

Security agencies deepen intelligence-led fight against threats — **ONSA**

RICHARD EWEKA
ABUJA
The Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) says the successful operations conducted by Nigeria's security and law-enforcement agencies in July and August demonstrate a growing reliance on intelli-

gence-sharing, inter-agency coordination and proactive measures to tackle terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, arms trafficking and other emerging threats.
The disclosure was contained in the third-quarter national security update issued by Chido Onumah, Special Adviser to the National Security

Adviser on Strategic Communication and Civil Society Liaison, on Monday in Abuja.
Onumah said security agencies conducted 7,062 operations across the country during the two-month period, resulting in the neutralisation of 1,487 terrorists and insurgents, the rescue of 777 kidnapped victims and the arrest

of 354 suspects.
He said the operations also resulted in the recovery of firearms, ammunition and improvised explosive devices (IEDs).
According to him, the figures underscored the growing importance of intelligence-sharing and operational coordination among security and law-enforcement agencies.

He stressed that no single institution could secure Nigeria alone, noting that effective national security required a combination of intelligence gathering, border management, financial intelligence, emergency preparedness and meaningful community engagement.
Onumah said the Nigeria

Police Force recorded significant gains through intelligence-led operations, arresting 1,334 suspects and rescuing 383 kidnapped victims during the period.
The police, he added, recovered 175 firearms and more than 3,790 rounds of ammunition.
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#200

TEAM PRESENTS NWFL, WAFU-B TROPHIES

Naira rain on victorious Edo Queens ...*get #50 million reward*

RICHARD EWEKA AND KEHINDE OSAGIEDÉ
BENIN CITY
Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State has rewarded the victorious Edo Queens with N50 million following their historic

triumph in the Nigeria Women's Football League (NWFL) and West African Football Union (WAFU-B) Championship.
Okpebholo announced the reward yesterday at the Festival Hall, Government House, Benin City, during a grand reception organised in honour of the team for bringing

glory to Edo State and Nigeria.
The victorious Queens also presented the NWFL and WAFU-B trophies to the governor at the ceremony.
Commending the players for their doggedness, resilience and determination, particularly their victory over Ghanaian side, Am-

pem Darkoa Ladies, in the WAFU-B final, the governor said the achievement was significant to the people of Edo State and Nigeria.
Edo Queens had played a 2-2 draw with Ampem Darkoa Ladies after regulation time before prevailing 4-1 in the decisive penalty shootout to win the

WAFU-B championship.
The victory also secured the team's qualification for the CAF Women's Champions League proper, scheduled to hold in South Africa later this year.
Okpebholo said he became confident that Edo Queens would emerge victorious during the penalty shootout after

observing the composure and strategy of the team's goalkeeper.
He particularly praised the goalkeeper's movements and efforts to distract the Ghanaian penalty takers, as well as her crucial saves during the shootout.
The governor also commend-

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VICTORIOUS EDO QUEENS:
Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo (Middle) with the victorious Edo Queens at the Government House, Benin City yesterday.

Edo Assembly moves to repeal 1988 Education Edict

RAYMOND OSOGBE
BENIN CITY

The Edo State House of Assembly has commenced moves to replace the 1988 Bendel State Education Edict with a new legal framework designed to strengthen the administration and management of senior secondary schools across the state.
The bill seeking the repeal of the decades-old edict scaled second reading on Monday following extensive debate by lawmakers, who argued that the existing legislation no longer adequately reflects the realities and demands of contemporary education administration.
Leading debate on the bill on Monday, the Majority Leader of the House, Hon. Ojezelle Osezua, said the proposed legisla-

tion had become necessary in view of changes in society and the need for laws to evolve with prevailing realities.
Osezua stressed that laws should not remain static but must respond to changing social conditions and the needs of the people.
He said the bill, if enacted, would provide for the establishment of the Edo State Secondary School Board to oversee the administration of senior secondary schools in the state.
The Majority Leader explained that the proposed board would complement the functions of the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), which regulates the administration of primary and junior secondary education.
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NEWS

Igbinedion's 92nd birthday celebration sets Okada Avenue aglow

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

A growing atmosphere of excitement and celebration has enveloped No. 1-13 Okada Avenue, GRA, Benin City, the expansive residence of the renowned businessman, philanthropist and traditional title holder, the Esama of Benin, Sir Chief Dr. Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion, as he prepares to mark his 92nd birthday anniversary on Friday, September 11, 2026.

The mood around the sprawling premises is one of anticipation, with preparations for the anniversary giving the residence a distinctly celebratory character, as members of the Igbinedion family, associates, friends and well-wishers look forward to marking the remarkable milestone with the Esama.

The atmosphere surrounding the residence reflects more than the celebration of age. It is also a celebration of a life associated with enterprise, philanthropy, education, traditional

leadership, religious service and community development.

The famous Garden of Eden residence, which has become synonymous with major celebrations involving the Igbinedion family, has over the years hosted prominent personalities from different walks of life during occasions organised in honour of the Esama.

As preparations gather momentum for Friday's celebration, the mood among those connected with the family is understood to be one of gratitude to God for the life, accomplishments and enduring influence of the nonagenarian.

One of the numerous visitors spotted at the residence, Alhaji Idris Abdul Kareem, described the birthday anniversary as principally an occasion to give thanks to God for the gift of life and to celebrate the enduring relationships Sir Chief Dr. Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion has built across tribes, cultures and nations.

"Ninety-two years is a remarkable milestone. It is a celebration of life, gratitude to God and appreciation for the many people

whose lives have intersected with that of the Esama," he said.

For some other visitors to the residence, the September birthday has become more than a private family occasion. It has evolved over the years into a period when friends, associates, traditional rulers, political figures, business personalities, religious leaders and ordinary admirers identify with the Esama and celebrate his contributions to society.

"At 92, Igbinedion's story continues to attract attention not merely because of his age, but because of the institutions and relationships built over a lifetime," another respondent said.

The birthday celebrant, Sir Chief Dr. Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion, was born on September 11, 1934, at Okada in present-day Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo State.

From relatively humble beginnings, Igbinedion rose through determination, enterprise and an enduring commitment to service to become one of Nigeria's prominent businessmen and philanthropists.

His name has, over the decades, become associated with several ventures spanning business, education, hospitality, broadcasting, aviation, agriculture and other sectors of the economy.

Beyond his business interests, however, his supporters and admirers often point to his contributions to education and human capital development as some of the enduring aspects of his legacy.

The establishment and growth of Igbinedion University, Okada, Nigeria's first private university, further cemented his reputation as an institution builder and an advocate of private-sector participation in education.

His philanthropic activities and support for individuals, communities and institutions have also earned him recognition in different circles, while his traditional title of Esama of Benin has placed him prominently within the social and traditional life of Edo State.

At 92, therefore, the celebration is expected to provide an opportunity for family members, friends, associates and well-wish-

ers to reflect on the journey of a man whose life has spanned some of the most significant periods in Nigeria's modern history.

For many Edo residents, particularly those who have followed his journey over the decades, the birthday represents an opportunity not only to celebrate longevity but also to acknowledge a legacy that has touched different aspects of society.

The anticipation surrounding Okada Avenue is consequently not simply about another birthday. It is about celebrating a remarkable milestone in the life of a man whose name has become deeply woven into the social, economic, educational and traditional history of Edo State.

With preparations continuing at the Garden of Eden residence, attention is now firmly focused on Friday, September 11, when the Esama of Benin will clock 92 and family, friends, associates and well-wishers are expected to gather to honour the nonagenarian and celebrate what many regard as a remarkable life of enterprise, service and philanthropy.

Naira rain on victorious Edo...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

ed the coach, technical crew and other officials for their contributions to the team's success.

"For me, this cup matters to Edo people and it matters to the country.

"I must commend the players for their doggedness. I also want to thank the coaching crew and other officials.

"I want to reward the team with the sum of N50 million," Okpebholo said.

He also commended the Edo Broadcasting Service (EBS) for televising the final match live, saying the coverage enabled more Nigerians to watch and celebrate the team's achievement.

Earlier, the Executive Chairman of the Edo State Sports Commission, Hon. Amadin

Enabulele, commended the Edo Queens for their resilience and outstanding performance throughout the tournament.

"Our girls have truly done us proud. To win the Nigeria Women's Football League and the WAFU-B championship in the same season is no small feat.

"It requires grit, unity, discipline, resilience and an unshakeable belief in oneself.

"I am particularly proud of the new management for not only keeping the flame burning but also raising the standard even higher," he said.

Enabulele commended the coaches, technical crew and management team for their sacrifices and commitment, noting that they carried the hopes and aspirations of Edo people on their shoulders.

Security agencies deepen...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

tion, while disrupting kidnapping, armed robbery, cultism and gun-running networks.

He said the Department of State Services (DSS) complemented these efforts through intelligence-driven operations targeting arms trafficking, terrorism, kidnapping and other threats.

According to him, the interventions disrupted illicit supply chains, facilitated hostage rescues and contributed to convictions for serious security offences.

The security update also highlighted the growing emphasis on dismantling the financial and logistical networks that sustain criminal activities.

Onumah said the National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons destroyed 1,419 illicit weapons on July 30, bringing the total number of weapons destroyed since

2022 to more than 19,000.

He said the Nigeria Customs Service further strengthened the campaign in August by handing over 399 intercepted firearms, alongside hundreds of firearm components, to the Centre.

He described the development as evidence of how border enforcement, intelligence and arms-control institutions could operate as interconnected components of Nigeria's national security architecture.

Onumah said the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) conducted 2,298 targeted operations between July and August, arresting 3,705 suspects and securing 471 convictions.

The agency, he said, seized almost 54,000 kilograms of illicit drugs and obtained court orders freezing accounts containing more than N9.8 billion allegedly linked to cartel operations.

Edo Assembly moves to repeal...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

Supporting the bill, the Minority Leader, Hon. Natasha Osawaru Idibia, said its passage would enhance the administration and effective management of senior secondary schools in Edo State.

Other lawmakers, including Hon. Maria Edekor, also highlighted the importance of the proposed legislation and expressed support for its passage.

Following the debate, the

bill was referred to the House Committee on Education, chaired by Hon. Donald Okogbe, representing Akoko Edo II Constituency, for further legislative scrutiny.

Meanwhile, the House received a letter from Governor Monday Okpebholo requesting timely amendment of the Child Rights Law in Edo State.

The lawmakers also observed a minute of silence in honour of the late Chief Dan Orbih.



VICTORIOUS QUEENS:

The victorious Edo Queens in a celebration mood yesterday at the Government House, Benin City.

Edo Assembly felicitates Esama, Tenebe on Birthdays

RAYMOND OSOGBE

BENIN CITY

Members of the Edo State House of Assembly (EDHA) have felicitated with the Esama of Benin Kingdom, Chief Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion, on the occasion of his 92nd birthday, describing the renowned businessman, philanthropist and traditional title holder as a global icon and an illustrious son of Edo State.

The lawmakers conveyed their goodwill during yesterday's plenary session following an address by the Deputy Speaker of the House, Hon. Stu Osamwonyi, who drew the

attention of members to the milestone birthday celebration of the Esama of Benin.

Osamwonyi said the occasion provided the House with an opportunity to identify with and celebrate a man whose remarkable contributions to business, politics, philanthropy and community development had earned him national and international recognition.

He described Chief Igbinedion as an astute businessman, renowned politician, distinguished philanthropist and a man of uncommon vision, whose name had become synonymous with enterprise, generosity and service to humanity.

that the Esama's 92 years represented not merely the passage of time but decades of impactful service, achievement and immense contributions to the development of Edo State and Nigeria.

Also speaking, the Minority Leader of the House, Hon. Natasha Osawaru Idibia, expressed her profound appreciation to the lawmakers for the honour extended to her grandfather and the warmth with which the House had identified with the historic celebration.

She used the occasion to extend an open invitation to members of the State House of Assembly to attend the grand celebration marking the Esama's 92nd birthday.

The House also extended warm felicitations to the Edo State Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Jarrett Tenebe, whose birthday celebration coincided with that of the Esama.

The lawmakers acknowledged both celebrants as distinguished sons of Edo State, whose contributions in their respective spheres had continued to attract recognition and commendation.

They prayed for God's continued grace, good health, wisdom and strength for the celebrants as they mark another remarkable milestone in their lives.

The House thereafter adjourned plenary till Monday, September 14, 2026.

NEWS**Benin High Court remands 4 over alleged kidnap, defilement**

OLIVER IJIIOGBE

BENIN CITY

A High Court in Benin, Edo State, has ordered the remand of three suspects in Police custody for 14 days over alleged conspiracy and kidnapping, while separately directing that a 17-year-old boy be remanded at the

Ugbekun Remand Home for the same period over an alleged defilement of a 10-year-old girl.

The orders were made in two separate motions ex-parte filed by the Police, seeking the continued detention of the suspects to facilitate further investigation and enable the relevant legal processes to be

concluded.

In the alleged kidnapping case, Police Counsel, Emmanuel Ekibade, told the court that the three suspects, alongside other persons still at large, allegedly conspired to kidnap a husband and his wife on August 8, 2026, in Auchi, Edo State.

Ekibade informed the court

that four suspects had earlier been arrested in connection with the alleged offence and subsequently remanded by the court.

According to him, information obtained from the suspects' alleged confessional statements provided investigators with lead that resulted in the arrest of the three addition-

al suspects in one of the northern states.

The Police Counsel further alleged that the suspects held the couple hostage and released them only after a ransom of N45 million was allegedly paid.

He told the court that the alleged offences contravened Sections 5(1) and 7(1) of the Edo State Kidnapping Prohibition (Amendment) Law, 2025.

Ekibade therefore urged the court to grant the Police's application to remand the suspects in custody to enable investigators conclude the ongoing investigation and take the appropriate legal steps.

Ruling on the application, the court ordered that the three suspects be remanded in Police custody for an initial period of 14 days, pending the completion of the investigation.

In a separate matter, the court ordered that a 17-year-old boy be remanded at the Ugbekun Remand Home for 14 days over the alleged defilement of a 10-year-old girl.

Police Counsel, Divine Dike, while moving an ex-parte motion, told the court that the al-

leged offence was committed in June 2026 in Benin City.

Dike informed the court that investigation into the allegation had been concluded, adding that the suspect was required to remain in custody pending the receipt of legal advice from the State Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).

The presiding Judge, Hon. Justice Aigbona Terry Momodu, expressed concern over the rising incidence of rape and defilement of minors in society.

The court urged parents and guardians to remain vigilant and pay closer attention to the welfare, safety and wellbeing of their children and wards.

Justice Momodu also stressed the need for concerted efforts by families, communities and relevant institutions to curb the growing incidence of sexual offences against minors.

The court consequently ordered that the teenager be remanded at the Ugbekun Remand Home for an initial period of 14 days, pending the report of the State Director of Public Prosecutions.

The orders were made in the course of the court's vacation sitting.

**COURTESY VISIT:**

L-R, Chairman of Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC Prof. Joash Amupitan presenting a gift to the Oba of Lagos, Oba Rilwan Osuolale Aremu Akiolu during the INEC Chairman courtesy visit to the traditional ruler as partners in peace citizen mobilisation in Lagos yesterday..

Photo by Omoye Aminu

Falana demands recovery of N33.75bn meant for vulnerable NigeriansOSARUGUE SOPHIA OSADOLOR /
AIYEBBOSA OGBEBOR**LAGOS**

Human rights lawyer and Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), Mr Femi Falana, has called for the recovery of N33.75 billion reportedly earmarked to provide financial assistance to vulnerable Nigerians under the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP).

Falana urged the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to investigate the handling of the funds and recover the money if investigations establish that it was diverted or otherwise mismanaged.

The legal practitioner also called on the EFCC to collaborate with the Auditor-General for the Federation in tracing the funds and determining how they were disbursed and utilised.

The money was reportedly allocated for cash transfers to millions of vulnerable households as part of the Federal Government's social intervention initiatives aimed at cushioning the effects of economic hardship.

Falana said the funds were public resources specifically intended to support Nigerians facing economic difficulties and, as such, must be properly accounted for by the agencies and officials entrusted with their management.

He further urged the appro-

priate authorities to prosecute any public official found, upon investigation, to have diverted, misappropriated or otherwise unlawfully handled the funds.

The SAN stressed that accountability and transparency were essential in the management of public funds, particularly resources allocated to social intervention programmes designed to assist poor and

vulnerable citizens.

He said government agencies responsible for implementing such programmes had a duty to ensure that public resources were managed transparently and reached their intended beneficiaries.

Falana's call comes amid continuing concerns over the management, monitoring and accountability of govern-

ment-funded social intervention programmes intended to provide relief to vulnerable Nigerians.

He maintained that funds appropriated for the welfare of citizens should not be allowed to disappear without proper accounting, stressing the need for relevant government agencies to ensure that every naira allocated for social intervention programmes was duly accounted for.

NNPC denies ownership of truck intercepted with 2,145kg Cannabis in Ondo

OGBEBOR AIYEBBOSA.

ABUJA

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd.) has denied ownership of a truck intercepted by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in Ondo State with 2,145 kilograms of cannabis concealed in a compartment.

The company, while commending the NDLEA for its vigilance and professionalism, said the truck only bore markings associated with NNPC Ltd. but was neither owned nor authorised by the company.

In a statement issued to journalists on Monday by its Chief Corporate Communications Officer, Andy Odeh, NNPC Ltd. said preliminary checks showed that the truck, with registration number MKA 960 XC, was neither

owned by the company nor listed in the official fleet of NNPC Ltd. or any of its authorised dealers.

The company also disclosed that the logo displayed on the truck did not correspond with its current official corporate branding and that the vehicle was not captured in its asset database.

NNPC Ltd. said it was engaging the Nigerian Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO) to obtain further information and establish how its old corporate branding came to be displayed on the vehicle.

It stressed that the unauthorised use of its corporate identity was a matter of serious concern, particularly where such branding was associated with criminal or unlawful activities.

According to the company, it would continue to cooperate with the NDLEA and other security agencies to facili-

tate a thorough investigation into the incident.

The investigation, it said, would include determining the ownership and operation of the truck, as well as how NNPC Ltd.'s corporate markings came to be placed on the vehicle.

The company added that it was reviewing its brand-protection and asset-monitoring measures and would take appropriate legal action against individuals found to have misused its corporate identity.

NNPC Ltd. urged members of the public and relevant authorities to verify the ownership and affiliation of vehicles purporting to belong to the company through its official channels.

The company reiterated its support for the NDLEA's efforts to combat illicit drug trafficking and pledged to provide all necessary assistance to ensure that the circumstances surrounding the incident were fully established.

Tinubu committed to reducing transportation costs — Shettima

OJO HAPPY.

ABUJA

Vice President Kashim Shettima says President Bola Tinubu is committed to reducing transportation costs in Nigeria through sustained investment in infrastructure and comprehensive reforms across the transport sector.

Shettima stated this on Monday in Abuja at the inauguration of the National Working Committee of the National Structure of Transporters for Tinubu/Shettima 2027.

The Vice President, who was represented at the event by the Deputy Chief of Staff to the President, Ibrahim Hadeija, said the administration regarded an efficient and affordable transportation system as critical to Nigeria's economic growth and development.

He acknowledged the challenges confronting transport workers and other Nigerians as a result of rising transportation costs, noting that the government was taking steps to address the factors responsible for the high cost of movement.

According to him, transportation remains central to the nation's economy because it connects communities, facilitates the movement of people and goods, and enables farmers, manufacturers and traders to participate effectively in economic activities.

Shettima said the administration was therefore prioritising investments in

critical infrastructure aimed at improving connectivity and eliminating bottlenecks within the transportation system.

He listed highways, rail corridors, ports, clean mobility initiatives and logistics infrastructure among the areas receiving attention under the administration's transport development agenda.

The Vice President noted that improvements in the sector would translate into increased national productivity, stressing that shorter travel times, more efficient ports and safer journeys would ultimately reduce the burden on businesses and citizens.

He also commended transport workers for their contribution to the national economy, describing them as key players in the movement of people and goods across the country.

Shettima urged the workers to remain committed to the nation and support efforts aimed at strengthening the economy, while cautioning them against misinformation and acts capable of undermining national development.

Earlier, the National Coordinator of Transporters for Tinubu/Shettima 2027, Segun Obayendo, commended the Tinubu administration for its reforms and investments in the transportation sector.

Obayendo said the group would mobilise transport workers and build nationwide support for President Tinubu ahead of the 2027 general elections.

NEWS

Nigeria records N12.6trn trade surplus as Q2 external trade climbs to N41.44trn

Osemudiamhen Faith

ABUJA

Nigeria's total external merchandise trade rose by 19.13 per cent to N41.44 trillion in the second quarter of 2026, compared to N34.79 trillion recorded in

the first quarter, the National Bureau of Statistics, NBS, has said.

According to the NBS Foreign Trade in Goods Statistics – Q2 2026 released yesterday, exports accounted for 65.20 per cent of total trade at N27.02 trillion, up from N21.16 trillion in Q1. Imports stood at

N14.42 trillion, representing 34.80 per cent, resulting in a trade surplus of N12.60 trillion for the period.

The report showed that crude oil remained the country's major exported commodity, valued at N12.91 trillion and accounting for 47.79 per cent of total exports.

However, non-crude oil exports were higher at N14.10 trillion, representing 52.21 per

cent of total exports. Non-oil products within that category contributed N3.72 trillion, or 13.80 per cent.

On the import side, total imports declined by 12.55 per cent year-on-year from N16.49 trillion in Q2 2025, but increased by 5.91 per cent quarter-on-quarter from N13.61 trillion in Q1 2026.

India emerged as Nigeria's leading export destination

in Q2 with N3.28 trillion, or 12.17 per cent of total exports. It was followed by Spain at N1.98 trillion, The Netherlands N1.90 trillion, the United States N1.72 trillion, and Togo N1.49 trillion. Collectively, the five countries accounted for 38.51 per cent of total export value.

China remained Nigeria's top source of imports with N5.91 trillion, representing 41.02 per cent of total imports. Other major sources were the United States with N1.005 trillion, India N924.46 billion, The Netherlands N409.81 billion, and Germany N395.87 billion.

Imports were mainly sourced from Asia at N8.56 trillion, or 59.37 per cent of total imports. This was followed by Europe with N3.06 trillion, the Americas N1.59 trillion, Africa N1.10 trillion, and Oceania N100.97 billion.

Trade with Africa stood at N7.75 trillion. Exports to the continent were valued at N6.65 trillion, while imports amounted to N1.10 trillion.

Togo led African export destinations with N1.49 trillion, followed by South Africa N1.34 trillion, Ivory Coast N1.21 trillion, Ghana N461.36 billion, and Egypt N455.81 billion. The five countries accounted for 74.75 per cent of Nigeria's exports to Africa.

Major commodities exported to Africa were petroleum

oil and oils obtained from bituminous minerals, crude, valued at N3.23 trillion; gas oil

in Q2 with N3.28 trillion, or 12.17 per cent of total exports. It was followed by Spain at N1.98 trillion, The Netherlands N1.90 trillion, the United States N1.72 trillion, and Togo N1.49 trillion. Collectively, the five countries accounted for 38.51 per cent of total export value.

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**BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS:**

the esama of benin, sir gabriel igbinedion, with the leadership of Edo Girls Brigade, who paid a courtesy call on him during part of the activities marking his 92nd birthday anniversary in Benin City yesterday.

Diphtheria: Plateau declares 'No Mask, No Entry' on all TinCity buses

Caroline Ameh

JOS

Passengers boarding TinCity Metro buses in Plateau State will now be required to wear face masks as authorities intensify efforts to contain a diphtheria outbreak that has reportedly claimed 23 lives in two weeks.

The Plateau Express Services Group announced the enforcement of a "No Face Mask, No Entry" policy on all TinCity Metro buses, effective Tuesday, September 8, 2026, until further notice.

The directive affects the intra-city mass transit service operating across the Jos metropolis and comes as

the state steps up measures to prevent further transmission of the bacterial infection.

In a statement issued on Monday, the management directed all passengers to comply with the new requirement, urging commuters to cooperate with transport officials at boarding points.

The company said it would make a limited number of face masks available at designated boarding locations to ease the commencement of the policy.

However, commuters were advised to provide their own masks as the available supplies might not be sufficient

for all passengers.

The management said the measure was necessary to promote a safer public transportation environment, stressing that containing public health outbreaks required collective responsibility.

The latest development follows a warning from the Plateau Commissioner for Health, Nicholas Baamlong, who disclosed on Friday that the state had recorded 148 suspected diphtheria cases, with 23 deaths reported within the preceding two weeks.

Baamlong said eight patients were receiving treatment at the Jos University

Teaching Hospital, while five others were being treated at the Plateau Specialist Hospital.

Diphtheria is a bacterial infection that can spread through respiratory droplets and close contact, making crowded public transportation environments a potential avenue for transmission.

The compulsory face-mask policy on TinCity buses is therefore expected to remain in place as part of the state's wider response to the outbreak.

Commuters using the service from Tuesday are expected to wear face masks before they will be allowed to board.

City Boy Movement targets 10m votes for Tinubu in Kano

IYALEKHUE O. GRACE

KANO

The City Boy Movement has inaugurated its Kano State chapter as part of efforts to strengthen grassroots mobilisation and support for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The inauguration, which brought together leaders, members and supporters of the movement, is expected

to deepen its presence across communities in the state and advance its mobilisation campaign for the president.

Speaking at the event, the movement announced an ambitious target of mobilising 10 million votes for Tinubu in the 2027 presidential election.

The group said achieving the target would require sustained grassroots engagement, community outreach and the expansion of its organisational structure across Kano and other parts of the country.

It also identified young Nigerians as a critical component of its mobilisation strategy, stressing the need to increase engagement with youths and encourage greater participation in its political activities.

Leaders of the movement urged members and supporters to remain committed to its objectives and work collectively towards building a strong and effective political network across Kano State and beyond.

They said the inauguration of the Kano structure represented another significant step in the movement's broader strategy to expand its grassroots presence and consolidate support for Tinubu ahead of the 2027 presidential election.

2027: INEC deploys early-warning system to prevent election failures

Caroline Ameh

ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has unveiled a real-time operational tracking system to detect and resolve potential problems before they undermine Nigeria's 2027 general elections.

The new system will give INEC headquarters real-time access to information on the preparedness of its offices across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, marking a major shift towards early intervention in election man-

agement.

INEC Chairman, Joash Amupitan, announced the initiative on Monday in Lagos while opening a two-day Strategic Operational Workshop for the commission's Administrative Secretaries.

At the centre of the new strategy is the Administrative Secretary Master Operational Tracker Template, a data-driven tool designed to provide the commission with up-to-date information on election preparations nationwide.

The tracker will be connected to INEC's Election Monitoring and Support

Centre, enabling the commission to monitor critical activities, including the movement of electoral materials and the training of personnel.

Amupitan said the system was intended to ensure that operational challenges were identified and addressed before they became major obstacles to the conduct of the elections.

He charged Administrative Secretaries, whom he described as the "engine room" of INEC's state-level operations, to maintain discipline and ensure strict compliance with the commission's procedures.

The chairman also warned against practices capable of compromising the credibility of the electoral process.

"If you tolerate shortcuts, shortcuts will multiply. If you tolerate political interference, neutrality will deteriorate," Amupitan said.

He urged the officials to learn from recent off-cycle elections, particularly the Osun State election, and convert the lessons into operational standards that could be applied nationwide during the 2027 elections.

The commission's strategy will focus on five major areas considered critical to elec-

tion preparedness.

These include voter registration and the distribution of Permanent Voter Cards as the national voter register approaches 100 million voters.

INEC will also strengthen the management of election logistics and sensitive materials, covering their receipt, auditing, storage and deployment.

Technology will receive particular attention, with officials expected to improve their management of the Bi-modal Voter Accreditation System, the INEC Results Viewing Portal and the Candidate Registration and Results Management System.

NEWS

Ogoni youths threaten protests over oil exploration, state creation

ABUJA

Port Harcourt: Youths of Ogoniland in Rivers State have declared that unless the Federal Government creates Bori State, the planned oil resumption activities in the area will not happen.

The youths also called for the immediate dissolution of the Ogoni Dialogue Committee currently in talks with the Federal Government on the return of oil exploration in Ogoniland, saying the Ogoni people have lost confidence in its composition.

President of the Ogoni

Youths Development Initiative, Imeabe Saviour, stated this in a letter dated September 8, 2026, addressed to President Bola Tinubu, a copy of which was made available to PUNCH Online on Tuesday.

Saviour said although the youths are not opposed to oil resumption in Ogoniland,

which they said would engender economic growth and development, they demanded an immediate cessation of secret oil drilling in the area, especially as talks were still ongoing.

The letter, titled 'Notice of Protest Against Oil Resumption in Ogoniland Without

Creation of Bori State', was also copied to the President of the Senate, the National Security Adviser, the Group Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited, the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Oil), among others.

The letter partly reads, "The leadership and entire membership of the Ogoni Youths Development Initiative (OYDI) hereby notifies the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Federal Government of our intentions to embark on a statewide protest in the coming weeks against oil resumption with-

out the creation of Bori State.

"Also, we write to make our position clear regarding the clandestine and insincere moves to resume oil operations in Ogoniland. Let it be known that we are not fundamentally opposed to economic progress or oil exploration in our land."

While noting that a generation of Ogoni leaders had died during the crisis that rocked the area, he said a major step that would be commensurate with the lives lost and the environmental devastation suffered in the land was the creation of Bori State.

**RETREAT:**

From left: Senator representing Enugu North Senatorial District, Sen. Ikeje Asogwa, Senator representing Enugu West Senatorial District, Sen. Osita Ngwu; APC Deputy National Chairman South, Dr Ben Nwoye; Secretary to Enugu State Government, Prof. Chidebere Onyia; Chief of Staff to Enugu State Governor, Mr Victor Udeh, Chairman APC, Enugu State, Dr Martin Chukwunweike, during the Close of APC Enugu State 2027 Elections Candidates Retreat in Enugu on Tuesday.

No assets recovered by EFCC will be mismanaged under my watch — Olukoyede

ABUJA

The Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Ola Olukoyede, has rejected calls for the creation of a single agency to manage all assets recovered by government agencies, arguing that such an arrangement would be impractical given the scale of recoveries across the country.

Olukoyede stated this in a post on his X account on Tuesday while weighing in on the ongoing debate over the management of forfeited assets.

The EFCC chairman, who previously served as Secretary of the commission and was involved in asset management, said his position was based on practical expe-

rience rather than commentary.

The chairman's comments come against the backdrop of the increasing volume of assets recovered by the EFCC and other government agencies.

"I have followed the debate on managing forfeited assets closely. I am not a commentator on this — I am a practitioner. As Secretary of the EFCC, I managed assets for years.

"Some are calling for a single agency to handle all recovered assets. It was tried in the UK at a cost of over £34 million and folded within a year. South Africa tried it too. Sixteen months. Look it up.

"And consider the scale here. Over 20 statutory agencies recover assets for government. The Po-

lice alone have divisions in nearly every local government and stations in most wards, all forfeiting assets. No single agency could manage the Police holdings alone, let alone everyone else's.

"We should also remember AMCON, set up to manage recovered assets — the government lost over N5 trillion there", the anti-graft boss stated in his post.

Olukoyede argued that the Proceeds of Crime Act provides a more appropriate framework by placing responsibility for recovered assets on the agencies that recover them.

"POCA got it right by placing the duty on each agency: what did you recover, and what have you done with it? That, alongside Section 31 of the EFCC Act,

is the most effective model anywhere in the world. So hold every agency to it. Ours goes up on our website within 24 hours, and our annual report has gone to the National Assembly on time every year of my tenure. My pledge to Nigerians: not a pin nor a penny of recovered assets will be mismanaged under my watch", Olukoyede stated.

At a briefing in Abuja last week, Olukoyede said the EFCC had secured interim and final forfeiture orders covering 10,053 tangible assets under his leadership. The assets included real estate, vehicles, plots of land, electronic items, schools, factories, hotels, oil rigs, barges, machinery and aircraft, as well as 102 tonnes of solid minerals.

Etsako West Council Chairman calls for synergy between executive, legislature

By Lamai Cassius

AUCHI

The Executive Chairman of Etsako West Local Government Council, Hon. Romeo Aloaye Omoike, has called for synergy between the executive and legislative arm to form a formidable front against political detractors.

Hon. Omoike made the call during the inauguration of the Legislative Arm of the Council in Monday in Auchi. He said no meaningful progress could

be achieved in an atmosphere of rancour.

He assured the lawmakers of mutual respect and cooperation throughout the tenure, adding that as representatives of their various wards, they would be carried along in the formulation of policies and programmes that would benefit the people of the local government area.

"Your inauguration today is a testament to the people's confidence in you. Hence, we owe them the responsibility of providing good governance to meet their expectations," he said.

The Chairman also appealed to all stakeholders for prayers and support towards the success of the administration, stressing that their positive suggestions for the betterment of the area would be highly valued.

In a related development, Hon. Omoike also swore in Hon. Abdulai Abubakar as Secretary to the Local Government. He charged the new SLG to uphold transparency, loyalty, professionalism, and teamwork in the discharge of his duties.

Describing the victory as one for all irrespective of political

affiliations, tribe, or religion, the Chairman urged the SLG to serve as a bridge between civil servants, politicians, and the public.

He expressed absolute confidence in Hon. Abubakar's ability to deploy his wealth of experience in the service of the people.

"To whom much is given, much is expected. On this note, we cannot afford to fail or betray the confidence of the people. Let us bring ideas that will unite us and bring peace and development," he added.

Customs officer dies in Cross River auto crash

Lamai Cassius

CALABAR

A 54-year-old officer of the Nigeria Customs Service, Prince Etteng Ise, has died in a lone auto crash along the Ikom-Calabar Highway in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Ise, who was serving at the Mfum Border in Etung Local Government Area, reportedly lost control of his vehicle while attempting to avoid a pothole.

Confirming the incident in a statement issued on Tuesday, the Cross River State Police Command's Public Relations Officer, ASP Sunday Eitokpah, said the accident occurred on Monday, September 7, 2026, near Alesi Village in Ikom Local Government Area of the state.

According to Eitokpah, the vehicle veered into a bush and crashed into a tree after the deceased lost control while trying to avoid the pothole.

The statement read, "The

Cross River State Police Command regrets to report a lone fatal motor accident which occurred today, 7 September 2026, at about 2:56 p.m. along the Ikom-Calabar Highway, near Alesi Village, Ikom Local Government Area.

"Preliminary information indicates that the victim, identified as Prince Etteng Ise, 54, a Customs Officer serving at Mfum Border, Etung LGA, reportedly lost control of his vehicle while attempting to avoid a pothole. The vehicle veered into the bush and collided with a tree", part of the statement read.

The police spokesman said Ise was pronounced dead by a medical doctor at Holy Family Hospital, Ikom, where residents had rushed him, while his remains were subsequently deposited at the hospital mortuary.

"The victim was rushed to Holy Family Hospital, Ikom, where he was confirmed dead by a medical doctor. His remains were subsequently deposited at the hospital mortuary", the statement said.

Abdulramanu Emerges Etsako West Council Leader, promises unity

Lamai Cassius

AUCHI

The newly elected Leader of the Legislative Arm of Etsako West Local Government Council, Hon. Sumaina Abdulramanu, representing Ward 6, has called on his colleagues to shun partisanship and focus on lawmaking and oversight for the good of the people.

Hon. Abdulramanu was unanimously elected following a motion moved by Hon. Lukman Mamud Osioorenorya of Ward 12 and seconded by Hon. Daniel Yamah of Ward 9.

The new leader said the legislature under his watch would be "vigilant, transparent and strictly people-oriented".

He pledged to work harmo-

niously with the Council Chairman, Hon. Romeo Omoike Alaoye, and to align with the SHINE Agenda of the Edo State Governor, Sen. Monday Okpebholo, to ensure democratic dividends reach the grassroots.

"Our primary constitutional role is to make laws that improve the lives of our people and provide responsible oversight. We will not be a clog in the wheel of progress," he said.

He listed infrastructure and flood mitigation, market development and economic empowerment, community safety and peace as key areas of focus.

"Our tenure will be measured not by the length of our speeches, but by the tangible delivery of our services to those who stood in line to vote for us," he added.

Defamation: JNl, CAN seek restraint as El-Rufai sues Musa for N10bn

KAFACHAN (KADUNA)

Muslim and Christian leaders in Southern Kaduna have called for peace, restraint and mutual understanding following reactions to recent remarks by the Minister of Defence, Gen Christopher Musa (retd.), against former Kaduna State Governor, Nasir El-Rufai.

The religious leaders, under the platforms of the Jama'atu Nasril Islam and the Christian Association of Nigeria, appealed during a joint peace meeting in Kafanchan, Kaduna State.

The development comes as El-Rufai demanded N10bn in compensation and a public apology from Musa over alleged defamatory statements

made during a Channels Television programme.

The demand was contained in a letter before action dated Monday, September 7, 2026, issued by El-Rufai's lawyers, the Chambers of Ubong Akpan, and addressed to Musa at the Federal Ministry of Defence in Abuja.

The letter was posted by Bello El-Rufai, a member of the House of Representatives and one of the sons of the former Kaduna State governor.

The legal action followed Musa's appearance on Channels Television's Politics Today

on September 3, where he discussed insecurity in Kaduna State and made several allegations concerning the former governor.

Musa was quoted in the letter as saying, "We can never be happy with somebody who has deliberately planned for the killing of our people."

He also allegedly said of El-Rufai, "He told us he paid bandits," while further claiming, "The next thing he sends a bulldozer to bulldoze your house down. He's done it."

El-Rufai's lawyers described the statements as false and de-

famatory, arguing that they portrayed their client as someone who deliberately planned killings, paid bandits, victimised opponents through demolitions and divided Kaduna State along ethnic and religious lines.

The lawyers said the statements, taken together, conveyed that El-Rufai was "a criminal, a murderer, a sponsor of banditry, and a person of the most base and depraved character."

They demanded that Musa issue a "prominent, unconditional and unambiguous retraction, correction and apology"

on Politics Today, with the same or greater prominence as the original statements.

The lawyers also demanded that the apology be published in two nationally circulating newspapers, one principally circulating in Northern Nigeria and another principally circulating in Southern Nigeria.

On the N10bn demand, the lawyers stated, "Our client's instruction is to demand the sum of N10,000,000,000.00 (Ten Billion Naira) as compensation for the injury to his reputation and the distress and inconvenience occasioned."

US Embassy stops routine visa processing in Abuja, moves services to Lagos

ABUJA

The United States Embassy in Abuja has stopped processing routine visa applications, directing applicants to the US Consulate General in Lagos for such services.

The embassy disclosed this in a reminder issued on its official X account Tuesday, stating that the new arrangement took effect on August 1, 2026.

The embassy said, "Routine visa services are only available at the Consulate General in Lagos. Effective August 1, 2026, U.S. Embassy Abuja no longer processes routine visa applications."

It, however, clarified that applicants who already had scheduled appointments would still be attended to, although some appointments might have been rescheduled.

"All applicants who already have scheduled appointments will be honored; however, those dates may have been rescheduled. Those with appointments in Abuja should check their email for their new appointment date," the embassy said.

The mission also said applicants with unused and still-valid MRV visa application fee receipts could use them to schedule new appointments at

the US Consulate in Lagos.

"Additionally, applicants holding an unused and still-valid MRV (visa application) fee receipt may use it to schedule a new appointment at U.S. Consulate Lagos," it added.

The development followed the U.S. Department of State's decision to realign routine visa operations across Africa to designated regional hubs.

The department said the move was aimed at strengthening national security through more uniform screening, vetting and adjudication standards, while also improving efficiency.

Lagos was designated as Nigeria's regional visa hub under the new arrangement, alongside other centres including Accra, Abidjan, Addis Ababa, Dakar, Johannesburg, Nairobi and Yaoundé.

Recall that the U.S. government had stated that the change affects routine visa processing and does not amount to the closure of the Abuja embassy.

The State Department said the realignment covers both routine nonimmigrant and immigrant visa services, including tourist and business-related visas, petition-based visas, family preference and employment-based immigrant visas, among other categories.

2027: Tompolo flags off door-to-door campaign for Tinubu in Katsina

KATSINA

The founder and convener of the PBAT Door-to-Door Movement, Government Ekpemupolo, popularly known as Tompolo, has unveiled the initiative in Katsina State as part of efforts to mobilise grassroots support for President Bola Tinubu ahead of the 2027 presidential election.

According to a statement personally signed by Tompolo on Monday, the unveiling began with 34 local government coordinators being inaugurated and campaign vehicles presented to them at the People's Square in Katsina.

Represented at the event by Kestin Pondi, Tompolo said the movement was established to

deepen grassroots engagement and promote support for the Tinubu administration.

He said the relationship between Tinubu and Katsina was based on trust, confidence and inclusion, urging members of the movement to take the administration's message directly to the people.

"The relationship between President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Katsina State is built on trust, confidence and inclusion. We are here to strengthen that relationship and take the message of the administration to the grassroots," he said.

Tompolo urged members of the movement to embark on door-to-door mobilisation across wards, communities, markets and households.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

President, Ohanaeze Ndigbo, Rivers State Chapter, Livingstone Wechie (M) and members of Ohanaeze Ndigbo, after their Annual General meeting in Port-Harcourt on Tuesday.

Makinde, Obi mobilise opposition to 'Reset' Nigeria ahead 2027 polls

ABUJA

Ahead of the 2027 election, the presidential candidate of the Allied Peoples Movement, Seyi Makinde; the candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress, Peter Obi; the APM National Leader and Bauchi State Governor, Bala Mohammed; and other opposition figures have unveiled a "Reset Nigeria" agenda, expressing confidence that Nigerians' votes will count in the next general election.

The unveiling took place on Monday during the inauguration of the APM presidential campaign office in Abuja.

Speaking at the event, Makinde rejected a return to fuel subsidy.

He, however, advocated domestic crude pricing for Nigerian refineries as an alternative to make petrol more affordable.

On May 29, 2023, President Bola Tinubu, in his inauguration speech, announced the removal of petrol subsidy.

The policy led to higher

prices of goods and services, although the All Progressives Congress-led Federal Government has continued to argue that it has delivered substantial economic benefits.

Ahead of the 2027 election, former Vice President and presidential candidate of the African Democratic Congress, Atiku Abubakar, who had pledged during the 2023 campaign to scrap the subsidy if elected, now promised to restore it if elected president to ease the impact of its removal on Nigerians.

Atiku's pledge has sparked mixed reactions among Nigerians.

Speaking on Monday, Makinde rejected Atiku's proposal and offered an alternative to the way Tinubu was managing the post-subsidy era, questioning why crude supplied to Nigerian refineries should be priced as though the country did not produce crude oil.

He stressed that Nigeria's oil must provide tangible and measurable benefits to Nigerians.

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

TALBORT HOPE PERE

BENUE

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

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

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

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

Alia said the investment

was particularly significant because, despite Benue's reputation as one of Nigeria's major food-producing states, the sector continued to face challenges arising from inadequate processing and storage facilities.

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

The project will be implemented under a 25-year Design-Build-Operate-Transfer (DBOT) arrangement, under which Rextodeneh Group will

finance, construct and operate the facility, while the state government will provide the land and necessary institutional support.

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

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

NEWS

Four arrested for allegedly killing Niger village head

MINNA

The Niger State Police Command has arrested four suspects in connection with the killing of a 53-year-old village head, Bawa Barde.

It was learnt that the incident happened on 23rd August, 2026, in Zhilu village, Fuka District in Munya Local Government Area when the assailants traced Barde to his residence at about 3 am and inflicted serious machete injuries on him and left him for

dead.

The Niger State Police Command spokesman Wasiu Abiodun who made this known revealed that when police operatives attached to Gwada Division arrived at Barde's residence the village head was found with several machete injuries and lying in the pool of his blood.

According to the cop, the victim was quickly evacuated to a nearby hospital where he was confirmed dead.

According to Abiodun, diligent investigations, however led to the arrest of the following suspects: Zegi Dogari, 48 years old and of Kabulai; Danjuma Galadima, 50 years, of Zhilu; Bashir Umar, 32 years of age, and of Kabulai; and John Doma, 35 years, also of Zhilu; but all of Munya LGA.

Abiodun confirmed the incident and said the suspects would be arraigned in court at the conclusion of investigations.

The Police PRO stressed, "On

23rd August, 2026, at about 7:am, a distress call was received by Gwada Division from Fuka outstation which indicated that some hoodlums attacked one Bawa Barde about 53 years old, and the village head of Zhilu village via Fuka District, Munya LGA.

"The Police operatives attached to Gwada Division mobilised to the scene and found the victim in his pool of blood with serious machete injuries all over his body within his residence

backyard. It was revealed that the victim was attacked in his house at about 3am of the same date by some yet to be identified miscreants.

"The body was evacuated to the nearby medical facility where he was confirmed dead. In the course of investigation, the following suspects were arrested on 25th and 28th August, 2026 in connection with the crime: Zegi Dogari, 48 years of Kabulai;

Danjuma Galadima, 50 years of Zhilu; Bashir Umar, 32 years of Kabulai;

John Doma 35 years of Zhilu, all of Munya LGA.

"During interrogation, the suspects confessed that they conspired and attacked the Village Head because they were not satisfied with his decision dur-

ing a mischief incident between Bashir and one other.

"It was further revealed that because the village head warned Bashir, who is his cousin to pave way for grazing routes from his farmland, hence, they conspired, attacked the victim in his house and macheted him to death.

"Danjuma Galadima was said to be the deceased's brother, Bashir is his cousin while others are also related to the Village head.

"Other underlining issues established indicated that Zegi Dogari, who is a herbalist was suspected of having an illicit amorous affair with the deceased wife, and when he was confronted he admitted to the allegation, and he was instructed to pay a fine of N700,000.

**BOOK READING:**

From left: Project Lead, Building Forever Friendship (BFF) Lifestyle Community, Demilade Taiwo; Convener, BFF Festival, Adetoun Jegede; Chief Executive Officer, Oak and Teak, Morenike Molehin; Chief Executive Officer, Palmers cake treat, Ibukun Akano at the reading of the book titled 'Surrounded: Together Is Better' in Lagos on Wednesday

Ex-SGF charges youths to rise above limitations

ABUJA

A former Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha, has urged Nigerian youths to rise above the limitations of their backgrounds and strive for excellence, saying his journey from the son of a classroom teacher to the nation's number two bureaucratic position demonstrates that humble beginnings should not determine one's destiny.

Mustapha spoke in Demsa, Adamawa State recently during the inauguration and handover of a library complex he donated to the Lutheran University Nigeria as part of activities marking his 70th birthday.

The facility, named the Wesley Mustapha Library Complex by the Archbishop of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, Most Revd. Musa Panti Filibus, was built in honour of

Mustapha's late father, who was a teacher and later became a headmaster at the Government Science School established by the LCCN.

Mustapha said his decision to invest in the university was driven by a desire to create opportunities for younger generations and contribute to the development of education in the country.

He said, "I want my life to be a template for the younger generation. If the son of a classroom teacher can make it, then you can make it.

"Do not allow your background to define your life; use it as a stepping stone.

"My decision to undertake this project is borne out of the need to better the lives of the generation coming after us."

Reflecting on his upbringing, the former SGF said his father's dedication to teaching had influenced his decision to give back to the educational system.

We'll turn Benue cassava to Nigeria's crude oil – Expert

MAKURDI

Benue State is set to ensure that its comparative advantage of agricultural produce is made an alternative to crude oil to boost the economy of the state.

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Green Harvest Stuffs, Prince Joshua Apeh stated this during the Farmers Awareness and Mobilisation Programme and the flag-off of the Green Harvest Cooperative Society in Benue South Senatorial District organised by Green Harvest Store located in Otukpo, Benue State.

Prince Apeh observed that the Benue South senatorial

district is blessed with cassava products which could serve as Nigeria's new "crude oil" to transform the nation's economy and guarantee food security.

Apeh said huge investment in cassava production and processing in Benue South would accelerate job creation and economic transformation.

He noted that Idoma land which produces the highest volume of cassava in the world is ready to lead a new agro-industrial chapter for Nigeria, stressing that farmers, government and other stakeholders must take advantage of the region's agricultural potential.

According to Apeh, "Benue South had enormous cassava

resources capable of supporting large-scale industries, but lamented that the absence of adequate processing facilities had prevented farmers from maximising the economic value of their produce.

"Our cassava is our crude oil. Just as crude oil transformed the fortunes of nations, cassava can transform the fortunes of our people if we are willing to invest in it, process it, add value to it and take it to the global market.

"This is a new dawn for the people of Idoma and for Nigeria. With the capacity we have here, we can end hunger in Nigeria and across West Africa, just as crude oil once changed the fortunes of this nation.

"Green Harvest Food Stuffs is strategically positioned to sustain millions of Nigerians and align with the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration.

"Our region could become a major carbohydrate and renewable-energy hub if its agricultural resources were properly harnessed," Apeh remarked extensively.

He maintained that cassava could be processed into food products and industrial materials, while also providing raw materials for bioethanol and biofuel production, thereby creating jobs and reducing Nigeria's dependence on imported fuel.

ADC governorship candidate calls for action against Sokoto killings, abductions

SOKOTO

The ADC governorship candidate in Sokoto State, Manir Dan'iya, has condemned the latest killings and mass abductions in Rabah Local Government Area, describing the attacks as evidence of the failure of the government to protect residents.

Dan'iya, in a statement issued by his Media Aide, Aminu Abdullahi, on Tuesday, said reports of the killing of a mother and her son, alongside the deaths of 10

people and the abduction of about 40 others in Rabah on Sunday, represented a worrying escalation of insecurity in the area.

He also expressed concern over another attack on Tofa village in the same local government, where seven people were reportedly killed and 12 others abducted.

"How many more people must be killed or abducted before the APC governments admit that Sokoto has a serious security emergency?" Dan'iya asked.

He said the repeated attacks in Rabah had exposed what he described as a widening gap be-

tween government assurances and the reality confronting residents in rural communities.

Rabah Local Government Area has witnessed repeated attacks by suspected bandits in recent months, with residents facing killings, abductions and livestock rustling. In March, police confirmed that one person was killed and five others abducted during an attack on Mallamawar Yari village. Another attack reported in June left four farmers dead and 12 others abducted.

More recently, several communities across Sokoto State have

come under attack, prompting calls for stronger security measures and an increased presence of security personnel in vulnerable areas.

No fewer than 10 persons were allegedly killed and several others abducted in the early hours of Monday when bandits stormed one of the communities in the local government.

The state government has announced several measures aimed at strengthening security, including the approval of N1.75bn for the procurement of 1,000 motorcycles for security agencies.

Ekiti Varsity Pensioners Lament Unpaid Pension

ADO-EKITI

Pensioners of the Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti (BOUESTI), have appealed to Ekiti State Governor, Biodun Oyeibani, to urgently intervene in the payment of their outstanding pensions and other entitlements.

The pensioners, under the aegis of the BOUESTI Pensioners Association, made the appeal in a letter dated September 7, 2026, addressed to Governor Oyeibani.

Signed by the association's Chairman, Dr Kola Ajaja, and its Public Relations Officer, Alao Odeyemi, the association said its members were facing severe hardship following the non-payment of their August 2026 pen-

sion, while only 50 per cent of the July pension had been paid.

According to the pensioners, the delay had subjected members to financial hardship, ill-health and, in some cases, untimely deaths, particularly as many depend on their monthly pensions for medication and basic welfare.

The association also alleged that the university management was heavily indebted to pensioners over outstanding gratuities, arrears arising from the new minimum wage and the 20-28 per cent pension increase.

It further accused the institution of failing to implement the 2019 consequential adjustment in pension for its retired workers.

The pensioners urged the governor to use his office to ensure the immediate payment of their outstanding entitlements.

FOREIGN

NEWS

Canada braces for prolonged trade war as counter-tariffs on US take effect

Canada's retaliatory tariffs on a range of US goods came into effect on Tuesday, with no sign of a trade deal on the horizon.

The counter-tariffs will apply to nearly C\$28bn (\$20bn; £15bn) worth of American products, from steel to furniture to cotton T-shirts, and will be as high as 50%.

Fresh fish and lobster were also on the list, but Canada later omitted them after pushback from its seafood industry - a sign of the tricky balance it has to strike as it retaliates against its largest trading partner.

Both US and Canadian officials have said they would like to strike a deal, but no movement has been made to resume talks after they collapsed in late August.

Speaking to reporters last week, Prime Minister Mark Carney said that Canada is still in search of a deal with the US that is "durable" and in the best interests of both countries.

"We're ready to sit down and strike that deal when the Americans are ready," Carney said.

US trade representative Jamie Greer said on Thursday the ball is in Canada's court.

"We offered them the best deal, they looked at it square in the face and turned around," Greer said in an interview with Fox News, adding that there has been sparse communication with the Canadians since talks collapsed.

In a separate interview with Canadian broadcaster CBC, Greer cautioned against retaliation and suggested the US might hit back by banning the import of some Canadian products.

President Donald Trump threatened on Monday to halt all US business with Canada-based airplane maker Bom-

bardier unless it moved its manufacturing south.

The aerospace giant is one of the largest in the country, contributing over C\$7bn to Canada's annual GDP in 2024, according to a report by accounting firm PwC.

Trump took aim at Canada in a series of other Truth Social posts over the weekend, including one that called Canada's exchange rate with the US "unacceptable".

Another post showed a map of North America - including Canada and Mexico - and Greenland all overlaid with the US flag.

Canada and the US have the world's largest bilateral trading relationship valued at nearly \$900bn in 2025.

With new US tariffs and Canadian counter-tariffs now in effect, businesses on both sides are scrambling to deal with what comes next.

The US currently has in place a 25% tax on Canadian cars and trucks, as well as taxes on Canadian steel, aluminium and lumber. In late August, President Donald Trump imposed new 50% tariffs on other goods like dairy, alcohol, hockey sticks and perfume.

Canada's counter-tariffs, which were described by Carney as "dollar-for-dollar" and range from 15% to 50%, will from Tuesday be applied to hundreds of items coming in from the US.

Products like American milk, golf clubs, steel, aluminium and certain clothing like jackets and T-shirts will face 50% tariffs. Cheese, toilet paper and certain household appliances like air conditioners will face 25% tariffs, while fork-lift trucks and industrial moulds will be hit with 15% tariffs.

At least two people died after Russian strikes on Kyiv

At least two people have been killed after Russia resumed airstrikes on the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv early on Tuesday, officials said.

The attack came after both countries agreed to halt strikes on each other's capitals for three days while US Donald Trump's top envoys visited Moscow and Kyiv.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Monday he expected the war to continue into the winter, following talks with Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner - their first visit to Ukraine since Russia's full-scale invasion.

Air raid alerts warned civilians to seek shelter as Russian forces launched drone strikes on Kyiv early on Tuesday, authorities said.

A series of explosions across Ukraine's capital overnight killed two people and injured ten others, the city's state emergency service said on Telegram.

Residential buildings were hit, according to authorities, including a five-storey apartment

block in the Solomianskyi district, while vehicles caught fire in the Podilskyi district.

People sought shelter inside a metro station in Kyiv during the overnight missile attack, something that is routine for residents protecting themselves during the ongoing war.

In Russia, buildings were struck in the city of Saratov during a Ukrainian drone attack, its regional governor Roman Busargin said on Telegram early Tuesday.

The talks with Trump's top envoys on Sunday in Ukraine, which lasted several hours behind closed doors, finished without any major breakthroughs.

Zelensky told reporters they had agreed that officials from Ukraine, Europe and America would meet in the near future to continue discussions. He also called for a trilateral meeting with Russia and the US.

According to a BBC Verify analysis, Kyiv is suffering more daily air raid alerts than at any time since Russia's invasion in 2022.



DRONE STRIKE:

People taking shelter inside a metro station during a Russian drone strike on 8th September, 2026

Investigation after female staff at Eiffel Tower replaced by men for religious visit

An investigation has been launched in France after female staff at the Eiffel Tower were replaced by male colleagues for the visit of a Hindu religious group.

A delegation of around 100 people linked to the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) group visited the iconic landmark in Paris on Saturday.

"Women were asked to leave their places of work" and felt "humiliated", staff union representative Diane Davoine said. The tower closed on Monday as staff went on strike to show their outrage.

BAPS - a movement whose beliefs originate in the 18th

Century - strictly separates men and women, including in temple activities and building entrances.

Ariel Weil, who is the president of the company that runs the Eiffel Tower, blamed its managers for being "a bit over-zealous" in complying with the request without considering whether it was "inappropriate".

Weil, who is also mayor of Paris Centre, told French broadcaster Franceinfo on Tuesday that the incident was "totally shocking and unacceptable".

An internal investigation will determine who was responsible for putting the conditions in place, Weil said, and ensure it "never happens again".

In a statement reported by AFP news agency, staff at the monument said that during Saturday's visit, female employees were also "instructed not to go through or cross certain areas while the delegation was present".

"Tensions mounted over the weekend, so [on Monday morning], the employees decided to meet: first, to open a dialogue with management, and second, to ensure that women are never treated this way at the company again," Davoine said.

Société d'Exploitation de la tour Eiffel (SETE), which runs the Eiffel Tower, had previously said the conditions imposed on female staff were not in line

with its values "nor with the principles of equality between men and women".

BAPS consecrated its first major temple in France on Sunday, in a Parisian suburb.

In a statement on X, BAPS said the trip was "arranged in conjunction with the Eiffel Tower team at the start of normal opening hours to avoid disrupting or inconveniencing others".

It apologised "for any pain or inconvenience caused", adding "we believe in the universal values of mutual respect and service".

On its website, the group describes itself as a "spiritual, volunteer-driven fellowship dedicated to improving society" through Hindu values.

Highest paid world leader to get salary increase of \$1 million

Singapore's government says it will raise the annual salaries of its ministers and other office holders, including its prime minister who is the highest paid political leader in the world.

Lawrence Wong will see an increase of 1.4 million Singapore dollars (\$1.1m; £818,000) in his annual pay package. He has said he will donate this pay increase to charity over the next five years.

Wong said that raising the pay of ministers was necessary to attract better talent. The government has previously argued that paying ministers high salaries deters corruption.

But the move has attracted criticism in Singapore where there is deep concern about job security and the rising cost of living.

Even before his pay raise kicks in, Wong is still by far the highest paid world leader.

He currently receives an annual salary of S\$2.2m and will now see his pay go up by more than 60% to S\$3.6m (\$2.8m).

Next is Hong Kong chief executive John Lee, who earns

about \$719,000, followed by Switzerland's president Guy Parmelin with \$606,000.

US president Donald Trump earns \$400,000 a year, while British PM Andy Burnham takes in \$230,000.

On Tuesday, Wong acknowledged that Singapore ministers' salaries have attracted scrutiny given that they were much more than what most citizens earn. The median monthly income in the country is S\$5,775.

But he argued that he has faced difficulty convincing business leaders and top civil servants to run for political office.

While the government cannot match what some of these people earn, "we do not make the financial hurdle unnecessarily high" for them to give up their careers and join politics, he said.

"Overall, I believe this will give me and future prime ministers a better chance of persuading capable Singaporeans to step forward, and of building the strongest possible team for Singapore," he said.

Currently, the base pay package of ministers is about S\$1.1m. With the new pay scheme, that will increase to around S\$1.2m.

But Wong said he expects most of these ministers to receive even more than that - around S\$1.35m - by the end of the current term of government, as pay will increase based on performance.

Part of their pay package is determined by whether the country reaches certain targets for unemployment rate, income growth, and GDP growth.

The topic of high salaries for Singapore's ministers has long been a lightning rod of criticism for the ruling People's Action Party (PAP), which has led the country since independence.

In a landmark general election in 2011 the PAP saw its lowest vote share in decades, fuelled partly by voters' unhappiness over ministers' pay as well as immigration policies. The following year, the government slashed ministers' salaries.

Wong's predecessor, Lee Hsien Loong, had also pledged to donate his salary increase to charity for several years back in 2007.

The government has for years pointed to its lack of corruption - Singapore consistently ranks near the top of Transparency International's annual Corruption Perceptions Index - as proof that the ministerial pay system works, arguing that it reduces the temptation for ministers to accept bribes.

But in a country where the average income is far below such sums, the issue continues to rankle and the latest announcement is no exception.

On Tuesday many online posted comments critical of the pay raise, saying it was "tone deaf" given current concerns about retrenchments, jobs for fresh graduates and inflation.

Retrenchments in Singapore hit their highest level in more than five years in the last quarter, according to government figures.

Kenya moves to register frightened Burundians as tension over foreign traders rises

Kenya says it will register undocumented Burundians and other East Africans living in the country, following days of anxiety over President William Ruto's directive targeting foreigners in small-scale businesses.

On Monday, hundreds of Burundians scrambled to process travel documents amid uncertainty over whether they could remain in Kenya.

Charles Owino, the Kenyan government spokesperson, has now said those without

proper documents should register through their embassies or high commissions as the authorities work with diplomatic missions to regularise their status.

Those undergoing registration would be presumed legally in Kenya during the process, Owino said.

Ruto had set Monday as the deadline for foreigners operating small-scale businesses to cease work. The directive came after the trade ministry said some foreigners exploit visa rules to work without the required permits.

Long queues were seen outside Burundi's embassy in the capital, Nairobi, after it said it would offer free emergency travel documents to citizens who wanted to go back home.

Others were seen racing to

buy bus tickets.

Some Burundians have reportedly faced hostility after President Ruto ordered action against foreign street vendors and those operating small shops, saying such jobs should be protected for Kenyans.

Kenyan officials have since sought to reassure neighbouring countries that there is no blanket ban on foreign traders.

Addressing a news conference on Monday, Owino said the government had opened registration and documentation of all foreign nationals residing in Kenya without valid documents.

He acknowledged that because of historical circumstances and regional dynamics, a number of East African nationals, including several Burundians, resided and operated in

Kenya without full documentation.

"To address this constructively, the government of Kenya is establishing a formal documentation and registration window," Owino said.

"We call upon all undocumented East African community nationals, and specifically Burundian citizens currently residing in Kenya, to immediately present themselves to their respective high commissions or embassies for formal identity registration."

In a statement on Tuesday, the Kenyan government said foreign nationals running businesses had 90 days to regularise their immigration status, work permits, business registrations and licences.

After that the requirements would be "enforced firmly and

strictly", it said.

"During this period, the responsible government agencies will provide the necessary guidance and administer the applicable requirements fairly, consistently and without discrimination," Kenya State House's statement added.

It also warned that no individual or group had "the authority to harass, intimidate, threaten or interfere with foreign nationals or their businesses".

Senior Kenyan foreign affairs official Korir Sing'oei has apologised to Burundians over the harassment some have faced, saying the president's directive had been misunderstood.

"I want to say sorry to all the Burundi nationals here," Sing'oei said during a visit to the Burundian embassy in Nairobi on Monday.

Five killed in Miami plane crash were in two vehicles on ground, investigators say

The five people killed and five injured when an Amazon cargo plane crashed on landing at Miami International Airport were in two vehicles on the ground, investigators said.

The Boeing 767-300, operated by 21 Air, overshot the runway on Sunday and hit an airline cleaning van holding seven people before breaking the perimeter fence and striking a Toyota SUV with three inside.

Jennifer Homendy, chairwoman of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), called the crash scene "utter devastation" and said it was too early to identify a cause.

Investigators have recovered the flight recorders and will look at flight systems, crew experience and weather as potential factors, say aviation experts.

Speaking at a press conference at Miami International Airport on Monday, Homendy said the aircraft had two crew members on board and was arriving from San Juan, Puerto Rico, on its third flight of the day.

The plane struck navigational aids and equipment after overrunning the runway, before hitting a white Ford van owned by a contract cleaning company.

It then travelled through a perimeter fence and collided with a Toyota Corolla, coming to rest about 1,300ft (394m) beyond the runway.

It was not clear from the NTSB's updates how many people died in each vehicle on the ground, or the condition of the two crew on board the plane.

Safety regulator details findings from investigation into Miami plane crash

Debris from the aircraft, mangled vehicles and airport fencing was left strewn across the area.

"It's hard to see, and I'm sure very difficult for the first responders as well," said Homendy during the press conference.

She said recovering victims' bodies was the current priority, adding: "The investigation and access to the aircraft, as well as evidence, can wait."

The flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder have been recovered and are being sent to NTSB headquarters for evaluation.

Homendy said investigators could not yet say anything substantive about the cause of the crash as they were still collecting evidence at the scene.

Investigators will examine the flight history, crew experience and training, radar data, and aircraft performance. Separate teams will look at the plane's systems and engines, while a meteorologist will assess the weather conditions at the time of landing.

The NTSB will also examine whether the runway should have had an engineered materials arresting system (EMAS), which is designed to slow and stop aircraft that overrun a runway. Homendy said this would be a "key" part of the investigation.

Reuters Tesla cars parked in a lot next to where a crashed Amazon Prime Air cargo plane came to rest.

Earlier analysis by BBC Verify found there was an active thunderstorm near the airport shortly before the crash, with winds gusting up to 26 knots (48km/h).

The NTSB has appealed for members of the public to share photographs or videos that could aid the investigation.

UN calls for immediate ceasefire as Sudan crisis deepens

The United Nations is calling for an immediate ceasefire in Sudan, as drone attacks and the destruction of healthcare facilities deepen an already devastating humanitarian crisis.

More than six million people have been displaced inside Sudan, while another 4.5 million have fled the country.

UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk says civilians in several regions face an imminent risk of further attacks, calling for an end to foreign involvement and a return to civilian rule.

UN investigators say both the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces are increasingly using long-range drones, extending attacks far beyond traditional front lines.

In South Kordofan, strikes on a kindergarten and hospital killed 114 people, including 60 children.

A separate attack on a teaching hospital killed at least 70 people.

Investigators say there are reasonable grounds to believe both sides committed serious violations that may amount to war crimes.



TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:

Hundreds of Burundians on Monday scrambled to process travel documents amid crackdown uncertainty

North Korea and Russia open first road bridge linking both countries

The road spans the Tumen river connecting the border cities of Rason and Khasan.

The first road bridge linking Russia and North Korea has opened, allowing the two countries to more easily move cargo and passengers between their border across the Tumen river.

Pyongyang state media said the bridge will be used for "personnel exchanges, tourism and trade".

But Ukrainian investigative organisation Truth Hounds said the bridge is intended "primarily to establish a covert military logistics corridor" to support Russia in the Ukraine war.

It comes amid stronger ties between the countries since the start of the Ukraine war, with Russia's Putin and North Korea's Kim Jong Un previously pledging that they would help each other in the event of "aggression" against either country.

Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin described the bridge as a "new symbol of friendship", while North Korea's Prime Minister Pak Thae Song said it was a "historical event".

Up to 300 vehicles and 2,323 people can cross the bridge daily, Russian state news TASS reports.

Satellite imagery reported by

the BBC in May this year showed the kilometre-long bridge alongside several new access roads, a border checkpoint, support infrastructure and parking facilities.

There are existing air links, as well as the rail link between the two countries, but until now the only road link was a makeshift solution where, by special arrangement, wooden planks were placed on the rail bridge to allow cars to travel over it, according to Reuters.

The Russian government said the bridge will initially be used to transport cargo, Reuters reported, before opening to passenger traffic later this year.

The bridge would provide, a

"powerful impetus for the further development of trade, economic, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation," said Mishustin.

Appearing at the opening ceremony via video link, he described ties between Moscow and Pyongyang as being "at an unprecedented high level."

The most immediate impact may be increased export of weapons to Russia.

Researchers at South Korea's spy agency estimates that North Korea has already transferred \$7 to 14 billion dollars' worth of rockets, missiles, artillery shells using ships. An estimated 11,000 North Korean troops are actively fighting Ukrainians in Russia.

DRC tightens state control over mining data in bid to boost influence over its vast mineral wealth

The Democratic Republic of Congo is tightening state control over the geological data underpinning billions of dollars in mining exploration, as the country seeks greater influence over the development of its vast mineral wealth.

Under a 180-million-dollar

contract with Spanish company Xcalibur, Congo is mapping its territory and digitising historical geological records to build a national database of critical mineral resources.

The government plans to restrict access to the data through a tiered, fee-based system, arguing that geological information is strategic national

infrastructure.

The move could give Kinshasa greater leverage in negotiations with mining companies and help attract investment by reducing the risks associated with mineral exploration.

Congo is a major producer of cobalt and copper and also has deposits of lithium and tanta-

lum. The policy comes as competition intensifies between the United States and China for access to critical minerals.

The government's challenge will be to balance tighter state control with transparency and access for investors, while ensuring the country's mineral wealth delivers broader economic benefits

2027 election: will young Nigerians still bother to vote?

SALIHU MARYAM SAIDU

For a young Nigerian struggling to afford food, pay transport fare, find a job, pay school fees or support a family, the 2027 general election may seem like something far removed from the immediate realities of everyday life. Yet, as political parties begin their campaigns ahead of the election, politicians are once again asking Nigerians for their votes.

This time, however, the promises are being made against the backdrop of rising living costs, insecurity, unemployment and growing frustration among citizens. The question is no longer simply who will win the election, but whether young Nigerians, many of whom are facing some of the country's toughest economic realities, will still believe that voting can change their lives.

The Independent National Electoral Commission has fixed January 16, 2027, for the presidential and National Assembly elections, while campaigns have officially begun. The election is already generating political activity across the country, with parties positioning themselves and politicians beginning to make their case to voters.

For many Nigerians, however, the political season is arriving at a time when surviving from one month to the next has become a major concern. The rising cost of food, transportation, rent, electricity and other basic necessities has changed the way many families live. A person who goes to the market with the same amount of money they used a few years ago may

return home with significantly fewer items. What used to be enough for a family meal may now only cover part of it.

Recent Reuters reporting illustrates the pressure on households. It found that the cost of preparing a basic jollof rice meal had more than doubled since President Bola Tinubu took office, while petrol prices had risen sharply following the removal of the fuel subsidy. The report also noted that many Nigerians are struggling to keep their salaries in line with rising expenses.

For ordinary families, these figures are not simply economic statistics. They are experienced in the market every day. They are seen when parents reduce the quantity of food they buy, when families cut back on things they once considered necessities and when workers discover that their salaries disappear only days after receiving them. For some households, saving money has become almost impossible because whatever comes in is quickly spent on food, transportation, rent, school fees and other basic needs.

The situation is particularly difficult for young Nigerians who are trying to become financially independent. A graduate may leave school with qualifications but spend months or years searching for employment.

A young entrepreneur may have a business idea but struggle with electricity costs, transportation, inflation and access to affordable capital. Others have turned to small businesses, freelancing, online work and other forms of self-employment simply because waiting for a conventional job is no longer an attractive option.

The economic reforms introduced by

the Tinubu administration, including the removal of the petrol subsidy and changes to the foreign-exchange system, have been defended by the government as necessary measures to strengthen the Nigerian economy. Investors and some economists have welcomed aspects of the reforms, while the government has maintained that the difficult adjustments are intended to produce stronger economic conditions in the long term.

But for many citizens, the immediate experience has been hardship. Reuters recently reported that the reforms have improved some macroeconomic indicators while contributing to intense cost-of-living pressure on households.



Young Nigerians

"This time, however, the promises are being made against the backdrop of rising living costs, insecurity, unemployment and growing frustration among citizens. The question is no longer simply who will win the election, but whether young Nigerians, many of whom are facing some of the country's toughest economic realities, will still believe that voting can change their lives."

EDUCATION

The decline of reading culture among Nigerian youths: causes, consequences and solutions

SALIHU MARYAM SAIDU

The habit of reading, once regarded as a cornerstone of learning and personal development, appears to be declining among many Nigerian youths. While technology has made information more accessible than ever before, it has also changed how young people spend their time.

Instead of reading books, newspapers and other educational materials, many now devote hours to social media, entertainment and short-form digital content. This trend has raised concerns among educators, parents and policymakers about its long-term impact on education and national development.

Reading is more than an academic exercise. It broadens knowledge, improves communication skills, develops critical thinking and exposes individuals to different ideas and cultures. Students who cultivate the habit of reading regularly are generally better equipped to perform well in school and make informed decisions in everyday life.

Several factors have contributed to the decline in reading culture. One major cause is the growing influence of social media and digital entertainment. Many young people spend

a significant portion of their free time on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook and X, leaving little time for books or educational materials. The widespread use of smartphones has also made instant entertainment more attractive than sustained reading.

Another contributing factor is the high cost of books and limited access to well-equipped libraries. In many communities, public libraries are either unavailable or poorly maintained, making it difficult for students to access quality reading materials. Some schools also lack functional libraries, while many homes do not encourage regular reading beyond classroom assignments.

The examination-oriented nature of Nigeria's education system has also played a role. Many students read mainly to pass examinations rather than to gain knowledge or develop lifelong learning habits. Once examinations are over, reading often becomes less of a priority.

The consequences of this decline are far-reaching. Poor reading habits can weaken students' writing and communication skills, reduce creativity and limit their ability to think critically. It may also affect academic

performance and reduce opportunities for innovation and research. In the long run, a society with a weak reading culture may struggle to produce professionals capable of driving scientific, technological and economic development.

Reversing this trend requires a collective effort. Parents should cul-

tivate reading habits at home by providing books and encouraging children to read from an early age. Schools should strengthen library services, organize reading clubs and literary competitions, and encourage students to read beyond their prescribed textbooks. Governments at all levels should invest in public libraries and ensure that educational resources are accessible to learners

across the country.

Technology, which is often blamed for the decline in reading, can also become part of the solution. E-books, educational websites, digital libraries and audiobooks provide convenient and affordable access to learning materials. Young people should be encouraged to use digital platforms not only for entertainment but also for education and self-development.



Students reading in a Library

Sports

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

Multi-billion naira NPFL sponsorship deal expected after new chairman's appointment

The Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) is on the verge of securing a major sponsorship deal worth several billions of naira, with the announcement expected to coincide with the unveiling of a new chairman for the league.

A senior official of the National Sports Commission (NSC), who spoke to BSN Sports on condition of anonymity, disclosed that discussions surrounding a new sponsorship package are at an advanced stage and that the deal is expected to provide a significant financial boost to the domestic top-flight league.

The development comes amid a major leadership shake-up within Nigerian football following the reported mass

resignation of Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) President Ibrahim Musa Gusau, General Secretary Mohammed Sanusi and members of the NFF Executive Committee.

The leadership crisis has created uncertainty around the administration of the NPFL, which has already entered the new season and is scheduled to continue with Matchday 2 this weekend.

Former NPFL Chairman Gbenga Elegbeleye previously secured a three-year sponsorship agreement reportedly worth \$2.5 million annually, amounting to \$7.5 million over the duration of the contract.

The latest sponsorship package is expected to surpass previous financial commitments

and provide additional resources for improving the organisation, commercial value and overall standard of the NPFL.

Speaking exclusively to BSN Sports, the NSC source said the sponsorship announcement would follow shortly after the appointment of the new NPFL chairman.

"Let me reveal this to you. As soon as the new league chairman is unveiled, a league sponsor that will bring in billions of naira will also be unveiled to boost the standard of the league," the source said.

The anticipated development could provide a significant financial lifeline for the NPFL at a crucial period, with stakeholders increasingly calling for stronger commercial partner-



THE NIGERIA PREMIER FOOTBALL LEAGUE (NPFL) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

ships and improved investment in the domestic game.

The identity of the prospec-

tive sponsor and the precise financial value of the proposed agreement are expected to be

made public when the new NPFL leadership is formally unveiled.

FIFA orders immediate freeze on NFF elective congress as joint mission heads to Abuja

FIFA and the Confederation of African Football (CAF) have officially ordered the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) to suspend its elective congress scheduled for September 27 in Lafia, Nasarawa State.

The decision follows a massive governance collapse after NFF President Ibrahim Gusau, General Secretary Mohammed Sanusi, and multiple Executive Committee members abruptly resigned amid growing public outrage over national team failures, including the Super Eagles missing the 2026 World Cup and the Super Falcons failing to reach the 2027 World Cup.

In a letter sent to NFF Deputy General Secretary Emmanuel Ikpe, FIFA's Chief Member Associations Officer Elkhan Mammadov confirmed that global football bodies are evaluating the legal, administrative, and governance implications of the leadership vacuum before allowing any further electoral decisions to proceed.

The immediate implication of this ruling is a complete halt

to all official campaign activities, candidate screenings, and electoral preparation nationwide, freezing the political machinery of Nigerian football to preserve the current status quo.

This intervention opens the door for FIFA and CAF to deploy a joint fact-finding mission to Abuja to hold talks with the NFF secretariat, electoral committees, and government officials from the National Sports Commission.

Depending on their findings, global authorities may either order a restructured electoral timeline or appoint a Normalisation Committee to temporarily manage Nigerian football operations, rewrite the federation's statutes, and run a fresh, transparent election.



NFF PRESIDENT IBRAHIM GUSAU

While the directive temporarily stabilizes administrative control under Deputy General Secretary Emmanuel Ikpe, it prolongs institutional un-

certainty for domestic leagues, national team coaching contracts, and upcoming international fixtures during a crucial transition period.

International Friendly: Nigeria battles Russia in Nizhny Novgorod on October 6

Nigeria will take on Russia for the second time in 16 months when the two sides meet in an international friendly at the Nizhny Novgorod Stadium on

Tuesday, 6 October 2026.

The fixture has been confirmed by Nigeria's FIFA Match Agent, Jairo Pachon of Eurodatasports.

The Super Eagles and Russia

previously played out a 1-1 draw in a friendly at Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium on 6 June 2025.

The upcoming encounter in Nizhny Novgorod will mark their first meeting since that result.

CAFCC: Seychelles government drags CAF to court

The Seychelles government has threatened legal action against the Confederation of African Football (CAF) following the cancellation of the Confederation Cup fixture between PTL Bazar Brothers and DR Congo's DC Virunga.

According to Seychelles authorities, PTL Bazar Brothers were prevented from travelling to the Democratic Republic of Congo due to health concerns associated with the reported Ebola outbreak.

The Seychelles side claimed that CAF was formally informed about the situation approximately two weeks before the scheduled first-leg encounter.

Authorities also proposed that the match be moved to a neutral venue, with Tanzania reportedly suggested as an al-

ternative location.

However, the Seychelles government alleged that its concerns and proposals were ignored, while CAF maintained that PTL Bazar Brothers should travel to DR Congo and honour the fixture.

PTL subsequently did not leave Seychelles for the match, resulting in the fixture against DC Virunga failing to take place as scheduled yesterday.

The Seychelles authorities have now indicated their readiness to challenge CAF through legal means, insisting that the decision not to travel was based on legitimate health and safety concerns.

The development could now trigger a legal dispute between the Seychelles government and CAF over the handling of the Confederation Cup fixture and the safety of players and officials.



SEYCHELLES TEAM



SHEHU DIKKO

NSC allegedly plots 36 FA Chairmen forced removal in total football reforms plan

A major shake-up could be looming in Nigerian football, as a source has alleged that the Shehu Dikko-led National Sports Commission (NSC) is considering a plan to force all 36 State Football As-

sociation chairmen to resign as part of an ambitious restructuring of football administration.

The alleged plan reportedly comes on the heels of the mass resignations within the Gusau-led NFF, raising fresh questions about whether a wider restructuring of Nigerian football

is now underway.

If confirmed, the move would represent a dramatic intervention in the existing football structure and could fundamentally alter the balance of power between the NSC, NFF and State Football Associations.

However, the allegation re-

mains unconfirmed, and no official NSC statement has announced such a directive.

The key question now is whether this is a genuine reform agenda designed to rebuild Nigerian football or a calculated attempt to take control of its entire administrative structure.

SPORTS



SUPER EAGLES OF NIGERIA

AFCON 2027 Qualifier: Crisis rocks Super Eagles group opponent, FA President reportedly faces arrest warrant

The President of the Guinea-Bissau Football Federation, Carlos Alberto Mendez Teixeira, has reportedly become the subject of legal proceedings over allegations including money laundering, embezzlement, forgery and the use of forged documents.

According to French in-

vestigative journalist Romain Molina, an arrest warrant has reportedly been issued against the football administrator in connection with the allegations.

Molina disclosed the development in a post on his official social media account, citing the alleged legal action against the Guinea-Bissau football federation chief.

However, the allegations have not been independently confirmed by major international news agencies or an official statement from Guinea-Bissau's judicial authorities.

Lopes should therefore be presumed innocent unless and until a court establishes otherwise.

The development comes at a

sensitive time for Guinea-Bissau football, with the country's football federation facing increased scrutiny following recent issues surrounding its national teams.

Guinea Bissau will compete in group L of the 2027 African Cup of Nations qualifiers with Nigeria's Super Eagles and Madagascar.

NFF Congress rejects Normalization Committee, proposes 3-6 months caretaker arrangement ahead of elections

The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) Congress has backed comprehensive reforms of Nigerian football but insisted that the process must be conducted in accordance with Nigerian law, the NFF Statutes and applicable FIFA and CAF regulations.

In a reform proposal dated September 2026, the Congress said the resignation of the NFF Executive Committee and General Secretary has created a serious governance vacuum, but argued that the development does not dissolve the Federation or remove the constitutional authority of Congress.

The Congress said existing provisions of the NFF Statutes provide a mechanism for addressing the vacancies through an Extraordinary Congress. It therefore proposed a sequence that would begin with the activation of the appropriate Congress, followed by a review

of the Statutes and Electoral Code, verification of electoral constituencies and stakeholder structures, and ultimately the conduct of elections.

The proposal also calls for FIFA and CAF to provide technical assistance, recognition and oversight without replacing the NFF's constitutional institutions.

According to the Congress, a Normalisation Committee should only be considered if FIFA formally determines that the existing statutory process cannot lawfully or practically function.

The Congress said it supports far-reaching reforms covering governance, league administration, commercialisation, funding, infrastructure, player welfare, legislation and football development.

It stressed, however, that the reform process should itself comply with the principles it seeks to promote, including

legality, institutional continuity, democratic representation, transparency, accountability and football autonomy.

The proposed framework covers eight broad areas: governance and institutional reform; league development and commercialisation; sports funding and infrastructure; elections and handover; implementation and monitoring; and the continuation of unfinished reforms.

The Congress recommended that the existing NFF Statutes and lawful football institutions serve as the starting point for the reform process.

It also argued that a reform framework should not independently amend the NFF Statutes, alter Congress membership, appoint or remove officials, establish a Normalisation Committee or interfere with the electoral process.

Such decisions, it said,

should remain with the institutions empowered to make them under the NFF's constitutional framework.

The Congress endorsed principles including football autonomy, democratic representation, inclusion, transparency, accountability and sustainability.

It acknowledged the role of government in supporting football through public resources, infrastructure and legislation but warned that financial or legislative support should not translate into control over the NFF's internal administration.

The proposal recommends transparent agreements, procurement procedures, independent audits and regular reporting for public funding and infrastructure projects.

It also calls for legislative reform to proceed alongside, rather than become a prerequisite for, the NFF electoral process.

Six female enthusiasts complete NIS basic coaching course

It was a moment of pride, joy and fulfilment as six female sports enthusiasts successfully completed their basic coaching programme at the National Institute for Sports (NIS), following their sponsorship by the Oyo State Pillar of Sports, Mr. Temitope Ademola Obideyi.

The beneficiaries, selected irrespective of their states of origin or current locations, emerged as certified coaches after completing their national diplomal, marking another significant milestone in Obideyi's commitment to empowering women and strengthening the human capacity required for sustainable sports development.

The newly trained coaches are Anthony Esther Ngozi (Football), Sobulo Omolara Mondinat (Football), Yusuf Adejoke Basirat (Handball), Adenaike

Ogunayo Ayomide (Football), Shittu Medinat Aderonke (Kung Fu), and Amos Titilayo Tope (Basketball).

For the graduates, the completion of the programme represents more than the acquisition of certificates; it is the beginning of a new professional journey and an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the development of young athletes in their respective sports.

Speaking after their graduation, the coaches expressed deep appreciation and excitement over the opportunity to receive professional training at one of Nigeria's foremost sports institutions. They described the sponsorship as a life-changing opportunity that has equipped them with valuable knowledge, skills and renewed confidence to pursue their coaching ambitions.

U-23 AFCON 2027 Qualifiers: Comoros withdraw from competition

The Comoros Football Federation has withdrawn its U-23 national team from the qualifiers for the 2027 Africa U-23 Cup of Nations, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

The decision comes despite the federation having initially confirmed its participation in the competition and taking part in the official qualifying draw.

The withdrawal is reportedly linked to the federation's ongoing

financial difficulties, which have continued to affect its football activities. Comoros' decision means the country will no longer participate in the qualifying campaign as preparations begin for the race to secure places at the 2027 U-23 AFCON.

The competition will serve as a pathway for Africa's top U-23 teams to compete for qualification to the Olympic football tournament

CAF AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS K.E.T.Z.UG. 2027	
QUALIFIERS	
PAMOJA 2027	
DRAW POTS	
POT 1	POT 2
MOROCCO	CAPE VERDE
SENEGAL	GHANA
NIGERIA	GUINEA
ALGERIA	GABON
EGYPT	UGANDA
CÔTE D'IVOIRE	ANGOLA
TUNISIA	BENIN
CAMBODIA	YEMEN
CONGO DR	MOZAMBIQUE
MALI	MADAGASCAR
SOUTH AFRICA	EQUATORIAL GUINEA
BURKINA FASO	COMOROS
POT 3	POT 4
KENYA	YIMHAWI
LIBYA	GUINEA-BISSAU
TANZANIA	CONGO
NIGER	CENTRAL AFRICAN R.
MAURITANIA	LIBERIA
THE GAMBIA	RUWANDA
SUDAN	ETHIOPIA
SIERRA LEONE	LESOTHO
NAMIBIA	BOTSWANA
TOGO	SOUTH SUDAN
MALAWI	ERITREA
RWANDA	SOMALIA