Nigeria Customs Deepens Global Push For Innovation-Driven Trade Facilitation



▪ *CGC, Trade Modernisation Team Engage Global Customs Leaders in Abu Dhabi*

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has reaffirmed its commitment to technology-driven border management and international cooperation as the 2026 World Customs Organisation (WCO) Technology Conference and Exhibition commenced on Wednesday, 28 January 2026, at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC) in the United Arab Emirates.

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TheMatrix

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■ ADC Accuses APC Of Forcing Civil Servants To Register To Join Party
■ Urges Data Protection Commission, Labour Union, Others To Intervene





Courtesy Visit...

The Board of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), led by its Chairman, Chief Idris Olorunnimbe and Executive Vice Chairman, Dr. Aminu Maida paid a courtesy visit to the Executive Governor of Lagos State, His Excellency, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, recently.

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EPL: Spurs Dent Man City's Title Hope, Man Utd's Revival Continue



TheMatrix

Lead Story

By Babajide Okeowo

2027: Opposition In Fresh Moves Against Tinubu, APC

- PDP: We'll Do Whatever It Takes To Srenghten Our Party, Sack Tinubu
- ADC Accuses APC Of Forcing Civil Servants To Register To Join Party

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) says it is intensifying efforts to rebuild internal cohesion and forge broad political alliances as part of its strategy for the 2027 general elections.

Caretaker National Vice-Chairman (South-South), Emmanuel Ogidi, disclosed this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), stressing that the party remains committed to defending democracy and repositioning itself as a credible opposition despite ongoing internal disagreements.

Ogidi acknowledged that the PDP is grappling with "pockets of trouble" but insisted the challenges would not derail its mission of safeguarding democratic governance and restoring public confidence. He described the party as the "only viable opposition" and vowed it would not disappoint Nigerians.

According to him, the PDP is fully aware of the seriousness of the country's current political climate and is determined to live up to the expectations of Nigerians who see the party as a stabilising force in the democratic process.

"Yes, today we have some pockets of trouble in the PDP today, but we are resolute and we believe in God because we know that we are the only viable opposition.

"We are going to fight for that cause; we will do whatever it takes to ensure that we have democracy; if we do not have democracy, then we will have a banana republic.

"We understand this part, and because of that, we will not disappoint the people; we want to do whatever it takes and we are determined.

"We are going to reach out to anybody reachable in the other political parties, including the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).

"We want to see what we can take away from these parties; else, this country will face more serious challenges," he said.

Ogidi said the PDP's central focus going into the 2027 elections would be the protection of democracy, promotion of national unity and offering Nigerians a credible alternative to the ruling party.

He accused the APC of prioritising electoral victories over effective governance, questioning why the ruling party, less than two years into office, appeared more focused on political campaigns than addressing governance challenges.

The PDP chieftain warned that the erosion of democratic institutions could plunge the country into instability, assuring that the party would do everything within its capacity to prevent such an outcome.

Meanwhile, the African Democratic Congress, ADC, has raised the alarm over what it described as widespread and coordinated attempts to compel Nigerian civil servants to register for the APC, through its ongoing e-registration exercise.

This was contained in a statement signed by the party's National Publicity Secretary, Mallam Bolaji Abdullahi.

The ADC said it had received consistent reports from different parts of the country alleging that public servants are being pressured to register for the ruling party as a condition for job security, career progression, or continued access to their livelihoods.

The party described the development as unacceptable in a democratic society, warning that compelling citizens to belong to a political party amounts to a gross violation of fundamental human rights guaranteed under the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

According to the ADC, freedom of thought, conscience, and association are inalienable rights that cannot be granted or withdrawn by any government or ruling party.

It argued that what the APC refers to as "e-registration" is increasingly taking the form of economic coercion and forced political membership.

"A political party that genuinely enjoys popular support does not need to conscript citizens through fear, intimidation, or the weaponisation of the payroll," the statement said, adding that pressuring civil servants to register for a party they do not believe in amounts to what it termed "state-sponsored conscription," rather than genuine party growth.

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Politicians Are Nigeria's Problem, Pray For Us- Peter Obi

Peter Obi, presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP) in the 2023 election, has urged Nigerians to pray for their political leaders, admitting that politicians are responsible for the country's challenges.

Speaking on Sunday at the thanksgiving service to mark Oyo State's 50th anniversary at the Cathedral of St. Peter Anglican Church, Aremo, Ibadan, Obi said:

"I want to make a request from Nigerians. Do remember us politicians in your prayers. We are the problem of Nigeria, no other person."

He stressed that Nigeria's problem is not poverty but poor governance. "Nigeria is not a poor country, it is poorly governed. Remember us in your prayers that God should touch our hearts to use public money for public good. That is what is required," he added.

In a post on X after the event, Obi thanked Governor Seyi Makinde for the opportunity to speak, recalling how the governor had invited him to address the maiden executive council retreat at the start of his administration.

"I am pleased to note that the governor has remained consistent in his approach. Beyond the visible infrastructure across the state, his performance is widely discussed and appreciated by Oyo people wherever they are," Obi said. The former Anambra governor also commended Makinde's emphasis on building strong institutions rather than relying on individuals. "His focus on continuity, systems, and shared responsibility reflects a statesmanlike vision and offers reassurance that the progress of Oyo State will be sustained beyond any single administration," he noted. Obi further expressed gratitude to Bishop Williams Aladekugbe of Ibadan North for what he described as a profound sermon. "He reminded us that thanksgiving is not merely a ritual but a moral discipline that nurtures humility, responsibility, and service to the common good," Obi said.

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I May Become APC Member – Defense Minister, Musa



The Minister of Defence, General Christopher Musa, rtd, says he is likely to formally become a member of the ruling All Progressives Congress, APC.

Speaking during an interview on 'Sunday Politics', a programme on Channels Television, General Musa said he is currently in political transition.

Musa said he was grateful that APC gave him the platform to present himself as Chief of Defence Staff, CDS, and now Minister of Defense, adding that he would definitely support the party.

The former CDS maintained that President Bola Tinubu needs full support, expressing full readiness to give Tinubu the support in every way he could.

"I've not transitioned yet. I'm in transition. I think I'll become a politician, a member of the APC, definitely.

"Mr President needs all support, totally," he said.



STRENGTHENING RELIGIOUS HARMONY…

105th Archbishop of Canterbury, His Grace Justin Portal Welby (left), and Kaduna State Governor, Senator Uba Sani, during the cleric's courtesy visit to governor after his engagement as Guest Speaker at the Ahmadu Bello University Convocation Lecture Zaria in Kaduna.. Recently

NDLEA Nabs Brazil Returnee With Cocaine Concealed In Private Part

A Brazil based Nigerian businessman Uche Franklin Onyekwere has been arrested by operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) at the arrival hall of the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA) Ikeja-Lagos for concealing parcels of cocaine in his private part and soles of his footwear.

Onyekwere was arrested on Thursday 29th January 2026 during the inward clearance of South African Airways flight passengers arriving from Brazil via Johannesburg following processed intelligence. When the 47-year-old suspect was taken for full body scan, the result confirmed illicit drug concealment. As a result, he was subjected to a strip search, during which a big parcel of white powdery substance, which later tested positive for cocaine, was discovered wrapped around his right thigh. A further search revealed two additional wraps of the same substance concealed in the sole of a pair of flat shoes worn by the suspect. In all, three large wraps of cocaine, with a gross weight of 1.60 kilograms, were recovered from his body and footwear. During a preliminary interview, the suspect revealed he purchased the illicit drug consignment in Brazil with the intention to resell the cocaine in Nigeria in order to raise capital to boost his business and also finance the naming ceremony of his newly born child. The suspect who lives in Rua Ever, Mulariuha, São Paulo, claimed that he has been living in Brazil since 2008 while he has been operating a toy business for about nine years. At the Tincan seaport in Lagos, a total of 55 jumbo bags of Canadian Loud, a strong strain of cannabis with a gross weight of 1,183 kilograms imported from Montreal, Canada in a container was discovered on Wednesday 28th January during a joint examination of the shipment by NDLEA officers, Customs and other security agencies. The illicit consignments were hidden inside two vehicles: a Hyundai SUV and a Toyota Matrix car. In another interdiction operation, NDLEA operatives in Edo state on Tuesday 27th January arrested Shaibu Yusuf along Auchi-Abuja express road while looking for a vehicle to convey 66 bags of skunk concealed in bags of charcoal, weighing 792kg, to Katsina. Also, in Edo, operatives supported by Nigerian Army personnel on Wednesday 28th January raided a cannabis farm at Ebora camp, Ilushi in Esan South East LGA where 4,063.675kg skunk was destroyed on over 1.6 hectares farmland while 328kg processed cannabis and its seeds were recovered. Suspects arrested at the camp include: Jeremiah Nwodeh, 46; Chukwudi Pius,33; Pius Ogaba, 46; and Onora Kwene, 35.

News

By Babajide Okeowo

Missing N22.3bn, $49.7m, £14.3m, €5.2m Oil Windfall: SERAP Sues NNPCL

- Says Diverted Or Misappropriated Oil Revenues Reflect A Failure Of NNPCL Accountability

The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has filed a lawsuit against the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Limited over the "failure to account for the alleged missing or diverted N22.3 billion, USD$49.7 million, £14.3 million and €5.2 million oil money."

The suit followed the damning allegations documented in the 2022 audited report by the Auditor-General of the Federation, which was published on 9 September 2025.

In the suit number FHC/ABJ/CS/195/2026 filed last Friday at the Federal High Court in Abuja, SERAP is seeking: "an order of mandamus to direct and compel the NNPCL to account for the alleged missing or diverted N22.3 billion, USD$49.7 million, £14.3 million, and €5.2 million oil money."

SERAP is asking the court to "direct and compel the NNPCL to disclose the specific financial transactions carried out in respect of the alleged missing or diverted N22.3 billion, USD$49.7 million, £14.3 million and €5.2 million oil money, including details of disbursement, the contractors, and other individuals who collected the money."

In the suit, SERAP is arguing that: "The diverted or misappropriated oil revenues reflect a failure of NNPCL accountability more generally and are directly linked to the institution's continuing failure to uphold the principles of transparency and accountability."

SERAP is also arguing that, "granting the reliefs sought would strike a blow against the impunity of those responsible for the missing or diverted oil money, and ensure that the money is returned for the sake of NNPCL's victims—Nigerians."

SERAP said, "The allegations have also undermined the economic development of the country, trapped the majority of Nigerians in poverty and deprived them of opportunities."

According to SERAP, "The Auditor-General has for many years documented reports of disappearance of oil money from the NNPCL. Nigerians continue to bear the brunt of these missing oil money meant to provide essential public services for Nigerians."

SERAP is also arguing that, "Combating the corruption epidemic in the oil sector would alleviate poverty, improve access of Nigerians to basic public goods and services, and enhance the ability of the government to meet its human rights and anti-corruption obligations."

The lawsuit filed on behalf of SERAP by its lawyers, Oluwakemi Agunbiade and Valentina Adegoke, read in part: "The diverted or misappropriated oil revenues have further damaged the already precarious economy and contributed to very high levels of deficit spending and borrowing by the government."

"Despite the country's enormous oil wealth, ordinary Nigerians have derived very little benefit from oil money primarily because of the widespread grand corruption including in the NNPCL, and the entrenched culture of impunity of perpetrators."

"The grim allegations by the Auditor-General suggest a grave violation of the public trust and the provisions of the Nigerian Constitution, national anticorruption laws, and the country's international human rights and anticorruption obligations."

"According to the 2022 audited report by the Auditor General of the Federation, published on 9 September 2025, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Limited (NNPCL) failed to account for over N22.3 billion, USD$49.7 million, £14.3 million and €5.2 million oil money."

"The NNPCL in 2020 reportedly paid over N292 million [N292,609,972.29] 'for a contract to construct an Accident and Emergency Facility along Airport Road, Abuja.' But 'the contractor has abandoned the

Nigerian Govt To Arraign Suspects In Yelwata Massacre Today

The Federal Government has announced that suspects linked to the June 2025 Yelwata killings in Benue State will be formally charged in court on Monday. In a statement issued Sunday by the Office of the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, officials confirmed that the accused persons will appear before Justice Joyce Abdulmalik at the Federal High Court in Abuja. The arraignment follows what the government described as "a painstaking investigation and collaboration by security agencies."

The Attorney General's office assured Nigerians that justice will be pursued to "send a strong signal to the enemies of the country acting under any disguise. The statement, signed by media aide Kamarudeen Ogundele, also reaffirmed President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's commitment to safeguarding lives and property as enshrined in the Constitution.

"The Office of the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice wishes to assure Nigerians that justice will be ensured in the matter, to send a strong signal to the enemies of the country acting under any disguise."

The Yelwata massacre occurred between June 13 and 14, 2025, when suspected armed herdsmen launched coordinated attacks on homes, a local market, and a Catholic mission in Guma Local Government Area. More than 100 people were killed, houses were set ablaze, and about 3,000 residents were displaced.

President Tinubu had earlier condemned the violence and directed law enforcement agencies to track down and prosecute those responsible. Monday's arraignment marks a significant step toward accountability in one of the deadliest attacks in Benue State in recent years.

Nigeria Customs Deepens Global Push For Innovation-Driven Trade Facilitation ▪ *Cont'd from cover page*

The conference, organised by the WCO under the theme "Customs Agility in a Complex World: Securing and Facilitating Trade through Innovation," brings together Customs administrations, technology providers, policymakers and industry leaders from across the globe to examine how innovation can strengthen border security while facilitating legitimate trade.

Nigeria's participation in the high-level event underscores the Service's ongoing trade modernisation drive and its alignment with global best practices in Customs administration, particularly in data exchange, digitalisation, and intelligence-led enforcement.

Speaking during a panel session titled "Customs Agility in a Complex World: Securing and Facilitating Trade through Innovation," the Comptroller-General of Customs (CGC), Adewale Adeniyi, who is also the Chairperson of the WCO Council, emphasised the importance of structured international collaboration in addressing emerging cross-border challenges.

According to the CGC, "Our experience has shown that robust engagement with international organisations such as INTERPOL, World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and the Universal Postal Union creates opportunities for deeper cooperation, especially in tracking criminal networks, protecting intellectual property and managing emerging trade risks."

He noted that enhanced data exchange and stronger governance frameworks remain critical to addressing global challenges such as cargo diversion along transit corridors.

"Diversion of goods in transit is not a challenge

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Ondo Should Bbe Mourning Stagnation At 50, Not Declaring Public Holiday – Sowore

Human rights activist and former presidential candidate of the African Action Congress (AAC) in the 2023 elections, Omoyele Sowore, has expressed concern over what he described as the absence of development in Ondo State. According to Sowore, an indigene of the state, who hails from Kiribo, Ese-Odo Local Government Area, stressed that the state ought to be mourning poor governance and not the declaration of public holidays.

Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa had declared Monday and Tuesday public holidays for residents of the state in order to be part of the 50th anniversary celebrations of the state. Sowore, who is the convener of the #RevolutionNow and Take-It-Back movements, stated the state has been stagnant under the watch of Aiyedatiwa with the absence of a developmental or renewal plan. He said, "It would be more fitting for Ondo State citizens to aid Governor Hon. Lucky Orimisan Aiyedatiwa in proclaiming a day of mourning over poor governance rather than observing a public holiday for the state's 50th anniversary. "Ondo @50 has been reduced to little more than spectacle and fluff under Hon. Lucky Orimisan Aiyedatiwa's watch. There are no refurbished schools to showcase. No bridges built. "No completed roads to commission. No hospitals to open, and no concrete security achievements to speak of.

"Instead of milestones, citizens are offered pageantry; instead of progress, some physical dance performance." At 50, Ondo State is not marking development or renewal but merely dancing around its own stagnation while thuggery thrives and governance remains conspicuously absent." Meanwhile, an aide to the governor, Yomi Oyekan, stated that Sowore does not understand the governance, hence the constant attack on constituted authorities. Oyekan, who is a Senior Special Assistant to Aiyedatiwa, said, "Running a state is not running a Twitter space. Institutions are not built with rage, and development is not measured by how angry a post sounds. What's more disappointing is that this comes from an Ondo son, someone who should understand the depth of our challenges. Instead of offering insight, timelines, or comparative analysis, you default to exaggeration: "nothing exists, nothing works, everything is fluff." That's not bravery; that's intellectual laziness.

"You claim high morality while you've never allowed democracy in the political party you founded. At some point, perpetual outrage stops looking like activism and starts looking like irrelevance. When a man spends years announcing collapse everywhere, people eventually stop asking him for direction."

Fueling Fears: Speeding CNG Truck Rams Car In Lagos, Leaving Two Injured

Two pedestrians have been injured following a road traffic accident involving a heavy-duty truck conveying Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and a private vehicle at Apakun Bridge, inward Oshodi, Lagos State.

The incident occurred at the crest of the bridge when the truck reportedly rammed into a moving silver Toyota Corolla, triggering a chain reaction that led to the pedestrians being struck.

According to preliminary reports, the truck, with registration number EKY 120 YK, was allegedly driven at excessive speed before colliding with the Toyota Corolla, EKY 289 HM, at the strategic Apakun Bridge corridor.

Officials said the impact caused severe disruption to traffic flow in the area and posed significant danger to other road users. In the aftermath of the collision, two pedestrians sustained injuries, while the driver of the Toyota Corolla was said to have suffered serious injuries.

The Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) confirmed that its officers swiftly mobilised to the scene and carried out a coordinated rescue operation.

"LASTMA officers promptly arrived at the scene and successfully rescued the injured victims from the wreckage," the agency said.

"The affected pedestrians and the injured driver were immediately transported to a nearby medical facility, where they are currently receiving medical attention."

Security support was provided by operatives of the Ajao Estate Police Division to ensure safety and prevent further incidents during the rescue and evacuation process.

Due to the highly flammable nature of the truck's cargo, personnel of the Rapid Response Squad (RRS) and the Lagos State Fire and Rescue Service were also deployed to the scene as a precautionary measure.

Reacting to the incident, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Transportation, Sola Giwa, condemned what he described as the growing trend of reckless overspeeding by truck and tanker operators across the state.

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TheMatrix

Opinion

By Abidemi Adebamiwa

The Democracy Some Leaders Once Fought For Must Be Remembered Before It Is Lost



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu did not stumble into democracy. He fought for it. At a time when speaking out could cost people their freedom, their safety, or their future, he stood with others who believed Nigerians deserved the right to choose their leaders. Men like General Alani Akinrinade paid heavy personal prices for that belief. They understood something simple but powerful, that a country cannot survive when power is allowed to silence choice.

That history matters today.

So when a party chairman can stand before cameras and openly say that the goal is for every Nigerian to belong to one political party, it should worry us all. Not because of politics, but because of what it forgets. It forgets the struggle. It forgets the sacrifices. It forgets why democracy was fought for in the first place.

In George Orwell's Animal Farm, the breakdown did not begin with violence. It began with language. The pigs spoke of unity and progress, of doing what was best for everyone. Slowly, the other animals were told that disagreement was dangerous and that questioning authority threatened stability. Before long, choice disappeared, not through force at first, but through persuasion and fear of standing alone.

Nigeria must not walk that same road. Democracy is not strengthened by everyone belonging to one political family. It survives because citizens are free to think differently. It grows when opposition exists, not when it is absorbed. Once leaders begin to speak comfortably about political uniformity, even elections start to lose their meaning.

President Tinubu understands this struggle better than most. He has lived it. That is why remembering those days matters, not as nostalgia, but as warning.

Because in Animal Farm, the tragedy was not that power changed hands. It was that, in the end, no one could tell the difference anymore.

Abidemi Adebamiwa is the Managing Editor @ Newspot Nigeria.



PROMOTING EDUCATION…

L-R: Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission, Prof. Abdullahi Ribadu; Provost, University of Birmingham, Prof. Nick Vaughan-Williams; Minister of Education, Dr. Olatunji Alausa; Vice- Chancellor, University of Lagos, Prof. Folashade Ogunsola; and British Deputy High Commissioner to Lagos, Jonny Baxter, during the signing of an agreement on the expansion of transnational education between UNILAG and University of Birmingham in Lagos recently


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Editorial

The Electoral Act Amendment Bill — A Test Of Nigeria's Democratic Resolve

As Nigeria marches steadily toward the 2027 general elections, one truth looms larger than any campaign slogan: the credibility of our democracy rests not on promises, but on the strength of our laws.

The Electoral Act Amendment Bill, currently before the National Assembly, is not just another piece of legislation. It is the scaffolding upon which the legitimacy of the next election will stand.

For too long, Nigerians have endured elections marred by logistical failures, legal ambiguities, and loopholes that empower manipulation rather than transparency.

The 2023 polls, while historic in their own right, exposed glaring weaknesses—from the deployment of technology to the clarity of results transmission. If these gaps are not addressed, 2027 risks becoming another cycle of disputes, litigations, and disillusionment.

Without its timely passage, the nation risks repeating the cycle of disputes, litigations, and public disillusionment that have plagued past polls.

Lessons from 2023: A Democracy Tested

The 2023 elections, though historic, exposed glaring weaknesses in our electoral system. From the deployment of technology to the clarity of results transmission, Nigerians witnessed firsthand how loopholes in the law can be exploited to sow doubt. The controversies surrounding electronic transmission of results, campaign financing, and the role of party agents revealed a system struggling to keep pace with modern democratic expectations.

These shortcomings are not abstract. They translate into real consequences: citizens losing faith in their votes, courts becoming the battleground for political legitimacy, and the specter of instability hovering over the nation. If these gaps are not addressed, 2027 could become another election defined not by the will of the people, but by the flaws of the process.

Why the Amendment Bill Matters

- The proposed Electoral Act Amendment Bill seeks to:
- Strengthen electronic transmission of results to ensure transparency and reduce manipulation.
- Tighten campaign finance regulations, curbing the influence of money and ensuring a level playing field.



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- Empower INEC with clearer authority to sanction violations and enforce compliance.
- Clarify legal ambiguities that have historically fueled endless post-election litigations.

These reforms are not luxuries; they are necessities. In a country where elections often determine not just leadership but national stability, the integrity of the process is paramount.

Beyond Politics: A National Imperative

While critics argue that the bill is being rushed or politicised, delay is the greater danger. Every day without reform is a day closer to an election conducted under flawed rules. Nigerians deserve better than a system that leaves room for doubt, dispute, and disenfranchisement.

This is not about who wins or loses in 2027. It is about whether Nigerians can trust the process at all. As one civil society leader aptly put it:

"Democracy dies not when ballots are cast, but when citizens lose faith in their power to choose."

That warning should echo through the chambers of the National Assembly.

A Call to Lawmakers

TheMatrix Newspaper believes the passage of the Electoral Act Amendment Bill is a litmus test for the National Assembly's commitment to democracy. Will lawmakers choose to entrench fairness and transparency, or will they gamble with the nation's fragile trust in its institutions?

History will not forgive hesitation. Nigerians will remember whether their representatives acted to safeguard democracy or allowed partisan interests to derail reform. The credibility of the 2027 elections depends on what the National Assembly does today.

The Time to Act is Now

Nigeria's democracy is young, fragile, and still evolving. The Electoral Act Amendment Bill offers a chance to strengthen it, to reassure citizens that their votes matter, and to demonstrate to the world that Nigeria is committed to democratic progress.

The National Assembly must rise above political calculations and pass the bill without delay. The stakes are too high, the risks too grave, and the opportunity too rare.

The time to act is now.

Letters in response to specifici publications in TheMatrix should be befi (150-250 words) and straight to the point. Interested readers may send such letters along with their contacts to opinion@thematrix.com We also welcome comments and opinions on topical local, national and international issues provided they are well written and should also not be longer than 750-1000 words. They should be sent to opinion@thematrix.com along with photograph, email address and phone numbers of the writer

Letters To The Editor

When Profit Is Placed Above Lives: A Firm Stand Against the Protesters of Sachet Alcohol Ban By Amb. Mallam Ibrahim Agunbiade



The recent protest staged by the Distillers and Blenders Association of Nigeria (DIBAN), supported by the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and other unions at the Lagos office of NAFDAC, over the ban on alcoholic sachet drinks, is not only unfortunate but deeply disturbing. It represents a calculated attempt to place profit above public health, morality, and national wellbeing.

The ban on sachet and small-sized alcoholic beverages is a just, timely, and morally sound policy that aligns with both public health realities and divine guidance. Any resistance to it no matter how loudly wrapped in the language of "job losses" or "economic concerns"—fails to address the monumental damage alcohol has caused to Nigerian society.

Islam provides clear and unambiguous guidance on intoxicants. Allah Almighty says: "O you who believe! Intoxicants, gambling, sacrificing to stones, and divination by arrows are an abomination of Satan's handiwork. So avoid it that you may be successful."

(Qur'an, Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:90)

Allah further explains the social harm of alcohol: "Satan only wants to cause between you animosity and hatred through intoxicants and gambling, and to avert you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. So will you not desist?" (Qur'an, Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:91).

These verses leave no ambiguity. Alcohol is not merely discouraged; it is explicitly condemned because of its destructive effects on individuals and society.

The divine command is not "regulate it better," but "avoid it completely" a principle that perfectly supports the government's decision to ban sachet and small-sized alcoholic drinks that make intoxication cheap, portable, and dangerously accessible.

Amb. Mallam Ibrahim Agunbiade
Taalib Jami'ei, Islamic Propagation, Rabwa – Saudi Arabia wrote in from agunbiadeib@gmail.com

TheMatrix

Politics

By Ilesanmi Adewale

OBAFEMI AWOLOWO:
"Those who desire to reach, and keep their places at the top in any calling must be prepared to do so the hard way."



2027: We will do whatever It Takes To Save Nigeria – PDP

The Caretaker National Vice-Chairman (South-South) of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Emmanuel Ogidi, has said the party is intensifying efforts to rebuild internal cohesion and form broad political alliances ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Speaking in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Ogidi said the PDP remains committed to defending Nigeria's democracy and repositioning itself as a formidable opposition party despite existing internal challenges.

He acknowledged that the party was dealing with some internal disagreements but insisted the issues would not derail its broader mission of safeguarding democratic governance and restoring public confidence.

According to him, the PDP is fully aware of the seriousness of the country's current political climate and is determined to live up to the expectations of Nigerians who see the party as a stabilising force in the democratic process.

"Yes, today we have some pockets of trouble in the PDP today, but we are resolute and we believe in God because we know that we are the only viable opposition.

"We are going to fight for that cause; we will do whatever it takes to ensure that we have democracy; if we do not have democracy, then we will have a banana republic.

"We understand this part, and because of that, we will not disappoint the people; we want to do whatever it takes and we are determined.

"We are going to reach out to anybody reachable in the other political parties, including the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).

"We want to see what we can take away from these parties; else, this country will face more serious challenges," he said.

Ogidi said the PDP's central focus going into the 2027 elections would be the protection of democracy, promotion of national unity and offering Nigerians a credible alternative to the ruling party.

He accused the APC of prioritising electoral victories over effective governance, questioning why the ruling party, less than two years into office, appeared more focused on political campaigns than addressing governance challenges.

The PDP chieftain warned that the erosion of democratic institutions could plunge the country into instability, assuring that the party would do everything within its capacity to prevent such an outcome. (NAN)

2027: 'I Will Not Impose Any Candidates On Kebbi Communities' - Gov Idris promises

Kebbi State Governor, Nasir Idris, has pledged that he will not impose candidates on communities during the 2027 general elections, insisting that people have the right to choose their representatives. The governor made the pledge while receiving executive members of the All Progressives Congress, APC, from Birnin Kebbi Local Government Area at the Government House, Birnin Kebbi.

"I will never impose any candidate on any community. You have the mandate to decide who represents you," Idris said, urging party members to support candidates with proven records of service. He said his administration had implemented about 80 per cent of its campaign promises in less than three years and reaffirmed his commitment to completing the remaining pledges. The governor also said his government was up to date with the payment of salaries, pensions, gratuities and other entitlements, adding that workers' welfare remained a top priority. Idris further disclosed that the state government had continued to support farmers with free fertilisers, agro-chemicals and farm equipment, as well as traditional rulers through infrastructural support and welfare programmes. He urged APC officials to mobilise members for the ongoing e-registration exercise, noting that it was crucial for credible internal party elections. He expressed concern over the low participation from Birnin Kebbi Local Government Area.

Rivers Crisis: Sleep With Two Eyes Closed, We're In Charge – Wike

Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, FCT, Nyesom Wike, has declared that he is in charge of Rivers State amid the ongoing political crisis in the state.

Wike said people can go and sleep with their two eyes closed because "we are in charge."

He disclosed this while revealing how he recommended Boma Iyaye to President Bola Tinubu for the position of the Executive Director of Finance and Administration of the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC.

The Minister spoke during the Wakirike Ethnic Nationality's grand civic reception in his honour held in Ogu, Rivers State on Saturday.

According to Wike: "When I had the opportunity, when the president called me and said



the position of the executive director of finance and administration is coming to Rivers State, I was helpless because I didn't know what to do.

"At that time, you don't even know who to trust again, I looked left and right and I said God guide me; but I want to give God the glory that he has guided me well in recommending Boma Iyaye to Mr president.

"I have always told people that there is nothing wrong in appreciating people who in one way or the other have contributed in their lives, Boma does not have the money to buy me anything I need in this world, Sekibo does not have it but for me, when people appreciate I say look 'thank you is enough.'

"I'm not the most intelligent or handsome person but you know why you gave me this position." He commended Boma for using his new position to better the lives of his people.

"I have told whoever cares to listen, when you have the opportunity to impact the lives of your people, do not waste time, that opportunity may not come again. Now you have it, make your people to be happy as that's the only way you can be happy yourself.

"Yes position comes with envy and hatred but Boma God will bless you for making your people happy, I thank God that you did not disappoint me and Mr President.

"I can tell you to go home and sleep with your two eyes closed, we are in charge," he added.

Atiku Hosts ADP Leadership Amid Rising 2027 Alliance Speculation

Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar held a high-profile meeting with the National Chairman of the Action Democratic Party (ADP), Yabagi Yusuf Sani, alongside other senior party executives. The closed-door session took place on Saturday at Atiku's private residence in Abuja, sparking immediate political interest across the country.



The timing of the visit is particularly significant, as the Nigerian political landscape is currently buzzing with rumors of fresh alliances. As the 2027 presidential election begins to appear on the horizon, opposition figures are reportedly exploring various strategies to consolidate their strength.

Speculation has recently intensified regarding a potential "mega-alliance" involving former Anambra State Governor Peter Obi and former Kano State Governor Rabiu Kwankwaso. Reports suggest the duo may be eyeing the African Democratic Congress (ADC) ticket as a joint platform to challenge President Bola Tinubu's second-term bid

This potential Obi-Kwankwaso ticket presents a strategic dilemma for Atiku Abubakar. Recent whispers within political circles suggest that the former Vice President is also interested in the ADC platform, leading to a crowded and competitive field for the party's endorsement.

Against this backdrop of shifting loyalties, Atiku's engagement with the ADP leadership was seen by many as a counter-move to broaden his own base. The meeting served as a reminder that the veteran politician remains a central figure in opposition consultations.

However, ADP National Chairman Yabagi Yusuf Sani was quick to downplay the sensationalist rumors following the discussions. Speaking to the press, he clarified the intent behind the Abuja meeting to prevent further political misinterpretation.

Sani explicitly stated that the meeting with Atiku was not about an immediate merger between the ADP and any other political entity. He sought to maintain the independent identity of his party amidst the flurry of "merger mania" currently gripping the opposition.

Furthermore, the ADP Chairman emphasized that the engagement was not a recruitment drive. He clarified that the party was not using the session as a formal attempt to bring Atiku Abubakar into the ADP fold as a member.

Despite these denials, the meeting underscores the fluid nature of Nigerian politics where informal dialogues often precede formal agreements. The presence of senior executives suggests the talks covered a broad range of national issues beyond mere party membership. As the 2027 race continues to take shape, these high-level consultations indicate that the opposition is far from settled. Whether through the ADP, ADC, or other platforms, the coming months will likely see more strategic sit-downs as candidates vie for the most viable path to the presidency.

News

By Ilesanmi Adewale

Defence Minister Reveals Chilling Details Of Foiled Coup Attempt

Defense Minister Reveals Near-Fatal Stakes in Foiled Coup Plot Nigeria's Minister of Defence, General Christopher Musa, has stepped forward with a chilling revelation regarding a recent attempt to destabilize the nation. He disclosed that he was a primary target in a failed coup plot aimed at toppling the current administration.

During a candid appearance on Channels Television's Sunday Politics, the General shared the harrowing details of the conspirators' plans. He noted that the masterminds had a specific protocol for dealing with him during the uprising.

According to Musa, the instructions given to the plotters were clear: he was to be taken into custody immediately. However, the mission had a lethal contingency plan if he did not cooperate with his captors. "I was supposed to be arrested, and if I refused, I was supposed to be shot," the Minister revealed. His statement underscored the extreme level of violence the group was willing to employ to achieve their goals.

The General, who previously served as the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), seemed unfazed but firm as he confirmed his place on the "hit list." He told the interviewer, "I was also a target, I am sure you know."

This admission comes in the wake of significant movement within the military justice system. Just days ago, the Armed Forces announced that sixteen officers are set to face trial for their alleged roles in the conspiracy.

The arrests originally took place in October, though the initial charges were described more vaguely. At the time, the military cited "acts of indiscipline and breaches of service regulations" as the reason for the detentions.

However, as the investigation deepened over the following months, authorities uncovered far more sinister motives. The scope of the probe expanded from simple misconduct to an active plot to overthrow President Bola Tinubu.

Military findings have since identified several officers whose actions were directly linked to the subversion of the government. The Defence Headquarters stated these actions are entirely inconsistent with the ethics and values of the Armed Forces.

Major General Samaila Uba, the Director of Defence Information, recently confirmed that the military would not treat these breaches lightly. He emphasized that maintaining professional standards is paramount to national security.

The implicated officers are now expected to be formally arraigned before a military judicial panel. They will face trial under the Armed Forces Act, which carries severe penalties for mutiny and treasonous acts.

As the trial approaches, General Musa's revelation serves as a stark reminder of the internal tensions managed by the military leadership. The government continues to maintain that the Armed Forces of Nigeria remain committed to protecting the country's democracy.

The revelation has sent shockwaves through the Nigerian political landscape, highlighting the fragile nature of security during transitions of power. General Musa's willingness to go public with the threat against his life is seen by many analysts as a move to demonstrate the transparency and resilience of the current military high command. By acknowledging the plot openly, the Minister is signaling that the government is fully aware of internal threats and is prepared to address them through the rule of law.

Beyond the personal threat to the Minister, the investigation has pulled back the curtain on the logistical reach of the conspirators. While the initial arrests were localized, the subsequent findings suggest a more coordinated effort that sought to bypass standard chains of command. This discovery has prompted a comprehensive review of internal security protocols within the barracks to ensure that such "breaches of service regulations" are caught long before they escalate into active subversion.

The timing of the disclosure on national television appears intended to bolster public confidence in the administration of President Bola Tinubu. By framing the failed coup as a defeated effort by a small faction, the Ministry of Defence is reinforcing the narrative that the vast majority of the Armed Forces remain loyal to the constitution. It also serves as a public warning to any remaining pockets of dissent within the ranks that the consequences of mutiny will be swift and public.

In the legal arena, the upcoming court-martial is expected to be one of the most high-profile military trials in recent Nigerian history. Legal experts suggest that the prosecution will rely heavily on the "serious allegations" uncovered during the months of interrogation following the October arrests. The trial will not only seek to punish the sixteen officers but will also serve as a fact-finding mission to determine if any external interests or political figures were bankrolling the planned overthrow.

Kwara Resumes Academic Activities Following Improved Security Report

The Kwara State Government has directed the reopening of schools across the state following what authorities say is a significant improvement in the security situation.

The announcement was made in a statement released on Sunday by the Commissioner for Education and Human Capital Development, Dr Lawal Olohungbebe, who said all public and private schools are to resume academic activities on Monday, February 2, 2026. Dr Olohungbebe said school heads and relevant education stakeholders have already been officially informed of the decision, which was reached after a review of ongoing security efforts across the state.

Since November 2025, many primary and secondary schools in parts of Kwara South were shut as a precautionary measure, forcing learners to remain at home while schools in other parts of the state and country continued with their academic calendar.

The state government said the decision to reopen schools was taken in the interest of restoring normal learning while ensuring that adequate security measures remain in place to protect students and school personnel.

According to him, sustained operations by security agencies have helped to reduce threats posed by criminal elements, particularly around communities and educational facilities that were previously affected by insecurity.

"The situation has improved considerably compared to what we experienced in the past, although we are not lowering our guard," the commissioner said.

He noted that security personnel remain deployed in strategic locations to consolidate recent successes recorded in tackling banditry and other criminal activities that had earlier disrupted academic activities in some parts of the state.

The commissioner added that alongside security operations, the state government is intensifying efforts to strengthen community participation, promote early warning mechanisms, and encourage collaboration between residents and security agencies to maintain lasting peace.

Kurmin Wali Abduction: 80 Worshippers Escaped, 86 Still In Captivity – Village Head

No fewer than 80 worshippers abducted during a church service in Kurmin Wali, Kajuru Local Government Area of Kaduna State, have been reunited with their families after escaping from their captors.

The Village Head of Kurmin Wali, Ishaku Dan'azumi, confirmed the development in an interview on Sunday.

He explained that while initial reports suggested that about 177 worshippers were kidnapped during the attack, subsequent findings revealed that 80 of them managed to escape and sought refuge in neighbouring communities.

According to Dan'azumi, 86 worshippers remain in the custody of the bandits.

He expressed concern over attempts by some individuals to politicise the incident, noting that affected families are still grappling with severe emotional and psychological trauma.

"Our people are going through a very difficult time, yet some are trying to politicise our suffering," he said.

"We are appealing to the government and the military to act swiftly to ensure the safe rescue of the remaining 86 worshippers still being held by the bandits."

When contacted for comments, the Kaduna State Police Public Relations Officer, Mansir Hassan, said the command would soon release a detailed statement on the incident.

"The police will issue a comprehensive report on the Kurmin Wali abduction," Hassan stated.

Niger Assembly Speaker Hails Army, DSS For Rescuing 70 kidnap Victims



The Speaker of the Niger State House of Assembly, Abdulmalik Mohammed Sarkin-Daji, has commended the Nigerian Army and security agencies for a successful operation in Mariga Local Government Area, which rescued about 70 kidnapped victims.

Praising the bravery and professionalism of the security forces in a statement, the Speaker said the operation has restored hope in affected communities.

Sarkin-Daji also commended the Department of State Services, DSS, and other security agencies for their strong collaboration and support, which contributed to the success of the operation carried out in Mariga Local Government Area and other parts of the Niger North Senatorial District.

He described the operation as a major relief to affected communities, saying, "The bravery and professionalism of the Nigerian Army and other security agencies led to the neutralization of several bandits, the arrest of suspected criminals, and the safe rescue of many innocent citizens who had been held captive."

According to him, the rescue of about 70 kidnapped victims clearly demonstrates the renewed commitment of the Nigerian Army and security agencies to ending banditry and other criminal activities in the state.

The Speaker stated that the success of the operation has restored hope and confidence among residents, especially those in rural and vulnerable areas who have suffered repeated attacks and abductions.

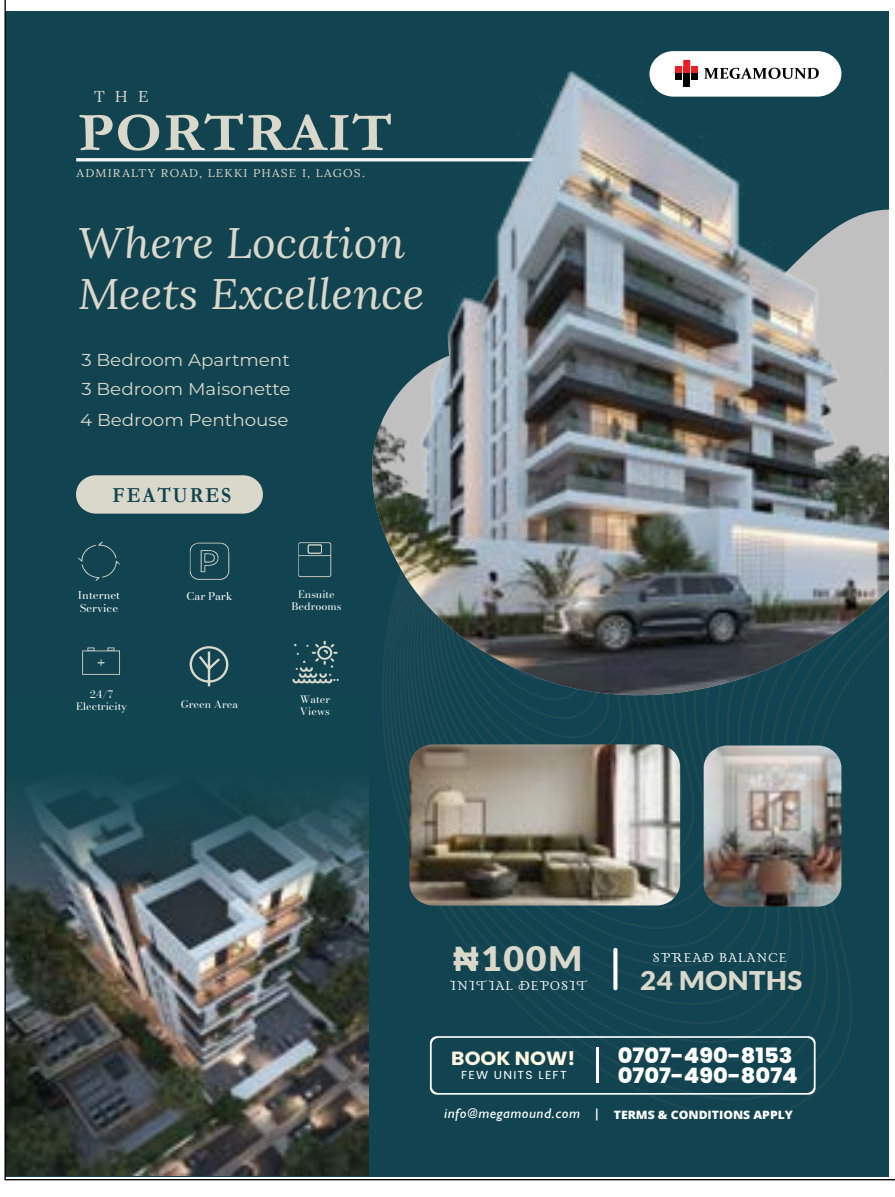
He further reassured the security forces of the continuous support and cooperation of the Niger State Government, stressing that the government remains committed to strengthening security efforts across the state.

He then called on the people of Niger State to remain calm, vigilant, and law-abiding, while encouraging them to support security agencies by providing useful and timely information that can assist in preventing crime and sustaining peace.

Project Development by MEGAMOUND









TheMatrix

DailyMarketUpdate

Exchange, Crude Oil & Depot Prices - January 29, 2026

3. CRUDE PRICES

S/N	DETAILS	OPENING	CLOSING
1	BRENT	$68.40	$70.40
2	WTI	$63.21	$65.13
3	NATURAL GAS	$3.732	$3.754
4	BONNY LIGHT	$69.65	$69.09

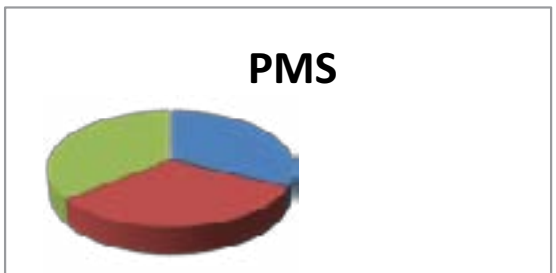
4. CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE

S/N	CURRENCY	C.B.N	BLACK MARKET
1	USD/NGN	₦ 1,423.44	₦1,488
2	GBP/NGN	₦ 1,924.17	₦ 2,014
3	EUR/NGN	₦ 1,669.57	₦ 1,727

1. DEPOT PRICES

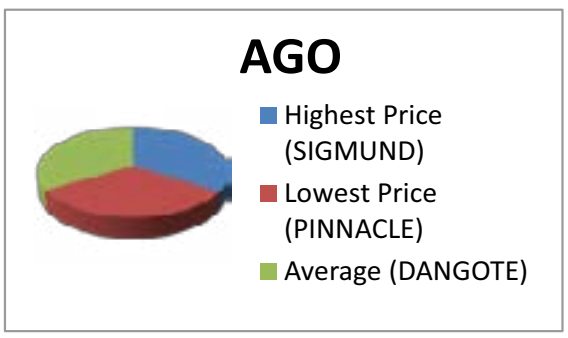
Location: Lagos

s/n	Depot Name	PMS	AGO	LPG	ATK
1	DANGOTE	800	910.5		
2	TECHNO OIL	850	990		
3	TMDK		930		
4	NIPCO	799	940		
5	EMADEB	800	930		
6	PINNACLE	800	920		
7	SHELLPLUX	797			
8	MATRIX	810	950		
9	OBAT		950		
10	RAINOIL	800		830	
11	NAVGAS			815	
12	IBETO		950		
13	ARDOVA			840	



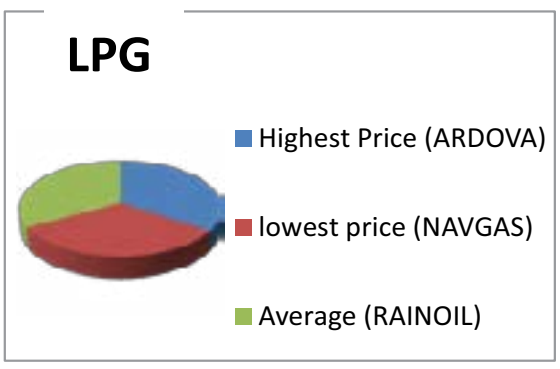
Location: Warri

s/n	Depot Name	PMS	AGO	LPG	ATK
1	NEPAL	818			
2	MATRIX	821	943	840	995
3	RAINOIL	822	950		
4	NIPCO		950		
5	A.Y.M SHAFA		943		
6	PRUDENT		949		



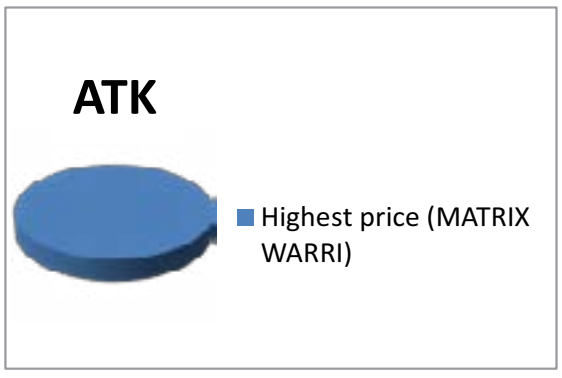
Location: Calabar

s/n	Depot Name	PMS	AGO	LPG	ATK
1	NORTHWEST	850			
2	FYNFIELD	850			
3	MAINLAND	850			



Location: Port Harcourt

s/n	Depot Name	PMS	AGO	LPG	ATK
1	MASTERS	835			
2	SIGMUND		954		



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BusinessToday

By Babajide Okeowo

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FG To Revolutionize Cooperative Societies Through Digitalization

The federal government is set to revolutionize cooperative societies through digitalization, aiming to modernize operations, ensure transparent financial reporting, maintain accurate member/asset records, and improve governance across more than 30,000 registered cooperatives.

The Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Security, Aliyu Sabi Abdullahi, who announced this initiative recently in Abuja, at the Stakeholders' Meeting on the Review of the Nigerian Cooperative Societies Act, Cap N98 LFN 2004, highlighted that digitalization would bring efficiency, integrity, inclusion, and sustainable growth to the sector.

"Digitalization will strengthen cooperative institutions, increase trust, improve service delivery, reduce fraud, and unlock new opportunities across the cooperative economy," Dr. Abdullahi stated.

He revealed that cooperatives would become a vital instrument for achieving capital mobilization, inclusive growth, and shared wealth creation when properly structured and supported.

As the driver of the Renewed Hope Cooperative Reform and Revamp Programme (RH-CRRP), Dr. Abdullahi emphasized that the programme aligns with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's vision to mobilize all sectors of the economy towards building a One Trillion Dollar Economy by 2030.

The Minister described the RH-CRRP as a bold and transformational national framework designed to position cooperatives as a tool for community wealth creation, poverty eradication, and inclusive growth.

He noted that key areas of focus include digital registration, national cooperative database, digital membership identification system, electronic documentation, administration of cooperative societies, filings, and reporting.

Dr. Abdullahi maintained that "Cooperatives must no longer be treated as a side activity. They are strategic institutions capable of mobilizing capital, empowering citizens, creating jobs, driving agricultural productivity, and strengthening the national economy."

He acknowledged the efforts of CFN and International IDEA but emphasized that, by mandate and structure, this initiative should be led by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (FMAFS), the supervising Ministry responsible for cooperative development in Nigeria.

He revealed that "the Ministry has fixed a date for a broader harmonization process, consolidating the reviewed output from the Stakeholders' Meeting and the Ministry's parallel work into a final national document"

According to him, "This document will align with the International Cooperative Alliance – Africa Model Cooperative Law and the Africa Ministerial Declaration and Action Plan, which Nigeria co-signed with other African Ministers in Kenya during the 14th Africa Ministerial Cooperative Conference (AMCCO) in October 2025".

He further revealed that the IDEA will join the Coalition of the Willing (CoW), a group of credible partners supporting the Renewed Hope Cooperative Reform and Revamp Programme (RH-CRRP).

He lauded the efforts of the critical stakeholders and the Federal Department of Cooperatives

In her remarks, the President Cooperative Federation of Nigeria (CFN), Mrs. Hannatu Mershak stated that "Digitization is not just innovation for innovation's sake. It is for efficiency, for integrity, for inclusion, and for sustainable growth."

She added that the initiative would strengthen cooperative institutions, increase trust, improve service delivery, reduce fraud, as well as unlock new opportunities across the cooperative ecosystem.

Customs Ogun Command 1 Records Second Violent Attack On Officers In One Week



The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Ogun I Area Command, has reported another violent attack on its officers, marking the second assault within a week during anti-smuggling operations in the state.

According to Deputy Superintendent of Customs, Zakari Chado, the Public Relations Officer the Command, the latest incident occurred around 6:00 a.m. on Saturday along a bush path in Alapoti, Ado-Odo/Ota Local Government Area. Officers on routine patrol intercepted a convoy of motorcycles transporting smuggled foreign parboiled rice. A total of 46 bags of 50kg rice were seized and loaded into an official patrol vehicle.

As the officers withdrew from the scene, they were ambushed by a large mob armed with Dane guns, stones, bottles, and charms. The attackers attempted to overwhelm the patrol team and reclaim the seized goods.

The confrontation lasted about thirty minutes before the officers successfully repelled the assault. One of the

CONTINUE ONLINE

FAAN's Quit Notice To NAGAFF, ANLCA, Others Sparks Tension



The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) has issued an immediate quit notice to the National Association of Government Approved Freight Forwarders (NAGAFF), the Association of Nigerian Licensed Customs Agents (ANLCA), and other freight forwarding groups occupying spaces at the Hajj & Cargo Terminal of the Murtala Muhammed Airport (MMA), Ikeja, Lagos.

In a letter dated January 27, 2026, and signed by Olatokunbo Arewa, Airport Manager and Regional General Manager (Southwest), FAAN reminded the associations of an earlier directive issued on April 30, 2025, instructing them to vacate the premises. The Authority noted that despite the directive, the groups had failed to comply.

The latest notice, referenced FAAN/MMA/RGM/HCT.A/14/Vol. 9, ordered the associations to vacate the premises immediately. FAAN warned that failure to comply would result in enforcement action without further notice.

"You are required to vacate the said premises with immediate effect, failing which the Authority shall proceed to enforce compliance without further notice. Ensure all persons and personal belongings are removed without delay," the letter stated.

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TheMatrix

BusinessToday

By Babajide Okeowo

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Zichis, Omatek, Union Homes, Others Emerge As Top Equities To Watch

Investors gained N194 billion as the equity market rebounded from last week's slump, with market capitalisation surging to N16.1 trillion.

Despite the bullish sentiment, the All-Share Index (ASI) depreciated by 0.39% to close the week at 165,512.18 from the 166,129.50 recorded the previous week.

The market performance was boosted by strong performances from stocks like Zichis Agro Allied Industries Plc, Omatek Ventures Plc, and UH Real Estate Investment Trust performed credibly to secure their places among the top ten best-performing stocks last week, positioning themselves as stocks to watch in the new week.

Kindly note that this is not a buy, sell or hold recommendation. It is advisable to consult your financial advisor before making any investment decision.

ZICHIS • 4.19 □ 0.38 (9.97%)

The current share price of Zichis Agro Allied Industries (ZICHIS) is N4.19. ZICHIS closed its last trading day (Friday, January 30, 2026) at N4.19 per share on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NGX), recording a 10% gain over its previous closing price of N3.81. Zichis Agro Allied Industries closed its IPO day (January 20, 2026) with a share price of N1.99 and has since gained 111% on that price valuation, ranking it eighth on the NGX in terms of year-to-date performance.

Zichis Agro Allied Industries is the 14th most traded stock on the Nigerian Stock Exchange over the past week (Jan 23 - Jan 30, 2026). ZICHIS has traded a total volume of 71.2 million shares—in 119 deals—valued at N210 million over the period, with an average of 11.9 million traded shares per session. A volume high of 48.8 million

CONTINUE ONLINE



Nigerian Governors Eye $2bn Boost From Sugar Industry



The Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) has unveiled plans to position sugar as a strategic commodity for industrial growth, targeting over $2 billion in revenue across states.

The decision follows a new partnership between the NGF and the National Sugar Development Council (NSDC), aimed at helping states design and attract investment-ready sugar projects. The Forum also resolved to prioritize sugar-related ventures in its engagements with local and international development partners.

Presenting the proposals, NSDC Executive Secretary, Mr. Kamar Bakrin, urged governors to embrace sugar development as a pathway to economic diversification. He identified 11 states with proven potential for profitable sugar production, including Oyo, Kwara, Niger, Nasarawa, Kaduna, Kano, Bauchi, Gombe, Jigawa, Adamawa, and Taraba.

Bakrin explained that exchange rate pressures have made sugar imports more expensive, strengthening the competitiveness of locally produced sugar. He noted that Nigeria has about 1.2 million hectares of prime land suitable for sugarcane cultivation, though only 200,000 hectares are required to achieve self-sufficiency. "The availability of land, water, labor, and policy incentives positions Nigeria favorably for large-scale sugar investments," he said.

He added that the Nigerian sugar industry is currently valued at $2 billion, while the wider African market under the AfCFTA is worth an estimated $7 billion. Addressing community concerns, Bakrin stressed

CONTINUE ONLINE

NITDA Charts Bold Path For Nigeria's Digital Future At Tech Revolution Africa 2026



The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) made headlines at Tech Revolution Africa 2026 with a high-level fireside chat that captured the attention of innovators, policymakers, entrepreneurs, and digital leaders at the Landmark Event Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Representing the Director General of NITDA, Kashifu Inuwa Abdullahi, Dr. Aristotle Onumo, Director of Stakeholder Management and Partnerships, led the conversation under the theme "Building Nigeria's Digital Journey: Policy, Infrastructure, and the Road Ahead."

Dr. Onumo outlined NITDA's strategic roadmap for accelerating Nigeria's digital transformation, stressing the importance of adaptive, innovation-friendly policies, the expansion of modern digital infrastructure to boost nationwide connectivity, and sustained investment in talent development to harness the country's youthful population.

He further highlighted NITDA's ongoing support for startups, digital creators, and tech entrepreneurs, while underscoring the role of strategic partnerships in advancing Nigeria's digital ambitions at national, continental, and global levels.

Central to his message was the need for strong public-private collaboration to build a sustainable and competitive digital ecosystem.

Dr. Onumo reaffirmed NITDA's commitment to citizen empowerment, announcing the agency's ambitious target of achieving 50 million digitally literate Nigerians by 2027 — a milestone expected to stimulate innovation, deepen inclusion, and strengthen Nigeria's position in the global digital economy.

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MarketIntelligence

Pricelist of Traded Equities 30 January, 2026





All Share Index (ASI)	Deals	Volume	Value	Market Capitalization	YTD Change
165,366.63	41,095	674.94 million	N14.82 billion	N106.15 trillion	6.27%
-0.10%	6.28%	-2.38%	-3.57%	-0.10%	

TOP GAINERS

Symbol	Previous Close	Close	Change	%Change
ABBEYBDS	8.55	9.40	0.85	9.94
ZICHIS	3.81	4.19	0.38	9.97
RTBRISCOE	7.15	7.86	0.71	9.93
HMCALL	3.94	4.33	0.39	9.90
OMATEK	2.73	3.00	0.27	9.89

BIGGEST VOLUMES

Symbol	Trades	Volume	Value
VERITASKAP	553	80,472,530	196,991,686
NSLTECH	422	79,277,147	87,536,177
DEAPCAP	1,629	33,316,695	340,489,592
ACCESSCORP	1,708	30,984,645	703,021,891
ZENITHBANK	46	30,547,736	2,183,305,087

BOTTOM LOSERS

Symbol	Previous Close	Close	Change	%Change
LEARNAFRCA	9.00	8.10	-0.90	(10.00)
LIVESTOCK	7.00	6.30	-0.70	(10.00)
LIVINGTRUST	4.50	4.05	-0.45	(10.00)
DEAPCAP	10.43	9.39	-1.04	(9.97)
MCNICHOLS	7.05	6.35	-0.70	(9.93)

SMALLEST VOLUMES

Symbol	Trades	Volume	Value
ENAMELWA	1	166	7,395
CNIF	3	3,105	341,550
GEREGU	82	3,515	3,611,311
TOTAL	56	4,505	2,594,880
MORISON	8	10,486	115,136

SOURCE: NGX WWW.MATRIXNGR.COM

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MarketNews

PRICES FOR SECURITIES TRADED AS OF JANUARY 30/2026

Symbol	P. Close	High	Low	Close	Change	%Change	Trades	Volume	Value
ABBEYBDS	8.55	8.55	8.55	**8.55**	0.00	0.00%	21	96,721	909,177.40
ABCTRANS	5.50	5.22	5.22	**5.22**	(0.28)	-5.09%	165	789,506	4,277,633.82
ACADEMY	8.65	8.50	8.50	**8.50**	(0.15)	-1.73%	52	621,435	5,281,591.95
ACCESSCORP	22.60	23.10	22.50	**22.80**	0.20	0.88%	1,599	18,338,211	417,314,452.00
AFRIPRUD	14.70	14.70	14.70	**14.70**	0.00	0.00%	119	587,432	8,693,923.35
AIICO	4.15	4.26	4.13	**4.20**	0.05	1.20%	432	9,053,082	37,910,083.32
AIRTELAFRI	2,270.00	2,270.00	2,270.00	**2,270.00**	0.00	0.00%	4	52	129,844.00
ALEX	17.20	17.20	17.20	**17.20**	0.00	0.00%	39	94,635	1,637,531.45
ARADEL	780.00	780.00	775.00	**780.00**	0.00	0.00%	700	3,438,201	2,667,721,506.20
AUSTINLAZ	4.00	3.90	3.70	**3.70**	(0.30)	-7.50%	89	1,758,267	6,725,052.88
BERGER	58.90	60.00	60.00	**60.00**	1.10	1.87%	142	397,288	23,581,883.35
BETAGLAS	420.00	420.00	420.00	**420.00**	0.00	0.00%	292	43,578	17,572,582.60
BUACEMENT	183.00	183.00	183.00	**183.00**	0.00	0.00%	727	379,688	66,466,348.60
BUAFOODS	798.90	798.90	798.90	**798.90**	0.00	0.00%	613	65,870	48,028,709.70
CADBURY	67.60	67.00	67.00	**67.00**	(0.60)	-0.89%	340	849,460	55,060,820.95
CAP	79.50	79.50	79.50	**79.50**	0.00	0.00%	44	35,869	2,837,506.35
CAVERTON	7.20	7.80	7.40	**7.80**	0.60	8.33%	154	1,924,473	14,341,234.05
CHAMPION	18.90	18.70	18.00	**18.70**	(0.20)	-1.06%	179	1,098,380	19,888,745.35
CHAMS	5.00	5.25	4.86	**5.08**	0.08	1.60%	602	24,094,704	122,136,892.77
CHELLARAM	13.20	13.20	13.20	**13.20**	0.00	0.00%	8	17,492	237,394.40
CILEASING	7.25	7.65	7.65	**7.65**	0.40	5.52%	70	661,272	5,033,599.10
CNIF	100.00	100.00	100.00	**100.00**	0.00	0.00%	1	740	81,400.00
CONHALLPLC	4.98	5.00	4.94	**4.96**	(0.02)	-0.40%	108	3,924,981	19,507,493.58
CONOIL	169.00	169.00	169.00	**169.00**	0.00	0.00%	98	17,505	2,844,115.70
CORNERST	6.10	6.21	6.10	**6.21**	0.11	1.80%	66	1,817,601	11,195,177.53
CUSTODIAN	45.00	44.00	44.00	**44.00**	(1.00)	-2.22%	92	4,301,107	189,081,251.00
CUTIX	3.60	3.70	3.56	**3.60**	0.00	0.00%	259	144,619,513	464,854,753.07
CWG	22.80	24.00	23.00	**23.00**	0.20	0.88%	288	2,961,810	69,495,966.80
DAARCOMM	1.28	1.40	1.29	**1.29**	0.01	0.78%	173	2,672,661	3,652,072.85
DANGCEM	635.00	635.00	635.00	**635.00**	0.00	0.00%	1,039	544,004	339,713,557.90
DANGSUGAR	65.00	65.00	65.00	**65.00**	0.00	0.00%	815	508,118	33,937,837.35
DEAPCAP	9.49	10.43	9.00	**10.43**	0.94	9.91%	983	15,492,039	159,042,736.35
ELLAHLAKES	15.05	15.05	14.90	**14.95**	(0.10)	-0.66%	646	8,324,612	125,068,118.60
ENAMELWA	40.50	40.50	40.50	**40.50**	0.00	0.00%	3	648	25,644.60
ETERNA	30.85	30.85	30.85	**30.85**	0.00	0.00%	138	442,232	13,667,689.05
ETI	48.00	48.00	48.00	**48.00**	0.00	0.00%	107	178,001	8,315,296.10
ETRANZACT	17.35	17.35	17.35	**17.35**	0.00	0.00%	129	717,201	12,557,236.00
EUNISELL	149.80	149.80	149.80	**149.80**	0.00	0.00%	79	158,405	21,411,615.85
FCMB	11.05	11.65	11.00	**11.60**	0.55	4.98%	553	8,234,388	93,434,121.50
FIDELITYBK	19.00	19.10	18.95	**19.00**	0.00	0.00%	552	4,297,423	81,819,827.55
FIDSON	71.50	68.00	66.90	**68.00**	(3.50)	-4.90%	814	1,146,794	76,847,874.55
FIRSTHOLDCO	46.00	47.50	46.00	**47.50**	1.50	3.26%	473	3,818,666	176,481,278.35
FTNCOCOA	6.99	7.00	6.60	**7.00**	0.01	0.14%	333	3,294,132	22,454,279.93
GEREGU	1,141.50	1,141.50	1,141.50	**1,141.50**	0.00	0.00%	56	1,832	1,882,196.80
GTCO	99.00	98.90	98.80	**98.85**	(0.15)	-0.15%	1,443	26,031,903	2,573,272,710.05
GUINEAINS	1.50	1.50	1.35	**1.47**	(0.03)	-2.00%	152	2,562,195	3,754,389.91
GUINNESS	349.90	349.90	349.90	**349.90**	0.00	0.00%	97	13,465	4,241,475.00
HMCALL	4.37	4.00	3.94	**3.94**	(0.43)	-9.84%	133	2,617,988	10,427,753.12
HONYFLOUR	22.15	22.15	22.15	**22.15**	0.00	0.00%	390	1,494,543	32,620,244.15
IKEJAHOTEL	32.25	32.25	32.25	**32.25**	0.00	0.00%	114	342,284	11,472,220.10
IMG	34.85	34.85	34.85	**34.85**	0.00	0.00%	12	5,407	186,867.25
INFINITY	9.00	9.00	9.00	**9.00**	0.00	0.00%	16	102,905	1,018,759.50
INTBREW	14.00	14.50	14.00	**14.50**	0.50	3.57%	153	2,060,384	29,583,368.95
INTENEGINS	3.00	2.94	2.94	**2.94**	(0.06)	-2.00%	62	536,369	1,649,142.12
JAIZBANK	8.06	8.29	8.06	**8.29**	0.23	2.85%	1,235	7,243,969	59,393,500.35
JAPAULGOLD	2.68	2.70	2.50	**2.50**	(0.18)	-6.72%	457	25,879,407	67,185,920.46
JBERGER	182.00	182.00	182.00	**182.00**	0.00	0.00%	138	148,583	24,966,541.80
JOHNHOLT	7.00	7.45	7.40	**7.40**	0.40	5.71%	97	1,486,688	10,920,669.85
JULI	7.26	7.26	7.26	**7.26**	0.00	0.00%	10	20,533	149,290.22
LASACO	2.47	2.50	2.47	**2.47**	0.00	0.00%	120	5,554,185	13,780,333.33
LEARNAFRCA	9.00	9.00	9.00	**9.00**	0.00	0.00%	50	120,734	1,017,932.25

TheMatrix

MarketNews

PRICES FOR SECURITIES TRADED AS OF JANUARY 30/2026

Symbol	P. Close	High	Low	Close	Change	%Change	Trades	Volume	Value
LEGENDINT	5.95	5.50	5.50	**5.50**	(0.45)	-7.56%	51	1,324,724	7,313,113.85
LINKASSURE	1.78	1.80	1.77	**1.78**	0.00	0.00%	136	7,704,647	13,749,017.95
LIVESTOCK	7.00	7.00	7.00	**7.00**	0.00	0.00%	93	254,268	1,767,189.15
LIVINGTRUST	4.64	4.50	4.18	**4.50**	(0.14)	-3.02%	92	2,408,202	10,163,204.22
MANSARD	15.02	14.51	14.51	**14.51**	(0.51)	-3.40%	89	1,033,215	15,189,716.53
MAYBAKER	35.25	35.00	31.80	**35.00**	(0.25)	-0.71%	806	3,458,368	121,161,145.25
MBENEFIT	4.30	4.30	4.18	**4.18**	(0.12)	-2.79%	371	9,549,668	40,515,095.04
MCNICHOLS	6.85	7.05	7.05	**7.05**	0.20	2.92%	195	2,402,365	16,648,618.34
MECURE	104.00	104.00	104.00	**104.00**	0.00	0.00%	130	250,554	23,451,864.40
MEYER	19.00	19.00	19.00	**19.00**	0.00	0.00%	54	191,523	3,571,505.60
MORISON	9.99	9.99	9.99	**9.99**	0.00	0.00%	30	325,771	3,576,732.00
MTNN	572.00	572.00	572.00	**572.00**	0.00	0.00%	2,299	1,567,511	900,305,995.70
MULTIVERSE	28.25	28.25	28.25	**28.25**	0.00	0.00%	41	87,456	2,225,755.20
NAHCO	115.00	114.25	114.20	**114.20**	(0.80)	-0.70%	199	1,185,804	136,255,755.95
NASCON	114.00	114.00	114.00	**114.00**	0.00	0.00%	112	167,325	18,994,436.15
NB	78.00	78.00	78.00	**78.00**	0.00	0.00%	314	1,232,258	98,945,044.15
NCR	199.00	199.00	199.00	**199.00**	0.00	0.00%	274	147,937	30,734,865.25
NEIMETH	10.50	11.55	10.30	**10.70**	0.20	1.90%	838	23,191,783	255,069,554.55
NEM	30.05	32.00	32.00	**32.00**	1.95	6.49%	135	1,007,228	31,653,845.25
NESTLE	2,153.80	2,153.80	2,153.80	**2,153.80**	0.00	0.00%	180	163,522	327,058,048.20
NGXGROUP	82.00	82.85	82.85	**82.85**	0.85	1.04%	694	1,648,176	136,482,239.80
NIDF	115.40	115.40	115.40	**115.40**	0.00	0.00%	152	129,771	15,637,835.00
NNFM	84.30	84.30	84.30	**84.30**	0.00	0.00%	21	16,535	1,255,006.50
NPFMCRFBK	5.55	5.86	5.66	**5.80**	0.25	4.50%	167	3,718,934	21,523,041.27
NREIT	103.00	103.00	103.00	**103.00**	0.00	0.00%	8	1,101	117,092.70
NSLTECH	0.96	1.05	0.97	**1.05**	0.09	9.38%	326	24,153,518	24,842,232.32
OANDO	39.55	40.40	39.70	**40.40**	0.85	2.15%	514	4,882,485	195,631,772.45
OKOMUOIL	1,206.50	1,206.50	1,206.50	**1,206.50**	0.00	0.00%	442	69,440	84,581,457.40
OMATEK	2.49	2.73	2.50	**2.73**	0.24	9.64%	620	18,366,204	48,702,436.01
PRESCO	1,635.00	1,635.00	1,635.00	**1,635.00**	0.00	0.00%	344	71,389	114,569,104.40
PRESTIGE	1.77	1.86	1.78	**1.78**	0.01	0.56%	104	3,187,423	5,780,303.21
PZ	56.00	56.00	56.00	**56.00**	0.00	0.00%	228	1,212,100	64,416,539.50
REDSTAREX	20.80	20.80	20.80	**20.80**	0.00	0.00%	109	459,069	8,655,234.15
REGALINS	1.18	1.22	1.10	**1.17**	(0.01)	-0.85%	181	21,905,543	25,440,528.17
ROYALEX	2.27	2.27	2.17	**2.19**	(0.08)	-3.52%	107	6,974,873	15,457,612.96
RTBRISCOE	6.50	7.15	6.00	**7.15**	0.65	10.00%	421	6,424,379	44,688,483.14
SCOA	28.75	31.60	31.60	**31.60**	2.85	9.91%	166	613,928	19,301,787.75
SEPLAT	6,700.00	6,700.00	6,700.00	**6,700.00**	0.00	0.00%	269	39,702	277,870,301.80
SFSREIT	418.75	418.75	418.75	**418.75**	0.00	0.00%	49	5,407	2,234,858.20
SKYAVN	128.60	128.60	128.60	**128.60**	0.00	0.00%	99	80,061	9,349,449.80
SOVRENINS	3.52	3.42	3.30	**3.30**	(0.22)	-6.25%	96	1,481,862	5,103,791.00
STANBIC	108.00	108.00	108.00	**108.00**	0.00	0.00%	232	218,963	24,276,868.15
STERLINGNG	7.40	7.45	7.05	**7.45**	0.05	0.68%	523	15,760,415	114,099,368.90
SUNUASSUR	4.99	5.00	4.67	**4.67**	(0.32)	-6.41%	74	1,693,350	8,197,129.95
TANTALIZER	3.88	4.26	4.00	**4.26**	0.38	9.79%	502	26,030,594	110,010,654.08
TIP	14.95	14.95	14.70	**14.90**	(0.05)	-0.33%	333	4,979,545	73,723,335.30
TOTAL	640.00	640.00	640.00	**640.00**	0.00	0.00%	72	3,454	1,989,504.00
TRANSCOHOT	170.90	170.90	170.90	**170.90**	0.00	0.00%	57	19,007	3,176,127.10
TRANSCORP	45.95	47.00	46.30	**46.40**	0.45	0.98%	232	3,980,276	185,170,316.35
TRANSEXPR	2.15	2.15	2.15	**2.15**	0.00	0.00%	1	1,000	2,360.00
TRANSPOWER	307.00	307.00	307.00	**307.00**	0.00	0.00%	95	43,602	12,058,036.10
TRIPPLEG	7.70	7.70	7.70	**7.70**	0.00	0.00%	51	311,776	2,181,340.07
UACN	92.50	92.50	92.50	**92.50**	0.00	0.00%	177	815,695	73,593,175.25
UBA	44.50	45.80	44.50	**44.50**	0.00	0.00%	1,063	11,612,505	520,156,914.70
UCAP	18.00	18.05	18.00	**18.05**	0.05	0.28%	221	2,692,305	48,635,250.75
UHOMREIT	94.85	94.85	94.85	**94.85**	0.00	0.00%	430	767,416	68,700,719.30
UNILEVER	77.00	78.00	78.00	**78.00**	1.00	1.30%	147	1,195,041	93,332,089.80
UNIONDICON	9.70	8.75	8.75	**8.75**	(0.95)	-9.79%	44	262,040	2,321,567.30
UNIVINSURE	1.22	1.27	1.19	**1.24**	0.02	1.64%	126	7,401,523	9,052,373.02
UPDC	6.00	6.05	5.65	**6.05**	0.05	0.83%	232	8,315,277	48,549,631.00
UPDCREIT	8.70	9.15	9.00	**9.00**	0.30	3.45%	377	6,533,515	59,196,582.90
UPL	6.25	6.00	5.75	**5.75**	(0.50)	-8.00%	89	1,902,521	11,034,504.45



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Ibeno Elders Knock EPU Over Attacks On Sen. Akpabio

The Ibeno Elders Council has once more condemned the Ekid People's Union (EPU) over what they described as a campaign of calumny, political desperation and sustained hate speeches against The Senate President, Senator Godswill Akpabio.

The Council stated that Akpabio is a National asset, whose towering leadership stature and political relevance transcends senatorial boundaries, they warned that dragging him into the lingering Stubbs Creek Forest Reserve dispute was a calculated attempt to gain political leverage after their legal options failed.

Speaking in Ibeno on Saturday, The Council's Spokesman, Barrister Diamond Akpanika, denounced what he called a "desperate propaganda stunt" aimed at smearing the Senate President to score cheap political points.

"The Stubbs Creek issue is a legal and historical matter, not a political bargaining chip. Anyone who abandoned their case at the Appeal Court, Calabar, and rejected the peace initiatives proposed twice by Governor Umo Eno cannot suddenly turn around to cry injustice." Akpanika said.

He stated that The Council had previously ignored the outbursts of EPU but was now compelled to respond in the interest of truth, justice and institutional order.

"You created this controversy, abandoned it at the Appeal Court Calabar and rejected the Governor's peace committee. No amount of name-dropping will change documented facts or history. Face your self-inflicted burden and stop hiding under prominent political figures to tell lies", he added.

The Ibeno Elders strongly eulogised Senator Akpabio, describing him as a detribalised leader whose influence extends beyond Akwa Ibom and Nigeria.

"Senator Akpabio is not just a senator for Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District; he is the Senate President of the Federal Republic of

CONTINUE ONLINE



Police Command Of Edo State Apprehend Man, 41, For Possession Of Firearms



Operatives of The Command in Edo State has arrested a 41-year-old, Emmanuel Omorodion for possession of firearms and alleged gun shooting in the state.

This was disclosed in statement issued by The PPRO of The Command, Eno Ikoedem and made available to Newsmen in Benin City over the weekend.

The Spokesperson disclosed that the suspect was arrested on Sunday at about 3am by operatives of Eagle Crack Unit led by CSP Ezekiel Ojeifo.

She further stated that on the fateful day, the Command received credible intelligence regarding repeated gunshots emanating from a residence along Erediuwa Street, off Sapele Road, Benin City.

"Upon storming the area, the hoodlums fled and were given a hot chase until they arrested one of them named Emmanuel Omorodion 'm', aged 41 years." The statement read in part.

She also stated that one English-made double-barrel gun and one live cartridge were recovered from the suspect.

Ikoedem also disclosed that the notable operational successes recorded across the Benin City metropolis within the past week were as a result of sustained intelligence-led patrols, rapid response to distress calls, and proactive crime-fighting strategies under the leadership of the Commissioner of Police, Monday Agbonika.

EMTF Foundation Celebrates Tonlagha At 50 With Donation Of Bus To School



As The Chairman of Maton Engineering Nigeria Limited, Mr. Mathew Tonlagha turn 50, a coaster bus has been donated to Ugborikoko Secondary School in Delta state as part of the celebration of the milestone.

The donation was made by The Esther Matthew Tonlagha Foundation , EMTF, at the school premises over the weekend.

In her speech at the occasion, Dr. Esther Matthew Tonlagha, the founder of EMTF, explained that education remains a powerful tool for shaping the future, she added that investing in young people is the surest way to build strong communities.

"This donation is in honour of the 50th birthday of my husband, Mr. Matthew Tonlagha who attended this school. The foundation chose to mark not with fanfare alone, but with a meaningful gift that would directly support students and teachers." She said.

"My husband attended this school and we are happy to be here today because this school is part of his success story. We are using a milestone celebration to create a lasting impact on education and community development." She continued.

The Principal of the school, Mr. Irhirhi Masson Ufuoma, described the donation as timely and transformative,

CONTINUE ONLINE

News From South South

BY PRINCE AMGBARE &
VICTOR EDOZIE &
FELIX ASUQUO

25 Million Nigerians Need Humanitarian Help Each Year – Minister



The Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction, Bernard Doro has disclosed that twenty five million Nigerians need aid yearly.

Doro disclosed this during the National Council on Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction meeting in Calabar, Capital of Cross River State.

He added that 60% of the population live in multidimensional poverty and the capacity of states to handle this challenge should be strengthened as they are in the frontline.

He said, "Nigeria today faces stark realities. Over 25 million citizens require humanitarian assis-

CONTINUE ONLINE

A'Ibom Police Command Admonish Motorists, Cyclists On Operating Against The Traffic

The Police Command in Akwa Ibom State has warned motorist and motorcyclists against the habit of driving against the traffic, popularly know as " one-way" driving.

This was conveyed in a Release issued by The PPRO of The Command, DSP Timfon John on Sunday and made available to TheMatrix Newspaper in Uyo.

The PPRO stated that the habit causes accident on the road and offenders will be arrested and prosecuted. She further called on parents, community leader and transport unions to draw the attention of their wards and members to the warning.

"The Akwa Ibom State Police Command has issued a stern warning to motorists, commercial drivers, tricyclists, motorcyclists, and cyclists who deliberately drive against the flow of traffic (popularly known as one-way driving) on roads across the state to desist immediately or face arrest and prosecution.

The Command notes with serious concern the rising incidents of traffic violations involving road users who unlawfully operate against traffic, thereby endangering their own lives, the lives of other road users, and public safety.

CONTINUE ONLINE

NLNG Sponsored Nigeria Prizes Open For Entries With Focus On AI, Others

The Nigeria Liquidified Natural Gas , NLNG sponsored Nigeria Prizes competition has officially kicked off on Sunday with Call for Entries for the 2026 edition.

This year's edition focuses on Artificial Intelligence and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for The Nigeria Prize for Science and Innovation; Poetry for The Nigeria Prize for Literature; and Documentary Filmmaking for the newly introduced The Nigeria Prize for Creative Arts.

The Prizes remain Nigeria's foremost platform for rewarding excellence in science and innovation, literature, and the creative arts.

This year, The Nigeria Prize for Science and Innovation retain the theme "Innovations in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Artificial Intelligence, and Digital Technologies for Development" following a "no winner" verdict of the 2025 cycle.

In a statement in Port Harcourt on Sunday NLNG's General Manager, External Relations and Sustainable Development, Sophia Horsfall, emphasised the relevance of the selected themes in a rapidly evolving global context. For Science, she noted that extensive research has demonstrated the immense potential of ICT, artificial intelligence, and digital technologies in reshaping industries and societies.

"The themes for the 2026 cycle reflect the realities of a world being reshaped by digital intelligence and creative expression. Through The Nigeria Prizes, NLNG continues to reinforce its commitment to innovative ideas and talents that are rigorous, relevant, and capable of shaping long-term national outcomes. The introduction of the Creative Arts Prize further strengthens this commitment by recognising creativity as a critical component of development," she said.

Also speaking on the Call for Entries, the Chairman Advisory Board of the Science and Innovation Prize, Prof. Barth Nnaji, called on scientists and innovators from all over the world to submit quality entries that transcend theoretical concepts and demonstrate deployable, scalable and practical solutions.

"The Nigeria Prize for Science and Innovation is founded on the principle that science must move beyond abstraction into solutions that work. The Prize recognises innovations grounded in rigorous research, demonstrating technical maturity and clear potential for application within Nigeria's development landscape. We are looking for works that are inventive, credible, scalable, and capable of delivering measurable outcomes." Prof Nnaji stated.

With the prize valued at USD $100,000, the Science and Innovation competition is open to scientists and innovators worldwide and invites pioneering digital and artificial intelligence–based solutions that can enhance systems, improve efficiency, and support informed decision-making in critical sectors of Nigeria's economy.

For The Nigeria Prize for Literature, poets will be in the spotlight for the 2026 edition , Nigerian authors resident in Nigeria and in diaspora are invited to submit poetry collections published from 2023 onwards. The prize, also worth USD $100,000, recognises literature's enduring capacity to interrogate society, preserve memory, and articulate both personal and collective experience.

The Chairman of the Advisory Board for The Nigeria Prize for Literature, and The Nigeria Prize for

CONTINUE ONLINE

NUJ Bayelsa Demands Monument And Street Named After Late Deputy Governor

The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Bayelsa State Council, has urged the Bayelsa State Government to immortalize the late Deputy Governor, Senator Lawrence Oborawharievwo Ewhrudjakpo, by naming a monument and a street after him.

This resolution was contained in a communique issued at the end of an expanded State Executive Council (SEC) meeting held at the Ernest Ikoli Press Centre in Yenagoa.

Senator Ewhrudjakpo, who served as Deputy Governor under Governor Douye Diri since 2020, died on December 11, 2025, at the age of 60 after collapsing in his office at the Government House and was rushed to the Federal Medical Centre, Yenagoa.

The SEC meeting drew wide participation from the NUJ State Working Committee, former chairmen and secretaries of the council, chapel chairmen and secretaries, as well as former leaders of the Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ) and Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN).

In the communique signed by Imgbi Gbalipre Stanley, Secretary of the NUJ Bayelsa State Council and Chairman of the Communique Drafting Committee, and Alambo Datonye, member of the committee, the council commended the leadership of Comrade Tonye Yemoleigha for introducing a "new paradigm" in the administration of the council.

The SEC urged the leadership to convert all council liabilities into assets and give the secretariat a facelift.

It also called on all members to fulfill their financial obligations and remain up to date in accordance with the NUJ Constitution.

The council appealed to state institutions including security agencies, ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs),

CONTINUE ONLINE

CityMetro

•POLICE UPDATE • CRIME BUSTING• CRIME WATCH •

13 Suspected Kidnappers Arrested As Police Free Three Abducted Victims

The Edo State Police Command has arrested 13 suspects for kidnapping and vandalism and rescued three abducted victims during separate security operations across the state.

The command disclosed this in a statement on Sunday by its spokesperson, Eno Ikoedem, who said the operation followed targeted intelligence, swift response and coordinated bush-combing operations in Esan West and Owan West Local Government Areas.

She explained that the operations were part of sustained security measures ordered by the Commissioner of Police, Monday Agbonika, to dismantle criminal networks and deny offenders safe haven.

According to the statement, on Monday, January 26, 2026, at about 9:30 a.m., police operatives in Ekpoma acted on credible intelligence regarding the vandalism of a Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited pipeline at Uhiele Community.

"Operatives of Ekpoma Division immediately mobilised to the location and successfully arrested five suspects in connection with the act," the statement said.

The police added that an excavator allegedly used to damage the pipeline was recovered, while efforts were ongoing to arrest other suspects who fled the scene and recover pipes already carted away.

The command further disclosed that on Wednesday, January 28, 2026, at about 3:30 a.m., a coordinated bush-combing operation was carried out in the Idoha/Ewu Forest and other identified hideouts.

The operation, which involved tactical teams of the command, the drone unit, the Edo State Security Corps, hunters and vigilante members, led to the discovery of three tents suspected to be kidnappers' camps.

"This resulted in the arrest of eight suspects and the recovery of five mobile phones suspected to belong to kidnapped victims," the statement noted, adding that investigations were ongoing to uncover other members of the syndicate.

The police said a distress call was received from Egoro Amende Community, Ekpoma, reporting the abduction of a farmer and his two wives from their farm in a remote area on Thursday at about 7:30 a.m.

The Divisional Police Officer of Ekpoma Division was said to have led a joint rescue team comprising police personnel, soldiers, the Edo State Security Corps, vigilantes, hunters and community youths to the area.

"Upon sighting the advancing security operatives, the kidnappers abandoned the victims and fled," the police said.

The three victims were rescued unhurt, while items recovered at the scene included cutlasses, a solar panel, a torch, canvas, rope, palm oil and a face cap.

The command reaffirmed its commitment to protecting lives and property and safeguarding critical infrastructure across Edo State.

The command also urged members of the public to remain vigilant and continue to support the police with timely and credible information to aid proactive policing.

PUNCH Metro had earlier reported that the command also arrested at least 14 suspects over alleged cult-related activities involving the hijacking of a corpse and attacks on commercial motorcyclists in the state.

415 Live Cartridges Intercepted In A'Ibom

The Akwa Ibom State Police Command has announced the recovery of a large cache of live ammunition and the arrest of a suspect linked to the consignment, along with others accused of obstructing lawful police duties.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Timfon John, disclosed this in a statement on Sunday.

According to the statement, the recovery was made on January 23, 2026, at around 11:00pm, when police operatives conducting routine stop-and-search duties along the Calabar–Itu Highway intercepted a commercial bus with registration number ARR 600 ZY, which was heading to Calabar.

"During a thorough search of the vehicle, a carton containing Four Hundred and Fifteen (415) live cartridges was recovered. The vehicle was driven by one Ikenna, with passengers on board," the statement read.

The driver reportedly told police during interrogation that the ammunition did not belong to him but was being transported as a waybill consignment to an unidentified recipient in Calabar.

John said that during the operation, a commuter identified as Excel obstructed officers in the lawful discharge of their duties by engaging in provocative conduct.

She added that another passenger, identified as Bright, who claimed to be an official of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission, allegedly interfered with the operation and assaulted police officers after failing to present valid identification.

The police stated that both individuals were promptly arrested.

"Upon further investigation, one Ndubisi Raphael, a 36-year-old indigene of Nyaje village in Akamkpa Local Government Area of Cross River State, was subsequently arrested in Calabar and taken into police custody," the statement said.

Meanwhile, the Commissioner of Police in the state, Baba Mohammed Azae, has ordered a discreet and thorough investigation to determine the source and intended use of the recovered ammunition, with a view to prosecuting all those found culpable.

The police commissioner also reiterated the command's resolve to combat the proliferation of illegal arms and ammunition and warned members of the public against obstructing police officers in the lawful execution of their duties.

He assured residents that the Akwa Ibom State Police Command remains committed to maintaining peace, public safety and security across the state.

Separately, PUNCH Metro reported on January 27 that the Akwa Ibom State Police Command had detained a 38-year-old man for alleged unlawful possession of a firearm, threat to life and possession of suspected illicit substances.

DSP John said the arrest followed a report by a resident of Ikot Akpa Ntuen village in the Ukanafun Local Government Area over an alleged threat of violence.

Security Operatives Rescued Farmer, Two Wives From Kidnappers In Edo

Operatives of the Edo State Police Command, soldiers, the State Security Corps, local vigilantes, hunters, and community youths who are volunteers of the Community Safety Partnership programme have rescued a farmer and his two wives unhurt from kidnappers in the state.

DAILY POST reports that the Public Relations Officer of the command, ASP Eno Ikoedem, disclosed this on Sunday, February 1, 2026, in a statement made available to newsmen in Benin City.

Ikoedem said the kidnapped victims were rescued on Thursday, January 29, 2026, at about 7:30 a.m., following a distress call from residents of Egoro Amende community, Ekpoma, in Esan West Local Government Area of the state.

She said the callers reported the abduction of the farmer and his two wives from their farm in a remote area of the community.

She gave the names of the victims as Abraham Udew, Brinda Abraham, and Anna Abraham, all from Benue State.

The spokesperson explained that during the rescue operation, an intensive search was conducted across Egoro Amende Forest, Igbira Farm Settlement, and Ekeke Erah Forest in Owan East Local Government Area.

She added that upon sighting the advancing security operatives, the kidnappers abandoned the victims and fled.

Ikoedem said cutlasses, a solar panel, a torch, a canvas, rope, palm oil, and a face cap were recovered from the fleeing suspected kidnappers.

She added that continuous monitoring and follow-up bush-combing operations are ongoing to apprehend the fleeing suspects.

Security Operatives Nab 8 Suspected Kidnappers In Edo

A combined team of operatives from the Edo State Police Command, the State Security Corps, hunters, and vigilante members has arrested eight suspected kidnappers in Esan Central Local Government Area of the state.

Ikoedem said the suspects were arrested in the Idoha/Ewu forest and other identified hideouts on Wednesday, January 28, 2026, at about 3:30 a.m., by the combined team of the command's tactical teams, drone unit, Edo State Security Corps, hunters, and vigilante members.

She named the suspects as Jokoro Sali, Buhari Ibrahim, Isah Abubakar, Shehu Ibrahim, Abdullahi Samar, Ibrahim Shaibu, Mohammed Joro, and Suleiman Unana.

Ikoedem added that three tents suspected to be kidnappers' camps were discovered during the exercise, leading to the arrest of the eight suspects.

She added that investigations are ongoing to uncover and arrest other members of the syndicate.

Police Probe 21 Over Illegal Mining In Zamfara

No fewer than 21 persons have been arrested and are currently under investigation following a joint operation against illegal mining activities in Zamfara State.

PUNCH Metro learnt that the suspects were apprehended on Saturday at different illegal mining sites, including Boko Village in Zurmi Local Government Area and Kaya Village in Maradun Local Government Area.

Confirming the arrests in a statement on Sunday, the spokesperson for the Zamfara State Police Command, Yazid Abubakar, said the operation was carried out by the police in collaboration with personnel of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps and the Federal Ministry of Mines and Minerals Development.

He said, "On January 31, 2026, at about 1400 hours, a joint operation comprising officers of the Anti-Illegal Mining Unit, Tactical Unit, and Bomb Disposal Unit of the Zamfara State Police Command, in collaboration with personnel of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps and the Federal Ministry of Mines and Minerals Development, Area Office Gusau, was conducted to dislodge groups of illegal miners.

"The operation targeted Boko Village in Zurmi Local Government Area and Kaya Village in Maradun Local Government Area, where illegal mining activities had been persistently reported. The raid was successfully executed, leading to the arrest of 21 suspected illegal miners."

Abubakar added that the suspects were being held at the Taskforce on Illegal Mining Unit, noting that investigations were ongoing and that "further developments will be communicated in due course."

In recent times, illegal mining activities in Zamfara State have been linked to banditry and other criminal activities, particularly in areas such as Maru, Anka, Tsafe, Bukkuyum, Zurmi, Bungudu, Talata Mafara and Shinkafi.

While it remains unclear whether the Federal Government's recent decision to lift the over five-year ban on mining in the state has contributed to the resurgence of illegal activities, reports have indicated that unlawful mining persisted even during the period of the ban.

The Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dele Alake, had earlier said the ban was lifted due to improvements in the security situation, noting that the move "will boost regulated mining, improve intelligence gathering, and curb illegal activities to ensure the nation benefits from the state's resources."

Education/Tourism

BY BABAJIDE OKEOWO

Idris: FG Supporting Youths In Education, Digital Skills To Make Nigeria An Unstoppable Global Force



The Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, has urged Nigerian youths to seize the opportunities created by ongoing national reforms, describing them as critical pathways for personal growth and nation-building.

The Minister stated this while delivering the 2026 Convocation Lecture at the 34th Convocation Ceremony of the Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger State. The lecture was titled "Youth and Nation Building: Navigating Opportunities in an Era of National Reforms."

Speaking to graduating students, the Minister described Nigeria as a youthful nation with immense potential, noting that the country's future depends mainly on how its young population is educated, skilled and engaged. "Nigeria, like the rest of Africa, happens to be a very youthful country, with half of our population under the age of 20, and three-quarters under the age of 35," he said. "With the right education, skilling, and preparation for the rapidly transforming workspaces of the 21st century, Nigeria will be an unstoppable global force."

He explained that the reforms introduced under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration were deliberate and necessary steps to reset Nigeria's economic and governance systems, stressing that nation-building cannot happen without reform. "There is no nation-building without reforms," the Minister said. "Reforms protect us from the trap of doing the same thing repeatedly while expecting different results."

Highlighting key reforms such as the removal of petrol subsidy, foreign exchange unification and the new tax laws, the Minis-

CONTINUE ONLINE

NYSC DG Warns Corp Members Against Absconding From Service



Corps Members have been advised against abandoning national service for any reason and urged to stay on and contribute to the country's socio-economic development.

The Director-General (DG) of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Brigadier General Olakunle Nafiu, gave the advice while addressing the 2026 Batch 'A' Stream One Corps Members at the Orientation Camps in Ogun and Oyo States.

General Nafiu, who lauded them for obeying the clarion call for service, also advised them to ensure prudent financial management, adding that this would help them during and after the service year.

He urged them to appreciate and respect the cultures and traditions of their host communities, and be of good conduct at all times.

"When you are posted to your place of primary assignment, respect their rules, be punctual, be resourceful and learn the culture of the organisation you are posted to," the DG said.

Earlier, the NYSC Ogun State Co-ordinator, Mrs. Olayinka Nasamu, had informed the DG that 3,341 Corps Members, including 975 originally deployed to Lagos State, were registered in the Camp, adding that they had conducted themselves responsibly and adapted to the regimented Camp life.

"All camp officials are also performing their duties diligently with high sense of synergy," she said.

In Oyo State, the Coordinator, Mr. Kayode Ola-Peters, said the 3,068 registered Corps Members had demonstrated commendable character, participated actively in Camp activities, and were eager to contribute to national development in all sectors.

At 77th Republic Day Celebration, Musawa Reaffirms Cultural Partnership With India

The Minister of Art, Culture, Tourism and Creative Economy, Barrister Hannatu Musa Musawa, joined senior government officials, members of the diplomatic corps, and the Indian community in Abuja to celebrate the 77th Republic Day of the Republic of India.

The event brought together senators, ministers, ambassadors, and distinguished guests, reflecting the enduring friendship and growing cooperation between Nigeria and India.

In his address, the High Commissioner of India to Nigeria, Abhishek Singh, highlighted India's democratic journey since the adoption of its Constitution in 1950 and outlined the country's recent achievements in economic growth, digital innovation, healthcare, manufacturing, and global development cooperation. He described India as the world's fastest-growing major economy and a leading voice of the Global South, while reaffirming India's strong commitment to deepening its strategic partnership with Nigeria across trade, investment, technology, and people-to-people engagement.

The High Commissioner also noted the expanding footprint of Indian investments in Nigeria and expressed confidence that continued collaboration between both nations would deliver shared prosperity and long-term development outcomes.

In her remarks, the Minister congratulated the Government and people of India on the milestone, describing the celebration as a tribute to democratic values, resilience, and cultural richness. She noted the strong cultural bonds between Nigeria and India and reaffirmed Nigeria's readiness to strengthen collaboration in culture, film, tourism, and the creative economy.

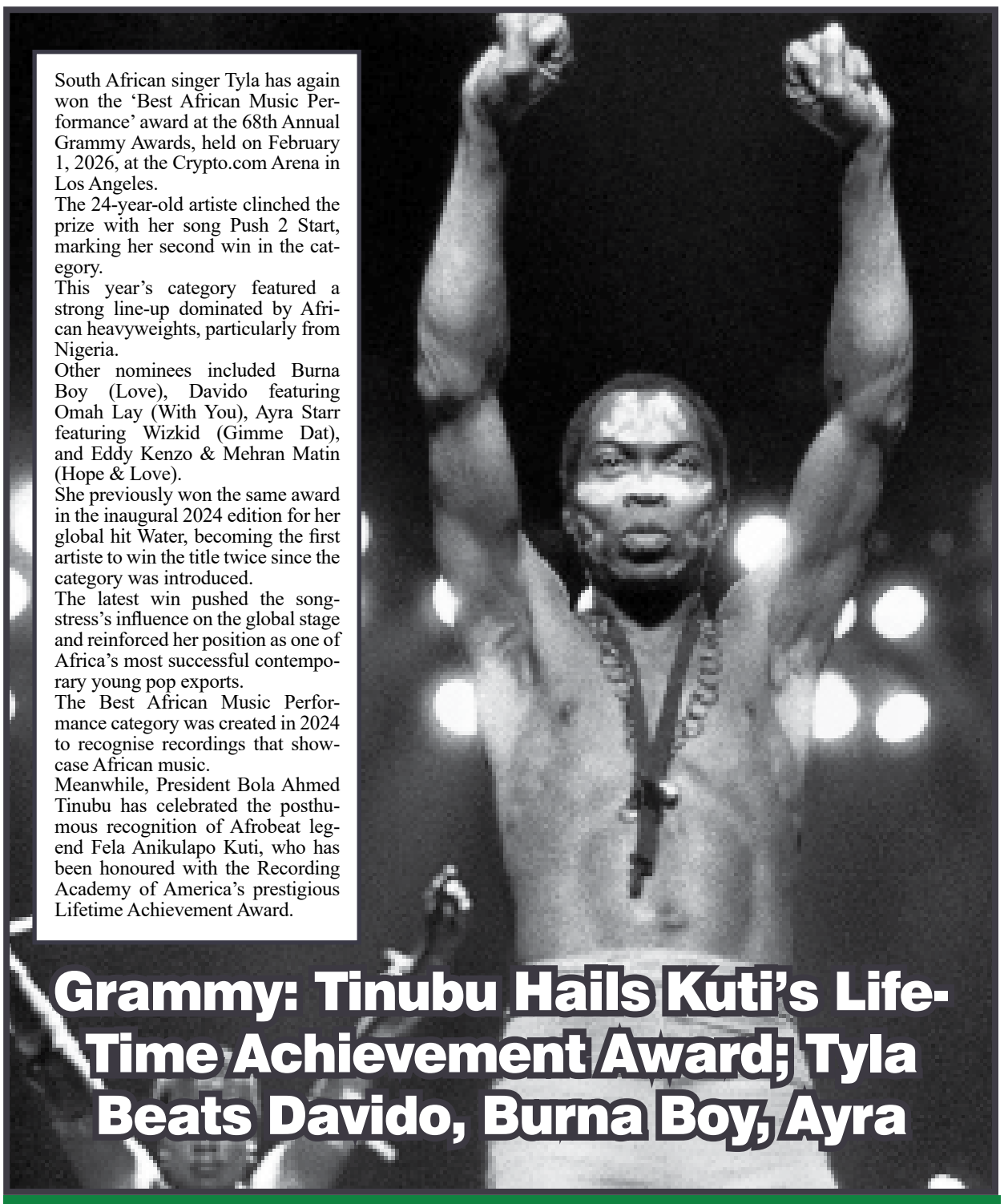
She emphasised the importance of promoting shared heritage and building a future where creative minds can innovate, explore, and connect the world through stories and artistic expression.

The celebration also featured goodwill messages from other senior members of the Federal Executive Council and dignitaries, all of whom

CONTINUE ONLINE



TheMatrix ShowBizGist



Grammy: Tinubu Hails Kuti's Life-Time Achievement Award; Tyla Beats Davido, Burna Boy, Ayra

South African singer Tyla has again won the 'Best African Music Performance' award at the 68th Annual Grammy Awards, held on February 1, 2026, at the Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles.

The 24-year-old artiste clinched the prize with her song Push 2 Start, marking her second win in the category.

This year's category featured a strong line-up dominated by African heavyweights, particularly from Nigeria.

Other nominees included Burna Boy (Love), Davido featuring Omah Lay (With You), Ayra Starr featuring Wizkid (Gimme Dat), and Eddy Kenzo & Mehran Matin (Hope & Love).

She previously won the same award in the inaugural 2024 edition for her global hit Water, becoming the first artiste to win the title twice since the category was introduced.

The latest win pushed the songstress's influence on the global stage and reinforced her position as one of Africa's most successful contemporary young pop exports.

The Best African Music Performance category was created in 2024 to recognise recordings that showcase African music.

Meanwhile, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has celebrated the posthumous recognition of Afrobeat legend Fela Anikulapo Kuti, who has been honoured with the Recording Academy of America's prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award.

'Acting Alone Can't Fund Luxury,' Says Bimbo Akintola



Veteran Nollywood actress Bimbo Akintola has explained why she does not live as lavishly as some of her colleagues, citing the harsh financial realities of Nigeria's film industry.

Speaking in a recent interview, Akintola dismissed the belief that acting alone can make many actresses wealthy, noting that payments from platforms such as Africa Magic are often not enough to support extravagant lifestyles.

She suggested that some public displays of wealth in the industry may be funded by sources outside acting, adding that when questioned about her own financial status, she points to the limitations of movie earnings.

According to her, the public frequently misunderstands how much actors are paid, stressing that acting fees alone cannot account for the flashy lifestyles often showcased online.

'Holy Spirit Cooked It' — Lagos Caterer Says iShowSpeed Jollof Boosted Her Business

A Lagos-based caterer, Theresa Sappor, has credited a viral jollof rice moment with American online streamer iShowSpeed for a surge in customers at her restaurant on Lagos Island.

Sappor, who runs Sappor Cuisine at Freedom Park, said the exposure from the livestream, watched by over one million viewers, significantly boosted patronage.

"This jollof rice, na Holy Spirit help me cook am. I'm still in shock. Social media get power," she said in an interview with The Plug.

She revealed that customers who had never visited Freedom Park before now come specifically to taste the jollof rice served to the streamer.

"One woman told me she had never stepped foot here, but she came because of iShowSpeed," Sappor said.

Her husband, a co-founder of the business, said expatriates and first-time visitors now frequent the restaurant for Nigerian dishes such as egusi soup and fufu.



During his visit, iShowSpeed praised the meal on livestream, saying, "I'm not gonna lie, this is good. I think I might have to go with Nigeria," a comment that sparked online celebration of Nigerian cuisine.

The streamer later travelled to Ghana, where he sampled Ghanaian jollof rice but again declared a preference for the Nigerian version, reigniting the long-standing culinary rivalry between both countries.

iShowSpeed's Africa tour began on December 29, 2025, and was scheduled to span 28 days across 20 countries.

Atiku's Aide Blames Poor Healthcare For Death Of Abuja Musician



Paul Ibe, media aide to former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, has attributed the death of Abuja-based musician Ifunanya Nwangene to Nigeria's failing healthcare system.

Nwangene, a 26-year-old soprano with the Amemuso Choir, reportedly died on Saturday at the Federal Medical Centre (FMC), Abuja, after suffering a snake bite.

Reacting on Sunday via his X handle, Ibe lamented the absence of snake antivenom at a public hospital in the nation's capital, describing the incident as another case of systemic failure.

He said the singer was not killed by the snake but by institutional neglect, questioning how a hospital in a high-risk snakebite area could lack essential treatment.

According to him, while critical medical supplies are unavailable, "anti-opposition" efforts appear to be well funded.

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Arsenal Officially Announce Zinchenko's Move To Eredivisie Side

Arsenal, on Sunday, announced that defender Oleksandr Zinchenko has left the club to join Ajax on a permanent transfer.

Zinchenko was recalled from his loan at Premier League club Nottingham Forest.

The Ukrainian international struggled for regular game-time at Forest, and his contract at Arsenal was up in the summer.

However, Ajax were willing to buy out the remaining six months of his deal at Arsenal. The former Manchester City star will discuss his long-term future in the summer.

Transfer: Besiktas Reject Ajax Bid For Ndidi



EPL: Spurs Dent Man City's Title Hope, Man Utd's Revival Continue

Dominic Solanke's stunning scorpion kick saw Tottenham recover from a dismal first-half showing to rescue a draw against Manchester City - whose inability to defend a two-goal lead saw the title race tilt further in Arsenal's favour. Thomas Frank's Spurs were once again booed off by their home fans at half-time as goals from Rayan Cherki and Antoine Semenyo put Pep Guardiola's side in a comfortable two-goal lead - with the hosts offering next to nothing in the opening 45 minutes.

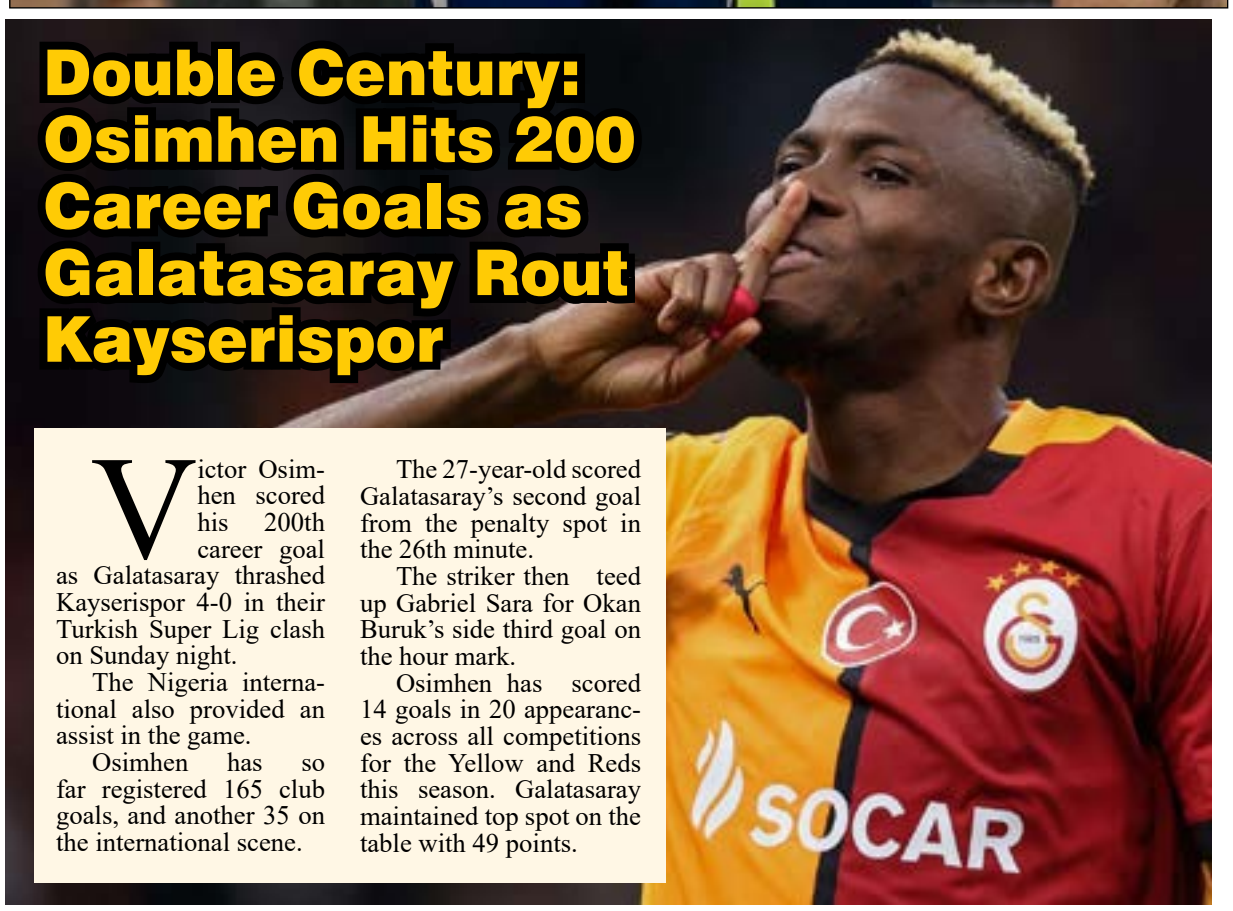
But Frank earned his money at half-time as Spurs looked like a completely different side at the break - with striker Solanke leading the way. The forward's excellent turn in the box saw him squeeze a ball in at the near post while under pressure from Marc Guehi. VAR checked a potential foul by Solanke on the City defender, but it was deemed he played the ball - which incurred the wrath of Guardiola.

The referee's call of goal was checked and confirmed by VAR – with the challenge by Solanke on Guéhi deemed not to be a foul as Solanke played the ball.

The goal accreditation panel has adjudged the goal to be a Solanke goal. "If a central defender does that to a striker, it's a penalty, right?" Guardiola said in his post-match press conference - admitting it created an "emotional issue" for his players. And after more pressure from the home side, a deserved equaliser came as Solanke turned Conor Gallagher's cross with a stunning flick from behind him to send the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium wild.

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Double Century: Osimhen Hits 200 Career Goals as Galatasaray Rout Kayserispor

Victor Osimhen scored his 200th career goal as Galatasaray thrashed Kayserispor 4-0 in their Turkish Super Lig clash on Sunday night.

The Nigeria international also provided an assist in the game.

Osimhen has so far registered 165 club goals, and another 35 on the international scene.

The 27-year-old scored Galatasaray's second goal from the penalty spot in the 26th minute.

The striker then teed up Gabriel Sara for Okan Buruk's side third goal on the hour mark.

Osimhen has scored 14 goals in 20 appearances across all competitions for the Yellow and Reds this season. Galatasaray maintained top spot on the table with 49 points.



TheMatrix

Foreign

BY ILESANMI ADEWALE

Iran Labels EU Militaries 'Terrorists' After IRGC Designation

Iran on Sunday declared the armies of European Union countries "terrorist groups" in retaliation for the EU's decision to blacklist Tehran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

The move was announced by Iran's parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, days after EU foreign ministers agreed to designate the IRGC a terrorist organisation following a deadly crackdown on nationwide protests.

Security forces, including the IRGC, have been accused by rights groups of using extreme force against demonstrators, with estimates putting the death toll as high as 30,000.

Iran said it was applying a 2019 law—first used after the United States designated the IRGC a terrorist group—to reciprocally label foreign militaries as terrorist organisations. The decision is widely seen as largely symbolic.

Qalibaf warned the EU of consequences, accusing European leaders of acting in "blind obedience" to the United States and against their own interests.

The declaration comes amid heightened regional tensions, as US President Donald Trump considers possible military action against Iran. Tehran has also announced live-fire military drills in the Strait of Hormuz, a key global oil transit route.

The IRGC, which controls Iran's ballistic missile programme and holds vast economic power□.



Israel To Ban MSF From Gaza Over Staff List Dispute



Israel says it will bar Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) from operating in Gaza after the medical charity refused to hand over a list of its local and international staff, citing safety concerns.

Israeli authorities had ordered 37 aid groups to submit employee details, alleging some workers had links to Hamas and Islamic Jihad, claims MSF strongly denies.

MSF said it could not comply without guarantees that staff would not be put at risk. In response, Israel said it was moving to terminate the organisation's activities in Gaza.

The move has drawn criticism from several countries, which warn it could severely disrupt humanitarian and medical services.

MSF currently provides about 20% of hospital beds in Gaza and runs around 20 health centres.

Spain Offers Residency To Hundreds Of Thousands Of Undocumented Migrants



Undocumented migrants in Spain have welcomed a government decision to grant residency and work permits to hundreds of thousands of foreigners living in the country illegally.

The Spanish government said it would regularise migrants who arrived before December 31, 2025, have lived in Spain for at least five months and possess a clean criminal record.

Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said the move would strengthen Spain's welfare and social security systems, arguing that bringing about half a million workers into the formal economy would boost contributions rather than burden public services.

The decision contrasts with tougher immigration policies being adopted in the United States and parts of the European Union.

Among those hopeful is Hussain Dar, a Pakistani national who has lived in Spain for nearly a year without legal status after failing to extend his residency in the UK. Unable to work legally, Dar said he exhausted his savings and at times slept on a Barcelona beach

"It's really beneficial for us," he said, while queuing at the Pakistani consulate in Barcelona to obtain a criminal record certificate required for the application.

Pakistan's consul general in Barcelona, Murad Ali Wazir, said an estimated 15,000 undocumented Pakistanis in Catalonia could benefit from the measure.

Applications will be accepted between April and the end of June, with Spain's migration ministry promising to process cases within three months.



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Worlds on Marble

Religion is not averse to common sense, hence common sense should be used on moral principles first, it is not possible to have such moral principles separated from religious values - Anonymous

THE PERSPECTIVE

By Festus Adedayo

Uproar About Tinubu's Subú-seré

SUBÚ-seré? Poetic licence gave me the indulgence of the above headlining. It is a broad, idiomatic expression whose surface is barely scraped by words like "tumbling" or "falling".

Subú-seré cannot be captured by a single slip. It finds expression in repeated falls. Subú-seré is deeper than its nearest English expression in connotation and texture. It can, in one breath, be deployed to describe a state of chaos, mismanagement, or a "tumble". In the last few days, the Nigerian president's fall in Ankara, the Turkiye capital, has engaged the Nigerian world. At a welcome ceremony by his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the president suddenly stumbled and fell. He had just walked past a line of dignitaries which included Turkiye soldiers when, as he moved to the right of Erdogan, the Subú-seré occurred. A viral video uploaded on the Turkish president's X handle showed him helping up his colleague president. Erdogan also held firmly to his hand thereafter like you hold a kindergarten kid crossing the road. About 45 seconds after the fall, the Nigerian president is seen in the video standing next to Erdogan and beaming a wry smile. The day after, while President Tinubu was shown being seen off Turkiye by Erdogan on a national television, ostensibly on his way to Nigeria, Nigerians do not yet know where in the whole wide world their president is holed up in. Concerns immediately ripped through Nigeria. The presidency however downplayed them all, maintaining that Tinubu was in great shape. Sunday Dare, his aide, said not only was the president in good health and unhurt from the slip, he immediately continued with a scheduled bilateral meeting in Turkiye. Presidential spokesman, Bayo Onanuga, took the explainer a notch higher. Tinubu had tripped as he stepped on a metal object on the floor, which made him lose his balance, he said.

Onanuga then went into his usual argumentative fallacy of argumentum ad hominem. This fallacy is distinguished by enemy-repelling and blame-trading. It is an everyone-but-self narrative. While at this, the presidential aide took his time to school Nigerians on the difference between a fall and a stumble.

"This is not a big deal, except for those who want to make mischief out of a fleeting incident. It was a mere stumble, thank God, not a fall" he said. As the Yoruba would say, even if we do not know anything else, we know that three people cannot stand in twos.

On June 12, 2024, during the Democracy Day celebration, President Tinubu had earlier fallen in public. It was at the Eagle Square. The president fell; pardon me, a la Onanuga, he stumbled, as he was about to board a parade vehicle. But Tinubu himself made a light joke of it.

"Early this morning, I had a swagger and it's on the social media. They're confused whether I was doing bùgá or doing bàbánrigá (two popular dance steps)," he said. "But it's a day to celebrate democracy while doing dobale (salute to elders) for the day. I'm a traditional Yoruba boy, I did my dòbálé." The president probably dobale-ed for Erdogan, too in Ankara last week, being a good Yoruba boy? But, not to worry, he is in a great shape, said his handlers. But, shouldn't we be worried?

As Onanuga said, it should ordinarily be no big deal that a mortal man falls, either literally, metaphorically or figuratively. Drilling deep into the figurative of falling, King Sunny Ade, Yoruba Juju music great, in a 1970s LP, pilloried his mockers who were deriding his fall. "Otá mí má yó mí, b'é mi bá subú" he fired, submitting that "if I fall, I will heave myself up" — "b'émi bá subú, èmi á dide è".

Falling and rising are part of the existential slopes of humanity. Whether as a literal fall or as metaphor, it is doubtable whether a man can waddle through the sloppy contours of life without experiencing life's fluctuations. They are embedded into the whole concept of living, so much that life would not be life if man doesn't rise and fall. It was probably a realization that life is fraught with falling and rising that Francois-Marie Arouet, famously known by his pen name, Voltaire, one of the best Enlightenment philosophers, satirist and historian, said of life that it is "thickly sown with thorns, and I know no other remedy than to pass quickly through them".

Voltaire himself lived a life of sicknesses and diseases. He is often quoted as saying my life is a struggle and frequently wrote about the miseries of existence. Born with a weak bodily constitution, Voltaire suffered afflictions of chronic health issues, one of which was the Crohn's disease, distinguished by its frequently leaving him bedridden. So also was Blaise Pascal. Voltaire's French compatriot, Pascal was a mathematician, physicist, philosopher and a Catholic writer. He, too suffered from lifelong, debilitating health conditions which included celiac disease, severe migraines with visual auras, peripheral neuropathy, epilepsy, and possibly craniosynostosis (skull deformity) and autism. There were and are many more great people whose lives were buffeted by ailments. Yet, sicknesses and diseases did/do not define them. The Lord Jesus Christ counsels that in this world, there would be tribulations. These include sicknesses, diseases and even death. Jamaican reggae group, Mighty Diamonds, a harmony trio which recorded roots reggae with a strong Rastafarian influence, said this much. In their famous track, Have Mercy, they sang that: "Man was made to suffer, yeah / And women were made to feel the pain" but prayed to "Jah" to "have mercy" on him/her.

On 4 April, 2021 and 20 October, 2024, I wrote two pieces which centered on presidential ill health. While the earlier one was entitled, "The President is a sick man: Buhari's Secret Therapy Inside the 'Oneida," the second was, "The president is a sick man."

The first was a lamentation of President Muhammadu Buhari's knee-jerk and off-the-cuff jetting out of Aso Rock Villa like a wandering evil spirit. The second lamented that in President Tinubu, Nigerians were "back to presidential night-time recourse to UK hospices and presidency's spins to shroud the truth."

Permit me to regurgitate chunks of the essential elements of those offerings.

In those pieces, I took my headlining from Matthew Algeo's book with the title, The President Is A Sick Man. Algeo, Philadelphia-born, award-winning American journalist, did a chronology of the medical travails of Grover Cleveland, the 22nd and 24th president of the United States of America, presiding over America from 1885 to 1889 and 1893 to 1897.

The president suddenly disappeared from the radar to go have a cancer surgery. The book shows how inexorably linked the health of a president and the health of the nation are. In those pieces, I said that shrouding the health status of African leaders from their constituents, as well as their sudden disappearance stunts, have a long history.

In October 2016, President Peter Mutharika of Malawi disappeared off the radar, by which time he was 76 years old. Mutharika had attended the United Nations General Assembly mid-September and didn't come back until 16 October.

The same was the story of Gabonese President, Ali Bongo, son of Omar Bongo. At a time in November 2018, Ali was said to have been "seriously ill," with speculations rife that he had died after suffering from a stroke. He was just 59 years old then. Findings, however, later revealed that he had not died but that was holed up in a Saudi Arabia hospice.

Benin Republic's Patrice Talon is perhaps one of the rarest breeds of the African leadership caste. Talon unusually and uncharacteristically made public disclosure of what ailed him. After the 59-year old president, who took over from Thomas Yayi-Boni, disappeared from the radar for about three weeks, his minders, on 19 June, 2017, released the information that he had undergone two successful surgical operations in Paris.

He said doctors had found a lesion in his prostate. This further necessitated another surgery in his digestive system. In 2006, (I guess), at the Enugu State Governor's Lodge, I saw then Katsina State governor and PDP presidential candidate, Umaru Yar'Adua, for the very first and last time. He had come to pay a thank-you visit to Governor Chimaroke Nnamani, after being picked as the man to fly the PDP banner in the 2007 elections.

He was frail and looked very sickly. I noticed a round patch of flesh on his left wrist, indicating flesh engraftment. As the meeting progressed, he took a mouthful of his drugs.

In 2011, I also chanced on then ex-Governor Tinubu taking his drugs. In my existential naivety, I was inwardly aghast that anyone would swallow such a mouthful. Today, I swallow almost same ounce of drugs as these men. Like all mortals, I have been served my own breakfast by life and fate. It reminds me of a line from Ilorin Dadakuada music bard, Odolaye Aremu. He chanted that, only God knows how many more people would be drenched by a ceaseless rain (Ojò tí nò tí ò dá, Olórun l'ó mo iye eni tí yió pa). Hiding the health status of our leaders is a carry-over of traditional Africa where the king was portrayed as Fredrich Nietzsche's Superman. Indeed, the mentality behind pulling shrouds on African leaders' health is a continuation of the empires and monarchies of Africa. There, kings were infallible, super-human and incapable of falling prey to the afflictions of plebeians and common people.

African leaders of today see themselves in the same mould of kings and emperors. They must not be heard to have failing health, nor their health statuses made public. In what other way can it be said to them that, no matter one's status in life, no mortal is immune to health failings and death?

This trend that I call the Kabiyesi mentality, has bred a pandemic of leaders of Africa who, almost like 19th century Cleveland, "abdicate their thrones" covertly to seek remedies abroad, without the knowledge of their people.

Those who argue strongly in defence of Nigerian sovereignty should well know that that same sovereignty is seriously threatened by the Nigerian president being a captive patient in a foreign hospital.

The truth is, presidents are as mortal as the beggar on the street. Any attempt to wear on them a contrary visor is akin to immortalizing their crass mortality.

Presidents' pooo-poo smells like every other mortal's and they are capable of taking ill and dying like the mad man on the street.

It is bad enough that citizens don't know the whereabouts of their president. It is even worse that a president, like the biblical Saul who crept out of the palace at nocturne to consult the Witch of Endor, surreptitiously gropes in the dark to hospices of the world.

Are presidential handlers aware that the office of the president is a public trust which gives citizens the right to know where their president is? What I counsel was preached over four and a half decades ago by evergreen Yoruba Apala music lord, Ayinla Omowura.

Disenchanted by the then reigning fad of women bleaching, Omowura espoused what I call the parable of the filthy. While asking young ladies to maintain the dignity of their African skin and values, he sang that once the filthy acknowledges their resenting personality, the world would cover them with sweet-smelling cloth.

"Jéwó òbùn k'án dá'so ró e" he sang.

So, let the presidency, like Omowura's filthy woman, come clean with us on what ails our president. While it is inhuman for any mortal to disparage another mortal on account of their health, the president's health status must be on the palm of Nigerians.

In May last year, President Donald Trump underwent a complete health check. Caroline Leavette, the White House Press Secretary, had given Americans Trump's Annual Physical Examination Results.

The National Assembly must pass a law that makes it compulsory for our presidents to undergo same checks in a Nigerian hospital.

While it is public knowledge that president Tinubu is battling a knee issue and has even undergone a knee cap replacement, details of it should not be kept away from the people.

If need be, the president can be made to operate from the wheelchair. There is no crime in it. Nigerians did not vote to have a macho or an athlete as president.

If he has other predisposing ailments that he is battling, it will be in sync with the life of every other mortal. We will pray for him as we do not want him dead.

To have presidential aides build a wall of immortality round him or make a Superman of the president is childish and distressing.

Whatever it is, we wish our president a speedy recovery.

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