Tinubu expands campaign tour to 20 locations, targets entire North-West

As APC intensifies mobilisation ahead of 2027 polls

AGHEDO IYOBOR

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu has expanded his 2027 re-election campaign itinerary from 12 states to 19 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), signalling an intensified mobilisation drive by the All Progressives Congress (APC) ahead of next year's presidential election.

The revised campaign timetable, released by the APC National Publicity Secretary, Felix Morka, lists 20 locations where the President is expected to personally participate in rallies between October 24, 2026 and January 13, 2027.

The party has scheduled 37 rallies across the 36 states and the FCT, with Tinubu expected to personally attend 20, while other APC leaders will represent him at the remaining engagements.

Under the initial arrangement, Tinubu was expected to attend rallies in only 12 states, leaving other campaign engagements to party leaders.

However, the revised timetable has expanded his personal campaign trail to include Katsina, Taraba, Abuja, Gusau in Zamfara State, Owerri in Imo State and Ilorin in Kwara State.

Akwa Ibom, Jigawa and Kebbi, where the President has already participated in rallies, have also been formally incorporated into the revised list.

Explaining the adjustment, the APC said the expansion reflected Tinubu's determination to meet voters personally, appreciate their support and seek their votes ahead of the 2027 election.

The North-West accounts for the largest regional concentration of Tinubu's campaign engagements, with all

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The Nigerian OBSERVER

That The People May Know

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Orhionmwon sets for electricity revolution

25 years of darkness set to end

RICHARD EWEKA

ABUDU

Orhionmwon Local Government Area of Edo State is set for a major infrastructural breakthrough as Governor Monday Okpebholo is expected to flag off a landmark electricity project today,

Friday, November 20, 2026, at Obozogbe Niro Community.

The project, which is expected to connect several communities in the area to the national electricity grid, offers renewed hope to residents who have endured prolonged power outages, with some communities reportedly without public electricity supply for as long as 25 years.

Governor Okpebholo has demonstrated his administration's commitment to the project by awarding the contract and approving an initial payment representing 70 per cent of its total cost.

The electricity project will commence from Benin City, pass through Evbuarue Community and extend to Ugo-Niyekeorhionmwon, covering communities along the designated corridor.

The intervention is expected to stimulate economic activities, revive small and medium-scale businesses, attract investments, create employment opportunities and improve the living conditions of residents.

For decades, the absence of electricity has remained a major obstacle to the economic development of Orhionmwon, limiting commercial activities, discouraging investors and forcing many residents, particularly youths, to seek better opportunities in urban centres.

The anticipated restoration of electricity is therefore being regarded as a significant step towards reversing the trend, opening up the area for economic expansion and improving its competitiveness within Edo State.

Speaking ahead of the flag-off, the Executive Chairman of Orhionmwon Local Government Council, Hon. Thompson Osagie, described the project as a historic milestone in the development of the area.

Osagie commended Governor Okpebholo for what he described as the political will and commitment to addressing one of the most enduring infrastructural challenges

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Okpebholo takes APC campaign to three Benin markets, woos traders

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, on Thursday led the All Progressives Congress (APC) campaign train to three major markets in Benin City, seeking traders' support and votes for the party's candidates in the January 2027 general elections.

The markets visited were Igun Spare Parts Market, Agbado Market and James Watt Market, all in Edo South Senatorial District.

The governor was accompanied by his deputy, Dennis Idahosa; APC Deputy State Chairman, Sylvester Aigboboh; State Secretary, Lawrence Okah; and other senior government officials and party leaders.

Addressing traders at Igun Spare Parts Market, Okpebholo appreciated their support for his administration and assured them that the government remained committed to improving the welfare of residents, irrespective of their ethnic or social backgrounds.

He urged the traders to sustain their support for the APC and President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, stressing that continued political support would enable the government to consolidate its development programmes.

At Agbado Market, the governor expressed concern over the recent explosion at the market and assured traders that his administration would work with relevant stakeholders to prevent a recurrence.

CONTINUES ON PG 2



ADDRESSING TRADERS:
Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpeholo addressing traders at the popular James Watt market in Benin City.
PHOTO: OKONDOH TALLE EBOSE

Edo constitutes taskforce on development control, environmental issues —Pg 2

CBN, NNPC seal deal to boost Forex inflows, target 3m barrels daily oil production —Pg 3

Survivors of Uganda's deadly landslide seek justice at the UN —Pg 14

Lagos SWAN congratulates Enakhena on his appointment to NFF normalisation committee —Pg 22

NEWS



APC CAMPAIGN:
L-R: Deputy Governor of Edo State, Dennis Idahosa, Governor Monday Okpeholo, Deputy State Chairman APC Sylvester Aigboboh, Secretary State APC, Lawrence Okah and Chief of Staff to Edo State Governor Yakubu Musa at Agbado market to seek for votes for party's candidate. PHOTO: OKONDOH TALLE EBOSE



APC CAMPAIGN:
Governor Monday Okpeholo acknowledged cheers from traders at James Watt market during the visit of APC campaign train to the market. PHOTO: OKONDOH TALLE EBOSE

Orhionmwon sets for electricity...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

confronting the people.

He said the project would have far-reaching benefits for present and future generations, urging residents and other stakeholders to support its successful execution.

The council chairman has consequently called on traditional rulers, political leaders, community leaders, sons and daughters of Orhionmwon, women, youths and other stakeholders to turn out en masse for the historic flag-off ceremony.

The event, scheduled for Obozogbe Niro Community, is expected to mark the beginning of a new phase in the development of Orhionmwon, with electricity serving as a catalyst for industrial growth, commercial expansion and improved social welfare.

For communities that have lived in darkness for decades, Friday's flag-off represents more than the commencement of an infrastructure project. It is a promise of renewed economic opportunities and a significant step towards restoring the area's development prospects.

Tinubu expands campaign tour...

seven states in the geopolitical zone featuring in his itinerary.

They are Kaduna, Jigawa, Kebbi, Katsina, Kano, Zamfara and Sokoto.

The North-East and South-South have three states each, while the North-Central, South-West and South-East have two states apiece.

Tinubu's North-West campaign engagements began in Kaduna, which hosted the APC's official campaign flag-off on October 24. He subsequently visited Dutse, Jigawa State, on November 10 and Birnin Kebbi, Kebbi State, on November 17.

The President is scheduled to return to the region on December 2 for a rally in Katsina, followed by Kano on December 17.

Gusau, Zamfara State, is scheduled to host him on December 28, while Sokoto will receive the President on January 5, 2027.

The concentration of engagements in the North-West underscores the political importance of the region to the APC's efforts to consolidate its support base ahead of the presidential election.

The remaining major engagements on the President's personal campaign itinerary include:

December 2 — Katsina
December 17 — Kano
December 19 — Jalingo, Taraba
December 21 — Abuja
December 28 — Gusau, Zamfara
December 30 — Owerri, Imo
January 4 — Yola, Adamawa
January 5 — Sokoto
January 8 — Ilorin, Kwara
January 11 — Asaba, Delta
January 13 — Lagos (campaign finale).

The revised timetable also changes some earlier arrangements. The Sokoto rally, initially scheduled for December 5, has been moved to January 5, while the Lagos campaign finale has shifted from January 9 to January 13.

Party sources attribute the expansion to appeals by state governors for the President to personally commission completed projects and participate in political engagements in their respective states.

The adjustment is also taking place against the backdrop of renewed political activities across northern Nigeria, particularly the growing visibility of former Vice President Atiku Abubakar in opposition politics.

With nearly 63 per cent of Tinubu's votes in the 2023 presidential election reportedly coming from the 19 northern states, retaining the region's support remains a major consideration in the APC's 2027 electoral calculations.

Edo constitutes taskforce on development control, environmental issues

Richard Eweka

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has approved the constitution of a Taskforce on Development Control and Environmental Issues to strengthen environmental sanitation, regulate development activities and ensure compliance with environmental laws across the state.

The taskforce, according to a Government Special Announcement issued on Tuesday by the Secretary to the State Government, Umar Musa Ikhilor, Esq., will be responsible for monitoring and regulating the activities of quarries, borrow pits and asphalt plants, including ensuring proper registration, documentation and payment of applicable taxes, royalties, fees and other statutory charges.

It will also carry out enforcement activities on behalf of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainability, while addressing street trading on roads, walkways and other public spaces.

Other responsibilities include ensuring regular clearing and maintenance of drains to prevent flooding, identifying and removing illegal structures in accordance with existing laws, and collaborating with the Edo State Waste Management Board to promote effective house-to-house sanitation and proper waste disposal.

The taskforce is equally mandated to ensure that industries, companies, hotels and other business establishments comply with relevant environmental regulations, particularly in addressing noise pollution and other environmental concerns.

Hon. Ikhide Matthew has been appointed Chairman of the taskforce, while Segun Oloruntoba will serve as Director of Operations. Other members are expected to be nominated by the state government in due course.

The government said the taskforce would work closely with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainability and the Edo State Waste Management Board to ensure effective implementation of its mandate.

Residents, business operators and other stakeholders have been urged to cooperate with the taskforce and comply with applicable environmental laws in the collective interest of a cleaner, safer and more orderly Edo State.

Okpebholo meets New Benin Market traders, promises end to over-taxation

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has promised traders at the New Benin Market in Benin City that their complaints about excessive taxation will be settled soon.

The governor made the pledge on Wednesday while addressing traders and market leaders during a rally the All Progressives Congress (APC) held at the market.

The governor recalled that he visited the market during his campaign and promised to return if elected. He also said he had pledged to tar the access roads within and around the market.

"I remember when I was contesting, I came here and sat down here that very day. I told you that when you vote for me, I will come back. I am back now," he said.

He said traders had earlier complained of unstable electricity supply, and that he would direct the Edo State Electrification Agency (EDSEA) to find the cause of the problem.

"If it is a transformer, we will get you a brand new transformer. What we are after is to provide you with a good life. Your vote was for me to provide you with a good life," he said.

On taxation, the Chairman of the Mother Union in the market, Mr Taiwo Aideyan appealed to the governor to reduce the levies imposed on traders. Okpebholo responded that he would meet the market leadership on Thursday in his office, together with the Chairman of the Edo State Board of Internal Revenue.

"We are going to resolve the issue of tax by Thursday in my office with your leaders and the state chairman of the Board of Internal Revenue, so that your leaders can tell us what you can pay.

"We are going to put it to rest. The tax issue will die completely, so that you can do your business very well," he said.

Okpebholo takes APC campaign to three Benin markets...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

He also appealed to them to support the APC at both state and federal levels.

At James Watt Market, traders raised concerns over what they described as excessive taxation and its impact on their businesses.

Responding, Okpebholo promised to address the complaints, directing officials of the Edo State Internal Revenue Service to engage the traders and harmonise the tax regime to ensure fairness.

"We want a situation where both sides benefit," he said.

The governor said his administration had recorded significant progress in tackling insecurity, particularly cultism and kidnapping, which he identified as major challenges confronting the state when he assumed office.

He acknowledged the support of President Tinubu in the fight against criminality, noting that security had improved considerably across Edo State in the last two years.

On infrastructure, Okpebholo highlighted the Ramat Park flyover, the ongoing Adesuwa Junction flyover and several completed and ongoing road projects as evidence of his administration's commitment to development.

He reiterated that the government would continue to pursue empowerment initiatives and other programmes aimed at improving the living conditions of the people.

Speaking on behalf of the traders, Simon Obiekwe of Igun Spare Parts Market, Prince Anthony Ezinwanme of James Watt Market and Arthur Robinson of Agbado Market commended the governor for ongoing infrastructure projects and other interventions.

They specifically mentioned the Ramat Park flyover, the ongoing Adesuwa Junction flyover and the rehabilitation of damaged sections of Sapele Road, saying the projects had strengthened the governor's relationship with traders.

CBN, NNPC seal deal to boost forex inflows, target 3m barrels daily oil production

AGHEDO IYOBOR

ABUJA

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd.) have formalised a strategic partnership aimed at strengthening foreign exchange inflows, improving the management of oil and gas revenues, attracting investments into the energy sector and promoting macroeconomic stability.

The agreement, sealed through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Wednesday at the CBN headquarters in Abuja, is also expected to support Nigeria's ambition of raising crude oil production from the current 1.8 million barrels per day to three million barrels per day.

The MoU was signed by CBN Governor, Olayemi Cardoso, and NNPC Group Chief Executive Officer, Bashir Bayo Ojulari.

The partnership provides a structured framework for closer institutional cooperation in managing oil and gas proceeds, facilitating energy financing, strengthening payment systems and improving the country's foreign exchange position.

Speaking at the ceremony, Cardoso said the agreement would formalise the long-standing relationship between both institutions and establish a more coordinated approach to addressing operational and financial challenges in the oil and gas industry.

He explained that the CBN, as custodian of NNPC's key operational foreign currency accounts, occupies a critical position in ensuring the timely, secure and transparent settlement of oil and gas proceeds into the Federation Account and other designated government accounts.

According to him, efficient account management, funds transfer and liquidity support are essential to ensuring predictable foreign exchange inflows and sustaining macroeconomic stability.

Cardoso noted that improved management of petroleum export earnings would strengthen the country's capacity to meet fiscal obligations and support monetary policy objectives, particularly during periods of economic uncertainty.

He disclosed that the agreement would cover the monetisation of oil and gas assets, energy financing, faster operational approvals, payment automation, digital innovation, regulatory alignment, cybersecurity, risk management, information sharing and capacity development.

The CBN governor further said the apex bank would deploy its convening power to attract international financial institutions and investment partners capable of supporting the development of Nigeria's vast natural gas resources.

He, however, clarified that the MoU did not establish an entirely new relationship but provided a formal framework for cooperation that had existed between both institutions for decades.

In her remarks, CBN Deputy Governor, Operations, Emem Usoro, disclosed that Nigeria's gross external reserves had exceeded $55 billion, attributing the improvement largely to increased oil production and sustained diaspora remittances.

She expressed confidence that the new partnership would help preserve and strengthen the reserves through improved export earnings, better management of foreign exchange proceeds and increased inflows from the oil and gas sector.

Usoro added that the agreement would provide clearer governance arrangements for international trade, energy financing, liquidity support and risk management.

On his part, NNPC Group Chief Executive Officer, Ojulari, described the agreement as a defining moment in the relationship between the national oil company and the country's monetary authority.

He said the partnership would provide the institutional structure required to bring energy and finance together in addressing the challenges confronting Nigeria's petroleum industry.

According to him, the collaboration would strengthen the flow of export proceeds into the Nigerian economy, improve access to energy financing, address foreign exchange challenges affecting trade and create opportunities for NNPC to raise capital against its balance sheet and assets.

Ojulari also said the initiative would support efforts to unlock Nigeria's enormous gas resources and increase crude oil production to three million barrels per day.

He recalled that NNPC faced significant financial challenges when he assumed office in April 2025, including liquidity constraints, troubled projects, substantial loan obligations and difficulties associated with the country's refinery operations.

He expressed optimism that closer collaboration with the CBN would improve financial planning, unlock investment opportunities and strengthen the company's capacity to execute strategic energy projects.

Earlier, NNPC Group Chief Financial Officer, Adedapo Segun, said the MoU would replace the previous practice of addressing financial matters through irregular, transaction-specific arrangements with a more predictable and coordinated institutional framework.

He explained that improved financial coordination between the two organisations would help attract the investments required to expand crude oil production and strengthen the country's position in the international energy market.



SEALING UP OPERATIONS:
From left: Zonal Coordinator, Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC), South West Zonal Office Lagos, Dr Olubunmi Otti; Deputy Director, FCCPC, Mr Marvin Nadah; Director Operations, Meridian Park Estate Ltd, Mr Uchenna Eze and others, during the Sealing up of Meridian Park Estate Ltd, over failure to comply with the Compliance notice given by the commission in Lagos on Thursday.

No ambition is worth Nigerian blood

KADUNA

• Shari'ah Council warns ahead of 2027

The Supreme Council for Shari'ah in Nigeria (SCSN) has called on Nigerians to reject electoral violence, religious and ethnic divisions, and political intolerance ahead of the 2027 general elections, declaring that no political ambition is worth the blood of innocent citizens.

The Council also urged eligible voters to obtain their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs), verify their registration details and participate actively in the electoral process by voting for candidates and political parties of their choice.

The appeal was contained in a statement issued on Wednesday, November 18, 2026, and signed by the Council's Secretary-General, Prof. Ahmad Bello Dogarawa.

The Council stressed that elections should be regarded as a constitutional process through which citizens freely choose their leaders, rather than a battle between political opponents.

It warned against allowing political differences to degenerate into hatred, intimidation, destruction of property and bloodshed.

"Political differences must not be allowed to breed hatred, violence or the destruction of property. We urge eligible Nigerians to obtain their PVCs, verify their voter registration details and turn out to vote for candidates and political parties of their choice," the statement said.

It declared emphatically: "No political ambition is worth the blood of any Nigerian."

The Council further cautioned citizens against apathy, intimidation, inducement and political manipulation, urging them not to surrender their democratic responsibilities.

The SCSN called on political parties, candidates, campaign organisations and supporters to conduct their activities

NLC, TUC reconcile, vow united front for workers

AGHEDO IYOBOR

BENIN CITY

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC) have resolved their differences over the Federal Government's N70,000 transport allowance for workers, pledging renewed unity in the defence of workers' interests.

The two labour centres announced the resolution on Wednesday at a joint press conference in Abuja, declaring their commitment to work together in protecting Nigerian workers, pensioners and other vulnerable groups.

In a joint statement signed by NLC President, Joe Ajaero, and TUC President-General, Festus Osifo, the unions acknowledged that their disagreement had played out publicly but stressed that their shared history and collective responsibility to workers must take precedence over institutional differences.

"The unity of the Nigerian working class is far greater than any disagreement between leaderships. Our common struggle, shared history, and collective responsibility to defend workers' rights must never be sacrificed on the altar of misunderstanding or institutional differences," they stated.

The unions described the disagreement as a family misunderstanding, which was amicably resolved following the intervention of former leaders of both labour centres.

How The Dispute Started

The disagreement stemmed from the N70,000 monthly transport allowance approved by President Bola Tinubu for workers across different levels of government for an initial six-month period.

The intervention followed an October 27 conciliation meeting between the Federal Government and the NLC, which the TUC did not attend.

Turn your allowance to wealth, NDIC tells corps members

KEBONKWU RUTH

ABUJA

The Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation, NDIC, has sensitised members of the National Youth Service Corps, NYSC, on money management, smart savings and financial discipline to help them turn their monthly allowance into financial freedom.

The sensitisation programme, tagged "NDIC in Your Camp 2026," is being held across orientation camps nationwide to deepen financial inclusion, build confidence in the banking system and promote disciplined savings among young Nigerians entering the workforce.

In Rivers and Delta States, about 6,000 corps members participated in the programme, while thousands more have benefitted in Kogi, Oyo, Anambra and other states.

Officials of the Corporation urged corps members to embrace a "Smart Life" instead of a "Soft Life" — by budgeting, saving before spending, and giving every naira a job.

They advised corps members to set aside part of their allowance for savings and emergencies before spending, noting that saving and investing are teammates, not twins.

They also warned against spending on expensive phones, hairstyles and luxury items while neglecting savings, describing such lifestyle as living a false life.

They cautioned corps members against keeping large sums of money at home and investing in unregulated schemes and Ponzi schemes that promise unusually high returns within a short period.

They also warned against sharing sensitive banking details, including Bank Verification Numbers, National Identification Numbers and ATM PINs, with unauthorised persons.

HON. JUSTICE MOMODU OHIHAN RAJE

EDO STATE JUDICIARY

March 1, 1933 - November 18, 2016



10 YEARS IN MIND

In Loving Memory of My Beloved Husband, Father and Grandfather

You were an exemplary and loving husband, a caring and wonderful father who lived his life in simplicity and truth. Amiable, God-fearing, warm, sociable and good to all who came in contact with you. We are proud to call you husband and father, and we strive to live up to your legacy.

You served your State meritoriously from the Midwest State Judiciary, to the Bendel Judiciary, and to the Edo State Judiciary, from your early beginnings as a Magistrate up to your elevation to the Bench as a Judge.

You mentored many Judges and took up the responsibility of retired Judges welfare. You also served at various times as Chairman, Edo State Sports Council, and Chairman, Edo State Pilgrims Board.

Your memory will always be cherished by us.

Continue to rest in the bosom of God, till we meet to part no more.

Your Loving Wife,
Mrs. LATIFAT TINUOLA RAJE
Children and Grandchildren

How I wrote UTME eight times before gaining admission – Kwara education commissioner

ILORIN

The Kwara State Commissioner for Education and Human Capital Development, Dr Lawal Olohungbebe, has revealed that he sat for the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) eight times before eventually gaining admission into the University of Maiduguri.

Olohungbebe disclosed this while recounting his academic journey in a video obtained from the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board's X handle on Thursday, which he said spanned eight years, from 1997 to 2005, before he finally secured admission into the university.

Reflecting on his experience, the commissioner said his repeated attempts did not stop him from pursuing his educational ambitions, adding that he has risen to become the Kwara State Commissioner for Education and Chairman of Commissioners of Education in Nigeria.

"I wrote UTME eight times before I passed. From 1997 to 2005, and to God be the glory, I'm the commissioner today and the chairman of all commissioners of education in Nigeria," he said.

The commissioner also cautioned prospective university students against accepting admission offers outside the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board's (JAMB) Central Admissions Processing System (CAPS), insisting that the platform remains the recognised channel for confirming admission offers.

"Anything that falls out of CAPS, forget about it, it's not going to happen. It is only JAMB, through CAPS, that can offer you admission that you can be rest assured that yes, you have admission. Anything outside that, forget about it, it's not going to work," Olohungbebe stated.

Speaking about his academic qualifications, he disclosed that he gained admission into the University of Maiduguri, where he studied Sociology and Anthropology.

He subsequently studied Social Work and Community Development at Ladoke Akintola University of Technology before proceeding to obtain a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree. He also earned a PhD in Community Development and Adult Education from Bayero University, Kano.

Olohungbebe's account highlights his prolonged struggle to gain university admission and his subsequent academic progression, which he described as a journey that eventually led him into public service.

His experience also serves as a reminder to prospective students that setbacks in the pursuit of education do not necessarily mean the end of their academic ambitions.

In an official statement issued by the Media Aide to the NDC governorship candidate, Mr Sampson Ukwu, the victim list was confirmed as Onovo Donald Ekene, Ngene Godwin Madueke, Ogbodo Gloria, Onovo Victor, Maduabuchi Ugwu, Nnaemeka Nelson, Chinonso Nwagbara and Obinna Daniel Owo.

The attack occurred during the party's state-wide monthly ward meeting at Ihuani Awkunanaw, the hometown of the NDC governorship candidate for the 2027 election, Sir Christian Chinyeaka Ohaa.

Beyond the bodily harm inflicted on party members, the invading gunmen destroyed several party materials, canopies and plastic chairs at the venue.



NEWS CONFERENCE:
From left: Director General, African Democratic Congress (ADC) Enugu State Governorship Campaign Organization, Chief Walter Oji; ADC Enugu Deputy Governorship Candidate, Mrs Angela Dilioha; ADC Enugu State Governorship Candidate, Chief Obodoeze Chukwuma-Ocho and Secretary ADC Enugu,Comrade Adolphus Ude, during a news conference on the forthcoming Campaign Activities of the Party in Enugu on Thursday.

NAFDAC intercepts unregistered beverages, skin-lightening injections at Kano airport

KANO

The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control has intercepted 17 cartons of suspected unregistered beverages and skin-lightening and anti-ageing injections at the Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport, Kano.

According to a statement shared by the agency on Thursday, the interception followed a joint examination conducted at the Skyway Aviation Handling Company Plc Shed.

The products were discovered concealed within a 33-carton consignment declared as "personal effects" and transported aboard an Ethiopian Airlines flight that arrived the previous day.

NAFDAC said a physical examination revealed that "the products bore no NAFDAC registration numbers, while the consignment lacked the requisite import documentation."

It added that "the entire consignment was placed on hold in the custody of the Nigeria Customs Service."

The agency said the importer was subsequently invited for questioning and "a statement was obtained as part of the investigation."

NAFDAC noted that the products remained on hold pending further regulatory directives, adding that "their quality and authenticity have not yet been established."

The agency said it continued to strengthen surveillance and enforcement at Nigeria's entry points "to prevent the unlawful importation and circulation of unregistered, substandard and falsified regulated products and protect public health."

Court upholds Yahaya Bello's emergence as APC senatorial candidate

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja, on Thursday, dismissed a suit challenging the emergence of former Kogi State Governor, Yahaya Bello, as the All Progressives Congress candidate for the Kogi Central Senatorial District in the May 2026 primary election.

Justice Inyang Ekwo, in a judgment in Suit No. FHC/ABJ/CS/1085/2026, dismissed the suit filed by Momoh Obaro for failing to exhaust the internal dispute resolution mechanisms of the APC before approaching the court.

The judge also held that the documentary evidence tendered by the plaintiff was unsigned and therefore lacked probative value.

Obaro had sought a declaration that he was the authentic winner of the senatorial primary.

However, Justice Ekwo held that although the plaintiff petitioned the party's Appeal Committee, he failed to escalate his grievance to the National Working Committee as required by the party's constitution.

The judge said the failure to exhaust the prescribed internal remedies constituted a breach of a mandatory condition precedent to instituting the action.

The court also faulted the documents tendered by Obaro in support of his claims, noting that none of the results from the five local government areas in Kogi Central bore the signatures of the chairman or secretary of the electoral committee that conducted the primary.

Justice Ekwo described the documents as being of dubious origin and said they lacked evidential value.

"In law, an unsigned document is of no value. The documents are of dubious origin," the judge said.

Why I chose South Africa posting over Europe — Fani-Kayode

LAGOS

Nigeria's Ambassador to South Africa, Femi Fani-Kayode, has said he appealed to President Bola Tinubu to be posted to South Africa after he was initially assigned to a European country.

Fani-Kayode disclosed this during a dinner and reception organised in his honour by members of the Nigerian High Commission, Nigerian Consular Office and diplomatic community in Pretoria, following the presentation of his letters of credence to South African President Cyril Ramaphosa on November 13.

He shared a video of his speech on X on Wednesday.

Explaining his decision, he said, "I was initially posted to a European country, and I made an appeal to our president that I'd prefer to go to South Africa, which he graciously, you know, agreed to. That's why I find myself here."

He said he had started examining issues affecting Nigerians in South Africa from the time he received approval to take up the posting.

"From the time I was accepted and I was given the agrément to come to South Africa, that's when I started looking into some of the things that were going on here which touched and concerned members of our community," he said.

Fani-Kayode added, "I am here first and foremost to protect the interests of members of the Nigerian community in South Africa."

He explained that he considered his remarks important because of the growing dissatisfaction among some Nigerian political and business leaders over developments involving the Nigerian community in South Africa.

"The feeling that is being enunciated by a number of our leaders, particularly those in the Nigerian Senate and the Nigerian House of Assembly, and a number of other leaders from the private sector, about South Africa, are not that good," he said.

"Some have called for a complete break in diplomatic ties, which the Federal Government and the President has resisted. Some have called for sanctions," he added.

The ambassador also said he believed Nigeria and South Africa had an important role to play in the development of the African continent, urging both countries not to allow disagreements to undermine their relationship.

"It is important we recognise the fact that together, South Africa and Nigeria can actually help to move Sub-Saharan and Africa in general forward," he said.

"We must not allow any division. We must not allow any misunderstanding. We must not allow even any slight to pull us apart."

UNN to introduce random drug tests after deaths of four students

NSUKA

The University of Nigeria, Nsukka has said it will introduce random drug testing for students, including those living off campus, following the deaths of four students at an off-campus house party.

According to a statement posted on the school's Facebook page on Wednesday, the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Simon Ortuanya, disclosed this on Tuesday when he received a condolence delegation of traditional rulers led by the Chairman of the Enugu State Traditional Rulers Council, HRM Igwe Samuel Ikechukwu Asadu.

The university said the proposed measure would be implemented in partnership with the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, while its recently established Directorate of Community Relations would coordinate engagement with landlords and other community stakeholders.

Ortuanya said the university was also strengthening its existing safety measures and regulatory framework to protect students, regardless of where they lived.

He explained that the tests would be conducted randomly, without following a predictable pattern.

"Students of a particular department or faculty could be randomly selected for the test," he said.

The Vice-Chancellor said the university recognised the challenges of monitoring students living outside its campuses but expressed optimism that drug testing and closer collaboration with landlords would help address misconduct among students.

He urged students to learn from the tragedy, recalling that the university had prohibited formal sign-out celebrations and similar activities on its campuses in Nsukka, Enugu and Ituku-Ozalla since 2025.

"It is our collective responsibility to protect the lives and welfare of our students and preserve the sanity, sanctity and integrity of the University as a centre of learning," he said.

Ortuanya also said the university was cooperating with relevant government and security agencies investigating the house party incident and was awaiting the outcome of their investigations.

NEWS

Oyo trains healthcare workers to tackle childhood illnesses, prevent deaths

IBADAN

The Oyo State Primary Health Care Board has begun a nine-day training programme to strengthen healthcare workers' capacity to manage common childhood illnesses and reduce preventable deaths among children in the state.

The training themed 'Training of Trainers and Facilitating Skills Course on Integrated Management of Childhood Illness' is holding at Plaza De Aruna Hotel, Eleekara, Oyo.

The programme is designed to equip healthcare workers with the knowledge and practical skills to identify childhood illnesses early, administer appropriate treatment PHCN and refer children requiring specialised care.

The Commissioner for Information, Dotun Oyelade, disclosed this in a statement made available to journalists in Ibadan on Thursday.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the Executive Secretary of the board, Dr Muideen Olatunji, represented by the Director of Disease Control and Immunisation, Dr Festus Mustapha, reaffirmed the board's commitment to improving child health and strengthening primary healthcare delivery.

"Healthcare workers must be well equipped to recognise early signs of illness in children and respond appropriately," he said.

He added that timely diagnosis and treatment could prevent complications and save lives.

He explained that the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness strategy provides a comprehensive approach to treating common childhood conditions, noting that its effective implementation would improve the quality of care provided at health facilities across the state.

Olatunji urged participants to engage actively in the training and apply the knowledge acquired in their daily duties, stressing that the programme's success would depend largely on how effectively the skills were put into practice.

The State IMCI Programme Officer, Mrs Adepeju Mosunmade, also stressed the importance of adhering to the programme's guidelines when assessing and treating sick children.

She said proper assessment, accurate classification of illnesses and appropriate treatment were essential to preventing complications and childhood deaths.

Mosunmade highlighted the need for healthcare workers to identify danger signs in children, communicate effectively with caregivers, maintain accurate records and ensure the rational use of medicines while providing timely, evidence-based and compassionate care.

She also explained that the training-of-trainers component was designed to enable participants to transfer the knowledge and skills acquired to other healthcare workers, extending the programme's reach to more health facilities and communities.

The nine-day course features classroom sessions, practical demonstrations, case studies, group exercises, clinical simulations and facilitation techniques to equip participants with clinical knowledge and the teaching skills required to train others.

The training covers the management of common childhood illnesses, including malaria, pneumonia, diarrhoea and malnutrition, with emphasis on early detection, appropriate treatment, caregiver counselling, follow-up and referral in line with established guidelines.



CONFERENCE:
From left Vice President Kashim Shettima : Minister of Information and National Orientation Alhaji Muhammad Idris : President of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Dr. Ike Neliaku and others during the opening of the 13th World Public Relations Forum (WPRF), and 51st Africa Public Relations Association (APRA) Conference at the Transcorp Hilton Hotel in Abuja on Wednesday.

Kalu, NHIA boss seek investment to curb medical tourism

ABUJA

The Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Benjamin Kalu, and the Director-General of the National Health Insurance Authority, Dr Kelechi Ohiri, have called for sustained investment in Nigeria's health sector to reduce medical tourism and improve access to specialised treatment.

They made the call at the inauguration of a robotic surgery platform at Eleos Specialist Hospital, Abuja, the second of its kind in Northern Nigeria, according to a statement by the institution on Thursday.

Kalu, represented by the Deputy Chairman of the House Committee on Health Institutions, Olumuyiwa Adedayo, said investment in modern medical technology was essential to strengthening the country's healthcare infrastructure and enabling Nigerians to access advanced surgical procedures locally.

He said, "The commissioning of this Robotic Surgery Platform demonstrates what private-sector investment, professional expertise and commitment to healthcare development can achieve.

"We must encourage more Nigerian investors to support modern medical facilities so that our people can access advanced surgical procedures without having to travel abroad."

Similarly, Ohiri, represented by his Senior Special Adviser, Prof Chima Onoka, described the introduction of the technology as an important intervention in addressing medical tourism and retaining healthcare spending within the country.

Onoka said Nigeria lost billions of naira annually as patients travelled abroad for complex urological and minimally invasive procedures.

He said, "Every year, billions of naira leave our shores as Nigerians travel abroad for complex urologic and minimally invasive procedures.

"This capital flight deprives our local institutions of the resources needed to grow, while placing an unbearable financial burden on families who must pay for international travel, accommodation and foreign healthcare out-of-pocket.

"By bringing this robotic platform to Abuja, Eleos Specialist Hospital is directly addressing this leak. We are shifting the narrative from capital flight to capital retention and positioning Nigeria as a hub for inbound medical tourism across West Africa."

He added that robotic-assisted surgery could offer benefits such as reduced blood loss, fewer postoperative complications in appropriate cases and shorter hospital stays, while urging policymakers to strengthen health insurance coverage to make advanced treatment accessible to more Nigerians.

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Bayelsa CP seeks joint action against gender-based violence

YENAGOA

The Commissioner of Police in Bayelsa State, Ajao Adewale, has called for stronger collaboration among government agencies, traditional rulers, civil society organisations and other stakeholders to tackle gender-based violence and protect women and girls in the state.

Adewale made the call during a one-day stakeholders' workshop on Gender-Based Violence organised by the Bayelsa State Police Command through the Gender Unit of the State Criminal Investigation Department at the Command Officers' Mess, Yenagoa.

The workshop, which had the theme, "Together, We Can Stop Gender-Based Crimes in Bayelsa State," brought together representatives of the Ministry of Women, Children Affairs and Social Development, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, the International Federation of Women Lawyers, civil society organisations, traditional rulers and non-governmental organisations.

The police commissioner described gender-based violence as a serious violation of human rights and a threat to the wellbeing of families and society, insisting that its prevention should not be left to the police alone.

He said, " Gender-based violence constitutes a grave violation of human rights and our collective humanity. The abuse or destruction of a woman's dignity undermines the foundation of our families and society."

Adewale, who cited the popular saying, "If you educate a woman, you educate a nation," often attributed to Dr James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey, stressed the importance of protecting women as key contributors to societal development.

He added, " A crime against a woman is a crime against humanity. We must therefore work together to ensure that women and girls are protected from every form of violence, abuse and exploitation."

The CP reaffirmed the command's commitment to the prevention, investigation and prosecution of gender-based crimes, assuring victims and survivors of professional handling of their cases.

According to him, victims and survivors would be treated with dignity, compassion and professionalism, while efforts would be sustained to ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.

2027: IPC urges journalists to shun sensational reporting

YOLA

Barely two months before the 2027 general elections, the International Press Centre has cautioned journalists against sensational reporting, warning that such practices could undermine the country's democracy.

Speaking in Yola on Wednesday during a training session for over 30 journalists in Adamawa State on election coverage, the Executive Director of IPC, Lanre Arogundade, urged Nigerian journalists to uphold professionalism, fairness and balanced reporting before, during and after the 2027 general elections.

Arogundade, who was represented by the Programme Manager, Mrs Stella Nwofia, said the training was coming at a crucial time as the general elections approached.

He said, "The media had a crucial role to play in providing credible, inclusive and public-interest information before, during and after elections."

He called on media practitioners to change their approach to reporting political campaigns and party activities by focusing attention on issues that directly affected women, citizens and their expectations of their leaders.

He said, "The media played a critical role in shaping citizens' opinions on elections. Most people vote based on the media reports they read or listen to before elections."

He also emphasised the need to ensure that women, youths, persons with disabilities and other underrepresented groups were prominently featured in media reports.

Delivering a paper titled, "2027 General Election in the Context of Democratic and Accountability Reporting: Scanning the Electoral Environment and Reporting Citizens' Priority Concerns," Dr Shadrach Idi of the Department of Communication, Taraba State University, said journalists should focus on politicians' campaign promises to hold them accountable.

He said reporting citizens' priority concerns should be the hallmark of journalism, adding that such an approach would bring to the fore the challenges facing people in rural communities.

Also speaking, Dr Olusola Oludira, in a presentation titled, "Integrating Fact-Checking for Democratic and Accountability Reporting," urged journalists to verify information presented to them before publishing reports.

Crime On Focus

Edo security operatives arrest three suspected armed robbers, recover guns in Irrua

Richard Eweka

BENIN CITY

Security operatives in Edo State have arrested three suspected armed robbers and recovered three pump-action guns in Irrua, Esan Central Local Government Area, during a joint security operation aimed at preventing criminal activities ahead of the Yuletide season.

The operation, which covered parts of Edo South and Edo Central Senatorial Districts, involved the Nigerian Army, Edo State Security Corps (ESSC), Nigeria Police Force, the Special Security Squad, codenamed Operation Flush Out Kidnapping and Cultists, and other security agencies.

In Benin City, the joint team raided a suspected criminal hideout around Iwehen and Osawe streets, off Wire Road, before moving through Iyaro, Dawson, Akpakpava and Ikpoba Hill en route to Edo Central.

Led by the Principal Security Officer (PSO) to the Governor, with support from the Coordinator of the Special Security Squad, Aimolemen Idemudia, the team also conducted security operations in Akho-Irrua and neighbouring communities.

Acting on intelligence, the operatives stopped at Akho Junction and raided an abandoned building in a nearby forest, where they arrested three suspects and recovered the firearms.

One of the suspects, who identified himself as James, reportedly told the operatives that a man known as Mandela had invited them and positioned four of them at the location to wait until the market closed before carrying out their operation.

Mandela, however, reportedly escaped before the arrival of the security team. The other two arrested suspects were identified as Chinedu and Chukudi.

The suspects were handed over to the Police Area Command in Uromi for profiling and are expected to be transferred to the State Police Headquarters in Benin City for further investigation.

The security team also extended its show of force to Anetor Okito Street and Egbele in Uromi, Esan North-East Local Government Area.

Speaking on the exercise, Idemudia said the operation was designed to send a strong warning to criminal elements that the state would not tolerate criminal activities.

"Today's exercise is about a show of force. We received intelligence on the activities of some criminals, and we are ready for them. Criminal activities will no longer be tolerated anywhere in the state," he said.

He maintained that Edo had remained peaceful and that the security agencies were determined to sustain the situation, particularly during the festive season, following intelligence reports that some criminal elements were planning to regroup.

"We assure our people, both at home and in the diaspora, of a peaceful festive celebration free of crime," he added.

On the arrests, Idemudia said the suspects allegedly planned to rob traders and usually operated on market days. He expressed confidence that the fleeing leader would be apprehended through further investigations.

"We acted on intelligence, which led to the arrest of three persons who were prepared to rob traders. Their leader fled, but further investigation will certainly lead to him," he said.

Idemudia further noted that Governor Monday Okpebholo's administration had put necessary measures in place to consolidate the state's security gains and guarantee residents a peaceful festive season.

"Edo is peaceful and will remain peaceful now and through the festive period. All the necessary strategies are in place to ensure a peaceful atmosphere across the state," he assured.



A SUSPECT ARRESTED BY THE POLICE



SUSPECTS ARRESTED BY THE POLICE

Edo-born man bearing Canadian passport killed near Lagos Airport

Mike Osarogiagbon

LAGOS

A 58-year-old Edo-born man, Abraham Safety Osakpolor, has died after being hit by a moving vehicle along an expressway near the Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos.

Police said Osakpolor, born in Benin City, Edo State, on September 1, 1968 who held both Nigerian and Canadian passports, was knocked down on Friday, November 13, 2026, along the expressway leading away from the airport towards the Oshodi axis.

The Police Public Relations Officer of the Airport Police Command, ASP Mohammed Adeola, disclosed on Wednesday, November 18, 2026 that a Nigerian passport bearing number B51930694 and a mobile phone without a SIM card were initially recovered from the deceased's personal effects.

ASP Adeola also said the mortuary attendants subsequently discovered a Canadian passport bearing number AE763025 during a further search of his belongings.

Police said the victim was rushed to a hospital after the accident but was later pronounced dead as his remains have since been deposited in the hospital morgue.

The police said the motorist involved in the accident was immediately apprehended and would be charged to court.

However, the Command has appealed to members of the public to help locate the deceased's family, relatives and friends, following unsuccessful efforts to establish contact with them.

ASP Adeola said the Command had made concerted efforts to identify and contact the deceased's relatives, but the attempts had so far proved unsuccessful.

The police therefore urged anyone who knew Osakpolor or could provide information about his family, relatives or associates to contact the Command to facilitate the notification of his loved ones.

Members of the public were also encouraged to circulate the appeal widely to help reach anyone who might have useful information.



NEWS

Illicit arms remains lifeline of terrorists, bandits, violent criminals – NSA

ABUJA

The National Security Adviser (NSA), Malam Nuhu Ribadu, has said that illicit small arms and light weapons remained the lifeline of terrorism, banditry, kidnapping and other violent crimes threatening Nigeria's security.

Ribadu stated this on Wednesday in Abuja at the public destruction of about 1,000 illicitly acquired, decommissioned and unserviceable small arms and light weapons.

He was represented by the National Coordinator, National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC), Maj.-Gen. Adamu Laka, at the event organised by the National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW).

The NSA said the availability of illegal weapons had continued to sustain criminal networks, fuel violent conflicts and undermine security efforts.

He warned that their proliferation must be tackled as a critical component of the country's counter-terrorism strategy.

He said the connection between illicit arms proliferation and insecurity was direct and unmistakable, stressing that denying criminal groups access to weapons was essential to degrading their operational capabilities.

"Terrorism, insurgency, banditry, kidnapping and communal conflicts are all sustained by the availability of illegal weapons.

"Every weapon recovered by our security agencies and eventually destroyed, represents a threat permanently neutralised," he said.

Ribadu warned that recovering illegal weapons without ensuring their proper documentation, storage and eventual destruction could create opportunities for them to return to criminal networks.

He said the Federal Government, under President Bola Tinubu, was pursuing a comprehensive security strategy anchored on intelligence-led operations, inter-agency collaboration, disruption of criminal and terrorist financing networks and strategic engagement with international partners.

"However, recovery alone is not enough. Weapons that are seized but poorly treated, stored or accounted for risk re-entering circulation.

"Public destruction, as we witnessed today, closes that loop decisively and ensures that these weapons can never again threaten our citizens.

"These efforts have contributed to degrading terrorist networks and strengthening Nigeria's national security architecture," he said.

The NSA also highlighted the importance of international cooperation in addressing the sources and financing of illicit arms trafficking, commending the NCCSALW for strengthening collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He said the diplomatic initiative was important in identifying and disrupting external sources of illicit weapons and their financing into Nigeria.

Ribadu further described the destruction of illicit weapons as complementary to ongoing military and security operations, noting that sustained efforts to reduce weapons availability would weaken the capacity of terrorists, insurgents and other criminal elements.

He urged Nigerians to support security agencies with timely and credible intelligence on the illegal possession, manufacture and movement of firearms. "Security is not the responsibility of government and its agencies alone. It requires a whole-of-society approach involving communities, traditional and religious institutions and ordinary citizens," he said.

He particularly urged traditional and religious leaders to use their influence to promote peace, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, while addressing conditions that expose young people to recruitment by armed groups.

Earlier, the Director-General of NCCSALW, retired DIG Johnson Kokumo, disclosed that the Centre had so far recovered over 22,377 illicit weapons and destroyed more than 18,000 since its establishment.

Kokumo described the exercise as a practical and irreversible contribution to national security, insisting that every destroyed weapon represented one less instrument available to criminal elements.

"Every weapon that goes into the furnace today is a weapon that can never again be used to threaten a community, terrorise innocent citizens or facilitate criminal and terrorist activities," he said.



PUBLIC DESTRUCTION:
A cross section of dignitaries at the public destruction of illicitly acquired, decommissioned and unserviceable small arms and light weapons organized by the National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALWA) in Abuja.

FNBN, ICPC partnership secures recovery of 27.9 hectare abandoned housing project

JOS

The Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN) says its partnership with the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has facilitated the recovery of a 27.9-hectare property linked to an abandoned housing project initiated in 2012.

The Managing Director of FMBN, Mr Shehu Osidi, disclosed this during an inspection of the 27.9-hectare project site on Wednesday in Abuja.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the project, initially designed to deliver 962 housing units, was abandoned after a developer failed to fulfil the terms of a 65 million dollar loan guaranteed by FMBN.

Osidi said the loan had remained classified as bad debt in the bank's books for about 10 years before the ICPC intervened to facilitate the recovery of the land. He explained that the land was recovered through a court-ordered forfeiture to the ICPC for onward transmission to the bank.

The FMBN managing director added that the court directed the commission to supervise the bank to ensure that the original purpose of the land, which was to provide houses for Nigerians, was achieved.

"The new developers of the site have been able to demonstrate capacity by coming out with a site proposal now that is going to deliver almost 150 per cent of the number of houses that were intended.

"Originally, the project was conceived to provide 962 housing units. Now we are going to end up with about 1,358 housing units.

"I think that is a win-win and a very good development that government agencies working together as sister agencies can actually deliver value to Nigerians."

Osidi commended ICPC for its diligence in pursuing the case and facilitating the recovery of the property.

Also speaking, the ICPC Chairman, Dr Musa Aliyu, said the inspection was organised as part of activities marking the first General Assembly of the African Asset Recovery Practitioners Forum.

Aliyu said the forum, established through collaboration between the African Union (AU), ICPC and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), was aimed at strengthening asset recovery efforts across Africa.

He said the commission invited representatives from other African countries to inspect the project as an example of how asset recovery could contribute to the fight against corruption.

"FMBN and ICPC were able to recover this land, which is 27.9 hectares, which about is 39 football field size.

"What really happened was that in 2012, there was a loan taken by a developer which was guaranteed by FMBN which is the sum of 65 million dollars and those houses were never delivered." The ICPC chairman said individuals suspected to be involved in the transaction were facing trial, adding that asset recovery remained a critical mechanism for tackling corruption and illicit financial flows across the continent.

Aliyu said Africa was losing about 150 billion dollars annually to illicit financial flows, stressing that such resources could contribute significantly to development if properly utilised.

ICPC keeps fake agency DG in custody over alleged N27bn fraud

Aghedo Iyobor

ABUJA

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has urged the FCT High Court, Abuja, to keep Prince Adeniyi Adeyemi, accused of floating a fictitious presidential agency to defraud unsuspecting persons of over N27 billion, in detention, citing security concerns.

Adeyemi was on Wednesday re-arraigned alongside four civil servants on an amended 36-count charge bordering on forgery, impersonation, obtaining money under false pretences and other corrupt practices.

Prosecution counsel, Sylvanus Tahir, SAN, told Justice Halilu Yusuf that some alleged victims were searching for Adeyemi and could attack him if released. The ICPC also described him as a flight risk and accused him of having the financial capacity to influence witnesses.

Adeyemi and the four co-defendants — Aminu Abdullahi, Ogaba Harry, Florence Omameh and Patricia Akhigbe — all pleaded not guilty. Their lawyers urged the court to grant them bail, citing ill health and their constitutional rights.

The commission alleged that Adeyemi created a fictitious Presidential Foreign Investment Promotion Council (PFIPC), using forged appointment documents purportedly signed by the Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabiamila, to secure government office space and obtain over N27 billion, including N3.8 billion for personnel expenses.

He was also accused of forging official correspondence to obtain financial and technological privileges for the non-existent agency and collecting N20 million from a company director under the guise of a project facilitation loan.

The alleged offences were committed between 2024 and 2026.

Ruling on the bail applications and commencement of trial were adjourned until November 30, 2026, following the judge's approval of accelerated hearing.

The court ordered that Adeyemi, Abdullahi and Harry remain at Kuje Correctional Centre, while Omameh and Akhigbe were remanded at Suleja Correc-

World Men's Day: Philantropist urges men to prioritise health

BENIN CITY

Mr Ambrose Agho, founder of the Ambrose Agho Welfare and Empowerment Initiative, has urged men to embrace responsible masculinity, prioritise their wellbeing and contribute meaningfully to family and national development.

Agho made the call in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Thursday in Benin to mark the 2026 World Men's Day.

Agho, a U.S.-based philanthropist, said the occasion provided an opportunity to recognise men's invaluable contributions to families, communities and national development.

He said it was also an opportunity to draw attention to issues affecting men's health, wellbeing and social development.

While congratulating men on this year's celebration, Agho urged them to embrace the theme, 'The Future Is Everyone', by promoting responsible masculinity, mutual respect, gender equality and stronger family values."

According to him, positive masculinity goes beyond societal expectations of strength and provision, encompassing compassion, emotional intelligence, respect for others, accountability and the promotion of peace and harmony.

He said men had important roles to play in building stronger families, nurturing responsible children, advancing gender equality and creating safer and more inclusive communities.

He urged men to serve as positive role models and promote fairness, mutual respect and social progress.

He also encouraged men to prioritise their physical and mental health, seek support when necessary and reject harmful stereotypes that discourage them from expressing their challenges or seeking help.

He affirmed the initiative's commitment to programmes that promoted responsible manhood, strengthen families and advance the wellbeing of members of society.

He congratulated men on the occasion and urged them to sustain their contributions towards building a more peaceful, equitable and prosperous society.

World Men's Day is celebrated annually on Nov. 19 to recognise men's contributions to society and promote their health and wellbeing.

Report adverse drug reactions to NAFDAC – Prof

BENIN CITY

Nigerians have been urged to always use drugs with caution and to report adverse reactions to the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, NAFDAC

The appeal was made by Prof. Ambibola Opadeyi during a lecture titled,- detecting and reporting adverse drug reactions in children organised by the Institute of Child Health, University of Benin Teaching Hospital UBTH/ University of Benin, UNIBEN in Benin city.

According to her, "NAFDAC has withdrawn a number of drugs from the market because of reports by the public. If you do not report NAFDAC cannot work and a call can save lives."

Prof. Opadeyi, a Consultant Physician/Clinical Pharmaco logy and Therapeutics, department of Internal medicine, UNIBEN/ UBTH, Benin city, noted that drugs without NAFDAC numbers should not be taken and anyone who refuses to report drug reactions is one of the problems of the nation

She said, if a patient is treating malaria every month without any improvement and if they are weak after taking the malaria drugs, this is an indication of drug reactions which should be reported.

Prof Opadeyi advised that before using any drugs, the leaflets coming with the medicine should be ready and everyone should be pharmaco vigilant .

"The health workers should be cautious of how drugs are administered by checking and cross checking to avoid errors," she added.

She also cautioned against the use of herbal products which can be contaminated and cause problems as well as combining two or three different drugs together without doctors prescription which can also lead to drug reactions in children

The Director of the Institute of Child Health, UBTH/UNIBEN, Prof. (Mrs) Ayebor Sadoh emphasized on the importance of health workers to be very careful when dispensing drugs, especially when calculating the doses to be taken by the patient to avoid untimely death.



PRESENTATION:
Left- Mrs Mary Ilobekemen, the representative of the Commissioner for Information and Strategy Prince Kassim Afegbua presenting the cheque for the FONWIP 8th interest free loan to one of the beneficiaries in Benin City.

FONWIP Lauded for empowering women with interest free loan

BENIN CITY

Edo State Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Prince Kassim Afegbua and the Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social development Hon Mrs. Eugenia Abdalla have commended the Forum of Nigeria Women in Politics, FONWIP for empowering women to become financially independent.

The Commissioners made the commendation during

a ceremony marking this year's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence and presentation of the 8th batch interest free revolving loan to beneficiaries by FONWIP in Benin city.

The Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Prince Kassim Afegbua who was represented by Mrs. Mary Ilobekemen, Public Relations Officer in the ministry, noted that the initiative to empower the women is commendable.

"With this empowerment, we can see the joy in the faces of the women today. We want to urge other organizations to emulate FONWIP to encourage the women," the Commissioner added.

The Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social development, Hon Mrs Abdalla who was represented by Mrs Nwaozor Florence advised the beneficiaries of the interest free loan to use the money well.

"Any money given to you for empowerment should be used well, turn it around and avoid unnecessary spending," she noted.

The President and founder of FONWIP, Hon Amb. Florence Gbinigie JP in her address disclosed that the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence is marked by the whole world every year to commemorate the event.

"This is a reminder to the whole world of the violence women are going through in one form or the other, so as to proffer possible solutions by all and sundry.

According to her," FONWIP believes that one of the ways to protect survivors of domestic violence is to empower them to become financially independent.

"This can be a preventive strategy to end violence against women. Economic empowerment can lead to ending impunity within the family and society at large by making them become independent, self reliance, busy, as well as supporting their family with this economic empowerment. This can also reduce stress and improve wellness, prolonging their life span and also prevent whatever could lead to violence."

The FONWIP President who was represented by Mrs Joy Adodo congratulated the beneficiaries of this 8th batch for scaling through the screening and advised them to step up in putting more effort into their businesses for greater yield.

The sum of N1.5 million was disbursed to eleven beneficiaries who include poor women, survivors of domestic violence, the trafficked and widows

Earlier, the committee chairperson, Hon Favour Oseki who appreciated Hon Florence Gbinigie for always willing to support the women disclosed that from the fourteen persons who applied for the free interest loan, eleven persons scaled through the screening.

There was a paper presentation by Barrister F.E Abbe on the strategies towards a successful business.

Edo community condemns media reports Over Land Dispute

Monday Oise

BENIN CITY

Elders and people of Aduwawa community in Ikpoba Okha Local Government Area of Edo State, have condemned the recent media reports by the Ohen Obaro, Nosakhare Osadolor , AKA Afro, saying he lacks the capacity to act in that regard, especially when it has become apparent that he was still under sanction.

Speaking to journalists during a press conference held at the community on Tuesday, November 17 2026, one of the principal witnesses to the land in dispute, Osayanrhion Igho-Oga Ogbeiwi, said that Monday Osayande, the managing director of a popular transport company in Benin City, remains the rightful owner of the land in dispute.

He explained that the said land was transferred to Monday Osayande by late Ukponmwan Nosa Jonathan, the former vice chairman of Aduwawa Community, noting that he was once invited to Aduwawa police divisional headquarters, where he made statement when some persons were arrested on a case of malicious damage and forging of land documents they presented.

Ogbeiwi said that he would not want his name to be dragged into their criminal act since the matter is already before the police and court.

Clarifying the issue, the representative to Ameosa Motors, Mr Matthew Ikhide said after Mr Ogbeiwi made a statement at the police station, the DPO decided to investigate and looked into the documents presented by Mr Benjamin and Andy Omokaro.

According to him, it was discovered that the landed documents they brought were forged and also discovered that there are two buildings on the land they demolished which belonged to Mr Monday Osayande, the MD of Ameosa Motors

He added that when the said Benjamin Ugbuanupe and Andy Omokaro found out that the Police wanted to charge the case to court they absconded, but the police were able to arrest Engr Ekeh Darlington, Amendu and a vigilante , who were charged accordingly and the case is before the court at Ogbeson

Also speaking, an elder and Justice of Peace, Pa Monday Osazuwa Egbe Ahanor, said that when Ohen Obaro, Felix Osadolor Odomore (AKA) Afro, an Ohen in the community drew his attention into the ownership dispute between Monday Osayande and the Igbo man contending, he told him that since there were two persons contending ownership he should allow them to settle it themselves.

SPCC Old students association elects new exco

ABUJA

St Peter Claver's College, Aghalokpe Old Students Association, has elected a new Executive Committee.

A Nigerian businessman, media figure and a member of the 1979 graduating set, Daniel Okeme, emerged Global President.

Okeme previously served as Chairman of the SPCCOSA, Warri Branch.

Harry Anirejuoritshe Ojuyah was elected 1st Vice President while Arierhie Agboromeji Iriferi emerged as 2nd Vice President.

Other elected officials include Adogbeji Udu Okiti (National Secretary), Itive Okpalefe (Assistant National Secretary) and Solomon Agah (Treasurer).

Others are Cletus Nzekwe (National Publicity Secretary), Henry Ufuoma Odiete (Financial Secretary) and Martins Etireri (Social and Welfare Officer).

Chairman of the 2026 SPCCOSA Electoral Committee, Onokpe David, in a statement said a total of 79 valid votes were cast for each position.

''All persons other than the position of the treasurer were decided by a Yes/No Vote on a single candidate. The position of the treasurer was contested by two candidates and the candidate with the highest number of votes was declared elected''



NEWS

No police report required before treating gunshot victims — IG

ABUJA

The Inspector-General of Police, Olatunji Disu, has urged hospitals and medical personnel across Nigeria to treat gunshot victims immediately without demanding a police report before providing medical attention.

Disu in a post obtained from the Nigeria Police Force's X handle on Thursday, described the issue as a matter of life and death, stressing that delays in treating victims could cost lives.

Addressing police officers, healthcare workers and members of the public, the police chief said the law does not require a police report before a gunshot victim can receive treatment in any hospital.

"When a gunshot victim is brought to any hospital, the law does not require a police report before treatment," he said.

He specifically appealed to doctors and other healthcare workers to prioritise saving lives rather than waiting for police documentation.

"To our doctors and healthcare workers, you are enjoined to treat gunshot victims immediately without waiting for a police report," Disu stated.

The Inspector-General also assured Nigerians that the responsibility of the police was to protect lives and not create fear among citizens.

"Our duty is not to create fear, but to protect lives. We wish to reassure citizens of their safety at all times," he said.

Disu further encouraged members of the public to assist injured persons in emergencies, assuring them that they would not be punished for helping victims.

"To members of the public, if you see someone injured, do not hesitate to help. You will not be punished for helping," he added.

He called on police officers and medical personnel to uphold the law and ensure that administrative procedures do not prevent victims from receiving urgent medical attention.

"Please uphold the law, because every second counts," the police chief said.

He concluded with a strong message to hospitals and emergency responders: "Treat first, save lives."

Indiscipline, dishonesty could undermine Tinubu's reforms, NOA DG warns

ABUJA

The Director-General of the National Orientation Agency, Lanre Issa-Onilu, on Thursday warned that indiscipline, dishonesty and disregard for public responsibility among Nigerians could undermine the economic and institutional reforms being implemented by President Bola Tinubu's administration.

He said the success of government policies and investments depended not only on good leadership and sound institutions but also on the character and conduct of citizens and public officials.

Issa-Onilu, who spoke at the one-week Global Alliance World Public Relations Forum, described Nigeria's national ethics policy as the foundation for sustainable development, arguing that the country could not achieve meaningful progress without deliberately addressing its values and behavioural challenges.

He noted that the Tinubu administration had, within three years, embarked on far-reaching reforms covering the economy, infrastructure, business conduct, education, health and strategic communication, but warned that poor national character could frustrate the gains.

He said, "This administration, in just three years, has embarked on far-reaching reforms covering economy, infrastructure, business conduct, education, health, and citizen-facing strategic communication. These reforms have been yielding positive outcomes that we all can see.

"However, the question remains: can we sustain these reforms when our national character is unsupportive of development?"

The NOA boss said the government had paid insufficient attention to character reform despite its importance to the success of other policy initiatives.

He explained that dishonesty among public officials, tax evasion by citizens and disregard for regulations could frustrate even the best-designed government policies.

"We can introduce the best tax system, but it will fail if officials are dishonest. Citizens deliberately evade their obligations. We can construct excellent roads, but they will not last if contractors compromise standards and road users disregard regulations," he said.

"Consider a public facility built with taxpayers' money. Within months, fittings disappear, the surroundings become filthy, and nobody accepts responsibility. Government may replace the damaged facility, but unless behaviour changes, the problem will return," he said.

Pay presidential campaign fee to feature Obi on billboard, Soludo's aide tells Umeh

AWKA

An aide to Anambra State Governor, Chukwuma Soludo, Izuchukwu Adichie has told Senator Victor Umeh to pay the required presidential campaign permit fee if he wants to feature Peter Obi on his campaign billboard, following the removal of the billboard by state officials.

Adichie, the Senior Special Assistant on New Media to Soludo, made the remark following the dismantling of a campaign billboard featuring Umeh and Obi by officials of the Anambra State Signage and Advertisement Agency.

The billboard promoted Umeh's senatorial ambition alongside Obi, who is seeking the presidency in the 2027 general election on the platform of the NDC.

Reacting to the development in a Facebook post on Thursday, Adichie said Umeh should pay the applicable fee for featuring a presidential candidate on his campaign material.

"If Senator Victor Umeh wants to put Peter Obi's face on his billboard, let him pay Peter Obi's rate as well. Peter Obi is running for president. ANSAA needs money!" he wrote.

The development followed reports that Umeh had paid the agency's N20m senatorial campaign permit fee but did not obtain a separate permit for Obi's presidential campaign.

Under the agency's campaign fee structure for the 2027 general elections, presidential candidates are required to pay N50m, while senatorial candidates are to pay N20m.

Other categories include N5m for House of Representatives candidates, N1.5m for state House of Assembly candidates and N2.5m for local government chairmanship candidates.

Nigerian microfinance bank wins global Islamic banking award

ABUJA

Nigerian non-interest digital microfinance bank, Ethica Microfinance Bank, has become the first in the country to receive the IRBA Excellence Award for Islamic Digital Microfinance in Nigeria 2026 at the 12th Islamic Retail Banking Awards held in Karachi, Pakistan.

The bank disclosed this in a statement by its Head of Marketing Communications and Partnerships, Sodiq Oyeleke, on Thursday, saying it was selected by the awards' Critics' Choice Committee for deploying mobile-first, Shari'ah-compliant financial solutions to promote grassroots financial inclusion across Nigeria.

Speaking at the ceremony, the bank's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Tajudeen Sekoni, described the recognition as "an international affirmation of our founding conviction: that non-interest banking principles, powered by robust digital technology, provide the most sustainable path to financial inclusion."

He said the bank's mobile application recorded more than 50,000 downloads within six months of its rollout, adding that "rapid early adoption of our banking app in less than six months proved that Nigerians were yearning for an ethical, transparent digital alternative."

Sekoni said the award belonged to the bank's customers and staff, adding, "It spurs us to double down on building seamless, fast, transparent, and ethical financial rails for every Nigerian enterprise."

Organised by international financial intelligence think-tank Cambridge IFA, the Islamic Retail Banking Awards recognise institutions across the world for efficiency, innovation and ethical integrity in Islamic finance.

According to the Chairman of the awards, Professor Humayon Dar, the winners demonstrated "Shari'ah authenticity in both their products and operations", alongside a strong commitment to Islamic finance.

The Chairman of Ethica's Board of Directors, Professor Tajudeen Yusuf, said the award

PUBLIC NOTICE

RENUNCIATION SECRET CULT

The general public is hereby notified that I, **ENGR. IRORERE OSAYIMWENSE WALLACE** (M) has renounced my membership of EIYE CONFRATERNITY, which I was forced to join in the Year 1987 in Benin City, Edo State. That I have since renounced my Membership in the year 1992 after my recall from suspension. I am no longer a member and have ceased to engage in any of their meetings and activities. That I hereby publicly and unequivocally renounce, disassociate, and withdraw my membership, affiliation, and association with EIYE CONFRATERNITY. That I, **ENGR. IRORERE OSAYIMWENSE WALLACE**, hereby confirm and affirm that I am no longer a member of EIYE CONFRATERNITY. That this declaration is made voluntarily and in good faith. The general public, security agencies, and concerned authorities should please take note.

Signed:
ENGR. IRORERE OSAYIMWENSE WALLACE

CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH

The general public is hereby notified that I, **DAYAL JUSTINE SHEPKWOET**. My correct Date of birth is 3th MARCH 1993 and not 1th of September 1993 as was wrongly written on my bank Verification number(B.V.N. all former documents remain valid concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

RECONCILATION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that my Correct Name is **GHAROSIOMWAN MAUREEN EFE** and not **AMAS EFE** as was wrongly Caputured in some of my documents. All former documents remain valid concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

ADDITION OF MIDDLE NAME

I formerly known as **IGHEDOSA JULIET** now wish to be known and Addressed as **DICKSON JULIET OFURE** All Former documents remain valid concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME/ CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH

The general public is hereby notified that **UMOLE RICHARD and AIGBA SAMUEL**. are one and the same person henceforth now wish to be known and Addressed as **AIGBA SAMUEL**. and also my correct date of birth is 10th day of APRIL 2004 and not 11th day of APRIL 1999. as was wrongly written on my bank verification number (B.V.N). All former documents remain valid concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **Miss. IMAFIDON SARAH ABEINETA**. now wish to be known and Addressed as **Mrs. KINGSLEY SARAH ABEINETA**. all former documents remain valid concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

ADDITION OF NAME

I formerly known as **ANDREW OSAMWONYI** now wish to be known and Addressed as **OSAMWONYI ANDREW ESE**.all former documents remain valid concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

RE-ARRANGEMENT OF NAMES

The general public is here by notified that my correct arrangement of names is **IGBINOBA - PALMER ORE IGBINOGHODUA** which appears on my National Identification number (NIN), Bank Verification Number (BVN), and International Passport. And not **PALMER IGBINOGHODUA ORE** which was wrongly arranged in my (BVN), all former documents remain valid, concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

ADDITION OF SURNAME AND CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH

I formerly known as **APPEAL ELIZABETH UZEZI**. now wish to be known and Addressed as **APPEAL- IVRI ELIZABETH UZEZI**. and also my correct Date of birth is 15th day of June 1990, and 15th day of June 1985. All former documents remain valid concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME AND DATE OF BIRTH

The general public is here by notified that my correct name is **ISOGO JOSEPH and not AIOGUO JOSEPH** as was wrongly captured in my Bank Verification Number, and also my correct date of birth is 10th April, 2003 as shown on my National Identification number and not 10th April, 2002, all former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

PUBLIC NOTICE

MISSING LAND DOCUMENTS

The general public is hereby notified that I, **IMMANUEL CHARLES AKHIMIEN** is the rightful owner of a pices of land measuring 100by100 feet comprise of six bedroom bungalow lying and situate at Isihor village, ward 11k, Benin city Edo state. That the said property was given to me by my mother **(MISS BERTHA ABURIME)** and the Deep of gift dated 18/11/2023 for the special love and affection which she had for me as her only child. My late mother also acquired the piece of land above from her last father **(MR ANTHONY IBHAFIDON)** via a Deed of transfer dated 27/11/1972. That the land documents above was granted to **Mr. ANTHONY IBHAFIDON** by virtue of a Deed of conveyance dated the 25/11/1971 by his highness, **AKENZUA II**, the OBA of Benin, Benin city. That the Deed of the property is missing and all effort to search for the documents has proved abortive. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

Signed: MR IMMANUEL CHARLES AKHIMIEN

PUBLIC NOTICE

AUGUSTINE COMMUNITY CARE INITIATIVE

The general public is hereby notified that the above name has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for the registration under Part F of the companies and allied matters act 2020.

TRUSTESS:
AUGUSTINE OYAMHENDA – Chairman.
JOY ISAGBONA – Secretary.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To Provide Humanitarian Assistance to Stranded, Vulnerable and Distressed Nigerians Abroad, Including Persons Seeking Voluntary Return To Nigeria, Through Necessary Support and Reintegration Services.
2. To Provide Relief and Welfare Support To Vulnerable Persons and Families, Including Children, Women, The Elderly and Persons with Disabilities.
3. To Undertake other Lawful Charitable and Humanitarian Activities Incidental or Conducive to Achieving The Above Objectives, Consistent with the non-profit Nature of the Organization.

Signed: CHAIRMAN

FEATURE

Women, agriculture and economic development in Nigeria

Grace Ijeoma Umeh

If you walk through any market in Nigeria in the early morning, you will see her. She is the woman who arrived at 4am with baskets of yam, pepper, tomatoes and garri balanced on her head. She is the woman who borrowed money to buy seeds, who tilled the soil with her own hands, who harvested under the sun, who carried her produce for miles to sell. She is the woman who feeds the nation, yet she is the last to be recognised, the last to be funded, the last to be invited to the table where agricultural policy is made. Nigeria cannot develop without her. Africa cannot develop without her. The world cannot develop without her. And until we invest in her, our economy will remain stunted.

In Nigeria, women make up between sixty and seventy percent of the agricultural labour force. They plant, they weed, they harvest, they process, they store, they transport, they sell. In the south, women dominate cassava, palm oil, vegetables and fish processing. In the north, women dominate groundnut, millet, rice processing and small livestock. In every region, it is women who ensure that food reaches the table. Yet when you look at who owns the land, who gets the loan, who gets the tractor, who gets the fertiliser subsidy, it is rarely the woman. In many parts of Nigeria, a woman cannot own land in her own name. She farms on her husband's land, or her father's land, or communal land that can be taken away at any time. Without land, she cannot get a loan, because banks demand collateral. Without a loan, she cannot buy improved seeds, cannot buy fertiliser, cannot buy machines. She is trapped in subsistence farming, working harder and harder for less and less.

This is not just a Nigerian problem. Across sub Saharan Africa, women produce most of the food but own less than twenty percent of the land. Across Asia, women in India, Bangladesh and Vietnam work in rice fields and tea plantations for wages far lower than men. Across Latin America, women in Colombia, Brazil and Peru work in coffee and flower farms, often without contracts, without health insurance, without maternity protection. Globally, the Food and Agriculture Organisation has estimated that if women had the same access to land, credit, training and technology as men, farm yields would increase by twenty to thirty percent, and the number of hungry people in the world would fall by up to seventeen percent. That is not a small figure. That is millions of children who would eat, millions of families who would escape poverty, simply by treating women fairly.

The Nigerian economy is a story of missed opportunity. We are a country blessed with fertile land, with a large population, with hardworking people, yet we import rice, wheat, fish and even tomatoes. We spend billions of naira every year importing food we could grow ourselves. Why? Partly because we have neglected the very people who grow our food. The woman farmer in Benue who could produce ten bags of rice produces only three, because she has no access to good seeds. The woman in Kaduna who could process groundnut oil cannot expand, because she has no machine. The woman in Edo who could export garri cannot meet international standards, because no one has trained her on packaging and quality. We hold conferences on agriculture in Abuja, in air conditioned halls, with men in suits speaking about food security, while the women who actually grow the food are outside, selling pure water, uninvited.

Development is not about big buildings in Abuja or Lagos. Development is about the woman in the village who can now send her children to school because her harvest improved. Development is about the market woman who can now save, who can now join a cooperative, who can now buy a freezer to preserve her fish. Development is about the young woman who studied agriculture in university and returns to her community to start a modern farm, using irrigation, using mobile phone apps to check prices, using social media to sell directly to customers. That is the new face of agriculture, and women are leading it, quietly, without applause.

Technology is changing the story, but only for those who can access it. In Kenya, women farmers use mobile money to receive payments, to save, to borrow. In Nigeria, fintech platforms are beginning to reach rural women, allowing them to receive loans on their phones without collateral. In Ghana, women use WhatsApp groups to share market prices, to warn each other about pests, to organise transport. But millions of Nigerian women still have no smartphone, no internet, no bank account. They are excluded from the digital economy that could transform their lives. If we are serious about development, we must close the digital gap for rural women. We must provide training in local languages. We must ensure that extension workers actually visit women farmers, not just men. We must ensure that government programmes for fertiliser, seedlings and loans reach women directly, not through middlemen who divert them.

Cooperatives are also a powerful tool. When women come together in cooperatives, they can buy in bulk, they can negotiate better prices, they can access loans, they can share machines. In many parts of Nigeria, women have formed thrift societies, ajo, esusu, adashe, where they save together and lend to each other. These informal systems have kept families alive for generations. Imagine what would happen if government and banks partnered with these cooperatives, if they provided matching funds, if they provided training in bookkeeping and marketing. The impact would be enormous. A woman who has access to fifty thousand naira can buy seeds. A woman who has access to five hundred thousand naira can buy a grinding machine and employ three other women. A woman who has access to five million naira can build a processing factory and employ a whole village.

We must also talk about unpaid care work, the invisible economy that women carry. Every day, Nigerian women cook, clean, fetch water, care for children, care for the sick and elderly, without pay. The United Nations estimates that women globally do three times more unpaid care work than men. If this work were paid, it would be worth trillions of dollars. It is the foundation of the economy, yet it is not counted in GDP, it is not recognised in policy, it is not shared fairly. A woman who spends six hours a day on housework has six hours less to farm, to trade, to study, to rest. When we talk about economic development, we must talk about reducing this burden, through water supply, through electricity, through childcare, through men sharing housework. A husband who fetches water is not helping his wife. He is contributing to the economy.

The future of Nigeria's economy is female. It is the young woman in Kano who wants to start a fashion business. It is the young woman in Port Harcourt who wants to start a fish farm. It is the young woman in Enugu who wants to start a tech company. It is the mother in Ibadan who sells akara and dreams of owning a restaurant. If we give them land, credit, training, technology and security, they will transform this country. If we continue to ignore them, we will continue to import what we should produce, to beg for what we should own, to remain poor in the midst of plenty.

Development is not a gift from government. Development is the release of the potential that is already in our people, especially our women. The woman who feeds the nation deserves more than praise. She deserves land. She deserves a loan. She deserves a tractor. She deserves respect. When we invest in her, we invest in Nigeria. When we lift her, we lift the nation.



WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

A planet in fever: Climate change, and why women and the poor will pay the highest price

Clareth Solomon

The world is getting hotter, and it is not a distant threat. It is here. In Nigeria, the rains come late, or they come too much. In Lagos, floods sweep away houses, shops and cars. In Borno, the desert is advancing, swallowing farmlands and villages. In Bayelsa, the sea is rising, swallowing communities. In the north, farmers and herders are fighting over shrinking land and water. In the south, fishermen are catching less because the sea is warmer. This is climate change. It is not a foreign word. It is the flood that destroyed your shop. It is the drought that killed your crops. It is the heat that makes your children sick. And around the world, from Pakistan to California, from Australia to Europe, the story is the same. The planet is in fever, and the poorest, especially women, are paying the highest price.

Climate change is caused by human activity, by the burning of fossil fuels, by deforestation, by industrial pollution, by the way we produce and consume. The countries that caused most of the pollution are the rich countries of Europe, America and Asia, who industrialised for two hundred years, burning coal and oil, cutting forests, emitting gases that now trap heat in the atmosphere. The countries that suffer most are the poor countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, who contributed least to the problem. This is the greatest injustice of our time. Nigeria, which contributes less than one percent of global emissions, suffers floods, droughts, desertification and rising sea levels. Bangladesh, which contributes almost nothing, sees its coastal villages disappear into the sea. Small island nations in the Pacific, like Tuvalu and Kiribati, face the possibility of disappearing entirely. Their people may become climate refugees, losing their homes, their culture, their identity, for a crisis they did not create.

And within every country, it is women who suffer most. Why? Because women are responsible for fetching water, for cooking, for farming, for caring for children and the sick. When water becomes scarce, it is the woman who walks further to find it. When firewood becomes scarce, it is the woman who walks further to find it, risking rape and attack. When crops fail, it is the woman who must find another way to feed her family.

When floods come, it is the woman who must carry children, elderly parents and belongings to safety. When there is a disaster, women are more likely to die, because they are less likely to know how to swim, because they are wearing clothes that restrict movement, because they stay behind to save others. After a disaster, women face increased violence, increased child marriage, increased trafficking, because families in desperation marry off their daughters to reduce the number of mouths to feed, or to get a bride price to survive.

In Nigeria, the impact is already visible. Lake Chad, once one of the largest lakes in Africa, has shrunk by over ninety percent. Communities that once fished and farmed around it have lost their livelihoods. Young men have migrated, some have joined armed groups, some have become bandits, because they have no work. Women left behind must farm on dry land, must fetch water from distant boreholes, must care for children in conditions of extreme poverty. In the Middle Belt, the shrinking of grazing land has intensified conflict between farmers and herders, a conflict that has killed thousands, displaced millions, and made women and children the primary victims. In the Niger Delta, oil pollution has destroyed fishing and farming, leaving women who once processed fish with nothing to process. In Lagos, the poor who live in Makoko, in Ajegunle, in Iwaya, live in houses on water, and when the sea rises, they lose everything.

Globally, the picture is equally alarming. In 2022, floods in Pakistan submerged one third of the country, displaced thirty three million people, and destroyed crops and homes. In 2023, wildfires in Canada burned an area larger than many countries, choking cities in smoke. In 2024, heatwaves in Europe killed thousands of elderly people. In Australia, bushfires have become more frequent and more intense. In the Horn of Africa, drought has left millions facing hunger. In the Philippines, typhoons are becoming stronger. In California, wildfires have destroyed entire towns. No country is immune. No continent is safe. Climate change does not respect borders, does not respect wealth, does not respect power.

FEATURE

TINUBU, ATIKU AND OBI:
Political Realignments, Regional Voting Patterns and the Constitutional Requirements for Victory

Chief/Barr. J.D. Ephraim



Research position: November 17, 2026

1. INTRODUCTION

The 2027 Nigerian presidential election promises to be one of the most consequential political contests in the country's democratic history. It will take place amid economic hardship, insecurity, political realignments and growing public dissatisfaction with governance.

Since the 2023 general election, the political landscape has changed considerably. Governors have defected, political alliances have been reorganised, and new presidential partnerships have emerged, altering the electoral calculations of the major parties.

This analysis focuses on three principal presidential camps: President Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Atiku Abubakar of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), and Peter Obi of the Nigerian Democratic Congress (NDC), with Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso as Obi's running mate.

The Obi-Kwankwaso alliance brings together two politicians with significant but geographically different electoral bases. Atiku retains considerable political experience and established networks, particularly in the North, while Tinubu benefits from incumbency and the APC's expanding political structures.

The central question is whether Tinubu can consolidate these advantages or whether the opposition can build a sufficiently broad coalition to defeat him.

This paper examines the contest against the 2023 electoral baseline, subsequent political developments, regional voting patterns and the constitutional requirements for presidential victory.

A fundamental consideration is that political defections do not automatically translate into voter loyalty. Ultimately, the electorate, not political endorsements, will determine the outcome.

2. THE 2023 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: THE ELECTORAL BASELINE

The 2023 presidential election provides the starting point for assessing the 2027 contest.

Candidate	Party	Votes
Bola Tinubu	A P C	8,794,726
Atiku Abubakar	P D P	6,984,520
Peter Obi	Labour Party	6,101,533
Rabiu Kwankwaso	NNPP	1,496,687

Source: INEC, 2023 General Election.

Obi and Kwankwaso together polled 7,598,220 votes, exceeding Atiku's total by 613,700 but remaining 1,196,506 votes behind Tinubu.

This arithmetic gives the Obi-Kwankwaso alliance a potentially strong starting position. However, it would be misleading to assume that all their previous supporters will automatically transfer their votes to the joint ticket.

Some Kwankwaso supporters may have moved towards the APC following Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf's defection, while some Obi supporters may have reservations about the alliance. Conversely, the partnership could attract new voters.

Atiku equally faces the challenge of retaining his former supporters while competing with the NDC for opposition votes.

Therefore, the 2027 election must be assessed by considering voter retention, new support, political organisation and mobilisation rather than simply adding previous election figures.

3. THE THREE PRINCIPAL PRESIDENTIAL CAMPS

A. BOLA TINUBU AND THE APC

Tinubu enters the election with the advantages of incumbency, national visibility and an established political structure.

The APC has expanded its political reach through defections involving governors, legislators and influential political figures, particularly in the South-South, South-East and North-Central regions.

However, acquiring political officeholders is not the same as acquiring voters. The President's greatest advantage is the APC's growing national organisation, while his major vulnerability is public dissatisfaction over economic hardship, insecurity, unemployment and the cost of living.

B. ATIKU ABUBAKAR AND THE ADC

Atiku's principal strengths are his political experience, national recognition and established networks, especially in the North.

The ADC provides an opportunity to assemble politicians and voters dissatisfied with the APC administration. His challenge, however, is to retain his traditional support while competing with the Obi-Kwankwaso alliance for opposition voters.

His electoral prospects will depend on the opposition's ability to avoid fragmentation and develop a coherent national campaign.

C. PETER OBI AND RABIU KWANKWASO: THE NDC TICKET

The Obi-Kwankwaso alliance has introduced a significant new dimension into the election.

Obi demonstrated substantial national appeal in 2023, particularly among young, urban and politically dissatisfied voters. Kwankwaso brings an established political movement and a strong personal following in Kano and parts of the North.

Their alliance could create a formidable electoral coalition.

However, Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf's defection to the APC and the movement of other Kwankwasiyya figures into the ruling party have complicated the calculations in Kano.

The ticket must demonstrate that Kwankwaso retains his grassroots influence and that Obi's supporters will embrace the partnership. Its ability to expand beyond the South-East and Kano will determine its national competitiveness.

4. STATE-BY-STATE ELECTORAL ASSESSMENT

The following assessment considers the 2023 results, current political alignments, influential actors and the possible strength of the three presidential camps.

A. NORTH-WEST

The North-West is one of the most important electoral regions because of its large voter population and historical influence in presidential elections.

Kaduna: Governor Uba Sani and House of Representatives Speaker Tajudeen Abbas give the APC considerable organisational strength. However, Southern Kaduna and the state's three senatorial zones have distinct political interests. The state remains competitive.

Kano: The biggest battleground in the region. Kwankwaso polled 997,279 votes in 2023, against Tinubu's 517,341 and Obi's 28,513. Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf's defection strengthens the APC institutionally, but Kwankwaso retains a significant personal following. The state is highly competitive.

Katsina: Atiku performed strongly in 2023, but the APC has an established political structure. Both camps have credible opportunities.

Jigawa: The APC has an established advantage following Tinubu's 2023 victory, although economic dissatisfaction could influence voting.

Kebbi: Atiku's previous support gives the opposition a meaningful starting position, but the APC remains competitive.

Sokoto: Atiku won the state in 2023. His political networks remain important, although the APC has the capacity to challenge strongly.

Zamfara: Tinubu won in 2023. The APC has a starting advantage, but insecurity and local political divisions could influence the outcome.

B. NORTH-EAST

Atiku's political roots in Adamawa and his regional networks make the North-East important to his prospects. However, the APC remains strong in parts of the region.

Adamawa: Atiku's home state and one of his strongest potential bases. The APC will nevertheless challenge through its national and local structures.

Bauchi: Its history of opposition politics gives Atiku a credible opportunity, although the APC and NDC will also compete.

Borno: The APC has a strong established political structure and a clear starting advantage.

Gombe: A competitive state where local alliances and party mobilisation will determine the outcome.

Taraba: Its complex political environment makes it difficult to predict. Atiku and the opposition have opportunities, but the APC remains competitive.

Yobe: Traditionally favourable to the APC, although Atiku's 2023 victory demonstrated that the opposition can compete.

C. NORTH-CENTRAL

The North-Central region is politically diverse, with security, ethnicity, religion, local grievances and political alliances influencing voting behaviour.

Benue: Tinubu won in 2023, giving the APC a starting advantage. However, insecurity and the grievances of farming communities could make the state competitive.

Kogi: The APC has a strong political structure and a clear organisational advantage.

Kwara: Tinubu's 2023 victory and established APC networks give the ruling party an advantage.

Nasarawa: The APC has a credible advantage, but established opposition networks make the state competitive.

Niger: Tinubu won in 2023, and the APC remains favourably positioned, although insecurity and economic conditions could influence voters.

Plateau: The defection of Governor Caleb Mutfwang to the APC and the emergence of Professor Nentawe Yilwatda as APC National Chairman have changed the political equation. Nevertheless, Obi's strong 2023 performance means the opposition retains a substantial electoral base. The state remains competitive, with an organisational advantage for the APC.

Federal Capital Territory: Although not a state, the FCT is constitutionally important. Nyesom Wike's political influence and relationship with Tinubu could benefit the APC. However, Obi's substantial 2023 victory demonstrated his appeal among urban voters. The FCT remains highly competitive.

D. SOUTH-EAST

The South-East remains an important electoral base for Obi. However, the APC has expanded its political presence through defections and alliances.

Abia: Obi's previous support gives the NDC an advantage, although the APC may improve its performance.

CONTINUES ON PG 13»

FEATURE

Nigeria's 2027 Presidential Election: A State-By-State Electoral Projection

«CONTINUED FROM PG 12

Anambra: Obi's home state and one of his strongest electoral bases. The NDC has a substantial advantage.

Ebonyi: Political realignments have strengthened the APC's organisational position, but Obi retains a meaningful electoral base. Competitive.

Enugu: Obi's strong 2023 performance gives the NDC an advantage, provided he retains his previous supporters.

Imo: The APC has a substantial political structure, making it competitive with the NDC and other opposition forces.

E. SOUTH-SOUTH

The South-South is particularly important because of the movement of governors from the PDP to the APC in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Delta. Edo also has an APC governor, while Rivers presents a complicated political situation.

Akwa Ibom: Governor Umo Eno's defection and Senate President Godswill Akpabio's influence give the APC a significant advantage. However, the former PDP electorate cannot automatically be assumed to have transferred its loyalty.

Bayelsa: Governor Douye Diri's defection strengthens Tinubu's political position, although the state's historical PDP support remains relevant.

Cross River: The APC has an established political structure and a credible advantage.

Delta: Governor Sheriff Oborevwori's movement to the APC has significantly changed the political landscape. Nevertheless, the former PDP electorate may not automatically follow the governor. The state remains competitive, with an APC organisational advantage.

Edo: Governor Monday Okpebholo gives the APC a strong state structure. However, Obi's considerable 2023 support makes the state worth watching. The APC has an organisational advantage, but the NDC could remain competitive.

Rivers: Wike's influence, his Rainbow Coalition and his relationship with Tinubu provide the APC with a major political asset. However, Governor Siminalayi Fubara's political interests and the continuing divisions in the state make Rivers highly competitive. Wike alone cannot determine the presidential outcome.

F. SOUTH-WEST

The South-West is Tinubu's home region and should provide the APC with substantial support. Nevertheless, the 2023 election demonstrated that opposition candidates can make significant gains.

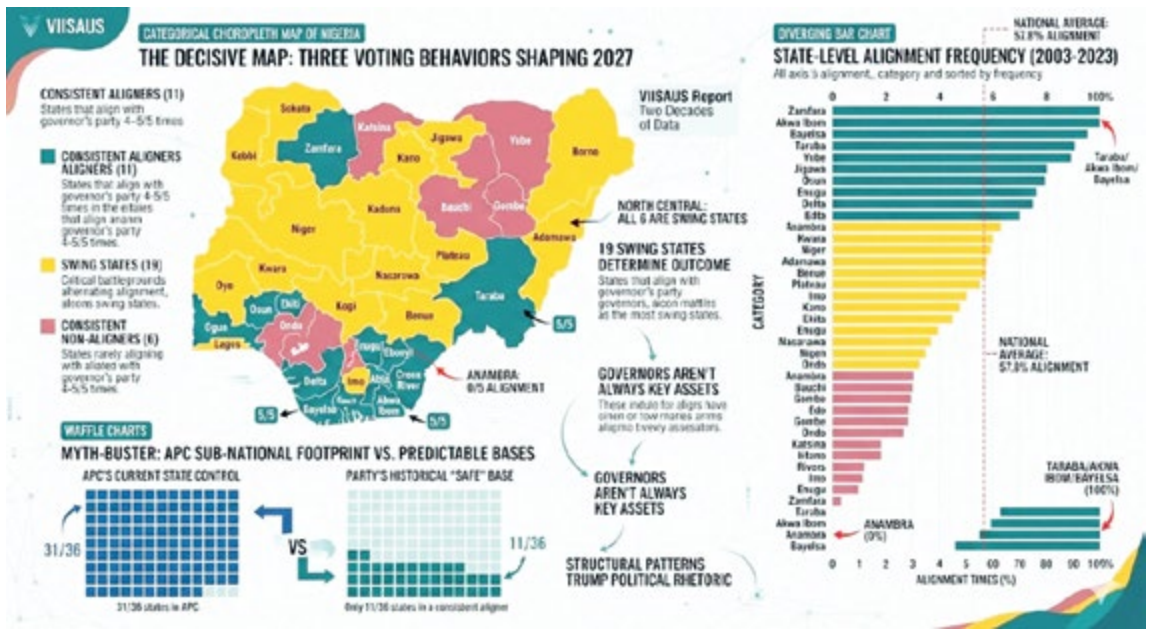
Ekiti: Tinubu's 2023 victory and the APC's established structure give the party a clear advantage.

Lagos: Tinubu's political base and the APC's organisation provide a substantial advantage. However, Obi's strong urban and youth support in 2023 means the opposition could remain competitive in parts of the state.

Ogun: The APC has a strong political structure and a clear advantage, although internal disagreements could influence the result.

Ondo: The APC has an established presence and a strong starting advantage.

Osun: Governor Ademola Adeleke's indication of support for Tinubu's re-election could benefit the President. However, Atiku's substantial 2023 support and the independence of voters make the state competitive.



Oyo: Governor Seyi Makinde's national political ambitions and relationship with opposition leaders could influence the election. The APC also has a substantial presence, while Obi may attract former supporters. Oyo remains competitive.

5. CONSOLIDATED ELECTORAL OUTLOOK

The state assessments can be summarised as follows:

Region States/Territories Present Outlook

North-West Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto Competitive

Kano Highly competitive

Jigawa, Zamfara APC advantage

North-East Adamawa Atiku advantage

Bauchi, Gombe, Taraba Competitive

Borno, Yobe APC advantage

North-Central Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger APC advantage, varying degrees

Plateau, FCT Competitive

South-East Abia, Anambra, Enugu NDC advantage

Ebonyi, Imo Competitive

South-South Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River APC advantage

Delta, Edo, Rivers Competitive; APC organisational advantage

South-West Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo APC advantage

Osun, Oyo Competitive

These are provisional political assessments, not declarations of likely official winners. An APC advantage does not guarantee victory, just as an NDC or Atiku advantage does not rule out a strong challenge.

6. THREE POSSIBLE ELECTORAL SCENARIOS

SCENARIO ONE: TINUBU CONSOLIDATES THE APC ADVANTAGE

This scenario assumes that the APC successfully converts defections into effective electoral structures, retains its South-West advantage, makes gains in the South-South and improves its position in parts of the North.

Wike's influence could assist the APC in Rivers and the FCT, while the defections in Plateau and other states could strengthen its organisation.

Atiku retains a substantial Northern following, but the opposition vote remains divided between the ADC and NDC.

Likely outcome: Tinubu remains the candidate with the strongest overall electoral advantage.

SCENARIO TWO: THE OPPOSITION CONSOLIDATES ITS SUPPORT

This scenario assumes that the opposition mobilises voters dissatisfied with the current administration and builds a coherent national campaign.

Atiku retains substantial support in the North, while Obi and Kwankwaso consolidate their bases in the South-East and Kano and expand into other regions.

The APC's political defections fail to produce the expected transfer of votes.

Likely outcome: Tinubu faces a serious national challenge, and the election becomes substantially more competitive.

The major obstacle is the division of opposition votes between Atiku and the Obi-Kwankwaso ticket.

SCENARIO THREE: A DIVIDED OPPOSITION AND STRONG APC MOBILISATION

Under this scenario, the ADC and NDC remain separate electoral forces while the APC maintains a disciplined national campaign.

Tinubu retains his South-West advantage, consolidates the South-South and makes gains in parts of the North-Central and North-West.

Atiku and Obi compete for overlapping opposition voters, allowing the APC to benefit from the division.

Likely outcome: Tinubu has a clearer path to victory, provided the APC converts its political structures into actual turnout and valid votes.

7. WHAT THE 2023 NUMBERS TELL US

The 2023 results provide a useful baseline but cannot independently determine the 2027 outcome.

Tinubu received 8,794,726 votes, Atiku 6,984,520, while Obi and Kwankwaso together received 7,598,220.

The combined Obi-Kwankwaso figure remained 1,196,506 votes below Tinubu's total. Therefore, the alliance must retain a substantial proportion of its previous supporters and attract additional voters to overtake the incumbent.

However, the figures cannot be transferred mechanically from one election to another.

A credible projection must consider:

The percentage of previous supporters each candidate can retain.

The extent to which Obi and Kwankwaso's supporters will embrace the joint ticket.

The impact of governors' defections on voter behaviour.

Atiku's ability to retain former PDP supporters.

New voters, PVC collection and turnout.

Economic conditions, insecurity and local political disputes.

Votes attracted by other presidential candidates.

Without applying these factors to actual state-level results, precise numerical forecasts would be misleading.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR VICTORY

The presidential election is not determined solely by the candidate with the highest national vote total.

Section 134(2) of the 1999 Constitution, as amended, requires a presidential candidate to secure:

The highest number of votes cast at the election; and

At least one-quarter of the votes cast in each of at least two-thirds of all the states of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory.

Where no candidate satisfies these conditions, the Constitution provides for a second election under the circumstances prescribed by Section 134.

This requirement makes geographical spread essential.

Tinubu must retain his South-West advantage while securing sufficient support across other regions. Atiku must maintain his Northern base and attract meaningful support outside the North. Obi and Kwankwaso must transform their combined political appeal into a genuinely national coalition.

The ability to secure widespread support may prove as important as the national vote total.

9. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Three principal observations emerge from this analysis.

First, Tinubu remains a formidable candidate because of incumbency, the APC's national structure and the growing number of influential political actors aligning with the ruling party. His challenge is to convert these advantages into actual votes, particularly amid economic and security concerns.

Second, Atiku remains a serious contender, especially in the North. His experience and established political networks should not be underestimated. However, he must contend with the Obi-Kwankwaso alliance for opposition voters.

Third, Obi and Kwankwaso have altered the electoral equation by bringing together two political movements with substantial regional influence. Their success will depend on retaining their previous supporters and expanding beyond their traditional strongholds.

The North will be decisive, but it would be wrong to treat Northern voters as a single political constituency. The region's diverse communities have different interests, grievances and voting patterns.

The South-South also presents an important opportunity for the APC following the defections of governors in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Delta. Nevertheless, the party must demonstrate that political realignments can translate into genuine voter support.

Kaduna, Kano, Plateau, the FCT, Rivers, Edo and Osun deserve particular attention because of their changing political alignments and competing electoral interests.

Ultimately, economic conditions may prove decisive. Nigerians will judge the government by their experiences with inflation, food prices, employment, security, electricity, education and the general cost of living.

10. CONCLUSION: THE 2027 ELECTION WILL BE WON BY VOTES, NOT DEFECTIONS

The political developments since 2023 have substantially altered Nigeria's electoral landscape. Governors have changed parties, political alliances have emerged and new presidential partnerships have been formed.

Tinubu has the advantage of incumbency and an expanding network of political allies. Atiku retains considerable experience and a substantial political following, particularly in the North. Obi and Kwankwaso have created a new opposition alliance capable of reshaping the electoral calculations.

My assessment is that Tinubu should not be dismissed, but his re-election should not be treated as inevitable. The APC has made significant political gains, yet the movement of governors and political officeholders does not necessarily mean that their voters will follow them.

Atiku's prospects should equally be assessed realistically. Northern voters are not automatically committed to a Northern candidate, particularly with the emergence of the Obi-Kwankwaso ticket.

Similarly, the NDC should not assume that it has automatically inherited every vote received by Obi and Kwankwaso in 2023. Political alliances must be tested at the polling units, not merely celebrated at political meetings.

Ultimately, victory will depend on the ability of each candidate to build a national coalition, retain existing supporters, attract undecided voters, mobilise registered voters and satisfy the constitutional requirements.

The 2027 presidential election is therefore a contest between three political strategies: the consolidation of incumbency, the revival of established opposition politics and the emergence of a new alliance seeking to bridge regional political divisions.

The final verdict belongs to the Nigerian electorate.

• *Chief/Barr. J.D. Ephraim*

NEWS

FOREIGN



Bududa has suffered repeated deadly landslides over the years

Survivors of Uganda's deadly landslide seek justice at the UN

Survivors of a 2019 landslide in eastern Uganda that killed more than 50 people have taken their fight for relocation and compensation to the United Nations.

The 48 complainants accuse the government of violating Uganda's constitution by failing to put effective disaster management measures in Bududa, a mountainous district prone to landslides.

Their case comes as heavy rains raise the risk of further landslides. They say the government relocation programme ignores their safety, land rights and livelihoods.

The UN Human Rights Committee is considering what is believed to be the first case seeking climate adaptation measures, one that could set a global precedent.

At least 33 of the 53 people who died in the 2019 landslide were children. Years later, survivors say every spell of heavy rain brings back fears of another tragedy.

William Tsama, one of the claimants, lost four members of his family.

"My quest should be a lesson," he said.

"Victims in such situations, ignored by governments, can take them to court to compel them to help their citizens."

Uganda introduced a resettlement plan for landslide-prone areas in 2011, but progress has been limited, with relatively few people relocated.

Last month, it launched a new resettlement programme offering affected households 18m Ugandan shillings ($4,300; £3,300) to help them move to safer areas.

But some survivors have questioned whether the amount is enough to cover the cost of relocating and rebuilding their lives.

Under the programme, families can choose between receiving two acres of land, valued at 8m shillings, plus 10m shillings towards building a house, or taking the equivalent land allowance in cash, alongside the same housing grant.

The scheme is expected to benefit 1,410 households identified as living in high-risk areas.

The government has now given residents of designated high-risk areas two months, from November to December, to leave or face forced eviction.

The threat extends beyond landslides. The complainants say changing rainfall patterns and declining soil fertility have also affected farming, leaving many families struggling to secure their livelihoods.

"I want to get a new good place for my people, so even if I die, they will be okay. I am an old man, but I am doing it for my children," Tsama said.

The survivors first launched legal action in 2020 in Uganda, and received support from Ugandan environmental organisation Greenwatch three years later.

They are seeking compensation for lost family members and livelihoods, as well as emergency measures, including accessible early-warning systems in high-risk areas.

Greenwatch Executive Director Samantha Atukunda Kakuru Mwesigwa said the case is about changing how governments prepare and respond to climate-related disasters.

"Justice for claimants is not just about winning in court. It is about forcing government policy to keep pace with a changing climate, and ensuring loss and damage is no longer an afterthought in disaster management," she said.

The threat of climate-related disasters extends across East Africa.

In Kenya, floods and landslides killed at least 181 people between March and May 2024, according to the Kenya Red Cross. In Rwanda, floods and landslides killed 135 people in May 2023.

The dangers are also being felt further afield. In October 2026, a flash flood swept through Nepal's Gorkha district after a landslide blocked a river, washing away homes and infrastructure, and killing over 1,500 people.

"Disasters like the one in Bududa are only getting worse because of climate change – and they are happening all around the world, as we've seen recently and tragically in Nepal," ClientEarth lawyer Vesselina Newman said.

Israeli military launches rare ground operation in Gaza beyond Yellow Line

Israeli ground forces have launched a rare operation in part of the central Gaza Strip outside their control, after issuing evacuation orders for residents.

Witnesses said tanks advanced east of Nuseirat refugee camp and rolled onto the territory's main north to south road under the cover of artillery strikes.

The Israeli military said the "targeted" operation aimed to dismantle a "terror tunnel" west of the so-called Yellow Line, which marks the more than 60% of Gaza's territory occupied by Israel.

The Palestinian armed group Hamas, which controls the rest of Gaza, accused Israel of a "flagrant violation" of the October 2025 ceasefire agreement.

Violence has continued in Gaza over the past 13 months, with near-daily Israeli strikes, and living conditions for the 2.1 million people there remain dire.

Early on Wednesday afternoon, Israeli military body Cogat's Arabic spokesperson announced the start of the incursion and warned Palestinians living in an area north of Nuseirat and Bureij refugee camp to stay away for their own safety.

It also said a section of the north to south Salah al-Din road that passed through the area would be closed to traffic.

Later, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said it had begun a joint operation with the Shin Bet security service "to dismantle a terror tunnel west of the Yellow Line that posed an immediate and direct threat to IDF troops".

"IDF troops under the Southern Command are deployed in the area in accordance with the ceasefire agreement and will continue to operate to remove any immediate threat and thwart attempts by the Hamas terrorist organisation to harm Israeli civilians or IDF troops, or to violate the agreement," it added.

Hamas warned in a statement that the advance of Israeli military vehicles beyond the Yellow Line and the evacuation of residents constituted "a dangerous development and a flagrant violation of the ceasefire agreement".

Footage published by Palestinian media outlets and on social media showed families fleeing areas near Nuseirat camp following the announcement.

In one video verified by BBC Verify, a man can be seen ducking after hearing artillery fire and then running along Salah al-Din road, about 1.5km (0.9 miles) west of the Yellow Line. "The Israeli occupation now is firing randomly near the houses and tents of people," he says.

Automatic gunfire can be heard in another video filmed just to the south-east.

Crimean bridge attacked again, Russia says

The Crimean Bridge has been attacked by Ukraine for the third time this week, Russia has said.

The Moscow-installed head of Crimea, Sergei Aksyonov, said that rail traffic was temporarily suspended following another strike on the bridge connecting Russia to occupied Crimea.

On Tuesday, Ukrainian missiles and drones destroyed the central road section of the critical bridge, collapsing part of it into the water.

The important infrastructure has long been targeted by Ukraine because of its significance as a logistical and symbolic asset to Moscow's war effort.

It came as Russian President Vladimir Putin met US President Donald Trump and China's President Xi Jinping on Thursday for landmark talks in China.

Aksyonov confirmed the strike on the bridge in the early hours of Thursday via Telegram.

Russia's transport ministry said nobody had been hurt in the attack, and that specialists were assessing damage to the bridge.

"As a result of a nighttime drone attack, train services on the railway section of the Crimean Bridge have been temporarily suspended," the ministry said in a statement on Telegram.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian sources have continued to issue air raid alert warnings overnight for districts just outside of the capital Kyiv.

At least four people were killed in a Russian drone attack on the southern city of Odesa on Wednesday, according to Odesa Governor Oleh Kiper. Officials described the attack as "brutal and deliberate... directly targeting people and their lives".

President Volodymyr Zelensky called the initial strikes on the Crimean Bridge an "unprecedented operation" weeks in the making.

Ukraine used drones and missiles against it on 17 November which brought down a key section of the road.

That section of the double-arched, 12-mile bridge now lies on the seabed, brought down by an arsenal of Ukrainian long-range weaponry in a seven-stage operation culminating in a dramatic collapse.

In response, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has said the bridge "will be rebuilt, and it will be even better than before".

While Ukrainian forces have struggled to close the bridge for good, recent attempts have brought them closer to destroying the bridge's crucial road and rail route for Russian soldiers heading towards the front line.

Russian forces have also targeted key bridge crossings over the Dnipro River in Kyiv in recent days.

Russian strikes hit the Pivnichnyi (Northern) and Pivdennyi (Southern) bridges causing traffic closures, partial damage to the metro system and some power and water outages.

Elon Musk says record $446m spending on US midterms was 'pretty foolish'

Elon Musk said on Wednesday that he felt "pretty foolish" about the record sum he spent on the US midterm elections, following sweeping Republican defeats.

The Tesla and SpaceX chief executive was the election's top individual donor, giving $446m (£339m) to support President Donald Trump's party, particularly in Texas where many of Musk's firms are based.

Musk, who had backed Trump's second White House bid, also said he was "not Maga" - the Make America Great Again movement associated with the president.

Democrats won control of both chambers in the US Congress, flipping both swing seats and making historic gains in places that have for decades been controlled by Republicans.

The election was seen as a bruising defeat for Trump, who has faced pressure over the impact his policies have had on the cost of living in the US.

Musk was speaking virtually at the New York Times DealBook Summit, an annual conference hosted in the city attended by major business and political leaders.

"I'm not Maga," Musk said, referring to the right-wing political movement.

He added: "I'm not sure what Maga means... if that means sort of blind adherence to a set of policies by the Republican Party, then I certainly don't have that."

This marks a major shift in tone by Musk, who has previously been seen wearing a Maga hat.

"I'm not just Maga, I'm dark, gothic Maga," he joked at a Trump rally in 2024.

For several months at the start of Trump's second term in the White House, Musk served as an unpaid "special government employee" and Senior Advisor to the President, leading the Department of Government Efficiency (Doge) to cut government spending.

In October 2026, the Pentagon named Musk as a co-lead of a future of warfare study called Project Meridian, while he continued to travel with and advise Trump.

NEWS

FOREIGN

This is a remarkable diplomatic moment for China's Xi - but it comes with pitfalls

Xi Jinping will believe he has achieved something no other world leader could in securing a historic summit with Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump in Shenzhen.

For decades, Washington and its western allies shaped the world order.

Yet it is China that has orchestrated the remarkable diplomatic spectacle of three of the world's most powerful protagonists sitting around the table.

And surrounding it all is the futuristic display that is Shenzhen, with driverless cars cruising past as drones fly overhead and robots - literally - dance in the streets.

Ostensibly, this is an economic summit for Asia Pacific leaders. But for Xi, it is also a demonstration of China's grip on the global economy and world politics.

His country is no longer just reacting to decisions made in Washington, London or Brussels - instead Beijing is at the heart of conversations which are reshaping the international order.

But this meeting is not without its pitfalls for Xi as there are many things he does not appear keen to discuss with Putin and Trump.

First, China is not keen for the war in Ukraine, now well into its fifth year, to be on the agenda.

This is a delicate balancing act for Xi who is aware his relationship with Putin may damage China's connections in Europe. The EU is a key market, especially now when the Chinese economy is heavily relying on exports.

However Xi also doesn't want the war to end in a way that will destabilise Russia, a key ally and neighbour.

Beijing is still trying to maintain that it is neutral in this war and has repeatedly called for negotiations and a political settlement while avoiding condemnation of Russia's full-scale invasion.

The US, especially under the previous Biden administration, and Europe have accused China of sending Russia components that it could use in its war in Ukraine, while also propping up the country's economy by buying oil and gas.

Xi wants to keep Putin close, but not too close because he also doesn't want Russia's problems to become China's problems.

China's growing nuclear arsenal

Donald Trump has already made it clear he wants the three leaders to discuss limiting the world's supply of nuclear weapons.

The US and Russia possess the world's largest stockpile of nuclear warheads. But China is rapidly expanding its own arsenal, which is raising alarm bells in Washington.

The last major US-Russian arms control treaty, known as New START, expired in February this year, triggering fears of an arms race. The agreement had set a cap to control the number of nuclear weapons in US and Russia's arsenal.

Trump would like China to be included in any new agreement, but Beijing has pushed back.

Xi's argument will be that his arsenal is considerably smaller than what Washington and Moscow own, and, therefore, it would be unfair for Beijing to be bound by their limits. China also believes it should have the freedom to develop its own nuclear capabilities.

China unveiled intercontinental nuclear missiles at a military parade in 2025.

This subject could complicate Xi's bid for China to be recognised as a leader on the world stage - because the US could argue that the status includes being a responsible nuclear power.



Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping meet for a historic trilateral summit

Dozens missing after boat carrying 100 migrants sinks off Senegal's coast

Senegalese authorities are continuing search operations after a boat reportedly carrying about 100 migrants capsized off the coast.

Initial reports said that one person had died, but some local media have reported that at least four bodies have been recovered. Dozens of people are still missing.

Personal belongings were found on the badly damaged boat, which washed ashore near the village of Yenne, south of Dakar. Search operations continued throughout Wednesday and were due to resume on Thursday.

This comes less than two weeks after a shipwreck off the coast of the north-western town of Thieppe killed at least 39 people, in one of Senegal's deadliest migration disasters.

Oumar Sow, a representative of the village chief, said the latest tragedy happened around 02:00 local time (02:00 GMT).

"Cries could be heard coming from the pirogue that were audible even from the beach," the AFP news agency quoted him as saying.

A survivor questioned by the police said there were about 100 people on the boat, including five women, AFP reported.

Police recovered identity documents, several mobile phones and personal belongings from the wreckage, including a school enrolment document.

At a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, President Diomaye Faye expressed concern about a renewed increase in irregular departure by migrants hoping to reach Europe.

He instructed the interior ministry to prepare a report examining the factors driving the dangerous journeys and proposing measures to tackle the problem.

Following last month's tragedy, Faye had urged Senegalese people not to risk their lives attempting the dangerous sea crossings.

Many thousands of people from West Africa have died or gone missing trying to flee conflict, authoritarian rule or poverty in recent years.

The UN's migration agency IOM said last month that it had recorded at least 454 deaths and disappearances off the West African coast this year alone.

It warned the figures were likely to be an underestimate, as many boats disappear without leaving survivors or a trace.

As it has become more difficult to reach Europe through North Africa, due to tighter controls and increased co-operation with European countries, migrants are increasingly targeting Spain's Canary Islands.

They often travel in wooden boats known as pirogues that are frequently overloaded and not suited to such long voyages across the Atlantic Ocean.

Most migrants arriving in the Canary Islands this year are from Senegal, according to the UN.

They are driven to leave home by limited employment opportunities, family pressures and established migration networks, according to the IOM.

On 7 November, El Hierro, one of the Canary Islands, declared a state of emergency following a surge in migrant arrivals.

It said more than 3,300 people had reached the island in about 30 boats since the beginning of the month. This amounts to almost a third of the island's population.

'Frustrated' - Democrats remain a divided party despite winning big in midterms

When James Talarico - who is the first Democrat to win election to the Senate for Texas since 1988 - appeared onstage at a Democratic political conference, he was greeted by a chorus of cheers and a standing ovation.

But their enthusiasm dimmed when he suggested working in tandem with the Republican Trump administration.

"We should make the final two years of his presidency the most productive of any presidency in American history," said Talarico, who at 37 will become the youngest member of the Senate when he takes his oath of office in January. "Because this moment is so much bigger and so much more important than the red team or the blue team."

He was just one of many rising stars speaking last week during a political conference in Denver, titled "What's Next: investigating strategies and priorities for the future of the Democratic Party".

And the answer? No one's sure.

Those present, which included activists and political organisers, were invigorated and celebratory the week after a "blue tsunami" saw Democrats win in Republican heartlands in the mid-term elections.

The party took control of both chambers of Congress, winning a majority in the House by over 80 seats and gaining at least eight seats in the Senate.

But the atmosphere in Denver was also introspective and forward-looking, as discussions focused on how those victories were won, which issues did not resonate, and what would be needed to continue the party's seat-winning momentum.

Some, like Talarico, suggested working alongside Republicans to push forward an economic agenda that would resonate with Americans, such as extending health coverage and reducing inflation.

Alabama Congressman Shomari Figures - who surprised many pollsters when he held his seat despite Republicans redrawing his district months before the election - cautioned going after Trump, when there were more pressing concerns for Americans.

Previous Democratic-led efforts to impeach Trump both ended in Senate acquittals.

"We impeached him twice and got him back - with a Republican majority," Figures said.

Yet others, like Maryland Congresswoman Angela Alsobrooks, insisted that voters wanted to see accountability.

Florida pastor found guilty over role in assassination of Haitian president

A Florida pastor has been found guilty of a number of charges relating to the assassination of the Haitian President Jovenel Moïse.

Christian Emmanuel Sanon, a dual US-Haitian national, was convicted of all eight charges against him, including conspiracy to kill or kidnap a person. He faces a potential sentence of life in prison.

The 67-year-old was accused of being involved in a plot to replace Moïse as Haiti's president with himself in 2021, allegedly so he could award lucrative contracts to a Florida-based security outfit once in place.

The murder of Moïse has left Haiti without a leader for five years. That political vacuum has intensified gang violence in the impoverished Caribbean nation.

A presidential election is scheduled for next year and Moïse's wife, Martine, who was injured in the attack that killed her husband, announced this week that she intended to stand.

Sanon was found guilty on Wednesday following an eight-week trial in federal court in Miami, according to CBS, the BBC's US partner. His lawyer said he maintains his innocence and that he intends to appeal against the verdict, it reports.

Prosecutors said Sanon had "political aspirations" in Haiti and, in April 2021, met several other co-conspirators to devise a plan to oust Moïse in an armed raid on the presidential palace in the capital, Port-au-Prince.

Opinion

2027: Gov. Okpebholo and the Tinubu Effect on Edo State



EUBALDUS ENAHORO

Every great nation reaches a defining moment when it must choose between the pains of reform and the comfort of returning to past failures. Nigeria is at such a crossroads, and the decisions made in 2027 will determine whether the country consolidates its ongoing reforms or abandons the journey towards economic recovery.

In Edo State, Governor Monday Okpebholo has emerged as a leading advocate of continuity in the All Progressives Congress (APC), urging the people to support President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for a second term to consolidate the reforms and development initiatives already underway.

When Tinubu assumed office in 2023, Nigeria was confronted with a fragile economy, an unsustainable fuel subsidy regime, a distorted foreign exchange market, mounting public debt and widespread insecurity that had affected agricultural production and economic activities.

Rather than maintain the existing system, the President embarked on far-reaching economic reforms, beginning with the removal of fuel subsidy and the unification of the foreign exchange market.

Although these measures imposed considerable hardship on Nigerians, the administration argued that the resources previously committed to fuel subsidy could be redirected towards infrastructure, education, healthcare and other critical sectors.

The increased revenue accruing to the three tiers of government has provided states and local governments with greater financial capacity to meet their obligations and execute development projects. For Edo State, this has created additional opportunities which the present administration says it is translating into visible development.

That is one of the defining dimensions of the Tinubu effect.

The foreign exchange reforms were also designed to address longstanding distortions, improve transparency and strengthen investor confidence. Meanwhile, major infrastructure projects, including the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway, Sokoto-Badagry Highway and Abuja-Kaduna-Kano Road, are expected to improve connectivity, stimulate trade and create employment opportunities.

On security, the Federal Government has continued to invest in military equipment, intelligence gathering and operational capacity to confront terrorism, banditry and kidnapping. Although considerable challenges remain, the administration maintains that sustained efforts are being made to restore security across the country.

Another important development is local government financial autonomy, which is intended to strengthen grassroots administration by giving councils greater control over their statutory allocations.

For Edo State, however, the most compelling argument for Tinubu's continuity campaign is the relationship between federal economic reforms and the development activities of the Okpebholo administration.

The increase in federal allocations following fuel subsidy removal has provided the state with additional resources. Governor Okpebholo has sought to utilise these opportunities through his SHINE Agenda, which focuses on Security, Health, Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Agriculture, and Education.

In less than two years, the administration has placed considerable emphasis on road construction, school renovation, healthcare delivery, workers' welfare and youth empowerment.

From Benin City to Ekpoma, Auchi to Igarra, Uromi to Okada and Igueben, road construction and rehabilitation projects have featured prominently in the government's development programme.

The Ramat Park Flyover stands out as one of the administration's major infrastructure interventions in Benin City, alongside other road, drainage and erosion-control projects aimed at improving transportation and addressing long-standing environmental challenges.

The government has also highlighted improvements in workers' welfare, pension obligations and gratuity payments, as well as initiatives designed to expand opportunities for young people.

These interventions have strengthened the political argument that increased federal revenue, when matched with purposeful leadership at the state level, can translate into tangible benefits for citizens.

This is what Governor Okpebholo's supporters describe as the Tinubu effect: a Federal Government providing the financial and policy environment, while the state government converts available resources into projects and public services.

The governor's growing political profile within the APC has also attracted affectionate descriptions from supporters, including the nickname 'Okpe's Baby', in addition to his popular identity as Akpakomiza.

The question before Nigerians in 2027, however, goes beyond political slogans. It is whether the country should sustain the present reform direction or embark on another transition that could alter existing economic priorities.

Reforms are often difficult at the beginning because their immediate consequences may be more visible than their long-term benefits. Nevertheless, continuity must be justified by measurable improvements in living standards, employment, security, infrastructure and the purchasing power of ordinary Nigerians.

The Tinubu administration has maintained that its policies are beginning to stabilise the economy, improve revenue generation, strengthen foreign reserves and restore investor confidence. The challenge is to ensure that these improvements translate into meaningful relief for households and businesses.

For Edo State, sustained federal support, improved infrastructure and stronger economic opportunities remain important to its development aspirations.

Governor Okpebholo's advocacy for Tinubu's second term is therefore closely connected to his administration's development agenda. His argument is that continuity at the centre will provide an opportunity to consolidate the reforms and partnerships upon which Edo State hopes to build.

Indeed, the first term of an administration often involves initiating policies and laying foundations, while a second term provides an opportunity to deepen implementation and consolidate achievements. Such continuity, however, must ultimately be justified by performance and the confidence of the electorate.

The APC's 2027 campaign in Edo is already taking shape around this message, with Governor Okpebholo expressing confidence that President Tinubu can secure as many as 2.5 million votes from the state.

That is an ambitious target. The governor's responsibility will be to convince Edo people that the benefits of federal reforms are sufficiently visible in their communities to justify such overwhelming support.

Ultimately, the Tinubu effect on Edo State will not be measured by political endorsements alone, but by roads completed, schools improved, hospitals equipped, jobs created and improvements in the quality of life of the people.

As 2027 approaches, the central message of the APC campaign in Edo is clear: continuity at the federal level, supported by effective leadership at the state level, offers an opportunity to consolidate ongoing development efforts.

• Eubaldus Enahoro is a former Editor of The NIGERIAN OBSERVER Newspaper.

This Christmas, A pot of Jollof Rice may cost less than 37% of the Minimum Wage (2)

MAGNUS ONYIBE

It is not by sheer coincidence that a similar concept is being replicated by Tinubu's administration, which has embarked on massive infrastructure development programmes, including the construction of the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway and the Badagry-Sokoto Highway, providing employment opportunities for thousands of Nigerians at both professional and artisanal levels.

The port rehabilitation initiative, reportedly backed by a £740 billion loan from Citibank, guaranteed by the UK government, is another Roosevelt-style initiative aimed at stimulating economic recovery.

Similarly, the argument that Roosevelt provided education grants while Tinubu is offering education loans also misses the point. Both are investments in human resources, which, by all standards, are classified as inputs into human capital development.

As I stated earlier, it is the underlying principle that matters, not the granular details.

One cannot, in good conscience, argue against the fact that there has clearly been a paradigm shift from subsidising consumption to subsidising production under Tinubu's watch. That is what matters in this context.

As I argued in the previous articles in this series, of which this is the fifth instalment, it takes between 24 and 36 months to establish a factory capable of creating employment, wealth and prosperity for Nigerians.

A practical illustration of the length of time required to establish a factory is the fact that Aliko Dangote spent seven years building his petroleum refinery.

The reality is that the factories being established by those currently making money at the macroeconomic level will eventually create employment and prosperity for people at the bottom of the economic pyramid, and the professionals like engineers, doctors, lawyers which represent the middle and microeconomic levels. The truth is that Tinubu has been at the helm of Nigeria's affairs for less than four years, while, as I have pointed out, establishing a factory can take between 24 and 36 months.

If the superstructure, such as the beams on which the slab rests in a typical road bridge, is not first constructed to provide a solid foundation, how can the slab on which vehicles travel be laid? I hope readers will permit me to use this analogy of bridge construction to explain my argument.

So, in my view, President Tinubu has done the right thing by fixing the economy at the macroeconomic level first.

Based on his Renewed Hope Agenda 2.0, unveiled at the Yar'Adua Centre in Abuja and as he had earlier promised during the flag-off of his re-election campaign at the Ranchers Bees Stadium in Kaduna in October, his priority goal will be to ensure that the wealth and prosperity currently evident at the macroeconomic level cascade down to the microeconomic level. This, in turn, should help stem the current hue and cry among poor Nigerians at the lower end of the economic spectrum.

According to his newly unveiled manifesto, President Tinubu is now poised to use his second term to cascade prosperity from the macroeconomic to the microeconomic level.

This is consistent with his campaign promise to focus on agriculture, the construction of cold-room storage chains, the provision of agricultural extension services, improved seedlings and the creation of better access routes for moving produce from farms to cities and, ultimately, to consumers' kitchens. These are initiatives that Anambra State governor, Professor Charles Soludo, is already pursuing in his state.

The 105-page pact with Nigerians, which is essentially what a manifesto represents, also contains similarly transformative proposals for other sectors of the economy. What this suggests is that Tinubu is not planning to wait for the traditional trickle-down process to take effect before providing relief to the critical mass of Nigerians currently under tremendous socioeconomic pressure.

Rather, he can intervene directly at the bottom of the economic spectrum to stimulate economic activity and accelerate growth beyond its normal pace. This would enable those at the grassroots to catch up with the prosperity cascading from the macroeconomic level, allowing both processes to meet halfway and positively impact society much faster.

In that regard, in my previous interventions, I have encouraged and urged President Tinubu to consider deploying 50% of the $1 billion earmarked for compressed natural gas (CNG) initiatives towards funding the production of electric-vehicle (EV) okadas and keke tricycles.

Such an initiative would not only improve mobility, as tricycles and motorcycles (three- and two-wheelers, respectively) serve as our equivalent of the mass-transit rail systems found in advanced industrialised economies, but would also create employment opportunities for the huge number of commercial riders through ride-to-own models.

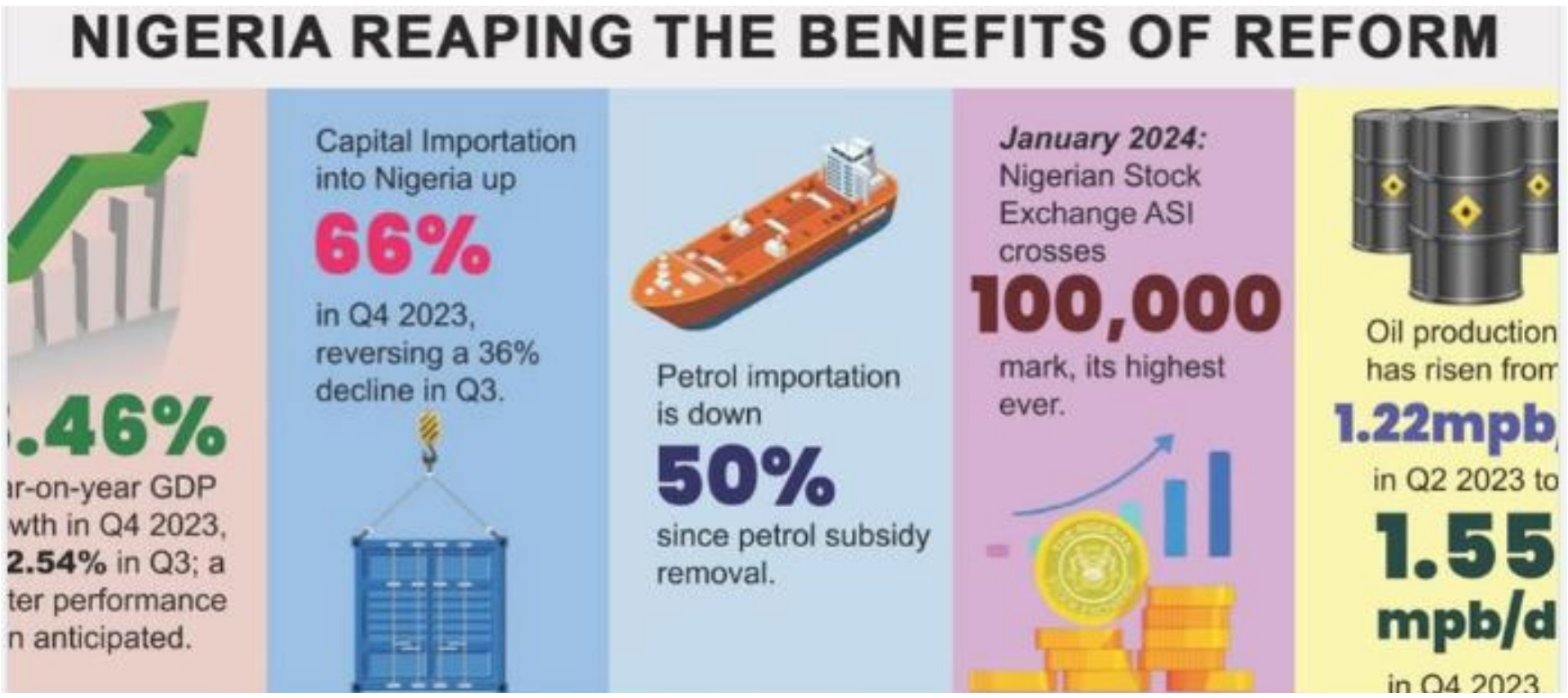
This would leave the beneficiaries with assets rather than simply burning petrol in SUVs, as happens under a system of petrol consumption subsidies.

I could go on and on establishing the connections between the principles underlying Roosevelt's and Tinubu's production-oriented subsidy policies. Suffice it to say, however, that although it is not yet uhuru, as we say in Africa, Tinubu appears to be on track towards pulling the Nigerian economy, and by extension Nigerians, out of the doldrums.

Fittingly, the first prove of the pudding, as conventional wisdom

FEATURES

Rebuilding the Nigerian economy: **from reform pain to productive growth**



James Uwadia

The Nigerian economy has been described in many ways over the years: a sleeping giant, a land of opportunity, a paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty. Oil-rich but infrastructure-poor. Population-rich but productivity-low. Entrepreneurial but constrained.

The Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu set out to change this paradox, not by magic, but by reform.

Economic reform is never easy. It disrupts old interests, creates temporary pain and tests the patience of citizens. But economists agree that without reform, the Nigerian economy was heading for a fiscal cliff.

The Inherited Crisis

Before May 2023, Nigeria was spending a large portion of its revenue on fuel subsidy and debt servicing. The country was borrowing to pay salaries and to fund consumption. The naira was overvalued on paper but undervalued in reality. Investors were cautious. Foreign direct investment was declining. Unemployment, especially among young people, was high.

The government inherited a situation where the economy was growing, but not fast enough to lift people out of poverty. Growth was driven by services and oil, while agriculture and manufacturing, which employ most Nigerians, were lagging.

Subsidy Removal And Exchange Rate Reform

The removal of fuel subsidy was the most consequential economic decision of the decade. It was controversial, but it was also inevitable. The subsidy had become a fiscal black hole. In 2022 alone, Nigeria spent more on subsidy than on health, education and infrastructure combined.

By removing it, the government saved trillions of naira. Monthly FAAC allocations to states rose from about N700 billion to over N1 trillion in many months, giving states unprecedented resources for development.

The second reform, exchange rate unification, ended a system where a few people accessed dollars at an official rate and sold at a higher parallel rate, making huge profits without producing anything. Unification restored transparency and allowed the market to determine the true value of the naira.

The immediate consequence was a sharp depreciation of the naira and a rise in inflation. Imported goods became more expensive. Businesses that depended on imports faced higher costs. Nigerians felt the pain in markets, in transport parks and in their homes.

The government responded with palliatives: cash transfers, food distribution, CNG buses, wage awards and support for small businesses. While these measures were criticised as inadequate, they showed an awareness that reform without cushioning can destroy social trust.

Tax Reform And Revenue

A major pillar of Renewed Hope is tax reform. Nigeria has one of the lowest tax-to-GDP ratios in the world, at about 6 percent. This means the government has very little revenue to fund development.

The Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms proposed a comprehensive overhaul: harmonising taxes, reducing the number of taxes paid by businesses from over 60 to less than 10, exempting small businesses from certain taxes, and improving collection through technology.

The aim is not to increase the burden on the poor, but to make the system fairer and more efficient. When more businesses pay a little, the government can earn more without over-taxing anyone.

The introduction of the new tax laws in 2024 and 2025, and the strengthening of the Federal Inland Revenue Service, are part of this effort. Early results show an increase in non-oil revenue, reducing Nigeria's over-dependence on oil.

Diversification: Beyond Oil

For decades, Nigeria has talked about diversifying the economy. The Renewed Hope Agenda has tried to move from talk to action.

In agriculture, the focus is on mechanisation, irrigation and value addition. In solid minerals, the government has established a new ministry, formalised artisanal mining, and sought investment in lithium, gold and other critical minerals. In manufacturing, the emphasis is on industrial clusters, access to credit through the Bank of Industry, and the reduction of logistics costs through infrastructure.

In the creative and digital economy, Nigeria is already a continental leader. Nollywood, Afrobeats, fintech and e-commerce are creating jobs and earning foreign exchange. The government's support for the digital economy through broadband expansion, the 3 Million Technical Talent programme and startup incentives is aimed at making Nigeria a tech hub for Africa.

In tourism, the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway, the upgrading of airports and the promotion of cultural festivals are meant to unlock the potential of a sector that has been neglected.

> Economic reform is never easy. It disrupts old interests, creates temporary pain and tests the patience of citizens. But economists agree that without reform, the Nigerian economy was heading for a fiscal cliff.

Investment And Confidence

One of the key tests of economic reform is investor confidence. In 2023 and 2024, Nigeria recorded increased interest from foreign investors in energy, agriculture, manufacturing and technology. The clearing of foreign exchange backlogs, the improvement in ease of doing business, and the signing of investment agreements with countries like Germany, UAE and Saudi Arabia signalled a return of confidence.

Domestically, the Dangote Refinery, which began operations in 2024, is a game-changer. For the first time, Nigeria is refining its own crude oil at scale, reducing dependence on imported fuel, saving foreign exchange and creating jobs. The refinery alone has the capacity to transform Nigeria's trade balance.

Inflation, Jobs And The Cost of Living

Despite these reforms, the cost of living remains the biggest challenge. Inflation, though moderating, remains high. Food inflation has hit households hard. Unemployment and underemployment remain serious.

The government's response has included raising the minimum wage, expanding social investment programmes, supporting MSMEs with grants and loans, and investing in food production to bring down food prices.

The lesson is that economic reform must be people-centred. Growth figures mean little if they do not translate into jobs, affordable food, stable power and accessible healthcare.

The Path To Productive Growth

Nigeria's economy does not need just growth. It needs productive growth. Growth that creates jobs. Growth that builds factories. Growth that feeds people. Growth that is inclusive.

The Renewed Hope economic agenda, if sustained, can deliver this. But it requires consistency, transparency and patience. It requires states to use their increased allocations wisely. It requires the private sector to invest. It requires citizens to hold leaders accountable.

The pain of reform is real. But the alternative — continuing on an unsustainable path — would have been worse. Nigeria is now on a difficult but necessary road to rebuilding its economy.

FEATURE

Climate change and Nigeria's fight for survival and sustainable development

Clareth Solomon



When floods submerged Maiduguri in 2024, displacing hundreds of thousands of people, it was not just a natural disaster. It was a climate disaster.

When farmers in Benue, Plateau and Nasarawa watch their crops wither because the rains came late or stopped early, it is not just bad luck. It is climate change.

When fishermen in Bayelsa and Rivers see the sea eat their villages, when herders in Sokoto watch the desert advance, when traders in Lagos lose goods to flash floods, Nigeria is experiencing climate change in real time.

Climate change is no longer an abstract concept discussed at conferences in Geneva or Dubai. It is a daily reality for Nigerians. It is destroying development gains, threatening food security, displacing communities and fuelling conflict.

Nigeria's Climate Reality

Nigeria is one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world, despite contributing less than 1 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. This is the injustice of climate change: those who pollute least suffer most.

In the North, desertification is advancing at an alarming rate. The Sahara is moving southwards, swallowing farmlands and grazing lands. Lake Chad, which once supported over 40 million people, has shrunk by over 90 percent since the 1960s. This has destroyed fishing, farming and livelihoods, and has contributed to insecurity in the region.

In the Middle Belt, changing rainfall patterns have shortened the growing season. Farmers who once planted in April now wait until June. Floods and droughts alternate, making planning difficult.

In the South, sea-level rise and coastal erosion are threatening Lagos, Port Harcourt, Warri, Calabar and other coastal cities. Lagos, which is home to over 20 million people, is one of the most vulnerable cities in the world to sea-level rise. A significant portion of the city is below sea level.

In the Niger Delta, oil pollution, gas flaring and flooding have combined to create an environmental crisis that has lasted for decades.

Climate Change And The Economy

Climate change is not just an environmental issue. It is an economic issue. Flooding destroys roads, bridges and markets. Drought destroys crops and livestock. Heatwaves reduce productivity. Environmental degradation drives migration and conflict.

The World Bank estimates that climate change could cost Nigeria up to 30 percent of its GDP by 2050 if no action is taken. That is a staggering figure. It means that without climate action, Nigeria's development dreams will be washed away by floods or buried by desert sand.

The Renewed Hope Response

The administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has placed climate action within its development agenda, recognising that Nigeria cannot develop by ignoring its environment.

The Energy Transition Plan, the National Climate Change Policy, and the commitment to net-zero by 2060 are the frameworks. But the real work is in implementation.

One of the flagship initiatives is the Presidential Compressed Natural Gas Initiative (PCNGI). By promoting CNG as an alternative to petrol and diesel, the government aims to reduce emissions, cut fuel costs by up to 60 percent, and create jobs in conversion, manufacturing and distribution. Thousands of vehicles, especially commercial buses and tricycles, have been converted across the country.

In the power sector, the government has pushed for solar energy, especially for rural communities, schools and health centres. The Energizing Education Programme, solar mini-grids and the Nigeria Electrification Project are bringing clean power to off-grid communities.

In the North, the Great Green Wall project, which aims to plant a wall of trees across 11 northern states, is being revitalised to combat desertification. The project, if fully implemented, will restore degraded land, create jobs, and protect communities from desert encroachment.

In flood management, the government has invested in dredging, dam rehabilitation, early warning systems and the construction of flood barriers. The Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency now issues seasonal climate predictions to help farmers and communities prepare.

Agriculture And Climate-Smart Farming

Agriculture is both a victim and a contributor to climate change. It is affected by changing weather, but it also contributes to emissions through deforestation and poor practices.

> Climate change is the greatest threat to Nigeria's development. But it is also an opportunity. The opportunity to build a green economy, to create green jobs, to become a leader in renewable energy, and to protect the environment for future generations.

The Renewed Hope Agenda has promoted climate-smart agriculture: drought-resistant seeds, irrigation, solar-powered water pumps, and precision farming. The National Agricultural Growth Scheme has distributed inputs to farmers for dry-season farming, reducing dependence on rain-fed agriculture.

The promotion of agroforestry, where trees are planted alongside crops, is helping to restore soil fertility and sequester carbon. The establishment of Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones is also helping to reduce post-harvest losses, which contribute to emissions.

Energy Transition: A Just Transition

Nigeria faces a difficult balance. It is an oil-producing country, yet it needs to transition to cleaner energy. It needs energy to develop, but it also needs to protect its environment.

The government's position is that the transition must be just. Nigeria cannot be asked to abandon its fossil fuel resources overnight while developed countries, which built their economies on fossil fuels, continue to pollute. Instead, Nigeria is advocating for gas as a transition fuel, for investment in renewables, and for climate finance from developed countries to support its transition.

The removal of fuel subsidy, while primarily an economic reform, also has climate benefits. By reducing fuel consumption and smuggling, it has reduced emissions. The shift to CNG and electric vehicles is part of this transition.

The Role Of States And Communities

Climate action cannot be left to the Federal Government alone. States and local governments must play a role. Lagos State, for example, has invested in flood control, waste management and the Blue Line rail to reduce emissions. Borno State has invested in tree planting and solar power. Kaduna, Kano and Jigawa have invested in irrigation and climate-smart agriculture.

Communities must also be involved. Tree planting, waste management, and early warning systems work best when communities own them.

The Way Forward

Nigeria needs three things to win the climate fight: finance, technology and political will.

Climate finance from developed countries, promised under the Paris Agreement, has been slow to arrive. Nigeria must continue to demand its fair share, while also mobilising domestic resources through green bonds, carbon markets and private sector investment.

Technology is critical. Early warning systems, satellite monitoring, drought-resistant seeds, and solar technology can help Nigeria adapt.

Political will is the most important. Climate action must be sustained beyond one administration. It must be built into budgets, into planning, into education and into every development project.

Climate change is the greatest threat to Nigeria's development. But it is also an opportunity. The opportunity to build a green economy, to create green jobs, to become a leader in renewable energy, and to protect the environment for future generations.

The fight against climate change is not a luxury. It is a fight for survival.

FEATURE

Renewed hope in action: **Infrastructure, social investment and the new Nigeria**






Martha Obi-Dike

Development is not measured by speeches. It is measured by roads that are built, schools that are opened, hospitals that work, power that stays on, and jobs that are created.

Two years after the Renewed Hope Agenda was unveiled, Nigerians are asking a simple question: where is the hope? Where is the renewal?

The answer is not in one project, but in many. In highways, railways, housing estates, schools, hospitals, farms and digital centres across the country, the Renewed Hope Agenda is attempting to translate promise into concrete action.

Infrastructure As Development

The most visible part of Renewed Hope is infrastructure. The Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway is the flagship. Stretching 700 kilometres from Lagos to Calabar, it will pass through Ogun, Ondo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Cross River. When completed, it will be one of the longest coastal highways in Africa.

Critics have questioned its cost and its priority. Supporters argue that it will unlock the economic potential of the entire southern coastline, boost tourism, connect ports, and create over 100,000 jobs.

Similarly, the Sokoto-Badagry Highway, the Abuja-Kaduna-Kano Expressway, and the rehabilitation of the East-West Road are all aimed at connecting Nigeria to itself.

In rail, the Lagos-Ibadan Standard Gauge Railway, the Warri-Itakpe Railway, and the ongoing Port Harcourt-Maiduguri rehabilitation are reducing travel time and logistics costs. The government's plan to link all state capitals by rail is ambitious, but if achieved, it will transform the movement of goods and people.

In aviation, the upgrading of airports in Lagos, Abuja, Kano, Port Harcourt and Enugu, and the push for a national carrier, are aimed at making Nigeria a regional aviation hub.

In ports, the Lekki Deep Sea Port, which became operational in 2023, has already begun to decongest Apapa and Tin Can ports, reduce waiting time for ships, and attract investment.

Housing And Urban Renewal

Nigeria has a housing deficit of over 20 million units. The Renewed Hope Cities and Estates programme aims to address this by building affordable houses across the 36 states and the FCT.

In Abuja, Lagos, Kano, and other cities, construction is ongoing. The programme is not just about houses. It is about jobs. Every house built employs bricklayers, carpenters, electricians, plumbers and suppliers of building materials.

Urban renewal is also part of the agenda. The government has pushed for the upgrading of slums, the provision of water and sanitation, and the development of smart cities.

Power: The Key To Everything

No country can develop without power. Nigeria has struggled with power for decades, with generation hovering around 4,000-5,000 megawatts for a population of over 200 million.

The Renewed Hope Agenda has sought to address this through the Electricity Act, which decentralised the power sector, allowing states to generate, transmit and distribute electricity. Enugu, Lagos, Ekiti, Ondo and other states have already begun to take advantage of this.

The Siemens Presidential Power Initiative, which aims to increase generation to 25,000 megawatts in phases, is being implemented. Solar mini-grids, the Energizing Economies Initiative, and the Distributed Access through Renewable Energy Scale-up programme are bringing power to rural communities, markets and schools.

While power remains a challenge, the direction is towards decentralisation, renewable energy and private sector participation.

Education And Health: Investing In People

The Renewed Hope Agenda recognises that infrastructure without human capital is incomplete.

The Student Loan Scheme, managed by NELFUND, has disbursed billions of naira to hundreds of thousands of students in universities, polytechnics and colleges of education. For many families, this is the difference between dropping out and graduating.

The government has also invested in the renovation of schools, the recruitment of teachers, and the promotion of technical and vocational education. The 3 Million Technical Talent programme aims to train young Nigerians in software development, data science, cybersecurity and other digital skills.

In health, the Basic Health Care Provision Fund has been expanded. Over 8,000 primary health centres are being revitalised across the country. The government has also recruited health workers, provided equipment, and launched the Presidential Unlocking Healthcare Value Chain Initiative to promote local manufacturing of drugs and medical equipment.

Agriculture And Food Security

Food security is at the heart of Renewed Hope. The declaration of a state of emergency on food security in 2023 was followed by the distribution of fertilisers, seeds and equipment to farmers, the promotion of dry-season farming, and the investment in irrigation.

The National Agricultural Growth Scheme has supported millions of farmers. The establishment of Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones in Kaduna, Kano, Oyo, Ogun, Imo, Cross River, Kwara and the FCT is linking farmers to processors and markets.

The goal is to make Nigeria self-sufficient in rice, wheat, maize and other staples, and to reduce the food import bill.

Social Investment And Welfare

The government has expanded social investment programmes, including conditional cash transfers to vulnerable households, grants to small businesses, and support for nano, micro, small and medium enterprises through the Bank of Industry and other agencies.

The Presidential CNG Initiative has provided buses to states and institutions to reduce transport costs. The wage award to federal workers and the increase in minimum wage to N70,000 were aimed at cushioning the impact of reforms.

Security And Development

Development cannot happen without security. The government has invested in the military, the police and intelligence services, and has recorded successes against insurgency in the North-East, banditry in the North-West, and oil theft in the Niger Delta.

The establishment of the Ministry of Livestock Development is aimed at addressing the farmer-herder conflict, promoting ranching and modernising livestock production.

Challenges And The Road Ahead

The Renewed Hope Agenda faces significant challenges. Inflation, though moderating, remains high. Insecurity persists in many areas. Corruption continues to undermine projects. Bureaucracy slows implementation. Many Nigerians are still waiting to feel the impact of reforms in their daily lives.

The government must do more to communicate its achievements, to ensure transparency in project execution, and to hold contractors and officials accountable.

States must also play their part. With increased FAAC allocations, states have no excuse for not delivering development. The success of Renewed Hope depends not just on Abuja, but on all 36 states and 774 local governments.

Conclusion: Hope Must Become Experience

Renewed Hope was a promise. It must now become an experience. An experience of a road that is built, a school that works, a hospital that heals, a farm that yields, a job that pays, and a country that works.

Nigeria is a country of immense potential. It has the land, the people, the resources and the talent to be a great nation. What it has lacked is consistency, discipline and long-term planning.

The Renewed Hope Agenda is an attempt to provide that discipline. Whether it succeeds will depend on whether Nigerians, leaders and citizens alike, stay committed to the hard work of building.

COLUMN

Uromi saga: The tragedy of blind faith



Social media platforms are saturated with amazing, eccentric and exhilarating videos that can make one laugh one's head off and brighten an evening without ingesting a morsel of food. All one needs is an internet connection. From displays of human folly to bizarre encounters, the digital space never runs short of amusing content.

Beneath the amusement, however, some videos reveal the excesses, absurdities and moral decadence that characterise aspects of our society.

One video that caught my attention concerned a suspected pastor who reportedly assembled congregants in Uromi, Esan North-East Local Government Area of Edo State, and instructed them to surrender their mobile phones into a bag before a marathon prayer session for a miracle. While the exercise, popularly described in some Pentecostal circles as 'kabashing', was in progress, the supposed man of God allegedly disappeared with their phones.

Information subsequently obtained from a reliable source has added a disturbing dimension. The congregants were reportedly persuaded to surrender their phones on the promise that the prayer session would bring miracle alerts showing deposits into their bank accounts. The prospect of financial windfalls was allegedly the bait.

If accurate, the incident represents more than ordinary theft. It exposes the dangerous intersection of greed, the desire for instant wealth and religious gullibility. The congregants were apparently seeking not only divine intervention but financial transformation without the demands of hard work, patience and enterprise. Their anticipated breakthrough allegedly became an opportunity for their supposed spiritual benefactor to disappear with their phones.

The episode raises questions about the gullibility of some Nigerians and the audacity of individuals who hide behind religion to commit crimes. More troubling is the ease with which self-acclaimed men of God manipulate followers, including educated adults who ought to distinguish genuine religious leadership from calculated deception.

There is nothing wrong with seeking spiritual assistance, praying for divine intervention or believing in miracles. Religion provides hope, moral instruction, consolation and social cohesion for millions of Nigerians. For people confronting poverty, unemployment, sickness and marital difficulties, the church can offer emotional support and belonging. Such spiritual yearning, however, must not become an opportunity for exploitation.

Unfortunately, questionable religious establishments and self-appointed prophets have turned what should be a sacred calling into a commercial enterprise. Their preoccupation is not spiritual development but the extraction of money and possessions. They deploy fear, fabricated prophecies, sensational testimonies and promises of instant miracles to keep victims financially and psychologically captive.

For these predators, poverty is a business opportunity, sickness a fundraising instrument and desperation an exploitable commodity. A man seeking employment, a woman praying for a child or a family battling illness may part with everything for a miracle. Instead of easing their distress, these supposed spiritual custodians compound it through demands for special offerings, sacrificial seeds and prophetic consultations.

The Uromi episode exposes another dimension: exploiting the appetite for instant wealth. The promise of miraculous bank alerts was apparently enticing enough to make congregants surrender their phones. How could a spiritual exercise become a scheme for instant financial gratification? Why should anyone expect money to appear in a bank account merely because a self-acclaimed prophet has announced a miracle?

The promise itself deserves scrutiny. A bank alert is a notification of a transaction, not evidence of supernatural intervention; any genuine credit can be verified through ordinary banking channels. Congregants should never hand over phones, passwords, PINs or access to banking applications on the strength of a prophecy. Religious leaders who demand such access should immediately arouse suspicion.

Faith does not require people to surrender control of their property or expose their financial security to strangers. Nor should the language of miracles be used to discourage questions. A credible spiritual leader ought to welcome prudence, transparency and informed consent rather than interpret reasonable caution as a lack of faith.

The consequences of such exploitation can be devastating. Some victims exhaust their savings, sell valuable property, borrow money and even compromise their children's welfare to satisfy the financial demands of religious entrepreneurs. They may emerge poorer after repeated encounters with people who claim to possess extraordinary spiritual powers. This is not merely religious deception; it is economic exploitation with serious social consequences.

Nor is Uromi an isolated case. Nigeria has witnessed other incidents in which individuals allegedly used religious identities to deceive and exploit unsuspecting members of the public.

In December 2019, for instance, the Lagos State Police Command arrested four suspects, including two individuals identified as pastors, over allegations that they staged fake miracles, prophecies and testimonies to defraud members of the public. According to the police, the suspects allegedly recruited people to pose as beneficiaries of supernatural interventions, thereby convincing worshippers that their ministry possessed extraordinary spiritual powers. The objective was reportedly to collect money through deception.

In another disturbing incident, the Plateau State Police Command arrested a pastor, Albarka Sukuya, in connection with allegations that he staged his own kidnapping on two occasions to extort money from sympathetic members of his congregation. The church members reportedly paid N400,000 and N200,000 respectively as ransom for his supposed release. Investigations allegedly revealed that the clergyman had conspired with accomplices to stage the incidents. Imagine the audacity! A man entrusted with his congregation's spiritual welfare allegedly manufactured his own abduction to exploit their compassion.

Even more disturbing was a report from Ogun State in November 2023 involving a pastor accused of using a purported prophecy to sexually exploit and abduct a 21-year-old woman. He allegedly threatened that she would die on her wedding day unless she had sexual intercourse with him. The police subsequently arrested him over allegations of abduction and false prophecy. If established, such conduct represents a despicable abuse of spiritual authority and the trust reposed in religious leaders.

In February 2026, the Ondo State Police Command also arrested six suspected individuals accused of posing as pastors and exploiting unsuspecting people through purported miracles. The police alleged that the suspects promised divine solutions to financial difficulties, health challenges and other personal problems before defrauding their victims.

The problem is compounded by religious leaders who allegedly prescribe bizarre solutions to ordinary problems. Some claim powers to cure every illness, reverse misfortune, secure employment and guarantee marital success. Others reportedly urge congregants to undertake dangerous exercises or abandon medical treatment for purported divine healing.

Surely, religious devotion should not require the abandonment of common sense.

I have written several articles in this column condemning unscrupulous individuals who parade themselves as men of God. I have also appealed to the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) to help sanitise the religious environment. Yet reports of exploitation and criminality under the cover of religion persist.

Although CAN and PFN cannot exercise the powers of the police or courts, they have a moral responsibility to promote accountability and ethical pastoral leadership. They should investigate credible complaints, establish disciplinary mechanisms and disassociate themselves from individuals whose conduct brings religion into disrepute.

Churches must adopt transparent financial systems. Congregants deserve to know how contributions are used; religious leaders should neither build private empires under divine mandates nor intimidate members into giving beyond their means.

Federal and state governments must recognise the urgency. Section 38 of the Nigerian Constitution guarantees freedom of thought, conscience and religion; it does not grant immunity to anyone using religion to commit fraud, theft, sexual exploitation or other crimes. The distinction between freedom of worship and freedom to offend must be clear.

Anambra State offers an example of intervention. Under Governor Chukwuma Soludo, the government began a crackdown on suspected fake pastors and spiritual operators accused of exploiting residents. In June 2026, eight suspected fake pastors were reportedly arraigned before a state High Court for alleged violations of the Anambra State Homeland Security Law 2025. Residents were urged to provide credible information to support investigations and prosecutions.

Rwanda offers another example. In 2018, its government closed thousands of places of worship that reportedly failed to meet infrastructure, health, safety and noise-control standards. Subsequent inspections have enforced requirements concerning registration and the qualifications of some religious leaders. Though Nigeria's circumstances differ, religious establishments, like other institutions, should operate within legitimate regulatory frameworks.

Regulation must nevertheless be carefully designed. Government should not decide who may preach according to theological preferences or suppress unpopular beliefs. Oversight should address verifiable matters: registration, financial accountability, building safety, public health, safeguarding and compliance with criminal laws.

Public enlightenment is equally urgent. Nigerians must understand that miracles cannot be bought, salvation cannot be auctioned and genuine spiritual leadership does not depend on extracting money from vulnerable people. They must question extravagant claims and report suspected crimes.

Religious organisations should introduce ethical orientation and periodic accountability assessments for their leaders. Where credible allegations of criminality emerge, such matters should be referred to law enforcement agencies rather than concealed in the name of protecting the image of the church.

The media also have a responsibility. Investigative journalism should expose fraudulent practices, while broadcasters and publishers must scrutinise individuals whose appeal rests on sensationalism and questionable supernatural claims.

Ultimately, responsibility also rests with Nigerians. Faith should inspire hope, compassion, discipline and responsible living, not intellectual surrender. A pastor is a human being, not an unquestionable deity, and should never control another adult's conscience, finances, relationships or personal decisions.

The Uromi episode offers a sobering lesson. The desire for financial prosperity, however legitimate, must never override rational judgement. A promise of miraculous bank alerts should provoke questions, not unquestioning compliance. The incident demonstrates how the pursuit of instant wealth can make even seemingly sensible individuals susceptible to extraordinary deception.

Nigerians must distinguish genuine spiritual leadership from religious entrepreneurship driven by greed. The church should be a sanctuary of hope, not a hunting ground for predators; the pulpit, an instrument of moral instruction, not a platform for crime.

The authorities should investigate the Uromi incident, identify the victims and recover the missing phones. If apprehended and found culpable, the suspect should be brought to justice.

Beyond this incident lies a national question: how long will Nigerians surrender their resources and dignity to individuals exploiting their religious convictions and appetite for instant prosperity?

Surely, enough is enough. God's name must no longer be used as a convenient cover for greed, criminality and the systematic impoverishment of innocent citizens.





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SOUTH-SOUTH

Oborevwori highlights infrastructure gains at Warri, Uvwie rallies

Ajuwa Victor

ASABA

Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwori, has called for political unity and peaceful participation, declaring that partisan differences should not undermine collective efforts to advance the development of the state.

Oborevwori made the call during the APC campaign rallies in Warri South and Uvwie Local Government Areas, where he received the House of Assembly candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) in Warri South Constituency II, Hon. Owin Ikuku and the party's Vice Chairman into the APC.

Speaking at the Uvwie rally, the Governor highlighted his administration's infrastructure achievements, particularly the construction of the PTI and DSC flyovers, which he said had significantly reduced travel time and transformed the area.

"Anytime I pass through this route, it gives me joy. Three and a half years ago, travelling through here towards Bayelsa could take as long as three hours. Today, the story is different," he said.

At the Warri campaign rally, he attributed the state's transformation to deliberate investments and commitment to development, stressing that governance must translate into tangible projects that improve people's lives.

The Governor also reaffirmed his commitment to peaceful elections, declaring: "I am not a violent person. I don't believe in violence. We must allow the people to exercise their democratic rights peacefully."

Oborevwori, accompanied by his wife, Deaconess Tobore Oborevwori, and other political leaders, urged eligible voters to turn out and exercise their civic responsibility, while expressing appreciation for the people's support.

The Deputy Governor, Sir Monday Onyeme, described Oborevwori as a performing leader, noting that the impressive turnout at the rallies reflected the growing support for the APC in the areas.

The State APC Chairman, Chief Solomon Arenyeka, presented party flags to the APC candidates for Warri South Constituencies I and II, while formally receiving defectors from the NDC into the party.

At Uvwie, Arenyeka also presented flags to Hon. Ransom Onoyake, the party's House of Representatives candidate, and Hon. Edafe Emakpor, its candidate for the Uvwie State Constituency.

The Director-General of the Delta APC Campaign Council, Senator James Manager, commended the Governor for the visible impact of his administration, citing road construction, bridge projects, market development and youth empowerment initiatives.

The Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo, urged the people to support President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, and Governor Oborevwori, cautioning against misinformation about their administrations.

Keyamo described the developments taking place in Uvwie and other parts of the state as unprecedented, commending the Governor for rehabilitating roads that had remained in deplorable condition for several years. He assured Oborevwori that the people of Uvwie, Warri and Deltans as whole would not disappoint him.



SEN. DOUYE DIRI
The Executive Governor of Bayelsa State



RT. HON. (CHIEF) SHERIFF OBOREVWORI
The Executive Governor of Delta State

Okorodudu charges Delta appointees to promote Oborevwori's achievements, mobilise for APC victory

Ajuwa Victor

ASABA

The Executive Director of Projects, Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC), and Otota of Ancient Olomu Kingdom, Olorogun Dr Ebenezer Okorodudu, has urged political appointees in Delta State to effectively communicate the achievements of the Federal and State Governments, strengthen grassroots engagement and intensify mobilisation towards the All Progressives Congress (APC) victory in the 2027 general elections.

Dr Okorodudu gave the charge, while delivering an address titled "Protecting the Gains, Sustaining the Momentum: Continuity, Consolidation and the Future of Nigeria and Delta State" at a three-day strategic sensitisation meeting and engagement for selected political appointees across the eight local government areas of Delta Central Senatorial District, held in Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State.

The DESOPADEC Projects Director described political appointments as a responsibility and a call to service rather than a privilege, stressing that appointees must justify the confidence reposed in them through dedication, accessibility and responsiveness to the needs of the people.

He noted that political appointees occupy strategic positions as intermediaries between government and the grassroots, making it imperative for them to understand government policies, programmes and achievements and communicate them accurately to the public.

According to him, the 2027 general elections demand informed, strategic and purposeful political engagement, urging the appointees to be adequately equipped with facts to explain government policies, address public concerns and counter misinformation with credible information.

Reviewing the Federal Government's Renewed Hope Agenda, Dr Okorodudu acknowledged the economic difficulties associated with the removal of petrol subsidy and the unification of the foreign exchange market. However, he explained that the reforms were introduced to address longstanding structural challenges in the Nigerian economy, noting that their ultimate success must be reflected in sustainable economic growth and

Bayelsa'll deliver Tinubu, Diri declares as Tompolo donates campaign vehicles

Philip Jeremiah Eke

YENAGOA

Governor Douye Diri has declared that the Bayelsa State will deliver its votes to President Bola Tinubu in the January 16, 2027 presidential election, citing his administration's commitment to true federalism and development in the Niger Delta.

He gave the assurance in Yenagoa during the inauguration of the Bayelsa State chapter of the PBAT Door-to-Door Movement, where former Niger Delta militant leader, Government Ekpemupolo, popularly known as Tompolo, donated campaign vehicles and other mobilisation materials to support the President's re-election bid.

The governor said the All Progressives Congress (APC) was preparing an extensive grassroots campaign across Bayelsa's three senatorial districts to mobilise voters for Tinubu, expressing confidence that the state would demonstrate its support during the presidential campaign scheduled for December 15, 2026.

"We assure you that Bayelsa is APC. APC is Bayelsa. This is just testing the microphone. By the time we go around sensitising our people across the three senatorial districts, and the main day of the campaign, the presidential campaign in Bayelsa State, is on the 15th of December, 2026. By God's grace, Bayelsa will showcase their support for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu."

Diri commended Tompolo for spearheading the mobilisation initiative, describing him as a distinguished son of Ijawland whose involvement reflected the determination of the Ijaw people to advance their political and developmental interests.

Describing Bayelsa as the Jerusalem of the Ijaw nation, the governor said the people's longstanding demand for true federalism was beginning to receive attention under Tinubu's administration.

DTSG begins trial of driver accused of murdering Bishop Clarence Chinedu Okonkwo in Ibusa

Ajuwa Victor

ASABA

The Delta State Government has commenced the trial of Uchenna Nicholas Obiagwu, a driver accused of allegedly murdering his employer, Bishop Clarence Chinedu Okonkwo, popularly known as Clarence James, at the Delta State High Court, Ibusa Judicial Division.

The case is being presided over by Honourable Justice H. O. Akpotohwo.

Bishop Okonkwo, a Pentecostal cleric and founder of End-Reconciliation Ministry in Asaba, was allegedly murdered at his residence in Ibusa, near Asaba, on May 12, 2026.

At the commencement of the trial, the prosecution, led by Delta State Solicitor-General, Mr Omamuzo Erebe, SAN, called its first witness, Pastor Tippa Wealth, to testify.

The prosecution team also includes Mrs Juliet Akpomiemie, Deputy Director; Ifeanyi Uduaghan, Principal State Counsel; and Miss Faith Beluchukwu, Pupil State Counsel, all from the Delta State Ministry of Justice. The defendant is being represented by Mr Ofiali of the Legal Aid Council.

During his testimony, Pastor Wealth told the court that he owned the agency through which the defendant was employed as a driver.

He further stated that barely three weeks after Obiagwu resumed work, he received a telephone call informing him that the driver had allegedly killed his employer.

According to the prosecution's account, Bishop Okonkwo was attacked and beaten to death with a pestle inside his residence. The defendant allegedly fled with the bishop's Toyota Land Cruiser and mobile phones.

The defendant and his brother were subsequently arrested in Nkpor, Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State, while allegedly attempting to sell the vehicle for ₦10 million.

However, during police interrogation, the defendant reportedly claimed that armed kidnappers had forced him to participate in the attack, alleging that they blindfolded him before gaining access to the premises.

Sports

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

Nigeria cannot keep celebrating champions while neglecting where they come from — *SSA Adeboye*

The Senior Special Assistant to the President on Grassroots Sports Development, Hon. Adeyinka Anthony Adeboye, has challenged government institutions, sports administrators and private-sector organisations to build a sustainable system that gives talented young Nigerians opportunities to succeed.

Delivering his welcome address at the National Grassroots Sports Summit 2026, held Thursday at the State House Banquet Hall, Presidential Villa, Abuja, Adeboye said Nigeria must stop celebrating sporting achievements without adequately supporting the communities where champions are discovered.

He observed that millions of young Nigerians possess extraordinary sporting abilities but lack access to facilities, qualified coaching and structured development programmes.

"The tragedy is not that Nigeria lacks talent. The tragedy is that we have not built enough pathways for that talent to flourish," he declared.



HON. ADEYINKA ANTHONY ADEBOYE

Adeboye expressed appreciation to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for endorsing the summit and supporting efforts to reposition grassroots sports within the national development agenda.

He emphasised that achieving meaningful results would require the active participation of state governors, local government chairmen, educational institutions, sporting federations and corporate organisations.

"Grassroots sports development cannot be achieved from Abuja alone. The playing fields are in our communities. The schools are in our states. The young talents are in our local government areas," he stated.

The SSA advocated a coordinated framework that would extend sporting opportunities across Nigeria's 774 local government areas.

"Opportunity must travel to where talent lives," he added.

Adeboye also urged investors to recognise sports as a viable economic sector capable of creating employment, stimulating entrepreneurship and attracting sustainable investment.

He commended the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) for its technical partnership and contribution towards shaping the summit's discussions.

However, he warned that the gathering must not become another ceremonial event without measurable outcomes.

"The success of this summit will not be determined by the number of speeches delivered or the quality of photographs taken. It will be determined by what we are prepared to do when we leave this hall," Adeboye stressed.

He called for practical recommendations, clear responsibilities and an implementation framework capable of transforming grassroots sports nationwide.



SUPER EAGLES OF NIGERIA



Five critical issues NFF Normalization committee must fix

The five-man Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) Normalisation Committee faces a series of critical responsibilities that could shape the future direction of football administration in the country.

On Wednesday FIFA announced Barrister Sampson Ebomhe as the Chairman of the Committee while Daniel Amokachi, Dr. Joe Abah, Godwin Enakhena and Amina Yerima as members.

At a time when Nigerian football requires stability, transparency and renewed confidence, the committee's assignment must go beyond addressing immediate administrative concerns. It presents an opportunity to rebuild institutional credibility, strengthen governance and establish a sustainable framework for the development of the game.

Here are five key agendas that should command the committee's attention:

The committee's foremost responsibility should be to restore stability within the NFF. A functional football federation requires effective leadership, clear decision-making structures and an administration capable of prioritising the interests of the game above individual ambitions.

Ensuring a credible, transparent and inclusive electoral process should be another major priority. The committee must work towards establishing an electoral framework that promotes fairness, accountability and confidence among stakeholders, while respecting applicable FIFA and CAF regulations.

Financial management remains central to the credibility of any football federation. The committee should prioritise a review of financial procedures, sponsorship arrangements, expenditure and outstanding obligations. Transparent financial practices will be essential to rebuilding trust among stakeholders and partners.

The development of Nigerian football cannot depend solely on the fortunes of the national teams. Domestic leagues, grassroots competitions, youth development and women's football deserve sustained attention. The committee should ensure that ongoing competitions and development programmes are not disrupted by administrative uncertainty.

Nigeria hosts CAF General Assembly for first timeIn 17 Years as Motsepe arrives

Football (CAF) President, Dr Patrice Motsepe, has arrived in Abuja ahead of the 48th CAF Ordinary General Assembly, scheduled to take place on Saturday, November 21, 2026.

Motsepe arrived at the Presidential Wing of the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport at 5:51 p.m. on Wednesday, where he received a warm welcome from senior Nigerian football officials and CAF representatives.

Those present to receive the CAF president included Chairman of the National Sports Commission, Mallam Shehu Dikko; former Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) President and Special Adviser to Motsepe, Amaju Melvin Pinnick; CAF Secretary-General, Samson Adamu; and CAF Project Lead for the Ordinary General Assembly and CAF Awards, Dr Christian Emeruwa.

Also present were Nigeria's Project Lead for both events, Dr Ademola Olajire, alongside other senior CAF management officials and staff.

Following his arrival, Motsepe and his entourage proceeded to the Transcorp Hilton Hotel, which is serving as the accommodation base for invited dignitaries, delegates, CAF officials, guests and other stakeholders attending the event.

The 48th Ordinary General Assembly represents a significant moment for Nigerian football, as the country is hosting the prestigious gathering for the first time in 17 years.

The assembly is one of the most important events on the African football administration calendar, bringing together CAF leadership, members of the Executive Committee, presidents and general secretaries of the confederation's 54 member associations, as well as representatives of FIFA and other continental football confederations.

The gathering provides an important platform for discussions on the administration, development and future direction of football across Africa.

This year's edition is particularly historic for Nigeria, which will become the first country to host both the CAF Ordinary General Assembly and the CAF Awards in the same year.

Abuja to host CAF Assembly as Lagos prepares for Awards ceremony



CONFEDERATION OF AFRICAN FOOTBALL (CAF) PRESIDENT, DR PATRICE MOTSEPE (2ND LEFT)

SPORTS FEATURE

NFF, NSC must act now: Why Eric Chelle should go





Sunday Agunbiade (Mr VAR)

The time has come for the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) and the National Sports Commission (NSC) to take a decisive position on the future of Super Eagles head coach, Eric Chelle. Nigerian football has reached a point where sentiment must give way to accountability, and where the country's football ambitions must take precedence over the interests of few individuals.

For some time, I have consistently raised concerns about the technical direction of the Super Eagles on this noble platform, Sports World. My position remains that Nigeria cannot continue to invest heavily in technical leadership that delivers underwhelming performances while millions of passionate supporters are repeatedly subjected to disappointment.

Chelle's record raises legitimate questions about his tactical competence, ability to manage high-pressure encounters and overall suitability for a football nation with Nigeria's pedigree and expectations.

His experience with Mali, particularly the painful late collapse against a 10-man Ivory Coast side at the 2024 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), should have prompted a thorough assessment of his credentials. Mali's failure to secure qualification for the 2026 FIFA World Cup further reinforced the concerns surrounding his capacity to lead a national team with ambitions of competing at the highest level.

Unfortunately, those concerns have not been adequately addressed.

Nigeria's failure to qualify for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, following the defeat to the Democratic Republic of Congo in the African play-off, remains one of the most painful setbacks in the country's recent football history. For a nation that has participated in several editions of the competition and possesses an abundance of football talent, missing out on the tournament was a monumental disappointment.

Even more troubling was Chelle's reported reference to juju in explaining the defeat. Such a reaction, if accurately reported, raises serious questions about the quality of technical leadership expected at this level. Nigerian football needs clear tactical explanations, honest post-match assessments and professional accountability, not supernatural explanations for failures that demand football-related answers.

The Super Eagles' performance against Morocco in the AFCON semi-final also exposed areas of concern. Nigeria struggled for long periods against the hosts and eventually lost on penalties. While losing a semi-final is not necessarily evidence of coaching incompetence, the overall performance and tactical approach deserved a critical examination. A team with Nigeria's quality and international experience should be capable of demonstrating greater authority and tactical conviction in such crucial encounters.

Equally difficult to forget is the earlier 0-3 defeat to Guinea-Bissau in an AFCON qualifying campaign. That result was a major embarrassment and should have triggered a serious review of the team's technical direction. Instead, the warning signs appeared to have been overlooked.

> This is not a personal campaign against Eric Chelle. It is a call for accountability, institutional responsibility and a better future for Nigerian football. Coaches must be evaluated on their performances, just as players and administrators must be held accountable for their respective responsibilities.

The recurring struggles and inconsistent performances against opposition Nigeria would ordinarily expect to compete strongly against have only heightened the need for a comprehensive assessment of the coaching arrangement.

One must therefore ask: what exactly are the criteria for retaining a national team coach when results, performances and the country's football ambitions are not aligned? Are the NFF and NSC satisfied with the current technical direction, or are there considerations beyond footballing performance influencing their position?

Nigeria must stop treating the Super Eagles coaching position as an experimental appointment. The country deserves a proven, experienced and accomplished tactician with a demonstrable record of success, preferably at the highest level of club or international football.

The next appointment, whenever it becomes necessary, must be guided by competence, experience, tactical philosophy, man-management ability and a proven capacity to deliver results under pressure. The coach must understand the enormous expectations that come with managing the Super Eagles and possess the temperament to navigate the demands of Nigerian football.

We must move away from the practice of appointing coaches simply because they are available or have become surplus to requirements elsewhere. Their professional antecedents, achievements, tactical identity and ability to manage elite players must be thoroughly scrutinised before they are entrusted with the responsibility of leading our national team.

The NFF and NSC must understand that the Super Eagles are not a laboratory for coaching experiments. Nigeria has the football talent, population, resources and historical pedigree to compete for the biggest honours in world football. What is required is a technical leadership structure capable of translating these advantages into consistent performances and tangible achievements.

This is not a personal campaign against Eric Chelle. It is a call for accountability, institutional responsibility and a better future for Nigerian football. Coaches must be evaluated on their performances, just as players and administrators must be held accountable for their respective responsibilities.

Ultimately, the question is not whether Chelle is a good individual or whether he deserves sympathy. The question is whether his technical leadership is sufficiently convincing to justify his continued stay as Super Eagles head coach.

In my considered opinion, the NFF and NSC must act now. If the present technical direction does not inspire confidence or meet the standards expected of a football nation like Nigeria, then a change of leadership should not be ruled out.

Nigeria deserves better. The Super Eagles deserve better. And Nigerian football cannot afford another costly mistake.

SPORTS

The Nigerian OBSERVER
That The People May Know

Lagos SWAN congratulates Enakhena on his appointment to NFF normalisation committee

The Lagos State chapter of the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (Lagos SWAN) has congratulated one of its members, Godwin Enakhena, CEO of Global Media, on his appointment to the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) Normalisation Committee by the world football governing body, Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA).



GODWIN ENAKHENA

In a statement signed by the Caretaker Committee Chairman of Lagos SWAN, Patrick Omorodion, the association described Enakhena's appointment as a recognition of his wealth of experience and long-standing contributions to the development of Nigerian sports.

Enakhena was named among the five-member committee alongside its Chairman, Sampson Ebomhe, Esq., former Super Eagles player Daniel Amokachi, Amina Yerima and Dr Joe Abah. The committee is tasked with managing the affairs of the NFF and driving governance reforms following the mass resignation of the board led by Ibrahim Gusau.

Omorodion expressed optimism that Enakhena's inclusion would bring valuable experience to the process of repositioning Nigerian football administration.

He acknowledged Enakhena's contributions as a broadcaster and sports administrator, particularly his roles as Director of Sports at Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries (MFM), Chairman of Sporting Lagos FC and General Secretary of the Nigeria Professional Football League Club Owners Association.

While congratulating Enakhena, Omorodion urged the Normalisation Committee to discharge its mandate with courage, fairness, transparency and an unwavering commitment to the institutional reforms outlined by FIFA.

He stressed that the committee's assignment must transcend the management of the NFF's daily affairs and the organisation of fresh elections. He insisted that the opportunity must be used to address the inclusion deficit and structural shortcomings that have continued to impede the growth of Nigerian football.

"The constitution of this Normalisation Committee presents Nigerian football with an important opportunity for a fresh beginning. We must not allow this opportunity to become another exercise in changing personalities without addressing the institutional weaknesses that have held our football back.

Judo: IGP Olatunji Disu emerges President of Nigeria Judo Federation, pledges new era

President of Nigeria Judo Federation (NJF), Inspector General of Police (IGP) Olatunji Disu has pledged to unite stakeholders in the sport and prioritise grassroots development as part of efforts to reposition judo in the country.

IGP Disu made the pledge shortly after emerging unopposed at the federation's elective congress held on Thursday at the Media Centre of the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja, where he secured all 13 votes cast.

The Police boss described his election as a significant moment in his life, expressing gratitude to the authorities, stakeholders and members of the federation who supported his emergence.

He said his immediate priority would be reconciliation, stressing the need to bridge divisions among stakeholders and bring back individuals who had become disconnected from the sport.

Disu said, "The first thing that came to my mind is reconciliation. We have to bring back everybody that has been divided among the judo family for a very long time.

"There is no winner, there is no loser. But there is a winner, and the winner is judo because judo is bigger than all of us."

He explained that his reconciliation initiative would extend beyond Nigeria to include Nigerian judokas living and practising abroad, particularly those who had distanced themselves from the country's judo administration.

Disu said he would focus on attracting more young people to the sport through grassroots initiatives, secondary schools and universities.

He noted that schools and tertiary institutions had played important roles in building the sport's participation base in the past and promised to revive that approach.

The former chairman of Lagos State Judo Association said, " "I'm going to concentrate on the grassroots starting from all secondary schools and universities because, in the past, this was where we got people to populate the sport of judo."

The NJF president said his administration would work towards making judo more attractive and accessible to young Nigerians, while creating opportunities for more athletes to develop their talents.

The police chief, who is regarded as one of Nigeria's prominent judokas, has an impressive record in the sport.

He won a silver medal at the 33rd US Open Judo Championship on July 31, 2022, competing in the minus 100kg category of the veterans' division.

In the election for the First Vice-President position, philanthropist Sir Dr Hon. Nwaobllor Ananaba secured all 13 votes cast to emerge victorious.

Similarly, Barrister Gbahabo Emmanuel, representing the North Central zone, emerged Second Vice President after polling all 13 votes cast by members of the board.

Nigeria confirm U23 AFCON qualifying order of play, face Zambia

Kehinde Osagiede

Nigeria's Olympic Eagles will play away to Zambia in the first leg of final qualifying for U23 Africa Cup Of Nations AFCON 2027 in Egypt.

The Eagles' media made this known today, saying the decisive second leg of the qualifying will take place at the Remo Stars Stadium in Ikenne Ogun State.

Winners over two legs between Nigeria and Zambia will quality for the U23 AFCON finals.

To reach the final qualifying, Nigeria beat Congo DR 4-2 on aggregate after losing 0-2 in the first leg.

Zambia advanced after overcoming Burkina Faso 3-2 on penalties following a 1-1 aggregate draw.

Both nations Nigeria and Zambia will battle in March 2027 for the ticket to the U23 AFCON finals.

The tournament doubles as Africa's Qualifying pathway to men's Olympic Football Tournament in Los Angeles USA.





National Sports Festival should never be postponed again, says Fashola

Former Lagos State Governor, Babatunde Fashola, has declared that the National Sports Festival should never be postponed again, stressing the importance of a predictable sports calendar to Nigeria's sporting development, reports www.totorinews.com

Fashola made the call on Thursday while delivering his keynote address at the National Grassroots Sports Summit at the State House in Abuja.

He emphasised that a properly structured sports calendar is fundamental to effective sports administration and essential if Nigeria genuinely wants to develop its sporting sector.

A well-planned calendar provides athletes, coaches, sports federations, government agencies and corporate sponsors with the opportunity to prepare adequately for competitions and other sporting activities.

The repeated postponement of major sporting events does not only disrupt athletes' training programmes but also undermines administrative planning, sponsorship commitments and the overall development of the country's sporting ecosystem.



BABATUNDE FASHOLA

For Nigeria to make meaningful progress in sports, competitions must be organised within clearly defined timelines, backed by adequate preparations and institutional commitment to ensure that scheduled events take place as planned.

The National Sports Festival, one of the country's biggest platforms for discovering and nurturing sporting talents, should occupy a stable and respected position on Nigeria's sporting calendar.

Beyond providing a competitive platform for athletes representing the states, the festival serves as an important talent-discovery channel, helping to identify emerging stars who can eventually represent Nigeria at continental and international competitions.

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