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FOR TRUTH. FOR NIGERIA

Monday June 8, 2026
Vol. 13 No. 98 N300

Farmers decry $2.34bn import bill, seek improved security

PG 24

Military rescues 360 captives in Borno

• Air Force intensifies search for abducted Oyo schoolchildren, teachers

PG 4



L-R: Incoming Vice-Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt, Prof Princewill Chike; Chairman Governing Council, Senator Mao Ohuabunwa; FCT Minister, Nyesom Wike; his wife, Justice Eberechi Nyesom-Wike; and Vice-Chancellor of UNIPORT, Prof Owunari Georgewill, during the University's 36th Convocation Lecture titled: 'Leadership and Infrastructure Development in Nigeria: Lesson for future leaders' delivered by the FCT Minister, in Port Harcourt...at the weekend

Court voids NASS N110bn on SUVs, allowances in SERAP's suit

PG 25

NDLEA intercepts opioids in Taraba, arrests 75-year-old in Ebonyi

PG 18

Hard times: Nigerians trade household goods

PG 5

• Second-hand dealers, scavengers profit from citizens' desperation

This Nigeria

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ADVERT RATES
EFFECTIVE FROM MAY 1, 2026

PRODUCT COLOUR

SIZE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
FULL PAGE	736,450.01	55,233.75	791,683.76
HALF PAGE	417,730.50	31,329.79	449,060.29
QUARTER PAGE	201,656.40	15,124.23	216,780.63
14.5X5	596,928.76	44,769.66	641,698.41
14.5X3	387,060.42	29,029.53	416,089.95
10X6	494,010.00	37,050.75	531,060.75
10X5	411,675.00	30,875.63	442,550.63
10X4	329,340.00	24,700.50	354,040.50
10X3	238,771.50	17,907.86	256,679.36
9X6	444,609.00	33,345.68	477,954.68
9X3	222,304.50	16,672.84	238,977.34
8X6	395,208.00	29,640.60	424,848.60
8X3	197,604.00	14,820.30	212,424.30
7X6	345,807.00	25,935.53	371,742.53
7X4	230,538.00	17,290.35	247,828.35
7X2	115,269.00	8,645.18	123,914.18
6X4	197,604.00	14,820.30	212,424.30
6X3	148,203.00	11,115.23	159,318.23
6X2	98,802.00	7,410.15	106,212.15
5X6	247,005.00	18,525.38	265,530.38
5X4	164,670.00	12,350.25	177,020.25
5X3	123,502.50	9,262.69	132,765.19
5X2	82,335.00	6,175.13	88,510.13
4X4	131,960.56	9,897.04	141,857.60
4X3	98,802.00	7,410.15	106,212.15
4X2	65,868.00	4,940.10	70,808.10
3X2	45,284.25	3,396.32	48,680.57
2X2	30,189.50	2,264.21	32,453.71
2X1	15,094.75	1,132.11	16,226.86
1X1	7,547.38	566.05	8,113.43

PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR

SIZE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
FULL PAGE	833,527.51	62,514.56	896,042.08
HALF PAGE	472,794.97	35,459.62	508,254.59
QUARTER PAGE	228,238.39	17,117.88	245,356.27
14.5X5	675,528.91	50,664.67	726,193.58
14.5X3	430,020.32	32,251.52	462,271.85
10X6	559,157.47	41,936.81	601,094.28
10X5	465,964.56	34,947.34	500,911.90
10X4	372,772.08	27,957.91	400,729.99
10X3	270,259.44	20,269.46	290,528.90
9X6	503,241.72	37,743.13	540,984.85
9X3	251,620.99	18,871.57	270,492.57
8X6	447,325.98	33,549.45	480,875.43
8X3	223,662.98	16,774.72	240,437.71
7X6	391,410.23	29,355.77	420,766.00
7X4	260,940.16	19,570.51	280,510.67
7X2	130,470.07	9,785.26	140,255.33
6X4	223,662.98	16,774.72	240,437.71
6X3	167,747.24	12,581.04	180,328.29
6X2	111,831.49	8,387.36	120,218.85
5X6	279,578.74	20,968.41	300,547.14
5X4	186,385.82	13,978.94	200,364.76
5X3	139,789.37	10,484.20	150,273.57
5X2	93,192.91	6,989.47	100,182.38
4X4	149,108.63	11,183.15	160,291.78
4X3	111,831.49	8,387.36	120,218.85
4X2	74,554.33	5,591.57	80,145.91
3X2	55,915.75	4,193.68	60,109.43
2X2	37,277.16	2,795.79	40,072.95
2X1	18,638.58	1,397.89	20,036.47
1X1	9,319.30	698.95	10,018.24

POLITICAL COLOUR

SIZE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
FULL PAGE	937,718.45	70,328.88	1,008,047.33
HALF PAGE	531,894.34	39,892.08	571,786.41
QUARTER PAGE	256,769.81	19,257.74	276,027.54
14.5X5	759,970.03	56,997.75	816,967.78
14.5X3	461,470.67	34,610.30	496,080.97
10X6	629,052.16	47,178.91	676,231.07
10X5	524,210.14	39,315.76	563,525.90
10X4	419,368.10	31,452.61	450,820.71
10X3	308,045.44	23,103.41	331,148.84
9X6	566,146.94	42,461.02	608,607.96
9X3	283,073.47	21,230.51	304,303.98
8X3	251,620.86	18,871.56	270,492.42
7X6	440,336.51	33,025.24	473,361.75
2X6 FRONT	1,861,260.00	139,594.50	2,000,854.50
2X6 INSIDE	497,874.95	37,340.62	535,215.57
2X6 BACK	1,191,000.00	89,325.00	1,280,325.00
EARPIECE FRONT	1,628,100.00	122,107.50	1,750,207.50
EARPIECE INSIDE	510,240.00	38,268.00	548,508.00
EARPIECE BACK	1,020,420.47	76,531.54	1,096,952.00
CENTRESPREAD FULL	2,519,880.00	188,991.00	2,708,871.00
CENTRESPREAD HALF	1,577,664.00	118,324.80	1,695,988.80
DOUBLESPREAD FULL	2,366,861.72	177,514.63	2,544,376.35
DOUBLESPREAD HALF	1,208,039.14	90,602.94	1,298,642.07

PRODUCT BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
FULL PAGE	484,166.18	36,312.46	520,478.65
HALF PAGE	261,918.58	19,643.89	281,562.48
QUARTER PAGE	126,432.24	9,482.42	135,914.66
14.5X5	374,814.79	28,111.11	402,925.90
14.5X3	259,699.98	19,477.50	279,177.48
10X6	310,191.55	23,264.37	333,455.92
10X5	258,492.96	19,386.97	277,879.93
10X4	206,794.37	15,509.58	222,303.95
10X3	149,925.86	11,244.44	161,170.30
9X6	279,172.39	20,937.93	300,110.32
9X3	139,586.20	10,468.96	150,055.16
8X6	248,153.24	18,611.49	266,764.74
8X3	124,076.62	9,305.75	133,382.36
7X6	217,134.08	16,285.06	233,419.14
7X4	144,756.06	10,856.70	155,612.76
7X2	72,378.02	5,428.35	77,806.38
6X4	124,076.62	9,305.75	133,382.36
6X3	93,057.47	6,979.31	100,036.78
6X2	62,088.31	4,652.87	66,691.18
5X6	155,095.78	11,632.18	166,727.96
5X4	103,397.18	7,754.79	111,151.97
5X3	77,547.89	5,816.09	83,363.98
5X2	51,698.59	3,877.39	55,575.99
4X4	82,717.75	6,203.83	88,921.58
4X3	62,088.31	4,652.87	66,691.18
4X2	41,358.88	3,101.92	44,460.79
3X2	28,434.26	2,132.57	30,566.83
2X2	18,956.15	1,421.71	20,377.86
2X1	9,478.07	710.86	10,188.93
1X1	4,739.04	355.43	5,094.47

PUBLIC NOTICE BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
FULL PAGE	626,656.44	46,999.23	673,655.67
HALF PAGE	366,536.09	27,490.21	394,026.29
QUARTER PAGE	188,966.72	14,172.50	203,139.23
14.5X5	558,778.40	41,908.38	600,686.78
14.5X3	335,269.25	25,145.19	360,414.44
10X6	460,097.28	34,507.30	494,604.58
10X5	383,414.40	28,756.08	412,170.48
10X4	306,731.52	23,004.86	329,736.38
10X3	222,380.35	16,678.53	239,058.88
9X6	414,087.55	31,056.57	445,144.12
9X3	207,043.78	15,528.28	222,572.06
8X6	368,077.82	27,605.84	395,683.66
8X3	184,038.91	13,802.92	197,841.83
7X6	322,067.52	24,155.06	346,222.58
7X4	214,712.06	16,103.40	230,815.47
7X2	102,882.86	7,716.21	110,599.08
6X4	184,038.91	13,802.92	197,841.83
6X3	132,277.97	9,920.85	142,198.82
6X2	88,185.59	6,613.92	94,799.51
5X6	220,463.28	16,534.75	236,998.03
5X4	146,975.52	11,023.16	157,998.68
5X3	110,231.64	8,267.37	118,499.01
5X2	73,487.76	5,511.58	78,999.34
4X4	117,580.42	8,818.53	126,398.95
4X3	88,185.31	6,613.90	94,799.21
4X2	58,790.21	4,409.27	63,199.47
3X2	44,092.66	3,306.95	47,399.61
2X2	29,395.10	2,204.63	31,599.74
2X1	14,697.55	1,102.32	15,799.87
1X1	7,348.78	551.16	7,899.93

POLITICAL BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
FULL PAGE	704,988.49	44,061.78	749,050.27
HALF PAGE	412,353.10	25,772.07	438,125.16
QUARTER PAGE	212,587.56	13,286.72	225,874.28
14.5X5	628,625.71	39,289.11	667,914.82
14.5X3	377,177.90	23,573.62	400,751.52
10X6	517,609.44	32,350.59	549,960.03
10X5	431,341.20	26,958.83	458,300.03
10X4	345,968.50	21,623.03	367,591.53
10X3	251,620.86	15,726.30	267,347.16
9X6	465,848.50	29,115.53	494,964.03
9X3	232,924.25	14,557.77	247,482.01
8X3	207,043.78	12,940.24	219,984.01
7X6	362,325.96	22,645.37	384,971.33
CENTRESPREAD FULL	2,001,000.00	125,062.50	2,126,062.50
CENTRESPREAD HALF	1,317,900.00	82,368.75	1,400,268.75
DOUBLESPREAD FULL	1,781,820.12	111,363.76	1,893,183.88
DOUBLESPREAD HALF	897,000.00	56,062.50	953,062.50

SPECIAL POSITION

SIZE	RATE	VAT	TOTAL
2X6 FRONT	1,650,000.00	123,750.00	1,773,750.00
2X6 INSIDE	454,895.80	34,117.18	489,012.98
2X6 BACK	987,000.00	74,025.00	1,061,025.00
EARPIECE FRONT	1,395,600.00	104,670.00	1,500,270.00
EARPIECE INSIDE	456,000.00	34,200.00	490,200.00
EARPIECE BACK	651,849.91	48,888.74	700,738.66
CENTRESPREAD FULL (COLOUR)	2,290,800.00	171,810.00	2,462,610.00
CENTRESPREAD HALF (COLOUR)	1,434,240.00	107,568.00	1,541,808.00
CENTRESPREAD STRIP (COLOUR)	667,910.40	50,093.28	718,003.68
DOUBLESPREAD FULL (COLOUR)	2,058,140.63	154,360.55	2,212,501.18
DOUBLESPREAD HALF (COLOUR)	966,431.30	72,482.35	1,038,913.65
DOUBLESPREAD STRIP (COLOUR)	562,143.77	42,160.78	604,304.55
BACK PAGE	9,520,500.00	1,904,100.00	11,424,600.00
CENTRESPREAD FULL (BLACK)	1,740,000.00	130,500.00	1,870,500.00
CENTRESPREAD HALF (BLACK)	1,146,000.00	85,950.00	1,231,950.00
DOUBLESPREAD FULL (BLACK)	1,549,408.80	116,205.66	1,665,614.46
DOUBLESPREAD HALF (BLACK)	780,000.00	58,500.00	838,500.00
FULL WRAP	29,880,000.00	2,241,000.00	32,121,000.00
10X6 FRONT	20,606,896.80	1,545,517.26	22,152,414.06
HALF FRONT	14,976,000.00	1,123,200.00	16,099,200.00
5X6 FRONT	10,303,448.40	772,758.63	11,076,207.03
4X6 FRONT	8,242,757.28	618,206.80	8,860,964.08
2X6 FRONT (UNDER MAST)	5,229,000.00	392,175.00	5,621,175.00

GENERAL INFORMATION

SURCHARGE
Pages 2, 3 and 4 (100)
Pages 5, 6, 7 and 8 (50%)

DEADLINE
3 days before publication

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RATE PER 1,000 SHEETS	50,000	3,750	53,750.00
HANDLING CHARGE (SINGLE)	120,000		
HANDLING CHARGE (DOUBLE)	150,000		

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CHANGE OF NAME	4,500.00
GUIDES	15,000.00

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Published by THISNIGERIA MEDIA LIMITED

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ThisNigeria
Monday June 8, 2026
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Military storms terrorist enclave, frees 360 hostages

By Babs Oyetoro

The Nigerian military has recorded a breakthrough in ongoing counter-insurgency and rescue operations with the recovery of 360 abductees from a notorious terrorist enclave in Borno State.

This came as the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) intensified aerial surveillance to secure the release of abducted teachers and pupils in Oyo State.

The rescue operation in Borno was described by military authorities as one of the largest and most coordinated hostage recovery missions carried out in the North-East in recent years.

Troops of Operation HADIN KAI stormed a heavily fortified Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS) hideout located within the Mandara Mountains in southern Borno after weeks of intelligence gathering and covert reconnaissance.

In a statement, Acting Media Information Officer of Operation HADIN KAI, Lt Col Haruna Sani, said the operation led to the rescue of hundreds of captives, including women and children abducted from several communities around the Ngoshe axis.

According to him, the mission was driven by a robust intelligence network involving Human Intelligence (HUMINT), Signals Intelligence (SIGINT), and sustained Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) operations.

"The successful rescue underscores the growing operational reach, intelligence dominance and tactical superiority of Operation HADIN KAI in denying terrorists freedom of action," Sani stated.

Military authorities disclosed that intelligence operatives successfully penetrated the terrorist network and obtained precise details about the location of the abductees, the movement of insurgent commanders and internal security arrangements within the enclave.

The military said the breakthrough enabled Special Forces and Sector 1 troops to launch a coordinated multi-axis assault under the cover of darkness.

"Supported by real-time ISR feeds, assault forces infiltrated the objective area while blocking units sealed likely escape routes," the statement added.

The operation reportedly achieved complete tactical surprise, forcing several insurgents to abandon their positions and flee into surrounding mountainous terrain, while others surrendered to advancing troops.

The rescued hostages were immediately evacuated from the enclave and taken to safe locations for medical screening and humanitarian assistance.

However, the military disclosed that two infants died from exhaustion caused by the harsh terrain and the prolonged hardship endured during captivity.



L-R: Chairman, Board of NIMASA, Yusuf Hamisu Abubakar; Governor of Kaduna State; Uba Sani; Actor & Flavours of Nigeria Cultural Ambassador, Uzee Usman; and Convener of Flavours of Nigeria Festival; Chukwuebuka Anyaduba, during a collaboration visit to the Governor on Flavors of Nigeria festival in Canada.

The Borno South Youth Alliance (BOSYA) also confirmed the release of abductees from Ngoshe communities.

President of the group, Samaila Ibrahim-Kaigama, said the victims' return had brought relief to families devastated by months of uncertainty.

"To the Ngoshe women and children who were released tonight, welcome home. Your return brings hope, joy and relief to Southern Borno," he said.

The group further revealed that four babies born during captivity died from infections before the rescue mission was concluded, while their mothers are currently receiving treatment.

Military authorities said follow-up operations were ongoing to dismantle remnants of the terrorist network and prevent future abductions.

•NAF surveillance intensifies search for abducted Oyo schoolchildren

Meanwhile, in Oyo State, the Nigerian Air Force has stepped up aerial surveillance operations to support efforts aimed at rescuing teachers and pupils abducted from schools in Oriire Local Government Area.

Governor Seyi Makinde disclosed that the Air Force swiftly deployed surveillance platforms after armed bandits attacked schools in Yawota and Ahoro-Esinele communities on May 15.

The attackers abducted pupils and teachers from Baptist Nursery and Primary School, Community Grammar School and L.A. Primary School during the raid.

One of the teachers was later killed in captivity, sparking protests by labour unions, civil society groups and residents demanding urgent government intervention.

Makinde spoke during a courtesy visit by representatives of the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Sunday Kelvin Aneke, and the Air Officer Commanding Logistics Command, Air Vice Marshal Abubakar Suleh.

According to the governor, intelligence gathered from the surveillance missions has continued to assist security agencies in tracking developments and coordinating rescue efforts.

"The Air Force made surveillance platforms available immediately after the incident, and the intelligence generated has been supporting ongoing rescue operations," Makinde said.

He appealed to residents to remain patient and cooperate with security agencies, assuring them that every available resource was being deployed to secure the safe release of the victims.

The governor also commended the NAF leadership for sustaining support while Oyo State's newly acquired aerial security assets are still being assembled at the NAF Base in Lagos.

Makinde explained that the state procured the platforms after consultations with the Air Force to ensure access to technical support, pilot training and maintenance expertise.

He expressed confidence that the assets would strengthen security operations across Oyo and neighbouring states once fully operational.

Responding on behalf of the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice Marshal Suleh reaffirmed the commitment of the Nigerian Air Force to ongoing rescue operations and national security efforts.

"The NAF remains committed to working closely with other security agencies and stakeholders to safeguard lives and property across the country," Suleh said.

The renewed rescue efforts followed nationwide outrage over the abduction of schoolchildren in Oyo State.

Last week, the House of Representatives called on the Federal Government and security agencies to ensure the victims were rescued alive.

WED 26: UBA expands green campaign with trees in Lagos schools

By Francis Ajuonuma

The UBA Foundation on Friday launched a new environmental sustainability campaign with tree-planting exercises at King's College, Lagos, and CMS Grammar School, Bariga, as part of activities marking World Environment Day 2026.

The initiative, which also signalled the commencement of the Foundation's 2026 Tree Planting for Sustainability Initiative, aims to promote environmental consciousness and climate-positive actions among young Nigerians.

Speaking during the exercise at CMS Grammar School, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of UBA Foundation, Bola Atta, said the programme was designed to encourage students to take responsibility for protecting the environment.

"We want young people to understand that the environment needs our collective support and protection. Through initiatives like this, we are encouraging the next generation to embrace sustainable practices that will help create healthier communities and a better future for all," she said.

Atta said the selection of King's College and CMS Grammar School was deliberate because of their historical significance and long-standing educational legacies.

"These are iconic institutions with deep historical significance. CMS Grammar School is Nigeria's oldest secondary school, while King's College has been shaping leaders for more than a century. We wanted schools where these trees will be nurtured and allowed to flourish for generations to come," she stated.

She expressed concern over the steady reduction of green spaces in many urban centres due to rapid development and environmental neglect.

"Over the years, development has often taken precedence over environmental preservation, leading to the loss of many trees and green areas. However, there is no better time than now to begin restoring our environment and making a lasting impact," Atta added.

Continued online at thisnigeria.com

Hard times: Nigerians trade household goods

By Anthony Otaru, Abuja

Nigeria's worsening economic crisis is pushing millions of households into painful survival choices, with growing numbers of citizens now selling household appliances, personal belongings, and land to cope with rising inflation, soaring living costs, and shrinking incomes.

Investigations across the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), neighbouring communities, and several major cities revealed that struggling families are disposing of refrigerators, television sets, generators, cooking gas cylinders, sewing machines, electrical appliances, vehicles, metal scraps, and even family property at give-away prices, desperate for cash.

The development has also triggered a booming trade for scavengers, popularly called "Baban Bola," and operators of "partaker" shops who buy and resell used household items across urban centres.

***Second-hand dealers, scavengers profit from citizens' desperation**

Findings by ThisNigeria showed that scavengers now move from street to street in search of distressed sellers, while residents fear the trend is worsening theft and insecurity as economic hardship deepens nationwide.

Many families, unable to cope with rising rent, transport costs, school fees and food prices, are reportedly withdrawing children from private schools, relocating to cheaper suburbs and abandoning businesses they can no longer sustain.

The grim reality reflects Nigeria's growing burden of poverty.

According to the latest Multidimensional Poverty Index report released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), about 133 million Nigerians — representing nearly 65 per cent of the population — live in multidimensional poverty.

The report measures deprivation beyond income levels, focusing on health, education, living standards and employment conditions.

In another report on monetary poverty and inequality, the NBS estimated that over 82.9 million Nigerians live below the national poverty line, pegged at N137,430 per person annually.

For many Nigerians, however, the statistics only mirror daily struggles already visible in homes and communities.

A retired civil servant, Martins Olowu, said he was forced to sacrifice valuable family assets after finding it difficult to fund his three children's university education.

"When things became unbearable, I sold my old Toyota car, refrigerator and even my wife's sewing machine so my children could complete school. It was painful, but we had no alternative," he told ThisNigeria.



Minister of State for Education, Prof Suwaiba Ahmad(r); with the Registrar, National Examination Council, Prof Ibrahim Wushishi (2nd r), during the monitoring of 2026 National Common Entrance Examination (NCEE) at Model Secondary School, Maitama, Abuja...at the weekend

He added that although his children eventually graduated, the family lost almost everything they owned in the process.

***Distress sales spread across Abuja, suburbs, major cities**

In Suleja, Niger State, commercial driver Bernard Bitrus narrated how rising fuel prices destroyed his transport business.

"Immediately fuel prices increased, it became impossible to survive in the taxi business. After discussing with my family, I sold the car, rented a small shop for my wife and started rearing goats in my compound," he said.

At Wuse Market in Abuja, tailor Mustapha Garuba said declining patronage and high operating costs pushed him out of tailoring.

"Customers are no longer coming because people don't have money. After my shop rent increased, I sold my sewing machine and moved into the charcoal business in Maraba to survive," he lamented.

The distress sales are no longer limited to low-income earners.

In Kuje, Abuja, Mrs Lawrenta Ogunjobi said her family was forced to dispose of household items after their landlord raised rent from N1 million to N2.5 million.

"My husband lost his job, and we could no longer cope. We had to move to Gwagwalada, where rent was cheaper, but even that proved difficult. We sold our fridge, generator and other valuables to raise money," she explained.

Economic hardship is also fuelling criminal activities and insecurity in several communities.

Nasir Imam, an Okada rider in Kuje, said he lost his motorcycle to thieves while observing prayers at a mosque.

"It is now very risky because poverty has increased everywhere. Before I came out from the mosque, my bike had disappeared. The motorcycle was bought on credit, so I had to sell my only land to pay the owner," he said.

Religious institutions are not spared from the growing wave of theft.

A pastor in Kubwa, Israel Akanji, recounted how scavengers allegedly invaded his Church and carted away speakers, microphones, a piano and other equipment.

"Police later arrested one suspect and traced the items to a partaker shop owner who confessed he bought everything for just N100,000. This is the situation Nigeria has found itself in because poverty is everywhere," he said.

Meanwhile, second-hand dealers and scavengers admit they are benefiting from the worsening hardship confronting many households.

Jimohe Adaji, who operates a partaker shop in Nyanya, described the current situation as a boom period for the business.

"People now bring household items for sale almost every day because of poverty. Business is booming for us, but it is sad seeing families sell valuable property at very low prices," he stated.

He appealed to the government to urgently revive the economy and reduce the suffering of ordinary Nigerians.

•Experts blame corruption, failed policies for worsening situation

Economic experts and policy analysts blamed the worsening poverty situation on years of corruption, poor governance, policy inconsistency and failure to diversify the economy.

Professor Sheriffdeen Tella described the economic condition as the outcome of "bad and selfish governance."

"It is unfortunate Nigerians are where they are today because leaders failed to put the people first. Corruption, wasteful spending and poor economic decisions created the hardship we are witnessing today," he said.

According to him, successive administrations failed to utilise huge oil revenues to build productive sectors capable of creating jobs and stabilising the economy.

"This government introduced subsidy removal and massive naira devaluation, but the benefits have gone largely to the political elite and top civil servants, while ordinary Nigerians are battling inflation, poverty and insecurity," he argued.

Tella called for people-oriented reforms, including deliberate investment in agriculture and industry, lower interest rates, temporary controls on energy costs, and stricter anti-corruption measures.

"The orientation of government must change from 'people do not matter' to people-centred governance," he added.

President of the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS), Godwin Ighedosa, urged the government to prioritise human capital development, vocational training, quality education, and access to healthcare.

Similarly, Lead Director of the Centre for Social Justice, Eze Onyekpere, stressed the need for inflation control, currency stabilisation and greater transparency in governance.

"A strong social protection mechanism and targeted safety nets must be introduced urgently to cushion the suffering of vulnerable Nigerians," he said.

INDIGENOUS IJAW AND URHOBO PEOPLE OF WARRI FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY OF DELTA STATE

June 5, 2026

His Excellency,
President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR,
President, Commander-in-Chief of the
Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Your Excellency Sir,

OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT BOLA AHMED TINUBU ON THE NEED TO RESPECT THE RULE OF LAW AND DEMOCRACY IN THE WARRI FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY OF DELTA STATE

1. Mr. President, on the 12th day of March, 2026, while addressing representatives of the Inter-Party Advisory Council at the Aso Rock Villa, Abuja, you said and we quote: ***'Democracy is about the rule of law and that the rule of law must prevail in any democracy'***. It is in the context of your foregoing statement that, we write this open letter to express our dissatisfaction with the attack on the rule of law and democracy in the Warri Federal Constituency of Delta State arising from the implementation of the Supreme Court judgment in SC/413/2016: HON. GEORGE U. TIMINIMI 7 9 ORS V. INEC on fresh delineation of electoral wards and polling units.
2. It would be recalled that, on the 2nd day of December, 2022, after 11 years of tedious legal journey through three layers of court in Nigeria by the Ijaw people of Warri Federal Constituency of Delta State, who have suffered decades of political oppression and suppression, the Supreme Court gave a final judgment where it ordered the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as follows:

"AN ORDER of this Honourable Court compelling the Defendant, its agents, servants, privies and assigns to conduct a fresh delineation of all that electoral wards/polling units for Warri South West, Warri North and Warri South Local Government Areas of Warri Federal Constituency in Delta State for the purpose of future elections". (underlying supplied for emphasis)

3. The Independent National Electoral Commission in reaction to the judgment met with stakeholders from the Warri Federal Constituency of Delta State on the 2nd day of February, 2023 at its Headquarters in Asaba, Delta State where it expressed its commitment to implement the judgment as a law-abiding agency of government in line with section 287 of the 1999 Constitution, as amended. The commitment was made by the then Hon. Resident Electoral Commissioner of Delta State, **Rev. (Dr.) Monday Udoh Tom** on behalf of the former Chairman, **Prof. Mahumud Yakubu.**
4. Subsequently, INEC had series of meetings with stakeholders which cumulated in the field work carried out from the 10th to 19th of July, 2024. The report of the field work containing the proposed fresh electoral wards/registration areas and polling units were presented to stakeholders of the Warri Federal Constituency on the 4th day of April, 2025 at Asaba, Delta State. INEC on that occasion called for comments, observations and inputs from stakeholders for the purpose of releasing its final report of the fresh electoral wards/registration areas and polling units for the conduct of the 2027 general elections and onward.
5. Further to the input by stakeholders, including agencies of government, INEC released the final report of the fresh delineation to stakeholders at Asaba on Wednesday, the 20th day of May, 2026. INEC in its wisdom and to ensure deeper representation in government by the people of Warri Federal Constituency created two additional state constituencies in Warri North and Warri South West Local Government Areas. It further recommended the creation of new additional Warri Federal Constituency 11 to cover Warri North and Warri South West Local Government Areas, subject to compliance with constitutional requirements. INEC through its National Commissioner Alhaji Abdulrazaq Tukur Yusuf promised that the Commission would direct political parties to immediately conduct primaries to nominate candidates for the newly created state constituencies considering the timetable for the conduct of political party primaries.
6. The above decisions of INEC were greeted with wide jubilations by stakeholders all over the Warri Federal Constituency because they addressed to a very large extent the age-longed demands of the people.
7. However, the jubilations were cut-short when information got to us that, the Presidency has ordered INEC to stop further implementation of its final report on the Supreme Court ordered fresh delineation of the Warri Federal Constituency of Delta State because of issues raised by the Itsekiri ethnic nationality, which is one out of the three ethnic nationalities indigenous to the Warri Federal Constituency of Delta State. We strongly believe that, this decision arose from your matrimonial ties to the Itsekiri ethnic nationality.
8. **PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE TO INEC IS AN ATTACK ON THE RULE OF LAW AND DEMOCRACY IN THE WARRI FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY OF DELTA STATE AND NIGERIA**
9. Mr. President, we state without hesitation that, your directive to INEC to stop further implementation of the Supreme Court ordered delineation of the Warri Federal Constituency of Delta State is a direct attack and desecration of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) which you swore to defend and uphold. On the 29th day of May, 2023, when you took your oath of office as President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, you among other things made a vow before God and the Nigerian people as follows:

'…That as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I will discharge my duties to the best of my ability, faithfully and in accordance with the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the laws,… that I will not allow my personal interest to influence my official conduct or my official decisions; that I will to the best of my ability preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria…, that in all circumstances, I will do right to all manner of people, according to law, without fear or favour, ill-will…'

10. We the Indigenous Ijaw and Urhobo people of Warri make bold to state that, your actions in relation to the implementation of the Supreme Court ordered delineation of the Warri Federal constituency is a complete violation of your oath of office and Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended).
11. We state that your directive to INEC undermines the sanctity of national institutions such as the Supreme Court of Nigeria and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). This is dangerous to the survival of our democracy and the rule of law. The rule of law in a democratic system of government requires that the finality of the decisions of the Supreme Court of Nigeria and the independence of the Independent National Electoral Commission should be respected by all persons and organs of government in the overall interest of Nigeria's democracy, including your office as President and Commander-in-Chief. It is a requirement of the 1999 Constitution, as amended that, the judgment of the Supreme Court is final and must be obeyed and enforced by all persons and authorities in Nigeria. Section 287 (1) of the Constitution concretised this mandatory duty in the following words:

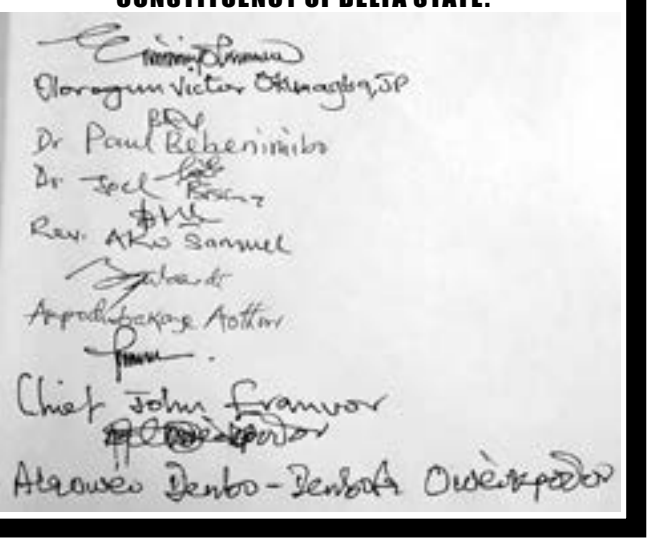
'The decisions of the Supreme Court shall be enforced in any part of the Federation by all authorities and persons, and by courts with subordinate jurisdiction to that of the supreme court.' (underlying supplied for emphasis)

12. The constitutional duty of all agencies of government including your office in the context of the fresh delineation of electoral wards and polling units as ordered by the Supreme Court in the Warri Federal Constituency of Delta State is to ensure the enforcement of the order of the Supreme Court to its logical conclusion. To do otherwise, as you did with your directive to INEC amounts to violent attack on the rule of law which is the bedrock upon which our constitutional democracy stands as you rightly stated in your meeting with the Inter-Party Advisory Committee on the 12th of March, 2026.
13. Furthermore, it is important to point out to Mr. President, the need to respect the constitutional independence of INEC in the performance of its constitutional and statutory functions. For the purpose of emphasis, section 160(1) of the 1999 Constitution, as amended provides for the independence of INEC as follows:

…provided that in the case of the Independent National Electoral commission, its powers to make its own rules or otherwise regulate its own procedure shall not be subject to the approval or control of the President" (underlying supplied for emphasis).

14. By the foregoing provision, INEC is supposed to be independent in the performance of its functions and the constitutional independence enjoys by INEC must be respected by all agencies of state in the interest of our nation's democracy. **It is a dangerous precedent for Mr. President to stop INEC in the performance of its statutory responsibility to implement its delineation report in line with the judgment of the Supreme Court because of affiliation to an ethnic group that is interested in the final report.** In the same vein, it amounts to disrespect to the Supreme Court of Nigeria for its orders to be undermined and enforcement truncated. May, the day not come when orders of the apex court would be disregarded with impunity. That would portend a direct attack on the rule of law and direct invitation to anarchy.
15. Furthermore, Mr. President, you swore and made a vow to Nigerians to do right to all manner of people without favour, affection or ill-will. We state with all sense of humility that, your interference in the affairs of INEC in order for the report of the Supreme Court ordered fresh delineation to be favourable to the Itsekiri ethnic nationality and at the expense of the Ijaws and Urhobos of Warri because of your matrimonial relationship with Itsekiri is a violation of your oath of office and the Constitution of Nigeria. You ought to with due respect treat everybody equally and without favour in accordance with law. INEC has submitted its final report and its independence should be respected in the implementation of the final report.
16. **OUR PRAYERS**
17. Based on the foregoing, we the Indigenous Ijaw and Urhobo people of Warri wish to humbly request as follows:
    a. The constitutional independence of INEC in the performance of its duties should be respected by all agencies and organs of the Federal Government in the interest of the rule of law and democracy.
    b. The Presidency should stay clear from interfering in INEC's statutory responsibility to implement the fresh delineation of electoral wards and polling units in the Warri Federal Constituency of Delta State as ordered by the Supreme Court of Nigeria in the conduct of the 2027 elections.

SIGNED FOR AND ON BEHALF OF INDIGENOUS IJAW AND URHOBO PEOPLE OF WARRI FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY OF DELTA STATE:



Tinubu's 3rd anniversary: Wike begins 30-day Abuja project commissioning

By Ben Adoga, Abuja

Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike, will today commence what officials describe as an unprecedented 30-day commissioning marathon of infrastructure projects across Abuja to mark President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's third anniversary in office.

No fewer than 100 projects have been lined up for inauguration during the month-long exercise, which will run from June 8 to July 17, 2026.

Speaking recently after inspecting projects in Kuje, Gwagwalada and the refurbished Abuja City Gate, Wike disclosed that the projects were ready for commissioning by President Tinubu as part of activities marking the administration's third year.

"We have close to 100 projects ready for commissioning to celebrate the President's third anniversary," the minister said during the inspection tour.

The exercise begins today with the commissioning of the dual carriageway of the Outer Southern Expressway (OSEX), also known as the Mahamadou Issoufou Expressway, stretching from Ring Road I junction to Ring Road II junction, linking the Nnamdi Azikiwe Expressway to Life Camp Junction.

Other projects scheduled for inauguration include the office annex of the Body of Benchers, 10 units of staff quarters at the Nigerian Law School in Bwari, and the reconstructed Old Keffi Road, which traverses the Karsana community and adjoining communities, including the Building Materials Market axis.

Also billed for commissioning are the Airport Expressway to Kuje Road, Judges' Quarters, the Court of Appeal Complex, the Code of Conduct Bureau Complex, and the Bill Clinton Drive-Tunga Madaki Road.

The administration is equally set to inaugurate projects under the Greater Abuja Water Supply Scheme, covering Karu Site, Karu community, Kurudu, Orozo and Karshi districts.

Communities in Bwari, Gwagwalada, Kuje and Kwali Area Councils are also expected to benefit from the water infrastructure projects.

The commissioning marathon is expected to end on July 17 with the inauguration of the reconstructed Arab Road/Gbazango Road in Kubwa, Bwari Area Council, alongside the official presentation of the Abuja @ 50 Compendium.



Children living in Karmajiji, chanting and showing their support for the re-election of President Bola Tinubu, during the Empowerment of 1000 Petty Traders in LEA Primary, Karmajini, by First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Sen. Oluremi Tinubu, in Abuja...at the weekend

Mahmoud lauds First Lady's empowerment support for Abuja traders, PWDs

By Ben Adoga, Abuja

Minister of State for the Federal Capital Territory, Dr Mariya Mahmoud, has commended First Lady Senator Oluremi Tinubu for what she described as her sustained commitment to empowering persons with disabilities and vulnerable Nigerians across the country.

Mahmoud spoke at the weekend during the empowerment of 1,000 petty traders in Karon Majigi community within the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC).

The programme, organised by the Office of the First Lady under the Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI), provided financial support and business tools to beneficiaries drawn from across the Federal Capital Territory.

According to the minister, the initiative reflects the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, which prioritises inclusion, poverty reduction and economic empowerment.

She said the intervention demonstrates the Federal Government's determination to integrate persons living with disabilities into national development by creating opportunities for self-reliance and economic growth.

"Empowering persons with disabilities is not merely a charitable gesture but a strategic investment in human capital and sustainable national development," Mahmoud stated.

She praised the First Lady for her "compassion, visionary leadership and unwavering dedication to humanitarian causes," noting that her interventions continue to restore hope and dignity to vulnerable citizens.

Mahmoud reaffirmed the Federal Capital Territory Administration's commitment to policies that promote accessibility, equal opportunities, and the full participation of persons with disabilities in governance and development.

"The FCT Administration will continue to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to build an inclusive society where every citizen, regardless of physical ability, can realise their full potential and contribute meaningfully to national progress," she said.

She also urged beneficiaries to utilise the support effectively to improve their businesses, attain financial independence and positively impact their communities.

On behalf of the FCT Administration, the minister expressed appreciation to the First Lady for what she described as practical support and encouragement to vulnerable groups in society.

Earlier, former FCT APC Women Leader, Mrs Hailmary Aipoh, also commended the First Lady for her generosity and support for women and vulnerable Nigerians.

Aipoh expressed optimism that the empowerment initiative would help beneficiaries expand their petty businesses and improve their livelihoods.

Rising gas prices force Abuja residents to traditional fuels

By Oyintutu Oyinkolade

The rising prices of cooking gas have forced many households and businesses in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) to embrace traditional fuels such as charcoal and firewood.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that cooking gas prices in the FCT have risen sharply within the last few months, moving from about N1,200 per kg to N2,000 per kg.

Industry operators have attributed the increase to supply shortages, higher depot costs, foreign exchange pressures, and rising transportation expenses.

Consumers and vendors of this essential commodity, who spoke to NAN, said the rising costs have forced many households and businesses to seek cheaper cooking alternatives.

Mrs Mayo Akinpelu, a food vendor in Gwarinpa, Abuja, said she stopped using cooking gas after repeated price increases made it too expensive for her business.

According to Akinpelu, she switched to firewood and charcoal because they are cheaper and easier to purchase in small quantities.

"Refilling my gas cylinder became difficult because the price kept rising. I could no longer afford it and still make a reasonable profit. Right now, 12.5kg of LPG goes for N25,000.

"Firewood and charcoal are not as convenient as gas, but they help me reduce costs and keep my business running," she said.

She added that although customers sometimes complain about delays, the alternative fuels have become her only practical option amid rising gas prices.

Another food vendor in Dutse, Bwari Area Council, Ms Victory Samson, said the increase has significantly reduced her profit margin and affected her business operations.

ThisNigeria
Monday June 8, 2026
thisnigerial thisnigerial



L-R: Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Senator George Akume; representative of the First Lady of the Federation and wife of the Senate President, Mrs Unoma Godswill Akpabio; President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio; and Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives, Benjamin Kalu, during the Inter- Denominational Church Service to mark the 27th Democracy Day celebration, at the National Christian Centre, Abuja...yesterday.



L-R: Kogi State Governor, Usman Ododo; Imo State Governor/ Chairman of Progressives Governors' Forum (PGF), Senator Hope Uzodimma; Ekiti State Governor, Biodun Oyebanji; and President General Ohaneze Ndigbo, Ekiti State, High Chief Alex Ndubisi, during the 2026 Igbo Cultural Day Celebration, at the Ekiti Parapo Pavilion, Ado-Ekiti...at the weekend



L-R: Ekiti State Commissioner for Health and Human Services, Dr Oyebanji Filani; Ekiti State Governor, Biodun Oyebanji; Executive Director, National Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA), Dr Muyiwa Aina; Deputy Director, Family Health, Gates Foundation, Rodio Dialo; and Director, Centre for Newborn Health Research and Innovation (CeNHRI), Dr Olufunke Bolaji, during the commissioning of the centre at Ekiti State University Teaching Hospital (EKSUTH), Ado- Ekiti... at the weekend



Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu (r), presenting a Lagos State Government plaque to the Group Chief Executive Officer of Arridex Group, Kayode Adeleke, during a courtesy visit at Lagos House, Marina...at the weekend



Member representing Ogbomoso North-South, and Orire Federal Constituency, Oyo State, Olamijuwonlo Alao-Akala (l), briefing members of House of Representatives Press Corps on his motion, demanding the Federal Government to expedite action on the creation of state police, local police and the decentralisation of courts as an integrated national intelligence and surveillance network, in effort at addressing the rising insecurity in the country, after the plenary at National Assembly Complex, Abuja. With him is the Chairman of the House of Representatives Press Corps, Gboyega Onadiran



L-R: Portfolio Director, Informa, Tom Coleman; Minister of State for Health & Social Welfare, Dr. Iziaq Adekunle Salako; Special Regional Representative of the DG AfCDC Western Regional Coordinating Centre, Prof Aliko Ahmed; and President of Healthcare Federation of Nigeria and Country Director, PharmAccess, Njide Ndili, during the Premiere of WHX Lagos 2026, at the Landmark Event Center, Lagos

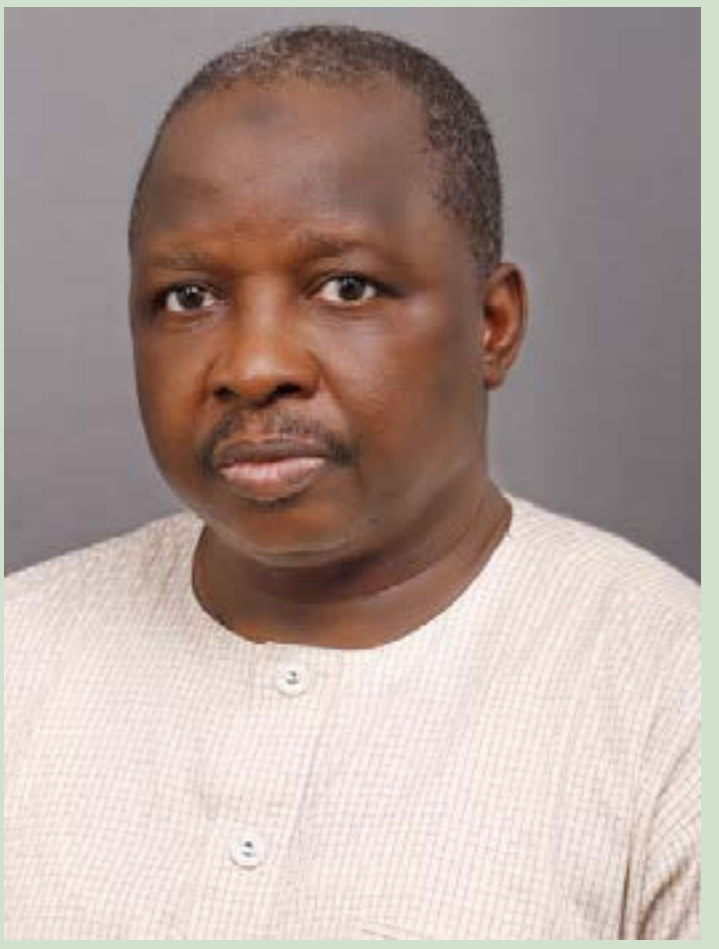


Group Chief Risk Officer, United Bank for Africa (UBA), Awele Ajibola; Managing Director/CEO, UBA Foundation, Bola Atta; Director and Principal, King's College, Magaji Zachariah; and King's College Teacher, Bello AA., flanked by students and staff members of King's College, Lagos Island, during the UBA Foundation Tree Planting Exercise, held at the school in commemoration of World Environment Day 2026...at the weekend

TheBigInterview

Government must earn citizens' trust to win security war –Shehu, retired NAF officer

A retired Nigerian Air Force officer and security analyst, Group Captain Sadeeq Shehu, has warned that Nigeria may continue to struggle against terrorism, banditry and kidnappings unless government rebuilds public trust and strengthens security institutions. Speaking on Channels Television's Politics Today, Shehu said citizens would willingly volunteer intelligence if they were confident their identities and lives would be protected. He also cautioned against spreading unverified information during rescue operations, stressing that misinformation could compromise security missions and endanger victims. David Lawani monitored the interview



Shehu

Nigeria appears to be facing an increasingly dangerous security situation. Did you ever imagine that insecurity, which escalated in the North-East, North-Central and South-East, would spread this rapidly to the South-West?

There is some surprise about that. Initially, we tended to regionalise insecurity to the northern part of the country due to several indices. But we should realise that when pressure becomes too much in one part of the country, the bad guys are also likely to move to areas where they think they can get shelter. In that regard, it is not surprising that what we once thought was a North-West or North-Central problem is gradually becoming a national one. So what does this mean? It means security concerns, everybody. When the security situation affects one part of the country, there is no way every other part will remain completely shielded from it. Even at the international level, you see concerted efforts against terrorism. Even countries not directly experiencing terrorism contribute to the fight because, in one way or another, they will eventually be affected. Even if attacks do not happen on your territory, your people may travel elsewhere and become victims. That is what we have seen.

From your assessment, does it appear that the security forces are losing the fight against insurgency and terrorism?

Counter-terrorism or counter-insurgency operations are not sprint races; they are marathons. Along the way, although citizens naturally want to see continuous success, there will periodically be setbacks. What is important, however, is ensuring that the successes outweigh the reversals and that the number of setbacks is reduced. Unfortunately, it appears that Boko Haram in the North-East, or ISWAP as we know them, have become more emboldened. Also, in the hinterlands of the North-Central, North-West and now South-West, we are seeing other related criminal activities. Opinions differ on this. Some people believe these groups are also terrorists, while others think Boko Haram elements are simply spreading into those areas. In my view, we are facing a different kind of threat there. It is an entirely different group we are dealing with today.

> Hostage rescue operations are extremely delicate because the first objective is not killing kidnappers, but bringing innocent victims out alive and safely

Do you see similarities between the Oyo incident and the attacks on the Chibok and Dapchi schoolgirls? What does the pattern suggest to you, and which groups typically operate in this manner?

Well, just like the military is an international profession where officers learn from one another, insurgent and terrorist groups also share tactics, skills and operational methods. You can see Nigerian officers going for courses in China and adopting some Chinese military practices. Unfortunately, insurgents do the same thing. Even if one group is religiously motivated and another is purely criminal, they can still cooperate. As far back as 2012, when I was in Mali, there were reports that Boko Haram fighters from Nigeria travelled there to support insurgents. When Boko Haram started, they did not know how to manufacture IEDs. It was ISIS and ISWAP that helped teach them those methods. So, operational tactics can move across borders. These groups maintain loose cooperation. They may not share the same ideology or ultimate objective. Some want territory, some are driven by extremist ideology, while others are purely criminal and motivated by money. But when they interact, they exchange tactics, skills and operational methods. That is why you see similar patterns across different groups.

How does difficult terrain, such as the Sambisa Forest and other remote environments, provide cover for terrorists and bandits?

Such ungovernable terrain greatly helps insurgents. Thick forests and seasonal rivers create major obstacles. Sometimes, when rivers overflow, even our own security forces cannot reach those areas. Terrain is one of the biggest challenges in the fight against bandits and Boko Haram. The locals themselves understand the terrain very well. They know the seasonal changes. In some hinterland areas of Niger State, for example, locals will tell you that during the rainy season, when rivers are swollen, they experience some relief from attacks. But as soon as the rivers dry up during the dry season, attacks increase again. So terrain complicates military operations despite the mobility assets available to the armed forces. In many cases, those assets are insufficient to reach the deep hinterlands. Above all, as I pointed out earlier, people often talk about technology. Technology has its place, but when you are dealing with thick forests and inaccessible terrain, the most effective deterrent is the constant presence of security personnel. Sometimes you go to villages, and there are no police stations within hundreds of kilometres. The bandits know they can attack such places freely because support will take a long time to arrive. That is why terrain, mobility and inadequate deployment all combine to create serious security gaps. But after

Continues on Page 27

NNPC donates MRI machine to Kano orthopaedic hospital

By Seyi Odewale



Pic. 5. L-R: Member representing Okigwe North Federal Constituency, Imo State, Rep. Miriam Onuoha; member representing Bida/Katcha/Gbako Federal Constituency, Niger State, Rep. Saidu Abdullahi; Chairman, House of Representative Committee on Finance, Rep. James Faleke; and the celebrant/ retiring clerk of Committee on Finance, Oscar Okoro, during the book launch titled "The Nigerian Legislature; A Practical Guide for Lawmakers." to celebrate the 60th birthday and retirement of the clerk of the committee, in Abuja

The NNPC Foundation has donated and commissioned a state-of-the-art 1.5 Tesla Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) machine at the National Orthopaedic Hospital, Dala, Kano State, to strengthen specialised healthcare services in Northern Nigeria.

The MRI system, installed at the federal health facility in Kano, is expected to improve the diagnosis and treatment of orthopaedic, neurological, trauma, musculoskeletal and gynaecological conditions.
Hospital officials said the facility would reduce diagnostic delays and lessen the burden on patients who previously travelled long distances to access advanced MRI services.

The development was disclosed in a statement by the NNPC Ltd.'s Chief Corporate Communications Officer, Andy Odeh, in Abuja.

Speaking during the handover ceremony, the Group Chief Executive Officer of NNPC Ltd., represented by the Managing Director of NNPC Foundation, Mrs. Emmanuella Arukwe, said the intervention formed part of the company's healthcare support initiatives across the country.

She said the organisation remained committed to delivering sustainable social investments that address critical national needs.
Arukwe noted that the donation came at a time when healthcare institutions were facing infrastructure deficits, limited medical equipment, and a growing demand for specialised services.

Also, the Executive Vice President, Business Services, NNPC Ltd., Mrs Sophia Mbakwe, represented by the Executive Director, Programme Management at NNPC Foundation, Mrs Rose Okonkwo, said the company was committed to supporting healthcare delivery and strengthening key institutions across Nigeria.

She described the MRI installation as part of efforts to improve access to quality healthcare, particularly for underserved communities.
The Kano State governor, Abba Yusuf, represented by the Commissioner for Health, Abubakar Yusuf, commended the NNPC Foundation for the intervention, describing it as a significant boost to healthcare delivery in the state and the North-West region.

Katsina intensifies multi-dimensional efforts to rescue abducted ex-General, wife

By Abbas Bamalli

The Katsina State government said prospects were bright for the release of the former Director of Defence Information, Maj.-Gen. Rabe Abubakar (rtd), and his wife, following intensified multi-dimensional efforts to secure their freedom.

The government disclosed this in a statement at the weekend by the Commissioner for Information and Culture, Dr Bala Salisu-Zango, in Katsina.

According to the commissioner, coordinated security operations have reached an advanced stage, raising optimism that the retired military officer and his wife would soon regain their freedom.

Abubakar and his wife were abducted by suspected bandits along the Matazu Local Government Area axis.

Salisu-Zango said Governor Dikko Radda had immediately directed all relevant security agencies to prioritise the safe rescue of the couple and other victims held by criminal groups.

He revealed that preliminary investigations showed the abduction was a deliberate, targeted operation.
According to him, evidence gathered so far suggested that the retired general and his wife were monitored and trailed from Kaduna, where they reportedly began their journey before the incident.

"The targeted nature of the crime points to a disturbing shift in the tactics of criminal elements operating in the region.

"The precision with which the operation was carried out indicates the involvement of organised criminal networks, and this insight is guiding ongoing rescue efforts," he added.

The commissioner described the attack as an affront not only to retired servicemen who had devoted their lives to national service but also to all law-abiding citizens.

Zulum canvases for protection of Lake Chad Basin's assets

By Hamza Suleiman

The Borno State governor, Babagana Zulum, has canvassed the need for the Federal Government to safeguard the critical assets of the Chad Basin Development Authority (CBDA) against being disposed of unjustly.

He made the appeal in a statement yesterday by his spokesman Mr Dauda Illiya in Maiduguri.

The governor insisted that some forces were trying to dispose of heavy serviceable equipment under the guise of scrap metal auctioning.

Zulum said the state government had received reports that some individuals were attempting to remove heavy-duty equipment and strategic assets located at the authority's headquarters and booster stations across northern Borno.

"It has come to the attention of the Borno State government that some unscrupulous elements are attempting to cart away the heavy equipment domiciled at the CBDA premises and booster stations across Northern Borno in the name of scrap metal auctioning.

"The Federal Government procured this equipment at a high cost, and it is serviceable. There is no reason whatsoever to auction them, as doing so will decapitate the CBDA and cripple the agricultural value chain in our state," the governor said.

The Chad Basin Development Authority was established by the federal government to harness the agricultural and water resources of the Lake Chad Basin through irrigation farming, livestock production, water supply and rural development programmes.

Zulum, however, said the recent reconstitution of the authority's management by the Federal Ministry of Water Resources aimed at reviving its mandate and accelerating food security, agricultural development and rural livelihoods across the North-east.

The governor stated further that the assets reportedly being targeted for disposal include irrigation stations, booster plants, drilling machines, electricity-generation facilities, tractors, bulldozers, combine harvesters, pipelines and crop-processing equipment.

According to him, many of the assets remain functional and are essential to the authority's operations.

"Carting away this equipment, under any guise, will amount to decommissioning them and cannibalising the CBDA," he said.

Musa inaugurates Kaduna Christian academy, says education fights insecurity

By Mohammad Tijjani

The Minister of Defence, Gen. Christopher Musa (rtd), yesterday inaugurated the Kaduna Christian Academy in Ungwan Bulus, Sabon Tasha, Kaduna State.
Musa described education as a critical tool for combating insecurity and building lasting peace.

Speaking at the inauguration, he said the academy, built with support from the Department of State Services (DSS), represented a strategic investment in human capital development.

He said the school would also strengthen community resilience and promote sustainable development.

The minister described the academy as: "A weapon of mass instruction" capable of defeating ignorance, hopelessness and conditions that often fuel insecurity.

"When we speak of national defence, the instinct is to focus on military hardware and intelligence gathering.

"However, true and lasting security is anchored on the defeat of ignorance and the conquest of hopelessness."

According to Musa, an educated and enlightened population remains the strongest defence against insecurity, extremism and social instability.

He commended the Director-General of the DSS, Mr Adeola Ajayi, and the service for extending their mandate beyond security operations to community development.

Musa said the project showed that internal security was not only about surveillance and arrests.

New Ebonyi CP urges media to prioritise professionalism

By David Eze, Abakaliki

The new Commissioner of Police in Ebonyi State, Hope Urunwa Okafor, has charged journalists in the state to live above board by discharging their duties professionally.

She gave the charge when members of the Correspondents' Chapel, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), in the state paid her a courtesy visit in her office at the weekend.

Okafor, who described journalism as a noble profession and its practitioners as watchdogs of society, further implored them to ensure objectivity and accuracy in their reportage.

"Your job as journalists is very critical. It requires a sound mind and a good conscience.

"You should discharge your duties professionally. You should be seen to have lived above board in your duties by society," the CP said.

She condemned the bad impression some members of the public have of the police force because of the attitudes of some officers who misbehave.

She urged such people to avoid using the attitude of the 'few' in the force to judge the police and its men, who have sacrificed so much to secure lives and property and are still doing so.

The Police Commissioner reiterated her commitment to the security of lives and property of the people of the state and advised the general public to report any security issues within their vicinity for prompt response.

She described Ebonyi State as one of the most peaceful states in the country but expressed worry over murder cases in some communities in the state.

She solicited the cooperation of journalists to end the ugly phenomenon, saying that her target is to ensure that such acts are curbed before she leaves the state.

In his remarks, the Chairman of the Correspondents' Chapel, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) in the state, Comrade Uchenna Inya, said the visit was to strengthen the relationship between the police and journalists as partners in progress.

He commended the CP for her respect for human lives and dignity and her quick intervention in the dehumanization of a child by a prophet in Izzi Local Government Area of the state, which led to the arrest of the prophet and all other culprits involved.



L-R: Former Chief of Defence Staff, retired Gen. Lucky Irabor; Taye Adelaja; and the Chairman of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), FCT Chapter, Arch. Chukwudi Eze, during the June 2026 Edition of ANA Reading /Writers Dialogue, in Abuja

WED: Enugu urges students to champion environmental sustainability

By Alex Enebeli

The Enugu State Ministry of Environment and Climate Change have urged students to champion environmental sustainability through responsible environmental practices and climate action.

The ministry made the call during activities marking the 2026 World Environment Day (WED) celebration in the state, according to a statement issued on Sunday in Enugu.

The statement was signed by Mr Elochukwu Anieze, Personal Assistant to the Senior Adviser to the Governor on Climate Policy and Sustainable Development.
It stated that students from 20 schools across Enugu and Nsukka planted 400 trees as part of the celebration.

According to the statement, the exercise formed part of the pilot phase of a climate education campaign tagged, "Rooted in Action: Growing Green Generation."

The initiative was organised by the Office of the Senior Adviser to the Governor on Climate Policy and Sustainable Development in collaboration with the Office of the First Lady and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change.
It added that the project received funding support from UNICEF's Enugu Field Office, while the Ministry of Education partnered in its implementation.

The statement noted that the campaign aligned with the 2026 World Environment Day theme, "Inspired by Nature. For Climate. For Our Future."

It explained that the programme was designed to promote climate action and responsible environmental stewardship among young people.

The ministry encouraged students to embrace proper waste management practices, reduce plastic use and sustain tree-planting activities to protect the environment.

It stressed that environmental protection required sustained collaboration among governments, institutions and citizens, adding that the newly planted trees would serve as symbols of hope, resilience and a greener future for the state.

The statement quoted Prof. Chukwumerije Okereke, Senior Adviser to the Governor on Climate Policy and Sustainable Development, as reaffirming the state government's commitment to environmental sustainability.

Okereke, represented by Anieze, described climate education as essential to raising environmentally conscious future leaders.

He said that engaging young people in practical climate activities would strengthen sustainable development efforts and contribute to a greener future.

The statement also quoted the Office of the First Lady as reiterating its commitment to environmental protection and youth development initiatives.

According to the office, students remain critical stakeholders in addressing climate change and building resilient communities.

The organisers commended participating schools, teachers and students for supporting the initiative.

The participating schools included Queens School, Enugu; National Grammar School, Enugu; Idaw River Girls Secondary School, Enugu; University of Nigeria Secondary School, Nsukka; Miketery International School, Enugu; and Uwani Secondary School, Enugu, among others. (NAN)

Izhi Nnodo Clan Unanimously Adopts Gov. Nwifuru as Sole 2027 Candidate, Backs APC

By David Eze, Abakaliki

The Oha Izhi Nnodo clan in Ebonyi State, has unanimously adopted Governor Francis Nwifuru as its sole governorship candidate for the 2027 general election and endorsed all candidates of the All Progressives Congress (APC) for elective positions across the state.

The endorsement was made during a massive political gathering at the Pa Ngele Oruta Township Stadium, Abakaliki, where thousands of stakeholders, political leaders, traditional rulers, youths, women, and party supporters from the clan converged to demonstrate solidarity with the governor and the ruling party, the APC.

In a move described by participants as historic, the apex socio-cultural and political leadership of the clan also declared an end to internal political divisions within the area, urging members to remain united and work collectively for the success of the APC in the 2027 elections.

The formal endorsement process commenced with a motion moved by Senator Onyekachi Nwebonyi, representing Ebonyi North Senatorial District, and seconded by Hon. Emmanuel Uguru, member of the House of Representatives for Abakaliki/Izzi Federal Constituency.

The lawmakers highlighted what they described as the remarkable achievements of Governor Nwifuru's administration over the past three years, citing infrastructure development, grassroots empowerment, human capital advancement, and inclusive governance as reasons for the endorsement.

When the motion was subjected to a voice vote by elder statesman Mathias Adum, the proposal received overwhelming approval from the crowd, effectively sealing the governor's endorsement by his home constituency.

Speaking during the rally, Governor Francis Nwifuru, who was represented by his deputy, Mrs. Patricia Obila, expressed appreciation to the people of Izhi Nnodo for their confidence in the administration and their commitment to political unity.

The governor charged the clan to translate this historic endorsement into massive electoral support for the APC across all levels in 2027, reassuring them that his administration will continue to prioritize impactful governance, human capital transformation, and structural projects that will continue to make the clan and the entire state proud.
The rally reached its peak with the presentation of a 2027 Sole Governorship Endorsement Certificate to Governor Nwifuru.
The presentation was performed by prominent leaders and elders of the clan, including Chris Nwankwo, Francis Idike, Elias Mbam, Sylvester Ogbaga, and Edward Nkwegu, among others.

Oniru restates #LeGIT vision at 6th coronation anniversary

By Grace Alegba

The Oniru of Iruland, Oba Omogbolahan Lawal, Abisogun II, said he would continue to pursue the Let's Grow Iruland Together (#LeGIT) vision aimed at building an Iruland that is Lagos-aligned, environmentally sustainable, globally competitive, innovation-driven and technology-enabled.

Oba Lawal, who stated this yesterday in Lagos while marking the sixth anniversary of his coronation, said the vision was designed to foster a resilient, economically vibrant and inclusive kingdom for present and future generations.

"Our vision is to build an Iruland that is Lagos-aligned, environmentally sustainable, globally competitive, innovation-driven and technology-enabled.

"We are committed to creating a resilient, economically vibrant and inclusive kingdom for present and future generations," he said.
Lawal also called for unity, collaboration and innovation among stakeholders, noting that more work remained to be done to advance the kingdom's development aspirations.

"While we celebrate our achievements, we recognise that there is still much work to be done. I call on all stakeholders to continue to embrace unity, collaboration and innovation as we advance the development of our kingdom.

"The story of Iruland is still being written, and I am confident that our finest chapters lie ahead," he said.

He thanked God, his ancestors, the people of Iruland and stakeholders for their support since his ascension to the throne in 2020.

Reflecting on his six years on the throne, he said the period had witnessed progress in cultural preservation, institutional strengthening, community development and economic advancement.

"Through strategic partnerships and a clear development agenda, we have continued to position Iruland as a hub of culture, enterprise, innovation and sustainable urban growth," Lawal said.

He also appreciated the Lagos State government, traditional rulers, members of the Oniru-in-Council, chiefs, elders, community leaders, residents and development partners for their contributions to the kingdom's development.

He acknowledged the support of his wife, Olori Mariam Lawal, and members of his family throughout his reign.

The event attracted clerics, dignitaries, traditional rulers, including the Oba of Lagos, senior police officers and other guests.

Presentations were made in honour of the ruler by various groups and associates.
His colleagues from Cadet ASP C/19/1996 of the Nigeria Police Force congratulated Lawal on the anniversary and commended his contributions to the development of Iruland.



L-R: Author of the Book, Dr Ayo Olowoporoku; former CEO, Wema Bank and Chief launcher, Segun Oloketuyi; General Overseer of Citadel Global Community Church, Pastor Tunde Bakare; Vice Chancellor, University of Caleb and chairman of the occasion, Professor Olalekan Asikhia; and Book Reviewer, Peter Ogudoro, during a public presentation of two books authored by Dr Ayo Olowoporoku, at Agip Recital Hall, MUSON Centre, Onikan, Lagos

Ikogosi Resort saves N513m through renewable energy

By Joan Odafe

The Ikogosi Warm Springs Resort management said its investment in renewable energy has generated savings of more than N513 million in energy costs as the facility intensifies expansion, environmental sustainability, and long-term destination development efforts.

The General Manager of Glocient Hospitality, Olanrewaju Balogun, disclosed this during a meeting with newsmen at the ongoing three-day media immersion at Ikogosi Warm Springs Resort, Ekiti State.

Glocient Hospitality – the hospitality arm of Cavista Holdings – serves as the operator, investor and development manager of the resort under a concession arrangement with the Ekiti State government.

The company's mandate is to revive and reposition Ikogosi into a sustainable and profitable destination through hospitality management, infrastructure renewal, improved guest experience and destination branding.
Balogun outlined how renewable energy and reinvestment had become central to repositioning the resort.

He said the resort invested about US$200,000 in solar infrastructure to reduce dependence on diesel and strengthen operational efficiency across the property.
According to him, the resort now runs significantly on renewable energy, with solar supporting operations for about 12 hours daily, and reducing pressure on conventional power sources.

Balogun said internal energy analysis carried out by the company showed major reductions in operating costs after benchmarking against diesel consumption under generator-powered operations.

"Now we've invested close to $200,000 in renewable energy and this serves us 12 hours every day.

"The savings we are making with the benchmark of our 500 kVA is over half a billion in a year and that benchmark was done with our 500 kVA generator running for 10 hours savings alone.

Motorists bemoan slow pace of work on Kabba-Omuo-Ekiti road

By Reporters

Motorists plying Kabba-Omuo-Ekiti road have expressed concerns over the slow pace of construction on the corridor, citing frequent gridlock, damage to vehicles and a huge loss of man-hours.

They noted that the road is a crucial inter-state economic route connecting communities between Kogi and Ekiti States.

Motorists who spoke with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Ado-Ekiti, lamented that passenger patronage had dropped sharply since construction began, stating that many commuters now take alternative routes to avoid delays.
They appealed to the Federal Government to prevail on the contractor handling the project to speed up work in order to ease vehicular difficulties, improve lives, and boost commercial and socio-economic activities in the area.

The respondents, while expressing displeasure over the slow pace of work on the road, noted that the unpredictable global economic activities could be a hindrance towards the completion deadline.

The Chairman of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Ekiti State Branch, Chief Omotayo Falope, said the road had been in a deplorable condition for a long time, and was causing severe damage to vehicles.

"The road has become a death trap and an avenue for criminals to operate freely. Because it is a federal road and a linkage between states, it is very critical not only for human survival, but the state's prosperity too.

"Our appeal is for government to expedite action on its completion, and aside the Kabba-Omuo-Ekiti road, we are grateful to the government for the major work on Akure-Ikere-Ado-Ekiti and the Ifaki-Omuo which has been fixed to a commendable extent," he said.

On his part, the Chairman, National Association of Cooperative Transporters (NACT), Ekiti Chapter, Mr Kehinde Afolabi, said before the administration of President Bola Tinubu, the Akure-Ikere-Ado-Ekiti road was a major issue, causing traffic gridlock, severe vehicle damage, and extended travel times for commuters due to its deplorable state.

South-West CAN calls for improved measures against insecurity

By Uchenna Eletuo

The South-West Zone of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has expressed concern over security challenges in parts of the country and called for sustained efforts to protect lives and property.

The association expressed its position in a statement yesterday in Lagos by the South-West CAN Chairman, Bishop Barnabas Tunde, noting recent incidents of kidnappings and attacks in some states, including Oyo, Ekiti, Ondo and Lagos. He added that the development remained a challenge that required collective action by relevant stakeholders.

According to CAN, the incidents have generated concern among residents and affected communities.

The association sympathised with victims, their families and communities affected by the attacks and prayed for the safe release of persons still in captivity.

It called for enhanced deployment of security resources, intelligence gathering and technology-driven strategies to tackle criminal activities across the country.

CAN also called for continued support for security agencies through the provision of modern surveillance equipment, communication gadgets and rapid-response

C' River shines nationally in girls' ICT innovation contest

By Seyi Odewale

The Cross River State has recorded another major milestone in education and digital innovation as students of Federal Government Girls' College (FGGC), Cross River State, secured second position at the Third National Girls in ICT Competition 2026 held in Abuja.

The competition, organised by the Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, featured over 3,700 participants from across Nigeria and showcased innovative technological solutions developed by young female students.

At the end of the contest held at the State House Conference Centre, Abuja, Special Education Centre, Bauchi State, emerged overall winner, while the FGGC Cross River State finished as first runner-up ahead of Resonance Science School, Abia State, which placed third.

Reacting to the development, Governor Bassey Otu described the achievement as a strong validation of his administration's investment in education, youth empowerment and digital innovation.
"This outstanding performance by the students of the FGGC Cross River is a proud moment for our state. It once again proves that Cross River is blessed with brilliant young minds capable of competing favourably at the highest level anywhere in Nigeria," the governor stated.
Otu said emerging among the top three nationwide in a highly competitive contest involving thousands of participants reflected the students' discipline, creativity, resilience and quality mentorship.

"To emerge among the top winners in a national competition of this magnitude is no small feat. These young girls have become worthy ambassadors of Cross River State and shining examples of excellence and determination," he added.

The governor noted that the competition's emphasis on digital innovation, problem-solving and emerging technologies aligns with his administration's commitment to equipping young people with future-ready skills.

According to him, the future belongs to societies that invest in technology, innovation and human capital development, stressing that Cross River remains committed to nurturing young innovators capable of creating solutions to local and global challenges.

Governor Otu also applauded the First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, for her inspiring remarks at the event, where she urged the participants to remain "curious, confident and courageous" in pursuing careers in science, technology and innovation.

He described the message as timely and motivational, saying innovation begins with curiosity and bold thinking.

The governor equally commended the Minister of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, Dr. Bosun Tijani, for expanding digital opportunities for young Nigerians through strategic initiatives aimed at strengthening the country's digital economy.



Catholic Parish Priest Imiringi, Rev. Peter Ikuli (5th, r); and the newly elected members of Church Council of Christ, King Station, after their inauguration in Imiringi Town, Ogbia Local Government Area, Bayelsa State ...at the weekend

Okpebholo leads call for prayer, hope amid national challenges

By Monday Ajogun

The Edo State governor, Monday Okpebholo, has said Nigerians should continually seek God's face to overcome the current insecurity across the country.

Okpebholo, who made the statement yesterday during a visit to LoveWorld City (Christ Embassy) in Benin City, where he requested prayers against kidnapping, cultism, and other security challenges, also called for prayers for peace, prosperity, good governance, and economic recovery in Nigeria.

The governor further urged the congregation to pray for President Bola Tinubu, asking God to grant him wisdom, guidance, and strength to lead the nation and manage its economy effectively.

Expressing confidence in the power of prayer, Okpebholo said Nigeria would overcome its current challenges.

"This country does not belong to kidnappers. No individual or group should hold the nation captive for personal or political interests," he said.

"As elections draw closer, kidnapping has become a growing concern.

However, with the prayers of God's people and collective efforts, we believe these challenges will be overcome," he added.
He added that prayers for Nigeria would naturally extend to the safety and well-being of Edo State and other parts of the country.

The officiating pastor, Moses Olayemi, led the congregation in prayers for Nigeria, its leaders, local government areas, the economy, and communities.

He prayed for divine peace, protection, economic restoration, and spiritual awakening across Edo State and the nation.

Pastor Olayemi also commended Governor Okpebholo for the ongoing developmental projects in Edo State, particularly improvements in road infrastructure.
"We appreciate the transformation taking place across the state. The roads and other projects are improving daily, and we commend your efforts.

Fire destroys sections of supermarket building in Benin

By Raphael Innocent

The Edo State Fire Service yesterday contained a fire outbreak that gutted sections of the popular Anambra Supermarket building along the Benin-Auchi Road in Benin City.

The incident, which occurred at about 9 a.m., caused panic among traders, residents and motorists in the area.

Eyewitnesses attributed the fire to a power surge.

One of the witnesses, who preferred anonymity, said the fire started while many residents were preparing for or heading to church services.

The witness said thick smoke billowed from the building as the flames spread rapidly through parts of the structure, attracting a large crowd.

An eyewitness, Mrs Grace Osagie, said traders and passersby initially attempted to salvage goods and prevent the fire from spreading before emergency responders arrived.

"We suddenly noticed smoke coming from the building, and within minutes the flames became intense. People were shouting and trying to move items away from nearby shops. It was a frightening experience," she said.

Another eyewitness, Mr Emmanuel Omoregie, commended firefighters for their prompt response, noting that their intervention prevented the blaze from spreading to adjoining buildings.

"The fire spread quickly, but the firefighters arrived in good time. They worked hard to bring the situation under control and stop it from affecting other shops," he said.

Mrs Monica Eboigbe, who was on her way to church when the incident occurred, expressed concern over recurring fire outbreaks linked to electrical faults.

"I was passing through the area when I saw smoke rising from the building. Many people had gathered around. We thank God for the quick response because this is a very busy commercial centre," she said.

Eboigbe also commended officials of the Edo State Fire Service for their efforts in bringing the fire under control.

Confirming the incident, Mrs Bidemi Jeremiah, State Commander and Comptroller of the Federal Fire Service, Edo State Command, said firefighters successfully contained the blaze and were taking steps to prevent a resurgence.

NDDC gives medical equipment to Rivers health centre

The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), has donated medical equipment to the Model Primary Health Care Centre, Orogbum Community, in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.

The NDDC said the donation was part of its efforts to strengthen healthcare infrastructure and improve access to quality healthcare in the Niger Delta region.
This was contained in a statement in Port Harcourt yesterday by the NDDC Director of Corporate Affairs, Seledi Thompson-Wakama, and made available to newsmen.

Speaking during the handover at the health centre, the NDDC Managing Director, Dr Samuel Ogbuku, said the intervention aligned with the Commission's mandate to enhance healthcare delivery and improve the well-being of people in communities across the region.

Ogbuku noted that access to functional healthcare facilities remained critical to sustainable development and reiterated the Commission's determination to support initiatives that improve health outcomes for Niger Delta residents.

Ogbuku, who was represented by the NDDC Director of Education, Health and Social Services, Dr Patience Ezugu, further said the donation was made to support the health centre in enhancing service delivery.

According to Ogbuku, the donations were part of the Commission's efforts to equip healthcare institutions with the tools and resources needed to deliver efficient, effective medical services.

FCCPC defends role in digital lending regulation dispute

By Anthony Otaru, Abuja

The Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) has clarified that its role in matters relating to digital and non-traditional lending is strictly limited to its statutory regulatory responsibilities under the Digital, Electronic, Online or Non-Traditional Consumer Lending Regulations 2025 (DEON Regulations).

The Commission also disclosed that it had suspended the implementation and enforcement of the DEON Regulations following an ex-parte order issued by the Federal High Court in Lagos.

In a statement on Sunday by the FCCPC Director of Corporate Affairs, Mr Ondaje Ijagwu, the Commission said the court order arose from Suit No. FHC/L/CS/760/2026 filed by the Wireless Application Service Providers Association of Nigeria (WASPAN).

Ijagwu stated that the Commission, as a law-abiding public institution, remains bound by the court directive pending the determination of the substantive suit.

According to him, the case has been adjourned to July 20 for further hearing.

The FCCPC said it was reacting to media reports alleging that the Commission was involved in forwarding the names of local fintech companies seeking to participate in the digital lending market to the Presidency as part of efforts to curb capital flight.

The Commission stressed that its involvement in the sector remains within the confines of its legal mandate under the DEON Regulations.

Ijagwu added that the FCCPC would continue to pursue all lawful processes regarding the matter while fully complying with the orders of the court.

The DEON Regulations were introduced to curb predatory loan app practices, violations of consumer data privacy, and unethical debt recovery tactics in Nigeria's digital lending sector.



A cross-section of the pupils, writing 2026 National Common Entrance Examination (NCEE), at the Model Secondary School, Maitama, Abuja...at the weekend

Nigeria airlines top Africa's fastest domestic seat capacity growth in June

Nigeria airlines recorded Africa's fastest domestic seat capacity growth in June 2026, rising 21.7 per cent year-on-year.

This is according to OAG data on the African aviation market for June 2026, based on scheduled flight capacity across carriers operating within the region for the month.

Across Africa's Top 10 aviation markets, Nigeria also posted the fastest overall capacity growth at 21.3 per cent year-on-year, largely driven by strong expansion in domestic seat capacity.

Nigeria's aviation market showed strong expansion in both domestic and total capacity, with domestic routes driving most of the growth.

Domestic capacity rose to 730,216 seats, making Nigeria Africa's second-largest domestic market after South Africa.

Domestic seats grew 21.7 per cent year-on-year, the fastest growth rate in Africa, adding about 130,200 seats.

Total airline capacity stood at 1,013,999 seats, up 21.3 per cent year-on-year, the fastest growth among the Top 10 African markets.

Egypt remained Africa's largest aviation market with 2.7 million seats in June 2026, up 1.7 per cent year-on-year.

South Africa led domestic scale with 1.5 million seats, while overall African capacity rose 3.2 to 23.4 million seats.
Nigeria's growth story in June reflects a clear domestic-led expansion, with airlines deploying more capacity on high-demand local routes. This suggests rising passenger demand within the country's internal air travel network.

However, despite the strong growth rates, Nigeria still operates from a smaller base compared to Egypt and South Africa, which remain dominant in total market size. Egypt's steady 1.7 per cent growth also reflects a more mature but stable aviation market.

Across Africa, aviation performance remains uneven, with some markets expanding while others contract, reflecting differing economic and operational conditions.

Chief Operating Officer at Aircraft Finance Germany, Shiekuma Gemade,said in an interview that Nigeria's strong aviation performance is linked to gradual improvements in aircraft leasing conditions and ongoing regulatory reforms, although he noted that the full impact would take time to reflect in fleet expansion.

He explained that Nigeria's exit from the Aviation Working Group watchlist and the improvement in its Cape Town Convention compliance score have strengthened the country's credibility in global aircraft leasing markets.

He noted that: Regulatory reforms have improved creditor protection in Nigeria's aviation sector, while Leasing decisions still depend on profitability, infrastructure, and operating conditions, with Market confidence improving but remains gradual, adding that early signals like Air Peace's dry-lease aircraft acquisition show improving sentiment.

MTN unveils transparency drive on data usage tracking, defends billing system

MTN Nigeria has unveiled new transparency measures to address persistent concerns over data depletion, just as it defended its data billing system, insisting that customers' data are neither manipulated nor stolen

The telecoms operator made the clarification at a public engagement held in Lagos at the weekend, tagged "Data on Trial."

Executives, independent auditors, regulators, media professionals and digital content creators at the event examined how mobile data is consumed and billed.

Chief Executive Officer of MTN Nigeria, Karl Toriola, said the event was designed to place the company's data processes under public scrutiny and provide evidence-based explanations to consumers.

"For some time, discussions have centred on data consumption. Today, consumers are the judges. Our responsibility is to provide facts and transparency," he said.

Toriola said many data depletion complaints are linked to modern digital habits, including video streaming, cloud backups, software updates, artificial intelligence tools and background application activities.

According to him, customers often underestimate the volume of data consumed by contemporary applications and connected devices.

He urged subscribers to review phone settings regularly and disable unnecessary background mobile data activity to better manage usage.

"We are not asking customers to trust us blindly. We want them to see the evidence and understand exactly how data is consumed," he said.

Toriola disclosed that MTN's Data Analyser Portal had undergone independent validation by KPMG and regulatory review by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC).

Responding to demands for unlimited mobile data, Toriola said no mobile operator could sustainably provide unrestricted high-speed internet access without usage limits.

Foreign investors seeking short-term gains, behind rise in Nigeria's capital importation - Expert

By Okeoghene Akubuike

A Financial Expert, Okechukwu Unegbu, says Nigeria's rise in capital importation in Q1 2026 was driven by foreign investors seeking short-term capital market gains rather than long-term economic opportunities.

Unegbu, a former President of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN), said this in Abuja yesterday, while reacting to Nigeria's Capital Importation report for Q1 2026.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported that total capital importation rose to 10.37 billion dollars in Q1 2026 from 5.64 billion dollars recorded in the corresponding period of 2025(Q1 2025).

The figure also represented a 60.97 per cent increase from the 6.44 billion dollars recorded in Q4 2025.

According to the NBS, portfolio investment accounted for the largest share of capital importation at 9.86 billion dollars, representing 95.09 per cent of total capital importation.

This was followed by Other Investment with 374.48 million dollars, accounting for 3.61 per cent, while Foreign Direct Investment recorded the least at 135.08 million dollars, accounting for 1.30 per cent of total capital importation in Q1 2026.

Unegbu said the surge in capital inflows was driven by increased investor interest in Nigeria's thriving stock market and the pursuit of higher returns amid improving global market conditions.

"What has happened is that the stock market is on the upswing globally and investors are moving funds from areas with lower returns to places where they can make more money.

"The Nigerian stock market has shown an upward trend and many investors came in to take advantage of the opportunity to earn quick capital gains."

The expert, however, noted that most of the inflows were short-term portfolio investments rather than long-term investments capable of creating jobs and supporting sustainable economic growth.

"From my analysis, the investments were largely short-term. Investors came in to take advantage of the gains available in the capital market and then move out with their profits.

"That is why portfolio investment accounts for about 95 per cent of the total inflow because they are short to mid-term investments, while long-term investment represented by Foreign Direct Investment is only about 1.3 per cent."

He said the dominance of portfolio investments indicated limited investor confidence in the Nigerian economy's long-term prospects.

Unegbu noted that in spite of increase in capital importation, the inflows had not translated into tangible improvements in the lives of ordinary Nigerians.

"If the inflows were making a significant impact, we would expect improvements in employment, inflation and other economic indicators.

"However, unemployment remains high, inflation remains elevated and interest rates have also increased.

"These suggest that the inflows did not impact positively on the Nigerian economy."

He said the low level of foreign direct investment reflected concerns among foreign investors about security and macroeconomic stability in the country.



Group Chief Executive Officer, Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), Engr. Bashir Bayo Ojulari, represented by the Managing Director of NNPC Foundation, Mrs. Emmanuella Arukwe (c), cuts a tape to commission a state-of-the-art, 1.5 Tesla Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) System at the National Orthopaedic Hospital (NOH), Dala, Kano State...recently

Energia appoints Oshisanya to strengthen board governance

By Francis Ajuonuma

Energia Limited has appointed veteran finance and energy executive, Adetokunbo Oshisanya, as an Independent Non-Executive Director on its Board, in a move aimed at strengthening corporate governance and supporting the company's long-term growth strategy.

The appointment took effect in May 2026, according to a statement on Sunday in Lagos by the indigenous oil and gas exploration and production company.

Oshisanya joins the Board with more than four decades of leadership experience spanning the energy, financial services, pension administration and development sectors across Africa and Europe.

Energia said her appointment underscored the company's commitment to "strong corporate governance, strategic oversight, and sustainable value creation."

The company described Oshisanya as the first Nigerian female Chief Financial Officer of an international oil and gas company in Nigeria, having served as Executive Director, Finance & Control and Chief Financial Officer of TotalEnergies EP Nigeria.

During her career at TotalEnergies, she held several senior management positions across Nigeria, France, South Africa and the Netherlands, overseeing financial operations, joint venture partnerships, enterprise transformation programmes and performance management systems.

Chairman of Energia Limited, George Osahon, said the company was pleased to bring her extensive industry and governance experience onto the Board.

"We are delighted to welcome Tai Oshisanya to the Board of Energia Limited. Her exceptional leadership experience, governance expertise, and deep understanding of the energy industry will bring invaluable insight to our Board," Osahon said.

He added that her "strategic perspective and wealth of experience will support our long-term growth ambitions and commitment to creating sustainable value for all stakeholders."

Oshisanya currently serves as an Independent Non-Executive Director on the boards of several financial institutions and is actively involved in promoting corporate governance, leadership development and women's economic empowerment initiatives.

Speaking on her appointment, Oshisanya described Energia as "a respected indigenous operator with a strong commitment to operational excellence, local content development, and sustainable growth."

Abiru seeks stronger policy-regulator alliance to drive capital market growth

By Nathaniel Zacchaeus, Abuja

Chairman of the Senate Committee on Banking, Insurance and Other Financial Institutions, Senator Adetokunbo Abiru, has called for stronger collaboration among policymakers, regulators, market operators and investors to accelerate the growth of Nigeria's capital market and strengthen the country's financial system.

Abiru made the call in Lagos while receiving the Legislative Excellence Award for Financial Sector Advancement at the 2026 Nairametrics Capital Market Awards.

According to a statement issued by his media office on Sunday, the senator said that sustained cooperation among key stakeholders was essential to building a resilient and globally competitive financial ecosystem capable of attracting investment, boosting investor confidence, and supporting economic growth.

The Lagos East lawmaker noted that effective partnerships among policymakers, regulators, and industry operators would be critical to advancing reforms to improve the efficiency of the capital market and drive long-term economic transformation.

He described the award as a recognition of the collective efforts of stakeholders who have remained committed to the development and expansion of Nigeria's financial services sector.

Abiru reaffirmed his commitment to championing legislative initiatives and policy reforms designed to strengthen the capital market, enhance financial stability and promote sustainable economic development.

He also commended regulators and operators in the financial services industry for their contributions to modernising the nation's capital market and expanding opportunities for investors.

According to him, a vibrant and resilient capital market remains vital to achieving Nigeria's economic aspirations and ensuring long-term prosperity.

The Nairametrics Capital Market Awards honour individuals and institutions that have made outstanding contributions to the growth, stability and advancement of Nigeria's capital market and the wider financial sector.

How AgriTech is creating new generation of wealth

By Adebomi Adekeye, Esq

For decades, conversations about agriculture have been largely confined to discussions about food security, poverty alleviation, and rural development. While these remain important considerations, they no longer capture the sector's full significance in today's economy.

Across the globe, technological innovation is fundamentally reshaping agriculture, transforming it from a largely traditional productive activity into a sophisticated ecosystem capable of attracting investment, generating employment, creating wealth, and driving economic growth.

The emergence of agricultural technology, commonly referred to as AgriTech, represents more than a technological shift. It signals a reconfiguration of how value is created, distributed, and scaled within one of humanity's oldest industries.

Increasingly, the conversation is no longer about growing more food. It is about building more efficient systems, unlocking productivity, and creating sustainable economic opportunities across entire value chains.

Historically, agriculture has suffered from several structural constraints. Farmers have often operated with limited access to finance, inadequate market information, fragmented supply chains, poor storage infrastructure, and significant exposure to climate-related risks.

These challenges have contributed to inefficiencies that suppress productivity and limit the sector's ability to attract long-term capital.

***AgriTech is changing this equation:**

Through innovations such as precision farming, satellite monitoring, artificial intelligence, digital marketplaces, climate analytics, supply chain technology, and embedded financial solutions, agricultural enterprises are becoming more data-driven, more efficient, and increasingly investable.

Technology is reducing information asymmetry, improving resource allocation, enhancing traceability, and enabling stakeholders to make better decisions based on reliable data rather than speculation.

***The implications extend far beyond the farm:**

One of the most significant misconceptions surrounding agriculture is the assumption that its economic value begins and ends with cultivation. In reality, modern agricultural ecosystems generate opportunities across multiple sectors. Software developers build platforms that connect producers to markets.



Adekeye

> As technology continues to redefine the boundaries of what is possible, AgriTech is emerging not merely as a tool for agricultural advancement, but as a catalyst for a new architecture of wealth creation

Financial institutions develop products tailored to agricultural enterprises. Logistics providers move products more efficiently across regions.

Data analysts interpret agricultural trends, while insurers leverage technology to assess risk more effectively and price it.

Consequently, AgriTech is not merely creating farmers. It is creating entrepreneurs, technology professionals, investors, financiers, logistics operators, and a host of other participants whose contributions expand economic activity and generate new forms of wealth.

This is particularly significant in an era where economies are increasingly seeking sustainable sources of growth.

While many sectors remain vulnerable to external shocks and cyclical fluctuations, agriculture addresses one of society's most enduring needs.

Technology enhances the sector's capacity to meet that demand more efficiently while simultaneously creating opportunities for innovation and enterprise development.

The impact is already visible across several jurisdictions. In countries that have successfully embraced agricultural innovation, technology has contributed to increased productivity, improved market access, enhanced food systems, and stronger rural economies.

More importantly, it has enabled agriculture to attract private investment that was previously difficult to secure.

Investors are generally attracted to sectors where risks can be measured, performance can be monitored, and outcomes can be forecast with greater certainty. AgriTech improves all three.

By generating reliable data, improving transparency, and enhancing operational efficiency, technology helps transform agricultural ventures from speculative undertakings into structured investment opportunities.

As a result, capital that may once have overlooked the sector is increasingly finding reasons to participate.

For emerging economies, this development carries important implications. Sustainable economic growth is rarely achieved through consumption alone. It is driven by productivity, innovation, investment, and the efficient allocation of resources.

AgriTech sits at the intersection of each of these drivers. It increases output, improves efficiency, attracts capital, creates employment, and expands economic participation.

Nigeria presents a particularly compelling case. With a growing population, vast arable land, increasing digital adoption, and a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem, the country possesses many of the ingredients necessary to benefit from the AgriTech revolution.

However, realising this potential will require more than technological innovation. It will require supportive policies, improved infrastructure, access to finance, regulatory clarity, and an enabling environment that encourages both local and foreign investment.

The broader lesson is that agriculture should no longer be viewed solely through the lens of subsistence, development, or food production.

The sector is increasingly becoming a platform for enterprise creation, capital deployment, and economic transformation.

As technology continues to redefine the boundaries of what is possible, AgriTech is emerging not merely as a tool for agricultural advancement, but as a catalyst for a new architecture of wealth creation.

The future of agriculture may still begin in the soil, but its true economic value lies in its ability to scale.

Adebomi Adekeye, ACA, corporate lawyer and accountant, advises businesses on governance, compliance. Contact: hello@uyilaw.com.

Heirs Energies boss hails partners after award-winning $750m financing deal

By Yunus Yusuf

Heirs Energies' Chief Executive Officer Ltd., Mr Osa Igiehon, has commended the company's financing partners, advisers and stakeholders for their roles in securing a landmark $750 million facility.

Igiehon, who gave the commendation in a statement yesterday in Lagos following international recognition for the financing transaction, said the support received from partners and stakeholders was instrumental to the successful execution of the deal.

"We are proud to receive this recognition and grateful to our financing partners, advisers and stakeholders whose support made it possible," he said.

According to Igiehon, the transaction reflected growing confidence among African and international financial institutions in Heirs Energies' strategy and long-term vision.

He said the financing demonstrated the capacity of indigenous African energy companies to structure and execute world-class funding solutions.

The Heirs Energies boss noted that the transaction supports investment, growth and value creation within Africa's energy sector.

He described the financing as one of the largest transactions secured by an indigenous African energy company.



L-R: Deputy Governor, Financial System Stability Directorate, CBN, Lamido Yuguda; Founder/CEO Nairametrics, Ugodre Obi-Chukwu; Chairman, Senate Committee on Banking, Insurance & Other Financial Institutions, Sen. Adetokunbo Mukhail Abiru; Chairman, National Pension Commission, Opeyemi Agbaje, and Group Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Nigerian Exchange Group, Temi Popoola, at the 2nd edition of Nairametrics Capital Market Awards, in Lagos

The $750 million dual-tranche Senior Secured Reserve-Based Lending facility was arranged in partnership with Afreximbank.

Igiehon said the facility would support field development programmes, increase production and drive the company's long-term growth objectives.

He added that the financing aligned with the vision of Heirs Energies Chairman, Mr Tony Elumelu, on mobilising African capital for African development.

According to him, Elumelu has consistently championed stronger participation by African institutions in financing the continent's resources and energy sector.

Also, Afreximbank's Executive Vice President, Global Trade Bank, Mr Haytham ElMaayergi, described the financing as a landmark transaction.

ElMaayergi said the deal highlighted the importance of Africa-focused financial solutions in supporting indigenous energy companies with strong growth prospects.

He noted that African financial institutions would play a critical role in mobilising capital to strengthen energy security across the continent.

According to him, such transactions could also expand production capacity and create sustainable economic value.

The Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer of Heirs Energies, Mr Samuel Nwanze, said the recognition validated the strength of the financing structure.

Nwanze said the award reflected the confidence financing partners have shown in the company and its long-term growth plans.

He stated that the facility was designed to support long-term investments in field development and production optimization.

According to him, the financing marked a major milestone in the company's transition to a capital structure aligned with reserve development.

Nwanze said the transaction further strengthened Heirs Energies' position as a leading indigenous energy producer.

He noted that since assuming operatorship of OML 17 in 2021, the company had more than doubled oil production.

According to Nwanze, oil output has risen to more than 50,000 barrels per day, while gas production has tripled.

He added that gas production now exceeds 135 million standard cubic feet per day.

The company currently contributes about five per cent of Nigeria's oil production and domestic gas supply. (NAN)

Ondo unveils solar initiative to power 1,000 businesses

In a strategic move to address the persistent energy challenges and stimulate economic growth, the Ondo State governor, Lucky Aiyedatiwa, has launched a solar-powered initiative aimed at providing reliable electricity to 1,000 businesses across the state.

The programme, tagged: "Lucky Light Initiative,", the governor said, would deliver solar energy solutions to small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) across the state's 18 local government areas.

Speaking at the unveiling yesterday, Governor Aiyedatiwa said the initiative formed part of his administration's strategy to boost enterprise development, enhance productivity, and reduce the high cost of electricity faced by businesses.

He noted that the project aligns with his administration's "OUR EASE" economic agenda, which focuses on expanding access to affordable energy, supporting entrepreneurship, and promoting industrial growth.

Aiyedatiwa said under the initiative, selected beneficiaries would receive complete solar power systems, including panels, inverters, battery storage, charge controllers, and installation support.

According to the governor, the intervention is expected to significantly reduce reliance on petrol and diesel generators, which constitute a major operational cost for many businesses.

"Under the programme, selected businesses will receive solar power systems comprising solar panels, inverter systems, battery storage, charge controllers, and installation support, enabling them to reduce dependence on fuel-powered generators and operate more efficiently.

"The implementation framework: the initiative will be rolled out in phases across all 18 local government areas within 5 years, benefiting businesses operating in key sectors such as agro-processing, fashion, food production, retail, ICT, digital services, and the creative economy," he said.

Aiyedatiwa explained that the programme will be implemented in phases over five years, covering all local government areas and targeting key sectors such as agro-processing, fashion, food production, retail, ICT, digital services, and the creative industry.

He added that participating businesses could see energy costs drop by up to 70 per cent, while productivity and operational hours may increase by between 30 and 60 per cent.

The governor also disclosed that the initiative is projected to generate over N2 billion in additional annual economic value through improved business performance and job creation.

"Economic projections indicate that by providing MSMEs and SMEs with reliable and uninterrupted access to electricity, the Lucky Light Initiative has the potential to generate over N2 billion in additional annual economic value across the State, creating a multiplier effect that supports business expansion, job creation, and broader economic prosperity.

"Beyond its economic impact, Lucky Light is expected to promote clean energy adoption, reduce carbon emissions, and decrease reliance on fossil fuel-powered generators, positioning Ondo State as a leader in renewable energy-driven enterprise development," he said.

NUPRC, NNRA to cut oil production costs, boost safety regulations

The Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) has begun moves to harmonise regulatory processes with the Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority (NNRA) as part of efforts to strengthen radiological safety in oil and gas operations and reduce the cost of doing business in the upstream petroleum sector.

The initiative emerged from a recent meeting between the Chief Executive of the NUPRC, Oritsemeyiwa Eyesan, and the Director-General and Chief Executive Officer of the NNRA, Yau Idris, at the commission's headquarters in Abuja.

According to a statement by the Head of Corporate Communications and Media at the NUPRC, Eniola Akinkuotu, yesterday, the collaboration is expected to address overlapping regulatory requirements, close existing gaps in oversight, and create a more efficient compliance framework for operators in the industry.

"The Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission is partnering with the Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority in order to enforce radiological safety in oil and gas operations and reduce the overall cost of operations," the statement said.

While the NUPRC regulates the technical, commercial, and operational aspects of oil and gas exploration and production, the NNRA is responsible for regulating the possession, use, transportation, and disposal of radioactive materials and radiation-emitting equipment across the country.

Speaking during the meeting, Eyesan stressed the need for greater collaboration among regulators to eliminate duplication and improve the investment climate in Nigeria's oil and gas sector.

She noted that excessive regulatory requirements often translate into additional costs for operators, ultimately affecting the competitiveness of the industry.

"The only way we can safeguard investments is to reduce our cost of operations, and when you have a multiplicity of laws, the likelihood is that you will have higher costs because each law normally will come with its own fees and charges," the NUPRC boss said.

Eyesan nominated senior officials from the commission who will work closely with the NNRA on the task ahead.

Group seeks urgent rescue of abducted schoolchildren, teachers

By Fatima Mohammed-Lawal

A non-governmental organisation, the Save the Future of Children Initiative (SFCI), has advised the Federal and state governments to intensify efforts to rescue abducted schoolchildren and teachers in Oyo State.

In a statement yesterday by its Chief Executive Officer, Mr Oyedeji Olufemi, the child rights' advocacy organisation expressed concern over persistent insecurity and rising cases of abductions across the country.

Olufemi said increasing incidents involving schoolchildren, teachers and attacks on communities underscored the need for stronger and more coordinated security measures.

He commended the Federal Government and security agencies for their ongoing efforts to combat banditry, kidnapping and other violent crimes.

The SFCI boss, however, expressed concern over the continued captivity of schoolchildren and teachers abducted in Orire Local Government Area of Oyo State.

"The prolonged uncertainty surrounding the victims' safety poses serious threats to child protection, access to education, and the wellbeing of affected communities," he said.



L-R: Chairman, Senate Committee on Works, Sen. Patrick Ndubueze; Minister of Works, Sen. David Umahi; and the Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Works, Rep. Akin Alabi, during the inspection of the ongoing construction of Abuja-Keffi Dual-Carriageway Lane 2, in Keffi...at the weekend

Olufemi advised President Bola Tinubu and Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State to sustain and strengthen efforts aimed at securing the immediate rescue and safe return of the victims.

He also advised relevant authorities to accelerate rescue operations for other kidnapped persons across the country, including 176 persons reportedly abducted in Woro community, Kaiama Local Government Area of Kwara State .

According to him, Nigeria already has policy frameworks designed to protect schools from attacks, including the National Policy on Safety, Security and Violence-Free Schools and the Safe School Minimum Standards developed in 2021.

He noted, however, that implementation of the frameworks had remained slow and limited in spite of growing security concerns in schools.

Olufemi advised the Federal Government to direct the Federal Ministry of Education and other relevant agencies to coordinate the immediate nationwide implementation of the policies across states and local governments.

According to him, effective implementation of the frameworks will strengthen school safety and reduce vulnerabilities.

He also advocated for the establishment of a multi-stakeholder community security task force in all 774 local government areas of the country.

"The proposed structure should involve community leaders, Divisional Police Officers, traditional rulers, youth representatives and women groups.

NDLEA intercepts opioids in Taraba, arrests 75-year-old in Ebonyi

By Ibironke Ariyo

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) said it has intercepted large consignments of various opioids and illicit substances concealed in building materials in Taraba State .

A statement by the Director, Media and Advocacy, NDLEA, Mr Femi Babafemi yesterday in Abuja, said a major blow was dealt to opioid trafficking networks in Taraba over the weekend.

This, he said, followed credible intelligence which led to the interception of a truck conveying building materials from Onitsha, Anambra State to Jalingo.

"A thorough search of the vehicle by the NDLEA operatives at the Nukkai Timber Shade, Jalingo, led to the discovery of a massive drug stash concealed beneath the cargo.
"A 22-year-old suspect was promptly arrested.

"Officials recovered 320,840 capsules of tramadol; 600 ampoules of pentazocine injection; 4,500 pills of rohypnol; and 299 bottles of codeine-based cough syrup from the truck ,"he said.

Meanwhile, Babafemi said the NDLEA operatives in a relentless nationwide offensive against drug cartels, arrested a 75-year-old grandfather in Ebonyi State .

Babafemi said the septuagenarian was found in possession of 300g of skunk, which he sells in retail sachets to the youth in his community.

In Imo State, the NDLEA officers successfully raided a known drug enclave at Umulolo, Orlu.
The raid resulted in the arrest of a notorious female dealer, 32-year-old Chioma Okeke, and the recovery of 8kg 8 of skunk,"he said.

In another development, the (NDLEA) said it has arrested four notorious female drug dealers in Edo, Imo, Kano, and Gombe states.

Babafemi, while giving a breakdown, said in Edo State, an intense sweep of notorious drug hotspots within Benin City by the NDLEA operatives on June 2, led to the arrest of four key traffickers, including three females.

"At Uyosa, Benin City, two female suspects were nabbed with a cocktail of illicit substances including 176 grams of skunk, 65g of Loud, and 5 grams of Methamphetamine.

"Along Agbor road in Benin City, another female suspect, 21-year-old Anita Abraham, was apprehended with 95 grams of Scottish Loud and 329 grams of regular Loud.

"At Upper Mission, Benin City, a male suspect was arrested with a diverse cache of psychotropic substances consisting of Loud, Colorado, Swinol, and Methamphetamine.

C' River seals 'death trap' maternity facility

By Seyi Odewale

The Cross River State government said it has sealed off Safe Hand's Maternity Clinic in Calabar Municipality over alleged unprofessional medical practices and deplorable operating conditions linked to the reported death of a patient after surgery.

The enforcement action was carried out by the State Task Force on Health Quality and Anti-Quackery Committee following a petition alleging that a patient died after undergoing an operation at the facility located at No. 21 Iyata Street, Calabar.
Chairman of the committee, Dr. Dan Abubakar, who led the inspection team during an unscheduled visit to the clinic, described the conditions discovered at the facility as "disturbing, dangerous and unacceptable."

"What we saw here is nothing short of a death trap. Facilities like this have no business handling surgical and maternity cases," Abubakar said.

Investigators discovered that the clinic, owned by Mrs. Inyang Ekeng, a Community Health Extension Officer, was operating from a converted three-bedroom apartment turned into a six-bed maternity ward without licensed nurses or standard medical infrastructure.

The committee further revealed that surgeries were allegedly being conducted at the facility by Dr. Sunday Abeng, identified as a registrar with the University of Calabar Teaching Hospital (UCTH), despite the poor and substandard condition of the clinic.

Officials also found that the centre had exceeded its approved operational scope by managing critical cases, including an abandoned stroke patient.

According to the task force, the clinic lacked operational licences, standard consulting rooms, proper ventilation, patient documentation records, theatre registers, staff records and approved waste disposal systems.

The committee also cited unhygienic surroundings and the engagement of unqualified personnel as part of the infractions uncovered during the inspection.

Abubakar warned that the state government would not tolerate illegal medical facilities operating below approved healthcare standards.

"The era of quack medical operators endangering innocent lives is over. We are determined to sanitize the healthcare system and protect residents from unsafe medical practices," he stated.

He said the administration of Governor was investing heavily in modern healthcare infrastructure across the state and urged residents to seek treatment only from accredited facilities.

NDC primary was 'satanic', worse than APC –Agbonayima, Reps aspirant

A former Code of Conduct Bureau Commissioner and ex-member of the House of Representatives, Ehiozuwa Agbonayima, has launched a blistering attack on the Nigerian Democratic Congress (NDC), describing its senatorial primary in Edo State as "shabby, undemocratic and satanic." Agbonayima, who recently defected from the All Progressives Congress to the NDC, accused influential figures within the party of subverting internal democracy, manipulating candidates and betraying agreements reached before the contest. He spoke on Channels Television's Politics Today programme. David Lawani monitored the interview

You left the APC in anger, and now you appear even more frustrated with the NDC. You claimed you were rigged out of the primaries. What exactly happened?

Democracy is supposed to be government of the people, by the people and for the people. You know my political history, my antecedents and my commitment to national development. I have always believed Nigeria can become a better country if citizens unite beyond politics, ethnicity and religion. I returned from the United States years ago and entered active politics through the AC, later the ACN and eventually the APC. I later moved to the PDP before returning to APC again. Frankly, I thought the APC was bad until I joined the NDC. Moving from APC to NDC felt like moving from the frying pan into hellfire. What I have witnessed over the past few months in the NDC has left me deeply disappointed. Initially, I considered joining the PDP because of one of our founding leaders in Edo State, Chief Dan Orbih. We held several meetings, but I was not convinced. I then moved toward the ADC, especially as discussions involving Peter Obi and Rabiu Kwankwaso were ongoing. We also spoke with leaders of other political movements, including the Democratic Leadership Alliance. At a point, I contacted my friend and colleague, former Bayelsa State governor and senator, Seriake Dickson. I informed him that I intended to contest for the House of Representatives, but he insisted I should instead run for the Senate. He repeatedly assured me he would support my senatorial ambition.

Did Senator Seriake Dickson actually make that promise to you?

Yes, he did. The discussion took place at his residence in Asokoro, Abuja, in May. I told him I would think about it. He insisted several times that I should contest for the Senate instead of the House of Representatives. I subsequently invited my political associate, Hon. Matthew Iduoriyekemwen, to Abuja to meet with Dickson regarding the House of Representatives seat. When that did not materialise, I spoke with another associate, Sunny Aguebor, who was also contesting in the ADC. Dickson repeatedly encouraged me to go for the Senate, arguing that I was too experienced for the House of Representatives. I have served Nigeria in several capacities — as a member of the House of Representatives, as a Director at the Nigerian Railway Corporation, and as a Commissioner at the Code of Conduct Bureau. I also suffered political persecution. There was even a time I was considered for the position of Acting Chairman of the Code of Conduct Bureau, but some political interests allegedly worked against me.

Are you alleging that Senator Adams Oshiomhole blocked your appointment? Do you have evidence?

I was informed by credible individuals close to government at the time that certain moves were made to prevent my emergence as Acting Chairman of the Code of Conduct Bureau. One former Deputy Director of the National Intelligence Agency confronted me and said the same people I defended publicly were privately lobbying against me. Another senior figure close to the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation also told me that Oshiomhole allegedly opposed my appointment because he feared I would aggressively investigate corruption cases. That period was painful for me because I had served him loyally while he was governor.



Agbonayima

> What happened in the NDC was not democracy; it was daylight political robbery wrapped in illegality

Was that experience part of the reason you left the APC?

It contributed to my frustration, but there were other painful experiences too. At one point during my governorship ambition in Edo State, I received the devastating news that my son had been shot dead in Houston, Texas. He was only 23 years old and was about a month away from completing his PhD. The university had already employed him to teach sophomore students. It was one of the darkest periods of my life. The police in Houston asked whether I suspected political motives behind my gubernatorial ambition, but I told them I did not believe that was the case.

Are you upset because you lost the NDC senatorial ticket?

I did not lose the election. That is my position.

Are you saying you were rigged out?

What happened was an aberration. It was undemocratic, unlawful and completely satanic. If the NDC truly wants to stand for justice and integrity, it must retrace its steps. It was Senator Dickson himself who persuaded me to contest for Senate. Samuel Ogbemudia Jr., son of the late Dr Samuel Ogbemudia, was present during some of those discussions. I won the election clearly.

What figures do you have to support your claim?

I won Egor with 529 votes, Ikpoba-Okha with 697 votes and Orhionmwon with 2,709 votes. Although I lost in some other local governments, the overall calculation still showed that I won the primary.

Who were the other aspirants in the race?

There were about four aspirants altogether. My disappointment is that Senator Dickson later denied encouraging me to contest. I obtained the nomination form through directives that he allegedly issued to party officials. Yet he later denied any involvement.

So are you saying Senator Dickson disappointed you?

Completely.

Did he personally take the ticket from you?

What happened was that I was informed there were plans to support another aspirant, a female candidate. At a meeting, we were told there would be an "affirmation" process because the party wanted a woman candidate. I immediately objected because the Electoral Act recognises only direct primaries or consensus arrangements backed by written consent from all aspirants. There is nothing in the law called "affirmation." You cannot impose a candidate who did not win.

So Senator Dickson initially encouraged your ambition and later backed another candidate. Is that your allegation?

Yes, that is exactly what happened.

Were there witnesses to these discussions?

Yes. Some individuals present at those meetings can confirm what transpired.

Are you accusing the NDC leadership of imposing candidates and violating the Electoral Act?

Absolutely.

What steps are you planning to take now?

I will consult with my political leaders and supporters. I am not acting alone. Several aspirants who genuinely won their primaries have also been denied victory. There is widespread anger in Edo State over the way the primaries were conducted.

Are you saying the protests in Edo are connected to the NDC primaries?

Yes. People are unhappy not only because of my case but also because of what happened across several states.

Continued online at thisnigeria.com

Defections can't stop APC's return bid in Osun- Oyintiloye

By Seyi Odewale

A chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Osun State, Olatunbosun Oyintiloye, has dismissed concerns over recent defections from the party, insisting that the development poses no threat to the APC's chances in the August 15, 2026, governorship election.

Speaking with journalists in Osogbo on Sunday, Oyintiloye described defections during election periods as a normal feature of politics, stressing that the APC remains firmly rooted across the state.

"The APC in Osun is bigger than any individual or group of individuals," he said.

"Our party is built on a solid foundation that has endured for decades. We have a resilient structure, loyal membership, and an ever-expanding support base across the state."

The former lawmaker maintained that the party's grassroots network remains intact in all wards, polling units and local government areas, adding that those predicting the collapse of the APC were disconnected from political realities in the state.

"Those who think the exit of a few members has weakened the APC are completely out of touch with the realities on the ground," he stated.

"The strength of our party resides in the people, and the people remain firmly with the APC."

Oyintiloye also said the emergence of Asiwaju Munirudeen Bola Oyebamiji (AMBO) as the APC governorship candidate had further energised party supporters and widened public acceptance of the party ahead of the poll.

According to him, Oyebamiji's popularity cuts across political, religious and professional divides.

"There is no community in Osun State today where the AMBO movement is not gaining momentum," he said.

"The truth is that no other candidate in the race currently commands the level of goodwill, credibility, acceptability, and political momentum that AMBO enjoys across the state."

He added that ongoing consultations, reconciliation efforts and grassroots mobilisation had strengthened unity within the party despite recent political developments.

"This is not the time for distractions or pessimism. It is the time for greater unity, deeper engagement with the people, and stronger mobilisation across our communities," he said.

"We are confident, we are prepared, and we are fully positioned for victory."

Oyintiloye, however, urged the APC leadership in the state to address grievances among aggrieved members to prevent further defections ahead of the election.

He stressed that every member remains important to the party's electoral success and called on stakeholders to sustain efforts to preserve internal cohesion.



Representative of the First lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the wife of the Vice President, Hajia Nana Shettima, presenting a cash gift to one of the beneficiaries of the Empowerment programme for 1000 petty traders, by the First lady, at the LEA, Primary School, Karmajiji, Abuja...at the weekend. With her is Minister of State, Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Dr Mariya Mahmoud Bunkure; Deputy National Women Leader of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Hajiya Zainab Abubakar Ibrahim; and other APC women

2027: Ebonyi commissioner resigns, joins PDP

By Christian Ogbonna

A chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Ebonyi State Commissioner for Project Monitoring, Mr Felix Igboke, has resigned his position and defected to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Igboke, who officially announced his defection on Sunday during a PDP gathering attended by party leaders, executives and supporters in Isu, Onicha Local Government Area of the state, said he defected with more than 10,000 supporters ahead of the 2027 general elections.

He described his return to the PDP as a homecoming, noting that his political journey began with the party.

Igboke said his decision was informed by the need to align with a political platform capable of advancing the interests of the people and promoting inclusive development in the state.

"I am happy to return to the political platform that built me. I served as a councillor, development centre coordinator, and chairman of the Onicha Local Government Area under the same party before joining the APC.

"I am grateful to the PDP family in Ebonyi State, especially the party's governorship candidate, Chief Ifeanyi Chukwuma-Odii, the incoming governor," he said.

Mr Chukwuma Igwe, the state chairman of the PDP, who welcomed the defectors, described Igboke's return to the party as a major boost to its fortunes ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Igwe said the PDP had regained its strength across the state and was well-positioned to reclaim power in the next election cycle.

According to him, the influx of thousands of supporters into the party demonstrates growing public confidence in the PDP and its leadership.

Also speaking, Mr Eni-Uduma Chima, the PDP candidate for the Afikpo/Edda Federal Constituency seat in 2027, said the party was experiencing rapid growth across Ebonyi.

Chima expressed optimism that the increasing support base would translate into electoral victories for the PDP in future elections.

He urged party members to remain united and committed to strengthening the party's grassroots structures.

The event attracted party faithful, community leaders and supporters from various parts of the state, who pledged their continued support for the PDP.

Oshiomhole rejects viral claims over Delta APC primary

By David Lawani, Abuja

Former Edo State Governor and Senator representing Edo North, Adams Oshiomhole, has denied making comments linked to the APC primary election in Delta Central Senatorial District, describing a viral social media report as false and misleading.

In a statement issued by his Chief of Staff, Victor Oshioke, the former governor disowned a publication alleging that he criticised Delta State Governor Sheriff Oborevwori and other political actors over the outcome of the APC primary.

The report, titled "2027: Oshiomhole blasts Oborevwori, Sheriff for fighting Omo-Agege against choice of Urhobo," claimed that the senator accused political leaders of attempting to stop an Urhobo politician from emerging as Senate President.

However, Oshiomhole's office dismissed the claim outright.

"For the record, Senator Oshiomhole did not make any statement whatsoever regarding the APC primary election in Delta Central Senatorial District," the statement said.

The senator stressed that he should not be linked to opinions or narratives circulating online regarding the political developments in Delta State.

According to the statement, Oshiomhole maintains cordial relationships with key political figures in the state, including Senator Ede Dafinone and Senator Ovie Omo-Agege.

His office further noted that Governor Sheriff Oborevwori, Senator Dafinone and Senator Omo-Agege are all respected sons of Urhobo land capable of resolving political issues without outside interference.

The statement also disclosed that Oshiomhole personally contacted Governor Oborevwori after the APC primary election to congratulate him on what he described as a peaceful process.

The former governor urged bloggers and political commentators to verify information before attributing statements to public officials.

The statement warned that the spread of false information could inflame political tensions ahead of the 2027 general elections.

It further advised aggrieved political actors to express their views openly rather than attributing fabricated comments to public figures.

Reaffirming his democratic principles, Oshiomhole's office stated that the senator remains committed to "One Man, One Vote" and believes that citizens should freely choose their representatives without manipulation.

2027: Babachir defends attacks on Atiku, cites security concerns

By David Lawani, Abuja

A former Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Babachir Lawal, has defended his criticism of former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, insisting that his comments were motivated by concerns over national security and leadership competence.

In a statement posted on his Facebook page titled "Kachalla 2," Lawal said his remarks about Atiku had triggered coordinated attacks from supporters of the former vice president.

He dismissed allegations that his comments were directed against the Fulani ethnic group, maintaining that public scrutiny of presidential aspirants remains legitimate in a democracy.

"Citizens have every right to interrogate the character, competence and leadership capacity of anyone seeking to become President and Commander-in-Chief," Lawal stated.

The former SGF said critics had repeatedly raised issues surrounding his removal from office during the administration of former President Muhammadu Buhari over the controversial "grass-cutting" scandal.

Responding to the allegations, Lawal insisted he was the target of a politically motivated campaign by individuals uncomfortable with his closeness to Buhari.

"The objective was to get me out of the office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation at all costs," he said.

Lawal claimed that former President Buhari initially rejected calls for his dismissal after receiving legal advice that the allegations lacked merit.

He further argued that investigations by the presidency and subsequent prosecution by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) eventually cleared him of wrongdoing.

According to him, the widely publicised scandal was actually a major environmental and agricultural intervention project in the North-East involving the clearing of the Komadugu-Yobe River and support for farming and fishing communities.

"No money was lost by government, no bribe was paid, and no money was laundered," he maintained.

On Atiku's presidential ambition, Lawal questioned the former vice president's silence over persistent killings and insecurity across parts of the country.

He said Nigerians must critically assess the records, competence and leadership capacity of those seeking the presidency ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Lawal also challenged allegations that his comments were anti-Fulani, insisting that criticism of political leaders should not be interpreted as ethnic hostility.

He pledged not to be intimidated by attacks from political opponents, describing his interventions as necessary contributions to national discourse.



L-R: Immediate Past District 9111 Governor, Dr Wole Kukoyi; Rotary International President-elect, Yinka Babalola; former Nigerian President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo; and District 9111 Governor-elect, Bukola Bakare, during courtesy visit to OBJ, at OOPL Kuto, Abeokuta...recently

Ajose targets 3.5m Lagos votes as APC House project begins in Badagry

By Oladapo Udom

A chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Lagos State, Mr Samuel Ajose, has begun the construction of a party federation house in Badagry to strengthen unity ahead of 2027.

Ajose, a former governorship aspirant popularly known as 'SMA Gold', laid the foundation of the SMA Badagry Federation House in Ibereko, Badagry, on Sunday.

He said the project would provide a central venue for party members to deliberate on development and strategic issues affecting the APC in Badagry Division of Lagos State.

"What we are doing today is to create an infrastructure in Badagry where everyone will converge and be able to make decisions," Ajose said.

According to him, the facility will be completed within two months and serve as the headquarters for APC activities across the division.

"The building will be completed in two months, and it will be a meeting point for all party activities in Badagry Division," he said.

Ajose said the project was designed to deepen unity and ensure members presented a common front on political matters.

"This is to enhance unity, so that we can speak with one voice in Badagry Division," he added.

He expressed confidence that the party could secure 3.5 million votes in Lagos State during the next general election.

"This is not too much out of the six million registered voters in Lagos State for President Bola Tinubu and Dr Kadri Hamzat in 2027," Ajose said.

The Lagos APC Chairman, Mr Cornelius Ojelabi, described Ajose as a committed party stakeholder whose contributions had strengthened the APC's presence in Badagry.

Represented by the Commissioner for Tertiary Education, Tolani Sule, Ojelabi said Ajose had provided leadership, infrastructure and financial support for the party.

"SMA Gold is the focus of the moment. God is using him for the development of Badagry Division and Lagos State," he said.

Ojelabi noted that the building would provide a permanent venue for meetings and conflict resolution among party leaders and members.

He said the facility would help the APC leadership coordinate activities, resolve disputes and project the party more effectively.

APC youth wing unveils democracy day festival

By David Lawani, Abuja

The Renewed Hope Ambassadors (RHA) Youth Directorate, in collaboration with the APC National Youth Wing, has unveiled plans for the maiden edition of the Renewed Hope Youth Festival 2026 as part of activities marking Nigeria's Democracy Day celebration.

The festival, scheduled for June 12 at the MKO Abiola National Stadium, Abuja, is expected to attract more than 10,000 youths from across the country.

Organisers said the event would combine sports, entertainment, leadership development, innovation and networking opportunities aimed at deepening youth participation in Nigeria's democratic process.

Speaking on the initiative, the Director of Youth at Renewed Hope Ambassadors, Dr Mustapha Abdullahi, described the festival as a platform designed to empower young Nigerians and encourage active civic engagement.

"The festival will celebrate youth excellence, encourage civic participation, promote national unity, and create pathways for young Nigerians to thrive," Abdullahi said.

He added that the programme was designed to equip participants with opportunities, networks and practical knowledge needed to succeed in a competitive environment.

Themed "Consolidating the Future: Youth Empowerment, Democratic Resilience, and the Renewed Hope Mandate," the event will feature football, basketball, table tennis, and chess competitions, gaming sessions, dance performances, music concerts, exhibitions, and talent showcases.

A major highlight of the festival will be a Growth and Development Masterclass where professionals and industry experts will engage participants in sessions on financial literacy, career development, wealth creation, emotional intelligence, communication, and health.

South Africa's Ramaphosa vows crackdown on groups behind xenophobic attacks

South Africa will crack down on groups behind xenophobic violence, President Cyril Ramaphosa said on Sunday, as anti-immigrant protests tarnish the country's reputation.

Ghana, Nigeria, Malawi and Mozambique are repatriating some of their citizens caught up in the protests, which have sometimes turned violent. Mozambique has said five of its citizens were killed.

"We will act against forces who are exploiting the concerns of our people about illegal immigration to further their own political, personal and criminal agendas," Ramaphosa said in a televised address, without specifying the actions.


Ramaphosa

"We will and must not allow groups to use the legitimate concerns of South Africans to destabilize our country through inciting lawlessness and violence," he said.

He cautioned citizens against stopping people on the streets to demand their identities, and said enforcement of immigration laws was a responsibility solely for the state.

Xenophobic attacks are a recurring problem in South Africa, where immigrants are often blamed for economic woes such as high unemployment and crime. Defenders of migrants say such accusations are unfair and exploited by populist politicians.

Ramaphosa said migrants were being blamed for problems that had arisen because of poverty and high unemployment.
The government was taking measures to address migration, including stricter enforcement of regulations, an overhaul of laws, and working with other countries to address the root causes of illegal immigration, he added.

He noted plans for policies including setting up dedicated courts to deal speedily with immigration cases, and upgrading the paper "green book" identity documents carried by South Africans and legal migrants, which are being replaced with more secure, biometric digital ID cards.

Ghana has petitioned the African Union over South Africa's treatment of Ghanaians there, its Foreign Minister Samuel Okudjeto Ablakwa said on Saturday. It was compiling a list of assets lost by Ghanaians because of attacks in South Africa, for future use in any litigation.

Kenya Met issues 24-hour weather forecast, predicts rainfall in four regions

In a notice, Kenya Met said rainfall is expected over a few parts in the Highlands, West and East of the Rift Valley, Northeast and the Coast from 9pm today to 9pm, Monday, Jun 8.

Strong southerly to southeasterly winds of above 25 knots (12.5 m/s) are expected over parts of the northwestern, North Eastern, southeastern lowlands and coastal counties.

Kenya Met releases 24-hour forecast, predicts continued rainfall in select counties in the counties are Kakamega, Vihiga, Busia, Bungoma, Kisumu, Kisii, Nyamira, Migori, Siaya, Homa Bay, Kericho, Nandi, Bomet, Nakuru, Elgeyo Marakwet, West Pokot, Baringo, Uasin Gishu, Trans Nzoia, and Narok, mainly partly cloudy conditions are expected tonight with a chance of showers over a few places.

Mainly sunny intervals expected in the morning. Showers and thunderstorms over a few places are expected in the afternoon.

Highland east of the Rif Valley This region includes the counties of Nyeri, Muranga, Kirinyaga, Embu, Meru, Kiambu, Tharaka Nithi, Laikipia, Nyandarua, and Nairobi. Tonight, expect partly cloudy conditions with isolated showers.

Tomorrow morning will be cloudy with a chance of light rain in some areas, clearing to sunny intervals for the rest of the day. High-ground areas may experience isolated light showers in the afternoon.

Northwestern In Turkana and Samburu, partly cloudy conditions are expected tonight, with sunny intervals expected to prevail the entire day tomorrow. Strong southeasterly winds of above 25 knots (12.5 m/s) are expected over parts of Turkana County.

242 migrants rescued south of Crete amid surge in Libya arrivals

Greek authorities say they have rescued 242 migrants after a series of five incidents involving six boats south of Crete on Thursday, amid a continued rise in arrivals from Libya.

The Hellenic Coast Guard reported that after the rescue operations, 65 people were taken to the port of Agia Galini, 139 were brought to Kaloi Limenes, and 38 were transferred to Palaiochora.

Official data shows migration flows from Libya toward Gavdos, a small island south of Crete, and southern Crete have increased by more than 50% in May compared with April. Overall arrivals between January and May 2026 were also 23% higher than during the same period last year.


The migrants

In response to mounting pressure along eastern Mediterranean migration routes, the Greek government is expected to transfer three second-hand patrol vessels to the coast guard in eastern Libya later this month, in an effort to help curb departures from Libyan shores, particularly around Tobruk, toward Gavdos and Crete.

Greek Migration Minister Thanos Plevris has also indicated that the government intends to introduce stricter measures in response to the increased number of arrivals on the island.

Tunisia FM, UN envoy discuss Libya political process


Mohamed Nafti

Tunisia's Foreign Minister Mohamed Nafti has held talks with the UN's top envoy to Libya, Hanna Tetteh, on the latest developments in the country's political process.

The meeting, held in Tunis, focused on ways to support UN-led efforts to move the process forward, according to a statement from Tunisia's foreign ministry.

Nafti underscored Tunisia's support for the UN Support Mission in Libya and its roadmap, and stressed the importance of "structured dialogue" to advance a political settlement.
He also welcomed a recent meeting of a "4+4" mini-dialogue mechanism hosted in Tunis on 4 June.

The minister reaffirmed Tunisia's commitment to coordination with neighbouring countries, describing it as a key framework for supporting a comprehensive political solution that preserves Libya's unity and sovereignty.

For her part, Tetteh praised Tunisia's "balanced and constructive" role and said continued coordination with regional and international partners was essential to achieving a lasting political settlement in Libya.

Zelensky urges Russian oligarch, Abramovich to send message to Putin

President Volodymyr Zelensky in May 2026 asked sanctioned Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich to speak to Russian President Vladimir Putin about restarting bilateral peace talks, the Financial Times (FT) reported on June 7, citing four sources familiar with the matter.

Zelensky confirmed the meeting with Abramovich during a June 7 interview with Sky News.

"(Abramovich) came, and he wanted to give me the message that (the Russians) want to understand what we are ready to do," he said.

Zelensky said he told Abramovich to tell Putin that Ukraine will never surrender Donbas. He also asked him to tell Putin he was ready to meet with him directly in a city outside Russia or Belarus.

"I said you can choose any time from tomorrow, you can choose any day, any format," Zelensky said.

The president's characterization of the meeting is slightly different than the version reported by the FT. Sources told the outlet that Zelensky invited Abramovich to Kyiv in May and asked the oligarch to pass a message to Putin signaling that the Ukrainian president was ready to meet for a face-to-face summit.

Kyiv hoped to show its commitment to engaging in peace talks, even with the U.S. distracted by its war in Iran, sources told the FT. Russia, however, rejected the overture.

At the St. Petersburg Economic Forum on June 5, Putin said he had met with "one of the representatives of our business circles" on May 21 following his visit to Kyiv. Putin said he told this "colleague" he saw no point in meeting with Zelensky.



Putin



Zelensky

The unnamed businessman was not acting in an official capacity, Putin said.
A source in the Ukrainian government told the news outlet Suspilne a version of events that aligns more closely with Zelensky's. The source said that Russia initiated the meeting between Zelensky and Abramovich as a way to learn Ukraine's conditions for ending the war.

Abramovich is a Russian billionaire who formerly owned the Chelsea Football Club. He was forced to sell the club and was banned entry to the U.K. in 2022, after the launch of Russia's full-scale war, due to his connections to Putin.

The news of Abramovich's attempt to broker a Zelensky-Putin summit comes three days after Zelensky published an open letter challenging Putin to meet him directly and negotiate an end to the war. The letter offers to begin negotiations with a ceasefire and prisoner exchange — while sending a message to Russians that the full-scale war is a dead end for Moscow.

The letter marked the first direct outreach from Zelensky to Putin since 2022. One official told the FT that the message sent by Abramovich to Putin was less antagonistic than the open letter, though the essential content was similar. Putin accused Zelensky of being rude in the open letter and once again refused to set up a meeting.

Abramovich has played a role in mediating between Russia and Ukraine since the early days of the full-scale invasion in 2022. He has helped broker prisoner exchanges and assisted in negotiations for the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Sources close to Abramovich said the oligarch is still involved in liaising between Kyiv and Moscow, though his role has been downplayed since Russia began negotiating directly with the U.S. after Donald Trump's re-election.

"He is needed because he is the only Russian (the Ukrainians) will tolerate. He gets along with everyone," one source told the FT.

Zelensky's push for a leader-level summit comes amid what the president has called Ukraine's "window" of opportunity to negotiate with Russia — a window that will likely close once winter returns.

Ukrainian forces have stalled Russia's offensive on the battlefield and managed to change the stakes of the war for Russian civilians by escalating its deep strike campaign.

Ukrainian strike on Russian navy arsenal burns 5,000 tons of ammunition

According to available information, the attack on military unit 55443-LI took place on June 6 using approximately 40 strike drones. Eight drones reportedly reached the target.

The strike hit ground hangar-type storage facilities, triggering the detonation of stored ammunition.

Reported losses are estimated at approximately 5,000 tons of material, mainly artillery ammunition of various calibers and engineer munitions.



Ukrainian strike on Russian

Dnipro OSINT published satellite imagery showing signs of detonation over an area of approximately 50,000 square meters.

Two servicemen reportedly present at the site were killed.The 15th arsenal of the Russian Navy is one of the major ammunition depots of the Baltic Fleet.

The facility was established in the 1930s as a storage base for naval ammunition of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet.

The arsenal was designed as a fortified complex with underground infrastructure and served during the Soviet period as a key node in the Baltic Fleet's ammunition storage system.

The Western Military District facility is used as a base for ships, submarines, and auxiliary support vessels.

Miltiarnyi recently reported that drones struck the Kronstadt naval base of the Russian Baltic Fleet alongside the arsenal operation.

IRGC targets Israeli airbase with ballistic missiles



Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) targeted Israel's Ramat David Airbase with ballistic missiles, describing the strike as retaliation for Israeli attacks in southern Lebanon and Beirut's southern suburbs.

In a statement, the group said the airbase was attacked because it was "the origin of these aggressions," referring to Israeli military operations that caused deaths and displacement in the Lebanese cities of Tyre and Nabatieh, as well as Beirut's southern suburbs (Dahiyeh).

The IRGC also accused Israel and the United States of violating a ceasefire that Iran said it had accepted on April 8, alleging continued attacks in Lebanon and strikes against Iranian interests in the Strait of Hormuz, the Sea of Oman, and the Indian Ocean.

"Tonight's operation was a warning," the statement said, adding that any further attacks would lead to a broader response targeting "American-Zionist targets" across the region.

The statement ended by declaring that any future retaliation would be wider in scope if hostilities continue.

Nigerians 'll not pay for repatriation from S' Africa –Official

By Fortune Abang

Nigerians to be evacuated from South Africa will not bear the cost of their repatriation, Mr Kimiebi Ebienfa, spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has said.

Ebienfa said this in a telephone interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Saturday.

He said the ministry would deploy aircraft to bring them home.

According to him, the screening of Nigerians in South Africa who registered for evacuation will end on Saturday.

"The process, which commenced on June 4, is a joint exercise involving the Nigerian High Commission in Pretoria, the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation, as well as the South African Police and immigration authorities.

"At the end of the screening, we will have a definite number of persons cleared for evacuation.

"Thereafter, we will finalise arrangements for the deployment of aircraft to bring them home," he said.

Ebienfa spoke against the backdrop of the Federal Government's preparations to repatriate Nigerians from South Africa under a voluntary evacuation programme following concerns over the safety of foreign nationals in the Southern African country and the recent anti-immigrant protests held in parts of the country. (NAN)



Managing Director, Middle East and Africa (MEA), Temenos, Santosh Rao (l); and Group Managing Director and Founder, Interswitch Group, Mitchell Elegbe, at the signing ceremony of a strategic partnership between Interswitch and Temenos to scale digital banking services across Africa, during the Temenos Community Forum (TCF) 2026, in Copenhagen, Denmark

Farmers lament $2.34bn import bill, seek improved farm security

By Mercy Omoike

Local farmers and agricultural experts have attributed Nigeria's growing dependence on food imports to insecurity in farming communities, calling on the government to prioritise the safety of farmlands and rural communities.

They spoke in separate interviews with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Sunday in Lagos while reacting to data from the Central Bank of Nigeria, that food imports stood at $2.34 billion in 2025.

The General Secretary of the All Farmers Association of Nigeria, Mr Femi Oke, described the country's increasing reliance on imported food as discouraging to local farmers.

Oke said food commodities that could be produced locally should not be imported, noting that such a trend undermined efforts to boost domestic agricultural production.

"As an association, we are not happy about the constant importation of food into the country, especially commodities that can be produced locally.

"We believe only a few products, such as dairy items that require specialised storage facilities, may justify importation.

"Continuous importation of food that should be grown locally discourages farmers and weakens efforts to achieve food security.

"We have consistently urged the government to discourage excessive food imports and empower local farmers to increase production," he said.

According to him, Nigeria should not depend on external sources for food if it is serious about attaining food security.

Also speaking, an agricultural communication expert, Dr Ismail Olawale, said sustainable agricultural development required more than increased budgetary allocations.

According to him, issues such as rural development, security, logistics and infrastructure are critical to achieving food security.

Olawale noted that focusing solely on agricultural budgets without addressing insecurity and poor infrastructure would yield limited results.

He added that agricultural development required a holistic approach encompassing security, transportation, education and social development.

"Food importation is not a sustainable solution to food security.

"When agriculture works, it stimulates

NDA dismisses admission exclusion claims

By Mohammad Tijjani

The Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) has dismissed reports claiming prospective candidates were excluded from admission into its 78 Regular Course due to portal closure.

The Academy described the allegations as inaccurate and inconsistent with the realities of its admission process.

In a statement issued on Sunday in Kaduna, the Academy's Public Relations Officer, Maj. Reuben Kovangiya, said the application portal remained accessible throughout registration.

He said applications for the 78 Regular Course opened on Nov. 28, 2025, and closed on April 30, 2026, before being extended to May 15.

According to him, candidates who scored 180 and above in the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination and selected NDA as first choice were invited.

"Eligible candidates were sent emails on May 19, 2026, directing them to register for the NDA Screening Test not later than May 24, 2026," he said.

Kovangiya said application procedures, timelines and requirements were widely publicised through the Academy's website, portal, social media platforms and emails.

He noted that candidates had adequate time to complete registration requirements, including generating Remita Retrieval References, paying fees and submitting forms.

The spokesman added that applicants were repeatedly advised to monitor official communication channels for updates and important notices.

Traditional Institutions, critical drivers of peace building – Former SGF

By Talatu Maiwada

Mr Boss Mustapha, the former Secretary to the Government of the Federation, on Sunday described traditional institutions as critical drivers of peace, security, development and national cohesion.

Mustapha stated this during the conferment of honorary traditional titles on 22 distinguished sons, daughters and friends of the Bachama Kingdom in Numan council area of Adamawa.

He said traditional institutions remain "living institutions" that continue to play vital roles in Nigeria's nation-building and governance processes.

According to him, traditional rulers serve as bridges between governments and citizens, helping to connect public policies with grassroots realities.

The former SGF said traditional titles should be seen as recognition of service, sacrifice and commitment to community development rather than mere symbols of status.

He said that every title bestowed carries responsibilities that require recipients to contribute positively to society and the welfare of their communities.

Mustapha urged title holders to demonstrate humility, integrity and dedication in discharging their responsibilities.

The former SGF, who received the title of "Ngra Bachama," advised recipients to remain accessible to the people, saying honour should strengthen service and deepen commitment to community welfare.

Mustapha also commended the Hama Bachama and the Bachama Traditional Council for recognising individuals who have contributed meaningfully to society.

Insecurity must not derail Nigeria's democracy, Akpabio warns

By Nathaniel Zacchaeus, Abuja

President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio, has warned that terrorism, kidnapping and other forms of violent criminality must not be allowed to undermine Nigeria's democratic gains, urging citizens to join hands with government and security agencies in the fight against insecurity.

Speaking during an inter-denominational church service held in Abuja to mark the 2026 Democracy Day celebration, Akpabio said the battle against insecurity requires a collective national effort involving communities, families and individual citizens.

He stressed that defeating criminal elements would depend not only on government action but also on the vigilance, cooperation and moral commitment of Nigerians.

"The struggle against terrorism, kidnapping and violent criminality requires the vigilance, cooperation and moral resolve of all Nigerians," the Senate President said.

"Let communities remain vigilant. Let citizens cooperate with our security agencies. Let families refuse to shield criminals. And let us continue to lift this nation before God."

Akpabio reaffirmed the Federal Government's commitment to securing the release of citizens held captive by kidnappers and terrorists, particularly children whose abductions, he noted, have become a source of national anguish.



L-R: Managing Director/Proprietress, Safe Heritage Crest Acadey, Mrs Feyikemi Arolasafe; Chief Operating Officer, Bamidele Arolasafe and School Administrator, Bolanle Moses, during the 10th Years Anniversary of Safe Heritage Crest Academy at Aco Estate, Abuja

According to him, the government remains determined to free those in captivity, defeat criminal networks and restore peace across the country.

"The government remains steadfast in its determination to secure the freedom of those in captivity, defeat the forces of terror and criminality, and restore peace to our communities," he said.

"We shall continue to act, continue to pray, and continue to persevere until our children are safely returned and our nation is secure."

The Senate President described the ordeal of abducted children and their families as a painful national tragedy, recalling his own experience during the Nigerian Civil War when he and his sister were separated from their mother for several days amid hostilities in Ikot Ekpene.

He said the experience gave him a personal appreciation of the fears and uncertainties faced by parents whose children are missing or held by kidnappers.

"That is why my heart breaks for every child in captivity and every parent who lies awake through the long hours of the night, not knowing whether a son or daughter is safe, hungry, frightened or even alive," he said.

Reflecting on Nigeria's democratic journey, Akpabio noted that the country had weathered political instability, economic challenges, insurgency and public health crises to sustain 27 years of uninterrupted democratic rule.

He attributed the survival of democracy partly to the prayers and support of Nigerians, especially religious leaders and the Church, whom he praised for standing with the nation during periods of political uncertainty.

According to him, democracy derives its legitimacy not merely from periodic elections but from accountable leadership, justice, and the government's ability to improve citizens' lives.

Acknowledging the economic difficulties facing many Nigerians, Akpabio said President Bola Ahmed Tinubu directed that this year's Democracy Day celebrations be observed modestly in recognition of prevailing hardships.

He, however, expressed optimism that ongoing reforms would eventually deliver positive outcomes and urged citizens to remain patient and hopeful.

The Senate President also called on young Nigerians to play active roles in the democratic process rather than disengage from national affairs.

"We hear you. Your concerns are real. Your aspirations are legitimate. Your desire for a better nation is justified. Nigeria does not need your withdrawal. She needs your participation, your ideas, your creativity, your courage, your enterprise and your faith in the possibility of national renewal," he said.

Akpabio further cautioned against divisive politics, insisting that Nigeria's diversity should be embraced as a source of strength.

He maintained that every region and community contributes meaningfully to national development and that unity remains essential for peace, stability and progress.

Court voids NASS N110bn on SUVs, allowances in SERAP's suit

By Anthony Otaru, Abuja

A Federal High Court in Lagos has declared unlawful the National Assembly's controversial N110 billion expenditure on bulletproof vehicles and support allowances for lawmakers, ruling that the spending violated procurement laws, constitutional provisions and the principles of accountability in public service.

Justice Yellim Bogoro, who delivered the judgment in a suit filed by the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), held that the allocation of N40 billion for 465 vehicles and N70 billion in allowances for newly inaugurated lawmakers amounted to unlawful and wasteful spending.

The court ruled that the expenditure breached Section 57(4) of the Public Procurement Act 2007, the Code of Conduct for Public Officers and the constitutional oath of office taken by members of the National Assembly.

"Looking at the magnitude of the expenditure, coupled with the absence of demonstrable due process, leads me to conclude that the procurement is arbitrary, disproportionate and inconsistent with statutory procurement standards," Justice Bogoro held.

The judge further described the spending as a case of "self-dealing and conflict of interest," noting that lawmakers who approved the expenditure were also direct beneficiaries.

"The beneficiaries of the expenditure are the very officials approving it, and the expenditure confers direct pecuniary and material benefits," the court said.

Justice Bogoro also cited the country's prevailing economic hardship, stressing that the allocation failed to reflect national priorities.

"I have taken judicial notice of the economic realities in Nigeria and the widespread financial hardship affecting Nigerian citizens. In this context, the allocation of N110 billion for the benefit of lawmakers demonstrates a failure to prioritise national interest," she ruled.

The court dismissed the National Assembly's argument that legislative autonomy shielded the spending from judicial scrutiny.

"The doctrine of separation of powers does not operate as a shield for illegality," the judge declared.

Justice Bogoro subsequently ordered Senate President Godswill Akpabio, Speaker of the House of Representatives Tajudeen Abbas, and members of both chambers to ensure that all future procurement and spending of public funds strictly comply with due process, transparency, accountability, and value-for-money principles.

SERAP had filed the suit in 2023 after reports emerged that lawmakers planned to spend N110 billion on luxury vehicles and allowances despite worsening poverty and insecurity in the country.

Reacting to the judgment, SERAP Deputy Director Kolawole Oluwadare described the ruling as "a major victory for transparency, accountability and responsible management of public resources in Nigeria."

According to him, "Justice Bogoro's judgment demonstrates that public office is a public trust and that public funds must be used strictly in the public interest."

Human rights lawyer Femi Falana, SAN, also welcomed the verdict, saying the judgment reaffirmed that public office holders cannot continue to live in "obscene opulence" while millions of Nigerians face economic hardship.

"The National Assembly must obey the judgment of the court without delay," Falana said.

The ruling is expected to intensify public debate over the cost of governance and legislative spending in Nigeria.

ThisNigeria
Monday June 8, 2026
thisnigerial thisnigerial

Bridging Nigeria's mechanisation gap through tractorisation

By Doris Esa

For decades, inadequate mechanisation has been a major constraint on agricultural productivity in Nigeria, limiting farmers' ability to cultivate larger areas, improve yields, and compete effectively in domestic and international markets.

Indeed, despite its vast agricultural potential, Nigeria continues to rely heavily on manual farming methods, with experts identifying low tractor density as a major obstacle to achieving food security and agricultural transformation.

Against this backdrop, the Federal Government introduced the Renewed Hope National Agricultural Mechanisation Programme (RHNAMP).

It is a flagship initiative aimed at closing the country's mechanisation gap by deploying 2,000 tractors and over 9,000 specialised agricultural implements.

The tractorisation programme is designed to promote mechanised farming, boost food and nutrition security, create jobs for youths and enhance the overall productivity of the agricultural sector.

Unlike previous interventions, the programme operates on a lease-to-own arrangement, deploying machinery through registered Mechanisation Service Providers (MSPs) rather than distributing tractors directly to individuals.

Government officials describe the initiative as the largest single agricultural mechanisation programme ever undertaken on the African continent.

According to them, the programme is expected to increase productivity, strengthen agricultural value chains, expand cultivated land, reduce food imports and reinforce agriculture's role as a driver of economic growth and resilience.

Notably, the initiative marks a major shift from conventional equipment distribution to a structured service-based mechanisation model.

Under the arrangement, tractors are deployed through MSPs, with each tractor expected to service approximately 600 hectares annually.

The model targets coverage of more than 1.5 million hectares and direct support for over 1.2 million farmers every year.

At the unveiling of the tractors and agricultural equipment in Abuja in June 2025, President Bola Tinubu said the initiative fulfilled his administration's commitment to transforming agriculture and ensuring food security for Nigerians.

"We made a promise when we came in. We are fulfilling that promise. Two years ago, I sounded the alarm on our nation's food security," the President said.

According to him, agricultural productivity is directly linked to national stability and food sovereignty.

"The ability to nourish our population is the bedrock of a prosperous nation, and our ambition extends beyond mere self-sufficiency.

"We envision Nigeria as a global agricultural powerhouse, supplying quality produce to international markets while ensuring every citizen has access to affordable nutrition.



Mechanised farming

"That is why we took the bold decision to establish the Renewed Hope Agricultural Mechanisation Programme. We are just beginning," Tinubu said.

He stressed the need to embrace modern farming practices, noting that Nigeria could no longer rely on outdated production methods.

"You don't have to use 18th-century methods for 21st-century agriculture. Our strategy encompasses year-round cultivation," he said.

The President urged beneficiaries to ensure proper utilisation of the equipment.

"To stakeholders receiving this equipment, deploy them with maximum efficiency. We will work with you, supervise you and hold you accountable.

"Let history recall this day as the beginning of Nigeria's agricultural renewal, where modern technology transformed farmers' resilience into unprecedented prosperity," he added.

Tinubu also commended the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security for its efforts in stabilising the nation's food system.

"Together, we shall cultivate a future where Nigeria is not only sustaining itself but nourishing the world," he said.

Similarly, the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Sen. Abubakar Kyari, outlined the programme as a landmark in Nigeria's agricultural transformation journey.

"It is a bold affirmation that under the leadership of President Tinubu, agriculture is once again at the heart of our national development strategy," he said.

According to him, the programme represents an unprecedented level of ambition and commitment to agricultural development.

"Never in Nigeria's history have we witnessed an agricultural mechanisation initiative of this scale, ambition and national focus.

> Production must be matched with processing. Mechanisation must be matched with financing. Policy must be matched with private-sector confidence and long-term investment

"Guided by the President's directive, we are unveiling the single largest mechanisation programme ever undertaken in Nigeria," Kyari said.

He disclosed that the package includes 2,000 tractors, trailers, ploughs, harrows, planters and sprayers, alongside 10 state-of-the-art combined harvesters, 12 mobile workshops and thousands of implements and spare parts.

Furthermore, Kyari said the deployment of the tractors commenced in phases, beginning with an initial batch of 600 units.

"This is not merely an equipment rollout. It is the ignition of a national agricultural productivity revolution, ending Nigeria's long era of low tractor density.

"Through the Renewed Hope National Agricultural Mechanisation Programme, we are deploying 2,000 heavy-capacity tractors and over 9,000 precision implements under a rigorously engineered national framework," he said.

The minister explained that the tractors would remain under MSP management to ensure optimal utilisation and sustainability.

He noted that many of the service providers are youth- and women-led enterprises operating under a lease-to-own arrangement.

"This is not just about 2,000 beneficiaries. It is about 1.2 million farmers across more than 1.5 million hectares annually. It is about national food sovereignty," he said.

Kyari also highlighted the financing architecture supporting the initiative.

"This is not just equipment distribution. It is a governed transformation. Mechanisation provides the horsepower, finance provides the liquidity and policy provides the stability.

"Together, they deliver food security, job creation and economic resilience," he said.

To ensure sustainability, the minister said each tractor comes with two years of free service support.

According to him, the government is institutionalising maintenance culture, genuine parts replacement and asset management systems.

"Mechanisation without maintenance is expenditure, but mechanisation with maintenance is investment," he said.

Kyari disclosed that government is deploying 36 mobile service trucks and constructing seven mega mechanisation service centres nationwide.

In addition, plans are underway to establish a tractor assembly plant capable of producing between 2,000 and 4,000 tractors annually.

"We are not importing dependency. We are building industrial capability," he said.

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15 or 16 years of this crisis, we must ask ourselves: what exactly is the long-term solution?

How important is rapid response time in addressing insecurity across large and difficult terrains?

Response time is absolutely critical.

Given Nigeria's vast landmass and difficult terrain, covering large areas during emergencies requires enormous effort, doesn't it?

Yes, it does, both in terms of equipment and personnel. As we speak today, I do not think the total number of security personnel in Nigeria is up to one million. Yet we are talking about securing a country of over 200 million people. We have long understood that we are understaffed. For over 15 years, we have been saying we do not have enough soldiers, policemen or auxiliary personnel, yet very little has been done about it. Periodically, the Army announces plans to recruit 10,000 personnel, but the scale of the challenge requires something much bigger.

The Federal Government recently announced the deployment of 1,000 forest guards to Oyo State, similar to the earlier announcement in Kwara State. Why do these decisions often come only after attacks have occurred?

With due respect to Mr President, announcing the deployment of 1,000 forest guards after an incident has happened is a knee-jerk approach. What we need is a comprehensive and proactive strategy. Nobody disputes the fact that Nigeria lacks sufficient security personnel. Even before this administration came into office, everybody, including ordinary commercial drivers, agreed that we did not have enough soldiers or policemen. So why is it that in a country of over 200 million people, where a significant percentage are of military age, and many are unemployed, we are not recruiting aggressively in line with the security realities?

Do inadequate personnel numbers also contribute to inefficiency within the security system? And what role can technology realistically play? Do we even have satellite capability for real-time surveillance?

We do not have that kind of satellite capability. Even the Americans were sharing satellite imagery with Nigeria until around 2017, when they stopped for their own reasons. Perhaps they have resumed now, but the point is that we should start with simple, practical things. If soldiers and police officers cannot communicate securely and instead rely on ordinary phone lines, we already have a major problem. While technology is important, we must admit that we are not yet a highly advanced technological society. So we should first focus on ensuring that units are connected via secure communication systems. We saw what happened in the unfortunate case of the general who was later killed after communication lines were compromised. These are practical issues we should address before talking about sophisticated satellite systems. What matters most to the ordinary man in Zamfara, Adamawa or Oyo State is simple. If there is danger in his community, there should be a police station, a military base, or a civil defence unit within two or three kilometres that can respond quickly. Once that is lacking, people will abandon their farms, homes and livelihoods out of fear. Our older generation of military officers often remind us that when previous crises emerged, Nigeria expanded military recruitment massively within a short period. Why are we not doing that now? With due respect to the President, during the campaign period there were statements about empowering millions of Nigerians. Yet today, after becoming President, we still wait for attacks before deploying forest guards. That approach will not work. What we need after 16 years of insecurity is proper planning and auditing. Audit is not just about money. It is also about equipment and workforce. If a senator overseeing defence visits a battalion in Monguno, he should know whether the battalion is operating at full strength or is under-equipped. What should be the optimal size of our military and police? That is the real question. We should have a rolling yearly recruitment and expansion plan rather than reacting only after attacks occur.

'Nigeria needs long-term security strategy, not emergency deployments'



Shehu

> Citizens naturally have more eyes and ears than security agencies, but people will only volunteer information when they trust the system will protect them

Why does government appear able to implement tax reforms quickly, yet struggle to make drastic security reforms?

It is simply a matter of political will. Under a democracy, the President is the Commander-in-Chief, but legislators also share responsibility. I listened to Senator Oshiomhole and others, and what shocked me was the realisation that proper oversight of defence spending may not have really happened over the years.

Would you describe that as a failure on the part of lawmakers?

Yes, it is. As a retired military officer, I see that these debates show our democracy is still maturing. In advanced democracies, legislatures actively scrutinise defence funding and security operations. Oversight is not necessarily about accusing agencies of wrongdoing. It is about efficiency and ensuring resources are properly utilised. Of course, there are operational secrets that legislators cannot demand publicly. You cannot ask a commander during an ongoing rescue mission exactly how many troops he has deployed. That would compromise operational security. However, legislators can legitimately ask broader questions about workforce, mobility assets, communication equipment and readiness. Those are valid oversight responsibilities.

Why are hostage rescue and recovery operations often so complicated?

Hostage rescue operations are among the most difficult and complex military operations anywhere in the world. Once kidnappers take victims into locations they control, especially when children and women are involved, rescue becomes extremely delicate. The primary objective is not killing the kidnappers; it is rescuing the hostages alive and safely. If possible, the criminals can then be arrested or neutralised afterwards. These operations require more than bravery or force. They demand careful analysis from multiple perspectives. The presence of children alone complicates matters because kidnappers know security forces will be cautious. That is why governments sometimes negotiate. Negotiation can buy time, provide intelligence opportunities and create room for strategic planning. Security forces must determine where the victims are being held, whether they are together or separated, whether the terrain is open or enclosed, and the behavioural history of the kidnappers involved. Some groups are extremely brutal and could begin killing victims immediately if pressured recklessly.

Some terrorist groups have already begun making demands. How should government approach negotiations in such situations?

In negotiations, professional negotiators usually start with low-hanging fruit. For example, if very young children or pregnant women are among the hostages, negotiators may seek their release first in exchange for food, medicine or humanitarian supplies. The circumstances determine the strategy. You must understand where the victims are being kept, whether they are in open terrain, and the character of the kidnappers involved. However, I commend the government for refusing to pay ransom. There are concessions the government can consider, such as humanitarian support, but demands for ammunition or huge sums of money should never be accepted because that would only encourage more kidnappings.

In the age of social media, how can citizens balance the need for information with the need to protect ongoing rescue operations and the lives of hostages?

As I said earlier, hostage rescue operations are among the most sensitive military operations. Premature disclosure of operational information or negotiation details can jeopardise the entire mission and endanger lives. What I encourage citizens and members of WhatsApp groups to do is simple: do not share unverified information. Some people far away from Oyo State suddenly begin spreading stories about what is happening there. That is dangerous. There is also a misconception that security is solely the responsibility of security agencies. Nigeria is a country of over 200 million people. Logically, citizens have more eyes and ears on the ground than security agencies do. The most important aspect of security is getting citizens to trust government enough to volunteer information. Responsible citizens should serve as the eyes and ears of security agencies, support lawful operations, and stop the spread of rumours. These criminals live among us. Regardless of ethnic, religious or

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ThisNigeria
Monday June 8, 2026
thisnigerial thisnigerial

A case for Nigeria's renewal



By Rekpene Bassey

"No one saves us but ourselves. No one can and no one may. We ourselves must walk the path." — Adapted from the Buddha.

There is a recurring temptation in moments of national frustration: the belief that salvation lies elsewhere.

When insecurity deepens, when corruption appears entrenched, when institutions falter, and public trust erodes, voices emerge calling on foreign governments, international organisations, and global powers to intervene and rescue Nigeria from itself.

Such appeals, however understandable, rest on a dangerous illusion. No nation has ever outsourced its destiny and remained truly sovereign. Freedom cannot be imported. Renewal cannot be subcontracted.

No foreign capital, diplomatic pressure, international resolution, or external intervention can substitute for the moral courage of a people determined to reclaim their own country.

Nigeria's greatest challenge is not that the world has abandoned us. It is that too many Nigerians have surrendered their agency while waiting for someone else to act.

History offers a different lesson. The philosophers who shaped civilisation understood that liberty is not a gift bestowed by benevolent outsiders. It is a responsibility assumed by citizens. Their wisdom remains urgently relevant to Nigeria today.

The Socratic persuasion emerges here. Before we judge others, we must first judge ourselves.

More than two thousand years ago, Socrates wandered the streets of Athens asking questions that made powerful men uncomfortable. His central command was simple: Know thyself.

Before a nation can be transformed, it must first be honest with itself. Too often, we Nigerians seek external explanations for our problems. Colonialism. Global markets. International conspiracies. Foreign interests.

While such forces exist and matter, they do not absolve us from confronting a harder truth. What have we tolerated?

Corruption flourishes not merely because corrupt men exist, but because societies gradually normalise what they once condemned. Bad leadership survives because too many citizens learn to accommodate it. Institutions decay because silence becomes easier than resistance.

Socrates was ultimately condemned not because he lied to Athens, but because he forced Athenians to examine themselves.

Nigeria's renewal will begin with the same uncomfortable exercise. Liberated people do not simply ask who is oppressing them. They ask what habits, compromises, fears and indifference have allowed oppression to endure. Plato's Cave and the Search for False Saviours offer an excellent lesson in this regard.

In The Republic, Plato describes prisoners chained inside a cave, mistaking shadows on a wall for reality. When one prisoner escapes and sees the world as it truly is, he returns to enlighten the others. Instead of gratitude, he encounters hostility.

The allegory remains strikingly modern. Many Nigerians have become prisoners of another illusion: the belief that solutions must arrive from outside, from the US President Donald Trump and others.

When citizens place their hopes entirely in foreign governments, international agencies, or external pressure, they are often staring at shadows rather than substance. The truth is that Nigeria possesses immense reservoirs of strength.

Such strength abides in its farmers who feed millions despite adversity. In its entrepreneurs who build businesses in hostile conditions. In its teachers who still educate despite neglect. In its scientists, engineers, artisans, soldiers, traders and innovators. In its extraordinary youth population.

The resources required for national renewal are not absent. They are underutilised. Plato's liberated prisoner did not remain outside the cave enjoying his freedom. He returned.

That is the real obligation of citizenship. Those who understand the nation's challenges must engage them. Those with knowledge must share it. Those with influence must use it. Those with courage must demonstrate it.

No American senator, European parliamentarian or foreign President can perform that duty for us.

In Aristotle's Forgotten Meaning of Citizenship, he argued that the state exists not merely to preserve life but to enable what he called eudemonia - human flourishing.

Government, in this view, is not an end in itself. It is an instrument for the common good. When public institutions become vehicles for private enrichment, they betray their purpose.

However, Aristotle offered another profound insight. The state is not simply its rulers. The state is its citizens.

Modern democracies often encourage a dangerous misconception: that politics is something governments do while ordinary people remain spectators. Aristotle rejected this entirely. During his time, citizenship was not passive observation. It was an active participation.

A society cannot be rescued solely from presidential villas, government offices, legislative chambers or court halls. It is strengthened in local communities. In professional associations. In trade unions. In schools. In markets. In religious institutions. In neighbourhood meetings and in civic organisations.

The health of a nation state ultimately reflects the health of its civic culture. A nation where citizens abandon public responsibility eventually becomes vulnerable to those who seek power without accountability.

Cicero's warned on this and declared that tyranny feeds on public indifference.

Cicero, the Roman statesman, lived during the decline of the Roman Republic. He understood a truth repeatedly confirmed by history. Tyranny rarely begins with overwhelming strength. It begins with widespread indifference.

The number of people who actively undermine a nation is often small. The number who quietly permit them to do so is usually much larger. The greatest ally of bad governance is not power. It is apathy. History offers countless examples.

Authoritarian systems endure not because every citizen supports them but because enough citizens conclude that resistance is futile. They retreat into private life. They disengage. They stop expecting better. This surrender of expectation becomes a form of consent.

A handful of powerful figures will not determine Nigeria's future. It will be determined by whether millions of ordinary citizens decide that national decline is unacceptable.

The arithmetic of democracy ultimately favours the people; if the people choose to exercise it. There is a stoic lesson in this. Control what is within your reach.

The philosopher Epictetus began life as an enslaved person. Even so, he developed one of history's most enduring philosophies of freedom.

His principle was straightforward. Some things are within our control. Others are not. We cannot control decisions made in Washington, London, Paris, Moscow or Beijing.

We cannot dictate the priorities of foreign governments. Nor should we expect them to prioritise Nigeria above their own national interests.

What we can control is our conduct. Our votes. Our integrity. Our communities. Our willingness to hold leaders to account. Our refusal to participate in corruption. Our commitment to raising a generation that values truth over convenience.

National transformation begins when citizens focus less on what distant powers might do and more on what they themselves must do. That is not merely a political philosophy. It is a philosophy of liberation.

Here are the three key steps toward national renewal. Every great transformation begins with a shift in consciousness.

First, we must awaken. Like Socrates, we must ask difficult questions and refuse comforting falsehoods.

Second, we must organise. Like Aristotle's citizens, we must build institutions, associations and networks capable of advancing the common good.

Third, we must act. Like Cicero, we must summon the courage to defend public virtue wherever we encounter its absence. No society is transformed by speeches alone. It is transformed by millions of daily decisions made by ordinary people.

The school teacher who refuses examination fraud and related malpractices. The voter who rejects inducement. The civil servant who chooses integrity. The journalist who speaks the truth on issues and to power. The judge who resists pressure. The citizen who refuses silence. These acts may appear small. Collectively, they become revolutionary.

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The heroes we ignore

Continued from backpage

tion while ignoring victories, they unwittingly amplify the enemy's message.

Other countries understand this.

After the September 11 attacks, Americans rallied against Al-Qaeda. Following the October 2023 Hamas attacks, Israelis united in confronting Hamas.

This does not mean governments should be shielded from criticism. Democracies thrive on accountability.

But before politics comes survival.

Before the 2027 elections, there must first be a country.

The war against insecurity should never become another casualty of partisan passions.

This is why community policing and intelligence sharing deserve serious attention.

No government can deploy enough security personnel to police over 220 million Nigerians effectively. Intelligence must flow from communities, and communities must trust the institutions established to protect them.

Trust grows when citizens see results.

And when results come, they should be acknowledged.

There is another angle that deserves serious consideration.

The DSS is presently prosecuting suspects linked to some of Nigeria's most devastating terrorist attacks, including the bombing of the United Nations building in Abuja, the attack on the Deeper Life Bible Church in Okene and the Owo Catholic Church massacre.

It is therefore worth asking whether some recent attacks may represent retaliation by foot soldiers seeking revenge for the arrest and prosecution of their leaders.

If that is the case, the answer cannot be retreat. The answer is more intelligence.

The answer is faster trials. The answer is more convictions.

Since assuming office in 2024, DSS Director-General Oluwatosin Ajayi appears to have placed greater emphasis on intelligence-driven prevention. Terrorist cells have been penetrated. Kidnapping syndicates have been disrupted. Arms trafficking networks have increasingly come under pressure.

That is a story worth telling.

But beyond the headlines and the arrests are sacrifices that seldom receive public attention.

An increasing number of operatives of the Department of State Services have paid the ultimate price in the line of duty. Others have sustained life-changing injuries. Their names rarely trend. Their funerals seldom make front pages. Their families bear losses that the nation scarcely notices.

Yet, these men and women willingly place themselves between danger and the rest of us. They are among the quiet guardians of the Republic.

Certainly, Nigeria's security challenges remain enormous, and no institution should be immune from scrutiny. But accountability and appreciation are not opposites.

A democracy that notices its security agencies only when they fail, while refusing to acknowledge them when they succeed, risks creating a culture that rewards cynicism and forgetfulness.

The men and women of our intelligence services work in the shadows. They seldom appear on television. They rarely grant interviews. Many will never receive medals or public acclaim. Some have paid the ultimate price so that others may live.

Yet every terrorist attack prevented, every bomb intercepted, every kidnap victim rescued and every peaceful morning that millions of Nigerians wake up to owes something to their patient, invisible and dangerous work.

Perhaps the greatest victories are not always the ones we see. Sometimes, the most important victories are the tragedies that never happened because someone, somewhere, working quietly in the shadows, stopped them before they began.

Those men and women are the heroes we ignore. They deserve our gratitude.

They deserve our remembrance. And yes, they deserve our celebration.

Dr Lemmy Ughegbe, FIMC, CMC

Nigeria: Healing matters more

Continued from backpage

moral language.

Where societies cannot agree on what is wrong, they cannot consistently punish wrongdoing. Where societies cannot agree on what is right, they cannot consistently reward virtue. The result is institutional confusion.

This insight resonated deeply with a keynote address I recently delivered at the 2nd International Conference on Followership Studies under the theme "The Demand Side of Accountability." My presentation, titled "Followership as Power: The Untold Politics of Consent, Silence and Complicity in African Governance," explored a question that African governance debates often avoid.

What if governance failures are not only leadership failures?

What if citizens, institutions, professionals, faith communities, media actors, and civil society organizations also shape the outcomes they routinely condemn?

I argued that no ruler governs alone. No corruption becomes systemic because a single politician decides to be corrupt. No injustice matures into culture without networks of permission, accommodation, rationalisation, reward, fear, and silence.

The tragedy of governance is therefore rarely the story of leaders alone. It is usually the story of an ecosystem. And ecosystems survive through participation.

This is where the monk's lesson becomes especially relevant.

The snake matters.

The bite matters.

Understanding the snake matters.

But healing matters more.

Nigeria's challenge is that we often confuse diagnosis with recovery. We assume that identifying the problem is the same as solving it. It is not!

A nation may understand every detail of its dysfunction and still remain dysfunctional. Knowledge alone does not produce transformation. Collective behaviour does.

At the conference, I introduced a distinction between what I called followers and followersheep.

Followers think, question, cooperate critically, strengthen institutions, and hold power accountable.

Followersheep surrender agency. They confuse loyalty with silence, confuse reverence with submission, and baptise power rather than scrutinise it.

The distinction may sound harsh, but it points to a larger truth. Societies rarely collapse because leaders fail alone. They weaken when citizenship becomes passive.

When silence becomes more comfortable than truth. When identity becomes more important than principle. When convenience triumphs over conscience. When citizens become spectators in the governance of their own nation.

This is why accountability cannot be understood merely as a demand placed upon leaders. Accountability is also a demand placed upon citizens. Democracy has a supply side and a demand side. We spend enormous energy discussing the supply side: presidents, governors, legislators, ministers, judges, and political parties.

Far less attention is paid to the demand side: the values, expectations, behaviours, and moral commitments of ordinary citizens. Yet history repeatedly demonstrates that institutions are only as strong as the cultures that sustain them.

Constitutions matter. Laws matter and policies matter. But culture often matters more, because trust is cultural, legitimacy is cultural and responsibility is cultural.

Even democracy itself rests on emotional and moral foundations like empathy, reciprocity, fairness, restraint, duty and shared standards. Without these foundations, elections become transactions, public office becomes entitlement, citizenship becomes survival, and governance becomes performance.

Victor Dickson's The Nigerian Emotional Map arrives at precisely this point. It suggests that Nigeria's future may depend less on finding new political saviours and more on cultivating a shared emotional morality capable of transcending ethnicity, religion, geography, and political affiliation.

In other words, before we can reform institutions, we may need to reform the emotional architecture that sustains them. This is not a call for perfection. No society achieves perfect consensus. But every successful society establishes certain non-negotiable principles.

Continued online at thisnigeria.com

Int'l friendly: S'Falcons opt for intensity against Senegal in second game

Super Falcons have opted for a more intense approach to today's second international friendly match against the Lionesses of Teranga from Senegal, after both teams fought a close battle in Ikenne-Remo on Friday.

Head Coach Justine Madugu said yesterday that his 10-time African champions will be more intentional at the fore when they clash with the Senegalese for the second time at the iconic Remo Stars Sports Complex, with both teams looking forward to the Women Africa Cup of Nations that begins next month in Morocco.

Goals by Asisat Oshoala (from the spot) and midfielder Toni Payne earned the Falcons a 2-1 win on Friday, with the Lionesses hitting one back with four minutes left of regulation time.

In 2016, the Super Falcons defeated the Lionesses 3-1 on aggregate in a qualifying fixture for the Women Africa Cup of Nations, with the first leg ending in a 1-1 draw and the Falcons winning the return by two unreplied goals.



Captain Rasheedat Ajibade and Christy Ucheibe in midfield action against the Senegalese...on Friday

In Morocco, the Falcons, who will be gunning for a record-extending 11th title, will be up against Egypt, Zambia and debutants Malawi in group C, while Senegal will play hosts Morocco, Algeria and Kenya in group A of the tournament that is scheduled for 25th July – 16th August in Morocco.

This year's tournament will also serve as the qualifying competition for next year's FIFA Women's World Cup finals, with the best four teams qualifying directly to Brazil, while the fifth-placed team will be involved in an intercontinental playoff tournament for an opportunity to qualify for the finals.

NSC sets ambitious 20 gold target for Glasgow 2026

The National Sports Commission (NSC) has thrown down the gauntlet ahead of the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland, setting an unprecedented target of 20 gold medals for Team Nigeria.

The target represents a significant leap in ambition for a country that, since its debut at the Commonwealth Games in 1950, has never won more than 12 gold medals at a single edition. Nigeria's best-ever performance came at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, where Team Nigeria returned with 12 gold, nine silver and 14 bronze medals.

The Games were also memorable for Oluwatobi Amusan's world-record run in the women's 100m hurdles.
Before Birmingham 2022, Nigeria's highest medal haul was recorded at the 1994 Commonwealth Games in Victoria, Canada, where the country secured 11 gold, 13 silver and 13 bronze medals.

However, under the leadership of NSC Chairman Shehu Dikko and Director General Bukola Olopade, the Commission is aiming to rewrite history in Glasgow.

Speaking with journalists after a strategic meeting with federation presidents, technical directors and secretaries in Abuja, Olopade revealed that the Commission's sights are firmly set on a 20 gold haul.

According to him, projections by the Elite Athletes Development and Podium Board, suggest Nigeria could win as many as 16 gold medals and about 20 silver medals. Yet, the NSC believes the country can surpass those projections.

"Yusuf Ali, the CEO of the Elite Athletes Development and Podium Board, has carried out a detailed scientific assessment and presented his findings to the federations. His projection remains that Nigeria can win close to 16 gold medals and about 20 silver medals," Olopade said.

"But I have told him that is not good enough. We must challenge ourselves and get the federations to work harder for us to achieve 20 gold medals. Winning 20 gold medals would place Nigeria among the top five nations at the Commonwealth Games, and that is not too much for Nigerians to ask. Neither is it too much for Nigeria to achieve."

Joshua recalls task to end Paul's boxing career

Anthony Joshua believes he brutally ended the Jake Paul boxing experience after breaking his jaw in two places and blasting him out in six rounds back in December.

Paul has since undergone two jaw surgeries and is unsure if the injury will ever allow him to fight again.

"There was a strict message that was given and a task that was laid upon me, and that was to get rid of Jake Paul and remove him from our beloved sport, which is boxing," Joshua told The Ring's CEO, Rick Reeno, on the "Mr. Verzace Podcast."

"Whether that took me one round, whether that took me six rounds, I believe the job was well and truly done."

Joshua (29-4, 26 KOs), the former two-time unified heavyweight champion, dropped Paul twice in the fifth and once in the sixth to mercifully end a mismatch that was globally streamed on Netflix.

"No matter if they move around and they run around, I'm that good," Joshua said. "I should be able to knock him out in a round, right? It doesn't matter that he's running around.

"Someone will say, 'Well, just cut the ring off, just do this.' And that's what we should be doing. However, I knew that if I throw a barrage of punches and the referee waved the fight off after 30 seconds, or two to three rounds, I don't think it would have been satisfying."



Joshua (r), unload pushes on Paul to win the fight

Serena relishes tennis success, says she has nothing prove in comeback



Tennis icon Serena Williams is making a highly anticipated return to the court at the HSBC Championships in London, entering the women's doubles with 19-year-old Canadian Victoria Mboko.

The 44-year-old, a 23-time grand slam singles champion, has been granted a wild card for the Queen's Club event, marking her first competitive appearance since her emotional farewell at the 2022 US Open.

Williams stated her decision to pick up a racket again was simply a case of "Why not?", and despite Mboko's observation that her partner is "hitting great", the American insists she is not focused on any outcomes.

"I don't need to win," said the tennis legend. "I've won more than most people have in their whole lives, so it's not that important to me, and it's important that I keep reminding myself of that, because I don't have anything to prove.

"I don't have anything to lose, and everything here is just to gain."

Williams never directly used the word retirement, but Monday's comeback confirmation still came as a shock after the mother-of-two had, to use her preferred terminology at the time, made the decision to "evolve away" from tennis.

Speaking after she and Mboko trained on the Queen's Club grass, Williams said: "This whole journey is like, I'm putting no pressure on myself.

"For me right now, it's really just about so many elements. It's really about my kids getting to see me play. Olympia is a little bit older, Adira is very young.

"An athlete is the best thing that you can be in the highest place, and having an opportunity to still be able to do that, possibly one last time, is kind of cool and exciting."

The seven-time Wimbledon singles champion, who spent 319 weeks as the WTA number one at the peak of her career, and claimed 39 major titles, has not exactly ruled out a return to singles, but suggested it was not imminent.

2026 C'Wealth Games Trials: Nigeria's medal prospects gather momentum

With the 2026 Commonwealth Games Trials just two weeks away, Nigerian athletes have been delivering outstanding performances across the globe, boosting hopes of a successful outing in Glasgow later this year.

The National Sports Commission has set an ambitious target of winning at least 20 gold medals and securing a top-five finish at the Games, and recent results suggest Team Nigeria possesses the talent and depth to challenge those objectives.

Leading the charge is world record holder Tobi Amusan, who appears to be rediscovering her best form. The women's 100m hurdles star claimed a fourth consecutive African title before embarking on an impressive Diamond League campaign. She finished third in Shanghai, placed second in Xiamen and then stormed to victory in Rabat, where she equalled her season's best of 12.28 seconds while breaking her own meeting record.

Amusan recently added another title to her collection by winning gold at the New Taipei Athletics Open in Taiwan in a meet-record time of 12.72 seconds despite running into a headwind. Her consistency has firmly established her as one of Nigeria's strongest medal hopes heading into Glasgow.

In the men's 100m, Kanyinsola Ajayi has emerged as the country's newest sprint sensation. The Auburn University athlete stunned the athletics world at the NCAA East Regional Championships when he clocked 9.84 seconds to break Olusoji Fasuba's 20-year-old Nigerian record of 9.85 seconds.

The performance not only made Ajayi the fastest Nigerian in history but also elevated him to the top of the world rankings for 2026.


Tobi Amusan, Nigeria's medal hopeful

With the national trials scheduled for Lagos from June 20 to 22, Ajayi will be one of the most closely watched athletes as he seeks to secure his place on Team Nigeria.

The country's sprint depth is further highlighted by the presence of Enoch Adegoke, Chidera Ezeakor, Israel Okon and Favour Ashe, all of whom are expected to provide fierce competition in the men's 100m.

Another athlete making waves is Samuel Ogazi. The University of Alabama quarter-miler recently clocked a personal best of 43.82 seconds in the men's 400m, a performance that propelled him to the top of the world rankings. His emergence has provided renewed optimism in an event where Nigeria has struggled to maintain consistent success at the highest level.

Rice now England's World Cup team vice captain

Thomas Tuchel has confirmed Declan Rice as England's vice-captain for the World Cup after the midfielder and his Arsenal team-mates joined their preparation camp in Florida.

The 27-year-old arrived at the team's West Palm Beach base with Bukayo Saka, Noni Madueke and Eberechi Eze on Saturday evening as their team-mates beat New Zealand 1-0 in baking Tampa.

Rice is one of the first names on the England team sheet and travelled to the United States fresh from playing a key role in Arsenal winning the Premier League and narrowly losing last weekend's Champions League final.


Tuchel confirms Rice England's World Cup team vice captain

The 72-cap midfielder's quality and personality will mean he serves as vice-captain during this summer's quest for World Cup glory having stepped up during skipper Harry Kane's absence for the October friendly against Wales.

"I think I would say Declan is my vice-captain," Tuchel said after beating the All Whites.

Asked whether Rice knows that he has that role, Tuchel said with a smile: "That is a good question. I was just thinking about it. Whether it is an official thing or not.

"But I think we had this talk when Harry was not in camp with us. We started with Ollie [Watkins] and I think Declan was captain. That was where I told him."

Rice and the rest of the Arsenal contingent began work with the group on Sunday as attention turns to England's final warm-up game against Costa Rica in Orlando.

Tuchel says the approach for Wednesday's friendly will be "different" having fielded different teams in each half against New Zealand, but he has yet to decided how best to utilise the Arsenal players.

"We will get bigger chunks of minutes because it is part of the build-up and then after that we will have six days or something for Croatia," he said. "We need some players to play 60 or 70 minutes."

Asked if the Arsenal quartet will all play against Costa Rica, Tuchel said: "I am not sure about that. Let's see how they come back.

"They come back [Saturday], three training days and let's see.

"We have one more match behind closed doors to manage all the minutes because of course, let's say if someone plays 70 minutes against Costa Rica and someone else only plays 20, that is also not enough so there will be players who only had 20 or 30 minutes and will play the next day again."

NSC appoints Fatodu as Nigeria Aquatics Federation president

Nigeria's drive to strengthen governance and accelerate development across its sporting ecosystem received a monumental boost on Friday as the National Sports Commission (NSC) announced the appointment of Lekan Fatodu as President of the Nigeria Aquatics Federation.

The announcement was made by the Director General of the NSC, Bukola Olopade, who described the appointment as part of ongoing efforts to reposition sports federations through capable leadership, institutional reforms, and a renewed focus on athlete development.

Fatodu, who currently serves as Director General of the Lagos State Sports Commission (LSSC), assumes the leadership of the federation at a period when stakeholders are increasingly demanding stronger structures, improved athlete pathways, enhanced technical development, and greater international competitiveness for aquatic sports in the country.

Speaking on the appointment, Fatodu described the opportunity as a call to service and a responsibility to contribute to the advancement of another critical segment of Nigerian sports.

"This appointment represents an opportunity to build stronger structures for aquatic sports development across the country. Our focus will be on creating pathways that identify talent early, strengthen coaching and technical capacity, improve competition opportunities, and ensure that Nigerian athletes can compete successfully on the continental and global stage. Sustainable sports development requires systems, consistency, and collaboration, and that is the approach we intend to pursue," he said.

Christian Eriksen regains consciousness after collapsing in friendly against Ukraine

A friendly match between Denmark and Ukraine was called off yesterday after Christian Eriksen collapsed on the pitch.

Denmark's national team later said on social media that the midfielder was conscious. In another post, national team doctor Morton Boesen said: "He was briefly unconscious, but regained consciousness very quickly."

Video of the match showed Eriksen grab his chest in the 65th minute of the game. The footage then showed players and staff calling for medical attention, with Eriksen lying on the pitch.

"Christian Eriksen is conscious and, under the circumstances, doing well," the Danish football federation said in a post on X. "The match is called off."

The Denmark midfielder previously collapsed during a Euro 2020 game against Finland in 2021. In that instance, he received CPR on the pitch and was then carried from the field on a stretcher. He was later fitted with a pacemaker.

"Christian is doing well and walked off the pitch by himself," Boesen said on the team's social media. "As I see it, the pacemaker responded as it should.

"He was briefly unconscious, but regained consciousness very quickly, and we were quickly in contact with him.


Christian Eriksen collapses again on the pitch during yesterday's friendly against Ukraine

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Int'l friendly: **S'Falcons opt for intensity against Senegal in second game** ▶ PG 30

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The Backpage



By Lemmy Ughegbe, Ph.D

The heroes we ignore

When Nigerians think about national security, they think about soldiers. They think about troops advancing through difficult terrain, fighter jets pounding enemy positions and dramatic gun battles. What they rarely think about is intelligence.

Yet intelligence is where victory usually begins, before the arrest comes surveillance. Before the rescue comes information. Before a terrorist commander is eliminated, somebody must first know who he is, where he hides, how he moves and who sustains him.

That is the work of intelligence. And if recent events are anything to go by, Nigeria's intelligence community deserves far more recognition than it currently receives.

On May 16, 2026, United States and Nigerian forces carried out what President Donald Trump described as a "meticulously planned and very complex mission" that eliminated Abu-Bilal al-Minuki, the second-in-command of ISIS globally.

Perhaps the most revealing testimony came from General Dagvin Anderson, Commander of the United States Africa Command, who stated that Nigerian authorities were instrumental in developing the target and providing the intelligence that made the operation possible.

Think about that for a moment.

Nigeria's intelligence agencies helped the world's most powerful military hunt down and eliminate the number two figure in ISIS.

That should have dominated headlines.

Instead, it passed almost unnoticed.

And that was not all.

Only recently, the Department of State Services arrested five suspects, including two foreign nationals, linked to the logistics network behind the attack on St. Mary's Catholic School in Papiri, Niger State. Fifteen AK-47 rifles and more than 1,400 rounds of ammunition were recovered from the suspects.

Earlier, painstaking investigations and years of intelligence work culminated in the conviction and death sentences handed to terrorists involved in the horrific Owo Catholic Church massacre.

These are not ordinary achievements.

They are major victories against terrorism.

Yet we are not celebrating enough.

Part of the problem lies in how we consume security news.

There is an unhealthy tendency, particularly on social media, to amplify every attack while paying scant attention to breakthroughs. Some individuals even recycle images from conflicts elsewhere in Africa and falsely present them as recent incidents in Nigeria.

That is not journalism.

It is propaganda.

And it serves the interests of terrorists.

Terrorist organisations thrive on fear. Their objective is not merely to kill but to demoralise societies and create the impression that governments are powerless.

When citizens endlessly circulate images of destruc-

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By Prince Charles Dickson, PhD

Nigeria: Healing matters more

A monk once offered a piece of wisdom that may contain one of the most accurate diagnoses of Nigeria's condition: "Imagine being bitten by a snake and, instead of focusing on healing from the poison, you chase the snake to understand why it bit you and to prove that you did not deserve it."

At first glance, the lesson appears personal. On closer reflection, it is profoundly political.

For decades, Nigeria has behaved like a nation chasing snakes.

We chased history and chased ethnic grievances. We have chased political betrayals, and chased colonial ghosts. We chased corruption scandals, and chased explanations. We have chased the culprits.

Yet while we chase, the poison spreads.

The poison of distrust, poison of division, of selective morality, weak institutions, and the poison of collective irresponsibility.

Our public life increasingly resembles an emergency room where patients spend more time debating who caused the injury than treating the wound itself. We have become experts at assigning blame and amateurs at national healing.

A few weeks ago, after returning from a trip, I received a remarkable manuscript from Victor Prince Dickson. The work arrived in a sealed package carrying a curious instruction in red lettering: "Do Not Open." Apparently warning the bearing not to touch.

Naturally, I opened it. I was the recipient!

Inside was a 142-page intellectual intervention titled The Nigerian Emotional Map: A National Doctrine for Stability, Trust and Governance.

The work is difficult to categorise. It draws from emotional intelligence, neuroscience, cognitive science, psychometrics, indigenous human capital frameworks, and an innovative civic-learning tool developed by the author known as the National Cake Board Game. Yet beneath its academic sophistication lies a simple but transformative proposition.

My one-sentence summary of the entire work is this: Nigeria desperately needs a collective agreement about what is right and what is wrong.

The simplicity of that statement conceals its revolutionary implications. Because if we are honest, one of Nigeria's deepest crises is not economic, constitutional, or even political.

It is moral.

Not morality in the narrow religious sense. But morality as a shared civic understanding of acceptable behaviour.

Today, we condemn corruption when our opponents steal and excuse it when our allies do. We denounce violence when our communities suffer and rationalise it when others become victims. We demand justice selectively. We defend principles conditionally. We often apply ethics tribally, religiously, regionally, and politically.

In such an environment, accountability becomes impossible because accountability requires a common

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Published by **THISNIGERIA MEDIA COMPANY LIMITED,** Corporate Headquaters: 13 Udi Street, Osborne Foreshore Estate Ikoyi, Lagos.
Abuja Office: Suite 13 Crown Plaza, No 4 Eke Yesufu Close, Off Ajose Adeogun Street, Utako; Newsroom: 0809-999-2396 Advert : 0809-999-2394 ISSN 2360-9958.
All Correspondence to these addresses. Email: **info@thisnigeria.com** Website: **www.thisnigeria.com**