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·Hold in Kogi, Lagos, Kwara, Rivers, Benue, Edo, Oyo, Ondo, Osun, Cross River, FCT
 ·NANS, NLC join in solidarity ·Senate, Reps condemn attack, warn against politicising insecurity
 ·Our priority is safe return of our students, not politics —Makinde
 ·CAN declares three-day national mourning, June 14 'Black Sunday', demand state of emergency on security



Oyo State governor, Seyi Makinde (left), addressing the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) and the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) during a protest to the Governor's Office, Secretariat, Ibadan on the abduction of teachers and pupils in Oriire Local Government Area of Oyo State, on Tuesday.



Rivers State Commissioner for Education, Mr Peters Nwagor (middle), and members of the Nigeria Union of Teachers, Rivers State wing, during a peaceful protest on abducted Oyo teachers and students in Port Harcourt on Tuesday. Photo: NAN

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NUT holds nationwide rally, threatens strike over abduction of students, teachers

·NANS, NLC join in solidarity ·Senate, Reps, condemn action, warn against politicising insecurity

·Our priority is safe return of our students, not politics —Makinde

By Our Reporters

THE Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) has threatened to embark on a nationwide strike if urgent action is not taken to secure the release of teachers and students abducted from schools in Oyo and Borno states.

The union made the declaration on Tuesday during a nationwide solidarity rally held across the country to demand the immediate and unconditional release of teachers and learners currently being held captive by kidnappers and terrorists.

Similar protests and rallies were held in Kogi, Lagos, Kwara, Oyo, Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Osun, Ondo, Rivers, Benue, Cross River, Edo, where the state chairmen of NUT all condemned the abduction of students and teachers, and demanded immediate and unconditional release of victims.

The national president of NUT, Comrade Audu Titus Amba, who addressed newsmen at the headquarters of the union, Lugbe, Abuja, expressed deep concern over the worsening insecurity in schools, describing the continued abduction of teachers and students as a direct attack on education and the future of the nation.

He recalled that seven teachers and 39 pupils and students were kidnapped from schools in Oriire Local Government Area of Oyo State on May 15, while more than 40 pupils were abducted from Mussa Primary and Secondary Schools in Askira-Uba Local Government Area of Borno State on the same day.

Amba lamented that more than two weeks after the in-

cidents, the victims remained in captivity under harsh conditions, while families continued to suffer anxiety and uncertainty.

"It is heartbreaking to note that two of our colleagues have been gruesomely murdered in cold blood by the bandits in Oyo State. The fate of the remaining abductees remains uncertain," he said.

The NUT president disclosed that the union had already directed all primary and secondary school teachers in Oyo State to withdraw their services indefinitely from June 1 until the abducted teachers and students are rescued.

He warned that the union would not hesitate to extend the industrial action nationwide if the situation persists.

"If it becomes obvious and necessary that we ask teachers all over the country to down tools, it is not going to be difficult. We have the responsibility to speak for our teachers whenever they are not secure in their places of duty," Amba said.

"These teachers were attacked and kidnapped in the course of their duties. If people are not safe in their places of work, where then can they be safe? Schools should be safe havens for learning, not crime scenes."

Senate, Rep warn against politicising insecurity

The Senate observed a minute's silence in honour of the deceased victims and commiserated with President Bola Tinubu and the government and people of Oyo State over the incident.

Akpabio said government would step up its security strategies to ensure that the victims in captivity were safely returned home.

The Senate president stated, "Today, we grieve the loss of two dedicated educators: Mr. Michael Oyedokun, who died in captivity, and Mr. Adesiyun Adegboye, who lost his life during the attack. We also mourn the child whose life was cut short before its promise could be fulfilled.

"We share the pain of the bereaved families. Their loss is our loss. Their sorrow is our sorrow. Their pain is our pain. Yet, even in the midst of grief, we remain hopeful that, through the determined efforts of the government and our security agencies, those still in captivity will be safely rescued and reunited with their loved ones."

The House of Representatives on Tuesday also condemned in strong terms the gruesome killing of Mr. Michael Oyedokun who was beheaded by kidnappers, alongside students and other teachers.

According to the two motions on urgent public importance, aside from the 39 students/pupils and nine teachers abducted in Ogbomoso North, South/Oriire Local Government, Oyo State, no fewer than 42 students were also abducted at Mussa Ward School Children and others in Askira-Uba Local Government Area in Borno State.

Leading debate on the motion, Hon. Olamijuwonlo Alao-Akala, member representing Ogbomoso North/South/Oriire federal constituency of Oyo State, harped on the need for structural security reform.

Hon. Alao-Akala, who acknowledged ongoing rescue efforts by the security forces, however, called for speedy action towards the recruitment of the 1,000 Forest Guards for the South-West

region as approved by the president.

He lamented that the Old Oyo National Park and its surrounding forests spanning over 15 kilometers are a vast, ungoverned wilderness straddling the border with Kwara State and opening onto international routes, a hidden highway through which these killers move freely, making the Orire axis the gateway through which terror is now creeping into the heart of the South-West.

In the bid to tackle the security challenges, he called for the decentralisation of Nigeria's security architecture and the establishment of a truly federal system of policing, anchored on state police, local government policing units, decentralised courts, and integrated intelligence systems, as the most effective and constitutionally sound framework for combating the diverse, localised security threats confronting the nation.

Our priority is safe return of our students, not politics —Makinde

Oyo State governor, Seyi Makinde, on Tuesday appealed for national unity in the wake of the abduction, saying the incident should be treated as a collective challenge rather than an opportunity for political blame game.

The governor spoke while receiving members of the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Trade Union Congress (TUC) and the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), who staged a peaceful protest at the Governor's Office in Ibadan over the abduction.

Speaking during the protest in Ibadan, the national

president of NANS, Afeez Akinteye, stated that all NANS structures across the 36 state of the federation and the FCT were in the state to solicit for the release of the abducted students and teachers.

He described the abductors as monsters, and called on Nigerians to come together to fight their common enemy.

The NANS president noted that the association is ready to partner with government and relevant stakeholders on the release of the captives.

Also speaking, chairman, NLC, Oyo State chapter, Kayode Martins, bemoaned that not only teachers and students are target of the kidnappers but all Nigerians, and that the NLC would not fold its arms and allow a repeat of the Chibok incident.

Governor Makinde, however, assured the protesters that security agencies were working tirelessly to secure the release of the victims, and that both state and federal authorities were collaborating closely on rescue efforts.

"This is a period that calls for unity. It is not a time to trade accusations or engage in politics. What is important now is bringing our children and their teachers back home safely," he said.

Makinde, who spoke emotionally about the incident, recalled that his late father was a primary school teacher in a community close to where the attack occurred.

"My father taught in Awole Dada, not far from where this happened. When I think about it, I feel deeply touched because if such an incident had happened during his time, perhaps my own story would have been different," he said.

According to him, insecur-

ity remains a challenge that requires a united response from all levels of government and citizens.

"This is not the time to argue about who is responsible. Whether it is the federal, state or local government, what matters now is that we work together to overcome this challenge," he stated.

Makinde described the kidnappers as ruthless individuals whose actions defy human reasoning.

He appealed to residents, workers, teachers and students to remain calm and continue to support security agencies as efforts to rescue the victims intensify.

Makinde disclosed that security personnel deployed by the Federal Government had remained actively involved in operations around the affected area.

In the same vein, the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, has assured protesting teachers and civil society organisations in Abuja that security agencies are intensifying efforts to secure the release of the abducted teachers and students, while cautioning against the politicisation of security challenges.

Addressing demonstrators who staged a protest on Tuesday in front of the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) Secretariat demanding the immediate rescue of the victims of recent school kidnappings, Wike said the Federal Government remained committed to ensuring the safe return of those in captivity.

"We are all concerned about this security situation. The government is on its toes to ensure that those who are kidnapped are rescued," he assured.

CAN declares three-day national mourning, demands state of emergency on security

·Give security chiefs 90 days to clear terrorists, or they resign, Adebayo tells FG

Collins Nnabuife | Abuja

THE Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has declared a three-day national mourning period over the worsening security situation in the country and called on the Federal Government to declare a state of emergency on security.

The resolutions were contained in a communiqué signed by the president of CAN, Archbishop Daniel Okoh, and issued at the end of the National Church Denominational Leaders Summit 2026 held in Abuja, with the theme 'The State of the Nation and the Way Forward'.

The summit, attended by leaders of major Christian denominations, church administrators, legal practitioners, security experts and representatives from across the six

geopolitical zones, reviewed the state of the nation and expressed deep concern over escalating insecurity, economic hardship and declining public confidence in state institutions.

CAN said the gathering was convened against the backdrop of increasing attacks on communities, churches, schools and vulnerable groups across the country.

The association noted that kidnappings, killings, terrorist attacks and the displacement of communities had reached alarming levels, with citizens being abducted from their homes, workplaces and highways, while many farmers had been forced off their lands.

Participants at the summit lamented what they described as the continued loss of lives, destruction of livelihoods and trauma suf-

fered by victims and their families.

In one of its major resolutions, CAN called on the Federal Government to declare a state of emergency on security and take urgent measures to halt the wave of violence across the country.

The association also urged a comprehensive review of the nation's security architecture, improved intelligence gathering, stronger inter-agency collaboration and greater accountability in the fight against terrorism, banditry and violent crimes.

CAN further renewed calls for the establishment of state police and other decentralised security structures, arguing that such measures would enhance intelligence gathering, rapid response and local accountability.

The organisation demanded

the immediate and unconditional release of all abducted schoolchildren, teachers and other citizens being held by criminal groups, while urging security agencies to intensify rescue operations.

As part of efforts to honour victims of insecurity, CAN declared Friday, June 12, 2026, as the commencement of a three-day period of national mourning, which will run until Sunday, June 14.

The association also designated June 14 as "Black Sunday" and directed churches nationwide to observe the day in honour of victims of violence and in solidarity with affected families.

Meanwhile, the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Pastor Enoch Adebayo, has called on the Federal Government to take a firm stand against terrorism,

including giving an ultimatum to the country's service chiefs.

Adebayo made the call in a video posted on his official X handle on Tuesday, describing his comment as a suggestion to the Federal Government amid the rising spate of insecurity in Nigeria.

"You can only advise the Commander-in-Chief. You can't command him. Because if you command the Commander-in-Chief, then you become the commander of the Commander-in-Chief. That doesn't make sense.

"What should we do now? I'm talking to you as my children. If I were asked to make suggestions, I would say quietly to our government: 'move fast, and tell our security chiefs, 'Get rid of these terrorists within 90 days or resign'."

The respected cleric re-

called a similar directive allegedly issued by former President Muhammadu Buhari during the height of the Boko Haram insurgency.

"There was a president, unfortunately he's dead now, that's Buhari, who issued such an order. Some of you will remember. He called the service chiefs together and said, 'I give you three months. Get rid of all these Boko Haram people or resign.'"

He also advised that military operations should not focus only on armed groups but also on those who finance and support them.

"When giving orders to the service chiefs this time around, we should make it clear to them that they are not only to eliminate the terrorists; they should eliminate their sponsors, no matter how influential they may be."

INEC probes 'insider' breach of CVR database, to hand over culpable personnel for legal action

Muideen Olaniyi | Abuja

THE Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has launched an investigation into allegations of unauthorised access and disclosure of information from its Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) database.

Mohammed Haruna, national commissioner and chairman of the Information

and Voter Education Committee (IVEC), disclosed this in a statement, on Tuesday in Abuja.

The probe followed social media reports claiming that the voter data of a candidate in the recent Federal Capital Territory (FCT) political party primaries was leaked, using official access credentials.

Haruna said that while INEC's preliminary findings showed no evidence of an external cyber-attack, the

commission took the allegation seriously and has immediately commenced a thorough investigation to establish the facts surrounding the incident.

He explained that as part of the ongoing CVR exercise nationwide, authorised INEC registration officers are granted controlled access to specific components of the CVR system.

This, according to him, is to enable them register new ap-

plicants, process requests for transfer of registration and update voter records, where necessary.

He added that such access is restricted to official duties only and withdrawn at the conclusion of the exercise.

Haruna, however, said that the audit trail from the preliminary investigation has enabled the commission to identify the user-account through which the information is accessed.

"Accordingly, relevant personnel have been questioned, and all units connected with the incident are cooperating fully with the investigation.

"The commission is also examining all technical, administrative and operational factors associated with the matter in order to establish individual responsibility," he said.

The INEC commissioner added that the investigation is to determine the circumstances surrounding the use of those credentials and identify any breach of internal access-control protocols before taking appropriate action against anyone involved.

"Preliminary findings from the commission's audit trail so far, however, indicate that there was no external breach of the CVR database, no hacking incident, and no unauthorised external access to the commission's ICT infrastructure.

"Rather, the information in question was accessed through valid user credentials assigned to personnel participating in the ongoing CVR exercise but released without authority," he said.

Haruna said that the incident under investigation relates to the retrieval of a specific voter record.

He added that it does not also indicate any compromise of the commission's broader voter registration infrastructure or the personal data of more than 90 million registered voters.

"The commission wishes to state categorically that it takes the security, confidentiality and integrity of voter data with the utmost seriousness and remains committed to transparency, institutional integrity and the protection of voters' personal information," he said in the statement titled 'Re: Alleged misuse of authorised access credentials and unauthorised disclosure of information from the commission's Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) database,' he said.

Haruna added that the Department of State Services (DSS), on its own accord, has also commenced an independent investigation into the matter.

The national commissioner urged members of the public and the media to disregard unfounded speculations while investigations remain ongoing, adding that the Commission will continue to keep the public informed of its final findings and any measures taken in response to the incident in due course.



President Bola Tinubu receiving the president of the Republic of Benin, Romuald Wadagni, during his visit to Nigeria.

13 Reps dump APC, PDP after party primaries

**As six Oyo lawmakers, one Bauchi lawmaker join Alliance Peoples Movement
Chinda resigns as minority leader, keeps mum on new party**

Kehinde Akintola | Abuja

NO fewer than 13 members of the 10th House of Representatives, on resumption from the four weeks recess, formally announced their decision to defect to other political parties after the conclusion of party primaries.

Speaker Abbas Tajudeen, who presided over the plenary, read all the notices.

According to him, six PDP lawmakers from Oyo State, who defected from the party, joined the Allied Peoples Movement (APM).

They are: Honourables Anthony Adebayo Adepoju, member representing Ibarapa North Federal Constituency; Adedeji Stanley Olajide, member representing Ibadan Northwest and

Makanjuola Sunday Ojo, member representing Ogo Oluwa/Surulere Federal Constituency.

Others are: Najimdeen Oyeshina Oyedeji, member representing Iseyin/Itesiwaju/Kajola/Iwajowa; Folajimi Oyekunle, member representing Ibadan North and Abass Adekunle Adigun, member representing Ibadan North-East/South-East, and Auwalu Abdu Gwalabe, member representing Katakum of Bauchi State.

Tajudeen also announced the defection of Honourables Etanabene Benedict, member representing Okpe/Sapele/Uvwie Federal Constituency of Delta State from Labour Party to PDP and Esosa Iyawe, member representing Oredo Federal

Constituency of Edo State defected from the All Progressives Congress (APC) to the National Democratic Party (NDC).

On his part, Honourable Shehu Dalhatu Tafoki, member representing Faskari/Kankara/Sabuwa Federal Constituency of Katsina State defected from APC to PDP.

Honourable Gaza Jonathan Gbafwi, member representing Keffi/Karu/Kokona Federal Constituency of Nasarawa State also defected from SDP to Labour Party.

Chairman, House Committee on Specialty Health Services, Honourable Alex Egbona, member representing Abi/Yakurr Federal Constituency of Cross River State also defected from APC to PDP.

Meanwhile, Honourable

Sani Lawal, member representing Zango/Baure federal constituency of Katsina State, who announced his decision to resign from APC, did not specify the new party that he is aligning with.

Meanwhile, Honourable Kingsley Chinda, from PDP, who announced his decision to resign as the Minority Leader, did not announce the party to which he is shifting alliance to.

According to the letter read by the Speaker, Chinda resigned from the position of minority leader with effect from April 23.

"I remain fully committed to my duties as a member of the House and will continue to support the work of the legislature in every way possible," the letter read in part.

Your performance has campaigned for you, Ekiti drivers tell Oyeibanji

TRANSPORT workers in Ekiti State under the aegis of National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Road Transport Employers of Nigeria (RTEAN) and National Association of Cooperative Transporters (NACT), have declared their support for Governor Biodun Oyeibanji's re-election, saying his impressive performance in office remains his strongest campaign for the June 20 election.

The workers maintained that the governor's achievements in office, coupled with his positive disposition to transport workers, have already done the campaigning for him, as his development projects and leadership style have earned him widespread support.

Speaking during a strategic engagement with the governor in Ado Ekiti, on Monday, the NURTW chairman, Chief Omotayo Falope, said all road transport workers in the state are solidly behind the governor and will mobilise aggressively for his re-election as a way of thanking the governor.

The union leader stated that the governor has positively impacted every aspect of the state economy, making business easy for them.

RTEAN state chairman, Mr Sunday Adeola, explained that Governor Oyeibanji's road infrastructure has

eased the pains of road users as well as transport owners.

He listed some of the roads to include Ado-Ekiti internal roads, Itawure-Okemesi road, Ara-Ikole-isinbode road, Ijelu-itapa-Omu road, Ikere-ilaweroad, Igbaraodo to Ikogosi road among others.

Also speaking, NACT chairman, Mr Kehinde Afolabi, commended Governor Oyeibanji for reconciling all the transport workers unions in the state, thereby restoring peace and stability within the unions through the appointment of the advisory council for union matters.

In his remarks, governor appreciated and commended the unions for their support for his administration and for sustaining peace among their members across the state, noting that the level of harmony among the unions is unprecedented and has contributed immensely to the peaceful atmosphere and development being experienced in the state.

Oyeibanji attributed the achievements of his administration to the support and leadership of President Bola Tinubu, and added that the spate of development being witnessed in the state is made possible by the backing of the Federal Government. He urged the transport workers to thank the president by voting massively for his party.

Senate intervenes in contractors' faceoff with FG over unpaid debts

Appoints seven-member panel to meet with parties

THE Senate moved on Tuesday in a bid to end the face-off between local contractors and the Federal Government over unpaid debts owed the former.

The contractors under the aegis of the All Indigenous Contractors Association of Nigeria (AICAN) have several times protested on the streets of Abuja since late 2025.

Between December 2025 and January 2026, they

blocked the gates of the headquarters of the Federal Ministry of Finance in Abuja in a bid to get the government to act by paying the debts, estimated to be about N760 billion quoted against projects executed in 2024 alone.

The Senate appointed a seven-member committee to interface between the ministry and the contractors to resolve the dispute.

The contractors initially al-

leged that they were owed N500bn by the Federal Government for 2024 projects, later jacked it up to around N760 billion.

The government budgeted N1.7 trillion to N1.8 trillion for the settlement of the debts in the 2026 budget.

The major complaint of AICAN is the alleged non-release of budgeted funds to settle the debts.

President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio, who an-

nounced the membership of the committee during plenary, gave them one week to submit a report.

The committee is chaired by the chairman, Senate Committee on Finance, Senator Sani Musa, while other members include the chairman, committee on Banking/Insurance and other Financial Institutions, Senator Adetokumbo Abiru, and the chairman, Committee on Customs, Senator Isah Jibrin.

Private sector growth hits nine-month high despite cost pressures —Report

Kehinde Akinseinde-
Jayeoba | Lagos

A renewed surge in customer demand propelled Nigeria's private sector to its strongest growth performance in nine months in May, offering fresh evidence that economic activity is gathering momentum despite persistent inflationary pressures and elevated fuel

costs.

The latest Stanbic IBTC Bank Nigeria Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), compiled by S&P Global, rose sharply to 54.1 in May from 52.4 in April, marking the fourth consecutive month of improvement in business conditions and the highest reading since August 2025.

The expansion was driven largely by a strong acceleration in new orders and

output, with businesses reporting improving customer demand, increased market activity and the introduction of new products. New orders grew at the fastest pace in nine months, while output expanded at its quickest rate in seven months, signalling strengthening confidence across key sectors of the economy.

The report showed that growth was broad-based, with all four major sectors

surveyed recording higher output levels during the month.

The stronger demand environment encouraged firms to increase purchasing activity and build inventories in anticipation of future sales. Companies also reported improved supplier performance, aided by better road conditions, prompt payments and stronger relationships with vendors, resulting in faster delivery

times and more efficient supply chains.

However, while business activity strengthened, employment growth remained modest. Companies continued to add staff, extending a year-long streak of job creation, but hiring failed to match the pace of expansion in output and new business.

Industry operators also faced lingering operational challenges, including customer payment delays, shortages of materials and intermittent power disruptions, all of which contributed to a further increase in backlogs of work.

Despite the encouraging growth momentum, inflationary pressures remained a key concern. The survey indicated that rising fuel prices, exacerbated by geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, continued to push up input costs across the economy.

Although purchase costs increased sharply during the month, the pace of inflation eased to a three-month low, providing some relief to businesses struggling with elevated operating expenses. Companies also reported higher transportation-related costs, prompting some firms to increase employee compensation to cushion the impact of rising living expenses.

Output prices similarly rose at a slower pace compared with previous months, with inflation easing to its lowest

level since February. Manufacturers and agricultural firms recorded some of the strongest increases in selling prices as businesses sought to pass higher operating costs on to consumers.

Commenting on the report, Muiyiwa Oni, Head of Equity Research, West Africa at Stanbic IBTC Bank, said the latest PMI reading reflects improving economic conditions and aligns with stronger growth trends seen in the broader economy.

According to Oni, the PMI's indication of economic activity suggested that first-quarter growth would remain robust, although official figures from the National Bureau of Statistics showed the economy expanded by 3.89 percent year-on-year in the first quarter, slightly below Stanbic IBTC's implied estimate of 3.99 percent.

He noted that the gap was largely attributable to weaker-than-expected performance in the non-oil economy, while growth in the oil sector moderated significantly compared with the previous quarter.

Key sectors driving economic expansion included agriculture, manufacturing, construction, information and communication technology, trade, finance and insurance, underscoring the resilience of Nigeria's productive sectors despite macroeconomic headwinds.

From left, Daren Tang, Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organisation Daren Tang, and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Jumoke Oduwale after receiving his delegation on a high-level bilateral discussions and the official unveiling of the new WIPO Nigeria Office in Abuja, recently.



Prevalence of deep seaports not enough for African economy —Operator

Tola Adenubi | Lagos

A boom in deep seaport constructions in different parts of Africa is not enough and will definitely not drive the continent's economic future alone except massive investments in strategic marine assets, such as vessel acquisition, coastal shipping systems, offshore support fleets, inland waterways logistics, marine engineering capabilities, cargo distribution networks is done to sustain trade movement, an expert has said.

Speaking with the *Nigerian Tribune*, a seasoned shipping professional, Captain Ladi Olubowale explained that without these capabilities, established deep seaports risk becoming sophisticated gateways operated largely for the benefit of foreign shipping and logistics interests while African economies

capture only a fraction of the long-term value.

Captain Ladi Olubowale, an Executive Director of Seamate Maritime Integrated Services Limited, said this is the defining challenge facing Africa's maritime future as ports alone do not create maritime power.

He said: "As Africa accelerates the development of deep seaports and industrial trade corridors, a more strategic question is emerging beyond infrastructure investment: Who will control the marine assets powering Africa's trade economy?"

"Across the continent, governments are committing billions of dollars toward maritime infrastructure development. From the rapid expansion of Deep Seaports in Nigeria to emerging deep seaport projects and port modernisation efforts in Ghana, Senegal, Angola, Na-

mbia, Kenya, Tanzania, and South Africa, Africa is entering what may become the most transformative maritime era in its modern history."

According to Olubowale, "For many policymakers, these projects symbolize economic growth, industrialization, regional trade integration, and global competitiveness. However, beneath the optimism lies a structural reality that Africa must urgently confront: Ports alone do not create maritime power

"No nation becomes a maritime force simply by constructing terminals and dredging channels. Maritime dominance is built through ownership and control of the strategic assets that sustain trade movement — vessels, coastal shipping systems, offshore support fleets, inland waterways logistics, marine engineering capabilities,

cargo distribution networks, and integrated supply chain operations.

"This is the defining challenge facing Africa's maritime future."

He pointed out that major maritime economies from Singapore, the UAE to China, Norway, Greece, and South Korea did not become maritime powers solely through infrastructure spending but their dominance emerged because private sector operators strategically invested in marine assets, shipping capacity, industrial logistics systems, and trade-linked maritime ecosystems.

Olubowale averred that it is a lesson for Nigeria and other African countries, which they must understand as "the real economic value in maritime trade is not merely in the port infrastructure itself. It lies in controlling cargo movement."

Nigeria, Zimbabwe firms explore AfCFTA to deepen digital trade in Africa

Collins Nnabuife | Abuja

CHI.africa, a pan-African Trade Intelligence and Coordination Platform, has entered into a partnership with Zimo Clan and Maistrade Multipurpose Cooperative Federation Limited to expand cooperative participation, digital commerce, trade traceability, and cross-border market access across Africa.

The partners said the initiative is aimed at creating an integrated ecosystem that will support farmers, traders, cooperatives, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), commodity aggregators, and entrepreneurs seeking greater participation in continent's growing digital and trade economy.

According to the organisations, the collaboration combines Chii.africa's trade intelligence and coordination infrastructure, Zimo Clan's community and network-building platform, and Maistrade's expertise in cooperative development to foster inclusive economic growth and strengthen regional trade integration.

The initiative aligns with key objectives of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), digital trade

expansion, cooperative development frameworks, and emerging cross-border payment innovations, including future interoperability with the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS).

Under the arrangement, the integrated ecosystem will provide services ranging from cooperative and SME onboarding, digital identity and verification systems, trade traceability, product verification, and agricultural marketplace access to cooperative finance, savings coordination, and cross-border trade facilitation.

The partners said participating members will access the ChiiMais platform, which connects producers, buyers, traders, service providers, and ecosystem partners across multiple African markets through data-driven coordination and market intelligence.

They noted that the platform is designed to create practical economic opportunities for various stakeholders. Farmers are expected to benefit from aggregation networks, improved market visibility, and verified trade opportunities, while traders will gain access to structured and traceable value chains.

NADDCC, Chinese company collaborate to boost local vehicles production in Nigeria

Tyavzua Saanyol | Abuja

THE National Automotive Design and Development Council (NADDCC) is collaborating with a Chinese company, Jiangling Motors Group Co. Ltd in a bid to foster the development of the Nigerian Automotive Industry.

Speaking while meeting with the company's leadership in China, the Director-General of NADDCC, Otunba Oluwemimo Joseph Osa-

nipin reaffirmed the Federal Government's commitment to supporting local vehicle assembly and automotive industrialization in Nigeria.

Osanipin emphasized that Nigeria remains committed to creating an enabling environment for vehicle assembly, technology transfer, local content development and sustainable industrial growth.

According to a statement by the Council, the DG noted

that strategic international collaborations remain critical to positioning Nigeria as a competitive automotive manufacturing hub in Africa while strengthening investor confidence in the country's automotive sector

The statement explained that as the government agency responsible for the development and regulation of Nigeria's automotive sector, NADDCC's presence at the engagement demonstrated

the Federal Government's strong institutional backing for credible Nigerian assemblers and long-term automotive investments in the country.

Furthermore, the statement said the DG also witnessed the signing of a collaboration agreement between Jiangling Motors Group Co. Ltd. and Nigerian assembler, Cedric Masters Limited, led by its CEO, Chief Anslam Ilekuaba.

NGX extends losing streak by N478bn as investors shed banking, consumer stocks

Kehinde Akinseinde-
Jayeoba | Lagos

THE Nigerian Exchange (NGX) sustained its downward trajectory on Tuesday as renewed selloffs in banking and consumer goods stocks wiped off about N478 billion from investors' portfolios, pushing the benchmark index lower for the second consecutive session.

The NGX All-Share Index (ASI) declined by 0.35 per

cent to close at 246,686.66 points, dragged down largely by losses in First HoldCo, Zenith Bank, PZ Cussons and Wema Bank.

Consequently, the market's year-to-date return moderated to 58.53 percent, while month-to-date performance weakened to negative 1.5 percent.

Market capitalisation fell to N158.21 trillion from the previous session, reflecting the bearish sentiment that has continued to dominate trading activities despite

pockets of bargain hunting in selected counters.

Trading data showed that First HoldCo shed 6.7 percent, Zenith Bank lost 2.3 percent, while PZ Cussons and CWG both recorded the maximum daily decline of 10 percent. Wema Bank also came under significant pressure, falling 9.1 percent.

The banking sector emerged as the worst-performing index, declining by 1.63 percent as investors took profits in several tier-one and mid-tier banking

stocks. The consumer goods index followed with a 0.50 percent loss, while the insurance index declined by 0.44 percent. The oil and gas sector slipped marginally by 0.04 percent, while industrial goods and commodities closed flat.

Analysts attributed the sustained weakness to continued profit-taking activities after the market's strong rally earlier in the year, with investors locking in gains amid heightened caution.

Market breadth remained

firmly negative, underscoring the weak sentiment across the market. A total of 37 stocks closed in the red against only 14 gainers, translating to a market breadth ratio of 0.38 times.

Among the day's gainers, International Energy Insurance Company rose by 9.9 percent to top the advancers' chart, while Trans-Nationwide Express gained 7.4 percent. Other notable gainers included Neimeth International Pharmaceuticals, LivingTrust

Mortgage Bank and Abbey Mortgage Bank.

On the losers' table, CWG and PZ Cussons led with 10 percent declines each. They were followed by ABC Transport, Wema Bank and Sovereign Trust Insurance.

Investor participation also weakened considerably during the session. Total trading volume on the exchange declined sharply by 47.9 percent to 587.64 million shares valued at N23.06 billion and exchanged in 63,954 deals.

i-invest relaunches as complete investment, loan advancement platform

Chima Nwokoji | Lagos

INVESTMENT platform i-invest has officially relaunched as a comprehensive one-stop solution for investing and borrowing, marking a significant upgrade that integrates multiple financial services into a single mobile application.

The platform, which began primarily with Treasury Bills and equities, has now expanded its offerings to include other fixed-income instruments, mutual funds, Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs), and a new Asset-Backed Loans feature.

This transformation aims to serve retail investors and borrowers seeking seamless access to wealth-building tools and credit facilities without navigating multiple platforms.

Speaking at the launch event, Tobi Olusoga, CEO of Parthian Technologies, the company behind i-invest, emphasized that while the product has evolved, the core mission remains unchanged.

"I am a trained accountant, and yet investing felt like a dif-

ferent world," Olusoga said. "Building wealth should not depend on who you know. That question became the foundation of i-invest."

She recounted starting her own investment journey with just ₦20,000, which has since grown substantially, using the story to illustrate that consistent investing habits matter more than perfection or large capital. "Wealth creation does not require having all the answers," she added.

The new i-invest app introduces several user-centric improvements. Jennifer Ogame, Head of Products, highlighted the platform's redesigned interface, faster performance, simplified onboarding, and enhanced security features during her presentation.

"We have completely reimagined the app from the ground up," Ogame stated. "Users can now personalise their dashboard to show fixed-income recommendations, market movers, watchlists, or news that matter to them."

Nigerian firm awards contracts for three newbuild LNG vessels

Dayo Ayeyemi | Lagos

NIGERIA'S Bonny Gas Transport Limited has awarded contracts for the construction of three newbuild LNG vessels to Hudong-Zhonghua Shipbuilding (Group) Co. Limited and China Shipbuilding Trading Co. Limited.

The vessels are part of BGT's fleet renewal and replacement plan programme.

BGT is a subsidiary of Nigeria LNG Limited (NLNG)

According to the statement by the company, each vessel will have a cargo capacity of 174,000 cubic metres and will be fitted with advanced X-DF propulsion technology.

This technology, the company said will improve fuel efficiency and reduce emissions compared to older vessel designs.

"The vessels are expected

to be delivered in 2029.

"They will be chartered by NLNG and managed by NLNG Shipping and Marine Services Limited (NSML), an integrated maritime services company with a strong reputation for providing top-notch maritime services.

"This is an important milestone in BGT's plan to modernise its fleet and support cleaner, more efficient and future-ready operations," the statement read.

The vessels, the company said will meet global and EU emissions regulations and help NLNG maintain its OGMP 2.0 Level five rating.

"The new vessels will further strengthen NLNG's ability to deliver cleaner energy to the world and support the company's commitment to sustainability and operational excellence," the statement read.

CBN targets 50 million new bank accounts with PSV 2028 platform

Tyavzua Saanyol | Abuja

THE Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) is targeting 50 million new bank accounts under the newly launched Payments System Vision (PSV 2028), a platform that aims to increase digital banking usage in Nigeria by 2028.

Speaking in Abuja, the Governor of CBN, Mr. Olayemi Cardoso stated that the apex bank is targeting 95 percent inclusion in the digital banking sector with PSV 2028

He said: "Under vision 2028, I would like to see this reaching 95% inclusion, that means 50 million more market women, farmers and young people will have a bank account in their name, with their name and BVN protecting them".

Cardoso revealed that Nigeria already occupies a position of leadership within Africa's payments landscape and has established itself as one of the world's most dynamic digital payments ecosystems.

"The significance of this position extends beyond the payments ecosystem itself. It creates opportunities to accelerate economic formalization, expand financial access, support trade and investment, and strengthen Nigeria's position within the regional and global economy.

"We have the scale, talent, entrepreneurial capacity, and institutional foundations to build on these achievements. PSV 2028 provides a framework for translating

these strengths into broader economic value and long-term national competitiveness.

"The Central Bank of Nigeria remains committed to providing the leadership and enabling environment necessary for this transformation. We will continue to promote innovation while safeguarding stability, strengthen oversight while encouraging competition, and work collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure that our payments ecosystem evolves in line with both global standards and national priorities.

"The success of PSV 2028 will not be measured by the quality of this document. It will be measured by execution - by our ability to expand opportunity, strengthen trust,

lower barriers to participation, and build a payments ecosystem that serves every Nigerian and supports the ambitions of our economy."

He said "this Vision therefore calls for sustained collaboration among government agencies, financial institutions, fintech companies, technology providers, development partners, academia, and users of payment services. Its success is a shared responsibility.

"Indeed, the future of finance is being shaped by systems that are faster, smarter, more connected, and more inclusive than ever before. The countries that will thrive in this new era will be those that invest in trusted, resilient, and forward-looking financial infrastructure.

Union Bank's Endless Possibilities campaign wins bronze at 2026 Pitcher Awards

UNION Bank of Nigeria's Endless Possibilities campaign has won Bronze in the Heritage category at the 2026 Pitcher Awards, one of Africa's foremost platforms for creative excellence.

The campaign was also shortlisted in the Craft category for Film Craft, a recognition of the artistry and technical quality behind the work. These recognitions were awarded following adjudication alongside qualifying entries from across the African continent.

The heritage win carries a particular resonance. It

recognises the bank's ability to honour its rich heritage while maintaining relevance with contemporary audiences.

For more than a century, Union Bank has been woven into the fabric of Nigeria's economic and social progress, and Endless Possibilities continues that story rather than departing from it.

Built to celebrate the ambition and resourcefulness of Nigerians who dream and create against the odds, the campaign mirrors the very qualities that have sustained the Bank across generations.

To be honoured in a category defined by history, identity and cultural continuity, is to have that legacy recognised on a continental stage.

Commenting on the award, Olufunmilola Aluko, Chief Brand and Marketing Officer at Union Bank of Nigeria, said: "We are honoured to be recognised at the 2026 Pitcher Awards for Endless Possibilities.

"This achievement reflects our commitment to telling authentic stories that resonate with the Nigerian spirit and reinforce our promise

to support the dreams and progress of the communities we serve. We are equally proud of the Film Craft shortlist, which speaks to the talent and collaboration behind the work."

This recognition on the African stage, adds to Union Bank's growing reputation for storytelling that is locally grounded and broadly resonant.

TAs the Bank deepens its connections with audiences across the country and continent, it remains committed to work that inspires confidence, possibility and progress.

news

UN budget crisis tops agenda as Nigeria's Jimoh Ibrahim takes helm of key UN committee

Kazeem Biriowo | Abuja

NIGERIA'S Ambassador to the United Nations, Senator Jimoh Ibrahim, has assumed leadership of the UN General Assembly's Fifth Committee with a pledge to confront the organisation's growing financial challenges, including a budget deficit of more than \$1.8 billion and the implementation of sweeping reform initiatives.

Ibrahim, who was elected chairman of the committee responsible for the UN's budgetary and administrative affairs, said the body will play a critical role in ensuring the effective management of the organisation at a time of fiscal constraints, geopolitical tensions and increasing demands on the United Nations' system.

In his acceptance speech on Tuesday, he described his election as both an honour and a significant responsibility, noting that the Fifth Committee oversees

key issues relating to administration, budgeting and human resources across the UN's 193 member states.

He thanked the member states, regional groups and bureau members for their support and confidence, while acknowledging the contributions of the outgoing bureau and the UN Secretariat.

The Nigerian envoy said the committee will be central to advancing the UN80 reform agenda, which seeks to improve efficiency and strengthen the organisation's operations amid mounting financial pressures.

According to him, ensuring that member states meet their assessed contributions promptly will be crucial to addressing the UN's financial difficulties and sustaining its programmes worldwide.

Ibrahim also identified geopolitical instability, economic uncertainty and governance challenges as major concerns facing the international community, warning that failure to

adapt to rapid technological changes could further complicate global development and security efforts.

He pledged to uphold the committee's tradition of consensus-building, stressing that cooperation among member states remains essential for effective decision-making and the achievement of the UN's objectives.

Drawing on his experience in Nigeria's National Assembly, where he served on budget and appropriation matters and chaired inter-parliamentary relations, Ibrahim said he will work to foster agreement among member states, while promoting transparency, accountability and prudent financial management within the organisation.

He reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to multilateralism and expressed confidence that member states would work together to strengthen the United Nations and advance global development goals.

\$750m SABER Programme: Shettima seeks extension of lifespan by one year

Taiwo Amodu | Abuja

VICE President Kashim Shettima, on Tuesday, mandated the Director General of the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC), Zarah Mustapha-Audu, to initiate moves toward extending the lifespan of the \$750 million World Bank-assisted State Action on Business Enabling Reforms (SABER) programme, by an additional year so that the 36 states in the country can fully utilise the opportunities.

The vice president gave the directive, while speaking during a stakeholder meeting on optimising the implementation of the SABER programme, at the Presidential Villa, Abuja.

Shettima, who implored state governments to accelerate business-enabling reforms to unlock the full potential of the \$750 million Fund, noted that a fully implemented SABER programme will help create a more predictable and transparent business environment.

He also listed other benefits of the programme to include: attracting domestic and foreign investment, strengthening private-sector confidence, reducing the cost of doing business, expanding digital and physical infrastructure, improving access to land and commercial justice systems and enhancing the competitiveness of the states.

translate into increased economic activity, higher productivity, job creation, improved Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) and better living standards for our citizens," he stated.

He noted that Nigeria stands a better chance of facilitating the actualisation of its one trillion-dollar economy drive by fully optimising SABER implementation.

"I, therefore, encourage us to engage constructively and contribute meaningfully to our deliberations. Let us seize this opportunity to unlock the full potential of the SABER Programme and position our states as engines of economic growth, investment and sustainable development," he stated.

Shettima tied the success of the ongoing reforms of the administration of President Bola Tinubu, to a conducive and enabling environment for businesses to thrive, maintaining that this can be determined at the sub-national level.

His words: "As a nation, we have embarked on a bold economic reform agenda under the leadership of President Tinubu. The success of this agenda depends significantly on our ability to create an enabling environment for businesses to invest, expand and create jobs.

"While the Federal Government continues to implement reforms at the national level, the reality

remains that many of the conditions that define the experience of investors and businesses are determined at the sub-national level. This is why the role of state governments in the implementation of SABER is critical."

Earlier, the Minister of State for Budget and Economic Planning, Dr Doris Uzoka-Anite, had encouraged stakeholders to address identified implementation bottlenecks as the SABER programme delivers its intended outcomes for Nigeria in line with the Renewed Hope Agenda.

She expressed optimism that the \$750 million performance-based intervention designed by the World Bank technical team and the PEBEC Secretariat will be accessed by the states.

Giving an overview of the SABER Programme and implementation matters, the Director-General of PEBEC, Zarah Mustapha-Audu, assured that the council remains committed to removing bureaucratic bottlenecks by working with all arms of government, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the private sector, and other stakeholders toward achieving the programme's objectives.

She explained that while the funds are tied to deliverables, progress is being made by participating states to meet all disbursement-linked indicators as stipulated by the programme.

GREENWICH HOLDINGS LIMITED AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025.



SUMMARY CONSOLIDATED AND SEPARATE STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

In thousands of Nigerian Naira	GROUP		Company
	December 2025	December 2024	December 2025
ASSETS			
Cash and short term balances with Central Bank of Nigeria	113,476	50,091	-
Due from other Banks	33,534,161	65,499,919	-
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	63,746,717	4,563,622	-
Investment securities:			
Fair value through OCI	61,749,700	9,266,098	-
Amortised cost	49,978,420	33,361,554	-
Pledged assets	3,035,263	9,569,686	-
Loans and advances to customers	48,553,881	40,977,525	-
Other assets	37,283,038	17,712,148	1,691,003
Investment in subsidiaries	-	-	52,951,477
Property and equipment	10,712,505	1,230,486	477,238
Intangible assets	196,623	254,077	-
Deferred tax asset	177,658	-	-
Total assets	309,120,842	182,485,204	55,037,718
LIABILITIES			
Due to Banks	43,617,025	5,730,204	-
Due to customers	173,836,351	94,313,267	-
Current tax liability	6,035,587	2,820,704	-
Other liabilities	8,847,546	31,285,926	1,803,319
Deferred tax liability	55,689	392,130	-
Total liabilities	232,412,198	136,542,231	1,803,319
EQUITY			
Share capital	7,759,631	6,498,164	7,759,631
Share premium	43,410,509	22,398,019	46,410,509
Retained earnings	16,453,020	13,134,961	(935,741)
Statutory reserve	8,226,847	4,064,605	-
Regulatory risk reserve	907,206	907,592	-
Fair value reserve	399,431	(412,366)	-
Treasury Shares	(648,000)	(648,000)	-
Total equity	76,708,644	45,942,975	53,234,399
Total equity and liabilities	309,120,842	182,485,204	55,037,718

The consolidated and separate financial statements were approved and authorized for issue by the Board of Directors on 27 February 2026 and signed on its behalf by:

Dr. Adenike Orolape Kalecho
(Chief Financial Officer)
FRC/2024/PRO/CAN/002/665438

Mr. Samson Oyejola Ayika
(Group Managing Director)
FRC/2014/PRO/CAN/00000001251

Mr. Oluwayode Akinlunde Falowo
(Group Chairman)
FRC/2014/PRO/DIR/003/00000007051

SUMMARY CONSOLIDATED AND SEPARATE STATEMENTS OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

For the year ended 31 December 2025	GROUP		Company
	31 December 2025	31 December 2024	31 December 2025
In thousands of Nigerian Naira			
Interest income of amortised cost	47,304,974	21,150,729	-
Interest income on financial assets at FVPL	193,354	-	-
Interest income on financial assets at FVOCI	2,044,605	1,199,563	-
Interest expense	(31,802,654)	(9,617,431)	-
Net interest income	17,690,081	12,732,851	-
Impairment charge	(25,072)	(77,266)	-
Net interest income after impairment charge for credit losses	17,665,009	12,655,585	-
Fee and commission income	4,083,158	1,630,017	-
Net gains on foreign exchange	37,538	2,140,115	-
Net gains on financial assets at FVPL	9,601,446	1,142,157	-
Other operating income	466,875	320,364	-
Operating income	31,894,266	17,902,228	-
Personnel expenses	(4,784,557)	(1,868,203)	(558,599)
Depreciation of property and equipment	(831,458)	(278,034)	(30,526)
Amortization of intangible assets	(134,223)	(126,455)	-
Other operating expenses	(4,835,437)	(4,333,704)	(346,614)
Operating expenses	(12,585,675)	(6,626,396)	(935,741)
Profit / (loss) before tax	19,308,591	11,275,832	(935,741)
Income tax expense	(5,393,509)	(3,165,954)	-
Profit / (loss) for the period	13,915,082	8,109,878	(935,741)
Other comprehensive income			
Items that may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss:			
Net fair value gain on financial assets at FVOCI	953,203	(9,453)	-
	953,203	(9,453)	-
Items that may not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss:			
Net fair value gain on financial assets at FVOCI	(168,575)	149,581	-
	(168,575)	149,581	-
Other comprehensive gain for the year, net of taxes	784,628	55,128	-
Total comprehensive income / (loss) for the year	14,699,710	8,165,006	(935,741)
Profit / (loss) for the period attributable to:			
Equity holders of the Company	13,894,902	8,110,918	(935,741)
Total comprehensive income / (loss) attributable to:			
Equity holders of the Company	14,679,530	8,164,046	(935,741)
Basic earnings per share (Naira)	195.38	156.15	(13.16)
Diluted earnings per share (Naira)	195.38	156.15	(13.16)

Report on compliance with banking regulations

During the year, the Bank subsidiary incurred penalties totaling N10 million in respect of the Risk Assets Examination for contravention of the regulation on unsecured lending.

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR ON THE SUMMARY CONSOLIDATED AND SEPARATE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

To the members of Greenwich Holdings Limited

REPORT ON THE SUMMARY CONSOLIDATED AND SEPARATE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Opinion

The summary consolidated and separate financial statements (the "summary financial statements"), which comprise the summary consolidated and separate statements of financial position as at 31 December 2025 and the summary consolidated and separate statements of comprehensive income for the year then ended are derived from the audited consolidated and separate financial statements (the "audited financial statements") of Greenwich Holdings Limited ("the Company") and its subsidiary companies (together the "Group") for the year ended 31 December 2025.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent in all material respects, with the audited financial statements, in accordance with the requirements of the Companies and Allied Matters Act and Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria (Amendment) Act, 2023.

Summary financial statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the IFRS Accounting Standards, the Companies and Allied Matters Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria (Amendment) Act, 2023 and other relevant Central Bank of Nigeria circulars applied in the preparation of the audited financial statements of the Group and Company. Therefore, reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements and the auditor's report thereon.

The audited financial statements and our report thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial statements in our report dated 18 May 2026. That report also includes the communication of key audit matters. Key audit matters are those matters that, in our professional judgement, were of most significance in our audit of the financial statements of the current period.

Directors' responsibility for the summary financial statements

The directors are responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies and Allied Matters Act and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria (Amendment) Act, 2023.

Auditor's responsibility

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

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements

In accordance with our full audit report, we confirm that:

i. we did not report any exceptions under the sixth schedule of the Companies and Allied Matters Act;

ii. The group paid penalties in respect of contraventions of certain sections of the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act and relevant regulatory circulars including circulars issued by the Central Bank of Nigeria during the year ended 31 December 2025.

In accordance with the requirements of the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria, we performed a limited assurance engagement and reported on management's assessment of Greenwich Holdings Limited's internal control over financial reporting as of 31 December 2025, and we have issued an unqualified opinion in our report dated 18 May 2026.

Wura Olowotoye

For: PricewaterhouseCoopers
Chartered Accountants
Lagos, Nigeria



18 May 2026

Engagement Partner: Wura Olowotoye
FRC/2017/PRO/CAN/004/00000016809

The statement of financial position, statement of comprehensive income, independent auditor's report and specific disclosures are published in compliance with the requirements of 5.27 of the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act. The information disclosed have been extracted from the full financial statements of the Company and the group and cannot be expected to provide as full an understanding of the financial performance, financial position and financing and investing activities of the Company and the group as the full financial statements. Copy of the full financial statements can be obtained from the Registrars of the Company.

It's Your 76th Posthumous Birthday, **BRODA BAYO!**



Today, we celebrate your life and enduring legacy as your memory continues to inspire us.

Though you are no longer with us in person, your love, wisdom, kindness, and values remain a constant reminder of the life you lived and those you impacted. On what would have been your birthday, we remember the countless lives you touched and the indelible mark you left on our hearts.

Your absence is deeply felt, but your presence lives on in our cherished memories.

We pray that your gentle soul continues to rest in perfect peace.

*Sleep on,
Omo Iya Alaro!*



His Excellency,
Otunba (Dr.) Christopher
Adebayo Alao - Akala
FORMER EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF OYO STATE

Fondly remembered by:

Senator Abdulfatai Buhari, Ph.D
Oyo North Senatorial District

NNPC's refineries: Another repair gambit

THE Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Nigeria National Petroleum Company, NNPC Limited (NNPC Ltd), Engr. Bashir Bayo Ojulari, caused shock waves around the country's oil and gas sector and the economy at large when, in May, he announced the signing of another Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with two Chinese firms on the repair and operational support for the Port Harcourt and Warri refineries. "Yet another round of repairs?" That was the question that reverberated across the public and private sectors of the economy as news of the new MoU echoed across the airwaves. A statement by the NNPC's Chief Corporate Communications Officer, Andy Odeh, said that the company signed the MoU with two Chinese companies named Sanjiang Chemical Company Limited and Xingcheng (Fuzhou) Industrial Park Operation and Management Co. Limited, and that the operations would cover a "potential Technical Equity Partnership (TEP) in support of the completion and operation of the Port Harcourt and Warri Refineries."

According to the statement, the MoU was signed by Ojulari on behalf of the NNPC; the chairman of Sanjiang Chemical Company, Guan Jianzhong, and the chairman of Xingcheng (Fuzhou) Industrial Park Operation and Management Company Limited, Bill Bi, in Jiaxing City, China. Quite expectedly, leaders in the public and private sectors, including professional bodies, weighed in on the development almost immediately, criticising the MoU for not meeting the threshold of transparency. For instance, the Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA) called for accountability before more money could be committed to the project, while civil society organisations demanded clarity on the over \$3.5 billion previously spent on the 2021 rehabilitation exercise. On his part, a former president of the Organised Private Sector of Nigeria (OPSN), Dela Oye, insisted that one of the Chinese firms lacked a track record in refinery turnaround maintenance and was facing financial constraints, while the other was primarily a real estate company. The MoU was also criticised for running the risk of repeating past failures which led to huge financial waste and zero results. The critics called for the consideration of better options, such as privatisation or the adoption of indigenous operators.

The alarm triggered by the development cannot be said to be misplaced. Once bitten, twice shy, goes the popular saying. In the present case, Nigerians have been bitten more than twice as far as the NNPC's moribund refineries are concerned. The announcement by Ojulari's NNPC is even instructive. Less than a year ago, he announced that the company was considering the sale of its rundown refineries in view of the huge constraints on public finance. During an interview with Bloomberg on the sidelines of the 9th OPEC International Seminar in Vienna, Austria, in July 2025, the NNPC's Group Chief Executive said that selling the Port Harcourt, Warri and Kaduna refineries was an option under consideration due to the challenges of rehabilitation, and that a strategic review

was underway. His words: "Sale is not out of the question. All the options are on the table, to be frank, but that decision will be based on the outcome of the reviews we're doing now."

It is a thing of surprise that Ojulari and his team would conclude after the long months of review that what is best for Nigeria is to commit to another round of uncertainty, especially in the hands of Chinese companies which have no historical links with the construction of the refineries in question. It is even more confounding that the NNPC would go public with such a position after the humongous waste that the refineries had constituted to the public purse in the last 20 years. Available public records show that the Federal Government and the NNPC had spent an estimated \$25 billion on Turn Around Maintenance (TAM) of the refineries in Port Harcourt, Warri, and Kaduna in the last 20 years. Though the figures tend to fluctuate depending on the volume of repairs included, the estimates have ranged from about \$5-6 billion to over \$25 billion. The joke has been on the Federal Government all along that, whereas a citizen of the country, Aliko Dangote, spent about \$20 billion to build the biggest refinery in the world — the Dangote Refinery in Lagos—the Nigerian government has spent a similar amount, if not more, on its four refineries, which to date have remained mere conduits of ruin and waste. A 2023 report by the House of Representatives stated that over N11.35 trillion (about \$25 billion) had been spent in the preceding 10 years (2013-2023) on fixing the dead refineries, which had continued to show zero capacity utilisation.

At the outset of the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, former President Olusegun Obasanjo reiterated his conviction that the nation's refineries would never work again and advised that they should be sold. The GMD of NNPC at the time, Mele Kyari, countered the former president. At a stage, he declared that the Port Harcourt refineries were technically completed, and even called on him (Obasanjo) to undertake a tour of the facility. However, it turned out that Kyari was only taking the nation and President Tinubu for a ride, as nothing came out of the \$2.39bn expenditure he persuaded the late President Muhammadu Buhari to commit to the venture. The Port Harcourt Refinery was said to have been completed, with production starting in November 2024, but it was shut down after six months when the lid was blown open that the refinery was merely blending some products. This is a huge scam that has left a gaping hole in the common purse.

With the gory details already unraveled about the Chinese partners of Ojulari and the NNPC, it would come as a huge surprise if President Tinubu allows the company to once again take Nigeria on another route to financial perdition. One of the famous quotes of the late President Muhammadu Buhari is this: "If we don't kill corruption, corruption will kill us." In the emerging scenario, if Nigeria doesn't do something about NNPC's penchant for financial waste, the company will get Nigeria entangled in the worst financial infamy anyone can imagine.



In the emerging scenario, if Nigeria doesn't do something about NNPC's penchant for financial waste, the company will get Nigeria entangled in the worst financial infamy anyone can imagine.



ADC crisis: Aregbesola asks new judge to withdraw from Gombe's suit

Sunday Ejike | Abuja

THE national secretary of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), Mr. Rauf Aregbesola, has asked Justice Peter Lifu of the Federal High Court sitting in Abuja to recuse himself from the party's leadership crisis suit reassigned to him.

Aregbesola's application came barely a day to the commencement of hearing in the suit filed by Nafiu-Bala Gombe to stop Senator David Mark-led leadership of the ADC from parading themselves as valid leaders of the

party.

Justice Lifu had fixed Wednesday for the hearing of the case after the Chief Judge of the court, Justice John Tsoho, reassigned the matter to him.

The suit, filed by Gombe, the aggrieved former national deputy chairman of ADC, was earlier before Justice Emeka Nwite of a sister court.

The matter was, however, reassigned to Justice Lifu, after Nwite's name was announced among the 12 new justices whose names were sent to President Bola Tinubu for approval as Justices of the Court of Appeal.

Meanwhile, Aregbesola, in a motion on notice dated June 1 but filed June 2, asked Justice Lifu to withdraw from the case and transfer the suit back to the Chief Judge for reassignment to another judge.

The ADC national secretary, through his lawyer, Mohammed Sheriff, cited lack of confidence in the judge, in his seven-ground argument.

He submitted that the 1999 Constitution (as amended) guarantees every litigant a hearing before an independent and impartial panel.

"Certain circumstances have arisen in this matter which creates a reasonable

apprehension of lack of confidence by the 3rd defendant which may undermine public confidence in the administration of justice," he argued.

Aregbesola said the court, in a suit No: ABJ/CS/2637/2026 between the Incorporated Trustees of the National Forum of Former Legislators Vs. INEC and six others, where his party (ADC) was the 3rd defendant in the suit, had shown a likelihood of lack of confidence.

He said this was so, because the court, "had given rulings against established principles of law and adverse to the applicant and his party

in that suit.

"Ordered an accelerated hearing when the matter was not in fact a pre-election matter or a matter of urgency.

"Refused two motions for stay of proceedings and directed parties to enter their defence, adopt their processes and adjourned for judgment, despite being informed of a pending appeal entered before the Court of Appeal and an affidavit of fact showing same before it."

He said at the proceedings of May 22 in Appeal Number: CA/ABJ/CV/569/2026, "counsel for the appellant informed the Court of Ap-

peal of this court's refusal to stay proceedings, and in complete indignation and irritation at this court's refusal to stay further proceedings, the Court of Appeal granted an order for stay of further proceedings.

"The applicant has no confidence in this court to administer justice in these proceedings. It is in the interest of Justice that the matter be heard by another judge.

"The applicant believes that a fair-minded observer would reasonably apprehend a lack of confidence in proceedings before this honourable court."

Atiku queries INEC over leaked data, demands full disclosure of probe report

By Muideen Olaniyi

FORMER Vice President Atiku Abubakar has said that the latest statement by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) concerning the unauthorised disclosure of information from its Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) database has only reinforced the urgent need for a full, transparent, and independent investigation into the matter.

In a statement issued by his Senior Special Assistant on Public Communication, Phrank Shaibu, the presidential candidate of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) asked the commis-

sion to provide information about the individuals who leaked the data if there was no hacking.

The former vice president noted that INEC's own statement revealed that it had identified the specific user account through which the information was accessed and that relevant personnel had already been questioned.

"That is welcome, but identifying a user account is only the beginning. Nigerians deserve to know the full chain of custody of this information: who accessed it? Who authorised its release, how it reached political actors, and whether anyone outside the commission

benefited from or encouraged the unauthorised disclosure," he said.

The Wazirin Adamawa noted that while INEC had attempted to reassure Nigerians that there was no external hacking incident or breach of its ICT infrastructure, the commission had nevertheless admitted that sensitive voter information was accessed through valid official credentials and subsequently released without authorisation.

"INEC's statement has moved this issue beyond conjecture. The commission has now confirmed that voter information was accessed through credentials assigned to personnel

participating in the ongoing CVR exercise and that such information was released without authority. That admission alone should concern every Nigerian.

"What Nigerians want to know is simple: how did information that resides within a restricted electoral database find its way into the hands of political actors and their associates?"

"The fact that there was no external hack does not diminish the gravity of the incident. If anything, it raises even more troubling questions about internal controls, institutional safeguards, and the possibility of political interference," he said.

Pity Fayose, don't be angry with him, Makinde appeals to Nigerians

By Busola Oworu

OYO State governor Seyi Makinde, has appealed to Nigerians to pray for former Ekiti State governor, Ayodele Fayose, following what the state government described as a series of unfounded allegations made against him.

The appeal was contained in a statement issued on Tuesday by the Commissioner for Information, Prince Dotun Oyelade, who said Nigerians were shocked by Fayose's recent public comments and accusations against Governor Makinde.

According to the commissioner, the former governor appeared to be acting under certain influences, leading him to make claims that were not only false but also capable of distracting attention from critical security challenges facing Oyo State.

"Nigerians watched with shock as the former governor disintegrated before the eyes of the world by making a series of false accusations, apparently under certain in-

fluences," Oyelade stated.

Oyelade said Governor Makinde remains focused on addressing the ongoing security challenges in the state, particularly efforts to secure the release of children and teachers reportedly abducted by kidnappers.

"Governor Seyi Makinde is too preoccupied with finding a solution to the challenges posed by the kidnappers of children and teachers in the state to engage someone whose lifestyle and comportment have been suspect over a long time," the statement said.

"For a former governor to be so consumed by the politics of vindictiveness, villainy, deceit and hate that he would further endanger the lives of those in captivity and distract security agents from handling this delicate job smacks of one who has lost his mind," he added.

The Commissioner also linked Fayose's actions to earlier political remarks allegedly made by the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike.

EFCC, Sule Lamido clash over witness in N1.35bn fraud trial

Sunday Ejike | Abuja

A disagreement broke out in court on Tuesday between former Jigawa State governor, Sule Lamido, and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) over a witness summoned to testify in his ongoing N1.35 billion money laundering charge preferred against him by the commission.

The anti-graft agency is prosecuting Lamido alongside his sons, Aminu and Mustapha, as well as Aminu Wada Abubakar and two companies over alleged fi-

nancial crimes.

At the resumed hearing before Ijeoma Ojukwu of the Federal High Court sitting in Abuja, the defence team requested additional time to speak with an EFCC investigator who had been brought to court under subpoena.

However, EFCC counsel, Chile Okoroma, opposed the request, arguing that all documents requested by the defence had already been submitted to the court.

Instead of granting an adjournment, the judge suspended proceedings for an

hour to allow the defence to meet with the witness.

When the hearing resumed, the witness told the court that he was not part of the team that investigated the case and said he had only been instructed to search for documents listed in the subpoena.

Following the testimony, defence counsel, Joe Agi, argued that the witness could not provide useful evidence as he had no direct knowledge of the case and urged the EFCC to produce a more relevant witness.

The prosecution disagreed, maintaining that

the EFCC is a corporate body and that any qualified staff member could represent the agency.

Okoroma also maintained that the defence had already received all the documents it requested.

Justice Ojukwu advised the defence that if it wished to obtain testimony from a specific witness who had earlier appeared in court, it should formally apply for that witness to be recalled, noting that subpoenas are generally used when a witness refuses to appear voluntarily.

CLTC to investigate alleged torture, death of FUTO student

Taiwo Amodu | Abuja

THE Citizenship and Leadership Training Centre (CLTC) has announced the commencement of an administrative investigation into the death of a student of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO), Chinedu Chibuzor Christogonus who died following alleged torture by officials of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO) Man O' War Cadet Unit over an accusation of theft.

Spokesperson of the Imo State police command, SP Henry Okoye, had confirmed arrest of three students of FUTO in connection with the death of Chinedu Christogonus, who was allegedly attacked by fellow members of the Man O' War Cadet Unit following allegations that he

stole N13,500.

Reacting to the development in a statement on Tuesday, the director-general of the CLTC, Rinsola Abiola, expressed deep condolences to the family of the deceased student, the university community and his colleagues.

CLTC, which supervises Man O' War Nigeria and its formations across tertiary institutions through the National Union of Man O' War Cadets in Higher Institutions (NUMOWCHIN), said the conduct alleged in the incident was inconsistent with the organisation's operational standards and code of conduct.

The agency said it had commenced an administrative investigation into the circumstances surrounding the student's death and pledged to ensure transparency throughout the process.

Osun kidnap rumour: Adeleke deploys hunters, Amotekun

Adeolu Adeyemo | Osogbo

OSUN State governor, Senator Ademola Adeleke, on Tuesday disclosed that he had held three-day marathon security meetings aimed at preventing school kidnappings in the state.

According to a statement by his spokesperson, Malam Olawale Rasheed, the meeting brought together

formal security chiefs and informal groups, including local hunters, the Oodua Peoples Congress, and Agbekoya.

"The meetings, which began two days ago with internal security reviews, advanced into consultations to align formal and informal networks to protect lives and property in the state," he said.

The statement further explained: "Adeleke first met

representatives of local hunters, OPC, Agbekoya, and the Amotekun Corps and that the sessions were designed to build a coalition of informal security structures to complement the police, DSS, and other agencies.

"As part of statewide intelligence mapping, the governor has also received the informal report about areas of threats, likely hot-spots and

vulnerable border areas."

Also, Security Adviser to the Governor, Mr Samuel Ojo, said the meeting "firmed up pre-emptive security actions to stop any likely school kidnappings."

"The details of the security strategy are being kept secret. But on behalf of Mr Governor, I want to assure our people that Osun is safe and secure," Ojo said.

Send your opinion of about 1,000 words, with full name and address, to: optribune@yahoo.com

opinion

Okpebholo is delivering, Edo is transforming

By John Mayaki

DO you remember when Nigeria had a good economic run and there was a saying that the country has enough money but did not know what to do with it? That was a statement that the country came to regret. The person who made that statement has not repeated it anywhere to the best of my knowledge. It shows lack of planning and vision. In Edo state, the same is not the case. The removal of fuel subsidy and masterful accounting of the renewed hope administration in Nigeria has meant that allocation to the states have improved. Moreover, under the administration of Governor Monday Okpebholo, internally generated revenue in Edo State increased substantially. But Edo State is not at a loss for how to spend money. There is a particular philosophy of governance that is content to announce press releases with MoUs signed before cameras and projects pencilled into budgets that hardly become tarmac or timber or working engines. Nigeria has seen more of this kind of governance than its long-suffering citizens deserve. But Governor Monday Okpebholo's approach to the equipping of Edo State's institutions stands out with a clarity that even the most hardened skeptic would find difficult to dismiss.

In barely 18 months, his administration has placed more working machinery, more functioning vehicles, and more operational equipment into the hands of Edo's security agencies, local governments, transport companies, farmers, and road workers than the state has seen in many years combined. Just take a look at the commissioning ceremonies, EXCO approvals, photographic records, and the testimony of police commissioners, traditional rulers, local government chairmen, and ordinary Edo citizens who have watched vehicles roll off grounds and machinery move into communities that had never seen a grader before. The story of what Okpebholo has procured, deployed, and put to work is the story of a governor who understands a simple but frequently forgotten truth: governance is not what you say. It is what you deliver.

When Governor Okpebholo armed security agencies with new equipment and vehicles, Senator Adams Oshiomhole, who stood at the commissioning ceremony in February 2025 said, with genuine candour: "Those that borrowed so much money could not afford to buy a new vehicle for security agen-

cies. Yet, in just 100 days, you have achieved this for the people of Edo." The governor unveiled 78 brand new Toyota Hilux patrol vans and 16 Prado Jeeps, all fitted with communication gadgets, for the security agencies across the state. In November 2025, during a project inspection tour of Edo Central, he also commissioned and handed over an additional 10 brand new Toyota Hilux patrol vehicles to the Nigeria Police Force, Irrua Area Command. The Onojie of Uromi, Anselm Aidenojie II, described the governor's security approach as practical, inclusive, and results-driven. In September 2025, the Edo State Executive Council (EXCO) approved the purchase of a further 111 motorbikes for use by security agencies in addition to the over 300 units previously procured. The governor's budget presentation to the Edo State House of Assembly in December 2025 confirmed the cumulative total of 80 Hilux patrol vans and 400 motorcycles supplied to security agencies, alongside the passage of a stronger anti-cultism law and the recruitment and training of 2,500 officers into the Edo State Security Corps.

What of intrastate transportation? Look at Edo line. The answer is there. In February 2025, the governor commissioned

56 brand new Toyota Hiace buses for the New Edo Line transport company, part of a planned procurement of 100 buses to be completed before the end of that month. The vehicles were procured directly without consultants, and without the layers of bureaucratic intermediation that have historically slowed and inflated government procurement in Nigeria. Senator Oshiomhole noted this pointedly: the governor had simply identified the need, found the resources, purchased the vehicles, and commissioned them. The directness was itself a statement.

In September 2025, EXCO approved a second tranche: 50 additional Toyota Hiace buses (2024 model) to complement the 100 units already procured for the New Edo Line. At the same EXCO meeting, the council approved the acquisition of 50 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses, 2025 model, for the Edo City Transport Service (ECTS). We are not talking about refurbished buses. We are talking about deliberate effort to make Edo Line work with top-tier equipment. In February 2026, the governor distributed 54 units of heavy construction equipment to all 18 Local Government Councils in Edo State, and the respected minister of the FCT, Nyesom Wike, was there to commission them. The equipment package comprised graders, excavators, rollers, and other heavy-duty machinery specifically designed for road construction, rural access improvement, drainage rehabilitation, and community infrastructure works. Again, in March 2026, the governor commissioned newly procured light and heavy-duty road maintenance equipment at the Ministry of Works on Sapele Road in Benin City. He explained that for many years Edo residents had endured poor road conditions that led to accidents, increased transportation costs, slower movement of goods, and missed economic opportunities. The new equipment directly addresses the capacity gap that had made those endurances necessary.

Now, he also touched agriculture. Governor Okpebholo's administration allocated N70 billion to agriculture in the 2025 budget. Again, under the Back to Farm Initiative, the government committed to preparing large farmlands across all three senatorial districts for large-scale farming, grouping farmlands to give farmers better access to tractors, improved seeds, fertilisers, and modern farming methods.

(See the rest on www.tribuneonlineng.com)

• Mayaki writes in from Edo State.



In barely 18 months, his administration has placed more working machinery, more functioning vehicles, and more operational equipment into the hands of Edo's security agencies, local governments, transport companies, farmers, and road workers than the state has seen in many years.

SWDC's rail ambition is about economic coordination

By Remi Ladigbolu

THERE are moments when development conversations stop sounding like routine government engagements and begin to reflect something more deliberate and structural. The recent rail strategy co-creation sessions organised by the South West Development Commission (SWDC) felt very much like such a moment. What stood out was the repeated emphasis on preparation, institutional readiness and the need for government to understand infrastructure not merely as construction, but as a long-term economic system requiring coordination, commercial logic and strategic planning. Across the engagements held on May 19, following earlier discussions on May 18 and culminating in an extensive rail corridor inspection tour on May 20, one phrase surfaced repeatedly. The need to become an "intelligent client". The expression came up so frequently that it eventually began to define the tone of the entire exercise. Discussions consistently returned to the importance of understanding financing structures before pursuing projects, anticipating investor concerns before negotiations begin, and developing commercially viable frameworks before committing resources. Participants repeatedly stressed that successful infrastructure systems are rarely built on engineering alone.

They depend equally on preparation, governance structures, policy alignment and institutional coordination. The sessions brought together SWDC management and technical officials, led by the Managing Director, Dr Charles Akinola, representatives of Odu'a Investment Company Limited, the South-West Governors' Forum, Development Agenda for Western Nigeria (DAWN) Commission, Southwest Agribusiness Company Limited (SWAgCo), the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC), independent rail consultants and other stakeholders interested in the future of regional logistics and economic integration. What gradually emerged from the conversations was a framework that appeared to go well beyond rail transportation itself. At the centre of that thinking was the question of how the South-West can reorganise the movement of goods, industrial activity and regional commerce around a more integrated logistics system. The South-West remains Nigeria's most economi-

cally active regional bloc. Lagos serves as the country's commercial gateway, Ogun continues attracting manufacturing investments, while Oyo increasingly positions itself as a logistics extension corridor. Osun, Ondo and Ekiti also possess considerable agricultural and mineral resources capable of supporting wider industrial expansion. Yet despite that economic concentration, movement across the region remains overwhelmingly dependent on roads, with the consequences visible in port congestion, deteriorating highways, rising haulage costs and increasing pressure on industrial supply chains. The question therefore is no longer whether rail matters. The more important question is whether the South-West can build an integrated movement system in which ports, industrial corridors, agricultural clusters, freight terminals and logistics hubs function as parts of a coordinated regional economy.

That broader ambition appeared to shape much of the conversations. One phrase repeatedly used during the sessions was the "railway encirclement" of the South-West economy. At first hearing, the expression sounded somewhat expansive. After the field tour, however, its practical

meaning became considerably clearer. Participants travelled through sections of the NRC's standard gauge rail network, visiting strategic freight and industrial facilities including the Papalanto Freight Yard in Ogun State, the Lafarge cement facility at Ewekoro, the Moniya Freight Yard in Oyo State and later the Lagos Port Freight Yard in Apapa. Together, the visits revealed an existing but significantly underutilised logistics spine already cutting across major economic zones within the region. The tour also challenged the widespread perception that freight rail operations are largely absent in Nigeria. Beyond the areas covered by the standard gauge rail network in the South-West, cargo services presently move from Ibadan through Osogbo in Osun State and onward to Ilorin in Kwara State using sections of the existing narrow-gauge network. At Papalanto and Ewekoro, stakeholders were shown how cement products are already being transported through the standard gauge rail channels, while gypsum, timber and other industrial materials also feature within existing freight operations.

At Moniya, participants observed how rail-linked freight arriving at the terminal is subsequently distributed by trucks into surrounding commercial corridors. Although some loading operations presently remain manual, there are expectations that increased mechanisation may emerge over time. What became increasingly evident throughout the tour was that substantial infrastructure already exists. The larger challenge appears to lie in creating the institutional, commercial and policy framework capable of maximising the economic value around those corridors. Officials repeatedly clarified that SWDC does not presently intend to build rail lines directly. Rather, its current thinking appears focused on positioning the South-West to benefit from the Federal Government's broader railway master plan, which envisages eventual standard-gauge connectivity across the region and beyond. Much of the Commission's attention therefore appears directed towards corridor development, logistics integration, land management and investment readiness. Land itself featured prominently during discussions. Participants repeatedly referenced the strategic importance of railway right-of-way corridors already secured over several decades.

(See the rest on www.tribuneonlineng.com)

• Ladigbolu is a journalist based in Lagos.



The more important question is whether the South-West can build an integrated movement system in which ports, industrial corridors, agricultural clusters, freight terminals and logistics hubs function as parts of a coordinated regional economy.

ARTS & REVIEW

with Adewale Oshodi

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The diplomat and a witness to war

A review of Ambassador Shina Fatai Alege's book, *The Sirens And The Flag*, by Dr Wale Okediran



embody the delicate balance between loyalty and empathy, strategy and sincerity. In this silent battlefield of peace, the diplomat learns that influence is earned not through command, but through the art of listening."

When Ambassador Alege first stepped on the soil of Ukraine in 2021/22, he found a peaceful and beautiful country; "When I arrived in Kyiv, the city immediately struck me as a place of quiet beauty and hidden strength. Its wide boulevards, golden-domed cathedrals, and the Dnipro River winding gracefully through the capital spoke of a people steeped in history yet determined to chart their own course. It was early summer — a time when the city shimmered under long daylight hours, and the streets hummed with youthful energy."

However, when in February 2022, the first explosions broke Ukraine's dawn, the hitherto beautiful and calm city became chaotic as

'windows trembled, birds scattered from the rooftops, and for one suspended moment, the city — proud, restless Kyiv — went utterly still'.

At the same moment, the Embassy of Nigeria in Kyiv was thrust from its usual diplomacy activities into an unprecedented humanitarian mission: the evacuation of thousands of Nigerian citizens—mostly students—from a nation under siege.

According to the author; "When the first explosions tore through the morning sky, the embassy's marble floors seemed to hum with the vibration of a world unravelling. Outside, sirens wailed through Kyiv's frozen streets; inside, calm had to be manufactured — one breath, one decision at a time. The flag still hung steady, though the air around it trembled. Within those walls, every creak of the door carried the weight of responsibility: citizens seeking safety, calls from headquarters, the unspoken fear that the line between diplomacy and survival had vanished. Guarding the mission was no longer a metaphor. It was a test of endurance, of faith, and of the unyielding idea that even in war, the homeland could still have an address."

Through the help of field notes, message logs and midnight reflections, the author was able to piece together the fragments of his story into a book that 'tells of the courage of ordinary people caught in extraordinary times; of young Nigerians who faced artillery fire with astonishing resolve; of parents who prayed across time zones; of diplomats who learned that statecraft sometimes means carrying suitcases, calming voices, and answering phones that never stopped ringing'

A veritable treasure trove of information about politics, diplomacy, international relations and war, the book gives you access to all the details about Nigeria's diplomatic relations with Ukraine, the genesis of the war with Russia as well as the evacuation of stranded Nigerians in the country.

As the author puts it; "Soon, the sound of sirens became our constant companion, each one a reminder that peace can vanish in an instant. The measured cadence of diplomacy was replaced by urgency — evacuation plans, coordination with other missions, and the delicate task of keeping hope alive amid chaos. Our first priority was the safety of Ni-

gerians — particularly the students trapped in conflict zones. The embassy became a lifeline, coordinating with volunteer networks, humanitarian corridors, and neighboring missions to facilitate evacuations. Each successful message — "We are safe", "We've crossed the border", "Thank you, sir" — felt like a small victory against the overwhelming tide of war".

In the book which is in 12 parts and 29 Chapters, Ambassador Alege has done an exceptional job in balancing the delicacy of diplomacy against the background of a gripping story. Despite this, the narrative did not hold back in its exposition of the ugliness of war, neither did it take sides in the unfortunate imbroglio nor did it prescribe judgement to those who are complicit. What the author did was to put in place a story of genuine hope and a record of endurance. Above all, he wrote a book for "those who lived through the experience, those who waited anxiously at home, and those who believe that even amid chaos, dignity can prevail".

Away from the cacophony of sirens, buzzing of shellfire, the whizzing of missiles, the spattering of blood and mud, and the tearing down of bodies, "The Sirens and the Flag" ends in medias res, without triumph or tragedy, only in the further possibilities of the enduring legacies of resilience, solidarity and grace under unimaginable pressure.

With a Foreword by Professor Ibrahim Gambari, another quintessential former Nigerian Diplomat and Minister of Foreign Affairs, the book hit the bookshelves in the first quarter of 2026.

POEM:

Songs of a Naija Man

When love reigns

Grant us Lord, with pure love
And all our problems will be
written off

From our minds, hate will
disappear
So also, the pains of fear

Families will grow in peace
Societies too will flourish

War will be a stranger
Strives will meet with anger

The earth will breathe peace
Its people with love will be rich

The meaning of life will be so
enriched
When into the embrace of love,
we would have reached

By Ade A. Ajakaiye

Cultivating Patience: A journey to inner peace and happiness

By Folorunsho Moshood

PATIENCE qualifies as a phenomenon because it meets the basic phenomenal criteria. Psychologically, it is a measurable shift in emotional regulation and decision-making that recurs across cultures and ages. Neuroscientifically, distinct brain-activity patterns emerge when people "wait calmly." Socio-culturally, rituals, proverbs, and teachings about patience appear worldwide, making the occurrence a cross-cultural regularity. Philosophically, patience is treated as an experience of inner steadiness. Religiously, the two chief scriptures—Bible and Qur'an—across their many chapters likewise stress the value of patience to the believers. For instance, Proverbs 14:29 says, "Whoever is patient has great understanding, but a hasty temper shows folly". Surah Al-Baqarah 2:153 declares, "O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer; indeed, Allah is with the patient".

The book, *Embracing Stillness: The Power and Wisdom of Patience*, written by Euphemia Oluchi Igbosofulu, and published in 2025

by Dreg Global Publisher, reveals how other religions, apart from Christianity and Islam, hold this phenomenon in high esteem. The 174-page scintillating book is divided into eight distinct chapters that easily flow into one another. Chapter one provides a comprehensive understanding of patience and its importance in people's lives, defining it as a multifaceted skill that enables individuals to navigate life's challenges with calmness, resilience, and emotional intelligence.

Chapter two explores the concept of patience in the face of adversity, using the metaphor of "dancing in the rain" to signify embracing life's challenges rather than waiting for them to pass.

The third chapter explores the pivotal role of patience in fostering self-discovery, emotional intelligence, and achieving long-term goals. This chapter encourages individuals to view challenges as opportunities for growth and development, rather than insurmountable obstacles.

The fourth chapter explores the role of patience in relationships, highlighting its importance in navigating conflicts, building strong

bonds, and fostering enduring love, understanding, and forgiveness.

Chapter five examines the impact of patience on communities and societies, highlighting its role in building strong relationships, resolving conflicts, and fostering social cohesion.

The last chapter explores the importance of patience in today's fast-paced world. It provides practical tips and strategies for cultivating patience, including mindfulness, reframing thoughts, setting realistic expectations, practicing gratitude, taking breaks and developing empathy.

The author adopts a multi-perspective approach, drawing on philosophical insights, socio-cultural and religious belvederes and practical advice. The writing style is clear and concise, making complex concepts easy to understand. The use of biblical examples and real-life scenarios adds depth and context to the discussion of patience. The language, tone and examples used suggest that the book is suitable for readers from various backgrounds and age groups.

•Moshood is a literary enthusiast.

Tinubu, Aiyedatiwa, Akande, Fayemi, Alake, Opadokun laud Ondo commissioner for role in restoring democracy

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu and other elder statesmen have lauded the Ondo State Commissioner for Information and Orientation, Idowu Ajanaku, for the role he played that led to the restoration of democracy in 1999.

This was conveyed in separate messages of goodwill by the president, Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa, Chief Bisi Akande, Dr Kayode Fayemi, Dr Dele Alake, Ayo Opadokun, to the commissioner on his 60th the birthday anniversary.

In a statement by Bayo Onanuga, Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, congratulating Idowu on his diamond jubilee, President Tinubu also commended his courage, vibrancy and unwavering dedication to the noble profession of journalism over many decades.

The president acknowledged Ajanaku's immense contributions to democracy and good governance in Nigeria, recalling his "valiant efforts against tyranny" during the dark days of military rule.

Lauding the celebrant's commitment to strengthening the progressive movement in the South-West zone, the president highlighted Ajanaku's stellar track record, just as he noted his impactful service as Senior Special Assistant on Public Affairs and later as Special Adviser on Information and Strategy in Lagos State, before successfully heading the media campaign for the late Governor Rotimi Akereolu.

Similarly, Aiyedatiwa, in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary (CPS), Mr Ebenezer Adesuyan, described the attainment of 60 as a milestone that calls for gratitude to God and reflection on a life of purpose and impactful service.

"Ajanaku has distinguished himself as a seasoned communications professional and committed public servant whose wealth of experience continues to add immense value to the governance process in the state," Aiyedatiwa added.

"Since assuming office as Commissioner for Information and Orientation, he has played a pivotal role in

strengthening the state's information management architecture and deepening government-citizen engagement through effective and strategic communication."

Also, elder statesman and former interim national chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Chief Akande, in his goodwill message, wrote: "Idowu, you

have used journalism as a tool to shape and help the people and you have served with dignity and integrity."

On his part, former Governor Fayemi of Ekiti State commented on Ajanaku's fearless role in the enthronement of democracy, recalling Ajanaku's contributions at The Guardian Newspaper during the NADECO era, particularly

the struggle to actualise the annulled June 12, 1993, presidential election mandate won by the late Bashorun M.K.O. Abiola.

Also, Chief Ayo Opadokun, the Secretary-General of Afenifere and NADECO during the pro-democracy struggle, commended Ajanaku's lifelong bravery and commitment to the progressive path.

Reflecting on Ajanaku's international contributions to the ruling party, Mr Dele Alade, who was then the APC-USA National Leader, recalled their joint involvement in Egbe Omo Yoruba conferences in Atlanta, Georgia and Texas, where Ajanaku used his media prowess to promote the progressive struggle.



Minister of State for Education, Professor Suwaiba Ahmad (second left), presenting Information and Communication Technology (ICT) equipment to the Vice Chancellor, Federal University of Education, Kontagora, Niger State, Professor Faruk Haruna (left), during the handing over of ICT equipment to 15 federal and state colleges of education by the Federal Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Government of Japan and UNESCO-IICBA, in Abuja, on Tuesday. With them are: Director of the Colleges of Education, Federal Ministry of Education, Dr Uchenna Mba (right) and Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of Japan, Mr Hitoshi Kozaki. Photo: NAN.

FG begins upgrade of colleges of education with modern digital tools

Clement Idoko | Abuja

THE Federal Government has commenced the upgrading of colleges of education across the country with modern digital tools as part of efforts to strengthen teacher training, improve digital literacy and enhance access to quality education.

The initiative began with the official handover of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) equipment and materials to 15 federal and state colleges of education drawn from the six geopolitical zones.

The intervention, facilitated through support from the Government of Japan and the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA), is being implemented under the project, "Capacity-building of teachers to promote continuous and Inclusive Access to Safe and Quality Education for Girls in West Africa."

Speaking during the handover ceremony, in Abuja on Tuesday, the Minister of State for Education, Profes-

sor Suwaiba Said Ahmad, described the intervention as a milestone in the Federal Government's drive to modernise teacher education and promote inclusive learning.

She noted that the project, which covers Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Nigeria, aligns with the Federal Ministry of Education's priorities under the Renewed Hope Agenda, particularly in the areas of equity, quality education, digital transformation and inclusive access to learning.

The minister said teachers remain central to the success of any education reform, stressing that no education system can thrive without well-trained, motivated and digitally empowered educators.

"It is encouraging that within the framework of this project, UNESCO-IICBA, in close consultation with the Federal Ministry of Education and beneficiary institutions, has acquired ICT equipment aimed at upgrading institutional facilities with modern digital tools," she said.

Kaduna: ADC Appeals Committee affirms Mikati as winner of gov primary

Orders fresh, rerun primaries in federal, state constituencies -Unveils Idris Yanoko as Kano governorship candidate

From Muhammad Sabiu and Kola Oyelere

THE African Democratic Congress (ADC) Primary Election Appeals Committee in Kaduna State has affirmed Shuaibu Idris Mikati as the party's governorship candidate, while ordering fresh and rerun primary in several federal and state constituencies following the determination of petitions arising from the party's primaries.

Announcing the committee's decisions, Chairman of the Appeals Committee, Dr Muhammed Mustapha Fagge, a retired Comptroller of Immigration, said the panel meticulously reviewed petitions, documentary evidence and submissions from aggrieved aspirants before reaching its verdicts.

Fagge disclosed that the committee unanimously upheld Mikati's emergence as the ADC governorship flag-

bearer after establishing that he secured the highest number of valid votes cast.

The committee further noted that evidence presented before it revealed irregularities and fraudulent activities linked to some competing governorship aspirants, strengthening its decision to affirm his victory.

The committee also upheld the victories of Tukur Salisu Kakeyi in the Zaria federal constituency primary and Muhammed Mahmoud Aliyu in Soba federal constituency after confirming that both aspirants recorded the highest number of valid votes in their respective contests.

However, the committee declared several primary inconclusive and ordered reruns in constituencies where substantial irregularities, procedural breaches, omitted candidates, or insufficient evidence of voting were established.

For instance in the Ikara/Kubau federal constituency, the committee directed a rerun after finding that a duly screened aspirant, Ibrahim Danlami Kubau, was omitted from the ballot papers.

Similarly, a fresh primary was ordered for Kaduna South federal constituency after investigations revealed that no credible evidence that elections were conducted across all wards in the constituency.

Fagge stated that rerun elections would be conducted in affected wards and constituencies across Kaura, Soba, Ikara, Kajuru, Badarawa/Malali, Magajin Gari II, Birnin Gwari, Tudun Wada West, Igabi, Kagarko, Kawo, Zaria, Chikun/Kajuru and Kudan/Makarfi, among others, to safeguard the credibility and integrity of the party's nomination process.

The committee also delivered a significant ruling on

the Kaduna North senatorial district primary, declaring that any attempt to adopt a consensus or affirmation process would be invalid unless it enjoys the consent and agreement of all parties involved.

Party unveils Idris Yanoko as Kano governorship candidate

Meanwhile, a faction of the ADC led by Nafi'u Bala Gombe, has unveiled Idris Yanoko, as its governorship candidate for Kano State ahead of the 2027 general election.

The party's acting chairman in the state, Musa Yankaba, announced the decision during the formal presentation of Yanoko to the factional national leader, Nafi'u Bala.

Yankaba said the choice of Yanoko followed extensive consultations among party leaders and stakeholders, expressing confidence in his capacity to provide effective leadership and address the needs of the state if elected.

New antibiotic-free strategy prevents newborn meningitis

By Sade Oguntola

RESEARCHERS at ETH Zurich and the University of Basel in Switzerland have developed a promising antibiotic-free approach to prevent life-threatening newborn meningitis before infection occurs.

Newborn meningitis is one of the most dangerous childhood infections. It can be fatal and, in survivors, may cause long-term complica-

tions such as developmental disorders. While relatively rare overall, it occurs more frequently in premature babies, affecting about one in every 500 infants in industrialised countries, and likely more in low-resource settings.

In their study, the researchers combined bacteriophages (viruses that kill bacteria), oral vaccination and probiotics to significantly reduce transmission of the

dangerous E. coli K1 pathogen from mothers to their offspring.

The approach uses bacteriophages originally isolated from Swiss wastewater. These viruses strip E. coli of its protective coating, making the bacteria more vulnerable to immune attack.

Scientists say the method could offer a new way to combat drug-resistant infections at a time when antibiotic effectiveness is declining

worldwide.

The work was led by Emma Slack, Professor of Mucosal Immunology at ETH Zurich, and M d ric Diard, Professor of Infection Biology at the University of Basel. Their goal is to stop infection transmission before it occurs by targeting bacteria in the intestines of pregnant women who carry them.

The researchers acknowledge that eliminating such pathogens in the gut is chal-

lenging, but say their strategy exploits a natural weakness of the bacteria.

In experiments involving pregnant mice infected with E. coli K1, the team tested a three-part intervention. First, bacteriophages were used to weaken the bacteria by removing their protective shell. Second, an oral vaccine stimulated antibody production in the gut to further suppress the pathogen. Third, a harmless

probiotic bacterium was introduced to compete with and displace the weakened bacteria.

In untreated control groups, E. coli K1 was transmitted to 83 percent of newborn mice. With the combined treatment, transmission dropped to 23 percent, with the remaining offspring protected.

The researchers are now working toward adapting the approach for human use.

INSIDE NIGER DELTA

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BEDC rewards students with N2.25m in Edo, promotes energy education

Idahosa Moses | Benin

THE Benin Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC) has rewarded winners of its 2026 Children's Day essay competition with cash prizes of N2.25 million in a move aimed at promoting energy education and encouraging academic excellence among students.

The competition, organised as part of activities marking the Children's Day celebration, saw students from various schools within the company's franchise areas compete for top honours through essays focused on electricity distribution and related subjects.

Akhimen Melody emerged as the overall winner and received a cash prize of N1 million, while Shaka Momodu Jeffery secured the second position with N750,000. Elizabeth Osa-Edohen came third and was rewarded with N500,000.

Speaking during the presentation ceremony in Benin City, the Chief Executive Officer of BEDC, Jonathan Lawani, said the initiative formed part of the company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes designed to give back to communities in its operational areas.

Lawani, who was represented by the company's secretary, Esanye Major, said the competition was specifically created to expose young learners to the fundamentals of electricity distribution, safety practices and the critical role of distribution companies in national development.

He said the programme also sought to stimulate students' interest in the power sector, while equipping them with knowledge about the processes involved in delivering electricity to homes and businesses.

He noted that the initiative reflected the company's commitment to promoting awareness about electricity distribution among young people and strengthening its relationship with host communities.

As part of the celebration, participating students were taken on an educational tour of a BEDC substation and operational control room, where they received practical lessons on electricity generation, transmission and distribution.

The students were also enlightened on electrical safety measures and the processes involved in ensuring that power reaches consumers across the company's franchise areas.

IWG expresses concern over increasing oil pollution-related health hazards in N'Delta

Aherhoke Okioma | Yenagoa

A non-governmental organisation (NGO), the International Working Group on Petroleum Pollution and Just Transition (IWGPPJT) in the Niger Delta, has described as highly traumatising the impact of oil pollution on the environment and health of the people of Bayelsa State.

The NGO, which is currently carrying out a sensitisation campaign on health hazards associated with the menace in the state, disclosed this during a visit to Governor Douye Diri, in Yenagoa.

Speaking through its team lead, Professor Engobo Emeseh, the group expressed concern that average life expectancy in Bayelsa has

reduced significantly as the "people are forced to live on contaminated land, air and water.

Professor Emeseh, who is of the Law Faculty of Aberswhyth University, United Kingdom, clarified that the IWG is focusing advocacy on the health of the people in line with the recommendations of the Bayelsa State Oil and Environmental Commission (BSOEC) report, which was submitted in 2023.

She disclosed that laboratory analysis of blood samples taken from indigenes from across the eight local government areas in Bayelsa indicated high levels of hydrocarbon pollution and carcinogenic metals, causing a sharp increase in mortality and morbidity rates in the state.

Emeseh, who commended

the Bayelsa government for being the first sub-national government, to set up a high-powered commission on oil and environment, said the IWG will continue to partner the state and other relevant organisations to mitigate the negative impact of oil pollution on the health of the people.

"Most of us here were constituted as members of the BSOEC. We gave our report in 2023; first presented at the House of Lords, and also presented to the Bayelsa government here in Creek Haven in October 2024, and then presented to the wider public in Abuja.

"In all of this, the Bayelsa government has given us the space and the support to provide our expertise and advice on how to deal with the chal-

lenge of the scourge of oil pollution in our state.

"We presented our report based on the evidence that we gathered, having gone to all the local government areas in Bayelsa, and spoken to indigenes and key stakeholders in the state.

"My colleagues and I, who were members of the expert working group, were quite traumatised at what we found in the state, and we called our report an environmental genocide.

"Based on that, we committed that though our commission was de-commissioned in November 2024, that we were going to carry on with this work," Emeseh said.

In his response, Governor Douye Diri, represented by his deputy, Dr Peter Akpe, described the report of the BSOEC

as one of the most important documents to guide concerted actions in the mitigation of environmental hazards from oil pollution in the state.

Diri thanked members of the IWG for partnering the government by making their expertise available to the ongoing efforts towards mitigating the impact of oil pollution on the health of Bayelsa residents.

Members of the six-man delegation include Dr. Kathryn Nwajiaku-Dahou, representing ODI Global UK; Professor Michael Watts of University of California; and Dr. Isaac Osuoka of York University, Canada.

Others are Professor Anna Zalik, also from the York University, Canada, and Dr. Cautlin Strong of the ODI Global, United Kingdom.



Members of the International Working Group (IWG), during a visit to Governor Douye Diri, at Government House, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. Photo: Aherhoke Okioma

Group decries rising banditry, child abductions

Idahosa Moses | Benin

THE leadership of the Neo Black Movement (NBM) of Africa worldwide, a pan-African organisation, has expressed concern over the growing wave of child abductions and insecurity across the country, warning that the trend poses a grave threat to Nigeria's future and development.

In a statement on Monday, by its president, Dr. Charles Chimezie, the organisation condemned the activities of bandits and kidnapers who abduct children and subjected them to exploitation within criminal networks, describing the development as a direct assault on the nation's collective future.

The group's concern comes

amid increasing cases of kidnapping across the country, including the recent abduction of 46 teachers and students in Oyo State by bandits.

The incident, which sparked widespread outrage and renewed concerns about the safety of schools and vulnerable communities, has further highlighted the country's security challenges.

Chimezie said that every child taken away from his or her family represents a life disrupted, a dream endangered and a future placed in jeopardy.

He stressed that the affected children deserve protection, rehabilitation and the opportunity to grow in a safe and secure environment.

"A nation that tolerates the loss of its children has lost its future. Every child deserves a home, not a hideout. Every child deserves love, not fear," he stated.

He called on the federal and state governments, security agencies, community leaders and other stakeholders to intensify efforts aimed at rescuing children currently in captivity, dismantling criminal networks and restoring peace to the affected communities nationwide.

Chimezie noted that insecurity has continued to devastate families, displace communities and rob countless children of access to education, identity and hope, adding that urgent intervention has become imperative to

prevent further deterioration of the situation.

He urged religious leaders, traditional rulers, civil society groups and well-meaning Nigerians to unite against what it described as a growing menace capable of undermining the nation's social and economic stability if left unchecked.

Reaffirming its commitment to child protection and humanitarian advocacy, the group said it will continue to promote awareness, support vulnerable communities and champion initiatives aimed at safeguarding the dignity, welfare and wellbeing of children, insisting that the protection of every child remains a critical pillar of national development and a safer Nigeria.

C'River arraigns 60 residents for environmental violations

Joseph Abasi-Abasi | Calabar

CROSS River State government has arraigned 60 residents before an Environmental Sanitation Mobile Court (ESMC) for various environmental offences, including violations of regulations governing the state's monthly sanitation exercise.

The offenders were apprehended by officials of the ministry during enforcement operations carried out in some parts of Calabar as part of the monthly sanitation exercise, which is observed on the last Saturday of every month, and were subsequently arraigned before the ESMC.

Speaking with journalists after the exercise, the Commissioner for Environment, Mr. Obol Moses Osogi, commended residents for the compliance recorded during the May edition of the programme.

The commissioner, represented by the Director of Environmental Health and Pollution Control, Mr. Dien Ugumanim described the compliance level as encouraging.

He said that areas previously identified as sanitation hotspots have shown significant progress, adding that traders and residents in the 8 Miles Market have adhered to movement restrictions and actively participated in cleaning surroundings.

inside niger delta

Youths, women benefit from LIFE-ND agric support scheme in C'River

Joseph Abasi-Abasi | Calabar

ABOUT 630 youths and women in Cross River State have benefited from the flag-off of the additional financing phase of the Livelihood Improvement Family Enterprises in the Niger Delta (LIFE-ND) project, an intervention jointly funded by the Federal Government, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the Cross River government.

The beneficiaries received

cash grants, certificates and agricultural inputs during the graduation and launch of the 2026 farming season held in Calabar.

Speaking at the event, the state Project Coordinator of LIFE-ND, Dr. Innocent Ogbin, described the programme as a strategic intervention aimed at promoting youth empowerment, sustainable agriculture and food security in the region.

He said 250 beneficiaries will benefit from the cash component of the programme, with a total of N100 million earmarked for disbursement, while others will

receive agricultural inputs tailored to their areas of production.

He said that beneficiaries were engaged across four major agricultural value chains, including rice, cassava, poultry and fish production.

"Today's event marks the distribution of support packages to both long-term and short-term incubatees, alongside the issuance of certificates and cash disbursement to beneficiaries under the cash support component.

"In total, we have 630 beneficiaries. The long-term incubatees underwent training for about three months,

while the short-term trainees received training lasting between two and three weeks," he said.

Ogbin explained that beneficiaries in rice and cassava production received fertilisers and agrochemicals, while those involved in poultry and fish farming will receive support specific to the nature of their enterprises.

He further stated that the selection of beneficiaries followed a transparent process involving radio announcements, newspaper publications, flyers, churches and community notice boards, after which interested partic-

ipants submitted expressions of interest.

He added that community stakeholders, including youths and women leaders, traditional representatives and incubators were involved in the screening and selection process.

Also, the Permanent Secretary in the state Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation Development, Dr. Odey Ikongha, who represented the Commissioner for Agriculture, Johnson Ebokpo, said the ministry had continued to provide monitoring and supervision for the implementation of the project in the state.

He reaffirmed the state

government's commitment to partnering with IFAD LIFE-ND in empowering youths and women through agriculture.

Ikongha noted that long-term incubatees, particularly those involved in cassava production, will continue practical field activities for up to one year to enable them apply modern agronomic practices and improve productivity.

Officials of the programme commended the Federal Government for supporting the initiative through the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, with additional backing from IFAD and the NDDC.

Bayelsa monarch nominated for community development award

Aherhoke Okioma | Yenagoa

THE paramount ruler of Azikoro Town in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, Dr. Amadoko Clever Austin, has been nominated for the 2026 Community Developer of the Year Award by the Bayelsa Media Network Awards (BMNA), in recognition of his contributions to peace and grassroots development.

The nomination letter was presented to the monarch at his palace in Azikoro by the Project Manager of BMNA, Mr. Blessing Matthew Ozegbe, who commended the traditional ruler for what he described as remarkable development and sustained peace in the community since his ascension to the throne.

Ozegbe said the monarch earned the nomination, due to the development witnessed in the community and the peaceful atmosphere prevailing under his leadership.

He described the monarch as a transparent and God-fearing ruler who has continued to lead the people with integrity and fairness.

He said the award was to recognise individuals whose leadership has significantly impacted their communities, adding that the award ceremony is slated for December 26, at the Ernest Ikoli Press Centre of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Bayelsa State Council, Azikoro road, Ekeki, Yenagoa.

As part of the event, a nomination banner was unveiled and hoisted at the palace of the monarch.

Responding, the monarch described the recognition as heartwarming, saying it reflect appreciation and confidence in his leadership style and commitment to the development of his community.

He thanked the organisers for the recognition and pledged his support towards ensuring a successful award ceremony.



Cross River State beneficiaries of the Livelihood Improvement Family Enterprises in the Niger Delta (LIFE-ND) project

Judicial independence bedrock of democracy —S'Court Justice

Idahosa Moses | Benin

JUSTICE of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, Mohammed Baba Idris, has declared that judicial independence remains the bedrock of democracy, warning that any attempt to subject the judiciary to political, financial or institutional influence could undermine constitutional governance and the rule of law.

Justice Idris made the assertion on Monday while delivering a lecture titled: 'The repositioning for effective justice delivery and democratic stability in Nigeria', at the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Benin Branch Law Week in Benin, Edo State.

Idris described an independent judiciary as the cornerstone upon which democratic

institutions and constitutional order are built, stressing that courts must remain free from external pressures to effectively discharge their constitutional responsibilities.

He said that a judiciary that is subjected to undue influence cannot function as an impartial arbiter between citizens and the state, thereby weakening public confidence in democratic institutions.

"A judiciary that is demonstrably independent is essential to preserving constitutional balance, sustaining democratic governance and inspiring public trust in the justice system," he stated.

He also advocated transparent and merit-based judicial appointments, promotions and disciplinary procedures, insisting that the processes must remain insulated from

partisan interests and political interference.

The jurist maintained that strengthening judicial independence will enhance effective justice delivery and contribute significantly to democratic stability in the country.

In his remarks, the Chief Judge of Edo State, Justice Daniel Okungbowa, described the Law Week theme: 'Reforming today, securing tomorrow', as apt and relevant to the challenges confronting the nation's justice sector.

Justice Okungbowa observed that the future of Nigeria's judicial system depends largely on the decisions being taken today and the reforms stakeholders are willing to embrace.

"The future of our justice system depends on the deci-

sions we take today and even on those actions we refuse to take. Reform is not a sign of weakness; it is a demonstration of strength and foresight," he said.

Also, chairman of the NBA, Benin branch, Mr. Idemudia Osifo, called on the government at all levels of to treat judicial independence as a constitutional imperative rather than a political slogan.

He stressed that respect for the rule of law remains the foundation of democratic governance and the credibility of the nation's justice system.

He added that the integrity and effectiveness of the judiciary depend significantly on the willingness of the executive arm of government to obey the law and honour judicial pronouncements.

Edo confirms Oshodin, Ehigiator as cultural ambassadors

Idahosa Moses | Benin

EDO State government has confirmed Chief Matthew Evbakor Oshodin, Chief Executive Officer of Surprise Pub and Cafe and Mr. Wilson Ehigiator also known as 'Akobe', as the Cultural Ambassadors of the state.

The recognition highlights their contributions to the promotion of arts, culture and the creative economy in the state.

The confirmation was made through the Commissioner for Arts, Culture and Creative Economy, Christopher Okaben, in his office in Benin.

Addressing journalists after their confirmations, Mr. Okaben said the state rewards those who, through what they do, promote the rich and cultural heritage of the Edo people and that, it has found such virtues in the persons of Oshodin and Ehigiator.

"Our little way of trying to appreciate great minds who have the interest of Edo at heart, who is passionate about promoting our cultural opportunities in this state, is what we have just done, reminding them of coming to do more good, to fly the flag of Edo in a positive light.

"And these two great sons of Edo that we have just honoured today, more of these awards are going to be coming up.

"We have great hands also coming from Edo North, and from Edo Central. So, they can be efficiently and more empowered to begin to do more of those good jobs they are doing.

"For Matthew Oshodin, he has been passionate about the cultural space, about performing artists and content creators.

"And for Akobe, I think he is going to use the mic positively in promoting and advancing the good works of the governor, Senator Monday Okpehoho," Okaben said.

The Permanent Secretary of the ministry, Iryn Omorogiuwa said the confirmation of the award on Oshodin is to spur him to up his games and continue to do his best in promoting the rich cultural heritage of the Edo people

ESSC nabs three over alleged plot to sell company's properties

Idahosa Moses | Benin

OPERATIVES of the Edo State Security Corps (ESSC) have arrested three suspects over an alleged attempt to unlawfully dispose of a company's delivery truck and its consignment of sachet water in Benin

The suspects were intercepted, following intelligence reports that led security operatives to a Toyota Dyna truck belonging to a sachet water manufacturing company based in Asaba, Delta State.

The *Nigerian Tribune* gathered that one of the suspects, Mohammed Magidji, a driver

employed by the company, had been entrusted with the delivery of approximately 150 bags of sachet water to customers before he allegedly diverted the vehicle from its designated route.

Sources disclosed that rather than complete the assignment and remit the proceeds from the sales to his employer, one of the suspects, Magidji allegedly conspired with two other suspects to move the truck to Edo with plans to sell both the vehicle and its contents.

It was learnt that the suspects' plan, however, hit a

snag after a prospective buyer reportedly contacted became unreachable shortly after they arrived in Benin.

The trio were said to have subsequently embarked on a search for another buyer in the city, a move that reportedly attracted the attention of security operatives.

Acting on intelligence, operatives attached to the Igbobi and Egbean sectors of the ESSC launched a coordinated operation on Ekehuan road, where the suspects were tracked and apprehended.

The security team also recovered the Toyota Dyna

truck, as well as the consignment of sachet water allegedly earmarked for sale.

During preliminary interrogation, two of the suspects, identified as Abdul and Abamaka reportedly accused Magidji of masterminding the operation.

They claimed that the driver lured them into the venture under false pretences and allegedly borrowed money to facilitate the movement of the vehicle from Delta State to Edo.

Magidji, however, denied being the sole architect of the alleged scheme, insisting that all three suspects were jointly involved in the operation.



Dr Christopher Adebayo Alao-Akala (1950-2022)
Former Executive Governor of Oyo State

REST ON, OMO IYA ALARO

**A QUINTESSENTIAL OMOLUABI
ENDOWED WITH AMAZING
GRACE; EVEN IN DEATH**

**STAY BLESSED IN THE BOSOM OF
YOUR LORD WHOM YOU SERVED
IN DEED AND IN SPIRIT**

I MISS YOU TO NO NO END

SUN RE O.

Engr. A. K Ahmadu, fnse, fnim

MID-WEEK POLITICS

Taiwo Adisa

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2027: Again, the three-horse race

As the 2027 presidential election fixed for Saturday, January 16, 2027 draws closer, Nigeria's political pendulum appears to be tilting toward another three-horse race. In this piece, MUIDEEN OLANIYI examines the chances and implications of the three major presidential candidates who were also the main actors in the 2023 contest.



Tinubu

Obi

Atiku

At the weekend, the coast became clear that the 2027 presidential election might be another three-horse race featuring incumbent President Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), former Vice President Atiku Abubakar of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) and, former governor of Anambra State, Peter Obi of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC).

The trio of Tinubu, Atiku, and Obi again emerged candidates of their various political parties after primary elections and consensus arrangements organised to beat the deadline set by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) ahead of the 2027 general elections.

In 2023, Atiku and Obi ran against Tinubu on different political platforms - Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Labour Party (LP) respectively. This time around, they are challenging the incumbent president on the platforms of ADC and NDC.

Although the contest will also have other contenders including Seyi Makinde of Allied People's Movement (APM), Donald Duke of Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), Adewole Adebayo of Social Democratic Party (SDP), Omoyele Sowore of African Action Congress (AAC), Anita Zugwai-Chukwu of Young Progressives Party (YPP), and Esther Okereke of National Rescue Movement (NRM), analysts believe that the three candidates will shake the polity again because of the country's political history, where ethnicity, religion, region, and sentiment override issue-based campaigns.

The 2023 presidential election was fiercely contested by the three candidates. Tinubu of the APC garnered 8,794,726 (37.62 percent). He was trailed by Atiku of then of the PDP who polled 6,984,520 (29.88 percent); Peter Obi of LP 6,101,533 (26.10 percent); and Rabiu Kwankwaso of the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) 1,496,687 (6.40 percent). Tinubu, Atiku, and Obi each won 12 states. While Tinubu won in Ekiti, Ondo, Ogun, Oyo, Kwara, Kogi, Niger, Benue, Zamfara, Borno, Jigawa, Rivers, Atiku secured victory in Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Taraba, Yobe, Osun, Akwa Ibom, and Bayelsa. Obi won in Lagos, Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Plateau, Nasarawa, Enugu, Anambra, Imo, Abia, Ebonyi, Edo, Delta, and Cross River. Kwankwaso of NNPP, who is now Obi's running mate for the 2027 presidential election, came fourth with victory in Kano State alone. Tinubu was declared winner after he met the constitutional requirements: highest votes and at least 25 percent in 24 states plus FCT. His 36.6 percent in the 7th election since Nigeria returned to democracy in 1999 was considered the lowest winning percentage.

Some pundits see the outcomes of that election as a reflection of ethnic and religious affiliation as the Muslim - Muslim ticket adopted by the APC also pitched the party against the Christian community.

The 61-year-old Obi who came third behind Atiku was believed to be a major beneficiary as he won 12 states, including the FCT. Obi, was vice presidential candidate of Atiku Abubakar in the 2019 presidential election which they lost to late Muhammadu Buhari of APC, cleared all states from his region, the South East geo-political zone, and defeated incumbent President Tinubu in Lagos in 2023.

Going by current situation, the three formidable presidential candidates will meet again if the ongoing court case over ADC leadership goes in favour of David Mark - led National Working Committee (NWC).

The 79-year-old Waziri Adamawa, who served as the second elected Vice President of Nigeria from 1999 to 2007 under former President Olusegun Obasanjo, is seen a frontrunner in the race for the 2027 presidency.

The former Vice President, who has operated within major political parties, including the defunct SDP, the PDP, the defunct Action Congress (AC), APC before joining ADC, entered politics with the encouragement of his mentor, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. Atiku has run for the presidency at least six times (1993, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2023). In 1993, 2011 and 2015, Atiku lost at the primaries. But in 2007 under the AC well as 2019 and 2023 under the PDP, he was defeated at the general elections. He lost to late Umaru Musa Yar'adua in 2007; Buhari in 2019; and incumbent President Tinubu in 2023.

In a recent interview, he declared the intention to pursue his possible last ambition to lead the most populous black nation

on earth again. He also said the North appeared more united behind his candidacy ahead of the 2027 general elections because it remained his political base. Atiku enjoys bloc votes from the North in 2023 and expects to repeat same feat again in 2027.

However, Sunday Adeniran, a political analyst and supporter of Tinubu, said Atiku has no chance to win the next election that he will not even get 25 per cent in any of the 17 southern states and in some states in the North Central geo-political zone, including Benue, Plateau and Kwara states.

Adeniran, in a post on his Facebook, said, "As we speak, there is no state in Nigeria that is ruled by the ADC while APGA, LP, Accord and even APM have a governor each.

The party has only angry birds with no political value as members.

"He (Atiku) will definitely win a few states in North East and North West but that won't take him close to winning the general election over all for even Buhari who has more followers in these two zones by far never won until he got a political enigma from the South to support him in 2025.

"Atiku cannot become president by relying on votes from two of six geopolitical zones and those who said that Obi will take southerner votes from Tinubu are naive.

"The southern votes that will go to Obi are those that Atiku would have gotten if he and Obi had succeeded in running on a joint ticket.

"It is politically advantageous to Tinubu that Atiku had Obi are running separately.

"It is just like the 2023 episode but even better now for him because Atiku is running on a weaker platform this time while the support for Obi has also greatly waned.

Atiku's chances in 2027 are brighter - Paul Ibe

Speaking with *Nigerian Tribune* on the chances of Atiku and implications of running a joint ticket with Obi, Paul Ibe, Media Adviser to former the Vice President, said those postulating such were people who had been used to buying votes.

He said the Waziri Adamawa, who has a pan-Nigeria mandate as reflected in the results of the presidential primary election, will have a smooth sail in 2027.

When told that the supporters of Tinubu saw the action of both his principal and Obi to contest the presidency on different platforms as a plus for the incumbent, Ibe said, "Where are they going to get the votes from?. There must be a pathway. They should stop being delusional. It is because of the fact that they are used to buying their way. They used to coerce people. They think we have the same way. Nigerians will not be coerced. Nigerians are tired.



Some pundits see the outcomes of that election as a reflection of ethnic and religious affiliation as the Muslim - Muslim ticket adopted by the APC also pitched the party against the Christian community.

Insecurity: Is politics driving South-West governors apart?

General Editor, Politics, TAIWO ADISA, examines the ominous silence among holders of political power in the South-West in the wake of bandits' dastardly attack on Oriire Local Government Area of Oyo State, the kidnapping of students and their teachers.

In recent years, three events have put to the test the level of unity and cohesion among governors of the South-West, especially under the aegis of the South-West Governors Forum. The forum, once led by the late Governor Rotimi Akeredolu, was never shy of putting on display its ability to speak with one voice at critical junctures. One instance was during the June 2019 killing of Mrs. Funke Olakunrin, daughter of Afenifere leader, Pa Reuben Fasoranti. The second was the processes leading to the establishment of Amotekun Corps and then the attack on St. Francis Catholic Church, Owo, by bandits, killing parishioners and residents of the community. The governors scaled the three huddles, making the forum emerge smelling like roses before the people.

Mrs. Olakunrin, Pa Fasoranti's daughter, was attacked and murdered by suspected bandits along the Benin-Ore Expressway on her way to Lagos. The governors of the region immediately pulled together despite the differences in political inclinations. Five of the governors attended the burial of Mrs. Olakunrin on June 22, 2019. They included Babajide Sanwo-Olu (Lagos), Dapo Abiodun (Ogun), Kayode Fayemi (Ekiti), Rotimi Akeredolu (Ondo), and Seyi Makinde (Oyo). The governors were quoted in the media as expressing readiness to tackle the incursion of banditry and insurgency into the region. Some observers have indicated that the incident was one of the propelling forces that gave fillip to the governors' push for the establishment of the Western Nigeria Security Network, otherwise called Amotekun Corps, under the administration of the late President Muhammadu Buhari.

Perhaps owing to the political sophistication of the zone, all of the six states have not really come under one political tendency since the start of the Fourth Republic. One or two states would just be left out in the opposite camp. The Olusegun Obasanjo tsunami of 2003 swept five of the six states, leaving Lagos, while the resurgence of the progressives in the zone has also been unable to bring all the states under one umbrella. At a point, Ekiti State, under Governor Ayo Fayose, was the only one left on the ticket of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), while the other states were ruled by the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), which transformed to the All Progressives Congress (APC). Oyo State joined Ekiti on the PDP flank in 2019, but Ekiti soon ported to the APC fold, and then Osun also left the progressives' fold when Governor Gboyega Oyetola lost to Senator Ademola Adeleke of the PDP. Despite the undulating nature of political control in the zone, the governors under the South-West Governors' Forum (SWGf) appeared focused on the goal of a united Oodua land.

Some analysts would say that the link provided by Oodua Group of Companies could be the source of the gravitational pull, while others have said that much of the united front is being championed by the Development Agenda for Western Nigeria (DAWN) Commission, a semi-official body which acts as the think-tank for the South-West states. Whatever it was, the governors appeared to keep passing the huddles against a united region. So, aside from the test provided by the killing of Pa Fasoranti's daughter, the attack on St. Francis Catholic Church, Owo, on June 5, 2022, was another test of the governors' unity. Members of the SWGF immediately visited Governor Akeredolu to commiserate with the people of Ondo State, while a virtual meeting was later held days after by the governors, who declared a three-day mourning period across the states. A communique of the meeting, which was later released by the late governor Akeredolu, indicated that the South-West states would observe the mourning period between June



Sanwo-Olu



Makinde



Abiodun

13 and June 15, 2022, to symbolise the collective loss across all the South-Western states of the country.

The communique read in part: "The recent attack on St. Francis Catholic Church, Owaluwa Street, Owo, compels immediate intervention in the whole of the South-West to nip the insidious phenomenon of insurgency in the bud. The meeting subsequently took decisions, some of which are expected to have far-reaching implications in the quest to protect lives and property in the region." During the three-day mourning period, flags were directed to fly at half mast in all public institutions across the zone in solidarity with the attack on the Owo Church by bandits who are still having their days in court. Though the Owo incident, coming a year after the inauguration of the South-West Security Network, Amotekun, was read by some analysts as a possible attack on Akeredolu's immediate domain for his forceful approach in handling the affairs of the SWGF, the development did not occasion any break in transmission by the governors.

The governors had scaled another major test to their unity when they launched the Amotekun corps on January 9, 2020, in Ibadan, Oyo State. That was, although the governor of Oyo State was (and is still) a member of the PDP. Having scaled such critical huddles as mentioned above, unfolding events, how-

ever, appear to be showcasing an SWGF that is growing wary or one divided along political lines. The forum, which is today under the leadership of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State, appears to be going soft and largely unheard, compared to the Akeredolu days.

On January 6, 2026, the Old Oyo National Park office located at the Oloka Village in Oriire local government of Oyo State was attacked by bandits, who killed some officials of the Forest Guards and forcefully released some herders who were said to have strayed into the Park. The SWGF was not as loud about that event as it used to be, but the silence was felt the more when, on May 15, 2026, reports indicated that bandits had again attacked Oriire local government via the Old Oyo National Park; this time, they kidnapped 39 students and seven teachers. They showed a video of the dastardly decapitation of the Mathematics teacher, Michael Oyedokun, who was one of the kidnapped, after they had earlier killed a teacher in one of the schools attacked. The attack on Ahoro Esinele and Yawota villages has caught national attention, leading to condemnation and protests by teachers under the Nigerian Union of Teachers and civil society organisations. Despite the widespread condemnation of the banditry, hitherto unseen in the South-West, the SWGF has been

unable to speak with one voice this time. Unlike what happened during the Owo massacre, when flags were flown at half mast and days of mourning were declared, the secretariat of the South-West Governors is yet to pay a visit to the affected state, while the governors' forum is yet to project a strong voice that would showcase a regional abhorrence of the development. Though the Federal Government had sent delegations to the affected community, officials of the government at the centre have not been seen at the state capital, or openly working with the state government on plans aimed at bringing back the kidnapped children and their teachers.

Questions are bound to be raised as to whether politics is already acting as the dividing line for the governors. Incidentally, two of the six states are not under the control of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC). While Oyo State, under Governor Seyi Makinde, is ruled by the PDP, Osun State, under Governor Ademola Adeleke, which was initially under the PDP, recently slipped to the Accord Party, following the protracted crisis that rocked the former ruling party, threatening to deny Adeleke the chance to seek re-election in the August 2026 off-season election. Could it be that the South-West governors are too engrossed in election activities, such that they are unable to focus on the human tragedy happening in Oyo? Are they being influenced by the conspiracy theories already being woven around the incident? Incidentally, the attention of the state governors to the regional security outfit, Amotekun Corps, also appears to be waning over the years. Aside from Oyo State, which recruited the highest number of corps members, each of Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Ekiti has recruited very few members, while Lagos has shown no particular interest in putting Amotekun to work. That was even though each of the states agreed to provide a legal basis for the Amotekun corps by passing its establishment law through the houses of assembly. Whatever it is, the people of the South-West expect their governors to act as the true chief security officers of their states, and in line with constitutional guarantees, ensure the security and welfare of the people who occupy the geographical space that falls under their jurisdiction.



Questions are bound to be raised as to whether politics is already acting as the dividing line for the governors. Incidentally, two of the six states are not under the control of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).

Contenders, pretenders in race for next presidential polls

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“Obi is vying on its own. How does that help Tinubu in the South for example? Where is the pathway for him in the South? Where is the pathway for him in the North? These are the issues we need to look at not for them to be postulating all manners of things because they want to win a return ticket that they need to earn. They have to earn it.”

On chances of his principal and factors that will work in favour of the Waziri Adamawa in what appeared to be a three-horse race compared to what happened in 2023, the media adviser said, “His chances have never been brighter. And let look at Waziri Adamawa himself and what he brings on the table. He brings competence, experience, especially his experience as Vice President. He has been involved at the highest level of policy formulation and policy articulation.

“One of his strengths is that he knows how to bring people together and he has stated it clearly. He will go to nooks and crannies of this country to look for the best of Nigerians to be able to help in this crucial period of rescue and rebuilding Nigeria.

“So, Nigerians know him very well. He is de-tribalised and the results of primaries in the ADC clearly show a pan-Nigeria mandate that was given to him by his party. He won across 30 states and FCT making 31 states, 73 per cent of the votes, people’s votes count, meaning that seven out of every 10 members of ADC wanted him. That was a very dominating win. And not only that, it spreads across 30 states, that is 73 per cent of the states. It also spreads across 8,809 wards. It spreads across local government areas. It spreads across geo-political zones. He won in the South East. He won in the South West. He won in the North West. He won in the North East. He won in the South South. In all of this, each state is represented. Clearly, that is the confidence that we have going forward.

“The fact that we have somebody who reflects our diversity and somebody who is prepared to work with Nigerians irrespective of their colour, tongue, and how they worship. These are the things we consider. Somebody who is tried and tested. So, it is not a trial and error show. And Nigerians know this because all Nigerians shop from the same market whether they are Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, Muslims, Christians or atheists, whatever may be the mode of their worship. Nigerians are looking for somebody that will ensure the provision of security and the promotion of their welfare. That is what they are looking for. It is not what they are talking about. It’s my turn. It’s your turn. It is the turn of Nigerians. It is their turn to do away with insecurity. It is their turn to be able to put food on the table. It is the turn of Nigerians to be able to go to hospitals and seek medical care. It is the turn of Nigerians to afford school fees for their children or wards. Those are the issues that we are talking about. It is about economy. It is about education. It is about security. It is about healthcare of Nigerians. And those are the factors that will define this election. So we have a lot going for us.

“As a matter of fact, we are prepared and there is a lot of policy formulation that is ongoing. Already, there is a review. He had a blueprint in 2023. But it has to be aligned with the vision of the party, the ADC. So, all of that is ongoing and very soon, we will review that and start selling them to Nigerians

High number of candidates from South will affect Tinubu - Eze

Also speaking in the same vein, a chieftain of the ADC and former National Publicity Secretary of the nPDP, Chief Eze Chukwuemeka Eze, said Atiku will win in 2027 as high number of presidential candidates vying for the presidency would affect the chance of the incumbent president.

He said, “Looking at the key actors contrary to the summation if 2023 will be repeated by 2027, I say no considering the following factors:



Makinde

“First, the number of presidential contestants from the South vying for 2027 presidential slot outweighs that of 2023. This time around, we have Makinde that will reduce the votes of Tinubu in South West. Duke from Cross River has gotten PRP ticket and Jonathan is going for that of PDP. Let us ignore Sowore and the guy from SDP that will one way or the other cut short the votes of Tinubu in the South.

“Obi as we know will surely try his best both in South East, South South, North Central and South West thereby reducing to a large extent the bulk votes due to Tinubu.

“On the other hand, Atiku has the entire North to himself except Kano. North Central is fighting ground for all the major political parties.

“In conclusion, the factor of Tinubu and his maladministration and inability to tackle the insecurity and level of hunger amongst Nigerians will surely turn 76 per cent of Nigerians against him.

“Except something extraordinary happens, I expect Atiku to win the 2027 general elections while Obi to come second due to the factor of Kwankwaso while Tinubu is not even sure of voting for APC come 2027 will come a distant third place.”

Eze said all plots deployed in 2023 had been studied and would do everything democratically possible to ensure that they were rendered ineffective.

President will defeat them again - Osita

However, a foundation member of the APC, Mr Osita Okechukwu, said President Bola Ahmed Tinubu will defeat former Atiku because the material conditions which enhanced his victory in 2023 are in place today.

He said, “Primarily among the factors is Atiku’s breach of zoning convention, which was adopted at the eve of the 1999 transition to democracy, to cement the fragile relationship between south and north.

“Fragile political landscape between North and South was heightened by the annulment of June 12th, 1993 presidential election



Duke

which Chief M.K.O. Abiola won.

“It is in obedience to this zoning convention which made prominent northern politicians like flamboyant Abubakar Rimi, Dr Sola Saraki, Adamu Ciroma, Umaru Shinkafi etc to sacrifice their ambition, hence the nomination of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo and Oba Olu Falae as the presidential candidates of PDP and defunct APP/AD.

“Hence, Atiku is a prime beneficiary of zoning convention, without which he couldn’t have been vice president in 1999.

“Is it not ironically that the same Atiku who benefited from the zoning convention, who opposed Jonathan in 2014 PDP’s presidential primary election and won in 2018, where in obedience to zoning convention no southern aspirant ran; is the one who is roundly opposed to the zoning convention?”

“One could see Karma at work, because Atiku doesn’t have the Buhari’s cult followership in the North and today APC has 18 states.”

Last month, the media office of former Vice President Atiku cautioned opposition political actors against embracing what it described as a self-defeating and intellectually dishonest narrative that insists the 2027 presidential ticket must be zoned exclusively to the South.

In a statement issued on by Olusola Sanni, media aide to former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, the camp said while the ruling APC may understandably retain its southern presidential configuration around incumbent President Tinubu, it would amount to political naivety for the opposition to adopt the same logic without a sober assessment of electoral realities.

The statement noted that politics must be driven by strategy, coalition-building, and hard electoral arithmetic—not emotional talking points or selective moral arguments.

“The first and most obvious question is this: how does a Southern opposition candidate realistically unseat a sitting Southern president? Nigerian political history offers no precedent for such an outcome. No incumbent president has ever been defeated by an



Sowore

opposition challenger from the same geo-political bloc. To insist otherwise is to enter the contest already defeated,” the statement said.

The Atiku camp further argued that the moral argument being advanced in favour of southern zoning collapses under scrutiny.

“By 2027, the South would have held presidential power for approximately 18 years in the Fourth Republic, compared to about 10 years for the North. If the South retains power for another four years, that disparity widens even further. It therefore becomes difficult to understand the justice in an argument that seeks to deepen an already existing imbalance under the guise of equity,” the statement added.

The statement also accused some political actors of selective memory and opportunism, particularly those who abandoned the zoning principle in 2011 following the death of President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua, only to now present it as a sacred political doctrine.

“It is intellectually dishonest for those who enthusiastically supported a Southern presidency under Goodluck Jonathan in 2011, despite the North’s legitimate expectation under the informal zoning arrangement, to now suddenly posture as custodians of rotational justice. Principles do not become sacred only when they align with personal ambition.”

Obi, Kwankwaso joint ticket

Peter Gregory Obi, the former governor of Anambra State and the 2023 presidential candidate, was on Saturday officially endorsed by the NDC as its presidential nominee for the upcoming 2027 general election.

This affirmation took place at a special convention held in Abuja, following a motion introduced by Senator Victor Umeh and supported by former Deputy Senate President, Omo Agege.

Immediately after his endorsement, Obi nominated Senator Rabi Musa Kwankwaso, the former governor of Kano State, as his running mate, stating that Kwankwaso would be a genuine partner rather than a mere backup, in contrast to the approach of the current government.

Pundits say Obi-Kwankwaso ticket will secure votes in the South and the North. While the South East geo-political zone is considered as a sure bloc for Obi, they say most analysts have also conceded Kano to him because of the influence of the leader of the Kwankwasiya movement, which is a grassroots, pro-youth movement focused on human capital development, education, and infrastructure in Kano.

Kwankwaso, who entered politics in 1992 as a member of the House of Representatives, later becoming Deputy Speaker, was a delegate to the 1995 Constitutional Conference.

He joined the NDC in 2026. He and Obi left the ADC to NDC, citing the ongoing legal tussle in the party.



The statement noted that politics must be driven by strategy, coalition-building, and hard electoral arithmetic—not emotional talking points or selective moral arguments.

Kwara: As 'O to ge, Otun ya' return to battle field

The stage is set for battle of Titans as governorship candidates of each leading political parties that emerged from their separate primaries get set to slug it out in 2027 general elections. Bukola Saraki is set to stage a comeback while the incumbent APC government wants to continue its hold on governance. What happens next as electioneering processes started in earnest. Biola Azeez writes.

POLITICAL atmosphere in Kwara state is peculiar and the state is a potential must watch in the 2027 general elections. Among the three senatorial districts in the state, Kwara Central has produced governor for 20 years and Kwara South for eight years, while Kwara North has not produced any in 28 years.

The political calculation is that the ruling APC has done well enough to right perceived geographic deficit in the production of governors by each of the senatorial districts, as the Kwara North district, with five local government areas, gets the party's ticket to produce 2027 governorship candidate.

Also, former Senate President, Bukola Saraki, is leaving no one in doubt that he is determined to lead the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) back into governance come 2027, after the 2019 'O to ge' movement which knocked his political structure out of power in Kwara State.

The PDP leader is already driving PDP's strategy, especially, when he hosted the PDP consensus meeting where aspirants agreed to the choice of former REA boss, Engineer Bolakale Kawu, from the Kwara Central District to be the party's flag-bearer. Kawu, a retired civil servant, has not occupied elective political position. Observers say Saraki's 2027 plan to field a candidate from Kwara Central was to leverage Ilorin Emirate's voting strength.

Engineer Kawu is a traditional title holder (Dan Iya) in the Ilorin Emirate and a philanthropist, who commands large followership in the state, especially, in the Kwara Central senatorial district. His choice among five other leading aspirants attested to hope and assurance that the party has in him to deliver in the 2027 governorship race.

Also, the APC governorship candidate, Salihu Yakubu Danladi, the 42 years old former Speaker of the state House of Assembly, defeated all other 15 aspirants to clinch the APC ticket in the state with 94,000 votes in the governorship primary. His runner up in the contest, Ambassador Yahaya Seriki polled 41,700 and 22,118 votes was recorded for Bashir Omolaja Bolarinwa (BOB).

Danladi, SYD, as popularly called, hails from Ilesha-Gwanara in the Baruten local government area in the Kwara North district. He is the choice of the incumbent governor. As a former Speaker, political watchers are expecting to see how convincing he would be to show that he was not a rubber stamp of the Abdulrazaq administration and how he will be independent-minded as a governor.

Contributing to the discourse, a lecturer in the department of Politics and Governance, Kwara State University (KWASU), Dr. Mohammed Danjuma, said that the ruling APC governments, both at the national and the state, would want to do all it takes to remain in power.

Danjuma, who said that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) chairman today was appointed by the President, thus, perceived that the umpire will be loyal to Mr. President. He also said that Mr. President would want to ensure that his party remains in power, come rain, come sun. "So, whether votes will count or not, only God knows for now. Because the President will not want to take any chances at all", he said.

Talking about chances of the PDP, he said the major opposition party has a lot of work and assignment to carry out before the election. "Possibly, before the election, things may change. But, looking at the PDP right now, it will be tough, although they are trying to regroup, to come together again to be a great force, but to what extent can they do it? Because that will involve a lot of things.

"It will involve a lot of patronage, a lot of money, a lot of concentration. The average Nigerian is hungry? So, are you sure that anybody will want to romance with any party that is not a ruling party, or that doesn't have money for now? Or, does the PDP still have money somewhere? Or will they go into loan? So, all these things matter, because the average Nigerian is hungry now.

And they will think they will still want to get the same thing. So, if PDP should win Kwara State, the leader of the party should be ready to make money available. But, are you sure the APC doesn't have money in Kwara State? And with the fact that it is the government in power at the moment, they will want to do everything possible to ensure that they remain in power.

"So, the challenge is a big one. But, are you really sure that we only have two parties that will contest for governorship in Kwara State? We have African Democratic Congress, we have National Democratic Congress too. But, can they serve as a true third force? Because the way we are going in this coun-



Saraki

try, I am looking at the NDC and the ADC coming together one day, the way we are going. The two may merge to cause upset.

"If that happens, that means they can scuttle any of the PDP or APC's chances. And you see the thing is, if that happens in Kwara State, APC is likely to have a problem. Because, I learned, that one of the new parties, the ADC, has its governorship candidate, Zakari Mohammed, from Kwara North just like the APC," he said.

The political analyst, who would want a geographic deficit on the governorship arrangements to be addressed in Kwara State with the 2027 general elections, said that political dialogue should be a matter at the centre of every process. He posited that the dialogue should take place between the Kwara North and Kwara Central and ditto for Kwara South to consider Kwara North for mantle of leadership.

To political enthusiasts in the state, calculations from the camps of the governorship candidates of the ADC and the NDC may work in favour and against of any of the two leading governorship candidates.

The governorship candidate of the ADC is Zakari Mohammed. He hails from the Kwara North senatorial district. He was a member of the National Assembly from the Baruten/Kaiama federal constituency in both seventh and eighth assembly.

He was an ally of the PDP leader, Dr. Bukola Saraki while they were together in the PDP. He was the Chairman House of Representatives Committee on Media and Public Affairs (2011-2015) in the 7th National Assembly. Zakari was also the Chairman, House Committee on Basic Education Services and Chairman House of Representatives Ad-Hoc Committee



Abdulrazaq

on Investigation of Oil Swap Agreement.

On the other hand, the NDC governorship candidate is an associate professor of Business Administration in the Lincoln University, Abdulmumin Ajia. He's from Ilorin, Kwara Central district like the PDP governorship candidate.

If the ADC is young in Kwara state, political watchers hold the views that NDC is newer with its own moderate followers judged by time of its registration and entrance into the 2027 general elections. Ajia has traversed many political parties in the state. He was a member of the PDP, APC and governorship candidate of another party in previous elections.

While he appears to uphold personal determination and conviction to cause upset in the 2027 poll, despite his relative presence in the political arena, political pundits say that collaboration with either of the two leading political parties could affect their votes or lead to cut in the share of their likely votes.

INFLUENCE OF GBEMISOLA SARAKI:

Political influence of Gbemisola Saraki, the younger sister to the PDP leader, Bukola Saraki, is another big factor here. Gbemisola is a former Senator for Kwara Central district between 2003-2011, former Minister of State for Transportation & Mines and Steel Development.

Since inauguration of the Tinubu administration, Gbemi leaves no one in doubt that she is a power broker in the ruling APC, though she has distanced herself from Kwara state politics, despite the state being APC state. However, she maintains her political camp and people while the people had remained loyal to her and support her political directives. Political watchers believe that she would work for the ruling party in the 2027 general elections, they would not be specific on her political moves towards the ruling party in the state and its choice of the governorship candidate considering no love lost with personalities in the incumbent administration in the state.

Bukola Saraki is already driving PDP's strategy - he hosted the PDP consensus meeting where aspirants agreed to let party leaders pick the flag-bearer. Observers say Saraki's 2027 plan is to field a candidate from Kwara Central to leverage Ilorin Emirate's voting strength.

Gbemi being APC and from Saraki dynasty puts her in a unique spot: she carries the Saraki name/brand but is on the opposite side of her brother, politically. Gbemisola is an asset to the ruling APC both nationally and in Kwara state because the party can use her name, recognition and experience to its advantage if well handled.

As a senior APC leader from the Saraki family, her endorsement of the party's governorship candidate would matter a lot in Kwara Central district as her position could be used by APC to neutralize Bukola Saraki's influence in the Ilorin Emirate.



The PDP leader is already driving PDP's strategy, especially, when he hosted the PDP consensus meeting where aspirants agreed to the choice of former REA boss, Engineer Bolakale Kawu.

EVERYTHING WOMAN

Wellness

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I wish for the right partnership to revive, restructure Imo Angels Football Club —Jennifer Anusiem

Jennifer Anusiem, a fashion designer and event planner, is the Chief Executive Officer of Imo Angels Football Club Owerri. In this interview with JOHNKENNEDY UZOMA, she speaks about female football, being the sole owner of a female football team, challenges and growth among other issues

WELLNESS

Routine tips for breast care

BREAST care is a priority for women of all ages because like every part of a woman's body, the breast is important and deserves care and attention. And failure to care for the breasts can cause a lot of issues which could be avoided with constant care. This is because constant care makes it easy to detect changes and issues before they become life threatening.

According to statistical figures, on average, one out of eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer at some point during their lifetime and incident rates are trending upward, too.

As a result, it is important to care for the breast and boost breast health to improve the odds. Are your breasts healthy? How can this be decided? Breast cancer can reveal itself in many ways; you may notice a change in the shape of a breast, suddenly feel a small mass or lump or the skin looks slightly different in color or texture. All these represent a departure from the breasts you have known and it is dangerous to ignore changes.

Below are ways women can care for their breasts and maintain overall optimal health at home:

Eating healthy: Maintaining a healthy diet is not only important for weight management, but also for the well-being of your breasts. Too many processed sugars and simple carbohydrates in a diet create acidity and inflammation in the body. For good health and wellness, women should eat a well-balanced diet of lean meats, fresh fruits and vegetables, healthy fats and plenty of essential fatty acids. Organic foods are often recommended as nonorganic foods often contain harmful chemicals.

Exercise: This is good for breast health. Fat cells can produce estrogen and high levels of estrogen have been linked to certain types of cancers, including breast cancer. Exercising regularly helps shrink the size of fat cells, essentially causing the body to make less estrogen.

Provide support: It is common for breasts to sag over time because of pregnancy, breastfeeding, genetics and age. However, failure to give the breasts the support they need often leads to premature sagging and stretching of the skin. To prevent breast tissue from stretching in a downward direction, wear properly fitted bras.

Low alcohol consumption: While the occasional alcoholic beverage may be an enjoyable stress reducer, it is important to keep alcohol consumption to a minimum level for health purposes as women who had three alcoholic drinks per week are said to have a higher percent risk of developing breast cancer than nondrinkers.

Moisturize the skin: The breasts are covered in thin, sensitive skin that requires ample hydration. Moisturizing the skin on and around the breasts will help prevent dryness and keep the breasts soft and supple.

Massage the breasts: Routinely massaging the breasts helps keep the tissues strong and healthy. Massaging the breasts help push the lymph in the right direction. Breast massage is also a great stress reliever and may cultivate positive body awareness.

Don't smoke: Puffing on cigarettes doesn't just open the door for potential lung cancer. Evidence shows that it also increases your risk of breast cancer, particularly if you start lighting up during your school-aged years.

the girls to limelight.

As I speak with you, few of them were invited to the national team as at 2020-2021. Some of them were also invited at the Under-20 and Under-17. The records are there. What I did was change the narrative and pave way for gender equality. Let people know that if men can play football, women can as well play ball. I know that today everyone is proud of the girls.

How easy has the journey been especially bringing the girls under one roof for football business?

Actually, when we came on board, it was so easy. We had the attention of the media especially the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN) and some Radio Stations in Owerri. It appeared as if people were already waiting for who will start it and who will bring those girls together. I did not actually know what was really going on then, although I was led by my spirit to start the female club, unknowing to me, that a lot of people were hungry to get that platform to showcase their talent.

When we started the publicity, it got the attention of everybody from both across the state and Local Government Areas to come for screening held at Old Stadium, Owerri. A lot of girls came for screening and because of mega resources, we could not take all. We streamlined to take the number of girls we could manage.

What about feeding and taking proper care of the players?

It was what we needed to do to take good care of the girls so that they will be happy. The welfare of players was paramount to the club. It is what any club should not joke with. Because God forbid, if any of them breaks down, what will you say or do? Because we are not paying salaries and don't have funds to pay salaries but we try to take care of them. Then we camped the players and was providing them with feeding. We were also providing them with pads because of their mensuration circle. Even their health was also part of what we took into consideration to enable them to be strong to play. I don't really know how other clubs do their own but for me I do those things to take care of the players. I know that I did my best to cater for their needs. Of course, you cannot cater for all but if you can get 70%, you have done a lot. Indeed, it was not an easy thing.

We tried to look at for sponsorship and the wife of the Governor of Imo State Barr. Chima Uzodimma came in including the Com-

missioner for Women Affairs. They came in to assist in the areas of food items and house materials like blanket amongst other things. We also had fans and friends that also supported the club on one occasion or the other. And we do really appreciate those that came to their aide because we know how demanding and tasking these things can be.

What is the current position of the club?

The current position of the club is that we are on break, hoping that we will move on again. I recall that at the time when we played FA Cup, we played it and we represented the state alongside the Heartland Queens FC because then it was only two clubs that was qualified to represent the state. So, we represented the state, though we did not go too far. We got to the knock-out level and we could not proceed. On return, we had issues on accommodation and we could not get it and that led to our going for break. Meanwhile, some of the players had joined other club sides where they are currently doing well.

When we started in 2020, we made bold steps to attend a pre-season tournament played at Ogun State. We came back with a trophy and when we presented it to Imo FA, they told us we were the first female football club to win the trophy. Hearing that gave us more encouragement to do more.

Would you continue if you get funds?

Yes, I will. Everybody that knows me as somebody that will always advocate for female club. I wish I can get the right partnership to revive and restructure Imo Angles Football Club. We have too many girls at the grassroots level than the male. Even as we pursued, I do receive calls from all over the places, even from those I do not know. Most time when I receive the calls, I feel so emotional, and I don't have anything to tell them. So, it's something I would like to back to revive. As it stands, we have Imo Angels Sports Academy for kids within the age bracket of four to 12 for boys and girls.

What is your advice to female footballers?

The truth is that football has to do with passion. If you don't have passion, you will not know how to play, but if you have it, you can play. And to do it, you have to package yourself starting from the grassroots clubs and being under a coach who will harness your talent.

I will encourage the girls not to hide their gifts or skills. Rather, they should make it open and keep on pushing. They should also be prayerful and always show themselves.

What is your assessment of female football in Nigeria?

Right now, female football clubs are actually upgrading, unlike what we had in the past. When I started in 2020, it gave birth to other clubs in the state such as First Mahi, Imo Strikers Babes, amongst others. I don't know if the rest continued but that motivated me in owning a female football club. So right now, from league level, we are seeing upgrading and generally, female club is something people say is still on the low level. But I don't see it that way. My assessment is that female club has come up to the limelight and it's something we all look forward to, I get excited when watching the girls at the World Cup. I know that even right now many people have started having different mindset about female football club. Many will be interested to watch the Super Falcon than the Super Eagles. You can't compare the money spent on the girls and the boys but what we need now is to harmonise things and move in a professional way so that our girls will attract value in the society.

What is the inspiration behind the setting up a female football club at a time no one is interested?

I actually started the female football club in 2016; it was during my visit to my village for Christmas celebrations. I discovered that everybody was interested in playing football and everyone that returned home for Christmas were donating trophy for male competition and the girls were left behind. So touched by this, I decided to do something because I noticed there was a gap in the women side. Then I started from the grassroots to the state and this happened as far back in 2016. I started to make a change by hosting the female tournament in my village, Obowo in Obowo LGA of Imo State.

With that, every year the girls will look forward to playing at the tournament and that showed us that those girls were ready and willing to take their football career to a greater and higher level but they lacked a platform to showcase their talent and skills. After running the club for three years under my NGO, I realised the need to bring the female club to limelight. In 2020 at the state level, we formed Imo Angels Football Club, having seen the experience and capacity in the girls at the rural areas. At that time, there were no female team or female club that was active at the state level. So, Imo Angels came as a Messiah for the girls in Imo State. That was how we started and we tried our best by bringing

Tinubu's re-election my number one project —Oborevwo

Says president's reforms working

Delta State governor, Right Honorable Sheriff Oborevwo, has declared that the re-election of President Bola Tinubu, in 2027 is his personal political project, insisting that the president's return to office will bring greater benefits to Delta and the nation at large.

Speaking during an interview on *ARISE News* monitored, in Asaba, on Tuesday, Oborevwo said he is fully committed to mobilising support for President Tinubu's second-term bid.

He said that the president's 2027 reelection success will further ease the burden of governance on state governments.

"I'm begging people to vote for President Bola Tinubu. It's my number one project. That project is bigger than any other project because it

will help us achieve more for our people," the governor insisted.

According to him, the Federal Government's economic reforms have significantly increased revenues accruing to states, enabling his administration to embark on and complete numerous development projects across Delta State.

Oborevwo noted that Delta is currently experiencing unprecedented financial stability, revealing that contractors handling state projects being paid promptly without waiting for federal allocations.

The governor said: "For the first time in the history of this state, we are not owing contractors. We don't wait for allocation before paying contractors. Once jobs are certified, we pay. We mobilize contractors with 40 percent

and continue to fund projects as work progresses.

Oborevwo maintained that the improved revenue profile of the state was a direct result of the economic reforms introduced by President Tinubu's administration.

"If the reforms are not working, will we get this money? More money is coming to the states. The reforms are working very well in Delta State and that is why we are able to execute projects and meet our obligations," he added.

Expressing confidence in the electoral prospects of both the President and the All Progressives Congress (APC) in his state, Oborevwo said the party is united in Delta and committed to delivering victory for the ruling party in future elections.

He disclosed that extensive consultations preceded the mass defection of Delta political stakeholders from the PDP to the APC, describing the movement as a "political tsunami."

According to him, meetings were held with party leaders, elected officials, stakeholders, religious leaders, and non-indigenes before the decision was taken, adding that there was overwhelming support for the movement into APC.

"We all agreed that we should move. That was why the movement was a tsunami. We moved en masse into the APC and nobody was left behind. The same people who agreed to move are still there to defend the party," he said.

The governor also expressed confidence that Delta will deliver substantial

votes for President Tinubu, citing the president's relationship with the state and the support of key political stakeholders across the three senatorial districts.

He said the people of state have embraced the APC and are already witnessing the positive impact of the Federal Government's policies.

Oborevwo further dismissed concerns about opposition parties making inroads into the state, in-

sisting that his administration's performance and the numerous projects being executed across Delta would speak for the APC in his state.

He said: "there are too many projects that we have done and we are still doing. If I start commissioning projects every week, I may not finish before the election. The people can see what we are doing and they know the difference".

Ekiti assembly passes 33 bills into law in three years

Yomi Ayeleso | Ado-Ekiti

THE Seventh Ekiti State House of Assembly has passed 33 bills into law within three years of its inauguration in 2023.

The assembly described the development as a reflection of its commitment to good governance, democratic consolidation and sustainable development in the state.

The chairman of the House Committee on Media and Public Affairs, Honourable Babatunde Oke, disclosed this on Tuesday during a media briefing held at the Assembly Complex in Ado-Ekiti as part of activities marking the third anniversary of the Seventh Assembly.

Oke said all the bills passed by the Assembly since its inauguration on June 6, 2023, have received the assent of Governor Biodun Oyejebanji, adding that nine major bills were enacted during the third legislative session covering June 2025 to May 2026.

According to him, the assembly's achievements were guided by a legislative agenda adopted at incep-

tion, focusing on responsive lawmaking, effective oversight, ethical conduct, digital transformation, public participation, administrative efficiency, poverty reduction and wealth creation.

"Since inauguration, the Seventh Assembly has passed Thirty-Three Bills into Law, all of which have received gubernatorial assent. Within the Third Legislative Session alone, Nine major Bills were passed into law.

"The nine laws enacted during the period include the Ekiti State Commercial Motorcycle Operators Regulatory Law, 2025; Ekiti State Electoral Law (First Amendment), 2025; Ekiti State Independent Electoral Commission (Fourth Amendment) Law, 2025; 2025 Supplementary Appropriation Law; Ekiti State Revenue Administration Law, 2025; Ekiti State College of Technology, Ijero-Ekiti Law, 2025; 2026 Appropriation Law; Ekiti State Local Government Administration Law (First Amendment), 2026; and the Ekiti State Administration of Criminal Justice Law (Amendment), 2026," he said.

32 candidates make final shortlist for 3rd Oyo Youth Parliament Assembly

By Busola Oworu

OYO State government, through the Oyo State Agency for Youth Development, has directed all 109 applicants who successfully participated in the screening exercise for the 3rd Oyo State Youth Parliament Assembly to visit the agency's official portal and verify their status on the final shortlist of successful candidates.

The directive was issued by the chairman of the agency, Honourable Adebawale Adebayo Falana, as part of the concluding phase of the selection process for the state's premier youth legislative platform.

He said the final shortlist was compiled following a rigorous screening exercise aimed at identifying competent, passionate, and visionary young leaders who will represent their constituen-

cies in the 3rd Youth Parliament Assembly.

Falana emphasised the commitment of Governor Seyi Makinde's administration to youth inclusion, leadership development, and active participation in governance, noting that the Youth Parliament remains a critical avenue for nurturing future leaders and promoting democratic values among young people in the state.

He urged all screened applicants to promptly check the Agency's portal for updates regarding the final selection and subsequent activities related to the inauguration of the 3rd Youth Parliament Assembly.

"You can check your status through this link and click on application status; <https://www.oyostateagencyforyouthdevelopment.com.ng/youth-parliament>," he stated.



From left: Chairman, Trade Union Congress, Osun State chapter, Comrade Abimbola Fasasi; Chairman, Nigeria Labour Congress, Osun State, Comrade Christopher Arapasopo; Governor Ademola Adeleke; NUP Chairman, Osun State, Comrade Chief Ola Odefisayo, during the Osun NUP's adoption of Governor Adeleke for second term, held at the Anglican Grammar School, Osogbo, on Tuesday. Photo: Osun State Press Unit.

Ebola threat: Reps demand adequate NCDC funding

Jacob Segun Olatunji | Abuja

THE House of Representatives, on Tuesday, urged the Federal Government to release adequate funds to the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) to strengthen the country's preparedness against the growing threat of Ebola Virus Disease in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The resolution followed the adoption of a motion sponsored by Honourable Amobi Ogah, who raised concerns over the outbreak of a rare strain of Ebola in the Turi Province of the DRC, as reported by the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention on May 15.

Presenting the motion on the floor of the House, presided over by the Speaker

Representative Tajudeen Abbas, the lawmaker noted that the outbreak poses a significant health risk to Nigeria, due to the country's porous borders and of cross-border movement.

Ogah recalled that on May 25, the NCDC classified Nigeria as being at high risk of Ebola importation and has activated emergency preparedness measures, including placing the National Emergency Operations Centre on alert.

The lawmaker expressed concern that despite the heightened risk, the NCDC has been grappling with severe funding challenges.

He added that the agency received no operational funding in 2025, while no capital releases have been made against its approved 2026 budget allocation.

He also described over-

and grossly inadequate.

He warned that the prolonged funding gap has weakened the NCDC's capacity to carry out critical health security functions, including outbreak response operations, laboratory services, disease surveillance, logistics coordination, and emergency preparedness activities.

In his contribution to the debate, Honourable Billy Osawaru, commended the sponsor of the motion and reminded Nigerians of the country's successful containment of the 2014 Ebola outbreak after the virus was introduced by an infected traveller from Liberia.

He noted that Nigeria limited the outbreak to 20 cases and eight deaths through coordinated efforts by healthcare workers, emergency response agencies, the Federal Ministry

of Health, the NCDC, and international partners.

The lawmaker, however, warned that the country remains vulnerable, due to its extensive land borders, heavy international travel and trade activities, and increasing regional mobility.

He expressed particular concern that the current outbreak is linked to the Bombali virus, a rare strain of Ebola for which there are currently no approved vaccines or specific treatments.

When the motion was put in to a voice vote, it was unanimously supported and the House directed the executive arm of government to immediately release funds appropriated for the NCDC to enable the agency settle outstanding liabilities and carry out its statutory responsibilities effectively.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP DIGEST

INTERVIEWS | NEWS | EVENTS | PERSONALITY SPOTLIGHT

ANCHOR: ROTIMI IGE | 08116954636 | rotimiige@yahoo.com

Currency of culture: How *Ojude Oba* festival powers multi-billion naira economic engine in Ogun State

.. As Globacom, FCMB, Rite foods, others fuel festival's legacy

Every year, on the third day of Eid-el-Kabir, the historic town of Ijebu Ode undergoes a profound transformation. The morning air, thick with the aroma of roasting meat and the rhythmic thumps of traditional *gbedu* drums, carries something more than just celebratory fervor. It amplifies the distinct, unmistakable electricity of a multi-billion Naira marketplace snapping into overdrive. This is the *Ojude Oba* festival, a century-old cultural masterpiece that has quietly evolved into one of West Africa's most potent, self-sustaining engines of grassroots entrepreneurship and corporate investment. ROTIMI IGE spotlights the elements that fuel the cultural ceremony into a verifiable economic hub from Ogun State to the world.



and polished brass ornaments for their horses, keeping specialised saddlers and metal smiths in business for generations. The entire ecosystem becomes a vibrant, localised manufacturing hub, proving that the celebration of identity can directly sustain the livelihoods of thousands of creative entrepreneurs.

As thousands of visitors troop into Ijebu Ode for the festival, the town's infrastructure experiences a temporary but highly lucrative expansion. The hospitality sector bears the initial weight of this influx, with dramatic economic benefits. Hotels, guest houses, and short-let apartments in Ijebu Ode and neighboring towns like Sagamu and Abeokuta experience full occupancy for at least five consecutive days. This massive demand generates substantial revenue for hotel owners, which trickles down to benefit hospitality staff, local suppliers of fresh food produce, laundry enterprises, and private security agencies.

Yet, the true entrepreneurial genius of the festival lies in how it embraces the informal economy. Because the formal hospitality sector cannot fully absorb the massive crowd, local families participate through a grassroots home-stay network. Residents open up spare rooms, annexes, or entire properties to visiting relatives, diaspora tourists, and corporate executives. This decentralised lodging system injects millions of Naira directly into ordinary households, allowing families to earn critical supplemental income that is routinely reinvested into small retail shops, poultry farms, or educational funds for their children.

Simultaneously, the transport arteries of Ogun State pulse with increased financial transactions. Taxi drivers, interstate transport operators, motorcycle taxis, and minibus drivers see their daily earnings skyrocket. A driver who typically navigates standard local routes can clear double or triple their regular weekly income during the festival period, capital that helps owner-operators maintain their vehicles or invest in expanding their small transport fleets.

Even the maintenance sector benefits; local mechanics, vulcanisers, and auto-electrical specialists position themselves along key access roads, operating extended hours to handle the inevitable wear and tear of increased vehicular traffic. On every street corner, the informal food and beverage sector thrives. Local women selling the traditional Ijebu delicacy, 'Ikokore' and 'Ofada', alongside street food vendors cooking noodles, hawking suya, chilled water, and freshly tapped palm wine, experience unprecedented inventory turnover.

The high velocity of cash circulating through these micro-businesses during the festival acts as a powerful economic equaliser, ensuring that the wealth generated by the festival reaches the very base of the economic pyramid.

Continues on page 25

WHILE the global media often captures the festival through the lens of its breathtaking pageantry, the dazzling array of silks and damasks, the majestic equestrian displays of the royal families, and the vibrant dances of the age-grade socio-cultural groups known as the Regberegbe, the true miracle of *Ojude Oba* lies beneath its ceremonial surface. The festival represents a masterclass in cultural capital, illustrating how deep-seated heritage can be leveraged to build a resilient micro-economy. For local entrepreneurs in Ijebu Ode and across the wider Ogun State, this annual gathering is not merely a day on the cultural calendar; it is the financial anchor of their fiscal year.

The scale of the festival is staggering, drawing an annual attendance that routinely exceeds two hundred and fifty thousand people, including domestic tourists, international visitors, and a affluent diaspora community returning home with foreign currency. In an economy looking for structural blueprints for sustainable growth and localised wealth distribution, *Ojude Oba* stands out as a living case study. It turns a temporary influx of people into a permanent boost for local enterprise, showing that when tradition is properly organised, it becomes an unparalleled driver of trade, innovation, and long-term prosperity.

To understand the economic footprint of *Ojude Oba*, one must look at the outfits worn by the participants. Fashion is the undisputed currency of the festival. Months before the first drumbeat sounds, the various Regberegbe groups, stratified by age brackets spanning from young adults to octogenarians, convene to select their official attire for the year. This is not a casual choice of clothing. The fabrics selected are often premium, high-grade textiles ranging from hand-woven Aso-Oke and intricate Swiss laces to heavy damasks and custom-designed

brocades.

The financial commitment from these groups sets off a massive chain reaction across the textile supply chain of Ogun State. Importers, wholesale merchants, and local weavers experience a monumental surge in demand. A single Regberegbe group can comprise dozens or even hundreds of members, all purchasing identical premium materials. This concentrated purchasing power directly fuels the businesses of local textile entrepreneurs. For many fabric retailers in the Italapo and New Market areas of Ijebu Ode, the sales recorded in the lead-up to *Ojude Oba* frequently surpass their combined revenue for the preceding six months.

The economic ripple effect moves rapidly from the fabric merchants to the workshops of local fashion designers, tailors, and embroiders. The demand for bespoke tailoring reaches such an intense peak that local designers

take on apprentices and work round-the-clock shifts to fulfill orders. These are not standard garments; they are intricate pieces of wearable art requiring specialised embroidery, beadwork, and custom stones. A tailor specializing in traditional male Agbada or female Iro and Buba can see their workshop earnings swell significantly during this period. This seasonal influx provides small-scale tailoring enterprises with the capital required to purchase heavy-duty industrial sewing machines, expand their physical storefronts, and hire permanent staff, effectively transforming transient festival earnings into long-term business growth.

This artisanal boom extends down to the creators of accessories. Traditional bead makers, cap weavers, footwear artisans, and leather workers experience an identical surge. The royal bloodlines or Baloguns, require custom-made leather saddles, embroidered velvet drapes,



As thousands of visitors descend upon Ijebu Ode again today, the town's infrastructure experiences a temporary but highly lucrative expansion...In an economy looking for structural blueprints for sustainable growth and localised wealth distribution, *Ojude Oba* stands out as a living case study. It turns a temporary influx of people into a permanent boost for local enterprise, showing that when tradition is properly organised, it becomes an unparalleled driver of trade, innovation, and long-term prosperity.

Ojude Oba critical to promoting local economy, attracting global visibility, and fortifying cultural capital—Gov. Dapo Abiodun

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Corporate Anchors and Grassroots Lifelines

The sheer commercial vitality of Ojude Oba has long attracted Nigeria's corporate titans, who view the festival not merely as a marketing background, but as a critical platform for enterprise development and financial inclusion. Corporate participation has evolved from passive branding to deep, structured partnerships that provide local entrepreneurs with direct access to capital, visibility, and business tools.

A prominent example of this long-term corporate commitment is FCMB Group Plc, a financial services institution whose foundational relationship with the festival spans nearly a quarter of a century. Rooted in the vision of its late founder, Otunba Olasubomi Balogun, a distinguished son of Ijebuland who passionately believed in the intersection of culture and enterprise, the bank has consistently used the festival to drive economic empowerment. Speaking on the strategic value of the gathering, the Divisional Head of Corporate Affairs for FCMB, Mr. Diran Olojo, emphasised this philosophy.

"Ojude Oba reflects the type of society we're working to build, one that values legacy, unity, and long-term prosperity. Our support, which began nearly twenty-five years ago, is rooted in the vision of our late founder, Otunba Olasubomi Balogun, who believed in the role of culture in enterprise development and community advancement. This belief remains a cornerstone of our purpose, to connect people, capital, and markets."

Through this purposeful connection of capital and markets, financial institutions introduce tailor-made banking products, micro-loans, and point-of-sale terminals to local merchants during the festival, bringing thousands of informal traders into the formal banking ecosystem and positioning them for future growth.

In the digital and technological sphere, Globacom has served as another major pillar of support, marking two decades of consistent sponsorship that has helped elevate the festival onto the international stage while driving local entrepreneurship. The telecommunications giant routinely integrates consumer promotions into its festival footprint, distributing high-utility enterprise rewards such as commercial grinding machines, televisions, and tricycles to participants. These items are not mere prizes; they are functional capital assets that allow ordinary citizens to launch new micro-enterprises or optimise existing ones.

The corporate support of the festival also creates an ideal environment for brand expression and experiential marketing, drawing premium beverage and manufacturing conglomerates into the heart of Ijebu Ode. Guinness Nigeria Plc, through its popular Orijin brand, returned as the official alcohol sponsor for the 2026 edition, building on an experiential platform designed to blend deep heritage with modern creative expression. Commenting at a pre-festival stakeholder briefing, Rotimi Oduola, the Corporate Relations and Legal Director for Guinness Nigeria Plc, shed light on the corporate responsibility of preserving these vital economic platforms.

"Ojude Oba represents pride, heritage, and the richness of our cultural identity. At Guinness Nigeria, we are proud to continue supporting platforms that celebrate the essence of who we are as Nigerians. Through Orijin, we remain committed to creating experiences that honour culture while connecting meaningfully with consumers and the communities we serve. Partnerships like this are essential to preserving and elevating our cultural heritage, and they ensure that festivals like ours continue to thrive and remain relevant for future generations. The private sector has a vital role to play in keeping our traditions alive."

By keeping these traditions alive, corporate heavyweights provide a reliable financial cushion for the festival's planning committees, allowing the community to invest in world-class security, logistical infrastructure, and digital broadcasting equipment. This corporate safety net ensures that local businesses can operate in a secure, high-traffic environment that maximises their retail potential.

Furthermore, indigenous conglomerates like the SIFAX Group have recognised the profound connection between cultural tourism and national macro-development. The maritime, logistics, and aviation powerhouse has leveraged its corporate social responsibility frameworks to champion the festival's capacity to put Nigeria on the global investment map. Highlighting this perspective, Olumuyiwa Akande, the Group Head of Corporate Communications for SIFAX Group, articulated the broader impact of their corporate intervention.

"SIFAX Group is proud to identify with the Ojude Oba



Festival through our sponsorship. This iconic event has put the country on the global tourism map, attracting tourists from around the world. The Ojude Oba Festival unites communities, boosts local economies, and projects Nigeria's rich cultural heritage to the world. Supporting this iconic celebration aligns with our values of inclusiveness, cultural pride, and national development. It plays a vital role in creating economic opportunities for artisans, local businesses, and service providers."

The deliberate alignment of corporate strategy with cultural celebration creates a powerful ecosystem. Brands like Rite Foods Plc, an indigenous food and beverage giant with deep production roots within Ogun State, add further momentum by deploying vast retail grids that employ hundreds of local youths in promotional, logistical, and sales roles throughout the festival duration. This collective corporate engagement transforms Ijebu Ode into a temporary economic free-trade zone where small business owners can learn corporate marketing techniques, build corporate networks, and secure the substantial sales volumes required to sustain their businesses throughout the fiscal year.



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The 'Regberege' as financial cooperatives

While corporate sponsorships provide critical macro-support, the internal socio-economic structure of the festival is driven heavily by the 'Regberege' themselves. To view these age-grade groups as merely social clubs or dance troupes is to misunderstand their historical and contemporary functions. In reality, the 'Regberege' operate as sophisticated peer-to-peer economic networks, self-taxing financial cooperatives, and modern venture capital clusters.

Throughout the year, members of these groups, many of whom are highly successful entrepreneurs, professionals, and industrialists based across the globe, meet regularly to pool financial resources. They establish robust internal welfare funds and investment syndicates designed to provide low-interest business loans, venture capital, and strategic mentorship to younger or less financially secure members within their ranks. If a member's enterprise faces operational difficulties or requires expansion capital to fulfill a major contract, the 'Regberege' often steps in as the primary financial guarantor, bypassing the bureaucratic bottlenecks of formal banking institutions.

Furthermore, the 'Regberege' act as institutional development engines for the entire Ijebu kingdom. Each age group routinely adopts specific community development projects as part of their civic duty to the Awujale. One group may fund the rehabilitation of a local healthcare facility, another might bankroll the construction of modern market stalls for retail traders, while a third might establish Information and Communication Technology hubs to empower local youth with digital skills. These infrastructure investments directly lower the cost of doing business for local entrepreneurs, creating a more favorable environment for micro-enterprises to scale.

The festival ground itself becomes an elite networking hub, a space where multi-million Naira supply contracts are negotiated, real estate syndicates are formed, and cross-border business partnerships are finalised. The shared bond of age-grade membership and cultural heritage establishes a high level of mutual trust, facilitating complex economic transactions that might otherwise take months of formal legal due diligence to solidify.

The extraordinary success of Ojude Oba has caught the attention of both state and federal policymakers, who recognise the festival as a model for leveraging creative arts and tourism for economic diversification. The Ogun State government has progressively integrated the festival into its strategic master plan for economic development, recognising that sustainable growth must look inward to indigenous assets.

The Governor of the state, Prince Dapo Abiodun, emphasised how cultural festivals act as vital tools for stimulating local economies, enhancing international visibility, and creating direct employment opportunities for the state's burgeoning youth population.

"This celebration aligns seamlessly with our administration's development philosophy, the 'Building Our Future Together' agenda. Festivals like Ojude Oba are critical to our vision of promoting the local economy, attracting global visibility, and fortifying our cultural capital. This festival has outgrown its current scope. We must take bold steps to scale it up. Ojude Oba has become a dynamic platform for tourism, youth engagement, and entrepreneurship, and we pledge our administration's commitment to expanding its reach and socio-economic impact."

To support this expansion, the state government has consistently invested in the dual-carriageway infrastructural network linking Ijebu Ode to the Lagos-Ibadan expressway and the industrial zones of Sagamu, making the town more accessible to investors and tourists alike.

This vision is fully supported at the federal level, where the cultural economy is increasingly prioritised as a core pillar of national development. The Minister of Tourism, Culture, and the Creative Arts, Hannatu Musawa, highlighted the federal government's commitment to working closely with state administrations to harness the unique cultural capital of regions like Ijebuland to drive national economic recovery.

"Ogun holds a significant place in Nigeria's history through its contributions from illustrious sons and daughters. It is time we fully explored what culture can offer our country. The Federal Government is working closely with state governments to harness the cultural uniqueness of each region for national development. We hope that Ojude Oba will continue to grow, eventually becoming a major attraction for foreign tourists, creating jobs, promoting peace, and attracting foreign investment."

Police arrest 38 foreign nationals in Ogun

Transfer them to NIS, debunk false banditry alerts in Ota, Ifo axis

Olayinka Olukoya | Abeokuta

THE Ogun State Police Command has confirmed the arrest of 38 Cote d'Ivoire nationals during an operation conducted in Kajiola-Ilese, Atan-Ota area of the state.

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Oluseyi Babaseyi, on Tuesday, said the foreign nationals, comprised 19 males and 19 females, aged between 25 and 35 years.

Babaseyi said their arrest followed credible intelligence, adding that they were found in an apartment in the location.

He stated in a release that

the individuals could not produce valid immigration or travel documents during preliminary screening, and they claimed to have gained entry into Nigeria for online business activities.

Those arrested have since been handed over to the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), after conclusion of preliminary police procedures.

The police spokesperson, however, clarified that the foreign nationals are not bandits, terrorists or kidnapers, regarding any piece of information linking any security-related incidents to them as outright falsehood.

Babaseyi said the NIS would look into the appropriate ad-

ministrative action in line with extant immigration laws and protocols for further investigation.

He said: "At no time during the operation were bandits, kidnapers, or terrorists arrested, nor was any security-related incident recorded in connection with the apprehension. Any attempt to link the arrested foreign nationals to banditry or any violent criminal activity is entirely false, misleading, and capable of creating unnecessary panic and disturbing public peace."

Similarly, he debunked a series of false and misleading reports being circulated on social media over alleged bandit attacks on schools and

communities within Ota and Ifo axis of the state.

Babaseyi said: "The command states unequivocally that there has been no bandit attack, kidnapping incident, terrorist activity, or any form of security breach anywhere in Ogun State, including Oluke Community High School, Sango Ota High School (Ijoko axis), Fadunsin area of Ijoko, Atan-Ota, Sango-Ota, Agbado, Ifo, and other adjoining communities.

"Following the circulation of the false reports, police operatives from the respective divisions were immediately mobilised to all affected locations for on-the-spot assessment, verification, and sustained confidence-building

patrols aimed at preventing panic and ensuring continued public reassurance.

"In addition, the command's School Protection Squad, in collaboration with the Divisional Police Officers (DPOs) of the affected areas, conducted immediate security assessments of all referenced schools, including Oluke Community High School and Sango Ota High School (Ijoko axis).

"The exercise confirmed that all schools were safe, secure, and fully operational. School activities continued peacefully and without interruption throughout the day, with students and staff completing a successful academic day before normal closure."

He, therefore, warned against needless tension and anxiety caused among residents by the circulation of unverified security information.

The PPRO assured that officers and men of the command remain fully deployed across the state, with sustained patrols, intelligence-led operations, and proactive measures to safeguard lives and property.

"Residents across Ogun State, including Ota, Ifo, Atan-Ota, Ijoko, Sango-Ota, Agbado, and adjoining communities, are strongly advised to remain calm, continue their lawful activities without fear, and take note that the entire state remains safe and secure," he said.

Man allegedly beats wife to death in Rivers

Olawale Sanusi | Port Harcourt

TRAGEDY struck Ogbogoro community in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, on Tuesday, as a man identified simply as Austin, allegedly beat his wife to death and abandoned her body inside a commercial tricycle, popularly known as Keke NAPEP.

A resident, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told the *Nigerian Tribune* that the incident was discovered early in the morning, prompting residents to alert security operatives.

The source said one of the deceased's daughters informed policemen that her parents had engaged in an argument before the situation allegedly turned violent.

The child reportedly told investigators that her father struck her mother during the altercation, causing her to collapse.

The source further alleged that Austin subsequently carried his wife into a tricycle and instructed the children to accompany them, ostensibly to seek medical attention.

However, upon realising that the woman had died, he allegedly abandoned both the corpse and the children inside the tricycle and absconded.

The resident said: "The child told the police that her father beat her mother during an argument and she fell to the ground. "According to what we heard, the family had earlier been facing accommodation challenges and had moved into a hotel after they were unable to continue paying rent for their apartment.

"The girl further explained that after her mother collapsed, her father placed her inside the tricycle, apparently intending to take her to the hospital, but when he realised that she had died, he abandoned her body and the children and fled."



Some participants during the Nigerian Air Force Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Seminar, in Abuja, on Tuesday. Photo: NAN

Attack on Soludo's CoS: Death toll rises to four

Cajetan Mmuta | Awka

SECURITY concerns have heightened in Anambra State following an increase in the number of victims from two to four, in Sunday night's attack by gunmen on the Amansea-Ndiukwuenu-Awa-Ufuma road in Orumba North Local Government Area of the state.

The convoy of the Chief of Staff (CoS) to Governor Chukwuma Soludo, Chief Ben Nwankwo, alongside others was attacked by gunmen said to be in police uniform.

A combined team of the Nigerian Army, Anambra State police command and the state-owned security outfit, Agunchemba Secur-

ity Squad, visited the scene of the attack, on Monday, at Ndiukwuenu community.

The Agunchemba Security Squad confirmed the death of four persons during the attack.

It disclosed that the perpetrators operated in a white Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV), and stormed the area from Awka, the state capital, to launch the attack.

Among the dead were two policemen and two civilians who were in the convoy of Chief Nwankwo.

The publicity secretary of Agunchemba Security Squad, Mr Nweke Nweke, said: "We have kept an intel on those criminals and we can state that they are not residents in the

area. They came from Awka to operate and then, they ran back to Awka.

"This is due to the fact that our outfit has taken over the state capital, hence they find it difficult to carry out their evil attacks there, so they visit neighbouring communities close to the capital," he said.

"Already, we are working as a joint patrol team along with other sister security operatives to nip the crime in the bud. We have made progress in the area of intelligence gathering, an indication that we are close to apprehending the criminals."

Similarly, Commissioner for Information, Dr Law Mefor, said in a statement, on Tuesday, that the culprits would not

go unpunished as government is on top of the situation.

"This was more than an attack on one person. It is an attack on the peace, security, and democratic order of our state," he said.

"Sadly, four persons lost their lives and deserve justice. The Anambra State government sends its deepest condolences to the families of those who died and share in their grief.

"The police and other security agencies are working to bring everyone involved in this evil act to justice.

"This isolated incident, after more than one year of peace and security in the state, will not affect our determination to remove all forms of crime from Anambra State," Mefor added.

Troops arrest suspected terrorists' logistics supplier in Borno

Atiku Galadima | Maiduguri

TROOPS of the Nigerian Army have arrested a suspected supplier of food and other logistics to terrorist groups operating in Borno State.

The suspect was apprehended by troops of the 149 Battalion (Motorised) during an intelligence-led operation in Gubio Local Government Area, security sources told the *Nigerian Tribune*.

It was said that the suspect was intercepted in Gubio town, while conveying food items allegedly destined for terrorist elements operating in parts of the state.

Items recovered from him included a pick-up vehicle loaded with 31 bags of buski, 11 bags of millet, a mobile phone and N43,500 cash.

A security source said the arrest formed part of ongoing military efforts to disrupt supply networks believed to be sustaining insurgent activities in the North-East.

The source said preliminary findings surrounding the movement of the items raised suspicion, leading to the suspect's arrest for further investigation.

"The suspect was intercepted during an intelligence-driven operation. The circumstances surrounding the items recovered necessitated further investigation," the source said.

The suspect and the recovered items are currently in military custody, while investigations continue to determine the extent of his alleged involvement and identify possible accomplices.

Security authorities said cutting off logistics and supply channels remains a key component of ongoing counter-insurgency operations, noting that such networks often serve as critical support systems for terrorist groups.

Plateau killings: Eight victims laid to rest

Isaac Shobayo | Jos

THE eight residents of Gwon-Ajang community in Foron District of Barkin Ladi Local Government Area of Plateau State, killed on Sunday by suspected bandits, were given a mass burial, on Monday.

Hundreds of people, including government officials, religious leaders, the deceased's relatives and people of neighbouring communities who thronged the site of the burial, sobbed as they denounced the heinous attack.

Addressing the mourners at

the gravesite, a former member of the House of Representatives, Honourable Peter Gyendeng, strongly condemned recurring killings in the local government, saying the attacks have forced many to leave their ancestral homes.

"We are sick and tired of being killed. We have been living in peace, and have tried everything humanly possible not to engage anybody. We have never crossed into another community to attack anyone, yet these things continue to happen to us on a daily

basis," he said.

The former lawmaker expressed frustration over what he described as the failure to halt the cycle of violence despite the peaceful disposition of affected communities.

"It is painful. People stay in their communities and somebody comes to attack and kill them. You cannot even celebrate one good thing without fear. For how long will people continue to live this kind of life," he asked.

Gyendeng called on security agencies and government

authorities to take urgent steps to halt the attacks and ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

Also, member representing Mangu/Bokkos Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives, Honourable Ishaya David Lalu, expressed sorrow over the killings in Foron and other recent attacks in the state.

Lalu described the incidents as painful, heartbreaking and unacceptable, adding that no community should be forced to live under fear and violence.

FG inaugurates inter-ministerial committee for 2026 Democracy Day celebration

Clement Idoko | Abuja

THE Federal Government has inaugurated an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) to coordinate activities marking Nigeria's 27th Democracy Day celebration, with the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Senator George Akume, urging members to commence preparations immediately.

Speaking during the inauguration, on Tuesday at the SGF conference room, Shehu Shagari Complex, Abuja, Akume described Democracy Day as a significant occasion for Nigerians to reflect on the country's

democratic journey and honour those who sacrificed for the attainment of democratic governance.

He paid tributes to the heroes of the June 12, 1993 struggle, particularly the late Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola, whose contributions and sacrifices culminated in the recognition of June 12 as Nigeria's **Democracy Day**.

According to the SGF, the democratic institutions and values being strengthened across the country today are built on the struggles and sacrifices of patriots who fought tirelessly for the restoration of democratic rule.

"Democracy Day remains a fitting opportunity to honour

their memory while celebrating the progress Nigeria has made in democratic governance," he said.

Akume noted that the annual celebration also provides the government an avenue to showcase achievements and reaffirm its commitment to democratic ideals, institutional development and national progress.

He said the administration of President Bola Tinubu would use the occasion to highlight strides made in consolidating democracy, strengthening institutions and implementing reforms aimed at repositioning the country despite prevailing socio-economic challenges.

With only 10 days to the

June 12 anniversary, the SGF urged members of the committee to begin work immediately to ensure a successful celebration.

He stressed that in line with the government's commitment to fiscal responsibility and prevailing national realities, activities for this year's Democracy Day would be modest but impactful.

Akume announced that approved programmes for the celebration include a world press conference on June 4, special Juma'at prayers on June 5, a special Inter-denominational church service on June 7, a Democracy Day public lecture on June 9, and youth and women-oriented programmes on June 10.

Ikirun College of Health Technology opens admission for 2026/2027 academic session

Biola Azeez | Ilorin

REGISTRAR of the Ikirun College of Health Technology (ICHT), Ikirun, Osun state, Mr Adeniyi Abdullah Adeoye, has said the institution is committed to maintaining academic and professional standards in the training of health personnel.

In a statement by the management on the sideline of commencement of admission into its various National Diploma (ND) programmes for the 2026/2027 academic session, the school stated that quality health training is capable of contributing meaningfully to Nigeria's healthcare sector.

Adeoye said the exercise is part of commitment to pro-

ducing competent health professionals through quality training, practical exposure and community-oriented healthcare education.

He said: "Available programmes for the new academic session include National Diploma in Community Health Technology, Public Health Technology, Health Education and Promotion, and Health Information Management.

The statement added that candidates who selected college as their first-choice institution on the 2026/2027 JAMB Central Admission Processing System (CAPS) and scored at least 100 in the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME), are eligible to apply.

Okpebholo sets new governance benchmark in Edo, says Agbomhere

Christian Appolos | Abuja

ALL Progressives Congress (APC) chieftain and immediate past South-South publicity secretary of the ruling party, Dr Blessing Agbomhere, has hailed the developmental strides of Edo State governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, describing the administration's achievements in infrastructure, security and environmental management as unprecedented in the state's history.

Agbomhere said Governor Okpebholo's performance since assuming office in November 2024 has demonstrated purposeful leadership and a clear commitment to transforming Edo State through people-oriented projects

and policies.

In a statement personally signed by him, the legal practitioner pointed to the ongoing reconstruction and rehabilitation of critical road infrastructure across the state as evidence of the governor's determination to drive sustainable development.

He specifically cited the construction of the Ramat Park Flyover in Benin City, describing it as a landmark project that has become a symbol of visionary governance.

He said, the flyover, situated at the strategic Ramat Park corridor linking the Benin-Auchi and Benin-Asaba expressways, is designed to permanently address traffic congestion and improve transportation within the state.

NPC Oye-Ekiti LGA controller retires

THE Controller of the National Population Commission in Oye Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Mrs Folasade Fasuyi, is set to retire from active service after years of meritorious service in the commission.

A statement issued by the family said, activities marking her retirement have been scheduled to hold on June 5,

at the NPC State Headquarters in Ado-Ekiti, beginning at 11 a.m.

The event is expected to draw family members, friends, colleagues, associates and well-wishers who are expected to celebrate Mrs Fasuyi's contributions to the commission and her years of commitment to public service.

The statement described the retirement ceremony as a celebration of a distinguished career marked by dedication, professionalism and unwavering commitment to duty throughout her years in service at the commission.

Mrs Fasuyi was also commended for her diligence, sense of responsibility and passion for excellence, qualities which, according to the family, earned her admiration among colleagues and members of the public she served during her career.



From left: Founder/chairman of the Eleganza Group of Companies, Chief Rasaki Akanni Okoya; Chief Imam of Lagos State, Sheikh Sulaimon Oluwatoyin Abu-Nolla, and managing director of Eleganza Industrial City Limited, Chief (Dr.) Folashade Noimat Okoya, during the 29th remembrance of Alhaja Idiat Abeke Okoya, organised by her son, Chief Okoya, at the Oluwanisola Estate, Lekki-Ajah Expressway, Lagos, on Monday.

Police declare six IPOB members wanted over protests in Abia

Cajetan Mmuta | Awka

THE Abia State Police Command has declared six individuals wanted over their alleged involvement with the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

The persons are: Chukwuebuka Ohaechesi, Emma Okonkwo, Jude Uwa, Gentle Okoro, Uchenna Dike, and Emmanuel Nwankwo.

According to a statement on Tuesday by the police public relations officer of the command, ASP Eguavon Omokaro, the individuals are suspected members of IPOB who allegedly participated in

protests at various times and locations within the state.

The statement alleged that the protests were organised in connection with imprisoned Mazi Nnamdi Kanu and demand for justice through the judicial process.

The police command further stated that the protests allegedly resulted in breaches of peace and disruptions to law and order in Abia State.

Consequently, the police intelligence department reportedly believed that the named individuals were among the principal organisers and coordinators of the demonstrations.

The statement further alleged: "It should be noted that on every 30th day of May, these men and their cohorts convene for the so-called remembrance of Biafra, holding clandestine meetings at various locations in the name of the emancipation of the Biafran Republic and the release of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu."

According to the police, the six individuals were invited on several occasions for questioning in relation to the allegations against them.

The statement indicated that the first invitation was issued on December 18, 2025,

followed by a second invitation on 7 February 2026, and a third invitation on 3 March 2026.

The police alleged that the individuals failed to honour all three invitations.

The statement further asserted: "These individuals were invited by the police on several occasions. Firstly, on 18 December 2025, they failed to honour the invitation. Again, they were invited on 7 February 2026 and failed to appear. Finally, they were invited on 3 March 2026, and they also failed to present themselves before the police."

Group raises alarm over surge in nicotine products

Kehinde Akinseinde-Jayeoba | Lagos

CORPORATE Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA) has decried what it describes as a rapidly expanding nicotine addiction crisis in Nigeria, warning that tobacco companies are increasingly targeting young people through a new generation of favoured and technologically appealing nicotine products.

Speaking at a press conference to commemorate the

2026 World **No Tobacco Day** in Lagos on Tuesday, CAPPA's Executive Director, Akinbode Oluwafemi, said the tobacco industry has merely changed its tactics, not its objective, as it shifts from traditional cigarettes to vapes, nicotine pouches, heated tobacco products and other emerging nicotine devices.

He noted that, while smoking rates have faced increasing public scrutiny and regulation over the years, tobacco companies have responded

by rebranding nicotine consumption as fashionable, innovative and socially acceptable.

"The industry has changed its products, packaging, language and marketing strategies, but its goal remains the same: profit through addiction," Oluwafemi said.

The advocacy group's concerns come amid growing evidence that Nigeria is witnessing a sharp proliferation of new nicotine products across physical and digital re-

tail channels.

CAPPA disclosed that a recent nationwide surveillance exercise identified 781 tobacco and nicotine-related products, including 573 classified as new and emerging nicotine products.

The products, many sold in fruit and candy flavour such as mango, strawberry, bubble gum, mint and vanilla, are increasingly available in supermarkets, convenience stores, nightlife venues and online platforms.

2026 Hajj: Oyo first, second batch pilgrims set for return June 5

THE first and second batches of the 2026 Hajj pilgrims from Oyo State are scheduled to depart Makkah, Saudi Arabia, for Nigeria on June 5 and 6, respectively, following the successful completion of the

Burial

BURIAL activities for the late founder of Omotayo Maternity Hospital, Oke Ado, Ibadan, Dame Eunice Moyo Oreoluwa Kayode, (MFR), will commence with A Day of Tribute on June 8, at Omotayo Maternity Home, Ibadan, Oyo State.

On June 10, there will be a lying-in-state at the Omotayo Maternity Hospital, Oke Ado, Ibadan, by 9 a.m. On the same day, there will be a Service of Songs at her residence, Oni and Sons, Ring Road, Ibadan, at 4 p.m.

On June 11, there will be a commendation service in her honour at Methodist Church, Oke Ado, Ibadan, at 9 a.m. Same day, her remains will leave for Ilare-Ijesha, Osun State, for a brief ceremony back to Imo, Ilesha, Osun State.

On June 12, there will be a Christian Wake, at Imo, Ilesha, Osun State, at 4 p.m. Also, on June 13, there will be a burial service at Otapete Methodist Church, Ilesha, Osun State. Reception is at Zenabab Half Moon, Ijebu-Jesa Road, Ilesha, Osun State.

Hajj rites in the Holy Land.

The two batches, comprising 630 pilgrims, both male and female, are expected to reunite with their families in Nigeria before the end of the week, considering the approved flight schedule.

This was disclosed in a

statement by the Chairman of the Oyo State Muslim Pilgrims' Welfare Board, Sheikh Abdul-Wahab Atere Hashim Olamide, JP.

According to the statement, the pilgrims will be airlifted by Air Peace Airline through the King Abdulaziz International

Airport, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

The statement emphasised the need for pilgrims to ensure that their luggage does not exceed the approved 46 kilogrammes of two 23kg bags allocated to each pilgrim, noting that the total allowable weight, including

hand luggage of 8kg, remains 52 kilogrammes.

Sheikh Atere also disclosed that each pilgrim will receive five litres of Zam-Zam water upon arrival in Nigeria, adding that the water has already been delivered to the

country.

While appreciating the pilgrims for the love, patience, and cooperation demonstrated throughout the Hajj exercise, the Board Chairman urged them to continue to be worthy ambassadors of the state.

Oyo community appeals to govt for appointment of monarch

By Rukiyat Ogunwade

Indigenes of Iresa-Adu in Surulere Local Government Area of Oyo State have called on Governor Seyi Makinde to appoint a king for the community, saying the absence of a recognised monarch is hampering security coordination amid rising abduction cases in the neighbouring communities.

Community leaders and youths argued that a traditional ruler with full authority would serve as a central point for intelligence gathering and collaboration with security agencies.

They made the call during a town hall meeting held recently to deliberate on

rising security concerns in the state, particularly in the ancient town and the absence of a king who would coordinate the security of residents.

Youths from various communities in Iresa-Adu, after the meeting, carried placards with various inscriptions highlighting the importance of the appointment.

They noted that recent kidnappings for ransom have heightened tension in the agrarian town, leaving residents anxious about their safety.

According to the indigenes, installing a new king is not just about cultural succession but a practical step toward restoring order, as the

monarch's office is critical in mobilising local vigilantes and interfacing with the government on security matters.

A youth leader in the town, Mr. Sunday Tunwagun-Oyelami, reiterated that the absence of a king in Iresa -Adu in the last eight years has affected many things apart from the current weak security system in the town.

He urged Governor Makinde to give the Iresaadu kingship selection and installation top priority, adding that the town has a history as one of the ancient towns whose heritage must not be eroded due to the selfish interest of some people contesting to mount the throne.

OLUNLADE
CONFIRMATION OF NAME: I, Olunlade Olusina Nurudeen (in my B.Sc. certificate) am one and same person as Olunlade Olusina (in my WAEC certificate). Henceforth, I wish to be known and addressed as OLUNLADE OLUSINA NURUDEEN. All documents bearing both names remain valid. WAEC and general public take note.

IMOMOH
I, formerly Imomoh Emmanuel Anege now IMOMOH EMMANUEL AGBONOARUE ANEGBE. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OLULEYE
CONFIRMATION OF NAME: I, Oluleye Grace Foluso refers to the same person bearing Ogunleye Grace Foluso. Now wish to be known as OLULEYE GRACE FOLUSO. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

FADIPE
CONFIRMATION OF NAME: I, Fadipe Temitope Festus am the same person bearing Fadipe Tope Festus and Fadipe Festus Temitope. Henceforth, I wish to be known and addressed as FADIPE TEMITOPE FESTUS. All former documents remain valid. First Bank Plc and general public take note.

SAMSON
I formerly Miss Samson Bukunmi Blessing now MRS ADEGBIE BUKUNMI BLESSING. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ISIAKA
I formerly Miss Isiaka Tawa Alake now MRS OYEWOLE TAWA BAMIDELE. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

PUBLIC NOTICE
THIS IS TO INFORM THE GENERAL PUBLIC OR WHOM IT MAY CONCERN THAT: ONE (1) DRILL MACHINE (SCRAP AND DAMAGED) WHICH WAS ABANDONED AROUND FREEDOM PARK, OSOGBO, OSUN STATE HAVE BEEN CAUSING ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH HAZARD, ECOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL CAUSE OF ACCIDENT IN THE OSOGBO METROPOLIS. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC OR WHOM IT MAY CONCERN TO CLAIM THE ABOVE EQUIPMENT WITHIN SEVEN (7) DAYS OF THIS PUBLICATION OR FORFEIT IT TO THE STATE GOVERNMENT PUBLIC AUCTION SALES.
SIGNED: OSUN STATE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND SANITATION & BAMBATORS CONSTRUCTION WORKS AND SERVICES.

IN THE COURT OF APPEAL
IBADAN JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT IBADAN

APPEAL NO: CA/181/2026
SUIT NO: FHC/181/2022

BETWEEN: WALE EWEDEMI, APPELLANT(S)
AND ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION, RESPONDENT(S)

TAKE NOTICE that the above mentioned Appeal/Motion has been adjourned/will be listed for hearing before the Court of Appeal, Ibadan Division sitting at New Adeoyo State Hospital Road Off Ring Road, Ibadan on ~~Monday~~ the 11th day of ~~June~~ 2026 at 9:00 o'clock in the forenoon before Panel.....
DATED at Ibadan this 11th day of May 2026

1. The Appellant/Respondent WALE EWEDEMI, PLOT 57A,
2. Basheer Augusto Street, Sunlure, Lagos.

Original received by me:-
NAME:
RANK:
SIGNATURE:
DATE:
TIME:
PHONE NO:

**KWARA STATE GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SERVICE
DIRECTORATE OF LANDS
PUBLIC NOTICE**

LOSS OF CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY AND RIGHT OF OCCUPANCY

This is to notify the general public that the original copies of the under listed Certificate of Occupancy and Right of Occupancy issued by the Kwara State Government are lost. The particulars of the said lost title documents are as follows;

S/N	NAME OF TITLE HOLDER	KW NO.	TITLE	REGISTRATION PARTICULARS
1.	SELF RELIANCE ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT PROGRAMME (SEAP)	KW. 23705	R of O	_____
2.	MR MICHAEL ORE OYEIPO	KW. 6747	C of O	NO. 418 AT PAGE 418 VOLUME XXII
3.	LIMOTA IYABO BELLO	KW. 5789	C of O	NO. 57 AT PAGE 57 VOLUME XXIV
4.	GABRIEL ADEWUMI	KW. 12093	C of O	NO. 549 AT PAGE 549 VOLUME XXIII
5.	WILLIAM KUNLE ADENIYI	KW. 2286	C of O	NO. 200 AT PAGE 200 VOLUME IV
6.	ALHAJI USMAN AHMED	KW. 11073	R of O	_____

2. The lost copies of the above listed titles are by this publication rendered **Null and Void**. Any objection to the Issuance of Certified True Copies of the said Certificate of Occupancy and Right of Occupancy should be forwarded within **Thirty (30) days** from the date of this Publication to **THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, KWARA STATE GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SERVICE, COMMISSIONER'S LODGE WAY, G.R.A., ILORIN.**

Signed:
NUHU YUSUF
Deeds Registrar
For: **EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN**

**LEGAL NOTICE
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
OSUN STATE OF NIGERIA
(PROBATE DIVISION)**

WHEREAS the persons whose names are set out in the Column of the schedule hereto died intestate on the date and the place mentioned therein.

AND WHEREAS the persons whose names and address set out in the second Column of the said schedule along (wherever found necessary or expedient) with the particulars of their relationship to the said deceased have applied to the High Court of Justice, Osun State of Nigeria for the grant unto them of Letters of Administration in respect of the real and or personal property of the said deceased.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the said Letters of Administration will be granted to the said Applicants unless a notice to prohibit such grant is filed in the Registry of the High Court of Justice, Osogbo, Osun State of Nigeria within twenty-one (21) days from today.

SCHEDULE

DECEASED	APPLICANT FOR GRANT
1. SUNDAY OLAKUNLE ADEBAYO Late of PD 55, Agbada Street, Ilesha, Osun State, who died on 27th day of January, 2025 at Ilesha.	Temidayo Josa Akande of PD 55, Agbada Street, Ilesha, Widow the said Deceased
2. BADERINWA JANET OLUWAYEMISI Late of 10-14, Baderinwa Street, Off Old Inisa Road, Obaagun, Ikirun who died on 28th day of September, 2020 at Ikirun.	Baderinwa Ajayi Ola of 10-14, Baderinwa Street, Off Old Inisa Road, Obaagun, Ikirun, Osun State. Widow of the said Deceased
3. MATTHEW AYOWOLE OYEGBADE Late of Jagba Road, Gbongan, Ayedade who died on 25th day of December, 2025 at Gbongan.	Kikelomo Oyetayo Oyegbade Oyegbade Oyetunji Joeli both of Jagba Road, Gbongan, Ayedade Osun State, Children of the said Deceased.
4. SERAHOYINLOLA LARINDE late of No. 1, Larinde Avenue, Bolorunduro Ifon - Osun, Osun State, who died on 21st day of April, 2025 at Ifon - Osun.	Oyedele Bunmi Oyerinola & Aderanti Busayo Oyebola both No. 1, Larinde Avenue, Bolorunduro Ifon - Osun, Children of the said Deceased.
5. HASSAN KEHINDE GBADAMOSI Late of Boluwatife Community, Ayekale Ota - Efun Area, Osogbo, Osun State who died on 29th October, 2025 At Osogbo.	Badmus Princess Aishat (Gbadamosi) of Boluwatife Community, Ayekale Ota - Efun Area, Osogbo, Widow of the said Deceased.
6. MARY IYABO AKINLUYI late of G.T.B Ekotedo Street, Oke -Alaafia Irojo, Ilesha, Osun State, who died on 27th April, 2025 at Ilesha.	Stella Opeyemi Afolabi Nee Akinluyi of GTB Ekotedo Street, Oke -Alaafia Irojo, Ilesha, Daughter Of the said Deceased.
7. AMOO ISIAKA ALAGBE late of Back Of St. Mary's Grammar School, Yidi Baki Area, Iwo, Osun State, who died On 30th December, 2025 at Osogbo.	Badirat Adebola Amoo of ST Mary's Grammar School, Yidi Baki Area, Iwo, Widow of the said Deceased.
8. KOLAWOLE MUKAILA ADEOYE Of Molaakun Compound, Obada Area Ikire, Osun State, who died on 5th March, 2026 at Ikire.	Ismaheel Adekunle Aadeboye of Molaakun Compound, Obada Area Ikire, Son of the said Deceased.
9. ELIJAH KEHINDE AYANBAMIJI late of Road 5, Ayegbami Street, Asabi Okin Area, Ile - Ogbo Rd, Iwo Osun State, who died on 15th day of August, 2022 at Iwo.	Ayanbamiji Oluranti Rebecca of Road 5, Ayegbami Street, Asabi Okin Area, Ile - Ogbo Rd, Iwo Widow of the said Deceased.
10. ADEKUNLE AKINTUNDE MUYIWA late of Aboderin street Agbale, Orita Challenge, Ibadan Oyo State, who died on the 29th day of April, 2021 at Ibadan.	Ola - Muiyiwa Ayodeji & Muiyiwa Sarah Edijana both of Aboderin Street Agbale, Orita Challenge, Ibadan, Children of the said Deceased.
11. DAVID ADEMOLA AKANJI Late of Olobere Area, Iwo, Osun State, who died on 9th July, 2022 at Iwo.	Akanji Olukunle Babatunde & Akanji Tunrayo Adelodun both of Olobere Area, Iwo, Widow/Brother of the said Deceased.
12. OYELEYE ELIJAH OLUGBEMIGA Late of Danakake Compound, Ikonifin Osun State, who died on 16th day of March 2025 at Ile - Ife.	Oyeleye Jumoke Titilayo of Danakake Compound, Ikonifin Widow of the said Deceased.
13. ASAFA KABIRU DENDE late of Ajobadi's House, Agaia, Iwo, Osun State, who died on 17th November, 2018 at Iwo.	Dende Taoreed Alao & Dende Memunah both of Ajobadi's House Agaia, Iwo, Children of the said Deceased.
14. OLUMUYIWA AKINTUNDE OLADAPO late of Block 4, Akande Street, Agunbelewo, Osogbo, Osun State, who died on 6th day of May, 2025 at Osogbo.	Oladapo Ayobami Folasade of Block 4, Akande Street, Agunbelewo Osogbo, Daughter of the said Deceased.
15. EUNICE IYABO OKUNOLA Late of B1, Unity Estate, Aralopon Irojo, Ilesha, Osun State who died on 18th of January, 2025 at Osogbo.	Amos Olatunde Okunola of B1, Unity Estate, Aralopon Irojo, Ilesha, Widower of the said Deceased
16. VICTORIA BOLUWAIJI OYEWOLE late of Sawmill Area Oke Gada, Ede, Osun State, who Died on 22nd September, 2025 at Ede.	Oyewole Olukunle Seun & Oyewole Olukunle Fisayo both of Sawmill Area Oke Gada, Ede, Children of the said Deceased.
17. ISAAC IBEDIOWE late of 18, Okwurelewo Road, Umuokwuru Umuosun Ubalala Umuahia South L.G.A. Abia State, who died on 28th day of March, 2023 at Abia	Promise Ibediowegwe of 18, Okwurelewo Road, Umuokwuru Umuosun Ubalala Umuahia South L.G.A. Abia State, Son of the said Deceased.
18. AASA - SADIQUE BINTU MOTUNRAYO late of Mrs Tunrayo Sadique's House, Plot 25, Block 4, Adedeji Housing Estate, Eko - Ende, Ikirun, Osun State, who died on the 22nd day of January, 2016 at Eko - Ende,	Aasa - Sadique Babatunde Oluwasegun of Mrs Tunrayo Sadique's House, Plot 25, Block 4, Adedeji Housing Estate, Eko - Ende, Ikirun, Son of the said Deceased.
19. ZACCHAEUS OLUWOLE OLAPADE Late of No. 34, Moboreje Street, Ikirun, Osun State, who died on 24th day of May, 2025 at Ikirun.	Olapade Christianah Omolola of No. 34, Moboreje Street, Ikirun, Widow of the said Deceased.

DATED THIS 2ND DAY OF JUNE, 2026

F. I. OMISADE
F. I. OMISADE
PROBATE REGISTRAR



IBRAHIM
RE-ARRANGEMENT OF NAME AND CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH: That in my BVN details, my name was written Ibrahim Usman instead of Usman Ibrahim. Henceforth, I wish to be known as USMAN IBRAHIM. My correct date of birth is 24th March, 1994. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OGUNKEYE
I, formerly Ogunkeye Bolanle now OGUNKEYE BOLANLE RACHEAL. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OKUNTUGA
CORRECTION OF NAME: In my account and BVN details my name captured as Okuntuga Etopia Modioluwamu, instead of Okuntuga Modimu Ethopia. Henceforth I wish to be known as OKUNTUGA MODIMU ETHOPIA. All former documents remain valid. Banks and general public take note.

ADAJINEWA
CORRECTION OF NAME AND DATE OF BIRTH ON BVN: I, formerly Adajinewa Blessing now ADAJINEWA BLESSING. My correct date of birth 11/06/2000. All former documents remain valid. Banks and general public take note.

PROBATE PUBLIC NOTICE
We, AYAYE VINCENT (SON) and AYAYE KEHINDE SAMUEL (SON) of No. 5, DAYO - IGE STREET, OSHINLE, AKURE have applied to the Estate Administration of Ondo State Customary Court of Appeal for Letter of Administration to administer the Estate of Late MR AYAYE JOSEPH AJAYI of No. 5, ILUOGHOKO, IFON, ONDO STATE who died on the 15/01/2023.
Any objection to this application is to be forwarded to the Estate Administration Office of the Ondo State Customary Court of Appeal, Akure, within 14 days of this notice.

AKINTOYE

I, formerly Akintoye Omowunmi Oluwatobiloba now to be known and addressed as OSADIYA OMOWUNMI TOBILOBA. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

YUSUF

I, formerly Yusuf Sodiq Tunde now to be known and addressed as YUSUF SODIQ ISHOLA. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AKINOLA

CORRECTION OF NAME: I, Akinola Samsudeen Olayinka whose name was written as Olayinka Samsudeen instead of Akinola Samsudeen Olayinka. That my correct name is AKINOLA SAMSUDEEN OLAYINKA. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AROWOSAFE

I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Arowosafe Bukola Deborah now wish to be called and addressed as MRS AYODEJI BUKOLA DEBORAH. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public take note.

AJAGBE

I, formerly known, called and addressed as Miss Ajagbe Odunola Okikijesu now wish to be known, called and addressed as MRS BADEJO ODUNOLA OKIKIJESU. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OLUOKUN

I, formerly Oluokun Sofiat Boluwatife now OLUOKUN SEFIAT BOLUWATIFE. My correct date of birth is **19th August, 2002** and not 19th August, 2001. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

EMMANUEL

I, formerly Emmanuel Taiwo Oyewunmi now RAJI TAIWO OYEWUNMI. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OPAREMI

I formerly Miss Oparemi Beatrice Abiola now MRS MOMOH BEATRICE ABIOLA. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

SANNI

I, formerly Sanni Idayat Tope now IDAYAT TOPE DAGUNDURO. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ANEBE

I, formerly Miss Anebe Deborah Ozavize now MRS SIMPA DEBORAH OZAVIZE. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

LAWAL

CORRECTION OF NAME: I hereby declare that my correct name is Lawal Aliyu Adisa and not Lawal Aliu as mistakenly written in my BVN and bank account details. Henceforth, I want to be known as LAWAL ALIYU ADISA. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OKWUOSA

I, formerly Miss Okwuosa Clara Iwuchukwu now MRS EFIENOKWU CLARA IWUCHUKWU. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OLOHUNNIYO

I, formerly Olohunniyo Bukola Racheal now OGUNRINDE BUKOLA RACHEAL. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

KAREEM

I, formerly Kareem Olusegun Indris now KAREEM OLUWASEGUN IDRIS. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

BOB

CORRECTION OF NAME: I, formerly Bob Abiola Aigbogun now BOB BIOLA AIGBOGUN. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OMOTOSO

I, formerly known and addressed as Omotoso Yinusa now wish to be known as OMOTOSHO YINUSA IBRAHIM. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

FOLASHADE

I, formerly Folashade Olabisi Ogunyemi now FOLASHADE OLABISI OLOTU. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AGBEDE

I, formerly known and addressed as Agbiede Oludamilola Adebisola now wish to be called and addressed as AGBEDE DAMILOLA ABIOLA. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public take note.

AJAGBE

I, formerly Miss Ajagbe Taiwo Islamiyat now to be known and addressed as MRS SULAIMON TAIWO ISLAMIYAT. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

RAZZAQ

I am Razzaq Risikat, but in my BVN, my name was written as Razak Risikat Abake and in my NIN as Razzaq Risikat Romoké. Henceforth, I wish to be addressed as RAZZAQ RISIKAT. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

FADUNSIN

CORRECTION OF NAME: My correct name is Fadunsin Seun Olaniyi (in NIN) and not Olaniyi Seun as wrongly stated in my BVN details. Henceforth, I wish to be known and addressed as FADUNSIN SEUN OLANIYI. All former documents remain valid. NIMC, banks and general public take note.

RAFIU

I, formerly Rafiu Idowu Zainab now RAFIU - MURITALA IDOWU ZAINAB. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADEGBOYEGA

I formerly Adegboyega Seun now ADEGBOYEGA SEUN ISIAIAH. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADELAKUN

I formerly Adalakun M'ranti Ariyike now AGBOOLA AFUSAT ARIYIKE. All former documents remain valid. UBA and general public take note.

JIDE

I, formerly Ifeanyichukwu Iheakachi Eucharia now JIDE IHEAKACHI EUCHARIA. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

WINJOBI

I, formerly Winjobi Modupe Oladoja, now AKIODE ANGELINA MODUPE. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OLUBUKUNOLA

I, formerly Olubukunola Olatokunbo Soga-Williams now OLUBUKUNOLA TOKUNBO SOGA-WILLIAMS. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

KIO

I, formerly Kio Chukwuma Jonah now KIO CHUKWUMA CHARLES. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AKANI

I, formerly Akani Kazeem Wale now MUSLIM KAZEEM ADEWALE. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

RASAQ

I, formerly known as Rasaq Ganiyat Adewunmi and now wish to be known and addressed as ABDULRAZAQ GANIYAT ADEWUNMI. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

FAGBUYI

I, formerly Fagbuyi Esther Oredola now to be addressed as TORIOLA ADERONKE ESTHER and that my correct date of birth is **July 7th, 1955** and not July 7th, 1952. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AFOLABI

I, formerly Afolabi Bolade Racheal now OGUNBANJO BOLADE RACHEAL. All former documents remain valid. Institution, concerned authorities and general public take note.

OLADOJA

I, formerly Miss Oladoja Ruth Oluwadamilola now MRS OMOTOSHO RUTH OLUWADAMILOLA. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AFE

I am Afe James Oluwaseun, but my name was wrongly written as Ogundele Oluwaseun James. Henceforth, I wish to be known as AFE JAMES OLUWASEUN. My correct date of birth is **2nd June, 1994** and not 5th June, 1994. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

JOHNSON

I, formerly Olawale-Johnson Christiana Oyindamola now JOHNSON CHRISTIANA OYINDAMOLA. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

TAOFEEK

I formerly Taofeek Kolawole Rahman now TAOFE EK KOLAWOLE RAMONI. My correct date of birth is **24th October, 1983** and not 1st November, 1983. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

TEMITOPE

I formerly Temitope Rebecca Oyeniyi now TEMITOPE REBECCA AFOLABI. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AGBOOLA

I formerly Agboola Oyinkansola Stelphen Stelven now AGBOOLA OYINKANSOLA STEPHANIE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and public note.

AFOLABI

CHANGE OF NAME AND CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH: I, formerly Afolabi Olamilekan now HAMZAT BAMI TALE OLAMILEKAN. My correct date of birth is **14/02/1985**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ABIOLA

CORRECTION OF NAME: I hereby declare that my correct name is Abiola Bamise Christiple and not Abiola Abiola Christiple as mistakenly written in my BVN and bank account. Henceforth, I want to be known as ABIOLA BAMISE CHRISTIPLE. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ASHOGBON

CORRECTION OF NAME: In my account and BVN details, my name captured as Ashogbon Sade instead of Omomowo Folashade, Henceforth, I wish to be known as OMOMOWO FOLASHADE. All former documents remain valid. Banks and general public take note.

ALATISHE

I, formerly Alatishe Toye Mojeed as it is in my BVN now wish to be known and addressed as ALATISHE DR TOYE MOJEED OLAIDE. All former documents remain valid. Banks and general public take note.

RASAKI

CORRECTION OF NAME AND DATE OF BIRTH: I, formerly Rasaki Muideen Nurudeen was wrongly captured in my BVN details. Also, my date of birth was wrongly captured as 04/04/1990 instead of **28/02/1982** now RASAK MUYIDEEN KABIRUDEEN (as written in my NIN details). All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADEOJO

I, formerly Adejo Kafayat Adebisi now ELISHA ROSE ADUKE and my correct date of birth is **4/2/1973**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OKOLI

I, formerly Okoli Gifi Zaza now OKOLI ONYINYECHUKWU GIFT. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and general public take note.

AKINBOLADE

I, formerly Miss Akinbolade Omowumi Tope now MRS ELIJAH WUNMI TOPE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and general public take note.

OYELARAN

I, formerly Oyelaran Hannah Oluwatimilehin now OLAYEY HANNAH OLUWATIMILEHIN. All former documents remain valid. Ebenezary International Pty Sch, Gwako Abuja, JSS Giri Abuja, Edu-Vision SSS, Gwako Abuja, Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo Ondo State, Monipete, Opay, UBA, First Bank Plc, GTBank, Polaris Bank, NIN, and general public take note.

ABIOYE

CORRECTION OF NAME AND DATE OF BIRTH: I, formerly Abioye Nasirat Idowu now ABIOYE NASRAT KIKELOMO and my correct date of birth is **16/04/2001** and not 16/04/2002 in my bank account details/BVN. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

PELUOLA

I, formerly called Peluola, Olawale Sunday O. wish to be called PELUOLA, SUNDAY OLAWALE OSUOLALE. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

BALOGUN

I, formerly Balogun Fatimoh Anuoluwapo now JOODA FATIMOH BALOGUN ANUOLUWAPO. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

DAUDA

I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Dauda Saheedat Olabisi now wish to be known and addressed as MRS OLUWAKAYODE SAHEEDAT OLABISI. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

IGBINOVIA

I, formerly Monday Noruwa Igbinovia now to be known and addressed as IGBINOVIA MONDAY MARK. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and general public take note.

UDEH

I, formerly known and addressed as Udeh Blessing Chilasa now RICHARDS BLESSING CHINASA. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

IBRAHIM

I, formerly known as Ibrahim Sheu Adewale now OLAJIRE IBRAHEEM ADEWALE. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ALAGA

I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Alaga Blessing Aduragbemi now wish to be known and addressed as MRS SHODEKE BLESSING ADURAGBEMI. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

WAHAB

I, formerly Wahab Busari Olalude now OLALUDE WAHAB OLAIYA. My correct date of birth is **05/06/1956** and not 19/06/1956. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

IGWE

ADDITION OF NAME AND CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH: I, Igwe Okeke Cyril, am the same person bearing as Igwe Cyril. Henceforth, I wish to be known as IGWE OKEKE CYRIL. My correct date of birth is **17/8/1974** and not 28/8/1975. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

JULIANAH

I, formerly known as Julianah Adeleke Bola now wish to be addressed as ADELEKE JULIANAH OMOBOLA. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OLUKOYA

My name was wrongly written as Olukoya Wale now wish to be known as OLUKOYA OLAWALE OLUWAGBEMIGA. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public take note.

AROLU

RE-ARRANGEMENT OF NAME: I, formerly Arolu Olalekan Owooseni now to be known and addressed as OWOSENI OLALEKAN AROLU. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and general public take note.

IMAM

I, formerly Imam Amudalat Oyinlade now IMAM AMUDAT OYINLADE. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

MUFTANU

CORRECTION OF NAME: I, formerly known Muftanu Madinat now MUFTAU MADINAT. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OGUNDELE

I, formerly known as Miss Ogundele Bidemi Benita now wish to be known and addressed as MRS ORISABINONE BIDE MI BENITA. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ASIMIYU

I, Asimiyu Afiz Ajao, my name was written as Asimiyu Afiz during NIN registration now wish my name to be written correctly as ASIMIYU AFIZ AJAO. All former documents remain valid. Banks, NIMC and general public take note.

OLORUNTOBI

CORRECTION OF NAME: In my bank account details, my name was written as Oloruntobi Pelumi John. My correct name is OLORUNTOBI OLUWAPELUMI JOHN. All former documents remain valid. Keystone Bank Plc, other banks and general public take note.

JOHN

CORRECTION OF NAME: In my NIN, my name was written as Danjuma Mary. My correct name is JOHN MARY IGBEKELE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and general public take note.

KOMOLAFE

I, formerly known and addressed as Komolafe Bukola Florence now KAZEEM BUKOLA FLORENCE. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

FAJUKE

I, formerly Miss Fajuke Bisola Margaret now MRS ADENIRAN BISOLA MARGARET. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

MOLIKI

I, formerly Moliki Kudirat now OGUBAJO KUDIRAT. My correct date of birth is **17th April, 1975** and not 7th June, 1967. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AWOLAJA

CONFIRMATION OF NAMES: I, Awolaja Siwajuola Olanrewaju, am the same person bearing Awolaja Asiwaju Saheed, Awolaja Saheed Olawale. Henceforth, I wish to be known and addressed as AWOLAJA SIWAJUOLA OLANREWAJU. All former documents remain valid. Central Securities and Clearing Systems Ltd (CSCS), National Identification Management Commission (NIMC), Other Shares Certificate Authorities Concerned and general public take note.

ISHOLA

I, formerly Isola Felicia Oyenike now ISHOLA FELICIA OYENIKE. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

DOMINIC

CORRECTION OF NAME: I, Dominic Amaka, whose name was written as Emmanuel Amaka instead of Dominic Amaka. That my correct name is DOMINIC AMAKA. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

EDEREHOR

I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Ederehor Sarah Funmi now wish to be known and addressed as MRS EGBEDOFO SUNDAY SARAH. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public take note.

MESIOYE

I, formerly Miss Mesioye Remilekun Omolabake now MRS BANKOLE REMILEKUN OMOLABAKE. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AKINTOLA

I, formerly Akintola Bukola Oluwamilerin now AKINTOLA BUKOLA PAMILERIN and my correct date of birth is **7th June, 1995** and not 7th June, 1998. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

JULIANA

I, formerly Mrs Juliana Omolade Akintunde now MISS JULIANAH OMOLADE FAKUNLE. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OLADELE

RE-ARRANGEMENT OF NAME: The correct arrangement of my name is Oladele Adegoke Philips (in NIN) and not Philips Oladele Adegoke as wrongly stated in my BVN details. Henceforth, I wish to be known and addressed as OLADELE ADEGOKE PHILIPS. All former documents remain valid. NIMC, banks and general public take note.

AZEEZ

That during the registration of my BVN, my name was written as Azeez Amidu now wish to be known and addressed as AZEEZ AMIDU ADE as it appears in my NIN while my correct phone number is **09168079759** and not 09132012586. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

SABITU

I, formerly Sabitu Afeez Olanrewaju, Sabitu Afeez Ogede and Sabitu Afeez Olanrewaju Ogede now to be known and addressed as SABITU AFEEZ OLANREWAJU OGEDE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and general public take note.

MUSIBAU

I, formerly known and addressed as Musibau Iyabo Aseri now SALAMI IYABO SADE. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AROWOSEGBE

I, formerly known as Miss Arowosegbe Dorcas Opeyemi now MRS BABALOLA DORCAS OPEYEMI. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

NOSIRU

I, formerly known and addressed as Nosiru Kudirat Oluwakemi now wish to be known and addressed as AJISAFE KUDIRAT OLUWAKEMI. All former documents remain valid. TSC and general public take note.

OGUNRINDE

My name was stated as Ogunrinde Amos Kayode instead of Ogunrinde Amos Kayode Olufemi now wish to be known and addressed as OGUNRINDE AMOS KAYODE OLUFEMI. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADEYEMI

I, formerly Adeyemi Fatimo Bintu now AJAYI BOLANLE MOROMOKE. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

'HOLD INEC RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY BREAKDOWN OF LAW AND ORDER, AND DISRUPTION OF OIL AND GAS OPERATIONS IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION'

BEING STATEMENT ISSUED BY IJAW AND URHOBO PROTESTERS ON TUESDAY THE 2ND DAY OF JUNE, 2026 AT INEC DELTA STATE HEADQUARTERS, ASABA OVER THE DELAYED IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS FINAL REPORT OF THE SUPREME COURT ORDERED FRESH DELINEATION OF WARRI FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY OF DELTA STATE

Protocols and Gentlemen of the Press.

1. It would be recalled that on the 20th day of May, 2026, INEC released its final report of the Supreme Court ordered fresh delineation of Warri Federal Constituency to stakeholders here in Asaba.
2. At that presentation of the final report, INEC National Commissioner, **Alhaji Abdulrazaq Tukur Yusuf** who represented the INEC Chairman, **Prof. Joash Amupitan, SAN** stated that the presentation was the decision of the Commission on the fresh delineation for immediate implementation. The Resident Electoral Commissioner of Delta State, **Sir Etekambo Udo Umoren** and other top officials of INEC were in attendance during the presentation.
3. The Commission in addition to creation of Registration Areas/Electoral Wards in the three local government areas, created two additional state constituencies for Warri North and Warri South-West Local Government Areas of Delta State to ensure more representation by the people of Warri Federal Constituency.
4. The INEC National Commissioner on that occasion also stated that, considering the limited time constraint imposed by the INEC timetable for the conduct of the 2027 elections, the Commission would immediately direct political parties to conduct primaries for the nomination of candidates to contest in the 2027 elections in the newly created state constituencies in Warri North and Warri South West Local Government Areas.
5. However, the Ijaw and Urhobo people of Warri Federal Constituency are shocked that almost two weeks after INEC presented its final report, the implementation of the report has not started as promised by INEC.
6. We note that the deadline for conduct and submission of list of Candidates of political parties to contest the 2027 general elections is fast approaching.
7. We have in good authority that INEC's failure to immediately implement the report of the fresh delineation as promised, is as a result of external interference by the Presidency which ordered that the implementation of the final report be put on hold.

INEC SHOULD BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY BREAKDOWN OF LAW AND ORDER AND DISRUPTION TO OIL AND GAS PRODUCTION IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION

8. We the Ijaw and Urhobo people of Warri condemn in the strongest terms the failure of INEC to start the immediate implementation of the final report of the Supreme Court ordered fresh delineation of Warri Federal Constituency of Delta State.
9. Delineation of constituencies is the constitutional and statutory responsibility of INEC and by section 161 of the 1999 Constitution, INEC is independent in the performance of its duties and the Presidency has no power whatsoever to direct INEC. The 1999 Constitution clearly state that INEC shall not be subjected to the direction and control of the President.
10. Furthermore, by section 287 (2) of the 1999 Constitution, the judgment of the Supreme Court is final and all organs and agencies of government have a constitutional duty to implement orders of the supreme court without delay or hesitation. In this case, the Supreme Court gave a final decision in SC/413/2016: HON. GEORGE U. TIMINIMI & ORS V. INEC and therefore, INEC is under a legal duty to comply with the order to its logical conclusion.
11. It is an aberration for INEC to surrender its constitutional independence to the Presidency or to be controlled by any individual or organ of government whatsoever.
12. We wish to alert the Nigerian people and the international community that, INEC should be held responsible for any breakdown of law and order, and disruption to oil and gas

operations in the Niger Delta region. We have used all available means to prevail on INEC to respect the rule of law to no avail and pushed to the wall.

13. We wish to alert the international community that oil production activities by multinational companies in the Niger Delta region like CHEVRON NIGERIA LTD, SHELL OFFSHORE (SNEPCo), MOBIL PRODUCING NIGERIA UNLIMITED, and other companies is at risk, of this issue is not quickly resolved. **It would be recalled that, the relocation of a local government headquarters in Warri led to the Warri Crisis of 1997 to 2003 which snowballed into the Niger Delta crisis that almost crippled the Nigerian economy before the declaration of the Presidential amnesty programme.**
14. INEC should under no circumstances try a repeat by attempting to change the final report of the delineation to favour the Itsekiri people.
15. It is disappointing that INEC respects individuals in the Presidency more than the order of the Supreme Court of Nigeria. INEC as a creation of law ought to be a law-abiding agency of government and not respect individuals above the orders of court especially with a Professor of law and Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Prof. Joash Amupitan as Chairman of the Commission.
16. In compliance with the dictates of the rule of law, we call on INEC to direct political parties to conduct primaries to nominate candidates for the newly created state constituencies in Warri North and Warri South West LGAs. The Ijaw people of Egbema Kingdom in Warri North LGA who the new state constituency was created for after more than a century of political oppression and suppression are eager to elect political party candidates to participate in the 2027 general elections into the Delta State House of Assembly. The Ijaws are ready and should be allowed to nominate their candidate based on the newly created constituencies and fresh delineation of registration areas and polling units in compliance with the judgement of the Supreme Court.
17. We state in conclusion that, INEC having concluded its delineation, must only conduct any subsequent electoral activity in the Warri Federal Constituency of Delta State based on the result of the final delineation without any alteration.
18. We strongly call on INEC to act fast before the situation degenerate into an unnecessary conflict in the Niger Delta region.

DATED THE 2ND DAY OF JUNE, 2026 IN ASABA AND

SIGNED FOR AND ON BEHALF OF THE IJAW AND URHOBO PEOPLE OF WARRI FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY OF DELTA STATE:

① Alhaji Jembo-Jembo Ouedepedon
 ② Chief John Edgar Eranwa
 ③ Ch. Godspower Gbamekara T.D A
 ④ Chief Reye David I.
 ⑤ Dr Paul Beberimibo
 ⑥ Rev. AKU Samuel
 ⑦ Chief Apodubakaye Arthur
 ⑧ Chief S/kester femi Okunuga



Dele-Bashiru set for Poland friendly

Lazio midfielder, Fiasayo Dele-Bashiru, has arrived at the Super Eagles camp ahead of Nigeria's international friendly against Poland today.

The game is scheduled to kick off at 7:30pm at the PGE Narodowy Stadium, Warsaw.

Wilfred Ndidi was among the players already at the Super Eagles' Warsaw Presidential Hotel by lunchtime on Monday, alongside goal-

keepers Maduka Okoye, Francis Uzoho and Arthur Okonkwo, defenders Bruno Onyemaechi, Zaidu Sanusi, Emmanuel Fernandez and Igoh Ogbu, and midfielders Frank Onyeka, Raphael Onyedika and Tochukwu Nnadi.

The contingent also included forwards Moses Simon, Paul Onuachu, Akor Adams, Terem Moffi and Rafiu Durosinmi.

Hull City centre-back Semi Ajayi and fresh invi-

tee Abdullahi Bewene did not participate in Monday's training session as they arrived after lunch time.

Recall that Dele-Bashiru was one of Eric Chelle's reliable options during the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations.

The Manchester City academy product appeared in all of Nigeria's games at the tournament, save for the 3-2 win over Tunisia, in which he was an unused substitute.

Poland, meanwhile, have endured a more difficult

spell. The *White-Reds* saw their World Cup hopes ended by Sweden in dramatic fashion before suffering a 2-0 home defeat to Ukraine in their most recent outing.

Today's encounter will mark only the second meeting between both nations at senior international level.

Their only previous clash came in March 2018 when Nigeria claimed a memorable 1-0 victory in Wroclaw courtesy of a second-half penalty from Victor Moses.

Commonwealth Games: AFN set for national trials

By Aherhoke Okioma

THE Athletics Federation of Nigeria [AFN] has scheduled its national trials to hold between June 20 and 22, 2026 at the Yaba College of Technology Sports Complex, Lagos, to select the track and field athletes to represent the country at the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland.

The three-day event will feature 32 track and field events for both men and women.

A statement by AFN's Media Co-ordinator, Dr Kola Oredipe, said the technical committee led by Mr Gabriel Okon, has released qualifying standards for both Nigerian and foreign-based athletes.

It notes that while athletes for 100m, 200m and 400m men and women would be eligible to participate based on the set standards, other track and field events will remain open for participa-

tion.

The statement emphasised that the AFN will provide accommodation for athletes who made the standard within the year under review, with names of qualified athletes expected to be published soon.

AFN President, Chief Tonobok Okowa, has called on athletics stakeholders, enthusiasts and fans across the country to turn out and support the athletes during the trials, as he expressed confidence that the event would help identify the country's best talents ahead of *Glasgow 2026*.

Okowa also commended the leadership of the National Sports Commission (NSC) for its continued support for the Federation and Nigerian athletes, noting that the backing received has contributed significantly to ongoing efforts aimed at strengthening athletics development and improving elite athlete performance.

Nigeria's Udom ranked Africa's best in taekwondo

By Niyi Alebiosu

NIGERIA'S Ability Matthew Udom has been ranked the best in Africa in the women's K44 57kg category following her gold medal-winning performance at the ongoing African Taekwondo Championship in Mali.

Udom's outstanding display earned Nigeria another gold medal at the championship, further cementing her status as one of the continent's top para-taekwondo athletes.

In other events, Joel Jordan secured a bronze medal in the heavyweight category, while Chidima also claimed bronze in her respective division.

Speaking with journalists on Tuesday, President of the Taekwondo Federation of Nigeria (TFN), Tayo Popoola, disclosed that 35 countries are participating in the

championship.

Popoola expressed optimism about Nigeria's chances of winning more medals, particularly in the Poomsae events.

"We are hopeful of winning more medals in Poomsae, which we prepared very well for. Our athletes are ready, up to the task, and determined to make the country proud," she said.

Popoola noted that several countries arrived in Mali with highly experienced athletes who have competed at major international competitions, but maintained confidence in the Nigerian team.

"Other countries came with their best athletes who have participated in bigger events, but I am optimistic that our athletes are up to the task and ready to make the country proud," she added.

Man Utd, best next destination for Osimhen —Ex-PSG star

FORMER Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) defender, Godwin Okpara, believes Manchester United remain the ideal next destination for Galatasaray striker Victor Osimhen.

The 2015 FIFA U17 World Cup winner has been a sensation since his arrival in Istanbul in the last two seasons, and ex-international Okpara, wants to see the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations

(AFCON) silver medallist move to the English Premier League.

"For me, I would prefer him [Osimhen] to go to Manchester United.

"He has already played in Belgium, France and Italy. Now, what comes next? If he can't go to Spain, why not England?"

"Manchester United is the best place for him because he will enjoy his football there. The way he plays will fit perfectly into the Manchester United team. It would be the ideal platform for him to showcase his talents. It would be lovely for him to sign for Manchester United," Okpara who featured at the France '98 World Cup was quoted as saying by *soccernet.com*.

While the Premier League noise refuses to go away, Galatasaray remain in a powerful position regarding their star man. Osimhen is currently under contract until 2029, meaning the Turkish giants are under no immediate pressure to sell unless a massive offer arrives.

Reports suggest that the club would hold out for a fee in the region of €150 million before even considering a departure for their

talisman.

Since joining the Super Lig side, Osimhen has been nothing short of extraordinary, netting 59 goals in 74 appearances and lifting three trophies. His incredible form has validated the decision to move to Turkiye after a difficult exit from Napoli, but at 27, the former African Footballer of the Year is entering his prime years in active football.



3SC Supporters Club bags NPFL, LBA awards

Taofeek Lawal | Abuja

SHOOTING Stars Sports Club (3SC) capped a remarkable campaign by emerging the winners of the NPFL Supporters Club of the Year Award for the 2025/26 season and also the League Bloggers Award (LBA) for Fans of the Season.

The double recognition reflects the extraordinary commitment, passion, and loyalty demonstrated by the club's supporters throughout the campaign.

The *Oluoyole Warriors* enjoyed one of their strongest seasons in recent years, fin-

ishing third in the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) standings and remaining among the league's most competitive sides.

Chairman of 3SC, Honourable Taiwo Lekan-Salami, acknowledged the crucial role supporters played in motivating the team and fostering a positive environment around the squad.

"The recognition as NPFL Supporters Club of the Year is particularly significant because it celebrates organisation, dedication, and positive fan engagement. Throughout the season, Shooting Stars supporters

consistently demonstrated unity and commitment to the club's ambitions," he said.

He stated that supporters' contribution extended beyond the terraces and help to strengthen the bond between the team and the city of Ibadan as well as the wider football community.

"These achievements belong not only to the supporters' leadership but also to the thousands of fans who stood behind the team through victories, draws, and difficult moments," he added.



SIDELINES

One Aubrey, 39, who told a local court in Zambia to dissolve his 17-year-old marriage, added that it got to a point he was paying his wife money [K50] per round of sex. Imagine, when one of spouses must be paid to honour conjugal duty, what a marriage of convenience!

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Can Nigeria shoot its way out of terrorism?

ing the disease untouched. We have shot everything at this monster, but it looks like every bullet has only toughened him. Every bomb has made him angrier. Now it is tall, black and menacing. And advancing towards Lagos. Oh no, you don't have to believe me.

Let us just focus on the uncomfortable truth. Poverty is not the same thing as terrorism. There are millions of poor Nigerians who are honest, hardworking and law-abiding. Every morning, they wake up, struggle through impossible circumstances and still choose decency over crime.

So poverty alone does not create terrorists. Yet poverty can create fertile ground for recruitment.

A hungry young man with no education, no employable skill and no hope for the future is easier to manipulate than one who has opportunities. A boy who sees no future may be tempted by anybody offering money, food, status or a sense of belonging. That is why economic empowerment must be part of the conversation.

Northern Nigeria is blessed with vast agricultural land, energetic youth and enormous human potential. Imagine what would happen if millions of young people were productively engaged in farming, agro-processing, manufacturing, technology and entrepreneurship.

A young man earning an honest living is less likely to answer the call of a bandit leader.

An idle young man is a different matter altogether.

However, let us not deceive ourselves.

If poverty alone caused terrorism, then every poor community in Africa would be a terrorist enclave. The reality is more complicated.

Groups such as Boko Haram were not built merely on economic frustration. They were built on ideas—dangerous ideas. They preached hatred. They preached violence. They preached rejection of modern education and the Nigerian state.

You cannot defeat such ideas with bags of

rice and empowerment grants alone.

You fight bad ideas with better ideas.

That is where reorientation comes in.

For too long, we have treated education as merely a means of passing examinations. Real education should teach citizenship, responsibility, tolerance and critical thinking.

The fight against terrorism must therefore involve teachers, parents, religious leaders, traditional rulers and community influencers. The battle is not only for territory.

It is also for minds.

And then comes the issue of cultural renewal.

Before anybody sharpens their knives, let me explain.

Cultural renewal does not mean abandoning tradition. It does not mean discarding faith.

It does not mean becoming less northern, less southern, less Muslim or less Christian. It means rediscovering the values that once held communities together.

Values such as respect for life, respect for learning, respect for honest labour and respect for communal responsibility.

Many years ago, entire villages helped raise children. Elders corrected young people. Communities celebrated hard work and frowned at criminality.

Today, too many communities are overwhelmed by unemployment, drug abuse, illiteracy and the erosion of social values.

A society that produces millions of disconnected and frustrated young people is unknowingly manufacturing tomorrow's security challenges.

Yet there is another truth we must not ignore. Economic empowerment, reorientation and cultural renewal are not substitutes for security.

No nation negotiates its existence with terrorists.

No government can fold its arms while armed criminals slaughter citizens.

Bandits who murder farmers, abduct children and terrorise communities must be confronted decisively.

Terrorists who wage war against the state

must face the full force of the law.

Development is necessary.

Security is non-negotiable.

The two must work together.

Then, there is the matter of governance.

Many communities affected by banditry complain that government appears only during elections.

Roads are bad.

Schools are inadequate.

Healthcare facilities are scarce.

Opportunities are limited.

When government becomes distant, criminal groups often move in to fill the vacuum.

A man who visits his wife once in a while must not delude himself into thinking someone else cannot fill the vacuum. Bad governance is a husband who visits his wife once in four years with plenty of gifts, sleeps with her every day for one month or two and then disappears for another four years. The gifts will be appreciated. The woman may even flaunt it. But there are no guarantees that the woman will happily wait for him, untouched, for another four years. Any number of bad things can happen when you leave your goat to wander. She may be injured, stolen, killed, or even impregnated.

A citizen who feels abandoned is easier for extremists to manipulate.

A citizen who believes government cares is more likely to cooperate with law enforcement. This is why governance itself is a security strategy.

In the end, Nigeria's challenge is not merely military.

It is economic.

It is educational.

It is cultural.

It is political.

It is moral.

The temptation is always to search for a single magic solution. Nigerians love silver bullets. We want one policy, one speech, one operation, one miracle.

Unfortunately, terrorism does not work that way.

Even if United States of America with its troops swoop in guns-ablazing, will they stay here forever? Will we still be a sovereign nation if America remains here permanently?

A nation defeats terrorism when it secures its borders, protects its citizens, educates its children, creates opportunities for its youth and builds institutions people can trust. Bullets can eliminate terrorists.

But only a just, functional and hopeful society can stop new terrorists from emerging.

That is the real battle before Nigeria.

And until we fight it on all fronts, we may continue cutting off the branches while leaving the roots firmly planted in the soil.

Sport

Lewandowski will start against Eagles —Poland coach

COACH of Poland, Jan Urban, has confirmed that Robert Lewandowski will start today's international friendly against Nigeria, with two other players also assured of places in the lineup.

The game is scheduled to kick off at 7:30pm at the PGE Narodowy Stadium, Warsaw.

The Barcelona striker featured in the first half of Poland's disappointing 2-0 defeat to Ukraine last weekend, before he was replaced by Mateusz Zukowski.

Urban revealed that the veteran forward

will lead the **White-Reds** from the outset against the three-time African champions under the tutelage of Eric Chelle.

The Polish manager also disclosed that he plans to make several changes to his starting XI, confirming that Wolfsburg goalkeeper Kamil Grabara will replace Marcin Bulka between the posts, while a third starter Piotr Zielinski has already been decided.

"Expect numerous changes. There were many in the first match, and there will be

many in the second. These are friendly matches, so when, if not now, should we try different things and give the players a chance?"

"We made nine changes during the match against Ukraine. I watched other teams in friendly matches; they made 10-11 changes. That's normal in such matches," Urban was quoted as saying by **Fakt**.

Poland are monitoring the fitness of midfielder Jakub Piotrowski, a teammate of Nigeria goalkeeper Maduka Okoye at Udinese.

The 28-year-old is currently dealing with a minor muscle strain and remains a doubt ahead of the encounter.

Meanwhile, according to Malian-born Chelle, the Super Eagles will prosecute today's friendly without Victor Osimhen, Ademola Lookman, Samuel Chukwueze, and Alhassan Yusuf, among others, but have the regulars like captain Wilfred Ndidi, Frank Onyeka, Raphael Onyedika, Moses Simon, Paul Onuachu, Akor Adams, Terem Moffi, and Fiso Dele-Bashiru to parade against Poland.