

Correctional reforms reduce re-offenders to 1,382 in 3 years —Tunji-Ojo

ABUJA
The Minister of Interior, Dr Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo says repeat offenders in the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS), dropped from 11,616 in 2023 to 1,382 in 2025.

Tunji-Ojo revealed this when he received reports on Wednesday in Abuja, from the investigative panel set up to investigate some allegations against the NCoS. Giving a breakdown of the statistics, he said that the figure declined to 3,156 in 2024 before it

drastically drop to 1,382 in 2025. The minister attributed the decline to sustained rehabilitation and reformation programmes organised for inmates in correctional centres across the country. "Recidivism was 11,616 when we came in in 2023 but

in 2025 it came down to 1,382 recidivists which means that our reformation programmes are bearing fruits. "The point is that we are no longer where we were as we are making progress, and for us not until recidivism gets to zero, we cannot say we have

succeeded," he said. He also revealed that 15,632 inmates were admitted into custody in May 2026 while 14,190 were released under various terms of imprisonment during the same period. Tunji-Ojo assured that the investigative report would not

be consigned to the shelves, but would aid the development of an implementation framework backed by a monitoring and evaluation committee. "This report will not gather dust on the shelves, we are going

CONTINUES ON PG 2 >>

The Nigerian OBSERVER

That The People May Know

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Stock market sheds N2.28trn on profit-taking in one day

● Market capitalization closed at N155.9trn from N158trn ● MTN topped the value chart with N17.6bn ● All-share index fell 1.44% ● "We are entering a bearish market now," VP Highcap

OUR REPORTER WITH AGENCY REPORT
LAGOS
The Nigerian stock market closed on a bearish note on Wednesday as investors lost N2.280 trillion in market value. Continued profit-taking

in large- and mid-capitalised stocks such as WAPCO, Zichis Agro-Allied Industries, Learn Africa, John Holt, and Consolidated Hallmark Insurance, alongside declines in 39 other stocks, dragged the equities market into negative territory. Market capitalisation declined by N2.280 trillion, or 1.44

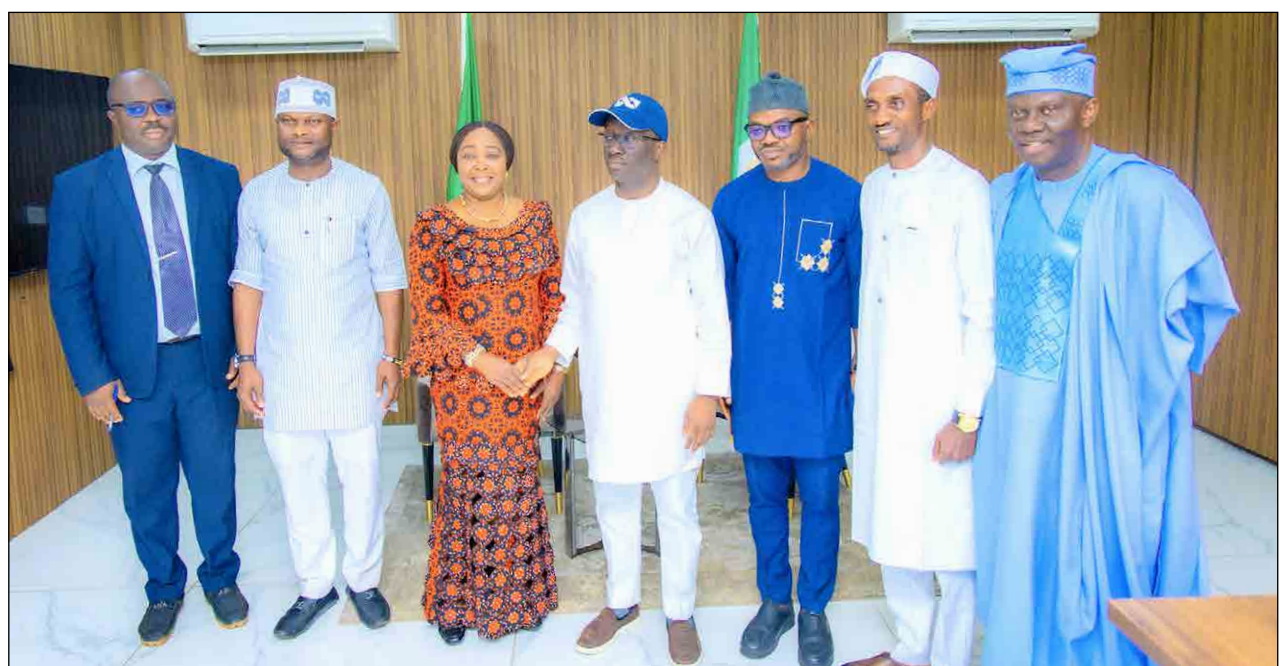
per cent, to close at N155.939 trillion from N158.219 trillion recorded in the previous session. Similarly, the All-Share Index fell by 3,554.05 points, or 1.44 per cent, to 243,132.61 from 246,686.66 posted on Tuesday. While the market's Year-to-Date (YTD) return moderated to 56.24 per cent, the mar-

ket breadth closed negatively as well, recording 44 losers against 15 gainers. WAPCO led the losers' chart by 9.97 per cent, closing at N307.90, Zichis Agro Allied Industries trailed by 9.82 per cent, settling at N29.20 while John Holt and Lafarge dipped by 9.80 per cent each, end-

ing the session at N13.80 and N11.50 per share respectively. Similarly, Consolidated Hallmark lost by 8.84 per cent, finishing at N6.19 per share. On the other hand, Abbey Mortgage Bank led the gainers' chart by 9.93 per cent, settling at N7.75, International Energy Insurance followed by 9.89 per cent, finishing at N6 and Triple Gee gained by 9.80 per cent, closing at N4.37 per share.

Also, Universal Insurance advanced by 8.91 per cent, ending the session at N1.10 while Royal Exchange increased by 7.14 per cent, closing at N1.50 per share. Meanwhile, market activity improved during the trading session, with total volume traded rising by 28.42 per cent to 922.97 million shares valued at N42.27 billion across 69,332 transactions.

CONTINUES ON PG 2 >>



COURTESY VISIT: Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo (middle); Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa (2nd left); Provost, Igueben College of Education, Dr. Victoria Okojie (3rd left), and some members of the institution's management, during a courtesy visit to the Governor, yesterday.

Okpebholo hails Provost for rejuvenating Igueben College of Education

RICHARD EWEKA BENIN CITY
Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo has hailed the Provost, Edo state College of Education Igueben, Dr Victoria Okojie, for rejuvenating the Institution within the shortest period of her appointment. Okpebholo made the commendation while addressing the school management who were on a courtesy visit to Edo Government House on Wednesday in Benin. According to him, first of

all let me thank you for your efforts in growing the school from within your five months of appointment. "At a time I think that school was completely a write off, but with your efforts, a lot of things have been achieved within the shortest time possible. "But before we appointed you we know your capability, we know who you are and your professionalism, I have no doubt that you were going to succeed. "I think some of the requests you made are achievable, I also

CONTINUES ON PG 2 >>

Gunmen strike Ogbomoso NIS Passport Office, injure 2, cart away service rifles —Pg 2

FG intensifies Ebola preparedness, strengthens border surveillance measures —Pg 6

Gabon opposition leader kept behind bars as court rejects appeal —Pgs 9

Manchester United weigh move for Osimhen after title-winning season in Turkey —Pg 12

Senate raises fresh alarm over escalating terror in Kwara North, demands urgent military action

CAROLINE AMEH

ABUJA

The Nigerian Senate on Wednesday sounded the alarm over the worsening wave of insecurity in Kwara North Senatorial District, warning that persistent killings, kidnappings, attacks on communities, and the prolonged captivity of victims of the Woro massacre have plunged the region into fear and uncertainty.

The upper chamber also condemned the recent attack on the palace of the Emir of Yashikira, where armed criminals report-

edly set the royal residence ablaze and abducted members of the monarch's family, describing the incident as a direct assault on traditional institutions and community stability.

The concerns were raised during plenary through a motion sponsored by Senator Sadiq Suleiman Umar (Kwara North), titled "Urgent Need for Federal Government Intervention to Address the Re-occurring Insecurity in Kwara North Senatorial District." The session was presided over by Senate President Godswill Akpabio.

Presenting the motion, Sen-

ator Umar stressed that security remains the foremost responsibility of government as enshrined in Section 14(2) (b) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), lamenting that communities across Kwara North have continued to suffer relentless attacks by criminal elements.

According to him, the district has witnessed a disturbing escalation in violence marked by killings, kidnappings, destruction of property, and repeated attacks on innocent residents.

He particularly drew attention to the fate of victims abducted during the Woro massacre, noting that several women and children kidnapped in the attack remain in captivity months after the incident.

"Several months after the unfortunate Woro massacre, many women and children abducted during the attack remain in captivity, while their families continue to suffer untold hardship and psychological trauma," Umar said.

The senator further informed lawmakers that armed criminals attacked and torched the palace of the Emir of Yashikira on the eve of the recent Sallah celebrations, abducting some of the monarch's wives, children, and other family members.

He warned that the attack represented a dangerous erosion of respect for traditional authority and posed a serious threat to communal peace in the area.

Umar also highlighted the deteriorating security situation in Patigi and Edu local government areas, where communities have reportedly suffered repeat-

ed kidnappings and deadly raids.

He disclosed that criminal gangs recently invaded Lafiagi township, killing and abducting residents in what he described as evidence of the growing audacity and operational strength of armed groups terrorising the region.

The lawmaker attributed part of the challenge to the vast and difficult terrain around the Kainji Lake axis, noting that the national park, forest reserves, and adjoining ungoverned spaces have become safe havens for criminal elements operating across Kwara North and neighbouring states.

Stock market sheds N2.28trn...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

Sterling Nigeria led the volume chart with 264.59 million shares, accounting for 28.67 per cent of total volume traded.

MTN Nigeria topped the value chart with transactions worth N17.61 billion, representing 41.67 per cent of the day's total turnover.

Reacting to the market downturn, Vice President of Highcap Securities, Mr David Adonri, said the market had entered a bearish phase due to the absence of major price-sensitive information capable of driving investor interest.

According to him, key market-moving events such as the release of full-year earnings and dividend distributions have been concluded, leaving investors with little incentive to take fresh positions.

"We are entering a bearish market now. There is no

price-sensitive information or disclosure capable of causing the market to rise.

"The full-year earnings announcements and dividend payments have already taken place," he said.

Adonri noted that the market usually slows from the end of April and regains momentum around August when companies begin to release half-year results and declare interim dividends.

He explained that investors might also be selling equities to raise funds ahead of the anticipated listing of Dangote Refinery and Petrochemicals, which he described as a major factor behind the current market trend.

He dismissed insinuations that the recently introduced T+1 settlement cycle contributed to the market decline, noting that weakening demand had become evident before its implementation.

Correctional reforms reduce...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

to be very aggressive in terms of implementation," he said.

He reiterated that the Federal Government remained committed to correctional centres that had been consumed by urbanisation.

The minister called on state governments to partner with the federal government on relocation exercise, noting that the burden of custodial management was largely a state responsibility.

"When we share the assets, we should also think of sharing the liabilities. About 90 per cent of these inmates are state offenders,

not federal offenders and 67 per cent are awaiting trial," he said.

He confirmed that President Bola Tinubu had approved a 50 per cent increment in inmate feeding allowances, which had already taken effect and challenged civil society to hold the service accountable for its implementation.

"It is now the responsibility of civil society and all Nigerians to hold the correctional service accountable for improvement in the feeding of inmates, because President Bola Tinubu has approved it and the Ministry of Finance has started paying," he said.

Okpebholo hails Provost for...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

look at visiting the school to see things for myself and know how we can come in", he said.

Earlier, the Edo state College of Education Provost, Okojie, commended the governor for increasing the school monthly subvention from N19 million to N100 million.

Okojie explained that they have focused attention on strengthening internal quality assurance system, promoting

staff and students welfare since assuming office.

She, however, appealed to the governor to support the school with students shuttle buses to aid their movement for lectures and other purposes.

The provost highlighted key areas where they needed the state government support to be; campus security, provision of additional students accommodations, staff quarters and improvement of internal road network among others.

**KIDNAPPERS:**

Operatives of the Violent Crime Response Unit, VCRU, Edo State Command, on the trail of suspected kidnapers.

Gunmen strike Ogbomoso NIS Passport Office, injure 2, cart away service rifles

● Oyo Police investigate the daring raid

IBADAN

The Police Command in Oyo State has launched a full investigation into an attack by armed hoodlums on the Nigeria Immigration Service Passport Office in Ogbomoso on Tuesday.

The State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Olayinka Ayanlade, in a statement in Ibadan on Wednesday, noted that the incident left two immigration officers injured

and resulted in the theft of a service rifle and other valuables.

He further stated that the immigration officer-in-charge raised an alarm at about 8.45 p.m. after hoodlums scaled the perimeter fence at the rear of the facility.

"On receiving the distress call, operatives of the Command Monitoring Unit and surveillance teams were immediately deployed to the scene for intervention and assessment.

"Preliminary findings revealed that about five assailants

gained access through the rear fence bordering a large expanse of bushland.

"The hoodlums attacked two Immigration officers on night duty, assaulting them with sticks and other dangerous weapons before carting away a G3 rifle assigned to the office along with its ammunition.

"The suspects also made away with a mobile phone belonging to one of the officers, a generating set, and a motorcycle battery, before escaping

through the same route used to enter the premises," he said.

According to Ayanlade, the injured officers have received medical attention and are currently in stable condition.

He added that the surveillance and tactical teams have intensified operations within and around the area, including combing adjoining bushes and likely escape routes.

He said that the operations aimed at apprehending the perpetrators and recovering the stolen firearms and other valuables.

The spokesperson added that all relevant investigative and operational resources have been deployed to ensure a swift breakthrough in the case.

Ebola alert: FG tightens airport, border screening

BENIN CITY

The Federal Government has intensified health screening at the country's airports, seaports and land borders.

It also announced that travellers identified as high-risk or displaying symptoms associated with Ebola and other viral haemorrhagic fevers will be subjected to secondary screening, isolation and referral procedures.

The move comes amid growing concerns over the ongoing outbreak of the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola virus disease in parts of East

and Central Africa and forms part of a broader national preparedness strategy aimed at preventing the disease from entering Nigeria.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, which was signed by the Assistant Director of Press and Public Relations, Ado Bako, the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare said there was currently no confirmed Ebola case in Nigeria but stressed that heightened preparedness measures had been activated nationwide to safeguard public health.

"The ministry wishes to reassure Nigerians that there is

presently no confirmed case of Ebola Virus Disease in Nigeria.

"However, in line with the Federal Government's commitment to strengthening national health security and preventing cross-border disease transmission, heightened preparedness measures have been activated nationwide," the ministry stated.

It said enhanced border surveillance remained a critical component of the government's response, with health officials directed to strengthen screening and risk assessment procedures for all incoming travellers.

Among the measures announced were mandatory temperature checks using infrared thermal scanners and handheld thermometers, health declaration forms, travel history assessments and intensified risk profiling at designated points of entry.

The ministry said authorities had activated "enhanced traveller risk assessment and screening procedures at designated points of entry" and put in place "secondary screening, isolation, and referral mechanisms for travellers presenting symptoms consistent with viral haemorrhagic fevers."

Special Marshals boss highlights impact of insurgency, banditry on road safety operations

MATTHEW OKAGHA

BENIN CITY

The National Coordinator of Special Marshals, Dr. Usman Adaji, has expressed deep concern over the adverse effects of insecurity on road safety operations across several parts of Nigeria, particularly in regions affected by

insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, and other violent crimes.

Speaking with journalists in Benin City Dr. Adaji said the prevailing security challenges have significantly hampered the effectiveness of road safety campaigns and enforcement activities in many communities, especially within the North-East, North-West, and parts of the

North-Central geopolitical zones.

According to him, Special Marshals operating in these areas are often unable to carry out their statutory responsibilities effectively due to the constant threat posed by criminal elements. He explained that many major highways, rural roads, and suburban routes that ordinarily require regular

patrols and road safety interventions have become increasingly difficult to access.

"The issue of insecurity remains a major concern to all critical stakeholders in road safety management across the country. In some parts of Nigeria, our members are unable to fully discharge their duties because of the risks associated with

insurgency, banditry, and related criminal activities," he stated.

Dr. Adaji noted that the inability of road safety personnel to freely access certain locations has created gaps in data collection and accident reporting mechanisms.

He explained that this development makes it difficult to obtain accurate statistics on road crashes, fatalities, injuries, and other traffic-related incidents occurring in some affected areas.

"Reliable data is essential for planning, policy formulation, and effective road safety interventions. Unfortunately, where insecurity restricts movement, there is a likelihood that some crashes go undocumented, thereby affecting the overall accuracy of available records," he said.

The National Coordinator emphasized that the safety and welfare of Special Marshals remain paramount to the organisation.

He stressed that no responsible institution would knowingly expose its personnel to unnecessary danger in pursuit of operational objectives.

"We cannot compromise the lives of our officers and volunteers. Human life remains invaluable, and every organisation has a duty to protect its workforce. While we remain committed to promoting road safety nationwide, we must also take into account the prevailing security realities in certain locations," he added.

Despite these challenges,

Dr. Adaji commended the resilience, dedication, and patriotism of Special Marshals and other road safety stakeholders who continue to render services under difficult circumstances. He called for stronger collaboration between security agencies, government institutions, community leaders, and road safety organisations to address insecurity and create a safer environment for road users and safety personnel alike.

He further observed that improved security across the country would not only enhance road safety operations but also facilitate economic activities, ease transportation, encourage investment, and improve the overall quality of life of citizens.

Dr. Adaji reaffirmed the commitment of the Special Marshals to supporting the mandate of the Federal Road Safety Corps through sustained public enlightenment campaigns, traffic management initiatives, and advocacy programmes aimed at reducing road crashes and promoting a culture of safety among motorists and other road users.

He expressed optimism that with renewed efforts by the government and security agencies to tackle insecurity, road safety personnel would once again be able to operate freely in all parts of the country and effectively contribute to the reduction of traffic accidents and loss of lives on Nigerian roads.

**WORLD BICYCLES DAY:**

FRSC promotes bicycles as affordable and eco-friendly means of transport at Akwa, Anambra State.

Edo police arrest kidnap suspect, recovers decomposing bodies of 2 victims

BENIN CITY

Officers of the Edo state Police Command have recovered 2 corpses from the forests along the Benin-Lagos Expressway, who were kidnapped last month from Ekiadolor.

The recovery followed the arrest of one of the kidnapers, a member of a 7 man syndicate who operates along the Benin-Lagos and Benin-Akure expressway, by the Violent Crime Response Unit VCRU who engaged them in a gun battle in the forest.

The State Commander VCRU CSP Osagie Godspower led journalists and health officials into the forest where the corpses were recovered.

According to one of the victims, whose mother was among

those killed, the kidnapers struck their home in Iyowa community, Ekiadolor abducting herself, her Mother and the maid staying with them.

She narrated that 3 more families were later abducted and brought to join them in the forest, making a total of 4 families.

She explained that the were meant to trek round the forest at Night while they rested during the day.

According to her "we were here at this spot for 2 days, when they asked my mother her age, she responded 66, they asked another woman and she said 45 and one small boy, who was 15 years. We initially thought they were going to let those ones go because of their age, but later in the evening they took them

down this way and after some arguments they shot the other woman on the shoulder, and the bullet also met my mom.

"The other woman went quite immediately, but my mom was still talking, I could hear her praying and later she started breathing heavily and later stopped. After about 5 minutes, they took us to another location where they also shot the boy through the shoulder and he died."

The victim noted that her family later paid eleven Million Naira and brought other items, while other families also paid ransom before they were all released.

On her part the police Public Relations officer ASP Eno Ikoedem, explained that "we had a major first breakthrough in this case on the 19th of May, when op-

eratives of the VCRU sighted four of the syndicate in the forest and engaged them in a gun battle with many of the escaping with gun shot injuries. We had another breakthrough days after following their trail when we arrested one 24 year old Haruna while he was trying to take treatment for his gunshot wound and have since confessed to the crime and he led us here to recover the 2 bodies, as well as the body of the 15 year old boy which we have evacuated earlier.

"We are still on the trail of the rest and we are confident that in no time the Violent Crime Response Unit will roundup the remaining members of this kidnapping syndicate."

Meanwhile the suspect 24 year old Haruna Musa Confessed to being a member of the 7man syndicate after a brief work controlling cattles in Ogun State Last year.

Nigeria, UAE deepen cooperation on water resources, irrigation

ABUJA

Federal Government and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation in water supply, sanitation and irrigated agriculture to enhance food security and sustainable development.

The Minister of Water Resources and Sanitation, Prof. Joseph Utsev, stated this on Wednesday in Abuja when the UAE Ambassador to Nigeria, Salem AlShamsi, paid him a working visit.

Utsev said that the administration of President Bola Tinubu had prioritised agriculture and water supply as critical sectors for achieving food security, expanding access to safe water and creating employment opportunities.

According to him, Nigeria remains committed to deepening collaboration with the UAE in water resources development, sanitation and irrigation systems.

He said the ministry would continue to work closely with the UAE to facilitate the exchange of technical expertise, explore investment opportunities and strengthen institutional cooperation.

The minister added that such collaboration would advance sustainable water management

and improve agricultural productivity in the country.

Speaking, AlShamsi said the visit was aimed at strengthening partnership with Nigeria on the Sustainable Power and Irrigation for Nigeria (SPIN) initiative and exploring opportunities for collaboration on ongoing water and energy projects.

He invited the minister to attend the forthcoming Water Forum scheduled for December and to be jointly hosted by the UAE and Senegal.

According to him, the forum will provide a platform for global leaders and stakeholders to exchange knowledge and best practices on improving access to water and sanitation services, particularly in underserved communities.

The ambassador commended President Tinubu for strengthening bilateral relations between Nigeria and the UAE, noting that improved cooperation had boosted trade between both countries.

He said the UAE had become Nigeria's leading Arab trading partner, accounting for about 47 per cent of Nigeria's trade with Arab nations.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the meeting wasn't attended by the Permanent Secretary of the ministry, Dr Emanso Umobong, and some technical directors.

FG distributes ICT equipment to 15 colleges of education

ABUJA

The Federal Government has officially received and handed over Information and Communication Technology equipment and materials to 15 Federal and State Colleges of Education across the six geopolitical zones to strengthen teacher training, promote digital literacy, and improve access to quality education.

The handover ceremony, held in Abuja on Tuesday, was facilitated through support from the

Government of Japan and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa under the project, 'Capacity-building of Teachers to Promote Continuous and Inclusive Access to Safe and Quality Education for Girls in West Africa.'

Speaking at the event, the Minister of State for Education, Professor Suwaiba Ahmad, described the intervention as a significant contribution to the education sector and aligned with the ministry's strategic priorities.

Ahmad commended UNE-SCO-IICBA, the Government of Japan, and the African Union for launching the regional project in March 2024, noting that it demonstrates a shared commitment to strengthening teacher preparation systems and expanding educational opportunities, particularly for girls.

She said the project, which covers Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Nigeria, aligns with the "Federal Ministry of Education's priorities under the Renewed Hope Agenda, especial-

ly in the areas of equity, quality, digital transformation, and inclusive education."

"Teachers remain the backbone of every education system. No education reform can succeed without well-trained, motivated, and digitally empowered teachers," the minister stated.

According to her, the ICT resources will enhance both pre-service and in-service teacher training through improved access to digital learning content, innovative teaching methods, and learner-centred instructional approaches.

NEWS

Ex-Minister's sister, twin sons kidnapped by gunmen during school run

IBADAN

Barely three weeks after the abduction of 47 pupils/students and teachers in Aboro Esiele, Oriire Local Government Area of Oyo State, gunmen have

kidnapped the younger sister of the former Minister of Power, Adebayo Adelabu, and her twin sons in Ibadan.

In a swift reaction to the incident via a statement, Adelabu's media aide, Femi Awpgboro disclosed that the victims were

abducted around 7.30am, June, 2026, in Elewa area of Challenge, Ibadan South Local Government Area of Oyo State.

He stated that the gunmen intercepted the 43 year old and her 12 year old twins, Peter and Paul, before whisking them into thin air.

According to reports, the former minister young sister, Mrs. Olaide Busayo Adegoke

John Paul, was taking her twins to school when the gunmen intercepted her at gun point, forced her to abandon her Kia Sonata vehicle before whisking her and the children away in another vehicle.

Sources disclosed that the kidnappers fired sporadic gunshots into the air before fleeing with their victims as residents and passers-by scamper for

safety.

The family sources said security agencies were immediately alerted after the abduction and investigations aimed at rescuing the victims and apprehending the suspects are ongoing.

Mrs. John Paul reportedly relocated to Ibadan with her children recently in preparation to join her husband in the United States of America

(USA) before her abduction.

Confirming to the incident, the Police Public Relation Officer (PPRO) of the Oyo State Police Command, Olayinka Ayanlade, disclosed in a statement, that investigation commenced immediately after the incident, adding that security operatives had mounted intense investigations and the victims' vehicle had been recovered.

Oyo APC condemns abduction of Adelabu's sister, her sons, demands immediate rescue

IBADAN

The All Progressives Congress (APC) in Oyo State has strongly condemned Wednesday's abduction of Mrs Busayo Adelabu-JohnPaul by unidentified gunmen in Ibadan.

In a statement by its State Publicity Secretary, Mr Olawale Sadare, on Wednesday, APC urged Gov. Seyi Makinde to collaborate with security agencies and relevant stakeholders with a view to arresting the spate of insecurity in the state.

Adelabu-JohnPaul, who is a biological sister to the immediate former Minister of Power in Nigeria, Chief Adebayo Adelabu, was reportedly kidnapped with her twin sons, Paul and Peter, both 12 years old at Bolumole, Elewura-Challenge Area of Ibadan.

The abduction was allegedly carried out by some gunmen, who were said to have trailed the car conveying the victims from their home before striking at 7.30 a.m.

The APC decried the rise in cases of kidnapping in the

state, saying "the public is increasingly becoming agitated over the cases of kidnappings.

It cited the unresolved case of kidnapping of some school children and their teachers in Oriire Local Government Area of the state.

"This is in addition to two staff of the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN) in Idi-Ayunre Area of Oluyole Local Government Area of Oyo state that were initially abducted.

"We use this medium to appeal to the relevant authorities at the federal, state and local government levels to take a critical look at the security architecture of Oyo state.

"This is with a view to tightening all the loose ends and ensure maximum protection of lives and properties of the citizens regardless of their background, economic or social-political status.

"We demand immediate rescue of all Oriire school abductees, CRIN staff, Mrs Adelabu-JohnPaul and her children as well as others who are in captivity at the moment.



ABDUCTION:

The recovered vehicle. **INSET:** The former Minister of Power, Adebayo Adelabu

Tinubu's re-election, my number one project —Oborevwo

AJUWA VICTOR

ASABA

Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwo, has declared that the re-election of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in 2027 is his personal political project, insisting that the President's return to office would bring greater benefits to Delta State and the nation at large.

Governor Oborevwo said he was fully committed to mobilizing support for President Tinubu's second-term bid, stressing that the President's 2027 reelection success would further ease the burden of governance on state governments.

"I'm begging people to vote for President Bola Tinubu. It's my number one project. That project is bigger than any other project because it will help us achieve more for our people," the governor insisted.

According to him, the Federal Government's economic reforms have significantly increased revenues accruing to states, enabling his adminis-

tration to embark on and complete numerous development projects across Delta State.

Oborevwo noted that Delta State was currently experiencing unprecedented financial stability, revealing that contractors handling state projects were being paid promptly without waiting for federal allocations.

The Governor said: "For the first time in the history of this state, we are not owing contractors. We don't wait for allocation before paying contractors. Once jobs are certified, we pay. We mobilize contractors with 40 per cent and continue to fund projects as work progresses.

The governor maintained that the improved revenue profile of the state was a direct result of the economic reforms introduced by President Tinubu's administration.

"If the reforms are not working, will we get this money? More money is coming to the states. The reforms are working very well in Delta State and that is why we are able to execute projects and meet our obligations," he added.

Oborevwo lauded for transforming Delta state

NDOKWA WEST

Delta State Commissioner for Works (Rural Roads) and Public Information, Mr. Charles Aniagwu, has commended Governor Sheriff Oborevwo for transforming rural communities across the state through strategic road and bridge infrastructure projects

He described the governor as a leader who is redefining development and connecting communities through purposeful governance.

The Commissioner who made the remarks during the inauguration of the 5.1-kilometre Obi-Ibaba Road project in Ndokwa West Local Government Area, highlighted the far-reaching impact of the administration's infrastructure drive on the socio-economic lives of rural dwellers.

Recalling his days as a student at Ndemili Grammar School over four decades ago, Aniagwu said travelling to Utakwa-Uno was once a difficult undertaking that required

extensive planning due to the poor state of roads in the area.

"Some four decades ago, when I was a student at Ndemili Grammar School, elders would often discuss their plans for days before travelling to Utakwa-Uno because of the terrible condition of the road. Today, by virtue of what Governor Oborevwo has done, that challenge has become history," he said.

According to him, the newly completed road has significantly reduced travel time, strengthened connectivity between agrarian communities and improved access to markets, healthcare and other social services.

The commissioner noted that the Obi-Ibaba Road project is one among several strategic road projects being executed by the Oborevwo administration across the Ndokwa and Ukwuani axis.

He listed other ongoing projects to include the Utakwa-Uno/Eweshi Road, the Inam-Abbi Road and the 8.4-kilometre road network linking Etua Ukpo, Etua-Etiti

and Etua-Oliogo communities.

Aniagwu said the projects were changing the physical and economic landscape of the benefiting communities, transforming them from isolated agrarian settlements into emerging urban centres.

"In Etua-Ukpo, Etua-Etiti and Etua-Oliogo, you have over 8.4 kilometres of roads. What that means is that you have redefined the skyline of those communities. They have moved beyond being mere agrarian communities and are gradually becoming townships," he stated.

He also praised the governor for the completion of the Obi-Ibaba Road in Onicha-Ukwuani, noting that the project had transformed the way residents commute and interact with neighbouring communities.

Describing Governor Oborevwo's infrastructure policy as one that builds "bridges of possibilities," Aniagwu said the administration was not only constructing roads and bridges but also creating economic op-

portunities for residents.

"Beyond these bridges of possibilities, you are connecting people, making business easier, improving transportation and helping farmers move their produce to markets. In doing so, you are strengthening the economy of these communities and the state at large," he added.

The commissioner further commended the governor for providing engineers and officials in the Ministry of Works the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the development of rural communities across the state.

He said the quality of projects being executed under the administration was a testament to the governor's commitment to delivering infrastructure that would stand the test of time.

Aniagwu thanked Governor Oborevwo for his confidence in the ministry and assured him of the continued dedication of engineers and other personnel to the successful delivery of projects that improve the quality of life of the people.

Edo State forest guards training commences Friday, June 5

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government hereby announce that the training for newly recruited Forest Guards in Edo state will commence on Friday, June 5, 2026 for 6 weeks.

This was disclosed by Rt. Hon. Festus Ebea, Hon Commissioner for Public Safety and Security

Edo State in a statement in Benin city

According to him, all candidates who have successfully been profiled by the Department of State Services (DSS)

and completed medical screening at Edo Specialist Hospital are by this statement required to report to the Police Training School, Ogida Barracks, Benin City on or before 5:00 p.m. on the stated date.

"Candidates are advised to come prepared with all re-

quired documentation and in compliance with the training facility's protocols.

"Other training facilities will be supplied to them there after. For further enquiries, contact the Office of the Commissioner for Public Safety and Security," the statement added.

Extrajudicial killing of 16-year-old: Family, others demand thorough probe

MAKURDI

Family members and close associates of 16-year-old Atser Sesugh have called for an independent forensic investigation into the circumstances surrounding his death. The demands follow a statement by the Benue Police Command confirming the death of Sesugh, who was linked to an alleged fraud and

cybercrime case under investigation by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in Makurdi.

The Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Edet Udeme, said Sesugh and two other suspects were arrested by the EFCC operatives on April 28 but allegedly escaped from custody on May 4.

According to the police, the EFCC received intelligence on

May 23 that the fleeing suspects had been sighted at a hideout behind Mechanic Village in Kanshio, Makurdi.

Operatives who responded to the information reportedly encountered a group of suspected cultists who opened fire on them, leading to an exchange of gunfire.

The police stated that while withdrawing from the scene, operatives found Sesugh lying

in a pool of blood by the roadside.

He was reportedly rushed to the Police Cottage Hospital in Makurdi, where he was confirmed dead.

His remains were subsequently deposited at the mortuary of the Benue State University Teaching Hospital for preservation and autopsy.

However, sources close to the family have disputed the official account, insisting that the teenager was not an escapee from custody as claimed by authorities.

Speaking on the incident, Sesugh's mother, Mrs Jennifer Asar, said her son was on EFCC bail at the time of his death.

The 35-year-old mother of five, who earns a living through the sale of garri, expressed grief over the loss of her son and appealed for justice.

"My son was a hardworking

and responsible boy.

He worked at construction sites and was also learning furniture making.

He was dedicated to his work and always supported the family," she said.

Asar alleged that she later learned her son had been killed by an EFCC operative.

Soludo vows to restore Nnewi's status as leading industrial hub

AWKA

Governor Chukwuma Soludo of Anambra has reaffirmed his administration's commitment to restoring Nnewi as the state's foremost industrial and commercial centre through strategic urban renewal and development projects.

Soludo made the pledge during an inspection tour of key public infrastructure and development sites in Nnewi on Wednesday.

The governor said the visit was aimed at identifying infrastructure challenges, reclaiming dormant public assets and unlocking the city's economic potential.

One of the major sites visited was the Nkwo Nnewi Triangle, where a shopping complex has remained uncompleted and unused for about 17 years.

Soludo expressed concern over the prolonged abandonment of the facility, describing it as a waste of public resources.

"It is unacceptable that public assets intended to drive commerce have been left to rot for nearly two decades.

"We are here to draw a line in the sand. This facility will no

longer be a monument to neglect; we are moving swiftly to restore it to productive use for the benefit of the people of Nnewi," he said.

The governor also inspected the Post Office area and the High Court premises, noting that the sites would be integrated into a broader urban renewal plan designed to improve accessibility and enhance public service delivery.

He said the administration was equally exploring suitable locations for housing developments to support the city's growing workforce and sustain its competitiveness as a commercial hub.

According to him, government is mapping out underutilised open spaces across the city for conversion into parks, recreational centres and commercial facilities.

"Our strategy is simple: we are unlocking the hidden value of Nnewi.

"By converting dormant open spaces into vibrant public parks and productive facilities, we are not just fixing buildings; we are stimulating local commerce.

"We are also reclaiming Nnewi's rightful place as the premier industrial nerve centre of the region," he added.



APPON NATIONAL CONFERENCE:

Participants during the 6th National Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Association of Public Procurement Practitioners of Nigeria (AP-PON) in Enugu on Wednesday.

FG's procurement reform, key to SMEs growth —BPP

ENUGU

The Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) says the Federal Government's affirmative procurement has increased participation of Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in public sector contracting.

The Director-General of the Bureau, Dr Adedokun Adebowale, stated this at the 6th National Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Association of Public Procurement Practitioners of Nigeria (AP-PON), held at the International Conference Centre, Enugu.

The conference, which runs from June 2 to June 6, is themed: "Procurement Reforms in Nigeria: Evaluating Progress and Strengthening

SMEs through Affirmative Procurement Policies."

The DG said that the policy was a catalyst for inclusive economic growth which had strengthened the SMEs.

According to him, the policy aligns with President Bola Tinubu's economic agenda aimed at empowering SMEs, youth-led enterprises, women-owned businesses, veterans and other vulnerable groups through greater access to government contracts.

"If there is anything government is doing today, it is how to strengthen small and medium-scale enterprises.

"The affirmative procurement agenda is designed to take development closer to the people by creating procure-

ment opportunities that SMEs can undertake with minimal barriers," he said.

Adebowale noted that many young entrepreneurs possess the capacity to execute small-scale projects and provide innovative technological solutions but often lacked access to public sector opportunities due to stringent procurement requirements.

"We have over 70 per cent youth in this country. There are projects worth N10 million or N15 million that startups and SMEs can effectively execute.

"The objective is to create a pool of projects reserved for these groups without the cumbersome documentation often required for large infrastructure contracts," he said.

The BPP boss described

public procurement as a strategic tool for industrial development, innovation, job creation and national economic transformation.

He said procurement reforms had significantly improved transparency, accountability, competitiveness and professionalism in the public sector.

Adebowale noted that government was deepening the reforms through policy adjustments, institutional strengthening and digitalisation.

According to him, procurement thresholds have been reviewed to reflect prevailing economic realities and reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks while maintaining transparency and accountability.

Optician advocates screen time reduction, 20-20 strategy for eye care

LAGOS

An Optician, Dr Violet Ogbatue, has advised on screen time reduction from gadgets and the need for protective lens to be incorporated into eye glasses, to protect the eyes

Dr Ogbatue also said that the 20-20 rule served as a protection for the eyes and to also prevent further damage to the eyes.

Ogbatue, Head Optometrist, St. Joseph Medical Centre, Egbeda, spoke with newsmen in Lagos on Wednesday, dur-

ing a medical outreach organised for NAN staff in Lagos.

She said: "We make sure that there is a level of protection for the eye, that is where the 20-20 rule comes in.

"We use the gadgets for 20 minutes and move away from them for 20 seconds to shield the eye from light.

"Studies have shown that the use of phones without protection brings some kind of strain. A conscious effort must be made to reduce screen time," she said.

Speaking, Mrs Ifenyinwa

Omwolole, Head NAN Lagos office, said the health outreach was a welcome development and that the agency would incorporate other medical tests and examinations subsequently.

Omwolole assured members of staff of routine health check, promising that the next one would be a cardiovascular check.

Mr Kevin Okunzuwa, Head of NAN News Room, Lagos office, advised journalists to put their eyes into consideration and be conscious of them because of the nature of their job.

"The nature of our job

makes us use gadgets always.

"We must ensure that we observe the 20-20 strategy, it corrects some abnormalities of the eye.

"The eye is one of the essential parts of the body; when the eyes are dead, you are as good as a dead person.

"The eye is also as good as what you put in your stomach, therefore, take good care of it," he said.

Okunzuwa said the screening exercise was continuous, to ensure the well-being of the members of staff.

4 political parties to contest Ondo South by-election —INEC

OKITIPUPA (ONDO)

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has said that four political parties will take part in the Ondo South Senatorial District by-election scheduled for June 20.

Dr Mutiu Agboke, the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) in Ondo State, made this known on Wednesday during a stakeholders meeting, held in Okitipupa.

The by-election in the senatorial district followed the resignation of Sen. Jimoh Ibrahim, who is now the Nigeria's Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

The Ondo South Senatorial District comprise of Okitipupa, Irele, Ilaje, Ese-Odo, Odigbo and Ile-Oluji/Oke-Igbo Local Government Areas.

Agboke named the participating political parties as the All Progressives Congress (APC), Allied People's Movement (APM), Action People's Party (APP) and Boot Party (BP).

The REC also said Prof. Dayo Faduyile of APC, Adeola Akinwunmi of APM, Adesanya Olaoluwa of APP and Clement Funso-Nejo of BP are the candidates contesting for vacant position.

"Voters with the ongoing CVR exercise are not eligible to vote as the process is still ongoing, only voters with valid PVC's are eligible to vote during that by-election.

"The total number of registered voters to vote in the six LGAs is 673, 446 across 1,354 polling units, 66 polling areas and 5,416 poll officials.

"We are fully ready for the by-election as we will deploy 1,359 Bimodal Voter Accreditation Systems (BVAS) which has been tested and 264 BVAS backup as well as INEC Result Viewing Portal (iReV).

"Logistics such as security, sensitive and non sensitive materials, like ballot papers, result sheets, Forms EC8A, ballot boxes, voting cubicles, indelible ink, stamps and other materials are all intact," Agboke said.

NEWS

FG intensifies Ebola preparedness, strengthens border surveillance measures

ABUJA

The Federal Government has intensified national preparedness and response measures against the possible introduction of the Bundibugyo Ebola Virus Disease (BEBOV), currently reported in parts of East and Central Africa.

This is contained in a statement issued on Wednesday by Mr Ado Bako, Assistant Director of Press and Public Relations, Federal Ministry of Health, in Abuja.

According to him, the move aims to safeguard Nigeria from cross-border disease transmission and strengthen the country's overall health security architec-

ture against emerging threats.

Bako reassured Nigerians that there was presently no confirmed case of Ebola Virus Disease in the country.

"However, in line with the Federal Government's commitment to strengthening national health security and preventing cross-border disease transmission, heightened preparedness measures have been activated nationwide.

"As part of ongoing response

readiness efforts, official preparedness protocols, advisories, and technical guidance documents have been uploaded to the Ministry's website to support public awareness, stakeholder sensitisation, and institutional compliance," he said.

According to him, strict border control and Point of Entry protocols are already operational across the country to strengthen surveillance and early detection of suspected cases.

He said the measures included universal temperature screening using infrared thermal scanners

and handheld thermometers, mandatory health declaration forms and travel history assessments for arriving passengers.

Bako added that enhanced traveller risk assessments, secondary screening, isolation and referral mechanisms for symptomatic individuals, as well as strengthened coordination with border management agencies, had also been activated.

The spokesman said surveillance activities had equally been intensified through the Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response system, alongside

strengthened community-based and event-based monitoring mechanisms nationwide.

He said public health authorities were actively monitoring, verifying and investigating alerts and rumours while conducting continuous national risk assessments and epidemiological surveillance.

Bako further said laboratory readiness, specimen collection and transportation systems for viral haemorrhagic diseases had been strengthened to ensure prompt diagnosis and response when necessary.

Police foil kidnapping attempt, neutralise 2 suspects in Enugu

ENUGU

The Police Command in Enugu State has foiled a kidnapping attempt, and neutralised two suspects in two separate operations in the state.

This is contained in a statement by the command's spokesman, SP Daniel Ndukwe, in Enugu.

Ndukwe said that three firearms, including an AK-47 rifle, a Beretta and locally-fabricated double-barrelled pistols, two magazines loaded with 30 rounds of 7.62mm calibre ammunition, one live cartridge and phones were recovered during the operations.

According to him, on May 30, at about 8:30p.m., information was received that a gang of about five armed men were attempting to kidnap an individual along the Nowas-Abakpa Road axis of Enugu.

"Operatives attached to the command's Trans-Ekulu Division, in collaboration with members of the Neighbourhood Watch Group, swiftly responded

and encountered the suspects, who opened fire on them.

"Our operatives responded with precision and fatally immobilised one of the suspects, while others escaped with varying degrees of gunshot injuries.

"The suspect was immediately taken to a hospital, where he was confirmed dead by the attending doctor.

"One AK-47 rifle, a double magazine loaded with thirty rounds of live 7.62mm ammunition, and two mobile phones were recovered from the neutralised suspect.

"Further intelligence-led operations by operatives of the Anti-Kidnapping Sub-Unit of the command's Violent Crime Response Unit (VCRU) led to the recovery of a Beretta pistol connected to the criminal gang."

Ndukwe said that similarly, on the same date at about 9:19p.m., information was received that a gang of armed robbers had invaded a residence in Owo community, Nkanu East Local Government Area of the state.

NIMC warns Nigerians against fake NIN correction portal

ABUJA

The National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) has alerted Nigerians to a fraudulent social media post promoting a purported free portal for correcting National Identification Number (NIN) records.

This was contained in a public advisory on the commission's X handle yesterday.

The commission in the advisory described the message and its accompanying links as a phishing scheme aimed at stealing personal information from unsuspecting members of the public.

It advised Nigerians to disregard the post and avoid clicking on any suspicious links claiming to offer free modification of NIN details.

The commission said that all requests for updates or corrections to NIN records should be carried out only through its approved self-service platform accessible via the official NIMC portal.

It urged citizens to rely on its verified communication chan-

nels for information relating to NIN enrolment, modifications and other identity management services.

According to NIMC, the portal being circulated online has no connection with the commission and should not be trusted.

The commission reassured Nigerians that the National Identity Database remained secured and protected against unauthorised access.

"We assure citizens that the National Identity Database is secure and fully protected," NIMC said.

The commission urged the public to remain vigilant and refrain from engaging with suspicious online links.

It reiterated its commitment to protecting citizens' identity data and maintaining the integrity of the country's identity management system.

It further encouraged members of the public to report any suspicious messages, websites or activities falsely claiming affiliation with the commission to the appropriate authorities.

**SOLIDARITY VISIT:**

Badagry women leaders on Wednesday, June 3, 2026, held a solidarity and endorsement rally in support of the APC and its deputy governorship candidate, Princess Damilola Sonayon James.

Troops kill 50 terrorists, top ISWAP commander in North-East

ABUJA

Troops of Operation Hadin Kai have intensified operations in the North-East, neutralising more than 50 terrorists, including a top ISWAP commander, and arrested multiple collaborators across Borno.

This was contained in an operational report made available to reporters in Abuja on Wednesday.

The major success, the Military followed a precision airstrike around Kirta and Arina Ciki, which killed several terrorist commanders, including Khalifa Umar, a member of the

ISWAP Shura Council.

The report said that the sustained air offensive had forced insurgents to abandon island enclaves and move towards the mainland under pressure.

The report also said that troops apprehended three suspected ISWAP logistics suppliers and informants, as well as a deserter soldier who absconded with his weapon and was later linked to criminal activities, in separate operations within Maiduguri and surrounding areas.

It said that items recovered from the suspects included a rifle with magazines, a vehicle, 30 litres of Premium Motor

Spirit (PMS), and other materials used in supporting terrorist operations.

"Troops also conducted fighting patrols in Kukawa axis, engaging fleeing terrorist scouts and recovering ammunition," it added.

The North-East theatre remains the epicentre of Nigeria's long-running counter-terrorism campaign under Operation Hadin Kai.

Over the years, coordinated air and ground offensives have targeted ISWAP and JAS enclaves across the Lake Chad Basin and Sambisa axis.

Recent operations have increasingly combined intelli-

gence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) with precision airstrikes, aimed at disrupting terrorist command structures, logistics hubs and mobility routes.

Military authorities say the evolving strategy has forced insurgents to abandon fortified island enclaves and disperse into smaller cells, increasing their vulnerability to sustained pursuit operations.

The latest wave of operations reflects continued efforts to degrade leadership elements, cut supply chains and denies terrorists freedom of movement across the state and adjoining border corridors.

Vandals destroy 6 TCN towers on Apir-Lafia transmission line

ABUJA

Vandals destroyed six transmission towers on the crucial Apir-Lafia transmission line in Nasarawa State, causing severe power supply disruptions, the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) has said.

According to TCN, the incident occurred on May 30 at about 1.15 am during a downpour.

Mrs Ndidi Mbah, TCN'S Gen-

eral Manager, Public Affairs in a statement on Wednesday in Abuja, said that trial closure of line II was made at 2:08 am following the initial tripping and failed.

Mbah said that the tripping of lines prompted a physical line trace to determine the fault which revealed damage to critical components of towers T125 to T130, confirming acts of vandalism on the affected sections of the transmission corridor.

She said that as a result of

the incident, both Apir-Lafia 330kV Transmission Lines I and II remain out of service pending reconstruction of the affected towers.

"TCN engineers have been mobilised to site to assess the extent of damage and ascertain materials required to commence to restore normal transmission along the corridor.

"Meanwhile, the Lafia 330kV Transmission Station is being supplied through the La-

fia-Jos transmission line as a temporary measure.

"To minimise the impact of the outage on affected electricity customers within the franchise areas of Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC) and Jos Electricity Distribution Company (JEDC)," she said.

Mbah also said that TCN strongly condemns the continued vandalism of power transmission infrastructure as it undermines years of investment in the sector.

Court sentences 4 Owo church bombers to death, acquits 1

● Gov Ayedatiwa reacts

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja on Wednesday sentenced four of the five defendants being prosecuted for their involvement in the 2022 terror attack on St. Francis Catholic Church, Owo in Ondo State, to death by hanging.

Judge Emeka Nwite, in a

judgment, held that the Department of State Services (DSS) had been able to prove the charge against the defendants.

Justice Nwite held that after a careful review of the evidence presented by the prosecution and the defence, it was "clear" that the convicted men belonged to a proscribed terrorist group known as "Al-Shabaab."

The judge, therefore, convicted the 1st to 4th defendants on count one for belonging to the terrorist group and acquitted the 5th defendant on that count.

On count two, the judge also convicted the 1st to 4th defendants.

He held that the prosecution's evidence "remains credible" and was not effectively challenged by the defendants.

On count three, the court convicted them as the master-

minds of the attack in connection with a meeting held on May 30, 2022, while the judge discharged and acquitted the 5th defendant on that count.

On counts four and five, the court also convicted the four defendants, while the 5th defendant was discharged and acquitted.

On count six, where the 5th defendant was charged with financing terrorism in connection with the attack, the judge said

the prosecution did not prove that he financed the attack.

Justice Nwite then discharged and acquitted him of the counts.

Those convicted are Idris Abdulmalik Omeiza, 25; Al Qasim Idris, 20; Jamiu Abdulmalik, 26; and Abdulhaleem Idris, 25, while Momoh Otuho Abubakar, 47, was exonerated of the charges.

The attack, which took place on June 5, 2022 at the church, left no fewer than 41 worshippers dead, while over a 100 others sustained varying degree of injuries.

Meanwhile, Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa of Ondo State has praised the judiciary and security agencies for the sentencing of four members of the Al-Shabaab terrorist group over

the June 5, 2022 attack on the St. Francis Catholic Church, Owo.

This is contained in a statement made available to newsmen by the Chief Press Secretary to Aiyedatiwa, Mr Ebenezer Adeniyi, on Wednesday in Akure.

The governor described the court verdict as a victory for justice, the rule of law, and for all victims of the heinous attack that claimed the lives of innocent worshippers and left many others injured.

Aiyedatiwa noted that the diligence of the prosecution team, the thoroughness of investigators, and the courage of the judiciary had shown that government would not tolerate acts of terror or violence against its people.



ADDRESSING JOURNALISTS:

Edo State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Eno Nkereuwem Ikoedem, addressing journalists/health officials in the forest where the remains of two kidnap victims were recovered.

Court sentences 2 men to death for kidnapping, assault of Anambra businessman

NEWI (ANAMBRA)

High Court sitting in Newi, Anambra State, has convicted two men, Chidozie Obinna and Ifeanyi Onyido, for criminal conspiracy, kidnapping and causing grievous harm to a businessman, Chief Lawrence Ezeifeke.

Delivering judgment on Wednesday, Justice Vincent Agbata of the Newi Judicial Division, found the defendants guilty of the offences and sentenced them to death by hanging.

Obinna, the first defendant, was convicted and sentenced in absentia after he allegedly

absconded while on bail during the trial.

The court heard that the convicts, alongside other members of their gang who are still at large, attacked Ezeifeke at his residence in Ekwulumili, Nnewi South Local Government Area, on December 12, 2020.

According to the prosecution, the assailants assaulted the victim, threw him from the first floor of his building and abducted him to an unknown location.

The victim was held captive for four days and regained his freedom after his family paid a ransom of N7.5 million.

The prosecution further told

the court that operatives of the Anambra State Police Command, working in collaboration with the Department of State Services (DSS), tracked and arrested the defendants.

Lead prosecuting counsel, Mrs Mary Ukaekwe-Onyeharam, urged the court to continue Obinna's trial in absentia following his disappearance while on bail.

She relied on provisions of the Administration of Criminal Justice Law of Anambra State, 2022, and the Anambra State Practice Direction for Criminal Matters, 2023.

Four prosecution witnesses testified during the trial,

including the victim, the Secretary of Ekwulumili Town Union, the victim's son who delivered the ransom and the investigating police officer.

In his defence, Onyido denied involvement in the crime and claimed that he was also a victim of kidnapping.

However, Justice Agbata held that evidence before the court showed that Onyido received part of the ransom and failed to provide a satisfactory explanation for the funds.

The judge ruled that the prosecution proved its case beyond reasonable doubt, noting that the evidence adduced by the prosecution was neither effectively challenged nor contradicted by the defence.

Man seeks custody of 10 children, alleges threat to life

MARARABA (NASARAWA)

A man, Mr Mohammed Bakar, on Wednesday prayed an Upper Area Court, sitting in Mararaba, Nasarawa to grant him custody of his 10 children.

Bakar, who lives in Masaka, Karu LGA, Nasarawa told the court that his wife, Hauwa, has refused to leave his house and has been threatening his life.

"She planted different charms around the house.

"My wife aided our daughter, Mariam Mohammed, to leave her husband's house in 2021, and rented a house with her boyfriend for two years at Tudun Fulani while still legally married without his consent," he said.

Bakar said he pronounced Saki Daya (single divorce) on the grounds that if Hauwa can aid their daughter to behave the way she did, she is capable

of harming him.

He alleged that upon being served the single divorce, Hauwa reported the matter at the Emir's Palace in Keffi, Nasarawa where the Emir's authority blamed her and advised her to leave according to Islamic rites.

"When she got home from the Emir's Palace, Hauwa rained insults on me, called me names and prevented me from going out.

"I pronounced Saki Uku (third divorce) on her," he said.

Hauwa, however, claimed that she cannot leave the house.

"I cannot leave the house because we jointly own the house," she said.

Bakar is praying the court for an order to vacate Hauwa from his house, custody of the 10 children, and any further order the court may deem fit.

The judge, Mohammed Yakubu, adjourned the matter until June 23, for definite hearing.

Man drags ex-fiancee's father to court, demands dowry refund

KADUNA

A businessman, Nasiru Dayyabu on Wednesday, dragged the father of his ex fiancee, Mallam Sani Direba, to a Shari'a Court II sitting at Magajin Gari, Kaduna over N260,000.

The complainant had joined Direba in the suit against two brothers demanding a refund of N250,000 dowry and N10,000 introduction money he paid to marry his daughter.

Represented by his counsel, Mr Sani Sunusi, the complainant told the court that he sent his people from Karaye, Kano state to Kaduna in 2025, to seek for the defendant's daughter's hand in marriage.

"We paid the dowry and the introduction money (kudin gausuwa) and were waiting for them to set a date for the wedding.

"Unfortunately, the lady's father called to inform us that they have cancelled the marriage," he said.

The counsel said the com-

plainant had asked for the refund of his money since Sept. 2025 but all the efforts he made proved abortive.

He claimed that his client had travelled to Kaduna from Kano three times about the issue and later filed a suit and hired a lawyer, a situation he said affected his (client's) finances.

Sunusi, therefore, prayed the court to compel the defendants to pay the sum of N250,000 as cost for wasting Dayyabu's time.

On their part, the three defendants said they came with the N260,000 dowry and introduction money and were ready to present it to the court.

On the issue of paying the cost of N250,000, the first defendant claimed that it was Dayyabu that called off the marriage and not them.

The Judge, Mallam Yakubu Abdullahi, asked the defendants if they have witnesses and they said yes.

He adjourned the case to June 17, for the defendants to present their witnesses.

ADC leadership crisis: Court adjourns Gombe's suit

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja on Wednesday adjourned a suit filed by Mr Nafiu-Bala Gombe against the Sen. David Mark-led leadership of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), until June 8 for hearing.

Justice Peter Lifu adjourned the case after Gombe's lawyer, Robert Emukpoero, SAN, applied for an adjournment following the absence of counsel

to parties seeking to join the suit in court.

When the case was called, only the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and parties seeking joinder were not represented in court.

Although it was confirmed from the court record that INEC was duly served with hearing notice, parties seeking to join were not served.

Counsel to ADC, Shaibu Aruwa, SAN, called the attention of the court to the history

of the suit in relation to parties applying for joinder.

He said the former trial judge, Justice Emeka Nwite, had taken judicial notice of them in the previous proceedings.

Aruwa, therefore, urged the court to accord the parties seeking for joinder same respect to come and say they needed to be joined in the interest of fair hearing.

Besides, he said issues had already been joined with the

parties seeking to join the case, and that the plaintiff was in the know.

Responding, Emukpoero gave a titbit about the Supreme Court judgement which ordered for an accelerated hearing of the case, in line with the earlier Appeal Court judgement.

The lawyer, who applied that all pending processes be filed and served, sought an adjournment to give the parties seeking to join the leverage for fair hearing.

NEWS

Foreign

One killed and dozens injured in Iranian drone strikes on Kuwait airport

One person has been killed and more than 60 injured in Iranian drone strikes on Kuwait's international airport, local officials have said.

Kuwait's defence ministry spokesman called Wednesday's attack "criminal Iranian aggression", while the foreign ministry said diplomatic missions had been damaged.

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) claimed the attack, saying it was in retaliation for US strikes on an Iranian oil tanker and Qeshm Island. Iran also said it targeted US bases in the Gulf.

The US earlier said it had launched "self-defence" strikes on Iran, and shot down or intercepted Iranian missiles fired

at Kuwait and Bahrain.

The latest escalation threatened a shaky US-Iran ceasefire.

The person who was killed in the Iranian attack on Kuwait's airport was later identified as an Indian citizen.

In a statement, the Indian foreign ministry condemned the attack, saying that several other Indian nationals were injured.

"We again call upon parties to cease such attacks," the statement added.

Following the strikes, Kuwait's foreign ministry ordered two Iranian diplomats to leave the country within 24 hours, and summoned Iran's charge d'affaires.

Earlier, US Central Command (Centcom) said that its overnight strikes on Qeshm Island, in the Strait of Hormuz,

were "in response to attempted attacks by Iran across the Middle East" and targeted an Iranian military ground control station.

It also said that the US shot down three attack drones that had been launched by Iran toward "civilian mariners that were rightfully transiting regional waters".

Centcom added that Iran had fired two missiles at Kuwait and three at Bahrain, all of which broke apart or were intercepted.

Iran said it had attacked US bases and helicopters in a "regional country" using missiles and drones in retaliation.

Kuwait International Airport was hit by Iranian drones, the Kuwait military said.

Centcom earlier said it had

struck and "disabled" an unladen oil tanker that was sailing towards Iran, as part of the US naval blockade on the Strait of Hormuz, which began on 13 April.

A US aircraft fired a Hellfire missile into the engine room of the Botswana-flagged M/T vessel, after its crew "ignored repeated warnings", it said.

The IRGC immediately vowed retaliation, saying that "disrupting the security of the Strait of Hormuz will carry a heavy price for the aggressive US military".

In Tehran, the foreign ministry said in a statement that the leaders of Kuwait and Bahrain had "direct and unmistakable responsibility" for "last night's acts of aggression", according to AFP news agency.

US announces new tariffs over forced labour concerns

The US has announced new tariffs of 10-12.5% on dozens of countries accounting for almost all its imports over concerns they are not doing enough to tackle forced labour.

It is the second time President Donald Trump's administration has announced new import taxes since the US Supreme Court struck down many of his previous duties in February.

The US Trade Department said these countries will face the tariffs because of their failure to address the importing of goods made with forced labour.

The UK said it is tackling forced labour, China denied goods are made with forced labour, and the EU said the tariffs were unjustified.

Meanwhile, an India analyst said the move was a pressure tactic as trade negotiations between the countries continue.

Human rights groups say forced labour does exist in China and that the UK and other countries need to do more on making sure firms do not have forced labour in their supply chains.

However, they questioned the effectiveness of US tariffs as a way of dealing with the problem.

The 60 trading partners listed - including the UK, the EU, Canada, India and Japan - account for almost all of the goods sold to the US.

The US government's stance is that trading with countries which buy things made with forced labour is unfair on the US.

US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said it "creates a dynamic where American workers are forced to compete globally on an unlevel playing

field".

The tariffs announced have not yet been enforced. The Trump administration will need to go through a process to do so.

The proposed tariffs come after an investigation launched in March by Greer into the 60 trading partners, and whether those countries had failed to act on prohibiting forced labour.

The report into the investigations concluded that 54 of the countries had "failed to impose a legal prohibition on the importation of goods produced wholly or in part with forced labour and to effectively enforce such a prohibition".

It said six other trading partners - Canada, the EU, Ecuador, Indonesia, Mexico and Pakistan - had "failed to effectively enforce a forced labour import prohibition".

The trade department said it would impose 10% tariffs on imports from Canada, the EU, Britain, Indonesia, Mexico, Pakistan, Argentina, Bangladesh, Cambodia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Indonesia, Malaysia and Taiwan.

The remaining 45 countries, which include China and India, would face 12.5% duties.

'Unjustified' move

A UK government spokesman said: "We're tackling forced labour in the UK and in global supply chains to ensure UK businesses are not complicit in forced labour and human rights violations."

"We continue to engage regularly with the US administration as part of our negotiations, and have made clear the actions we're taking."



MAJOR ECONOMIC FORUM:

Black smoke from a burning oil terminal could be seen billowing over central St Petersburg

Ukrainian drones hit St Petersburg as Putin's flagship economic forum opens

Ukraine has carried out a strike on the outskirts of Russia's St Petersburg, hours before the opening of a major economic forum designed to attract foreign investment into the country.

As dawn broke black plumes of smoke rose over Russia's second city, where Vladimir Putin is due to address the financial event on Friday. Thousands of guests from 130 countries are due to attend, including a low-key US delegation.

Local authorities said air defences shot down 59 drones overnight and that three different districts of St Petersburg had been hit, although no one was killed.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Moscow would respond to the strikes. "Our responses will be systemic in nature," he said on Wednesday. Mobile internet was disrupt-

ed and St Petersburg's Pulkovo Airport was temporarily closed, while some regions of nearby Latvia and Estonia also issued air raid alerts.

Hours later, Volodymyr Zelensky confirmed Ukrainian drones had hit several locations in Russia, including the oil terminal and a naval base in the nearby town of Kronstadt.

"The Ukrainian plan of long-range sanctions is being implemented exactly as it is needed to bring peace closer," Zelensky wrote on social media, using a euphemism for long-distance strikes on Russia.

Kronstadt is the main outpost of the Russian Navy's Baltic Fleet. Unverified videos posted on social media by Ukrainian military figures showed drones heading for docked military ships, with the video cutting off before impact.

Robert Brovdi, the commander of Ukraine's un-

manned systems, said on Telegram that the corvette Boikyi was struck.

The St Petersburg Economic Forum - once dubbed the "Russian Davos" - is a flagship event on the Russian political agenda.

Until Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, it used to be attended by high-profile Western delegations, including CEOs and heads of state.

This year, for the first time in nearly a decade, a low-key US delegation is also due to participate in the forum. It is led by the head of the US Commission of Fine Arts Rodney Mims Cook Jr, the official who has been overseeing President Donald Trump's ballroom project at the White House.

US right-wing commentator Candace Owens and Putin-backing US actor Steven Seagal are also due to attend.

In a tongue-in-cheek post on X, Denys Shtilerman of Ukrainian defence company Fire Point said: "Due to such distinguished guests and the importance of the event itself, we couldn't ignore it - and urgently flew to [St Petersburg]."

The post was accompanied by videos of drones crossing the sky and thick black smoke billowing from undisclosed locations on the sea front.

In the four years since Russia's invasion began, Ukraine has developed a booming defence sector. Kyiv is now able to regularly hit targets within Russia, focusing its efforts on energy infrastructure and oil facilities, which it sees as fuelling the Russian war machine.

On Wednesday, seven people were killed after a drone hit a passenger bus travelling in the Russia-controlled Donetsk region of Ukraine, a Moscow-installed official said.

Trump-backed candidate in Iowa loses primary

A candidate hoping to run for governor in the US state of Iowa has lost a closely watched primary contest, despite getting the backing of Donald Trump.

Randy Feenstra, who was seen by many as a frontrunner, conceded the race on Tuesday, having received a last-minute presidential endorsement ahead of the vote.

The three-term Iowa congressman, who was running for his party's nomination for November's governor contest, had also been a reliable Trump supporter.

But for his part, the winner, farmer and businessman Zach Lahn, campaigned on a decidedly Trumpian platform - with slogans like "Make Iowa Healthy Again" and "Iowa first".

He campaigned on limiting foreign and out-of-state ownership of Iowa land and railed against "global elites".

Lahn also had the backing of Turning Point USA, the conservative group founded by the late Charlie Kirk, and grassroots conservatives in the state

who viewed Feenstra as too much a part of the Washington establishment.

Trump has been out of the public eye the past six days, other than prerecorded interviews with friendly media and his postings on Truth Social, which included an assertion that negotiations with Iran over the war "have been going on continuously".

While the talks may be ongoing, they don't seem to be making much progress. It's been a rough week for Trump domestically as well - his administration has abandoned plans to create a \$1.8bn (£1.3bn) "anti-weaponisation" fund. The fund had been designed to compensate individuals who claimed to be targets of political investigation by previous presidential administrations.

And Tuesday night marked a hit to his golden track record of political endorsements.

Over the past few weeks, it has appeared like a Trump endorsement was a guaranteed ticket to success.

Gabon opposition leader kept behind bars as court rejects appeal

Gabon's main opposition figure, Alain-Claude Bilie-By-Nze, will remain in detention after an appeals court rejected his bid to invalidate legal proceedings against him. The decision deepens concerns over judicial independence and political freedoms in the Central African nation.

Former Gabonese Prime Minister Alain-Claude Bilie-By-Nze will remain in prison after the Libreville Court of Appeal rejected his request to nullify the legal proceedings brought against him.

The ruling, delivered on June 2, marks a significant setback for the opposition leader, who has been detained since April 16.

Bilie-By-Nze is under investigation for alleged breach of trust and fraud linked to events dating back to 2008. His legal team argues that the accusations are legally prescribed and therefore should no longer be subject to prosecution.

Defense denounces arbitrary detention

The opposition politician's lawyers have sharply criticized the court's decision, describing the case as legally flawed and politically troubling.

Defense attorney Arthur Vercken said the continued detention constitutes a serious violation of Gabonese law, fair trial guarantees and the country's international commitments. He called for Bilie-By-Nze's immediate release.

According to his party, Ensemble pour le Gabon, the opposition leader was arrested under "brutal" and irregular circumstances.

Party officials allege that he was held for 24 hours without access to legal counsel before being formally detained.

President rejects claims of interference

Speaking in an interview with France 24, President Brice Oligui Nguema denied any involvement in the case and insisted that Gabon's judiciary operates independently of the executive branch.

"I have nothing to do with it. It is a private matter," the president said, arguing that foreign observers often question judicial independence in African countries while accepting the principle of separation of powers elsewhere.

Arrest fuels political tensions

Bilie-By-Nze, who served as prime minister under former president Ali Bongo Ondimba, emerged as one of Oligui Nguema's strongest challengers during the 2025 presidential election, which he ultimately lost.

His arrest came after a series of public criticisms directed at the government, including opposition to the suspension of social media platforms and objections to reforms of Gabon's nationality code adopted without parliamentary debate.

Growing scrutiny of democratic freedoms

Man shot dead by FBI after taking hostages at California bank

A man who had been holding several people hostage overnight inside a California bank has been shot dead in a standoff with the FBI, police said.

The suspect was killed in "an officer-involved shooting involving Federal Bureau of Investigation personnel" on Wednesday, the Bakersfield Police Department said.

The fatal shooting ended a tense period after the suspect barricaded himself with several others inside the multistory Chase Bank building on Tuesday in Bakersfield, 110 miles (177km) north of Los Angeles. Police had originally responded to a bomb threat at the scene.

Two hostages were released on Tuesday during negotiations. The remaining hostages released on Wednesday were unharmed, police said.

Police arrived to the scene on Tuesday at around 13:00 PST (22:00 BST), after calls of a bomb threat and reports of a man who had barricaded himself inside with several people.

Bakersfield City Hall, the local police headquarters, nearby

buildings and multiple roads were closed during the hostage situation, as the police department's negotiation team began contacting the suspect via telephone.

"Every single resource is at the site's disposal," Bakersfield Police Sergeant Eric Celedon told the press on Tuesday.

"SWAT team, bomb squad, K9 team, gang unit, negotiators, drone team. Every single asset we have to bring this to the safest conclusion is out here right now," he continued.

Members of the FBI's Hostage Rescue Team were also on the scene, according to CNN. Representatives for Chase Bank said on Tuesday the company was "aware of the ongoing situation occurring at the building where our branch is located on the ground floor".

"The branch is currently empty, and we are working with authorities," a Chase spokesperson told the BBC's US partner CBS News in an earlier statement.

Bakersfield mayor Karen Goh had said she was also monitoring the situation.



INAUGURATE PARIS MEMORIAL:

Rwandan President Paul Kagame, left, with his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron.

Foreign nationals among at least 21 killed in Delhi fire

At least 21 people have been killed and dozens injured after a fire tore through a multi-storey building in south Delhi, police in India's capital say.

Many of the victims were foreigners - including people from South Asian and African countries - who had travelled to India for medical treatment or to accompany relatives undergoing care, local media reported.

The building in the Malviya Nagar area allegedly operated as a bed-and-breakfast catering to patients and relatives of those receiving treatment at a nearby private hospital.

More than 40 people were rescued and taken to hospital. It remains unclear how many were inside the building when fire broke out. Its cause is not yet known.

The blaze at the Flourish Stay B&B is one of the deadliest in recent years in the Indian capital.

"The fire was brought under control quite early on - it was

contained very quickly. We have now cleared the building and opened it up for the police," fire officer AK Malik said.

Delhi minister Ashish Sood said authorities were investigating whether the building had the necessary permissions to operate as a bed-and-breakfast facility, adding that those found responsible for any violations would face criminal action.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his condolences and announced compensation of 200,000 rupees (\$2,088; £1,552) for the families of those killed and 50,000 rupees for those injured.

Videos on social media showed flames shooting from the building as people gathered nearby. Footage broadcast by Indian news channels showed its exterior badly charred as emergency workers searched the site.

Eyewitnesses and locals at the scene told BBC Hindi that, upon entering the building, they found many people un-

conscious - some lying beneath beds in hotel rooms and others collapsed in washrooms.

Wasim, who lives nearby and was among the first responders at the scene, recounted a particularly shocking incident. He said he found bodies of a couple in a washroom, holding each other in an embrace.

Another witness said they performed CPR on several unconscious victims and managed to revive some of them.

A shopkeeper who runs a quilt store opposite the building said he spread quilts on the ground below to cushion people attempting to jump to safety.

Several people jumped from the upper floors and some survived, he said.

Authorities have not yet released a full list of those killed or formally identified the victims. Local media reports, citing officials and other sources, said some of the victims were foreign nationals, including people from neighbouring

South Asian countries as well as countries in Africa and Central Asia.

Several people in the building were from Bangladesh and other parts of South Asia and had travelled to Delhi for medical treatment, local lawmaker Satish Upadhyay said.

By early evening, the search and rescue operation was nearly complete but ambulances were still on standby as officials continued clearing debris from the site.

Fires are common in India, where building safety laws are often poorly enforced.

From factories and coaching centres to hospitals and entertainment venues, many of Delhi's deadliest blazes have exposed a persistent gap between safety rules on paper and their implementation on the ground.

Investigations have repeatedly pointed to lax inspections, faulty electrical systems and buildings operating beyond their approved use.

Macron and Kagame inaugurate Paris memorial to Rwanda genocide victims

French President Emmanuel Macron and Rwandan President Paul Kagame have inaugurated a monument in Paris in memory of the victims of the Rwanda genocide.

Speaking at the event, Macron said the memorial marked "the culmination of a long and patient quest for truth".

"In a world where empires sometimes have the temptation to falsify history, in this moment also where the past is a battlefield, telling the truth is more necessary than ever. This is the condition for peace," he said.

Rwandan authorities have

long blamed the international community for ignoring warnings about the killings, and some Western leaders have expressed regret.

"France was in a unique position to observe and to act. It took too long for France to come to terms with its role causing additional pain and on some points we still have not found consensus," Kagame told those gathered.

But he said that no country "has gone as far as France in setting the record straight and accepting its part in the tragedy."

Dubbed "The Archive", the monument consists of

two black brass steles by Berlin-based Portuguese artist Grada Kilomba is in memory to those victims.

It bears an engraved tribute to the estimated 800,000 men, women and children, mostly ethnic Tutsis, massacred between April and July 1994.

"Here, like an archive, rest the voices and words, the memories and experiences, the feelings and hopes of the victims and the survivors," it reads.

The mass killing was triggered on 6 April 1994, when President Juvénal Habyarimana's plane was shot down, killing the leader who, like most

Rwandans, was an ethnic Hutu.

The Tutsi minority was blamed for downing the plane. Bands of Hutu extremists began slaughtering Tutsis and their perceived supporters, with help from the army, police, and militias.

In a historic speech in Kigali in 2021, Macron acknowledged France's failure to heed warnings of impending massacres in Rwanda.

The monument on the banks of the Seine river in the heart of Paris is part of France's efforts to acknowledge its role in one of the 20th century's worst atrocities.



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FP 3X2	64,870	69,735	73,000	78,475	3 X 2	30,900	33,218	26,600	28,595	
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PROPERTY DEMOLITION

FROM BUDGET TO BULLDOZERS

Why Nigeria's development projects fail

EJEMBI SILAS

On paper, Nigeria is building. The 2025 budget allocated N13.8 trillion for capital projects. The Minister of Works announced 2,604km of roads. The Minister of Health promised 20 new federal hospitals. Ground-breaking ceremonies happen every week with gold-painted shovels and long speeches.

But drive 30km out of Abuja to Kwali, or 20km out of Benin to Ugbo, and the story changes. You will see rusted "project signboards" standing beside half-built bridges. You will see hospitals with only a foundation and goats grazing inside. You will see roads that were "80% complete" in 2020 and are still 80% complete in 2026.

Nigeria budgets trillions. But development crawls. Why? This feature investigates the dangerous gap between budget allocation and actual delivery.

BUDGET VS EXECUTION: THE BIG GAP

Every December, the National Assembly passes a budget with huge capital votes. Citizens get excited. Then the year starts, and nothing moves.

BudgIT's 2025 "Budget Performance Report" shows that only 58% of capital budget was released by Q4. Of that, only 43% was actually spent on projects. The rest went to "overheads" and "consultancy."

In Edo State, the 2024 budget allocated N45bn for road construction. By December, only N18bn was spent, and just 112km of roads were completed out of 300km promised. The

rest of the money? Virement, delays, and "administrative issues."

A permanent secretary in a federal ministry, who asked not to be named, said: "We get the budget in March. Procurement takes 6 months. By September, rains start. Contractors say they cannot work. By December, we are back to begging for rollover."

THE ABANDONED PROJECTS CRISIS

Nigeria has over 11,000 abandoned federal projects according to the Ministry of Works. State governments have thousands more.

Example 1: Lagos-Badagry Expressway

Started in 2010. Budgeted at N63bn. 14 years later, it is still incomplete. Drivers spend 4 hours on a 60km journey.

Example 2: National Children's Hospital, Abuja

Foundation laid in 2001 by President Obasanjo. In 2026, only the main block exists. No equipment, no staff.

Example 3: Benin-Asaba Road

This 45km road has been "under construction" for 20 years. Each government re-awards it. Each contractor does 5km and leaves.

The cost is not just money. It is lives. Ambulances cannot reach hospitals. Farmers cannot move produce. Investors run away.

WHY PROJECTS DIE: 5 KILLERS

Poor Planning and Design

Many projects start without proper survey or design. A road is awarded,

then halfway the contractor discovers the soil is swampy. New bill, new delay. The Lagos-Ibadan rail had to redesign 3 bridges after work started. That added 2 years.

Bureaucracy and Procurement Delays

The Public Procurement Act is good, but slow. It takes 180 days average to award a contract. By the time approval comes, inflation has eaten 30% of the budget.

Corruption and Kickbacks

Contractors often pay 10-15% "mobilization fee" to officials before work starts. That money is never spent on site. When the project stalls, everyone blames "funding."

Lack of Continuity

New governor, new project. New minister, new priority. The Abuja Metro rail was 95% complete in 2015, then abandoned for 5 years until 2024. Each administration wants its own "signature project."

Community and Security Issues

In the North, bandits chase contractors off sites. In the South-East, IPOB sit-at-home stops work 2 days weekly. In Niger Delta, youths block sites until "settlement."

SUCCESS STORIES: WHEN PROJECTS ACTUALLY WORK

Not all is lost. Some projects prove Nigeria can deliver when there is focus:

Lagos Blue Line Rail: Started 2012, completed 2023. Carries 250,000 pas-

sengers daily. Governor Sanwo-Olu kept one contractor, one design, and protected funding through 3 administrations.

Kano Solar Irrigation: 2,000 solar pumps installed in 2025 using FAAC money. Farmers now farm all year. Project succeeded because Kano State gave it to one agency, tracked it monthly, and involved community leaders.

Edo SUBEB Classrooms: 12 new classrooms built in Ekiadolor Primary School in 6 months. Why? SUBEB chairman visited site weekly and fired the first contractor for delay.

The lesson: political will + single agency + community involvement = delivery.

THE ROLE OF CITIZENS: FROM SPECTATORS TO WATCHDOGS

Citizens must stop clapping at ground-breaking. They must ask: "Where is the completion date?"

Tools exist:

Tracka.ng: Take photo of abandoned project, upload with location. Government responds within 72 hours in 40% of cases.

BudgIT: Publishes "Track Your Constituency Project" so you know what was budgeted for your LGA.

Open Contracting Portal: FG now uploads contract details online. Citizens can check contractor name and amount.

In Plateau, citizens used Tracka to expose an N200m water project abandoned for 5 years. After viral tweets, the government completed it in 4 months.

WHAT MUST CHANGE NOW

1. Multi-Year Funding: Stop budgeting projects yearly. Approve 3-year funding for big projects so contractors have certainty.

2. Project Bank: Create a national database of all ongoing projects with GPS, budget, and completion date. Update monthly.

3. Punish Abandonment: Blacklist contractors who abandon projects for 10 years. Jail officials who approve payment for no work.

4. Community Monitoring: Each LGA should have "Project Monitoring Committee" with youth, women, and traditional rulers. They must sign off before contractor gets paid.

5. Less Ceremony, More Work: Reduce ground-breaking for projects that have no money in budget. Nigerians are tired of "flag-off politics."

FROM CEREMONY TO COMPLETION

Nigeria does not lack money. It lacks discipline. The 2026 budget has N15.8 trillion for capital projects. That is enough to fix 5,000km of roads, build 200 hospitals, and 1,000 schools if spent well.

But budget is not development. Bulldozer is development. Completed hospital is development. Child learning in new classroom is development.

As BudgIT founder Oluseun Onigbinde said, "A budget without execution is just a wish list."

The next time you see a gold shovel and a long speech, ask one question: "When will you finish?" Until we demand answers, Nigeria will keep budgeting trillions and delivering poverty.

Sports

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

Belarusian club hunts football talents at Katsina tournament

Young footballers in Katsina State have been given an opportunity to showcase their talents before international scouts seeking players for professional football in Europe.

The opportunity came during the four-day second edition of Gov. Dikko Radda Football Scouting Tournament held at the Muhammadu Dikko Stadium in Katsina.

The tournament was organised by the Katsina Football Academy in collaboration with the Belarusian club.

Speaking after the event, the Coordinator and Director of Katsina Football Academy, Shamsuddeen Ibrahim-Makudawa, expressed satisfaction with the performance of the players.

He explained that the aim was to discover and develop talented players and create

opportunities for them to play professional football abroad.

Ibrahim-Makudawa commended Gov. Radda, coaches, technical officials and sports lovers for supporting youth and sports development in the state.

According to him, the four-day tournament attracted hundreds of young players who competed for a chance to secure professional contracts with FC Torpedo BelAZ Zhodino, a football club in Belarus.

A member of the scouting team, Vladimir Bogdanou, said they came to Katsina to identify talented players capable of joining the Belarusian club.

Also, a Katsina-born professional footballer based in Belarus, Hamza Hadi Mai-Dawa, said he facilitated the visit of the scouts with support from the Katsina government.

Mai-Dawa praised the com-

mitment and discipline shown by the players, adding that between 15 and 17 participants had been shortlisted for further

assessment.

According to him, only the best among them will be offered opportunities to pursue

professional football careers abroad.

He added that the tournament has raised hopes among

many young footballers in Katsina of securing opportunities to play on the international stage.



YOUNG FOOTBALLERS IN KATSINA STATE

Seven-time Olympian Olufunke Oshonaike says Nigerian table tennis players are making steady progress in spite of the challenges they face in competing regularly at international tournaments.

Oshonaike made the observation in an interview on Wednesday in Lagos, saying that many players are improving in both skill and experience, but limited financial support continues to affect their development and world rankings.

"The players are improving, and the girls are improving too, but the others are also making progress.

"What many people do not understand is that regular participation in international tournaments is necessary for athletes to improve, gain experience and move up on the rankings," she said.

According to her, the biggest challenge facing many Nigerian players is not a lack of talent, but the high cost of participating in international competitions.

She explained that competing in World Table Tennis (WTT) events and other global tournaments requires significant financial resources, which many athletes struggle to secure.

"If you want to play in WTT competitions, it is very expensive. Sometimes athletes have to fund themselves to attend competitions.

"We are not like footballers who have a lot of money. Without regular competitions, it is difficult to improve rankings," Oshonaike said.

The table tennis icon noted that in spite of these challenges, Nigerian players have continued to show determination and commitment in their pursuit of excellence.

Table-Tennis: Oshonaike hails steady progress of Nigerian table tennis players

She said many athletes often rely on personal funds to participate in continental championships and other important tournaments needed for their growth.

Throughout her career, she became known for her consistency, discipline and resilience, earning respect from players and administrators across the world.

The table tennis icon also disclosed plans to revive her table tennis clinic for young

players, particularly girls, as part of efforts to contribute to the development of the sport in Nigeria.



OLUFUNKE OSHONAIKE

Volleyball: We're determined to win remaining matches —Lights spikers coach

The Head Coach of Lights Spikers Volleyball Club, Uthman Mohammed, has vowed to win their two remaining matches in the first phase of the ongoing National Volleyball Division One and Two League.

The coach told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Wednesday in Abuja that they are determined to win all their matches in the first and second phases of this year's league.

According to him, they played

all their matches with dedication and seriousness to end the league and gain promotion to the Premier League next season.

He said they played seven matches and won them all, adding that they have two matches remaining to end the first phase.

"We still have two matches to play against Kada Stars and Rhino. These are the matches we are focusing on now.

"We are determined to win, although they will be tougher

than today's game. Whatever happens, we believe we will get it right," he said.

Lights Spikers Volleyball Club have won all their seven matches so far with 21 points and are currently first on the table.

A total of 11 clubs are participating in the ongoing first phase of the league.

The clubs are Sword Spikers VC, Kwara VC, NAF Rockets VC, Adamawa VC, Wikki Spikers VC, Bayelsa Spikers VC, Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Kada Kings VC, Katsina VC, Rhino Spikers and Lights Spikers VC.

The Nigeria Volleyball Federation (NVBF) 2026 Phase One Division One National League features 11 teams, while Division Two comprises seven teams in both the men's and women's categories.

The championship began on May 23 and will run until June 5 at the Indoor Sports Hall of the Moshood Abiola National Stadium.



LIGHTS SPIKERS VOLLEYBALL CLUB

Enugu Governor rewards Rangers with ₦150m for NPFL title triumph

Enugu State Governor, Dr Peter Mbah, has rewarded Rangers FC with N150 million following their 2025/26 Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) title triumph.

Mbah, who was present during the Club's Title Parade on Tuesday at the Okpara Square, Enugu, said that the Enugu people were proud of Rangers and what they were able to achieve this season in the league by winning their second title in three years.

The Governor further explained that the package includes N100 million (One hundred million naira) for players and N50 million for the club management.

The State government also awarded a Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) of a plot of land in Enugu to each player and the management of Rangers following their successful title-winning season.

Governor Mbah also assured that the stadium will be upgraded ahead of the CAF Champions League to be played at the Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium and also the National Sports Festival (Coal City Games 2026), which will be hosted in Enugu later this year.

Rangers were crowned champions after they secured a hard-fought 2-1 win away at Ikorodu City in the last game of the season to secure their ninth NPFL trophy.



ENUGU STATE GOVERNOR, DR PETER MBAH WIT THE TROUPLY

Sports



FIFA names Davido for World Cup 2026 countdown concert in Los Angeles

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Nigerian music superstar Davido is marking another major international stage as the award-winning artiste has been confirmed as one of the big time performers at the 2026 FIFA World Cup Countdown Concert in Los Angeles, USA.

Countdown Concert in Los Angeles, USA.

In a statement the world football governing body FIFA announced that Davido will join Major Lazer, the music project led by Diplo, for the June 10 event at the Crypto.com Arena.

The concert is part of FIFA's first synchronised live entertainment series covering the three host nations of the 2026 World Cup - Canada, Mexico and the United States of America. Additional performers are expected to be unveiled later.

"Los Angeles will play host to a high-energy celebration, featuring Diplo's Major Lazer and Davido, the first artists announced for what promises to be an unforgettable night of music, football and culture," FIFA said.

According to the world football governing body, the Los Angeles show will be staged at the Crypto.com Arena, with

doors opening at 5:00 p.m. PT and the live broadcast beginning an hour later. The statement added.

The concert series is designed to connect audiences across the three host countries through simultaneous performances. Fans will also be able to watch live acts streamed from Mexico City and Toronto.

"The Countdown Concert series celebrate the passion, unity and cultural connections across three countries and around the world that define the FIFA World Cup 2026," said Manolo Zubiria.

"Just two days before the

opening match in the United States, Los Angeles will stage an unforgettable show, featuring top talent in one of the world's premier entertainment capitals, bringing together music, football and fans in a global celebration as we prepare to welcome the world."

FIFA said ticket sales will open on June 3 at 10:00 a.m. PST. The event will be streamed worldwide across FIFA's digital platforms, including an exclusive social media livestream on TikTok. Fans will also be able to watch the full concert and behind-the-scenes footage on VuMe Live the following day.



DAVIDO

Kaduna Cycling Association, FRSC urge residents to embrace bicycles for health, cleaner air

The Kaduna State Cycling Association, in conjunction with the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), has urged residents to adopt regular cycling for healthy living.

Samaila Usman, Director of Sports Facilities and Technical Services at the Ministry of Sports Development, made the call in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Kaduna on Wednesday.

According to the director, the celebration being held every June 3, is in line with the United Nations-approved observance.

"Bicycling is a total way of life and key to physical fitness and human wellbeing.

"World Bicycle Day recognises the bicycle as an affordable, reliable, and sustainable mode of transportation.

"It highlights how cycling reduces carbon emissions, improves physical and mental health, and promotes inclusive, accessible mobility for all," he said.

He observed that cycling benefits more than just physical health, adding that doctors say it reduces stress by stimulating the body to produce endorphins.

"Hormones that relieve stress, reduce pain, and help fight depression.

"Experts say cycling promotes mindfulness, where you focus on the present rather than worrying about daily concerns, which helps reduce anxiety.

"Many people also enjoy the sense of achievement they get

from hitting self-imposed cycling goals," he added.

Usman urged residents, especially youths, to embrace cycling as it cuts carbon emissions and helps combat the climate crisis, and improves cardiovascular health.

Othe benefits, he said, it lowers the risk of lifestyle diseases, and provides an economical transportation alternative that fosters social inclusion.

He said the association plans to expand cycling to all 23 local government areas of the state.

"We have excelled in cycling in Kaduna and want more people to join the sport.



KADUNA FRSC CYCLING

Crisis looms in CAF as President Motsepe set to step down

Uncertainty is beginning to surround the leadership of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) following reports that its president, Patrice Motsepe, could step down from his position.

According to Moroccan insider Youssefamz13, Motsepe is reportedly considering leaving his role at CAF to focus on a potential political future in South Africa, including a possible presidential bid.

The speculation is not entirely unexpected, as Motsepe's name has been linked with political ambitions in recent months within the country.

Discussions around succession within the ruling African National Congress (ANC), currently led by President Cyril

Ramaphosa, have intensified, with some observers identifying the CAF boss as a unifying figure for a party challenged by recent electoral setbacks.

A prominent mining magnate and influential businessman, Motsepe is widely regarded as a respected figure in South Africa, with a profile that could appeal to a broad section of the electorate. Despite this, he has consistently maintained in the past that he has no interest in pursuing a political career.

Motsepe was re-elected in March 2025 for another four-year term, extending his mandate at CAF until 2029, with a focus on consolidating reforms introduced since he first assumed office in 2021.

Should he step down in 2027, it would represent a resignation before the completion of his tenure rather than a decision not to seek re-election.

At present, there has been no official confirmation that Motsepe is preparing to leave his role. Under his leadership, CAF has recorded notable institutional and financial stability, alongside a significant rise in revenues from its continental competitions.

However, with the Africa Cup of Nations 2027 approaching and several key development projects ongoing, any early departure could trigger significant disruption within African football's governing body. Women's football news

Manchester United weigh move for Osimhen after title-winning season in Turkey

Manchester United are weighing a move for an established centre-forward this summer, with Galatasaray striker Victor Osimhen emerging as a priority target.

The 27-year-old Nigerian international helped the Istanbul club defend the Turkish Süper Lig title in the concluded season, registering 22 goals and eight assists in 33 appearances across all competitions. United, who finished third in the Premier League after improving their attacking output, are looking to add experience to support their young forward line.

According to the Nigerian sports report, SoccerNet. The former Paris Saint-Germain defender Godwin Okpara has endorsed a Premier League switch for his compatriot.

Speaking in an interview published on 1 June, Okpara said he would prefer Osimhen to choose Old Trafford over other destinations. He argued that the striker has already tested himself in Belgium, France, and Italy, and that England would be the logical next step. Okpara added that United's style would suit Osimhen and provide an ideal platform to showcase his abilities.

Osimhen joined Galatasaray on loan from Napoli in 2024 before completing a permanent transfer last summer. He is under contract with the Turkish champions until 2029, meaning any deal would require a significant fee. The striker previously played for Wolfsburg, Charleroi, Lille and Napoli, where he won the Serie A title in 2023.



VICTOR OSIMHEN



FLAMINGOS

Flamingos begin short break ahead of final FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup qualifier

Nigeria's U-17 women's national team, the Flamingos, have been granted a short break following their successful progression to the final round of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup qualifiers.

The team secured passage to the decisive stage after overcoming Guinea and will

now face Benin Republic in the third and final qualifying round for a place at the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup Morocco 2026.

Officials expressed appreciation to supporters and media partners for their continued backing throughout the qualification campaign, noting that the encouragement received

has played a significant role in the team's journey so far.

With the next crucial fixture on the horizon, players and officials have been given time to rest and recover before preparations resume for the encounter against Benin Republic.

Further details regarding the team's training schedule and match arrangements are ex-

pected to be announced in due course as the Flamingos intensify their quest for a World Cup ticket.

The team also extended goodwill wishes to supporters at the start of the new month while thanking them for their unwavering commitment to the campaign. Alternative Headlines

FEATURE



Two years after subsidy: Nigeria's economy at the crossroads

DANIEL OJEMBA

Two years ago, President Bola Tinubu announced “subsidy is gone” from the Eagle Square podium. The petrol price jumped from N198 to N617 overnight. Markets panicked. Transport fares doubled. For many Nigerians, that speech marked the start of the hardest economic adjustment in a generation.

May 2026 marks 24 months since that decision. Inflation has cooled from 33% to 22%. FAAC allocations to states have doubled. The naira, after wild swings, is trading around N1,350/\$1. Foreign investors are cautiously returning.

But in Benin Market, Mama Nkechi still counts her coins twice before buying rice. In Kano, okada riders say daily earnings can no longer feed their families. The question is everywhere: Has subsidy removal worked, or are we bleeding?

This feature examines where Nigeria's economy stands two years after subsidy removal — the gains, the pain, and what must happen next.

1. THE SHOCK THERAPY: WHY SUBSIDY HAD TO GO

For decades, Nigeria spent N4 trillion yearly subsidizing petrol. The money went to smugglers, fake importers, and middlemen. NNPC deducted subsidy costs before remitting to FAAC, leaving states broke.

Economists across the political divide agreed: the subsidy was unsustainable. It was consuming 30% of federal revenue while hospitals had no drugs and schools had no teachers.

Tinubu's argument was simple: remove subsidy, save money, invest in infrastructure, social welfare, and local refining. Pain now, prosperity later.

2. THE GAINS SO FAR: MONEY IN GOVERNMENT COFFERS

Higher FAAC: States now share N1 trillion monthly vs N400bn pre-2023. Delta got N46bn in March 2026. Lagos got N52bn. Even small states like Ebonyi received N22bn.

FX Reforms: The CBN unified exchange rates. Multiple rates that encouraged round-tripping are gone. Investors now say, “At least we know the real price.”

Local Refining: Dangote Refinery started production in 2024 and now supplies 60% of domestic petrol needs. Port Harcourt refinery restarted in late 2025. Import dependence is dropping.

Inflation Cooling: Headline inflation fell from 33.2% in March 2024 to 22.1% in April 2026. Food inflation is still high at 26%, but the trajectory is downward.



PRESIDENT BOLA AHMED TINUBU

Revenue: FIRS collected N19.4 trillion in 2025, highest in history. Non-oil revenue now accounts for 62% of collections.

3. THE PAIN: CITIZENS STILL STRUGGLING

Cost of Living: A bag of rice that sold for N25,000 in 2023 now sells for N92,000. Transport in Lagos from Ikeja to CMS rose from N300 to N800. Electricity tariff increased 300% for Band A users.

Wage Pressure: Minimum wage moved from N30,000 to N70,000 in 2024. But N70,000 cannot buy what N30,000 bought in 2023. Many states are still owing arrears.

Job Losses: Manufacturing companies like P&G and GSK exited Nigeria in 2024, citing FX volatility and low purchasing power. Unemployment remains around 33%.

Poverty: World Bank estimates 104 million Nigerians are now multidimensionally poor — 1 in 2 citizens.

Dr. Muda Yusuf, CEO of Centre for Promotion of Private Enterprise, says: “Subsidy removal was right economics but poor social policy. The safety nets were too slow and too small.”

4. WHAT GOVERNMENT DID WRONG: THE SAFETY NET GAP

The Tinubu administration promised palliatives: N5bn to each state, N25,000 monthly for 15 million households, buses for students, ferti-

lizer for farmers.

Implementation was slow. In Edo, bags of rice arrived 8 months late. The N25,000 cash transfer reached less than 5 million people. Many complained of portal issues and exclusion.

Meanwhile, the “pain” hit immediately. Economists call it “adjustment fatigue” — when reforms outpace people's capacity to adapt.

5. WHAT IS WORKING: SIGNS OF TURNAROUND

Roads and Infrastructure: Lagos-Calabar coastal highway, Sokoto-Badagry road, and Enugu-Onitsha expressway are receiving funding from saved subsidy money.

Student Loan: NELFUND has disbursed N45bn to 350,000 students since 2024. For the first time, poor students can attend university without dropping out.

Agric Investment: The government launched N500bn agricultural intervention for dry season farming. Wheat and rice production rose 18% in 2025.

Foreign Interest: Shell, TotalEnergies, and 5 new IOCs signed deep-water oil deals in 2025 worth \$13bn. They cite “single exchange rate” as key reason.

6. THE WAY FORWARD: 5 THINGS NIGERIA MUST DO NOW

1. **Targeted Social Protection:** Expand cash transfers but use data. Give

to poorest 40%, not political lists. States must publish beneficiary lists.

2. **Crush Food Inflation:** Invest heavily in irrigation, storage, and roads from farm to market. 40% of food rots before reaching cities.

3. **Fix Power:** Without stable electricity, factories cannot produce cheaply. Band A pricing must be matched with 20-hour supply.

4. **Support SMEs:** Give tax breaks and single-digit loans to small businesses that employ 80% of Nigerians. N200bn is not enough.

5. **Communicate Better:** Citizens must see where subsidy savings are going. Monthly “subsidy savings dashboard” should show projects funded.

CROSSROADS, NOT DESTINATION

Two years after subsidy removal, Nigeria is not broke. But Nigerians are tired. The economy has stabilized at macro level, but micro level pain is real.

The next 2 years will decide if this was courageous reform or cruel policy. If FAAC money builds roads, schools, and farms, history will be kind. If it ends in SUVs and bloated recurrent spending, the anger will grow.

As Mama Nkechi in Benin said while buying half paint of beans: “We don't need grammar. We need food we can afford.”

The economy is at a crossroads. The

direction Nigeria takes from here will define the next decade.



For decades, Nigeria spent N4 trillion yearly subsidizing petrol. The money went to smugglers, fake importers, and middlemen. NNPC deducted subsidy costs before remitting to FAAC, leaving states broke.