

Dangote IPO triggers surge, crashes Bamboo, Cowrywise platforms

OSEMUDIAMHEN O. FAITH

LAGOS

The launch of the Dangote Petroleum Refinery and Petrochemicals FZE Initial Public Offering on Monday 14 September 2026 triggered a surge in demand that overwhelmed two major Nigerian investment platforms, Bamboo

and Cowrywise. ● **Retail frenzy overwhelms fintechs as ₦2.15tn offer opens with ₦5,250 minimum entry**

and Cowrywise.

Both platforms reported unusually high traffic as retail investors rushed to subscribe to the offer, with some users unable to log into their accounts.

In a post on X on Monday, Bamboo attributed the access difficulties to the unexpected

volume of traffic generated by investors seeking to participate in the Dangote IPO.

"Hey everyone, we're getting a much higher than expected traffic trying to get into the Dangote IPO and it's making it difficult for some users to log into the Bamboo app. We're

working on a fix and it will be up and running shortly," the platform said.

Cowrywise also acknowledged the pressure.

"We're currently seeing more traffic than usual on the Cowrywise app. Our team is already on it and working to get things

back to normal. Thanks for your patience, everyone," it said in a post on X.

The two platforms are among the approved fintech channels through which investors can subscribe to the Dangote Refinery public offer.

The offer, which opened on

Monday, seeks to raise about ₦2.15 trillion through the sale of 4.1 billion ordinary shares at ₦525 each.

To encourage broad participation, investors can subscribe for a minimum of 10 shares val-

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Oba of Benin to politicians: Unite, put Nigeria first!

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

The Oba of Benin, Omo N'Oba N'Edo Uku'Akpolokpolo, Oba Ewuare II, has called on Nigerian political leaders to close ranks and work together in the interest of national development, stressing the need for greater cooperation between the ruling party and the opposition.

The monarch made the call in Benin City yesterday when the Director-General of the

Presidential Campaign Council (PCC), Abdulaziz Yari, led members of the council to the Benin Palace to seek royal blessings, prayers and support for President Bola Tinubu's re-election bid in the 2027 presidential election.

Oba Ewuare II said political differences should not be allowed to undermine the collective interests of the nation, arguing that opposition parties could still support policies and programmes of the ruling government when such initiatives

were beneficial to Nigerians.

"In democracy there must be opposition when a party comes to power. I don't see why an opposition party can't support the ruling party," the monarch said.

He also urged former governors, senators and other political leaders to work together, irrespective of their political affiliations, in the interest of the country.

The Oba, however, stressed that the Benin throne remained non-partisan and that his call for cooperation should not be interpreted as partisan support for any political party.

"The Benin throne is not partisan. There is no point for change for the sake of change. That is not to say that I belong to one party or the other," he said.

The monarch further appealed to politicians and their

supporters to moderate their criticisms of political leaders, noting that no individual was perfect.

"Is there anybody who is so perfect as I am talking now? Nobody. I love and like peace and tranquillity. I am American and British trained as a diplomat, and I say it the way it is," he said.

Earlier, Yari explained that the delegation was at the palace to seek the monarch's royal bless-

ings, prayers and support for President Tinubu's re-election.

"Our mission today is simple: Mr. President formed the campaign council for his re-election. We are here to seek royal blessings, prayers, and support for the re-election of your son, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, come 2027," Yari said.

CONTINUES ON PG 2»

2027 Elections: Police, Military, NSCDC pledge synergy

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

The Nigerian Police Force, Nigerian Navy and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) have pledged stronger inter-agency collaboration to ensure the safety, fairness and credibility of the 2027 general elections.

The security agencies made the commitment on Monday in Abuja at a one-day seminar organised by Naval Base Abuja with the theme: "The Roles of the Armed Forces in Conducting Free, Fair and Credible Elections."

Representing the Nigerian Police, ACP Akaniyene Edwards of the Department of

Operations, FCT Command, said the support of the Armed Forces remained critical to the overall success of elections in Nigeria.

He noted that although election security was primarily the responsibility of the Police, the military provided additional manpower to ensure adequate coverage across the country.

"Though safety during elections is primarily the responsibility of the Police, the military brings added manpower to help cover every corner of the country during elections.

"The presence of the military is deployed to deplete external forces that may seek to desta-

CONTINUES ON PG 2»



COURTESY VISIT:

The Oba of Benin, Omo N'Oba N'Edo Uku'Akpolokpolo, Oba Ewuare II (middle), flanked by the Director-General of the APC Presidential Campaign Council, Abdulaziz Yari (right), and other members of the council during a courtesy visit to the Benin Palace on Tuesday.

FG, IFAD-LIFE-ND contribute \$68.7million to national economy
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Denmark says Russian warship fired flares at military helicopter
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Shaibu rewards more staff for commitment to NIS weekly keep-fit sessions
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NEWS

Oba of Benin to politicians: Unite...

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The former Zamfara State governor also highlighted what he described as achievements of the Tinubu administration in the economy, citing improvements in GDP growth, inflation and foreign exchange stability.

Yari said annual GDP growth had risen from 2.7 per cent in 2023 to 3.9 per cent, while inflation, according to him, had declined from 22.9 per cent to 15.9 per cent.

He also said the administration had stabilised the foreign exchange market, describing Tinubu as the right person to lead the country.

The Deputy Governor of Edo State, Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa, who thanked the monarch for the royal bless-

ings, said President Tinubu deserved a second term, arguing that equity, fairness and justice demanded that the South be given the opportunity to complete its constitutional political cycle.

Idahosa also expressed confidence in the APC's performance in Edo State, saying Governor Monday Okpebholo had provided the administration with several projects and achievements to campaign with ahead of the 2027 elections.

"For us in Edo State, Governor Monday Okpebholo is the leader and he is leading well. We have a lot of projects to campaign with, and the people of Edo State will vote massively for President Tinubu to enable him win the 2027 Presidential election," he said.

Dangote IPO triggers surge...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

ued at N5,250.

The Dangote Refinery IPO is one of the largest public share offerings in Africa. The refinery, owned by the Dangote Group, said proceeds from the offer would support expansion and increase its refining capacity.

The offer has generated significant interest among retail investors, following efforts to position the opportunity as a means for Nigerians and other African investors to own shares in one of the continent's biggest industrial projects.

The surge in demand highlights both the scale of interest in the offer and the pressure that high-demand investment

events can place on digital platforms.

The Securities and Exchange Commission, SEC, had earlier warned investors against unauthorised promotions relating to a purported Dangote Refinery IPO before regulatory approval.

In June, the commission said no application for the IPO had been filed or approved at the time and directed capital market operators to stop accepting deposits or expressions of interest.

Following regulatory approval, the Dangote Refinery public offer was cleared to proceed, with the company publishing a list of approved banks, fintechs, mobile operators and NGX Invest platforms through which investors can subscribe.

2027 Elections: Police, Military...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

bilise the process of the elections," he said.

Speaking with journalists after the seminar, Edwards said the Police had commenced preparations to improve its effectiveness during the 2027 elections.

He said personnel were being trained and retrained on the Electoral Act and other regulations guiding the electoral process.

"We are also engaging with stakeholders, community leaders, youth leaders and civil societies, and the engagements have always been very fruitful.

"The whole essence is to have a situation where the election process is seamless, voters come out to vote without fear of intimidation or harassment, and at the end of it all, the election will not only be fair, but safe and credible," he added.

Edwards urged personnel deployed for election duties to remain impartial, apolitical and professional, stressing that the use of force must be avoided except where absolutely necessary.

The Commander, Naval

Base Abuja, Commodore Oluseyi Oladipo, said the military would continue to support the democratic process by creating the necessary conditions for free, fair and credible elections.

Oladipo said Nigeria had continued to accord priority to improving electoral practices, noting that the country had recorded 27 years of uninterrupted democratic governance.

He said it had therefore become necessary to continuously examine the role of the Armed Forces in elections within the established constitutional, legal and institutional frameworks.

"Against this background, the Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Adm. Idi Abbas, has mandated commands, formations, establishments and bases to organise seminars of this nature," he said.

According to him, the seminar was designed to enhance awareness and provide greater clarity to Nigerian Navy personnel who would be deployed for electoral duties.

Oladipo reaffirmed the commitment of the Nigerian Navy and the Armed Forces to the preservation of democracy in Nigeria.

FG, unions meet over King's College concession

ABUJA

The Federal Government has commenced discussions with staff unions over concerns surrounding the proposed concession of King's College, Lagos.

The Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, who led the meeting, said the engagement was aimed at addressing workers' concerns and finding a mutually acceptable way forward.

A statement issued in Abuja on Monday by Ikharo Attah, Special Adviser to the Minister on Media and Communications, said the meeting was attended by the Trade Union Congress (TUC), Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria (ASCSN) and other affiliated unions.

Also present were the Minister of State for Education, Prof. Suwaiba Ahmad, and the Act-

ing Permanent Secretary, Dr Folake Olatunji-David.

Alausa said the engagement formed part of the Federal Government's ongoing education reforms under President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda, aimed at ensuring access to quality education for every Nigerian child.

While acknowledging the importance of workers' welfare, the minister urged stakeholders to balance their concerns with the national interest and the future of Nigerian children.

He commended the unions for defending workers' rights and choosing dialogue to resolve the dispute, assuring them that the government would continue to engage all stakeholders in good faith and address legitimate concerns within the law and framework of its education reforms.

Alausa also commended

Olatunji-David for cutting short an official trip to London to return and address the concerns raised by the unions.

Olatunji-David assured the unions that the government was committed to a smooth transition and protection of affected workers' interests.

She clarified that the workers would remain civil servants, adding that they would have the option of remaining at King's College under the new administrative arrangement or transferring to other schools within Lagos State.

According to her, the choice would be based on the preference of individual workers.

She added that a committee would be established to manage the transition, ensure effective stakeholder participation and preserve the heritage and objectives of King's College.

Speaking on behalf of the

unions, TUC General Secretary, Mr Nuhu Toro, said they were seeking clarification on the proposed changes, particularly the use of the term "concessioning".

Toro said the issue had generated concerns and prompted a directive for workers in unity schools and King's College to down tools.

He, however, noted that interventions at the highest level had brought the government and unions to the negotiating table.

He said the unions were committed to resolving the matter through dialogue, particularly in the interest of children from poor and less privileged families.

"We are on the same page on the future of our children," Toro said, stressing that both the ministry and unions were interested in resolving the matter quickly.



EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME:

Director-General, Maryam Babangida National Centre for Women Development (MBNCWD), Dr Adedayo Benjamins-Laniyi (R), presenting a souvenir to the students of Government Girls Secondary School, Dutse, during the Girls Leadership and Empowerment Programme organised by the Director-General of the centre in collaboration with Chloe Ikpe in Abuja, recently.

FG, IFAD-LIFE-ND contribute \$68.7m to national economy

OSEMUDIAMHEN O. FAITH

ABUJA

The Federal Government and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)-Livelihood Improvement Family Enterprises for Niger Delta (LIFE-ND) project have contributed an estimated \$68.7 million (about N90.7 billion) to the Nigerian economy through agricultural enterprises and improved livelihoods in the Niger Delta.

National Project Coordinator of IFAD-LIFE-ND, Dr Abiodun Sanni, disclosed this on Monday in Abuja at the project's 6th Joint Supervision Mission.

Sanni said the project, being implemented across nine Niger Delta states, had contributed 130,744 metric tonnes of agricultural produce to food security, while creating 23,751 jobs for women and youths.

According to him, the ben-

eficiaries comprised 12,526 females and 11,225 males, whose earnings had contributed significantly to economic growth.

He disclosed that the youth and women beneficiaries had earned N38.23 billion, equivalent to about \$60.68 million, from their agricultural enterprises.

"Income of N38.23 billion, approximately \$60.68 million, earned by youth and women beneficiaries has contributed to the national economy," he said.

Sanni listed the project's seven priority commodities as cassava, rice, plantain, cocoa, fisheries, oil palm and poultry.

He said the IFAD-funded states

were Abia, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Ondo, while Akwa Ibom, Imo and Rivers were funded by the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).

The National Coordinator disclosed that 38,250 youth and women agri-enterprises had been created or strengthened under the first phase of the project.

He added that another 13,050 youth and women were targeted for direct participation through the regular incubation process, while 51,775 beneficiaries would receive business development support.

Sanni further said 30,600 beneficiaries, representing 80

per cent of the direct beneficiaries, had increased their food security by 50 per cent.

He explained that LIFE-ND was designed to transform the rural economy by increasing incomes, creating employment and improving food security among rural youths and women through sustainable agribusiness development.

Earlier, the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries, NDDC, Dr Ehimhen Eigbe, said the joint supervision mission provided an opportunity to assess the implementation of the project, identify gaps and agree on measures to consolidate its gains.

CHANGE OF NAME/ CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH
ESTHER now wish to be known and addressed as **UMARU GRACE MASANG** and also my correct date of birth is 1/12/1978 and not 1/12/ 1979. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME
The general public is here by notified that my correct name is **AKPOMUJE FREDRICK OKPORUA** and not **AKPOMUJE FRED OKPORUA**. Hence now wish to be known and addressed as **AKPOMUJE FREDRICK OKPORUA**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known as **Miss OPUTA UCHE B.** now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs. ABU UCHE BRIDGET**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

NEWS

ICPC, NFIU open stocktake on financial intelligence, asset recovery

ABUJA

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Nigeria Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) have commenced a stocktake exercise to assess the effectiveness of financial intelligence, money laundering investigations and asset recovery ahead of Nigeria's 2027 Financial Action Task Force (FATF) 3rd Round Mutual Evaluation.

The ICPC Chairman, Dr Musa Aliyu, SAN, disclosed this at the opening of the exercise, held as part of preparations for the international assessment.

Aliyu, who was represented by the Commission's Secretary, Mr Clifford Oparaodu, said the exercise would provide an opportunity to determine how effectively ICPC investigations were translating financial intelligence into prosecutions, asset recovery and stronger enforcement outcomes.

He said the stocktake would serve as an "internal mirror" for measuring the Commission's performance under the Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2022, Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) 2022 and the Proceeds of Crime Regulations

(POCR) 2024.

According to him, the ICPC has, in recent years, made parallel financial investigations mandatory in every corruption case handled by its investigators to strengthen the tracing of illicit funds and recovery of proceeds of crime.

He noted that while previous reviews had focused largely on laws and policies, the current exercise would go deeper into operational performance and Nigeria's enforcement effectiveness.

Aliyu said the exercise would focus on five FATF Immediate Outcomes—1, 2, 6, 7 and 8—which cover risk understanding, international co-operation, the use of financial

intelligence, effectiveness of money laundering investigations and asset recovery.

He explained that participants would assess whether anti-corruption agencies were aligning their investigations with Nigeria's national risk profile and identified priority threats.

"We must show that our operations reflect where the real threats are, including bribery and grand corruption," he said.

On cross-border financial crimes, Aliyu said the stocktake would examine Nigeria's formal Mutual Legal Assistance channels and informal intelligence networks to determine the country's capacity for international cooperation.

He said Nigeria must

demonstrate its ability to swiftly share information, support investigations and secure con-

victions through effective co-operation with international partners.

Benin residents groan over resurgence of fuel price hike

BENIN CITY

Residents of Benin City, the Edo State capital, have expressed growing concern over the resurgence of the hike in the pump price of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), popularly known as petrol, as the price now ranges between 1,400 and 1,500 per litre in parts of the city.

The latest increase has intensified pressure on households, commercial transport operators, traders and small businesses, with residents saying the development has made their daily struggle to meet basic needs even more difficult.

Across several parts of the Edo State capital, commuters are already feeling the impact as transport operators adjust fares to reflect the increasing cost of running their vehicles.

Residents who spoke on the development said the situation was more worrisome as schools had just resumed for the 2026/2027 academic session, when many parents and guardians need to take their children and wards to school on a daily basis.

A commuter, Mrs. Esther Imuentiyan, said there had been some relief in the last few months as the pump price of fuel gradually came down, only for the sudden increase to reverse the trend.

"Every day, you leave home with a particular amount for transportation, but by the time

you return, you discover that almost all the money has gone into transport. It is affecting what we are able to take home for food and other needs."

The situation is particularly difficult for workers and low-income earners who depend on commercial buses, tricycles and motorcycles to commute to their workplaces, a civil servant, Andrew Ekhuaghere, lamented.

A commercial driver, Mr. Gaf Imorie, described the situation as increasingly difficult for both transport operators and passengers.

"Transport fares have increased noticeably, and the current increase in the pump price of petrol makes daily operations unpredictable. Commuting, delivering goods, and maintaining vehicles have all become more stressful and costly."

A trader at New Benin Market, Mrs. Antonia Obi, said higher transportation costs were already feeding into the prices of goods.

"When the transporter increases the fare, the trader cannot absorb everything. The cost eventually reaches the consumer. That is why food and other commodities become more expensive."

Residents therefore urged the Federal Government and the Edo State Government to take urgent steps to stabilize the petroleum market, improve public transportation and cushion the impact of rising living costs on vulnerable households.



Edo State Deputy Governor, Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa, exchanges a warm handshake with the Director-General of the APC Presidential Campaign Council, Abdulaziz Yari, on his arrival at the Benin Airport yesterday.

PwDs seek advanced digital skills training

LAGOS

Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) have called for more advanced and specialised digital skills training to enable them take fuller advantage of opportunities in the digital economy.

They made the call during a two-day digital citizenship training organised by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) in Lagos to promote safe, productive and inclusive digital participation.

The Lead Facilitator, Mrs Binta Agbonika, said participants demonstrated a higher level of digital knowledge than expected, making a strong case for more specialised training.

Agbonika, Head of Career Advancement Centre, Miva Open University, said: "I was pleasantly surprised by their performance. These people are extremely intelligent, and I think we should have more advanced training for them."

She, however, noted that gaps remained in participants' knowledge of accessibility features available on mobile de-

vices.

According to her, the training exposed participants to voice-to-text, text-to-speech, magnification, large-text settings and other accessibility tools, as well as cybersecurity measures for protecting devices, personal information and online activities.

She said participants were also introduced to free online learning platforms, CV improvement, email usage and opportunities for freelance work.

Agbonika urged stakeholders to move PwDs beyond basic digital literacy, stressing that their performance demonstrated their readiness for advanced and specialised programmes.

She also called for accessible training venues with adequate movement space and suitable toilet facilities for wheelchair users and other persons with mobility challenges.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that participants were drawn from different disability groups and that the programme focused on digital skills, accessibility tools,

cybersecurity and online opportunities.

A participant, Mr Hammed Wasiu, from People with Disabilities in Agege, said the training improved his knowledge of accessibility features, including voice recording, voice-to-text, accessibility settings and flash notifications for incoming calls.

Wasiu expressed interest in digital marketing and urged organisations and universities to create more opportunities for PwDs to acquire digital skills.

Another participant, Mr Samuel Ezewanta of the Albinism Association of Nigeria, said he learnt how to tailor CVs to specific job applications and create stronger passwords without relying on personal information.

Ezewanta, however, complained about overcrowding at the venue, saying the limited space and distractions affected participants' comfort.

A secondary school student, Bolu Raji, said the programme improved his knowledge of CV preparation and online safety,

including precautions to take before transferring money online.

He appealed for digital devices to enable participants continue practising the skills acquired.

Similarly, Calister Uche, a content creator with albinism, said she learnt how to use magnification, large text, select-to-speak and voice-input features.

Uche said the knowledge would assist her in creating content that raises awareness and protects people from online scams.

Mrs Titilayo Odukoya of the Lagos State Office for Disability Affairs (LASODA) said the training would improve her effectiveness as a civil servant, particularly through lessons on email, Excel and other digital tools.

Odukoya urged the NCC to provide computers and other digital devices to enable participants practise and consolidate the skills acquired, noting that such support would extend the benefits of the programme beyond mobile-phone-based learning.

Experts seek tax waivers on menstrual products

LAGOS

Experts at the 2026 Nigeria Menstrual Health Product Forum in Lagos have called for tax waivers on menstrual products and free sanitary pads for schoolgirls to tackle period poverty and reduce absenteeism.

A participant, Inwalomhe Donald, advocated tax-free menstrual products and free pad distribution in primary and secondary schools.

Speaking on the theme, "Driving Standards and Policy Reform for Affordable Menstrual Products," Director-General of the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), Dr Ifeanyi Okeke, urged the Federal Government to review taxes, duties and levies on menstrual-product manufacturers and importers to reduce costs.

Okeke said collaboration among regulators, government agencies, manufacturers and development partners was essential to making quality menstrual products affordable.

He noted that painful menstruation, inadequate school sanitation and the high cost of sanitary products often prevent girls from concentrating in class or attending school.

UNICEF and other studies estimate that about 37 million Nigerian women and girls face difficulties accessing or affording menstrual products, with many resorting to unsafe alternatives such as cloth and tissue.

Experts also stressed that cheaper or free sanitary pads should be complemented by clean water, private toilets, soap and safe disposal facilities in schools.

THE NIGERIAN OBSERVER

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LONG MAY HE REIGN

NEWS**Tech week to drive digital investment into Abuja -organisers****ABUJA**

The Chairman of the Abuja Tech and Digital Economy Week (ATDEW) Steering Committee, Andrew Abu, says the event will connect investors and technology companies to development opportunities at the Abuja Technology Village.

Abu disclosed this on Monday in Abuja during an interview with newsmen, saying the 2026 edition of the event would be held under the theme: "Energising Smart Mobility: Powering Cities of the Future."

He said such linkages were critical to translating Nigeria's innovations into jobs, products and services capable of expanding the digital economy and attracting local and foreign investments.

"Nigeria has no shortage of innovative young people. Our responsibility is to build the bridge between ideas, infrastructure, investment, deployment and scale."

"Our engagement with Abuja Technology Village is part of that strategy."

"It has been designed to stimulate economic activities by showcasing market-ready innovations, facilitating deal-making and positioning Abuja as a hub for smart-city and technology investments," he told newsmen.

According to him, the Tech Week is expected to contribute significantly to economic development through job creation, support for startups, at-

traction of venture capital and private equity, as well as the commercialisation of research.

Abu said the event would also provide a platform for government and the private sector to align policies aimed at reducing the cost of doing business in Nigeria's technology sector.

He disclosed that discussions would focus on providing selected innovators from the National Innovation Challenge with access to technology infrastructure and incubation facilities.

He said the initiative would also provide participants with mentorship, pilot opportunities and commercialisation support at the Science and Technology Park.

Abu said the management of Abuja Technology Village had welcomed the collaboration and expressed readiness to work with the Steering Committee on a formal partnership framework.

The ATDEW 2026 is expected to attract no fewer than 7,000 delegates, including policymakers, investors, startups and development partners.

The event will also feature an exhibition, investor deal room and investment forum focusing on smart mobility, clean energy, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and digital infrastructure.

ATDEW 2026 will be hosted by Young Innovators of Nigeria in collaboration with the Rural Electrification Agency and the Nigeria Computer Society.

**PLENARY:**

Hon. Edosa Richard, member representing Oredo West Constituency (left), and Hon. Edobor Uzamere, member representing Ovia North-East Constituency II, during plenary at the Edo State House of Assembly yesterday.

Photo: Godwin Iseguan

Defence minister charges MOD staff on security consciousness**ABUJA**

The Minister of Defence, retired Gen. Christopher Musa, has charged personnel of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to remain vigilant, security-conscious and proactive in identifying and mitigating safety risks.

Musa gave the charge on Monday at a Town Hall meeting with staff of the ministry at its headquarters, Ship House, Abuja.

In a statement issued by his Special Assistant on Media,

Leah Katung-Babatunde, the minister stressed the critical role of civilian personnel in Nigeria's national security architecture.

He urged staff to promptly report suspicious activities and embrace the mantra, "See something, say something," while maintaining situational awareness, particularly regarding their personal movements.

Musa said the maiden Town Hall meeting was organised to establish direct communication between the ministry's leadership and staff, identify operational gaps and address pressing concerns affecting the workforce.

He expressed appreciation to the personnel for their dedication and reaffirmed the commitment of President Bola

Tinubu's administration to improving the welfare and working conditions of civil servants.

Describing civil servants as the "engine room of government," the minister emphasised the need to strengthen civil-military cooperation through unity, teamwork and mutual respect between civilian employees and members of the Armed Forces.

He also announced plans for structured engagement programmes aimed at fostering stronger and more productive working relationships between the ministry's civilian and military cadres.

In her remarks, the Director Overseeing the Office of the Permanent Secretary, Mrs Bose Olaniyi, commended the minister for initiating the en-

gagement.

Olaniyi said the initiative would strengthen open communication, discipline and collective responsibility in the execution of the ministry's mandate to safeguard Nigeria's national sovereignty.

Presenting the concerns of workers, President of the Joint Executive Council of the Ministry of Defence Union, Mr Dahiru Goronyo, highlighted several issues affecting staff welfare.

He identified delays in third-party remittance deductions, transportation challenges, training opportunities, promotion matters and outstanding entitlement arrears as some of the major concerns requiring urgent attention.

The meeting was attended by Directors, Heads of Departments and Units, staff across various cadres and representatives of the media.

Christian Journalists award: Moghalu tasks Nigerians on integrity, patriotism**LAGOS**

Former Managing Director of the Nigerian Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA), Dr George Moghalu, has challenged Nigerians to embrace integrity, patriotism and personal responsibility as critical ingredients for national development.

Moghalu made the call last weekend in Lagos while delivering the keynote address at the 2026 Nigerian Association of Christian Journalists (NACJ) Integrity Awards, held under the theme, "Integrity is Everything."

He said Nigeria could not achieve meaningful development if citizens expected only public officials to demonstrate integrity while neglecting their own responsibilities.

According to him, every Nigerian has a duty to uphold integrity and patriotism in both public and private life.

"Everyone should embody integrity and patriotism as essential traits to advance the course of the nation and humanity," he said.

Moghalu identified corruption, declining public trust, tribalism, the growing

emigration wave and waning patriotism among the challenges confronting the country.

He also condemned dishonesty in business dealings and careless attitudes towards the environment, describing them as practices capable of undermining national development.

The former NIWA boss stressed that rebuilding Nigeria must begin with individual conduct, noting that seemingly insignificant decisions and actions could have far-reaching consequences.

> "Building a virile nation requires truthfulness in small things," he said.

Moghalu urged Nigerians to love the country enough to contribute to its development rather than merely seeking opportunities abroad.

He also called on parents to raise children with strong moral values, integrity and national consciousness, while urging citizens to stand for what is right even when doing so demands personal sacrifice.

He said Nigerians had a collective responsibility to demonstrate faithfulness in their daily conduct and con-

tribute to building a better nation.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the annual NACJ Integrity Awards recognise individuals whose conduct and achievements exemplify integrity and ethical leadership.

Among those honoured at the ceremony was Mr Mechelin Iketalu, who received the NACJ Integrity Media Personality of the Year award.

Mr Benedict Ogbagbe was honoured as Professional Integrity Man of the Year, while Mr Joseph Ikunna received the Integrity Man of the Year award.

Eze Kalu Ogbu IV, the Enachoken of Abiriba, received the Integrity Royal Father of the Year award and also served as the royal father of the occasion.

Other recipients included Mrs Rita Ikiriko, Integrity Woman of the Year; Mrs Grace Kalunta-Chidinma, Woman of Integrity of the Year; Mr Felix Morka and Dr Francis Osita-Chuks.

Speaking after receiving his award, Ogbu described integrity as one of the most valuable qualities a person could possess.

INEC trains personnel to restore voter confidence ahead of 2027**LAFIA**

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has trained electoral personnel from Nasarawa, Plateau, Benue and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) as part of efforts to strengthen voter confidence and participation ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The Nasarawa Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), Mallam Abubakar Mohammed, disclosed this on Monday in Lafia during a capacity-building programme organised for electoral personnel from the four jurisdictions.

The participants comprised Assistant Electoral Officers (AEOs) and Voter Education Desk Officers.

Mohammed said the training was designed to address voter apathy, misinformation and concerns over the credibility of the electoral process.

He stressed that public confidence could only be earned when electoral officers demonstrated competence, neutrality and professionalism at every

stage of the electoral process.

According to him, the training was aimed at strengthening the knowledge, skills and professional capacity of personnel to effectively perform their statutory and operational responsibilities in the conduct of elections.

He said: "Your role is critical to improving voter participation, voter awareness and ultimately public trust in the electoral process."

Mohammed said the officers would also be equipped with the skills required to engage stakeholders and provide accurate electoral information to citizens in their respective communities.

He noted that successful elections depended largely on the timely dissemination of accurate information, enabling voters to understand electoral procedures before casting their ballots.

The REC urged the participants to use their positions to deepen voter education and strengthen citizens' understanding of the electoral process.

Also speaking, the Head of Voter Education, Gender, Publicity and Inclusivity Department, INEC, Nasarawa, Hajija

Safiya Garba, said some eligible voters had in the past stayed away from elections because of the belief that their votes would not count.

Garba urged the participants and other commission staff to become "ambassadors of democracy" by educating citizens on the importance of electoral participation.

"The participants and, of course, all staff of the commission must now become ambassadors of democracy who can explain to people why participation matters," she said.

She said the participants, being closer to the grassroots, had a critical role to play in educating women, youths, persons with disabilities and rural communities on political participation.

Garba further urged the officers to take voter education to various platforms and communities to counter misinformation and promote better understanding of the electoral process.

"From markets to campuses, from town halls to social media, we must meet voters where they are and give them correct information about elections," she said.

NDLEA Edo command destroys 5 cannabis farms, arrests 3, intercepts hard drugs in transit

BENIN CITY

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) Edo State Command has intensified its crackdown on drug-related activities with successful operations leading to the destruction of five cannabis farms, the arrest of

three suspected drug traffickers and the interception of significant quantities of psychotropic substances, including tramadol, codeine cough syrups and diazepam.

Commander of Narcotics Mitchell Ofoyeju, PhD, stated that the cannabis farms are gradually taking over our forests and called on the local government

chairmen to collaborate with the NDLEA to stem the illicit cultivation of cannabis. "We cannot continue this way because what began as a little garden is turning into a large plantation. These farms were destroyed in the past two weeks. Chairmen of local government councils are closer to the people, and we need their active collaboration," Mitchell stated.

A total of five cannabis farms were discovered and destroyed.

Two farms measuring 0.928744 hectares were located at Monday Camp, Usen Forest, Ovia South West Local Government Area. Two other farms measuring 1.004278 hectares were found at Igwe-Oke Forest, Owan East Local Government Area, while one farm measuring 0.336646 hectares was detected at Ogboha Forest, Owan West Local Government Area of the State. The plantations measured 2.269668 hectares with an estimated yield

of 5,674.17kg. Meanwhile, during the raid at Ogboha Forest in Owan West LGA, a 39-year-old male suspect, Sunday Segun, was apprehended at the scene.

Similarly, at Bob-Izua Park, New Road, Okada town, one Hassan Mohammed was apprehended with 7.1kg of cannabis. Also seized from him are three deadly knives and charms. The fight against psychotropic substances has also seen significant

progress. In a patrol operation in Auchi, NDLEA officers intercepted a vehicle containing a large quantity of assorted illicit drugs. The haul included 590 bottles of codeine syrup, 50,000 capsules of Tramadol 100 mg, 100 tablets of Tramadol 225 mg, and 25,000 tablets of Diazepam. A 25-year-old Jamie Zubaru was apprehended and assisting narcotic officers with further investigation.



LAUNCH: Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa (M); Minister of State for Education, Prof. Suwaiba Ahmad (3rd L); Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Dr Jumoke Oduwole (2nd R) and others during the official launch of the Digital Training Academy, DTA by the Minister of Education in Abuja on Monday

Peter Obi urges UNN to release his academic records

ANAMBRA

The Nigerian Democratic Congress NDC presidential candidate, Peter Obi, has asked the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, to release his academic records following reports of a legal action seeking Certified True Copies of his university certificates and other admission records.

Obi, in a statement on Tuesday on X, said he had no objection to the release of his Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy, which he said was awarded by the university in 1984, as well as other academic records relating to his admission and studies at the institution.

His statement followed re-

ports circulating on social media concerning a legal action by an individual or group seeking CTCs of his degree certificate and other academic credentials.

"I wish to state clearly that I have absolutely no objection to the release of these records," Obi said.

He called on the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, to make his academic certificates, records and other official documents available upon legitimate request and within the limits permitted by law.

"I respectfully request that the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, within the limits permitted by law, make available, upon legitimate request, my academic certificates, records, and other

official documents relating to my admission and studies at the University," he said.

Obi added that he had no objection to other educational institutions he attended, both within and outside Nigeria, releasing his academic records in accordance with applicable laws and procedures.

He said he believed in transparency and accountability, particularly for people seeking public office, but urged that scrutiny be conducted fairly and lawfully.

"I believe strongly in transparency and accountability, particularly for those who seek the privilege of public office. Public scrutiny must, however, be fair, lawful, and applied consistently to everyone who seeks

to lead our nation," he said.

Obi, who is seeking to contest the 2027 presidential election, said he welcomed legitimate public interest in his background, qualifications and record.

"As a presidential candidate seeking the trust of Nigerians to lead our country, I welcome legitimate public interest in my background, qualifications, and record. I am prepared to subject myself to the level of scrutiny that should reasonably be expected of anyone seeking the highest office in our country," he said.

He also challenged other presidential aspirants to make their educational qualifications and relevant records available for public scrutiny.

Having a male heir not my priority, says Dangote

KANO

The Chairman of Dangote Group, Aliko Dangote, has said having a son to inherit his business empire is not a priority, stressing that his three daughters are capable of taking over the Dangote Group.

Dangote stated this during an interview with ARISE News on Tuesday, where he said he believed one of his daughters could eventually lead the conglomerate.

Asked whether he could see one of his daughters taking charge of the group, Dangote said, "I think, yes, I can see one of them. I've been watching all of them, so I can definitely see one of the three that can actually lead."

Dangote's daughters, Halima, Fatima and Mariya, hold senior positions within the conglomerate, with their roles expanding as the group continues to develop its succession structure.

Dangote said their involvement in the family business was based on their personal interest rather than pressure from him.

"They are very, very interested in the business. I'm not forcing them to come and be part of this business, no. They are very interested, and they enjoy it," he said.

The billionaire and Africa's richest man said he believed his daughters could surpass his achievements and take the company to a higher level.

"One of them can be better than — I never expected to perform this much," he said.

"But I'm sure they're highly educated, so they will be more creative. So most likely, they might be even taking the company to the next level."

Asked if he believed all three daughters were capable of achieving this, Dangote replied, "All of them."

On whether he still hoped to have a son, particularly given the traditional expectations surrounding male heirs in Kano, Dangote said it was not important to him.

Four cattle rustlers killed as security operatives recover 35 cows in Kwara

ILORIN

Four suspected cattle rustlers have been killed during a gun battle with security operatives after armed men invaded a cattle camp in Lade, Patigi Local Government Area of Kwara State.

It was gathered that the incident occurred at about 10 pm on Friday, September 11, 2026, when the suspected rustlers reportedly invaded the camp of a cattle owner, fired several shots and fled with about 40 cows.

Following the attack, personnel of the Kwara State Police Command, Nigerian Army, Forest Guards and local vigilantes mobilised to the area after receiving information about the incident.

The joint security team reportedly extended its operation into the surrounding for-

est, while operatives identified routes believed to have been used by the fleeing suspects.

The suspects subsequently engaged the security operatives in a gun battle, during which four members of the gang were killed, while others escaped into the forest with suspected gunshot injuries.

Thirty-five of the cows taken from the camp were recovered during the operation, while the security team also recovered a locally fabricated AK-47 rifle from the suspected rustlers.

The remaining livestock had yet to be recovered as of Tuesday, while security operatives were said to have intensified efforts to locate the fleeing members of the gang.

The development was confirmed by the Kwara State Police Command in a statement issued on Tuesday by its Public Relations Officer, Adetoun Ejire-Adeyemi.

2027: APC Gov's distance themselves from Wike-led rainbow coalition, deny alliance

IMO

Governors elected on the All Progressives Congress platform have distanced themselves from any coalition or alliance with any individual ahead of the 2027 general elections, maintaining that they remain committed to the APC and its political structure.

Chairman of the APC Governors Forum and Imo State Governor, Hope Uzodimma, said this at the end of the gov-

ernors' meeting in Abuja late Monday night, stressing that they had not entered into any formal agreement with any individual or opposition party ahead of the election.

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory and national leader of the Peoples Democratic Party, Nyesom Wike, who is serving in the APC-led Federal Government, has been championing a Rainbow Coalition movement in Rivers State in support of President Bola Tinubu ahead of the 2027 elections.

Wike, who has been em-

broiled in disagreements with some APC governors, disclosed during his recent media chat that Kwara State Governor, Abdulrahman AbdulRazaq, and Uzodimma were allegedly behind his political challenges.

He said this was because of the growing national spread of his Rainbow Coalition, which he said was providing the PDP with a platform for politicians seeking to challenge the ruling party's governorship and senatorial candidates in the next election, contrary to the governors' interests.

In what appeared to be an indirect response to Wike's remarks and his moves to expand his political influence across the states, the APC governors declared that they would not entertain any arrangement that could create confusion, divided loyalty or competing interests within the party.

Uzodimma, who read the communique at the end of the meeting, said the forum's primary focus was to support official APC candidates at all levels rather than promote external interests.

NEWS

Why petrol remains expensive in Nigeria — Dangote

LAGOS

President of Dangote Industries Limited, Aliko Dangote, has attributed the high price of petrol in Nigeria partly to the continued smuggling of the commodity to neighbouring countries where it sells for significantly more.

Dangote said petrol prices in neighbouring countries were between 30 and 50 per cent higher than what they are in Nigeria, arguing that the price difference creates a strong financial incentive for traders to move petrol out of the country.

He stated this in an interview aired on Arise TV on

Tuesday while speaking about petrol prices and the availability of the product amid the ongoing crisis in the Middle East.

Explaining why Nigerians may perceive petrol as expensive despite the country producing the commodity domestically, Dangote said the price could not be considered in isolation from the prices in neighbouring countries.

"You know, expensive is relative. In the sense that today, maybe, you know, a lot of them, there's ignorance also. What they need to do is ask, what is the neighbour's price?"

He said the continued movement of Nigerian petrol across the borders was partly driven

by the significant difference between domestic prices and those obtainable in neighbouring countries.

"I don't know if you know that there's still a lot of smuggling of the same petrol we are producing to our neighbouring countries."

The price gap means that petrol bought in Nigeria can

potentially be resold across the border at a substantial premium. Dangote said this creates an incentive for smugglers to divert petrol meant for the Nigerian market rather than sell it domestically.

"Because those neighbouring countries are about 30 to 50 per cent more expensive than Nigeria. So, it's not actu-

ally like for like."

Dangote specifically cited Niger, where he said petrol was selling at a premium of between 20 and 25 per cent compared with Nigeria.

He used the example to illustrate why the border trade could be financially attractive, particularly when the price difference is large enough to

provide an immediate return on the commodity.

"And people can now go and ask, okay, fine, what is the price of, even now at N1,350? Okay, the price in Niger is 20 to 25 per cent more than Nigeria," he said.

He questioned what other legitimate business could provide such an immediate return.

Police arrest suspects, rescue victims, recover firearms in 11 states

ABUJA

The Nigeria Police Force has reported a series of operational successes across 11 states, including the neutralisation of a suspected terrorist, the rescue of kidnapped victims, and the arrest of suspected kidnappers, armed robbers, and a suspected bandit informant.

The operations, carried out between September 12 and 15, 2026, also led to the recovery of firearms, ammunition, illicit drugs, vehicles, motorcycles, ransom money, and other exhibits.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Ani Iniedu, said police operatives, working with other security agencies, continued to intensify operations against criminal elements across the country.

He said, "Police operatives,

in collaboration with military personnel, successfully conducted a clearance operation in Gumki Village, Arewa Local Government Area of Kebbi State, during which one terrorist was neutralised."

In the operation, the police said one PKT rifle with 174 rounds of live ammunition, an AK-47 rifle with 14 rounds of ammunition, four motorcycles, mobile phones and other exhibits were recovered.

In Katsina State, two women abducted in Sha'Iskawa Fulani Village, Kankia LGA, were rescued unharmed after police operatives engaged the armed bandits in a gun duel.

According to the police, "The operatives successfully overpowered the assailants, forcing them to abandon the two victims and flee into the bush with varying degrees of gunshot wounds."

Kaduna varsity workers reject selective implementation, demand equal pay

KADUNA

The Joint Action Committee of the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities, Non-Academic Staff Union and National Association of Academic Technologists, Kaduna State University branch, has rejected the Kaduna State Government's plan to implement the newly negotiated Federal Government agreement for academic staff alone.

The committee, which comprises SSANU, NASU and NAAT, described the proposed selective implementation as discriminatory and warned that excluding non-academic workers from the benefits of the agreement could undermine industrial harmony at the university.

The JAC stated this in a statement issued on Tuesday and signed by its Acting Chairman, Comrade Aliyu Garba, and Secretary, Comrade Dahiru Musa, after its Executive Committee meet-

ing held at the SSANU Conference Room, KASU, Kaduna.

The unions urged the state government to extend the implementation of the agreement to all recognised staff unions at the university, arguing that academic and non-academic workers jointly sustain the institution.

The committee said, "It is worthy of note that all the universities that implemented the FGN agreements have done so for all the unions in their respective universities without discrimination."

It added that the Kaduna State Government should adopt an inclusive approach that recognises the contributions of all categories of workers to the development and effective administration of KASU.

The JAC warned that selective implementation could create divisions among workers, stressing that "no university can function effectively when any category of its workforce is left behind."

**SUMMIT:**

Secretary-General to the Government of the Federation, George Akume (L); with the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Amb Sola Enikanolaiye, during the North Central Stakeholders Development Summit in Abuja

32,000 Nigerians to get free tech skills, certifications from FG academy

ABUJA

The Federal Government has launched a six-month Digital Training Academy aimed at equipping 32,000 Nigerians with digital skills, professional certifications and pathways to employment and entrepreneurship in the global digital economy.

The Federal Ministry of Education disclosed this in a statement issued on Tuesday, signed by the Director of Press and

Public Relations in the ministry, Boriowo Folasade, saying the initiative was designed to address the country's digital skills gap and expand opportunities for Nigerians in the technology-driven global economy.

The academy is being implemented under the Nigeria Education Sector Renewal Initiative through the Nigeria Education Digital Infrastructure programme and is aligned with President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda.

The statement noted that while speaking at the launch in Abuja, the Minister of Education, Dr Maruf Alausa, said the ministry received 72,850 applications from the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, with 19,699 applicants meeting the entry requirements.

According to the ministry, 16,000 beneficiaries were selected for the inaugural cohort and the programme will also provide participants with access to international learning

platforms and professional certification opportunities, according to the ministry.

"The Federal Government has launched the Digital Training Academy (DTA), a six-month intervention of the Federal Ministry of Education designed to equip 32,000 Nigerians with globally relevant digital skills, professional certifications and pathways to employment, entrepreneurship and participation in the global digital economy.

Obi rejects Anambra debt claims, vows to end 2027 campaign if proven wrong

ABUJA

Presidential candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress, Peter Obi, has rejected claims by the Anambra State Government that his administration left behind inherited debts, including a 2bn ecological loan, contractor liabilities and unpaid salaries, gratuities and pensions.

Obi, in a statement on X on Tuesday, described the claims as "completely false," saying his administration had cleared more than 35bn in historical gratuities and arrears and handed over the state without outstanding salary, pension or gratuity obligations.

He said, "We systematically liquidated historical gratuities

and arrears dating back several years, amounting to over 35 billion."

"At the point of handover, the state owed nothing in salaries, gratuities, or pensions, nor did we owe anything to any contractor for projects duly executed and certified," he added.

The former Anambra governor was reacting to claims by the state government that the administration of Governor Chukwuma Soludo was still servicing debts incurred by previous administrations, including those of Obi and former Governor Willie Obiano.

Anambra State Commissioner for Finance, Izuchukwu Okafor, said the Soludo administration had not borrowed

from any commercial bank since assuming office but had continued to service inherited loans.

Okafor said deductions were being made from the state's Federation Account Allocation Committee funds to repay loans obtained by previous administrations, while noting that the government had reduced the state's debt burden by more than 83 per cent.

But Obi specifically disputed the claim concerning the 2bn ecological fund, explaining that the money was released shortly before he left office for the Oko/Umuchiana erosion crisis.

"The 2 billion ecological fund in question was released barely three months before the end of my tenure for the Oko/Umuchiana erosion crisis," he

said.

"Despite pressure to spend the money, I refused, insisting that it should be left for my successor because government is a continuum and the funds were tied to a specific project."

According to Obi, the money was left untouched in a First Bank account.

"The money was therefore left 100 per cent intact in First Bank, in Account No. 2018779464, with a balance of over 2.13 billion," he said.

He also maintained that the money was not part of the savings he claimed his administration left for the state.

"It is important to stress that funds tied to specific projects or set aside for particular purposes were not even included in the over 75 billion in savings we left behind," Obi said.

APC denies link to violence in Enugu, demands probe

ENUGU

The Enugu State chapter of the All Progressives Congress has denied allegations linking the party, its leaders or the state administration to an alleged act of political violence in Nkanu West Local Government Area.

The party stated this in a statement issued on Tuesday and made available to PUNCH Online, signed by its State Publicity Secretary, Chief Uche Obute, the APC described the allegations as “misleading, unsubstantiated and politically motivated.”

The ruling party, however, urged security and law enforcement agencies to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation into the incident and make public the facts surrounding it.

According to the statement, the party would support the prosecution of anyone found culpable of violence or criminality, irrespective of political affiliation or status.

“The APC has nothing to fear from a transparent investigation and will continue to uphold the principles of democracy, justice and the rule of law,” the statement partly read.

The party also rejected attempts to link Governor Peter

Mbah with the alleged incident, arguing that his administration had prioritised peace, security, development and good governance in the state.

It said, “It is therefore difficult to reconcile allegations of sponsorship of violence with an administration that has consistently placed security, development and good governance among its major priorities.”

The APC further appealed to opposition parties and other

political actors in the state to exercise restraint and avoid what it described as character assassination, misinformation, inflammatory rhetoric and unsubstantiated accusations.

The party urged its members and supporters to remain calm and law-abiding, warning them not to be provoked by rumours or inflammatory political statements.

It also called on traditional rulers, religious leaders, community leaders, youth organi-

sations and civil society groups to promote peace, dialogue and responsible citizenship.

The APC said political disagreements should be resolved through democratic and lawful processes rather than confrontation or violence.

The party added that it remained committed to supporting the development agenda of the Mbah administration and urged citizens to protect the peace and stability of Enugu State.

“Nkanu West is peaceful. Enugu State is peaceful. Governor Peter Ndubuisi Mbah remains committed to peace, security, law and development,” the statement added.

The National Democratic Congress in Enugu State had on Monday released the names of eight party members who sustained gunshot injuries on Saturday after unidentified hoodlums invaded their political gathering in Obuofia, Nkanu West Local Government Area.

I’m not Makinde’s surrogate, says Oyo APM Gov. candidate

IBADAN

The governorship candidate of the Allied Peoples Movement in Oyo State, Abimbola Adekanmbi, has said he is not a surrogate of the Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde.

Speaking in an interview on Arise News on Tuesday, the former Commissioner for Finance stated that he has his own manifesto and strategy for governing the state.

Adekanmbi said he would take responsibility for his decisions and actions if elected governor, noting that he was prepared to chart his own course rather than inherit the political liabilities of the incumbent governor.

“I’m no surrogate to Governor Makinde. The governor

made it clear that I shouldn’t inherit his enemies or liabilities.

“I’m owning every action I take as governor, just as I have always owned my actions in life. I own it, and I’m prepared. I have my own manifesto and strategy,” he said.

Adekanmbi also explained that the emergence of candidates for the various elective positions was not based on a decision taken solely by the governor.

According to him, the process involved consultations and public engagements, with contributions from different sectors and regions of the state.

“The governor did not sit in his office and simply drop a list. There was a process that led to the emergence of all the candidates.

Anambra mother arrested for brutalising seven-year-old daughter

AWKA

The Anambra State Police Command has arrested a 32-year-old woman, Ogechi Ofoma, for allegedly inflicting bodily injuries on her seven-year-old daughter, Oluebube, in the Ibollo community, Awada-Obosi, Idemili North Local Government Area of the state.

Oluebube was allegedly injured with a hot knife after she was accused of taking meat from a pot.

The suspect was arrested on Sunday by police operatives in collaboration with officials of the state Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare.

She is currently being held at the Awada Police Station, pending further investigation.

Confirming the incident in

a statement on Monday, the spokesperson for the state police command, SP Tochukwu Ikenga, said the child was rescued following the intervention of community security personnel and residents.

Ikenga said the command received a report of the alleged abuse and severe bodily injuries inflicted on the child on the evening of September 13, 2026.

He said, “The Anambra State Police Command has strongly condemned the alleged brutal abuse of a seven-year-old girl in Obosi, Idemili North Local Government Area and has reaffirmed its resolve to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice.

“The prompt intervention of security personnel from the Ibollo Community, Awada-Obosi, and concerned residents led to the child’s rescue and the arrest of her mother, Mrs Ogechi Ofoma, 32.



SUMMIT:

Minister of Information and National Orientation Mohammed Idris Malagi; Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Amb Sola Enikanolaiye and Former Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives Ahmed Wase, during the North Central Stakeholders Development Summit in Abuja on Monday

Support Tinubu in 2027, Yari urges Northerners

LAGOS

The Director-General of the All Progressives Congress Presidential Campaign Council, Abdul’aziz Yari, has called for more support from the Northern region for President Bola Tinubu’s 2027 re-election bid.

Yari said the move was necessitated owing to Tinubu’s support for former President, Late Muhammadu Buhari, who stayed in office for two terms, from 2015 to 2023.

He stated this on Monday when he led a delegation to the palace of the Oba of Lagos, Oba Riliwanu Akiolu, in

Lagos.

Yari, a former governor of Zamfara State, noted that despite facing pressure within the party from some “power-mongering bloc” to run for the presidency in 2019, Tinubu held to his word by pushing for the late Katsina-born president.

This, he said, was enough reason to garner votes from the North for Tinubu’s re-election.

“For us in the north, I think it is time for us to pay Tinubu back for allowing the north to complete its full term. I remember there was a struggle by some power-mongering bloc within the APC that tried

to convince Tinubu to contest the presidential election in 2019. He resisted the pressure and said it was the turn of the North.

“Tinubu said as long as Buhari can come out and ask people to vote for him, he would be with Buhari till the end. And that was what Tinubu truly did.

“Today, I don’t think there is an excuse for us from the northern region not to support Tinubu to continue the good job he started and complete his tenure.

“The message from northern Nigeria, where I came from, is that there is nothing

to worry about. There are still people of high calibre and character who believe in justice and fairness. We are going to do our best to ensure that Tinubu’s journey continues to the end. He can count on us,” the campaign DG said.

Yari said Tinubu has restructured the country despite inheriting a challenging situation from previous administrations.

The senator representing Zamfara West said the campaign council was not seeking Tinubu’s re-election solely for power rotation, but because it believed Nigerians wanted him to continue in office.

Ondo council chair gifts education materials to 1,000 pupils

AKURE

As schools resumed in Ondo State on Monday, the Chairman of Akoko South-West Local Government Area of the state, Mr Ayo Ajana, gifted educational materials to no fewer than 1,000 indigent pupils in the council area.

The gesture was said to be part of the Back-to-School initiative of the council boss.

Distributing the materials to the beneficiaries, who are

from 55 primary schools in the local government, on Tuesday at St Mary’s Catholic Mega Primary School, Oka Akoko, Ajana explained that the initiative was aimed at reducing the financial pressure on parents and encouraging children to remain in school.

According to him, some of the materials, including 30,000 exercise books and 1,000 school bags, among others, would be distributed to pupils in public primary schools across the council.

The council chairman said,

“This programme is designed as an investment in the future of our children rather than merely a distribution of educational materials. The economic challenges confronting families are real, and any step we can take to reduce the cost of educating a child is a responsibility we cannot overlook. This initiative is about investing in the dreams, confidence and future of our children.”

The chairman urged the beneficiaries to use the materials judiciously, study diligently and respect their teachers and

parents, assuring residents that his administration would continue to invest in education, social welfare, agriculture, youth and women empowerment.

In his remarks, the Chairman of the Nigeria Union of Teachers in the local government, Comrade Suuru Edward, commended Ajana for fulfilling his promise to prioritise education.

He said the intervention would ease the burden on parents and benefit pupils across the council.

FEATURE

Back to School: Excitement, challenges and expectations as Edo students resume

After weeks of holiday, schools across Edo State have reopened their gates as students return to classrooms for the 2026/2027 academic session.

For many students, the first day of resumption comes with excitement. The opportunity to see friends and classmates again, meet new teachers and begin a fresh academic journey creates a lively atmosphere around many schools.

For some students, however, returning to school also means adjusting once again to early mornings, school routines, assignments and the demands of academic work after spending weeks away from the classroom.

Parents, too, have had to prepare for the new session. From purchasing textbooks and notebooks to replacing uniforms, shoes and other school materials, school resumption often comes with significant financial responsibilities for families.

The cost of education remains a major concern for some parents, particularly as families deal with increasing household expenses. While parents want to provide their children with everything they need to succeed, some are forced to prioritise essential items.

For teachers and school administrators, the beginning of a new session presents an opportunity to set new academic goals and improve on the experiences

of the previous school year. Teachers are expected to help students settle into their routines while creating an environment that encourages learning and participation.

Beyond academics, school resumption also brings renewed attention to the safety and wellbeing of students. Parents and school authorities are expected to remain vigilant and ensure that children can travel to and from school safely and learn in a secure environment.

For students moving into a new class or school, the new academic year may also bring new responsibilities. Some will be meeting new classmates, while others will be preparing for important examinations and making decisions about their future education.

The first day may be filled with excitement, but the weeks ahead will determine how successfully students, teachers and parents adapt to the demands of the new session.

As schools across Edo State begin another academic journey today, the expectations are high: better academic performance, improved discipline, stronger parental involvement and a safe environment where every child has the opportunity to learn and develop.

For Edo's students, it is more than simply returning to school. It is the beginning of another opportunity to learn, grow and work towards a better future.



Give them wings: helping children turn dreams into reality

SALIHU RUKAYYA SAIDU

Every child has a dream. Some dream of becoming doctors, teachers, journalists, engineers, musicians, athletes or entrepreneurs. These dreams often begin at a young age through curiosity, imagination and the desire to make a difference. While talent and determination are important, the support a child receives at home can determine whether those dreams flourish or fade away.

Parents are a child's first teachers, mentors and role models. The encouragement they provide shapes a child's confidence, self-worth and ambition. When parents believe in their children's abilities, they give them the courage to pursue their goals despite challenges. On the other hand, constant criticism, comparison with others or forcing children into careers they do not love can discourage them from chasing their dreams.

One of the best ways parents can support a child's dream is by listening. Children should feel comfortable talking about their interests without fear of being laughed at or dismissed. Whether a child dreams of becoming a footballer, artist or scientist, parents should ask questions, understand the child's passion and provide guidance rather than immediate judgment.

Encouragement is another powerful tool. Every dream comes with obstacles, and children need reassurance that failure is part of learning. Parents who celebrate effort instead of only success help build resilience. A child who loses a competition or

performs poorly in an examination should be encouraged to improve rather than be made to feel incapable.

Providing opportunities for growth is equally important. Parents can enrol children in clubs, sports, music classes, debate societies or other activities that match their interests. They can also provide books, educational materials or online learning resources that help children develop their skills. Even when financial resources are limited, emotional support, guidance and motivation can make a significant difference.

Parents should also avoid comparing their children with others. Every child has unique talents and develops at a different pace. Comparing siblings, classmates or neighbours can create feelings of inadequacy instead of motivation. Rather than asking, "Why can't you be like your friend?" parents should focus on helping each child improve based on their individual strengths.

Communication between parents and children should remain open and honest. As children grow older, their interests may change, and parents should be willing to adapt. Dreams sometimes evolve with age and experience. A child who once wanted to become a pilot may later discover a passion for architecture. Supporting these changes shows trust and respect for the child's personal journey.

Parents must also teach discipline, responsibility and hard work. Dreams become reality through commitment and consistent effort. Children should understand that

success requires patience, practice and perseverance. Parents who model these values prepare their children to overcome setbacks and remain focused on their goals.

Another important responsibility of parents is to help children understand that choosing a career should not be based solely on money or social status. A profession may be financially rewarding, but if a child has no interest or ability in that area, forcing them into it may lead to frustration. Parents can provide advice while allowing children to discover where their strengths and interests lie.

Parents should also create an environment where children are not afraid of making mistakes. Fear of failure can prevent a child from trying new things. When mistakes are treated as opportunities to learn, children become more willing to explore their abilities. A child who is allowed to learn from failure can develop the confidence needed to face future challenges.

In today's digital age, parents can also use technology to support their children's development. The internet provides access to educational materials, tutorials, courses and platforms where young people can learn new skills. However, parents should guide their children on how to use technology responsibly and protect them from harmful online content.

Experts and child-development professionals generally emphasise the importance of supportive environments in children's development. When children feel loved, respected and encouraged, they are more likely

to develop confidence, creativity and a willingness to pursue meaningful goals.

History is filled with successful people whose achievements were supported by families who recognised their potential. Behind many great inventors, athletes, writers, entrepreneurs and leaders are parents and guardians who encouraged them during difficult moments.

In today's fast-changing world, career opportunities are more diverse than ever before. Many professions that were once overlooked now offer rewarding careers. Parents should therefore keep an open mind and guide their children based on their talents, interests and abilities rather than outdated expectations or societal pressure.

Supporting a child's dream does not mean removing every obstacle. It means standing beside them, offering guidance, encouragement and unconditional love as they work towards their goals. Parents should teach children that dreams require effort and that nobody becomes successful overnight.

Schools, communities and society also have a role to play. Children need access to good education, safe environments, mentorship and opportunities to develop their talents. When parents, teachers and communities work together, young people are more likely to discover their potential and use it positively.

Every child deserves the opportunity to dream without feeling that their dreams are too small, too unusual or impossible. A parent's role is not necessarily to choose the destination

but to provide the support and direction that helps the child find the right path.

A child's dream is like a seed. With love, patience, encouragement and proper guidance, it can grow into something extraordinary. Parents have the opportunity to nurture that seed and help it blossom into a life of purpose, achievement and fulfilment. When we give children the support they need today, we help build the confident and capable adults of tomorrow.



Supporting a child's dream does not mean removing every obstacle. It means standing beside them, offering guidance, encouragement and unconditional love as they work towards their goals. Parents should teach children that dreams require effort and that nobody becomes successful overnight.

Matters-In-Focus

Edo healthcare transformation: How Okpebholo built, renovated 61 PHCs in 18 LGAs in less than two years

Expanding Access to Free and Affordable Healthcare
BENIN CITY — Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has stepped up efforts to transform the state's primary healthcare system, with the construction and renovation of 61 Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs) across the 18 local government areas in less than two years in office.

The intervention, which is aimed at bringing quality and affordable healthcare closer to the people, is particularly targeted at underserved communities where residents have traditionally had to travel long distances to access basic medical services.

The renewed health centres are providing a range of essential services, including free malaria testing and free delivery services, thereby reducing the financial burden on families and making healthcare more accessible to women, children and other vulnerable residents.

Among the communities benefiting from the intervention are Idogbo Health Centre in Ikpoba-Okha, Usih in Egor, New Era in Oredo, Urhonigbe Health Centre in Orhionmwon and Iguoriakhi Health Centre in Ovia South-West, among others across the Edo South Senatorial District and other parts of the state.

Beyond the physical transformation of the facilities, the intervention has restored confidence in primary healthcare delivery at the community level, with residents saying the renewed centres have significantly reduced the stress, cost and risks associated with travelling to urban centres for treatment.

For many beneficiaries, the renovated and newly constructed facilities represent far more than improved buildings. They symbolise the return of essential healthcare services to communities that had for years struggled with dilapidated facilities and limited access to medical care.

A resident whose wife delivered a baby at one of the centres said she benefited from the government's free delivery programme, describing the initiative as a major relief to

families at a time when the cost of healthcare is becoming increasingly burdensome.

Another beneficiary expressed satisfaction with both the quality of the facility and the attitude of the health workers.

> "I am happy that we have something like this in our community. I love it and love the professionalism of the staff there, the way they attend to me and treated me. I am really happy," she said.

For Mr. Victor Okonta, a resident in one of the beneficiary communities, the availability of a functional health centre within the neighbourhood has become particularly valuable during emergencies.

> "Having a health centre in our community is a good one for us. We don't have to go through the stress of going to the city centre anymore, especially during emergencies at night. Before, this place was not okay, but since the renovation, everything is back to normal and the community people are using it," he said.

The impact of the intervention, residents said, is also extending beyond healthcare delivery to local economic activities.

Mrs. Helen Ebhogiaye, a trader at Iwogban Community, said the transformation of the formerly dilapidated health centre had brought increased patronage to businesses around the facility.

> "Before, this health centre was in a very bad state and people hardly come here for treatment or delivery. But today, since the government intervention, here is booming and it is a plus for us traders. I sell food, and because the place is always busy, I now have many customers patronising me," she said.

The renewed centres are also strengthening preventive and maternal healthcare services, with some facilities operating round the clock to ensure that residents have access to medical attention when they need it.

A staff nurse at one of the facilities, Mrs. Omorodion Victory, said the centre provides 24-hour services covering immunisation, maternity care, treatment and family planning.

> "We render 24-hour services. Delivery is 100 per cent free here. The benefit of this place is that it provides healthcare for community people at an affordable cost and is accessible 24 hours," she said.

The emphasis on free delivery services is particularly significant for women in rural and semi-urban communities, many of whom are vulnerable to delays in accessing skilled birth attendants because of distance, transportation challenges or financial constraints.

Similarly, free malaria testing is expected to encourage early diagnosis and treatment of one of the commonest health challenges affecting families, particularly children and pregnant women.

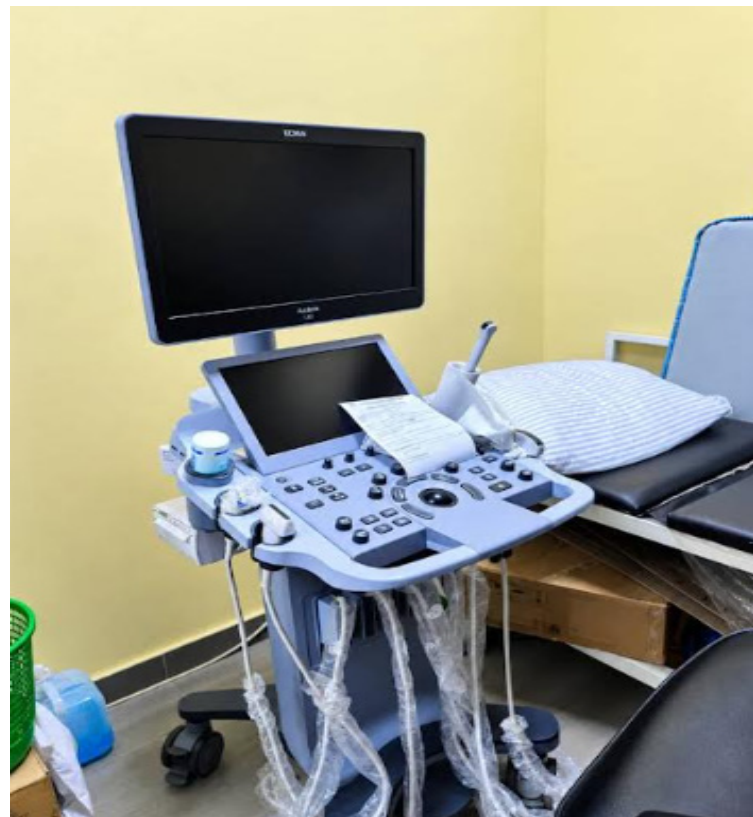
Across the 61 facilities, patients, nursing mothers, traders and other beneficiaries have continued to commend the government for restoring functionality to healthcare centres that had previously fallen into disrepair.

They also praised the commitment and professionalism of healthcare workers, whose services have become central to sustaining the renewed facilities.

The transformation is gradually changing the perception of primary healthcare among residents, with communities that once depended heavily on distant hospitals now having functional centres within closer reach.

For families that previously endured long journeys, high transportation costs, expensive medical bills and poorly functioning health facilities, the renewed PHCs are increasingly being seen as a tangible return of essential public healthcare to the people.

With the ongoing intervention across the state's 18 local government areas, the Okpebholo administration is positioning primary healthcare not merely as a government service, but as a critical instrument for improving the quality of life, protecting families from avoidable health risks and ensuring that access to basic healthcare is no longer determined by where a resident lives or the size of his or her pocket





PROTEST: Rubble set on fire as health workers involved in Congo's Ebola response go on strike as they protest over payment issues in Bunia, Congo,

US confirms for first time it has deployed space weapons

The US has confirmed it deployed a space weapon in Earth's orbit, the first time it has acknowledged such offensive capabilities.

US Secretary of the Air Force Troy Meink said the "on orbit" weapon was necessary to safeguard US forces against hostile enemy action.

Speaking at the Air, Space and Cyber Conference on Monday, Meink said the US was ready for "evolving threats", but did not elaborate on the weapon's capabilities or when it was put into orbit.

Senior military leaders have previously said they planned to boost military capabilities in space, citing Russian and Chinese programmes developing ways to attack and disrupt US

satellites in a future conflict.

Watch: US Space Force Guardians spring into action during training exercise

China responded on Tuesday by warning against an "arms race" in space.

"We urge the US side to stop expanding its military capabilities and preparing for war in outer space," AFP quoted a foreign ministry spokesman as saying.

Details of how the weapon operates have not been disclosed by US officials.

A US Space Force spokesperson said: "Space control encapsulates the mission areas required to contest and control the space domain – employing kinetic and non-kinetic means to affect adversary capabilities

through disruption, degradation and even destruction, if necessary.

"These capabilities can be employed for offensive and defensive purposes at the direction of combatant commands."

An expert on military uses of outer space noted that "precious little" was publicly known about the technology, and told the BBC there could be a "whole range of different weapons systems".

Speaking to Radio 4's Today programme, Dr Bledwyn Bowen, from the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), said he was "totally guessing" but that the US could have been referring to "some kind electronic warfare or radio jamming platform".

That would be the sort of weapon that already exists on Earth and could disrupt radio

communications, Bowen said.

An alternative would be "a kinetic kill vehicle of some sort - so a vehicle that would release a projectile of some sort that would ram into a satellite and destroy it".

But this was less likely because such a physically destructive tool would be capable of creating a lot of debris, Bowen added.

The Trump administration has said that space-based capabilities - and interceptor missiles - are a crucial part of its planned "Golden Dome" defence system to protect the US from missiles and other airborne threats.

Last year President Donald Trump issued an executive order underlining the US Space Force's role in not only defending assets, but also as an attacking force.

Hundreds in DRC protest against constitutional amendment for 3rd presidential term

Hundreds of protestors gathered in the Democratic Republic of Congo's capital, Kinshasa, to voice their opposition to a government-proposed constitutional amendment that could allow President Felix Tshisekedi -- elected in 2019, then re-elected in 2023 -- to stand for a third term following a referendum.

Organised by the C64 coalition, the opposition is calling on President Felix Tshisekedi to "give up" proposed constitutional changes that could open the way for him to secure a third term.

Elections are two years away but tensions are already high between the government and its opponents since the

ruling-party-majority parliament approved a proposal to extend the presidential mandate.

Authorities suppressed a July rally in Kinshasa against the constitutional amendment and several opposition supporters were injured in clashes in which the UN said at least one person was killed.

In mid-July, Kinshasa also announced the organisation of a national dialogue long demanded by the opposition, without specifying its terms.

The proposed constitutional change comes as much of the country is riven by conflict, particularly to the east, where the Rwanda-backed M23 armed group seized swathes of territory last year.

More than 100,000 people in Japan are now aged 100 or older

When records began in 1963 there were only 153 centenarians in Japan - now there are 107,677.

The number of people aged 100 or more in Japan has exceeded 100,000 for the first time, according to the health ministry.

Figures show Japan is now home to 107,677 centenarians, the highest number in the world, of which 88% are women. The oldest woman is Kishimoto Fuyo, a 114-year-old from Kyoto City and the oldest man is Kato Hikaru, a 112-year-old from Kumamoto.

Health Minister Kenichiro Ueno said he was "delighted that so many people are living long, healthy and active lives", citing progress in medicine and technology.

But Kenichiro also warned of the challenge the country faces in maintaining a sustainable social security system.

Experts put the long lives of the Japanese down to several factors, including a healthy diet and an active lifestyle.

The island nation's cuisine predominantly consists of fish, vegetables, and rice - and less saturated fat than many Western diets.

Older people also regularly walk, use public transport, cycle and stretch.

Japan has been aging for years and sales of adult nappies have been higher than those for babies for more than a decade.

Companies have also developed new products for the older population, including a powered exoskeleton to support moving various parts of the body and eyewear that automatically adjusts its focus.

Japanese people's diets - largely consisting of fish, vegetables and rice - are thought to contribute to living longer.

For a population to replace itself, each woman needs to give birth to 2.1 children on average.

Last year Japan's total fertility rate dropped to a record low of 1.14.

The total population is estimated to drop to 87 million by 2070, representing a 30% decline from its peak of 128 million in 2008, according to data from the National Institute of Population and Social Security research.

Residents aged 65 and older currently make up around 30% of the population and are expected to make up nearly 40% by 2070.

Japanese authorities have called the trend an "existential crisis" with Prime Minister Sanae Takichi describing the decline as a "quiet emergency".

In 2025 Japan's total population decreased in all 47 prefectures but two, and the rate of decline is accelerating.

The government's many programmes and subsidies to encourage young people to have more children do not appear to be boosting birth rates.

Experts say the reasons are complex, ranging from lower marriage rates and more women joining the workforce to the increased costs of raising children.

While immigration has risen in previous years, foreigners only make up around 3% of the population and opposition to accepting more has grown.

Migration to Japan has increased in recent years but remains low compared to other major economies.

When Japan began its centenarian survey in 1963, there were 153 people aged 100 or over. That figure rose to 1,000 in 1981 and stood at 10,000 by 1998.

The most recent figures were released ahead of Japan's annual "Respect for the Aged" public holiday, on which the government honours those turning 100 with a personal letter and traditional sake cup.

Meta to report child abuse material directly to Indian authorities

Meta says it will begin reporting child safety cases directly to Indian authorities, following a BBC Eye investigation into paid advertisements promoting child sexual abuse material (CSAM) on its platforms.

The investigation, published in July, found that Instagram was running paid adverts promoting such material in India.

The findings prompted the Indian government to order Meta to remove all advertisements and content promoting CSAM from its platforms.

"Protecting children on our platforms is a priority for us, and we're committed to working with the government to ensure that the perpetrators of these crimes are held responsible," a Meta spokesperson said.

"To collectively strengthen our efforts to combat this harm, Meta will now report child safety matters directly to the Cybercrime portal managed by the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre."

The Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre, known as I4C, operates under the country's home ministry.

Meta has not said when direct reporting will begin, precisely which cases it will cover or how the arrangement will work in practice.

Until now, Meta has said that when it becomes aware of apparent child exploitation, it reports it to the US-based National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, or NCMEC, in accordance with its legal obligations.

NCMEC operates a centralised reporting system and passes relevant reports to law enforcement agencies in other countries.

Once Meta also begins reporting child safety matters directly to India's cybercrime portal, it will allow local authorities to receive information more quickly.

The change follows pressure from Indian authorities and child-rights groups over how such material was circulated and monetised on social media.

After the BBC Eye investigation, the government had ordered Meta to remove all advertisements and content promoting child sexual abuse material from Instagram.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, or NCPCR, also took notice of the findings and sought an explanation

and documents from Meta. It later opened a formal inquiry and summoned Meta India's managing director and country head.

India's National Human Rights Commission separately issued notices to two government ministries. Its inquiry is examining whether the platform's systems played a role in selecting, circulating, amplifying or monetising the content.

Just Rights for Children, a network of more than 250 organisations, also cited the BBC's findings in a petition before India's Supreme Court. It asked the court to direct social media companies to identify and report those promoting child sexual abuse material to Indian authorities.

Its founder Bhuwan Ribhu had told the BBC that reporting cases only through the US-based system was insufficient.

Trump says AI safety fears a 'hoax' as he rejects calls for greater safeguards

US President Donald Trump has said fears about the safety of artificial intelligence (AI) are a "hoax", as he criticised calls to have more guardrails in place for the fast-moving technology.

It comes after Jack Clark, co-founder of AI giant Anthropic, told the BBC that a "kill switch" that can be checked by a third party may need to be mandatory for the industry.

Clark's comments followed warnings about the risks the technology poses to humanity that have been raised in recent days by several executives and staff at leading AI firms.

Those concerns triggered a selloff in tech firms' shares as investors weighed the impact of a potential slowdown in the multi-billion dollar development of AI.

In a series of social media posts, the US president compared warnings about AI to the "Global Warming Scam" which, he said, was "being perpetrated by the Radical Left Democrats".

Trump also called himself "the Hoax Buster", likening concerns about the safety of the technology to what he called "the RUSSIA, RUSSIA, RUSSIA HOAX".

The only "guardrails" needed for AI was a "strong and smart" president, said Trump.

In another post he wrote: "There is a SICK conspiracy going on against AI and Data Centers, and the only one that is happy about it is China. WHOEVER WINS AI, WINS!"

Chinese state media said experts had warned that "Washington's growing anxiety over China's rapid AI development appears to be increasingly distorting its policy priorities".

"They know that China has become a strong competitor in AI, and worry that if the US slows down development or tightens regulation, China could catch up even faster," Xin Qiang, a professor of American Studies at Fudan University, told the Global Times.

Clark, who is one of Anthropic's seven founders, said earlier on Monday that a way of shutting off AI software completely if it gets too dangerous was something society "might want to eventually pass rules around".

He added that "most labs have different ways of being able to pull the

plug", including Anthropic, but said lawmakers may need to enforce having one.

UK Business Secretary, Jonathan Reynolds, said on Tuesday that people should "never be complacent" about the impact AI might have but added: "We've got to be careful not to get hyperbolic about this either."

Speaking to the BBC, he said: "Of course there are risks but, let's be frank, there are some tremendous upsides, whether it's public services, healthcare, the contribution to the economy."

AI "more powerful by the day", Anthropic co-founder says

A growing number of tech industry and political figures are calling for better safeguards, most recently Microsoft AI which this week discussed limiting the models it is developing in a document on what it called "humanist AI".

Microsoft AI's chief executive Mustafa Suleyman told business news channel CNBC that it had been working on the new guidance for months and had decided to publish it now due to the current debate around the technology.

In an indication of how concerns over the technology have been thrust into the spotlight, two high-profile figures on opposite sides of US politics are set to appear at the same event calling for a re-evaluation of AI policy.

Former Trump chief strategist Steve Bannon and veteran progressive Senator Bernie Sanders are due to speak at the "Pro-Human Assembly" in Washington on Tuesday.

According to its website the gathering "aims to define a shared vision and articulate a better, more human-centric path for AI development".

Sanders told BBC's Newsnight last week that "we have got to do something immediately to stop the uncontrolled growth of AI".

"You've got the existential threat of the possibility of humanity being wiped out," he said.

The debate over the potential dangers posed by the technology intensified in recent days after a post by Jacob Coxon, a researcher who left Anthropic over concerns AI could wipe out humanity, went viral.



DONALD TRUMP

Two sailors missing after tanker attacked in Strait of Hormuz, Oman says

Two sailors are missing and 23 others have been rescued following an attack on an oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz, Oman says.

Oman's Maritime Security Centre said the Panama-flagged El Gaia was being towed to an Omani port on Tuesday after a fire broke out in its engine room, adding that the vessel was targeted 1.3 nautical miles (2.4km) north of the Musandam peninsula.

On Monday, Iran's Revolutionary Guards said the tanker hit naval mines and caught fire while passing through what they described as a restricted and unsafe route.

But the US military insisted the Iranian report was false. It said the tanker was struck by an Iranian missile last month and again by a drone over the weekend.

The UK Maritime Trade Operations centre, meanwhile, said it had received a report of a fire breaking out on board a vessel that was struck by an unknown projectile while transiting the Strait of Hormuz in the early hours of Sunday.

Earlier this month, Iran made a similar claim about an incident that killed two Filipino sailors on a Saudi-owned oil supertanker in the crucial waterway.

The Revolutionary Guards said the

vessel, Sidra, caught fire after hitting a naval mine. But Saudi authorities said it was targeted by Iran and maritime security firms reported that it was hit by projectiles north of Musandam.

The International Maritime Organization says at least 22 seafarers have been killed in 79 confirmed incidents in the Strait of Hormuz and the rest of the Middle East since the start of the US and Israel's war with Iran at the end of February.

The Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of global oil and gas shipments usually pass, has effectively been closed due to Iranian missile and drone attacks on commercial vessels and a US naval blockade of Iranian ports.

Denmark says Russian warship fired flares at military helicopter

Denmark has accused a Russian warship of firing two emergency flares at one of its helicopters while it was tracking the vessel in the Baltic Sea.

The Danish government has summoned the Russian ambassador

over the incident, which it said happened during a "routine" monitoring operation on Monday.

Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen branded the Russian action "reckless" and said it was designed to "intimidate and divide".

Russia said it would "thoroughly investigate" the incident but accused Danish helicopters of making "dangerous manoeuvres" near Russian warships.

It came on the same day that Nato forces shot down a drone over Lithuania in the latest security scare on the alliance's eastern flank, where tensions remain high during Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

In a statement detailing the in-

cident in the Baltic Sea, the Danish armed forces said: "One of the air force's Fennec helicopters was today fired at with flares during a routine photographic operation of a Russian frigate, which was located in international waters off Gedser."

Of the two flares fired at the helicopter, one passed close to it, the statement added.

The Danish foreign ministry described the incident as "completely unacceptable".

Danish Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen accused Russia of "gradually shifting the boundary for what they consider acceptable behaviour", adding: "That is something we cannot accept."

Colombian ex-foreign minister charged over nanny's lie detector test

Prosecutors in Colombia have accused former foreign minister Laura Sarabia of abusing her power after she made her nanny take a lie detector test.

The scandal erupted in 2023, when Colombian news weekly Semana reported that a woman Sarabia had employed to look after her son had been hooked up to a polygraph and questioned over the alleged disappearance of a case full of cash from Sarabia's flat.

Sarabia, who was the chief of staff for President Gustavo Petro at the time, resigned in June 2023 but was later appointed as foreign minister and, following her resignation from that post, as Colombia's ambassador

to the United Kingdom.

She has denied any wrongdoing.

The 32-year-old was one of the closest advisers of Gustavo Petro, Colombia's first left-wing president, who governed from 2022 to August this year.

Prosecutors said Sarabia abused her position as his chief of staff by ordering police to question her nanny, Marellys Meza, over the alleged disappearance of the cash, which was said to amount to several thousands of dollars.

Meza told Semana that she was taken by Sarabia's driver to an official building opposite the presidential palace, saying it felt like "a kidnapping".

Police officers then attached her to a polygraph machine and questioned her about the alleged disappearance of the money.

Meza denied having stolen any money during the test, and has consistently denied any wrongdoing in media interviews since.

Amsterdam hit by major rail disruption after suspected sabotage to the tracks

Suspected sabotage causes major Netherlands rail disruption. Parts of the Netherlands, including Amsterdam, have been hit by major rail disruption after suspected sabotage to the tracks, the country's railway infrastructure operator has said.

A spokesperson for operator ProRail told the BBC disruption was not yet over but services were gradually recovering, after widespread cancellations and delays in the country's centre and north on Tuesday.

Pipes and cables were placed on the tracks in multiple locations, according to local media. In a statement, ProRail said the incident appeared

to be "an intentional disruption... caused by human action".

It added that no suspects or motives had been identified. Police said a criminal investigation had been launched.

"Objects were found on railway tracks at several locations across the country, causing major disruption to rail traffic," Dutch police said in a statement.

Sports

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



NFF Normalization Committee

Imo SWAN Re-affirms boycott of Kun Khalifat FC Activities over harassment pattern of members

The Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN), Imo State Chapter, has reaffirmed its decision to boycott all matches involving Kun Khalifat FC, insisting that the boycott remains in force until the club takes concrete steps to guarantee the safety, dignity, respect and professional rights of sports journalists covering its matches.

Imo SWAN made this decision during an emergency congress held on Monday the 14th of September at Dan Anyiam stadium Owerri. The position follows reactions to the Association's earlier press release, particularly a purported narrative circulating on some online platforms suggesting that only the Chairman of Imo SWAN, Mr Cosmos Chukwuemeka, was denied access to the Dan Anyiam Stadium during Kun Khalifat FC's NPFL fixture against Barau FC on September 6, 2026.

For the avoidance of doubt, that narrative is false and mis-

...Demands safety, dignity, respect

leading.

The Association hereby maintains that the incident involving its Chairman was not an isolated occurrence. Several members of Imo SWAN have, on different occasions, experienced denial of access, intimidation, confrontation and embarrassing treatment from personnel attached to Kun Khalifat FC.

These repeated incidents have compelled the Association to conclude that what could have been dismissed as isolated misunderstandings has developed into a disturbing and unacceptable pattern.

For record purposes, On May 24, 2026, during the NPFL fixture between Kun Khalifat FC and Wikki Tourists at the Dan Anyiam Stadium, Imo SWAN member Kelvin Anyanwu was prevented from gaining access to the stadium to perform his legitimate professional duties, despite identifying him-

self with his SWAN identification card.

Even after he reportedly raised the matter with the club's owner, and while other Heartland staff were permitted entry, the journalist remained denied access despite the heavy downpour that day.

On the same May 24, 2026, another member, Uchechukwu Olebara, was subjected to an embarrassing confrontation with Kun Khalifat FC security personnel while attempting to enter the stadium for the same fixture.

Despite presenting his identification card, he was denied entry while others were allowed through. When he questioned the decision, the situation became confrontational, with threats issued against him if he refused to leave the entrance.

It took the intervention of the Imo SWAN Chairman to de-escalate the situation, with

the Chairman appealing to the journalist not to allow the matter to escalate.

Similarly, on February 8, 2026, during Kun Khalifat FC's fixture against Shooting Stars FC, SWAN member Precious Iheanacho, was denied access despite presenting identification.

They were made to wait for an extended period before the intervention of the club owner and its media officer eventually facilitated their entry.

Another member, Amarachi Adimuko, has also experienced denial of access by club security personnel on a matchday with heavy downpour despite identifying herself as a member of the Association.

The incidents continued on September 6, 2026, during Kun Khalifat FC's NPFL fixture against Barau FC. A member of Imo SWAN by name Anthony Ahize was also denied access and was turned back before the intervention of an Imo FA official who eventually secured his entry.

Our World cup has just started, Aduku fires England warning after Falconets' 10-1 Rout



ADUKU

Falconets head coach Moses Aduku has declared that Nigeria's FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup campaign has only just begun after his side produced a stunning 10-1 demolition of New Caledonia to storm into the Round of 16.

Nigeria entered Sunday's final Group F encounter in Łódź under enormous pressure after collecting just one point from their opening two matches but responded with their most emphatic performance of the tournament to finish second in the group with four points.

The result completed a remarkable turnaround for a Falconets side that began their campaign with a 2-0 defeat to Spain before battling to a goal-

less draw against China PR.

For Aduku, however, reaching the knockout stage is not the time for celebration or complacency.

"The tournament has just started for us," Aduku declared after qualification.

Despite watching his players score ten times in their decisive group encounter, the coach believes there are still areas that must be corrected if Nigeria are to remain in contention for the title.

Aduku stressed that the technical crew will return to work immediately, with the standard of opposition set to increase significantly in the knockout rounds.

The Falconets overwhelmed

New Caledonia particularly after the interval, with Nigeria's attack repeatedly breaking through their opponents' defence. The victory significantly improved their goal difference and propelled them above China into second place in Group F.

The qualification means Nigeria will now face Group E winners England in the Round of 16 on Thursday, presenting Aduku's players with an immediate test of how much they have learned from an inconsistent group campaign.

Aduku acknowledged that the Falconets still have plenty to improve upon despite the size of Sunday's victory.

His message to the players is therefore to treat qualification as a fresh beginning rather than an achievement in itself.

Shaibu rewards more staff for Commitment to NIS weekly keep-fit sessions

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The Director-General of the National Institute for Sports (NIS), H.E. Rt. Hon. Comrade Philip Shaibu, has rewarded another set of staff members for their consistent active participation in the Institute's weekly aerobics and keep-fit sessions.

The latest recipients, Salihu Hajaratu and Ekhasomi Rose-Joy, both from the Medical Unit, were recognised for their commitment to maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle through the Institute's fitness programme.

The initiative, which is part of the DG's efforts to promote staff wellness, discipline and a culture of fitness at NIS, has continued to motivate staff for greater participation in the

weekly sessions.

Speaking on the initiative, Shaibu reaffirmed that more staff would be rewarded in October, November and December, while expressing his commitment to extending the recognition to the Lagos Office and the six zonal offices.

As part of the December reward, the office that records the highest level of active participation among the Athlete Development Centre, Lagos Office and the six zonal offices will receive a trophy personally presented by the DG.

The ongoing initiative reflects the DG's commitment to building a healthier, more disciplined and physically active workforce, while strengthening unity and teamwork across the Institute.



Director General of NIS Rt Hon Comrade Philip Shaibu rewards NIS staff

Government remains major stakeholder in football development

SAMI ADEDEJI

The role of government in the development and administration of football remains significant, with the government regarded as one of the biggest external stakeholders in the sport.

Stake-holding generally refers to individuals, organisations or institutions that have an interest in, or can influence the direction and development of an activity, often in pursuit of specific objectives.

Football has both internal and external stakeholders, and the effective development of the game requires contributions from both sides.

The internal stakeholders include players, coaches, clubs, football officials and referees, who are directly involved in the organisation and execution of the game.

On the other hand, external stakeholders include government, sponsors, the media and fans, whose roles can significantly influence the growth, financing, visibility and sustainability of football.

While FIFA maintains

that decisions concerning the internal interpretation and application of football statutes and regulations are matters for football's internal stakeholders, government remains an important partner in creating the environment in which the sport operates.

Government involvement can extend to areas such as infrastructure, security, funding, policy formulation, youth development and the provision of facilities required for football to thrive.

The recognition of government as a major stakeholder is therefore not new, as football development in many countries has historically depended on cooperation between football authorities and government institutions.

However, the distinction between government's legitimate stakeholder role and interference in football's internal administration remains important.

A balanced relationship between government and football authorities, while respecting the autonomy of the sport, can provide the foundation for sustainable football development.

SPORTS



FA Chairmen lose ground as FIFA, CAF weigh normalization committee for NFF

The push by some State Football Association chairmen for the installation of a Caretaker Committee to run the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) appears to have suffered a major setback, with indications that FIFA is more likely to support a Normalization Committee to address the leadership crisis engulfing Nigerian football.

The development followed consultations between the FIFA/CAF delegation currently in Nigeria and key stakeholders in the country's football administration.

Four of the five NFF Members consulted are understood to have expressed preference for a Normalization Committee, rather than a Caretaker Committee. The groups include the Players' Union, the Football Coaches Association of Nigeria, the League bodies and the Nigeria Referees Association.

The position has further weakened the campaign by a section of State FA chairmen who have been advocating for a Caretaker Committee following the mass resignation of members of the NFF leadership and the resignation of

the General Secretary.

A major issue in the debate is the FIFA Statutes. Unlike a Normalization Committee, which is a recognised mechanism used by FIFA in exceptional circumstances to restore

the proper functioning of a member association, the term "Caretaker Committee" is not provided for in the FIFA Statutes.

The distinction is significant because FIFA places consider-

able emphasis on the autonomy and statutory governance of its member associations. Any transitional arrangement therefore has to be consistent with FIFA's regulations and the statutes governing the affected

football association.

The latest consultations suggest that the Normalization Committee option may be gaining wider acceptance among the stakeholders, particularly as FIFA and CAF seek

a solution that can restore stability, review the federation's governance structure where necessary and create the conditions for a credible return to elected football administration.

The FIFA and CAF delegation is expected to continue its consultations this (Tuesday) morning with members of the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN), as well as some former NFF presidents and former General Secretaries.

The delegation is also scheduled to hold a final meeting with the National Sports Commission before concluding its visit to Nigeria and returning to FIFA headquarters in Zurich.

The outcome of the consultations is expected to provide greater clarity on the next step for the NFF and the framework that FIFA and CAF will recommend for resolving the current leadership crisis.

For the moment, the balance of stakeholder opinion and FIFA's established governance framework appear to favour a Normalization Committee over the Caretaker Committee being proposed by some State FA chairmen.



President, Sports Writers Association of Nigeria, SWAN, Comrade Benjamin Isaiah and SWAN National Executive members

Kenya to host first-ever World Athletics Championships in Africa

Africa is set to witness a historic moment in global athletics after Nairobi, Kenya, was officially selected to host the 2029 World Athletics Championships, becoming the first African city ever to stage the sport's biggest global championship.

The decision was taken during the 242nd World Athletics Council Meeting in Budapest on Monday and Tuesday, September 14-15, following what World Athletics described as one of the strongest bidding processes in the history of the championships.

Nairobi will host the 2029 edition, while Munich, Germany, has been selected to stage the 2031 World Athletics Championships.

The historic decision represents a major breakthrough for African athletics and a reward for Kenya's decades-long contribution to the development

and success of the sport.

World Athletics President Sebastian Coe said Nairobi presented a compelling bid and that the time was right for the championships to come to Africa.

"It was important that the World Athletics Championships should come to Africa when we had the right host, the right bid and the right circumstances," Coe said.

He described Kenya as one of the great athletics nations, noting that the sport is deeply woven into the country's culture.

Nairobi's successful bid was strengthened by Kenya's impressive history of hosting major international athletics events.

The Kenyan capital hosted the World U18 Championships in 2017 and the World U20 Championships in 2021, while the country also stages

the prestigious Kip Keino Classic, which has been part of the World Athletics Continental Tour Gold since 2020.

According to World Athletics fan research, 68 percent of Kenyans surveyed rated their interest in athletics as high, compared with a global average of 39 percent.

Kenya is also the second-most successful nation in World Athletics Championships history and finished second on the medal table at the Tokyo 2020 World Championships with seven gold medals and 11 medals overall.

The country has produced some of the greatest names in athletics history, including Olympic and world champions such as Faith Kipyegon, Eliud Kipchoge, David Rudisha, Hellen Obiri, Vivian Cheruiyot and Kip Keino.

The decision is also the latest step in what has become

a steady expansion of major World Athletics events across the continent.

Uganda hosted the World Cross Country Championships in Kampala in 2017, Nairobi hosted two global youth championships, and Gaborone, Botswana, hosted the 2026 World Athletics Relays — the first edition of the event to be held in Africa.

Nairobi 2029 will now take that progression to an entirely new level.

For the first time, athletes from across the world will converge on African soil for the full World Athletics Championships. The championships are expected to be staged at the renovated Kasarani Stadium, which is undergoing a major structural overhaul ahead of the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations.

Two years after Nairobi, the championships will return to Germany, with Munich selected to host the 2031 edition at the iconic Olympic Stadium.

NFF mourns the demise of Coach Christopher Alor

The Nigeria Football Federation has expressed deep sadness at news of the death of Coach Christopher Alor, who was a member of the technical crew of the Nigeria U20 women national team, Falcons, to the 2010 FIFA U20 Women's World Cup finals in Germany. The respected tactician passed on at the age of 75.

Alor was in the crew that tactically and technically prepared the team for the draws with England and Mexico, and defeat of Japan in the group phase, before the famous penalty-shootout defeat of United States of America in the quarter-finals, and 1-0 defeat of Colombia in the semi-finals. The team lost 0-2 to Germany in the final but was the first Nigeria women national team to attain a podium appearance at the FIFA World Cup.

"The NFF mourns deeply the demise of Coach Christopher Alor, for his contributions to Nigerian football, especially

his work with young players and his involvement with the national team. His time with the national team was significant in that Nigeria attained a historic feat of earning the FIFA World Cup silver medals in Germany in 2010.

"We pray that God grants his soul eternal rest, and also grant those he has left behind, including his immediate family, friends and the young players that he loved to work with, the fortitude to bear the loss," NFF's Acting General Secretary, Dr Emmanuel Ikpeke, said on Monday.

