

2027: Police, army, INEC pally to beef up security in Edo

MIKE OSAROGIAGBON AND
OLIVER IJIOGBE

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Police Command and the 4 Brigade Nigerian Army have strengthened their security partnership, with both agencies resolving to deepen

intelligence sharing and joint operations to tackle emerging security threats across the state.

The resolve was reached when the Commissioner of Police, Edo State Command, CP Patrick Daaor, paid a courtesy visit to the Headquarters of the 4 Brigade Nigerian Army in Benin City on Tuesday, September 8, 2026.

ASP Eno Ikoedem, Public Relations Officer for Edo State Police Command disclosed this in a statement made available to journalists in Benin City on Tuesday.

She said CP Daaor was received by the Brigade Commander, Brigadier General Ahmed Balogun, alongside other senior officers of the Brigade. ASP Ikoedem said the Police

Commissioner and the Brigade Commander held a special security engagement on the prevailing security situation in Edo State.

Their discussions, she said focused on enhanced inter-agency cooperation, intelligence sharing, joint operational strategies and other measures to prevent and effectively respond to security threats across the state.

ASP Ikoedem said the visit also featured the exchange of gifts between CP Daaor and Brig. Gen. Balogun, symbolising the cordial relationship and strong partnership between the Police and Army.

In a related development, the Commissioner of Police reaffirmed the Command's commitment to strengthening

collaboration with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to ensure peaceful, credible and secure elections in the state.

Daaor stated this when he paid a familiarization visit to the INEC Edo State Office at Aduwawa, Benin City.

CONTINUES ON PG 2»

The Nigerian OBSERVER

That The People May Know

f t i s NigerianObserver @Nigerian_Observer @NigerianObserver www.nigerianobservernews.com

PUBLISHED SINCE MAY 29, 1968

VOL. 47, NO. 1,348

THURSDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER, 2026.

₦200

ASUU salary dispute grounds UNIZIK, students seek intervention in Nasarawa varsity

OSARUGUE OSADOLOR AND
AYENOMOH WINNER

AWKA

Academic activities at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University (UNIZIK), Awka, have been grounded following an indefinite withdrawal of services by members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) over non-payment of the outstanding portion of their August

2026 salaries.

The industrial action commenced on Monday, September 7, after the university's ASUU chapter resolved to suspend teaching and administrative duties until their outstanding salaries are fully paid.

The Union said the decision was in line with an existing resolution of its National Executive Council (NEC), which empowers branches to withdraw their services when members'

salaries remained unpaid beyond the stipulated period.

According to the UNIZIK chapter of ASUU, delays in the payment of salaries have occurred on more than three occasions and describing the development as frustrating and unacceptable to its members.

In a statement signed by the chapter's Chairperson, Inno-

cent Nnubia, and Secretary, Osita Nnajofo, the UNIZIK chapter appealed to the university authorities and the institution's Visitor, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, to intervene and ensure the immediate release of the outstanding August salaries.

They also called for measures to prevent further delays

in salary payments.

The university's Director of Information and Public Relations, Aloysius Attah, however declined comment when contacted on the development.

In a related development, students of Nasarawa State University, Keffi, have appealed for government intervention to resolve the prolonged dis-

pute between the institution and its academic staff.

The National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) in the state, passionately appealed to the Nasarawa State Government to settle all outstanding financial obligations owed to the university workers, stress-

CONTINUES ON PG 2»

More dignitaries, groups celebrate Igbiniedion at 92

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

The Garden of Eden residence of the Esama of Benin, Sir Chief Dr. Gabriel Osawaru Igbiniedion, has continued to attract dignitaries, religious organisations, professional bodies and well-wishers as activities gather momentum ahead of his 92nd birthday on September 11, 2026.

The residence has remained a hive of activities as various groups visited to honour the elder statesman and celebrate what they described as a remarkable milestone in his life.

Leading the stream of the

recent visitors was the Christ Chosen Church of God International, led by its Spiritual Leader, Senior Apostle David Unuefe, accompanied by other church elders.

The church choir entertained the celebrant with birthday songs and praises, after which the delegation presented an honorary plaque to Igbiniedion and offered prayers for his continued good health, long life and divine protection.

The Muslim community of the Benin Central Mosque also paid a courtesy visit to the Esama of Benin. The delegation,

CONTINUES ON PG 2»



SECURITY PARTNERSHIP:

The Commissioner of Police, CP Patrick Daaor (right) receiving a souvenir from Brig. Gen. Ahmed Balogun, the Commander, 4th Brigade, Nigerian Army, Benin City, during a courtesy visit to the Brigade on Wednesday.

Dangote Refinery IPO triggers ₦1.88trn loss in equities market

—Pg 2

Keyamo condemns Obi's Benue blockade, calls for media neutrality

—Pg 5

Oil hits \$100 a barrel for first time since July after US and Houthi strikes

—Pg 8

National Intermediate Games Postponed, to Support Excellent Hosting of Inaugural Edition

—Pg 11

NEWS



Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Sa'adatu Hassan Liman

ASUU salary dispute grounds...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

ing that "such action would help resolve the dispute and pave the way for the resumption of academic activities.

The appeal came during a meeting between NANS representatives and the university management, led by the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Sa'adatu Hassan Liman.

The m ASUU chapter of the University commenced an indefinite strike since August 10 over alleged unpaid staff entitlements running into billions of naira.

The National Treasurer of NANS and its leader in Nasarawa State, Idris Omeiza, acknowledged the hardship the prolonged closure of the University had caused students, but urged them to remain peaceful and patient while efforts to resolve the dispute continued.

He called on the state government to urgently clear the arrears owed to university employees, stressing that doing so would create an enabling environment for negotiations and facilitate the resumption of academic activities.

Dangote Refinery IPO triggers ₦1.88trn loss in equities market

ABUJA

The Nigerian equities market on Tuesday reversed its three-day bullish trend as investors embarked on aggressive sell-offs ahead of the planned Initial Public Offering (IPO) of the Dangote Petroleum Refinery, wiping N1.879 trillion off market capitalisation.

The sell-off pushed the total market capitalisation down from N160.600 trillion to N158.721 trillion, representing a 1.17 per cent decline.

Similarly, the All-Share Index (ASI) fell by 2,897.67 points, or 1.17 per cent, from 247,699.78 to 244,802.11 points.

Managing Director of Globalview Capital Ltd., Mr Aruna Kebira, attributed the sharp decline to investors repositioning their portfolios to raise funds ahead of the Dangote Refinery IPO.

Kebira said the development had triggered a significant im-

balance between sell and buy orders as investors sought to free up cash to participate in the offer.

"Preparations for the Dangote Refinery IPO caused the downturn in performance today.

"The number of people selling is high. Today, our sales were about 15 times higher than purchases.

"Everybody is selling to prepare for the Dangote Refinery IPO and the further disruption expected in the market," he said.

According to him, the strong selling pressure had significantly weakened demand for equities as investors repositioned their portfolios in anticipation of the offer.

He noted that what had initially been speculation about the refinery's planned listing had now assumed greater certainty following the formal signing ceremony and commencement of preparations for the offer.

"The idea was muted before, but now the signing ceremony

has been held and the offer is expected to open on the trading floor on Sept. 14.

"So, it is no longer a rumour," Kebira said.

The broad-based sell-off resulted in a sharply negative market breadth, with 64 stocks recording losses against only four gainers.

The market's Year-to-Date return, however, remained positive at 57.31 per cent.

On the losers' table, FG162029S1 led the decline, shedding 31.19 per cent to close at N75.

AVA Capital followed with a 10 per cent loss to close at N5.40, while Fortis Global Insurance declined by 9.89 per cent to N1.64 per share.

Abbey Mortgage Bank lost 9.74 per cent to close at N6.95, while Critical Minerals Financing Corp declined by 9.66 per cent to settle at N2.15 per share.

On the gainers' side, Ellah Lakes led with a 7.07 per cent increase to close at N9.85.

Nigerian Exchange Group

gained 1.38 per cent to N131.90, while Learn Africa appreciated by 1.16 per cent to close at N8.75 per share.

Wema Bank also gained 0.68 per cent to finish at N29.70 per share.

Despite the decline in prices, trading activity strengthened considerably during the session, with total volume traded rising by 84.67 per cent to 753.17 million shares.

The transactions, executed in 54,051 deals, were valued at N27.83 billion.

NEM Insurance Plc emerged as the most actively traded stock by both volume and value, with 131.73 million shares worth N4.07 billion changing hands.

The company's transactions accounted for 17.49 per cent of the total market volume and 14.63 per cent of the total market value traded during the session.

The market's sharp decline highlights the potential impact of the much-anticipated Dangote Refinery IPO on investor liquidity and portfolio positioning as the offer date approaches.

2027: Police, army, INEC pally...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

The visit provided the police commissioner an opportunity to meet with the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), Hon. Obo Effanga, and members of the commission's management team.

Discussions at the meeting focused on election security, inter-agency collaboration, intelligence sharing and other measures required to safeguard the electoral process and ensure the peaceful conduct of the forthcoming electoral activities in the state.

The commissioner stressed the need for sustained cooperation between the Nigeria Police Force and INEC, noting that effective stakeholder engagement, timely intelligence sharing and comprehensive security planning were critical to the

successful conduct of elections.

As part of the visit, Daor also conducted an on-the-spot security assessment of the INEC facility to identify potential security gaps and determine additional measures required to strengthen the existing security arrangements.

The assessment was considered particularly important given the sensitive nature of the electoral materials expected to be received and stored at the facility ahead of the forthcoming electoral activities.

The Edo CP said the Command would continue to work closely with INEC, other security agencies, relevant stakeholders and members of the public to maintain a safe and peaceful environment before, during and after electoral activities across the state.

More dignitaries, groups...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

led by the Chief Imam, Alhaji Abdulfatir Enabulele, offered special prayers to Almighty Allah for Igbinedion's continued health, peace and longevity.

Also at the residence was the management of the Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), Benin Network Centre, led by its Zonal Director, Teni Omoniyi Ajayi.

The NTA delegation presented birthday cards bearing congratulatory messages to the celebrant, whom the organisation regards as a father figure.

Staff and students of the Igbinedion College of Health Technology, Benin City, also joined the growing list of visitors. They came to honour Igbinedion, the founder of the

institution, and celebrate his contribution to education and human capital development.

The Girls' Brigade Nigeria, led by the State Commandant, Mrs. Esther Ezomo, equally paid homage to the Esama and joined other groups in celebrating his 92nd birthday.

In his response, the Esama of Benin, Sir Chief Dr. Gabriel Igbinedion appreciated his guests for the birthday wishes.

The continued influx of visitors to the Garden of Eden residence of Sir Chief Dr. Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion to mark his 92nd birthday underscores the broad network of relationships and goodwill enjoyed by the nonagenarian across religious, educational, professional and community circles.



ESAMA @92:

The Esama of Benin, Chief Osawaru Igbinedion, receiving Mrs. Adeola Uyi Ekhuagere, Esq., among other dignitaries and well-wishers as part of activities marking his 92nd birthday anniversary in Benin City on Wednesday.

AIG assures FIDA of swift police response to GBV, child abuse cases

MIKE OSAROGLAGBON

ABUJA

The Assistant Inspector-General of Police, Zone 5, Benin City, AIG Monday Agbonika, has assured women and children of improved police response to gender-based violence, domestic violence, sexual abuse and child abuse.

AIG Agbonika gave the assurance when the Edo State Branch of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), led by its Chairperson, Princess Francisca Elema, visited the Zone 5 Headquarters,

Benin City on Tuesday, September 8, 2026.

The AIG said complaints involving abuse and violence would receive appropriate attention and professional handling by the Police.

The Zonal Police Public Relations Officer, SP Tijani Momoh, disclosed this in a statement on Wednesday, September 9, 2026.

But the meeting, he stated went beyond a courtesy call, as FIDA sought a stronger working relationship with the Police to tackle growing challenges confronting women and children.

SP Tijani said that Princess Elema congratulated AIG Agbonika on his promotion and redeployment to Zone 5, saying the visit was aimed at strengthening ties with the Zone's gender and legal offices.

She said FIDA remained committed to protecting the rights and welfare of women and children, particularly through access to justice and protection from gender-based violence.

The FIDA chairperson called for closer collaboration with the Police in tackling domestic violence, sexual abuse, child abuse and other forms of violence

against vulnerable persons.

SP Tijani added that FIDA chairperson also said the organisation was ready to deepen the partnership through legal assistance, public enlightenment, capacity building and improved communication.

Responding, AIG Agbonika commended FIDA for its longstanding advocacy for women and children and its contribution to access to justice.

He assured the delegation that Zone 5 would support lawful initiatives aimed at protecting the fundamental rights of vulnerable persons.

NEWS**Benue seals \$250m food city deal, targets 20,000 jobs**

TALBORT HOPE PERE

MAKURDI

The Benue State Government has signed a \$250 million agreement with Rexzodeneh Group Limited for the development of the National Food City Complex, a project expected to create about 20,000 direct permanent jobs and integrate farming, food processing, storage and logistics.

The agreement was signed on Monday in Makurdi, with the project, projected to cover about 30,000 hectares across Otukpo, Obi and Ado Local Government Areas.

Governor Hyacinth Alia, who was represented by his deputy at the signing ceremony, said the investment would help reposition Benue's agricultural sector by moving the state beyond the production of raw materials to processing, value addition and market development.

According to him, the project is expected to bring about 40,000 smallholder farmers into its agricultural value chain while creating employment opportunities across farming, processing, transportation, logistics and other related businesses.

Alia said the investment was particularly significant because, despite Benue's reputation as one of Nigeria's

major food-producing states, the sector continued to face challenges arising from inadequate processing and storage facilities.

He said the Food City would provide farmers with improved access to markets and enable the state to retain greater value from its agricultural output through local processing and value addition.

The project will be implemented under a 25-year Design-Build-Operate-Transfer (DBOT) arrangement, under which Rexzodeneh Group will finance, construct and operate the facility, while the state government will provide the land and necessary institutional support.

The first phase is expected to cover about 12,000 hectares in the Ogyoma Akpa area of Otukpo Local Government Area, with a focus on the production and processing of rice, maize, cassava and soybeans.

The complex is also expected to have supporting infrastructure, including a hybrid power system with an estimated capacity of between 20 and 25 megawatts to support its operations.

The Benue State Investment Promotion Agency (BENIPA) said relevant government agencies had participated in the processes leading to the agreement, including negotiations and technical reviews with the investors.

Man drags ex-fiancée to Shari'a court over 'wedding gifts'**KADUNA**

A man, Abubakar Lukman, during the week, dragged his ex-fiancée, Fatima Muhammad, before a Shari'a Court sitting in Magaji Gari, Kaduna State, seeking the return of the "wedding gift" items to her family.

Lukman told the court that both of their parents had been involved in the preparations for the wedding, but he later discovered that his wife-to-be had certain habits that he could not condone in a wife. "I decided to call off the wedding," he said.

The man therefore asked the

court to order the defendant, his estranged former fiancée to return the goods; including foodstuffs, an electric kettle, a gas cylinder, a floor rug, sweets, buckets, etc; given during the marriage introduction ceremony.

The defendant's counsel, Mr Sani Sanusi, however denied the allegation, saying "all the items had been returned to the complainant, (Lukeman).

The presiding Judge, Malam Yakubu Abdullahi, however adjourned the matter till Sept. 25 for Lukman to present witnesses or evidences to prove that the items were not returned.

Ex-NSCDC boss, Abolurin calls for upgrade of civil defence college**IBADAN**

The pioneer Commandant-General of the NSCDC, Dr Adewale Abolurin has called for the repositioning of the Civil Defence College of Security Management to offer degree and postgraduate programmes.

Abolurin said this at the pulling-out and retirement ceremony of the Assistant Commandant-General (ACG) Iskil Makinde, who is the pioneer Provost of the Civil Defence College of Security Management, Abeokuta.

According to him, the institution should become a centre of excellence comparable to military and other specialised security training institutions.

"We want to see this institution in the nearest future as a place of pride, where everyone can confidently say it meets the demands of the modern era," he said.

He noted that Makinde rose from an HND holder to a doctorate degree holder, describing his educational advancement as worthy of emulation.

He urged officers to pursue continuous education and professional development, re-

**INVESTMENT SUMMIT:**

From left: Chairman, Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), Mohammed Bello; Special Assistant to the Chairman of RMAFC, Muhammed Wada; Executive Director of Guaranty Trust Bank, Ahmed Liman; and the Chairman, Investment Committee of RMAFC, Hon. Ekene Enefe, during a breakfast meeting between the Investment Monitoring Committee, RMAFC and Stakeholders in Nigeria's Oil and Gas Sector preparatory to the oil and gas investment summit scheduled for Beijing China

Catholic priest lauds Igbiniedion at 92, says legacies cut across generations**BENIN CITY**

Edo Catholic Priest, Rev. Fr. Andrew Obinyan, has hailed the Esama of Benin Kingdom, Chief Gabriel Igbiniedion, at 92, and describing him as a revered living legend.

In a birthday message to the Esama, the Catholic priest declared that the Esama as an elder statesman, had remained relevant across generations through vision, resilience, service, and enduring impact.

In his words, "Igbiniedion had built bridges rather than barriers, maintaining an open-door policy that enabled people from diverse backgrounds to access him freely without difficulty."

Obiyan added: "In spite of attaining extraordinary heights, Igbiniedion has remained humble and grounded, never allowing wealth, influence, or social standing to distance him from people and God."

"Your life reminds us that greatness is not measured by how far one rises, but by how closely one remains connected to people, and God," Obiyan said.

The Catholic Priest further remarked that Igbiniedion's

humility had illuminated his accomplishments, while his generosity had deepened the meaning of his success and endeared him to generations of people.

According to him, Chief Igbiniedion's philanthropy and commitment to humanity had transformed lives, created opportunities, inspired hope, and positively impacted countless individuals and communities across Nigeria.

"Igbiniedion's legacy extended beyond monuments, institutions, and material accomplishments while his greatest footprints remained deeply within lives he touched most personally. He said.

"History will remember you; future generations will never forget your journey; and those who encountered your kindness will continue to tell your remarkable story". Obiyan further said.

In congratulating the Esama of Benin Kingdom, on attaining 92 "remarkable years", he expressed great joy that himself and others are blessed to have witnessed and greatly benefited from the wisdom and benevolence of Igbiniedion.

The Catholic Priest prayed that Almighty God preserve Igbiniedion in sound health, strengthen him with vitality, and crown his remaining years with abundant grace and joy.

CNG affordability, critical for clean mobility says Pi-CNG/EV boss**ABUJA**

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Presidential Initiative on Compressed Natural Gas and Electric Vehicles (Pi-CNG/EV), Ismael Ahmed says the availability of CNG is critical to making clean mobility affordable to Nigerians.

He made the remark in Abuja on Tuesday when members of the CNG/EV Users Forum paid him a courtesy visit in his office.

According to Ahmed, the development of CNG infrastructure was a complex process involving several stages, from gas production and processing to transportation, compression and distribution.

In his words, "the government is building a new industry from the ground up, rather than merely implementing an intervention in one segment of the value chain."

He noted that transportation accounted for a significant portion of household expenditure, with Nigerians spending between 15 per cent and 25 per cent of their income on transportation -- depending on their location and mode of transport.

"Reducing the cost of transportation costs had therefore become important, particularly

amid the impact of rising global oil prices on the domestic economy."

He further remarked that the misconceptions about CNG, including fears that its cylinders were similar to LPG cylinders and could easily explode, remained a major challenge to adoption.

"Changing people's perception and energy habits would take time and require sustained public awareness, the Pi-CNG boss said.

He further noted that investors needed to be encouraged to commit funds to CNG infrastructure to ensure that consumers could access the product after converting their vehicles.

According to him, government alone cannot finance the entire CNG value chain because the industry requires huge investments and competes with other national priorities for limited public resources.

"Ahmed said the cost of gas production, pipelines, compression stations, transportation, daughter stations, land acquisition, licensing and establishment of filling stations all formed part of the investment required to deliver CNG to consumers." He said

He argued that affordability could not be separated from

availability and noting that a "cheaper product that was difficult to access would ultimately lose its economic advantage."

"The success of the initiative should therefore be measured by its impact on people's daily lives rather than only by conventional economic indicators. That is my economic index," he said.

Ahmed cited the experience of a vehicle owner who previously spent about N300,000 weekly on petrol while travelling between Kano and Karai.

He said after converting the vehicle to CNG, the owner spent about N22,000 to cover a similar trip, saving about N80,000 per journey in spite of the initial conversion cost of about N1.5 million.

"Such savings demonstrated the economic potential of CNG and the need for users to understand the long-term benefits of conversion.

Ahmed, however pointed out that the initiative was not aimed at replacing petrol and diesel immediately, stressing that "Nigeria would continue to operate a mix of energy sources, including CNG, electric vehicles, petrol and diesel.

He applauded the establishment of the CNG/EV Users Forum, saying feedback from users was important in improving the clean-mobility programme.

NEWS

Tinubu to commission Kaa-Ataba Bridge in November

Precious Agbejesi

RIVERS

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is expected to commission the 1.2-kilometre Kaa-Ataba Bridge linking Khana and Andoni Local Government Areas of Rivers State in November, the Minister of Regional Development, Engr. Abubakar Momoh, has said.

Momoh disclosed this during an inspection tour of the bridge, describing the project as one of the longest bridges in the Niger Delta region.

The Minister was accompanied by the Managing

Director of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Dr Samuel Ogbuku, the Executive Director Projects, Dr Victor Antai, the Executive Director Corporate Services, Hon. Ifedayo Abegunde, and other officials of the Commission.

He expressed satisfaction

with the level of work on the project, saying the development demonstrated the Federal Government's commitment to improving infrastructure and stimulating economic growth in the Niger Delta.

According to Momoh, the project also showed the ad-

ministration's determination to complete major infrastructure projects across the region. He commended the NDDC Board and Management for responding to President Tinubu's directive to execute projects that would have a direct impact on communities.

"I have good news to trans-

mit to Mr President. I am hopeful that Mr President will commission the project in November," Momoh said.

He further praised the use of an indigenous contractor, noting that the completion of the bridge would contribute significantly to the development of the surrounding communities.

**INTER-FAITH PRAYER:**

From left: Chairman, Conference 57, Mr Sesan Olowa; Chairman All Progressives Congress (APC) Lagos, Pastor Cornelius Ojelabi; Gov. Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State; his Deputy and APC Governorship candidate, Dr Obafemi Hamzat and his running mate, Princess Damilola Sonayon-James, during the Inter-Faith Prayer for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (PBAT)/Kadri Obafemi Hamzat (KOH) and all APC Candidates organized by the APC Campaign Secretariat in Lagos.

Appeal Court upholds 400-year jail term for ex-NEXIM Bank boss over N2.4bn fraud

EKHABAFE BELOVED

ABUJA

The Court of Appeal sitting in Abuja has upheld the conviction of former Managing Director of the Nigeria Export-Import Bank (NEXIM Bank), Robert Orya, over a N2.4 billion fraud case.

The three-member panel, led by Justice Muhammed Danjuma, unanimously dismissed Orya's appeal challenging the judgment of the Federal Capital Territory High Court, Abuja. Other members of the panel were Justices Ntong Festus Ntong

and Ele Ejo Enenche.

In the judgment delivered on Tuesday, Justice Danjuma held that the appeal lacked merit after reviewing the submissions of counsel and the records of the lower court. The appellate court subsequently affirmed the judgment delivered by Justice F.E. Messiri on February 5, 2026.

Orya was convicted on 49 counts brought against him by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), bordering on obtaining money by false pretences, forgery and advance fee fraud involving approximately N2.4 billion.

The trial court had sentenced him to 10 years' im-

prisonment on each of the 49 counts, amounting to a cumulative sentence of 490 years. However, the sentences were ordered to run concurrently, meaning they are served at the same time.

Dissatisfied with the decision, Orya approached the Court of Appeal seeking to overturn his conviction and sentence. The appellate court, however, found no basis to interfere with the decision of the lower court.

Justice Danjuma said the issues raised by Orya in his appeal had been resolved in favour of the respondent and against the appellant. He consequently dismissed the appeal and affirmed the February 5 judgment of the FCT

High Court.

The EFCC had arraigned Orya in 2021 over the alleged offences. During the trial, the prosecution maintained that it had established its case beyond reasonable doubt, leading to his conviction on all 49 counts.

The latest ruling brings another legal setback for the former bank chief, whose appeal had sought to challenge the findings of the trial court.

Orya served as Managing Director of NEXIM Bank from 2009 to 2016. He was first appointed to the position on August 14, 2009, by the late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua and was reappointed by former President Goodluck Jonathan on August 18, 2014.

Aondokaa pledges N2bn education fund to support Benue students

ODINMA AMARACHI

BENUE

Former Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Michael Aondokaa, has promised to establish a N2 billion education fund to support students from Benue State.

Aondokaa made the promise while speaking on the need to improve access to education and reduce the financial challenges faced by students in the state. He said the proposed fund would provide assistance to students who may struggle to pay school fees and meet other educational expenses.

According to him, education remains one of the most important tools for developing young people and preparing them to contribute meaningfully to society. He stressed that financial difficulties should not prevent students from completing their education or achieving their career goals.

Aondokaa said the N2 billion fund would be designed to reach students who genuinely need financial support. He added that the initiative would also contribute to the development of Benue State by investing in the education and future of its young people.

He called on relevant stakeholders, including government officials, private individuals and organisations, to support efforts aimed at improving the education sector in the state.

The former minister further urged students to take their studies seriously and make good use of every opportunity available to them. He said the development of human capital was necessary for the economic and social progress of Benue.

The proposed education fund is expected to provide relief for students and families facing the rising cost of education, while encouraging more young people in the state to pursue higher education.

IMION DG blames logistics for blue economy challenges

FAVOUR OBADIGIE

LAGOS

The Director-General of the International Maritime Institute of Nigeria (IMION), Rear Admiral Thaddeus Udofia (rtd.), has identified inefficient logistics and weak trade facilitation as major challenges to Nigeria's efforts to maximise its blue economy potential.

Udofia made this known in Apapa, Lagos, while declaring open a three-day executive training programme on logistics and trade facilitation for blue economy growth.

He said efficient logistics was essential to reducing the cost of doing business, strengthening supply chains and improving Nigeria's competitiveness in international trade.

According to him, Nigeria has significant maritime resources that could contribute to economic growth if properly harnessed.

Udofia identified Nigeria's coastline, inland waterways,

creeks, estuaries and other maritime resources as important components of the country's blue economy.

He, however, stressed that the country's maritime resources could not be fully converted into economic benefits without an efficient system for moving people, goods, information and services.

The IMION director-general called for stronger collaboration among relevant stakeholders in the maritime and logistics sectors.

He also advocated improved trade facilitation, digitalisation, transparency and better coordination among agencies and operators within the sector.

Udofia said the training programme was aimed at equipping participants with knowledge and practical skills needed to improve logistics and trade facilitation and contribute to the development of Nigeria's blue economy.

AGILE begins ATM card distribution to 22,696 Jigawa pupils

JIGAWA

The Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment (AGILE) project has begun distributing Automated Teller Machine (ATM) cards to 33,696 pupils in Jigawa State.

The cards are being distributed to beneficiaries under the Conditional Cash Transfer Component 2.3 of the programme.

The Deputy Lead of CCT Component 2.3, Binta Gambo, disclosed this during the inauguration of the distribution exercise in Dutse on Monday.

Gambo said the beneficiaries were drawn from two cohorts, comprising 10,979 pupils under the 2024/2025 academic cycle and 22,717 under the 2025/2026 cycle.

She said 14,959 ATM cards were distributed in the first batch of the exercise across the state's 27 local government areas.

According to her, the distribution exercise was being conducted through National Identification Number (NIN) verification as a key requirement for authenticating beneficiaries.

Gambo explained that the

money was intended as educational support to enable the pupils to purchase essential items needed when returning to school.

She listed school uniforms, bags, books and other basic educational materials among the items the funds were intended to cover.

She said First City Monument Bank (FCMB) and Jigawa Savings and Loan Limited were facilitating the exercise.

Gambo urged parents and caregivers to use the money for its intended educational purpose and avoid withdrawing it for unrelated needs.

The Jigawa State AGILE Project Coordinator, Babawuro Fate, said the intervention was designed to address financial barriers that could prevent girls from accessing and remaining in school.

He assured that the distribution process would be transparent, organised and accountable.

Fate commended project personnel, financial institutions, security agencies, local government education authorities and School-Based Management Committees for their support.

NEWS

Keyamo condemns Obi's Benue blockade, calls for media neutrality

ABUJA

The Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo, has called on the media to end what he described as partisan narratives in reporting political confrontations, following the reported blockade of the presi-

dential candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress, Peter Obi, in Benue State.

Keyamo, in a statement sent to our correspondent, condemned the incident, saying politicians should be allowed to move freely and campaign without intimidation or violence.

Obi was reportedly prevented

by a group of youths from proceeding to Yelwata in the Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, where he had planned to visit families affected by the deadly June 2025 attack in the community.

The incident has since generated controversy, with Obi and his party alleging that the pro-

testers were sponsored, while the Benue State Government denied involvement and said it was unaware of the visit.

The police in Benue also confirmed that they were aware of Obi's movement and had provided security for the visit, but said the reason the youths blocked the convoy remained unknown and

that the matter was being investigated.

The NDC had described the incident as unacceptable, alleging that suspected hired thugs blocked Obi's convoy and prevented him from accessing Yelwata. The party said Obi had gone to the community to commiserate with families affected by the killings.

Reacting to the development, Keyamo said the incident should be condemned irrespective of the political affiliation of those responsible.

"Yesterday's report of the prevention of the Presidential candidate of the NDC, Mr. Peter Obi, by some angry protesters from

proceeding to the venue of his visit in Benue State must be condemned by all men of goodwill," he said.

He said it was immaterial whether the protest was caused by internal disagreements within the NDC, as suggested by the Benue State Government, or whether it was allegedly sponsored by the APC or another rival political party.

"Whether the protest was as a result of internal squabbles within the NDC (as posited by the Benue State Government) or sponsored by the APC or any other rival party, this should not be part of our democracy," Keyamo said.

**BREAKFAST MEETING:**

From left: Managing Partner, Deutsche Partners Holding (DPH), Onoha Nnachi; Lead Consultant to the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON), Sen. Ubanesse Igbeke; Chairman, Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), Mohammed Bello; and the Chairman, Investment Committee of RMAFC, Hon. Ekene Enefe, during a breakfast meeting between the Investment Monitoring Committee, RMAFC and Stakeholders in Nigeria's Oil and Gas Sector preparatory to the oil and gas investment summit scheduled for Beijing China on Wednesday.

WAEC results row deepens as police invite official

ABUJA

The Nigeria Police Force National Cybercrime Centre has invited a staff member of the West African Examinations Council, Olanrewaju Fadehan, to appear in Abuja over an alleged case of cyberstalking and criminal defamation.

This comes as the Lagos State High Court restrained Fadehan from publishing or circulating alleged defamatory statements concerning the examination body and its Director-General, Dr Amos Dangut.

The police invitation, signed by the Director of the NPF-NCCC, AIG Akaninyene Ezima, directed Fadehan to

report to the centre in Abuja at 10 am on Wednesday for an interview over an alleged case of cyberstalking and criminal defamation.

Reacting to the developments, Fadehan said he had received the court papers and was aware of the injunction.

"They've even done that already. At least, they sent me a court paper yesterday (Monday). That one is an interim injunction that I should not post anything any longer," he said.

On the police invitation, he added, "They're taking me to the cybercrime centre in Abuja. Tomorrow (Wednesday), I'm supposed to appear before them."

On Monday, Justice Yetunde Adesanya, in an interim

order made in Suit No. LD/ADR/6656/2026, restrained Fadehan from "publishing, broadcasting, circulating or disseminating" any "defamatory, maligning and/or injurious falsehood" concerning WAEC, its examinations, results and certificates, or Dangut's "character and/or integrity."

The order covers publications in video, audio, written or other formats on any platform, including YouTube and WhatsApp. It is to "abate after seven (7) days" unless renewed by the court.

WAEC and Dangut are seeking N500m general damages for libel, N300m aggravated and exemplary damages and N25m costs, totalling

N825m.

They are also seeking an order compelling Fadehan to retract the alleged defamatory publications, issue a public apology and permanently remove them from all platforms.

Fadehan, who is Head of Examinations at WAEC's office covering Anambra, had, in viral videos, called for a review of the recently released 2026 West African Senior School Certificate Examination results, citing alleged irregularities.

He also made allegations of financial impropriety against the council's management, including issues concerning the supply of calculators, students' identification cards and charges imposed on candidates and other service seekers.

Army reshuffles top leadership, names new theatre commander

ABUJA

The Nigerian Army has announced a strategic reshuffle of its senior leadership, with the redeployment of several generals and brigadier generals to key command, operational and staff appointments across the Service.

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lieutenant General Waidi Shaibu, approved the postings as part of efforts to enhance operational effectiveness, strengthen leadership and align the Army's command structure with the country's evolving security environment.

In a post on the Nigerian Army's X handle on Wednesday, the Acting Director, Army Public Relations, Colonel Apolonia Anele, said the exercise prioritised critical operational theatres and strategic appointments to ensure that the "right leadership, experience and ex-

pertise" were positioned to deliver decisive results.

Under the new arrangement, Major General IA Ajo-se has moved from the Army Headquarters Department of Army Operations to the Theatre Command, Joint Task Force North East, Operation HADIN KAI, as Theatre Commander.

Major General AE Abubakar, who previously served under Operation HADIN KAI, has been redeployed to the Nigerian Army Heritage and Future Centre as Dean, Faculty of Operational Research.

Major General AM Alechenu has also moved from Defence Headquarters Garrison to the Nigerian Army Heritage and Future Centre, while Major General RT Utsaha has been redeployed from the Army Headquarters Department of Army Standards and Evaluation to Defence Headquarters Garrison as Commander.

NDLEA arrests fugitive kingpin over 49.7kg heroin haul

ABUJA

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency has arrested and brought back to Nigeria the suspected kingpin behind the 49.70kg heroin shipment intercepted at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, in 2024.

The NDLEA disclosed this in a statement signed by its Director, Media and Advocacy, Femi Babafemi, in Abuja on Wednesday.

The suspect, 52-year-old Festus Ibewuike, also known as Chidibest Ibewuike, was "arrested at the airport in Cotonou, Benin Republic on Wednesday 2nd September 2026" after actionable intelligence led security operatives to him.

The arrest ended Ibewuike's attempt to evade the authorities by moving between Mozambique and Nigeria through Benin Republic. The NDLEA said he had relocated to Mozambique, where he operated a hotel business as a front.

Seized drugs. Photo credit: NDLEA

After his arrest, the agency worked with INTERPOL in Nigeria and Benin Republic to secure his return. According to the NDLEA, "a team of NDLEA operatives" was deployed to Cotonou on Friday, September 4, to take custody of him before he was conveyed to Nigeria.

Ibewuike had been declared wanted after the NDLEA seized 49.70kg of heroin concealed in cartons of metal-cutting machines at the Import Shed of the MMIA cargo terminal in February 2024.

Bank manager killed by kidnappers in Imo, as FUTO students abducted

OWERRI

A branch manager of Polaris Bank, identified as Mr Ossy, has been shot dead by suspected kidnappers after he reportedly resisted an attack within the premises of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Imo State.

The incident occurred on Sunday evening while the banker, who was based in Owerri, was reportedly taking his children to the university.

Two female students were

also allegedly abducted by the fleeing gunmen during the incident.

Sources said the late banker had gone to drop off his children, who are students of FUTO, when he was accosted by the gunmen.

However, the bank, in a statement signed by the Head, Brand Management & Corporate Communication, Rasheed Bolarinwa said the deceased was reportedly taking his children to the university, when he was attacked by hoodlums.

The bank said the children

managed to escape from the scene, but the manager was not as fortunate.

"We are deeply saddened by the tragic death of our Branch Manager and extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, colleagues, and loved ones during this difficult time.

"The unfortunate incident occurred on Sunday, when he was accosted by the hoodlums, and while the children managed to escape from the scene, he was not that lucky.

"We understand that the matter is being investigated by

the relevant law enforcement agencies, and we trust that the circumstances surrounding the incident will be thoroughly established.

"Our thoughts and prayers remain with the family of the deceased, and we respectfully urge the public to allow the authorities to complete their investigations," the bank stated.

Meanwhile, the management of FUTO confirmed that a visitor was fatally shot within the university campus during the incident.

**ROAD PROJECT:**

From left: Baale Ajaguro Owutu of Ikorodu, Chief Osipitan Iwofun; Permanent Secretary, Office of Infrastructure, Mr Olutokunbo Oyenuga and the Chairman Ikorodu-West Local Council Development Area, Mr Sulaimon Olanrewaju, during the opening of the Agric-Isawo-Konu-Arepo Road project in Lagos.

Reps probe NNPC, oil firms over 432bn NMDPRA debt

ABUJA

The House of Representatives Public Accounts Committee has opened an investigation into outstanding regulatory debts owed to the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority by the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited and oil companies, with liabilities under review put at 432.07bn.

The investigation followed findings in the Auditor-General's annual audit reports on unpaid petroleum-related obligations accruing to the regulatory authority.

The Auditor-General's 2023 Annual Audit Report put the combined indebtedness of NNPC and oil companies at 392.73bn.

Of the amount, NNPC accounted for 162.46bn, while oil companies operating under the Depot and Petroleum Products Marketers Association of Nigeria, Major Marketers Association of Nigeria and Major

Energy Marketers Association of Nigeria owed 230.27bn.

The liabilities were linked to Balancing Allowance, National Transport Average, the one per cent Midstream and Downstream Gas Infrastructure Fund, as well as legacy obligations arising from importation, coastal and credit transactions.

The Auditor-General's 2024 report subsequently placed outstanding indebtedness at 432.07bn, excluding liabilities attributed to NNPC.

Further submissions by the NMDPRA to the committee showed that 146 oil companies operating under DAPPMAN, MEMAN and MOMAN owed the authority 327.53bn as of 2025.

The committee said the outstanding obligations covered several years, with some dating back to 2017, raising concerns over the effectiveness of the mechanisms used by the regulatory authority to assess, collect and recover the funds.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, the Chairman

of the committee, Bamidele Salam, said the probe was aimed at establishing the facts behind the outstanding liabilities and ensuring that all government revenue due from the affected entities was accounted for and recovered.

He warned companies and institutions summoned by the committee against failing to appear with the appropriate representatives and relevant records.

"Any company invited by this committee must respect the people's parliament of the Federal Republic of Nigeria by honouring the summons with appropriate representation and all relevant documents. We are not here to witch-hunt anybody; our responsibility is to establish the facts, protect public revenue and ensure that every naira due to government is properly accounted for," Salam said.

The committee is expected to examine the basis on which the debts were assessed, the periods covered, payments made by the affected companies, outstanding balances and actions taken by the NMDPRA to re-

cover the funds.

It will also seek explanations on "why liabilities accumulated over a number of years remained outstanding and whether enforcement measures were deployed against defaulting companies."

The probe comes amid heightened scrutiny of revenue generation, collection and remittance in Nigeria's petroleum industry following the implementation of the Petroleum Industry Act, which overhauled the legal and regulatory framework governing the sector.

The NMDPRA was established under the PIA to regulate Nigeria's midstream and downstream petroleum operations. Its responsibilities include the regulation of petroleum product processing, transportation and distribution, domestic gas operations, infrastructure and other activities within the midstream and downstream segments.

The committee said its inquiry was part of the National Assembly's constitutional oversight responsibility and was not intended to target any particular company or institution.

Police hunt armed robbers in Delta community, recover gun

WARRI

The Delta State Police Command has launched a manhunt for two masked men who allegedly attacked a 48-year-old man in his residence in the Effurun area of Uvwie Local Government Area, recovering a locally made firearm abandoned by the suspects.

The suspects, who were armed with a locally made shotgun, allegedly broke into the victim's residence in the Charlisco area of NPA Express Road, Effurun, at about 5:30am on September 4, 2026.

The command's spokesman, SP Bright Edefe, said the victim confronted and wrestled with one of the suspects carrying the firearm, during which the gun broke.

He said the second suspect struck the victim on the forehead before both men fled, abandoning the firearm.

Edefe said, "In a courageous act, the victim confronted and wrestled with the suspect carrying the firearm, during which the gun broke."

"The second suspect struck the victim on the forehead before both suspects fled, abandoning the firearm."

According to the PPRO, the incident was reported at the Ekpan Division at about 6:14am, following which the Divisional Police Officer deployed operatives to the scene.

He said, "Upon receipt of the report, the Divisional Police Officer immediately deployed operatives to the scene, where the broken locally made firearm was recovered."

The victim was subsequently referred to a hospital for treatment, while police operatives commenced efforts to track down the fleeing suspects.

Meanwhile, the Commissioner of Police in the state, CP Samuel E. Erale, commended the victim for his courage in confronting the suspected robbers and assured him that the suspects would be tracked down and arrested.

In another development, operatives of the Special Anti-Kidnapping Unit, Ubulu-Uku, acting on credible intelligence, arrested a 40-year-old suspected drug peddler, Joy Anthony, in Agbor on September 6, 2026.

Edefe said the operatives carried out a covert operation at about 5am and subsequently executed a search warrant at Anthony's residence in Agbor-Obi.

Education minister hails NYSC for using tech to fight fraud

ABUJA

The Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, has commended the National Youth Service Corps for deploying technology and digital innovations to curb fraudulent activities and improve the efficiency of its operations.

Alausa gave the commendation when the Director-General of the NYSC, Brigadier General Olakunle Nafiu, paid him a courtesy visit in Abuja, according to a post on the scheme's X handle on Wednesday.

The minister particularly

praised the NYSC leadership for the transformation recorded by the scheme, especially its adoption of technology in the registration and deployment of corps members.

"I would like to commend you for all the transformation that you have brought to NYSC and the use of technology to ensure seamless operations and deployment of Corps Members," he said.

Alausa recalled that the NYSC's decision to embrace technology in its registration process initially faced resistance from some sections of the public but noted that the digitisation had significantly improved the process.

Eno pledges support for Akwa Ibom power project

AKWA IBOM

Akwa Ibom State Governor, Umo Eno, has assured the Niger Delta Power Holding Company of Nigeria of the state government's intervention to ensure the completion of the National Integrated Power Project located along the Ikot Ekpen-Ikot Abasi axis of the state.

The governor gave the assurance in Uyo when he received a delegation of the NDPHC, led by its Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Jennifer Adighije, at the Government House, in the state capital.

He noted that completing the transmission project would significantly boost power supply in the state and contribute to

the development of the nation's power sector.

He said, "The completion of this project is critical to our industrialization drive and to providing stable power for our people. Government will intervene to ensure outstanding issues are resolved."

Governor Eno said the state's intervention was aimed at facilitating the completion of the 330kV transmission line and improving electricity supply across Akwa Ibom.

In her remarks, NDPHC Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer commended Eno for his willingness to intervene, describing the gesture as a significant complement to the development efforts of the administration.

"I sincerely commend the

governor for the willingness to intervene. This kind gesture will significantly complement the development efforts of your administration. We are ready to collaborate with the state," Adighije said.

She disclosed that non-payment of wayleave compensation to members of communities affected by the project had stalled its completion.

"This project which commenced about 20 years ago has faced several challenges, particularly those relating to compensation with host community," Adighije said.

She explained that the delegation's visit was primarily to brief the governor on the challenges confronting the project and to seek the state government's intervention to facilitate its completion.

Oborevori's aide challenges Deltans to measure impact by improved movement

AJUWA VICTOR**ASABA**

The transformation of Delta State's road infrastructure under Governor Sheriff Oborevori should be judged not by the number of projects announced, but by effective movement of communities and people with one another and the commitment to remove long-standing transportation bottlenecks. These were the words of the Governor's Special Adviser on Government Affairs, Hon. Chief Jite Brown during an interactive session with newsmen in Asaba. Brown, in a detailed assessment of the administration's infrastructure interventions under

the MORE Agenda, challenged Deltans to look beyond project figures and ask a more fundamental question: "Is movement across Delta State materially different from what it was on May 29, 2023?"

According to him, developments across major road corridors, flyover projects and bridge connections provide evidence that the answer is yes.

He said the significance of the administration's infrastructure programme lies in its practical impact on the daily lives of citizens, arguing that roads should be measured by the journeys they shorten, bridges by the isolation they end and flyovers by the traffic conflicts they eliminate.

"Roads are not built for statistics. They are built for movement," Brown said, stressing that infra-

structure only becomes meaningful when its benefits are experienced by the people.

He identified the Ughelli-Asaba dualisation as one of the major projects illustrating the impact of infrastructure continuity across the state.

While acknowledging that the project predates the Oborevori administration, Brown said major sections, particularly Sectors C1 and C2, have reached completion under the present government, with work continuing on Sector A.

He described the corridor as a critical statewide spine linking communities across Delta North, Central and South, while carrying people, goods and economic activity between different parts of the state.

NEWS**2027: Police warn political parties against violence in Sokoto****SOKOTO**

The Sokoto State Commissioner of Police, Hayatu Shafa, has warned political parties and their supporters against violence, hate speech, fake news and other acts capable of undermining the 2027 elections.

Shafa gave the warning on Wednesday during a meeting with chairmen and representatives of political parties in the state, where he urged them to

embrace peaceful campaigns and cooperate with security agencies to ensure credible and violence-free elections.

The commissioner said the forthcoming elections should not be viewed as a battle, but as a contest of ideas that should be determined by the electorate.

"We are gathered here today not as rivals but as custodians of Sokoto State's future. The elections ahead are not a war to be won by force. They are a

contest of ideas to be won by the will of the people," he said.

He outlined five key areas for engagement with the political parties: peaceful conduct, accountability, zero tolerance for violence and illegal conduct, cooperation with security agencies, and recognition of the security challenges facing the state.

Shafa urged political leaders to discourage abusive campaigns, fake news and character assassination, while calling

on them to allow their manifestos and policies to speak for them.

"We must move from the politics of insult to politics of issues. There is no room for hate speech, fake news or character assassination," he said.

The CP warned party leaders that they would be held responsible for the conduct of their supporters, including youth groups and social media influencers.

"If your supporters, be they

youth wings or social media influencers, disturb the peace, we will hold you personally accountable. The days of looking the other way are over," he said.

He also warned against the destruction of campaign posters and banners, display of weapons and the use of private security outfits during rallies, stressing that the police would enforce the Electoral Act 2022.

"The Nigerian Police Force will enforce the Electoral Act 2022 without fear or favour. If you break the law, you will face the consequences," Shafa said.

He called on political parties to provide security agencies with relevant information on emerging threats and potential flashpoints, saying security

was a collective responsibility.

Shafa further cautioned politicians against exposing voters to danger in areas affected by banditry, including Sabon Birni, Rabah, Kebbe, Tureta and Isa axes.

"Protect the voters, do not endanger them," he said.

Responding, the Sokoto State APC Chairman, Haruna Adiya, said the party was prepared to comply with all laws governing the elections.

Adiya said the APC would sensitise its supporters on the need to conduct themselves peacefully and within the law. He added that the party would support the police command and was ready to sign the proposed peace accord when presented.

**CONFERENCE:**

President/Chairman of Council, Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN), Dr Dele Alabi (L) presenting a souvenir to the representative of President Bola Tinubu/Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr Taiwo Oyedele, during the CBIN's 19th Annual Banking and Finance Conference, in Abuja on Tuesday.

Minister warns tertiary institutions against borrowing staff, equipment for accreditation**ABUJA**

The Federal Government has commenced moves to overhaul the accreditation system for tertiary institutions in the country, with the Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, warning institutions against presenting borrowed staff, equipment and facilities during accreditation exercises.

Alausa said the government was seeking to transform accreditation from a periodic exercise into a continuous, digital and data-driven quality

assurance system capable of verifying the actual capacity of universities, polytechnics and colleges of education.

The minister spoke on Wednesday during the inauguration of the Ministerial Committee on Strengthening Accreditation and Quality Assurance Systems for Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria.

He said the existing system must be strengthened to make it "more transparent, efficient, evidence-based and difficult to manipulate," stressing that accreditation should provide an accurate picture of an institution's capacity to deliver

quality education.

According to him, institutions should no longer be allowed to create a temporary impression of their capacity merely to satisfy an accreditation team.

"An institution should not be able to prepare a temporary picture of itself simply for the purpose of an accreditation visit. Sadly, this is what persists in the majority of instances," Alausa said.

He said the government must address situations where academic and non-academic personnel were temporarily moved or presented for accreditation and subsequently returned to other institutions.

"We must similarly address the temporary movement, borrowing or presentation of equipment, laboratory facilities, workshop resources, library materials and other infrastructure solely for accreditation purposes," he said.

Alausa stressed that whatever an accreditation team sees and verifies must represent the "actual and sustainable capacity" of an institution.

He said the government would deploy technology to strengthen the verification of infrastructure, equipment and personnel, including the use of geospatial mapping, geotagging and digital identification technologies.

Delta APC chieftain recommits to Oborevwo's re-election, launches house to house campaign**AJUWA VICTOR****ASABA**

The Senior Special Assistant (SSA) to the Governor of Delta State on Youth Mobilization, Chief Lucky Abuah (Bullet Empire), has unveiled a grassroots-oriented House-to-House campaign strategy aimed at securing the re-election of Governor Sheriff Francis Oborevwo and other All Progressives Congress (APC) candidates in the 2027 general elections.

According to Chief Abuah,

the campaign is designed to take the achievements of the Oborevwo administration directly to the people, ensuring that voters are adequately informed about the developmental strides recorded across the state under the Governor's MORE Agenda.

Research and public opinion across Delta State indicate several reasons why many citizens may support Governor Oborevwo's re-election. Since assuming office, the Governor has prioritized infrastructure development, road construction,

healthcare delivery, education, youth empowerment, and rural development. Communities that were previously neglected have witnessed increased government attention through the construction and rehabilitation of roads, schools, and healthcare facilities.

The administration's commitment to inclusive governance has also earned commendation from various stakeholders. Through strategic partnerships and investments, the government has continued to create opportunities

for youths and women, while promoting peace and stability across the three senatorial districts of the state.

Chief Abuah noted that the house-to-house campaign strategy will focus on direct engagement with residents, allowing campaign volunteers to interact with voters, listen to their concerns, and present factual information on government achievements. He emphasized that grassroots mobilization remains one of the most effective means of political communication, especially in rural communities.

Omoike Pledges Basic Amenities For Arewa, Hausawa Communities In Etsako West**LAMAI CASSIUS****AUCHI**

The Executive Chairman of Etsako West Local Government Area, Hon. Romeo Omoike Alaoye, has assured Arewa cattle dealers and leaders of the Hausawa community of his administration's commitment to inclusive governance and the provision of basic amenities.

Hon. Omoike gave the assurance when a delegation of Arewa cattle dealers and Hausawa community leaders, led by Alhaji Ahmed Rufai, paid him a courtesy visit in his office in Auchi.

The Chairman thanked the delegation for the visit and appreciated the support for his administration.

He urged members of the communities to maintain peaceful relations with their host communities, stressing that peaceful coexistence was essential to achieving sustainable development and harmonious living.

The Chairman also called on the community leaders to work closely with the government and security agencies to identify and isolate individuals whose activities could undermine public peace and security.

According to him, "the responsibility of maintaining security and peaceful coexistence requires the cooperation of all residents, irrespective of ethnic or cultural background."

He further assured them that his administration would give due attention to their concerns and urged the leaders to prioritise their needs and present them in their order of priority to enable government respond effectively.

"The administration is committed to listening to the concerns of all communities in Etsako West and will ensure that development initiatives are guided by the needs of the people," he said.

Earlier, the leader of the delegation, Alhaji Ahmed Rufai, congratulated the Chairman on his victory and assumption of office. He pledged the loyalty and support of the Arewa and Hausawa communities to the administration.

Alhaji Rufai also appealed to the Chairman for the provision of basic amenities in areas where members of the communities reside and carry out their businesses. "My father was a classroom teacher who rose to become a headmaster at the Government Science School founded by LCCN," he added.

Pa Matthew Orukpe Okojie passes**BENIN CITY**

The family of Orukpe Okojie of Idumhunje, Eguare, Oguwa, Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State has announced the passing of their father, Late Matthew Orukpe Okojie.

He was aged 79 years old.

According to a burial notice from the family, Pa Matthew Orukpe Okojie would be interred in his compound, 56

Idumhunje-Ibhijie, Eguare, Oguwa, Esan West Local Government Area of the state on Friday after a Funeral Mass at the Saint John, The Baptist Catholic Church, Oguwa.



NEWS**FOREIGN**

Hong Kong's first leader after British handover dies

Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's first leader after the city returned to Chinese rule, has died at the age of 89.

The former shipping scion took over the reins from the last British Governor Chris Patten in July 1997 when the UK handed Hong Kong back to China, ending more than 150 years of British control.

Tung's rocky tenure was marked by the Asian Financial Crisis, two major epidemics, and historic protests which attracted criticism of his administration. He eventually resigned in 2005.

Tung died on Tuesday night surrounded by loved ones, local media reported. His office described him as a man "devoted to his country and its people".

Born in Shanghai in 1937, Tung graduated with a mechanical engineering degree from Liverpool University in the UK before moving to the US, where he worked at General Electric for almost a decade.

In 1969, he moved to Hong Kong and worked in his father's shipping conglomerate, the Orient Overseas, eventually taking over the reins in 1979.

His political career began in 1992 when he was appointed a member of Patten's executive council.

Despite having little political experience, Tung was believed to be handpicked by Beijing to lead Hong Kong after the handover. He was seen as a loyalist, especially after China's state-run banks helped rescue his family business during a global slump in the mid-1980s.

During a reception at the Great Hall of the People in January 1996, China's then-presi-

dent Jiang Zemin walked across a packed room to shake Tung's hands – a widely photographed gesture that at the time famously signalled Beijing's backing of Tung for the top job.

Tung Chee-hwa (right) took over from the last British governor Chris Patten in 1997.

The Asian Financial Crisis hit shortly after Tung took over, which sent home prices diving. His administration was also beset by a series of public health challenges, including a bird flu outbreak from 1997 to 2002 and the 2003 outbreak of Sars, also known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

But Tung's biggest political challenge took place in July 2003 during his second term, when half a million Hong-kongers took to the streets to protest against a proposed national security law they feared would threaten their civic rights.

His administration abandoned the proposed legislation following the massive outcry, which also contributed to Tung stepping down in March 2005.

At the time his declining health was cited as a reason – but some said he was pressured by Beijing to step down.

Beijing ultimately imposed a national security law on Hong Kong in 2020, which authorities have argued is necessary to maintain stability. Critics however have called it "the end of Hong Kong" and say it has created a climate of fear in the city.

Tung's last public outing was in July 2021, at an event marking the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party. He underwent heart surgery months later, according to reports.



HONG KONG'S FIRST LEADER:

Tung Chee-hwa was the first chief executive of Hong Kong following the 1997 handover.

Oil hits \$100 a barrel for first time since July after US and Houthi strikes

Oil prices rose past \$100 (£74) a barrel on Wednesday after further strikes in the conflict between the US and Iran and continuing Houthi attacks in Saudi Arabia.

In back and forth attacks, the US hit five Iranian tankers in reprisal strikes after Tehran targeted one of its warships.

Brent crude – which is the global benchmark for prices – has not been as expensive since the end of July, when a ceasefire between Iran and the US collapsed.

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi movement also attacked oil facilities in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday and have been targeting tankers in the Red Sea.

Brent crude did dip back down to \$99.90 a barrel, but any fresh flare-ups in the Middle East could see it pushed higher again.

The US strikes on the five Iranian tankers saw four in the Gulf of Oman linked to Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps

(IRGC) hit as well as another near Kharg Island.

Tehran responded by launching missiles at a US base in Jordan – most of which were shot down – and said it attacked two US vessels and eight oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz.

The Houthis and Saudi Arabia have also been exchanging strikes since July after their own informal ceasefire unravelled.

On Monday the Houthis accused Saudi Arabia of bombing a prison in al-Hazm and killing 11 people.

Then on Tuesday the Saudi authorities said Houthis had struck civilian and economic sites in the cities of Abha, Khamis Mushait, Jazan and Najran.

Tit-for-tat strikes between Iran and the US have escalated in the past week, more than six months after conflict broke out when the US and Israel launched attacks on Iran on 28 February.

Oil prices have fluctuated wildly since the war began, and

pressure on the industry has been exacerbated by wider regional instability.

Before the conflict Brent crude had been priced at about \$70 (£52) a barrel.

But the war has seen the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, which carries 20% of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG).

The rising costs have sparked huge price leaps in petrol around the world for motorists at the pumps.

The latest round of escalation comes after Iran targeted a US warship with ballistic missiles, which Centcom said were "successfully evaded". It added that no American troops were harmed during the attacks.

In response, the US said that the five Iranian oil tankers it targeted were "part of a multi-billion-dollar shadow network that funds the IRGC and its regional proxies".

One of the ships it had

struck, the M/T Riesco, sunk in the Gulf of Oman, Centcom later said, posting a video on X of the damaged vessel.

Kharg Island – where one Iranian tanker was attacked in the latest round of US strikes – hosts Iran's main terminal for exporting oil.

Some 90% of the country's crude oil passes through the island in the Gulf, transported through pipes from the mainland.

Also on Tuesday, Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi movement attacked energy facilities and civilian infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, injuring 73 people, according to Saudi authorities.

The drone and missile attack caused fires at oil facilities and installations that led to a temporary halt in operations, Saudi Arabia's military and energy ministry said.

When asked by reporters about the latest tit-for-tat strikes between the US and Iran, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Tuesday said the situation was "pretty straightforward".

Tycoon to pay ex-wife \$1.87bn in record South Korea divorce settlement

A South Korean court has ordered gaming tycoon Kwon Hyuk-bin to pay his ex-wife 2.55tr won (\$1.87bn; £1.38bn) in assets, marking the largest divorce settlement in the country's history.

Kwon, who founded South Korea's third-largest video game company Smilegate, is one of the country's richest men. Bloomberg puts his net worth at \$3bn.

Smilegate was wholly owned by him until Wednesday when a court ruled that a 35% stake, valued at about 2.5tr won, be transferred to his wife Lee Hwa-jin. He was also ordered to pay her an additional 65bn won in cash.

This settlement is more than double the previous record of 944bn won which tech titan Chey Tae-won was ordered to pay his ex-wife.

In filing for divorce with Kwon, Lee had sought a 50% stake in Smilegate. Her lawyers argued that she had helped finance the company at its founding, according to Bloomberg.

Kwon and Lee got married in 2001, a year before he founded Smilegate. Its best-known titles include the first-person shooter game CrossFire and the action role-playing game Lost Ark.

Lee also said she spent more than 20 years raising their children and caring for their household.

Kwon in turn argued that Lee neither invested nor worked for the company. Earlier this year, Smilegate published a statement saying all of the company's initial capital came from Kwon.

A Smilegate spokesperson declined to "comment on the major shareholder's personal matters".

"We will continue to faithfully perform our duties as usual," they said in a statement cited by The Chosun Daily.

Both parties can still challenge the ruling.

In July this year, Chey Tae-won, the chairman of the corporate giant SK Group, was ordered to pay his ex-wife 944bn won which, prior to today's ruling, was the largest divorce award in Korean history.

US to ban imports of some Canadian alcohol, dairy goods and motorbikes

The US will ban imports of a range of Canadian products, including alcoholic spirits, some dairy goods and motorbikes, after its neighbour's retaliatory tariffs on American goods came into force.

In a series of executive orders on Tuesday, President Donald Trump said Canada was "discriminating" against the US and outlined the bans, which will begin on 29 September.

Officials on both sides have said they would like to strike a trade deal, but no new talks have been scheduled since negotiations collapsed in late August.

Dominic LeBlanc, Canada's trade minister, said the latest US measures were "unjustified" and that he would work to pro-

tect the country's workers, families and businesses.

"Our core focus is on what we can control: building strength at home, diversifying our partnerships abroad, and building Canada strong for all Canadians," LeBlanc said.

He said he had contacted his US counterpart and promised to work "in good faith" to resolve tensions.

Earlier on Tuesday, Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney said in a video address that his country's move away from the US as its largest trading partner "will come at a cost".

The White House's new sanctions are the latest strike in a months-long trade war between the US and Canada. The two

countries have historically been close allies, with each a key business partner to the other.

Generally more than two-thirds of Canada's total exports go to the US. In 2025, Canada's exports of alcoholic spirits to the US were worth US\$687m (£507m), dairy products were worth \$269m and motorbikes were worth \$90m, according to UN data compiled by Trading Economics.

But Stephen Brown, chief North America economist at Capital Economics, said the import ban covered just 0.25% of Canada's exports to the US.

He said: "Nonetheless, Trump's willingness to impose an import ban is further evidence, if it were needed, that these latest measures are about inflicting economic pain rather

than raising revenue."

The US-Canada trade war in 5 charts

Canada is the second-largest trading partner of the US after Mexico. Its exports are less diversified than those of the US.

In recent months, business owners on both sides of the border have expressed fears over the trade war's fallout. Many expect prices of goods to rise and the number of customers to fall.

Last month, the White House imposed 50% tariffs on around \$20bn (£14.8bn) of Canadian goods after several rounds of talks had broken down.

Those tariffs hit sectors including Canada's furniture and wine industries, as well as some sporting and fishing equipment businesses.

FOREIGN

NEWS



NEWLY COMMISSIONED:

Kim was pictured earlier this year at a "newly commissioned" nuclear enrichment site.

N Korea has built two-storey uranium enrichment facility, says watchdog

North Korea has built a new two-storey uranium enrichment facility, the head of the world's nuclear watchdog said this week, calling it a cause for "serious concern".

The new building is part of the main Yongbyon nuclear complex, and reportedly capable of housing up to 28 centrifuge cascades used to enrich uranium.

In a report published late last month, the International Atomic Energy Agency said Pyongyang has also begun operating an expanded annex at another enrichment site.

These findings point to a steady expansion of the North's sanctioned nuclear infrastructure. The agency, which has no inspectors in North Korea since it was expelled in 2009, relies on satellite imagery for assessments.

"The continuation and further development of the DPRK's nuclear programme are clear violations of relevant UN Security Council resolutions and are

deeply regrettable," IAEA director Rafael Grossi said in a statement earlier this week.

The IAEA first referred to the existence of the building in June, although Grossi had mentioned the possibility earlier in the year.

In June, the agency said that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un visited a "newly inaugurated nuclear materials production factory" on 3 June, which it identified as the Yongbyon enrichment facility.

Kim had praised the country's "greatly expanded production capacity", adding that this would "offer the possibility of carrying out larger plans", according to the agency's report.

Despite running one of the poorest countries in the world, Kim spends millions each year developing a secretive nuclear arsenal. A 2022 report by a non-proliferation think-tank put this figure at \$640m.

"What makes North Korea's nuclear programme so concerning is that many of its facilities are

unknown, concealed, and thus difficult to target," Edward Howell, a lecturer at the University of Oxford told the BBC.

"Beyond Yongbyon, we know that other facilities exist: Kangson, for instance. The embeddedness of North Korea's nuclear doctrine within its foreign and domestic policy means that we should expect there to be more concealed production sites."

The agency also said there were indications that operations had started at another enrichment facility in Kangson, near the capital Pyongyang, in January this year. An annex had first been constructed in Kangson in 2024, it said.

It had said in April that North Korea appeared to be stepping up its ability to make nuclear bombs, saying they were monitoring the apparent expansion of Yongbyon.

The North's nuclear programme has accelerated under Kim, who has overseen a record number of missile tests. The country has fired has numerous

intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) since it began testing its long-range system in 2017.

The country has conducted six nuclear weapons tests so far, the last of which was in September 2017.

In August, South Korea's president, Lee Jae Myung, proposed talks with North Korea on officially ending the war between the two countries, adding that this could serve as a forum for discussing "effective ways to halt the advancement of the North's nuclear capabilities".

North Korea has yet to respond to the proposal.

North Korea declared itself a nuclear power in 2022 and vowed never to relinquish its weapons, of which it is estimated to possess dozens.

Lee previously said Pyongyang was producing 15 to 20 more warheads annually, telling the BBC last year he would back a deal between US President Donald Trump and Kim to freeze production.

Germany's Merz attacks AfD in stormy debate after far-right election win

Merz and Weidel faced off for the first time since Sunday's AfD election victory

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz has clashed with AfD leader Alice Weidel in parliament, calling her party a "destructive force" with a migration policy that amounts to "ethnic cleansing" for skilled workers.

Merz was addressing the Bundestag in the aftermath of the anti-immigration party's sweeping victory in the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt where it won almost 44% of the vote, while the chancellor's conservatives saw their vote halved.

Weidel told MPs that voters had shown that Merz's coalition with the centre left was a total failure and his time was up.

Merz hit back saying the AfD had harmed German interests by backing Russia, and its "remigration" policy would affect millions.

It is not yet clear whether the party will be able to form a government or not in Saxony-Anhalt, having fallen three seats short of an outright majority. No far-right party has won power in any of Germany's 16 states since World War Two, and Merz has admitted the "seismic" result has changed Germany.

The AfD's success has been praised by US President Donald Trump, who said "the Populist

Party in Germany just had a really big night", linking the victory to "absolutely horrible immigration rules and regulations".

The AfD in Saxony-Anhalt has been labelled as "right-wing extremist" by German domestic intelligence and the party has promised a "deportation and remigration" offensive targeting irregular migrants.

Repeatedly heckled by AfD MPs, the chancellor told Weidel that one in six skilled workers had a migration background, and if her party had its way then its policy would amount to "nothing other than an ethnic cleansing in the skilled trades based on skin colour and origin".

While the government understood some deportations were needed, he said it make a careful distinction between those who contributed to German prosperity and those without permanent residency.

Disruption by AfD MPs became so loud that at one point Bundestag President Julia Klöckner threatened to start expelling people from the chamber: "We are not on a football pitch."

Weidel said mass migration had left Germans with daily knife violence and attacks on trains and in stations, but Merz warned that the AfD's plans would mean that no single care home, hospital or restaurant could function.

Foreigners in Kenya given 90 days to regularise documents

The Kenyan government on Tuesday gave foreigners running businesses in the country 90 days to obtain or update required documents, including work permits and business licenses. The move followed remarks by the president about foreign-owned businesses that sparked panic in immigrant communities.

Presidential spokesperson Hussein Mohamed said government agencies would carry out the process with foreign embassies. He warned against threats, harassment and intimidation of foreign businesspeople.

Hundreds of Burundian nationals went to their embassy in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, on Monday to obtain documents. Some planned to return home because they fear for their lives.

Some Kenyans complain that foreigners have taken menial jobs and established small businesses, creating what they considered unfair competition for locals.

Kenya's economy, the strongest in the East African region, has attracted foreign investors as well as laborers from neighboring countries.

President William Ruto acknowledged last week receiving complaints from small-business owners who said foreigners were unfairly competing with them.

He directed Kenyan lawmakers to expand a bill currently before parliament to include fair participation in small businesses

by foreigners and identify sectors that may be reserved for locals.

Burundian nationals hold documents outside the Embassy of the Republic of Burundi, in Nairobi, Kenya Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2026.

The president's directive created panic within the Burundian and Congolese communities, with one businessman, Eric Munahayo, telling local media that his shop in the suburbs of Nairobi was attacked by unknown men.

"I have been living well with Kenyans, I have become part of the community here and have the correct licenses," he told journalists on Monday.

Mohamed said the registration process was aimed at ensuring compliance with Kenyan law and the East African rules governing the movement of goods, labor and services.

"Every person conducting business in Kenya is required to comply with applicable immigration, work-permit, registration and licensing requirements. Over the next 90 days, the government will conduct an orderly regularisation exercise to facilitate compliance," Mohamed said.

Korir Sing'oei, permanent secretary in the Foreign Ministry, visited dozens of Burundian citizens at their embassy in Nairobi on Monday and apologised for the misrepresentation of the president's directive, saying the registration exercise was also aimed at protecting foreigners.

'You're not alone in darkness': Gambia president urges calm after violent blackout protests

The Gambia's President Adama Barrow has urged citizens to remain calm over prolonged power cuts, saying the country is not alone in facing an electricity crisis that has affected several parts of West Africa.

His comments follow protests on Monday night in the capital Banjul and surrounding areas over blackouts that residents say have sometimes lasted up to 48 hours.

"When you lie down in the heat and the dark, believe that you are not alone in that darkness," Barrow said, pledging to boost power supplies by next month.

The Gambia supplements its own generation with imported electricity, including supplies from Guinea and neighbouring

Senegal.

The tiny West African country has endured persistent blackouts since June, with outages becoming longer and more frequent during the current hot season as soaring temperatures drive up electricity demand.

Frustration boiled over on Monday night, when protesters took to the streets in Banjul and surrounding areas, burning tyres and blocking roads over the prolonged power cuts.

Police used tear gas to disperse crowds in Westfield area as they moved towards the headquarters of the national electricity company, Nawec, with some chanting, "Barrow must go".

Protesters also gathered outside the vice-president's resi-

dence in Farato, where banners at an office of Barrow's ruling National People's Party were damaged.

The unrest comes just months before a presidential election expected in December, in which Barrow is seeking a controversial third term.

In a televised address on Tuesday night, Barrow acknowledged the hardship caused by the blackouts but warned protesters against damaging public infrastructure, saying it would only worsen the disruption and divert money towards repairs.

"Let us not destroy in a moment of anger what we suffered so long to gain," he said.

The president admitted there had been shortcomings in the

government's planning, power generation and maintenance systems, calling the resulting outages "a national security issue" and an "emergency".

"I know that the fans have stopped turning, children work in the dark, mothers throw away stale food, and the heat is unbearable by day and by night," the president, promising that supplies would improve by the end of October.

He said a new 24-megawatt generating unit was being installed at the Brikama power station and would be commissioned by the end of next month.

A contract has also been awarded for a 50MW solar power plant in Soma, although no completion date was given.

A multifaceted bid to reset Edo's security

DR. PATRICK AKHERE EBOJELE

Governor Monday Okpebholo is taking a very aggressive approach to the state's security challenges, combining faster emergency response, community intelligence, traditional security structures and expanded military operations in an attempt to tackle headlong all the vices of kidnapping, cultism and armed violence.

It is not news because abinitio it is what he set out to do. His strategy is significant not simply due to the number of security measures he has announced, but because it seeks to address different stages of the security problem — from intelligence gathering and prevention to rapid response and military intervention, where required.

Over the last few days, Governor Okpebholo has moved between churches, security meetings and military facilities, using the engagements to demonstrate that his administration's intention to make security a visible priority.

At Living Faith Church, Winners Chapel, along Sapele Road in Benin City on Sunday, the governor announced plans for an emergency telephone system through which residents could report security threats and trigger rapid deployment "Edo will be safer in the next one month," Okpebholo said. "We will be able to respond to security threats in any part of the state."

The proposed system would deploy between five and seven security vehicles to distress calls in five minutes or emergencies, while motorcycles would be used to reach forests and other difficult terrain. This idea addresses one of the recurring weaknesses in Nigeria's security response: the time lag between the reporting of an attack and the arrival of security personnel.

For victims of kidnapping or armed robbery, minutes can determine whether an incident is contained or becomes a major security operation. A response system that can reliably move personnel quickly could therefore have a practical impact beyond the political symbolism of announcing new security measures. The governor is aware that the success of the emergency line depend less on the telephone number itself than on what happens after a call is made.

He is talking a system with functioning communication channels, trained operators, reliable vehicles, fuel, personnel and clear coordination between the police, Edo State Security Corps and other security agencies. He is talking public awareness. Residents who know where to call, believe their complaints will be taken seriously and trust that reporting criminal activity will not expose them to retaliation.

This is what makes the governor's decision to involve communities particularly important. At a security stakeholders' meeting at the Sir Victor Uwaifo Creative Hub in Benin City on Monday, Governor Okpebholo brought together Okaighele, traditional community security aides operating across Edo South, police officers, members of the Edo State Security Corps and community leaders.

His message was that government cannot hope to secure the state by relying solely on conventional security agencies. "Security is not a one-



Governor Okpebholo on a military operations to tackle headlong vices of kidnapping, cultism and armed violence in State



Governor Monday Okpebholo with the security chiefs at the government house



This is what makes the governor's decision to involve communities particularly important. At a security stakeholders' meeting at the Sir Victor Uwaifo Creative Hub in Benin City on Monday, Governor Okpebholo brought together Okaighele, traditional community security aides operating across Edo South, police officers, members of the Edo State Security Corps and community leaders."

The administration's intention is therefore be to use the strengths of local knowledge without creating parallel security structures that operate outside established command and legal frameworks. On this Governor Okpebholo is determined - to combine community intelligence with greater military presence.

On Monday, he inspected a temporary facility at Teboga in Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area being prepared for the Nigerian Army's new 83 Division. The division is one of four new Army formations approved by President Bola Tinubu to expand the military's operational capacity. Okpebholo said the facilities would be ready within two weeks, with contractors deploying to accelerate construction.

Brig. Gen. Ahmed Balogun, Commander of the Army's 4 Brigade, said significant progress had been made since an inspection several days earlier. "Between the last time we came here, about four or five days ago, and now, we have seen tremendous work ongoing," he said.

The military component is important because Edo's security challenges are not confined to urban centres. Kidnappers and other criminal groups can exploit forests, remote settlements and poorly monitored routes as operating bases or escape corridors. A stronger military presence in such areas could increase

pressure on criminal networks that conventional policing finds difficult to reach.

A new formation can increase capacity, but its impact will depend on where personnel are stationed, the quality of intelligence available to them, mobility, logistics and coordination with existing police and security structures.

There is also a broader question about the balance between military and civilian policing. The military can provide substantial firepower and mobility in difficult security environments, but long-term public safety ultimately requires effective policing, functioning courts, intelligence-led investigations and community trust. That is why Governor Okpebholo's decision to combine military presence with emergency response and community intelligence is potentially more consequential than any single measure.

It creates layers. The community provides early information. The emergency system receives and channels reports. Rapid-response vehicles and motorcycles provide mobility. The police handle conventional law enforcement. The military provides additional capacity in difficult or high-risk areas. In essence, weaknesses in one layer can be compensated for by another.

The strategy also responds to a political problem facing any government confronted by insecurity: public confidence.

People do not assess security only through crime statistics. They judge it by whether they can travel safely, whether they believe help will arrive when they call and whether criminal groups appear to operate without consequences. Okpebholo's promise is therefore politically significant. "Edo will be safer in the next one month" is a measurable public commitment, even if "safer" itself is difficult to quantify.

The governor's warning against criminals from outside Edo also reflects another dimension. He said suspects from Niger, Kogi and Bauchi states had been arrested over alleged criminal activities in Edo and warned that anyone committing crime in the state would be caught.

At the same time, Pastor Charles Osazuwa's comments at Rock of Ages Christian Assembly International introduced another important dimension: security cannot be separated from economic and social stability.

His call for Nigerians to acquire skills and become economically productive points to a longer-term issue. Security operations may suppress criminal activity, but reducing the conditions that make young people vulnerable to recruitment into cult groups and other criminal networks requires jobs, education, skills and economic opportunity.

The emergency telephone system is designed to improve speed. The Okaighele and community structures are intended to improve intelligence. The Army's 83 Division is expected to strengthen physical presence, particularly in rural and remote areas. There is no doubt that this is a multifaceted approach that will yield results as expected.

Dr. Ebojele, PhD in Public Administration and is the Chief Press Secretary to Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo

Matters-In-Focus

2027 Presidency: Obi, Atiku, Makinde reject call to step aside



ATIKU ABUBAKAR

SEYI MAKINDE

PETER OBI

HASSAN DAISY

As political activities ahead of the 2027 general elections continue to gather momentum, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, Labour Party presidential candidate in the 2023 election, Peter Obi, and Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde, have reportedly resisted calls for some opposition figures to step down from the emerging presidential race.

The development has further intensified discussions within opposition political circles, where stakeholders have continued to advocate for a stronger political alliance capable of challenging the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2027 elections.

Calls for some of the leading opposition politicians to withdraw their presidential ambitions have been based largely on the argument that the opposition should rally behind a single candidate in order to present a formidable challenge at the polls.

However, the three politicians have maintained their respective political positions, with their supporters insisting that the decision on who should contest should be determined through a transparent and democratic process rather than pressure from political groups or individuals.

Atiku, a former vice president and a major opposition figure,

has remained active in consultations with political stakeholders as discussions over a possible coalition continue.

Obi, who secured significant support among young Nigerians and urban voters during the 2023 presidential election, has also continued to command a strong political following. His supporters have repeatedly argued that his political base should not be disregarded in any arrangement ahead of 2027.

Similarly, Governor

Makinde remains an influential figure within the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), particularly in the South-West, where his political standing has continued to attract attention as parties prepare for the next general election.

The disagreement over who should step aside reflects the wider challenge confronting opposition parties as they seek to forge a common front ahead of 2027.

Political observers believe that while a united opposition

could improve its electoral chances, achieving such unity may prove difficult because of competing ambitions, regional interests and disagreements over the process for selecting a presidential candidate.

With the 2027 elections still ahead, consultations among political leaders, parties and various interest groups are expected to continue. The coming months are therefore likely to witness more negotiations, alliances and counter-alliances as the political

Rising prices tighten grip on FCT residents, household budgets under strain

Residents of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) are facing fresh economic pressure as rising petrol prices continue to push up transportation costs and the prices of essential goods and services, forcing many households to review their daily spending.

The development has heightened concerns among workers, traders, students, artisans and other low- and middle-income earners in Abuja, who say the increasing cost of transportation is gradually consuming a larger portion of their disposable income.

For many residents, the impact of the fuel price surge extends beyond the filling station. As the cost of petrol rises, commercial transport operators are compelled to adjust fares

to cover increased operational expenses. The higher transport costs, in turn, affect the movement of goods and people across the nation's capital.

Commuters travelling from satellite towns and neighbouring communities into the city centre are particularly affected, with some residents reporting that they now spend significantly more on transportation than they did previously.

A resident who spoke on the development said the situation had made it increasingly difficult for families to manage their monthly income.

According to the resident, "What we earn has not increased, but almost everything we spend money on is becoming more expensive. Transportation alone

takes a large part of my income before I even think about food and other household needs."

Traders have also expressed concern over the situation, explaining that higher transportation costs are affecting the prices of foodstuffs and other commodities brought into Abuja from different parts of the country.

The ripple effect is being felt across markets as traders factor transportation and logistics expenses into the final prices of their goods.

Some workers have equally resorted to cost-cutting measures, including reducing the number of trips they make, combining errands and relying more on public transportation in an effort to cope with the rising cost of living.

CBN intensifies terror financing surveillance, makes compliance top priority

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has strengthened its supervision of financial institutions as part of renewed efforts to prevent the use of Nigeria's financial system for terrorism financing and other illicit financial activities.

The apex bank said terrorism financing supervision has now been elevated as a major regulatory priority, directing banks and other financial institutions to reinforce their internal controls and ensure strict compliance with existing anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing regulations.

The move is coming amid growing concerns over the sophistication of financial crimes and the methods being employed by criminal networks to move, conceal and access funds through legitimate financial channels.

Under the renewed supervisory approach, financial institutions are expected to maintain effective systems for identifying suspicious transactions, monitoring customer activities and reporting unusual financial movements to the appropriate authorities.

The CBN is also expected to intensify its oversight of banks and other regulated institutions to ensure that existing safeguards are not merely documented but are effectively implemented.

The development underscores the importance of cooperation between the banking sector, government agencies and other stakeholders in disrupting the financial networks that support terrorism and organised crime.

Financial institutions have

consequently been urged to strengthen customer due diligence, improve transaction-monitoring systems and ensure that suspicious activities are promptly escalated through the appropriate regulatory channels.

The apex bank's position further reflects Nigeria's broader commitment to strengthening its financial integrity framework and meeting international standards on combating money laundering and terrorism financing.

Experts have consistently stressed that cutting off access to funds is critical to weakening terrorist organisations, noting that effective financial intelligence can help authorities identify networks, trace suspicious transactions and prevent illicit funds from reaching criminal groups.

The CBN's renewed focus is therefore expected to place greater responsibility on financial institutions to remain vigilant and proactive in detecting financial activities that could threaten national security.

The apex bank maintained that compliance with anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing requirements remains essential to maintaining confidence in Nigeria's financial system and protecting the economy from abuse by criminal elements.

The latest regulatory emphasis is also expected to reinforce Nigeria's efforts to improve its standing within the global financial system while ensuring that the country's banking sector remains resilient against emerging financial and security threats.



OLAYEMI CARDOSO, CBN GOVERNOR

Court bars NMDPRA from shutting Dangote refinery in free zone

AYENOMO ALUKHEI

The Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority is weighing its next move to prevent it from losing regulatory authority over midstream and downstream companies located in free trade zones.

Last week, a Federal High Court in Lagos issued an interim injunction restraining the NMDPRA from shutting

down or interfering with the operations of the Dangote Petroleum Refinery in the Lekki Free Zone, Lagos.

Justice Akintayo Aluko made the order while ruling on a motion ex parte marked FHC/L/CS/1174/26, filed and argued by counsel to Dangote Petroleum Refinery Nigeria Limited, led by Olawale Akoni and Abimbola Akeredolu.

The refinery had approached the court following a letter dat-

ed August 24, 2026, in which the NMDPRA allegedly directed the suspension of the loading and truck-out of petroleum products from the refinery.

In his ruling, Justice Aluko said he had carefully considered the application, the affidavit evidence, exhibits and submissions of counsel, including the NMDPRA's letter. The judge noted that the refinery's case was that the NMDPRA lacked regulatory or oversight

powers over operations within free zones, including the Dangote Industrial Free Zone.

Justice Aluko also referred to a letter dated March 2, 2026, issued by the Attorney-General of the Federation, which, according to the judge, stated that the NMDPRA was not entitled to exercise regulatory powers or oversight functions over operations within free zones.

The judge further held that

the refinery had satisfied the conditions required for the grant of an interim injunction. "Accordingly, I find merit in the application, and the same is hereby granted in terms of the reliefs sought," Aluko ruled.

When contacted, the spokesman of the NMDPRA, George Ene-Ita, declined further comments on the matter, saying, "I can't comment on a case before the court."

While not denying the

NMDPRA's letter to shut the Dangote refinery, Ene-Ita refused to give details on why the regulator ordered the refinery to stop loading.

However, other senior officials within the NMDPRA disclosed that the regulator is weighing the next move as far as the case and the ruling are concerned. It was gathered that the agency's legal team and its management "will decide the next line of action".

 The Nigerian OBSERVER That The People May Know					ADVERTISEMENT RATES (PRINT)					
SIZES	COLOUR		BLACK AND WHITE		BLACK AND WHITE		MULTI NATIONALS			
			PUBLIC NOTICE		PRODUCT		COLOUR		BLACK & WHITE	
	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)
FULL PAGE	417,344	448,645	369,500	397,213	325,150	349,536	565,156	607,542	443,440	476,698
13 X 4	369,500	397,213	295,600	317,770	206,938	222,458	443,500	476,763	369,550	397,266
10 X 4	340,000	365,500	273,500	294,013	177,400	190,705	370,000	397,750	295,600	317,770
HALF PAGE	295,600	317,770	236,500	254,238	147,800	158,885	340,000	365,500	273,450	293,959
10 X 3	221,700	238,328	147,800	158,885	118,300	127,173	266,000	285,950	251,300	270,148
13 X2	206,900	222,418	133,000	142,925	103,500	111,263	221,800	238,435	147,810	158,896
QUARTER PAGE	192,150	206,561	118,250	127,119	88,690	95,342	236,500	254,238	133,000	142,975
FRONT PAGE POSITIONS					OTHER SIZES					
SIZES	PRODUCTS		PUBLIC NOTICE		PUBLIC NOTICE			PRODUCTS		
	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	SIZES	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	
FP 6X2	89,800	96,535	105,450	113,359	6 X 2	60,640	65,188	49,140	52,826	
FP 5X2	81,100	87,183	97,300	104,598	5 X 2	51,950	55,846	42,120	45,279	
FP 4X2	73,000	78,475	80,700	86,753	4 X 2	45,260	48,655	34,400	36,980	
FP 3X2	64,870	69,735	73,000	78,475	3 X 2	30,900	33,218	26,600	28,595	
FP 2X2	59,000	63,425	64,900	69,768	2 X 2	18,680	20,081	15,600	16,770	
SPECIAL POSITIONS					2 X 1	12,400	13,330	15,600	16,770	
SIZES	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	CAC	38,000	40,850			
STRIP	118,250	127,119	147,800	158,885	LOOSE INSERTS					
STRIP INSIDE	88,600	95,245	118,250	127,119	LOOSE INSERTS: N40 PER SHEET MINIMUM ORDER: 5000 COPIES HANDLING CHARGES: N40,000 PER 1000 COPIES NEWSPAPER DIMENSION: 14.5" X 10.5"					
SPECIAL PAGES					CHANGE OF NAME					
FRONT PAGE	ADD 70% SURCHARGE									
PAGES 2 & 3	ADD 55% SURCHARGE				Type		Fridays		Other Days	
PAGES 4 & 5	ADD 40% SURCHARGE				Miss to Mrs.		5,000		7,000	
BACK PAGE	ADD 60% SURCHARGE				Reconciliation/Corrections of name		6,000		8,000	
 The Nigerian OBSERVER That The People May Know 24 Airport Road, Benin City, Edo State					For advert placement contact:					
					Business Development Manager				08081986842	
					Advert Manager				08051177163	
					Commercial Service Manager				08033798009	

EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 14, 2026

EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 14, 2026

Sports

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



TEAM NIGERIA

National Intermediate Games postponed, to support excellent hosting of inaugural edition

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The first edition of the National Intermediate Games, scheduled to take place in Lagos from October 1 to 15, 2026, has been postponed to the first quarter of 2027 to allow for adequate preparations to ensure a successful world-class inaugural edition.

According to the press statement signed by Kola Daniel, S.A. on Media to the Director General, National Sports Commission, the Lagos State Sports Commission formally communicated the decision to the National Sports Commission following a comprehensive review of preparations by the Local Organising Committee (LOC), the NSC and an independent Quality Control and Assurance Specialist.

The review followed the Joint Technical Meeting held from September 3 to 6, 2026.

The assessment covered proposed facilities, sporting events, technical requirements, rules and regulations, as well as other critical operational

areas. While the review established that the Games could technically proceed, it also determined that the remaining timeframe may not be sufficient to deliver the inaugural edition to the standard befitting Lagos and an event of national significance.

The postponement is intended to safeguard the quality,

credibility and long-term success of the National Intermediate Games, which is expected to establish an operational benchmark for future editions.

Hosts, Lagos State has reaffirmed its commitment to hosting the Games and will continue preparations in collaboration with the National Sports Commission and other

stakeholders pending the finalisation of a new date by the LOC.

Meanwhile, the NSC will continue its programme towards the Games as previously planned, including accreditation, zonal elimination for team sports and other technical and operational activities within its immediate purview.

Washington Spirit Deborah Abiodun ruled out for season, set to miss Super Falcons' Olympic Qualifiers

Super Falcons midfielder Deborah Abiodun has been ruled out for the remainder of the season and will miss Nigeria's crucial 2028 Olympic qualifiers against Comoros in October after Washington Spirit placed her on the season-ending injury list.

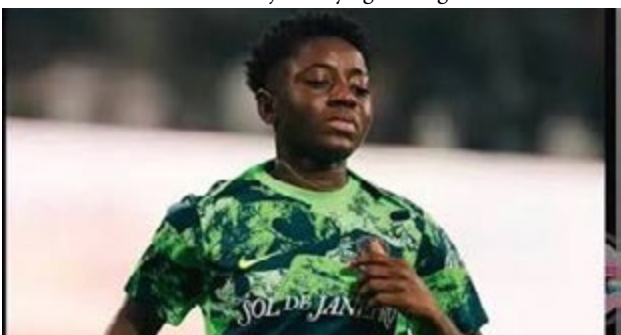
The NWSL club confirmed the development in a post on its official Instagram account, bringing an abrupt end to Abiodun's season.

Washington Spirit did not disclose the specific nature or extent of the injury in its announcement, but her placement

on the season-ending injury list means she will play no further part for the club this season.

The setback is also a major

blow to the Super Falcons, with Abiodun now unavailable for Nigeria's two-legged Olympic qualifying clash against Comoros.



DEBORAH ABIODUN

NFF needs scouts across all of Nigeria's Geo-political Zones to spot talents for Golden Eaglets – Victor Ikpeba

As Nigerian football stakeholders, fans, followers and analysts continue

asking questions regarding a revival of the under-17 national team, Golden Eaglets, a product

of the squad has called for the mobilisation of scouts across the country's six geo-political zones.

This suggestion was offered by 1997 African Footballer of The Year, Victor Nosa Ikpeba, who was in the star-studded Eaglets' squad of Scotland '89 FIFA U-17 World Cup.

Ikpeba, who is fondly called 'The Prince of Monaco', noted that the problem with Nigerian football is not lack of talent, but how to spot them and blend them into a winning squad.

He also refused to label recent failures of the Eaglets as a slump, preferring instead to point at ad-

vancements being achieved by other countries, hence his call for new ideas from technical buffs at Nigeria Football Federation (NFF).

Ikpeba opined, "I don't think the Eaglets are down. It's only that football has evolved and we cannot dominate as we used to in the past. That does not mean we are short of talent."

"Go to various grassroots fields across Nigeria, you'll see that many talents are there. What we need is to create an environment where these talents can be brought together to showcase themselves."



VICTOR IKPEBA

D'Tigress hails President Bola Tinubu as Presidential rewards hit players', officials' accounts

Players and officials of Nigeria's Senior Women's Basketball team, D'Tigress, have expressed gratitude to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, following the receipt of the financial rewards promised to the team for winning the 2025 FIBA Women's Afrobasket tournament.

The payments represent the final part of the Presidential Rewards announced for the team in recognition of their continental triumph.

Recently, the Chairman of the National Sports Commission (NSC), Mallam Shehu Dikko, met with the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Prof. Taiwo Oyelede, to conclude arrangements for the payment of the outstanding financial rewards.

Within three days of the conclusion of the process, players and officials of both D'Tigress and also the Super Falcons have received the financial rewards promised to them by the President.

Speaking on behalf of the team, D'Tigress captain, Amy Okonkwo, expressed appreciation to President Tinubu, describing him as a father who has demonstrated strong commitment to the development and welfare of Nigerian athletes.

"On behalf of the entire D'Tigress team, I want to specially thank our dear President, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, for this show of love and support. We are truly grateful for everything he has done to ensure that we receive all that he promised us after winning the Afrobasket last year."



D'TIGRESS

Africa: Ballon d'Or 2026 – Full list of African Footballers Nominated

Several African footballers have been nominated for awards at the 2026 Ballon d'Or, with players from Morocco, Senegal, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire and Algeria featuring among the nominees.

The nominations include contenders for the Men's Young Talent of the Year and Men's Goalkeeper of the Year awards.

Bouaddi, who plays for Manchester City, has been recognised for his impressive performances at club and international level. The 18-year-old midfielder chose to represent Morocco despite previously being eligible for France.

Diomandé has also emerged as one of Africa's brightest young talents. The Côte d'Ivoire winger enjoyed an impressive debut season at RB Leipzig, contributing 20 goals and assists across competitions.

Algeria international Maza has likewise attracted attention for his performances at club and international level.

African nominees for Men's

Goalkeeper of the Year

Three African goalkeepers have been nominated for the Men's Goalkeeper of the Year award:

Yassine Bounou – Morocco
Édouard Mendy – Senegal
Vozinha – Cape Verde

The nominations highlight the continued presence of African players among the leading performers in world football.

Full list of African nominees announced so far

Ayyoub Bouaddi – Morocco — Men's Young Talent of the Year
Yan Diomandé – Côte d'Ivoire — Men's Young Talent of the Year
Ibrahim Maza – Algeria — Men's Young Talent of the Year
Yassine Bounou – Morocco — Men's Goalkeeper of the Year
Édouard Mendy – Senegal — Men's Goalkeeper of the Year
Vozinha – Cape Verde — Men's Goalkeeper of the Year

The 2026 Ballon d'Or ceremony is scheduled to take place in London on October 26, with the winners of the various categories to be announced at the event.

SPORTS



FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup: Nigeria's Ambassador lifts Falconets' spirits for China

Despite their 0-2 reverse against Spain in their first match at the 2026 FIFA U20 Women's World Cup in Poland on Monday, Nigeria's Ambassador to that country, Her Excellency, Ambassador Chioma Ohakim Esq, did not abandon

the team or feel dejected like everyone else.

She watched the match played at the Stadion Sosnowiec, and alongside mission staff, did her best to support and encourage the team.

After the game, Ambassador Ohakim took time to interact

with the players and technical crew, encouraging the girls not to be discouraged by their opening defeat to Spain. She urged the team to put the result behind them and remain focused on their next challenge against China, reminding them that they played good football

and have every reason to remain confident.

In a thoughtful gesture, the top diplomat also brought Nigerian food for the players, helping to lift the mood and give the team a taste of home while away in Poland. Her presence and words of encouragement provided a timely morale boost as the Falconets turn their attention to their crucial clash with China.

The two-time silver-medallists take to the pitch of the Stadion Sosnowiec for the second time on Thursday evening, when they take on China in a match that matters so much.

Th Chinese girls are highly motivated after a 5-0 pounding of New Caledonia in their first match – a result that has established them at the top of the Group F table, ahead of 2022 champions Spain on goals difference.



NIGERIA FALCONETS

AFN counts on speed, experience, youthful talent to excel for Nigeria at World Athletics Ultimate Championship

As the inaugural World Athletics Ultimate Championship comes up from this Friday to Sunday in Budapest, Hungary, Nigeria is already counting on a team loaded with 'speed, experience and youthful talent' to excel for the country.

The Nigeria's contingent includes highly exposed male and female athletes as well as emergent ones, who officials believe will make the country proud during the impending three days of keen contests on the track and field.

This was made known by the chairman of Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN) media committee, Maxwell Kumoye, who disclosed that 'a star-studded squad' has already been selected to represent the country in the Hungarian capital during the highly anticipated maiden championship.

Kumoye added in a press release that, with some of the country's best athletes already listed to feature during the global competition this weekend, there is a bright ray of hope that the contingent will return home with a huge haul of medals and outstanding performances.

He revealed further that the Nigerian team features a promising blend of elite stars and emerging talents for various individual races and the mixed relay as well as field events, led

by women's 100m hurdles former world record holder, Tobi Amusan, and men's 100m ace, Kanyinsola Ajayi among others.

Ajayi is expected to excel for Nigeria in the men's 100m and 4x100m race, while Amusan will feature in the hurdles and 100m mixed relay, with Udodi

Onwuzurike also scheduled to compete in the men's 200m and the 100m mixed relay events.

The AFN's media officer added in his press statement, "Ella Onojuwewvwo will compete in the women's 400m, while Ezekiel Nathaniel takes on the men's 400m hurdles.

"Nigeria's mixed 4x100m team comprises Alaba Akintola, Favour Ashe, Miracle Ezechukwu, Udodi Onwuzurike, Rosemary Nwankwo and Tobi Amusan, providing the country with another opportunity to challenge for honours on the international stage.

Imo SWAN draws battle line, Boycotts Kun Khalifat FC matches over alleged media snub

The Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN), Imo State Chapter, has drawn the battle line with Kun Khalifat FC, resolving to boycott all publicity, promotion and media activities of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) side until further notice.

The decision was taken during their crucial Congress on Tuesday, September 8, 2026, in which they deliberated on what members described as the alleged mistreatment, intimidation and security concerns involving sports journalists during Kun Khalifat FC's NPFL Matchday Two encounter against Barau FC at the Dan Anyiam Stadium, Owerri, on Sunday, September 6.

According to a press statement issued and signed by Messrs Cosmos Chukwuemeka and Tunde Liadi, the association's State Chairman and Secretary respectively pointed out

that accredited sports journalists who arrived at the stadium to perform their professional duties were allegedly denied access to the venue, reportedly on the directive of the club even when one of them bought ticket.

The development, the sports writers said, was further compounded by comments allegedly attributed to the Chair-

man of the Imo State Football Association, Barrister Ifeanyi Dike, who reportedly said that the restriction was at the instance of the owner of Kun Khalifat FC.

Dike was also reportedly quoted as saying that the safety of a journalist attempting to gain access to the press stand could not be guaranteed.



KUN KHALIFAT FC



AUSTIN EGUAVOEN

Eguavoen in charge of Super Falcons only for Comoros clash

Several top officials have said NFF technical director Austin Eguavoen will only lead the Super Falcons for next month's 2028 Olympics qualifiers against Comoros as the search for a substantive coach will continue to be intensified.

Eguavoen's appointment to lead the Super Falcons has been met with an outcry.

However, officials told SCORENigeria that he is only a stop-gap appointee while the search for the head coach of the women's national team will

be stepped up.

"He is only for the Comoros match and hopefully by then we would have decided on a new head coach for the Falcons," a senior official told SCORENigeria.

The Super Falcons take on Comoros on October 9 and 13th with both legs played in Ikenne.

Eguavoen has handled the Super Eagles on several occasions as well as the Golden Eaglets, Olympic team and the Flying Eagles.

This would be the first time he is handling a women's team.



KELECHI IHEANACHO

Iheanacho top scorer in Turkish First Division

Super Eagles striker Kel-echi Iheanacho is now the leading scorer in the Turkish first division after he fired another brace to take his tally to eight goals.

Iheanacho was the match winner Monday night for Bur-saspor to win 2-1 at Manisa.

He drew his team level in the 27th minute, before he got the

winning goal in stoppage time.

He has now scored eight goals and made two assists in six matches in the Turkish second-tier league.

Sofascore named him Man of the match with the highest individual score of 8.1 points.

His club are second in the standings with 15 points, a point behind the leaders.