



Reject ethnic profiling, religious hatred, Shettima urges Nigerians

Vice President Kashim Shettima has implored Nigerians to reject ethnic profiling, religious hatred, misinformation and retaliatory violence in order to build a secure, inclusive and prosperous federation. Shettima made the call on Saturday in Jos, Plateau State capital, during the 80th birthday anniversary and public presentation of the autobiography of former Gov. Jonah

CONTINUES ON P2 →

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Nigeria gets \$500 million for vaccines, PHC from Gavi
P6



Soldier, Policeman killed as troops foil attack by terrorists in Zamfara
P4



Northern Christians back Catholic Bishops, fault Bwala over divisive politics
P5



2027: INEC publishes particulars of Tinubu, Atiku, Obi, others
P14

ATIKU TO PRESIDENCY

Address Catholic bishops' concerns, stop attacking Onaiyekan

- Says Presidency's comment towards Onaiyekan "unbecoming of a govt, amounted to sheer arrogance"
- Rejects defence of Tinubu's economic policies, describes it as desperate attempt at revisionism



Scene at the 7th African Emerging Markets Forum (AEMF 2026), held at the Central Bank of Nigeria Headquarters in Abuja, where Governor, Olayemi Cardoso (2nd left) and World Trade Organisation Director-General, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (2nd right) shared compelling insights on the reforms, investments, and partnerships needed to position Nigeria and Africa for sustainable economic growth.

Emeka Agu Jnr
with agency reports

Former Vice-President, Atiku Abubakar, on Sunday, told President Bola Tinubu's media handlers to stop attacking former Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, Cardinal John Onaiyekan, and address the concerns raised by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) about the state of the nation. Recall that the leadership of the CBCN, led by Matthew Ndagoso, its president, last Tuesday visited President Bola Tinubu at the State House in Abuja. During the meeting, Ndagoso presented the CBCN's message to the president, raising concerns about the state of the nation and the economic hardship facing Nigerians. Tinubu, however, defended his administration's performance, saying the economy is stabilising and that the era of prolonged strikes by university lecturers has ended. The president also told the Catholic bishops that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is "neutral", adding that his political

CONTINUES ON P2 →

The Presidency has dismissed former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar's claim that the federal government earned a N7.98 trillion oil windfall under the current administration, asking him to provide evidence to support the allegation. In a statement issued on Sunday, Special Adviser on Information and Strategy to the president, Bayo

CONTINUES ON P2 →

Presidency dismisses Atiku's N7.98trn oil windfall claim, demands evidence

Address Catholic bishops' concerns, stop attacking Onaiyekan

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

opponents are "afraid of their own shadows and uncertainty in the companies they keep".

But speaking on the "Prime Time" programme on Arise

Television on Friday, Cardinal Onaiyekan said Tinubu was unhappy with and disagreed with the message delivered by the Catholic bishops.

Onaiyekan said the Catholic

bishops told the president that the country is bleeding and that the economy is worsening the plight of poor Nigerians.

Responding to Onaiyekan's remarks, Daniel Bwala, special adviser to the president on communication, said the cardinal's comments did not represent the views of all Christians.

Bwala also alleged that the Catholic Church was "rooting for" Peter Obi, the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) presidential candidate for the 2027 election.

However, in a statement issued on Sunday by Phrank Shaibu, his senior special assistant on public communication, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar said the duty of Catholic bishops is not to flatter those in power, adding that the CBCN has always spoken truth to power.

Atiku said the Catholic bishops showed courage by "looking the President in the face and telling him the bitter truth about the state of the nation".

The former vice-president said the presidency's com-

ment towards Onaiyekan was "unbecoming of a government and amounted to sheer arrogance".

"The commentary by the Tinubu Presidency against Cardinal John Onaiyekan—a respected voice, elder statesman and beacon of truth within the Catholic Church—was delivered in language that was unbecoming of a government and amounted to sheer arrogance, not only towards the Church but towards millions of Nigerians who hold the Cardinal and the institution he represents in the highest esteem.

"Such haughtiness betrays a government that has lost respect for independent voices. What the media managers of the Tinubu administration attempted to do was to cancel and overwrite the voices of the revered Catholic bishops by selectively editing and reframing their engagement with the President in order to manufacture a narrative favourable to the government.

"That cynical exercise amounted to an affront to the

integrity, credibility and moral authority of the bishops.

"Cardinal Onaiyekan's decision to speak to the press after the Presidency sought to dominate and distort the public conversation was nothing more than an effort to place the facts on record.

Such a responsible act cannot justify the vile, uncouth and disrespectful reaction that followed from Tinubu's media handlers. Resorting to insults instead of addressing the issues only exposes the bankruptcy of their arguments," the statement read.

The former vice-president said the presidency owes the Catholic Church and Onaiyekan an "immediate and unreserved apology" over the "reckless assault" on the cleric.

In another development, the former vice-president has rejected the defence of President Bola Tinubu's economic policies by the Chairman of the Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms, Taiwo Oyedele, describing it as a desperate attempt at revisionism.

In a statement on Sunday by his Senior Special Assistant on Public Communication, Phrank Shaibu, Atiku said the government's claims on public debt, subsidy removal, debt servicing and workers' welfare collapse under the weight of publicly available facts.

"Which salary increase is the government talking about? The Federal Government is yet to fully implement the new minimum wage. The 40 per cent peculiar allowance tied to the wage adjustment remains unpaid despite official directives that it should take effect from May 1, 2026," he said, adding that "these are not opposition allegations; they are the grievances of organised labour."

On the administration's public debt profile, Atiku cited figures from the Central Bank of Nigeria CBN, noting that the Federal Government's exposure to the apex bank stood at approximately ₦26.9 trillion when President Tinubu assumed office in May 2023, and has since risen to over ₦40.38 trillion.

Presidency dismisses Atiku's N7.98trn oil windfall claim, demands evidence

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Onanuga, described Atiku's economic analysis "deficient" and challenged the former vice-president to substantiate his claims.

The presidency's rebuttal follows Atiku's recent criticism of the federal government's continued domestic borrowing despite what he described as "higher-than-expected" oil revenues.

In an earlier statement issued by Phrank Shaibu, his senior special assistant on public communication, Atiku said President Bola Tinubu administration's economic management was "contradictory, opaque, and bereft of fiscal discipline".

The former vice-president claimed that at an average production of 1.5 million barrels per day, Nigeria earned an estimated \$42.7 million in additional revenue daily, amounting to about \$5.76 billion, or approximately N7.98 trillion, between March 1 and July 14.

He argued that despite the revenue, the federal government raised about N5 trillion from the domestic bond market in the first half of 2026, representing nearly 80 percent of the amount borrowed during the corresponding period in 2025.

According to him, such aggressive borrowing would only be justified if government revenues had declined.

Rejecting the claims, Onanuga said Atiku's economic analysis was deficient, insisting that "there is no such windfall of N7.98 trillion".

"Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, in his typical pastime, has accused the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu of fiscal recklessness, citing excess borrowing in the 2024 budget, questioning the removal of fuel subsidy, criticising tax reforms, concocting an oil windfall of N7.98 trillion, and suggesting that Nigeria is drifting economically," the statement reads.

He said any incremental revenue from higher oil prices is reflected in the monthly FAAC figures.

He added that while the average Brent crude price for the first half of 2026 was around \$90, compared with the \$64.85 benchmark, average daily production fell short at about 1.6 million barrels per day against the

projected 1.84 million barrels per day.

According to him, the production shortfall partly offset the price premium, while some crude volumes had already been pledged for loans used to finance the fuel subsidy that had since been removed.

"The convenient mistake many analysts make is to multiply the oil price by the daily crude production volume to determine revenue to the government. Such analyses ignore the cost of production, the share of crude belonging to the oil-producing companies and the impact of crude sale contracts such as forward contracts designed to hedge against price volatility," Onanuga said.

"Atiku will do well to show the workings for his N7.98 trillion oil windfall."

He also faulted Atiku for relying on what it described as outdated economic arguments.

"It is curious that in the middle of 2026, the opposition's principal economic argument remains anchored to developments in the 2024 fiscal year," he stated.

"Economies are dynamic. Reforms are processes, not events. Judging a reform programme solely by its earliest and most painful phase is like judging chemotherapy by the nausea it induces while ignoring the remission it seeks to achieve."

Onanuga said the Nigerian economy had evolved significantly since the exchange-rate reset, with dollar-denominated GDP rising from about \$253 billion to approximately \$377 billion, while naira GDP increased from about N314 trillion in 2024 to around N530 trillion.

According to the presidential spokesperson, the reforms were never presented as painless but as necessary structural adjustments intended to correct long-standing distortions.

He also dismissed the claim that Nigeria has "over-borrowed", arguing that the country's revenue-to-GDP ratio remains among the lowest globally, limiting the government's ability to fund public services without borrowing.

He added that recent reforms have begun to improve revenue mobilisation, broaden the tax base, reduce leakages, and strengthen public financial management.

"The debt debate should,

Reject ethnic profiling, religious hatred, Shettima urges Nigerians

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Jang of Plateau.

He also called for a renewed national covenant on peace, observing that peace is a shared responsibility between government, community leaders and the citizens.

"A people at peace is the highest achievement of any government, because peace is the soil in which every other blessing grows," he declared.

The vice president conveyed the goodwill and prayers of President Bola Tinubu to the celebrant.

Shettima reaffirmed Tinubu administration's commitment to a Nigeria where security supports economic opportunity and every citizen feels at home in every part of the country.

The vice president said that sustainable development cannot take root in an atmosphere of fear, insecurity and distrust.

Shettima noted that the economic fortunes of communities and states in Nigeria are closely connected.

"No community flourishes in isolation. Prosperity cannot survive where fear reigns. A farmer in Riyom depends upon peace beyond his village.

"A trader in Jos depends upon roads that run through the towns of other men. The confidence of one state is the security of another," he said.

He described Plateau as "Nigeria in miniature," adding that the state's diversity, aspirations, difficulties and recovery reflect the wider national experience.

According to him, whatever strengthens peace and development in the Plateau

contributes to the stability of the entire federation.

"While any setback in the state points to the unfinished work of national reconciliation.

"Plateau State is Nigeria in miniature. Its dreams are the dreams of Nigeria. Its struggles are the struggles of Nigeria.

"Its complexity is the complexity of Nigeria. Its fears are the fears of Nigeria. Its grief is the grief of Nigeria. Its recovery is the recovery of Nigeria," he stated.

Shettima condemned attempts to associate individual criminal conduct with entire ethnic, religious or regional communities.

The vice president warned that collective blame enables criminals to deepen divisions beyond the immediate harm caused by their actions.

"No criminal represents his origin, his ethnic group, his religion, his language, his ancestry, his village or the innocent people who bear his surname. "Crime has no tribe. Violence has no religion. Murder carries no mandate from any community," he maintained.

The VP averred that when innocent people are condemned for crimes committed by others, the perpetrator succeeds twice by taking a life and destroying the trust among those left behind.

"He destroys a life, and then he poisons the fellowship of those left behind. This is the lesson the rest of Nigeria must learn," he added.

Shettima said that Plateau had endured years of violence perpetrated by criminals who invested in chaos, disrupted farming, weakened commer-

cial activities and attempted to replace neighbourliness with suspicion.

He praised the people of the state for refusing to abandon their belief in peaceful coexistence.

Shettima described their resilience as a quiet form of heroism that had earned the gratitude of the nation.

He assured that the Federal Government would continue to discharge its constitutional responsibility for security.

He emphasised that lasting peace also requires citizens to reject rumours, resist inflammatory rhetoric and choose reconciliation over revenge.

While paying tribute to Jang, Shettima described the former military officer, governor and Senator as a father figure whose influence extended beyond the Berom people, Plateau, his religious faith and political affiliation.

He said the worth of a life in public service should be measured by its impact on people rather than wealth, political authority or public applause.

"The secret of a life well lived is neither the fortune we gather nor the power we hold. Life is measured by the difference we make among our people.

"Wealth fades. Office passes from one hand to another. Applause is carried away by the wind. What endures is the good we leave behind in human lives," he stated.

Shettima thanked Jang for the uniform he wore in defence of the country, the offices he held in its service and his continued pursuit of peace in Plateau.

The vice president announced President Tinubu's appointment of Yakubu Jang, son of the celebrant as a Senior Special Assistant to the President.

Earlier, former President Goodluck Jonathan said the birthday celebration and public presentation of the autobiography was a testament to Jang's integrity and accomplishments as a leader.

He said Jang's autobiography encapsulates the choices made, the challenges faced and convictions that guided his service to the nation in various capacities.

"It teaches the younger generation of leaders the virtues of integrity, patience and peace.

For his part, Gov. Caleb Mutfwang of Plateau explained that the event was an opportunity to honour the values, leadership quality and sacrifices of Jang as a former military administrator, executive governor, elder statesman and bridge-builder.

He said though Jang had been misrepresented at different times, the people of Plateau still love and appreciate his sacrifices for future development of the state and wellbeing of the people.

Also, Gov. Hyacinth Alia of Benue extolled the leadership qualities of Jang, recalling his days as the military administrator of Benue State.

He prayed to God to grant the celebrant long life in good health, as he continues to offer selfless service to the development of Plateau and Nigeria in general.



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Rivers: Fubara’s political mistake was he tried to build his own structure – Wike

Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, has blamed the prolonged political crisis in Rivers State on Governor Siminalayi Fubara’s decision to create a political structure independent of the one that brought him to power, saying the move effectively jeopardised the governor’s chances of securing a second term.

Wike made the remarks on Saturday during a media chat with selected radio stations in Port Harcourt, where he spoke extensively on the breakdown of his relationship with Fubara and the events that led to the political stand-off in the state.

According to the former Rivers governor, Fubara began distancing himself from his political base barely 100 days after assuming office, allegedly under the influence of advisers who encouraged him to break away from those who supported his emergence.

“There are people who will tell you all kinds of things and convince you that you no longer need those who helped

you get into office. Some even go through family members to pass such messages. The responsibility lies with you to separate good advice from bad,” Wike said.

“His mistake was trying to establish his own structure against the structure that brought him into office, and it happened too early. It started within his first 100 days in office.”

Wike said he had repeatedly advised Fubara to focus on governance and build on the developmental foundations already laid in the state rather than becoming entangled in political battles.

Recalling a conversation during a church service, the minister said he challenged the governor to define his vision for Rivers State and urged him to continue efforts aimed at positioning the state as a competitor to Lagos.

“I told him that he had been elected and needed to decide what he wanted to achieve. My vision was for Rivers to compete with Lagos, and I believed I had laid the foundation for that journey,”

he said.

The FCT minister rejected suggestions that their disagreement was driven by financial interests, insisting that his concern had always been the development of Rivers State.

“It was never about money. If it were, we wouldn’t be where we are today. My focus was on governance and en-

suring Rivers kept pace with leading states. Unfortunately, he lost focus,” Wike stated.

Addressing speculation about impeachment threats that emerged at the height of the crisis, Wike clarified earlier comments he made on the issue, saying his statement that “there is no sin” was rooted in religious doctrine rather than politics.



Former President Olusegun Obasanjo (left); NDC Presidential candidate, Peter Obi (right) and former Commonwealth Secretary General, Emeka Anyaoku (2nd right), honouring entertainer, Charles Oputa, aka Charly Boy (2nd left) at the public presentation of his book, ‘999: The Memoir of Charly Boy’ in Lagos at the weekend.

FG defends mining licence revocation, denies favouring Chinese investors

The Federal Government has defended its decision to revoke the mining licences of Basin Mining Limited, insisting the action was based solely on the company’s failure to meet its statutory obligations and not on any preference for Chinese investors as alleged in recent media reports.

The Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dele Alake, stated this in a statement issued by his spokesperson, Kehinde Bamigbetan, in Abuja on Sunday.

Alake also dismissed allegations that he was handing Nigeria’s mineral wealth to Chinese interests, describing the claims as false, misleading and part of a campaign to discredit ongoing reforms in the mining sector.

According to Bamigbetan, Basin Mining Limited’s mineral titles were revoked after the company failed to pay statutory annual service fees amounting to N1.223 billion in 2024.

He said the outstanding debt later rose to about N2.494 billion before the licences were eventually cancelled.

“The revocation was carried out in accordance with Nigerian mining laws and had nothing to do with the nationality of any investor,” Bamigbetan said.

He further claimed that although British-Australian firm Jupiter was not the holder of the revoked licences, it insti-

tuted arbitration proceedings against the Federal Government, claiming a violation of the Nigeria-United Kingdom Bilateral Investment Treaty.

Bamigbetan also stated that the company had resorted to media campaigns and cyber attacks against Alake in an attempt to pressure the government into reversing the revocation.

Responding to allegations that the minister favours Chinese investors, Bamigbetan said Alake had visited China only twice in the past three years—first as part of President Bola Tinubu’s delegation on a state visit and later at the invitation of the Chinese government for China Mining Week 2025.

He said the minister had attended more investment conferences in Western countries than in China, including three editions each of the London Mines and Money Conference and Mining Indaba in South Africa, as well as two official visits to Australia to promote investment opportunities in Nigeria’s mining sector.

According to Bamigbetan, Nigeria’s policy of opening the mining industry to foreign investment predates the current administration, tracing it to the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission Act and the Foreign Exchange (Monitoring and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act of 1995, which liberalised investment across virtually all sectors of the economy.

Soldier, Policeman killed as troops foil attack by terrorists in Zamfara

Troops of Sector 2, Operation FANSAN YAMMA, deployed at the Forward Operating Base (FOB) in Kasuwan Daji, Kaura Namoda Local Government Area of Zamfara State, have repelled an attempted infiltration by terrorists.

The defence of the base, according to the Nigerian Army, resulted in heavy casualties for the attackers, forcing them to retreat in disarray, and led to the rescue of nine abducted civilians.

It, however, said that an army officer and a police officer lost their lives during the operation, which occurred at approximately 1:40 a.m. on August 2, 2026, when terrorists attempted to exploit the cover of darkness to breach the military facility.

The military authorities said that alerted troops swiftly detected the hostile movement and responded with coordinated, overwhelming firepower, compelling the terrorists to abandon their mission and withdraw in confusion.

“Following the initial engagement, reinforcements arrived, and troops launched a hot pursuit of the fleeing terrorists, who had abducted an unspecified number of residents from the surrounding community during the attack. The relentless pursuit by the troops led to the rescue

of nine abducted locals, who were safely recovered.

“Regrettably, one Army officer and one police officer paid the supreme price during the heavy firefight. Additionally, two soldiers sustained gunshot wounds and were promptly evacuated by air for advanced medical care; both personnel remain in stable condition,” a statement by the Acting Deputy Director, Army Public Relations of 8 Division, Nigerian Army/Sector 2 Operation FANSAN YAMMA, Lieutenant Colonel Olaniyi Osoba, partly read.

“Troops have since secured and dominated the area, and are currently conducting exploitation operations to ascertain the full extent of the terrorists’ losses and ensure the safety of the community.”

The army further stated that the failed infiltration attempt represented yet another significant operational setback for the terrorists, capping a costly weekend for the group amid intensified military pressure across the North-West theatre.

It also said that the outcome underscored the increasing difficulty these armed groups face in executing coordinated attacks against highly alert and combat-ready troops, further degrading their combat capability, morale, and freedom of action.

NDLEA intercepts cocaine concealed in mortar, backpack for export to China, Italy

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) says its operatives have intercepted consignments of cocaine concealed in a local mortar and a backpack destined for China and Italy.

In a statement on Sunday, Femi Babafemi, NDLEA spokesperson, said the seizures were made by officers of the agency’s directorate of operation and general investigations (DOGI) on July 30.

Babafemi said operatives recovered 250 grams of cocaine factory-fitted into the base of a local mortar packaged in a carton for export to China, as well as 500 grams of the drug concealed in the false bottom of a backpack meant for shipment to Italy, through a logistics company in Lagos.

He added that in Rivers state, NDLEA operatives arrested a 38-year-old suspected drug dealer, Ugo Okonkwo, at Eagle Island in Port Harcourt following intelligence.

According to the agency, Okonkwo was apprehended on July 26 with quantities of cannabis, cocaine, methamphetamine, swinol, tramadol and codeine syrup.

Babafemi said operatives also intercepted a truck marked X 131 BDG at the DMGS Roundabout in Onitsha, Anambra state, on July 27.

He said the truck was loaded with 26,000 bottles of codeine syrup weighing 3,960 kilograms, while its driver, Chinedu Nwanze was arrested.

The agency also said its officers recovered 331.84 kilograms of skunk from

a Toyota Sienna bus with registration number KUJ 26 DV along the Kwale-Ughelli expressway in Delta state on July 26.

In Nasarawa, NDLEA said its operatives arrested Joseph Nwaeke, a 64-year-old suspect, on July 28 at Asso Angwan Muazu in the Karu area of the state with 68 kilograms of skunk and 29 grams of methamphetamine.

The agency added that operatives on patrol along the Zaria-Gusau highway in Zamfara state intercepted Sani Umar on July 27 while allegedly conveying 7,400 pills of tramadol 225mg suspected to be supplies for criminal elements.

Babafemi said NDLEA commands across the country also sustained the agency’s War Against Drug Abuse (WADA) sensitisation campaign during the week.

He said awareness lectures were held for students and staff of Hausawa Special Primary School in Kano, Royal Crown School in Oluyole, Ibadan, Government Secondary School in Ibi, Taraba state, and drivers at the Challenge Bus Terminal Park in Ibadan, among other locations.

Babafemisaid Buba Marwa, chairman and chief executive officer of the NDLEA, commended officers of DOGI, as well as the Rivers, Anambra, Delta, Nasarawa and Zamfara commands for the successful operations.

Marwa urged personnel across the agency to sustain the NDLEA’s balanced approach to drug control through enforcement and public sensitisation.

FG unveils power sector reset to boost electricity supply

The Minister of Power, Mr Joseph Tegbe, has unveiled a roadmap to reposition the electricity sector, with reforms aimed at improving power supply, accelerating infrastructure development, strengthening the national grid and restoring investor confidence.

Tegbe disclosed this on Friday during an interactive media engagement in Lagos.

He said the Federal Government, under President Bola Tinubu's administration, was implementing comprehensive reforms to make electricity more reliable, accessible and financially sustainable while addressing longstanding structural challenges in the industry.

According to him, the "Resetting the Sector" initiative builds on previous reforms and focuses on resolving technical, commercial, governance and liquidity constraints that have hindered the sector's growth.

"Our objective is clear: make electricity more available, make the grid more reliable, make the market financially sustainable and re-

store investors' confidence.

"Ultimately, we want electricity to become a catalyst for national productivity rather than a constraint to economic growth," he said.

The minister said the government would no longer measure success solely by electricity generation but by improved access to reliable power for households, businesses and industries.

He described the Electricity Act 2023 as a landmark reform that had empowered states to establish electricity markets suited to their development priorities while encouraging competition and private sector investment.

On metering, Tegbe said the Federal Government had launched the Presidential Metering Initiative to install seven million prepaid meters nationwide over the next three years.

He said the government had commenced the training of 5,000 young Nigerians in meter installation and basic electrical engineering to bridge the metering gap and create employment opportunities.

The minister added that

procurement challenges that delayed meter acquisition had been resolved, paving the way for the deployment of about 1.56 million meters before the end of the year.

Speaking on transmission infrastructure, Tegbe said investments would

be driven by commercial viability and electricity demand to maximise economic returns.

He said the government had consistently generated about 5,000 megawatts of electricity in recent weeks but stressed that generation alone could not guarantee

reliable electricity supply.

"Electricity must be generated, transmitted, distributed and paid for. Every part of the value chain must work efficiently for Nigerians to enjoy reliable power," he said.

The minister also highlighted the Energy for Edu-

cation and Energy for Health initiatives, under which universities and teaching hospitals are being powered through solar mini-grids.

He disclosed that between 12 and 15 additional solar projects for universities would be inaugurated within the next eight weeks.



The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), during the commissioning of a modern Tactical Training Ground at the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Command Headquarters, Wuse Zone 5, Abuja by the Commandant General, Ahmed Abubakar Audi.

Troops dismantle criminal syndicate operating in S/East, S/South, recover stolen weapons

Troops of 34 Artillery Brigade, operating under Operation UDOKA through ongoing Operation EAST-ERN SANITY II, have arrested key members of a notorious criminal syndicate responsible for ambush of troops on May 4.

This is contained in a statement by the acting Deputy Director Army Public Relations 82 Division Nigerian Army, Lt.-Col. Olabisi Ayeni, on Saturday in Enugu.

Ayeni said that the unfortunate ambush claimed the life of one soldier and left another wounded.

He said that following the attack, troops launched a series of intelligence-led raids aimed at apprehending the perpetrators and recovering weapons stolen during the incident.

According to him, these sustained operations resulted in the arrest of the suspects.

He noted that acting on actionable intelligence, in the early hours of Friday, troops in collaboration with 181 Battalion operating under 63 Brigade conducted a coordinated raid at Opaebe and Oleh in Delta.

He said that the raid led to the arrest of the suspects popularly known as Chiboy, Marathon, and Onowu, who had fled to Oleh in Delta State after

the ambush on troops.

According to the statement, the suspects guided troops to their hideouts at Aggah Plantation, Ekpeagah, Rivers State, and Umudike Plantation, where the stolen weapons and other arms used in committing their nefarious acts were concealed.

"During the operation, troops recovered the stolen service weapons comprising one AK-47 rifle with two magazines and one FN rifle with two magazines.

"Additionally, troops recovered three more AK-47 rifles with nine magazines, pistols with their magazines, 194 rounds of 7.62mm special ammunition, and 45 rounds of 7.62mm NATO ammunition.

"Military clothing and protective gear, including camouflage shirts, trousers, jungle hats, and a fragment protection jacket, were also recovered.

"Other items included one empty first aid box and five mobile phones believed to be linked to the syndicate's criminal activities," he said.

Ayeni said that the suspects are currently in custody for further investigation and would face prosecution in accordance with the law.

Northern Christians back Catholic Bishops, fault Bwala over divisive politics

GABRIEL UDEH, KADUNA

The Northern Christian Association (NCA) has thrown its weight behind the Catholic Bishops following their recent meeting with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, cautioning the Special Adviser to the President on Media and Public Communications, Daniel Bwala, against what it described as divisive politics capable of undermining Christian unity.

The association said the Catholic Bishops who met with the President spoke on issues affecting not only Catholics but also Christians and Nigerians in general, insisting that their message was one of national interest,

humanity and good governance.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the Chairman of the Northern Christian Association, Rev. Joseph John Hayab, said the association would not allow anyone to create division within the Christian community for political reasons.

He stressed that members of the NCA cut across all major Christian denominations, including the Catholic Church, Baptist, ECWA, Methodist, Anglican, Pentecostal and other churches.

"We should tell Bwala to know that Catholics are Christians and Nigerians.

"Our members are Catholics, Baptist, ECWA, Methodist, Anglican, Pentecostals and people of all denominations. We refuse to be divided

by Bwala's politics of division," Hayab stated.

He said the Cardinal and the Catholic Bishops who visited President Tinubu deserved respect, noting that they met with the President to discuss issues concerning humanity, Christians and the welfare of all Nigerians rather than matters affecting only the Catholic Church.

"Our Cardinal is our respected leader and the Bishops that visited the President went to speak to him about humanity, Christians and all of us, not only Catholics," he said.

Hayab described it as "shameful and a disservice" to President Tinubu for his spokesperson to disrespect the Cardinal, maintaining that the bishops offered honest counsel intended to help

the President succeed and move the country forward.

"It is therefore shameful and a disservice to Tinubu for his spokesperson to disrespect our Cardinal.

"An honest counsel has been given to Mr. President for his own good and for a better Nigeria," he added.

The NCA Chairman further warned that any government official who chooses propaganda over addressing the genuine concerns of citizens was doing more harm than good to the nation.

According to him, public office holders who ignore the realities facing Nigerians in pursuit of personal or political interests should be seen as contributing to the country's challenges rather than helping to solve them.

Wike orders demolition of suspected criminal hideouts in Abuja

STEPHEN GBADAMOSI, IBADAN

Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Mr. Nyesom Wike, has ordered the FCT Department of Development Control to demolish shanties, and illegal settlements close to Karmajiji in Kukwaba District, Abuja.

According to his media aide, Lere Olayinka, in a statement on Sunday, Wike gave the order when he led security operatives to the

settlement, a suspected criminal hideout, after the FCT Security Committee Meeting at the weekend.

He explained that the directive was part of efforts to strengthen security in the nation's capital.

He added that intelligence reports indicated that suspected criminals often retreated to the settlement after carrying out attacks in parts of the FCT.

"Look at the area. You don't even know who the occupants are. How do you

identify them? How do you know where to locate them? And this is inside the city.

"This is a time-bomb. There's no way we can allow this. The FCT Administration will not allow criminal hideouts to thrive in Abuja," he said.

He directed the Commissioner of Police in FCT, Ahmed Sanusi, to work with the Director of Development Control to demolish the settlement.

The minister stressed that anyone found using such

locations to aid criminal activities would face the full weight of the law.

According to the minister, the demolition is part of ongoing efforts by the FCT Administration to dismantle criminal enclaves, improve public safety and protect residents.

Wike reaffirmed the administration's commitment to sustaining security operations across the territory, noting that the safety of lives and property remains a top priority.

FG, KADSG synergy is tackling insecurity in Kaduna State - NSA

GABRIEL UDEH, KADUNA

The National Security Adviser (NSA), Malam Nuhu Ribadu, has noted that the synergy between the Federal Government and Kaduna State Government under Governor Uba Sani, is tackling insecurity.

Malam Nuhu Ribadu, who disclosed this at the graduation of the pioneer batch of Armed Forest Guards, was represented by Malam Sani Sani, the Director of Internal Security at Office of the National Security Adviser on Saturday.

The NSA, who appreciated the training of the Armed Forest Guards, further said that "from the evaluation that we carried out across the country, the training in Kaduna State has been recorded as the best at the moment."

"The Office of the National Security Adviser will not have any doubt, to grant another request to Kaduna State, to continue this kind of training if the Governor wishes to do so," he added.

According to the NSA, the over 1000 Forest Guards have been subjected to rigorous training in weapons handling, physical fitness, battle-readiness, relationship with the host community, civil-military cooperation and cooperation with other services, as well as observance of the rule of law.

"The beneficiaries of this training are expected to go back to their respective communities and establish a first line community resilience, to resist every invading enemy of the state as first responders, before the arrival of various security agencies," he

clarified.

he National Security Adviser recalled that President Bola Tinubu declared the Armed Forest Guard initiative on the 24th of May, 2025, "to commence training of indigenous people to protect our ungoverned spaces, particularly the forest belts, protect our biodiversity, water sheds and wild life."

He also said that Armed Forest Guards will form "a security architecture that will dominate the forest and deny criminal elements the freedom of action within our forest spaces."

According to him, the president directed the Office of the National Security Adviser to give strategic leadership and to "also manage the training across the federation."

In his address, Governor Uba Sani who commended the NSA for all his support, also said that he is proud that the training in Kaduna State is the best in the country.

"I also want to use this opportunity, to formally make additional request of another 1000 Forest Guards in Kaduna. In our state, security is one of the most important agenda of our government," he pointed out.

"Many local governments were not accessible due to insecurity when we came in in 2023. But people can now go to such local governments without police escorts. And that, in my opinion, is progress," he added.

According to him, frontline local governments like Birnin Gwari, Giwa and Kachia were under siege during the last dispensation but the story is now different.

"Today, because of our collaboration with the Federal Government, the support of

our leader, President Bola Tinubu, we have been able to address most of the problems of insecurity in those frontline local governments.

"That is the reason why we are making this additional request of 1000 Forest Guards. And I have no doubt that the National Security Adviser,

and our leader, will approve this request,"

Governor Uba Sani promised that under the guidance of Almighty God, with the support

of all stakeholders, "we shall continue to build a Kaduna State that is peaceful, strong and prosperous for generations to come."



The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Gombe Operations Office, distributing relief materials to households affected by flooding in Ningi/Warji Federal Constituency of Bauchi State as part of the Federal Government's humanitarian intervention to support disaster-affected communities.

Kefas' N/E Tennis: Four kids secure international sponsorship to Ghana

OKERAFOR ATHANATI-US, JALINGO

Four kids, Denis Devine, Yawan Philip from Adamawa, Abba Adamu and Charity Ubandoma from Taraba states who were champions during the grand finale of the Taraba State Governor, Dr. Agbu Kefas North East (N/E) Tennis Championship have secured international sponsorship to Ghana.

Secretary to the Government of Taraba State (SGS), Chief Timothy Kataps, who doubles as the chairman of the State Tennis Association, stated this while making a

remark at the closing ceremony of the program held at the Tennis Court of the Jolly Nyame Stadium Jalingo.

Chief Kataps who further disclosed that arrangements have been concluded with his colleague from North central Nigeria for winners to attend a tennis championship in Ghana this year noted with optimism that the tournament was to expose young talents from the six states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe to National and International festivals.

"And for the ladies under category 17, 1st and 2nd

runner up, and the boys under 17 winner, and 1st runner up, I have arranged with my colleague from the North Central, for them to attend a tennis championship in Ghana, this year", said.

Our Correspondent gathered that the Dr. Kefas North East Tennis Championship organized by Chief Bar Kataps took off from 27th to 30th July, 2026 with the message: Sustainable North East Tennis Development Initiative.

In an interview with journalists shortly, the chairman of the State Sports Development Commission, Couch Bulus Hussaini commended

the organizers for doing a good job.

Commenting the way forward to boost the morale of the young champions, Couch Bulus Hussaini pledged to talk to the present Nigeria Tennis Federation (NTF) on the need to send them to development areas, countries in Africa for what he described as, 'at least six months' high intensive training for higher performance'.

He told Journalists that during the performances of the contingents, technical lapses were identified which he posited must be addressed during training.

Nigeria gets \$500 million for vaccines, PHC from Gavi

After a high-level discussions between the Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Professor Muhammad Ali Pate, and Gavi Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Sania Nishtar, in Abuja, Nigeria has secured about five hundred million dollars support for vaccines and primary healthcare from Gavi.

The Daily Monitor learned that the funding was approved under the Gavi 6.0 programme will support Nigeria's efforts to accelerate routine im-

munisation, sustain polio eradication, expand HPV vaccination, strengthen primary healthcare services and improve long-term vaccine financing.

Welcoming Gavi's country-focused reforms, including the introduction of a five-year funding envelope, Professor Pate noted that about five hundred million dollars allocation will enable Nigeria to plan more effectively and deliver life-saving vaccines to more children and vulnerable populations.

Police nab gun runners, small arms dealers, others in Benue

HENRY IYORKASE, MAKURDI

The Commissioner of Police, Benue State Command, Mr Cletus Nwadiogwu, has disclosed that men of his command has busted gun runners as well as small arms fire factories, gangsters and cattle rustlers among others

The police boss noted that his team concerted made efforts to get rid of criminal elements and their corroborators and recorded huge success as all the culprits were arrested and are undergoing interrogation.

Briefing journalists on

Friday at the state's Police command Headquarters in Makurdi, the state capital. he however, revealed that major breakthrough unveiled as suspected dare-devil robbers, illegal small fire arms factories, as well as cattle rustlers were reportedly apprehended.

He disclosed that the command recorded major success by apprehending suspected gun runners, while riding on their motorcycle during stop and search operation.

The CP similarly restated a fortnight ago, his crack team arrested an illegal fire arms dealer and later went to other community in the neighborhood and discovered AK 47 ri-

fles, five locally manufactured English pistols with different brands of guns discovered altogether in Kwande part of the state, stressing the gangsters were apprehended.

According to him, just recently some cattle rustlers have reportedly murdered 13 persons stressing anytime they rustle cows anyone they sees around instantly be killed they just assumed you're a threat

Given further update on suspected notorious armed robber during operation carried out in Buruku Local Government apprehended, Mr Terseer Ephraim, the suspect volunteered useful information which led to the arrest

of five others in their hideout in Kusuv and all of the gang members are in the custody.

"Police operatives said there were ambushed by men of undesirable elements however restated we were able to neutralised the suspects and they were absolutely defeated.

The CP informed that someone connived with other lodgers in the hotel with his counterpart called her parents informing her mother that his kidnapped and were in captivity their demanded ransom of Ten Million Naira saying it was a gimmick nothing of such ever happened. The duo were apprehended and in their custody.

Insecurity: Security forces and delay in response time

Since insecurity blossomed in Nigeria, one recurring issue that has remained on the front burner of national discussion has been the time it takes security forces to respond to distress calls by communities under attack of insurgents, bandits, kidnappers and other criminal elements.

For example, the head of Woro village in Kwara State, Umar Bio Salihu, revealed not too long ago that armed bandits attacked his community for nearly 10 hours before security forces arrived, leaving scores dead and villages razed.

Speaking during an interview, Salihu said distress calls to authorities were made shortly after the attack began around 5:00pm, but soldiers only arrived at about 3:00am the following morning.

"I called after 5pm, but they did not come until about 3am. That was from 5pm to about 3am. That is about 10 hours," he said.

Salihu disclosed that by the time the military arrived, the attackers had already fled, and no engagement took place.

"The military did not

attack them. The bandits had gone when the military came," he stated.

The Kwara incident has been repeated across the country times without number. Sometimes, communities notify security forces of imminent attacks by terrorists, bandits, etc, yet little is done to stop the attacks.

On some occasions, the security forces arrive at the scenes of the attacks long after the deed had been done, leaving many killed, communities displaced and families reeling in pain.

The question that needs answering is: why does it take our security forces hours to respond to distress calls from communities under attack by terror merchants and their allies?

We understand that our security forces may be facing logistics and other challenges, but beyond these, there is need for deeper investigation to unearth the other reasons leading to delay in response time to distress calls by the security forces.

There is no gainsaying the fact that sabotage may be a reason for the delayed re-

sponse time by our law enforcement agencies to distress calls.

The High commands of our security forces should take it upon themselves to fish out such saboteurs who are behind the late arrivals of security operatives to communities under attack and bring such to book.

Our security forces should respond swiftly to distress calls from communities to ensure that terrorists, bandits do not have the last laugh.

There is also the need for more security outposts in communities far flung from the state capitals equipped adequately with necessary personnel and equipment that would enable rapid response to distress calls from communities.

We believe that with well-equipped security outposts located near communities at risk of attacks, and well-motivated personnel among others, the rate at which insurgents, bandits, kidnappers and other criminals strike would be reduced to the barest minimum if not eliminated.

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Opinion

Dibò k'ó se'bẹ and the raw reality of politics (2)

BY ABIODUN KOMOLAFE

As Adlai Stevenson Jr. famously observed, "A hungry man is not a free man." This truth conveniently haunts our troubled polity, where politicians tend to demand absolute electoral loyalty while offering nothing in return. But, again, can a hungry populace give their best while fending for themselves in a vacuum, and can one harvest where nothing was sown? For any political system to endure therefore, the social contract ought to be more than a one-way street. The two hands must clap: if we expect total commitment, we should first provide the security and the tools that make such commitment possible.

The contrast between a positive past and our present is deeply disturbing, and indeed ominous. We should do everything to prevent a catastrophic future, the fault lines of which are already visible in daily occurrences across the nation. The key issue which needs to be addressed is that Nigeria's political establishment detains us in an appearance of disagreement without difference. This is akin to self-immolation, for no matter how much the elite believe they have ring-fenced and protected themselves against political turbulence, it never works that way in reality.

The contestation of ideas between the weaponisation of poverty and the creation of an illusory economy built on "palliatives" and assorted shibboleths is already unravelling, for it possesses no foundation. In a globalized economy and with the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the complexity and the reality of the uncompetitiveness of Nigeria's economic structure is exposed by the day.

For instance, a recent report from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reveals that Nigerian pupils' literacy levels lag behind those of most African nations. If this is not a warning of what is to come, nothing is. No amount of palliatives can disguise these realities, and any strategy built upon them will be dead in the water.

As leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Kwame Nkrumah, Ahmadu Bello and Awolowo demonstrated, a foundational base is the only sustainable, enduring structure. To paraphrase their collective vision: development does not begin with grand pretenses, but with basic infrastructure - water systems, schools, and dispensaries - followed by financial inclusion and agricultural storage.

As Nehru himself often stressed, if a nation commits to these foundational building blocks, it will return years later to find a profound and lasting transformation. In essence, what we currently refer to as "empowerment" is, in reality, a delusion. These are essentially civic, self-help community projects.

It will be in Nigeria's interest to return to the foundational development planning, anchored by a National Democratic Agreement on the central ethos of that mission. We should balance life's chances and opportunities by reinstating national planning - not to be confused with the rigid central control of a totalitarian state. The neoliberal framework inherited from the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) has proven to be a series of self-inflicted wounds. True national planning implies a genuine devolution of power to the grassroots. In practice, these initiatives should start at the ward level, drawing directly from the expertise of local development associations and civil society groups. India and Malaysia provide clear exam-



ples of this model of national planning and nation-building. We have to return to it! Southwest states can achieve this by reviving their moribund Ministries of Regional Integration as the engine room for the task. The South West Development Commission (SWDC) should also be strategically engaged. Furthermore, the Economics, Sociology and Anthropology Departments of regional tertiary institutions should be actively integrated into a framework of applied research. This is how to reset the clock before everything melts in our faces.

As history has shown, such focused development will inevitably place other zones in a position to catch up. By whatever name we call or describe our predicament, the pursuit of stomach infrastructure is an agenda that is clearly alien to our common humanity; we abandon this truth to our collective detriment.

Unlike past initiatives such as the Western Nigerian Finance Corporation (WNFC) or the Western Nigerian Development Corporation (WNDC), which current "empowerment" scheme is actually based on self-regeneration? A first-year Social Science undergraduate could use a simple cost-benefit analysis to expose the self-deceit inherent in these increasingly convoluted "empowerment" schemes. Ideally, long-standing institutions like the National Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) should have led this charge long ago; had it maintained its institutional independence, such an assessment would have shattered this illusion and ended the mass distortion of reality.

Institutions like NISER should also conduct a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of, for example, distributing Keke NAPEP as a path to the lower middle class. This stands in sharp contrast to how the Western Region Cooperative Bank fostered financial inclusion and credit aggregation. Those efforts effectively upgraded rural subsistence farming and developed distributive trades, fostering a self-regenerating petit bourgeoisie - a model colonial officers later exported to East Africa and Malaysia.

In 'The Road to Serfdom', Friedrich Hayek warned against fostering a dependency syndrome that starves individual productivity. That warning is the raw reality of Western Nigeria today. Dependency has turned governance into a living lie: a toxic wedge that fractures the very capacity for self-regeneration.

Consider the irony of a well-educated middle-aged man seeking "succour" rather than genuine empowerment, only to be turned away. The beauty is wasted when it becomes a grotesque ritual of survival that mocks a proud heritage, reducing decades of schooling to a beggar's queue and the bitter harvest of a pauperized commonwealth.

Blood shortage: NBM donates lifeline to Plateau hospital, offers hope to emergency

TITUS AKHIGBE

For accident victims fighting for survival, mothers battling severe childbirth complications and patients awaiting emergency surgeries, the availability of safe blood often determines the difference between life and death. To help bridge that critical gap, the Jos Zone of NBM of Africa Worldwide has donated pints

of blood to the Plateau State Specialist Hospital, Jos, in a voluntary exercise aimed at strengthening the hospital's emergency blood bank. The humanitarian initiative, conducted under the directive of the President of NBM of Africa Worldwide, Dr. Charles Chimezie, formed part of the organisation's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme designed to support

healthcare institutions, boost blood reserves and promote a culture of voluntary blood donation across Nigeria. Medical experts at the hospital described the intervention as both timely and significant, noting that inadequate blood supply remains one of the most pressing challenges confronting healthcare facilities, particularly during medical emergencies when every second counts. According to the health professionals, donated blood is essential for saving the lives of road crash victims, women experiencing excessive bleeding during childbirth, patients un-

dergoing major surgical operations, individuals living with sickle cell disease, cancer patients and others requiring urgent transfusions. They explained that each unit of donated blood can be separated into red blood cells, plasma and platelets, enabling a single donation to provide life-saving treatment for multiple patients. The experts also urged more Nigerians to embrace regular voluntary blood donation, stressing that the exercise not only saves lives but also promotes healthier blood cell production, supports cardiovascular wellness and offers donors free

routine health screening before every donation. Speaking after the exercise on behalf of the President of NBM of Africa Worldwide, the Jos Zonal President, Engr. Amoni Emmanuel Harmony, praised members for their enthusiastic participation and unwavering commitment to humanitarian service. He said the exercise underscored the organisation's conviction that true leadership is measured by selfless service, compassion and meaningful contributions to society. Harmony called on members to sustain their commitment to voluntary blood donation and

other community-based interventions capable of improving healthcare delivery and advancing national development. He reaffirmed the organisation's determination to deepen its humanitarian outreach across the country, maintaining that supporting hospitals through regular blood donation remains one of the most effective ways of giving critically ill patients another chance at life. The exercise ended with participants reaffirming their commitment to initiatives that save lives, strengthen Nigeria's healthcare system and build healthier, more resilient communities.

Kaduna: Omega University gets NUC Approval, to begin admission this year

GABRIEL UDEH, KADUNA

The National Universities Commission (NUC) has officially approved Omega University, Kaduna, ending its status as a proposed institution and clearing the way for it to commence academic activities with admission of students in the 2026/2027 academic session. The approval was announced on Friday in Abuja during the presentation of the operational licence to the promoters of the faith based institution. Speaking at the event, the Executive Secretary of the NUC, Prof. Abdullahi Yusufu Ribadu said the approval marked the end of one chapter and the beginning of another for the institution. Ribadu congratulated the management and promoters for successfully meeting all the requirements for the establishment of a private university. "Today marks the end of a chapter and the beginning of a new era. You have crossed all the hurdles. The university is now approved and no longer proposed," he said. The NUC boss disclosed that the institution would commence operations with 10 undergraduate academic programmes, adding that there was no reason why the university should not begin admitting students this year. He further announced that Kaduna State University would serve as the mentor institution for Omega University, providing guidance and technical support to ensure compliance with the Commission's standards. The Executive Secretary urged the management to remain committed to the operational guidelines and quality assurance standards of the Commission in order to sustain excellence. In his remarks, Chairman of the Northern Christian Association (NCA), Rev. Joseph John Hayab, expressed appreciation to the NUC for

what he described as the professionalism, support and transparent processes that culminated in the approval of the university. Hayab assured the Commission that the institution would operate strictly in line with approved university regulations and would not compromise on quality. Drawn inspiration from the biblical account of Mary, the mother of Jesus, he said the management had carefully taken to heart every piece of advice given by the Executive Secretary. "Like the story of Mary, the mother of Jesus, we have kept everything the Executive Secretary has said in our hearts. We will ensure that we do everything required so that we will not bring shame to ourselves or to the Commission," he said. He stressed that since Omega University would be driven by faith based individuals, it would be anchored on excellence, integrity and accountability. "We do not just want to have another university. We want to build a university that will stand the test of time, contribute meaningfully to nation building and make significant impact in Nigeria's education sector," Hayab added. Addressing journalists shortly after the event, the Pro Chancellor of Omega University and President of Messengers Foundation, the community outreach arm of Restoration Ministries, Rev. Dr. Tunde Bolanta, described the issuance of the operational licence as the fulfilment of a long cherished vision. "Today we are here to collect the licence. After a long journey, it has finally come to pass. We have been on this for a long time, but by the grace of God we are here at the NUC receiving the licence," he said. Bolanta disclosed that the institution was fully prepared to commence academic activities immediately and would admit its pioneer students this year.

Hayab congratulates Akanji, hails legacy of unity in Nigerian Baptist Convention

GABRIEL UDEH, KADUNA

Chairman of the Northern Christian Association (NCA), Rev. Joseph John Hayab, has congratulated the outgoing President of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, Rev. Dr. Israel Adelani Akanji, on the successful completion of his five-year tenure, describing his leadership as one that fostered unity, strengthened the Convention and projected Nigerian Baptists across Africa. In a statement issued on Friday, Hayab, who is also the Senior Pastor of Amaz-

ing Grace Baptist Church, Gonin Gora, Kaduna, said Akanji's tenure would be remembered for providing stable and Christ-centred leadership at a period when many institutions were grappling with internal divisions. He noted that Akanji, who succeeded Rev. Dr. Samson Ayokunle in 2021, led the Convention with wisdom, humility and unwavering commitment to the Great Commission, ensuring that the Baptist family remained united and focused on evangelism, discipleship and missions. "On behalf of my family, the Northern Christian As-

sociation and the Amazing Grace Baptist Church, I congratulate our father in the faith, Rev. Dr. Israel Adelani Akanji, on the successful completion of a remarkable tenure as President of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. "Your administration will be remembered as a period of unity, stability and purposeful leadership. You kept the Baptist family together, strengthened the mission of the Church and remained a courageous voice for righteousness and national development. "Akanji's service on the African stage enhanced the influence of the Nigeri-

an Baptist Convention and promoted stronger cooperation among Baptist churches across the continent," Hayab said. The northern Christian leader prayed that God would grant the outgoing Convention President good health, renewed strength and greater opportunities for continued service in God's vineyard. He also congratulated the incoming President of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, Rev. Dr. David Olusola Idowu, urging Baptists across the country to support the new leadership with prayers and commitment to pre-



The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) coordinating an emergency response to a fire outbreak at the Federal Mortgage Bank building in the Central Business District, Abuja.

Kwara NSCDC arrests 36-yr-old man over alleged sexual assault of 14-yr-old girl

KEHINDE AKINPELU ILORIN

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Kwara State Command, has arrested a 36-year-old man, AbdulGaniyu AbdulRahman,

over the alleged sexual assault of a 14-year-old girl in Ilorin. The suspect was arrested following a complaint lodged by the father of the victim at the Command's Gender Unit, alleging that his 14-year-old daughter

had been repeatedly sexually assaulted by the suspect. Preliminary investigation revealed that the suspect, who operates a Point-of-Sale (POS) business at Alfa Yahaya, Adeta Ilorin, became acquainted

with the victim through his business premises. It was further alleged that he repeatedly lured the victim to his POS shop and an uncompleted building, where he allegedly sexually assaulted her on different occasions.

Environment: Abia plans setting up Neighbourhood Watch for active participation of residents

EMEKA OKAFOR, UMUAHIA
Abia State Ministry of Environment has disclosed preparedness in the setting up of Environmental Neighbourhood Watch aimed at engaging residents of the state own up the assignment of keeping

their environments and State clean. Speaking while assessing the level of improvement and impact of the monthly sanitation exercise, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Mr. Ikechukwu Oriuwa rated the progress of compliance and level of participation as encour-

aging but more needed to be done to achieve the desired result of the present administration under Governor Alex Otti in making the State a model in environmental cleanliness. "We are doing well so far, there has been more improvement. All we need to do at this time is to set up the anthea, may

be considering setting up Environmental Neighbourhood Watch so that people can own up the monthly assignment. "It has always been the State government that is doing so much, people have to be part of this, creating the neighbourhood watch will help Abians take responsibility in keeping their surround-

ings and State clean", he said. On the alert raised by NIMET on expected increased rainfall which would cause Flood in some States including the State, the Permanent Secretary revealed that the ministry had earlier before the alert taken precautionary moves which includes clearing

blocked drainages, sensitisation of residents against blocking drainages with refuse. He warned traders in the State to ensure that they use the last Friday of the month designated for them to keep their business premises clean or face the taskforce with sanctions.

DESOPADEC steps up flood response with new canal projects

BY NOSA AKENZUA, ASABA
Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC) has intensified efforts aimed at mitigating flooding across affected communities in Delta State, following Governor Sheriff Oborevwori's directive to provide immediate relief to residents. Speaking to newsmen at the weekend during an inspection of ongoing flood control works in Oviri-Agbarho, Ughelli North Local Government Area, DESOPADEC Chairman, Olorogun Barr. John Nani, said the intervention was aimed at easing the hardship caused by severe flooding in the community. According to him, although the drainage structures constructed by the Delta State Government are functional, a narrow culvert beneath the East-West Road has restricted the natural flow of water to its discharge point, leading to persistent flooding.

box culvert or bridge capable of carrying the volume of water from Agbarho community into the Agbarho River," he said. Nani stated that DESOPADEC has been carrying out flood intervention projects across the state for about two months in line with Governor Oborevwori's directive. "The governor instructed us to intervene wherever flooding is threatening communities. We have been on the field for weeks, doing everything possible to reduce the impact of the floods, and we are committed to continuing these efforts," he added. He expressed optimism that the ongoing clearing of canals and culverts would significantly improve the situation, assuring residents that floodwaters would begin to recede within a week. The chairman also urged residents to stop dumping refuse into waterways, warning that blocked drainage channels worsen flooding.

"The entire community is flooded because water cannot flow freely across the East-West Road to the discharge point. We are here with a swamp buggy to open up the waterways and clear blocked culverts so the floodwater can drain properly," Nani said. He explained that DESOPADEC had earlier cleared the discharge point, allowing water to flow out, and noted that the current exercise is intended to improve the movement of water from the community into the Agbarho River. Describing the intervention as a temporary measure, Nani appealed to the Federal Government to undertake a permanent solution by expanding the drainage crossing beneath the East-West Road. "We are calling on the Federal Government to split the East-West Road at the affected section and construct a larger

According to him, although the drainage structures constructed by the Delta State Government are functional, a narrow culvert beneath the East-West Road has restricted the natural flow of water to its discharge point, leading to persistent flooding. "The entire community is flooded because water cannot flow freely across the East-West Road to the discharge point. We are here with a swamp buggy to open up the waterways and clear blocked culverts so the floodwater can drain properly," Nani said. He explained that DESOPADEC had earlier cleared the discharge point, allowing water to flow out, and noted that the current exercise is intended to improve the movement of water from the community into the Agbarho River. Describing the intervention as a temporary measure, Nani appealed to the Federal Government to undertake a permanent solution by expanding the drainage crossing beneath the East-West Road. "We are calling on the Federal Government to split the East-West Road at the affected section and construct a larger

Makinde, Ido community leader mourn passing of Lekan Alabi

STEPHEN GBADA-MOI, IBADAN
Governor of Oyo State, 'Seyi Makinde, has expressed deep sorrow over the demise of Oloye Lekan Alabi, a senior Ibadan Chief, veteran journalist, outstanding public affairs analyst, distinguished elder statesman, cultural icon, and respected community leader. Governor Makinde described Chief Alabi's passing as a monumental loss not only to Oyo State but to Nigeria as a whole, noting

his invaluable contributions to journalism, culture, and public service. Also, a community leader and follower of Olubadan of Ibadanland, Oba Rasidi Adewolu Ladoja, in Harmony Gold, Ologuneru, Ido Local Government, Jetawo Felix, mourned the death of the culture ambassador. Makinde said, "Chief Lekan Alabi was a man of immense wisdom, integrity, and dedication. His voice carried the weight of truth, his counsel was sought by leaders across generations, and his commitment to the

preservation of Yoruba culture and values was unwavering. Oyo State has lost one of its finest sons." Governor Makinde aid this in a statement by hi Special Advier, Media, Dr. Sulaimon Olanrewaju, at the weekend. He extended heartfelt condolences to Chief Alabi's family, friends, and associates, as well as to the Ibadan community and the wider Oyo State. He urged all who mourn to take solace in the enduring impact of Chief Alabi's life and work.

"The government and people of Oyo State stand with the Alabi family at this difficult time. May the Almighty grant them strength and comfort, and may Chief Lekan Alabi's soul rest in perfect peace," the governor added. Mr. Felix spoke with our reporter on Sunday, saying that the Olubadan lost one of his important chiefs, while commiserating with the monarch, Ibadan people and members of Chie Alabi's family.



The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) coordinating an emergency response to a fire outbreak at the Federal Mortgage Bank building in the Central Business District, Abuja.

Ondo NUJ carpets Federal Government on deplorable roads

BY ADETOKUNBO ABIOLA, AKURE
The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Ondo State Council has applauded President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration for the dualisation of some federal roads but expressed deep concern over the deplorable condition of the ones linking Ondo North, particularly the Akoko area. This was contained in a communique issued at the statutory congress at the NUJ Press Centre and signed by Olaoluwa Meshack, State Secretary. At the congress, which was presided over by the State Chairman, Prince Leke

Adegbite, the NUJ said the dualisation of the Ilesa-Akure-Owo-Benin road, reconstruction of Akure-Ado Ekiti road and Akure-Ondo-Ore road were good ideas, but more needed to be done in relation to roads in Ondo North. To solve the problem, the communique enjoined federal lawmakers and government's appointees from that part of Ondo State to rise to the occasion by facilitating urgent rehabilitation of such roads, particularly the Ikare- Ogbagi-Irun-Akoko-Ado Ekiti road, as well as the Owo-Ipele-Isoa Akoko-Kabba road. The communique noted the ongoing road construction efforts by the govern-

ment across the state, but expressed reservations over the slow pace of works on some of the projects, especially Akungba-Ikare Akoko road, Okitipupa-Igbokoda road and Akure-Ikanre road. The communique therefore urged contractors handling the road projects to double up efforts at completing them. While describing the ongoing construction of flyover at Oba Adesida Road in Akure as a lofty project, it urged the Ondo State Government to make alternative routes motorable to ease traffic diversion, especially the clearing of Arakale road for easy and free flow of traffic in the state

capital. On environmental issues, the communique described the pockets of flooding across the state as pathetic, calling on both the state and local governments to be more proactive in preventing flooding and allow such to happen before taking actions. The congress commended the improvement being witnessed at the state-owned media organization, the Ondo State Radiovision Corporation and OSRC media Group, and implored the state government to place the television station on Cable Networks for effective service delivery and career fulfillment for the workers.

Otti hands over completed NAF administrative complex to FG, reaffirms commitment to fighting criminality

EMEKA OKAFOR, UMUAHIA

Abia State governor, Dr. Alex Otti, has formally handed over the newly completed Administrative Complex building to the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) in Umuahia, while reaffirming the commitment of his administration to further strengthen the existing collaboration with the Federal

Government in the area of sustaining the current fight against every form of criminality in the State. The facility was handed over to the Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Kelvin Anele and the Minister of Defence, General Christopher Musa on Friday at a well ceremony by Security Chiefs in the State and other serving and retired military top brass including Lt.

General Azubuike Ihejirika (rtd) former Nigeria's Chief of Army Staff. Speaking at the event, Governor Otti said the security of lives and property remains a fundamental right of every resident in the State. He described the handover as a testament to the benefits of strong collaboration between the Federal Government and sub-national governments in advancing a shared security agenda.

According to the Governor, the completion and handover of the facility demonstrates his administration's resolve to leave no stone unturned in protecting Abians and visitors alike from all forms of security threats. "For us, the right to security for our people, whether they are residents or visitors, is non-negotiable," Governor Otti declared. He described the arrival of the Nigerian Air Force as

"a dream come true," noting that it completes the presence of the nation's armed forces in Abia alongside the Nigerian Army's Goodluck Ebele Jonathan Barracks in Ohafia and the Nigerian Navy College of Accounts and Finance in Owerinta. The Governor expressed profound appreciation to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, and the leadership of the Nigerian Air Force for supporting the establishment of the

Air Force presence in the State. He assured that the Abia State Government would continue to provide the necessary support for the Force to succeed in its operations. "I formally welcome the Nigerian Air Force to Abia and assure you that, within the limits of our powers, we shall provide whatever is required to guarantee your success in safeguarding our dear State," Governor Otti said.

Alleged waste of state funds: CRPP lambasts Okpebholo over UK trip

TITUS AKHIGBE, BENIN

The Coalition of Registered Political Parties (CRPP) has described the trip by Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, to the United Kingdom as a mere jamboree that will not yield tangible results to Edo people.

In a joint statement at the weekend in Benin City by the national chairman, Dr. Samson Isibor and the secretary, Hon. Nkama Waribe, the organisation alleged that the delegation is largely composed of people who have no tangible contributions to the trip.

Isibor challenged the state government to publicly disclose the total cost of the trip, the identities and official capacities of all members of the delegation, the source of funding, the specific investment opportunities being pursued and the expected timelines for delivering any agreements or commitments arising from the visit.

The CRPP chairman said that the UK trip raises serious questions about the administration's spending priorities, noting that Edo people deserved to know the objectives of the mission, the anticipated outcomes and the measurable benefits expected to accrue to the state from the investment event the governor attended yesterday.

The statement added: "Foreign investment missions should not become ceremonial exercises financed with public funds but should be driven by clearly defined economic goals, transparent deliverables and verifiable outcomes capable of improving the lives of the people.

"The composition of the delegation reflected poor planning. Individuals with no apparent relevance to the investment mission were included, while some commissioners overseeing ministries central to the state's economic and investment

agenda were initially left behind."

The CRPP recalled what it described as Governor Okpebholo's investment mission to Glasgow, Scotland last year, alleging that the trip ended in controversy after a widely publicized \$250 million investment proposal failed to translate into tangible results for the state.

The chairman noted that the experience underscores the need for greater transparency and accountability in government-sponsored foreign engagements.

Isibor stated that Edo people deserve governance anchored on fiscal responsibility, transparency and measurable development outcomes rather than public expenditure that, in their views, lacked immediate value to the citizens.

He urged the governor to demonstrate that the visit will produce concrete investments, jobs and economic opportunities capable of justifying the expenditure of public funds.

Isibor maintained that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's recent admonition to state governors on prudent management of public funds should serve as a timely reminder to governments enjoying increased federal allocations and improved internally generated revenue to prioritize the welfare of the people.

The group further noted that President Tinubu's call on state governments to be cautious on the indiscriminate building of flyovers has vindicated CRPP's stand, adding that the advice is particularly relevant to the Edo State Government at a time when thousands of residents are grappling with economic hardship, unemployment, poor infrastructure and declining purchasing power.

CRPP added: "The president has spoken. He has vindicated us for objecting to the indiscriminate rush by state governments to build flyovers."

Contractors under pressure over delayed university projects in Ebonyi

BY CHIJOKE SIMON, ABAKALI

The Ebonyi State Government has issued a strong warning to contractors handling ongoing projects at the Aeronautic University, Onueke, Ezza South Local Government Area, declaring that it will no longer tolerate project delays, abandoned contracts or substandard construction works.

The Commissioner for Project Monitoring and Evaluation, Chief Sunday Inyima, gave the warning during an inspection meeting with contractors at the university site, where he declared that contractors must either deliver quality projects within agreed timelines or face government sanctions.

The inspection was part of the intensified monitoring exercise by the administration of Governor Francis Ogbonna Nwifuru to ensure accountability, transparency, value for money and strict project compliance with approved project specifications under the People's Charter of Needs agenda.

The monitoring team included the Commissioner

for Housing, Engr. Francis Ori; Commissioner for Tertiary Education, Prof. Amari Omarka Chukwu (SAN); Senior Special Adviser on Project Monitoring, Engr. Chukwuma Nwiboko; Special Adviser on Project Monitoring and Evaluation, Hon. Ajah Philemon; and Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Project Monitoring and Evaluation, Mrs. Shullamite Mbazu.

Addressing contractors at the project site, Inyima declared that the state government had drawn a line against poor workmanship and unnecessary delays in the execution of public projects.

He warned that any contractor who failed to execute projects according to specifications or within the stipulated completion period would face contractual consequences.

"The government will not tolerate delays or substandard work. No contractor will be spared if you fail to deliver. Every ongoing project at the Aeronautic University must be completed on schedule and executed with quality materials that meet approved standards," Inyima stated.

The commissioner stressed that the projects at the institution were critical to the state's ambition of expanding quality tertiary education infrastructure and creating a conducive learning environment for students.

He said the Nwifuru administration remained committed to prudent management of public resources, adding that every government investment must translate into durable infrastructure that would benefit citizens.

According to him, the Ministry of Project Monitoring and Evaluation had intensified supervision of government projects across the state to ensure that contractors comply with contractual obligations and deliver projects that meet engineering and safety standards.

"The objective of his monitoring exercise is not merely to inspect projects but to ensure that every contractor delivers value for money. Government resources belong to the people, and every project must reflect quality, durability and accountability," he added.

Inyima explained that

continuous monitoring had become necessary to prevent project abandonment, eliminate waste and guarantee that public infrastructure was delivered according to approved designs.

After the inspection at the Aeronautic University, the monitoring team proceeded to the Ebonyi State College of Nursing, Uburu, where they inspected the ongoing construction of a students' hostel.

During the inspection, the commissioner said the visit was part of the government's renewed commitment to ensuring quality, speed and efficiency in the execution of infrastructure projects across tertiary institutions in the state.

He noted that the hostel project would improve students' welfare, enhance learning conditions and support the training of healthcare professionals in Ebonyi State.

The commissioner reiterated that routine inspections would continue across all government projects to discourage contract violations, eliminate poor workmanship and ensure timely completion.

Anambra Govt reaffirms commitment to improved healthcare at COOUTH

Anambra State Government says it remains committed to improving healthcare service delivery at the state-owned Chukwue-meka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital (COOUTH), Awka.

The Chief Medical Director (CMD) of COOUTH, Amaku, Awka, Dr Maureen Umeakwewulu, stated this during an inspection tour of the health facility on Saturday.

The CMD undertook the tour alongside the state Commissioner for Health, Dr Afam Obidike.

Umeakwewulu said the hospital management had continued to maintain a clean environment through regular sanitation and vegetation control to improve patients'

comfort and reduce mosquito breeding.

She disclosed that the state government had approved medical equipment worth over N500 million to strengthen healthcare delivery since she assumed office, while accreditation processes for the hospital were also underway.

The CMD debunked a recent social media report alleging poor sanitary conditions at the hospital, inadequate equipment, and potholes within the facility.

She described the report as misleading and inconsistent with the realities on the ground.

"This inspection is organised to ensure transparency and allow members of the media and the public to in-

dependently verify the state of the facility," she said.

"It follows a viral video that alleged the hospital had deteriorated, with potholes, unhygienic wards, and poor patient care."

She said that after inspecting the hospital from the entrance through various departments, including the emergency unit and wards, no potholes or unhygienic conditions were found, contrary to the allegations contained in the viral video.

According to her, the hospital management has maintained a clean environment through regular sanitation and vegetation control to improve patients' comfort and reduce mosquito breeding.

The CMD highlighted

some of the reforms introduced since assuming office on March 16, including the ongoing digitalisation of hospital records, the installation of smart cards with barcode systems, and the provision of Wi-Fi facilities.

She listed other reforms to include the renovation of hospital buildings and the introduction of an electronic revenue collection system to eliminate cash handling and improve accountability.

She commended the state governor, Prof. Chukwuma Soludo, for his continued investment in the health sector, saying the administration remained committed to transforming the hospital into a centre of excellence.

The Daily Monitor

...Monitoring the present, shaping the future

ADVERT RATES

	COLOUR			BLACK & WHITE		
SIZES	RATE	VAT	TOTAL	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
F/PAGE	550,000.00	27,500.00	577,500.00	442,402.65	22,120.13	464,522.78
H/PAGE	303,439.60	15,171.98	318,611.58	229,476.11	11,473.81	240,949.92
Q/PAGE	163,431.45	8,171.57	171,603.02	124,895.04	6,244.75	131,139.79
14" x 5	341,320.00	17,056.00	358,386.00	258,000.40	12,900.02	270,900.42
14" x 4	273,056.00	13,652.80	286,708.80	206,400.32	10,320.02	216,720.34
14" x 2	136,528.00	6,826.40	143,354.40	103,200.16	5,160.01	108,360.17
FPS 6"x3	873,388.02	43,669.40	917,057.42	873,388.02	43,669.40	917,057.42
FPS 6"x2	582,257.82	29,113.39	611,381.20	582,267.81	29,113.40	611,381.20
BPS 6"x3	861,432.81	43,071.64	904,504.45	861,432.81	43,071.64	904,504.45
BPS 6"x2	565,621.87	28,281.09	593,902.96	565,621.87	28,281.09	593,902.96
ROP 2"x6	198,096.61	9,904.83	208,001.44	198,096.61	9,904.83	208,001.44
FPS 2"x6	582,257.82	29,112.89	611,370.71	582,257.82	29,112.89	611,370.71
BPS 2"x6	565,621.87	28,281.09	593,902.96	565,621.87	28,281.09	593,902.96
BPS 2"x2	349,354.69	17,467.73	366,822.42	349,354.69	17,467.73	966,822.42
13" x 5	316,940.00	15,847.00	332,787.00	239,571.80	11,978.59	251,550.39
13" x 2	126,776.00	6,338.80	133,114.80	95,828.72	4,791.44	100,620.16
11" x 5	268,180.00	13,409.00	281,589.00	202,714.50	10,135.73	212,850.33
11" x 4	214,544.00	10,727.20	225,271.20	162,171.68	8,103.58	170,280.26
11" x 2	107,272.00	5,363.60	112,635.60	81,085.84	4,054.29	85,140.13
10" x 6	292,560.00	14,628.00	307,188.00	221,143.20	11,057.16	232,200.36
10" x 5	243,800.00	12,190.00	255,990.00	184,286.00	9,214.30	193,500.30
10" x 4	195,040.00	9,752.00	204,792.00	17,428.80	7,371.44	154,800.24
10" x 3	146,280.00	7,314.00	153,594.00	110,571.60	5,528.58	166,100.18
10" x 2	97,520.00	4,876.00	102,396.00	73,714.40	3,685.72	77,400.12
9" x 6	263,304.00	13,165.20	276,469.20	199,028.88	9,951.44	208,980.32
9" x 5	219,420.00	10,971.00	230,391.00	165,857.40	8,292.87	174,150.27
9" x 4	175,536.00	8,776.80	184,312.80	132,685.92	6,634.30	139,320.22
9" x 3	131,652.00	6,582.60	138,234.60	99,514.44	4,975.72	104,490.16
8" x 6	234,048.00	11,702.40	245,750.40	175,914.56	8,845.73	185,760.29
8" x 5	195,040.00	9,752.00	204,792.00	17,428.80	7,371.44	154,800.24
8" x 4	156,040.00	7,801.60	163,833.60	117,943.04	5,897.15	123,840.19
8" x 3	117,024.00	5,851.20	122,875.20	88,457.28	4,422.86	92,880.14
8" x 2	78,015.00	3,900.80	81,916.80	58,971.52	2,948.58	61,920.10
7" x 5	170,660.00	8,533.00	179,193.00	129,000.20	6,450.01	135,450.21
7" x 4	136,528.00	6,826.40	143,354.40	103,200.16	5,160.01	108,306.17
7" x 2	68,264.00	3,413.20	71,677.20	51,600.08	2,580.00	54,180.08
6" x 4	97,520.00	4,876.00	102,396.00	73,714.40	3,685.72	77,400.12
6" x 3	87,750.00	4,388.40	92,156.40	66,342.96	3,317.15	69,660.11
6" x 2	58,512.00	2,925.60	61,437.60	44,228.64	2,211.43	45,440.07
5" x 5	121,900.00	6,095.00	127,995.00	92,143.00	,607.15	96,750.15
5" x 4	97,520.00	4,876.00	102,396.00	73,714.40	3,685.72	77,400.12
5" x 3	73,140.00	3,657.00	76,797.00	55,285.80	2,764.29	58,050.09
5" x 2	48,760.00	2,430.00	51,198.00	36,857.20	1,842.86	38,700.06
4" x 2	39,008.00	1,950.40	40,958.40	29,485.76	1,474.29	30,960.05
3" x 3	43,884.00	2,194.20	46,078.20	33,171.48	1,658.57	34,830.05
3" x 2	29,256.00	1,462.80	30,718.80	22,114.32	1,105.72	23,220.04
2" x 5	48,760.00	2,438.00	51,198.00	36,857.20	1,842.86	38,700.06
2" x 2	19,504.00	975.20	20,479.20	14,742.88	737.14	15,480.02
1" x 2	9,752.00	487.50	10,239.60	7,371.44	368.57	7,740.01
1" x 1	4,876.00	243.80	5,119.80	3,685.72	184,284	3,870.01

COMPUTER & IT EDUCATIONAL, PROPERTY, VACANCY, HOME DECOR		
SIZES	COLOUR	BLACK & WHITE
F/PAGE	676,264.17	757,667.79
H/PAGE	206,232.41	216,232.41
Q/PAGE	154,153.75	113,151.35
10"x 2		57,833.73
8" x 2		46,766.03
7" x 2		40,483.39
6" x 2		34,696.60
5" x 2		20,916.22
4" x 2		23,130.84
3" x 2		17,347.40
2" x 6		34,37.18
2" x 2		11,565.50
1" x 2		5,784.35
1" x 1		2,831.68

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CATEGORY	F/PAGE	1,500,000.00
PICTURES AND CAPTIONS		
CLASSIFIED ADVERT		3,000.00
LOOSE INSERT	FOR 1,000 COPIES	25,541.25
	HANDLING CHARGE FOR 1ST 50,000 COPIES	71,662.60

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F/PAGE	675,675.00	510,974.00	FULL WRAP	20,000,000.00	
H/PAGE	350,475.00	265,045.00	EARPIECE 2x2	300,952.55	
Q/PAGE	100,765.00	144,255.00	CENTER SPREAD	1,564,061.75	
PHOTO SPLASH	165,250.00	120,050.00	DOUBLE SPREAD	1,395,076.76	874,810.85
			HALF DOUBLE SPREAD	705,210.97	450,451.98

Economy

NACCIMA launches applications for \$150m expansion loan for manufacturers, transport firms

The Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA) says it has opened applications for a \$150 million offshore financing facility aimed at supporting the expansion of Nigerian businesses across key sectors of the economy.

In a statement on Sunday, the association said the facility, developed in partnership with ODDO BHF SE, a German banking group, offers eligible companies access to long-term expansion financing at single-digit interest rates.

NACCIMA said applications can now be submitted through the dedicated online portal launched during the Infrastructure Conference (INFRACON) 2026 in Abuja.

According to the association, the financing targets businesses operating in manufacturing, agro-allied processing, energy, logistics, mineral beneficiation, transportation, and information and communication technology (ICT), with 20 percent of the fund reserved for digital economy projects.

The facility provides a minimum financing amount of \$10 million with a minimum repayment tenor of 7.5 years, according to NACCIMA.

However, the association said beneficiaries must commit between 35 percent and 50 percent of the financing to procuring

eligible machinery, equipment, technology and services from Europe, while the balance may be invested in Nigeria or other approved markets.

Speaking on the facility, Waheed Olagunju, chairman of the Joint NACCIMA-ODDO BHF working group committee, said the initiative is designed to connect viable Nigerian businesses with long-term international capital.

"The Joint NACCIMA-ODDO Committee has developed a rigorous framework that enables viable, ESG-compliant Nigerian enterprises to access capital, starting at a minimum of \$10 million, to acquire the European machinery, equipment and technology needed to scale their operations," Olagunju said.

To qualify, NACCIMA said applicants must demonstrate financial viability by providing at least three years of audited financial statements and evidence of compliance with environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards.

The association added that applicants must also be verified financial members of recognised organised private sector associations, including NACCIMA, the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), the Nigerian Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (NASME), or the Nigerian Association of Small Scale Industrialists (NASSI).

CPPE advocates new development finance model to close Nigeria's real sector financing

The Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise (CPPE) has called for a new development finance model to close Nigeria's real sector financing gap.

In a policy brief issued on Sunday, the organisation said manufacturers, farmers, agribusinesses, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), supply chains and export-oriented businesses face severe financing constraints that conventional commercial lending cannot address.

CPPE estimated the financing gap at over N50 trillion, attributing it to high lending rates, short loan tenors, stringent collateral requirements, limited risk appetite among lenders and inadequate long-term capital.

The organisation said agriculture contributes more than one-fifth of Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP), but has historically received less than five percent of banking sector credit, while manufacturers struggle to secure affordable long-term funding for expansion and investment.

"The answer is not indiscriminate monetary expansion. It is a carefully designed development-finance framework targeted at identifiable market failures and structured to preserve monetary-policy credibility," the brief reads.



CPPE said the current monetary policy environment has compounded financing challenges for productive businesses, noting that the monetary policy rate (MPR) of 26.5 percent and the cash reserve ratio (CRR) of 45 percent have pushed lending rates beyond levels many businesses can sustain.

Still, CPPE acknowledged that the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) monetary tightening has strengthened policy credibility, supported exchange-rate stability and moderated inflationary pressures.

However, it said monetary stability should not come at the expense of investment and

productivity.

"Price stability and development finance should not be treated as mutually exclusive objectives. In an economy characterised by deep financing gaps, market failures and severe supply-side constraints, monetary stability must be complemented by carefully targeted, transparently governed and non-inflationary development finance interventions," CPPE said.

It added that financing productive sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing would expand supply, strengthen productivity and help moderate structural inflation over time.

CPPE said weaknesses

associated with previous CBN intervention programmes, including governance concerns, political influence and weak repayment discipline, justify reform rather than a complete retreat from development finance.

The think tank said Nigeria should adopt a market-driven framework that allows the CBN to play a catalytic role instead of directly allocating credit.

"Nigeria does not need a return to large, discretionary and administratively allocated intervention funds. What is required is a modern development-finance framework that is market-correcting rather than market-replacing; wholesale rather than retail; rules-based rather than discretionary; performance-driven rather than allocation-driven; and shielded from political capture," CPPE said.

The organisation also recommended recapitalising the Bank of Industry (BoI) and the Bank of Agriculture (BoA), expanding credit guarantee schemes, establishing specialised refinancing windows for manufacturing and agriculture, mobilising pension and insurance funds for long-term productive investments, and reducing sovereign crowding-out through stronger fiscal discipline.

NAAE seeks NASS comprehensive, equitable, review of 5% TSC sharing formula

CHUKWUEMEKE IWELUNMO

As the National Assembly sets to commence hearing on the Ticket Sales Charge (TSC), the National Association of Air Traffic Engineers (NAAE) has called on them to undertake a comprehensive, objective and equitable review of the 5% TSC sharing formula.

NAAE said NASS in carrying out the important legislative responsibility, they should be guided by the statutory mandates, operational realities, funding requirements and evolving responsibilities of each aviation agency, with the overriding objective of strengthening Nigeria's aviation safety architecture.

In press statement signed by Engr Selzing Miri and Engr Mohammed Shuaibu, president and secretary respectively, declared that Nigeria cannot effectively fulfil the obligations if its Air Navigation Service Provider if it continues to operate under financial constraints that are inconsistent with its statutory responsibilities.

According to NAAE, the

current allocation formula, under which the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) receives only 23% of the TSC while the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) receives 57%, no longer reflects the operational realities, technological demands, and financial responsibilities of modern air navigation service provision.

They explained that the current sharing formula was established decades ago when aviation technology was considerably less complex adding that since then, Nigeria has embraced Performance-Based Navigation (PBN), satellite surveillance technologies, digital communication systems, cybersecurity requirements and other ICAO-mandated modernisation initiatives while the statutory revenue allocation to NAMA has remained substantially unchanged despite the exponential increase in operational responsibilities and maintenance costs.

They argued that it was not a struggle between aviation agencies but a national

conversation about ensuring that the institution responsible for the safe, orderly and efficient movement of aircraft within Nigerian airspace is adequately funded to discharge its statutory obligations.

According to NAAE, while the regulatory oversight role of NCAA remains indispensable and deserving of adequate funding, regulation alone cannot guarantee aviation safety, safe flight operations are achieved only when robust regulation is complemented by reliable and uninterrupted air navigation services.

"Air navigation services constitute the backbone of aviation safety. Every aircraft that departs, transits or lands within Nigerian airspace depends continuously on NAMA's Communications, Navigation, Surveillance and Air Traffic Management (CNS/ATM) infrastructure. These systems are sophisticated, safety-critical and capital-intensive. Their procurement, installation, calibration, maintenance, modernization and periodic replacement require enormous and sustained financial investment

"Unlike several other

aviation services, CNS/ATM facilities operate twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, throughout the year without interruption. Radar systems, Instrument Landing Systems (ILS), DVOR/DME facilities, ADS-B, Multilateration (MLAT), satellite-based navigation infrastructure, communication networks, Aeronautical Information Management (AIM), flight calibration programmes, power systems, cybersecurity architecture and numerous other safety-critical facilities demand continuous maintenance by highly skilled engineering personnel"

NAAE noted that these facilities cannot be allowed to deteriorate due to inadequate funding without exposing the nation to significant operational and safety risks.

"Every successful take-off, every safe en-route flight, every instrument approach and every safe landing depends upon the seamless operation of engineering systems designed, installed, maintained and monitored by dedicated Air Traffic Safety Electronics Personnel and other aviation professionals within NAMA.

Ossimo Power Company accuses CCETC of attempting to circumvent court litigation through CAC

BY TITUS AKHIGBE, BENIN

The Ossimo Power Company, Ologbo in Edo State, has raised an alarm over what it described as an attempt by a Chinese firm, CCETC to undermine the ongoing legal proceedings at the Federal High Court, Abuja, through an alleged fictitious petition filed with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC).

In a statement issued on Saturday, 1st August, 2026, by the management of Ossimo Power Company in Benin City, the company alleged that CCETC made spurious claims to the CAC regarding its wholly-owned Project Company, "COPC", despite the fact that the matter is pending in a federal high court sitting in Abuja.

According to the Ossimo Power Company, on 28th July 2026, COPC received an email from the Compliance Department of the CAC, with a letter dated 19th June, 2026. The letter referenced a petition submitted by Jiangsu/CCETC on 3rd June 2026, bordering on the removal of directors and divestment of shares, and asked COPC to respond within seven days.

The company noted that although the CAC letter was dated

June 19, it was only delivered to it on July 28, 2026, and it was promptly responded to, even though COPC was not provided with a copy of the purported CCETC letter.

The Ossimo Power Company further noted that "the issues raised in the CAC's correspondence are already the subject of litigation pending before the Federal High Court, Abuja in Suit No: FHC/ABJ/CS/2025, instituted by CCETC itself in October 2025".

The company added that the CAC is a party to the suit and has filed a preliminary objection challenging its joinder and the basis of CCETC's claims. "The objection is yet to be determined" the Ossimo Power Company, stated.

The company further alleged that the fresh development amounted to a breach of existing court orders directing all parties, including CCETC and the CAC, to maintain the "status quo".

The statement added that "this is another desperate attempt by CCETC to abuse the court process and subvert the course of justice".

The company said the press statement was issued to place the matter on record and to highlight the timing of the CAC's correspondence within the context of the pending proceedings.

BIPC audits moribund industries, begins Benue's industrial revival

The Benue Investment and Property Company (BIPC) has intensified efforts to revive abandoned industries through asset audits targeting job creation, investment attraction and economic growth.

The Group Managing Director of BIPC, Dr Raymond Asemakaha, disclosed this during inspections of the abandoned Igumale Cement Factory and Otukpo Burnt Bricks Factory during the ongoing asset audit exercise.

Asemakaha said the exercise formed part of BIPC's root cause analysis initiative to identify factors responsible for industrial collapse and recommend lasting solutions across the state economy.

He identified policy inconsistency, poor infrastructure, weak value chains, inadequate private investment, and limited public-private partnerships as major causes of industrial decline in Benue.

According to him, Benue's population has increased from about 2.5 million during the Aker Aku administration to over seven million, while industrial productivity has continued to decline significantly across sectors.

He recalled thriving industries, including Benue Brewery, Taraku Mills, Benro Packaging, Lobi Bank, Benue Bottling Company, Flour Mills, Benue Cement and Ikyogen Cattle Ranch, which later became moribund.

Asemakaha said Gov. Hyacinth Alia's administration was determined to reverse the trend through industrial revitalisation, investment promotion, value-chain development, industrial clusters and sustained human capital development initiatives.

He said reviving dormant industries would create jobs, reduce dependence on government

employment, diversify the economy and increase value addition to the state's abundant agricultural produce and resources.

He added that government would retain a 35 per cent equity stake in revitalised industries, while private investors would provide management expertise, operational leadership and additional investment capital.

Asemakaha directed immediate resumption of work at the Igumale Cement Factory and renewed the government's invitation to the Chinese firm to complete installation of the long-abandoned cement plant.

He assured the company that government would facilitate completion of the environmental impact assessment and mining lease documentation required before the project could resume full operations successfully.

The inspection team was led by Deputy Governor Mr Sam Ode, who visited the abandoned industrial facilities to evaluate their condition and identify practical steps required for their rehabilitation and revival.

The deputy governor said the inspection followed Gov. Alia's directive to assess abandoned industries across Benue South and prepare them for rehabilitation and productive commercial operations.

He reaffirmed the administration's commitment to revitalising moribund industries as a strategy for stimulating economic growth, attracting investments and improving the livelihoods of Benue residents across communities.

Mrs Mbamilin Yandev, Director of Industry, said the state government and the Chinese company began installing the Igumale Cement Factory in 2021 under an 80-million-dollar BOT arrangement.



NGX, stakeholders advocate inclusive fintech growth

Group Chairman, Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX Group), Dr Umaru Kwairanga, has called for more collaboration among regulators, financial institutions, technology companies and other stakeholders to deepen financial inclusion and strengthen Nigeria's digital financial ecosystem.

Kwairanga made the call on Friday in Lagos while delivering his address as Chairman of the third Business Journal Fintech and Financial Inclusion Roundtable.

The theme of the conference is "Fintech: Driving the Future of the Digital Financial Ecosystem in Nigeria".

The conference was convened by Prince Cooke, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of Business Journal Media Group.

The chairman said although Nigeria had built one of Africa's most vibrant fintech ecosystems over the past decade, stakeholders must ensure that innovation translated into broad-based economic opportunities for all citizens.

According to him, financial

inclusion should go beyond increasing the number of bank accounts and digital wallets.

He said it should enable individuals and businesses to build financial resilience, access capital, grow wealth and participate meaningfully in the economy.

He stressed the need to extend digital financial services to small businesses, women, young entrepreneurs and underserved communities that remained outside the formal financial system.

Kwairanga said trust remained the foundation of innovation, noting that consumers would only embrace digital financial services if they were confident that their transactions were secure, their data protected and the financial system operated with integrity.

"Building this trust requires collective action.

"Regulators must continue to encourage responsible innovation while safeguarding market stability.

"Financial institutions and technology companies must work together to expand access.

"Stakeholders across the ecosystem must continue investing in digital infrastructure, cybersecurity and financial literacy to ensure that technology serves as an enabler of opportunity," he said.

Kwairanga said the Exchange was leveraging technology to deepen participation in the capital market through initiatives such as NGX Invest, which simplifies access to public offerings and enables companies to raise long-term capital more efficiently.

He noted that innovative businesses required patient capital to scale sustainably.

"A mature financial ecosystem should provide funding opportunities for companies at different stages of growth.

"A sustainable progress can only be achieved through collaboration among government, regulators, businesses and technology providers," Kwairanga said.

He expressed confidence that Nigeria could emerge as a leading digital financial hub in Africa, making reference

to the country's youthful, innovative and technology-driven population.

Kwairanga said achieving that goal would require supportive policies, strong institutions and continuous innovation.

Meanwhile, the Chief Executive Officer of PufferPay Ltd., Mr Emmanuel Ovaga, called on fintech operators, regulators and investors to invest more in consumer education and cybersecurity to sustain Nigeria's digital financial ecosystem.

He said while the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) had introduced policies that had strengthened the fintech ecosystem and helped reduce the country's unbanked population, more efforts were needed to educate users of digital financial services.

According to him, increasing digital adoption without corresponding awareness of cyber risks could expose millions of Nigerians, particularly those in underserved communities, to fraud and other financial crimes.

AVA Capital posts N1.46bn half-year PBT, lists on NGX

AVA Capital Plc has reported a group profit before tax (PBT) of N1.46 billion for the first half of 2026.

The Managing Director of the company, Mr Olukayode Fadahunsi, disclosed this on Friday during the company's "Facts Behind the Listing" presentation and listing by introduction ceremony at the Nigerian Exchange Ltd (NGX) on Friday in Lagos.

Fadahunsi said the group's profit after tax for the six months ended June 30, stood at N1 billion, while total assets rose to N110.9 billion.

He said the company's standalone investment banking business posted strong growth during the period, with revenue increasing year-on-year.

According to him, fee income surged by 402 per cent, while interest income increased by 54 per cent in the review period.

Fadahunsi said the group recorded an audited profit after tax of N614 million for the 2025 financial year and had executed transactions valued at more than N1.257 trillion since inception.

"AVA Capital has maintained a strong capital position, with shareholders' funds of N12.7 billion, this exceeds the Securities and Exchange

Commission's minimum capital requirement for investment banking operations.

"AVA Global Asset Managers, AVA Securities Ltd. and AVA Trust Ltd. also met their respective regulatory capital requirements.

"We remain focused on increasing recurring income streams to improve earnings quality and provide more predictable returns for shareholders," he said.

Fadahunsi explained that the company's admission to the Nigerian Exchange through a listing by introduction did not involve the issuance of new shares or dilute the equity holdings of existing shareholders.

According to him, this will strengthen transparency, corporate governance and access to long-term growth.

He said that the decision to list reflected the company's commitment to operating as a visible and accountable institution entrusted with managing investors' capital.

Fadahunsi noted that the company would continue to leverage its integrated financial services platform to deepen capital market activities and deliver sustainable value to investors.

Stock market gains N11.11trn in July, analyst projects bullish August

The Nigerian equities market rebounded strongly in July, with investors gaining N11.109 trillion as renewed interest in banking stocks lifted the market after the N13.3 trillion loss recorded in June.

The rally was driven largely by sustained buying in banking stocks, led by First HoldCo Plc, amid expectations of robust half-year corporate earnings, ongoing bank recapitalisation and increased institutional participation.

Market capitalisation rose by 7.55 per cent to close the month at N158.326 trillion, compared with N147.217 trillion at the beginning of July.

Similarly, the Nigerian Exchange Ltd. (NGX) All-Share Index (ASI) gained 15,864.45 points, or 6.92 per cent, to close at 245,283.63, against 229,419.18 recorded at the

start of the month.

Trading remained largely positive, with the market recording 12 gaining sessions and 11 losing sessions during the 23 trading days in July.

Market activity also improved as investors traded 17.817 billion shares worth N1.184 trillion in 1,166,154 deals, compared with 16.292 billion shares valued at N855.994 billion exchanged in 1,227,430 deals in June.

Among the major gainers were Aradel Holdings, MTN Nigeria, Dangote Cement, HBM Nigeria, Nigerian Aviation Handling Company (NAHCO), Transcorp Hotels, NGX Group, Africa Prudential and Unilever Nigeria.

Banking and insurance stocks also posted impressive gains, with First HoldCo rising from N56.05 to N129.55, United Bank for Africa from N38.40 to

N44.50, Zenith Bank from N110 to N123.55, GTCO from N125 to N130, while AllCO Insurance and AXA Mansard Insurance also advanced.

However, Nestlé Nigeria, Presco Plc, Vitafoam Nigeria, Legend Internet, Omatek Ventures and Neimeth International Pharmaceuticals closed the month lower.

Speaking with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), the Managing Director of Wyoming Capital and Partners, Mr Tajudeen Olayinka, expressed optimism that the market would sustain its positive momentum in August.

He attributed the outlook to expectations of strong half-year corporate earnings and interim dividend declarations, particularly by tier-one banks.

According to him, companies that have

released their half-year results have posted encouraging performances, boosting investor confidence.

"The market may not witness an aggressive rally, but we expect it to remain positive as more companies release their half-year results," he said.

Olayinka said banking stocks were likely to dominate trading activities in August, noting that many were still trading below their intrinsic values despite strong fundamentals.

He said the anticipated approval and payment of interim dividends would further stimulate investor demand for banking stocks.

The analyst also said the recent acquisition activities involving First HoldCo had renewed investors' interest in the banking sector and could further support valuations.

2027: INEC publishes particulars of Tinubu, Atiku, Obi, others

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Saturday published the personal particulars of candidates contesting the 2027 Presidential and National Assembly elections.

The publication was carried out at INEC state offices nationwide in accordance with the commission's revised timetable and schedule of activities for the 2027 general elections.

The published particulars featured presidential candidates and their designated running mates representing various political parties across the country.

According to the details released by the commission, President Bola Tinubu was listed as the presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), with Vice President Kashim Shettima retained as his running mate.

The African Democratic Congress (ADC) fielded



former Vice President Atiku Abubakar as its presidential candidate, paired with former Minister of Transportation, Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi, as his vice-presidential running mate.

Similarly, the National Democratic Coalition (NDC) published Peter Obi as its presidential candidate, with former Kano State Governor, Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso, as his running mate.

Other political party flagbearers and their running mates published by the

electoral body include the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) with Sandy Onor as Presidential candidate, and Umaru Babangida as running mate.

Also were African Action Congress (AAC): Omoyele Sowore as Presidential candidate, and Garba Magashi as Vice-Presidential candidate; Young Progressives Party (YPP)- Zugwai Chukwu as Presidential candidate, and Egbeola Martins as VP.

Social Democratic Party

(SDP)- Adewole Adebayo as Presidential candidate and Bujgaje Mohammed as VP; African Democratic Party (ADP): Abbas-Bin Aliyu (Presidential candidate), Ike Chinazam (VP); National Democratic Congress (NDC)- Fredrick Okwori as Presidential candidate, Anthony Chukwuemeka as running mate.

For Labour Party (LP)- Chibuzo Okereke (Presidential candidate), Bintu Konto (VP); New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP)-Mohammed Dikwa (Presidential candidate), Isah Abubakar (VP); Action Alliance (AA).

Also published were the details of candidates for the senate and the House of Assembly

INEC noted that the display of personal particulars allowed the public and political stakeholders to inspect the candidates' credentials and lodge any valid claims or objections as provided by the Electoral Act.

2027: NDC youths endorse former ESUT Pro-Chancellor, Ohaa, for Enugu guber race

The National Democratic Congress (NDC) Youth Wing in Enugu State has unanimously endorsed the party's governorship candidate, Mr Chinyeaka Ohaa, for the 2027 general elections.

The endorsement was made during the maiden executive meeting of the NDC Youth Wing held in Enugu on Saturday.

Speaking at the meeting, the State Youth Coordinator, Mr Jideofor Ude, described Ohaa as an "astute public servant" who had served in various capacities in the state and the country.

According to him, Chief Chinyeaka Ohaa served as Accountant General of Enugu State, FCT Permanent Secretary and Pro-Chancellor, Enugu State University of Science and Technology among other positions.

He called on members to unite behind all candidates fielded by the party, with particular emphasis on Ohaa's governorship bid.

The meeting was attended by the NDC State Chairman, Mr Ibuchukwu Obeta, and the 17 Local Government Coordinators of the Youth Wing.

Ude expressed appreciation to Obeta for what he described as his strategic leadership and commitment to the growth of the party in the state.

Ude assured the chairman of the youth wing's commitment to working with the party leadership to advance its objectives and strengthen its grassroots structures across the state.

Outlining the youth's plans for the election cycle, the coordinator said that activities would commence in earnest in line with the timetable to be released by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Ude urged all NDC candidates in the state to collaborate with the Youth Wing in driving grassroots mobilisation and youth participation in the electoral process.

The youth coordinator charged the 17 Local Government Coordinators to be proactive in implementing party programmes at the grassroots to ensure effective youth representation.

Ude further encouraged members to submit ideas and policy contributions ahead of the forthcoming NDC Youth Leadership Summit, where the Youth Wing was expected to unveil key programmes and initiatives for the 2027 elections.

In his remarks, the state chairman, Obeta, commended the youth wing for its dedication and proactive approach to party affairs, pledging continued support for its activities and growth.

He also addressed the ongoing leadership dispute within the state chapter, saying he was pursuing all legal avenues to resolve the matter.

Obeta maintained that he remained the duly recognised State Chairman by the NDC national body and urged members of the youth wing to remain focused and avoid distractions as the party prepares for the 2027 elections.

The meeting also featured the presentation of appointment letters to the Local Government Coordinators.

Osun 2026: S/West Accord urges security agencies to curb political violence

The South-West Forum of the Accord Party has described the wave of political violence in Osun ahead of the Aug. 15 governorship election as disturbing, urging security agencies to act decisively to restore public confidence.

The forum also appealed to the African Union (AU), United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), U.S. Government, USAID and UKAID to closely monitor developments in the state.

The Secretary of the South-West Forum of the Accord Party and Lagos State Chairman of the party, Mr Dele Oladeji, made the call in a statement made available to newsmen on Saturday in Lagos.

Oladeji alleged that the political atmosphere in Osun had become

increasingly tense since campaigns commenced for the governorship election.

He claimed that members and leaders of the Accord Party, government officials and relatives of the governor had been victims of politically motivated attacks.

"In the last couple of months, since the beginning of electioneering campaign in Osun State for the Aug. 15 governorship election, there has been a steady and rising rate of politically motivated, brutal and fatal attacks on Accord members.

"These fatal attacks have led to loss of lives, including that of a 14-year-old boy and several others.

"These politically motivated killings have become one too many," he said.

Oladeji expressed concern over

what he described as the inability of security agencies to apprehend and prosecute those behind the attacks.

He said the situation had heightened fear among party members and residents of the state.

"The perpetrators and suspects in these assassinations have not been arrested or prosecuted, either to serve as deterrent or to establish justice and fight crime.

"The persistent attacks and failure of the Nigeria Police to arrest murder suspects have created fear, while some named suspects are allegedly seen moving freely under police protection," he said.

The chieftain also criticised the recent arrest of the Secretary to the Osun State Government, Mr Teslim Igbalaye, describing it as

politically motivated.

Oladeji said that dozens of party members remained in police custody following their arrest and transfer from Osun to the Federal Capital Territory.

He claimed they were being detained without warrants, formal charges or court orders.

"As at midnight of July 29, there were still 61 Accord members in police captivity without warrants, formal accusations or petitions against them.

Oladeji urged security agencies to remain neutral and professional in the discharge of their constitutional responsibilities.

He also called on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to ensure a free, fair and credible governorship election.

Bauchi Gov cautions faith leaders against divisive rhetoric ahead of 2027 polls

BY LUKA YELMI

Bauchi State Governor, Senator Bala Mohammed, has urged religious and traditional leaders to refrain from provocative statements, warning that such rhetoric threatens peace and stability ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The governor, who spoke on Thursday at the 9th Interfaith Conference in Bauchi, said Nigeria's ethnic and religious diversity should be harnessed for development rather than exploited for political gain.

He was represented by his Principal Private Secretary, Alhaji Hashimu Yakubu Kumbala.

The conference, themed "Non-Violent Elections: The Role of Faith

and Traditional Leaders in Nigeria," was organised by the Interfaith Dialogue Forum For Peace (IDFP) in partnership with the International Institute of Peace. It drew clerics, traditional rulers, youth groups, civil society organisations and government officials.

"We live in an ethnically and religiously diverse country. The need to understand and respect our differences for social harmony, political stability and economic prosperity cannot be overemphasised," the governor said.

Mohammed cautioned that divisive politics and mutual distrust remain major obstacles to national progress, and charged faith leaders with the responsibility of ensuring violence-free elections in 2027.

"No meaningful development can take place where mutual mistrust and discord prevail. Sustainable progress thrives only where there is harmony, justice and peaceful coexistence," He said.

Describing peace as "the presence of harmony, justice and shared progress," he noted that both Islam and Christianity preach human dignity and compassion.

"When hunger strikes, it does not differentiate between Muslims and Christians. When poverty knocks, it does not check our creed," he said. "We must therefore pay more attention to the values that unite us than those that divide us."

To strengthen coexistence, the governor proposed the establishment of community early-

warning networks comprising youth and elders from different faiths to identify and resolve tensions early.

He also advocated joint development projects such as health clinics, schools and self-help groups open to all citizens regardless of religion.

"As a government, we have invested in peace-building through workshops and seminars for religious and community leaders," Mohammed said. "To a large extent, these have promoted tolerance and mutual trust. We have also prioritised the inclusion of various segments of society in our policies and programmes."

The IDFP presented Bauchi State with an award for its "modest achievement in peace-building."

Atiku to youths: Turn social media influence into votes ahead of 2027

BY LUKA YELMI, BAUCHI

Nigeria's former vice president, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, has urged Nigerian youths to convert their online influence into electoral action, saying their numbers will determine the outcome of the 2027 general elections.

Speaking in a Facebook address to the "Riseup Naija Movement" on Saturday, Atiku laid out what he called "three mandates" for young Nigerians: move from online outrage to offline participation, reject ethnic and religious division, and take responsibility for building a new Nigeria.

2027: Be wary of political hijackers, Kwara APC chieftain tells youths

KEHINDE AKINPELU, ILORIN

The coordinator of Kwara Central All Progressives Congress Elders Caucus, Alh Razaq Lawal, yesterday urged Kwara youths to be wary of political hijackers, who are out to stage a 'come back to power' in the 2027 general elections.

He sensitised the youths to the fact that the forthcoming election, especially the governorship remain a contest between the youth and political hijackers.

Lawal spoke alongside leaders of the ruling party at AA Youth Wing Community Resilience Pledge event organised in Ilorin, the state capital, to assess the performance of Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq and mobilise support for APC candidates in the elections.

He allayed the fear in some quarters of a plot to create a new political dynasty with the selection process of the ruling party's candidates for 2027.

"To our young people, I want you to know that 2027 elections are going to be a battle between light and darkness," he added.



"Hashtags do not count votes. Livestreams do not secure polling units. Tweets do not defend democracy. Only citizens do," he said.

The PDP chieftain and 2023 presidential candidate advised youths to register, verify their Permanent Voter

Cards, serve as polling agents, and defend the electoral process peacefully.

"The old political establishment may have enormous financial resources, but you possess something far more powerful — your numbers," Atiku stated.

Atiku, who served

as Vice President from 1999 to 2007, said he was offering himself for service again because "Nigeria can still become the country we all know it is capable of becoming."

He blamed successive administrations for weak institutions, corruption, insecurity and economic hardship, which he said have forced many graduates and entrepreneurs to leave the country.

"The question history will ask your generation is not whether Nigeria faced enormous challenges. The question is: What did your generation do when the future of Nigeria rested in your hands?" he asked.

He concluded by saying he was "placing the baton" in the hands of young Nigerians to "carry it with courage, discipline, integrity and patriotism."

'Politics is not like church, I'm a Christian, not pastor,' Wike defends political style

STEPHEN GBADAMOSI, IBADAN

Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, has defended his political style, saying his faith does not require him to operate like a cleric.

Speaking during a special media chat in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, at the weekend, Wike said politics and religion were governed by different principles, insisting that his critics failed to appreciate the realities of political engagement.

The former Rivers State governor dismissed suggestions that he should model his political conduct after his father who was a gospel preacher.

He said these in a statement by his media aide, Mr. Lere Olayinka.

"Politics is not like church. I'm a Christian but not a pastor. That my father is a pastor does not make me a pastor," Wike said.

Drawing a comparison with his own family, the minister added with a query that "I am a lawyer, but my second son is not a lawyer; so, because his mother is a judge does that make my son a judge?"

According to him, every profession had its own standards and expectations, stressing that politics cannot be judged by the same yardstick as religious ministry.

"The point is that, if you want to be a politician, there are rules; and if you want to be a pastor, there are rules."

"That is why when I hear people saying they are angry because this happened, that happened, I say you are talking theory," he stated.

Wike's remarks came amid continued criticism of his political style, particularly following his prolonged rift with Rivers State governor, Siminalayi Fubara.

The minister was responding to claims that his actions in the state were driven by a desire to retain control over Rivers' political structure despite leaving office as governor.

Taraba 2027: PDP's Bwacha unveils Ddeputy, Zakari

OKERAFOR ATHANATIUS, JALINGO

The Taraba State governorship candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for 2027 polls, Senator Emmanuel Bwacha, has unveiled Engr. Aminu Zakari, to party faithful and supporters as his deputy governorship candidate of the election.

The Daily Monitor Correspondent gathered that Senator Emmanuel Bwacha emerged as PDP's governorship flag-bearer for 2027 polls under the faction of the FCT's Minister, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike.

Welcoming his running mate, Engr. Aminu Zakari at the event held Saturday at the party's secretariat in Jalingo, Bwacha said the joint ticket of himself and Engr. Zakari is a reflection of competence and commitment to service.

He further disclosed that his choice of Zakari is not political but because of his record of service and a call that is greater than his personal life but a call to serve the people of Taraba State.

"My choice of Engr. Zakari was based on track record and not politics, and I have listened to farmers, youths,



men and women who are crying for good leadership," he said.

Sen. Bwacha urged the people of Taraba to take ownership of the movement, which he said is aimed at building a better Taraba where leadership is measured not by opportunity but by service.

"We promise integrity, transparency, and accountability. We should reject a politics of fear and division. We will not allow rigging to take place in 2027 as we are going to be watchful," he added.

Accepting the offer before the gathering, Engr. Zakari applauded Senator Bwacha for choosing to work with, describing it as the well-being of the people of the

State.

pledging not to betray but to justify the confidence reposed in him, Zakari explained that good governance is not magic but the product of deliberate planning, listening and rendering good service delivery to the people of the State.

The event attracted the presence of some critical stakeholders from the 16 LGAs of the State among whom were, the former Nigerian Ambassador to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Amb. Hassan Ardo, former State Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Hon. Yusufu Nya Akirikwe (SAN), and the former Taraba State SSG, Hon. Anthony Jellason.

Nigeria's digital identity gap leaves schoolchildren behind

BY USMAN ALIYU AND IBUKUN EMIOLA

When five-year-old David Osagie arrived at a public primary school in Benin City with his mother for enrolment last September, she carried what she believed was every document her son would ever need.

His birth certificate had been issued shortly after birth by the National Population Commission (NPC).

It bore a Quick Response (QR) code and existed in the commission's central digital database.

She assumed the school would simply verify the record electronically.

Instead, the head teacher glanced at the certificate, accepted the date of birth as presented and completed the admission manually.

No QR code was scanned. No digital record was queried. No government database was consulted.

By the time David walked into his classroom, his officially registered birth had effectively become another paper document in a school file.

The promise that one verified identity could follow a Nigerian child from birth into education had broken at the school gate.

David's experience reflects a wider disconnect uncovered by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Edo and Oyo states, where government agencies have made major progress in digitising birth registration and expanding the National Identification Number (NIN).

Yet, schools continue to rely largely on manual admission processes that cannot communicate with identity databases.

The investigation comes at a time when Nigeria is expanding digital identity services.

UNICEF says birth registration is fundamental to a child's legal identity and access to education, while recent efforts by the National Population Commission and its partners have enabled more than 10 million children to obtain birth registration through electronic systems.

Notwithstanding these gains, experts say the inability of government databases to communicate across sectors continues to undermine efficient service delivery.

The findings expose one of the weakest links in Nigeria's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) agenda.

While citizen records are currently being digitised, they remain fragmented across institutions, forcing parents to repeatedly present the same birth certificates and identity documents throughout their children's educational journey.

The Edo State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) confirmed that admission into public primary and junior secondary schools remains entirely manual.

Mrs Ebanehita Omonzane, Executive Chairman of the board, said parents seeking admission were required to submit admission forms alongside birth certificates, passport photographs, parents' identification documents and previous school records where applicable.

However, in spite of collecting birth certificates, schools have no electronic means of determining whether the documents presented are genuine.

"There is no digitalised system for



verifying pupils' birth certificates or birth registration within the Edo SUBEB ecosystem," she said.

Omonzane attributed the situation to the absence of an official verification platform, poor digital literacy among some school administrators and weak internet connectivity across many rural schools.

She added that some parents still enrolled children without presenting birth certificates, relying instead on declared dates of birth.

More significantly, she disclosed that the board had neither ongoing plans nor future initiatives to establish interoperability between education and identity management systems.

The Edo Ministry of Education painted a similar picture.

Mrs Mercy Isibor, a Deputy Director in the ministry, said admission into both primary and secondary schools remained entirely manual, with applicants simply submitting photocopies of birth certificates alongside admission forms.

"There is no interoperable way of verifying birth for now in the state," she said.

The findings sharply contrast with the digital transformation taking place within the National Population Commission.

The Federal Commissioner representing Edo at the NPC, Dr Tony Aiyejina, said the commission's birth registration system had become fully digitised.

"NPC is fully digitised. We have a centralised national database where all registration data are stored," he said.

According to him, birth certificates issued by the commission carry QR codes that can be used to verify authenticity.

However, he acknowledged that the commission's database was not connected to education platforms operating within Edo.

"NPC birth registration database is not connected to any educational platform within Edo State," he said.

The implication is that although government has digitised birth registration, schools still lack the infrastructure to retrieve or authenticate records electronically during admission.

The situation is not different in Oyo State.

Parents interviewed by NAN said they repeatedly submitted the same identity documents in spite of

government agencies already having the information.

Mr Kunmi Adepoju said that although his child obtained a birth certificate shortly after birth, he had continued to present the same document at different stages of the child's education.

He recalled that the birth certificate was issued through the hospital after delivery, while the child's NIN was obtained much later.

According to him, the birth certificate was again required during school enrolment together with other documents already supplied to government institutions.

"We seek a more robust database that would eliminate duplication. Everywhere you go, you present your certificates and make photocopies because that's the system we are used to," he said.

Another parent, Mr Siyanbola Adegoke, expressed hope that government agencies would eventually adopt interoperable identity systems capable of eliminating repeated documentation.

"We wish for a better system where things flow seamlessly and government agencies can access the information they already have instead of asking us to present the same documents every time," he said.

Their experiences are reflected within schools.

Mrs Ibitayo Olutayo, a counsellor and enrolment officer in a public secondary school in Oyo State, said student enrolment still relied largely on paper records with little integration of digital identity systems.

She explained that while public schools generally required fewer documents than private schools, student files often contained only basic information such as previous academic results and passport photographs, making records incomplete and difficult to retrieve.

According to her, the absence of a centralised digital record system means schools and government agencies repeatedly request the same documents from parents, students and even teachers.

She argued that securely storing verified information would simplify school administration and examination registration while reducing unnecessary stress on families.

Private schools face similar challenges.

The National Secretary of the National Association of Proprietors of Private Schools (NAPPS), Dr Kayode Adeyemi, said admission officers currently had no access to any central database for verifying birth certificates or other admission documents.

"We actually do not verify. Once you are not seeing any forgery or tampering, you take it like that because we don't have a central record where schools can check," he said.

Adeyemi said schools occasionally encountered attempts by parents to manipulate children's ages, especially during admission into junior secondary school.

He explained that schools normally required birth certificates, medical records and transfer documents, but some parents claimed they had relocated and could not produce the necessary records.

"If there is a place schools can check the authenticity of documents or scan a code digitally, it would be helpful," he said.

He disclosed that Oyo State, in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education and development partners, was working on a learner identification system that would assign every child a unique learner identification number.

According to him, the initiative would enable schools to access pupils' educational history during transfers, reducing duplication and strengthening record integrity.

He, however, noted that the project was still under development.

The Oyo State Government says it has nevertheless made considerable progress in integrating digital identity into education.

Mrs Oyinloye Bamidele, Permanent Secretary, Oyo State Ministry of Education, said birth certificates and NIN had become central requirements for school enrolment while pupils' records were continuously being digitised.

She explained that pupils without NIN were not denied admission but were expected to obtain one before reaching terminal classes where it became mandatory for national examinations.

Bamidele said one of the greatest challenges remained parents' inability to provide birth certificates because many births were either never registered or the documents were unavailable.

To address this, she said the ministry collaborated with the National Identity

Management Commission (NIMC) to conduct mass registration exercises in schools with large numbers of unregistered pupils.

She added that access to education databases was restricted to authorised institutions to ensure data privacy and protection.

The NPC says it has equally strengthened efforts to improve birth registration before children enter school.

Mrs Olubisi Adegbite, Oyo State Director of the commission, said officials regularly visited schools, engaged Parent-Teacher Associations and registered pupils who had missed birth registration.

"We don't want the time that the child needs the certificate before parents begin to rush us. That is why we are going to schools and registering the children," she said.

Adegbite disclosed that birth registration had now been integrated with the NIN system, enabling newly registered children to obtain NIN automatically, although occasional connectivity challenges still occurred.

She added that each birth certificate carried a unique identification number that allowed records to be retrieved electronically.

However, schools still lacked direct real-time access to the commission's database.

Similarly, an official of NIMC in Oyo State said the commission had expanded registration through ward-based enrolment, mobile registration teams and accredited agents to improve access for residents, including school-age children.

"We've been doing what we call ward enrolment since February.

"The essence is to bring enrolment of NIN closer to the people," the official said.

The official explained that children seeking NIN must present government-issued birth certificates before enrolment.

Stakeholders believe the missing link is no longer data collection but data integration.

The Secretary of the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT), Oyo State Wing, Mr Salami Olukayode, said government agencies must harmonise identity databases to eliminate repeated requests for the same documents.

"If our data are properly captured and linked from one government agency to another, there will be less need to keep requesting the same information from citizens," he said.

According to him, Nigeria's challenge lies not in generating data but in managing and harmonising it across relevant institutions.

The investigation indicates that while Nigeria has made measurable progress in digitising birth registration, expanding NIN enrolment and introducing electronic education records, these systems continue to operate largely in isolation.

For parents, the consequence is repeated documentation. For schools, it is inefficient record management.

For government, it is the inability to fully harness the benefits of Digital Public Infrastructure for planning and service delivery.

Until birth registration, national identity and education databases can communicate seamlessly, thousands of Nigerian children will continue to carry paper records from one classroom to another, even though their identities already exist in government databases.]

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Super Falcons will make Nigeria proud – Adeboye

Following the Super Falcons' shocking 2-3 loss to debutants Malawi in their opening game of the 2026 Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) in Morocco, Hon. Anthony Adeboye, Senior Special Assistant to President Bola Tinubu on Grassroots Sports Development, has expressed confidence in the team's ability to recover.

Adeboye reaffirmed his belief in the reigning champions and record 10-time winners, insisting they will redeem themselves. "It is still a pain in our hearts that our African queens lost to Malawi. That's football for you. Meanwhile, considering the immense qualities of our team, I want to state confidently that the Super Falcons shall bounce back stronger and better. They also understand that a World Cup slot is at stake," he said.

The Super Falcons will face Zambia in their next Group C match on Saturday, with the Zambians currently leading the table with three points and a superior goal advantage.

Adeboye's remarks come as a morale boost for the Nigerian side, which is seeking redemption and a path back to contention in the tournament.



Nigerian community in Morocco mobilises support for Super Falcons ahead of Zambia clash

The Nigerian community in Morocco has organised a massive show of support for the Super Falcons ahead of their crucial Group C match against Zambia on Saturday.

The mobilisation follows Nigeria's disappointing 3-2 defeat to Malawi in their opening game on Tuesday. Local supporters hope to fill Rabat's Al Medina Stadium to create a vibrant atmosphere, contrasting with the thin crowds at the opener.

A Nigerian resident in Rabat, Emeka Okafor, lamented the poor turnout at the first match. "You could practically count every Nigerian in the stands," he said, noting that while Malawi had over 200 fans cheering, Nigeria barely had 30 supporters, mostly officials and media personnel.

Okafor highlighted that in past tournaments, community groups received ticket allocations to help organise crowds, but this year's WAFCON has seen little coordination. "Officials need to intensify plans to bring more Nigerians to the stadium for the Zambia match. Most communities and unions are not even aware the competition is taking place because no awareness was created," he appealed.

Malawi stunned the ten-time champions in the opener, powered by the Chawinga sisters, with Temwa Chawinga scoring twice and Tabitha Chawinga adding another. Nigeria's Rasheedat Ajibade and Uchenna Kanu pulled goals back, but it was not enough to prevent a historic victory for the debutants.

2026 Commonwealth Games: Enekwechi delivers Nigeria's 8th gold

Team Nigeria's medal haul at the 2026 Commonwealth Games received another major boost as Chukwuebuka Enekwechi produced a championship-winning throw of 21.07m to claim the men's shot put gold medal at the Scotstoun Stadium, Glasgow.

He edged out New Zealand's Tom Walsh, who settled for silver with 21.03m, in one of the closest field event contests of the Games. England's Scott Lincoln completed the podium with a throw of 20.99m to take bronze.

Enekwechi's winning effort separated him from a world-class field, with just four centimetres dividing the top three finishers in a thrilling final. South Africa's Aiden Smith placed fourth with 20.31m, while India's Tajinderpal Singh Toor and Australia's Nick Palmer both recorded 20.27m to finish fifth and sixth respectively.

The victory adds another gold medal to Team Nigeria's athletics campaign in Glasgow, underlining Enekwechi's status as one of Africa's leading throwers. His composure under pressure ensured Nigeria finished on top in an event featuring several seasoned international competitors.



Tobi Amusan cites injury after settling for bronze in 100m hurdles at Commonwealth Games

Nigeria's sprint queen, Tobi Amusan, has blamed injury for her inability to successfully defend her women's 100m hurdles title at the ongoing 2026 Commonwealth Games.

The world record holder finished third in Thursday night's final, clocking 12.60s. Bahamas' Devynne Charlton claimed gold in 12.33s, while Jamaica's Megan Simmons took silver in 12.41s.

Amusan, who won gold in the event at the 2018 Gold Coast Games and the 2022 Birmingham Games,

revealed that she suffered a training injury that hampered her performance. "I had a pretty bad fall at training camp, so I have been a bit concerned about my knee coming into this meet. But I am just thankful I was able to hold it together and get on the podium once again," she said.

Despite the setback, Amusan's podium finish adds another medal to Nigeria's tally at the Games, underscoring her resilience and determination to compete at the highest level.

WAFU B U20 AFCON: Super Eagles Coach commends Flying Eagles after Togo win



Super Eagles coach Eric Chelle has saluted the Flying Eagles after they rallied to beat Togo 3-0 and qualify for the semifinals of the WAFU B 2027 U20 AFCON.

The coach was in Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire, to watch the Nigeria U20s in action.

The Flying Eagles were held to a scoreless draw in the first half, before they came back to score thrice after the break.

"The first half was difficult for Nigeria because Togo have a good team, who started to play with the ball and it was difficult for us,"

he reported.

"In the second half, the coach asked the boys to make high pressure on the team, they did. They played well in the second half, they put a lot of pressure on Togo, got the ball high on the pitch, got a lot of chances to score goals and they did."

"I was happy with what I saw in the second half."

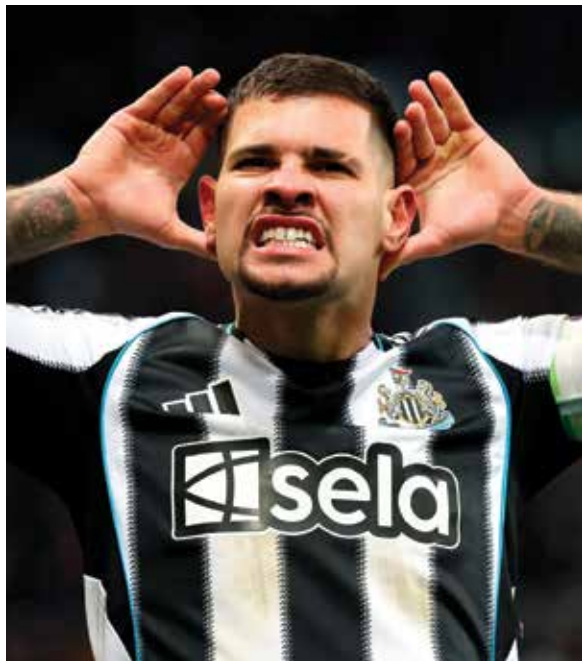
He said he is big fan, who followed the Flying Eagles when they were preparing in Abuja.

He also disclosed that he hopes to put some of the players who have impressed "directly on our database".

Arsenal confident of signing Bruno Guimaraes

Arsenal are confident of landing Bruno Guimaraes this summer. The Gunners earmarked the Newcastle man as a potential option and have been courting him all summer. However, the departure of Eddie Howe looks likely to work in Arsenal's favour, with confidence high in North London.

Guimaraes has been earmarked as a target as Mikel Arteta wants to strengthen his midfield options. Arsenal have never defended a Premier League crown and Arteta is keen to become the first manager at the club to do that. Newcastle have already lost Anthony Gordon and Sandro Tonali this summer.



UEFA nations back World Cup boycott over FIFA proposal

All 55 UEFA member associations have reportedly voted unanimously to support a boycott of FIFA tournaments in protest against the world football governing body's proposed investment structure for the FIFA World Cup. According to report, the decision was reached during an emergency online meeting held by UEFA members on Thursday. The meeting was convened to discuss FIFA's proposal to establish the FIFA Forward Enterprise, a planned \$20 billion subsidiary that would manage the FIFA World Cup and other major competitions. Under the proposal, up to 20 per cent of the new company could be sold to external investors. Following deliberations, the 55 UEFA members reportedly agreed unanimously to boycott all FIFA competitions, including the men's FIFA World Cup, the Women's World Cup and the FIFA Club World Cup. The reported vote represents a significant escalation in tensions between UEFA and FIFA over the proposed restructuring of the commercial operations surrounding football's biggest tournaments.



English FA introduces minimum 10-match ban for discrimination offences

Ahead of the 2026/2027 league season, the English Football Association has introduced tougher punishments for discriminatory offences, with players found guilty set to receive a minimum 10-match suspension. The revised disciplinary measures apply to breaches of FA Rule E3.2, which covers misconduct involving references to ethnic origin, colour, race, nationality, religion, sex, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or disability. The tougher sanctions will also apply to managers and individuals in the technical area. Previously, punishments for aggravated breaches ranged from six to 12 matches. Under the updated regulations, 10 matches will now serve as the standard minimum suspension. The FA said the changes form part of its commitment to creating a game free from discrimination. "While significant progress has been made in recent years, discriminatory conduct continues to be a challenge across the game," an FA statement read. "Enhanced measures are necessary to tackle this abhorrent conduct."

The governing body also confirmed that regulatory commissions will have the power to impose bans longer than 10 matches where there are significant aggravating factors. A reduced suspension of at least six matches may still be handed down if there are mitigating circumstances or if an individual admits the offence at the earliest opportunity. However, six matches will no longer be the standard minimum sanction. The FA added that repeat offenders found guilty of two or more aggravated breaches

on separate occasions could face suspensions exceeding 12 matches. In particularly serious cases, time-based bans of any length may also be imposed as the governing body steps up its fight against discrimination in football.

NLO boss Shola Ogunnowo offers study scholarships to Nigeria sports journalists

Chief Operating Officer, COO, of the Nationwide League One, NLO, Olushola Ogunnowo, has offered study scholarships to selected Sports Writers to study Sports Journalism at a private university in London, United Kingdom. The scholarship offer is to assist members of Sports Writers Association of Nigeria, SWAN, to proceed to undertake Level 5 International Study Programme in the October 2026 cohort of the El Roi London University. SWAN President, Mr Isaiah Benjamin, who confirmed the development, in a statement through the Association's Secretary-General Amb. Ikenna Okonkwo, Thursday, said the names of the beneficiaries have been forwarded to the appropriate quarters for further action.

He said, "We appreciate this gesture and gladdens our hearts. This will no doubt go a long way to help our members to improve their skills, it is important to note that we are committed towards improving the professional capacity of our members. "Our doors are always open to welcome any form of support that will improve the working skills of our members, we want to specially thank Shola Ogunnowo for this unforgettable gesture." The President of SWAN noted that plans are also underway to partner individual and corporate bodies to organise an expanded capacity building for members in parts of the country.

Real Madrid agree deal to sell two players



Real Madrid have agreed a double deal to sell both Gonzalo Garcia and Cesar Palacios to Fulham. According to report the Premier League side will pay a combined fee of £42.3m (€50m) for the duo. Both Garcia and Palacios came through Real Madrid's academy. Garcia, a 22-year-old striker, who was top scorer at the Club World Cup last summer, is set to move for around £34m. Meanwhile, Palacios, an 18-year-old midfielder who made his senior debut for Real Madrid in January, is costing Fulham around £8.5m. New Fulham head coach, Alvaro Arbeloa, has been a driving force behind these two deals, as he is familiar with both players from his time at Real Madrid as first-team coach and working in the academy.

Viewpoint

\$40bn net reserves, record wealth, relentless poverty: Who is Nigeria's economy serving today?

BY BLAISE UDUNZE

No doubt, it was a welcome announcement that Nigeria's net foreign exchange (FX) reserves have surged by an astonishing 1,233 percent from about \$3 billion to over \$40 billion. This would ordinarily be the kind of economic milestone that inspires optimism, coupled with gross external reserves of about \$52.52 billion, which are sufficient to finance roughly 11 months of imports of goods and services. Penultimate week, the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Olayemi Cardoso, has understandably presented the development at the end of the 306th meeting of the apex bank's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) as evidence that its reforms are working.

It is no surprise that around the same period, one would say that another important economic event occurred with the government sharing more money than ever before with the federal, state, and local governments, as the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) distributed a record N2.55 trillion, representing an increase of N250 billion over the N2.3 trillion shared in the preceding month.

Of course, the official figures are impressive numbers. Yes, anyone would conclude that the economy is becoming stronger, more stable and better positioned for growth. While this suggests stronger public finances, it also raises the question of whether these larger allocations are producing tangible improvements in the lives of ordinary Nigerians. More interesting is that another set of figures tells a completely different story.

According to the World Bank's newly approved Country Partnership Framework for Nigeria, 61 per cent of Nigerians now live below the poverty line, while about 79 per cent are either poor or vulnerable to falling into poverty. More than 139 million Nigerians live below the poverty line. Over 86 million people lack access to electricity, while millions of young Nigerians enter the labour market every year with little prospect of decent employment.

The contradiction could not be starker. If reserves are rising, government revenues are increasing and governments at all levels are receiving record allocations, why are the lives of ordinary Nigerians becoming more difficult?

This is the question policymakers must answer not with statistics, but with tangible improvements in the lives of citizens. If government agencies engineering these figures must know, these are not merely economic statistics; they are the lived realities by which citizens judge any government.

Foreign exchange reserves are not an economic trophy. They are a means to an end. Strong reserves are expected to stabilise the currency, reassure investors, strengthen the country's ability to withstand external shocks and create an enabling environment for investment, production and employment.

But reserves alone do not feed families nor would they reduce their housing rents. They do not lower transport fares. They do not reduce school fees. They do not make healthcare affordable. Nor do they automatically create jobs.

Ultimately, this is to say that the success of macroeconomic reforms must be measured not by the strength of the CBN's balance sheet but by the wellbeing of the Nigerian people.

Historically, unlike our dear country, countries that consistently build substantial foreign exchange reserves do so on the back of strong economic fundamentals. The fact is that they maintain sustained trade surpluses, export diversified products, attract large volumes of long-term foreign direct investment (FDI), develop globally competitive manufacturing industries and continuously improve productivity.

Nigeria, unfortunately, still struggles on nearly all these fronts. The country's export earnings remain overwhelmingly dependent on crude oil. Non-oil exports remain relatively insignificant. Value-added manufacturing exports are weak. Another area that raises concern is agriculture, which continues to export mostly raw commodities rather than higher-value processed products despite being known previously as the country's mainstay. With all these so-called developments, Nigeria still imports refined petroleum products, machinery, pharmaceuticals, industrial inputs and even food that



could be produced locally.

This naturally raises an uncomfortable but legitimate question that requires an answer. Yes, it would be necessary to ask: How exactly has Nigeria grown and accumulated over \$40 billion in net foreign exchange reserves without the structural fundamentals that typically support such reserve growth?

The apex bank has continued to credit exchange-rate reforms, improved transparency, stronger investor confidence and increased diaspora remittances. Well, it would be said that these achievements deserve recognition.

However, they do not completely explain the scale or more importantly, the sustainability of the reserve accumulation.

Nigeria has not consistently recorded the large trade surpluses associated with countries that rapidly accumulate reserves. Oil production remains below historical capacity. Export diversification remains limited. Ease of doing business continues to be constrained by multiple taxation, infrastructure deficits, insecurity, policy uncertainty, logistics bottlenecks and unreliable electricity.

Without addressing these structural deficiencies, reserve accumulation risks becoming more financial than productive.

Equally important is the question of foreign direct investment. Governor Cardoso has argued that improved macroeconomic stability is attracting foreign investors. That may well be true. But confidence alone does not build factories.

The real question is how much fresh FDI has actually entered Nigeria's productive sectors? How much has gone into manufacturing? How much into agro-processing? How much into export-oriented industries capable of generating sustainable foreign exchange earnings and creating jobs?

If reserve growth is being driven largely by short-term portfolio investments attracted by high interest rates rather than long-term productive investment, then Nigeria remains vulnerable. Portfolio investors can exit as quickly as they entered whenever global financial conditions change.

The unarguable fact is that foreign direct investment, by contrast, creates factories, expands production, develops supply chains and creates lasting employment. Nigeria desperately needs more of the latter.

The CBN also points to diaspora remittances as a growing source of reserve accumulation, projecting inflows of approximately \$1 billion every month before the end of the year. Again, this is encouraging.

Again, the country will not be tired of asking questions because several of these questions deserve closer examination. How much of these remittances represent genuinely new inflows rather than funds previously routed through informal channels? Come to think of

it, how much of these remittances finance productive investments instead of household consumption? Can diaspora remittances realistically become a permanent substitute for export competitiveness?

No economy has ever industrialised on remittances alone. A nation cannot sustainably depend on the sacrifices of its citizens abroad while failing to create opportunities for them at home.

Beyond the reserve figures lies another troubling contradiction. This is more disturbing because every month, FAAC distributes unprecedented sums to governments across Nigeria. Yet again, with daily regret, the average Nigerian struggles with deteriorating public services.

Honestly speaking, it has become so frustrating that the majority of the people who yearn for pleasant or attractive experiences are struggling as roads remain poor, public hospitals remain overstretched, schools continue to decline, electricity remains unreliable, water infrastructure remains inadequate, youth unemployment remains widespread. Worst still, think of the cases as the nation continues to grapple with rising inflation, worsening poverty, declining purchasing power, struggling businesses and persistent insecurity.

One major contradiction is that if revenues continue rising while poverty deepens, then one unavoidable question must be asked: Where is the money going? Another pertinent question: How can the citizens be surrounded by water and still suffer from thirst or soap lather in their eyes?

This has been the predominant worry in the minds of many even as the World Bank itself acknowledges this disconnect. While praising recent macroeconomic reforms for improving fiscal stability, strengthening foreign reserves and restoring investor confidence, it concludes emphatically that the gains have not translated into meaningful improvements in living standards.

Ironically, despite the claims of declining inflation, it continues to erode purchasing power. Social protection remains weak. Most Nigerians remain trapped in low-productivity informal employment.

One contradicting and astonishing step taken recently is nowhere more evident than in the Central Bank's monetary policy. Consider this that, despite a marginal decline in headline inflation to 15.91 percent in June 2026, the Monetary Policy Committee retained the benchmark Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) at 26.5 percent, alongside a 45 percent Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) for commercial banks.

The decision reflects understandable caution. The CBN remains concerned that escalating geopolitical tensions in the Middle East could increase global energy prices, worsen imported inflation and reverse recent gains in price stability.

From a monetary policy perspective, this caution is defensible. But from the standpoint of businesses and

households, the consequences are profound. An interest rate of 26.5 per cent inevitably translates into prohibitively expensive bank lending.

The ripple and adverse effects have led to manufacturers struggling to finance expansion. Another tough aspect is seeing the small and medium-sized enterprises, the backbone of employment generation, find access to affordable credit increasingly difficult. Entrepreneurs postpone investments. Factories delay expansion. Potential employers reduce hiring. Economic growth slows.

Ironically, while it is understandable that high interest rates may help stabilise inflation and attract foreign portfolio inflows that support reserves, it should be made known that they simultaneously suppress domestic investment, production and job creation.

In other words, the same policies helping strengthen the country's macroeconomic indicators may also be constraining the real economy. Even the celebrated decline in inflation deserves closer scrutiny.

The national inflation rate may have eased marginally to 15.91 per cent, but this national average masks severe hardship across much of the country, which continues to create perpetual pain.

How best can this be figured out if data from the National Bureau of Statistics show that 19 states and the Federal Capital Territory recorded inflation rates exceeding 30 per cent, with Niger State above 42 percent and Kogi State exceeding 41 per cent?

Food inflation continues to rise, driven by increases in the prices of tomatoes, pepper, beef, yams, garri and other staple foods.

Businesses themselves remain unconvinced. The Organised Private Sector has welcomed the marginal moderation in inflation but insists that prices remain painfully high for both consumers and businesses.

Leaders of small business associations argue that market realities tell a different story from headline statistics. For millions of Nigerians, inflation is not measured by percentages. It is measured by empty shopping baskets. By reduced meal portions. By businesses shutting their doors. By families withdrawing children from school. By postponed medical treatments.

From a theoretical standpoint, macroeconomic stability is undoubtedly necessary. Without it, sustainable development is impossible. But it would also be agreed that macroeconomic stability alone is not sufficient. It can be argued further that economic reforms must eventually improve household incomes, reduce poverty, expand productive employment and raise living standards.

Otherwise, they risk becoming reforms that look impressive in economic reports but remain invisible in everyday life.

The truth remains that with the current situation, Nigeria therefore stands at a critical pivotal moment and the decisions taken now will determine its future.

The current reserve position should not become a destination for celebration but a foundation for deeper structural transformation. The country must diversify exports beyond crude oil. Strengthen manufacturing. Promote value-added agricultural exports. Improve electricity supply. Reduce the cost of doing business. Expand logistics infrastructure. Attract long-term productive investment.

In addition, support local industries with affordable financing. Strengthen institutions. Improve governance and ensure greater accountability for public spending. Only then will rising reserves translate into rising prosperity. Only then will record FAAC allocations produce visible development. Only then will macroeconomic stability become household stability.

The ultimate measure of economic success is not the number of dollars held in the Central Bank's vaults. It is whether parents can afford school fees and housing rent. Whether young graduates can find decent jobs. Whether businesses can borrow, produce and expand. Whether families can afford food without sacrificing nutrition. Whether citizens feel that economic growth includes them.

Until those questions receive positive answers, one uncomfortable question will continue to linger. Who is Nigeria's Economy Serving Today?

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