Onyeali-Ikpe, Dabiri Erewa, Bismarck Rewane Advocate Increased Diaspora Participation In Nigeria's Economy



Tier-one lender, Fidelity Bank Plc, has reaffirmed its leadership in the diaspora banking sector with the successful hosting of the Fidelity Diaspora Summit 2026, a global virtual engagement designed to help Nigerians living abroad navigate evolving policies and identify credible opportunities for wealth creation in Nigeria.

The summit held virtually on Saturday, 14 March 2026, and convened Nigerians across key diaspora markets including the United Kingdom, the United States, Can-

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TheMatrix

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■ Troops Repel Infiltration Attempt At Ajilari Cross In Borno



Higher Call To Duty...

President Bola Tinubu swearing in Mr Taiwo Oyedele, the Chairman of the Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms, as Minister of State for Finance, at the State House, Abuja, yesterday.

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TheMatrix

Lead Story

By Babajide Okeowo

Bomb Explosions Rock Maiduguri, Several Casualties Feared

- *Zulum Calls For Calm, Vigilance At Worship, Public Places*
- *Troops Repel Infiltration Attempt At Ajilari Cross In Borno*



Multiple bomb explosions rocked Maiduguri on Monday evening, March 16, 2026, leaving several people feared dead and many injured.

The blasts targeted the busy Monday Market and the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital, plunging the city into chaos shortly after residents broke their Ramadan fast.

The Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Nahum Daso, said preliminary reports revealed the explosions happened at the Post Office area and the main entrance of University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital, but he had yet to confirm the one at the Monday market.

"Yes, there were reports of explosions at University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital main gate and Post Office area, but the one at Monday Market, I have no information, but I will get back to you as soon as I have it," Daso said.

He explained the number of casualties were still sketchy as the victims had been taken to different hospitals in the state capitals, adding that he did not have the records at the time of filing this report on Monday night.

But some residents in the area feared that the explosions might have claimed several lives and injured many others.

Reacting to the explosions, the state's Governor, Babagana Zulum, who is currently in Saudi Arabia for the Lesser Hajj, described the attack as despicable, cruel, and cowardly, targeting innocent people in the holy month of Ramadan.

In a statement, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Media, Dauda Iliya, called for increased vigilance and heightened security measures, particularly in places of worship, as the festive period beckons.

"I am deeply saddened by the explosions that occurred in parts of the metropolis on Monday evening. My thoughts and prayers are with the families of the victims and those injured as a result of the blast. The act is utterly condemnable, barbaric, and inhumane," Zulum was quoted as saying.

"The recent surge in attacks is not unconnected with intense military operations in the Sambisa forest and other hideouts of the insurgents," he added.

The governor, therefore, assured people of the state that the military and other security agencies were on top of the situation, as adequate measures had been taken to forestall any security breach in Maiduguri and the entire state

He called on residents to remain calm, go about their usual activities, and report any suspicious movement or activity to security agencies. Earlier, suspected Boko Haram insurgents had attempted to infiltrate the Ajilari Cross area of Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, in the early hours of Monday.

According to residents of the area, the incident occurred around 1 a.m., with sporadic gunshots heard across the neighbourhood, causing panic among residents of the state capital.

Ajilari Cross is located on the outskirts of Maiduguri, the Borno State capital.

Men Should Stop Marrying Broke Women — Kingsley Okonkwo

Relationship coach and Senior Pastor of David's Christian Center, Kingsley Okonkwo, has challenged traditional dating norms by urging men to seek out financially responsible partners. In a series of social media posts, the cleric argued that the modern trend of women being fully dependent on their male partners creates an unhealthy dynamic that shifts the focus away from genuine companionship.

Okonkwo observed that many men now view marriage as a heavy burden rather than a blessing because relationships are increasingly treated as a one-sided financial obligation. He noted that when a partnership is defined solely by a man's ability to provide, the essence of a shared life and mutual support is often lost under the weight of financial pressure.

To fix this trend, the pastor advised men to raise their standards and prioritize women who can actively contribute to a shared future. By seeking partners who value productivity, he believes men can help foster a culture where more women are encouraged to pursue financial independence and personal growth.

The cleric also took aim at societal expectations that place the entire financial weight of a relationship on the man's shoulders. He described this cultural norm as not only harmful to the mental and financial health of men but also inconsistent with biblical principles of partnership and stewardship.

Finally, Okonkwo issued a stern warning to men who intentionally seek out financially vulnerable women to maintain a sense of power. He cautioned that using a partner's lack of resources as a means of control is a predatory behavior that undermines the foundation of a healthy, Christ-centered marriage.

Pastor Giwa To Govt: You Can't Dictate Our Closing Time



Pastor Adewale Giwa of Awaiting the Second Coming of Christ Ministry, has challenged the church to wake up from its slumber before the devil takes over.

Giwa made the remark while lamenting that a government that lacks the fear of God is dictating to the church when to close its programme.

His remark came after the Commissioner of Police in Ondo State advised religious centres to suspend night worship due to the incessant security challenges in the state. The police boss in the state anchored his call on the recent abduction of six worshippers at a Celestial church in the Uso community, Owo Local Government Area of the state. Pastor Giwa, while addressing his members in Akure, said: "Once you are filled with the holy spirit fear disappears; today a government that does not fear God will dictate to the church what time to close programme and the church would foolishly agree to it.

"Where is the Holy Spirit that rested upon Daniel to continue to pray to God, even when King Darius signed a decree prohibiting prayer?

"Where is the Holy Spirit that rested upon Peter and John today in the church?

"The Jewish council, otherwise known as sanhedrin had instructed them not to proclaim the gospel, but they went ahead and did so. "The church is sleeping and it needs to wake up before the devil finally takes over."



SULTAN VISITS PRESIDENT...

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (R) welcomes Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammadu Sa'adu Abubakar III, to the Presidential Villa, Abuja... Recently

APC Membership In Zamfara Hits 158,697 After Lawal's Defection

The Secretary to the Zamfara State Government, Abubakar Nakwada, has announced a significant boost in the All Progressives Congress (APC) membership following Governor Dauda Lawal's recent defection. According to Nakwada, the Governor's move to the ruling party has acted as a major catalyst, sparking a massive surge in e-membership registrations across the state.



During a monitoring exercise of the registration process in Gusau and Bungudu Local Government Areas, Nakwada revealed impressive data regarding the party's growth. He noted that the APC successfully onboarded 60,987 new members in just three days after the digital registration portal was reopened to the public.

This rapid influx of supporters has fundamentally altered the party's numerical strength in Zamfara. The official statistics show that total APC membership in the state has climbed to 158,697, representing a substantial leap from the previous figure of 97,710 recorded before the Governor's entry into the party.

Nakwada attributed this momentum directly to Governor Lawal's deep-rooted grassroots support and the perceived benefits of his alignment with the center. He emphasized that the "Lawal factor" has re-energized the party's base and attracted citizens who were previously on the political sidelines. Looking ahead, the State Government scribe expressed strong optimism that the APC will surpass its ambitious membership targets before the March 25 deadline. He urged residents to continue utilizing the e-registration platform to formalize their status as the party prepares for future electoral challenges.

News

By Babajide Okeowo

Nigeria's Inflation Rate Drops To 15.06 % In February, Says NBS

▪ Food Inflation Hits Double Digits, Spikes From 8.89% In January To12.12% In February

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has disclosed that Nigeria's inflation rate declined marginally from 15.1 percent in January to 15.06 percent in February.

The development was contained in the NBS consumer price index (CPI) report for February, released on Monday in Abuja.

According to the statistical body, the CPI, which measures the rate of change in prices of goods and services, declined by 0.04 percent (month-on-month) compared to the January 2026 headline inflation rate.

"On a year-on-year basis, the Headline inflation rate was 11.21% lower than the rate recorded in February 2025 (26.27%)," the bureau said.

"This shows that the Headline inflation rate (year-on-year basis) decreased in February 2026 compared to the same month in the preceding year (i.e., February 2025).

"On a month-on-month basis, the Headline inflation rate in February 2026 was 2.01%, which was 4.89% higher than the rate recorded in January 2026 (-2.88%).

"This means that in February 2026, the rate of increase in the average price level was higher than the rate of increase in the average price level in January 2026." The statistics firm said the percentage change in the average CPI for the twelve months ending February 2026 over the average for the previous twelve-month period was 21.03 percent, showing a 3.02 percent increase compared to 18.01 percent recorded in February 2025.



Meanwhile, Nigeria's food inflation rate rose to 12.12% year-on-year in February 2026, pushing the indicator back into double-digit territory after a sharp drop to single digits in January. Data from the Consumer Price Index (CPI) report released by the NBS showed that food inflation increased from 8.89% in January 2026 to 12.12% in February 2026, representing a 3.23 percentage point rise month-on-month.

According to the report, "The Food inflation rate in February 2026 was 12.12% on a year-on-year basis. This was 14.86% points lower compared to the rate recorded in February 2025 (26.98%)." February recorded a 4.69% month-on-month increase, signalling renewed upward pressure in food prices. The NBS attributed the increase to rising prices of key food commodities across markets. The report stated that the increase was "attributed to the rate of increase in the average prices of Beans, Carrots, Okazi Leaf, Cassava Tuber, Crayfish, Millet Flour, Yam Flour, Snails, Avenger (Ogbono/Apon) – dried ungrinded, cow peas, etc." Despite the February rebound, longer-term indicators still point to a significant moderation in food price growth compared with 2025.

The NBS reported that the average annual food inflation rate for the twelve months ending February 2026 stood at 19.08%, sharply lower than the 37.40% recorded in February 2025. The report noted that "The average annual rate of Food inflation for the twelve months ending February 2026 over the previous twelve-month average was 19.08%, which was 18.31% points lower compared with the average annual rate of change recorded in February 2025 (37.40%)." This suggests that while short-term volatility persists in food markets, the overall inflation trajectory over the past year has softened considerably.

State-level food price disparities persist

State-level data from the CPI report showed that food inflation varied widely across the country.

On a year-on-year basis, Kogi recorded the highest food inflation rate at 26.91%, followed by Adamawa at 23.12% and Benue at 21.89%. At the lower end of the spectrum, Katsina recorded the slowest rise in food prices at 5.09%, while Bauchi and Imo posted 7.09% and 7.65% respectively. Month-on-month data showed that Bayelsa recorded the highest increase in food prices at 8.81%, followed by Ebonyi at 8.51% and Edo at 7.72%. Meanwhile, Katsina recorded a slight decline of -0.70%, while Nasarawa and Kano recorded increases of 0.17% and 1.39%, respectively.

Tinubu Swears In Taiwo Oyedele As Minister Of State For Finance



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has officially sworn in Taiwo Oyedele as the new Minister of State for Finance. The ceremony took place at the State House in Abuja, marking a significant addition to the President's economic management team.

This high-profile appointment comes as part of a strategic cabinet reshuffle aimed at optimizing the administration's performance. The move signals the President's intent to bring specialized expertise into the core of Nigeria's financial leadership.

Oyedele steps into the role previously held by Dr. Doris Uzoka-Anite. Following the restructuring, Uzoka-Anite has been redeployed to serve as a minister within the Federal Ministry of Budget and National Planning.

The new minister is a well-known figure in Nigeria's financial sector, having recently chaired the Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms. In that capacity, he was the primary architect of the administration's strategy to modernize the nation's tax framework.

During his time leading the committee, Oyedele earned a reputation for championing the simplification of the tax system. His work focused heavily on reducing the burden on small businesses while finding sustainable ways to boost overall government revenue. Beyond his recent public service, Oyedele brings decades of private-sector experience to the role. He previously served as a prominent tax leader at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), where he became one of Africa's most respected voices on fiscal policy and economics.

In his new ministerial capacity, the economist is expected to be a driving force behind the administration's broader economic reform agenda. His primary focus will be on strengthening fiscal management and ensuring the long-term stability of the Nigerian economy.

Onyeali-Ikpe, Dabiri Erewa, Rewane Advocate Increased Diaspora Participation In Nigeria's Economy ▪ *Cont'd from cover page*

ada, and the United Arab Emirates.

"Our theme today is, "Navigating the New Tax Policy and Unlocking Investment Opportunities in Nigeria". This subject is timely, practical, and matters to every Nigerian in the diaspora who earns, saves, owns assets or invests back home.

"It is no news that Nigerians living abroad are our strongest ambassadors. You do much more than remit funds, you carry our reputation, our enterprise, and our potential into boardrooms, hospitals, laboratories, studios, and technology hubs around the world. Many people describe the diaspora as Nigeria's thirty-seventh state, and the description fits because of your scale and your impact", remarked the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Fidelity Bank Plc, Dr. Nneka Onyeali-Ikpe,OON, during her welcome address at the webinar.

The summit, which followed a maiden edition held in 2021, featured topical presentations delivered by thought leaders

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FFK Knocks Momodu Over Tinubu-Abacha Comparison

Nigeria's Ambassador-designate to Germany, Femi Fani-Kayode, has launched a stinging verbal assault on veteran journalist and publisher Dele Momodu. The confrontation follows recent public comments made by Momodu regarding the current trajectory of the Nigerian presidency.

The friction began during a recent broadcast of Politics Today on Channels Television. During his appearance, Momodu drew a controversial parallel between the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the military regime of the late General Sani Abacha.



Momodu did not stop at historical comparisons, going further to issue a stern warning about the future of Nigerian democracy. He suggested that if current trends continue, President Tinubu has the potential to transform into a "dictator," a claim that immediately sparked a firestorm of reactions.

Responding via a post on X (formerly Twitter) on Monday, Fani-Kayode dismissed Momodu's assertions as baseless. He accused the Ovation International publisher of suffering from "cognitive dissonance," suggesting his perspective was disconnected from reality.

In a personal swipe, the Ambassador-designate remarked that Momodu appeared "drained and tired" during his television appearance. Fani-Kayode used the observation to suggest that the veteran journalist's political analysis was losing its sharp edge.

Fani-Kayode also extended his criticism to the African Democratic Congress (ADC), the political platform Momodu is currently associated with. He dismissed the party as an unserious entity that is wholly unprepared for the rigors of high-level Nigerian politics. Concluding his critique, Fani-Kayode urged Momodu to abandon the opposition and join the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC). He argued that the publisher would be better served by aligning with the current administration rather than criticizing it from the sidelines.

Lagos Showcases Investment Drive At London Roundtable



Lagos took center stage at a strategic investment roundtable in London yesterday, hosted by the Nigeria Investment Promotion Commission in collaboration with the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council. Speaking at the event, Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu highlighted ongoing efforts to strengthen the state's investment climate and unveiled plans for the upcoming Invest Lagos 3.0 Summit scheduled for June.

The summit aims to reinforce Lagos's position as Africa's leading gateway for capital and innovation.

An update was also provided on the progress toward establishing the Lagos International Financial Centre, a flagship initiative designed to boost global investor confidence and streamline business operations in the state. "Our focus is to ensure Lagos remains a place where capital and innovation can grow with confidence," the representative said. "We are committed to building an environment that attracts investment and creates opportunities for people to succeed." The roundtable brought together policymakers, investors, and business leaders to explore new avenues for collaboration and to reaffirm Lagos's role as a hub for international trade and finance.

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TheMatrix

Spotlight

By TheMatrix

BLOOM Conference Returns With A Prophetic Call To Thrive

The BLOOM Conference, a transformative gathering for women, is set to return with its second edition, BLOOM 2.0, on Saturday, March 28, 2026, at RCCG Newsprings, Ikorodu Road, Maryland, Lagos. Building on the success of its inaugural edition, this year's theme, THRIVE, calls women to move beyond restoration into leadership, influence, and sustainable growth.

Birthed from the prophetic promise in Isaiah 35:1–2 — "the wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad… the desert shall rejoice and blossom abundantly" — BLOOM has become a spiritual and practical movement reminding women that God's intention is transformation, restoration, and visible fruitfulness. "Blooming is not accidental; it is the result of alignment, intentional growth, and obedience to God's process," said Pastor Omowumi Adewole, the convener of the conference. "This year, we are going further. BLOOM 2.0 is about thriving — spiritually, financially, emotionally, and professionally." The conference will address five critical pillars of thriving: Relationships, Career, Health, Physical & Emotional Abuse and Finance and Investment. According to Adewole, the finance and investment pillar is particularly crucial: "Thriving in finance speaks to stability, stewardship, and influence. It is about understanding money, building wealth responsibly, and positioning women to lead in their homes, communities, and society at large."

The lineup of speakers reflects the conference's holistic vision. Alongside Pastor Adewole, guest speakers include Pastor Bolanle Ogbole, Pastor Tomi Adisa, Mrs. Yetunde Oni (Managing Director, Union Bank), and Mrs. Solape Akinpelu (Founder & CEO, HerVest). Together, they will inspire and equip women to step fully into this season of thriving. Mrs. Oni emphasized the importance of financial literacy for women: "When women thrive financially, they thrive in every other area of life. It's not just about survival; it's about influence and legacy." The conference is expected to draw women from all walks of life — professionals, entrepreneurs, ministers, and emerging influencers — creating a vibrant space for empowerment, healing, and activation. "This is a prophetic call for women to move from potential to leadership," Adewole added. "We believe every woman who attends will leave spiritually grounded, financially informed, and strategically positioned to lead with wisdom and impact."

> ***The lineup of speakers reflects the conference's holistic vision. Alongside Pastor Adewole, guest speakers include Pastor Bolanle Ogbole, Pastor Tomi Adisa, Mrs. Yetunde Oni (Managing Director, Union Bank), and Mrs. Solape Akinpelu (Founder & CEO, HerVest). Together, they will inspire and equip women to step fully into this season of thriving".***





CLOSING CEREMONY OF A 3-DAY TRAINING WORKSHOP ON ANTI-COMPETITION LAW AND CONSUMER RIGHTS...

L-R: Hon. Justice M. L. Shuaibu, presiding Justice Court of Appeal Akure Division; Hon. Justice Adamu Jauro of Supreme Court; Hon. Justice Festus Obande Igbuinya of Supreme Court and Hon. Justice Adewale Abiru of the Supreme Court at the closing ceremony of a 3-day training workshop on Anti-Competition Law and Consumer Rights held at the National Judicial Institute, Jabi, Abuja at the weekend.

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Editorial

The Electoral Act Amendment Bill — A Test Of Nigeria's Democratic Resolve

As Nigeria marches steadily toward the 2027 general elections, one truth looms larger than any campaign slogan: the credibility of our democracy rests not on promises, but on the strength of our laws.

The Electoral Act Amendment Bill, currently before the National Assembly, is not just another piece of legislation. It is the scaffolding upon which the legitimacy of the next election will stand.

For too long, Nigerians have endured elections marred by logistical failures, legal ambiguities, and loopholes that empower manipulation rather than transparency.

The 2023 polls, while historic in their own right, exposed glaring weaknesses—from the deployment of technology to the clarity of results transmission. If these gaps are not addressed, 2027 risks becoming another cycle of disputes, litigations, and disillusionment.

Without its timely passage, the nation risks repeating the cycle of disputes, litigations, and public disillusionment that have plagued past polls.

Lessons from 2023: A Democracy Tested

The 2023 elections, though historic, exposed glaring weaknesses in our electoral system. From the deployment of technology to the clarity of results transmission, Nigerians witnessed firsthand how loopholes in the law can be exploited to sow doubt. The controversies surrounding electronic transmission of results, campaign financing, and the role of party agents revealed a system struggling to keep pace with modern democratic expectations.

These shortcomings are not abstract. They translate into real consequences: citizens losing faith in their votes, courts becoming the battleground for political legitimacy, and the specter of instability hovering over the nation. If these gaps are not addressed, 2027 could become another election defined not by the will of the people, but by the flaws of the process.

Why the Amendment Bill Matters

- The proposed Electoral Act Amendment Bill seeks to:
- Strengthen electronic transmission of results to ensure transparency and reduce manipulation.
- Tighten campaign finance regulations, curbing the influence of money and ensuring a level playing field.



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- Empower INEC with clearer authority to sanction violations and enforce compliance.
- Clarify legal ambiguities that have historically fueled endless post-election litigations.

These reforms are not luxuries; they are necessities. In a country where elections often determine not just leadership but national stability, the integrity of the process is paramount.

Beyond Politics: A National Imperative

While critics argue that the bill is being rushed or politicised, delay is the greater danger. Every day without reform is a day closer to an election conducted under flawed rules. Nigerians deserve better than a system that leaves room for doubt, dispute, and disenfranchisement.

This is not about who wins or loses in 2027. It is about whether Nigerians can trust the process at all. As one civil society leader aptly put it:

"Democracy dies not when ballots are cast, but when citizens lose faith in their power to choose."

That warning should echo through the chambers of the National Assembly.

A Call to Lawmakers

TheMatrix Newspaper believes the passage of the Electoral Act Amendment Bill is a litmus test for the National Assembly's commitment to democracy. Will lawmakers choose to entrench fairness and transparency, or will they gamble with the nation's fragile trust in its institutions?

History will not forgive hesitation. Nigerians will remember whether their representatives acted to safeguard democracy or allowed partisan interests to derail reform. The credibility of the 2027 elections depends on what the National Assembly does today.

The Time to Act is Now

Nigeria's democracy is young, fragile, and still evolving. The Electoral Act Amendment Bill offers a chance to strengthen it, to reassure citizens that their votes matter, and to demonstrate to the world that Nigeria is committed to democratic progress.

The National Assembly must rise above political calculations and pass the bill without delay. The stakes are too high, the risks too grave, and the opportunity too rare.

The time to act is now.

Letters in response to specifici publications in TheMatrix should be befi (150-250 words) and straight to the point. Interested readers may send such letters along with their contacts to opinion@thematrix.com We also welcome comments and opinions on topical local, national and international issues provided they are well written and should also not be longer than 750-1000 words. They should be sent to opinion@thematrix.com along with photograph, email address and phone numbers of the writer

Letters To The Editor

The City Boys Owerri Farce: Nature Abhors A Vacuum of Integrity

History and nature alike teach us one consistent lesson: a structure built on a foundation of deceit, corruption, and the denial of fundamental human principles cannot stand. It will not only collapse; it will be stunted by its own lack of truth. This was the lesson delivered recently in Owerri.

The "City Boys Movement," a gathering orchestrated by Seyi Tinubu in collaboration with Obi Cubana, Cubana Chief Priest, and others to spearhead a second-term campaign for President Bola Tinubu in the South-East, recently attempted what was presented as a palliative outreach under the guise of helping the impoverished. However, from observations of those present, it appeared to be little more than a thinly veiled effort to reward loyalists.

Like a collapsing domino, the event spiraled into chaos when pandemonium broke out. It was as though nature itself decided the movement was not in harmony with the needs of the people.

Despite the massive deployment of security operatives, authorities could not restrain a crowd seemingly determined to seize what many perceived as political patronage.



It is rather ironic that this administration seeks to convince Nigerians that a leadership defined by broken promises is the "best fit" for a citizenry already burdened by socio-economic and security challenges largely created by poor governance.

While violence should never be condoned, the root cause must be acknowledged: what lacks legitimacy in the eyes of the people will always face resistance. Instead of empowering citizens through sound economic policies, the government appears to punish the populace with one hand while offering meagre palliatives with the other like giving a drop of water to quench a thirst it helped create.

Politics

By Ilesanmi Adewale

OBAFEMI AWOLOWO:
"Those who desire to reach, and keep their places at the top in any calling must be prepared to do so the hard way."



APC Unveils Official Zoning Formula For NWC Ahead Of National Convention



The All Progressives Congress, APC, has reaffirmed that its existing zoning arrangement for National Working Committee, NWC, positions will remain in force ahead of the party's 2026 National Convention.

In a statement issued on Monday in Abuja, the party's National Publicity Secretary, Felix Morka, said the decision is intended to guide aspirants and ensure stability within the party as it prepares for key internal elections.

According to the statement, the zoning formula outlined in the published 2026 Schedule of Nationwide Congresses, National Convention and Related Activities remains valid and will be strictly applied during the convention process.

"The existing zoning arrangement for National Working Committee positions across states within the geo-political zones remains valid and applicable to the upcoming National Convention," the statement said. The party also advised aspirants seeking national offices to strictly comply with the zoning framework when obtaining and submitting their Expression of Interest and Nomination Forms.

"Accordingly, aspirants are advised to be STRICTLY GUIDED by the existing zoning arrangement," Morka added.

The APC noted that maintaining the zoning structure would help ensure fairness, balance and orderliness in the conduct of the party's internal processes ahead of the convention.

INEC Under Fire: ADC Alleges Conspiracy To Install Pro-Tinubu Chairman





The African Democratic Congress (ADC) has raised an alarm over an alleged conspiracy by the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) to destabilize its leadership. The party claims there is an ongoing plot to pressure the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) into recognizing an external figure as its National Chairman.

At the center of the controversy is Mr. Nafiu Bala Gombe, whom the ADC identifies as a reported ally of President Bola Tinubu. The party clarified that Mr. Nafiu is not a legitimate leader within their ranks, describing him instead as a former member who has already been expelled from the organization.

In a formal statement released in Abuja, the ADC National Publicity Secretary, Mallam Bolaji Abdullahi, characterized the move as a "calculated attempt" by the ruling party. He argued that the APC is intentionally trying to manufacture internal confusion to weaken the ADC's structural integrity ahead of future elections.

The opposition party further alleged that this maneuver is part of a broader strategy by the Tinubu administration to systematically dismantle any remaining political resistance. Abdullahi described the ADC as the "only viable opposition platform left in the country," making it a primary target for such interference.

According to the statement, the ultimate goal of this alleged interference is to clear the political field for the 2027 general elections. The ADC suggests that by creating leadership crises within opposition parties, the ruling class intends to ensure President Tinubu emerges as the only "serious contender" on the ballot.

To counter claims of leadership instability, the ADC asserted that there is no legal basis for confusion regarding its chairmanship. The party maintained that Senator David Mark remains the undisputed leader, following a constitutional transition that was properly documented and overseen by the appropriate authorities.

The party pointed to a joint meeting of the National Working Committee (NWC) and the National Executive Committee (NEC) held in July 2025 as the definitive moment of this transition. They emphasized that officials from INEC were present to witness the proceedings, making the current leadership status a matter of public record.

Concluding the briefing, the ADC vowed to resist any "anti-democratic forces" attempting to compromise Nigeria's multi-party system. The party pledged to use every legitimate and legal means available to protect its autonomy and ensure that competitive democracy remains intact in the country.

PDP Hits Back at Felix Morka, Labels APC's Defection Stance "Delusional"

The Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, has dismissed claims by All Progressives Congress, APC, National Publicity Secretary, Felix Morka, that it is no longer a political party.

PDP, in a statement signed by its spokesman, Comrade Ini Ememobong, described Morka's comment as most unfortunate and a clear indication that he and his cohorts are clearly delusional.

TheMatrix had earlier reported that Morka had claimed that the PDP "is no longer a political party" due to the defection of some political office holders to the APC. Responding, Ememobong said, "Interestingly, reality shows that despite the large-scale defections secured by force and inducement by the APC, Nigerians have consistently rejected the ruling party which is daily ruining Nigeria and Nigerians.

"This is evident in the struggle their party has had with membership registration, where in many states governors have copied the database of state empowerment programmes to populate their state registers.

"The recent disruption of the City Boys event in Owerri is a foreshadow of what awaits them all over the country."

Ememobong also accused Morka of engaging in dangerous propaganda.

"For Morka, who is struggling to become a modern-day Joseph Goebbels, he should remember that delusional propaganda does not just destroy a nation but ultimately consumes its proponents, as it did in Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler.

"His defence of the political genocide of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu APC-led Federal Government is akin to Goebbels' defence of Hitler's pogroms and concentration camps."

Edo LG Polls: Protest Erupts As APC Group Rejects Alleged Candidate Imposition



Ahead of the forthcoming Local Government Elections in Edo State, a crisis has rocked the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the state over the alleged imposition of a chairmanship candidate.

Members of the party in Ovia North-East Local Government Area on Monday, March 16, 2026, staged a peaceful protest alleging that a chieftain of the party is imposing Mr. Christopher Enamatoe as the party's chairmanship candidate.

The protest was staged by Concerned Ovia North-East Leaders and youths.

Speaking to newsmen, the spokesperson of the protesters, Hon. Luggard Ayenoma, however, called for the intervention of the Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo.

Ayenoma alleged that Mr. Christopher Enamatoe is not a member of the APC and, as such, cannot be given such a vital position in the local government.

He further alleged that the imposed chairmanship candidate once worked against the party as a media agent to the former governor, Godwin Obaseki, in the election that brought Governor Okpebholo to power.

According to him, Ovia North-East Local Government Area is blessed with great potential, but imposing someone with opposition affiliations as chairman because of maternal relationships sounds awful and embarrassing.

"It sidelines legitimate party stakeholders and qualified indigenes from our Local Government Area, weakens cohesion, and undermines the principle of local representation which you advocate for and stand for.

"Our ward leaders and youths, who make up the local government, have already raised concerns. Placing an outsider risks eroding confidence in the government's fairness in Ovia North-East," he said.

The protesters called for the halting of the nomination until the process becomes transparent.

They, however, pledged loyalty to the party and expressed willingness to provide a list of qualified indigenes for the party's consideration.

Reacting to the protest, Peter Uwadaie, the Edo State Publicity Secretary of the APC, described the allegations as speculative.

Uwadaie said the party was yet to conduct primary elections, noting that the allegations of imposition are uncalled for.

The local government election is scheduled for July 2026.

News

By Ilesanmi Adewale

El-Rufai Alleges ICPC Demanded Political Exit As Condition For Freedom

Former Kaduna State Governor, Nasir El-Rufai, has made a startling claim against the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC). He alleges that the anti-graft agency attempted to use his freedom as a bargaining chip to force him out of the political arena.

This serious accusation is central to a comprehensive 30-page criminal complaint filed by El-Rufai's legal team. The lawsuit targets ICPC Chairman, Musa Adamu Aliyu, alongside four other high-ranking officials within the commission. According to the court documents, the alleged coercion took place while the former governor was in the custody of the commission. El-Rufai claims that investigators explicitly told him that his release was tied to a total withdrawal from all political activities.

The specifics of this interaction are detailed in Paragraph 12 of the formal complaint. In this section, El-Rufai asserts that the officers involved made it clear they were acting under the direct authority and instructions of the ICPC chairman. The former governor contends that such a condition is a blatant violation of his fundamental rights. He argues that the commission's demand was an unlawful attempt to strip him of his constitutionally guaranteed right to participate in the democratic process.

To support these claims, El-Rufai's counsel provided a detailed affidavit. This document expands on the nature of the pressure applied to the former governor during his period of incarceration.

Paragraphs 22 to 24 of the affidavit state that the warnings given to El-Rufai were frequent and persistent. He was reportedly told that his continued presence in the political space would inevitably result in a prolonged stay in detention.

The legal team further alleged that the officials presented a "commitment to withdraw" as the only viable path to securing his immediate release. This ultimatum, they argue, transforms a legal detention into an act of political intimidation. These allegations have been codified as Count Six in the criminal complaint filed before the court. This specific count focuses on the illegality of using state power to influence personal political choices.

The complaint accuses the ICPC officials of "wrongful confinement with intent to compel." This is a significant charge that suggests the agency's facilities were used for purposes beyond simple criminal investigation. El-Rufai's lawyers have cited Sections 264 and 267 of the Penal Code to back this charge. They believe the evidence meets the threshold for a criminal trial against the named anti-corruption officers.

Through this lawsuit, the former governor is asking the judiciary to conduct a thorough examination of the ICPC's conduct. He maintains that their actions represent a gross abuse of office and a dangerous precedent for the country's law enforcement agencies.

The outcome of this case could have major implications for the limits of anti-graft powers in Nigeria. El-Rufai's team remains adamant that the political process must be shielded from interference by investigative bodies. As of the time of the filing, the ICPC has maintained silence regarding the specific claims in the document. The commission has not yet issued a public rebuttal or a formal response to the allegations contained in the suit.

Sowore: Kanu's Refusal To "Settle" Is Why He Remains In Detention

Omoyele Sowore, a former presidential candidate and activist, has alleged that Nnamdi Kanu remains in detention because he refused to accept political conditions that were reportedly embraced by fellow agitator Sunday Igboho. Sowore argued that Kanu's steadfastness sets him apart, claiming that if the IPOB leader had shared Igboho's "transactional" approach, he would currently be a free man campaigning for President Bola Tinubu in the Southeast. He emphasized that his recent interactions with Kanu in Aba confirmed the stark ideological divide between the two men, describing any comparison between them as "heresy."

Sowore went on to heavily criticize Sunday Igboho's political path, labeling it "Amala politics"—a term used to describe a self-serving, "chop-I-chop" style of leadership. Drawing parallels to historical figures like Arthur Nzeribe and Daniel Kanu, who faded into obscurity after aligning with military regimes, Sowore warned that Igboho is heading toward a "hall of infamy." He concluded that by choosing this path, Igboho has effectively retired himself into political irrelevance and may soon face fresh scrutiny from the international community.

Panic As Abuja-Bound Train Suffers Disruption On Kaduna Rail Corridor



The Abuja–Kaduna rail service was thrown into chaos on Monday following a violent incident that left several passengers injured and forced an emergency halt midway through the journey. The disruption has raised fresh concerns regarding the safety and operational coordination of Nigeria's busiest rail corridor.

The train, which was traveling from Kaduna toward the Federal Capital Territory, reportedly came to a sudden, jarring stop. Passengers described hearing a deafening "loud bang" followed by a powerful jolt that sent shockwaves through the coaches, triggering immediate panic among those on board.

According to eyewitness accounts, the impact was severe enough to throw commuters from their seats. Many passengers sustained physical injuries, including deep cuts and bruises, as they were flung against the interior fixtures of the train cars during the sudden deceleration.

While the exact cause of the mechanical failure or impact is still being scrutinized, early accounts from the scene suggested a potential collision. Some passengers indicated that the Abuja-bound train may have clipped or collided with another locomotive or object on the dual-track route.

One passenger, Sada Malumfashi, took to the social media platform X to share a harrowing first-hand account of the ordeal. He reported that the train remained eerily stationary for approximately 30 minutes in a remote area before it was able to slowly resume its movement toward the Kubwa station. Malumfashi's testimony highlighted the severity of the casualties, noting that many of his fellow travelers were bleeding and appeared to be severely injured. He described a scene of confusion where the force of the jolt literally launched people across the aisles of the train. A significant point of frustration for those trapped on board was the initial lack of information. Malumfashi noted that for a considerable period following the bang, there was no communication or emergency guidance provided by the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) staff to the distressed passengers.

In a brief acknowledgment of the crisis, the spokesperson for the Nigerian Railway Corporation, Callistus Unyimadu, confirmed that an incident had indeed occurred on the line. He stated that the corporation is currently assessing the situation to determine the root cause of the disruption.

The NRC has promised to issue a comprehensive official statement once the full details of the incident and the extent of the injuries are verified. For now, rail operations on the Kaduna–Abuja corridor face temporary uncertainty as investigators work to clear the tracks and ensure passenger safety.

Tinubu In London, Commences Historic State Visit

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu arrived in London on Tuesday for a historic state visit hosted by King Charles III. This high-profile diplomatic engagement marks a significant milestone in international relations, as it is the first such formal state visit between Nigeria and the United Kingdom in nearly forty years.

The visit is designed to serve as a cornerstone for revitalized cooperation between the two long-standing partners. Strategic discussions are expected to focus heavily on expanding bilateral agreements in key sectors, specifically targeting advancements in trade, critical infrastructure, and regional defense.

Economic ties between the two nations are already showing a strong upward trajectory ahead of these talks. Official data reveals that bilateral trade reached approximately £8.1 billion ($11 billion) in the year leading up to September 2025, marking an impressive 11.4 percent increase over the previous period. The formal itinerary begins on Wednesday, when President Tinubu and First Lady Oluremi Tinubu will receive an official welcome. They are scheduled to be greeted by Prince William and Catherine, the Princess of Wales, signaling the high level of importance the British monarchy has placed on the visit.

Following the initial welcome, the Nigerian leader will travel to Windsor Castle for a private meeting with King Charles III. The day's events will culminate in a grand state banquet held in the evening, a traditional gesture of diplomatic honor reserved for visiting heads of state. On Thursday, the focus will shift toward executive and administrative collaboration. President Tinubu is scheduled to hold a high-level meeting with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer to discuss shared policy goals and strengthen the geopolitical bond between Abuja and London.

Beyond official government business, the President will also dedicate time to engaging with the Nigerian diaspora living in the United Kingdom. This follows a preliminary gesture by King Charles, who recently hosted a reception at St James's Palace for prominent Nigerians residing abroad.

NAFDAC Recalls Dangerous Male Enhancement Drugs Over Toxic Ingredients

The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, NAFDAC, has warned the public about the recall of all batches of MR.7 Super 700000 capsules following safety concerns linked to undisclosed pharmaceutical ingredients.

The agency disclosed this on Monday in a public notice published on its website.

According to NAFDAC, the recall was initiated by the manufacturer, StuffbyNainax LLC, after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) tested the product and discovered it contains undeclared sildenafil and tadalafil.

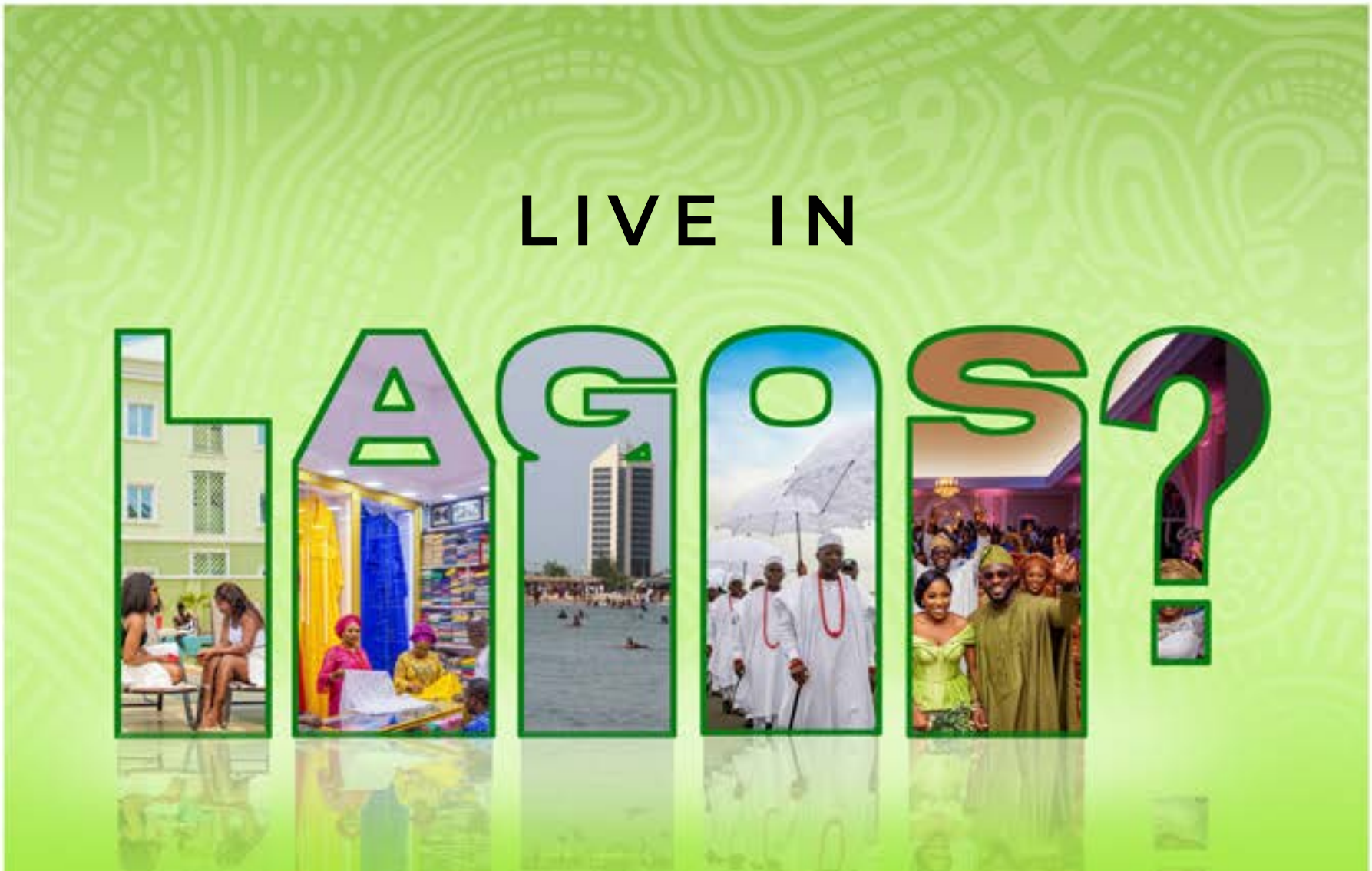
These substances are commonly used in medications approved for treating Erectile Dysfunction.

NAFDAC explained that both ingredients belong to a group of medicines known as phosphodiesterase (PDE-5) inhibitors. Because the substances were not listed on the product label, the capsules are regarded as unapproved drugs whose safety and effectiveness have not been verified. The product, which is promoted online as a dietary supplement for male enhancement, should not be sold as a supplement if it contains sildenafil or tadalafil, the agency stated.

The advisory identified the product as MR.7 Super 700000 capsules, manufactured by StuffbyNainax LLC and marketed as a male enhancement supplement. The recall applies to all batches currently available. NAFDAC advised anyone in possession of the capsules to stop using or selling them and return them to the nearest NAFDAC office. The agency also urged healthcare professionals and consumers to report suspected counterfeit or substandard medicines and any adverse reactions through its official reporting channels.

NAFDAC warned that consuming products containing undeclared sildenafil or tadalafil could pose serious health risks. The agency explained that these substances can react with nitrates found in prescription medicines used to treat heart conditions, including Nitroglycerin. Such interactions may cause a sharp drop in blood pressure, which can be life-threatening. People living with diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or heart disease who often take nitrate-based drugs may be particularly vulnerable. Adult men using nitrates for cardiac conditions face the highest risk if they take the capsules. The recall follows recent alerts by NAFDAC about the circulation of unsafe and falsified medicines in Nigeria. The agency recently warned health workers and the public about counterfeit Avastin 400 mg vials circulating in the country. The medicine, known as Avastin (Bevacizumab), is used to treat recurrent Glioblastoma in adults by blocking blood vessels that feed tumours.

According to NAFDAC, the suspected fake product was first reported by Roche after an oncologist at a local hospital questioned the authenticity of some Avastin vials labelled 400 mg/16 ml. The agency reaffirmed its commitment to protecting public health through continued monitoring of the safety, quality and effectiveness of medicines and other regulated products in Nigeria.



FILE YOUR INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX RETURNS

(FOR INCOME EARNED FROM JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2025)

File from NOW till
MARCH 31ST 2026

PAY YOUR TAX ON THE eTax PLATFORM NOW!

- Log on to https://etax.lirs.net
- Log in to your eTax profile using your Taxpayer ID (e.g., N-xxxxx).
  If you need to reset your password, click the "Password Reset" link.
  For new users, select Create New Tax ID and follow the prompts.
  Should you encounter a validation error using your National Identification Number (NIN), kindly substitute it with your Bank Verification Number (BVN)
- Click on RETURNS on the menu bar at the left side of your screen
- Fill all sections as applicable and update relevant documents (Statement of Income, Mandatory Disclosure of Accommodation, etc.)
- Once all information is entered, click Confirm Submission.
- If you encounter any issues, use the Live Chat feature on eTax, call Customer Service at **0700 2255 5477,** or send an email to **etax@lirs.net.**

TAKE NOTICE that failure to file your annual individual income tax returns is a contravention of the extant provisions of the Nigeria Tax Administration Act (NTAA) 2025, which attracts administrative sanctions in addition to other stiff penalties as prescribed by the Act.

ELECTRONIC FILING VIA THE eTAX PLATFORM IS THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE MODE OF FILING

Lagos State Internal Revenue Service

Lagos Revenue House, Assbifi Road, Central Business District, Alausa, Ikeja, Lagos State

Tel: 0700-CALL-LIRS (0700 2255 5477)

Lagos State Internal Revenue Service (LIRS) | www.lirs.gov.ng | @lirsgovng | @lirs_govng | info@lirs.net

TheMatrix

DailyMarketUpdate

Exchange, Crude Oil & Depot Prices - March 13, 2026

CRUDE	OPENING	CLOSING	
BRENT	$101.23	$101.14	▼
BRASS RIVER	$98.11	$100.91	▲
WTI CRUDE	$96.25	$96.86	▲

Friday, March 13, 2026

	CBN	BLACKMARKET
EUR/NGN	₦1,568.03	₦1,620.00
GBP/NGN	₦1,812.99	₦1,875.00
USD/NGN	₦1,366.23	₦1,400.00

LOCATION: WARRI

DEPOT	PMS	AGO	LPG	ATK
A.Y.M SHAFA		₦ 1,500.00		
MATRIX	₦ 1,200.00	₦ 1,450.00	₦ 1,005.00	₦ 1,710.00
NEPAL	₦ 1,200.00			
NIPCO				
PRUDENT			₦ 980.00	
ZAMSON	₦ 1,200.00	₦ 1,440.00		

LOCATION: LAGOS

DEPOT	PMS	AGO	LPG	ATK
A.A RANO	₦ 1,185.00		₦ 885.00	
AFRICAN TERMINAL		₦ 1,440.00		
AITEO		₦ 1,480.00		
ARDOVA			₦ 885.00	
BONO				
DANGOTE	₦ 1,175.00		₦ 795.00	₦ 1,775.
DUPORT		₦ 1,440.00		
IBACHEM		₦ 1,440.00		
IBETO		₦ 1,440.00		
INTEGRATED	₦ 1,105.00	₦ 1,440.00		
LISTER	₦ 1,200.00			
MATRIX	₦ 1,185.00	₦ 1,580.00		₦ 1,700.
NAVGAS			₦ 925.00	
NIPCO	₦ 1,110.00	₦ 1,500.00	₦ 1,000.00	
OBAT				
PINNACLE	₦ 1,195.00			
SAHARA				
TECHNO OIL			₦ 910.00	

LOCATION: PORT HARCOURT

DEPOT	PMS	AGO	LPG	
BULK STRATEGIC	₦ 1,110.00			
LIQUID BULK	₦ 1,115.00			
MASTERS	₦ 1,220.00			
MATRIX	₦ 1,210.00	₦ 1,600.00	₦ 980.00	₦ 1,
SIGMUND	₦ 1,110.00	₦ 1,470.00		
T.S.L	₦ 1,125.00			

LOCATION: CALABAR

DEPOT	PMS	AGO	LPG	ATK
ALKANES	₦ 1,110.00			
DOZZY	₦ 1,110.00			
MATRIX	₦ 1,115.00			
SOROMAN	₦ 1,110.00			
WABECO	₦ 1,110.00			

TheMatrix

BusinessToday

By Babajide Okeowo

•OIL&GAS • AGRICULTURE • ECONOMY • ENVIRONMENT • MARITIME



Dangote Seals $4.2bn Gas Deal With China's GCL Group To Power Ethiopian Fertilizer Megaproject

Dangote Industries Limited (DIL) and GCL Group, China's leading private energy conglomerate, have formalized a landmark US$4.2 billion, 25-year natural gas supply agreement to power Dangote Group's major expansion projects in Ethiopia.

The agreement, signed in Lagos, reinforces one of the most significant China–Africa industrial partnerships to date.

Under the long-term arrangement, GCL Group will supply stable natural gas to Dangote Group's upcoming 3-million-tonne-per-year urea fertilizer production complex in Ethiopia. The plant, valued at US$2.5 billion, is being developed under a 60:40 equity structure between Dangote Group and Ethiopian Investment Holdings (EIH), respectively, and is scheduled to begin operations in 2029.

Once commissioned, the facility will become East Africa's largest modern fertilizer production hub, fully meeting Ethiopia's current urea import demand while supplying neighbouring regional markets. The project is expected to significantly reshape East Africa's fertilizer landscape, reducing reliance on imports and strengthening agricultural self-sufficiency.

The natural gas supplied by GCL will be sourced from the Calub Gas Field in Ethiopia's Ogaden Basin and delivered via a dedicated 108-kilometre pipeline directly to the Dangote fertilizer complex in Gode, Somali Region. The initiative aligns with Africa's broader objective of establishing an integrated energy-to-food value chain, leveraging local resources to drive industrial autonomy.

Describing the significance of the collaboration, Aliko Dangote, President/Chief Executive of Dangote Industries Limited, said: "Africa's energy industry cannot continue indefinitely exporting raw materials while importing finished products. We must pursue a new path of highly autonomous development. Through seamless integration and strategic cooperation with GCL, we will achieve an efficient closed-loop value chain from natural gas extraction to fertilizer production, taking a crucial step toward enabling Africa to secure greater autonomy over its food security."

Chairman of GCL Group, Mr. Zhu Gongshan, also reaffirmed the company's confidence in the partnership, noting that the agreement was made possible through the facilitation and support of the Ethiopian government:

"This cooperation will enable both sides to expand new frontiers in Ethiopia's energy, chemical, and food security sectors while transitioning from a 'business going global' model toward a mutually beneficial ecosystem-based framework. Leveraging GCL's integrated oil and gas operations in Ethiopia and Dangote Group's extensive industrial footprint across Africa, the partnership will significantly enhance our service capabilities and market reach across the continent."

The strategic collaboration marks a historic step in Africa–China industrial cooperation and is expected to catalyse long-term economic transformation across East Africa.

Looking ahead, GCL will continue to focus on its core industrial strategy of integrated gas–power–computing development, leveraging Chinese technologies and solutions in synergy with Africa's development needs, and working together to write a new chapter of mutually beneficial cooperation between China and Africa on this promising land. Both parties noted that the successful conclusion of this cooperation would not have been possible without the strong leadership of the Government of Ethiopia and the active support of the relevant authorities.

Over the past 20 years since its establishment in Ethiopia, GCL Group has progressed from oil and gas exploration and development to the construction of the country's first natural gas liquefaction project, and from advancing the integrated "gas–power–computing" development model to supporting the country's pursuit of greater energy self-reliance. Each step has involved sustained and substantive investment, deeply integrating the company's activities into the trajectory of Ethiopia's economic and social development and continuously earning the high level of trust of senior government leadership.

Industry analysts note that this project conveys multiple

CONTINUE ONLINE

Naira Strengthens, Gains ₦8.47 Against Dollar At Official Market



The Nigerian currency, the naira, appreciated further against the U.S. dollar at the official window on Monday.

At the official window, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) foreign exchange data showed that the naira closed at N1,357.76/$1, compared to N1,366.23/$1 on Friday.

This represents a gain of N8.47 for the local currency against the American dollar.

At the black market, the Nigerian currency lost N10 against the American dollar, trading at N1,420/$1, as against N1,410/$1 the previous day.

The local currency closed flat against the British Pound, trading at N1,900/£1, the same as the previous day's N1,900/£1.

The naira closed flat against the Canadian dollar to trade at N1,000/CA$1, the same as the previous day's rate of N1,000/CA$1.

The naira lost N5 against the euro, trading at ₦1,640/€1, as against the previous day's ₦1,645/€1.

NGX Opens Week On Bullish Note As Market Capitalization Rises By ₦1.9trn



Investors in the Nigerian equities market gained N1.96 trillion at the beginning of trading on Monday.

This followed a surge in the share prices of stocks such as Bua Cement, Premier Paints and John Holt among others on the trading floor.

The benchmark All-Share Index (ASI) increased to 201,474.89 points from the 198,407.3 points recorded on the previous trading day.

After five hours of trading on the capital market, equity capitalisation rose to N129.3 trillion from N127.3 trillion posted by the bourse on Friday.

The market breadth was negative, with 38 stocks advancing, 30 declining, and 92 remaining unchanged in 72,735 deals.

A total of 948,211,904 shares were traded, valued at N49.1 billion.

Bua Cement, Premier Paints and John Holt led the gainers' chart, with 10%, 9.79% and 9.52% growth each in share prices, respectively, to close at N297.00, N21.30, and N10.35 per share, up from N270.00, N19.40, and N9.45 per share.

VFD Group, Royalex, and Omatek led other

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TheMatrix

BusinessToday

By Babajide Okeowo

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Polaris Bank Chairman, Gidado Urges Integrity And Professional Excellence At 2026 CIBN Chartered Banker Induction



The Chairman of Polaris Bank, Dr. Kassim Gidado, has called on newly inducted banking professionals to uphold integrity, embrace continuous learning, and demonstrate ethical leadership as they navigate the rapidly evolving financial services landscape.

Dr. Gidado, made the call while delivering his remarks as the Special Guest of Honour at the 2026 Stream 1 Chartered Banker Induction Ceremony organised by the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN).

The ceremony which held in Lagos at the weekend, celebrated the induction of 2,037 professionals into the prestigious Chartered Banker and Microfinance Certified Banker cadre of the Institute, marking a significant milestone in their professional journeys.

According to the Institute, the inductees emerged through various certification routes including 9 candidates through the Chartered Banker/MBA route, 816 through the Chartered Banker Regular Route, 25 through the MSc/Chartered Banker pathway, 262 through the SMP/AMP/ Chartered Banker pathway, and 435 Microfinance Certified Professionals.

The candidates comprise executives, senior and middle management staff of Deposit Money Banks, Microfinance Banks and other financial institutions, as well as professionals from the public and private sectors, self-employed members of the Institute, and graduates from linked tertiary institutions.

In his address, Dr. Gidado described the induction ceremony as more than a formal event, noting that it represents a celebration of excellence, perseverance, and professional discipline within the banking industry.

"Banking today is evolving at an unprecedented pace. Digital transformation, financial inclusion, regulatory reforms and emerging technologies are redefining how financial institutions operate and deliver value to society," he said.

He emphasized that while technology continues to transform the banking sector, trust remains the most valuable currency in banking, stressing that the credibility of the financial system ulti-

CONTINUE ONLINE

FG Partners Admiralty Maritime Services To Slash Transport Costs Via Inland Waterways



The Federal Government is considering partnering with Admiralty Maritime Services as its strategic focus on expanding inland and coastal waterway usage as a primary, cost-effective alternative for moving cargo and passengers across the nation.

The Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy (FMMBE), Fatima Sugra Tabi'a Mahmood, who disclosed at the weekend during a courtesy visit from the CEO of Admiralty Maritime Services Limited, Rear Admiral Muhsin Abba (Rtd), in Abuja, emphasized that optimizing Nigeria's vast aquatic resources is central to lowering national logistics costs.

According to her, since assuming office ten weeks ago, her priorities has been how to fastrack the transition of freight from road to water. "Data confirms that water transportation is significantly more affordable than road or rail. By shifting a substantial portion of cargo to our waterways, we will directly reduce the market price of goods and services, making the Nigerian economy more competitive."

She further noted that the Ministry is working under the policy direction of the Honourable Minister, Adegboyega Oyetola, to realize President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's vision of positioning Nigeria as a global maritime leader.

The Permanent Secretary highlighted Nigeria's success in maintaining piracy-free territorial waters for three consecutive years. While acknowledging this milestone, she stressed that sustaining this growth requires intensified

CONTINUE ONLINE

Apapa Customs Strike Again, Seizes ₦3.398bn Codeine Syrup In Massive Crackdown



Barely five days after the Comptroller-General of Customs (CGC), Bashir Adewale Adeniyi, declared Apapa Port "no longer a playground for smugglers," officers of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Apapa Area Command, have intercepted another massive shipment of illicit drugs.

In a joint operation with the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) on Sunday, March 15, two containers loaded with 3,398 cartons (339,800 bottles) of codeine-containing syrup were seized. The drugs, valued at ₦3.398 billion in Duty Paid Value (DPV), had been carefully concealed inside household utensils.

This development was announced in a statement by Chief Superintendent of Customs, I Sulaiman, Public Relations Officer, Apapa Area Command.

- Container MRKU 3816476: 1,700 cartons (170,000 bottles) hidden among 38 cartons of insulated casseroles and hotpots.
- Container TGBU 5399178: 1,698 cartons (169,800 bottles) concealed with 36 cartons of pearl plating casseroles.

Both shipments have been officially converted to seizure under the Nigeria Customs Service Act 2023.

Speaking on the breakthrough, Comptroller Emmanuel Oshoba, Customs Area Control-

CONTINUE ONLINE

TheMatrix

MarketIntelligence

Pricelist of Traded Equities 16, March, 2026





All Share Index (ASI)	Deals	Volume	Value	Market Capitalization	YTD Change
201,474.89	72,735	948.21 million	N49.17 billion	N129.33 trillion	29.47%
1.55%	37.07%	60.43%	40.48%	1.55%	

TOP GAINERS

Symbol	Previous Close	Close	Change	%Change
BUACEMENT	270.00	297.00	27.00	10.00
PREMPAINTS	19.40	21.30	1.90	9.79
JOHNHOLT	9.45	10.35	0.90	9.52
GUINEAINS	1.28	1.40	0.12	9.38
FTGINSURE	1.18	1.29	0.11	9.32

BIGGEST VOLUMES

Symbol	Trades	Volume	Value
SOVRENINS	372	72,563,638	147,120,037
ACCESSCORP	2,510	69,856,285	1,758,672,852
FIRSTHOLDCO	743	67,030,581	3,354,347,471
NB	624	55,028,535	4,032,240,180
UBA	293	54,556,741	2,584,793,116

BOTTOM LOSERS

Symbol	Previous Close	Close	Change	%Change
VFDGROUP	12.50	11.25	-1.25	(10.00)
ROYALEX	1.87	1.69	-0.18	(9.63)
OMATEK	2.60	2.35	-0.25	(9.62)
SOVRENINS	2.11	1.92	-0.19	(9.00)
REGALINS	1.23	1.12	-0.11	(8.94)

SMALLEST VOLUMES

Symbol	Trades	Volume	Value
AIRTELAFRI	4	15	37,455
ENAMELWA	5	460	17,362
GEREGU	83	2,980	3,061,652
SFSREIT	67	4,256	1,698,896
NREIT	19	5,751	617,961

SOURCE: NGX WWW.MATRIXNGR.COM

TheMatrix

MarketNews

PRICES FOR SECURITIES TRADED AS OF MARCH 16/2026

Symbol	P. Close	High	Low	Close	Change	%Change	Trades	Volume	Value
ABBEYBDS	10.30	10.30	10.30	**10.30**	0.00	0.00%	138	226,555	2,107,797.60
ABCTRANS	6.24	6.24	6.24	**6.24**	0.00	0.00%	387	687,007	4,367,819.49
ACADEMY	8.40	8.40	8.40	**8.40**	0.00	0.00%	101	341,276	2,748,221.00
ACCESSCORP	24.90	25.35	24.90	**25.30**	0.40	1.61%	2,510	69,856,285	1,758,672,851.95
AFRIPRUD	15.50	15.30	15.20	**15.20**	(0.30)	-1.94%	340	1,746,952	27,036,353.30
AIICO	4.12	4.29	4.06	**4.06**	(0.06)	-1.46%	898	21,857,036	90,224,277.65
AIRTELAFRI	2,270.00	2,270.00	2,270.00	**2,270.00**	0.00	0.00%	4	15	37,455.00
ALEX	12.60	12.60	12.60	**12.60**	0.00	0.00%	58	72,150	865,029.20
ARADEL	1,340.00	1,230.00	1,230.00	**1,340.00**	(110.00)	0.00%	2,269	4,569,563	5,574,207,769.80
AUSTINLAZ	3.95	4.10	4.10	**4.10**	0.15	3.80%	96	520,322	2,124,672.75
BERGER	66.65	66.65	66.65	**66.65**	0.00	0.00%	197	117,973	7,794,930.35
BETAGLAS	498.50	498.50	498.50	**498.50**	0.00	0.00%	717	170,350	82,371,521.30
BUACEMENT	270.00	297.00	291.80	**297.00**	27.00	10.00%	1,830	1,425,247	417,748,453.90
BUAFOODS	798.00	798.00	798.00	**798.00**	0.00	0.00%	1,098	96,298	74,856,710.00
CADBURY	67.00	67.00	67.00	**67.00**	0.00	0.00%	440	1,102,793	76,441,795.30
CAP	99.00	99.00	99.00	**99.00**	0.00	0.00%	92	39,151	3,602,342.80
CAVERTON	6.45	7.05	5.90	**6.90**	0.45	6.98%	218	4,149,836	27,494,126.40
CHAMPION	16.00	16.30	16.05	**16.30**	0.30	1.88%	271	1,759,654	28,511,021.50
CHAMS	3.85	4.04	3.90	**4.04**	0.19	4.94%	884	26,734,848	106,278,811.60
CHELLARAM	13.20	13.20	13.20	**13.20**	0.00	0.00%	31	17,443	226,824.25
CILEASING	7.00	6.70	6.65	**6.65**	(0.35)	-5.00%	116	1,190,137	7,972,147.70
CNIF	110.00	110.00	110.00	**110.00**	0.00	0.00%	19	7,404	889,641.20
CONHALLPLC	5.00	4.97	4.75	**4.80**	(0.20)	-4.00%	141	1,728,395	8,462,800.44
CONOIL	204.40	204.40	204.40	**204.40**	0.00	0.00%	532	138,517	27,066,790.50
CORNERST	5.43	5.80	5.60	**5.80**	0.37	6.81%	119	1,771,303	10,197,616.57
CUSTODIAN	77.00	79.00	79.00	**79.00**	2.00	2.60%	424	1,610,044	120,738,796.65
CUTIX	3.40	3.50	3.40	**3.50**	0.10	2.94%	428	5,643,290	19,588,004.95
CWG	21.55	21.85	21.85	**21.85**	0.30	1.39%	456	2,252,962	48,577,621.25
DAARCOMM	2.14	2.13	1.93	**2.01**	(0.13)	-6.07%	279	4,890,943	9,695,236.32
DANGCEM	794.90	802.90	802.90	**802.90**	8.00	1.01%	3,017	1,506,039	1,191,984,151.00
DANGSUGAR	72.80	73.00	73.00	**73.00**	0.20	0.27%	2,045	5,465,572	396,308,798.50
DEAPCAP	7.00	7.00	7.00	**7.00**	0.00	0.00%	286	2,047,847	14,372,189.22
ELLAHLAKES	12.05	12.50	11.75	**12.00**	(0.05)	-0.41%	573	18,868,467	228,088,930.90
ENAMELWA	37.00	37.00	37.00	**37.00**	0.00	0.00%	5	460	17,362.10
ETERNA	42.30	41.00	41.00	**41.00**	(1.30)	-3.07%	397	747,072	30,363,512.05
ETI	45.95	45.95	45.95	**45.95**	0.00	0.00%	194	509,015	23,063,516.90
ETRANZACT	18.25	20.05	17.90	**18.10**	(0.15)	-0.82%	371	20,429,668	379,865,386.30
EUNISELL	143.95	143.95	143.95	**143.95**	0.00	0.00%	70	7,042	912,643.20
FCMB	12.65	12.90	12.35	**12.55**	(0.10)	-0.79%	1,024	25,753,884	324,333,225.00
FIDELITYBK	19.20	19.50	18.90	**19.30**	0.10	0.52%	1,072	24,024,894	459,730,506.90
FIDSON	105.35	105.35	105.35	**105.35**	0.00	0.00%	1,687	950,416	96,811,286.05
FIRSTHOLDCO	50.00	50.85	50.00	**50.00**	0.00	0.00%	743	67,030,581	3,354,347,470.80
FTGINSURE	1.18	1.29	1.24	**1.29**	0.11	9.32%	275	35,785,469	46,003,207.54
FTNCOCOA	6.31	6.40	6.00	**6.18**	(0.13)	-2.06%	341	3,382,555	20,897,428.74
GEREGU	1,141.50	1,141.50	1,141.50	**1,141.50**	0.00	0.00%	83	2,980	3,061,652.00
GTCO	117.50	118.15	117.50	**118.15**	0.65	0.55%	2,804	28,895,090	3,408,872,914.55
GUINEAINS	1.28	1.40	1.18	**1.40**	0.12	9.38%	149	3,640,641	4,739,395.04
GUINNESS	385.00	385.00	385.00	**385.00**	0.00	0.00%	693	238,867	95,009,399.10
HMCALL	3.91	4.10	3.80	**4.10**	0.19	4.86%	93	1,537,275	6,151,235.38
HONYFLOUR	21.00	21.40	20.50	**21.20**	0.20	0.95%	606	2,040,987	42,942,155.85
IKEJAHOTEL	36.00	36.95	36.95	**36.95**	0.95	2.64%	164	1,027,825	36,462,567.90
IMG	36.00	36.00	36.00	**36.00**	0.00	0.00%	45	139,422	4,889,798.55
INFINITY	19.00	19.00	19.00	**19.00**	0.00	0.00%	15	14,589	304,395.20
INTBREW	14.95	14.95	13.60	**14.95**	0.00	0.00%	280	11,957,424	173,725,343.55
INTENEGINS	3.20	3.00	2.93	**3.00**	(0.20)	-6.25%	82	891,335	2,724,255.62
JAIZBANK	10.75	11.30	10.83	**11.12**	0.37	3.44%	2,857	11,707,950	128,701,881.51
JAPAULGOLD	3.50	3.78	3.47	**3.56**	0.06	1.71%	807	19,543,415	69,192,438.58
JBERGER	288.00	288.00	288.00	**288.00**	0.00	0.00%	293	111,875	29,104,285.30
JOHNHOLT	9.45	10.35	9.45	**10.35**	0.90	9.52%	171	2,504,123	24,227,485.75
JULI	7.26	7.26	7.26	**7.26**	0.00	0.00%	14	28,200	185,494.70
LASACO	2.35	2.35	2.30	**2.35**	0.00	0.00%	134	2,957,761	6,849,918.81

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PRICES FOR SECURITIES TRADED AS OF MARCH 16/2026

Symbol	P. Close	High	Low	Close	Change	%Change	Trades	Volume	Value
LEARNAFRCA	8.25	8.95	8.95	**8.95**	0.70	8.48%	101	347,697	3,024,117.40
LEGENDINT	6.00	5.98	5.46	**5.98**	(0.02)	-0.33%	88	12,360,282	72,228,019.49
LINKASSURE	1.56	1.65	1.47	**1.47**	(0.09)	-5.77%	177	4,630,217	7,179,371.23
LIVESTOCK	7.20	7.20	7.15	**7.20**	0.00	0.00%	214	1,803,402	12,990,336.95
LIVINGTRUST	4.85	5.24	5.24	**5.24**	0.39	8.04%	47	5,225,677	27,358,564.00
MANSARD	14.91	15.20	14.55	**15.20**	0.29	1.95%	302	4,627,555	69,063,040.18
MAYBAKER	41.50	41.50	41.50	**41.50**	0.00	0.00%	1,041	3,044,585	127,439,935.15
MBENEFIT	4.60	4.85	4.50	**4.59**	(0.01)	-0.22%	553	17,484,150	80,349,798.77
MCNICHOLS	6.20	6.10	6.02	**6.10**	(0.10)	-1.61%	130	1,761,254	10,697,646.65
MECURE	61.50	61.50	61.50	**61.50**	0.00	0.00%	252	266,062	14,946,824.95
MEYER	18.65	18.65	18.65	**18.65**	0.00	0.00%	44	49,348	868,263.50
MORISON	10.87	10.87	10.87	**10.87**	0.00	0.00%	26	111,862	1,177,735.40
MTNN	779.10	799.00	795.00	**798.00**	18.90	2.43%	5,844	6,979,009	5,569,807,456.60
MULTIVERSE	16.65	16.65	16.65	**16.65**	0.00	0.00%	79	292,084	5,130,494.55
NAHCO	163.90	163.90	163.90	**163.90**	0.00	0.00%	322	902,295	145,132,341.90
NASCON	147.60	147.60	147.60	**147.60**	0.00	0.00%	598	1,917,405	276,386,769.20
NB	78.00	78.10	73.00	**78.00**	0.00	0.00%	624	55,028,535	4,032,240,179.70
NCR	199.00	199.00	199.00	**199.00**	0.00	0.00%	100	51,346	9,660,541.70
NEIMETH	11.00	10.70	10.20	**10.70**	(0.30)	-2.73%	389	2,510,000	27,017,981.35
NEM	34.00	34.00	33.60	**34.00**	0.00	0.00%	180	2,823,339	95,909,125.25
NESTLE	3,250.00	3,250.00	3,250.00	**3,250.00**	0.00	0.00%	447	39,298	118,628,323.60
NGXGROUP	176.50	182.50	182.30	**182.30**	5.80	3.29%	2,654	4,257,283	775,723,251.35
NIDF	126.00	126.00	126.00	**126.00**	0.00	0.00%	184	174,584	20,814,961.90
NNFM	79.40	79.40	79.40	**79.40**	0.00	0.00%	39	130,899	9,359,278.50
NPFMCRFBK	7.45	7.30	7.00	**7.00**	(0.45)	-6.04%	185	2,710,231	19,166,524.98
NREIT	103.00	103.00	103.00	**103.00**	0.00	0.00%	19	5,751	617,961.40
NSLTECH	1.40	1.40	1.30	**1.30**	(0.10)	-7.14%	264	8,310,251	11,165,333.49
OANDO	48.85	49.30	48.10	**48.10**	(0.75)	-1.54%	1,068	15,031,409	730,713,239.65
OKOMUOIL	1,765.00	1,765.00	1,765.00	**1,765.00**	0.00	0.00%	1,038	77,223	123,504,423.20
OMATEK	2.60	2.52	2.35	**2.35**	(0.25)	-9.62%	264	3,631,528	8,889,537.36
PREMPAINTS	19.40	21.30	21.30	**21.30**	1.90	9.79%	149	552,951	11,615,006.00
PRESCO	2,083.90	2,083.90	2,083.90	**2,083.90**	0.00	0.00%	1,276	253,616	479,082,172.30
PRESTIGE	1.66	1.65	1.60	**1.60**	(0.06)	-3.61%	90	7,249,924	11,614,231.96
PZ	74.90	74.90	74.90	**74.90**	0.00	0.00%	362	1,308,373	95,947,179.90
REDSTAREX	28.55	28.55	28.55	**28.55**	0.00	0.00%	41	60,706	1,560,194.20
REGALINS	1.23	1.23	1.12	**1.12**	(0.11)	-8.94%	131	14,187,933	16,512,963.96
ROYALEX	1.87	1.98	1.69	**1.69**	(0.18)	-9.63%	254	12,344,411	21,939,906.81
RTBRISCOE	10.40	10.50	10.50	**10.50**	0.10	0.96%	179	1,162,521	12,753,347.61
SCOA	22.65	22.65	22.65	**22.65**	0.00	0.00%	62	118,043	2,450,424.10
SEPLAT	9,099.90	9,099.90	9,099.90	**9,099.90**	0.00	0.00%	688	393,254	3,544,937,526.10
SFSREIT	418.75	418.75	418.75	**418.75**	0.00	0.00%	67	4,256	1,698,896.00
SKYAVN	144.90	144.90	144.90	**144.90**	0.00	0.00%	45	24,684	3,313,428.20
SOVRENINS	2.11	2.32	1.92	**1.92**	(0.19)	-9.00%	372	72,563,638	147,120,037.11
STANBIC	135.00	135.00	134.00	**134.00**	(1.00)	-0.74%	452	1,409,189	190,308,547.30
STERLINGNG	7.90	8.00	7.40	**8.00**	0.10	1.27%	692	29,619,954	225,382,392.90
SUNUASSUR	4.40	4.40	4.40	**4.40**	0.00	0.00%	66	325,570	1,447,203.47
TANTALIZER	4.40	4.50	4.45	**4.45**	0.05	1.14%	341	3,316,281	14,581,126.54
TIP	18.25	19.15	18.30	**19.00**	0.75	4.11%	494	4,317,179	82,417,227.90
TOTAL	640.00	640.00	640.00	**640.00**	0.00	0.00%	132	20,484	11,798,784.00
TRANSCOHOT	203.00	203.00	203.00	**203.00**	0.00	0.00%	153	37,121	7,017,117.00
TRANSCORP	48.00	48.30	46.55	**48.30**	0.30	0.62%	566	3,633,384	172,453,250.55
TRANSEXPR	2.36	2.36	2.36	**2.36**	0.00	0.00%	3	10,500	27,195.00
TRANSPOWER	306.90	306.90	306.90	**306.90**	0.00	0.00%	90	21,744	6,007,867.20
TRIPPLEG	4.26	4.26	4.26	**4.26**	0.00	0.00%	31	55,472	247,373.09
UACN	102.50	100.00	100.00	**100.00**	(2.50)	-2.44%	185	982,595	98,152,059.35
UBA	45.50	48.00	45.50	**48.00**	2.50	5.49%	2,190	54,556,741	2,584,793,116.30
UCAP	18.05	18.20	18.05	**18.05**	0.00	0.00%	457	15,641,064	283,435,365.30
UHOMREIT	76.15	76.15	76.15	**76.15**	0.00	0.00%	71	77,008	5,417,323.70
UNILEVER	94.00	94.00	94.00	**94.00**	0.00	0.00%	284	612,153	55,495,021.60
UNIONDICON	14.80	14.80	14.80	**14.80**	0.00	0.00%	64	155,430	2,114,344.10
UNIVINSURE	1.28	1.33	1.27	**1.27**	(0.01)	-0.78%	163	7,793,014	10,061,808.33
UPDC	5.00	5.10	5.00	**5.10**	0.10	2.00%	163	2,168,935	10,955,250.30



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MMI Itu Chapter Fete Int'l President, Akparawa Edet

It was an evening of tributes and encomiums as the Itu Chapter of The Mboho Mkparawa Ibibio received The International President of the organization, Akparawa James Edet, NPOM, at Green Minds Hotel, Idoro road in Uyo, the Akwa Ibom State Capital on Sunday.

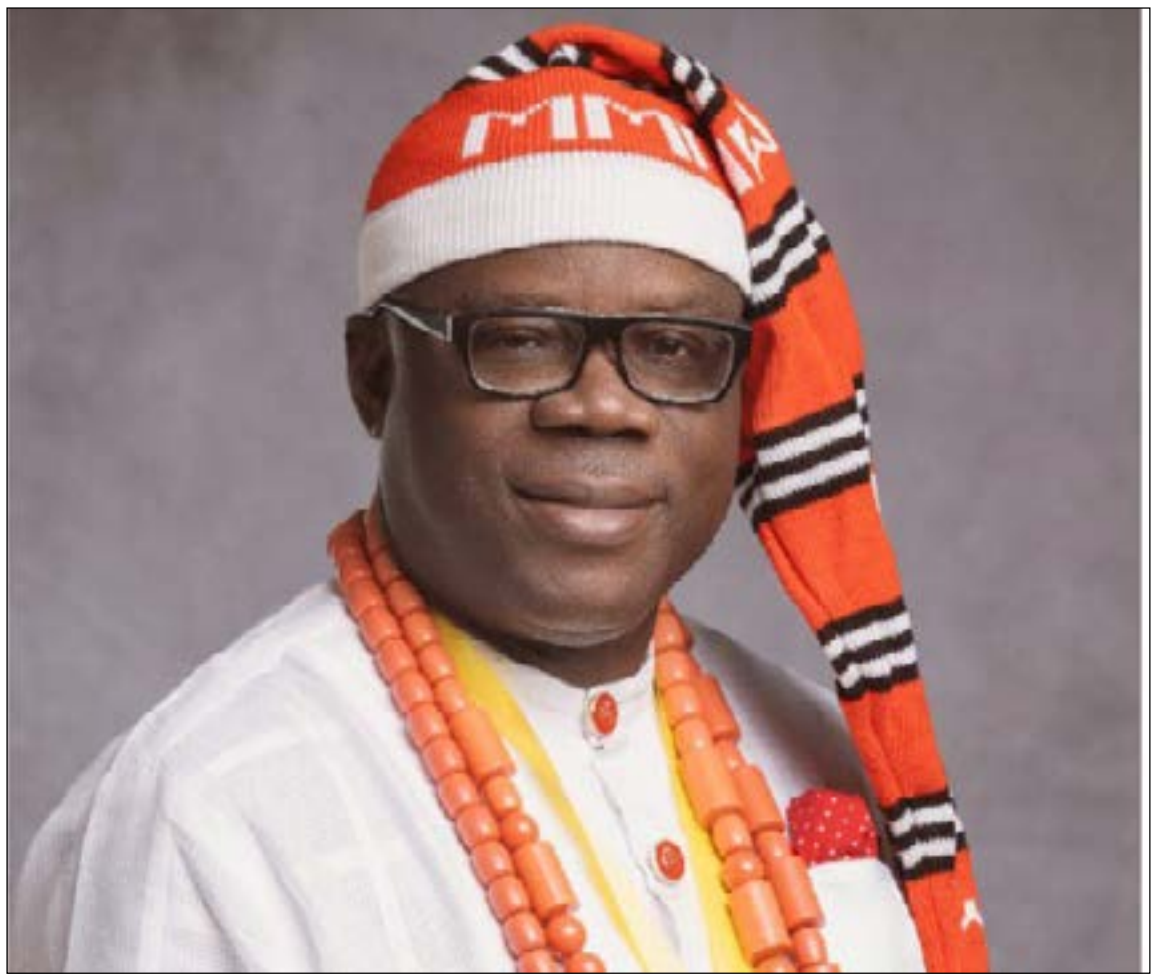
The Chairman of Itu Chapter of the group, Akparawa Francis Willie, setting the tone, said the event was conceived during one of the general meetings to celebrate excellence as a member of chapter who is the International President has excelled in the office with remarkable and outstanding performance. Akparawa Willie enumerated the achievements of The International President to include clearing outstanding salaries in both the Unity School and the Secretariat, restoring confidence in the organization and promoting unity and brotherhood among members across Ibibioland and the diaspora.

The Chairman of the occasion, Akparawa Churchill Udoh, who was ably represented by The Head of Legislature, Ibiono Ibom Local Government Council said he was glad to be part of the success story of Akparawa James Edet, he pledged to always identify with projects of Mboho Mkparawa Ibibio as a true son of Ibibioland.

Many dignitaries in their speeches poured encomiums on the celebrant, these included The immediate past Head of Service in the State, Elder Eseme Essien, Akparawa Anietie Ukpe, Akparawa Godwin Ntuk Udeh, among others.

In his speech which was preceded by a well rendered citation by Akparawa Pastor Idy James, the celebrant, Akparawa James Edet, NPOM thanked his chapter for celebrating him alive, he traced his journey through Mboho from a chapter member through offices of Chief of Staff, Secretary, Vice President 1, Vice President 2 to The 11th International President. He used the occasion to revere his mentors in the organization which include Akparawa Godwin Ntuk Udeh and Akparawa Nse Ubeh.. The International President called for unity among members of the group and Ibibios in general

CONTINUE ONLINE



Polobubo Oil-Producing Communities Want A Share Of The ₦400bn Delta Projects

Stakeholders of Polobubo (Tsekelewu) and its bloc communities in Warri North Local Government Area of Delta State have want to be included in the recently approved infrastructure projects valued at over ₦400 billion by the Delta State Government. The people protests their exclusion from the deal.

In a statement signed by the President of the Polobubo (Tsekelewu) bloc communities, Paul Toruwei, and the Aboh Youth leader, Comr. Markson Juwoiye, on Monday, the people expressed deep concern and disappointment that the state government had overlooked their area despite it being a major oil-producing area in the state.

They however commended the government for its efforts to improve infrastructure across various parts of the state. The people observed that the complete omission of Polobubo (Tsekelewu) from the list of projects raises serious concerns about fairness, equity and balanced development.

Polobubo (Tsekelewu) and its bloc communities serve as host communities to major oil companies, including Chevron, NPDC, Sahara Energy and Conoil.

The statement stated that operations of the oil firms in the area contribute significantly to the petroleum output of Delta State, with the area accounting for over 20 percent of the state's petroleum production.

"For decades, our land and resources have played a critical role in sustaining the economic prosperity of Delta State. Yet, despite this enormous contribution, our communities continue to suffer from serious infrastructural deficits, poor accessibility, and minimal government presence.

"It is therefore troubling that such a strategic oil-producing axis—often described by our people as the goose that lays the golden egg—was not considered in the recently announced infrastructure approvals." The statement read in part.

The people pledged to remain peaceful, law-abiding and committed to the progress and stability of the state while asserting that justice, fairness and inclusive development ought to guide government policies and actions.

They urged the state government to review the projects to include the Trans-Egbema Road from Ogbudugbudu/Ogbinbiri to Polobubo as well as the Polobubo internal road network, which was earlier approved during the administration of Governor Ifeanyi Okowa.

CONTINUE ONLINE

Operatives Of The A'Ibom Police Command Raid Arms Manufacturing Enclave, Arrest Fabricator, Drug Producer





Operatives of The Akwa Ibom Police Command in tandem with the directive from The State Commissioner of Police, CP Baba Mohammed Azare, fsi to rid the state of all forms of criminality has ransacked an arms manufacturing den in Uyo , arresting a gun fabricator and illicit drugs producer.

This was contained in a Release issued by The PPRO of The Command, DSP Timfon John on behalf of The State Commissioner of Police, CP Baba Mohammed Azare, fsi in Uyo on Monday and made available to The Matrix Newspaper.

According to The Command's Spokesperson, the operation took place at Idem street, off Itu road in the State Capital. The Release also states that several items were recovered during the operation.

"The Akwa Ibom State Police Command has recorded another significant operational breakthrough in its ongoing Operation Zero Black Spots, a strategic initiative aimed at dismantling criminal hideouts, illegal arms production centres, and drug networks across the State.

On 15th March 2026 at about 2100 hours, operatives of the Command, acting on credible intelligence, stormed a suspected criminal facility located at Idem Street, off Itu Road, Uyo.

The operation was carried out by Operatives of the command following intel-

CONTINUE ONLINE

News From South South

BY PRINCE AMGBARE &
VICTOR EDOZIE &
FELIX ASUQUO

Gov Okpebholo Pays Retired Teachers, LG Workers In Edo Gratuity 14 Years After Retirement



Governor Monday Okpebolo of Edo State has paid gratuities of teachers and Local Government workers fourteen years after retirement.

The Governor released the sum of N1bn for the purpose recently.

The payment, according to Chairman, Local Government Staff Pension Bureau, Alhaji Adjoto Kabiru, is the first tranche of gratuity payment for retired teachers and local government workers.

Alhaji Adjoto stated this at a press briefing in Benin City while commending Governor Okpebholo, for his commitment to the welfare of workers and retirees.

The former Edo Speaker said Governor Okpebholo has demonstrated strong political will to confronting long-standing challenges affecting pensioners and retirees in the State.

He thanked the retirees for their patience, understanding, and continued faith in Government despite the delays experienced over the years.

"It is pertinent to note that the payment of gratuities being addressed will capture retirees from 2012 and other outstanding sets.

"This responsibility comes with a significant financial burden on Government due to the significant increase in the number of retirees and the consequential financial burden arising from successive minimum wage increases.

"Despite these challenges, the present administration has remained resolute in its determination to ensure that those who served the State meritoriously are not forgotten and their legitimate entitlements are progressively settled.

"Let me therefore assure our retirees and the general public that with the renewed commitment of the present administration under the SHINE Agenda, the process of gratuity payment will henceforth be more regular and systematic than what was previously obtainable. Administrative work is currently ongoing and deserving beneficiaries will be invited to collect their cheques in the coming days." He said.

Comrade Mike Olekiale, The Chairman of Local Government Retirees called on the Governor to continue the payment to lift up the spir-

CONTINUE ONLINE

100 Persons Benefit From NLNG Empowerment Scheme

NLNG's economic empowerment initiative, the Vocational Innovation Business and Empowerment Scheme (VIBES), has inducted a new cohort of 103 trainees into its 2026 empowerment programme.

The induction ceremony, held in Port Harcourt on Monday, marked a significant milestone in the scheme's ongoing commitment to skills development and sustainable economic empowerment.

The newly inducted trainees will undergo a structured series of capacity-building sessions, culminating in a competitive pitching phase, during which the most viable business proposals will be selected based on clearly defined evaluation criteria.

Simultaneously, 26 beneficiaries from the previous cohort successfully completed their training and graduated from the programmme. They received grant support in the preceding year, marking the close of their training.

One year after receiving support, several of the graduates have strengthened their operations, enhanced financial management practices, expanded their customer base, and transitioned from early-stage concepts to more structured, revenue-generating enterprises. Some have scaled up production and diversified their service offerings, demonstrating measurable business growth and improved operational stability.

Speaking at the induction ceremony in Port Harcourt, the General Manager, External Relations and Sustainable Development, Sophia Horsfall, emphasised NLNG's commitment to sustainable community development, stating:

"The VIBES programme reflects NLNG's long-standing commitment to sustainable development in our host communities. Through targeted capacity building, access to innovative support, and enterprise development opportunities, we are strengthening the local economy across our host and pipeline communities. The graduation of one cohort and the induction of another showcase the continuity of our investment in youth empowerment, innovation, and enterprise development as key drivers of inclusive growth."

She added that VIBES represents a strategic intervention aligned with NLNG's broader sustainable development objectives. The programme is designed to cultivate entrepreneurial capability and strengthen the networks required for emerging business leaders and community change-makers to thrive within their communities.

Also speaking at the event, the Manager, Community Relations and Sustainable Development, Yemi Adeyemi, described the milestone

CONTINUE ONLINE

Army Kills Four Gunmen After Foiling Ambush In Cross River

Troops of the Nigerian Army have killed four suspected gunmen after foiling an ambush along a route in Obubra Local Government Area of Cross River State.

The incident occurred on March 12, 2026, when troops of the 13 Brigade deployed in Ochon and Alesi communities responded to intelligence reports of rising tension linked to a communal dispute in Odonget community.

The Army disclosed this in a statement by the Assistant Director, Army Public Relations, Headquarters 13 Brigade, Lt. Yemi Sokoya.

According to the statement, the troops were mobilised to the community to prevent a breakdown of law and order and conducted patrols and a show of force that helped calm the situation and restore normalcy among the warring parties.

However, while the soldiers were returning to their respective locations after stabilising the area, they discovered that their route had been deliberately blocked by unidentified persons.

Sokoya said that while troops attempted to clear the obstruction, they came under a coordinated ambush by armed attackers, leading to a fierce exchange of gunfire.

He added that reinforcements from the 245 Battalion were immediately deployed with armoured and tactical support vehicles following a contact report from the troops on the ground.

The Army spokesman said the swift response enabled the troops

CONTINUE ONLINE



CityMetro

•POLICE UPDATE • CRIME BUSTING• CRIME WATCH •

Police Arrest Graduate For Running Illegal Arms Factory In Uyo

Operatives of the Akwa Ibom State Police Command have arrested a graduate of Animal Science from the University of Uyo, identified as Koabasi Marsodi, for allegedly operating an illegal arms fabrication facility in Uyo.

Marsodi was arrested on Sunday, March 15, 2026, at about 9:00 p.m. during a raid targeting criminal hideouts, illegal arms production centres and drug networks across the state.

The command's Public Relations Officer, Timfon John, disclosed this in a statement issued in Uyo on Monday.

According to the statement, operatives raided the suspected criminal hideout located at Idem Street, off Itu Road, in Uyo, following credible intelligence reports.

Police said investigations later revealed that the facility was being used not only for the production of narcotic-laced food items but also as a clandestine workshop for the fabrication of arms and ammunition.

The statement read, "On March 15, 2026, at about 2100 hours, operatives of the command, acting on credible intelligence, stormed a suspected criminal facility located at Idem Street, off Itu Road, Uyo.

"The operation was carried out following intelligence reports that illicit chin-chin snacks laced with Indian hemp were being produced and distributed from the location.

"Upon raiding the premises, police operatives discovered that the facility was not only being used for the production of narcotic-laced food items but also functioned as a clandestine arms and ammunition fabrication workshop."

The police said preliminary investigations revealed that the suspect allegedly operated the illegal facility.

According to the statement, Marsodi reportedly confessed to producing narcotic-laced chin-chin and engaging in the illegal fabrication and modification of firearms, including cutting long guns into shorter, concealable weapons.

Items recovered from the facility include eight refilled cartridges, six expended cartridges, a bag of gunpowder, refilling pellets, a pack of striking pins, and a rifle butt.

Other items recovered are filing, cutting and drilling machines used for weapon fabrication, filing and cutting stones, assorted saws, two machetes, substances suspected to be Indian hemp, packets of chin-chin suspected to be laced with Indian hemp, and two pairs of black military boots, belts and a jacket.

The police said investigations are ongoing to apprehend other members of the criminal network mentioned during interrogation.

Meanwhile, the Commissioner of Police in the state, Baba Mohammed Azare, reaffirmed the command's resolve to identify, dismantle and prosecute individuals involved in illegal arms fabrication, drug distribution and other criminal activities threatening public safety.

The command also warned criminal elements in the state to desist from such activities or be prepared to face the full weight of the law, noting that intelligence-driven operations would continue across identified crime hotspots.

EFCC Arraigns Ex-Convict For Alleged N12m Theft

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, on Monday arraigned an ex-convict, Oluokun Gabriel Adekola, before Justice Rahman Oshodi over an alleged N12 million theft.

The case was announced by the EFCC in a post on its official X handle on Monday.

A statement by the anti-graft agency said Adekola was arraigned by the Lagos Zonal Directorate 1 of the commission at the Special Offences Court Ikeja.

According to the EFCC, the defendant and others still at large allegedly conspired in 2025 to conceal and disguise the origin of N12 million paid into his bank account.

The commission alleged that the suspect transferred and converted the funds to cash through Point of Sale (POS) agents.

The EFCC further stated that the money formed part of N3,091,441,849 reportedly stolen from accounts domiciled in a commercial bank through unauthorised access and fraudulent transactions carried out on the bank's mobile banking applications.

Adekola pleaded guilty to the charge when it was read to him in court.

Police Arrest Four Suspects, Rescue Herders In Oyo Cattle Rustling

The Oyo State Police Command has arrested four suspects in connection with a cattle-rustling incident in Ado-Awaye, Iseyin Local Government Area of the state, following a swift response to a distress call from residents.

The command's Public Relations Officer, CSP Olayinka Ayanlade, confirmed the development in a statement issued on Monday in Ibadan, noting that the operation led to the recovery of stolen cattle and the rescue of two herders who were tied up by the suspects.

According to the statement, the incident occurred in the early hours of Thursday, March 13, 2026, at about 2 am, when one Muhammad Ibrahim of the Igbojaye area reported to the police that armed men had invaded a cattle camp belonging to one Yahaya at Iserin area via Ado-Awaye and made away with several cows.

Ayanlade said the Divisional Police Officer in Ado-Awaye immediately mobilised a joint team of police operatives and local vigilantes to the scene, leading to the interception of the suspects while attempting to escape with the animals.

"On arrival at the scene, it was discovered that the suspects had already loaded two cows into a white Mazda bus with registration number KMA 178 ZY and were in the process of loading three other cows when the police patrol team closed in on them. On sighting the operatives, the hoodlums abandoned the vehicle and fled into the bush," he said.

He added that the team found two cattle herders, identified as Ibrahim Musa and Ibrahim Umaru, tied together at the camp before they were rescued by the security team.

The police spokesman stated that an intensive manhunt led to the arrest of the driver of the vehicle, Sekooni Wale, 30, and the motor boy, Jimoh Toheeb, 25, shortly after the incident.

He said further investigation extended to Maya Town in the Lanlate area, where the alleged principal suspect, Moshood Abdullahi, 38, described as a notorious cattle rustler from Badagry, was apprehended alongside another accomplice, Macho Sindi, 29.

Ayanlade said the suspects confessed to their involvement during interrogation, adding that the operation highlights the importance of collaboration between the police and local security groups in tackling rural crime.

"The successful recovery of the rustled cattle and arrest of the suspects underscores the effectiveness of coordinated security efforts in protecting lives and property in rural communities," the statement added.

The command assured residents of its continued commitment to curbing criminal activities across the state.

Police Arrest Suspect After Gunfight With Tanker Robbers In Oyo

The Oyo State Police Command has foiled a highway robbery along the Ogbomoso–Ilorin Expressway and arrested a suspected armed robber during a joint operation with local vigilantes.

The Police Public Relations Officer in the state, DSP Ayanlade Olayinka, disclosed this in a statement issued on Monday.

According to the statement, the incident occurred at Egbeda Village via Ogbomoso when a joint patrol team comprising police operatives and local vigilantes encountered suspected armed robbers who had blocked the highway.

"The hoodlums had blocked the highway and stopped a tanker loaded with diesel, driven by Surajudeen Sulaiman.

"The robbers forcibly dispossessed the tanker driver and his motor boys of their belongings.

"A gun duel ensued between the fleeing hoodlums and the Police patrol team, during which one of the suspects, later identified as Dere Yahaya, aged 32, was apprehended.

"Other members of the gang escaped into the bush, sustaining bullet wounds," the statement read

It added that security operatives subsequently launched a bush-combing operation and a manhunt to apprehend the fleeing suspects.

The Commissioner of Police in Oyo State, CP Femi Haruna, commended the bravery and swift response of the operatives and local security partners involved in the operation.

Haruna also expressed appreciation to the Inspector-General of Police, IGP Olatunji Disu, for his continued guidance and support in strengthening highway and community policing across the country.

The Ogbomoso-Ilorin Expressway has become one of the hotspots for auto crashes, hijackings, and armed robberies in Oyo.

This latest arrest builds on ongoing security efforts in the area.

It comes barely a month after a similar operation in Ogbomoso in February 2026, where police recovered goods worth ₦31.75 million from another gang.

The police urged members of the public to remain vigilant and report suspicious activities to security agencies.

Residents were also advised to contact the Oyo State Call Response Centre toll-free line on 615 or the command's control room numbers, 08081768614 and 07055495413, in case of emergencies.

Police Arrest 10 Suspected Kidnappers In Edo, Rescue A Female Victim

Operatives of the Edo State Police Command have arrested 10 suspected kidnappers in a joint operation with vigilantes and hunters.

The suspects were arrested during a raid at the Eko Uwaya forest, Ekpoma, in Esan West Local Government Area.

The Public Relations Officer of the Command, ASP Eno Ikoedem, who confirmed the arrests to newsmen in Benin City, said operatives of Ekpoma Division got credible information that some armed men have kidnapped a woman in the area.

Ikoedem said the middle aged woman who was kidnapped by the suspects was rescued unhurt during the raid.

She explained that the woman was taken deep into the forest, where they demanded for N10 million ransom.

Ikoedem stated that when the negotiation for ransom was ongoing, the police mobilised local vigilantes and hunters into the bush in search of the kidnapped woman.

She said the search paid off as the woman was rescued unhurt while 10 of the kidnappers were arrested in the forest.

The police spokesperson added that the rescued woman was able to identify some of the suspects as those that kidnapped her.

Ikoedem said all the arrested suspects have been transferred to the Anti-Kidnapping and Cybercrime Unit of the state police command for profiling and prosecution.

Happy Birthday to a Worthy Friend & Cherished Brother

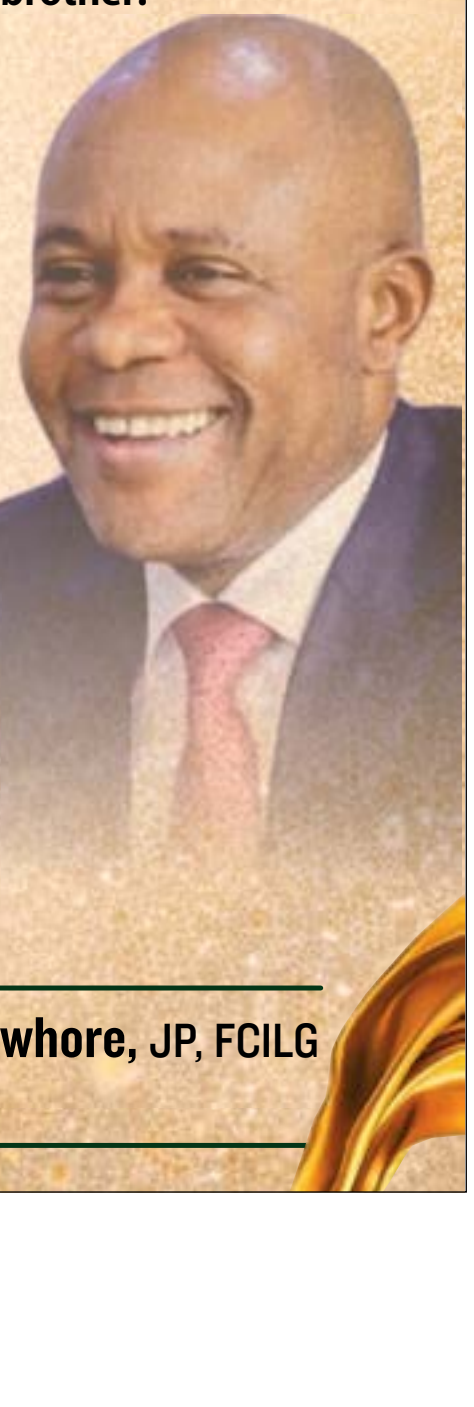
DR. PETER NDUBUISI MBAH,
Executive Governor, Enugu State



My family and I warmly celebrate my dear friend and brother, **Dr. Peter Ndubuisi Mbah, Executive Governor of Enugu State,** on his **54th birthday.**

We commend your visionary leadership and dedication to the progress of Enugu State. As you mark another year, we pray for God's continued guidance, good health, wisdom, and greater accomplishments in your service to the people.

Once again, Happy Birthday my brother.

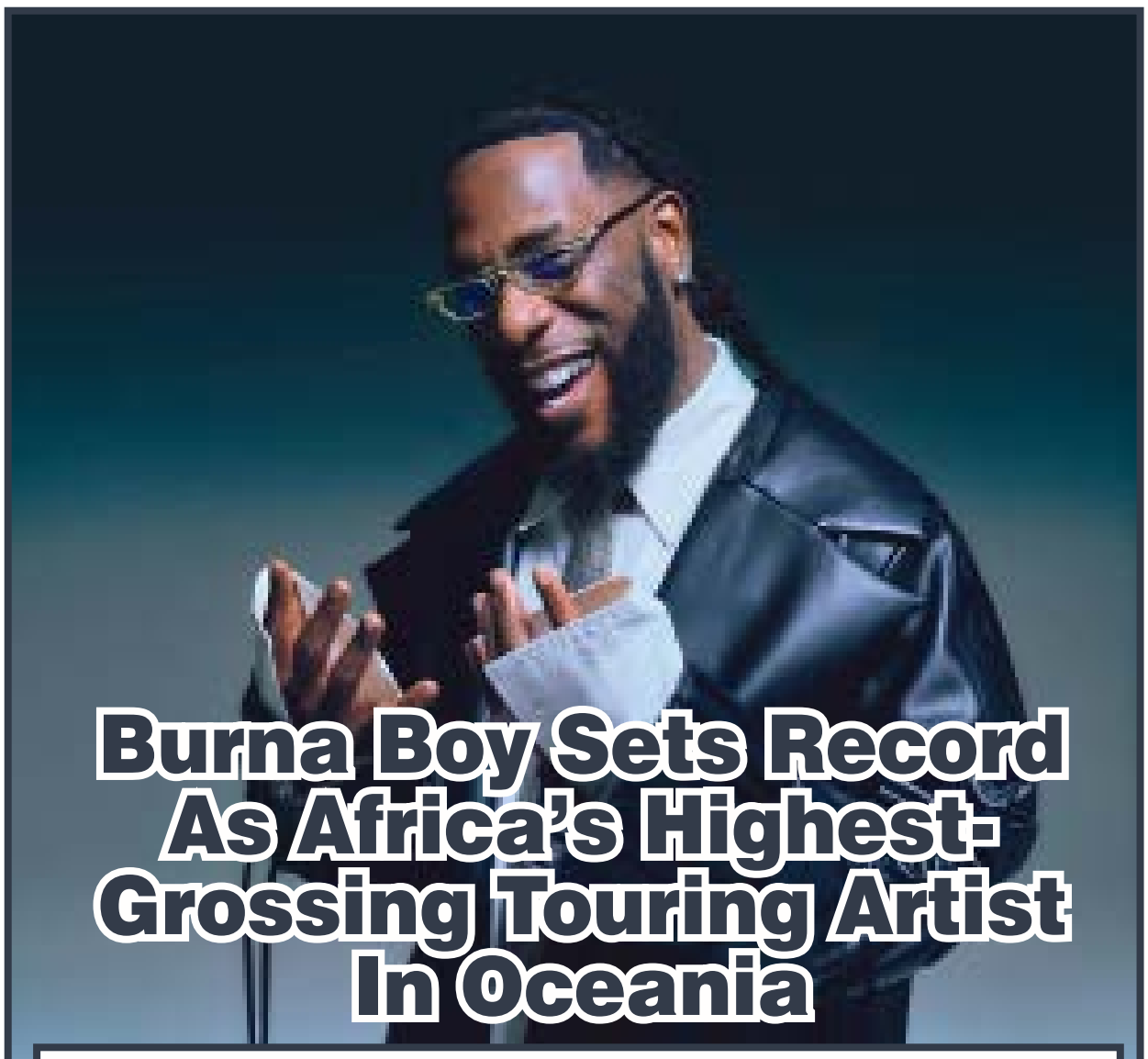


HAPPY 54TH Birthday

Signed: _____

High Chief (Dr.) Emonena Victor Wayles Egukawhore, JP, FCILG
Chairman, De Wayles Group of Companies

TheMatrix ShowBizGist



Burna Boy Sets Record As Africa's Highest-Grossing Touring Artist In Oceania

Grammy-winning Nigerian superstar Burna Boy has made history as the first African artist to achieve record-breaking revenue from a single concert tour in Oceania. According to Touring Data, the "No Sign of Weakness" tour grossed $3.1 million from 31,000 tickets sold across four shows, making it the highest-grossing tour by an African artist in the region.

The milestone was reached during the Sydney stop at Qudos Bank Arena, where Burna Boy generated $1.117 million in ticket sales alone.

The tour, which spanned 20 shows across North America, Europe, and Oceania, demonstrates that African artists can fill major arenas worldwide. The Oceania leg alone attracted nearly 31,000 fans, solidifying Burna Boy's position as one of Africa's top-grossing global performers.

Fans and industry experts see this as further proof that African music continues to make a powerful impact on the global stage.

Lady Sues TikToker Peller, Seeks N395 Million Over Viral Lounge Video

A Lagos-based woman, Osarobo Odigie, has filed a legal demand against TikTok influencer Habeeb Hamzat, popularly known as Peller, seeking N395 million over alleged defamation, cyber harassment, and invasion of privacy.

In a pre-action letter dated March 10, 2026, signed by Bola Osineye of FA Garrick & Co., Odigie's lawyers detailed an incident on January 6, 2026, at Folixxx Lounge in Lekki. The letter claims that while Odigie was buying food, Peller loudly confronted her, instructing her to "shut up" and verbally abusing her with Yoruba slurs when she asked him to moderate his behavior.

The lawyers allege that Peller recorded the encounter without consent and posted it on Snapchat, WhatsApp, TikTok, and Instagram, where it quickly went viral, exposing Odigie to public ridicule and online harassment.

Odige's legal team stated that the incident caused emotional distress, reputational damage, and fears for her personal safety. They are demanding:

N200 million for defamation
N100 million for emotional trauma and reputational harm
N75 million for cyberbullying and threats
N20 million for legal fees

Additionally, they are seeking the immediate removal of the video from all platforms and a public apology published on Peller's social media and in two national newspapers.

Although Peller had previously apologized publicly on January 9, Odigie's lawyers warned that failure to meet the new demands within seven days will trigger formal legal proceedings.

Gospel Singer Deborah Fasoyin Alive, Family Dismisses Death Reports

Deborah Fasoyin, the renowned gospel singer of the Christ Apostolic Church famous for the song "Odun n Lo Sopin," is alive, contrary to viral social media reports claiming she had died.

Her son, Korede Fasoyin, dismissed, describing the reports as false.

The rumour had circulated widely online, with several posts sharing the singer's photograph alongside "RIP" inscriptions, while many users posted condolence messages.

Reacting, Korede said the family had already begun preparing a video message to reassure well-wishers about her condition.

"My mother is alive. The news of her death is fake. We are already doing a video for her to speak," he said.

He added that the family began receiving numerous calls from within and outside Nigeria shortly after the rumour surfaced.



"I started receiving calls from outside Nigeria and within Nigeria since midnight asking if she was dead. I don't know the mischievous person who posted that without verifying," he said.

Deborah Fasoyin recently celebrated her 86th birthday on March 1, 2026. She remains a respected gospel singer within the church and beyond, with her music continuing to influence generations of Nigerian gospel music lovers.

I Faced Insults, Cruel Claims During Tinubu Campaign — Remi Surutu

Nollywood actress Remilekun Oshodi, popularly known as Remi Surutu, has revealed the intense online backlash she faced for supporting Bola Tinubu during the 2023 presidential election campaign.

Speaking at the launch of the EKO57 Movement, a Lagos-based support group for Tinubu, the actress said social media trolls insulted her and even linked her political support to the death of her daughter.

In a viral video from the event, Oshodi said some critics claimed that the politician she supported was responsible for her child's death.

"I've been campaigning for many years. People bashed me online during the campaign. They even said a day before the election that it was the person I was following who killed my child," she said.

Despite the attacks, the actress said she remained resolute and went ahead to cast her vote.

"Your vote is your right. Don't let anyone deceive or scare you. I am not backing out. I will continue to campaign for him and he has my vote," she said.

Remilekun Oshodi lost her first daughter, Ayomikun, in July 2017 to complications from Sickle Cell Disease.

The actress, who has spent decades in the Nigerian film industry, said her political conviction would not be shaken by criticism or threats online.

The EKO57 campaign launch in Lagos also attracted several Nollywood practitioners, including Yomi Fash-Lanso, Ayo Adesanya and Ademola Nurudeen (Lege Miami).

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Guardiola Admits He Hasn't Formulated Plan For Real Madrid

Manchester City manager, Pep Guardiola, has admitted he does not have “a specific plan” for their Champions League last-16 second leg against Real Madrid. Guardiola’s men were hammered 3-0 in the first leg in Spain.

With City looking to overturn the deficit in the return leg, Guardiola has claimed all they will try to do is win.

Ahead of the game at the Etihad, Guardiola told reporters: “I don’t have a specific plan for the game against Real Madrid, apart from just trying.” “In a match, many things can happen. The first thing we have to do is try to win.” “If after 10 years I have to explain to our players what faith is, we have a problem. I’m pretty sure we’ll give it a try. We have a great opportunity.”

Work Permit Delay Stalls Olisa Ndah’s Debut For Stellenbosch FC



Fifa Sanctions Nigeria, DR Congo Over World Cup Play-off Incidents

Fifa has sanctioned the national football teams of Nigeria and DR Congo following disciplinary incidents during their 2026 World Cup continental play-off in November last year.

According to the disciplinary overview released by Fifa's judicial body, both the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) and the DR Congo Football Association (Fecofa) were found guilty of separate breaches during the match.

Fifa fined the NFF 1,000 Swiss francs ($1,270; £950) after determining that the federation had failed to ensure proper "order and security", particularly following the "throwing of objects" by spectators during the game.

The incident was deemed a violation under Article 17.2.b and Article 17 of the Fifa disciplinary code. The Congolese FA received a heavier sanction of 5,000 Swiss francs after supporters were found to have used "laser pointers or similar electronic devices", which constitutes a breach of Article 17.2.d.

The African play-off final, played on 16 November 2025 in the Moroccan city of Rabat, ended in dramatic fashion as DR Congo triumphed 4-3 on penalties after extra time following a 1-1 draw.

The result dashed Nigeria's hopes of qualifying for the Fifa World Cup for the first time since 2018.

Moments before Leopards captain Chancel Mbemba converted the decisive spot-kick, Super Eagles head coach Eric Chelle accused DR Congo officials of attempting to use voodoo.

In the aftermath of the defeat, the NFF lodged a formal protest with Fifa, questioning the eligibility of several DR Congo players who had switched international allegiance.

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Promises Kept: FG Rewards D’Tigress For 2025 Afrobasket Victory

The Federal Government has fulfilled its promises to D’ Tigress for winning the 2025 FIBA Women’s AfroBasket Championship.

Rena Wakama’s side edged out Mali 78-64 in the final of the competition last August.

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu approved a cash reward of naira equivalent of $100,000 to each player, and $50,000 equivalent for the coach and each technical team member at the end of the tournament.

Tinubu awarded each player, and technical crew member the title of Officer of the Order of the Niger (OON).

He also directed the allocation of one flat for each player, coach , and technical crew member.

The documents of Houses and National Honours were presented to the players, and technical crew members by the Chairman of National Sports Commission, NSC, Shehu Dikko, and Director General Bukola Olopade in Lyon, France on Monday.

D’Tigress are currently competing at the 2026 FIBA Women’s World Cup qualifying tournament in Lyon, France.



TheMatrix

Foreign

BY ILESANMI ADEWALE

Kenya Wins Russian Pledge To End Citizen Recruitment For Ukraine War



Kenya has secured a commitment from Russia to stop enlisting Kenyan nationals into its military, following growing concerns over citizens being drawn into the Ukraine conflict.

The announcement came from Foreign Affairs Minister Musalia Mudavadi after discussions with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

Authorities in Kenya say hundreds of citizens were lured abroad with promises of civilian jobs but ended up enlisted in military roles. In response, Nairobi has shut down over 600 recruitment agencies and is working to repatriate affected citizens, 27 of whom have returned so far.

The government continues to provide counselling and rehabilitation for returnees while seeking to maintain legitimate economic and employment ties with Russia. Families of missing citizens remain concerned, and the total number of Kenyan casualties in Ukraine is unknown.

The recruitment of African nationals into the Ukraine conflict is not unique to Kenya. Ukrainian intelligence estimates that over 1,700 individuals from 36 African countries have joined Russian forces since the war began, with other nations like South Africa also repatriating misled citizens.

Palestinian Boy Describes Horror As Israeli Forces Kill Parents, Brothers



A 12-year-old Palestinian boy, Khaled Bani Odeh, watched in horror as Israeli forces shot dead his parents and two younger brothers while they were driving home from a shopping trip. Among the dead was six-year-old Othman, blind and disabled, who was killed in his mother's lap.

Khaled recounted: "My mother cried out one last time before going quiet. My father recited the Shahada as he died."

The boy's only surviving brother, Mustafa, 8, was injured by glass from the car window. Khaled and Mustafa were beaten and questioned by Israeli forces at the scene, according to eyewitness accounts.

Relatives say the family was minutes from home in Tammun, near Tubas, and unaware of any military operations in the area. Witnesses contradict the Israeli army's claim that the car posed a threat, reporting the vehicle had stopped completely before being fired upon.

The incident highlights ongoing concerns over the use of lethal force against civilians in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, where violence against Palestinians has surged since the October 2023 Hamas attacks on Israel. Between 7 October 2023 and 15 March 2026, the UN OCHA reports 1,071 Palestinians killed in the West Bank, including 233 children.

Uniformed Division Of Secret Service Seeks New Recruits With Competitive Pay, Bonuses



The United States Secret Service has opened applications for its Uniformed Division, offering successful candidates a recruitment bonus of up to $75,000.

The announcement was made on the agency's official X page on Monday.

Applicants must be U.S. citizens aged 20–40, possess a valid driver's licence, pass medical and background checks, and qualify for Top Secret security clearance. Citizenship may be by birth, parentage, or naturalisation.

Officers in the Uniformed Division protect key government facilities, including the White House, the Vice President's residence, the Treasury Building, and foreign diplomatic missions in Washington, D.C. They also support protective operations for the President, Vice President, and visiting leaders, and may serve in specialised units such as Counter Sniper, Emergency Response, and K-9 teams.

The recruitment process includes exams, interviews, background checks, and fitness tests, followed by 13 weeks at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center and 18 weeks of specialised training at the James J. Rowley Training Center.

New officers can earn $77,987 to $134,165 annually, with the $75,000 incentive paid over four years contingent on training completion and continued service.



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Worlds on Marble

Religion is not averse to common sense, hence common sense should be used on moral principles first, it is not possible to have such moral principles separated from religious values - Anonymous

THE PERSPECTIVE

By Jibril Abdulmalik

Running Business And Your Mental Health

Ayomide is a fashion designer in Osogbo who has been experiencing erratic NEPA supply. The increase in fuel prices has reduced his profits, as he must use the generator to meet customers' demands. The harsh economy has resulted in fewer people sewing clothes. He has not yet paid the rent of his shop and still owes money for clothing materials he bought on credit. He was recently arrested by the police after he couldn't deliver a customer's clothes on time for an event because there was no light and he didn't have money to fuel the generator. He is extremely frustrated with the situation of business, despite working very hard and being skilful as a tailor. He now has panic attacks every time his phone rings for fear it might be a creditor.

Emeka owns a printing company in Enugu with a team of five employees. His nuclear and extended family all depend on him for financial support. Staff theft, an epileptic power supply, and increasingly rising costs of business have gradually reduced profit margins. The situation is causing him anxiety, sleepless nights, constant financial terror, and isolation.

What are the facts?

A 2017 National Survey on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) reported that there were 41 million SMEs, and they account for 48% of Nigeria's gross domestic product. The report also revealed that SMEs account for 84% of employment in Nigeria. These statistics show the importance of entrepreneurship in sustaining the economy of our country, families and individuals. Despite this importance, businesses in Nigeria struggle due to many factors. In fact, research shows that 50% of businesses in Nigeria fail in the first year, and 95% fail within the first five years. Entrepreneurs in Nigeria face daily crises and challenges to the survival of their business, and these take their toll on their mental health.



Warning signs of mental distress among entrepreneurs

You may be experiencing mental distress if you have some of the following:

- Difficulties falling asleep or sleeping too much
- Unexplained body aches, headaches, or stomach problems
- Feeling tired all the time
- Panic attacks or racing heartbeats for no specific reason
- Crying frequently or feeling close to tears
- Increased irritability
- Numbness or inability to feel joy
- Overwhelming feeling of sadness
- Feeling trapped and stuck
- Avoiding business tasks that you previously enjoyed
- Struggling to concentrate on tasks
- Social withdrawal from friends and family
- Feeling on edge and unable to relax
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Constant rumination about business problems
- Racing thoughts that won't stop
- Catastrophic thinking ("If this deal falls through, I'm finished.")
- Suicidal thoughts

How to improve your mental health while running your business

1. Separate your identity from your business: Remember that your business is not who you are. Your business can have problems, but it does not mean you are not a good person or you cannot become successful again in life. People can even start all over or go into a completely new business and still make it.

2. Build a support network: Find other entrepreneurs, ideally in similar industries with more experience, who can guide and mentor you. A support network of people who understand business struggles and can offer insightful guidance, especially in times of crisis, is important for entrepreneurs… especially when you are new.

3. Create frameworks and structures: Design a structure that allows work to run with ease, even when you are not there. If your business cannot run without you, it will be very stressful for you to cope.

4. Manage your finances: Financial stress reduces with careful and prudent management of your finances. Separate personal and business finances with clear boundaries. Track your business and personal income, expenses, and debts.

5. Keep learning and stay alert to what is going on: The survival and growth of every business today depend on following what is going on. Many tailors now advertise their outfits on social media and can get orders for business from anywhere in the country. If you don't key in, only those who know you in your neighbourhood will use your services (small market).

6. Set work-life boundaries: Have designated times for each work activity and for your personal life. Do not employ staff without the necessary skills and personality just because you know them; you might be at risk of ruining your business.

7. Exercise regularly: Stay healthy and fit by exercising regularly. Exercise helps reduce stress and anxiety and promotes good sleep.

8. Avoid drug abuse: It is tempting to turn to drugs when you are stressed, but you will end up causing more trouble and harm for yourself.

9. Spirituality/faith: This may be a source of comfort or strength for some people.

10. Avoid unrealistic targets: You set yourself up for failure when your goals and targets are so high that you simply cannot achieve them. Because they are unrealistic.

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