

BENIN CITY

The preview edition of The Nigerian Observer Newspapers is set to hit newsstands tomorrow, the General Manager, Hon. Peter Odibo, has announced.

The announcement comes just three weeks after Hon. Odibo assumed office as the substantive General Manager of the newspaper, which last appeared on newsstands in

The Nigerian Observer returns to newsstands April 1

November 2024.

First published on May 29, 1968, The Nigerian Observer is Nigeria's longest-surviving government-owned newspaper.

Hon. Odibo, who personally supervised the final test run of the 10,000-copies-per-hour Goss Magnum printing machine, said he has the mandate of Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, to restore

the newspaper to its former status as a flagship in the industry.

In the company of the Editor, Andy Egbon and other management staff, he also inspected the commercial printing machines, assuring the government and the public that he intends to leave a lasting impact on the company.

He further urged the newspaper staff to remain committed to their duties as part of efforts to reposition The Nigerian Observer to its rightful place in the media landscape.

Hon. Odibo noted that the newspaper will soon introduce new sections and columns aimed at engaging a wider readership, with a focus on in-depth reporting, investigative journalism, and community stories across Edo State and beyond.

He vowed that upgrading the newsroom, alongside comprehensive staff training and the adoption of modern technology, would be central to achieving these goals.

He also promised to boost the personnel and leverage on the quality manpower available in the company for optimum results.

The General Manager also

highlighted plans to expand the newspaper's digital presence, ensuring that The Nigerian Observer reaches readers, both online and offline.

He expressed optimism that these initiatives would not only boost readership, but also reinforce the newspaper's reputation as a credible and influential voice in Nigerian journalism.

The Nigerian Observer



...that the people may know

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TUESDAY 31ST MARCH, 2026.

NPA targets N1.489trn revenue, begins Apapa, Tin Can Ports upgrade —Pg 2

Nigeria loses ₦28trn oil revenue amid price surge —AERE Chairman

ABUJA

Nigeria is forfeiting an estimated ₦28.3 trillion in potential annual oil revenue due to its inability to take advantage of rising global crude prices, the Chairman of the Alliance for Economic Research and Ethics (AERE), Mr Dele Oye, has said.

Oye, the immediate past chairman of the Organised Private Sector of Nigeria (OPSN),

said in a statement that the recent surge in oil prices, driven by the ongoing Iran war, has created a significant revenue window for producing nations, but Nigeria has been unable to capitalise on it.

He noted that Brent crude is currently trading between \$102 and \$114 per barrel, far above Nigeria's budget benchmark of \$64.85, creating a price premium of between \$37 and \$49 per barrel that could have

translated into substantial fiscal gains.

Despite this favourable pricing, Oye said the expected windfall remains largely unrealised due to persistent production shortfalls and structural inefficiencies in the oil sector.

According to him, Nigeria is currently producing about 1.46 million barrels per day, significantly below its target of 1.84 million barrels per day, leaving a daily deficit of roughly

380,000 barrels.

He explained that a considerable portion of the country's crude oil output is already committed to debt servicing and domestic refining obligations, limiting the volume available to benefit from higher international prices.

Oye recalled that Nigeria similarly failed to maximise gains during the Russia-Ukraine conflict when oil prices exceeded \$110 per

barrel for an extended period, attributing the lost opportunity to low production levels and the burden of fuel subsidies.

He added that even planned incremental increases in output would have minimal impact when compared to the scale of the existing production gap.

The AERE chairman stressed that if Nigeria were able to harness even part of the current price advantage, the additional revenue could be channelled

into critical sectors, including the establishment of strategic petroleum reserves, support for agriculture through fertiliser subsidies, expansion of compressed natural gas (CNG) initiatives, targeted social interventions, and investment in refinery rehabilitation.

He, however, warned that such gains would remain out of reach without urgent efforts

CONTINUES ON PG 2»»



Nigeria targets 7% GDP growth, seeks \$14bn yearly to bridge infrastructure gap —Edun

● As NPA targets N1.489trn revenue for 2026

LAGOS

The Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr Wale Edun, on Monday said Nigeria is targeting a seven percent annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate as part of efforts to accelerate economic expansion and reduce poverty.

Edun also disclosed that the country requires about \$14 billion in annual investment to close its infrastructure deficit.

He spoke in Lagos at the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Day, where he underscored Nigeria's deepening partnership with the multilateral institution.

According to him, achieving a seven percent growth rate is crucial to lifting millions out of poverty and surpassing the nation's population growth rate of about three per cent.

The minister noted that the Federal Government has been repositioning the economy to attract large-scale domestic, diaspora and foreign investments within a stable macroeconomic framework.

"We are moving from stabilisation to growth, from reliance on public financing to private capital mobilisation, and from traditional borrowing to innovative financing instruments," Edun said.

CONTINUES ON PG 2»»

INEC funding delay sparks fears over Ekiti, Osun guber polls —Pg 2

Court bars Turaki-led PDP faction from nat'l secretariat —Pg 7

Spain closes airspace to US aircraft involved in Iran war —Pg 8

International friendly: Super Eagles aim for victory against Jordan's Al-Nashama —Pg 12

INEC funding delay sparks fears over Ekiti, Osun guber polls

ABUJA

Anxiety is mounting over the preparedness of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for the forthcoming governorship elections in Ekiti and Osun states, following delays in the release of funds to the

electoral body.

With less than ten weeks to the Ekiti governorship election slated for June 18 and about four months to the Osun poll, stakeholders have warned that the funding delay could disrupt critical pre-election operations.

Findings show that although provisions for the elections

were captured in the 2026 national budget, no disbursement had been made to the Commission as at the end of March.

The development has heightened concerns among election observers and civil society groups, who note that late funding has historically resulted in logistical challenges, technical failures and administrative lapses.

Experts say timely funding is crucial for the procurement of sensitive materials, deployment of logistics and training of ad hoc staff, all of which require months of preparation.

INEC Chairman, Joash Amupitan, had earlier dis-

closed that the Commission proposed ₦873.78 billion for the 2027 general elections, separate from its ₦171 billion allocation for routine operations in 2026, which includes the Ekiti and Osun elections.

However, uncertainty remains over when funds will be released and the actual amounts that will be approved. Sources within the Commission revealed that internal adjustments are already underway, with some timelines under review as INEC grapples with the funding constraints.

Officials warned that staggered releases could force compromises that may affect

the quality of election delivery.

The situation is further complicated by prevailing economic pressures, including rising inflation, high fuel costs and exchange rate volatility, which have significantly increased the cost of election logistics and procurement. Analysts caution that delays in funding could render initial budget estimates inadequate.

Civil society organisations have warned that funding gaps could undermine recent gains in electoral reforms, stressing that credible elections depend not only on laws and technology but also on adequate financial backing.

Opposition figures have also called for transparency and

accountability in the management of election funds, warning that large budgets without proper oversight could erode public confidence.

Analysts listed likely consequences of delayed funding to include late delivery of election materials, inadequate staff training, possible technical failures and reduced voter confidence.

As Nigeria prepares for another election cycle, stakeholders have urged the Federal Government to ensure early and full release of funds, adopt flexible budgeting in line with economic realities and strengthen oversight mechanisms to guarantee credible elections.

Nigeria loses ₦28trn oil revenue...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

to boost production, secure oil infrastructure, and improve sector governance.

Oye called on the government to prioritise long-term structural reforms, including selling crude to local refineries in naira to reduce foreign exchange pressure, strengthening asset security to curb losses, and deploying digital systems to improve efficiency in agricultural support programmes.

He also advocated flexible fuel taxation, increased adoption of CNG and liquefied petroleum gas, and the trans-

parent management of oil revenues through established savings frameworks such as the Sovereign Wealth Fund and the Excess Crude Account.

He cautioned against basing fiscal projections on sustained high oil prices, noting that oil market booms are often temporary.

“Nigeria stands at a critical juncture. While the current price surge offers an opportunity, the country risks missing yet another windfall without decisive action. The real challenge is building an economy resilient enough to withstand both boom and downturn,” he said.

Nigeria targets 7% GDP growth, seeks...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

He explained that Nigeria's estimated \$14 billion annual infrastructure financing gap is being addressed through strategic initiatives and partnerships, particularly with the IsDB.

Edun further revealed that the Nigeria-IsDB engagement framework for 2026-2028 is anchored on infrastructure development, social investment, innovative finance and regional cooperation.

He identified priority sectors as energy, transport, agriculture and digital infrastructure, stressing their importance in boosting productivity and competitiveness.

“In a young country like Nigeria, digital infrastructure is key to empowering our population for innovation, technology and global competitiveness,” he added.

The minister disclosed that 2026 has been designated as the Year of Social Development, with plans to integrate up to 10 million Nigerians into productive economic activities through skills development, financing support and job creation initiatives.

He added that the government would also prioritise the empowerment of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to boost production and expand market access.

On financing strategies, Edun said Nigeria would deepen the use of Sukuk, expand domestic capital markets and securitise public assets to attract private investment, while emphasising the need to de-risk investments and improve the business environment.

He said Nigeria is positioning itself as a leader in regional cooperation within the IsDB framework, with a long-term target of building a \$1 trillion economy.

Edun stressed the urgency of accelerating project implementation and efficiently mobilising capital to generate jobs at scale.

In his remarks, the Director-General of Country Programmes at the IsDB, Mr Anasse Aissami, reaffirmed the bank's commitment to supporting Nigeria's economic transformation.

Aissami said the bank has expanded its interventions across key sectors, including agriculture, energy, transport, health and education, and would scale up support to Nigeria over the next five years, surpassing its engagement over the past 25 years.

The IsDB Group Day featured a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony, business partnership presentations, a news conference and panel discussions, among other activities.

The event attracted senior government officials, private sector leaders, financial institutions, chambers of commerce, development partners and other international stakeholders.

Meanwhile, the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) has set ₦1.489 trillion as its Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) target for the 2026 fiscal year.

The figure represents an increase of ₦21 billion over the ₦1.468 trillion target for 2025, which the agency exceeded with an actual revenue of ₦1.97 trillion.

The Managing Director of the NPA, Dr Abubakar Dantsoho, stated this on Monday during the agency's 2026 budget defence before the Senate Committee on Marine Transport.

Dantsoho said that the authority was set to begin groundbreaking projects for the modernisation of Apapa and Tin Can Island ports to enhance global competitiveness.

According to him, of the projected revenue: ₦945 billion is allocated for capital projects, ₦447.5 billion for operating expenses, and

₦90.6 billion for remittance into the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF).



SIGNING OF MoU CEREMONY:

L-R: Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr Wale Edun (left) and Anasse Aissami, the Director-General of Country Programmes, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), during signing of MoU ceremony at Islamic Development Bank Day on Monday in Lagos.

NPA targets N1.489trn revenue, begins Apapa, Tin Can Ports upgrade

ABUJA

The Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) has set a revenue target of ₦1.489 trillion for the 2026 fiscal year as it moves to commence the modernisation of Apapa and Tin Can Island Ports to improve efficiency and global competitiveness.

Managing Director of the Authority, Abubakar Dantsoho, disclosed this during the agency's 2026 budget defence

before the Senate Committee on Marine Transport in Abuja.

He said the 2026 projection represents an increase of ₦21 billion over the ₦1.468 trillion target for 2025, which the Authority exceeded with a total revenue performance of ₦1.97 trillion.

According to him, ₦945 billion of the projected revenue has been earmarked for capital projects, ₦447.5 billion for operational expenditure, while ₦90.6 billion will be remitted into the

Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Dantsoho explained that the budget is anchored on the theme, “Consolidation, Renewed Resilience, and Shared Prosperity,” with the upgrade of Apapa and Tin Can Island Ports as flagship projects.

He described the ports as outdated and inadequate for modern trade demands, noting that Apapa Port is nearly 100 years old, while Tin Can Island Port has operated for over five decades. He added that groundbreaking for the projects would commence within the next two to three weeks.

On revenue management, the NPA boss clarified that all funds generated by the Authority are remitted into the Treasury Single Account managed by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), stressing that the agency does not retain revenue and must apply for releases when necessary.

Chairman of the Senate Committee on Marine Transport, Wasiu Eshinlokun, called for sustained collaboration to strengthen institutional capacity, eliminate inefficiencies and ensure prudent use of public resources.

EIRS moves against revenue leakages, threatens sanctions for defaulters

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Internal Revenue Service (EIRS) has intensified efforts to curb revenue leakages, warning scratch card vendors and haulage sector revenue collectors to comply with operational guidelines or risk sanctions, including termination.

Executive Chairman of the Service, John Osirenimhe Odior, issued the directive during a stakeholders' meeting at the agency's headquarters in Benin City.

Odior, while acknowledging the contributions of vendors and collectors, expressed concern over irregularities in beat allocations and non-compliance with established procedures at revenue collection points, promising a review to ensure fairness and transparency.

He stressed that taxation remains critical to the state's development, linking revenue generation to the performance of Governor Monday Okpehlo's administration.

“For government to deliver

on its mandate and earn the trust of the people, it must be supported by strong revenue. Stakeholders must demonstrate commitment through transparency, diligence and compliance,” he said.

The EIRS chairman pledged continued support through simplified tax processes, public enlightenment, enforcement measures and incentives for high-performing collectors.

He also urged company directors and business owners to meet the March 31 deadline for filing annual tax returns,

reiterating the importance of tax compliance to Edo State's development agenda.

In his remarks, Executive Director of MDA Services, Jackson Eribo, described the poor performance of some vendors as worrisome, warning that it undermines revenue targets and calling for stricter disciplinary measures.

Responding, stakeholders acknowledged operational challenges, but pledged renewed commitment to improved performance and revenue delivery.

NEWS

Edo Central records 300 human rights violations —JDPCI

JUDE EHEBHA

EGBELE

The Justice Development, Peace and Caritas Initiatives (JDPCI) in Uromi has raised concern over rising human rights abuses in Edo Central Senatorial District, revealing that over 300 cases were recorded across communities last year.

The Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo, made the disclosure while delivering a keynote address at the Annual Stakeholders' Conference on Inclusive Human Rights Defence Mechanism in Communities, held in Egbele, Esan North East Local Government Area of Edo State.

Speaking on the theme, "Defending Human Rights at the Grassroots: The Power of Community-Based Legal Action," Arhedo stressed the need for stronger commitment to the protection of human dignity, as well as the promotion of justice, peace and integral human development.

He noted that human rights violations occur daily across

communities and called for greater collaboration among stakeholders to curb the trend.

According to him, community-based human rights structures intervened in over 300 cases, including 87 cases of domestic violence, 58 cases of neglect and abandonment, 28 cases of assault, 20 rape cases, and 16 incidents of child labour and trafficking.

Other abuses recorded include denial of education, harmful widowhood practices and arbitrary detention.

Arhedo further disclosed that 74 non-case-based interventions were carried out through advocacy visits and sensitization campaigns, while more than 320 support services—ranging from psychosocial counselling to referrals and alternative dispute resolution were provided.

He added that over 434 cases had been successfully resolved at the community level, a development he said reflects growing public trust in grassroots justice mechanisms driven by JDPCI.

The cleric also revealed that more than 2,200 individuals

have been trained as human rights actors, over 2,300 adolescents engaged through Human Rights Clubs, and about 4,000 women and girls supported in addressing violence and inequality.

However, he lamented that worsening economic hardship continues to increase vulnerability, while entrenched cultural practices and rising case reporting are placing pressure on response systems.

In a progress report, the Head of Programme, Dr. Michael Iyioribhe, commended traditional rulers and the Nigeria Police for their support in tackling human rights violations across communities.

Also speaking, the Edo State Coordinator of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Mr. Olumide Dosunmu, represented by Mrs. Laureatta Omorogbe lauded JDPCI's efforts despite prevailing challenges and called for sustained support from stakeholders.

He emphasised that ignorance remains a major driver of rights violations.

Foundation urges Nigerians to support indigent, vulnerable groups

MONDAY OISE

BENIN CITY

The Founder and Executive Director of Tomiya Helping Hand Foundation, Prince Thomas Iyare, has called on Nigerians to embrace a culture of giving and extend support to indigent and vulnerable members of society.

Iyare made the appeal while speaking with journalists on the activities of the Benin City-based non-governmental organisation.

He said the foundation, which has operated for over four years, is driven by the vision of ensuring that no individual goes to bed hungry, while also promoting educa-

tional and skills empowerment, as well as small-scale business support for those in need.

According to him, the organisation regularly visits schools, where it distributes writing materials, books and uniforms to pupils, and provides meals during such outreach programmes.

He added that the foundation also caters to homeless persons by securing accommodation for them and paying rent to help reintegrate them into society.

Iyare explained that the initiative has been sustained through proceeds from his real estate business, as well as contributions from family members and friends who share in the vision.

He further noted that the foundation organises an annual outreach programme tagged "Smile" every December, aimed at bringing joy to widows, widowers, orphans and persons living with disabilities during the Christmas season.

"God has placed us in a position to help others. We must be our brother's keeper by extending a helping hand to those in need so that society can become better for all," he said.

He urged government at all levels to create an enabling environment for credible non-governmental organisations to thrive, and called on well-meaning Nigerians to support efforts aimed at uplifting the less privileged.

NBC DG enlist content owners for successful digital switchover

ABUJA

Mr Charles Ebuebu, the Director General (DG) of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), has called on content owners to seize the opportunities presented by the Digital Switchover (DSO), assuring them that the transition will unlock unprecedented visibility, financial growth, and industry collaboration.

Speaking as Special Guest of Honour at the induction ceremony of the Electronic Media Content Owners Association of Nigeria (EMCOAN) in Lagos, the DG affirmed that the success of the DSO hinges on the active involvement of content creators.

"Without engaging content to populate the channels, the DSO's success could be incomplete.

"This is why we are urging content owners to collaborate with the commission to ensure Nigeria's digital future is

rich, diverse, and sustainable," Ebuebu said.

He added that the upcoming FreeTV Direct-to-Home (DTH) platform and its companion mobile applications will serve as transformative tools for creators, offering nationwide reach, advanced analytics, and brand partnership opportunities.

Nigeria's DSO signifies a transition from analogue to digital broadcasting.

It is led by the NBC utilising the Nigcomsat satellite infrastructure.

EDO STATE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION BOARD (SUBEB) BENIN CITY, EDO STATE ADDENDUM (RE-EXTENSION OF BID SUBMISSION DEADLINE) 2024 FGN/UBEC/SUBEB INTERVENTION PROJECTS

The Edo State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) hereby notifies the general public and all interested bidders that further to the advertisement published in **The Nigerian Observer of Monday, 2nd February, 2026** and **Vanguard Newspaper of Sunday, 8th February, 2026**, and the Addendum issued on **Thursday, 12th March, 2026** for extension of the bid submission deadline, the Board has approved a RE-EXTENSION of the closing date for submission of bids.

Accordingly, the new deadline for submission and opening of bids is as follows:

NEW DEADLINE: Friday, 10th April, 2026

TIME: 12:00 Noon Prompt

VENUE: Edo State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) Headquarters, Benin City, Edo State.

All other information, requirements, and conditions as contained in the original advertisement and the earlier addendum remain valid and unchanged.

This addendum is issued to ensure wider participation, enhance competition, and uphold transparency in the procurement process. All prospective bidders are advised to be guided accordingly.

N/B: Payment for the standard bidding document should be made to the following account details

ACCOUNT NAME: EDSG Internally Generated Revenue A/C

BANK NAME: Premium Trust Bank

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 0080050728

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR YEAR 2024 UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION INTERVENTION FGN/UBEC/SUBEB/PROJECTS

1. INTRODUCTION:

Edo State Universal Basic Education Board just received approval by the **Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC)** to commence implementation of the **UBEC/SUBEB 2024 Basic Education Action Plan on Universal Basic Education Intervention Fund Programme**. The Edo State Universal Basic Education Board therefore wishes to invite interested registered, competent, capable and reputable vendors, contractors, consultant service providers and suppliers to submit their tender documents for the underlisted jobs:

2. The scope of work is highlighted below based on different categories:
 - A. Construction of Classroom Blocks - Lot A1 - A3
 - B. Construction of Perimeter Fence - Lot B1 - B3
 - C. Renovation of Classroom Blocks - Lot C1 - C4
 - D. D. Water Supply and Sanitation - Lot D1
 - E. Supply of Furniture
 - i. Pupil's Furniture - Lot E1
 - ii. Teacher's Furniture - Lot E2
 - iii. ECCDE Furniture - Lot E3
 - F. Procurement of ICT Equipment: Procurement of Tablets - Lot F1 Procurement of Laptops - Lot F2
 - G. Procurement of Pickup Truck - Lot G1

3. REQUIREMENTS FOR TENDERING/ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- i. Evidence of Certificate of incorporation with Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) including forms CAC 1.1 or CAC2 and CAC7
- ii. Evidence of Current Company Income Tax Clearance (FIRS) for the last 3 years (2022, 2023 & 2024) having expiry date of 31st December 2025
- iii. Evidence of current Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund Compliance Certificate valid till 31st December, 2025
- iv. Evidence of Pension Clearance Certificate (PENCOM) valid till 31st December 2025
- v. Evidence of Industrial Training Fund (ITF) Compliance Certificate valid till 31st December 2025.
- vi. Evidence of registration on National Database of Federal Contractor, Consultants and Service Providers of the Bureau of Public Procurement by submission of Interim Registration Report (IRR) expiring on 31st December 2025.
- vii. Company audited accounts for the last 3 years i.e 2022, 2023 and 2024.
- viii. Company Profile including organization structure, key professional staff with their names and registration with appropriate regulatory bodies (COREN, QRSBN, ARCON, CORBON e.t.c) with their current practicing license
- ix. Verifiable documents evidence of at least 3 similar jobs executed in the last 3 years including letter of award, evaluation certificate, job completion certificate and photographs of the projects.
- x. Equipment and technology capacity, with evidence of ownership or lease.

- xi. Letter of consent to allow verification of documents submitted.
- xii. An affidavit disclosing:
 - a. that the company is not in receivership of any form of insolvency, bankrupt proceedings
 - b. that none or any of the Directors of the company has been convicted of fraud or financial impropriety
- xiii. Evidence of payment of appropriate non-refundable tender fee of N10,000.00 only.
- xiv. All documents for submission must be transmitted with a covering letter on the company's letter head paper bearing all necessary details.
- XV. Evidence of registration with edo state public Procurement agency

4. COLLECTION OF BID DOCUMENTS

Interested Companies are to collect the bidding documents from the office of **The Executive Chairman, Edo State Universal Basic Education Board, Education Hub, Iyaro, Benin city, Edo state.**

5. SUBMISSION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS

Prospective bidders are to submit bids for each lot desired, two (2) hard copies each of the Financial and Technical Bids packaged separately in sealed envelopes and clearly marked "Technical Bid" or "Financial Bid". Thereafter, put the two sealed envelopes together in a big envelope should be submitted in a sealed envelope addressed to **The Executive Chairman, Edo State Universal Basic Education Board, UBEC/EDOSUBEB/2024/LOT Number** clearly indicated on the top right-hand corner. Furthermore, the reverse of the envelope should bear the name and address of bidder and be dropped in the designated tender box at the premises of the Board before **12PM on 10th April, 2026.**

6. OPENING OF TECHNICAL BIDS

The Technical Bids will be opened immediately after the deadline for submission of tenders **10th April, 2026 by 12 noon** at the **PREMISES** of the Edo State Universal Basic Education Board (EDO SUBEB) in the presence of bidders or their representatives, while the financial bids will be kept unopened. Please ensure that you sign the Bid Submission Register in the open registry of the Physical Planning Department as the Board will not be held liable for misplaced or wrongly submitted bids.

7. GENERAL INFORMATION

- a. Bids must be submitted in English Language as official authorized by the bidders
- b. Bids submitted after the deadline for submission would be returned un-opened
- c. Bidders may not bid for more than 2 Lots in a category
- d. All costs will be borne by the bidders
- e. **Edo State Universal Basic Education Board** is not bound to pre-qualify any bidder and reserves the right to annul the Procurement process at any time without incurring any liabilities in accordance with Section 28 of the Procurement Act 2007.

Signed:
**EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN EDO STATE UNIVERSAL
 BASIC EDUCATION BOARD (SUBEB)**

2027: Clerics warn politicians against violence, urge issue-based politics

LAGOS

Prominent Nigerian clerics on Monday cautioned politicians against actions that could trigger violence or undermine national unity ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The appeal was made at a Cross Campaign Media Parley on the State of the Nation in Lagos, convened by Rev. Yomi Kasali of the Foundation of Truth Assembly (FOTA) and Apostle Lawrence Achudume, Founder and General Overseer of Victory Life Bible Church (VLBC).

Among attendees were Bishop Mike Okonkwo, a former President of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), and Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor, former President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), alongside other clerics, including Archbishop Praise Daniel, Prophet Isa El-Buba, Rev. Itua Ighodalo, Rev. Felix Omobude and Dr Janet Onaolapo.

Speaking on the 2027 polls,

Oritsejafor stressed that elections should centre on service to the people rather than personal ambition.

"The election is coming again. We see the tension and preparations for conflict. But if leadership is truly about service, the people themselves will call you to serve," he said.

He suggested that elected officials should receive allowances rather than full salaries if

their motive is genuine service, while urging the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to ensure votes count to sustain public confidence in elections.

Okonkwo, in his remarks, emphasised national unity and collective responsibility, noting that Nigeria remains the only homeland for its citizens.

While acknowledging economic challenges, he said blame should not rest solely on the current administration, but insisted that public funds must be accounted for.

"If more money is being allocated to states, Nigerians deserve to know how it is utilised. Citizens must hold leaders at all levels accountable," he said.

On insecurity, Prophet Isa El-Buba decried recent killings in the North, describing the situation as dire and calling for urgent action, including the establishment of state police.

"The nation is bleeding. Enough of the bloodshed. We must confront those responsible and their sponsors, regardless of affiliation," he said.

Earlier, Rev. Felix Omobude said the gathering was aimed at promoting peace, justice and improved living conditions for Nigerians, stressing that no individual should be above the law.

Kasali added that the parley was part of an ongoing annual engagement to address pressing national issues beyond election cycles.



2026 IGR BUDGET DEFENCE:

R-L: Executive Director of Finance and Administration, Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), Mrs. Vivian Richard-Edet; Managing Director, NPA, Abubakar Dantshoro, and Executive Director of Engineering, NPA, Ibrahim Umar Abbas at the 2026 Internal Generated Revenue (IGR) budget defence at the National Assembly, Abuja, yesterday.

PHOTO BY OMOYE AMINU.

Afenifere urges S'West govs to deploy hunters against insecurity

LAGOS

The Yoruba socio-cultural organisation, Afenifere, has called on South-West governors to integrate local hunters into the region's security framework to combat rising insecurity.

Lagos State Chairman of the group, Chief Deji Wellington, said on Monday that hunters possess deep knowledge of forests where criminals often operate.

He noted that collaboration between hunters and formal security agencies would significantly enhance operations.

"These hunters understand the terrain and can track criminals in ways conventional forces may not," he said.

Wellington added that many hunters are capable of staying in forests for extended periods, making them valuable assets in tackling kidnappers and bandits.

He acknowledged the efforts of the Western Nigeria Security Network (Amotekun) but said incorporating hunters would further strengthen the outfit.

The Afenifere leader also reiterated support for state police, arguing that localised policing would improve intelligence gathering and response.

Anioma identity: Group hails Delta monarch's historic role

ASABA

The Odu Oma Club of Nigeria has commended the Obi of Owa Kingdom, Obi Emmanuel Efeizomor II, for his pivotal role in shaping Anioma identity during the late 1980s under the defunct Bendel State.

The commendation was contained in a statement issued on Monday by the group's

Publicity Secretary, Dr Christopher Nwayalani, following a courtesy visit to the monarch to mark his 88th birthday.

Led by its President, Ogbogu Okenyi, the delegation described the monarch as a "distinguished pillar of Anioma unity," noting his contributions to cultural preservation and advocacy.

Efeizomor II, who ascended the throne in 1959, remains one of Nigeria's longest-reigning traditional rulers.

The group highlighted his role in the historic Anioma Declaration of December 13, 1989, presented to then Bendel State Governor, Tunde Ogbaha, which formally affirmed the collective identity of the Aniocha, Ndokwa, Ika and Oshimili people.

Okenyi also recalled the monarch's involvement in renewed agitation for Anioma State creation in 2006, alongside the late Asagba of Asaba, Obi Chike Edozien, and other stakeholders.

Responding, the monarch expressed appreciation for the visit but raised concerns over growing divisions among political and cultural actors, warning that competing interests were weakening the Anioma cause.

He lamented what he described as declining respect for traditional institutions and increasing materialism among younger generations, urging unity and strategic coordination in advancing the Anioma agenda.

Women protest alleged killing of 26yr-old in C'River

OGOJA

Hundreds of women in Nwang-Ekpugrinya community, Ogoja Local Government Area of Cross River, on Monday staged a protest over the alleged killing of a 26-year-old woman, Lucy Morshie.

The protesters marched through the community and converged on the Divisional Police Station, demanding that the suspect, Malime Ejo, 35, be handed over to them.

Confirming the incident, police spokesman ASP Sunday Eitokpah said the victim was allegedly attacked and killed on Saturday near a stream close to

a farm in Nwang Village, Eka-juk.

He said the suspect was promptly arrested and rescued from mob action by operatives, adding that he remains in custody pending investigation.

"The case will be transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department," he said.

Eitokpah added that arrangements were ongoing to deposit the victim's remains at the General Hospital mortuary in Ogoja.

Security personnel, including soldiers, were deployed to the area as tensions escalated following the protest, while demonstrators continued to demand justice for the deceased.

WASH campaign hits schools, promotes hygiene, gender equity in C'River

CALABAR

The Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Media Network, Cross River Chapter, has intensified advocacy on hygiene and gender equity with an outreach to Government Secondary School, Anantigha, Calabar South.

Coordinator of the group, Mr Jeremiah Archibong, said the campaign formed part of activities marking the 2026 World Water Day, observed annually on March 22.

The team distributed sanitary pads to female students to support menstrual hygiene, while also sensitising students on safe water practices.

Archibong decried the poor state of water and sanitation facilities in the school despite its proximity to the council secretariat.

"If a school in such a location lacks basic facilities, the situation in remote areas would be far worse," he said.

Also speaking, Mr Augustine Oyongha of the Borehole Drillers Association of Nige-

ria stressed the need to protect water infrastructure and ensure proper maintenance, warning against the dangers of contaminated water.

Mrs Abenmire Williams, the network's Secretary, cautioned against stigmatising girls during menstruation, noting that such attitudes discourage school attendance and participation.

The school's Principal, Mrs Valarie Henshaw, described the intervention as timely, lamenting that the school's borehole had stopped functioning barely two years after installation.

She called on stakeholders to support the provision of reliable water supply to improve sanitation conditions.

ADDITION/CORRECTION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **AIBANGBEE KENNETH EGHIANRUWA** and **AIBANGBEE KENNETH**, are one and the same person as appeared in some of my documents. Henceforth, I wish to be known and address as **AIBANGBEE KENNETH EGHIANRUWA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME

I, formerly known as **EZENWA VANESSA NGOZICHUKWUKA**, now wish to be known and address as **EKWUNNO VANESSA NGOZICHUKWUKA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MISS KPAA BARISI**, now wish to be known and address as **MRS. UNYENSE BARISI**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public please take note.

MISSING DOCUMENTS

The general public is hereby notified that, we **Mr Alozie Hector Ndubuisi & Mrs Alozie Mirian Kelechi** are the lawful owner of a piece of land, measuring 50ft by 100ft with a bungalow building, lying and situate at **No. 8 Irabor Street off Ewaen off Upper Mission Extension Road, Benin City, Edo State**.

The title documents was discovered missing on September 2, 2021 and all efforts to trace it has proved abortive, hence this publication for record purposes.

The general public, Edo Geographic Information Services (EGIS) and concerned authorities should please take note.

Signed: MR ALOZIE HECTOR NDUBUISI

COAS pushes strong leadership for operational effectiveness

JAJI (KADUNA)

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt.-Gen. Waidi Shaibu, has stressed the need for strong leadership to enhance operational effectiveness in the Nigerian Army. Shaibu, represented by the

Commander, Infantry Corps, Maj.-Gen. Godwin Mutkut, made the call on Monday in Jaji, Kaduna State, at the opening of the Warrant Officers' Academy Course 47/2026 Leadership and Management Seminar.

Speaking on the theme,

“Transformational Leadership in a Dynamic Environment: Strategies for Warrant Officers to Drive Operational Excellence,” he emphasised the critical link between junior and senior leadership, warning that ineffective leadership at lower levels could negatively impact formations, battalions, regiments and units.

He described leadership and management as universal

concepts, noting that decisions taken at all levels significantly affect personnel and shape long-term operational outcomes.

According to him, the evolving nature of warfare and prevailing security challenges across the country demand high standards of military leadership and management.

The COAS urged participants to approach the course

with realism by drawing on personal operational experiences to enrich discussions and deepen learning.

He noted that the training was designed to strengthen leadership capacity, improve personnel management, and prepare participants for key decision-making roles while serving as role models in promoting team spirit and operational effectiveness.

Shaibu added that the seminar would broaden participants' understanding of the military profession in line with national strategic objectives, urging them to learn from resource persons and maintain a positive attitude throughout the programme.

He commended the academy's leadership for organising the seminar, describing warrant officers and senior non-commissioned officers as the backbone of the Armed Forces.

Earlier, the Commandant of

the Warrant Officers' Academy, Brig.-Gen. Anthony Wende, said the programme was aimed at bridging leadership and management gaps between commissioned officers and enlisted personnel.

He noted that the academy remained the apex training institution for warrant officers and senior non-commissioned officers, providing tools for re-orientation, restructuring, and effective communication of directives.

Wende added that the training would equip participants with confidence, integrity, sound judgement and a strong sense of responsibility, while preparing them for leadership roles in joint and multi-agency environments.

He said the course, which has 81 participants—79 from the Nigerian Army and two from the Nigerian Navy reflects growing inter-service collaboration.



ANNUAL STAKEHOLDERS CONFERENCE:

Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Arhedo (centre); Very Rev. Fr. Charles Akhue (right) and Mrs. Lorita Omeregbe, representative of the National Human Rights Commission, at the Annual Stakeholders Conference on Inclusive Human Rights Defence Mechanisms in Communities, organised under the Human Rights and Education Paralegal Scheme, held in Egbele, Uromi, Esan North East Local Government Area of Edo State.

AIG Akpanudom vows to end rights abuses in Police investigations

LAGOS

The newly promoted Assistant Inspector-General of Police in charge of the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID), Alagbon, Mr Simeon Akpanudom, has pledged to eliminate human rights abuses in police investigations.

Akpanudom made the pledge on Monday during his inaugural address at the 56th AIG at the FCID headquarters in Lagos, describing his appointment as both a signif-

icant responsibility and a call to serve with integrity, professionalism and accountability.

He noted that the FCID, as the apex investigative arm of the Nigeria Police Force, handles complex and sensitive cases of national and international dimensions, requiring strict adherence to the rule of law and respect for fundamental human rights.

“I see my posting as a call for the highest level of professionalism, transparency and accountability to ensure that human rights are respected and the rule

of law is upheld,” he said.

The AIG stressed the need to rebuild public trust in the police, noting that effective law enforcement depends largely on the confidence of the people.

Aligning his vision with the Inspector-General's philosophy of people-centred policing, he outlined plans to strengthen investigative capacity through intensive training, adoption of modern technology, and strategic partnerships with government agencies and the private sector.

He disclosed that the reforms would be implemented within 30 to 60 days, adding that improved investigative processes

would enhance efficiency, reduce rights violations, and minimise costly litigation.

Akpanudom warned officers against misconduct, stressing that disciplinary breaches would be addressed in line with existing laws, including the Police Act, Force Orders and Public Service Rules, while exemplary conduct would be recognised and rewarded.

He thanked the Inspector-General of Police, Mr Olatunji Disu, for the appointment and called on the media to support the police through accurate and responsible reporting to enhance national security.

S'East LP women endorse Oti, Usman, pledge grassroots mobilisation

ABUJA

Women leaders of the Labour Party (LP) in the South-East have passed a vote of confidence in Abia State Governor, Dr Alex Oti, and the party's Interim National Chairman, Sen. Nenadi Usman.

The endorsement followed resolutions reached at a strategic online meeting involving women leaders from the five South-East states.

In a statement jointly signed

by the Deputy National Woman Leader (South-East), Mrs Ijeoma Chukwu, and the party's National Organising Secretary, Mrs Chinelo Ofoche, the group commended Oti and his deputy, Mr Ikechukwu Emetu, for what it described as purposeful and visionary leadership in Abia.

They said the administration reflects the transformative potential of the party and also praised Usman for her courage, prudence and efforts in fostering unity and stability

within the party.

The women further lauded Sen. Darlington Nwokocha and Ofoche for strengthening the party's structure and advancing its ideals.

Reaffirming their commitment to increased female participation in politics, they stressed the importance of inclusion in leadership and decision-making processes for equity and sustainable development.

They pledged to intensify grassroots mobilisation to encourage more women to par-

ticipate actively in party affairs.

The group also urged members across the zone to engage fully in the ongoing electronic registration exercise and prepare for forthcoming congresses and the national convention, describing them as critical to strengthening internal democracy.

They concluded with a renewed commitment to unity, grassroots expansion and positioning the party as a credible political force in the South-East and beyond.

Economist warns CBN policy may widen forex market gap

IBADAN

An economist, Dr Alarudeen Aminu, has cautioned that the Central Bank of Nigeria's policy mandating naira-only disbursement of diaspora remittances could widen the gap between official and parallel foreign exchange markets.

Aminu, an Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Ibadan, gave the warning in an interview on Monday.

He said while the policy might be intended to conserve foreign exchange and stabilise the official market amid the ongoing Middle-East crisis, it could create distortions if sustained for too long.

According to him, the move may reduce the availability of foreign currency in the parallel market while increasing pressure on the official market, potentially widening the exchange rate gap.

He added that the policy

could encourage arbitrage, enabling individuals with access to official rates to resell at higher parallel market rates.

Aminu warned that a significant disparity between the two markets could lead to inefficient allocation of foreign exchange, negatively impacting businesses and households.

He noted that firms might begin pricing goods based on parallel market rates, even when accessing forex at official rates, thereby worsening inflation.

The economist, however, expressed hope that the measure would be temporary, cautioning that prolonged implementation could erode gains made in narrowing the exchange rate gap.

The Central Bank of Nigeria had directed International Money Transfer Operators and authorised dealer banks to process all remittances through designated naira settlement accounts as part of efforts to improve efficiency in the foreign exchange market.

BPP schedules orientation for 97 deployed procurement officers

ABUJA

The Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) will organise an online orientation workshop for 97 newly deployed procurement officers on Grade Levels 15 to 17 across ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs).

This is contained in a statement issued on Monday in Abuja by the Head of Press and Public Relations, Mr Zira Nagga.

He said the deployment followed a May 13, 2025 directive by President Bola Tinubu,

which reverted the mobility of procurement officers to the BPP, as well as a subsequent directive from the Secretary to the Government of the Federation dated December 9, 2025.

According to him, the orientation, scheduled for March 31, will be presided over by the Director-General of BPP, Dr Adebawale Adedokun.

Nagga explained that the workshop is aimed at strengthening the capacity of the officers in effective procurement processes, adding that attendance is mandatory.

NEWS

Kwankwaso joins ADC, bolsters opposition coalition in Kano

KANO

Former Governor of Kano State, Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, on Monday formally aligned with the African Democratic Congress (ADC) in a move widely described as a defining moment for opposition politics in the state.

The National Chairman of the party, David Mark, received Kwankwaso and his supporters into the party, describing the defection as more than a political realignment.

He said it reflected growing calls by Nigerians for a cohesive and formidable opposition capable of safeguarding democratic values.

Mark noted that the ADC now serves as a rallying platform for a broad-based national movement anchored on inclusion, integrity, competence and progress, adding that the

coalition aims to provide credible alternatives and restore confidence in democratic governance.

He expressed concern over what he described as the gradual erosion of opposition space, warning that actions capable of limiting political participation pose a threat to democracy.

"The future of Nigeria cannot be built on domination but on participation. Leadership must be earned through trust rather than sustained by control," he said.

Mark further noted that Kwankwaso commands a significant grassroots following, particularly in Northern Nigeria, through the Kwankwasiyya movement.

He called on Nigerians across ethnic, religious and regional divides to join the movement and take an active role in building a more inclu-

sive and accountable system.

Earlier, Kwankwaso urged supporters to register massively

with the party and promote its

ideals ahead of future elections. Also speaking, Alhaji

Mubarak Fagge said he joined Kwankwaso in the ADC to ensure the party's success, adding

that mobilisation efforts had already begun across communities in Kano.



AFTER A CLOSED-DOOR MEETING:

Director-General, National Agency for the Great Green Wall, Saleh Abubakar (R), exchanging pleasantries with his senegalese counterpart, Dr Sekou Diatta, after a closed-door meeting on the sideline of 3-day Technical Consultation meeting on the new African Union's (AU) Great Green Wall Strategy and 10-year implementation framework in Dakar, Senegal.

NPA pushes export drive with automation, port upgrades

LAGOS

The Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) has unveiled plans to boost non-oil exports through infrastructure renewal, process reforms and full automation of port operations.

Managing Director, Mr Abubakar Dantsoho, disclosed this in a statement issued on Monday, noting that the initiative aims to link local producers, especially SMEs, to global markets.

Speaking at the 37th Enugu International Trade Fair, Dantsoho described Enugu as a strategic gateway to the South-East with strong export potential.

He said the authority is rehabilitating key eastern ports, including Onne, Warri and Calabar, while supporting new

deep seaport projects.

"We are removing bottlenecks and creating efficient export pathways to enhance competitiveness," he said.

A major reform, he noted, is the establishment of Export Process Terminals (EPTs) to simplify cargo consolidation, documentation and shipment.

The terminals will be linked to Domestic Export Warehouses in collaboration with the Nigerian Export Promotion Council to improve port-hinterland connectivity.

On automation, Dantsoho said the implementation of the National Single Window system would enhance transparency and reduce human interference.

He reaffirmed the NPA's commitment to partnerships with investors and exporters to expand Nigeria's export base

Ondo pays N2.4bn gratuities, clears more pension backlog

AKURE

Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa has announced the disbursement of N2.4 billion as gratuities to pensioners who retired from the Ondo State public service in 2018 and 2019.

Speaking at a ceremony in Akure on Monday, Aiyedatiwa said the payment underscored his administration's commit-

ment to the welfare and dignity of retirees.

He explained that the disbursement followed an earlier release of N2.2 billion in October 2025 to settle gratuities owed to retirees from 2016 and 2017.

According to him, the initiative is aimed at alleviating hardship caused by delayed entitlements and restoring confidence among pensioners.

"This is not merely an administrative exercise but a demonstration of our unwavering commitment to the welfare and dignity of those who served the state diligently," he said.

The governor acknowledged the backlog of pension liabilities inherited by his administration, noting that some retirees had died waiting for their benefits.

He, however, reiterated his

government's resolve to clear all outstanding arrears.

Earlier, Permanent Secretary of the Ondo State Pension Transitional Department, Mr Peter Akingbade, commended the government, noting that beneficiaries would receive full payments.

A beneficiary, Mrs Mary Mabogunje, also expressed appreciation, describing the payment as timely and impactful.

Rail link to ports key to trade growth —SEREC warns

ABUJA

The Sea Empowerment and Research Center (SEREC) has called for urgent rail connectivity to Nigerian seaports to boost maritime efficiency and economic growth.

Head Researcher, Mr Eugene Nweke, said Nigeria's intermodal transport system remains weak, with over 90 percent of

cargo evacuated by road.

He warned that the overdependence on trucking has led to port congestion, high logistics costs, infrastructure damage and loss of regional competitiveness.

"Despite existing rail lines and inland waterways, the absence of effective integration has rendered the system largely monomodal," he said.

Nweke noted that between

90 and 95 percent of cargo movement is by road, with rail accounting for only about five per cent and inland waterways seven percent.

He added that the situation inflates the cost of goods and undermines Nigeria's maritime potential.

The researcher also highlighted cargo diversion to neighbouring countries with more efficient logistics systems, resulting in

significant revenue losses.

He called for urgent reforms, including enforcement of rail connections to ports, promotion of barge operations, liberalisation of rail freight and implementation of a national single window system.

According to him, a coordinated multimodal transport framework is critical for sustainable economic growth and trade facilitation.

New Oyo CP pledges crime-free State, seeks public support

IBADAN

The new Commissioner of Police in Oyo State, CP Abimbola Olugbenga, has pledged to reduce crime to the barest minimum while strengthening collaboration with residents.

Olugbenga made the commitment during a sanitation exercise and medical outreach held to mark the

2026 National Police Day in Ibadan.

The outreach took place at Aleshinloye Market, while sanitation activities were conducted at the Challenge Bus Terminal.

He stressed that effective policing requires public trust and cooperation.

"The only way we can build trust is by partnering with the people and engaging them

meaningfully," he said.

The CP added that his goal is to create a secure environment where economic activities can thrive without fear.

Chairman of the Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC) in Oyo State, Mrs Esther Adegbenjo, urged residents to support security agencies with timely and accurate information.

She reaffirmed the PCRC's

commitment to community policing and safety.

Also, Director of Nigeria Police Medical Services, ACP Kazem Olayemi, said about 100 residents would benefit from free medical services targeting hypertension, diabetes and other ailments.

A beneficiary, Mrs Bukola Adegboyega, commended the initiative and appealed for its regular continuation.

PUBLIC NOTICE

We act as Solicitors to Mr Izelogha Solomon Oscar herein-after refer to as "Our Client" and on his authority we bring to the notice of the general public, that our client is not the biological father of one Solomon Endurance Oscar.

That our client was presumed to be his biological father, until recent DNA test results carried out from Diagnostic and Clinical Services Plc, at Eletu Ogabi Street, off Adeola Oduku, Victoria Island, Lagos State on April 27, 2021 and Lily Hospital, G.R.A, Benin City, Edo State on June, 18, 2021, showed that our client is not his biological father.

That our client do not consent to the said Solomon Endurance Oscar bearing his name and he should stop it forthwith. Our client disclaim any paternal relationship, rights or responsibilities to him.

The general public and concerned authorities should please take note.

Signed:

H. O. OSATOHANMWEN & CO.
Legal Practitioner and Notary Public.



SOLOMON
ENDURANCE OSCAR

JUDICIARY

NEWS

Court bars Turaki-led PDP faction from nat'l secretariat

Orders substituted service on Yilwatda, others

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja on Monday restrained the faction of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) led by Kabiru Turaki from accessing the party's national secretariat in the Federal Capital Territory.

Justice Joyce Abdulmalik issued the order while delivering judgment in a suit filed by a rival faction loyal to the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike.

The court also directed security agencies, including the

Nigeria Police Force and the Department of State Services, to provide protection for the Wike-aligned faction in accessing the secretariat.

Justice Abdulmalik held that the national convention organised by the Turaki-led faction on November 15 and 16, 2025, in Ibadan, and the election of party officials, were conducted in violation of subsisting court orders and were therefore null and void.

She ruled that the convention breached Section 287(3) of the Constitution, as well as the PDP constitution, describ-

ing the expulsion of Wike and his allies as an affront to the rule of law.

"I considered the expulsion of the members of the plaintiffs as not only an affront to the subsisting judgment, but also a direct assault to a democratic and principled society," she said.

The judge declared all proceedings, resolutions and decisions from the convention, including suspensions of members, unconstitutional and of no effect.

The suit was filed by a faction led by acting National

Chairman, Alhaji Mohammed Abdulrahman, alongside Sen. Samuel Anyanwu, who is recognised as factional National Secretary.

The plaintiffs had sought to restrain security agencies from granting access to the Turaki-led leadership and asked the court to stop INEC from recognising any address other than the party's existing registered office.

Justice Abdulmalik reaffirmed that all authorities must enforce court decisions, noting that earlier judgments already affirmed by the Court of Appeal had barred the Turaki faction from holding the con-

vention.

She ruled that the plaintiffs are entitled to remain in office and continue using the party's national secretariat and assets.

The court dismissed the Turaki faction's application seeking the judge's recusal, holding that allegations of bias were unsubstantiated and unsupported by credible evidence.

It also rejected arguments challenging the court's jurisdiction and the plaintiffs' locus standi, describing the objections as lacking merit.

The judge stressed that dissatisfaction with court rulings should be addressed through appeal, not recusal.

The Wike-aligned faction had on Sunday held its own convention, where Abdulrahman emerged as substantive national chairman.

Earlier rulings by Justices James Omotosho and Peter Lifu of the Federal High Court had barred the Turaki faction from conducting its convention, although conflicting decisions were issued by an Oyo State High Court.

Despite the rulings, the Turaki group proceeded with its convention and announced new party leadership, including Turaki as national chairman.

Also, a Federal High Court in Abuja yesterday ordered substituted service of court processes on Nentawe Yilwatda and other officials of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in a suit challenging an alleged exclusion from the party's national convention election.

Justice Joyce Abdulmalik granted the order and adjourned the case until April 24 for hearing of all pending applications, including the APC's preliminary objection.

The suit was filed by an aspirant, Fubara Dagogo, who is contesting his exclusion from the race for National Vice Chairman, South-South.

Dagogo is seeking to nullify any congress held without his participation, arguing that he was duly cleared and had paid for his expression of interest and nomination forms.

Through his counsel, Chief Ogochukwu Onyema, he listed the APC, Yilwatda, Hon. Victor Giadom and Sulaiman Muitamma as defendants.

He is also asking the court to award N100 million in damages for alleged embarrassment and mental distress.

In response, the APC, through its counsel Kayode Okunade, urged the court to dismiss the suit, arguing that it concerns internal party affairs, which are non-justiciable.

The party further contended that the plaintiff lacks locus standi and failed to exhaust internal dispute resolution mechanisms.

At the hearing, the plaintiff's counsel informed the court of difficulties in serving some defendants, prompting the application for substituted service.

Justice Abdulmalik granted the request and ordered that hearing notices be served on all parties ahead of the next adjourned date.



2026 SATELLITE WEEK:

Managing Director, Nigerian Communications Satellite Limited (NIGCOMSAT), Jane Egerton-Idehen (L), with the Director-General, National Space Research and Development Agency, Mathew Adepoju, during the 2026 Satellite Week in Abuja on Monday.

Absence of counsel stalls Iyabo Obasanjo property suit again

ABUJA

Proceedings in a property dispute involving Iyabo Obasanjo and others were on Monday stalled for the second time at the Federal High Court in Abuja due to the absence of counsel.

The matter, before Justice Mohammed Umar, could not

proceed as neither the plaintiffs' nor the defendants' lawyers were present in court.

The case was adjourned until June 10 for further mention.

The plaintiffs, ABB Electrical Systems Limited and Amb. Yohana Margif, are contesting ownership of a property located at Plot 4254, Cadastral Zone A04, measuring about 1.67

hectares in Asokoro, Abuja.

Other defendants include former FCT Senator Philip Aduda and several others.

The case was initially handled by Justice Inyang Ekwo, who had earlier declined an ex-parte application seeking to restrain the defendants from interfering with the property.

Instead, the court directed that

the defendants be put on notice.

The plaintiffs maintain that they hold a valid Right of Occupancy issued by the Federal Capital Development Authority and have been in peaceful possession of the land.

They warned that any interference could cause irreparable damage and render any future judgment nugatory.

Driver arraigned over alleged N5m car fraud in Ibadan

IBADAN

A 41-year-old driver, Abdullahi Akinleye, was on Monday arraigned before an Iyaganku Chief Magistrates' Court over alleged N5 million fraud involving a car

hire purchase.

The defendant pleaded not guilty to a three-count charge of forgery, fraud and stealing.

Prosecutor ASP Foluke Adedosu told the court that Akinleye obtained a Toyota Camry valued at N5 million from one Akeem

Alao on April 12, 2025, under a hire purchase arrangement.

She alleged that he converted the vehicle to personal use and sold it without the owner's consent, using forged documents.

The offences contravene Sections 390(9), 419 and 467

of the Criminal Code Laws of Oyo State, 2000.

The defence counsel, Mr O.S. Akinbode, applied for bail, which was granted in the sum of N1 million with two sureties.

The case was adjourned until May 13 for hearing.

6 men docked over alleged illegal detention in Ibadan

IBADAN

Six men were on Monday arraigned before an Iyaganku Magistrates' Court over alleged unlawful detention and breach of peace.

The defendants—Akeem

Rashid, Lukman Adedosu, Taofeek Adeshina, Kolade Onifade, Lateef Jongbo and Bankole Abdulfatai pleaded not guilty to charges of conspiracy and deprivation of liberty.

Prosecutor Insp. Adeshina Folaranmi alleged that the de-

fendants unlawfully detained one Olayode Omotosho on March 29 in the Ido area of Ibadan.

He said the act restricted the complainant's freedom of movement and was likely to cause a breach of peace.

The offences contravene Sec-

tions 249(d), 365 and 516 of the Criminal Laws of Oyo State, 2000.

The Magistrate, Mrs. Oluwabusayo Osho, granted each defendant bail in the sum of N500,000 with two sureties.

The case was adjourned until June 30 for hearing.

NC sets up panel to resolve Ijaw disputes

LAGOS

The National Congress (INC), the apex socio-cultural organisation of the Ijaw people, has formed a seven-member ad-hoc mediation committee to settle disputes among ex-agitators, businessmen, and politicians of the Ijaw tribe.

A statement by the INC Publicity Secretary, Chief Ezonebi Oyakemeagbegha, said the committee's mandate is to promote peace and unity within the Ijaw community.

"Rather than resorting to

abuse or public confrontation, aggrieved parties should channel their grievances to this committee or other internal dispute platforms for amicable settlement," the statement said.

The committee is chaired by AIG Okoro Julius Alawari, with Traditional Ruler, Iraron Obolo as Vice-Chairman, and Prof. Juliet Teibowei as Secretary. Other members include Regent Youmor, Bomo Fetepigi Obhe, Roberts Reginald, and Mrs Adesola Ebiseni.

INC is led by Prof. Benjamin Okaba

Lagos govt engages residents to improve housing estates

IKORODU (LAGOS)

Residents of Lagos State government-owned housing estates in Ikorodu have been urged to provide feedback to help improve living conditions.

The forum, held at Oba Adeboluwa Housing Estate, was chaired by the Ministry of Housing Permanent Secretary, Mr Abdulhafis Toriola, who said the initiative will be a

monthly engagement to tackle challenges in government estates.

Residents expressed satisfaction over recent improvements, such as building maintenance and infrastructure upgrades, but called for more amenities, including healthcare and recreational facilities.

Officials also addressed fire safety, waste management, drug abuse prevention, and property insurance during the meeting.

NEWS

Foreign

Spain closes airspace to US aircraft involved in Iran war

Spain has closed its airspace to US planes involved in attacks on Iran, Madrid's Defence Minister Margarita Robles has said.

"We will not authorise the use of Morón and Rota [military bases] for any acts related to the war in Iran," she said, adding that Spain had "made this clear to the American government from the beginning".

Foreign Affairs Minister José Manuel Albares stated that the aim of the decision was to "not do anything that could encourage an escalation in this war".

A White House official told the BBC that the US military was "meeting or surpassing all of its goals under Operation Epic Fury and does not need help from Spain or anyone else".

US President Donald Trump

has previously threatened to impose a full trade embargo on Spain over its opposition to the Iran war.

Since the start of the war in late February, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has been one of the most vocal opponents of the US and Israeli attacks on Iran, describing them as "reckless" and "illegal".

Earlier in March, Sánchez said Spain had denied the US use of the two jointly run military bases at Rota and Morón, both in Andalusia.

Last Wednesday, he also announced that "all flight plans that involved actions related to the operation in Iran were rejected - every single one of them, including those of refuelling aircraft."

"We are a sovereign country that does not wish to take part

in illegal wars," he said.

Madrid already denied the US use of the two jointly run military bases at Rota and Morón earlier in March.

Some US bombers involved in operations in Iran are stationed at the RAF Fairford base in Gloucestershire in the UK, after Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer announced on 1 March that the UK had agreed to the request from the US.

Planes taking off from there will be forced to bypass much of the Iberian peninsula - either by flying over the eastern Atlantic or France.

Spanish newspaper El País reported that aircraft would only be able to transit through Spain's airspace or land at the bases in case of emergency.

In a 10-minute televised ad-

dress on 4 March, the Spanish prime minister reflected on the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, as well as the Iraq War more than 20 years ago, and said the Spanish government's position could be summed up as "no to war".

Later in March, the Iranian embassy in Spain said Tehran would be receptive to requests from Madrid concerning transit through the Strait of Hormuz because Spain was "committed to international law".

Around 20% of the world's oil supply normally passes through the narrow waterway between Iran and the tip of the Arabian peninsula.

For weeks the threat of attacks by Iranian drones, missiles and potentially mines has kept it effectively closed, sending oil prices shooting.

How the US could try to seize Iran's Kharg Island

US President Donald Trump has indicated that he may send troops to seize control of Iran's key oil export terminal at Kharg Island in the northern Gulf. So what's behind this, how would it work and what are the risks?

Kharg Island has long been Iran's chief outlet for its oil exports. The island sits offshore with waters deep enough to load product onto tankers known as Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCCs), which can hold around two million barrels. Around 90% of Iran's oil exports pass through Kharg.

During the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s it was frequently bombed by the Iraqi Air Force and on 13 March this year the US struck what it said were 90 military targets on the island. It however spared the oil infrastructure.

If the US does decide to invade Kharg Island then it would most likely be a temporary measure intended to put pressure on Iran by cutting off its fuel exports until it relinquished its chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz - one of the world's busiest oil shipping lanes - and conceded to Washington's demands.

Given the resilience and defiance of the Iranian regime it is highly questionable whether this would work.

The speaker of Iran's parliament, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, has warned that his country's forces would "rain down fire" on any invading US forces. Iran is believed to have reinforced its defences on the island, including with surface-

to-air missile batteries.

Iran has also accused the US of duplicity by proposing peace talks at the same time as dispatching troops to the region. These forces are made up of nearly 5,000 US Marines and around 2,000 paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division.

This has prompted widespread speculation that either or both could be used to seize and hold Kharg.

In theory, the paratroopers could make an airborne assault, probably at night, to seize key positions on this small island, which measures just 20 sq km (7.7 sq miles).

The US Marines would deploy from ships equipped with Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft and Landing Craft Air Cushioned (LCAC) for making amphibious landings. But first those ships would have to run the gauntlet of getting through the Iranian-controlled Strait of Hormuz and then sailing all the way up the Gulf past any number of hidden Iranian drone and missile launch sites.

Any landing, by air or sea, would expect to be met with anti-personnel mines and swarms of drones. Such is the awesome fighting power of these Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs) that the US force would almost certainly prevail, but it could come at the expense of a severe number of casualties.

The US then has the problem of holding the ground, for an indeterminate period, while subject to bombardment from the Iranian mainland.



ADOLFO SUAREZ AIRPORT:
The control tower at Adolfo Suarez Airport in Madrid, Spain in 2025

Russian oil tanker reaches Cuba after Trump appears to loosen blockade

A Russian tanker carrying oil to Cuba has entered the waters off the Communist-run island, Russian news agencies report.

The oil shipment - the first to reach Cuba since January - comes hours after US President Donald Trump said that he had no problem with countries, including Russia, sending supplies to the island.

Trump's remark appeared to signal a loosening of a de facto oil blockade his administration had imposed on Cuba since January.

Cuba has been experiencing a series of nation-wide blackouts as the blockade exacerbated existing fuel shortages.

Russian media reports the Russian tanker Anatoly Kolodkin was carrying a "humanitarian shipment" of 100,000 tonnes of crude oil.

Last week, the World Health

Organization (WHO) had warned that severe fuel shortages meant that Cuban hospitals were struggling to maintain emergency and intensive care services.

Cuba's situation has deteriorated rapidly since 3 January, when US forces seized Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro - a staunch ally of the Cuban government - who had been providing the island with oil under highly preferential terms.

Trump also threatened to impose tariffs on any nation sending oil to Cuba.

Just over a week ago, the US Treasury Department added Cuba to a list of countries barred from receiving oil deliveries from Russia.

But in an apparent reversal of his strategy, Trump told journalists on board Air Force One on Sunday that he had "no

problem" with Russia delivering oil to Cuba.

"We have a tanker out there. We don't mind having somebody get a boatload because they need... they have to survive," he said.

It was not clear from Trump's comment whether this represented a permanent reversal of the fuel blockade policy or just a temporary softening - especially as Trump appeared to double down again on his threats towards the government in Havana, telling journalists on Sunday that "Cuba's finished".

"They have a bad regime. They have very bad and corrupt leadership, and whether or not they get a boat of oil it's not going to matter."

The Russian tanker is expected to offload the oil in Matanzas terminal in the coming hours.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitri Peskov said that Russia considered it "its duty to step up and provide necessary assistance to our Cuban friends".

He added that the shipment had been "raised well in advance... with our American counterparts".

The Cuban authorities have portrayed the arrival of the Russian tanker as "breaking" the US-imposed oil blockade.

The oil the Russian tanker carries is expected to provide Cuba with a short-term lifeline.

Its Communist government, led by President Miguel Díaz-Canel, has been in talks with the Trump administration to try to find a route out of the crisis.

But both sides have publicly set out a number of political and economic red lines that make it hard to see where they could find common ground.

Russia expels British diplomat over spying allegations

Russia has ordered a British diplomat to leave the country over allegations of spying, the latest in a series of expulsions of embassy staff from both sides.

The Federal Security Service (FSB) claims the man provided false information when applying to enter the country, as well as trying to obtain sensitive information during informal economic meetings, according to state media reports.

The diplomat has had their accreditation revoked and has been ordered to leave the country within two weeks.

A UK Foreign Office spokesman called the move "complete nonsense" and accused Russia of an "aggressive and co-ordinated campaign of harassment against British diplomats".

In a statement, they said Russia has been "pumping out malicious and completely baseless accusations about their work".

"The UK does not stand for intimidation of British embassy staff and their families," they added.

The FSB claims the diplomat "intentionally provided false information" when obtaining a permit to enter Russia, and that there were "signs of intelligence

activities" detected, according to state news agency Tass.

His name has also been shared in Russian state media.

Following the expulsion, the UK's charge d'affaires Danae Dholakia was summoned to the Russian Foreign Ministry, which she reportedly left without comment.

This is just the latest in what is a series of tit-for-tat responses from Russia and the UK.

Diplomatic relations between the UK and Russia have worsened in recent years, with both countries expelling a number of each other's diplomats since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Earlier this year, Russia expelled a British diplomat from the country over spying allegations.

In March 2025, Russia expelled two British officials over accusations of spying, with the UK Foreign Office accusing Moscow of "malicious and baseless accusations" against its staff.

The UK, in response, revoked accreditation for a Russian diplomat and a diplomatic spouse, saying it would "not stand for intimidation of British embassy staff and their families".

Foreign

NEWS

Myanmar junta chief Min Aung Hlaing nominated as president

Myanmar's military chief Min Aung Hlaing has been nominated for the presidency as parliament convened on Monday, following a general election from which the biggest opposition parties were excluded.

Min Aung Hlaing is certain to be chosen, as he was nominated in parliament alongside two loyalists who are very unlikely contenders for president.

He has been sanctioned by many Western countries for leading a military coup five years ago.

In the ensuing civil war, thousands of people have been killed and millions have been displaced. Large areas of the country remain under the control of armed opposition groups.

The general elections, held between December and January, were touted by the junta as a pathway to peace.

But the vote was widely viewed as a sham, with many popular parties banned from standing and large areas of the country not allowed to participate because of the civil war.

The regime has rejected this criticism, maintaining that the vote was free and fair.

Still, around 90% of the members of Myanmar's new parliament owe their loyalty to Min Aung Hlaing, either as serving officers in the armed forces - which are guaranteed a quarter of the seats - or as elected candidates for the military's own party.

They plan to spend most of this week debating the choice of the next president, but it is now inevitable that the coup leader will get the job.

Following Myanmar's general elections, its parliament convened for the first time on 16 March.

Min Aung Hlaing is known to have wanted the presidency for a long time.

The prospect of not getting it after the military party's dismal performance in the 2020 election was a big factor behind the coup that ousted the elected government led by Aung San Suu Kyi.

But there are trade-offs: the constitution states that Min Aung Hlaing must give up command of the armed forces if he becomes president.

That carries risks. There are known to be senior commanders who are unhappy with his leadership.



MYANMAR'S MILITARY CHIEF:

Min Aung Hlaing has been sanctioned by many Western countries for leading a military coup five years ago

Dozens killed in deadly gold mine attack in South Sudan

At least 73 people have been killed in a brutal attack on a gold mining site in South Sudan, highlighting ongoing insecurity in the world's youngest nation.

The assault targeted the Khor Kaltan mining area, around 70 kilometres southwest of the capital Juba, over the weekend. According to Vice President James Wani Igga, at least 25 others were seriously injured.

In a statement, Igga called for urgent medical evacuations for the wounded and announced plans for an investigation into the attack. He said authorities must identify those responsible and determine their motives.

The perpetrators remain unclear, with conflicting accounts

emerging. A security source suggested the involvement of forces linked to Riek Machar, while his representatives have denied responsibility and instead accused the army loyal to President Salva Kiir.

Since gaining independence in 2011, South Sudan has faced repeated cycles of violence, often driven by political rivalries and armed factions. Recent months have seen renewed tensions, particularly in regions such as Jonglei State.

The latest attack underscores the fragile security situation and the risks faced by civilians, especially in remote areas where competition over natural resources like gold continues to fuel conflict.

Fugitive Dezi Freeman shot dead by Australian police after seven months in hiding

Australian police have shot and killed Dezi Freeman after the double-murderer spent seven months on the run.

A well-known conspiracy theorist, Freeman, 56, gunned down two police officers on his property in the small Victorian town of Porepunkah last August, before fleeing into dense bushland and evading extensive searches.

Victoria Police say a man was shot dead after an hours-long stand-off at a rural property in the state's north-east on Monday morning. Chief Commissioner Mike Bush said the man was believed to be Freeman, but formal identification was still under way.

"Today, an evil man is dead," said Victoria Premier Jacinta Allan. "It's over."

Police said they had surrounded a building - described as a cross between a shipping container and a long caravan - on a rural property around 05:30 local time (18:30 GMT

on Sunday).

After three hours and multiple police pleas, a man believed to be Freeman came outside and was shot dead.

Details are still being confirmed, Bush told reporters, but he believed Freeman emerged wrapped in a blanket and armed with a gun, possibly taken from one of the slain officers back in August.

"Our ultimate goal was to arrest the person," Bush said. "There was an opportunity for him to surrender peacefully but he did not."

No officers were hurt during the operation, police said, which will be investigated, as is standard in police shootings.

The squad sent to Freeman's property on 26 August was there to search it over an investigation into sex offences, when two senior constables - Neal Thompson and Vadim de Waart - were killed by Freeman.

Their families were the first to be told about Freeman's death,

Bush said, adding that it would take 24 to 48 hours to confirm the identity of the body.

"Should [his identity] be confirmed... this brings closure to what was a tragic and terrible event."

Who is Dezi Freeman, the 'sovereign citizen' wanted for killing police?

Investigators believe Freeman was helped while he was on the run and detectives will now focus on working out who may have aided him, Bush added.

"It would be very difficult for him to get to where he was... without assistance," Bush said. "If anyone was complicit, they will be held accountable."

The Police Association of Victoria said in a statement on Monday that Freeman's death was a "step forward" - but not quite "closure".

"It doesn't lessen the trauma, give back the futures that were callously stolen or lessen the collective fear and grief that this tragic event has instilled in police and the wider public."

Freeman, whose real name was Desmond Filby, was a self-described "sovereign citizen", part of an anti-government movement that rejects authority and laws.

Locals in Porepunkah - an alpine tourist town beneath Mount Buffalo - said he had lived on his property with his wife and two children.

After the double murder, police shut down the area, offered a A\$1m (£525,000; \$709,000) reward, and spent months scouring steep and rocky terrain riddled with caves and mineshafts for Freeman - who had extensive bush survival skills.

Last month, police renewed their search and brought in cadaver dogs, saying they "strongly" believed Freeman was dead.

Bush said on Monday that there was "a lot to suggest that Freeman had taken his own life", but officers had kept an open mind. He would not reveal what led police to his location.

Latin Patriarch will have access to Jerusalem holy site after police stopped entry

Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa said the initial decision was an "extreme departure from basic principles of reasonableness, freedom of worship"

Israel's prime minister has said the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem will now have "full and immediate access" to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, after police earlier prevented him from celebrating Palm Sunday Mass there.

Benjamin Netanyahu said Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the head of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land, had been asked not to enter out of concern for his safety as Iran had repeatedly targeted Jerusalem's holy sites with missiles.

The decision to block the

cardinal from entering Christianity's most sacred site had been criticised by several Western nations.

Israel's police later said it had agreed a "mutual framework" with the Latin Patriarch for Easter celebrations.

On Sunday, Cardinal Pizzaballa and the Reverend Francesco Ielpo were stopped outside the church, believed to be the site of Jesus Christ's crucifixion, as they were planning to hold a Mass to mark the start of Holy Week, Church authorities said.

Cardinal Pizzaballa's office said it was "the first time in centuries" a Latin Patriarch had been turned away from the holy site on Palm Sunday, which marks Christ's return to

Jerusalem.

He and Rev Ielpo had been "compelled" to turn back from the church, where Christ was also believed to have been buried and subsequently resurrected, it said.

A statement from the patriarchate on Sunday said: "This incident is a grave precedent and disregards the sensibilities of billions of people around the world, who during this week, look to Jerusalem."

But in a later statement, released on Monday, Cardinal Pizzaballa's office said the matter had been "addressed and resolved" and expressed "sincere gratitude" to Israel's President Isaac Herzog for intervening in the matter.

The cardinal's office said it

hoped "appropriate arrangements will continue to be found, enabling prayer to take place in places of worship, particularly in the holy places of all religions".

This was a matter of "profound importance to hundreds of millions of believers", it added.

Before the decision was made to allow Cardinal Pizzaballa full access to the church, Netanyahu had said worshippers of "all faiths" had been asked not to visit sites in Jerusalem's Old City while it was being targeted, and that police had acted out of "special" safety concerns in this instance.

Israeli police said all holy sites in the Old City had been closed to worshippers since the

US-Israel war against Iran began on 28 February for security reasons, and that it had rejected the patriarchate's request for an exemption on Palm Sunday.

The traditional Palm Sunday procession into the city had already been cancelled due to restrictions on public gatherings.

Netanyahu said holy sites belonging to Christian, Jewish and Muslim worshippers alike had been "repeatedly targeted" by Iranian missiles in recent days.

"In one strike, missile fragments crashed meters from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre," he said in a statement on X, adding that Sunday's decision involved "no malicious intent whatsoever".

Then, late on Sunday night,

Netanyahu announced he had instructed relevant authorities to grant the Latin Patriarch "full and immediate access" to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre so he can "hold services as he wishes".

Israel's police said on Monday that officers had met Cardinal Pizzaballa to work out how to accommodate Easter ceremonies, and that the Holy Fire - the lighting of a flame at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the Saturday before Easter - would be held in a "symbolic, limited format".

The force added: "This co-ordination ensures that freedom of worship is maintained alongside our shared, primary duty: the protection of human life."

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EFFECTIVE FROM FEBRUARY 1, 2023

FEATURES



Fragility and Rule of Law in Nigeria

SEUN ADEKUNLE

Fragility and Rule of Law in Nigeria, based in West Africa, has the largest economy and most populous country in Africa. It has a great amount of natural resources, such as oil, yet it remains one of the poorest countries globally, with an estimated 87 million Nigerians living below the poverty line. There are many reasons for endemic poverty in the region but one of these is the state of the rule of law in Nigeria, in particular, the nature of corruption and violence. These two features exist as persistent structural problems in the region. They undermine development efforts, job creation and service delivery. Poor Nigerians are most affected by these problems as they depend most on security and public institutions. These two issues weaken institutions and efforts to reduce poverty. Here are some of the ways that the state of the rule of law in Nigeria affects poverty.

CORRUPTION AND POVERTY

Nigeria remains one of the most corrupt countries in Africa with a score of 26/100 from Transparency International, an organization dedicated to monitoring corruption. There is poor government accountability. Public institutions routinely suffer from embezzlement, ghost workers and contract fraud.

These practices drain funds that are meant for poverty reduction initiatives such as social welfare and infrastructure projects. Corrupt officials also often divert aid or demand

bribes to release public goods. While there are some anti-poverty programs like N-Power, they often fail to reach the poorest and political favoritism further reduces their impact.

Corruption also worsens access to services. Citizens sometimes have to pay bribes to access health care, school enrollment, land documents or housing support. This inflates the cost of these services and makes them inaccessible to the poorest who need them the most.

Corruption also shapes access to job opportunities as nepotism and bribery influence public sector jobs, scholarships and government contracts. Poor people, lacking money or political connections, are often excluded from these opportunities. This reinforced cycles of inequality and poverty as elites stay empowered while the poor stay locked out. The poor state of the rule of law in Nigeria, as it pertains to corruption, reduces trust in the system and discourages participation in government programs or elections, furthering the cycle of poverty.

VIOLENCE AND POVERTY

Violence in Nigeria, since the fourth republic, has largely been concentrated in the northern and central regions. These regions also experience the highest poverty rates in Nigeria. Several studies have drawn the link between insecurity and deprivation in these regions.

In particular, in the north-east (Borno, Yobe, Adamawa), Boko Haram has terrorized civilians in their attempt to overthrow the government,

leading to mass displacement. Meanwhile, in the north-west (Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto), there is widespread banditry, kidnapping and extortion. Additionally, in the middle belt of the country (Benue, Plateau, Taraba), there are herder-farmer conflicts and communal violence which lie along ethnic and religious lines.

In these regions, their poverty rates range from 60-80%. In contrast, the southern regions, such as Lagos and Anambra, have much lower poverty rates, suggesting a geographic overlap between insecurity and extreme poverty.

While it is likely the case that extreme poverty has led to violence in

these regions, the violence itself has exacerbated poverty and its plight. It affects food production by reducing farming and livestock output and leads to great food insecurity as tens of millions are put at risk.

It also affects education as the destruction of schools and fear leads to dropout and inaccessibility. Likewise, Internally Displaced Persons from the violence, generally lack stable housing, health care and clean water. The weakened rule of law in Nigeria produces great violence which worsens poverty now and makes it more difficult to escape it in the future.

ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVES

There have been some recent promising efforts to tackle corruption. In 2024, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) secured 4,111 criminal convictions and recovered about \$214.5 million USD in looted funds. The establishment of the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPS) has gone a long way to eliminate ghost workers. The launch of the Open Treasury Portal in 2019 has provided public access to federal government expenditures.

These initiatives have had some effect on tackling poverty. Recoveries help plug fiscal gaps for services, although they have limited impact on direct poverty alleviation. The elimination of ghost workers helps free up some salary funds. Transparency tools can build long-term trust and enable advocacy which is crucial in the fight against poverty although they currently remain underused or

inconsistently updated.

SECURITY REFORMS & COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES

Some efforts recently taken to address violence include military offensives such as Lafiya Dole against insurgents. The Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) has increasingly involved itself in local defense. Additionally, the government has initiated peacebuilding and deradicalization programs in Borno and Zamfara and has further emphasized community policing and state security networks.

These efforts have allowed the return of displaced persons in some areas such as in Borno, which goes a long way in tackling poverty. However, poverty reduction is slow due to damaged infrastructure, trauma and loss of livelihoods. Localized success stories exist but are not yet scalable or systemic. However, efforts in bolstering the rule of law in Nigeria goes a long way in facilitating poverty reduction in the country.

LOOKING AHEAD

Nigeria faces complex and varied challenges, with insecurity, poverty, and corruption, but these difficulties are not insurmountable. Recent steps show a growing awareness that change is both urgent and possible. There remains real hope that Nigeria's immense potential can be more fully realized.

Seun is based in Scotch Plains, NJ, USA and focuses on Politics for The Borgen Project.

However, poverty reduction is slow due to damaged infrastructure, trauma and loss of livelihoods. Localized success stories exist but are not yet scalable or systemic

Rhesus incompatibility and issues around infant mortality: Giving every child a fighting chance

GRACE IJEOMA UMEH

It's so sad when a woman bears pregnancy for 9 months and goes into the labour room and comes out without her child! Even more difficult is if it happens not once, not twice, but several times over.

This is not like a miscarriage or spontaneous abortion. She carried 4 pregnancies full term, went into labour, was updated on the dilation of the cervix...let me not be too fast...

She missed her period, did the pregnancy tests, a laboratory confirmed the pregnancies, she often ran home to share the good news with her man, they both celebrated, prayed, other family members joined in worship, then she started the antenatal care, registered in two modern private hospitals with fame for topnotch medical care and all the equipment to boot! She ate nourishing meals, did her routine exercises, carried out all that was required in terms of antenatal care...

She did more ultrasound than the recommended number and never missed routine antenatal care clinics! Each time she was given positive update on fetal progress, and it was obvious, because if the baby kicked, you may just be sitting by her side and feel it!

Everything was "normal," until it wasn't normal anymore! Baby was born, but baby either didn't make it home or managed to live up to the one week of the naming ceremony!

Four good times, my friend and her family suffered this terrible fate and ache! Then people started pointing fingers at all manner of suspicions, from spiritual to supernatural. Witchcraft was also fingered. Household enemies mentioned as culprits. "Village people" said to be fully alert! Only a few said it could be Rhesus incompatibility.

Then...the journalist in me became restless. I went asking questions.

Findings showed the connection is mainly related to Rh disease, where an Rh-negative mother carrying an Rh-positive fetus can develop antibodies, potentially leading to complications in future pregnancies. Historically, this led to higher infant mortality rates, and in some extreme cases, infanticide due to societal pressures or lack of medical understanding.

It's tough when people jump to conclusions. Rh incompatibility can be a factor, but it's crucial to get medical facts straight. I asked her if she consulted a specialist to understand the actual cause?

That should be a step in the right direction, and she is expected to go with her hubby. It is my hope the consultation sheds some light and brings some peace. I also hope she has a good doctor!

But as a journalist, I want to know more, so I went digging.

Rh incompatibility occurs when an Rh-negative mom has an Rh-positive baby, triggering antibody production. This can affect future Rh-positive pregnancies. I asked some key questions: Has she had any prenatal care or testing? Was she given Rh immune globulin?

The current medical incursion the couple has embarked on would determine. As for prenatal care, yes, she's had prenatal care and testing, but has likely not received Rh immune globulin.

Given her history, her doctor might've taken steps to manage the

risk. I asked about antibody titers and fetal monitoring during pregnancy. She received a lot of prenatal care.

Now, back to the issue. Rh incompatibility occurs when an Rh-negative mother carries an Rh-positive fetus, potentially leading to complications in future pregnancies. Here's a breakdown:

What happens: If Rh-positive blood from the fetus enters the mother's bloodstream, her immune system may react and produce antibodies, attacking the fetus's red blood cells in future pregnancies.

Risks: This can cause fetal anemia, jaundice, enlarged liver or spleen, and even heart failure or miscarriage.

Prevention: Rh immune globulin (RhoGAM) injections can prevent antibody production. These are typically given at 28 weeks of pregnancy and within 72 hours after delivery, findings show.

Treatment: If complications arise, treatments include blood transfusions for the fetus or newborn, and monitoring for anemia and jaundice.

Rh incompatibility testing and treatment options. The testing process, treatment procedures: How the testing works, how couples should be more circumspect

RH INCOMPATIBILITY TESTING TYPICALLY INVOLVES:

Blood type screening for both parents Antibody screening for the mother

Monitoring antibody levels (titers) if Rh-negative.

Couples should be circumspect about:

Family planning and future pregnancies

Informing healthcare providers about Rh status

Following up with Rh immune globulin injections as needed

Now, what if it is not Rhesus incompatibility? Other issues can cause infant mortality. Even mothers die while bringing forth babies! Infant mortality rate in Nigeria is a major concern, currently at around 56 deaths per 1,000 live births.

Infant mortality rate is a serious indicator of grey matters in a country's healthcare system. In Nigeria, we've made some progress, but it's still a challenge.

Causes include, Limited access to healthcare, Poor maternal health, Malnutrition, Infectious diseases (malaria, pneumonia, diarrhea) and Birth complications.

There could be solutions and they should be targeted at improving healthcare access and quality, enhancing maternal and child health services, vaccination and immunization programs, nutrition education and support and Community-based interventions.

PREVENTABLE CHILDHOOD DEATHS

- Many deaths are preventable with simple interventions like:

- Vaccines
- Proper nutrition
- Clean water and sanitation
- Skilled birth attendants

On the preventable interventions:

Vaccines: Routine immunization can prevent diseases like measles, polio, and tetanus, significantly reducing child mortality.

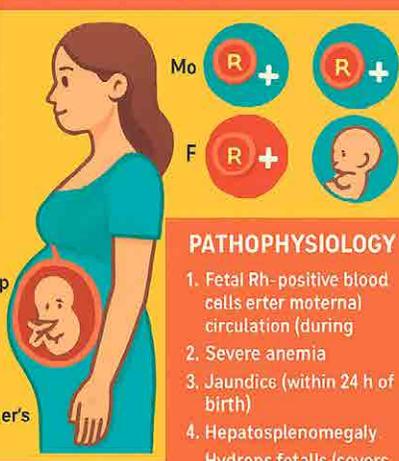
Proper nutrition: Adequate breast-

Rh INCOMPATIBILITY

(MediNurse Update)

DEFINITION

Rh incompatibility is condition that occurs when a mother who is Rh-negative, carries a baby who is Rh positive system forming antibodies against baby's red blood cells.



CAUSES

- Mother: Rh-negative blood group
- Father: Rh-positive blood group
- Fetus: Rh-positive blood group
- Maternal immune system become sensitized when fetal Rh-positive RBCs enter the mother's bloodstream.

PATHOPHYSIOLOGY

1. Fetal Rh-positive blood cells enter maternal circulation (during)
2. Severe anemia
3. Jaundice (within 24 h of birth)
4. Hepatosplenomegaly. Hydrops fetalis (severe form → edema, ascites, heart failure) Stillbirth (in severe cases)

CLINICAL FEATURES IN THE FETUS/NEWBORN

- Hemolytic disease of the newborn (HDN)
- Severe anemia
- Jaundice (within 24 hours of birth)
- Hepatosplenomegaly
- Hydrops fetalis (in severe form → edema, ascites, heart failure)
- Stillbirth (in severe cases)



COMPLICATIONS

- Severe neonatal jaundice – kernicterus (brain damage)
- Heart failure in fetus
- Intrauterine death

TREATMENT (FOR AFFECTED NEWBORN)

- Phototherapy (for jaundice)
- Exchange transfusion (if severe anemia/jaundice)
- Intrauterine transfusion (in severe fetal anemia)

SUMMARY:

Rh incompatibility is a preventable condition. Early detection and prophylactic anti-D injection to Rh-negative mothers effectively reduce

feeding, complementary feeding, and micronutrient supplementation can prevent malnutrition-related deaths.

- Clean water and sanitation: Access to clean water, hygiene practices, and sanitation facilities can prevent diarrhea and other waterborne diseases.

- Skilled birth attendants: Trained healthcare providers can manage complications during delivery, reducing birth-related deaths.

CAUSES

1. Limited access to healthcare: Many families lack access to quality healthcare facilities, especially in rural areas.

2. Poor maternal health: Unhealthy mothers increase the risk of complications during pregnancy and childbirth.

3. Malnutrition: Inadequate nutrition weakens children's immune systems, making them more vulnerable to diseases.

4. Infectious diseases: Diseases like malaria, pneumonia, and diarrhea are major killers.

5. Birth complications: Lack of skilled birth attendants contributes to high neonatal mortality.

SOLUTIONS

1. Improve healthcare access and quality: Strengthen healthcare infrastructure and train more healthcare workers.

2. Enhance maternal and child health services: Focus on prenatal, delivery, and postnatal care.

3. Vaccination and immunization programs: Increase coverage and awareness about vaccine-preventable diseases.

4. Nutrition education and support:

Promote breastfeeding, proper weaning practices, and nutrient-rich diets.

5. Community-based interventions: Train community health workers to provide basic care and referrals.

PREVENTABLE CHILDHOOD DEATHS

- Simple interventions can save lives:

- Vaccines: Prevent diseases like measles and tetanus.

- Proper nutrition: Reduce malnutrition-related deaths.

- Clean water and sanitation: Prevent diarrhea and other waterborne diseases.

- Skilled birth attendants: Reduce birth complications.

Now, let's start writing the article. What's your preferred tone? Formal, conversational, or something else?

Meta AI: Cool! Let's get started then. Here's a possible opening paragraph:

Infant mortality is a pressing issue in Nigeria, with many children dying before their fifth birthday. But here's the thing: many of these deaths are preventable. Let's dive into the causes, solutions, and simple interventions that can save lives.

So, what are the main culprits behind these preventable deaths? Limited access to healthcare, poor maternal health, malnutrition, infectious diseases, and birth complications top the list. Let's break it down:

- Many families struggle to get quality healthcare, especially in rural areas.

- Unhealthy mothers increase the risk of complications during pregnancy and childbirth.

- Malnutrition weakens kids' im-

mune systems, making them more vulnerable.

- Diseases like malaria, pneumonia, and diarrhea are major killers.

- Birth complications are often linked to lack of skilled attendants.

Limited healthcare access: Rural areas often lack facilities, equipment, and skilled staff.

- Poor maternal health: Issues like anemia, hypertension, and infections increase risks.

- Malnutrition: Inadequate feeding practices and lack of micronutrients weaken immunity.

- Infectious diseases: Malaria, pneumonia, and diarrhea are top killers, often linked to poor sanitation and lack of vaccines.

- Birth complications: Skilled attendants can make a huge difference here.

- Boost healthcare access: Strengthen facilities, equip them, and train more staff.

- Maternal and child health services: Focus on prenatal, delivery, and postnatal care.

- Vaccination drives: Increase coverage for diseases like measles and polio.

- Nutrition support: Promote breastfeeding, proper weaning, and nutrient-rich foods.

- Community health workers: Train them to provide basic care and referrals.

SIMPLE INTERVENTIONS THAT CAN SAVE LIVES:

- Vaccines prevent diseases

- Proper nutrition reduces vulnerability

- Clean water and sanitation prevent diarrhea

- Skilled birth attendants reduce complications

So, what can we do to turn things around? For starters, we need to boost healthcare access. This means strengthening facilities, equipping them properly, and training more staff. We also need to focus on maternal and child health services, from prenatal care to postnatal support. Vaccination drives are another key area – we need to increase coverage for diseases like measles and polio.

Community health workers are game-changers too. They can provide basic care, educate families, and refer serious cases. Plus, promoting breastfeeding and proper nutrition can significantly reduce malnutrition-related deaths. And let's not forget clean water and sanitation – simple things like handwashing and clean drinking water can prevent so many diseases.

Skilled birth attendants are crucial too – they can manage complications during delivery and ensure both mom and baby get the care they need. And vaccines? They're a no-brainer. Routine immunization can prevent diseases like tetanus and measles, which still claim too many lives.

In Nigeria, simple interventions can make a huge difference. For example, ensuring pregnant women have access to quality prenatal care can reduce complications during delivery. And when babies are born, skilled attendants can ensure they get immediate care if needed. Plus, promoting exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months can boost their immunity and overall health.

FEATURE

The meeting point of powers: Achieving the electricity generation target by 2027

MARTHA SOLOMON-DIKE

The "No Electricity, No Vote" issue is a trending topic in Nigeria, with the opposition African Democratic Congress (ADC) telling President Bola Ahmed Tinubu that Nigerians will hold him responsible for his promise of stable electricity supply in the 2027 election if he decides to recontest.

The ADC is referencing a campaign promise made by Tinubu in 2022, where he said, "If I don't give you electricity, don't vote for me." However, some supporters argue that this statement was taken out of context and that Tinubu's promise was more general, covering all his campaign promises.

The reality on the ground is that many Nigerians are still struggling with erratic power supply, with over 90 million people lacking access to electricity, and many more getting just 4-6 hours of power per day. The grid has collapsed 12 times since Tinubu took office, and electricity tariffs have jumped by 240%.

Tinubu has acknowledged the challenges and assured Nigerians that his administration is working to improve the power sector, with plans to inject 1,500MW into the grid. The administration says it is working to improve electricity supply, with plans to inject 1,500MW into the grid and attract \$122bn in investments by 2045. Minister Adebayo Adelabu says they aim to generate 8,000MW by 2027, citing a 40% improvement in power generation since 2023.

Electricity supply is a MAJOR factor for me. I mean, it's like basic necessity, right? If I'm gonna vote for someone, I want them to show me they're serious about fixing this mess. 4-6 hours of power per day is just not cutting it! Shouldn't Tinubu's team be doing more, or is it all about unrealistic expectations?

For real, they need to do MORE! Tinubu's administration needs to show Nigerians tangible progress on electricity. It's like, promises were made, and now it's time to deliver. More investment in infrastructure, better management, and accountability would go a long way. The "No Electricity, No Vote" chant isn't just a slogan; it's a reality check. You may wish to ask, what is the biggest hurdle – politics, funding or execution? I would say it's a combination of politics and execution.

Politics because you have multiple stakeholders (govt agencies, unions, private players) that need to align, and execution because the infrastructure is old and needs serious upgrades. Plus, there's the issue of corruption and mismanagement. Funding is crucial too, but if the plan's not solid, money alone won't fix it.

It's easy to speculate if this is more about willpower or resources?

I'd say it's both, but if I had to pick... willpower. Nigeria's got resources, but execution and follow-through are the issues. If there's genuine commitment to reform and deliver, funds can be mobilized, and technical expertise can be hired. The "will" to tackle corruption, streamline processes, and prioritize the people over politics –



Power Minister Adebayo Adelabu

that's what's lacking.

Can the administration please prioritize the people over politics!

Now that's the million-dollar question! But here are a few ways:

- Transparency: Make budgets, projects, and decisions public. When people see where their money's going, they hold leaders accountable.

- Community engagement: Involve locals in planning and implementation. They know their needs best.

- Accountability mechanisms: Set up independent bodies to monitor progress and penalize failures.

- Prioritize basic needs: Focus on healthcare, education, and infrastructure. When people feel seen, they're more invested.

- Decentralize power: Give states and local governments more autonomy to address specific needs.

But, it's easier said than done, right? Politics often gets in the way. What is the biggest barrier to implementing these, you may wish to ask?

I would say it's entrenched interests and corruption. People in power often prioritize maintaining their position over serving the people. It's hard to give up perks and patronage networks. Plus, there's a lack of trust – citizens doubt if leaders will truly change. It could be more about bad leadership or systemic issues.

Tricky one! I would say it's a vicious cycle – bad leadership perpetuates systemic issues, and systemic issues enable bad leadership. Entrenched corruption and weak institutions create an environment where leaders prioritize self-interest. Fixing it requires breaking that cycle, maybe through strong institutions, transparency, and citizen pressure.

What is therefore the tipping point for change in Nigeria, you may be compelled to ask again...

Hmm, the tipping point could be a combination of factors:

- Youth mobilization: Gen Z is fed up, educated, and connected – they could drive change.

- Economic pressure: When hardship bites hard enough, people might demand accountability.

- Leadership shift: A new generation of leaders who truly care could break the cycle.

- Tech-driven transparency: Tools like blockchain and data platforms could expose corruption and force action.

But what's often missing is sustained collective action. It is important to consider the role of citizens in pushing for this change.

CITIZENS ARE KEY! THEY'RE THE ONES WHO CAN:

- Hold leaders accountable: Vote, protest peacefully, and demand answers.

- Drive conversations: Social media, town halls, and community meetings amplify issues.

- Support transparency: Demand data and monitor projects.

- Build coalitions: Unite across tribes, religions, and interests for a common goal.

But it's tough – apathy, fear, and division can hinder progress. Survival and self-interest! When citizens see direct benefits or threats, they mobilize. Think:

- Economic hardship: Hunger and joblessness can spark protests.

- Injustice: When people feel personally targeted or see others being wronged.

- Opportunity: Access to education or resources can drive collective action.

But sustained motivation needs a sense of hope – believing change is possible. What drives you to care about issues like electricity or governance?

Did the President promise electricity before election? The promise! So it's about holding him to his word. Fair enough! When leaders make big promises and don't deliver, it feels like a betrayal. But Tinubu's administration can still turn it around before 2027.

KEY INITIATIVES INCLUDE:

- Grid upgrades: Expanding trans-

- mission capacity and adding new substations

- Renewable energy: Incorporating solar, wind, and hydro power

- Investment: Attracting \$2.2bn in fresh investments and targeting \$122bn by 2045

- Reforms: Decentralizing the power sector and activating state electricity markets

Adelabu assured Nigerians of uninterrupted electricity by 2027, but challenges like vandalism, infrastructure decay, and funding keep being in the way.

Achieving 8,000MW by 2027 faces several hurdles:

- Infrastructure decay: Ageing transmission and distribution networks lead to significant power losses.

- Vandalism: Attacks on transmission towers and infrastructure disrupt power supply.

- Liquidity crisis: The sector's N4 trillion debt and unfunded subsidies hinder investments.

- Distribution inefficiencies: Poor revenue collection and metering issues weaken financial stability.

- Gas supply disruptions: Pipeline issues and pricing disputes affect power generation.

Minister Adebayo Adelabu assured that with ongoing reforms and investments, including a \$122bn plan, Nigeria can overcome these challenges.

The Nigerian government plans to utilize the \$122bn investment to overhaul the power sector, focusing on:

- Diversifying energy sources: Incorporating hydrogen, solar, wind, and nuclear power

- Upgrading transmission and distribution infrastructure: Adding 700MW to transmission capacity and constructing super grids

- Enhancing sector governance: Implementing the Electricity Act 2023 and National Integrated Electricity Policy

- Increasing access: Adding 3.45 million meters nationwide and improving revenue collection.

The target is to generate 8,000MW by 2027, with plans to reach 30GW by 2030. Minister Adebayo Adelabu assures that with sustained efforts, the 8,000MW target is achievable.

The Nigerian government plans to address the liquidity crisis in the power sector through several initiatives:

- Debt Refinancing: The government has approved a N4 trillion (\$2.61 billion) debt refinancing plan to settle outstanding debts owed to power generating companies and gas suppliers, aiming to improve liquidity and attract investments.

- Bond Issuance: The government will issue bonds through the Debt Management Office to ease immediate pressure and restore confidence in the electricity market.

- Tariff Adjustments: A 35% reduction in subsidies and tariff adjustments for urban consumers are expected to save over N1.1 trillion annually, promoting financial sustainability.

- Metering Initiatives: The Presidential Metering Initiative aims to deploy 5 million smart meters, improving revenue assurance and reducing estimated billing.

- Regulatory Reforms: The Electricity Act 2023 promotes decentralization, allowing states to regulate intra-state electricity activities, and introduces bilateral trading to enhance market competition.

These measures aim to stabilize the power sector, attract investments, and improve electricity supply.

The timeline for implementing the \$122bn investment plan is between 2024 and 2045, a 21-year period. The plan aims to diversify energy sources, reduce dependence on the national grid, and enhance stability and sustainability. Key initiatives include:

- 2024-2028: \$192m allocated to boost transmission capacity

- 2026: Expected improvements in sector liquidity, regulatory framework, and renewable energy integration.

- 2027: Target to generate 8,000MW of electricity

- 2030: Gas production target of 12bcf/day

- 2045: Completion of the investment plan

The plan is structured across eight chapters, addressing critical challenges and outlining a comprehensive framework for sector transformation.

Key question asked by stakeholders is: Will the Electricity Act 2023 help resolve distribution inefficiencies?

The Electricity Act 2023 is a game-changer! It addresses distribution inefficiencies by:

- Decentralizing power: States can now regulate intra-state electricity, allowing for tailored solutions.

- Promoting competition: Bilateral trading and private sector participation can improve efficiency.

- Enhancing revenue collection: Metering initiatives and clear tariffs can reduce losses.

- Encouraging investment: Clear frameworks attract investors to the sector.

However, success depends on implementation, tackling corruption, and ensuring transparency. What do you think – will states effectively leverage this Act?

Sports

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

Derby boost for Galatasaray as pundit backs Osimhen's timely return

EDWARD OSEGHE

Turkish football analyst Levent Tüzemen has expressed strong confidence that Victor Osimhen



VICTOR OSIMHEN

will recover in time to feature in Galatasaray's high-stakes Intercontinental Derby against rivals Fenerbahçe on April 26, provided there are no unexpected complications.

Osimhen sustained a fractured forearm during an aerial challenge with Liverpool defender Ibrahima Konaté in Galatasaray's UEFA Champions League clash at Anfield on March 18. The injury initially cast serious doubt over his availability for the crucial domestic encounter.

The Super Eagles forward subsequently underwent a successful surgical procedure at the Maslak Acibadem Hospital, carried out by Galatasaray's team physician, Yener İnce. Early medical assessments projected a recovery period of between five and six weeks.

Despite the uncertainty, Tüzemen remains optimistic

about the striker's return, citing both modern medical advancements and confidence in the club's medical team.

Speaking in remarks published by Haber Sarikirmizi, the veteran commentator stated: "Unless something unexpected happens, Osimhen will be in the starting eleven for the Fenerbahçe match.

"There is an old Turkish saying that a broken bone heals in proportion to a person's age. Taking that into account, alongside today's medical technology and the expertise of Galatasaray's doctor, Yener İnce, I believe he will be ready for the derby."



BENJAMIN FREDRICK

Super Eagles Fredrick returns to training after injury layoff

EDWARD OSEGHE

Super Eagles youngster Benjamin Fredrick has taken a significant step toward full recovery after returning to on-grass training following a lengthy spell on the sidelines due to a knee injury.

The promising central defender, currently on loan at Belgian outfit F.C.V. Dender EH from Premier League side Brentford, has been out of action since November 2025. He sustained the injury during a training session, forcing him into an extended rehabilitation

period.

Fredrick's absence was a notable setback, as it ruled him out of Nigeria's campaign at the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations in Morocco, where the Super Eagles eventually finished third.

Encouragingly, the young defender has now resumed training on the pitch under carefully managed conditions, signaling progress in his rehabilitation. Sources indicate that his return is being handled through a structured recovery programme expected to span several weeks, with a focus on regaining full match fitness.

Kano Pillars crushed in Bayelsa; Remo Stars stand tall, Oga Boys escape, Rivers United edge past Kun Khalifat

As the Nigeria Premier Football League season edges toward its conclusion, the fiercest contests have shifted to the bottom of the table, where survival has become the ultimate prize. Nearly ten teams remain locked in a tense relegation scrap, with safety far from guaranteed until the final day—adding a gripping twist to the campaign.

In a season defined by unpredictability, no fewer than four former champions are entangled in the survival fight with just six matches left. Remo Stars F.C., buoyed by last weekend's 3-1 victory over fellow strugglers Kwara United F.C., knew the importance of avoiding defeat in Maiduguri. They fell behind early to Yusuf Adewale's 7th-minute strike, but talisman Victor Mbaoma restored parity in the 36th minute, ensuring they left with a valuable point.

In Aba, it was a contest befitting A Tale of Two Cities—a clash of contrasting ambitions. Enyimba F.C. were desperate to pull clear of the relegation zone, while Abia Warriors F.C. sought to strengthen their continental push. The former champions emerged 2-1 victors in a nervy encounter. Chidera Michael gave Enyimba the lead in the 60th minute, before Emeka Obi-

oma equalised late on. However, Chidera held his nerve to convert a decisive 90th-minute penalty and secure all three points.

At the Lekan Salami Stadium, Shooting Stars S.C. delivered a commanding 3-1 victory over title-chasing Enugu Rangers. Sodiq Ibrahim opened the scoring in the 50th minute, Chidiebere Nwobodo equalised, but goals from Desmond Ojietefian and Adams Mustapha sealed an emphatic win for the Oluoyole Warriors.



KANO PILLARS VS BAYELSA

CAF considering Africa Cup of Nations expansion to 28 teams

Confederation of African Football (CAF) President Patrice Motsepe has said that the Africa Cup of Nations could be expanded

from 24 to 28 teams.

Motsepe made the remarks at a press conference following a CAF executive committee meeting, but did not specify

how the tournament structure would change or when the expansion might take effect.

The Africa Cup of Nations was expanded from 16 to 24 teams in 2019.

Motsepe also confirmed that the 2027 tournament will go ahead as planned in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

After an additional edition in 2028, the competition is expected to move to a four-year cycle.

He added that CAF plans to launch a new national league competition in 2029, to be played annually, with a 16-team finals tournament staged every two years.



PATRICE MOTSEPE

International friendly: Super Eagles aim for victory against Jordan's Al-Nashama

Following their 2-1 victory over Iran in Antalya on Friday, Head Coach Eric Chelle is confident the Super Eagles of Nigeria will pluck another win when they confront their Jordanian counterparts in another international friendly match in the same Turkish town on Tuesday.

Goals by Moses Simon, early

in the first half, and Akor Adams, early in the second period, lifted the Eagles above Team Melli at the Corendon Airlines Park on Friday evening.

Despite the departures from the camp of defenders Semi Ajayi and Bruno Onyemaechi (whose wife was delivered of a baby) Chelle is looking ahead to win with the 21 players

available to take on the emerging Asian power. The Franco-Malian and his assistants again drilled the players in a training session on Monday evening.

FIFA World Cup-bound Jordan are no longer the paperweights they used to be considered as, with the squad having evolved greatly, and despite

sitting at 64th in the current FIFA ranking, has lost only one of their last five matches.

That loss was a narrow 2-3 reverse to 2022 FIFA World Cup semi-finalists Morocco.

On the other hand, Al-Nashama have beaten Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Egypt, and drew 2-2 with Costa Rica in a pulsating encounter on Friday.

NBBF President Kida hails Tinubu's leadership as President marks 74th birthday

The President of the Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF), Engr. Ahmed Musa Kida, has celebrated President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on the occasion of his 74th birthday, commending his leadership style and dedication to Nigeria's progress, reports Puyaka.net.

In his congratulatory message, Kida praised the administration's reform-driven agenda, describing it as bold and necessary for repositioning the nation's economy and rebuilding trust in key sectors.

He emphasized the growing importance of sports in national development, noting that the current government's attention to the sector could unlock opportunities

for youth empowerment, national cohesion, and economic advancement. According to him, basketball stands to gain significantly from policies designed to harness Nigeria's sporting potential.

Kida also pointed out that the President's policies are laying the groundwork for sustainable development, urging stakeholders within the sports industry to key into the broader vision for national transformation.

"Your leadership continues to inspire optimism across various sectors, including sports. The direction you have set is creating a pathway for a more organized and successful sporting environment," he stated.



ENGR. AHMED MUSA KIDA

Sports

The Nigerian
Observer
...that the people may know

Okoye ruled out of Jordan clash as Eagles face goalkeeping dilemma today

EDWARD OSEGHE

Maduka Okoye has been sidelined ahead of Nigeria's upcoming international friendly



MADUKA OKOYE

against Jordan after sustaining an injury in training.

The Super Eagles' media officer, Promise Efoghe, confirmed on Monday that the Udinese shot-stopper picked up a thigh

knock during preparations for the encounter, ruling him out of contention for the fixture.

Okoye had featured prominently in Nigeria's 2-1 victory over Iran last Friday, marking a notable return to the national team following his absence from the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON). His recall came amid the exclusion of Stanley Nwabali, who remains unattached at club level.

With Okoye unavailable, head coach Eric Chelle must now choose between Adebayo Adelaye and Francis Uzoho to man the posts against the Jordanians.

The Eagles will also be without defender Semi Ajayi, who is nursing an injury, while Bru-

no Onyemaechi has departed the team's camp to attend to family matters after the birth of his first child.

Nigeria will take on Jordan today in Antalya, Turkey, with kick-off scheduled for 6:30 pm Nigerian time.

Historically, both nations have met twice at senior level. Nigeria secured a 2-0 win in their first meeting during the LG Cup in Lagos in April 2004, thanks to goals from Emeka Akueme and Chukwudi Nworgu.

However, Jordan edged the most recent encounter, claiming a 1-0 victory via a Hatem Aqel penalty in a friendly match in Amman in October 2013.



VICTOR OSIMHEN

Osimhen refused discharge from hospital after surgery

Victor Osimhen has reportedly delayed his discharge from hospital following surgery, choosing instead to remain under medical supervision in a bid to speed up his recovery.

The Galatasaray forward underwent an operation on his arm last Monday after sustaining an injury earlier in the month. Initial reports had indicated that he would be discharged the following day, but that plan was later changed at the player's request.

According to Turkish journalist Haluk Yürekli, Osimhen personally asked club officials to allow him stay longer in the hospital so he could receive continued care and return to action as quickly as possible.

Quoting the journalist, Osimhen made it clear he preferred to remain under close medical observation rather than leave immediately after the procedure. His request was granted, with strict measures reportedly put in place around his recovery process.

A security guard was said to have been stationed outside his hospital room, limiting access as part of efforts to ensure a controlled recovery environment. Even close family members were not allowed to visit during that period, highlighting the level of caution surrounding his rehabilitation.

He has since been discharged after completing the extended stay, with attention now shifting to his recovery timeline and eventual return to competitive football.

Rivers Whales Triumph in first national Teqball league

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Rivers Whales Teqball team, weekend, emerged victorious in the maiden edition of the National Teqball League held at the indoor hall of Abia Sports Club.

Team Rivers clinched two gold medals and one bronze out of the five categories of events they featured.

Gladys Abasi of Rivers State defeated Rejoice Jatau of Delta State 2-1 to win the team's first gold medal in the Women's Singles event.

In the Mix Doubles event, the duo of Gladys and Musa Joshua recorded a convincing 2-0 victory over Cornelius Ezeigbo and Ashara Loris of Imo State to give Team Rivers its second gold medal.

Rivers' Joshua and Efosa Ebosa had earlier secured a bronze medal for the state after beating Ikoko Andrew and Martins Agu 2-0 in the Men's Doubles' third place match.

Speaking after the victorious outing, the Chairman of Rivers State Teqball Association (RIVTEQ), Mr. Halim Adebo, attributed the team's success to the collective efforts of every member of the association.

Halim Zaccab also acknowledged the financial support of RIVTEQ's Patron, Ambassador Paul Ngwaba and Vice Chairman, Mr. Sunday Ehi-

men Agbonighale which has helped in boosting the morale of the athletes.

Mr. Halim thanked the governor of Rivers State, Sir Siminalayi Fubara for providing the team with the enabling environment to train.

He however, called for more support from the Rivers State government, to further strengthen the State's representatives as one of the heavyweights in the game of Teqball in Nigeria.



RIVERS WHALES TEQBALL TEAM

NSC DG, Hon. Bukola Olopade Celebrates President Bola Ahmed Tinubu at 74

The National Sports Commission (NSC) Director General, Hon. Bukola Olopade heartily congratulates His Excellency, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, on the occasion of his 74th birthday.

President Tinubu, continues

to demonstrate unquestionable commitment to national development and the advancement of Nigeria's global standing since assuming office as the nation's President in 2023.

Hon. Olopade described the President as a visionary leader whose reforms and bold decisions are laying the foundation

for a stronger and more prosperous Nigeria.

"On behalf of the Nigerian sports community, we celebrate a statesman whose leadership continues to inspire confidence and hope. President Tinubu's dedication to nation-building and his support for youth and sports development remain invaluable."

"We wish him continued strength, wisdom, and good health as he steers Nigeria towards greater heights," Hon. Olopade stated.

"Mr. President's life has been one of service, resilience, and vision. As he celebrates 74 years, we acknowledge his steadfast commitment to transforming Nigeria across sectors, including sports development."



HON. BUKOLA OLOPADE AND PRESIDENT BOLA TINUBU

5th NCF Invitational Cricket Tournament: Nigeria stuns Rwanda to win Patricia Kambarami Cup

Nigeria put up a rare sporting feat in the final of the 5th NCF Invitational Cricket Tournament when her women turned the table against high-flying Rwandan women in a dramatic fashion to record a slim but significant 9-run victory in the final to win the Patricia Kambarami Cup at the Tafawa Balewa Square Cricket Oval, Lagos on Saturday.

Nigeria won the toss and elect-

ed to bat first as expected, hoping to set a decent total worth defending. The early overs were plagued with dot balls and surprisingly a maiden 4th over, as Nigeria never really got going. After 6 overs of batting power play, Nigeria Women were on 27 runs for the loss of 1 wicket. Esther Sandy was introduced, providing the required spark with a couple of boundaries to get Nigeria back on track.

Ester Sandy was run out after

contributing 26 runs off 28 balls. Captain Lucky Piety was introduced and she scored a couple of boundaries but was caught out for 17 runs off 15 balls in 13.3 overs with Nigeria on 62 runs for the loss of 2 wickets.

From then, the middle order collapsed and Nigeria could not manage a decent partnership, losing the next 7 wickets for a combined 18 runs to finish with a total of just 80 runs all out in 20 overs.

Rwanda captain, Marie Diane Bimenyimana took a hat-trick of wickets, increasing her total wickets for the tournament to 14 and leading the log.

In the second innings, Nigeria opening bowlers were tidy on the lines, giving nothing away in the first 2 overs to restrict Rwanda to just 3 runs. Rwanda stayed patient, scoring the first boundary in the 3rd over to finish with 7 runs.

Team Edo begins 3rd National Para Games on impressive note in Abuja

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

As the ongoing 3rd National Para Games, 'Abuja 2026' enters its day three of competition, Team Edo has harvested four gold medals to match their impressive performance so far.

Team Edo secured the four gold medals in para Table Tennis with Ivie Edogawerie Peculiar and Blessing Aiwekhoe leading the charge.

Ivie Peculiar Edogawerie delivered a brilliantly, clinching 2 Gold in the women open singles and Class 10 women singles respectively while Blessing Aiwekhoe also posted outstanding result securing

gold in the Class 5 women singles and Mixed doubles event together with Olowe

Ada Okungbowa won Bronze medal in the men single class 5 just as Kazeem Adejunye won Bronze also in the men class 4 category.

Edo state Sports Commission sent 90 man Team, participating in 10 sports at the 2026 3rd National Para Games holding in Abuja.

The ten sports team Edo is featuring include. Para Athletics, Para Swimming, Para Badminton, Para Cycling, Para Canoeing and Para Karate. Others include: Para powerlifting, Para table Tennis, Para Taekwondo, Para Wheelchair Tennis.



EDO PARA WHEELCHAIR TENNIS TEAM

Tuchel confirms genuine injuries for Rice, Saka after England withdrawal

EDWARD OSEGHE

England head coach Thomas Tuchel has allayed doubts surrounding the withdrawal of Arsenal stars Declan Rice and Bukayo Saka from national team duties, confirming that both players are indeed carrying injuries.



THOMAS TUCHEL, DECLAN RICE AND BUKAYO SAKA

Their absence adds to Arsenal's growing concerns, with a number of players reportedly pulling out of international assignments over the weekend.

Rice and Saka have since returned to Arsenal's London Colney base to continue recovery ahead of Saturday's FA Cup clash against Southampton. The duo were initially part of

a group of 11 England players granted extended rest, which ruled them out of Friday's 1-1 draw against Uruguay.

However, after undergoing further medical evaluations on Saturday, both players were deemed unfit to continue and subsequently released from the squad prior to the upcoming friendly against Japan.

Amid speculation that Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta may have influenced the withdrawals as a precautionary measure, Tuchel dismissed such claims, insisting the decisions were purely medical.

"Both players felt discomfort during assessment, so it simply did not make sense to take any risks.

"As a coach, I rely on the medical team's advice. After evaluation, it was clear neither player was in a position to fea-

ture," Tuchel said.

Tuchel emphasised that the decision was made with the players' long-term fitness in mind.

"They were eager to play, but we had to be responsible. If this were the final game of the season, perhaps we might have handled it differently, but at this stage, risking further injury was not an option," he explained.

The German tactician admitted his disappointment at losing key players but praised their commitment to the squad.

"I'm disappointed because we want everyone available and in good condition, but I cannot fault the players. They showed a strong desire to be involved, and some even began treatment here, which reflects their dedication," he added.



JANNIK SINNER

Sinner beats Lehecka to win Miami Open, completes rare 'Sunshine Double'

EDWARD OSEGHE

World number two Jannik Sinner defeated Jiri Lehecka 6-4, 6-4 to claim his second Miami Open title, capping an outstanding run that also saw him win at Indian Wells.

The Italian overcame multiple rain delays before and during the final to complete the prestigious "Sunshine Double," becoming the first man since Roger Federer in 2017 to win both tournaments in the same season—and the first to achieve the feat without dropping a set.

Sinner's victory continues a dominant stretch, marking his third consecutive ATP Masters 1000 title following his triumph in Paris last year. He returned to Miami in style after missing the previous edition due to a three-

month doping suspension, having won the tournament in 2024.

The match was heavily disrupted by weather, with an initial delay of over an hour and another 90-minute stoppage after Sinner had taken the opening set. However, he remained composed throughout, delivering a clinical performance.

Sinner's serve proved decisive as he fired 10 aces and won 33 of 36 points on his first serve. His return game was equally sharp, earning him an early break in the first set and ultimately control of the contest.

Lehecka, playing in his first Masters 1000 final, showed resilience by saving several break points and pushing Sinner in both sets. However, the Czech was unable to prevent a decisive break late in the second set, allowing Sinner to serve out the match comfortably.

Okwaraji U-16 championship set to unearth future Eagles

Bukola Olopade, Director-General of the National Sports Commission (NSC), says the FirstBank Sam Okwaraji U-16 Championship will discover talents for Nigeria's U-17 World Cup team.

Olopade spoke at the unveiling of the maiden Memoir Cup at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium on Monday.

The event, endorsed by the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), Nigeria School Sports Federation (NSSF), NSC and Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN), was held in Abuja.

The championship, organised by the Samuel Okwaraji Foundation, promotes patriotism, education and youth development through football.

Samuel Okwaraji, born May 19, 1964, was an international footballer and lawyer with a master's degree in international law.

He died on Aug. 12, 1989, after collapsing during a World Cup qualifier against Angola in Lagos.

The championship seeks to immortalise his legacy and nurture disciplined young footballers nationwide.

Olopade praised Osita Izu-naso for sustaining Okwaraji's legacy through the foundation.

"Okwaraji's legacy transcends generations and inspires unity, patriotism and sacrifice among young Nigerians," he said.

He commended reforms at the National Institute for Sports, aligned with NSC's vi-

sion and President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda.

"For the first time, sports is recognised as a major GDP contributor under President Tinubu's RHINSE initiative to transform the sports industry.

"This event will impact millions of youths across the country," Olopade said.

He urged corporate organisations to emulate FirstBank's support for grassroots sports development.



BUKOLA OLOPADE, DG, NSC

Calvin Bassey set for April return after missing Nigeria friendlies

Calvin Bassey is expected to return to action for Fulham FC on April 11 after missing Nigeria's March international friendlies due to a back injury, offering a timely boost for both club and country.

The defender had initially been

included in Nigeria's squad for matches against Iran and Jordan but withdrew shortly before the fixtures, prompting concern given his importance to the national team. His absence came as a surprise, having completed the full 90 minutes in Fulham's 3-1 Premier

League victory over Burnley prior to the international break.

Medical assessments have since indicated that the injury is not serious. Bassey is expected to resume full training in early April and return to match action shortly thereafter, limiting his absence to the recent international window.

In his absence, Nigeria head coach Eric Chelle called up Chibuike Nwaiwu to provide defensive cover, ensuring continuity within the squad while offering an opportunity for other players to stake their claim.

Bassey's anticipated return comes at a crucial stage of the season for Fulham. With the club out of the FA Cup and no immediate fixtures following the international break, the recovery period has allowed him adequate time to regain fitness.



CALVIN BASSEY

Aruna faces tough draw as Africa targets historic ITTF World Cup feat

Africa's table tennis trailblazer, Quadri Aruna, has been handed a challenging draw as he leads the continent's charge at the 2026 ITTF World Cup in Macao, China, from March 30 to April 5, 2026.

This year's edition carries added significance as the International Table Tennis Federation marks its centenary,

with 48 men's and 48 women's singles players vying for the prestigious Evans and Hammarlund Cups.

Aruna, the only African ever to reach the quarterfinals of the World Cup—achieved in 2014 in Düsseldorf, Germany, a run that also earned him the ITTF World Player of the Year award—will face Croatia's Tomislav Pucar and Japan's

Sora Matsushima in Group 6. His campaign begins on Monday, March 30, against Pucar.

Other African contenders also face stern tests. Egyptian champion Omar Assar is drawn in Group 5 alongside Algeria's Mehdi Bouloussa and Chinese Taipei's Lin Jun-Yu. Algeria's Stephane Ouache, making his debut, will battle France's Simon Gauzy and Chi-

na's Wen Ruibo in Group 15.

In the women's draw, African champion Hana Goda aims to surpass her 2025 last-16 finish, facing Chinese Taipei's Cheng I-Ching and Macao's Leong On Na in Group 14.

Former champion Dina Meshref has a daunting task against world No. 1 Sun Ying-sha of China and Lin Yu-Jhun of Chinese Taipei in Group 1.

NPFL: Ikorodu City edge Warri Wolves in 4-3 goals thriller

Ikorodu City FC survived a late scare from Warri Wolves FC to secure a thrilling 4-3 win in NPFL Match Day 32.

The pulsating encounter took place on Sunday at Mobolaji Johnson Arena, Onikan, Lagos.

Hosts, nicknamed Oga Boys, raced into a 2-0 first-half lead before the visitors mounted a spirited comeback.

Abayomi Ayodeji opened scoring in the 8th minute, nutmegging two defenders before a composed finish.

Joseph Arumala doubled the lead in the 25th minute, heading in his 11th goal from Tosin Oyedokun's corner.

Warri Wolves responded immediately as Ewvurhurhoma Igbunu reduced deficit in the 26th minute with a fine finish.

Ikorodu City restored two-goal cushion before half-time via an own goal after defensive error from Ayodeji's effort.

Visitors pulled another back in the 53rd minute, Igbunu converting a penalty after a foul in the box.

Captain Tosin Oyedokun restored control, finishing a fine move to make it 4-2 in the 54th minute.

Warri Wolves pressed late and scored in stoppage time, Igbunu completing his hat-trick in the 94th minute.

Coach Bright Ozadegbe praised his side's resilience, saying: "It was nervy, but the players showed determination."

Ikorodu City remain third on the NPFL table with 52 points from 32 matches.



IKORODU CITY FC CELEBRATE

FEATURE

APC and the drum beats of unity



From left: Governors Monday Okpebholo of Edo, Siminalayi Fubara of Rivers, Douye Diri of Bayelsa, Bassey Otu of Cross River, Umo Eno of Akwa Ibom, and Sheriff Oborewori of Delta.

DR. PATRICK AKHERE EBOJELE

When President Bola Ahmed Tinubu addressed thousands of delegates at Eagle Square, Abuja, on Friday, March 27, 2026, during the All Progressives Congress (APC) 4th Elective National Convention, he distilled his message into a single, commanding theme: “Unity in Progress: Consolidating the Renewed Hope Agenda.”

It was more than a slogan—it was a declaration of political intent and a pointed warning to party members tempted to elevate personal ambition above collective purpose.

“Our greatest strength has never been in our size or numbers, but in our unity,” the President said. He cautioned that political parties do not only fail at the ballot box; they falter when ego overrides ideology and when individual ambition displaces collective discipline. His message was unequivocal: the convention must signal to Nigerians and the world that the APC remains strong, united, focused, and future-ready.

Notably, that message had already found a deliberate echo two days earlier—not in Abuja, but in Asaba, Delta State. There, Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, addressed South-South APC leaders at

the party’s Zonal Congress, striking the same chord with clarity and conviction.

At the congress, Okpebholo framed the gathering as more than a routine party exercise. It was a strategic platform to entrench unity as a regional imperative ahead of the 2027 elections.

“A region that speaks with one voice cannot be ignored,” the governor told delegates. He argued that a divided South-South would weaken its influence within the APC’s national structure, reduce its bargaining power with the federal government, and ultimately shortchange the people it serves.

He described the peaceful, consensus-driven emergence of a new Zonal Executive Committee as evidence of a maturing party—one that has moved beyond internal divisions and personal rivalries that once threatened its cohesion. In his view, the orderly congress was not just an administrative milestone but proof that the South-South APC now possesses the discipline required for effective governance.

The alignment between Tinubu and Okpebholo is both clear and significant. From different platforms, both leaders advanced the same argument: that the APC was conceived

not as a vehicle for individual political advancement, but as a durable instrument for national and regional transformation.

In Abuja, Tinubu reaffirmed the party’s founding vision—to build a Nigeria where governance works, institutions function, opportunities expand, security improves, poverty declines, and citizens can live with dignity and hope.

In Asaba, Okpebholo localized that vision, arguing that coordinated leadership across the South-South would yield tangible benefits—stronger policy coherence, improved investment prospects, and faster infrastructure delivery.

Both leaders also emphasized that unity must translate into results. Without measurable impact, unity becomes an empty promise. The real test, they stressed, lies in how governance improves the daily lives of citizens.

Their convergence was particularly evident on grassroots engagement. Both identified the ward and community levels as the decisive battleground for the APC’s 2027 electoral strategy.

Okpebholo was direct: bridging the gap between party leadership and ordinary citizens remains an urgent priority in the South-South. He stressed

that this requires sustained, meaningful engagement—not occasional campaign appearances, but a consistent presence within local communities.

From Eagle Square, Tinubu reinforced this by calling on young Nigerians to take a more active role in shaping the country’s future. He emphasized the need to expand youth participation within the party—not as symbolic inclusion, but as genuine involvement in decision-making.

Taken together, their messages outline a coherent strategy: the APC’s path to 2027 runs through its grassroots base, and its leadership is aligned on that reality.

Tinubu further strengthened his unity message by highlighting key achievements under the Renewed Hope Agenda. He pointed to declining inflation, sustained economic expansion, a surging stock market, and a heavily oversubscribed Eurobond issuance as indicators of economic progress. He also acknowledged ongoing challenges in the power sector, outlining plans for the proposed Grid Asset Management Company (GAMCO) to boost electricity supply.

Okpebholo, in parallel, anchored his argument in practical outcomes. A united South-South, he maintained, would be better positioned to attract investment, leverage federal

policies, and accelerate development. In his framing, unity is not an end in itself, but a necessary foundation for progress.

The Asaba congress provided institutional backing to this vision. Its outcomes gave structure to the rhetoric of unity and demonstrated the region’s readiness to align with the broader direction set at the national level.

What emerged from Asaba and Abuja was not coincidence—it was coordination. A President and a governor, operating from different levels of authority, but advancing a shared political strategy.

Tinubu’s directive was clear: the APC must emerge from every internal contest as one cohesive force, guided by discipline and shared purpose. Okpebholo, days earlier, had already shown that the South-South is prepared to lead by example.

The message is unmistakable. From Abuja to the Niger Delta, the call for unity is growing louder—and the APC’s leadership is ensuring it resonates across every ward, community, and constituency.

Dr. Patrick Akhere Ebojele, is the Chief Press Secretary to Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo