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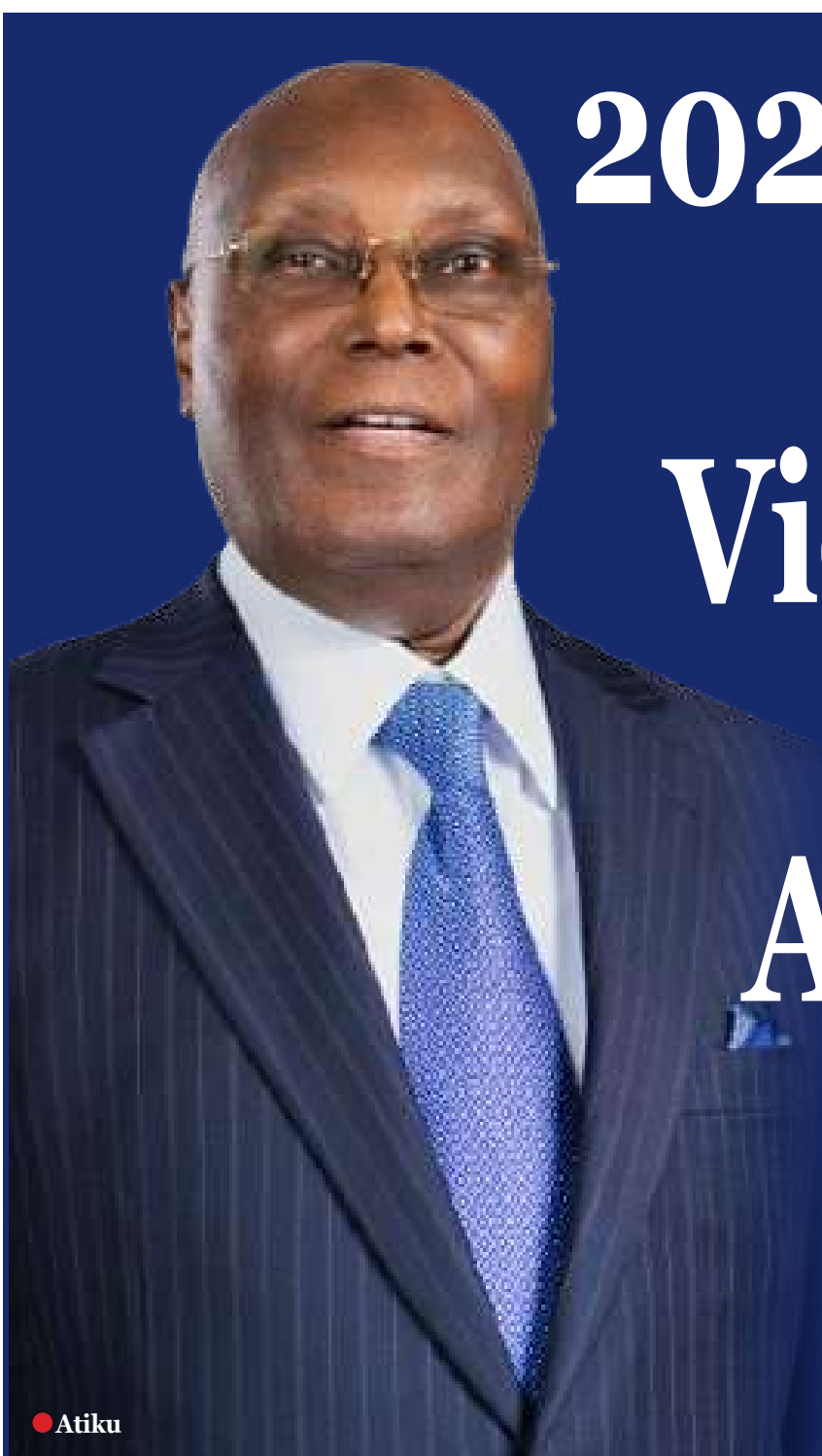
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● Charley Boy

Charley Boy Jabs Atiku Over Obi, Kwankwaso Moves: "Na Ludo You Dey Play, Not Chess"

Maverick entertainer and social commentator, Charles Oputa, popularly known as Charley Boy or Area Father, has taken a swipe at former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, accusing him of playing politics without strategy in the unfolding permutations involving Peter Obi and Rabiu Kwankwaso.

In his signature streetwise tone, Charley Boy mocked what he described as a failed grand plan by Atiku to lure Obi into a political trap through the primaries, alleging that the strategy was to outspend and outmanoeuvre him, only for electoral laws to box him in.

But according to the Area Father, the plot collapsed spectacularly.

"Atiku wan play chess, but na ludo e end up with," he quipped, suggesting that whatever political "jazz" or calculation was at play had already been exposed and neutralised.

He further ridiculed Atiku for overstaying his welcome on the political stage, contrasting him with what he called a "good dancer" who knows when to exit gracefully. In his words, Atiku has instead "glued himself like super glue," refusing to step aside despite shifting political dynamics.

Charley Boy also took aim at what he framed as Atiku's disregard for Nigeria's informal power rotation, saying the former VP appeared unwilling to yield to either northern or southern turns, choosing instead to

remain perpetually in contention.

In a more biting jab, he insinuated that Atiku's moves may have contributed to internal disarray within the PDP, hinting, without evidence, that the former presidential candidate could even be positioning for a return to the APC.

"Plot don cast. Dollar no buy sense," he declared, dismissing any perceived financial advantage in the political chessboard.

Projecting ahead, Charley Boy suggested that after Obi's current influence, Kwankwaso could emerge as a dominant force in the North, framing it as an evolving political order that leaves Atiku increasingly sidelined.

“Leave Jabbi Lake for the People” - Pastor Omakwu Kneels to Beg Wike



Founder of Family Worship Centre, Sarah Omakwu, has drawn national attention following a heartfelt appeal during her Sunday service on 3 May 2026.

In an emotional moment before her congregation, she directed a public plea to the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike, urging him to preserve Jabbi Lake.

Reflecting on her 33-year journey in Abuja, Pastor Omakwu acknowledged

the rapid development and transformation of the city over the decades. However, she expressed concern over the increasing commercialisation of public spaces.

Going on her knees during the service, she made a passionate appeal:

“I know I cannot fight the minister, but I beg you... as a mother, do not sell that land. Let it remain for everyone.”

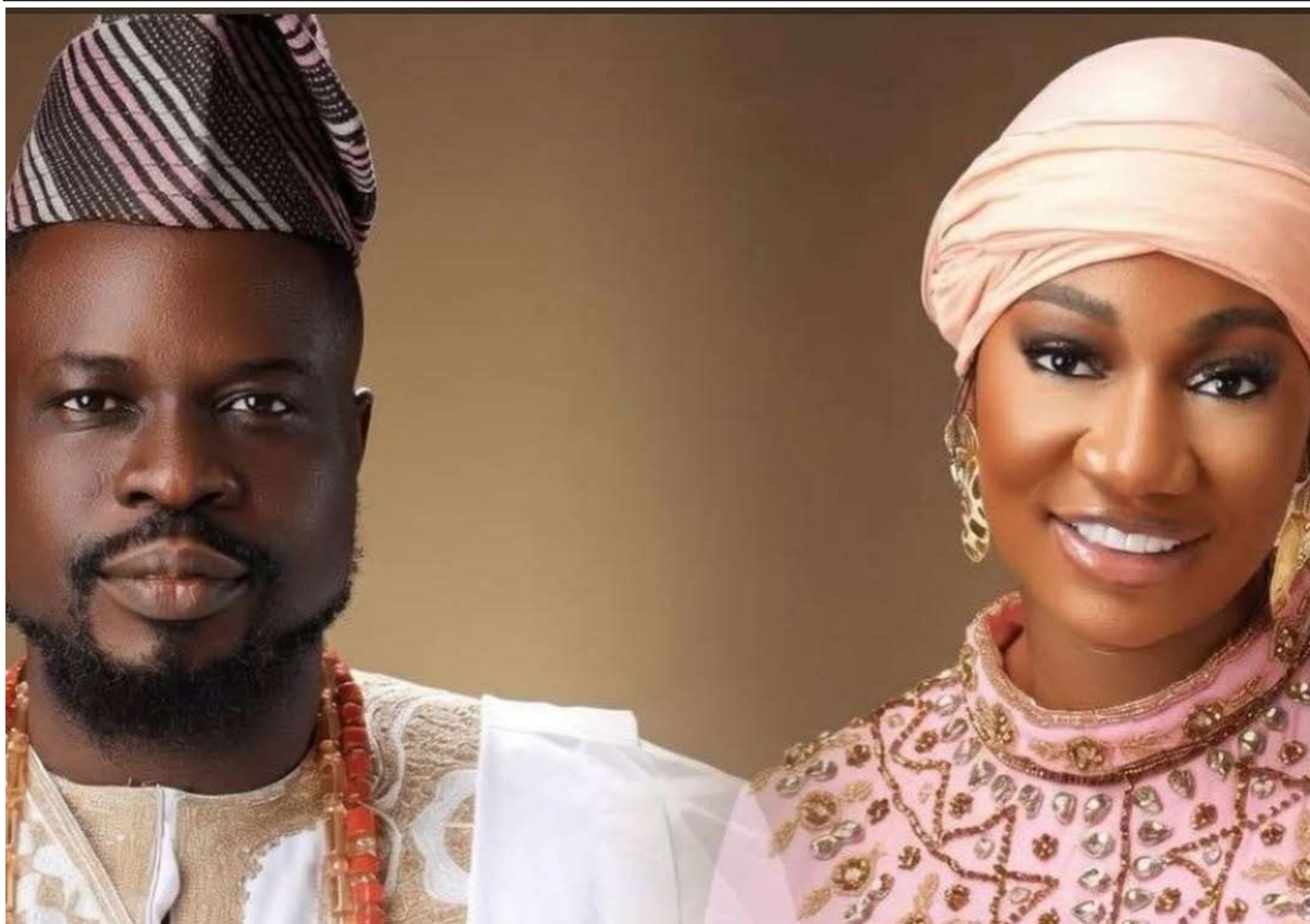
She described Jabbi Lake as more than just land, but a shared

space where small-scale traders earn a living and residents find relaxation.

Despite her concerns, she balanced her message with appreciation, thanking the minister for ongoing infrastructural improvements, particularly road construction that has eased movement across the city.

Her plea has since sparked conversations online, with many Nigerians weighing in on the balance between urban development and the preservation of public spaces.

Soft Sell



Sisi Alagbo Apologises to Nigerians Days After Viral Video Controversy

Days after a threesome video involving social media Herbalist, Eniola Fagbemi, popularly known as Sisi Alagbo, surfaced online, she issued a public apology to Nigerians yesterday, 4th May, 2026, via her Instagram page.

The video, which quickly made rounds across social platforms, sparked widespread reactions and

intense debate about privacy, personal choices and public accountability.

Addressing the situation, Sisi Alagbo expressed regret over the incident, acknowledging the backlash and the disappointment from the public.

While she did not go into extensive detail, her apology appeared to be an attempt to take responsibility and

calm the growing criticism surrounding the issue.

The development has continued to divide opinions, with some Nigerians calling for empathy and privacy, while others insist that public figures must be mindful of their actions, especially in the digital age.

For now, her apology marks a shift from silence to accountability.

Mohbad: Fresh Push for Justice as Court Fixes May 28 to Revisit Case



● Mohbad

The Federal High Court in Abuja has fixed May 28 to hear a suit seeking to compel the Nigeria Police Force to reopen investigations into the death of late singer Mohbad.

Presiding judge James Omotosho adjourned the matter after confirmation that all parties listed in the suit had been duly served.

Those named as respondents include the Nigeria Police Force, the Inspector General of Police, and the Commissioner of Police, Lagos State Command.

The case, filed by the Break the Silence Foundation, is seeking an order of mandamus to compel authorities to carry out what it describes as a “thorough, diligent and impartial” reinvestigation into the circumstances surrounding the singer’s death in September 2023.

During proceedings, counsel to the applicant,

Tunde Falola, informed the court that all respondents in the suit had been properly served, leading to the adjournment.

Beyond reopening the investigation, the suit is also pushing for key individuals to be invited for questioning, including the late singer’s wife, Omowumi Cynthia Aloba, close associates, and his father, Joseph Aloba, over allegations surrounding the circumstances of his burial.

The applicants further urged the court to direct law enforcement agencies to arrest and prosecute anyone found culpable once sufficient evidence is established.

As the new hearing date approaches, the case signals renewed pressure for answers in a matter that has continued to stir public interest and demand for justice.

Intimate Affairs: Where Did All The Wife Materials Go?

Funke Egbemode

There is an extra lament in town. It is not the price of petrol or diesel. It is more troubling than the mean charges of estate agents and rising cost of aso-ebi. It is this: "There are no more wife materials."

You hear it in barbershops, at buka tables, in Uber rides, and whispered with despair in bachelor flats where devouring noodles has become a lifestyle. The men sigh, shake their heads like village elders and conclude: "Women of nowadays..." — as if they themselves are not also "men of nowadays."

But let us not rush to crucify a whole gender. This matter is not as simple as Ankara vs. miniskirt or prayer warrior vs. party hopper. Finding a life partner has always been serious business. Bestsellers have been written on it and blockbuster movies made on the theme. It only looks harder now because illusions have multiplied and patience has reduced.

So, dear serious-minded dude, before you start considering becoming a Baby Daddy out of despair and desperation, sit down. Let's talk.

First, it is not true that there are no good wife materials left anywhere.

There are still many around.

What has gone extinct is discernment.

The problem is not that good women don't exist. The problem is that many men are shopping for wife material in showrooms meant for entertainment.

It is like going to a nightclub at 2am, seeing flashing lights, bottles popping, and then complaining that nobody there looks like your grandmother who woke up at 5am to pray and made breakfast for 10 people before 7am.

My brother, context matters. If you fish in a pond, don't expect a whale.

Take the case of Kunle and his Instagram standards. Kunle was 34, a banker with a steady job and a mother who had started sending him pictures of "very decent girls." But Kunle had standards. Not ordinary standards—Instagram standards.

He wanted beauty that could trend, a body that could cause traffic, and a lifestyle that would make his friends green with envy.

He found her. They are a-plenty on social media, selling the mirage.

Ada was stunning. Soft skin, perfect curves, and a social media presence that could intimidate small countries. Kunle fell like a mango in harmattan.

Within months, they were inseparable. Vacations, expensive dinners, designer gifts—Kunle was living the dream. Until reality knocked.

Ada did not believe in "stress." Cooking was stress. Managing money was stress. Even basic emotional support was... stress. What she believed in was "soft life"—financed, preferably, by Kunle.

When Kunle's finances began to groan under the weight of luxury, cracks appeared. Arguments started. Respect evaporated. Eventually, Ada left—with her bags, her beauty, and her belief that another sponsor would soon emerge.

Kunle sat in his empty apartment, staring at the wall like a man who had just watched his generator pack up during Champions League final.

His conclusion? "There are no good girls anywhere, only opportunists."

But the truth? Kunle did not look for a wife. He shopped for a fantasy.

So where should a serious man look?

Let's be honest. Wife material is not written on anyone's forehead. It is revealed in patterns, in consistency, in values that don't shake when nobody is watching. If you are serious, your search must also be serious.

First, look where values live.

Good partners are often found in places where values are practised, not performed. Workplaces, professional circles, volunteer groups, faith communities, academic environments—these are places where people are known beyond makeup and captions.

When you see someone consistently show up, treat others with respect, handle responsibility with grace—you are seeing raw material. Not packaging.

Because marriage is not packaging. It is content, lifetime content.

Pay attention to how she treats



Funke Egbemode

people who she can make money or contact from.

Watch how she speaks to waiters, how she treats her siblings, how she handles disagreement.

Anybody can be sweet when things are going well. The real person appears when things don't go their way.

A woman who is kind without audience, respectful without reward, and grounded without pressure—that one is not common. If you see her, don't be forming hard guy. Walk up to her and give your best pitch ever. She is likely the one you have been waiting for.

Listen more than you talk.

Many men are in love with the idea of being heard, but they don't listen.

If you actually listen, you will hear everything: her values, her priorities, her fears, her worldview. Does she respect family? Does she believe in partnership or dependency? Does she take responsibility for her life?

These things don't hide. They whisper. But you must be quiet enough to hear them.

Musa was not flashy. He worked in a logistics company and lived a simple life. His friends often teased him for being "too calm."

He met Zainab at a colleague's small birthday gathering—not a party, just a few people, food, and laughter. Zainab was not the loudest in the room. She wasn't trying to impress anyone. But Musa noticed something.

She helped the host clean up without being asked. She listened when others spoke. When a disagreement came up, she didn't raise her voice; she made her point and smiled.

Curious, Musa struck up a conversation. Weeks turned into months of friendship. No rush. No pressure.

Over time, Musa saw consistency. Zainab was the same person everywhere—steady, thoughtful, respectful.

When he eventually expressed his intentions, there was no drama. They spoke like adults, involved their families, and built something solid.

Today, their home is not perfect—but it is peaceful. And in a world full of noise, peace is luxury.

Musa did not complain about scarcity. He recognised value.

There is also a way a dude looking for a wife must present himself.

Let's not pretend, this is one-sided matter. Some men are looking for angels while behaving like walking headaches. Bad men looking for good girls no longer works. Today's ready-to-marry women have what my people call 'aju inu', inner eyes. Simply put, discerning spirit.

If you want a good partner, you must also be partner-worthy.

Define what you actually want.

Not vibes. Not pressure from your mother. Not competition with your married friends. What do you truly want in a partner? Values, character, lifestyle, vision—be clear. Because if you are not clear, anything shiny will distract you.

Make sure you are ready and stable.

Emotional stability. Financial responsibility. Mental maturity.

Marriage is not a rehabilitation centre. If you are broken, fix yourself before inviting someone into the mess.

A serious woman is not looking for a project. She is looking for a partner.

Be honest about your intentions.

If you want something serious, say it. Early.

Stop hiding behind "let's see how it goes" when you already know you are not serious. You will only attract people who are also not serious—or worse, hurt someone who was.

Clarity saves time. And heartbreak.

The Hard Truth Men Don't Like to Hear

Sometimes, the "scarcity" you are complaining about is actually rejection.

The women you call "wife material" are seeing you—and quietly saying: "Not this one." Painful? Yes. But necessary.

Because instead of blaming the entire female population, it may be time to ask:

Am I the kind of man a good woman would choose?

Do I bring peace or pressure?

Am I consistent or confusing?

Self-reflection is not weakness. It is strategy.

My final thoughts: Is the problem scarcity really or selectivity?

We are not in a season of scarcity. We are in a season of visibility.

Everybody is seen. Everybody is heard. And everybody is choosing.

The good women are there—but they are no longer waiting quietly to be picked. They are also evaluating, also deciding, also rejecting.

So, dear serious-minded dude, if you want a life partner, stop chasing noise.

Start recognising substance.

Stop performing.

Start becoming.

Because in the end, marriage is not about finding a perfect person. It is about finding someone whose imperfections you understand, whose values align with yours, and whose presence brings you peace—not pressure.

And when you find her, you will not need a committee to tell you she is "wife material." Your spirit will rest, in the middle of all the chaos of building a life and career, finding someone who gives you rest.

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2027: Atiku Camp Confident of Victory—Insider Reveals Plot Against Tinubu

By Abu Adamu

Fresh insights have emerged from within the camp of former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, with a top insider expressing strong confidence that the opposition leader is well-positioned to win the 2027 presidential election.

The source, who spoke exclusively to KTH Daily, disclosed that Atiku's strategy hinges on consolidating what was described as the enduring political structure of the late former President Muhammadu Buhari in Northern Nigeria—estimated at a “locked-in” 12 million vote base.

According to the insider, Buhari had, before his passing, given his blessings for Atiku to inherit the structure and pursue the presidency, a factor said to explain the alignment of key figures from the defunct Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) bloc with Atiku. Among those mentioned was former Attorney-General Abubakar Malami,

■ Obi: Nigeria in Emergency, Must be Rescued

■ Morka: Opposition Unserious; APC Will Sweep 2027 Elections

alongside other influential northern operatives.

The source further claimed that Buhari had quietly supported Atiku's presidential bid against Bola Tinubu in 2023, suggesting that the foundation for the current political alignment had long been in place.

Outlining the electoral pathway being projected by the Atiku camp, the insider said victory would come from a combination of sweeping Buhari's northern vote base, dominating the North-East, while allowing Labour Party's 2023 candidate, Peter Obi, to retain strength in the South-East and parts of the South-South. The South-West, the source argued, would be split between Obi and President Tinubu, thereby weakening the incumbent's traditional stronghold.

Central to this calculation, the source added, is a broader strategy

to deny Tinubu significant traction in both the North and South-East, while also chipping away at his influence in the South-South—ultimately pushing him into a distant third-place finish.

The source also claimed that the leader of the Kwankwasiya movement, former Defence Minister, Rabiu Kwankwaso's role is to deny Tinubu any significant number of votes in Kano, northern Nigeria's voting powerhouse.

The projection aligns with a recent assertion by former Kaduna State Governor, Nasir El-Rufai, who in a 2025 television interview predicted that Tinubu could fail to make it into a potential runoff. El-Rufai had argued that the President lacks a viable pathway to victory and could, at best, place third if current political dynamics persist.

Within Atiku's camp, this

scenario is seen as paving the way for a second-round contest, potentially between Atiku and Obi.

Meanwhile, the opposition landscape continues to shift. Peter Obi, on Monday, spoke of his defection from the African Democratic Congress (ADC) to the Nigerian Democratic Congress (NDC), alongside former Kano State Governor Rabiu Kwankwaso.

In a detailed statement, Obi said the move was driven by a desire to continue the struggle for “a new Nigeria built on justice, competence, accountability, and compassion,” insisting it was not motivated by personal ambition but by national urgency.

He also blamed internal crises and what he described as orchestrated litigations within parties for limiting effective participation by key actors, warning against actions that could

weaken Nigeria's democratic space.

However, the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) dismissed the opposition realignments as unserious. Its National Publicity Secretary, Felix Morka, criticised Obi and Kwankwaso for what he termed habitual party-switching, accusing them of seeking “cheap platforms” to secure presidential tickets rather than building sustainable political structures.

Morka maintained that the APC was not responsible for internal crises within opposition parties, describing such claims as baseless, while insisting that the ruling party remains firmly in control ahead of 2027.

As political permutations intensify, the Atiku camp appears undeterred, betting heavily on northern consolidation and opposition fragmentation as the pathway to unseating the incumbent in what is shaping up to be a fiercely contested race.

Ardo Sidesteps INEC, Threatens Legal Action Against NDC Over “Expedited” Registration

By Franklin Adole

A fresh legal battle is brewing ahead of the 2027 elections as Dr. Umar Ardo, a leading promoter of the All Democratic Alliance (ADA), has vowed to challenge the registration of the Nigerian Democratic Congress (NDC), while pointedly directing his grievance at the party rather than the electoral body that approved it.

Ardo insists the NDC's recognition by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was irregular and failed to follow due process, maintaining that the party did not meet statutory requirements before securing registration.

■ ...As Kwankwaso Rallies Supporters into Party

“The NDC did not properly apply and did not meet the requirements set by law or INEC guidelines. We will challenge this in court,” he said, adding that his suit would extend to any political association he believes was improperly registered.

However, legal observers have raised eyebrows over the approach, noting that Ardo appears to be targeting the beneficiary of the process rather than the institution responsible for it. Several analysts likened the move to “suing someone for receiving a visa instead of the embassy that issued it,” arguing that any procedural grievance should logically be directed at

INEC or the courts that ordered the registration.

INEC had earlier announced that only two associations, the Democratic Leadership Alliance (DLA) and the NDC, were successfully registered out of 171 applicants, explaining that the NDC's approval followed a court order. The commission said all decisions were guided by constitutional provisions, the Electoral Act, and its regulatory framework.

But Ardo dismissed the explanation, alleging that the NDC bypassed the official screening process and was not properly documented under INEC's registration system.

He also questioned the court judgment that led to the party's approval, vowing to pursue an appeal.

According to him, the ADA fully complied with all requirements, including payment of fees and submission of documentation, and had progressed to advanced stages of verification before being denied registration.

He further alleged disparities in judicial timelines, claiming that while ADA's case has faced delays, the NDC secured a swift judgment, an outcome he described as troubling for electoral integrity.

Despite criticism of his legal

strategy, Ardo maintained that his actions are driven by principle rather than politics, citing a history of challenging perceived injustices in governance.

Meanwhile, political momentum appears to be building within the NDC. Former Kano State Governor Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso has called on Nigerians to rally behind the party, describing it as a credible platform for advancing good governance and democratic ideals.

Kwankwaso urged citizens to seize what he termed a renewed opportunity to reshape Nigeria's political future, insisting that the NDC represents a serious alternative capable of delivering meaningful change.

Makinde-Led PDP Installs Turaki as Interim Chairman, Says Party on Path to Reclaim Power

By Jeremy Fregene

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) faction backed by Oyo State Governor Seyi Makinde has installed Alhaji Kabiru Tanimu Turaki, SAN, as Interim National Chairman.

Turaki's emergence followed the inauguration of a 13-member Interim National Working Committee (INWC) during the party's 103rd National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting in Abuja, with Taofeek Arapaja appointed as Secretary.

The motion for the interim leadership was moved by the

Chairman of the Forum of State Chairmen, Anthony Aziegbemi, and seconded by the Chairman of the Forum of Ex-officials, Clement Faboyede.

Presiding over the meeting, Chairman of the PDP Board of Trustees (BoT), Senator Adolphus Wabara, said the decision was necessitated by the April 30, 2026, Supreme Court judgment which nullified previous party conventions, leaving the PDP without a valid National Working Committee.

Wabara explained that the BoT stepped in to avert a leadership vacuum and reposition the party

ahead of the 2027 general elections, expressing optimism that the PDP would reclaim power at the centre.

He disclosed that the BoT secured the backing of two-thirds of NEC members before convening the meeting and had duly notified the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Governor Makinde, in his remarks, declared that the Abdulrahman Mohammed-led NWC had no legitimacy to operate from the party's national secretariat, insisting that the newly installed interim leadership reflected the will of the majority.

While acknowledging the

party's internal challenges, Makinde maintained that the PDP has the capacity to overcome its current crisis, urging members not to be discouraged.

He described the move as part of a broader effort to stabilise the party and preserve democratic plurality, pledging his full support for the interim committee.

In his acceptance speech, Turaki assured members that the committee was ready to rebuild and reposition the party, promising that the PDP would field candidates for all elective positions and win the 2027 presidential election.

Other members of the interim NWC include Hamza Koshe, Dr. Daniel Woyengikuro, Iheidiwa Richard, Isa Abubakar, Okechukwu Daniel, Theophilus Dakas Shan, Ini Ememobong, Aribisala Idowu, Bara'u Shafi'i, Ogbu Chinenyenwa, and Umar Aji.

Speaking after the meeting, Makinde insisted that the NEC session met constitutional requirements, noting that it had the required quorum. He added that the party would formally communicate the development to INEC and expressed confidence that the commission would recognise the interim leadership.

FBN HoldCo Loss Widens to N407bn on Soaring Costs

FBN Holdings Plc (FBN HoldCo) is facing mounting scrutiny from investors and market analysts after reporting a N407.8 billion loss for 2025 alongside more than N1 trillion in operating expenses, triggering concerns over governance, cost control and oversight.

The figures were disclosed in the group's unaudited financial results for the year ended December 31, 2025, released in late April 2026. The results show a sharp deterioration in performance at one of Nigeria's oldest banking institutions, driven by large impairment charges and a surge in operating costs.

At the centre of the losses is a N748.1 billion impairment charge on loans, widely interpreted by analysts as the crystallisation of credit risks accumulated over several years.

Market watchers say the scale of the write-down points to structural weaknesses in lending practices and risk management.

"Impairment losses of this magnitude typically reflect long-standing issues in credit underwriting and monitoring," a Lagos-based analyst said on May 3. "They do not emerge suddenly."

The group also recorded an operating loss of N337.5 billion, underscoring pressure on its core banking business.

Beyond the losses, attention has turned to the bank's spending profile. Financial disclosures show "other operating expenses" rose sharply to N809.4 billion in 2025, a near sixfold increase from the previous year.

Analysts say the size of the expense line, without detailed breakdown, raises questions about cost transparency and internal controls.

"The lack of clarity around such a large expense category warrants closer examination," another analyst said.

Advertising and promotional costs also rose significantly to N185 billion during the year, while personnel expenses climbed to N385.9 billion, further adding to investor concerns over cost discipline in a loss-making period.

The spending comes as the group considers plans to develop a new corporate headquarters in Eko Atlantic, a high-profile real estate project that has drawn criticism from some stakeholders who argue that capital allocation should prioritise balance sheet recovery.

FBN HoldCo has not publicly detailed timelines or funding structure for the proposed headquarters.

The financial disclosures have also raised broader questions about oversight. Analysts say the scale of deterioration in asset quality and profitability suggests that early warning indicators may not have been adequately addressed.

"There are concerns about whether risk signals were identified and acted upon in a timely manner," a market observer said.

The results, which remain subject to audit, have intensified calls among some shareholders for a more detailed review of the bank's loan book and expense structure.

Investor groups are also urging stronger disclosure standards and clearer communication from management on recovery plans.

FBN HoldCo is a major player in Nigeria's banking sector through its flagship subsidiary, First Bank of Nigeria, with operations spanning retail, corporate and commercial banking.

The group's performance is closely watched by investors given its systemic importance and long history in the financial system.

The 2025 results mark a sharp contrast to prior years and come at a time when Nigerian banks are navigating tighter regulatory conditions, foreign exchange volatility and evolving capital requirements.



L-R: Minister of State for Budget and Economic Planning, Dr Doris Uzoka-Anite, Russian Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Nigeria, Mr Andrey Leonidovich Podelyshev, and Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Senator Abubakar Bagudu, during the ambassador's visit to the minister in Abuja yesterday.

NNPC Remits N2.89trn in Q1, Posts N276bn March Profit on Gas Gains

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd) remitted N2.89 trillion to the Federation Account in the first quarter of 2026 and posted a profit after tax of N276 billion in March, as higher gas output and policy reforms strengthened its financial performance.

The figures were disclosed in the company's March 2026 operational and financial report published on May 4, which said all data remained provisional pending reconciliation with relevant agencies.

The report showed that NNPC's statutory remittances rose steadily in the first three months of the year, supported by improved production and stricter revenue management rules introduced by the federal government.

NNPC remitted N726 billion in January and N1.804 trillion in February, bringing total transfers to N2.888 trillion by the end of March, positioning the company as a key fiscal anchor for the federation.

The strong remittance performance follows an executive order signed in February 2026 by President Bola Tinubu aimed at reforming oil revenue management and boosting

transparency.

The directive suspended management fees and frontier exploration deductions previously retained by NNPC and mandated the full remittance of oil and gas revenues to the Federation Account. It also established an inter-agency committee led by the Minister of Finance to oversee compliance.

Analysts say the reforms have reshaped cash flows across the petroleum value chain, increasing funds available for distribution to federal, state and local governments through the Federation Account Allocation Committee.

Alongside higher remittances, NNPC reported a rebound in profitability in March, with profit after tax rising to N276 billion on revenue of N2.774 trillion.

The performance was driven largely by stronger gas output, which rose to 7,731 million standard cubic feet per day (mmscf/d) in March from 7,458 mmscf/d in February, continuing an upward trend observed since late 2025.

Gas sales also increased to 5,059 mmscf/d from 4,893 mmscf/d in the previous month, reflecting improved distribution and demand.

Crude oil and condensate production rose modestly to 1.56 million barrels per day in March from 1.51 million barrels per day in February, indicating a gradual recovery in upstream operations.

The company attributed the production gains in part to the early completion of maintenance work on the OML 118 Bonga field, which was delivered 12 days ahead of schedule.

However, crude sales volumes declined to 17.27 million barrels in March from 23.08 million barrels in February, suggesting logistical or export constraints during the period.

Operations were also affected by disruptions, including a leak on the Trans Forcados Pipeline that led to outages across several assets between February 20 and March 25.

Despite these challenges, the company said overall output improved month-on-month, supported by operational efficiencies and ongoing recovery efforts.

NNPC's financial performance comes against the backdrop of broader reforms in Nigeria's oil sector aimed at improving accountability and boosting government revenues.

Between January and December

2025, the company remitted N14.706 trillion to the federation, underlining its central role in public finances.

Nigeria's oil-dependent economy relies heavily on such remittances to fund government spending, making NNPC's performance a key indicator of fiscal health.

The company also reported progress on strategic infrastructure, including the Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano (AKK) gas pipeline, where welding of a 24-inch spur line to the Gwagwalada Independent Power Plant has been completed, alongside advances in pre-commissioning works on the mainline.

Industry data shows that Nigeria's crude oil production has been recovering, with output rising to around 1.84 million barrels per day in recent months, according to the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission.

The increase reflects efforts to address oil theft, pipeline vandalism and operational inefficiencies that have constrained production in recent years.

NNPC remains a dominant player across Nigeria's oil and gas value chain, spanning upstream exploration, midstream infrastructure and downstream distribution.

Tinubu Asked Me to Step Down From Senate Race, Ex-Gov Ayade Laments, Alleges 'Betrayal'

Former Cross River State Governor, Senator Ben Ayade, has revealed that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu directed him to withdraw from the upcoming Senate race, a development he described as deeply painful and unjust.

In a lengthy and emotional message to his supporters on Facebook, Ayade said he was summoned to Abuja for what he termed a "high-level national consultation" with the presidency, after which it became clear that he was expected to shelve his senatorial ambition. Though he said he has chosen to respect the President's directive, Ayade expressed anguish over what he called years of neglect and political marginalisation.

He suggested that those benefiting from the President's alleged instruction were individuals who had previously opposed him and the All

Progressives Congress (APC) in Cross River State, including elements he accused of stoking religious tensions during the 2023 elections and allegedly deploying violence at collation centres.

Ayade reminded the President of his pioneering role in building the APC in the South-South region, noting that he was the first APC governor in the zone and played a critical part in delivering a historic presidential victory for the party in Cross River State. He also highlighted his personal contributions to the party, including financial support, logistics, and ongoing mobilisation efforts ahead of the 2027 elections.

Despite these efforts, Ayade lamented that he has remained without any federal appointment for over three years, a situation he implied was at odds with his level of loyalty

and sacrifice.

The former governor also raised concerns about fairness, arguing that the individual favoured to replace him had already spent multiple terms in the National Assembly, while his own constituency had comparatively limited representation.

Drawing from his political history, Ayade recalled that he had previously stepped down from electoral contests in 2007 and 2015 at the behest of party leaders, only to later emerge as a senator and two-term governor. He said this reinforced his belief in destiny and divine timing, even in moments of disappointment.

While urging his supporters to remain calm and law-abiding, Ayade advised them not to purchase nomination forms for the Senate race for now, in deference to the President's authority. He cited biblical injunctions on obedience to

constituted authority but maintained that his loyalty should not preclude fairness.

Ayade, however, made it clear that he and his supporters would continue to back the APC and work for its success at all levels in Cross River State, regardless of the final outcome of the situation.

In a veiled message to his political rival, he criticised what he described as the use of "influence from high places" to secure advantage, calling it a hollow victory that undermines democratic principles.

Concluding his message, Ayade urged patience and faith among his followers, expressing hope that the President would ultimately reconsider the decision. He described the situation as a test of restraint and conviction, insisting that their collective future remains bright despite the current setback.



Former Inspector General of Police/Gubernatorial aspirant of Yobe state, Usman Alkali Baba, addressing journalists, after his submission of expression of interest and nomination forms, yesterday in Abuja.

LP Releases 2027 Primaries Timetable, Fixes Nomination Fees

The Labour Party (LP) has released its timetable and schedule of activities for the conduct of its 2026 primary elections, with concessions for women, people living with disabilities and youths.

The National Publicity Secretary of the party, Ken Asogwa who disclosed this in a statement on Monday in Abuja added that the timetable was released in accordance with the 1999 Constitution.

He also said it was released in compliance with the Electoral Act, 2026 and the Independent National Electoral Commission's (INEC) revised timetable and schedule of activities for the conduct of the 2027 Elections.

According to him, the timetable indicates that the sale of nomination

forms for all elective offices will start on May 6 and end on May 16.

Asogwa said that the submission of completed forms would begin on May 17 and end on May 18.

"Screening of aspirants for House of Assembly and Governorship election will be on May 20 while that of the National Assembly and the Presidential election will be on May 22," he said.

He said that results of the screening would be published on May 23.

He added that appeals and petitions for house of assembly and governorship aspirants would be on May 24, while those for national assembly and presidential aspirants would take place on May 25.

He further said that the final

list of cleared aspirants would be published on May 26.

According to him, party primaries for house of assembly and governorship positions will hold on May 27, while those for national assembly and presidential positions will take place on May 29.

Asogwa also announced the structured fees for nomination forms for various offices.

"For house of assembly, the expression of interest form costs N1,000,000, while the nomination form costs N2,000,000, bringing the total to N3,000,000.

"For the House of Representatives, the expression of interest form costs N1,500,000 and the nomination form N3,500,000, totalling N5,000,000.

"Senatorial aspirants are to pay N2,500,000 for the expression of interest form and N7,500,000 for the nomination form, amounting to N10,000,000.

"Governorship aspirants will pay N5,000,000 for the expression of interest form and N20,000,000 for the nomination form, totalling N25,000,000," he said.

"For the presidential ticket, expression of interest form costs N10,000,000, while the nomination form costs N40,000,000, bringing the total to N50,000,000," he said.

He, however, said that for the Abia Governor, Alex Otti, the National Working Committee of the party had decided to give him the form free of charge.

The spokesman said that in line

with the party's motto of "Equal Opportunity and Social Justice", concessions had been approved for certain categories of aspirants.

"Female aspirants, people living with disabilities and youths aged 25 to 30 would only be required to pay for the expression of interest forms for all positions," he said.

He also said that the LP was calling on all prospective aspirants for the 2027 elections who were yet to register, to take advantage of the ongoing membership e-registration and register.

He said registration was open from May 3 to midnight of May 4, ahead of compilation and submission of the party's membership register to INEC in compliance with the Electoral Act, 2026.



Action recorded during the opening match of the NNL Super 4 between Sporting Lagos and Ranchers Bees of Kaduna. Sporting won 1-0

Sporting Lagos Beat Ranchers Bees in NNL Super Four Opener

Sporting Lagos kicked off their 2026 Nigeria National League (NNL) Super Four campaign on a winning note, edging Ranchers Bees of Kaduna 1-0 in a tightly contested opener at the Remo Stars Stadium in Ikenne.

The Lagos-based side wasted no time asserting themselves, showing clear attacking intent from the blast of the whistle. Their early pressure nearly paid off in the 17th minute when Seun Akanji carved out the first real chance of the game, but his effort was smartly denied by the Ranchers Bees goalkeeper.

Sporting Lagos continued to probe for an opener, with Aliyu Baba also displaying moments of attacking promise. However, despite their dominance in possession and territory, they struggled to find the cutting edge needed to break down a resolute Ranchers Bees defence.

The breakthrough eventually arrived

five minutes before halftime. A well-worked move down the flank saw Shola Oladunjoye combine with Seun Akanji, who delivered a pinpoint cross into the box, where Alex Leme rose highest to power home a clinical header in the 40th minute, sending the Sporting Lagos bench into celebration.

That goal proved to be the difference in a game defined by discipline and defensive organisation from both sides. Ranchers Bees pushed for an equaliser in the second half but were unable to breach Sporting Lagos' backline, as the Lagos side held firm to secure all three points.

Seun Akanji, who provided the decisive assist and remained a constant threat throughout the encounter, was deservedly named Man of the Match for his outstanding performance.

Speaking after the game, Akanji credited his teammates for the victory

and stressed the importance of staying focused going forward.

"This award means a lot, but it's not just about me, it's about the team. Everyone put in a great shift today, and that's what got us the win. We are happy with the start, but we know there's still a lot ahead, so we stay focused and keep working hard," he said.

With the win, Sporting Lagos set the pace in the Super Four tournament, laying down an early marker as they continue their quest for silverware.

Dignitaries present at the game include the Special Adviser to the president on Media and Public Communications, Chief Sunday Dare, Chairman of the Nigeria National League, George Aluo, Executive Board Member of the Nigeria Football Federation, Alhaji Ganiyu Majekodunmi and international Felix Owolabi MON.

718 Goals Scored in 359 Matches as 2025/2026 NPFL Nears End

With only two rounds of matches left to draw the curtain on the ongoing 2025/2026 Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) season, organisers have released the official statistics for Nigeria top flight football league.

According to the figures, 359 matches have been played so far, with a total of 718 goals scored—maintaining a steady average of two goals per game. One outstanding fixture remains from Matchday 36, involving Ikorodu City of Lagos and Wikki Tourists of Bauchi, a game that could still influence the final outlook of the standings.

The numbers also reflect a league largely dominated by home sides. Out of 268 total wins recorded this season, 226 have come on home soil, while only 42 away victories underline the difficulty teams face on the road. A total of 91 matches have ended in draws, with away teams suffering 226 defeats, further reinforcing the home advantage trend.

At the summit, Rangers have emerged as the standout side, sitting top of the table with 62 points from 36 matches. Their

campaign has been built on defensive solidity—conceding just 25 goals, the best in the league—while also boasting a superior goal difference of +18. They are also among the joint highest scorers this season, with 43 goals, underlining their balance at both ends of the pitch.

At the other end, Bayelsa United and Wikki Tourists remain rooted with the lowest points tally of 40, highlighting the battle for survival as the season winds down. On the road, Abia Warriors—popularly known as the Umu Chineke boys—have impressed with the highest number of away wins, recording five victories away from home.

Meanwhile, Remo Stars have struggled defensively, conceding 45 goals—the highest in the league so far—pointing to vulnerabilities that have shaped their campaign.

With just two matchdays remaining and one outstanding fixture yet to be decided, the statistics paint the picture of a fiercely contested season, where every goal, point, and performance continues to shape the final narrative of the 2025/26 NPFL season.

Rivers United's Home Win Over Abia Warriors Excites Finidi



Rivers United technical adviser Finidi George has reflected on his team's comfortable home victory over Abia Warriors.

Finidi's side thrashed Abia Warriors 3-0 in a Nigeria Premier Football League, NPFL, matchday 36 encounter at the Adokiye Amiesimaka Stadium, Port Harcourt, on Sunday.

Abia Warriors put up a resolute display at the back in the first half, but conceded thrice after the break.

Azeez Falolu scored the

curtain raiser five minutes after the break.

Timothy Zachaaria and Bello Babatunde later added two more goals for the hosts.

"It was a good game, I would say. In the first half, we didn't create much. We only had one glaring chance that we missed—a glaring header. There was another chance but not as clear-cut as the first," Finidi said after the game.

The Port Harcourt club will face Wikki Tourists in their next game at the New Jos Stadium this weekend.

Barewa, AJ Sharks Emerge Atlantic Rugby 7s Champions

Barewa RFC delivered a commanding performance to defeat Cowrie RFC 19-0 and clinch the men's title at the Atlantic Rugby 7s in Lagos. The final, held at Rugby School, Nigeria, showcased Barewa's dominance, as they controlled possession, defended with discipline, and converted their chances with clinical precision.

In the women's category, AJ Sharks edged Edo Queens 7-0 to emerge champions. The contest was tightly contested, but AJ Sharks' organised defence and sharp attacking play proved decisive in sealing victory.

Organisers described the tournament as a strategic platform for revitalising domestic rugby and strengthening competition nationwide. General Manager of the Nigeria Rugby Football Federation, Azeez Ladipo,

said the event was designed to provide crucial game time for players while identifying emerging talents for national assignments.

"This competition was created to give players game time and help us rebuild domestic rugby," he said, adding that, "this platform helps us identify emerging talents for future national assignments."

Ladipo further described the tournament as a stepping stone toward a larger international rugby event later in the year, noting that preparations are already underway for the upcoming Africa Rugby Sevens in Mauritius.

Also speaking, Nti Martin of Sportickerof highlighted technological innovations introduced during the competition.

He said Sportickerof deployed

digital ticketing and accreditation systems for the tournament.

"Participants and spectators could access tickets and accreditation without internet connectivity," Martin said.

He noted that the system improved access, efficiency, and overall event coordination.

Martin added that increased digital visibility would strengthen rugby's appeal nationwide and attract sponsors and fresh investment.

Adam England, Principal of Rugby School Nigeria, expressed optimism about the sport's future.

"Nigeria has an energetic youth population and remarkable natural athleticism," he said.

England noted that infrastructure and investment remain key challenges and called for stronger grassroots support and wider institutional backing.

Wuraola Hussain, match commissioner and coach of Golden Sharks RFC women's team, praised the initiative.

She said the competition also served as a trial ground for national team selection.

"Regular tournaments are essential because many athletes lack sufficient match opportunities," Hussain said.

Nunayon Travih, Director of Sport at the Lagos State Sport Commission, welcomed the tournament.

He said the initiative aligns with Lagos' youth development agenda through sports and disclosed plans to introduce rugby in secondary schools across the state.



Nottingham Boost Survival Hopes with Win at Chelsea

A second-string Nottingham Forest side took a major step towards Premier League survival by inflicting Chelsea's sixth consecutive league defeat.

Forest boss Vitor Pereira made eight changes with Thursday's Europa League semi-final second leg against Aston Villa in mind, but two goals from Taiwo Awoniyi and another from Igor Jesus helped the visitors open a six-point gap over 18th-placed West Ham in the relegation zone.

Chelsea, meanwhile, scored a late consolation goal through striker Joao Pedro, narrowly avoiding an unwanted record of making it six league games in a row without scoring for the first time in the club's history.

Their dismal afternoon was summed up when Cole Palmer missed a first-half penalty after academy winger Jesse Derry, 18, sustained a serious-looking head injury on his first senior start.

This was Chelsea's first Premier League match since Liam Rosenior was sacked, with interim head coach Calum McFarlane - who guided the club to a 1-0 FA Cup semi-final win against Leeds United last week - taking charge for the first time at Stamford Bridge.

Forest needed just two minutes to take the lead, with Awoniyi left unmarked to head home after winger Dilane Bakwa beat Chelsea defender Marc Cucurella and delivered a nicely

floated cross. The same Forest pairing combined again in the 15th minute to win a penalty - Awoniyi was pulled back in the area by Malo Gusto as he attempted to reach Bakwa's cross, and Igor Jesus converted the resulting spot-kick down the middle.

It came after a video assistant referee (VAR) check, with Gusto possibly lucky to have avoided a red card.

Enzo Fernandez hit the post and Igor Jesus forced a good save at the other end, before Derry won Chelsea a penalty following a nasty head collision with Zach Abbott that led to a six-minute stoppage and both academy graduates being substituted.

Palmer's low penalty kick towards the corner was then saved by Forest goalkeeper Matz Sels at full stretch.

Chelsea introduced striker Liam Delap for Derry and returning defender Levi Colwill at half-time, but conceded seven minutes again into the second half when Awoniyi tapped in substitute Morgan Gibbs-White's low cross.

Gibbs-White was later involved in another heavy clash with Chelsea goalkeeper Robert Sanchez, with both players forced off with their bleeding heads bandaged.

Joao Pedro also had a goal narrowly ruled out for offside late on, but then scored a spectacular overhead kick in stoppage time to end Chelsea's more than 550-minute run without a league goal that stretched back to early March.



● Lookman

Lookman Listed for Arsenal Champions League Rematch

Ademola Lookman will return to his hometown, London, for tomorrow's UEFA Champions League return leg semifinal against Arsenal after he was named by Atletico Madrid on their matchday squad.

There have been injury concerns over the Super Eagles forward after he first complained of discomfort around his abductor during the recent Copa del Rey final against Real Sociedad. 'Mola' played the full duration

against Arsenal a week ago in the first leg, which ended in a 1-1 draw.

He was one of many first-team players who were rested in the 2-0 win at Valencia at the weekend.



Pistons, Cavaliers Advance in NBA Play-offs



The Detroit Pistons fought back from a 3-1 deficit to beat the Orlando Magic in the NBA play-offs and advance to the Eastern Conference semi-finals.

The Pistons won the final match of their best-of-seven series 116-94, their first play-off series win since 2008.

They are the 15th team in NBA history to come back from 3-1 down, and the second in the space of two days after the Philadelphia 76ers beat the Boston Celtics.

Cade Cunningham top-scored for the Pistons with 32 points and 12 assists, while Tobias Harris added 30 points.

"We had a great regular season,

we built a lot of momentum going into these play-offs," said Cunningham.

"To lose in the first round would have really stung. To come back from 3-1, odds against us, and to come back and win it at home - it feels good."

The Pistons will face the Cleveland Cavaliers in the semi-finals, another best-of-seven series starting on 5 May.

The Cavaliers beat the Toronto Raptors to book their place in the second round with a 114-102 victory.

Jarrett Allen starred for the Cavaliers with 22 points and 19 rebounds as they recovered from a 10-point deficit after the first quarter.

The scores were tied 49-49 at the halfway mark but the Cavaliers surged ahead in the third quarter with Allen contributing 14 points and 10 of his rebounds.

"I just wanted to show my teammates that we can win this game," said Allen.

"Energy and effort, that's what I believe wins games. Every single possession, it means a lot. Every single possession means it could be the end of the season."

Donovan Mitchell added 22 points and James Harden scored 18.

For the Raptors, who were in the play-offs for the first time since 2022, Scottie Barnes had 24 points and nine rebounds while RJ Barrett scored 23.

Inter Miami, LA Galaxy Battling to Sign Casemiro from Man Utd

Two clubs are currently battling to sign Manchester United midfielder Casemiro.

According to reports, Inter Miami and LA Galaxy are the two leading contenders to sign the Brazilian.

The two Major League Soccer, MLS, clubs are both currently in talks to try and sign the veteran midfielder in the summer.

Casemiro is leaning towards a

move to the MLS despite strong interest from Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

The 34-year-old confirmed a few weeks ago that he would be leaving Old Trafford at the end of the season despite fan calls for him to stay for another season.

Casemiro is one of Man United's highest earners, and he joined the Premier League club from Real Madrid in 2022.



● Casemiro



L-R: Paramount Ruler of Rumomasi Community, Eze Ezeunwo Adele, Chairman of the occasion, Mr Ogonnia Nwuke, and representative of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information and Communication, Rivers State, Director, Publications Department, Mr Christian Davis, during a lecture on World Press Freedom Day 2026 organised by the NUJ Rivers State Council in Port Harcourt yesterday.

Nigeria Condemns Threats Against Citizens in South Africa

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has condemned reported threats against Nigerians and other foreign nationals in South Africa.

The ministry said some groups had allegedly urged foreigners, particularly black migrants, to leave the country.

The ministry's spokesperson, Kimiebi Ebiefa, disclosed this on Monday in Abuja.

Ebiefa spoke after a meeting between Permanent Secretary, Dunoma Ahmed, and South Africa's Acting High Commissioner.

The Acting High Commissioner, Lesoli Machele, attended the meeting convened by Nigeria's foreign ministry.

Ebiefa said the meeting addressed attacks on Nigerians and other matters affecting bilateral relations.

He said Nigeria strongly condemned violence against its citizens living in South Africa.

According to him, recent incidents included the deaths of Matthew Ekpenyong and Kelvin Amaramiro.

He said both deaths allegedly followed assaults involving security personnel.

"This incident, alongside other reported cases, has heightened anxiety within the Nigerian community.

"It requires urgent, credible and transparent remedial action from relevant authorities," Ebiefa said.

He said Nigeria demanded a thorough and impartial investigation into both deaths.

"We request prompt sharing of preliminary findings and regular updates with the Government of Nigeria," he said.

Ebiefa added that Nigeria also requested access to autopsy reports and other case documents.

He said authorities should also support affected families in accessing legal processes.

Quoting Ahmed, he acknowledged statements by South African leaders condemning extrajudicial killings.

Ahmed also welcomed official rejection of attacks and looting targeting foreign nationals.

He said such commitments must now translate into practical action on the ground.

Ahmed stressed the need for accountability where misconduct by security personnel is established.

He said disciplinary and prosecutorial action must follow confirmed wrongdoing.

The permanent secretary also urged South Africa to guarantee protection for Nigerians residing lawfully in the country.

He said this included protection against profiling and unlawful detention.

Ahmed also called for strict compliance with professional standards by security agencies.

He identified Jacinta Zuma and Operation Dudula among groups linked to anti-foreigner attacks.

He called for proactive steps to prevent incitement, intimidation and violence.

Ahmed also welcomed the early warning mechanism memorandum signed by both countries.

He urged immediate activation whenever threats against Nigerians emerge.

Chinese Firms to Operate Warri, Port Harcourt Refineries — NNPC

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with two Chinese firms for the restart, operation and expansion of the Warri and Port Harcourt refineries.

In a statement on Monday, NNPC's Chief Corporate Communications Officer, Andy Odey, said the agreement was signed with Sanjiang Chemical Company Limited and Xingcheng (Fuzhou) Industrial Park Operation and Management Co. Ltd.

He said the deal is expected to pave the way for a Technical Equity Partnership (TEP) aimed at completing ongoing rehabilitation works and ensuring efficient operations of the refineries.

The MoU was executed in

Jiaxing City, China, on April 30, 2026, by NNPC's Group Chief Executive Officer, Bashir Bayo Ojulari, alongside the Chairman of Sanjiang Chemical Company, Guan Jianzhong, and Chairman of Xingcheng Industrial Park Operation and Management Co. Ltd, Bill Bi.

Under the proposed arrangement, the Chinese partners will support the completion of outstanding rehabilitation work at both facilities and take part in their operation and maintenance to achieve sustainable performance.

The partnership will also explore the expansion and upgrade of the refineries to meet cleaner fuel standards, improve profitability and boost petrochemical production capacity. It is further expected to support

the development of gas-based industrial hubs around the facilities.

Speaking after the signing, Ojulari described the agreement as a major milestone following months of negotiations.

"All parties recognise mutually beneficial opportunities for the development and long-term sustainability of NNPC's refining assets," he said.

He added that the MoU represents a key step toward securing technical partners for the rehabilitation and expansion of the country's refineries, while also unlocking opportunities in petrochemicals and gas-based industries.

Ojulari, however, noted that the agreement is non-binding and subject to regulatory approvals and further

negotiations.

The rehabilitation of the Port Harcourt Refining Company was approved in 2021 at an estimated cost of \$1.5 billion, with contracts awarded to Italy's Saipem and other partners to restore its capacity of 210,000 barrels per day.

Similarly, the Warri Refining and Petrochemical Company is undergoing rehabilitation under a contract valued at about \$897 million, aimed at reviving its 125,000 barrels per day capacity and integrating petrochemical production.

Both projects form part of NNPC's broader strategy to reduce Nigeria's reliance on imported petroleum products.

The Port Harcourt refinery had briefly resumed operations in late 2024 after years of inactivity but was later shut down due to operational and financial challenges.

Bandits Kill 11 Persons in Reprisal Attacks on Katsina Communities

No fewer than 11 persons have been killed following a reprisal attack by bandits on communities in Kankia Local Government Area of Katsina State.

The Katsina State Police Command said the attack occurred on Sunday at about 1200hrs, when bandits regrouped and stormed Jeka da Kolo and Kwalgoro villages, fatally shooting eleven persons before police tactical teams mobilised and repelled the assailants.

The State Commissioner of Police, CP Ali Umar Fage, condemned the attack in strong terms and extended condolences to the families of the victims.

In a statement on Sunday night signed by the Command's spokesman, DSP Abubakar Sadiq, the Commissioner described the attack as cowardly and barbaric, and ordered an aggressive, intelligence-led manhunt to identify

and arrest the perpetrators. He also deployed additional tactical teams to the affected area.

The statement added that bush-combing operations and coordinated patrols have been intensified to track down the fleeing suspects and prevent further attacks.

The command assured residents of its commitment to protecting lives and property, stressing that efforts are ongoing to ensure all those involved face the full wrath of the law.

Members of the public were urged to remain calm but vigilant and provide timely and credible information to aid security agencies.

"Report suspicious movements to the nearest police station or via the Command's emergency lines: 0815 697 7777 or 0707 272 2539. Further developments will be communicated in due course," the statement said.

The command, however, noted that the

reprisal attack followed recent operational successes against bandits in the area.

It recalled that on April 29, 2026, at Gadar Yan Tulu and Kartaka villages, operatives foiled a cattle rustling attempt and recovered 205 animals, comprising 91 cows and 114 sheep.

Similarly, on May 2, 2026, operatives foiled another attack on Matinjin village, forcing several bandits to flee with gunshot injuries, while eight operational motorcycles were recovered.

Meanwhile, the Katsina State Government also condemned the attack, describing the deliberate targeting of innocent civilians as an act of terror.

In a statement signed by the Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Nasir Mu'azu, the government extended condolences to the bereaved families and called on residents

to remain resolute.

The statement said intelligence reports had earlier indicated that a notorious bandit kingpin, Mohammad Fulani, led armed men toward key locations in Kankia with criminal intent.

According to the government, community members alerted security agencies, prompting the Divisional Police Officer of Kankia to lead a joint security team that successfully intercepted the bandits, neutralised several of them, and recovered motorcycles and rustled cattle.

It noted that the same kingpin later led a retaliatory attack around midday on Gwalgoro Village in Gyaza/Kundururu Ward, resulting in the death of eleven persons.

The government commended security personnel for their swift response and urged continued collaboration between communities and security agencies.



L-R: Representative of the Ministry of Power, Mr Shehu Ibrahim, Energy Consultant, Mr Oluwaseun Fadare, Representative of Odua Group, Mr Shuaib Olawoyin, Chief Executive Officer, Quaint Energy, Mr Durodola Mobolaji, Chairman, Quaint Energy, Mr Femi Adeyanju, and Executive Director, Quaint Energy, Dr Mahmud Suleiman, during the UK PACT stakeholders' engagement workshop on accelerating delivery of the Ikere Gorge Hydropower Project in Ibadan yesterday.

Delta Govt. Sues for Calm Over Community Land Dispute

The Delta State Government has called for calm following a land dispute between some landowners and estate developers in Ugbolu Community, Oshimili North Local Government Area of the state.

The Director of Protocol, Chief Sunday Onoriode, made the appeal on Monday while addressing protesters at the Government House, Asaba.

Onoriode assured the aggrieved parties of the government's swift intervention to resolve the dispute.

He commended the protesters for their peaceful conduct, noting that they had adopted the appropriate channel to air their grievances.

"I sincerely thank you for bringing your complaints to Government

House, Asaba. I am pleased that you did not take the law into your own hands, and I urge you to remain peaceful," he said.

He further assured them that the governor, whom he described as a firm advocate of the rule of law, would give the matter due attention and ensure justice.

"I have heard all you have said. As you know, our governor is a law-abiding citizen, and I can assure you that he will look into this matter and ensure that justice is served," he added.

Earlier, the group leader, Dr Ofili Okweose, said the protesters were at the Government House to express grievances over the alleged

wrongful acquisition of their land and the unlawful demolition of their properties.

Okweose said the affected land, spanning hundreds of hectares and owned by thousands of individuals—mostly civil servants—had been peacefully occupied for over two decades without dispute until recently.

"Our concern is that we acquired land in Ugbolu-Amachai quarters and have used it for years without hindrance. Nobody challenged us, and there was no contention whatsoever.

"Just a few weeks ago, someone brought in bulldozers, cleared the entire area and carved it into a layout," he said.

He alleged that investigations

suggested that some officials in the Ministry of Lands had been engaging with members of the Ugbolu community, creating the impression that the land was under government acquisition.

"But we know that government does not acquire land to hand over to estate developers for private business.

"If that happens, the court will nullify it. That is far from a legitimate government acquisition," he said.

Okweose further alleged collusion among some individuals, community members and estate developers to unlawfully sell the land under the guise of a state-backed project.

"The summary of what is happening is that some unscrupulous

senior civil servants are using the name of the state, in collaboration with some elements in Ugbolu and estate developers, to sell our land," he alleged.

He also questioned the legitimacy of the project, citing the absence of official markings or documentation typically required for government projects.

Okweose condemned the manner in which the demolition was allegedly carried out, describing it as violent and unlawful.

He added that the matter had been reported to the Delta State Police Command but claimed no action had been taken, prompting the peaceful protest.

DSS Detains “Justice Crack” Over Viral Army Feeding Video, Trial Fixed for May 25

The DSS on Monday arraigned Chidiebere Justice Mark, aka “Justice Crack,” before the Federal High Court in Abuja over a viral post alleging poor feeding of soldiers.

Mark was arrested by the Army over the weekend after a video and posts from his X handle, @JusticeCrack, went viral on April 28.

The DSS filed three counts against him: circulating false information to cause “annoyance, ill will, and hatred” under Section 24(1)(b) of the Cybercrimes Act; publishing material likely to cause fear and breach of peace under Section 59 of the

Criminal Code; and attempting to commit a felony by circulating a “derogatory video” likely to cause fear under Section 509 of the Criminal Code.

Justice Joyce Abdulmalik adjourned the case to May 25, 2026, for trial and possible bail hearing.

She ordered Mark remanded in DSS custody.

The DSS said the April 28 posts from Plot 88 Sabon-Lugbe, Abuja, generated “widespread negative public reactions.”

Meanwhile, there was tension at the Federal High Court in Abuja yesterday as a group of activists and youths protested

over the continued detention of blogger Justice Crack.

The incident occurred when operatives of the Department of State Services, DSS, attempted to escort the influencer out of the court following his arraignment.

In response, a group of youths formed a human blockade around the operatives, repeatedly chanting, “Free Justice Crack,” as they demanded his immediate release and described his detention as unjust.

The protesters were heard shouting, “We want to see the minister! (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation). Call the minister! Let him come out! Protest

is a fundamental human right!”

Some of the demonstrators called on Nigerians in Abuja to join them at the Ministry of Justice.

“Everybody, please come to the Ministry of Justice, we need you, Nigerians. They said Justice’s next court date is May 26, which means he will remain there for one month. Please help us and come out if you’re in Abuja,” one protester said.

Among those present at the protest were activists and influencers, including Omoyele Sowore and Peter Akah, who joined the crowd in demanding Justice Crack’s release.



Controller General, Federal Fire Service, Samuel Olumode (right), speaking with children during the commemoration of International Firefighters’ Day in Abuja yesterday.

Garo to be Sworn-in as Kano Deputy Governor Today

Kano State Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf will officially swear in his new deputy, Hon Murtala Sule Garo, on Tuesday, May 5, 2026.

The ceremony, according to a statement by the governor’s Special Adviser on Information, Ibrahim Adam, on Facebook, will take place

at 11:00 a.m. at the Coronation Hall inside the Government House in Kano.

He wrote: “His Excellency Gov. Abba Kabir Yusuf will swear in his deputy, Hon. Murtala Sule Garo, on Tuesday, 5th May 2026, by 11 am at Coronation Hall, Government House,

Kano.”

Senior government officials, party leaders, and other distinguished guests are expected to be present.

Garo’s appointment follows his confirmation by the Kano State House of Assembly.

Lawmakers approved him after he

passed a detailed screening process and security checks carried out by a committee led by the Deputy Speaker, Muhammad Bello.

At 48 years old, Murtala Sule Garo is an experienced political administrator who has spent over 20 years serving in both elected and appointed positions.

US Close to Delivering Israeli 'Gideon' KC-46 Refuelling Aircraft

After years of waiting, the US is close to delivering to Israel the first of at least six KC-46 midair refuelling aircraft for future potential attacks on Iran and other distant targets, the Defence Ministry announced on Monday.

The first of the KC-46 aircraft undertook a maiden test flight within the US, and is expected to be delivered to the Jewish state in around a month.

This delivery could be a game-changer in providing Israel with much greater independence regarding whether it may decide to strike the Islamic regime, the Yemen Houthis, and any other potential distant adversaries in the future, even if some later US administration may oppose such a strike.

In the short-term, the move is suddenly surprisingly less necessary and imminent than once imagined.

Israeli assumptions had always been that the IDF might need to attack Iran without American help, which could require midair refuelling.

The air force has had such a capability, but it has been limited.

However, ultimately Israel had some American help in attacking Iran, and has pushed its nuclear and ballistic missiles threats off by some years.

Still, those threats are not gone and could come back, and when they do, it is possible that a future US administration may be less ready to assist Israel, and may even oppose a strike.

In that case, the KC-46 will enable Israeli F-35s, F-16s, F-15s, and others to have much more significant midair refuelling capabilities.

Most of Iran is at least 1,500 kilometres away, some parts are 2,000 kilometres, and the Yemen Houthis are mostly at least 1,800 kilometres away, with some parts beyond 2,000 kilometres.

Recently, the air force revealed that it has learned some new fast take-off capabilities to be able to fly to closer portions of Iran and back without refuelling, but this significantly limited what targets can be hit within Iran, and how long the aircraft can remain in the sky if any part of the mission goes wrong or is delayed.

This Boeing KC-46 aircraft is the first of six tanker aircraft procured by the ministry's Mission to the US and is part of a wide-scale force buildup program managed by the ministry on behalf of the IDF, which includes purchasing additional F-35s and new F-15As as part of a new NIS 350 billion decade-long budget focused on boosting future military power and independence.

According to the ministry, the tanker aircraft - designated "Gideon" in Hebrew - will be equipped with Israeli systems and adapted to the air force's operational requirements, enabling it to extend operational range and maintain air superiority across all theatres.

In July 2025, sources warned that Israeli delays in moving forward with aspects of its purchasing process allowed Japan and Italy to jump ahead of it in terms of receiving additional KC-46 aircraft.

In fact, there had been points when Israel could have received the KC-46 aircraft in 2025, though at the very start, 2026 was the expected delivery time period.

In June 2023, The Jerusalem Post visited a Boeing KC-46 midair refuelling aircraft at a conference in Paris and participated in a briefing within the aircraft with US pilot Capt. Cody Nelson.

Nelson, who has flown missions all over the world, said the KC-46 was "like a mobile gas tank" that carries 207,000 pounds of fuel and can refuel a wide variety of aircraft, including the F-35, F-16, F-15 and F-22 (which America possesses but Israel does not), thereby covering Israel's various combat aircraft.



Iran: US Hormuz Escort Plan Would Breach Ceasefire

Iranian officials warned Monday that a US proposal to escort and guide commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz would constitute a violation of the ceasefire.

"Any American interference in the new maritime regime of the Strait of Hormuz will be considered a violation of the ceasefire," senior Iranian lawmaker Ibrahim Azizi said in a statement.

Other Iranian officials have stressed that Tehran would not back down from its position regarding control of the strategic waterway.

A statement issued Monday by the unified command of Iran's armed forces warned the US Navy against entering the Strait of Hormuz. "We have repeatedly stated that the security of the Strait of Hormuz is under the control of the armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and under all circumstances, any safe passage must be coordinated with the armed forces." The statement explicitly threatened to attack any foreign military forces, particularly US forces, that

attempt to enter or approach the strait.

Ali Nikzad, a member of the Iranian parliament, said in an interview with The Islamic Republic of Iran News Network (IRINN) over the weekend that the "Strait of Hormuz will never return to [its] pre-war state," and that ships associated with the US and its allies would only be allowed through if they pay war reparations, further underscoring Tehran's intention to maintain full control of the strait.

Nikzad added that Israeli vessels "will under no circumstances" be allowed passage.

Despite the US plan to assist stranded ships, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) maintained the security threat level in the Strait of Hormuz as "critical," according to a statement on Monday.

"The maritime security threat level in the SoH remains CRITICAL due to ongoing regional military operations. Mariners should expect increased naval presence,

enhanced force protection postures, potential VHF hailing, and congestion near anchorage areas," UKMTO said.

Trump's 'Project Freedom' initiative

In a statement on Sunday, US President Donald Trump said Washington would begin a maritime operation to escort commercial vessels out of the Strait of Hormuz starting Monday morning, Middle East time, framing the move as a humanitarian effort to ease mounting pressure on shipping routes.

Dubbed "Project Freedom," the initiative is intended to assist ships stranded in restricted waterways in and around the Persian Gulf. "This process, Project Freedom, will begin Monday morning, Middle East time," Trump said.

Trump noted the effort was launched following requests from countries whose vessels have been unable to exit the strait, describing them as "neutral and innocent bystanders." He added that the US would "guide their Ships safely out of these restricted

Waterways," allowing them to resume normal operations.

While warning that the US would use force if its efforts were disrupted, Trump added that American officials were engaged in "very positive discussions" with Iran that he said could lead to broader diplomatic progress.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, held a phone call early on Monday with Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, focusing on the evolving regional situation and Islamabad's ongoing diplomatic efforts to promote stability. Araghchi stressed that diplomacy remains "the only viable path" toward resolving tensions and achieving lasting peace in the region and beyond.

Trump has said that the latest proposal submitted by Tehran to end hostilities within 30 days was "not acceptable." Washington's plan to guide ships through Hormuz and Iran's rejection of the proposal have raised fears of renewed conflict that could ultimately collapse the fragile ceasefire.

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Army's Action Against "Justice Crack" As A 'Wartime' Imperative

Introduction: Nation At War Cannot Afford A Second Front

Nigeria is not at peace. Across the North East, North West, and North Central, our armed forces are locked in daily combat against terrorists and bandits. Thousands of soldiers are deployed forward, often without rotation, facing an enemy that watches every word on social media. In this environment, the difference between "free speech" and "subversive act" is not academic – it is life and death.

The Nigerian Army recently arrested a social media influencer, Justice Mark Chidiebere (known as "Justice Crack"), and handed him to civil authorities. His crime: systematically spreading content designed to turn soldiers against their commanders over welfare issues – beyond legitimate criticism into active incitement of insubordination. Public outcry has followed, with many calling the Army a silencer of whistleblowers. This statement argues the opposite: the Army acted lawfully, proportionately, and in the highest interest of national security.

What Justice Crack Actually Did

On 2 May 2026, the Army announced the arrest of Justice Crack alongside several soldiers. Investigations showed he had built direct communication lines with frontline troops. He did not merely amplify complaints about rations or equipment – he actively urged soldiers to question their commanders' legitimacy, refuse orders, and post videos attacking military hierarchy. Some soldiers admitted receiving small payments to share internal grievances that should have gone through proper channels.

Crucially, the Army did not court-martial the influencer. He was handed over to civilian police for normal criminal prosecution. That is not military dictatorship; that is constitutional democracy where no one – influencer or general – is above the law.

Why The Criticism Is Misplaced And Dangerous

First, critics confuse "whistleblowing" with "subversion." A real whistleblower reports specific, verifiable wrongdoing to lawful authorities – Defence Headquarters, Human Rights Commission, or the

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BY

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media with evidence. Justice Crack did none of that. He broadcast unverified, one-sided narratives meant to make soldiers feel abandoned. In a war zone, that is not transparency; it is psychological warfare.

Second, timing is everything. Isolated welfare lapses exist in every army – including the US, UK, and Russia. But during war, amplifying those lapses in real time to combat units hands the enemy a propaganda tool. Terrorist groups already use such posts to claim "the Nigerian Army is starving" or "commanders don't care," lowering troop morale and encouraging desertion.

Third, the Army acted with restraint. No soldier was shot. No journalist was jailed. The influencer was detained, investigated, and transferred to civilian police – exactly the same process for any civilian who incites factory workers to sabotage production during wartime. Why should the military be held to a lower standard?

Fourth, the slippery slope argument cuts both ways. Critics fear any arrest will clamp down on dissent. But the greater risk is inaction: if the military does nothing while influencers systematically undermine command authority, the result will be crumbling discipline, friendly fire, and avoidable deaths. Which is more humane – arresting one influencer for investigation, or allowing a thousand soldiers to die because they lost faith in their leaders?

The Harsh Reality of Wartime Morale

Military psychology is clear: a soldier who believes his nation has abandoned him hesitates. In counter-insurgency, hesitation kills.

The difference between a successful ambush and a fatal one is often split seconds. When a frontline soldier spends his rest time watching a viral video accusing his commander of stealing his meal allowance, trust in the chain of command erodes. Once eroded, it is nearly impossible to restore under fire.

The Nigerian Army has therefore not overreacted. It has sent a clear signal: social media is not a free-fire zone against our armed forces during active hostilities. Debate military policy in newspapers or on talk shows – that is welcome. But directly engaging serving soldiers to provoke indiscipline will face the law.

Conclusion: Accountability Must Be Shared

In a democracy under threat, rights come with responsibilities. The Army has a duty to protect itself from internal subversion just as it protects the nation from external enemies. The Justice Crack case was not an assault on free expression; it was a lawful intervention to prevent the weaponization of social media against combat morale. The widespread criticism – much of it based on incomplete facts – ironically proves the danger: misinformation spreads faster than truth.

Nevertheless, no institution is perfect. The military can improve, and so can influencers and the public. Therefore, the following recommendations are offered in good faith.

Recommendations For All Stakeholders

For the Nigerian Military: Establish a transparent, fast welfare grievance mechanism – a confidential hotline with a rapid-response team that

visits units within 48 hours of a complaint. Publish anonymised summaries of actions taken. Mandate pre-deployment social media training warning personnel against communicating with civilian influencers on internal matters. Adopt a clear public policy distinguishing legitimate criticism from prohibited incitement, published in English, Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba. When future arrests occur, release initial evidence (redacted for security) within 72 hours to prevent misinformation.

For Social Media Influencers: Before posting military content, ask three questions: Could this help an enemy? Could it break a soldier's spirit? Have I verified the claim through official channels? If yes to any, do not post. Nigerian criminal laws on cyberstalking, incitement, and sedition apply to you. If you wish to expose genuine shortcomings, send evidence to Defence Headquarters or recognised civil society groups – not by launching a viral campaign while the nation bleeds.

For Civil Society and Human Rights Organisations: Do not reflexively defend every person the military detains. Investigate each case on its merits. In the Justice Crack matter, ask to see the evidence before condemning. Work with the military to create accredited observer programmes for detention of civilian security suspects. Such cooperation will give you moral authority to criticise when the military truly oversteps.

For the General Public and Media: Resist turning every military-civilian clash into a viral outrage. The soldiers in uniform are your children, neighbours, and relatives. When you share a video mocking a soldier's boots or food, you are demoralising someone who may take a bullet for you tomorrow. Report genuine welfare failures through your state governor, National Assembly member, or Ministry of Defence – not by blowing up the dam online. Extend the same presumption of innocence to the military that you demand for civilians.

• Tanko is civil-military relations expert.