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DTN@100 Heroes Awards Announces 29 Winners

● Opens Public Voting for Financial Innovation, Nat'l Devt & Sustainable Honours



Jim Ovia



Gov. Hope Uzodinma



Mrs. Folorunsho Alakija



Aliko Dangote



SGF George Akume

Insecurity: FG To Fund Security Agencies To Protect Schools Nationwide — Minister

Tunde Opalana, Abuja

The Federal Government is more than ever ready to provide protective cover for schools nationwide by ensuring prompt releases of funds to security agencies tasked under the Safe Schools Initiative.

Minister of Finance and

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Motolani Oseni, Lagos

Lagos, Nigeria | July 29, 2026
The Organising Council of the Daily Times Nigeria Centenary (DTN@100) Heroes Awards has announced the winners in 26 award categories, following the successful conclusion of a nationwide public voting process that attracted thousands of verified votes from Nigerians across the country and the diaspora.

The awards, one of the flagship initiatives marking the centenary celebration of Daily Times Nigeria, recognise exceptional individuals, institutions and organisations whose leadership, innovation

and enduring contributions have shaped Nigeria's political, economic, social and corporate development.

Announcing the winners, Chairman of the DTN@100 Organising Council, Bolaji Okusaga, described the overwhelming public participation as a testament to Nigerians' desire to celebrate excellence, integrity and transformational leadership.

"The DTN@100 Heroes Awards were conceived not merely to recognise achievement, but to celebrate individuals and institutions whose leadership has created lasting value for Nigeria and a critical pipeline to

select states, organizations and individuals to be featured in the Nigeria Grand Book (National Souvenir).

The quality of nominations, the scale of public participation and the credibility of the voting process reaffirm that Nigerians are eager to honour excellence wherever it is found," he said.

He added that the awards represent one of the defining legacies of the Daily Times centenary celebration. "For one hundred years, The Daily Times has chronicled Nigeria's history

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Singer Yemi Alade: Why I Choose Birth Name Over Stage Name



DTN@100 Heroes Awards Announces 29 Winners

and celebrated the people shaping its future.

The DTN@100 Heroes Awards continue that legacy by spotlighting individuals and institutions whose vision, courage and impact have advanced national development and inspired generations. This year's honourees embody the excellence, resilience and transformative leadership that continue to move Nigeria forward."

Among the headline honourees, Mr. Jim Ovia, CON, Founder and Chairman of Zenith Bank Plc, was honoured with the Change Maker of the Century Award in recognition of his transformational contributions to Nigeria's financial services sector and national development. Mrs. Folurunsho Alakija received the prestigious Life and Legacy Award for her enduring impact on entrepreneurship, philanthropy and nation-building.

Also honoured was Senator George Akume, CON, Secretary to the Government of the Federation, who received the Public Impact Person of the Decade Award for his distinguished record of public service and national leadership.

Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, CON, CGH, former President of the African Development Bank, received the Global Impact Award,

while Alhaji Aliko Dangote, GCON, was recognised as the Business Icon of the Century. Dame Dr. Adaora Umeoji, OON, emerged Person of the Year.

In the political and legislative categories, Senator Hope Uzodinma, CON, Governor of Imo State, was recognised as Governor of the Decade, while Alhaji Mohammed Umar Bago emerged Governor of the Year. Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda was named Politician of the Year.

Within the National Assembly, Rt. Hon. Benjamin Kalu, CFR, won the Lawmaker of the Year (House of Representatives) award, while Senator Ahmed Aliyu Wadada received the Lawmaker of the Year (Senate) honour.

At the federal executive level, Barrister Festus Keyamo, SAN, was honoured as Minister of the Decade in recognition of his enduring contributions to public service and national development.

Barrister Nyesom Wike, CON, emerged Impactful Minister of the Year for his leadership and delivery of high-impact infrastructure and governance initiatives, while Dr. Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo received the Transformative Minister of the Year award for his bold reforms, innovative leadership

and transformative efforts in driving institutional renewal, service delivery and public sector transformation.

The Outstanding Governor Awards, presented across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, were won by Dr. Dauda Lawal (North West), Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed, CON (North East), Engr. Abdullahi Audu Sule (North Central), Mr. Peter Ndubuisi Mbah (South East), His Excellency, Pastor Umo Bassey Eno (South South) and Babajide Sanwo-Olu, CON (South West).

Traditional leadership was also recognised, with His Imperial Majesty Ooni Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, CFR, receiving the Community Impact Award for his outstanding contributions to community development, cultural preservation and national cohesion.

In the corporate category, Green Energy International Limited (GEIL) was honoured as the Energy Company of the Decade in recognition of its transformative contributions to Nigeria's energy sector, notably the successful delivery of the Otakikpo Onshore Crude Oil Export Terminal in record time, alongside the execution of strategic projects that have strengthened indigenous

capacity and expanded the nation's energy infrastructure.

Emadeb Energy Group was named Energy Company of the Year for its sustained investments, operational excellence and significant contributions across the upstream, midstream, downstream and power sectors, reinforcing energy security, driving industrial growth and supporting Nigeria's economic development.

MTN Nigeria Communications Plc received the Digital Company of the Decade award, while The Trade Modernisation Project emerged Transformative Project of the Year, and the Nigerian Revenue Service (NRS) was recognised as Government Agency of the Year.

Other notable winners include Mrs. Jane Egerton-Idehen of NigComSat, who received the Enterprise Award; Alhaji Bashir Adeniyi, MFR, Comptroller-General of the Nigeria Customs Service, honoured as Public Officer of the Year; and the National Council on Climate Change (NCCC), which received the Climate Responsibility Award.

Meanwhile, the Organising Council announced that public voting remains open for three additional categories—the Financial Innovation Award,

National Development Award and Sustainability Award—which commenced at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 30, 2026, and close at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, August 7, 2026.

The nominees for the Financial Innovation Award are OPay, Moniepoint, Paystack, PiggyVest, Flutterwave and VBank. For the National Development Award, nominees include Dr. Olasupo Olusi (Bank of Industry), Dr. Tony Okpanachi (Development Bank of Nigeria), Mr. Charles Odii (SMEDAN) and Ms. Jennifer Adighije (Niger Delta Power Holding Company). The Sustainability Award features ACRESA, Bank of Industry, Seplat Energy, Sahara Group, Unilever Nigeria and Sahara Holdings.

The Council further announced the close of nominations for the DTN@100 Trailblazer Award, with all successfully nominated individuals and organisations proceeding to a public voting phase. The ten nominees receiving the highest number of verified public votes will be inducted as DTN@100 Trailblazers.

According to Okusaga, the remaining voting categories provide Nigerians with another opportunity to shape the

recognition of excellence.

"These awards belong to Nigerians. Public participation is central to the credibility and integrity of the process, and we encourage Nigerians everywhere to continue participating by voting for individuals and organisations whose leadership, innovation and service are creating meaningful impact and helping to build a stronger nation."

All award recipients will be formally honoured at the DTN@100 Heroes Awards and Centenary Celebration, where they will also be inducted into the Nigerian Book of Life—a commemorative publication documenting outstanding personalities and institutions whose contributions have significantly shaped Nigeria's development over the past century.

The Organising Council reaffirmed its commitment to a transparent, credible and merit-driven selection process, noting that while public voting remains a critical component of the awards, final outcomes in the remaining categories will be determined through a combination of verified public votes and the Council's established evaluation framework.

Insecurity: FG To Fund Security Agencies To Protect Schools Nationwide — Minister

Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr Taiwo Oyedele, gave the assurance on Friday at the National Assembly.

Oyedele, who appeared before the Senate Ad-hoc Committee on the Safe Schools Initiative under the chairmanship of Senator Orji Uzor Kalu, said keeping schools safe is one of the most important responsibilities of government.

According to him, every child should be able to go to school with confidence that the nation can protect them, just as their teachers should be able to work in a secure environment."

Emphasising that school safety remained a priority for the Executive, Oyedele said, "For us in the Executive arm of government, school safety is a priority. We recognise that protecting educational institutions is an investment in Nigeria's future."

The minister disclosed that the government had already identified areas requiring improvement in the administration of the Safe Schools Initiative.

"We have identified several issues requiring attention, including the

timeliness of funding for agencies responsible for implementing the initiative, such as the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, the Department of State Services and other relevant institutions."

He explained that the government was also strengthening accountability mechanisms.

"We have equally identified measures to improve transparency and accountability because Nigerians deserve to know that public resources devoted to fighting insecurity are being properly managed."

Oyedele assured the committee of the ministry's readiness to cooperate fully with the investigation.

"On our part, we are fully committed to transparency. We will continue to work closely with the National Assembly in identifying any shortcomings and implementing the necessary reforms."

He agreed with the committee that leadership changes should not prevent accountability.

"Whether those issues occurred

before my appointment or not is secondary. As the chairman rightly observed, government is a continuum. Once we accept public office, we also accept responsibility for the institution we lead."

The minister added, "Where we discover that something was not done properly, our duty is to acknowledge it, correct it and ensure that future processes are strengthened. Ultimately, the Nigerian people should benefit from improved governance."

In his welcome address, the Chairman of the Senate Ad-hoc Committee on the Safe Schools Initiative, Senator Orji Uzor Kalu, said the committee was established following resolutions of the Senate to investigate the funding, implementation and accountability framework of the Safe Schools Initiative.

"As you are aware, this ad-hoc committee was constituted by the Senate to investigate the funding, operations and implementation of the Safe Schools Initiative. During our preliminary engagements and review of available records, the Senate identified significant

issues requiring comprehensive legislative scrutiny."

He explained that the committee was examining financial flows, operational structures and accountability mechanisms across all Ministries, Departments and Agencies involved in the initiative.

"The Ministry of Finance occupies a central position in this investigation because of its constitutional responsibility for the management of public funds. Our task is to trace financial allocations, donor contributions, disbursements and utilisation of resources dedicated to protecting our schools and ensuring a safe learning environment."

The chairman stressed that the exercise was not intended to witch-hunt any individual or institution.

"This investigation is not a witch-hunt. It is a constitutional responsibility entrusted to the National Assembly under Sections 88 and 89 of the 1999 Constitution. Our objective is to ensure financial accountability, value for money and the protection of Nigerian schoolchildren."

He said the committee expected

comprehensive information from the ministry.

"Without complete, transparent and accurate financial records from the Ministry of Finance, our assessment of the Safe Schools Initiative cannot be complete. We therefore expect robust cooperation that will enable this committee to present a comprehensive and actionable report to the Senate."

Kalu particularly commended the minister for consistently responding to invitations from the National Assembly.

"Honourable Minister, permit me to commend you publicly. Every time the Senate or any of its committees invites you, you make yourself available. That demonstrates respect for Parliament and for the Nigerian people whom this institution represents."

He continued: "This National Assembly is the home of the Nigerian people. Ministers are accountable to the citizens through Parliament. Your punctuality, humility and willingness to appear before committees have earned you the respect of senators across party

lines."

The chairman noted that although Oyedele assumed office long after many of the transactions under investigation had taken place, the principle of continuity in government required accountability.

"We recognise that you were not the Minister of Finance when many of these transactions occurred. Nevertheless, government is a continuum. Public institutions remain accountable regardless of leadership changes, and that is why this committee is carrying out its assignment."

Because of the security implications of the subject matter, Kalu announced that detailed deliberations would be held behind closed doors.

"We cannot discuss sensitive operational details in public because criminals are listening. Matters relating to the protection of our schools require confidentiality. We shall therefore proceed into an executive session where these issues can be discussed frankly.

Osun Guber: Amupitan warns electoral officers against delay, diversion of polling materials

Tunde Opalana, Abuja

Two weeks to the Osun State governorship election, the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, Prof. Joash Amupitan, SAN, on Friday warned Supervisory Presiding Officers, SPOs, to avoid delay in deployment or diversion of election materials as well as resisting political pressure from parties and candidates.

Addressing the SPOs, during a working visit to SPOs undergoing training at Ataoja School of Science in Osogbo yesterday, Prof. Amupitan charged the officers that the success of the election rests largely on their professionalism and integrity.

Pro-Fubara women group joins rainbow coalition, declares support for all APC

Amaechi Okonkwo, Port Harcourt

Rivers Women Unite for Sim (RWUS), a political pressure group loyal to the Rivers State Governor, Mininialayi Fubara has declared their support for the Nyesom Wike-led Renewed Hope Family and Rainbow Coalition in the state.

The group also declared support for the governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) Kingsley Chinda and all candidates of the party in the 2027 general elections.

The group said they have decided to align with the decision of Governor Fubara who had earlier

declared his return to the political family which produced him as governor of the state

Convener of the group, Sotonye Toby-Fulton while addressing members of the group at their monthly prayer meeting on Thursday, urged them to accept the decision in good fate and for the interest of peace in the state.

She said: "As women who have decided to be politically active, we must accept our fate.

"We'll remain united. You can't say you stand with Fubara and go at the back saying something different. This is where I stand and if you are with me, we'll continue to stand together and pray; and I'm

reiterating it because we can't pray together if we don't agree.

"So we are part of the Renewed Hope Family. We are part of it. May the good Lord make of it whatever he wills."

She thanked the women for remaining faithful to the course and praying for the peace of Rivers State. She averred that the prayers of the women contributed to averting the predicted bloodbath in the state.

"Despite anything, we haven't seen the kind of bloodshed that was predicted in Rivers State and we believe God will grant us more peace and our children won't die," she added.

Addressing the concerns of

those that may be disappointed by the decision, Toby-Fulton said the women were free to associate with other groups but warned against backstabbing the group and her leaders.

"There is freedom of association and we are free to associate but don't sell lies to the groups that you are joining. If it is not said by RWUS don't go there to say it is RWUS," she warned.

A former Rivers State chairperson of Federated Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Barr. Adata Bio-Briggs expressed satisfaction with the move by the governor, saying it will sustain the existing peace in the state.

"We are grateful that our prayers have been answered. We prayed and asked God for this peace between Governor Fubara and his leader which God has done; and as his core supporters, we believe in his vision and leadership, and so what he has done we'll follow," Bio-Briggs assured.

Mrs Atonye Green, another leader in the group said that the governor's decision to return to his leader, Nyesom Wike is the best decision for the state.

"As a woman, I'm happy because the governor has shown so much love to the women here in Rivers State, so we can't go elsewhere. We stand with him because he knows

the importance of belonging to his family again. We have seen that his decision is best for everyone in Rivers State and we just have to align and work with him," she stated.

RWUS was only group still standing with the governor after the disbandment of the Simplified Movement immediately after the return from emergency rule in the state.

However, with this declaration, all known Fubara's structures have fully aligned with the Rainbow Coalition and Renewed Hope Family led by Nyesom Wike.

- SILVER JUBILEE -



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BREAKDOWN OF THE 29 AWARDEES

S/N	Award Category	Winner
1	Change Maker of the Century	Mr. Jim Ovia, CON
2	Life and Legacy Award	Mrs. Folorunsho Alakija
3	Public Impact Person of the Decade	Senator George Akume, CON
4	Global Impact Award	Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, CON, CGH
5	Business Icon of the Century	Alhaji Aliko Dangote, GCON
6	Person of the Year	Dame Dr. Adaora Umeoji, OON
7	Governor of the Decade	Senator Hope Uzodinma, CON
8	Governor of the Year	Alhaji Mohammed Umar Bago
9	Politician of the Year	Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda
10	Lawmaker of the Year (House of Representatives)	Rt. Hon. Benjamin Kalu, CFR
11	Lawmaker of the Year (Senate)	Senator Ahmed Aliyu Wadada
12	Minister of the Decade	Barrister Festus Keyamo, SAN
13	Impactful Minister of the Year	Barrister Nyesom Wike, CON
14	Transformative Minister of the Year	Dr. Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo
15	Outstanding Governor (North West)	Dr. Dauda Lawal
16	Outstanding Governor (North East)	Senator Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed, CON
17	Outstanding Governor (North Central)	Engr. Abdullahi Audu Sule
18	Outstanding Governor (South East)	Mr. Peter Ndubuisi Mbah
19	Outstanding Governor (South South)	His Excellency, Pastor Umo Bassey Eno
20	Outstanding Governor (South West)	Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu, CON
21	Community Impact Award	His Imperial Majesty Ooni Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, CFR
22	Energy Company of the Decade	Green Energy International Limited (GEIL)
23	Energy Company of the Year	Emadeb Energy Group
24	Digital Company of the Decade	MTN Nigeria Communications Plc
25	Transformative Project of the Year	Trade Modernisation Project
26	Government Agency of the Year	Nigerian Revenue Service (NRS)
27	Enterprise Award	Mrs. Jane Egerton-Idehen
28	Public Officer of the Year	Alhaji Bashir Adeniyi, MFR
29	Climate Responsibility Award	National Council on Climate Change (NCCC)

Signed:
DTN @100 HEROES AWARDS

Mr. Bolaji Okusaga
Chairman, DTN @100 Heroes Awards
08099912629

Mrs. Stella Din-Jacob
Member

Dr. Nonny Patricia Ugboma
Member

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Troops neutralize 102 terrorists, arrest 345 others, rescue 393 kidnapped victims in July - DHQ

Andrew Orolua, Abuja

The Armed Forces of Nigeria, AFN, said on Friday that troops operational record for the month of July stands as compelling testimony of military sustained resolve to ensuring a secure environment for socio-economic stability and peace to thrive in our country.

Director of Defence Media Operation Major General Michael

Onoja who stated this during the monthly press briefing on troops activities, said over 102 terrorists and criminals were neutralized in July, while a total of 345 terrorist/criminals were arrested across the country.

He also said that 393 kidnap victims were rescued from their captives in July.

"Additionally, 57 insurgents surrendered to troops, while 59 arms and 1,811 rounds of

ammunition were recovered.

"Similarly, the overall successes recorded in the fight against crude oil theft has continued to frustrate the activities of economic saboteurs. On the whole, the AFN has significantly degraded the capabilities of criminal and terrorist across the nation, " he claimed.

The Director listed several troops operations across the six theatres of war in the country where terrorists

were neutralized and over 345 others arrested.

He was however silence on the troops' responses to the killings of 30 unarmed civilians on Monday in Naridon Village in Kamaru ward, Chawai Chiefdom ,Kauru Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Nor did he said anything about the killing on Tuesday of a DIA's Senior Intelligence officer Colonel Abdulsalam Ude by an unidentified assailants at his residence in Army

Housing Estate Kurudu, Abuja, even when these incidences have left people in fears that needs to be explain away.

On troops unwavering efforts, the director said the Chief of Defence Staff, General Olufemi Olatunbosun Oluyede, has commended their professionalism across all theatres of operation for the successes recorded during the month of July.

"The CDS specially commends

troops of the AFN and other security agencies for the synergy that culminated in the safe rescue of the 44 pupils and teachers who were tragically abducted from schools in Oriire LGA of Oyo State, on 15 May."

He added "it is imperative to note once again, that the rescue was achieved without any concession to the abductors and no quarter shall be given to perpetrators of such heinous crime, going forward."

Oriire Kidnap: Makinde sets up 8-man judicial panel

Omolara Bakare, Ibadan

Oyo State Governor, Engr. Seyi Makinde, on Friday inaugurated an 8-member Judicial Commission of Inquiry to investigate the May 15, 2026 abduction of students and teachers in the Esiele and Yawata communities of the Oriire Local Government Area.

The inauguration was held at the Executive Council Chamber, Governor's Office, Secretariat,

Agodi, Ibadan.

The panel will be chaired by retired Justice of the Court of Appeal, Prof. Mojeed Owoade.

Governor Makinde said the commission became necessary following allegations that his administration masterminded the abduction.

According to him, the independent panel was not set up to undermine security agencies but to ensure every lesson is learnt, every question

is answered, and the facts of the incident are established.

"They said I orchestrated the kidnap. The abduction of innocent children and their teachers was not merely an attack on the Ahoro, Esiele and Yawata communities. It was an attack on the right of every Nigerian child to learn in safety," Makinde stated.

He noted that while the victims were eventually rrescued, the government's responsibility extended beyond securing their

freedom. "Rescue brings relief. But the truth brings closure. Accountability and reform restore public confidence and help prevent a recurrence," the governor said. Makinde charged the commission to establish the facts of the abduction, identify institutional or operational lapses, and recommend measures to strengthen the protection of schools and communities.

"The assignment is clear: to establish the facts, identify any

lapses, and help ensure that such a tragedy never happens again," he said.

The governor gave the panel four weeks to submit its report, but said it could request an extension to ensure a thorough job. He assured the commission of the government's full support to operate independently and professionally.

Citing a personal experience, Makinde said: "My own father taught in 1959. Let's just assume

that he got kidnapped, and he was beheaded. I would never have been born. That is why we must get to the root of this."

He urged members to conduct their work with impartiality, professionalism and strict adherence to the law.

"Your work must be guided only by the evidence, the law and the public interest. Nigerians expect nothing less than an impartial, thorough and credible process," Makinde added.

Makinde inaugurates APM campaign council

Omolara Bakare

Oyo State Governor and Presidential Candidate of the Allied People's Movement (APM), Engr Seyi Makinde, on Friday inaugurated the party's Oyo State Presidential and Governorship Campaign Council, charging members to build an all-inclusive structure capable of uniting party members and other political stakeholders ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Speaking at the inauguration held at the Conference Room of the Governor's Office, Secretariat, Agodi, Ibadan, Makinde said the campaign council, being the apex leadership of the party in the state, must immediately begin integrating members of APM with defectors and supporters

from other political platforms.

He recalled that the coalition which brought him to power in 2019 was made up of politicians from different parties, noting that the same model would be adopted under the APM.

"Even in 2018 and 2017, the PDP had most of us from different parties. We came from the SDP, some people came from Accord and others from different political backgrounds. We all came together inside the PDP and eventually used the platform to contest and win the election. So, what we are doing now is not new," Makinde said.

The governor, who described the campaign council as the apex leadership of the party in Oyo State, urged members to reach out to all stakeholders and avoid

running an exclusive campaign structure.

"One thing this apex leadership must do is to have an all-inclusive campaign council. Go round and tap our leaders. Reach out to APM members and ensure that they are fully integrated. Don't make it another PDP affair.

"Yes, we hold the structure, but they own the platform. We must also give them some slack. When nobody wanted to associate with APM, they stayed with the party. This is a major task for you. We need to ensure that the structure and the platform are fully integrated," he said.

Makinde explained that his political camp moved to the APM after concluding that the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) would not be available as a viable

platform for the 2027 elections.

"We had to move into APM when it became apparent that the PDP was not going to be ready as a platform for us to contest the general election. Today, those claiming ownership of the PDP have all declared where they stand. They are supporting the APC," he stated.

According to him, the APM offers Nigerians a credible political alternative capable of sustaining the country's democratic ideals.

"For those of us in APM, our mission is to give Nigerians a real option, not an option that looks like an illusion where the more you look, the less you see.

"We want a political environment that reflects what our founding fathers stood for—

federalism and genuine multi-party democracy, not a one-party system that merely serves as an appendage of the government," the governor added.

Makinde urged members of the council to complete the integration process without delay, saying the commencement of formal campaigns was only days away.

"You have to do this within the shortest possible time. According to the INEC timetable, the campaign should begin around August 17 or 19. So, you have less than a week to go round the state, bring all our people together and get them fully prepared," he said.

The governor announced the Executive Chairman of the Oyo State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Dr

Nureni Adeniran, as Oyo State Coordinator of the APM 2027 Presidential Campaign and Director-General of the Oyo State Governorship Campaign Council.

Other principal officers are Hon Saheed Arowosaye as Deputy State Coordinator of the APM Presidential Campaign; Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Matters, Hon Demola Ojo, as Deputy Director-General for Oyo South Senatorial District; Dr Femi Ojo as Deputy Director-General for Oyo Central; Alhaji Siju Lawal as Deputy Director-General for Oyo North; Hon Ramata Agberemi-Dabo as Director of the Women's Wing; and Hon Kazeem Bolariwa as Director of the Youth Wing.

Nigeria's diversity an asset, not weakness, Bauchi Gov says, urges faith leaders to shun hate speech

Samuel Luka, Bauchi

Bauchi State Governor, Senator Bala Mohammed, has said Nigeria's ethnic and religious diversity is the country's greatest strength for development and stability, and must not be allowed to become a source of division.

The governor, represented by his Principal Private Secretary, Alhaji Hashimu Yakubu Kumbala, stated this on Thursday while delivering the keynote address at the 9th Interfaith Conference held at the International Conference Centre, Bauchi.

The conference, themed "Non-Violent Elections: The Role of Faith and Traditional Leaders in

Nigeria," was organized by the Interfaith Dialogue Forum For Peace, IDFP, in collaboration with the International Institute of Peace. It drew religious leaders, traditional rulers, youth groups, civil society organizations and government officials.

"We live in an ethnically and religiously heterogeneous country. Therefore, the need to understand and respect our differences for social harmony, political stability, and economic prosperity cannot be overemphasized," Mohammed said.

He warned that divisive politics and mutual distrust continue to threaten national progress, and

urged religious and traditional leaders to take a leading role in ensuring violence-free elections in 2027.

"No meaningful development can take place where mutual mistrust and discord prevail," he said.

According to the governor, "Sustainable progress thrives only where harmony, justice and peaceful coexistence prevail."

Bala Mohammed defined peace as "the presence of harmony, justice, and shared progress," and reminded participants that Islam and Christianity preach the same core values.

"Our major religions teach us the sanctity of human life, love

for one another, and care for the vulnerable," he noted.

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

Mohammed cautioned faith leaders against provocative language, describing their words as powerful tools that "hold the power to ignite anger or calm tension."

To strengthen peaceful coexistence, he proposed the establishment of community early-warning networks where

youth and elders from different faiths meet regularly to identify and resolve tensions before they escalate.

He also advocated joint development projects such as health clinics, education programs, and self-help groups that serve citizens irrespective of religious background.

"As a government, we have invested in peace-building through workshops and seminars for religious and community leaders," he said.

"To a large extent, these have promoted tolerance and mutual trust. We have also prioritized the inclusion of various segments of society in our policies and

programs," He said.

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

He said, "Nigeria's diversity is not a weakness. It is an asset. If we work separately, we remain fragile. But if we lock hands — imams, pastors, Christians and Muslims together — we create an unbreakable bond of peace, security, and true national development."

Governor Mohammed charged participants to leave the conference committed to building a prosperous future for every child in Nigeria.

FG moves to end military doctors' shortage, sets 2026 take-off for Armed Forces Medical College

David Aduge Ani, Abuja

The Federal Government has moved to tackle the shortage of medical personnel in the Nigerian Armed Forces, by inaugurating a Technical Working Group to fast-track the establishment of the Armed Forces College of Medicine and Health Sciences for the commencement of academic activities in the 2026 academic session.

Minister of Education, Dr Maruf Olaturunji Alausa, who inaugurated the committee in Abuja on Friday, said the proposed institution would create a dedicated pipeline for the training of doctors, nurses and other specialised healthcare professionals to meet the unique medical and operational needs of military personnel.

"We cannot continue to leave the brave men and women who defend our nation without a sustainable system for training the healthcare professionals they require.

Neither can we continue to expect the Armed Forces to compete with the rest of the country for the limited number

of doctors graduating from our universities," Alausa said.

The Minister said the inauguration of the Technical Working Group followed the Federal Government's approval for the establishment of the college and represented a transition from policy approval to implementation.

He said the proposed institution would complement the Federal Government's wider expansion of medical education across the country.

Alausa disclosed that annual admissions into Medicine and Dentistry had increased from about 5,000 students before the current administration to 10,405, with the government targeting at least 20,000 admissions within the next two years through the accreditation of additional Colleges of Medicine.

He also disclosed that annual enrolment in nursing education had risen from about 28,000 to nearly 120,000 students nationwide, exceeding the administration's target.

The Minister commended the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria for maintaining

professional standards that had helped Nigerian nurses gain international recognition.

However, he said the healthcare requirements of the Armed Forces went beyond conventional medical training and required a purpose-built institution with programmes tailored to military realities.

Alausa directed the Technical Working Group to prioritise, alongside Medicine, specialised disciplines such as Occupational Therapy, Prosthetics and Orthotics, Speech Therapy and other programmes critical to the treatment and rehabilitation of military personnel recovering from combat-related injuries.

"This institution is not being established to compete with conventional universities. It is being established to make the Armed Forces self-sufficient in producing the healthcare professionals they require. Every programme should answer one simple question: Does the Armed Forces need it? If the answer is yes, then it should be prioritised," he said.

The Minister said the Technical Working Group comprised

representatives of the Federal Ministry of Education, Ministry of Defence, National Universities Commission, Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria, Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria, Nigerian Defence Academy and other strategic institutions.

He said the committee would be responsible for developing the academic curriculum, integrating academic and military training, coordinating accreditation, facilitating the appointment of key academic personnel and working with the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board to ensure the college begins academic activities in the 2026 academic session.

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facilitating the appointment of key academic personnel and working with the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board to ensure the college begins academic activities in the 2026 academic session.

Alausa disclosed that he had already engaged the JAMB Registrar to facilitate the inclusion of the college on the admissions portal.

He also directed the National Universities Commission to fast-track resource verification and accreditation processes to enable the admission of the institution's first military medical cadets in 2026.

Providing an update on the proposed college, the Director-General of the Ministry of Defence Health Implementation Programme and Chairman of the Technical Working Group, Brigadier General Dr Idris Babatunde Solebo, said the institution was being developed along the lines of the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences in the United States.

Solebo said the model would integrate military and academic training from admission through graduation, equipping

medical cadets with specialised competencies in battlefield medicine, Tactical Combat Casualty Care and other military medical skills.

He disclosed that the college would be located in the vicinity of the 68 Nigerian Army Reference Hospital in Lagos, where existing infrastructure would provide the foundation for immediate take-off.

Solebo said the Armed Forces currently faces shortages of medical personnel, making the proposed college critical to strengthening military healthcare and ensuring a sustainable supply of doctors and other specialised professionals.

The proposed college is expected to strengthen the medical capacity of the Armed Forces by producing healthcare professionals trained not only in conventional medicine but also in the specialised fields required to treat and rehabilitate personnel exposed to combat and other high-risk military operations.

Wike orders demolition of suspected criminal hideout near city gate

Ukpono Ukpong

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, has ordered the immediate demolition of a shanty settlement near Karmajiji in the Kukwaba District of Abuja, which he identified as a suspected hideout for criminals operating within the nation's capital.

Wike issued the directive on Friday after leading security operatives to inspect the settlement, located close to the City Gate, following a meeting of the FCT Security Committee.

The minister said the decision was part of measures to strengthen security in Abuja and prevent criminal elements from using unregulated settlements as safe havens to evade security agencies.

According to Wike, intelligence

reports available to the FCT Administration indicated that suspected criminals often retreated to the settlement after allegedly carrying out attacks in different parts of the Federal Capital Territory.

He expressed concern over the difficulty of identifying and monitoring people living in the settlement, warning that its continued existence posed a serious security threat to residents and the wider capital city.

"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 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.



Bayelsa govt reaffirms commitment to healthcare as NMA seeks stronger medical services

Amos Odhe, Yenagoa

The Bayelsa State Government has reaffirmed its commitment to sustained investment in healthcare infrastructure, medical personnel, technology and emergency response systems to improve access to quality healthcare services across the state.

Governor Douye Diri stated this on Thursday at the 30th Annual General Meeting and Scientific Conference of the Nigerian Medical Association, NMA, Bayelsa State Branch, held at the DSP Alamieyeseigha Memorial Banquet Hall, Government House, Yenagoa.

The Governor, who was represented by the Deputy Governor, Dr. Peter Akpe, described healthcare as a major priority of his administration and a critical foundation for human development, productivity and shared prosperity.

Governor Diri said the state

government had continued to make strategic investments in the health sector, including the completion and equipping of the 500-bed Bayelsa Medical University Teaching Hospital, the establishment of a Haemodialysis and General Outpatient Centre, and the expansion of the state health insurance scheme.

He also highlighted the government's partnership with Zipline to deploy drones for the delivery of vaccines, essential medicines and other critical medical supplies to healthcare facilities and communities, particularly those in hard-to-reach areas.

The Governor acknowledged challenges in retaining skilled health workers, improving healthcare services in remote communities and enhancing the welfare of medical personnel, assuring the NMA of continued collaboration and openness to professional recommendations.

His words: "The Prosperity Administration of Senator Douye Diri recognizes healthcare, not only as a social obligation, but also as a foundation for human development, productivity and shared prosperity.

"For this administration, political will in the health system is demonstrated through concrete commitment to sustained investments.

"However, government is prepared to receive constructive professional counsel that will strengthen reforms, improve standards, promote ethical leadership and expand equitable access to high quality healthcare.

"Attaining 30 years is an institutional milestone. It is a clear dedication to professional organization sustained by advocacy and commitment to the health and well-being of our people. I salute the founding members of this branch of the NMA, its successive

leaders and the present executive council for preserving the integrity and relevance of this association."

In his remark, the Commissioner for Health, Professor Seiyefa Brisbane, said the state government was building an integrated and resilient healthcare system aimed at increasing life expectancy and improving the quality of life of residents.

The Commissioner also said the government had approved improved welfare packages for healthcare workers and appealed to the striking Doctors at the Federal Medical Centre, FMC, Yenagoa to immediately suspend their industrial action, emphasising that industrial action should be considered only after all avenues for resolving disputes had been exhausted.

Declaring the conference open, Chairman of the occasion and former Deputy Governor of Bayelsa State, Rear Admiral Gboribogh

John Jonah, Rtd, called for increased investment in healthcare infrastructure, modern medical technology and the continuous training of health professionals.

He also urged the adoption of Artificial Intelligence to support healthcare workers, reduce clinical workload and improve service delivery without replacing human judgement.

In her virtual keynote address, the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health and former Deputy Governor of Rivers State, Dr. Ipalibo Harry Banigo, who commended the Bayelsa State Government for its investment in healthcare and stressed the need for equitable access to quality medical services.

Also participating virtually, the National Programme Manager of the National Emergency Medical Services and Ambulance System, Dr. Emuren Doubra, called for stronger emergency response and

communication infrastructure.

Earlier in his welcoming address, the Chairman of the NMA, Bayelsa State Branch, Dr. Wilcox Izebaya, acknowledged the contributions of the state government to healthcare delivery in the state and called for greater investment in specialist medical personnel, advanced diagnostic facilities, emergency medical response systems and critical care services.

The conference, themed, "Healthcare Leadership and Political Will: Catalyst for Reform, Global Competitiveness and Equitable Access," was attended by the Secretary to the State Government, Prof. Nimibofa Ayawei, the Head of Service, Dr. Wisdom Sawyer, the Chairman House Committee on Health, Dr. Godbless Oyinke, the Provost, College of Medical Science, Federal University, Otuoke, Prof. Dennis Alagoa, among other dignitaries.

500 patients benefit from seadogs medical mission in Rivers

Amos Odhe, Yenagoa

Over 500 persons from the Omuakwa Community in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State have benefited from a medical mission initiated by the National Association of Seadogs (Pirates Confraternity).

The NAS said the outreach was part of activities marking its 50th Konverge in Port Harcourt, the State capital.

Speaking at the sideline of the medical outreach held at the Omuakwa Primary Health Care Centre on Friday, Vice-President, NAS, Dr. Patrick Briggs, described the activity as part of its quarterly meetings.

Insisting that one of the ideals of NAS was offering humanitarian services, he said: "One of our philosophies is for humanistic ideals. That's part of what we believe and aspire to as members of the National Association of Seadogs. So, one way for us to do that is by having this medical mission to help people in the community who don't have easy access to medical help".

Briggs said their motivating factor for the missions was to see the downtrodden get necessary help when needed.

He said: "We are always looking out for the downtrodden in the society. We are always looking out for the people who don't have. And so that ideal drives us. We know

medical can be very expensive, especially in the rural areas.

"So, what we do is, we look at this and say, how can we contribute to the society? So, we have these medical missions regularly as a way of contributing our little quota to the society at large, to help the downtrodden access medical help".

Briggs explained that the association used its resources and support from a few organizations to run the missions.

In his remarks, the Chief Medical Officer of NAS Medical Mission, Dr. Odoemene Chiazor, explained that the mission had been in existence for over 13 years.

He said that they carried out general medical review in every

community they visited and attended to cases within their capacity while referring others that needed secondary care to appropriate facilities.

He said: "So, what we try to do when we come is community-based healthcare. We try to do general review based on anything they present. If we see any case we cannot manage, that maybe needs secondary care or tertiary care, we refer them to the tertiary institution. But, those primary level, we take care of them here and support them, counsel them, and whatever else we can do for them".

In his speech, Prof. Prince Chinedu Mmom, Vice-Chancellor of the Federal University of

Environment Technology (FUET), Ogoni, expressed gratitude to the association for bringing the mission to his community.

He said the mission afforded many, who could not afford medical care the opportunity to be treated of their ailments.

He said: "It's a feeling of joy that this outreach programme is holding in my community. I'm so excited because if you look at the crowd here, you will see so many people who are in need of one medical attention or the other.

"So, I commend the Seadogs for bringing this medical mission to my community. I'm so excited, and of course, I know that many people will benefit from this program

today and at least improve their health conditions".

Earlier, Community Development Committee (CDC) Chairman of the community, Ajoku Prince expressed his appreciation for the gesture and called on other organisations to emulate the Seadogs in reaching out to the unreached in the society.

He said: "Considering what we are seeing here today, considering the turnout of people on this very wonderful gesture, I want to say that it should be emulated by other associations, to ensure that they reach out to people, to ensure that they see to the need of people around them."

Tinubu's road infrastructure stimulating economic activities, addressing hunger challenges - Umahi

Peter Okutu, Abakaliki

The Minister of Works, Senator David Umahi, Friday revealed that President Bola Tinubu's massive investments in road infrastructure is creating employment opportunities, stimulating economic activities and addressing the challenge of hunger across the country.

Umahi stated this while inspecting the ongoing Calabar-Ebonyi-Benue-Nasarawa-Abuja Superhighway project at Onueke in Ezza South Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

The Minister said the President's infrastructure agenda is generating jobs for thousands of Nigerians through direct construction activities and businesses along project corridors, stressing that the economic impact extended beyond

road construction.

"When people talk about hunger in this country, they should understand that the activities being created by the infrastructural development of the President are a catalyst for addressing that challenge," Umahi said.

"You can see the number of people working on the reinforcement section alone. You go to the project yards and see the number of workers employed.

"Along this corridor, people are selling food, supplying chippings, supplying sand and rendering different services."

He added that the introduction of reinforced concrete pavement on major federal highways was boosting local industries by increasing demand for locally produced construction materials.

"The introduction of reinforced

concrete pavement is not only about durability; it is also important for our economic revolution because virtually nothing is imported. Cement manufacturers are increasing production, making more profits and employing more Nigerians," he said.

Umahi urged Nigerians to exercise patience with the Tinubu administration, noting that decades of infrastructure deficits will not be corrected within a few years.

"The President is making very serious efforts. Everything cannot be corrected in three years. People should acknowledge the giant strides he is making in different sectors of the economy," he said.

He appealed to media organisations to give greater visibility to ongoing Federal Government projects, particularly in the South-East.

"I am not asking you to report what we are not doing. Report what we are doing because the people of the South-East need to know what the President is doing in the region," he said.

The Minister further described the Calabar-Abuja Superhighway as a transformative project that would enhance regional integration, reduce travel time and stimulate economic development across communities along its route.

Earlier, the Acting Federal Controller of Works in Ebonyi State, Engineer Maxwell Oko, said the section of the highway being handled by MSS Infriouest International Limited was awarded at a cost of 454 billion.

According to him, construction has attained 39.12 per cent completion, with work progressing steadily on both carriageways.

"We are standing at kilometre 34.972 of the Calabar-Ebonyi-Benue-Nasarawa-Abuja Superhighway. The project has reached 39.12 per cent completion," Oko said.

Also speaking, the Project Manager of the Trans-Sahara Highway, Engineer Mohamed Mostapha, said work was progressing simultaneously on both sections of the road, with earthworks, stabilisation and reinforcement continuing in line with the project's execution schedule.

"As the Federal Controller has stated, we have completed about 39 per cent of the project. Earthworks, stabilisation and reinforcement are ongoing across the alignment," he said.

In her remarks, the Senior Special Assistant to the President

on Community Engagement (South-East), Barrister Chioma Nweze, commended President Bola Tinubu for ongoing infrastructure development in the region, saying the projects were opening up rural communities, improving access to healthcare and expanding economic opportunities.

"I want to thank the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for what he is doing in the South-East. These roads are opening communities, improving access to hospitals and bringing the dividends of democracy closer to our people," Nweze said.

She also urged students from the region to take advantage of the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND), noting that the initiative had made tertiary education more accessible to young Nigerians.

Police arrest one over fatal attack linked to witchcraft allegation in Bauchi

Samuel Luka

The Bauchi State Police Command has arrested one suspect in connection with a deadly attack in Garin Malam Village, Gamawa Local Government Area, that claimed one life and left three others injured.

SP Nafiu Habib, the Police Public Relations Officer, said in a statement

on Friday that the incident occurred in the early hours of July 28, 2026, at about 2:28 a.m.

According to the police, a 45-year-old resident of the village reported the matter on July 29 at about 8:30 a.m. He alleged that Garba Daudu, 35, conspired with Ya'u Garba and Musa, all of Garin Malam, to break into the home of Audu Sabo, 38.

The attackers reportedly assaulted

Sabo on the grounds that his wife, Habse Ubale, 30, was a witch. In the process, they also attacked Sabo's two sons, Sale Audu, 12, and Yakubu Audu, 14, with sticks, and macheted Habse Ubale. All four victims sustained serious injuries.

Police operatives, supported by local hunters and vigilantes, responded swiftly and evacuated the victims to the General Hospital,

Gamawa.

Habse Ubale was confirmed dead at the hospital. Her remains were photographed and released to the family for burial. One victim was admitted for further treatment, while the other two were treated and discharged.

Habib said one suspect has been arrested while efforts are intensified to apprehend the two others now at

large.

The case has been transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department, Bauchi, for further investigation and prosecution.

Condemning the attack, the Commissioner of Police, CP Sani-Omolori Aliyu, warned against jungle justice and violence fueled by superstition.

"The Command remains

committed to ensuring that justice is served and that all perpetrators are brought to book," he said.

The police also called on residents to remain calm and to provide credible information that could lead to the arrest of the fleeing suspects.

NBM donates lifeline to Plateau hospital, offers hope to emergency patients

Titus Akhigbe, Benin

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 undergoing 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.

Alkali lauds Yilwatda for inspiring purposeful leadership in APC

Tom Okpe, Abuja

Former Political Adviser to former President Goodluck Jonathan, Prof Rufa'i Ahmed Alkali, has commended the National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress, (APC), Prof Nentawe Yilwatda, for his inspiring and purposeful leadership of the party.

Prof Alkali made this known in Abuja on Friday while speaking with journalists, saying that the APC has made steady progress since Yilwatda assumed office, a year ago.

He said Prof Yilwatda emerged as the APC National Chairman, at a critical moment in the nation's political history.

"We celebrate not merely the passage of one year in office,

important as it is, but, we are celebrating one year of purposeful, steady progress, and advancement of the APC under your able and inspiring leadership.

"When you assumed the mantle of leadership of our great party, the APC, at a critical moment in the nation's political history on 25th July 2025, you accepted a responsibility that demanded hardwork, courage, wisdom, patience and unwavering commitment.

"Expectations were very high, the challenges were enormous, and the political terrain was both demanding and unpredictable. Yet, through determination, exceptional administrative ability, and creativity, you have justified the confidence reposed in you by

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, and the leadership and members of our great Party.

"Over the last one year, you have demonstrated that true leadership is not measured by loud noise, but by calm judgement, fairness, integrity and ability to inspire confidence.

"Your style of leadership has also encouraged constructive engagements among leading stakeholders within the party and reinforced the spirit of compromise and accommodation that has remained one of the greatest assets of the APC.

"One of the defining, perhaps, testing moments of your first year in office, was the successful conduct of the APC primary elections. It was a delicate National assignment that required wisdom,

impartiality and extraordinary political dexterity.

"Under your watch, the Party navigated through that sensitive exercise with maturity and credibility, laying a solid foundation for the journey towards the 2027 General Elections," he stressed.

He noted that commitment of the National Chairman to dialogue, extensive consultations and reconciliation, especially among aggrieved members, who might have lost out during the primaries, ensured that the Party emerged stronger, more united and better prepared for the tasks ahead.

According Prof Alkali, these virtues, distinguished Prof Yilwatda's leadership, not only by intellectual brilliance or impressive

record as an administrator, which are indisputable, but also by his humility.

"You have remained approachable, respectful and receptive to people from all backgrounds. You listen before you speak, build bridges instead of creating walls, and consistently, place collective interest of the Party above personal considerations.

"These rare qualities have earned you the respect and admiration of colleagues, party faithfuls and even among political opponents, even if they do not want to admit it publicly. As an accomplished academic, a distinguished public servant and now, leader of Nigeria's foremost political party, the ruling party, you continue to demonstrate that excellence, integrity and

dedication can indeed coexist in public leadership.

"As you mark this memorable first year anniversary, I wish to join all our party members nationwide, friends and well-wishers, in expressing our profound commendation for your selfless service, your sacrifices and your unwavering commitment to the progress of the APC and advancement of our democracy in Nigeria.

"May your deep commitment to the service to our dear party and to our great nation, Nigeria, continue to be marked by peace, fulfilment and enduring success and may God grant you the grace to accomplish even greater achievements in the years ahead, especially the 2027 General Elections," he added.

Hayab hails Akanji's 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 Amazing 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 Association 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 Nigerian 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 preserving the unity and vision that characterized Akanji's administration.

FCT NUJ chairman urges responsible tax reporting, civic engagement

Tom Okpe, Abuja

Chairman of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, (NUJ), FCT Council, Grace Ike, has called on journalists to promote responsible and balanced reporting on tax issues to strengthen public trust, accountability and national development.

Speaking at the 2026 Press Week Public Lecture and Award organised by the Federal Capital Territory Administration Chapel, (FCTA) with theme:

'Compliance and Good Governance in the FCT' on Thursday in Abuja, Ike said:

"Tax matters should not be viewed merely as technical issues

for economists and accountants, the media has a critical role in educating the public on how tax compliance contributes to community development."

She said journalists must provide a platform for constructive dialogue between tax authorities, policymakers and taxpayers, while ensuring balanced reporting that amplifies citizens' concerns alongside government perspectives.

The NUJ chairman urged media professionals to avoid sensationalism, verify information before publication, provide adequate context in their reports and focus on stories that demonstrate how tax policies affect daily lives of residents.

"Nigerians want to know how

tax policies impact infrastructure, healthcare, education and other public services. They also want transparency and accountability in the management of public funds.

"Tax compliance is not only a legal obligation but also a civic responsibility that supports the provision of essential public services," she said.

She encouraged citizens to demand accountability from leaders by asking how tax revenues are utilised and supporting reforms that make tax administration more transparent, fair and efficient.

The Chairman further called for stronger collaboration among the media, tax authorities, civil society organisations and citizens

to promote credible reporting, transparent governance and inclusive development noting that; "Improved public trust, greater tax compliance and accountable governance are essential for sustainable development and reduced inequality."

Ike expressed appreciation to all stakeholders participating in the programme, reaffirming commitment of the NUJ FCT Council to partnering with relevant institutions in advancing tax awareness, compliance and good governance.

She urged participants to sustain discussions beyond the event, describing collaboration between the media and public institutions

as critical to improving service delivery and fostering national development.

In her speech, Chairman of the Federal Capital Territory Administration, (FCTA) Chapel of the NUJ, Comrade Ufomba Ngozi Uloma, called on journalists to intensify public enlightenment on tax compliance and good governance to foster sustainable development in the Federal Capital Territory.

According to the FCTA Chapel Chairman, tax compliance remains the foundation of good governance, as it provides government with resources needed to deliver essential services such as infrastructure, healthcare, education and security.

Uloma urged journalists covering the FCT Administration to use their platforms to bridge the information gap between government and the public by explaining government policies, exposing revenue leakages and highlighting best practices that strengthen public trust.

She explained that the award and investiture ceremony was organised to recognise individuals and organisations that have made significant contributions to governance, journalism and women empowerment within the FCT, describing the recognition as an encouragement for others to contribute to national development.

2027: Bauchi monarch charges Nigerians to preach peace in homes, communities

Samuel Luka, Bauchi

His Royal Majesty, Marcus Kokko Yake, the Gung Zaar of Zaar Chiefdom, has called on Nigerians to become ambassadors of peace in their homes and communities, saying no nation can develop without it.

Speaking at the 9th Interfaith Conference held at the International Conference Centre, Bauchi on Thursday, the monarch said peace was the foundation for progress in families and the country at large.

The event was organized by the Interfaith Dialogue Forum For Peace (IDFP) in Collaboration with International Dialogue Center and the Bauchi state government.

"We are gathered here not just to give awards, but to celebrate a value that is more precious than gold," he said, at the conference themed "Non-violent Elections: The Role of Faith and Traditional Leaders in Nigeria".

"Without peace, there can be no development. Without peace, there can be no progress in our families, communities, and our nation." The Monarch added.

Defining peace beyond the absence of conflict, the Gung Zaar told the packed hall:

"Peace is not just the absence of war. It is the presence of justice, understanding, tolerance, and love for one another."

The monarch also welcomed the Governor of Bauchi State, Senator Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed, who holds the traditional title of Gbhzhi Zaar of Zaar Chiefdom, and his wife, Hajiya Dr. Aisha Bala Mohammed.

He praised their unwavering commitment toward ensuring peace and unity, as well as advancing development in the state.

"Your unwavering dedication to promoting peace and development in Bauchi State and beyond serves as an inspiration

to us all," he said.

"Your contribution to interfaith dialogue and community building has made Bauchi a model for peaceful coexistence." The Gung Zaar added.

He urged participants to take the message beyond the conference hall.

"I urge us to leave this hall today as ambassadors of peace. Let us preach peace in our

homes, places of work, worship centres, and our communities," he charged.

The 9th Interfaith Dialogue Forum for Peace brought together religious leaders,

traditional rulers, government officials, and civil society groups to reaffirm dialogue as a tool for unity in Bauchi State and across Nigeria.



Prof Amupitan SAN with the Electoral Officer, Obokun Local Government, Funke Olajumoke (left), during the Chairman's visit to the local government in Ibokun, Osun State.

FG moves to revive \$25m Technical Cooperation Fund for Africa

Stories by Okpono Ukpong

The Federal Government is set to pursue the replenishment of the \$25 million Nigerian Technical Cooperation Fund, which has been fully utilised, in a move aimed at sustaining Nigeria's technical assistance programmes across Africa and other developing countries.

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Sola Enikanolaiye, gave the indication in Abuja when he received the Director-General of the Directorate of Technical Cooperation in Africa (DTCA), Col. Garba Moyi Isa (Rtd), at the headquarters of the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs.

The meeting was part of ongoing briefing sessions involving heads of government agencies under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During the engagement, Isa briefed the minister on the mandate, operations and activities of the Directorate, stressing its importance to Nigeria's foreign policy objectives through technical cooperation based on mutual respect, partnership and a shared commitment to development.

The Director-General also congratulated Enikanolaiye on his appointment as Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and expressed optimism about working

closely with him to advance the Directorate's mandate.

A major issue raised during the meeting was the urgent need to replenish the Nigerian Technical Cooperation Fund, which Isa said had been established with an initial contribution of US\$25 million but had now been completely exhausted.

The development, he noted, posed a significant challenge to the continued implementation of Nigeria's technical assistance programmes across Africa and the wider developing world.

Other concerns highlighted by the DTCA Director-General included the implementation of the Directorate's Establishment

Act, inadequate budgetary provisions and delayed releases, office accommodation, shortage of operational vehicles and critical infrastructure requirements.

Responding, Enikanolaiye assured the Director-General that the issues raised would be brought before the relevant government authorities for necessary action.

The minister pledged to support initiatives aimed at replenishing the Nigerian Technical Cooperation Fund while advocating improved budgetary allocations and timely releases to enable the Directorate to effectively discharge its responsibilities.

He also promised to facilitate the provision of suitable office

accommodation, raise the visibility of the DTCA within Nigeria's foreign policy framework and promote stronger partnerships between the Directorate and regional and international development institutions.

Enikanolaiye reaffirmed the Federal Government's commitment to using technical cooperation and development diplomacy to advance Nigeria's strategic interests and strengthen its leadership role on the African continent.

In his response, Isa expressed appreciation for the assurances given by the minister and reaffirmed the Directorate's determination to promote Nigeria's

influence and leadership in Africa through effective technical cooperation programmes.

He expressed confidence that sustained government support and strategic guidance would enable the DTCA to expand its reach and make a greater contribution to the achievement of Nigeria's foreign policy objectives.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said it remained committed to advancing Nigeria's national interests through strategic partnerships and mutually beneficial cooperation capable of delivering tangible benefits to Nigerians.

Nigeria urges South Sudan to implement peace accord ahead 2026 elections

Nigeria has urged the government of South Sudan to recommit itself to the implementation of the Revitalised Peace Accord ahead of the country's scheduled presidential elections in December 2026, stressing the need for openness, transparency and inclusion in the process.

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Sola Enikanolaiye, made the call on Thursday in Abuja when he received the Ambassador of South Sudan to Nigeria, Ambassador David Buom Choat, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The meeting focused on the peace process and national reconciliation efforts in South Sudan, as well as ways to deepen bilateral relations between Nigeria and the East African country.

Enikanolaiye reaffirmed

Nigeria's commitment to supporting sustainable peace, stability and inclusive dialogue in South Sudan, in line with the country's longstanding role in regional peace efforts.

He urged the South Sudanese government to intensify efforts to resolve the conflicts and disagreements affecting the country and create a peaceful environment for its citizens.

The minister also called for a ceasefire in the White Nile region, stressing that the restoration of peace and security remained essential to the country's political transition and preparations for the 2026 elections.

Both sides recalled Nigeria's historic contribution to the process that eventually led to South Sudan's independence in 2011 and reaffirmed the strong ties of friendship and solidarity between the peoples of both

countries.

Enikanolaiye specifically recalled the Abuja-1 and Abuja-2 rounds of talks held in the early 1990s, which he said laid an important foundation for the process that culminated in South Sudan's independence.

He also noted President Bola Tinubu's commitment to peace and national reconciliation in South Sudan in his capacity as an active member of the AU Ad hoc Committee of 5 (C5) on South Sudan.

According to the minister, the IGAD-AU-led peace process remains the surest pathway to achieving lasting peace, security and stability in the country.

He further said Nigeria had continued to contribute to manpower development in South Sudan through the deployment of Technical Aid Corps (TAC) Volunteers and remained willing

to provide additional volunteers in response to requests from the South Sudanese government.

The minister, however, expressed deep concern over the recent assault on a Nigerian diplomat in Juba, the South Sudanese capital, condemning the incident and demanding a thorough investigation.

He called for the identification and prosecution of those responsible, insisting that attacks on Nigerian diplomatic personnel would not be tolerated.

Enikanolaiye also urged the South Sudanese authorities to take concrete steps to guarantee the safety and security of Nigerian diplomatic personnel in the country in accordance with the Vienna Convention and established diplomatic norms and practices.

Responding, Ambassador Choat congratulated

Enikanolaiye on his appointment, describing it as well-deserved in view of his extensive diplomatic experience and distinguished career.

The South Sudanese envoy conveyed the regrets of his government over the assault on the Nigerian diplomat and assured the minister that the incident was already being investigated by the relevant authorities.

The two sides also stressed the importance of credible, free, fair and inclusive elections as a critical step towards strengthening democratic governance and achieving lasting peace in South Sudan.

Enikanolaiye reiterated Nigeria's willingness to support initiatives aimed at creating the conditions required for a successful electoral process.

He also called for the judicial

proceedings involving the imprisoned Vice President, Rick Mercia, to be concluded in the spirit of equity, fairness and justice.

As part of efforts to deepen bilateral relations, the meeting also highlighted the need for the early establishment of a Nigeria-South Sudan Ministerial Commission.

The proposed commission is expected to provide a structured platform for regular high-level consultations and cooperation in areas including politics, the economy, security and socio-cultural development.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to constructive engagement with the government and people of South Sudan in pursuit of peace, security and shared prosperity.



Nigeria-Saudi Investment Summit to tackle misconceptions, unlock opportunities — NiDCOM

The upcoming Nigeria-Saudi Diaspora Investment and Tourism Exhibition Summit is expected to address misconceptions surrounding investment in both countries while opening new opportunities for businesses and investors, the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM) has said.

Chairman/CEO of NiDCOM, Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, stated this during a pre-event media conference held at the Commission's headquarters in Abuja ahead of the second edition of the summit.

The event, themed "The Misconceptions, Challenges, and Opportunities in Investing in

Saudi Arabia and Nigeria Today", is expected to promote stronger economic ties between Nigeria and Saudi Arabia by examining investment challenges and creating platforms for business connections in both markets.

Represented at the briefing by the Commission's Secretary, Dr Sule Yakubu Bassi, Dabiri-Erewa recalled that the maiden edition of the exhibition, held in 2019, attracted more than 30 companies from Saudi Arabia.

She described the forthcoming event as a timely platform for strengthening investment relations between the two countries and creating opportunities for businesses, investors and other

stakeholders.

The NiDCOM chairman also commended Al Yaro International Limited, the organisers of the exhibition, for its continued efforts to improve investment visibility for individuals, businesses and companies operating in Nigeria and Saudi Arabia.

Speaking at the event, the Head of Department, Technology Transfer, Innovation and Investment, Hon. Abdulrahman Terab, said the exhibition had been designed to give participants a clearer understanding of the investment environment in both countries.

He said the summit would also encourage meaningful business-to-business connections and

help translate the longstanding diplomatic, cultural and socio-economic relations between Nigeria and Saudi Arabia into stronger economic partnerships.

According to Terab, participants will have the opportunity to explore areas of mutual interest, including real estate, agriculture, technology transfer, trade and tourism.

He therefore encouraged Nigerians and other interested stakeholders to participate in the summit and take advantage of the opportunities expected to emerge from the discussions and exhibition. One of the organisers, Mr Muhammed Umar Yaro, announced that the two-day exhibition would take place on

August 4 and 5, 2026, at the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Centre in Abuja.

Yaro said the summit was designed to unlock investment opportunities and bring policymakers, investors and other key stakeholders together to explore practical ways of strengthening Nigeria-Saudi Arabia relations in trade and business.

He added that the event would attract more than 100 exhibitors, 5,000 visitors and participants from 20 investment sectors.

The organiser said the exhibition would focus on key areas including energy, agriculture, real estate, tourism and manufacturing.

He also urged prospective participants to register through

the official registration platform to take part in the exhibition and discussions on investment opportunities, challenges and prospects in both countries.

Yaro expressed appreciation to President Bola Tinubu, Vice President Kashim Shettima and the NiDCOM Chairman for their continued support and partnership, expressing optimism that the second edition would be more engaging and impactful.

The exhibition is organised by Al Yaro International Company in collaboration with NiDCOM, Almanafie, the Association of Nigerians in Diaspora, Saudi Arabia (ANDISA), and Suruh Alhijaz.

2027 presidency won't be won on election day



Chinedu Okpalanma



Amaechi



Atiku

People keep talking about who will be President in 2027. I think they are asking the wrong question.

This election is unlike any other. It is not just about popularity or who draws the biggest crowd. Many Nigerians have become sceptical about elections and whether simply having more supporters is enough. If the opposition wants to defeat President Bola Tinubu who just recently told anyone who cares to listen that "he will wrestle the opposition to finish", then it cannot afford to prepare for an ordinary election.

In my opinion, the African Democratic Congress (ADC) is the only opposition platform with a realistic shot at taking power. Atiku Abubakar probably has the strongest chance of consolidating support across much of the North.

But let nobody deceive himself. Northern votes alone will not remove an incumbent President. Elections are won by organisation, discipline and fearless execution.

That is why the campaign matters just as much as the candidate.

And if the campaign matters, then the choice of Director-General matters even more.

The Director-General of a presidential campaign is not merely an administrator. He is the field marshal. He coordinates intelligence, mobilisation, logistics, messaging, crisis management and political negotiations. Every successful presidential campaign has someone whose job is to wake up every morning thinking only about winning.

For me, there is only one name that fits the job—Rotimi Amaechi.

Some will immediately object that he is already the vice-

presidential candidate.

That is precisely why the party should think differently and ask him to lead the campaign as well. If anything, it makes even more sense.

Campaigns are not won by wishful thinking. They are won by people who understand how elections are fought.

Amaechi does.

He is not just a former Governor or Minister. He is one of the few politicians in Nigeria today who has spent over two decades building political structures across the country. He knows how campaigns are organised. More importantly, he has led one before.

Amaechi's role in the 2015 campaign that brought Muhammadu Buhari to power remains one of the strongest examples of large-scale political mobilisation in Nigeria's Fourth

Republic. Regardless of anyone's opinion about the Buhari administration, few dispute that the campaign itself was disciplined, organised and relentless.

Perhaps more importantly, he has repeatedly shown that he does not retreat simply because the odds appear unfavourable. His political journey has been defined by difficult contests in which he often found himself with his back against the wall. Those experiences matter.

That is why an arrangement in which Amaechi serves as Director-General, supported by a seasoned northern figure such as Aminu Tambuwal as Deputy Director-General, deserves serious consideration. One brings operational aggression and nationwide mobilisation; the other brings political diplomacy and deep relationships across the North. Together, they could

provide both balance and strategic depth.

Just as importantly, the campaign team itself should not become another gathering of familiar political faces whose loyalties are divided. If the objective is genuine political change, then the campaign must be staffed by people whose commitment is unquestionable.

This is no time for political tourists.

No time for those maintaining one relationship with the ADC and another with the APC.

No time for individuals calculating personal survival ahead of collective victory.

The campaign should deliberately create room for younger professionals, organisers, technocrats and grassroots mobilisers from both the Atiku and Amaechi political camps—people with energy, competence

and something to prove because elections are increasingly won by disciplined execution, data, communication and relentless field organisation as much as by headline personalities.

The ADC must therefore resist sentiment. Appointments should not be rewards. They should be strategic decisions because history is unforgiving to opposition parties that mistake popularity for preparedness.

There is a saying that generals don't win wars from behind a desk.

If the ADC is serious about 2027, then it needs its best general where the battle will be fought.

This is not the time for sentiment. It is time for strategy.

The 2027 presidential election will not be won on election day alone. It will be won—or lost—long before the first ballot is cast.

2027: We submitted Jonathan, other candidates' names manually to INEC - Turaki PDP faction

Tunde Opalana, Abuja

Despite being denied access code to upload names of candidates for the 2027 general election, the Kabiru Turaki-led Interim National Working Committee of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), said it successfully submitted names of former President Goodluck Jonathan as its Presidential candidate alongside other candidates for national and state assemblies elections.

Spokesperson of the faction, Comrade Ini Ememobong disclosed that while addressing the media on the state of the Party and its preparations for the 2027 general elections, Thursday night in Abuja.

He said the fact that the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC gave access code to the Mohammed-led National Working Committee to upload names of candidates does not make the loyalists of the Federal

Capital Territory FCT minister, Nyesom Wike, authentic leaders of the party.

According to him, the judgment of the Supreme Court on the leadership of the party, effectively left the Peoples Democratic Party without a legally recognised national leadership, upon which the Board of Trustees and a member-requisitioned National Executive Committee constituted an Interim National Working Committee to manage the affairs of the Party.

He said this decision was duly communicated to INEC in line with the law but the election management body decided to recognise those he called place holders.

Insisting that INEC should be held responsible for the ambiguity created in the leadership of the party, Ememobong said "any responsible electoral management body confronted with conflicting judicial pronouncements and a pending appeal before the Court

of Appeal would exercise restraint pending the final determination of the issues. Such caution would protect both the integrity of the electoral process and the rights of all parties."

He said candidates of the party overwhelmingly expressed complete confidence in the legal and constitutional processes already initiated and reaffirmed their commitment to reclaiming the party from those who seek to mortgage its future.

"Accordingly, we are pleased to announce that notwithstanding INEC's refusal to provide us with the necessary access codes- which is an administrative convenience rather than a legal requirement, we have successfully submitted, manually and in full compliance with the Electoral Act 2026, the list of candidates sponsored by the authentic Peoples Democratic Party. "That submission, containing the names of our Presidential Candidate,

President Goodluck Jonathan, as well as all Governorship, National Assembly and State Assembly candidates-receipt of which was duly acknowledged by INEC.

As part of the electoral timetable, INEC will soon publish the names of candidates sponsored by political parties, the faction cautioned that "should the Commission publish names other than those lawfully submitted by us, we urge our members, supporters and the teeming Nigerians who eagerly await the candidature of President Jonathan and our other candidates not to despair.

"We sincerely hope that INEC, under the leadership of Professor Joash Amupitan, will adopt this prudent course. If, however, the Commission proceeds to publish the names of persons other than those validly sponsored by the authentic leadership of the Peoples Democratic Party, it will only deepen public concerns regarding

its neutrality and strengthen the perception that it is lending institutional support to individuals whose primary objective is to weaken the opposition from within."

He said the Turaki-led faction is exhausting every constitutional, legal and democratic avenue to ensure that the party is not hijacked or annexed to the ruling party.

Speaking further, the Spokesperson said "electoral authoritarianism is fundamentally incompatible with democratic consolidation. It reduces elections to mere rituals rather than genuine expressions of the people's sovereign will. It weakens public confidence in democracy and ultimately produces leaders who owe their emergence not to the electorate but to narrow political interests determined to perpetuate themselves in power.

"This is why every Nigerian, regardless of political persuasion, has a stake in defending multi-party democracy and resisting every

attempt at state capture. Nations prosper when political competition is free, fair and credible. They decline when democratic institutions become instruments for suppressing legitimate opposition."

He said the group remain hopeful that victory is certain, even if it is delayed, saying "there may be obstacles. There may be frustrations. But the triumph of evil over good, darkness over light, and compromise over principle can only be ephemeral.

"We understood from the very beginning that this struggle would be a marathon and not a sprint. We remain willing and prepared to endure to the very end, confident that when this difficult chapter in our nation's political history is eventually closed, history will remember those who stood firmly for principle over expediency, courage over compromise, and democracy over convenience. We intend to be counted among them."

FG rules out tariff hike, targets stronger grid, 7m meters

Samuel Mobolaji

The Federal Government has ruled out any immediate increase in electricity tariffs, shifting its focus instead to expanding power supply, deploying seven million electricity meters and strengthening the national grid as part of a broad reform agenda aimed at delivering reliable electricity and driving economic growth.

Minister of Power, Joseph Tegbe, disclosed this on Friday during a media stakeholders' engagement in Lagos, where he outlined the administration's roadmap for resetting Nigeria's electricity sector through improved generation, transmission, distribution, metering and financial sustainability.

He dismissed reports suggesting that the government was planning another tariff increase, insisting that the administration's priority remains improving service delivery and ensuring Nigerians pay only for the electricity they consume.

"There is no policy by this administration to increase electricity tariffs beyond the current level. Our priority is service improvement, universal metering and ensuring Nigerians pay only for the services they receive," Tegbe said.

The minister revealed that the Federal Government plans to deploy seven million electricity meters over the next three years to eliminate estimated billing, which he described as one of the biggest sources of distrust between electricity distribution companies and consumers.

He said 5,000 young Nigerians had already been recruited and trained under the government's Power Force Initiative to support nationwide meter installation, with plans to expand the programme to

500,000 youths, creating jobs while closing the country's metering gap.

According to him, an additional 1.56 million meters will be deployed before the end of the year following the resolution of procurement disputes that had delayed implementation.

Tegbe said recent stakeholder engagements had resolved outstanding issues surrounding meter procurement and lifted legal impediments that stalled deployment over the past several months.

He also announced that electricity generation had consistently exceeded 5,000 megawatts over the past two weeks, describing the development as evidence of improving coordination across the electricity value chain.

While welcoming the progress, the minister stressed that higher generation alone would not solve Nigeria's electricity challenges.

"Electricity must be generated, transmitted, distributed and, importantly, paid for. All these components must function simultaneously," he said.

Tegbe identified liquidity constraints, commercial inefficiencies and governance challenges as the major obstacles confronting the sector, noting that technical issues represented only part of the industry's problems.

To restore financial stability, he said the government was advancing the Power Sector Bond Initiative to clear accumulated legacy debts owed to electricity generation companies, gas suppliers and other market participants.

He recalled that President Bola Tinubu had approved a N3.3 trillion payment plan under the Presidential Power Sector Financial Reforms Programme to settle longstanding obligations, while the government had earlier concluded

frameworks for a N4 trillion government-backed bond and already issued an inaugural N501 billion bond under the Presidential Power Sector Debt Reduction Programme.

The government also recently approved a second tranche of about N729 billion to settle verified legacy debts owed to generating companies.

According to the minister, restoring liquidity is essential to rebuilding investor confidence and ensuring operators can recover legitimate revenues needed to sustain investments.

He disclosed that the ministry would commence a comprehensive technical audit of the national transmission network to identify ageing infrastructure, overloaded substations, weak transmission corridors and other bottlenecks that have constrained electricity

evacuation.

The audit, he said, would guide investment decisions and ensure public resources are channelled towards projects with the highest economic impact.

Tegbe said the government had also begun implementing strategic grid interventions across the Lagos, Enugu-Port Harcourt and Abuja-Kaduna-Kano corridors while advancing a Super Grid Programme designed to strengthen transmission capacity, improve redundancy and support significantly higher electricity volumes.

He added that under-utilised transmission assets would be linked to industrial clusters and manufacturing hubs to maximise existing infrastructure and stimulate economic activity.

On regulatory reforms, Tegbe said the Ministry of Power was

working closely with the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission and newly established state electricity regulatory agencies to harmonise responsibilities under the Electricity Act 2023 and provide greater regulatory certainty for investors.

The minister said the administration was equally promoting renewable energy, targeting a 40 per cent contribution from solar power to Nigeria's energy mix by 2060.

According to him, solar mini-grids are already being deployed across universities and teaching hospitals, with several projects expected to be commissioned in the coming weeks.

Tegbe further disclosed that the government intends to phase out the current electricity subsidy regime by next year while ensuring improved service delivery for

consumers.

He acknowledged that the sector still faces significant challenges but expressed confidence that Nigerians would begin to see noticeable improvements in electricity supply within the next few months, with a stronger and more reliable national grid expected over the next two to three years.

He stressed that the success of the ongoing reforms would ultimately be measured by their impact on households, businesses and industries rather than electricity generation figures alone.

"The objective is to build a power sector capable of supporting national productivity, attracting investment and driving industrial growth," the minister said.



BUA backs NPA reforms, invests \$65m in port modernisation

Motolani Oseni

BUA Group has reaffirmed its confidence in Nigeria's port reform programme with a \$65 million investment in the modernisation of Terminal B at the Rivers Port Complex, Port Harcourt, as the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) intensifies efforts to improve operational efficiency and attract private sector investment.

Chairman of BUA Group, Abdul Samad Rabi, commended the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the NPA,

Dr Abubakar Dantsoho, and his management team for their commitment to strengthening stakeholder engagement, improving port operations and advancing the modernisation of Nigeria's seaports.

Rabi made the remarks during a meeting with the NPA leadership, where both parties reviewed ongoing reforms, infrastructure renewal initiatives and opportunities to deepen collaboration between the Authority and private sector operators.

As one of Nigeria's largest industrial conglomerates, BUA is a major investor in the maritime sector through BUA Ports and Terminals Nigeria Limited, the concessionaire of Terminal B at the Rivers Port Complex.

The company is investing more than \$65 million to reconstruct and modernise the terminal, a project aimed at expanding cargo handling capacity, improving operational efficiency and enhancing service delivery.

Rabi said the NPA's commitment to creating a more

efficient operating environment and maintaining constructive engagement with stakeholders was strengthening investor confidence and encouraging long-term investments in critical port infrastructure.

Responding, Dantsoho thanked the BUA chairman for the commendation and reaffirmed the Authority's resolve to build a modern, efficient and globally competitive port system through sustained collaboration with terminal operators and other private sector partners.

He said the NPA would continue to implement reforms designed to reduce vessel turnaround time, strengthen cargo evacuation, improve operational efficiency and attract greater investment into Nigeria's maritime industry.

According to him, private sector investments such as BUA's ongoing reconstruction of Terminal B represent a strong vote of confidence in the Federal Government's port reform agenda.

Dantsoho added that the Authority would continue to provide an enabling environment

for investments that facilitate trade, support industrialisation and unlock the full potential of Nigeria's marine and blue economy.

He noted that the collaboration aligns with the Federal Government's Renewed Hope Agenda, which prioritises public-private partnerships to modernise critical infrastructure, improve trade facilitation and accelerate economic growth.

Naira holds near N1,834/£ despite pound weakness against dollar

Temitope Adebayo

The naira traded at about N1,834 to the British pound at the opening of Friday's foreign exchange session, holding close to recent levels despite renewed weakness in the pound against the United States dollar amid heightened geopolitical tensions and shifting monetary policy expectations.

Market data showed the pound exchanged at N1,834/£, having traded within a range of N1,813 and N1,862 during the month, indicating that the N1,830 level has emerged as a key trading anchor

for the currency pair.

Demand for the British currency in Nigeria remained elevated, driven largely by payments for medical treatment in the United Kingdom, tuition fees for students in British schools and other offshore obligations requiring sterling.

Analysts noted that any sustained move above the N1,840/£ level could trigger fresh buying interest towards the month's high around N1,850/£, although traders are also watching month-end foreign exchange liquidity from authorised dealers and Bureau De Change

operators, which often influences market direction.

The Central Bank of Nigeria's tighter monetary policy stance and improved external reserves have helped moderate volatility in the foreign exchange market despite persistent demand pressures.

Nigeria's foreign reserves recently climbed above \$52 billion before easing slightly, providing the apex bank with greater capacity to intervene in the market and support exchange rate stability.

Nevertheless, Nigeria's inflation remains significantly higher than that of the United Kingdom,

continuing to exert depreciation pressure on the naira over the medium term.

In the international market, the British pound weakened against the US dollar, trading around 1.3445 during early European trading after investors sought the safety of the greenback following renewed military tensions in the Middle East.

The US dollar found additional support after fresh missile strikes involving the United States and Iran heightened geopolitical risks, boosting demand for safe-haven assets.

Despite the weakness, sterling continued to draw support from expectations that the Bank of England would maintain its benchmark interest rate at 3.75 per cent, reflecting the central bank's cautious approach to monetary easing amid moderating inflation.

Financial markets currently expect the Bank of England to leave rates unchanged at its next policy meeting, with only a limited probability of any further tightening before year-end.

Meanwhile, recent United States economic data pointed to slowing growth and easing inflation,

reducing expectations of another immediate interest rate increase by the US Federal Reserve.

The US economy expanded at an annualised rate of 1.5 per cent in the second quarter, below the previous quarter's 2.1 per cent growth, while the Personal Consumption Expenditures Index recorded its first monthly decline since April 2020, reinforcing expectations that the Federal Reserve may remain on hold after retaining its policy rate within the 3.50 to 3.75 per cent range.

Aeronautical Engineers' Institute confers gold award on United Nigeria Airlines' boss

CHUKWUEMEKE IWELUNMO

The Executive Chairman of United Nigeria Airlines (UNA), Prof. Obiora Okonkwo, has been conferred with a gold medal award by the Institute of Nigerian Aeronautical Engineers (INAE), in recognition of the airline's safety culture, capacity building and rapid growth despite a turbulent economic climate.

The award, presented by the national president of INAE, Dr Ebitei Charles, at the International Fellowship Conferment, which was held in Lagos on Wednesday, is reserved for individuals whose work has significantly advanced the field of

aeronautical engineering. INAE, a division of the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE) regulated by the Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN), said Okonkwo was honoured for steering UNA's rapid expansion in the five years since its inception, especially at a time there was a global economic downturn as a result of COVID.

Though Prof. Okonkwo was not present to receive the award in person, he was represented by the airline's Director of Continuing Airworthiness, Alex Iheuewa, and the Chief Pilot, Capt. Joan Obasi-Ibraheem.

Dr Ebitei said the recognition reflects a shared commitment to advancing safety standards,

modernising infrastructure, and building indigenous engineering capacity, priorities the institute says align closely with UNA's own.

He also said the council is appreciative of the airline's internship programme for aeronautical engineering students, describing it as a quiet but impactful contribution to grooming the next generation of talent.

He also commended the airline's rigorous safety culture and its role in inspiring resilience and professionalism within Nigeria's aviation workforce, despite the difficult operating environment.

According to the institute, these efforts are helping to build the kind of specialised engineering capacity the aviation industry needs

to optimise aircraft performance, cut the high costs associated with maintenance, and secure long-term sustainability for Nigerian carriers.

UNA was not the only airline celebrated at the event. Arik Air and Xejet were also honoured, while the Director-General of the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), Capt. Chris Najomo, and the Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo, were each conferred with honorary fellowships of the institute.

Reacting to the honour, Prof. Okonkwo described it as a validation of the airline's founding philosophy. He said the recognition affirmed everything the airline had worked to build, which is an operation rooted in safety and sustained investment

in capacity.

The award adds to a growing list of milestones for the carrier, which has weathered difficult challenges since its inception. At the unveiling of two new Boeing 737-800NG aircraft in Lagos in June, Okonkwo recounted one of the airline's challenging times, which was when a batch of 23 pilots sent to South Africa for training were stranded for nine months after international airspace shut down during the COVID-19 pandemic.

He said some fell ill and none could return home, yet the airline continued covering their hotel bills and paying salaries throughout the ordeal. Reflecting on how the carrier pulled through, he said that the airline kept flying and that was

what kept it alive.

UNA commenced commercial operations in February 2021 and has since built a diverse, modern fleet. It now operates to more than 15 routes, including Accra, Ghana. Its growth has continued this year with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the government of Guinea-Bissau to help establish a national carrier for the country.

UNA has also secured the IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) certification, joined the IATA Clearing House, and been admitted as a Full Member of the African Airlines Association (AFRAA).

NGX investors lose N1.65trn in two-day sell-off

Temitope Adebayo

Investors on the Nigerian Exchange (NGX) have lost N1.65 trillion in market value within two trading sessions as sustained profit-taking in banking and other heavyweight stocks extended the market's bearish run, despite a sharp surge in trading activity.

The market shed N1.005 trillion on Thursday after losing N648 billion in the previous session, pushing total investor losses to more than N1.65 trillion in two days.

The benchmark NGX All-Share Index (ASI) declined by 0.66 per

cent to close at 245,362.26 points from 246,980.17 points recorded on Wednesday, while market capitalisation dropped by 0.63 per cent to N158.34 trillion from N159.34 trillion.

Consequently, the market's year-to-date return moderated to 57.67 per cent from 58.71 per cent.

The decline was driven by heavy sell-offs in large and medium-cap stocks, particularly HBM Nigeria, NGX Group, NASCON Allied Industries, First HoldCo and Zenith Bank, as investors continued to lock in gains after the market's strong rally earlier in the year.

Market sentiment remained weak, with 45 stocks recording losses against 17 gainers, reflecting broad-based selling pressure across major sectors.

The Insurance Index led sectoral losses, declining 2.26 per cent, followed by the Banking Index, which fell 2.04 per cent. Consumer Goods dropped 1.10 per cent, while the Industrial Index lost 0.70 per cent. The Oil and Gas Index posted a marginal gain of 0.01 per cent, while the Commodity Index closed flat.

Despite the bearish performance, trading activity strengthened significantly as investors executed

several large institutional transactions.

Total trading volume surged by 177.01 per cent to 2.10 billion shares, while the value of transactions jumped by 583.04 per cent to N230.83 billion, although the number of deals declined by 12.71 per cent to 48,231.

First HoldCo dominated market activity, accounting for 1.57 billion shares valued at N196.20 billion, representing the bulk of the day's turnover.

Access Holdings followed with 37.40 million shares worth N998.51 million, Sterling Financial Holdings traded 36.01 million

shares valued at N286.80 million, while Ellah Lakes exchanged 34.75 million shares worth N297.83 million. Zenith Bank recorded transactions of 33.10 million shares valued at N4.03 billion.

Among the gainers, Legend Internet appreciated by 8.64 per cent to close at N4.40 per share. Daar Communications rose 7.32 per cent to N1.76, Sterling Financial Holdings gained 6.67 per cent to N8.00, Sovereign Trust Insurance advanced 5.73 per cent to N2.03, while Royal Exchange added 4.69 per cent to close at N1.34.

On the losers' chart, Tripple Gee & Company declined by

the maximum 10.00 per cent to N2.88, Lasaco Assurance lost 9.92 per cent to N2.18, C&I Leasing dropped 9.84 per cent to N5.50, Mutual Benefits Assurance fell 9.80 per cent to N3.22, while Trans-Nationwide Express depreciated by 9.03 per cent to N2.82.

Analysts at Cowry Asset Management Limited said the equities market is likely to remain under pressure in the near term as investors continue profit-taking across key sectors following the market's strong gains recorded earlier in the year.

NITDA to license tech firms as software testing goes mandatory

Motolani Oseni

The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) will begin licensing technology firms to provide independent software testing services under a new regulatory framework that will make third-party certification compulsory for all Federal Government software projects from the second quarter of 2027.

The initiative, unveiled under the National Software Quality Assurance (SQA) Framework, is designed to standardise software development, reduce costly project failures, strengthen cybersecurity and improve public confidence in digital government services.

According to a statement issued by the agency's Director of Corporate Communications

and Media Relations, Mrs Hadiza Umar, the framework, signed by the Director-General of NITDA, Kashifu Inuwa Abdullahi, under the provisions of the NITDA Act 2007, will require all government software projects to undergo independent testing and certification before deployment as a prerequisite for obtaining IT Project Clearance.

NITDA said it would commence nationwide stakeholder engagements and capacity-building programmes ahead of the rollout while opening the accreditation process for Licensed Software Testing Organisations (LSTOs).

The agency disclosed that it would shortly issue an Expression of Interest (EOI) inviting qualified technology firms to apply for licences to operate as accredited

software testing organisations.

According to NITDA, the licensing regime is expected to create a regulated market for independent software testing services, providing new business opportunities for indigenous technology firms while encouraging local companies to obtain internationally recognised certifications.

The agency also said the initiative would generate high-skilled technology jobs, strengthen Nigeria's software ecosystem, improve confidence in locally developed software and enhance the competitiveness of Nigerian technology firms in global markets.

Abdullahi said software quality remained the foundation of digital trust and was critical to the country's digital transformation agenda.

"Quality is the foundation of digital trust. With this Framework, every software solution serving Nigerians, whether built for government or the private sector, will meet clear national standards for security, reliability and interoperability. This is how we modernise government technology and position Nigerian software to compete on the global stage," he said.

The framework consolidates three existing regulatory instruments into a unified national standard, comprising the National Software Development Guideline, the National Software Testing Guideline and the Software Testing Organisations Licensing (STOL) Guideline.

Under the new regime, software developers will be required to adopt structured software

development life cycles, secure coding practices based on Open Web Application Security Project (OWASP) standards, standardised documentation and compliance with WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards for citizen-facing digital services.

The framework also establishes national benchmarks for software functionality, cybersecurity, system performance under peak operating conditions and interoperability before deployment.

To ensure appropriate oversight, NITDA introduced a three-tier risk classification model covering high-risk critical infrastructure systems, moderate-risk enterprise platforms and lower-risk internal applications.

Critical systems, including core banking switches, national identity management platforms and

electricity grid control systems, will undergo the highest level of security assessment, including comprehensive penetration testing and specialised cybersecurity audits conducted by top-tier accredited testing organisations.

NITDA said the framework recognises that different software systems pose varying levels of operational and cybersecurity risks and therefore require different levels of regulatory scrutiny.

The new quality assurance framework follows concerns over the persistent failure of government technology projects.

According to NITDA, 56 per cent of Information Technology projects executed by Federal Public Institutions (FPIs) failed because of poor compliance with the agency's IT Project Clearance Guidelines.

FRSC moves to safeguard Nigeria's transition to EVs, CNG Vehicles

Temitope Adebayo

The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) has pledged to strengthen road safety regulations and operational standards as Nigeria accelerates the adoption of Electric Vehicles (EVs) and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)-powered vehicles, positioning safety as a critical pillar of the country's clean mobility agenda.

The Corps Marshal, Shehu Mohammed, committed at the 3rd Nigeria Auto Industry Summit organised by the Nigeria Auto Journalists Association (NAJA)

in Lagos, where stakeholders discussed strategies for advancing cleaner and safer transportation under the theme, "Nigeria's Clean Mobility Future: The EV and CNG Journey Under the Bola Tinubu Administration."

The summit attracted government officials, regulators, automobile manufacturers, industry experts and development partners to examine opportunities and challenges associated with Nigeria's transition to environmentally friendly transport.

Mohammed said the growing

adoption of EVs and CNG-powered vehicles presents significant opportunities for economic growth, environmental sustainability and improved transportation, but stressed that the transition must be supported by comprehensive safety standards, effective regulation and stronger collaboration among stakeholders.

According to him, the FRSC is already repositioning itself to respond to the emerging realities of clean mobility by updating safety regulations, strengthening operational frameworks and engaging stakeholders across the

automotive value chain.

"As Electric Vehicles and CNG-powered vehicles become increasingly common on our roads, regulatory institutions must evolve to address emerging technologies through specialised training, updated operational guidelines and strengthened enforcement mechanisms," he said.

The Corps Marshal disclosed that the agency has commenced initiatives to develop operational procedures specifically tailored to EVs and CNG-powered vehicles, while enhancing its capacity to regulate the evolving transport

ecosystem.

He noted that the transition to cleaner mobility should not only reduce carbon emissions but also improve road safety, promote higher vehicle standards and strengthen public confidence in emerging transportation technologies.

Mohammed emphasised that achieving these objectives would require sustained collaboration among regulators, transport operators, vehicle manufacturers, conversion centres, development partners and road users.

He reaffirmed the Corps'

commitment to working closely with relevant government agencies and private sector stakeholders to ensure that Nigeria's transition to electric and gas-powered transportation delivers long-term environmental, economic and safety benefits.

The FRSC, he added, remains focused on ensuring that the country's clean mobility drive is accompanied by robust regulatory oversight capable of supporting sustainable growth in Nigeria's automotive sector.

Zamfara seeks Chinese solar investment to drive industrialisation

Motolamni Oseni

Zamfara State Governor, Dauda Lawal, has intensified efforts to attract foreign direct investment into the state's renewable energy sector after holding a high-level investment roundtable with China's GCL Group, one of the world's leading energy conglomerates, to explore large-scale solar power projects.

The meeting, held during the governor's investment and trade mission to China, focused on strengthening economic cooperation between Zamfara State and the Chinese energy giant, with discussions centred

on harnessing the state's vast solar energy resources to support industrialisation and economic diversification.

Governor Lawal, who met GCL Group executives alongside Nasarawa State Governor, Abdullahi Sule, said the proposed partnership aligns with his administration's strategy of attracting strategic investments capable of delivering sustainable economic growth, reliable electricity and employment opportunities.

Founded by Chinese billionaire Zhu Gongshan, GCL Group operates across the global energy value chain, including thermal

power, renewable energy, solar technology and energy infrastructure, with projects spanning China and several international markets.

During the discussions, the company expressed interest in investing in utility-scale solar power projects in Zamfara and indicated its readiness to explore broader partnerships covering technology transfer, local content development and workforce capacity building.

The proposed investments are expected to harness Zamfara's abundant solar resources, improve electricity supply, support industrial activities and reduce

dependence on the national grid.

To accelerate implementation, both parties agreed to establish a joint technical working group to develop a comprehensive framework covering feasibility studies, project design, financing arrangements and regulatory approvals.

GCL Group also committed to sending a technical and investment delegation to Zamfara to conduct on-site assessments and engage relevant stakeholders before moving the projects to the implementation stage.

The engagement forms part of Governor Lawal's broader investment drive aimed at

repositioning Zamfara as a preferred destination for international investors across renewable energy, mining, agriculture and infrastructure development.

The governor's administration is seeking to diversify the state's economy beyond its traditional reliance on mining and agriculture by leveraging opportunities created by the global transition to clean energy.

If implemented, the proposed solar projects are expected to improve access to affordable electricity, stimulate industrial development, attract manufacturing investments and

create employment opportunities through construction, operations and maintenance activities.

The initiative also aligns with the Federal Government's renewable energy and energy transition agenda, which seeks to increase the contribution of clean energy to Nigeria's electricity mix while promoting sustainable economic development.

Governor Lawal's investment mission to China is expected to continue with further engagements involving Chinese investors and financial institutions across key sectors of the state's economy.





Peller and Jarvis tie the knot in court wedding

Popular TikTok content creators Hamzat Habeeb, popularly known as Peller, and Amadou Elizabeth Aminata, known as Jarvis, have officially tied the knot in a court wedding.

TikTok stars Peller and Jarvis have officially tied the knot in a court wedding ahead of their August 1, 2026 ceremony.

The court wedding marks the beginning of the couple's wedding celebrations after weeks of sharing pre-wedding moments with fans.

The couple will livestream their August 1 wedding ceremony on YouTube and Twitch for fans who cannot attend in person.

The court wedding, held on Wednesday, marks the official

commencement of the couple's wedding celebrations ahead of their highly anticipated traditional and white wedding ceremony scheduled for August 1, 2026. During the ceremony, the newlyweds exchanged vows, shared a kiss and received their marriage certificate.

Ahead of the traditional ceremony, Peller announced that fans who would be unable to attend the wedding in person would be able to watch it live online. In a post shared on Instagram on Monday, the TikTok star revealed that the event would be streamed simultaneously on YouTube and Twitch.

"For you guys that won't be able to attend the wedding, go to any of these that day and watch the wedding," he wrote.

In the days leading up to the wedding, the couple kept fans updated on their preparations through Snapchat. Their posts offered glimpses of activities ahead of the big day, including a spa session and visits to friends and family members to personally deliver their wedding asoebi.

The couple's pre-wedding updates have generated excitement on social media, with fans eagerly counting down to their traditional and white wedding ceremony on August 1..

Femi Adebayo's ex-wife denies viral claims Toyin Abraham and Funke Akindele ruined her marriage

Femi Adebayo's estranged wife, Omotayo Sanusi, has denied viral claims that Toyin Abraham and Funke Akindele played a role in the collapse of her marriage.

Omotayo Sanusi says claims linking Toyin Abraham and Funke Akindele to her marriage breakdown are false.

She denied ever confronting anyone on the set of Jagun Jagun Part 2.

Neither Toyin Abraham, Funke Akindele nor Femi Adebayo has responded publicly.

Omotayo Sanusi, popularly known as Iyan Aladuke and the estranged wife of Nollywood actor and filmmaker Femi Adebayo, has publicly denied allegations that actresses Toyin Abraham and Funke Akindele played any role in the collapse of her marriage, describing the circulating claims as entirely false.

Sanusi said she was compelled to speak after a video by social media personality Mama Esabod went viral, reviving allegations she described as having no basis in truth.

Femi Adebayo and Omotayo Sanusi when they were still together

Femi Adebayo and Omotayo Sanusi when they were still together "I have deliberately chosen not to publicly respond to the many false stories and allegations surrounding my marriage. However, because these narratives continue to spread and are being presented as facts, I believe it is necessary to address one of them," she wrote in a statement shared on her Instagram page on Wednesday.

The allegations, which had been circulating online before Mama Esabod's video brought them back into focus, claimed that Toyin Abraham informed Sanusi that Femi Adebayo and Funke Akindele were romantically involved during the production of Jagun Jagun Part 2.

According to the claims, Sanusi subsequently stormed the movie set and publicly confronted Akindele, an incident the blogger alleged contributed directly to the breakdown of her marriage.

The allegations went further, suggesting that Akindele later used her influence to turn Nollywood producers against Toyin Abraham after discovering that Abraham had instigated the confrontation. This detail was also linked to widespread speculation about why Akindele appeared to ignore Abraham's greeting at Iyabo Ojo's movie premiere in April, an incident that itself generated significant online reaction at the time.

Statement shared by Omotayo Sanusi on Instagram

Statement shared by Omotayo Sanusi on Instagram

Sanusi rejected all the allegations directly. On the claim that Toyin Abraham triggered the confrontation, she said it was completely fabricated, adding that no such incident took place on any movie set involving her.

"The allegation that actress Toyin Abraham was responsible for the problems in my marriage by allegedly informing me that another actress was with my then-partner on a movie set is completely false. For the record, I never confronted, attacked, assaulted, or harassed any woman or man at any movie location," she said.

She pointed out that she was present throughout the Jagun Jagun Part 2 production from start to finish, overseeing the welfare of over 500 cast and crew members alongside her team for more than a month, and challenged the idea that a public confrontation of that scale could have occurred without a single witness.

On allegations that she made claims about Funke Akindele, she was equally direct, dismissing them as lies and calling on anyone making the allegation to produce evidence.



‘It doesn’t make sense to me’ — Rudeboy drops truth bombs on music by the new generation of Nigerian artists

Rudeboy is disillusioned with the type of music made by the new generation of Afrobeats artists.

Rudeboy says he cannot bring himself to make music like the new generation of Afrobeats stars because it makes no sense to him.

The veteran superstar stated that he will be causing significant damage to himself if he attempts to make music like the new generation of stars.

In a recent interview on Wazobia FM, Paul Okoye AKA Rudeboy, shared his thoughts on the music by the new generation of Nigerian artists. According to the Afrobeats veteran, who is one half of the iconic P-Square duo, he cannot make music like the new generation, and he wouldn’t even bother trying.

Rudeboy stated that he doesn’t attempt to make music like the new generation of stars because

that would amount to inflicting mental, emotional, and career damage on himself, as the new strain of Afrobeats doesn’t make sense to him.

Speaking in Pidgin English, Rudeboy says that with the illustrious career he has enjoyed and the quality of music in his catalogue, he cannot bring himself to make the type of music from the new generation because it doesn’t make any sense to him, and he cannot even be proud enough to share the outcome with the public should he try.

Rudeboy’s submission comes as Nigerian mainstream pop music is seeing a notable sonic shift led by a new generation of rising stars adding their complexity to the soundscape.

With the growing popularity of underground artists and the fragmentation of the industry

into regional hubs and silos, perhaps more than ever before, listeners are experiencing greater diversity in Nigerian music. The unique approaches of different rising stars have divided opinion, with some listeners finding it exciting while others, like Rudeboy, can’t seem to make sense of it.

While Rudeboy has no intention of making music like the young generation, he still very much has plans to delight listeners with his music. On July 24, he released a new single titled ‘Blessed & Alive,’ featuring Ghanaian superstar rapper Sarkodie. The mid-tempo record sees the veteran contemplate his journey to the top with the familiar melodies that have shaped some of his hit records.



Singer Yemi Alade reveals why she chose her birth name over stage name

Popular Nigerian singer Yemi Alade has revealed why she chose to keep her birth name rather than adopt a stage name like many artistes.

Yemi Alade has explained why she chose to keep her birth name instead of adopting a stage name.

The singer revealed that she considered the names ‘Electra’ and ‘Ginger’ before deciding to retain her birth name.

Alade said she began translating her songs into French, Swahili, and Portuguese to appreciate fans across Africa who supported her despite language barriers.

Speaking in an interview with the BBC, the singer revealed that she deliberately avoided names that would make her too predictable. She explained she wanted people to be curious about who she was before hearing her music.

‘One of the names that I had played with in my early days was Electra, but I changed my mind because I felt that the minute you hear Electra, you already expect me to be electrifying, and I

didn’t want people to see me coming or overexpect. I wanted them not to know what’s coming, and then I tried another name, Ginger, but the problem is, in Nigeria, when you say ginger, it means energy, and I’m just telling everybody who I am before they meet me.’

She said she eventually turned to God for direction and decided to embrace the meaning behind her birth name.

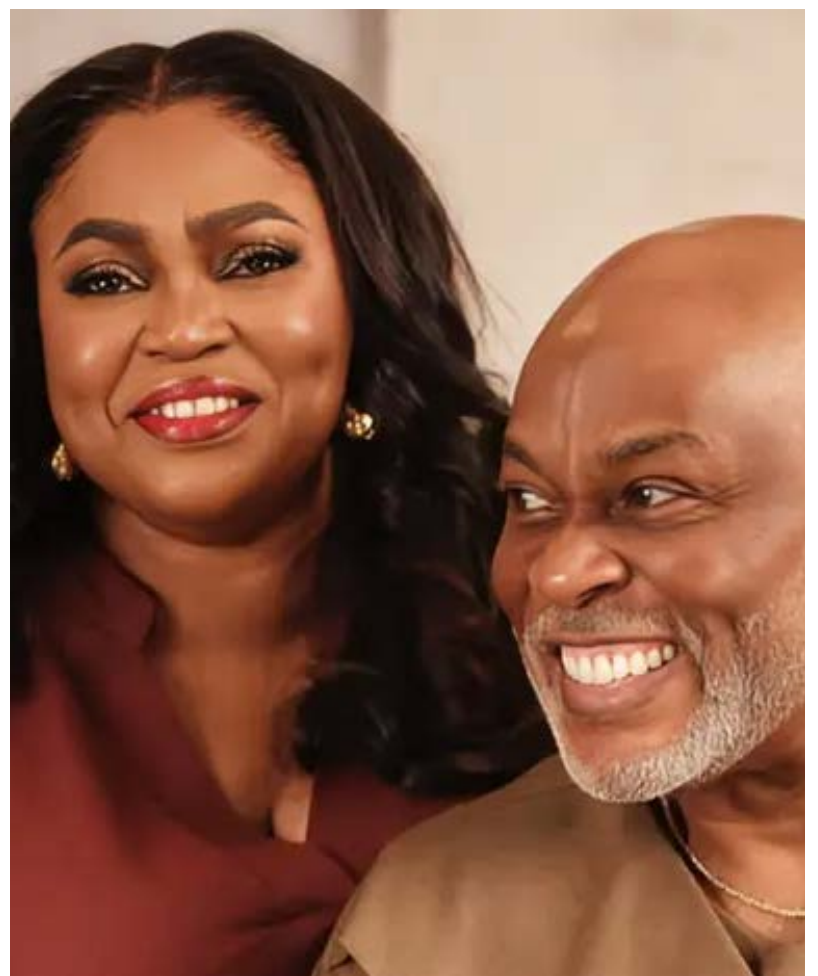
‘I had a moment where I just sat on the idea, and I honestly just reached out to God and just asked, ‘Please lead me,’ and the reckoning that came to me was that I needed to stick to my birth name because it had a huge meaning behind it. Opeyemi means ‘thanks be to God,’ and Alade means ‘the one who holds the crown.’ I feel like that embodies who I am, so I held on to it.’

Alade also revealed that her decision to translate her music into other African languages was inspired by the overwhelming support she received from fans across the continent, even when they did not speak English or her native languages.

Popular Nigerian singer Yemi Alade “The first language I translated my music into was French, and it was born out of curiosity. I felt a very strong connection with many French-speaking African fans when I saw them in the front row of my concerts, singing my songs even though they didn’t speak English or any of my native languages. So I thought to myself, why don’t I do something very dear to them and show them I truly love them? That’s where my desire to start translating my music came from. I later went on to translate my music into Swahili and Portuguese.”

The award-winning singer also noted that while the music industry has become more accommodating for women, female artistes still have to keep pushing for greater representation.

According to her, the industry is not necessarily easier for women today, but people have become more accepting. She stated that women need to continue coming out in their thousands and millions to occupy more space.



I gift my wife the biggest things I own -Actor RMD

Nigerian actor Richard Mofe-Damijo, popularly known as RMD, has revealed that he makes it a point to give his wife the biggest gifts he can afford to ensure she never has to ask him for anything.

Richard Mofe-Damijo says he gifted his wife his first N100 million cheque and continues to give her his biggest possessions.

The veteran actor says his wife’s love language is receiving gifts and that she proudly credits him for everything he buys for her.

RMD also opened up about his son Tega’s acting career and shared the mindset he believes has helped him stay youthful.

Speaking during an appearance on The Morayo Show, the veteran actor said his wife’s love language is receiving gifts. He noted that one of the greatest compliments he receives is hearing her publicly acknowledge the things he gifts her.

“These days, it’s never about flowers and chocolates anymore. Ladies like money. For my wife, a trip abroad must have a shopping mall. Her love language is gifts. I think that the biggest compliment that I ever get from her is that whatever important thing she has or holds, she will tell you that my husband buys everything that I need, so I try to gift her enough.”

RMD also recalled giving his wife the first biggest cheque he ever received, worth about N100 million, instead of keeping it for

himself.

“The first time I had the biggest cheque in my life, like 100m, my manager had gone to pick it up, and I said, ‘Give it to my wife.’ When she got it, she was like, ‘You want me to keep it for your children? I said, ‘No, keep it for yourself.’”

He added that although much of the money would eventually benefit their children, he deliberately chooses to give his wife.

“I know that 90% of that will end up on my children, but for me, I like to gift my wife with the biggest things I have so that way, she never has to ask for anything.”

The actor also spoke about his son, Tega. He said that he was surprised when the young man decided to pursue acting because none of his children had previously shown interest in following his career path.

“He never once told me he wanted to act. It was during graduation that we were taking pictures when he told me that he wanted to act, and I’m like Why didn’t you say something since because none of my kids is into what I am doing.”

Speaking on how he has maintained his youthful appearance over the years, RMD said he tries to eat healthy and exercise regularly. He added that he lives by the advice of an older person who once told him that growing older should never mean allowing an old mindset to take over.



Europe Awakens: A New Season, New Dreams and Old Rivalries

From England to Spain, Italy, Germany and France, Europe's football giants are preparing for another long battle for glory — but this time, the landscape looks different.

Shonubi Samson

The waiting is almost over.

The boots are being polished, the stadium lights are ready, new shirts are being unveiled and across Europe, supporters are beginning to dream again. The 2026/27 football season is arriving with its familiar promise: a clean slate, renewed ambition and the possibility that history could be rewritten.

The European football calendar is coming alive after a summer dominated by the expanded FIFA World Cup, and the continent's biggest leagues are preparing for another season of fierce competition.

The Premier League will officially open its campaign on August 21, while LaLiga begins on August 15 and Serie A follows on the weekend of August 23.

England: Can Anyone Stop the Champions?

The Premier League once again enters the new campaign as arguably Europe's biggest financial and competitive battlefield.

Arsenal begin the season as champions, but retaining the title could prove even more difficult than winning it.

Manchester City, Liverpool, Manchester United, Chelsea and Newcastle will all believe they can challenge at the top, while Tottenham and Aston Villa will be hoping to push themselves into the conversation.

The managerial landscape has also changed dramatically. Several clubs have new men in charge, including Liverpool, Chelsea, Manchester City, Newcastle and others, creating an unusual level of uncertainty before a ball has even been kicked.

The opening weekend itself immediately provides intrigue, with Arsenal hosting newly promoted Coventry City, Manchester United facing Hull City and Newcastle welcoming Liverpool.

And behind the football is another battle — money.

Premier League clubs have already spent more than £1.4 billion during the summer transfer window, a figure greater than the combined

spending of clubs in Germany's Bundesliga, Spain's LaLiga, France's Ligue 1 and Italy's Serie A.

The question is no longer simply who has the best team.

It is who can survive the pressure.

Spain: The Giants Prepare for Another Duel

In Spain, the spotlight will once again fall on the country's traditional giants.

Barcelona and Real Madrid remain the clubs everyone wants to beat, while Atlético Madrid continue to represent the stubborn third force capable of disrupting the established order.

LaLiga's opening round begins in mid-August, with Barcelona scheduled to face Athletic Club on August 27.

For Barcelona, the challenge will be to turn domestic consistency into European dominance.

For Real Madrid, the expectation is different. At the Santiago Bernabéu, second place is rarely considered success.

The Spanish giants will enter the campaign with the Champions League firmly in their sights, knowing that Europe's biggest competition has a way of defining seasons.

Italy: The Race for Tactical Supremacy

Serie A brings a different flavour.

Italian football remains one of Europe's great tactical laboratories, where defensive organisation, midfield control and managerial strategy can be just as important as individual brilliance.

The new Serie A campaign begins on the weekend of August 23 and runs until May 30, 2027.

Inter Milan, Juventus, AC Milan, Napoli and Roma will all have ambitions at the top.

But the Italian title race may again come down to who can maintain consistency through the long winter months and survive the demands of European competition.

In Italy, the difference between champions and challengers can sometimes be measured in the smallest details.

Germany: Bayern's Crown Under Threat?

Germany presents another familiar question: can anyone finally take the Bundesliga crown away from Bayern Munich?

Bayern's dominance has made the German championship one of Europe's most predictable title races, but predictability does not mean a lack of drama.

Borussia Dortmund, Bayer Leverkusen and the league's ambitious challengers will once again look for weaknesses.

Their task is simple to describe but extremely difficult to accomplish:

Stay close enough to Bayern long enough to make the final months uncomfortable.

France: PSG and the Challenge of Staying Hungry

In France, Paris Saint-Germain remain the obvious heavyweight.

But dominance creates its own problem.

When winning becomes expected, motivation becomes part of the competition.

PSG will be judged not only by domestic success but by what happens when Europe's elite gather in the Champions League.

The French champions know that another league title may satisfy the statistics, but European glory is what would truly define their era.

The Champions League: Where Everything Changes

Domestic football may provide the weekly drama, but the Champions League remains the ultimate measuring stick.

The 2026/27 competition has already begun with qualifying rounds, while the league phase starts from September 8 to 10. The competition will culminate in the final at Madrid's Estadio Metropolitano on June 5, 2027.

And that is where Europe's biggest clubs will eventually meet.

A club can dominate its domestic league and still collapse under European pressure. Another can struggle at home before discovering a completely different identity on continental nights.

That unpredictability is what makes the competition special.

The African Factor

For African football supporters, Europe's new season also means another opportunity to watch the continent's finest talents compete on the biggest stages.

From Nigeria to Senegal, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Morocco and beyond, African players will once again carry expectations far beyond the stadiums in which they play.

The performances of Europe's African stars will be followed closely — not simply because of the clubs they represent, but because every goal, assist, save and trophy adds another chapter to Africa's growing influence on global football.

The continent will be watching.

The New Season, The Same Question

Every August, football gives supporters something it rarely gives them elsewhere: hope without evidence.

Before the first whistle, every club has possibilities.

Every signing can be a genius.

Every young player can become a star.

Every manager can be the one who finally changes everything.

But football has a way of separating dreams from reality.

The Premier League will demand consistency. Spain will demand quality. Italy will demand tactical intelligence. Germany will demand endurance. France will demand dominance.

And Europe will demand everything.

By May, the dreams will have become statistics.

By June, one club will lift the Champions League trophy in Madrid.

Until then, the arguments begin again.

Who will rule England?

Who will conquer Spain?

Who can dethrone Bayern?

Can PSG finally turn dominance into European glory?

And, above all, who will emerge from Europe's football jungle as the continent's new king?

The answers are coming.

The stadiums are ready. The rivalries are alive. Europe is awake again.

Record-breaking Nwachukwu in cloud nine, gets \$10,000 cash reward



'I promised President Tinubu that I will break world record in Glasgow'

Goodness Nwachukwu, who won Team Nigeria's seventh gold medal at the ongoing Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games, has revealed that she promised President Bola Tinubu that she would break a world record at the Games.

Nwachukwu won the gold with a new world record in the women's para discus F42-44/61-64 event, where she threw 39.66 metres.

The athlete set a new world record and further strengthened Nigeria's reputation as a leading force in para sports.

Her latest feat adds another golden chapter to Team Nigeria's campaign, which has already produced several record-breaking performances across para powerlifting, weightlifting and athletics.

The victory also marks a

successful title defence for Nwachukwu, who first announced herself on the Commonwealth stage at the Birmingham 2022 Games, where she delivered one of the standout performances of the competition by breaking her own world record twice on her way to winning gold in the same event.

On her arrival at the Athletes' hotel after winning the gold, Nwachukwu was received by top officials of the National Sports Commission (NSC), led by the Director General, Bukola Olopade, who presented the athlete a cash reward of \$10,000.

An excited Goodness Nwachukwu told The Guardian after receiving the cash award that she made the promise of breaking the world record when Team Nigeria's delegation visited Aso Villa prior to their departure for the training camp in Aberdeen.

"I actually made this promise at the Villa, but I never knew

the NSC will keep to its promise of rewarding me, not to talk of doubling the amount to \$10,000. The DG (Olopade) just told me now that another money will be paid into my account soon. I can't believe this. I am really grateful to President Tinubu for putting smiles on our faces. I also thank the leadership of the NSC for keeping to its promises," Nwachukwu said.

Meanwhile, the NSC also doled out \$4,000, a double amount to 19-year-old Jessica Oji, who won the silver medal in the women's shot put with a best throw of 17.87 meters. Her podium finish ends a 20-year drought, making her the first Nigerian woman to win a shot put medal at the Commonwealth Games since Vivian Chukwuemeka in 2006.

Olopade said the decision to double the amount to \$4,000 instead of \$2,000 was as a result of her young age.



Flying Eagles batter Sparrow Hawks 3-0 to seal semifinal spot

The Flying Eagles have booked their place in the semifinals of the ongoing WAFU B U-20 Tournament following their 3-0 defeat of Togo in their second Group B game in Yamoussoukro yesterday.

The Nigerians had earlier beaten Ghana 4-2 in their opening game.

Togo's Sparrow Hawks came out strong and proved difficult in the first half. The Flying Eagles dominated early but were almost caught napping in the 38th minute when Togo missed a clear chance and shot wide. The game became open towards the end of the half with both sides launching onslaughts, but there was no

breakthrough from either team. The first half ended scoreless with both sides on equal possession. Nigeria came out stronger after the break and broke the deadlock early.

One minute into the second period, Muiz Adeleke, who netted a brace against the Black Satellites on Monday, put the Flying Eagles ahead to make it 1-0. Togo pushed to get back into the game, but Nigeria's defence stood firm, and the team maintained good control.

Adeleke got his second in the 59th minute. He went on a quick counter, rounded the Togolese goalkeeper and scored to complete his brace. Nigeria almost made

it three shortly after when Togo's goalkeeper made a mistake, but the opportunity was not utilised. However, the handsome win was sealed in the 85th minute when substitute Abdoulaye Agbejeye replaced Adeleke and immediately got on the scoresheet to make it 3-0. The Flying Eagles held on till the final whistle to secure the victory and a place in the semifinals.

Seven-time African champions Nigeria face Burkina Faso on Sunday in what promises to be an explosive encounter.



AFC joins UEFA, CONCACAF to oppose FIFA's World cup investment plan

Pressure is mounting on FIFA President Gianni Infantino after the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) formally aligned with UEFA and CONCACAF in opposing FIFA's controversial proposal to introduce private investment into its flagship competitions through the proposed FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE).

In a strongly worded statement, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) warned that the growing divisions within global football have reached an unprecedented level and called on FIFA to urgently review its governance and decision-making processes. The confederation also suggested that the proposal no longer enjoys the broad support required to move forward.

The AFC stated:

"The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has observed with deep concern the developments of recent days relating to the proposed establishment of FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE) and the uncertainty that has emerged across the global football community.

"The AFC stands in solidarity with UEFA and CONCACAF in expressing serious concerns over FIFA's proposal to introduce private investment into FIFA's flagship competitions and the decision-making process around FFE.

"The fact that the situation has reached the point where the real possibility of a FIFA World Cup boycott has entered public discourse should concern everyone who cares about the future of our game. Football should never have been placed in such a position.

"Against this backdrop, and in light of the clear positions expressed by UEFA and CONCACAF, as well as the

unprecedented divisions that have emerged across the football world, the AFC believes that the proposed FFE cannot realistically achieve the necessary broad consensus and unity required to move forward."

"The FIFA World Cup is the pinnacle of global football and derives its strength from the participation of all Confederations and the world's leading football nations. Any proposal that risks undermining the unity and universal character of the competition must be reconsidered.

"While the immediate debate centres on FFE, the AFC considers this issue extends far beyond a single proposal. Rather, it has exposed fundamental weaknesses in FIFA's consultation and decision-making processes that must now be addressed. While the AFC notes FIFA's latest clarification on the proposal, the central concerns surrounding governance, institutional process and meaningful consultation remain unanswered.

"A proposal of such significance, with the potential to affect the commercial, sporting and strategic future of world football, must not emerge through processes that leave Confederations, Member Associations (MAs) and even FIFA's own governing bodies, including the FIFA Council, feeling sidelined. The primary objective for world football must be to ensure that decisions of such magnitude are being developed through processes that are anchored on transparency and command the confidence of the football community.

"This is not the first occasion where major stakeholders have been confronted with significant initiatives after the direction of travel appears to have already been determined. Such an approach undermines confidence in FIFA's governance framework and diminishes the authority of its

statutory bodies. No subsequent consultation process, however well intentioned, can replace early engagement with the appropriate FIFA bodies and the football family.

"The AFC believes this moment must become a catalyst for strengthening institutional reform. While every FIFA MA must have the opportunity to consider and determine proposals affecting the future of world football, meaningful democracy is not measured solely by the opportunity to vote. It begins with transparent governance, timely consultation, informed deliberation and genuine participation throughout the decision-making process.

"Accordingly, the AFC calls upon FIFA to undertake an urgent review of its governance and decision-making framework to ensure that proposals of global significance are developed through proper consultation, meaningful engagement and appropriate oversight by FIFA's statutory bodies.

"The FIFA World Cup, and the game itself, belong to the entire global football family. Their future must always be shaped collectively, through institutions that reflect the voices of all Confederations and MAs."

The AFC's intervention marks a significant escalation in the dispute surrounding FIFA's investment proposal. With three of football's six continental confederations now publicly opposing the plan, pressure continues to mount on FIFA's leadership ahead of the expected vote. The latest development also raises fresh questions about whether the governing body can secure the level of consensus needed to proceed with one of the most consequential commercial reforms in the history of world football.

'Poor selection haunting Nigerian boxing team at Glasgow'

Some amateur boxers and their coaches, yesterday staged a peaceful protest at the National Stadium, Lagos, over alleged favouritism in the selection of boxers to the ongoing Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland.

The protesters at the Nigerian Amateur Boxing Association (NABA) office, located at the Brai Ayonote Boxing Complex, accused the Nigeria Boxing Federation (NBF) of hampering the country's chances of success at the Games.

With banners and placards, the protesters called on the Director General of the National Sports Commission (NSC), Bukola Olopade, and the NBF Chairman, Wale Edun, to urgently intervene in the crisis rocking amateur boxing in the country.

The demonstrators accused the NBF Vice Chairman, Yakubu Imadu Omonle, of manipulating the selection process in favour of "his fighters" and appealed to Olopade and Edun to "call him to order before his inordinate ambition causes more damage to Nigerian boxing."

The crux of the matter, according to the protesters, is that the federation allegedly conducted an

unfair trial process that resulted in the selection of boxers who have failed to impress at the competition.

They alleged that five of the six boxers fielded by Team Nigeria have already been eliminated in the preliminary rounds.

They said that the disappointing performances reflect flaws in the selection process and called on the federation to prioritise merit and proven performance when choosing athletes for major international competitions.

Addressing the protesters, NBF Technical Director, Babatunde Laguda, appealed for calm and urged the coaches and athletes to formally document their grievances.

He assured them that their

complaints would be considered through the appropriate channels.

One of the coaches involved in the protest, Fatai Azeez of Owonikoko Boxing Club, highlighted the achievements of his boxer, Adeshina Zainab, questioning why an athlete with an impressive international record was overlooked. "She won a silver medal at the African Games in Ghana, reached the final of the Olympic qualifiers in Thailand in 2024, where she narrowly lost to a Finnish boxer in a controversial bout, and also won silver at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Saudi Arabia. Since 2023, she has consistently represented Nigeria and has always reached the final stage of competitions," Azeez said.





Record-breaking Nwachukwu in cloud nine, gets \$10,000 cash reward

Scoring goals is my job, says Arokodare after joining Ajax

“I have missed playing football. I can’t wait to score goals and hear my name called in this stadium,”

Super Eagles striker, Tolu Arokodare, after joining Ajax Amsterdam of Holland has reiterated that scoring goals is his job.

Arokodare said this on Wednesday after completing a summer transfer on loan from Wolverhampton Wanderers of England, where he suffered relegation from the Premier League to the Sky Bet Championship last season.

Ajax announced on its official website and social media platforms that it had reached an agreement with Wolves regarding the loan signing of Arokodare, with the 25-year-old striker joining on a one-season loan deal until the summer of 2027.

The agreement includes an option to buy for Ajax for a fee reported to be in the region of 16 million Euros.

In his first official interview as an Ajax player, Arokodare who had a few troubles at Wolves spoke with a smile about his move to Amsterdam.

The striker also introduced himself to the Ajax fans,

discussed his goal celebration, talked about his role model and fellow Nigerian Nwankwo Kanu, and explained why he wears the number 99.

He also said that: “Scoring goals is my job, and that is why I am here.” The Super Eagles striker further admitted that he initially thought his agent was joking when he told him Ajax had interest in signing him.

Speaking to Ajax’s official website following his unveiling as the team’s latest signing, the Nigerian international forward could not hide his excitement about sealing a move to one of Europe’s most historic clubs.

Arokodare described his transfer to the Dutch Eredivisie giants as a dream he never imagined would become a reality.

“I could never have imagined that I would play here. Not because I do not want to, but because everyone knows this club. In Nigeria, no one watches the Eredivisie, but everyone knows Ajax,” Arokodare said.

“When my agent said Ajax were interested, I thought he was joking. As I said, I never

expected this. I immediately thought: I want this. It is the biggest club in the Netherlands and one of the biggest in Europe.”

Having been barred from training with the first team of Wolves where he scored six goals in 38 games across all competitions in his maiden campaign, the lanky Nigerian striker added that he has missed the game and can’t wait to start playing once again while he looks forward to scoring plenty of goals.

“I have missed playing football. I can’t wait to score goals and hear my name called in this stadium,” said Arokodare at his unveiling by Ajax.

Arokodare, born in Festac, Nigeria on November 23, 2000 began his career in his homeland with Box2Box FC. In 2019, the forward moved to Europe and signed for Latvian side Valmiera FC.

The ten-cap Nigerian international subsequently played for 1. FC Cologne of Germany and Amiens SC of France before continuing his career with KRC Genk in the winter of 2023.

At the Belgian club, he finished as the top scorer in the Jupiler Pro League during the 2024/2025 season. In mid-2025, Arokodare completed a move to English club Wolves.

