

FAAC: FG, states, others share N2.257trn April 2026 revenue

**ABUJA** The Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) has shared a total sum of N2.257 trillion to the Federal, States and the Local Government Councils for the month of April 2026. Mr Bawa Mokwa, Director Press and Public Relations in the Office of the Auditor-General of the Federation (OAGF), who revealed this in a statement issued on Monday, said the revenue was shared at the May 2026 FAAC meeting held in Abuja recently. He stated that, the N2.257 trillion total distributable revenue comprised distributable statutory revenue of N1.260 trillion, distributable Value Added Tax (VAT) revenue of N747.088 billion and Augmentation N250 billion. Mokwa said a communiqué issued by the FAAC indicated that total gross revenue of N3.184 trillion was available in the month of April 2026. "A total deduction for cost of collection was N113.756 billion while total transfers, refunds and savings was N813.839 billion. "Gross statutory revenue of N2.378 trillion was received for the month of April 2026. This was higher than the sum of N1.699 trillion received in the preceding month by N678.224 billion. "Gross revenue of N806.617 billion was available from the Value Added Tax (VAT) in April 2026. This was higher than the N664.425 billion available in the month of March 2026 by N142.192 billion," Mokwa quoted the communiqué. He quoted the communiqué further: "From the N2.257 trillion total distributable revenue, the Federal Government received total sum of N787.351 billion and the State Governments received total sum of N772.360 billion. "The Local government Council received N540.152 billion, while the sum of N157.254 billion (13 per cent of mineral revenue) was shared to the benefiting State as derivative.

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The Nigerian OBSERVER That The People May Know

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FG inaugurates mass trial of second batch of suspected terrorists

vows to root out terrorism from Nigeria

**ABUJA** The Attorney General of the Federation, Mr. Lateef Fagbemi (SAN), on Monday, said the Federal Government has commenced the mass trial of the second batch of 500 suspected terrorists in Abuja. He stated this on yesterday when he led the prosecution of the defendants charged with terrorism – related offences, while the while the Director-General, Legal Aid Council, Mr Aliyu Abubakar, led the team of lawyers for the defence. The AGF, who allayed fears that the trial, which usually takes places in Kainji, Nigeri State, was moved to the Federal High Court (FHC) Abuja, cited logistics reasons for the transfer of the cases to Abuja from Kainji. "Whether the cases are tried in Kainji or Maiduguri, those to try terrorism suspects are judges of the Federal High Court. "It is more convenient here; we have more courtrooms and facilities. We have 10 judges at a time, you know what it means. It means a lot," Fagbemi said. According to him, no fewer than 58 of the suspects that had been slated for prosecution in phase 9 of the mass trial, were listed for trial yesterday before Justice Nwite. "Whether the cases are tried in Kainji or Maiduguri, those to try terrorism suspects are judges of the Federal High Court. "It is more convenient here; we have more courtrooms and facilities. We have 10 judges at a time, you know what it means. It means a lot," Fagbemi said. Some of the trial judges, who are handling this batch, which is taking place in all the courtrooms in the FHC and is expected to last for one week are Justices Binta Nyako, Eme-ka Nwite, Musa Liman, James Omotosho, Obiora Egwuatu and Ekerete Akpan, Others include Justices Abba Bukar, Abba Manye, Gujja Mala Bukar, Brem Gonimi, Isa Mohammed, Lawali Dashiri Danke, Yau Tukur (Mai-Auduga) and Bello Liman, aka Alhaji Bell Doctor. Meanwhile, almost all other matters scheduled for today at the court had been rescheduled for the mass trial amidst security beef up in and around the

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Gov. Okpebholo condemns Airport Road kidnapping, orders immediate security action

Police making progress —Edo PPRO

**BENIN CITY** Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has strongly condemned the kidnapping reported at the Vegetable Market along Airport Road, Benin City, describing it as unacceptable and a direct attack on innocent residents. The governor has directed the Edo State Commissioner of Police to immediately commence a swift and coordinated investigation into the incident with a view at securing the safe rescue of the victims and arresting those responsible for the attack. The governor warned that the Edo State Government will not tolerate any act that threatens public safety and security or disturbs the peace of the state. Governor Okpebholo urges residents of Benin City and across Edo State to remain alert and report any suspicious movements to the nearest Police station stressing that timely information will support on-going police operations. He reaffirmed that the government would not relent until those responsible were apprehended and made to face the full weight of the law. Meanwhile, the Police Command in Edo says it has made significant progress in the investigation into the abduction of a woman by suspected kidnappers in Benin, on Sunday. ASP Eno Ikoedem, command's Public Relations Officer, disclosed, on Monday, while confirming the incident that the suspects were seen in a viral video showing the victim

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INSPECTION OF ONGOING CONSTRUCTION: Minister of Works, Sen. David Umahi (R); Senior Special Assistant to the President on Community Engagement, South-East, Mrs Choma Nweze (L); Federal Controller of Works, FCT, Usman Yakubu (M) and other dignitaries, during the inspection of the ongoing construction of Abuja-Lokoja Dual-Carriageway Lane in Gwagwalada, FCT.

# NEWS

## Gov. Okpebholo congratulates Edo Queens, reaffirms commitment to sports devt in Edo State

### BEBNIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has congratulated Edo Queens Football Club on their outstanding achievement, describing the team's success as a proud moment for the state and a testament to the talent, determination, and resilience of Edo athletes.

Edo Queens produced a dominant performance to defeat FC Robo Queens 4-1, with

Chioma Moses scoring twice in the first half before second-half goals from Precious Oscar and Mary Mamudu sealed a convincing victory.

The impressive result has moved Edo Queens firmly back into contention for the 2026 NWFL Premiership Super Six title, further highlighting the team's strength, consistency, and competitive spirit.

The Governor commended the players, coaches, technical crew, and management of

Edo Queens for their dedication and discipline, noting that their achievement has further strengthened Edo State's reputation as a leading sports hub in Nigeria.

Governor Okpebholo said his administration remains committed to repositioning the sports sector through improved

infrastructure, support for athletes, and policies aimed at creating more opportunities for young talents across the state.

He noted that sports remain a powerful tool for youth development, empowerment, and unity, adding that the government will continue to provide an enabling environment

for Edo athletes and teams to excel at national and international levels.

"Edo Queens have made the people of Edo State proud. Their achievement reflects the spirit of excellence, hard work, and determination that defines our people. I congratulate the champions and assure them of our continued support," the governor said.

Governor Okpebholo fur-

ther charged Edo athletes to remain focused and committed, assuring that his administration will continue to invest in initiatives that will restore Edo's position as a powerhouse in Nigerian sports.

He described Edo Queens as worthy ambassadors of the state and encouraged them to continue inspiring young girls and aspiring athletes across Edo State.

## NDLEA auctions drug barons' assets for N6.1bn

### ABUJA

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has auctioned four properties forfeited by convicted drug traffickers for N6.1bn, with a six-floor hotel in Victoria Island, Lagos accounting for the bulk of the proceeds.

Speaking at the event on Monday in Abuja, the NDLEA Chairman, retired Brig.-Gen. Buba Marwa, said the exercise underscored the Federal Government's commitment to ensuring that criminals do not benefit from the proceeds of illicit activities.

Marwa who was represented by the Agency Secretary, Mr Shadrach Haruna, said public auctions of forfeited assets served a broader national purpose beyond revenue generation.

"Public auctions such as this serve a broader national purpose.

"Beyond generating revenue for the Government, they reinforce public confidence in the rule of law, demonstrate

accountability in the management of recovered assets.

"They also send a clear message that criminal proceeds will not be allowed to remain in the hands of those who seek to profit from the misery and destruction caused by illicit drugs," he said.

The NDLEA boss reaffirmed the agency's commitment to strengthening Nigeria's asset recovery framework and ensuring that recovered assets were managed and disposed of transparently, lawfully and in the public interest.

Marwa said the agency would continue to pursue drug traffickers, dismantle criminal networks, recover proceeds of crime and uphold the rule of law without fear or favour.

He stressed that transparency remained central to the auction process, noting that representatives of sister law enforcement and regulatory agencies, civil society organisations, the media, bidders and members of the public were invited to witness the exercise.

## Lagos Govt. disburses N15bn to 20,000 MSMEs, creates 320,000 jobs

### LAGOS

The Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF) has disbursed N15 billion to about 20,000 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the state.

The Executive Secretary of LSETF, Mrs Feyisayo Alayande, disclosed this at a news conference on Monday at Alausa, Ikeja during which she gave account of the agency's stewardship over the past decade.

Alayande said that LSETF also facilitated creation of more than 320,000 direct and indirect jobs.

Alayande said that the achievements reflected Lagos State Government's commitment to reducing poverty and expanding economic opportunities for residents through access to finance and enterprise

support.

According to her, the impact of the interventions is evident in the growing number of entrepreneurs and businesses that have benefited from the Fund's programmes.

"In the last 10 years, we have disbursed N15 billion across 20,000 MSMEs and facilitated creation of over 320,000 direct and indirect jobs.

"These are not just figures. They represent livelihoods sustained, businesses expanded and families empowered across Lagos State," she said.

The executive secretary said that the fund had recorded a repayment rate of 94 per cent, describing it as a testament to the integrity and resilience of Lagos entrepreneurs.

"We have maintained a repayment rate of 94 per cent, with only about N100 million outstanding.



### SWEARING-IN OF 2026 NYSC BATCH B STREAM 1:

Representative of the Minister of State for FCT, Mr Istifanus Luka (3rd L); FCT Coordinator, National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Mr Samson Ateli (4th L); Camp Director, NYSC, Mrs. Abosede Fashina (M) and others, during the swearing-in of 2026 NYSC Batch B Stream 1 Orientation Course at the Kubwa Orientation Camp in Abuja Monday

## Edo Assembly Confirms Osifo as Commissioner

RAYMOND OSOGBE

### BENIN CITY

Dr Washington Osa Osifo was yesterday officially confirmed as Commissioner by Members of Edo State House of Assembly (EDHA) in the legislative Chamber, Benin City.

Speaking before his confirmation, Rt. Hon. Blessing Agbeba, drew the attention

of House members to the letter written to the House by his Excellency, Governor Monday Okpebholo, to confirm Dr Osifo As Commissioner.

He drew Members attention to the fact that he has been screened previously.

The Speaker hinted that the second nominee on the Governor's list of Commissioners is Kayode Jeff.

Hon Agbeba disclosed

that Osifo's nomination was based on capacity and intellect.

However, Hon .Dr. Richard Osaro Edosa, House Majority leader, initiated Dr. Osifo confirmation and he was seconded by Hon. Osamwonyi Uhunoma Kycee, representing Uhunmwode Constituency.

Also yesterday, three bills on Land matters, Fire Service Regulations and Rural access Roads Authority were passed

for Second Reading.

While reflecting on the past primaries of the All Progressives Congress APC, Speaker Agbeba urged Members to forge ahead with philosophical calmness.

On Security, the speaker condemned the recent Vegetable Market abduction and called on Edo Citizens to be vigilant. The House adjourned to Monday next week.

## No development thrives in an atmosphere of fear, insecurity, says Clergy

### BENIN CITY

Apostle Sule Azekhumen of the Edo Government House Chapel, on Monday in Benin, said that no meaningful development can thrive in an atmosphere of fear and insecurity.

Azekhumen stated this while delivering his sermon at the 2026 Mid-year Thanksgiving and Praise, held on Monday in Edo Government House Chapel.

According to him, we are particularly encouraged by the governor's unwavering determination and unrelenting fight against kidnapping, banditry, cultism and all forms of criminality.

He noted that Okpebholo's

administration has demonstrated courage and commitment in strengthening security and protecting lives and property across the state.

"As a people of faith, we understand that while our leaders work diligently, ultimate success comes from God, except the Lord keeps the city, the watchman waketh in vain.

"It was this conviction that inspired the government house chapel to embark on 14 days of prayer and fasting from June 1 to June 14, culminating on Sunday, seeking God's guidance, protection, wisdom, peace and prosperity for Edo.

"We believe that God who answers prayer will continue to strengthen our leaders and

establish the work of their hands", he said.

The clergy, appealed to Church of Christ and other religions bodies throughout the state to continually pray for President Bola Tinubu, Gov. Monday Okpebholo and his deputy and other members of the state executive council.

Speaking on the significant of thanksgiving, Azekhumen, cited Psalm 100:4, adding that we have every reason to thank God, who has preserved our lives, sustained our families, protect our communities.

He commended the governor for the employment of 5,000 teachers, which he described as bold investment in the future of our children and the strengthening of our edu-

cational system.

On his part, Okpebholo, reaffirmed his administration commitment in improving security and protecting lives and property across the 18 Local Government Area of the state.

The governor, who was represented by the Commissioner of Finance, Mr Emmanuel Okoebor, highlighted various sector's his administration has invested on, adding that he is doing everything humanly possible to make live meaningful for Edo people.

The governor, however explained that his administration would continue to give thanks to God, nothing that there is reward in showing appreciation to God at every given time.

## NEWS

# NASS, NELFUND move to scale student loan scheme to 7m beneficiaries amid push for national expansion

CAROLINE AMEH

ABUJA

The National Assembly (NASS) has deepened collaboration with the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) to significantly expand Nigeria's student loan scheme from 1.6 million direct beneficiaries to a projected 7 million, in what lawmakers de-

scribe as a strategic step toward broad-based national transformation.

The expansion plan was highlighted on Monday during a one-day national sensitisation programme on student loans, organised by the Senate Committee on Tertiary Education and TETFund in partnership with NELFUND.

The Managing Director of

NELFUND, Akintunde Sawyerr, said the scheme, which has so far recorded disbursements of about ₦282 billion, is already reshaping access to higher education and could reach far more Nigerians if expanded into skills acquisition, technical and vocational education, and training (TVET).

According to him, the programme currently has about

1.6 million direct beneficiaries, with an estimated indirect reach of nearly 10 million people when family dependents are considered.

"If we consider that the average Nigerian family consists of about five people, it means we are directly and indirectly impacting nearly 10 million lives," Sawyerr said.

He added that the next phase

of the initiative is expected to scale up coverage to as many as 7 million beneficiaries across tertiary institutions and vocational training centres nationwide, describing it as essential for driving "real national transformation."

Speaking at the event, Deputy Senate President Barau Jibrin described the sensitisation cam-

paign as timely, stressing that awareness remains critical to the success of the programme.

"No matter how beneficial a programme is, if the intended beneficiaries are not adequately informed about it, its impact will be limited," he said, adding that the outreach should be extended across all six geopolitical zones.



**RESCUED FROM BANDITS' CAPTIVITY:**

Mrs. Amina Abubakar, wife of the late former Director of Defence Information, retired Maj. Gen. Rabe Abubakar, rescued from bandits' captivity by troops of the Nigerian Army with the support from the Nigerian Force on Monday.

## Oredo council chairman, Iduseri flags off ward to ward campaign ahead of July 2026 local government election

BENIN- CITY

The Chairman of Oredo Local Government Council, Hon. Engr. Gabriel Iduseri, has officially flagged off his ward-to-ward campaign ahead of the forthcoming Local Government Election, reaffirming his commitment to grassroots development and people-oriented governance across Oredo.

As part of the campaign tour, Hon. Iduseri visited Wards 1, 3,

5, and 12, where he was warmly received by party faithful, community leaders, and residents.

Addressing supporters, Hon. Iduseri expressed gratitude to the people of Oredo for their unflinching support and confidence in his administration, while appealing for their votes in the July 11, 2026 Local Government Election.

Hon. Iduseri thanked the Executive Governor of Edo State, Sen. Monday Okpebholo, for finding him worthy to

fly the flag of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the forthcoming election.

Speaking further, the APC Chairmanship candidate emphasized the need for unity among party members and stakeholders, while urging them to remain committed to the ideals of the APC and work collectively towards a resounding victory at the polls.

He assured the people of Oredo of his continued commitment to delivering impact-

ful projects and programmes that will further enhance development and improve the welfare of residents across the local government area.

Present on the campaign team were top APC Chieftains including; Senator Matthew Urhoghide, Gen. Charles Airhiavbere, RTD, Hon. Razak Bello Osagie, Hon. Patrick Obahiagbon, Dr. Osamudiamen Osarenkho LGA party Chairman, as well as the incoming Vice Chairman, Hon. Ekhinadose Akhilome, all commended the giant strides of Hon. Engr. Gabriel Iduseri across the Wards.

## Edo court sentences five to death by hanging over lawyer's murder

BENIN CITY

After six years of legal proceedings, the Edo State High Court sitting in Benin City has delivered judgment in the murder and kidnapping case involving the late legal practitioner, Barrister Iyoha Osobase, with five defendants sentenced to death by hanging while one defendant was discharged and acquitted.

Delivering judgment in Charge No. B/CD/136C/22, The State versus Valentine Dibia and Five Others, presiding Judge, Justice Efe Ikpomwon-

ba, held that the prosecution successfully proved its case against five of the defendants beyond reasonable doubt.

The court consequently convicted the five defendants on charges bordering on conspiracy, kidnapping and murder, imposing various prison terms and sentences, including the death penalty by hanging.

However, Justice Ikpomwonba found that the evidence presented against the second defendant, Solomon Esuiké, was insufficient to sustain the charges against him.

The court accordingly dis-

charged and acquitted him of all counts.

The judgment brought to a close one of the most closely watched criminal trials in Edo State, arising from the abduction and killing of Barrister Osobase, who was reportedly attacked, beaten to death and buried in a shallow grave in Aduwawa, Benin City, on May 9, 2020.

Esuiké's defence team, led by Douglas Ogbankwa, with A.P. Uzor and S.A. Idemudia, successfully challenged the prosecution's case against their client, securing the only acquittal among the six defendants who stood trial.

The prosecution was led by former Edo State Director of

Public Prosecutions, Orobosa Okunbor, who presented witnesses and other evidence during the lengthy proceedings.

The case also attracted national attention following public interventions and demands for justice by senior legal and political figures, including the Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Chief Festus Keyamo (SAN), who had called for thorough investigation and prosecution of those responsible for the lawyer's killing.

With Wednesday's verdict, the court effectively brought to a close a criminal trial that has remained a reference point within Edo State's legal community since 2020.

## NARD warns as 30 doctors assaulted in one year

BENEDICT OKATE

ABUJA

No fewer than 30 resident doctors were assaulted across Nigeria within the last year, highlighting the growing dangers faced by healthcare workers in the course of their duties.

Data provided to our correspondent by the Nigerian Association of Resident Doctors showed that at least 21 cases of assaults on healthcare workers were reported nationwide during the period, with about 30 resident doctors directly affected.

The statistics further revealed that fewer than five of the reported cases were charged in court, while only one assailant has been convicted to date.

The figures suggest that, on average, a healthcare worker is assaulted every two weeks in Nigeria.

It stated, "Available statistics before the association reveal that within the last year alone,

no fewer than 21 cases of assaults on healthcare workers were reported across the country, with about 30 resident doctors directly affected.

"Shockingly, fewer than five cases were charged to court, while only one assailant has been convicted to date.

"What this simply means is that in Nigeria today, approximately every two weeks, another case of assault against a healthcare worker is recorded."

According to the data, hospitals, which should serve as safe havens for healing and lifesaving interventions, have increasingly become unsafe environments where doctors and other health workers are exposed to threats, physical violence, emotional trauma, intimidation, harassment and even kidnapping.

### CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MISS OJO ANTHONIA OMOH**, now wish to be known as **MRS. ADEKOYA ANTHONIA OMOH**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

### REMOVAL OF NAME

I, formerly known as **IRENE OSARHIEMEN UWUIMWONSE AGHO**, now wish to be known as **AGHO UWUIMWONSE IRENE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

### CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MRS. VIVIAN JOY OMORODION OHRENNECHEWEL**, now wish to be known as **JOY EFE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

### PUBLIC NOTICE PRIMEHEALTH COMMUNITY NETWORK INITIATIVE

THE GENERAL PUBLIC IS HEREBY NOTIFIED THAT THE ABOVE NAMED ASSOCIATION HAS APPLIED TO THE CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMISSION FOR REGISTRATION UNDER PART C OF THE COMPANIES AND ALLIED MATTER ACT 2020.

#### THE TRUSTEES ARE:

- Eguavoen Joy - Chairman
- Azeke Ikhine Dennis - Trustee
- Ekhosuehi Francis - Trustee
- Peter Anya - Trustee
- Eguavoen Kingsley - Trustee
- Ogbejele Josephine - Secretary

#### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

- To apply all incomes for this non-profit organization towards expanding access to mental healthcare services to the most vulnerable persons in Nigeria.
- To apply all incomes for this non-profit organization towards improving preventive healthcare delivery especially amongst the most vulnerable women in Nigeria.
- To apply all incomes for this non-profit organization towards operating community health hubs to enhance access to health care amongst underprivileged members of the community by deploying mobile healthcare outreach units and provision of telehealth services.
- To apply all incomes for this non-profit organization towards conducting public health education programs to support government efforts to improve health in rural community.
- To apply all incomes for this non-profit organization towards building partnerships with local and international organizations to promote healthcare innovation and support health workers skill development.

Any Objections to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Maitama Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

SIGNED: CHAIRMAN

# Bishop Badejo: S/Africa, Congo threatened as Nigeria faces worsening insecurity

IBADAN

The Catholic Bishop of Oyo Diocese, Most Rev. Emmanuel Badejo, has lamented that Africa's three wealthiest black nations — Nigeria, South Africa and Democratic Republic of Congo — were "all in shreds for one reason or the other."

Badejo warns that the continent at this point in time, urgently needs courageous leaders with patriotic vision.

Speaking in an interview, on

Monday in Ibadan, the cleric said the situation across the continent was "very unsettling."

"Africa really needs the help of courageous leaders with patriotic vision. Look at Nigeria, South Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo, the three wealthiest countries of black Africa are all in shreds for one reason or the other."

"This is very unsettling. These three countries aforementioned have a great responsibility to drag Africa out

of the doldrums of centuries past," Badejo stressed.

The Catholic Bishop expressed concern that Africa's development would remain stalled without bold leadership.

He decried the state of insecurity that had left citizens traumatised and security forces demoralised.

According to him, Nigeria's worsening insecurity has eroded public confidence in government and reduced the military to undertakers.

"Army general's corpse delivered by bandits, traditional rulers deserting their palaces for fear of kidnap, schools shut down by threats of abduction and entire families held hos-

tage by criminals."

The bishop urged President Bola Tinubu and state governors to be more active and act decisively in curbing the challenges in the face of escalating violence, else, "that would already be several years late!"

Badejo added: "Arise Oh God rebuild the ruins of Jerusalem. This is the time when real lead-

ers are needed. Let them show up in Nigeria now, not tomorrow... So our army is not seen as an undertaker unit."

Badejo remarked that the situation demanded urgent intervention by God.

He further emphasised that the continent and nation could not progress amid persistent violence and bloodshed.

## FG, states, others share N2.257trn...

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vation revenue.

"On the N1.260 trillion distributable statutory revenue, the Federal Government received N580.942 billion and the State Governments received N294.661 billion."

"The Local Government Councils received N227.172 billion and the sum of N157.254 billion (13 per cent of mineral revenue) was shared to the benefiting States as derivation revenue."

"From the N747.088 billion distributable Value Added Tax (VAT) revenue, the Federal Government received N74.709 billion, the State Governments

received N410.898 billion and the Local Government Councils received N261.481 billion."

"The Federal Government received N131.700 billion from the N250.000 billion, the States received N66.800 billion and the Local Government received N51.500 billion."

He further disclosed that, in April 2026, Companies income Tax (CIT), CGT, SDT, Import Duty, Oil and Gas Royalty and Value Added Tax (VTA) increased significantly, while Petroleum Profit Tax (PPT), Hydrocarbon Tax (HT), decreased considerably as that Excise Duty and CET Levies decreased marginally.



**BUSINESS ACTIVITIES:**

Some female traders in Dutse, Jigawa State, undertaking their daily business activities.

## Gov. Okpebholo condemns Airport...

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being dragged into a vehicle after her husband escaped from the abductors.

The incident reportedly happened at the popular "Vegetable Market" area along the Airport road in the heart of the state capital.

Ikoedem said that operatives of the command's Anti-Violent Crime Unit and Anti-Kidnapping Unit were already on the trail of the suspects.

According to her, the victim was returning from church with members of her family when they stopped at the popular market where the abduction occurred.

Ikoedem said that substantial progress had been made in the investigation, though she did not disclose details for operational reasons.

The incident, which oc-

curred in broad daylight, triggered panic among traders and residents after a video of the attack surfaced on social media.

In the viral footage, armed men dressed in vigilante-like attire were seen arriving in an unmarked Lexus Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV).

The suspects were seen walking up to another parked SUV occupied by the family and shooting one of its tyres.

They initially attempted to abduct the husband by dragging him toward their vehicle, but he managed to break free and escape.

The assailants then pursued his wife, who was also trying to flee, overpowered her and forcibly dragged her into their waiting vehicle before speeding away.

A voice in the background of the video was heard saying that the man had escaped while the woman had been taken away.

## Sir Okunghae passes on

The death of a social philanthropist and a community leader, Sir James Omorovbiye Okunghae has been reported in Benin City. He was aged 74 years.

Sir Okunghae passed on at the Military Based Hospital at the weekend in Benin City after a brief illness. He was a Knight of Saint Christopher in the Anglican Communion. He is survived by a wife and children.

A statement issued by Charles Ogiemwonyi on behalf of the family stated that the fu-

neral ceremony of the late philanthropist will be announced by the family.



SIR OKUNGHAE

## 5 dead, 11 confirmed cases in Plateau cholera outbreak

JOS

Dr. Nicholas Baamlong, Plateau's Commissioner for Health says the state has recorded 11 confirmed cases of cholera, five deaths, and 53 suspected cases.

Baamlong, who disclosed this to journalists on Sunday in Jos noted that the confirmed and suspected cases were reported in Pushit, Mangu 1 and Mangu 2 communities in Mangu Local Government Area (LGA).

Baamlong said the state ministry of health is intensifying public health interven-

tions to contain the outbreak, prevent further spread, and reduce its impact on affected communities.

He explained that the state had taken decisive actions to control the outbreak and protect its citizens via the deployment of additional Response Teams (RRTs) to the affected wards, scaling up of treatment centres and isolation capacity and the emergency procurement of Rapid Diagnostic Tests Kits, intravenous fluids and essential drugs.

The Commissioner further said that the ministry had activated an Incident Management

System (IMS), for a comprehensive and multi sectorial response to the outbreak.

"The activation of the IMS ensures a coordinated, efficient, and accountable response structure in line with national and international emergency response frameworks," he said.

Baamlong explained that cholera was an acute diarrhoeal disease caused by consuming food or water contaminated with the bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*.

He urged residents of Mangu LGA and neighbouring communities to remain

vigilant and take preventive measures, including drinking safe water, maintaining proper hand hygiene, avoiding open defecation, and ensuring proper waste disposal.

He also advised residents to promptly report suspected cases of cholera to the nearest healthcare facility for immediate attention.

While reaffirming the state government's commitment to safeguarding the health and well-being of residents, Baamlong called on development partners and other stakeholders to support ongoing response efforts

## FG inaugurates mass trial of second...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

Central Business District and the Abuja Federal High Court.

Reports indicate that all roads leading to the court were blocked by armed security personnel just as when 500 suspected terrorists were also tried between April 7 and April 10 at the FHC in Abuja.

The Federal Government on Monday said it is determined to stamp out terrorism and its related activities from the country.

Mr Lateef Fagbemi, SAN, the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice, made this known on Monday while speaking with newsmen shortly after he led a team of lawyers to the Federal High Court in Abuja in the ongoing mass trial of sus-

pected terrorists.

"We will fight with every inch of our blood to ensure that we make Nigeria a safe haven for everybody."

"The message is clear, direct and straight forward. It is that the present administration is not taking the issue of terrorism with levity."

"And that is why you see the ongoing trials."

"Since the inception of this administration, this is about the fourth phase that we are undertaking."

"So the message is that, let everybody know that terrorism in whatever form, shape, will not be tolerated; will not be condoned," he said.

On the total number of suspects on trial in the current phase, the AGF said more than 600 terror suspects would be

prosecuted.

"Well, for this phase; the ones we have today, we have about 490. Tomorrow we'll have 84."

"But this 84 does not include the 102 that was brought forward from the last phase."

"So in total, you have almost about 600 plus to contend with for this phase."

"We have been assured by the honourable judges that they will do their utmost part to ensure that they clear this number for this phase," he said.

He assured that the trial would be given accepted hearing.

He said: "we have about 10 judges devoted to this case alone and they are not doing any other cases apart from the terrorism cases."

"I mean, total devotion to trial of terrorism cases."

"I am optimistic and I've

gotten assurances from them (judges) that they will do no other than this one and they are speeding up the process without compromising the necessary safeguards and oversight that they are meant to do."

Fagbemi, who said there had been convictions so far from the proceedings he had appeared, said a record would be compiled at the end of the trial.

He said the trial, which began today, would last until Thursday.

"By the end of Thursday, we are optimistic that it would have gone very, very fine," he concluded.

Reports showed that at least 500 suspected terrorists were also tried between April 7 and April 10 at the Federal High Court in Abuja as part of an intensified effort to tackle insecurity.

**NEWS**

# Expert urges Nigerians to stay alert to Ebola symptoms

**AWKA**

An Infectologist and Vaccinologist, Prof. Nnamdi Onyire, has urged Nigerians to remain vigilant and seek immediate medical attention if they develop symptoms associated with Ebola Virus Disease (EVD).

Onyire, a lecturer at Alex Ekwueme Federal University,

Ndufu-Alike, gave the advice while reacting to reports of Ebola outbreaks in parts of East and Central Africa.

He described Ebola as a severe and often fatal viral disease caused by Orthobolaviruses, warning that the outbreaks highlighted the need for preparedness against possible cross-border transmission.

"We have received reports of

Ebola outbreaks in some parts of East and Central Africa, and the disease is capable of causing fatalities.

"We do not want to be caught unprepared should it spread beyond the affected areas because Ebola is highly contagious.

"Based on this, I advise anyone who notices symptoms associated with Ebola disease to visit a hospital for proper testing, diag-

nosis and treatment," he said.

The expert, who also chairs the Health Committee of the Obosi Development Union, identified common symptoms as fever, weakness, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhoea, stomach pain and unexplained bleeding.

He advised Nigerians to reduce their risk of infection by observing good personal hygiene, avoid-

ing contact with bodily fluids of infected persons and refraining from handling dead animals.

"To avoid contracting Ebola disease, wash your hands regularly with soap and water, avoid contact with infected persons, do not touch dead animals and refrain from unsafe burial practices," he advised.

Onyire said that although Ebola had a high mortality rate, patients had better chances of survival when they received

prompt diagnosis, medical care and supportive treatment.

He identified healthcare workers, family caregivers, laboratory personnel and travellers exposed in affected areas as groups facing a higher risk of infection.

The don urged Nigerians to remain alert and comply with recommended preventive measures to minimise the risk of transmission should the disease spread beyond the currently affected regions.

**SWEARING-IN:**

Representative of the Minister of State for FCT, Mr Istifanus Luka (3rd L); FCT Coordinator, National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Mr Samson Ateli (4th L); Camp Director, NYSC, Mrs Abosede Fashina (M) and others, during the swearing-in of 2026 NYSC Batch B Stream 1 Orientation Course at the Kubwa Orientation Camp in Abuja Monday.

## Ward delineation: Warri leaders demand urgent implementation of S'Court order

**WARRI**

The Indigenous Ijaw and Urhobo people of Warri Federal Constituency have warned against further delay in the implementation of the Supreme Court ordered electoral ward delineation report.

The representatives of the two ethnic groups issued the warning at a joint news conference held in Warri on Sunday.

The news conference was convened by Chief Godspower Gbenekama, Chief Victor Okumagba, Chief Denbo-Denbofa Oweikporodor, Chief John Eranvor, Chief Ar-

thur Akpodubakaye, Chief David Reje and Mr Samuel Ako.

The event was organised, following the June 11 stakeholders' meeting convened in Abuja by President Bola Tinubu.

They said that any further delay in the implementation could undermine the fragile peace recently secured through the President's intervention.

They also urged the Federal Government and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to respect the trust reposed in them by the stakeholders.

"We reluctantly accepted painful compromises in the

interest of peace and national stability," the stakeholders said.

They called on INEC to immediately upload the delineation report to its portal, commence voter registration and transfer exercises in the newly created wards and polling units, ahead of the 2027 General Elections.

"We state in conclusion that any further delay in the implementation of the delineation report and attempt to alter the report will amount to betrayal of trust by the Federal Government and INEC.

"We reluctantly accepted the intervention of the President in

respect of the alteration to the Registration Areas/Electoral Wards in Warri South-West Local Government Area as a mark of respect for the President," they said.

The people recalled that INEC had, on May 20, released the report of the Supreme Court order for a fresh delineation of Warri Federal Constituency, creating 20 registration areas and electoral wards in Warri North, Warri South and Warri South-West LGAs.

They said that the report created additional state constituencies for Warri North and Warri South-West.

## FRSC recovers stolen vehicle in Edo

**ABUJA**

The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), has recovered a vehicle stolen from a Church premises in Edo, its Public Education Officer, Osondu Ohaeri, has said.

Ohaeri, in a statement, said that the intelligence-driven patrol team of the Irukepken Unit Command, Edo, recovered the vehicle stolen from Benin, the state capital.

He said that the vehicle was recovered on Sunday following a distress report received by the patrol team.

According to him, the vehicle, with registration number RBC 987 CM, was reportedly stolen from the Church premises earlier in the day.

"Upon receiving detailed information about the stolen vehicle, the patrol team immediately activated its intelligence and surveillance network, strategically monitoring vehicular movements along major routes within its operational corridor.

"Through a combination of vigilance, professionalism and effective patrol coordination, the vehicle was subsequently

sighted and intercepted.

"The suspect found in possession of the vehicle claimed to be a delivery agent but, following preliminary investigations, he was apprehended and handed over to the Police and taken into custody for further interrogation," he said.

Ohaeri added that the recovered vehicle was secured, pending identification and handover to its rightful owner.

According to him, the successful recovery highlights the growing impact of FRSC patrol operations in crime reduction across the country.

He said that beyond traffic management and road safety enforcement, FRSC patrol teams serve as vital eyes and ears on the highways.

"These patrol teams contribute significantly to the detection of stolen vehicles, apprehension of criminal suspects, rescue of crash victims, and provision of timely intelligence to relevant security agencies.

"This proactive approach continues to strengthen public safety, deter criminal activities and enhance confidence in the nation's road transportation system," he also said.

## Osun 2026: Adeleke urges corps members to stay apolitical ahead of governorship poll

**OSOGBO**

Governor Ademola Adeleke of Osun has urged members of the 2026 Batch B, Stream I of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) deployed to the state to remain apolitical ahead of the Aug. 15 governorship election.

Adeleke gave the charge on Monday while declaring open the 2026 Batch B, Stream I Orientation Course at the NYSC Permanent Orientation Camp in Ede area of the state.

The governor, who was represented by the Commissioner for Budget and Economic Planning, Prof. Moruf Adeleke, emphasised the need for neutrality and professionalism, especially for corps members who may be involved in the electoral process.

According to him, the state is approaching a critical period with the forthcoming governorship election.

"I urge you, as corps members, to remain apolitical and

professional in the discharge of your electoral duties.

"Do not allow the credibility of our electoral process to be marred by your actions. The state is looking up to you to help ensure the integrity of the election.

"I implore you to shun all forms of undue influence and uphold the ideals and regulations of both the NYSC scheme and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)," he said.

The governor also advised the corps members to comply with camp rules and regulations in order to maximise the benefits of the orientation exercise.

Adeleke assured them of his administration's continued commitment to their welfare and safety, urging them to approach their assignments with patriotism, humility and dedication to national development.

Earlier, the NYSC Coordinator in the state, Mr Ekeng Kubianga, commended the governor for his administration's sustained support for the scheme.

## NGO seeks end to discriminatory language against persons with disabilities

**OSOGBO**

A non-governmental organisation, Community Advancement Initiative for Self Reliance (CAI4SR), has urged the media to adopt disability-inclusive language and uphold ethical reporting standards to protect persons with disabilities from discrimination and misrepresentation.

The organisation also cautioned against portraying persons with disabilities as vulnerable, less human, or a burden to others in news reports.

Speaking at a one-day media engagement and training on disability inclusion in Osog-

bo, the Executive Director of CAI4SR, Mrs Eni Ayeni, stressed the need for journalists and other stakeholders to avoid the use of degrading language when referring to persons with disabilities.

Ayeni emphasised that persons with disabilities are first and foremost human beings, noting that their conditions should not define them in society.

She urged the media to use appropriate and respectful language, describing it as a vital tool for promoting human rights, equity, and dignity.

According to her, journalists should adopt person-first lan-

guage in their reports.

"Use 'person with a disability' rather than 'disabled person.' This recognises the individual before the condition," she said.

Ayeni further advised against the use of passive, pity-driven expressions such as "suffers from," "afflicted by," or "wheelchair-bound."

She also recommended phrases like "person with a disability" instead of "disabled" or "handicapped," and "person with visual impairment" or "person who is blind" instead of terms such as "the blind," "visionless," or "sightless."

"Affirm individual person-

hood first and avoid grouping unique individuals under generic labels," she added.

Ayeni noted that the use of appropriate language in reporting would enhance the dignity of persons with disabilities and promote their inclusion in society.

She explained that the objective of the training was to equip participants with a sound understanding of ethical considerations in reporting disability-related issues.

According to her, participants would gain the knowledge required to produce accurate and ethical reports on disability rights.

# Constitutional breach: Court orders deregistration of ADC, Accord, AA, APP, ZLP

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja on Monday ordered the deregistration of African Democratic Congress (ADC) and four others over failure to meet the constitutional requirements for political parties in the country.

Justice Peter Lifu, in a judgement, ordered the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to deregister the affected parties having failed to secure 25 per cent of the votes in the last general elections in compliance with the provisions of the law.

The Oive political parties

include ADC, Accord (A), Action Alliance (AA), Action Peoples Party (APP) and Zenith Labour Party (ZLP).

Judice Lifu, who earlier dismissed all the multiple preliminary objections filed by the defendants, ordered INEC not to allow the parties participate in the subsequent elections, including the 2027 general polls, having failed to meet the constitutional threshold

A group, the Incorporated Trustees of the National Forum of Former Legislators had filed the suit marked: FHC/ABJ/CS/2637/2026 against the five political parties.

The plaintiff, who also joined the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) in the suit, named INEC as 1st defendant.

The forum argued that the affected political parties failed

to meet constitutional requirements relating to electoral spread and performance.

It contended that political parties were required to secure at least 25 per cent of votes in prescribed elections to remain relevant under the law.

It, therefore, urged the court to order the deregistration of the parties, insisting that none of the defendants had effectively countered the argument.

The plaintiffs also sought orders restraining the affected parties from participating in elections, conducting primaries, organising rallies, or carrying out other political activities pending compliance with constitutional requirements.

In his judgment, Peter Lifu, the presiding judge, upheld the arguments of the plaintiff and ordered INEC to deregister the five political parties.

## FG inaugurates technical working group on agricultural standards

ABUJA

The Federal Government has inaugurated a Technical Working Group (TWG) on Agricultural Produce Residue Standards to strengthen food safety, improve export quality and enhance Nigeria's competitiveness in global markets.

Speaking at the inauguration on Monday in Abuja, the Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Security, Sen. Aliyu Abdullahi, said the initiative underscores government's commitment to safe and sustainable agricultural production.

He said the TWG brings together stakeholders from government, regulatory agencies, academia, research institutions, the private sector and development partners to address residue-related challenges in agricultural produce.

"It has become increasingly important that Nigerian agricultural products not only meet production targets but

also comply with internationally accepted food safety and quality standards under the Renewed Hope Agenda," he said.

Abdullahi noted that Nigeria had suffered repeated export rejections due to non-compliance with Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) and other sanitary and phytosanitary standards.

According to him, the trend has resulted in economic losses, reduced market confidence and missed opportunities for farmers and exporters.

He stressed that concerns over pesticide residues and contaminants require a coordinated, science-based response.

The minister said the TWG was expected to develop practical solutions to strengthen national food control systems, improve pesticide use practices and expand access to premium markets.

He added that the group's work would also enhance public health, boost export earnings and reduce post-harvest losses linked to trade restrictions.

## Embrace voluntary blood donation as life-saving gesture —NOA

UYO

The National Orientation Agency (NOA) has appealed to Nigerians to embrace the culture of voluntary blood donation as a vital act of humanity and life-saving gesture.

The Akwa Ibom Director of the agency, Mr Mkpoutom Mkpoutom, made the appeal in a statement issued in Uyo and made available to newsmen at the weekend.

Mkpoutom urged individuals, groups and organisations to see blood donation as a moral obligation to save lives, rather than just as a medical necessity.

He said the call came as part of the global celebration of World Blood Donor Day, observed annually on June 14, to raise awareness about the need for safe blood and blood products.

He further said that the day is also used to thank voluntary, unpaid blood donors for their life-saving contributions.

"Blood donation is a life-saving act of solidarity.

"Every pint of blood donat-

ed can save up to three lives.

"It is a selfless gesture that binds us as a community, especially in times of emergency," Mkpoutom said.

According to him, regular blood donation ensures that hospitals and health centers have an adequate supply of safe blood for patients undergoing surgeries, accident victims and mothers with pregnancy complications, among others.

The state NOA boss, therefore, appealed to healthy individuals above 18 to regularly visit designated health facilities and blood banks to donate blood.

"We must move from emergency-driven blood donation to a consistent culture of voluntary donation.

"Let us make it a habit, not just a reaction to a crisis," Mkpoutom said.

He commended existing donors in the country for their humanitarian efforts, and encouraged more citizens to join the cause.

He said that every drop of blood donated "is a lifeline to someone in need".



BASKET WEAVING:

Children making basket at Kasuwan Barchi in Kaduna on Monday.

## Police making progress in Benin abduction —Edo PPRO

BENIN CITY

The Police Command in Edo says it has made significant progress in the investigation into the abduction of a woman by suspected kidnappers in Benin, on Sunday.

The suspects were seen in a viral video showing the victim being dragged into a vehicle after her husband escaped from the abductors.

The incident reportedly happened at the popular "Veg-etable Market" area along the Airport road in the heart of the state capital.

ASP Eno Ikoedem, command's Public Relations Officer, disclosed this on Monday

while confirming the incident.

Ikoedem said that operatives of the command's Anti-Violent Crime Unit and Anti-Kidnaping Unit were already on the trail of the suspects.

According to her, the victim was returning from church with members of her family when they stopped at the popular market where the abduction occurred.

Ikoedem said that substantial progress had been made in the investigation, though she did not disclose details for operational reasons.

The incident, which occurred in broad daylight, triggered panic among traders and residents after a video of the attack surfaced on social media.

In the viral footage, armed men

dressed in vigilante-like attire were seen arriving in an unmarked Lexus Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV).

The suspects were seen walking up to another parked SUV occupied by the family and shooting one of its tyres.

They initially attempted to abduct the husband by dragging him toward their vehicle, but he managed to break free and escape.

The assailants then pursued his wife, who was also trying to flee, overpowered her and forcibly dragged her into their waiting vehicle before speeding away.

A voice in the background of the video was heard saying that the man had escaped while the woman had been taken away.

Meanwhile, Gov. Monday

Okpebholo has condemned the incident, describing it as unacceptable and a direct attack on innocent residents.

The governor, in a statement issued by his spokesperson, Mr Patrick Ebojele, directed the Commissioner of Police to commence a coordinated investigation aimed at securing the victim's safe rescue and arresting those responsible.

"The Edo Government will not tolerate any act that threatens public safety and security or disturbs the peace of the state," Ebojele quoted the governor as saying.

The governor also assured residents that security agencies were working round the clock to bring the perpetrators to justice and strengthen security across the state.

## FG, States, others share N2.257trn April 2026 revenue

ABUJA

The Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) has shared a total sum of N2.257 trillion to the Federal, States and the Local Government Councils for the month of April 2026.

Mr Bawa Mokwa, Director Press and Public Relations in the Office of the Auditor-General of the Federation (OAGF), revealed this in a statement issued on Monday in Abuja.

In the statement, Mokwa said the revenue was shared at the May 2026 FAAC meeting held in Abuja recently.

He revealed that, the N2.257 trillion total distributable revenue comprised distributable statutory revenue of N1.260 trillion, distributable Value Added Tax (VAT) revenue of N747.088 billion and Augmentation N250 billion.

Mokwa said a communiqué issued by the FAAC indicated that total gross revenue of N3.184 trillion was available in the month of April 2026.

"A total deduction for cost of collection was N113.756 billion while total transfers, refunds and savings was N813.839 billion.

"Gross statutory revenue of N2.378 trillion was received for

the month of April 2026. This was higher than the sum of N1.699 trillion received in the preceding month by N678.224 billion.

"Gross revenue of N806.617 billion was available from the Value Added Tax (VAT) in April 2026. This was higher than the N664.425 billion available in the month of March 2026 by N142.192 billion," Mokwa quoted the communiqué.

He quoted the communiqué further: "From the N2.257 trillion total distributable revenue, the Federal Government received total sum of N787.351 billion and the State Governments received total sum of N772.360 billion.

"The Local government Council received N540.152 billion, while the sum of N157.254 billion (13 per cent of mineral revenue) was shared to the benefiting State as derivation revenue.

"On the N1.260 trillion distributable statutory revenue, the Federal Government received N580.942 billion and the State Governments received N294.661 billion.

"The Local Government Councils received N227.172 billion and the sum of N157.254 billion (13 per cent of mineral revenue) was shared to the benefiting States as derivation revenue."

## NEWS

# Ojukwu varsity sacks 4 lecturers over alleged sexual abuse, extortion

## AWKA

The Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU), Igbariam, Anambra, has dismissed five lecturers over alleged sexual abuse, harassment, intimidation, extortion and other forms of misconduct.

The university's Public Re-

lations Officer, Dr Harrison Madubueze, disclosed this in a statement issued in Awka.

Madubueze said the decision was taken at the 122nd meeting of the Governing Council held on June 12.

According to him, those dismissed include Prof. C.C. Nwabachili, the immediate past Dean of the Faculty of Law, and Prof. Chike Osegbue of the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences.

Others are Dr I.H. Iheuk-

wumere and Mr Emeka Nwabunnia, both of the Department of Microbiology, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Uli Campus.

Also dismissed was Mrs Ifeoma Kakulu, a Principal Assistant Registrar, who served as the Examination Officer of the Faculty of Law in the Examinations Unit, at the time the offences were allegedly committed.

Madubueze said the affected staff members were found culpable of offences ranging from sexual abuse and harassment

to intimidation, extortion and ethical misconduct.

He said the council reaffirmed its commitment to discipline, integrity and accountability within the institution.

"The council reaffirmed its stance on discipline and integrity, warning that actions tarnishing the university's reputation would face severe consequences.

"It also promised to ensure a safe, accountable and forward-thinking atmosphere, aligning with the vision of building a new university

for the future," he said.

The university spokesman said the disciplinary action underscored the institution's

resolve to uphold ethical standards and maintain public confidence in its academic and administrative processes.

## Embrace voluntary blood donation as life-saving gesture —NOA

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He commended existing donors in the country for their humanitarian efforts, and encouraged more citizens to join the cause.

He said that every drop of blood donated "is a lifeline to someone in need".

## NSCDC nabs 21-year-old over alleged kidnap, murder

## ILORIN

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Kwara Command, has arrested a 21-year-old suspect, Soliu Mujeeb.

Mujeeb was arrested over alleged kidnapping, abduction and culpable homicide involving his employer, 60-year-old Mr Olarewaju Afolabi.

Mr Abbas Nda-Muhammed, Kwara commandant of NSCDC, disclosed this to newsmen over the weekend in Ilorin.

He said the case was reported at the Command's Tracking Unit on June 11, after Afolabi was declared missing.

Nda-Muhammed explained that the victim left his residence on June 7 to inspect an

electrical wiring site.

"He did not return home after leaving for the assignment," the Commandant said.

He said the victim's family later received a ransom demand of N2 million through Afolabi's phone.

"The family was only able to raise N120,000, which was paid as directed by the caller.

"The caller promised to release the victim after receiving the money," he added.

The Commandant said operatives traced the suspect through investigation and financial analysis of funds paid into the victim's Opay account.

He said interrogation revealed that Mujeeb worked with Afolabi as a 'joinman' in electrical installation services.

"The suspect confessed that there was a disagreement between him and the victim over missing material.

"He said the victim forced him to pay for it in instalments," Nda-Muhammed stated.

He added that the suspect became angry after deductions started from his salary.

"The suspect said it annoyed him when the victim started removing money from his salary," the commandant said.

Nda-Muhammed said the suspect allegedly lured Afolabi to Anuoluwapo Community, Kangile, Ilorin East.

He said the victim was taken there under the guise of inspecting a new electrical project.

The Commandant alleged that the suspect attacked and

killed Afolabi at the uncompleted building.

He said the suspect took the victim's phone and SIM card before demanding ransom.

"The suspect used the victim's phone to demand money from the family," he added.

Nda-Muhammed said the suspect later led operatives to the scene of the incident.

He said a shallow grave containing Afolabi's remains, mobile phone and SIM card were discovered.

The commandant said the investigation was still ongoing and the case would be transferred appropriately.

He explained that the suspect would face further investigation and prosecution after preliminary findings.

## FOBTOB decries job losses, rising costs in food sector

The Food, Beverage and Tobacco Senior Staff Association (FOBTOB) has expressed concern over growing job losses and rising operational costs confronting Nigeria's food and beverage industry.

The National President of FOBTOB, Mr Jimoh Oyibo, said this while speaking with newsmen on the sidelines of the just concluded 114th Session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva, Switzerland.

Oyibo said the sector was facing multiple challenges, including dependence on imported raw materials and the impact of foreign exchange volatility.

According to him, most companies in the food and beverage sector rely heavily on imported raw materials, making them vulnerable to fluctuations in exchange rates and rising production costs.

He said recent regulatory measures affecting sachet packaging and products below 200 millilitres had also negatively impacted businesses and employment within the industry.

"Most of our companies depend on imported raw materials and the exchange rate situation is biting harder."

It is creating enormous pressure on businesses across the sector," he said.

Oyibo added that the restric-

tions on smaller pack sizes had already resulted in job losses, adding that many workers had been thrown into the labour market.

"As I am talking to you, many of our members have been thrown into the labour market.

"We are engaging government to see how best we can resolve the situation," he said.

He described smaller package sizes as a major revenue source for manufacturers, noting that many consumers preferred affordable products due to declining purchasing power.

"Not everybody wants to go for the big pack sizes. The smaller pack sizes are the cash cow for many companies and workers in that sub-sector," he said.

## Family says Gen. Abubakar's death God's will

## KATSINA

Mr Isyaka Rabe-Abubakar, son of retired Maj.-Gen. Rabe Abubakar, who recently died in the hands of bandits, says that his father died as a martyr.

He said the family accepted the military officer's death as the will of God, in spite of the circumstances surrounding his demise.

The retired general was abducted alongside his wife by suspected bandits on May 30, along Matazu-Katsina Road.

The Katsina State Government announced his death on Saturday, while his wife re-

mains in captivity.

Speaking with journalists in Katsina on Sunday, Isyaka said the family was grateful to God in spite of their painful loss.

"We believe what happened to our father was destined by Allah.

"We believe he died a martyr and will be granted a place in Paradise," Isyaka said.

He described his late father as a mentor, deeply religious man and humble personality who lived peacefully.

According to him, the former military officer dedicated his life to guiding others and showing kindness.

"If you did not know him, when you saw him, you will

never know who he was.

"He was humble, peaceful and always willing to guide others," the deceased's son added.

Isyaka said his father's simplicity often concealed his achievements and position in the military.

He explained that the family had continued to draw strength from their faith during the difficult period.

On the circumstances surrounding the release of his father's body, he said only the government could provide details.

He added that the family was uncertain about the exact cause of the retired general's death.

## CAVEAT EMPTOR / PUBLIC NOTICE

### FAMILY LANDED PROPERTY AT NO. 5 OGBOTOR LANE, OFF OZOLUA ROAD, OLOGBO, EDO STATE, NIGERIA, AND ALL OTHER PROPERTIES COMPRISING THE ESTATE OF LATE MR. EMMANUEL IMOHI ENAHORO

The general public is hereby notified and put on notice that all original title documents, survey plans, receipts, and other documents of title relating to the family landed property located at **No 5 OGBOTOR LANE, OFF OZOLUA ROAD, OLOGBO, EDO STATE, NIGERIA**, and all other properties comprising the estate of **Late Mr. Emmanuel Imohi Enahoro** are currently in the wrongful custody of **MR. MARTINS OSAHON ENAHORO**.

Said documents were taken without the authority, consent, or knowledge of the lawful owners and beneficiaries of the estate.

### WARNING

By this publication, the general public, intending purchasers, lessees, mortgagees, financial institutions, developers, surveyors, real estate agents, and all persons howsoever described, are hereby cautioned and warned **NOT TO ENTER INTO ANY TRANSACTION, DEALING, SALE, LEASE, MORTGAGE, CHARGE, GIFT, OR ANY FORM OF ENCUMBRANCE** with respect to the said property or any other property forming part of the estate, with Mr. Martins Osahon Enahoro or any person claiming through him.

Any person or institution that deals with Mr. Martins Osahon Enahoro or anyone acting on his behalf in respect of the said property does so **AT HIS/HER OWN PERIL/RISK**, and such transaction shall be null, void, and of no effect whatsoever in law. The lawful owners will not be bound by, and will not recognize, any such transaction.

This notice is issued in compliance with due process and to protect the interest of the rightful beneficiaries/owners of the estate.

For further information, inquiries, or delivery of the said documents, please contact **Ms. Egun Enahoro** through the family solicitors:  
**(Meridien Partners (U.A. & E. Chambers))**

Plot 13, Port Harcourt Crescent,  
Off the National Industrial Court of Nigeria, Area 11, Abuja.

Tel: 09122000727-8

Dated this 12th day of June, 2026.

SIGNED

Egun Enahoro

For the Estate of Late Mr. Emmanuel Imohi Enahoro

# Kogi Govt will reclaim state's forests from criminal elements, says Ododo

## LOKOJA

The Kogi Government will reclaim the state's forests from criminal elements, Governor Ahmed Ododo, has said.

Ododo made the declaration during a visit to the training camp of the newly recruited Forest Guard trainees at the weekend in Lokoja

"There will be no safe haven for terrorists, bandits and other violent criminals operating within the state.

"We are determined to rid Kogi of criminal elements and

we will deploy all lawful resources necessary to guarantee the safety of residents and visitors," he said.

The governor urged the guards to discharge their responsibilities with discipline, patriotism and a strong commitment to service.

"The vast and largely unguarded forest areas in some parts of the state has become a major security challenge, providing hideouts for criminal groups and enabling attacks on innocent citizens.

"The recruitment and training of Forest Guards form a key

component of the state's security strategy is aimed at strengthening surveillance, denying criminals access to safe havens and improving the capacity of security agencies to respond effectively to threats," he said.

Ododo said that the initiative was part of the Forest Guard Programme approved by President Bola Tinubu and it is being implemented through the Office of the National Security Adviser in

collaboration with the Department of State Services and other security institutions.

He commended Tinubu for his commitment to strengthening national security and empowering states with innovative measures to tackle emerging security challenges.

The governor also expressed appreciation to the National Security Adviser, Nuhu Ribadu, for his support and leadership in advancing secu-

rity reforms across the country.

Ododo further lauded the Director-General of the DSS, Adeola Ajayi, for supporting security operations in Kogi.

He noted that the DSS was overseeing the profiling and training of the Forest Guard recruits to ensure professionalism, competence and accountability.

The governor stressed that while his administration was committed to expanding se-

curity manpower, it remained focused on ensuring that only individuals of proven character, integrity and loyalty were entrusted with the responsibility of protecting lives and property.

He expressed confidence in the trainees, describing them as a valuable addition to the state's security architecture and urged them to take their training seriously in preparation for the task ahead.

The visit to the training

## Police begin crackdown on improper number plates in Kwara

## ILORIN

The Police command in Kwara has begun a state-wide enforcement exercise against vehicles with improper registration number plates.

The exercise began on Monday, targeting covered, obscured, unauthorised, defaced, altered or missing plates.

This is contained in statement issued in Ilorin by the command's spokesperson, Adetoun Ejire-Adeyemi.

Commissioner of Police, Kwara Command, Mr Ojo Adekimi, said the action followed a directive from the Inspector-General of Police, Mr Olatunji Disu.

Adekimi said the enforcement was designed to strengthen public safety and prevent criminals from hiding their identities.

He explained that some criminals exploit concealed or unregistered vehicles to carry out unlawful activities.

The commissioner directed Area Commanders, Divisional Police Officers and the State

Traffic Officer to enforce the directive.

He ordered officers to begin full compliance operations across their respective jurisdictions throughout the state.

Adekimi warned that any vehicle violating the directive would be impounded and investigated under existing laws.

He stressed that the command would not grant exemptions or special treatment to any offender.

"There will be no preferential treatment, exemption or special consideration for anyone.

"The law will be applied fairly, firmly and without compromise," the commissioner said.

He advised motorists and vehicle owners to remove all coverings or obstructions from their number plates.

The police boss in Kwara urged residents to ensure only valid and clearly visible registration plates were displayed.

He also encouraged vehicle owners to keep relevant documents updated and available for inspection.



## INTERVENTIONAL SEMINAR:

L-R: Zonal Manager, News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) Ibadan and Guest Speaker, Mr Adebayo Sekoni; Deputy Director Programme, Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, Ibadan Zonal office, Rev. Niyi Dahunsi; Secretary, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Oyo State Council, Dayo Adu; NUJ Oyo Council, Akeem Abas; Dr Olugbemiga Bamidele; General Editor of *Nigeria Tribune*, Mr Taiwo Adisa, during the Interventional Seminar titled: "Responsible Reporting in the Era of Insecurity and Fake News for members of NUJ in Ibadan on Monday.

## Oyo abduction: Bala canvasses rejig of security architecture

## IBADAN

Governor Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State has called for a comprehensive review of the nation's security architecture to address the country's growing security challenges.

Bala made the call when he led some members of the leadership of Allied People's Movement (APM) on a solidarity visit to Governor Seyi Makinde at his Ikolaba residence in Ibadan.

Speaking with newsmen shortly after a closed-door meeting with Makinde, Bala maintained that there was a

need for synergy among security agencies and increased community participation in combating crime.

He underscored the need for a comprehensive rejig of the nation's security architecture to nip the rampant security lapses across the country.

"The nation's security architecture requires scrutiny to birth greater commitment and better synergy among security operatives as well as between the security agencies and the citizens," Bala stressed.

The governor who sympathised with his Oyo State counterpart over the May 15 abduction of some pupils and teachers in Oriire Local Government Area of the state, urged citizens to remain vig-

ilant and avoid collaborating with criminal elements.

He said that the prolonged ordeal of the abducted pupils and teachers had generated concern across the country.

Bala, however, expressed confidence in Makinde's capacity to secure the release of the abductees, and pledged the support of the government and people of Bauchi State towards efforts aimed at ensuring the safe return of the victims.

"We are here to encourage him that what he is doing to ensure their release is being noticed by the whole nation.

"We join, on behalf of myself, the government and people of Bauchi State, to commiserate with him and to encourage him to ensure that these Nigerians

are released," he said

The governor cited community engagement initiatives adopted in Bauchi State as a method to improve security awareness in states across the country.

He attributed the rising criminal activities in the country to economic hardship and challenges of governance.

Bala tasked the citizens to take responsibility for the future of the country by electing credible leaders in the coming general elections.

He congratulated Makinde on his emergence as the presidential candidate of the APM, describing him as an energetic and visionary leader capable of providing quality leadership and good governance for Nigeria

## We need information on fake pastors —Anambra govt tells residents

## AWKA

Anambra State Government has called on residents of the state to provide it with credible information on pastors, churches, or so-called "men of God" involved in criminality, extortion, fraud and deception.

The Commissioner for Information and Value Reformation, Dr Law Mefor, made the call in a statement made available to journalists in Awka on Monday.

He also requested for information on fake pastors involved in any act that endangered lives and peace of communities or misleads the people in the state.

He promised that all information would be treated with absolute confidentiality.

The commissioner said the move was part of government's efforts to rid the state of all forms of criminality and sanitise both traditional worship and religious practices to restore sanity, law and order in the state.

"In spite of the negative claims made during the campaigns against the effort to clean up criminals pretending to be traditional healers and real religious leaders, this effort will actually protect the true freedom of traditional worship and religious practice.

"Let us work together to take back our state from criminals hiding under religion, culture and tradition," the statement noted.

"Call +2348034182108 or 5111 if you have any useful information about any such actions," the commissioner said.

## Troops nab suspected arms racketeer, recover ammunition in Plateau

## ABUJA

Troops of Operation Enduring Peace (OPEP), have apprehended a suspected arms racketeer and recovered arms, ammunition and other items during a covert operation in Riyom Local Government Area of Plateau.

This was disclosed in an operational report made available to newsmen in Abuja.

The report said that the operation was conducted by troops of Sector 6 at Makera checkpoint following credible

intelligence on the movement of illegal arms.

It also said that the operation was initiated after information emerged that a suspected arms dealer was transporting weapons in a white Peugeot vehicle from Jos South towards the Makera axis of Riyom.

According to the report, troops trailed and intercepted the suspect at the checkpoint in Makera at about 2:30 p.m. on Sunday.

"A search conducted on the vehicle led to the recovery of two locally fabricated pistols,

167 rounds of 9mm ammunition, three cans of pepper spray and one jack knife."

The report added that troops also recovered two mobile phones, two cutlasses, a police staff identity tag, three photographs of the suspect in police uniform, two ATM cards, a National Identity Number card and N73,300 cash.

It revealed that preliminary investigation identified the suspect as an Inspector, whose last known posting was at the Nigeria Police Force Base 7 Abuja before his dismissal from service.

The report further said that the suspect was currently in the custody of Operation Safe Haven and undergoing further investigation.

It added that efforts were ongoing to establish possible links to criminal networks and determine the intended destination of the recovered weapons and ammunition.

The arrest, according to the report, forms part of ongoing efforts by security agencies to curb the proliferation of illegal arms and enhance security across Plateau and neighbouring states.

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## FEATURE

# Rivers: Groups urge urgent solution to underground gas eruption in Bille

## PORT HARCOURT

A coalition of rights groups in the Niger Delta Region, have urged relevant Federal Government agencies to urgently address the issue of underground hydrocarbon eruption in Bille community in Rivers.

The groups, which include Social Action, Agape Birthrights, and Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) made the call after visiting sites of underground gas bubbling and eruption in Bille at the weekend.

The Executive Director, Social Action, Mr Isaac Osuoka, said that the underground gas eruption in Bille was discovered in October 2025.

Osuoka described the eruption

as an environmental and public health emergency that required immediate government intervention to safeguard health and the environment.

He said that polluted waters and wetlands had severely affected fishing activities and livelihoods, saying that urgent remediation and stronger regulatory response had become necessary.

“Environmental protection and petroleum oversight agencies nationwide should rise to the occasion. Meaningful steps should be taken immediately to safeguard the people,” he said.

The executive director urged the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency to the lead in the interest of the residents of Bille.

Osuoka also urged the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission to investigate the eruption with a view to proffering lasting solutions.

Ann kio-Briggs, an Environmental and Human Rights Activist, said that the gas bubbles observed in rivers and other water bodies in the community posed grave risks to residents’ health.

Kio-Briggs said that adequate attention had not been given to the issue since it was discovered several months ago.

“The development has left the residents exposed to hazardous environmental conditions and worsening public health risks.

“The Federal Government and regulatory agencies should urgently stop the eruption, provide

safe drinking water, and support the welfare and survival of the residents,” she said.

Also speaking, Mr Datolu Sukubo, the Chairman, IYC, Eastern Zone, described the prolonged inaction of relevant agencies as a ‘disservice’ to the people.

Sukubo said that there was an urgent need for a scientific investigation to determine the root cause of gas eruption in water sources.

Depriye Igani, a representative of Bille Clan, said that residents of the community were already facing difficulties in accessing safe water.

Igani further said that fishing activities had been disrupted, leaving many residents who depended on fishing to languish in hunger.

# Army arrest 46 suspected illegal immigrants in Ogun

## ABEOKUTA

Troops of the Nigerian Army, in collaboration with other security agencies, have apprehended 46 suspected illegal immigrants in Ogun.

Maj. Idereghi Akari, Assistant Director, Army Public Relations, 35 Artillery Brigade, disclosed this in a statement in Abeokuta.

Akari noted that the operation was carried out with personnel of the Department of State Services (DSS), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), and Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS).

He explained that the suspects were arrested during a targeted security operation conducted on Thursday in Ijebu Imushin, Ijebu Ilse and neighbouring communities.

The army spokesperson noted that preliminary investi-

gations indicated that the suspects had allegedly resided in the state for about six months without valid immigration documents.

“During interrogation, the suspects claimed to be merchants and workers affiliated with QNet, an online marketing platform.

“The suspects comprised 18 nationals of Burkina Faso, 23 from Côte d’Ivoire, four from Togo and one from Senegal.

“They included 36 males and 10 females,” he said.

Akari stated that the suspects had been handed over to the Nigeria Immigration Service, Ogun State Command, for further investigation and necessary administrative action.

The Commander, 35 Artillery Brigade, Brig.-Gen. Friday Onu, commended the troops and collaborating agencies for their professionalism.

# Ondo Govt promises safe rescue of kidnapped community head

## AKURE

The Ondo State Government has promised to secure the release of Chief Adeniyi Adelana, the Baale of Ode Oriya Village in Owo Local Government Area, who was abducted by suspected gunmen.

This was contained in a statement issued in Akure by the Commissioner for Information and Orientation, Mr Idowu Ajanaku over the weekend.

The 60-year-old community head was abducted by gunmen at his residence in Ode Oriya.

Ajanaku said that security agencies, including the Police and Amotekun Corps had launched coordinated search and rescue operations to secure the victim’s freedom.

“The Ondo State Government wishes to reassure the family of the victim and the general public that the Police and other security agencies, in collaboration with the Amotekun Corps, have swung into action.

“They are currently conducting coordinated search

and rescue operations across strategic locations within and around the area of the incident,” he said.

The commissioner noted that the swift response by security operatives reflected the effectiveness of the state’s investments in strengthening its security architecture.

According to him, the government has continued to enhance the operational capabilities of security agencies through the provision of modern intelligence-gathering equipment, including surveillance drones and other technological assets.

Ajanaku said that preliminary intelligence reports indicated that security operatives were making significant progress in tracking the kidnappers.

“Government remains confident that ongoing operations will yield the desired outcome and lead to the safe rescue of the victim while ensuring that those responsible for the criminal act are brought to justice,” he said.

Ajanaku reiterated the commitment of the state government to protect lives and property in the state.



## WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY:

Director-General, National Senior Citizen Centre, (NSCC), Mrs. Omobolanle Akinyemi-Obe; Convener, Mission Visionary, Renewed Hope for Elderly and Senior Citizens, Dr Mike Oveowo and Director-General, Renewed Hope for Elderly and Senior Citizens, Dr. Bode Olaonipeku, during the 2026 news conference on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in Abuja on Monday.

# State Police: Ex VON DG proposes 3% federation account for funding

## ENUGU

Former Director-General of the Voice of Nigeria (VON), Mr Osita Okechukwu, has advocated allocation of three per cent of the Federation Account for the funding of the proposed state police.

Okechukwu, who is also a chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC), made the call in a statement he issued at the weekend in Enugu.

He commended the unprecedented, bipartisan consensus among Nigerians on the urgent need for the establishment of state police as imperative response to contain the security challenges across the country.

The APC chieftain said that the success of state police would depend largely on the dedication of the three per cent funding mechanism to sustain the patriotism.

He noted that the bill passed by the House of Representatives for

the establishment of state police did not indicate specific percentage to adequately fund state police.

“I, therefore, advocate that three per cent of the Federation Account should be dedicated specifically to the funding of state police.

“Without proper financial backing, the nation risks unleashing official toll collectors and police thugs on the populace,” he said.

Okechukwu noted that poor funding remained antithetical to modern gadgets and essential ingredient in asymmetrical warfare.

He said that the devolution of police powers and other synergy paradigm were not enough to address poor funding, which rendered Federal police prostrate.

According to him, the realities on the ground have made state police an unavoidable national necessity.

The APC chieftain noted that the creation of state police without a clearly defined

funding framework in the Bill and synergy paradigm with other security agencies would amount to chasing shadows.

He cautioned that leaving the financing of state police entirely to the discretion of individual

state governments might undermine the objective of the reform.

“Therefore, appropriate adjustment to the Federal Government’s share of the Federation Account, should accompany the Bill.

# Detest corruption, social vices: Kano anti-graft urges youth

## KANO

The Chairman, Kano State Public Complaint and Anti-Corruption Commission (PCACC) Saidu Yahaya has called on youths to detest corruption and social vices.

Yahaya made the call during a two-day public sensitisation campaign against corruption organised by the Commission with support from Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), and MacArthur Foundation, for youths in Kano.

He said corruption remains one of the greatest obstacles to development, hence, the need for the youths

to make a conscious decision to reject all forms of corruption.

According to him, if the society tolerates corruption or social vices it becomes difficult to address but where it is detested, it will have no place to thrive.

“Corruption remains one of the greatest obstacles to development. It deprives citizens of opportunities, weakens institutions, erodes public trust, and undermines social and economic progress.

“Beyond financial misconduct, corruption manifests through examination malpractice, cyber-crime, abuse of trust, dishonesty, favouritism and other forms of

unethical conduct that threaten the future of our society.

“As a young people, you must therefore make a conscious decision to reject all forms of corruption and social vices.

“The fight against corruption cannot be left to government institutions alone. It requires the active participation of enlightened and responsible citizens.”

He said through the programme, the commission seeks to equip them with the knowledge, values and motivation necessary to become advocates of integrity and champions of accountability within their respective communi-

ties and spheres of influence.

The anti-graft Chairman commended the Gov. Abba Kabir-Yusuf administration for its commitment to good governance, transparency, accountability and youth development.

He said the administration has continued to provide the enabling environment for the commission to organise impactful programmes.

In her paper presentation, the commission’s Head of Training unit, Hafsat Aliyu-Khalil said the event was to ensure social behavioral change among the youths.

# Entertainment

— with Davidson Imosime Izegaegbe —

## Film geometric discord of the storyteller and film director

It's easy for any filmmaker to easily posit that cinema is often celebrated as the ultimate collaborative art form by filmmakers and film lovers, a unique grand tapestry creatively woven from the distinct threads of writing, acting, cinematography, sound and directing. At the heart of this collaborative ecosystem, as seamless as it can be, lies a foundational relationship: the loose bond between the storyteller (the screenwriter or author) and the film director. Film directors and storytellers can relate easily as they both know their wars, battlefields and casualties. When this relationship loosely functions harmoniously, it operates like two distinct paths but intersecting lines, meeting at a singular, concentrated point of creative convergence with the intent to birth a masterpiece. However, have we asked ourselves what happens when that geometry fails? Now I think I am beginning to sound like a mathematician which of course I am not.

In our school's mathematics, we know that parallel lines are usually defined as two lines in the same plane that breathe the same air, travel in the very same direction, yet are always destined never to meet. Therefore, when a storyteller and a film director become parallel lines in a film production, that in itself signals a unique, often tragic creative crisis. It is at that point in time not a state of explosive, loud warfare; rather, it is a quiet, systemic decoupling. They are working on the same movie, looking at the same script, and moving toward the same release date, but their core visions actually run entirely independent of one another. The resulting film is frequently a cinematic ghost, a work structurally intact but fundamentally hollowed out by a lack of shared soul.

For us to understand how this divergence occurs, we must intentionally look at the fundamental difference in how storytellers and directors perceive reality from different but equally unique creative planes. A storyteller constructs a world from the inside out by uniquely weaving the diverse vagaries of life into a cinematic script. They deal in internal monologues, thematic subtext, psychological architecture, and the invisible weight of a character's emotional history. The writer's tools are usually abstract; they are words on pages crafted entirely from the reader's well of imagination with an intent to bloom without any other form of distortions. Sadly, the end of a script on a writer's writing board, is the beginning of a life's creative journey in the director's world-view. The reasons are not far fetched as the director, by contrast, operates from the outside in. These creative masterminds are inherently visual translators. They think in pictures. A director must boldly and clearly take these scenic and dialogue abstract internal landscapes and ground them in concrete reality: these include but not limited to harshness of a specific lighting setup, the rhythm of a camera movement, the physical blocking of an actor, and the spatial constraints of a film set.

As mentioned earlier, the parallel line phenomenon usually begins when the translation process becomes a mere transcription, or worse, a total bypass.



This separation typically stems from three primary catalysts: Firstly and sometimes, a director respects the text too much but understands it too little to express the true nature of the script message. They treat the screenplay like an instruction manual rather than a living blueprint. They capture the literal words but miss the emotional frequency between the lines. The storyteller's creative, thematic depth runs along one track, while the director's superficial creative approach and execution runs along another, never intersecting at any point to create subtext.

Furthermore and conversely, a director may view a script merely as an excuse for aesthetic exercise. When a director decides to prioritise striking compositions, complex camera angles and manoeuvres, or stylistic creative indulgence over narrative logic and character integrity, the visual language immediately detaches from the story. The writer's narrative then continues down its path, while the director's visual showcase runs alongside it, beautiful but completely unbothered by the human element it was supposed to capture before the diverse heterogeneous audiences.

Additionally, the rift between the storyteller and film director is often purely logistical and emotional. In the high-stress, fast-paced environment of physical production, time is usually money. Also, if initial alignment was not fiercely secured during pre-production, the director begins making thousands of micro-decisions on set each day out of survival instinct in the bid to make creative sense from the story that the audience can easily relate with. Isolated from these decisions, the storyteller's intent would remain frozen in the original text, while the production rapidly drifts into an alternate, parallel reality.

Don't we know that the cinema history is usually littered with projects where the tracks ran parallel, occasionally resulting in fascinating disasters or even sanitised but sterile misfires? Or do we want to pretend this doesn't

*Most film sets are either silent or loud creative battlefields with spears of disputes pointed by the screenwriters and Directors respectively. It is usually a battle of wits and even when the director's superior wit wins, the storyteller still feels cheated in the war of wits*

happen? Consider again, the tension that often arises from adaptations of most beloved literary works. Classic and contemporary historical examples abound in Nollywood, Hollywood and other film industries globally. Most film sets are either silent or loud creative battlefields with spears of disputes pointed by the screenwriters and Directors respectively. It is usually a battle of wits and even when the director's superior wit wins, the storyteller still feels cheated in the war of wits.

In Nollywood, this parallelism manifests acutely in both low and mega-budget film productions. We see writers often hired by producers to construct intricate, serialised lore and character arcs, while directors are brought in to manage massive, pre-visualised action sequences dictated by producers and executive producers. The resulting films, like we see most times and complain of as well, often feel like two different movies stitched together: while one track features characters trying to tell a grounded story, the other parallel track deliv-

ers mandatory, green-screen spectacle that does nothing to advance the story. When lines run parallel, the audience feels the gap. The symptoms of productions suffering from these geometric afflictions are distinct: You suddenly realise in watching a scene in a film where the dialogue suggests profound grief or intimacy, but the camera angles, compositions, colour grading, or mood sounds feel distant, clinical, or inappropriately kinetic. The intellectual narrative of the film tells you to feel one thing, but the sensory narrative demands another differently from you.

Many of us do have this kind of feeling when watching movies without knowing exactly where to pin the problem on. You notice that the story is searching for breath, eager to build tension, or explore a character's quiet realisation, while the director, anxious about pacing or visual stagnation, cuts through the scene with aggressive cinematography and editing. You also notice too that the film rushes forward physically with so much energy while the story is left behind trying to catch its breath on the parallel track. And sadly, the actors are not left out of this creative web as they are also trapped in the web of parallel creators which turn into fractured performances. Without a unified creative compass, an actor might play the writer's internal depth while the director blocks them for external, stylised archetypes. The character ends up lost, feeling like a collection of diverse rehearsed traits rather than a cohesive human being.

Now, how do filmmakers in their productions avoid this curse of the parallel line? I think this may require an intentional, sometimes painful bending of the creative trajectories to force an intersection that can create a creative blend in the film. A director must not just direct the script from a storyteller; they must direct the reason why the script was written. The storyteller and the film director must stress-test the story together with an unbiased approach. They

need to intentionally agree not just on what happens, but why it matters. If for instance a director wants to use a specific visual motif, like oppressive shadows or gimbal style, documentary-style camerawork, the storyteller would need to understand how that visual language by the film director enhances or challenges the thematic structure of the text. The traditional Nollywood pipeline often discards the storyteller the moment the shooting script is locked. To me, this is a costly mistake. Keeping the storyteller engaged during the production, allowing them to witness the physical realities of the set, would enable them to help the director pivot, especially when things go wrong, thereby ensuring that even if a scene must be rewritten on the fly, it still intersects with the overarching theme. A director must possess the humility to realise when the text must anchor the lens. He must know at what point in his film shoot when some shots must be sacrificed.

Conclusively, the ultimate goal of filmmaking is not to keep lines tidy, perfectly straight, and parallel to avoid conflict. The goal must be to create a definitive point of intersection where the storyteller's internal truth and the director's external vision collide, fuse, and explode into something entirely new that would create an interrelationship between the audience and the film. When a film achieves this intersection, it immediately ceases to feel like a script that was filmed or a series of images looking for a plot. The film becomes a singular, indivisible piece of art because of the proper blend of storytelling and filming. Do we not know that words justify the images, while the images give life to the words? By actively fighting the drift toward parallel existence, storytellers and directors must ensure that their creative trajectories do not just run alongside each other into oblivion, but instead creatively collide to leave a lasting mark in the minds of the audiences and on the landscape of cinema and Nollywood.

# ArtsWorld

with Francis Odupte  
08023680030



PROF. WOLE SOYINKA

## WSICE to Celebrate Wole Soyinka at 92 With Lagos, London Cultural Exchange

SUNDAY EHIGIATOR

The 17th edition of the Wole Soyinka International Cultural Exchange (WSICE) will take place in Lagos and London this July, bringing together scholars, artists, policymakers, students, cultural practitioners and members of the African diaspora for a global conversation on culture, identity, memory and humanity.

Organisers announced that the 2026 edition, themed 'Culture Beyond Borders' with the sub-theme 'Rooted, Yet Not Restricted', will coincide with the 92nd birthday celebration of Nobel Laureate Professor Wole Soyinka and will feature a series of cultural, literary and intellectual engagements aimed at fostering dialogue across generations and continents.

The Lagos leg of the programme is scheduled for July 13–14, while activities in London will take place from July 17–18, a statement disclosed.

According to the organisers, this year's theme reflects growing concerns about the impact of globalisation, migration, digital technology and artificial intelligence on cultural identity and human relationships.

They noted that although the world has become increasingly interconnected, many societies continue to grapple with social divisions, cultural dislocation and the erosion of historical memory.

The organisers said the 2026 edition seeks to explore how culture can remain a unifying force in an era marked by rapid technological change, increasing migration and evolving notions of identity.

"Culture has always crossed borders. The question is whether it survives the journey," the organisers stated.

They explained that while modern technology has enabled unprecedented levels of communication and mobility, preserving cultural heritage and values remains essential for sustainable development and social cohesion.

"Humanity itself is becoming more mobile than ever before. Yet beneath that movement remains an eternal responsibility: to remember who we are. For roots are not prisons. They are foundations. And culture is not a museum artifact preserved beneath glass. It is a living inheritance," the statement added.

Over the years, the Wole Soyinka International Cultural Exchange has evolved from a commemorative initiative into one of Africa's most enduring platforms for cultural dialogue, youth engagement, creative expression and international exchange.

Inspired by the life and works of Professor Soyinka, Africa's first Nobel Laureate in Literature, the programme promotes values associated with his intellectual and literary legacy, including freedom of thought, cultural consciousness, social justice, moral courage and artistic responsibility.

The organisers said the event would feature a broad range of activities, including international cultural roundtables, youth leadership and identity workshops, theatre productions, literary conversations, spoken word performances, music showcases, visual arts exhibitions, academic exchanges and diaspora heritage dialogues.

A major highlight of the London programme, to be hosted in collaboration with The Africa Centre and several educational and community partners, will focus on young people and their role in preserving cultural identity in a rapidly changing world.

According to the organisers, the youth-centred engagements are designed to encourage critical thinking about heritage, belonging and the values that future generations will inherit.

They stressed that development should not be measured solely by economic growth or technological advancement but must also include cultural preservation and historical memory.

"Without memory, progress loses direction. And without culture, development risks becoming merely efficient displacement," the organisers noted.

Since its inception 17 years ago, WSICE has served as a platform connecting generations, disciplines, nations and cultures through the arts and humanities.

The organisers described the 2026 edition as an opportunity not only to celebrate Professor Soyinka's enduring legacy but also to reflect on the role of culture in addressing some of the most pressing challenges facing humanity.

"As Professor Wole Soyinka turns ninety-two, the conversation continues—not merely about Africa, literature or heritage, but about humanity itself," the statement said.

The organisers added that in a world increasingly characterised by division and competing identities, culture remains one of humanity's most powerful instruments for dialogue, understanding and coexistence.

The event is expected to attract participants from Nigeria, the United Kingdom and other parts of the world, further reinforcing its reputation as a leading international platform for cultural exchange and intellectual engagement.

## My water story

A state governor was recently at a rural community with his political "god-son" to commission a borehole water project that the honourable lawmaker had given the community as a constituency project in about three years.

The atmosphere was gay, the people were in frenzy and the women were sweating it out as they danced, clapped and hit the maracas and other instruments of music in jubilation and praise-singing as they have been mobilised to do: Some desperate children climbed onto low-branched tree tops and dilapidated fences, just to get a good glimpse of the show. The photojournalists could not resist the temptation to capture several shots of the graceful traditional attires of the community elders thronging the mirthful number one citizen of the state, as he moved closer to the project to, be commissioned.

As the humour-loving, governor held the scissors, about to cut the tape to declare the bore hole open, amid jubilant, natives, he shot a glance at the lawmaker and the following words jumped out jokingly from his mouth, "Honourable, these tanks are big 0, how many people did you project will use this facility?" "It's up to the community and their leaders to decide", replied the lawmaker without a thought. The crowd cheered and applauded in approval. The governor quickly turned to the crowd and threw another, teaser 'in Pidgin English: "...my people, una sure say una ready, to, make maximum use of this water so?" "Yes", the crowd yelled in excitement, and the community head standing beside the governor quipped, "Our women and girls dey kampe, we trust dem ... no more trek trek go streams and rivers ... ". The crowd clapped in support.

"Okay now", the chief executive said, "the maintenance and protection of this bore hole nko? How una go do am," he queried. The youth chairman stepped forward with his right hand waiving in the air. "Your Excellency, Sir, we have enough capable boys in this community to monitor and administer the operation, maintenance and protection of this bore hole from vandalism. I will personally supervise it, sir!" he boasted. Jubilant youths rented the air with shouts of "up chair", "Nothing do you" and some jargons.

As soon as the governor made to cut the tape to declare the bore-hole open, for consumption, the lawmaker quickly bent over to the video camera-man from the government-owned media house who was covering the event, and whispered saying, "please delete this part of the ceremony from the tape before going to press". The busy journalist didn't quite get what he meant but, as one under authority, he simply nodded his head.

"Who was fooling who?" you'd ask me. It would have sufficed to discard this as one of those FRANCODUS' jokes and laugh over it, but because the story you just read is based on true-life experiences in our society, we have to discuss it. First of all, it beats my wits how our people have been so compromised, so exploited, shortchanged and subjugated that we have become too docile and ignorant of our rights and our responsibilities as a people.

The tragedy of leadership in this country has brought it home to us that the strength of the oppressor is in the maintenance of ignorance and time has come for us to say, "Enough is Enough".

How can you explain to our neighbours in developed economies that a whole community will desert homes, roll out drums, mobilise hungry women and their children to line up in the hot sun (no thanks to climate change and global warming) and stage cultural dances and praise-singing songs, all to commission a single overdue community bore-hole provided by a politician who has only reluctantly come to fulfil his electioneering promise of giving, us so, so, so and so, as constituency projects as soon as voted into office, when actually these are basic amenities that must be on ground everywhere for the population to use? When these were actually the reasons why we voted them in to represent us? And to think that the much publicised televised and flaunted bore-hole projects (which hardly last longer than 4 months after commissioning before it 'caputs') was reported to have cost several millions of Naira? Bore-hole?? Millions of Naira? Think about it! Something must be fishing.

I remember vividly well that sometime in 2007 or so, my local church embarked on a community help project in Evbuotubu community, in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, through free medical services (held at the health centre) and by sinking a formidable bore-hole water project that was situated at the heart of Evbuotubu village along the road to Igwuogie village. As I write this now, the people of Evbuotubu are still, enjoying that borehole.

I may not be a bore hole engineer but I have a fair idea of what it might cost to sink about 6 borehole projects in 6 villages in a community. I make bold to say that I am one of the people who were involved in that charity work in Evbuotubu, and later were deployed by our church leadership to begin evangelistic and church-planting work in the area as preachers and lay pastors. So I know to some extent, how much the church spent to sink the borehole, unannounced.

A critical look at the story above lends a lot of credence to what experts have been saying about the need for policy formulation and planning with accurate demographic data in Nigeria. There is no gain saying that human population remains a major factor in every part of our socio economic and political life as a people.

As Nigerians, we pride ourselves in our demographic strength as the most populous black nation on the earth. But conversely, this strength seems to be a metaphor for many of our weaknesses. The apparent ignorance, apathy and lack of interest and or attention by many of our leaders to, the role actual population figures play in our collective efforts to build a better Nigeria through responsive and responsible governance and good followership is telling so much in the attitude of the general public. People do business without proper planning (that is if "proper planning" entails the knowledge and proper understanding of accurate population figures in your target market. etc).

# From stigma to strength: A case for intellectual and developmental disabilities children (1)

FRANCIS ODUPUTE

They are mostly hidden by their parents and care-givers. They are kept away from the rest of the world. They are isolated, abandoned and mostly neglected; often-times, nobody even knows they exist at all. They are the IDD children!

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) refer to a group of conditions characterised by limitations in intellectual functioning (such as learning, reasoning, and problem-solving) and adaptive behaviors, which cover every day social and practical skills. These conditions often begin very early in life and can include disorders such as autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, and cerebral palsy.

In the bustling Benin City metropolis, a parent's voice rises in advocacy above the silence that too often surrounds children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). With both pain and conviction, Mr. Wisdom Ekuase, the Chairman, Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities of Nigeria (AIDNN) Edo State chapter, reflects: "In western world, people believe so much in special children. They are not curses but blessings. 'Children are a heritage from the LORD (Psalm 127:3)' is a profound biblical declaration that children are divine gifts, rewards, and entrusted blessings from God."

"When I was growing up," Mr. Ekuase earlier lamented, "I was shown the blind—now visually impaired, the deaf—now hearing impaired, the dumb—now speech impaired, and those lame or crippled—now physically impaired. I have always asked: where does the intellectually impaired fall under? Society refers to them as imbeciles. Some parents see them as witches or wizards; others blame them for their family misfortune... Please, let's educate society together."

AS a parent with two special needs children he fights daily to cater for and give a bright future to, the pain of seeing his two special needs children treated like sub-humans by some members of the public can be heartbreaking and traumatising. But Mr. Ekuase is not alone in this counterculture. Yes, his testimony is not an isolated cry, but is a mirror reflecting a deep societal gap in understanding, acceptance, and support for individuals living with intellectual and Developmental disabilities (IDD) in Nigeria.

Organizations like the Association for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities of Nigeria (AIDNN) Edo State chapter has risen to the occasion of amplifying the voices of special needs children in the State, especially the IDD children who are grossly neglected, hidden by their parents and, in some cases, allegedly killed by their frustrated parents. In Edo State, for example, the association is fighting to get the Government's attention to the mounting needs of IDD children and adults, as well as rally together more parents and care-givers of IDD persons for better welfare and more inclusiveness in the scheme of things in society.

According to Mr. Onome Otueroro, the National Secretary of Association for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities of Nigeria (AIDNN), some



A CROSS SECTION OF IDD CHILDREN, THEIR PARENTS, CAREGIVERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS, DURING A STRATEGIC MEETING OF THE AIDNN EDO STATE CHAPTER, IN BENIN CITY, RECENTLY.

PHOTO BY FRANCIS ODUPUTE

of the key challenges faced by children with intellectual developmental disabilities are lack of empathy and love from most members of the society. He sued for parents of children with intellectual and Developmental Disability (IDD), teachers, caregivers and other stakeholders to come together and build a strong force and a united voice for IDD children.

Mr. Otueroro explained: "In the Persons With Disability (PWD) world, the persons with Intellectual Developmental Disabilities (IDD) are the most relegated clusters. We have different clusters in the PWD world - we have the visually impaired; the physically challenged - mean those that walk with crutches and wheelchairs; the hearing impaired; the spinal cord; the albinism; the dwarf; and other clusters in the PWD world."

Globally, the World Health Organisation estimates that about 1 in 6 people live with some form of disability, and a significant proportion of these are intellectual or developmental in nature. In Nigeria, there are very limited reliable national data on IDD children, but the United Nations Children's Fund suggests that millions of children live with disabilities, many of whom are excluded from education, healthcare, and social participation.

## THE NIGERIAN REALITY:

Between Ignorance and Stigma: Despite global progress in disability rights and inclusion, Nigeria still grapples with deeply entrenched cultural beliefs and misconceptions about IDD. In many communities, children with intellectual disabilities are misunderstood—often labeled with derogatory terms or attributed to supernatural causes.

Many Government ministries and agencies charged with the duties of looking into the affairs of the PWDs community, hardly know about the IDD person cluster within the PWDs. A vivid example was observed during a recent courtesy visit to one of the ministries in Edo State by representatives of the AIDNN Edo State chapter sometime in 2025. The Permanent Secretary, who represented the Commissioner during the visit, requested the AIDNN visitors to kindly explain what the Intel-

*We are at a crossroads. One path leads to continued marginalisation of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities*

lectual Developmental Disabilities cluster was all about as the name was totally strange to them at the Ministry.

A 2021 report by Human Rights Watch highlighted that children with disabilities in Nigeria frequently face discrimination, neglect, and even abuse. Some are hidden away by families due to shame, while others are denied access to basic services. IDD children are seen not as individuals with potential, but as burdens or omens. This mindset has far-reaching consequences, including educational exclusion; healthcare disparities; economic marginalisation; social insecurity and loneliness to mention just a few.

IDD children are helpless; they cannot speak for themselves. Parents, siblings, neighbours, care-givers/people, have to speak up for them for their plights to gain some attention from those who should do something about their challenges.

## WHY CAN'T THINGS BE DIFFERENT?

According to UNESCO, children with disabilities are among the least likely to attend school in Nigeria. When they do, they often face bullying, lack of trained teachers, and inaccessible learning environments. Many healthcare providers lack training in managing IDD, leading to misdiagnosis or neglect. Early intervention, which is very critical for improving outcomes, is rarely available. In Nigeria, even adults with IDD cannot find employment due to stigma and lack of vocational support, perpetuating cycles of poverty against these PWD minority communities.

In contrast, many Western societies

have made significant strides in recognising and supporting individuals with IDD. Through inclusive education, community-based services, and legal protections, these societies have begun to shift from a deficit-based view to a strength-based perspective.

Mr. Ekuase's assertion that "they are not a cause but blessings" echoes a growing global understanding within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG): individuals with IDD bring unique perspectives, talents, and contributions to society, and we should accept and support them in the true spirit of genuine love, empathy, equity and inclusiveness.

Scientific studies have shown that inclusive environments benefit not only individuals with disabilities but society as a whole. Diverse classrooms foster empathy, creativity, and collaboration. Workplaces that embrace neurodiversity report higher innovation and employee engagement. Given the right environment and support, persons with disabilities can excel in every aspect of life like other human beings are without disabilities. God made everyone equal!

In Nigeria, this shift in perception is urgently needed. It begins with language—moving away from derogatory labels to respectful, person-first terminology. It continues with education—both formal and informal—and is sustained through policy and practice.

## FAITH, CULTURE, AND ADVOCACY: A POWERFUL ALLIANCE:

The parent's invocation of Psalm 127:3—"Children are a heritage from the LORD"—is particularly significant in a deeply religious society like Nigeria. Faith can be a powerful tool for inclusion when aligned with compassion and understanding. Religious institutions—churches, mosques, and traditional centres—can play a transformative role by promoting love, empathy, and inclusive teachings that affirm the dignity of all individuals; providing support networks for families; challenging harmful beliefs and practices against IDD children and their counterparts in the PWD community.

Nigeria has made some legislative progress with the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities

(Prohibition) Act of 2018. This law guarantees equal rights and access to education, healthcare, and public services for persons with disabilities.

However, implementation remains a major challenge. Many states have yet to domesticate the law, and enforcement mechanisms are weak. Funding for disability services is limited, and data collection is inadequate.

To bridge this gap, stakeholders and policy makers must prioritise data-driven planning: accurate data on IDD prevalence and needs, Capacity building training for teachers, healthcare workers, and social service providers, therapists, etc. must be mainstreamed into all policy plans and budgetary allocations for special needs children in Nigeria. Inclusive infrastructure development evidenced by accessible and inclusive schools, clinics, and public spaces should be given priority by the federal, state and local governments.

To combat stigma and promote inclusion, public awareness campaigns and focus group engagements should be intensified. Families and communities can lead the change. Across Nigeria, families of children with IDD are forming support groups, sharing experiences, and advocating for change. These grassroots movements are crucial in building a more inclusive society.

In Benin City and beyond, enlightened parents are no longer hiding their children—they are celebrating them. They are demanding better services, inclusive education, and societal acceptance. The Edo State chapter of the Association for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities of Nigeria (AIDNN) is turning the table downside-up, one step at a time, courtesy of a new collaborative agenda with the leadership of the Edo State Disabilities Commission headed by Honourable Theophilus Egbodion. The AIDNN's message is clear: our children are not invisible. They are not burdens. They are blessings.

The journey toward inclusion for IDD children and PWDs in general is not the responsibility of a few, but a collective mandate. Every Nigerian has a role to play: Educators must embrace inclusive teaching practices. Our healthcare providers must offer compassionate, informed care. Policy makers must enforce and expand disability rights. The Media must tell stories that harmonise, not stigmatise. Communities must open their hearts and minds. Government must show responsibility by sharing the costs of medical care with the parents of IDD children, thereby reducing their financial burdens. Everybody must do something to change the narrative.

As Mr. Wisdom Ekuase urges, "Please let's educate society together." This shouldn't just be a statement—let it be a movement.

We are at a crossroads. One path leads to continued marginalisation of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The other leads to a society that recognises their inherent worth, nurtures their potential, and celebrates their contributions.

The choice is ours! Let us choose empathy over ignorance, inclusion over exclusion, and action over apathy, because every child, regardless of ability, is indeed a heritage from the Lord.

# Feature

## A national call for urgent action on insecurity and the rescue of kidnapped school pupils and teachers



OYO STATE TEACHERS ACTION GROUP PEACEFUL SOLIDARITY WALK

FAITH ILUOBE

Nigeria is known as the Giant of Africa. Yet many Nigerians are asking a painful question: if Nigeria is truly the Giant of Africa, why can't this giant overcome the bandits and kidnapers terrorizing innocent citizens across the country?

Nigeria has one of the largest populations in Africa and a strong military that has participated in peacekeeping missions in several countries. Nigerian soldiers have helped maintain peace abroad and have earned respect internationally. If our security forces can help bring peace in other nations, Nigerians naturally wonder why insecurity and banditry continue to persist at home despite the available human and military resources, including drones, aircraft, and intelligence systems.

Today, this concern has become even more urgent because of the kidnapped school pupils and teachers who have remained in captivity for weeks. Their situation should move every Nigerian.

While many of us sleep safely in our homes, these innocent children and teachers may be sleeping in forests, exposed to rain, hot sun, cold nights, mosquito bites, hunger, sickness, fear, and deep uncertainty. Their families

live in constant pain, not knowing if their loved ones are safe, fed, or alive.

There is also deep concern that female victims may be vulnerable to abuse and other forms of harm while in captivity. This painful reality should move every responsible citizen to demand urgent action.

This is not just a family issue. It is a national emergency.

The President, Federal Government, state governments, security agencies, traditional rulers, religious leaders, labour unions, youth groups, and all citizens must treat the rescue of these victims as a top national priority.

At a time like this, Nigerians expect urgency, coordination, and results. Some urgent actions that should be taken include:

- Full deployment of security forces, drones, aircraft, surveillance systems, and intelligence operations to locate and rescue the victims quickly.
- Stronger monitoring of forests and known criminal hideouts using trained forest guards and security personnel.
- Continuous peaceful civic pressure and public advocacy to ensure that the issue remains a national priority.
- Churches, mosques, and prayer platforms should unite in prayer and

fasting for the safe release of the children and teachers and for an end to insecurity in Nigeria.

- Community leaders should work closely with security agencies to expose criminal elements within their areas.

- The government should provide free medical treatment, counselling, rehabilitation, and full support for all victims after their release until they fully recover physically and emotionally.

- Kidnappers and their sponsors who are arrested and convicted should face the full weight of the law, with severe punishment that serves as a strong deterrent, while fully respecting due process and justice.

Beyond the immediate crisis, Nigerians must also reflect on the deeper causes of insecurity.

Many citizens believe that poor governance, weak leadership, corruption, unemployment, and lack of accountability have contributed to the insecurity facing the country today.

Citizens must learn to vote based on competence, integrity, credibility, vision, and proven leadership — not based on political party, tribe, religion, ethnicity, friendship, or personal connections. Nigeria needs leaders who are capable of solving problems, not just occupying office.

There is also a need for serious political and leadership reforms. A presidential college or leadership institute should be established to train and prepare future leaders for the responsibility of governing a complex nation like Nigeria.

Leadership positions should also require not only experience but the physical and mental capacity needed to handle national responsibilities effectively.

Nigeria may also benefit from reviewing its administrative structure to strengthen regional governance while still maintaining one united country under a federal system. This could bring the government closer to the people and improve security and development across regions.

Finally, leadership must always place the lives and welfare of citizens above political ambitions. At a time when insecurity is high and innocent children and teachers are still in captivity, national interest must come before personal or political goals.

The safe rescue of these kidnapped pupils and teachers should remain the top priority. Every day they remain in captivity is one day too many.

Nigeria must act — with urgency, unity, and responsibility — until every child and teacher is safely reunited with their families.

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*At a time when insecurity is high and innocent children and teachers are still in captivity, national interest must come before personal or political goals.*

# Because I am not an indigene?

NWARIMOYA NAOMI IRO-OGHENE

As students, many of us leave our homes and travel to different states in pursuit of education. We move into unfamiliar communities with the hope of learning, growing, and building a better future. While some find acceptance and support, others are reminded that being far from home can sometimes leave them vulnerable.

This reality became personal to me over a year ago.

What began as a disagreement between myself and a coursemate eventually escalated into something far beyond a simple misunderstanding. After our friendship broke down, tensions grew and exchanges that should have remained verbal soon turned into physical confrontations.

According to my experience, the

situation worsened when family members became involved. Instead of seeking help from school authorities, security personnel, or law enforcement agencies, the conflict was allowed to escalate further. As a result, I suffered injuries and was left questioning not only the actions of those involved but also my place within the community where I had come to study.

The incident forced me to ask a difficult question: Would things have happened differently if I were an indigene of the community? I cannot answer that question with certainty. However, as someone studying far from home, I could not ignore the feeling of being alone and exposed during one of the most challenging moments of my student life.

Many students leave the comfort and protection of their families to

pursue higher education. They arrive in communities where they have few relatives, limited support systems, and little influence. In such situations, they may become easy targets for intimidation because those around them know that immediate family members are hundreds of kilometres away.

Nigeria is a diverse nation made up of many ethnic groups, cultures, and communities. Yet, regardless of where a student comes from, every student deserves to feel safe. No one should be treated unfairly because they are not an indigene of a particular area. A student's state of origin should never determine the level of protection, respect, or justice they receive.

Conflicts are inevitable in human relationships, especially among young people living and learning together. However, violence should never be

the solution. Schools, security agencies, and community leaders have a responsibility to ensure that disputes are handled through proper channels rather than through intimidation, retaliation, or mob action.

My experience is not just a story about a personal conflict. It is a reminder that many students studying away from home may feel vulnerable when disputes arise. It is also a call for communities to treat all students with fairness and dignity, regardless of where they come from.

At the end of the day, we are all Nigerians. We may come from different states and speak different languages, but we share the same right to safety, justice, and respect. No student should have to wonder whether being a non-indigene makes them less deserving of those rights.



*As a result, I suffered injuries and was left questioning not only the actions of those involved but also my place within the community where I had come to study.*

## We Cannot First-Class on an empty stomach: Why campus food Security requires urgent attention



HUNGER STEALS KIDS

OYIBO PERPETUAL

Every semester, university authorities across the country stand at matriculation and convocation ceremonies to lecture students on the importance of academic excellence. We are told to read wide, avoid distractions, and strive for a First-Class or a Distinction. But what these elegant speeches consistently fail to address is the raw, physical foundation that academic success requires: food. In my opinion, the current silence of both university

administrations and government policymakers regarding the severe food crisis hitting Nigerian campuses is not just a failure of welfare; it is a direct threat to the quality of our degrees.

Let us be realistic. It is intellectually impossible to digest complex lecture notes on syntax, economics, or engineering when your stomach is actively digesting itself. The romanticized narrative of the "starving, struggling student who eventually succeeds" belongs in the past. In today's Nigeria, the sheer scale of inflation has

turned that struggle from a minor inconvenience into a psychological burden. When a student spends their entire lecture period worrying about whether their remaining half-measure of garri will stretch until Friday, academic concentration becomes impossible.

Furthermore, we are witnessing a dangerous rise in structural inequality on our campuses. While a few privileged students can still afford comfortable meals, a vast majority are slipping into severe nutritional deficit. This isn't just about

missing a meal; it affects health, increases absenteeism, and drives up depression rates among youths. Yet, our student union governments and university managements treat this like an individual problem rather than a collective emergency. If universities can build grand lecture halls and administrative blocks, they must also think about sustainable student food banks, heavily subsidized campus cafeterias, and agricultural partnerships to protect their population.

A university degree is supposed to

be a tool for mental liberation, but you cannot liberate a mind that is trapped in survival mode. If we truly want our graduates to compete globally and drive national development, we must treat their basic welfare as a priority, not an afterthought. It is time for the government and institutional stakeholders to look beyond the dry macroeconomic data and see the real human cost inside our hostels. We are ready to do the reading and pass the exams, but the system must give us the fuel to actually cross the finish line.

## FEATURE

# How inflation is Changing the spending habits of Nigerian Families

OMOSEFE GIFT ENODIANA

Inflation has become one of the biggest challenges facing Nigerian families today. The continuous rise in the prices of food, transportation, rent, and other basic necessities has forced many households to change the way they spend money. What used to be affordable a few years ago now costs much more, making it difficult for families to maintain their standard of living.

Across the country, many families are now prioritizing their needs and cutting down on non-essential expenses. Items that were once bought regularly are now purchased less frequently or in smaller quantities. For many Nigerians, managing household finances has become a daily struggle as they try to balance increasing costs with limited income.

To understand how inflation is affecting spending habits, interviews were conducted at Abraka Main Market. Mr. Peter, a POS operator, explained that the amount of money people withdraw for shopping has reduced significantly. According to him, before the recent inflation, many customers would withdraw between N100,000 and N150,000 for grocery shopping. Today, however, the situation is different. He noted that many people now withdraw as little as N20,000 or N50,000 because they can no longer afford to spend as much as they used to.

This change reflects the reality faced by many households. As prices continue to rise, families are forced to buy fewer items despite spending almost the same amount of money. A shopping budget that once covered a month's groceries may now last only a few weeks, leaving families searching for ways to stretch their income.

Mrs. Margret, a businesswoman and wife, also shared her experience. She explained that inflation has changed the way she makes purchasing decisions for her family. According to her, she now thinks carefully before spending money on foodstuffs to ensure that the family can still af-

ford other important needs such as transportation, school expenses, and healthcare. She added that planning and budgeting have become more important than ever.

The effects of inflation go beyond food and household expenses. Many families have reduced recreational activities, postponed major purchases, and limited unnecessary spending. Some parents have also taken up additional jobs or small businesses to supplement their income. Others rely on support from relatives and friends to cope with the increasing cost of living.

Economists often describe inflation in terms of percentages and statistics, but its real impact is felt in homes and marketplaces. It is seen in the difficult choices parents make every day, the sacrifices families endure, and the constant effort to make limited resources meet unlimited needs.

As inflation continues to shape Nigeria's economy, families are adapting in different ways. While resilience remains a common trait among Nigerians, many hope for economic policies and improvements that will stabilize prices and ease the financial burden on households. Until then, careful budgeting and prudent spending will remain essential survival strategies for many Nigerian families.



*Many families have reduced recreational activities, postponed major purchases, and limited unnecessary spending.*

## Nigerian households' spending on consumption

Real household spending declined 40.67% over 4 years to N31.12tn as naira expenditure jumped N173tn

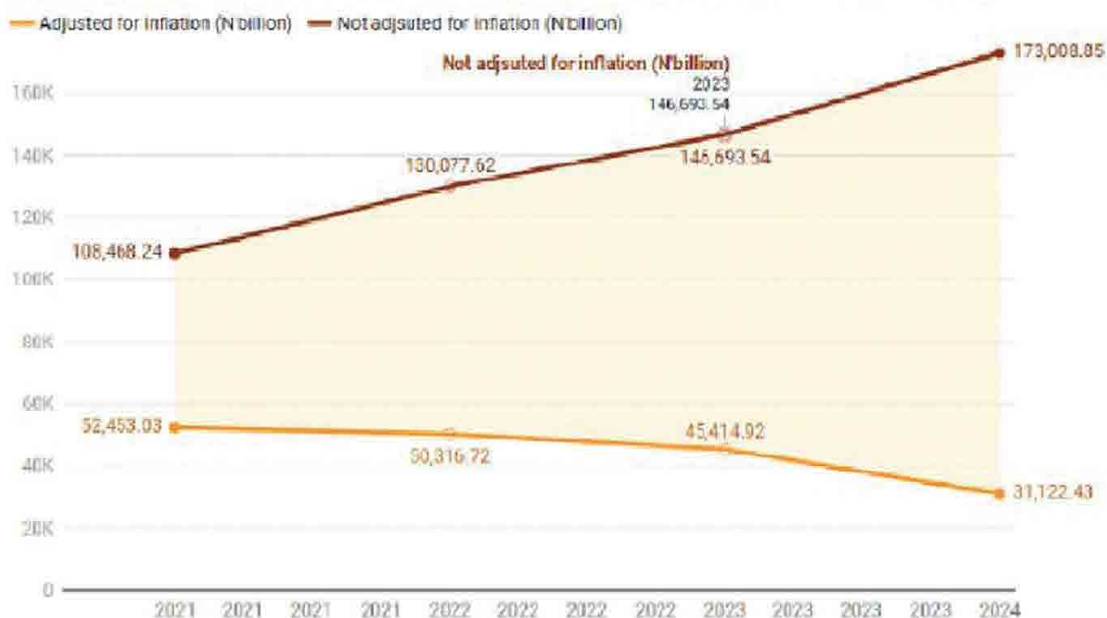


Chart: Arinze Newsfor • Source: CBN, The PUNCH • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper



## Matters Arising: The Prosecution of fake Miracle Pastors by Anambra State Government

Towards the end of last week, the social, electronic and mass media was agog with the arrest and prosecution of eight pastors arrested in connection with fake miracles. According to google.com, fake miracles, often called counterfeit miracles or lying wonders, are deceptive acts that mimic supernatural events but are actually fabricated by humans or spiritual forces to mislead others. They are deliberately staged for financial gain, power, or to promote a false narrative. These deceptive phenomena can be grouped into the following categories which includes, "Staged Performances: Claims of miraculous healing (like curing blindness or making the lame walk) that use recruited actors, plants in the audience, or deceitful camera angles. Sleight of Hand: Magician-style tricks—such as producing objects out of thin air, changing the

color of liquids, or materializing artifacts—presented as divine intervention. Theatrical Manipulation: Emotional coercion where the "healed" individual is simply caught up in the psychological fervor of a crowd and temporarily believes they have been cured. Lying Wonders: In theological contexts, these are considered genuine supernatural events orchestrated by malevolent spiritual forces to deceive followers away from true faith."

When churches like the Baptist Denomination, Catholic, Methodist and Anglican Communion to mention but a few landed in the country, they knew that the people needed miracles hence they came with schools, hospitals and others with extremely lesser fee. These were center of miracles as children of four years will be admitted and by six years they can write their names. Those who have

headache goes to the hospital for diagnosis and drugs prescribed why those that needed to be injected are treated and discharged. However, with the arrival of these democracy fake pastors and imams came on board including native doctors. When he was the president fake miracles are displayed on the Nigeria Television Authority only for Obasanjo to ban it. The city of Lagos is a place with more fake miracle pastors than anywhere in the country. Years ago Lagosians woke up one early morning to the news of a woman hidden inside a stone hole at Bar Beach area of the state. Efforts to draw the women out of the stone proved abortive until a construction company was invited and on reaching there, they used their caterpillar to break the stone into pieces and luckily the woman did not sustain any injury due to the professionalism

of those who did the job. When she was interviewed she said that she wants to have her own church so she can perform miracles.

"What is a 'false prophet'? Those who lie by attributing personal biases to divine source."

Leland Lewis, Random Molecular Mirroring. A pastor in Lagos was moving from place to place in the name of crusade and one woman always come out to tell people during miracle hour that she was just delivered. However, unknown to her she is being trailed by some journalists only to discovered that she planned with the pastor to use it as a proof of miracles healings. I met a young man weeping years ago and when I accosted him to tell me what happened, he said that they were having two days, revival services in the church.

In order to receive your miracle, the invited pastor order them to drop their phones but removed the sims card. He obeyed and going home empty handed was responsible for his weeping like a baby. The son of a General Oversea boasted some time ago that he made his first million when he was less than twenty years. Nigerians took on him. With fake handkerchief you were selling on crusade ground to miracle seekers you would have even made a billion naira if you were intelligent. Recently a General Oversea told the world that his daughter is doing marvelously well in one of the European countries and people started questioning why did he not leave her here to undergo ninety days of fasting and prayer? Since then the General Oversea has gone into hiding.

# Role of women in securing the nation: Why NAWOJ wants to honour women at Winsec

GRACE IJEOMA UMEH

Security in Nigeria is often discussed in barracks and government houses. But women are on the frontlines in ways that don't make headlines: as mothers preventing youth recruitment, as market leaders sharing intelligence, as counselors healing trauma, and as professionals in police, military, and civil society. The Nigeria Association of Women Journalists, NAWOJ, through its WINSEC Summit, is pushing to make this work visible and honored.

## WOMEN AND SECURITY: BEYOND THE UNIFORM

When we say "national security", we think soldiers and police. But security starts at home. A mother who notices her son's sudden withdrawal and intervenes before cult recruitment is doing counter-radicalization. A market woman who reports strange faces at motor parks is doing community intelligence. NAWOJ argues these contributions must be recognized as "security work", not just "women's work".

## WHY WINSEC SUMMIT? THE DATA GAP

WINSEC – Women in Security – Summit exists because women's role in peace and security is under-documented and under-funded. UN Resolution 1325 mandates women's participation in peace processes. Nigeria adopted a National Action Plan. Yet at LGA security meetings in Edo, women's seats are few. At policy tables, their voices are soft.

## NAWOJ WANTS TO HONOUR WOMEN AT WINSEC FOR 3 REASONS:

**Visibility:** If girls in Uromi see women police commissioners and female conflict mediators honored, they will aspire.

**Policy Influence:** Honored women get access to speak to governors, legislators, security chiefs. Their solutions move from workshops to budgets.



The President Nigerian Army Officers Wives Association (NAOWA), Mrs Safiyyah Hassan Shaibu receiving the Chairperson of the NAOWA 7 Division Chapter, Mrs Onyinye Unachukwu, during a courtesy visit to the NAOWA National Secretariat on Monday, 19 January 2026.

**Network Building:** WINSEC connects women journalists, security officers, traditional rulers' wives, and activists. Networks save lives during crises.

## CASE STUDIES: WOMEN SECURING COMMUNITIES

In Plateau, women's groups negotiate ceasefires between farmers and herders. In Northeast, women survivors lead deradicalization for repentant fighters' wives. In Edo, women vigilante groups in rural communities gather intelligence on kidnappers'

movements. These are not "soft" roles. They are strategic.

Female journalists in NAWOJ amplify these stories, counter fake news about attacks, and demand accountability when security fails. During #EndSARS, women journalists documented police brutality and provided safe reporting channels. That is security work.

## BARRIERS WOMEN FACE

Despite impact, women face barriers: cultural stereotypes that security is "men's job", lack of funding for wom-

en-led peace projects, and risk of attack when they speak out. A woman journalist reporting on kidnapping in Edo forests risks her life. WINSEC Summit creates protection and solidarity.

## THE CALL: FROM HONOUR TO POWER

Honoring women at WINSEC is step one. Step two is power: appoint more women as Divisional Police Officers, LGA security committee chairs, and advisers on women/children to governors. Fund women's peacebuilding organizations. Include

gender analysis in security budgets. When women design security policy, communities are safer.

Security is Everyone's Business.

Nigeria will not be secure until women are safe, heard, and leading.

According to Aishatu Ibrahim, National Chairperson of NAWOJ, "NAWOJ's WINSEC Summit is not an award show. It is a strategy session. By honoring women, Nigeria invests in the half of its population that holds communities together when conflict tears them apart."

# Those Eyeing Government House Asaba Come 2027: Who The Cap Fits?

The greatest politician must humble himself before the lowest constituent. The greatest governor must humble himself before the lowest peasant. The greatest president must humble himself before the lowest citizen. The greatest leader must humble himself before the lowest servant? ---- Matshona Dhliwayo, Chief Executive Officer at Genius Consulting. Since the creation of delta state in 1999, a lot have happened when it comes to the office of the governor. It was Chief James Ibori who occupied the office till 2023, followed by Uduaghan, Okowa and now Oborevwoi respectively. While Ibori and Okowa achievements can be seen by visiting where they came from that of Uduaghan was a computerized failure as he did not even cite a bole hole in Abigborodo near Koko in Warri North Local Government Area where he came from

and all eyes are on Oborevwoi whether Osubi will remain the same at the end of his four years in office. If there is any office that is so attractive today the governor's seat is the most in the entire country. Without mincing word most of the governors received not less than five hundred million naira monthly as security votes which is not accounted for while Dangote Refinery do not earn a profit of this amount. The implication is that the least governor makes six trillion naira a year without cutting a grass. This is outside the budgetary provisions in the entire year.

As 2027 election is getting closer, five political party candidates are now eyeing the Oborevwoi seat with a view to sack the sitting governor. One of such is Chief Great Ogboru, a prominent member of the African Democratic Congress (ADC). He emerged as the ADC's governorship

candidate in Delta State ahead of the 2027 general elections. He hails from Abraka in Etiope East Local Government Area of the state. In 2023, he contested for the same office under Alliance for Democracy (AD) then. It is widely believed, that without him Omo-Agege would not have even been a local government chairman today not to talk of deputy senate president. Extremely wealthy, he arrived Osubi International Airport few days ago and was received by a monmouth crowd of people from all walks of life. Since Omo-Agege confirmed recently that Ogboru won all his election but was rigged out, he may have learnt some lessons and his own dream now is to reclaim his victory by defeating Oborevwoi hands down. Dr. Joshua Denila from Isoko ethnic nationality is the candidate of Youth Party eyeing the governor's seat. Although, it is

not a household name, whether the Isoko Nation will allow their son in-law Oborevwoi to continue in office for another four years or will bank on their illustrious son to be the governor will only be seen when the results are fully out in 2027.

The National Democratic Party with Peter Obi has chosen Deacon Chris Iyovwaye, a former governorship candidate as its candidate for the 2027 general election. Deacon Chris Iyovwaye from Okpe Local Government Area of Delta State is an international business man and politician of repute. While Peter Obi defeated Tinubu in 2023 in delta state the presentation of unknown governorship candidate worked strongly against Labour Party. The crowd that welcome him to Osubi airport is unprecedented thereby convincing all Obedient supporters that Chris Iyovwaye is a candidate to beat come 2027. From

the Peoples Democratic Party is Dr. Peter Adogbejire Mrakpor from Ughievwen clan Ughelli South Local Government Area. A Senior Advocate of Nigeria and former Attorney General of Delta State during Okowa era, some were of the view that his governorship ambition is not a threat since the current APC is made up of people from PDP. Whether Mrakpor have the machinery to win the position is another ball game altogether. Also, Comrade Emeka Nkwoala, the governorship candidate of the Zenith Labour Party (ZLP) in Delta State 2027, officially hails from Imo State, though he has spent his political career operating in the Lagos and Delta state chapters of the Labour Party and ZLP. Finally, the present going is still eyeing the position so that he can complete second tenure but without this will be possible or not depends on the electorates.

## Foreign

## NEWS

**SWAT AT SUNDAY SERVICE:**

More than 30 members of the Church were taken for interrogation midway through Sunday service.

## Oil prices fall and shares jump after US-Iran deal announced

Oil prices have fallen and shares risen after the US and Iran said they had agreed a framework deal to end the war, which US President Donald Trump said would see the reopening of the key Strait of Hormuz shipping route.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, dropped 4.7% to \$83.24 (£61.94) a barrel, and shares in Asia and Europe jumped in reaction to the deal.

Pakistan, which has been mediating an end to the US-Iran war, said an official signing ceremony would be held on Friday, 19 June in Switzerland.

Iran's deputy foreign minister Kazem Gharibabadi confirmed in a phone call on state TV that a deal with the US had been finalised, while Trump posted on

social media "let the oil flow".

But Vandana Hari from energy markets analysis firm Vandana Insights said a lack of detail on what has been agreed was "likely to inject unease and uncertainty into the market".

This could mean a week of uncertainty and volatility for the oil market, she added.

The Strait of Hormuz has been effectively closed since shortly after the US and Israel launched airstrikes on Iran on 28 February.

After the conflict began, Tehran threatened to attack vessels using the crucial waterway, through which around 20% of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) normally passes.

Global energy markets have

been on a wild ride in recent months, with prices often rising or falling sharply in response to developments in the US-Israel war with Iran.

Brent crude, which was trading at around \$70 a barrel before the conflict started, peaked at about \$120 during the war.

Asian stock markets surged on Monday as investors welcomed the framework deal. Japan's Nikkei 225 share index closed 5% higher, while the Kospi in South Korea ended up 5.2%.

The region was hit particularly hard by higher energy prices as it is heavily reliant on the Middle East for its oil and LNG supplies.

In Europe, both Germany's Dax and France's Cac 40 indexes were up by about 1.7%

and in London the FTSE 100 rose 0.6%.

Energy market experts have also warned that the movement of oil through the strait is unlikely to immediately return to pre-war levels.

Andrew Lipow from consulting company Lipow Oil Associates said mines would first need to be cleared from the waterway, which could take from a few weeks to up to six months.

## Russian strikes kill nine and set historic cathedral in Kyiv ablaze

At least nine people have been killed in a wave of Russian strikes on Ukraine that set a major religious landmark in Kyiv on fire, officials say.

Five people were killed in attacks on the Ukrainian capital, while five rescue workers died trying to put out a fire caused by a strike on the north-eastern city of Kharkiv, officials said.

The 11th Century Dormition Cathedral was significantly damaged in what President Volodymyr Zelensky called "one of the biggest Russian crimes against Christian culture today". Russia denied hitting the site.

Meanwhile, a Ukrainian drone attack in the Russian city of Tula killed three people and wounded three others, including a one-year-old, local officials said.

Drone and missile strikes set fire to buildings and cars and left more than 140,000 people in Kyiv without electricity, its Mayor Vitali Klitschko said.

Most of Ukraine was under air raid warnings on Monday morning.

The Kyiv strikes, which targeted several residential buildings, left at least 23 people wounded, while five others were wounded in Kharkiv.

The Dormition Cathedral is part of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, an architectural ensemble of monastic buildings declared a Unesco World Heritage Site.

A gaping hole could be seen on one side of the church, with flames visible from the partial-

ly destroyed roof.

Zelensky said Russia launched a total of 70 missiles and 611 drones in the overnight attack, and that the fire had since been extinguished.

French President Emmanuel Macron joined the Ukrainian leader in condemning the strike.

"Nothing justifies this attack on our universal heritage," he said on X.

The strikes come ahead of a G7 meeting of world leaders this week in France, where the war in Ukraine is on the agenda.

Zelensky said the meeting's response should be "decisive and meaningful: more pressure on the aggressor, more assistance to Ukraine with air defense, primarily with anti-ballistic missiles".

The Ukrainian leader earlier said he had spoken to US President Donald Trump about efforts to end the long-running conflict.

Russia said a US-manufactured Patriot air defence missile had hit the cathedral, possibly after misfiring. It did not provide evidence to support its claim.

Russia's military said its "massive strike" had targeted Ukrainian military sites.

This is not the first time the cathedral has been struck during Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which began in 2022.

In January, Russian attacks damaged several buildings in the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra complex, Ukraine's Ministry of Culture said at the time.

## South African government says it repatriated 2,745 foreigners in a week

South Africa has repatriated 2,745 foreigners in the week after President Cyril Ramaphosa vowed tougher action against illegal immigration, the country's home affairs minister said on Sunday.

One of Africa's largest economies, South Africa has long attracted migrant workers from across the continent, both legally and illegally.

But saddled with an unemployment rate above 30 per cent, it has experienced recurring spurts of anti-immigrant unrest, including fresh violence in recent weeks.

Mobs of South Africans carrying sticks, whips and shields have marched through parts of the country ordering foreigners with no residency papers to leave by June 30.

Growing security fears after businesses were looted and foreigners targeted have prompted citizens of Nigeria, Malawi,

Ghana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique to accept voluntary repatriation organised by their governments.

"As of last night, the number we can report is 2,745 repatriations that have come in this period since the president spoke," Home Affairs Minister Leon Schreiber told reporters.

"It is a moving target," he said.

The government said most of those repatriated were in the country illegally.

They include Malawian nationals, about 7,000 of whom have been sheltering in an open field in the eastern port city of Durban, according to an inter-ministerial migration committee set up after the president's address.

Eight buses commissioned by the Malawian government began moving its citizens on Sunday, with South Africa providing 10 additional buses

to speed up deportations, the committee said.

Among those boarding the first buses, some carried babies on their backs and small bags of belongings.

"I'm relieved we are finally leaving. It's better than living in fear here," said Fortunate Chilenje from Blantyre, Malawi's commercial capital.

## US musician Oliver Tree dies in helicopter collision in Brazil

The alt-pop US musician and internet personality Oliver Tree was among six people who died when the helicopter he was travelling in collided with another in Brazil.

The 32-year-old had been on a world tour when the crash occurred over Rio de Janeiro on Sunday. One of the helicopters then fell onto the car park of a dealership, setting around 20 vehicles ablaze.

Footage published by Brazilian media shows one of the helicopters dropping from the sky, as well as flames and thick smoke rising from the crash site.

Authorities say an investigation into the cause of the collision is now under way.

The Military Fire Depart-

ment of the State of Rio de Janeiro said it was called to the crash site around 09:00 local time (12:00 GMT).

Argentine content creator Gaspar Prim Diaz - also known as Gaspi - was also believed to have been in one of the helicopters, according to the Associated Press.

The other passengers on the helicopter's manifest were Lucas Brito Chaves, Lucas Vignale and pilot Alexandre Souza. The crew manifest for the second aircraft lists only the pilot, Charles Marsillac.

Tree - born Oliver Tree Nickell in Santa Cruz, California in 1993 - first rose to fame in 2016 after going viral on social media.

With his distinctive bowl

haircut, he was known for hits including Life Goes On, Miss You and Alien Boy.

Tree had just begun a world tour, with his most recent show in São Paulo, Brazil on 6 June. He was next scheduled to perform in Lisbon, in Portugal, on 1 July and had been due to play dates in Glasgow, Manchester and London in September.

YouTube KSI, who collaborated with him on the track Voices, paid an emotional tribute.

In a post shared on X, Britain's Got Talent judge KSI said: "Can't believe I'm actually having to type this. You're 32 man. You should still be here. You still had so much life to live. So much music to make."

## Norwegian crown princess's son found guilty of two counts of rape

Marius Borg Høiby, the 29-year-old son of Norway's Crown Princess Mette-Marit, has been found guilty of two counts of rape and sentenced to four years in prison.

The three judges in courtroom 250 at Oslo District Court cleared him of two other counts of rape, but found him guilty of many of the other offences of which he had been accused.

Høiby was not in court for the verdict for unspecified health reasons, but

joined the session via video link.

Prosecutors had called for Høiby to be given seven years and seven months in prison. His defence lawyers had called for a lesser term of 18 months and can appeal against the verdict.

Even though Marius Borg Høiby is not himself a royal figure, the trial has cast a shadow over the broader royal family. His mother married Crown Prince Haakon when he was four, and he grew up within the family.

Mette-Marit is very ill with a form of pulmonary fibrosis and has recently been placed on a lung transplant list.

Her son's lawyers have repeatedly sought his release from prison so he could spend time with his mother because of her declining health.

After the verdict, Høiby's defence lawyer Petar Sekulic again asked the court for his release. Although Oslo district court initially granted his release last week, the decision was over-

turned by the Supreme Court.

One of the three judges in the trial, Judge Jon Sverdrup Efstad, began the session early on Monday with a summary of their conclusions, before going into a 128-page ruling explaining the verdict.

Høiby had denied all four counts of rape, but the judges convicted him of raping two women, including one on the Crown Prince's estate at Skau-gum in 2018 and another involving a woman in Oslo in 2024.

**NEWS****Foreign****Tourist train overturns and injures 17 during Cártama tapas festival**

Seventeen people have been injured after the wagon of a tourist train overturned in the Spanish town of Cártama.

The accident happened just after 21:30 local time (20:30 BST) evening, according to local authorities. The cause is unknown.

Emergency teams attended to the injured at the scene and four were later evacuated to a nearby hospital, including three children. None of the victims suffered serious injuries, local authorities said.

The free train ride was part of an annual event called la Ruta de la Tapa y el Cóctel, where people are encouraged to visit different local businesses to try their food and drink offerings.

The road train was carrying around 30 passengers at the time of the incident.

Photos shared on social media show several people aboard the wagon while emer-

gency services attend to a child sat on the floor.

The event, happening from the 10 to 14 June, provides a map across the city highlighting several restaurants and bars. The train stops along the route to drop people off at the establishments.

Customers can get stamps from trying different food and drinks and later be entered into a raffle for prizes.

The accident happened while the train had been turning at a crossing in Santo Cristo road, local authorities said, citing several calls to emergency services.

The train service has been suspended for the weekend while investigations are ongoing.

The town of Cártama, in southern Spain, is located just 17 km (10.6 mile) from the popular tourist destination of Málaga, and a 44-minute drive to the wealthy resort town of Marbella.

**Swiss voters reject 10 million population cap**

Voters in Switzerland have rejected a proposal to limit the country's population to 10 million.

Results showed nearly 55% of participants voted against and 45% voted for, with a turnout of 60% of the population.

The proposal came from the right-wing Swiss People's Party, which has long campaigned on an anti-immigration platform.

The divisive vote risked putting the country's free movement agreement with the European Union in jeopardy and was opposed by the government, Swiss businesses, and all the other major parties.

Welcoming the no vote, Switzerland's justice minister Beat Jans said it was "a sign of stability, openness and reliability".

Switzerland's population has grown rapidly since 2002, when it stood at 7.3 million. Now it is 9.1 million, 27% of whom are not Swiss citizens.

However, the People Party's argument that capping the population would reduce pressure on transport, housing and the environment seem not to have persuaded enough voters.

Although the Swiss People's Party insisted the population cap was designed to protect Switzerland's public services and its environment, it has a long history of campaigning on an anti-immigrant platform, frequently blaming asylum seekers and minorities for societal problems.

Some voters were seemingly worried at the prospect of losing much-needed workers in tourism, hospitals, and care homes.

Others, in particular Swiss business leaders, feared losing Switzerland's crucial access to Europe's single market.

Over half of all Swiss products are sold into the EU, but their access to Europe's markets depends on Swiss commitment to Europe's free movement of people. Had the population cap been approved, Switzerland would have had to terminate that agreement.

Both the Swiss government and Swiss business leaders say the vote shows non-EU member Switzerland wants to stay close to Europe.

The President of the European Commission, Ursula von

der Leyen, had stayed out of the campaign, but welcomed the result once the votes were counted, saying: "The Swiss people have spoken. The EU and Switzerland share deep ties and a strong partnership".

But the concerns over high rents, over development, crowded public transport, and rising health costs will not go away because of this particular decision.

Marcel Dettling, the Swiss People's Party's president, said the vote showed that "the population wants solutions. Not a single problem has been solved".

What the Swiss voters have shown though, is that many of them may be weary of the People's Party's continued focus on immigration as the source of Switzerland's problems, while voters themselves are not at all convinced that blaming immigrants, or stricter controls on immigration, are the way to solve them.

Switzerland's system of direct democracy means all major decisions are taken via the ballot box. Campaigners simply have to gather 100,000 signatures to ensure a nation-

wide vote.

Two posters side by side - one on the left is a Yes-vote poster calling for "No to 10 million Swiss, and one on the right backs the No-vote, condemning the plan as a "chaos initiative"

Two young politicians with opposing views on limiting the Swiss population spoke to the BBC prior to the vote.

"We have lost control," complains Nils Fiechter, 29, who represents the Swiss People's Party in canton Bern's parliament.

"Unchecked immigration is leading to Switzerland no longer being Switzerland," he said.

In 2022, Fiechter and his co-president of the People's Party's youth wing were convicted of racial discrimination by the Swiss Federal Court, in relation to a poster they distributed in 2018 targeting Roma and traveller communities.

He believes Switzerland's problems, which he says include a "housing shortage, gridlocked traffic, overburdened schools and strained social services", are a direct result of immigration.

**China detains two leaders of influential underground church**

An influential Protestant church in China has said two of its leaders were detained after more than dozens of congregants, including children, were rounded up for interrogation.

They were midway through Sunday service in the south-western city of Ji-angyou, when armed police officers stormed the room they were in, Early Rain Covenant said in a statement on Monday.

Founded in 2008 in Chengdu city, the church has long been on the Chinese Communist Party's radar given how religion is tightly controlled in the region.

Founding pastor Wang Yi was detained in a raid in December 2018 and is serving a nine-year jail term for "inciting subversion of state power" and "illegal business operations".

The grounds for detaining two of its leaders, Yan Hong and Wu Wuqing, on Sunday are still unclear, the church said in its statement posted on Telegram. Chinese authorities have not responded to the statement, or made any comment so far.

The church also shared photographs and videos that show the congregants, seated in a hotel ballroom surrounded by a team of SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactical Unit) officers.

At least 50 police officers were present during the raid at 11:00 local time, according to some members' estimates.

More than 30 members and leaders were "forcibly taken away in several police vehicles" and questioned in the Jiangyou detention centre, the church said. Throughout the

process, they "fellowshipped, sang hymns, and prayed until most of them were released," it added.

The remaining congregants, which included elderly and children, were locked up in the ballroom and subject to identity checks, according to the church. Clips show some congregants singing even as an officer in plain clothes took to the stage and repeatedly shouted for them to stop.

The church said officers tried to get those in the ballroom to sign an affidavit in exchange for their release, but did not disclose what was in the affidavit. The congregants refused and were eventually released at 18:00.

Apart from Yan and Wu, those who were taken away for interrogation were released between 21:00 and 23:00 on Sunday.

The two preachers have previously been detained by authorities, the most recent being in January, when they were summoned by police for "picking quarrels and provoking trouble".

Chinese authorities said in 2018 that there were 44 million Christians in the country, but it is unclear if this number includes those who attend the many underground churches.

The Communist Party pressures Christians to join only state-sanctioned churches led by government-approved pastors.

Many have turned to underground churches, also known as "house churches", over the years, but Christian groups say the government's grip has tightened noticeably, with arrests becoming more common.

**FUEL PUMP:**

Oil prices dip ahead US Iran's MOU signing

**Australian PM demands answers after Pakistan police shoot girl on holiday dead**

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has called on authorities in Pakistan to investigate the fatal shooting of an Australian girl while on holiday with her family.

Nine-year-old Hania Ahmed and her family were taken hostage at gunpoint by armed robbers inside their rental car in the northern city of Chakwal in Punjab province on 10 June.

The suspects fired at a police officer, leading to a shootout, Punjab police said.

A police officer, thinking that the suspects were flee-

ing on the family's vehicle, "mistakenly" fired his gun, resulting in the nine-year-old's death and wounding her father and older brother, police said.

Punjab police said the suspects fired first at the police officer, who has been placed under custody. However, the girl's father told SBS Urdu that the police fired first.

"These circumstances do need to be examined. They need to be examined in a transparent way, so that everyone can know, the family, most importantly, but others as well," Albanese told reporters

in Canberra on Monday.

"Australia expects there to be transparency and a proper investigation of these circumstances," he said.

Punjab police said there was "absolutely no justification for deviating from our established protocols" and that it was conducting a "thorough and impartial investigation".

The girl's death has shocked both Australia and Pakistan.

Abdullah Khan, the principal of Hania's school in Perth, the Australian Islamic College, told the BBC that news of her death was "traumatic" for her

community.

Hania was very friendly, bubbly, and very social, Khan said.

"She had lots of friends, [and was] very respectful to teachers," he added. "She was loved by everyone."

Khan said he has been in touch with Hania's family, and that the school was providing counselling support to staff and students.

"Especially the students in her class - they are distressed and in a state of shock," he said.

The Australian government is providing consular assistance to the family.

# On Democracy Day, Nigeria chooses reform over stagnation



CHINEDUM ANAYO

**D**emocracy Day offers Nigerians an opportunity not only to celebrate June 12 but also to assess how far the nation has progressed in strengthening its democratic institutions.

Democracy is not merely the conduct of elections; it is a continuous process of strengthening institutions, expanding citizens' rights, and improving governance.

In that regard, Nigeria stands at a significant moment in its democratic journey.

In recent weeks, the National Assembly has undertaken one of the most ambitious constitutional reform efforts in recent years.

The House of Representatives has passed constitutional amendments aimed at establishing state police, a long-debated proposal that seeks to address the country's complex security challenges through a more decentralized policing framework.

While other constitutional amendments have been deferred to a subsequent legislative session, the willingness to engage in fundamental constitutional review demonstrates a legislature actively responding to the evolving needs of the federation.

Even more remarkable is the growing focus on deepening democratic

participation and accountability.

One of the proposed constitutional amendments seeks to introduce independent candidacy for presidential, governorship, National Assembly, State House of Assembly, and local government elections.

For subsequent years, political parties have remained the sole gateway to elective office, often limiting political participation to those able to navigate party structures.

By creating a pathway for independent candidates who can demonstrate genuine grassroots support through verified signatures, the bill has the potential to widen democratic space and encourage greater citizen participation.

The proposed fee waiver for women candidates further indicates a deliberate effort to make politics more inclusive.

Another important proposal seeks to strengthen State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs).

Local government elections have frequently been criticized for lacking credibility and independence.

By introducing stricter qualification standards for commissioners, granting regulatory autonomy, and expanding the commissions' responsibilities, the reforms aim to enhance public confidence in grassroots democracy.

Similarly, the proposed Electoral

Offences Commission represents a critical response to one of Nigeria's enduring democratic weaknesses, the culture of electoral impunity.

Elections cannot truly be free and fair when violations go unpunished. A dedicated commission focused on investigating and prosecuting electoral offences could significantly strengthen electoral integrity and voter confidence.

The ongoing constitutional review also extends to the judiciary.

Proposed reforms seek to reduce the burden on the Supreme Court, accelerate the resolution of election petitions, regulate appellate jurisdiction more effectively, and allow elevated judges to conclude part-heard criminal matters.

These changes are designed not only to improve efficiency but also to

enhance public trust in the administration of justice.

Perhaps one of the most compelling proposals is the bill seeking constitutional protection for children.

The amendment would enshrine the best interests of the child as a constitutional principle, strengthen protections against abuse and violence, and improve children's access to justice.

This proposal is particularly timely. Across parts of Nigeria, families continue to endure the trauma of child abductions and kidnappings.

In recent incidents in Oyo and Borno States, children remain among the victims whose whereabouts continue to concern parents and communities.

While constitutional provisions alone cannot eliminate such tragedies, embedding child protection within

the nation's supreme law sends a powerful signal about the values Nigeria seeks to uphold.

Of course, legislation alone does not guarantee democratic progress.

The true test lies in implementation, institutional independence, and political will.

Many promising reforms have historically struggled to translate into meaningful change.

Meanwhile, democracy advances not only through outcomes but through the deliberate effort to improve the rules and institutions that govern society.

As Nigeria marks another Democracy Day, there is reason for cautious optimism.

The constitutional amendments before the National Assembly, the renewed attention to electoral integrity, judicial efficiency, citizen participation, and child protection collectively suggest a democratic system seeking to evolve rather than remain stagnant. Democracy is not a destination. It is an ongoing project of national improvement.

On this Democracy Day, Nigeria's greatest achievement may not be where it has arrived, but its willingness to continue the journey.

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*The amendment would enshrine the best interests of the child as a constitutional principle, strengthen protections against abuse and violence, and improve children's access to justice.*

# Tinubu's Reforms: Rewriting Nigeria's trajectory



MUHYIDEEN JIMOH,  
NEWS AGENCY OF NIGERIA

Upon assuming office in May 2023, President Bola Tinubu inherited a Nigerian economy contending with a severe combination of cascading crises.

These predicaments ranged from crippling fuel subsidies and multiple exchange rates to declining revenues, rising debt-servicing costs, insecurity and weak investor confidence.

To prevent further economic collapse, the administration opted for difficult reforms, including the removal of the petrol subsidy and the unification of the foreign exchange market, arguing that delaying action would have pushed the country deeper into an economic crisis.

Tinubu succinctly captures it in his third anniversary address.

"At the height of the subsidy regime, Nigeria was spending as much as N18.4 billion daily to sustain petrol subsidies.

"Over N4 trillion was spent in 2022 alone, resources that could have been invested in roads, healthcare, education, housing and critical infrastructure.

"Multiple exchange rate windows and forex arbitrage created massive distortions, with Nigeria losing more than N8 trillion over three years to rent-seeking and speculative practices," he said.

Though the reforms triggered sharp increases in living costs and tested the patience of many Nigerians, the government insists the sacrifices are beginning to yield measurable gains.

Policy analysts say one of the clearest indicators is improving competitiveness and renewed investor confidence.

The Nigerian stock market has wit-

nessed significant growth, with market capitalisation rising from about N30 trillion in 2023 to N160 trillion in 2026.

Public finances have also improved, enabling states and local governments to access larger allocations for developmental projects and social services.

Mr Taiwo Oyedele, the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, said Nigeria was steadily moving from a phase of economic stabilisation to growth.

"We have seen moderation in inflation; we have seen the foreign exchange rate stabilise; and, in fact, steady appreciation over the past couple of years; we have also seen growth, modest growth, but increasing.

"So, we believe that we are now at a point where we are moving from stability to growth," Oyedele said.

Across the country, observers say massive infrastructure projects are changing the landscape, with more than 2,700 kilometres of highways and major roads under construction, reconstruction or rehabilitation.

The Minister of Works, Sen. Dave Umahi, highlighted critical road projects.

He said the Federal Government was executing legacy highway projects designed to improve connectivity and boost socio-economic development across the six geopolitical zones.

The projects include the 750km Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway, 1,068km Sokoto-Badagry Super Highway, Calabar-Abuja Superhighway, 482km Trans-Saharan Road and 439km Akwanga-Jos-Bauchi-Gombe Road.

Umahi said the Sokoto-Badagry Super Highway would be a game-changer for the economy.

"This highway will unlock economic opportunities and strengthen movement of people and goods across states," the minister said.

Analysts say projects such as the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway, Abuja-Kaduna-Zaria-Kano Road and East-West Road are expected to enhance connectivity, stimulate trade and create thousands of jobs, while rail modernisation initiatives are advancing economic integration across the federation.

In the oil and gas sector, reforms have attracted fresh investments worth billions of dollars, while the nearing completion of the five-billion-dollar NLNG Train 7 project, expansion of domestic gas utilisation and increased local refining capacity are improving energy security.

In addition, the power sector, long constrained by debt, weak infrastructure and inadequate investment, is also receiving renewed attention through transmission upgrades, renewable energy initiatives and efforts to stabilise the national grid.

It is worth noting that agriculture remains central to the administration's economic agenda.

Millions of farmers have benefited from interventions covering improved seedlings, fertiliser distribution, mechanisation, irrigation and expanded access to finance.

The Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Sen. Abubakar Kyari, said government interventions were focused on achieving food security and reducing dependence on food imports.

"We are investing in mechanisation, irrigation, improved seedlings and access to finance because agriculture remains critical to economic diversification and national food security.

"The goal is to increase productivity, reduce food inflation and improve farmers' incomes across the country," Kyari said.

Analysts say the opening of new

agricultural corridors is expected to boost food production, strengthen supply chains and reduce pressure on household incomes.

What's more, stakeholders in the education sector acknowledge that notable progress has been made through the Nigerian Education Loan Fund.

Available data indicates that NELFUND has provided more than 1.5 million students access to higher education, with over N282 billion disbursed to beneficiaries.

In addition, the housing sector has also gained momentum under the Renewed Hope Housing Programme and Federal Housing Authority projects, with more than 10,000 housing units under development across 14 states and the FCT, generating over 300,000 jobs and stimulating construction activities.

In healthcare, thousands of primary healthcare centres are being revitalised, while health insurance coverage continues to expand for vulnerable Nigerians.

More so, the telecommunications sector is witnessing renewed confidence as a result of ongoing reforms.

Sector experts say the reforms resulted in expanded network coverage and deepened digital connectivity nationwide.

The aviation sector has also benefited from reforms aimed at modernising airport infrastructure, improving operational efficiency and restoring investor confidence.

The Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo, was upbeat.

"Our focus is to modernise airport infrastructure, strengthen safety standards, attract investment and make Nigeria a major aviation hub in Africa," he said.

For many Nigerians, the most sensitive area remains security.

While terrorism, banditry, kidnapping and other criminal activities persist in some parts of the country, security agencies have intensified operations and recorded gains in several communities and major transport corridors.

The National Security Adviser (NSA), Nuhu Ribadu, said security agencies were recording significant successes through coordinated operations.

"While challenges remain, we are seeing improved collaboration among security agencies, better intelligence gathering and increasing pressure on criminal elements across different parts of the country," Ribadu said.

Security experts hold the view that smart policing is pivotal to tackling Nigeria's hydra-headed security challenges.

"Enhanced investments in intelligence, surveillance technology, logistics and inter-agency collaboration are gradually improving the state's capacity to confront emerging threats," a security analyst said.

Nonetheless, the administration acknowledges that significant challenges remain—namely inflation, unemployment, and insecurity—underscoring the need to translate macroeconomic gains into tangible improvements for Nigerians.

Yet, three years into the Renewed Hope Agenda, supporters argue that Nigeria is witnessing the early signs of a turnaround driven by economic reforms, infrastructure expansion, human capital development and renewed investor confidence.

For policy pundits, whether the gains ultimately meet public expectations may depend on how effectively the administration consolidates current progress and ensures that the dividends of reform reach ordinary Nigerians in the years ahead. (NANFeatures)

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

## Ibom Angels congratulate Edo Queens on NWFL triumph

Ibom Angels Football Club have joined teeming supporters, associates and stakeholders across the country and beyond, in congratulating Edo Queens on their

2025/2026 NWFL title-winning success.

Edo Queens were crowned champions after a goalless matchday five outing against former champions, Bayelsa Queens on Sunday afternoon.

The result took the Benin Arsenal unassailably to ten points, courtesy of their three wins and one draw in five super-six matches which took place in the garden city of Port Harcourt from June 6 to 14, 2026.

Edo Queens arrived the super-six from second place in Group A of the regular season after amassing thirty-six points, one behind table toppers, Bayelsa Queens.

Speaking in Uyo, Sunday, the chairman of Ibom Angels - Prince Ukeme Ukpog, described the victory as "reward for hard work" and "thoroughly deserving."

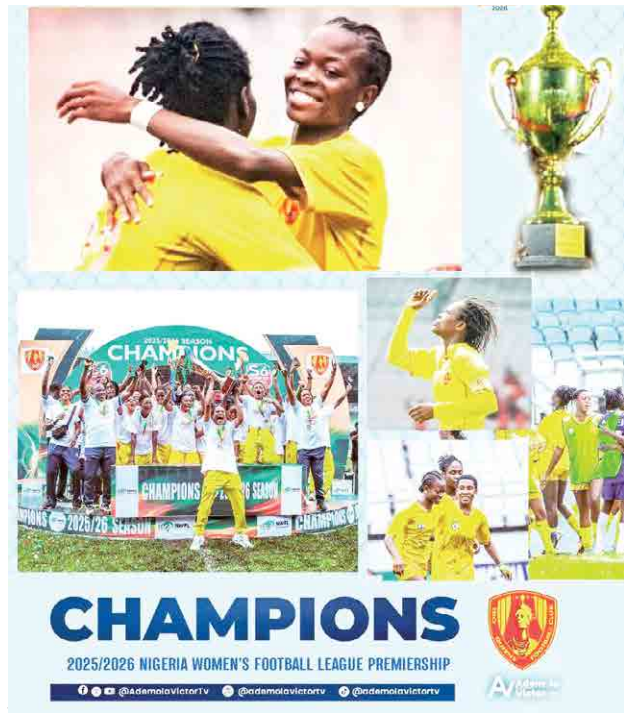
"On behalf of our prestigious club, I heartily congratulate the players, officials, and everyone who's associated with Edo Queens on winning the league

this season." "They have a talented set of players who have been very determined and resolute throughout the season, and in the end, I honestly do think that they deserve to win the title."

Mr Ukpog also praised the NWFL board for what he called "exceptional organization" of the league, but noted that there was always room for improvement. While urging the board not to relent in its remarkable efforts at sourcing sponsors and having the league on live television, Prince Ukpog pledged his continuous support for the NWFL.

On his team's performance, the experienced football administrator and renowned philanthropist cited his side's league victory over Rivers Angels, the ousting of Bayelsa Queens from the Federation and the league draw away to the now league champions, Edo Queens, as grounds for optimism.

"The work is a continuous one, but given some of the



## NWFL Triumph: Yussuf Alli, OLY congratulates Edo Queens, Edo Sports Commission Chairman

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The Chief Executive Officer, Elite Athletes Development and Podium Performance Board of the National Sport Commission, Olympian Yussuf Alli, has congratulated Edo Queens Football Club on 2026 NWFL title Triumph.

Edo Queens shared the spoils with defending champions Bayelsa Queens, after a 0-0 draw and garnered 10 points from five games in the NWFL Super Six tournament to lift the premier league trophy in Port Harcourt on Sunday evening.

The Benin based team won three matches, drew one and lost one to finish tops ahead of Bayelsa Queens and others. They suffered a 1-0 defeat to Nasarawa Amazons in their opening match and came out stronger in the remaining fixtures with 4-1 thrashing of FC Robo; 6-2 thrashing of Abia Angels before going ahead to beat host team Rivers Angels 2-1 in the second, third and fourth engagements.

Edo Queens won the NWFL title for the first time in 2024. The 2026 NWFL SUPER Six triumph in Port Harcourt on Sunday made it the second time they have won the league title.

The former Executive Chairman, Edo State Sports Commission in a statement praised the players, coaching crew and

the management for their resilience and commitment to bringing honour to the state.

He also congratulated his successor in office Hon Amadin Desmond Enabulele over the victory. He commended Enabulele for his courage and unwavering commitment to taking the Edo state Sports Commission to greater heights.

"This remarkable achievement is a reflection of the club's dominance and the incredible work done by the players, technical crew, and management.



EDO QUEENS CELEBRATING

## Netherlands, Japan share spoils in thrilling 2-2 World Cup draw

The Netherlands and Japan played out an exciting 2-2 draw in their 2026 FIFA World Cup Group F encounter, after a dramatic second-half battle.

Both teams displayed attacking intent from the opening whistle, with the Netherlands

relying on their physical strength and experience, while Japan impressed with quick passing and energetic pressing.

The Dutch side dominated possession during several periods of the first half but struggled to create clear openings against a disciplined Japanese

defence.

Japan remained dangerous on the counter-attack, using their pace and movement to trouble the Netherlands whenever they advanced into the final third.

The match burst into life after the interval when the Netherlands took the lead in the 51st minute through captain Virgil van Dijk.

The defender rose above the Japanese defence to head home a well-delivered cross, giving the Dutch a 1-0 advantage.

Japan responded immediately and restored parity in the 57th minute through Keito Nakamura, whose strike found the back of the net after a swift attacking move.



VIRGIL VAN DIJK WITH TEAM MATE



AMAD DIALLO

## World Cup: Amad fires Cote d'Ivoire to 1-0 victory over Ecuador

Ivorian winger Amad Diallo's 90-minute strike was the difference as Cote d'Ivoire defeated Ecuador in their first group match of the 2026 FIFA World Cup in group E.

The Manchester United forward who came on later in the game was set up by Wilfred Singo who broke down the right wing and delivered a pass for Amad; the winger slotted home from the age of the box.

Ecuador came close to scoring twice in the first half but saw both strikes from Yeboah

and Minda struck the cross bar.

The defeat brought an end to Ecuador's 19-game unbeaten run and they will hope to come back to winning ways against group E underdogs Curacao on Saturday.

The win gave Cote d'Ivoire important three points as they square up against Germany on Saturday. The Germans are top of the group of E after thrashing Curacao 7-1 earlier.

Ivorian coach Emerse Fae, said his side were hoping to create more space after the first half.

## Edo Queens' NWFL triumph testament to hard work -Shaibu

The Director-General and Chief Executive Officer of the National Institute for Sports (NIS), H.E. comrade Philip Shaibu has congratulated Edo Queens for emerging champions of the Nigeria Women Football League (NWFL) Premiership.

Shaibu, in a statement by his Special Adviser on Media, Ben Ogbemudia, on Sunday in Abuja described the achievement as a deserving reward for the dedication, hard work and determination displayed by the team and management throughout the season.

"Edo Queens had once again demonstrated the growing

strength and influence of women's football in Nigeria, while bringing honour and pride to Edo State and the country.

"The club's success reflects the positive impact of sustained investment in sports development and talent nurturing.

"The achievement of the team will serve as an inspiration to a new generation of young female athletes to pursue excellence in sports," he added.

Shaibu commended the Edo Government for its commitment to sports development, noting that the state had continued to record impressive achievements across various sporting disciplines.



PHILIP SHAIBU WITH EDO QUEENS

## Sports



# Governor Okpebholo congratulates Edo Queens on 2026 NWFL title triumph

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has congratulated Edo Queens Football Club for winning the 2026 Nigeria Women Football Premier League, NWFL title



GOVERNOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLO

The Governor described the team's success at the NWFL Super Six as a proud moment for the state and a testament to the talent, determination, and resilience of Edo athletes.

In Sunday's final game against Bayelsa Queens, the

Edo Queens secured a 0-0 draw, enough for them to finish with 10 points from five games. The Benin team won three games, drew one and lost one.

The win confirmed the Edo Queens as the top team of 2026 NWFL, further highlighting the team's strength, consistency, and competitive spirit.

The Governor, in a statement yesterday by his Chief Press Secretary Dr Patrick Ebojele, commended the players, coaches, technical crew, and management of the team for their dedication, discipline, and the outstanding achievement, noting that their achievement has further strengthened Edo State's reputation as a leading sports hub in Nigeria.

Governor Okpebholo said his administration remains committed to repositioning the sports sector through improved infrastructure, support for athletes, and policies aimed at creating more opportunities for young talents across the state.

He noted that sports remains a powerful tool for youth development, empowerment, and unity, adding that the state government will continue to provide an enabling environment for Edo athletes and teams to excel at national and international levels.

"Edo Queens have made the people of Edo State proud. Their achievement reflects the spirit of excellence, hard work, and determination that defines our people. I congratulate the champions and assure them of our continued support," the governor said.

Governor Okpebholo however charged Edo athletes to remain focused and committed, assuring that his administration will continue to invest in initiatives that will restore Edo's position as a powerhouse in Nigerian sports.

He described Edo Queens as worthy ambassadors of the state and encouraged them to continue inspiring young girls and aspiring athletes across Edo State.



JAMAL MUSIALA

## World Cup: Germany hammer Curacao 7-1 in group E clash

Germany began their 2026 FIFA World Cup campaign on a high note with an emphatic 7-1 victory over Curacao in a Group E match played on Sunday.

The four-time world champions showed their quality from the start, controlling possession and creating several chances against the World Cup debutants.

Felix Nmecha gave Germany the lead in the sixth minute after finishing off a well-worked attacking move.

In spite of Germany's early dominance, Curacao stunned the crowd in the 21st minute when Livano Comenencia found the back of the net to level the scores.

The strike registers the Caribbean nation's first-ever World Cup goal.

The equaliser briefly raised Curacao's hopes, but Germany quickly regained control of the contest.

Defender Nico Schlotterbeck restored Germany's lead in the 38th minute with a clinical finish.

Kai Havertz converted a penalty in first-half stoppage time (45+5) to hand his side a comfortable 3-1 advantage going into the break.

Germany continued their attacking display after halftime. Jamal Musiala extended the lead in the 47th minute, taking advantage of a defensive lapse by Curacao.

The goal further boosted Germany's confidence as they continued to press forward in search of more goals.

Nathaniel Brown added the fifth goal in the 68th minute after another flowing team move.

## 2026 World Cup: Disquiet as referee, player suffer travel restrictions

Football fans and stakeholders have lamented travel restrictions and visa ban on referees, players and fans at the ongoing FIFA World Cup in the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

Ghana's Thomas Partey is the latest as he was denied entry into Canada on grounds of his ongoing case in England, excluding him from Ghana's opening match against Panama on June 17.

The former Arsenal midfielder is set to stand trial as he had been charged with seven count of rape and one count of sexual assault by London's Metropolitan Police.

FIFA confirmed the visa ban in a statement released on Friday, stating that hosts countries reserved the right to approve or deny visas for tournament participants.

The statement read "We confirm that Thomas Partey will not be able to leave the Ghana national team's camp in Boston (United States) to head to Canada for his country's first match against Panama on Wednesday, after the Canadian government refused to issue him visa.

"We would like to clarify that FIFA is not a party to the immigration procedures of host countries, including decisions to grant or deny visas.

"As has been the case in previous FIFA tournaments, the host government holds the final decision regarding visa issuance and allowing individuals to enter its territory."

Reacting to FIFA's statement, Kofi Adams, Ghana's Minister of Sports and Recreation says the football governing body should not allow host countries deny visas for players.

"FIFA can not say that it can

not interfere with the internal affairs of the host countries as to whether they admit a person into their countries or not. This should not have been the position, especially for a player," Adams said while speaking to a local TV station.

The Ghana Ministry of Foreign Affairs has said the country is in talks with relevant Canadian authority on the matter. This was contained in a statement released on Saturday by the ministry



## Nigeria Cricket Federation names 16-man squad for Namibia Tri-Series

The Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF) has announced a 16-man YellowGreens squad for the upcoming Namibia Tour.

In a statement issued by the federation's Media Manager, Zeal Ibe, yesterday, the team is expected to depart Nigeria on Monday for the series.

According to the statement, the YellowGreens will compete in a T20 and 50-over Tri-Series involving hosts Namibia and Hong Kong China, scheduled to hold on June 18 to June 29.

He said the tour is part of the national team's preparations for future international competitions as the YellowGreens continue to improve on recent performances and strengthen their position in world cricket.

"The squad will be led by Captain Sulaimon Runsewe, who is expected to guide the team against Namibia and Hong Kong China in what is anticipated to be a highly competitive tournament," he said.

Ibe noted that the selected squad blends experienced play-

ers and emerging talents, providing the technical crew with an opportunity to assess player development and experiment with different combinations in both the T20 and 50-over formats.

He added that the return of Chima Akachukwu and Miracle Akhigbe was a major highlight of the squad announcement.

He said the duo returned to the national team after spending some time away and would be hoping to make meaningful contributions as Nigeria seeks success in Namibia.

Ibe said the team would be supervised during the early stage of the tour by coaches Leke Oyede and Tamuno John.

He added that the newly appointed Head Coach and High Performance Manager, Stephen Magongo, would join the team later in Namibia.

He said Magongo's arrival represents another step in the federation's efforts to strengthen the national team structure and improve player development.



NIGERIA CRICKET FEDERATION

## FIFA to pay Somali referee Artan full World Cup fee

Somali referee Omar Artan, who was denied entry to the United States to officiate at the World Cup, will still receive his full tournament fee.

Artan was interrogated for 11 hours by US immigration authorities at Miami International Airport on Monday before being told he would not be allowed into the country after his diplomatic passport and single entry US visa were rejected.

A US government official said Artan had not been allowed to enter the country because of an alleged "association with suspected members of terror organisations".

Artan said he had been questioned by border officials over his links to Somali militant group Al Shabab and had

told them he knew nothing about the organisation.

"I had the right papers and everything. I had the right visa," said Artan.

"I'm just simply a referee who's trying to live his dream, the biggest dream of my life, to come to the World Cup."

After being put back on a plane to Turkey, Artan received assistance from FIFA officials in Istanbul before boarding a flight to the Somali capital Mogadishu.

Sources said that even though Artan will take no part in the World Cup, FIFA has committed to paying his salary.

Referees do not know the actual fee they will receive for officiating at the World Cup, which is paid after the tournament is over.



OMAR ARTAN



# 2026 FIFA World Cup: Saka, Chukwuemeka, Balogun among 15 Nigerian-descent stars representing other countries

The absence of Nigeria's Super Eagles from the 2026 FIFA World Cup remains a major disappointment for football fans across the country. However, despite Nigeria's failure to qualify for the tournament in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, several players of Nigerian descent will still grace the global stage representing other nations. England headline the list with a strong Nigerian connection through Bukayo Saka, Noni Madueke, and

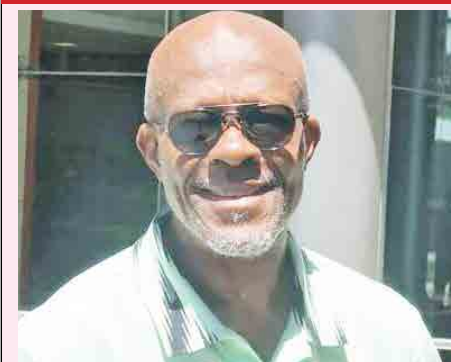
Eberechi Eze. The trio are expected to play important roles as the Three Lions chase World Cup glory. Saka remains one of England's most influential attacking players, while Madueke and Eze continue to impress with their creativity and attacking flair. The United States will rely on striker Folarin Balogun, who has consistently shown his quality in front of goal and remains a key figure in the American attack heading into the tournament. France's squad also features ex-

citing winger Michael Olise, whose outstanding performances at club level have established him as one of Europe's brightest attacking talents. Norway will look to the pace and skill of Antonio Nusa, while Switzerland boast the experience of defender Manuel Akanji alongside forward Noah Okafor as they seek a strong World Cup campaign. Austria have two players of Nigerian heritage in their ranks — experienced defender David Alaba and versatile

midfielder Carney Chukwuemeka. Both players are expected to strengthen Austria's ambitions at the tournament. Germany's squad includes Jamal Musiala and Felix Nmecha, two highly-rated midfielders capable of influencing games at the highest level. Musiala, in particular, is regarded as one of the most talented young players in world football. Canada will also parade Nigerian-descendant stars in Tani Oluwaseyi and Promise David, both of whom have become important members of the national team setup. South Africa complete the list with young defender Imé Okon, who continues to rise steadily on the international scene.



## NFF Deputy General Secretary, Ikpeme, presents book on sports development in Nigeria



DR EMMANUEL IKPEME

The Deputy General Secretary of Nigeria Football Federation, Dr Emmanuel Ikpeme, MON will on Thursday make a public presentation of a book on sports development in Nigeria, titled Perspectives on Sports Development in Nigeria: Challenges and Ways Forward. The former university lecturer and highly-experienced administrator said he authored the book because he felt a "compelling responsibility to contribute meaningfully to the discourse on sports development in our nation." He stated further: "Over the course of my career as a lecturer and sports administrator at both the state and national levels, I have had the privilege of accumulating a wealth of knowledge and hands-on experience within Nigeria's sporting landscape. I have distilled these insights and observations into a comprehensive volume titled Perspectives on Sports Development in Nigeria: Challenges and Ways Forward. "The book offers an in-depth examination of eleven sports across eleven dedicated chapters, with a twelfth chapter devoted to the critical subject of anti-doping, a topic of growing urgency in contemporary sports administration." An erudite academic, Ikpeme lectured at the University of Calabar for several years, before serving as Sole Administrator of the Cross River State Sports Council. He was appointed as deputy secretary general (technical) of the NFF in 2007, before becoming the Deputy General Secretary in March 2015. The public presentation of the book will take place at the VIP Lounge of the MKO Abiola National Stadium, Abuja on Thursday, 18th June 2026, starting by noon, and will be attended by prominent political, academic and sports personalities from across the length and breadth of Nigeria.

## World Cup 2026: Morocco close in on Nigeria's scoring record

Morocco's impressive 1-1 draw against Brazil at the 2026 FIFA World Cup was about more than just a valuable point. The result also saw the Atlas Lions rewrite several chapters of their World Cup history while strengthening their status as one of Africa's leading football nations. In a memorable Group C encounter at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, Morocco matched the five-time world champions stride for stride and emerged with a series of historic achievements. The Atlas Lions stunned Brazil in the 21st minute when Ismail Saïbani calmly finished past goalkeeper Alison Becker to hand his side the lead. The goal secured a remarkable place in World Cup history, making Morocco the first non-European nation to take the lead against Brazil in the Seleção's opening match at a World Cup tournament.

Although Vinicius Junior restored parity for Brazil in the 32nd minute with a superb individual effort, Morocco's disciplined display ensured they left the stadium with a deserved point. The draw also marked another significant milestone for the North African side. According to French statistics outlet Stats Foot, Morocco secured their first-ever World Cup point against a South American nation, ending a long wait for a positive result against teams from the continent on football's biggest stage. The achievement further underlined Morocco's growing reputation following their historic fourth-place finish at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. Morocco's goal against Brazil also had implications in the African record books. Saïbani's strike took the Atlas Lions' total number of World Cup goals to 21, moving them closer to

the continent's most prolific teams in tournament history. Only Cameroon, with 22 goals, and Nigeria, with 23, currently sit ahead of Morocco in the all-time African World Cup scoring rankings. With several matches still to play at the 2026 tournament, Morocco have an opportunity to surpass both nations and establish themselves as Africa's leading scorers on the World Cup stage. Morocco arrived at the tournament carrying the confidence of their historic campaign in Qatar four years ago, where they became the first African and Arab nation to reach a World Cup semi-final before eventually finishing fourth.

Didier Deschamps' news conference at the New Jersey New York Stadium to preview Tuesday's game with Senegal (20:00 BST). Gleizes' mother Sylvie has travelled to the World Cup to highlight her son's case. She told BBC Sport on Monday that his accreditation for the tournament was personally approved by Fifa president Gianni Infantino. She added that her son felt "cut off" from the world. Christophe Gleizes' accreditation for the 2026 World Cup was on display at

## Empty seat at World Cup for imprisoned french sports journalist

the France news conference As well as a seat in the press box, a chair in each France news conference is being left empty to highlight his case. Journalist Vincent Duluc, who works for French daily sports newspaper L'Equipe, asked a question to Deschamps on behalf of Gleizes about hydration breaks on Monday. "I hope for his sake and his family's that he can be here as soon as possible and ask his questions himself," Deschamps replied.