



Zulum Sets 60-Day Deadline for 400-Bed Teaching Hospital, Orders Completion of Orthopaedic Hospital **P.5**

NGF, CBN Strengthen Fiscal-Monetary Coordination on Inflation Targeting **P.4**



NGF Reaffirms Commitment to Advancing Women's Leadership **P.8**



Presidency Signals Breakthrough on State Police, Constitutional Changes Expected Soon **P.2**



R-L: Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation in Nigeria, **Prince Lateef Olasunkanmi Fagbemi** (SAN), Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives, **Rt. Hon. Benjamin Okezie Kalu**, Chief of Staff to the President, **Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila**, Deputy Senate President, **Senator Barau Jibrin** and Inspector General of Police (IGP), **Olatunji Rilwan Disu**, all members of the State Police Committee at the State House, Abuja recently.

The Federal Government has recorded significant progress in efforts to establish state police across Nigeria, with constitutional amendments required for its implementation expected to be introduced soon.

The disclosure was made by the Chief of Staff to the President, Hon Femi Gbajabiamila, following a high-

level consultative meeting on state policing convened by the Presidency at the State House in Abuja.

Speaking with State House correspondents after the meeting, Gbajabiamila revealed that discussions on the proposed framework began several months ago on the directive of President and have now advanced to the

constitutional amendment stage.

According to him, establishing state police requires extensive legal and constitutional work and cannot be implemented without the necessary legislative groundwork.

"We started deliberations in the last three or four months on how to go about the

establishment of state police as directed by Mr President. Establishing state police is not something that you do with the snap of the fingers. There is a lot involved in terms of constitution and legalities, and thank God we have now gained a lot of traction," he said.

Gbajabiamila explained that attention is currently focused on constitutional amendments

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

THE TEAM

Publisher

Dr. Abdulateef Shittu

Editor-in-Chief

Yunusa Tanko Abdullahi

Editorial Consultant

Dahiru Gani
Enam Obiosio

Production

Halima S. Ahmed

Senior Correspondents

Matthew Ayeni
Musa Ibrahim
Oluwatoyin Bamidele

Correspondents

June Ifebe
James Ahmed
Mohammed Ali
Susan Okoro
Peter Shehu
John Frank

Reporter

Albert Egbede

Graphics

June Ifebe

Page Planning

Emmanuel Olatunde

Photography

Matthew Ayeni
Safwan Yusuf Jibo

Enquiries

+234 (0)7033828294

51, Lake Chad Crescent,
Maitama, Abuja

COVER

Presidency Signals Breakthrough on State Police, Constitutional Changes Expected Soon



File Photo: The Nigeria Police

CONT'D FROM COVER

that would provide the legal basis for state police, after which enabling legislation would be developed to operationalise the new policing structure.

He noted that national discourse has largely moved beyond debating whether state police should exist and is now focused on designing an effective legal and institutional framework that would ensure accountability, efficiency and coordination between federal and sub-national security structures.

The Chief of Staff said President Tinubu, a long-time advocate of state police, would receive a comprehensive report on the outcome of the consultations.

The meeting forms part of ongoing engagements by the Federal Government aimed at developing a

“
...debating whether state police should exist and is now focused on designing an effective legal and institutional framework that would ensure accountability, efficiency and coordination between federal and sub-national security structures

workable framework for decentralised policing. Advocates of the initiative argue that state police would strengthen grassroots security,

improve intelligence gathering and enhance the ability of state governments to respond more effectively to local security threats.

President Tinubu has repeatedly maintained that Nigeria's evolving security challenges require innovative approaches, including greater involvement of states in maintaining law and order.

Among those who attended the meeting were Deputy Senate President, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Inspector-General of Police, alongside other senior government officials.

The renewed push for state police is widely regarded as one of the most consequential security reforms under the current administration and could significantly reshape Nigeria's internal security architecture once the required constitutional and legislative processes are completed.

EDITORIAL

The Birth Of The NGF Weekly Newsletter

"It is time we tell our own story, the NGF story- not through borrowed voices and lenses, or external media filters, but through a deliberate, pragmatic platform that understands the NGF through its nuances",

Before now, the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) has been misunderstood, misrepresented, and misquoted — not for a lack of achievements but for a tragic deficit in communication.

With the vision and the challenge of the NGF chairman to the Secretariat to reengineer our communication strategy, we are delighted to introduce "The NGF Weekly" one of several strategic communications stable created which includes - state Documentaries, state sector specific Documentaries and aggressive social media posturing..

The new internal newsletter rises not only as a mouthpiece, but as a credible platform to correct the narrative and restore public confidence in Nigeria's policy and advocacy-driven hub.

In the past, NGF communication structures had been lethargic, inconsistent, and often reactive.

The NGF as a credible policy hub has been rendering oversight and managing and domesticating reforms across sectors - agriculture, energy, tax and finance, education, digital innovation, environment & climate change, entrepreneurship programs, NASS assembly liaison, investment, gender issues

and above all capacity development via community of practice and peer learning across the subnational. All of these great works and interventions have gone unnoticed because the NGF had largely failed to communicate these successes with clarity and consistency. In this silence, distortions flourished. In these delays, misinformation had taken root.

This was not just a forum's communication failure — it was a vacuum of narrative power. It is precisely in this void that the NGF Weekly and other communication ideas emerged as a strategic imperative. Our aim here is not to whitewash our actions or spread propaganda.

“

The new internal newsletter rises not only as a mouthpiece, but as a credible platform to correct the narrative and restore public confidence in Nigeria's policy and advocacy-driven hub

We are not beholden to spin doctors. We are beholden only to the facts, figures, and the truth — the verifiable, policy-driven, people-impacting truth of NGF's reform journey.

We are committed to amplifying facts, not fiction. The subnationals are not standing still. They are progressing— and moving fast and creating impact across all sectors but without strategic storytelling rooted in fact and transparency, that movement may be missed, misinterpreted or maligned.

To our stakeholders and partners: we are implementing reforms. But reforms do not speak alone. The NGF Weekly is here to do just that, professionally, objectively, and impactfully.

To the subnational, you are our principals in the reform process. Let your voice be heard.

Let your innovations and contributions to national development be documented in your own Newsletter founded on the principle of national interest above noise.

It is time we tell the NGF story, the Nigerian story, not through borrowed voices or external mediafilters, but through a deliberate, intelligent platform that understands the nation and its nuances.

This is not a plea. This is a call to action. Let the story of subnational rebirth be told by those who live it, lead it, and believe in it.

Urban Renewal in Action: Anambra Moves to Unlock Economic Value Through Strategic Redevelopment

Governor Chukwuma Charles Soludo of Anambra State has commenced a comprehensive urban regeneration initiative in Nnewi aimed at revitalising dormant public assets, improving urban infrastructure, and enhancing the city's economic competitiveness.

During an inspection tour of key locations across Nnewi, the Governor assessed infrastructure challenges and identified opportunities for redevelopment as part of a broader strategy to modernise one of Nigeria's leading industrial and commercial centres.

A major focus of the visit was the Nkwo Nnewi Triangle, where a shopping complex that has remained unused for approximately 17 years is set for rehabilitation and reintegration into the local economy. The facility, originally conceived as a commercial hub, is expected to be repurposed to support business activity, create jobs, and improve service delivery within the city.

The initiative reflects a growing emphasis among state governments on maximising the value of existing public assets rather than relying solely on new infrastructure projects. By restoring underutilised facilities to productive use, states can expand economic opportunities while improving the efficiency of public investment.

The Governor also inspected the Post



Executive Governor of Anambra State, His Excellency, **Professor Charles Chukwuma Soludo**

Office area and the High Court premises, exploring options for integrating the sites into a more functional urban framework that enhances accessibility and supports commercial activity. The exercise forms part of an effort to align physical infrastructure with the evolving needs of residents and businesses.

Recognising the importance of

housing in sustaining economic growth, the administration further identified locations for strategic residential developments aimed at supporting Nnewi's expanding workforce. Adequate housing, transportation links, and public amenities remain critical components of urban competitiveness, particularly in rapidly growing economic centres.

Another key aspect of the regeneration programme is the planned conversion of underutilised open spaces into public parks, recreational facilities, and commercial areas. Such interventions are expected to improve environmental quality, strengthen community engagement, and stimulate local economic activity.

The initiative offers an example of how subnational governments can leverage urban planning, infrastructure renewal, and asset optimisation to drive local development. As Nigerian cities continue to experience rapid population growth and increased demand for services, strategic redevelopment of existing public assets is emerging as an important tool for promoting sustainable urbanisation and inclusive economic growth.

Construction and redevelopment activities are expected to commence in the coming weeks. The inspection tour was attended by senior officials, including the Commissioners for Works, Housing, and Environment, as well as local government leaders from Nnewi North, Nnewi South, and Ekwusigbo.

For state governments across the federation, the Nnewi redevelopment initiative underscores the role of proactive urban governance in unlocking economic value, improving public spaces, and strengthening the foundations for long-term growth.

NATIONAL NEWS

From Blueprint to Mandate: How Nigeria's Digital Public Infrastructure Journey Is Taking Shape

The most difficult phase of any public policy reform is rarely its conception. It is the transition from strategy to implementation, the moment when ambitious plans must confront institutional realities.

Nigeria's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) agenda has now reached that moment.

In September 2025, the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), in partnership with the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), convened a high-level technical workshop to advance the development of a national Digital Public Infrastructure framework. The engagement brought together state officials, technology experts, development partners and policy practitioners to deliberate on the architecture that would underpin Nigeria's digital future.

At the time, the emphasis was on design. Discussions centred on establishing common standards for data exchange, strengthening interoperability across government platforms, enabling secure digital communication, and building governance structures capable of supporting a connected public sector. The process was deliberately collaborative, allowing sub-national governments to contribute directly to the shaping of a framework that would ultimately affect service delivery across all levels of government.

The workshop reflected an important principle: successful digital transformation cannot be imposed. It must be co-created.

Eight months later, however, the conversation has shifted decisively from planning to execution.

Speaking at the International Civil Service Conference in Abuja, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, represented by the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, announced that the era of manual government processes was coming to an end. The Federal Government disclosed that nearly 40 ministries, departments and agencies had already transitioned to paperless operations and directed the wider public service to accelerate its own migration to digital workflows.

The message was unequivocal. Digital transformation is no longer a future aspiration; it is now a national imperative.

Viewed together, the September 2025 workshop and the June 2026 presidential directive represent two stages of the same reform journey. The first established the blueprint. The second created the mandate.

Importantly, the earlier consultations ensured that states were not mere observers in the process. Through the NGF-led engagements, governors and senior state officials were able to interrogate proposals, identify operational realities and help shape the technical foundations of the emerging DPI ecosystem. That collaborative approach has positioned states as active architects rather than passive recipients of reform.

Yet the success of the national agenda will ultimately depend on what happens beyond Abuja.

A recent readiness assessment commissioned through the NGF revealed significant disparities in digital maturity across the federation. While a small number of states—notably Akwa Ibom and Oyo—demonstrated advanced levels of preparedness, many others continue to face substantial challenges in infrastructure, institutional capacity, digital skills and governance systems. The findings underscored a critical reality: Nigeria's digital transformation is advancing at uneven speeds.

This disparity represents one of the most significant risks to the success of the DPI programme.

Digital Public Infrastructure is often misunderstood as a technology project. In reality, it is an institutional reform programme enabled by technology. Its effectiveness depends not merely on software deployment but on the existence of interconnected systems capable of supporting government operations and public service delivery at scale.

Globally, successful DPI ecosystems rest on



three foundational pillars: trusted digital identity systems, efficient digital payment infrastructure, and secure data-exchange frameworks. Nigeria has made considerable progress in the first two areas. The country has expanded its digital identity ecosystem and built one of Africa's most sophisticated interbank payment networks. What remains less developed is the layer that allows these systems to communicate seamlessly with one another through standardised and secure data-sharing protocols.

Without interoperability, digital systems remain fragmented. With it, they become public infrastructure.

This is where the role of state governments becomes indispensable.

For most citizens, interactions with government occur primarily at the sub-national level—whether through healthcare facilities, schools, tax authorities, land registries, social protection programmes or local government services. The quality of Nigeria's digital transformation will therefore be measured not by the sophistication of federal platforms alone but by the extent to which digital services become accessible, integrated and reliable within states.

The NGF occupies a strategic position in this transition. Through its convening power, policy coordination role and sustained engagement with federal institutions and development partners, the Forum has helped establish a shared understanding of the reforms required. More importantly, it has created a platform through which states can learn from one another, share implementation experiences and collectively address capacity gaps.

The challenge now is execution.

The federal government has signalled its intention to phase out manual processes. The policy direction is clear. The question is whether implementation across the federation can keep pace.

States that move quickly stand to gain significant advantages: improved service delivery, stronger revenue administration, greater transparency, reduced administrative costs and enhanced citizen trust. Those that lag risk widening existing developmental disparities and limiting their ability to participate fully in the emerging digital economy.

Nigeria's DPI journey has therefore entered a new phase. The consultations have been held. The frameworks have been designed. The consensus has largely been built.

What began as a blueprint is rapidly becoming an operational mandate.

The future of Nigeria's digital transformation will not be determined solely by federal directives or technological innovation. It will be shaped by the capacity of states to translate policy into practice, modernise institutions, and build the digital foundations required for twenty-first-century governance.

The era of planning is giving way to the era of delivery. The success of the national vision now depends on how effectively the states rise to the challenge.

NGF Strips

NGF, CBN Strengthen Fiscal-Monetary Coordination on Inflation Targeting

The Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) Secretariat and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) have reaffirmed the need for stronger coordination between fiscal and monetary authorities as the country advances towards the full implementation of an Inflation Targeting Framework.

The commitment emerged during a joint webinar hosted by the NGF Secretariat and the CBN, where it was also disclosed that the framework was designed to promote price stability and sustainable economic growth.

Participants at the webinar included state government representatives, finance commissioners, statisticians, and economic policymakers to examine the role of subnational governments in supporting Nigeria's transition to an inflation-targeting regime.

Speaking during the session, Dr. Olubunjo Ajilore of the CBN described inflation targeting as a forward-looking monetary policy framework anchored on clearly communicated inflation objectives, transparency, and accountability.

He noted that Nigeria commenced the transition process in 2024 and has recorded significant progress, with inflation declining from 34.8 per cent in December 2024 to 15.1 per cent in February 2026. Full implementation of the framework is projected for 2028.

Participants noted that while the responsibility for monetary policy rests with the CBN, state governments have an important role to play in influencing inflation outcomes through fiscal planning, expenditure management, borrowing decisions, and efforts to strengthen internally generated revenue.

The discussions underscored the importance of fiscal discipline, prudent debt management, and alignment of state-level fiscal policies with broader national macroeconomic objectives.

The webinar also examined key challenges to inflation management, including fiscal dominance, heavy dependence on Federation Account allocations, and structural factors that continue to drive price pressures.

State officials called for deeper engagement in the implementation process and emphasized the need to complement monetary measures with policies that expand domestic production and address supply-side constraints.

A major focus of the engagement was the role of data in supporting effective economic management. Participants agreed that successful inflation targeting depends on the availability of timely, reliable, and forward-looking data.

States were therefore encouraged to strengthen their statistical agencies, improve real-time data collection systems, and invest in digital tools and analytical capabilities to support evidence-based decision-making.

In support of these objectives, the NGF Secretariat highlighted the establishment of its Economic Intelligence Unit and Futures Lab, initiatives aimed at enhancing data-driven policymaking, economic forecasting, and strategic planning across states.

The CBN further committed to institutionalising engagement with state governments through regular consultations, data-sharing platforms, technical assistance, and closer collaboration with state finance and statistics officials. In response, state governments pledged to strengthen their data systems and support ongoing coordination efforts.

The webinar concluded with a shared commitment by the CBN, NGF Secretariat, and state governments to deepen collaboration in the implementation of the Inflation Targeting Framework and to foster a more stable and resilient macroeconomic environment for Nigeria.



SUBNATIONAL NEWS

Zulum Sets 60-Day Deadline for 400-Bed Teaching Hospital, Orders Completion of Orthopaedic Hospital in Four Months

Borno State Governor, Professor Babagana Umara Zulum, on Friday, inspected the multi-billion naira 400-bed capacity Kashim Ibrahim University as part of his ongoing inspection visit to ambitious projects being executed by his administration.

Zulum on Monday inspected the 4,000-capacity International Conference Center, Post Office flyover, and the 2.5km Tandari-Kasuwan Shani-Neital Shoe and Ternary road.

Addressing journalists shortly after inspecting the facility, the Governor assured that the flagship hospital will be completed and ready for operation within the next 60 days, noting that over 90 percent of the work has already been executed and that all medical equipment and installations required for the hospital have been fully procured and delivered.

"The equipment meant for this hospital has all been purchased, procured, and delivered. You can see the level of development in the hospital, and the consultant has informed us that over 90 percent of the work required has been completed," Zulum said.

The Governor expressed confidence that the remaining work would be concluded within two months, paving the way for the commencement of services.

"We believe that within the next 60 days, we will round off all the outstanding works, and the hospital will be ready for utilisation. Regarding human resources for health, approval has already been granted, and about 350 staff members have been employed. We are set to go and ensure that this hospital, which has been our dream project, comes to stay," he added.



Executive Governor of Borno State, (L) **Professor Babagana Zulum** during one of his infrastructure tour in the state

Governor Zulum remarked that his administration had invested heavily in healthcare infrastructure across the state and was determined to ensure effective management and maintenance of the new hospital.

According to the Governor, the state government has resolved that the new facility would operate under a carefully structured management model that balances accessibility with sustainability.

"Business as usual will not be feasible. The cardinal objective of any government is to bring succor to the people, particularly the less privileged. However, we must establish certain standards for

costing. We cannot charge like a private hospital, but we also cannot make everything completely free. There must be a minimum threshold that will ensure the sustainability of the hospital," Zulum stated.

The Governor further stressed the need for full automation of the hospital's operations, particularly its billing and management systems, to guarantee transparency, accountability, and efficiency.

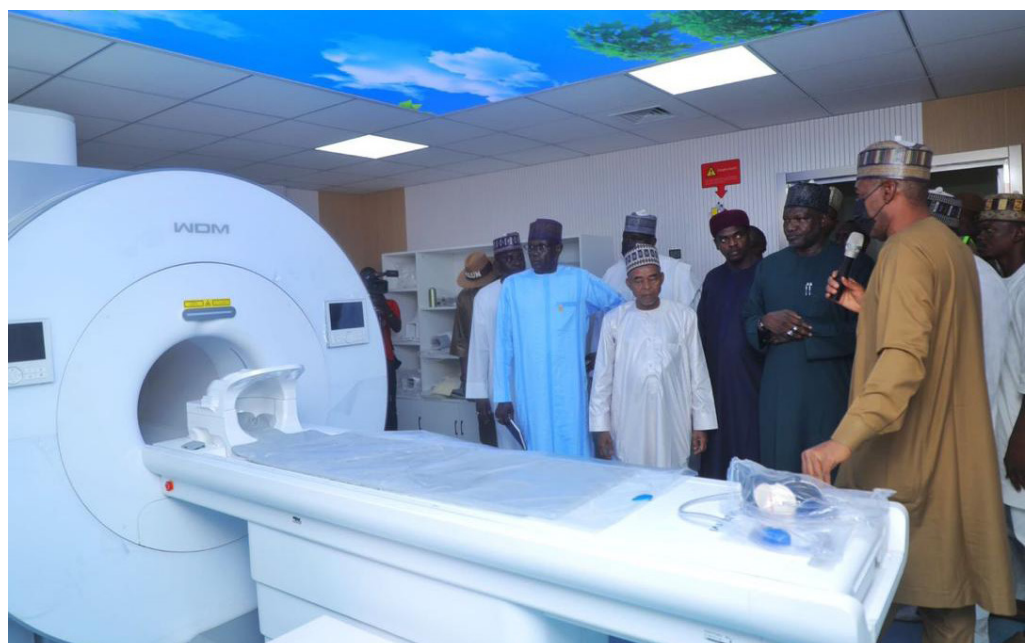
"This hospital has the capacity to provide services not only to our people but also to those from neighboring countries. It will become a referral center for quality healthcare, provided it is managed

effectively and sustainably," the Governor added.

Governor Babagana Umara Zulum also inspected the 300-bed State Orthopedic Hospital along Dikwa Road, which is at 85% completion, and directed that it be completed within the next four months.

He also inspected the ongoing construction of the road network at Maiduguri Industrial Hub.

The Governor was accompanied by the Secretary to the State Government, Hon. Bukar Tijani; the Acting Chief of Staff, Dr. Babagana Mustapha Mallumbe; Special Advisers; Permanent Secretaries; and other senior government officials.



SUBNATIONAL NEWS

Oyebanji Inaugurates Centre for Newborn Health Research and Innovation at EKSUTH

...Says Facility Will Drive Cutting-Edge Research, Reduce Neonatal Mortality



His Excellency, **Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji**, Governor of Ekiti State, commissioning a health facility in the state

Ekiti State Governor, Mr Biodun Oyebanji on Friday commissioned a state-of-the-art Centre for Newborn Health Research and Innovation (CeNHRI) at the University Teaching Hospital, Ado Ekiti, describing the facility as a major milestone in his administration's effort to improve maternal and newborn healthcare delivery in the State and the country at large.

Speaking while commissioning the facility, which is the first in Nigeria focusing solely on newborn, Governor Oyebanji said the centre would serve as a hub for cutting-edge research, innovation and clinical excellence aimed at addressing challenges associated with neonatal care and reduce infant mortality rate in the state and beyond.

Governor Oyebanji maintained that the facility reflects his government's commitment to advancing scientific knowledge and reducing neonatal mortality, adding that the centre will serve as a platform for innovation, research, capacity building and evidence based healthcare intervention aimed at improving the survival and well-being of mothers and newborns.

Lamenting that thousands of African newborns die annually from preventable causes, particularly within the first few days, the Governor said the centre represents collective response to these challenges through science, innovation and collaboration.

According to him, the facility will serve as meeting point for researchers, clinicians, policymakers, development partners and communities to work together and develop practical solutions that save lives.

Governor Oyebanji said he was confident that the centre would soon produce ground breaking research, train future generation of healthcare professionals and influence healthcare

policies.

He thanked the state's development partners for their collaborations in advancing the health sector in the state.

"Today marks another significant milestone in our collective efforts to strengthen healthcare delivery, advance scientific knowledge, and improve the survival and well-being of mothers and newborns across Nigeria and the African continent.

"While this center is located in Ado Ekiti, the capital of the states, its mission extends far beyond our borders. The Center for Newborn Health Research and Innovation has been deliberately conceived as an african focused institutions that will generate knowledge, develop solutions, strengthen health systems and contribute meaningfully to remarkable reduction in neonatal mortality across the continent.", he added

Earlier in his remarks, the Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Prof Mohamed Ali Pate, who was represented by Dr Samuel Oyeniyi, commended Governor Oyebanji and the state government for the establishment of the centre, describing it as timely, strategic and transformative. He noted that the facility represents a bold step in the bid to strengthen healthcare delivery and improve outcomes for mother and newborn in Nigeria.

He said the facility reflects the growing recognition that Nigeria must not only consume global health knowledge but must also produce it.

The Minister added that the Federal Ministry of Health remains firmly committed to reducing neonatal mortality and ensuring that every Nigerian newborn has the opportunity to survive, thrive and reach full developmental potential

He expressed optimism that the centre would serve as a leading hub for research, innovation and collaboration, bringing



together experts and stakeholders to generate evidence-based solutions needed to further advance newborn survival and strengthen healthcare across the country.

Also in his address, the Commissioner for Health and Human Service, Dr Oyebanji Filani thanked Governor Oyebanji for his commitment to strengthening the state's healthcare system through strategic investment in infrastructure, research, and human capital development. He commended the Governor for his visionary and consistent

support for initiatives aimed at improving maternal and newborn health outcomes in the state..

Describing the facility as a landmark achievement that reflects the Governor's administration to position Ekiti as a centre of excellence in healthcare delivery, the Commissioner said the centre would not only enhance clinical practice and training but would also contribute significantly to reducing neonatal mortality and improve overall health outcome for mothers and children in the state and beyond



SUBNATIONAL NEWS

Gombe Leads National Healthcare Ranking as Emir Commends Seven Years of Development Gains

By Misili Uba

Gombe State has earned national recognition for its healthcare performance, emerging as the highest-ranked state in residents' satisfaction with public hospital services, according to the latest StatiSense assessment for 2025.

The ranking places Gombe first nationwide in public perception of the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of healthcare services, ahead of Jigawa, Adamawa, Niger, Osun, Yobe, Benue, Akwa Ibom, Kebbi, Bauchi, Oyo and Plateau states.

The recognition reflects sustained investments in healthcare infrastructure and service delivery under the administration of Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya. Over the past seven years, the state has undertaken extensive upgrades of health facilities, including the renovation of the Gombe State Specialist Hospital, rehabilitation of general hospitals across the senatorial districts and revitalisation of primary healthcare centres in communities across the state.

The government has also prioritised workforce development, the provision of medical equipment, strengthened referral systems and expanded access to healthcare through the Gombe State Contributory Healthcare Scheme (Go-Health). These interventions have contributed to improved healthcare



Executive Governor of Gombe State, His Excellency, **Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya**

access and strengthened public confidence in the state's health system.

The healthcare milestone coincided with the seventh anniversary of the Inuwa Yahaya administration, during which the

Emir of Gombe, Alhaji (Dr.) Abubakar Shehu Abubakar III, commended the state government's development efforts during the traditional Sallah homage at Government House.

The Emir noted that the period has witnessed significant investments in infrastructure, economic development and public service delivery. He highlighted projects such as the Three-Arms Zone, Muhammadu Buhari Industrial Park, Agro-Livestock Development Zone, road networks, water infrastructure, educational facilities and healthcare upgrades as evidence of the state's development trajectory.

He also acknowledged initiatives aimed at strengthening security and urban development, including the establishment of the Ministry of Internal Security and Home Affairs and ongoing urban renewal projects across the state capital.

Responding, Governor Inuwa Yahaya reiterated the administration's commitment to sustaining development gains and strengthening partnerships with traditional institutions and other stakeholders. He emphasised that long-term development requires continuity, collective responsibility and sustained investment in critical sectors.

The twin developments—national recognition for healthcare performance and endorsement from the traditional institution—underscore the role of sustained sectoral reforms and strategic investments in advancing development outcomes at the subnational level.

Misili Uba is the Director General, Press, Government House, Gombe.

Lagos Unveils N10bn Cooperative Finance Scheme for MSMEs

The Lagos State Government has launched a N10 billion financing initiative aimed at expanding access to affordable credit for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through cooperative societies.

The programme, known as the Lagos State Access to Finance for MSMEs through Cooperatives (LASMECO), provides non-collateralised loans of up to N10 million at a single-digit annual interest rate of nine per cent, with a six-month moratorium and repayment period of up to 36 months.

Speaking during the 2026 Ministerial Press Briefing in Alausa, the Commissioner for Commerce, Cooperatives, Trade and Investment, Mrs. Folashade Ambrose-Medebem, said the initiative was designed to address longstanding barriers to finance faced by small businesses, particularly limited access to affordable credit.

The state government has committed N5 billion as its counterpart contribution under the scheme, which was launched in partnership with the Bank of Industry (BoI) in May 2025.

According to the commissioner, LASMECO is intended to deepen financial inclusion, strengthen enterprise growth, promote business formalisation and support job creation across the state. The programme adopts a cooperative-based financing model to improve access to capital for underserved businesses



Executive Governor of Lagos State, His Excellency, **Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu**

while strengthening grassroots entrepreneurship structures.

To support implementation, Lagos has engaged 19 business accelerators to provide mentorship, business advisory services, monitoring support and market access opportunities for beneficiaries. Applications are now open to eligible cooperative societies across the state's 57 Local Governments and Local Council

Development Areas (LCDAs).

Implementation is being coordinated through a cooperative digitalisation Special Purpose Vehicle involving the Ministry of Commerce, Cooperatives, Trade and Investment, Asset Matrix Microfinance Bank, SEKAT, QooP and Imade Forte.

The initiative has attracted national recognition, with LASMECO being

adopted by the 16th National Council on Industry, Trade and Investment as a model framework for MSME financing reforms across Nigeria.

The programme aligns with the economic development agenda of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, particularly efforts to stimulate industrial growth, expand employment opportunities and support women- and youth-led enterprises.

FEATURES

NGF Reaffirms Commitment to Advancing Women's Leadership



Hauwa Haliru, Director, Gender, Nigeria Governors' Forum, NGF speaking at the the Women in Leadership Cross-Sector Convening recently in Abuja.

The Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) has reaffirmed its commitment to promoting women's leadership and strengthening gender-inclusive governance through its participation in the Women in Leadership Cross-Sector Convening.

The event brought together established and emerging women leaders from across governance, business, and civil society to strengthen networks, exchange practical insights, and advance collaborative approaches to increasing women's representation in leadership and decision-making roles.

Speaking at the convening, the NGF Director of Gender Affairs, Barr Hauwa Haliru-Hassan underscored the importance of collective action in addressing barriers to women's leadership and creating pathways for greater participation across sectors.

She highlighted the work of the Nigeria Women in Leadership Coalition, a platform that brings together leading women's leadership organisations and governance stakeholders to advance women's representation through coordinated advocacy, evidence-based engagement, and policy reform.

According to the Director, the Coalition serves as an important bridge between advocacy and governance,

helping to drive policy adoption, strengthen state-level commitments, and support workplace reforms that promote equal opportunities and inclusive leadership.

The Coalition comprises key organisations including Women in Management, Business and Public Service (WIMBIZ), Women in Successful Careers (WISCAR), Women in Leadership Advancement Network (WILAN), and the Nigeria Governors' Forum, working together to amplify women's voices and influence in leadership spaces.

She noted that the Coalition's overarching goal is to increase women's representation and influence across political leadership, public appointments, corporate governance, and workplace policy development. By fostering a unified platform for engagement, the Coalition seeks to move beyond fragmented advocacy efforts and secure measurable commitments that advance gender equality and inclusive leadership.

The convening reaffirmed the commitment of participating organisations to building a more inclusive leadership landscape and highlighted the growing momentum behind collaborative efforts to expand opportunities for women across Nigeria.



L-R **Ekemini Apkpan**, Executive Secretary Women in Successful Careers (WISCAR), **Omowunmi Akingbohunbe**, Executive Director Women in Management, Business and Public Service (WIMBIZ); **Abosede George-Ogan**, Founder Women in Leadership Advancement Network (WILAN) Global and **Hauwa Haliru Hassan**, Director Gender Affairs Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat

NGF Explores Clean Cooking Solutions Through Natural Gas Initiative



R-L: **Dr. Abdulateef Shittu**, Director General, NGF, **Obiora Nnaji**, Executive Director, Finance and Administration watch as representatives of SEAP demonstrate how the innovative Cooking solution works during a presentation at the NGF secretariat recently

The Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) hosted representatives of SEAP on 3 June 2026 for a strategic engagement on expanding access to clean cooking solutions through the adoption of natural gas technology across Nigeria.

The meeting forms part of ongoing efforts to identify innovative approaches to addressing energy poverty, improving public health outcomes, reducing environmental degradation, and advancing sustainable development across the states.

During the presentation, SEAP outlined the potential benefits of the proposed initiative, including increased access to cleaner cooking energy, reduced reliance on traditional biomass fuels, and opportunities for economic empowerment through local distribution networks.

NGF officials and stakeholders welcomed the proposal and engaged in extensive discussions on key implementation considerations, including affordability for households, infrastructure requirements, distribution logistics, environmental sustainability, scalability, and alignment with Nigeria's broader energy transition objectives.

Participants also examined the

potential role of state governments in supporting wider adoption through strategic partnerships, policy frameworks, and targeted interventions designed to improve access to clean cooking technologies.

Stakeholders emphasized the importance of practical demonstrations, evidence from successful implementation models, and the development of a comprehensive framework that addresses last-mile distribution, accessibility, and long-term sustainability.

The discussions highlighted the potential of clean cooking solutions to deliver multiple development benefits, including improved public health, environmental protection, job creation, and economic empowerment, particularly for low- and middle-income households.

The NGF reaffirmed its commitment to exploring innovative solutions that enhance citizens' welfare and contribute to sustainable development outcomes across Nigeria's states.

The meeting concluded with an agreement to undertake further technical engagements and assessments to evaluate the viability and potential impact of the proposed initiative before wider consideration by state governments.



R-L: **Obiora Nnaji**, Executive Director Finance & Admin, NGF, **Dr. Abdulateef Shittu**, Director General, NGF, **Obiora Nnaji**, Executive Director, Finance and a representatives of SEAP during a meeting at the NGF secretariat during the innovative Cooking solution demonstration recently

FEATURES

NGF Spotlights States' Mining Potential at Maiden SOMEA 2026

The Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), through its Solid Minerals Desk under the Environment, SDGs and Investment Programme, participated in the maiden edition of the Solid Minerals Excellence Awards (SOMEA) 2026 held at the Abuja Continental Hotel, reinforcing its commitment to promoting state participation in Nigeria's rapidly evolving mining sector.

Representing the Director-General of the Forum at the event were Ms. Aisha Yaman, Senior Solid Minerals Analyst, and Ms. Rafiat Olamide Malik, Human Resources Manager. The gathering attracted a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including miners, investors, regulators, policymakers, financiers, and industry leaders, reflecting growing confidence in the country's solid minerals industry.

The event featured leading operators such as Segilola Resources, Eta Zuma Group, African Natural Resources and Mines Limited, BUA Cement, Julius Berger Nigeria Plc and African Industries Group. Representatives of Fidelity Bank Plc, Wema Bank Plc and Bank of Industry were also present, highlighting increasing financial sector interest in supporting mineral sector investments.

Delivering the keynote address, Dr. Dele Alake described SOMEA as more than an awards platform, noting that it was conceived to promote best practices, strengthen investor confidence and position Nigeria as Africa's premier mining destination. The vision, he noted, aligns with ongoing efforts to deepen subnational participation and unlock the economic potential of the sector.

A major highlight of the



Executive Secretary Solid Mineral Development Fund, **Hajiya Fatima Umaru Shinkafi** (left); Director of the Investments Promotion and Mineral Trade Department at Federal Ministry of Solid Minerals Development, **Dr. Esther Udo**; President The SOMEA and Chief Executive Officer Blackgold Energy Authorities, **Dr. Oladunni Owo**; Minister of Solid Minerals Development **Dr. Dele Alake**; Director General Nigeria Mining Cadastre Office, **Engr. Obadiah Simon Nkom**; Director-General, Nigeria Geological Survey Agency, **Prof. Olusegun Ige** and Director General Nigeria Institute of Mining and Geosciences, **Prof. Suleiman Hassan** at the event.

evening was the recognition of Edo State as the State with the Highest Royalty Contribution. The award underscored the benefits of effective governance, policy consistency and strong political commitment in harnessing mineral resources for economic development.

For the NGF, the recognition offers an important lesson for other states seeking to maximise the benefits of their mineral

endowments. Edo State's achievement demonstrates how deliberate policy implementation and institutional coordination can transform natural resources into sustainable revenue streams and broader economic opportunities.

The event also showcased the increasing role of innovation in the mining industry. Headline sponsor dGold, which operates at the intersection

of mining, digital infrastructure and asset tokenisation, highlighted emerging opportunities for technology-driven growth across the value chain.

Speaking during the event, SOMEA Chief Executive Officer, Femi Da Silva, said the quality of nominees and award recipients reflected the growing momentum, innovation and professionalism shaping Nigeria's solid minerals

landscape.

NGF's participation in SOMEA 2026 forms part of its broader engagement in national conversations on governance, investment promotion and state-level participation in the mining sector. The Forum noted that the future success of Nigeria's mineral economy will depend significantly on the ability of governors, state institutions and host communities to work collaboratively in creating an enabling environment for responsible and sustainable mining.

As the sector continues to attract investment and policy attention, the NGF believes that examples such as Edo State's provide a practical roadmap for other states seeking to leverage solid minerals as a catalyst for economic diversification, revenue generation and inclusive development.

“

The award underscored the benefits of effective governance, policy consistency and strong political commitment in harnessing mineral resources for economic development

FEATURES

NGF Explores Rwanda's Irembo Model to Advance Digital Public Infrastructure Across States

The Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) Secretariat has underscored the importance of stronger inter-state collaboration in accelerating the development of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), drawing lessons from Rwanda's globally recognised Irembo platform.

This was the focus of a peer-learning webinar titled "From Silos to Scale: Understanding Digital Public Infrastructure – Lessons from Rwanda's Irembo," which featured the Chief Executive Officer of Irembo, Israel Bimpe, as keynote speaker.

The session convened over 110 senior government officials, including Heads of Service, commissioners, permanent secretaries, and ICT leaders from across Nigeria, to explore how integrated digital systems can enhance public service delivery, improve revenue generation, and strengthen citizen trust in government.

In his opening remarks, Professor Dauda Olalekan Yinusa, Executive Director of Policy, Strategy and Research at the NGF Secretariat, emphasised that DPI is fundamentally a governance issue rather than a technology project. He noted that fragmented systems for identity management, payments, and service delivery often create inefficiencies, while integrated digital foundations can significantly improve government performance and citizen experience.

Sharing Rwanda's experience, Bimpe explained that Irembo was established to provide citizens with a "zero trips, zero paper" experience when accessing government services. The platform currently hosts more than 280 public services and processed over 10 million transactions in 2025. Through a network of more than 7,000 community agents and multiple digital access channels, Irembo has expanded service delivery to citizens regardless of literacy levels, internet access, or device ownership.

He identified several factors behind the platform's success, including a unified digital identity system, interoperable data architecture, open payment rails, and the redesign of government processes prior to digitisation. According to him, digital transformation should focus on



simplifying public services rather than merely automating existing bureaucratic procedures.

The webinar featured robust discussions on digital identity coverage, interoperability, artificial intelligence, digital literacy, and the adaptation of Rwanda's model within Nigeria's federal system. Participants

also highlighted the need for a coordinated framework to address varying levels of digital maturity across states.

The role of artificial intelligence in public service delivery was another key area of discussion. Bimpe stressed the importance of data sovereignty and advocated for locally controlled AI

infrastructure to safeguard citizen data while supporting innovation.

A recurring theme throughout the session was the need for stronger coordination among states. Participants proposed structured peer-learning mechanisms and closer collaboration between state ICT agencies, the NGF Secretariat, and national institutions, including the National Information Technology Development Agency.

The webinar also introduced a new capacity-building initiative by the NGF Academy and Leadership Centre, which is developing a free online course on artificial intelligence for public officials through its E-Learning Management System (ELMS).

Looking ahead, the NGF Secretariat announced plans for a study visit to Rwanda later this year and is considering the development of a DPI maturity framework to help states assess progress and identify practical pathways for implementation.

The session concluded with a shared recognition that Digital Public Infrastructure presents a significant opportunity for states to improve service delivery, strengthen internally generated revenue, reduce leakages, and foster greater citizen confidence through more efficient and integrated governance systems.

“Through a network of more than 7,000 community agents and multiple digital access channels, Irembo has expanded service delivery to citizens regardless of literacy levels, internet access, or device ownership

Moments Of The Week

It was all fun and emotions as staff and colleagues, gathered to celebrate the send-forth ceremony of Mallam Ibrahim Jaa'far. Tributes poured in from across the organization, with many describing him as calm, friendly, approachable, and ever jovial. Speakers reflected on his positive impact, professionalism, and the warm relationships he built throughout his time in the organization. There was a unanimous acknowledgement that his presence will be greatly missed, as colleagues wished him success and fulfillment in the next chapter of his journey.



Perspectives

State Police: Reform, Risk and the Search for a Safer Nigeria

By Dr. Emmanuel O. Ejembi

Few policy proposals have generated as much public interest in recent years as the push for state police. As insecurity continues to challenge communities across Nigeria, the idea of devolving policing powers from the federal government to the states has moved from the fringes of public debate to the centre of national discourse.

Supporters view state police as a long-overdue reform capable of transforming security governance. Critics, however, warn that it could place a powerful instrument in the hands of governors, creating opportunities for political misuse.

Yet amid the passionate arguments on both sides, one question has received far less attention than it deserves: Who will pay for state police?

The answer may ultimately determine whether the reform succeeds or fails.

The Funding Question

Before debating command structures, uniforms, ranks or recruitment processes, policymakers must first resolve the issue of funding.

If state police are established, should they be funded entirely by state governments, or should they receive constitutionally guaranteed allocations directly from the Federation Account?

This is not merely an administrative question; it goes to the heart of police independence.

Many states already face significant fiscal pressures and depend heavily on monthly allocations from the Federation Account. A system that places the entire burden of policing on state governments could create stark disparities across the federation, with wealthier states operating sophisticated police services while poorer states struggle to equip and sustain theirs.

Equally important is the issue



of control. Where funding depends entirely on governors, operational decisions could be influenced through budgetary pressure. A police service that can be rewarded or punished financially by political actors may find it difficult to maintain public confidence as an impartial institution.

Australia offers a useful lesson. Each state maintains and funds its own police service, yet institutions such as the Australian Federal Police and state agencies like the Queensland Police Service operate within legal and professional frameworks that help insulate operational policing from day-to-

day political interference. While elected governments determine policy priorities and budgets, police leaders retain responsibility for law-enforcement decisions.

In Queensland, for example, oversight is provided by the Crime and Corruption Commission and the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman. While Australia operates a more mature federal system than Nigeria, the key lesson is not that Nigeria should replicate the Australian model, but that funding arrangements must reinforce institutional independence rather than undermine it.

For this reason, many advocates argue that if state police are to become a reality, their funding should enjoy constitutional protection, possibly through a first-line charge mechanism that guarantees a minimum level of financial autonomy.

In many respects, the debate over funding is also a debate about independence.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK

If state police are established, should they be funded entirely by state governments, or should they receive constitutionally guaranteed allocations directly from the Federation Account?