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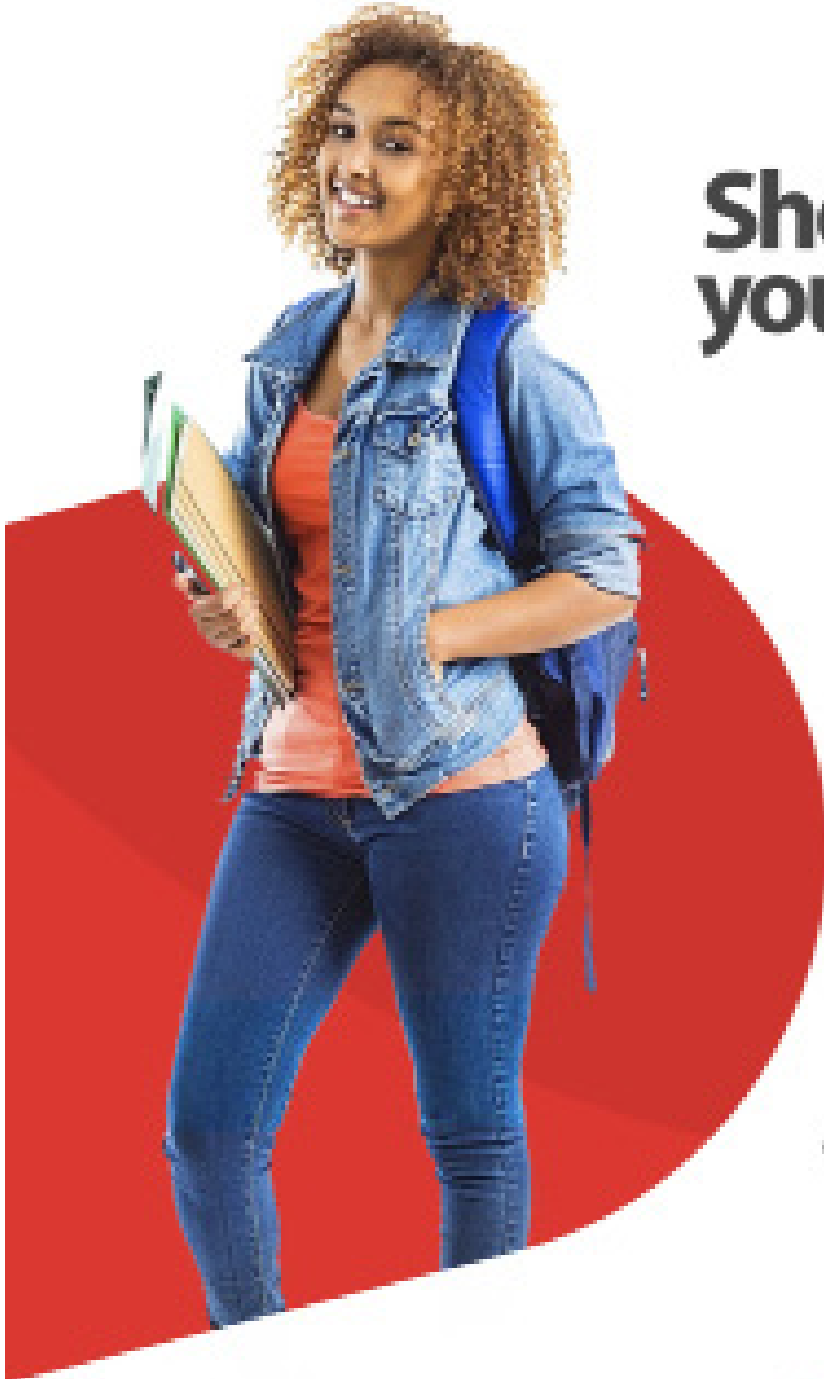


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— Ogbuokiri



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THE ILLUSION OF A SINGLE PARTY

A persistent fear in Nigerian politics is the emergence of a single-party system or a sole presidential candidate. Despite recurring anxieties, this outcome has never materialised. While recent party defections might suggest an invincible ruling party, Nigeria's political history is defined by unexpected twists. Shattered dreams and surprise elements are inherent to our national life.

The surprise element is unavoidable. Unexpected events are inescapable part of life and strategy. I will cite three examples in relation to three former leaders - Alhaji Shehu Shagari GCFR (25 February 1925 – 28 December 2018), General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida GCFR (84) and General Sani Abacha GCFR (20 September 1943 – 8 June 1998).

After the July 7, 1979 elections during which, Shagari was declared presidential winner in the polls, the NPN (National Party of Nigeria) had 36 Senate seats, the UPN (Unity Party of Nigeria) had 28, the NPP (Nigerian People's Party) had 16 seats, the GNPP (Great Nigerian People's Party) had 8 while the PRP (People's Redemption Party) had 7.

Those elected on the platform of NPN then were Alhaji A.D. Rufai, Alhaji Ibrahim Dimis, Alhaji Ibrahim Jalo Waziri, Alhaji Abdulkadir Yelwaji Saleh, Alhaji Uba Ahmed, Chief D.D. Dafinone, Chief Andrew Abogede, Chief J.S. Tarka, Mr. Suemo Chia, Mr. B. Ameh Ebute, Colonel Ahmadu Ali, Alhaji Girigiri Lawan, Mr. Victor Akan, Mr. Donald Etiebet, Dr. Joseph Ways, Mr. Iliya Audu, Alhaji Abba Ali, Mr. Jacob Madawaki, Alhaji Yusuf Ali, Alhaji Isa Abonyi Obaro, Mr. Aliyu Mohamadu Gani, Dr. Abubakar Olusola Saraki, Alhaji Abubakar Magaji, Alhaji Jibrin Salihu, Alhaji Ibrahim Kolo, Alhaji Abdullahi Mangu, Colonel Garba Dada Paiko, Dr. O. Eberewariye, Mr. C.N. Nunieh, Mr. Amatari Zuofa, Mr. Atto Bugundu, Mr. Haruna Muza, Alhaji Garuba Gada, Alhaji Hassan Zuru and Alhaji Garba Kware.

Under the United Party of Nigeria, those elected were Chief John Umolu, Chief Emmanuel O. Akpata, Justice Franklin O. Atake, Mr. Gayus Gilama, Mr. Justus Olu Olabode, Alhaji Sikiru Shitta-Bey, Dr. Femi Ayantuga, Alhaji Mudasiru A.O. Abiru, Mr. Abayomi Durosini, Mr. Adeyiga Ajayi, Mr. Ladega Daniel Adetola, Mr. Oyero Kunle, Mr. S.O.

Sogbein, Chief Jonathan Akinremi Olawale Odebiyi, Chief Abraham Aderibigbe Adesanya, Chief Emmanuel Kayode Ogunleye, Mr. Michael Onukun, Professor David O. Oke, Mr. Ayo Fasanmi, Professor Banj Akintoye, Chief Ayoola Adeleke, Dr. Christopher Ilori, Mr. Ademola Adegoke, Dr. Christopher Adeoye and Mr. Olalere Adesina.

On a personal note, one of them, Chief Ayoola Adeleke from Ede was the father of the present Osun state governor, Senator Ademola Adeleke.

He was the Vice Chairman of the then Senate Committee on Labour. I will not forget his regular supply of bitter kola to me during his senate years.

Those elected for the NPP were Prince Onyeabo Obi, Dr. Offia Nwali, Chief B. C. Okwu, Chief N. Nathaniel Anah, Mr. Isaiah N. Ani, Mr. Bardi Joe, Mr. Emeka P. Echeruo, Dr. Elijah E. Emezio, Dr. Jaja Nwachukwu, Chief Tony Anyanwu, Mr. Simeon Ojukwu, Mr. Garba Matta, Mr. John Wash Pam, Mr. George Hookwap, Mr. Francis Ella and Dr. Obi Wali.

The elected Senators for the GNPP were Alhaji Idrisa Kadi, Mr. Bukar Sanda, Mr. Jafaru Manga, Mr. Umaru Lawan Bama, Mr. George Daniel, Prince Joseph Ansa, Pastor Luka Zanyazing, Mr. Bitrus B. Kajal and Alhaji Mahmud Waziri while the PRP Senators were Alhaji Ibrahim Barau, Alhaji Adamu Gaya, Alhaji Ahmed Zakari, Alhaji Hamisu Musa, Alhaji Usman A. Dambata and Alhaji Sabo B. Zuwo.

In the gubernatorial election, the following were elected on the platform of NPN. They were Alhaji Tatari Ali (Bauchi), Alhaji Shehu Kangiwa (Sokoto), Chief Melford Okilo (Rivers), Anwal Ibrahim (Niger), Alhaji Adamu Attah (Kwara), Dr. Clement Isong (Cross River) and Mr. Aper Aku (Benue).

As for the UPN, the following were elected as governors. Chief Bisi Onabanjo (Ogun), Chief Bola Ige (Oyo), Chief Ambrose Alli (Bendel), Chief Adekunle Ajasin (Ondo) and Alhaji Lateef Jakande (Lagos). As for the NPP, there were three governors, namely, Chief Jim Nwobodo (Anambra), Chief Solomon Lar (Plateau) and Chief Sam Mbakwe (Imo). As for GNPP, they had two governors, Alhaji Abubakar Barde (Gongola) and Mohammed Goni (Borno) and the PRP had two, namely, Alhaji Balarabe Musa (Kaduna) and Abubakar Rimi (Kano).

Security experts caution Katsina govt on suspected bandits' release



Suspected bandits facing criminal trials for their involvement in banditry related activities surfaced. Classified as "SECRET," it was issued by the Ministry of Justice and addressed to the state's Chief Judge, Justice Musa Abubakar.

In the letter, the state government, through the Ministry, sought the intervention of the Administration of Criminal Justice Monitoring Committee (ACJMC) to facilitate the release of the detained suspected terrorists.

Signed by the Director of Public Prosecutions, Abdur-Rahman Umar, the letter indicated that a list of 48 individuals accused of banditry-related offences had been forwarded to the Ministry of Justice by the Ministry of Internal Security and Home Affairs.

According to the letter, the planned release of the suspected terrorists was "one of the conditions precedent for the continuance of the peace accord deal signed between the frontline local governments and the bandits."

The government also said while some of the suspects were standing trial before the Federal High Court, others remained in detention, awaiting trial at various magistrates' courts across the state.

Umar added that a separate list of no fewer than 22 inmates facing trial before various high courts across the state was submitted, and that the letter sought their release under the same peace arrangement, urging the state Chief Judge to take "necessary action" to that effect.

'Not safe for fragile regional peace'

Speaking with this reporter, a retired military officer, Col. Michael Oguntimo, said poorly implemented deals would

never lead to peace. He said, "During these so-called peace deals, notorious warlords or groups of commanders sit across from government officials or clerics.

"They make public declarations of repentance, often swearing on the Koran and conduct a ceremonial handing over of a token number of weapons - sometimes rusty old rifles. Captives are released in staged ceremonies. Government leaders hail these moments as breakthroughs, but within months, the violence returns, worse than before.

"As someone who has served theatre operations across Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto and Kebbi states, I also know the cost of these failed policies."

Continuing, he said, "Instead of producing peace, the pursuit of poorly structured amnesty deals has emboldened armed groups, deepened community mistrust of the state and perpetuated impunity. These peace deals are not a path to stability; they are dangerous illusions.

"There are other better ways to tackle the expanding violence that has driven people from their homes, triggered alarming levels of food insecurity, turned the region into the country's kidnap capital, and overwhelmed Nigeria's already over-already over-stretched security forces."

Victims the losers

Similarly, a retired officer, Group Capt. Abubakar Girma, urged the Katsina state government not to reward killers with a peace deal. He said any peace built on appeasing violent actors was fragile and unsustainable.

"Any initiative that prioritises perpetrators of violence over the millions of innocent citizens who have suffered displacement, trauma, and the loss of their homes and

livelihoods must be rejected.

"Many northern families, for more than a decade, have lived through unrelenting violence, massacres, kidnappings, burned villages, and the forced displacement of entire communities. As we speak, millions of Nigerians remain uprooted, scattered across camps and temporary shelters.

"Children have grown up in IDP settlements, never once stepping onto the farmland their parents once owned, countless women have buried husbands, and parents have mourned children lost to attacks that could have been prevented," he said.

Furthermore, he said, "Despite this overwhelming suffering, public voices continue to advocate for leniency toward the very groups that inflicted these atrocities. Many ravaged villages and farmlands remain under the control of armed elements, not their rightful residents.

"As long as displaced citizens remain unable to return to their homes, releasing bandits is both premature and unjust. No nation rewards those who spill innocent blood, and Nigeria must not become an exception."

He urged Northern governors, especially the Katsina state governor, Dikko Umaru Radda, to work together with security agencies in order to prioritise the reclaiming of occupied territories, restoration of community security, as well as facilitating the safe return of displaced families.

According to him, justice for victims cannot continue to be deferred, while their voices are silenced by violence and neglect.

He stressed that, "Any credible path toward peace must include reconstruction of destroyed communities, rehabilitation of abducted persons, dismantling of criminal networks, and the establishment of clear accountability mechanisms"

He said, "Peace built on appeasing violent actors is fragile and unsustainable. True stability requires justice, dignity, and the recognition of victims' rights. The national leaders, traditional institutions, and civil society groups must place humanity and fairness at the centre of all discussions on security and reconciliation.

"Peace deals must not substitute justice, and no proposal should overshadow the suffering and rights of the millions of Nigerians whose lives have been torn apart by violence."

Deals fatal, totally unreliable'

Also, a Professor in the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, Gombe State University, Marcus Ardo, said peace deals with bandits in Northern Nigeria "have a calamitous record because most of them are badly administered."

"Zamfara first experimented in 2016 with an agreement with the notorious bandit leader, Buharin Daji. The truce, brokered by former governor, Abdulaziz Yari, saw fighters surrender stolen cattle and a few weapons in exchange for cash. By 2017, over a thousand young men had sworn off violence, a spectacle repeated in Katsina and Sokoto.

"But the agreement was badly administered and fell apart when Daji - who was made a special government advisor and put on a stipend - was killed by rival bandits.

"In 2019, Zamfara's new governor, Bello Matawalle, revived the policy with a 'cows-for-guns' deal. Hundreds of hostages were freed, and repentant fighters paraded for the media.

"Yet, these gestures rewarded impunity more than they restored security. As critics warned at the time, many of those that had signed up for peace returned to the bush and resumed their lucrative violence. Markets closed, villages were torched, and farmers were again forced to flee their fields or pay taxes to competing bandits," he said.

Continuing, he said, "Neighbouring Katsina state has experienced a similar story. In October 2019, the government granted amnesty to armed groups in exchange for the release of 70 captives.

WAANSA Calls for Stronger Border Security To Curb Drug Trafficking



West African Action Network on Small Arms, WAANSA, has called for urgent action to strengthen Nigeria's border security architecture to tackle the burgeoning security challenges bedeviling the country.

WAANSA made the call in a press statement issued during a public hearing and stakeholders engagement of the House of Representatives Ad-Hoc Committee on Drugs and Illicit Trafficking at the National Assembly in Abuja.

WAANSA noted that such step is critical in addressing drug trafficking and substance abuse across the country.

The hearing was convened in line with Sections 88 and 89 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) to investigate drug trafficking, substance abuse, and the regulation of alcohol, tobacco, and pharmaceutical industries in Nigeria.

The organisation noted that porous borders and weak coordination among border management agencies had continued to fuel the influx of illicit drugs, precursor chemicals, and other contraband into the country.

According to WAANSA, these illicit

flows not only worsen substance abuse and public health challenges but also contribute significantly to insecurity and organised crime

Speaking at the event, the deputy national secretary of WAANSA, Mrs. Stella Onyinyechi Okereke noted that drug trafficking thrives in environments where border governance is weak.

Okereke further explained that the same trafficking routes used for illicit drugs were often exploited for the smuggling of small arms and light weapons, human trafficking, and other criminal activities that threaten national stability.

She stressed that drug trafficking is closely linked to other forms of transnational organised crimes and should be addressed through a comprehensive and intelligence-driven border security strategy.

The WAANSA secretary called for stronger inter-agency collaboration among the Nigeria Customs Service, Nigeria Immigration Service, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, and other relevant security institutions.

WAANSA also urged the federal government to invest in modern border

surveillance technologies, strengthen data sharing among security agencies, and improve regulatory oversight of pharmaceutical and chemical supply chains to prevent diversion for illicit use. The organisation further highlighted the importance of engaging border communities as partners in intelligence gathering and early warning mechanisms.

At the regional level, WAANSA called for deeper cooperation among ECOWAS member states, noting that Nigeria's borders are shared security spaces.

The group also advocated harmonisation of laws, joint border patrols, and coordinated intelligence sharing to effectively disrupt cross-border drug trafficking networks.

It commended the House of Representatives for convening the public hearing and providing a platform for inclusive stakeholder engagement, reaffirming its commitment to supporting legislative reforms and policies aimed at strengthening border security, enhancing drug control systems, and safeguarding public health and national security in Nigeria.

CIDSAN National Conference Aims To Strengthen Innovation, Ethics In Governance — Ogbuokiri



Chartered Institute of Development Studies and Administration of Nigeria, CIDSAN, says its forthcoming National Conference, will discuss strategies to strengthen innovation and ethics in governance in Nigeria. National president of the institute, Dr. Elijah Ogbuokiri, who disclosed this at a world press conference at the weekend, said the conference would bring together development scholars, policymakers, corporate leaders, strategic planners, civil society advocates, and global development partners to deliberate and advance strategic pathways for Nigeria's transformation. Ogbuokiri said the theme of this year's conference, 'Innovation, Ethics and Governance: The Role of Development Studies and Administration Professionals,' would guide discussants to on strategic measures on how Nigeria could reposition its developmental and governance issues to address unemployment and underdevelopment bedeviling the nation. "Nigeria's future will not be determined by sentiments or political rhetoric, but by ethical leadership, responsible governance, and forward-thinking innovation. As development professionals,

we must strengthen institutions, drive policy intelligence, and defend ethical administrative standards that support national prosperity. This conference is not just an event — it is a strategic call to action," Ogbuokiri noted. The president reiterated that development practice must move beyond theory into measurable impact, especially in a rapidly changing global environment where knowledge, ethics, technology, and institutional discipline drive competitiveness and national stability. He disclosed that This year's conference would focus on innovation-driven development and digital governance with MEAL in perspective. Others, axcoedinf ro him, include ethics and anti-corruption frameworks for public and private institutions; strengthening governance systems and leadership capacity, aa well as highlighting the role of the Development Communication in Conflict Management; migration and refugee challenges According to the president, "Nation-building requires a reliable, ethical and competent development corps, equipped to lead reforms, support government

institutions, create policy solutions, and foster equitable economic progress. "CIDSAN remains committed to building a new cadre of professionals who embody ethics, innovation, and strategic competence. Nigeria needs builders — not spectators. This conference mobilises serious minds ready to shape the development architecture of our nation." Also speaking at the conference, Executive member of CIDSAN, Mrs Victoria Ochuno, said the theme for the conference was well articulated and concentrating most on Nigeria's most pressing needs. "We are looking at three essential pillars for development — sustainable national development," she said. "We are saying for society to have meaningful progress, all our actions must centre on innovation driven by solutions. "We are saying ethics must guide our decisions. We are also saying that governance must form a structure and ensure accountability and fairness. "When these three pillars are aligned, we will have a structure that will be inclusive. Basically those are things we are looking at achieving at these year's conference," Ochuno added.

Nigeria Police Force

Bauchi governor seeks stronger security collaboration to curb crime

Bauchi State Governor Bala Mohammed has called for closer collaboration between security agencies and traditional rulers to tackle emerging threats and prevent crime in the state.

Speaking at an expanded State Security Council meeting on Monday at the Government House, Bauchi, the governor said security is central to governance, urging stakeholders to adopt a preventive approach.

"Without security, there is no governance. Security agencies must work closely with our traditional rulers and local authorities to ensure effective intelligence gathering and crime prevention," he said.

Mohammed commended security

agencies for maintaining relative peace in Bauchi but warned that the state must remain vigilant against banditry, kidnapping, cross-border crimes and misinformation.

He also cautioned traditional rulers against misuse of authority, including illegal land allocations and harbouring criminals, stressing that silence in the face of crime is complicity.

The governor called for improved intelligence sharing, community engagement and inter-agency cooperation to sustain peace and stability in the state.

"Security is a shared responsibility. We must work together to ensure Bauchi does not slide into crisis. Prevention is key," he added.



Bauchi police nab seven over alleged attack on forest security guards

The Bauchi State Police Command has arrested seven suspects over allegations of criminal conspiracy and armed robbery in Giade Local Government Area.

Spokesman of the command, SP Nafiu Habib, said the suspects attacked two members of the Nigerian Forestry and Security Services attached to Giade Emirate Council in the early hours of January 9.

Habib in a statement issued on Tuesday said, "At about 2:30 a.m., a gang of seven armed men, wielding cutlasses, knives, sticks and a dane gun, attacked Mohammed Musa, aka Baushe, 40, and

Auwal Maidawa.

The victims sustained injuries and were robbed of a dane gun, a torchlight and a mobile phone."

He added that detectives, led by the Divisional Police Officer, DPO, of Giade, CSP Bello Yusuf Kumo, quickly tracked and arrested one of the suspects, Aminu Abdulkadir, 22, of Ung. Guru.

Interrogation led to the arrest of six others, identified as Habu Musa alias Habule, 24; Adamu Samaila alias Aliyos, 24; Yusuf Sabo alias Isibu Dan Tsure, 24; Abdullahi Garba alias Audu Guntu, 25; and Dan Azar, all from Giade town.



Ghana nabs 53 Nigerians in large-scale cybercrime operation, recovers laptops, phones, firearms

Ghanaian authorities have arrested 53 Nigerian nationals in a sweeping intelligence-driven operation targeting suspected cybercrime hubs across several communities in the Greater Accra Region.

The arrests were confirmed on Sunday by Ghana's Minister for Communications, Digital Technology and Innovation, Samuel Nartey George, who said the action was part of efforts to safeguard the country's cyber space and protect its international digital reputation.

According to the minister, intelligence gathered within the last 48 hours by the Cyber Security Authority (CSA) uncovered multiple locations allegedly being used for coordinated cybercrime activities in East Legon Hills, Afienyaa, Kwabenya, Weija and Tuba.

The intelligence reportedly revealed that several young men, mostly foreign nationals, were being coerced and exploited by suspected ringleaders to carry out cyber-related crimes from these locations.

Acting on the information, a joint security task force comprising operatives from National Security Operations, the CSA, the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) Headquarters and the Ghana Police Service SWAT Unit carried out simultaneous raids on January 16 and 17, 2026.

During the operation, nine Nigerians were arrested as key suspects allegedly involved in organising and coordinating the cybercrime network.

Another 44 Nigerians were rescued from various apartments and are believed to be victims of human trafficking and cybercrime exploitation.

The minister disclosed that the rescued individuals were found operating laptops in multiple apartments, pointing to what authorities described as a well-structured and organised cybercrime syndicate.

Plateau Gov. Mutfwang tells military to treat terrorists as enemies of state

Plateau State Governor, Caleb Mutfwang, has called on the Nigerian Armed Forces to treat terrorists and bandits as criminals and enemies of the state who must be taken out by all means possible.

Mutfwang who made the call when he received the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt.-Gen. Waidi Shuaibu at the Government House in Jos recently, mandated the Army to go all out to eliminate terrorists from all parts of the state, so that peace can return to the state, once known as the "Home of Peace and Tourism."

During the interaction with the Army Chief, Mutfwang particularly advised the military to treat terrorists and bandits appropriately and not to downplay their offences.

"I have said it times without number that insurgents and terrorists must be seen as enemies of the state who are threatening the sovereignty of our country; we must deal with them as such," he said.

He added that while Plateau State has enjoyed considerable peace during his tenure despite pockets of violence in some local communities, the onus was now on the military to ensure that the terrorists and bandits who carry out the attacks must be eliminated once and for all.

He stated that the military must not relax and bask in the victories they have recorded so far but should carry out mop-up operations to wipe out the remnants of the terrorists.



NAF neutralises over 40 terrorists in Borno air operations

The Nigerian Air Force, NAF, has neutralised more than 40 terrorists during coordinated close air support and air interdiction operations in Azir and Musarram areas of Borno State.

The operations were carried out on January 15 and 16 by the Air Component of Operation HADIN KAI, following actionable intelligence and in close coordination with ground troops.

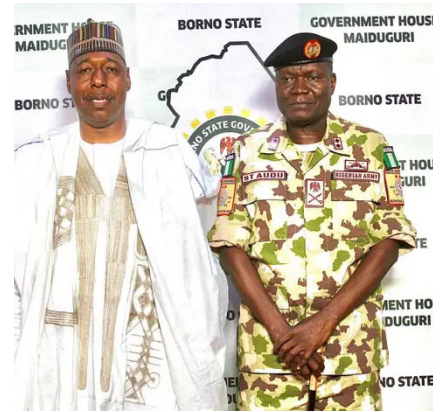
This was disclosed in a statement on Sunday in Abuja by the Director of Public Relations and Information, NAF, Air Commodore Ehimen Ejodame.

According to him, NAF aircraft, in the early hours of January 16, responded swiftly to a distress call from troops engaged with terrorists withdrawing from Azir.

Further reconnaissance revealed the terrorists attempting to regroup under nearby tree cover, prompting precise and successive airstrikes that neutralised several of them.

"Post-strike assessment confirmed no further threats, while feedback from ground troops, local authorities and community sources indicated a significant degradation of terrorist presence and a return of relative calm," Ejodame said.

He added that on January 15, NAF air assets also conducted a successful air interdiction at Musarram in the Tumbuns general area after intelligence revealed terrorists assembling on canoes to launch attacks along the Baga and Fish Dam axis.



'End in sight for terrorists in Lake Chad' – Nigerian Army assures Borno Govt

The Force Commander, Multinational Joint Task Force, MNJTF, Maj.-Gen. Saidu Audu, has assured the Borno State Government that the end of Boko Haram and other non-state armed groups operating in the Lake Chad region is in sight.

Audu gave the assurance during a courtesy visit to Gov. Babagana Zulum of Borno in Maiduguri as part of his familiarisation tour following his assumption of office on November 13, 2025.

This is contained in a statement on Tuesday by Lt.-Col. Ikedichi Oweha, Acting Chief Military Public Information Officer of MNJTF.

Audu said the visit was to engage the governor as a key stakeholder in the Lake Chad Basin Commission Governors' Forum and to appreciate the state government's consistent support to MNJTF operations.

He said the MNJTF had developed a comprehensive strategy aimed at addressing the challenges posed by Boko Haram and other non-state actors by taking the fight directly to their enclaves.

The MNJTF commander assured the state government that the force would operate in line with its grand strategic direction to achieve its mandate of restoring peace and security in the Lake Chad region.

"Ongoing efforts by MNJTF troops and partner forces indicate that the end of the Boko Haram insurgency and related security challenges is within reach," he said.

Responding, the governor congratulated the MNJTF commander on his appointment and reaffirmed the state government's continued support for the task force in the discharge of its mandate.

Zulum commended the military and other security agencies for their sustained support to the state, noting that their efforts had continued to provide the foundation for peace and development in Borno.

He recalled the state government's past logistical and operational support to security agencies, including its contributions to the success of MNJTF's flagship operations, Operation Lake Sanity I and II.

Why I joined politics — Ex-DSS DG Daura

Former Director-General, Department of State Services (DSS), Alhaji Lawal Daura, has described himself as a “politics mechanic” who joined politics to save lives and rescue Katsina State from insecurity.

Daura stated this on Thursday in Katsina at a reunion of the Government College Funtua Old Boys Association (FOBA), Class of 1969, to reaffirm its support for his gubernatorial ambition in 2027.

He said, “Many people have called me to verify when they heard my short interview where I called myself a politics mechanic.

“Whenever you see a mechanic with his instruments, you know there is a problem.

“Really, there is a problem in our dear state, and that has been affecting all of us.

“People are talking about security every time because it is the key to open where the keys of other problems are.

“If you didn’t get that key, you cannot have access to the keys to address other problems.”

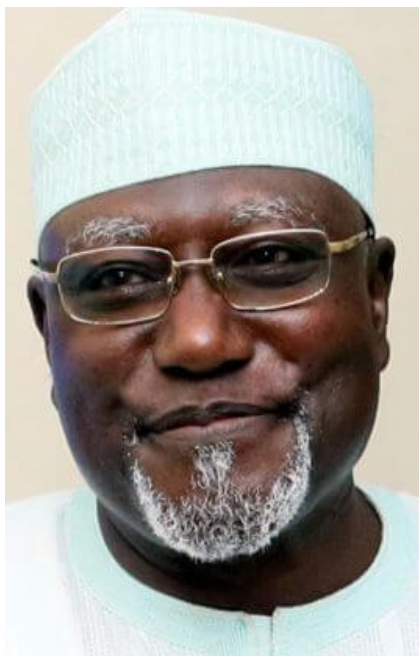
Daura also recalled that some years back, there were some markets in the state that were operating at night, adding, “but today, some of the markets can’t operate even in the daytime.

“And we know farming is the economy of the state and other neighbouring states. But today, farming has been affected by insecurity.

“That is why we joined politics. It is not about the matter of leadership, because the position I held was bigger than that of a governor.

“Whenever you see a mechanic with his instruments, you know there is a problem.

“Really, there is a problem in our dear



state, and that has been affecting all of us.

“People are talking about security every time because it is the key to open where the keys of other problems are.

“If you didn’t get that key, you cannot have access to the keys to address other problems.”

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DSS maintains cyber stalking charge against Sowore, drops X, Meta from defendant list

The Department of State Services (DSS) has revised the criminal proceedings it initiated against Omoyele Sowore, publisher of Sahara Reporters, by removing social media firms X and Meta from the case while retaining the cyberstalking charge against him over an alleged false claim involving President Bola Tinubu.

The adjustment was announced yesterday at the Federal High Court in Abuja, where Akinlolu Kehinde, SAN, DSS’s lead counsel, informed Justice Mohammed Umar of the development when the matter came up for trial.

He subsequently applied for the newly amended two-count charge to be read to Sowore, now standing as the only defendant.

The original charge had listed Sowore alongside X Inc. (formerly Twitter) and Meta Platforms Inc. (Facebook) as defendants.

The amended charge, however, excludes the two technology companies, effectively narrowing the scope of the prosecution to Sowore.

Sowore’s lawyer, Marshal Abubakar, raised no objection to the application, and the charge was read in court. Sowore entered a plea of not guilty to the allegations.

Sowore, who contested the 2019 and 2023 presidential elections on the platform of the African Action Congress (AAC), is accused of cyberstalking President Tinubu through content allegedly posted on his X and Facebook accounts.

The DSS had previously arraigned Sowore over statements he made on social media, which it claims were false and capable of triggering public unrest.

With Monday’s amendment, the prosecution is now focused exclusively on Sowore’s alleged conduct, with the social media companies no longer part of the proceedings.

Awujale: Nominees directed to report to DSS office

The Awujale Kingmakers Council has directed nominees for the Awujale of Ijebuland stool to report to the Department of State Services (DSS) office in Ijebu-Ode on Wednesday by 11:00 a.m.

This directive was contained in a letter dated January 20, 2026, and signed by the Secretary of the Awujale Afobaje Council, Chief Ayotunde Ola Odulaja.

The letter was addressed to the Chairman of the Fusengbuwa, Otunba Lateef Owoyemi, his deputy, and the vice chairman.

According to the letter, all Awujale nominees are to present themselves at the DSS office located along NTA Road, beside the State Psychiatric Hospital, off Igbeba

Road, Ijebu-Ode, at the specified time.

The council also announced the cancellation of the meet-and-greet earlier scheduled to hold at the Aafin Awujale.

“We write to formally inform you that the meet-and-greet earlier scheduled for this morning at the Aafin Awujale has been cancelled,” the letter read.

“We sincerely apologise for any inconvenience this change may cause. Kindly ensure that all concerned nominees are punctual and comply strictly with this directive.”

DAILY POST had earlier reported that the Ogun State Government halted the ongoing selection process for the new Awujale of Ijebuland.

NSCDC honours Kano volunteer who returned N20m forgotten in tricycle

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Zone 12 Command, Kano, has honoured one Nura Abdullahi, a volunteer staff, for returning more than N20 million forgotten by a co-passenger in a commercial tricycle.

Presenting a commendation letter to Abdullahi on Friday in Kano, Amos Abiodun-Taiwo, the zonal commander, described his action as “a rare display of honesty, integrity and professionalism.”

According to the commander, the incident occurred when a passenger, identified as Alhaji Mustafa from Katsina, alighted from the tricycle, forgetting his bag containing money.

When Abdullahi found the money, he used the last dialled number on his mobile phone, which he had lent to Mustafa moments earlier, to contact him.

“It is very rare in our days to find someone who would return such a huge amount of money, especially under the current economic hardship,” the zonal commander said.

“Nura is not even a regular staff member. He is a volunteer and could not boast of N20,000 in his account. Yet, he chose honesty.”

Abiodun-Taiwo explained that the command documented the incident and reported it to Ahmed Abubakar Audi, commandant-general of the corps, who ordered that Abdullahi be celebrated as an example worth highlighting.

“This young man is a good ambassador of his family, the NSCDC, and Nigeria at large. If this were something negative, social media would have been awash with it. Positive deeds like this deserve equal publicity,” he said.

The zonal commander also used the occasion to urge Nigerians to uphold integrity regardless of present economic realities.

“It pays to be honest. If he had taken the money, he would not be enjoying peace today. Parents should train their children well, and young people should uphold such moral values,” Abiodun-Taiwo added.



NSCDC Arrests 20 Suspects in Multi-State Security Operations

Operatives of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) Commandant General's Special Intelligence Squad (CG's SIS) have arrested 20 individuals linked to kidnapping, terrorism, vandalism, armed robbery, and other criminal activities across the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nasarawa, Benue, Plateau, and Ondo States.

The operations, carried out recently, were part of intensified intelligence-led directives issued by the Commandant General, Prof. Ahmed Abubakar Audi, mni, OFR, aimed at dismantling high-profile criminal networks nationwide.

The CG's SIS Commander, AS Dandaura (JP), revealed that the suspects face charges ranging from kidnapping, murder, vandalism of public infrastructure, and obtaining by false pretence to armed robbery.

Two of the detainees were identified as members of terrorist and militia groups linked to recent communal attacks, while five others were major receivers of stolen goods.

Recovered during the operations were two AK-47 rifles, two G3 rifles (from Ondo State), sixty-five rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, a 2010 Toyota Corolla LE, four stolen

motorcycles, mobile phones, electronics, charms, and cash.

Key arrests include Ibrahim Hudu (30) and Hassan Ibrahim (23), apprehended in Nasarawa for multiple kidnappings and murders. Both confessed to killing Mr. Obasanjo H. Aku along the Lafia-Akwanga road and farmer Mr. Muhammadu Yaka in Nasarawa Eggon after collecting ransom payments. Hassan Ibrahim was also linked to militia attacks in Yelwata (Benue State) and Qua'an-Pan (Plateau State).

Three others — Bamaiyi Mustapha (aka Dan Borno), John Ishaya (aka Baushe), and James Bako (aka Muchake) — were arrested for highway robbery and attempted kidnappings targeting prominent individuals in Nasarawa State. Their gang was further connected to armed robberies along Lambata-Kogi-Kaduna and Akwanga-Niger highways, as well as cattle rustling.

In Ondo State, Iseoluwa Shadrach Omosehin (27) was detained with two G3 rifles (serial numbers 6911856 and 69047064). In Nasarawa, Nyitamen George (34) was arrested for illegally diverting electricity payments, while Muhammad Aliyu (aka Aliko, 23) faces charges of vandalism, assault, and grievous harm.



Jubilation in NSCDC as Tinubu extends Audi's tenure

Joy and renewed optimism swept through the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), on Wednesday following the extension of the tenure of its Commandant General, Dr. Ahmed Abubakar Audi, a move widely seen as an endorsement of his leadership and reform agenda.

The decision sparked celebrations across commands nationwide, with officers and stakeholders hailing it as a strong vote of confidence in Audi's stewardship of the Corps.

Since assuming office, the NSCDC boss has been credited with strengthening professionalism, boosting operational efficiency and repositioning the agency as a key player in Nigeria's internal security architecture.

Reacting to the development, the National Coordinator of Stand Up Nigeria, Mr. Sunny Attah, commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for what he described as a timely and well-deserved show of trust in the NSCDC leadership.

According to Attah, the tenure extension underscores the President's confidence in Dr. Audi's ability to further consolidate reforms and enhance the Corps' capacity to safeguard the nation.

“The extension will significantly boost morale within the NSCDC and provide the leadership stability needed to deepen ongoing reforms,” Attah said.

He added: “Nigerians can be assured that the Corps will continue to live up to its constitutional mandate.”

Arabinrin Aderonke: FIRS To NRS – So far so seamless



The establishment of the Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS) represents a defining moment in the evolution of Nigeria's tax administration. Transitioning from the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) to NRS is not merely a change in name or structure; it signals a broader reform agenda aimed at strengthening revenue mobilisation, improving taxpayer experience, and supporting national development.

The Transition from FIRS to NRS: The transition from FIRS to NRS has been guided by continuity, stability, and institutional realignment. Existing systems, processes, and human capital have been carefully integrated into the new framework to ensure that revenue collection remains uninterrupted.

This phase has focused on harmonising operational structures, aligning staff roles with the new mandate, and embedding service-oriented values across the organisation.

With the transition largely complete, NRS is now positioned to move beyond structural adjustments and concentrate on delivering tangible outcomes for government and taxpayers alike.

What Comes Next After the Transition: Now that NRS staff, management, and leadership are fully settled and ready to serve, the emphasis shifts to implementation and performance. This phase prioritises operational efficiency, improved compliance mechanisms, and

stronger stakeholder engagement. Clear communication, internal coordination, and accountability will be critical as NRS consolidates its role as the central authority for tax administration.

Institutional maturity will be measured not only by revenue outcomes but also by trust, transparency, and responsiveness to taxpayers' needs.

Tax Administration Powered by Technology: A cornerstone of the NRS reform agenda is the application of technology to tax administration. Digital platforms will streamline tax registration, filing, payment, and dispute resolution processes. Automation and data analytics will enhance accuracy, reduce leakages, and support risk-based compliance strategies.

By leveraging technology, NRS aims to reduce human bottlenecks, improve turnaround times, and provide real-time services that meet global best practices in revenue administration.

Making Taxation Easier for Taxpayers: Central to NRS's mission is making taxation simpler and fairer for all Nigerians. Special attention will be given to low-income earners, small businesses, and informal sector participants, ensuring that tax obligations are proportionate, understandable, and affordable.

Simplified tax regimes, clear guidance, and accessible digital tools will help reduce the burden on taxpayers while

encouraging voluntary compliance. By lowering barriers to compliance, NRS seeks to broaden the tax base without placing undue pressure on vulnerable groups.

Shared Responsibility for National Development: Taxation remains a shared responsibility between government and citizens. Nigerians are encouraged to pay their taxes when due, knowing that their contributions play a vital role in funding infrastructure, social services, and economic growth.

In return, NRS is committed to doing the right thing—taxing profits, not survival; taxing growth, not struggle; and ensuring fairness and accountability in the use of public resources. When the system works for everyone, the benefits are collective and enduring.

The emergence of NRS marks the beginning of a new chapter in Nigeria's revenue administration. With the right mix of leadership, technology, and public trust, the Service has the opportunity to redefine how taxes are collected and perceived. At the end of the day, when taxpayers are treated fairly and revenue is managed responsibly, Nigeria as a whole stands to benefit.

Arabinrin Aderonke Atoyebi is the Technical Assistant on Broadcast Media to the Executive Chairman of the Nigeria Revenue Service.

Commending the Nigerian Immigration Service Centre in London amidst dimmed HOPE

Nigerians in the diaspora rarely have positive stories to share about their experiences with our own country institutions. We've heard stories of how extortion, neglect, and lack of credibility have left the system inefficient. But lately, I have heard and witnessed firsthand how promising the Nigerian Immigration Centre in London has become under Minister Bunmi Tunji-Ojo. It is refreshing to be alive to witness a step being taken to achieve the new Nigeria we've all been dreaming of.

During my recent visit to the Nigerian Immigration Service Centre in London, I witnessed a level of professionalism and efficiency that was beyond my expectations. I have had my own fair share of bad experiences, so I approached the centre cautiously, bracing for the worst. What I met instead was a masterclass in public service delivery. Gone are the days when touts roamed freely outside the premises, harassing and extorting desperate Nigerians. Today, the environment is properly controlled. From the very moment one steps into the vicinity of the centre, a sense of dignity and order welcomes you.

The transformation in the customer service left me in awe. This is an area where, historically, government institutions have woefully underperformed, not just outside Nigeria but within. A larger percentage of Nigerians are familiar with the lackadaisical attitude, the 'I-better-pass-you' face, and the 'I have the upper hand and you should respect me or I won't attend to you' reactions from many government workers. We were used to begging to receive quality services, but I am beyond grateful things have changed.

Staff members were courteous and helpful to ensure visitors were properly guided. I was surprised that what used to be an endless, chaotic queue dissolved systematically within thirty minutes.



Nigeria government increase prices for international passport

Di Nigerian govtment don give new announcement on top di increment of international passport fees.

Di govtment make dis announcement on Thursday 28 August 2025 for dia statement.

Di increment go affect the five and ten years validity, and di 32 and 64 pages passports.

Di fees increment dey come for time wey di immigration service for Nigeria dey witness some changes under current Minister of Interior, Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo.

For September 2024, di 32-page passport wey get 5-year validity dey cost 50,000 naira, wen dem previously increase am from 35,000 naira wey e bin dey bifor.

Also, di 64-page passport wey go last for 10 years, wey im price bifor na 70,000 naira, bin increase go 100,000 naira.

But now, anoda increment don dey ontop di Nigerian passport application fees and reach as high as 100,000 naira and 200,000 naira for 32 pages and 64 pages respectively.

Di new Nigerian passport application fees go only affect passport application wey dem make for Nigeria.

Meanwhile, for dose outside Nigeria wey dey apply for di Nigerian passport, di application fees no change..

NIS say passport application fees by Nigerians wey dey diaspora dey unchanged at di price of \$150 for 32-page wit

5-year validity and \$230 for 64-page wit 10-year validity.

Di Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) tok-tok pesin, ACI AS Akinlabi announce say di new passport application fees go start from 1 September 2025.

E say dem make di increment becos dem want quality for di Nigerian passport.

"For di bid to uphold di quality and integrity of di Nigerian Passport, di Nigeria Immigration Service hereby announce upward review of Nigerian Standard Passport fees."

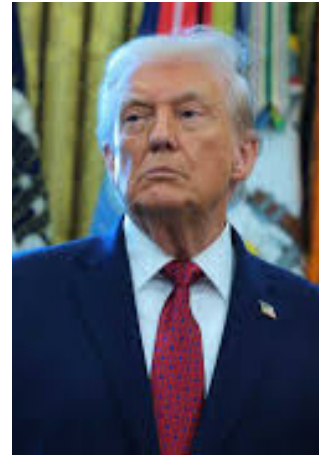
Di immigration service also add say dia commitment na to balance "quality service delivery wit di need to ensure say passport services dey accessible to all Nigerians".

Within di past few years, some changes don happen for di passport application process for Nigeria.

For June 2023, BBC News Pidgin interview di acting Comptroller General of Nigeria Immigration Service, Adepoju Wuraola, and one of di tins she promise to do for office na to "overcome all di problems wey Nigerians dey face bifor dem fit collect dia passport".

Also, di current Minister of Interior, Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, bin tell BBC News Pidgin for anoda exclusive interview say im top priority na to digitise di passport application process and make am almost autonomous.

US halts immigration applications from Nigeria, others as Trump expands travel ban



The United States government has temporarily suspended the processing of legal immigration applications filed by Nigerians and citizens of several other countries newly added to President Donald Trump's expanded "travel ban," according to a report by CBS News.

The development signals an escalation of the Trump administration's ongoing crackdown on legal immigration and affects applicants from parts of Africa and Asia.

Many of those impacted are lawful immigrants already resident in the United States who are seeking to adjust their immigration status, obtain permanent residency, or become American citizens.

Read also: American man cries out as Trump's travel ban bars Nigerian wife from coming over

Earlier in December, the administration directed the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to freeze all immigration petitions, including applications for naturalisation and green cards submitted by nationals of countries listed under the June travel ban or related restrictions.

The order followed the Thanksgiving week shooting of two National Guard soldiers in Washington, D.C., an attack allegedly carried out by an Afghan national.

In response, the administration announced a series of immigration measures, including the suspension of all asylum decisions handled by USCIS and a halt to the processing of immigration and visa requests submitted by Afghan nationals.

Customs board approves 13 top appointments, 10 special promotions

The Nigeria Customs Service Board (NCSB) has approved thirteen top management appointments and ten special promotions in a major shake-up designed to strengthen the Service's leadership and operational efficiency.

The decisions were reached at the Board's 64th Regular Meeting held on earlier in the week, chaired by the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Wale Edun.

According to the Board, the appointments comply with statutory provisions and reflect the Federal Character requirements outlined in Section 14(4) of the Nigeria Customs Service Act, 2023.

The restructuring includes the confirmation of five Deputy Comptroller-Generals (DCGs) and eight Assistant Comptroller-Generals (ACGs), a move aimed at reinforcing strategic command across Customs formations nationwide.

The newly appointed Deputy Comptroller-Generals are Baba Imam (North-East), Isah Umar (North-West), Tijjani Abe (North-West), Timi Bomodi (South-South) and Oluyomi Adebakin (South-West).

Their elevation follows the retirement of several senior officers and is expected to enhance high-level decision-making and administrative oversight within the Service.

Similarly, eight senior officers were appointed as Assistant Comptroller-Generals. They include C.G. Ogbonna (South-East), I. Abba-Aji (North-East), G.M. Haruna (South-South), E.J. Edelduok (South-South), G. Gaura (North-West), I. Isyaku (North-West), M.S. Shuaibu (North-Central) and M.D. Malah (North-East).

The Board noted that these appointments demonstrate its commitment to improving policy execution, compliance enforcement and operational coordination.

The NCSB also approved special promotions for 10 officers who demonstrated exceptional professionalism, leadership and service delivery. Those promoted include A.C. Fanyam and G.M. Shidali who were elevated to Comptroller of Customs, while S. Omofoma, O.A. Oladepo, A.Y. Musa, A. Ogboru and A.A. Maiwada were promoted to Deputy Comptroller of Customs. Others are C.N. Essien and H. Aliyu who became Assistant Comptrollers of Customs, and A.S. Shofadekan who earned promotion to Deputy Superintendent of Customs.

Describing the recognition, the Board stated that special promotions are reserved for officers "whose work has significantly improved operations in their respective commands/units and contributed meaningfully to national revenue and security."

Adeniyi: Customs will replace multiple levies with single 4% charge



Adeniyi

The Nigeria Customs Service says it will replace its seven percent collection fees from the federation account and one percent comprehensive import supervision scheme (CISS) with a 4 percent free on board (FOB) levy at the port.

The one percent CISS is a pre-shipment inspection fee, while the four percent FOB is a charge based on the value of imported goods, including transportation costs up to the loading port.

Adewale Adeniyi, the comptroller general of the service, spoke at a town hall meeting with stakeholders on the B'Odogwu clearance system in Lagos.

The high-level engagement, held in Ikeja, brought together importers, freight forwarders, shipping lines, terminal operators, banks and other financial institutions (OFI), and other critical stakeholders to discuss reforms aimed at improving trade compliance, clearance efficiency, and technological modernization.

On February 4, the NCS announced plans to implement a four percent charge on the FOB value of imports.

However, this plan was

later suspended to allow for comprehensive stakeholder engagement and consultations regarding the implementation framework.

According to Adeniyi, the customs will use the four percent FOB levy to address concerns about the simultaneous collection of the 1 percent CISS fees and the seven percent customs collection fee from the federation account.

Advertisement

He told the stakeholders that there would be no extra charges after the 4 percent FOB as this would replace the 1 percent CISS and the seven percent they are collecting from the federation account.

The CGC said with the indigenously developed trade platform, the NCS had no choice but to re-introduce the levy to enhance its operational efficiency and fund the technology and modernisation programme of the service.

"The Unified Customs Management System (UCMS), popularly known as B'Odogwu, is a fully digital platform designed to streamline customs operations, eliminate bottlenecks, and promote transparency in Nigeria's import and export systems," Adeniyi said.

He also said that as the service is gradually migrating from the NICIS II platform to an indigenous trade platform, the new platform requires a lot of money to fund it to an international standard.

The CGS said aside from funding such technological evolution which requires a lot of money, the service has also invested heavily in the process.

Adeniyi, however, sought the support and understanding of stakeholders, saying that the introduction of the four percent FOB is inevitable if Nigeria is to enjoy the dividends of the new technological innovation as done in other countries.

"We have no choice in the payment of the four percent FOB because it is needed by the Customs to fund the huge technology and modernisation programme it has embarked upon," he said.

"When we introduced this levy some months ago, we were asked to hold on and consult with our stakeholders.

Alleged \$4.5bn fraud: EFCC pressured my client to implicate Emeziele – Lawyer

Mr. Nnamdi Offial, counsel to the second defendant, Henry Omoile, in the ongoing trial of former Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor Godwin Emeziele, on Thursday accused the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) of pressuring his client to implicate the ex-apex bank chief.

Offial made the claim while testifying in a trial-within-trial, which Justice Rahman Oshodi of the Lagos State High Court ordered to determine whether Omoile's statement to the EFCC was made voluntarily.

He alleged that EFCC investigators offered multiple promises to Omoile, including bail and the possibility of avoiding charges, if he cooperated by providing incriminating information against Emeziele.



Emeziele and Omoile are facing charges of accepting gratification, receiving gifts through agents, corruption, and fraudulent receipt of property.

The EFCC also accused them of conferring corrupt advantage on associates, contrary to the Corrupt Practices Act, 2000. Both defendants have pleaded not guilty.

At the resumed hearing, Offial told the court that Omoile informed him that the head of the EFCC interrogation team assured him of leniency if he implicated the first defendant.

He added that the interrogation was conducted in a question-and-answer format, where his client had to respond "satisfactorily" before being allowed to write down his answers.

"On several occasions, questions were put to the second defendant and he answered, but he was not allowed to write them down because the answers did not conform to what the interrogators wanted him to say. I objected to this many times," Offial said.

He further recounted that the session on February 26, 2024, ended with investigators informing him that Omoile would be detained because they were not finished with him.

Offial also described an incident on February 27, 2024, when he questioned why his client was being interrogated in his absence.

This, he claimed, led to a confrontation with one of the officers, identified as Davide, who allegedly ordered him out of the premises.

"I reported the incident to the head of the team, who advised me not to worry and to sit in the waiting area. I was not allowed to render services to my client until about 8pm, when he was taken back to the detention centre," he said.

EFCC returns N1.28bn recovered from Sujimoto to Enugu

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission on Wednesday handed over N1.28bn recovered from Sujimoto Luxury Construction Limited to the Enugu State Government over the failed construction of 22 Smart Green Schools across the state.

The development followed investigations into allegations of fraud, contract breach and diversion of public funds linked to the school construction project.

According to a statement by the EFCC's Head of Media and Publicity, Dele Oyewale, the recovery was initiated after a petition dated February 11, 2025, accused Sujimoto Luxury Construction Limited of collecting public funds without delivering on the agreed scope of work.

The petitioner alleged that the Enugu State Government paid a total of N2.29bn as advance payment for the construction of the 22 smart schools, but that the contract completion deadline of January

2, 2025, elapsed without meaningful progress on the project.

The petition identified the company's Group Managing Director, Olasijibomi Ogundeke, and held him jointly liable for the refund of the funds, citing persistent non-performance and the alleged diversion of project funds.

Following the petition, operatives of the EFCC's Special Task Fraud Section attached to the Enugu Zonal Directorate commenced investigations, which led to the recovery of the funds for the state government.

Presenting the recovered cheques and bank drafts at the EFCC Enugu Zonal Office, the Zonal Director, Commander of the EFCC, Daniel Isei, who represented the Chairman of the Commission, Ola Olukoyede, said the action was in fulfilment of the EFCC's statutory mandate to trace, recover and return public funds lost to economic and financial crimes.

Again, EFCC witnesses admit Yahaya Bello not beneficiary of withdrawals from Kogi govt accounts

Three witnesses of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) have admitted that there were massive withdrawals from Kogi State Government House Administration bank accounts but revealed that a former governor of the state, Yahaya Bello, was never a beneficiary of the withdrawals.

The witnesses, Mshelia Arhyel Bata of Zenith Bank, Mohammed Hassan of Keystone Bank, and Gabriel Oche of First City Monument Bank (FCMB), testified on Thursday for the anti-graft agency in the trial of Yahaya Bello and two others over alleged corruption.

They tendered several documents from their respective banks at the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), detailing numerous withdrawals from Kogi State Government House Administration bank accounts.

Although the account opening packages and statements of account were admitted as exhibits, the witnesses, upon reviewing the statements, stated that Yahaya Bello's name did not appear anywhere in the documents.

Specifically, they admitted that Bello's name did not feature either as a signatory to the accounts or as a beneficiary of the withdrawals.

Mshelia Arhyel Bata of Zenith Bank, during the continuation of cross-examination by Joseph Daudu, SAN, counsel to Yahaya Bello, said he had gone through the documents and could not find the former governor's name as a beneficiary.

He also explained that the purpose of the withdrawals could not be determined from the documents, adding that the pattern of withdrawals was consistent.

He identified Chris Enefolo, a former Permanent Secretary; Onekutu Daniel, a Chief Accountant; and Abdulsalami Hudu, an Accountant, as signatories to the accounts.

Another witness, Mohammed Hassan from the Marketing Department of Keystone Bank, testified in respect of the Dantata and Sawoe accounts, stating that he was neither the account officer nor the relationship manager and therefore did not have knowledge of the account operations.



Lagos Assembly ignores protest, backs ongoing controversial demolition

The Lagos State House of Assembly has backed the state's executive in the ongoing demolition of structures and shanties erected along shorelines and under high-tension cables across the state.

The Chairman, House Committee on Information, Security and Strategy, Mr Stephen Ogundipe, said this in a statement in Lagos on Tuesday.

The state government, through the Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development, has embarked on the demolition of illegal structures, especially in the Ovoronsoki and Makoko areas in the state.

Makoko residents had on Thursday protested at the Assembly complex over the demolition of their structures, urging Gov. Babajide Sanwo-Olu to stop further demolition.

Ogundipe, representing Oshodi-Isole Constituency-01, said the exercise was a necessary step to safeguard the lives and property of residents in the state.

He said: "It is quite worrisome that we have ramshackle structures, sheds and shanties, especially along shorelines.

"The shorelines have turned to abodes of miscreants/street urchins, kidnappers, touts, street traders and hawkers, who often vandalise public utilities and attack innocent citizens.

"Although, the demolition exercise may be painful for those affected, it is a necessary step to protect the larger society and uphold the rule of law.

"The government's action reflects a commitment to preventing avoidable disasters and ensuring sustainable urban development."

The spokesman said the leadership of the Assembly viewed the exercise as responsible and forward-looking.



Diezani Appears In London Court For '£100,000 Bribery' Trial



Diezani Alison-Madueke, a former Nigerian minister of petroleum resources, has made an appearance at the Southwark Crown Court in London, United Kingdom, where she faced a preliminary session in her ongoing bribery case.

The matter came up on Monday before Justice Thornton in Court 8, as listed on the court's cause list.

Alison-Madueke attended the proceedings ahead of her substantive trial, which is slated to begin on January 26, 2026.

Recall that in August 2023, the United Kingdom authorities formally filed charges against the former minister, accusing her of receiving a £100,000 bribe.

According to the UK National Crime Agency (NCA), investigators believe she accepted illegal payments in exchange for the approval of oil and gas contracts worth several millions of pounds while she was in public office.

Alison-Madueke served as Nigeria's minister of petroleum resources between 2010 and 2015 under the administration of former President Goodluck Jonathan. She also made history in 2014 when she

became president of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

In October 2023, a UK court granted her bail in the sum of £70,000.

The Westminster Magistrates' Court had earlier placed strict conditions on her release after ruling that she was "a flight risk".

Among the bail terms were a curfew from 11pm to 6am, the use of an electronic monitoring tag at all times, and the provision of a £70,000 surety before she was allowed to leave the court premises.

In January 2025, Nigeria and the United States entered into an asset repatriation agreement involving \$52.88 million traced to the Galactica assets allegedly connected to Alison-Madueke.

The US government stated that Alison-Madueke, alongside her associates, acquired high-end properties in California and New York, as well as the Galactica Star, a 65-metre superyacht using "proceeds of those illicitly awarded contracts".

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has also pursued several assets believed to be linked to the former petroleum minister.

Dangote Petitions ICPC, Demands Arrest Of NMDPRA Boss Over Alleged Fraud

Business mogul and chairman of Dangote Group, Aliko Dangote, has petitioned the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), demanding the arrest, investigation, and prosecution of the Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), Engr. Ahmed Farouk, over alleged corruption and abuse of office.

In the petition dated and submitted on December 16, 2025, through his lawyer, Ogwu Onoja, SAN, Dangote accused the NMDPRA boss of "living far beyond his legitimate means" as a public servant and "enmeshing himself in monumental corruption and unlawful spending of public funds running into millions of dollars."

The petition, which was received by the office of the ICPC chairman, Dr. Musa Aliyu, SAN, alleged that Engr. Farouk spent over seven million dollars (\$7m) on the education of his four children in Switzerland — payments said to have been made upfront for a six-year period without any lawful source of income to justify the expenditure.



"Engr. Farouk Ahmed has grossly abused his office contrary to the extant provisions of the Code of Conduct for Public Officers and, in doing so, enmeshed himself in monumental corruption and unlawful spending of public funds running into millions of dollars," the petition read in part.

Dangote's petition reportedly detailed the names of Farouk's four children, the Swiss schools they attended, and the exact tuition fees paid, urging the ICPC to verify the claims independently.

"That Engr. Farouk Ahmed spent, without evidence of lawful means of income, a humongous amount of over seven million dollars of public funds for the education of his four children in different schools in Switzerland for a period of six years upfront," Dangote alleged.

"It is without doubt that the above facts in relation to abuse of office, breach of the Code of Conduct for public officers, corrupt enrichment and embezzlement are gross acts of corrupt practices for which your Commission is statutorily empowered under Section 19 of the ICPC Act to investigate and prosecute," Dangote said.

He added that the alleged acts, if proven, attract a prison term of five years without an option of fine under the same law.

Dangote further accused the NMDPRA chief of using his office to "embezzle and divert public funds for personal gain," claiming such conduct has fuelled public outrage and recent protests by civic groups.

"That Engr. Farouk Ahmed has corruptly enriched himself with taxpayers' money meant for public consumption and diverted it into private uses," the petition stated.

"Any public officer who uses his office or position to gratify or confer any corrupt or unfair advantage upon himself or any relation or associate of the public officer shall be guilty of an offence and shall on conviction be liable to imprisonment for five years without option of fine."

Dangote said he is confident in the ICPC's capacity, alongside other anti-corruption agencies, to investigate and prosecute financial crimes, stressing that decisive action would "uphold justice and protect the image of the administration of President Bola Tinubu."

"Decisive action by the ICPC will help uphold justice and protect the integrity of the current administration," he noted.

Court affirms ICPC's power to probe Kano scholarship funds

Justice Josephine Obanor of the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), sitting at Jabi, Abuja, has affirmed the powers of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) to investigate scholarship funds in Kano State.

Officials of the Kano State Ministry of Higher Education, led by the Permanent Secretary, Dr Hadi Bala, and those of the Kano State Scholarship Board, had dragged the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) and ICPC before the court, alleging that invitations sent to them by the Commission violated their fundamental rights.

Their invitation, which requested the officials to provide documents and clarification on allegations against them, was part of ICPC's investigation of a petition received by the Commission, alleging financial impropriety in the administration of scholarship funds in the state.

Delivering judgment in the case brought before the court in the suit marked FCT/HC/CV/2857/2025, the judge upheld the power of the anti-graft agency to carry out its statutory mandate of investigation.

Justice Obanor held that an invitation letter from ICPC for investigative purposes does not constitute a breach of fundamental rights.

The court further held that the plaintiffs/applicants failed to show any violation of their rights and reaffirmed that ICPC cannot be restrained from performing its lawful duty of investigation.

It ordered that officials of the Kano State Scholarship Board be properly joined as parties in the suit, while the Attorney-General of the Federation be struck out as a party, holding that his joinder was unnecessary.

The judge consequently dismissed the suit for lack of merit.

London property: ICPC files criminal charge against Ozekhome

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission, ICPC, has filed a criminal charge against Mike Ozekhome, SAN, over allegations bordering on fraud in relation to a London property.

The ICPC, in a three-count charge filed by its lawyer, Osuobeni Akponimisingha, Head, High Profile Prosecution Department, at the Abuja High Court, accused Ozekhome of complicity in the large-scale corruption case.

The fresh charge, marked: FCT/HC/CR/010/26 dated and filed January 16, 2026, named the senior lawyer as sole defendant.

Count one alleged that Ozekhome, 68 years, of No. 53, Nile Street, Maitama, Abuja, sometime in August 2021 or thereabout in London, within the jurisdiction of the court, directly received House 79, Randall Avenue, London NW2 7SX, purportedly given to him by one Mr Shani Tali.

The ICPC said the act constitutes a felony, an offence contrary to Section 13 and punishable under Section 24 of the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences, Act, 2000.

In count two, Ozekhome was alleged to have, sometime in August 2021 or thereabout, while being a legal practitioner and Senior Advocate of Nigeria, made a false document with a Nigeria passport: A07535463, bearing the name of Mr Shani Tali.

The Commission alleged that the senior lawyer did this with a plan to use the same to support claim of ownership of property known and described as "79, Randall Avenue, London NW2 78X with intent to commit fraud".

It said the offence is contrary to Section 363 and punishable under Section 364 of the Penal Code CAP 532 Laws of the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, 2006.

Count three accused Ozekhome of dishonestly using as genuine, a false "Nigeria passport A07535463, bearing the name of Mr Shani Tali to support claim of ownership of property known and described as '79, Randall Avenue, London NW2 7SX', when he had reason to know that the said document was false.

The ICPC said the offence is contrary to Section 366 and punishable under Section 364 of the Penal Code CAP 532 Laws of the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, 2006.



NDLEA arrest two suspected traffickers with illicit drugs worth N300million in Delta

The Delta State Command of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, has arrested two suspects with illicit drugs estimated at approximately N300 million in the state.

DAILY POST reports that the suspects were arrested when operatives of the command intercepted two commercial buses laden with various illicit drugs.

A statement by Johnkennedy Edoziem, Media and Advocacy Officer of the command, gave the names of the suspects as Zaharadeen Yahaya, 25, and Sanusi Maman, 23.

Edoziem said the suspects were arrested on January 15, 2026, in an operation led by the State Commander of the agency, Dr. Halilu Hamidu.

He said the operatives conducted a successful operation along the Asaba-Onitsha expressway, resulting in the interception of two commercial buses carrying various illicit drugs.

While noting that operatives acted on credible intelligence to arrest the suspects, he listed the illicit drugs recovered to include 410,800 pills of tramadol, 84.2 litres of codeine syrup, 82,250 tablets of diazepam, 900 tablets of swinol, and 65 pills of molly.

He estimated the street value of the illicit drugs seized at approximately N300 million.

The State Commander, Halilu Hamidu, commended the operatives for their diligence and commitment to eradicating drug trafficking in the state.

The state's NDLEA boss, who assured the public of the agency's continued efforts to ensure a drug-free society, urged citizens to support the agency in its mission to combat drug abuse and trafficking.

He said the suspects are currently in NDLEA custody and will be charged to court upon completion of investigations.



Wanted drug kingpin 'Kanmo-Kanmo' arrested 12 years after murder of 3 NDLEA officers



The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, said its operatives have successfully arrested a long-wanted drug kingpin, Lekan Jimoh, popularly known as 'Kanmo-Kanmo', ending a 12-year manhunt following his involvement in the brutal killing of three NDLEA officers.

NDLEA announced that Kanmo-Kanmo, notorious for drug trafficking, evading arrest and mobilizing armed thugs against security agents, was arrested on Friday after he was tracked to his hideout in Owode town, Ogun State, by tactical teams of the agency.

This was made known in a statement recently by Femi Babafemi, Director, Media & Advocacy, NDLEA Headquarters, Abuja.

Babafemi disclosed that during the operation, the suspect was found in possession of 69 kilograms of skunk, a strain of cannabis.

He stated that the arrest marks a significant breakthrough in the agency's commitment to ensuring that no fugitive, regardless of how long they evade justice, remains beyond the reach of the law.

Lekan Jimoh's criminal history is marked by extreme violence and lawlessness. On 15th June 2014, he orchestrated a barbaric mob action against a team of NDLEA officers who had attempted to arrest him

at his enclave.

The attack resulted in the cold-blooded murder of three NDLEA officers, including Rabiu Usman Kazaure and two others, who were killed by armed thugs mobilized by Jimoh.

While the suspect managed to escape the scene that day, the agency remained resolute in its pursuit of justice for the fallen heroes.

In another encounter with Jimoh on 12th August 2023, when NDLEA operatives stormed his residence in Ado-Odo town, Ogun State, he managed to escape while operatives succeeded in recovering 139 sacks of skunk with a total weight of 1,922 kilograms.

Following assets forfeiture proceedings instituted in court by the agency, the house in Ado-Odo, which served as a warehouse for his illicit drug trade, has since been finally forfeited to the Federal Government.

Meanwhile, NDLEA operatives in Edo State on Tuesday raided the Arokpa forest, Uzebba town, Owan West LGA, leading to the arrest of another drug lord, Isihor Edika, 53, and seizure of 320kg skunk and seeds.

Similarly, in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, operatives on Friday tracked and arrested a 44-year-old lady Yinka Agboola following intelligence on her online sale of illicit substances.



Oyo Government Prosecutes 13 Offenders Over Road Kerb Damage

The Oyo State government, through Oyo State Rule of Law Enforcement Authority (OYRLEA), has taken stringent action in enforcing public order following the alleged wilful and malicious damage to state road infrastructure in Ibadan.

The enforcement exercise, led by the chairperson of OYRLEA, Justice Aderonke Aderemi (rtd.), alongside the enforcement team, led to the arrest of Farinde Lawal, Akanji Kazeem, Abidemi Ishaq and 10 others, whom were arraigned before the Chief Magistrate Court, Ibadan Magisterial District, sitting at Iwo Road, on charges of conspiracy and wilful damage, on Wednesday, January 21, 2026.

According to the charge sheet, the defendants allegedly conspired and maliciously damaged the road kerbs constructed by the Oyo State government, on January 20, 2026, at Odejayi area, Old Ibe Road, and New Gbagi area, Ibadan.

The offences were said to be contrary to Sections 516 and 451 of the Criminal Code, Cap 35, Vol. II, Laws of Oyo State, 2000.

During proceedings, the defendants pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The presiding Magistrate subsequently granted them bail with stringent conditions.

The government-employed sureties were required to present evidence of a minimum balance of N200,000 in their bank accounts, alongside a valid two-year tax clearance certificate as well as proof of title to land within the court jurisdiction.

The court, therefore, adjourned the case to February 13, 2026, for further mention.

Paid but no licence: Nigerian drivers trapped in FRSC broken system



WHAT should have been a routine drivers licence renewal has turned into a two-year ordeal for Bayo (not his real name), a Bolt driver in Lagos. His case highlights the entrenched inefficiencies and bureaucratic lapses within Nigeria's road safety administration system.

On a mild November morning in 2023, Bayo walked into the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) office at the Iponri Zone in Surulere, expecting a quick process. He carried with him expired licence documents and anticipated completing his renewal within the hour.

Instead, he became ensnared in a web of cash transactions, repeated delays, and inconsistent communication, a situation that remains unresolved nearly two years later.

"The man who attended to me told me to pay N30,000 for 5-years, and when I asked if I could make a transfer, he said no. So I went outside, withdrew the money, and paid him in cash. He then filled out the form, gave me a copy, and asked me to come back the following week for capturing," Bayo recalled.

That was the beginning of a cycle. When Bayo returned, he was told the system was down. What began as a week-long wait has spiralled into over 18 months without a valid or even temporary licence.

Instead of a valid licence, Bayo was given a stamped document unofficial and

unrecognised, with eight separate date extensions. The ICIR sighted the document.

"Since then, I've been going there repeatedly. Eventually, the first man who attended to me was no longer there, and a different colleague of his who has asked me to apply for another reissue which would warrant me to pay another N25,000. Till date, they haven't called me for capturing," he said.

The delay has left him without a temporary or valid license, a risky situation for any driver in Lagos, where police and road safety officers frequently demand up-to-date papers.

A pattern of delay and frustration

Bayo's experience is echoed across the country and reflects a broader issue with the FRSC's licence renewal process, which several Nigerians have described as inefficient, inconsistent, and vulnerable to informal practices, including cash-only transactions.

In Abia, IK Carasko, said he paid N40,000 in October 2024 but had been repeatedly asked to keep coming back.

"I paid N40,000 since October 24, 2024. I've not been issued the licence till today. I've been calling and texting. It's been one story to another. I can't be coming to their office from Ikwuano every week," he said.

Similarly, In Abuja, John Dennis, said he paid N48,000 in December 2024 but has yet to receive his valid licence.

Nigerian state in mourning after 22 die in road accident

Nigeria's Kano State declared Monday as a day of mourning after 22 people died in a road accident while returning from a sports festival in the southwest of the country.

Athletes, coaches, officials, medical staff and a journalist were among the fatalities when a state bus carrying the team veered off the road and overturned around the town of Dakatsalle, approximately 40km from Kano, on Saturday.

A further nine people were injured in the accident, while one person travelling on the bus did not sustain an injury.

The contingent was making a journey of over 1,000km back from the National Sports Festival in Abeokuta, Ogun State, which had concluded on Friday.

Shehu Dikko, the chairman of the Nigeria Sports Commission (NSC), said the accident marked "a very sad day for Nigerian sports".

"We are heartbroken by this tragedy," Dikko added in a statement.

"These were promising athletes and dedicated officials who had just served their state and country with pride. Their loss is immeasurable."

The National Sports Festival, which marked its 22nd edition this year, is a key event in Nigeria's sporting calendar and is aimed at promoting unity, youth engagement and national development through athletics.

The accident has cast a shadow over what had been a successful competition for Kano State, with the team collecting a total of 29 medals.

BBC Sport Africa understands that some of the state's medal winners are among the deceased.



Photo Gallery

Security Executives Converge



TONY ELUMELU FOUNDATION PARTNERS FEDERAL FIRE SERVICE TO TRAIN 7,400 NIGERIANS ON FIRE SAFETY PREPAREDNESS

The Federal Fire Service has announced a groundbreaking national capacity-building initiative following a strategic collaboration with the Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF) to train 7,400 Nigerians on fire safety preparedness across all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.

This partnership was consolidated during a courtesy visit to Mr. Tony O. Elumelu, CFR, Founder of the Tony Elumelu Foundation and Chairman of Heirs Holdings and the United Bank for Africa (UBA), at the Hilton, Abuja. The Controller General, Federal Fire Service, Samuel Adeyemi Olumode, FCNA, ACTI, led a delegation of senior management officers to the high-level engagement.

During the engagement, the Service also formally invested Mr. Peter Ashade, Group CEO, United Capital Plc, as a National Fire Safety Ambassador, in recognition of the Heirs Group's significant contributions to enhancing safety consciousness and advancing community-focused fire safety initiatives nationwide. This honour further reinforces the expanding partnership between the Federal Fire Service and the Tony Elumelu ecosystem. As part of the collaboration, Federal Fire Service personnel will

be deployed across all infrastructures under Mr. Tony Elumelu's business portfolio nationwide, serving as safety officers to support compliance, strengthen safety monitoring, and enhance fire prevention awareness across all facilities.

Mr. Elumelu emphasised the urgent need to deepen community-level fire safety awareness, noting that thousands of households, local markets, and indigenous settlements remain vulnerable due to limited access to structured fire prevention education. He underscored that empowering citizens with practical, life-saving knowledge will significantly improve national resilience and reduce both the frequency and severity of fire outbreaks.

Under the collaboration, the Federal Fire Service will train 200 persons in each state of the federation and the FCT, totaling 7,400 beneficiaries.

The programme will focus on essential fire-prevention skills, early warning practices, and basic emergency response procedures. Participants will also be groomed to serve as fire safety advocates within their communities, creating a multiplier effect that promotes vigilance and responsible safety behaviour nationwide.



Fire Service Intervenes As Diesel Tanker Overturns On Lagos Bridge

A 45,000-litre diesel tanker has overturned on the Tincan Liverpool Bridge outward Apapa, Tin Can Island area of Lagos, triggering a dangerous scramble as residents and passersby were seen scooping the inflammable product from beneath the bridge.

Eyewitnesses said the tanker tipped over in the early hours of Monday during rush hour, with officials of road traffic management yet to arrive at the scene at the time the incident occurred.

Footage obtained by Channels Television showed locals arriving with jerrycans and containers of various shapes and sizes, scooping

diesel leaking from the fallen tanker despite the obvious risk of fire or explosion.

Confirming the incident, the Lagos State Fire and Rescue Service said it was currently salvaging the tanker and had prevented a secondary incident.

"The Lagos State Fire and Rescue Service is currently salvaging a 45,000 diesel tanker which overturned at Liverpool Bridge outward Apapa, Tin Can Island, Lagos," the agency said.

"The tanker has been saved from secondary incident while security agents are doing their best to curtail the scooping crowd."

FCT Lost Over N650m Properties To Fire In 32 Hours, Says Fire Service

The Federal Capital Territory was hit by a spate of fire outbreaks in January 2026, with at least three major incidents recorded within 32 hours, causing estimated property losses exceeding N650m, the Federal Fire Service has said.

The incidents, which occurred at different locations across the FCT, were attributed to suspected electrical surges and overloading.

This was confirmed in a statement issued on Tuesday by the National Public Relations Officer of the service, DCF P. O. Abraham.

The most recent fire broke out in the early hours of Monday, January 19, 2026, at Corner Shops, Chalyx Close, Abacha Road, Maraba, along the Abuja-Keffi axis, affecting six retail outlets.

"The emergency was reported at 02:51 hours by ASP Abdulmalik to the Federal Fire Service National Headquarters, Garki Station.

"Despite a late emergency call, firefighters contained the fire and prevented further escalation, saving property estimated at approximately N100m out of N400m exposed to the blaze" he said.

Federal Fire Service stated that it "occurred barely 14 hours after the KUGBO Furniture Market fire, which itself came 18 hours after the LEVENTIS Plaza fire.

"Preliminary assessments indicate that all three incidents were triggered by suspected electrical surges.

"Due to the prompt intervention of Federal Fire Service responders and supporting agencies, property valued at over N2.8bn was preserved from destruction across the three emergencies."

The Controller-General of the Federal Fire Service, Olumode Samuel Adeyemi, warned residents and business operators against electrical overloading and urged them to adopt strict safety practices.

Federal fire service decorates 130 officers in Kano

The Kano State command of the Federal Fire Service (FFS) has decorated 130 officers recently promoted to various ranks in a ceremony held in Kano.

The command's controller in the state, Kazeem Sholadoye disclosed this in a statement issued by the service's public relations officer, Al-Hassan Kantin, on Wednesday in Kano.

Congratulating the officers, the state controller described their promotion as well deserved and a call to greater responsibility and professionalism.

Mr Sholadoye charged the officers to see their new ranks as an opportunity to demonstrate increased commitment to protection of lives and property.

He reminded them that promotion comes with higher expectations in service delivery.

Speaking on behalf of the promoted officers, Deputy Superintendent of Fire in the command, DSF Abdullahi Muhammad, expressed appreciation to the management for organising what he described as a befitting ceremony.

He reiterated the readiness of the officers to rededicate themselves to duty and uphold core values of the Federal Fire Service.

COAS charges 6 Division troops to sustain security, boost oil production in N'Delta

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt. General Waidi Shaibu, has charged troops of the 6 Division of Nigerian Army not to relent in sustaining security across the country, particularly in the Niger Delta, to support increased oil production and protect critical national assets.

General Shaibu gave the charge while addressing officers and soldiers at the 29 Battalion Parade Ground during his maiden operational visit to the headquarters of 6 Division in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The COAS reassured the troops that their welfare remained a top priority under his leadership, stressing that deliberate efforts are being made to address operational and welfare-related challenges confronting personnel.

He said since assuming office, he had embarked on visits to various formations and units to assess their operational readiness firsthand and gain deeper insight into their challenges, with a view to providing practical solutions.

According to him, the Nigerian Army will continue to place a high premium on the welfare of officers, soldiers, and their families, noting that improved welfare is critical to morale and operational effectiveness. Shaibu urged the troops to remain disciplined, committed, and dedicated to the discharge of their responsibilities, particularly in protecting critical national infrastructure in line with the Division's mandate and his command philosophy.

"Let me assure you that the Nigerian Army will take care of your work-related issues, which is our topmost priority. You will get what you deserve and what you are entitled to. This will go a long way in mitigating some of the accommodation challenges," he said. Earlier, the General Officer Commanding (GOC), 6 Division, Major General Emmanuel Eric Emekah, said the division's troops were battle-ready and fully prepared to discharge their constitutional mandate.



Udeh

A'lbom community backs passage of coastal highway through Stubb Creek Reserve



Gov Eno

PEOPLE OF IBENO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA of Akwa Ibom State have pledged to allow the passing of federal government's Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway project through the Stubb Creek Reserve. Routing the project through the forest reserve has raised tension as the people of Eket and Esit Eket, who claimed ownership of the forest, had issued a caveat empor barring contractors from the area. However, the state governor, Pastor Umo Eno, during the commissioning of a hospital facility in Eket warned the people to steer clear of the land and allow the project to sail through.

Also, the state government, through the Commissioner for Justice, Uko Udom (SAN), disputed the claim by leaders of the protesting communities, clarifying that the historic case of Ntiaro and Ikpak v. Ibok Etok Akpan and Edoho Ekid, decided by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in 1918, did not vest ownership of Stubbs Creek land on any ethnic group or community.

However, Ibeno people, who insist they were the rightful owners of the forest, during a peaceful rally at the weekend hailed Governor Eno for being

bold enough to stand by what they described as the "truth" on the disputed oil rich forest reserve. Displaying placards at the local government secretariat with inscriptions such as 'Ibenu is the true host of Stubbs Creek Forest Reserve', 'Dialogue not dispute, Ibenu is for peace', 'Ibenu says yes to coastal highway', 'Peace is our strength', among others, the Ibenu people said they were not averse to development and therefore, would support the federal government's construction of the super highway as well as allow other prospective investors to come to their community.

Addressing the rally, vice chairman of the local government, Ukpong Okon, who represented the council chairman, Mrs Glory Effiong, appreciated President Bola Tinubu and Senate President Godswill Akpabio for the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway project. He also commended Governor Eno for his wisdom in handling the disputed forest reserve, which he noted would bring peace and development to the communities. He also applauded Ibenu youths for exercising restraint amid the provocative situation and claims by Eket people.

"We quite appreciate what the youth are doing for coming out here today in an organised protest. We appreciate our nonviolent approach to the issue on ground. Over the period, there have been various write-ups on social media, on paper, even on radio, challenging the ownership of the Stubb Creek." But that is never an issue. For government to come out to take the bull by the horn, to tell the whole world the truth about Stubb Creek, I think that should put to rest whatever understanding or claim that anybody must have had.

"We in Ibenu seriously and honestly support the government for this move, for this approach to take the superhighway through this forest reserve to open up the rest of Ibenu land to investors to come in," Effiong said. In his remarks, spokesperson for the Ibenu Elders' Forum, Barrister Diamond Akpanika noted that what played out was a testament that the Stubb Creek Reserve was not owned by Eket people.

"Today you have seen Ibenu people come out in their white for a rally, white signifies peace, so the people are out to display the character and quality that is engrained in every Ibenu person, that we are peaceful, peace lovers and peace makers. "We are peacefully rallying our support behind, President Bola Tinubu, for constructing the Lagos-Calabar coastal highway.

Abia Govt moves to tighten security in hotels, to introduce new laws

Abia State government has moved to maintain a verified register of all hotels and other hospitality establishments in the state.

A Memorandum of Understanding, MOU, to that effect was signed with a private firm on Tuesday.

The MOU, according to the government, would ensure proper oversight of hospitality operators, reduce risk to customers and boost travelers' confidence.

Speaking at Ministry of Justice after signing the MoU, Abia State Commissioner for Tourism, Arts and Creative Economy, Mathew Ekwuribe, said that the initiative will be followed up with a tourism law, adding that it would be beneficial to the state and the industry operators.

He disclosed that a lot of things would be made mandatory as part of security measures in the Abia hospitality industry, including presentation of proper identification cards by customers before they are logged.

"A lot of things would be made mandatory. We are talking about security, people must not be able to lodge in hotels without proper ID cards," Ekwuribe said.



Gov Oti

Stakeholders demand dialogue as NAFDAC moves to enforce sachet alcohol ban



Protests have erupted over the alleged enforcement of a ban on the production, distribution and consumption of alcoholic beverages in sachets and small PET/glass bottles (below 200ml) by the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, with a civic group accusing the agency of acting in a high-handed and undemocratic manner.

At a press conference in Abuja on Friday, a group, Concerned Citizens for Change, condemned what it described as a hasty move that could cause serious economic damage.

The group said reports attributed to NAFDAC suggested that enforcement of the ban had commenced, allegedly following resolutions of the Senate.

PUNCH Online reports that in November 2025, NAFDAC, in a press release, reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to enforce the total ban on the production and sale of alcoholic beverages in sachets and small-volume PET/glass bottles by December 2025, in line with the directive of the Senate.

The Agency stated that the decisive action, ordered by the Nigerian Senate and backed by the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, underscores its statutory mandate to safeguard public health and protect vulnerable populations, particularly children, adolescents, and young adults,

from the harmful use of alcohol. NAFDAC said the proliferation of high-alcohol-content beverages in sachets and small containers has made such products easily accessible, affordable, and concealable, leading to widespread misuse and addiction among minors and commercial drivers.

"This public health menace has been linked to increased incidences of domestic violence, road accidents, school dropouts, and social vices across communities," NAFDAC said.

Speaking on the ban, on behalf of the group, Oluoha Chukwudi said the announcement made by NAFDAC's Director-General, Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, did not reflect earlier stakeholder engagements involving industry operators, regulators and lawmakers.

According to him, the issue had been extensively discussed at a stakeholders' parley convened by the Federal Ministry of Health, with participation from members of the House of Representatives, where key resolutions were reached, including a one-year extension period and the development of a multi-sectoral National Alcohol Policy.

"The alleged outright ban is at variance with the resolutions already agreed upon by stakeholders and supervised by the Ministry of Health, which constitutionally oversees NAFDAC," Chukwudi said.

NSCDC decorates 265 promoted officers in Kano

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Kano State Command, has decorated a total of 265 officers and men with their new ranks following their recent promotions approved by the Civil Defence, Correctional, Fire, and Immigration Services Board.

The decoration ceremony, which took place at the Command Headquarters in Kano, was presided over by the State Commandant, Mohammed Hassan Agalama, who congratulated the newly promoted officers on the well-deserved elevation.

This is contained in a statement released by the Command's Public Relations Officer, Ibrahim Idris Abdullahi, a copy of which was made available to The Punch on Friday.

In his address, Commandant Agalama described the promotion as a recognition of dedication, discipline, and commitment to duty, urging the officers to see their new ranks as a call to higher responsibility and service.

"Your elevation is in recognition of your dedication, discipline, selfless service, and commitment to duty," the commandant was quoted as saying.

He charged them to continually uphold the core values of the Corps—integrity, patriotism, loyalty, professionalism, and respect for constituted authority, while discharging their duties.

The Commandant further warned against acts of indiscipline and unprofessional conduct, stressing that the Command will not tolerate any behaviour capable of bringing the Corps into disrepute.

According to him, professionalism, teamwork, and adherence to operational guidelines remain critical to achieving the Command's mandate of protecting critical national assets and ensuring public safety across Kano State.

The ceremony was attended by important dignitaries, including a member representing Wudil/Garko Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives, Abdulhakim Kamilu Ado, senior officers of the Command, representatives of sister security agencies, family members, and well-wishers.

Fubara must be allowed to carry out his duties without undue interference – Tinubu’s aide

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has affirmed his support for Rivers State Governor, Siminalayi Fubara, stressing that the governor must be allowed to carry out his duties without undue interference.

Speaking on Channels Television’s current affairs programme, Hard Copy, the Special Adviser on Policy and Communication, Daniel Bwala, stated that the party’s structure in Rivers State is clear.

“I agree with the point highlighted by the National Chairman that in Rivers State, Governor Fubara is the leader of the APC. Wike is not a member of the APC, so he cannot speak for the party.

“He may be regarded as a leader within the PDP in Rivers State, having been a former governor, but the APC leader in the state is Governor Fubara.”

Bwala emphasized that President Tinubu believes strongly in the rule of law and best democratic practices, adding that the APC respects internal party procedures.

“What the National Chairman said is what the party stands by because he respects party procedures. The President believes in the rule of law and due process, and the party will always respect that.”

Addressing concerns about Wike’s influence within the Federal Government, Bwala noted that while the FCT minister has been adequately compensated for his role, such privileges do not override national interest.

“We’ve heard people complain that as a cabinet member, Wike enjoys certain benefits.

“The President believes in compensating people, but not at the expense of the interest of Nigeria. President Bola Tinubu gives latitude, but once you cross the line, you will know.”

On the ongoing political tension in Rivers State, he further said the matter between Wike and Governor Fubara is being handled within the framework of the law.

“When you ask who is the leader of the party, the answer is the governor. The impeachment procedure must be consistent with the practice of law and constitutional requirements.

“There are court orders stopping the impeachment, and the party is clear: nobody should stop Governor Fubara from governing Rivers State.”

Diezani Appears In London Court For ‘£100,000 Bribery’ Trial



Maina made the assertion during an event by the Garki Branch of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), where he alleged sustained persecution, intimidation, and attempts on his life.

He said all relevant petitions and documentary evidence had been submitted to appropriate authorities and welcomed an independent and transparent review of his claims.

“I remain willing to serve Nigeria in any lawful and transparent capacity,” Maina stated.

The former task force chairman further alleged that in 2017 he was invited to Abu Dhabi by senior Nigerian government officials, including the then Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, and encouraged to return to Nigeria to assist in recovering looted public funds.

According to him, a restrictive agreement was reached under which he claimed to have helped Nigeria recover approximately \$1.3 trillion and secure additional assets valued at \$88 billion.

He said the agreement entitled him to a five percent whistleblower fee amounting to about \$65 billion but alleged that he was later pressured to share the funds, a demand he claimed to have rejected.

was never signatory to pension account’ – Abdurashheed Maina

Former Chairman of the Presidential Task Force on Pension Reforms, Abdurashheed Maina, has denied ever being a signatory to any pension-related bank account, insisting that official banking records back his claim.

Tinubu approves posting of 4 ambassador-designates to US, France, two other countries

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has approved the posting of four ambassador-designates out of the 68 confirmed by the Senate last December.

In a statement by presidential spokesperson, Bayo Onanuga, President Tinubu confirmed the posting of Ambassador Ayodele Oke as the ambassador-designate to France and Colonel Lateef Are as the ambassador-designate to the United States of America.

Also confirmed by the President is the posting of Ambassador Amin Dalhatu, former ambassador to South Korea, as the high commissioner-designate to the United Kingdom.

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Usman Isa Dakingari Suleiman, former governor of Kebbi State, is the ambassador-designate to Turkey, where the President is scheduled to begin a state visit next week.

“In a memo to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, President Tinubu urged the ministry to notify the governments of the four countries about the ambassador-designates, in accordance with diplomatic procedures,” the statement reads.

DAILY POST recalls that in December last year, the Nigerian Senate screened 68 ambassador-designates nominated by President Tinubu.

Two lives lost as Lassa fever cases rise to nine in Benue

Two deaths have been recorded from Lassa fever in Benue State, just days after health authorities confirmed the emergence of new cases of the viral infection.

The State Commissioner for Health, Paul Ogwuche, made the disclosure on Thursday in Makurdi, explaining that reported cases of the disease have risen steadily over the last two weeks.

He said the latest update from the state's disease surveillance platform shows that two fresh cases were added, raising the number of suspected infections to nine. Out of these, five have been confirmed positive, with two fatalities recorded.

"As we speak now, there are nine suspected cases of Lassa fever on our dashboard. About five are positive, and unfortunately, two of them have resulted in mortality," Ogwuche said.

The commissioner noted that the infections were mainly traced to Buruku

and Makurdi Local Government Areas, revealing that health workers were also affected.

"The cases involved are in Buruku and Makurdi LGAs. Two cases came from Buruku but were diagnosed in Makurdi. There are also cases involving two health workers," he added.

Ogwuche stated that the Benue State Government has swung into action by activating emergency public health measures to curb further spread of the disease.

"As a ministry, we have responded appropriately. We have our incident rapid response team, activated our Public Health Emergency Operations Centre, and put in place all necessary mechanisms," he said.

He urged residents to improve hygiene practices and take preventive measures against rodents, particularly rats, which are known carriers of the virus.



Suspected gunmen kill two, abduct three in Benue community

Suspected gunmen have reportedly killed two people in a deadly attack on Iwanev community at Ugbema Junction in Buruku Local Government Area of Benue State.

Sources said a group of unidentified gunmen invaded the community under the cover of darkness, killing two residents on the spot and abducting three others to an unknown destination.

The attack has thrown the community into fear and panic, with residents expressing concern over the worsening security situation and the possibility of further assaults.

Residents have appealed to the Benue State

Government, led by Governor Hyacinth Alia, as well as the chairman of Buruku Local Government Area, Hon. Raymond Zege Aondoakura, to take immediate and decisive action to restore peace and protect lives and property.

They also called on security agencies to intensify patrols and launch thorough investigations aimed at apprehending the perpetrators and securing the safe release of the abducted victims.

Meanwhile, efforts to confirm the incident from the spokesperson of the Benue State Police Command, DSP Udeme Edet, were unsuccessful as at the time of this report.

Shehu Sani urges collective action on Kajuru kidnapping

Former Senator representing Kaduna Central, Shehu Sani, has called for unity and collective responsibility in addressing the recent kidnapping incident in Kajuru Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

He urged Nigerians to avoid politicising the tragedy.

Reacting in a statement, Sani expressed confidence in the capacity of the Kaduna State Government and security agencies to secure the release of the abducted victims, describing the rescue of the captives as an urgent priority.

"I have no doubt that the Kaduna State Government and the security agencies will work diligently to secure the release of the captives," he said.

While condemning the attack, Sani acknowledged the security efforts of Governor Uba Sani, noting that significant progress has been made in tackling insecurity across the state over the past two years.

He said despite the tragic incident, Governor Uba Sani has been doing a lot to secure the state in the last two years, and his efforts should be appreciated.

Sani emphasized that moments of crisis should not be exploited for political gains, stressing that the focus must remain on saving lives and restoring safety.

He further noted that criminal elements often take advantage of vulnerable communities, urging sustained resolve in confronting insecurity.

"Bandits and terrorists will always hit soft targets, and we must never waver or falter in our determination to defeat them and secure our state and country," he added.

'There's problem with democracy we operate in Nigeria' - Don

A Professor of Communications at Baze University, Abuja, Abiodun Adeniyi, has said that there is a problem with the character of democracy operated in Nigeria.

Prof Adeniyi said this on Thursday while responding to questions in an interview on Arise Television's 'Prime Time', monitored by DAILY POST.

He said: "The problem in reverse is becoming like a bad coin, and it is one too many. But it does appear to me that institutions are also getting weary, even if individuals have expressed some kind of exasperation in time past.

"But institutions are picking that up from individuals, and that might actually be what we need, and of course, it speaks to the kind of democracy that we actually are.

"We often commend the fact that we celebrate longevity. That's fine. This is the longest stretch we have had since independence. And of course, we've done about seven elections, next year will be the eighth.

"There's a problem with the character of the democracy we operate in Nigeria. And it has to do again, perhaps to some extent, our attitude towards it. Still a lot of limitations that will often identify, and we seem to be making progress too slowly."

Politicising abduction of 177 worshippers from Kaduna churches puts victims in danger – *Amb. Adamu*

A security expert, Ambassador Abdullahi Bakoji Adamu, has warned that politicising kidnapping incidents in Kadunppa State only strengthens criminal groups and delays the rescue of victims.

Speaking amid the controversy surrounding the recent church abductions in Kajuru Local Government Area, Adamu said kidnapping in Kaduna is fundamentally a security challenge, not a political one.

“The perpetrators are organised criminal groups driven mainly by ransom. They exploit gaps in surveillance, intelligence gathering, and weak security presence in rural communities,” he said in an exclusive interview recently.

According to him, turning security incidents into political, ethnic, or religious arguments distracts attention from real operational failures and weakens coordinated responses.

“The issue has been heavily politicised. Incidents are often interpreted through political, ethnic, or religious lenses, which shifts focus from operational security failures to blame and rhetoric. This politicisation benefits criminals by weakening coordination and public trust.

“From a security standpoint, once kidnapping is politicised, rescue operations suffer and captivity is prolonged.”

He stressed that what Kaduna needs is a professional, intelligence-led approach rather than public disputes and blame trading.

“What is required is a depoliticised security strategy, stronger inter-agency coordination, and deliberate efforts to disrupt the ransom economy, not political arguments,” he added.



Recall that bandits on Sunday attacked churches in Kurmin Wali village, Kajuru Local Government Area of Kaduna State, and abducted worshippers.

Initial reports claimed that over 100 people were taken, but the Kaduna State Government and the Police Command dismissed the figures as false and misleading.

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), however, confirmed the attack, stating that 177 worshippers were initially abducted from three churches.

CAN's Kajuru LGA chairperson, Enoch Kaura, said about 10 people later escaped and called on security agencies to rescue those still in captivity.



Insecurity: NSCDC seeks TETFund's support to secure Nigerian schools

The Commandant General of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Prof Ahmed Abubakar Audi, has said that although attacks on schools across the country have reduced, sustained collaboration with key stakeholders remains critical to fully tackling the menace.

Audi made the remarks on Thursday while leading a high-powered delegation of senior NSCDC officers on a courtesy visit to the headquarters of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund).

According to him, the visit was aimed at strengthening cooperation between both institutions through a proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that would provide a framework for inter-agency training, enhance the capacity of NSCDC training institutions, and reinforce security within Nigeria's educational sector.

The NSCDC boss said the Corps was particularly interested in partnering with TETFund to upgrade its six training institutions, including the College of Security Management in Abeokuta, to support career progression and world-class development for officers.

He noted that while school attacks were once rampant, especially in the early 2000s and during the Chibok girls' abduction, recent interventions such as the Safe School Initiative had helped to curb the trend.

“If you have been following the trajectory, you would see that attacks were very high around 2001 to 2003. Things escalated again during the Chibok girls' incident, which led to the Safe School Initiative and safe school financing. Recently, the attacks have reduced, although we still observe some pockets, which are under control,” Audi said.

He stressed that school security cannot be handled by one agency alone, describing it as a “whole-of-society approach” involving security agencies, education authorities, school communities, and traditional institutions.

Fubara impeachment: Rivers can exist without Wike – *Annkio Briggs*

A Rivers State political stakeholder, Annkio Briggs, has said that the state can effectively exist without the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, FCT, Nyesom Wike.

Briggs made this statement on Thursday while fielding questions in an interview on ‘Politics Today’, a programme on Channels Television monitored by DAILY POST.

She was speaking on the political tension in the state where the State Assembly initiated impeachment proceedings against Governor Siminalayi Fubara and his deputy, Ngozi Odu.

“What is it? He keeps talking about an agreement. What's the agreement? Do you know the agreement that Nyesom Wike is shouting about? Agreement, agreement.

Everybody is shouting, agreement, agreement. The lawmakers are shouting.

“His supporters are shouting, no Wike, no Rivers state. You can't say that. How can you say that without one man (Wike) a state will not exist? Where is that political, and where is it acceptable?

“Well, it may be acceptable anywhere else. But I don't think such is acceptable by the people of Rivers State. All I do know is that the majority of Rivers people are in support of Governor Siminalayi Fubara.

“His support is organic. And therefore, if Today he finds himself for whatever reasons, he has decided as the governor of River State to move to the APC to survive as a governor.

Gov Yusuf's planned defection to APC: Fresh concern over Kano emirship tussle

The planned defection of Kano State Governor, Abba Kabir Yusuf to the All Progressives Congress, APC, has reignited anxieties around one of Nigeria's most sensitive traditional disputes—the lingering tussle between Emir Muhammadu Sanusi II and the 15th Emir of Kano, Aminu Ado Bayero.

There are indications that the rumoured move threatens to reopen old wounds in the northwest state where power, tradition and politics are tightly intertwined.

This is even as the defection speculation has also reportedly deepened political tension within Kano State, triggering strains between supporters of the Kano Governor and loyalists of his political mentor, Senator Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, a key figure in the NNPP.

Reports that the defection move was one of the reasons the governor met with President Bola Tinubu behind closed-



doors on Tuesday.

We learnt that Yusuf has fixed another date for defection from the NNPP to the ruling APC after a series of postponements.

Recall that the Kano emirate crisis dates back to 2020, when then Governor Abdullahi Ganduje of the All Progressives Congress dethroned Sanusi and later installed Ado Bayero following the passage of the Kano State Emirate Council (Repeal) Law 2024.

The move was widely criticised as politically motivated and deepened divisions within Kano.

It is reported that when Gov Yusuf assumed office in 2023 under the New Nigeria Peoples Party, NNPP, his administration repealed the emirate law, restored the single Kano Emirate and reinstated Sanusi, while Ado Bayero was asked to vacate the palace.

The decision, hailed by Sanusi's supporters as corrective justice, was condemned by others as executive overreach, with tensions within the Kano Emirate remaining high since then.

However, Bayero, refusing to relinquish his claim to the throne, returned and took up residence at the Nassarawa mini palace in Kano under heavy security protection, while legally challenging his removal by the state government.

Since March when the Court of Appeal in Abuja directed all parties in the Emirship tussle, to exercise caution pending the hearing of their appeals at the Supreme Court, nothing has been heard about the matter.

It is against this fragile backdrop that Governor Yusuf's alleged plan to join the APC has triggered fresh concern.

For some in Kano, Yusuf's defection would represent not just a political realignment, but a potential reversal, or at least a weakening, of the forces that restored Sanusi to the throne.

Presidency withdraws Dakingari's posting to Turkey as ambassador

The Presidency has reversed its earlier decision and has withdrawn the appointment of former Kebbi State Governor, Usman Saidu Dakingari, as Nigeria's ambassador-designate to Turkey, less than 24 hours after the announcement was made.

A statement issued on Thursday night by Presidential Spokesperson, Bayo Onanuga, confirmed that President Bola Tinubu had approved the posting of four ambassadors-designate from the more than 60 nominees confirmed in December.

They included former Director-General of the Department of State Services (DSS), Kayode Are, who was named ambassador-designate to the United States. Former Director-General of the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), Ayodele Oke, was posted

to France, while former ambassador to South Korea, Amin Dalhatu, was appointed high commissioner-designate to the United Kingdom.

Dakingari was initially listed as ambassador-designate to Turkey.

The announcement of Dakingari's posting was shared on X but was later deleted. His appointment had come just days before President Tinubu's planned state visit to Turkey.

However, in a fresh statement released on Friday by the State House, Onanuga said no ambassador has been appointed to Turkey.

The new statement restated the postings of Are, Oke and Dalhatu but removed Dakingari's name.

No explanation was given for the sudden change.

'I am not blocking Otti from joining APC' – Deputy Speaker, Benjamin Kalu



The Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Benjamin Kalu has said his invitation to Governor Alex Otti to join the All Progressive Congress, APC, was borne out of friendship and the interest of the party.

Kalu also denied the claims that he is blocking Governor Alex Otti from joining the APC.

The Deputy Speaker, who was addressing Journalists in his home at Bende, Bende LGA of Abia State on Friday, said it was through his ongoing party membership drive that former Governor of Abia State, Theodore Orji joined the APC.

"Even the narrative that I want to block him from coming to APC is not true.

"If I was self-centered, I would have blocked him from entering APC but here I am the one inviting him to APC," Kalu said. Being Governor is not the ultimate ambition for people like me."

Kalu said he is much interested in attracting development to his Bende Federal constituency, saying that any decision about his future political ambition would be decided by the APC and the Abia people.

Kalu reiterated this support for the creation of one more state for the South East to enable the zone be at par with others.

According to him, the creation of one State in the South East would help in national cohesion, unity and progress.

The Deputy Speaker also dismissed reports that some ongoing roads he attracted to Bende, have been abandoned.

Abiodun sets up committee for burial of ex-Ogun First Lady, Lucia Onabanjo

Ogun State Governor, Dapo Abiodun, has set up a committee to coordinate a state-backed burial for the late former First Lady of the state, Chief (Mrs) Lucia Onabanjo.

The committee will be headed by the Secretary to the State Government, Mr Tokunbo Talabi. Other members include the Chairman of Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area, Mr Dare Alebiosu, and the Commissioner for Finance, Mr Dapo Okubadejo.

Governor Abiodun announced the decision on Thursday during a condolence visit to the Onabanjo family in Ijebu-Ode, following the death of the former First Lady.

He described Mrs Onabanjo as an outstanding and selfless woman who used her position in service to God, her family and humanity, adding that the Ogun State Government would play an active role in ensuring she receives a dignified burial befitting her status.

Why I joined politics — Ex-DSS DG Daura

We've been vindicated' – Rivers APC reacts to Tinubu's position on Wike, Fubara

Rivers State chapter of the All Progressives Congress, APC, has reacted to the position of the presidency on the unending battle between the Federal Capital Territory, FCT Minister, Nyesom Wike and Governor Siminalayi Fubara.

The Presidency on Thursday, affirmed that Governor Fubara is the leader of the party in Rivers.

It was reported on Thursday that through his Special Adviser on Policy and Communication, Daniel Bwala, President Tinubu affirmed his support for Fubara, stressing that the governor must be allowed to carry out his duties without undue interference.

Bwala said this during an appearance on Channels Television's Politics Today programme on Thursday.

Bwala also acknowledged the role of the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike, describing him as instrumental to the Tinubu administration.

However, he clarified that Wike is not a member of the APC, adding that Fubara should be given the space to govern the State.

Reacting to the development through a statement by its Publicity Secretary, Darlington Nwauju, the Rivers APC said, "We are grateful to the President and Commander-in-Chief His Excellency President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR, leader of the APC party in Nigeria for sticking to our party constitution/ convention by reaffirming the position of the Governor through his SA on Policy Communication, Daniel Bwala Esq.

"This Presidential clarification has once again vindicated our uncompromising



stand on this matter and aligns with the policy thrust of our national party leadership under Prof Nentawe Yilwatda and Senator (Dr) Ajibola Basiru.

"We therefore commend the sincerity of Mr President and Commander-in-Chief to stick to party management direction which allows APC Governors to lead the party at the state level to engineer mobilization, cohesion and efficiency.

"This timely reaffirmation justifies the position of Rivers State APC on the position of the state Governor, His Excellency Sir Siminalayi Fubara as leader of our party in Rivers State and should correct any false or misleading narrative being peddled by political jobbers.

2027: Hakeem Baba-Ahmed's call on Atiku to step outside in ADC dishonest — Obayemi

A public affairs analyst, Olumide Obayemi, has condemned President Ahmed Tinubu's former aide, Hakeem Baba-Ahmed, for his continued intervention in Nigeria's opposition politics.

This comes after Baba-Ahmed, who was the former spokesperson for the Northern Elders Forum, suggested that Nigeria's former vice president, Atiku Abubakar, should step aside in the contest for the African Democratic Congress presidential candidate for the 2027 election.

Reacting, Obayemi, who is the convener of the Omoluabi Coalition, in a statement on Friday described Baba-Ahmed's

comment on Atiku as duplicitous, partisan, and calculated to weaken the opposition ahead of 2027.

According to Obayemi, since exiting the administration of Bola Tinubu, Baba-Ahmed has conspicuously avoided any serious critique of a government that has presided over unprecedented economic hardship, social dislocation, and national despair.

He noted that Baba-Ahmed has instead channeled his energy disproportionately against the opposition, particularly the African Democratic Congress, ADC, raising legitimate questions about where his true loyalties lie.



APC e-registration: Nobody forcing civil servants to register – Morka

The National Publicity Secretary of the ruling All Progressives Congress, APC, Felix Morka, has denied the allegation that the party is compelling civil servants to partake in its ongoing e-registration across the country.

Morka made this rebuttal on recently while fielding questions in an interview with journalists

He said that they were already struggling to register existing members and those willing to register, stressing that nobody has the time or incentive to pursue those who are not willing.

He said: "With every system, people have a tendency to make all kinds of allegations. It's easy to allege, but to substantiate, I think it's the challenging part of that whole thing.

"The existing members of the party are all crowded, struggling to register because the enthusiasm is high, they want to register.

"But sometimes we have downtime with technology, with network systems and all of that. But the idea that civil servants or anybody is being compelled to register, that's a bit almost unimaginable at this point.

"Who has that time to go compelling people who don't want to register, or who are civil servants, or who are not disposed to registering, to actually register? To me, it's actually ridiculous to suggest.

"Those who have a reason and interest to register are right now struggling trying to register because of some of the congestions on the networks and all of that."

"And don't forget that we have outlined districts around the country where network connectivity is not that great, and in those areas, we have device systems and now deploying technologies that allow supervisors and agents to register people momentarily on the platform," he added.

Longevity without impact meaningless – Saraki insists on functional democracy in Nigeria

Former Senate President, Dr Abubakar Bukola Saraki, has said Nigeria's democracy, though under pressure, remains intact, describing the country's Fourth Republic as tested, strained, but not broken.

Saraki spoke on Thursday where



he cautioned that the survival of democracy alone should not be mistaken for success if it fails to improve the lives of citizens.

According to him, Nigeria's return to civil rule in 1999 has shown resilience, with notable gains such as peaceful transfers of power, freedom of expression, media diversity, and the role of civil society and the judiciary in checking excesses at different times.

However, he stressed that longevity without impact is meaningless.

"The Fourth Republic has survived, but survival is not enough. Nigerians expect democracy to deliver in security, governance, economic opportunity, and justice," Saraki said.

He urged Nigerians to honestly assess what is working and what is failing in the democratic system, noting that continuity without quality is empty.

He further highlighted the need to strengthen institutions, including the judiciary, anti-corruption systems, and the electoral process.

He stressed that constructive criticism should be encouraged and not treated as hostility to the state.

Nasarawa ADC crisis deepens as chieftain condemns suspension of state chairman

A chieftain of the African Democratic Congress, ADC, in Nasarawa State, Muhammad Bose, has criticised the suspension of the party's state chairman, Godwin Alaku Williams, describing the action as unjust, ill-timed, and damaging to the party's unity.

Bose, who is a leading ADC figure from Doma South, faulted the party leadership for what he called a "wrong decision," questioning the rationale behind suspending the chairman just as preparations for the party congress were underway.

"Our leaders have made a mistake," he said. "With the congress approaching, why not allow him to participate and, if necessary, be replaced through a proper congress?"

"Suspending him under the claim of anti-party

activities when he has not committed any is injustice."

Bose dismissed allegations of anti-party conduct, noting that during the last general election, party members exercised individual political choices without being accused of disloyalty.

"In the last election, many of us supported different candidates. I personally voted for Buhari Usman for the State Assembly under ADC and Atala Yusuf for the House of Representatives on the same platform.

"That did not make anyone anti-party. Perhaps those who suspended the chairman did not even vote for ADC candidates themselves," Bose stated.

The ADC chieftain warned that injustice within the party would only breed deeper division and weaken its future prospects.



'Trusted big names' – Nwajiuba reveals why Obi, Atiku, Amechei matter in ADC

Former Minister of State for Education, Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba, has said he does not regard anyone as a political "heavyweight" at present, arguing that many political figures are still adjusting to a new political order.

Speaking on Thursday, Nwajiuba said "To be honest with you, I don't consider anybody a political heavyweight right now, because everybody is just like who has abandoned wherever he was to come to this new field."

He, however, stressed that the African Democratic Congress (ADC) is populated by credible leaders with public trust.

"That recognises that they are very important men and women who are in ADC right now very important people, people who we've heard had public trust, who have been celebrated," he said.

Nwajiuba cited Atiku Abubakar as an example, referencing his stewardship of Nigeria's privatization programme.

"The likes of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar I mean, when he ran the privatisation scheme in Nigeria, it was decent.

"When other people took it over, it wasn't so. You can see the difference; it's like daylight," he noted, adding, "They are people like that you can trust."

He also mentioned former Rivers State governor Rotimi Amaechi, describing him as "my friend... who was within the cabinet," and spoke glowingly about Peter Obi.

"There is my elder brother, Peter Obi, who has just joined us at the end of December. He has been part of the coalition all along," Nwajiuba said.

Reflecting on the 2023 elections and youth support for Obi, Nwajiuba added:

2027: Labour Party women leaders demand appeal of Abure-led faction sack

The National Women Leader, Deputy National Women Leader, South-South, and State Women Leaders of Labour Party have reaffirmed their support for the Julius Abure-led leadership of the party.

The National Women Leader of the party, Dudu Mamman Manuga, expressed the support during a virtual meeting to review key developments affecting the Party, and chart a way forward for 2026.

The women leaders extensively reviewed the recent judgment of the Federal High Court delivered on 21st January 2026 against the leadership of Barrister Julius Abure, and unanimously resolved that the decision contains fundamental errors and should be appealed.

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Women, children bear brunt of health workers' strike in public hospitals



Across Nigeria, recurring industrial strikes by doctors, nurses, and other health professionals have become a painful routine in the public health sector.

While the disputes often centre on salaries, hazard allowances, and poor working conditions, the fallout is borne disproportionately by women and children, who make up the bulk of patients in government hospitals.

For many low-income families, public facilities are not a choice but the only option. Pregnant women are among the hardest hit. Antenatal clinics are suspended, scheduled caesarean sections postponed, and labour wards operate skeletal services, if there are any at all.

Midwives recount cases of women forced to deliver at home or with unskilled birth attendants, increasing the risk of maternal deaths and birth complications. In rural communities, where distances to alternative facilities are long, delays can be fatal.

Children, especially those under five, face equally grave risks. Immunisation programmes are disrupted, routine check-ups missed, and treatment for malaria, pneumonia, and diarrhoea delayed.

Health experts warn that even short interruptions in care can reverse gains made in child survival, exposing children to preventable illnesses and long-term complications. Beyond physical health, the emotional toll on families is immense. Mothers describe anxiety, guilt, and

fear as they watch their children suffer without access to care.

Some are forced to sell belongings or borrow at high interest rates to afford private hospitals, pushing already struggling households deeper into poverty while others simply endure the wait, hoping the strike will be called off before it is too late.

Health workers, however, argue that strike action is a last resort. Many point to dilapidated facilities, staff shortages, unpaid allowances, and unsafe working environments as reasons for industrial action.

The death of Jennifer, popularly known as Jenny in Tatagiyi village under the Gyadna community, is a grim reminder of how fragile access to healthcare has become for many Nigerian women, especially during periods of disruption in the public health system.

Her death, following complications after childbirth, underscores not only the absence of basic health facilities in rural communities but also how women and children bear the brunt when healthcare services are unavailable or overstretched.

According to residents, Jennifer delivered her baby at home with the help of a midwife because Tatagiyi village has no functional health centre or maternity facility.

Like many pregnant women in the community, she had little choice as she had to rely on home delivery or undertake a long, risky journey to a distant hospital. Although she appeared stable after childbirth, hours later, she

began to bleed heavily, a known and treatable emergency if prompt medical care is available.

Efforts to rush her to a hospital outside the community were delayed, and by the time help came, Jennifer was confirmed dead. Residents insisted that her life could have been saved if a nearby public health facility was available and adequately staffed.

Speaking with Abdul, a Tatagiyi resident, he said, "If there was a clinic here, she would have been taken for treatment immediately," he lamented. "Instead, we lost her."

Jennifer's death has also sparked tension in the community. Eyewitnesses said police officers stormed Tatagiyi around 1 a.m., arresting several residents, including people who were not directly involved in the delivery. The midwife who assisted Jennifer said to also work in a public hospital was among those arrested.

Community members described the arrests as indiscriminate, alleging that money was seized during the operation, further deepening anger and fear among residents.

Incident reflects a broader national crisis

While the incident is rooted in the lack of a local health facility, it reflects a broader national crisis worsened by recurring health workers' strikes in public hospitals. When strikes shut down services or

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Climate change worsening hunger, health risks, says expert

A climate justice advocate, Mr. Oluwatobi OjuOluwa, has warned that worsening climate conditions in Nigeria are fuelling hunger, health challenges and economic instability across the country.

OjuOluwa, who made the observation while speaking on the current climate situation in Nigeria and Africa in Ibadan, Oyo State, at the weekend, noted that changing weather patterns had made rainfall unpredictable and disrupted seasonal cycles Nigerians once relied on.

He said periods previously associated with harmattan and dry weather could no longer be clearly felt while rain could no longer be predicted. He pointed at human activities such as improper waste management, bush burning, deforestation and fossil fuel exploitation as major drivers of climate change, bringing far-reaching consequences for livelihoods and public health.

"If there is hunger in the land, there is economic instability. "Aviation cannot work well because the weather is not palatable, there is food insecurity and health issues, all of which are linked to climate change," the environmental advocate posited. OjuOluwa explained that climate action as captured under Goal 13 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), was central to achieving other development targets, including poverty reduction, food security and improved health outcomes.

He also pointed out that although Africa contributes less than four percent of global emissions, the continent bears a disproportionate burden of harsh climate impacts due to limited resources, calling on stakeholders to come together to mitigate the adverse trend. "The government cannot do it alone.



OjuOluwa

Parading Distinctive Excellence As Ncws National President



Ghebreyesus

CHINESE SCIENTISTS RECOVER 98% OF GOLD FROM OLD phones in 20 minutes at low cost

Chinese researchers have discovered a fast, low-cost and environmentally cleaner method for extracting gold from electronic waste, that could significantly reshape e-waste recycling worldwide and reduce the need for traditional mining.

The technique, said to be the easiest means to extract gold from discarded electronics within 20 minutes at room temperature, was developed by researchers from the Guangzhou Institute of Energy Conversion under the Chinese Academy of Sciences and South China University of Technology.

The research team reported that the new process costs about one-third of current market prices for gold recovery, which makes it the most cost-efficient method currently. It also achieves more than 98.2 percent gold leaching efficiency from waste Central Processing Units (CPUs) in old mobile phones and Printed Circuit Boards (PCBs) from home appliances at room temperature. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), electronic waste (e-waste), one of the fastest growing solid waste streams in the world, records 2.6 million tons of e-waste annually, with the potential of rising to 82 million tons by

2030. The most common e-waste items include computers, large household appliances, mobile phones and medical equipment.

These items contain small but valuable amounts of precious metals, including gold (Au) and palladium (Pd), which are widely used for their excellent conductivity, stability and corrosion resistance. Meanwhile, conventional recycling methods often rely on toxic chemicals such as cyanide, posing serious environmental and health risks. To address the challenge the team, whose study outcome has been published in the *Angewandte Chemie International Edition*, developed a process based on a selfcatalytic leaching mechanism.

The mechanism eliminates the need for corrosive reagents or external catalysts. In contrast it uses a simple aqueous solution of potassium peroxydisulfate (PMS) and potassium chloride (KCl). When the solution comes into contact with gold or palladium surfaces, the metals themselves behave as catalysts. On the metal surface, PMS and chloride ions (Cl) are activated, producing highly reactive oxidants such as singlet oxygen and hypochlorous acid.

These oxidants then break down the metal atoms, and allow the chloride ions to bind to them and dissolve them into the solution for easy recovery.

Nigerian govt moves to grant polytechnics power to award degrees

The Federal Government has instructed all polytechnics in Nigeria to award a bachelor's degrees to Higher National Diploma (HND) holders.

The announcement was made on Wednesday in Abuja by the Minister of Education, Tunji Alausa, during a retreat for council chairmen, rectors and key education stakeholders.

The minister stated that the policy marks a major reform aimed at repositioning polytechnics as equal partners with universities in national development.

According to Dr. Alausa, the move is designed to eliminate professional bias against technical graduates and transform polytechnics into centres of excellence capable of driving Nigeria's industrial and economic growth.

According to him, the reform goes beyond certificate changes and focuses on strengthening technical education to produce problem-solvers and innovators.

He explained that the initiative aligns with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda and is expected to improve funding, deepen industry collaboration and restore public confidence in technical and vocational education.

The minister assured that strict quality assurance measures would be enforced to ensure that degrees awarded by polytechnics meet global standards.

He also warned administrators that transparency, accountability and zero tolerance for corruption would be strictly upheld.



JAMB begins sale of 2026 UTME, Direct Entry forms

The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, JAMB, has announced the sale of registration forms for the 2026 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination, UTME, and Direct Entry, DE, admissions for the 2026/2027 academic session.

The Board made this announcement in a post on its X handle on Tuesday night.

The photo statement signed by its Registrar, Ishaq Oloyede, said the UTME is open to suitably qualified candidates for admission into Nigerian tertiary institutions for the 2026/2027 academic session.

JAMB stated that registration begins January 2026 and closes March 2026, disclosing that the UTME examination is scheduled to hold in April 2026.

According to the Board, the period of registration for UTME candidates, including those from foreign countries, is from Monday, 26th January, 2026 to Saturday, 28th February, 2026.

The tertiary institution examination body reiterated that candidates must have obtained their National Identification Number, NIN, before registration.

It maintained that only candidates who will not be less than 16 years old by 30th September, 2026 are generally eligible to apply/be considered.

"Candidates less than 16 years old by 30th September, 2026 will have to undergo an intensive evaluation to determine their eligibility for a waiver. Such must have scored not less than 80% in each of UTME/ALEVEL, PUTME, SSCE, and in the exceptional candidate assessment.

"The UTME results of the underage candidates will be released only at the conclusion of the complete evaluation process," JAMB said.

For Direct Entry candidates, JAMB disclosed that the sale of 2026 Direct Entry (DE) application documents and E-PIN vending would commence from Monday, 2nd March, 2026, and end by Saturday, 25th April, 2026, and would only be at the Board's State and Zonal Offices.



Economic situation still hard, we can't eat – ASUU tells Nigerian govt

The President of the Academic Staff Union of Universities, ASUU, Professor Chris Piwuna, has disclosed that the economic situation in Nigeria is hard.

Piwuna disclosed that Nigerians are finding it difficult to eat and transport themselves.

He made the remark during ASUU's meeting with the Minister of Education, Tunji Alausa on Wednesday in Abuja.

Piwuna also urged the Minister to inform the Federal Executive Council, FEC, that security agents need to do

more.

He said: "Honourable Minister, when you go for the next FEC meeting, please tell your colleagues that the economic situation in the country is still hard.

"That meals are hard to come by. That transportation is still a challenge. Families are struggling to keep their bodies and souls together.

"Tell those in charge of security that we've noticed that they're up and doing and we support them, and we want them to do more."

Cont'd on page 30

reduce them to skeletal operations, rural and low-income communities are left with no safety net.

Pregnant women, nursing mothers, and children who depend mostly on public healthcare are forced into unsafe alternatives, including home births and delayed treatment. Health experts warn that maternal deaths from postpartum bleeding, like Jennifer's case, are largely preventable with timely medical intervention.

Yet, strikes, staff shortages, and poor infrastructure mean many public hospitals are either inaccessible or unable to respond to emergencies. Children, too, suffer as routine immunisations, malaria treatment, and emergency care are disrupted.

Beyond police involvement...

As of the time of filing this report, the police had yet to issue an official statement on Jennifer's death or the arrests. But for residents of Tatagiyi, the questions go beyond policing. They ask why a community can exist without a basic clinic, why women must give birth at home, and why the failure of the health system continues to claim lives.

Pregnant women, children most affected during strikes - JOHESU

In a telephone interview, the spokesperson of the Joint Health Sector Unions, (JOHESU), Martin Luther, said women and children, particularly pregnant women, are the most affected by health workers' strikes, especially those requiring emergency medical care.

According to him, when essential services are disrupted, they face the greatest risk of complications and preventable deaths. Illness does not discriminate, as anyone can fall sick at any time. It is therefore deeply unfortunate that healthcare disruptions continue to occur, exposing vulnerable populations to avoidable dangers.

Luther explained the full impact of such strikes on maternal mortality is often difficult to measure immediately. However, the consequences become evident over time through increased complications during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postnatal period.

The JOHESU spokesperson noted that children are also severely affected, as disruptions in healthcare contribute to higher child mortality rates. Their developing bodies require regular medical attention, which becomes inaccessible during prolonged industrial actions.

Role of investigative journalism

These are critical areas where investigative journalism can play an

...bear brunt of health workers' strike in public hospitals



Muhammad Ali Pate

important role by examining available data and highlighting trends in maternal and child mortality linked to healthcare disruptions.

He said: "Regardless of differing opinions, healthcare strikes take a heavy toll on citizens, particularly those who rely solely on public hospitals. Many Nigerians cannot afford private healthcare or treatment abroad, leaving them with limited options.

"The media also has a role to play in terms of investigative report."

Comparatively, he said the impact of healthcare disruptions is more severe in maternal and child health than in other areas of medical care. This underscores the need for urgent attention to these vulnerable groups.

"Women face multiple biological and reproductive health challenges, while children, due to their developmental stage, are more susceptible to illness. These factors explain why they are disproportionately affected when healthcare services are inadequate.

"Responsible nations prioritise maternal and child health, a principle reflected in Sustainable Development Goals 2 and 3, which emphasise good health, well-being, and universal access to healthcare," he said.

Meanwhile, the healthcare sector remains strained as resident doctors resume their previously suspended strike, while JOHESU strike continues.

Although court injunctions apply only to resident doctors, the ongoing industrial actions continue to place women and children at increased risk, he explained.

"No work, no pay" rule applies - FG

In an effort to curb the impact of repeated industrial actions on Nigeria's fragile public health system, the federal government enforced a "no work, no pay" policy for health workers, including resident doctors.

Under this directive, salaries for federal hospital staff participating in strike actions are suspended for the duration of the walkouts, reflecting the government's stance that pay should be commensurate with work performed.

Hospital authorities were tasked with strictly implementing this policy in order to minimise disruptions to essential services while attempting to discourage prolonged labour stoppages.

A circular from the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, signed by the Director of Hospital Services on behalf of the Coordinating Minister of Health, Muhammad Ali Pate, instructed chief medical directors and medical directors across federal hospitals to enact the "no work, no pay" rule.

While the most recent actions focused on the strike by the JOHESU, the policy and directive extend to other health staff, including resident doctors, who engage in industrial action.

The federal government has said this measure aims to discourage prolonged strikes that disrupt essential public health services and to protect hospital operations by ensuring continuity of emergency and critical services like maternal mortality and child mortality.

Officials argue that enforcing no pay for days not worked aligns with existing labour provisions and acts as a deterrent against frequent industrial stoppages in the health sector.

NARD reacts

The Nigerian Association of Resident Doctors (NARD) was prepared for the enforcement of the no work, no pay stance as part of ongoing tensions with the government over unmet welfare and working condition demands.

Resident doctors faced the possibility of having salaries withheld during strike periods, adding financial pressure to the already significant strain on healthcare delivery caused by prolonged industrial action.

Motoring



These Are the Best Cars You Can Buy in 2026

Honda Civic Pros:

The hybrid gets great fuel economy Interior is a cut above the competition Great to drive.

Cons:

It can get pricey for a small car, especially if you want the high-performance Type R Interior gets loud at highway speeds You're locked out of the good tech and good sound system unless you spring for a top trim.

Hyundai Elantra Pros:

Tons of great tech comes standard Hybrid is great and doesn't have a big price premium Exceptional warranty coverage.

Cons:

Tight back seat, even for a small car Interior materials feel cheap and not that cheerful It's slow ... very slow.

Toyota Camry Pros:

Refined safety systems that work without bothering you One of the few hybrid sedans with available all-wheel drive All models are hybrids, so fuel economy is great across the board.

Cons:

Tight back seat for a midsize sedan Front seats could be more comfortable Engine doesn't sound good under hard acceleration.

Honda Accord Pros:

Great to drive Spacious interior with excellent material choices These Are the Best Cars You Can Buy in 2026 Hybrid models get great mpg.

Cons:

Like the Civic, you're locked out of the good tech unless you go for the top-spec Touring model All-wheel drive isn't offered, nor is a sport-oriented engine Exterior styling has lost its character compared to the previous generation.

Audi A3 Pros:

Great tech inside Comfortable front seats and good ride quality Efficient engine even though a hybrid isn't offered.

Cons:

Small back seat Small truck for this type of car Anonymous exterior design and aging platform.

BMW 3 Series Pros:

A vast array of best-in-class engines to choose from; the M3 is a serious performance car High-quality materials inside; great build quality.

Roomy cabin Cons:

Most of the driver assists aren't standard equipment Ride quality can be too firm Can get pricey with options BMW 5 Series (and BMW i5) Pros: Plenty of efficiency or power depending on which you're looking for An interior that dazzles with great tech and solid build quality Good space for all passengers

Cons:

Climate controls in the touchscreen are



hard to use The current-generation M5 is a dynamic letdown Steering feel is far short of "Ultimate Driving Machine" Mercedes-Benz E-Class Pros: Sublime ride quality, even over broken pavement Luxurious materials inside Many standard and optional advanced driver aids

Bonus:

Wagon variants are just plain cool

Cons: Interior tech can be overwhelming with the optional SuperScreen Price can rise high as you climb the performance ladder. The trunk and rear seat space are a bit small.

Mercedes-Benz S-Class Pros:

One of the nicest interiors in a modern car thanks to elegant design and excellent materials Sublime ride quality and an interior that insulates you from almost every outside noise Back seats are truly first-class

Cons:

It can get extremely expensive. The trunk is small for a car so large Maybach models barely do enough to separate themselves from the "regular"

S-Class Genesis G90 Pros:

Exceptional luxury value Every single feature you can think of, packed into one car Genesis warranty coverage is the best in the industry.



Banks to cut fraud response times to under 30 minutes as benefits of BVN, NIN kick in – CBN

Banks in the country have agreed to reduce fraud response times to under 30 minutes, a move expected to significantly improve recovery outcomes and limit systemic risk, according to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

This disclosure was made on Wednesday by Philip Ikeazor, deputy governor, Financial System Stability, at the 2026 Nigeria Electronic Fraud Forum (NeFF) Technical Kick-Off Session held in Lagos.

Represented by Ibrahim Hassan, Ikeazor said fraud mitigation efforts within the banking industry have continued to evolve in response to increasingly sophisticated threat vectors. While legacy forms of fraud such as ATM card cloning have largely been neutralised, newer risks including online fraud, social engineering, SIM-swap abuse, insider compromise and authorised push payment (APP) scams have emerged as major challenges.

According to him, NeFF has played a pivotal role in coordinating timely and industry-wide responses to these emerging risks. These interventions include the introduction of mandatory two-factor authentication, issuance of industry advisories, sustained public awareness

campaigns, the establishment of 24/7 bank fraud desks and, more recently, the development of a Standardised APP Scam Framework.

"Importantly, the industry has agreed to reduce fraud response times to under 30 minutes, a decisive step that materially improves recovery outcomes and limits systemic exposure," Ikeazor said.

He noted that a major enabler of fraud reduction in Nigeria has been the country's progress in identity management. The introduction of the Bank Verification Number (BVN), alongside its ongoing integration with the National Identification Number (NIN), has significantly constrained impersonation and synthetic identity fraud.

According to him, enhanced identity verification across banking channels, agent networks and high-risk digital platforms is steadily closing loopholes previously exploited by criminals. He added that this development reinforces the importance of identity infrastructure as a foundational control for payment system integrity, with the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) remaining a key partner in strengthening fraud prevention efforts.



Five key policy tests facing Nigeria in 2026

Nigeria's fiscal strategy faces its toughest test in 2026. Government revenue is rising, inflation is easing from recent highs, and new tax laws are coming into effect.

Some of the key fiscal tests facing the government are revenue mobilisation, debt management, tax reform execution, inflation/household pressure, and investor confidence.

The challenge now is whether the government can strengthen its finances without putting more pressure on households or scaring away investors. The decisions taken this year will shape not only budget outcomes, but also public trust in the reform agenda.

How these forces interact over the next year will determine whether consolidation strengthens economic resilience or exposes new fault lines.

At the centre of this transition are a set of fiscal and tax policy tests that will define outcomes in 2026.

The first test is whether revenue gains can be sustained without weakening consumption, investment, or formal sector participation.

Non-oil revenue has expanded sharply, rising from N5.96 trillion in 2022 to N16.09 trillion in 2024. However, nominal GDP growth has been more measured, creating a "tax-to-GDP" tension.

While the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) remains optimistic, projecting FGN retained revenue to hit N35.51 trillion in 2026, analysts warn of a communication gap.

Dumebi Oluwole, lead economist at Stears said, "One of the biggest sources of pushback is information asymmetry as many people still do not understand the potential benefit of these policies."

"The government needs to do more to communicate why these policies matter clearly". With information asymmetry, implementation risks rise, making revenue targets difficult to achieve", Oluwole said.

VAT on banking services: Setting the record straight

In recent days, Nigerians have been inundated with reports suggesting that the Federal Government has introduced Value Added Tax (VAT) on banking services such as electronic transfers, fees and commissions. Understandably, this has triggered anxiety among citizens already grappling with economic pressures. However, the truth is far less dramatic than the headlines suggest.

Contrary to widespread claims, VAT on banking services is not new. It was not introduced by the Nigeria Tax Act, 2025, and it does not represent an additional financial burden on bank customers.

For decades, Nigeria's VAT framework has applied to fees, commissions and charges for services rendered by banks and other financial institutions. What has changed is not the law, but enforcement.

The Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS) has been compelled to clarify this point following a wave of misinformation that blurred the line between service charges and actual funds transferred. VAT is not, and has never been, charged on the amount of money a customer transfers or withdraws. Rather, it applies strictly to the service fee imposed by the bank.

When a customer transfers N10,000 or N1 million, VAT is not deducted from the transferred sum. It is calculated only on the small service charge associated with the transaction.

Interest earned on savings accounts and fixed deposits also remains exempt, as it does not constitute a supply of goods or services under the law.

Equally important is what VAT does not cover. Basic food items, essential goods, medical and pharmaceutical products, as well as educational services, remain firmly exempt under the Nigeria Tax Act, 2025. These protections were deliberately preserved to shield ordinary Nigerians from unnecessary hardship.

So why the sudden public concern?

The answer lies in improved compliance and enforcement. Financial institutions are being reminded of their obligation to remit VAT already charged and collected. This renewed focus has created the false impression of a new tax, when in reality, it is the implementation of an existing one.

Tax reforms often attract controversy, especially in times of economic strain. Yet clarity must prevail over confusion. Spreading inaccurate information undermines public trust and distracts from the real conversation Nigeria must have about transparency, accountability and effective tax administration.

The Nigeria Revenue Service has made it clear that the Nigeria Tax Act, 2025, does not introduce any new VAT burden on ordinary citizens, particularly in sensitive areas such as savings, food, healthcare and education.

As Nigerians, we deserve honest explanations — not alarmist headlines. In a democracy, scrutiny is healthy, but it must be anchored on facts.

The task before us is not to fear taxation, but to demand that taxes already in place are administered fairly, communicated clearly, and used responsibly for national development.



FUTB VC attributes growth to town-gown collaboration

The Federal University of Technology Babura says it has launched a town and gown committee to support and foster sustainable development within its host community in Jigawa State.

Findings by Arewa PUNCH revealed that the initiative aided the speedy growth of FUTB, as also confirmed by the varsity's Vice Chancellor Professor Ibrahim Sabo Birnin-Kudu.

Our correspondent reports that the FUTB, founded in June 2021, has been a strategic part of the Nigerian government's efforts to boost national growth through science and technology education.

The university began academic activities in 2022, with 13 programs comprising: engineering, computing, and various sciences, including cybersecurity and software engineering.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with our correspondent on Monday in his office, Prof Birnin Kudu disclosed that the committee brought together the university staff and community representatives to identify and address the needs of Babura residents.

"The Town and Gown Committee looks for ways the university can assist the community beyond financial aid, such as offering free training programs to fill knowledge gaps,"

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Professor Sabo explained.

"Although still young, we have made steady progress and are actively working to fully accredit our programs while expanding our offerings," the VC added.

Speaking on infrastructural development in the new university, the VC highlighted that "Infrastructure development is underway with three schools established; Applied Sciences, Computing, and Engineering alongside support facilities like a library, IT center, and security office."

According to him, currently, the university operates from a temporary site provided by the Jigawa State government but has plans for a permanent campus, which he said "the work is ongoing."

Prof. Sabo explained further that "Staff recruitment has also grown, with 401 academic and non-academic personnel hired through two recruitment phases. Student enrollment has risen steadily, demonstrating the university's expanding role in technological education."

While detailing more on the plan of the university to come up with the remedial programme, the VC pointed out that "recognising the challenge of admitting qualified students, FUTB plans to start a remedial programme in January 2026.

boost national growth through science and technology education.

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FG orders ministries to prioritise local tech, companies in projects

The Federal Government on Tuesday directed Ministries, Departments and Agencies to prioritise indigenous companies and locally developed technologies in all science and engineering projects as part of moves to enforce local content across the non-oil economy.

The Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology, Kingsley Udeh, issued the directive in Abuja during the official presentation of 13 patent certificates to Nigerian inventors facilitated by the National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion.

Udeh said the implementation team for Presidential Executive Order 5, working with NOTAP, the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, and all relevant MDAs, had been ordered to "execute the comprehensive framework to institutionalise local content across the non-oil and gas sectors."

"I am issuing a clear directive to the Strategy Implementation Task Force for Presidential Executive Order 5, in collaboration with NOTAP and all relevant ministries, departments, and agencies, to execute the comprehensive framework to institutionalise local content across the non-oil and gas economy of Nigeria.

"The future will not be shaped by nations with the most oil, but by those with the best ideas. We are now moving Executive Order 5 from policy aspiration into an enforceable economic reality that empowers our businesses, creates jobs and builds a resilient, diversified economy," he said.

The strategic framework will provide clear guidelines for implementing Presidential Executive Order 5, as outlined in the approved Federal Government Gazette.

The framework aims to foster the development of new sectors across the Nigerian economy, spanning advanced manufacturing, construction, digital infrastructure, and renewable energy, ensuring that local content and indigenous expertise are prioritised in all projects.



Udeh

Energy

Africa's new gas frontier to be dominated by Nigeria's 'Decade Of Gas' – Report

Nigeria's 'Decade Of Gas' project has been tipped to dominate Africa's new gas frontier with other countries in the continent taking broader action to boost gas sector investment.

Liquefied National Gas (LNG) experts from sub-Saharan Africa forecast a surge by nearly 175 percent to hit 98 billion cubic meters (bcm) per year in 2034 from 35.7 bcm in 2024.

Launched in 2021, Nigeria's Decade of Gas is a national initiative that aims to leverage the country's vast natural gas reserves (over 200 trillion cubic feet) to transform the economy, boost industrialization, reduce energy poverty, and increase exports by 2030.

The initiative has triggered crucial reforms, most notably the passage of the landmark Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) 2021, which aims to modernize the sector, attract investment, and provide a clearer regulatory framework.

Nigeria recently announced that over \$8 billion in Final Investment Decisions (FIDs) for gas projects have been unlocked within the last 18 months, indicating growing investor confidence after recent executive orders and reforms.

It has also facilitated the development of several important infrastructure projects, including the 614km Ajaokuta-KadunaKano (AKK) gas pipeline, the Nigeria LNG (NLNG) Train 7 project, and the OML 53 Kwale Gas Gathering facility, which has been successfully commissioned.

Under the initiative, Africa's leading oil producer has witnessed significant growth in demand for Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), thanks to government policies (like the autogas policy and National Gas Expansion Program) pushing for wider adoption in transportation and industry.



ANOH project has achieved first gas, commenced production, says Seplat



Ghebreyesus

Seplat Energy says the 300 million standard cubic feet per day (mmscfd) ANOH gas project has achieved its first gas.

In a statement on Tuesday, Stanley Opara, Seplat's spokesperson, said the ANOH Gas Processing Company (AGPC) has commenced gas supply to the Indorama Petrochemical plant.

"Seplat Energy Plc ("Seplat" or the "Company"), a leading Nigerian independent energy company listed on both the Nigerian Exchange Limited and London Stock Exchange, is pleased to announce that the 300 MMscfd ANOH gas project has achieved first gas," he said.

"Following completion of the 11km Indorama gas export pipeline and receipt of regulatory approval from the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), on Friday 16th January 2026, ANOH Gas Processing Company (AGPC) commenced gas supply to Indorama, under a firm and interruptible offtake Gas Sales Agreements (GSAs).

"To enable the flow of gas, the four upstream wells, which had been on standby since November 2025, were brought online."

Since first gas, Opara said wet gas production has been stabilising, delivering 40 to 52 mmscfd of processed gas directly from the ANOH gas plant to the Indorama Petrochemical plant.

He added that condensate production has reached 2,000 to 2,500 barrels of oil equivalent per day (kboepd) and is expected to rise alongside gas production as the plant ramps up to design capacity.

"In addition, preparations are underway to

initiate sales of processed gas to the Nigeria LNG (NLNG) with an offtake agreement structured on an interruptible basis and will support the gas plant to further scale production towards full design capacity of 300MMscfd," Opara said.

"Meanwhile, the construction of the OB3 pipeline export route by Nigerian Gas Infrastructure Company (NGIC), originally designated as the primary channel for ANOH gas supply to the domestic market, has resumed and a revised completion date will be communicated in due course.

"The ANOH gas plant was developed by AGPC, an incorporated joint venture between Seplat Energy and the NGIC."

He said the integrated plant consists of two 150 mmscfd gas processing units, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) recovery units, condensate stabilisation units, a 16 megawatt (MW) power plant, and other supporting facilities.

Opara added that the ANOH gas plant was built to operate with zero routine flares.

Commenting on the development, Roger Brown, Chief Executive Officer of Seplat Energy, said ANOH is the first of seven critical gas projects identified by the federal government to begin operations.

"It is an important strategic project for Seplat, our partner NGIC, and Nigeria as a whole," he said.

"It has taken a significant amount of commitment and hard work to complete the project in a part of the onshore Niger Delta with limited gas pipeline infrastructure, and we are extremely proud of this achievement.

Foreign lenders sue FBN Trustees, Sulu Gambari over alleged illegal creation of security in Neconde -Nestoil case

A consortium of Foreign financial institutions, Glencore Energy UK Limited, Africa Finance Corporation, Mauritius Commercial Bank, has sued First Bank Nigeria Trustees Limited. The action is filed against both FBN Trustees and their appointed receiver, Abubakar Sulu-Gambari SAN, over what the Foreign Lenders allege is an unlawful attempt to seize control of Neconde Energy Limited's interests in Oil Mining Lease 42 (OML 42).

The Foreign Lenders extended credit facilities to Neconde, with FBN Trustees appointed as security trustee under the agreed terms.

The International Financiers whose court processes accuse FBN Trustee of an alleged illegal Grab of Asset and breach of Trust hauled FBN Trustees Limited and its receiver Abubakar Sulu Gambari SAN before the courts, accusing them of a deliberate attempt to unlawfully seize Neconde Energy Limited's stake in Oil Mining Lease 42 (OML 42).

The Foreign Lenders allege that FBN Trustees abandoned its role as a neutral trustee, ignored binding loan terms, and

allegedly acted to benefit the consortium of Nigerian banks that have no debt claim against Neconde Energy.

According to court filings, FBN Trustees was appointed to protect the interests of the Senior Foreign Lenders—international financial institutions and an oil trading company. They allege, that instead, FBN trustee crossed the line, secretly creating a second, illegal security over Neconde's OML 42 interest without the required consent.

That consent, the foreign lenders state, was clearly refused.

Despite this, FBN Trustees allegedly went ahead and executed a deed of charge, a move the foreign lenders describe as unauthorised, unlawful, and a clear breach of trust.

The lawsuit stresses that Neconde Energy owes nothing to the Nigerian banks who are now claiming rights over OML 42. The foreign lenders say that this makes the security baseless from the start, and any enforcement action flowing from it legally void.

They also challenge the appointment of a receiver, arguing it rests on an invalid and manufactured claim.



Iran will be 'wiped out' if it targets me – Trump warns

The President of the United States, Donald Trump, has issued a strong warning to Iran, declaring that the Middle Eastern nation would face total destruction if any assassination attempt were made against him.

Trump made the statement during an interview aired on News Nation on Tuesday, where he addressed reports and threats allegedly issued by Iranian leaders against him.

According to the president, he has already given "very firm instructions" on

how the United States should respond if such an attack were to occur.

"If anything happens, they're going to wipe them off the face of this earth," Trump said during the interview.

He added that Iran should not contemplate such an action, stressing that the consequences would be devastating.

Trump, who has previously spoken about threats from Tehran, said he had left explicit instructions to ensure Iran would be destroyed if he were assassinated.

Anjel Chakma's Killing Exposes India's Denial of Racism

The killing of 24-year-old student Anjel Chakma in Dehradun has forced India to confront an uncomfortable truth it has long avoided: racism exists within its borders, and it kills. Chakma, who was from Tripura in India's Northeast region, was attacked in December after he and his younger brother were allegedly subjected to racial abuse while shopping for groceries. Seventeen days later, Chakma died from his injuries.

According to his brother, the assault began with racial slurs that framed the two as outsiders. The situation escalated quickly. His brother was struck with a metal object, while Chakma was stabbed in the head and back. The violence was sudden, brutal and devastating. For many Northeastern Indians, however, it was also painfully familiar.

Chakma's death was not an isolated act of violence. It was the culmination of everyday racial hostility that Northeastern Indians face across the country, especially in mainland cities where their appearance, accents and cultures are marked as "foreign." What happened in Dehradun reflects a broader pattern of racialization that India continues to deny.

A pattern, not an outlier

For many from the Northeast, a region with distinct ethnicities, cultures, languages and physical features that often differ sharply from those of Mainland Indians, daily experiences of name-calling, mocking of physical features and assumptions of being "foreign" or "outsiders" create a sense that Mainland Indian spaces aren't fully welcoming to them.

These acts are often dismissed as ignorance or prejudice, but their persistence reveals something deeper. Racism in India is not accidental; it is structural.

Chakma's death is one among several high-profile tragedies. In 2014, Nido Tania, a 19-year-old student from Arunachal Pradesh, was beaten to death in Delhi in 2014 following an altercation in which he was targeted with racist abuse.



Anjel Chakma



NFF executive board set to meet over Chelle

The executive committee of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), will on Tuesday 27th, January, hold it's board meeting at his Sunday Dankaro Secretariat, Abuja to deliberate and evaluate the performance of the Super

Eagles at the just concluded African Cup of Nations (AFCON 2025) in Morocco.

Other matters that will be on the meeting agenda is the extension of contract for Super Eagles coach Eric Chelle, who has gained support from stakeholders and the

media, sportsunlimited reports.

They will also appraise the preparations and participation of the Nigeria Senior National women team Super Falcons at 2027 FIFA women's World Cup ticket, at the 14th women Africa Cup of Nations schedule for Morocco, 17th March - 3rd April 2026.

They will also discuss the proposed enlarged Congress slated for April in Abuja ahead of the September elective congress.

The Super Eagles finished third and won bronze at the 2025 AFCON, staged in Morocco.

2028 Olympics: Hope rises as Bane plans switch to Nigeria

Nigeria's hopes of Olympic basketball success could receive a boost, with Orlando Magic's Desmond Bane saying he wants to "make something happen" and recruit fellow NBA stars to D'Tigers' cause.

Bane is officially listed as American by the NBA but has Nigerian heritage and is yet to represent any nation on the international stage.

Having qualified for their first Olympics at London 2012, Nigeria's basketball team went on to also compete at Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020, but missed out on the 2024 Games in Paris.

Houston Rockets guard Josh Okogie, who was born in Lagos but raised in the USA, is already a Nigeria international, but Bane says he has had conversations with other players about joining up.



Forwards Precious Achiuwa and Adem Bona of the Sacramento Kings and Philadelphia 76ers respectively are also Nigerian-listed NBA players.

Currently ranked 50th in governing body Fiba's world rankings, Nigeria have dropped to 7th among African nations.

Galatasaray to sign Onyedika if...

Galatasaray will complete the transfer of Super Eagles midfielder Raphael Onyedika should they fail to sign two of their top transfer targets, according to Turkish newspaper Sabah.

The transfer targets are 2025 AFCON final match winner Pape Gueye of Senegal and Youssouf Fofana of AC Milan.

Both players are valued at over 30 million euros, while Onyedika is a lot more affordable with a price tag of around 20 million euros.

Defensive midfielder Onyedika, 24, is already at loggerheads with his Belgian team Club Brugge over a transfer in this window.

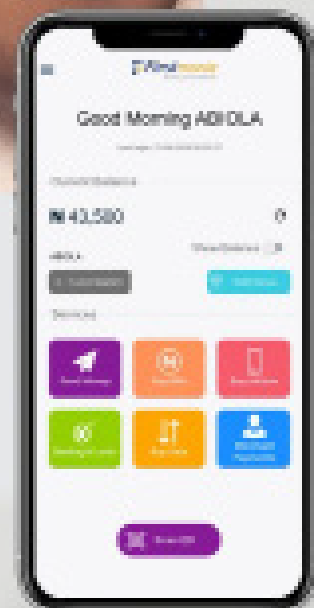
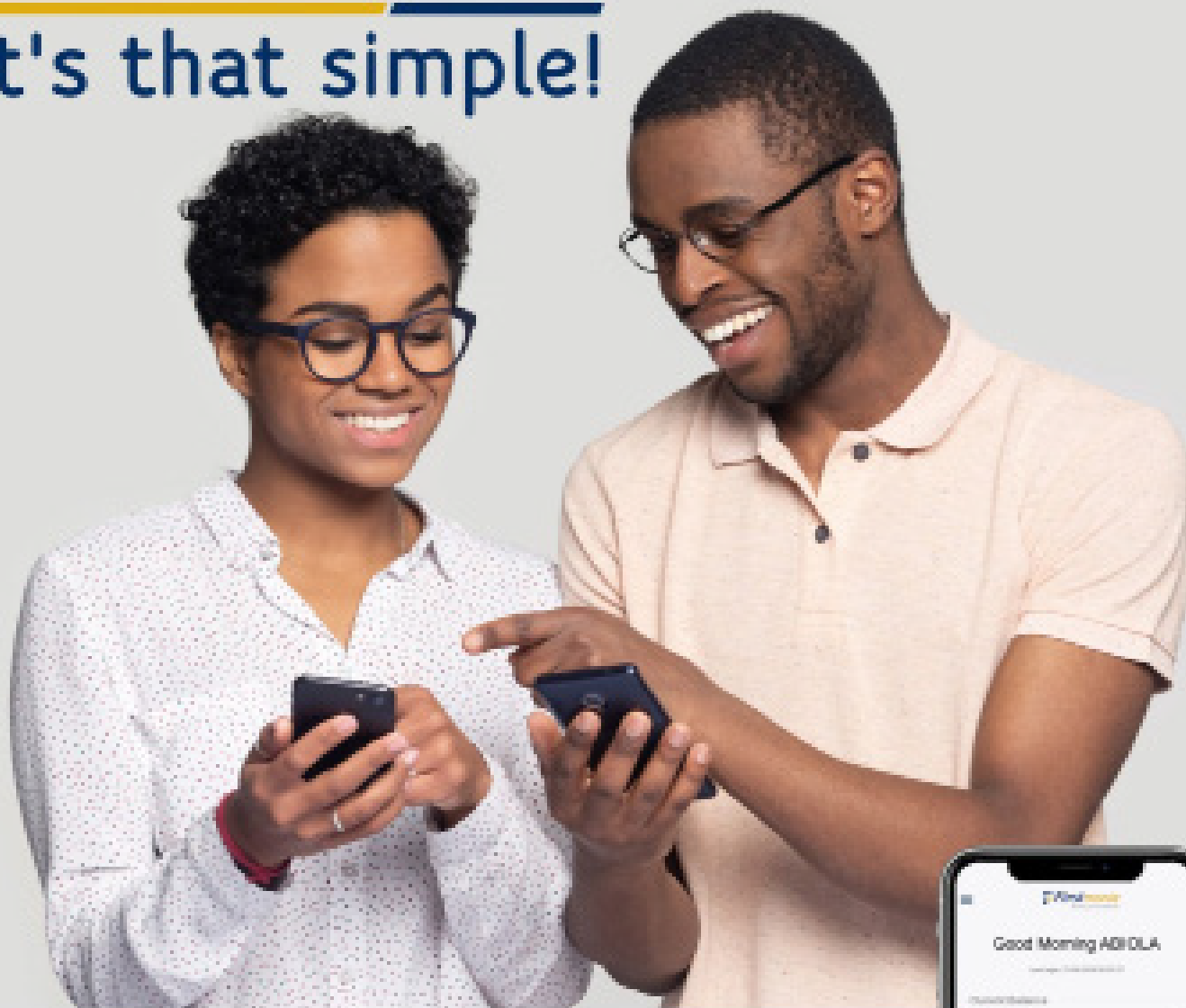
He wishes to move after agreeing personal terms, while Club Brugge plan to hold on to him until at least the summer.

The player still has 18 months left on his contract.

Fellow Super Eagles star Victor Osimhen has already tried to convince Onyedika to join Galatasaray, saying they are one of the biggest clubs in the world.

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