

956 Nigerians evacuated from Libya in first quarter of 2025 —NiDCOM

ESE AMADASUN

The Chairman/CEO of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, has disclosed that 956 Nigerians were evacuated from Libya in the first quarter of 2025.

The operation was carried out with the support of the International Organization

for Migration (IOM) Nigeria and the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCRMI).

This was contained in a press statement signed by Abdur-Rahman Balogun, Director of Media, Public Relations, and Protocols Unit, NiDCOM, and shared via the Commission's official X handle.

According to the statement,

the breakdown of evacuees includes 683 females, 132 males, 87 children, and 54 infants.

The repatriation took place in six separate operations between January and March 2025, with return flights scheduled as follows: 152 Nigerians on January 28, 145 on February 11, 180 on February 19, 159 on February 25, 144 on March 4, and 176 on March 18.

The statement further noted

that over the past few years, more than 15,000 stranded Nigerians have been successfully brought home through joint efforts by the Federal Government and IOM.

Dabiri-Erewa reiterated NiDCOM's persistent warning against the use of Libya as a migration route, emphasizing the country's instability and the severe dangers associated with irregular migration.

"Due to the delicate political situation in Libya, we consistently caution Nigerians against using it as a pathway to Europe, not just Libya, but other irregular routes as well," she stated.

She urged Nigerians to embrace legal and regular migration channels, expressing concern that some returnees still attempt the journey again through even more hazardous routes.

The NiDCOM Chairman reaffirmed the Federal Government's commitment to protecting the rights, dignity, and well-being of Nigerians, both at home and abroad. She called for stronger collaboration among government agencies, non-governmental organizations, the media, and other stakeholders to intensify awareness campaigns on the risks of irregular migration.

The Nigerian Observer



...that the people may know

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INEC chairman seeks posthumous honour for late Prof Nwosu

—Pg 4

INEC receives petition to recall Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan

CAROLINE AMEH

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has received a petition from constituents of Kogi Central Senatorial District demanding the recall of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan.

A copy of the petition obtained by The Nigerian Observ-

er, showed that over 250,000 constituents signed the document, surpassing the 50 percent threshold required to initiate a recall process out of the district's 480,000 registered voters.

The petition was submitted three days after a Federal High Court in Lokoja overturned an earlier ruling that had barred INEC from accepting recall petitions.

In its ruling on Friday, the court reaffirmed that the recall process is constitutionally recognized and falls within the democratic rights of the constituents.

However, last Thursday, the same court had issued an interim injunction restraining

INEC, its officials, and agents from receiving or acting on any recall petition against Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan.

The court also barred the commission from conducting a referendum on the matter until the determination of the Motion on Notice.

The injunction followed an ex-parte application filed by Anebe Jacob Ogirima and four other registered voters, who claimed the petition contained fictitious signatures.

Their counsel, Smart Nwachimere, argued that fraudulent names had been included

in the petition.

Following the latest ruling, INEC is now restricted from accepting or acting upon any recall petition found to contain fraudulent signatures.

The case has been adjourned to May 6, 2025, for further proceedings.

Edo govt partners stakeholders on improving GDP accuracy

EGHOSA EMILY

Towards achieving the vision of accurate Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the Edo State Government through its Bureau of Statistics (ESBS) in collaboration with the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the World Bank, has organised a one-day Stakeholders Engagement on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Survey.

The engagement which held in Benin City, had in attendance stakeholders from various Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) as well as the private sector.

According to the Statistician General, Edo State Bureau of Statistics, Mr. Bashiru Abiebhode, the aim of the engagement is to create awareness among stakeholders and business owners of upcoming

enumeration exercises to guide them to provide accurate information, which is required to compute the Edo State's accurate GDP.

Mr. Abiebhode disclosed that there would be training for 50 enumerators, who are solely statisticians designated for the enumeration exercise to ensure accuracy and to cover all sectors of the economy.

The State Coordinator, Edo State Bureau of Statistics, Mr. David Obianubi stated

that the purpose of the stakeholder's event is to trigger the willingness in the hearts of captains of industries and heads of MDAs in articulating the State's GDP.

He stressed that GDP shows how the economic structure of the state fares in comparison to other states and that the en-

CONTINUES ON PG 2



OFFICIAL FLAG-OFF:

Minister of Works, David Umahi (2nd left); Senator representing Edo North senatorial district, Adams Oshiomhole (middle); Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo (3rd right - cutting the tape), and others, during the official flag-off of the 125km Benin-Asaba Super Highway, a key project under the Highway Development and Management Initiative (HDMI).

IGP warns policemen against unlawful, prolonged detention —Pg 2

NANS lauds FG's plan to build CNG conversion centres in tertiary institutions —Pg 3

First black Republican congresswoman Mia Love dies at 49 —Pg 5

World Cup: Gov Eno purchases 30,000 match tickets for fans to drum support for Super Eagles —Pg 7

Delta Police arrest armed suspects in Ekpan, Jeddo operations

AJUWA VICTOR

The Delta State Police Command has confirmed the arrest of multiple suspects linked to illegal arms possession and criminal activities in Ekpan and Jeddo communities.

On 15th March 2025, at approximately 10:30 AM, the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) of Ekpan Police Station, CSP Aliyu Shaba, received intelligence that Victor Edavwe, the Youth President of Ekpan

community, was suspected of recently acquiring an AK-47 rifle. Acting on this information, police operatives mobilised to Shrine Street in Ekpan, where Edavwe was apprehended and taken into custody for questioning.

During interrogation, Edavwe provided information that corroborated earlier intelligence, leading the police to the residence of an individual identified as Efe, also known as 'Eteyomo'. A search of the premises uncovered an

AK-47 rifle, a single-barrel gun, three cutlasses, two daggers, and forty-four rounds of 7.62mm live ammunition, all hidden in the roof of the sitting room. The suspects remain in custody as investigations continue.

In a related operation, on 16th March 2025 at approximately 4:00 PM, the Ekpan Police Division acted on intelligence regarding criminal activities in the Jeddo area of Okpe Local Government Area. The DPO led officers in arrest-

ing four suspects: Endurance Oghoghome (38), Blessing Oghoghome (46), Marvellous Dissy (43), and Jonas Orogho (38).

Preliminary investigations led the police to a hideout in Jeddo, where a search warrant was executed.

Recovered from the premises were an automatic English pump-action gun, two locally made single-barrel guns, a locally fabricated Beretta pistol, a cut-to-size locally made gun, and a live

cartridge.

The suspects and recovered weapons are currently in police custody, with further investigations underway.

The Commissioner of Police, CP Olufemi Abaniwonda, commended the DPO and his

team for their dedication and commitment to public safety. He noted that residents of Jeddo community have expressed their appreciation to the command, stating they now feel a greater sense of security following the arrests.



2-DAY TECHNICAL WORKSHOP:

A group photograph of participants during a 2-day technical workshop on fostering collaboration within Edo State's export ecosystem organised by ESIPO in collaboration with the Nigeria Export Promotion Council (NEPC) to drive non-oil export diversification which held at Edo State One-Stop-Investment Centre (ES-OSIC) in Benin City

Idahosa informs Ovia North-East constituents of approved road projects

BERNADETTE IDALU

The office of the Edo State deputy governor was thrown into a festive mood on March 24, 2025 as members of the All Progressives Congress (APC) from Ovia North-East Local Government Area paid a solidarity and courtesy visit.

During the visit, Hon. Dennis Idahosa informed the party faithful and local chieftains that Governor Monday Okpebholo, in his commitment to uplifting the economy and infrastructure, has approved two major road projects for the area.

Idahosa announced that the governor has finalized procurement processes for the extension of the road from Ekenhuan Barracks to the Ekenhuan community, signaling a significant dividend of democracy for the people of Ovia North-East.

He added that the procurement process for Okhuo Road,

from the 7Up Bottling Company to Siluko Road, has also been completed, further cementing the administration's dedication to infrastructure development.

The visit was marked by expressions of elation from party leaders.

Ovia North-East APC Chairman, Hon. Oscar Aghe-do noted that the group was not only there to congratulate Governor Okpebholo on his recent electoral victory, but also to reaffirm their unwavering commitment to the current administration.

Other leaders, including Hon. Prince Samuel Aghe-do, Prof. Ovenseri Aibueku, Mrs. Sonata Eweka, Hon. (Engr.) Osazee Eghe Sunday, and Charity Amayaenbo, shared words of encouragement on behalf of youths, ward leaders, women leaders, and the broader community, all buoyed by the promise of improved local infrastructure and economic growth.

IGP warns policemen against unlawful, prolonged detention

MIKE OSAROGIAGBON

The Inspector-General of Police, Kayode Adeolu Egbetokun, has warned all officers of the Nigeria Police Force against engaging in unlawful and prolonged detention practices, particularly concerning pre-trial detentions.

In a statement by the Force Public Relations Officer, ACP Olumuyiwa Adejobi, the IGP emphasized that adherence to legally prescribed detention periods is essential.

He underscored that following the legal requirements is not merely about compliance with the law, but is a fundamental aspect of protecting the

dignity and personal liberty of every individual, as enshrined in Sections 34 and 35 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The IGP warned that any officer found to have violated constitutional provisions regarding human rights would face severe consequences.

He cautioned that unlawful

detention practices could significantly erode public trust in the police force.

"By prioritizing human rights, the Nigeria Police Force aims to build stronger relationships with the communities it serves, ensuring that policing is conducted with integrity and respect," the statement read.

Edo govt partners stakeholders on...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

agement creates an insight on the enumeration exercise to allay fear of giving false data based on alleged tax premises.

Similarly, the Statistician General of the Federation, Prince Yemi Adeniran, represented by the State Coordinator of National Bureau of Statistics, Mr. Emmanuel Agbebaku, accentuated that the collaboration demonstrates the importance of data driven

decision making in promoting economic growth and development across the subnationals.

A participant, the Chairman of the Nigerian Association of Small-scale Industries, Mr. Noma Eguesehi commended the efforts of the State Bureau of Statistics for initiating an interaction and driving the move for a collaboration among stakeholders. He added that the growth of the GDP cannot be determined if the real stakeholders are not involved.

I don't have an alarm clock, Soyinka defends delay in Tinubu's assessment

Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka has rejected any attempt by Nigerians to dictate the timing of his assessment of President Tinubu's government.

He asserted his independence, making it clear that he would not be bound by external schedules.

Soyinka emphasised that he would only offer his evaluation when he deems it necessary and when he has substantive observations to share, dismissing the notion that he should adhere to a pre-determined timeline, such as the one-year mark of Tinubu's presidency.

Soyinka asked Nigerians not to work on his timetable for him, saying he would speak on Tinubu's government when he had something to say.

"People should stop trying

to work on my timetable for me," the nonagenarian cautioned those asking him to fulfil his promise to assess Tinubu's administration after one year in office which elapsed on May 29, 2024.

"I had not swallowed an alarm clock," Soyinka said on Channels Television's The Morning Brief programme on Monday.

"I don't see why I should put my alarm on and say: 'One year has passed, now, I must make an assessment' if there is nothing I feel like talking about and if I am busy elsewhere."

On Sunday, December 24, 2023, Soyinka paid a visit to Tinubu in his Bourdillon residence in the highbrow Ikoyi area of Lagos.

When asked to assess Tinubu's administration which started on May 29, 2023, the

Nobel laureate said he would reserve his comments about Tinubu's government till after one year, in May 2024.

Critics have accused Tinubu, ex-Lagos governor, of mismanaging the economy, with all-time high inflation and unprecedented cost of living.

Tinubu's administration would be two years in office by May 29, 2025, and many had expected Soyinka to fulfill his promise.

However, the academic said many conscientious persons had been speaking and that assessing any government is a collective responsibility of like-minded persons.

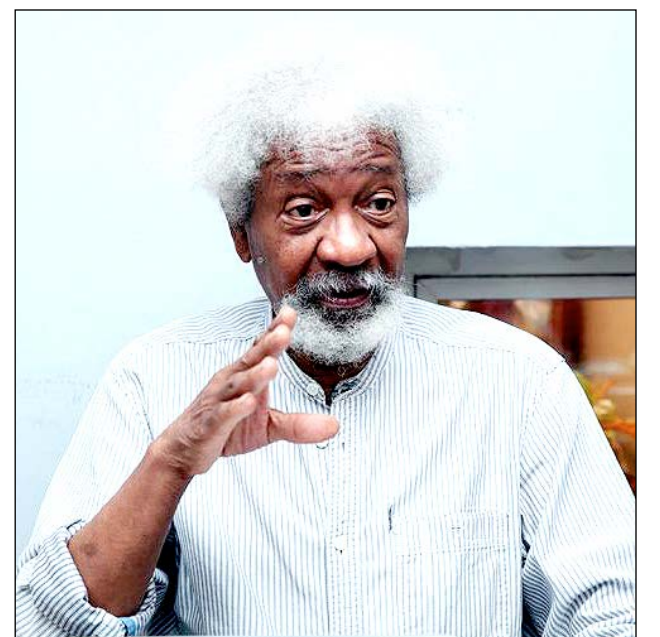
Soyinka said, "This business of 'you haven't come to do this,' I don't understand it. Other people are doing the same; this is a collective effort. The Fa-

lanas speak consistently. The Baiyewus speak consistently. The Sowores come out and try to lead demonstrations. It's a collective effort.

"The one year is up which means you have a right and I have a responsibility to respond when you call me on certain issues. But if you are saying that I would call a press conference and say: 'One year is up, let us now make an assessment'.

"The only question I'd ask you is: 'Did I do that with Jonathan?' 'Did I do that with Buhari?' 'Did I do that with Obasanjo?' 'Did I do that with anybody?' So, why is it expected of me?"

"All it means is that one year is up. If I am around, and you want to get hold of me, I would speak. That's all that statement meant."



SOYINKA

NEWS

DTSG solicits partnership to transform state into special economic zone

AJUWA VICTOR

The Secretary to Delta State Government Dr. Kingsley Emu, says the state has the potential to become a key economic zone in the country leveraging its vast crude oil and gas reserve, and resources for both aquatic and land-based agriculture.

Dr. Emu stated this in Asaba, during a study tour to Delta State by Participants of the Naval Warfare Course 9, of the Naval War College of Nigeria.

Reports stated that stakeholders at the tour called for collaborative initiatives between the state and the federal government, focused on maximizing and preserving the natural resources that abound in the area.

Dr. Emu, said water bodies constitute about 40% of the total landmass of Delta State, which has four Seaports and was the highest producer of crude oil, hence the need to

maintain an active naval presence to safeguard the strategic area.

Dr. Emu stated that, the government had embarked on the construction of bridges to link riverine communities, established conflict resolution mechanisms and executed human development schemes targeted at improving the lives of people and maintaining the peace in the area.

Dr. Emu stressed "We have loads of critical assets supporting the extractive industry of oil, most oil majors are located here.

"There is a need to protect that environment."

The Commandant Naval War Collage Rear admiral Olatunde Olodude, noted that strategic locations across Delta State have been earmarked for the tour, to establish firsthand analysis that would inform corresponding reports and recommendations after the five-day exercise.

Commandant pointed out

"At the end of the day we can take all this back and feed the Chief of Naval Staff on our findings."

A Ministerial Briefing was programmed for the tour,

where the Delta State Commissioner for Economic Planning Mr. Sunny Ekedaye; his counterpart in Transport Ministry Onoriode Agofure; and that of Women Affairs Mrs Pat

Ajudua, took turns to educate the participants on activities in their sectors.

The Study Tour of Delta State by Participants of the Naval Warfare Course 9, of

the Naval War College of Nigeria was embarked upon with the theme: Maritime Security, a Panacea for Viable Socio-economic Development.



OFFICIAL FLAG-OFF:

Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborewori (left), and the Minister for Works, David Umahi, acknowledging cheers from excited locals in Asaba, during the official flag-off of the construction of the Access Road to the Second Niger Bridge, linking Delta and Anambra states in Phase 2A.

Edo Task Force clears Ring Road, restores order in Benin

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Task Force on Street Trading, led by SP Mike Anetor and comprising various security personnel, has launched a clearance operation at the Ring Road axis of Benin City.

The exercise, aimed at restoring order to an area long plagued by congestion and disorder, is part of the government's broader efforts to create a more organised and accessible environment for residents and businesses.

For years, the Ring Road area has been notorious for traffic gridlocks caused by illegal street trading and taxi drivers operating without regulation.

The situation was worsened by alleged hoodlums posing as task force officials, extorting commuters and compounding the challenges faced by road

users.

Determined to change the narrative, the government stepped in over the weekend, successfully clearing the area and bringing much-needed relief to residents.

The clean-up aligns with the state's SHINE agenda, which prioritises infrastructure development and urban renewal, transforming Benin City into a more beautiful and orderly space.

According to Mr John Okafor, a trader in the area, the task force's actions demonstrate the administration's commitment to building a better Edo State. Echoing the sentiments of many residents, he remarked, "This is the Edo we voted for, a state where the government is proactive in addressing public concerns and fostering an environment for growth and development."

NANS lauds FG's plan to build CNG conversion centres in tertiary institutions

The National Association of Nigerian Students has applauded the Federal Government's plan to establish Compressed Natural Gas conversion centres and refuelling stations in 20 selected tertiary institutions across the country.

Describing the initiative as a "noble and practical step," NANS said it would help cushion the impact of the high cost of transportation on students following the removal of petrol subsidy.

The Minister of Education, Dr Olatunji Alausa, had on Monday disclosed that the Federal Government, through

the Presidential Compressed Natural Gas Initiative and in partnership with a private energy firm, would soon commence the CNG conversion project in 20 selected tertiary institutions.

He added that six of the centres would become operational by May, noting that the initiative was aimed at reducing transportation costs for students and lecturers while integrating clean energy solutions into the education sector.

Reacting to the development, NANS National Vice President (Inter-Campus and Gender Affairs), Akinbodunse Felicia, in

a statement on Wednesday in Abeokuta, Ogun State, said the project would go a long way in alleviating students' hardship.

"Students are the worst hit by the effects of subsidy removal as transportation costs have soared beyond the reach of many Nigerians.

"This decision by the Federal Government under the leadership of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu will provide relief for students who have been groaning under the harsh economic situation," the statement read in part.

NANS, however, urged the Federal Government to prioritise safety considerations while setting up the CNG conversion

centres and refuelling stations on campuses.

The association also called for the provision of more CNG-powered buses and vehicles in tertiary institutions to ease students' mobility.

While acknowledging the project's potential to reduce transportation costs, Akinbodunse urged the government to strengthen security measures on campuses to curb the rising cases of student kidnappings.

She decried the trauma suffered by victims and their families, calling on relevant authorities to adopt proactive strategies to prevent abductions both within and outside campuses.

Oborewori's SAs dole out financial grants to 23 persons in Ika South LG

AJUWA VICTOR

The duo of Special Assistants (SA) on Youth Development to Governor Sheriff Oborewori, Comrade Peter Abiamuwe and Mrs Joy Elelegwu, the Special Assistant on Women Development gave financial support to 23 Persons across the 11 units that make up Ward 4 in Ika South Local Government Area of Delta State.

At a meeting which was held at the ward party Secretariat, leaders and stakeholders lauded the two political aides to the Delta State Governor.

Ward 4 PDP Chairman, Mr Friday Onyeator who declared the session open posited that Comrade Peter and Mrs Joy decided to give back to select members of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the 11 units in ward 4.

He disclosed that the beneficiaries were selected by stakeholders in the respective units, urging other members to remain committed to enable them benefit in subsequent empowerment.

The governor's aide, while addressing the party enthusiasts stated that they decided to give back to members of the

party because they are benefiting from the collective efforts of all true supporters of the party in ward.

They lauded Governor Oborewori for giving them the opportunity to serve in his government and urged the leadership and faithful of the PDP in ward 4 to continue to support the Oborewori -led administration, adding that the M. O. R. E Agenda is already yielding results.

Comrade Abiamuwe posited that the Chairman of Ika South, Hon. Jerry Ehiwarior has done marvellously well by domesticating the M. O. R. E

Agenda in Ika South

One of the beneficiaries, Mr Osuhon Roland, while speaking with newsmen lauded the duo of Peter and Mrs Joy for their gesture.

He offered prayers for their benefactors and assured that they will continue to support the PDP.

Leader extraordinary, Col. John Ebomah (Rtd), while addressing newsmen hailed the duo of Peter and Mrs Joy for giving back to the PDP.

He noted that political positions are a call to serve selflessly while imploring others to emulate Comrade. Peter and Mrs Joy.



TINUBU

NEWS

Edo govt, UNICEF inaugurate Social Behavioural Change C'ttee

The Edo State Ministry of Information and Communication, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), has inaugurated the Social Behavioural Change Committee

to enhance interventions for children and adolescents.

The multi-sectoral committee is tasked with planning, harmonising, implementing, reporting, and documenting data-driven social and behav-

oural change initiatives aimed at promoting and protecting child rights.

Its primary objective is to drive positive behavioural change at individual and community levels by addressing

barriers that hinder children's well-being across various thematic areas.

Membership comprises representatives from civil society organisations, religious and traditional institutions, com-

munity structures, and government agencies, all focused on raising awareness about child and adolescent-related services statewide.

Inaugurating the committee at the ministry's headquarters in Benin City, the Commis-

sioner for Information and Communication, Hon. Paul Ohonbamu, represented by the Permanent Secretary, Dr Desmond Agbama, emphasised that the committee will lead advocacy against child abuse and anti-children policies.



TECHNICAL WORSHIP:

R-L: Team Lead, Business Development Support and Export, Edo State Investment Promotion Office (ESIPO), Abraham Akhigbe; Edo State Coordinator, Nigeria Export Promotion Council (NEPC), Okhiulu Andrew; Managing Director, ESIPO, Hon. Amen Odigie; Agbonifo Blessing Erosa, and Coordinator, Edo State One-Stop-Investment Centre (ES-OSIC), Joel Edionwe, during a technical worship organised by ESIPO on fostering collaboration within Edo State Export Ecosystem which held at ES-OSIC.

INEC chairman seeks posthumous honour for late Prof Nwosu

The Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission, Professor Mahmood Yakubu, has called for a posthumous national honour for the late Professor Humphrey Nwosu, who served as Nigeria's electoral chief from 1989 to 1993.

Speaking at a tribute held at INEC headquarters in Abuja on Monday, Yakubu praised Nwosu's role in shaping Nigeria's electoral process, particularly his introduction of the Option A4 voting system and the Open Ballot System.

Yakubu described the 1993 presidential election conducted under Nwosu's leadership as one of the freest and fairest in the country's history, despite its annulment.

Yakubu said, "Like all his six predecessors and seven succes-

sors to date, he had the arduous task of managing elections in an extremely challenging context.

"He also introduced a number of reforms to election management. His tenure is synonymous with the Open Ballot System, popularly referred to as Option A4 in which voters queued up behind the symbol of the party of their choice to vote and to be physically counted.

"Professor Nwosu did his best, which was not always appreciated by many, including those who appointed him under an infinite transition from military rule to democracy, which ended in the annulment of the presidential election held in 1993, resulting in the dissolution of the electoral commission and the emergence of an interim government.

"However, with the passage of time, the outcome of his effort is now widely appreciated. The election is now celebrated as one of the best in Nigeria. Even those who annulled it have expressed regret."

Yakubu expressed his belief that Nwosu's contributions deserved a national honour and urged the relevant authorities to bestow a posthumous recognition upon him.

He stated, "A quarter of a century (25 years) later in June 2018, the presumed winner of the 1993 Presidential election, Chief M. K. O. Abiola, received the highest national honour, the Grand Commander of the Federal Republic, posthumously. His running mate, Ambassador Baba Gana Kingibe, was conferred with the second highest national hon-

our, the Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger. The date of the election (June 12th, 1993) has been gazetted as a national holiday and appropriately named Democracy Day.

"Sadly, the electoral commission that conducted the election which was personified by Professor Nwosu received only a muffled commendation as if no one conducted the election. Surely, the election did not conduct itself. It was organised by a Commission made up of Commissioners and a Chairman. If it was an oversight that Professor Nwosu was not honoured in his lifetime, it is never late for the appropriate authority to do so posthumously.

"For us in INEC, we will continue to appreciate Professor Nwosu and the dedicated service he rendered to the nation."

Minister orders probe of Kogi jailbreak

The Minister of Interior, Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, has ordered an immediate investigation into the jailbreak at the Koton Karfe Correctional Centre in Kogi State.

The minister described the incident as "unfortunate" and assured Nigerians that all escaped inmates would be recaptured using advanced biometric technology and other security measures.

In a statement issued on Monday by his Special Adviser on Media, Babatunde Alao, Tunji-Ojo emphasised the government's determination to uncover the circumstances surrounding the prison break.

He also directed the Acting Controller General of the Nigerian Correctional Service, Sylvester Ndidi, to visit the facility and conduct a comprehensive security audit.

"We are on top of the situation. Our men are on the ground in Kogi, and I have ordered a comprehensive audit of the situation," the minister stated.

He further assured Nigerians that the authorities would leave no stone unturned in tracking down the fleeing inmates.

"All necessary measures, including our robust biometric database and existing technology solutions, will be deployed

to recapture every escaped inmate," he added.

Constituents insist on Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan's recall, cite 'international embarrassment'

In a post on his official X (formerly Twitter) account, Tunji-Ojo reiterated his commitment to ensuring accountability within the correctional system.

"The jailbreak at Koton Karfe is unfortunate, but we will get to the root of it. We will not allow breaches like this to go unchecked. Every fugitive will be found and brought to justice," he wrote.

Meanwhile, the minister assured the public of strengthened security at correctional facilities across the country to prevent future occurrences.

He reaffirmed that the Nigerian Correctional Service would be held accountable for lapses and that corrective measures would be swiftly implemented.

The Koton Karfe jailbreak is the latest in a series of prison security breaches in Nigeria, raising concerns over the safety and management of correctional facilities.

However, Tunji-Ojo maintained that his ministry is committed to enforcing stricter security measures.



TUNJI-OJO

PSC warns against tactical squads abuse, appoints CPs for FCT, others

The Police Service Commission has cautioned state police commands against allowing Tactical Units to overshadow recognised police departments, especially at state headquarters.

The commission noted that some state commissioners have misused these units, rendering core police departments ineffective despite being led by Deputy Commissioners of Police.

A statement on Monday by the PSC spokesman, Ikechukwu Ani, said the warning was

issued during an interactive session with nine commissioners recommended by the Inspector General of Police for appointment and deployment to state commands.

The PSC emphasised that the new commissioners must allow existing police departments to function properly.

Ani said, "The Police Service Commission has warned that Tactical Units should not be allowed to supplant recognised Police Departments, especially at the State Command Headquarters.

"The commission notes that many state commissioners have abused these amorphous Tactical Units and had rendered recognised police departments redundant even when they are headed by Deputy Commissioners of Police."

In the latest appointments, the PSC approved the IGP's recommendations, assigning Ibrahim Maikaba from Kano State as Commissioner of Police for Zamfara State, while Breret Simon from Plateau State will head Taraba State.

Christopher Emmanuel from

Niger State has been appointed as CP for Yobe, and Olusegun Omosayin from Ondo State will oversee Cross River State.

Other appointments include Adamu Elleman from Jigawa State as CP for Niger State, Sani Aliyu from Kogi State for Bauchi Command, and Bello Shehu from Gombe State for Katsina Command.

Additionally, Saka Ajao from Ogun State has been assigned to the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Command, while Ojo Adekimi from Ekiti State will head the Kwara

Command.

Ani said the PSC Chairman, DIG Hashimu Argungu (retd.), urged the officers to prevent the misuse of Tactical Units and ensure they do not take over roles designated for recognised departments.

He said, "Chairman of the commission DIG Hashimu Argungu (retd.), advised the officers to ensure that Tactical Units are not abused at the state commands and not used to do the work meant for recognised Departments.

"He expressed worry about

the abuse of power by these Units and noted that it is in the interest of the new CPs to work with Deputy Commissioners manning the Departments and posted by the Inspector General.

"DIG Lakanu in his contribution told the Officers to work with their subordinates and establish trust with the people – the youths, traditional leaders and Organisations such as the NBA and advised that they should refrain from establishing squads that are not necessary."

News

Foreign

First black Republican congresswoman Mia Love dies at 49

Mia Love, the first US black Republican congresswoman, has died aged 49 in Utah, her family has announced.

"She passed away peacefully" on Sunday, surrounded by family at her home in the town of Saratoga Springs, a state-

ment said.

Love, a daughter of Haitian immigrants, had represented the state of Utah in the House of Representatives.

Her daughter Abigale said earlier this month that Love had no longer been responding to treatment for brain cancer.

"In the midst of a celebration of her life and an avalanche of happy memories, Mia quietly slipped the bands of mortality and, as her words and vision always did, soared heavenward," said the family statement, which was posted on X.

Paying tributes to Love, Utah

Governor Spencer Cox wrote: "A true trailblazer and visionary leader, Mia inspired countless Utahns through her courage, grace, and unwavering belief in the American dream.

"Her legacy leaves a lasting, positive impact on our state. We will miss her deeply."

Mia Love's political career formally started in 2003 when she won a seat on the Saratoga Springs' city council, and she later became the mayor, aged 34.

In 2014, she was elected to the US House of Representatives. She made history as the first Black Republican woman to take up the role, and served two terms.

Love was critical of Donald Trump when he was running for president in 2016, endorsing instead his Republican nomination rival Texas Senator Ted Cruz, who dropped out of the race a few months later.

She also called for Trump to publicly apologise for making derogatory comments about Haiti in 2018.

Her bid for a third term ended in a razor-thin defeat to her Democratic rival Ben McAdams.

Trump reacted to that by saying at a news conference: "Mia Love gave me no love, and she lost."

Before entering politics, the mother of three worked for some time as a flight attendant.

As a teenager she dreamed of an acting career, later graduating from the University of Hartford in Connecticut with a degree in musical theatre.

In 2022, Love was diagnosed with glioblastoma, a fast-moving and aggressive form of brain cancer, and was given just 10-15 months to live - which she surpassed.

Her death comes nearly two weeks after Love wrote an opinion piece for *Deseret News*, which she said was "not to say goodbye but to say thank you and express my living wish for you and the America I know".



MIA DIES @49:

Mia Love, the first US black Republican congresswoman, dies @ 49

US deportations to Venezuela resume after dispute

A flight carrying 199 Venezuelans deported from the US to their homeland has landed at Simón Bolívar airport near Caracas.

US repatriation flights to Venezuela had ground to a halt weeks ago after the Trump administration revoked a licence allowing Venezuela to export some of its oil to the US despite sanctions.

But on Saturday the two governments, which have no diplomatic relations, reached agreement on resuming the flights, as part of the Trump administration's plan to remove undocumented migrants.

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro described the flights as a chance to "rescue and free migrants from prisons in the US".

As they disembarked from the plane early on Monday, some of the deportees raised their arms and waved.

They had earlier been transferred from US state of Texas to Honduras, in Central America, from where they were flown by Venezuelan flag carrier Conviasa to Maiquetía, north of Caracas.

The US Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs described them as "illegal aliens" who "had no basis to remain in the United States".

The head of Venezuela's National Assembly, Jorge Rodríguez, on the other hand stressed on Saturday that migration was "not a crime".

Venezuela had originally agreed to take in Venezuelan deportees from the US in a deal struck by Trump's special envoy, Richard Grenell, in Caracas in January.

It was widely seen as a victory for Trump, who has made deporting undocumented migrants a priority.

However, Maduro said on 8 March that the US administration's decision to revoke the

licence of oil giant Chevron to operate in Venezuela had created "a little problem".

"They damaged the line of communication we had opened, and I was interested in those lines of communication (...) because I wanted to bring home all the Venezuelans they have in custody they have unjustly persecuted," he said.

A week later, the Trump administration deported 238 Venezuelans to a mega-prison in El Salvador, arguing that they were members of the Tren de Aragua criminal gang.

It caused an outcry in Vene-

zuela, where several relatives of those deported to El Salvador insisted their loved ones had no criminal connections.

The deportation of Venezuelans to El Salvador's feared Cecot prison was followed by a warning posted on X by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio last week that Venezuela would face "severe and escalating" sanctions if it refused to accept its citizens deported from the US.

The following day, Maduro ordered his government to "step up the action needed to guarantee return flights for detained migrants".

South Korea court reinstates PM as acting leader

South Korea's constitutional court has dismissed the impeachment of Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, reinstating him as the country's acting president.

Han took over as acting leader last December when President Yoon Suk Yeol was suspended from duties and impeached by parliament after he attempted to declare martial law.

However, Han only lasted two weeks in power before lawmakers voted to impeach him as well. Since then, South Korea has been led by deputy prime minister Choi Sang-mok.

South Korea has been roiled by political chaos since Yoon's botched attempt to impose martial law.

Shortly after assuming the role of acting president, Han blocked the appointment of new judges to the constitutional court - something the opposition had hoped would improve the odds of Yoon getting impeached.

As a result, they voted to impeach Han.

But on Monday, the judges ruled seven to one to strike down the impeachment.

"I thank the constitutional court for its wise decision," Han said after the ruling was announced. "I will work to bring the government to order."

South Korea remains on tenterhooks for another upcoming decision by the same court - on the impeachment of President Yoon.

Lawmakers voted to impeach Yoon on 14 December, but it is ultimately up to the constitutional court to decide.

If the court votes to uphold the impeachment, Yoon would be immediately removed from office and South Korea must hold a presidential election within 60 days. If it dismisses the impeachment, Yoon would return to his duties immediately.

The court date has not yet been set for the Yoon verdict, but in recent weeks Seoul has seen swelling protests from Yoon's supporters and opponents, with hundreds of thousands taking to the streets of the nation's capital last weekend.

Political analyst Leif-Eric Easley said the dismissal of Han's impeachment shows that the constitutional court "wants to appear impartial, upholding the law and encouraging national stability during a messy political transition".

It "serves to admonish progressive parties for their over-zealousness in impeaching government officials", said Dr Easley. He noted that opposition lawmakers have filed several impeachment motions, and the court has dismissed the nine cases it has ruled on so far.

"Reinstating Han is also partly political theatre setting up its more consequential ruling on Yoon's impeachment," Dr Easley added.

"Mostly siding with conservatives on Han's case can be seen as a play for unity and legitimacy" for when the court votes on Yoon's fate in coming days, he said.

Israel kills Hamas official being treated at Gaza hospital

An Israeli air strike on a hospital in Gaza killed a senior Hamas leader and an aide on Sunday evening, a Hamas official told the BBC.

Ismail Barhoum, the head of the group's financial affairs, was killed in the strike on Nasser Hospital, the main medical facility in Khan Younis.

He was receiving treatment at the hospital after being wounded in an air strike four days ago, the official said.

Israel's military said it had struck a key Hamas member operating inside the hospital compound following "an ex-

tensive intelligence-gathering process" and said that "precise munitions" had been used to mitigate harm.

The Hamas-run health ministry said "many others", including medical personnel, were injured.

The hospital department that was hit was evacuated after a large portion was destroyed, the ministry said.

Footage verified by the BBC showed people attempting to extinguish a fire after the strike.

Israel has repeatedly accused Hamas of using hospitals as hiding places for weapons and

command centres, which the group denies.

Another Hamas leader, Salah al-Bardaweel, was killed by a separate Israeli air strike in Khan Younis on Sunday, an official told the BBC.

At least 30 people were killed in Khan Younis and Rafah as of Sunday morning, before the strike on the hospital in the evening, the health ministry said.

Israel resumed its military campaign in Gaza on 18 March, ending a ceasefire that lasted almost two months. Hundreds of people have been

killed in strikes since then.

Israel blamed Hamas for rejecting a new US proposal to extend the truce. Hamas, in turn, accused Israel of abandoning the original deal agreed in January.

The war was triggered by Hamas's attack on Israel on 7 October 2023, in which about 1,200 people, mainly civilians, were killed and 251 others taken hostage.

Israel responded to the 7 October attack with a military offensive in Gaza to destroy Hamas, which has killed more than 50,000 people, the Hamas-run health ministry said.

Foreign

News

Tate brothers report to Romania police after return from US

British-American influencer Andrew Tate and his brother Tristan have appeared at a police station after returning to Romania from the US.

The brothers registered with the authorities in the capital, Bucharest, in a legal formality to demonstrate their compliance with an ongoing criminal investigation.

They are under investigation in Romania for forming an organised criminal group, human trafficking, trafficking of minors and money laundering. Andrew also faces allegations of rape and sex with a minor. The pair deny all accusations.

After leaving the police station, Andrew, 38, refused to say whether he would remain in Romania, but vowed to clear his name.

The brothers returned to Romania on Friday nearly a month after they unexpectedly had their travel ban lifted by the authorities.

Soon after, the pair announced they flew on a private jet to Florida - where they quickly became the focus of a new investigation.

Florida's state attorney-general launched a criminal inquiry into the brothers, welcomed by the US National Centre on Sexual Exploitation, which represents one of Tate's alleged victims.

The brothers' exit from Romania led to speculation that prosecutors felt political pressure from President Donald

Trump - whom they support. Trump has denied any knowledge of their release and the Tates have dismissed claims of outside influence.

Replying to a question about the US charges today, Andrew denied them and said: "I am investigated everywhere on the planet, because I am one of the most important people on the planet."

He also said there was a "witch hunt" against him.

The pair were arrested in Romania in late 2022 amid accusations of misleading women and transporting them to Romania where they were later sexually exploited and subjected to physical violence.

The pair are also the subjects of a separate investigation in the UK into allegations of rape and human trafficking, which they deny.

British authorities have secured a warrant over allegations of sexual aggression dating back to 2012, meaning the brothers could face extradition once Romanian proceedings conclude.

Last month, Romanian authorities warned the Tates they must return for a court appearance or risk "a higher custodial measure".

Andrew, who has been banned from several social media platforms for his misogynistic views and hate speech, later told his 10 million followers on X that he had spent \$185,000 (£142,800) on a private jet to "sign one single piece of paper in Romania".



DISPUTED BORDER CLASHES:

Ties between India and China have been strained since the 2020 clashes along a disputed border

India-China Relations: Modi's hope for a thaw amid uncertain geopolitics

In a recent interview, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke positively about India's relationship with long-time rival China. He said normalcy had returned to the disputed India-China border and called for stronger ties.

These are striking comments, because tensions have been high since a nasty border clash in the northern Ladakh region in 2020 - the deadliest since a 1962 war.

Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning expressed appreciation for Modi's

words and declared that "the two countries should be partners that contribute to each other's success".

Modi's pitch for closer partnership isn't actually as big of a leap as it may seem, given recent improvements in bilateral ties. But the relationship remains strained, and much will need to fall into place - bilaterally and more broadly geopolitically - for it to enjoy a true rapprochement.

India-China ties have many bright spots.

Bilateral trade is consistently

robust; even after the Ladakh clash, China has been India's top trade partner. They co-operate multilaterally, from Brics, the alliance of major developing countries, to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. They share interests in advancing non-Western economic models, countering Islamist terrorism and rejecting what they deem US moral crusading.

Even after the Ladakh clash sunk ties to their lowest level in decades, the two militaries continued to hold high-level dialogues, which resulted in a deal in October to resume border patrols. Modi met Chinese President Xi Jinping at a Brics summit in Russia that month and they pledged further co-operation. In January, the two sides agreed to resume direct flights.

Still, the relationship remains troubled.

Each side has close security ties with the other's main competitor: India with the US and China with Pakistan.

China opposes Indian policies in the disputed Kashmir region. Beijing frustrates India's great power ambitions by

blocking its membership in influential groupings like the Nuclear Suppliers Group and permanent membership on the UN Security Council.

China has a large naval presence, and its only overseas military base, in India's broader maritime backyard.

The Belt and Road Initiative, the connectivity corridor through which Beijing has expanded its footprint in India's neighbourhood, is categorically rejected by Delhi for passing through India-claimed territory.

Meanwhile, India is deepening ties with Taiwan, which China views as a renegade province. It hosts the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan leader. Beijing regards him as a dangerous separatist.

India is negotiating sales of supersonic missiles to Southeast Asian states that could be used to deter Chinese provocations in the South China Sea. China views several global forums to which India belongs, such as the Indo-Pacific Quad and the Middle East Economic Corridor, as attempts to counter it.

Greenland condemns planned visits by Usha Vance and Trump adviser

Greenland's politicians have condemned plans for high-profile US visits, in the wake of President Donald Trump's threats to take over the island.

Second Lady Usha Vance will make a cultural visit this week, and a separate trip is expected from Trump's National Security Adviser Mike Waltz.

Outgoing Greenlandic Prime Minister Mute Egede described the plan as aggressive, and said the duo had not been invited for meetings. Meanwhile, the island's likely next leader accused the US of showing a lack of respect.

Greenland - the world's biggest island, situated between the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans - has been controlled by Denmark, nearly 3,000km (1,860 miles) away, for about 300 years.

It governs its own domestic affairs, but decisions on foreign and defence policy are made in Copenhagen. The US has long held a security interest - and has had a military base on the island since World War Two.

It is also thought Trump is interested in the island's rare earth minerals. His son Donald Jr visited Greenland before Trump's inauguration in January.

Announcing Mrs Vance's

visit, the White House said the second lady would visit historical sites and attend the Avanaata Qimussersu, Greenland's national dogsled race.

Her delegation - including her son - would be there to "celebrate Greenlandic culture and unity", the statement said.

Waltz's trip was confirmed by a source who spoke to the BBC's US partner, CBS News. He is expected to visit before Mrs Vance and to travel with Energy Secretary Chris Wright, according to the New York Times.

Outgoing PM Egede described Waltz's visit in particular as a provocation. "What is the security advisor doing in Greenland? The only purpose is to show a demonstration of power to us," he told Sermitsiaq newspaper.

Speaking to the same paper, Greenland's probable next PM Jens-Frederik Nielsen accused the American officials of showing the local population a lack of respect.

Trump appeared to escalate his campaign to take over the island during a conversation with Nato Secretary-General Mark Rutte earlier this month.

Greenland was already on the defensive about Trump's talk of a takeover, but he sent further shockwaves by imply-

ing he might ask to take the island with support of Nato, a military alliance of which Denmark is also a part.

"You know, Mark, we need that for international security... we have a lot of our favourite players cruising around the coast, and we have to be careful," Trump said. "We'll be talking to you."

When asked about the prospect of annexation, Trump

said: "I think that will happen."

The move prompted Greenland's leading political parties to issue a joint statement to condemn the American president's "unacceptable behaviour".

The issue took centre-stage in the recent election, during which Egede's governing Inuit Ataqatigiit party was defeated in a surprise result by Nielsen's Democratic party, which fa-

Trump looms over Canada's election as campaign begins

Canada's newly appointed Prime Minister Mark Carney has called a snap election, sending the country to the polls on 28 April.

The election comes as Canada faces a trade war with the US and calls from President Donald Trump for it to become the 51st American state, issues which are expected to be top of mind for voters.

It also comes nine days after Carney, a Liberal, was sworn in as Canada's prime minister following Justin Trudeau's resignation.

Carney must now face Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre, whose party had been leading in national polls since mid-2023, though recent polls suggest the race is now neck-and-neck.

The two main candidates

held their first rallies on Sunday. In St John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Carney addressed the threat of US tariffs, repeating a favoured sporting analogy: "In this trade war, just like in hockey, we will win."

Speaking in Ottawa earlier that day, Carney said he needed a clear, positive mandate to deal with Trump.

"We are facing the most significant crisis of our lifetimes because of President Trump's unjustified trade actions and his threats to our sovereignty," he said.

In a rally of his own in Toronto on Sunday evening, Poilievre said Carney's party was failing to offer change, and simply "making the same promises that they've been breaking for over 10 years."

The Liberals - once written off for this election - now have a chance of forming a government for the fourth consecutive time under Carney.

Carney, 60, the former governor of the Bank of England and the Bank of Canada, has never served as an MP and is untested politically.

Carney made the most of his short days in office, meeting with UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron and stopping in Canada's Arctic to announce a partnership with Australia to develop a new northern radar system.

He also ended Trudeau's signature carbon tax climate policy, which had faced heavy criticism by the Conservatives.

Now he will face the general electorate, which is concerned about Canada's rapidly shifting relationship with the US, its historically close ally, as well as the country's high cost of living.

In a campaign launch shortly before the election call, Poilievre, 45, sought to link Carney to the Liberals under Trudeau, who left office as a deeply unpopular leader. He called Trudeau's time in office a "lost Liberal decade".

He accused the party of weakening the country by blocking resource development, failing to fund the military, and mismanaging immigration and the economy, saying its "post-national globalist ideology" made Canada more vulnerable to Trump's trade war.

Sports

● Football ● Athletics ● Golf ● Basketball ● Tennis ● Boxing

Niger Delta Sports Festival: Edo restates commitment to sports devt as Enabulele receives unity torch

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE AND
EDWARD OSEGHE

The Edo state Governor Senator Monday Okpebholo has restated his administration's commitment to sports development in Edo state, reassuring the state Sports Commission of his support.

The Governor gave the assurance on Monday, March 24, 2025 when he received the unity torch of the maiden Niger Delta Sports Festival in Government House, Benin.

Represented by his Deputy Governor Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa at the colourful ceremony, Governor Okpebholo, reaffirmed his commitment to sports development, saying that Sports occupy special place in his administration's development programme.

"Our government has laid so much emphasis on sports development in Edo State, and by the grace of God, we will give you all the support to win this competition," Governor Okpebholo stated while also assuring Hon Amadin Desmond Enabulele led Edo state Sports Commission.

The Governor commended the Executive Chairman, Edo state Sports Commission Hon Amadin Desmond Enabulele and his board for their efforts this far, noting that the Niger Delta Sports Festival aligns with the administration's vision to nurture talents from the grassroots.

"I want to sincerely appreciate the Chairman, Edo State Sports Commission Hon Amadin Enabulele, his board; the Permanent Secretary and all of you in the Edo state Sports Commission for all you have been doing since we came on board. You people, no doubt have brought new energy to the Sports Commission and I urge you to keep the momentum.



Let me also commend the sponsors and organizers of the Niger Delta Sports Festival, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and Dunamis for the noble initiative and it is my wish that we keep the partnership for the overall good of Edo and our region."

The Executive Chairman of the Edo State Sports Commission Hon. Amadin Desmond Enabulele who earlier received

the Niger Delta Sports Festival torch of unity at the Samuel Ogbemudia stadium on its arrival from Bayelsa state, said that Edo is ready to compete and win in Uyo, Akwa Ibom state where the maiden regional sports fiesta will be staged.

Speaking further at the torch handover ceremony at Government House, Enabulele highlighted the comprehensive process of preparation which began

with local government trials.

"We started by going to the Local Governments to conduct trials. Those who qualified will converge at the state level starting tomorrow, Tuesday, for the finals," he said. The selected athletes will represent Edo in Uyo, aligning with the state's broader strategy to excel at both the Niger Delta Sports Festival and the upcoming National Sports Festival.

World Cup: Governor Eno purchases 30,000 match tickets for fans to drum support for Super Eagles

In a bid to drum support for the Super Eagles of Nigeria, the Governor of Akwa Ibom State His Excellency Umo Eno has bought the entire match tickets for the game against the Warriors of Zimbabwe in Uyo on Tuesday.

This cheering news was made public on Monday by the Akwa Ibom State Commissioner for Sports Elder Paul Bassey.

Paul Bassey in a statement said, "In line with his determination and promise to mobilize

support for the victory of the Super Eagles of Nigeria against the Warriors of Zimbabwe, Akwa Ibom State Governor, Pastor Umo Eno has purchased 30,000 tickets for football fans and supporters ahead of the 2026 World Cup qualification match scheduled for Tuesday, March 25, 2025, at Godswill Akpabio International Stadium, Uyo."

It was gathered that distributions of the free match tickets have already started from 5pm of today, Monday, March 24 at

the following venues and centres outside the stadium: All Radio Stations;

De Venus Bar and Restaurant, Stadium Road, Uyo; Uyo Township Stadium, Uyo; Plaza Management Committee Office, Ibom Plaza, Uyo; All previous sales agents and centres

The Commissioner further emphasized that this gesture by His Excellency is to encourage citizens and residents of the state to come out en masse and cheer the Super Eagles to victory.

Best performers to pocket cash awards in Nigeria's World Cup Qualifying

Man Of The Match and Most Valuable Player awards winners in tomorrow's (25 March 2025) World Cup 2026 qualifying match between Nigeria and Zimbabwe will each pocket one million Naira.

The monies have been made possible by corporate partners of the Nigeria Football Federation NFF.

Nigerian Breweries are sponsoring the Man-of-the-match award while Carloha, official automobile company of the NFF and

the National Teams, will sponsor that of the Most Valuable Player.

Dummy cheques for the amounts will be presented to the winners on the pitch after the match.

Sports journalists covering Tuesday's match will be saddled with the task of picking winners of both awards.

The World Cup Qualifying Group C clash between Nigeria and Zimbabwe will kick off at 5pm at the Godswill Akpabio Stadium in Uyo Akwa Ibom State.



Anambra Beach Soccer Warriors land in Kebbi ahead of 2025 league season

The Anambra Beach Soccer Warriors have arrived Birnin Kebbi, the Kebbi State capital ahead of the 2025 Nigeria Beach Soccer League.

The Anambra Beach Soccer Warriors who arrived on Monday would enter into a closed and intensive camping for about a week before kick-off on March 31.

Okwudili Awam, the Coordinator and Media Director of the team who disclosed this in a Statement on Monday said

the team was battle ready and determined finish as champions at the end of the League.

According to him, the team will undergo a lengthy camping period to prepare for the competition, which commences on March 31 in Birnin Kebbi.

"Last season, we made an impressive debut, finishing second behind champions Kebbi BSC, but this year, we are determined to go one step further and claim the top spot," he said..



Amusan returns to winning ways, opens season with 100m victory in Jamaica

Nigerian sprint hurdler Tobi Amusan has made a triumphant return to competitive action, storming to victory in the women's 100m race at the Velocity Fest in Jamaica.

Amusan, the women's 100m hurdles world record holder,

showed her versatility by competing in the flat 100m sprint, where she clocked an impressive 11.28s (-0.5m/s wind) to claim first place.

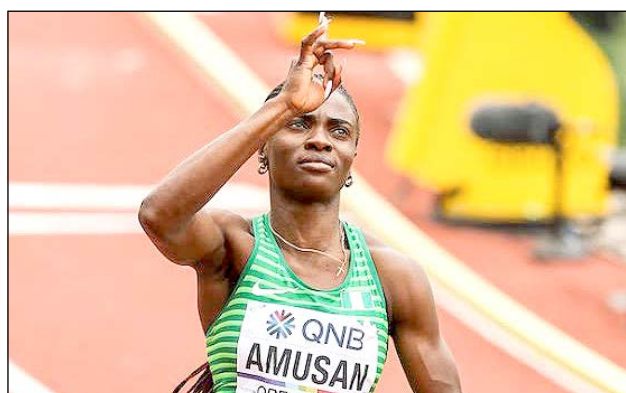
The 2022 world champion held off a strong field, finishing ahead of Serena Cole of Jamaica, who

placed second in 11.45s, while Anthonique Strachan of The Bahamas came third in 11.46s.

This victory marks a strong start to the season for Amusan, who has faced challenges in the past year, including legal battles over whereabouts failures.

However, with her return to the track, she has sent a clear message that she is back and ready to dominate once again.

Fans will be eager to see how the Nigerian superstar builds on this momentum as she gears up for bigger competitions.



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to flag off Unity Torch movement ahead of 22nd National Sports Festival —NSC confirms

The National Sports Commission (NSC) has confirmed that His Excellency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu will officially flag off the Unity Torch movement at a ceremony scheduled for Tuesday, March 25, 2025, at the Presidential Villa, Abuja.

The Commission described the Unity Torch as a symbol of

peace and unity, emphasizing its significance in fostering national cohesion.

"The Unity Torch, which symbolizes peace and unity, will be taken around the capitals of all states of the Federation to herald the National Sports Festival and transmit the message of peace and brotherhood among

the people of Nigeria," the official communication stated.

The Festival, which is Nigeria's premier multi-sport event, will bring together athletes from across the country to compete in various sporting disciplines, promoting talent discovery, unity, and sportsmanship.

Recall that across the nation,

zonal eliminations took place a few weeks ago, as State contingents jostled for slots to compete at the main event in May.

The NSC once again confirmed that the 22nd National Sports Festival (Gateways Games, Ogun 2024) will be held in Abeokuta, Ogun State, from May 16 to 30, 2025.

FEATURE

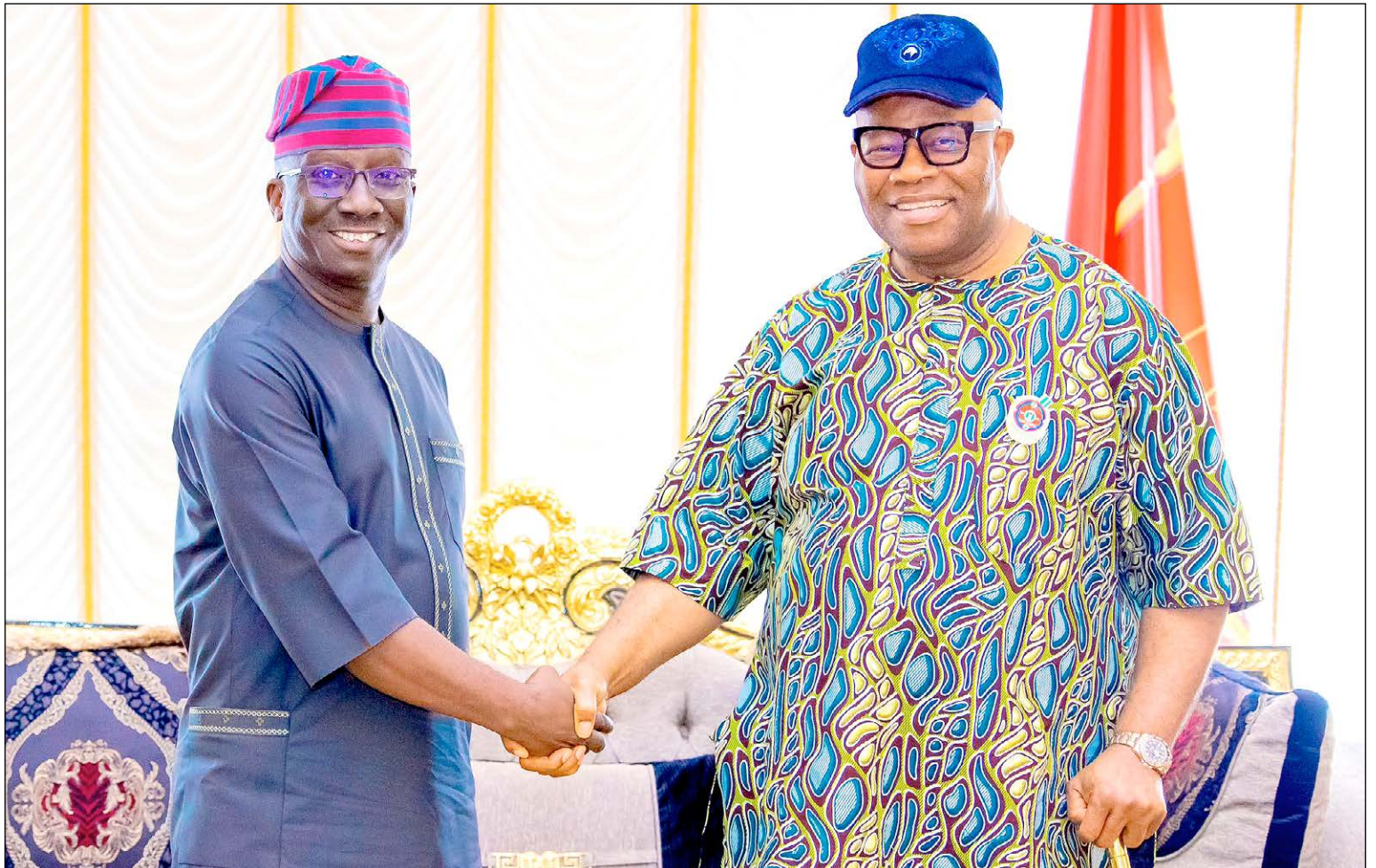
Okpebholo's strategic engagements: Attracting federal presence for Edo's devt

FRED ITUA

In a federal system of government, such as Nigeria's, subnational governments enjoy a level of autonomy that allows them to pursue development aggressively within their jurisdiction. However, this autonomy does not render federal collaboration irrelevant. On the contrary, history has shown that states that adopt a confrontational stance toward the central government often suffer developmental setbacks, particularly in areas where federal intervention is crucial. Edo State, under the immediate-past administration of Godwin Obaseki, is a prime example of such a miscalculation.

Obaseki's tenure was marked by an adversarial approach to governance, one that alienated Edo from the federal government's intervention programs. His refusal to engage constructively with the federal government resulted in a near-total absence of federal presence in the state. Federal roads in Edo were left to deteriorate, and instead of engaging the necessary channels to seek intervention, Obaseki resorted to a public relations gimmick—erecting signposts on failed roads that read: "Bear with us, this is a federal road." This was not just an abdication of responsibility but a demonstration of political naivety. Federalism does not preclude negotiation, collaboration, and engagement; rather, it demands it.

The consequences of this isolationist posture were dire. Travelers and residents bore the brunt of the neglect, with highways in deplorable conditions. The state House of Assembly made repeated calls for federal intervention, but the efforts of legislators were limited without executive backing. Even the Minister of Works, Engr. Dave Umahi explicitly stated that Obaseki was the problem with federal roads in Edo. According to Umahi, a simple WhatsApp message or phone call from the governor would have sufficed to secure approvals for remedial work on federal roads—approvals that could have led to refunds. Obaseki was not daring enough—how could he be? The few state roads he managed to construct barely lasted three months before deteriorating. He understood that attempting to build federal roads, only for them to suffer the same fate, would be a monumental failure. Knowing he couldn't rely on quality construction to secure federal refunds, he chose to do nothing. Instead, he resorted to erecting signposts in Benin, Ekpoma, and Auchi, shifting blame rather than taking initiatives. What a shame! His refusal to engage meant that Edo missed out on opportunities that oth-



GOVERNOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLO (LEFT), ENJOYING SOME MOMENT OF CONVIVIALITY WITH THE SENATE PRESIDENT, GODSWILL AKPABION IN ABUJA.

For the first time in years, Edo is no longer an isolated island. It is firmly reintegrated into national development plans, leveraging federal resources to accelerate progress. Okpebholo has demonstrated that leadership is about foresight, engagement, and execution. His promise to make Edo a hub for construction is not just a rhetoric; it is being fulfilled at an unprecedented pace.

er states readily capitalized on.

Contrast this with the approach of Governor Monday Okpebholo, who has, in just over four months, rewritten Edo's developmental trajectory. His ability to leverage his strong political standing with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has already begun yielding tangible results. Two major road infrastructure projects have been launched: the dualization of the Benin-Ekpoma-Auchi-Okpella-Okene-Ajaokuta Road and the 125km Benin-Asaba Highway. These are not just ordinary road projects; they are critical arteries that will drive

economic growth in Edo State.

Road infrastructure is the backbone of economic prosperity. The Benin-Ekpoma-Auchi-Okpella-Okene-Ajaokuta Road is one of the most significant commercial corridors in the country, linking Edo to the northern parts of Nigeria. It facilitates the movement of goods and services from key economic hubs like Lagos to the northern states, passing through Edo. The reconstruction of this road will reduce travel time, lower the cost of transportation, and ease business operations for traders, manufacturers, and logistics firms. The mining sector

in Okpella and the industrial hubs in Auchi stand to gain immensely, as smoother road networks translate to reduced wear-and-tear on vehicles and lower operational costs.

Similarly, the 125km Benin-Asaba Highway is another strategic infrastructure upgrade. It connects Edo with the commercial nerve center of Delta State and, by extension, the South-East region. This road is a crucial link for businesses engaged in interstate trade, enhancing Edo's position as a transportation hub. With its reconstruction, commercial activities between Edo and Delta will flourish, attracting more investors, boosting tourism, and facilitating seamless logistics for industries operating within these two states.

Beyond the politics of governance, Okpebholo's actions signify a leader who prioritizes the well-being of his people. His early commitment to road infrastructure aligns with his broader vision to make Edo a construction hub—a vision that is steadily gaining momentum. Infrastructure development is a fundamental driver of job creation, and with major road projects underway, thousands of direct and indirect jobs will emerge. From engineers and construction workers

to suppliers and small businesses that provide support services, Edo's economy is poised for a boom.

This is what true leadership looks like—a governor who understands that politics is not just about occupying an office but about making strategic moves that translate into real benefits for the people. Okpebholo's engagement with the federal government is not about political loyalty but about securing the necessary partnerships that will transform Edo into a model state for development.

For the first time in years, Edo is no longer an isolated island. It is firmly reintegrated into national development plans, leveraging federal resources to accelerate progress. Okpebholo has demonstrated that leadership is about foresight, engagement, and execution. His promise to make Edo a hub for construction is not just a rhetoric; it is being fulfilled at an unprecedented pace.

With a governor who understands the power of relationships and strategic governance, Edo's future has never looked brighter.

Fred Itua is the Chief Press Secretary to Edo State Governor.