

Petrol: FG, experts, others reject Atiku's subsidy plan

ODINI AMAKA VIVIAN / MARYAM SALISU /
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ABUJA

The Federal Government has rejected calls by former Vice President Atiku Abubakar

for the restoration of petrol subsidy, insisting that there will be no going back on the removal of the subsidy introduced by President Bola Tinubu in 2023.

The government said reversing the policy would

undermine reforms already carried out in the petroleum sector and could create serious legal and fiscal complications for the country.

It also warned that bringing back the subsidy could discourage investment in

domestic refining and undermine the progress being made by major refineries, including the Dangote Refinery and other modular refineries operating across the country.

Reacting to Atiku's pro-

posal to restore petrol subsidy if elected president in 2027, the Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, described the plan as retrogressive, fiscally unsustainable and a product of what he called "despera-

tion to win the presidency." Onanuga said Nigeria's petroleum landscape had changed fundamentally since Tinubu announced the removal of the subsidy,

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Okpebholo effects minor cabinet reshuffle

BENIN CITY

...Celebrates Igbinedion at 92, hails legacy of service, nation-building

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, at the weekend, effected a minor cabinet reshuffle as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen governance, enhance service delivery and promote greater efficiency in the management of state affairs.

In a statement issued by the Secretary to the State Government, Umar Musa Ikhilor, Esq., the exercise involved the redeployment of some commissioners.

According to the announcement, the Commissioner for Water Resources, Hon. (Dr.) Felix Ehigues Akhabue, has been redeployed to the Ministry of

Physical and Urban Development, while Hon. (Barr.) Vincent Osas Uwadiae moved from the Ministry of Physical and Urban Development to the Ministry of Water Resources.

Also affected are Hon. Andrew Momodu, who moved from the Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy to the Minis-

try of Oil and Gas Resources, and Prof. Omorodion I. Ikponmwosa, who moved from the Ministry of Oil and Gas Resources to the Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy.

The affected commissioners were enjoined to bring their wealth of experience and expertise to bear in their respective

new portfolios and remain committed to the present administration's SHINE Agenda for the sustainable development of Edo State.

The redeployment takes immediate effect.

Meanwhile, the Edo State governor, has extolled the Sterling qualities of Chief Dr. Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion, the Esama of Benin

Kingdom, as the distinguished businessman and philanthropist marks his 92nd birthday, recognising his lifelong commitment to using personal success as a vehicle for public good.

In a message to mark the occasion, Governor Okpebholo said: "It is with

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EDO GOVERNOR WINS E-GOVERNANCE AWARD:

The Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo, represented by the Deputy Governor, Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa (3rd right) and the Head of Service, Dr. Anthony Okungbowa (left) receiving an award in recognition of the administration's strides in digital governance at the Nigeria eGovernment Summit held recently in Lagos.

FG pays N1.1bn additional exit benefits to 175 retirees

ABUJA

The Federal Government has begun payment of additional exit benefits to retirees of Treasury-funded Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

The National Pension Commission (PenCom) disclosed in a statement that about N1.1 billion had been paid to 175 retirees who exited the Federal Public Service between Jan. 1 and Aug. 31.

It said the payments were being made under the Federal Government Exit Benefit Scheme (EBS), approved by the Federal Executive Council and effective from Jan. 1.

According to PenCom, the scheme provides additional financial benefits to federal employees at retirement, alongside pension benefits under the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS).

It said federal civil servants who had served for at least 10 years were entitled to an exit benefit equivalent to 100 per cent of their total annual emolument.

PenCom said the commencement of the payment marked a significant development in efforts to provide retirees with additional benefits beyond their Retirement Savings Account (RSA) balances.

It said the 2026 Appropriation provided N32.90 billion for the smooth implementation of the scheme.

"So far, the Federal Government has released N12.3 billion into the dedicated Exit Benefit Scheme Account maintained with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)."

The commission said it was supporting the implementation of the scheme in collaboration with the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation (OHCSF), Office of the Accountant-General of the Fed-

eration (OAGF), Pension Fund Administrators (PFAs) and other stakeholders.

It said the collaboration was aimed at ensuring proper processing, verification and prompt payment of the benefits.

PenCom explained that retirees were required to submit relevant documents, including clearance letters and recent payslips, to their PFAs.

It said the PFAs would verify the records and forward the information to PenCom for further validation and approval.

"Once approved, the Exit Benefit is credited to the retiree's RSA through the PFA, after which the PFA transfers the entire amount to the retiree's designated salary bank account," it said.

The commission emphasised that the payment was an additional benefit and would exist alongside the

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News



Edo Dep Gov hails Igbinedion at 92, says Esama's legacy will endure

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Deputy Governor, Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa, has felicitated the Esama of Benin Kingdom, Chief Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion, on the occasion of his 92nd birthday, describing the renowned businessman, philanthropist and community leader as an enduring symbol of enterprise, service and commitment to humanity.

In a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Friday Agheho, the Deputy Governor congratulated Chief Igbinedion for attaining the remarkable age of 92 in good health and with an enviable record of contributions to the development of

Edo State and Nigeria.

Idahosa noted that the Esama's name has become synonymous with entrepreneurship, philanthropy, education, media, community development and the promotion of Edo's cultural heritage, stressing that his accomplishments over the decades have inspired generations of Nigerians.

According to him, Chief Igbinedion's pioneering investments in the private sector, establishment of institutions and numerous interventions in the lives of individuals and communities have continued to demonstrate the power of vision, resilience and generosity.

The Deputy Governor particularly acknowledged the Esama's role in promoting Benin

and Edo State on the global stage, noting that his remarkable journey from humble beginnings to becoming one of Nigeria's foremost entrepreneurs remains a compelling story of determination and achievement.

"On behalf of my family, the government and people of Edo State, I warmly congratulate our father, the Esama of Benin Kingdom, Chief Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion, on the occasion of his 92nd birthday.

"Your life has been a remarkable testament to vision, enterprise, resilience and service to humanity. Your contributions to education, business, media, philanthropy and community development have left enduring footprints in Edo State and

beyond.

"At 92, you remain a towering personality whose wealth of experience, wisdom and accomplishments continue to inspire generations. We are proud of your contributions to the growth and development of our dear state and Nigeria.

"I pray Almighty God to continue to bless you with sound health, greater wisdom and many more years of fulfilment, so that you may continue to contribute to the progress of our society."

Idahosa further commended Chief Igbinedion for his enduring commitment to the welfare of the people and prayed that his 92nd birthday would mark the beginning of another fruitful chapter in his life.

Edo Govt distributes school materials, motorbikes to boost basic education

MIKE OSARO GIAGBON

BENIN CITY

In a fresh effort to improve learning conditions in public schools, the Edo State Government has distributed school bags, books, shoes and other educational materials to pupils across the state's 18 Local Government Areas.

The intervention, implemented through the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), is aimed at improving access to learning materials and raising the standard of basic education in the state.

Speaking at the flag-off ceremony, SUBEB Chairman, Hon. Ayewoh Ambrose Oyakhilome, commended the state government for what he described as its commitment to transforming public education.

Hon. Oyakhilome said SUBEB would sustain efforts to improve teaching and learning, assuring that the

board remained focused on raising the standard of public primary schools across Edo.

But the intervention went beyond classroom materials, as the government also distributed motorbikes to monitoring officers to strengthen supervision of public schools.

The motorcycles are expected to improve the mobility of monitoring personnel and enable them to reach schools more effectively, particularly those in hard-to-access areas.

The Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Yekini Idaiye Oisayemoje, represented by his Deputy, Hon. Osamwonyi Egbaghehita Atu, also commended the initiative.

Hon. Atu reaffirmed the Assembly's support for government policies aimed at improving the welfare of pupils and creating better learning conditions across the state.

FG, experts, others rejects Atiku's plan

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stressing that the country could not afford to return to a system that placed a heavy burden on public finances.

The Presidency maintained that the reforms were designed to reposition the petroleum sector, encourage domestic refining and reduce the financial pressure associated with subsidising petrol consumption.

The government's position was further supported by the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyelede, who disclosed that the removal of petrol subsidy had generated N15.8 trillion in resources for the federation between June 2023 and December 2025.

According to Oyelede, N5.4 trillion of the amount accrued to the Federal Government, while N10.4 trillion was shared among state and local governments. President Tinubu also criticised Atiku's proposal, describing it as evidence of what he considered a lack of understanding of governance and the economy.

The President made the comment while receiving Osun State Governor Ademola Adeleke at the State House recently, insisting that returning to petrol subsidy would not provide a sustainable solution to the country's economic challenges.

Atiku, who is a major contender for the presidency ahead of the 2027 general election, has promised to restore petrol subsidy if elected, arguing that Nigerians have not enjoyed sufficient benefits from its removal. The former vice president had supported the removal of the subsidy during the 2023 presidential

campaign but has now made its restoration a major part of his proposed economic intervention.

He argued that the funds saved from subsidy removal had not translated into improved living conditions for ordinary Nigerians, particularly in terms of food affordability and purchasing power.

Atiku proposed a new intervention centred on domestic refining, with government support capped, properly budgeted and tied to verifiable production and measurable benefits for consumers.

According to Atiku, every barrel of crude allocated under his proposed arrangement would be targeted and tracked to ensure that Nigerians benefit directly from the intervention.

He maintained that his proposal should not be regarded as a return to the opaque subsidy system of the past but as a controlled mechanism aimed at supporting Nigerian refineries while ensuring that the benefits of cheaper crude feedstock are passed on to consumers.

However, financial expert and President of the Capital Market Academics of Nigeria, Prof. Uche Uwaleke, said the debate should go beyond the immediate attraction of cheaper petrol. Uwaleke said Nigeria should focus on finding the most economically sustainable way to use its limited public resources to improve citizens' welfare over the long term, warning that the old subsidy regime had created opportunities for arbitrage, smuggling, rent-seeking and other sharp practices.



COURTESY VISIT:

Chairman, Edo State Internal Revenue Service, (EIRS), John Osirenimhe Odior, (10th from left) flanked by CITN Vice President, Simon Kato and members of his entourage and EIRS management staff

...Okpebholo effects minor cabinet reshuffle

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immense joy and profound gratitude to Almighty God that I felicitate with you, our esteemed father, illustrious son of Edo State, and distinguished philanthropist, on the joyous occasion of your 92nd birthday."

The Governor described Chief Igbinedion's trajectory spanning business, aviation, education, broadcasting and community infrastructure as a testament to faith, vision and unwavering dedication to uplifting society.

"At 92, we celebrate not merely longevity, but an extraordinary legacy of faith, vision, enterprise, service, and generosity," Governor Okpebholo said of the Edo business icon, whose influence extends well beyond the state into the national development discourse.

For five decades, Igbinedion has channelled resources into education, healthcare infrastructure, community development and humanitarian inter-

ventions – investments which the Governor said reflected a deeper commitment to measuring success beyond personal gain.

Governor Okpebholo stressed that "true greatness is not measured only by what we achieve, but also by the institutions we build, the opportunities we create, the lives we touch, and the positive legacy we leave for generations yet unborn."

The Governor particularly highlighted what he described as Chief Igbinedion's most significant achievement – the breadth of human lives touched across decades.

"The number of lives you

have touched and transformed" represents perhaps his greatest contribution, Governor Okpebholo noted, adding that "as an illustrious and highly respected son of Edo, your contributions to humanity have transcended your immediate community and brought immense honour and distinction to Edo State and Nigeria."

The felicitation also referenced Igbinedion's sustained investments across multiple development sectors, noting that his interventions in education, healthcare, infrastructure, community development, religion, security and hu-

manitarian causes reflected "a deep commitment to using success as an instrument for the advancement of society."

The Governor said that at a time when questions about wealth, responsibility and national development continue to shape public discourse, Igbinedion's example of anchoring business success to education, healthcare and institutional development offered a worthy model.

He concluded by wishing the Esama "continued good health, renewed strength, peace, and many more years of purposeful living."

...FG pays N1.1bn additional exit benefits

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usual retirement benefits drawn from retirees' RSA balances.

PenCom said the maiden payment demonstrated that the scheme had officially begun for retirees of Treasury-funded MDAs.

It noted that subsequent retirees who met the eligibility requirements would be entitled to an additional exit benefit equivalent to 100 per cent of their total annual emolument at retirement.

The commission said the scheme would provide additional financial support to retiring

civil servants and strengthen efforts to improve the financial wellbeing of public service retirees.

It reaffirmed its commitment to working with relevant stakeholders to ensure the smooth implementation of the scheme and prompt payment of exit benefits.

NEWS

2027: Tinubu, Atiku, Obi, 15 others make INEC final Presidential candidates' list

ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has published the final list of presidential candidates and their running mates for the January 2027 general elections.

The list, signed by the Secretary to the Commission, Rose

Oriaran-Anthony, released on Saturday in Abuja, featured candidates sponsored by 18 political parties competing for the office.

The gender distribution of the list showed that out of the 18 presidential flag bearers, 16 are male, representing 88.9 per cent, while two are female.

NAN also reports that the

male contenders on the list include: Bola Tinubu of All Progressives Congress (APC), Abubakar Atiku of African Democratic Congress (ADC), and Peter Obi of Nigerian Democratic Congress (NDC).

Others are: Adewole Adeniyi of Social Democratic Party (SDP), Oluseyi Makinde of Allied People's Movement

(APM), Donald Duke of People's Redemption Party (PRP), Chibuzor Okereke of Labour Party (LP) and Omoyele Sowore of African Action Congress (AAC).

The only two female presidential candidates, which constitute 11.1 per cent of the number, are: Okwori Fredrick of National Democratic Party

(NDP) and Dr Esther Okereke of National Redemption Party (NRM).

The gender statistics of the vice-presidential candidates also shows that a total of 14 running mates are male, representing 77.8 per cent, while only four, representing 22.2 per cent, are female.

The female vice-presidential candidates are: Ofordile Egobia (APP), Abubakar Usaku (DLA), Konto Bintu (LP) and Patience Ndidi (YPP).

NAN reports that the commission also released the final list of candidates for the Senate and the House of Representatives.

NCS begin final recruitment screening of candidates

ABUJA

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has commenced the final phase of its recruitment screening, with shortlisted candidates undergoing documentation, physical fitness assessments and medical screening.

The NCS Spokesperson, Abdullahi Maiwada, who made this known recently, said that the screening was holding at the service's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Gwagwalada, Abuja.

Maiwada said the two-week exercise, which commenced on Monday, would run through Sept. 19 and cover shortlisted applicants for the Assistant Superintendent of Customs II (ASCI), Inspectorate and Customs Assistant cadres.

He said candidates were being screened in batches, arranged alphabetically according to their states of origin, to prevent congestion and ensure an orderly exercise.

Addressing the candidates, Frank Onyeka, Assistant Comptroller-General of Customs in charge of Human Resource Development, said the service was evaluating character and professional conduct alongside physical fitness.

Onyeka congratulated the candidates for reaching the stage and urged them to adhere to the guidelines of the exercise.

"On behalf of the NCS Comptroller-General, Bashir Adeniyi, I congratulate you on reaching this stage.

"I urge you to remain orderly and strictly adhere to

the guidelines.

Beyond physical requirements, your attitude, discipline, and conduct are critical factors in deciding who ultimately joins the service," he said.

He said the NCS was working closely with the Customs Police and other relevant units within the service to safeguard the integrity of the process.

Also speaking, Assistant Comptroller-General of Customs, Dow Gaura, Commandant of the Nigeria Customs Command and Staff College, Gwagwalada, said administrative innovations and inter-agency collaboration had streamlined the exercise.

Gaura said all the activities of the recruitment exercise reflected the policy vision of the Comptroller-General, which emphasised continuous operational improvement, collaboration and innovation.

"The process has been seamless, hitch-free and conducted without any casualties," he said.

The screening for the Assistant Superintendent of Customs (ASC) cadre ended on Thursday, while evaluations for the Inspectorate and Customs Assistant cadres would continue until Sept. 19.

The NCS had announced an annual recruitment cycle and released the final list of 3,852 successful candidates for its 2024/2025 recruitment exercise on Aug. 4.

The exercise received 573,680 applications for 3,852 positions, with 1,275 candidates selected for the Superintendent Cadre, 367 for the Inspectorate Cadre and 2,210 for the Customs Assistant Cadre.



HARVEST:

Children of St Linus Catholic Church, Chika/Aleita, soliciting for members of the church to key in for the fruits of the spirit, during the children harvest in Abuja on Sunday

Adesuwa Ehimuan Appointed TTB National Director of Engagement Edo State

BENIN CITY

Hon Adesuwa Ehimuan, a former aspirant for the Edo State House of Assembly, Oredo East Constituency and immediate past Chairperson, Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), Edo State Chapter, has been appointed National Director of Engagement, Edo State Chapter, Tinubu Torch Bearers (TTB).

Her appointment was contained in a list of National Directors of Engagement approved by the National Woman Leader of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Convener of the Tinubu Torch Bearers, Hon. Dr. Mary Alile Idele, PhD.

The appointment is part of efforts by the Tinubu Torch Bearers to strengthen its engagement structure across Nigeria, deepen grassroots interaction and advance its mobilisation and advocacy ac-

stakeholders and promote grassroots participation.

Her experience in politics, media and women-focused advocacy is expected to contribute to her new role. She previously contested for a seat in the Edo State House of Assembly to represent Oredo-East Constituency and also served as Chairperson of NAWOJ for two term in Edo State Chapter, where she was involved in initiatives focused on women and professional development.

The TTB said the newly appointed directors have been entrusted with the responsibility of fostering meaningful relationships with stakeholders, coordinating engagement activities, amplifying the values of the movement and ensuring that the voice of the people remains central to its activities.

The movement described the appointments as part of a new architecture of engagement aimed at building a structured and people-oriented network capable of

connecting communities, women, youths and other stakeholders across Nigeria.

With her appointment, Hon Adesuwa Ehimuan is expected to lead the TTB's engagement efforts in Edo State while contributing to the movement's broader advocacy for the policies and programmes associated with the Renewed Hope Agenda.

The Tinubu Torch Bearers congratulated the newly appointed directors and charged them to approach their responsibilities with discipline, integrity, humility and a strong commitment to service.

Group screens over 300 beneficiaries for hepatitis, HIV at Kwara orphanages

KWARA

The Advocates for Orphaned Children (AOC) on Saturday screened no fewer than 300 beneficiaries for Hepatitis and HIV/AIDS across orphanages in Kwara.

The free medical exercise

nuel Babalola, explained that the screening is a two-day programme across selected orphanages in the state.

He explained that children and care givers were tested for HIV and Hepatitis, adding that only two results were reactive.

According to him, the initi-

Babalola commended the Kwara Government for the support towards the initiative and life saving intervention for the orphanages.

The Desk Officer of Kwara Viral Hepatitis B, Mrs Bilqees Alaya, noted that the state government has equipped health

baby.

She explained that it was part of safety measures to prevent mothers from having a child that tested positive to Hepatitis B.

She warned against the dangers associated with the viral infection, saying it could dwell

liver cirrhosis and liver cancer.

She applauded the organisers and partners for bringing educational assessment and essential health services closer to children who needed them.

Stakeholders at the screening of children at Kwara orphanages.

Divine John Oshone

AKURE

The Ondo State Government has confirmed that 29 people have died from suspected poisoning linked to the consumption of alcoholic substances in Odigbo Local Government Area of the state.

The state Commissioner for Health, Dr Banji Ajaka, disclosed this while giving an update on the incident in Akure.

According to the commissioner, 60 suspected cases have

29 dead, 60 hospitalised over suspected alcohol poisoning in Ondo

been recorded, with three people currently receiving treatment in hospitals and 27 others under medical observation.

The affected communities include Orita Odigbo, Araromi-Obu, Newtown, Odole, Okele and Oniparaga. Most of those affected are males between the ages of 16 and 55.

Health officials said victims developed symptoms including headache, body pain, weakness, blurred or disturbed vision, difficulty breathing and loss of consciousness.

Ajaka said the pattern of illness and the reported consumption of alcoholic substances had raised strong suspi-

cion that a toxic substance may have been involved. However, he stressed that laboratory tests are still needed to establish the exact cause of the deaths.

The commissioner said 36 blood and urine samples had been collected for laboratory testing, while samples of the suspected alcoholic substanc-

es had also been submitted for toxicological analysis.

He added that several suspects had been taken into custody as authorities investigate the source of the suspected toxic substance.

As part of measures to prevent further deaths, the Ondo State Government has temporarily banned the production and sale of locally brewed alcoholic and alcoholic herbal bev-

erages in Odigbo Local Government Area.

The government has also advised residents to avoid unlicensed alcoholic products and seek medical attention immediately if they experience unusual symptoms after consuming alcohol.

Authorities said investigations are ongoing to determine what caused the deaths and prevent further loss of lives.

**COLLAPSE BUILDING:**

Site of a Four Story Building Collapse at Independence Layout in Enugu Metropolis on Sunda

14.9m housing deficit: REDAN restates commitment to bridge gap

ABUJA

Dr Gbadewole Kayode, the Vice President, Real Estate Development Association of Nigeria (REDAN), Abuja Chapter, says the organisation is committed to bridging the housing deficit in the country.

Kayode, who is the Managing Director of Crown Allied Global Realty Limited, made this known at the official groundbreaking of "The Embassy" an estate in Wasa District of Abuja on Saturday.

He also expressed the determination of his company in ensuring that the deficit in the country is reduced.

According to him, Nigerians are struggling with housing deficit, occasioned by inadequate houses, especially in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

"Officially, we have 14.98 million housing deficit in Nigeria.

"We are committed to reducing the housing deficit in Nigeria, especially in the FCT, and that is why we are doing the groundbreaking of 'The Embassy'.

"We are building 2,400 housing units in this estate and this is the way we are impacting the housing sector.

"We are providing ener-

gy saving, and large volume of houses that will reduce the housing deficit in Nigeria.

"For low income earners, they can make a part payment and spread the rest within the next six months. That is also one of our efforts to address housing deficit.

"We also sell blocks of flats through mortgage. We have Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria and other Primary Mortgage Institutions (PMIs) that provide services for people to get affordable houses," Kayode said.

On job creation, the chief executive officer said over 3,000

jobs would be created in the process of developing "The Embassy."

According to him, one of the objectives of the Federal Government is to provide jobs and generate economic boom through the informal sector.

He explained that, "the way we are going to carry out this project, we are expecting to generate more than 3,000 jobs in this place.

"This is because, for you to build a duplex, you need more than 30 people for the work.

"Now, if you multiply 30 people by 2,400 units, you will know that job creation by

Crown Luxury properties in FCT and Nigeria at large cannot be over emphasised," Kayode said.

He further explained that Crown Luxury properties was very much available to know what customers need.

He added that "they need a distance of within 18, 20 or 15 minutes drive to the city center; they need infrastructure, electricity, solar power, EV charging spot, etc and 'The Embassy' has the advantage.

"So Crown Luxury Properties is developing this place, and the document is very good and authentic.

2027: INEC releases final NASS list of candidates

SALIHU MARYAM SAIDU

ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has released the final list of candidates for the 2027 National Assembly elections, setting the stage for a keen contest for seats in the Senate and House of Representatives.

The final lists, covering the two chambers of the National Assembly, contain 4,408 candidates, according to an analysis of the candidate documents released by the electoral commission.

The figure comprises 1,195 candidates for the Senate and

3,213 candidates for the House of Representatives.

INEC's publication comes as preparations intensify for the 2027 general elections, with the presidential and National Assembly elections scheduled for January 16, 2027. The commission's official election calendar also lists the governorship and State House of Assembly elections for February 6, 2027.

Of the 4,408 candidates, 3,965 are male, while only 443 are female. The Senate list contains 1,080 male candidates and 115 female candidates.

In the House of Representatives, there are 2,885 male candidates and 328 female candidates.

The Allied Peoples Movement (APM) fielded the highest number of female candidates across the Senate and House of Representatives races: 11 for the Senate and 42 for the House of Representatives.

The electoral body on Saturday released its final list of presidential and vice-presidential candidates for Nigeria's 2027 general elections.

The list contained 18 presidential candidates and their running mates across various political parties and was signed by the INEC Secretary, Rose Oriaran-Anthony.

Among those on the list are President Bola Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress

Prof. Esogbue hails Miss Earths , Nigeria 2026, model of the year winner

Ajuwa Victor

ASABA

The Diokpa of Umuafene in Isieke, Ibusa, Delta State, Prof. Emeritus, Augustine Onwuyali Esogbue ((NNOM), has thumb-up pretty Miss Merylin Ifesinachi Ajidua on her emergence as winner of Miss Earth, Nigeria 2026 Model of the Year.

The grand finale of the Miss Earth Nigeria beauty pageant was concluded in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, over the weekend.

The Nigerian-born engineer, and Professor Emeritus of the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech), described, as the world's first Black Ph.D holder in industrial engineering, expressed delight at the achievement of Merylin in overwhelming her contenders in the keenly

contested Miss Earth Beauty pageant.

Prof. Esogbue was particularly delighted that a daughter of the clan had attained such a remarkable accomplishment, while noting that her achievement reflects the greatness and potential of the people.

"For our young Queen, I am behind her in her wholesome global pursuits," He assured. Born to Umuafene parents in Isieke, Ibusa, Miss Merylin Ifesinachi Ajidua is a student of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling at the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Merylin Ajidua, in a telephone conversation, described her experience as a beautiful mix of excitement, challenges, growth and unforgettable memories.

Stakeholders react as Abuja filling stations increase petrol pump prices

ABUJA

Many filling stations across the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) have continued to increase the pump price of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), popularly known as petrol.

The latest adjustment followed an N85 increase in Dangote Petroleum Refinery's gantry price, from N1,265 to N1,350 per litre, amid a surge in global crude oil prices.

This represents a 6.7 per cent increase and takes the refinery's wholesale price above the current petrol landing cost of N1,311 per litre.

Bent crude, the benchmark for Nigeria's oil, was trading at about 107.92 dollars per barrel, and now to 108.21 dollars per barrel. The increase has intensified pressure on downstream operators and triggered further adjustments in petrol prices across the FCT.

The implication is that motorists could face higher prices at filling stations in the coming weeks, higher cost of transportation and more financial burden on households.

Checks by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Sunday in Abuja showed that some filling stations had started adjusting their petrol prices upward, with motorists paying more for the product.

NAN observed that MRS

retail outlets increased pump price from N1,350 to N1,395 per litre, while NIPCO retail outlets raised pump price from N1,350 to N1,430 per litre.

Mobil outlets also increased from N1,350 to N1,400 per litre.

A petrol attendant at an MRS filling station, who pleaded anonymity, said the price of fuel could increase further from tomorrow.

"We are currently selling our old stock at N1,395 per litre, but from tomorrow, once the new stock arrives, the price will be higher," she said.

Dr Aliyu Ilias, an economist and development expert, said the latest increase in petrol prices could worsen inflation and deepen economic hardship for Nigerians.

Ilias said the increase in petrol prices would likely translate into higher transportation and production costs, particularly for food and other essential commodities.

"I think there should be a way of absorbing these costs. If you do not absorb them, they will show up in our next inflation figures and economic analysis.

"The more prices increase, the more the cost of producing goods, especially food, will rise because everything is affected by transportation costs.

"This kind of change is not good for the economy at all, and people are going to face more hardship as a result," he said.

NEWS

EDSCIA commends Gov Okpebholo for creating Islamic affairs office, congratulates SA

Hameed Braimah

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Council for Islamic Affairs (EDSCIA) has commended Governor Monday Okpebholo, for creating the office of the Special Adviser to the Governor on Islamic Religious Matters and the appointment of Alhaji Ahmed Musa Momoh as the pioneer Special Adviser. Chairman of EDSCIA, Alhaji Abdul-Aziz Igbinidu gave the commendation when he led other Council members on a

courtesy visit to the Special Adviser in his office, Block C, State Secretariat Building, Benin City. While congratulating the SA on his appointment, the chairman described it as a significant development for the Muslim community in Edo State and an opportunity to strengthen constructive engagement between the state government and the Muslim Ummah. Igbinidu assuring him of the Council's readiness to work closely with his office in promoting peace, unity,

religious harmony and peaceful coexistence, while also advancing Islamic activities and development across the state. The Council Chairman further expressed the appreciation of the Muslim community in Edo State to Governor Okpebholo for creating the office, noting

that the initiative provides an important platform for meaningful communication, consultation and collaboration between the government and the Muslim community. According to him, the establishment of the office demonstrates a willingness by the Governor to strengthening the relationship between

the government and Islamic organisations and communities across Edo State, while ensuring matters concerning Islamic religion receive appropriate attention.

He expressed confidence that the Special Adviser would discharge his responsibilities with wisdom, integrity, diligence and a deep sense of service, adding that the Council was prepared to provide the necessary cooperation

within its capacity to support initiatives that would benefit the Muslim Ummah and the wider Edo State.

Responding, Alhaji Ahmed Musa Momoh, Special Adviser to the Governor on Islamic Religious Matters, expressed appreciation for the visit and the goodwill extended.

He pledged to work towards promoting initiatives towards the development of Islam across Edo State.

2027: INEC releases final list of 122 Ondo national assembly candidates

AKURE

The Independent National Electoral Commission in Ondo State has released the final list of 122 National Assembly candidates and their political parties for the 2027 general elections.

INEC's Head of the Voter Education and Publicity Department in the state, Ogunseye Olayinka, made this known in a statement on behalf of the INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner, Dr Mutiu Agboke, on Sunday in Akure.

Olayinka said the names of 18 presidential candidates and their political parties were also published.

He also said the publication was in strict compliance with the commission's approved timetable and schedule of activities for the 2027 general elections.

The head of department called on the general public, political parties, candidates and all stakeholders to visit INEC offices across the state to view the list.

"31 names with the political parties have been published for the senatorial districts with 91 names for House of Representatives as the final list of candidates for the 2027 National Assembly Elections in Ondo State.

"As scheduled, Sept. 12 was fixed as the last day for the publication of the final list of candidates for the Presidential and National Assembly Elections.

"In fulfilment of this timeline, the commission has on this day, forwarded and published the final list of candidates for these elections, pursuant to Section 32(1) of the Electoral Act, 2026.

"This milestone marks a significant step in the commission's preparations towards the 2027 Presidential and National Assembly Elections scheduled to hold in January 2027.

"It also reaffirms INEC's unwavering commitment to transparency, credibility and strict adherence to the electoral timetable in the build-up to the elections," he said.



COURTESY VISIT:

Chairman of the Edo State Council for Islamic Affairs (EDSCIA), Alhaji Abdul-Azeez Igbinidu, (5th L), Special Adviser to the Governor on Islamic Religious Matters, Alhaji (Hon.) Ahmed Musa Momoh (5th R) flanked by members of the Council and other dignitaries during the courtesy visit to the SA at his office in Benin City.

Omoike seeks Otaru's support to tackle drug abuse, insecurity in Etsako West ...pledges equitable development

LAMAI CASSIUS

AUCHI

The Executive Chairman of Etsako West Local Government Council, *Hon. Romeo Aloaye Omoike*, has solicited the support and partnership of the Otaru of Auchi Sacred Kingdom, HRM Alhaji H.A. Momoh, Ikelebe III, and his Traditional Council in tackling illicit drug

use, insecurity, and poor environmental sanitation in the local government area.

Hon. Omoike made the appeal during a courtesy visit to the Otaru at his palace in Auchi.

He expressed appreciation to the monarch and members of the traditional council for their "overwhelming support and prayers" before, during and after the election.

According to him, the success of his administration would depend on the collective efforts of traditional rulers, community leaders and other stakeholders.

A major focus of the visit was the administration's plan to confront the growing menace of illicit drug use in communities across Etsako West.

The Chairman said his administration would begin with a "period of grace" to educate, counsel and rebuke those involved in the illicit drug trade.

He explained that the approach was aimed at giving offenders the opportunity to desist, while protecting youths and safeguarding the social fabric of the communities.

"We believe in correction before coercion. We will first engage, educate and counsel. But we will not allow the future of our youths to be destroyed", he said.

Hon. Omoike also pledged closer collaboration with the traditional institution in the areas of public sanitation, protection of government property and security.

He assured the Otaru

that his administration would pursue an equitable development agenda across Etsako West, irrespective of community or location.

"The cooperation and support of traditional institutions will be critical to achieving meaningful grassroots development", he added.

Responding, the Otaru thanked the Executive Chairman for the visit and acknowledged the activities already initiated by the administration within its first week in office.

The monarch commended Omoike for the early steps taken to address issues affecting the people, and pledged the support of the Auchi community and existing administrative structures to the local government.

"The traditional institution will provide the necessary cooperation to enable this administration to deliver the expected transformation to the people at the grassroots", HRM Momoh said.

The Otaru also called for sustained cooperation between the local government and traditional institutions in addressing security, sanitation and other challenges confronting the communities.

Post-election crisis tears Osun APC apart

OSHOGBO

The defeat of the All Progressives Congress in the August 15 Osun governorship election has exposed deep divisions within the party, with its leaders trading blame over what went wrong, Ismaeel Uthman writes

The August 15 governorship election defeat has plunged the Osun State chapter of the All Progressives Congress into a fresh crisis, with party leaders and supporters trading accusations over who should

take responsibility for the loss.

Since Governor Ademola Adeleke was declared winner of the election, after polling 511,067 votes against Oyebamiji's 444,815, the battle for blame has spilled onto social media and the pages of national newspapers, with supporters of opposing camps accusing one another of sabotaging the party's chances.

While some party members are seeking the removal of the Minister of Marine and Blue Economy, Adegboyega Oyetola, as the leader of the APC in Osun, accusing

him of contributing to the party's defeat, supporters of the former governor have hit back, blaming the National Secretary of the APC, Ajibola Basiru, and his predecessor, Iyiola Omisore, for working against the party's interest for their 2030 governorship ambitions.

Those who blamed Oyetola said the imposition of the APC governorship candidate, Bola Oyebamiji, on the party was a major flaw in Oyetola's leadership.

The critics also cited "lopsided" federal appointments and the facilitation of national

and state assembly tickets favouring only the minister's tendency.

Besides, the critics lamented that the people's resentment towards Oyetola also affected the party's poor performance at the election, despite the billions of naira spent on the poll.

But apart from his background role, Oyetola did not openly campaign for Oyebamiji. His abstinence from the campaign was part of the strategy to disconnect Oyebamiji's candidature from the minister, according to some officials of the party.

NDLEA seizes UK-bound cannabis, drugs hidden in bread, speakers

LAGOS

Operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency have intercepted two shipments of synthetic cannabis, popularly known as Colorado, weighing 44.45kg in consolidated cargoes from the United Kingdom. The NDLEA also recovered

two consignments of the substance concealed in music speakers at two motor parks in Lagos, with at least seven suspects linked to the seized consignments arrested.

The agency disclosed this in a statement issued on Sunday by its Director, Media and Advocacy, Femi Babafemi. "At the import shed of the Murtala Muhammed Inter-

national Airport (MMIA), Ikeja Lagos, NDLEA operatives intercepted a UK-in-bound consignment concealing 27 parcels of colos weighing 32.20kg, while a real estate agent Abideen Jide Salami, who showed up with a secret collection code relayed from his UK-based brother to collect a large luggage containing the illicit substance was arrested on Wednesday 9th September 2026," the statement read.

"A follow-up operation stem-

ming from a second UK consignment led operatives to the designated recipient of another consignment of Colorado weighing 12.25kg.

"The suspect Nurudeen Abiodun Kadiri, 44, said the consignment was sent to him by his brother in the UK." Meanwhile, operatives of the Directorate of Operations and General Investigation intercepted a music speaker rigged with three packs of Colorado at a motor park in Maza-Maza, Lagos.

The consignment was re-

portedly headed to Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and ultimately Liberia.

A tour agent, Ifeanyi Obed Augustine, 41, and the owner of the consignment, Obasi Ugochukwu, 46, were arrested after a sting operation at a nearby eatery, according to the NDLEA.

In a separate operation at Iddo Park, the agency said a suspect, Ifeanyi Nwokolo Henry, was arrested on Friday, September 11, while attempting to dispatch 2.1kg of Colorado to Kano.

In Delta State, two separate arrests in Ughelli and Asaba led to the recovery of ampoules of pentazocine injection, codeine syrup, tramadol, diazepam, flunitrazepam, also known as Hypnox, and MDMA, popularly known as Molly.

Several of the substances were concealed in music speakers, while two suspects, Emeka Oji and Chukwuebuka Anedi, were arrested.

In Kano, a raid in Sabon Gari led to the arrest of 20-year-old Saidu Adamu with 785,000 capsules of pregabalin weighing 669.425kg. A stop-and-search operation along the Zaria-Kano-Hadejia Road also led to the seizure of 1,700 tablets of diazepam concealed in loaves of bread from a suspect, Habibu Sabitu, 28.

The NDLEA also said it destroyed 4,832.56kg of skunk, a form of cannabis, on farms at Usen Forest, Igwe-Oke Forest and Ogboha Forest in Ovia South-West, Owan East and Owan West Local Government Areas of Edo State.

A suspect, 39-year-old Sunday Segun, was arrested on Friday, September 11, during

the operation.

In Ondo State, NDLEA officers acting on intelligence raided a residence along Oke-Iya, Ijoka Road, Akure, on Wednesday, September 9. The officers recovered 186kg of skunk concealed in the boot of a Toyota Avalon car with registration number ABJ 917 FV.

A 58-year-old suspect, Paul Ogbuwala, was arrested and allegedly planning to move the consignment to Jos for onward distribution, the agency said.

In Kaduna State, a female suspect, Hannah Michael, was arrested at Gonin Gora with 369.6kg of cannabis.

In Bayelsa State, four suspects, including 70-year-old Godwoman Gboriye, were arrested at Ovom, Yenagoa, with 110 bags of cannabis weighing 876kg.

The other suspects were identified as Motombo Silver, 44; Pere Andrew, 39; and Keme Andrew, 43.

The agency also said its commands and formations across the country continued their War Against Drug Abuse sensitisation activities in schools, worship centres, workplaces and communities during the week.

The activities included a WADA enlightenment lecture for students and staff of Mezube Islamiyya Academy, Tudun Wada, Kano; an advocacy visit to the management of Cross River State College of Health Technology, Calabar; and a visit by Rikkos traditional rulers to the NDLEA Academy in Jos. The Zone 4 Command also paid a WADA advocacy visit to the Emir of Keffi, Alhaji Shehu Chindo Yamusa III, in Nasarawa State.



VISIT:

Former President, Goodluck Jonathan signing a condolence register, during his visit to the late former Aso Rock Chaplain, Rev. William Okoye's residence in Abuja.

Police probe officer over shooting of seven-year-old boy in A'lbom

UYO

The Akwa Ibom State Police Command has detained a police officer identified as Monday Okonta and commenced an investigation after a seven-year-old boy was injured during a stop-and-search operation in Uyo, the state capital.

This was contained in a statement signed and released by the command's Police Public Relations Officer, Timfon John, which was

made available to newsmen on Sunday in Uyo.

According to the command, the incident occurred on Friday, September 11, 2026, at about 9:30 pm, along Abak Road in Uyo, involving personnel of the Quick Response Squad.

John said the police were on routine stop-and-search duty and later stopped a vehicle conveying members of a family.

She explained that during the encounter, a smoke pistol was discharged by one of the officers, resulting in an injury to the left hand of the boy who was inside the vehicle.

The statement read, "The Commissioner of Police, Akwa Ibom State Command, CP Baba Mohammed, has ordered an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into an incident involving personnel of the Quick Response Squad (QRS), during which a seven-year-old child sustained an injury along Abak Road, Uyo, on 11th September, 2026.

"Preliminary information available to the Command indicates that at about 2130hrs, police personnel conducting a routine stop-and-search operation along

Abak Road stopped a vehicle conveying members of a family.

"It was alleged that during the encounter, a smoke pistol was discharged by one of the officers, resulting in an injury to the left hand of a seven-year-old boy who was inside the vehicle," the statement partly read.

The command's PPRO, while expressing concern over the incident, added that the Commissioner of Police, Baba Azare, has assured the family that the command would establish the full circumstances surrounding the matter.

Police arrest 'fake doctor' over unauthorised hernia surgery in C'River

CALABAR

Operatives of the Cross River State Police Command have arrested a 33-year-old man, Otu Bassey, for allegedly posing as a doctor and performing an unauthorised hernia surgery on a 60-year-old man in Ekorri, Yakurr Local Government Area of the state.

The Command's Police Public Relations Officer, Sunday Eitokpah, who confirmed the incident in a statement made available to journalists on Sunday in Calabar, the state capital, said the incident oc-

curred at a private clinic in Ekorri after the patient, identified simply as Ukpan, reportedly developed complications following the procedure.

Eitokpah said the alleged surgery was carried out on September 8, 2026, and the patient was discharged the same day, adding that three days later, on September 11, 2026, at about 4 pm, the patient's condition worsened and he was taken to Ugep General Hospital by the suspect.

The statement read, "The Cross River State Police Command has commenced an investigation into the circumstances

surrounding an alleged unauthorised hernia surgery performed on Ukpan, surname withheld, 'm', 60 years, at a private clinic in Ekorri, Yakurr Local Government Area, after the patient reportedly developed complications following the procedure.

"Preliminary information indicates that the patient underwent the procedure on September 8, 2026 and was discharged the same day. On September 11, 2026, at about 4 pm, he was reportedly taken to Ugep General Hospital by Bassey Otu Bassey, 'M', 33 years, following the reported com-

plications," the statement said. The statement further said chaos started at about 9 pm when the patient's family members, suspicious of the suspect's qualifications, attempted to attack him at the hospital.

The command's PPRO said the police officers on duty swiftly intervened, prevented the mob action and moved the suspect to protective custody at the Ugep Police Division, adding that the command proceeded to verify the suspect's professional status and qualifications.

Army confirms abduction of six Islamic scholars in Zamfara

GUSAU

The Nigerian Army has confirmed the abduction of some Islamic scholars in zamfara state, while debunking reports that the clerics were kidnapped at the residence of former governor of the state, Abdul'aziz yari, in talata mafara local government area.

The army said the victims were abducted while travelling from the sububu forest axis in bakura local government area to talata mafara.

This was contained in a statement issued on Sunday by the acting deputy director, army public relations, 8 division, Nigerian Army/Sector 2, operation fansan yamma, lieutenant colonel olaniyi oso-ba.

The statement, titled "situation report on abduction of Islamic scholars in zamfara state," described reports that the clerics were abducted at yari's residence as misleading.

it read, "we wish to categorically refute the claim and set the record straight that no cleric was abducted at senator yari's residence."

The army added, "intelligence reports confirm that some persons were abducted while travelling from sububu forest axis within bakura local government area en route to talata mafara."

As reported by daily trust, six juma'at imams were abducted by suspected bandits while travelling to talata mafara to attend a special prayer session organised for peace and the success of president Bola Tinubu's 2027 re-election bid.

The newspaper reported that the clerics were abducted about three kilometres from damri village, at gidan suleiman bature in gonar sarkin forest.

The zamfara state police command also confirmed the incident, with its spokesperson, DSP Yazid Abubakar, telling daily trust that six imams were abducted.

GRACE IJEOMA UMEH

"Her name is not statistic: The women rewriting Nigeria's economy from the market"



Wuse market, Abuja

It is 4:45am in Wuse Market, Abuja. The city is still dark but the market is already awake. Women are dragging wheelbarrows, arranging trays of pepper, shouting prices across narrow lanes. The sound of generators mixes with prayer and gossip.

Amina Bello, 38, has been coming here for 15 years. She sells bags of rice and beans. She feeds 7 people. She pays school fees for 3. She also pays market dues, union dues, security levy, and sanitation levy every single week. She has never been to a bank. She has never filled a government form. But she moves over N2 million worth of food every month.

Amina is not in GDP reports. She is not in the budget speech. Yet without women like her, Nigeria does not eat.

This is the story Nigeria keeps ignoring. The story of women in the informal economy. Not CEOs. Not ministers. Just women who wake before dawn and carry the weight of homes, communities, and the entire food system on their heads.

The National Bureau of Statistics says 80 percent of Nigerian workers are informal. Women make up about 60 percent of that. That means 6 out of every 10 people hustling without contracts, without pensions, without safety nets are women. From Kano to Calabar, from Onitsha to Sokoto, the pattern is the same.

They process garri in Benue. They fry akara in Port Harcourt. They sew uniforms in Aba. They run POS shops in villages where banks don't exist. They are hairdressers, caterers, petty traders, and transporters. The informal econo-

my is estimated to contribute 65 percent of Nigeria's GDP. Yet in policy, it is treated like a problem to be formalized away, not an engine to be powered.

Dr. Nkiru Nwagbo, an economist who has studied women's work for 20 years, says we have it backwards. "We keep looking for foreign investors to save us. But the real investors are already here. They invest their bodies, their time, and their last kobo every day. The woman selling tomatoes is the stimulus package."

Follow Amina for one day and you

see why. She wakes at 3am. Prays. Takes two buses to the market. By 6am she has bought rice from wholesalers with money borrowed at 10 percent interest from the market association. By noon the sun is punishing and there is no shade. By 4pm she has made N12,000 profit on a good day. From that she pays transport, levies, her assistants, and food. The rest goes to rent and school fees. She gets home at 9pm. Cooks. Washes. Checks homework. Then sleeps for 5 hours and does it again.

"Government does not know I exist,"

she says, wiping her face with her wrapper. "But if I don't open tomorrow, people will go hungry."

Her story is not unique. In Edo, women run palm oil processing centers. In Lagos, women control the entire chain from Mile 12 to restaurants. In Kano, women operate grinding machines that feed whole neighborhoods.

The cost of this invisibility is heavy. There is no maternity leave. If a woman has a baby, her income stops. There is no health insurance. If she falls sick, the business dies. There is harassment. Market touts, local government officials, and police demand money daily. "They call it levy," a trader in Oshodi told me. "But it is extortion."

There is also no access to credit. Banks ask for CAC, collateral, and BVN. Most market women don't have those. So they borrow from money lenders at 20 to 30 percent interest. And there is the double burden. A man closes shop and goes home. A woman closes shop and starts a second shift at home. Many girls are pulled out of school to help their mothers, repeating the cycle.

Government has tried to intervene. TraderMoni gave N10,000. SMEDAN

has grants. NIRSAL has agri-loans. But the gap between Abuja and the market is wide. A 2025 survey by Women in Business found that only 18 percent of informal women knew about these programs. Most who applied were rejected for paperwork they didn't have. "The forms are online," a tailor in Benin said. "I don't have data. Who will help me?" Even when money comes, N10,000 cannot stock a shop. And repayment starts whether business is good or not.

Despite this, women are organizing themselves. In Edo, cooperatives pooled money to buy cold rooms and grinding machines. They sell in bulk and share profits. In Kano, women moved to POS and transfers to avoid robbery. In Benue, women-led centers turn cassava into flour for export and employ 20 women each. In Lagos, market associations negotiated for toilets and security.

They are not waiting. They are building.

Economists have a saying: when a woman earns, 90 percent goes back to the family. That is true for Amina. Her profit pays WAEC, hospital bills, food, and rent. Yet budgets for agriculture go to big farms. Budgets for trade go to importers.

Iyaloja General of Lagos, Folashade Tinubu-Ojo, said it plainly. "We are invisible in GDP but visible in the market. Any policy that ignores market women will fail."

With 2027 approaching, politicians are suddenly in the market. They take pictures at Wuse, Mile 12, Ariaria. They promise new markets and lower levies. Women groups are pushing back. NAWOJ, FOMWAN, and market associations want candidates to sign a "Women's Economic Charter" They are asking for gender-responsive budgeting, single-digit loans, markets with water and light, and women in economic planning.

"Don't come and take pictures and disappear," a market leader in Ibadan told a candidate. "Tell us how you will make our work easier."

Prof. Nwagbo believes women will decide the next election. "Women are the majority of voters. They are also the majority of the economy. Any party that ignores them will lose."

What must change is simple. Formalize the informal without killing it. Bring services to where women are. Mobile banking at the market. Health insurance at the motor park. Training that does not require a laptop. If 10 million women can access cooperatives, credit, and markets, poverty can be cut in half in five years.

Back in Wuse, it is 7pm. Amina is packing up. "All I want is light so I can sell late. A safe place to save money. And health insurance so if I'm sick, I won't close." She laughs. "Government should just see us. We are here. We are working."

Nigeria's economy does not run on oil alone. It runs on women like Amina. They wake before dawn. They carry the market. They feed families and keep communities alive without contracts, without safety nets, without recognition.

The informal economy is not a problem. It is the solution we have not supported. Until Nigeria sees the women holding it up, growth will remain incomplete.

As Amina lifted her last bag, she said: "We are not begging. We are building. Just give us the tools."

My honourable chairman, sir!

KWEMEZI NDIDI

It was after the 2012 governorship election. I had been part of the media team of General Charles Airhiavbere, the PDP candidate at the time, through the recommendation of my boss, Hon. Chris Nehikhare.

After the election, my boss reached out to me and said, "Come and see me at this address. I have a job for you."

As was the case with me in those days, I carried my laptop bag and off I went.

When I arrived at the address, I was amused to discover that it was the residence of Chief Dan Osi Orbih.

My boss introduced me to him and spoke about the work I had done during the campaign. Chairman, as he was fondly called, listened, gave me a brief on what he wanted me to do, and then told me to sit at the dining table and get to work.

Little did I know that moment would become the beginning of a relationship that would profoundly shape my life.

From that day, I became part of his media team throughout his tenure as the PDP Chairman in Edo State. I was part of virtually every campaign he was involved in.

But it became much more than a job. His house became home to me.

During that period, I could confidently say I was the first person Chairman saw in the morning and, many times, the last person he saw before going to bed because I would stay back at his house, working.

And throughout all of this, Chairman never treated me like a stranger.

He treated me like his own son.

At the time, I was still in school, and Chairman would always ask about my studies. He encouraged me to take my education seriously. Beyond the work, he was interested in the person I was

becoming.

There are many things people say about politicians. You hear stories about politicians using people, exploiting their loyalty and discarding them when they are no longer useful.

But my experience with Chairman was different.

The trust I have in politicians was, in many ways, shaped by him.

Chairman did not just reward my effort; many times, when he was impressed with my work, he would give me far beyond what I charged.

That was the kind of person he was to me.

Even after his tenure as PDP Chairman in Edo State ended and he moved further into national politics, Chairman remained accessible.

He answered my calls.

He responded to my messages.

And even when he was busy, he would simply say, "I'm in a meeting. I will call you back."

And you could trust that he would.

Chairman always called back.

I remember my wedding.

Chairman did not just attend; he supported me financially, even at a time when he himself was dealing with significant challenges.

On the wedding day, I was still in church when I received a call that Chairman and his team were already at the reception venue.

By the time we eventually arrived, I was told Chairman had left.

I immediately called him to apologise for not being there when he came.

His response was classic Chairman:

"That's not an issue. I quickly went to another event. I'm coming back for you."

And to my surprise, Chairman came back.

He returned to my wedding reception and sat through the reception.

That gesture meant so much to me.

Because it wasn't just about attending a wedding.

It was about showing up for someone he considered his own.

My Honourable Chairman, Sir!

I remember those sleepless nights.

I remember the countless hours we spent working.

I remember the videos we worked on together.

I remember your encouraging words.

I remember your fatherly love.

I remember how you made a young man who was still finding his feet feel valued, trusted and important.

You gave me an experience of leadership that went beyond politics.

You taught me, by your actions, that leadership could be humane.

That power could come with kindness.

That success did not have to make a person inaccessible.

And that when you believe in someone, you can change the trajectory of that person's life simply by giving them an opportunity and treating them with dignity.

Looking back now, I realise that what started as a simple instruction to "sit at the dining table and work" became one of the most significant relationships of my life.

I came with a laptop bag.

I thought I was going for a job.

I did not know I was walking into a home, into a family, and into a relationship that would leave an indelible mark on my life.

Chairman, thank you.

Thank you for the opportunities.

Thank you for the trust.

Thank you for the encouragement.

Thank you for the fatherly love.

Thank you for always showing up.

Thank you for being Chairman.

But, most importantly, thank you for being you to me.

My Honourable Chairman, Sir, I will always remember those days at that dining table.

I will always remember the sleepless nights.

I will always remember your voice, your encouragement and your kindness.

And I will always be grateful that our paths crossed.

You were not just a Chairman to me.

You were a father, a mentor, a boss, and a friend.

And for that, I will forever be grateful.

**KWEMEZI NDIDI is a Media/Entertainment consultant*



Dan Orbih

Iran war reshapes Brics ties but also exposes divisions

This weekend, some of the most powerful people in the world gathered in Delhi around a vast circular table.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that together, the leaders next to him should increasingly become "rule-shapers", not "rule-takers".

Among those listening were members of the Brics group, including Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian, Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa.

These are hardly natural allies. They have histories of border disputes and even military confrontations.

India and China engaged in a deadly clash along their disputed border in 2020. Iran and the UAE have been on opposing ends of the war in the Middle East, with Tehran launching missiles and drones at its fellow Brics member as the conflict sent shockwaves across global economies.

The fact that India was able to gather these leaders together in person is a feat in and of itself and testament to its diplomatic reach. The weekend also provided a platform for countries to reassess their relationships in light of the Iran war.

But agreeing on what a new global order should look like and achieving clear, tangible outcomes was a much harder task, and that tension ran through this weekend's summit.

A counterweight to Western influence

For members such as China, Russia and Iran, Brics offers a vehicle to dilute the influence of the US and western Europe.

But India has been reluctant to cast Brics as an anti-Western bloc. Modi himself said at

the summit that the group is "not against anyone".

That distinction matters for Delhi, which wants to preserve its relationships with nations at odds with each other.

"There are countries in the grouping which would like it to become anti-western, but it is not that," says Anil Trigunayat, a veteran Indian diplomat and former ambassador. What India has achieved, in his view, is a push for "strategic autonomy in an era of war" and initiatives to "enhance greater collaboration amongst themselves".

Inside the joint declaration The summit succeeded in delivering a joint declaration when divisions among members have rarely been so glaring.

Twice earlier this year, meetings between Brics ministers had failed to produce a joint statement. This time a consensus was reached, but by side-stepping issues that members sharply disagree on, with few solutions.

The "New Delhi Declaration" was adopted on the first day of the summit. But what is striking is what it doesn't say.

On the war in the Middle East, the declaration urges "maximum restraint". It also condemns "attacks on civilian infrastructure and peaceful nuclear facilities" but assigns no blame.

It reiterates support for a two-state solution, opposes forced displacement of Palestinians or actions that could "legitimise or prolong occupation", framing it carefully around existing UN resolutions.

It makes no mention at all of Russia's war in Ukraine, a departure from previous Brics declarations.

There is similar caution on trade. It lists concerns over "indiscriminate rising tariffs" and condemns unilateral sanctions but stops short of naming the US, and is likely to avoid Washington's ire.

Trump shadow looms large over Brics as Modi hosts Putin and Xi in Delhi

Several Brics members would have been loath to draw President Donald Trump's anger, as he has previously called the group's proposals, including potentially linking central-bank digital currencies for cross-border trade, "anti-American".

"Not mentioning any country by name, even as they condemned the conflict in the Middle East, bears the hallmark of India," says Praveen Donthi, senior analyst at the International Crisis Group.

"I was pleasantly surprised that there was a strong reference to tariffs, because India could have wanted to be less direct about it, but perhaps this

was a chance to convey their displeasure," he added.

In the wake of Trump's trade threats and the shock of the war in the Middle East, reshaping the global order has become a vital need for many member economies.

What the summit did provide is a platform for meetings that seemed hard to imagine just a few months ago.

Iran's Pezeshkian and Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince sat down for talks together - the highest-level face-to-face meeting known between the two countries since the war began.

This weekend offered Tehran a chance to show that it does not stand alone amid the US and Israel's military attacks and economic pressure.



Russian President Vladimir Putin, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping pose for a photo at the Brics summit in Delhi

Six dead, 130 missing after Indonesian ferry capsizes in Java Sea

Six people have died and 107 have been rescued from a capsized Indonesian passenger ferry in the Java Sea, authorities have said.

Another 130 people are still missing after contact was lost with the Virgo Transport8 ship, as it encountered bad weather.

The ferry was travelling from Surabaya to the South Kalimantan city of Banjarmasin and was last reported to be about 150km (93 miles) south of Banjarmasin around 02:00 on Sunday (18:00 GMT on Saturday).

Ships and a helicopter have been deployed to the scene, with 280 personnel taking part in a search and rescue operation. All vessels in the area of the Java Sea have been alerted to report any signs of passengers.

There were 213 passengers and 30 crew members on board the 390ft (119m) ferry.

The ship left Surabaya at 10:33 on Saturday and was scheduled to arrive in Banjarmasin on Sunday at 14:00, according to data from two maritime monitoring sites. Authorities received the initial distress report at 04:10.

A joint task force involving Indonesia's search and rescue agency, navy, maritime police and other parties has been set up for the rescue effort.

"They flew there initially, but for the return journey they wanted to try travelling by ship," she told BBC Indonesia.

As of Sunday afternoon local time, Rusmilawati said she had not received any information

from officials about whether her relatives had been rescued.

The family last heard from one of the relatives through a WhatsApp status update. In the post, the relative wrote: "The waves are really frightening tonight. Or is this just what it's normally like travelling by ship, rocking and crashing against the waves?"

"Hopefully they're safe," Rusmilawati said.

Family members of the victims wait to hear news about

their loved ones at Trisakti Port.

Meanwhile, Misnah broke down in tears after learning that her husband, Ahmad Supandi, had survived.

Ahmad, a freight driver, had been aboard Virgo Transport 8 and was later rescued by the vessel MV Haida.

At Tanjung Perak Port in Surabaya, relatives of crew members have also been seeking information about their loved ones.

One relative, Fredy, said his youngest sibling, Stevie Manuhua, worked aboard the vessel as a keyboard player, entertaining

passengers.

"We spoke two days ago when the ship was docked in Surabaya. After that, there was no news until now," Fredy said.

He said he had still not received any information about his sibling's whereabouts.

The Indonesian archipelago has more than 17,000 islands and ferries are a common form of transport.

But marine transport accidents are not uncommon. Government data show that 111 ship accidents were recorded between 2020 and 2026.

Fire at nursing home in Chile kills 16 residents

At least 16 elderly residents have died in a fire at a nursing home in Chile, according to authorities.

Ten others were evacuated after a blaze broke out at El Edén home in /idt2/d9cfcc9a-2842-463f-a4d8-4dd007ef9547, around 640km (400 miles) south of the capital Santiago, on Friday evening.

Jorge Granada, a prosecutor leading the case, said it was not clear at this stage what caused the incident.

Chile's President José Antonio Kast said he had ordered a review into the condition of nursing homes across the country.

"We will fully collaborate with the justice system to clarify what happened, determine where failures may have existed in oversight or prevention,

identify what alerts were raised and what actions were taken in response to them," Kast said.

"We need to know the truth and, based on that, correct whatever is necessary to do everything possible to prevent a tragedy like this from happening again," the president added.

The fire, which began at around 22:30 (01:30 GMT) was finally put out on Saturday morning.

On Saturday, firefighters were still clearing debris and removing collapsed corrugated metal roofing. Police cordoned off the area for safety.

"It is a situation that fills our souls with great sorrow and pain. We have been... providing support to the families," said local mayor Jacqueline Romero.

Trump doubles down on United Ireland comments on day two of visit

President Donald Trump has doubled down on his support for a united Ireland.

He's on day two of a visit, which he is spending at Trump International Golf Links in Doonbeg, County Clare, for the Irish Open.

On Saturday, Trump told reporters he would love to see a united Ireland while at a meeting with the Taoiseach (Irish PM) Micheál Martin in Dublin.

Speaking on Sunday at his Doonbeg golf resort, he said it would be natural to put Ireland and Northern Ireland "together".

He spoke to reporters after watching the tournament leader Irish golfer Shane Lowry tee off.

He described what he said

about a united Ireland as "a fairly routine comment".

"I've always loved the people of Ireland. It just seems to me you have Northern Ireland and Ireland," he said

"It seems that one of the naturals of all time is to put them together.

"That's only my opinion, and by the way many people agree."

The president sidestepped a question about Scottish independence.

"I won't talk about Scotland yet I will save that," he said.

The taoiseach said the president's remarks did not come as a "surprise" to him.

Speaking on Sunday at The Open, Martin referred to Trump asking about a "merger" of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland at an event in Washington during the Saint

Patrick's Day celebrations, which some believed to be a comment on unity.

"He would make the point this is his view. He believes unity is the logical way for the island to be configured and organised," Martin said.

A major security operation is continuing for Trump's visit to Ireland. He will leave from Shannon Airport on Sunday evening. Protests continue against Trump visit

More than 10,000 people marched through Dublin on Saturday to show their opposition to the US president.

Others protesting against the visit have been arriving in buses to Doonbeg on Sunday, with about 100 protesters present.

A small crowd were moved from the president's hotel by Gardai (Irish police), Irish broadcaster RTÉ is reporting.

NEWS**FOREIGN**

Turkish police detain dozens in raids on gay bars and homes of LGBTQ+ activists

Riot police have regularly chased LGBT activists during previous attempts to gather for pride parades.

Police in Turkey have detained 47 people in a series of raids on gay bars and the homes of LGBTQ+ activists, officials say.

Raids took place in 12 provinces over the weekend

as part of a campaign dubbed "My Family is Safe" that the Turkish government says has been designed to protect family values.

One of the targets of the operation was LGBTQ+ association Kaos GL.

Same-sex marriage is not recognised in Turkey, with growing pressure on gay cou-

ples. Human rights groups in Turkey have accused the government of using the campaign to target the LGBTQ+ community.

Officers detained 26 people and seized drugs, digital equipment, smuggled alcohol and a firearm during the raids, according to the Istanbul chief prosecutor's office.

In a separate statement, the Ankara chief prosecutor's

office said another 21 people had been detained as part of an investigation into Kaos GL.

The organisation said 50 activists had been detained, more than 10 taken after police raids on their homes.

It said that authorities had blocked several websites and social media accounts linked to LGBTQ+ organisations.

According to the group, authorities have accused Kaos GL of making "obscenity" in

online posts that are available to children and had demanded the shutting down of the Kaos GL X account, as well as those of around 15 other LGBTQ+ organisations.

Same-sex relations are not an offence in Turkey but homophobia is common, with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan describing LGBTQ people as "perverts" responsible for the falling birth rate.

As part of "My Family is Safe", Turkish Justice Minister Akin Gurlek says legal proceedings have been started against more than 160 people and a number of organisations and companies across the country.

Gurlek did not say how many people had been taken into custody, but said the raids came in the context of the "Decade of the Family" campaign.

Only Roland Garros towel left, says Ukraine tennis player after Russian strike hits flat

Dayana Yastremska said her family's apartment was destroyed in "a direct hit by a Kalibr cruise missile" fired by Russia.

Ukrainian tennis player Dayana Yastremska has said her family's flat has been destroyed in a Russian aerial strike on the Black Sea port of Odesa.

"This is what the 'Russian world' looks like. A direct hit by a Kalibr cruise missile," she wrote on social media, showing a photo of a burning multi-storey residential building.

"The only thing that survived was a Roland Garros... towel," the 26-year-old added, posting an image of a famous clay orange towel from Paris's Grand Slam tournament hanging from the wreckage.

Odesa regional head Oleh Kiper said 37 people were injured, including a baby, and two missing in the missile and drone attack on Odesa and nearby Chornomorsk on Friday night.

"A Russian missile destroyed our apartment in

Odesa... SYMBOLIC. A piece of world tennis survived a Russian missile. Our home did not," Yastremska wrote on Instagram on Saturday.

"@wta @itf_reviews Look at these images through our eyes," she said in a reference to the governing bodies of world tennis - the Women's Tennis Association and the International Tennis Federation.

Yastremska - who in 2024 reached the semifinal stage of the Australian Open - is currently 113th in the women's world singles rankings.

It is not the first time Ukrainian athletes' homes have been hit by Russia since the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Last year, Ukraine international football midfielder Heorhiy Sudakov said his flat in the capital Kyiv had been severely damaged by a Russian drone while his wife and child were at home.

USTA via Getty Images Ukrainian tennis player Dayana Yastremska competes at the US Open 2026 in New York. Photo: 30 August 2026.

At least 26 students killed in fire and stampede at school in Eastern DRC

A fire and stampede at a school in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo killed at least 26 children, the UN children's agency said on Friday, with some pupils leaping from windows on high floors to escape the carnage.

The blaze in the city of Bukavu on Thursday began around 9:00 am while the children were in lessons, forcing some to try to escape by jumping from higher floors, a teacher told AFP.

"In the middle of class, I suddenly heard students screaming, some were jumping from the upper floors, and others were running away through the doors," Simon Kasamira, a teacher at Ujamaa primary school, told AFP at a clinic where he had

been admitted.

"Parents came from all over looking for their children. That's when I saw a huge fire engulfing our school built of wooden planks," he said.

Smoke rose from the site of the fire as locals picked through the wreckage, an AFP correspondent saw.

The fire sparked a stampede as the children struggled to escape, with students "trampled" after falling down, inspectors from the Congolese education ministry said in a report on Friday.

Those trapped inside suffered from "asphyxiation," it said.

"Fires broke out simultaneously at three different locations about 500 metres apart," the report added.

UNICEF said the disaster injured 25 children.



People stand at the site of school fire that killed several people in Bukavu, Congo, Thursday, Sept. 10, 2026.

BRICS leaders voice concern over Middle East war, call for restraint

The BRICS group of emerging economies on Saturday expressed concern over rising tensions in the Middle East and condemned the use of sanctions not authorised by the United Nations, as the leaders met in New Delhi to strengthen their position in global affairs seen as dominated by the West.

Leaders of India, Russia, China, and other BRICS nations showed off commemorative postage stamps issued to mark twenty years since the founding of the group of emerging economies.

This year's summit is hosted by India, under the theme "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability."

"Our meeting today was very

fruitful and creative. Besides the diversity of our views, our shared commitment to BRICS cooperation also came out clearly," Narendra Modi, Indian Prime Minister, said at the meeting. "It is clear from the discussion today that changing the world cannot be run with old institutions."

BRICS was founded as a forum for emerging economies looking for greater influence in institutions dominated by Western powers.

Middle East war

In a joint statement, leaders expressed their concern over the escalation of tensions in the Middle East, and called for calm and maximum restraint.

The bloc's foreign ministers

had failed to agree on a joint statement when they met in New Delhi in May, with member states Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates divided over the war that began with US-Israeli strikes on Iran in late February.

But a statement was issued on Saturday after intense diplomatic efforts by India.

The statement also condemned attacks on civilian infrastructure and nuclear facilities.

"We express serious concern over deliberate attacks on civilian infrastructure and peaceful nuclear facilities under full safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in violation of international law and relevant resolutions of the IAEA," it said.

"Nuclear safeguards, safety, and security must always be upheld, including in armed conflicts, to

protect people and the environment from harm."

Chinese President Xi Jinping, speaking on Saturday, said that the Middle East war "does not serve the common interests of the international community," according to state news agency Xinhua.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian are also at the summit.

"We note the current global context of polarisation and distrust and encourage global action to strengthen international peace and security," the joint statement read.

"We stress the need to work together to maintain smooth flow of global trade, supply chains and energy, in accordance with applicable international law," it added.

Thousands forced to flee as Houthis advance on Bab el-Mandeb Strait

Tens of thousands of people have been displaced across Yemen in recent days, fleeing the advance of Iran-backed Houthi rebels.

Many residents of Aden, Yemen, opened their homes to people displaced by the Houthi rebels takeover of the port city of Mokha.

In one of the houses, dozens of men lied on the floor carpeted with thin mattresses

and bed sheets.

"We set out in hysterical panic on a motorcycle, not knowing where we were heading," said Alaa Ali Salem who fled along with his family from Mokha's al-Khawakha district.

"The roads suddenly became extremely congested, and while I was driving, the motorcycle overturned. My wife, my children and I were all injured," he added while

holding his son.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) said Saturday that at least 76,000 people have fled their homes in Yemen since July in light of escalation in fighting, up from 46,000 just days earlier.

"We saw soldiers shouting for a retreat as bullets flew all around, and we had no idea what was happening," said Durrah Ali Hassan who found shelter in a relative's house in Aden.

The capture of the Red Sea

port of Mokha and a strategic island by Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen brings their forces to the heart of a key choke point for the global economy: the Bab el-Mandeb Strait leading out of the Red Sea.

The Houthis took Mokha on Thursday and on Friday captured Mayun, also known as Perim, off Yemen's coast, two officials said, in a swift advance that extends their reach near one of the world's key commercial lanes.

Sports

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

Ultimate Championships: Amusan sets the pace with silver as Nigeria Opens Budapest campaign

Tobi Amusan led Team Nigeria to a silver medal on the opening day of the World Athletics Ultimate Championships in Budapest, Hungary, producing a strong performance in the women's 100m hurdles final.

Amusan advanced to the final after finishing second in her semifinal in 12.49 seconds, narrowly behind Bahamas' Devynne Char-

lton, who won the heat in 12.45 seconds.

The Nigerian superstar improved her time in the final, clocking 12.34 seconds to secure the silver medal behind American Masai Russell, who claimed the title in 12.22 seconds. Netherlands' Nadine Visser completed the podium in 12.39 seconds.

Amusan's silver provided Team Nigeria with its first

medal of the championships as the country's athletes began their campaign against some of the world's leading competitors.

Earlier, Ella Onojuvwevo finished sixth in the first semifinal of the women's 400m, posting 50.50 seconds to place 12th overall among the 16 athletes in the event.

Dominican Republic's Marileidy Paulino won the

semifinal in 49.58 seconds, with Bahrain's Salwa Eid Naser second in 49.67 seconds.

Team Nigeria will return to action on Day 2, with Ezekiel Nathaniel set to compete in the second semifinal of the men's 400m hurdles, while Kayinsola Ajayi will line up in the men's 100m semifinals against a strong field of global sprint stars.



Tobe Amusan

Bayelsa qualifies for six team sports at intermediate games zonal elimination,

...Turns attention to National Sports Festival elimination

Team Bayelsa has secured qualification to compete in six teams sports at the National Intermediate Games after two days of intensive competition among the South-South States in the zonal elimination in Calabar, the Cross River State capital.

Bayelsa arrived Calabar for the fiesta with a 400-man strong contingent comprising officials and athletes to compete in the team sports in both men and women's categories at the zonal elimination ahead of the Intermediate Games slated for Lagos, next year.

Abula booked qualification for the Games in both the men and women categories. Abula men's team finished first in the zone ahead of Delta while the women settled for second place to progress to the maiden of the National Intermediate Games.

Volleyball women finished first beating Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Delta States.

In the beach volleyball event, Team Bayelsa men also qualified for the Games with wins over Rivers and Akwa Ibom while the female team unfortunately, failed to qualify for the Games proper.

Bayelsa finished second in the women basketball event behind Delta. Bayelsa narrowly lost to rivals Delta 30-29 in the deciding tie having taken host



Intermediate Games: Bayelsa Clinches 8 Tickets In 6 Sports, Eyes more in South-South - New Waves Newspaper

Cross River and Rivers to the cleaners in their earlier games.

Handball joined Abula to qualify in both the men and women's events while the women's hockey finished second to secure qualification to the Games proper.

The eight sports Team Bayelsa qualified for include; Abula men and women; volleyball women; handball men and

women; beach volleyball men; basketball women as well as hockey women.

Both the men and women's teams could not qualify for the football event.

In the last football match of the day, the Bayelsa lads lost 1-2 to Cross River in a match they needed to win. In the same vein, beach volleyball (women); volleyball (men); basket-

ball (men) and hockey (men), also did not make it to the Games proper.

In the meantime, zonal eliminations for the 23rd National Sports Festival slated for Enugu from November 27 to December 11, 2026 will commence on Sunday, September 13, at the U.J. Esuene Stadium in Calabar, Cross River State

IOC Solidarity Programme: 35 Nigerian coaches to undergo swimming course in Lagos

The Nigeria Aquatics Federation (NAqF) has selected 35 swimming coaches from across the country for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Olympic Solidarity Swimming Coaches Course scheduled to take place in Lagos from September 15 to 20, 2026, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

The capacity-building programme is being organised under the IOC's Olympic Solidarity programme in collaboration with the Nigerian Olympic Committee (NOC) and the Nigeria Aquatics Federation.

The initiative is aimed at strengthening Nigeria's swimming coaching structure while addressing identified gaps in technical development and athlete progression.

The six-day course is expected to expose participants to contemporary coaching techniques, technical knowledge and international best practices needed to develop swimmers from the grassroots through to

elite competition.

The programme also aligns with the development-oriented agenda of the National Sports Commission and the strategic direction of the current NAqF leadership, which has placed emphasis on human-capacity development, youth progression and the discovery and nurturing of the next generation of Nigerian aquatic talents. Cricket news

NAqF President, Lekan Fatodu, has repeatedly stressed the importance of investing in coaches and other technical personnel as a critical component of the federation's long-term development strategy.

According to the federation, a stronger coaching workforce will have a direct impact on athlete development and competitive performances, while improving Nigeria's prospects of producing swimmers capable of competing successfully at continental, Commonwealth, Olympic and world championships



NAQF PRESIDENT, LEKAN FATODU

Pitching for 2030: NSC DG Olopade Engages World Athletics on Nigeria's bid to host U20 championships

While attending the inaugural World Athletics Ultimate Championships in Budapest, Hungary, this weekend, the Director General of the National Sports Commission (NSC), Hon. Bukola Olopade officially initiated high-level discussions with World Athletics officials regarding Nigeria's strong interest in hosting the 2030 World Athletics U20 Championship.

The strategic meeting centred on Nigeria's ambition to bring the global athletics communi-

ty to its shores and firmly establish the nation as a premier destination for international sporting events.

During the engagement, Hon. Olopade made a compelling case for Nigeria's capacity to deliver a spectacular tournament, highlighting several key areas:

Infrastructural Readiness : Reaffirming the country's commitment to providing top-tier sporting facilities and meeting the highest global organizational standards.

Warm Hospitality : Promising an excellent and welcoming atmosphere for athletes, officials, and fans from across the globe.

Continuous Investment : Noting that Nigeria's growing financial and structural investments in athlete development and event management have perfectly positioned the country for greater responsibilities on the world stage.

To solidify the credibility of Nigeria's bid, the DG pointed to the flawless execution of the 2025 CAA Africa U20/U18 Athletics Championships.

Stepping in at very short notice in July 2025, Nigeria successfully hosted the continental showpiece in Abeokuta, Ogun State. The event saw the country seamlessly welcome delegations from over 40 African nations, accommodating nearly 1,000 athletes, officials, and participants.

According to Olopade, the success in Abeokuta stands as undeniable proof of Nigeria's logistical capacity, passion for athletics, and organizational efficiency, laying a rock-solid foundation for the 2030 global showpiece.

Supporters club chiefs under fire over botched transition

A leadership arrangement meant to last just twelve months has now dragged on for a year and a half — and Nigeria's football supporters clubs are still waiting for the elected leaders they were promised.

The five club presidents heading the Unification and Interim Management Committee (IMC) for Nigerian Football and Sports Groups are facing mounting criticism over their failure to complete the very job they were appointed to do: unite the country's fractured supporters clubs, restructure the organization, and hand power to a democratically elected executive.

The IMC's authority rests on a Memorandum of Understanding that took effect on February 13, 2025, granting the committee a strictly one-year term that, by its own wording, could not be renewed or extended under any circumstances. That deadline came and went on February 13, 2026, without the transition being completed. Seven months later, in September 2026 — roughly 19 months since the committee was formed — no election has been held, no unified leadership installed, and no full account of the group's stewardship has been delivered to stakeholders, leaving the same five presidents in place well beyond their contractual window.

Facing scrutiny, the IMC has pointed to a structural obstacle: the various supporters clubs are separately registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission, which the committee says makes a single, unified merger legally complicated to execute. It has also cited the Super Eagles' failure to qualify for the FIFA World Cup as a factor that disrupted its work. Neither explanation is landing well with observers, who note that untangling registration hurdles was precisely the kind of administrative challenge an interim body exists to solve, while a national team's qualification campaign has no obvious bearing on whether an internal supporters' election gets organized on schedule.

Adding to the frustration is a string of contradictory public statements. In



The supporters club

one release, the IMC unveiled concrete steps toward an election, including plans to set up a Constitutional Drafting Committee and an Electoral Committee — seemingly signaling that the long-delayed transition was finally underway. Barely 48 hours later, however, a follow-up statement suggested the same leaders would instead wait for further directives from the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) and the National Sports Commission (NSC) before deciding how to proceed, leaving stakeholders to wonder why a process was announced if it wasn't actually ready to move.

Perhaps the sharpest criticism leveled at the committee is structural rather

than procedural. The five presidents, critics argue, cannot reasonably be the ones to determine whether their own stewardship has succeeded. They were handed a mandate with a fixed duration and clearly defined goals — and when those goals go unmet, the responsible path is accountability and transparency, not self-justification. Instead, recent public messaging from the group has focused largely on explaining away the missed deadline and defending its own continued relevance.

Supporters, critics say, deserve better: an independent review of what actually happened over the past 18-plus months, a clear account of the decisions made along the way, and a transparent

roadmap toward genuine elected leadership. The list of unanswered questions keeps growing — why the election was never conducted, why a promised transition report was never delivered, what specifically prevented the IMC from finishing a one-year assignment in the time allotted, and under what authority it has continued operating well past its expiration date.

As one assessment put it, an interim committee exists to build a bridge to a permanent structure — not to become the permanent structure itself. For Nigeria's supporters clubs, the message from critics is unambiguous: the time for excuses has passed, and the time for accountability has arrived.

Silver Start: Tobi Amusan clinches 100m hurdles Silver to open team Nigeria's budapest campaign



THE WINNING TEAM

Tobi Amusan has delivered Team Nigeria's first piece of silverware on the opening day of the World Athletics Ultimate Championships in Budapest, Hungary, putting on a stellar performance in the women's 100m hurdles final.

The Nigerian track superstar secured her spot in the final after a tightly contested semifinal race, where she finished second in 12.49 seconds — just a fraction of a second behind the Bahamas' Devynne Charlton, who took the heat in 12.45 seconds.

Amusan significantly stepped up her pace in the final, crossing the finish line in 12.34 seconds to secure the silver medal. She finished behind American Masai Russell, who claimed the ultimate title in 12.22 seconds, while the Netherlands' Nadine Visser rounded out the podium in third with a time of 12.39 seconds.

Other Opening Day Results

Earlier in the day, Ella Onojuvwewo represented Nigeria in the first semifinal of the women's 400m sprint.

She posted a time of 50.50 seconds, finishing sixth in her heat.

Her solid performance placed her 12th overall out of the 16 elite athletes competing in the event.

The semifinal was won by the Dominican Republic's Marileidy Paulino (49.58 seconds), followed closely by Bahrain's Salwa Eid Naser (49.67 seconds).

Team Nigeria will return to the track on the second day of the championships with two key athletes ready to take the stage:

Ezekiel Nathaniel is set to compete in the second semifinal of the men's 400m hurdles.

Kayinsola Ajayi will line up in a highly anticipated men's 100m semifinal, where he will test his speed against a stacked field of global sprint stars.

Wheelchair American Football exhibition: Organisers laud stakeholders' support, seek more participation

Lawrence Ojaideh, Founder, Wheelchair American Football in Nigeria, has commended stakeholders for supporting the sport's exhibition game held on Thursday in Lagos.

Ojaideh made the commendation on Saturday, during an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN).

According to him, the exhibition marks a significant milestone in the development of sports in Nigeria and Africa, especially by promoting opportunities for athletes with disabilities.

He said the event demonstrated that an inclusive and sustainable sports system, could be developed to empower athletes to compete and excel at the highest level.

According to him, the initiative aim to create opportunities for athletes with disabilities to pursue their ambitions and compete for titles.

Ojaideh said the organisation, with the support of its board, was identifying and developing elite talents, while establishing structured pathways from the grassroots level.

He added that the initiative extended beyond Wheelchair American Football, with plans also underway to establish Tackle Football and Flag Football leagues.

Speaking further, he said creating a sustainable and high-performance environment for athletes across Nigeria

and beyond, required the collective efforts of key stakeholders.

Ojaideh then called on corporate organisations, diplomatic missions, educational institutions and government agencies to support the development of the sport.

Similarly, Dominik Muller, a German national based in Nigeria, said he was impressed by the exhibition and had followed the sport since its debut in the U.S.

Muller urged the organisers and board members to work together to establish a formidable league, capable of developing and showcasing Nigeria's young talents.

He said the participation of young athletes at the exhibition demonstrated the growing interest in Wheelchair American Football and its potential for further development.

NAN reports that no fewer than four teams participated in the exhibition matches, which attracted representatives of the U.S. Consulate and the South African Consulate-General.

The one-day exhibition also attracted representatives of the University of Lagos, Lagos State University, as well as Unique Open University.

The exhibition provided an opportunity for players, stakeholders and sports enthusiasts to witness the growth of Wheelchair American Football in Nigeria.

At the conclusion of the exhibition games, Liberty Pioneer defeated Iron Invicta 13 – 0.

SPORTS

FIFA U20 WWC: Falconets bounce back, crush new Caledonia 10-1 To Reach Round of 16

Nigeria's Falconets produced a sensational attacking display on Sunday, thrashing New Caledonia 10-1 to secure their place in the Round of 16 at the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Poland 2026.

The emphatic victory provided a remarkable response to Nigeria's difficult start to the tournament and transformed their qualification hopes into reality after two frustrating opening matches.

The Falconets entered their final Group F fixture knowing that only a convincing victory would give them a strong chance of progressing after losing 2-0 to Spain and playing out a goalless draw against China.

They responded in spectacular fashion, overwhelming New Caledonia with sustained pressure and clinical finishing to record one of the tournament's biggest victories.

The 10-goal haul significantly boosted Nigeria's goal difference and ultimately proved decisive in securing their passage into the knockout phase.

New Caledonia, competing at the tournament for the first time, endured another difficult outing as their campaign end-

ed without a point following three consecutive defeats.

The victory marked a dramatic turnaround for Nigeria, who had struggled to find the back of the net in their opening two games despite creating opportunities.

Against New Caledonia, however, the Falconets displayed greater urgency, attacking purpose and ruthlessness in front of goal.

The result not only delivered the crucial three points but also gave Nigeria a major boost in confidence ahead of the knockout stages.

Spain finished top of Group F after defeating China 3-1 in the other final group fixture, with Nigeria and China also advancing to the Round of 16.

With the group stage now concluded, the Falconets will turn their attention to the knockout phase, where the margin for error will be considerably smaller.

Nigeria's Round of 16 opponent will be determined by the final group standings and the allocation of the best third-placed teams.

The 24-team tournament format sees the top two teams from each of the six groups advance alongside the four best

third-placed sides.

For the Falconets, the immediate task will be to maintain the attacking momentum generated by their emphatic victory while addressing the shortcomings exposed in their opening matches.

After a difficult beginning to their Poland 2026 campaign, Nigeria have secured a second

chance to challenge for honours and will now look to carry their newfound confidence into the knockout rounds.

The Falconets' Round of 16 opponent, venue and kick-off time will be confirmed following the completion of the remaining group-stage fixtures.

Volleyball: Nigeria unveils squad for 2026 African Men's Nations Championship

Head Coach of Nigeria's senior men's volleyball team, Ryan Masajedi has named his 14-man squad for the 2026 African Men's Volleyball Nations Championship in Tunisia.

The continental tournament is scheduled to take place from September 13 to 27 in Tunis, as the championship also serves as an important qualification pathway for the Los Angeles

2028 Olympic Games.

Masajedi selected two setters, two opposites, two liberos, four outside hitters and four middle blockers for the tournament, as two new players broke to the squad.

The Setters are Bruno Ibeh and Adeniyi Favour, while Armstrong Udoka and Okonkwo Ebuka will provide options in the Opposite position.



The Hon Commissioner for Youth Development Charity Amnayaivbo celebrates with the Executive Chairman, Edo State Sports Commission Hon Amadin Desmond Enabulele as Bendel Insurance thrash Kunkalifat FC 4-2 in the match Day 3 of the NPFL 2026/27

Nigeria Now Has World Rugby educators who can train coaches, referees locally – Ademola Are

The president of Nigeria Rugby Football Federation (NRFF), Dr Ademola Are has come out with an enthusiastic observation that the country now has its own globally acclaimed instructors in the sport, who can equally train their compatriots at home.

Are gave the assurance at the end of a three-day World Rugby intensive coaching, refereeing and medical course organised by the NRFF in Abuja, where he charged the participants put their new ideas to work at their various communities.

Are added that the sophisticated training they gained during the course that ended on Saturday should make the coaches, referees and medical officers become the pivot of rugby development in their states, where further growth of the sport will depend on their commitment.

While expressing satisfaction with the rate at which rugby is growing in Nigeria, the NRFF boss called for stronger collaboration among coaches, officials, players and stakeholders in creating a sustainable structure

for the sport to develop better across the country.

Are enthused, "I am happy with the level Nigeria has attained in the last few years. Nigeria now has educators who can train coaches and referees locally; meaning World Rugby does not always need to send educators here.

"They can provide supervision, as we have done this time around. The most encouraging part is that more coaches and referees are coming on board. Go back and impact your communities because rugby needs you.

"Without you, rugby cannot make headway. I also urge you to work with your respective state associations, sports councils and ministries of sports to grow the game and secure greater recognition for rugby."

About 80 participants registered for the three-day seminar and workshop, at the end of which World Rugby East and Southern Africa Game Growth Manager, Robert Bwari stated satisfaction with the progress recorded in Nigeria.

NPFL27: MD3: Chinedu Nwosu shines as Bendel Insurance beat Kunkalifat FC 4-2

Bendel Insurance Football Club on Sunday evening produced an impressive performance as they bounced back from Match Day 2 setback in Lafia and recorded a 4-2 victory over Kunkalifat FC of Owerri.

Alex Oweileyefa opened scoring for the resurgent Benin Arsenal at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium as early as 5 minutes into the game that lived up to its expectation.

Insurance continued to dictate the pace as the combination of Alex Oweileyefa, Kayode Oke and Suraju Lawal in the attack remained potent and dangerous for the visitors.

In the 19th minute, Suraju Lawal registered his goal account with the Benin Arsenal. Kayode Oke supplied the clean assist to make it easy for Lawal.

Insurance FC went into the halftime break with a comfortable 2-0 lead over the visitors.

On return from the halftime break, Insurance FC technical crew made immediate substitution as Kayode Oke and Suraju Lawal gave way to Emmanuel Dung and Shimagande Terdoo. A minute later, Chinedu Nwosu scored to increase the tally after connecting well with Kayode's assist.

Amas Obasogie made great saves and parried off a penalty kick in the 58th minute. In the 68th minute, another spot kick was awarded to Kunkalifat as Chigozie hand ball in the box was spotted. The penalty was well converted to reduce the deficit to 3-1 by Kunkalifat FC.

In the 66th minute, Chinedu Nwosu went solo in the middle

and fired in a close range shot to get his second goal to make it 4-1 for Insurance FC.

The visitors however fought back, and got a late goal to reduce the deficit in the 88th minute to make it 4-2. Jonathan James inclusion added the necessary flair to Insurance attacking midfield with more possession and several attempts to increase the tally until the end of proceedings.

In the post match interview, Insurance assistant coach Jolomi Atune expressed worries over the poor communication between the defenders and goalkeeper, noting that the goals and penalty offences committed by Insurance players were unnecessary.

"I am happy we won deservedly but we are not happy about the cheap goals we conceded.

The present Squad is still work in progress and we will get better.

Insurance FC now have six points in the three outings in the current premier league season.

They will be on the road to Ranchers Bees FC next week.

Bendel Insurance began the campaign on a winning note, defeating neighbours Warri Wolves 2-1 at home with Kayode Oke and Oweifaleya Alex scoring to secure the 2-1 victory.

The Benin Arsenal, however, were unable to maintain that momentum in Lafia, where they suffered a narrow 1-0 defeat to Nasarawa United.

Insurance were in the 9th position on the NPFL table with three points in their opening two matches before the match day three encounter in Benin with Kunkalifat FC.