s has ever been recycled.

They alleged that countries such as the United States, Italy, Germany and Greece continue to export hazardous materials, including e-waste, plastic waste and textile waste, to African nations.

The groups also expressed concern over major waste hotspots in African cities such as Lagos, Accra and Nairobi, where dumpsites are reportedly filled with illegal imports, toxic electronics, hazardous plastics, textile waste and chemical waste.

Speaking during the 2026 Africa Day celebrations, the organisations said they were outraged that the relentless pursuit of cheap resource

extraction by countries in the Global North continues to inflict severe environmental and health consequences across Africa.

They stressed that children are among the worst affected, as many work in toxic dumpsites where they are exposed to dangerous chemicals and pollution with devastating health implications.

Executive Director of the Centre de Recherche et d'éducation pour le Développement, Gilbert Kuepouo, said Africa was grappling with what he described as a "silent handicap" in addressing environmental challenges.

Kuepouo said, "Thirty-five years after its adoption, the Bamako Convention counts only 30 ratifications and only three Conferences of the Parties (COPs) organised about one COP every 12 years.

"This is a paradox for a region that deliberately

designed this instrument to protect itself and its people against wasteful colonialism. While the Bamako Convention provides stronger regional protections than the Basel Convention in prohibiting the import of hazardous waste into Africa, enforcement and political will across the continent remain inadequate."

The groups maintained that all African nations needed to ratify and fully implement the Bamako Convention, while taking a united stand against continued waste dumping from the Global North.

Also speaking, Project Lead for the Pan-African Plastic Project at Greenpeace Africa, Helen Dena, warned about the devastating impacts of waste colonialism, citing toxic chemicals, massive carbon footprints and worker exploitation.

Nigerian ecologist, Tanshi honoured for endangered species protection

By Chinedum Uwaegbulam

THE National Geographic Society has announced Iroko Tanshi and Mauricio Hoyos Padilla as the 2026 recipients of the National Geographic/Buffett Awards for Leadership in Conservation in recognition of their outstanding dedication to protecting endangered wildlife, restoring critical habitats and inspiring public action to defend at-risk species.

Tanshi, a Nigerian ecologist and conservationist, is leading efforts to protect threatened bat species and small mammals across West Africa.

Both Tanshi and Hoyos Padilla are spearheading groundbreaking research aimed at strengthening conservation efforts across West Africa and the eastern Pacific Ocean while mobilising communities to implement evidence-based solutions to reverse species decline.

Established in partnership with the Howard G. Buffett Foundation, the awards recognise two changemakers from Africa and Latin America who demonstrate exceptional commitment to biodiversity protection in their regions, serve as role models and mentors to aspiring conservationists, and promote environmental stewardship within their communities and globally.

"Because of Iroko and Mauricio's decades of courageous leadership, the world's most biodiverse regions and vulnerable wildlife are more resilient for generations to come," said the Society's Chief Science and Innovation Officer, Ian Miller.

"Their heroic fieldwork is a testament to the power of curiosity and collaboration to illuminate new paths forward for conservation despite the global challenges we face," he added.

By investing in and amplifying the leadership of changemakers like Tanshi and Hoyos Padilla, who are advancing knowledge and driving bold conservation programmes across the globe, the Society said it is reaffirming its commitment to supporting explorers who are protecting the planet's biodiversity.

Tanshi's passion for conservation has been driven by her deep curiosity about the natural world, particularly Afrotropical bats and small mammals. She is credited with rediscovering the short-tailed roundleaf bat after a 45-year absence and establishing Nigeria's first national bat database to support future research.



FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, OWERRI
OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR
P.M.B 1526, OWERRI

PRESS STATEMENT

RE: INCIDENT INVOLVING A STUDENT OF THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, OWERRI (FUTO)

The Management of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO) is deeply saddened by the death of one of its students following an incident whose circumstances are currently under investigation.

The University extends its heartfelt condolences to the family, friends, colleagues, and loved ones of the deceased during this difficult time. We share in their grief.

Management wishes to assure the University community and the general public that the matter is receiving urgent attention. Relevant Security Agencies were promptly engaged, and the Imo State Police Command is conducting investigations to ascertain the circumstances surrounding the incident and establish all material facts in accordance with the law. The Vice-Chancellor and members of the Management Team have also engaged directly with students on campus to address concerns arising from the incident and to reinforce the University's commitment to their safety and well-being.

In keeping with its commitment to the safety and welfare of its students, the University has directed the immediate and indefinite suspension of all activities of the Man O' War Unit pending the outcome of the investigations.

The University maintains a zero-tolerance policy towards any act capable of endangering the lives, safety, dignity, and well-being of its students and staff. Appropriate action will be taken upon the conclusion of the investigations and in accordance with the findings of the relevant authorities.

Management appeals to members of the University community and the public to remain calm and refrain from speculation while investigations are ongoing. The University remains committed to upholding the highest standards of safety, discipline, accountability, and justice and will provide further updates as may be necessary.

Signed.

Chiedozie Uba

Registrar



UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT CHOBA, PORT HARCOURT

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF **EXTERNAL AUDITOR**

Applications are invited from qualified and interested Audit Firms for appointment as External Auditor of the University of Port Harcourt.

Qualification Requirements

1. Evidence of Registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CACV);
2. Evidence of Registration/Renewal with the Office of the Auditor General of the Federation;
3. Evidence of Tax Clearance Certificate for the past three years, i.e. 2023, 2024 and 2025;
4. Evidence of compliance with the provisions of the Pension Reform Act of 2024;
5. Evidence of VAT Registration and past VAT remittance;
6. Comprehensive Company Profile and Organisational Structure;
7. Evidence of cognate experience of 10 years with reputable organization especially institutions of higher learning;
8. Evidence of Registration with relevant Professional Bodies – ICAN/ANAN;
9. Evidence of payment of Industrial Training Fund (ITF) contribution in compliance with statutory provision of the ITF Amended Act 2011;
10. Evidence of Tax Identification Number (TIN).

Method of Application

Interested Audit Firms must submit their applications not later than six (6) weeks from the date of publication of this advertisement to:

The Registrar
University of Port Harcourt
East-West Road
P.M.B. 5323, Choba
Port Harcourt,
Rivers State

Envelopes containing the applications must be marked "External Auditor" on the top right-hand corner.

SIGNED:

MRS. GLORIA O. CHINDAH [Ph.D]
REGISTRAR/SECRETARY TO THE COUNCIL

Stakeholders Celebrate Successful Completion of One of Nigeria's Largest Human Capacity Development Initiatives in the Oil and Gas Sector

THE Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), in collaboration with the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) and Daewoo Engineering & Construction Nigeria Limited (DECNL), have successfully graduated 330 young Nigerians under the Nigerian Content Human Capacity Development (NC-HCD) Training Programme implemented on the back of the Warri Refining and Petrochemical Company (WRPC) and Kaduna Refining and Petrochemical Company (KRPC) Quick Fix Projects in compliance with the requirements of the NC-HCD Guidelines.

The official Close-out ceremony, which was held at Cassoni Hotel, Port Harcourt, marked the successful completion of a comprehensive 15-month capacity development programme designed to equip participants with globally competitive technical, vocational, and professional skills required within the oil and gas industry.

The programme, which attracted over 990 applicants through the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Joint Qualification System (NOGIC-JQS), culminated in the selection and training of 330 beneficiaries across thirteen specialized disciplines, including QA/QC Non-Destructive Testing, Project Cost Engineering, Onshore and Offshore Piping Design, Safety Engineering, Quality Management Systems, Web Development, Mechanical Engineering Design, Civil Engineering Design, Electrical Engineering Design, Pipefitting and Plumbing, Crane Operations, Forklift Operations, and Electrical Technician Training.

In addition to technical specialization, all participants underwent foundational training in Entrepreneurship, Introduction to Oil and Gas, Nigerian Content Awareness, Health and Safety at Work, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT), ensuring a holistic approach to workforce development.

Speaking at the ceremony on behalf of the Executive Secretary of NCDMB, Mr. Lotanna Onyekachi described the programme as a celebration of transformed potential and a demonstration of the Board's unwavering commitment to developing indigenous capacity for the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

According to him, the programme represents a strategic investment in the future of Nigeria's workforce, aimed at preparing young Nigerians not only for employment opportunities but also for leadership, innovation, and long-term contributions to national development. "This programme is more than a training initiative; it is a deliberate effort to build a pipeline of highly skilled Nigerian professionals capable of driving the growth and sustainability of the oil and gas industry. The knowledge, certifications, and industry exposure acquired by these beneficiaries will position them to compete favourably on both national and international platforms," he stated.

The training programme recorded significant achievements, including over 776,000 training man-hours, the award of multiple internationally recognized certifications, and the successful deployment of all participants to structured On-the-Job Training (OJT) placements across partner organizations and industry facilities.

Representing Daewoo Engineering & Construction Nigeria Limited, Mr. Kehi Valentine commended the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board for its vision and sustained commitment to local content development. He also acknowledged the role of Dexterous Applied Training Institute and other training providers in delivering quality training that has contributed significantly to the development of competent Nigerian manpower.

A major highlight of the event was the presentation of project achievements and success stories by the beneficiaries, who expressed gratitude to NCDMB, NNPCL, DECNL, and the training providers for the life-changing opportunity. Participants shared how the programme had enhanced their technical competence, employability, confidence, and career prospects within the energy sector.

Certificates and internationally recognized professional certifications were presented to eligible participants, while outstanding learners received special awards in recognition of exceptional performance, commitment, and professionalism throughout the programme.

The successful completion of the NC-HCD Training Programme underscores the commitment of NCDMB, NNPCL, and Daewoo Engineering & Construction Nigeria Limited to advancing Nigerian Content objectives through sustainable human capital development. The initiative further demonstrates the transformative impact of strategic partnerships in building a highly skilled workforce capable of supporting Nigeria's industrial growth, energy security, and economic development.

As the programme formally closes, stakeholders expressed confidence that the graduates will serve as ambassadors of excellence for Nigerian Content and contribute meaningfully to the continued advancement of Nigeria's oil and gas industry.



330 Young Nigerian graduates and Artisans Earn International Certifications as NCDMB, NNPCL and DAEWOO Close Out WRPC/KRPC Human Capacity Development Programme, covering over 776,000 Training Man-Hours

How OPay is deepening financial inclusion, creating jobs across Nigeria

By Ifeanyi Ibeh

IN many markets, motor parks, roadside kiosks, and small shops across Nigeria today, one green Point-of-Sale (PoS) terminal has become a familiar sight. From Lagos to Kano, Enugu to Maiduguri, tens of millions of Nigerians now use digital payments daily through OPay. This fintech company is reshaping access to financial services and economic opportunities across the country.

Since launching operations in Nigeria in 2018, OPay has built a large digital financial ecosystem focused on inclusion, accessibility, and everyday convenience. The company currently serves over 45 million consumer users and more than 1 million merchants and businesses across Nigeria, reflecting its growing role in supporting the country's digital economy and cashless transition.

Bringing Financial Services Closer to Underserved Communities

For many Nigerians, especially people living in rural and semi-urban communities, access to traditional banking services has historically remained limited. Long travel distances to bank branches, high banking costs, infrastructure gaps, and strict account requirements have left millions financially excluded.

OPay's expansion has helped close part of that gap by providing digital wallet services, transfers, bill payments, savings solutions, and agency banking services through a nationwide network of agents and merchants. The company's operational model is designed to serve populations often overlooked by traditional financial institutions, particularly low-income earners, small traders, artisans, transport workers, and residents of underserved communities. This means people can transfer money, withdraw cash, make pay-



ments, and carry out everyday financial transactions within their communities, without travelling long distances to physical bank branches.

OPay describes its broader mission as "making financial services more inclusive through technology," with a focus on emerging markets where financial access remains limited. The company's contribution to advancing financial inclusion has also received national recognition. In 2024, OPay received the Financial Inclusion Innovation Award from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), further reinforcing its growing role in expanding access to digital financial services and supporting Nigeria's financial inclusion agenda.

Distinguishing OPay's Ecosystem

A major part of OPay's growth has come from building separate but connected solutions for consumers and businesses. OPay's digital wallet platform provides individuals with access to transfers, airtime purchases, utility bill payments, savings products, debit cards, and other everyday financial services through mobile technology. The company launched its wallet business to provide convenient financial services to Africa's unbanked population and

support the transition toward a more cashless economy.

The platform has grown rapidly over the years, driven largely by demand for affordable, easy-to-use, and reliable financial services. According to company information, OPay's monthly active transacting users grew from 25.13 million in 2024 to 39.32 million by the end of 2025. For tens of millions of users, especially those entering formal finance for the first time, digital wallets now serve as an alternative to traditional banking channels.

OPay also provides payment and smart business solutions for merchants, SMEs, agents, and enterprise operators. Its merchant ecosystem includes POS services, card payments, online payments, cardless payment solutions, and software services that help businesses process transactions more efficiently.

Today, OPay's merchant services support businesses ranging from neighbourhood shops and pharmacies to restaurants, transport operators, supermarkets, and independent retailers. By digitising payments, merchants can reduce cash-handling risks, improve transaction speed, and enhance cus-

tomers convenience.

Supporting Nigeria's Cashless Economy Nigeria's financial regulators have consistently promoted digital payments and financial inclusion as part of the country's broader economic modernisation agenda. OPay's growth aligns with this transition toward a more digital and less cash-dependent economy.

The company's services enable users to conduct transfers, make QR and PoS payments, pay bills, and access financial services digitally. During periods of cash shortages in Nigeria, fintech platforms such as OPay became critical channels for many individuals and businesses seeking uninterrupted access to transactions and payment services.

According to company data, OPay's annual gross transaction value (GTV) increased from \$166.2 billion in 2024 to \$358 billion in 2025, highlighting the growing scale of digital payment adoption across its ecosystem. The company also states that it has continued to invest in intelligent risk management, compliance systems, fraud-prevention technology, and customer security infrastructure to strengthen trust in digital financial services.

Driving Employment and Grassroots Economic Empowerment

Beyond payments, OPay's expansion is contributing to job creation and small-business growth across Nigeria. Its ecosystem supports hundreds of thousands of direct and indirect jobs through agency banking operations, merchant support services, customer acquisition, technology operations, logistics, and field support activities. Across many communities, PoS agency banking has also become a source of entrepreneurship and income generation for young Nigerians.

The company's long-term growth vision includes creating one million jobs while expanding financial access across emerg-

ing markets. For many small business owners, digital payments have also improved operational efficiency and customer reach. Merchants that previously relied almost entirely on physical cash can now receive payments instantly and manage transactions more securely.

Long-Term Investment in Nigeria's Digital Economy

OPay's continued expansion also reflects growing long-term foreign capital investment into Nigeria's digital economy. Since entering the Nigerian market, the company has attracted major international investments from global venture capital and technology-focused institutions, including SoftBank, Sequoia China, Redpoint, IDG Capital, and others.

These investments have supported the development of digital payment infrastructure, technology systems, merchant networks, and financial service operations within Nigeria.

Building a More Inclusive Financial Future

As Nigeria continues to advance its digital economy, financial inclusion is increasingly becoming about more than simply opening bank accounts. It is about giving individuals, small businesses, and underserved communities access to tools that improve economic participation and everyday financial stability.

OPay's growth illustrates how technology-driven financial services can help expand access, simplify payments, support entrepreneurship, and create economic opportunities at scale.

From urban commercial centres to remote communities, the company's expanding network of users, agents, and merchants reflects the growing role fintech companies are playing in shaping a more inclusive financial future for Nigeria.

CHANGE OF BRAND OWNERSHIP

This is to inform the General Public that the brand names of **APACCI COSMETICS (NIGERIA) LIMITED** of Plot 55, Happy Home Avenue, Kirikiri, Lagos is now bought by **HSD PERSONAL CARE LIMITED** and as such, the brands name officially belongs to the new said company.

All **APACCI COSMETICS (NIGERIA) LIMITED** old customers and the General Public should take note.

PUBLIC NOTICE/ CAVEAT EMPTOR

This is to inform the general public that the landed property and the development therein located at Princess Uduak E. Oyo Ita Layout , off MCC Road, Calabar, clearly delineated in survey plan No. SSS/Z/CR/04/2023/55 dated 2/3/2026 covering an area of 470. 249 SQM has already been sold by Ubong Effiong Esset to Mr. Unyime Ekpenyong Akpan, the new owner.

Ubong Effiong Esset, has no consent from the new owner (Mr. Unyime Ekpeyong Akpan)to re sell the same property by advertising same for sale.

He is currently on police investigation. The general public should take Note. Caveat emptor (Buyers beware) Any person who has any dealing with Ubong Esset in respect of that property does so at his own risk.

" I would have told you is not the same thing as I have told you"

**Thanks.
Unyime Ekpenyong Akpan**

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SONNY EJA RE-ELECTED AS PRESIDENT OF SHIPOWNERS ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA AS SOAN RECORDS MAJOR ADVOCACY AND INDUSTRY MILESTONES

THE Shipowners Association of Nigeria (SOAN) has re-elected Mr. Sonny EJA as its President following the Association's General Meeting and Elections held on 29 May 2026.

The re-election follows a successful 2025/2026 financial year during which SOAN recorded significant achievements in maritime advocacy, stakeholder engagement, industry development and indigenous shipping growth.

Speaking after his re-election, Mr. Eja described the outcome as a collective mandate to continue advancing the interests of indigenous shipowners and strengthening Nigeria's maritime industry.

"This re-election is not a personal victory but a collective mandate to continue advancing the interests of indigenous shipowners and strengthening the maritime industry in Nigeria," he said.

Presenting his report to members at the General Meeting, Mr. Eja highlighted key milestones achieved by the Association during the year, including:

- A landmark Federal High Court victory against the imposition of the Coastal Vessel Licence Fee by the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), with the Court ruling in favour of SOAN.
- Significant progress on the Cabotage Vessel Financing Fund (CVFF), including participation in stakeholder engagements and the launch of the CVFF application portal.
- Continued engagement with NIMASA and other key maritime stakeholders to promote regulatory alignment and indigenous participation in shipping.
- Commitment by SOAN members to provide sea-time training opportunities for over 50 (fifty) cadets of the Maritime Acad-

emy of Nigeria, Oron, demonstrating the Association's commitment to human capital development.



Sonny Eja
President, Shipowners Association of Nigeria

- Active participation in major local and international maritime forums, including shipping decarbonisation in Abuja, 2026 Q1 Stakeholders collaboration for sustainable implementation of the National policy on Marine & Blue Economy in Lagos and the Commonwealth Trade & Investment Summit 2025 and 2026 in London.

- Recognition of Nigeria's successful return to Category C of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Council after fourteen years.

The Association also welcomed Bourbon Interoil Nigeria Limited as a new member during the year, further strengthening its membership base and industry representation.

Looking ahead, Mr. Eja stated that SOAN's priorities for the 2026/2027 financial year will include sustained advocacy for the full disbursement of the CVFF, deeper engagement with regulators, expansion of seafarer development initiatives, enhancement of governance structures and the strengthening of international partnerships.

Mr. Eja reaffirmed his commitment to providing purposeful leadership, fostering unity within the Association and championing initiatives that will create value for members while contributing to the sustainable growth of Nigeria's maritime industry.

About SOAN

The Shipowners Association of Nigeria (SOAN) is the umbrella body representing indigenous shipowners and operators in Nigeria. The Association promotes the growth, competitiveness and sustainability of Nigerian shipping through advocacy, stakeholder engagement, capacity development and industry collaboration.

Deepening digital sovereignty with in-country data centres, policies

Establishing in-country data centres is the cornerstone of digital sovereignty as keeping data within national borders, countries secure local legal jurisdiction, shield critical infrastructure from foreign interference and accelerate domestic innovation, ADEYEMI ADEPETUN reports.

NIGERIA'S digital future is being written not in distant data hubs, but within its own borders. As the world accelerates toward an AI-driven economy, the question of digital sovereignty has become urgent: who owns the data, where is it stored, and under what laws is it governed? For Nigeria, the answer lies in building robust in-country data centres that anchor its digital ecosystem firmly on home soil, ensuring that its technological destiny is not outsourced but secured.

The implications stretch far beyond infrastructure. In-country data centres are the backbone of trust, resilience, and independence in the digital age. They safeguard sensitive information, reduce reliance on foreign servers, and create the conditions for Nigeria to harness artificial intelligence at scale. By localising data, Nigeria strengthens its ability to regulate, innovate, and protect its citizens' digital rights while laying the groundwork for industries to thrive in an AI-ready environment.

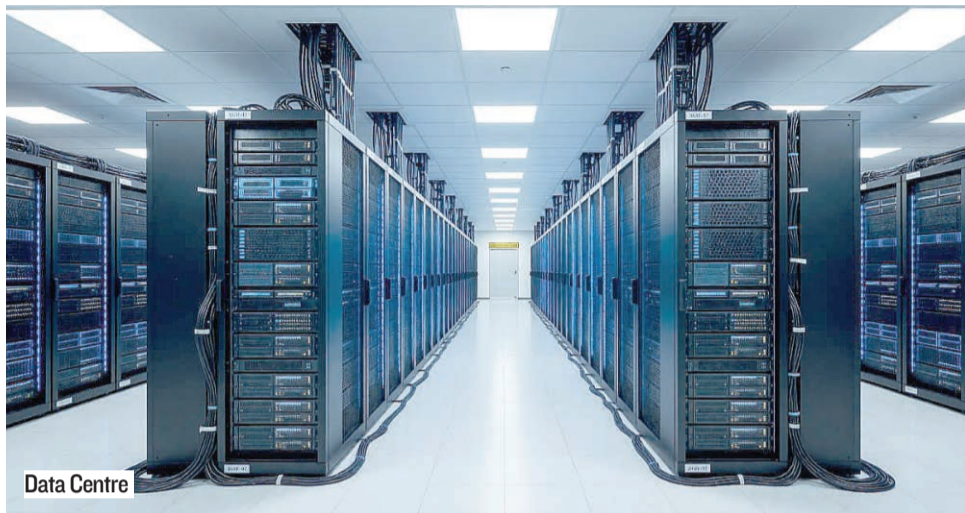
This is more than a technical milestone; it is a strategic leap. Analysts noted that deepening digital sovereignty through local data centres positions Nigeria as a continental leader in shaping Africa's digital economy. It signals a commitment to inclusive growth, national security, and technological competitiveness. In this move, Nigeria is not just catching up with global trends; it is defining its own path toward an AI-powered future that reflects its values, priorities, and ambitions.

For decades, Nigeria has faced a paradoxical digital reality: despite being a leading economy and a tech powerhouse in Africa, over 90 per cent of its data has been hosted on foreign servers. This reliance resulted in an estimated yearly capital flight of \$850 million for cloud services alone, alongside significant latency issues and jurisdictional vulnerabilities. However, the commissioning of the Kasi AI data centre, among others, appeared to be a turning point.

Imperative for digital sovereignty in Nigeria
DIGITAL sovereignty extends beyond data residency; it encompasses the nation's ability to govern its digital assets, protect citizen privacy, and retain economic value from data generation. The Nigerian government has recognised that without local infrastructure, the country cannot fully enforce the Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA) 2023 or the new General Application and Implementation Directive (GAID) 2025.

Hosting data externally exposes national secrets, financial transactions, and personal data of citizens to foreign legal jurisdictions. Under the current legislative review by the National Assembly, there is a growing push for mandatory local storage of all public and financial sector data, treating data as a "strategic national asset" similar to oil or gas.

Current data centre landscape
BEFORE analysing the Kasi impact, it is essential to understand the existing



Data Centre

baseline. As of early 2026, Nigeria operates approximately 21 to 22 major data centre facilities. They include Rack Centre, Equinix (formerly MainOne/MDXi), Open Access Data Centres (OADC), Africa Data Centres, Dabengwa Data Centre (owned by MTN), Digital Reality, Airtel's Nxtra, Galaxy Backbone, among others.

The market is projected to grow from \$322 million in 2025 to nearly \$782 million by 2031, driven by cloud adoption and 5G rollouts. However, the sector suffers from two critical bottlenecks. These are geographic concentration and legacy limitations.

Today, more than 80 per cent of these facilities (approximately 19) are clustered in Lagos. In contrast, the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja) has only three, while the other 35 states have virtually zero colocation infrastructure. This creates latency for users outside the commercial capital.

Before the Kasi launch, experts noted that while Tier III facilities in Nigeria excelled at cloud and enterprise IT, they were "years away" from supporting the high-density racks required for AI and real-time inferencing.

The Kasi edge
INDEED, the unveiling of the Kasi Lekki Campus, backed by the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority, represents the most significant shift toward indigenous control of digital assets in West Africa. Unlike standard cloud data centres, this facility was engineered specifically to anchor AI workloads within Nigerian borders.

The Kasi facility is designed to reach 100MW of critical IT capacity at full build-out, with the initial phase (LOSI) immediately operational. This is a massive expansion of the current 30MW national installed capacity.

It is officially designated as West Africa's first AI-ready hyperscale data centre. This allows Nigerian startups and banks to train and run AI models locally instead of using foreign GPUs.

The facility guarantees sub-50 milliseconds latency for local workloads, enabling real-time applications like autonomous fintech fraud detection that were previously impossible due to the "round-trip" to Europe or the U.S.

Located on four hectares in Lekki, the campus sits adjacent to six subsea cable landing systems (including Equiano and

2Africa). This "carrier-neutral" positioning allows it to act as a true internet exchange point, reducing the cost of bandwidth.

Founder and CEO of Kasi Cloud Datacenters, Johnson Agogbua, said: "For too long, Africa's data has powered someone else's economy. Today, that changes. This flag-off marks the transition from development into commissioning and operational readiness — as we deliver world-class sovereign cloud and AI infrastructure, built in Lagos, for Africa's digital future."

Economic impact on sovereignty
THE flagship benefit of the Kasi centre is its ability to stop capital flight. By providing an institutional-grade, locally owned alternative, it allows companies to pay in Naira (avoiding FX volatility) while keeping revenue within the Nigerian economy. The government estimates this will recapture a significant portion of the \$850 million lost yearly to foreign cloud providers.

The Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyedele, at the unveiling, has emphasised the need to strengthen national data sovereignty.

He described the project as sovereign infrastructure, adding that it marked a strategic choice for the country.

"We cannot remain consumers of artificial intelligence, paying foreign exchange to access AI capability hosted abroad.

"We can become producers, hosts, and builders of the infrastructure powering the next-generation economy. Today, with Kasi Cloud, Nigeria has made that choice," he said.

"When the story of Nigerian digital transformation is written, history will remember today as the moment we stopped exporting raw potential and started building the infrastructure to process that potential at home," the minister said.

The launch of Kasi is not occurring in a vacuum but as part of a broader "Sovereign Cloud Initiative."

The Nigerian Sovereign Cloud project
BACKED by NITDA, the policy encourages government agencies and banks to migrate to local infrastructure. The recent partnership between Galaxy Backbone and the iHatch programme offers subsidised cloud credits to startups, specifically shielding them

from the dollar-denominated costs of AWS or Azure.

In collaboration with the International Data Centre Authority (IDCA), Nigeria has initiated a three-year master plan to move beyond Lagos. The NDT aimed to build interconnected hyperscale clusters across the geopolitical zones, ensuring that the \$1.9 billion market opportunity serves the entire nation, not just the coast.

Challenge of power and decentralisation
DESPITE the optimism, two structural challenges threaten to bottleneck this progress. There is a power supply crisis. Data centres are essentially factories for electricity consumption. However, Nigeria's national grid struggles with availability (historically supplying only 41 per cent of required uptime) and frequently collapses.

There is also the cost of autonomy. Operators like Kasi must over-invest in captive power. To guarantee uptime, facilities rely on redundant gas generators and solar hybrids. Industry reports indicate operators are spending approximately \$1 million per MW on backup generation just to bridge the grid gap.

While there is a push for solar, the sheer density of AI servers requires base-load power that gas turbines currently provide. Without grid reform, a significant portion of the revenue generated by the sector will be eaten by diesel/gas costs, raising prices for end-users.

Though Lagos is now "AI-ready," the rest of the country is not. To realistically support a \$1 trillion economy, industry leaders estimate Nigeria requires at least 72 edge data centres (two per state). Currently, state capitals outside Lagos lack the fibre ring infrastructure or reliable power to support even Tier II facilities.

Future beckons
THE inauguration of the new data centres has effectively retired the excuse that Nigeria lacks the hardware for digital sovereignty. For the first time, a major African economy has the onshore capability to host AI, high-frequency finance, and government records under its own jurisdiction and legal protection.

The Governor of Lagos State, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, at the unveiling, said the project demonstrated what could happen when "ambition, technical excellence and institutional backing" come together.

"What we are commissioning today is proof that ambition coupled with technical excellence and institutional backing truly delivers," he said.

Sanwo-Olu said Lagos had become the heartbeat of Africa's digital economy, producing many of the continent's most successful startups, but noted that much of that growth had depended on foreign infrastructure.

"For too long, African innovation has depended on infrastructure built elsewhere. Our startups are built here, but they are hosted abroad. Our businesses generate data here, but process it elsewhere.

"That model may have survived in the early Internet era, but it will not sustain the AI economy we see today," he said. He also highlighted the project's employment potential.

"Beyond technology, this project is also about jobs and skills," he said.

However, industry analysts posited that sovereignty is not just about storage; it is about access. To fully realise this opportunity, they said Nigeria must aggressively pursue two parallel paths: first, decentralising infrastructure to the 72 required nodes to avoid a "digital Lagos-only" reality, and secondly, solving the energy trilemma by designating data centres as critical national infrastructure eligible for dedicated power plant support. "If these challenges are met, Nigeria will not only host its own data but will become the data hub for the entire West African region," they stated.

For decades, Nigeria has faced a paradoxical digital reality: despite being a leading economy and a tech powerhouse in Africa, over 90 per cent of its data has been hosted on foreign servers.

Politics & Policy

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2027: Can Atiku's serial contest still force a presidential upset?

Love or loathe him, no politician has pursued Nigeria's presidency with the consistency of former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar. Having secured the African Democratic Congress (ADC) ticket for 2027, he is set for another push for the office that has eluded him for decades. With President Bola Tinubu standing in his path, can Atiku still pull an upset? SEYE OLUMIDE writes.

FOR more than three decades, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar has remained one of the most enduring figures in Nigeria's democratic journey. From the aborted transition programme of the 1990s to the unfolding political permutations ahead of the 2027 general election, Atiku has consistently stayed within striking distance of the presidency, surviving shifting alliances, party defections, internal betrayals and repeated electoral disappointments.

Having secured the presidential ticket of ADC after defeating former Rivers State governor Rotimi Amaechi and businessman Mohammed Hayatu-Deen, the Turaki Adamawa is once again in the race for Nigeria's highest office.

Few politicians in Nigeria's history have pursued the presidency with the consistency and determination displayed by Atiku, who served as running mate to former President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999 and 2003, contested under the platform of the defunct Action Congress (AC) in 2007, sought the presidential ticket of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in 2011, contested the All Progressives Congress (APC) primary in 2015, and flew the PDP flag in both the 2019 and 2023 elections.

Long before the current democratic dispensation, Atiku had already positioned himself among Nigeria's leading political actors. In 1993, he contested the presidential ticket of the defunct Social Democratic Party (SDP) but lost to the late Chief M.K.O. Abiola, widely regarded as the winner of the annulled June 12 presidential election.

That loss did not diminish his national relevance. Rather, it marked the beginning of a long political journey that would eventually see him become vice president and later transform into one of the most persistent presidential aspirants in the country's history.

As he prepares for another showdown with incumbent President Bola Tinubu in 2027, the central question remains whether Atiku can finally convert decades of ambition into electoral victory.

Opinions among Nigerians remain sharply divided. While supporters describe him as a resilient democrat who has paid his dues and possesses the experience required to steer the country through turbulent times, critics argue that his repeated presidential pursuits have become symbolic of a political generation unwilling to relinquish power to younger leaders.

Now flying the ADC flag after emerging from a tense coalition primary, Atiku's latest presidential bid comes with enormous political baggage.

He must navigate growing agitation for power rotation within the South, unite a fragmented opposition, confront questions about his advancing age, and challenge an incumbent president who has steadily consolidated political influence across the

country.

Indeed, Atiku's presidential odyssey has become one of the longest in Nigeria's democratic history, rivalled only by the late former President Muhammadu Buhari, whose persistence eventually paid off after multiple failed attempts.

Over the years, Atiku has contested under different political platforms, fought bruising primary battles and suffered defeats against some of Nigeria's most formidable political heavyweights, including the late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, former President Goodluck Jonathan and former President Muhammadu Buhari.

Yet despite those setbacks, he has remained politically relevant through every major transition since the return to democracy in 1999.

Four parties, six major presidential attempts

ATIKU'S latest 2027 bid under the ADC represents his sixth major presidential attempt and his fourth political platform since 2007.

His first major presidential outing came in 2007 following a dramatic fallout with then-President Obasanjo over succession politics and the controversial third-term agenda. The disagreement fractured one of Nigeria's most influential political partnerships and ultimately forced Atiku out of the PDP.

Seeking a new platform, he joined the Action Congress and contested against the formidable PDP machinery.

The election eventually produced Yar'Adua as president, while Atiku finished a distant third with about 2.6 million votes behind Buhari and the PDP candidate.

The outcome exposed the limitations of challenging a dominant ruling party without a broad national coalition. It also revealed the weakness of Atiku's new platform outside portions of the Northeast and Southwest.

Following Yar'Adua's death, Atiku returned to the PDP ahead of the 2011 election, hoping to benefit from northern expectations that power should return to the region after the late president's tenure was cut short.

However, Jonathan's emergence dramatically altered the political equation. It was during the 2011 electoral cycle that zoning became one of the defining debates in

Nigerian politics.

While many northern politicians insisted that power should revert to the North, a competing argument emerged that Jonathan should be allowed to complete the tenure initiated by the late Yar'Adua.

The sentiment generated substantial national sympathy for Jonathan and weakened Atiku's succession strategy.

In the PDP presidential primary, Jonathan defeated Atiku convincingly, polling 2,736 votes to Atiku's 805.

The result reflected not only the power of incumbency but also the widespread goodwill Jonathan enjoyed across large sections of the country.

By 2015, Atiku had again repositioned himself politically. This time, he joined the newly formed APC, a coalition that brought together several opposition tendencies determined to end the PDP's sixteen-year dominance.

Alongside Tinubu, Buhari, and other opposition leaders, Atiku helped build what eventually became Nigeria's first successful political merger. However, his presidential ambition once again encountered a major obstacle at the APC primary.

Buhari's cult-like popularity across much of northern Nigeria overwhelmed every other aspirant.

The former military ruler secured 3,430 delegate votes, while Atiku finished behind both Buhari and former Kano State governor Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso.

Although disappointed, Atiku remained within the APC until political differences once again pushed him back to the PDP.

The peak of Atiku's strength

OF all his presidential attempts, the 2019 election remains Atiku's strongest outing in terms of national spread, political momentum and total votes.

Running under the PDP against incumbent President Buhari, Atiku campaigned vigorously on restructuring, economic liberalisation, job creation and national unity. His message resonated strongly in parts of the South-East, South-South and Middle Belt.

He won 17 states and the Federal Capital Territory, recording major victories in Adamawa, Taraba, Benue, Plateau, Delta, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu, Anambra, Oyo, Osun, Ondo and Edo.

The election demonstrated Atiku's strongest southern penetration since entering presidential politics.

For the first time, he appeared capable of building the broad national coalition required to challenge a sitting president.

Nevertheless, Buhari's overwhelming dominance across the Northwest and sections of the Northeast proved decisive.

The APC also retained considerable support in the Southwest, largely due to Tinubu's formidable political machinery. Although Atiku challenged the outcome at the Presidential Election Petition Tribunal, alleging widespread irregularities and insisting electronic server results favoured him, the courts dismissed his petition.

Despite the legal defeat, the 2019 election is his closest approach to the presidency.

The 2023 setback

IF 2019 represented Atiku's strongest performance, the 2023 election was perhaps his most serious setback.

Although he again secured the PDP ticket, the emergence of Peter Obi under the Labour Party fundamentally altered Nigeria's electoral map.

Obi's candidacy fractured the opposition base,

particularly across the South-East and among urban voters who had largely supported Atiku in 2019.

The PDP also entered the election deeply divided following the G-5 governors' rebellion led by former Rivers State governor Nyesom Wike.

One of the factors that tilted the contest against Atiku was the perception in some quarters that he did not respect the unwritten zoning understanding that many believed should have favoured the South after Buhari's eight-year tenure.

That argument became particularly influential in the South-East and contributed significantly to Obi's departure from the PDP. Beyond zoning, Atiku also faced criticism for failing to resolve disputes surrounding the PDP leadership structure.

Critics argued that once the presidential ticket went to the North, the party's national chairmanship should have shifted to the South. Instead, Senator Iyorchia Ayu from the North-Central remained national chairman, fuelling resentment among key stakeholders.

The controversy deepened divisions within the party and weakened campaign coordination in strategic states. Ultimately, Tinubu won the presidency with 8.7 million votes, while Atiku finished second with nearly seven million, narrowly ahead of Obi.

Unlike in 2019, when Atiku enjoyed broad southern support, his victories in 2023 were largely concentrated in the Northwest and Northeast.

He lost all five South-East states to Obi and struggled to maintain dominance in key South-South states where internal PDP conflicts weakened party structures.

The election highlighted how dramatically Nigeria's political landscape had changed within four years. Regions that once formed the backbone of Atiku's coalition became vulnerable to new political forces, changing demographics and shifting voter sentiments.

ADC coalition and fresh zoning crisis

ATIKU'S emergence as the ADC presidential candidate for 2027 has once again reopened difficult conversations around zoning, coalition stability and generational change.

While his victory over contenders such as Amaechi demonstrated his enduring influence among northern political elites and experienced delegates, it has also generated resistance within sections of the coalition.

Many southern politicians insist that power should remain in the South until 2031 in line with Nigeria's informal rotational arrangement.

Their argument is simple: if Tinubu has completed only one term by 2027, another northerner should not immediately replace him. That debate threatens to become one of the biggest obstacles confronting Atiku's ambition.

Beyond zoning, the ADC coalition itself remains a work in progress.

Managing competing ambitions, addressing post-primary grievances and maintaining unity among various political tendencies will be critical.

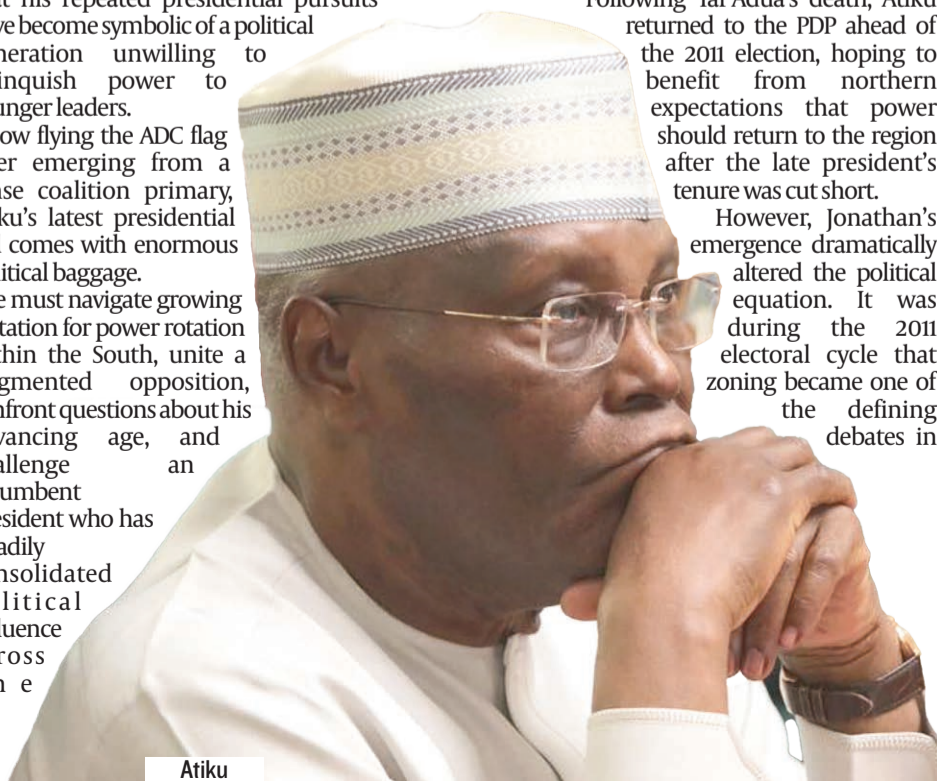
Responding to such concerns, ADC National Publicity Secretary Bolaji Abdullahi told *The Guardian* that mechanisms already exist within the party to address post-primary disputes.

According to him, Atiku's solidarity visit to Amaechi shortly after the contest demonstrates the coalition's commitment to internal reconciliation.

He also assured that the party would listen to and address all complaints arising from the primary process.

Perhaps the biggest question surrounding Atiku's ambition is whether he can genuinely defeat President Tinubu. Despite repeated defeats, many still regard him as one of Nigeria's most formidable opposition politicians because of his extensive political network, financial resources, deep northern structure and proven ability to negotiate alliances across party lines.

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Atiku

World Report

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Israel expands ground operation against Hezbollah

THE Israeli military has increased the zone in southern Lebanon that it has warned residents to evacuate from, as it further expands its ground operations against Hezbollah.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) reiterated its warning to everyone south of the

Zahrani River to leave.

"Anyone present near Hezbollah elements, facilities, or means of combat endangers their life," a spokesman said.

The warning came shortly after the army confirmed it had taken Beaufort Castle, a strategic point on a high ridge

above the Litani River.

Every day is bringing a new expansion in Israel's war against Hezbollah.

The latest evacuation warning is the second time in recent days that Israel has told residents to leave the entire south of the country below the Zahrani River.

The IDF spokesman said that a significant number of IDF ground soldiers were involved in the operation, which was currently expanding to additional areas.

It's another clear indication that Israeli ground forces are moving ever deeper into Lebanese territory beyond

their original demarcation line of the Litani River.

Meanwhile, yesterday, Lebanon's Health Ministry said 13 hospital staff had been injured in an airstrike in the vicinity of Hiram Hospital in Tyre, which caused significant damage.

France, which has historical ties with Lebanon, has requested a meeting of the United National Security Council to discuss the Israeli military operations.

Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot told French network BFMTV the situation was a

major mistake for Israel.

"Nothing can justify the prolongation of Israel's military operations in Lebanon and its increasingly deep occupation of Lebanese territory," he said.

Just over the Litani River line, the IDF has confirmed it has captured one of the key strategic prizes in the area - Beaufort Castle. It was built as a fortress commanding views from high on the cliffs above the Litani River by the Crusaders some 900 years ago, and has been fought over many times since.

Final campaign ends in Ethiopia ahead of polls

FINAL campaigns have been held across Ethiopia ahead of today's parliamentary and regional polls.

Faced with a fragmented and weak opposition, Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed's ruling Prosperity Party is widely expected to win a landslide victory.

It currently holds more than 500 seats in the House of Representatives and is ex-

pected to win a majority in this election, securing him another five-year term.

For his supporters, Abiy's leadership represents stability despite significant unrest across the country. Prosperity Party partisan Aynalem Bekele said they had confidence in their leaders.

"Our prime minister is a leader who can lead the world, who has achieved re-

markable feats in the global arena and has been honoured with international acclaim," she said.

She also praised the mayor of Addis Ababa, describing him as a national icon, adding that they were dedicated to building a country for everyone.

Abiy has consolidated his grip on Ethiopian politics since his appointment in

2018. But he has faced years of violent unrest in several of the country's ethnically organised regions, including a civil war in Tigray from 2020 to 2022.

Hundreds of thousands of people died during the conflict as the federal security troops clashed with the regional forces.

Japan defence minister denies militarism, criticises China's 'huge arsenal'

JAPAN'S Defence Minister, Shinjiro Koizumi has rebutted Beijing's claim that his country was engaging in a new militarism, criticising China for its military expansion and lack of transparency. Koizumi argued that it was actually China and its "huge arsenal" of weapons that was of serious concern to the international community.

His remarks, on the last day of a defence summit in Singapore, were some of the most pointed yet from Tokyo in response to China's repeated

criticism of Japan's military build-up under Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi.

The two countries have a long history of tensions stemming from Japan's invasion of China during World War Two.

Last week, a day before a Singapore summit began, China's national defence ministry spokesman Jiang Bin warned that the grey rhino of a remilitarised Japan was gaining speed and called on the international community to work together to contain Japan's neo-militarism.

Ebola outbreak in DR Congo can be stopped, says WHO chief

THE head of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, has said that the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) can be stopped.

The WHO chief stated this at a news conference in the east-

ern Ituri Province, epicentre of the current outbreak, alongside the country's health minister.

Speaking in Bunia in the Democratic Republic of Congo at the weekend, Ghebreyesus said the DRC has faced Ebola before, 16 times,

and has ended every outbreak.

"This is the 17th. That history gives me real confidence," he said.

Health teams are racing to contain the emergency that has spread across several provinces in the Congo and

into neighbouring Uganda.

During his visit to the country, Ghebreyesus called for more international support for the response, stating that WHO had so far received only a third of its funding requirements.

News

Lagos tops list of 33 states to expect severe flooding in 2026

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

devastating effects of flooding, the Lagos State government has recently launched a flood risk insurance policy to provide rapid financial relief to vulnerable residents. The policy would enable the government to promptly provide direct cash transfers and emergency support to affected communities.

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu said about four million vulnerable residents across seven local government areas would benefit in the initial phase.

The policy provides up to \$7.5 million in coverage per flood event, creating a financial safety net for high-risk communities. The beneficiaries would not need to apply or pay premiums, as the scheme is structured as a state-backed community protection system.

Sanwo-Olu said the government would leverage residents' registration and social databases to quickly identify and reach people during emergencies.

Also, environmentalists urged a shift from emergency relief to resilience-building. They recommend channelling part of the federal and state ecological funds into long-term flood management infrastructure, such as retention basins, wetland restoration, and urban drainage expansion.

Development partners are also stepping in, with the World Bank's ongoing Nigeria Erosion and Watershed Management Project (NEWMAP) and the Hydro-Meteorological Resilience Project planning to improve forecasting capacity and flood-control works in high-risk states.

However, access to climate-finance instruments remains limited. Nigeria has yet to fully operationalise its National Climate Change Fund or establish a functional insurance mechanism for flood-related losses. As one analyst put it, "We spend billions every year rebuilding what could have been prevented at half the cost."

The Federal Government also pledged to integrate flood-risk reduction into the Renewed Hope Agenda, with commitments to update urban planning codes, enforce right-of-way protections for drains, and improve cross-border dam management with Cameroon. Lagos State, for its part, plans to expand its stormwater channels and strengthen the Drainage Enforcement Agency (LASDREA) to curb illegal reclamation of floodplains.

An environmentalist, Dr Godwin Ojo, told *The Guardian* that early warning signals and emergency alerts are commendable but insufficient for effective flood governance.

"Government must rise to the challenge of flood disaster prevention, rescue, and rehabilitation. Local communities in rural areas have limited chances of survival due to the absence of basic infrastructure to support temporary evacuations. Relief measures should meet the real needs of survivors, not serve as tools for cheap politics or publicity," he said.

Ojo identified the persistent dumping of solid waste into drainage systems as a major urban menace that worsens flooding.

He called for orientation programmes and public enlightenment campaigns to address the clogging of drainage channels.

He added that millions of dollars are available globally to address climate vulnerabilities and impacts. "Flood control projects and compensation to victims qualify for adaptation funding support to build prevention infrastructure and resilience," he explained.

However, he lamented that "funding procedures remain tedious and cumbersome and should be drastically simplified to allow countries from the Global South to access adaptation resources."

Ojo observed a growing awareness of climate-resilient agriculture and flood-resistant infrastructure but said more deliberate investment is required. "Resources should be channelled into building climate-resilient infrastructure," he added.

The Director of Programmes, Communication for Development and Social Change (CDSC), Dr Emmanuel Okezie, attributed recurring flood disasters to fragmented responsibilities and weak institutional coordination.

"Flood risk is shared across ministries of water resources, environment, works, and land planning, as well as NEMA and state agencies, but overlapping mandates and ad-hoc coordination create gaps in prevention, early warning, and recovery," he said.

Okezie explained that while relevant laws and standards exist, enforcement remains inconsistent, especially at the local level. Many agencies, he noted, lack the capacity, standard operating procedures, and financing to act on early warnings.

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

NUT orders nationwide solidarity rallies over abducted teachers, pupils

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

on May 15.

The governor appealed for unity in efforts to secure the release of the victims, stressing that the situation required collaboration among all levels of government rather than blame-trading.

"This is not the time to trade blame, whether it is the federal government, the state government or local government. This is the time to come together and rescue our children and their teachers," he said.

Makinde assured the affected families that his administration would continue to deploy every available resource towards ensuring the safe return of the abductees.

He also sympathised with the families of victims and security personnel who lost their lives while protecting lives and property.

"For the Amotekun Corps, we have lost over 200 operatives. People may not know the sacrifices they make. They go into dangerous situations and many do not return. May God help us put an end to the bloodshed in our state and country," the governor said.

Makinde noted that while residents had expressed frustration over prevailing secu-

urity challenges, the government remained committed to addressing the situation through sustained collaboration with security agencies.

The governor reiterated his support for the creation of state police, describing Amotekun as a temporary response to growing security concerns in the absence of a constitutional framework for state policing.

Speaking earlier at the joint mega rally of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the Allied Peoples Movement (APM) in Ibadan, Makinde said the South-West states established Amotekun after efforts to secure approval for state police failed to materialise.

"We wanted state police. Since it was not forthcoming, we created Amotekun as a stop-gap measure to support existing security structures," he said.

The governor urged the Federal Government to take concrete steps towards addressing security challenges across the country, stressing that effective policing requires localised solutions and stronger community participation.

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TheGuardianSports

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Again, Shaibu tasks govt on inauguration of NSC board

By Christian Okpara

DIRECTOR General of the Nigeria Institute of Sports (NIS), Philip Shaibu, has urged the Federal Government to inaugurate the board of the National Sports Commission (NSC) without further delay to halt the steady slide in the country's sports.

Speaking immediately after the Okpekpe International Road Race, where he featured in the VIP category, at the weekend, Shaibu said that it is a disservice to the country and its people to allow only two persons, the NSC Chairman, Shehu Dikko and the commission's director general, Bukola Olopade, to decide the fate of millions of Nigerians over two years after the Federal Government appointed a board for the commission.

"I am a member of the board of the NSC, and that is why, consistently, I'm telling them, we need to constitute that board.

"Whatever they are doing there is completely illegal, so that board has to be constituted. "If the board is constituted, I can bet you, you'll see the turnaround of Nigerian sport. I am saying this because then all the board members will bring their wealth of experience and passion into one basket to make it work."

Restating that President Bola Tinubu wants

'Two-man board is illegal'

Nigeria to take its position as the number one destination for sports tourism, Shaibu said: "Now that we have a leader that is interested in sports, we should make the best use of the opportunity.

"That is why I'm struggling, speaking out so that Nigeria will do the right thing. The board has to be constituted now."

Shaibu is among many stakeholders that have been calling on President Tinubu to prevail on the NSC chairman to constitute the board as stated by law.

Earlier in the year, sports analyst, Saab Ikewuaku raised the alarm that the NSC is being administered as a one-person shop, with the officials taking "decisions that sometimes go against the interest of the country."

He said: "A board that is meant to have representatives from different interest groups in sports has now become a corner shop where officials make decisions without consulting those who were expected to analyse critical decisions before their implementations."



Osimhen and Lookman are out of the June friendlies against Poland and Portugal.

Withdrawals won't affect Eagles' plans against Poland, Portugal, says Chelle

By Christian Okpara

THE Super Eagles have been hit by the withdrawals of key players ahead of the international friendlies against Poland and Portugal, but Team Manager, Eric Chelle, is still upbeat that Nigeria will hold its own against the Europeans.

Inter Milan's Ebenezer Akinsanmiro, Victor Osimhen, Ademola Lookman, Samuel Chukwueze, and new kid on the block, Femi Azeez, are among the players forced to skip the games due either to club pressures or some other issues.

Akinsanmiro was added to the squad following the withdrawals of Samson Tijani and Alhassan Yusuf due to visa issues. But the youngster has been forced out of

the games by illness.

Last week, English Championship club Millwall pulled Femi Azeez from the games owing to club engagements. Conspicuous by their absence in the squad are two of the most important players in the Nigerian squad, Victor Osimhen and Ademola Lookman.

Osimhen withdrew from the squad amid growing speculation over his future at Galatasaray, while Lookman also pulled out for personal reasons.

Speaking after Nigeria's 3-0 defeat of Jamaica in the Unity Cup final on Saturday, Chelle said: "For now, we have two games, Poland and Portugal, and I have a lot of problems because some players don't have decent form.

"Concerning Victor Osimhen, he is an important player for Nigeria and Galatasaray. This period is off-season, when a lot of things happen off the pitch, and we must respect certain decisions that are not in our hands.

Ajayi's 9.84s world lead, a major achievement, says Porbeni

By Gowon Akpodonor

FORMER Head coach of the Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN), Seigha Porbeni, has described as a "major achievement" the 9.84 seconds achieved by U.S.-based Nigerian sprinter Kanyinsola Ajayi at the weekend.

Ajayi made history in the men's 100m at the NCAA East Regionals as he powered to a new Personal Best (PB) time of 9.84s (0.4) to win his race and qualify for the NCAA Championships.

He broke the Nigerian record of 9.85s set by Olusoji Fasuba in 2006.

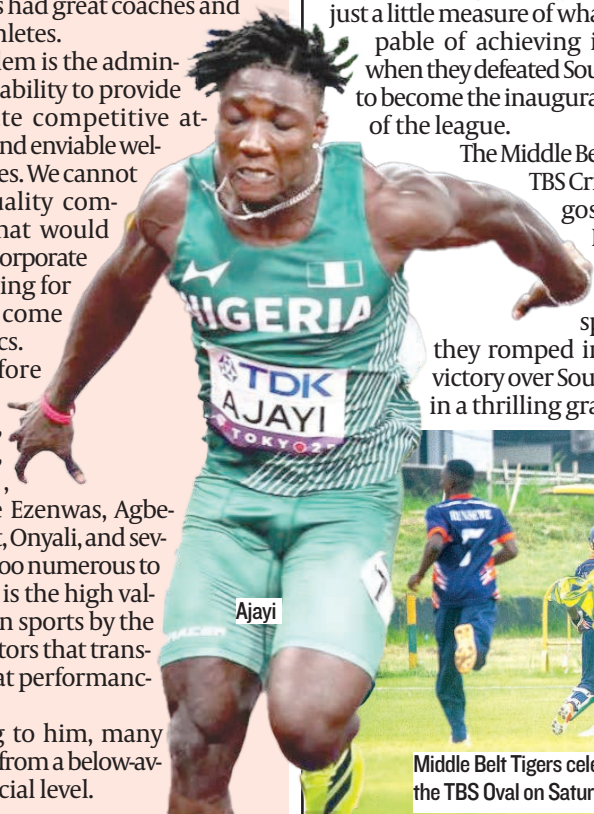
Ajayi is also now the fastest man in the world so far in 2026, taking over the World Lead.

Speaking with *The Guardian* yesterday, Porbeni said: "This further proves that we have always had great coaches and talented athletes.

"Our problem is the administrators' inability to provide an adequate competitive atmosphere and enviable welfare packages. We cannot provide quality competitions that would inspire the corporate bodies jostling for a space to come into athletics.

"Even before Fasuba, Okagbare, Igor, Oduduru, we had the Ezenwas, Agbaku, Falilat, Onyali, and several others too numerous to mention. It is the high value placed on sports by the administrators that translates to great performances."

According to him, many athletes are from a below-average financial level.



Liverpool set to open formal talks with Andoni Iraola

LIVERPOOL will 'open formal talks' with Andoni Iraola this week to succeed Arne Slot, with the now former Cherries boss reportedly keen to take the job, reports *bournemouthecho.co.uk*.

Iraola, who left Bournemouth having guided them to a first European qualification at the end of the season, is the frontrunner for the job at Anfield.

Liverpool, according to *The Times*, are keen to make a swift appointment after they sacked Slot on Saturday, and want to have his successor in place by the start of the World Cup.

Iraola has had discussions with other clubs, including Crystal Palace, Bayer Leverkusen, and AC Milan, over vacant positions, but while the Reds will consider others for their head coach role, the *Times* indicates it would be a surprise if he were not appointed.

The *Daily Mail*, meanwhile, has reported that Iraola is keen to take the job.

A move to Merseyside would bring a reunion with Richard Hughes, who brought Iraola to Bournemouth as club technical director, before he moved on to Liverpool.

Cricket: Middle Belt Tigers win maiden Nigeria Super League

By Christian Okpara

THE Middle Belt Tigers, at the weekend, proved that their earlier victories in the maiden Nigeria Super League were just a little measure of what they are capable of achieving in the game when they defeated Southern Sharks to become the inaugural champions of the league.

The Middle Belters held the TBS Cricket Oval, Lagos, as Middle Belt Tigers were crowned spellbound as they romped into a six-run victory over Southern Sharks in a thrilling grand finale on Saturday.

The championship clash brought the curtain down on an exciting maiden edition of the Nigeria Super League, with 20 matches played, showcasing elite talent, fierce competition, and the continued growth of cricket in Nigeria.

After winning the toss and electing to bat, Middle Belt Tigers posted a competitive 104/5 in their allotted 10 overs in a high-intensity contest.

Solomon Chilemanya set the tone early with a blistering 17 off just seven balls, smashing two sixes and a boundary.

Olaleye Olayinka Elijah added stability with a composed 21 off 14 deliveries, while David N.A Ankrah produced a crucial late-innings assault with 22 runs off only 10 balls, including three towering sixes.



Middle Belt Tigers celebrating their victory at the maiden Nigeria Cricket Super League at the TBS Oval on Saturday.

Grange, St Saviour's extend reign at Dolphin Swimming League Awards

RISE star Naetochukwu Oguegbu of Meadow Hall School and Grange School duo, Aidan Dumuje-Abili and Oluwatofunmi Ibadapo, emerged as the standout performers at the Season 7 of the Dolphin Swimming League Awards, clinching the coveted Most Valuable Player (MVP) honours.

Grange School and St Saviour's School also reaffirmed their dominance, retaining their titles as Nigeria's best-performing schools in the country's premier schools swimming competition.

Oguegbu stole the spotlight with an impressive haul of 15 gold medals, earning the Best Male Swimmer award alongside Grange's Aidan Dumuje-Abili, a familiar MVP winner. His breakthrough performance has marked him as one of the league's brightest prospects, signalling a new generation of talent in Nigeria's youth swimming scene.

The well-attended awards ceremony in Lagos featured remarks from former Presi-

dent of the Nigeria Aquatics Federation, Babatunde Fatayi-Williams, who described the Dolphin Swimming League as "the best to have emerged from Nigeria."

He highlighted the league's growing impact, noting that several of its alumni are now representing the country at national, continental, and international competitions.

Fatayi-Williams urged the federation to partner with the Dolphin Swimming League to replicate its success across the country.

For the second consecutive year, Ibadapo of Grange School was named Best Female Swimmer after winning 14 gold medals and one silver. Reflecting on her achievement, she said: "After winning last year, I knew I had to redouble my efforts to retain the title. With the support of my parents, I was able to achieve that. Next season, I hope to make it three in a row through even greater dedication and hard work."

Solution

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FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS



*The memory of the righteous
is a Blessing **Proverbs 10 vs 7***

*Today makes it a year since you
were called home **DEAREST MOTHER**,
yet the pain is still very deep,
fresh and the tears have not stopped.*

*Though you are no longer
physically here but your Love
and legacies continue to inspire
and comfort us,
you cared for everyone and taught us
by your actions
that Love is best expressed in service.*

*We miss you deeply and celebrate
the memories we shared. Rest on
DEAREST MOTHER
in the bosom of God*

**LATE VERONICA
AYEDIME
TAIYE EWOLABI**

(Nee: Kato)

1953 TO 1ST JUNE 2025

FONDLY REMEMBERED BY

TOYIN	DAUGHTER
ABEL	SON
FUNMILAYO	DAUGHTER
SUNDAY	SON
TOPE	DAUGHTER
GRANDCHILDREN	



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Withdrawals won't affect Eagles' plans against Poland, Portugal, says Chelle

/38



2027 elections amid uncertainties

SO far, candidates have emerged for the 2027 presidential election. Attaining that significant phase suggests the process is on course. But there are other challenges. Apart from the All Progressives Congress (APC), that is stabilised with incumbency powers, major opposition parties are infested with endless disputes and court matters.

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), and the African Democratic Congress (ADC), have reported parallel primaries and duplicate lists of candidates. Even the Social Democratic Party (SDP) is not spared. As for an end to the disputes, there are no clear signs. Yet, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), has to work with a clear idea of which parties are in the ballot within a timeframe.

After 27 years of the Fourth Republic, parties are reluctant to organise free and fair primaries. Godfathers prefer to anoint candidates. Governors have lost their prime place as checks to domineering Federal Government. The entire system no longer looks like democracy. It is now tending towards a single sole administrator supported by a lame legislature. What's more troubling is the effort by the electoral umpire to take sides, drawing up a stiff timetable, with a mindset to over-regulate the political space. The situation on ground makes 2027 uncertain.

Contentious primaries

The APC effortlessly elected president Tinubu as their flagbearer, with 10,999,162 votes. It wasn't a surprise that the incumbent President summoned an overwhelming victory. But the party makes it a big deal, believing that those are numbers already in the bank for Mr. President, preparatory to the real election. The worry for some is that the numbers are not verifiable.

With the APC members boasting that the party alone could elect the President in 2027, having surpassed the 8.7 million he polled in 2023, the opposition suspects the numbers are outrageous and preparing ground to justify a future landslide declaration that might not be earned. Here, it is the responsibility of INEC to make primaries transparent. After all, parties' membership registers are now with the electoral body and the idea behind the register was to ensure internal party democracy and establishment of statutory eligibility for primaries.

Party primaries are not all-comers affair but what took place was a contest by governors to post exaggerated numbers for President Tinubu. The worry among the opposition is that the APC may be tempted to carry the same untamed zeal into the elections proper.

Then there was the drama of one Stanley Osifo, who was presented as a challenger to Mr. President. Many observers think that was a needless stunt and a clear case of throwing money away willfully, if indeed Osifo invested around N100 million to buy the Expression of Interest and Nomination forms.

Of course, it is the democratic right of the challenger to put himself forward. However, he should be investigated by the financial crimes agencies for tax compliance and the details of what he does for a living. In these hard times, a presidential contest should not be reduced to costly jokes.

In the ADC, former Vice President, Atiku



INEC Chairman, Joash Amupitan

Abubakar, won the primary. But not without the other contenders, Rotimi Amaechi and Mohammed Hayatu-Deen, crying foul and alleging irregularities in the exercise. Considering logistics and costs, the leadership of ADC was reported to have proposed resolving the flagbearer challenge by consensus. Atiku Abubakar was reported to favour that option as well. But the other aspirants won the day and the party delivered the Direct Primary option.

After results from about 13 states had been tallied, Amaechi and Hayatu-Deen claimed the process was rigged. They took to the media to ventilate their grievances. But at the end of the day, ADC announced that Atiku had won by a huge margin. Reconciliations are ongoing in ADC to pacify both men.

Atiku must have embraced the spirit of reconciliation the hard way. In 2023, his inability to manage Nyesom Wike's political emotions turned out to be very costly for the PDP and Atiku. That the PDP is now sickly and a caricature of its former ebullient self is traceable to the miscalculations and mismanagement of its 2023 presidential primary. The ADC must pick some lessons from that and reconcile well.

Despite the fractious opposition, the ADC appears set to regain balance after it lost members to the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC). With the emergence of Atiku on the ticket, the party might begin to chart a course across Nigeria's divided political landscape.

Peter Obi is the sole candidate of NDC. Obi is reported to be shy of contested primaries, particularly ones that requires mobilisation of delegates and paying stipends for travels and accommodation. He calls it inducement. He left the ADC because his chances of emerging as flag bearer in that party were bleak. At the NDC, he got crowned effortlessly, because he arrived with huge presence and mass appeal. Not only that, Obi came with Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso,

fellow former governor and crowd puller.

There are formidable presidential candidates who have been awarded tickets of other parties; they include Donald Duke (Peoples Redemption Party); Governor Seyi Makinde (Allied Peoples Movement); Adewole Adebayo (Social Democratic Party), Omoyele Sowore (African Action Congress). There is also former President Goodluck Jonathan, being pressured to join a faction of the disfigured PDP.

Window of opportunity

The lineup for 2027 is not cast in stone yet, as other parties are yet to finalise their details. Moreover, there are court cases that are ongoing. Depending on how they are treated, the lineup could see further adjustments.

Among ongoing electoral litigation, of particular concern is the case instituted by the Youth Party (YP) and the SDP, challenging the legality of INEC's regulations and timetable. That judgment of Justice Umar of the Federal High Court, Abuja, and the order that INEC went beyond its powers on timelines for submission of candidates' list and parties' membership register could be the game changer for the election season.

The general impression is that some regulations of INEC were designed to favour the ruling party, and are contrary to what is provided in the Electoral Act 2026. Justice Umar saw sense in YPP's complaint and ordered that INEC adjusts its timetable in line with the Act.

Now, what INEC does with the order is the crux of the matter. But before then, the response by political office seekers to the judgment has been swift, particularly for those who felt that they were schemed out in the APC primaries. They are trooping to other parties.

Former minister of Digital Economy and Communications, Isa Panatami, has grabbed the governorship ticket of the PDP, in Gombe State. Senator Ovie Omo-Agege of Delta Central has resigned from the APC. He got a waiver to fly NDC ticket for the Senate in 2027. The season for transfers has just begun if the window opens till September.

However, for INEC the order might disrupts arrangements and fixtures for 2027. A reordered timetable could affect the entire elec-

“The election year 2027 is looking dicey. There is induced instability in the system, with the intention to weaken popular participation. If there is no popular participation, it is no longer democracy. This is the time to cease the window of opportunity to intervene. And it is the responsibility of the judiciary to stabilise the polity and avert political logjam.”

tion year one way or the other. INEC is in a better position to know what implications are likely. Feelers are that the Commission has indicated interest to appeal the judgment. INEC is reported to be considering applying for a stay, pending the appeal.

The Movement for Credible Elections (MCE), a coalition of civil societies is worried that the integrity of 2027 elections might be jeopardised, given the manner INEC has appealed the judgment of Justice Umar, which nullified aspects the Commission's timetable. MCE said it is equally concerned that INEC seeks a “stay” of the judgment pending the determination of the appeal.

In a statement signed by Dr. Usman Bugaje (chair), Dr. Obiageli Ezekwesili (co-chair), Dr. Hadjia Bilkisu Magoro (deputy chair) and Wale Okunniyi (Head of Secretariat), MCE counseled that INEC does not require early submission of candidates' names since it uses party names and logos in its ballot papers. The Movement said: “there is therefore no operational basis for compelling political parties to conclude primaries in May or submit candidates' lists months earlier than the law requires.”

MCE suggested that what INEC got for itself is an unnecessarily early timeline that imposes avoidable pressure on political parties. And that it also undermines internal democracy in parties, with increased risk of procedural errors that will later fuel litigation.

Equally troubling for MCE is the perception that INEC might be construed as descending into the arena, instead of staying neutral. “Public trust is the most valuable asset of any electoral umpire. When INEC becomes a litigant against political parties over a timetable issue, it risks being perceived as an interested party rather than a neutral regulator. Such perceptions- even if unintended- can weaken trust and confidence among political actors and voters ahead of the 2027 elections.”

Drawing from data on an already dangerously low public confidence in INEC, MCE illustrated with recent data by Afrobarometer's survey of just 23 per cent of Nigerians expressing trust in INEC.

MCE said: “This is an electoral emergency. At a time when the country is already anxious about preparations for the 2027 elections, INEC should be taking every possible step to rebuild trust, not engaging in actions that risk pushing trust in the institution toward complete collapse. An appeal on a matter where the law is already clear sends the wrong signals to a public whose faith in the electoral process is already dangerously low.”

Not done, MCR further counseled that INEC's mandate is to enforce the law, not to contest it. INEC is required to implement the law impartially. Appealing a judgment that merely affirms and clarifies the Electoral Act may be interpreted as the Commission taking sides. This perception alone can damage the legitimacy of the electoral process, the Coalition stated.

The election year 2027 is looking dicey. There is induced instability in the system, with the intention to weaken popular participation. If there is no popular participation, it is no longer democracy. This is the time to cease the window of opportunity to intervene. And it is the responsibility of the judiciary to stabilise the polity and avert political logjam.

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