

# ABUJA Rising fuel, energy costs drive Nigeria's inflation —Experts

Economic experts have identified rising fuel and energy costs as the primary drivers of the latest increase in inflation in Nigeria. The experts spoke to newsmen in Abuja on Sunday.

They said higher petrol and diesel prices had triggered increases in transport fares, logistics costs and the general distribution of goods across the country.

Prof. Ken Ife, a Development

Economist, attributed Nigeria's recent uptick in inflation to rising energy costs and structural inefficiencies in the oil and gas sector, calling for urgent policy actions to stabilise prices.

Ife, who is also a public policy analyst, said Nigeria's inflation rate, which rose slightly to 15.38 percent in March after 12 consecutive months of decline, was largely driven by increases

in fuel and energy prices.

According to him, energy remains a critical driver of inflation due to its central role in transportation, production, and distribution.

"When energy prices go up, petrol and diesel prices rise, and these drive the entire transportation system.

"The cost of moving food, goods and people increases,

and that translates directly into higher prices across all sectors.

"This may likely be worse on a month-on-month basis. You will see month-on-month inflation going dramatically up."

He said that rising gas prices, which are benchmarked internationally, also contribute to higher electricity tariffs and production costs.

"As gas prices increase, the

cost of power generation rises, and consumers feel it in their electricity bills.

"Manufacturers also face higher costs due to increased energy and logistics expenses, leading to general price increase," he said

The professor said that while global factors such as tensions in the Middle East may influence energy prices, Nigeria's situation was worsened by do-

mestic structural challenges.

He criticised the handling of crude oil allocation, saying that local refining capacity was not being prioritised as required by law.

Ife referenced the operations of the Dangote refinery, stating that it was not receiving adequate crude supply for op-

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# The Nigerian Observer



...that the people may know

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PUBLISHED SINCE MAY 29, 1968

VOL. 47, NO. 1,245

MONDAY 20TH APRIL, 2026.

**NGX investors gain N8.66trn as market rallies on trading surge** —Pg 5

# SSANU threatens strike over delay in FG renegotiation talks

● **as FCT teachers begin indefinite strike today**

ABUJA

The Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) has threatened to embark on an indefinite nationwide strike as the April 30 deadline for the conclusion of its renegotiation with the Federal Government draws near.

The union's National Pres-

ident, Mr Muhammad Ibrahim, disclosed this in a communiqué issued at the end of a Special National Executive Council (NEC) meeting held on Sunday in Abuja.

SSANU had, on March 30, issued the Federal Government a 30-day ultimatum to resolve lingering welfare concerns and conclude agreements reached

with university-based unions.

Ibrahim, who also serves as Chairman of the Joint Action Committee (JAC) of SSANU and the Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Associated Institutions (NASU), said the renegotiation process remains ongoing and has yet to be concluded.

He expressed concern over

the delay in finalising discussions and signing agreements, reaffirming NEC's position that the Federal Government must conclude negotiations within the April 1 to April 30 window earlier communicated by the union.

According to him, failure to meet the deadline would trigger a comprehensive industrial action.

"Should the Federal Government fail to conclude the renegotiation process and sign

the agreements within the stated period, SSANU will have no alternative but, in conjunction with NASU, to commence an indefinite, comprehensive and total industrial action," he said.

The union leader urged members across all branches to remain calm, vigilant and united, while complying fully with directives

aimed at defending their welfare, dignity and collective interests.

NEC also raised concerns over what it described as misleading public claims suggesting that negotiations had been concluded, citing in particular a letter alleging approval of a 30

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CONDOLENCE VISIT:

Former Deputy Governor of Edo State, Hon. Dr. Pius Egberanmwun Odubu (right), presenting a letter of condolence to the Edo State Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa, during a condolence visit following the death of his mother, Madam Esther Imaguomwanruo Idahosa.

PHOTO: MOSES OBOH

# Okpebholo celebrates mothers, reaffirms women-focused governance

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo, has extended warm felicitations to mothers of the Catholic faith on the occasion of Mother's Day, commending their enduring contributions as the backbone of families and communities.

In a statement issued by his Chief Press Secretary, Dr Patrick Akhere Ebojele, the governor paid tribute to women across all expressions of motherhood, including biological, adoptive, foster, and caregiving roles, noting that their sacrifices continue to shape society in profound and lasting ways.

Okpebholo described mothers as pivotal to the growth and stability of Edo State, highlighting their resilience, dedication, and the critical role they play in nurturing future generations.

He stressed that their influence

remains central to building cohesive and thriving communities.

The governor linked his administration's development drive to the welfare of women and families, stating that the SHINE Agenda—an acronym for Security, Health, Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Agriculture, and Education—is deliberately structured to enhance the quality of life for mothers across the state.

He explained that ongoing investments in healthcare, security, and education are targeted at creating safer environments, expanding access to essential services, and enabling mothers to raise their children in dignity and security.

Okpebholo further acknowledged the strength of women navigating economic and social challenges, describing their per-

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**FCT teachers begin indefinite over unmet demands** —Pg 4

**Emefiele: Court fixes May 4 for ruling in co-defendant's trial-within-trial** —Pg 7

**Pope says 'tyrants' speech was not aimed at Trump** —Pg 8

**CAF Champions League: Final venue, prize money and format confirmed** —Pg 13

# Edo groups close ranks behind Ikhilor, dismiss neglect allegations as baseless

● *Urge youths, media to avoid distractions and uphold due process*

ABDUL-KADIR ABDULLAH

**BENIN CITY**

Two separate civic and stakeholder groups in Edo State have strongly defended the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Umar Musa Ikhilor, Esq., dismissing allegations that he has neglected his official duties as unfounded, misleading, and disconnected from the realities of governance.

The Initiative for Youth Awareness on Migration, Immigration, Development and Reintegration (IYAMIDR), alongside a coalition under the banner of Edo Progressive Minds, faulted claims reportedly made by the Concerned Edo Youth Groups, insisting that the accusations lack credibility and fail to reflect the true state of affairs in the SSG's office.

In a statement, the Executive Director of IYAMIDR, Solomon Okoduwa, said the group's direct engagement with the SSG's office contradicts the allegations, noting that Ikhilor has demonstrated commitment, accessibility, and a methodical approach to governance.

According to Okoduwa, the Office of the SSG remains fully functional, handling matters of urgent government attention with due diligence. He argued that claims suggesting the SSG had abandoned his office overlook the nature of his responsibilities, which often require his presence alongside Governor Monday Okpehlo at key state functions, in addition to overseeing administrative coordination.

"Barr. Ikhilor has shown himself to be deliberate, methodical, and accessible. The Office of the

SSG is working, and matters requiring urgent government attention are being handled with due diligence," he said, adding that reducing such responsibilities to claims that the SSG is absent from office is unfair and ignores governance realities.

Addressing a specific case referenced by the youth groups and dated February 28, Okoduwa

explained that government procedures involve multiple stages, including vetting and budgetary considerations, stressing that delays should not automatically be interpreted as negligence.

"Every request passes through structured processes. We urge citizens to use official follow-up channels instead of promoting narratives that de-

market the state," he added.

The group reaffirmed that Ikhilor understands his mandate and is executing it with legal precision, maintaining that the SSG's office remains accessible to the public.

It further stressed that the administration's SHINE Agenda requires stability and collective support rather than divi-

sive narratives.

"Attempts to pitch the Governor against his SSG only weaken the goodwill the Concerned Edo Youth Groups claim to protect. Edo State needs unity of purpose. Barr. Ikhilor deserves support, not vilification," the statement concluded.

CONTINUES ON PG 7

## SSANU threatens strike over...

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percent allowance increase while talks were still in progress.

SSANU insisted it would not accept any outcome below the understanding reached during negotiations, stressing the need for fairness, due process and strict adherence to collective bargaining principles.

Meanwhile, the State Wing Executive Council (SWEC) of the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), Federal Capital Territory (FCT) has directed primary and secondary school teachers to begin an indefinite strike today.

The union gave the directive in a communique issued at the end of an emergency SWEC meeting in Gwagwalada, Abuja, on Friday.

The communique was jointly signed by the State Chairman, Abdullahi Shafa; the State Secretary, Margaret Jethro; and the State Publicity Secretary, Ibukun Adekeye.

In the communique, made available to newsmen in Abuja at the weekend, the union directed the teachers to comply with the directive and await further instructions.

It further advised parents to keep their children and wards in primary and secondary schools safe at home until further notice.

It said that the teachers would remain at home until all their demands are met.

The union explained that the decision was the outcome of the SWEC meeting, convened to review the seven-day ultimatum issued to the FCT Minister, Nye-

som Wike, on March 11, which expired on March 29.

It said that the SWEC appreciated Wike for the implementation of the N70,000 Minimum Wage and payment of the nine months arrears to the primary school teachers in the FCT.

It, however, said that the Council noted with concern that the Minister's intervention, which facilitated the suspension of the 14-week strike on July 9, 2025, was yet to be addressed.

"The Minister constituted a committee on July 7, 2025 with a mandate to, within two weeks, harmonise all outstanding entitlements of primary school teachers.

"The committee was also directed to make appropriate recommendations that would lead to a permanent solution to the frequent industrial disputes involving FCT Primary School Teachers.

"The committee concluded its assignment and submitted its report in August 2025, however, the report is yet to be made public," it said.

The union explained that the seven-day ultimatum followed the unexplained delay in the implementation of the committee's report.

It added that the move also became necessary following the continued silence on the legitimate demands of teachers amid the prevailing harsh economic realities in the country, particularly in the FCT.

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**RECEIVING THE C-OF-O:**

Hajiya Aishatu Ibrahim, National Chairperson of the Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), receiving the Certificate of Occupancy (C-of-O) of the association's land from Mr. Samuel Bako Sule of the C-of-O Unit of the FCTA.

## Tech hubs seek partnership with Edo Ministry on digital innovation

**BENIN CITY**

Technology experts and digital policy stakeholders have called for stronger collaboration with the Edo State Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy to advance innovation and capacity building.

The call was made during a working visit to the Ministry by representatives of technology hubs and development organisations.

Mr. Tres Osayi Omokaro of the African Centre for Enterprise and Capacity Development commended the establishment of the Ministry, noting that it has

positioned Edo State on a path toward digital transformation.

He also lauded the Ministry's leadership for its strategic framework, adding that technology clusters within and outside the state are eager to partner with the government.

Omokaro briefed the Ministry on the forthcoming Omniverse Africa Summit 3.0, scheduled for June 2-5, 2026, in Lagos, describing it as a key platform for

fostering innovation and multi-sectoral collaboration.

Responding, the Permanent Secretary, Jennifer E.N. Aisuan, appreciated the visit and reiterated the importance of stakeholder alignment in building a cohesive digital ecosystem.

She affirmed the Ministry's readiness to partner with organisations capable of driving innovation and supporting the review of the Edo Digital Policy.

## NDLEA intercepts cocaine, loud, arrests fashion designer, others

**ABUJA**

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has intercepted 12 large parcels of cocaine heading to the United Kingdom via a Virgin Atlantic Airline flight from the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA) Ikeja, Lagos.

A statement by the NDLEA spokesman, Mr Femi Babafemi

on Sunday in Abuja, said that the drugs were concealed in the false bottom of food flasks.

Babafemi said that the cocaine consignment with a gross weight of 2.80 kilograms was intercepted on Thursday, April 16, by NDLEA operatives attached to the export shed of the Lagos airport.

He said that two cargo agents involved in the export bid were swiftly arrested.

"Further investigation revealed a 52-year-old Freight and Forwarding agent as the sender of the consignment and he was arrested in a follow-up operation," he said.

In a similar operation, NDLEA officers at the import shed of the Lagos airport on April 8, intercepted a consignment of Loud, a strong strain of cannabis.

Babafemi said that the drugs

with a gross weight of 2.90 kilograms was concealed in snack food packs and arrived from the United States of America aboard a Delta Airlines flight.

"Two cargo clearing agents were initially arrested in connection with the seizure before the consignee, a 29-year-old fashion designer, was nabbed in a follow-up operation at 3 Oba Ogunji Road, Ogba, Lagos, on Monday.

## Okpehlo celebrates mothers...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

severance as a stabilising force within homes and society.

He urged residents to honour mothers not only in words but through tangible acts of care, support, and sustained engagement.

The governor also extended sympathy to mothers who have lost children and families still grieving, expressing solidarity and noting that their experi-

ences remain part of the shared human condition that binds communities together.

Reaffirming his administration's commitment to inclusive governance, Okpehlo emphasised that policies under his leadership would continue to prioritise the welfare, safety, and empowerment of women, stressing that sustainable development is closely tied to the well-being of mothers and families.

## Rising fuel, energy costs drive...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

timal production.

"Local refiners require sufficient crude to operate efficiently, but current allocations fall short.

"This forces them to source crude externally at higher costs, including additional shipping and insurance charges, which ultimately push up domestic fuel prices," he said.

He said such inefficiencies put

pressure on the economy and contribute to inflationary trends.

On immediate measures, the expert urged authorities to prioritise crude supply to domestic refineries and ensure compliance with existing laws.

"Providing adequate crude for local refining and allowing transactions in Naira, as stipulated, will reduce costs and ease pressure on consumers," he said.

He cautioned against a re-

turn to fuel subsidies or increased borrowing to cushion economic hardship, describing such measures as unsustainable.

"We are not going back to subsidies or excessive borrowing. The focus should be on fixing structural issues in the energy sector to ensure long-term stability," he said.

If said that addressing these challenges would help moderate inflation and improve overall economic conditions.

Also, an economist, Mr

Chidi Nwanze, said the rise in inflation could be linked to renewed pressures in transportation and service costs.

"The rise, though marginal, suggests that structural factors such as logistics costs, exchange rate fluctuations and energy prices are still influencing inflation dynamics," he said.

A financial analyst, Mr Segun Ibikunle, said the sharp increase in month-on-month inflation was a more concerning indicator.

## NEWS

# FG cracks down on fake ambassadors, warns against illegal diplomatic titles

ABUJA

The Federal Government has raised the alarm over the growing misuse of diplomatic titles across the country, warning individuals and organisations to desist from parading themselves as “Ambassadors” without lawful authority.

Speaking with diplomatic correspondents at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs headquarters

in Abuja, the Ministry’s spokesperson, Kimiebi Imomotimi Ebienna, expressed deep concern over the activities of unauthorised persons who confer such titles on themselves and others.

The Ministry described the trend as illegal and inconsistent with both Nigerian laws and established international diplomatic conventions, listing common violations to include the unauthorised use of titles such as “Am-

bassador” and “Diplomatic Envoy,” as well as the circulation of fake diplomatic passports, identity cards and vehicle number plates bearing Nigeria’s insignia.

It further decried the activities of self-acclaimed organisations that fraudulently confer diplomatic titles, stressing that such practices amount to impersonation and constitute a criminal offence.

According to the govern-

ment, only the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces has the constitutional authority to appoint and accredit ambassadors.

It emphasised that no private individual, group or non-governmental organisation can grant diplomatic titles, nor can such titles be acquired through payments or memberships.

While acknowledging the existence of “brand ambassador” roles in marketing and promotion, the Ministry clarified that such designations carry no legal recognition and do not entitle

holders to adopt “Ambassador” as an official title.

The Federal Government disclosed that it is working closely with security agencies, including the Nigerian Immigration Service and the Federal Road Safety Corps, to identify and prosecute offenders involved in

impersonation and the use of fake diplomatic materials.

Reaffirming its position, the government said it remains committed to safeguarding the integrity of Nigeria’s diplomatic system and will not tolerate actions capable of undermining the country’s image.



## GOVERNORSHIP DECLARATION

Wife of the Senator representing Oyo South, Mrs. Tawakaltu Alli; her husband/APC Governorship Aspirant in Oyo, Sharafadeen; a member of APC, Mr Soji Adedeji, during the Senator’s governorship declaration, in Ibadan at the weekend.

## Edo warns of hajj visa fraud as NAHCON closes issuance

ABDUL-KADIR ABDULLAH

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board has warned intending pilgrims against falling victim to fraudsters following the closure of Hajj visa issuance for the 2026 pilgrimage.

The warning follows an announcement by the National

Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON) that visa processing ended on 1st Shawwal 1447 AH (March 20, 2026).

In a statement, the Board’s Chairman, Mallam Musa Muhammad Uduimoh, urged residents to exercise patience and avoid desperation, noting that fraudulent agents are exploiting the situation.

Also speaking, the Execu-

tive Secretary, Alhaji Eranga Abdulkabir Muhammadkibir, disclosed that some intending pilgrims have requested refunds due to misleading claims by unauthorised agents promising alternative arrangements.

He stressed that all legitimate Hajj processes are conducted through approved channels and the official Nusuk platform, warning that any

contrary claims are fraudulent.

NAHCON reiterated that no alternative visa category, whether tourist, Umrah or work can be used to perform Hajj, warning that violators risk imprisonment, heavy fines and deportation with long-term entry bans.

The Commission urged the public to rely only on verified information and report suspicious activities to authorities.

## Odubu, Urhoghide, others console Idahosa over mother’s death

BERNADETTE IDALU

BENIN CITY

Prominent political figures, party leaders and community groups on Friday rallied round Edo State Deputy Governor, Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa, offering condolences over the death of his mother, Madam Esther Imaguomwanruo Idahosa.

Among those who visited the bereaved family were former Edo State Deputy Governor, Rt. Hon. Dr. Pius Odubu, and former governorship aspirant, Hon. Pharmacist Mathew Urhoghide, both of whom paid glowing tributes to the deceased.

Receiving the visitors, Ida-

hosa described Odubu as his political mentor and a member of his extended family, noting the long-standing relationship between Odubu and his late mother. He revealed that both hailed from Iyeke-Orhionmwon community, adding that his mother entrusted him to the guidance of respected leaders.

“My mum left me in the hands of many leaders, and by the grace of God, I know they will lead me right,” he said.

In his condolence message, Odubu described the deceased as a matriarch, a pillar of strength and a devout woman whose influence extended far beyond her immediate family, while Urhoghide said she would

be proud of her son’s role in governance, noting that her legacy would continue to inspire unity and blessings within the family.

The condolence visits also drew a wide array of political and community groups, including members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) from Ovia South West, led by Deputy National Treasurer, Pa Aigbohaviho Harrison Omagbon, who recalled the deceased’s generosity and warmth.

Leaders of the All Progressives Congress (APC) from Usen and Ora wards, community figures, women leaders and other stakeholders were also present in large numbers to sympathise with the family.

Representatives of professional and civil society organisations, including the Medical and Health Workers Union of Nigeria, Edo State Chapter, and members of the Generational Kingdom Purpose Foundation Library Institute, said they were not only mourning but also documenting the life and cultural contributions of the deceased.

Clerics led by the Regional Pastor of Christ Apostolic Church, Pastor Anu Ojo, offered prayers for the repose of her soul, while youth groups, labour unions and community associations also paid their respects, pledging solidarity with the family during the period of mourning.

## Igbinedion University honours Unuigbe, calls for renewed push against maternal deaths

EDWARD OSEGHE

OKADA

Igbinedion University, Okada, has called for renewed commitment to tackling maternal mortality in Nigeria as it honoured renowned obstetrician and gynaecologist, Prof. Jacob Unuigbe, at a valedictory session marking his retirement.

Speaking at the event held in Okada, Edo State, the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Lawrence Ezemonye, urged the nation’s medical and academic community to draw inspiration from Unuigbe’s pioneering work and intensify efforts to end pregnancy-related deaths.

Describing the retiring professor as a scholar of global repute, Ezemonye said his career had been defined by the training of highly skilled healthcare professionals, many of whom are making significant contributions within and outside Nigeria.

He noted that Unuigbe’s research had exposed critical gaps in Nigeria’s healthcare delivery system, particularly in maternal care.

Citing alarming statistics, the Vice-Chancellor said that Nigeria records one of the highest maternal mortality rates globally, with about 1,047 deaths per 100,000 live births, amounting to an estimated 82,000 deaths annually from largely preventable causes, such as haemorrhage, sepsis and hypertensive disorders.

He stressed that the figures represent real lives lost, includ-

ing mothers, daughters and sisters underscoring the urgency of sustained intervention.

Delivering a lecture titled, “Reducing Maternal Mortality in Nigeria: What Still Works and What Must Change—A Journey Through the Evidence,” the Guest Speaker, Prof. Dilichukwu Anumba, described the situation as both a public health emergency and a systemic failure.

He argued that while wealthier nations tend to record lower mortality rates, economic growth alone does not guarantee improvement, noting that healthcare access and nutrition play critical roles.

Anumba highlighted the need for early detection of pregnancy complications and timely access to medical care, while advocating proven strategies such as community-based health insurance, task-shifting, clinical audits and strengthened mentorship.

In his remarks, Prof. Unuigbe expressed gratitude to the university’s founder, Chief Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion, for the opportunity to serve, reflecting on a career spanning 17 years at the University of Benin, 16 years in Saudi Arabia and 19 years at Igbinedion University.

A former Provost of the College of Health Sciences, he pledged to remain engaged with the institution and continue contributing to its growth in retirement.

## Troops rescue 13 kidnapped Benue Links passengers in Benue

ABUJA

The Nigerian Army troops under Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS), have rescued 13 kidnapped passengers of a Benue Links commercial bus abducted along the Makurdi-Otukpo road on April 15, 2026.

This is contained in an operational report made available to newsmen on Sunday in Abuja.

The report said the troops, while conducting search-and-rescue operations, recovered the victims in the early hours of Sunday from a forest area in Okete Ward, Ohimini Local Government Area of Benue.

According to the report, those rescued include Hycent

Orili Raphael (29), Sunday Augustine (18), Emmanuel Elai-cha (21), Gbile Nguyor Daniel (18), Ukacha Tersoo (18), and Nyikwagh Aoridakator (22).

Others are Iornav Ngukuhan (18), Nyikwagh Benjamin (18), Buker Agatha (19), Paul Wende (29), and Akor Jessica (19).

It added the rescued victims were immediately evacuated to the General Hospital, Otukpo, where they are currently receiving medical attention, including treatment for injuries sustained during captivity.

The report further disclosed that three of the 17 abducted passengers had earlier escaped and reunited with their families safely, while efforts are ongoing to rescue the remaining victims still in captivity.

# Obeta assumes leadership of APWEN Benin chapter

LUCKY EFESE

## BENIN CITY

A senior lecturer and Head of Department of Petroleum Engineering at Igbinedion University, Okada, Engr. Perpetual Oby Obeta, has emerged as the 7th Chairman of the Association of Professional Women Engineers of Nigeria (APWEN), Benin Chapter.

Obeta and her executive members were sworn in at the weekend in Benin City by APWEN National President, Engr. Chinyere Nnenna Igwegbe.

In her acceptance speech, Obeta described her emergence as both a personal milestone and a call to service, pledging to advance the association's vision and strengthen opportunities for women in engineering.

She said her administration would operate within established

frameworks to promote women's participation in engineering in line with global trends, while also creating awareness among girls and positioning engineering as a tool for societal transformation.

"These are not just words, but a mandate to empower, inspire and transform society with engineering proficiency," she said.

Obeta promised to prioritise capacity building, expand the chapter's reach and deepen its impact through collaboration, accountability and transparency.

She also assured members that welfare would remain a top priority.

She commended the electoral committee for conducting what she described as a credible and transparent election, and solicited the support of members to achieve her administration's goals within the next two years.

Earlier, Igwegbe congratulated the new leadership, describing the inauguration theme, "Engineering Resilient Infrastructure Through Technical Excellence and Gender-Inclusive Leadership," as aligning with APWEN's vision.

She urged the new chairman to lead with humility, courage and teamwork, stressing that leadership is collective, not individual.

Igwegbe also called for unity, open communication and accountability within the executive, while commending Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo, for fostering a conducive environment for development.

Other members of the new executive include, Rev. Engr. Osamede Oseghale (Vice Chairman), Engr. Izebugba Iyalekhue (Secretary General), Engr. Ufumwen Asemota (Treasurer), and Engr. Osamwonyi Gladys Onyinye (Financial Secretary).

# FCT teachers begin indefinite over unmet demands

## ABUJA

Public primary and secondary school teachers in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) have commenced an indefinite strike from today, following unresolved welfare issues.

The directive was issued by the State Wing Executive Council (SWEC) of the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) after an emergency meeting in Gwagwalada at the weekend.

In a communiqué signed by State Chairman Abdullahi Shafa, Secretary Margaret Jethro, and Publicity Secretary Ibukun Adekeye, the union directed all teachers to stay off duty until

further notice.

Parents were also advised to keep their children at home as the strike takes effect.

The union said the action followed the expiration of a seven-day ultimatum issued to FCT Minister Nyesom Wike on March 11, which lapsed on March 29 without satisfactory response.

While acknowledging the minister's implementation of the N70,000 minimum wage and payment of nine months' arrears, the union said critical issues remain unresolved.

It cited the failure to implement the report of a committee set up on July 7, 2025, to harmonise outstanding entitlements and recommend lasting solutions to recurring disputes.

According to the union, the committee submitted its report in August 2025, but it has yet to be made public.

The NUT also demanded the removal of "vacancy" conditions for teacher promotions and a comprehensive review of the 2024 promotion exercise to ensure fairness.

It expressed concern over continued silence from authorities despite an additional 28-day grace period granted after the ultimatum.

"After exhaustive deliberations, the council resolved that all teachers in the FCT shall proceed on an indefinite strike until our demands are met," the communiqué stated.

# Bauchi PDP halts defection talks with APC over terms

## BAUCHI

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Bauchi State has formally ended talks with the All Progressives Congress (APC) over plans for Governor Bala Mohammed's possible defection.

State PDP Chairman, Sama'ila Adamu-Burga, announced the decision at a news conference over the weekend.

He disclosed that discussions collapsed after the APC rejected key conditions set by the PDP, including a proposed

60/40 leadership sharing formula and reimbursement for funds spent on federal projects executed by the state government.

Adamu-Burga said the initiative for the talks came from the APC, noting that Governor Mohammed participated out of respect for national figures involved and his commitment to inclusiveness.

"After extensive consultations, it became clear that the conditions for realignment were not accepted. The discussions have therefore been dis-

continued," he said.

He added that the PDP is now exploring other political options outside the APC in line with the interests of Bauchi residents.

The development follows recent visits by APC National Chairman Nentawe Yilwatda and Kano State Governor Abba Yusuf, who had urged Mohammed to join the ruling party.

Adamu-Burga dismissed claims of division within the PDP, insisting the party remains united and committed to strengthening internal democracy and governance.

# Soludo bans money politics in APGA primaries

## AWKA

Governor Charles Soludo of Anambra State has declared an end to monetary inducement and "transactional politics" in the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) primaries.

Speaking at the party's South-East stakeholders' meeting in Awka, Soludo said the move was necessary to restore integrity and

strengthen internal democracy.

He blamed the party's slow growth since 2002 on practices where aspirants were exploited financially during primaries.

"The era of marketing party tickets is over. Politics must be driven by values, not commerce," he said.

APGA National Chairman, Sylvester Ezeokenwa, announced an 11-point code of conduct to guide future prima-

ries and ensure transparency.

He said the party would adopt the Option A4 voting system for the 2026 primaries and ban officials from accepting gifts, wearing campaign materials or engaging in inducement.

"Even presenting money as kola nut is prohibited," he said.

Ezeokenwa added that only expression of interest fees would be paid initially, with nomination fees required after screening.



## EDO STATE INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION (EDSIEC)

### PRESS STATEMENT

#### EDSIEC CONCLUDES COLLECTION AND SUBMISSION OF NOMINATION FORMS AND PUBLISHES PERSONAL PARTICULARS OF CANDIDATES FOR THE 2026 EDO STATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The Edo State Independent Electoral Commission (EDSIEC) hereby informs the general public, political parties, and all relevant stakeholders that it has successfully concluded the collection and submission of Nomination Forms (Forms A, A1, and M) by duly registered political parties for the forthcoming Local Government Council Elections scheduled for Saturday, 11th July 2026.

This exercise was conducted in strict compliance with the provisions of Section 29(1) of the Electoral Act, 2022, which stipulates that the submission of candidates' nomination forms must be completed not later than 180 days before the date of the election.

The Commission is pleased to announce that a total of twelve (12) political parties have successfully completed the nomination process and will be participating in the upcoming elections across Edo State. EDSIEC commends all participating political parties for adhering to the established guidelines and timelines, demonstrating their commitment to due process and democratic principles.

Following the successful completion of this phase, the Commission further notifies the public that it has published the personal particulars of candidates in accordance with Section 29(3) of the Electoral Act, 2022, which mandates publication within seven (7) days of receipt of nomination forms.

Accordingly, the personal particulars of candidates are available for public inspection at the following locations:

- All EDSIEC Local Government Offices across the State
- The EDSIEC Headquarters, Plot 116, Oko-Ogba Airport Road, Benin City
- The Commission's official Facebook page

Members of the public are encouraged to carefully scrutinize the published particulars. Any individual with reasonable grounds to challenge the information provided by any candidate is advised to take appropriate legal action as provided by law.

The Commission reiterates its unwavering commitment to conducting free, fair, credible, and transparent elections and calls on all stakeholders to continue to cooperate with the Commission as preparations intensify towards the successful conduct of the elections.

For further inquiries, please contact the Commission through its official communication channels.

Signed:

MR. ABEBE EMMANUEL

Acting Secretary, Edo State Independent Electoral Commission (EDSIEC)



### PUBLIC NOTICE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT

#### PUBLIC DISPLAY EXERCISE ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) FOR THE PROPOSED DUAL GAS PIPELINE AND ANCILLARY EQUIPMENT FROM OML 40 ABIALA FIELD IN IKPOBA OKHA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, TO OML 96 IN GELEGELE FIELD OVIA NORTHEAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA EDO STATE BY BINI PIPELINE COMPANY

In accordance with the provisions of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act CAP E12 LFN 2004, which makes it mandatory for proponents of all new major development activities to carry out EIA for their proposed projects, the Federal Ministry of Environment hereby announces twenty-one (21) working days public display for information and comments on the draft EIA report submitted by Bini Pipeline Company

#### Brief Project Description:

The proposed project shall entail the construction and installation of dual 8-inch pipeline system designed to transport wet associated gas over a distance of approximately 20 km from the upstream inlet facility at Oputuke (Abiala Marginal Field, PPL 209/OML 40) to the downstream outlet at the HADC gas processing and LNG facility in Gelegele (OML 96), Edo State. The pipeline traverses Ikpoba-Okha and Ovia North-East LGAs, passing through a mixed landscape of freshwater swamp and dryland terrain, traversing the six corridor communities.

#### The Display Centers Are:

- Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area Headquarters, Idogbo, Edo State
- Ovia North-East Local Government Area Headquarters, Okada, Edo State
- Edo State Ministry of Environment & Sustainability, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Palm House, Sapele Rd., Benin City, Edo State.
- Federal Ministry of Environment, Edo State Field Office, Benin City,
- Federal Ministry of Environment, Environmental Assessment Department (Environment House), Independence Way South, Central Business District, Abuja - FCT.
- [www.cad.gov.ng](http://www.cad.gov.ng)

#### Duration of Display:

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> April – 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2026  
Time: 8:00am – 4:00pm Daily.

COMMENTS SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO THE HON. MINISTER, FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT HEADQUARTERS, MABUSHI, ABUJA-F.C.T AND VIA [info@cad.gov.ng](mailto:info@cad.gov.ng) ON OR BEFORE 25<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2026.

SIGNED  
PERMANENT SECRETARY  
FOR: HONOURABLE MINISTER.

## NEWS

# NMA crisis deepens as Lagos chairman impeached over rule breaches

## LAGOS

Crisis within the Nigeria Medical Association (NMA), Lagos Branch, has deepened following the impeachment of its Chairman, Dr Babajide Saheed, over alleged violations of the association's rules.

In the aftermath, the former 1st Vice-Chairman, Dr Temidire Ewonowo, has assumed leadership as Chairman in line with the association's constitution.

Saheed's impeachment was effected during an Emergency General Meeting of the association, where members cited re-

peated breaches of NMA rules and regulations.

His removal was conducted through a secret ballot.

Following majority approval for his removal, the 1st Vice-Chairman automatically assumed office, as stipulated by the NMA constitution.

Providing details, Ewonowo said the infractions included Saheed's refusal to convene an Emergency General Meeting

within seven days, despite requests from 10 affiliate heads and some members.

He added that the former chairman also walked out of a duly constituted Emergency General Meeting on January 13, 2026, and submitted a delegate list that was not ratified by the same meeting.

Another violation, he said, was referring members of the Lagos NMA to a disciplinary committee

based on an alleged decision that did not occur at either the State Executive Council Meeting or the Emergency General Meeting.

"Before now, I was the 1st Vice-Chairman.

"The former chairman was served a letter by the affiliate heads to present his side on these constitutional infractions within seven days, but he failed to respond.

"There is a window of three days within which an emergency meeting should be held. Following the failure to hold that meeting, and in line with our rules, the congress and affiliate heads resolved that the former chairman be removed," he said.

Ewonowo stressed that the process complied with NMA rules requiring the presence of at least three affiliate heads and

30 members at such a congress.

He disclosed that 112 members and nine affiliate heads attended the meeting, with 93 members voting for removal, four against, and three votes declared invalid.

According to him, the Emergency General Meeting remains the highest decision-making organ of the association.

He pledged to stabilise the association, emphasising unity, welfare and progress.

"We will work together as a congress and with the State Executive Council to ensure a crisis-free administration.

"This is not an era where Lagos doctors will be denied their rights or subjected to dehumanising conditions. The association will resist that vehemently," he said.



## BUILDING INAUGURATION:

L-R: Representative of Lagos State Governor/Commissioner for Higher Education, Mr Tolani Sule; MD, Shell Nigeria Exploration Company Ltd., (SNEPCo), Ronald Adams; Vice-Chancellor, University of Lagos, Prof. Folasade Ogunsoola, and representative of Executive Secretary, Nigeria Content Development Monitoring Board (NCDMB), Mr Abayomi Bamidele, during the inauguration of the Geosciences Centre of Excellence Building, at the University of Lagos.

## NIEEE targets skills gap with training drive to fix power sector

## ABUJA

The Nigerian Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (NIEEE), Abuja Chapter, has unveiled a comprehensive training-driven strategy to equip young engineers to tackle Nigeria's persistent power challenges.

Chairman of the chapter, Mr Ohida Maiyaki, disclosed this at the weekend during his inauguration as the 10th Chairman, themed "The Role of Electrical Engineers in Building a Vibrant Economy."

Maiyaki said his administration would prioritise capacity development, stressing that the complexity of Nigeria's electricity sector requires a new generation of well-trained, industry-ready professionals.

He revealed that a detailed training programme had been designed to bridge knowledge gaps and align engineering skills with real-world demands.

Planned areas include solar photovoltaic (PV) design and installation, MATLAB/Simulink applications, electrical services design using AutoCAD, low- and medium-voltage power systems, earthing and lightning protection, and energy audit.

He added that the chapter would promote continuous learning through monthly technical paper presentations and quarterly webinars, while also working to secure free and subsidised training opportuni-

ties for young engineers.

Maiyaki reiterated his vision to reposition the chapter under the "Make Abuja Chapter Great Again" agenda, focusing on participation, technical contributions and professional excellence.

He disclosed plans to facilitate job placements for qualified members, linking skills development with employment and national development.

The chairman further revealed ongoing engagements with institutions such as Nile University and Baze University to bridge the gap between academia and industry through mentorship, industrial training and collaborative research.

These initiatives, he said, would expose students to emerging technologies, engage NYSC members and promote engineering careers through outreach to secondary schools.

In a keynote address, CEO of Daylad Consult Ltd., Mr Dayo Olugboye, stressed that reliable electricity remains central to economic growth, industrialisation and improved quality of life.

He called for renewed investment in the power sector and policies that support local production, reduce import dependence and create an enabling environment for investors.

Also speaking, the 22nd President of NIEEE, Mr Felix Adegboye, urged engineers to embrace innovation and service, noting that the profession is central to national transformation.

## NGX investors gain N8.66trn as market rallies on trading surge

## LAGOS

The Nigerian Exchange Ltd. (NGX) recorded a strong weekly performance, with investors gaining N8.661 trillion amid increased trading activity.

Market capitalisation rose by 6.60 percent to N139.827 trillion from N131.166 trillion recorded in the previous week.

Similarly, the NGX All-Share Index climbed by 6.57 per cent to 217,167.57 from 203,770.43.

According to the NGX report released on Saturday, investors recorded a total gain

of N8.661 trillion during the review period.

A total turnover of 3.588 billion shares valued at N195.313 billion was traded in 254,553 deals, compared with 3.361 billion shares worth N151.948 billion exchanged in 229,442 transactions in the preceding week.

Sectoral analysis showed that the Financial Services Industry led trading activity with 2.498 billion shares valued at N94.005 billion in 111,052 deals, accounting for 69.62 per cent and 48.13 percent of total equity turnover volume and value respectively.

The Services Industry followed with 329.034 million shares

worth N3.452 billion in 14,050 deals, while the Oil and Gas Industry ranked third with 152.472 million shares valued at N42.511 billion in 19,022 transactions.

Trading in Sterling Financial Holdings Company Plc, Access Holdings Plc and Zenith Bank Plc accounted for 1.038 billion shares valued at N46.081 billion in 33,067 deals, contributing 28.92 per cent and 23.59 per cent to total turnover volume and value respectively.

A total of 61 equities appreciated during the week, compared with 25 in the previous week. Thirty-six equities declined, down from 54, while 49

equities remained unchanged, compared with 67 previously.

Top gainers included Trans-Nationwide Express Plc, Ecobank Transnational Incorporated, Stanbic IBTC Holdings Plc, Royal Exchange Plc and Aradel Holdings Plc, recording price increases of N2.28, N21.30, N50.55, 42k and N370 respectively.

On the losers' chart were Coronation Insurance Plc, Ikeja Hotel Plc, International Energy Insurance Plc, Academy Press Plc and Honeywell Flour Mills Plc, which posted declines of 42k, N5.60, 49k, N1.10 and N2.35 respectively.

## PHACCIMA urges artisans to embrace innovation for economic relevance

## PORT HARCOURT

The Port Harcourt Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (PHACCIMA) has urged artisans and small-scale entrepreneurs to embrace innovation, professionalism and continuous learning to enhance their economic relevance.

PHACCIMA President, Dr Chinyere Nwoga, gave the advice at a leadership and capacity-building programme held at the weekend in commemoration of World Artisans Day.

Nwoga said the programme, organised in partnership with the Leadership Challenge

Foundation, was aimed at strengthening the capacity and productivity of artisans.

Describing artisans as critical drivers of the economy, she noted that their services sustain households, businesses and public institutions, despite being largely undervalued.

She encouraged artisans to take pride in their work and build confidence in their skills, while reaffirming PHACCIMA's commitment to supporting them through SME and non-oil trade initiatives.

According to her, the chamber provides capacity building, advisory services, networking opportunities and policy advocacy, while also facilitating

access to finance and linkages with larger industries.

"The partnership with the Leadership Challenge Foundation is designed to equip artisans with both technical and leadership skills to scale their businesses," she said.

Nwoga further urged artisans to adopt digital tools and modern techniques, formalise their businesses through proper registration, maintain records and embrace sound financial management.

She stressed the importance of quality, branding and excellence in accessing broader market opportunities.

In her remarks, Executive Di-

rector of the Leadership Challenge Foundation, Dr Joyce Ikpe, called for greater recognition of artisans within the informal sector.

Ikpe noted that the foundation focuses on reorienting artisans and enhancing their skills to improve productivity and livelihoods, adding that artisans play key roles in housing, transportation and essential services.

Keynote speaker, Prof. Cynthia Obiorah of the University of Port Harcourt, emphasised the need for quality, integrity and confidence, while calling for government support through financing and the establishment of artisan hubs nationwide.

## SSANU threatens strike over...

## «CONTINUED FROM PG 1

It explained that the Wike-led FCT Administration was asked to, within the seven-day ultimatum, release and implement the report of primary school teachers' outstanding entitlements.

The union further called for the removal of the "vacancies" precondition for the promotion of classroom teachers and totally reviewed the 2024

promotion exercise conducted by the FCT Civil Service Commission to allow for the unhindered promotion of eligible teachers.

It said that the SWEC was disturbed that following the expiration of the seven-day ultimatum on March 19, including the additional 28-day grace period granted to the authorities, there has been no tangible response to all the issues raised in the ultimatum.

# Kano moves to secure reserved seats for women in politics

## KANO

**A**mina Abdullahi-Sani, Kano State Commissioner for Women Affairs, Children and Persons with Special Needs, has reaffirmed the state government's commitment to advancing women's representation in governance.

Sani spoke while receiving a delegation from the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), led by Salma Ahmad-Danbappa, according to a statement issued at the weekend by the ministry's Director of Public Enlightenment, Bintu Nuhu-Yakasai.

The commissioner emphasised the need to actualise reserved seats for women in legislative bodies, stressing that increased female participation is vital for inclusive and sustainable development.

"We will continue engaging the state government and House of Assembly to realise reserved seats for women," she

said.

Sani also reaffirmed commitment to the effective implementation of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Law, noting that enforcement remains critical to protecting citizens' rights and dignity.

On rehabilitation efforts, she disclosed plans to accommodate female drug dependents at the Gaya Reformatory Centre despite ongoing renovations.

She expressed concern over rising substance abuse among women, describing the temporary facility at Goron Dutse Remand Home as inadequate for effective rehabilitation.

Sani further pledged intensified implementation of the Child Protection Law to safeguard children and revealed plans to commence a diversion programme addressing social challenges affecting children and communities.

"The initiative will start at a temporary facility in Shagari Quarters pending completion of a permanent centre at Gyadi

Gyadi," she said.

The commissioner commended Governor Abba Yusuf

for supporting initiatives aimed at improving the lives of women and vulnerable groups.

FIDA and RoLAC representatives, in their remarks, pledged support for pro-

grammes focused on empowering women and protecting vulnerable populations.



## ENERGY TIMES AWARDS 2026:

L-R: Chairman/CEO, International Energy Services Limited, Dr Diran Fawibe; General Manager, Corporate Communications, Nigeria Content Development Monitoring Board (NCDMB); Dr. Obinna Ezeobi, and Chairman, Editorial Board, Energy Times, Malam Yakubu Lawal, during the Energy Times Awards 2026 in Lagos.

## Kogi reaffirms drive on culture, girl-child education

### LOKOJA

**T**he Kogi State Government has reaffirmed its commitment to preserving culture, promoting girl-child education and strengthening unity across the state.

Governor Ahmed Ododo gave the assurance through his deputy, Mr Joel Salifu, at the grand finale of the 2026 Ovia Osese Cultural Festival in Ogori at the weekend.

He described the festival as more than a celebration, saying it represents the history, identity and values of the Ogori people.

"Ovia Osese is also a tool for education, tourism and economic development," he said.

The governor commended the organisers, particularly the President of the Ogori Descendants Union, Dr Gabriel Aiso, for making the event more impactful.

He stressed the importance of girl-child education, noting that Ogori has become a model with increasing school enrolment among girls.

"The government remains committed to supporting girls

through education and empowerment programmes," he said.

He disclosed that under the AGILE Project, 13,359 girls had received financial support to remain in school.

Ododo described the festival as a major cultural asset and the only UNESCO-recognised festival in the state, pledging continued government support and improved tourism infrastructure.

He also highlighted achievements in security, road construction, education, healthcare, agriculture and workers' welfare.

"We have strengthened security, executed major road projects, made basic education free and improved healthcare services," he said.

The governor called for unity across ethnic and social lines, warning against divisions driven by politics or religion.

"Whether we are Ebir, Igala, Okun, Bassa, Nupe, Ogori or Kakanda, we are one people with a common destiny," he said.

He congratulated the Ogori people on the successful festival and prayed for continued peace, progress and unity.

## Edo groups close ranks behind...

### «CONTINUED FROM PG 2

Similarly, Edo Progressive Minds described the report against the SSG as "baseless, misleading, and lacking professional balance," accusing those behind the allegations of failing to carry out due diligence before making their claims public.

In a statement jointly signed by its coordinator, Hon. Oshioriamh Shokur, and secretary, Comrade Gift Oseni, the group said it was disappointing that

such serious allegations were made without verifying facts from the SSG's office or offering him an opportunity to respond.

"Balanced journalism requires that all sides be given a fair hearing, which was clearly ignored in this case," the statement noted.

The group emphasised that no official file remains unattended in the SSG's office beyond the required administrative timeline, insisting that government processes are guided by due procedure rather than haste.

## Minister hails Tinubu, dedicates book to nat'l heroes

### SOKOTO

**M**inister of State for Works, Alhaji Bello Goronyo, has commended President Bola Tinubu for advancing national growth through the Renewed Hope Agenda.

Goronyo gave the commendation in Sokoto during the unveiling of a book written in his honour titled, "Military Law in Nigeria: A Guide to Practice and Procedure."

He said the President's agenda continues to prioritise security and promote the rule of law, among other pillars essen-

tial for national development.

The book was authored by Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Ibrahim Abdullahi, and co-authored by Mrs Rasheedat Muhammad, Chairperson of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Sokoto State chapter.

Describing the gesture as humbling, Goronyo expressed appreciation to the authors and organisers, noting that although the book was dedicated to him, he chose to dedicate it to Nigerians serving the nation diligently.

"I dedicate this honour to all those who serve our nation tirelessly to uphold justice, peace and national unity," he said.

He described the publication as a timely and significant contribution to legal scholarship and military professionalism, adding that its practical approach makes it valuable to practitioners, officers, scholars and students.

Goronyo said the book comes at a critical time as the armed forces continue to safeguard the nation's sovereignty and address security challenges.

He called for increased investment in knowledge, research and institutional development, stressing that strong institutions are built on discipline, knowledge and respect for the rule of law.

He also appreciated dignitaries

at the event, including Sen. Aliyu Wamakko, Governor Ahmed Aliyu, the authors and the reviewer, Prof. Ahmad Okene.

In his remarks, Governor Aliyu, represented by his deputy, Alhaji Idris Gobir, described the event as a celebration of excellence and recognition of Goronyo's contributions to Sokoto State.

He said the book is timely and significant, noting the central role of the military in national security.

Also speaking, Sen. Wamakko described the publication as an important addition to legal practice in Nigeria and commended the authors and organisers.

## FRSC dismisses viral CBD video, denies assault claims

### ABUJA

**T**he Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) has dismissed allegations arising from a viral video involving its patrol team in Abuja's Central Business District, describing the incident as misrepresented.

The Corps Public Education Officer, Mr Osondu Ohaeri, clarified the incident in a statement issued at the weekend.

The footage captured a tense

encounter between FRSC officials and a driver who allegedly failed to comply after being booked.

The situation reportedly escalated when the driver diverted from the route to the command, drawing a crowd amid unverified claims involving an iron rod.

Ohaeri said the vehicle was lawfully intercepted for traffic violations, including overloading and seatbelt non-compliance, adding that personnel acted in line with standard procedures.

"The driver became

non-compliant and diverted from lawful directives, creating a scene that attracted public attention and heightened tension.

"As the situation evolved, a crowd gathered, raising security concerns and the potential for disorder.

"The allegations circulating are false, as none of the personnel assaulted, threatened or attempted to use force against the driver or occupants," he said.

He clarified that the individual seen holding an iron rod

was neither linked to the driver nor the Corps, but a passerby.

Ohaeri said personnel displayed professionalism, restraint and emotional intelligence in managing the situation.

He added that disengagement was in line with global best practices, given the volatile crowd dynamics.

"The action should not be interpreted as weakness, but a strategic move to prevent escalation, protect lives and maintain public order," he said.

## Tinubu inaugurates 720-capacity school in Lagos

### LAGOS

**F**irst Lady, Sen. Oluremi Tinubu, has inaugurated a 720-capacity secondary school in Abaranje, Ikotun, Lagos, to expand access to education.

The project, named after the First Lady, was initiated by Lagos lawmaker, Mr Kehinde Joseph, for the Alimosho community.

Mrs Tinubu, represented by her aide, Mr Wahab Alaw-

aye-King, commended the lawmaker for prioritising education and dedicating the project to public benefit.

She said the school would accommodate over 720 students, reduce travel distance and expand access to quality education.

"The ultra-modern school is the first public secondary institution in Abaranje, aimed at boosting education and taking children off the streets," she said.

According to her, true rep-

resentation is measured by lasting legacies, particularly in education, which shapes the future of children.

"We have not just built classrooms, but a school that will open doors for children to achieve their dreams," she said.

She highlighted education as a tool for reducing poverty, improving health outcomes and fostering peace, noting the project aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Goal

4 on quality education.

Tinubu urged proper maintenance of the facility and called on residents to take ownership of the school.

Addressing students, she urged them to remain disciplined and hardworking.

Speaker of the Lagos Assembly, Mr Mudashiru Obasa, urged residents to support the APC in the 2027 elections, praising President Bola Tinubu's performance.

## NEWS

## JUDICIARY

## Kano JSC sanctions Shari'a Judges, court staff over misconduct

## KANO

The Kano State Judicial Service Commission (JSC) has sanctioned two Shari'a Court judges and several court officials over various acts of misconduct.

This was contained in a statement issued at the weekend by the spokesperson of the Kano State Judiciary, Baba Jibo-Ibrahim.

The decisions followed resolutions reached at the commission's 89th meeting held on April 16, in line with its mandate to uphold discipline, integrity and accountability within the judiciary.

Those sanctioned included, Salisu Buhari-Mandawari, Upper Shari'a Court Judge in Rogo, and Umar Sunusi-Danbaba, Upper Shari'a Court Judge in Filin Hockey.

Others are Mahmud Ahmed,

a Transport Officer attached to the State High Court; Abdulbari Ado, Finance Registrar; Umar Abdulhamid, Administrative Registrar; and Sabiu Adam-Inusa, Finance Registrar at the Upper Shari'a Court, Gwarzo.

The statement said the actions followed the adoption of recommendations by the Judiciary Public Complaints Committee (JPCC) after investigating petitions.

The commission issued a strong warning to Mahmud Ahmed for acting outside his official duties, threatening members of the public and using the name of the judiciary to intimidate individuals, directing him to confine himself strictly to his responsibilities.

Buhari-Mandawari was sanctioned for demanding and receiving gratification and for failing to properly record court

proceedings.

He was demoted by two grade levels and recalled from judicial duties for a minimum of three years on half salary.

Sunusi-Danbaba was also recalled from judicial duties for at least three years over acts of bias, improper handling of funds and failure to properly record proceedings.

He is to receive half salary for one year.

Two registrars, Abdulbari Ado and Umar Abdulhamid, were demoted by two grade levels and placed on half salary for one year for demanding and receiving gratification.

They were also strongly warned against further misconduct.

Sabiu Adam-Inusa was warned over discrepancies in figures and words on an issued receipt and relieved of his position as Finance Registrar, despite accepting the error as a mistake.

The commission reiterated its zero-tolerance for misconduct, stressing that discipline, integrity and accountability remain fundamental pillars of the judiciary.

In a related development, the commission approved the appointment of Hussaini Hassan-Suleiman as the substantive Chief Registrar of the High Court of Justice, Kano State.



## 15TH CONVOCATION CEREMONY:

A cross section of Journalists from the *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)*, Bureau Chief, *The Cable* and others, celebrating their masters degree across different discipline, during the 15th Convocation ceremony of the National Open University in Abuja at the weekend.

## Anambra govt seeks pro bono legal aid for inmates

## AWKA

The Anambra State Government has urged lawyers to render free legal services to support indigent inmates and accelerate justice delivery.

The state's Attorney-General, Mr Tobechukwu Nweke

(SAN), made the call in a notice issued on April 17.

He said that the initiative aims to fast-track criminal cases and decongest correctional centres.

Nweke explained that a regulation under Section 24 of the Office of the Public Defender (OPD) Law, 2008, allows engagement of external law-

yers to provide free legal representation to persons facing criminal prosecution.

He said the OPD would register interested lawyers willing to offer pro bono services to inmates awaiting or standing trial.

According to him, practitioners can visit the OPD at the Old Government House, Awka, or

contact the office via telephone or email, urging stakeholders to circulate the information within the legal community.

He reiterated the government's commitment to improving access to justice, ensuring that no resident is denied legal representation due to financial constraints.

## Kano CJ swears in 30 new Shari'a Court judges

## KANO

The Chief Judge of Kano State, Justice Dije Abdul-Aboki, has sworn in 30 newly appointed Shari'a Court judges in a move to strengthen the administration of justice.

This was disclosed in a state-

ment issued at the weekend by the judiciary's spokesperson, Baba Jibo-Ibrahim.

Justice Abdul-Aboki described the ceremony as a significant milestone and urged the judges to be God-fearing and discharge their duties with integrity, impartiality and accountability.

She emphasised adherence

to the principles of justice, fairness and the rule of law.

Also speaking, the state's Attorney-General, Mr Abdulkarim Kabiru-Maude (SAN), congratulated the judges and charged them to uphold ethical standards.

He underscored the importance of the courts as pillars

of equity and social harmony, while reaffirming government support for the judiciary.

The event was attended by the Grand Khadi of Kano State, Tijjani Yusuf-Yakasai, Khadis of the Shari'a Court of Appeal, High Court judges and other stakeholders in the justice sector.

## DSS nabs suspect over threats to attack Abuja schools

## ABUJA

An operative of the Department of State Services (DSS), Michael Jago, has told a Federal High Court in Abuja how a suspect, John Agbo, who allegedly threatened to attack elite schools in the Federal Capital Territory, was arrested.

Testifying before Justice Joyce Abdulmalik, Jago, the first prosecution witness, said the suspect sent multiple messages threatening to kill students and teachers

and destroy property.

He said the DSS received petitions from three schools in 2024 reporting threatening SMS messages from multiple phone numbers.

The schools affected include Premier International School, The Regent Secondary School and Oakland International British School.

According to the DSS, the suspect used several GSM numbers to send the messages, threatening attacks that would take less than a minute to execute.

Jago said the suspect was tracked to Otukpo, Benue State, where he was arrested, and a Techno android phone and SIM card were recovered.

He said the defendant later made a statement in Abuja in the presence of a Legal Aid Council lawyer.

The prosecution tendered the phone, petitions, a compact disc containing audio-visual recordings of the interview, and the defendant's statement, all of which were admitted without objection.

Although the defendant

admitted familiarity with the phone, he denied ownership.

Under cross-examination, Jago said the petitions did not initially contain the defendant's name, but the phone numbers and messages were provided by complainants.

## CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **SALAM OGANLA ABDULLAHI**, now wish to be known as **WASIU ABDUSALAM**. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

## court jails 76-year-old grandfather 25yrs for drug offences

## ABUJA

A 76-year-old grandfather, Francis Omofe, has been sentenced to 25 years imprisonment for drug-related offences.

Justice James Omotosho, delivering judgment, held that the prosecution proved the charges beyond reasonable doubt.

"Consequently, he is hereby convicted as charged," the judge ruled.

He noted that despite pleas for leniency, punishment was necessary to serve as a deterrent in the national interest.

The court took judicial notice of the defendant's transportation of a large quantity of cannabis using a vehicle bearing a police number plate to the northern region, par-

ticularly Kaduna State, where insecurity has claimed lives.

Omofe was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment on count one without an option of fine, while the life sentence in count two was reduced to 25 years considering his age.

The sentences are to run concurrently from June 18, 2024, the date of his arrest.

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) charged Omofe in suit number FHC/ABJ/CR/286/2024.

He was arrested in Abuja on June 18, 2024, in a Nissan Frontier vehicle bearing police number plate NPF 558D while transporting cannabis from Edo to Kaduna State.

He was found in possession of 340.8 kilogrammes of cannabis sativa along Kuje Road, Abuja.

## Foreign

## NEWS

## Zelensky condemns US extension of Russian sanctions waiver

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky has condemned a US decision to extend the period during which Russia is allowed to sell oil despite Western sanctions.

The move means countries can purchase Russian oil and petroleum products already loaded on vessels at sea until 16 May.

The US argues that the waiver is meant to ease the energy supply crunch sparked by the US-Israel war with Iran.

But in his remarks on Sunday, Zelensky said "every dollar paid for Russian oil is money for the war" in Ukraine. Widespread sanctions have been in place against Russia since President Vladimir Putin launched

his full-scale invasion of its neighbour in February 2022.

The devastating US and Israel attacks against Iran have prompted it to retaliate not only against Israel and US military bases in the Gulf, but also against energy fatalities and other civilian sites across Arab allies of the US in the region.

Additionally, Iran has virtually shut the Strait of Hormuz - the narrow passage where some 20% of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) is usually transported through.

This has led to turmoil in energy markets, with fears that a world recession may ensue if it is not reopened soon.

The US move to ease Russian sanctions on 13 March was widely condemned by Zelensky

as well as his European allies.

Extending the waiver on Friday, the US said it wanted "to ensure oil is available to those who need it" as negotiations to end the war "accelerate".

The Ukrainian leader said Russia had more than 110 tankers from its "shadow fleet" - vessels with obscured ownership designed to help it bypass sanctions - with "over 12 million tons" of oil.

Their sale, he added, would bring \$10bn (£7.4bn) to Moscow's coffers as "a resource that is directly converted into new strikes against Ukraine".

The Ukrainian leader did not explain what those figures were based on.

But he added that just over the past week, Russia had

launched "over 2,360 attack drones, more than 1,320 guided aerial bombs, and nearly 60 missiles of various types at our cities and communities".

That included the deadliest attack against Ukraine in months on 15 April during which more than 700 drones and missiles were used in multiple waves in one night, killing at least 18 people.

Ukraine has also attacked Russia, particularly focusing on energy facilities.

However, despite ongoing attacks, a stalemate has been reached in the war in Ukraine, with Russia in control of about 20% of Ukrainian territory.

Efforts led by the US to end the war have been put on hold as a result of the war in Iran.

## Pope says 'tyrants' speech was not aimed at Trump

Pope Leo says he was not seeking to debate Donald Trump when he criticised "tyrants" for spending billions on wars in a speech earlier this week.

The pontiff said the remarks, delivered days after a high-profile spat with the US president, had been written a fortnight earlier - "well before the president ever commented on myself".

"And yet as it happens, it was looked at as if I was trying to debate, again, the president, which is not in my interest at all," he told reporters aboard a flight to Angola on Saturday.

On Monday, Trump launched a scathing attack on the first American Pope - who has been a vocal critic of the US-Israeli military operation in Iran - as "terrible for foreign policy".

The Pope, who is on a tour of Africa, said a "certain narrative that has not been accurate" had developed, citing "the political situation created" by Trump's comments.

In response to the pontiff's latest remarks, US Vice-President JD Vance, who converted to Catholicism as an adult, said he was "grateful to Pope Leo for saying this".

"While the media narrative constantly gins up conflict - and yes, real disagreements have happened and will happen - the reality is often much more complicated," Vance added.

Earlier in the week - before the Pope's speech referring to "tyrants" - Vance had urged the Vatican to "stick to matters of morality".

During the speech in Cameroon on Thursday, the Pope had criticised leaders who

"turn a blind eye to the fact that billions of dollars are spent on killing and devastation, yet the resources needed for healing, education and restoration are nowhere to be found".

"The masters of war pretend not to know that it takes only a moment to destroy, yet often a lifetime is not enough to rebuild," he said.

The Pope also condemned "an endless cycle of destabilisation and death" in a "blood-stained" region of Cameroon that had been gripped by insurgency for nearly a decade.

The remarks were interpreted by some as a reference to Trump - who later told reporters: "The Pope can say what he wants, and I want him to say what he wants, but I can disagree."

He had initially posted his lengthy criticism of the leader of the Catholic Church after the pontiff had voiced concern about Trump's threat that "a whole civilisation will die" if Iran did not agree to US demands to end the war and open the Strait of Hormuz.

The president said he was "not a big fan" of the Pope and called him "WEAK on crime, and terrible for Foreign Policy". Trump also posted an AI-generated image of himself as a Jesus-like figure, which he later removed.

The Catholic leader's Africa tour includes stops in 11 cities across four countries. It is his second major foreign visit since being elected to the papacy last year, and reflects the importance of Catholicism in Africa.

More than a fifth of the world's Catholics - some 288 million people - live in Africa, according to figures from 2024.



**MILITARY BASES:**

Daily attacks on Ukraine continue unabated, causing widespread death and suffering.

## Australia's most-decorated soldier vows to fight war crime charges

Australia's most decorated living soldier, Ben Roberts-Smith, has publicly denied all allegations against him in his first statement after being charged with five counts of the war crime of murder last week.

The Victoria Cross recipient, released on bail on Friday, said he was "proud of my service in Afghanistan", and would use the charges against him as an opportunity to "finally" clear his name.

He said: "I understand this journey will be difficult. But I can promise everybody that I have never run from a fight in my life."

Roberts-Smith, 47, is accused of being involved in the deaths of unarmed Afghan detainees, either by killing them or ordering a subordinate to, between 2009 and 2012.

A former corporal in Australia's Special Air Service (SAS) Regiment, Roberts-Smith told

the media that "while I would have preferred these charges not to be brought, I will be taking this opportunity to finally clear my name".

He went on: "I'm proud of my service in Afghanistan. While I was there, I always acted within my values, within my training and within the rules of engagement."

He described his arrest as a "sensational" and "unnecessary spectacle", and refused to take

any questions from journalists. Roberts-Smith was arrested at Sydney airport on 7 April, and was released from jail on bail on Friday.

The presiding judge noted that his case was "exceptional" and he was likely to spend "possibly years and years" in custody before it went to trial, if not granted bail.

The criminal case against Roberts-Smith follows a 2023

civil defamation case, in which a judge found - on the balance of probabilities - there was "substantial truth" to some of the murder claims against him.

Brought by Roberts-Smith against Nine newspapers, which first published allegations of misconduct in 2018, the high-profile trial was the first time in history any court has examined claims of war crimes by Australian forces.

## Gulf tensions escalate as Iran tightens control of Strait of Hormuz

Tensions between Washington and Tehran are rising sharply over access to key shipping routes in the Persian Gulf, as both sides harden their positions.

US President Donald Trump said Washington would maintain its blockade on Iranian ports unless a peace agreement is reached, warning that a temporary cease-

fire due to expire Wednesday may not be extended.

In response, Iran announced it has reimposed "strict control" over the Strait of Hormuz, reversing a brief reopening that lasted just one day.

In a statement broadcast on state media, a spokesperson for Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya central command said Tehran had

agreed "in good faith" to allow limited passage of oil tankers and commercial vessels. However, the statement accused the United States of repeatedly violating its commitments and engaging in what it described as "acts of piracy" under the guise of a blockade.

The situation escalated further when the UK Maritime Trade Operations reported that

## Bodies of 50 infants dumped at Trinidad graveyard

The remains of at least 50 infants and six adults have been dumped at a graveyard in Trinidad and Tobago, police say.

In a statement, the country's police service (TTPS) said the bodies were found in the town of Cumuto, about 40km (25 miles) from the capital Port of Spain on Trinidad - one of the two islands forming the Caribbean nation.

A preliminary investigation shows it may be a case of an "unlawful disposal of unclaimed corpses", it added.

It is unclear if the incident is linked to gang violence in the

country with one of the highest murder rates in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The police statement said five of the six adults - four men and two women - had identification tags on them. Two showed signs of having had post-mortem examinations.

The discovery was "deeply troubling", police commissioner Allister Guevarro said.

"Any individual or institution found to have violated that duty will be held fully accountable," the commissioner said.

A state of emergency which gives police extended powers of search and arrest has been renewed since being introduced on 2 March.

The US state department has issued several travel advisories since then - due to crime as well as "a heightened risk of terrorism".

"Although violent crime in Trinidad and Tobago has dropped greatly since 2024 due to security efforts started during the previous state of emergencies, crime remains a challenge throughout the country," the advisory said.

## DR Congo accepts first set of deportees from the US

Fifteen people deported from the US, who are reportedly from South America, have arrived in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

This is the first group of an unknown number of people that the US has expelled which the DR Congo had agreed to take in.

The government in Kinshasa has stressed that their stay in the country is only temporary and that Washington is funding "their reception, support and care".

The US has already sent deportees to several other African countries, including Ghana, South Sudan and Eswatini, as part of the crackdown on immigration.

Earlier this month, when details of the deportation deal first emerged, the Congolese government said the decision to receive what are known as third-country migrants - that is those who come from neither the sending nor receiving nation - aligns with its commitment to human dignity, to protecting the rights of migrants and international solidarity.

The Congolese authorities also said that the scheme was not a "permanent relocation mechanism or an outsourcing of migration policies".

The US State Department said that while it did not comment on "diplomatic communications with other governments" the administration remained "unwavering" in its "commitment to end illegal and mass immigration and bolster America's border security".

The US has deported dozens of people to third countries since President Donald Trump came to power in January last year as part of its hard-line approach towards immigration.

"The individuals concerned are admitted to the national territory under short-stay permits, in accordance with national legislation concerning

the entry and residence of foreigners," a Congolese government statement said on Friday without giving any more details about the deportees.

But a source at N'djili International Airport, where the group landed in the early hours of Friday, told the BBC that they were mostly Colombians and Peruvians.

According to a minority report from the US senate's committee on foreign relations, the Trump administration has "likely" spent more than \$40m (£30m) in third-country deportations up to January 2026, although the total cost is "unknown".

The US has provided more than \$32m "directly" to five countries - Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, El Salvador, Eswatini and Palau - it added.

The US is also negotiating a minerals deal with DR Congo to help gain access to the central African country's vast reserves of key metals such as cobalt, tantalum, lithium and copper.

Under Trump, the US has facilitated a peace deal between DR Congo and Rwanda, although implementation remains a challenge.

At the conclusion of a fresh round of talks between the Congolese government and the Rwanda-backed M23 rebels, both sides, who have been fighting in the east of the DR Congo, say they will allow in humanitarian aid, protect civilians and their infrastructure, and begin monitoring a permanent ceasefire.

Delegates at the negotiations in Switzerland, mediated by the US and Qatar, said they were encouraged by their progress toward ending the conflict.

Rwanda has repeatedly denied supporting the M23 despite overwhelming evidence, saying its military presence is a defensive measure against threats to its security by armed groups in DR Congo.



**FRENCH PEACEKEEPER:**

File photo of Unifil peacekeepers in southern Lebanon on 16 April.

## French peacekeeper killed in southern Lebanon

A French peacekeeper has been killed and three others wounded after a UN patrol came under fire in southern Lebanon, in what officials described as a deliberate attack.

The soldier was serving with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (Unifil), which confirmed that one peacekeeper had died and three others were injured, two of them seriously, when their patrol came under small-arms fire.

French President Emmanuel Macron blamed the attack on Hezbollah. The Iran-backed armed group denied "any connection" to the incident.

It comes amid heightened tensions in southern Lebanon, where peacekeepers have faced growing risks since renewed fighting between Hezbollah and Israel erupted on 2 March.

On Sunday, Unifil confirmed the French peacekeeper's body would be repatriated to Paris.

Two severely injured peacekeepers were still receiving treatment in Beirut, while a third peacekeeper was being treated for "moderate injuries" in southern Lebanon, it added.

A 10-day ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon came into effect on 16 April. The US, which announced the deal, urged Hez-

bollah to abide by its terms.

"Everything suggests that responsibility for this attack lies with Hezbollah," Macron said.

"France demands that the Lebanese authorities immediately arrest the perpetrators and take their responsibilities alongside Unifil."

France's Armed Forces Minister Catherine Vautrin said the peacekeeper had been part of a mission to reopen access to a Unifil position that had been cut off by the recent fighting when it had been "ambushed by an armed group at very close range".

Vautrin added that he was "hit immediately by a direct

shot from a small arms weapon" and was pulled away by fellow soldiers, who were unable to revive him.

A spokesperson for UN Secretary General António Guterres condemned the attack, adding that an initial assessment from Unifil suggested that the team came under fire from "non-state actors", which they presumed to be Hezbollah.

The spokesperson urges all parties to "respect the cessation of hostilities and to cease fire".

Unifil said the patrol had been clearing explosive ordnance along a road in the village of Ghanduriyah to reconnect isolated positions.

## Mexico's Sheinbaum denies 'diplomatic crisis' with Spain after conquest row

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum has said there was "no diplomatic crisis" with Spain after years of frosty relations over the conquest of the North American nation.

"There is no diplomatic crisis. There never has been. What is very important is that we recognise the strength of our country's indigenous peoples," she said as she arrived at a summit of left-leaning leaders in Barcelona on Saturday.

Spain's colonisation of Mexico has become a thorny issue in recent years, prompting calls for an apology and an apparent diplomatic snub.

The summit, which seeks to address a rise in illiberalism, comes as far-right leaders met in Italy for a rally against immigration and EU bureaucracy.

Sheinbaum's comments came moments before she met the Barcelona summit's co-chair, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, who did

not comment on the state of his nation's relations with Mexico.

However, Spain's economy minister was quoted by news agency Reuters as saying that Sheinbaum's presence was "a very important and positive sign of a rapprochement between the two countries".

Her visit is the first by a Mexican president in eight years.

Relations between Spain and Mexico deteriorated in 2019 when Sheinbaum's predecessor, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, demanded that Spain apologise for human rights violations during its conquest.

Spanish conquistadors killed thousands through fighting and disease as they dismantled the Aztec empire in the 16th Century.

When López Obrador's request went unanswered, Sheinbaum took the unusual decision not to invite Spain's King Felipe VI to her inau-

guration in 2024. Spain then refused to send any Spanish representative.

Recently, though, there have signs that relations had begun to thaw.

King Felipe said in March that there had been "a lot of abuse" during the conquest of the territory that would become Mexico.

"There are things that, when we study them, with our present-day criteria, our values, obviously cannot make us feel proud," he had said while visiting an exhibition on indigenous Mexican women in Madrid.

King Felipe's words marked the first time a Spanish monarch had publicly acknowledged abuses during the country's colonial era.

It then emerged that, a month prior, Sheinbaum had invited him to the upcoming Fifa World Cup.

She said that the sporting event - being hosted jointly with the US and Canada -

would provide "a timely opportunity to evoke the depth and unique character of the ties between Mexico and Spain", according to the Spanish royal palace.

Spain's Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares won plaudits from Sheinbaum last October when he said there had been "pain and injustice" in the countries' shared history.

Saturday's summit in Spain was the fourth meeting of the In Defence of Democracy initiative, which aims to counter extremism and illiberalism.

"Democracy cannot be taken for granted," Sánchez said.

"We are witnessing attacks on the multilateral system, one attempt after another to challenge the rules of international law, and a dangerous normalisation of the use of force."

His co-chair, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, said the UN Security Council was not working and

that its five permanent members - the US, China, Russia, France and the UK - all of whom hold veto power, had become "lords of war".

"No president of any country in the world, however powerful, has the right to keep imposing rules on other countries," Lula said.

The leaders of Brazil, Mexico and Spain later issued a joint statement saying they had agreed to increase aid deliveries to Cuba, which they described as undergoing a "humanitarian crisis".

The Caribbean island nation has recently been experiencing a series of nationwide blackouts as an informal US oil blockade has exacerbated an existing fuel shortage.

Meanwhile, in Milan, thousands of supporters of the Patriots for Europe party, a right-wing grouping in the European Parliament, gathered for a rally.

The party's leader, Jordan Bardella, who is also the head

of France's far-right Rassemblement National (RN), took part alongside the event's organiser, Italy's Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini, and Geert Wilders, who leads the Dutch far-right PVV party.

Bardella said immigration and the "ever-increasing regulations imposed by the European Commission and the European Union on European industry and on the economies of the eurozone" would be among the issues leaders discussed.

"In Europe, the Alliance of Patriots is the only true adversary for the Brussels bureaucrats who serve a few businessmen and warmongers," Salvini told the crowd.

Hungary's outgoing leader Viktor Orbán, whose Fidesz party is also a member of the Patriots for Europe, was not present at the rally. He was ousted last weekend in the country's general election by Péter Magyar, a former Orbán ally.

# RE: EGOR/IKPOBA-OKHA: EQUITY, JUSTICE AND THE URGENT NEED FOR BALANCE.

Our attention has been drawn to a publication with the aforementioned caption, and published at page 34 of the Vanguard newspaper of Thursday, April 16th, 2026 series. To start with, the publication is at best, an escalation of outright falsehoods and half truths peddled by a handful of divisive minds in Egor/Ikpoba-Okha Federal Constituency to misinform the unsuspecting public and to derail the merit mindset of the All Progressives Congress leadership in Edo State.

The first shot by the faceless group was to weep up pedestrian sentiments about Ikpoba-Okha's dominance in the trajectory of the House of Representatives over time but was elusive in stating the fact that the political parties primaries have been fairly and squarely contested by aspirants of Egor and Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Areas respectively, partly because there is no standing agreement on rotation, and if an agreement is to be made today, it will be in favor of Ikpoba-Okha LGA, for very obvious reasons, namely, the last bearer of the APC ticket in the 2023 election (Hon. Crosby Eribo) is from Egor Local Government Area, and the current occupant of the seat (Hon. Murphy Omoruyi) is from Egor Local Government Area.

In case the author doesn't know, the first person elected to represent the federal constituency upon its creation in 1996 is Hon. Oni Edigin Esq from Egor LGA. Ikpoba-Okha LGA is the largest in landmass, has the highest number of registered voters in Edo State, and this factor always defines the massive outcomes in the Edo election. This underscores the need for a painstaking choice process as we approach the APC primaries. A choice rooted on clear indices of election winning capacity.

In the contemporary election history of the Federal Constituency, anytime Ikpoba-Okha person is given the party ticket, he always wins. The record is available, we challenge anyone to contest this fact.

Egor and Ikpoba-Okha are one people, and we have very cordial sociopolitical relations. This resonates in the wisdom of the Oba of Benin to appoint two prominent Palace chieftains from Egor LGA to be overseeing two solid Dukedoms in Ikpoba-Okha LGA, namely, Ologbo and Utesi respectively.

Please see the factual historical analysis below:

1. Egor and Ikpoba-Okha Local Governments were among the newly created Local Governments in 1996 by the Military Regime, under Late Gen. Sani Abacha. There has never been a time or any conventional arrangement of Zoning for determining candidates to the Federal Constituency between the two Local Governments. It has become imperative to put the record straight as regards the list of those persons that have so far represented the Federal Constituency till date, and how they emerged.

1. Barr. Oni Edigin from Egor, was the first elected representative of the federal constituency, "Sworn-in or not" 1997-1998.

2. In 1999, Hon. Hon. Sunny Aguebor from Ikpoba-Okha defeated Barr. Oni Edigin from Egor in the hotly contested (PDP) primaries held at late Dr. Samuel Ogbemudia's residence. Hon. Sunny Aguebor won the general election and represented the Constituency 1999-2003.

3. In 2003, Captain Jim Adun under Oredo then, was contesting for SENATE against Sen. Daisy Danjuma, was stepped down and imposed on the Egor/Ikpoba-Okha federal constituency by Late Mrs. Stella Obasanjo in collaboration with the ESAMA of Benin, Chief Osawaru Igbinedion in the Senatorial (PDP) primaries held at his residence. Caption Jim Adun won the general election and represented the Egor/Ikpoba-Okha federal constituency 2003-2007.

4. In 2007, Hon. Ifaluyi Isibor from Egor defeated Hon. Sunny Aguebor from Ikpoba-Okha and others in the keenly contested (PDP) primaries held at St. Maria Gorothy, Dumez road, upper Sokponba. Hon. Ifaluyi Isibor won the general election and represented the federal constituency 2007-2011.

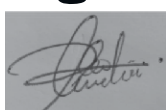
5. In 2011, Captain Jim. Adun who was aspiring for SENATE under ACN against Sen. Ehigie Uzamere who decamped from PDP was again imposed on the federal constituency by Governor Adams Oshomhole. Captain Jim Adun won the general election and represented the federal constituency 2011-2015.

6. Hon. E. J Agbonayinma from Ikpoba-Okha defeated Mr Christopher Omokaro from Egor and others in the hotly contested (PDP) primaries held at S&T Military Barrack, Uselu, New Lagos road. Hon. E J won the election and represented the federal constituency 2015-2019.

7. In 2019, Hon. Jude Ise Idehen from Ikpoba-Okha defeated Barr. Nosa Adams, Mr. Tony Igiehon (both from Egor) in another keenly contested (PDP) primaries held at S&T Military Barrack, Uselu, New Lagos road. Hon. Jude Ise Idehen won the general election and represented the constituency in 2019-2023.

8. In 2023, Hon. Murphy Osaro Omoruyi from Egor under LABOUR PARTY won the general election and represented the federal constituency till date. Flowing from the above, it is evidently clear that 95% of those elected representatives of the federal constituency went through keenly contested primaries in their parties irrespective of the local government you are from. Also, it implies that party members are given free hands or without restriction to make a choice amongst the aspirants as to who represent the federal constituency at the National Assembly, Abuja. Just from a dispassionate overview, and stand to be contradicted.


**Signed**



**Hon . Amos Omoregie**

**Convener.**

**Ikpoba-Okha Development Congress (I. D. C.)**

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13 X 4	369,500	397,213	295,600	317,770	206,938	222,458	443,500	476,763	369,550	397,266
10 X 4	340,000	365,500	273,500	294,013	177,400	190,705	370,000	397,750	295,600	317,770
HALF PAGE	295,600	317,770	236,500	254,238	147,800	158,885	340,000	365,500	273,450	293,959
10 X 3	221,700	238,328	147,800	158,885	118,300	127,173	266,000	285,950	251,300	270,148
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FP 5X2	81,100	87,183	97,300	104,598	5 X 2	51,950	55,846	42,120	45,279
FP 4X2	73,000	78,475	80,700	86,753	4 X 2	45,260	48,655	34,400	36,980
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**EFFECTIVE FROM FEBRUARY 1, 2023**

# Sports

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

## NSC announces November 27th as opening ceremony for 2026 Coal City Games

The National Sports Commission, NSC, has announced that the highly anticipated 2026 National Sports Festival, tagged Coal City Games, will hold from the 27th of November to the 11th

### ● 15 compulsory sports set to feature at the Games

of December this year.

The Director General of the NSC, Hon. Bukola Olopadé, revealed this on Thursday during the first Main Organising

Committee (MOC) meeting for the Games held in Abuja.

He stated that the arrival of states will be from the 25th to 26th of November, while the opening ceremony will hold on the 27th of November and the Games close on the 11th of December 2026, emphasising that the dates are all sacrosanct.

The DG said the final dates were agreed upon following a productive and fruitful meeting he had with the Governor of Enugu State, Barrister Peter Mbah.

"I must commend the Governor of Enugu State, Barrister Peter Mbah, who has shown tremendous enthusiasm in the aggression with which facilities are being built and completed for the Games. This is highly commendable."

Hon. Olopadé further opined that the Coal City Games will break and set a record of being the best sponsored and funded games in the history of the games in Nigeria.

"Let it be on record that the Enugu games, without any argument, is the best sponsored festival in history. The main sponsor, Premium Trust Bank, has made good their commitment and it is a very historic contribution to the festival."

"The last record was the Gateway Games last year in Abeokuta, which many had described as the best festival ever, but I am very optimistic that Enugu is on the verge of hosting the best well-funded and best well-organised games later this year."



OLOPADE AND DIKKO



SENEGALISE FANS FIGHTING

## Three arrested Senegalese fans released after Royal Pardon

Three Senegalese football fans detained in Morocco have been released following a royal pardon, authorities confirmed on Saturday.

The supporters, who had been held in connection with incidents involving visiting fans, were granted clemency and subsequently freed.

Their release marks a partial resolution to a situation that had drawn attention from both Senegal and Moroccan officials in recent days.

Before returning home to Dakar, the trio made a spiritual stop in Fez, where they visited

a Tijaniyya Sufi lodge, a significant religious center for followers of the Tijaniyya brotherhood across West Africa.

Meanwhile, efforts are ongoing to secure the release of other detained Senegalese nationals.

A formal request for a royal pardon has been submitted on their behalf, with diplomatic channels actively engaged to resolve the matter.

Officials from both countries are expected to continue discussions as pressure mounts for the remaining detainees to benefit from similar clemency.

## NPFL26: Efe, Dung Shine as Bendel Insurance FC beat Wikki Tourists 2-1 in Jos

KEHINDE OSAGIEDÉ

Bendel Insurance Football Club, Sunday afternoon had their strength renewed as they defeated Wikki Tourists FC of Bauchi 2-1 in the match day 35 of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) to rekindle their hope for continental tournament this season.

Mercurial winger Dung Emmanuel gave the Benin Arsenal a deserved lead 11 minutes into the game in a goal mouth scramble, following a long throw from Henry Oyian which the host defenders could not curtain.

In the 24th minute of action, Jonathan Mairiga got an equaliser for Wikki Tourists to tie the game at 1-1 before going into the halftime break on equal terms.

On resumption of the second half, Insurance FC took the game to the host and their spirited efforts paid off in the 55th minute when new midfield revelation Efe Ubiomo headed home the second goal and sealed victory for the Benin Arsenal.

Tourists however put up some determined fightback effort but Insurance FC defenders were alive to their responsibility and remained resilient

throughout the remaining part of the game.

The Benin Arsenal returned to winning ways after a back to back draws with Warri Wolves, Plateau United and 4-0 defeat to Kano Pillars, beating Abia Warriors 1-0 in the match day 34 of the Nigeria Premier Football League before their trip to Jos for the important award maximum points.

In their first round meeting in Benin, Insurance FC thrashed Wikki Tourists FC 3-0.



BENDEL INSURANCE PLAYERS CELEBRATING

## CAF Champions League: Mamelodi Sundowns progress to African Champions League final

Colombian-born striker Brayan Leon saw his penalty saved but tucked away the rebound on Saturday to put South Africa's Mamelodi Sundowns

through to the African Champions League final at the expense of Esperance of Tunisia. Soccer

Leon had his 35th-minute spot kick parried by visiting goalkeeper

Bechir Ben Said but snapped up the rebound to ensure a 1-0 home win at Loftus Versfeld.

Leon had scored the only goal of last Sunday's first leg in Tunis and the 2-0 aggregate triumph means Sundowns are through to the final for a second successive season.

They will take on Morocco's Royal Armed Forces. Sundowns, runners-up last season, were awarded the penalty after a throw-in back to Ben Said caught the goalkeeper napping as he tried to clear, with Leon sprinting down on him and getting a touch to the ball before the keeper made contact with him as he attempted to kick the ball clear.



MAMELODI SUNDOWNS PLAYERS

## Lookman scores as Atletico Madrid lose Copa del Rey final

Super Eagles forward, Ademola Lookman scored in the 19th minutes to equalise for Atletico Madrid in their Copa del Rey final against Real Sociedad on Saturday.

Real Sociedad had taken the lead just 13 seconds into

the game through Barrenetxea's strike but Lookman equalised with a beautiful left footed strike from inside the box.

Striker Oyarzabal restored Real Sociedad's leads just before halftime but Atletico leveled the score in the 83rd

minutes through Argentine striker Julian Alvarez.

Both teams couldn't find the winner after 120 minutes leading the game to penalty shootouts where Sociedad won 4-3, with Atletico's Alexander Sorloth and Julian Alvarez missing their penalties.

Lookman's goal made him the second Nigerian player to score in the Copa del Rey final, after Finidi George.

George scored for Real Betis in 1997 at the Santiago Bernabéu against Barcelona.

Just like Lookman, Finidi's side couldn't win the trophy.

## Edet targets new records after MTN CHAMPS victory

Fervent Edet, the 100m and 200m winner in the boy's juniors at the just concluded MTN CHAMPS Grand Final said that he is looking forward to breaking the records he set in this competition before the year ends.

Eder said that setting a new record is his next target.

"The record is good and can only get better.

"My mind is always positioned to improve in each competition I see myself competing in," he said.

He added that prior to the competition, he prepared rigorously as he was determined to win.

"I feel so great winning this; I replicated what I did in Jos.

"I came fully motivated with the mindset to win and I am glad I won.

"I will score myself 5 out of 10 for two wins out of three

legs," he said.

Bernice Onoriode delivered a standout performance in the U-17 Girls' 100m final, storming to a new Personal Best (PB) of 11.88s.

The young sprinter displayed remarkable consistency throughout the competition, recording PBs in all three rounds.

She finished ahead of Rebecca Enilolobo, who equalled her own PB of 12.07s for Silver, while Rodia Ibrahim claimed Bronze in 12:16secs.

In the Youth Boys' 100m final, Edet powered to victory in 11:10secs having earlier dipped under 11secs with a lifetime best of 10:99secs in the heats.

Maleeq Odesanya placed second in 11:20secs, with Boluwatife Alagbon finished behind in 11:25secs.



FERVENT EDET

## Sports

The Nigerian  
**Observer**  
...that the people may know

## NAN holds 4th fitness walk, promotes wellness, team spirit

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Saturday held its 4th Fitness Walk and Jogging Exercise in Abuja, drawing staff, partners and stakeholders in a colourful outing to promote wellness and unity.

The event was organised by

NAN in collaboration with Alpha Designs Nigeria Limited, the Ladies Golf Association of Nigeria (LGAN), Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), and Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN), FCT Chapter. The Managing Director of

NAN, Ali M. Ali said the initiative aimed to boost staff productivity through regular exercise and team bonding.

"Events like this build unity and a sense of belonging among staff. When we interact outside the workplace, we strengthen bonds that translate into improved productivity and shared goals," he said.

Ali added that NAN had institutionalised wellness, including a well-equipped gym and dedicated fitness hours twice weekly for staff to keep fit.

"At NAN, we prioritise staff wellbeing. Our gym facilities and structured wellness time reflect our belief that a healthy workforce drives efficiency and

teamwork," he said.

The LGAN President, Lami Ahmed, commended participation, especially among women, stressing the importance of exercise.

"The turnout is impressive, especially from women. Regular physical activity is vital for healthy living, and sports like golf provide both exercise and recreation," she said.

Ahmed noted that golfers walk long distances during play, enhancing endurance and overall fitness.

"An average round of golf involves about 10 kilometres of walking, making it an excellent way to stay active while enjoying the game," she said.



OYEDEJI AND OSHONAIKE

## IOC appoints Oyedeji, Oshonaike to key roles

Nigeria ex-international basketball player, Olumide Oyedeji, has been appointed to occupy a prestigious seat on the International Olympic Committee Athletes' Commission

The move signals rising influence of the former NBA center turned administrator as he step into one of the most influential platforms in world sport.

He would be representing the World Olympians Association on a 23-member board tasked with shaping the future of athletes worldwide.

Oyedeji's appointment is a reward for a relentless advocacy, championing athlete welfare and pushing for strong-

er representation both at home and abroad.

The former athlete who was leading the Nigeria Athletes' Commission before coming to serve as World Olympic Association Secretary.

Similarly, one of Nigeria's table tennis icon Olufunke Oshonaike also joined the commission, doubling the country's presence and amplifying its voice within the Olympic Movement.

At the helm sits Spanish basketball great Pau Gasol, supported by a diverse leadership team spanning continents, a clear proof that the commission is where global perspectives collide to shape athlete futures.

## CAF Champions League: CAF Champions League final venue, prize money and format confirmed

The Confederation of African Football has confirmed the venue, prize money and format for the 2025/26 CAF Champions League final, with Morocco's Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium set to host the decisive second leg.

The winners of Africa's premier club competition will earn \$6 million, a significant increase from last season's \$4 million, while the final will be played over two legs.

CAF announced that the newly redeveloped Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium in Rabat will stage the second leg on 24 May 2026, marking a major continental showpiece for the venue in its first season after renovation.

The first leg will be played at Loftus Versfeld Stadium in Pretoria, South Africa, on 15 May 2026.

The Rabat stadium, which previously hosted the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations final, continues to underline Morocco's growing reputation as a hub for major African football events.

CAF confirms Rabat's Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium as 2026 CAF Champions League final venue, with \$6m prize money and two-legged format set.

In a statement, CAF confirmed a major financial boost across its club competitions.

CAF Champions League winners: \$6 million

Runners-up: \$2 million (un-

changed)

CAF Confederation Cup winners: \$4 million

Confederation Cup runners-up: \$1 million

Both finalists in the Champions League are already guaranteed at least \$2 million.

The final will be contested between South Africa's Mamelodi Sundowns and Moroc-

co's AS FAR.

Sundowns booked their place with a 2-0 aggregate victory over Esperance de Tunis, thanks to Colombian striker Brayan León, who scored in both legs, including a decisive goal in Pretoria.

It will be Sundowns' fourth CAF Champions League final, as they chase a second title af-

ter their 2016 triumph. They were runners-up in 2001 and again last season.

Head coach Miguel Cardoso is also heading into his third consecutive final in the competition.

Their opponents, AS FAR, progressed despite a 1-0 second-leg defeat to RS Berkane, advancing 2-1 on aggregate.

## NPFL: Oriental derby drama as Rangers centre-backs flip script against Enyimba

Rangers International came from behind to secure a 2-1 victory over Enyimba in a tense Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) Matchday 35 Oriental derby at the Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium.

After a cautious opening, Rangers began to assert control, with Ikechukwu Mgbemena testing goalkeeper Kelvin Ogunga from long range.

The visitors were forced onto the back foot as Oputa Chibueze's dangerous deliveries and Waheed Adebayo's effort from outside the box highlighted the home side's growing momentum.

Despite the pressure, clear chances were scarce. Adebayo spurned a gilt-edged opportunity after weaving through Enyimba's defence, while Williams Wonah nearly punished Rangers with a surging run, only to be denied at close range.

The breakthrough came after

the interval, but against the run of play. Wonah struck from distance to give Enyimba the lead with their first shot on target, marking the first time Rangers had conceded first at home this season.

Rangers responded quick-

ly. Chidozie Iwundu, who had earlier rattled the post with a free-kick, equalised in the 61st minute, firing home after Enyimba failed to clear their lines. It was the defender's ninth goal of the campaign.

Home	Score	Away
KIPPERS FC	1-2	BEROHL INSURANCE
WIL MARRIAGE FC	2-1	IMPERIAL CITY FC
SEATERS UNITED	1-1	KUK KHALIFA FC
NANGAWA UNITED FC	3-0	MARIE WOLVEN FC
EL KARKHI WARRIORS	1-2	SHOOTING STARS SC
KATSINA UNITED FC	3-2	BAVELSA UNITED FC
KWARA UNITED FC	2-1	WARRI FC
KANO KILLERS FC	2-1	INVERE UNITED FC
IBOMO STARS FC	3-0	NIGER TORNADES
RANGERS INTL FC	2-1	ENYIMBA FC

## Galadima Burial: Stakeholders seek NPFL match shift in Kano

Some football stakeholders have called on authorities to postpone the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) match between Kano Pillars and Rivers United, scheduled for Sunday in Kano, in honour of late Ibrahim Galadima.

Nigerian football is mourning the death of former Nigeria Football Association (NFA) President, Ibrahim Galadima, who died on Saturday.

Galadima, a revered sports

administrator, served as NFA President from 2002 to 2006 and held key positions in Kano State sports administration as well as the Nigeria Olympic Committee.

The appeal for postponement followed his burial scheduled for Sunday in Kano.

President of InterTech Football Academy, Kano, Suleiman Musa, said postponing the match would be a mark of honour and respect for Galadima's legacy and contributions to

football development.

Also speaking, former FIFA-badged referee, Alex Manna, described proceeding with the match as disrespectful to the memory of the late administrator.

"This is appropriate. Proceeding with the match diminishes the legacy of an icon who embodied discipline, integrity and service to Nigerian football," he said.

Manna added that Galadima was a principled leader and men-

tor, noting that postponement would reflect collective respect for his impact on the game.

In his reaction, former Chairman of Gombe United, Ahmed Shuaibu Gara-Gombe, expressed shock over the death, describing it as a painful loss to Nigerian football.

"I was speechless when I heard the news. Galadima was very dear to me and Nigerian football. His death is a painful loss to all stakeholders," he said.

## NSC mourns passing of former NFA Chairman, Galadima

The National Sports Commission (NSC) has expressed deep sorrow over the passing of former Nigeria Football Association (NFA) Chairman, Alhaji Ibrahim Galadima, describing his death as a profound loss to Nigerian sports industry.

The Chairman of the NSC, Shehu Dikko in a statement described the late Galadima as a mentor, father-figure, and a selfless patriot who placed national interest above personal gain and always worked for the collective good.

"He was more than a leader; he was a guiding light, mentor and a father figure to many of us who had the privilege of working under and alongside him.

"His passion for national

development was unmatched, and he consistently demonstrated incredible commitment to building structures that would stand the test of time.

"I was privileged to have worked so closely with him as one of his mentees and strategic advisors throughout his time at the helm of the NFA between 2002-2006.

"I indeed learnt a lot that shaped my involvement in sports administration and public service," he said.

The statement stated that Dikko in July 2004, served as the FIFA Goal Project Manager for Nigeria under Galadima's leadership as NFA Chairman, which led to the activation of several FIFA Goal projects in Nigeria.



ALHAJI IBRAHIM GALADIMA

# FEATURES

## When opposition stops thinking, it starts counting wrinkles

DAN OSA-OGBEGIE, ESQ.

One of the laziest and most embarrassing pastimes of Nigeria's opposition today is its puerile obsession with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's age. Having failed repeatedly to build a compelling national alternative, they now busy themselves with social media arithmetic, waving around the age of his daughter, Folashade Tinubu-Ojo, and asking with rehearsed mischief:

How can Tinubu be 74 while his daughter is 64?

It is a preposterous line of attack, built on falsehood and sustained by intellectual lassitude.

The truth is straightforward. Folashade Tinubu-Ojo is not 64. She is 49, going on 50. President Tinubu's widely cited date of birth is 29 March 1952, which places him at 74 in 2026. So the entire talking point is not merely weak. It is false. Anyone who sees that woman and still insists she is 64 is mistaken. He is being mischievous and deliberately peddling falsehood.

And that, in truth, is the deeper problem with much of Nigeria's opposition: it has become intellectually lazy.

Instead of confronting the hard questions of governance, economy, security, institutional reform and national cohesion, it retreats into cheap mockery, gossip, innuendo and emotional drama. Rather than interrogate policy with seriousness, it chases triviality. Rather than build persuasive alternatives, it manufactures ridicule. Rather than confront governance with ideas, it substitutes mockery for substance. It is the same empty theatre, the same shallow performative opposition, the same unserious politics that has repeatedly failed them at the ballot box. Yet they persist in it, as though repetition can somehow convert silliness into strategy.

A serious opposition would by now be presenting a coherent alternative vision for Nigeria, sector by sector, with clarity, discipline and intellectual honesty. But that would require work. It would require thought. It would require a seriousness many of them have shown little appetite for.

And when the time of serious political reckoning comes, Nigerians will not merely ask questions of Tinubu. They will also ask hard and unavoidable questions of those who parade themselves as alternatives.

Atiku Abubakar is not the future. He is a perpetually unelectable candidate, a man who has spent more time pursuing power than explaining why he should be trusted with it. He represents a tired recycling of elite ambition, not a fresh governing vision. His politics increasingly feels like a



PRESIDENT BOLA TINUBU

permanent candidacy in search of a convincing national purpose.

Peter Obi thrives on moral posturing and digital enthusiasm, but governance is not a motivational seminar and a hashtag coalition is not a statecraft doctrine. A nation as complex as Nigeria cannot be governed by perpetual indignation, selective statistics, and the illusion that public frustration alone is a programme. Increasingly, he comes across as a provincial apostle, animated less by a coherent national doctrine than by a grievance-laden mood around perceived Igbo exclusion. Nigeria does not need another sectional presidency dressed up as moral insurgency. We have had enough of provincial power wrapped in national language. That experiment should have ended with Buhari. And truth be told, each time one listens carefully to Peter Obi, what emerges is too often a bizarre convoluted monologues that confuse more than they clarify.

Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso remains trapped in the narrowness of regional vanity, too often projecting a politics of personal cult and provincial ego rather than broad national accommodation, in ways that make it appear as though he is contesting not to govern



*It is often painful before it becomes productive. But Nigeria is better served by difficult correction than by sentimental decline. We are, slowly but surely, moving away from the years of drift and into an era of structural reckoning.*

Nigeria, but to become the Ayatollah of Kano, or perhaps of the Muslim North, sadly.

Nasir El-Rufai may be brilliant in flashes, but brilliance without balance is dangerous. Nigeria does not need a combustible technocrat with a taste for provocation and an uneven record in managing plural realities. Governance is not warfare against your own citizens. He will also have to explain, honestly and convincingly, the troubling legacy of Southern Kaduna, where many still believe his stewardship deepened wounds rather than healed them. He must also explain the recklessness of producing a Muslim-Muslim ticket in a deeply combustible Kaduna State, long defined by delicate religious and ethnic schisms. That was not courage. It was political insensitivity elevated to doctrine.

By contrast, Tinubu's public life, whatever critics may say, has never been empty of governing content. In Lagos, he helped lay the institutional and fiscal architecture that transformed the state from a struggling subnational unit into one of Africa's most viable economic centres. He did not merely govern Lagos; he helped redesign its possibilities.

As President, he has chosen the

hard road of reform over the cowardice of postponement. He has confronted distortions that many before him lacked either the courage or discipline to touch. And while the pain of reform is real and should never be dismissed, so too is the necessity of rescue. A broken country cannot be healed by denial, and a bleeding economy cannot be saved by sentimental slogans.

That is the point.

Serious reform is rarely romantic. It is often painful before it becomes productive. But Nigeria is better served by difficult correction than by sentimental decline. We are, slowly but surely, moving away from the years of drift and into an era of structural reckoning.

The opposition may continue counting wrinkles, inventing ages, and rehearsing lazy propaganda.

Tinubu, meanwhile, is governing.

And in politics, as in history, builders will always outlast hecklers.

• DAN Osa-Ogbegie, Esq., is a Benin City-based legal practitioner, public affairs commentator, and advocate of purposeful governance and democratic accountability.