



DSS DG directs operatives not to arrest anyone over civil matters

Director General of the Department of State Services (DSS), Mr. Oluwatosin Adeola Ajayi, has directed operatives of the agency not to arrest anyone over civil matters. Ajayi gave the directive during an interview with selected media executives on Thursday, saying it was part of measures to strengthen ad-

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APC's control of over 30 govs does not guarantee Tinubu's victory in 2027 –Kwankwaso

- Says if Jonathan could lose election, those who think they have over 30 govs and can't lose are making a big mistake
- Slams northern govs over poor performance, says many have failed to deliver meaningful devt



Vice President Kashim Shettima, receiving a delegation from the International Energy Agency (IEA), led by its Chief Executive, Dr Fatih Birol, who were on a visit to the Presidential Villa, Abuja, Nigeria.

Vice-Presidential candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, says the All Progressives Congress (APC)'s control of more than 30 states does not guarantee President Bola Tinubu's victory in the 2027 election. Kwankwaso spoke on Thursday in Port Harcourt during a town hall meeting with voters where he and Peter Obi, presidential candidate of the NDC, fielded questions on the prospects of the 2027 general election. The former governor of Kano cited the 2015 election, when then-President Goodluck Jonathan lost his re-election bid to Muhammadu Buhari, the APC candidate. Recall that in the build-up to the 2015 election, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the platform on which Jonathan contested, controlled about 20 states in the country. However, during the election, Jonathan won in 15 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), while Buhari won the remaining 21 states, according to results declared by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

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The Presidency has clarified that the ongoing Freedom of Information Act case in the United States is a civil records-disclosure dispute, not a criminal case against President Bola Tinubu. The clarification is contained in a statement issued by Presidential Spokesperson, Mr Bayo Onanuga, on Thursday in Abuja, against what the Presidency described as specu-

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No criminal case against Tinubu over U.S. FOIA records —Presidency

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lative reports.

“For clarity, the matter is a civil records-disclosure dispute under the United States Freedom of Information Act.

“It is not a criminal case against President Bola Tinubu, nor has the court found him guilty of any criminal wrongdoing.”

The Presidency said the matter dated back to 2022, when Mr Aaron Greenspan submitted FOIA requests to several U.S. government agencies seeking records relating to Tinubu.

It said after some agencies withheld records or declined to confirm or deny their existence, Greenspan commenced Civil Action No. 23-1816 before the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia in 2023.

The court subsequently permitted Tinubu to participate in the proceedings as an intervenor, while the defendants invoked the “Glomar defence”, a mechanism used by U.S. agencies in certain records-disclosure cases.

According to the Presidency, the defence means that a government agency is not in a position to confirm or deny the existence of an investigation, thereby protecting law-enforcement personnel, sources and investigative techniques.

It said the court subsequently granted summary judgment in favour of the CIA, EOUSA, Department of State, Department of the Treasury and Internal Revenue Service, removing them from the proceedings.

The Presidency said the remaining aspects of the claims involving the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) concerned the redaction of records produced during the proceedings.

“In compliance with the court’s orders, the FBI and DEA produced 399 pages of records, with portions redacted under exemptions provided by United States law.”

It said the FBI and DEA,

through the U.S. Department of Justice, opposed demands for the release of the records without redactions.

The Presidency said the agencies relied on statutory exemptions covering grand jury proceedings, pen-register information, attorney-client privilege, attorney work product and law-enforcement materials.

It added that other exemptions protected personal privacy, confidential sources and investigative techniques from disclosure.

It noted that Tinubu, on the advice of his lawyers, had also asserted his rights under FOIA Exemption 7(C), relating to protection against unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

The Presidency said the plaintiff had until Sept. 11 to file any opposition and reply to the defendants’ and intervenor’s processes, while the FBI, DEA and Tinubu had until Sept. 18 to respond.

“The release or withholding of records under FOIA does not, by itself, establish criminal liability. The case concerns access to government records and the proper application of statutory exemptions.”

It also recalled that, in a Feb. 4, 2003 letter, the American Consulate in Lagos informed the then Inspector-General of Police, Mr Tafa Balogun, that an FBI records check found no criminal arrest records, wants or warrants for Tinubu, then governor of Lagos State.

The Presidency urged the Nigerian media and public to distinguish verified court proceedings from partisan commentary, stressing that the case remained under the control of Judge Beryl Howell.

“The litigation is a civil records-disclosure dispute under FOIA. It does not constitute a criminal charge, trial, or judicial finding against President Tinubu.”

It said the court would determine whether the redactions were lawful based on the filings, evidence and applicable U.S. law, rather than political commentary



Tinubu

APC’s control of over 30 govs does not guarantee Tinubu’s victory in 2027 –Kwankwaso

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Eleven of the 21 states won by Buhari were controlled by the PDP at the time.

Following his victory in the 2023 election, in which he defeated Obi and former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, President Bola Tinubu is seeking re-election on the platform of the APC, which currently controls about 31 states.

Referencing Jonathan’s defeat in 2015, Kwankwaso dismissed suggestions that the ruling party’s control of numerous states would guarantee victory for Tinubu.

“Jonathan was the sitting president and he lost the election. Those who think that because they have over 30 governors they cannot lose are making a very big mistake,” he said.

The former Kano governor argued that many candidates seeking to be Nigeria’s president lack the

experience required to lead the country.

He said Nigeria urgently needs “a committed, strong and vibrant president” capable of addressing the nation’s challenges.

Kwankwaso warned Nigerians against making what he described as another costly political mistake in 2027.

“This is the time to get it right. Anything to the contrary, if people make a mistake, they will regret making that mistake because it will be too costly for the people and the country,” he said.

Kwankwaso also criticised the performance of several governors, particularly in northern Nigeria, claiming that many had failed to deliver meaningful development.

He predicted that some governors, particularly those in the North, would find it difficult to campaign for their parties because of what he described as poor performance in office.

“By the grace of God, all of them, especially the ones in the North, because I studied the trend. The trend is those governors and their party have performed woefully to the extent that it is very difficult for them even to come out and campaign,” he said.

He also criticised what he described as poor management of public resources by state governors and the Federal Government, arguing that government revenues had increased substantially compared with previous years.

Recalling his experience as governor in 1999, Kwankwaso said states and local governments received about N4 billion each at the time.

He, however, questioned the impact of the increased revenues accruing to governments in recent years on the lives of Nigerians.

“Now in one year, we have seen it on social media that our government

collected over N1.11tn, just less than one year. You go around, what have you done with that money? Close to nothing,” he said.

Kwankwaso said the alleged poor performance of governments had increased public anger across the country, warning that insecurity remained a major concern, particularly in Northern Nigeria.

“And people are very angry. And this anger is bad, and worse is the issue of insecurity, especially in northern Nigeria,” he stated.

Also speaking, Dumo Lu-lu-Briggs, NDC governorship candidate in Rivers, commended party members for their patience, resilience and commitment to the movement.

Lulu-Briggs expressed confidence that the party would build “a Nigeria that works”, while assuring the national leadership of the unwavering support of party members in the state.

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herence to the rule of law and improve the agency’s human rights record.

The DG DSS said since assuming office, he had introduced reforms across five broad areas, including law enforcement, inter-agency synergy, accountability, respect for human rights, and infrastructural and administrative reforms aimed at improving operational efficiency.

According to him, the reforms had also created a clearer distinction between civil and criminal matters within the agency, noting that his career experience showed that

the DSS had previously conflated the two.

He said the use of force is inappropriate in civil disputes.

“You cannot apply the use of force in civil matters. Even some criminal matters don’t require force,” Ajayi said.

He cited the case involving Pat Utomi, a political economist, over allegations relating to an attempt to establish a “shadow government”.

“Rather than arrest him, we sought judicial interpretation,” the DG DSS said.

“And the court ruled that his adventure was unconstitutional, illegal, and a threat to national security.”

He also referred to a case involving the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), saying the organisation approached the court over allegations that two DSS operatives invaded its premises.

He said the matter was pursued in court without any arrest, adding that the court eventually awarded more than N100 million in favour of the operatives.

The judgement, delivered in May 2026, awarded N100 million in damages to two DSS officials over alleged def-

amation, although SERAP has since appealed the decision.

Ajayi said the DSS now resorts to the courts in civil matters, adding that he had instructed operatives that there should be no arrest in any civil case.

He said the agency would also approach the courts in cases involving journalists because “we do the same job.”

Ajayi described journalists as “professional colleagues” of the DSS, noting that the difference is that journalists inform the public while the DSS informs the government.

2027: Nobody will intimidate us again at the polling booth, says Peter Obi

Presidential candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), Peter Obi, says nobody will intimidate him and his supporters again at the polling booth during the 2027 presidential election.

He added that he is ready to protect his votes in the 2027 election, even if it requires surrendering his life.

Obi spoke on Thursday in Port Harcourt during a town hall meeting with voters tagged “Obi Talks Nigeria”, where he fielded questions on the prospects of the next general election.

At the Rivers town hall, the former governor of

Anambra urged Nigerians to prevent a repeat of what he described as irregularities witnessed during the 2023 general election.

He said efforts are underway to ensure that intimidation and suppression of voters do not occur during the polls.

“Nobody will intimidate us again at the polling booth,” Obi said.

“If you get to any polling booth today, the highest number of officials you see is five. The average number of voters is 40 to 50. There is no way five people will intimidate 50 people.

“This time all of us

will rescue our country. Somebody said, ‘We are ready to die.’ Let me tell you, I’m ready to die too.”

He added that the NDC would establish effective coordination mechanisms to ensure that voters freely exercise their rights.

“We will make sure we have coordination to ensure that such intimidation does not arise,” Obi said.

The NDC presidential candidate maintained that while attempts might be made to manipulate election results through the Independent National Electoral Commission’s result viewing portal (IREV),

such efforts would be strongly resisted.

“Yes, they will try to manipulate the IREV. But let me tell you, it will not be easy this time,” he said.

According to him, alternative technological measures would be deployed to ensure transparency in the transmission and collation of election results.

“There will be so many IREVs this time. If there is a network glitch, we will give them another one that has no glitch.

“By allowing them to continue, that glitch will glitch our lives. That is what we are suffering today,” he said.



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AFC, Industry leaders hail Dangote investments as catalysts for Africa's economic growth

Leading economists, financial experts and industry stakeholders have described the Dangote Group's investments as major drivers of industrialisation and economic transformation across Nigeria and Africa, citing their impact on job creation, im-

PFIPC scandal: Court rejects Adeniyi Adeyemi's bail application

The Federal High Court in Abuja on Thursday declined to grant an application for bail filed by Adeniyi Adeyemi, the Director-General of the controversial Presidential Foreign Intervention Promotion Council (PFIPC). Justice Obiora Egwuatu, in a ruling on an ex-parte motion filed by Adeyemi's lawyer, M.B. Abdulazeed, held that there was need to hear from the police and other respondents in the suit in the interest of fair hearing. Justice Egwuatu, however, granted a relief for the respondents to give Adeyemi, who is currently in police custody, unhindered access to him lawyers. The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Adeyemi, through his lawyer, had, in the suit, sued the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF), the Inspector-General (I-G) of Police (IGP), Nigeria Police Force and Assistant-Inspector General of Police as 1st to 4th respondents respectively. In the suit signed by another lawyer, Ademola Oyedokun, the alleged fake DG sought six reliefs. Adeyemi urged the court to admit him to bail, release him from detention and allow him to seek medical attention from health practitioners of his own choice over his alleged ill health. He also sought an order restraining the police or any other officers or agents from interrogating him or directing him to make, adopt or sign any statement, save in the presence of a legal practitioner of his own choice. He equally sought "an order that, for so long as the applicant remains in custody, the respondents do permit the applicant unimpeded access to legal practitioners of his own choosing at all reasonable hours." In his affidavit, Adeyemi's elder brother, Adeniyi Adebola, said the detainee was unable to attend to the commissioner for oaths because of his detention. NAN reports that the police, in a criminal

port substitution, foreign exchange conservation and economic competitiveness. The experts spoke at the Lagos Economic Summit themed "The Real Deal: Africa's Greatest Investment Opportunity," where they urged governments to implement policies that strengthen local industries and accelerate economic diversification. President and Chief Executive Officer of the Africa Finance Corporation (AFC), Samaila Zubairu, commended the Dangote Group's sustained investments across Africa, describing them as critical to unlocking the continent's economic potential. He noted that while recent economic reforms have improved foreign exchange stability, strengthened reserves and eased inflationary pressures, the focus must now shift to growth in industry, productivity and employment. Also speaking, Chief Executive Officer of the Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise (CPPE), Muda Yusuf, said industrialisation remains the most effective path to sustainable economic development. He called for better alignment of trade and industrial policies,

stressing that local manufacturers require strategic support to compete effectively and drive broader economic benefits. Founder and CEO of Nairametrics, Ugodre Obi-Chukwu, said Africa's growing population presents a significant industrial opportunity, noting that investments such as the Dangote Refinery are helping to retain capital within the continent while strengthening local production capacity. In his keynote address, Managing Director of Financial Derivatives Company Limited, Bismarck Rewane, said Nigeria is gradually transitioning from a consumption-led economy to one driven by investment and production. He added that sustained investments in productive sectors will continue to stimulate growth, create jobs and improve living standards. Participants at the summit also advocated stronger credit infrastructure, improved national identification systems and increased investment in skills development to enhance the productivity and global competitiveness of Africa's growing youth population.

Tinubu hails October launch of African Credit Rating Agency

President Bola Tinubu has welcomed the African Union's announcement that the African Credit Rating Agency (AfCRA) will begin operations on October 7. Tinubu said AfCRA would strengthen Africa's financial institutions by providing credit assessments that better reflected the continent's economic realities. The President stated this in a message posted on his official X handle on Thursday, reacting to the AU's announcement. He recalled advocating an African credit rating agency in a February article published by the Financial Times, before reiterating the call in May. Tinubu made the second call while speaking at the Africa CEO Forum in Kigali, Rwanda, stressing the need for institutions that understand African economies. "AfCRA is another step toward that goal," Tinubu said, emphasising the importance of accurate assessments of African risks and economic fundamentals. He stressed that Africa was not seeking preferential treatment from international credit rating agencies, but fair assessments based on its realities. "Africa is not asking for favourable ratings. We are asking for fair ratings, grounded in our fundamentals and reforms," he said. According to him, AfCRA should strengthen Africa's capacity to present its economic fundamentals and ongoing reforms more accurately to investors. He, however, said the agency must demonstrate independence and professional rigour to gain the confidence of investors and global capital markets. "AfCRA must now earn the confidence of global capital. That confidence will rest on its independence and the rigour of its work," he said. Tinubu expressed optimism that the agency would improve the assessment of African economies and risks while strengthening insti-



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tutions suited to the continent's realities. "I welcome the African Union's announcement that the African Credit Rating Agency will officially launch on Oct. 7," he said. The President said his advocacy was driven by the need for credible, context-sensitive institutions capable of accurately assessing African economies and reforms.

2027: Army pledges neutrality, reassures Nigerians on election security

The Nigerian Army has assured citizens that its personnel will maintain strict neutrality and professionalism, and adherence to constitutional mandates when called upon to support civil authorities during the 2027 elections. The Commander, 35 Artillery Brigade, Alamala, Brig.-Gen. Friday Onu, gave the assurance on Thursday in Abeokuta at a sensitisation lecture on the conduct of the Nigerian Army personnel during the 2027 elections. Onu stated that the engagement was designed to re-anchor personnel on their constitutional roles, ensuring they remain apolitical, non-partisan, and disciplined before, during, and after the polls. He explained that the primary responsibility of military personnel deployed for

election duties was to support the lead internal security agencies in maintaining a safe, peaceful environment for voters. According to him, the session focused on the defence headquarter's code of conduct for armed forces personnel during elections, relevant provisions of the Electoral Act 2022, and strict adherence to rules of engagement. "The Nigerian Army remains apolitical, non-partisan, and professional at all times. "Army leadership maintains zero tolerance for political bias, operational overreach, and indiscipline. Any breach of guidelines will not be tolerated," Onu warned. He expressed appreciation to the General Officer Commanding (GOC), 81 Division, for approving the exercise, describing it as a testament to the military leadership's commitment to operational readiness and discipline. In his keynote address, the Special Guest of Honour, the Alake and Paramount Ruler of Egbaland, Oba Adedotun Gbadebo, commended the Army hierarchy for extending the training to sister security agencies. Gbadebo noted that no single security institution could independently handle the complex challenges of a national election, emphasising that joint engagements build synergy and strengthen inter-agency collaboration. He urged participants to internalise the directives, noting that public confidence in the armed forces depended on their conduct under pressure. He added that the ultimate objective of election security was to safeguard an environment where citizens could exercise their franchise freely and without intimidation. "Our collective conduct must strengthen public confidence and demonstrate that the security institutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria remain loyal to the constitution and to all Nigerians," he said. Col. Olusegun Oladuntoy (Rtd), the Guest Lecturer, noted that the essence of the seminar was to re-emphasise the role of the military in a democracy. "Democracy is about 27 years old in Nigeria and we have seen the role played by the Nigeria military in strengthening our territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Nigeria state," he said.

Fubara signs 2026 Rivers budget, says it's 'breath of fresh air'

Rivers State Governor, Siminalayi Fubara, has signed the much-anticipated 2026 Appropriation Bill into law, describing the budget as a "breath of fresh air".

The governor performed the exercise on Thursday at the State Executive Council Chambers, Government House, Port Harcourt, the state capital.

He expressed optimism that the budget would usher in a new phase of development and cooperation in the state.

Fubara said his administration's commitment remains focused on the progress and development of a cordial and cooperative relationship going forward.

The Rivers governor thanked God for making the occasion possible, describing it as the beginning

Political parties must curb hate speech, cyberbullying – Yiaga Africa

Yiaga Africa has urged political parties to strengthen internal discipline and sanction members who engage in hate speech, cyberbullying and character assassination.

Mr Michael Ogunshola, Lagos State Focal Person, Yiaga Africa, made the call in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Wednesday in Lagos.

Ogunshola said political parties had a responsibility to regulate the conduct of their members, candidates and supporters, particularly as political activities intensified ahead of future elections.

He called for the adoption and strict enforcement of internal codes of conduct that clearly defined unacceptable language and behaviour during political campaigns.

According to him, such codes should contain specific sanctions for violations to ensure that members understood the consequences of engaging in abusive, defamatory or inflammatory conduct.

"Every political party should have a well-defined code of conduct stating the sanctions that will be imposed on any member who violates the rules.

"If members, followers or candidates are sanctioned for engaging in these activities, the menace will be drastically reduced," he said.

Ogunshola said political parties should also clearly define what constitutes abusive language and ensure that campaign messages focus on policies and programmes rather than personal attacks.

He said political communication should allow candidates to present their plans and explain how they intended to address issues affecting citizens, rather than resorting to insults or attacks against opponents.

"All campaign messages should be policy-based rather than based on insults.

"Our democracy has gone beyond one party insulting the other. What we

of a healthy relationship between the executive and legislative arms of government.

He also acknowledged the role of the former Rivers State Governor and Minister of the FCT, Nyesom Wike, in facilitating the meeting and the progress that culminated in the passage and signing of the budget.

While presenting the

budget to the governor for assent, the Majority Leader of the Rivers State House of Assembly, Major Jack, described the appropriation bill as an ambitious budget.

Jack said the Rivers Assembly had subjected the estimates to thorough scrutiny, with the best of intentions, in the expectation that the budget would deliver the desired growth and development for the state.

In his address, the Speaker of the Rivers State Assembly, Martin Amaewhule, disclosed that the budget figure was not passed exactly as presented by the Governor, following the lawmakers' decision to review downward the proposed 6 billion allocation to PAMO University of Medical Sciences, a private university

where Rivers indigenes have been receiving scholarships from the state government since the previous administration.

Amaewhule said the allocation was reduced, with part of the funds reassigned to the State Primary Healthcare Development Board, after the management of the institution failed to provide satisfactory explanations on



Rivers State Governor, Siminalayi Fubara, when he signed the 1.84 trillion 2026 Appropriation Bill into law on Thursday at the Government House in Port Harcourt, describing the development as "a breath of fresh air" for the state.

FG announces new date for youth confab, targets 360 delegates

The Federal Government has fixed October for the national youth conference, with at least 360 delegates expected to attend from across the country.

Recall that on October 1, 2024, President Bola Tinubu announced plans to convene a 30-day national youth conference.

Although he did not specify a date at the time, the federal government said the conference would commence in the first week of February 2025, with three weeks of grassroots engagement, followed by a one-week meeting of youth delegates in Abuja.

However, the conference did not take place as planned, and Tinubu later inaugurated a 44-member planning committee in March 2025, while an official registration portal for the confab was launched in June.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, Olubunmi Olusanya, permanent secretary of the ministry of youth development and chairman of the planning committee, said the conference would now be held over two weeks in October.

Olusanya said the conference is designed to move youth engagement beyond participation in national development.

"It will bring together young Nigerians from across the country and the diaspora to identify challenges, propose practical solutions and develop actionable recommendations for government and other relevant institutions," the statement reads.

He said the two-week programme will begin with a nationwide virtual consultation open to Nigerians aged 18-35, including those in the diaspora, during which youths are expected to submit memoranda and policy proposals via an online portal.

"The second week will feature the physical conference in Abuja, with one youth delegate representing each of Nigeria's 360 federal constituencies, alongside six diaspora delegates, stakeholders and observers," he said.

Olusanya said the programme will feature discussions on governance, leadership and political participation; economic transformation, entrepreneurship and job creation; education and skills for the future; technology, innovation and digital transformation; climate change and energy transition; and social cohesion and security.

Bauchi pledges to domesticate FG Almajiri and Tsangaya Commission Act

LUKA YELMI, BAUCHI

The Bauchi State Government has pledged to domesticate the Federal Government's Act establishing the National Commission for Almajiri and Out-of-School Children Education, NCAOOSCE, describing it as critical to achieving zero out-of-school children in the state.

The pledge was made on Thursday during a stakeholder engagement organized by the Bauchi State Ministry of Education in collaboration with NCAOOSCE. Traditional rulers, Islamic scholars, government officials and civil society groups attended the meeting in Bauchi.

Commissioner for Education, Hon. Abdulkadir Mohammed, said the administration of Governor Bala Mohammed had already invested heavily in education and would align with the federal policy by establishing a state Almajiri and Tsangaya Commission.

"No child will be left behind under this administration. We will domesticate the federal policy and put structures in place to ensure every child in Bauchi has access to quality education and skills," Mohammed said.

The Federal Government, through the Minister of Education, Prof. Tunji Alausa, urged states to urgently align with NESRI and four key policies covering Almajiri education, data and digitization, and alternative learning pathways.

Dr. Balarabe Shehu Kakalle, Special Adviser to the Minister, who delivered the message, commended Bauchi for the pledge.

"Bauchi is setting a model for other states. Under the new framework, children in Tsangaya and Almajiri schools are formally recognised as students with pathways to formal education, skills and self-reliance," Kakalle said.

Speaking on behalf of NCAOOSCE Executive Secretary, Dr. Muhammad Sani Idris, Director Halliru Musa

Halliru said the Commission has enrolled more than 700,000 children nationwide as part of its "zero out-of-school children" target.

He said NCAOOSCE has developed a 10-year Strategic Plan 2025-2035 and the National Policy on the Enhancement of Almajiri Education, which formally integrates Tsangaya education into the national system.

"We are not discarding tradition, we are building bridges between Tsangaya and modern education," Halliru said. "Our approach is clear: literacy, numeracy, skills and inclusive learning, while preserving our religious and cultural values."

16 million northern children benefit from SARMAAN programme

CHUKWUEMEKE IWELUNMO

Sixteen million children across 11 participating states in northern Nigeria have been reached through the Safety and Antimicrobial Resistance of Mass Administration of Azithromycin in Children 1–59 Months in Nigeria (SARMAAN) programme.

This major milestone demonstrates what becomes possible when evidence, government leadership, community engagement, frontline delivery, and rigorous safety monitoring work together around a shared child-survival objective.

This milestone is more apparent as Nigeria's own health indicators show slow but real progress: under-five mortality has fallen from 132 to 102 deaths per 1,000 live births between the 2018 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey and the 2023–24 survey.

This progress can be directly attributed to improvements in immunization coverage, exclusive breastfeeding, antenatal care attendance, skilled birth attendance, and treatment-seeking for childhood illness. At 102 deaths per 1,000 live births, Nigeria still remains more than four times above the Sustainable Development Goal target of 25 per 1,000 live births, underscoring why delivery models capable of working at scale, like SARMAAN's, are drawing close attention.

Reaching millions of young lives is an important achievement. Doing so while maintaining systems for safety monitoring, data collection, supervision, and scientific evaluation provides a deeper contribution to the evidence needed to inform future child-survival policy and practice.

For Professor Oliver Ezechi, Lead Investigator of SARMAAN and Director of Research at the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research (NIMR), this combination of implementation and evidence is central to

the project's value. "What the data from SARMAAN shows is that safety monitoring and antimicrobial resistance surveillance can be built directly into a mass drug administration project at scale, not layered on afterward," he noted. "The experience demonstrates that rigorous science and large-scale delivery do not have to compete; they can strengthen one another."

The project has been largely successful through a combination of efforts to reach young boys and girls where they live, reliant on caregivers having sufficient information and confidence to allow trained personnel into their communities and homes.

Pediatrician and SARMAAN Champion Dr. Zainab Shinkafi-Bagudu emphasized that each child's health outcome is determined by how effectively their needs are met by the systems surrounding and supporting them. "Reaching young people at this scale requires health workers, caregivers, communities, and government systems to work together. True equity is when an intervention can reach all children, regardless of where they live," she said.

SARMAAN implementation has relied heavily on community engagement, mobilisation, and frontline delivery alongside state leadership and coordination. Repeated rounds of implementation have reinforced an important lesson: communities are not simply recipients of public health interventions; they are partners that jointly decide the fate of these interventions in their localities.

In Jigawa State, First Lady and SARMAAN Champion Her Excellency Hadiza Umar Namadi reflected on the importance of that relationship. "The numbers are important, but behind them are mothers, caregivers, and communities who have opened their doors and placed their trust in the people delivering this intervention," she noted. "Sustaining that trust requires continuous engagement."

Flooding: FCTA begins desilting of drains, warns against vandalism, illegal structures

STEPHEN GBADA-MOSI, IBADAN

The Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) has commenced a city-wide desilting of drainage channels following heavy torrential rainfalls that triggered flash floods across parts of the nation's capital.

Inspecting the ongoing clearance operations along the Airport Expressway on Thursday, the Acting Executive Secretary of the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA), Mr. Richard Dauda, said the exercise was directed by the FCT Minister, Mr. Nyesom Wike.

The directive followed a flash flood that flooded

the Airport Expressway on Tuesday.

According to Dauda, the effort was to mitigate flood risks during the peak of the rainy season.

Dauda noted that while recent downpours aligned with earlier meteorological warnings and climate change trends, the Abuja Master Plan inherently recognised certain areas, including the Airport Expressway axis, as flood plains.

He assured residents that while resilient infrastructure was originally built to handle high water volumes, human activities had severely compromised its efficiency.

"Some of these drainage facilities over time have been silted. Part of the cause

is residents dumping refuse into drainage channels.

"When rain falls, it washes down polythene bags, waste, and even large objects that block the outlets," he said.

Dauda highlighted two major human factors aggravating the flash floods: Illegal development and widespread infrastructure vandalism.

Exposing a major choke point along the expressway, Dauda pointed to a triple-cell box culvert meant to discharge a powerful stream flowing from the Galadima Roundabout.

He explained that a private developer had illegally constricted the waterway

further downstream by constructing retaining walls to expand a personal plot.

"What that causes is that the volume of water that ought to pass no longer passes, causing detention, backflow, and eventual flooding."

"To restore adequate discharge capacity, we must remove the structures built by this developer," he said.

Dauda also decried the theft of metal gully inlet covers by vandals, which allows large debris to flow directly into underground drains instead of being sieved at the surface.

"When vandals steal these covers, it's like stealing from yourself as a taxpayer," he remarked.



Inspector-General of Police Olatunji Rilwan Disu, presenting cheques worth 2.317 billion to 2,971 beneficiaries and next-of-kin of police officers who died in active service.

Kaduna ALGON salutes Uba Sani over enhanced pay for traditional rulers

GABRIEL UDEH, KADUNA

The Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON), Kaduna State chapter, has commended Governor Uba Sani for approving enhanced remuneration for traditional rulers across the state.

The association said the approval covers paramount rulers, including Emirs and Chiefs, as well as district and village heads, describing the decision as a boost to the traditional institution and

its role in promoting peace, security and grassroots development.

In a statement issued by its chairman, Sheikh Jamilu Abubakar Albani, said traditional rulers remained indispensable partners in governance and served as a vital link between government and the people.

According to ALGON, the improved remuneration would further motivate traditional leaders and strengthen their capacity to support intelligence gathering, conflict resolution,

peaceful coexistence and community mobilisation.

ALGON noted that improved welfare for traditional rulers would also contribute to efforts to address security challenges and promote peace and harmony across the 23 local government areas of the state.

It commended Sani for his efforts to strengthen the relevance of traditional institutions as partners in the administration's peace-building and development agenda.

The association, on behalf

of the 23 local government councils, pledged continued collaboration with the state government and other stakeholders towards consolidating peace, security, good governance and sustainable grassroots development.

ALGON also urged traditional rulers to reciprocate the gesture by strengthening their collaboration with local government councils and other relevant agencies in promoting peaceful coexistence, security and the overall development of the state.

NASWAMSA DG appeals to residents over massive post-sanitation waste evacuation

BY FRANCIS NANSAK LAFIA

The Director General Nasarawa State Waste Management and Sanitation Authority (NASWAMSA), Hon. Mohamed Bello Isa, has appealed to residents of Lafia, Karu and other urban centres across the state to remain patient as the Authority intensifies the evacuation of the huge

volume of waste generated during the end-of-the-month Environmental Sanitation Exercise.

According to him as it is usually experienced after every monthly sanitation exercise, residents bring large quantities of refuse to both designated and, unfortunately, undesignated waste collection points.

"This month is not exempted, as an unusually

high volume of waste was deposited across several locations, creating enormous pressure on the Authority's waste evacuation operations.

The DG made the appeal on behalf the NASWAMSA management on Thursday as ongoing evacuation across some major cities of the state is being carried out.

He added that under the purposeful leadership of his administration work will

not be stand down but immediate commencement of emergency evacuation of the accumulated waste and simultaneous sustaining its routine waste collection services across Lafia, Mararaba, Masaka and other communities within the state is a priority.

He explained that the current exercise is extensive and requires continuous

deployment of personnel, waste collection trucks and operational equipment to clear all affected locations and transport the waste to approved final disposal sites. Despite these challenges, dedicated staff of the Authority remain committed to restoring cleanliness in all communities.

"NASWAMSA acknowledges the concerns and complaints from residents

in areas where evacuation is still ongoing and assures the public that no community will be abandoned.

"All identified waste collection points have been captured in the Authority's operational schedule and will be attended to as quickly as logistics permit."

"Let me therefore appeal to Resident to exercise patience and cooperate with waste evacuation teams."

Prioritise Nigeria’s security challenges

Nigeria, a nation teeming with potential and vibrant human capital, finds itself increasingly crippled by a deepening security crisis that threatens its very foundation. What began as a regional insurgency in the North-East has presently metastasized into a hydra-headed monster, manifesting as ubiquitous banditry, mass kidnapping, farmer-herder clashes, and separatist agitations across all six geopolitical zones. The sheer scale and multi-dimensional nature of these threats are not merely an inconvenience; they are actively unraveling the social contract between the state and its citizens, who, as guaranteed by the 1999 Constitution, deserve safety and security.

The recent reported statistics—with hundreds of thousands of lives lost and millions displaced due to violence in a single year—paint a grim picture of a country under siege. The terror is no longer confined to remote forests; it is knocking on the doors of schools, highways, and even capital cities. This state of perpetual fear has devastating economic and social consequences: farmers abandon their fields, fueling a catastrophic food inflation crisis; foreign and local investments flee a volatile landscape; and the collective psychological well-being of the populace is severely damaged.

While military force is necessary, the Federal Government's response has historically been overly reliant on kinetic approaches that address the symptoms, not the disease. The crisis is not purely military; it is fundamentally a crisis of governance, development, and social justice.

The roots of this widespread insecurity are deeply embedded. Poverty and rampant youth unemployment create a vast pool of alienated individuals susceptible to recruitment by criminal and extremist groups. When legitimate pathways to success are blocked, the 'business' of crime—be it banditry or kidnapping—becomes an attractive, albeit dangerous, enterprise. This is compounded by elite manipulation of ethnic and religious differences, which exploits communal fault lines for political gain, turning neighbour against neighbour, particularly in the escalating farmer-herder conflicts.

The weakness of the security apparatus itself—marred by corruption, poor funding, inadequate equipment, and a lack of

modern intelligence-gathering capacity—allows perpetrators to operate with near-total impunity. A porous border system also facilitates the easy flow of arms and foreign fighters into the country, escalating the sophistication of criminal gangs.

Stemming the tide requires a radical shift from a reactive, military-centric model to a holistic, proactive security and development strategy led by the Federal Government.

The government must aggressively target the financial networks that sustain insecurity. This means tracking and freezing ransom payments and illicit profits from oil bunkering and mining. The political will to prosecute the powerful networks and individuals who profit from chaos, regardless of their status or connections, is non-negotiable.

The long-term solution lies in economic empowerment. The Federal Government must roll out genuine, massive job creation and vocational training programs for youth across all regions. This must be paired with land reform and community mediation efforts to resolve farmer-herder conflicts, protecting agricultural livelihoods and ensuring food security. The focus must be on lifting millions out of poverty and providing a viable alternative to crime.

While increasing the budget for security is crucial, the funds must be used transparently and effectively to train, equip, and motivate personnel. This includes embracing advanced surveillance and intelligence technology to predict and preempt attacks, rather than simply responding after the fact.

The recent threats by the US President, Donald Trump should, therefore, be seen as a wakeup call for the political will to be summoned by the Executive arm of government. Nobody is above the law and none, no matter how highly-placed, should be spared in the fight to let Nigeria regain her peace.

Nigeria's leadership must understand that national security is not just about the state's survival; it is about the survival of its citizens. By addressing the twin scourges of poverty and impunity, supported by strategic security reform, can the Federal Government begin to rebuild the damaged thread of trust and pull the nation back from the precipice. The time for half-measures and rhetoric is over; the future of the republic depends on courageous, decisive action.

“

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Opinion

Hello, God!



WOLE OLAOYE

When the king of Afrobeat, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, died on 2 August, 1997, the world stood still. He had conquered the music world from Africa, re-inventing African jazz in his own unique way and wielding his lyrics as a weapon of social emancipation.

Michael Jackson's death on 25 June, 2009, also shook the world, especially considering that he was at the height of his glory and only 50 years old. The King of Pop redefined the concept of dancing, revolutionising James Brown's electric moves with a touch of the extraterrestrial.

Famous Deaths

The revolving door between mortality and the hereafter has hosted many notable passers-through in the last 15 years: Amy Winehouse, 2011; Whitney Houston, 2012; BB King, 2015; Prince, 2016; David Bowie, 2016; George Michael, 2016; Chuck Berry, 2017; Don Williams, 2017; Aretha Franklin, 2018; Hugh Masekela, 2018; Manu Dibango, 2020; Eddie Van Halen, 2020; Kenny Rogers, 2020; Tina Turner, 2023; Quincy Jones, 2024.

Star-studded as the modern music scene has been, it will be hard to find another contemporary songwriter with as much cross-cultural and trans-ideological appeal as the woman who combined intense Christian faith with folksy fellow-feeling and a perpetual investment in everlasting youth. Her name was Dolly Parton.

In all, she wrote an estimated 3,000+ songs throughout a career that lasted a little over six decades. Out of her massive output, she has officially recorded and released around 450 to 500 of her own compositions, including such iconic tracks as "I Will Always Love You" (later famously redone by Whitney Houston), "Jolene", "Coat of Many Colors", and "9 to 5". Twenty-five years ago, in 2001, she was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in recognition of her prolific songwriting output.

I am always fascinated by the lives of celebrities who were so rich they had more than money. What coursed through my mind when the announcement of Parton's death hit the airwaves was the great example of generosity she left for the world to emulate in a remarkable life.

Philanthropy

Dolly Parton's philanthropic record includes a wide range of charitable initiatives, donations, and direct community support. Her Imagination Library, which was founded in 1995 in honour of her father, mails free, high-quality books monthly to children from birth until age five. It has so far distributed over 300 million books across the United States, Canada, the UK, Ireland, and Australia.

In 2020, she donated \$1 million to the Vanderbilt University Medical Center, which directly helped fund the development of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. She raised \$700,000 to assist communities affected by the 2021 Tennessee floods. In 2024, she donated \$1 million personally, matched by another \$1 million from her Dollywood businesses, to assist disaster relief across East Tennessee.

She made donations towards educational support and high school retention, em-

ployee scholarships for higher education, paediatric cancer research, and wildlife conservation of bald eagles and reinvested earnings — including royalties from songs like "I Will Always Love You" — into local business properties and historic districts to support community economic development.

She was the home girl who ensured that the ordinary folk in her environment shared in her fortune. If that is the only lesson the world can learn from her, it would still have been a remarkable one. But her entire life itself was a grass-to-grace poem packaged in a curvy, buxom, mannequin-perfect visage.

Cosmetic Surgeries

Perhaps the only vanity she permitted herself was her insistence on physical perfection, which made her undergo plastic surgery several times to spruce up her looks. She viewed cosmetic enhancement as an ongoing maintenance routine, famously joking, "If I see something sagging, dragging, or bagging, I'm going to go get it stuck, tucked, or plucked."

Ever candid in a childlike manner, she had admitted to doing facelifts, blepharoplasty (eyelid surgery), breast implants/lifts, liposuction, and excess skin removal aside from non-surgical procedures like Botox injections, dermal fillers, and lip collagen injections.

She was so light-hearted about it, quipping, "I may look fake, but I'm real where it counts."

Her heart was where it counted. For almost 60 years, she was married to Carl Dean, an extremely reclusive man who ran an asphalt-paving business and preferred rock to country music. He rarely appeared in public, leading to persistent tabloid urban legends that he didn't actually exist. They had no biological children.

She had enough love to share with the rest of humanity, and that is why, without ever having the benefit of personal contact, this writer, born into a different race half a world away, feels we must imbibe the deeper lessons of a life so richly blessed and so massively charitable.

Relatable Narratives

I make bold to say that her most popular song across all faiths in Nigeria is "Coat of Many Colors" because it vividly illustrates themes of poverty, love, and resilience. Interestingly but not surprisingly, it was a biographical song. Dolly was the fourth of 12 children born to Avie Lee and Robert Lee Parton who lived in a tiny, two-room log cabin on Locust Ridge in Sevier County, Tennessee, without electricity and running water.

Robert Lee Parton was a sharecropper and tobacco farmer who also worked construction jobs while his wife managed the household, cooked meals from basic staples, and made clothes for the children. Cash was always a problem, so much so that Dolly's father paid the doctor who delivered her with a sack of cornmeal.

"Coat of Many Colors," therefore, did not drop from the sky. It was a lived experience. In a world where about 1.1 billion people live in acute multidimensional poverty across developing countries, the song resonated well. Parton was vocalising the sentiments of the wretched of the earth, irrespective of geographical location.

Kaduna traditional rulers' salaries, reviewed, security allowances approved – Gov Sani

GABRIEL UDEH, KADUNA

Kaduna State Governor, Uba Sani has approved an upward review of salaries and allowances for Emirs, Chiefs, District Heads and Village Heads across Kaduna state.

In a statement announcing the approval on Wednesday, made available on Thursday, the Commissioner of Information and Culture, Malam Ahmed Maiyaki disclosed that the upward review covers traditional rulers across the three senatorial districts.

The statement quoted the Commissioner of Local Government Affairs, Alhaji Sadiq Mamman Lagos as saying that the review is aimed at improving their welfare and strengthening their capacity to effectively discharge their responsibilities at the grassroots.

Maiyaki said that the LG affairs Commissioner further announced that Governor Uba Sani has approved monthly security allowances for all 35 Emirates and Chiefdoms in Kaduna State, effective from 1st September 2026.

The statement said that the security allowance is to strengthen grassroots intelligence gathering and support security agencies in tackling crime and other security threats.

Mamman Lagos also said the measures demonstrated the administration's recognition of traditional institutions as indispensable partners in grassroots governance, peace-building, conflict resolution and security.

"Our traditional rulers are the custodians of our communities and a critical link between government and

the people. Their closeness to the grassroots places them in a strategic position to detect emerging threats, facilitate timely intelligence and resolve disputes before they escalate.

"With this enhanced support comes greater responsibility. We expect our royal fathers to intensify their efforts in fostering peaceful

coexistence, strengthening mutual trust and promoting harmony among the diverse ethnic and religious groups within their respective emirates and chiefdoms," he added.

The Commissioner for Information and Culture maintained that the approvals further underscore Governor Uba Sani's com-

mitment to strengthening traditional institutions and providing them with the necessary support to contribute effectively to peace, security and development.

Maiyaki noted that traditional rulers remain an important bridge between government, security agencies and communities, particularly in intelligence

gathering, community engagement and the promotion of peaceful coexistence.

He urged residents to continue cooperating with traditional institutions and security agencies by providing timely and credible information to safeguard lives and property and ensure a safer and more prosperous state for all.

Jigawa varsity issues two-week strike ultimatum

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Sule Lamido University Kafin Hausa (SLUK) branch, has issued a two-week ultimatum to the Jigawa State Government to implement the new university salary structure or face a full-scale industrial action.

The threat was contained in a press release dated 1 September, and signed by the ASUU-SLUK chairperson, Idris Chiomawa.

According to the union, members had exercised patience while operating under lower pay for roughly seven months following the approved new salary package.

ASUU-SLUK noted that while several other state-owned universities across the country have since implemented the agreement, the Jigawa State Government has continuously delayed the process.

The union said despite sending three formal letters to the Commissioner for Higher Education, Yusuf Chamo, the Speaker of the House of Assembly, Haruna Aliyu, and engaging respected community leaders, its appeals for dialogue have been met with silence.

ASUU criticised the operational failures of the state's Integrated Payroll and Personnel Management System (IPPPMS).

The union described the platform as ineffective, incompatible with university operations, and requested an immediate exemption in compliance with university law.

The union outlined its primary demands, which include: immediate implementation of the ASUU-Federal Government agreement and full payment of accrued arrears from January 2026 to date.

There is also the exemption of the institution from the IPPMS platform to accommodate university peculiarities and immediate remittance of all unremitted third-party salary deductions, alongside the release of the 2024/2025 Earned Academic Allowance (EAA).

Others are settlement of selective responsibility allowances, annual increments withheld since 2023, and promotion arrears owed to staff (including the professorial cadre) since 2024.

"A review of the state government's decision to deduct 0.7 per cent from the statutory 2 per cent Local Government contribution to the university, urging sustainable funding solutions for sister institutions instead."

ASUU said it has exhausted all peaceful and administrative channels for constructive dialogue.

"Should the Government fail to address these issues at the expiration of the two-week ultimatum, the union would be left with no option but to embark on a strike," the statement read.

The two-week ultimatum, which took effect on 1 September, 2026, is set to expire mid-September, leaving academic activities at the state-owned university hanging in the balance.

However, in its response, the state government stated that the two-week ultimatum issued by ASUU was the result of a communication gap between both parties.

Crush emerging threats, protect Plateau's peace, Mutfwang orders security agencies

Plateau State Governor, Caleb Mutfwang, has convened a meeting of the State Security Council, directing security agencies to strengthen intelligence gathering, inter-agency collaboration and preventive operations to safeguard lives and property across the state.

The meeting, held at the New Government House, Little Rayfield, Jos, on Wednesday, brought together the Deputy Governor, heads of security and law enforcement agencies, the Gbong Gwom Jos, Da. Jacob Gyang Buba, and other top government officials.

The council reviewed emerging security threats, recent attacks in some communities, intelligence

sharing and preventive strategies aimed at ensuring that residents, visitors and businesses can operate in a safe and secure environment.

Speaking after the meeting, the Commissioner of Police, Plateau State Command, CP Ayodeji Faniyan, said the meeting was part of the governor's periodic assessment of the security situation and his determination to strengthen existing measures.

Faniyan, who described Mutfwang as the Chief Security Officer of the state, said the council was convened to identify security gaps and take necessary steps to prevent a recurrence of recent incidents.

"His Excellency Governor Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang

is the Chief Security Officer of the state, and once in a while, we review the security situation. We assess the security situation in order to take steps to improve on what we already have," he said.

The police commissioner described the recent attacks in Mangu as unfortunate, saying the incident was one of the issues that informed the governor's decision to convene the security council.

"The Mangu case was very unfortunate. We prepared and deployed, but somehow, such incidents still occurred. That is part of why His Excellency called this meeting so that such must not happen again," Faniyan said.

He disclosed that security

agencies had made arrests in connection with some of the major attacks recorded in the state in the past month, adding that investigations were ongoing to identify other suspects and establish their roles.

"We have some arrests; investigation is ongoing. We are not investigating in isolation. We are collaborating with all the other agencies up to the national level. We are still going after some suspects, and we are doing a lot of technological analysis," he said.

Faniyan assured residents that security agencies had received the governor's marching orders and would intensify efforts to protect lives and property while responding swiftly to emerging threats.



The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Uyo Operations Office, has presented Certificates of Participation to passing-out members of the NEMA/NSC Emergency Management Volunteers (EMVs) in Ikot Ekpene and Uyo Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State.

2027: Nasarawa Deputy Speaker predicts landslide victory for Tinubu, Wadada

The Deputy Speaker, Nasarawa State House of Assembly, Muhammad Oyanki, has expressed optimism that President Bola Tinubu would win a second term in 2027 with a landslide victory.

He also said that the APC governorship candidate in Nasarawa State, Sen. Ahmed Aliyu-Wadada, would emerge victorious in the general elections.

The lawmaker stated

this on Wednesday in Lafia while hosting a socio-political group, "G-13 for Wadada and Oyanki," from Doma Local Government Area of the state.

Oyanki, who is the APC candidate for Doma North Constituency, observed that President Tinubu's developmental strides would earn him a second term in 2027.

The deputy speaker appreciated the group for the visit, solidarity, and endorse-

ment, while assuring them of his support at all times.

"I want to call on you to continue to mobilise grassroots support for His Excellency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Sen. Ahmed Aliyu Wadada, our APC governorship candidate, and all other APC candidates.

"By the grace of God, come 2027, President Tinubu will be re-elected and Sen. Wadada will win the governorship election in

the state. "The APC-led government's achievements are there for everybody to see, and our achievements will earn victory for APC come 2027," he said.

The deputy speaker said the APC was a party to watch out for and a party to beat in 2027.

He advised the visitors to remain law-abiding and to engage in peaceful and issues-based campaign.

Oborevwo moves to boost Deltans' purchasing power amid economic hardship

NOSA AKENZUA,
ASABA

The Delta State Government has announced fresh measures to cushion the effects of economic hardship and boost the purchasing power of residents through infrastructure development, workers' welfare, empowerment programmes and strategic investments.

The State Commissioner for Works (Rural Roads) and Public Information, Mr Charles Aniagwu, disclosed this on Thursday while addressing a press conference in Asaba.

He said Governor Sheriff Oborevwo had directed the administration to intensify programmes capable of stimulating economic activity at the grassroots and ensuring that the benefits of ongoing economic reforms were felt directly by households.

Aniagwu, who was accompanied by the Executive Assistant to the Governor on

New Media, Mr Felix Ofou, said the state's improved financial position had enabled the government to undertake major capital projects while deliberately deploying resources to stimulate local economic activity rather than fuel inflation.

"The governor has directed that we intensify efforts at rolling out programmes that will indeed improve the purchasing power of our people," Aniagwu said.

He explained that the planned massive renovation of schools across the state was part of the strategy, noting that the projects would create opportunities for contractors, artisans, suppliers and traders in local communities.

He said materials such as cement and roofing sheets would largely be sourced locally, ensuring that government expenditure circulated within the communities where the projects were being executed and created a multiplier effect through in-

creased earnings and household spending.

The commissioner also disclosed that the state government was working to institutionalise the proposed payment of a 13th-month salary through legislation.

He said the initiative was not intended as indiscriminate distribution of funds but as a deliberate intervention to increase the disposable income of civil servants and stimulate economic activity.

"Once this fund gets to the

hands of the civil servants, that civil servant is also enabled to spend money in certain directions. That way, government would have been able to take the benefit of the reforms from the macro level to the micro level," he said.

Aniagwu further revealed that the governor had directed government agencies responsible for empowerment to commence the process of identifying beneficiaries for various programmes.

Unemployment: NBM of Africa empowers four with motorcycles in Ebonyi

TITUS AKHIGBE,
BENIN

The Ebonyi Zone of the NBM of Africa Worldwide has empowered four unemployed members with brand-new motorcycles, in a move aimed at promoting self-reliance, economic independence and discouraging youths from engaging in social vices.

The empowerment exercise, described by members of the humanitarian and Pan-African organisation as a celebration of hope, progress and renewed opportunities, was initiated by the President of the Ebonyi Zone, Chief Chika Joseph Nwangele.

Presenting the motorcycles to the beneficiaries, Nwangele said the gesture was part of his administration's commitment to translating leadership into tangible benefits for members, rather than limiting empowerment to promises and rhetoric.

Speaking on behalf of the Worldwide President of NBM of Africa, Dr Charles Chimezie, at the ceremony, Nwangele said the motorcycles would enable the beneficiaries to engage in legitimate transportation and other income-generating activities, thereby providing them with a sustainable means of livelihood.

He stressed that unemployment should not become a pathway to idleness or social vices, noting that

empowering young people with productive opportunities remained critical to building stronger families, communities and the nation.

According to him, "When you build the youths, you build the entire community and nation," adding that the initiative was designed to provide members with practical opportunities to improve their livelihoods and become economically independent.

The Ebonyi Zonal President said the empowerment was also in line with the humanitarian philosophy of NBM of Africa Worldwide, which he described as one of the cardinal objectives of the organisation under the leadership of Chimezie.

He said the Ebonyi Zone would continue to implement initiatives aimed at supporting members and reaching out to people in need, stressing that the organisation remained committed to improving lives through practical humanitarian interventions.

Nwangele urged members to remain committed to personal development and productive ventures, saying collective progress could only be achieved when leaders were willing to lift others and create opportunities for them to succeed.

He expressed optimism that the beneficiaries would justify the confidence reposed in them by using the motorcycles responsibly



Scene at the 7th Freedom Online Newspaper Lecture about the state of economy and security in Lagos.

Idris commends C'River Govt for repositioning Nigerian Chronicle

IDONGESIT INYANG,
CALABAR

Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohamed Idris has remarked that the decision of the Cross River State Government to rebuild and reposition the Cross River State Newspaper Corporation, publisher of the Nigerian Chronicle rather than allow it to disappear into history, deserves commendation.

Idris said this in Calabar on Thursday, in his keynote address at the official commissioning of the new government printing press and reactivation of the remod-

elled State Newspaper, now the Cross River Information Hub.

According to the Information Minister, commissioning of a modern Government Printing Press even in a digital age, affords official documentation to remain indispensable just as Laws, gazettes, white papers, reports and other public records must be properly produced, secured and preserved.

While congratulating governor Bassey Otu for giving the vital sector the attention it deserves, he stated that "Today is about much more than reopening a building or commissioning new equipment. It is about restoring an

institution."

He added that Gov Otu is preserving institutional memory and renewing confidence in the place of credible information, professional journalism and effective communication in governance.

The Minister, added that the Cross River State Newspaper Corporation, established in 1971, has a proud history as it has served for decades as an important platform for documenting the affairs of government and the people of Cross River State through publications such as the Nigerian Chronicle and Weekend Chronicle.

Idris maintained that "The information environment

has changed dramatically since this Corporation was established more than five decades ago."

The Information boss argued that "technology may change the tools of journalism, but it cannot replace truth, accuracy, fairness and professional judgement."

He added that "the Cross River Information Hub must therefore become more than a renovated physical structure. It should be a centre for credible journalism, digital innovation, professional development and meaningful public engagement. It should tell the Cross River story confidently to Nigeria and the world."

Oyo Environmental Vanguard apprehends 55 offenders

STEPHEN GBADAMOSI,
IBADAN

The Oyo State government has reiterated its resolve not overlook environmental infractions, as the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, through its Environmental Vanguards, apprehended and secured the conviction of 55 offenders in Ibadan in August.

The offenders were apprehended for various violations of the state's environmental laws and were subsequently prosecuted

and convicted in accordance with the provisions of the law.

The state Commissioner for Environment and Natural Resources, Ademola Aderinto, stated that the development was part of the ministry's intensified monitoring and enforcement efforts towards ensuring compliance with environmental regulations and sustaining a clean, healthy and habitable environment across the state.

The development was contained in a statement by the state Commissioner

for Information, Prince Dotun Oyelade, on Thursday.

Aderinto reaffirmed the commitment of the state government to strengthening environmental enforcement, warning residents, business owners and other stakeholders against activities capable of degrading the environment, stressing that environmental laws ought to be obeyed by all.

The commissioner further urged members of the public to support the government's efforts by complying with environmental

regulations, adopting proper waste disposal practices and promptly reporting environmental infractions to the appropriate authorities.

He stressed that open dumping and the dumping of refuse on road medians are strictly prohibited in Oyo State, adding that all forms of refuse disposal must be carried out through accredited waste contractors directly from the source, in line with the state government's approved waste management system.

Enugu Health commissioner advocates increase in BHCPF fund to 5% to cover funding gaps

CHINELO UDE, ENUGU

The Enugu State Commissioner for Health, Prof. George Ugwu, has called for increase in the Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF) from current one per cent to five per cent. The BHCPF fund is a Nigerian financing initiative established by the National Health Act of 2014 to deliver free and basic healthcare services to the poorest and most vulnerable populations. The funded is at least one per cent of the Federal Government's Consolidated Revenue Fund and donors support. Ugwu, who is a Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, made the call on Thursday while delivering the 251st Inaugural Lecture of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN). The lecture, which was titled: "The Mother, the Child and the State: My Triumphant Journey from Evidence to Action," was delivered at the University of Nigeria Enugu Campus (UNEC). Ugwu, who was former Executive Secretary of Enugu State Primary Health

Care Development Agency, said that increase in the fund had become imperative following withdrawal of funding for basic healthcare by some countries and international donors. "The existing funding from the one per cent from the Federal Government's Consolidated Revenue Fund and donor support had gone a long way in assisting states put their primary healthcare centre in optimal condition. "However, there is concern that as donor countries, agencies and organizations are pulling out their funding support; there is a need to shore up existing funding. "The anticipated increased funding, would take adequate care of the perceived and anticipated gaps to be created by pulling out of donors," he said. The lecturer said that the Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs), which thousands are scattered nationwide, holds the key to health of majority of pregnant women and children in the country. He said that the state or government should ensure it is built to be resilient, equipped, accessible and deliver measurable and

quality healthcare services. "This will ensure that healthcare issues are dealt with early with less resources at the grassroots and reduce health burden at secondary and tertiary levels as well as on the government," he said. Ugwu noted that there was a need for more health advocacy and education to sharpen understanding of health issues and how to live healthy lifestyle "since prevention is better than cure". The commissioner also advocated for the practice of universal health coverage through adoption of health insurance scheme and practices. "On this, a little health insurance premium payment can cover ones health for a year and such gesture can be extended to family members, people in rural communities and indigents. "As in Enugu State, where our health-loving governor,

Dr Peter Ndubuisi Mbah, is ensuring a newly-built and functional PHC in each of 260 political wards, the insurance will ensure optimisation and accessibility of these facilities. "We are also advocating that wealthy and influencer people adopt a PHC within their wards or communities to ensure their monitoring, supervision and at times intervention to ensure optimal running and delivery," he said. Ugwu also highlighted key research breakthroughs throughout his career, detailing how empirical data collected in hospital wards and rural health centres informed state and national policy guidelines and community intervention programmes. On the lecturer, Ugwu, whose medical career spans over two decades, had made pivotal contributions to public health and clinical medicine as a clinician and technocrat with over 70 ac-



George Ugwu

ademic research publication to his credit. He is also a Member of Presidential Committee Task Force on Ebola Prevention and Preparedness as well as former Chairman of Nigeria Medical Association (NMA). The lecturer holds an MBBS, Master of Public Health (MPH), and fellowships from prestigious international and national surgical colleges—including FWACS, FMCOG, and FICS among others.

Afokang Correctional Centre in Calabar houses 784 inmates against designed capacity

IDONGESIT INYANG, CALABAR

Afokang Correctional Centre in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, says it is currently housing 784 inmates translating to 334 above its designed capacity. Of this number a total of 531 inmates comprising 520 males and 11 females are awaiting trial. An inspection of the facility on Monday, August 31, 2026, by the Student's Right Academy, revealed that the Centre, was originally built for about 450 inmates. According to data provided during the visit, those on death row 48 while 35 are serving life imprisonment. According to A. E. Edet, Chief Superintendent of corrections who conducted the students around the facility, the awaiting trial inmates make up of about 68 percent of the total population. Edet raised fresh questions about access to timely justice and prolonged detention of suspects who have not been convicted identifying delays in case determination and prose-

cution as the main drivers of overcrowding. The Department of Public Prosecutions was also cited as a key part of the process where bottlenecks prolong detention. The Chief Superintendent, also expressed concern is the infrequency of jail delivery exercises as the Chief Judge of Cross River State who has the authority to conduct the exercises, visited Afokang last in September 2025. The Rights Academy is an intensive youth training programme run by We The People (WTP)—formally known as the Center for Social Studies, Research, and Advocacy—based in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. As Core Focus & Purpose, the Academy is designed to build the capacity of young citizens to become active agents of change and advocates for social transformation. It provides a learning framework focused on two primary pillars of Human Rights: Empowering youth to identify, report, and combat human rights abuses. The students were led on the facility tour by their Academic Prefect Mr Jude Edu.

985 retirees to get N4 billion as gratuities in Ondo

ADETOKUNBO ABIOLA, AKURE

Nine hundred and eighty-five retirees, covering public servants who left the service of the Ondo State Government between 2015 and 2020, are to get their gratuities of almost four billion naira. Flaggering off the payment exercise in Akure, the Governor of Ondo State, Lucky Aiyedatiwa, described the gesture as "a debt of honour being discharged" to those who devoted their productive years to the service of Ondo State. The beneficiaries comprised 509 retirees from the 2020 batch and 476 from the 2015–2019 batches, drawn from the mainstream civil

service, secondary school teaching and non-teaching staff, and parastatals across the state. The governor said his administration confronted the burden of the exercise with courage and responsibility, having inherited billions of naira in outstanding gratuity obligations covering the period from 2015 to date. "When our Administration came to the saddle, we inherited billions of Naira in outstanding gratuity obligations covering the period from 2015 to date. We confronted it with courage, responsibility and a clear understanding that governance is not only about initiating new projects; it is equally about confronting inherited challenges and

resolving them," he said. Governor Aiyedatiwa said his administration had successfully defrayed outstanding gratuities for 2015 to 2019, describing Wednesday's exercise as a gesture to remember the services of retirees and respect their sacrifice by paying their entitlement. In his welcome address, the Permanent Secretary, Ondo State Pension Transition Office, Dr Peter Akingbade, disclosed that retirees from the 2015 Batch C, 2016 Batch C, 2017 Batch C, 2018 Batch B, 2019 Batch B and 2020 Batch A were being paid and were already receiving bank alerts. Akingbade said the beneficiaries would receive their full gratuity entitlements rather than partial payments, describing the development as a milestone that would bring relief, dignity and renewed hope to retirees. Speaking on behalf of the beneficiaries, Mrs Nike Ogunbodede appreciated the governor for the gesture, describing it as a remarkable development that had never been witnessed in the state. In his vote of thanks, the state chairman of the Nigeria Union of Pensioners, Comrade Johnson Osunye, appreciated the governor, saying Ondo State is among the leading states in the country in clearing the backlog of gratuities owed to retired workers.

DESOPADEC opens 2026 bursary portal for students in oil communities

NOSA AKENZUA, ASABA

The Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC) has officially rolled out its 2026 bursary scheme for students in the mandate areas in Delta State. The commission also unveiled its online portal, directing qualified students to commence submitting their application through the newly established website. (<https://apply.desopadecbursary.com.ng>) Speaking during the launch at the commission's headquarters, the Executive Director of Social Services, Chief Favour Izuokumor said the initiative followed discussions between the commission and representatives of students from oil

producing ethnic nationalities. Chief Izuokumor urged the students to familiarize themselves with the requirements before applying, stressing that failure to provide the required documents would affect their eligibility. According to him, applicants are to provide a recent passport photograph, student identity card, admission letter, local government of origin certificate and a letter from their ethnic nationality student union. He added that students were expected to provide bank details. However, he said students of polytechnics and colleges of education were not included in the current phase of the scheme.

Chief Izuokumor warned applicants against submitting multiple applications saying any student found applying more than once would be disqualified. He expressed optimism that the bursary payment would begin in November, subject to completion of the verification process in October. The executive director further disclosed that DESOPADEC would commence its annual skill empowerment to youths and women across its mandate areas before the end of the year. He commended the Delta State Governor, Rt Hon Sheriff Oborevwori for approving the 2026 bursary program, describing it as a blessing to the state, whose administration is committed

to improving the welfare of students and the people of oil-producing communities. In his remarks, the Chairman of the Confederation of Delta State Oil Producing Ethnic Nationality Students Union (CODSOPENSU) Comrade Johnson Aweh, representing Ijaw ethnic nationality, commended DESOPADEC and Executive Director of Social Services Chief Favour Izuokumor for their commitment in ensuring that the 2026 bursary became a reality. Comrade Aweh also commended the Governor of Delta State for his commitment to the welfare of students in Delta State. He appealed to the commission to consider students from polytechnic and colleges of education in the next bursary payment.

The Daily Monitor

...Monitoring the present, shaping the future

ADVERT RATES

	COLOUR			BLACK & WHITE		
SIZES	RATE	VAT	TOTAL	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
F/PAGE	550,000.00	27,500.00	577,500.00	442,402.65	22,120.13	464,522.78
H/PAGE	303,439.60	15,171.98	318,611.58	229,476.11	11,473.81	240,949.92
Q/PAGE	163,431.45	8,171.57	171,603.02	124,895.04	6,244.75	131,139.79
14” x 5	341,320.00	17,056.00	358,386.00	258,000.40	12,900.02	270,900.42
14” x 4	273,056.00	13,652.80	286,708.80	206,400.32	10,320.02	216,720.34
14” x 2	136,528.00	6,826.40	143,354.40	103,200.16	5,160.01	108,360.17
FPS 6”x3	873,388.02	43,669.40	917,057.42	873,388.02	43,669.40	917,057.42
FPS 6”x2	582,257.82	29,113.39	611,381.20	582,267.81	29,113.40	611,381.20
BPS 6”x3	861,432.81	43,071.64	904,504.45	861,432.81	43,071.64	904,504.45
BPS 6”x2	565,621.87	28,281.09	593,902.96	565,621.87	28,281.09	593,902.96
ROP 2”x6	198,096.61	9,904.83	208,001.44	198,096.61	9,904.83	208,001.44
FPS 2”x6	582,257.82	29,112.89	611,370.71	582,257.82	29,112.89	611,370.71
BPS 2”x6	565,621.87	28,281.09	593,902.96	565,621.87	28,281.09	593,902.96
BPS 2”x2	349,354.69	17,467.73	366,822.42	349,354.69	17,467.73	966,822.42
13” x 5	316,940.00	15,847.00	332,787.00	239,571.80	11,978.59	251,550.39
13” x 2	126,776.00	6,338.80	133,114.80	95,828.72	4,791.44	100,620.16
11” x 5	268,180.00	13,409.00	281,589.00	202,714.50	10,135.73	212,850.33
11” x 4	214,544.00	10,727.20	225,271.20	162,171.68	8,103.58	170,280.26
11” x 2	107,272.00	5,363.60	112,635.60	81,085.84	4,054.29	85,140.13
10” x 6	292,560.00	14,628.00	307,188.00	221,143.20	11,057.16	232,200.36
10” x 5	243,800.00	12,190.00	255,990.00	184,286.00	9,214.30	193,500.30
10” x 4	195,040.00	9,752.00	204,792.00	17,428.80	7,371.44	154,800.24
10” x 3	146,280.00	7,314.00	153,594.00	110,571.60	5,528.58	166,100.18
10” x 2	97,520.00	4,876.00	102,396.00	73,714.40	3,685.72	77,400.12
9” x 6	263,304.00	13,165.20	276,469.20	199,028.88	9,951.44	208,980.32
9” x 5	219,420.00	10,971.00	230,391.00	165,857.40	8,292.87	174,150.27
9” x 4	175,536.00	8,776.80	184,312.80	132,685.92	6,634.30	139,320.22
9” x 3	131,652.00	6,582.60	138,234.60	99,514.44	4,975.72	104,490.16
8” x 6	234,048.00	11,702.40	245,750.40	175,914.56	8,845.73	185,760.29
8” x 5	195,040.00	9,752.00	204,792.00	17,428.80	7,371.44	154,800.24
8” x 4	156,040.00	7,801.60	163,833.60	117,943.04	5,897.15	123,840.19
8” x 3	117,024.00	5,851.20	122,875.20	88,457.28	4,422.86	92,880.14
8” x 2	78,015.00	3,900.80	81,916.80	58,971.52	2,948.58	61,920.10
7” x 5	170,660.00	8,533.00	179,193.00	129,000.20	6,450.01	135,450.21
7” x 4	136,528.00	6,826.40	143,354.40	103,200.16	5,160.01	108,306.17
7” x 2	68,264.00	3,413.20	71,677.20	51,600.08	2,580.00	54,180.08
6” x 4	97,520.00	4,876.00	102,396.00	73,714.40	3,685.72	77,400.12
6” x 3	87,750.00	4,388.40	92,156.40	66,342.96	3,317.15	69,660.11
6” x 2	58,512.00	2,925.60	61,437.60	44,228.64	2,211.43	45,440.07
5” x 5	121,900.00	6,095.00	127,995.00	92,143.00	,607.15	96,750.15
5” x 4	97,520.00	4,876.00	102,396.00	73,714.40	3,685.72	77,400.12
5” x 3	73,140.00	3,657.00	76,797.00	55,285.80	2,764.29	58,050.09
5” x 2	48,760.00	2,430.00	51,198.00	36,857.20	1,842.86	38,700.06
4” x 2	39,008.00	1,950.40	40,958.40	29,485.76	1,474.29	30,960.05
3” x 3	43,884.00	2,194.20	46,078.20	33,171.48	1,658.57	34,830.05
3” x 2	29,256.00	1,462.80	30,718.80	22,114.32	1,105.72	23,220.04
2” x 5	48,760.00	2,438.00	51,198.00	36,857.20	1,842.86	38,700.06
2” x 2	19,504.00	975.20	20,479.20	14,742.88	737.14	15,480.02
1” x 2	9,752.00	487.50	10,239.60	7,371.44	368.57	7,740.01
1” x 1	4,876.00	243.80	5,119.80	3,685.72	184,284	3,870.01
POLITICAL			SPECIAL POSITION			
SIZES	COLOUR	BLACK & WHITE	SIZES	COLOUR	BLACK & WHITE	
F/PAGE	675,675.00	510,974.00	FULL WRAP	20,000,000.00		
H/PAGE	350,475.00	265,045.00	EARPIECE 2x2	300,952.55		
Q/PAGE	100,765.00	144,255.00	CENTER SPREAD	1,564,061.75		
PHOTO SPLASH	165,250.00	120,050.00	DOUBLE SPREAD	1,395,076.76	874,810.85	
			HALF DOUBLE SPREAD	705,210.97	450,451.98	

COMPUTER & IT EDUCATIONAL, PROPERTY, VACANCY, HOME DECOR		
SIZES	COLOUR	BLACK & WHITE
F/PAGE	676,264,17	757,667.79
H/PAGE	206,232,41	216,232.41
Q/PAGE	154,153,75	113,151.35
10"x 2		57,833.73
8" x 2		46,766.03
7" x 2		40,483.39
6" x 2		34,696.60
5" x 2		20,916.22
4" x 2		23,130.84
3" x 2		17,347.40
2" x 6		34,37.18
2" x 2		11,565.50
1" x 2		5,784.35
1" x 1		2,831.68

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

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Economy

California-Lagos summit to cement Nigeria-California business bridge

A private sector-led summit powered by Afretrade, the US Diaspora United Chamber of Commerce, NIED Group, and the Office of Diaspora Affairs of Lagos State — curated to celebrate, alongside the State of California and Lagos State, a landmark milestone in transatlantic economic partnership.

Afretrade Inc. today announced the California-Lagos Business & Investment Summit, themed "Building the California-Nigeria Business Bridge," a private sector-led gathering convening Nigerian professionals and entrepreneurs together with the global business community — including members of the African diaspora and all those invested in the economic development of Africa in general, and Lagos in particular.

As part of the California-Lagos Business & Investment Summit, The state of California with an annual GDP of \$4.2 trillion and Lagos State with a GDP of 62.66 trillion naira, are signing a trade pact lead by the governors of both states who will be present at the summit. This is a significant milestone in business diplomacy as these states, through their government demonstrate their willingness to enhance fluid business relations and investment between both countries.

The Summit is a privately curated initiative designed to celebrate, alongside the State of California and Lagos State, the milestone achieved through the combined efforts of the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), led by California State Transportation Secretary Toks Omishakin; the Office of Mark Henney; and the Bay Area Council. The event honors the groundwork these institutions have laid, while the private sector steps forward to carry the relationship into commercial reality.

"Africa's economy will only thrive through love, unity of purpose, and collaboration without subordination," said Mr. Lekan Salaam, Chief Executive Officer of Afretrade. "This Summit belongs to the entrepreneurs, investors, and diaspora leaders who turn goodwill into enterprise, and we

are proud to celebrate this historic moment alongside the people of California and Lagos."

The Summit spotlights the extraordinary scale and complementarity of its two anchor economies. California is the world's fourth-largest economy, with a gross domestic product of approximately US\$4.1 trillion — ranking behind only the United States, China, and Germany — and a global centre of technology, venture capital, entertainment, agriculture, and advanced manufacturing. Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital, is Africa's second-largest city economy after Cairo, with a GDP of approximately US\$259 billion on a purchasing-power-parity basis and one of the youngest, most entrepreneurial populations on earth.

Together, these markets present powerful areas of synergy and business alignment: technology and fintech; trade, logistics, and transportation infrastructure; the creative and entertainment economy; agriculture and agri-processing; renewable energy; real estate and urban development; and access to capital for small and medium enterprises. The Summit is structured to translate these complementarities into concrete partnerships, investment, and market-entry pathways in both directions.

The two-day Business Summit, scheduled for September 17-18, will convene leaders across government, industry, and the diaspora for keynotes, high-level dialogue, panels, capital-raising sessions, and business matchmaking, running from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The official celebration will take place at the historic Stanford Mansion, in the presence of representatives of both states and the business community, honouring this memorable and historic day.

That same evening, the Gala and Award Night will be held at the prestigious Hyatt Regency Sacramento — the same location as the Business Summit — an occasion rich with cultural performances and festive moments to mark the achievement.

NUPRC clarifies \$300 helicopter levy, exempts offshore oil operations from TNC

The Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) says the 300 dollars Helicopter Levy for Air Navigational Services remains payable, while Terminal Navigational Charge (TNC) does not apply to offshore petroleum operations.

The commission said the levy remained payable to the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA).

The clarification was contained in a circular signed by NUPRC Chief Executive, Mrs Oritsemeyiwa Eyesan, following concerns raised by stakeholders in the upstream petroleum sector.

The concerns centred on the introduction, structure and operationalisation of the 300 dollars helicopter levy and other aviation-related charges affecting petroleum operations.

Following the concerns, the Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo, constituted a Ministerial Review Committee on March 9.

Eyesan said the review established that the TNC did not apply to helicopter landings at private offshore facilities and platforms when such operations support upstream petroleum activities.

She said that TNC remained applicable to helicopter operations that were not undertaken in support of upstream petroleum activities. She listed such operations to include medical evacuation, private charter services and agricultural activities.

The clarification is expected to provide greater certainty to upstream operators on applicable aviation charges and distinguish petroleum-support helicopter operations from other commercial and private helicopter activities.

FTSE Russell admits Dangote Cement, MTN Nigeria, First HoldCo, others to Frontier Index Series

FTSE Russell, a London-based provider of global stock market indices, has added MTN Nigeria, Dangote Cement, First HoldCo, and seven other Nigerian public companies among the qualified equities for its Frontier Index Series, effective from 21 September.

Others include Guaranty Trust Holding Company, Nestle Nigeria, Nigerian Breweries, Presco, Stanbic IBTC Holdings, and Aradel Holdings.

FTSE Russell disclosed a September 2026 review of the stock index. The admission of the equities remains tentative until the 7th of this month, it noted.

The 10 stocks will be among the equities in the index's Large Cap category.

Quoting the companies in the Frontier Index Series provides them with broader visibility among international investors than their primary listing on the Nigerian Exchange in Lagos.

Apart from the prospect of increased



cross-border trading in the company's shares, the listing provides the company with diversified access to equity finance through public offers and rights issues, among others.

The development comes a week after the index provider announced Nigeria's upgrade to a frontier market from an unclassified market, which it had been downgraded to nearly three years ago after a far-reaching foreign exchange squeeze complicated the ordeal of international

investors seeking to recoup their investments.

Nigeria's reclassification will come into force on the same day later this month when the inclusion of the stocks in the Frontier Index Series will be effected.

On Wednesday, Dangote Cement, one of the most capitalised of the 10 stocks, announced that it will host a capital markets day in London this month, in preparation for its proposed secondary listing on the London Stock

Exchange.

The event "will provide investors and other stakeholders with an update on the company's strategy, operations, and business priorities, as well as an opportunity to engage with the company's senior management," it said in a market disclosure.

Should the plan work out, Dangote will be quoted under the international commercial companies' secondary listing framework, according to a company announcement in May.

N120bn: How KADIRS improved IGR, tax compliance in Kaduna

GABRIEL UDEH, KQADUNA

Kaduna State Governor, Uba Sani's support in providing the political will, has enabled the State Internal Revenue Service (KADIRS) to increase Internally Generated Revenue, without interfering with its operations.

The outgoing Executive Chairman of KADIRS, Mr Jerry Adams, made this known while speaking at the ongoing 160th meeting of the Joint Revenue Board, holding in Kaduna.

In his submission, Mr Adams noted that the IGR of Kaduna State stood at N58 billion before 2023, noting that by 2023, it had risen to 62 billion, while in 2024, it had reached 71 billion.

"In 2025, we recorded an annual revenue of 85 billion, with an average monthly collection of 7 billion. Today, we are trending towards N120 billion, at a monthly average of N10 billion," he disclosed.

The outgoing Executive

Chairman pointed out that the IGR figures are not a spike but "a trend that is steady and sustainable, with even stronger performance ahead as we deepen collaboration with MDAs, stakeholders, and with the full support of His Excellency, the Governor."

He recalled that "between 2019 and 2023, the highest annual collection this Service ever recorded was 59 billion in 2022 at a monthly average of about 4.8 billion."

"On paper, that looked like progress. But if you looked closer, as we eventually did, you'd find out that a significant portion of that revenue didn't come from organic tax growth. It came from back-duty recoveries, sale of government properties and some other one-off recoveries, not a growing, breathing tax base," Mr Adams had disclosed.

According to him, "by early 2023, that model had done

exactly what such models always eventually do: it stalled. Vertical growth had become stunted, just as we feared it would."

Mr Adams said that KADIRS then had an honest and uncomfortable conversation, decided that "we could no longer keep squeezing the same familiar taxpayers a little harder each year and call it strategy."

"We needed to grow horizontally, not just vertically; to expand the tax net itself, rather than simply tighten it around those already caught in it, and to stop relying on windfalls to flatter our numbers," he clarified.

The outgoing Executive Chairman said that KADIRS decided to fully digitize its processes to block leakages, through the introduction of the PAYKADUNA portal, alongside Project C.R.A.F.T (Cross-Sector Systems for Revenue Administration and Fiscal Transparency).

"This gave us, for the first time,

a centralised payment system for all state revenue, closing gaps that informal, cash-based collection had long allowed to thrive," he added.

According to him, the Service recruited more staff "to comb the streets and expand the tax net, provided necessary working tools and facilitated promotions that had been delayed."

Mr Adams further said that KADIRS also "provided capacity building opportunities to staff and established three additional area offices to complement the existing 34 offices for improved accessibility."

"We also strengthened partnerships beyond our own borders with institutions like the Joint Revenue Board, the Nigeria Revenue Service, and the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit, particularly around data sharing, which has been invaluable in identifying taxable activity that would otherwise have gone unseen," he added.

'U.S. -Nigeria collaboration can close startup funding, infrastructure gaps'

U.S. Consul General Brandon Hudspeth says collaboration between Nigerian innovators and American investors can close funding gaps, expand infrastructure, develop skills and support startups' global growth. Hudspeth made this known on Wednesday at the GITEX Nigeria Startup Festival in Lagos. He highlighted the expanding role of American capital in Nigeria's technology ecosystem.

"Nigeria's technology ecosystem is attracting significant international investment, but startups still face funding gaps, infrastructure challenges and limited access to global markets," he said.

According to Hudspeth, U.S.-based investors remain the largest source of external capital for Nigeria's technology ecosystem over the past decade. He explained that the investment had supported startups, digital infrastructure, technology skills and access to international markets.

"U.S.-sourced funding accounts for an estimated 60 per cent of all venture capital entering Nigeria," he noted.

Hudspeth linked the scale of U.S. investment to Lagos' rapid emergence as one of Africa's most prominent technology ecosystems.

He added that Lagos technology ecosystem valuation had increased nearly 12-fold since 2017, while the city had produced six of Africa's 10 unicorns.

According to him, Lagos ranked first on Dealroom's 2025 Global Tech Ecosystem Index 'Rising Stars' list, ahead of Istanbul, Mumbai and São Paulo.

Marketers will cut petrol prices when new stock arrives - IPMAN

The Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN) says filling stations across the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) will begin reducing petrol pump prices in the next few days.

Chinedu Ukadike, national publicity secretary of IPMAN, spoke during an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Thursday in Abuja.

Ukadike said marketers were preparing to review their pricing and sales strategies as new petrol products enter the market.

He said the arrival of the products could trigger changes in the current market, adding that marketers would make the necessary adjustments to ensure consumers continue to purchase the products they need.

The IPMAN spokesperson said the exact timing of the products' arrival remains

uncertain as marketers are yet to receive a definite date. He said the process would be guided by existing rules and regulations.

"Once the new products begin arriving, marketers are expected to respond quickly by reviewing their prices and updating their product offerings," Ukadike said.

"After this process, when we make purchases tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, as soon as it starts, we will adjust our prices and begin making the new products available to consumers.

"The purchases can begin in few days, depending on when the process officially commences."

He said the development is expected to bring further changes to the market as filling stations adjust their prices and make the new products available to consumers.

He noted that Google and Meta had invested in subsea cable infrastructure serving Nigeria, while Equinix and Digital Realty were connecting Nigerian data infrastructure to global networks.

He added that smaller U.S. venture capital firms and philanthropic organisations were also supporting technology development in Nigeria. According to him, the Gates Foundation and Chan Zuckerberg Initiative are expected to increase their involvement in Nigeria's technology and innovation ecosystem.

Hudspeth explained that American companies were providing Nigerian startups with training, infrastructure, connectivity and technology platforms to help them develop products and reach international customers.

He noted that Google and Meta had invested in subsea cable infrastructure serving Nigeria, while Equinix and Digital Realty were connecting Nigerian data infrastructure to global networks.

He noted that the ranking demonstrated the depth of Lagos technology ecosystem and its growing appeal to international investors and technology companies.

Hudspeth disclosed that Lagos currently had more than 3,300 startups, while Nigeria's technology industry contributed more than 16 per cent to the country's gross domestic product.

He pointed out that U.S. involvement in Nigeria's technology sector extended beyond traditional venture capital to major technology and financial companies. "Visa, Google, Mastercard, Microsoft, Uber and PayPal were among the American companies participating in Nigeria's technology ecosystem," he said.

He added that smaller U.S. venture capital firms and philanthropic organisations were also supporting technology development in Nigeria.

According to him, the Gates Foundation and Chan Zuckerberg Initiative are expected to increase their involvement in Nigeria's technology and innovation ecosystem.

FG directs Shippers' Council to transfer inland dry port functions to NPA

The Federal Government has directed the Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC) to transfer the inland dry port (IDP) functions to the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA).

Minister of Marine and Blue Economy, Gboyega Oyetola, announced the directive in a post on X on Thursday, saying it was part of efforts to establish a clear separation between port economic regulation, development, and operations.

He also announced the immediate constitution of a ministerial committee to oversee the transition of the NSC into the newly established Nigeria Ports Economic Regulatory Agency (NPERA).

"I have also directed the immediate constitution of a Ministerial Committee to oversee the transition of the Nigerian Shippers' Council into the newly established Nigeria Ports Economic Regulatory Agency (NPERA), following President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's assent to the NPERA Act, 2026," the



minister said.

"The NPERA Act marks a landmark reform in Nigeria's port sector, establishing a substantive statutory economic regulator after two decades of efforts to create one.

"With the enactment of the law, the NSC, which has served as the country's interim port economic regulator since 2014, will transmute into NPERA.

"Under the new framework, NPERA will focus on its core economic regulatory responsibilities, including the regulation of tariffs and charges, promotion

of competition, licensing, service standards, commercial dispute resolution and protection of port users."

He said the government must ensure that the transition is properly executed, noting that the credibility and effectiveness of an economic regulator depend partly on its ability to function as an impartial referee without responsibilities that could create actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

"A regulator cannot function as an operator and, at the same time, be expected to be perceived as an unbiased referee.

"Our objective is to ensure

that agencies under the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy operate within clearly defined mandates, eliminating overlapping responsibilities while strengthening transparency and creating a more predictable operating environment for port users, investors, terminal operators, shipping companies and other stakeholders," Oyetola said.

According to the minister, the transfer of the IDP functions to the NPA would strengthen inland dry ports by placing their promotion within an institution better positioned to integrate the facilities into the wider port infrastructure and operational network.

"The emergence of NPERA marks a new chapter in the governance of Nigeria's port sector," he said.

Oyetola reiterated the ministry's commitment to ensuring a seamless transition and building a more efficient, integrated, and competitive port system that serves the entire country.

On August 19, the Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC) formally transitioned into the Nigeria Ports Economic Regulatory Agency (NPERA).

Dangote Cement sets date for London capital markets day ahead of LSE listing

Dangote Cement PLC will hold a high-level engagement with investors and other capital market players in London next month to bring the foreign investing community up to speed with key corporate goals and direction in the lead-up to its secondary listing in the city.

Sub-Saharan Africa's biggest cement manufacturer told the Nigerian Exchange, where it already has a primary listing, on Wednesday, that its shareholders have assented to the proposal to host "a Capital Markets Day (CMD) in London on 21 September 2026."

"The CMD will provide investors and other stakeholders with an update on the Company's strategy, operations and business

priorities, as well as an opportunity to engage with the Company's senior management," it added.

The move is the next phase of Dangote Cement's bid to secure a quicker pathway to international capital and foreign investors than what a local listing in Lagos affords, using London as a window to the world.

Other objectives include a wider shareholder base, which a listing on a bourse of LSE's reputation promises, and the potential to consolidate its status as a leading pan-African corporation.

The step to hold the capital markets day on 21 September will receive timely support from FTSE Russell's upgrade of Nigeria from "unclassified" to a frontier market, taking

effect the same day next month.

Nigeria lost its place among frontier market economies in 2023 after an enduring FX crisis, dating back to the global oil price crash resulting from pandemic lockdowns in 2020, forced the Central Bank of Nigeria to ration dollars to conserve its direly low reserves.

The currency squeeze led several potential foreign investors to look elsewhere for a haven after the investments of existing foreign portfolio investors were trapped in the web of the crunch.

Foreign participation in Nigeria's equity market, which dominated trade in the years before 2020, is yet to regain its pre-pandemic levels.

According to Nigeria Exchange's latest data, foreign participation in equity trading stood at

5.6 per cent in July, while domestic participation accounted for the rest.

That compares to September 2019, three months before COVID-19 broke out, when foreign trading in equities was as high as 66.8 per cent.

The improved visibility for foreign investors that an FTSE Russell upgrade offers to Nigerian stocks could attract large inflows into transactions in Dangote Cement's shares, both locally and on the LSE.

If plans work out, the company will be quoted under the international commercial companies secondary listing framework, it said in May.

Dangote Cement promised to provide the agenda and presentation documents for the London event in September, along with other relevant information, at an appropriate time.

2027: Academics back Oborevwo, seek continuity in Delta

BY NOSA AKENZUA, ASABA

The Coalition of Academics has endorsed the re-election bid of Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwo, describing the administration's performance in the last three years as a reflection of what it termed a new approach to governance in the state.

The coalition made its position known Thursday during a courtesy visit to the Chief Strategist to the Governor, Dr. Festus Okubor, in Asaba, where it presented its vision, mission and programmes ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Coordinator of the coalition, Prof. Lawrence Omo-Aghoja, said the group, comprising academics and professionals within and outside Nigeria, was established to provide intellectual support for the administration and undertake objective assessments of its policies and programmes.

According to him, the coalition intends to deploy research, public advocacy, workshops, media engagements and other platforms to examine and communicate the administration's achievements.

Omo-Aghoja said members of the coalition in the diaspora had also expressed interest in joining the initiative, following what they described as the



emerging governance model in Delta.

He said the group would focus on identifying indicators of good governance, providing evidence-based recommendations on public policies and mobilising intellectual and professional support for the administration's 2027 campaign.

The coordinator said the coalition would also collaborate with relevant government institutions and stakeholders to provide what he described as "robust intellectual embellishment" to the administration's policy agenda.

He commended Oborevwo for his

commitment to the MORE Agenda, arguing that the administration had translated a number of its policy commitments into programmes and projects across the state.

Omo-Aghoja also pointed to the governor's experience at the grassroots, local government, legislature and executive levels, saying the exposure had given him a broader understanding of the needs of the people.

He argued that the current political and developmental trajectory in Delta should be sustained, stressing that continuity would enable the

administration to consolidate projects and policies already initiated.

The coalition subsequently declared its support for Oborevwo's re-election, with Omo-Aghoja stating: "In 2027, it is Sheriff or nobody."

Responding, Okubor welcomed the coalition's support, describing the growing involvement of academics and professionals in the governor's re-election campaign as significant.

He said the 2027 governorship election would be difficult for opposition candidates to challenge Oborevwo effectively, given what he described as the governor's performance in office.

Okubor described Oborevwo as a leader who had demonstrated professionalism, candour, compassion and grassroots understanding in the management of the state.

He said the governor had remained focused on "translating grassroots dreams into sustainable development," adding that some of the projects being implemented across Delta were long-standing aspirations of communities in the state.

The governor's chief strategist, however, stressed the importance of maintaining a constructive relationship between the state and the Federal Government, saying this would be necessary for Delta to attract continued support and consolidate ongoing development efforts.

Osun: Accord moves against anti-party activities, warns erring members of sanctions

BY MIKE DIKE, OSOGBO

The Osun State chapter of the Accord Party has raised concerns over alleged anti-party activities by some of its members who are reportedly working for candidates of rival political parties ahead of the 2027 National and State Assembly elections.

The party expressed its displeasure during a closed-door stakeholders' meeting presided over by the Osun State Governor, Ademola Adeleke, in Osogbo on Wednesday.

According to a statement issued by the governor's spokesperson, Olawale Rasheed, the stakeholders expressed concern over reports that some Accord members were allegedly supporting candidates of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Allied Peoples Movement (APM), Action Peoples Party (APP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC).

The stakeholders described the development as an anti-party activity capable of undermining the unity, cohesion and electoral prospects of the Accord Party in the state.

The meeting resolved that no member of the party should sponsor, campaign for or work for candidates of other political parties in the forthcoming legislative elections.

"Under no circumstances should any Accord member be caught sponsoring or working for legislative candidates of other political parties. Such behaviour will not be tolerated," the stakeholders resolved.

To address the situation, the party leadership approved measures aimed at identifying members allegedly involved in anti-party activities and bringing them before the appropriate party organs for disciplinary action.

The meeting further warned that members found culpable would face severe sanctions, while a committee was directed to investigate constituencies where alleged cases of divided loyalty had been reported.

The state leadership was also mandated to strengthen its monitoring mechanisms and ensure that members accused of working against the party's candidates are identified and called to order.

The stakeholders also directed that all disagreements arising from the selection of legislative candidates should be resolved immediately, stressing that party members must close ranks and support candidates already fielded by Accord.

Taraba 2027: ADC guber hopeful prioritises rural development, others

OKERAFOR ATHANATIUS, JALINGO.

The Governorship Candidate of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) for 2027 general elections in Taraba State, Senator Abubakar Umar Tutare has pledged to focus on rural development, provision of basic infrastructure and development of agro allied industries to harness agricultural potential in the State if voted into power.

Senator Tutare, who made the pledge through a press statement he

signed and shared to Journalists in Jalingo said his agenda is for the unity of Taraba people and create infrastructural development, to advance the welfare of the people of the state who according to him are suffering because of years of misgovernment of resources of the state by past leaders.

The ADC State gubernatorial candidate also announced his choice of Barr. Harua kwetishe from Southern Taraba as his running mate for the said elections promising to work hand in hand with him when elected

as governor and deputy governor respectively.

Calling on the electorate from the State to reject and say no to religious and tribalistic politics, Senator Tutare advised that the candidates that would unite the people of the State should be voted for during the elections.

He further lamented that some politicians and elites have divided the people of the State owing to tribal and religious barriers.

"I therefore urge the electorate in the state to shine their eyes and vote to

power candidates that will bring unity and development to all part of the state. It is very important for us as people to reject politics of Religion and tribalism which is the root cause of Taraba under development",

"It is sad to note that those elected power in the state hide under religion and tribalism to steal funds meant for the development of our state and therefore electorates should reject such politicians who use religion and tribalism for their personal gains", he said.

2027: Abia North NULGE leaders endorse Labour Party candidate, Bourdex for Senate

BY UGOCHUKWU UGOJI-EKE, ABA

The senatorial campaign of Chief Dr. David Ogba Onuoha Bourdex, MFR, OON, has received a major boost following the adoption of his candidacy by the leadership of the National Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE) across the five Local Government Areas of Abia North Senatorial District.

The workers also inaugurated a dedicated campaign structure designed to mobilise support for the Labour Party candidate ahead of the 2027 senatorial election, adding a new layer to the growing grassroots activities around the Bourdex campaign.

The development followed an interactive meeting held in Umuhia, which brought together NULGE leaders from Arochukuwu, Bende, Isuikwuato, Ohafia and Umunneochi Local Government Areas for discussions with Bourdex.

In what the workers described as a strategic mobilisation initiative, NULGE constituted itself into an "Extra Ward" in each of the five LGAs, with a 20-member executive in each local government

area.

The structures are expected to drive grassroots mobilisation for the Bourdex senatorial project.

Speaking for the workers, the NULGE Chairman in Ohafia LGA, Comrade Ojisi Orji, praised Bourdex's leadership qualities, character, commitment to excellence and record during his tenure as Transition Committee Chairman of Ohafia Local Government Area.

Ojisi recalled that when Bourdex assumed office, workers took him around the council headquarters and showed him the poor state of infrastructure arising from years of neglect.

According to him, Bourdex responded by ensuring that reconstruction work commenced through the appropriate Local Government channels rather than allowing administrative processes to delay the required intervention.

Ojisi said that Bourdex personally monitored the projects and remained committed to their completion even after the dissolution of the Transition Committee.

He said, "Today, Ohafia Local Government headquarters wears a completely different look and provides a

far more conducive and workers-friendly environment".

The NULGE chairman also highlighted Bourdex's attention to workers' welfare, particularly the completion of the NULGE Secretariat building, which he said had previously not received the required attention.

The NULGE Chairman in Bende LGA, Comrade Amadi Onwuka, also declared support for Bourdex, describing him as a credible pathway towards a new direction for Abia North.

Onwuka assured that the workers would go beyond merely endorsing the Labour Party candidate, pledging to mobilise their members, families, friends and supporters for the senatorial project.

His counterparts in Isuikwuato, Umunneochi and Arochukuwu — Comrades Ikechukwu Ijioma, Ajala Kingsley and Uyor Enyinnaya respectively aligned themselves with the position, reaffirming the commitment of Local Government workers across the five LGAs to the Bourdex project.

The endorsements further strengthen the grassroots dimension of Bourdex's campaign as the 2027 election approaches.

Responding Bourdex described their endorsement as both an honour and a responsibility, thanking them for finding him worthy of their confidence.

He told the NULGE leaders that their confidence must be matched by his continued commitment to integrity, accountability, performance and service, while insisting that the senatorial contest should be determined by ideas, vision, capacity, character and verifiable records.

Bourdex said Abia North needs a senator who would regard public office as an avenue to serve rather than an opportunity for personal enrichment.

He also challenged the electorate to examine the records of all candidates seeking their mandate and assess what each has accomplished with opportunities previously entrusted to them.

Addressing questions around empowerment, the Labour Party candidate pointed to his business experience, particularly Bourdex Telecommunications, describing it as an indigenous telecommunications enterprise that created employment and connected businesses and communities.

ADC inaugurates reconciliation committee, seeks unity ahead of 2027

The African Democratic Congress (ADC) has inaugurated a national reconciliation and peace committee to strengthen unity, rebuild trust and resolve grievances ahead of 2027.

National Chairman of ADC, Sen. David Mark, who performed the inauguration on Wednesday in Abuja, named Sen. Tunde Ogbeha as Chairman, Prof. Oserheimen Osunbor, South-South, Deputy chairman, Dr Ahmad Ajuji (North-East), member and Musa Elayo (North-Central), member among others.

Mark described the reconciliation as essential, saying it is to ensure every ADC member felt valued and carried along.

He said the ADC was founded on democracy, inclusion, justice, consultation and its handshake philosophy, which encouraged members to build bridges across political differences.

"Our recently concluded primaries produced winners, but they also produced disappointments and grievances. These are realities we must acknowledge and address clearly today," he said.

He said an election might determine the party's flag bearers,



but should never determine who belonged to the party or remained valuable members.

"Those who did not emerge victorious still remain valuable members of the ADC. Their experience, networks, structures and commitment remain important assets," Mark added.

He urged successful aspirants to recognise that victory came with responsibility, stressing that it was not a licence to exclude, humiliate or marginalise other members.

Mark said the party's major challenge was building a united political platform capable of winning Nigerians' confidence, rather than fighting members who contested

against others.

The committee's terms of reference according to Mark included engaging aspirants, candidates, leaders and stakeholders in constructive dialogue to identify grievances, address legitimate concerns and rebuild trust fully.

"I expect the committee to discharge this responsibility with fairness, neutrality, maturity, sincerity and confidentiality. Everyone must support this reconciliation process wholeheartedly," he said.

He appealed to all leaders, state chairmen, zonal coordinators, candidates, aspirants and elected representatives to become ambassadors of reconciliation

and reject internal sabotage and revenge.

He said the 2027 general elections would require a disciplined, coordinated and united ADC, adding that the party could not approach the polls divided.

"The ADC is bigger than any individual, aspirant, candidate or office. Our Handshake Philosophy requires us to reach across differences and build bridges," he said.

He called on aggrieved members to give reconciliation a chance, candidates to extend fellowship, unsuccessful aspirants to remain committed, and leaders to lead by example.

Mark charged committee members to build bridges, heal wounds, restore confidence and unite members, urging them to work together for the country and its people.

In his acceptance speech, Ogbeha said he recognised the enormous responsibility before the committee and would do everything humanly possible to achieve the objectives.

"Our members must sacrifice and put Nigeria first, then the party and personal interests, because the 2027 election offers another opportunity for collective success.

Ogbeha assured the party leadership that they would uphold the oath with honesty, transparency, diligence and fear of God while pursuing justice, reconciliation, peace and unity.

2027: DESTMA chairman calls for support for Tinubu, Oborevwo, Okowa, APC candidates

BY. NOSA AKENZUA, ASABA

The Chairman of the Delta State Traffic Management Authority (DESTMA), Chief (Sir) Peter Idion, the Adolor Dein of Agbor Kingdom, has called on Deltans to support and vote for the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Bola Ahmed Asiawaju Tinubu, GCFR, in the 2027 general elections.

Chief Idion in a recent media chat, urged Deltans to continue to support President Tinubu, noting the importance of sustaining the reforms, policies and development initiatives of the Federal Government.

He called on the people of Delta State to remain united and support the President for continued progress and national development.

The DESTMA Chairman also called on Deltans to support the Governor of the state, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Francis Oborevwo, for a second term in office.

He stressed the importance of continuity, stability and sustained development in Delta State, and appealed to the people to give the Governor the necessary support to continue with his administration's programmes and development initiatives.

He equally called on the people of Delta North Senatorial District to support and vote for Senator Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa in the 2027 general elections.

He described the former Governor as an experienced leader with the capacity to provide effective representation and contribute meaningfully to the progress and development of Delta North.

The DESTMA Chairman also appealed to Deltans to support all APC candidates contesting the 2027 general elections, and urged the people to rally behind candidates who had demonstrated commitment to the development of their various constituencies and the state at large.

According to him, the 2027 elections present another opportunity for the people to make choices that will strengthen representation, promote development and advance the collective interests of Delta State and Nigeria.

Consequently, Chief Idion called for peace, unity and responsible participation in the electoral process, and urged Deltans to come together and support leaders who can deliver meaningful progress for the people.

Sylva's defection: APC still intact in Bayelsa – Nabena

A former All Progressives Congress (APC) Deputy National Publicity Secretary, Mr Yekini Nabena, says the party is still intact in Bayelsa in spite of the defection of former Gov Timipre Sylva.

Nabena stated this in a statement on Wednesday in Abuja, while reacting to Sylva's defection from the party.

He assured that APC would win elections at all levels in the state, with or without Sylva.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Sylva, a former Minister of State for Petroleum, had, on Monday, announced his resignation from APC, alleging that the party had derailed from the ideals upon which it was founded.

Nabena, who said he was speaking on behalf of about 90 per cent of Bayelsa APC members and stakeholders, however, declared that the party was still strong and united, maintaining that it was a force to reckon with in future elections in Bayelsa.

He added that the party's structure and other stakeholders had resolved to stay in APC to work for its success and deliver President Bola Tinubu's re-election in the state.

Nabena said they were also determined to work hard to deliver all the party's candidates in the coming elections.

While wishing the former governor well in his political journey, he said that that APC in Bayelsa had become a formidable institution, bigger than an individual.

Osun APC raises alarm over alleged plan by PDP LG executives to invade council secretariats

BY MIKE DIKE, OSOGBO

The Osun State chapter of the All Progressives Congress (APC) has raised the alarm over an alleged plan by purported Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) local government council executives to invade the secretariats of the 30 local government areas and the Area Office across the state.

The party, in a statement signed by its Director of Media and Information, Mogaji Kola Olabisi, on Wednesday, alleged that the purported PDP chairmen and councillors were planning to take over the council secretariats on Thursday, September 3, 2026.

The APC also alleged that the group had mobilised what it described as "hardened and dangerous political hoodlums" from within and outside the state to execute the planned invasion.

According to the party, the alleged move was emboldened by the recent re-election of Governor Ademola Adeleke, claiming that the purported PDP council executives had regrouped to force their way into the local government secretariats.

The APC further alleged

that the Nigerian Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE) in the state was involved in the purported plan, accusing the union of allegedly acting in concert with the state government.

The party called on the Osun State Police Command, the Department of State Services (DSS) and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) to urgently intervene and prevent any action capable of disrupting public peace.

The APC argued that the dispute over the local government councils remains a matter before the courts and should therefore be resolved through the judicial process rather than by force.

It maintained that all parties involved should allow the legal process to run its full course in accordance with the 1999 Constitution, as amended.

"There is no tact and diplomacy in a set of hoodlums teaming up to promote disruption of public peace in the state on a matter that is still very much alive in the Court of Appeal," the party said.

The APC described any attempt by the purported PDP council executives to forcibly take over the secretariats as

"a monumental illegality," insisting that the appropriate avenue for resolving the dispute remained the courts.

The party also linked its warning to previous political violence in the state, expressing concern that a fresh confrontation at the local government secretariats could result in loss of lives.

It specifically recalled the killing of one of the reinstated APC local government chairmen, Hon. Remi Abass of Irewole Local Government Area, alleging that he was killed by suspected PDP thugs who, according to the party, are currently facing trial at the Federal High Court in Abuja.

The APC further stated that the legal dispute concerning the tenure of the reinstated APC local government chairmen and councillors remained pending before the Court of Appeal in Akure, Ondo State, after the Federal High Court delivered judgment against the APC council officials.

The party urged the alleged PDP council executives to refrain from taking the law into their own hands and instead pursue their grievances through the courts.



Burna Boy makes history as 1st Nigerian surpassing 4 billion views

Nigerian Grammy winning artiste, Damini Ogulu, popularly known as Burna Boy, has become the first Nigerian artiste to surpass four billion views on YouTube.

The milestone was achieved through the combined views of music videos and other content on the artiste's official YouTube channel.

The development underscores the global appeal of Burna Boy's music and the growing international reach of

Afrobeats.

The singer's catalogue includes popular songs such as "Ye," "On The Low," "Last Last" and "For My Hand", which have collectively attracted hundreds of millions of views on the video-sharing platform.

Burna Boy had earlier made history in 2021 by becoming the first Nigerian artiste to surpass one billion total views on YouTube.

The achievement comes amid a series of international milestones recorded by

the artiste, whose music has continued to attract audiences across Africa, Europe, North America and other parts of the world.

Industry observers say the achievement reflects the increasing role of digital platforms in taking Nigerian music to a global audience.

Also, the milestone places Burna Boy among the leading African artistes on YouTube and sets a new benchmark for Nigerian music.

Patience Ozokwor shares hard advice for parents

Nollywood veteran Patience Ozokwor has advised wealthy parents against over-pampering their children, stressing that shielding them from challenges and resilience-building struggles ultimately ruins their lives.

The actress, while speaking during a recent interview, spoke against parents shielding their children from every form of hardship in a bid to give them a better life. She stated that such moves could unintentionally prevent them from developing resilience and appreciating what they have.

Ozokwor also argued that children who grow up surrounded by wealth may struggle to understand the effort their parents put into acquiring their properties and other possessions.

"The fastest way to ruin a child's life is to say you don't want them to suffer the way you did. I'm not saying allow them to suffer. What I'm saying is allow them to struggle. Go through the process. When they don't struggle, can you imagine you have, like, 20 houses? You have in Enugu, you have in Abuja, you have in Lagos. Your children will just be struggling, 'Which one belongs to me?' They don't know how you struggled to get those things," she stated.



Jaiye Kuti takes movie on world tour



The paparazzi endowed with Jaiye Kuti movie titled "Jaiyeola ni moje" is getting more interesting as the movie is set to move from Nigeria to Canada, United States, United Kingdom, France and Netherlands.

According to the actress, "We are so excited to personally bring this story to audiences around the world. This September 2026, we are coming to you! So wherever you are, tell your friends, tell your family, tell your community—

tell everyone to tell everyone!

"Let them come, yes let them come laugh with us. Come feel with us. Come experience the story.

"The movie, Jayeola Monje: The Anniversary, which is set to storm major Cinemas around the world is been distributed by: Nile Entertainment @nileentertainment.

"The whole world will be shaking with the Jaiyeola anniversary which is already generating anticipation all over the world"

Opebe in critical condition, seeks financial help

Veteran Nollywood actor, Yomi King aka Opebe has sparked concern among colleagues and fans after filmmaker Kunle Afod appealed for urgent support over his deteriorating health condition.

Afod made the appeal recently after visiting the actor at his residence in Ibadan, sharing a video in which he called on Nigerians and industry stakeholders to come to Opebe's aid.

According to Afod, the actor's health has continued to decline, leaving him in need of medical assistance and support.

As of August 2026, Baba Opebe has been battling a serious, undisclosed health challenge for over a year, causing him to step away from the screen. According to an account, fellow actor Kunle Afod and other industry supporters shared that he has undergone multiple tests and received blood transfusions across various hospitals, though doctors have yet to reach a definitive diagnosis.

And a support appeal have been raised for the ailing heath of the comedian . Public calls and prayers have been raised by fans and colleagues asking for urgent financial and medical assistance to help the veteran actor get proper specialised care.

"Our fans, we have come again this time around for one of our

elders in the industry, Baba Opebe. He's not feeling healthy. His health is diminishing," Afod said.

The filmmaker urged individuals and organisations with the capacity to assist the actor to come forward, saying the veteran entertainer needed help at this critical period.

Speaking about his condition, Opebe revealed that he has been battling the health challenge since last year despite undergoing several medical tests.

The actor said doctors have been unable to identify the exact illness affecting him, although he was informed that he had low blood levels and was given four pints of blood.

"I have done a series of tests but nothing was found. They only told me that I'm short of blood and I was given four pints of blood," Opebe said.

He added that he had visited different hospitals in search of answers but his condition had continued to worsen.

Opebe, known for his contributions to Yoruba Nollywood, has been absent from movie screens due to his health struggles

Kunle Afod's appeal has since drawn attention from fans and members of the entertainment industry, with many calling for support for the veteran actor.



Another tragedy hits Nollywood

Nollywood has been thrown into mourning following the death of actress Atinuke Remilekun Kareem, who passed away after battling breast cancer.

Kareem's death was announced on Tuesday by Owolabi Ajasa, the Ogun State governor of the Theatre Arts and Motion Pictures Practitioners Association of Nigeria (TAMPAN), in a statement shared on his Instagram page.

Ajasa expressed appreciation to colleagues, fans and well-wishers who supported the actress financially and emotionally during her illness, but said their efforts had ultimately not been enough to save her.

"Sadly, despite all our efforts and prayers, Atinuke has passed on and answered the final call," Ajasa said.

He added that the association remained grateful to everyone who contributed towards Kareem's treatment, offered prayers or encouraged her and her family during the difficult period.

The actress had publicly appealed

for assistance during her battle with breast cancer. In a video circulated online, Kareem disclosed that she had been receiving treatment for some time and that the financial burden had placed considerable pressure on her family.

"I'm a breast cancer patient. It has been going on for a while. My family has spent a lot of money; I've come to seek help," she said in the appeal.

Kareem also revealed that she was a mother of two young children as she appealed to Nigerians and other well-wishers to assist with her treatment.

Her death has triggered an outpouring of grief across the Yoruba film industry, coming barely days after the death of veteran actor Taiwo Hassan, popularly known as Ogogo, who died after a prolonged battle with cancer.

Kareem's passing has therefore deepened the sense of loss within an industry that has endured a string of bereavements involving actors and other practitioners.



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D'Tigress name final squad for 2026 FIBA Women's Basketball World Cup

Nigeria Women Basketball team, D'Tigress head Coach Rena Wakama has named 12-player squad for the 2026 FIBA Women's Basketball World Cup in Germany.

Amy Okonkwo will captain the reigning African champions, who are set to make their third appearance at the global tournament after featuring at the 2006 and 2018 editions.

Ezinne Kalu and Promise Amukamara are the only players in the squad who featured at the 2018 World Cup. Their inclusion means they will become the first Nigerian players to appear at two editions of the FIBA Women's Basketball World Cup.

D'Tigress arrived in Berlin on Wednesday ahead of the tournament, which runs from September 4 to 13.

Nigeria have been drawn in Group B alongside Hungary, the Republic of Korea and France. Wakama's team will open their campaign against the Republic of Korea at the Berlin Arena on Friday, September 4.

They will face Hungary at the Max-Schmeling-Halle the following day before completing their group-stage fixtures against France at the Berlin Arena on Monday, September 7.

D'Tigress head into the tournament with history on their side after making a landmark run at the 2018 World Cup in Spain. Nigeria became the first African team to reach the quarter-finals of the competition.

D'Tigress full squad includes, Promise Amukamara, Jordan Obi, Elizabeth Balogun, Murjanatu Musa, Pallas Kunaiyi, Rita Igbokwe, Victoria Macaulay, Ezinne Kalu, Shay Ijiwoye, Nicole Enabosi, Amy Okonkwo and Grace Efosa.



Sabalenka earns win over US Open debutant Polina Iatcenko

Two-time defending champion Aryna Sabalenka earned one of the quickest Grand Slam wins of her career with a 53-minute pummeling of US Open debutant Polina Iatcenko in the second round.

Sabalenka, 28, is aiming to win her first major title of a strange season where she has enjoyed spectacular success but is now looking to recover from a recent dip.

Coasting to a 6-1 6-1 victory over 22-year-old

qualifier Iatcenko did not offer a true test of where Sabalenka's level is.

But the ruthless manner in which she secured victory will certainly boost confidence as she looks to complete a rare 'three-peat' of US Open titles.

"I'm happy with the level I played, happy with the focus and happy to be through this match," said Sabalenka, who will play Uzbekistan's Kamilla Rakhimova in the third round.



FIFA U20 Women's World Cup: Falconets in Katowice, countenance opening match against Spain

Nigeria's U20 Women's National Team, the Falconets, departed their training base in Trzebnica on Thursday and arrived at the Novotel Katowice Centrum as preparations enter the final stretch ahead of the 2026 FIFA U20 Women's World Cup kicking off in Poland on Saturday.

The team spent 10 days in Trzebnica, where Head Coach Moses Aduku and his technical crew intensified work on the squad's tactical organisation, technical execution, physical conditioning and overall team cohesion. The period also provided the players with valuable time to acclimatise to the Polish environment and build match sharpness ahead of the global tournament.

As part of their final build-up, the Falconets played two international

friendly matches against quality opposition. They recorded an impressive 1-0 victory over hosts Poland last Friday with Mary Mamudu scoring the decisive goal in first-half. The team followed that result with a 1-1 draw against Korea Republic on Tuesday in their final warm-up match, with Mamudu also the goalscorer.

The two matches provided the technical crew with an opportunity to assess the team against different types of opposition, while allowing the players to further adapt to the pace, intensity and conditions expected at the World Cup. With the Trzebnica phase now completed, attention turns to Katowice, where the Falconets will establish themselves ahead of their opening Group F encounter against Spain on Monday.

Continental Challenges:NFF charges Edo Queens, Rangers, others to do Nigeria proud

Nigeria Football Federation, NFF, acting General Secretary, Emmanuel Ikpeme, on Thursday expressed confidence in the capacities of WAFU-B Women's Champions League finalists Edo Queens and the four Clubs flying Nigeria's flag in continental competitions this weekend to fight hard for the badge and make the nation proud.

Edo Queens, 2024 winners of the WAFU-B Women's Champions League, will take on Ampem Darkoa of Ghana in the competition's final in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso with the winner guaranteed a spot in this year's CAF Women's Champions League finals.

In CAF Club competitions, Enugu Rangers and Rivers United FC will begin their campaigns in this year's Champions League competition with United away to FC San Pedro of Cote d'Ivoire in Abidjan, while Enugu Rangers lock horns with SOBEMAP FC of Benin Republic at the MKO Abiola Sports Arena in Abeokuta. Both are first preliminary round, first leg matches. In the CAF Confederation Cup, Shooting Stars Sports Club are up against CS Sfaxien of Tunisia in another first preliminary round, first leg

match at the MKO Abiola Sports Arena, while El-Kanemi Warriors confront Deportio Nationale of Guinea at the Remo Stars Stadium in Ikenne.

"I have no doubt in the capacity of each of the teams flying the country's flag this weekend to make Nigeria proud. However, it is not going to be picnic-time against their equally well-prepared and ambitious opponents. Edo Queens have done very well to get to the final, and I believe they have enough left in their tank to deliver the goods against their Ghanaian opponents and bring the trophy to Nigeria."

"Rangers and Rivers United have the responsibility to start a new song for Nigeria in the CAF Champions League, which we have not won in the past 22 years. Shooting Stars and El-Kanemi Warriors should also take to the pitch at their different venues with gusto, focus, and positive energy. It is time that we begin the journey for a gradual return to the forefront of African club football competitions."

Edo Queens hammered AS Garde Nationale of Niger Republic 7-0 and defeated ASEC Mimosas of Cote d'Ivoire 3-1 before losing 1-2 to Ampem Darkoa in their final group phase game.

Prosperity Cup organisers celebrate Premium Trust Bank new branch

BY WARIYAI DANIELS, YENAGOA

Organisers of Nigeria's biggest grassroots football spectacle, the Bayelsa Governor's Football Tournament, tagged the Prosperity Cup, have congratulated the board, management and staff of Premium Trust Bank, and particularly the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Emmanuel Emeffienim for inaugurating another branch in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.

Director General of the tournament, Mr Ono Akpe, in a statement on behalf of the Central Organizing Committee, COC, described the development as a significant milestone for the financial institution that has continued to flourish in the State under Dr. Emeffienim.

He lauded the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Premium Trust Bank, Dr. Emmanuel Emeffienim, whom he describes as a goal-getter, for the foresight in expanding its operations and bringing quality banking services closer to the people of Bayelsa State, stating that the financial institution in the past five years has emerged as Nigeria's fastest growing financial institution.

According to him, the latest addition from Premium Trust Bank reflects the bank's confidence in the economic potential of the State and its willingness to contribute to the development of the State and the Niger Delta region.

The statement commended the bank for its investment in the Governor's Football Tournament, and that the institution's continued sponsorship of the tournament shows its commitment to the development of sports, maintaining that the institution in the last few years has used the Prosperity Cup to positively engage youths in the State.

Mr. Akpe acknowledged the bank's commitment to growth, innovation and excellent customer service, describing its presence in Yenagoa as a positive development for residents and businesses operating in Bayelsa.

The COC equally appreciated the governor, Senator Douye Diri and the Deputy Governor, Dr. Peter Akpe for creating the enabling environment for businesses to thrive in the State.

He further expressed pride in having Premium Trust Bank as part of its growing family of partners, that the partnership represents a shared commitment in supporting the philosophy of the Governor's Football Tournament, pointing out that the platform has become a launchpad for the development of grassroots football in the country.

"The entire family of the Bayelsa Governor's Football Tournament celebrates with Premium Trust Bank on the official inauguration of their new branch in Yenagoa, we are elated with this development" Akpe said.

"Your commitment to growth and services in Bayelsa State is commendable, and we are proud to have you as part of the Prosperity Cup family. Your investment in the tournament speaks volume of the institution's passion for sports development" the statement said.

"We wish to particularly commend the Managing Director, Dr Emeffienim, who has been driving the partnership between the bank and the Prosperity Cup for his passion and commitment to sports development in the State".

"We want to, as well appreciate the governor, Senator Douye Diri and the deputy governor, Dr. Peter Akpe for creating an enabling environment for businesses to thrive. Bayelsa under the Prosperity administration has become the safest state in the country due to your investment in security" he added.



Anthony Joshua yet to sign Tyson Fury heavyweight fight contract

British boxing promoter Frank Warren has said that Anthony Joshua is yet to sign the contract for his proposed heavyweight clash with Tyson Fury.

Warren, however noted that Fury has already completed his side of the agreement.

The delay is linked to disagreements over the venue and other contractual details, putting the long-awaited all-British showdown at risk of further postponement.

Joshua's original contract favoured a UK venue, with Wembley Stadium among the options, but organisers and broadcasters Netflix and Saudi-backed Sela are pushing for the fight to take place at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Warren said the conflicting contracts must be amended before the bout can be finalised, with Joshua's side now needing to resolve the outstanding issues.

"It's not for me to give him [a deadline]; it's the people who are paying the money. It's all this stuff, as I said from the

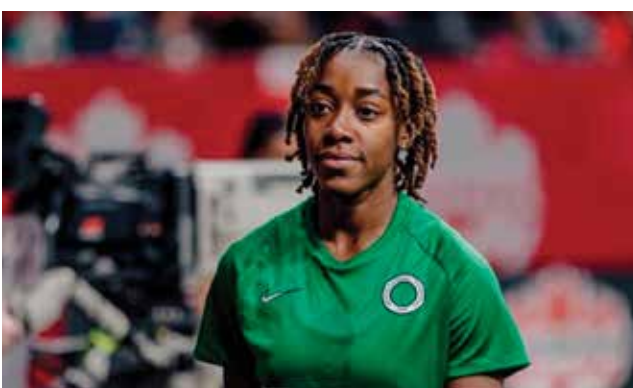
beginning, it's about contracts. I know what the contracts say. The contracts have all got to be amended," Warren told Independent.

"Tyson's signed. Tyson's done. He don't care when the fight takes place. [If] they want it in New York, they want it in Barbados, they want it on the Isle of Wight, he's signed. He's done."

Warren revealed that Fury signed his contract in January when the fight was initially scheduled for September. However, the proposed date was pushed back after Joshua was involved in an accident.

"He signed for the fight in January," Warren continued. "The fight was supposed to take place in September, but what happened with AJ and his accident, that all got pushed back."

"Where we got to with it was obviously AJ had his fight back, and we'd already had that one in December with Jake Paul."



Manchester City make strong push for Echegini

Manchester City are intensifying efforts to sign Super Falcons midfielder Jennifer Echegini from Paris Saint-Germain.

The Women's Super League champions have already seen several offers for the Nigeria international rejected.

According to report City remain determined to secure Echegini's services before the WSL transfer window closes

PSG, however, are reluctant to part ways

with the 25-year-old, who has one year left on her contract.

Echegini has developed into an important member of the Parisian side since joining the club in 2024.

The midfielder is familiar with English football, having spent part of her youth career with Charlton Athletic, Millwall and Arsenal. She joined PSG after one season with Juventus, where she enjoyed an impressive campaign, scoring 10 goals in 16 appearances.

ICC U19 Women T20 World Cup qualifier: Nigeria beat Tanzania to reach semifinals

Nigeria's Junior Female YellowGreens have qualified for the semifinal of the ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup Africa qualifier after producing another commanding performance to defeat hosts Tanzania by 57 runs.

The emphatic victory completed a perfect group-stage campaign for the Nigerian girls, who maintained their

unbeaten record and strengthened their position as one of the leading contenders in the tournament.

The YellowGreens dominated the contest against the hosts, combining disciplined bowling with an impressive batting display to secure a comfortable margin of victory and underline their growing confidence as the competition enters its decisive phase.



Viewpoint

Fake agencies and ghost workers saga

BY EHI BRAIMAH

The latest scandal involving fake government agencies and ghost workers should not be dismissed as another corruption story in Nigeria's seemingly endless catalogue of public-sector abuses. It is better to treat it as a critical inquiry into the quality of governance. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's decision to order a comprehensive forensic audit of the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS), federal agencies and related government systems is therefore timely.

The audit, to be coordinated by finance minister and coordinating minister of the economy, Taiwo Oyelede, is expected to examine payroll records, personnel and pension systems, bank accounts, government agencies and the connections between IPPIS, GIFMIS (Government Integrated Financial and Management Information System), Remita and the Treasury Single Account.

But an uncomfortable question must be asked: why did government need another scandal before it looked seriously at the architecture of government? That is the bigger issue.

The discovery of the fictitious Presidential Foreign Intervention Promotion Council (PFIPC) and other allegedly fake agencies is astonishing. More disturbing is that PFIPC, one of the phantom entities, reportedly secured a N1.3 billion allocation in the 2026 federal budget. The scandal raises a fundamental question: if an agency that does not legally exist can find its way into the budget, what else is hiding in the system?

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) subsequently uncovered another alleged fake agency and reported that the promoter created additional fictitious entities, complete with forged legislative documents and bank accounts. This is no longer simply about one clever fraudster; it is about a system that is broken and apparently had enough gaps for the fraud to flourish.

That brings us to the Stephen Oronsaye Report – a low-hanging fruit – which has been gathering dust since the report was submitted in 2012 after a presidential committee chaired by former Head of the Civil Service, Stephen Oronsaye, examined the structure of federal government agencies and the cost of governance.

The report identified duplication, overlapping mandates and unnecessary agencies. Among its major recommendations was reducing 263 statutory agencies to 161, abolishing 38 agencies, merging 52 and reverting 14 to departments within ministries.

In February 2024, President Tinubu's Federal Executive Council approved implementation of the report, with agencies to be scrapped, merged, subsumed or relocated. An implementation committee was subsequently inaugurated with a 12-week deadline.

So, what happened?

That is precisely the question Nigerians should be asking. More than two years after the presidential approval, the evidence suggests that implementation has been selective and incomplete. In fact, the government has continued to create or entertain proposals for new agencies whose mandates overlap with existing institutions.

The International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR) recently documented this contradiction, noting that the executive and legislative pipelines continue to produce new agencies despite the stated commitment to rationalisation. This is where the government's credibility is tested, as it cannot appraise and reprobate at the same time. If the cost of



governance is too high, then why are we creating more ministries, departments, agencies and boards?

Instead of the promise of a leaner government, the political system continues to treat the creation of agencies as a convenient way of rewarding interests, creating positions and distributing patronage. I have a strong feeling that President Tinubu is now ready to step on toes and wield the big stick because of the embarrassing ICPC revelations.

But why is the Oronsaye so difficult to implement?

The uncomfortable answer is that reform threatens vested interests. Every agency has a director-general, chairman, board members, directors, special assistants, administrative structures, procurement opportunities, contracts and budgetary allocations. Merging two agencies may make economic sense to the taxpayer, but it also means that somebody's office disappears.

On the other hand, scrapping an agency means eliminating positions and reducing the number of political appointments. Politicians and civil servants know that rationalising government has political consequences. That is why the Oronsaye Report has survived three administrations. Jonathan did not fully implement it. Buhari ignored it. Tinubu announced implementation in 2024, but the process remains far from complete.

The ICIR's recent assessment is particularly revealing: despite the 2024 approval, implementation has been selective, while new establishment bills continue to emerge. But there is another problem: legislation.

Some agencies cannot simply disappear because they were created by Acts of the National Assembly. Some mergers therefore require legislative amendments. For example, the proposed subsuming of the National Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission into the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission requires constitutional amendment because the latter is constitutionally established.

But that cannot become an excuse for doing nothing. The federal government knows which agencies require legislation and those that can be administratively merged. What of redundant agencies and those that can be returned to ministries? We should not pretend that government does not know them. In fact,

the reform could have been done in phases with specific deliverables.

This naturally leads us to the ghost-worker scandal which is equally revealing. Nigeria has invested heavily in payroll technology, which explains why the IPPIS was supposed to eliminate precisely the kind of fraud now being exposed.

If fictitious names, ineligible personnel or fraudulent bank accounts can still penetrate the payroll system, then the issue is no longer simply whether IPPIS exists; it is whether the controls around IPPIS work. And if the allegation that some workers who live and work abroad are drawing salaries from the civil service is true, then the allegation, in my view, would be a much bigger scandal.

The ICPC has reported recovering more than N24 billion linked to ghost workers' pensions and obtaining forfeiture orders involving more than 900 suspected ghost workers. That is a staggering indictment of institutional controls.

The President's forensic audit is therefore welcome, but it must not become another committee exercise that produces a report which eventually gathers dust. What we are suffering from is poor implementation of rules and regulations; enforcement of existing laws and ignoring committee recommendations, not a shortage of reports.

Whatever happened to previous white papers and audit reports? We have reform programmes and anti-corruption agencies, but we often lack the political will to follow recommendations to their logical conclusion. That is a governance failure spanning several seasons since 1999.

The most important lesson from the fake-agency scandal is that corruption does not always require sophisticated technology; sometimes, it only requires institutional negligence. How could an agency without a proper legal foundation obtain recognition, open accounts, have access to government offices, and be accommodated within the national budget? That is a huge scandal arising from poor stewardship.

How could several layers of bureaucracy fail to ask the most basic question: where is the enabling law? These questions should form part of the forensic investigation by Tunde Oyelede and his committee. The President's directive appropriately says the audit should go beyond individual cases and examine the architecture of government. That is exactly what is required, but

the architecture must lead to restructuring for far-reaching decisions.

If the forensic audit, for example, discovers 50 weaknesses and government merely fixes the individual cases, we will be back here again. The objective should be to create a government where it is structurally difficult – not merely illegal – for a fake agency or ghost worker to enter the system. The Oronsaye Report should be the starting point to clean up an opaque system. The government should resist the temptation to establish yet another committee to review the report.

The report is old, which means some recommendations may require updating because Nigeria's institutional landscape has changed, but the central diagnosis remains relevant: too many institutions have overlapping responsibilities at too great a cost.

Indeed, a recent analysis cited concerns that Nigeria now has more than 900 MDAs (it could be more), with estimates of significant annual losses associated with the proliferation of agencies.

The answer is not another report. While the Tunde Oyelede Committee is diligently carrying out President Tinubu's directive, the government should publish the Oronsaye Implementation Matrix showing which agency has been scrapped, merged, subsumed, or requires legislation. If implementation was stalled at some point, who is now responsible for completing each action? There should also be a deadline for feedback.

And, importantly, no new federal agency should be created without demonstrating that its functions cannot be performed by an existing institution. That should become a rule of governance going forward. President Tinubu deserves credit for ordering the forensic audit, but Nigerians should not judge the exercise by the number of ghost workers discovered or fake agencies exposed – they should judge it by what happens after the discovery.

Will the government recover the money and will those responsible face prosecution? Those who failed in their supervisory responsibilities should be held accountable. We also want to know whether duplicated agencies were actually merged and if redundant agencies were made to disappear like the morning dew.

Without prejudice to Tunde Oyelede's Committee Report, the number of government entities must be reduced, and payroll verification should become continuous rather than episodic. Government should also stop creating the institutional conditions that make these scandals possible.

Meanwhile, how many weaknesses in government remain undiscovered because nobody is looking? Who are the promoters of fake agencies and ghost workers? If they truly exist, why can't we find them? That is why this scandal should not be treated merely as another anti-corruption event, but a governance story.

The Oronsaye Report provides a tested framework for rationalising government, eliminating duplication and reducing the cost of governance. The Tinubu administration should pick it. If government is serious about fighting ghost workers and fake agencies, it must do more than clean up the symptoms by redesigning the system that produced them.

Nigerians are entitled to ask: if the government approved the Oronsaye reforms in 2024, why are we still debating the same problem in 2026?

Braimah is a PR specialist, marketing strategist, and publisher/editor-in-chief of Naija Times (www.ntm.ng) and Lagos Post (www.lagospost.ng). He can be reached through: ehi.braimah@neomedia.com.ng