

Edo APC unveils campaign structure with Okpebholo as chairman

MUSA ABDURAHEEM OMOH
BENIN CITY

The Edo State chapter of the All Progressives Congress (APC) has unveiled its campaign structure for the 2026/2027 elections, with Governor Monday Okpebholo, Deputy Governor

Names Oshiomhole, Idahosa, Momoh, Imasuen in key roles

Dennis Idahosa, Minister of Regional Development, Engr. Abubakar Momoh, Senator Adams Oshiomhole and Senator Neda Imasuen, named into key positions as the party prepares for the elections. Under the new arrangement, Governor Monday Ok-

pebholo will chair the APC Campaign Advisory Council, placing him at the head of the party's strategic campaign advisory structure. Senator Adams Oshiomhole, a former governor of the state, will serve as Co-Chairman of the council alongside

APC Edo State Chairman, Emperor Jarrett Tenebe. Also named among members of the Campaign Advisory Council is Senator Neda Imasuen, representing Edo South Senatorial District and Chairman of the Senate Committee on Ethics, Privileges

and Public Petitions. The council also includes Deputy Governor Dennis Idahosa and Minister of Regional Development, Engr. Abubakar Momoh, alongside other senior political figures and party leaders. Other members are Pastor

Osagie Ize-Iyamu, Rt. Hon. Philip Shaibu, Dr. Pius Odubu, Col. David Imuse and Prof. Julius Ihonvbere. Beyond the advisory council, the APC has appointed Senator Matthew Urhoghide as Director-General of the Campaign Council.

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#200

UNGA 81: Tinubu rallies Africa against exploitation of mineral wealth

NEW YORK

President Bola Tinubu has called for a renewed continental alliance to end the exploitation of Africa's critical mineral resources, urging African countries to stop exporting raw materials and move decisively towards local processing, manufacturing and value addition.

Tinubu, represented by Vice-President Kashim Shettima, made the call in New York on Monday at the 3rd Africa Minerals Strategy Group (AMSG) High-Level Roundtable on Critical Minerals Development in Africa, held on the sidelines of the ongoing 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The roundtable, convened

and chaired by President Tinubu alongside the Chairman of the AMSG and Nigeria's Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dr Dele Alake, had as its theme: "From Resources to Wealth: Continental Cooperation for Mineral Value Addition, Data Sovereignty, Innovative Financing and Critical Minerals Security."

The gathering focused on strategies for transforming Africa's vast mineral resources into sustainable economic growth, industrial development, jobs and shared prosperity.

Tinubu challenged African leaders and stakeholders to unite against a system in which the continent exports raw minerals only to import finished products at premium prices. "For generations, Africa has furnished the materials of prosperity elsewhere. Our duty is to ensure that the future being fashioned from African minerals has room for African ambition," he declared. The President said Africa

could not claim to be wealthy while its mineral-rich communities remained without adequate infrastructure, jobs and meaningful participation in the wealth generated from their natural resources. He noted that the urgency had increased with rising global demand for critical minerals driven by clean energy, artificial intelligence and advanced

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No plan to increase electricity tariff – Tegbe

BENEDICT OKATE
BENIN CITY

The Federal Government has ruled out any immediate increase in electricity tariff, saying its priority is to stabilise the power sector, restore market discipline and strengthen governance across the electricity value chain. Minister of Power, Mr Joseph Tegbe, gave the assurance in Abuja on Monday while briefing Power Correspondents on his first 100 days in office. Tegbe, who assumed office on June 8, said the administration of President Bola Tinubu was more concerned with fixing structural challenges in the

sector and improving electricity supply than imposing additional financial burdens on consumers. According to him, the first 100 days of his tenure were devoted largely to diagnosing the problems confronting the sector and initiating measures to stabilise the electricity value chain. "Upon assuming office, the diagnosis we undertook at the onset revealed constraints at every segment of the electricity value chain. Gas supply to power stations was limited by damaged pipelines and commercial terms that discouraged investment," he said.

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ONGOING UNGA 81ST SESSION: President Donald Trump addressing the ongoing 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly yesterday in New York.

CBN slashes interest rate to 23% as current account surplus jumps to 67%
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Major US outlets boycott shared Trump coverage in protest at media ban
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Tinubu extends Europe trip, returns at weekend
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manufacturing, stressing that Africa must seize the opportunity to build industries and retain greater value from its resources.

According to him, the answer to the continent's mineral paradox "must be processing, refining, batteries, components, African technologies and competitive skills."

"The worth of a mine must be counted in the lives it improves.

"Jobs, industries, infrastructure, technology transfer, African enterprise participation and prosperity retained across generations must measure our progress from resources to wealth," he said.

Tinubu warned that no African country could achieve the desired transformation in iso-

lation, arguing that competition among countries through lower royalties, weaker local-content requirements and excessive concessions would undermine the continent's collective bargaining power.

"Fragmentation leaves us exporting raw materials and buying finished goods at a premium. Cooperation gives our markets scale, our industries integration, our financing reach and our negotiations authority," he said.

Highlighting Nigeria's ongoing mining reforms, the President said the country now required local value addition for new mining licences, while strengthening geological data and investor access, organising artisanal miners into cooperatives, combating illegal mining and improving regulatory accountability.

Edo APC unveils campaign...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

Hon. Audu Gani will serve as Deputy Director-General, while Dr. Blessing Agbonmhere has been appointed Secretary.

The appointments are expected to provide the organisational framework for coordinating the party's campaign activities, grassroots mobilisation and engagement across Edo State.

Announcing the structure on Tuesday, APC State Chairman Jarrett Tenebe said the appointments were aimed at strengthening coordination, grassroots mobilisation and the party's engagement ahead of the elections.

The campaign's media operations will be led by former Chief Press Secretary and media strategist, Prince John Mayaki, who was appointed Director of Media.

Hon. Omo-Ojo Oroboosa will serve as Co-Director, while Collins Osaghae was appointed Deputy Director.

The APC also unveiled coordinators for the state's three senatorial districts as part of its grassroots mobilisation strategy.

Former Deputy Governor Lucky Imasuen will coordinate Edo South, while Lawani Abu will oversee Edo North.

Former Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly, Thomas Okosun, was appointed coordinator for Edo Central.

No plan to increase electricity...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

The minister explained that the generation segment remained heavily dependent on thermal plants, many of which were affected by ageing equipment, deferred maintenance, stalled projects and inadequate capacity to deliver available power to consumers.

He disclosed that the sector diagnosis also revealed that only 27 per cent of generation companies' bills were being paid, a situation he said undermined their capacity to maintain their plants and meet obligations to gas suppliers.

On transmission, Tegbe said the national grid was constrained by vandalised towers and lines, overstretched equipment and frequent tripping, while the distribution segment continued to contend with aggregate technical, commercial and collection losses of between 30 and 40 per cent.

He listed inadequate metering, estimated billing, damaged distribution assets and weak payment discipline among the major challenges affecting the distribution companies.

Despite the challenges, the minister said the sector had recorded some "modest gains" be-

tween June 8 and September 16.

These, he said, included the restoration of the 375 megawatts Alaoji open-cycle power plant after being offline for three years.

He also cited the upgrade of substations at Apapa, Ijora, Alausa and Lekki in Lagos, which he said had unlocked 672MW, as well as the installation of a new 300MVA transformer at Katampe, Abuja, unlocking an additional 240MW.

Tegbe said power generation and transmission had risen above 5,000MW in recent weeks, compared with between 3,700MW and 4,700MW before June, with a peak of 5,330MW recorded in August and September.

He further disclosed that more than 300 containers of Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) equipment had been released from the ports, while two solar and mini-grid installations across 30 states had delivered 43.6MW and facilitated 41,735 new connections.

According to him, about 350,000 meters were installed within the first 100 days, bringing the cumulative number of meters installed to 1,004,260 as of August, while an additional 90,000 meters were installed in military formations.

CBN slashes interest rate to 23% as current account surplus jumps to 67%

ABUJA

EKHABAFE BELOVED

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has reduced its benchmark interest rate to 23 per cent, as the country's current-account surplus surged by 67.9 per cent to \$7.54 billion in the second quarter of 2026.

The latest monetary policy decision comes as the apex bank continues to adjust its policy stance amid developments in inflation, economic growth and the country's external position.

According to provisional balance-of-payments data released by the CBN, the current-account surplus increased from \$4.49 billion in the first quarter to \$7.54 billion in the second quarter, representing a 67.9 per cent rise. The figure was also 45.8 per cent higher than the \$5.17 billion recorded in the corresponding period of 2025.

The increase was largely driven by a stronger goods surplus, which rose to \$10.12 billion from \$5.96 billion in the first quarter.

Nigeria's total exports also increased during the period,

supported by crude oil, natural gas, refined petroleum products and non-oil exports.

The country recorded \$20.08 billion in total exports in the second quarter, with crude oil exports contributing \$9.39 billion, while natural gas exports stood at \$3.63 billion.

Personal transfers from Nigerians abroad also strengthened during the period, rising from \$5.30 billion in the first quarter to \$5.82 billion in the second quarter.

The reported reduction in the Monetary Policy Rate is expected to have implications for

borrowing costs, lending activities and investment across the economy.

A lower benchmark rate generally reduces the cost of funds for financial institutions and could influence the rates charged to businesses and consumers, although the actual effect on lending rates depends on broader conditions within the banking system.

The latest developments will be closely monitored by businesses, investors and households as the CBN continues to balance price stability, economic growth and financial stability.



WAR AGAINST DRUG ABUSE:

NDLEA Edo State Commander Mitchell Ofoyeju PhD with the winners of the Okpebholo and Marwa Mini-Marathon Against Drug Abuse.

Okpebholo appoints Alenkhe substantive EBS Managing Director

OSEMUDIAMHEN O. FAITH

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has approved the appointment of seasoned broadcaster and journalist, Festus Alenkhe, as the substantive Managing Director of the Edo Broadcasting Service (EBS), in a move aimed at strengthening the leadership and professional capacity of the state-owned broadcast organisation.

The appointment, which

takes immediate effect, formally places Alenkhe at the helm of the Edo Broadcasting Service following his tenure as Acting Managing Director, during which he demonstrated what the State Government described as effective leadership and commitment to the advancement of the Service.

A Government Special Announcement signed by the Secretary to the Edo State Government, Umar Musa Ikhilior, Esq., yesterday, said the appointment underscored the administra-

tion's commitment to enhancing the capacity of EBS and improving service delivery to the people of Edo State.

Alenkhe is a seasoned broadcaster with extensive experience spanning journalism, media practice and public service. His career has also been marked by leadership responsibilities within the media and humanitarian sectors.

He served as Chairman of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Edo State Council, where he was involved in the

affairs and professional development of journalists in the state.

He also served as Chairman of the Nigerian Red Cross, Edo State Branch, bringing to the position experience in humanitarian service and community engagement.

Prior to his confirmation as substantive Managing Director, Alenkhe had been serving in an acting capacity at EBS.

His appointment is expected to provide continuity in the management of the broad-

NDLEA, Edo Govt launch mini-marathon to tackle drug abuse

OLIVER IJIOGBE

BENIN CITY

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, in collaboration with the Edo State Government, has held the maiden edition of the Okpebholo and Marwa Mini-Marathon Against Drug Abuse for secondary school students in Benin City.

The initiative, aimed at raising awareness among young people on the dangers of drug abuse and promoting a drug-

free society, began and ended at the Victor Uwaifo Creative Hub on Airport Road, with participants running through the Kings Square axis.

Students from Oba Ewuare, Edokpolor Grammar, Ogbé and Oba Akenzua Secondary Schools participated in the event alongside NDLEA officials, government representatives and anti-drug advocates.

The State Governor, Monday Okpebholo, represented by the Deputy Chief of Staff to the Deputy Governor, Pius Alile, reaffirmed the administration's

commitment to strengthening the fight against drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking in the state.

The NDLEA Edo State Commander, Mitchell Ofoyeju, described the event as historic, noting that it was designed to sensitise students and other young people on the dangers and consequences of drug abuse.

Also speaking, the State Government's Senior Special Assistant on Drug and Illicit Trafficking Control, Andrew Efe, called for increased public support and collective action

in the campaign against drug abuse.

At the end of the marathon, winners were rewarded with one-year academic scholarships and decorated as War Against Drug Abuse (WADA) Ambassadors, with a mandate to promote the anti-drug campaign in their schools and communities.

The organisers said the initiative would further strengthen efforts to keep young people away from illicit drugs and encourage them to make healthy and responsible choices.

NEWS**EDOHERMA warns: Non-compliant health facilities face closure****BENIN CITY**

IYALEKHUE O. GRACE

The Edo State Healthcare Regulation and Monitoring Agency (EDOHERMA) has warned that health facilities that fail to meet approved standards will face

sanctions, including closure.

The agency said the move is part of efforts to strengthen healthcare regulation, protect patients and eliminate unsafe and unprofessional practices in the state. EDOHERMA is responsible for licensing, inspecting and monitoring healthcare facilities across Edo State.

Chief Executive Officer of EDOHERMA, Dr. Adesuwa Urhoghide, has repeatedly urged healthcare providers to comply with regulatory requirements and ensure that only qualified personnel provide medical services.

The agency has already demonstrated its enforcement

approach by shutting Jess Royal Hospital in Benin after discovering that the facility had operated for more than 10 years without statutory registration.

EDOHERMA also recently sealed Divine Blessing Basic Health Clinic in Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area following an inspection that identified

regulatory concerns, including the absence of qualified medical personnel, poor infection-control practices and unauthorised healthcare operations.

The agency has also warned health facilities against training auxiliary nurses without the required authorisation, stressing that facilities found

violating the regulations could face sanctions.

Urhoghide has advised residents to verify the registration status of private hospitals, clinics and other healthcare establishments before seeking treatment, saying the measure would help protect patients from unsafe and substandard services.

**ACAN COLLABORATION:**

From left: Minister Counsellor of Russian Embassy in Nigeria, Mr. Igor Ivannikov; Chairman of Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences (ICPC), Dr. Musa Aliyu; Provost of the Anti-Corruption Academy of Nigeria (ACAN), Prof. Sheriff Ibrahim; and Director of ACAN, Mr. Tukur Aliyu, during the Fourth International Diplomatic Dialogue organised by ICPC in collaboration with ACAN in Abuja on Tuesday.

UK restricts direct teaching qualification route for Nigerian, Ghanaian teachers**LONDON**

OJO HAPPY

The United Kingdom has removed Nigeria and Ghana from the list of countries whose teachers can apply directly for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) in England, in a move that affects overseas-trained teachers seeking recognition of their qualifications.

The change, which took effect on September 9, 2026, was announced in updated guidance by the UK Department for Education (DfE). India was also removed from the direct application route.

According to the DfE, countries whose teachers are eligible for the direct QTS service must have a national regulator capable of confirming teachers' professional standing and must be able to provide employment references that meet the department's requirements.

The department said its data showed that more than 70 per cent of applications from Ghana and Nigeria included work-history references using public email services such as Gmail or Hotmail rather than official school email domains.

It said this created additional difficulties and resources for assessors attempting to verify information supplied by applicants.

The UK government stressed that the change does not amount to a blanket ban on Nigerian or Ghanaian teachers working in England.

Qualified teachers from outside the UK can still work in England for up to four years without QTS, subject to the applicable rules. After that period, QTS is required for teaching in many schools, although it is not a legal requirement in every type of school, including some academies, free schools

and private schools.

Teachers who can no longer use the direct QTS application service may also explore alternative routes, including assessment-only QTS, teacher training in England and International Qualified Teacher Status (iQTS).

The UK government says iQTS is available to non-UK citizens and can be completed without travelling to the UK.

The development comes as England continues to recruit teachers from overseas. The

DfE's guidance states that QTS can make it easier for schools to employ overseas-trained teachers, but obtaining QTS does not itself provide a teaching job or visa; those processes must be handled separately.

For Nigerian and Ghanaian teachers planning to work in England, the new policy therefore represents a change in the qualification-recognition process rather than a complete prohibition on teaching in the country.

Federal High Court releases ex-minister' passport for medical treatment abroad**ABUJA**

IYALEKHUE O. GRACE

The Federal High Court in Abuja has ordered the release of the international passport of former Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology, Uche Nnaji, to enable him travel abroad for medical treatment.

Justice Joyce Abdulmalik granted the application on Monday after Nnaji's counsel, Chief Ogwu Onoja, SAN, moved a motion seeking the release of the travel document.

The passport had earlier been deposited with the court as part of the bail conditions imposed on the former minister. Follow-

ing the fresh application, the judge ordered its release for the purpose of his medical trip.

Nnaji is currently standing trial on a six-count charge filed by the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), bordering on alleged certificate forgery, false information and corruption. He pleaded not guilty to all the charges when he was arraigned on July 13.

The ICPC alleged that Nnaji received about N29.58 million in salaries and allowances between August 2023 and October 2025 while serving as minister, describing the funds as proceeds of unlawful acts.

The anti-graft agency also

accused him of presenting allegedly forged National Youth Service Corps and University of Nigeria, Nsukka certificates during the documentation process for his ministerial appointment. These allegations remain before the court, and Nnaji has denied them by pleading not guilty.

Justice Abdulmalik had earlier granted Nnaji bail in the sum of N20 million with one surety in like sum, with conditions including the deposit of his international passport.

The court has now fixed October 26, 2026, for continuation of the trial, with Nnaji expected to return his passport before the next hearing.

FG, NSIA unveil \$300m fund to boost renewable energy**ABUJA**

EKHABAFE BELOVED

The Federal Government, through the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) and its development partners, has commercially launched a \$300 million Nigeria Distributed Renewable Energy (DRE) Fund to boost renewable energy investment and electricity access across the country.

The fund, jointly managed by NSIA and Africa50, is designed to mobilise public and private capital for distributed renewable energy projects, including mini-grids, standalone solar systems and other decentralised electricity solutions.

The initiative is particularly aimed at communities and businesses that remain underserved by traditional energy infrastructure and the national grid.

NSIA, Africa50 and Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) announced the commercial

launch on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly on September 22, 2026.

The launch marks the transition of the fund from its structuring phase to active capital deployment, creating a dedicated investment platform for scaling distributed renewable energy projects across Nigeria.

According to NSIA, the fund is strategically aligned with Nigeria's national development priorities and is expected to contribute to the country's efforts to provide reliable, affordable and sustainable energy.

The initiative also supports Mission 300, an effort aimed at connecting 300 million people across Africa to electricity by 2030.

NSIA Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Aminu Umar-Sadiq, described the commercial launch as a major development milestone, saying it signals to investors and development partners that Nigeria's distributed renewable energy market is ready to operate at scale.

Exam malpractice: Kwara Poly expels 42 students**KWARA**

EWERE ISOKEN

The management of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, has expelled 42 students for examination malpractice following investigations by the institution's Examination Malpractice Committee.

The affected students comprise 31 Higher National Diploma (HND) students and 11 National Diploma (ND) students drawn from various institutes and programmes of the Polytechnic.

This was disclosed in a statement issued on Monday, 21st September, 2026, by the Principal Assistant Registrar, Academic Board Matters Division, Ibrahim Esin.

According to Esin, the students were investigated by the committee after allegations of examination malpractice were levelled against them and were subsequently found guilty.

"The students were found guilty of the allegations against them after due investigation by the Examination Malpractice Committee," Esin stated. "The offences contravened the Matriculation Oath sworn to by the students upon admission

into the institution."

He said the expulsions were approved in accordance with the provisions of the Polytechnic's Students' Handbook, effectively terminating the affected students' relationship with the institution.

A breakdown of the affected students showed that the Institute of Finance and Management Studies (IFMS) recorded the highest number with 23 students expelled.

Others are Institute of Technology (IOT) - 8 students, Institute of Information and Communication Technology (IICT) - 4 students, Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) - 4 students, Institute of Health Technology (IHT) - 2 students, and Institute of General Studies (IGS) - 1 student.

The affected programmes include Mechatronics Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical/Electronic Engineering, Strategic Communication, Journalism and Media Studies, Public Administration, Business Administration, Banking and Finance, Accountancy and Medical Imaging Technology.

The management also directed all expelled students to return all Polytechnic property in their possession to their respective Heads of Department.

NEWS

Hajj 2027: Saudi Arabia insists on 50,000 quota for Nigeria — NAHCON

ABUJA

The Chairman of the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON), Amb. Ismail Yusuf, says Saudi Arabia has insisted that Nigeria's 50,000 Hajj slots allocated for the 2027 pilgrimage remain sacrosanct.

Yusuf disclosed this in Abuja on Monday at a media roundtable on the 2026 Hajj policy reforms of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and their implications for Nigeria's Hajj operations.

He said Nigeria had appealed to the Saudi authorities for an increase in the allocation but the request was rejected because of capacity and the advanced stage of preparations for the pilgrimage.

"The Saudis had told us that the 50,000 quota they gave us was sacrosanct," he said.

He explained that Nigeria had an obligation to appeal for more slots because of the number of Nigerians interested in performing the pilgrimage.

"We had an obligation to our nationals to appeal, which we did. Unfortunately, the Saudis turned down our requests," he said.

Yusuf said the Saudi authorities attributed the decision to capacity utilisation and the fact that preparations for the pilgrimage had already gone far.

He, however, said Saudi Arabia had promised to review Nigeria's allocation in the following year based on the country's performance in utilising its current quota.

"They however promised that next year they will consider adjustment in our quota depending on how we perform this year," he said.

He said the performance assessment would particularly focus on Nigeria's ability to fully utilise the 50,000 slots allocated to it.

Yusuf explained that each country participating in Hajj was assigned a predetermined number of pilgrims based on available space, logistics and other services.

"These numbers are predetermined," he said, adding that

countries could not exceed their approved allocations because of the limited capacity available for pilgrims.

He said Nigeria's 50,000 slots were divided between the government-controlled pilgrimage system and the tour operator model under the new Saudi arrangements.

According to him, 35,000 slots had been allocated to the government quota, while 15,000 slots were earmarked for tour operators.

"That is what makes our 50,000," Yusuf said, stressing that the allocation was designed to reflect the new structure being introduced by the Saudi authorities.

He said the Nigerian government had decided to support full compliance with the new Saudi Hajj regulations.

Yusuf said Nigeria's compliance with the reforms was important to maintaining the country's diplomatic credibility and relationship with Saudi Arabia.

He said NAHCON was therefore implementing measures aimed at protecting the welfare, security and interests of Nigerian pilgrims within the new regulatory environment.

One of the measures, he explained, was the promotion of state-driven private local entities that could operate within the business-to-business framework being introduced by Saudi Arabia.

Yusuf said the initiative would enable state Muslim pilgrims' welfare boards to establish subsidiaries that could operate as private companies while retaining a public welfare orientation.

He said the arrangement was intended to combine compliance with Saudi Arabia's business-to-business model with the need to keep Hajj services affordable for Nigerians.

Yusuf said NAHCON was also pursuing comprehensive digital transformation to align Nigeria's Hajj operations with the Saudi Vision 2030 framework.

"NAHCON has rolled out an aggressive digital blueprint to match the Saudi Vision 2030 standards," he said.

Nigeria – France trade skyrockets to ₦18.56trillion in two years

ABUJA

EKHABAFE BELOVED

Nigeria and France have recorded ₦18.56 trillion in bilateral trade between 2023 and 2025, with French investment in Nigeria also rising to \$233.22 million, according to figures presented by the Nigerian government.

The reported trade figure represents an increase from ₦4.71 trillion recorded between 2020 and 2022, while French investment rose from \$100.76 million during the earlier period to \$233.22 million between 2023 and 2025.

The development comes

amid renewed efforts by both countries to deepen economic cooperation and attract more investment into key sectors of Nigeria's economy.

Speaking at the 10th France-Nigeria Business Council meeting, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu called for greater emphasis on investments that would create jobs, expand industries and develop infrastructure.

Tinubu said the relationship between both countries had moved beyond diplomatic discussions towards what he described as "serious economic execution."

The President urged Nigerian and French businesses to translate the growing relation-

ship into tangible economic opportunities through investments in factories, hotels, ports, energy projects, technology platforms and agricultural value chains.

The meeting brought together prominent Nigerian and French business leaders, including Aliko Dangote, Abdul Samad Rabiu, Tony Elumelu, Wale Tinubu, Kola Karim, Patrick Pouyanné of TotalEnergies and Rodolphe Saadé of CMA CGM, as well as representatives of Danone and Accor.

One of the major developments from the meeting was an agreement between Accor and Shoreline Group to establish Nigeria's first national hotel

platform. The Presidency described the agreement as a sign of increasing cooperation in the country's hospitality, tourism and investment sectors.

The Nigeria-France economic relationship has also expanded into the creative and digital economy.

During a recent engagement in Paris, Tinubu met French businessman Vincent Bolloré, whose business interests include media, entertainment and infrastructure. According to the Presidency, the Bolloré Group confirmed plans to deepen the localisation of its operations in Nigeria, particularly in film, entertainment and fibre-optic infrastructure.



NUJ PRESS WEEK:

From left: Head of Multimedia Unit, News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) Lagos, Ms. Yinka Fadare; Chairman NAN Press Week Committee, Mrs. Vivian Ihechu; Head of Lagos Operations NAN, Mrs. Ifeyinwa Omowole; Fuji Musician, Dr. Adewale Ayuba and Co-owner of New Afrika Shrine, Yeni Kuti, during the News Agency of Nigeria Lagos NUJ Press Week in Lagos.

Nigeria lost 3% of GDP to previous forex subsidy regime, says CBN Governor

ABUJA

OJO HAPPY

The Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Olayemi Cardoso, has said the country's previous foreign exchange regime resulted in revenue losses equivalent to about three per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Cardoso made the disclosure while presenting the outcome

of the 39th Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting in Abuja on Tuesday, as the apex bank reviewed developments in the Nigerian economy and the impact of recent monetary and foreign exchange reforms.

The governor said the former foreign exchange system imposed significant costs on the Nigerian economy, particularly through the implicit subsidy created by the gap between official and paral-

lel-market exchange rates.

The issue has previously been highlighted by the World Bank, which estimated that Nigeria forfeited about ₦6.2 trillion in foreign-exchange-related revenues in 2022, equivalent to approximately three per cent of GDP at the time. The World Bank attributed the revenue loss to the large premium between official and parallel exchange rates.

According to the World Bank's assessment, ₦4.5 trillion of the forgone revenue came from gross oil revenues, while another ₦1.7 trillion was associated with foreign-exchange revenue forgone from non-oil tax revenues.

The development was linked to Nigeria's former multiple-exchange-rate system, which created a significant difference between the official exchange rate and rates available in the parallel market.

The CBN has since pursued reforms aimed at unifying the foreign exchange market and allowing market forces to play a greater role in determining the value of the naira.

The apex bank has maintained that greater transparency in the FX market is necessary to reduce distortions, improve market confidence and strengthen Nigeria's external position. The CBN has also reported improved foreign-exchange market liquidity and a substantial reduction in the gap between official and parallel-market rates following the reforms.

The foreign exchange reforms have nevertheless had significant implications for businesses and consumers, particularly because changes in the value of the naira affect the cost of imported goods, raw materials and other foreign-currency-dependent transactions.

Cardoso's remarks come as the CBN continues to focus on price stability, exchange-rate stability and strengthening the country's financial system.

The latest MPC meeting is also taking place against the backdrop of changing inflation and external-sector conditions, with the committee assessing whether recent improvements in the economy provide room for adjustments to monetary policy.

COAS boosts Army Women Command with vehicles, welfare facility

ABUJA

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt.-Gen. Waidi Shaibu, has reiterated the Nigerian Army's commitment to enhancing operational readiness and personnel welfare.

Shaibu stated this on Monday at the operationalisation of refurbished operational vehicles and the renovated Soldiers' Club named, "Nightingale Club" of the Nigerian Army Women Command (NAWC), Giri, Abuja.

The COAS, represented by

the Acting Director, Army Public Relations, Col. Appolonia Anele, said serviceable vehicles were critical to the timely movement of personnel, equipment and logistics.

He said the refurbishment of the vehicles would significantly enhance the Command's ability to respond promptly and effectively to operational requirements.

According to him, mobility remains a critical component of military effectiveness, particularly in supporting troops

during operations.

He urged personnel entrusted with the vehicles to treat them as valuable government assets by ensuring proper maintenance, responsible handling and strict adherence to extant regulations.

Shaibu also stressed the importance of personnel welfare, saying a military organisation was sustained not by equipment alone, but also by the morale and cohesion of its personnel.

He said the Soldiers' Club would provide an avenue for

relaxation, recreation, social interaction and strengthening of esprit de corps among personnel and their families.

The COAS urged the Command to sustain the culture of maintenance, accountability, discipline and prudent management of resources.

He commended the leadership and personnel of NAWC for the initiative, saying the projects demonstrated what could be achieved through effective leadership and collective commitment.



THE NIGERIAN OBSERVER

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❖ **LONG MAY HE REIGN** ❖

Drug War: Etsako West Chairman hands over suspected drug dealer to NDLEA, warns against compromise

LAMAI CASSIUS

AUCHI

The Chairman of Etsako West Local Government Council, Hon. Romeo Aloaye Omoike, has warned against any attempt to compromise the investigation and prosecution of suspected drug dealers in the area.

The Chairman gave the warning while handing over a young woman, identified as Mrs. Grace, arrested in South Ibie, Etsako West Local Government Area, with a large quantity of substances suspected to be illicit drugs to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA).

He said the Council will

monitor the progress and outcome of the investigation, stressing that the anti-drug campaign is part of his administration's broader effort to restore security and protect the future of young people in the local government.

He noted that the consequences of illicit drug use had already taken its toll on several

youths and families in the area.

The Chairman directed that the case must be allowed to follow due process, warning against any action capable of frustrating the course of justice.

The suspect was allegedly found in possession of assorted substances including tramadol, cannabis, amphetamines and other suspected illicit drugs.

During preliminary interrogation at the Council Secretariat, the suspect reportedly admitted involvement in the sale of the substances for some years. She also disclosed that she is a native of Cross River State and holds a Higher National Diploma from a polytechnic.

The Chairman, upon re-

sumption of office, had intensified campaigns against drug trafficking and related activities, warning persons engaged in the illicit drug business to desist or leave the local government, insisting that his administration will not allow criminals to continue exposing young people to the dangers of drug abuse.

**CONFERENCE:**

From left: General Secretary, Association Professional Women Engineers (APWEN), Olubukola Komolafe; National President of APWEN, Chinyere Ugwegbe and Vice President, Olaolu Adedapo-Aishida, during the 2026 International Conference, Exhibition and Annual General Meeting of APWEN in Abuja on Tuesday.

Ekpeson secures major education project for Eppa Secondary School

LAMAI CASSIUS

AGENEBODE

The Executive Chairman of Etsako East Local Government Council, Rt. Hon. Sunny Ekpetika Ekpeson, has announced a major educational intervention project for Eppa Secondary School.

The Chairman disclosed this when he paid a courtesy visit to the Ogie-Eppa of Weppa Clan, His Royal Highness Moses Akpamuka Estu.

Rt. Hon. Ekpeson stated that the project was attracted by him in his capacity as Edo State ALGON Chairman and has been approved by the State Governor, Senator Monday

Okpebholo, as part of his administration's commitment to securing the future of the younger generation through quality education.

He said the project involves a complete overhaul of Eppa Secondary School, including the total renovation of existing structures, construction of new classroom blocks, building of a befitting Corpers' Lodge, and perimeter fencing of the entire school premises.

Rt. Hon. Ekpeson assured the community that the project will create direct job opportunities for the indigenous people of Weppa Clan.

He emphasised that from block moulding to construction and roofing, all labour components will be handled

by sons and daughters of Eppa Kingdom and not by outsiders.

The ALGON Chairman also used the opportunity to sensitise the people of Eppa Clan on the need to continue to rally support for the APC and the administration of His Excellency, Governor Monday Okpebholo.

He urged them to be part of history by contributing to the actualisation of the 2.5 million votes promised by the Governor to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for his second-term re-election, in order to sustain the Renewed Hope Agenda.

He appealed to the people to support the party's candidates from the Presidency to the Senate, House of Representatives and House of Assembly elections in the local government, as a way of appreciating Gover-

nor Okpebholo for the project approved for Eppa Clan.

The Council boss, who was accompanied by the newly appointed Secretary to Etsako East Local Government Council, Dr. Samuel Oshiole Enaboakpe, a son of Weppa Clan, used the opportunity to officially introduce him to the clan and to His Royal Highness.

He described Dr. Dr Enaboakpe's appointment as a demonstration of his love for Weppa land and his commitment to giving Eppa sons a place in governance.

In his response, the Ogie-Eppa of Weppa, HRH Moses Akpamuka Estu, expressed profound gratitude to the Chairman for the cheering news.

The monarch appreciated the Chairman for attracting such unprecedented development to Eppa land.

Ondo rehabilitates students arrested over wild post-WASSCE jubilation

AKURE

The Ondo State Government has rehabilitated and reoriented some students of Oyemekun Grammar School and Aquinas College, Akure, who were involved in wild and indecent jubilation after writing their final West African Senior School Certificate Examination papers.

This was contained in a statement issued by the Press Officer of the state Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Bisi Lawani, on Tuesday.

According to the statement, the rehabilitation programme, which was carried out during the holiday period, was organised by the ministry in collaboration with the Nigerian Correctional Service, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency and the Ondo State Neuro-Psychiatric Specialist Hospital.

Speaking on the development, the state Commissioner for Education, Science and Technology, Prof. Igbekele Ajibefun, said the rehabilitation programme was aimed at correcting negative behaviours,

instilling discipline and responsible conduct, and helping the students understand the consequences of actions capable of threatening public safety and disrupting peace in society.

He described the rehabilitation programme as a novel approach, stressing that the government deliberately chose counselling and rehabilitation rather than punitive measures that could negatively affect the future of the students.

Ajibefun assured the students and their parents that their names had been permanently removed from the Black Book, adding that their WASSCE certificates, which had previously been withheld, would also be released.

Admonishing the students, the commissioner said, "What you have done has been totally forgiven because you have undergone the desired change, so, we want you to continue to behave in a responsible way. Anywhere you find yourself, you are representing your family; you are representing Nigeria. Please behave well so that we can continue to be proud of you."

Bayelsa communities laud oil firm over investment

YENAGOA

Host communities of Halkin Exploration and Production Limited's Atala Petroleum Mining Licence (PML) 105 in Azagbene, Ekeremor Local Government Area, and Ezetu, Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, have commended the company for its investments in community development.

The communities praised the founder, promoter and Chairman of Halkin E&P, Otunba Babatunde Morakinyo, for sustaining the company's relationship with its host communities through investments in social infrastructure and other development initiatives.

Speaking with newsmen on Tuesday on behalf of the communities, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Azagbene and Ezetu Host Communities Development Trust, Chief Idani Ebibomene, said Halkin E&P had executed several projects across the communities.

He listed the projects to include the installation of solar streetlights, renovation of the community town hall and guest house, construction of public toilets, market stalls, a community stadium and school buildings, as well as the provision of educational materials for students.

Also speaking, the Vice Chairman of the HCDT Board of Trustees, Chief Fawari Tokowe, described Halkin E&P as a valued partner to the Ezetu community.

Tokowe commended the company for its ongoing water development project, saying it would provide relief to residents and improve their living conditions.

Since its inception, Halkin Exploration and Production Limited has said it is committed to the objectives of the Petroleum Industry Act 2021, particularly improved sector governance, regulatory certainty, investment promotion and greater benefits for host communities through structured development initiatives.

2027: NNPP denies joining coalition, says no deal with other parties

LAGOS

The New Nigeria Peoples Party has warned the public against dealing with impostors parading themselves as candidates and leaders of the party in the build-up to the 2027 general elections.

The party also said that it was yet to join any coalition or working arrangement with any other political party ahead of the 2027 elections.

The NNPP made its position known in a statement issued on Tuesday in Abuja by

the party's Founder, Dr Boniface Aniebonam.

"It has come to the knowledge of NNPP leadership that certain individuals, who have been expelled from our fold, confirmed by court judgments and INEC, have been parading themselves as leaders of the party with the intent to extort money from unsuspecting political parties and candidates," he said.

While describing the party as "independent," Aniebonam urged anybody or entity that had been "duped" by the impostors to seek a refund from them (the impostors).

"All contestants, coalitions, or political parties who may have been duped should go back to the impostors for a refund of the money paid as contestants' fees or for alliance.

"The authentic NNPP with basket of fruits logo is not a member of any coalition. It stands to reason that as a national political party, we are independent," Aniebonam stated.

According to him, the NNPP will announce certain decisions with regard to strategic alliances with any of the political parties for purposes of the 2027 general

elections if there is a need to.

"For the avoidance of doubt, the following people have the mandate of NNPP as the authentic leaders to speak and take informed decisions on behalf of the party.

"These are the recognised officials by INEC.

"The officers include Dr Boniface Aniebonam, Founder and Chairman, Board of Trustees; Dr Agbo Major, National Chairman; Mr Oginni Olaposi, National Secretary; Prince Toyese, National Treasurer; and Aisha Kade Onyia, National Woman Leader," Aniebonam stated.

NEWS

Court fixes October 26 to rule on El-Rufai's no-case submission

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja on Tuesday fixed October 26, 2026, to rule on the no-case submission filed by former Kaduna State Governor, Nasir El-Rufai, in his ongoing trial over alleged unlawful interception of a telephone communication.

The ruling date was fixed after counsel for the prosecution and defence adopted their respective positions on the no-case submission.

At the resumed hearing, prosecuting counsel, Oluwole Aladedoye, SAN, told

the court that the business of the day was for the defence to adopt El-Rufai's no-case submission.

Counsel for El-Rufai, Akinyemi Aremu, informed the court that the defence team was led by Paul Er-okoro, SAN, who was still on his way to court and had requested that the matter be stood down.

The trial judge, Justice Joyce Abdulmalik, however, declined the request, saying, "I do not do stand-downs."

Aremu subsequently sought the court's permission for his co-counsel, Ekere, to take over the proceed-

ings.

Ekere then moved an application seeking an extension of time to deem the defendant's no-case submission properly filed and served.

The judge granted the application and deemed the processes relating to the no-

case submission properly filed and served.

Ekere thereafter adopted the no-case submission and urged the court to uphold it and discharge El-Rufai.

He argued that the prosecution had failed to establish a prima facie case requiring the former governor to enter

a defence.

Responding, Aladedoye urged the court to dismiss the no-case submission and order El-Rufai to open his defence.

He argued that the defence had failed to address Exhibit B, which he described as the defendant's confession.

"If they had averred it, they won't make the no-case submission, so I urge my lord to invite the defendant to open his case," he said.

Justice Abdulmalik subsequently adjourned the matter until October 26 for ruling on the no-case submission.

Akwa Ibom Gov. unveils 14.8km roads project in ex-gov's community

UYO

Akwa Ibom State Governor, Pastor Umo Eno, has inaugurated 14.8km of internal roads and 1.9km of discharge drains in Awa, the community of his predecessor, Udom Emmanuel, in Onna Local Government Area.

Eno also assured residents of more development projects in the area.

The project, which comprised 16 road sections, was initiated by the immediate past governor, Udom Emmanuel, in his community and completed by his successor, Umo Eno, as part of the state government's infrastructure drive under the ARISE Agenda.

Speaking during the commissioning ceremony on Monday, Eno described the road inauguration as special because Awa is the hometown of his predecessor and political father, Udom Emmanuel.

Eno said his decision to personally commission the project was an expression of respect for his predecessor and a continuation of the good works of his political father, adding that development should not be limited by political differences.

He said, "I have an affinity

with Onna people, so we must continue to develop Onna. We are together, and we will continue to work together and bring development to our people."

The governor commended the Chairman of Onna Local Government Area, Kufre Umoren, and the people for their support, assuring them that other ongoing projects in the area would be completed.

He explained that 26 projects were currently ongoing in Onna, including a hospital project which, upon completion, would provide laboratory facilities for the training of medical students.

"My administration will continue to commission completed projects across the state with more projects expected to be inaugurated between now and the commencement of my second term in office," he explained.

Eno also listed the number of Onna indigenes serving in his administration, including the Commissioner for Finance, Accountant-General, Chief Press Secretary and Chief Photographer, describing their appointments as evidence of the cooperation between his administration and the people of the area.

Delta Governor directs suspended commissioner to resume after 10 weeks

ASABA

Delta State Governor, Sheriff Oborevwori, has lifted the suspension of the Commissioner for Works (Highways and Urban Roads), Reuben Izeze, directing him to resume office after completing 10 weeks from the date of his suspension.

Oborevwori announced this on Tuesday during the swearing-in ceremony of the Auditor-General and members of the governing councils of the University of Delta, Southern Delta University and Dennis Osadebay University at Unity Hall, Government House, Asaba. The governor said Izeze had appealed to him for forgiveness and acknowledged his willingness to return to the public to address the issue that led to his suspension.

According to Oborevwori, Izeze sent him a message on Tuesday morning asking for forgiveness and requesting that the governor inform the public that he had just returned from

the correctional facility.

The governor said, "Let me talk for a minute about one commissioner who was suspended. He sent me a message this morning that I should forgive him."

"He doesn't know me, and he was telling me what to say; that I should tell the public that he is just coming from Okere prison. Is that my business?"

"I always tell people that my kind of system is different. If someone like me has changed my style, this is not the sheriff of 20 years ago. So when you are in government, you must behave well because nobody is above the law."

The governor, however, said Izeze's appeal and decision to face the public had influenced his decision to lift the suspension.

"But because you have pleaded and really removed that shame and you came to face the public, even as people know that you are under suspension, from where you were suspended is not yet two months," Oborevwori said.

**STAKEHOLDERS MEETING:**

From left: Representative of the Minister of Defence, retired Maj.-Gen. Garuba Abdullahi; Chairman of the Nigerian Legion (NL), Mrs Moronike Grace-Henry; representative of Chief of Defence Staff, Maj.-Gen. Jamad Habu-Abdulsalam and Chief of Defence, Accounts and Budget, Defence Headquarters, Maj.-Gen. Samson Sunday-Jiya during the high level stakeholders meeting between the Nigerian Legion and Ministry of Defence, Service Chiefs, Past and Present Legion Chairmen and all Relevant Security Sectors Nationwide, in Abuja on Friday

Nigeria records 18.8m passengers in 2025, clinches 4th position in Africa -FAAN

ABUJA

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria, Mrs Olubunmi Kuku, has revealed that Nigeria recorded more than 18.8m domestic and international air passengers in 2025, emerging as the fourth-largest aviation market in Africa.

Onabanjo-Kuku disclosed the figure on Tuesday while delivering her welcome address at the ACI Africa Regional Conference and Exhibition 2026, in Abuja.

The FAAN MD spoke in her capacity as Vice President of the Airports Council International Africa.

The FAAN chief said the passenger figure represented an 11.9 per cent year-on-year increase, describing the growth as evidence of Nigeria's expanding role in the continent's aviation market. She said, "Our aviation market now ranks as the fourth-largest in Africa, with over 18.8m domestic and international passengers recorded in 2025, representing a year-on-year increase of 11.9 per cent."

The conference, themed "Next-Gen Airports: Driving Performance and Resilience," brought together aviation leaders, airport executives, regulators, financiers, technology providers and other stakeholders from across Africa and beyond.

Onabanjo-Kuku said the theme goes beyond the immediate

discussions at the conference, representing what she described as a strategic challenge for the continent's aviation industry.

She stresses, "This gathering of minds, this convergence of vision, could not have come at a more consequential moment for African aviation."

"The theme before us, 'Next-Gen Airports: Driving Performance and Resilience' is not merely a conference title. It is a strategic mandate. It is a call to action. It also reflects the jour-

ney we are collectively undertaking as a continent."

Onabanjo-Kuku while pointing to recent industry figures indicating continued expansion in African aviation, the FAAN MD cited International Air Transport Association data showing that African airlines recorded a 6.4 per cent year-on-year increase in international passenger demand in July 2026, compared with a 0.1 per cent decline in global international demand during the same period.

She also said overall passenger demand in Africa increased by 5.2 per cent, placing the continent behind only Latin America and the Caribbean in growth during the period.

"This is not a marginal improvement. This continent is on the move," she told delegates.

According to her, Nigeria is contributing significantly to that movement, with growth in scheduled airline capacity and renewed interest from carriers operating in the country's market.

FRSC boss tasks marshals on professionalism

SOKOTO

The Corps Marshal, Federal Road Safety Corps, Shehu Mohammed, has charged frontline marshals to uphold discipline, integrity, fairness and professionalism in the discharge of their duties.

Mohammed gave the charge on Tuesday at a two-day capacity-building programme for frontline marshals of the RS10, Sokoto Sector Command.

Represented by the Zonal Corps Marshal, ACM Fredrick Ogidan, the Corps Marshal said the training was part of efforts to strengthen the competence and operational effectiveness of personnel.

He said, "The programme forms part of the Corps' deliberate efforts to strengthen the competence, professionalism and operational effectiveness

of our frontline personnel, and the management's commitment to equipping our marshals to meet the demands of modern road safety operations."

Mohammed described frontline marshals as the most visible representatives of the Corps, stressing that their conduct and interactions with motorists could shape public perception of the organisation.

Group photograph of management, facilitators and routine Marshals.

Group photograph of management, facilitators and routine Marshals.

He said, "The impression formed by members of the public about the FRSC is often influenced by their direct encounters with our personnel on the road. Consequently, our conduct, communication,

appearance and manner of enforcement must always reflect the standard expected of a professional road safety organisation."

The Corps Marshal further urged the marshals to deploy emotional intelligence and fairness while enforcing traffic regulations, noting that enforcement should not result in unnecessary confrontation.

"Fairness is necessary for effective enforcement, but fairness must not require unnecessary confrontation. Enforcement must be professional, measured, consistent and respectful of the dignity of the road user," he said.

He also reminded the personnel that the FRSC uniform represented the authority of government and should therefore be worn and exercised responsibly.

FG inaugurates committee to probe Niger miners' deaths

ABUJA

The Federal Government has inaugurated a 10-member independent committee to investigate the deaths of 37 people detained by the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in Niger State over suspected illegal mining.

The Minister of Interior, Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, inaugurated the committee on Tuesday in Abuja, following a directive by President Bola Tinubu for a

comprehensive investigation into the incident.

The committee is chaired by retired Deputy Director-General of the Department of State Services, Jonathan Kure, while a former Director-General of the Nigerian Law School, Prof Isa Hayatu Chiroma, SAN, will serve as secretary.

Other members are retired AIG Hosea Hassan Karma; Prof Olayinka Buhari, a professor of Histopathology and former Chief Medical Director of the University of Ilorin

Teaching Hospital; a representative of the Minna Emirate Council; and a representative of the Niger State Government.

The committee also includes Alhaji Liman Sulaiman, National Secretary of the Miners Association of Nigeria; lawyer and human rights activist Deji Adeyanju; Mrs Zainab Suleiman Okino of Blueprint

Newspaper; and public affairs analyst, Dr George Agbakahi.

The 37 detainees died on Thursday, September 17, 2026, while in the custody of the NSCDC Niger State Command.

The cause of the deaths has not been established, with authorities ordering an investi-

gation to determine the circumstances surrounding the incident.

The minister, in his remarks, thanked Tinubu for constituting the committee and directing an investigation into the incident, saying the move was aimed at ensuring justice for the victims.

Tunji-Ojo also expressed condolences to the families of the deceased and appealed for calm while the investigation was ongoing.

According to the minister, the committee would identify the deceased and establish the immediate and remote causes, as well as the time and place of

Plateau attacks: Nigerians must not get used to killings – Northern Christians

KADUNA

The Northern Christian Association has condemned the latest killings in Plateau State, warning that Nigerians must not become so accustomed to violence that the deaths of innocent citizens are treated as ordinary occurrences.

The association said the latest attacks, which reportedly claimed at least nine lives across communities in the state, including a pastor travelling to church, underscored the need for the government and security agencies to move beyond reactive measures and prevent attacks before they occur.

The NCA Chairman, Rev. Joseph Hayab, made the position known in a statement issued to journalists in Kaduna on Tuesday.

Hayab expressed concern over the recurring violence in Plateau State and its devastating impact on families, communities and livelihoods.

He said every life lost represented a human tragedy that should command the attention of the government and Nigerians, irrespective of ethnic, religious or political differences.

According to him, the recent attacks occurred between Saturday night and Sunday morning across parts of Barkin Ladi, Riyom and neighbouring communities.

He said five people travelling towards Gana-Ropp in Barkin Ladi were reportedly killed when their vehicle came un-

der attack, while a pastor and another person were killed on their way to church at Dorowa Babuje.

Hayab added that separate attacks were also reported at Baten Wereng and Ratyidi.

"Is that how lives have become so cheap that they can now be taken at will?"

"Nigerians must not get used to killings. Every life matters. We cannot continue to wake up to reports of innocent people being killed and gradually accept such incidents as part of our normal existence," he said.

The NCA chairman said the frequency of attacks should not diminish Nigerians' sense of compassion, stressing that every victim left behind relatives, friends and communities that continued to bear the consequences of the violence.

While commending the Federal and Plateau State governments, as well as security personnel, for their efforts, Hayab urged the authorities to urgently review the security situation in vulnerable communities and strengthen measures to identify and neutralise threats before they result in attacks.

He said increased deployment of security personnel could provide temporary reassurance, but argued that the long-term solution required a security system capable of detecting threats early, acting on credible intelligence and preventing attackers from reaching vulnerable communities.



INDUCTION:

From left: Company Secretary, Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX Group), Izuchukwu Akpan; Chief Executive Officer, Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX), Jude Chiemeka; President, Chartered Institute of Stockbroker (CIS), Fiona Ahimie and the former CIS President, Ariyo Olusheku, during the Induction Ceremony of Authorised Dealing Clerks in Lagos.

Kaduna free CNG buses eased transport cost –Commissioner

KADUNA

The Kaduna State Government has said its free Compressed Natural Gas-powered mass transit scheme has continued to cushion the impact of rising transportation costs on residents, with the programme now in its 15th month.

The state Commissioner for Information and Culture, Malam Ahmad Mayaki, stated this in an interview with our correspondent on Sunday while reacting to President Bola Tinubu's renewed National Affordable CNG Transit Programme.

Mayaki said Kaduna had keyed into the CNG transport initiative ahead of the Federal Government's latest intervention, adding that the state com-

menced its free bus service on July 7, 2025, shortly after President Tinubu inaugurated 100 CNG buses in the state.

Tinubu had on September 19, 2026, disclosed that the 100 CNG-powered buses operating on major routes in Kaduna carried about 3.2 million passengers in their first year and saved commuters more than N3.5bn in transport costs.

According to Mayaki, Kaduna remained the only state providing free CNG-powered mass transit services to its residents, while other states had adopted different levels of fare subsidies.

"Kaduna is the only state offering free services in the whole of Nigeria. Other states offer different forms of subsidised costs; some offer 50 per cent, while others offer certain percentages.

"Even the FCT, where the Federal Government is partnering with the NURTW, is not offering it free. Kaduna is the only state providing free services to students, civil servants, traders, artisans and the entire citizens of the state," he said.

The commissioner said the state operated the scheme through eight routes with 100 CNG buses and about 200 bus stops.

He said the initiative had reduced the financial burden on residents, particularly civil servants, students, traders and artisans, by freeing up money previously spent on transportation.

"Transportation takes a chunk of people's income. Taking that off their shoulders is reducing the impact of the removal of fuel subsidy.

"Instead of spending the money on transport, they have

more money for their families, feeding and the education of their children. It has significantly improved the productivity of our civil servants because they can save between 40 and 50 per cent of their salaries that would ordinarily have gone into transportation," Mayaki stated.

He added that the scheme had also contributed to school enrolment and retention by making transportation more affordable for students.

"Some students drop out or miss some days of school because of the cost of transportation. But with this transport scheme, it has improved school enrolment and retention," he said.

Mayaki further said the scheme had improved access to healthcare, particularly for women who needed to visit hospitals, while the reduction in household transportation expenses had, according to him, eased pressure on families.

He also claimed that the scheme had contributed to reducing domestic tensions in some households by leaving families with more disposable income.

"Funny enough, somebody said it has helped in the reduction of divorce and broken homes because men now have more money to take care of their families.

"Instead of spending the money on transport, they have more money for the upkeep of their families and to save for the education of their children," the commissioner said.

2027: NDC begins mobilisation of polling agents nationwide

ABUJA

The Nigeria Democratic Congress has ordered its state and Local Government Area chairmen to begin compiling and harmonising party agents for the forthcoming 2027 general elections, giving them two weeks to submit final lists for approval by the party leadership.

In a statement signed by its National Publicity Secretary, Osa Director, on Tuesday, the party directed all state and LGA chairmen to immediately convene meetings with candidates

and other relevant stakeholders to collate and harmonise the list of agents.

Director explained that the directive was issued in line with the provisions of the Electoral Act, 2026.

According to him, two separate sets of agents would be compiled: one for the National Assembly elections, and another for the governorship and state House of Assembly elections.

The NDC said the lists would be scrutinised and ratified by the party leadership, includ-

ing its presidential candidate and running mate, before the commencement of training.

The party further directed that the final lists must be counter-signed by the state chairmen and the respective candidates to authenticate the nominations and establish ownership.

It added that where disagreements arose between party leadership and candidates over the choice of agents, the candidate's choice would prevail.

The statement read in part,

"That State and LGA Chairmen shall meet with candidates and stakeholders to generate a comprehensive list of two sets of party agents; those for national assembly elections and another set for governorship/state assembly elections.

"These party agents shall be scrutinised and ratified by the party's leadership, including the presidential candidate and his running mate, before training commences."

Director assured party members and supporters that its structures were in place for

the campaign.

"The leadership of the party wishes to reassure all members, supporters and stakeholders that the National Democratic Congress is fully prepared and ready for a robust, issue-based campaign, with all necessary structures firmly in place for victory," he said.

Adebayo Folorunsho-Francis

The PUNCH journalist, Adebayo, has over 20 years of experience covering politics, health, metro, entertainment and properties

FOREIGN

NEWS



SHOOTING:
CCTV SHOWS TURKEY SCHOOL SHOOTING SUSPECT WITH WEAPON

Iran must stop arming Houthis in Yemen, G7 says ahead of UN General Assembly

Iran must "end its arming of and support" for the Houthis in Yemen, the foreign ministers of G7 nations have said in a joint statement.

The G7 also condemned "in the strongest terms" Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia, adding that the recent escalation in fighting against Saudi-backed pro-government forces in Yemen represented a threat to regional and global energy security.

Thousands of refugees have fled Yemen in recent days after the Iran-backed group seized territory along the country's Red Sea coastline, including near the Bab al-Mandab Strait, the gateway to a key global shipping route.

Iran has previously denied supplying weapons to the Houthis and says it only supports them politically.

The G7 statement comes ahead of the annual UN Gen-

eral Assembly in New York, where Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian is due to speak.

"We call on the Houthis to immediately cease all military actions, all threats and attacks against civilian shipping, and to return to the political process in good faith," said the foreign ministers of the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States.

It went on: "Their reprehensible actions constitute a dangerous pattern of escalation that risks further exacerbating the conflict, undermining international trade and creating global economic instability."

"Looking forward, we will continue to support the legitimate Government of Yemen and reaffirm our strong commitment to the unity, sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Yemen," the ministers said.

Their statement was issued fol-

lowing a meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

Meanwhile, at least six people were killed in Saudi strikes on the strategic Yemeni Red Sea port city of Mokha, the AFP news agency reported, citing Houthi-affiliated media.

Two children and a woman were among the dead, while eight others were injured in the attack on the city, which the Houthis seized from pro-government forces earlier this month.

Saudi Arabia, which backs Yemen's government, has not yet commented on the reported strikes.

The UN estimates that in all, more than 120,000 Yemenis have been displaced by the sudden surge in fighting along Yemen's Red Sea coast.

Earlier this month, the Houthis, who had already seized most of the populated parts of Yemen, took control of Bab al-Mandab,

a narrow, maritime chokepoint where the southern Red Sea flows into the Gulf of Aden and the wider Indian Ocean.

Saudi Arabia has retaliated with hundreds of air strikes in the region.

The Houthis have also launched hundreds of drones and missiles at cities and infrastructure in south-western Saudi Arabia, including the capital city, Riyadh.

Prime Minister Andy Burnham has said the UK will provide "defensive air-to-air refuelling" support for Saudi Arabia, involving a single British aircraft, a Voyager, based out of RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus.

Burnham said the announcement followed a request from Saudi Arabia for "military support", which he agreed to on the advice of Defence Secretary Wes Streeting and Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband.

Major US outlets boycott shared Trump coverage in protest at media ban

Major US television networks suspended their pooled coverage of President Donald Trump on Monday in response to CNN, Politico and MS NOW being barred from the White House.

Trump announced the ban on Friday as he accused the organisations of writing "fiction or lies" about his administration. The companies said their reporters were denied access to the building on Saturday.

The three US outlets have since said they will sue the Trump administration in a bid to "defend the principle that the government does not decide what the press reports".

Shortly after, the White House launched its own streaming channel, Trump TV, which operates a 24/7 feed of clips of the president.

Several other US outlets have also announced that they would not participate in coverage of pooled events, with some, including the New York Times and Washington Post, saying they would not share still images from Trump events on Monday.

It meant there was no network TV footage of Trump boarding Air Force One or arriving in New York to attend the UN general assembly.

Trump also took part in a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Marine One helipad on the White House South Lawn. The event was streamed on the White House site but his comments were inaudible.

The president did later appear on television following a meeting with the Mayor of New York

Zohran Mamdani. He told the president that all members of the media would be welcome at the press conference.

Trump said: "It's interesting because, they said they were going to boycott me, but they never boycott me, so I wasn't very worried about that. Look at all that press."

The pool involves media organisations sharing material to save on costs and space when broadcasting presidential events to the American public.

Fox News Washington bureau chief Bryan Boughton, who currently holds a rotating role helping to organise media TV crews covering the White House, wrote in an email seen by the BBC that "effective today, the TV pool will not be covering designated as pool coverage" of Trump.

The message said the move followed the White House "preventing" CNN from fulfilling its pool duties for Trump's trip to New York and that "there will be no replacement pool put in place".

The three media organisations banned from the White House filed a lawsuit on Monday in US District Court in Washington.

A joint statement announcing the legal action said: "Without notice or process, the White House revoked our journalists' credentials because it objected to our reporting."

"Left unchallenged, this threatens press freedom and the public's right to independent journalism free from government interference."

Eleven injured in shooting outside Turkish school

Eleven people have been injured in a shooting outside a high school in Turkey, with police detaining a 15-year-old male suspect.

Two people were left in critical conditions after a gunman opened fire before fleeing on Tuesday morning.

It happened at the Inci Uzmey Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School in the western province of Manisa, with the injured reportedly all students.

The suspect's mother, father, and grandfather - who reportedly owned the weapon - have also been detained, according to the country's justice minister Akın G rlek.

It is the third school shooting in Turkey this year and comes as the government continues to grapple with how to address the recent spate of violence.

The incident saw a response from a number of different state agencies.

CCTV footage appeared to show the suspect walking through empty streets checking a shotgun, which is clearly visible. He is casually dressed

and appears unhurried.

Later footage showed the apparent suspect, who is reportedly a student at the school, running from the scene with the weapon still in hand.

The motive behind the attack was not immediately clear.

According to Turkish law, the teenager is required to appear before a court before being officially arrested.

In a statement, Turkey's education ministry said the incident had "deeply saddened our nation, and our educational community in particular".

It said that three national investigators from the ministry had been sent to Manisa.

Two deadly school shootings in April caused outrage in Turkey and led to new security measures for the 2026-2027 academic year, including tighter gun controls.

Before then, the country did not have a history of school shootings.

In an attack in Kahramanmaraş, a 14-year-old killed nine students aged 10 and 11, and one teacher. The gunman died at the scene.

Sri Lankan court to deliver verdict on deadly Easter bombings

A Sri Lankan court is set to rule on 24 people accused of plotting the 2019 Easter Sunday bomb attacks that killed 270 people and injured more than 500.

The case against Naufer Moulavi, named as the main mastermind of the attacks, and 23 others has dragged on for years.

The co-ordinated suicide attacks on multiple locations including several churches holding Easter mass and three luxury hotels were the deadliest Sri Lanka had seen since the end of its civil war in 2009.

The associates and relatives of nine suicide bombers are among those facing more than 23,000 charges, including murder, conspiracy to commit terrorism and possessing firearms. All defendants have denied involvement.

Investigators blame the attack

on a homegrown Islamist extremist group.

The prosecution had named Moulavi as the main organiser of the attacks, and had submitted what they said was a voluntary confession to the court where he had admitted his role.

The court accepted the confession. However, Moulavi later told the three-judge bench hearing the case that he was not shown what he was signing and rejected the allegations against him.

More than 2,300 people gave evidence for the prosecution.

There were also 2,076 pieces of evidence, including explosives, swords and firearms.

In the wake of the attacks, Sri Lankan authorities pointed to a "major intelligence lapse". Its parliament heard that a tip-off from India about the attacks was not properly shared with the au-

thorities.

In 2023, the Supreme Court ordered former president Maithripala Sirisena to pay millions in compensation to the victims of the bombings, after finding him responsible for national security failures that led to the attacks.

Last month, two former senior officials were sentenced to death for criminal negligence that led to the bombings. Death sentences are usually commuted to life in prison in Sri Lanka due to a decades-old moratorium on executions.

For years, Sri Lankans have held regular demonstrations demanding justice for the victims of the Easter attacks.

The verdict on Tuesday comes as a separate investigation on former intelligence chief Suresh Sallay is under way. Sallay is accused

of orchestrating the bombings with Islamist extremists.

The allegations echo those aired in a 2023 documentary by British broadcaster Channel 4, which heard whistleblower testimony claiming the attacks were allowed to happen to boost the popularity of the Rajapaksa family, which long dominated Sri Lankan politics.

Sallay, who was arrested in February, denies the allegations. Former president Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who was elected months after the 2019 attacks, with a campaign of tackling Islamist extremism has also denied the allegations.

Rajapaksa, who has been banned from leaving the country, has asked the court to prevent his potential arrest in connection with the ongoing investigations.

FOREIGN

NEWS

**TYPHOON:**

Timelapse shows typhoon barreling towards Japan

Four dead after powerful Typhoon Dujuan lashes Japan

Four people have died in Japan after Typhoon Dujuan battered Tokyo and surrounding prefectures with torrential rains and destructive winds, local reports said.

The storm cut power for 50,000 people and caused the suspension of hundreds of flights. Most evacuation orders were lifted on Tuesday as the storm pulled away from Japan's eastern coast.

At the height of the storm on Monday, authorities warned of an "imminent threat to life" and urged 1.9 million people to move to shelters.

The fatalities were from landslides in Kanagawa and Chiba prefectures. Six others were reported missing, public broadcaster NHK reported.

Pedestrians caught in the rain at the Shibuya crossing in Tokyo

Dujuan had sustained winds of 130km/h (81mph) and gusts of 194km/h.

The typhoon is the latest in a series of storms in the Pacific, made more intense by

the "super El Niño", which has warmed the ocean, fuelling the formation of storms.

Authorities had advised the public to pay attention to weather information.

Dujuan, which is Japan's 25th typhoon of the year, hit in the midst of a five-day holiday and forced the cancellation of several events.

Concerts scheduled for Monday at the Rock in Japan music festival were cancelled, while the Tokyo Game Show, a video game convention, also cancelled Monday's programme.

Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi offered her condolences in a post on X to those who lost their lives in the typhoon, before saying she would be continuing with her scheduled trip the United States as planned.

"With a sense of urgency, I instructed Chief Cabinet Secretary Takehara and Minister Hosono to respond with utmost preparedness," she wrote, before saying she had boarded

a flight to the US.

She will be speaking at the UN General Assembly in New York on Tuesday, and will meet with US President Donald Trump.

The Yokosuka City Fire Department told the BBC that a woman in Kanagawa prefecture, aged in her 60s, was believed to have been buried alive after a landslide swept the house she lived in.

Following a search by rescue crews, she was found inside the home and pronounced dead, NHK reported.

Separately, Sodegaura City Fire Department in Chiba prefecture told the BBC a man in his 50s was rescued after getting trapped while working to clear debris at a landslide site.

The department said the worker fell into a bamboo thicket, along with some heavy machinery. He was then taken to hospital before his death was confirmed, according to local reports. Police are investigating the details of the incident.

Some research suggests that Japan has become more exposed to destructive storms, but climate change is not thought to be increasing the number of these storms globally, and could even make them less common in some regions.

As temperatures rise, typhoons that do form are likely to become more intense on average, however.

Warmer ocean waters mean storms can pick up more energy, leading to higher wind speeds.

And because a warmer atmosphere can hold more moisture, these storms could also bring heavier rainfall.

This year, El Niño - the natural weather phenomenon bringing warmer water to parts of the tropical Pacific - is another factor.

El Niño doesn't have a clear effect on the total number of typhoons, but it can affect where typhoons form, their strength and which countries they hit.

Doctor in court to face Rwanda genocide charges

A 65-year-old doctor has appeared in court, the first person in the UK to be charged over the genocide in Rwanda in 1994.

Dr Vincent Brown, formerly Dr Vincent Bajinya, who is in custody, confirmed his name and address from the dock at Westminster Magistrates' Court.

He was charged following a seven year British investigation into the killings.

He was told he faced a charge of conduct ancillary to genocide and six offences of conduct ancillary to murder, as a crime against humanity.

The case was passed to the Old Bailey for a hearing on 9 October. A bail application will be considered later on Tuesday.

The 1994 killings in Rwanda lasted 100 days, during which Hutu extremists carried out a campaign of slaughter against Tutsis and other moderate Hutus.

The charges against Brown relate to an alleged slaughter in the Rugenge district of Kigali between 6 April and 13 April in 1994.

Brown is accused of "killing, directing or encouraging" the deaths of members of the Tutsi

ethnic group, as well as intending to destroy the group "as a whole or in part."

Prosecutors said he was being charged with genocide under the 2001 International Criminal Court Act and the alleged killings were "part of a widespread or systematic attack, directed against a civilian population, with knowledge of the attack."

Three members of the same house were allegedly murdered, along with a taxi driver, a mother and her young son.

The alleged victims were Dominique Mukurarinda, Immaculee Mukankusi, Gerasi Rurangirwa, Leandre Mbogoye, Charlotte Kamaguja and Olivier Tuyishime.

Brown is a medical doctor who qualified in Rwanda in the 1980s. He later became head of the country's Department of Family Health in Kigali and lived in a suburb there with his wife and young son.

In 2006 he was worked at Praxis, a London-based charity which helps refugees from places like Rwanda.

He has also served on the Refugee Nurses Task Force, which was set up in 2003 to advise the UK government.

Outrage in India over viral video of teen molested and her friend beaten

A video showing a teen-aged girl being sexually assaulted and her male friend beaten by a group of men in India's Bihar state has sparked widespread outrage.

The school students, both minors, were stopped in Jamui district on 19 September. Footage shared widely online shows them surrounded and repeatedly pleading to be allowed to leave.

The boy is seen being slapped and pulled by his collar, while the girl is touched inappropriately and, in another clip, carried away by a man as the boy tries to intervene.

Three accused, also minors, have been arrested in connection with the assault. A special investigation team has been set up to catch the other suspects.

The disturbing footage has prompted anger over the harassment of the two teenagers and renewed a wider debate about the safety of women and girls in Bihar, as well as questions over the response of state authorities.

The outrage intensified after Bihar minister Shrawan Kumar said that "sporadic incidents keep happening" and that the government was keeping a watch on them.

"The world is not entirely free of crime," he said, adding that those responsible would not be allowed to escape and would face strict action.

Umesh Kushwaha, of the governing Janata Dal (United), also faced criticism after referring to such cases as "isolated

incidents" and contrasting the government's record with that of the previous RJD administration.

Kushwaha later said his remarks had been "distorted and misrepresented" and promised action against those responsible.

Police said the incident took place around 19:00 local time [13:30 GMT] on Saturday, but it came to light on Monday after the video of the assault went viral.

The teenagers, both students of 10th standard, attended the same coaching institute and had gone to the area to take photographs after their classes, according to police.

Jamui police chief Bishwajeet Dayal said neither of them had initially reported the incident - officers began investigating after the video circulated widely online and traced the pair using the registration number of a vehicle visible in the footage.

Their statements were subsequently recorded and a case was registered following a written complaint from the girl.

A case has been registered under India's stringent Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, or PoCSO.

Police have also invoked sections of India's criminal code covering assault or criminal force against a woman with intent to outrage her modesty, assault or criminal force with intent to disrobe, and acts carried out with a common intention.

Ex-Junglers Commander in Gambia faces military court over desertion

A notorious member of Gambia's "Junglers" paramilitary unit, which acted as a death squad under ex-dictator Yahya Jammeh, appeared in military court in Banjul on Monday to face desertion charges.

Sanna Manjang, who was the head of the squad and a lieutenant colonel, is charged with deserting the armed forces when he went on the run in January 2017, when Jammeh was forced into exile at the end of his two-decade reign. Manjang had previously been charged with four counts of murder, including of longtime AFP journalist Deyda Hydara,

but those charges were dropped in mid-July.

The murder charges were withdrawn while the state works through how it plans to call witnesses, given that most are themselves alleged Junglers. The charges are expected to be refiled at a future date. The Junglers worked independently of Gambia's regular army, and the death squad has long been accused of extrajudicial killings and torture by the United Nations and rights groups.

In addition to the shooting of Hydara, Manjang was formally accused of killing three other men, including one whom he allegedly told would be fed to

crocodiles before decapitating him. Manjang's court martial is for desertion "on or about" January 21, 2017, when Jammeh also fled the country, and of absence "for a continuous period of nine years with the intention of deserting".

Manjang was arrested in neighbouring Senegal in November and repatriated to Gambia in December. The Gambian Armed Forces described Manjang as "implicated in serious human rights violations" in its statement on Monday announcing the court martial. When the murder charges were dropped in mid-July, Manjang was charged separately with the assault of two other men, in a trial that is ongoing.

Jammeh's more than two

decades in power, from 1994 to 2017, were marked by significant rights abuses and the earmarking of state funds for the eccentric leader's personal use, the current government and rights groups say. After losing a presidential election in December 2016 to opposition leader Adama Barrow, Jammeh refused to acknowledge the results and was ultimately forced to flee to Equatorial Guinea.

Following his departure, the country established the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC), which probed alleged crimes under his rule. The commission found that between 240 and 250 people were killed by the state during Jammeh's reign.

Matters-In-Focus

Tinubu extends Europe trip, returns at weekend

OSEMUDIAMHEN O. FAITH

● **Presidency says President still in charge from Paris, dismisses Atiku over UNGA**

President Bola Tinubu will return to Nigeria at the weekend after extending his working vacation in Europe by a few days.

The President's Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Mr. Bayo Onanuga, announced this in a statement issued on Monday, September 21, 2026, in Abuja.

Tinubu left Nigeria on August 30 for London to begin the vacation and later moved to Paris, where he met with French President Emmanuel Macron and French businessman, Mr. Vincent Bollore.

Onanuga said that despite being away, the President has continued to direct the affairs

of state, including ordering an independent panel to investigate the death of 37 illegal miners in Minna, Niger State, following their detention by operatives of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps.

He said Vice President Kashim Shettima, who had been representing the President at of-

ficial engagements, left Abuja on September 20 for New York to attend the 81st United Nations General Assembly.

Shettima will deliver Nigeria's national statement at the General Debate, which opens on Tuesday, September 22.

The statement added that the Secretary to the Government of

the Federation, Senator George Akume, will continue to represent the President at official functions until his return.

On politics, Onanuga said the Director-General of the Presidential Campaign Council, Senator Abubakar Yari, has been leading consultations with prominent traditional

rulers across the country.

The Presidency also dismissed criticisms over Tinubu's absence at UNGA, describing as "irresponsible" the "baseless insinuation" by former Vice President Atiku Abubakar and a United States-based lobbying firm headed by an ex-convict.



INAUGURATE MEMBER:

Minister of Interior, Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo (M) with members of the inaugurated 10-member independent investigative committee following the death of 37 illegal miners in custody of NSCDC Niger Command, in Abuja on Tuesday (22/9/26). Behind is heads paramilitary agency.

FG threatens to shut Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway over vandalism, safety breaches

The Federal Government has given motorists and other road users on the Lagos section of the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway a two-week ultimatum to comply with safety rules and stop activities that are damaging the road infrastructure.

The Federal Controller of Works in Lagos State, Olufemi Dare, issued the warning on Monday, September 21, 2026, during an inspection of the

highway. He said the directive followed concerns raised by Works Minister David Umahi over persistent vandalism, reckless driving and other illegal activities.

According to the Federal Government, vandals have removed about five kilometres of ClearVu fencing, while concrete covers along approximately 18 kilometres of the highway have also been vandalised and taken away. Another report said about

150 directional signs had been removed along an 18-kilometre stretch.

The government is also concerned about motorists exceeding the 30 km/h speed limit on the still-under-construction road, with some drivers reportedly reaching speeds of up to 120 km/h. Other prohibited activities include illegal U-turns, truck parking, commercial motorcycles, tri-cycles, hawking, animal grazing and illegal structures.

Dare said that if there is no

significant improvement within two weeks, the government will return to shut the road. The Lekki-Epe Expressway was identified as an alternative route if the closure becomes necessary.

The government is also considering replacing the vandalised steel fencing with concrete barriers and deploying CCTV cameras. In addition, 40 coastal guards have been approved for the first section to assist the police with surveillance and protection of the infrastructure.

2027 Elections: Disu pledges neutrality, warns against electoral violence

FAVOUR OBADIGIE

The Inspector-General of Police, Olatunji Disu, has assured Nigerians that the Nigeria Police Force will remain neutral and professional in securing the 2027 general elections.

The IGP gave the assurance on Monday at the 2026 Conference and Retreat for Senior Police Officers (CARSPPO) held in Owerri, Imo State, where senior police officers and other security stakeholders discussed measures for effective election security.

Olatunji Disu charged police officers to remain prepared, present and accountable throughout the electoral process, stressing that the police must protect the election without becoming part of the political contest.

He warned against activities capable of undermining the elections, including vote-buying, arms mobilisation, intimidation and incitement. He said anyone found culpable would face prosecution regardless of their status.

The police chief also unveiled a six-point roadmap focused on intelligence gathering, training, joint command, communication, community partnership and neutrality.

According to him, election security should not be limited to Election Day but should cover the entire electoral cycle, including planning, intelligence gathering, deployment and response to emerging threats.

President Bola Tinubu, represented by the Secretary to

the Government of the Federation, George Akume, also urged the police to maintain professionalism and impartiality in the discharge of their duties.

Tinubu said the police had a key responsibility in protecting voters, electoral officials, candidates and election materials, while calling for stronger intelligence gathering, improved response time and greater cooperation among security agencies.

He also assured the police of continued government support for training, technology, welfare and other areas necessary for effective policing.

The Imo State Governor, Hope Uzodimma, who hosted the conference, called on the police to strengthen intelligence-led policing and embrace digital technology ahead of the elections.

Uzodimma also stressed the importance of public trust and police neutrality, particularly amid the growing use of misinformation and digital manipulation during elections.

He urged the officers to ensure that measures discussed at the conference reached officers at all levels of the Police Force.

The conference, which was attended by senior police officers and representatives of other security agencies, focused on developing a practical roadmap for securing the 2027 elections.

The Inspector-General of Police reaffirmed the commitment of the Force to working with relevant stakeholders to ensure peaceful, credible and secure elections.

Stock market investors' wealth rises by ₦4.6trn in one week

MUYIDEEN FUNMILAYO

Investors in the Nigerian stock market recorded a significant increase in their wealth last week as the total market capitalisation of listed equities rose by ₦4.6 trillion.

The development reflected improved trading activities and renewed buying interest among investors, leading to gains in

the prices of several stocks listed on the Nigerian Exchange.

The increase in market capitalisation indicates stronger performance in the equities market during the week, providing investors with higher value on their stock holdings.

Market participants continued to take positions in selected companies, while positive sentiments across some sec-

tors contributed to the overall upward movement recorded during the period.

The development also highlights the continued importance of the Nigerian capital market as investors seek opportunities to grow their funds despite prevailing economic challenges.

Analysts and market watchers are expected to continue monitoring factors such as

corporate earnings, government policies, interest rates and general economic conditions, which could influence the direction of the market in the coming weeks.

The ₦4.6 trillion increase therefore represents a notable weekly gain for the Nigerian equities market and provides a positive indication of investor activity during the period.



OLATUNJI DISU

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13 X 4	369,500	397,213	295,600	317,770	206,938	222,458	443,500	476,763	369,550	397,266
10 X 4	340,000	365,500	273,500	294,013	177,400	190,705	370,000	397,750	295,600	317,770
HALF PAGE	295,600	317,770	236,500	254,238	147,800	158,885	340,000	365,500	273,450	293,959
10 X 3	221,700	238,328	147,800	158,885	118,300	127,173	266,000	285,950	251,300	270,148
13 X2	206,900	222,418	133,000	142,925	103,500	111,263	221,800	238,435	147,810	158,896
QUARTER PAGE	192,150	206,561	118,250	127,119	88,690	95,342	236,500	254,238	133,000	142,975
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FP 5X2	81,100	87,183	97,300	104,598	5 X 2	51,950	55,846	42,120	45,279	
FP 4X2	73,000	78,475	80,700	86,753	4 X 2	45,260	48,655	34,400	36,980	
FP 3X2	64,870	69,735	73,000	78,475	3 X 2	30,900	33,218	26,600	28,595	
FP 2X2	59,000	63,425	64,900	69,768	2 X 2	18,680	20,081	15,600	16,770	
SPECIAL POSITIONS					2 X 1	12,400	13,330	15,600	16,770	
SIZES	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	CAC	38,000	40,850			
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