

# How ADC is grappling with crises in the North-East

## \* From bitter factions to fragile unity in Adamawa

By Mijinyawa Ahmed

As Nigeria's political terrain gradually reshapes ahead of the 2027 general elections, the African Democratic Congress (ADC) has emerged as a magnet for politicians, civil society actors and reform-minded citizens disillusioned with the country's dominant parties.

Nowhere is this transformation more visible and more turbulent than in the North-East, where the party's rapid growth across six states has been accompanied by leadership crises, reconciliations, violent confrontations and renewed mobilisation.

From Adamawa to Yobe, the ADC's journey reflects both the promise and peril of a fast-growing opposition party struggling to institutionalise internal democracy while expanding its political reach.

### Adamawa: From Bitter Factions to Fragile Unity

Adamawa State has been the epicentre of the ADC's most high-



*Atiku gives David Mark a handshake during a meeting with ADC leaders in Abuja*

profile leadership crisis in the North-East. Shortly after the party's formation, rival factions emerged over who should serve as state chairman, splitting the party between camps led by Sadiq Dasin and Saidu Komsiri.

The dispute quickly drew national figures into the fray. Former Secretary to the Government of the Federation and ADC National Vice-Chairman, Babachir Lawal, declared the Dasin-led faction as the authentic leadership, dismissing rival claims as "null and void."

Adamawa: From Bitter Factions to Fragile Unity

Heavyweights such as

former Governor Jibrilla Bindow, ex-Senator Abdul-Aziz Nyako and former Senator Elisha Abbo rallied behind that position.

The conflict escalated further when former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar publicly endorsed the Dasin-led leadership, expressing hope that it would unify the party and strengthen its structure in the state.

Yet the Komsiri-led faction rejected the legitimacy of Lawal's intervention, accusing him of acting without the mandate of the party's national organs.

Backed by former Senator Aisha Binani,

Komsiri promised that the durability of the reconciliation, constitutionalism and inclusiveness.

After months of tension, Adamawa's ADC chapter reached a negotiated settlement. A new 44-member State Executive Council was sworn in, with Yohannah Shehu emerging as chairman and Komsiri accepting the role of organising secretary—an outcome widely seen as a compromise arrangement.

Party leaders described the resolution as a triumph of unity over rancour, though observers note

duly conducted state congress recognised by the national leadership.

He accused expelled and suspended members of acting as agents of confusion and urged INEC and security agencies to take note.

However, the counter-narrative came swiftly. One of the accused, Aminu Muhammad, denied being expelled and challenged Haruna's claim to legitimacy, insisting that due process must be followed in removing party officials.

The Bauchi crisis underscores a recurring problem for the ADC in the region: weak internal dispute-resolution mechanisms and growing suspicions of external interference as the party gains popularity.

### Borno: Violence, Police Intervention and Political Anxiety

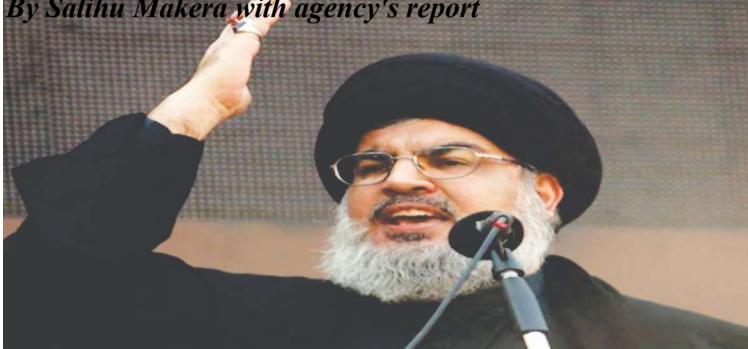
In Borno State, the ADC's internal disagreements turned violent. The crisis erupted during the inauguration of an interim management committee set up by the party's national secretariat.

*Continue on Back page*

## News

### How Israel spent about \$40 million to assassinate late Hezbollah leader

By Salihu Makera with agency's report



The Israeli military spent around \$40 million to assassinate Hezbollah's long-time leader Hassan Nasrallah in 2024, an Israeli business newspaper has revealed.

Nasrallah was killed on 27 September 2024 in Hezbollah's headquarters located underground in the Haret Hreik suburb south of Beirut, days after Israel began a wide-scale aerial offensive on Lebanon.

The bombing campaign came after months of cross-border fire between Hezbollah and Israel in a fallout over the Gaza war. Israel's offensive also included a ground invasion of southern Lebanon, where Israeli forces still occupy five strategic hilltops.

The massive strike south of Beirut, which killed Nasrallah, also killed several other Hezbollah and Iranian officials present in the underground base at the time. Nasrallah had led the Shia militant group for over three decades.

His killing was officially announced by Hezbollah the following day.

The Marker, a business daily owned by Haaretz, said the mission cost an estimated 125 million shekels, around \$34 million.

Roughly 25 million shekels (around \$6.8 million) were spent on the munitions used in the strike itself, and the rest covered flight hours, fuel, and additional munitions dropped to block rescuers from accessing the site of the attack, which levelled several buildings in the residential quarter.

The F-15 jets reportedly dropped several munitions totalling 83 tonnes, with the force of the explosions felt around Greater Beirut, as massive plumes of smoke filled the afternoon sky.

Israeli interceptors used to counter a retaliatory Hezbollah missile attack on the day of the assassination cost an additional several tens of millions of shekels, The Marker says.

Days later and in another major airstrike, Israel assassinated Nasrallah's cousin Hashem Safieddine, seen as a hardliner and who was set to lead the group. Much of Hezbollah's senior leadership has been eliminated, and thousands of its fighters have been killed and injured.

Nasrallah was long regarded as a charismatic and commanding figure, known for his often lengthy televised addresses that hundreds of thousands would tune in to watch.

His assassination was seen as seismic across the region and as one of the heaviest blows dealt to the Iran-led alliance of militant groups.

Israel continues to conduct near-daily strikes on Lebanon in violation of a November 2024 ceasefire deal, vowing to keep Hezbollah weakened. Tel Aviv has threatened to launch another offensive if the group is not fully disarmed.

#### The cost of war

The Marker estimates the cost of Israel's war on Gaza since October 2023 at around 222 billion shekels (around \$60 billion). A ceasefire has held between Hamas and Israel since October last year, but Israeli fire has killed more than 400 Palestinians since.

Israeli forces occupy 52 percent of the enclave but are obliged to gradually withdraw as the ceasefire agreement moves into its second phase.

The newspaper says the most expensive day of the Gaza war happened early in the offensive, shortly after the ground invasion into the Palestinian territory, costing around 1.3 billion shekels, approximately \$350 million.

Counting civilian expenditures such as compensation for businesses, property damage, funding for evacuees and financing costs, Israel's Finance Ministry puts its estimation at 277 billion shekels (\$88.36bn). The Bank of Israel says it has cost Tel Aviv 352 billion shekels (\$112.29bn).

As well as the Gaza and Lebanon wars, Israel has bombarded Syria and Yemen and fought a 12-day air war with Iran.

It also conducted an unprecedented strike on Qatar's capital, Doha, in a failed attempt to assassinate senior Hamas officials. (Source: newarab.com)

### How DSS' Ifeanyi Festus Hid Missing Jigawa Teen

\* Impregnated Her, Convert her to Christianity

The family of a girl who went missing at the age of 16 in Jigawa State in 2023 has petitioned the authorities for an investigation after one Ifeanyi Festus, a Department of State Security (DSS) officer, confessed that she had been with him.

Foundation For Investigative Journalism (FIJ) learnt after admitting that the missing girl had been with him all along at the DSS facility in Karmajiji, Abuja, the officer noted that the girl had given birth to his child.

The family filed a direct criminal complaint before a court in Jigawa, and the court has issued a preliminary summons directing Festus to appear before the court on Wednesday last week.

A copy of the petition that the family's legal counsel wrote to the DSS, which Yusuf Asunmogejo, a concerned Nigerian, posted on X on Thursday, reveals that Festus phoned Abdulhadi Ibrahim, the father of the missing teenager, on January 1.

During the phone call, he identified himself as a serving DSS officer, admitted that the missing girl had been with him all along and disclosed that she had given birth to his child.

He also told the father that "he was now ready to marry her" and instructed him to come down to Abuja for discussions.

The petition to the DSS dated January 4.

Hussaini Sani, the family's lawyer, told FIJ on Friday that, having submitted the petition to the DSS, the security agency said they were investigating the matter.

He said that the DSS is also trying to dissociate itself from Festus.

"The DSS is trying to deny him. To say that he's not a DSS staff member will not even hold water. Of course, that's naturally what they will want to do because it will indict them," he said.

The lawyer disclosed that when the teenage girl went missing from the house two years and two months ago, the family members took all the necessary steps towards finding her.

"They reported to the police, to the media, and even to the mosques in search of her. The lady, in particular, did not even have a phone number or a phone. It was just one day that she went missing in the house. The family underwent a severe psychological trauma, especially the mum, who is

now late partly due to worry and some underlying ailments," Sani said.

"The family got to know about the girl's abduction through the admission of the DSS officer himself. He put a call across to the father. He got the number through the girl, and he called the father to say his daughter was with him and that she's hale and hearty, and that she has a child with him and that they want him to bless them to get married. Then he asked the father to come down from Jigawa to Abuja, which is callous of him.

"When the uncle got there, he was accosted by some DSS officers, including this person, and they introduced themselves. They asked the lady to confirm whether he's a relative, and immediately, she saw him, she hugged him and started crying, saying he's her father's brother. He revealed that her mother was even dead, and she cried again.

"When they saw that the altercation might attract more personnel because, apparently, they had to call the uncle aside for the meeting, which was an unofficial meeting, they quickly asked him to come back later. They also told him that she had already given birth. The uncle even saw her with a child."

The lawyer said findings showed that the missing girl and Festus cohabited within a DSS facility and that she later developed complications during childbirth, which led to a caesarean section carried out at the DSS hospital.

"It was administered in that same DSS facility, in their hospital. The record of the medical reports is there," he said.

"As you know, the judiciary is neutral. In *prima facie* cases, there is a high chance of a committed crime, so what the court normally does is to compel your attendance to be able to defend yourself based on the accusations against you."

FIJ learnt that, in addition to issuing a preliminary summons mandating the DSS to produce Festus, the court also ordered the Commissioner of Police (CP) to investigate the matter.

"That's the position we have taken on behalf of the family. We are waiting for their compliance with the court order," the lawyer said.

He said the court equally ordered the DSS to reunite the girl with her family, as she is still at the facility of the

security service in Abuja.

"She's still at the DSS facility. They are also taking her statement, and since both the man and the lady are under the custody of the DSS for investigation, we cannot just enter the facility and say we want to take her away. That's why we can only apply through the DSS or through the court order, as we did," Sani explained.

When FIJ first called the phone number attributed to Festus in the petition on Friday, the call rang out on the first attempt but was switched off on the second and third attempts. The reporter dialled the number again a few minutes later; it rang but was not answered.

FIJ also sent messages via WhatsApp and SMS, but there was no response at press time.

In another development the Department of State Services (DSS) has taken into custody of the operatives over allegations of abducting, defiling and forcefully converting Walida Abdulhadi, to Christianity in Abuja.

The arrest followed the January 4, 2026 petition submitted by Abuja-based law firm, Gamji Lawchain. A copy of the petition, addressed to the Director-General of the DSS, was obtained by our correspondent on Friday via X (formerly Twitter).

Reacting to the allegations, the DSS Director of Public Relations and Strategic Communications, Favour Dozie, confirmed on Friday that an officer of the Service had been arrested in connection with the case.

Dozie said the officer was under investigation for the alleged forceful conversion and marriage of Walida, adding that inquiries were ongoing.

"The attention of the Department of State Services has been drawn to reports alleging involvement of a staff of DSS, in a case of abduction, defilement of a minor, and abuse of office, among other offences. For clarity, the Service has no record of the above-named in its employment."

The DSS spokesperson maintained that such acts were against the agency's regulations and laid-down code of conduct, adding that the outcome of the investigation would be made public.

(Called from Foundation for Investigative Journalism with additional reports from other sources).

## Bauchi Assembly Public Accounts Committee Reaffirms Constitutional Mandate on Transparency, Accountability

By Mijinyawa Ahmed

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the Bauchi State House of Assembly has reiterated its constitutional responsibility to promote accountability, transparency and strict adherence to due process in the management of public finances across the state.

The Chairman of the Committee, Hon. Mubarak Haruna, who represents Jama'are Constituency, made this declaration on Friday while addressing journalists at a news conference in Bauchi.

He emphasized that the committee's activities are firmly anchored on the provisions of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) and the Standing Orders of the House.

Hon. Haruna explained that the primary mandate of the PAC is to scrutinize audited financial statements of the state and local governments to ensure that public funds are expended in line with approved financial regulations and extant laws.

He noted that since the inauguration of the current Assembly, the committee has demonstrated strong commitment to its oversight functions, particularly through the careful examination of



audit reports submitted by the Offices of the Auditor-General for the State and Local Governments.

According to him, the committee has undertaken a series of oversight visits to ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), as well as local government councils. During these engagements, accounting officers were invited to defend their financial records and respond to audit queries raised against their offices.

The PAC chairman further disclosed that the committee has convened public hearings, investigated reported cases of financial misconduct and closely monitored the implementation of audit recommendations as part of efforts to protect public

resources.

Haruna revealed that all audit queries contained in the 2024 Auditor-General's report were comprehensively reviewed and addressed in accordance with established procedures.

He stressed that due process remains the guiding principle of the committee's work, cautioning the public against relying on audit-related claims circulated outside recognized legal and institutional frameworks.

Reaffirming the committee's independence,

Haruna assured residents that the PAC operates without external interference and remains committed to ensuring prudent, transparent and accountable use of public funds in Bauchi State.

## Bauchi immunization funding up, coverage still low

By Ahmed Ahmed

The Africa Health Budget Network (AHBN), in collaboration with its Communities of Practice (CoP) in Bauchi, Borno, Kano and Sokoto States, has released the 2025 Immunization Budget Accountability Scorecard, highlighting both progress and gaps in Bauchi State's immunization efforts.

This is contained in a press statement signed by Dr Aminu Magashi Garba made available to newsmen on Friday in Bauchi.

According to the press statement, the scorecard is the outcome of sustained evidence-based monitoring and citizen-led accountability initiatives that assess

government commitments to immunization financing, budget allocations, fund releases and service delivery performance.

Although the Zero Dose Learning Hub (ZDLH) initiative supported by GAVI and implemented with technical support from AFENET officially ended in December 2025,

AHBN reaffirmed its resolve to continue accountability advocacy to ensure equitable access to life-saving vaccines, especially for zero-dose children, in 2026 and beyond.

The report commended Bauchi State for a significant milestone in immunization financing during the 2025 fiscal year.

The state government

allocated and fully released ₦872 million into the Immunization Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Basket Fund, achieving a 100 per cent fund release.

AHBN described the development as a strong indication of political will and continuity in supporting routine immunization programmes, urging the state to sustain the momentum in future budgets.

However, the scorecard revealed persistent challenges in immunization outcomes. Data showed that Penta 1 and Penta 3 vaccination coverage rates remain below 40 per cent, pointing to a disconnect between financial commitments and service delivery results.

AHBN stressed the need for improved implementation, stronger community engagement, and enhanced demand creation to ensure that released funds translate into increased vaccine uptake.

The network concluded by calling on all stakeholders to intensify efforts so that every eligible child in Bauchi State is fully immunized.



## Bauchi reopens recruitment portal, short-listed 50,000 applicants for verification

By Mijinyawa Ahmed



The Bauchi State Government has reopened its recruitment portal to enable applicants who recently applied for government jobs to check their qualification status and download their acknowledgment slips for the next stage of the exercise.

The State Head of Civil Service, Barrister Mohammed Sani Umar, disclosed this while briefing journalists in his office in Bauchi. He explained that the reopening of the portal is aimed at ensuring a transparent and inclusive recruitment process in line with the directive of Governor Bala Mohammed.

According to him, applicants who are short-listed and found qualified are required to print their slips and present them at their respective Local Government Areas for physical verification of credentials.

He revealed that out of about 200,000 applicants who applied for the vacancies, over 50,000 candidates were short-listed as qualified.

Umar stated that the government has already directed the chairmen of the 20 Local Government Areas to appoint desk officers who will coordinate the collection and verification of qualification slips from short-listed candidates.

## INEC begins PVC distribution in FCT ahead of February 21 council polls

The Independent National Electoral Commission has announced the commencement of the distribution of Permanent Voter Cards ahead of the February 21 Area Council elections in the Federal Capital Territory.

INEC disclosed this in a statement posted on its official X handle, urging eligible voters in the FCT to take advantage of the exercise to collect their PVCs.

According to the commission, PVC collection will take place at voters' respective Registration Areas (wards) from January 22 to January 26, between 9 am and 3 pm daily.

INEC added that eligible voters who are unable to collect their PVCs at their wards within the stipulated period would be able to do so thereafter at the INEC Area Council offices across the FCT.

It said, "Dear #FCT Resident, as we prepare for the February 21st Area Council Election, INEC is bringing your PVC closer to you. Don't miss the chance to collect your PVC in the FCT."

"From Jan 22-26, 9 am -3 pm daily, visit your Registration Area (Ward) to collect your Permanent Voter Card (PVC). After the 26th, collection continues at INEC Area Council Offices."

The commission encouraged residents of the FCT to participate in the exercise and urged them to track their collection using the link <https://cvr.inecinigeria.org/Locator>.

The February 21 election, set to run from 8:30 a.m., will see 17 political parties vying for positions across the FCT's 62 wards.

## Northeast News

# APC–PDP Face-Off in Bauchi: Defection Rumours, EFCC Allegations, Politics of Power

By Mijinyawa Ahmed

In Nigeria's evolving political landscape, few issues generate as much intrigue as defection rumours and allegations of institutional misuse. In Bauchi State, these dynamics have taken centre stage following sharp exchanges between the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Governor Bala Mohammed of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), raising broader questions about governance, accountability and political stability under the current democratic dispensation.

The Bauchi State chapter of the APC has firmly dismissed claims that it is plotting to lure or force Governor Bala Mohammed into defecting from the PDP. Speaking during an interview with journalists in Bauchi, the state APC Chairman, Alhaji Hassan Tilde, described the speculations as politically motivated distractions designed to shift attention away from the achievements of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the APC-led Federal Government.

According to Tilde, the ruling party at both state and national levels is not preoccupied with recruiting opposition governors but is instead focused on governance and service delivery.

He stressed that President Tinubu's administration remains committed to policies that improve the welfare of Nigerians, regardless of political affiliation.

"I want to assure Nigerians that the President and the APC will not be distracted by such



talks. Our priority is good governance and ensuring that every Nigerian has a sense of belonging under this administration," Tilde said.

He commended President Tinubu for what he described as bold, inclusive and pragmatic leadership, particularly in ensuring the regular and timely release of funds to all 36 states of the federation.

Tilde argued that the equitable disbursement of federal allocations has created a level playing field for governors, enabling them to focus on development rather than political survival.

The APC chairman noted that the funds released to subnational governments have translated into tangible investments in key sectors such as healthcare, education and infrastructure.

According to him, these interventions are gradually improving living standards and reinforcing public confidence in governance at both federal and state levels.

Beyond fiscal policy, Tilde also touched on the sensitive issue of anti-corruption, defending the role of

institutions such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

He reminded Nigerians that the EFCC was established during a PDP administration to strengthen transparency and accountability in public life.

"The fight against corruption is in the interest of the nation, not any political party," Tilde said, adding that the mandate of anti-graft agencies was never intended to shield any individual or group from investigation.

He urged political actors across party lines to support reforms that strengthen institutions rather than promote narratives capable of undermining public trust and political stability.

However, Governor Bala Mohammed has offered a sharply contrasting narrative. The Bauchi State governor recently accused the APC-led Federal Government of using the EFCC to persecute him and officials of his administration because of his refusal to defect to the ruling party.

Mohammed made the allegation while receiving an ambassadorial award for safety from the Institute of Safety

Professionals in Nigeria at the Government House in Bauchi.

Chairman of the PDP Governors' Forum, Mohammed claimed that one of his commissioners was being detained by the EFCC, describing the action as politically motivated and aimed at intimidating the opposition.

"As a governor, someone who is the head of the opposition, my commissioner has been kept and will not be released by the EFCC," he said.

He further alleged that despite his constitutional immunity, his name had been mentioned in court proceedings, which he described as unprecedented and alarming.

For the governor, these developments illustrate what he sees as the growing influence of partisan politics on governance and state institutions.

He accused the Federal Government of deploying courts and anti-graft agencies as tools to harass and silence political opponents.

"The APC-led federal government thinks they can

use the courts and institutions of government, like the EFCC, to persecute and prosecute Nigerians who are not within their own party," Mohammed alleged.

Insisting that he would not be coerced or intimidated into changing his political allegiance, the governor declared that no amount of pressure would make him join the APC.

While he said he had previously remained silent in the interest of peace and security, Mohammed warned that he would no longer keep quiet if the alleged harassment persisted.

The standoff between the APC leadership in Bauchi and Governor Mohammed reflects deeper tensions within Nigeria's multiparty democracy, where accusations of defection plots and institutional bias often surface ahead of electoral cycles.

While the APC maintains that its focus is governance and national development, the PDP governor's allegations underscore lingering mistrust between ruling and opposition parties.

As the debate continues, analysts say the situation highlights the need for strong, independent institutions capable of enforcing accountability without political colouration.

Ultimately, how these competing narratives are managed may shape not only political stability in Bauchi State but also public confidence in Nigeria's democratic institutions nationwide.

## Farmers happy with the establishment of forest guards

From Ahmad Muhammad, Bauchi

The National President All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) Hon. Mohammed Magaji Gettado has expressed happiness with the efforts made by the Federal Government to protect farmers during dry and wet farming through the establishment of 7000 Forest guards.

Alhaji Magaji Gettado said this to newsmen in Bauchi. He said graduation off over 7,000 newly recruited Forest Guards drawn from seven frontline states, with immediate deployment ordered will strengthen internal security and reclaim Nigeria's forests

from criminal elements.

He said the All Farmers Association of Nigeria notes with delight and expressed confidence that the bold initiative no doubt represents a coordinated federal and state security intervention aimed at reclaiming Nigeria's forest from criminal elements unleashing terror and mayhem on our innocent and defenseless citizens."

President said "We received with great nostalgia the news of the graduation ceremony of the agile and energetic forest guards who were graduated on Saturday, 27th December, 2025 across: Borno, Sokoto, Yobe, Adamawa, Niger, Kwara,

Zamfara and Kebbi States."

Magaji said "Given the profound impact of security on the lives, livelihoods of ordinary citizens farming activities, businesses, religious, social and economic activities, the new initiative superintendent by our ebullient and hardworking National Security Adviser will no doubt open the floodgates and easy access to farms by our hardworking farmers who before now had abandoned their farms for fear of their dear lives following the threats by hoodlums and criminal elements in the society."

Also, the intervention will no doubt strengthen Nigeria's internal security architecture by denying terrorists, bandits, kidnappers and other criminal groups sanctuary with forested and hard-to-reach terrains at the same time the deployment of the forest guards will encourage farmers to go back to farm for dry season farming."

President said "citizens farming activities, businesses, religious, social and economic activities, the new initiative superintendent by our ebullient and hardworking National Security Adviser will no doubt open the floodgates and easy access to farms by our hardworking farmers who before now had abandoned their farms for fear of their dear lives following the threats by hoodlums and

kidnappers and other criminal groups sanctuary with forested and hard-to-reach terrains at the same time the deployment of the forest guards will encourage farmers to go back to farm for dry and rainy season farming".

We assure you of our unflinching support and cooperation in the attainment of this noble objective aimed at providing succor and a relief to our farmers across the length and breadth of the country.

# My Successor still Unknown, Zulum declares at APC meeting

By Alkali Muhd Musa, Maiduguri

Borno State Governor Babagana Umara Zulum has stated that he does not know who will succeed him after the expiration of his tenure in May 2027.

The governor reiterated that his administration was focused on strengthening security and providing needed development to the people.

He spoke on Sunday evening during a critical All Progressives Congress (APC) stakeholders' meeting convened at the Multi-purpose Hall of the Government House in Maiduguri.

Addressing party leaders, elected officials and members, Zulum reiterated his stand for a fair, transparent and just process in the election of party officials during the forthcoming congresses.

He emphasised that the integrity of the process was paramount for the party's unity and future success.

The governor strongly advocated a fresh set of individuals to occupy the various party positions.

He urged stakeholders to allow new faces to emerge through a democratic process, thereby strengthening the party's grassroots structure and inclusivity.

Governor Zulum also dismissed speculation about his influence on the party's future ticket.

He firmly and publicly reaffirmed that he had not anointed any candidate for the



upcoming party positions or for any elective position.

"I have no candidate for any position, and I do not know who will succeed me. I have entrusted the choice of leaders to Almighty Allah, in accordance with the democratic will of the party members and the people of Borno State.

The governor set up two committees to scale up the APC e-registration and reconciliation among party members.

The 10-man committee will be headed by Nigeria's former Ambassador to China, Baba Ahmed Jidda and will include members drawn from the state's 3 senatorial districts.

The meeting was attended by the acting governor, Umar Usman Kadafur; the former governor of Borno State, Maina Ma'aji Lawan; APC Deputy National Chairman, Ali Bukar Dolori, State APC Chairman, Bello Ayuba and

three former deputy governors, including Ali Abubakar Jatau, Adamu Shettima Dibal and Usman Mamman Durkwa.

The Chief Whip of the Senate, Mohammed Tahir Monguno, Senator Kaka Shehu Lawan and 10 members of the House of Representatives, including Dr Midala Balamai, who announced his resignation from the People's Democratic Party (PDP), were in attendance.

The speaker of the Borno State House of Assembly, Abdulkarim Lawan; the deputy speaker, Engr Abdullahi Askira and 25 other members also graced the occasion.

Others in attendance included former Senator Baba Kaka Bashir Garbai, Dr Bulama Mali Gubio and senior government and party officials.

## Gov. Kefas Lunches e-filing of cases in state judiciary to improve Case Management

By Usman Shehu Gungura

Governor Agbuk Kefas of Taraba State, has launched the e-filing of cases for the State High Court.

Speaking at the Go-Live event held at the Grand Shields Hotel, Jalingo, governor Kefas, who was represented by the Secretary to the Government of the State, Chief Gebon Timothy Kataps, said the initiative demonstrates the resolve of the judiciary to embrace innovation and technology to overcome the challenges associated with manual court processes.

He noted that the e-filing system will enhance transparency and accountability in court operations, reduce delays and administrative bottlenecks,

and improve record management and case tracking among other benefits.

Kefas reaffirmed his administration's unwavering commitment to upholding the constitutional independence of the judiciary and supporting judicial reforms that promote efficiency and integrity.

He urged judicial officers and staff to take full advantage of the innovation to improve case management, while maintaining professionalism and integrity in the use of the technology.

In his address, the Chief Judge of Taraba State, Justice Joel Filibus Agya, described the event as a major milestone in the modernisation of the Taraba State Judiciary.

He said the initiative represents a deliberate and strategic step towards

transforming how cases are initiated, processed, and managed within the High Court system.

Justice Agya explained that the e-filing system will enable the electronic filing of originating processes and subsequent applications, thereby reducing delays associated with manual registry procedures and improving overall efficiency.

The Special Guest of Honour and Chief Justice of Borno State, Hon. Justice Kashim Zannah, congratulated the government and people of Taraba State on the successful launch of the e-filing system.

He described the e-filing system as a strategic innovation that will promote transparency and reduce human error within the justice system.

## Bauchi PRP demands arrest, prosecution of govt officials involved in alleged ₦2.9bn scam

The Bauchi State chapter of the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), has called for the arrest, thorough investigation and prosecution of government officials who have been fingered in an alleged ₦2.9 billion scam involving state funds.

In a statement signed by the Secretary of the party in the state, Hon. Wada Abdullahi, the party said recent reports credited to the state's Auditor-General's is deeply alarming and worrisome.

"The Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), Bauchi State Chapter, is deeply alarmed and profoundly disturbed by the recent revelations in the Bauchi State Auditor-General's report for the 2024 accounts, as reviewed and published by WikkiTimes," Abdullahi said.

"The report exposed pervasive financial irregularities, misappropriation of public funds, and blatant breaches of accountability within Bauchi State government agencies, including the Office of the Chief of Staff, Ministries of Finance, Budget, Economic Planning and Multilateral Coordination, Education, Religious Affairs, Housing and Environment, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Agriculture, Health, Pension Board, Sustainable Development Goals Office, Sa'adu Zungur University, Abubakar Tafawa Ali Polytechnic, and other key MDAs.

"The detailed audit findings reveal the reckless spending of over ₦2.9 billion without proper documentation, approval, or accountability. These findings are a grave indictment of the leadership and governance standards in our dear state.

"They highlight a systematic pattern of corruption, abuse of office, and a total disregard for the rule of law and the financial regulations designed to safeguard public resources.

"In light of these disturbing disclosures, the

Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) hereby calls on the Federal Government's anti-corruption agencies, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), to:

1. Launch an immediate and comprehensive investigation into the fraudulent financial activities, including unapproved payments, missing vouchers, fake receipts, and diversion of public funds as outlined in the recent audit reports.

2. Invite or arrest the heads of the implicated ministries and agencies—including the Chief of Staff—for questioning, and ensure they are thoroughly scrutinized.

3. Ensure that any individual found culpable—whether officials, political appointees, civil servants, or others—is swiftly prosecuted and made to face the full weight of the law.

4. Take urgent steps to recover looted funds, restore transparency, and institute measures that will prevent the recurrence of such financial misconduct in Bauchi State and Nigeria at large.

"Our state and country deserve governance rooted in integrity, transparency, and accountability. It is the constitutional duty of the anti-corruption agencies to act decisively, demonstrate zero tolerance for corruption, and send a clear message that impunity will no longer be tolerated.

"The PRP reiterates its unwavering commitment to fighting corruption and ensuring that public funds serve the interest of the people, not a few corrupt elements. We call on all patriotic Nigerians and stakeholders to support these efforts and demand justice and accountability.

"Let it be known that corruption is a cancer that erodes the foundation of our democracy. We must work collectively to eradicate it, restore public trust, and build Nigeria into a nation that works for all", the party stated.



**Issues**

# Political atmosphere charged as governors move to dismantle godfather structures

As preparations for the 2027 general elections gradually take shape, political activities across Nigeria are heating up. Party defections, internal crises within major parties such as the PDP, LP, NNPP, ADC and others, as well as emerging fault lines even within the ruling APC, now dominate the political landscape.

However, beyond defections and party disputes, one issue has captured growing public attention: the steady erosion of political godfatherism.

From 2023 to date, Nigeria has witnessed a familiar but increasingly bold pattern, governors who emerged through the influence, resources and political machinery of powerful benefactors later breaking ranks with those same godfathers.

Once-installed protégés are now asserting independence, often at great political cost.

In Nigerian political parlance, a godfather is an influential figure who installs a candidate into office using power, money, structures or political clout, with voters often aligning out of loyalty or fear rather than policy conviction.

While this practice has long shaped electoral outcomes, recent developments suggest its dominance is weakening.

**Kano: Kwankwaso vs Abba Yusuf**

One of the most striking examples is unfolding in Kano State, where relationship between Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf and his political mentor, former governor and NNPP leader, Senator Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, has deteriorated sharply.

The crisis revolves around reports that Governor Yusuf is planning to defect from the NNPP to the APC. Kwankwaso is said to have openly opposed any such move, stating that Yusuf would not join forces with APC leader Abdullahi Ganduje with his blessing.

Despite this resistance, political insiders say arrangements to welcome the governor into the APC are already far advanced and January 12 has already been fixed as the "deal" date.

Observers have expressed surprise at the speed and intensity of the fallout,



especially given Yusuf's past loyalty to Kwankwaso.

The rift has since spilled onto social media, where supporters of both camps trade words daily.

The division has also cut across the political structure of the state, with commissioners, local government chairmen, lawmakers at state and federal levels openly choosing sides.

The crisis has already claimed a casualty within the NNPP. The party's state chairman, Hashim Dungurawa, believed to be loyal to Kwankwaso was removed and replaced with Abdullahi Abiya, a known ally of Governor Yusuf.

Speaking with journalist, Kano State Commissioner for Information, Comrade Ibrahim Abdullahi Waiya, described a possible defection by Yusuf to the APC as "a blessing" for the state.

"Kano has lost a lot because we are not in the ruling party. Many federal projects that should come to the state are not coming because of party differences. If the governor moves, it will be for the good of Kano, and we only pray that Allah reconciles Governor Abba Yusuf and his political leader, Senator Rabiu Kwankwaso," Waiya said.

For now, Governor Yusuf remains in the NNPP, but analysts believe it is only a matter of time before he makes a final decision.

Meanwhile, Kwankwaso's camp is reportedly preparing for a major political showdown ahead of 2027.

**Kaduna: El-Rufai and Uba Sani's fall out**

A similar power struggle has played out in Kaduna State between former governor Nasir El-Rufai and his successor, Governor Uba Sani.

Tension became public in early 2024 when Uba Sani accused El-Rufai, his political benefactor, of leaving the state in deep financial trouble,

claiming Kaduna was struggling to even pay workers' salaries. El-Rufai strongly denied the allegation.

The crisis escalated when the Kaduna State House of Assembly accused El-Rufai's administration of financial impropriety involving contract funds.

The lawmakers directed anti-graft agencies to investigate the former governor's ex-chief of staff and former commissioner for finance. While El-Rufai has since moved to the ADC, Sani remains in the APC. A true test of leadership is expected come 2027.

**Jigawa: Quiet but growing tension**

In Jigawa State, political watchers also point to a growing rift between Governor Umar Namadi and his predecessor, former governor Badaru Abubakar. While the disagreement has remained relatively subdued, insiders say relations between both camps are increasingly strained.

Yusuf Ahmed, a political analyst from the state journalist that it will be a "clash of the titans" as preparations for 2027 begin. All is not well between the governor and the former governor.

**Rivers: Wike-Fubara Showdown**

The political crisis between former Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike and his protégé-turned-rival, Governor Siminalayi Fubara, escalated into a full-blown confrontation that engulfed the State House of Assembly and local government councils.

Although the crisis appeared to subside after Governor Fubara backed down and sought reconciliation, following his suspension from office for six months and the appointment of an acting administrator, the underlying

tension has continued to linger.

In a bid to end the conflict altogether, Governor Fubara defected to the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC). However, recent actions from both leaders have showed that the dispute is far from over, as political undercurrents continue to signal lingering instability in the state.

Wike had during a recent tour of the state insisted he remains the only leader in the state. His body language indicated he is picking another candidate for 2027 election. The House of Assembly members loyal to the FCT minister have equally commenced an impeachment move against the governor.

**Not a new phenomenon**

Recall that clashes between godfathers and their protégés are not new in Nigeria. Historical examples abound.

In Kano, the ideological alliance between Malam Aminu Kano and Governor Abubakar Rimi collapsed in 1982, Rimi eventually left the PRP, joined another party and contested against his former mentor, only to be defeated by a new PRP candidate backed by Aminu Kano.

In Oyo State, the late political strongman Lamidi Adedibu orchestrated the impeachment of Governor Rashidi Ladoja in 2006 after both fell out.

Similar godfather-protégé crises have played out in Sokoto between Attahiru Bafarawa and Aliyu Wamakko, and earlier between Yariman Bakura and Mahmud Shinkafi, rifts that still shape Sokoto politics till date.

**Experts weigh in**

Professor Kamilu Sani Fage, a political scientist at Bayero University, Kano, told Journaists that godfatherism has no place in a true

democracy.

"Democracy has nothing to do with godfathers," he said.

"This practice only thrives in Nigeria. In most cases, godfathers do not support candidates for public interest but for personal gain. That is why these arrangements always collapse."

According to him, the collapse of godfatherism is healthy for democracy. "Wherever godfatherism exists, conflict is inevitable. Its decline will allow governors to serve the people freely without undue interference."

**Divided opinions**

Not all political actors agree. Umar Kyari, spokesperson of the PDP in Jigawa State, insists that godfatherism remains unavoidable in Nigerian politics.

"In Nigeria, politics cannot work without a godfather; someone who mentors you and brings you into the system," Kyari told Journaists.

"The problem starts when relationships are not built on trust and sincerity," he said.

He added that godfathers should step back after elections and allow elected officials to govern independently.

Similarly, Sheikh Ibrahim Khalil, ADC governorship candidate in Kano during the 2023 elections, argued that many politicians lack the capacity to succeed without strong backing.

"Some people cannot stand on their own. Their success depends on guidance and support," he said, adding that betraying one's godfather is morally wrong.

On Kano politics, Khalil was blunt: "Without Kwankwaso, Abba Yusuf would not have become governor. Anyone who voted for Abba did so because of Kwankwaso."

**2027: What next?**

As Nigeria edges closer to the 2027 elections, political analysts expect more confrontations between godfathers and their political offspring across party lines.

Whether this signals the end of godfatherism or merely a reshaping of old power structures remains an open question, but one thing is clear, loyalty is no longer guaranteed, and authority is increasingly contested.

Called from DAILY POST

## Inferno Struck GSSS Jalingo, Destroys Classrooms, Learning Materials, As Commissioner Visits The Scene

By Saneen Yarima, Jalingo



A devastating fire outbreak recently struck the Taraba State Government Science Secondary School (GSSS) in Jalingo, leaving a trail of destruction and disruption to the academic activities of the students.

In a statement issued by Jonathan Jolly, say the incident occurred on Sunday, January 11, 2026, around 2 pm, and was quickly brought under control, thanks to the prompt response of the school authorities.

The Commissioner of Basic and Secondary Education, Dr. Augustina, who visited the scene to assess the damage, assured the school community that the government would provide necessary support to restore the affected facilities.

The fire destroyed classrooms and a multipurpose examination hall, causing significant damage to property, including desks and learning materials.

Fortunately, no lives were lost in the incident, as the cause of the fire is still unknown, but investigations are ongoing.

During the visit, Dr Augustina accompanied by the Permanent Secretary, Alhaji Idris Goje and the Secretary in the ministry, Mr Benjamin Zantimaba, inspected the damaged

### Sheikh Kanoma Lounds Madarasatul Lu'u Lu'u Walmurjan for improving Islamic Knowledge in Zamfara

By Usman Shehu Gungura

Management of Madarasatul Lu'u Lu'u Walmurjan/Albisher Orchard School, have been Commended for their effort to Improving Islamic knowledge in Zamfara State

The Commendation was made by an Islamic Scholar Sheikh Ahmad Umar Kanoma during a Walimat Ceremony of the Students of Madarasatul Lu'u Lu'u Walmurjan Gusau, held at the School premises.

Sheikh Ahmad Kanoma Expressed happiness over the way under age Students cited qur'an, described it as timely.

Ahmad Kanoma, emphasize the need of Sending wards to both the Islamic and Western Education, considering that, no Society would develop without Knowledge.

In her Speech the Director Albisher Orchard Gusau/Madarasatul Lu'u Lu'u Walmurjan, Hajiya Ubaida Shehu, Commended the Parents for their turnout to the Ceremony, called on them to keep it up.

In their Separate Speeches, the Representative of Emir of Gusau HRN Abdulkadir Ibrahim Bello II, and Grand khadi Dahiru Shehu, Galadima, Alhaji Samaila, Congratulates the Students for their Successful Completion, assured to Support and Cooprate with the School for improved development.

## BASEPA alerts Bauchi residents to health, safety risks of seasonal dust haze

By Mijinyawa Ahmed

The Bauchi State Environmental Protection Agency (BASEPA) has cautioned residents of Bauchi State and its environs to take necessary health and safety precautions as the seasonal dust haze associated with the winter period sets in across northern Nigeria.

The Director General of BASEPA, Dr. Mahmood Muhammad Bose, issued the warning during a recent interview, explaining that the annual phenomenon is caused by fine particulate matter transported by strong winds from the Sahel region.

According to him, the haze blankets many towns in Bauchi State and neighboring areas, significantly reducing air quality and visibility during the season.

Dr. Bose noted that exposure to the dust-laden air poses serious health risks, particularly respiratory-related illnesses such as coughing, asthma attacks, and other breathing difficulties.

He stressed that children, the elderly, and individuals with pre-existing medical conditions are especially vulnerable.

"During this period, residents are strongly advised to wear face masks to reduce the inhalation of harmful dust particles," he said.

"The dust haze also affects transportation, especially air



travel, as poor visibility often leads to flight delays and cancellations."

Beyond health concerns, the BASEPA boss warned of increased safety risks linked to the dry and windy conditions.

He urged residents to avoid activities that could spark fires, noting that strong winds can rapidly spread flames and worsen environmental hazards.

Open burning of refuse and careless handling of fire, he said, should be strictly avoided.

Dr. Bose also advised residents to drink plenty of water to stay hydrated, as the dry weather can easily lead to dehydration and related health complications.

He encouraged the public to maintain clean indoor environments by regularly

dusting homes and ensuring proper ventilation while limiting exposure to outdoor dust where possible.

While acknowledging the inconvenience caused by the haze, Dr. Bose reassured residents that the phenomenon is temporary and typically lasts for only a few months before normal atmospheric conditions return.

He emphasized that adopting simple preventive measures can significantly reduce its impact on health and daily activities.

The BASEPA Director General reaffirmed the agency's commitment to environmental monitoring and public awareness, urging residents to stay informed and cooperate with safety guidelines to protect lives and property throughout the dusty season.

## Police Crack Down on Drug Dens in Maiduguri, Arrest Eight, Recover Large Cache of Illicit Substances

By: Alkali Muhammad Musa, Maiduguri

The Borno State Police Command has intensified its war against drug abuse and criminality with the arrest of eight young men and the recovery of a large cache of suspected hard drugs during an intelligence-led operation in Maiduguri.

The raid, carried out on Friday, January 16, 2026, was executed by operatives of the Command's Crack Squad, who stormed known criminal hideouts along the Baga Road axis of the state capital at about 4:00 p.m., following credible intelligence reports.

Confirming the development in a statement issued the same day, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), ASP Nahum Kenneth Daso, said the suspects, all males aged between 18 and 25 years were apprehended while allegedly in possession of illicit substances believed to be

investigations, in line with extant laws.

Reacting to the development, the Commissioner of Police in Borno State, CP Naziru Abdulmajid, reaffirmed the Command's determination to combat drug abuse and drug-related crimes, which he described as a major driver of violence and social disorder.

The police boss warned individuals involved in drug peddling and other criminal activities to desist, stressing that the Command would continue to sustain aggressive operations against criminal elements across the state.

He also called on residents to support security agencies with timely and credible information, noting that community cooperation remains vital to sustaining peace and security in Borno State.

## Buratai sues ex-army general who accused him of funding terrorism



Tukur Buratai, the former chief of army staff (COAS), has filed a N1 billion defamation suit against Danjuma Ali-Keffi, a retired major-general and former general officer commanding (GOC) of the Nigerian Army's 1 division.

The suit, instituted before a Kaduna State high court, stems from statements allegedly made by Ali-Keffi and circulated through online media platforms, linking Buratai to terrorism financing, Boko Haram suspects, and the unlawful release and shielding of terror suspects.

Buratai, who filed the action through his lawyers, A. I. Aliyu and A. M. Hassan of Law Plus Consult, asked the court to declare that "the publications, which appeared on Sahara Reporters and were further amplified on several news and social media platforms, were false, malicious and damaging to his reputation".

The former army chief accused Ali-Keffi of granting interviews in 2025 in which he allegedly suggested that Buratai maintained relationships with individuals linked to terrorism and was involved in efforts to conceal terrorism-related activities while serving as COAS.

Buratai said the allegations gained wide circulation across digital platforms, including Facebook, X, WhatsApp and Instagram, exposing him to public ridicule and reputational damage within and outside Nigeria.

In his statement of claim, Buratai said he has never been investigated, indicted or convicted for terrorism, terrorism financing or any related offence, describing the

allegations as baseless and misleading.

He argued that the statements portrayed him as "a threat to national security, an unpatriotic citizen and a corrupt public officer", assertions he said had severely undermined his integrity, honour and standing in the international community.

He said Ali-Keffi "acted with malice and reckless disregard for the truth, even while acknowledging in the same publications that no official investigation had found Buratai culpable of terrorism financing".

Buratai is seeking "an order of court directing Ali-Keffi to retract the statements and issue an unreserved public apology, to be published with equal prominence on Sahara Reporters, in two national newspapers, and across all social media platforms where the allegations were circulated".

He is also asking the court to award N1 billion as general damages for libel, citing the gravity of terrorism-related accusations, the extent of their dissemination, and the influence associated with the defendant's status as a retired senior military officer.

The former army chief further prayed the court to grant a perpetual injunction restraining Ali-Keffi from making or repeating the alleged defamatory statements, and to compel him to bear the full cost of the litigation, including legal fees.

The writ of summons directed the defendant to enter an appearance within 21 days of being served, failing which the court may proceed with the matter in his absence.

No date has been fixed for the hearing of the suit.

## Drug tests for public office aspirants, a must

THE Federal Government's push for mandatory pre-employment drug testing of prospective public service applicants marks a vital step in curbing Nigeria's rampant drug abuse.

A 2019 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime survey revealed 10.6 million Nigerians abusing marijuana, with local cultivation rivalling Afghanistan, the world's second-largest exporter of marijuana resin.

Nigerian youths also consume cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and local brews.

To stem this tide, the government in December directed all Ministries, Departments, and Agencies to make drug testing a core recruitment requirement, a laudable move.

This aligns with the current administration's resolve to tackle drug and substance abuse head-on, insulating the national workforce from unwholesome practices.

Yet for a crime spanning age, status, and class, one that shreds the socio-economic fabric, workplace productivity, and national security, limiting efforts to new hires falls short.

The testing must extend to all serving public and elected officers, military and paramilitary personnel, traditional institutions, university staff, and students, conducted randomly and consistently for real impact. Drug addicts cannot oversee national or state resources.

Random mandatory testing forms the initiative's core strength, keeping everyone vigilant and purging doping from the system. Sustained political will is essential to combat a scourge afflicting every societal stratum.

The killing of motorists by trigger-happy, often drunk police officers seeking bribes indicates that the police need random drug testing.

Premium Times reported that a police officer killed a truck driver for refusing to give a N50 bribe at a checkpoint on



the Owo-Akure Expressway in 2019. The PUNCH gave a vivid account of how a police officer, Pius Senu, shot a driver, Michael Ishola, dead for refusing to offer a bribe at Awo in Osun State in 2016.

The Transparency International reports: "In 99 per cent of killings from 2013-2019, the officers involved were not charged with a crime."

The uncouth conduct of some military men and officers places them in this fold.

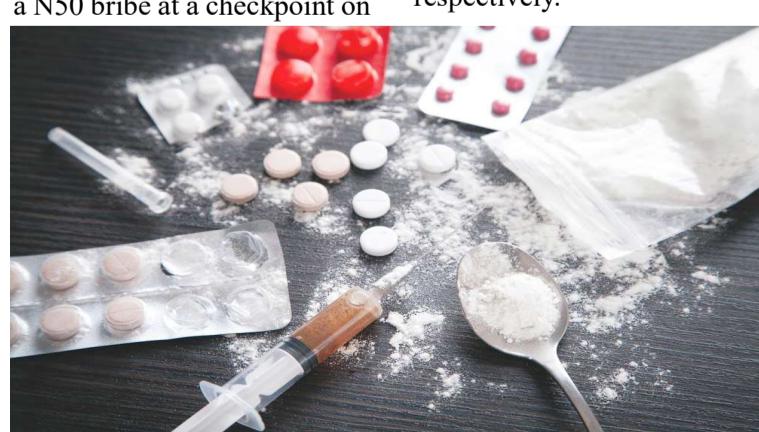
In 2024, a Brigadier-General, G.S. Mohammed and his escorts physically assaulted an intending couple, Vershma and Mker Iorvihi, in Abuja "for overtaking their vehicle."

Nigeria has been notorious for drug peddling and abuse over the years, and the rate keeps escalating embarrassingly.

Research published in the African Health Sciences in 2021 says, "18 different drugs were empirically identified as being abused by secondary school students in nine different states in Nigeria."

Additionally, the UNODC says 14.4 per cent of (14.3 million) people between the ages of 15 and 64 abuse drugs.

A 2022 Journal of International Medical Research indicates that "in Nigeria, a population of 30 to 35 million spends approximately \$15,000 and \$30,000 annually on psychotropic drugs and alcoholic beverages, respectively."



In late November 2025, The Indian Express reported the arrest of 50 Nigerians for drug trafficking. Thirty-two of them were deported less than 10 days later.

A 2024 report of the Narcotics Control Bureau of India indicated that 106 Nigerians were among the 660 foreign nationals arrested for drug trafficking and drug-related charges during the year.

According to the report, the arrests made country with the most arrests of Africans is the second-highest overall.

The Chairman of the NDLEA, Buba Marwa, announced in January 2025 that 18,500 arrests were made by the agency, over 3,250 convictions were made, including 10 drug barons, and 2.6mkg drug seizures were recorded in 2024.

Random mandatory testing for all Nigerians, irrespective of age, class and status, will significantly rid the country of bad eggs.

In a society where life sentences for advanced cases have not been effective in checking the drug malaise, complementing it with random testing will widen the apprehension net and act as a deterrent.

The ongoing sensitisation of the public against illicit drug peddling and abuse should be massively increased and expanded to include indigenous languages to reach the local areas for maximum effectiveness.

There is a need for the relevant agencies to collaborate with the NDLEA to strengthen the intelligence plank of this exercise, while the government must also have the political will to make it effective.

Drug peddling and abuse are robbing the country of its human resources and denying it its strength.

Nigeria must kill the illicit drug monster before it kills it.

Called from The Punch

# 141 million Nigerians poor while politicians jostle for power — Obi

Former Anambra State governor, Mr. Peter Obi, has raised the alarm over Nigeria's deepening poverty crisis, saying the country is sliding backwards as politicians remain fixated on power struggles and control of party structures.

In a statement, yesterday, Obi said about 141 million Nigerians, 62 percent of the population, are now living in poverty, describing the situation as a grave national failure and a threat to the country's future.

"As we politicians scramble for positions and vie for control of party structures, often sharing posts even before elections are concluded, a harsh truth confronts our nation: a staggering 62 percent of Nigerians, roughly 141 million people, are ensnared in poverty," Obi said.

He cited World Bank data showing a sharp rise in poverty levels in recent years, noting that the number of Nigerians living in poverty increased from 81 million in 2019 to approximately 139 million in 2025.

According to him, the situation worsened significantly within a single year, as poverty figures rose from 115 million in 2023 to 129 million in 2024, pushing 14 million more Nigerians into hardship.

"Projections for 2026 suggest that this figure will reach around 141 million, meaning an additional 26 million Nigerians will be thrust into poverty between 2023 and 2026."

"It is estimated that by 2026, an overwhelming 141 million people, 62 percent of the population, will be living in poverty."

"Low-income households are especially at risk, as food constitutes up to 70 percent of their total spending, leaving them acutely vulnerable to food inflation and price shocks."

"A sustained increase in poverty could unravel public finances, erode human capital,



**Mr. Peter Obi, Labour Party Presidential Candidate**

and impede economic recovery unless we see robust job creation, productivity growth, and effective social protection programs.

"Meanwhile, Nigeria has witnessed a rise in poverty from about 40 percent in 2000 to a distressing 62 percent today.

"By 2025, while India and Bangladesh surged to 0.685, and Indonesia rose to 0.74, Nigeria languished at 0.53, remaining entrenched in the low human development category after 25 years.

"The fact that 141 million Nigerians are living in poverty is not merely a national failure, it is a blatant threat to our future. The time for complacency has passed," Obi said.

Slams NFF for failing to pay Super Eagles players allowances

Meanwhile, Obi has also faulted the failure to pay match allowances owed to members of Nigeria's senior national football team, the Super Eagles, describing the situation as an embarrassing reflection of the country's misplaced priorities and poor sense of obligation.

Obi made the remarks while reacting to reports that the players were still being owed agreed match bonuses

despite their ongoing campaign and morale-boosting performances for the country.

"Can we get through a day without troubling news in this country?" Obi asked.

"At a time when Nigerians need joy and unity, something the national football team, the Super Eagles, has been providing by winning matches and lifting our spirits worldwide, these same players are being denied their basic match allowances," he said.

Obi contrasted the situation with what he described as the ease with which huge public funds are written off or spent on projects that do little to improve the lives of ordinary Nigerians, arguing that the inability to settle players' allowances exposes distorted national priorities.

"A country that writes off trillions in debts for government agencies and political allies, and squanders money on grandiose, self-serving projects, now struggles to pay the basic match bonuses owed to our players."

"Nigeria deserves a better international image than this ongoing failure to honor previously agreed-upon allowances before the tournament."

"The Super Eagles do not deserve this embarrassment or the avoidable distractions ahead of a crucial quarter-final match," he said.

Obi stressed that the issue goes beyond sports, insisting that national credibility depends on the ability to keep commitments, no matter how small. "Nigeria must learn to fulfill its obligations," he said.

## Gov. Mutfwang Sworn-in Justice Kadi Tijjanni Zololo as Acting Grand Kadi of Plateau State Sharia Court of Appeal

By Usman Shehu Gungura, Bauchi



**H**onourable Justice Kadi Tijjanni Zololo has been sworn-in as the Acting Grand Kadi of the Sharia Court of Appeal by the Executive Governor of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, charging him to dispense justice with the utmost fear of God.

Performing the swearing in ceremony at the Victoria Gowon Hall, Little Rayfield, Jos on Monday, the governor enjoined the Acting Grand Kadi not to allow his personal decision to influence his official functions.

According to Governor Mutfwang, the state government was poised towards repositioning the judiciary for maximal performance and urged Judicial officers to put in their best in the discharged of their constitutional functions.

He therefore called on Acting Grand Kadi to perform his functions without fear or favour and to always stand for the truth.

"I therefore remind you to discharge your functions with all honesty. Everything one does, God, the creator and the

### Troops rescue 11 kidnapped victims in Kaduna

**T**roops of the Nigerian Army have rescued 11 kidnapped victims in Kachia Local Government Area of Kaduna State following a swift operation along the Kaduna-Abuja road.

A military source told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Tuesday that the operation was carried out on Monday night after troops deployed at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Doka detected suspicious movement with the aid of a long-range CCTV camera mounted in the area.

The source said the troops sighted armed terrorists moving through the bush along the Gidan Duna-Amale axis with kidnapped victims and immediately mobilised in pursuit.

"On sighting the approaching troops, vehicles and motorcycles, the terrorists abandoned the victims and fled into the bush.

"The troops secured the area and fired probing shots to forestall any possible counterattack, but no further contact was made," he said.

The source disclosed that a total of 11 victims were rescued, comprising five adult males, three females and three children.

He added that the victims revealed they were abducted from Gada Mallam Maman community in Kachia LGA on Oct. 26, 2025.

The military source reaffirmed the commitment of the Nigerian Army to sustained operations aimed at degrading criminal elements and ensuring the safety of lives and property along major routes and communities. (NAN)



## Northeast News

### 2027: APC accord Atiku son heroic reception in Adamawa

From Umar Dankano, Yola

**A**midst the defection of many politicians across various political parties ahead of the 2027 general elections, the Adamawa state Chapter of the All Progressives Congress, APC has welcomed the son of former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, Abba Abubakar into its fold after defecting from People's Democratic party recently.

Chairman of the party, Barrister Shuaibu Idris while officially receiving Abba Atiku at the APC's state secretariat in Yola Monday told the mammoth crowd in attendance that Abba's defection stood out as a strong signal of President Tinubu's growing national acceptance, even within the elite opposition circles.

Idris stated that, the decision of the son of a leading opposition figure publicly commit to Bola Tinubu's re-election underscores the widening appeal and political capital of the President across party and family lines.

He noted that Abba has made a clear and unambiguous statement with his latest decision of joining the ruling party (APC) which he said speaks volumes about the confidence Nigerians have in president Tinubu's administration.

He praised Abba Atiku for what he called an independent, bold, and patriotic choice, noting that the move showed a willingness to rise above personal, family, and emotional considerations in favour of what he believes is in the national interest.

Idris assured the new entrant of equal rights and opportunities within the party, stressing that the APC would provide a level playing field guided by justice, equity, and fairness.

"You have demonstrated conviction in President Tinubu's leadership. The leader of our party in Adamawa State, the National Security Adviser receives you

warmly and assured you of full inclusion. The APC family is delighted to have you," he added

Also speaking, the Organizing Secretary of the party, Mustapha Atiku Ribadu, also described the development as historic, noting that it coincided with the alignment of Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf of Kano State with the APC on the same day in another state.

"We are grateful to receive two Abba's today, one in Kano and one in Adamawa. Abba Atiku Abubakar has shown clarity of judgment, wisdom, and political foresight. He has proven that he can take decisions independently, without being driven by sentiments," he said.

In his remarks, the new entrant, Abba Atiku Abubakar expressed appreciation for the warm reception accorded him by the leadership and stakeholders of the APC, from the national leadership down to his ward.

Abba said the reception he received has strengthened his resolve to work for the party's success calling on party members to close ranks and mobilize massively for President Tinubu's re-election, making it clear that his political loyalty now lies firmly with the APC.

"I am grateful for this warm embrace, from Abuja to my ward and the state secretariat. I am ready to work with all stakeholders to give my full, indefatigable support to the APC.

"We must work together and do everything possible to ensure the victory of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in 2027," he declared

Our Correspondent reported that Atiku's son was formally received into the APC amid a rousing, and carnival-like atmosphere with Party faithfuls, youth groups, and supporters trooped out in large numbers to welcome him, and hailed his move as pragmatic, historic and courageous.



### How strategic interventions in education, healthcare, empowerment and sports are reshaping lives across Biu, Hawul and Shani

By Alkali Muhammad Musa, Maiduguri

**G**overnor Babagana Umara Zulum's recent multi-day visitation tour of Southern Borno has left an indelible impact on communities across Biu, Hawul, Shani and neighbouring local government areas, reinforcing his administration's commitment to people-centred development, post-insurgency recovery and inclusive growth.

From commissioning schools and hospitals to empowering women, youths and small businesses, the tour combined inspection, execution and immediate policy actions turning long-standing community aspirations into tangible realities.

#### Education: Expanding Access, Modernising Learning

Education stood at the heart of the governor's engagements, with a flurry of inaugurations and groundbreaking ceremonies aimed at tackling out-of-school challenges and modernising learning.

In Bayo Local Government Area, Governor Zulum inaugurated Government Secondary Schools in Fikiyel and Balbaya, each equipped with 20 modern classrooms, laboratories, libraries and sporting facilities. He also flagged off the construction of a High Islamic College in Fikiyel, designed to integrate Almajirai and out-of-school children into a formal education system through a hybrid NBAIS curriculum blending Islamic studies with science, technology and humanities.

In Shani, three model secondary schools, Government Day Secondary School Shani, Borgu and Gasi were commissioned, while the foundation stone was laid for the 22nd High Islamic College in the state. The governor reaffirmed his pledge to establish one High Islamic College in each of Borno's 27 local government areas.

Similarly, in Hawul Local Government Area, construction commenced on two mega schools in Shafa and Marama, including a 48-classroom High Islamic College and a two-storey, 36-classroom modern secondary school. Governor Zulum also announced plans to recruit



New Media

competent indigenous teachers to address manpower gaps.

To complement infrastructure, the governor ordered the full digitalisation of all public secondary schools in the state, directing the integration of smart classrooms, e-learning platforms, computers and tablets to enhance teaching and learning outcomes.

#### Healthcare: Strengthening Services and Valuing Volunteers

Healthcare delivery featured prominently during the tour, with Governor Zulum taking decisive steps to strengthen facilities and human resources.

In Shani, the governor ordered the immediate employment of volunteer nurses, midwives and community health workers at the General Hospital, directing their absorption into the state payroll. A similar directive followed his visit to Biu Specialist Hospital, where long-serving volunteers were granted automatic employment in recognition of their dedication.

The governor also inspected rehabilitated and equipped health facilities, including the National Orthopaedic Hospital, Azare, in Hawul LGA, underscoring his administration's resolve to ensure functional, well-staffed hospitals across the state.

#### Empowerment: Investing in Women, Youths and Small Businesses

One of the most emotional highlights of the tour unfolded in Biu with the commissioning of a fully remodelled Second Chance School for vulnerable girls and women. The centre offers literacy, numeracy, digital skills and vocational training for women who missed formal education due to

conflict and socio-economic challenges.

In a moment that sparked tears of joy, Governor Zulum announced a ₦100,000 financial grant payable in two tranches for each of the 400 trainees. He further approved immediate scholarships for qualified trainees to study nursing and midwifery, opening new professional pathways for many.

Beyond education and skills, the governor disbursed ₦1 billion to small and medium-scale enterprises across Biu, Hawul, Shani, Bayo and Kwaya-Kusar LGAs to stimulate grassroots economic growth. He also approved the employment of 200 youths from Biu LGA as part of efforts to curb unemployment and youth restiveness.

#### Sports and Unity: Building Cohesion Through Competition

Governor Zulum rounded off the tour by attending the grand finale of the Ndume Unity Cup in Biu, a football tournament featuring teams from all nine local government areas of Southern Borno.

By presenting the trophy to winners Biu United and commending Senator Mohammed Ali Ndume for promoting unity through sports, the governor reaffirmed the role of sports in youth engagement, social cohesion and peacebuilding. He pledged continued state government support for initiatives that unite communities and harness youthful energy positively.

#### A Tour with Lasting Impact

Governor Zulum described the interventions across Southern Borno as transformative, noting that investments in education, healthcare, housing, empowerment and sports would yield sustainable benefits and improve quality of life.

## NSCDC Intercepts Truck Conveying Vandalised Railway Tracks, Arrests Five Suspects in Bauchi

By Mijinyawa Ahmed



The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Bauchi State Command, has recorded a major breakthrough in its fight against infrastructure vandalism with the interception of a truck loaded with vandalised railway materials and the arrest of five suspects.

This is contained in a press release signed by the Command's spokesperson, ASC Saminu Yusuf, made available to newsmen on Friday in Bauchi.

According to a press release issued on Thursday, January 23, 2026, the interception followed credible intelligence received on January 12, 2026, at about 3:00 a.m.

NSCDC personnel on routine patrol along the Miri-Jos Road intercepted a Dangote-branded long vehicle truck with registration number MDB 360 XA around Gital town in Tafawa Balewa Local Government Area.

The truck was found conveying 80 pieces of vandalised railway tracks and five slippers, cleverly concealed under bags of chicken feed, allegedly enroute to the eastern part of the country.

Investigations revealed that the owner and alleged mastermind, identified as Mr. John, alongside the truck driver, Auwal, are currently at



large, while efforts are ongoing to apprehend them.

The five suspects arrested in connection with the crime include Adam Kolo (42) from Borno State, Samuel Musa (44) from Yobe State, Solomon Jankaro (40) from Niger State, Emmanuel Collins (26), and Sunday David (20), both from Enugu State.

Exhibits recovered during the operation include the vandalised railway tracks, bags of chicken feed used as camouflage, the long vehicle truck, and a Lexus LX 350 with registration number BWR 60 DN.

In a related development, NSCDC operatives arrested one Nura Abdullahi of Wuntin Dada area, Bauchi, on January 14, 2026, for motorcycle theft.

Preliminary investigations revealed his involvement in a syndicate dealing in stolen motorcycles valued at over ₦2.02 million.

According to release, the State Commandant, Commandant Oloyede Nelson Oyerinde, commended his personnel for their vigilance.

Reaffirmed the command's resolve to rid Bauchi State of vandals and criminal elements.

The Commandant urged residents to support security agencies by providing timely and credible information on suspicious activities.

## Gombe Commissions Centre to Support Victims of Sexual Assault

By Najib Sani, Gombe

Gombe State government has launched the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) at the Gombe State Specialist Hospital to provide comprehensive support to survivors of sexual violence in the state.

The centre, established with support from UNICEF, was commissioned by the deputy governor of the state flanked by the chief of UNICEF's Bauchi field office.

Chief Medical Director of the hospital, Dr Sambo Dawa, during the commissioning ceremony explained that the centre aims to offer medical, psychological and legal aid to victims.

He revealed that there were 170 reported cases of sexual violence in the state last year, mostly from rural areas adding that the incidents were on the rise.

The Chief Medical Director explained that the centre was equipped with a reception, treatment room, counselling unit, police desk and legal desk, ensuring a one-stop solution for victims.



Gombe's Commissioner for Health, Dr Habu Dahiru, representing the Deputy Governor, Manasseh Jatau, assured the government would also rehabilitate survivors after treatment.

According to him, the centre was strategically located in a secluded area in the hospital to ensure victims' privacy, with counsellors on hand to advise them.

While the Chairman Gombe State House of Assembly Committee on Health, Musa Manaja, blamed the judiciary for not meting out severe punishment to perpetrators, urging them to apply the enacted laws to deter offenders.

The Emir of Gombe, Abubakar Shehu Abubakar, represented by the 'Wakilin

Birnin Gombe', Dalhatu Babayo, commended the centre's establishment, saying traditional leaders were concerned about the menace and urged victims to speak out to get justice.

In her remarks, UNICEF's Chief of Bauchi Field Office in charge of Bauchi, Gombe, Adamawa, Taraba and Plateau States, Nuzhat Rafique, urged stakeholders to enlighten communities on reporting sexual violence and supporting victims, stressing the need to end the abuse.

While decrying that children are also victims of sexual assault, she called on lawyers and police to support the survivors, warning that without action, the incidents would recur.

## 2025 WASA: Army reaffirms commitment to peace as Bauchi Gov praises troops' sacrifice

By Mijinyawa Ahmed

The Nigerian Army has reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to sustaining peace and security in Bauchi State, calling for stronger collaboration between security agencies and the public to effectively tackle security challenges.

This assurance was given on Saturday during the 2025 West African Social Activities (WASA) ceremony held at the Shadawanka Barracks, Bauchi, and organised by the 33 Brigade of the Nigerian Army.

Speaking at the event, the Brigade Commander, Brigadier-General Uchechukwu Godwin Simon, emphasised that security remains a collective responsibility, stressing that the efforts of the military must be complemented by the cooperation and support of citizens.

According to him, while the Nigerian Army will continue to discharge its constitutional duties with diligence, intelligence sharing and public support are crucial in eliminating criminal activities across the state.

Brig. Gen. Simon



described WASA as a vital military tradition that celebrates the Army's shared identity, rich cultural heritage, and collective achievements over the year.

He expressed gratitude to Bauchi State Governor, Senator Bala Mohammed, and the Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant-General Waidi Shaibu, for their sustained support and strategic leadership.

Governor Bala Mohammed, represented by the State Chief Security Adviser, retired Deputy Inspector-General of Police (DIG) Sani Mohammed, commended the Nigerian Army for its professionalism, resilience, and sacrifices in maintaining internal security.

He described WASA as a

unifying platform that strengthens discipline, camaraderie, and civil-military relations while boosting troop morale.

The governor reaffirmed his administration's continued support for the Nigerian Army and other security agencies, noting that peace and security remain critical to socio-economic development and the wellbeing of citizens.

Highlights of the ceremony included colourful cultural performances, a tug-of-war competition, presentation of awards to outstanding personnel, and the ceremonial lowering of flags.

The event ended with a bonfire, symbolising unity and brotherhood among officers and soldiers.

## Interview

# What we are doing to follow footsteps of Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi - Caliph Ibrahim

From Ahmad Muhammad, Bauchi

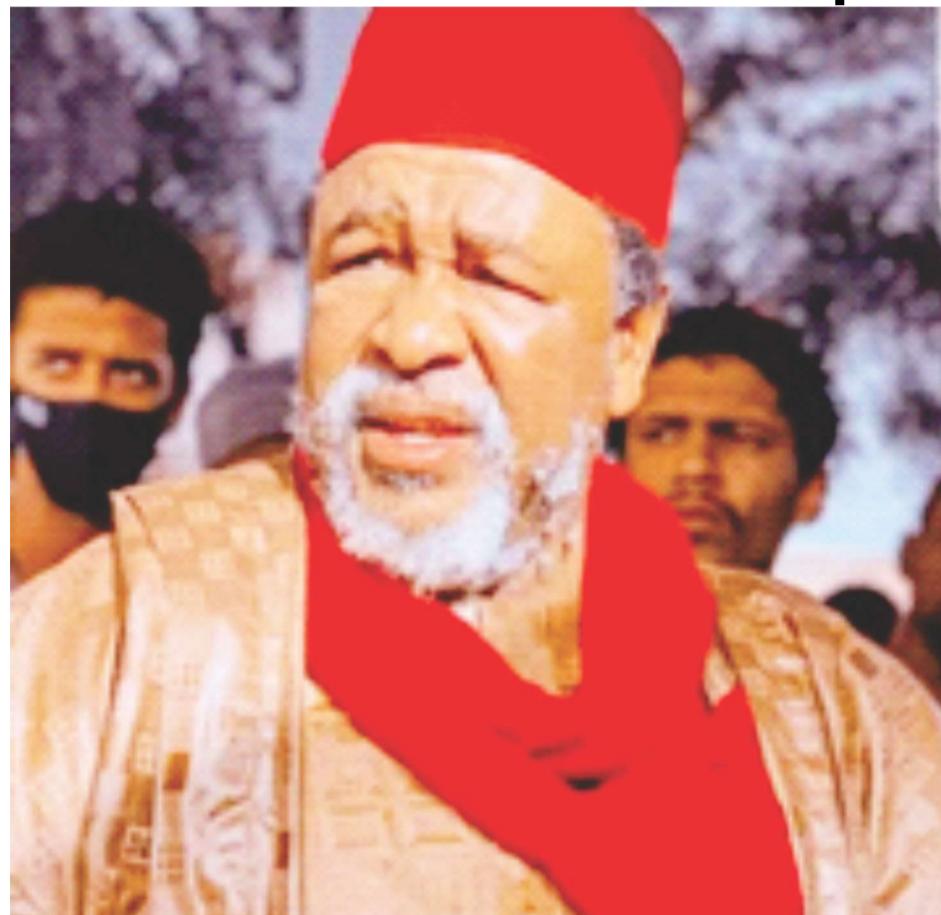
**S**ince the death of the renowned Islamic scholar Sheikh Dahiru Usman Bauchi, the eldest son of the scholar Sheikh Ibrahim Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi was appointed as the Caliph of the scholar, therefore the Trumpeter Newspaper interviewed him on how he will face the challenges of leading the journey of millions of disciples and followers of Late Sheikh Dahiru Usman

**Since the death of the Sheikh, people from within and outside Nigeria are still coming to Bauchi to offer condolences. Will you tell us what the life of Maulana Shehi was like?**

Alhamdulillah, the life of Maulana Sheikh Dahiru Usman Bauchi, we have spent 40 days after the death of Maulana Sheikh Dahiru Usman Bauchi of blessed memory, we received condolences from people from all walks of life, we thank the Almighty Allah because this shows that Maulana Sheikh live and exemplary life, his life was a wonderful life that was full of struggle for knowledge, impacting knowledge through teaching the ummah by practicing the truth, showing the truth and clarifying the Truth no matter how bitter it was, and the Sheikh spent a century servicing the religion of Islam through his journey he enjoyed and practice different style of life, life in the olden days and life of today's people, he enjoyed life in the villages and life in the urban cities.

As it is said in his biography, his father and mother were together when his father saw a crippled man who intended going to perform Hajj crawling, when his father saw the man, he said that he had no excuse in front of Allah, on why he didn't go to pilgrimage, so he made up his mind to go to Hajj, and he went and left his mother in the hands of a knowledgeable Quran scholar and went to perform Hajj until they returned and met his mother again.

Since that time, the Sheikh has been struggling, and since he was a young boy, he was sent to school. Unpot theme he left this world, he did not return home, you see, the life of education is a life of struggle, at that time, they went to many places with his father and



**Sheikh Ibrahim Dahiru Bauchi**

established Quranic Memorisation centers, schools.

He went to so many scholars in Bauchi, Zaria and many places in search of Islamic knowledge, up to the time he met His eminence the great Scholar Shehu Ibrahim Nyass Radiyallahu Anhu, Sheikh entrusted all his affairs to him, he received a lot of support, blessings and knowledge from the Shehu Ibrahim Nyass, Sheikh Nyass gave Sheikh all the permission to do anything in the affairs of the Tijjaniyya order, and appointed him among his Caliphs, and Sheikh stood as a bridge between Scholars and followers of Sheikh Ibrahim.

In Nigeria, if something happened here, Scholars and leaders would sent late Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi from here to Senegal to explain it to Sheikh Nyass, and bring back the message of the Sheikh Nyass back to Nigeria.

He was always on the road between Nigeria and Senegal until after the Sheikh's death, apart from the struggles of the ancient times, the Shehu lived a modern life when he stood up and stood firm in defending the religion of Islam and speaking the truth no matter how bitter it was, because before the kind of slanderers who insult the saints of God servants and infidels.

Many Muslims scholars testified that Maulana Sheikh Dahiru Usman Bauchi of blessed

memories traveled to Islamize people and spread the Tijjaniyya order in the nooks and corners of the country and abroad, in an effort to convey the message of God, late Sheikh traveled on foot, on horseback, when there was no riding equipment, later bicycles and motorbikes were available. The Shehu traveled on bicycles, even boats and ships up to the time when Allah gave the Sheikh a car and he continued to spread Islam, not just a car, but even an airplane.

The late Sheikh Dahiru traveled in it to spread Islam. The Sheikh lived his life teaching and conveying the message of the Messenger of God to people and everything about him was filled with the fear of God and the truth and a strong zeal.

In the life of the Sheikh he interacted with Muslims, Sheikh interacted with non-Muslims, interacting in the manner of the taught by Islamic religion, in short, how the Sheikh lived, he lived a fulfilled life always reading the Qur'an and remembrance of Allah and spreading Islam in the past and the present.

I can still remember before the detractors of these saints explained where the Sheikh met people, whether in the market or in their cities, he would call them and say, bismillah come and receive the blessings of the Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallama.

In short, Sheikh lived a religious life and imitated the Messenger of Allah, the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, wherever you see Sheikh you will see that he is always either reading the Quran, glorifying the name of Allah by frequent dhikr, praying and offering salutations to the Messenger of Allah often or teaching the Muslims Ummah through preaching, counselling or educating them with whatever they want to learn from him.

### **How did Shehu interact with non-Muslims?**

Sheikh interacted with them in a religious way, he respected them and treated them with dignity and humility well, he gave them their rights, and when anything happened to them, they would seek for his advice and he would give them true and useful advice. Many of them would visit him during the Ramadan fasting and break their fast together, I can remember some of the Christians that such as Barrister Solomon Selcap Dalung, and I can remember, before the slanderers came to explain, we knew when we were going to Plateau with Sheikh and other places, if we went to Pankshin. If the Sheikh preaches on Friday to Muslims and on Saturday, Christians will come to discuss with him on issues related to Islam, Christianity, and the best way to live in peace in this country. because of that when the Sheikh, even though he died, after his death not only Muslims came to offer condolences, even non-Muslims They came to console us, because of the good life and good treatment he had for them.

### **What is the Contribution that Sheikh Made to the Religion of Islam?**

Alhamdulillah, the contribution he has made to the religion is immeasurable. Just read, everyone knows how the Sheikh stands by doing anything that will promote the religion of Islam, and he also stands firmly to protect anything that will touch the religion, and the contributions he has made to the religion since they were walking on foot and inviting people to Islam, to achieve this late Sheikh travel on

*Continue on page 13*

From Page 12

foot, on animals like horses and canoes and ride bicycles and even motorcycles that came out before cars were available, the Sheikh used them all to promote the religion.

Indeed, the sheikh helped to develop the religion, he established schools, he promotes Memorisation and reading of the Quran, He established many places of learning religious education and mosques. He was the first person who started Quranic Commentary Tafsir up head, the sheikh defended the dignity of Islam and Muslims, and worked hard to educate the Muslim community on all matters that arose, he helped governments and the community to create peace.

He is the only teacher who never taught or preacher we'll not finish whatever he is doing until he prays for our country Nigeria and the religion of Islam and Muslims. He frequently prays for peace stability of Nigeria, the sheikh is a law-abiding person who wants to live in peace with everyone, he always exhibited good habits worthy of emulation in dealing with people, including non-Muslims. Everyone benefitted from the late sheikh Abundant Wisdom, knowledge, exemplary character and everything he does.

Among the benefits that the sheikh has brought to Nigeria is the creation of FGGC Girls' School. It was the sheikh who advised the Federal Government to separate the schools for boys and girls because parents were afraid to send their children to school. He said that if they were separated, the fears of parents would be eliminated. The government accepted the advice and today they are studying separately. In their midst, Shehi tried to fight against anything that would harm religion. He defended the Sufi movement. You see, Shehi spent a century working for Islam.

**Let me ask you are there some hidden qualities that Sheikh, which the Muslims community does not know except for you his family?**

In fact, the Sheikh is a servant of Allah, all his life is open for all to see learn and emulate, the life he leads in secret was the same thing with his life in the eyes of public, everything about him is in the open, as I said earlier, he loves the truth and protects the truth and protects his religion, even inside

## What we are doing to follow footsteps of Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi - Caliph Ibrahim

his house, if you are truthful you are with him, if you deviate from the truth, The Sheikh will not listen to you, and will not support you, you know the consequences every time he is in the worship of Allah or reading the Quran, or reciting Salatul Fatihi salutations to Prophet Muhammad peace be upon or preaching to people, he is always in the open, because his preaching inside the house and outside, is the same thing as if he is inside, I can remember in the past over forty years back, even his children, when a person reaches the ages of puberty, they do not always enter the house, it was written boldly, from the door of the house it will be said don't enter the house, it is written in writing that, a person of age of puberty will not enter, he established the rules of Islam and the laws of Islam, and at least he trains people to hold to the truth, truth is, nothing has increased the sheikh's glory like his standing on the truth and standing on the path of God,

**Now, as the caliph of the Shehu, what are some challenges that you will face?**

Alhamdulillah, Allah is the one who does everything He does, and He did the same for us. No one can do like the Sheikh or the like of the Sheikh except to imitate him. Alhamdulillah, we will do our best to follow his footsteps and his teaching, what the Sheikh does and learn and practice from his teachings. We will try and pray to Allah wherever the Sheikh sets foot in this religion. We will ask Allah to help us find it because it is Allah's affair and Allah's will, so it will be done as Allah wills.

The Sheikh has guided us on the path and as is expected that we will try to follow his guide, Myself my brothers and sisters his brothers and his disciples and subjects, his murids and students all of us will work together to see that, we can continue to follow the path that Sheikh followed. He did everything alone, now he died and left more than 80 children but we thank Allah they memorised the Quran, and he has millions of disciples and students, we will work together and we will ask Allah to help us follow the path of Sheikh, we will try to emulate him and copy from his humility, wisdom and exemplary life he

taught us in sha Allah, we know we can't be like him but we will continue to Allah to help us to unite us and give us the ability to continue with his teachings.

**President Bola Tinubu came to condole and renamed Azare School after Sheikh how did you feel?**

Alhamdulillah we thank God We thank the President for the kind of support he gave us on the death of Maulana Sheikh he took this matter seriously and took his death seriously, on the day of the funeral he sent people including the Vice President, and after Sheikhs death three days later he sent a delegation of Ministers and Senior Government Officials, and Alhamdulillah, he has come in person to offer his condolences, we are grateful for this honor and respect for the one whom God has honored, this man is also respecting the side of God and we are grateful for naming the school after Sheikh we thank him and may God reward him with goodness, we thank the Almighty Allah for all the honour he has done to Maulana Sheikh.

**Is there any message or call that the caliph will give to the scholars or disciples of Sheikh?**

Alhamdulillahi, we thank all those who came to console us and stand by us in the situation that God has brought us, we are more grateful, may God reward them with goodness, and the call that we will make to the Muslims is not more than what the Sheikh used to tell us to fear Allah, this world is not a place to live, everyone comes to pass, we are expected to work to build the life in the hereafter, everything you will do in this world is temporary but the hereafter is certain,

That was the reason why Allah sent his messengers and prophets to call people to worship Allah, and the scholars are their successors we should follow the teaching of our religion and be with Allah in whatever we are doing, We also want to emulate the life of Sheikh which is a School itself, it's like a journey because the journey of the Sheikh is the journey of the Messenger of God and Shehu Tijjani and Shehu Ibrahim, you always do it with the teachings of the Messenger of God, people who fear God, stand at the door of God are always with the Blessings of Allah, we ask God to help us, may God give us good health and a safe and secure life. May God bring all goodness to Nigeria. May God



**Issues**

# Dangote refinery, marketers fuel deal crashes as imports surge

The fuel supply arrangement between the Dangote Petroleum Refinery and 20 major petroleum marketers, under which the parties agreed to offtake 600 million litres of petrol monthly, has collapsed over pricing disagreements.

It was also gathered that the disagreement sparked the surge in petrol importation witnessed in the month of November 2025, with total imports rising to 1.563 billion litres, according to the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority.

The authority disclosed the import figure in its November 2025 Fact Sheet, titled State of the Midstream and Downstream Sector, which showed a sharp spike in imported volumes during the period the pricing dispute intensified.

Recall that the deal, reached in October 2025, was structured as a pilot arrangement under which 20 depot owners were to collectively offtake about 600 million litres of petrol monthly, with each marketer lifting roughly 30 million litres from the Dangote Refinery.

The National Public Relations Officer of the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria, Chinedu Ukadike, had confirmed in an interview that the refinery set the target after a strategic meeting with key players in the downstream sector.

Ukadike said the agreement was part of efforts to stabilise supply in the domestic market and ease the recent surge in pump prices. According to him, the meeting, which included representatives of A.Y.M. Shafa, A. A Rano, NNPC Retail, Salbas, and several other major distributors, focused on how to streamline product allocation and reduce the layers of middlemen contributing to price distortions.

"At the meeting, Dangote announced plans to sell to only 20 selected marketers who will serve as primary distributors to other dealers. Each of them will lift a minimum of two million litres, which will translate to about 600 million litres every month," Ukadike said.

"We believe that once this structure takes effect, petrol availability will improve significantly and retail prices will start to ease," he added.

However, two industry sources who spoke to Journalists confirmed that the

deal, which lasted barely a month, has now collapsed, attributing the breakdown to the refinery's reluctance to adjust its gantry price in line with falling international benchmarks.

According to the first source, an industry stakeholder who requested anonymity due to the nature of the matter, the agreement was structured to include monthly price reviews. Products were initially sold to marketers at N806 per litre for coastal delivery and N828 per litre at the gantry.

Under the arrangement, Dangote temporarily suspended direct sales to independent marketers, who could only purchase 250,000 litres or less, forcing them to rely on the 20 approved marketers for supply.

The source said, "The arrangement between Dangote and 20 marketers has collapsed. Remember that there was an agreement in October, and they agreed on a particular price, and that every month, there will be a price review. So in the month of October, the price was shifted for the marketers, and they were given products at N806 per litre and sold gantry at N828 per litre.

"That was fixed, and they now stopped all forms of product sales to independent marketers who were only buying 250,000 litres or less. Due to the agreement, marketers who needed products had to go buy from the 20 marketers. This is because the marketers had mentioned in the agreement that Dangote won't sell directly to other marketers but only to the approved members, and then the rest would buy from them."

The official added that the initial system functioned smoothly, with products being loaded through ships and gantries, and additional interested parties gradually added to the approved list.

However, the deal began to unravel in November, when importers noticed that international petrol prices had fallen below Dangote's selling price.

"But the agreement had a bit of issues in the month of November when importers saw prices at the international benchmark and that it was lower than the price Dangote was selling to them. They said it was supposed to drop to around N750 per litre. But Dangote was reluctant to review. This caused the heavy influx of imported petrol in November."

In response, Dangote later slashed its gantry price to N699 per litre, the lowest in 2025, but the move came too late to prevent losses.

The source also revealed that depot owners and marketers who had purchased products at N828 per litre in October but had not yet sold were left bearing heavy losses, while smaller marketers also struggled to adjust to the sudden price change.

According to data from the Major Energies Marketers Association of Nigeria and petroleumprice.ng during the period, the average landing cost of imported premium motor spirit dropped to N829.77 per litre, a price lower than the ex-depot price of the fuel produced locally.

The MEMAN data showed that the average landing cost of petrol as of October 30 was N829.77 per litre. This was a further drop in the landing cost, which was an average of N849.61 on October 13, N847.61 on October 14, N841.54 on October 20, and N839.97 per litre on October 21.

In contrast, Dangote refinery's gantry remained N877/litre as of October 24, 2025.

He further said the dispute boomeranged into a public confrontation between Dangote and the former NMDPRA boss, Farouk Ahmed, over the agency's issuance of multiple import licences to other marketers, a conflict that eventually led to the ACE's resignation in December 2025.

"Now there is no agreement or alignment between Depot owners and Dangote. The refinery is now selling to another marketer that can offtake any quantity of products," the source stated.

Confirming the position of the industry stakeholder, the Chief Executive Officer of petroleumprice.ng, Jeremiah Olatide, said the pricing mechanism for the deal was tied to Eurobob, the international benchmark for European gasoline, with the understanding that prices would be reviewed monthly in line with global crude oil movements. Under the initial arrangement, Dangote published a coastal price of N806 per litre and a gantry price of N828 per litre.

He explained that after the first month, the international crude oil benchmark declined sharply, prompting the depot owners to request a reduction in the gantry price. While Dangote implemented a price adjustment, it fell short of

expectations when compared with international prices.

"Yes, it has collapsed. It was agreed that the process would be determined by Eurobob, which primarily refers to the benchmark price for European gasoline (petrol), that is the international benchmark. That for every benchmark, the price would be discussed and agreed to be adjusted.

"They agreed on N806 coastal rate and N828 gantry price as published by Dangote refinery. After the first month, the international crude oil benchmark dropped, and the private depot owners requested a reduction in the Dangote gantry price. The reduction was effected but not what they expected in comparison with international prices. It was this difference that made the marketers turn to imports in the month of November 2025.

Confirming the collapse, the National Publicity Secretary of IPMAN, Chinedu Ukadike, told newsmen that the agreement was no longer in force.

"No, it is no longer in place. Dangote has decided to liberalise the buying options. Marketers are now free to buy products, even down to those who can lift as little as 250,000 litres," Ukadike said.

He added that the refinery had specifically invited independent marketers to come forward and load products directly. "These are market strategies. You don't want unnecessary issues in distribution or artificial price hikes. The market is now open. It is also about competition," he said.

Ukadike explained that tensions also arose because some marketers continued importing petrol even after signing the October agreement, undermining the exclusivity clause.

"Even after the agreement was signed, some marketers still went ahead to start importing petroleum products, which is against the agreement signed. So he decided that since they are keeping to it or evacuating products well, he has decided to allow all marketers to take products. That is the situation on the ground," he added.

When contacted, Dangote spokesperson, Anthony Chiejina, did not respond to calls and messages sent to his phone number by our correspondent for an official reaction.

Meanwhile, fresh market data show that the spot price of imported petrol into

Nigeria has dropped to about N696 per litre, according to the latest energy bulletin released by the Major Energies Marketers Association of Nigeria.

The price, calculated at the Apapa jetty, is below Dangote's current gantry price of N699 per litre. This was the 30-day average import parity price of N772.65 per litre, reflecting a temporary easing in international crude oil costs and foreign exchange stability.

The bulletin, obtained on Thursday, showed that the difference between the on-spot import price and the 30-day average, currently about N76 per litre, creates opportunities for marketers to optimise inventory and timing, especially as local refiners adjust gantry prices.

For instance, Dangote Petroleum's gantry petrol price is currently N699 per litre, slightly above the import parity spot price, which could incentivise competitive pricing in the downstream market.

The spot price for petrol in Apapa had fallen steadily alongside a slight decline in Brent and WTI crude prices, which currently trade at \$63.75 and \$60.14 per barrel, respectively. Similarly, Bonny Light crude fluctuated around \$66.22 per barrel, reflecting global market adjustments following a period of relative stability.

According to MEMAN, the decline in spot prices has been driven by a combination of lower international benchmark prices, reduced shipping costs, and a stronger naira, which currently trades at N1,419.07 against the dollar, down from N1,450 earlier in December. The association noted that diesel and kerosene have also experienced downward pressure, with spot prices for diesel at N844.88 per litre and kerosene at N882.94 per litre.

The report also highlighted that average 30-day import parity prices are calculated using Platts commodity prices, freight charges, insurance, and terminal costs, providing a benchmark for local marketers and regulators in the Nigerian downstream sector. According to MEMAN, fluctuations in these prices directly impact retail pump prices, the profitability of depot owners, and the viability of local refining operations.

# Fed Govt explains how lowest income earners will pay zero tax

The Federal Government has explained how low-income earners will pay zero tax in the new regime, which took effect on January 1.

In a statement yesterday, Director-General (DG) in the Budget Office of the Federation, Tanimu Yakubu, made the clarification in response to what he called "wrong notions, stage-managed arithmetic, selective accounting and misrepresentation of the law" by those sponsored to discredit the government policy.

Yakubu highlighted the N800, 000 annual tax-free threshold under the new personal income tax structure as the most critical omission in the criticism, explaining that the first N800,000 of annual income attracts a zero per cent tax rate, as against the previous framework that lumped low-income earners into equal tax bracket.

Using an illustrative example of a worker earning N75,000 monthly, Yakubu noted that such a person earns N900,000 annually, placing only N100,000 above the zero-rated band.

According to him, even at a 15 per cent rate on the excess of N100,000, the tax exposure would amount to N15, 000 a year, before deductions. But once pension contributions are applied, the taxable portion drops sharply and could fall to zero if other allowable deductions, such as health insurance, are included.

Yakubu said: "Under the new regime described in



multiple reputable summaries, the first N800, 000 of annual income is taxed at 0 per cent. That is not a footnote. That is the hinge. Now apply it to "Joseph": Monthly income: N75, 000. Annual income:  $N75,000 \times 12 = N900,000$ .

"Under a system where the first N800, 000 is taxed at 0 per cent, Joseph is not 'squarely inside' some punitive bracket. He is N100, 000 above the zero band. Even before deductions, the portion potentially exposed to tax is N100, 000 per year.

"If the next band is taxed at 15 per cent as these summaries indicate, then Joseph's gross annual PIT exposure is: N100, 000  $\times$  15 per cent = N15,000 per year, N1,250 per month.

"Now add pension: If Joseph contributes pension at 8 per cent, even using the essay's own assumption, that is: N900, 000  $\times$  8 per cent = N72, 000 in pension contributions annually, simplified. That reduces the portion above N800, 000 from N100, 000 to N28, 000. Tax becomes: N28, 000  $\times$  15 per cent = N4, 200 per year, N350

per month.

"And if Joseph also has any deductible health insurance contribution, which many formal arrangements do, he can easily fall below N800, 000 taxable income, making his PIT zero. What this means is that the essay's 'public U-turn' story is not proof that 'the poor will pay tax'.

The DG added: "A deduction is not a tax, and a contribution you own is not a levy you lose. Such deductions, in fact, reduce taxable income and demonstrate an effort to protect workers' welfare rather than exploit it.

"It is proof that the narrator's demonstration did not apply the actual threshold structure that defines liability. That is not logic. That is stage-managed arithmetic," Yakubu stated in a factual rebuttal of the wrong notion being pushed by the critic.

He also faulted the use of global poverty lines in the criticism, noting that the World Bank's \$4.20-a-day benchmark was a purchasing power parity (PPP) measure,

not a nominal wage threshold that could be converted directly into naira using market exchange rates, pointing out that such conversions turned technical welfare metrics into political talking points.

On the claim that "widening the tax base" necessarily meant taxing the poor, Yakubu described it as a false syllogism.

He said tax base expansion could involve bringing non-compliant high earners into the net, closing loopholes, capturing affluent segments of the digital and informal economy, and strengthening employer withholding, rather than targeting subsistence incomes.

Yakubu further argued that long lists of alleged corruption and mismanagement, while raising legitimate governance concerns, did not invalidate the structure of a tax schedule.

He said the logical response to accountability concerns was to improve transparency, auditing and enforcement, not to misrepresent tax reforms aimed at reducing Nigeria's reliance on borrowing.

Yakubu said: "The outrage depends on omitting the very thresholds and concepts that make its conclusion collapse. The new tax structure explicitly protects low incomes and that claims to the contrary were driven more by narrative devices than by arithmetic grounded in law.

"Nigeria's revenue

problem is not 'the poor escaping'. Nigeria's problem is a historically weak tax-to-GDP ratio and heavy reliance on borrowing; tax reforms have been publicly framed as part of reversing that.

"So 'widening' does not necessarily mean 'drag subsistence wages into the net'. It often means: make the system catch who already should be paying".

Yakubu noted that the narrative branding the policy as "Bola's tax" deliberately ignored key provisions designed to shield low-income earners.

The essay written by one Emmanuel Orji, the Budget Office DG said, was "built on powerful but false rhetorics, simply achieved by engaging in selective accounting".

He said the argument relied on emotional framing rather than the actual structure of the tax schedule approved under the new regime.

According to Taminu, at the centre of the misinformation was a "category error" in which pension and health insurance contributions were wrongly presented as taxes.

He explained that pension payments are deferred wages owned by workers and lodged in their Retirement Savings Accounts (RSAs), while health insurance premiums are contributions that purchase defined coverage, not compulsory levies for general government spending.

## FG raises N1.1tr from first 2026 Treasury Bills auction

### UN report projects global economic output to grow 2.7%

Nigeria's Debt Management Office (DMO) secured N1.144 trillion at its first Nigerian Treasury Bills auction of 2026, with stop rates climbing across all maturities as investors continued to show a strong appetite for government securities.

This was as global economic output was forecast to grow by 2.7 per cent this year, slightly below the 2.8 per cent estimated for last year and well below the pre-pandemic average of 3.2 per cent, according to the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2026, released yesterday by the United Nations (UN).

The auction, held on

January 7, recorded N108.17 billion raised for the 91-day bill, N48.23 billion for the 182-day tenor, and N987.78 billion for the 364-day paper.

The results highlighted an upward re-pricing of risk-free assets, particularly at the long end of the curve, as investors sought government instruments as a hedge against inflation and policy uncertainty.

Despite the higher rates, demand remained resilient, underlining robust system liquidity and investors' readiness to lock in elevated yields. The one-year paper once again dominated the auction, accounting for the bulk of funds raised.

The 364-day NTB

emerged as the centrepiece, with the DMO raising N987.78 billion from an offer of N800 billion, while total subscriptions reached approximately N1.38 trillion. The stop rate for this tenor rose to 18.47 per cent, marking the largest increase across the curve.

Market participants noted that the strong interest reflected a preference for longer-dated instruments offering better yield and protection against reinvestment risk in a high-rate environment.

ECONOMIC growth in the United States (U.S.) is projected at two per cent this year, compared to 1.9 per cent last year, supported by

monetary and fiscal easing. In the European Union (EU), economic growth is forecast at 1.3 per cent in 2026, down from 1.5 per cent in 2025, as higher U.S. tariffs and ongoing geopolitical uncertainty dampen exports.

Meanwhile, in East Asia, growth is projected at 4.4 per cent in 2026, down from 4.9 per cent in 2025 as the boost from front-loaded exports fades. Output in Japan is expected to expand by 0.9 per cent in 2026, compared with 1.2 per cent in 2025.

In South Asia, growth is forecast at 5.6 per cent in 2026, easing from 5.9 per cent, led by India's 6.6 per cent expansion, while in Western Asia, Gross Domestic

Products (GDP) is expected to grow by 4.1 per cent in 2026, up from 3.4 per cent in 2025, according to the report.

Output in Africa, where high debt and climate-related shocks pose significant risks,

is projected to grow by four per cent in 2026, marginally up from 3.9 per cent in 2025.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, output is expected to expand by 2.3 per cent in 2026, slightly down from 2.4 per cent in 2025, amid moderate growth in consumer demand and a mild recovery in investment.

According to the report, global trade proved resilient in 2025, expanding by a faster-than-expected 3.8 per cent despite elevated policy uncertainty and rising tariffs.

## Northeast News

### ATBU Needs 30 Billion Naira to avoid difficult challenges - vice Chancellor

By: Ahmad Muhammad, Bauchi

**A**bubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi Needs Over 30 Billion Naira to avoid risk of being in a sorry state.

The Vice Chancellor of the University, Professor Ibrahim Hassan Garba, made this known while speaking to newsmen, saying, "As the Vice Chancellor of the University, I am tasked with finding this amount of over 30 billion Naira, and God willing, we will get it, because if we do not get it within two to three years, the university could be in a difficult situation.

He said, "As the Vice Chancellor of the University, my main concern is to get enough money to run the university itself, the information we have gathered indicates that if the university does not get enough money of about 30 billion Naira, it will be a problem. This money will be used to run the university and find a way to change the system. What we are doing, especially the way children study, is to re-establish the system of providing scientific research laboratories, engineering training rooms, workshops, and improving the living environment of the students, if we do not get these funds within two years, then we will really face challenges, secondly, the information in my hand now is that I am looking for at least 2,000 teachers and nonacademic staff, if we want to continue education in it as a university."

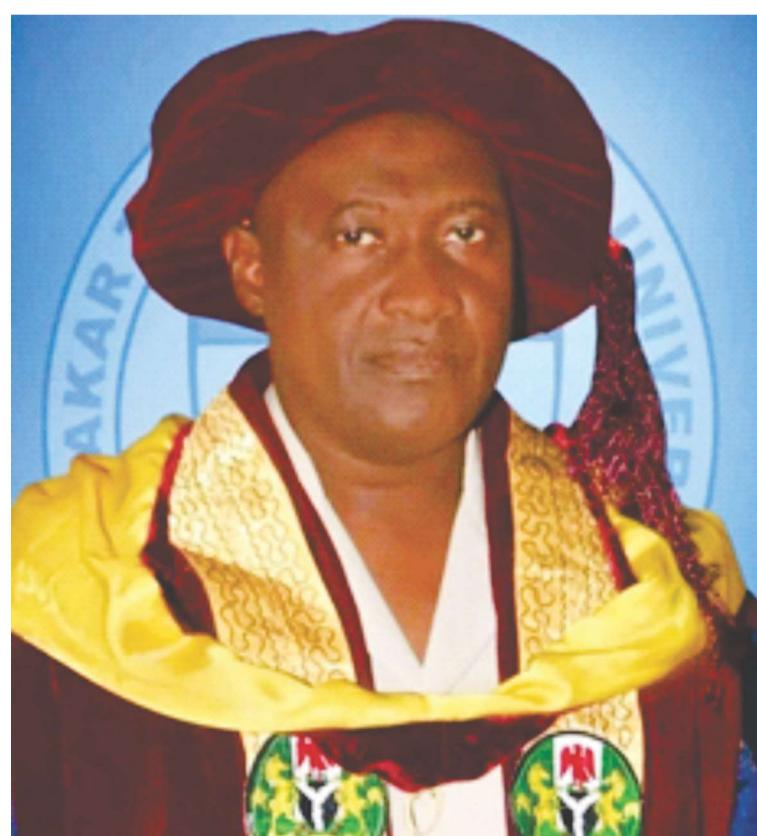
Regarding the Senate's move to change the University from a University of Science and Technology to a



University that offers all courses, Professor Garba said they were not consulted when the bill was introduced. They only heard about it in the media.

He said that if to say the senate consult with us, we will oppose it we will tell them our reasons, and our problems, because if you want to update the law, then make sure that you do it in a way that it will solve our problems not to increase the challenges we are facing, and the issue of increasing the number of courses all over the world check Universities in the world, there is no one university that offers all the courses in the world, and in the current system, these universities are looking at the courses and how they can meet the educational needs of the people entrusted to us, how when we graduate them, they will get the right training, how they will help the community, they will get jobs and not just provide courses, I will give you an example, go to ABU Zaria now They are looking at the courses that they should reduce."

Professor Garba said that



the university has graduated men who are contributing, in Abuja and other places in the field of construction and scientific works or NNPC oil companies and other scientific fields, you will find students who were trained by ATBU, and you will find them playing a very important role there, even if not, we have produced men who contribute to the development of science and technology in this country",

Professor Garba said that the statutes of the university should not be changed because in the national education system, each part of the country and each of the six zones should have one university of science and technology, so if ours is changed, our university in the north-east will be like that, we will not have such a university.

Speaking on his personal opinion, a lecturer at the university, Dr. Kabiru Garba Ilelah, said that he does not support changing the name of the university from the University of Science and Technology, but it will be good if the laws are amended. So, that the University will be allowed to conduct some courses that it does not teach like the University of Technology Makurdi"

Some of the stakeholders, Dr. Abdullahi Yalwa and Professor Shehu Galoji have expressed their support for the Senate's move to change the name of the University to a university that provides all courses in education, agriculture, law and others.

They said This will lead to development and increase recruitment opportunities and will also provide more students from Bauchi State with opportunities to study in the varsity

This issue of changing the rules of establishment of the University is still being debated by scholars and stakeholders in the fields of law and education.

### CBN recruits beg Tinubu, CBN Governor to look in to their plight

From Ahmad Muhammad, Bauchi

**A** group of newly recruited staff of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) have cried out over delayed posting and onboarding into various positions since August 28, 2023.

The Workers appeal to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu as a father, his Wife Senator Oluremi Tinubu as their Mother his Son Seyi Tinubu as a youth and Central Bank Governor Olayemi Cardoso to look into their plights as economic hardship has taken a toll on them after about three years of leaving their jobs.

Speaking on behalf of over 50 newly recruited CBN workers Emmanuel Linus Dabo and Yakubu Yerima Abdullahi, told newsmen on Monday that "the Apex Bank issued them employment offer which was followed by acceptance copy and instructions to resign from their previous places of work where applicable as part of documentation.

"We all tendered resignation letters to our former employers as at that time to enable us proceed with the CBN process," one of the affected employees,

Speakers said, the application process started in April 2023 where their resumé were submitted to the Headquarters of CBN and after sometimes got mails from the Human Resources Department for interview and aptitude test.

"We did a medical examination from the Bank's medical clinic where a code was given to individual applicants before we could access the hospital. After the interview, medical and aptitude test, the successful applicants were contacted by the HR manager to come over to CBN Headquarters in Abuja, to pick up our offer letter. We filled the acceptance without delay."

They said that there were a series of e-mails from the Human Resources office to forward their credentials for the online documentation, including their acknowledged resignation letters from their previous employers.

Linus said that after a long period of time, there was no further communication from the Bank after becoming jobless but were optimistic of being deployed to their various offices while believing that the change of government at the Apex Bank must have affected the process.

According to the offer of employment obtained by our Correspondent, allegedly issued by the Human Resources Department, it was stated that an offer of 'Provisional Offer of Appointment' for a probationary period of one year after which a satisfactory report would be given before the confirmation of the appointment.

Also, the group gave copies of acknowledged letters of reminder addressed to the new CBN governor, written in September 2023, November 2024 and January 2025 but yielded no response from management.

The concerned recruited staff cried to CBN Governor, President Bola Tinubu and other stakeholders to look into their plights as economic hardship has taken a toll on them after about three years of leaving their jobs.

"As I'm talking to you, many of our colleagues have come down with depression. In fact, we just contributed N3,000 to some of them in the hospital. We speak with each other every time.

"Many of us cannot afford to pay our rent anymore, we can't pay our bills and have withdrawn our children from their schools. Even our old age parents we cannot afford to pay for their medical bills and We don't know how to explain to them about the current situation.

"Some of us studied abroad, decided to return and contribute to our country. We are pleading for our leaders' parents' stakeholders and the authorities concerned to look in to our flight as sons and daughters of Nigeria, the situation is worsening."



## Gombe Trains Women Recruited in NFWP-SU Empowerment Programme

By **Najib Sani, Gombe**

The Gombe State government has commenced training for women recruited into the empowerment programme 'Nigeria for Women Programme Scale-Up (NFWP-SU), a World Bank-assisted initiative aimed at empowering women economically.

During the opening of a three-days orientation training for the newly recruited State Project Coordinating Unit (SPCU) and Local Project Implementing Units (LPIUs) staff of the project organised by the state Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in collaboration with the Gombe State office of the Nigeria for Women Programme Scale-Up, the commissioner of the ministry, Asma'u Iganus, disclosed that the beneficiaries would be trained on agriculture, trade and finance, equipping them with financial discipline and empowering them to become agents of change in their communities.

According to the commissioner, the programme was designed to empower women through the formation of Women's Affinity Groups (WAGs), which would enable them to save funds and grant loans to their members for business purposes.

She explained that the



WAGs would be federated into sustainable economic institutions, linking them to formal markets and finance.

Commissioner Iganus further stated that the programme would focus on sectors like agriculture, with emphasis on cassava, rice, and oil palm production, as well as tailoring and other income-generating activities.

"Our goal is to improve the livelihoods of millions of women in Gombe State, and we are committed to ensuring that they have access to the resources and support they need to succeed," she said.

State project coordinator, Hauwa Adamu Saraki, explained that the initiative is a five-year project, targeting 3,600 groups in the state in the first phase, with Balanga, Funakaye and Yamaltu-Deba local governments benefiting.

"The programme is open

to women from 18 years and above, and it is aimed at enhancing their economic well-being," she said.

Saraki added that the NFWP-SU has already shown promising results in its pilot phase in collective savings and supporting numerous women across six states.

"We are scaling up this initiative to reach more women across the country, and Gombe State is proud to be part of it," she said.

The NFWP-SU, a \$500 million World Bank-funded project, aims to reach approximately 4 million women nationwide by 2028, providing them with access to financial services, digital literacy and formal banking connections, as well as grants and technical assistance for income-generating activities.

## Group demands transparency over Alleged banditry funding claims in Bauchi

By **Ahmed Ahmed**

The Bauchi Citizens Action for Change (BCAC) has expressed deep concern over what it described as damaging allegations linking the Bauchi State Government to the funding of banditry, warning that the claims have severely tarnished the image and dignity of the state.

The group made its position known during a press conference read by Mohammad Ladan Adamu Chairman and John Akevi Secretary held at CFA Hotel on Saturday in Bauchi. It said recent statements attributed to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) have cast Bauchi State in a negative light both nationally and internationally.

BCAC said the narrative portraying Bauchi as a state governed by individuals allegedly involved in banditry financing has caused reputational harm to millions

of peace-loving citizens.

The group noted that such generalizations are offensive and undermine the historical legacy of Bauchi as a centre of scholarship, reform and moral leadership.

BCAC recalled that Bauchi produced respected scholars and national leaders, including Malam Sa'adu Zungur and Nigeria's first Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, stressing that the state played a critical role in Nigeria's independence struggle and early democratic development.

The group said it was troubling that the allegations had led to widespread suspicion and ridicule of Bauchi citizens, with some questioning whether banditry had become a defining feature of the state's governance. According to BCAC, this perception is false and unjust.

It stressed that accusations bordering on terrorism or banditry financing are too

serious to be reduced to political rhetoric and must be addressed through transparency and cooperation with investigative authorities.

BCAC specifically called for clear explanations regarding alleged financial transfers from the Bauchi State Government to Bello Badejo, who is under investigation for alleged banditry-related activities.

The group also defended former Secretary to the State Government, Barrister Ibrahim Mohammed Kashim, commending him for cooperating with investigators. It clarified that Kashim resigned voluntarily and was officially commended by the government at the time of his exit.

The group concluded by reaffirming its belief in the rule of law, noting that all accused persons remain innocent until proven guilty, and called for justice, clarity and accountability in the interest of Bauchi State and Nigeria at large.

## Senator Yaroe visit victims of Bachama, Tsobo clash, calls for peace, unity

From **Umar Dankano, Yola**

Senator Binos Dauda Yaroe of the Adamawa Southern

Senatorial District has commiserated with the victims of the Bachama and Tsobo communal clash in Lamurde local government area of the state.

Recall that the two communities have in recent times recorded a civil unrest as a result of a long chieftaincy and farm lands disagreement which claimed lives and properties despite the state government several interventions to broker peace.

During his visit to these communities, Senator Yaroe registered his displeasure over the issue noting that, the importance of peace can never be over emphasized as no society can develop or attain its full potential in the absence of peace and stability.

Senator Yaroe urged the communities to embrace calm and allow peace to prevail stressing for all and sundry to sheathe their swords and give room for dialogue, reconciliation and lasting peace.

He said while addressing the affected victims in their communities visited that, his visit aimed at calming frayed nerves, assessing the level of damage caused by the crisis and gathering first-hand information that would enable him to present a comprehensive report to the Senate.

He noted that communal disputes are better resolved through constructive engagement, dialogue and mediation rather than violence, which only deepens divisions and inflicts lasting damage on communities.

He further recalled that for decades, the Bachama and Tsobo communities have lived side by side as brothers bound together through intermarriages, trade and commerce observing that, these long-standing social and economic ties have created a relationship that should not be allowed to disintegrate because of emerging socio-economic challenges or misunderstandings.

"My decision to visit your communities was particularly significant given that I am still recuperating from a major health challenge that required surgery towards the end of last year.

"So I urge you all to give peace a chance because no society can achieve any meaningful development without peace and stability,

lets embrace dialogue in any disagreement or difference between us as a people". Yaroe appealed.

The Senator and his team throughout the day toured several affected victims in their communities including; Gamadio, Rigange and Bashakka villages across Numan and Lamurde Local Government Areas.

At each location, he sympathized with victims, encouraged renewed unity and peaceful coexistence, and distributed relief materials to ease their suffering.

During the visits, food and Nonfood relief items were donated to the victims including; 400 bags of 25kg rice, 80 gallons of cooking oil, 200 cartons of spaghetti, 200 brocade materials, 200 yards of fabric, cash support and assorted children's clothing.

According to the senator the gesture was meant to provide temporary relief while longer-term solutions are pursued pledging to report the matter before the national Assembly as soon it resumes.

Traditional rulers, community leaders and leaders of internally displaced persons (IDPs) praised Senator Yaroe for identifying with the victims despite his health challenges in their moment of pains and distress.

In Gamadio, the IDP camp leader, Barris David, thanked the senator for his compassion and concern, describing the visit as a morale booster for displaced persons praying for God to grant the senator good health and long life to continue serving his people.

David also lamented that during the attack on their village, Waduku, residents lost virtually everything and appealed to the senator to use his position to facilitate the rebuilding of the community.

Similarly, in Rigange, the District Head, Mr. Kpana Linus Ishaya, represented by his secretary, Mr. Chikauno Audu, expressed gratitude to the senator for his concern and intervention.

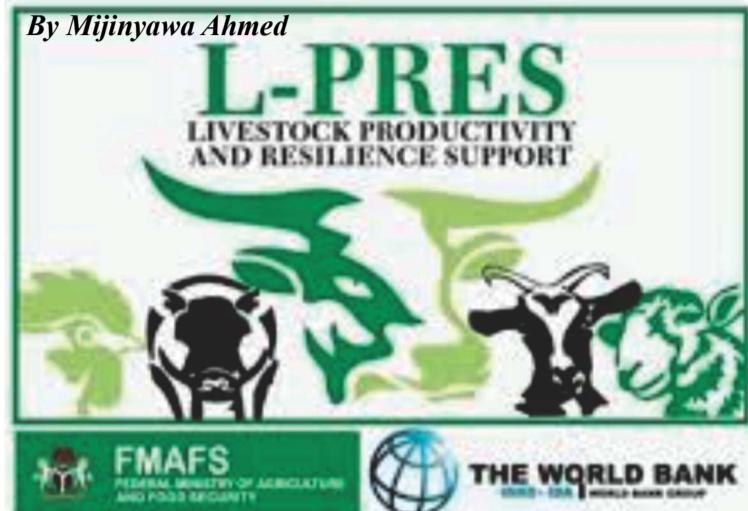
He also offered prayers for the senator's full recovery, noting that his leadership and presence were crucial at this time.

A bashakka village, community leaders poured encomiums on Senator Yaroe, commending his foresight, empathy and commitment to his constituents. They assured him of their readiness to formally present their key concerns through an official memo, while also praying for his continued good health.

## Northeast News

### L-PRES Approves Major Livestock Service Centre in Galambi, Targets Value Chain Growth in Bauchi

By Mijinyawa Ahmed



The Livestock Productivity and Resilience Support (L-PRES) Project has approved the establishment of a large Livestock Service Centre in Galambi, Bauchi State, with construction already at an advanced stage.

The Bauchi State Coordinator of L-PRES, Musa Adamu One, disclosed this in an interview, expressing optimism that the facility would be completed within the year. He noted that the level of work at the site is clearly visible to commuters along the Galambi-Liman Katagum corridor.

According to him, the L-PRES project was introduced to boost livestock production and strengthen the livestock value chain across Bauchi State through improved infrastructure, modern technology and expanded commercial opportunities for livestock owners, traders and pastoralists.

Musa Adamu explained that the project focuses on all aspects of livestock development, including dairy and meat production, as well as small ruminants such as sheep and goats.

He said the initiative is designed to benefit communities widely and promote sustainable growth in the livestock sector.

He stated that while the project concentrated on key

interventions supporting crop and animal production in 2025, its 2026 work plan will prioritise major infrastructural development. Planned projects include grazing-related infrastructure such as water points for herders, modern abattoirs, veterinary clinics, and the development of civilised pasture areas with fenced land, planted grasses and reliable water supply.

The coordinator added that L-PRES is promoting value addition through the provision of processing equipment for animal feed supplements and encouraging the use of crop residues as alternative livestock feed to reduce waste.

He also revealed that the project is emphasising livestock breed improvement through Artificial Insemination, noting that a major facility under construction in Bauchi will serve as a breed improvement centre, alongside a proposed Liquid Nitrogen Plant for semen preservation.

Musa Adamu One commended Governor Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed and the Commissioner for Livestock Development, Dr Bala Musa Lukshi, for their support, stressing that L-PRES is a people-focused initiative aimed at improving livelihoods, meat hygiene and economic growth across Bauchi State.



### Yobe Youths Drafts Senator Bomai for 2027 Gubernatorial Candidature

From, Sani Gazas Chinade Damaturu

A youth coalition, the Bomai Yobe East Solidarity Movement, has formally called on Senator Ibrahim Mohammad Bomai to contest the Yobe State governorship election in 2027.

The endorsement came during the inauguration of the group's new executives on Saturday in Federal Polytechnic, Damaturu.

The Coordinator of the group, Abba Soso Geidam stated the movement was established specifically to rally support for Senator Bomai's candidacy.

He expressed strong confidence in the senator's record, claiming no potential contender could match Bomai's developmental achievements over his eight years in the Senate Chamber.

The Pioneer Secretary of the Bomai Support Group Ibrahim Mohammed, cited Bomai's performance in his constituency and his rapid rise to prominence respectively.

He praised Bomai's



leadership, noting his unprecedented appointment as Chairman of the LCT Committee as a second-term senator.

Ibrahim also highlighted Bomai's 35-year civil service career and his decisive electoral victory in 2018, when he unseated an incumbent senator by a wide margin.

On the issue of political zoning, Mohamed advocated for a power shift to Zone B, framing it as a necessary rotation of governance within the state.

The public endorsement

marks an early mobilization effort as political preparations for the 2027 elections gain momentum."

Alhaji Muhammad Ngordi, a chieftain of the APC from Yobe East (Zone A), said that they do not have any candidate better than Senator Ibrahim Bomai when the time comes because he is doing work all over his senatorial districts.

According to him, that is why they came out in number to show their support for the Senator to contest for the governorship when the time comes.

### Yobe State Governor Alhaji Mai Mala Buni, has been conferred with the title of Matawalle Gudi



In a press statement by Mamman Mohammed, DG Press and Media Affairs to the Governor, stated this in Damaturu when councillors of Gudi Emirate council conveyed a letter of the Chieftaincy title of 'Matawalle Gudi' on the

Governor.

In his remarks Governor Mai Mala Buni urged parents, elders and traditional authorities, to uphold moral upbringing of the youth.

"The youth are future leaders who deserve responsible mentoring to

produce good future leaders and followers for a sane society" he said.

Gov. Buni advised the youth against associating with drugs to have a prosperous future.

He assured to contribute to the development of the Emirate and its people.

The leader of the delegation and Waziri Gudi, Alhaji Hussaini Masaya, said the Gudi Emirate Council found Gov. Buni worthy of the office of Matawalle Gudi and appointed him to serve in that capacity.

The office of the Matawalle Gudi qualifies Gov. Buni as one of the Kingmakers of Gudi Emirate.

He commended the Governor for accepting the title and to serve the Emirate in the capacity of the title.

### Troops arrest three suspected ISWAP recruitment agents in Banki

Troops of Operation Hadin Kai have arrested three suspected Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) recruitment agents in Banki town, Borno State.

Sources said that the suspects were arrested on Jan. 17 following a tip-off from the Banki District Head.

The sources said intelligence operatives were deployed to Banki on a covert operation, where they apprehended the suspects while attempting to recruit and move youths for terrorist training.

"They were identified as Gajibo Kayama, 23; Tahiru Modu, 22; and Bulama Modu, 24. They are suspected to be involved in the

recruitment of youths aged between 17 and 20 from Banki town for ISWAP elements operating in Adamawa State," the source said.

According to preliminary investigations, the suspects were former ISWAP members who claimed to have repented about five years ago but were allegedly re-engaging in recruitment activities.

"They were arrested while trying to recruit and convey youths within Banki town for training in Adamawa State," the source added.

The suspects have since been handed over to Military Intelligence Regiment for detailed interrogation and further action.

## EU Removes Nigeria from High-Risk Financial Crime List

Nigeria has recorded a significant international breakthrough in its fight against money laundering, terrorist financing and proliferation financing, following its official removal from the European Union's list of high-risk third countries under the EU Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) framework.

The development was disclosed in a statement signed by the Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), Hafsat Abubakar Bakari.

According to the statement, the decision is contained in the European Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) C (2025) 8460, adopted on December 4, 2025, in line with updates issued by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) after its October 2025 Plenary.

The regulation, which takes effect from January 29, 2026, also confirms the removal of Burkina Faso, Mali, Mozambique, South Africa and Tanzania from the



EU's high-risk list.

These countries were delisted after successfully exiting the FATF list of Jurisdictions under Increased Monitoring, having addressed identified strategic deficiencies in their AML/CFT frameworks.

The European Commission acknowledged that Nigeria and the other delisted countries strengthened the effectiveness of their AML/CFT regimes, closed critical technical and operational gaps, and fulfilled

commitments outlined in their respective FATF Action Plans. These efforts led to their removal from the FATF grey list in June and October 2025.

Nigeria's removal from the EU list reflects what stakeholders describe as strong political will and leadership under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, whose administration prioritised financial system integrity, inter-agency coordination and compliance with international standards.

The achievement was also

attributed to sustained collaboration among the National Assembly, law enforcement agencies, regulators, supervisors, the judiciary, the private sector and development partners.

Reacting to the development,

NFIU CEO Hafsat Bakari described the decision as a significant validation of Nigeria's reform efforts. She noted that the delisting demonstrates how consistent reforms, effective coordination and strong

national ownership can yield tangible international outcomes.

The removal means financial transactions between Nigeria and the European Union will no longer be subject to enhanced due diligence requirements associated with high-risk jurisdictions.

Experts say this is expected to ease compliance burdens, support smoother cross-border financial flows and boost Nigeria's attractiveness for trade, investment and financial partnerships with EU member states.

Beyond the immediate economic gains, the NFIU said the development strengthens international confidence in Nigeria's financial system and reinforces the country's standing as a responsible participant in the global financial architecture.

The agency reaffirmed its commitment to sustaining reforms and deepening the effectiveness of Nigeria's AML/CFT/CPF framework in collaboration with domestic and international partners.

## Tinubu/Shettima admired administration, APC Youth Parliament Urges Continuity in 2027

By Usman Shehu Gungura, Bauchi

The All Progressives Congress (APC) Youth Parliament has vehemently warned against information going around that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu may replace Vice President Kashim Shettima as his running mate ahead of the 2027 presidential election, describing such moves as dangerous, divisive, and capable of weakening the ruling party.

The group said it had observed with concern the growing circulation of reports in sections of the media alleging that President Tinubu is considering dropping Shettima in favour of a Northern Christian candidate, allegedly to address criticisms of the Muslim-Muslim ticket adopted during the 2023 elections.

Speaking to journalists in Bauchi on Monday, the Chairman of the APC Youth Parliament, Kabiru Garba Kobi, dismissed the rumours as a deliberate attempt to sow discord within the APC and undermine both President Tinubu and Vice President Shettima.

According to Kobi, those

behind the speculation are just pursuing their personal and external political interests rather than the unity and stability of the party.

"Any attempt to replace Senator Kashim Shettima will be a grave political error that could cost President Tinubu massive support in the North, particularly the North-East," Kobi warned.

He noted that despite renewed political discussions suggesting that President Tinubu is assessing names such as former Speaker Yakubu Dogara, Defence Minister Lt-Gen. Christopher Musa (retd), Plateau State Governor Caleb Mutfwang, and Catholic Bishop of Sokoto, Most Rev. Matthew Hassan Kukah, such speculations remain distractions driven by political opportunists.

Kobi acknowledged that the 1999 Constitution gives the President the freedom to choose a running mate from any part of the country, but insisted that political wisdom, loyalty, and electoral realities must guide such decisions.

"Everything required of a deputy, loyalty, dedication,

courage, political experience, and grassroots support, Senator Kashim Shettima has demonstrated beyond doubt," he said.

The APC Youth Parliament Chairman stressed that Shettima remains the most unifying political figure in the North-East and a bridge between the region and the rest of the country.

"Shettima is the man who can mobilise the North and deliver the votes President Tinubu needs in 2027. Those calling for his replacement did not contribute meaningfully to the APC's victory in 2023. Some of them actively worked against Tinubu at the time," Kobi added.

He further cautioned President Tinubu against listening to voices that were neither loyal to the party nor invested in its success. "We appeal to Mr President not to be distracted by those who were never part of the struggle. Holding firmly to Shettima is the surest path to victory in 2027," he said.

Kobi declared that the APC Youth Parliament would resist any attempt to sabotage the Tinubu/Shettima ticket, insisting that the party's



strength in continuity, remain unchallenged considering the development programs put in place to Nigerians by Tinubu/Shettima's administration in Nigeria.

Describing Vice President Shettima as a visionary, humble, and patriotic leader, Kobi said his resilience and leadership style continue to inspire young Nigerians across the country.

He likened Shettima's political impact in the North-

East to that of Nigeria's first Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, noting that youths in the region see him as a symbol of courage, hope, sacrifice, and national unity.

The APC Youth Parliament Chairman warned that undermining Shettima's position ahead of 2027 would not only divide the party but also alienate millions of Northern voters whose support remains critical to the APC's electoral success.

## Business

### NCC, CBN to launch refund framework for failed airtime, data transactions

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) says it has developed a joint framework with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to address consumer complaints arising from failed airtime and data transactions caused by network downtime, system glitches, or human input errors.

In a statement, Nneka Ukoha, NCC's spokesperson, said the initiative is designed to ensure refunds within 30 seconds.

Ukoha said the framework followed several months of engagement involving the NCC, the CBN, mobile network operators (MNOs), value-added service (VAS) providers, deposit money banks (DMBs), and other relevant stakeholders.

The NCC official said the initiative represents a unified position by the telecommunications and financial sectors in response to growing complaints from subscribers who were debited without receiving airtime or data.

The framework, according to the spokesperson, also introduces an enforceable service level agreement (SLA) for MNOs and DMBs, clearly defining the responsibilities of each stakeholder in transaction processing and dispute resolution.

Under the new framework, where a purchaser

is debited but fails to receive value for airtime or data—whether the failure occurs at the bank level or with an NCC licensee—the purchaser is entitled to a refund within 30 seconds, except in circumstances where the transaction remains pending, of which the refund can take up to 24 hours,” she said.

The framework further mandates operators to notify consumers via SMS of the success or failure of every transaction.

“It also addresses erroneous recharges to ported lines, incorrect airtime or data purchases, and instances where transactions are made to the wrong phone number.”

Freya Bruce-Bennett, director of consumer affairs at the NCC, said the framework establishes a central monitoring dashboard to track transaction failures, refunds, and SLA breaches in real time—jointly hosted by the NCC and the CBN.

“Failed top-ups rank among the top three consumer complaints, and in line with



our commitment to addressing these priority issues, we were determined to resolve it within the shortest possible time,” she said.

“We are grateful to all stakeholders—particularly the Central Bank of Nigeria and its leadership—for their tireless commitment to resolving this issue and arriving at this framework, and for ensuring that consumers of telecommunications services receive full value for their purchases.

“So far, pending the approval of management of both regulators on the framework, MNOs and banks have collectively made refunds of over N10 billion to customers for failed transactions.”

Bruce-Bennett added that the framework will be implemented on March 1, after final approvals by the NCC and the CBN, once technical integration by MNOs, VAS providers, and DMBs is concluded.

### Nigeria gets 24-hour unmanned fuel stations



Chad, Benin and Cameroon.

“Our first automated fuel stations are expected to commence operations from January 2026,” he said, adding that this would enable motorists and motorcyclists to refuel and make instant payments to complete their transactions without fuel attendants at the stations, 24 hours daily.

According to Rano, the technology is designed to reduce the loss of man-hours at fuel stations, improve transparency and assure customers that they are receiving the exact volume of fuel dispensed for what they have paid.

The Chief Executive Officer of Petrosoft Limited, Dr Joshua Denila, said the digitalised fuel dispensing and payment project demonstrates how home-grown technology can overcome the myriad challenges in Nigeria's retail fuel market.

Highlighting the significance of local technology, Denila said, “Our fuel dispensing and payment systems are developed locally and built to international standards.”

### 19 banks meet new capital requirements ahead of March 2026 deadline

As of January 6, 2026, at least 19 Nigerian banks have met the new minimum capital requirements set by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), signalling early compliance ahead of the March 31 deadline.

The recapitalisation exercise, introduced by the CBN as part of broader reforms to strengthen the resilience of the financial system, raises minimum paid-in capital thresholds across banking licence categories.

The policy aims to enhance banks' shock-absorbing capacity, support larger credit creation, and align Nigeria's banking sector with regional and global peers.

According to market data and records from the CBN, six lenders operating with

international banking licences have met the N500 billion minimum capital requirement. They are: Access Bank, Fidelity Bank, First Bank of Nigeria, Guaranty Trust Bank (GTBank), under GTCO, United Bank for Africa (UBA) and Zenith Bank.

These banks collectively dominate Nigeria's cross-border banking activities and systemically important transactions.

Similarly, eight banks licensed to operate nationally have met the N200 billion capital threshold. They are: Citibank Nigeria, Ecobank Nigeria, Globus Bank, Stanbic IBTC Bank, Sterling Bank, Wema Bank, PremiumTrust Bank, and Providus Bank.

Three merchant banks

have also complied with the N50 billion minimum capital requirement: FSDH Merchant Bank, Greenwich Merchant Bank, and Nova Merchant Bank.

Merchant banks play a critical role in corporate finance, investment banking, and structured transactions.

In the same vein, two non-interest banks have met the revised capital thresholds of between N10 billion and N20 billion: Jaiz Bank and LOTUS Bank.

Non-interest banking remains a growing segment, particularly in ethical and Shariah-compliant finance.

The most recent lender to meet the requirement is Fidelity Bank Plc, which on December 31, 2025, raised between N250 billion and N270 billion through a private

placement.

With an existing verified share capital and share premium of approximately N306 billion, the fresh equity injection lifts Fidelity Bank's qualifying capital comfortably above the N500 billion minimum required for banks with international authorisation.

As of April 2025, Nigeria had 44 deposit-taking banks, comprising seven commercial banks with international authorisation, 15 with national authorisation, four with regional authorisation, four non-interest banks, six merchant banks, seven financial holding companies, and one representative office.

The CBN has given all deposit money banks until March 31, 2026, to meet the new capital levels through

options including equity injections, mergers and acquisitions, or licence downgrades. Banks that fail to comply risk regulatory sanctions, including operational restrictions.

Market analysts note that early compliance by these 19 banks could boost investor confidence and reduce systemic risk, even as attention shifts to how remaining lenders plan to meet the deadline. The CBN is expected to provide periodic updates as the recapitalisation process progresses.



# Water, Worship Places, Education,: How Sen. Shehu Buba's interventions are transforming Bauchi South

From Ahmad Muhammad/Mijinyawa Ahmed

For decades, access to clean and reliable water has remained one of the most pressing challenges confronting rural and semi-urban communities across Bauchi South Senatorial District. In many areas, residents rose before dawn to trek long distances in search of water that was often unsafe for drinking or cooking.

Today, however, a new sense of relief and optimism is sweeping across the district as Senator Shehu Buba Umar commissioned 40 solar-powered boreholes to serve communities in the seven local government areas of Bauchi South.

The symbolic commissioning of the solar-powered boreholes marks a significant milestone in the senator's broader development agenda aimed at addressing critical infrastructure deficits in the district. Beyond water supply, the agenda spans healthcare delivery, education, rural electrification and other people-oriented projects designed to directly impact the lives of ordinary citizens.

As the boreholes were unveiled, scenes of jubilation erupted across beneficiary communities. For residents, the project represents more than infrastructure; it is a lifeline.

Many described water as "a lifesaver," explaining that their struggles went beyond thirst. Some said they often went to bed hungry not because food was unavailable, but because there was no clean water to cook or drink.

The 40 boreholes are spread strategically across the district's seven local government areas. Bauchi Local Government Area received 15 boreholes, reflecting its dense population. Toro Local Government Area got seven, while Alkaleri, Kirfi and Tafawa Balewa local government areas received four boreholes each.

Dass and Bogoro local government areas benefited from three boreholes each. According to the senator, the selection of beneficiary communities was based on population density and the severity of water challenges, with millions of residents expected to benefit directly or indirectly.

Residents across the district were unanimous in their appreciation. Malam



Aminu Ado, a resident of Tirwun community, recalled years of hardship without running water. "We spent many years without seeing a single drop of water from a tap," he said.

"Today, with this intervention by Senator Buba, our problem of safe drinking water has become history."

Similarly, Ibrahim Muhammad, a meat seller, said water scarcity had long affected both his livelihood and family life. The new borehole, he noted, would improve hygiene, boost small businesses and reduce the spread of waterborne diseases.

Community leaders also acknowledged the transformative impact of the project. Alhaji Aminu Muhammad Danmaliki, Danmalikin Bauchi, described the boreholes as a turning point for the people.

"This project will significantly improve the quality of life for everyone in our community," he said, adding that residents had resolved to take ownership of the facilities to ensure sustainability and proper maintenance.

Addressing the gathering, Senator Shehu Buba Umar reaffirmed his commitment to delivering essential services to his constituents.

He stressed that access to clean water is a basic necessity and a foundation for healthy and productive communities. According to him, the boreholes are part of his constituency projects, conceived from direct engagement with the people during his electioneering campaign.

"During the campaign, we visited 72 out of the 75 wards in this constituency," the senator explained.

"Everywhere we went, people complained about the lack of potable water. I promised them that if elected, I would do something about it.

Today, we are fulfilling that promise."

He added that while the 40 boreholes were executed under his constituency projects, he had also personally funded the construction, rehabilitation and repair of several boreholes across Bauchi State.

The solar-powered design, he noted, was deliberately chosen to ensure sustainability, reduce running costs and guarantee water supply even in off-grid rural communities.

Beyond water projects, the senator's interventions extend into religious, educational and humanitarian spheres.

The Muslim community in Bauchi South has particularly commended him for constructing a magnificent Juma'at Mosque and Islamiyyah School in Nabordi community, headquarters of the Jama'a Emirate in Toro Local Government Area.

The project includes a central Juma'at mosque, female mosques, an Islamiyyah school and sanitary facilities within the premises.

Speaking shortly after the Friday prayers during the commissioning of the mosque, Senator Buba said the project was aimed at boosting Islamic education and strengthening moral values in the community.

He urged worshippers to intensify prayers for peace, unity and stability in Bauchi State and Nigeria at large.

The senator emphasized that the humanitarian projects he has executed within and beyond his senatorial district have a direct bearing on the lives of ordinary people.

He commended the

benefit society and earn spiritual rewards.

The commissioning events also provided a platform for political engagement. All Progressives Congress (APC) chieftains and supporters advised voters to make effective use of their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) ahead of the 2027 general election.

Former Chief of Staff, Government House Bauchi, Alhaji Yusuf Musa Gimli, and Alhaji Aminu Muhammad Danmalikin Bauchi stressed that the PVC remains the most powerful tool for rewarding good leadership and curbing electoral malpractice.

They called on eligible voters to register, collect and safeguard their PVCs, warning against selling votes. According to them, democracy thrives when citizens vote leaders of competence, character, capacity and compassion.

They described Senator Buba as a unifier and urged voters to support leaders who place the people first.

As the celebrations wound down, leaders and residents of the seven local government areas reiterated their gratitude to Senator Shehu Buba Umar. Many offered prayers for his continued success and pledged their support for future initiatives.

Ultimately, the commissioning of the 40 solar-powered boreholes underscores a broader narrative of responsive leadership rooted in listening to the people and translating promises into tangible outcomes.

By addressing basic needs such as water, education, worship and civic participation, the senator's interventions are not only improving daily life in Bauchi South but also restoring faith in the power of purposeful governance.



## Health News

# Tracking the Naira and the Needle: How Budget Accountability Is Shaping Immunization Outcomes in Northern Nigeria

By Mijinyawa Ahmed

In a region where preventable diseases still threaten the lives of thousands of children, the link between public finance and public health has never been more critical.

The 2025 Immunization Budget Accountability Scorecard released by the Africa Health Budget Network (AHBN), in collaboration with its Communities of Practice (CoP) across Bauchi, Sokoto, and Kano States, offers a revealing snapshot of how government commitments, funding releases, and implementation realities intersect to shape immunization outcomes in northern Nigeria.

The scorecard, contained in a press statement signed by the AHBN Coordinator, Dr. Aminu Magashi Garba, and made available to journalists in Bauchi, builds on years of evidence-based tracking and citizen-led accountability.

It assesses government performance across key indicators, including budget allocation, releases, and service delivery outcomes for routine immunization during the 2025 fiscal year.

Although the Zero Dose Learning Hub (ZDLH) initiative supported by GAVI with technical partnership from AFENET—formally concluded in December 2025, AHBN and its partners insist that accountability efforts must continue to ensure no child is left behind.

At the heart of the scorecard is a shared goal: expanding equitable access to life-saving vaccines, especially for zero-dose children—those who have not received a single routine vaccine.

The findings reveal a mixed picture of commendable progress, persistent gaps, and opportunities for reform across the three states reviewed.

### Bauchi: Strong Funding, Weak Coverage

Bauchi State stands out for its fiscal commitment to immunization in 2025.

The state government allocated and fully released ₦872 million into the Immunization Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Basket Fund, achieving a rare 100 percent release.

This milestone, applauded by AHBN and the Community



of Practice, reflects strong political will and continuity in supporting routine immunization financing.

However, the scorecard reveals a troubling disconnect between financial inputs and health outcomes. Despite the full release of funds, Penta 1 and Penta 3 vaccination coverage rates in Bauchi remain below 40 percent.

These figures suggest that funding alone is not enough. Challenges related to implementation, community engagement, health worker deployment, and demand creation continue to limit vaccine uptake.

For AHBN, the lesson is clear: sustained investment must be matched with effective service delivery. Strengthening community outreach, addressing supply-chain bottlenecks, and tackling vaccine hesitancy are critical steps if Bauchi is to translate budgetary success into real protection for every child.

### Sokoto: Advocacy Paying Off, Transparency Still Needed

In Sokoto State, the 2025 scorecard highlights a more incremental but significant gain. The state government released ₦365 million for immunization programmes, marking a positive step toward strengthening routine immunization financing. This progress, AHBN notes, was largely driven by sustained advocacy and engagement by the Community of Practice.

The impact of this advocacy was publicly acknowledged by the Executive Secretary of the Sokoto State Primary Health Care Development Agency, Dr. Bilyaminu Balarabe Yari Sifawa, during the ZDLH End-of-Year Media Parley. His recognition underscores the growing influence of civil society and citizen-led accountability in shaping public health priorities.

Yet, the scorecard also points to areas requiring urgent attention. Data transparency and accessibility remain weak,

limiting shared understanding and evidence-based decision-making.

AHBN and the CoP have therefore called on the Sokoto State Ministry of Budget and Planning to leverage existing platforms, including government websites, to publish timely and comprehensive quarterly budget performance reports. Such openness, they argue, will strengthen trust, coordination, and results.

### Kano: Investment Meets Impact

Kano State presents perhaps the most encouraging narrative in the 2025 scorecard. The state recorded a historic milestone with a total ₦1.4 billion allocated to immunization services—nearly triple the ₦528 million allocated in 2024.

This substantial increase signals a growing prioritization of immunization within Kano's health agenda.

More importantly, the increased funding appears to

be delivering results. Penta 1 and Penta 3 vaccination coverage rates in the state both exceeded 65 percent, a marked improvement compared to previous years.

For AHBN, Kano demonstrates what is possible when political commitment, adequate financing, and effective implementation align.

To sustain this momentum and further reduce the number of zero-dose children,

AHBN and the CoP have urged the Kano State Primary Health Care Management Board to prioritize timely and adequate disbursement of the Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCDF) to primary healthcare facilities. Frontline facilities, they stress, are where budgets ultimately become vaccines in children's arms.

### Looking Beyond 2025

Across Bauchi, Sokoto, and Kano, the 2025 Immunization Budget Accountability Scorecard reinforces a central message: accountability is not an event, but a process. As the ZDLH initiative ends, AHBN and its partners remain committed to sustaining citizen-led monitoring and advocacy into 2026 and beyond.

The stakes are high. Immunization is one of the most cost-effective public health interventions, yet its success depends on more than allocations on paper.

It requires transparency, timely releases, strong systems, and active communities. As northern Nigeria continues its fight against preventable childhood diseases, the scorecard serves as both a mirror and a roadmap showing where progress has been made, and where urgent action is still needed.



## CHAMPS Emphasises Hand Hygiene as Lifesaving Tool for Paediatric Care in Bauchi

By Mijinyawa Ahmed



Dr. Sani Giade, a facilitator and lecturer at the College of Medical Sciences, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Bauchi, has charged paediatric healthcare workers to prioritise proper hand hygiene, describing it as one of the most effective and life-saving practices in healthcare delivery, particularly in high-risk clinical settings.

Dr. Giade made the call on Tuesday in Bauchi during a capacity-building programme organised by the Child Health and Mortality Prevention Surveillance (CHAMPS) Programme at the College of Medical Sciences, ATBU.

The training focuses on the foundations of Infection Prevention and Control (IPC), with special emphasis on hand hygiene as a critical tool for preventing infections in health facilities.

Speaking during the session, Dr. Giade noted that poor hand hygiene among healthcare workers remains a major contributor to healthcare-associated infections. He explained that such infections often result in prolonged hospital stays, increased medical expenses, and preventable deaths, especially among vulnerable patients.

According to him, simple measures such as correct handwashing techniques and the appropriate use of alcohol-based hand rubs can significantly reduce the transmission of infections

within hospitals.

He stressed that the importance of hand hygiene is even greater in units that care for newborns, children, and pregnant women.

"In places like the Special Care Baby Unit and the Emergency Paediatric and Early Pregnancy Units, hand hygiene is not optional; it is a critical safety measure that directly determines survival outcomes," Dr. Giade said.

Participants at the training included healthcare workers from the Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU) and the Emergency Paediatric Unit/Early Pregnancy Unit (EPU) of the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Teaching Hospital (ATBUTH), as well as staff of the Specialist Hospital, Bauchi.

Dr. Giade explained that the programme combines theoretical sessions with practical demonstrations to ensure participants understand when and how to perform hand hygiene in line with global best practices.

He urged them to apply the knowledge consistently in their daily routines, noting that sustained behavioural change among healthcare workers would significantly improve patient safety.

The CHAMPS Programme stated that the training forms part of its broader commitment to strengthening infection prevention practices and reducing preventable child and maternal deaths in Bauchi State.



## Expert decries animal abuse, calls for enforcement of welfare laws

By Mijinyawa Ahmed

A veterinary expert and animal welfare advocate, Dr. Shehu Zailani, has raised serious concerns over the widespread mistreatment of animals particularly during transportation.

Dr. Zailani, who is the Vice President of the Animal Welfare Society of Nigeria (AWSN), made the call in an interview with the Journalists on Tuesday in Bauchi.

He calls for stronger public awareness and strict enforcement of existing animal welfare laws in Nigeria.

The veterinarian lamented that animals are frequently subjected to cruelty and neglect, despite laws designed to protect them.

He explained that AWSN is an inclusive organisation open to everyone, not only veterinarians or animal handlers, noting that the society's core mission is to educate the public on animal rights.

According to him, animals are living beings with the capacity to feel pain and stress and therefore deserve humane treatment similar to humans.

Dr. Zailani highlighted animal transportation as a major challenge, many animals are overcrowded in vehicles and transported under



harsh conditions, especially when being conveyed to markets.

He warned that such practices expose animals to extreme stress and injuries, with some dying before reaching their destinations due to poor handling and lack of veterinary supervision.

The Expert disclosed that AWSN has been engaging transport unions such as the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), as well as security agencies including the Nigeria Police Force and the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC).

"These engagements are aimed at educating officials on animal welfare laws and empowering them to stop and sanction vehicles involved in animal abuse.

Dr. Zailani also linked improper animal

transportation to road accidents, explaining that overcrowding animals in unsuitable vehicles increases safety risks on highways.

He noted that while some animal owners understand proper handling, many lack access to suitable transport, placing greater responsibility on transporters.

He added that AWSN is working with Fulani associations, including Miyetti Allah, to sensitise livestock owners on humane animal care.

Dr. Zailani urged the public to recognise animal welfare as both a moral and religious obligation, stressing that improving animal welfare enhances public safety, reduces suffering, and promotes ethical standards in society.

## Army Urges Nigerians To Support Security Agencies in Fight Against Criminals

By Usman Shehu Gungura, Bauchi

The commander, 12 Brigade, Nigerian Army, Brig.-Gen. Kasim Sidi, has called on Nigerians to support security agencies in their determination to defeat criminal elements and terrorists.

Sidi who assured of sustained military commitment to peace and security in Kogi state, made the call on Saturday, at the Nigerian Army West African Social Activities (WASA) 2025 in Chari Maigumeri Barracks, Lokoja.

He noted that cooperation from the citizens remains vital to tackling insecurity effectively.

The commander described WASA as "a unifying platform" that brings officers, soldiers, families, and friends together to celebrate identity, culture, and shared achievements.

He said the event showcased the Nigerian Army's diversity and unity

across ethnic and religious lines.

Gen. Sidi praised officers and soldiers for their dedication and professionalism, highlighting successful operations against bandits and kidnappers in Kogi during 2025.

He thanked Governor Ahmed Ododo and the Chief of Army Staff, Lt.-Gen. Wadii Shaibu, for their leadership and support for army welfare.

Governor Ahmed Usman Ododo while speaking at the event, commended the army for sustaining the WASA tradition, describing it as "a vital platform for unity and camaraderie".

Represented by state security adviser, Jerry Omodara, the governor reaffirmed support for the Nigerian Army and other security agencies.

Ododo praised the 12 Brigade for maintaining peace in Kogi and urged personnel to remain focused and

resilient in their constitutional duties.

He noted that the brigade recorded "significant success" through recent clearance operations across the state.

He assured that the Kogi government would continue supporting security agencies to ensure the safety of residents.

The governor also rewarded the wives of fallen heroes, donating N9 million to nine beneficiaries from the brigade.

WASA 2025 featured colourful cultural displays, entertainment and souvenir presentations to dignitaries.

Ethnic groups, including Hausa, Igbo, Igala, Ebira, Nupe, Fulani, Okun, Langtang and Zuru, participated in the celebrations.

Awards were presented to outstanding soldiers who distinguished themselves in various fields during 2025.

The event also featured a tug-of-war competition, with the barracks women emerging as the overall winners.

## Northeast News

### Bauchi Govt. House Staff Appreciate Emir of Gamawa for Appointing State Director of Protocol As District Head

By Usman Shehu Gungura, Bauchi

Staff of the Government House, Bauchi have paid a thank-you visit to the Emir of Gamawa, Alhaji Adamu Abdulkadir Adamu, for appointing the state Director of Protocol, Alhaji Aliyu Abdulkadir Adamu as the new District Head of Gamawa.

The delegation, led by the Permanent Secretary, Government House Bauchi Alh. Yakubu Jibrin and the Chief Protocol Officer Alhaji Umar Hassan visited the Emir's Palace to express appreciation for what they described as a great honour bestowed on the Director of Protocol who has maintained a harmonious working relationship with colleagues across various departments.

Speaking on behalf of the delegation, Alhaji Umar



Hassan described the appointment of Alhaji Aliyu Abdulkadir Adamu as timely and well deserved, citing his high level of commitment to duty, professionalism and respect for all.

The delegation includes staff of various Directorates and units of the government house such as Press affairs, Security, Protocol Admin and Account, Works and Transport among others.

Responding, the Emir of Gamawa, Alhaji Adamu

Abdulkadir Adamu thanked the delegation for the visit and expressed confidence in the ability of the appointee to live up to expectations and justify the confidence reposed in him.

While wishing them Allah's protection back to Bauchi, the Emir commended Bauchi State Governor Senator Bala Mohammed for turning around Bauchi State to the dreams of the founding fathers of the state and reemphasized his total loyalty to government of Bauchi State.

### Expert urges parents, mentors to rebuild values among young people

By Mijinyawa Ahmed

Dr Ahmad Umar, A Gender-Based Violence and HIV Management specialist in Bauchi has called for renewed emphasis on mentorship and parental guidance as critical tools for instilling discipline, moral values, and responsible behaviour among young people.

Umar made the call in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Bauchi.

He expressed concern over what he described as the gradual erosion of values among youths, fueled by weak family structures, poor role modelling, and negative social influences.

The noted that while government policies and institutional frameworks are important, the family and community remain the first line of influence in shaping the character and mindset of young people.

He stressed that parents,

guardians, teachers, and community leaders must deliberately invest time in guiding youths, helping them navigate social pressures and make informed decisions.

Dr Umar, who has worked extensively on issues related to gender-based violence and HIV prevention, noted that lack of mentorship often exposes young people to risky behaviours, making them vulnerable to violence, substance abuse, and health-related challenges.

He added that proactive guidance could significantly reduce these risks and promote healthier lifestyles.

Umar recalled the role of youth movements in Nigeria's pre-independence struggle, particularly the contributions of young intellectuals and activists such as Sa'adu Zungur in Bauchi.

He explained that youths of that era were guided by strong values, discipline, and a clear sense of purpose, which enabled them to contribute

meaningfully to national development.

The expert urged today's youths to learn from past generations by responding thoughtfully to challenges rather than reacting hastily out of anger or frustration.

According to him, constructive engagement, critical thinking, and patience are essential for personal growth and societal progress.

Umar further called on stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organisations, and religious institutions,

"To collaborate in creating structured mentorship programmes that will empower youths with life skills, leadership qualities, and a strong ethical foundation," he said

He expressed optimism that with sustained mentorship and active parental involvement, Nigerian youths could be repositioned as agents of positive change and development.

### Foundation urges immediate care for emergency patients

A US-based foundation, Quantus Medical Foundation (QMF) has urged hospital management across the country, to always accept emergency cases in a bid to save lives.

Founder of QMF, Dr Nnenna Ihekoramdu, made the call during the flag off of "WeCare Nigeria Initiative" at the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH) Ituku-Ozalla Enugu on Monday.

She noted that some patients who were rushed to hospital in emergency situations, were often refused for various reasons ranging from lack of beds, non-availability of medical doctors and understaff of medical personnel.

"We are saying that hospital management should put a ban on patient rejection in emergency situations, whether it's during labor or any type of emergency because Nigeria law

does not allow that.

The founder added that through the initiative, it would empower UNTH, by providing satellites, train its porters by giving them uniforms, walkie-talkies, as well as increase bed spaces for patients in the accident and emergency units.

She explained that the engagement with management and staff of UNTH, focused on strengthening compassionate care, emergency preparedness, and patient safety.

Also speaking, the Programme Director of WeCare, Chibueze Obinwa, said that the ambassadors were created to drive the change process in the hospital, especially in the accident and emergency units.

"He noted that the hospital does not waste time to treat patients in emergency, adding that the hospital undertake 24-hours operations, to serve patients. (NAN)

### ATBU Tops Nigeria in Innovation, Ranks 3rd in Research in 2025 Scimago Index

By Mijinyawa Ahmed

Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Bauchi, has emerged as Nigeria's leading institution in innovation following the release of the 2025 Scimago Institutions Rankings, further cementing its growing reputation as a hub for research excellence and technological advancement.

According to the rankings, ATBU placed 1st in Innovation, 3rd in Research, and 6th overall nationwide, a development widely described as a landmark achievement for technology-based universities in Nigeria.

The performance positions ATBU firmly on the national innovation map and highlights the increasing role of technology-driven institutions in addressing societal and developmental challenges.

Reacting to the ranking, stakeholders noted that the achievement goes beyond numerical placement, serving as strong evidence that universities focused on science and technology are at the forefront of national transformation.

In recent years, technology-based universities have often faced misconceptions regarding their academic depth and research influence, but ATBU's latest performance has decisively dispelled such doubts.

The university's top ranking in innovation reflects

#### NAHCON records key milestones ahead of 2026 Hajj

Prof. Abdullahi Usman, the Chairman/CEO of the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON), has concluded his second pre-Hajj visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

According to a statement by Ahmad Muazu, Technical Assistant (Media), Office of the NAHCON Chairman, this marks a major step in preparations for the 2026 Hajj.

Muazu said that the visit, which took place from Jan. 4 to Jan. 19, focused on consolidating operational arrangements.

He said that it also focused on strengthening coordination with Saudi authorities, and aligning Nigerian service providers and stakeholders with the timelines and standards of the Saudi authorities ahead of the 2026 Hajj.

"During the visit, the NAHCON delegation held high-level engagements with the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, and the General Authority of Civil Aviation GACA.

"These engagements resulted in progress on airlift coordination, accommodation and feeding arrangements, Mashā'ir services, medical preparedness, and media coordination frameworks," Muazu said.

He listed key achievements of the visit to include the signing and initiation of service agreements, uploads of contracts and flight schedule on the Nusuk Masar platform.

He said that there were also inspection and identification of clinics and medical facilities in Makkah and Madinah, confirmation of unified medical screening requirements, alignment on digital health and operational platforms, and diplomatic engagement.

"This includes finalisation of contracts, pilgrims data uploads, medical screening, and continued engagement with relevant authorities to ensure smooth and well-coordinated Hajj exercise," he said. (NAN)

a strong institutional culture that promotes problem-solving, experimentation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and applied research.

Observers say this ecosystem has enabled ATBU to translate research ideas into practical solutions with real-world relevance, particularly in engineering, applied sciences, and technology-driven disciplines.

The Scimago Institutions Rankings are based on globally recognised indicators that assess research performance, innovation output, and societal impact. ATBU's strong showing across these three pillars underscores its capacity to generate impactful knowledge while contributing meaningfully to industrial growth and economic development.

Commenting on the development, Dr. Abubakar Abdullah Usman described the results as a clear affirmation of the importance of technology-focused education, stressing that such institutions are critical to equipping graduates with future-ready skills.

Stakeholders further emphasized that the rankings silence critics who question the relevance of technology-based universities, noting that ATBU's success demonstrates that tech universities are not optional to national growth but essential drivers of sustainable change.

## 8 Muslim countries, including Saudi Arabia, announce joint decision to join Trump's Board of Peace



Reports said that eight prominent Muslim-majority nations have formally agreed to participate in US President Donald Trump's recently created Board of Peace, representing a carefully coordinated diplomatic move that had been under discussion for several weeks.

The countries—Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Indonesia, Pakistan, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates—will each appoint a delegate to the body, as outlined in a collective statement issued by their foreign ministers. The lineup combines key regional powers with nations that hold significant sway throughout the wider Muslim world.

Certain participants came as no surprise: Egypt, Pakistan, and the UAE had previously signaled their willingness to join. Others had been more deliberate in their approach. Saudi Arabia's decision drew particular attention, given that President Trump had publicly urged

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to commit, while Riyadh had maintained a deliberate silence until this point.

The Board of Peace was formally established through a United Nations Security Council resolution and is charged with supervising postwar administration and reconstruction efforts in Gaza until the close of 2027. Nevertheless, American officials have openly expressed intentions to leverage the mechanism for broader conflict resolution across the region beyond the Gaza context.

Operationally, the full board is not anticipated to convene frequently—only a handful of meetings are scheduled annually. Routine oversight and decision-making for Gaza matters are expected to be handled primarily by a more compact Gaza Executive Board, introduced last Friday, which includes delegates from Turkey, Qatar, the UAE, and the United States.

## South Africa to step aside during US G20 presidency

South Africa's Finance Minister, Enoch Godongwana, has confirmed that the country will step back from its G20 engagements during the United States presidency of the grouping.

Speaking at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos recently, he described the decision as a "temporary setback".

US President Donald Trump said in November that South Africa—which in 2025 became the first African country to chair the forum—would not be invited to US-hosted events.

His announcement came after months of escalated tensions between the two

nations with Trump falsely claiming there was a white genocide in South Africa.

"This is not because the Americans can chase us out of the G20, but they hold an important instrument: the accreditation," Godongwana said.

"If you don't have the accreditation, you can't get into the venue, even if you are around. So they will not accredit us."

He said he believed Africa's voice would still be heard at the G20 through the African Union and that he did not think that Britain, the 2027 president, would exclude South Africa.

The country will host the WEF's special Africa summit in April next year.

## You talk too much, you will have your response on the battlefield – IRGC Commander to Trump

\* Your \$Trillion investment under watch of our missiles - Iran to US

A senior commander of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has issued a forceful response to recent statements by US President Donald Trump, saying Tehran's military stance will not be limited to words and that any hostile moves will be met strongly on the ground.

According to a report by Iranian News Agency (IRNA), the comments from the IRGC come amid rising tensions between Iran and the United States, with both sides exchanging stern warnings and cautioning against miscalculations. According to Iranian state media, the commander highlighted that Tehran's armed forces are prepared and vigilant, with "their finger on the trigger" and ready to respond to orders from the country's leadership if provoked.

General Mohammad Pakpour, head of the IRGC's ground forces, emphasised that Iran is more prepared than ever to defend itself and that any U.S. or allied military action would be met with serious retaliation. His remarks were framed as advice to global powers to avoid actions that could escalate into a broader conflict.

The backdrop to these warnings includes renewed US pressure and Trump's comments about possible responses if Iran continues activities that the White House regards as threatening to regional stability. Reports indicate that Trump left open the option of further military action while also signalling a continued interest in negotiations.

Iranian officials have repeatedly rejected the idea that external threats will sway their strategic priorities. By stating that military forces are ready to act decisively, Tehran underlined its long-standing

### Israeli fire kills two people in Gaza, as US pressures both sides to advance Gaza deal

Israeli fire killed two Palestinians in the Tuffah neighbourhood in the northern Gaza Strip, and an Israeli drone wounded four others in a separate incident in Gaza City, local health authorities said.

Medical workers said an Israeli drone exploded on the rooftop of a multi-floor building in Gaza City, wounding four civilians in the street nearby.

Gaza has been reduced to rubble in the war that was triggered by an attack by



message that deterrence is central to its defence policy.

The IRGC commander's warning follows a series of diplomatic and military exchanges that have heightened apprehensions in the Middle East. Tehran's armed forces have been increasing their readiness levels and emphasising unity in the face of what Iranian officials describe as foreign interference.

In another development, Iran has issued a fresh warning to the United States following President Donald Trump's decision to deploy a major US naval force toward the country, as tensions continue to escalate in the wake of a deadly crackdown on protests ordered by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The warning was delivered by senior Iranian cleric Mohammad Javad Haj Ali Akbari, who said Tehran could target US-linked investments across the Middle East if Washington launched an attack. He claimed that American interests worth over \$1 trillion in the region were within reach of Iranian missiles.

Trump, responding to reports of executions of protesters in Iran, renewed his threats against Tehran and confirmed that a large naval force—including the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and several guided-missile destroyers—was heading to the region. While stressing that he hoped force would not be used, the US president said

Palestinian militant group Hamas on southern Israel on October 7, 2023, that killed 1,200 people, according to Israeli tallies.

The Gaza health ministry says more than 71,000 people, mostly civilians, have been killed by Israeli fire since then. It says that at least 480 people were killed by Israeli fire since the ceasefire agreement came into effect last October.

Earlier this month, Washington announced that the plan had now moved into

the second phase, under which Israel is expected to withdraw troops further from Gaza, and Hamas is due to yield control of the territory's administration.

Advertisement · Scroll to continue

Meanwhile, in Khan Younis, over a hundred people attended the funeral of a person who was killed by Israeli drone fire on Saturday, after holding special prayers in front of his white-shrouded body at the morgue in Nasser Hospital.

# News

## A Sacrifice That Saved Hundreds: The Story of Yakubu Muhammad Fannami

By Alkali Muhammad Musa, Maiduguri

**O**n January 26, 2017, a quiet corner of Borno State witnessed one of the most selfless acts in Nigeria's recent history. It was not carried out by a soldier or security operative, but by a schoolboy, an SS1 student whose courage stood between terror and an innocent crowd. His name was Yakubu Muhammad Fannami.

According to accounts preserved in community memory, Yakubu noticed something unusual. As people went about their normal activities; neighbours, traders, passers-by, he observed a man whose behaviour raised alarm. In a region long affected by insurgency, such instincts were born from painful experience. Yakubu quickly understood the danger.

With no time to alert authorities or warn the crowd, Yakubu made a split-second decision that would define his life and legacy. He rushed toward the suspected suicide attacker and held onto him, placing his own body between the threat and the unsuspecting people nearby. Moments later, the explosion occurred.

Yakubu lost his life alongside the attacker. But his action prevented the blast from reaching its intended target. Hundreds of lives were spared. Families were saved from grief. A community was protected from what could have been a devastating tragedy.

Yakubu was not armed with anything except courage and a strong sense of responsibility. He did not act for recognition or reward. He acted because, in that moment, he chose others over himself.

Those who knew him describe Yakubu as an ordinary student with ordinary dreams focused on school and hopeful about the future. That ordinariness makes his sacrifice even more powerful. He did not wake up that day expecting to be remembered as a hero. He simply refused to look away when it mattered most.

Nine years later, his story remains a powerful reminder of resilience and moral courage in Borno State. It challenges society to do more than remember in passing. Yakubu Muhammad Fannami deserves lasting honour through education, remembrance, and deliberate efforts to keep his story alive for future generations.

His sacrifice did not end violence, but it stopped it in that moment. It saved lives. It changed destinies.

May his soul continue to rest in peace. And may his courage never be forgotten.

## Bauchi Commissioner Meets PDP Stakeholders, Dismisses Terrorism Allegations Against Bala Mohammed

By Usman Shehu Gungura, Bauchi

**T**he Bauchi State Commissioner for Higher Education and Regional Integration, Hon. Hajiya Hadiza Abdulkadir Kango, has met with leaders of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) from Dan'kade Ward, Bauchi Local Government Area, under the leadership of Mal. Dan Bala Ustaz and Hon. Mamman Zodo.

In her opening remarks, Hon. Kango expressed deep appreciation for the leadership style, discipline, humility, and support demonstrated by the party leaders.

She commended them for their loyalty and commitment to the party and the state government, while also seeking their advice and guidance as key stakeholders.

She called for sustained unity and cooperation in order to strengthen the party and advance development.

The Commissioner reaffirmed her total support for the Executive Governor of

Bauchi State, Senator Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed, and urged party members to remain united in their support for his administration.

Hon. Kango in strong terms challenged allegations linking Governor Bala Mohammed to terrorism, stating clearly that the Governor is a peace-loving leader and not a terrorist.

Similarly, the PDP Ward Chairman of Dan'kade, Malam Dan Bala Ustaz, prayed for the Commissioner's success and asked God to grant her the wisdom and strength to effectively discharge the responsibilities entrusted to her, while also wishing her success within the present administration.

The meeting was attended by all PDP ward executives of Dan'kade, the Deputy Chairman of the PDP in Bauchi Local Government Area, Hon. Mamman Zodo the Dan'kade Councillor, Hon. Khalid Muhammad, and other key party stakeholders.

## Alkaleri LG Chairman reiterates commitment to issues of Security, Health Care, Education Sectors, Appreciate Gov. Mohammed

By Usman Shehu Gungura

**T**he Executive Chairman of Alkaleri Local Government Council, Hon. Garba Hassan Bajama, has reiterated his administration's strong commitment to security, healthcare, education and grassroots development as key pillars for sustainable peace and progress.

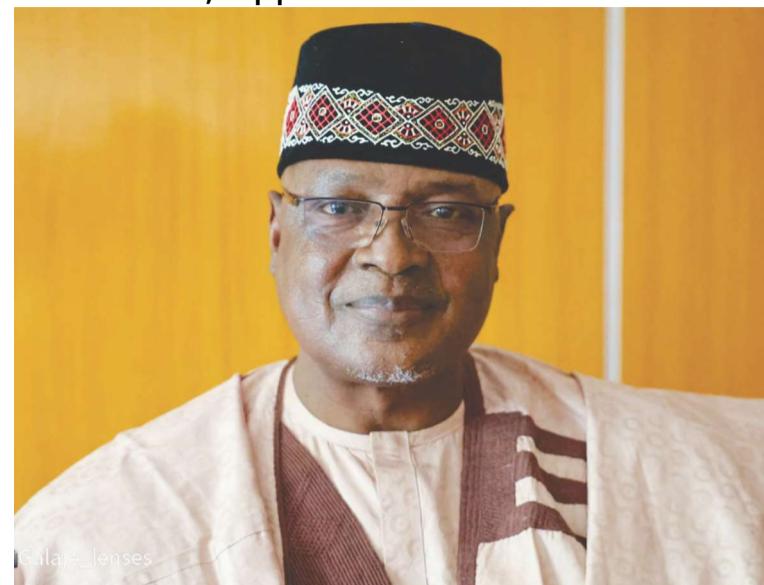
Hon. Bajama made this known during an extensive interaction with journalists, where he stressed that no society can experience meaningful development without enduring peace and security.

He called on the people of Alkaleri to continue supporting government efforts, noting that collective responsibility remains essential to achieving shared goals.

According to him, "We must move together to succeed together."

Speaking on security interventions, the chairman disclosed that the local government had provided four operational vehicles in the Duguri axis, in addition to motorcycles, to enhance surveillance and support security operatives in protecting lives and property across the area.

In the education sector, Hon. Bajama revealed that solar-powered electricity has



been installed at the model secondary school constructed by Bauchi State Governor, Senator Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed, in Yelwan Duguri, aimed at improving teaching, learning and overall academic performance.

The Alkaleri council boss also used the opportunity to dismiss allegations and misinformation linking Governor Bala Mohammed to terrorism-related activities, describing such claims as false, baseless and malicious.

He maintained that the governor is widely known for his firm stance against terrorism and his decisive role in restoring peace and security across Bauchi State.

Hon. Bajama further noted that the governor's commitment to grassroots

governance informed the recent creation of 14 new traditional emirates and the appointment of 142 district heads, a move aimed at bringing leadership closer to the people and accelerating development at the community level.

The Chairman expressed his appreciation to Governor Bala Mohammed for the establishment of the Duguri Emirate and the appointment of new district heads, while also offering prayers for the continued success of the governor, the Bauchi Emirate Council, and the Emir of Bauchi, Alhaji Dr. Rilwanu Sulaiman Adamu. He prayed for lasting peace, economic prosperity and stability in Bauchi State and Nigeria at large.

## The Borno State Government to Repatriate over 3,000 Refugees from Cameroon after 11 Years

**B**orno State Government has finalised arrangements for the voluntary repatriation of more than 3,000 Nigerian refugees from Cameroon republic to their ancestral homes after 11 years.

This is in fulfillment of Borno State Governor, Professor Babagana Umara Zulum's commitment to repatriate and resettle all Nigerian refugees from Borno who are sheltering in neighboring Chad, Cameroon and Niger republics.

The operation is being conducted with the support of the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons.

Chairman Borno State Sub - Committee on Repatriation and member of the Presidential Committee on Repatriation, Engineer Lawan Abba Wakilbe, on Monday met with a Government delegation from Cameroon's Far North Region and officials of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) at the Minawao Refugee Camp in Maroua.

The purpose of the meeting was to finalise logistical and other arrangements to ensure the refugees' safe and dignified return.

During a visit to the camp in December 2025, Governor Zulum assured refugees willing to return that they would do so in a safe and dignified manner, marking a new chapter for families displaced by insurgency over 11 years ago.

The refugees, predominantly from communities in central and southern Borno, fled to Cameroon more than 11 years ago during the peak of the insurgency, which devastated villages, displaced families, and disrupted socio-economic life across the North-East.

During their stay, Cameroonian authorities and humanitarian partners provided shelter, healthcare, education, and other essential services. Many refugees were also allocated farmland to support agricultural activities, reducing aid dependency and

allowing them to sustain their families with dignity.

With improved security in several parts of Borno and ongoing state-led reconstruction efforts, many refugees have expressed their readiness to return home voluntarily.

"This is the fourth phase, which began in 2020. The process is going on smoothly in accordance with the tripartite and technical working group agreements," Engr. Wakilbe stated.

In a related development, Engineer Wakilbe led a high-level delegation to the office of the Governor of Cameroon's Far North Region, Midjiyawa Bakari.

During their meeting, Governor Bakari commended the Borno State Government for sustaining the longstanding and cordial bilateral relationship, noting that cooperation between the two countries has been instrumental in ensuring the protection, welfare, and orderly return of displaced persons across the border.

# NPFL Boss Elegbeleye Advocate N1M Minimum Monthly Salary for Players

In his ambitious vision for the future of the domestic top flight, the Chairman of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) Hon. Gbenga Elegbeleye, has strongly proposed a ₦1 million minimum monthly salary for players as part of broader reforms aimed at professionalising the league.

Elegbeleye said his long-term goal is to transform the NPFL into a more competitive, credible, and commercially viable league capable of retaining top local talents, attracting private investors, and standing among Africa's elite domestic competitions.

The NPFL chairman, informed that key areas of focus include improving the standard of refereeing, enforcing stricter discipline, increasing live television broadcasts, and aligning the league calendar with international football schedules. Believing that these measures will enhance the league's image, boost fan confidence, and make it more appealing to sponsors and commercial partners.

Central to his reform agenda is the proposal for a ₦1 million minimum salary for NPFL players. Elegbeleye argues that professional footballers in Nigeria deserve wages that reflect their status and contribution to the game.

He noted that improved remuneration would significantly enhance players' welfare and quality of life, while also reducing the growing trend of Nigerian footballers leaving the country.



**Chairman NPFL, Hon. Gbenga Elegbeleye**

for lower-tier foreign leagues in search of better financial rewards.

"Better pay will not only improve player welfare but also strengthen the credibility, competitiveness, and marketability of the NPFL," the NPFL Boss stated that improved salaries would help clubs retain talent and raise the overall standard of the league.

He however, acknowledged that several challenges must be addressed before these ambitions can be fully realised. Chief among them is the financial limitation faced by many clubs, most of which are state government-owned and struggle with inadequate funding.

He also highlighted the need for increased private investment and stronger commercial partnerships to

support salary reforms and sustain professional league operations. Elegbeleye stressed the importance of expanding the league's media and broadcast reach to drive revenue growth through sponsorships and fan engagement.

While discussions on implementing the ₦1 million minimum wage are ongoing, Elegbeleye confirmed that wage reviews will continue in consultation with clubs and stakeholders, with a phased approach expected after key seasons.

Despite the challenges, the NPFL chairman remains optimistic that sustained reforms, improved governance, and enhanced commercial opportunities will position the league for long-term growth and stability.

## NSC appoints Oluwatoyin Aluko as President of Nigeria Netball Federation, NNF

The National Sports Commission, NSC, has taken a huge step to structure the Sport of Netball in Nigeria by appointing a Seasoned Sports administrator, Dr Oluwatoyin Aluko as the President of the Nigeria Netball Federation, NNF.

In a signed Press statement made available to sports journalists by Dr. Mrs Kehinde Ajayi ANPR, Director Information and Public Relations of NSC recently, The Director General of the Commission, Honourable Bukola Olopade, said it's time Nigeria established a sustainable structure for the growth of

Netball in Nigeria.

Noting that Netball is one of the World's fastest growing sports and Nigeria has many top professional athletes in the diaspora who are doing the sport at the highest level.

"As part of Mr President's mandate to build a sustainable Sports economy, is creating a well organised system where Nigerians either home or abroad can be proud to represent the country in their specialised sports".

"And currently based on our research, over thirty Nigerians are gainfully playing the Sport of Netball in some of the top Netball leagues in Europe and in South Africa".

"It means we can have a very formidable Netball team which can add to our podium strength, if we have a well organised Federation for the Sport. Dr Aluko is a former Netball player who knows everything about the Sport. This is a big step that we have taken and in days ahead we will announce the entire board members", he added.

The newly appointed President, Dr Oluwatoyin Aluko is a former Netball player who is currently the President of the Association of Former Female Athletes of Nigeria, AFFAN.

She is an accomplished national athlete, coach and sport administrator with over 45 years of experience.

## THE TRUMPSPORTS

With  
**Usman Abbas Shehu**



## Nigeria's Oyedeleji Become first African Secretary General of World Olympians Association

In a keenly contested election of the World Olympians Association held recently, Nigeria's Olumide Oyedeleji has been elected Secretary General of the Association after scoring 55 votes out of the 106 valid votes cast.

Olumideji secured 51.89 per cent of the votes to defeat Salvador Salguero of El Salvador and Liston Bochette of Puerto Rico to emerge as the first ever African to attain that position.

The Nigeria's elected Secretary General takes over from Anthony Ledgard (OLY) of Peru.

Oyedeleji, who is the current President of the Nigeria Olympians Association (NOA) and Third Vice President of the Nigeria Olympic Committee (NOC), will serve on the board for the next four years alongside President Pernilla Wiberg of Sweden and Treasurer Wei-Tsu Thomas of Chinese Taipei.

The current Chairman of the Nigeria Athletes Commission expressed gratitude to the former Executive Committee, led by Joel Bouzou (OLY), noting that their contributions to Olympians worldwide will remain part of the association's history. He promised that integrity would guide every decision,

transparency would define their actions and inclusive leadership would be the standard.

Stressing that every continent, every National Olympians Association and every Olympian matter, would be listen to, engage and act collectively.

Oyedeleji also announced that, under his leadership, the secretariat will work closely and constructively with the International Olympic Committee as a key partner in the Olympic Movement through open dialogue, mutual respect and shared purpose. Adding that the association will unite the Olympians family, empower National Olympians Associations, amplify Olympians' voices and translate Olympic values into measurable impact.

Other board members include Rosa Rakotozafy of Madagascar (Africa – Woman), Andrew Owusu of Ghana (Africa – Man), Claire Carver-Dias of Canada (Americas – Woman), Willie Banks of the United States (Americas – Man), Gilian Akiko Guevara of the Philippines (Asia – Woman), Deepak Bista of Nepal (Asia – Man), Stavroula Kozompoli of Greece (Europe – Woman), Igor Boraska of Croatia (Europe – Man), Julia Bell of Australia (Oceania – Woman) and Carl Probert of Fiji (Oceania – Man).



**You are our sole candidate in 2027  
governorships election  
– Ganduje to Gov. Kabir Abba**

Immediate past National Chairman, All Progressive Party (APC), Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, announced that the Kano State Governor, Abba Yusuf Kabir has been granted an automatic ticket for the 2027 governorship election in the state.

Dr Abdullahi Ganduje made the remarks after Governor Yusuf announced his defecting to the APC, on Monday at an event held at the Coronation Hall of the Kano State Government House, citing the need to foster unity, stability and fast-track development across the state.

Ganduje, who announced the automatic ticket during the governor's formal defection from the New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP) to the APC, declared that the candidate who contested for the governorship seat in 2023 and his running mate, as well as others who showed interest for the governorship seat, have resolved to step down and support the governor ahead of the 2027 elections.

The former Governor also declared that with the defection of Governor Yusuf into the party, he automatically assumes the position of the party leader in the state.

Ganduje gave strong assurances of victory in the 2027 governorship election, declaring that the party would fully back Yusuf for a second term.

He noted that Yusuf's return marked a homecoming, recalling that the governor was part of the APC at its formative stage before leaving due to political differences and realignments.

The former Kano governor described Yusuf as a progressive politician whose leadership style and disposition align with the ideology of the APC.

Governor Yusuf said his defection was driven by the need to foster unity, stability and fast-track development across the state.

The governor had resigned from the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) on Friday, blaming deepening internal crises and prolonged leadership disputes within the party for his exit.

According to him, his foremost priority remains the delivery of good governance and the dividends of democracy to Kano residents.

Yusuf's defection comes alongside a mass movement of elected officials. Twenty-two members of the Kano State House of Assembly defected from the New Nigeria Peoples Party to the All Progressives Congress.

The lawmakers announced their defection during a plenary session on Monday, shortly after Governor Yusuf formally resigned from the NNPP.

Among the defectors are the Speaker of the House, Jibril Falgore (Rogo), and the Deputy Speaker, Muhammad Bello Butu Butu (Tofa/Rimin Gado).

Also leaving the NNPP are the Majority Leader, Lawan Hussain (Dala); the Deputy Majority Leader, Garba Shehu Fammar (Kibiya); and the Chief Whip, Muddasir Ibrahim Zawachiki (Kumbotso).

Other lawmakers who joined the APC include Zakariyya Abdullahi Nuhu (Gabasawa), Lawal Tini (Ajingi), Musa Tahir Haruna (Albasu), Ali Lawan Alhassan (Bagwai/Shanono), Ali Muhammad Tiga (Bebeji), and Hafiz Gambo (Bunkure).

The list also includes Murtala Muhammad Kadage (Garko), Abdulkmajid Isah Umar (Gwale), Ahmad Ibrahim (Karaye), Alhassan Zakari (Kura/Garun Malam), Suleiman Mukhtar Ishaq (Madobi), Abdulhamid Abdul (Minjibir), Muhammad Ibrahim (Rano), Kabiru Sule Dahiru (Tarauni), and Ali Abdullahi Manager (Wudil).

In addition to the state lawmakers, eight members of the House of Representatives and all 44 local government chairmen in Kano State also defected alongside the governor.

Several prominent APC figures were present at the defection event, including former national chairman of the party, Abdullahi Ganduje; Deputy Senate President, Barau Jibrin; and Kawu Sumaila.

Members of the Kano State Executive Council, party stakeholders and other government officials also attended.

For the APC, the development consolidates its control in one of Nigeria's most politically significant states and strengthens the party ahead of the 2027 elections.

From Front Page

# How ADC is grappling with crises in the North-East

As Nigeria's political terrain gradually reshapes ahead of the 2027 general elections, the African Democratic Congress (ADC) has emerged as a magnet for politicians, civil society actors and reform-minded citizens disillusioned with the country's dominant parties.

Nowhere is this transformation more visible and more turbulent than in the North-East, where the party's rapid growth across six states has been accompanied by leadership crises, reconciliations, violent confrontations and renewed mobilisation.

From Adamawa to Yobe, the ADC's journey reflects both the promise and peril of a fast-growing opposition party struggling to institutionalise internal democracy while expanding its political reach.

## Adamawa: From Bitter Factions to Fragile Unity

Adamawa State has been the epicentre of the ADC's most high-profile leadership crisis in the North-East. Shortly after the party's formation, rival factions emerged over who should serve as state chairman, splitting the party between camps led by Sadiq Dasin and Saidu Komsiri.

The dispute quickly drew national figures into the fray. Former Secretary to the Government of the Federation and ADC National Vice-Chairman, Babachir Lawal, declared the Dasin-led faction as the authentic leadership, dismissing rival claims as "null and void." Heavyweights such as former Governor Jibrilla Bindow, ex-Senator Abdul-Aziz Nyako and former Senator Elisha



Abbo rallied behind that position.

The conflict escalated further when former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar publicly endorsed the Dasin-led leadership, expressing hope that it would unify the party and strengthen its structure in the state.

Yet the Komsiri-led faction rejected the legitimacy of Lawal's intervention, accusing him of acting without the mandate of the party's national organs.

Backed by former Senator Aisha Binani, Komsiri promised reconciliation, constitutionalism and inclusiveness.

After months of tension, Adamawa's ADC chapter reached a negotiated settlement. A new 44-member State Executive Council was sworn in, with Yohannah Shehu emerging as chairman and Komsiri accepting the role of organizing secretary—an outcome

widely seen as a compromise arrangement.

Party leaders described the resolution as a triumph of unity over rancour, though observers note that the durability of the peace will be tested as 2027 approaches.

## Bauchi: Allegations, Suspensions and Counterclaims

In Bauchi State, the ADC's internal troubles have followed a different trajectory. Party Chairman Hassan Haruna alleged that impostors and disgruntled elements were being sponsored to destabilise the party through unconstitutional suspension claims.

Haruna dismissed reports that he had been removed from office, insisting that his emergence followed a duly conducted state congress recognised by the national leadership.

He accused expelled

and suspended members of acting as agents of confusion and urged INEC and security agencies to take note.

However, the counter-narrative came swiftly. One of the accused, Aminu Muhammad, denied being expelled and challenged Haruna's claim to legitimacy, insisting that due process must be followed in removing party officials.

The Bauchi crisis underscores a recurring problem for the ADC in the region: weak internal dispute-resolution mechanisms and growing suspicions of external interference as the party gains popularity.

## Borno: Violence, Police Intervention and Political Anxiety

In Borno State, the ADC's internal disagreements turned violent. The crisis erupted during the inauguration of an interim management committee set up by the party's national secretariat.

The state chairman



The ADC train made a stopover in Jalingo for the unveiling of the Taraba State secretariat of the Coalition Party. There's no stopping the ADC; it is heading your way.