

Interest Income Rise Lifts FCMB Earnings To N828bn

A 64.7 per cent growth in interest income has driven the gross earnings of the FCMB Group to N828.1bn as of the end of the first nine months

of 2025. According to its earnings release filed with the Nigerian Exchange Limited during the weekend, the financial

services company said that the N828.1bn was a 40.9 per cent growth from N587.7bn for the same period in the prior year. The Monetary Policy

Committee of the Central Bank of Nigeria has maintained a hawkish stance for most of this year as it sought to get a handle on

inflation, which has been on a decline in the last six months. The MPC held the

CONTINUES ON PAGE 2



Obozuwa

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Benin Quells Coup Attempt, Arrests Mutinous Soldiers Pg. 2

● Talon Safe as Loyal Troops Retake State TV ● Nigeria, ECOWAS Warn Plotters, Mull Standby Force Deployment



From left: Gov. Usman Ododo of Kogi; Gov. Monday Okpebholo of Edo; Gov. Sheriff Oborevwori of Delta; Gov. Ahmed Aliyu of Sokoto State; Gov. Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State; Gov. Hope Uzodinma of Imo; Gov. Dapo Abiodun of Ogun; Gov. Peter Mbah of Enugun State; Gov. Luky Ayedatiwa of Ondo and others, during the APC Progressive Governors Forum (PGF)/stakeholders meeting in Lagos on Saturday

PDP Crisis: Wike Camp Moves To Conduct Fresh Congresses, Convention

● Factional Leaders Rally Support for Mohammed-led NWC

BY LAIDE AKINBOADE, ABUJA

The factional Board of Trustees (BoT) of the Nyesom Wike tendency in the Peoples Democratic Party PDP has unveiled a major internal restructuring plan aimed at

reorganizing troubled state chapters and preparing the grounds for fresh congresses and a national convention. Chairman of the factional BoT, Senator Mao Ohuabunwa, disclosed this yesterday at the opening

session of the board's meeting held at the Life Camp official residence of the FCT Minister, Nyesom Wike. He said the group was committed to rebuilding the PDP from within and restoring public confidence

in its internal processes. Ohuabunwa said the faction was already "making meaningful progress in reorganizing affected states, including the constitution of credible caretaker committees," explaining that the

initiative would "prepare the ground for transparent congresses and subsequent convention process." He insisted the reforms were necessary to "build trust, strengthen internal structures and ensure that our party remains

CONTINUES ON PAGE 2

Kano Goes Spiritual, Offers Prayers against Security Challenges Pg. 4

Bayelsa Hosts Inaugural Human Rights Summit Pg. 6

Africa Faces Rising Outbreaks of Cholera, Mpox, Marburg, CDC Warns Pg 16

Bethlehem Christmas Tree Lights up for First Time since Start of Gaza War Pg. 28

D'Tigers' Decline Raises Fresh Concerns over Nigeria's Basketball Direction Pg. 29

NiMet Forecasts Three-day Dust Haze, Cloudiness From Today Pg. 2

Benin Quells Coup Attempt, Arrests Mutinous Soldiers

<< FROM COVER

BY DAVID TROUGH, ABUJA

Benin Republic yesterday repelled an attempted military coup after a group of soldiers briefly seized the national television station and announced the removal of President Patrice Talon from office.

The soldiers — operating under the name Military Committee for Refoundation (CMR) and led by Lt.-Col. Pascal Tigri — declared on state TV that all state institutions had been dissolved and that they had assumed power. Their broadcast was cut shortly after, and loyalist forces moved to restore order.

Gunfire was reported around Camp Guezo, near the president’s residence in Cotonou, prompting the French Embassy to advise its nationals to remain indoors. But the presidency quickly assured the public that Talon, 67, was “safe” and that the coup attempt involved only “a small group” with control limited to the television station.

Military sources confirmed that the plotters did not breach the presidential residence or offices.

By Sunday afternoon, security forces had arrested about a dozen soldiers, including alleged ringleaders. All but one of the detainees are serving personnel, according to security sources.

Nigeria condemned the coup attempt “in the strongest possible terms,” describing it as a dangerous assault on constitutional order. Minister of Foreign Affairs Yusuf Tuggar said the action threatened democratic stability in a “brotherly nation,” praising Beninese forces for swiftly defending the government and ensuring President Talon’s safety.

Nigeria urged all parties in Benin to remain calm and uphold democratic processes, reaffirming its commitment to regional stability.

ECOWAS also issued a strongly worded condemnation, calling the attempted takeover a “subversion of the will of the people.” The regional bloc warned that coup

leaders would be held personally accountable for any loss of life or damage.

In an unprecedented signal, ECOWAS said it would support Benin “in all forms necessary,” including the possible deployment of the regional standby force to defend the country’s constitutional order and territorial integrity.

The foiled putsch comes as West Africa grapples with a wave of recent coups in Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and the latest in Guinea-Bissau. Benin itself has a history of coups and attempted coups, including the 2024 arrest of Djimon Tevoedjre, then commander of the presidential guard, over an alleged plot.

President Talon, in power since 2016 and known as the “cotton king of Cotonou,” has overseen notable economic growth but faces criticism over political restrictions, including the exclusion of major opposition parties from elections. He is expected to step down in April 2026 at the end of his second and final constitutional term.

Interest Income Rise Lifts FCMB Earnings To N828bn

<< FROM COVER

benchmark rate at 27 per cent at its last meeting of 2025. The high-interest environment is a boon for lenders while detrimental to the real sector, which has been lamenting about the impact on its operations.

For the FCMB Group, while interest income has risen, non-interest income declined by 33.8 per cent, driven by a N54.6tn year-on-year decline in currency revaluation gains.

“Our digital business,

comprising Lending, Payments, and Wealth, continued to record strong growth across revenue lines, transaction volumes, and transaction value, with digital now contributing 13.7 per cent to gross earnings. This resulted in a 54 per cent y-o-y growth in digital revenues from N73.6bn as of September 2024 to N113.6bn for the period ended September 2025, with Lending contributing 74.4 per cent, Payments 23.0 per cent, and Wealth 2.6 per cent.

“Net interest income grew by 101.9 per cent from N173.8bn

in the prior year, to N350.8bn at the end of September 2025. The yield on earning assets improved to 21.1 per cent, resulting in a growth in Net Interest Margin to 10.1 per cent for 9M 2025 from 6.3 per cent as at FY 2024. Operating expenses grew by 41.3 per cent y-on-y to N238.9bn for the period ended September 2025, with over 70% of the cost growth due to increased personnel costs, regulatory costs (AMCON & NDIC), technology costs, and investments in business expansion,” read part of the earnings disclosure.

Shettima Departs Abuja for Ouattara’s Inauguration in Abidjan

Vice President Kashim Shettima has departed Abuja for Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, to represent President Bola Ahmed Tinubu at the inauguration of Alassane Ouattara for a fourth term in office as President of that country.

Shettima is expected to join other leaders across Africa and beyond to witness activities lined up for the swearing-in ceremony scheduled to hold on Monday, December 8, 2025, at the Presidential Palace in Abidjan.

Quatara was re-elected for a

fourth term in office on October 25, 2025, as President of Côte d’Ivoire, a West African country that shares cordial diplomatic ties with Nigeria.

Both nations collaborate significantly within ECOWAS and the African Union on security, trade, and development, formalised by a Bi-National Commission and numerous agreements covering areas like anti-trafficking, agriculture, and digital economy, with strong informal trade and a significant Nigerian diaspora in Côte d’Ivoire, fostering deep

bilateral economic and social connections.

A statement signed by Stanley Nkwocha, Senior Special Assistant to the President on Media & Communications (Office of the Vice President), disclosed that the Vice President is accompanied by Omar Aliyu Touray, President of ECOWAS Commission; Senator Abubakar Sani Bello, Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and Hon. Usman Zannah, member representing Kaga/Gubio/Magumeri Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives.

PDP Crisis: Wike Camp Moves To Conduct Fresh Congresses, Convention

<< FROM COVER

a model of fairness and inclusiveness in the Nigerian democratic space.”

Declaring full support for the Abdulrahman Mohammed-led National Working Committee NWC, he said; “We are going to work with this NWC, we are going to encourage them, we are going to support them to ensure that the right things are done, and that things will be done in line with the law and the guidance of our great party.”

The senator stressed that the BoT must reclaim its statutory role in stabilizing the PDP, noting that “as the constitution of our party entails, the Board of Trustees must continue to provide stability, wisdom,

and moral guidance.”

He added that its responsibility was to “safeguard the party’s soul, steer it away from divisive tendencies, and reinforce the values that have historically set the PDP apart as a disciplined and democratically established institution.”

Ohuabunwa urged members to prioritize unity as they push through the restructuring agenda, saying, “in this defining moment, therefore, we must rise above sentiments and act with unity of all.”

He also reaffirmed the faction’s determination to ensure that the PDP emerges stronger after the reforms.

“Our duty is clear, well stated, to consolidate the reforms already underway, deepen internal cohesion, and ensure that the People’s Democratic Party emerges stronger, more virile,

more united and fully prepared for the leadership responsibilities ahead,” he said.

Describing the BoT as the “conscience of the party” and its “moral compass,” he warned that the board must not be found wanting in upholding legality and due process.

He said; “We must stand and face the truth, and ensure that this party stands to be counted at all times in our obedience to the laws of the Federation, the laws of our party, and the guidelines of the regulatory body, which is the Independent National Electoral Commission”.

Ohuabunwa thanked members who attended despite the short notice and travel delays, expressing optimism that the meeting would set the tone for a stable and reinvigorated PDP.

NiMet Forecasts Three-day Dust Haze, Cloudiness from Today

The Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) has predicted dust haze and cloudiness from Monday to Wednesday across the country.

NiMet’s weather outlook released on Sunday in Abuja envisaged moderate dust haze on Monday in northern region with visibility range of 2 km to 5km over parts of Katsina, Kano, Jigawa, Gombe, Bauchi, Adamawa, Taraba, Borno and Yobe States.

The agency said the rest of the region would possibly experience slight dust haze throughout the forecast period.

”For the central region, slight dust haze is anticipated over the region throughout the forecast period.

For the southern region, a cloudy atmosphere

with sunshine intervals is anticipated over the region with chances of isolated thunderstorms over parts of Cross River and Akwa Ibom during the morning hours.

”Later in the day, isolated thunderstorms with light rains are anticipated over parts of Rivers, Delta, Ondo, Lagos, Edo, Ogun, Bayelsa, Cross River and Akwa Ibom,” it said.

According to NiMet, moderate dust haze with visibility range of 2km to 5km is anticipated over the northern region throughout the forecast period on Tuesday.

It anticipated slight dust haze over the region central throughout the forecast period.

NiMet predicted a cloudy atmosphere with sunshine intervals over the southern

region with prospects of isolated thunderstorms over parts of Bayelsa, Rivers, Delta, Cross River and Akwa Ibom later in the day.

The agency envisaged moderate dust haze on Wednesday over the northern region with a visibility range of 2km to 5km over the region throughout the forecast period.

”Moderate Dust haze with visibility range of 2 – 5km is anticipated over the central region throughout the forecast period.

”Cloudy atmosphere is expected over southern region during the morning hours. Isolated thunderstorms with light rains are anticipated over parts of Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Lagos, Edo, Ogun and Ondo later in the day,” it said.

Troops Rescue 25 Victims, Nab 10 Suspects in Nationwide Operations — Army

The Nigerian Army said its troops have in the last 48 hours rescued 25 kidnapped victims and apprehended 10 suspects, including bandits’ collaborators, illegal miners, violent extremists and a suspected arms dealer.

A credible source at Army Headquarters said on Sunday that the successes were recorded during intensified operations across the country.

The source said the coordinated operations spanned the North East, North West, North Central and South South theatres.

In the North East, he said the troops of Operation Hadin Kai

(OPHK) conducted clearance missions around Gargash terrorist clusters in Bama Local Government Area of Borno, recovering two AK-47 rifles, magazines, ammunition and motorbikes, and destroying terrorists’ enclaves and farms.

In the North West, he said the troops under Operation FANSAN YAMMA rescued three kidnapped victims at Kobbo village in Kebbi’s Shanga Local Government Area following a response to terrorist activity.

According to him, troops in Sabon Birni Local Government Area of Sokoto State also

responded to an attack that left a farmer dead and one civilian abducted.

“In Silame Local Government Area, a suspected arms dealer was arrested after attempting to buy 10 rifles and ammunition from a soldier.

“Troops recovered 58 rounds of 7.62mm special ammunition and a mobile phone.

“Troops also confronted violent extremists attempting to cross into Odare Forest in Wase Local Government Area, recovering a loaded magazine, motorbikes and other items,” he said.



' EDITORIAL

Tinubu's Ambassadors Should Undergo Rigorous Senatorial Scrutiny

More than two years after terminating the services of all ambassadors, appointed by the previous administration; precisely on September 2, 2023, President Bola Tinubu left Nigerian embassies fallow. It was only a few days ago that he forwarded his list of ambassadorial nominees to the Senate.

The list contains several well-known political figures - some controversial characters. The list includes; former Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Mahmood Yakubu; former Minister of Aviation, Femi Fani-Kayode; former Abia State Governor, Okezie Ikpeazu; and former presidential aide, Reno Omokri. Given the quality and pedigree of some of the ambassadorial nominees, Nigerians have reacted with mixed feelings. Some have pointed out that after the long delay to nominate the ambassadors, the list did not contain personalities worthy of occupying prestigious

positions as Nigeria's representatives in other countries.

Nigerians are still wondering why the President did not name ambassadors all this while. Diplomatic posts remained empty or were being filled by acting officials. Consequently, the emergence of the list has even elicited more questions than answers.

One of the questions on the lips of keen watchers is: why the sudden release of the nominees after strong words from United States President, Donald Trump, criticising the growing insecurity in Nigeria? Trump had threatened to send troops to Nigeria to eliminate the terrorists killing Nigerian Christians, if the government did not take action to stop them.

Although the Presidency has not confirmed any link, many Nigerians believe the list was hurriedly compiled in response to the international reactions triggered by Trump's remarks.

Another question is: how can a country run for over two years

without ambassadors when it is facing multi-dimensional challenges? What critical national issues occupied the presidency for so long that he could not appoint ambassadors who should represent Nigeria in different countries of the world? And when he visits a country, who follows up with the bilateral agreements reached?

Tongues are also wagging against the inclusion of the likes of Reno Omokri and Femi Fani-Kayode because of their flippant and skewed stance on some critical national issues that touch on national unity, ethnicity and insecurity. Nominating such people to represent a country that needs unity and peace sends a wrong signal to their host countries.

Again, the inclusion of the former INEC chairman in the list is controversial because of the role he played during the last general elections. He is been accused of mismanaging billions of naira budgeted for instant electronic transmission of previous

elections which he blamed on technical "glitches".

It is neither here nor there why such people should be rewarded with ambassadorial positions in a country where suitably qualified individuals abound.

Diplomats are expected to bridge differences, build trust, and represent the best version of their country. They are often the first impression foreign governments and investors encounter. At a time when Nigeria needs goodwill, stability, and a clear demonstration of unity, it is obvious the president missed an important opportunity to make things happen positively.

The thinking in some quarters is that Tinubu is rewarding political allegiance rather than competence or emotional intelligence. And the fear is that diplomatic missions could turn into extensions of political battlegrounds rather than centres of national service. Diplomacy requires calm judgement, respectful engagement and the ability to build

relationships even with critics. The inclusion of individuals known for acidic or divisive language is not in the best interest of Nigeria.

With the emergence of 68 ambassadorial nominees, the president has undoubtedly acknowledged the essence of diplomacy, even though the nomination of certain individuals do not sit well with a good number of Nigerians due to their alleged soiled pedigree and character.

Furthermore, keen watchers see the list of the nominees as a platform for patronage that seems to reward cronies, party and family members and political jobbers because it does not reflect the quality and potentials of Nigerians as a whole.

The final list of 65 nominees raises the total number of ambassadorial candidates before the Senate to 68. Three of them Kayode Are, Aminu Dalhatu, and Ayodele Oke, have already been screened by the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs.

DAILY ASSET is of

opinion that at a critical period like this when Nigeria is at a crossroads with dampened image and low morale, a m b a s s a d o r i a l appointments should serve as an opportunity to portray the country in good light. However, its not too late to make amends to the ambassadorial postings, since the president has demonstrated that he listens to the concerns of the Nigerian public.

Pointedly, while calling on the Senate to thoroughly screen all the ambassadorial nominees, we make bold to stress once again that the country is facing deep socioeconomic challenges, insecurity, youth restiveness and increasing ethnic suspicion. Leadership at such a time requires actions that show concern for unity, fairness and competence that should give the citizenry a sense of belonging. The ambassadorial list falls short addressing this pressing need because ambassadors as image-makers of the nation have a vital role to play in this regard.



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OUR MANDATE

DAILY ASSET promises to be a national newspaper, providing quality information to the people in the time-honoured tradition of truth, objectivity and fairness that been the distinctive feature of nigeria press.

We shall be responsible, decorous, factual, just and fair in the reportage of people, private and public institutions, processes and procedures believing that truthful and timesly information is an asset to decision makers at all times.

We shall always be guided by the patriotic duty to promote, support and defend the unity and responsibility of Nigeria.

We shall support the effort to build a society where citizens live peacefully and ar availed the opportunity to tap their God-given talents and acquired skills to improve their living conditions and more imortantly, attain the highest possible heights in their chosen vocations and endeavours."

NGO Launches Climate Project Steering Committee in Benue

FROM ATTAH EDE, MAKUR-DI

A global Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), International Alert has inaugurated Climate Project Steering Committee in Benue State, to tackle climate-induced conflicts and promote peace through Community dialogue.

The programme which is being supported by Irish Government, is meant to address the challenges of climate stress and conflicts by providing oversight and strategic guidance for implementing the Powering Peace through Climate Action project.

While inaugurating the state steering committee in Makurdi, the Senior Project Officer, International Alert, Kengkeng Ati, enjoined the State Steering Committee members to diligently tackle the dual challenges of climate stress and conflicts across the state.

He further urged the committee to provide oversight, strategic guidance, and recommendations for implementing the Powering Peace through Climate Action project.

"We are not simply urging communities to cease hostilities; we are investing in climate-smart solutions that offer livelihood options and alleviate tensions," Ati emphasized.

Highlighting the climate challenges faced by Benue State, the Project Officer mentioned issues such as reduced rainfall, drying water sources, declining soil fertility, and abnormal weather patterns as indicators.

He underlined the urgent need to address these issues to prevent further disputes

over land and resources.

Meanwhile, as part of measures to mitigate tensions, climate hubs have been set up in Fiidi and Agatu, offering services like weather monitoring, biogas production, briquette-making, fish drying, and solar-powered water supply.

This is in addition to fish ponds in Fiidi Community in Makurdi and Agatu which are being revitalized to enhance food security and income.

The project which is being implemented in collaboration with the Benue State Council on Climate Change, aims to empower local Communities and ensure the sustainability of climate hubs beyond the project's one-year duration.

The inaugurated multi-stakeholder Steering Committee includes representatives from government ministries and parastatals, departments, agencies, and the private sector.

The Senior Project Officer highlighted the project's objectives, which include raising awareness about climate change, developing local peace and adaptation plans, influencing government policies and funding, and providing sustainable livelihoods to reduce conflict triggers.

He encouraged Benue Communities to embrace new technologies and transition from conflict-prone systems to a more prosperous future.

In a presentation titled "Powering Peace Through Climate Action Project Phase II," Mr. Ati shared insights from the project's initial phase, which he confirmed had successfully united Communities and resolved resource-related conflicts through a climate-conflict analysis.

Kano Goes Spiritual, Offer Prayers against Security Challenges

FROM ALIYU ASKIRA, KANO

No fewer than 4,444 Qur'an memorizers gathered at the Government House for a statewide prayer intervention targeted at confronting the rising wave of bandit attacks in the state.

The massive spiritual mobilization which was attended in person by the Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf, and top government figures, religious leaders, and the 16th Emir of Kano, Muhammadu Sanusi II, prayed for the commercial city in unity against insecurity.

Participants at the special prayer session in one voice

sought a divine intervention against the threat of armed banditry, hitherto alien to Kano State.

Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf, who hosted the event, reminded attendees that insecurity "Does not know politics or party lines," urging citizens to set aside political differences and work together in combating criminality in the Area.

He revealed plan by government efforts, including equipment support for security agencies and continuous engagement with operatives to tackle emerging threats.

Abba Kabir Yusuf further reassured residents that

coordinated security measures were in place, stressing that prayers remain a vital complement to operational interventions.

Governor Yusuf described the gathering as a crucial spiritual investment that every concerned citizen must support and participate.

In his remarks, the Emir of Kano, Muhammadu Sanusi II, praised the government's initiative, calling it a timely response to the challenges confronting the state.

Sanusi II, recounted his recent visit to Faruruwa in Shanono Local Government Area, where he observed new rural roads under

construction.

The Emir noted that such infrastructure would significantly improve access to remote communities and enhance security response.

Sanusi II therefore encouraged the governor to sustain these developmental projects, particularly those that strengthen local government connectivity and reinforce the state's security architecture.

He assured that the Emirate Council remains fully committed to partnering with the state government to restore Kano's long-standing reputation as a beacon of peace, commerce, and cultural harmony.



From left: Director of Technical, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Dr Alike Peter; Resources Person/Consultant, Mrs Josaphine Okeke; Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Livestock Development, Dr Chinyere Akujobi; Minister of Livestock Development, Alhaji Idi Mukhtar Maiha and another Resources Person/Consultant, Mr Wale Ogunbowale, during the high-level alignment and harmonize the ongoing Baseline Study for the livestock sector in Abuja.

NYSC Presidential Honour Award Winner Returns to Benue, Shows Appreciations

FROM ATTAH EDE, MAKUR-DI

An ex-corps member and a recipient of Presidential Honour Award, Udokpo Abasi, at the weekend returned to the NYSC orientation camp Wannune and his place of primary assignment in Benue State to show appreciation for the support he garnered to win presidential award.

Abasi, former member of the Orientation Broadcasting Service(OBS) and the Editorial and Publicity CDS Group, visited the NYSC Orientation Camp in Wannune, Benue State, to express his gratitude for the platform the scheme provided him.

He was warmly received by the State Coordinator, Veronica Garba, the Camp Director,

Yahuza Isa Adamu, and the Head of the Publicity and Protocol Committee, Victoria Ogwuche.

During the visit, he shared the principles that shaped his success and contributed to his recognition as a State and Presidential Honour Award recipient.

Abasi highlighted punctuality, regularity, determination to

duty, loyalty, effectiveness, resilience, initiative, discipline, teamwork, and strong interpersonal relationships as key values that guided him during and after his service year. He encouraged Corps Members to embrace these virtues diligently.

He also commended the current batch for the teamwork and discipline he observed in camp,

noting that such qualities remain central to personal progress and the continued legacy of excellence in the NYSC scheme.

He further motivated Corps Members to embark on purposeful projects, embrace responsibility, and maximise the opportunities available during the service year.

As part of his visit to Benue, Abasi also returned to

his former place of primary assignment and his host community, where he once served as a Corps Member, to reconnect and express appreciation for the support he received.

Corps Members described his visit as inspiring and reaffirming, as it offered real life examples of the opportunities available through dedication and hard work.

Ooni Installs Oluremi Tinubu as Yeye Asiwaju Ile Oodua

FROM AYINDE AKINTADE,
OSOGBO

The Permanent Chairman, Southern Nigeria Traditional Rulers Council (SNTRC), Arole Oodua Olofin Adimula and Ooni of Ife, His Imperial Majesty Ooni Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, Ojaja II, has installed the First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, as the Yeye Asiwaju gbogbo Ile Oodua.

The installation ceremony took place yesterday at Afewonro Park, Enuwa Square, Ooni's Palace, Ile-Ife, during the grand finale of activities marking the 10th Coronation Anniversary of Ooni Ogunwusi.

Rites were performed for

Senator Oluremi Tinubu by traditional chiefs in accordance with ancient customs.

Speaking during the ceremony, the Ooni expressed deep appreciation to Senator Oluremi Tinubu for her unwavering support over the years.

"She is the mother of the nation. Exactly 10 years ago, on the 7th of December 2015, she stood by me through thick and thin. I asked Baba Obasanjo to help me thank her because he accompanied me to several ancestral sites during those critical moments. Baba spent 16 straight hours with me when I was announced as Ooni of Ife. Today is not a day for long speeches, but I must sincerely thank President Bola Tinubu for his support and

thank all of you for standing by our mother. She is indeed a merciful mother," Ooni Ogunwusi said.

In her speech, Senator Oluremi Tinubu expressed profound gratitude to God and described the honour as both humbling and divine.

She commended the Ooni for his visionary leadership, describing him as a young, wise, and progressive monarch whose reign has brought global visibility and renewed pride to the Yoruba race.

She expressed appreciation to the entire Ife Kingdom for their support for the Ooni throughout the last decade.

"The joy of the nation has come, and we are just beginning to celebrate. God has assured us that 2026 will

be a year of joy, honour, and restoration, a year in which everyone will partake in renewed glory," she added.

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo lauded the Ooni for deeming the First Lady worthy of the prestigious title.

He urged Senator Tinubu to continue her humanitarian works, stressing that chieftaincy titles are traditionally bestowed on individuals of proven character.

"You have come to where you should belong. Continue your good works wherever you go. I am grateful to God that I witnessed the beginning of Ooni Ogunwusi's reign and that I am here again to celebrate his 10th anniversary," Obasanjo said.



From left: Chairman, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Enugu State Council, Comrade Obinna Ogbuka; National Treasurer, NUJ, Comrade Victor Ndukwe; Chairman, Igboeze South LGA of Enugu State, Mr Ferdinand Ukwueze and Chairman All Progressive Congress, Igboeze South, Chief Ejike Amedu, during the 2025 Press Week celebration by NUJ in Enugu on Saturday

Nigeria, Indonesia Scale up Livestock Technology Exchange

BY RAPHAEL ATUU, ABUJA

The Minister of Livestock Development, Idi Mukhtar Maiha, recently received the Indonesian Ambassador to Nigeria, Bambang Suharto, who led a five-man delegation on a courtesy visit to the Ministry in Abuja.

The engagement advanced ongoing efforts by both countries to deepen cooperation in livestock development, capacity building, and technology transfer.

The Minister underscored the critical importance of food security to national stability and commended Indonesia's steady support to Nigeria's livestock sector. He cited the successful artificial insemination project in Sokoto and Kebbi States, where 1,000 doses of semen donated by the Indonesian Government have achieved a 70 percent success rate with 20 calves delivered.

Mukhtar described the initiative as a practical example of

the value of technology exchange and affirmed Nigeria's willingness to expand such interventions. He also expressed readiness to learn from Indonesia's advancements in livestock innovation to strengthen national productivity.

He further requested strengthened collaboration in breeding centre development, pasture production, animal health and disease control systems, and certification processes. He expressed optimism that more states will adopt the artificial insemination model to improve genetics, productivity, and profitability across livestock value chains.

In response, Ambassador Suharto praised the Minister's leadership and reiterated Indonesia's commitment to scaling up technical assistance.

He announced that five Nigerian professionals from the Ministry are scheduled to depart for Indonesia next week for capacity building, another milestone in the evolving partnership.

Strategic, Robust Soil Management 'll Sustain Agriculture, Says Abdullahi

BY RAPHAEL ATUU, ABUJA

The Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Security, Sen. Dr. Aliyu Sabi Abdullahi has said that strategic and robust soil management is the foundation of sustainable food production, environmental quality, and agricultural resilience.

The Minister made this disclosure during the celebration of 2025 World Soil Day event at Abuja Continental Hotel recently.

Abdullahi stated that Soil constitutes the backbone of the agricultural sector, supplying 95% of food and providing 15 of the 18 essential elements required for plant growth.

The Minister noted that

"Soil supports crop growth and livestock production, purifies water, regulates climate, sequesters carbon, mitigates greenhouse gas emissions, and offers habitat for beneficial microorganisms, thereby supporting ecosystem services and biodiversity"

He pointed out that "World Soil Day will enable us to educate the public especially our esteemed farmers about soil conservation and its advantages, promote sustainable agricultural practices, support the ministry's initiatives for soil health, encourage research, and advocate for policies that safeguard our soils".

He reaffirmed the commitment of the ministry's vision "to restore and

uphold soil health, ensuring sustainable agriculture, food security, and enhanced livelihoods for all Nigerians".

Sen. Abdullahi highlighted federal government efforts to "improve soil management by the launch of Nigeria Farmers' Soil Health Scheme (NFSHS) in October with nearly 600 farmers and stakeholders in attend The scheme is part of President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda for Food Security".

According to him, the programme offers crop- and location-specific fertilizer recommendations to curb indiscriminate fertilizer use, reduce pollution, and cut production costs. It also promotes organic amendments and regenerative agriculture practices to protect

soil and water resources.

"A major component of the initiative is the plan to establish soil-testing laboratories in all 774 local government areas, to be run by youth and women agripreneurs. Twelve laboratories, equipped with modern diagnostic tools, have already been installed across the six geopolitical zones".

"We are implementing the Nairobi Declaration on African Fertilizer and Soil Health endorsed by African Heads of State, and strong collaboration with development partners including GIZ, Soil Values, AGRA, the World Bank's ACRoSAL Project, Sasakawa Africa, IITA, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation".

He added that "another

significant milestone achieved is the incorporation of the NFSHS into the federal budget and the organization of stakeholder workshops leading to the establishment of the Coalition of the Willing (CoW) platform and Readiness Assessment".

He revealed that "on the operational front, training sessions for laboratory technicians and technologists regarding the use of Soil Health Card modules were held in Oyo and Kano States earlier in 2025, along with readiness assessments and pilot soil analyses conducted in 12 states across the six geopolitical zones.

He further said that "state-of-the-art soil laboratory equipment has been deployed and successfully

installed for operations in twelve states across the six geo-political zones of the country. The government is not relenting to reposition Nigeria agriculture landscape; and there is a strong synergy with both local and international partners to rejuvenate degraded soil across the country".

In a goodwill message, President, Nigerian Institute of Soil Science (NISS), Prof. Abubakar Musa Kundiri, represented by the Vice President, Prof Olumuyiwa James Jayeoba, said the theme "Healthy Soils, Healthy Cities" reflects a growing understanding that soil health is central not only to agriculture but also to urban sustainability.

Dafinone Urges New UPU Leadership to Prioritize Unity, Peace

FROM FRANCIS SADHERE, DELTA

The Senator representing Delta Central Senatorial District, Senator Ede Dafinone, has urged the newly elected leadership of the Urhobo Progress Union (UPU) to place unity, peace, and collective development at the forefront of their administration.

He made the call at the 94th Urhobo Day Celebration held at Uvwiamuge, Agbarho, in Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State.

The event, themed “Awaken Urhobo Spirit for Unity,” attracted traditional leaders, cultural advocates, community representatives, and

stakeholders from across the Urhobo Nation.

Addressing the gathering, Senator Dafinone stressed that the UPU must intensify efforts to strengthen internal cohesion and promote harmony among Urhobos.

He noted that sustainable development can only be achieved when the people stand together, adding that unity remains the foundation upon which the Urhobo Nation can continue to make meaningful progress.

The senator congratulated the re-elected President-General of the UPU, Chief Ese Gam Owe, and members of his executive council, describing their renewed mandate as a clear vote

of confidence from the Urhobo people.

He encouraged the leadership to build on existing successes and adopt a more inclusive, coordinated, and forward-thinking approach.

Highlighting his own commitment to cultural preservation, Senator Dafinone reaffirmed his support for initiatives that promote Urhobo heritage.

He referenced the annual Urhobo Language Competition, which he sponsors in honour of the late Senator Pius Ewherido, noting that the programme continues to motivate young people to learn and uphold their mother tongue.

Reflecting on the UPU’s 94-year legacy,

the senator praised the union for its resilience, purposeful leadership, and enduring spirit of unity.

He emphasized that these values must continue to guide the organization as it confronts contemporary challenges and explores new opportunities for growth.

The celebration also featured the 2025 Annual Congress, during which the outgoing executive council was formally dissolved and new leaders were elected.

The re-election of Chief Owe as President-General was widely regarded as a sign of continuity, stability, and renewed dedication to advancing the Urhobo cause.



From left: South East Zonal Coordinator, Network Against Child Trafficking, Abuse and Labour (NACTAL), Dr Ijeoma Nnaji; Team Director Foundation for the Internalization of Public Administrations (FIPA), Mr Javier Leon; Legal Adviser NACTAL, Ms Ogechukwu Enwelum; National Secretary of NACTAL, Comrade Osita Osemene; Coordinator of NACTAL Enugu State, Dr Amarachi Kene-Okafor and the Technical Advisor, Criminal Investigation FIPA, Mr Sani Dantuni-Bello, during the Closing Session of the Launch of Enugu Legal Hub for Victims of Human Trafficking in Enugu on Saturday.

HOMEF Trains Niger Delta Communities on Environmental Monitoring

FROM MIKE TAYESE, YENA-GOA

As part of her efforts to equip relevant stakeholders especially Youth and women on how to get firsthand information on Oil spillage, the Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) last Friday concluded a Two-Day training workshop for Niger Delta oil communities on environmental monitoring.

HOMEF is an ecological think-tank and environmental rights advocacy group.

The capacity building programme drew participants across the Niger Delta region from Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta states.

Fossil Politics Lead at HOMEF, Stanley Egholo noted that the challenges posed by oil pollution and climate change have made environmental monitoring imminent.

He regretted that oil bearing communities often lose cases instituted to seek environmental justice due to lack of credible scientific evidence.

He urged the participants to take interest in defending their environments and gather empirical evidence whenever there is oil pollution.

Executive Director, Media Awareness and Justice Initiative who served as a resource person, Onyekachi Okoro, said that empirical data reinforces and strengthens advocacy for environmental justice.

Okoro took through the rudiments of Understanding Environmental Monitoring – Air, Water and Land.

According to him, recent technological advancements have made so many digital tools available for monitoring the environment.

He explored the immense potentials of smartphones and

how they could be deployed in monitoring the environment.

He urged the participants to leverage on the location and geotagging features in mobile phones to geotag photographs.

He assured participants that evidences obtained by digital tools are credible and universally acceptable for litigation and advocacy.

Speaking at the panel segment, Chief Alagoa Morris, a renowned environmentalist highlighted the challenges to environmental monitoring and gave tips on how to overcome them.

He urged participants to refrain from exaggerating pollution incidents as credible facts were sacrosanct in environmental activism and would always survive validity tests.

Morris encouraged participants to work with residents of pollution impacted communities and avoid taking sides in community conflicts.

On his part, the traditional ruler of Ayetoro, a coastal community in Ondo State on Saturday advocated unity amongst coastline settlements across Niger Delta to confront ocean encroachments.

Oba Oluwambe Ojagbohunmi, the Ogelayinbo of Ayetoro made the call at Coastal Communities Exchanges organised by Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) in Yenagoa.

The event brought coastal communities residents across the Niger Delta region from Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta, Edo and Ondo states.

Ojagbohunmi noted that rising sea levels and associated coastal erosion posed existential threat to the culture and identity of Ayetoro people adding that the community remains the ancestral land of his subjects.

Bayelsa Hosts Inaugural Human Rights Summit

FROM MIKE TAYESE, YENA-GOA

The Bayelsa State Government is set to host the first summit against Human Rights abuse as part of efforts in reducing the menace and prosecuting offenders.

The Chairman, House Committee on Human Rights, Bayelsa State House Of Assembly, Hon. Tonbara Ted Elemeforo

made this known during a Stakeholders meeting with the Association of Women Against Gender Based Violence, BANGOF, NAPTIP, National Human Right Commission, Girls in Tech, Do foundation, thriving hope development initiative and other NGOs at the State House of Assembly Complex.

Hon. Elemeforo,

stated that the landmark event will convene legal advocates, policymakers, delegates, major stakeholders and opinion leaders from all the eight Local Government Areas of the state to strengthen the fight against human rights violations.

While decrying the increase of reported and unreported cases without proper prosecution, he disclosed that if there's

need to strengthen legislation, and amend the laws regarding human rights, they won't hesitate to put that in place.

He said "Human rights should be respected, protected and promoted. We are ready to collaborate with all relevant stakeholders to ensure we nip this acts to its nearest minimum"

"If there's need to strengthen legislation we will do it, we have to sit down look at the issues critically, discuss on how to proffer solution to this crime and the victims. Sometimes implementing all of this becomes a challenge but we will ensure we get it right this time, we will not take it likely this time around, if

they're are cases we will pursue them to the end."

"For some who are holding onto some traditional beliefs, though such beliefs are not easily made away, we will ensure various sensitization strategies, thorough awareness creation will be employed as major part of the advocacy campaign."

Orphanage Games: 100 Children Participate in Maiden Edition

FROM MIKE TAYESE, YENAGOA

About a hundred children from Five Orphanage homes in Bayelsa State at the weekend participated in the maiden edition of 2025 Orphanage Games and Sports.

The Orphanage Games and Sports, which was an initiative put together by a Corps Member, Victoria Abiye Kiolawson, witnessed the participation of Children from Orphanage homes in Athletics, Sack race, Music and Dance performance.

The visionary of the Charity Inter-House sports for the Orphanages, Victoria Abiye Kiolawson, said the goal of the games is to give the children

visibility so that more people could now see that the children have sporting potentials and talents could be discovered in orphanage homes.

She also called on the management of the National Youths Service Corps (NYSC) to make it a mandatory community Service session for corps members in Orphanage homes in order to encourage interaction service to children in needs.

Kiolawson also welcomed the idea of the State Government organising similar games for Orphanage homes and called on the state government to subsidise the medical care of children in such homes

and support them with educational supports.

Among the participating orphanage homes are the Daisy's Home for Special Children, the Daniel and Dorothy Orphanage, the Victorian Orphanage and Child Care centre, the Destiny Child Orphanages and Homes and the Blossom Home for the Deaf and the Blind.

The State Commissioner of Sports, Hon. Daniel Igali, commended the organiser of the games and muted that the State Government attention have been drawn to the need to support such sporting competition and being out the best in children with special needs.

Hon. Daniel Igali, represented by a Director in the Ministry of Sports, Micheal Alakere, said the sporting competition among the children of the Orphanages was interesting and said it should be a partnership between the private sector and the state government that will work.

Also speaking, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Women, Children Affairs, Empowerment and Social Development, Agnes Oloye commended the vision of the organisers and promised that the state government will look closely at the idea of a sporting activities for the children of orphanage homes and key into it.

BMNA Honours Rhema Heritage International Schools as Best School in Bayelsa

FROM MIKE TAYESE, YENAGOA

Organisers of the prestigious Bayelsa Media Network Awards (BMNA) have nominated Rhema Heritage International Schools, Amarata, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State for an award of excellence, in recognition of the school's sterling qualities and antecedents in the educational sector in Bayelsa State.

In a statement issued in Yenagoa by the Project Manager, Blessing Matthew Ozegbe, stated that the nomination of Rhema Heritage International Schools for its prestigious awards is as a result of notable achievements and dedication to imparting knowledge to students especially the high moral standard that is bequeathed to wards and students of the school.

Ozegbe noted that he was amazed at the successes recorded by Rhema Heritage International Schools since it's establishment,

describing the citadel of learning as a fantastic space for learning.

The project manager further commended the Proprietress, Pst. Duomo Apere for her distinguished character and personality noting that character moulding in schools is paramount and essential in the development of a child academically and Rhema Heritage International Schools is the modest school in Bayelsa where discipline, character moulding, hardwork and quality teachings are never compromised.

Ozegbe urged other schools in Bayelsa State to emulate Rhema Heritage International Schools and urged parents and guardians to enroll their children en-masse in Rhema Heritage International Schools which is situated at Imgbi Road, Amarata, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.



From left: Ayinla Gbemisiola, Adewuyi Onigbide, Solanke Olafunto, Adeyemi Anjolaade, all are grandaunt at the 2025 Post-graduate Diplomas Convocation of University of Ibadan on Friday

Bayelsa Deputy Gov Tasks Nigerians on Creating Value

FROM MIKE TAYESE, YENAGOA

Bayelsa Deputy Governor, Sen. Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo and the Member representing the Sagbama/Ekeremor Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives, Chief Fred Agbedi, have urged Nigerians to make necessary sacrifices to touch lives amidst difficult times and uncertainties in the country.

The duo spoke while delivering tributes as part of funeral activities in honour of late Chief Clement Ligha,

an uncle to the Deputy Chief of Staff to the Deputy Governor, Comrade Gowon Toruyouyei in Ekeremor Town, headquarters of Ekeremor Local Government Area of the state, over the weekend.

They eulogized the deceased, who was the father to the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Bayelsa Medical University, BMU, Prof. Aloysius Ligha, as a man of impeccable character and promoter of education that contributed to the development of Ekeremor and humanity in

general.

In his remarks, the Deputy Governor opined that the essence of living is to create value, stressing that everyone alive should be able to positively touch the lives of others in one way or the other before death.

Ewhrudjakpo, however, particularly urged the well-to-do in society to look beyond their immediate families, emphasizing that a life lived without making positive impact on others, is only miserable and meaningless.

The Deputy Governor, who recounted late Chief Ligha's contribution to the education of Hon. Christopher Enai, Comrade Gowon Toruyouyei and several others, encouraged the bereaved family and the entire people of Ekeremor not to mourn, but to celebrate the deceased octogenarian for leaving behind a legacy life that has become shining example of selfless service and development.

His words: "When we come for a funeral like this, I always insist that people

should not be carried away because the takeaways they get. Rather should study the life of the man or woman they have come to celebrate, because in every biography, there is a clear message conveyed. From his biography, I am happy that Pa Ligha made impact in life.

"What we are in life only make meaning when we impact the lives of others. When we don't impact the lives of others, we are as miserable as misery itself

"And so, we are happy that our father whom we

have come to lay to rest today (Saturday) touched lives beyond his immediate family. We have all heard how he trained Honourable Christopher Enai, and my Deputy Chief of Staff, Gowon Toruyouyei, who are not his direct biological children."

Also speaking, Chief Fred Agbedi, paid glowing tributes to late Ligha, pointing out that while the deceased lived, he made remarkable contributions to the development of Ekeremor LGA and Bayelsa State at large.



TAJBANK LIMITED

ABRIDGED AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE SIX MONTHS PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

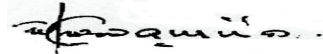
	30 June 2025 N'000	31 December 2024 N'000
Assets		
Cash and balances with Central Bank of Nigeria	147,328,232	235,199,915
Due from banks and other financial institutions	44,105,173	78,962,220
Interbank receivables	2,069,041	-
Investment in sukuk	207,033,322	135,033,174
Investment in Real Estate Trust scheme	13,744,244	3,118,497
Mudarabah Financing,net	1,170,000	620,000
Murabahah receivables, net	295,404,019	237,523,091
Istisna' receivables, net	6,597,646	5,511,071
Ijarah muntahiyah bi tamleek,net	46,914,112	29,087,626
Inventory financing	75,971,009	56,483,197
Other assets	127,919,421	118,682,777
Right of use assets	10,770,159	11,416,317
Property, plant and equipment	17,408,558	25,795,839
Leasehold improvement	12,814,933	9,549,881
Intangible assets	6,444,897	5,734,955
Deferred tax assets	1,417,379	379,905
TOTAL ASSETS	1,017,112,144	953,098,465
LIABILITIES, EQUITY OF INVESTMENT ACCOUNT HOLDERS AND OWNERS' EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Customers' current and qard saving deposits	250,370,506	352,778,019
Other financing	6,737,022	7,559,599
Other liabilities	158,219,496	187,172,731
Tax payable	796,794	731,291
Total liabilities	416,123,818	548,241,640
Equity of Investment account holders		
Mudarabah investment account holders	499,528,942	313,606,583
Mudarabah investment with other Banks and Other Financial Institutes	30,000,000	30,000,000
Total equity of investment account holders	529,528,942	343,606,583
Equity		
Share capital	18,644,459	18,239,919
Share premium	1,184,381	996,921
Sukuk issued (Additional Tier 1 capital)	11,359,989	11,359,989
Retained earnings	14,017,116	8,654,434
Regulatory risk reserve	10,200,253	9,950,190
Statutory reserve	13,887,901	10,455,560
AGSMEIS reserves	2,003,619	1,431,562
Profit equalization reserve	161,667	161,667
Total owners' equity	71,459,384	61,250,242
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	1,017,112,144	953,098,465

STATEMENTS OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

	30 June 2025 N'000	30 June 2024 N'000
INCOME		
Income from financing and investing contracts	32,469,105	15,522,823
Income from investment activities	19,762,368	15,960,279
Gross income from financing & investment activities	52,231,474	31,483,102
Return on equity of investment account holders	(17,705,645)	(10,294,841)
Bank's share as equity investor/mudarib	34,525,829	21,188,261
Net impairment allowance	(1,500,000)	(318,959)
	33,025,829	20,869,302
Fee and commission income	1,520,380	1,363,105
	-	-
Total income	34,546,209	22,232,407
EXPENSES		
Staff costs	6,743,298	4,464,316
Depreciation & amortisation	2,475,394	1,409,468
General and administrative expenses	14,174,818	7,214,611
Total expenses	23,393,510	13,088,395
Profit/(loss) before tax	11,152,699	9,144,012
Income tax credit	288,436	(12,535)
Profit/(loss) after tax	11,441,135	9,131,477
Statement of other comprehensive income		
Items that may be reclassified to profit or loss	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	11,441,135	9,131,477
Key financial information		
Total impaired financing	18,385,195	8,342,935
Total impaired financing to total financing (%)	5%	3%
Earnings per share - basic (kobo)	61.36	50.06
Gross earnings	53,751,854	32,846,207

Customer complaints for the period ended 30 June 2025

	Number	Amount claimed
Pending complaints brought forward	259	76,494
Number of complaints received	3,411	945,973
Number of complaints resolved	(3,407)	(863,314)
Number of complaints unresolved	263	159,153


Isiaku Tanko Gwamna - Chairman
FRC/2022/PRO/DIR/003/990740


Hamid Joda - Managing Director/CEO
FRC/2015/CIBN/00000013507

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

TO THE MEMBERS OF TAJBANK LIMITED

Opinion
The accompanying summary financial statements, which comprise the summary statement of financial position as at 30 June 2025, the summary statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the period then ended, and related notes, are derived from the audited financial statements of TAJBank Limited for the six month period ended 30 June 2025.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements derived from the audited financial statements of TAJBank Limited as at 30 June, 202 are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial statements in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), Financial Accounting Standards issued by the Accounting and Auditing Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI), the Banks and Other Financial Institution Act 2020 and in the manner required by the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020 and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria (Amendment) Act, 2023.

Summary financial statements
The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), Financial Accounting Standards issued by the Accounting and Auditing Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI), the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020, the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act, the Banks and Other Financial Institution Act and other relevant Central Bank of Nigeria circulars. Reading the summary financial statements and the auditors' report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements of TAJBank Limited.

The audited financial statements and our report thereon
We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial statements in our report dated 15 September, 2025. That report also includes the communication of the key audit matters as described in the auditors' 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 a summary of the audited financial statements in accordance with the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020, the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act 2020, Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria Act, Financial Accounting Standards issued by the Accounting and Auditing Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI) and the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

Auditor’s responsibility
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 International Standard on Auditing (ISA 810 revised). “Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements”.

Report on other legal and regulatory requirement
Complied with the requirement of schedule 5 of Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020, with no exception.

In compliance with the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act 2020 and Central Bank of Nigeria circular BSD/1/2004, we hereby confirm that:

i) related party transactions and balances are disclosed in the financial statements in accordance with the Central Bank of Nigeria Circular BSD/1/2004.

ii) the Bank paid penalties in respect of contravention of certain sections of the Bank and Other Financial Institutions Act and/or relevant circulars issued by the Central Bank of Nigeria during the period ended 30 June 2025


Nafisa S. Awak, FCA
FRC/2018/PRO/ICAN/004/00000018811
For: Ahmed Zakari & Co.
(Chartered Accountants)
Abuja, Nigeria
15 September 2025





From Left, Secretary to the Catholic Bishop of Enugu Diocese, Rev. Fr. Charles Ezeonu, Director Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) Catholic Diocese of Enugu, Rev. Fr. Francis Anezichukwu-Agu, Representative of Enugu State Government, Mrs. Ngozi Enih, Catholic Bishop of Enugu, Bishop Chukwuma Onaga, Dean Enugu Deanery, Rev. Fr. Malachy Ezeonu and Founder, Genetter Global Care Foundation, Mrs. Chidinma Okwuowu during Church Service Celebration at the Holy Ghost Cathedral to Kick Off PMS Holy Child Association Day With the Bishop in Enugu on Sunday

Incoming MAAN Boss Commits to Swift Resolution of Maritime Disputes

The new President of the Maritime Arbitrators Association of Nigeria (MAAN), Chief Jean Anishere (SAN), has pledged her administration’s commitment to effective maritime disputes resolution that aligns with global best practices.

Anishere said this in an interview on Sunday in Lagos, following her emergence as president of the association.

She described Nigeria’s maritime sector as being a critical component of both

the national and continental economy, adding that effective dispute resolution is key to sustaining investor’s confidence in the sector.

According to her, MAAN has a vital responsibility to ensure that disputes are resolved efficiently, impartially and professionally, in line with international standards of arbitration.

Anishere expressed appreciation to the Chairman of the Advisory Council, members of the council,

colleagues and guests who attended the association’s election held on Dec. 4.

“I am deeply honoured by the trust you have placed in me to serve as President of the Maritime Arbitrators Association of Nigeria.

“I accept this responsibility with humility and a firm commitment to advance the values of excellence, integrity and professionalism that define our association,” she said.

She also paid tribute to the

past presidents of MAAN for their contributions to the growth and reputation of the association.

“We are beneficiaries of their hard work and dedication, and we will continue the journey they began,” she said.

The MAAN president also hinted that her administration will focus on strengthening professional capacity, increasing membership and expanding the association’s visibility at regional and international levels.

Cost of Services in Nigeria’s Oil and Gas Industry Cheapest in Africa – PETAN

FROM MIKE TAYESE, YENAGOA

The President, Petroleum Technology Association of Nigeria (PETAN), Wole Ogunsanya recently declared that the cost of providing services in Nigeria’s oil and gas industry is relatively the cheapest on the African continent.

He spoke at a Townhall Session at the 14th Practical Nigerian Content (PNC) Conference and Exhibition at the Nigerian Content Tower (NCT), Yenagoa and provided a detailed analysis of project costs across Africa and elsewhere.

Ogunsanya insisted that a distinction must be made between the capital expenditures (CAPEX) of the oil industry and operating expenditures (OPEX), stressing that Nigeria’s CAPEX rates were arguably the lowest in Africa.

clientele.

According to him, PETAN, the umbrella body of reputable indigenous technical oilfield service companies, has been analysing production costs in different countries over time, using capital expenditure (CAPEX) and operating costs/ expenditure (OPEX), and, in the case of Nigeria, carefully identifying cost elements at successive stages of oil and gas production.

In his words, “The number one cost driver in Nigeria’s oil and gas industry operations is evacuation of crude oil and gas. Our pipelines are vandalised, and some companies use vessels, barges to move crude oil, at a cost of US\$12 per barrel.” Costs include payments to security agents as guards or escorts.

The PETAN boss, who is also Chairman/ Chief Executive Officer of Geoplex Drillteq Limited, said whereas contracting a land rig in India costs as much as US\$60,000 per day, the same services in Nigeria cost as low as US\$30,000 for the same duration.

NGX Says Reforms Set to Strengthen Nigeria’s Investment Climate

Chairman, Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX), Dr Umaru Kwairanga, said ongoing regulatory reforms are positioning the nation’s capital market to attract more investments and boost investor confidence.

Kwairanga was quoted in a statement on Sunday in Lagos to have said this during the ongoing 2025 Capital Market Correspondents Association of Nigeria (CAMCAN) Workshop.

The workshop had the theme, “Regulatory Reforms: ISA 2025 and Nigeria’s

Investment Climate.”

The NGX Chairman noted that the Investment and Securities Act (ISA) 2025 marked a major step in improving market governance and investor protection.

According to him, the reforms represented structural changes aimed at modernising the market and attracting deeper investment flows.

“With the recent reforms encapsulated in the Investment and Securities Act (ISA) 2025, Nigeria has entered a pivotal phase in strengthening market governance, boosting

investor protection, and enhancing overall market competitiveness.

“These reforms are not merely regulatory updates; they are foundational shifts designed to modernise our capital market architecture, attract deeper pools of capital, and position Nigeria as a top-tier investment destination within Africa and globally.

“As we navigate the complexities and opportunities presented by these reforms, your role as market media stakeholders becomes even more critical,” he said.

He said that the

Exchange remained committed to supporting reforms that deepen transparency and broaden market participation.

He highlighted NGX Invest as a major innovation designed to simplify public offers and rights issues through digital channels.

Kwairanga said the platform had enabled millions of investors to participate directly in capital-raising activities.

He explained that NGX Invest had improved transparency, strengthened compliance and enhanced efficiency

within the primary market.

Kwairanga said these efforts aligned with ISA 2025, which prioritises digital inclusion, operational efficiency and improved investor confidence.

“None of these efforts can thrive without credible and informed communication, and this is where the members of CAMCAN, remain indispensable.

“As journalists and correspondents covering the capital market, you act as a bridge between policy, market activity, and the investing public.

“Your work ensures that reforms are

understood, market developments are accurately reported, and public trust is maintained. In a world increasingly challenged by misinformation, your role in delivering timely, factual, and contextual reporting is more vital than ever.

“I therefore charge you to continue upholding the highest standards of professionalism, accuracy and integrity.

“Your contributions help shape investor perception, support regulatory transparency, and ultimately strengthen the Nigerian capital market,” he said.



Commissioner for Works (Rural Roads), and Public Information, Mr Charles Aniagwu (2nd right), drawing the attention of the Project Director, Rural and Riverine Roads, Engr. Solomon Aghagba (right), during his inspection of Emevor- Orogun Road. With them are the Deputy Director Engr. Daniel Awani (2nd left), and the Zonal Chief Engineer Oleh zone, Engr Mark Egwalusor (left), during the inspection.

Zamfara Urges Investors to Explore State’s Abundant Economic Potentials

The Zamfara government has urged local and foreign investors to explore the abundant economic opportunities available in the state.

The state Commissioner for Commerce and Industries, Abdul Rahman Tubidu, made the call on Saturday in Gusau after participating in the just-concluded Kano International Trade Fair.

Tubidu, in a statement signed by the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the ministry, Jamilu Bello, said the state had

vast economic potentials to showcase as shown at the trade fair.

“We have key sectors of comparative advantage and investments viability which include; solid minerals, agriculture, livestock development, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), tourism among others.

”Zamfara has been uniquely positioned as an investment friendly state with abundant natural resources and a growing market for agro-allied and mineral-based industries.

“The administration of Gov.

Dauda Lawal, is building a safe, stable and business supportive environment,” Tabidu said.

The commissioner added that the present administration had created a conducive atmosphere for investors to operate with confidence and sustainability.

“This is through enhanced security measures, infrastructure development and clear policy reforms.

“We commend the organisers of the kano international trade fair for providing a platform

that strengthens inter-state economic collaboration, fosters innovation, and connects investors with new opportunities.

“Zamfara’s participation at the trade fair reflects the government’s dedication in promoting the state’s products, empowering entrepreneurs, and attracting private sector partnerships.

“We assure prospective investors of the ministry’s readiness to provide necessary guidance and support towards establishing their businesses in the state,” Tabidu said.

Ribadu Hosts U.S. Congressional Delegation, Seeks Deeper Nigeria–U.S. Security Cooperation

National Security Adviser (NSA), Malam Nuhu Ribadu, on Sunday received a United States Congressional delegation in Abuja, reaffirming Nigeria’s commitment to strengthening its strategic security partnership with the U.S.

Ribadu, in a post on his official X-Handle of Saturday, said the visit was a continuation of earlier engagements

in Washington, D.C., aimed at advancing shared priorities.

He said the high-level visit underscored the importance both nations attach to cooperation on security and stability.

“This morning, I received a U.S. Congressional delegation on a fact-finding mission to Nigeria, following our earlier engagements in Washington, D.C.,

on shared security priorities.

“The discussions focused on counter-terrorism cooperation, regional stability, and strengthening the Nigeria–U.S. strategic security partnership,” he said.

According to Ribadu, the delegation included Rep. Mario Díaz-Balart, Rep. Norma Torres, Rep. Scott Franklin, Rep. Juan Ciscomani and

Rep. Riley Moore, alongside the U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr Richard Mills.

He expressed confidence that the meeting would translate into more robust collaboration.

“I’m optimistic this engagement will deepen trust, collaboration, and our shared commitment to peace and security,” he said.

NEPZA Urges FG to Grant SEZ Operators 10-year Tax Exemption

The Nigeria Export Processing Zones Authority (NEPZA) has appealed to the Federal Government to grant operators within Nigeria’s Special Economic Zones a 10-year exemption from the newly introduced tax laws.

Managing Director of NEPZA, Dr. Olufemi Ogunyemi made the appeal during a virtual stakeholder dialogue organised by the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment.

Ogunyemi, who was represented by Haleema Kamba, Director, Corporate Service, said that it would enable them to adjust their operations to the evolving regulatory environment.

He said that the request had become necessary in view of the persistent concerns raised by operators across local and international platforms.

He said that the uncertainty was negatively affecting efforts to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the country.

According to him, tax incentives remain central to the Special Economic Zone scheme

“A 10-year (sunset period) will offer stability, predictability and stronger linkages with the domestic economy.

“I am making this special appeal to the chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service for a sunset period of approximately 10 years for all our investors.

“We hope the Chairman will consider this for the benefit of the scheme,” he said.

Ogunyemi said that aligning the incentives with global best practice

would help Nigeria strike a balance between revenue collection and the commitments made to investors.

He said that the country’s 63 Free Trade Zones and more than 700 enterprises operating within them remained crucial to Nigeria’s industrialisation and export strategy.

He said that the Zones’ revenue potential would only be fully realised if the scheme continued to operate under a competitive incentive structure capable of attracting and retaining investors for sustainable operations.

“Nigeria is open for business, and NEPZA will continue to stand with FIRS and other relevant stakeholders through this transition, ensuring stability, competitiveness and sustained investor confidence,” he said.

The managing director also emphasised the need for clarity and certainty in the tax environment, as investors prepare their 2026 business plans.

The NEPZA boss described the dialogue as a demonstration of the government’s commitment to transparency and collaboration.

In her remarks, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Dr Jumoke Oduwole, reiterated the importance of ongoing reforms.

Oduwole said that the national revenue framework, Special Economic Zone incentives and updated Financial Reporting Council compliance requirements would create a competitive environment for trade, investment and economic growth.

AUCTION! AUCTION!! AUCTION!!!

The general public is hereby informed that the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has engaged Mohammed Abatcha & Co. (Auctioneers) to conduct a public auction of a block comprising 5 units of 4-bedroom terrace houses, each with an attached 1-bedroom BQ, located at Plot 589 David Jamibewon Crescent, Gudu District, Abuja.

CONDITIONS OF SALE:

- All prospective bidders must comply with the ICPC guidelines as published in Daily Trust (Monday, December 1, 2025, page 40) and The Punch (Monday, December 1, 2025, page 52).
- All interested participants are required to swear an Affidavit of Eligibility in line with the ICPC publication referenced above.
- Participants must register and pay a refundable deposit of N200,000 to obtain a bidder’s TAG/ID.

Venue: At the property site
Date: Wednesday, December 17, 2025
Time: From 10:00 a.m.

For further enquiries, please contact the Auctioneers on 08036123967 or 08038795107.
Signed:**AUCTIONEER**

LOSS OF ORIGINAL LAND DOCUMENT

This is to inform the general public that one azuibuike chinedum ikejaku "m" of no. 8, Iho dimeze street, works layout, owerri, imo state (representing the family of late chief sir benson chukwuma ikejaku) and reported that while the family members were cross checking the documents of the late chief, they found the copies of the property and later discovered that the original right of occupancy of 0) and recertification acknowledgement in respect of plot no. 139 Cadastral zone c02 gwarinpa 1 district, abuja with file no. An 12745 with size 2,182.39sqm (originals reportedly lost by family). All efforts made to trace the said original land documents proved abortive. If found kindly contact any nearest police station or the address above. Authorities concerned and general public should take note

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public of the lost of original right of occupancy in respect of plot no. 422 Measuring about 1214.00sqm located at dape district and dated 15/05/07. File no. Ad 20953 bearing bilkisu ibrahim shehu the said documents got missing while on transit from agis reception to customer car parks abuja. If found, kindly return to the nearest police station.

TAMAR MIRIZI THOMAS FOUNDATION

This is to inform the general public that the above named has applied to the corporate affairs commission for registration under part 'f' of companies and allied matters act, (cama 2020).

TRUSTEES ARE:

- 1) Dogo Sanusi Lawrence
- 2) Dogo Cecilia Habiba
- 3) Dogo Atine David

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ARE:

To provide referrals, including medical, educational, social, and spiritual support, to special needs children. To create public awareness about the challenges faced by special needs children through media campaigns, public lectures, and other forms of outreach

Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the registrar-general, corporate affairs commission, plot 420 tigris crescent, off aguiyi ironisi street, maitama, abuja within 28 days of this publication.
Signed : **Secretary**

IZIZIKE/UMUORJI PROGRESSIVE ASSOCIATION

This is to inform the general public that the above named has applied to the corporate affairs commission for registration under part 'f' of companies and allied matters act, (cama 2020).

TRUSTEES ARE:

- 1. Ndubuisi Onwukaik
- 2. Udeh Christopher NnaNna
- 3. Chukwu Godwin Martins

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ARE :

- 1. To promote unity and cater for the welfare of all Izizike/Umuorji citizens resident in Abuja and environs who are members or dependent of members.
- 2. To bring together all Izizike/Umuorji citizens resident in Abuja & environs under one umbrella for mutual co-operation and assistance.
- 3. To create a forum for exchange of ideas and views on all matters relating to and affecting the welfare and progress of Izizike/Umuorji within the frame work of the welfare of the country as a whole.
- 4. To award scholarships to deserving sons and daughters of Izizike/Umuorji as a means of promoting unity and progress and improving the standard of education of the new generation of citizens.
- 5. To carry other social welfare activities as may be determined from time to time by the association.

Any Objection To This Registration Should Be Forwarded To The Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 420 Tigris Crescent, Off Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama, P.m.b 198, Garki Abuja Within 28 Days Of This Publication.

SIGNED : **SECRETARY**

CHANGE-MAKER FOUNDATION

This is to inform the general public that the above named has applied to the corporate affairs commission for registration under part 'f' of companies and allied matters act, (cama 2020).

TRUSTEES ARE:

- 1. Uwaje Peter Nnagozie (Chairman)
- 2. Uwaje Christiana Igbehinadun (Secretary)
- 3. Oni Adeola Oluwafemi

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ARE :

- 1. To improve the quality of life of vulnerable population (e.g children, women & men, Elderly, Marginalized communities)
- 2. To promote social justice, equality and human rights.
- 3. To protect the environment and conserve natural resources.
- 4. To provide humanitarian aid and disaster relief.
- 5. To support education, healthcare, and economic sector.

Any objections to this registration should be forwarded to the registral general corporate affairs commission, plot 420 tigris crescent off aguyi ironsi street maitama abuja within 28 days of this publication.
Signed **secretary**

AL-HARAMAIN MOSQUE OUAGADOUGOU

This is to inform the general public that the above named has applied to the corporate affairs commission for registration under part 'f' of companies and allied matters act, (cama 2020).

TRUSTEES ARE:

- 1 Idris Muhammad Auwal - Chairman
- 2 Musa Hamisu Yaya
- 3 Mundi Adnan Yusuf - Secretary

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ARE :

- 1 To promote the practice and understanding of islam through prayer and religious activities.
- 2 To provide authentic islamic knowledge and practice to the community through schools, centers and seminars, and to foster an understanding of islamic values, the qur'an, and the sunnah. To provide educational and training programmes to enhance knowledge, expertise, character and citizenship skills.

Any objections to this registration should be forwarded to the registral general corporate affairs commission, plot 420 tigris crescent off aguyi ironsi street maitama abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed **secretary**

LOSS OF DOCUMENT

This is to inform the general public of loss of original right of occupancy (r of o) in respect of plot no: 192, situated at katampe district, abuja. With file no: kd 10220. Size 778.40sqm. Belonging to ishaku gyeih dabo.

All efforts made to trace the said missing document proved abortive. If found, kindly return to the nearest police station. General public should please take note.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public of the lost of original right of occupancy in respect of plot no. 162 Measuring about 1500.00sqm located at dape district and dated 17/05/01. File no. Ak 10243 bearing mr inyang essien inyang the said documents got missing while on transit from agis reception to customer car parks abuja. If found, kindly return to the nearest police station.

UNILAG 1995-2000 SET 95100

This Is To Inform The General Public That The Above Named Has Applied To The Corporate Affairs Commission For Registration Under Part 'F' Of Companies And Allied Matters Act, (Cama 2020).

THE TRUSTEES ARE :

- 1. Ekpudu Jonathan Ehimen
- 2. Okwunaleze Ngozi Scholastica
- 3. Okafor Charles Chukwuma

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ARE :

- 1 To Foster Unity, Co-Operation, Understanding And Companionship Among Member
- 2 To Ensure Physical, Social And Economic Welfare Of Each Other
- 3 To Assist Each Other As The Need Arises

Any Objection To This Registration Should Be Forwarded To The Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 420 Tigris Crescent, Off Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama, P.m.b 198, Garki Abuja Within 28 Days Of This Publication.
Signed : **Secretary**

ONE TO ONE SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

This is to inform the general public that the above named has applied to the corporate affairs commission for registration under part 'f' of companies and allied matters act, (cama 2020).

THE TRUSTEES ARE :

- 1. Agidigbo Chuks Benjamin (Chirman)
- 2. Nwaomucha Festus Ulugbe (Secretary)
- 3. Otuya Patrick Orlando
- 4. Chukuma Felicia
- 5. Ogwu Nze Happy
- 6. Onah Uche Richardson

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ARE :

To render assistance that will enhance the educational development of the less privileged, particularly at the grassroot level.

Any objection to this registration should be forwarded to the registrar general, corporate affairs commission, plot 420 tigris crescent, off aguiyi ironsi street, maitama, p.M.B 198, garki abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed : **Akintoye Olawale Esq.**

REHOBOTH CENTRE FOR CHILDREN INITIATIVE

This is to inform the general public that the above named has applied to the corporate affairs commission for registration under part 'f' of companies and allied matters act, (cama 2020).

TRUSTEES ARE:

- 1. Bobby Yetunde Adeola - Chairman
- 2. Ogunfunmilayo Rashida Olayinka - Trustee
- 3. Ogunfunmilayo Aminat Abosede - Secretary

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ARE :

- 1) To support children in need of care and protection and to help destitute children, poor neglected needy and orphans children
- 2) To promote and provide formal and informal education to the children, functional literacy in the community they live and vocational training to the youth

- 3) To undertake relief to those affected by natural calamities and emergency
- Any objections to this registration should be forwarded to the registral general corporate affairs commission, plot 420 tigris crescent off aguyi ironsi street maitama abuja within 28 days of this publication.
Signed **secretary**

ODUSOLA & ODUSOLA HEALTH LAW AND SOCIAL WELFARE FOUNDATION

This is to inform the general public that the above named has applied to the corporate affairs commission for registration under part 'f' of companies and allied matters act, (cama 2020).

TRUSTEES ARE:

- 1. Odusola Fayowole Ademola (Chairman)
- 2. Odusola Gbemisola Josephine (Secretary)
- 3. Odusola Oluseyi Oluwakemi
- 4. Odusola Akintanibiade Sharon
- 5. Ogunmoyela Cornelius Oluwadunsin
- 6. Odusola Abiola Jessica
- 7. Odusola Gbemisola Josephine

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ARE :

- 1 To enhance human capacity through training, welfare support, recognition of excellence, care for the less privileged, and the empowerment and protection of women, youths, and children.
- 2 To train and equip individual to render social services to all classes of people in the advancement of humnaity.
- 3 To promote efficiency, safety, and technological advancement through education and training.
- 4 To provide social security and welfare support for individuals and communities.
- 5 To recognize and encourage outstanding achievement through awards of excellence.
- 6 To offer care, relief, and assistance to the less privileged and vulnerable.
- 7 To advance the empowerment, development, and protection of women, youths, and children.

Any objections to this registration should be forwarded to the registral general corporate affairs commission, plot 420 tigris crescent off aguyi ironsi street maitama abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed **secretary**

HAUWA SANI ISA

I, formerly known and called **HAUWA SANI ISA** Now wish to be known and addressed as **HAUWA SANI**. My correct date of birth is 01/01/2003 not 02/04/2002. All former documents remain valid. The general public and concerned Authorities should please take note

HAUWA MAIGARI

I, formerly known and called **HAUWA MAIGARI** Now wish to be known and addressed as **HAUWA DUJO MAIGARI**. All former documents remain valid. The general public and concerned Authorities should please take note

ILIASU ADAMU BABAWO

I, formerly known and called **ILIASU ADAMU BABAWO** Now wish to be known and addressed as **ILIASU ZAIRO**. My correct date of birth is 01/08/1998 not 01/08/1984. All former documents remain valid. The general public and concerned Authorities should please take note

PAMBI YUSUF JATUTU

I, formerly known and called **PAMBI YUSUF JATUTU** Now wish to be known and addressed as **PAMBI JARUMI MANGEY**. All former documents remain valid. The general public and concerned Authorities should please take note

ESTHER ILIYA TSOKWA

I, formerly known and called **ESTHER ILIYA TSOKWA** Now wish to be known and addressed as **MUSA ESTHER FYARAH**. All former documents remain valid. The general public and concerned Authorities should please take note

HAULATU YUSUF ZURMI

I formerly known and called **HAULATU YUSUF ZURMI** Now wish to be known And address as **HAULATU YUSUF**. All former documents remain valid. The general public and concerned Authorities should please take note.

GLORIA DANIEL SALLAH

I, formerly known and called **GLORIA DANIEL SALLAH** Now wish to be known and addressed as **NEHEMIAH GLORIA BUTSWAT**. All former documents remain valid. The general public and concerned Authorities should please take note

ABUBAKAR FATIMATU USAINI

I, formerly known and called **ABUBAKAR FATIMATU USAINI** Now wish to be known and addressed as **USAINI FATIMA BUTSWAT**. All former documents remain valid. The general public and concerned Authorities should please take note

JOSHUA PAM ESTHER

I, formerly known and called **JOSHUA PAM ESTHER** Now wish to be known and addressed as **PAM ZERRE JOSHUA**. All former documents remain valid. The general public and concerned Authorities should please take note

MARUK YAKUBU

I formerly known and called **MARUK YAKUBU** now wish to be known and addressed as **JOSHUA MARUK YAKUBU** All former documents remain valid. All concern authorities and the general public to take note.

SOKU WAJI

I, formerly known and called **SOKU WAJI** Now wish to be known and addressed as **SOKU CONFIDENCE EDINYA**. All former documents remain valid. The general public and concerned Authorities should please take note

AHMADU JOHN OMIRI

I, formerly known and called **AHMADU JOHN OMIRI** Now wish to be known and addressed as **JOHN OMIRI AHMADU**. All former documents remain valid. The general public and concerned Authorities should please take note

OJO ISHAYA HENYENARUBI

I, formerly known and called **OJO ISHAYA HENYENARUBI** Now wish to be known and addressed as **OJO HINARUBI ISHAYA**. All former documents remain valid. The general public and concerned Authorities should please take note

NELSON MIKAILU

I, formerly known and called **NELSON MIKAILU** Now wish to be known and addressed as **AMINCHI ELISHA**. All former documents remain valid. The general public and concerned Authorities should please take note

HAMMAN'ADAMA MOHAMMED

I, formerly known and called **HAMMAN'ADAMA MOHAMMED** Now wish to be known and addressed as **HAMMAADAMA SAMBO**. All former documents remain valid. The general public and concerned Authorities should please take note

MIRI NANTIM NANBOL

I, formerly known and called **MIRI NANTIM NANBOL**, Now wish to be known and addressed as **MIRI VICTOR NANTIM**. All former documents remain valid. The general public and Concerned Authorities should please take note.

MUTAKA MOHAMMED

I formerly known and called **MUTAKA MOHAMMED** Now wish to be known and addressed as **MUTAKA MUHAMMAD**. All former documents remain valid. The general public and concerned Authorities should please take note

USAINI MOHAMMED IBRAHIM

I, formerly known and called **USAINI MOHAMMED IBRAHIM** Now wish to be known and addressed as **IBRAHIM MUHAMMAD HUSSAIN**. All former documents remain valid. The general public and concerned Authorities should please take note

MANJO GWAKJUL NIMMAK

I, formerly known and called **MANJO GWAKJUL NIMMAK** Now wish to be known and addressed as **GWAKJUL MANJO NIMMAK**. All former documents remain valid. The general public and concerned Authorities should please take note

MOHAMMED MOHAMMED

I' am known called and addressed as **MOHAMMED MOHAMMED** and not **MUHAMMED MUHAMMED** which wrongly spelled. the correct spelling of my name is **MOHAMMED MOHAMMED** All former documents remain valid.

Customs Intercepts 25.5kg Cocaine from Brazilian Ship in Lagos

Apapa Command of the Nigeria Customs Service says it has uncovered and intercepted Cocaine weighing 25.5kg onboard a Brazilian ship MV San Anthonio.

CSC Isah Sulaiman, spokesman of the command disclosed this in a statement on Saturday in Lagos.

According to Suleiman, the illicit drugs were packaged in 24 parcels and hidden in five bags found aboard the ship during customs intelligence led checks which resulted in the detention of the ship.

Comptroller Emmanuel Oshoba, Customs Area Controller for Apapa Port

command, lauded the discovery which he described as a fallout of the robust synergy between the NCS and the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA).

He said that the customs intelligence made the discovery upon her departure from Brazil the ship's country of origin, she had called at ports in Honduras, Guatemala and other places suspected to be hubs for illicit drug trade.

Oshoba reiterated the NCS' resolve in ensuring only legitimate trade thrives in the port of Apapa in Lagos, following a zero compromise directive by the Comptroller-General of Customs, Adewale Adeniyi.

PDP BoT Vows to Restore Confidence, Holds

BY LAIDE AKINBOADE, ABUJA

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Board of Trustees (BoT), Wike's fraction on Sunday, vowed to restore confidence of its members across Nigeria.

The BoT Chairman, Sen. Mao Oluabunwa stated this in Abuja.

Oluabunwa said arrangements are almost concluded to organize congresses in states where they have not yet been held.

He told members that the national leadership is ready to work collaboratively with all state chapters to bring fresh leadership

and stability across the country.

He outlined the PDP's roadmap: conduct overdue state congresses, consolidate ongoing achievements, and support the national leadership to steer the party back on course.

According to him, these steps are critical

to ensuring unity, transparency, and strengthening grassroots engagement.

By holding timely congresses and reinforcing organizational discipline, PDP hopes to rebuild trust among members and present a more organized, credible front ahead of future elections.

LP Reps Accuse Tinubu, APC of Choosing 2027 over Citizens' Security, Welfare

BY UBONG UKPONG, ABUJA

The Labour Party Caucus in the House of Representatives has accused President Bola Tinubu and his All Progressives Congress (APC) of prioritizing 2027 politics over the welfare and security of Nigerian citizens.

The caucus said this was insensitive, unconscionable and a clear example of questionable leadership.

It emphasized that while the President's aspiration for re-election was legitimate, his priority should be addressing the pressing challenges facing Nigerians.

In a statement issued by the Labour Party Caucus leader, Hon. Afam Victor Ogene, in Abuja on Sunday, the lawmakers reiterated that the primary duty of a government is to ensure the welfare and security of its citizens. However, they criticized the APC and President Bola Tinubu for prioritizing their 2027 reelection bid over these fundamental responsibilities.

The statement expressed concern and bewilderment that while the nation grapples with insecurity, the ruling party is either ignoring the issue or offering superficial solutions rather than addressing the problem effectively.

These concerns were raised amid escalating insecurity nationwide and the administration's struggles to fund budgets and demonstrate accountability. "The situation has led to prolonged protests by local contractors who remain unpaid for completed projects, sparking economic hardship, stalled development, and a dearth of new projects."

Recently, these aggrieved contractors have been holding vigils outside the Ministry of Finance, highlighting the government's shortcomings.

The Labour Party representatives highlighted that the "Appropriation Act, a law governing budget allocation, has been consistently disregarded by the current administration." They pointed out the irony of the government pursuing costly projects like the controversial multi-trillion naira coastal road without

proper appropriation or procurement processes, while essential federal road infrastructure lies in disrepair. This has raised concerns among citizens, particularly those planning to travel during the festive season, who face not only difficult road conditions but also heightened insecurity.

Also of grave concern is the opaque expenditure of N17.5 trillion, in 2024 alone, on a pipeline-security contract, as revealed in the recently audited accounts of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company, NNPC.

"Nigerians would remember that over a 12-year period, the country spent about N18 trillion on subsidy (which benefitted everyone through affordable transportation and cheaper costs of foodstuffs), but on the excuse of lack of funds to sustain the subsidy regime, this Administration has clearly robbed Peter(Nigerians), to pay Paul(cronies), through a questionable pipeline-security contract whose executors are unknown."

This statement paints a grim picture of Nigeria's current state, highlighting concerns about the effectiveness of its government branches. "The executive is seen as underwhelming, the judiciary's decisions are questioned, and the legislature is criticized for not having the moral fiber to hold the executive accountable."

"Our dear country, Nigeria has become a special economic zone: everyone and everything now has a price. Kidnappers and bandits now have prices on the heads of the citizenry; elected officials now have a price to look the other way; and opposition figures have prices to enthrone chaos in their own platforms. Even the clergy and ulamas are not spared the chicanery of the divisive effects of a gravely monetized polity."

"Pray, Nigerians, we're in the 12th month of the year, 2025. In fact, across government owned enterprises, ministries, departments, and agencies of government, none can boast of 10 percent of execution of the capital component of the budget. In most cases, the scorecard reads nil.



Convener/Founder, Archbridge Care Foundation (ACF), Dr Ololade Akinrmola (L), presenting clothing materials to an elderly women, during the monthly feeding programme and building bridges of care and empowerment for the poor and needles organised by ACF in Jos on Sunday

PDP Chieftain Hails Bala's National Award on Governance, Regional Growth

FROM AJIYA AYUBA, BAUCHI

The Chieftain of the People's Democratic Party in Bauchi State, Godiya Iliya Wakil (GIWA), has described the national award of Governor Bala Mohammed on governance and regional growth by The Best Strategic (TBS) media in collaboration with the office of the secretary of the Federation, as a very good decision.

Wakil, who is also the 2023 party House of Representatives candidate for Bogoro, Dass and Tafawa-Balewa federal constituency, in a press statement, said

that the award was well deserved.

He said that the governor's award not surprise to them due to Bala's doggedness on both human and infrastructural development across the State.

He further said that they have witnessed so much development in the six years of the administration of governor Bala.

According to him said that there's no any sector in the state that is leaved behind without development, saying "All sectors has been touched."

He said that its during the administration of

governor Bala that the State get two functional fly overs that are located in Wunti and central markets, which help to reduce traffic congestion in the state.

Wakil said that the governor did not stopped from there but also make sure that every community get access road for easy transportation and movement of citizens from one place to another.

Also upgrading the standard of education, health facilities, construction of markets, provision of water supply, agriculture, e m p o w e r m e n t

program for youth and women of the state, provision of scholarship to students particularly orphans and vulnerable students.

He said that the most important is in the administration of the governor is leaving peacefully with one another, payment of pension and gratuity to the retired civil servants of the State.

The party Chieftain, Godiya Iliya Wakil expressed his appreciation to the organizers for considering Governor Bala Mohammed Abdulkadir with the National honor.



From left: Secretary General, The Church of the Lord (TCL), Adeshina Kolawole; Primate, TCL, Rufus Okikiola-Ositelu; Administrator General of the Church, David Fabusoro and Provincial Head, Olayinka Ashaye, during the inauguration of TCL in Abuja on Sunday

Group Backs Tinubu, Urges Sule to Run for Senate

FROM ABEL ZWANKE, LAFIA

The Chief Executive Officer of the Community Initiative for Character Moulding and Entrepreneurship Development (CiCMED) and Chairman of Kefas Elisha Tigga Group, Kefas Elisha Tigga, has reaffirmed support for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and called on Governor Abdullahi Sule to contest the Nasarawa North Senate seat at the end of his tenure.

Tigga made the call on Sunday during a press conference at the closing

ceremony of the Future Planters LEAD Africa Festival 2025 held at Gaji Luxury Hotel, Akwanga.

He described the festival, with the theme “Sowing the Seeds of Change, Harvesting the Future of Africa,” as a major success, noting that it has strengthened the Future Planters Network across Northern Nigeria and the continent.

“This year, we trained hundreds of young people in leadership, agriculture, financial literacy, climate action and entrepreneurship,”

he said. “Our network has now grown to over 14,000 members. We are not just planning the future; we are planting and building it.”

Tigga said the country is passing through a challenging period, insisting that Nigerians must support President Tinubu to succeed.

“Anyone who understands leadership knows this is not the easiest season for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu,” he said. “But we choose unity and encouragement. We choose to stand with the President.”

According to him, the administration’s reforms have begun to reflect in economic stability, resource allocation and support for innovation, agriculture and MSMEs.

“This is not the time to tear down the nation with sentiments,” he stated. “This is the time to build together.”

Tigga commended Governor Abdullahi Sule for what he described as “quiet but impactful leadership,” particularly in mining, agriculture, infrastructure and human capital development.

APC Chieftain Decries Poor Condition of Ibadan/ Gbongan Federal Road

FROM AYINDE AKINTADE, OSOGBO

A Chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC), in Osun State, Hon. Olatunbosun Oyintiloye, yesterday expressed concern over the deplorable condition of the Ibadan-Gbongan road, describing it as a death trap.

Oyintiloye, a member of defunct Presidential Campaign Council (PCC), while speaking with newsmen on Sunday in Osogbo, said the road linking Oyo, Osun and Ondo states has become a threat to road users.

He warned that continued neglect of the road would lead to higher risk, especially during this festive period when more commuters are expected to use the road.

Oyintiloye, a former lawmaker, appealed to the federal government to urgently find a solution to the road before its total collapse.

He said the road was now in such a terrible condition that motorists had to abandon one lane of the dual carriage way.

The APC chieftain noted that many deep potholes on the road which serves as a vital route linking Southwest states with the other regions of the country has made it almost impassable.

“I want to appeal to the Federal Ministry of Works to urgently find a solution and fix this road.

“Every part of the road is

almost impossible, and this is causing untold hardship for motorists traveling on it.

“In this festive season, traffic volume on the road will increase and without emergency repairs, motorists might face more hardship and insecurity”, he said.

Oyintiloye, while commending the federal government on its Renewed Hope infrastructure development across the country, said urgent intervention is needed on the road for the safety and well-being of Nigerians using it.

“Due to the terrible condition of the road, the dual-carriageway has been converted to a single lane.

“This is not good for the safety of road users, especially at this period. A good road network will help to the nation to sustain its current economic growth, create jobs, improve economic activities, and enrich the quality of life of the people”, he said.

Oyintiloye said that the deteriorating condition of many roads across the country had become a significant strain on the economy.

He said the situation was leading to loss of billions of naira annually in lost productivity and resources.

“Beyond economic setbacks, the poor state of the road network has claimed countless lives in preventable accidents and exposed travelers to danger of insecurity”, he said.

Labour Party Re-elects Osim as State Chairman in Cross River

FROM ENE ASUQUO, CALABAR

The Labour Party in Cross River State has re-elected Patriarch Ogar Osim as its state chairman for another four year term.

Ogar was returned during the party’s congress on Saturday in Calabar, where delegates passed vote of confidence on his leadership style, describing his tenure as “visionary.”

The congress was monitored by the Independent National Electoral Commission INEC, Personnel of the Department of State Security (DSS) and The Commissioner of Police, Cross River State Command, whose presence ensured the

entire exercise adhered to democratic principles, transparency guidelines, and internal party regulations.

Speaking after his re-election, Patriarch Ogar Osim expressed gratitude to delegates across the State for their overwhelming support, pledging to continue building a strong, united, and people-driven Labour Party in state.

He said, “I thank all the delegates across the State for their overwhelming support throughout the Congress exercise. I pledge to continue building a strong, united, and people-driven Labour Party in Cross River State.”

According to him, “The congress activities commenced on December

2, 2025 at the Ward levels and continued on December 4, 2025 with the Chapter Congresses across the State. The Congress exercise was formally concluded today December 6, 2025 with the State Congress held at Browland Hotel, Calabar, where delegates reaffirmed their confidence in the leadership of the party in the state.”

Osim, pledged to rebuild the party and strengthen its structures ahead of future elections, promising to address past challenges and unify members.

Party stakeholders who participated in the congresses described the process as peaceful, well-organized, and reflective of the Labour Party’s commitment to internal democracy.

Kogi Debunks Sack of 25 Political Officials

FROM JOSEPH AMEDU, LOKOJA

Kogi State Government has debunked rumour making the rounds that 25 political officials were sacked by the directive of the Governor, Ahmed Ododo, over their alleged ties to certain political figures.

The Hon. Commissioner for Information and Communications, Kingsley Femi Fanwo, in a statement issued and made available to newsmen, said ordinarily, such blatant falsehood would not deserve a response. However, its circulation in some quarters makes it necessary to set the record straight.

The statement read as follows: “The attention of

the Kogi State Government has been drawn to a baseless and mischievous report alleging that the State Government sacked 25 government officials over their alleged ties to certain political figures.

“Ordinarily, such blatant falsehood would not deserve a response. However, its circulation in some quarters makes it necessary to set the record straight.

“For clarity, only one Special Adviser was relieved of his duties, strictly on the basis that his services were no longer required. No other aide was removed, and certainly not for reasons related to political affiliation or association.

“It is important to emphasise that the Kogi

State Government has no political dispute with anyone. The administration is committed to separating governance from politics, and its singular focus is the continued development and greatness of Kogi State.

“The Government of Kogi State holds Hon. James Abiodun Faleke in the highest esteem and maintains a cordial and productive relationship with the distinguished federal lawmaker, a proud and illustrious son of Kogi State.

“We therefore urge the public to disregard the falsehood being spread by individuals whose stock-in-trade is mischief and unnecessary tension. Kogi State remains peaceful, united, and firmly on the path of progress”.

Zamfara APC Accuses Lawal of Alleged Persistent Illegal Presentation of Budget

BY IFEANYICHUKWU NWANNAH, GUSAU

Zamfara State chapter of the All Progressives Congress (APC) has accused Governor Dauda Lawal for persistent illegal presentation of budgets in the State, calling on the Federal government to suspend federal allocations to the State.

The party also pointed accusing fingers on the leadership of the State House of Assembly for engaging in improper conduct, particularly in matters relating to the annual appropriation bill, internal revenue generation, and public expenditure.

In a statement by the State

APC Publicity Secretary, Mallam Yusuf Idris Gusau, the party expressed deep concern over the Governor's recent presentation of his third appropriation bill, amounting to over N861 billion.

According to Gusau, the budget was submitted to a House of Assembly session full of flaws, despite what they termed the government's failure in implementing last year's budget, which the party alleges was also passed in a suspicious, unconstitutional, and illegal manner", Gusau added.

The statement further added that, as with the previous year, the 2025 budget proposal was presented to fewer than two-thirds of the 24-member

House of Assembly, a move the APC says violates the Nigerian Constitution, which requires a two-thirds majority for decisions involving budgets, impeachments, and other critical legislative actions.

"Like last year, the 2025 budget proposal was presented to less than two third of the 24-member House of Assembly which is in gross violation of the nation's constitution which requires a two third majority on issues bordering budget, impeachment and other related matters and since the abnormality was not challenged by all but the opposition APC, the governor took it for granted

by repeating the same violation today"

The APC lamented that "because this anomaly went unchallenged last year by all but the opposition, the governor has chosen to repeat it"The party said that because of avoiding the flaws, scrutiny and accountability, journalists were barred from covering the budget presentation.

The party also alleged that, the event was held behind closed doors at the Jibril Bala Yakubu Secretariat conference hall rather than at the State House of Assembly complex, a decision the APC labelled "dictatorial and totally condemnable"

Lawmaker Empowers Constituents, Demands Accountability in Governance

A federal lawmaker, Chief Amobi Ogah, has charged Nigerians to redefine the essence of governance by demanding accountability and transparency from those they elected into office.

Ogah, representing I s u i k w u a t o / Umunneochi Federal Constituency of Abia, said the essence of holding office holders accountable is to ensure that public trust was not abused.

Party, warned his constituents to be wary of unscrupulous politicians, who would want to buy their votes, pointing out that such people had nothing to offer.

He further assured them that he remained committed to pursuing policies and initiatives that would enhance their socio-economic wellbeing.

He said, "I am very passionate about making a difference and impact in the lives of my people."

He said this during the second edition of his empowerment programme held at Onuaku Primary School Field, Uturu, in Isuikwuato Local Government Area.

Ogah called for fundamental shift in the perception of public office by Nigerians "so that leadership positions could be seen as a sacred trust and not a platform for personal gain.

"I am convinced that holding public office is a real privilege bestowed by the people and must be approached with a deep sense of responsibility and service.

"Since holding public office is a privilege and not a business venture, we must, therefore, change our mindset, accordingly.

He listed some of his achievements in his two years in office, including some infrastructure development in the constituency, and promised to do more.

Ogah distributed different items, including mini-buses, cars, tractors, tricycles, grinding machines, and sewing machines, among others, to his constituents.

In a remark, the governor lauded Ogah for his impactful representation.

Otti, represented by the Secretary to the State Government, Prof. Kenneth Kalu, said: "What is happening today is what leadership and representation should be all about.

"It is not speaking all the grammar and all the noise-making in the social media without impacting on the constituents."

"The prevailing attitude of viewing political positions as avenues for wealth accumulation has greatly hindered national development.

"And genuine leadership must be anchored on selfless transparency and unwavering commitment to the welfare of the people," the lawmaker said.

He extolled Gov. Alex Otti for his dynamic and transformative leadership in the state, describing him as "a governor that listens to his people".

He charged both the elected and electorate to continue to support his administration, so it could sustain the dividend of democracy they were enjoying.

Ogah, a chieftain of the Labour

Also, the Chairman, House Committee on Appropriation, Abubakar Kabir, said that Ogah is one of the strong voices, who had been a part and parcel of the activities in the National Assembly.

Kabir, represented by a fellow lawmaker, Mark Essien, urged Ogah's constituents to vote for him for a second term in 2027.

In a goodwill message, the Chairman, House Committee on Financial Crimes, Ginger Onwusibe, described the e m p o w e r m e n t programme as a demonstration of true and responsive representation.



Convener/Founder, Archbridge Care Foundation, Dr Ololade Akinrmola (R), with beneficiaries, during the monthly feeding programme and building bridges of care and empowerment for the poor and needles organised by ACF in Jos on Sunday

Blocking Mutfwang's Defection to APC Not in Party's Interest - Plateau APC Legacy Members

FROM JUDE DANGWAM, JOS

A group of pioneer members of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Plateau State has condemned attempts by some individuals to block Governor Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang's alleged defection to the party.

The Concerned Plateau APC Legacy Members led by their leader Emmanuel Dankasa on Friday at a press conference held at the NUJ Press Centre in Jos the Plateau State capital described

the protests and press conferences organized by some individuals as "ill-advised, counterproductive, and puerile".

In his words, "We consider such infantile behaviors as acts of gross misconduct and the height of anti-party activity that deserves to be reprimanded with the full weight of disciplinary sanctions," the group said.

The group argued that blocking Governor M u t f w a n g ' s defection would not be in the interest of

the party, citing the benefits of having a sitting governor join the APC.

"The governor of a state controls all the structure of his party from the wards to the local governments and state levels, elective positions of his party and the loyalty of his appointees and constituencies that have benefited from his government.

"These are assets that could be harvested effortlessly by any party he is moving into," the group strongly stated

The Convener appealed to Governor

Mutfwang to compassionately look into the plight of the sacked workers of Plateau tertiary institutions and recall those who are truly deserving of the opportunity, regardless of their political loyalty.

"We passionately appeal to Governor Mutfwang to compassionately look into the plight of the sacked workers, scrutinize the beneficiaries and recall those who are truly deserving of the opportunity, regardless of their political loyalty," the group stated.

Zamfara Mobilises 1,997 Teams for Statewide Immunization

The Zamfara Primary Health Care Board, in collaboration with development partners, has mobilised 1,997 vaccination teams for the November integrated polio campaign across the state's Local Government Areas.

Incident Manager of the state Polio Emergency Operations Centre, Dr. Murtala Salahudeen disclosed this on Saturday in Gusau during a media dialogue organised to sensitise journalists to the upcoming integrated polio campaign.

The dialogue was convened by the State Primary Health Care Board with support from the United Nations Children's Fund to strengthen communication

around the scheduled immunisation activities.

According to Salahudeen, the mobilised teams will vaccinate children against measles, rubella and several other childhood killer diseases, ensuring comprehensive coverage across identified settlements and hard-to-reach communities throughout Zamfara State.

He explained that each of the 1,997 vaccination teams consisted of approximately 6,000 personnel, including vaccinators, recorders, supervisors and influential community leaders supporting mobilisation efforts.

Salahudeen noted that all personnel received training on



vaccination protocols and interpersonal communication skills to enhance outreach effectiveness, ensuring every eligible child in the state successfully received lifesaving routine immunisation vaccines.

He further disclosed that the November

campaign aimed to reach approximately 1.2 million children with essential immunisation doses, targeting both urban and rural communities across the entire state.

The Executive Secretary of the Zamfara Primary Health Care Board, Dr. Hussaini

Yakubu, reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening primary healthcare delivery and improving access to quality immunisation services statewide.

Yakubu emphasised Gov. Dauda Lawal's strong dedication to ensuring every eligible child in Zamfara received complete vaccination against preventable diseases, noting intensified community sensitisation and enlightenment efforts across the state.

He stated that traditional, religious and community leaders had been effectively engaged to support mobilisation activities, encouraging caregivers to embrace vaccination and

reject misinformation that discouraged routine immunisation participation.

The Executive Secretary acknowledged partners including UNICEF, WHO, e-Health, Sultan Foundation, Solina and Chigagari Foundation for their continued contributions toward ensuring successful immunisation campaigns throughout Zamfara State.

Yakubu also commended media organisations for sustained support in public enlightenment, noting their essential role in promoting awareness on immunisation campaigns against polio and other preventable childhood diseases.

UN Commits to Strengthening Nigeria's Policy Framework, Enhancing Digital Safety

The UN Women has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening policy frameworks, enhancing digital safety, and promoting accountability for online harms in Nigeria.

Deputy Executive Director for Normative Support, UNWomen, Nyara Gumbonzvanda, said this at a press conference on Saturday in Abuja.

The press conference was on Gumbonzvanda's high-level mission to Nigeria and commemoration of the 2025 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

She said that the visit was to deepen partnerships, reinforce national leadership, and accelerate collective action to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Nigeria.

"A critical area of concern remains technology-facilitated GBV, which is rising globally and nationally.

"Between 16 per cent and 58 per cent of women worldwide experience some form of online or technology-facilitated GBV, depending on the region.

"UN Women is

supporting the government and stakeholders in strengthening policy frameworks, enhancing digital safety, and promoting accountability for online harms," she said.

She commended the National Assembly's commitment to strengthening legislation that protects women and girls and advance women's participation in governance, and called for effective legal frameworks and inclusive governance.

Gumbonzvanda decried low representation of women at the National Assembly,

which she said stood at only 3.8 per cent, far below the global average of 27.2 per cent.

She, therefore, emphasised the need for legislative reforms such as affirmative action, quotas, and the proposed special seats bill, which she described as globally recognised tools to accelerate women's participation.

"This is critical because globally, nearly one in three women experiences physical or sexual violence in their lifetime.

"Effective legal frameworks and inclusive

governance are essential to reversing this trend," she said.

On insecurity in Nigeria, she called for the release of abducted girls and reaffirm the need to ensure that every girl has the right to security and education.

She listed the impact of UN Women's work in communities, including the commissioning of new WASH facilities.

She said that there was also rehabilitation of agro-processing centre in Kwali to improve women's safety, reduce time burdens, and expand income-generating

opportunities.

"UN Wornen will continue to mobilise partnerships across government, development partners, and the private sector to ensure that frontline organisations and national institutions have the resources required to deliver lasting change," she said.

On her part, Beatrice Eyong, UN Country Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, commended the media for amplifying issues affecting women and girls in the country.

Foundation Seeks Ban of Repressive, Degrading Widowhood Practices

The Advocacy for Widows Empowerment Foundation (ADWEF) has urged the Federal Government to enact law to ban the practice of marrying a late brother's wife and inheriting his children and property.

The President and Founder of ADWEF, Willie Workman, made the call at a programme titled: "Make a Widow For Christmas", organised by the Foundation to celebrate widows in Lagos.

Workman frowned at the practice of a man (family member) automatically inheriting his late brother's wife and property, describing it as 'barbaric and forced marriage'.

He said that child-

widowhood was becoming rampant, decrying instances where young women would be married to an advanced (aged) man, who might die eventually, leaving the women widows early in life and at the mercy of his family members.

He said that in most cases, where the widows would not consent to such arrangements, the practice had resulted to many widows suffering after the demise of their spouse, as they would be left with nothing to carter for the family.

Workman advised the government to enact a law to abolish such practices.

This, he said, would address the plights of widows, saying the practice

might make some men to pray/cause the death of their brother to enable them occupy his space.

According to him, the property of a late husband should be left to his wife, to at least use it to uphold the family and cater for the children he left behind.

On the widows' Christmas empowerment programme, Workman said it was a medium through which the foundation impacted lives of widows and their children by distributing food items and other items to them.

He explained that it was a divine call that inspired him to start advocating for the widows some years ago, because the mission started even before his mum lost her

husband.

"The programme – 'Make a Widow Smile for Christmas' is an annual event and usually our last event for the year.

No fewer than 40 widows have been given different foods items.

"We have millionaires out there who don't even know what to do with money, but cannot reach the indigent widows and their children who need help, and these widows cannot go to them.

"So, we stand to bridge the gap between the rich people and these widows, in making them happy particularly during Christmas, so that they have something to celebrate with.

"Sometimes we provide

them with gifts including their children, apart from the raw food items we give them.

"In the past, we have also empowered many widows with skills and things like grinding and sewing machines with which most of them still utilise to earn income for the upkeep of their families," Workman said.

Contributing, the Programme Coordinator, ADWEF, Bola Olarinwaju, canvassed the need for prospective wives to know and understand the culture and tradition of their intending husbands in case of eventualities.

According to her, it is the duty of parents to know and

educate their children about the culture and tradition of the people they intend to be married to.

"In some areas, the people will insist that it's in their culture for the brother to the deceased husband to automatically marry his wife.

"In as much as we supposed to preserve and promote our culture, tradition and values, it is imperative for parents to ensure that intending couples are well informed about the culture of the people and family they want to be married into.

"And if they think such culture is not favourable, it's advisable not to go into the marriage.

Lagos to Create Agency to Monitor Private Health Facilities

Lagos State Assembly Speaker, Mudasiru Obasa, has announced plans to establish a regulatory body to oversee private healthcare facilities, ensuring they meet operational standards.

Obasa disclosed this during a Gala and Awards Ceremony organised by the Lagos State Branch of the Association of Nigerian Private Medical Practitioners (ANPMP) on Saturday.

He stated that this initiative aimed to guarantee patient safety and quality care in the state, given its numerous private healthcare institutions.

“We have received complaints where the health of many people was badly managed. But we don’t want that to continue,” he said.

He expressed concern that many private hospitals failed to meet standards due to inadequate monitoring, and appealed to ANPMP to work with the House to develop laws that would improve healthcare quality.

Obasa argued that the proposed agency would not duplicate Health Facilities and Monitoring Accreditation Agency (HEFAMAA’s) role, adding that HEFAMAA’s staff strength and capability could not effectively handle the identified lacuna.

The Speaker commended ANPMP for supporting the state government in providing healthcare services to its teeming residents, assuring the association of LSHA’s commitment to developing business-friendly laws.

Earlier, Dr. Jonathan Esegine, Chairman, ANPMP Lagos, commended the speaker for leading the House to promote laws that entrenched good governance and peace in the state.

Esegine assured that the association would continue to work with the state government to deliver quality healthcare services to residents.

On the Awards and Gala ceremony, Esegine emphasised that the event was to celebrate the dedication and support of members throughout the year.

World Bank, Partners Record Progress Toward 1.5bn Healthcare Goal

The World Bank Group, global partners and countries on Saturday announced continued progress toward the goal of delivering affordable and quality health services to 1.5 billion people by 2030.

A statement by the World Bank Online Media Briefing Centre said 15 countries introduced National Health Compacts, outlining practical five-year reforms aimed to expand primary healthcare, improve affordability and support job-rich economic growth.

The statement said that since the goal was set in April 2024, the Bank and partners had supported countries to provide quality and affordable care to 375 million people.

It said work was underway with roughly 45 countries to scale proven primary care approaches that strengthen health outcomes while generating employment across health workforces, local supply chains and supporting industries.

“This progress comes as governments confront aging populations, rising chronic disease, and financial pressures.”

The statement said the 2025 Global Monitoring Report released at the Tokyo Universal Health Coverage (UHC) High-Level Forum showed that 4.6 billion people globally still lacked access to essential health services.

It said the report also revealed that 2.1 billion people faced financial hardship due to health expenses.

“These challenges underscored the need for long-term, coordinated reforms that help countries build more resilient and equitable health systems.”

World Bank Group President, Ajay Banga, is quoted in the statement as saying, “strong primary healthcare systems are central to both health protection and economic growth.

“Strong primary health systems do more than safeguard health, they support jobs and economic opportunity.

Africa Faces Rising Outbreaks of Cholera, Mpox, Marburg, CDC Warns

Africa is grappling with increasing public health threats amid overstretched resources and persistent gaps in preparedness, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) has said.

Incident Manager for Health Emergencies at Africa CDC, Prof. Yap Boum, gave the alert during the agency’s weekly virtual press briefing.

He gave the alert as the CDC released data showing rising outbreaks of cholera, Mpox and Marburg virus across the continent.

Boum noted that Africa Health Security and Sovereignty Agenda provided a roadmap to strengthen preparedness, expand local manufacturing and invest in digital and financing systems for long-term resilience.

“Progress requires shared commitment, with Africa leading and partners aligning, to build a more secure and sovereign health future for the continent,” he said.

He said that accelerating local drug production was crucial to reducing dependency and building a resilient health ecosystem.

He also announced that the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) had declared the end of its 16th Ebola outbreak centred in Kasai Province and first reported on Sept. 4.

He said that Africa CDC joined Prime Minister Judith Suminwa Tuluka in marking the milestone, and commended the DRC Government, the country’s Ministry of Health and field teams for coordinated response.

“This success is the result of exceptional determination and exemplary coordination,” he said.

Data for epidemiological weeks one to 47 of 2025 shows a rising disease burden across the continent.

Boum said there were 132,442 suspected cases of Mpox and 40,218 confirmed cases resulting in 953 deaths.

There were 301,561 suspected Cholera cases, 10,057 confirmed cases causing 7,187 deaths, according to him.

“Measles affected 140,217 people, with 11,674 confirmed cases causing 1,243 deaths, while Dengue fever recorded 52,155 suspected cases, 6,062 confirmed cases, and 139 deaths.

“Lassa fever recorded 8,791 suspected cases, 1,023 confirmed cases, and 192 deaths,” he said.

He said that the Ethiopian Ministry of Health and the country’s Public Health Institute confirmed Marburg virus outbreak in Jinka Town on Nov. 14.

“As of Dec. 3, 13 cases had been confirmed with eight deaths, and 530 samples were tested in week 49 alone.

“Rapid response teams have been deployed with contact tracing, active case search and surveillance at points of entry ongoing.

“South Sudan has also activated its Emergency Operations Centre.

“Mpox continues to pose a major public health challenge, with Liberia, DRC, Kenya, Ghana, Uganda and Guinea accounting for 81 per cent of confirmed cases over the last six weeks,” he said.

According to him, transmission is declining in many countries, with Sierra Leone reporting 36 days without a confirmed case.

“Africa CDC continues support in countries where transmission persists, including Kenya, Guinea, Liberia and Ghana.”

He said Cholera remained a significant threat, with 311,618 cases and 7,187 deaths reported across 25 African countries in 2025.

According to him, Sudan, DRC, South Sudan and Angola accounted for 85 per cent of all cholera-related deaths.

“Notable outbreaks include Namibia (13 cases, one death), Burundi (cases concentrated in northwestern provinces due to poor access to safe water).

“Angola (152 municipalities affected; over 3.57 million people vaccinated with oral cholera vaccines), DRC (65,541 cases in conflict-hit eastern provinces), and Kenya (cases reduced after intensive vaccination campaigns),” he said.

On Mpox vaccination, he said 18 countries had regulatory approval for the MVA-BN vaccine, with two countries extending vaccination to children under 12.

“A total of 4.88 million doses has been delivered to 16 countries, and 1.91 million people have received at least one dose.

“Mozambique recently rolled out vaccination with health worker trainings in hotspot districts, while new shipments to Kenya and Liberia are expected in early December,” he said.

Boum emphasised the need for long-term investment in preparedness, including domestic health financing, laboratory and manufacturing capacity, early warning systems, and protection for frontline health workers.

Roche Partners NHIA to Boost Breast Cancer Diagnosis, Treatment

Roche, a global pharmaceutical and diagnostics company, has reaffirmed commitment to fighting breast cancer in Nigeria in spite of economic challenges. Ecosystem Enabler and Oncology Cluster Lead, Roche Nigeria, Funsho David, gave the assurance at the ninth Annual Conference of the Association of Nigerian Health Journalists on Friday in Abuja.

David highlighted some initiatives of the company aimed at improving early diagnosis, access to treatment and overall survival for breast cancer patients.

“One of the flagship programmes is BRANT (Breast Cancer Access to Navigation and Testing), which provides specialised testing for women diagnosed with breast cancer.

“The programme aims to reach 5,000 patients and ensure accurate identification of the type of cancer, a critical step for effective treatment.

“Normally costing over 150,000, the tests are fully subsidised for indigent patients, while those who can afford a portion pay between 30,000 and 50,000,” he said.

He also disclosed that Roche was collaborating with FLAC (First Ladies Against Cancer), a network of current and former Nigerian First Ladies, to raise awareness and mobilise resources for cancer care.

“The initiative, supported by Doris Duke, focuses on early detection and patients’ survival at both state and national levels.

“In addition, Roche has partnered with the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) to make cancer treatment more affordable through the NHI-Roche Cost Sharing Partnership.

“Under this scheme, Roche covers 50 per cent of treatment costs, NHIA contributes 30 per cent and patients pay only 20 per cent.

Nigeria Academy of Pharmacy Champions Innovation as Driver of Nat’l Growth at 2025 AGM

BY DAVID TOROUGH, **ABUJA**

The Nigeria Academy of Pharmacy (NAPHARM) has renewed its call for stronger investment in pharmaceutical innovation as a central pillar for national development, during its 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM), Valedictory Session, and Investiture Ceremony held October 15–16 at the Old Great Hall, College of Medicine, University of Lagos, Idi-Araba.

Anchored on the theme “Pharmaceutical Innovation as a Catalyst for National Development,” the two-day gathering convened leaders from academia, industry, government, and the global pharmaceutical community to examine how research, manufacturing, regulatory excellence, and digital health can accelerate Nigeria’s economic diversification and strengthen its healthcare system.

A major highlight of the event was the Valedictory Session in honour of the late Pharm. Chief Oludolapo Ibukun Akinkugbe, FNAPharm, the Academy’s revered founding President. Tributes poured in celebrating his vision, discipline, and extraordinary influence on pharmacy practice and national development.

NAPHARM President and Chairman of the Governing Council, Prof. Lere Baale, described Akinkugbe as “a pharmacist, leader, and statesman whose life exemplified grace, discipline, and visionary service to humanity.”

Delivering the keynote address, Group Managing Director of First HoldCo Plc, Wale Oyedeki, stressed that Nigeria’s quest for sustainable development must prioritise pharmaceutical innovation. He argued that innovation spans beyond drug discovery to include the creation of an enabling ecosystem for research, manufacturing, entrepreneurship, and coordinated government–industry collaboration.

Health Experts Task Government on Increase in Domestic Funding

BY LAIDE AKINBOADE, **ABUJA**

Experts in the health sector, at the weekend agreed that even though foreign grants and aid remain highly valuable, it is imperative for the three tiers of government to increase domestic funding in Nigeria.

They agreed that it is only through the above the nation can build a resilient, domestically financed health system.

This was agreed at the 9th annual health conference organized by the Association of Nigeria Health Journalists (ANHeJ) in Abuja.

The theme of this year conference is ‘Domestic Resource Mobilization in the Face of Dwindling Foreign Grants and Aids’.

Among those who spoke at the occasion, include, Special Adviser to President on Health, Dr. Salma Ibrahim Anas, Minister of State for Health and Social Welfare, Dr. Kunle Salako, representative from National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, (NAFDAC), Dr. Matins Illuyomade, Salako who was represented by his Special Adviser, Dr. Babatunde Akinyemi, said Nigeria has benefited from substantial foreign health assistance, including over \$6 billion from PEPFAR, \$2.5 billion from the Global Fund, \$1.5 billion from the World Bank, \$1.2 billion from Gavi, and \$1.6 billion from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

He stressed, that government initiatives under the Renewed Hope Agenda and the Nigeria Health Sector Renewal Investment Initiative (NHSRII), including the Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF), which has disbursed over N260 billion to states and the Federal Capital Territory since 2018, and the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) Act, mandating health insurance for all Nigerians.

He said, "The United States government, through PEPFAR, has invested over \$6 billion in Nigeria's HIV/AIDS response since 2004, with annual allocations averaging \$400-450 million in recent years. In fiscal year 2023 alone, USAID (Now DoS) allocated approximately \$535 million for health programs in Nigeria, covering HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, and maternal and child health initiatives.

"The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria has disbursed over \$2.5 billion to Nigeria since 2003, making us one of the largest recipients globally. The World Bank currently supports our health sector with approximately \$1.5 billion through various projects, including the \$500 million Nigeria COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus Program and the \$820 million International Development Association credit for primary healthcare strengthening.

Similarly, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, has committed over \$1.2 billion to Nigeria since 2001 for immunization programs, while the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has invested approximately \$1.6 billion across various health interventions in Nigeria over the past two decades.

"The United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), though reducing its overall aid budget, continues to invest significantly in Nigeria's health system, particularly through the £210 million Health Systems Strengthening program.

The European Union and its member states collectively provide approximately €100 million annually for health-related interventions, while the Government of Japan, through JICA, supports our health infrastructure development with grants averaging \$30 million annually.

Multilateral development banks and financial instruments have also remained vital partners; the World Bank in 2024 approved substantial concessional financing, including a major credit and complementary grant financing package that supports health outcomes and health system resilience across states and communities.

Such financing is targeted not only at service delivery but at strengthening our ability to prevent, detect, and respond to emergencies".

The Minister of state also enumerated the innovative domestic financing efforts at the state and private sector levels.

“Lagos State allocates over 12% of its budget to health, Kaduna State’s contributory health scheme has enrolled 1.6 million residents, and Abia State has launched a diaspora health investment fund.

“The Private Sector Health Alliance of Nigeria and the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority contributed over N50 billion and \$200 million, respectively, to health initiatives,” he said.

Dr. Salma, in her presentation, said, donor fatigue is real, and the inevitable graduation of Nigeria from various aid programs is approaching.

In his welcome address, ANHeJ President, Joseph Kadiri, said the conference theme, “Domestic Resource Mobilisation in the Face of Dwindling Foreign Grants and Aid,” underscores the urgent need to strengthen domestic financing, partnerships, and resilient health institutions.

Kadiri called on journalists to track government commitments, highlight gaps, and amplify the realities faced by Nigerian families.



The Homily

With

REV. FR. EMMANUEL ASUE

Contact: 0708 578 1580 [WhatsApp Only] email: suenue17@gmail.com

Second Sunday of Advent (Year A)

Readings: Isaiah 11:1–10; Romans 15:4–9; Matthew 3:1–12

Today we celebrate the Second Sunday of Advent. We are gradually moving toward the celebration of the birth of Christ Jesus, the Savior of mankind.

The Gospel reading calls us to be conscious of the nearness of the Kingdom of God: “Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand,” John said. As the clock ticks, so our lives move toward eternity, which by God’s design and intention is His Kingdom. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that all might be saved through faith in Him (John 3:16). Every passing day draws us closer to our end, and that end is meant to be the

Kingdom of God.

John refers to Christ metaphorically as the Kingdom of God. He is the way to the Kingdom of God, malkhut in Hebrew and basileia in Greek, meaning the reign and sovereignty of God.

In the first reading, Isaiah presents a vision of the nature of God’s Kingdom, a place of perfect peace and harmony. He paints a picture: “A wolf shall dwell with a lamb; a child will play with a viper,” Isaiah prophesied. In the coming Kingdom, the lion shall eat grass. This means there will be no oppression or domination of the weak in God’s Kingdom. The lion’s meal normally costs the life of other animals; the lion dominates and ends the lives of others for food.

In human society, we see the same pattern. Many people in positions of authority, and the bourgeois class, oppress the poor and the less privileged. They drain the lives of the poor to increase their wealth and expand their business empires, often by underpaying their workers. The life of the weak is treated as worthless, sacrificed to support the lives of the strong, the rich, and the political class. Others deny workers their rightful wages and artisans their pay. God’s word warns: “Whoever denies his worker’s wages is a murderer” (Sirach 34:27), and murderers have no place in the Kingdom of God.

In the Kingdom of God, there will be no oppression or domination.

Equality, peace, and love will reign. There will be total transformation; earthly appetites will give way to the reign of love. Even the carnivorous will become herbivorous, the lion shall eat grass. This is the final state God desires for all at the end of our earthly journey.

To be part of this Kingdom, arrogance, pride, oppression, hatred, and immorality must be abandoned. “Repent,” the Gospel urges us. Like the Pharisees and Sadducees, let us flee from the judgment that awaits those outside God’s Kingdom. Time is running out, the Kingdom of God is near. Repent, tomorrow may be too late.

Psalms for prayer this week: Psalms 121, 122, and 123.

Why AI Must Pay for the News It Devours

By Segun Adediran

The collision between the newspaper industry and Artificial Intelligence companies is no longer news; it is a global legal and economic reckoning. Legal cases, which primarily focus on copyright infringement and fair use, are currently ongoing in many countries and are expected to shape the future of both industries.

Just recently, a Spanish court ordered Meta, the Facebook owner, to pay 479 million euros (\$552 million) to Spanish digital media outlets for unfair competition practices and infringing European Union data protection regulations. It was a profoundly cheering moment for the print media.

But it wasn’t the first of its kind and it won’t be the last. The ruling was the latest in a series of fines Meta had faced in Europe. Meta equally reached a settlement with the Nigerian Data Protection Commission (NDPC) for a \$32.8 million fine related to data privacy violations, agreeing to an out-of-court resolution in October 2025.

But the Munich court’s ruling against OpenAI is a significant step in the right direction. It recognises that AI developers have a responsibility to respect intellectual property rights and compensate creators for their work. That’s right. This decision should serve as a wake-up call for AI developers and regulators worldwide.

We all must be worried. The rise of AI is accelerating the decline of trusted newspapers, with many news outlets struggling to adapt to the changing media landscape. In Nigeria where the economy is already on its knees, the disruption the AI firms and global tech giants have inflicted on the media business is unimaginable.

The decline of the mainstream press

means a democratic backsliding. As the traditional media’s business model fails and trust erodes, its ability to perform its crucial role as the “Fourth pillar” of democracy—holding power to account and informing the public—is severely compromised. And the society loses.

Journalism history is the story of man’s long struggle to communicate freely with his fellow men, to dig out and interpret news, and to offer intelligent opinions in the marketplace of ideas. Big tech firms and AI threaten all that.

Those in the newspaper business and other content creators are correct: this moment presents a unique opportunity for AI developers and regulators to establish an ethical and equitable framework for the AI business. Let’s be clear—this framework must be built on the unshakeable foundation of intellectual property rights and fair compensation.

It’s not a fair deal to rob Peter to pay Paul. While AI is expected to rake in up to \$15.7 trillion from the global economy by 2030, the global newspaper market revenue, currently at \$80.5 billion, has been declining at 3.1 per cent Compound Annual Growth Rate, (CAGR) over recent years. The argument is simple and devastatingly urgent: AI cannot be allowed to feast indiscriminately on the world’s creative output without consequence or consent.

For decades, the creative industries—journalism, book publishing, academic research—have invested enormous time, resources, and human expertise to produce high-quality, trustworthy content that has, ironically, become the essential fuel for these massive AI models.

Let us call it what it is: a subsidised race to market, where the subsidy is provided, involuntarily, by the very creators whose livelihoods are now being mindlessly undermined. This indiscriminate

seizure of protected content is simply an infringement of established rights.

The bedrock of any thriving creative economy is the assurance that the creator—the journalist, the editor, the author, researcher—will be adequately remunerated for their work. When AI developers treat copyright-protected material as a free, limitless resource, they erode the economic incentive that drives the creation of high-quality content.

The publishers are absolutely right, therefore, to demand that developers, operators, and deployers of AI systems respect intellectual property rights and seek express authorisation for use. The fact that frameworks already exist for content licensing—which have long facilitated media indexing, search engine operations, and content syndication—makes the current unlicensed activity all the more inexcusable. To argue that licensing suddenly “Impedes innovation”; when applied to training AI models suggests a desire not for innovation, but for exploitation. We must recognise and enforce existing rules for content licensing to ensure that value flows back to the originators.

Where do we go from here? It simply calls for a robust system of accountability. Legally, the abuse of content should be severely penalised as the Spanish court has done. Furthermore, AI deployers providing informational content cannot be shielded from liability for their outputs. The EU has enacted comprehensive, binding legislation with the Digital Services Act (DSA), which imposes significant liability and obligations on platforms. The recent law in Australia, banning children under 16 from major social media platforms and imposing massive fines, offers a valuable, if distinct, example for Nigerian regulators of taking a firm stance against Big Tech

impunity.

The idea that a system can improperly attribute, misrepresent, or essentially launder misinformation through a veil of limited liability or safe harbours is a direct threat to the health of our democracies and the functioning of scientific discourse. AI systems must be designed to promote trusted and reliable sources, and their developers must use best efforts to ensure that AI-generated content is accurate, correct, and complete. They must pay for their inputs.

The future of journalism depends on finding a balance between embracing AI and protecting intellectual property rights. Essentially, AI developers, regulators, and policymakers should promote responsible AI development and ensure that intellectual property rights are respected.

The press and AI metamorphosis is a complex issue, requiring careful consideration and cooperation. By prioritising intellectual property rights and fair compensation, we can ensure that AI development benefits creators and promotes a vibrant media industry. It then becomes a win-win situation.

The stakes are high, and the future of journalism hangs in the balance. Relevant government agencies should act fast and responsibly, too.

A flourishing, free and independent press must be preserved. By working together, we can create an AI future that is fair, transparent, and beneficial to all. Nigeria’s regulators should make AI companies adopt a licensed content model and establish new precedents for copyright law. It’s happening in Europe already. The future of trusted news, and by extension, our democracy, depends on it.

Adediran is the GM/CEO of the Newspaper Proprietors’ Association of Nigeria (NPAN)

Is Community Parenting Still Relevant?

By Dorcas Jonah

In the Nigerian culture, extended families and communities play a crucial role in care-giving, instilling values, and supporting the development of children.

This cultural heritage of community parenting emphasises shared responsibility in raising children.

But in contemporary Nigeria, this age-long practice is facing enormous challenges due to modernisation.

In scrutinising this trend, some par-

ents are of the view that community parenting helps in instilling morals and curbing social vices among children and youths, while others believe it is outdated.

Some parents are of the belief that their children are their responsibility; so they do not tolerate others correcting their children.

By contrast, others say that community parenting, when done with good intentions, can help raise a better society.

Mr Peterson Bangyi, a community

leader in Dutse Makaranta, said that community parenting was the bedrock of raising a child.

He said the adage: “it takes a village to raise a child”, remained a powerful principle in contemporary society.

According to him, by Nigeria’s cultural norms and values, a child is owned by everyone; therefore, the grandparents, aunts, uncles, and neighbours actively contribute to raising children.

“This approach fosters a sense of belonging and ensures children grow

up with diverse role models.”

Bangyi said that the extended families practiced by more communities were the backbone of parenting.

“But modernisation has taken away this practice as most families do not want people to come close to their children,” he said.

Mrs Monica Umeh, a mother of two, emphasising on the importance of community parenting, said that it played significant role in shaping her upbringing as a child and young adult.

Appeal For The Establishment Of A Government Secondary School In Uvir Ward, Guma LGA, Benue State

By Gwar James Atoo

Uvir Ward is one of the ten council wards that make up the Guma Local Government Area of Benue State. It is as old as Guma itself, which was established in 1987 by the then Military Sole Administrator, Col. Fidelis A. Maka. Today, the Ward hosts a population of over twenty thousand children of school age and a voting population estimated at more than ten thousand eligible voters.

Despite its long history and abundant human resources, Uvir Ward has remained severely underserved in the area of secondary education. This is particularly ironic considering that the Ward is home to numerous distinguished personalities who have contributed immensely to the political, academic, and economic development of Benue State and Nigeria at large. These include the late Senator JKN Waku; Hon. Dickson Tarkighir, Member representing Makurdi/ Guma Federal Constituency; and

Surveyor John Tondou, a notable business magnate based in Abuja.

In academia, Uvir Ward proudly boasts more than five professors across various fields of human endeavour. Among them are Prof. Engr. Kuhe Aondoyila; Prof. Zayol P. I.; and Prof. Sengev A. I., all of the Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi; as well as Prof. Nyamnger Amase of the University of Ilorin and Prof. (Col.) Mayange Levi of Nasarawa State University. These eminent scholars reflect the intellectual strength and enormous potential embedded within the Ward.

Given the vast landmass of Uvir Ward, its sizeable population, and the long distances children must travel to neighbouring communities in pursuit of secondary education, the absence of a government-owned secondary school is both alarming and unacceptable. It is important to recall that a Government Day Secondary School once existed during the administration of the late Governor Aper Aku—

Government Day Secondary School Iye—facilitated by Hon. Alexander Atero, who represented the then Daudu Constituency. Unfortunately, that institution collapsed and has remained non-functional for over four decades, leaving behind a significant educational vacuum.

Kaseyo, the headquarters of Uvir Ward, previously hosted critical facilities such as a police station and a mission-run evening secondary school established by the NKST Church. Both institutions ceased operation due to insecurity and the lack of sustained government support. These closures have further deepened the educational deprivation endured by the people of Uvir Ward.

It is therefore both imperative and urgent that a Government Secondary School be established in Uvir Ward. This is not merely a developmental need but a strategic investment in the future of a people who have made remarkable contributions to the state and the nation. Data from

the National Population Commission, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and the State Bureau of Statistics all testify to the demographic significance and political relevance of Uvir Ward.

As the political atmosphere intensifies and governance structures continue to evolve, we passionately appeal to the Executive Governor of Benue State, Rev. Fr. Dr. Hyacinth Iormem Alia; legislators at all levels; relevant ministries and government agencies; policymakers; and public-spirited individuals to intervene. Uvir Ward deserves access to quality government secondary education within its boundaries.

We therefore fervently plead that the longstanding educational neglect of Uvir Ward be addressed through the immediate establishment of a Government Secondary School. May the Benue State Government and the Federal Government hear our cry and respond to the yearnings of our people.

A silent Emergency: Soaring Costs of Diabetes Care Spark Alarm

By Folasade Akpan

For Mrs Schola Effiong, a 58-year-old confidential secretary in Calabar, managing diabetes in today's economy feels like "climbing a hill that only gets steeper".

Diagnosed in 2009, she said her monthly expenditure on insulin, tablets, laboratory tests and monitoring supplies now exceeds 150,000.

"You cannot stop taking the drugs, yet the cost keeps going up.

"Sometimes I do not have the money to buy some of them at the same time," she said.

Her struggle mirrors the experiences of thousands of Nigerians at a time when experts warn that diabetes is becoming a major public health concern.

According to a 2018 national meta-analysis by Uloko et al., titled "Prevalence and Risk Factors for Diabetes Mellitus in Nigeria: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis", Nigeria's diabetes prevalence stands at 5.7 per cent, representing 11.2 million adults.

The authors defined diabetes mellitus as a metabolic disorder of chronic hyperglycaemia caused by absolute or relative insulin deficiency and associated with disturbances in carbohydrate, protein and fat metabolism.

The study, which pooled data from numerous research works across the country, revealed wide regional disparities.

The prevalence rate was 3.0 per cent in the North-West, 5.9 per cent in the North-East, and 3.8 per cent in the North-Central, respectively.

The rates were higher in the southern part of the country: 5.5 per cent in the South-West, 4.6 per cent in the South-East, and 9.8 per cent in the South-South.

Experts say these patterns reflect changing lifestyles, rapid urbanisation and limited access to routine screening.

However, for many patients, statistics tell only a fraction of the real story.

Mr Offum Akung, a 57-year-old teacher in Cross River, said he had to ration his drugs because prices kept rising faster than his salary.

"I spend over 40,000 a month and still cannot buy everything on my prescription.

"I rely mostly on Glucophage now; when money allows, I add Neurovite Forte; diabetes management has become more difficult than the disease itself," he said.

He appealed for government intervention, saying many patients were already "giving up".

The Second Vice-President of the Diabetes Association of Nigeria, Mr Bernard Enyia, said the economic situation had pushed many Nigerians with diabetes into dangerous coping methods.

He said that he once managed his condition with about 70,000 monthly, but currently spends more than 180,000.

"Insulin has become something you pray for, while some people are sharing doses or skipping injections.

"Once you break treatment, the complications come quickly."

Enyia, who lost his job as a health worker in 2017 due to frequent hospital visits, described the emotional toll as immense.

"It affects your finances, your social life, your marriage — everything. Many Nigerians with diabetes are quietly drowning," he said.

Globally, concerns are also rising. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that more than 24 million adults in Africa are living with diabetes, a figure projected

to rise to 60 million by 2050.

Marking World Diabetes Day 2025, WHO Regional Director for Africa, Prof. Mohamed Janabi, warned that rising obesity, lifestyle changes and weak health systems were fueling an "unprecedented wave of diabetes" across the continent.

He urged governments to prioritise access to affordable insulin, diagnostics and long-term care.

More so, pharmacists say they are witnessing the crisis firsthand.

The Senior Vice-President, Advantage Health Africa, Mr Adewale Oladigbolu, said many patients were no longer able to maintain regular medication schedules.

"People buy drugs today and skip them tomorrow because they do not have money.

"With non-adherence, they never reach therapeutic goals."

Oladigbolu, a Fellow of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria, said that locally manufactured metformin remained in high demand due to affordability, but insulin-dependent patients faced the harshest burden.

He stressed that diabetes care extended far beyond drugs.

"You need glucometers, strips, blood pressure monitors and regular tests.

"In countries where insurance work, patients do not think about the cost; in Nigeria, they pay for everything out of pocket," he said.

He called for diabetes care to be covered under health insurance to reduce the financial burden on patients.

President of the Diabetes Association of Nigeria, Prof. Ejiofor Ugwu, described the rising cost of treatment as "a national crisis hiding in plain sight.

He said insulin, which sold for about 3,500 four years ago, presently costs 18,000 to 22,000 per vial.

"Test strips that were 2,000 now sell for 14,000, while glucometers have risen from 5,000 to over 25,000.

"On average, a patient now needs between 100,000 and 120,000 every month. Imagine earning 50,000 and being asked to spend twice that on one illness."

He warned that between half and two-thirds of Nigerians with diabetes remain undiagnosed.

"We are seeing more kidney failure, more limb amputations, more blindness.

"These are late presentations caused by delayed or inconsistent treatment."

Ugwu urged the Federal Government to urgently subsidise essential anti-diabetic medications and remove taxes on their importation.

"Most of these drugs are produced outside the country.

"Once you add import duties and other charges, prices become unbearable; subsidies and tax waivers could drop costs by at least 30 per cent," he said.

He also called for expansion of the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) to cover a wider range of anti-diabetic medicines, glucose meters and strips — none of which are currently covered.

For many Nigerians, however, the struggle continues daily.

Across households, clinics and pharmacies, the message is the same: as Nigeria's diabetes prevalence rises and treatment costs soar, more patients are slipping through the cracks — some silently, others painfully — while waiting for meaningful intervention.

In all, stakeholders say diabetes is a national emergency; people are dying quietly because they cannot afford medicine; hence the urgent need for relevant authorities to make anti-diabetic medications accessible and affordable. (NAN)



METRO NEWS

Plateau NUJ Correspondent Chapel, Special Taskforce, Others Walk for Peace in Jos

FROM JUDE DANGWAM,
JOS

The Correspondent Chapel of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Plateau State Council in collaboration of Operation Enduring Peace has organized a peace walk to sensitised citizens of Plateau state on the need to sustain the relative peace being enjoyed in the state.

The Chairman of the Correspondent Chapel, Polycarp Auta, who led members during the walked at weekend

from the popular old airport junction through the Tudun-Wada ring road and terminated at the NUJ Secretariat stressed that aside reporting, journalists must actively get involved in propagating the peace especially as yulitide seasons draw closer.

In his words, "The Correspondents' Chapel is an arm of the NUJ. For you to be a member of the NUJ, it means you belong to a chapel, and for those of us who do daily reporting, we belong to the Correspondents'

Chapel.

"We organized this kind of walk sometime back, and today we are out to replicate what we have done before. This walk is supported by the Joint Task Force, Operation Enduring Peace. We want to thank our security agencies who have joined us this morning.

"Our aim is to ensure that beyond reporting conflict and security issues, we also promote peaceful coexistence. That is the rationale behind organizing this walk. Is to sensitize people and tell Plateau

people that there is need for us to live in peace, to tolerate each other, and to love each other.

"Particularly as we head towards the yuletide, the Christmas season, a lot is happening, and so we went down the street to tell Plateau residents that there is need to love one another so we can have a peaceful Christmas and a peaceful New Year celebration by God's grace" he explained

The NUJ Chairman Comrade Ayuku Pwaspo commended the Chapel for the

peace walk noting that journalists can only do better in an atmosphere of peace hence the need for practitioners to uphold the relative peace in the state.

"We are indeed delighted to have this walk this morning, a walk for peace. Peace is something very dear to our hearts. As reporters, we look forward to a peaceful state and a peaceful nation.

"Let me urge all of you Plateau journalists and bloggers here, please let us focus our reports on peace. Let us do reports that will bring peace and

progress to our state. We know we are in the ember months, and we hope and pray that this Christmas festivities will be very peaceful," she optimistically stated

The Peace Walk had personnel of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), the Operation Rainbow, Members of the Civil Societies as well as the Peace Practitioners network both reiterated the need for stronger collaboration for peace advocacy in the state at all time.

No Proof Shows Igbos Migrated from Jews - Jazzy Eze

FROM SYLVIA UDEGBU-NAM, ENUGU

Prof. Peter Jazzy Ezeh, a retired Professor of Anthropology, University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) has said that there is no evidence to prove that Igbo people migrated from the Jews as claimed by some authors and historians.

Ezeh, a renowned Anthropologist, stated this during a Maiden Annual Lecture 2025, organised by Chess Conclave Section of Enugu Sports Club, with the theme "Igbo Origin 'Facts and Fiction'".

Speaking on the theme, Ezeh said that when compared with Hebrew and Igbo languages with their lexicon, there was nothing showing relatedness as reported by some writers.

According to him, for

you to claim that any two languages are related genealogically, it must be the case that lexicon of those two languages are coordinated and originated from the same source, sound and meaning.

"Hebrew belong to Afro-Asiatic language and when it comes to Nigeria, they have Hausa as their relations because Hausa is Afro-Asiatic along with 23 others.

"This is not assertion or belief but scientific as there is ample, credible, solid evidence. So, if belonging to Hebrew confers any advantage, then it is to the Hausa."

He added that some claimed that Esau's wife was Ada and Igbos name their first daughters, Ada, explaining that if languages were related, the phonological similarity should also

have semantic similarity.

The anthropologist explained that there were so many accounts of Igbo origin that were yet to be proved, revealing that they were not objective, because every creation story was by its nature subjective.

Ezeh noted that were yet to be proved, revealing that they were not objective, because every creation story was by its nature subjective.

Ezeh noted one author claimed that Igbos migrated from Jews as both practiced circumcision, described Igbo own as rite of passage from child to adulthood but has changed due to modernisation while Jews own was done eighth day after birth

"Average Nigerian cultural group practices circumcision, are you

then saying that all Nigerians are Jews?. So Hebrew and Igbo circumcision are two different things. One is a rite of passage admitting you to manhood.

"My father told me he was circumcised at adult," he said.

The Chairman of the event and former Anambra Chief Judge, Justice Peter Umeadi, noted that the fact about Igbo's unique identity both in language and culture and dressing cannot be denied.

According to him, they represent resilience, hardworking and forefront of development in anywhere they found themselves.

In a keynote address, the Leader/Captain, Chess- Conclave Section, Enugu Sports Club, Prince Chukwuemeka Onyesoh, said the

lecture was organised to shed more light on the rich history and cultural heritage of Igbo nation by addressing misconception about the Igbo history.

Onyesoh described people without knowledge of their past history, origin and culture as tree without roots, noting that those cannot remember their past were condemned to repeat it.

Stressing that Igbos were organised entity, Onyesoh said, "Every one of us here has a duty to further insist on who we are, to our own people, other Nigerians and the world at large, by continuing to write and more urgently, publicise the proud past of our dear Igbo nation without apology.

"We need to be celebrating our past as

a way of continuing to be who we were. We need to be doing some work in order to add to what our ancestors left for us. There are Igbo doubting Thomases even among our supposedly enlightened elite.

"As it is accepted, those who half-know and half don't are a major problem of world development. That is the very essence of this lecture series which must continue as long as there is the will and the funding," he said.

The Chairman, Enugu Sports Club, Chief Ifeanyi, in a welcome address said the topic was very apt and commended Onyesoh for convener for the lecture.

Highlight of the event include, question and answers, presentation of awards and dance

Delta Police Arrest Key Suspects in Murder of Retired Anambra High Court Judge

FROM FRANCIS SADHERE, DELTA

Operatives of the Homicide Section, State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), Delta State Police Command, have arrested two major suspects in connection with the gruesome murder of retired Anambra State High

Court Judge, Justice Ifeoma Okogwu.

Justice Okogwu (Rtd) killing recently sparked public outrage and renewed calls for improved protection for senior citizens and public officials.

The arrest, made on December 6, 2025, followed credible intelligence that led detectives to 25-year-

old security guard, Godwin Mngumi, who served at the residence of the late judge.

Police investigations revealed that Mngumi allegedly murdered Justice Okogwu in Anambra State before fleeing with her mobile phone, which has now been recovered from him.

According to

the Police Public Relations Officer, Edafe Bright, the suspect confessed during interrogation that he invited two accomplices—Nnaji Obalum and another suspect currently on the run—to the judge's home, where they jointly carried out the attack. The police have since arrested Nnaji Obalum, while

a manhunt is ongoing for the third suspect.

Justice Okogwu (Rtd), known for her firm judicial stance and decades of service on the Anambra State High Court bench, was widely respected within the legal community.

Her untimely death has drawn condemnation from legal practitioners, civil

society organisations, and residents, who described the incident as a tragic loss.

The Delta State Police Command has assured the public that every individual linked to the crime will be apprehended and prosecuted, reaffirming its commitment to ensuring justice for the slain jurist.



METRO NEWS

Clerics Urge FG to Deepen International Collaboration in Fighting Terrorism

BY EZE OKECHUKWU, ABU-JA

A coalition of Bishops has urged the Federal Government of Nigeria to view the recent concerns raised by the United States as an opportunity to deepen international collaboration in combating terrorism, while refuting claims of Nigerian Christians facing genocide. The clerics, led by Bishop Timothy Cheren of the Lord's House Worship Center Makurdi said such allegations of Christian genocide in Nigeria required empirical

facts, rather than passing judgements out of emotions, maintaining that "we believe there's a few elements who may be fueling violence across the country". Speaking in Abuja over the weekend ahead of the forthcoming North West Peace Summit in Kaduna between December 17-18, 2025, Bishop Cheren commended President Bola Tinubu for his unwavering efforts in maintaining peace across the country, while also praising the Sultan of Sokoto, His Eminence Alhaji Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar III, for his

consistent role in peace building in the country. Bishop Cheren also highlighted the significance of the upcoming North West Peace Summit in Kaduna—expected to be chaired by the Sultan—saying it would reinforce ongoing efforts by government and stakeholders to restore peace across the North West and the wider sub-Saharan region. Speaking against the backdrop of the US President Donald Trump, who designated Nigeria as a “country of particular concern” and alleged genocidal attacks on

Christians, Cheren said the claims were unfounded and not supported by any evidence pointing to government-backed persecution. “There is no state-sponsored Christian genocide in the country. However, we believe there are elements who may be fueling violence. Nigeria is grappling with serious but complex security challenges, including terrorism and banditry, which affect citizens across religious and regional lines. So, framing the crisis as a government-driven attack on Christians only deepens division and distracts from

solutions. “I have to commend President Bola Tinubu’s efforts in restoring security. So, I call on Nigerians to support his ongoing campaigns aimed at dismantling violent groups. The presence of peace does not mean the absence of justice. The government must ensure anyone involved in incitement is brought to book,” he said. The cleric welcomed the appointment of Christopher Musa as Minister of Defence, describing it as a timely move to strengthen national security, emphasizing that warnings

from the US should not be dismissed but rather embraced as an opportunity for deeper cooperation in combating terrorism. The bishop who described Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar, the Sultan of Sokoto as a “harbinger of unity” whose leadership continues to promote coexistence, noted that the forthcoming north-west peace summit in Kaduna, which the sultan will chair, will complement ongoing efforts by government and stakeholders to secure lasting peace in the north-west and across sub-Saharan Africa.

Zulum Consoles Troops in Damboa, Pledges Stronger Support for Fight against Insurgency

FROM MUHAMMAD MUHAMMAD AL-AMIN, MAID-UGURI

Borno State Governor, Prof Babagana Umara Zulum, at the weekend visited troops of the 25 Task Force Brigade in Damboa, reassuring them of the unwavering support of the state government and its citizens as they continue their fight against Boko Haram and

ISWAP insurgents. Addressing the soldiers at the frontline base, Zulum expressed deep sympathy over the recent loss of personnel during combat operations. He praised the troops for their courage, resilience, and daily sacrifices made to safeguard communities across the state. “On behalf of the government and the good people of Borno State, we are here in Damboa to

commiserate with you over the unfortunate incident that claimed the lives of some of your colleagues,” he said. “We extend our condolences to you and the families of the fallen officers and pray for the quick recovery of those injured.” The governor lauded the brigade for its commitment, acknowledging their consistent efforts to restore peace. He

assured them that his administration would continue to provide every possible support to strengthen ongoing military operations. Zulum was received by Brigadier General Igwe Patrick Omokeh, Commander of the 25 Task Force Brigade. The visit formed part of the governor’s tour of southern Borno communities. Earlier, he met with grieving

families in Chibok, where he sympathized with those who lost loved ones and property in recent attacks. He announced enhanced security interventions, noting that both state and federal authorities are working closely with security agencies to better protect vulnerable areas. “We are here to offer our condolences. The situation is painful, but we assure you that

insecurity in Chibok will be addressed permanently,” Zulum said. He encouraged residents to remain resilient and patient as renewed measures take effect. The governor also announced immediate relief support N1 million for each bereaved family and N500,000 for households whose properties were destroyed.

Igala Chiefs Hail Appointment of Lt.-Gen. Shaibu as Army Chief

FROM ABEL ZWANKE, LAFIA

Amid growing concerns over national security and the need for stronger defence leadership, the Forum of Igala Traditional Chiefs in Karu, Nasarawa State, has applauded the appointment of Lieutenant General

Waidi Shaibu as the Chief of Army Staff, describing it as timely and critical to strengthening Nigeria’s security architecture. In a statement signed by its Chairman, HRH, Dr. Yunusa Al Ce Salifu Alide Omakoyi Ogah Attah, and the Secretary, the Forum and sent to Daily Assets on Sunday

said Shaibu’s elevation is “well-deserved and reflective of his unwavering dedication, professional excellence, and exemplary leadership.” “We are confident that he will discharge his duties with distinction and contribute immensely to

strengthening Nigeria’s defence and security architecture,” the chiefs said. The Forum prayed for God’s guidance for the new Army Chief, noting, “May the Almighty God grant him more wisdom, strength, and divine protection as he leads the Nigerian Army to greater

heights.” They also congratulated the Governor of Kogi State, Alhaji Usman Ahmed Ododo, and the Attah Igala, HRM (Dr.) Mathew Alaji Opaluwa Oguiche Akpa II, describing the appointment as a source of pride to the Igala nation.

The traditional rulers further commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for “recognizing and appointing a worthy son of Igala land to this exalted position.” The Forum expressed optimism that Lt.-Gen. Shaibu’s tenure will bring honour, peace, and progress to Nigeria.

Abuja Emerging as Africa’s Creative Capital — Mahmoud

BY LAIDE AKINBOADE, ABU-JA

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Minister of State, Dr. Mariya Mahmoud has affirmed that the nation’s capital, Abuja, is not just the political capital but also a growing hub for arts, culture, and creative expression.

The Minister stated this at the closing ceremony and award night of the 2025 Zuma International Film Festival held at the Chida Event Centre, Utako, Abuja. She emphasized how the festival enhances the city’s cultural footprint, attracts visitors, supports local businesses, and promotes

film production and training. Mahmoud noted that nations have increasingly recognized the film industry as a tool for shaping narratives, strengthening diplomacy, promoting cultural identity, and driving economic prosperity. According to her, "Our stories have travelled far

beyond our borders, carrying with them our values, humour, resilience, and collective spirit. "Nollywood has become one of the world’s most powerful cultural exports, influencing fashion, tourism, language, and global perceptions of Nigeria and Africa."

She, therefore, commended the organizers, filmmakers, actors, and producers for their dedication in making the 15th edition a resounding success. Reaffirming the federal government’s commitment under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu’s Renewed Hope

Agenda, Mahmoud affirmed ongoing support for the creative economy. She outlined efforts to foster a conducive environment for filmmakers through infrastructure improvements, partnerships, investment-friendly regulations, and platforms like the Zuma Film Festival.

Osun Digital Media Week: Convergence for Advancing Democratic Governance - Ajelogbon

FROM AYINDE AKINTADE, OSOGBO

Deployment of technology and artificial intelligence has been described as a way of strengthen Nigeria's electoral processes and information ecosystem.

The Chairman, Osun Online Publishers Association (OOPA), Mukhtar Ajelogbon, who spoke at the 2025 Osun Digital Media Week, described it as a convergence of innovators, media practitioners, policy influencers and thought leaders committed to advancing democratic governance through digital solutions.

Ajelogbon said this year's theme, "Harnessing Technology and Artificial Intelligence Towards Credible Elections and Information Dissemination in Nigeria," reflects the urgent need to embrace digital tools that promote transparency, truth, and accountability in public communication, especially as Nigeria deepens its democratic journey.

He noted that OOPA was honoured to host the Osun State Resident Electoral Commissioner, Dr. Mutiu Agboke, as Guest Speaker, describing him as a seasoned expert whose insights will be pivotal in examining how emerging technologies can enhance election credibility, improve media professionalism, and reshape public engagement.

The OOPA Chairman outlined the activities lined up for the three-day programme, which includes Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), a free medical outreach, a public lecture and a refresher course for association members.

He said the medical outreach courtesy of Shifauk Group of Hospitals, underscores the group's commitment to societal welfare beyond digital engagements, while the capacity-building session is aimed at enhancing members' skills in digital journalism and AI-driven reporting.

Highlighting OOPA's achievements under his leadership in less than two years, Ajelogbon listed eight milestones, including periodic capacity-building trainings of members, acquisition of OOPA official secretariat, opening of an association bank account, improved member welfare through advertising partnerships, launch of the association's official website, appointment of a matron, expansion of membership from 16 to 21, and strengthened media partnerships within and outside Osun State.

According to him, these achievements demonstrate OOPA's strategic positioning as a fully digitalised organisation and a major stakeholder in the future of journalism. "OOPA is 100% digital.

This simply means we are the future of journalism, and the future is now," he stated.

Ajelogbon expressed appreciation to dignitaries present, including the representative of the state government, Hon. Eniola Odeniyi, Special Adviser to the governor on Public Enlightenment, and commended the patron of the association, His Royal Majesty, Oba (Dr.) Hameed Oyelude Makama, the Olowu of Kuta, and the Matron, Mrs. Funmi Abokede who is the General Manager of Osun CSDA, for their unwavering support.

BY DAVID TOROUGH, ABUJA

Authorities in the Federal Capital Territory on Saturday honoured renowned entrepreneur and philanthropist, Chief Dr. Sam Maduka Onyishi, with the unveiling of a street named after him in Asokoro, Abuja.

Speaking at the event, the representative of the Abuja Metropolitan Management Council's Department of Street Naming, Mr. Charles Adikwu, said the honour was in recognition of Onyishi's remarkable contributions to national development, job creation, and community upliftment.

Adikwu described the Peace Mass Transit founder as "a

businessman who built his enterprises from scratch to the top," noting that Onyishi has grown into one of Nigeria's most influential private-sector employers.

The honouree is the Chairman of Globus Bank, Peace Microfinance Bank, Peace Oil & Gas, Peace Mass Transit, and the Chancellor of Sam Maduka University, Akwegbo, Enugu. According to Adikwu, Onyishi's businesses have collectively provided employment to over 150,000 Nigerians, making him "one of the highest employers of labour in the country."

Adikwu added that naming streets after distinguished Nigerians

also enhances security and navigation within Abuja communities.

"If anything happens along this route, it can now be easily identified as taking place at No. 7 Sam Maduka Onyishi Street," he said. "Before now, locating places involved unnecessary descriptions that sometimes complicated emergency responses."

Also speaking, the Regional Manager of Peace Mass Transit (Northern Region), Mr. Ngwu Jude Chinweike, said the gesture reflects government's increasing willingness to recognise individuals who positively impact society.

He expressed delight that his principal was among those

honoured, describing the development as a morale boost for communities and a reminder that meaningful contributions do not go unnoticed.

"The public will now understand that when you make positive impact in your community, government has a way of recognising your efforts," he said.

Chinweike noted that the newly named street is already attracting interest from businesses and institutions, including security agencies, and assured that Peace Mass Transit and Onyishi's other subsidiaries would support efforts to enhance the area's outlook.



From left: Vice Chairman, Joint Community Development Association (JCDA), Aboru, Odio Joseph; Chairman, Aboru JCDA, Elder Olupinla Lawrence; Prophetess, Docas Funmilola; Patron, Aboru CDA, Asiawaju Adewale-Onabanjo and Chairman, Media and Publicity, JCDA, Prince Julius Adegunna, during the 2025 Community Day celebration in Lagos on Sunday

Otu Inaugurates AfSNET 2026 Planning Committee

FROM ENE ASUQUO, CALABAR

Cross River State Governor, Senator Bassey Edet Otu, has inaugurated the Planning Committee for the African Sub-Sovereign, Governments Network (AfSNET) Conference 2026. The ceremony, at the State Executive Council Chambers,

Calabar, officially kick-starts the State's preparations to host the prestigious Afreximbank-led investment and development conference.

The Committee is tasked with steering Cross River's engagement with AfSNET, an influential platform that promotes intra-African trade, investment

partnerships, and economic cooperation among sub-national governments across the continent. With this development, Cross River becomes the only second sub-sovereign government in Nigeria to host the conference since its inception.

Otu described the inauguration as timely and strategic, noting

that hosting AfSNET 2026 presents a unique opportunity for the state to showcase its economic assets and its growing reputation as a regional hub for trade, industry, and innovation.

He emphasized that the committee's membership was carefully selected on the basis of merit, competence, and a strong

record of public service. According to him, the individuals appointed have demonstrated the experience and expertise required to deliver an exceptional outcome for the state.

He added that the conference offers a rare window for Cross River to project its progress, investment readiness, and

development potential to Africa and the global community.

The Governor highlighted the significance of the 2026 edition, recalling that Abuja hosted the second AfSNET conference in 2022, while Cross River will host the sixth edition in 2026, a milestone he described as a remarkable achievement for the state.

Oluremi Tinubu Empowers 250 Persons with Disabilities in Zamfara

BY IFEANYICHUKWU NWANNAH, GUSAU

The Nigeria First Lady, Sen. Oluremi Tinubu has under the Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI) Social Investment, empowered 250 persons with disabilities in Zamfara State.

Tinubu presented the cash grant at an event to commemorate the 2025 international day for disable, theming fostering disability inclusive society for social progress held in Gusau recently.

The Nigeria First Lady, who was represented by the wife of Zamfara State Governor, Hajiya Huriyya Dauda Lawal, said that, The Social Intervention was aimed to empower Veterans from the Military, Police and other Paramilitary that physically challenge to boost their small businesses, also gives cash grant to them.

“The event holds special significance as it coincides with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities and is being launched simultaneously across the 36 States of the Federation, the Federal Capital Territory and the Defence and Police Officers’ Wives Association (DEPOWA)”

“Nation grows stronger when every individual was empowered to contribute meaningfully. As Helen Keller, the renowned American disability rights advocate, once said, “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much”

“These words remind us that a truly inclusive society built when stand together, creating opportunities that empower everyone to contribute their unique gifts to the collective progress”

“Today, the RHI

would provide the sum of N200,000 Business Recapitalization Grants to each of the 250 Persons with Disabilities in the 36 State and the Federal Capital Territory to support small business owners to recapitalize their existing businesses and strengthen their means of livelihood”

“Each state of the federation, the FCT, the Defence and Police Officers’ Wives Association will receive fifty million naira (N50,000,000), to be distributed to the beneficiaries in their domain”

“In total, 9,500 Persons with Disabilities across Nigeria will benefit from this programme, amounting to N1,900,000,000”

According to her the programme aligns with the Renewed Hope Agenda of the President Bola Tinubu, which seeks to promote inclusive growth and shared prosperity by ensuring that no Nigerian was left behind, especially those whose needs were overlooked.

"It is worth noting that, over the past two years, the Renewed Hope Initiative has supported over 100,000 women petty traders and small business owners, including physically challenge persons, with direct financial grants to grow their businesses".

She said

“The FG commitment to improving lives has also been demonstrated through various interventions in Agriculture, Economic Empowerment, Education, Health, and Social Welfare aimed at improving the well-being of families across the country”

Federal Civil Servants in Cross River Pledges Professionalism, Excellence

FROM ENE ASUQUO, CALABAR

The Association of Heads of Federal Establishments, Cross River State Chapter have pledged to ensure that their presence in the state is marked by professionalism and excellence as they look forward to 2026.

Chairman Association of Heads of Federal Establishments (AHFE) Cross River State Chapter, Dr. Rita Akpan, made the pledge during its end

of year party.

She said, "As we stand at the threshold of a new year, I encourage us all to remain steadfast".

"Let us renew our commitment to service, continue to drive improvements in our various establishments and ensure that the Federal presence in Cross River State remains a model of efficiency and professionalism", she said.

Reflecting on the outgoing year, she

said civil servants in the state strengthened their synergy, deepened cooperation across MDAs and also improved communication channels.

She added that they responded to national directives with precision and upheld the values of the Federal Civil Service which is excellence, accountability, transparency, and integrity.

She also emphasized that she is proud of the

achievements of her colleagues, the strides they have achieved together and also humbled to lead such an exceptional body of professionals.

As part of the celebration the outgoing heads of the Nigeria Customs Service, National Security and Civil Defence Corps and the Nigeria Immigration Service in the state were honoured for their outstanding contributions to the association.



From left: Deputy Chairman, National Youths Council of Nigeria (NYCN), Zailani Musa; Chairman, Kaduna South Local Government Area, Rayyan Hussein; Executive Secretary, National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), Idris Bugaje and a member of NYCN, Nasir Aminu Jasawa, during the visit of the Chairman to the Executive Secretary in Kaduna on Sunday

Christmas: Zamfara Gov Distributes Food Items, Cash to Christian Communities in Zamfara

BY IFEANYICHUKWU NWANNAH, GUSAU

The wife of Zamfara State Governor, Hajiya Huriyya Daúda Lawal has distributed foodstuffs and cash to 26 Christian Communities, and organization for Christmas and New Year celebrations in the State.

At the occasion in Gusau, the State capital, Hajiyya Lawal urged the christians to

continue to preached unity and peace among followers.

"I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all those gathered here for this Christmas support distribution, this gesture is a token of gratitude to the continuous support you have been given to the government", she added.

"You have remained the pillars of peace, strength progress

in homes and communities"

The 26 communities and organizations benefited from the gesture include, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Igbo, Yaruba, Dakkarawa, Igala and Ibira communities.

Others were Market Women, NYSC, lawyers, youths, teachers, doctors, Nurses, bankers, media, military and

paramilitary personnel.

Each community or organization received a concernment that comprises, N1.4million cash, sugar, 14 bags of 50kg Rice, carton of maggie, 2carton of cooking oil and many more, all were provided to support Christians during this festive season.

"I urge you to kindly share these items to families with the fear of God, as the purpose

of this gathering is to assist and uplift households who are celebrating Christmas across the state”

Appreciating the gesture the CAN Chairperson Women Wing, Martila Udowella expressed happiness with the gesture, adding that this had truly demonstrate a spirit of togetherness.

Udowella said the Christians in the

State acknowledged the effort of Gov. Dauda Lawal in bringing meaningful development to the State.

The Zamfara State branch of CAN further presented an award of the First Lady on humanitarian service, her outstanding performance in the development of women and other vulnerable groups in the State.

Delta Accelerates Rural Development with Major Road Projects

FROM FRANCIS SADHERE, DELTA

Delta State Commissioner for Works (Rural Roads) and Public Information, Charles Aniagwu, has reaffirmed the Oborevwoiri a d m i n i s t r a t i o n ' s commitment to delivering meaningful, people-oriented development through an expanding network of rural roads and bridges across the state.

Aniagwu stated this during an inspection tour of ongoing projects in Isoko North, Isoko South and Ughelli North Local Government Areas.

The projects inspected include the 4.8km Emevor-Ivrogb-Orogun Road (Phase II), the Amaka/Ogodogo/Ivu Access Road at Okpolo-Enhwe, and the Phase III construction of the Okpolo-Enhwe-Uwheru Road and bridge.

He said the governor's MORE Agenda—Meaningful development, Opportunities for all, Realistic reforms and Enhanced security—was being fully reflected in the scale and spread of rural infrastructure currently underway.

"We are not just building infrastructure for the cities. The governor is connecting communities, building bridges of possibilities."

"This bridge alone links the people of Isoko South with their brothers and sisters in Ughelli North. You no longer need to go through the expressway to travel between these local governments," Aniagwu said

Aniagwu explained that the projects would boost agricultural productivity, enhance fishing activities, ease movement and open up economic opportunities for rural dwellers long disconnected from neighbouring communities.

At Emevor, the

commissioner inspected the 4.8km second phase of the Emevor-Ivrogb-Orogun Road. He recalled that Governor Sheriff Oborevwoiri inaugurated the first 4.4km phase earlier in the year and immediately approved commencement of the second phase.

"That promise has been fulfilled," Aniagwu said. "The contractor has assured us that before the end of February next year, the second phase will be ready for commissioning. The pace is impressive—they've started laying the binder course, completed most earthworks and made significant progress."

The team also inspected the 3.2km Amaka/Ogodogo/Ivu Access Road in Okpolo-Enhwe, which services several oil facilities in the area. Aniagwu reported steady progress, noting that drainage works were almost completed and earthworks advancing rapidly.

"I am confident that by the end of January they will have progressed far with the binder course, and with this pace, are likely to conclude the job before April," he said.

On the Okpolo-Enhwe-Uwheru bridge, Aniagwu praised Emo Rock Concepts, the indigenous contractor, describing their work as commendable.

"You can see the quality of stone pitching, the approach and descent. This is the kind of work that makes us proud of our indigenous contractors," he stated, expressing optimism that the governor would personally commission the bridge due to its strategic importance.

Aniagwu said the road and bridge projects were not only improving connectivity but also strengthening peace and security by enhancing community interaction across the rural belt.

Kogi Conducts Bid Opening for Construction of Livestock Service Center

FROM JOSEPH AMEDU, LOKOJA

The Kogi State Government has taken a significant step towards boosting the livestock sector with the bid opening for the Construction Works Phase 1 of the Livestock Service Center (LSC) Osara Adavi LGA, Kogi State.

The LSC construction is one of the key infrastructural components of the Kogi Livestock Productivity and Resilience Support (Kogi L-PRES) Project, supported by the World Bank.

At the ceremony in Lokoja, the State Project Coordinator of Kogi L-PRES Project, Mr

Abdulkabir Onoruoyiza Otaru, said the initiative marks a milestone in the state's efforts to reposition the livestock sector, improve productivity and livelihoods of the livestock farmers and key value chain actors in the state.

The LSC, is a livestock agribusiness hub approved under the L-PRES Project and shall comprise facilities to modernize the livestock production in Kogi State.

Otaru assured the prospective bidders and stakeholders of fair and transparent procurement process, noting that the L-PRES Project would strictly adhere to the World Bank Procurement Procedures.

"We have our specifications as contained in the Bidding Documents and we shall continue to maintain standards as prescribed by the World Bank to ensure successful implementation and Sustainability of the Sub-projects towards the achievement of L-PRES Project Development Objective (PDO) in Kogi State.

Otaru also revealed that the Kogi L-PRES Project had earlier conducted a successful procurement process and awarded the contract for the Rehabilitation of Nine (9) Livestock Markets across the three senatorial districts of the state. In

addition, the L-PRES Project has awarded the contract for the construction of a Model Veterinary Hospital in Kogi State.

The Kogi L-PRES Project has also secured approval from the World Bank to Construct Five (5) Model Slaughter Houses in the state and the procurement process will commence as soon as possible.

He added that the Kogi L-PRES Project is presently conducting Feasibility Studies and Design for the construction of a Climate Smart Abattoir in Lokoja and Poultry Cottage Processing Centres across the State.



From left: National President, Nigerian Army Officers' Wives Association, Safiyah Shaibu; National President, Defence and Police Officers' Wives Association (DEPOWA), Mrs Mernan Oluyede; formal National Vice President, Naval Officers' Wives Association (NOWA), Mrs Zainab Akpan and National President of NOWA, Hajiya Aisha Abbas, during the NOWA's 60 Years Anniversary Dinner in Abuja on Saturday

Oborevwoiri Approves Automatic Postgraduate Scholarships for Best Graduating Students

FROM FRANCIS SADHERE, DELTA

Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwoiri, has approved automatic p o s t g r a d u a t e scholarships for the best graduating students across the state's four universities, in a major push to promote academic excellence and youth development.

The initiative was announced by the Delta State Bursary and Scholarship Board. Its Executive Secretary, Dr. Godfrey Enita, said the gesture reflects the Governor's dedication to empowering young people through the M.O.R.E. Agenda, especially in the area of human capital development.

Under the new

policy, the Best Graduating Student from each academic session in Delta State University, Abraka; University of Delta, Agbor; Delta State University of Science and Technology, Ozoro (formerly SDU); and Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba, will automatically qualify for fully

funded Master's and Ph.D. programmes in approved Nigerian universities.

Dr. Enita stated that while the award is automatic, beneficiaries will still be required to complete standard s c h o l a r s h i p procedures and d o c u m e n t a t i o n before accessing the funds.

He stressed that the policy demonstrates the state government's commitment to building a highly skilled and globally competitive youth population capable of driving sustainable development in Delta State.

"The Board remains committed to creating opportunities that uplift our students

and encourage academic distinction," Enita said.

The scholarship scheme is expected to further inspire excellence among undergraduates in the state-owned universities and strengthen Delta State's position as a leading centre for educational advancement in Nigeria.

NDLEA Destroys Illicit Drug Warehouses in Ekiti, Ondo Forests

Operatives of a special operations unit of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) stormed forests in Omuo-Ekiti, Ekiti, destroying 14,654 kilograms of skunk and arresting two suspects.

The agency made the disclosure in a statement by its Director, Media and Advocacy, NDLEA, Mr Femi Babafemi on Sunday in Abuja.

It said the operatives in another operation on Dec. 2 stormed the forests in Asin-Ekiti, Ikole Local Government Area(LGA) , Ekiti , where they destroyed 54,300kg of skunk in two large warehouses that were razed.

Babafemi said that 28.3kg of the same psychoactive substance was recovered for the purpose of prosecution.

“Following actionable intelligence, NDLEA operatives on Dec. 2 raided Igoba forest in Akure North LGA, Ondo state.

“A total of 2,483 compressed blocks of skunk and 247 bags of same substance all weighing 5,442 kilograms were recovered and five suspects arrested.

“500kg of same substance was recovered from a Mercedes Benz van marked MGU 614 XB by NDLEA officers on patrol along Mokwa-Jebba road in Niger, on Dec. 4 with the driver arrested,”he said.

He further explained operatives in the FCT Abuja on Dec. 3 intercepted a consignment of Colorado, a synthetic cannabis, weighing 22kg at Abaji expressway.

Babafemi said that a follow up operation at the Jabi park in Abuja led to the arrest of a female receiver.

Also in the FCT, a suspect was arrested by operatives on Friday with 24kg skunk and 573,500 pills of exol-5 along Kwali-Gwagwalada expressway.

In Lagos, “NDLEA operatives recovered 217 pouches of Canadian Loud weighing 113kg from a suspect at Ladipo Market, Mushin.”

Babafemi said that a suspect was nabbed with 351kg skunk at Onipanu area of the state on Dec. 5, adding that another suspect was arrested with 104.1kg of same psychoactive substance at Trade Fair complex, Ojo, on Dec.2.

“A total of 447.5 kilograms of skunk were recovered from two Honda Accord cars marked: ABC-678 KK and GGE-772 FB at Agho forest, Akoko Edo LGA, Edo.

“A suspect was apprehended in connection with the seizure. A raid operation at a warehouse in the Isiefve community, Uhunwonde LGA, led to the seizure of 315.8kg of skunk and the arrest of a male suspect.

“With the same vigour, commands and formations of the agency across the country continued their War Against Drug Abuse, WADA, sensitisation activities to schools, worship centres, work places and communities among others in the past week.

These include: WADA sensitisation lecture to students and staff of St. Michael’s Academy, Sabon Gari, Kano; Harry Pass Secondary School, Masaje, Gboko LGA, Benue; and Community Junior Secondary School, Okuru-Ama, Obio/Akpor LGA, Rivers, among others.

Former IGP Launches Biographies, Says Shared Knowledge Key to Strengthening Nigeria’s Security Institutions

BY DAVID TOROUGH, ABUJA

Former Inspector General of Police, Usman Alkali Baba, has unveiled two biographies chronicling his life and policing career, declaring that sharing knowledge and experience remains essential to strengthening Nigeria’s internal security architecture.

The event, held at the Nigeria Police Resource Centre, Abuja, drew eminent personalities including Vice President Kashim Shettima, state governors, service chiefs, traditional rulers, and senior security officials.

In his remarks, Baba revealed that he initially

resisted the idea of having his biography written, fearing it might be misconstrued as an attempt at self-glorification while still in office. His hesitation, he said, also stemmed from the belief that his life’s journey was still unfolding. But the insistence of the biographers, who argued that the story was “about him, but not just about him,” eventually changed his mind.

According to the former police chief, the biographies were conceived not merely to document his life but to enrich national conversations on internal security, strategic leadership, and policing in Nigeria. “My life and

career are laced with experiences that could enrich knowledge,” he said. “Knowledge and experience hoarding is an unforgivable vice that destroys an organisation and a nation.”

Baba noted that his trajectory—from his early days in the Force to his leadership at its apex—could help guide officers navigating the “sweet and sour dynamics” of modern policing. He also expressed hope that the biographies would serve as valuable reference points for policymakers, researchers, and law enforcement practitioners confronting Nigeria’s evolving security challenges.

The former IGP paid

glowing tribute to former President Muhammadu Buhari, whom he credited with shaping his career and exemplifying integrity and principles. He equally commended President Bola Tinubu for actions aimed at restoring police primacy, including the recent directive withdrawing police escorts from undeserving persons—a move he described as unprecedented.

He acknowledged the presence and support of past Inspectors General, service chiefs, and his former classmates, while offering special recognition to Vice President Shettima for honouring the occasion.



From R- L: President, Club De Pals, Abuja Chief Richard Nduul; Chairman of the Occasion, Tpl Hassan Ogbale; Vice President, Club De Pals, Pal Randy Iortyer; Secretary General, Arc Robert Unde; Pioneer President, Arc Felix Gbem; A Member, Barr Mwuese Hur; Past President, Barr Terkula Anande and another Member, Lynda Iornav, unveil the New Constitution at the 30th Anniversary of the Club at Royal Choice Inn, Abuja at the weekend. Photo: Terry Igbakule.

Kogi Commends Mangal Cement Company for Donating Three Security Vans

FROM JOSEPH AMEDU, LOKOJA

The Kogi State Government has express its profound gratitude to Mangal Cement Company for its generous donation of three brand-new vans to support the State’s ongoing efforts to enhance security and safeguard the

lives and property of citizens.

Kogi State's Commissioner for Information and Communications, Kingsley Fanwo gave the commendation on behalf of government in a statement made available to Journalists in Lokoja

The statement reads "This supportive gesture by Mangal Cement Company, one of the foremost industrial giants in Kogi State, demonstrates a strong commitment to corporate social responsibility and partnership with The Government in

addressing critical security needs.

"The donated vehicles will significantly boost the operational efficiency of our security agencies as they work tirelessly to maintain peace and order across the State.

"The Government appreciates this timely

support, which demonstrates what is possible when the private sector joins hands with the government in pursuit of a safer and more prosperous Kogi State.

"We therefore, encourage other corporate organizations, business leaders,

and stakeholders to emulate this exemplary act by Mangal Cement Company. Together, through shared responsibility and collaborative action, we can continue to advance the security, development, and collective well-being of our people.

Nightclub Fire in India's Goa Kills 25 People



A fire at a popular nightclub in India's coastal region of Goa has killed 25 people, local officials say. Police believe a gas cylinder exploded in the kitchen of the Birch nightclub, located near a popular beach. The venue was packed with revellers who had come to hear a Bollywood DJ. Four people from the same Delhi family and 21 staff were among the victims, Goa police said, adding that most had died of suffocation. The nightclub's manager has been arrested and an arrest warrant for the owner has been issued. Goa is a former Portuguese colony on the Arabian Sea. Its nightlife, sandy beaches, and resorts attract millions of tourists annually. Eyewitnesses said of scenes of panic in the bustling nightlife area.

One eyewitness said that it was a usual Saturday night and holidaymakers were enjoying themselves. He said: "I was outside the club when I heard screams, I didn't initially understand what was going on. "In a bit, it became clear that a massive fire had broken out. The scenes were just horrific." Though the main entrance is wide, the crossing on the small lake leading to the main structure is narrow and that made it difficult for firefighters to reach the spot. Local police chief Alok Kumar said the fire had been concentrated in the kitchen area on the ground floor. Goa's Chief Minister Pramod Sawant told journalists three people had died from burn injuries, while others died of suffocation. Six people are in a stable condition in hospital.

A chef who works at a nearby venue said he knew some of the workers at the Birch club. "People from all over the country and also from Nepal work in different clubs in Goa," he said. "I am really worried for some people who I knew at the club. Their phones are off." On Sunday emergency teams were combing through the charred wreckage. An inquiry into the cause of the fire has been launched, the chief minister said. "Those found responsible will face most stringent action under the law – any negligence will be dealt with firmly," Dr Sawant said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi called the Goa fire "deeply saddening" in a post on social media. About 5.5 million tourists visited Goa in the first half

of the year, government data showed, with 270,000 coming from abroad. Some opposition politicians said that stricter regulations were needed to avoid such tragedies. They alleged that newer clubs are opening too frequently and the government needs to ensure they are safe for people to visit. India has seen a number of deadly fires at entertainment venues in recent years. A fire at a three-storey building killed 17 in the southern city of Hyderabad in May, while a hotel blaze in north-east Kolkata left 15 dead a month earlier. Last year, 24 died at an amusement park arcade in the western state of Gujarat after visitors were trapped inside. An official review later found poor safety standards contributed to the death toll.

Benin Coup Attempt Foiled by Loyalist Troops, Says Interior Minister

Benin's interior minister has appeared on national TV to announce that an attempted coup in the West Africa nation has been thwarted. Earlier, a group of soldiers, led by Lt-Col Pascal Tigri, had made a broadcast saying they had ousted President Patrice Talon and suspended the constitution. In social media posts, the French embassy in Benin said gunfire had been reported near the residence of the president in the main city of Cotonou, which is the seat of government. Eyewitnesses said that they had heard gunshots and some journalists working for the state broadcaster were held hostage. A presidential adviser has since said that the president is safe and is at the French embassy. "Early on Sunday morning, 7 December 2025, a small group of soldiers launched a mutiny aimed at destabilising the state and its institutions," Interior Minister Alassane Seidou said. "Faced with this situation, the Beninese armed forces and their leadership, true to their oath, remained committed to the republic. Their response allowed them to retain control of the situation and foil the attempt," he said. "The government therefore urges the population to go about their activities as normal." Helicopters have been seen flying over Cotonou and roads are blocked with a heavy military presence on several streets in the city. Benin, a former French colony, has been regarded as one of Africa's more stable democracies.

It is one of the continent's largest cotton producers, but ranks among the world's poorest countries. The French and Russian embassies have urged their citizens to stay indoors for their safety. The US embassy's advice was to stay away from Cotonou, especially the area around the presidential compound. The soldiers leading the attempted coup justified their actions by criticising President Talon's management of the country. "The army solemnly commits to give the Beninese people the hope of a truly new era, where fraternity, justice and work prevail," said a statement read by one of the soldiers. Talon, who is 67 and regarded as a close ally of the West, is due to step down next year after completing his second term in office, with elections scheduled for April. A businessman known as the "king of cotton", he first came to power in an election in 2016. He promised not to seek a third term and has endorsed Finance Minister Romuald Wadagni as his successor. Talon has been praised by supporters for overseeing economic development, but his government has also come in for criticism for suppressing dissenting voices. In October the electoral commission barred the main opposition candidate from standing on the grounds that he did not have enough sponsors. Last month, several constitutional amendments were passed by MPs, including the creation of a second parliamentary chamber, the Senate.

Deadly Attack on Kindergarten Reported in Sudan

A drone attack on the town of Kalogi, in Sudan's South Kordofan region, is said to have hit a kindergarten and killed at least 50 people, including 33 children. The Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the paramilitary group battling the army in Sudan's civil war, was accused of Thursday's attack by a medical organisation, the Sudan

Doctors' Network, and the army. There was no immediate comment from the RSF. The RSF in turn accused the army of hitting a market on Friday in a drone attack in the Darfur region, on a fuel depot at the Adre border crossing with Chad. Sudan has been ravaged by war since April 2023 when a

power struggle broke out between the RSF and the army, who were formerly allies. The reports could not be verified independently. According to the army-aligned foreign ministry, the kindergarten was struck twice with missiles from drones. Civilians and medics who rushed to the school were also

attacked, it added. Responding to reports of the attack in Kalogi, a spokesman for the UN children's agency Unicef said: "Killing children in their school is a horrific violation of children's rights." "Children should never pay the price of conflict," Sheldon Yett added. The agency, he said, urged "all parties to

stop these attacks immediately and allow safe, unhindered access for humanitarian assistance to reach those in desperate need". The RSF accused the army of attacking the Adre crossing because it was used for the "delivery of aid and commercial supplies". According to the Sudan War Monitor, a group of researchers

tracking the conflict, the attack caused civilian casualties and significant damage to a market. The military did not immediately comment on the reports from Darfur. Wedged between Sudan's capital Khartoum and Darfur, the region made up of North Kordofan, South Kordofan and West Kordofan has been a frontline in the civil war.



File Photo

Hong Kong votes in Election as City Mourns Deadly Fire

Hongkongers are voting in an election seen as a test of public sentiment following a deadly fire that angered some in the city.

The government has mounted a huge campaign to encourage Hongkongers to choose members of the Legislative Council (LegCo). All of the candidates have been vetted to ensure they are loyal to China.

The election takes place as many are mourning the Tai Po fire last month which killed nearly 160 people.

In recent days, authorities have distributed aid to survivors, arrested suspects and sought to improve building safety, as some Hongkongers raise questions about the incident.

A total of 161 candidates are competing for 90 seats in the LegCo, which acts as a mini parliament and can make and amend laws.

The election is the second since 2021 when China made sweeping changes to

Hong Kong's electoral system to ensure only "patriots" could run for seats.

Beijing has said the changes, which were put in place shortly after the 2019 protests, were necessary to ensure stability in Hong Kong, but critics say they weakened democracy.

The last poll, which took place shortly after those changes, saw its lowest-ever turnout of 30% amid widespread voter apathy.

This year, the government has blanketed the city with posters urging Hongkongers to head to the polls, while dangling freebies and shopping discounts.

After casting their vote, each person will receive a "thank you card" that could be redeemed for vouchers in selected shops and restaurants, or for beauty services, medical check-ups and insurance policy premiums.

Authorities are also offering free entry to public swimming pools and museums on the polling day, organising carnivals in various neighbourhoods, and holding a televised variety show and gala.

They have also created cartoon mascots and a theme tune for the election, adapted from a 2001 hit song by Cantopop star Aaron Kwok, called "Let's Vote, Together We Create The Future".

Chief Secretary Eric Chan told reporters last month that the measures were aimed at ensuring "a happy and festive mood" and to "let residents recognise the importance of the election".

But in recent days the city has been focusing on the 26 November fire that engulfed high-rise residential blocks at Wang Fuk Court in the northern district of Tai Po.

The blaze was the worst seen in Hong Kong in more than 70 years. The death toll, which currently stands at 159, is likely to rise further as officials continue to recover bodies.

BRICS: 20th Ethiopian Int'l Film Festival in Addis Ababa Ends

The 20th Ethiopian International Film Festival (EARTHOPIAN) in Addis Ababa ended after a week of screenings, discussions, and professional exchange, with TV BRICS serving as the international media partner of the event.

Organised in partnership with the Addis Ababa City Administration, the festival brought together filmmakers, industry experts, and audiences from Ethiopia and around the world.

This year's edition was held under the evocative theme "Nile: The Origin of Stories", highlighting the cultural and historical symbolism of the river as a source of creativity and collective memory.

Over the course of the week, around

60 films – including feature films, shorts and documentaries – were screened, with works coming from Ethiopia and across the world.

Thousands of viewers attended the programme, which also featured conversations with filmmakers, workshops and seminars on contemporary film theory and practice.

The festival concluded with an awards ceremony recognising excellence in Ethiopian filmmaking across 10 categories, celebrating both emerging and established talent.

The festival's awards recognised outstanding Ethiopian filmmaking, with Fikadu Cherinet winning Best Feature Film (Black Lion Award) for "Kenja", while Sami Bayush received Best Director (Saba Eyes) for "Gemehalia". Ayeligne Tsega won Best Writer/Screenplay (Geezopics Award) for "Kenja", and Surafel Mezigebe earned Best Cinematography (Rainbow/Kestedemena), also for "Kenja".

The Ethiopian International Film Festival continues to serve as one of the country's key cultural platforms.

Established in 2000, the organisation promotes media production, festival management and cultural exchange.

Each year, the festival showcases around 100 films of diverse genres, awarding the best Ethiopian productions in ten competitive categories.

Ukrainian City Hit by Massive Strike as Peace Talks in US Conclude

Russia continued its air strikes on Ukraine overnight, hours after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said he had a "very constructive" phone call with Donald Trump's negotiating team following three days of talks in Florida.

Early on Sunday the mayor of Kremenchuk, a major industrial hub in central Ukraine, said the city had been repeatedly struck in a "Massive" attack. No deaths have been confirmed so far.

Meanwhile, Russia said it had shot down 77 Ukrainian drones in several locations.

Aerial assaults have continued even as efforts to negotiate an end to the war have intensified, including detailed Ukraine-US talks in Miami aimed at drafting a peace settlement acceptable to both sides.

On Saturday, Zelensky said he was "determined" to continue working with the US after speaking to Trump's envoy, Steve Witkoff, and the US president's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, at the conclusion of those negotiations.

Zelensky said they had discussed how to ensure that Russia stuck to any potential deal to end the war.

Hours later, Kremenchuk Mayor Vitaliy Maletsk said his city had sustained a "massive combined strike" on its infrastructure. The extent of the damage was unclear as of Sunday morning but the mayor said water, electricity and heat had been cut off for some.

The city, which is roughly halfway between Kyiv and the frontline in the east, has been repeatedly targeted since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022.

The White House has pushed Kyiv and Moscow to agree to a multi-point plan to end the war but there has been little sign of a breakthrough, despite both sides engaging with the US-led process.

The Russian strikes in the early hours of Sunday followed a wider attack 24 hours earlier, which drew condemnation from Kyiv's European allies.

In a social media post, French President Emmanuel Macron said he had spoken to Zelensky and offered his "full solidarity".

Macron, Zelensky, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz are due to hold in-person talks in London on Monday.

Europe has pushed back against early versions of the US-led peace plan and has sought to win support from the White House for its own proposals, including comprehensive security guarantees for a post-war Ukraine, including the possibility of a peacekeeping force.

Sir Keir has led the push for a so-called coalition of the willing, a loose collection of Ukrainian allies who are committed to continuing to underwrite Kyiv's defence in the event of a ceasefire to deter a second invasion. He has called that proposal "vital" for Ukraine's long-term security.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has rejected the idea of such a force saying any troops deployed to Ukraine would be "legitimate targets".

Also on Saturday, U.S. and Ukrainian negotiators urged Russia to show a "serious commitment to long-term peace".

The joint statement was issued days after Witkoff returned from talks with Putin at the Kremlin which failed to produce a breakthrough.

Witkoff and Rustem Umerov, newly installed as Zelensky's most senior negotiator, said they had "Agreed on the framework of security arrangements" and "discussed necessary deterrence capabilities to sustain a lasting peace".



File Photo

Bethlehem Christmas Tree Lights up for First Time since Start of Gaza War

For two years during the Gaza war, all public celebrations for Christmas were cancelled in Bethlehem in the occupied West Bank – where Christians believe Jesus was born.

But after the recent ceasefire, the holy city decided that this year the festivities would return as symbolised by the lighting of its traditional, giant Christmas tree in front of the historic Nativity Church.

The mayor accepts that the idea of resuming celebrations was not without controversy, as suffering continues in Gaza – including for those in its tiny Christian community, many of whom have relatives in Bethlehem.

Locals – both Christians and Muslims - pose for selfies in front of the tree hung with red and gold baubles in Manger Square. They are joined by a handful of foreign tourists.

Brightly coloured lights now decorate the streets and there are signs advertising Christmas bazaars

and children's parties.

The neighbouring towns of Beit Jala and Beit Sahour are also planning to light Christmas trees in the coming days. Hotels – which have stood largely empty for the past two years – have an influx of bookings from Palestinian citizens of Israel as well as some foreign visitors.

For now, the souvenir stores dotted around Bethlehem have little business, and outside the cream-coloured walls of the Nativity Church, which date back to the Fourth Century, tour guides largely stand idle. Prior to the Gaza war, it was often crammed with people.

One guide, Hamza, is worried that ongoing news coverage makes people feel the situation is still dangerous. He insists it is safe.

In the past two years, unemployment has skyrocketed in Bethlehem. Since the deadly Hamas-led attacks on southern Israel in October 2023 which triggered the war, tens of thousands of Palestinian

labourers from the West Bank have been blocked from entering Israel and its settlements for work.

Meanwhile, public servants have received only partial salaries by the Palestinian Authority (PA) – which governs parts of the West Bank. The PA relies on tax revenues collected by Israel which it is withholding – to the tune of \$1.76 billion, according to the UN's trade and development agency.

Israel says it is holding the funds because the PA makes payments to Palestinian prisoners that incentivise attacks on Israelis. The authority – which has been under international pressure to make reforms – says it has recently changed its welfare system.

The grim economic outlook means that for many Palestinian Christians, even though there are now public events as well as religious services, it will be an austere Christmas.

At the edge of Manger Square, a few customers are waiting to buy sizzling balls of falafel from a row of shops.

ECOWAS Insists on Deepening Ties with Sahel States amid Distrust

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) said it is committed to strengthening relations with breakaway Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, notwithstanding the trust deficit between the two sides.

ECOWAS President, Dr. Omar Touray, stated this while presenting the 2025 Annual Community Report on the State of the Community to the ECOWAS Parliament during its 2025 Second Ordinary Session in Abuja.

The annual report offers the ECOWAS President the opportunity to comprehensively review and brief the

parliamentarian's on developments across key sectors within the region.

The report usually covers a wide range of political, economic, security, agricultural, humanitarian support, economic integration, public health issues, among others, across the region in the year ending.

Touray said that the withdrawal of the Sahel States from ECOWAS had strained cooperation on peace and security between the two sides and solicited intensified efforts to build trust between them.

According to him, ECOWAS has been

engaging global partners, including the U.S. and Russia, diplomatically, to bridge the trust deficit, which deepened divisions.

He stated that the diplomatic efforts had paid off as relations between ECOWAS and the Alliance of the Sahel States (AES) had improved in the most recent months.

The commission's president said that both parties had deliberately agreed to maintain the status quo, until a new agreement is concluded.

He said that the past eight months were devoid of hostile statements being exchanged between them.

Single Women Risk Rape, Exploitation in Search for Better Life in Europe - Report

Esther was sleeping on the streets of Lagos when a woman approached her with the promise of a route out of Nigeria to a job and a home in Europe.

She had dreamt of a new life, especially in the UK. Thrown out of a violent and abusive foster home, she had little to stay for. But when she left Lagos in 2016, crossing the desert to Libya, she had little idea of her traumatic journey ahead, forced into sex work and years of asylum claims in country after country.

The majority of irregular migrants and asylum seekers are men - 70% according to the European Agency for Asylum - but the number of women like Esther, who have come to Europe to seek asylum is on the rise.

Its 2024 report highlighted a 250% annual rise in the number of single adult women arriving in Italy on the Balkan route, while families grew by 52%.

Migrant routes are notoriously treacherous. Last year 3,419 migrant deaths or disappearances in Europe were recorded by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) - the deadliest year on record.

But for women, there is the added threat of sexual violence and exploitation, which happened to Esther after she was betrayed by the woman who had promised her a better life.

Many women are aware of the risks but go anyway, packing condoms, or even getting contraceptive devices fitted in case they are raped on the way.

Ms Gbedo supports women migrants in Trieste, a port city in north-east Italy which has long been a crossroads of cultures and serves as a major entry point to the European Union for those crossing from the Balkans. From here, they continue to countries like Germany, France, and the UK.

After four months of being exploited in Libya, Esther escaped and crossed the Mediterranean in a rubber dinghy from which she was rescued by the Italian coast guard and taken to the island of Lampedusa.

She claimed asylum three times before she was granted refugee status.

Asylum seekers from countries viewed as safe are often rejected. At the time Italy viewed Nigeria as unsafe, but two years ago it changed that assessment as governments across Europe began tightening their rules in response to the big migrant influx into Europe of 2015-16. Voices calling for further restrictions on asylum claims have only grown louder since.

However, many women arriving from countries considered safe claim that the abuse they suffered on account of being a woman has meant that life in their home countries has become impossible.

This was the case for Nina, a 28-year-old from Kosovo.

Nina said she and her sister were sexually abused by their boyfriends who forced them into sex work.

A 2019 report by Europe's OSCE security organisation suggested that 54% of women in Kosovo had experienced psychological, physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner since the age of 15.

SPORTS



File Photo

D'Tigers' Decline Raises Fresh Concerns over Nigeria's Basketball Direction

Nigeria's D'Tigers no longer resemble the confident and dominant side that once made the nation proud across Africa and beyond.

Recent performances have exposed deeper structural failings that many observers say have long threatened the stability of the men's programme.

In spite of boasting several gifted players in Europe, Asia, and the United States, the team has struggled to translate potential into consistent success on court.

Stakeholders said that the decline is worrying and could worsen unless urgent reforms begin immediately.

Their comments followed D'Tigers' poor showing in the opening window of the 2027 FIBA World Cup African Qualifiers.

The team played three matches and secured only one victory, leaving fans questioning their readiness for the long qualification journey.

They lost 88-78 to hosts Tunisia in Rades after a game dominated by defensive errors and wasted scoring opportunities.

Their second match ended in a disappointing 69-55 defeat to Guinea,

who capitalised on Nigeria's disorganised transition play.

D'Tigers managed a 75-69 win over Rwanda, though the performance still highlighted several weaknesses in defence and team chemistry.

Many stakeholders said these results were predictable, insisting that the national team's problems stretch back several years.

The team's decline follows their quarter-final exit at the 2025 AfroBasket tournament in Angola, where they initially showed early promise.

D'Tigers had started the competition brightly but failed to sustain momentum when it mattered in the knockout stages.

Their campaign ended after a heavy 91-75 loss to Senegal, who simply outplayed them in pace, structure, and discipline.

Since then, confidence in the team has gradually declined, especially with the latest ranking drop recorded by FIBA.

Nigeria slipped 11 places between March and September, falling from 42nd to 53rd in the world rankings.

The fall in ranking represents Nigeria's worst position in recent years and reflects their inconsistency across key

competitions.

Head Coach Mohammed Abdulrahman faced several challenges before the AfroBasket tournament, including limited preparation time and unresolved administrative issues.

In spite of those disruptions, the team impressed briefly in the group stage but could not maintain quality performances when pressure increased.

However, some analysts argue that Nigeria's problems go beyond coaching limitations or isolated preparation issues.

D'Tigers remain historically significant in African basketball, boasting a continental title in 2015 and several strong Olympic and World Cup appearances.

Nigeria participated in the 2016 and 2020 Olympics and last featured at the World Cup in 2019, under Coach Alex Nwora.

Their absence from the 2023 World Cup was a major setback, and missing another would severely damage the team's global relevance.

Former international, Seun Akinwunmi, said Nigeria's decline is a direct consequence of poor organisation and administrative disconnect.

Abridged League Stifling Talent, Markmentors Owner Warns Ahead of NBBF Elections

Markmentors Basketball Club owner, Igboche Mark warns that Nigeria's abridged league structure is stifling talent.

Mark added that the structure was also undermining the sport's development, threatening the nation's future competitiveness on the global stage ahead.

Mark, a respected stakeholder within the basketball community, spoke in an interview on Sunday in Abuja.

He expressed hope that the National Sports Commission would ensure a transparent and credible electoral process.

He described the forthcoming Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF) elections as a critical turning point for Nigerian basketball.

According to Mark, the sport needs a "total overhaul," emphasising that only visionary leadership could drive meaningful progress.

Mark criticised the fragmented domestic league, saying its shortened, inconsistent format prevents young players from fully developing or competing at elite levels.

"Without a full, competitive league structure and strong grassroots programmes, Nigeria's basketball potential will continue to be underutilised," he said.

He added that, if entrusted with leadership, his priorities would include grassroots development, a structured talent adaptation system, and transparent administration—key elements for rebuilding the sport's foundation.

A well-organised league supported by a reliable grassroots pipeline, he noted, would strengthen domestic basketball and enhance Nigeria's competitiveness in Africa and globally.

Mark's remarks reflect growing pressure from stakeholders calling for comprehensive governance reforms, including improvements in league structure, grassroots development, and talent identification, which have become central issues ahead of the elections.

Beyond basketball, Mark commended progress in Nigeria's broader sports sector, praising the successful hosting of the Continental African Association tournaments.

He also highlighted the 1st West Africa Para-Sport events in Abeokuta, noting that such initiatives provided athletes with valuable exposure and competitive experience.

Former Liverpool Co-owner Hicks Dies at 79

Former Liverpool co-owner Tom Hicks has died at the age of 79.

The American, who owned the club alongside George Gillett from 2007 to 2010, died surrounded by family at his home in Dallas, Texas.

"Of everything he accomplished in his remarkable life, Tom Hicks' most cherished title was 'Dad,'" read a statement from Hicks' six children.

"No matter the trials and tribulations he faced in life, he was constant in his generosity and love for his family.

"He remains a guiding force for our family, and we are deeply honoured to continue expanding his legacy.

"Although we are devastated by this loss, we are profoundly grateful to have been his children."

Hicks and Gillett sold Liverpool to Fenway Sports Group after encountering financial difficulties.

They were widely unpopular with Liverpool fans, running up debts of about £237m and failing to deliver on promises to renovate Anfield or build a

new stadium.

In a statement, Liverpool said they send their condolences "to the Hicks family and Tom's friends at this difficult time".

Hicks also owned ice hockey team the Dallas Stars from 1995 to 2011 and baseball team the Texas Rangers from 1998 to 2010.

Under Hicks' ownership, the Stars won consecutive Central Division titles between 1996 and 1998 and the Stanley Cup in 1999.



Okoye

AFCON 2025: Udinese to Release Okoye December 14

Udinese head coach Kosta Runjaic has confirmed Maduka Okoye will be released for the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations on Saturday, December 14.

FIFA announced this week that clubs can release players by December 15, one week before the start of the competition.

Clubs were earlier expected to release players on December 8.

Okoye is expected to be named in Nigeria's squad for the AFCON 2025 finals by head coach Eric Chelle.

The goalkeeper will leave for international duty after Udinese's Serie A clash with Napoli on December 14.

"We're considering this issue. After Napoli, we'll probably no longer have Rui Modesto, Okoye, Bayo, and Zemura, but

we've known about it for some time," Runjaic was quoted by the club's official website.

"Kamara won't be available against Genoa, perhaps he'll return against Napoli. We're evaluating who to play on the wings, but it's something that will become a reality after the Napoli match. For the Genoa match, everyone except Atta and Kamara is available."

England in Battle to Avoid Worst Ashes Tour in Modern Times

England have never come from 2-0 down to beat Australia, who have the added security of holding the urn. Australia have not lost three consecutive home Tests to anyone in 38 years.

There will be no defining series win for the Ben Stokes-Brendon McCullum era.

Instead, this team is battling to avoid the worst England performance on an Ashes tour this century.

There have been some belters either side of a 2010-11 victory that is increasingly starting to feel like a fever dream of sprinkler dances, a Swann keeping a diary and a knight of the realm wearing a chef's hat.

In 2002-03 England lost 4-1 but took hope from the runs of Michael Vaughan. In 2006-07, England's Ashes winners of 2005 were ravaged by injury and felt the wrath of one of the greatest teams of all time.

There has been revisionism about 2013-14. England arrived as favourites, though any team would have been destroyed by Mitchell Johnson. Four years later was the birth of Australia's 'big four' attack. Last time - the Covid tour of 2021-22 - England had no chance.

This? This was England's big opportunity. The most anticipated Ashes series in a generation.

This is why James Anderson was pensioned off, why performances in domestic cricket were largely ignored and why parts of the County Championship were turned into an experiment with the Kookaburra ball.

Australia were supposed to be ageing

and in decline - "The worst team in 15 years". Instead, the home side have rissold England with their reserve bowling attack and opening batter Usman Khawaja out with a bad back.

Steve Smith has been able to spend time revising Monty Panesar's answers on Mastermind, and Pat Cummins felt comfortable enough to go through a charade over whether or not he would play at the Gabba.

All that talk about Test cricket being so different from county cricket? Michael Neser has taken wickets bowling medium-fast with the keeper up to the stumps. Where's Darren Stevens when you need him?

The biggest insult was the Brisbane crowd voting Australia's Bluey as the superior children's cartoon to the UK's Peppa Pig. This England team owe Peppa an apology. She would probably do a better job in the top order.

The most hostile pace attack England have sent to Australia since 1970 have bowled well for one session. Shoaib Bashir, a spinner backed specifically for this tour, is still to play on it.

Wicketkeeper Jamie Smith looks overwhelmed by the occasion. Being pictured not wearing a helmet on his e-scooter must feel like a golden age for Smith, considering the week he has had at the Gabba.

It is England's batting that will cause the biggest recrimination. If the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over, and expecting different results, England have collectively lost their

marbles and their wickets.

Drive after drive. Edge after edge. Catch after catch. Bargain basement batting from a group playing like millionaires. Sachin Tendulkar once made 241 in Sydney by deliberately resisting the cover drive. This lot must think they are better than the Little Master.

Actions speak louder than words, but the words are pretty damning, too.

"They always play their shots. If we put as many balls in the right areas they're going to give you some chances," said Scott Boland, who faced more deliveries in the second Test than all of Ben Duckett, Ollie Pope and Harry Brook.

Contrast that to assistant coach Marcus Trescothick's explanation for England's approach on the third evening in Brisbane.

And therein lies the problem. England have become slaves to their style, stubbornly believing a one-size-fits-all method will bring results in Test cricket.

It was thrilling at first, a much-needed kiss of life to a team that won only one of its previous 17 matches. It produced some superb performances and magic moments.

In the cold light of day, it can be argued England beat the teams they should have beaten anyway.

The Gabba is an eighth defeat in England's past 15 Tests. Away from home they have lost 10 in 14. There has been no win in a five-Test series against Australia or India. If it feels harsh to use a 4-1 defeat in India at the beginning of last year as part of the judgement, India have recently lost 3-0 at home to New Zealand and 2-0 to South Africa.

Race Organizer Says More Private Sector Investment Needed in Sports

Convener of the Annual 10km Owan Marathon Race, Chris Ojo, on Sunday, called for increased private investment in sports development in Edo, to boost sporting activities.

Ojo made the call in Benin at a news conference to herald the fifth edition of the annual racing tournament billed for Jan. 3, 2026.

He described sports as a launchpad to boosting small scale enterprises.

According to him, sports can be used as part of measures to curb security challenges in the state and the country at large.

He said that he took the initiative to invest in the annual event as a means to productively engage youths from his community, council area, and Edo in general.

Ojo said that leaving the responsibility to government alone would leave the industry behind in Nigeria when compared to the western world.

He, however, underscored the need for provision of an enabling environment for those willing to invest, in order to reap the dividends of their investments.

On the marathon, he disclosed that he had sponsored the race over the years, knowing its potential for the socio-economic well-being of his people.

He explained that over the years, the purpose of the race had not been defeated, even though he tried to improve on each edition of the race.

NPFL: Enugu Rangers Wallop Bayelsa United 4-1 in Enugu

Defender Chiedozie Iwundu scored a brace as Rangers International Football Club of Enugu thrashed Bayelsa United of Yenegoa 4-1 at the Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium Enugu.

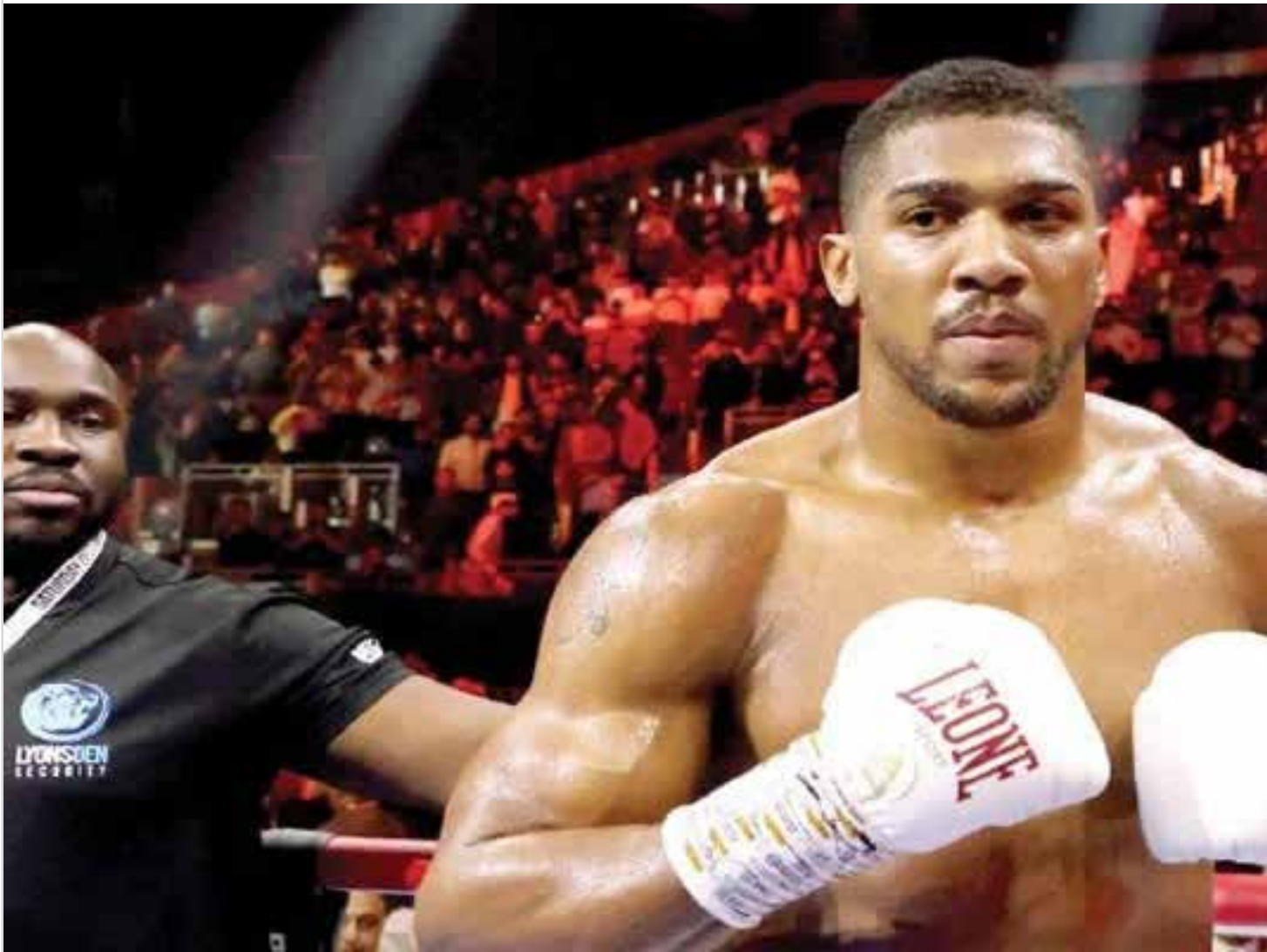
The match was the week 16 of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) 2025/26 season.

Iwundu struck in the 10th minutes of the game to put the Flying Antelopes ahead.

The ubiquitous defender completed his brace in the 19th minute before the visitors reduced the tally five minutes later.

Rangers continued their dominance and in the 33th minute, veteran Godwin Agu's free kick made it 3-0.

The home team scored their fourth goal through a solo run by young diminutive st riker Chimaobi Igwilo to end the half 4-1.



Joshua

Joshua to Avenge Tyson in Paul Showdown

Anthony Joshua is not just fighting for his own benefit against Jake Paul but for the entire sport of boxing following the YouTuber-turned-boxer's controversial fight with Mike Tyson, according to UFC icon Jorge Masvidal.

Masvidal believes the boxing faithful want to see the 28-year-old brutally rendered unconscious when he faces the two-time heavyweight world champion on December 19 in Miami.

The world of boxing was left stunned

by the confirmation of a bout between Paul and 59-year-old Mike Tyson last year. Paul won the fight via unanimous decision, but fans were quick to condemn the showcase.

"If AJ goes out there and executes Jake Paul in under a minute, this won't add anything or take anything away from AJ's legacy. But it will add clout and numerous more bags that he's gonna get, and the folklore tale, right? Because everybody wants to see Jake

get whooped like that, especially for what he did to Mike Tyson," Masvidal said.

"He's gonna be a folklore hero. It's definitely gonna add to the folklore of AJ, for generations to come. These 14-year-old kids that adore Jake Paul, when they're 28 years old, they'll still be talking about AJ."

Joshua himself has admitted he would not go easy on his upcoming foe.

NFF Moves to Improve NPFL Officiating

The Nigeria Football Federation has issued a firm warning to referees and assistant referees nationwide, insisting it will impose severe sanctions on any match official whose conduct brings the sport into disrepute.

In a memo released by the NFF refereeing development committee and signed by Mohammed Ameenu on behalf of the NFF president, with copies sent to the heads of all league bodies and the federation's general secretary, the

organisation expressed growing concern over fluctuating officiating standards across domestic competitions.

The memo acknowledged that while many officials continue to uphold fairness and comply with the laws of the game, others have acted in ways that undermine both the integrity of refereeing and the wider reputation of Nigerian football.

To strengthen oversight, the NFF president has set up a monitoring committee tasked with deploying

personnel to match venues across the NPFL, NNL and NWFL.

These personnel will file direct assessments on the performance and conduct of referees and their assistants, and the findings will guide disciplinary measures where required.

The federation urged all officials to carry out their duties with diligence, honesty and neutrality, warning that there will be zero tolerance for any form of misconduct.

Triathlete Yee Runs Second Fastest British Marathon

Olympic triathlon champion Alex Yee ran the second fastest marathon by a Briton in only his second competitive race at the distance.

The 27-year-old, who won triathlon gold at Paris 2024 and the world title later in the year, finished seventh at the Valencia Marathon in two hours six minutes 38 seconds.

Only four-time Olympic champion

Mo Farah has run quicker than Yee, with a time of 2:05:11.

Emile Cairess, who is now third on the all-time list with 2:06:46, paced Yee for about 21 of the 26.2 miles.

Kenya's John Korir won in 2:02:24, with Germany's Amanal Petros 1min 39secs behind in second and Norway's Awet Kibrab a further 21 seconds back in third.

Yee's time was 4mins 30secs faster than at the London Marathon in April, when he finished 14th.

He has said he will not permanently switch to the marathon and plans to defend his Olympic triathlon title in Los Angeles in 2028.

Joyciline Jepkosgei won the women's race in 2:14:00, the fastest time of the year.

No Place for Weak Men in My Dressing Room – Stokes

Captain Ben Stokes questioned his England players' mentality after their crushing defeat by Australia in the second Test, saying his dressing room is "not a place for weak men".

Though England showed some fight on day four, they were thrashed by eight wickets in Brisbane to go 2-0 down in the five-match Ashes series.

Stokes denied England's problems are down to skill and instead questioned why they have been unable to capitalise on key moments.

"Do we need to start thinking about what mentality we are taking into those pressure moments?" Stokes said.

"When we are on top we are great and when behind the game we are also very good but when that moment is neck and neck we are not coming out on top on enough occasions."

Stokes led the resistance on the final day by surviving 152 balls for 50 runs but England lost 4-17 after batter Will Jacks was dismissed, leaving Australia a chase of 65 in their second innings.

In a separate interview, Stokes said his players were not "weak" but former England captain Michael Vaughan said "a few better get ready" after the comments.

Those moments can be traced back to the fifth Test against India in the summer, possibly back to the 2023 Ashes when England blew good positions in the first two Tests and also went 2-0 down.

England's recent struggles include:

In their chase of 374 against India at The Oval, England were 73 runs from victory with Harry Brook and Joe Root and seven wickets left. They lost by six runs.

In the first Ashes Test in Perth, England were effectively 105-1 in their second innings but lost five wickets for 38 runs and lost by eight wickets.

In the first innings in Brisbane, England were 176-3 when Mitchell Starc was brought back under the lights and Brook was caught playing a booming drive to his second ball.

Having scrapped to 334, Stokes' side made a wayward start with the ball to allow Australia to race to 77-0 in the first 13 overs.

They fought back late in the day but dropped four catches in the evening session and then allowed Mitchell Starc and Scott Boland build a partnership of 27.3 overs the following morning.

In their second innings, England reached 90-1 to reduce their deficit to 87 but quickly fell to 128-6 after Ollie Pope and Zak Crawley fell to drives.

Stokes said he would have conversations with his players and believes they can come from 2-0 behind to win for the first time in an Ashes series.

The Inside Story Of The Fake Coup In Guinea-Bissau

BY
OWEI LAKEMFA



Umaro Mokhtar Sissoco Embaló, on 26 November, sat in his office as the President of Guinea-Bissau.

As a retired General, the 53-year-old knew when he was beaten. Three days earlier, he had succumbed to unbearable pressures that he allowed general elections to be held despite his fears. His tenure had expired on February 27, 2025.

Rather than hold elections in accordance with the constitution, he had it postponed. The Constitutional Court had come to his aid by setting September 4, 2025 as the new date for his departure or mandate renewal. The seven-month extension had seemed a long way off. But like the debtor who sets the month end for him to pay his debts, the payment day soon came, finding him like a cornered rat. He finally agreed to hold the election in November.

He had in his five years as President tried to prepare for a possible re-election.

Amongst a number of repressive measures, he had twice proscribed the parliament, the National Peoples' Assembly, NPA, because it was controlled by the opposition African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, PAIGC. That was the party that led the country through the liberation struggles and won its independence. Embaló had joined the PAIGC in 2016 and was later that year appointed the Prime Minister under President Jose Mario Vaz.

But two years later, amidst disagreements, he left the PAIGC to establish the Madem G15 party.

He was declared winner of the disputed November 2019 elections and sworn in as President in February 2020. However, despite his best efforts, the PAIGC maintained control of parliament and, as it turned out, the support of the people. So he dissolved the parliament. But when new elections were conducted, the opposition PAIGC maintained control of the parliament. So, five months into the life of the new parliament, he again dissolved it unconstitutionally, and this time, refused to allow new elections.

He also moved against the judiciary, putting it under armed siege, and forced the Chief Justice out. But these seem to make the PAIGC stronger. So, when the presidential election became

inevitable, he banned the PAIGC and its candidate. But rather than fight the bans, the PAIGC decided to adopt the Independent candidate, Fernando Diaz da Costa.

Embaló might have thought he would have a walkover, but now, the election results starring him in the face, showed he had lost.

However, he was not the only person who had the results, the opposition also had them. Worse still, the international observers, like those of the African Union Election Observation Mission led by former Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi, also had them. Also, the observers of the West African Elders Forum, WAEF, led by Dr Goodluck Jonathan, former President of Nigeria, equally had the results.

I interviewed a leader of the opposition and asked him how they came to the conclusion they had won the election even when the electoral commission had not made a formal announcement. He explained:

"On each of the voting table, there are representatives of the candidates, Electoral Commission, Public Ministry, judicial police and election observers. Votes were counted manually and in public view.

These were entered into the tally sheet and the representatives signed. People present, like the representatives, took photographs of the signed tally sheet. There are a total of 4,000 voting tables. Then you have diaspora voting. These results were then taken to the regional electoral centres

and tallied with the few diaspora voting which took place in a handful of countries, including a total of six countries in West Africa. So, the representatives and observers have photocopies or photographs of the result sheets and these are what showed that we won the election."

A fundamental pre-election agreement between the opposition candidate Fernando Diaz and the PAIGC is that if he wins, parliament will be reconvened and all unconstitutional decisions will be reversed.

Embaló knew that with his loss of the election, he might be moving from the presidential office to prison. If he fled, Diaz will be sworn in and, if he resigns, constitutionally, the person who will replace him is the President of the National Assembly who is the leader of the PAIGC.

Given the fact that he has limited options, he decided to execute a childish prank. He phoned the media to announce that he was being overthrown. He continued to give interviews, including that he was being moved to the headquarters of the Armed Forces General Staff.

Then, the head of his presidential guard, General Denis N'Canha, announced a coup which he claimed was being carried out to stop politicians allied to an unnamed drug baron from taking over the country. But, why would anybody execute a coup against an opposition candidate who had allegedly lost the elections?

His Excellency Jonathan who was on ground, gave a graphic presentation of the events in Guinea-Bissau: "I wouldn't call it a coup. It was not a coup. I would just say, for want of a better word, maybe it was a ceremonial coup. Because for two things: It is the president, President Embaló, who announced the coup. Later, the military men came up to address the world that they were in charge of everywhere.

"Then Embaló had already announced the coup, which is strange. Not only announcing the coup, but Embaló, while the coup took place, was using his phone and addressing media

organisations across the world that he had been arrested.

"The military doesn't take over governments, and the sitting president that they overthrew would be allowed to be addressing press conferences and announcing that he has been arrested. Why does this happen? Who is fooling whom?"

The next day, the alleged coup plotters who turned out to be loyal to Embaló, sent their boss to Senegal while announcing that they would be in power for one year. Senegal found out that it had been fooled by Embaló. Its Prime Minister Ousmane Sonko said the so-called coup was a "sham". Given the fact that his cover had been blown, Embaló fled Senegal and was last heard about in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Nigeria has done very well by giving President-elect Dias asylum in its embassy in Bissau, and invited the regional Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS, military, stationed in the country, to provide extra security for him.

The next step should be that the coup plotters in Bissau, be ordered to step down and allow resumption of constitutional rule. This was what Nigeria and ECOWAS did in Gambia in the case of Yahaya Jammeh in 2017.

As for Embaló, he needs to be returned to Guinea-Bissau and tried for crimes against the country, including for treason.

Owei Lakemfa, a former secretary general of African workers, is a human rights activist, journalist and author.

QUOTE ME



Our party is fully prepared for the future, and by the grace of God, the APC will win convincingly in 2027.

...National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda, on Sunday in Abuja

