

Nigeria's inmate population hits 81,710 —NBS

Nigeria's total inmate population has risen to 81,710, up from 69,946 in 2017, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The NBS disclosed this in its Nigerian Correctional Service Statistics for 2017 to Q2 2025, released on Wednesday in Abuja.

The bureau said the Q2 2025 figure represents a 16.82 percent increase over the 2017 total.

The report presents data from the Nigerian Correctional Service covering the period from 2017 to the second quarter of 2025, including inmate population figures, correctional centres' capacity, unsentenced inmates and admissions.

According to the report, Lagos State recorded the highest inmate population in Q2 2025

with 9,209 inmates against a correctional centres' capacity of 4,167, resulting in an overcrowding ratio of 221 per cent.

Other states with high inmate populations include Ogun with 4,939 inmates, Kano with 4,667, and Enugu with 3,536.

Conversely, Kogi State had the lowest inmate population at 530, followed by Bayelsa

with 696 and Benue with 777.

The NBS noted that the number of unsentenced inmates increased from 47,610 in 2017 to 53,790 in Q2 2025, representing a 12.98 percent rise over the period.

It further stated that between 2017 and Q2 2025, the capacity of correctional centres nationwide rose from 53,752 to 65,035, marking a 20.99 percent increase.

The bureau disclosed that by the end of 2024, Nigeria's correctional facilities recorded a total of 176,536 inmate admissions across various offences. Remand and awaiting trial cases accounted for the highest number of admissions with 94,614 inmates, while condemned cases recorded the lowest at 2,883.

In terms of offence categories, stealing accounted for the highest admissions with 55,722 inmates, followed by other offences with 46,043, and armed robbery with 10,090.

Bribery and corruption recorded the least number of admissions at 27, followed by cybercrime with 48 and smuggling with 118.

The Nigerian Observer



...that the people may know

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'No work, no pay' policy: JOHESU insists on continuing strike

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FG, ASUU sign renegotiated agreement

● Approve 40% pay rise for lecturers

The Federal Government has unveiled a renegotiated agreement with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), describing it as a major turning point in restoring stability, trust and quality in Nigeria's tertiary education system.

Presenting the agreement in Abuja on Wednesday, the Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, said it reflected President Bola Tinubu's commitment to accessible, quality education and uninterrupted academic calendars, noting that the President personally took ownership of resolving long-standing disputes that had plagued the university system for decades.

"For years, unresolved remuneration concerns, welfare gaps and recurring industrial disputes disrupted academic calendars, weakened staff morale and threatened the future of our young people," Alausa said.

"Under President Bola Tinubu, we chose dialogue over discord, reform over delay, and resolution over rhetoric."

A key provision of the agreement is a 40 percent upward review of the remuneration of academic staff in federal tertiary institutions, approved by the National Salaries, Income and Wages Commission and effective from January 1, 2026.

The minister said the review was aimed at improving morale, enhancing service delivery,

boosting global competitiveness and curbing brain drain.

He explained that the increase is embedded in a consolidated academic tools allowance, peculiar to university lecturers and now part of their salary structure.

The allowance covers journal publications, conference participation, internet access, learned society membership and book allowances, which he described as essential for effective teaching, research and global academic relevance.

Alausa added that nine previously earned academic

allowances had been streamlined, clearly structured and tied strictly to duties performed, to promote productivity, accountability and fairness.

He also announced the introduction of a new professorial credit allowance, the first of its kind approved by the Federal Government.

Under the scheme, full-time professors will receive an additional ₦1.8 million annually, about ₦140,000 monthly, while academic readers will

earn ₦840,000 per annum, or ₦70,000 monthly. The allowance, he said, would support research coordination, academic documentation and administrative efficiency, allowing senior academics to focus more on teaching, mentorship and innovation.

The minister disclosed that implementation of the agreement had already begun, with

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UNAVAILING OF AGREEMENT:

L-R: Chairman, House Committee on University Education, Mr Abubakar Hassan; Minister of State for Education, Prof. Suwaiba Ahmad; Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa; President, Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Prof. Christ Piwuna; Chairman, Senate Committee on Tertiary Institutions, Sen. Mohammed Muntari; Minister of Labour and Employment, Muhammadu Dingyadi and the representative of the Chairman of FGN/ASUU Renegotiation Team, Sen. Lanre Tejuoso, during the unavailing of the agreement between the Federal Government of Nigeria and the ASUU in Abuja on Wednesday.

Youth Minister lauds Okpebholo projects, Says devt reaching Edo grassroots

The Minister of Youth Development, Hon. Ayodele Olawande, has praised Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, for what he described as visible, people-oriented infrastructural projects driving development to the grassroots across the state.

Olawande spoke during an inspection tour of major ongoing projects in Benin City, which he undertook alongside the governor and other top government officials.

He said the scope and distribution of the projects reflected a deliberate effort by the administration to improve living standards and open up communities for growth.

The inspection team, which included the Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly, Hon. Blessing Agbebaku, visited several project sites, including Temboga Road, Uteh Palace Road, the Ikpoba Hill flyover, the gully erosion control site at Obaseki Street, the Adesewa Junction flyover on Sapele Road, Etete Road and other locations.

According to the minister, Governor Okpebholo has remained focused on governance despite criticisms in some quarters, stressing that development should never be undermined by politics.

"You don't sabotage government because of politics. The people must always come first, because that is how human capital development is achieved," Olawande said.

He noted that the administration's investments in road construction and erosion control were already stimulating economic activities at the local level, adding that the impact of the projects was being felt directly.

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Owo church attack victim identifies 2 suspected terrorists in open court

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Uganda election chief says he has had threats over results declaration

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NSCDC decorates spokesperson, 149 other officers with new ranks in Edo

BENIN CITY

The Edo Command of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), on Wednesday decorated its Public Relations Officer, Mr Efosa Ogbor, alongside 149 other officers and men recently promoted to various ranks.

The decoration ceremony, held at the command head-

quarters in Benin City was presided over by the State Commandant of the Corps, Commandant Saidi Akintayo.

In his opening address, Akintayo said the event marked a turning point in the history of the NSCDC in the state.

"This is not just another ceremonial event; it is a landmark in the history of the NSCDC in Edo State. Truly, we have never

had it so good," he said.

The commandant noted that for the first time since the establishment of the command, an officer who had served extensively in state and understood its terrain and peculiar security dynamics had been appointed as State Commandant.

"This is unprecedented and worthy of celebration," he said.

The NSCDC boss also disclosed that the State had, for the first time, produced three Commandants simultaneously,

describing the development as a testament to the professionalism, dedication, and quality of officers who had served in the state.

He further described the large number of promotions and the timing of the decoration ceremony, within the first 100 days of his assumption of office, as clear evidence of positive reforms within the Corps.

While congratulating the newly promoted officers, the commandant reminded them that elevation in rank came with increased responsibility.

"Promotion is not an end; it is a call to higher responsibility.

To whom much is given, much is expected," he said, warning that indiscipline, misconduct, or sabotage would not be tolerated.

He expressed appreciation to the Minister of Interior, Dr Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, and the Commandant-General of the NSCDC, Prof. Abubakar Ahmed Audi, for what he described as purposeful leadership and commitment to merit and institutional justice.

In a goodwill message, a legal practitioner, Mr Donald Boih, praised the progress and rising profile of the NSCDC.

Boih noted that the Corps had grown from being ridi-

culed in its early years to becoming a key pillar in Nigeria's security architecture.

"Today, you cannot talk about Nigeria's security without mentioning the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps.

"The whole world is watching," Boih said, urging officers to uphold professionalism and make Nigeria proud.

Some of the promoted NSCDC officers in Edo State with the state Commandant and representatives of sister security agencies shortly after the decoration ceremony

FG, ASUU sign renegotiated...

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a circular from the National Salaries, Income and Wages Commission dated December 30, 2025, directing full implementation of the wages component from January 1, 2026.

Speaking at the event, ASUU President, Prof. Chris Pinuwa, recalled that the 2009 agreement, due for renegotiation in 2012, suffered prolonged delays.

He said the 2025 agreement emerged from a renegotiation process initiated in 2017, after several failed attempts under previous administrations.

According to him, committees chaired by Wale Babalakin, Munzali Jibrin and Nimi Briggs between 2017 and 2022 failed to produce a collective bargaining agreement.

He noted that progress was made only after the current administration inaugurated a new renegotiation committee chaired by Alhaji Yayale Ahmed in October 2024, leading to an agreement about 14 months later.

Pinuwa said the agreement addressed conditions of service, funding, university autonomy, academic freedom and other systemic reforms aimed at reversing decay, curbing brain drain and repositioning universities for national development.

He commended President Tinubu, Alausa, Ahmed and members of the renegotiation team for their commitment to concluding the process.

However, while welcoming the successful agreement, the ASUU president warned that unresolved issues remained, particularly persistent government interference in university autonomy.

"University autonomy is universally recognised as a cornerstone of a functional higher education system," he said.

"In Nigeria, although autonomy is recognised in principle and partially entrenched in law, its practical implementation remains weak."

He raised concerns over alleged mismanagement of funds and governance weaknesses in some universities across the country.

Pinuwa warned that the situation was undermining accountability, stability and academic standards in the system.

He noted that weak governance structures had continued to affect effective utilisation of resources in some institutions.

According to him, although university autonomy was recognised in principle and partially entrenched in the law,

its practical implementation remained weak, leading to persistent external interference in university administration.

He disclosed that arbitrary dissolution of governing councils and interference in the appointment of vice-chancellors have become recurring challenges which undermine meritocracy and erode institutional stability.

Pinuwa noted that such interventions had often resulted in conflicts, litigation and staff polarisation within universities, thereby disrupting academic activities and effective management.

He also expressed concerns over what he described as the creeping culture of prolonged acting Vice-Chancellorship in universities, calling for greater scrutiny of governing councils and principal officers to safeguard institutional integrity.

On research funding, the ASUU president said adequate funding was critical to the relevance and global competitiveness of Nigerian universities.

He added that research and development funding formed a key component of the 2025 re-negotiated agreement with the federal government.

"Nigerian universities have faced paucity of research funding for a very long time, and I'm glad that research and development funding is a component of the 2025 ASUU-FG re-negotiated agreement.

"It was agreed that the National Research Council (NRC) Bill shall be forwarded to the National Assembly for consideration.

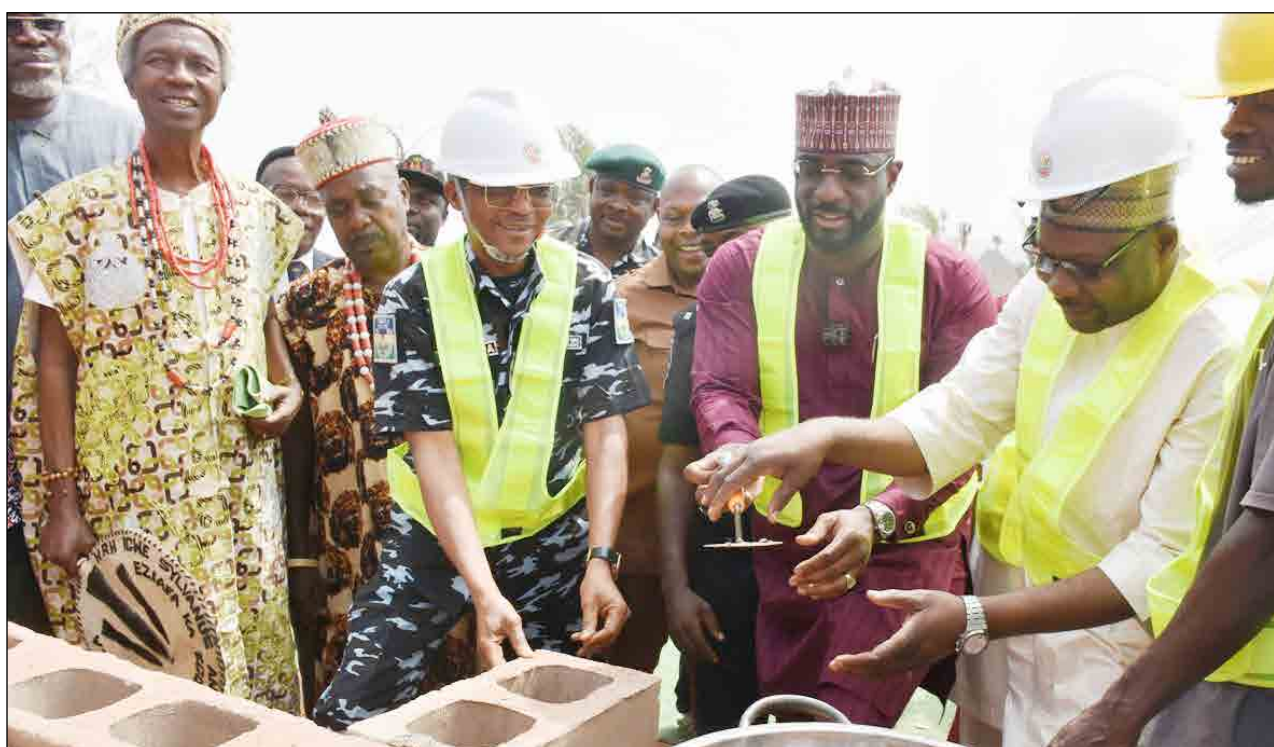
"The proposed bill shall provide for at least one per cent equivalent of GDP as a source of funding for research, innovation and development.

"It is my belief that, as stakeholders, members of the National Assembly will expedite action in the passage of the bill," he said.

The ASUU president also criticised promotion practices in some newly-established federal universities of education, alleging that due process and established standards for professorial appointments were being compromised.

According to him, the conversion of colleges of education to universities should not erode established academic standards.

Consequently, Pinuwa called on vice-chancellors of the affected institutions to urgently review such promotions to protect the integrity of the university system.



POLICE QUARTERS GROUNDBREAKING:

L-R: Igwe of Ighe Ozalla, Igwe Sylvanus Okeke; representative of the Inspector General of Police, Mr Maman Giwa; Executive Secretary, Nigeria Police Trust Fund (NPTF), Mr Mohammed Shaidu and Head of Project, NPTF, Mr Lawal Aliyu, during the Groundbreaking of Police Officers Quarters at Ozalla in Nkanu West LGA of Enugu State on Wednesday.

Edo Govt extends enforcement of commercial vehicles colour coding

BENIN CITY

The Edo Government on Wednesday, announced an extension of enforcement, of its commercial vehicle colour coding scheme until February 1.

The state Commissioner for Transportation, Mr Saturday Idehen, disclosed this during a meeting with commercial vehicle operators in Benin City.

The decision was sequel to

appeal by a group of commercial drivers.

Idehen, however, warned members of the public against impersonating Edo government officials, in a bid to extort motorists, adding that same was not authorised.

The commissioner also clarified that the Ministry has not commenced full-scale enforcement of the schemes in Benin.

He explained that the only authorised enforcement exercise was

conducted at the Sapele Road-Ikpokpan Junction, in collaboration with the Nigeria Police Force and the Edo State Traffic Management Agency (EDSTMA).

"The people alleged to be enforcing in other areas are not from the Ministry of Transportation.

"They took advantage of our announcement to impersonate us; We did not extend enforcement beyond Sapele Road-Ikpokpan Junction, and that exercise was carried out with the Police and EDSTMA.

"Anyone enforcing outside this framework is acting ille-

gally; For emphasis, any enforcement carried out without a sitting mobile court in designated areas is not authorised by the Ministry," he said.

Meanwhile, he commended the drivers for their orderly conduct and for choosing dialogue over protest, noting that government values orderliness, security, peace, and economic progress.

He further explained that the colour coding exercise goes beyond painting, but also involves profiling drivers and vehicle owners, as well as issuing unique serial identification codes.

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rectly by residents.

"We have gone round to inspect projects and it is clear that this administration is delivering. Development is getting to the roots, and that is how lives are transformed. I am happy to be part of this inspection to see things for myself," he added.

Olawande described the Okpebholo administration as people-centred, saying its infrastructural drive was also creating jobs and empowering residents.

He also commended the Federal Government under President Bola Tinubu for what he described as a shared commitment to people-focused governance.

In his response, Governor Okpebholo thanked the minister for the visit and assured him that Edo residents would continue to enjoy the dividends of democracy through what he called practical governance.

He said projects were being executed across different parts of the state to demonstrate that his administration was work-

ing for all Edo people, adding that public reactions to the projects showed growing confidence in his leadership.

"The jubilation and cheers from the people show that they recognise what we are doing," the governor said, while reiterating his support for President Tinubu and the ruling party.

Speaking specifically on the gully erosion control project at Obaseki Street, Okpebholo said the intervention would restore access to the area before the end of the year and bring

relief to residents who had endured years of hardship.

Earlier, the Special Adviser on Projects, Engr. Mrs Phoebe Williams Bello, said the Obaseki Street area had become inaccessible and was used as a refuse dump due to severe gully erosion.

She explained that technical assessments revealed inadequate underground drainage, leading the governor to approve an expansion of the drainage system linked to the nearby flyover.

Dangote Refinery plans capacity expansion to 1.4m bpd

ABUJA

The Dangote Petroleum Refinery has launched an expansion programme to more than double capacity from 650,000 barrels per day to 1.4 million within three years.

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Mr David Bird, disclosed this on Wednesday during an interactive media session in Lagos.

Bird said the expansion would use a "roofless replica-

tion" model, duplicating existing infrastructure to accelerate delivery without altering core engineering designs.

"Once engineers start tinkering with designs, projects return to prolonged engineering stages. Our approach avoids that."

"We will not re-engineer or redesign. This allows us to move directly into procurement and construction," Bird said.

He expressed confidence the expansion would be completed within three years, citing exten-

sive preparatory work already carried out at the Lekki site.

Bird said procurement of long-lead items would begin immediately, with completion targeted for the first quarter of 2026.

He added that site preparation and piling works were expected to begin before the end of January 2026.

"The remarkable thing about this site is the foresight of Aliko Dangote."

"The land has already been reclaimed, raised and prepared. Much of the pre-invest-

ment that delays projects has already been done," he said.

Bird said steelwork for the expansion could begin emerging before the end of the year, reinforcing confidence in the project timeline.

He said the refinery would continue prioritising local capacity development by upskilling Nigerian workers and deepening domestic technical expertise.

On operations, Bird said the refinery imports 100 per cent of its crude feedstock by sea,

enabling it to process diverse crude grades.

"This is not a traditional refinery tied to a single pipeline or crude stream."

"We can process Nigerian grades, alternative crudes, intermediate feed stocks and blending components. That flexibility guarantees security of supply," Bird said.

He said advanced conversion units, described as the plant's "moneymakers," enable production of high-quality fuels meeting market specifications.

In spite of not operating at

full capacity, Bird said the refinery consistently delivers products safely and reliably, even during planned maintenance.

"We have built enough resilience to take individual units offline and still meet market demand," he said.

Bird said the refinery supplied over 50 million litres of Premium Motor Spirit daily throughout the festive season.

He disclosed current PMS production of between 50 and 52 million litres daily, with average truck-out volumes of about 50 million litres.



ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PRESS:

L-R: Chief Human Resources Officer, Dangote Petroleum Refinery, Gloria Byamugisha; Managing Director/CEO, Dangote Petroleum Refinery, David Bird and Group Chief Brand/Communications Officer, Anthony Chiejina, during an Engagement with the Press in Lekki, Lagos on Wednesday.

Rival cult clash claims student's life at Michael Koleoso Poly

IBADAN

A fight between two rival cult groups at Michael Adeniyi Koleoso Polytechnic in Saki, Oyo State, has led to the death of a student of the school.

The Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Ayanlade Olayinka, confirmed this in a state-

ment made available to newsmen on Wednesday in Ibadan.

Olayinka said that the Command responded to a distress call on January 7, at about 2:30 p.m., after receiving a report about the clash among students of the institution at Challenge 1 Area.

He said the clash, which happened behind the school,

led to sustenance of a gunshot injury by one of the students of the Polytechnic.

"A student sustained a gunshot wound to the back and was rushed to Tunmise Private Hospital, Saki, where the victim later succumbed to the injury," the spokesman said.

Olayinka said that one expended cartridge was recovered at the scene and a suspect

had been arrested in connection with the incident while others are still at large.

According to him, further investigations have commenced to determine the circumstances and motive behind the crime.

He said that the operation demonstrated the command's ability to respond swiftly to violent crimes and restore order in sensitive environments.

U.S. Embassy re-opens redesigned centre to deepen U.S.-Nigeria ties

ABUJA

The United States (U.S.) Embassy in Abuja has announced the official reopening of its redesigned American Centre (for excellence and creativity) at the Embassy Chancery, to deepen U.S.-Nigeria relations.

The Centre features modernised spaces and enhanced technology aimed at expanding educational, cultural and professional opportunities for Nigerians of all ages.

The Embassy, in a statement issued on Wednesday in Abuja, said that the role of the American Centre and American Spaces are basically to foster opportunity and connection.

It explained that the goal of having such spaces was to provide information about the U.S., English language teaching and learning, and educational advisory for study at U.S. institutions.

Others include providing information about U.S. cultural programmes, networking with U.S. exchange programme alumni and professional skills building.

The U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria, Richard Mills, said that "Today, we are proud to reopen the American Centre as a space that celebrates American excellence in arts and reflects the values that define our nation."

"American Spaces have become trusted venues for young people seeking opportuni-

ties to learn about the United States, improve their English, and develop professional skills."

"They offer a welcoming environment where students, entrepreneurs, and community leaders can connect, collaborate and innovate."

He added that through educational advisory, entrepreneurship training, and digital literacy programmes, American Spaces equipped Nigerians with the tools they needed to succeed in a rapidly changing global economy.

The newly redesigned centre, the statement said, featured murals, which are a series of large public artworks that celebrate American history, culture and shared values, highlighting freedom, innovation and community.

"Through creative artworks, bold imagery and symbolic scenes, the murals are meant to educate, inspire, and reflect the experiences and ideals that have shaped the United States."

"The individuals depicted on this mural embody the values of hard work, determination and perseverance."

"These are hallmarks of American achievement, but they are also qualities we see everyday in Nigerian youth," Mills added.

Also speaking, Lee McManis, U.S. Country Public Diplomacy Counselor, stated that the revitalised space joined twenty-nine other American Spaces across Nigeria, serving as vibrant hubs for cultural exchanges and learning.

Evbosawe is autonomous community, not Camp —Odionwere

The Odionwere, elders and people of Evbosawe community in Uhumwonde Local Government Area of Edo State have reiterated that Evbosawe is an autonomous community and not an Ago (camp), contrary to claims allegedly made by a neighbouring community, Ugomoson.

Speaking on the matter, the Odionwere of Evbosawe, Pa Dallas Osarenkhoe Osawe, urged members of the public to disregard assertions that Evbosawe is a camp under Ugomoson, describing the claim as false and misleading.

Pa Osawe said that from time immemorial, Evbosawe and Ugomoson communities had coexisted peacefully without rancour or bitterness, expressing surprise at the recent claim questioning Evbosawe's status.

He noted that Evbosawe, which is being described as a camp, is larger and more developed, and has in the past produced a local government chairman under the administration of Chief Lucky Igbiniedion as Governor of the State.

He recalled that the late Henry Osawe, who served as Chairman of Uhumwonde Local Government, also facilitated the construction of a Pri-

mary Healthcare Centre that serves both communities.

While pledging unalloyed loyalty to the Oba of Benin, Oba Ewuare II, whom he described as a father to all and a unifying force among Benin people, Pa Osawe appealed to the public to ignore the claim.

He stressed that the people of Evbosawe are peace-loving and would not entertain anything capable of disrupting the community's progress and development.

He also encouraged prospective developers to partner with the community in advancing its growth.

Corroborating the Odionwere's position, the Ozukpogiega (2nd-in-command), Pa Sunday Ogbomwenrhie, and the Okaighele (youth leader), Ambassador Osarobo Ogbomwenrhie, said that the historical records of communities in the area clearly establish Evbosawe as an autonomous settlement, tracing its existence to the era of Oba Ewuare I expeditions.

They noted that Evbosawe has, over the years, had several Odionweres, adding that the current Odionwere, Pa Dallas Osarenkhoe Osawe, has led the community peacefully for 13 years without incident.

KWASUTH reopens radiology depart after upgrade

ILORIN

The Kwara State University Teaching Hospital (KWASUTH) has reopened its Radiology Department following months of upgrades and refurbishment.

The department is equipped with state-of-the-art medical imaging machines.

Speaking in Ilorin, Chief Medical Director, Dr Bola Ahmed, called the reopening a major milestone for the hospital and Kwara's health system.

He said the absence of functional, sophisticated radiology equipment had constrained effective diagnosis and treatment.

According to him, the acquisition supports ongoing efforts to strengthen healthcare de-

livery and improve diagnostic capacity across the state.

"With installation completed, the Radiology Department has resumed full operations, offering patients essential imaging services within the hospital."

"This equipment marks a turning point. Testing is complete, and trained personnel are in place to begin full operations," Ahmed said.

He said the upgrade will ease patient burdens, reducing reliance on private facilities or travel outside Kwara for investigations.

He reaffirmed the administration's commitment to investing in equipment, infrastructure and manpower, assuring expanded access to quality healthcare statewide.

NEWS

Cybercrime one of greatest challenges of digital age —ICPC

ILA-ORANGUN

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) said that cybercrime is one of the greatest challenges of the digital age.

The commission said that while laws and institutions play important roles in mitigating these challenges, ethical individuals remain the strongest defence.

ICPC Chief Superintendent Laaro Sulyman said this on Wednesday while delivering a lecture at a two-day orientation programme for new students of the Federal University of Health Sciences (FUHSI), Ila-Orangun, Osun.

The lecture was themed, "Cybercrime Legislation: Global Perspectives, Challenges and Ethical Use of Social Media."

Sulyman, who noted that the digital age had transformed how people learnt, communicated and conducted business, said that alongside these benefits came a growing threat.

He said crimes committed through digital means now af-

fecting individuals, institutions, governments and global security.

According to him, universities, especially health sciences institutions that handle sensitive data are increasingly being targeted.

"Despite global and national efforts, several challenges persist in the fight against cybercrime," he said.

The chief superintendent identified rapid technological advancement where technology evolved faster than laws and enforcement mechanisms as one of the major challenges.

According to him, jurisdictional issues make it possible for a cybercrime committed in Nigeria to be executed from another country.

Sulyman, who described cybercrime as activities carried out using computers, digital devices or the internet, warned students against engaging in such acts.

"Common forms of cybercrime affecting students include online fraud and scams, identity theft and impersonation, cyberstalking and cyberbullying, phishing emails and fake links, among others.

"Cybercrime is not limited by national borders and, as a result, countries collaborate through international frameworks.

"Students should protect

their personal information, verify information before sharing, and avoid suspicious links and platforms.

"The ICPC believes that

corruption prevention begins with awareness, integrity and responsible behaviour.

"As newly admitted students of the Federal University of Health

Sciences, you are encouraged to use technology responsibly, uphold ethical values, be law-abiding citizens and become agents of positive change," he said.



HOLY SPIRIT CAMPUS RALLY:

L-R: General Overseer, Redeemed Christian Church of God, Pastor Enoch Adeboye; Deputy Vice Chancellor, Administration, University of Ibadan, Prof Peter Olapegba and other ministers at the Annual Holy Spirit Campus Rally in University of Ibadan on Wednesday.

Bayelsa fixes Jan 30 for late deputy governor's burial

YENAGOA

The remains of late Bayelsa Deputy Governor, Mr Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo, will be laid to rest on January 30, says Governor Douye Diri.

Diri disclosed this on Wednesday at the 179th State Executive Council meeting at Government House, Yenagoa.

Ewhrudjakpo died on December 11, 2025, at the age of 60.

The governor said a four-day funeral programme was approved following consultations by a burial committee chaired by Secretary to the State Government, Prof. Nimibofa Aya-

wei.

"The programme begins January 27 with sporting activities, followed by a Day of Tributes on January 28," Diri said.

He added that valedictory sessions would hold on January 29 at the State High Court and Executive Council Chambers.

"On January 30, a requiem mass will hold at St Paul's Catholic Church, Ofoni, before interment," the governor said.

Diri said the government, family and church "are all in agreement on the burial activities of our departed deputy governor."

We 'll not compromise academic standards —Nacabs Poly founder

AKWANGA (NASARAWA)

Mr David Abuluya, Founder of Nacabs Polytechnic, Akwanga Nasarawa State, said that the institution will not compromise its academic standards.

Abuluya gave the assurance while fielding questions from newsmen on Wednesday in Akwanga.

He said that the school was well known for its academic standard, adding that measures were in place to continue to maintain it.

"As you can see this school has well equipped laboratories, facilities, as well as qualified lecturers and other staff.

"Our graduates are doing well in wherever they are working because we don't compromise academic standard in this institution.

"I want to assure you that we

will continue to maintain academic excellence for improved standard of education in this institution," he said.

Abuluya said that the institution has set up disciplinary measures against any erring staff or student.

"In this school, we don't tolerate indiscipline, examination malpractice and other negative tendencies.

"Any one found in engaging in negative acts will be dealt with according to the rules and regulations," he said.

Abuluya appreciated lecturers and staff of the of the institution for putting in their best and called for its sustenance.

The founder who is the Chairman, Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC), Nasarawa State advised the students to study hard in order to excel in their academic pursuits.

Oborevwoori donates 65 SUVs to Delta royal fathers

ASABA

Governor Sheriff Oborevwoori of Delta, on Wednesday, donated 65 new Sports Utility Vehicles (SUVs) to traditional rulers in the state for their critical role in ensuring good governance.

Oborevwoori, who described the traditional institution as "a tool for service," for guardians of peace and stability, presented the cars to the royal fathers at the Government House,

Asaba.

The vehicles included 60 new Prado Jeeps and five Land Cruisers.

According to the governor, the gesture underscored the centrality of the traditional institution in governance.

He described the event as "a very important and symbolic day in the life of this administration," adding that "traditional rulers are far more than custodians of culture.

"The beneficiaries represent

a special class of leaders, whose contributions to governance are critical, but often understated.

"They are not merely custodians of our customs, norms and traditions, they are vital intermediaries between government and the people at the grassroots," the governor said.

He reaffirmed his administration's irrevocable commitment to building a strong, inclusive economy, founded on equity and justice, and lauded the traditional rulers for their

support.

He said: "Royal fathers play a frontline role in mobilising communities, promoting government programmes, resolving disputes, and supporting security agencies, often without expecting reward.

"I can confidently state that traditional rulers have made governance easier, and more effective in Delta.

"I commend their unwavering commitment to peace, progress and prosperity.

Tinubu mourns Yakubu Mohammed, *NewsWatch* co-founder

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu has expressed condolences to the family of Alhaji Yakubu Mohammed, veteran journalist and co-founder of NewsWatch Magazine, who died on Monday night.

This was contained in a statement issued by Presidential spokesperson, Mr Bayo Onanuga, on Wednesday in Abuja.

Mohammed co-founded NewsWatch Magazine in 1984 with the late Dele Giwa, Dan Agbese and Ray Ekpku.

The magazine inspired an era

of fearless investigative journalism during Nigeria's military rule.

Tinubu, who commiserated with the Government and people of Kogi over the loss, also condoled with the Nigerian Union of Journalists, the Nigerian Guild of Editors and the Commonwealth Journalists' Association.

The president extended his sympathies to other public and private media institutions where Mohammed rendered service.

Tinubu said Mohammed's journalism career spanned more than five decades and was devoted to nation-building.

He said that the late journalist consistently placed his life on the line to speak truth to power.

The president described Mohammed as a personal friend and praised his dedication to professional journalism.

He recalled Mohammed's resolve, alongside his colleagues, in sustaining NewsWatch after Dele Giwa's assassination in 1986.

Tinubu said their courage reinforced the magazine's legacy and expanded the frontiers of investigative journalism.

The president stated that Mohammed's memoir, Beyond

Expectations, published in November 2025, encouraged reflection on leadership and the media's role in Nigeria.

Mohammed served as Pro-Chancellor and Chancellor of Ahmadu Bello University's Governing Council.

He was Associate Editor of New Nigerian Newspapers from 1976 to 1980.

He later served as Deputy Editor and Editor of National Concord between 1980 and 1984.

The president prayed that Almighty God grant the departed eternal rest and admit him into Jannatul Firdaus.

Okpebholo inaugurates corps to boost environmental protection in Edo

BENIN CITY

Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State has inaugurated 100 Edo State Environmental Compliance Corps (EECC) to boost Environmental Protection in the state.

Inaugurating the Corps on Wednesday in Benin City, Okpebholo urged them to serve with courage, integrity, and a deep sense of purpose.

The governor who was repre-

sented by his Commissioner for Finance, Mr Emmanuel Okoebor, reaffirmed his administration's commitment to environmental protection, public health, and responsible governance.

The governor urged their actions to inspire compliance and to earn respect and commitment, in order to strengthen public trust.

The Governor called on the corps members to discharge their responsibilities with pro-

fessionalism, discipline, and respect for the law while working closely with communities to promote environmental compliance and awareness.

"The inauguration of EECC today (yesterday) reaffirms this administration's commitment to environmental protection, public health, and responsible governance.

"A clean environment is not only a social necessity but also an economic imperative that supports productivity, invest-

ments, and overall well-being.

"You are expected to carry out your duties with professionalism, discipline, and respect for the law while working closely with communities to promote environmental compliance and awareness," he said.

On his part, the Commissioner for Environment and Sustainability, Mr Nosa Adams, said that the 100 personnel were the first batch of EECC, who were selected through credible means.

'No work, no pay' policy: JOHESU insists on continuing strike

ABUJA

Joint Health Sector Unions and Assembly of Health Care Professionals (JOHESU) has insisted on continuing its indefinite national strike, in spite of the Federal Government's 'no work, no pay' policy. This is contained in a memo signed in Abuja by the National Secretary of the union,

Mr Martin Egbanubi, and addressed to Presidents, General Secretaries, and State Chairmen of affiliate unions.

According to the union, the decision follows resolutions reached by its national leadership at an emergency virtual meeting held on Jan. 12 to review developments surrounding the industrial action.

It recalled that the Federal

Government recently directed the implementation of the 'no work, no pay' policy and the stoppage of JOHESU members' salaries through the Accountant-General of the Federation's office.

The strike, JOHESU said, stemmed from its long-standing demand for the implementation of the adjusted Consolidated Health Salary Structure

(CONHESS) and other welfare-related issues.

The union stated that its national leadership reviewed reports from affiliates and congresses to assess the status of the strike nationwide.

It also reacted to a memo from the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare directing chief medical directors and managing directors to enforce the policy.

JOHESU described the 'no work, no pay' policy as a common tool used to pressure workers when government delays the resolution of labour disputes.

The union said it had complied with all procedures outlined in the Trade Disputes Act before embarking on the industrial action.

It said that the action quali-

fied as a lawful dispute of right and not a breach of industrial relations laws.

JOHESU urged members not to be discouraged, and called for sustained solidarity and commitment to the struggle.

The union said it would intensify monitoring, picketing, and media engagement while exploring strategies to achieve its demands.



VISIT TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

L-R: Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology, Philip Ebioghe-Ndiomu; Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology, Kingsley Tochukwu and, Executive Director, MIT Kuo Sharper Centre for Prosperity and Entrepreneurship (MKSCPE), Dina Sherif, during the visit of the Executive Director to the Minister's Office in Abuja on Wednesday.

Fire razes petrol station, tanker, others in Oyo community

IBADAN

A devastating fire incident has burnt down the RSK Adebawale Multipurpose Filling station, a petrol tanker and a motorcycle at Ofiki area, Saki in Oyo State.

The Chairman of the state Fire Services Agency, Mr Moorof Akinwande confirmed the incident in a statement on Wednesday in Ibadan.

Akinwande said that the agency received a distress call about the fire incident through a telephone call from one Alhaji Mufutau Badmus, the Saki Branch Chairman of the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN).

He said that on receipt of the distress call, firemen led by Mr Kolade Taiwo immediately mobilised to the scene of the

incident.

"On arrival at the scene, it was discovered that the filling station, a DAF tanker truck loaded with 50,000 litres of petrol, one Bajaj motorcycle and three fuel dispense pumps were already engulfed in the inferno," he said.

Akinwande said that personnel of the agency were able to completely extinguish the fire and prevented it from spreading to other properties within the area.

He commended the Ofiki Division's personnel of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) for their presence and for providing security in the area during the exercise.

He urged owners of filling stations in the state to prioritise fire safety guidelines.

50 killed, 468 injured in Bauchi auto crashes —FRSC

BAUCHI

The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) Bauchi State Command has said that no fewer than 50 people have lost their lives in road traffic crashes across the state within the last three months.

Mr Apaji Boyi, the state Sector Commander of the corps, disclosed this in an interview with newsmen in Bauchi on Wednesday.

Boyi said that the crashes which occurred in the months of October, November and December 2025, left 468 people injured and 193 others unscathed.

He also said that there were 76 reported cases of auto crashes

within the period under review.

"In October, 2025, we had 10 reported cases of road traffic crashes involving 77 people, with 58 persons seriously injured while eight of the victims lost their lives.

"In November, we had 25 reported cases of auto crashes with 201 people involved. Out of the figure 14 people died, while 144 others were injured.

"Then, in December, 28 people lost their lives in 41 reported cases of road traffic crashes involving 433 persons with 266 persons reported seriously injured," he said.

The sector commander explained that some of the major causes of the crashes were speeding, wrongful overtaking, driver

fatigue, overloading of persons, conveyance of persons in haulage vehicles and traveling with fuel in plastic containers.

While emphasising that drivers' behaviour was a fundamental element in determining safety on highways, he added that some road traffic infringements by drivers also responsible for road crashes included speed limit violations.

He said these infringements include failure to adhere to road traffic rules and regulations, speed limit violations, intake of drugs, seat belt violations, and use of phones while driving among others.

He acknowledged that the Federal Government's support

had been responsible for the modest achievement of the FRSC over the years and appreciated the government for its advisory oversight.

Boyi urged motorists to be cautious and adhere strictly to traffic rules and regulations, avoid overloading, speeding, wrongful overtaking and the use of cell phones while driving.

He also urged drivers to ensure their vehicles were in good condition before embarking on journeys.

The FRSC boss further reassured that the corps would not relent in its responsibility of sensitising motorists in the state about traffic rules, signs and regulations.

Wike approves promotion of 2,000 FCTA, FCDA workers

ABUJA

Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, has approved the promotion of more than 2,000 members of staff of the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) and the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA).

Chairman of the FCT Civil Service Commission, Mr Emeka Ezech, disclosed this to newsmen on Wednesday in Abuja.

Ezech explained that the members of staff who cut across 165 cadres, were promoted after a Computer-Based Test held on November 29, 2025.

He described the promotion as a clear demonstration of Wike's commitment to staff welfare and career progression.

He urged civil servants in the FCT to continue to work hard, stressing that only diligent and hardworking members of staff would be promoted, through the CBT.

Edo Central schools to resume Jan 19

IDAHOSA MUSA

The Edo State Government has fixed Monday, January 19, 2026, as the new resumption date for all public and private primary and secondary schools in Edo Central Senatorial District, ending weeks of uncertainty over the commencement of the second term.

The decision was announced in a special public statement issued by the Commissioner for Education, Dr Paddy Iyamu, following a review of the earlier postponement of the second term in the district.

Dr Iyamu said the directive applies to all public and private primary and secondary schools in Edo Central and is aimed at ensuring a smooth and effective

take-off of academic activities for the 2025/2026 academic session.

He urged parents, guardians, school heads, proprietors and other stakeholders in the education sector to take note of the new date and ensure full compliance. Parents and guardians were advised to make necessary arrangements to enable their children and wards resume promptly, while school authorities were directed to put all academic and administrative structures in place ahead of resumption.

The Ministry of Education also expressed appreciation to stakeholders for their patience, cooperation and understanding during the period of postponement, assuring that the state government remains committed to improving students' welfare and providing a conducive learning environment across Edo State.

AFCRD 2026: Tinubu charges Armed Forces to uphold unity, democracy

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu, had charged the Nigerian Armed Forces to remain steadfast in discipline, loyalty and unity, describing them as the enduring symbol of Nigeria's shared strength and guardians of the nation's democracy.

Tinubu gave the charge at the 2026 Armed Forces Celebration and Remembrance Day (AFCRD) Gala and Award Night held in Abuja.

He was represented by the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Moham-

med Idris.

Tinubu reaffirmed his administration's commitment to supporting the military to secure lasting peace and stability across the country.

He said the welfare of troops was inseparable from national security, assuring personnel of improved equipment, enhanced training and better living conditions.

Tinubu stressed that his government would continue to match their sacrifices with concrete support.

The president paid glowing tributes to the fallen heroes who paid the supreme prices in

defence of the nation, noting that their names were etched not only on monuments but in the hearts of Nigerians.

He added that remembrance was a permanent national duty and not merely a ceremonial exercise.

Tinubu commended the serving personnel for their courage and resilience on the front-lines, saying their recent operational successes had helped restore confidence and safety in many communities previously affected by insecurity.

He also acknowledged the sacrifices of military families, describing their support as a

vital pillar of national defence.

The president announced the approval of two nationwide engagement initiatives—the 'Thank-A-Soldier Electronic Wall' and the 'My Nigerian Hero Campaign'—to enable Nigerians honour service personnel and veterans.

He assured Nigerians that despite progress recorded under the Renewed Hope Agenda, the government would not relent until every citizen could live and work in safety and dignity.

The event featured different categories of awards to some deserving serving and retired officers of the armed forces.

NEWS

Gov Yusuf doesn't need Kwankwaso's endorsement to join APC —NNPP

LAGOS

The New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) has said that Governor Abba Yusuf of Kano State does not need Sen. Rabiul Kwankwaso's endorsement to join the All Progressives Congress (APC) or any other party of his choice.

The party also stated that the governor doesn't need Kwankwaso's approval to remain in the NNPP.

Recall that Yusuf is the NNPP sole governor whilst Kwankwaso is the party's 2023 presidential candidate who was later expelled for alleged anti-party activities.

The NNPP statement was coming on the heels of a statement by Kwankwaso's Spokesman, Mr Ladipo Johnson that his principal has not endorsed Yusuf's defection to the APC as reported.

Johnson in a statement on Sunday night, described a breaking news that Kwankwaso has reversed his position to en-

dorse Yusuf's defection as false. Johnson had alleged that those seeking to move from the NNPP were responsible for misinforming the people on Kwankwaso's stand.

The NNPP through its National Secretary, Mr Oguni Olaposi in Lagos on Monday, reiterated that the Kano governor, as the party's sole governor and Leader, does not need Kwankwaso's approval to join the ruling party.

"Whilst we advise the governor to remain in the NNPP, we also understand that it is within his constitutional rights to join any party of his choice due to escalating legal battles.

"NNPP doesn't have any misgivings against any political party, including the APC and so cannot forcefully demand that its governor must remain in the party.

"If the governor had made up his mind to leave the NNPP, no dictatorial tendencies and blackmail can stop him.

"Yusuf has been doing well

as the governor of Kano state and we will not be a stumbling block on his path by insisting he remains in the NNPP against his will," Olaposi stated.

He reiterated that Kwankwaso and his Kwankwaso Movement should stop distracting the governor and should allow him to continue his good works in Kano.

"What Kwankwaso has failed to tell us is if his stand on the governor's alleged planned defection is out of godfatherism or he has personal issues against the ruling party.

"Whatever misgiving he has against the APC should remain personal and should not be forced on others wishing to join the party," he added.

Reacting to Johnson's allegation that Kwankwaso described the impending move by some members of the Kwankwaso Movement and NNPP led by Yusuf, as a cold betrayal of trust and mandate given to him, the party said it is just nemesis.

"Kwankwaso and his group now know how betrayal feels, when he tried to hijack a party

that gave him a platform to contest election for free in 2023.

"We will remain in support of the Kano state governor and any decision he takes but still advise and encourage him to have a rethink and remain with the NNPP.

"Kwankwaso remains expelled from the NNPP for the good of the party and members."



SIGNING OF MEMORANDUM:

L-R: Legal Adviser Rangers Football Club (RFC), Dr. Nnenna Nwomeh; Head of Strategy and Implementation NEAPI Apparel (NA), Mrs Chiamaka Onwuagba; Founder NA, Mr Odinaka Ugwuozor and General Manager RFC, Mr Amobi Ezeaku, during the Signing of Memorandum of Understanding between RFC and NA on Apparel Production.

NLC urges proactive action for progress in 2026

LAGOS

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has urged governments at all levels, to prioritise accountability, stewardship, responsiveness, social justice and improved security in 2026.

Chairperson of the Lagos chapter of NLC, Funmi Sesi, gave the advice on Wednesday, in an interview with newsmen in Lagos.

She said that sustained measures aimed at enhancing welfare of Nigerians, would ease the burden of workers and citizens in the new year.

The chairperson appealed to government to take proactive steps in the new year, aimed at tackling spate of insecurity in the country, so as to protect lives, property and ensure a free flow of economic activities.

On social justice, Sesi underscored the need for increased quality healthcare and education.

She urged government to increase the budgetary allocations for health, education and security, as being critical sectors.

The chairperson also spoke on the need for tax justice, urging that taxation which affects the poor, should be discouraged.

In her outlook for 2026, she said that workers anticipate a reduction in the cost of goods and services, especially food items.

She noted that this can be achieved by deliberate support to farmers, to boost agricultural production.

Moreso, Sesi noted that the new minimum wage expected in the year, should be negotiated fairly, to reflect true living wages of workers.

The NLC ultimately, harped on the need for a secure nation, with affordable basic amenities to uplift living standards.

She also urged a prioritisation of the rights, freedom, and happiness of citizens in a bid to stem the tide of migration.

FGN/IFAD-VCDP, SMEDAN train micro entrepreneurs in Taraba

JALINGO

The Federal Government and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)'s Value Chain Development Programme (VCDP) have trained women and youths on Innovation clinic in Taraba State.

The training was also done in collaboration with the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN).

Mr Irmiya Musa, State Programme Coordinator, VCDP, while declaring the event open in Jalingo, said that the training

was crucial to enhancing agricultural business in the state.

Musa encouraged participants to develop the needed skills to grow their businesses from small scale to medium and large scale.

He pledged the determination of Taraba in ensuring the effectiveness of the programme.

Earlier, Mr Bala Yusuf, State Director, SMEDAN, explained that an innovation clinic was a business support service which engendered business diagnosis, providing grounds for entrepreneurship development.

Yusuf also said that the agen-

cy was committed to supporting small scale businesses to grow, and underscored the efforts of the SMEDAN in mentorship of nano business class.

The director encouraged participants to develop business ideas before venturing into it to enable them flourish in whatever business they might have chosen.

Similarly, Mr Ibrahim Aminu, Manager, Technology Incubation Centre, Jalingo advised participants to take advantage of the centre in the promotion and sustainability of their businesses.

In the same vein, Mr Wiza Baido, Head of Business and Marketing Department of the VCDP advised participants to develop an ideology towards developing their businesses from small scale to mega ones.

He encouraged them to streamline their business plans as well as ensure adequate records keeping for the determination of profit and loss.

The training brought together producers, processors and marketers as critical components of the agricultural production value chain.

Harmattan: Kano Fire Service sensitises Gezawa residents to fire prevention

KANO

The Kano State Fire Service said it has sensitised residents of Gezawa Local Government in Kano to preventive fire outbreak measures during harmattan season.

The Divisional Commander,

Rabiul Mansur disclosed this in a statement signed by the service Public Relations Officer, Alhaji Saminu Abdullahi in Kano.

The statement said, "The sensitization was conducted as part of the service's ongoing efforts to safeguard lives and property across the state.

"Residents should take extreme caution in handling fire and flammable materials, especially during harmattan period as dry weather conditions increase the risk of fire incident."

It urged the residents to promptly report any fire outbreak or emergency to

the Kano State Fire Service through its emergency lines: 08107888878 or 07026026400.

"The Service reaffirmed its commitment to continue public enlightenment and rapid emergency response to reduce fire-related incidents across the state," the statement noted.

CORRECTION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **OGHAE JOY BECKY** and **DEBORA ABIGIRL OSARUMWENSE** are one and the same person. Henceforth, I wish to be known and address as **OGHAE JOY BECKY**. Former documents remain valid concerned authorities and general public should please take note.

ADDITION OF NAME

I formerly known as **OSAGIE MOSES** now wish to be known and called **OSAGIE MOSES IBHENBIGHE**. Former documents remain valid general public please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **VICTORIA EBIZALE OZIKA** and **VICKY EBIZALE OZIKA** are one and the same person. Henceforth, I wish to be known and address as **VICTORIA EBIZALE OZIKA**. Former documents remain valid, concerned authorities and general public please take note.

ADDITION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **MRS. GRACE ORHUE OBASEKI** and **MRS. GRACE OBASEKI** are one and the same person. Henceforth, I wish to be known and called **MRS. GRACE ORHUE OBASEKI**. Former documents remain valid general public please take note.

Ekiti LG boss tasks workers on commitment, punctuality to work

IKOLE-EKITI (EKITI)

The Chairman of Ikole Local Government Area (LGA) of Ekiti State, Mr Bayo Omojola, has urged workers of the local government to show commitment and punctuality to their duties in the new year.

Omojola gave the advice on Wednesday in Ikole-Ekiti, during his first meeting with workers for the new year.

The chairman noted that his administration can only achieve its development agenda, by good efforts from the workers.

He, consequently, urged them to discharge their du-

ties diligently, and eschew any forms of malice and conflict with colleagues.

"I want to thank God for his divine protection and faithfulness over every worker in Ikole Local Government Area.

"This is a new year, and I want every workers of this council to embrace the habit of commitment

and punctuality in their offices.

"The engine room of every council are the workers, and I am ready to provide a conducive environment to enhance your productivity," he said

Omojola assured the workers that his administration would give priority attention to their welfare in 2026.

JUDICIARY

NEWS

Man jailed 12 months for enticing a married woman

JOS

An Area Court in Jos, Plateau State on Wednesday sentenced one Abdullahi Usman to 12 months imprisonment for en-

tinging a married woman and defaming her character.

The judge, Irene Pati, sentenced the convict after he pleaded guilty to the offence.

The judge, however, gave the convict an option of N 50,000

fine or 12 months imprisonment for enticement and defamation.

Earlier, the police prosecutor, Insp Ibrahim Gokwat, told the court that the case was reported at the Angwan Rogo

police station, on November 24, 2025, by Mr Hamza Aliyu.

He said the complainant, said the accused person called his wife and asked her to meet him in a hotel and if she failed to comply, the accused person

said he would inform her husband that she was involved in extramarital affairs and had aborted various pregnancies from the act.

The prosecutor further told the court that during a police

investigation, the accused person confessed to have committed the offence.

The offence, he said, contravened the Plateau State Penal Code law of Northern Nigeria of 2017.



NEWS CONFERENCE:

Coordinator of Publicity, Celebrate Jesus, Pastor Dotun Oyawoye; Pastor, Global Harvest Church Canada, Pastor Femi Aladesanmi; Host Celebrate Jesus, Rev. Victor Adeyemi; and Pastor Tolu Aladesanmi, at a news conference on the forthcoming celebrate Jesus 2026 organised by Global Harvest Church in Ibadan.

Man jailed 12 months for stealing phone

JOS

An Area Court in Jos on Wednesday, sentenced one Miracle Pam, to 12 months imprisonment, for house breaking and stealing a phone worth N126, 000.

The judge, Irene Pati, sentenced the convict after he pleaded guilty to the offence.

She however gave the convict an option of fine of N30,000.

Earlier, the Police Prosecutor, Insp Ijupitil Daniel, told the court that the case was reported at the Laranto Division Police Station, on November 25, 2025, by one Mr Emmanuel

Samuel, the complainant.

Daniel said that the complainant told the police that the accused person trespassed into his house with a dangerous weapon and stole his Infinix spark 9 phone valued at N126, 000.

The prosecutor also told the court that during police investigation, the accused person confessed to have committed the offence.

He added that during the now convict arrest, the stolen phone was found in his possession.

He said the offence contravened the Plateau State Penal Code law of Northern Nigeria, 2017.

Owo church attack victim identifies 2 suspected terrorists in open court

ABUJA

One of the victims of the June 5, 2022 terror attack on St. Francis Catholic Church, Owo, Ondo State, identified two of the five defendants as those who took part in the attack

The victim and a Department of State Services (DSS) witness, simply tagged as "SSB" for security reasons, told Justice Emeka Nwite of the Federal High Court in Abuja while being led in evidence by the DSS lawyer, Adedayo Adedipe, SAN.

The DSS is prosecuting Idris Abdulmalik Omeiza (25 years), Al Qasim Idris (20 years), Jamiu Abdulmalik (26 years),

Abdulhaleem Idris (25 years) and Momoh Otuho Abubakar (47 years) as 1st to 5th defendants respectively in the alleged terrorism offences.

SSB, who is the 2nd prosecution witness (PW-2), said he is a member of the church and was present on the day of the attack.

The witness chronicled details of how the attack took place and the extent of damages recorded both to worshipers and the church building.

When Adedipe asked the PW-2 if he could recognise the attackers of the church from the defendants in the dock, he responded in affirmative.

The witness, thereafter, identified Qasim Idris (2nd defend-

ant) and Abdulhaleem Idris (4th defendant) as those he saw among the attackers.

He said the attack took place on Sunday when the church was about rounding off the mass held in commemoration of the Feast of the Pentecost.

"We were having our normal mass in the church, just about the time the church was closing, we heard a gun shot outside the church compound.

"So, we were wondering what was happening.

"We heard another gun shot at the gate, then there was pandemonium in the church.

"Everybody was running helter skelter and asking what was happening.

"Then we started hearing sporadic shooting inside the church compound.

"One of the MOD (Men of Order and Defence) of the church ran towards the church and shouted, 'lock the door, lock the door.' Then, those by the door tried to lock the door.

"Then, we heard some sound at the door. And then, we started hearing foot steps of people running towards the other entrance of the church. They were shooting as well.

"In a matter of seconds, I saw one man holding a gun.

"He looked at the church, up and down, then he used his hand to beckon on someone behind him to come forward," the witness said.

When asked if he could recognise the man who was holding a gun and beckoning on another of the attackers to come forward, the witness said he could.

Prison decongestion: Lagos CJ releases 18 inmates, deports 2 Chadians

IKEJA

The Chief Judge of Lagos State, Justice Kazeem Alogba, has ordered the release of 18 inmates and deportation of two Chadians also released from custody.

The Chadians, Musa Abubakar and Yusuf Aliu, were released with others during the 2026 decongestion exercise of correctional facilities in the state.

The chief judge specifically directed that Abubakar and Aliu be handed over to the Lagos State Controller of the Nigeria Immigration Service for immediate deportation to Chad, citing the nature of their offences.

Alogba gave the order on Tuesday at the Ogba Magistrates'

Court shortly after approving their release from the Nigerian Correctional Service under a special session organised for the release of eligible inmates.

The two men were among 18 inmates released during the exercise, which drew beneficiaries from the Borstal Home, Adigbe; the female correctional centre; and medium and maximum security custodial centres across the state.

The chief judge held that the freed inmates were found to have met the requirements for release.

While addressing the inmates, who had regained their freedom, Alogba advised them to seize the opportunity to reform in order to be fully reintegrated back to the society.

"This is an opportunity for you to change because you will not be this lucky next time if you commit another offence," he said.

Earlier, Abubakar had told the court that he had been in custody since 2018 without being taken to court and admitted that he robbed his victim with a knife.

When asked if any relative was present in court, he said none was in attendance but added that he lived around Ago Palace Way in Lagos and knew his way home.

However, the chief judge, rejected the request and insisted on his deportation.

"I want to release you, but

I order that you should be deported back to Chad.

I hereby release you to the Controller of Immigration, Lagos State, for immediate deportation," Alogba said.

Aliu also admitted to stealing money from his victim but denied using a knife or gun in the act.

In total, four females and 14 males were released during the exercise, while several inmates were denied release after a review of their cases.

Earlier, the Controller of the Nigeria Correctional Service, Lagos State Command, Mr Dar-amola George, disclosed that custodial centres in the state currently hold more than 8,000 inmates despite having a combined capacity of less than 4,000.

Alleged certificate forgery: Court to hear UNN's objection in ex-minister's suit

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja fixed February 26 to hear the preliminary objection filed by the University of Nigeria, Nsuka (UNN) against a suit instituted by the former Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology, Uche Nnaji.

Justice Hauwa Yilwa fixed the date to allow the 3rd to 7th defendants, through their counsel, Chief Chris Uche, SAN, served the preliminary objection on the 1st and 2nd defendants who were not represented in court.

The 1st and 2nd defendants in the suit are Minister of Education and the National Universities Commission (NUC).

The UNN had jointly filed the preliminary objection alongside its Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Simon Ortuanya, the Registrar of UNN; a former acting Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Oguenji-for Ujam; and the Senate of the university who are 3rd to 7th respondents respectively.

They had prayed the court to strike out the ex-minister's suit for being statute barred.

They also urged Justice Yilwa to strike out the motion on notice for prerogative writs for being incompetent and wrongly commenced.

Nnaji had filed the suit following allegations of certificate forgery levelled against him.

The former minister, in an ex-parte motion, had sought an order granting him leave to issue prerogative writs prohibiting the university and its officials from "tampering with" or continuing

to "tamper with" his academic records, among others.

Nnaji, in the suit, marked, FHC/ABJ/CS/1909/2025, sued the Minister of Education, the NUC, UNN and Ortuanya as 1st to 4th respondents.

He also joined the Registrar of UNN; Ujam and the Senate of the University as 5th to 7th respondents respectively.

He sought the leave to issue a prerogative writ of mandamus compelling the university and its officials to release his academic transcript to him, and asked the Minister of Education and the NUC to exercise their supervisory powers to compel UNN to do so.

He equally sought an interim injunction restraining UNN and its officials from "tampering" with his academic records pending the determination of the substantive suit, among others.

But in their preliminary objection, they prayed the court to strike out the suit for want of jurisdiction.

They also sought an order awarding substantial costs in favour of the 3rd, 4th and 6th defendants.

In a nine-ground of argument, they said the motion ex-parte for leave was not filed within three months of the occurrence of the subject matter.

They argued that this was contrary to Order 34 Rule 4(1) of the Federal High Court (Civil Procedure) Rules 2019 and Section 2 (a) of the Public Officers Protection Act 2004, which rendered the entire proceedings incompetent and rob this court of jurisdiction.

NEWS

Foreign

Trump vows 'very strong action' if Iran executes protesters

President Donald Trump has said the US will take "very strong action" against Iran if it executes protesters, as rights groups say more than 2,400 anti-government demonstrators have been killed in a violent crackdown by Iranian authorities.

Relatives of 26-year-old Erfan Soltani, who was detained last week, told BBC Persian he was due to be executed on Wednesday. It is unclear whether this has taken place.

A representative from the Hengaw Organization for Human Rights also told the BBC that they had "never witnessed a case move so quickly".

Speaking to the BBC's US partner CBS News, Trump said of potential executions: "If they hang them, you're going to see some things... We will

take very strong action if they do such a thing."

Soltani's relative told BBC Persian that an Iranian court had issued a death sentence "in an extremely rapid process, within just two days".

They were "deeply concerned that he could be executed without any prior notice", given that contact with Iran has been affected by the internet shutdown.

Soltani's detention demonstrated that the Iranian government was trying "to control the population, to not allow any more protests to happen", Hengaw representative Awyar Shekhi told the BBC's Radio 4 Today programme on Wednesday.

Soltani's sister - who is a lawyer - tried to intervene in his case but was told by authorities there was nothing to

pursue, Shekhi added.

Prisoners sentenced to death in Iran are typically granted final moments with loved ones. While the Iranian authorities have told the family they will allow a meeting with Erfan before his execution, Shekhi said, he hasn't been allowed any contact with his family since his arrest.

An Iranian official told Reuters that 2,000 people had been killed, but that "terrorists" were to blame.

Trump earlier said he planned to attend a meeting at the White House on Tuesday night to discuss the situation in Iran, pledging to get "accurate numbers" on the death toll from the protests.

"The killing looks like it's significant, but we don't know yet for certain," Trump told reporters while returning to the

White House.

Once he has the numbers, he said, "we'll act accordingly."

The US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) said that it had so far confirmed the killing of 2,403 protesters, as well as 12 children, despite an internet blackout. Nearly 150 people affiliated with the government have also been killed, the group said.

State-linked Iranian news agency Fars reported that funerals were held in Tehran on Wednesday for more than 100 members of the security forces and others they described as "martyrs".

On Tuesday, Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform that Iranian authorities would "pay a big price" for the killings, and urged people to "keep protesting".

At least 32 killed after crane collapses on train in Thailand

At least 32 people have been killed and 66 others injured after a construction crane fell onto a moving train in north-eastern Thailand.

The crane derailed the train and crushed some of its carriages, one of which caught fire. A one-year-old and an 85-year-old are among those injured, with seven people in critical condition, according to authorities.

Officials say some 171 passengers had been onboard the train when the accident occurred at around 09:00 local time (02:00 GMT).

The State Railway of Thailand has launched an investigation into the incident and announced that it is taking legal action against the construction company responsible for the crane.

Italian-Thai Development Public Company Limited said it expressed regret and it would provide compensation and relief to the families of those who died or were injured.

The train had been travelling from Bangkok to the north-eastern Ubon Ratchathani province when the accident occurred, carrying mostly students and workers travelling for school and work in other districts.

Local outlet The Nation reported that the incident occurred while the crane was lifting a large concrete section which dropped on to the train, causing several coaches to derail.

One survivor, train staff

member Thirasak Wongsoongnern, told local media that he and the other passengers were thrown into the air after the crane fell on them.

An eyewitness, Maliwan Nakthorn, told BBC Thai that she witnessed the moment the crane collapsed. "There were small pieces, like fragments of concrete, that started falling," she said. "After those fell, the crane slowly slid down and hit. It struck hard, and then it came down and crushed the train."

"The whole incident took less than one minute," she added.

Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, who was due to visit the scene later on Wednesday, called for "someone [to] be punished and held accountable" for the incident.

"Accidents like this can only happen due to negligence, skipped steps, deviations from the design, or the use of incorrect materials," Anutin said.

The crane was being used to build an overhead railway that is part of a US\$5.4bn (£4bn) China-backed project to link Bangkok with neighbouring Laos, where a Chinese-built high-speed line is already running to south-western China.

Known officially as the Bangkok-Nong Khai HSR Development for Regional Connectivity, the Italian-Thai Development Company is listed as the firm in charge of the Lam Takhong-Sikhio section where the incident took place.



CRANE COLLAPSES ON TRAIN:

Construction work had been going on when the train travelling past was hit.

Greenlanders brace for summit that could shape the Arctic's future - and their own

It's crunch time. The US Vice-President, JD Vance, is hosting the Danish and Greenlandic foreign ministers, as well as their US counterpart, Marco Rubio, in the White House on Wednesday.

The focus of the talks: the future of the world's biggest island, Greenland.

There is a large digital news ticker tape running above the snow-covered shopping mall in the island's capital, Nuuk. You don't have to speak Greenlandic to understand the words "Trump", "Greenland" and "sovereignty" that appear over and over again, in stark red letters.

Donald Trump says he wants this territory and he'll take it "the easy way or the hard way". Ahead of Wednesday's talks, he said the US needed Greenland for national security, and Nato "should be

leading the way for us to get it".

After his recent controversial military action in Venezuela, people in Greenland are taking him at his word.

The anxious countdown to the Washington meeting has been going on for days.

Passers-by tell me it feels like years.

"I would like to encourage (Donald Trump) to use both his ears wisely, to listen more and to speak less. We are not for sale. Our country is not for sale," Amelie Zeeb said, removing her chunky mittens, traditionally made here with sealskin and known as pualuuk, in order to wave her hands for emphasis.

"My hope is for our country to be independent and well-managed and not be bought," said Inuit writer and musician, Sivnissok Rask.

While Maria, with her sev-

en-week-old baby, wrapped snugly inside her winter coat, told me, "I worry for the future of my young family. We don't want all this attention here!"

But international attention on Greenland is not going to disappear anytime soon.

Far more hangs in the balance than the fate of this issue.

The tussle over Greenland pits Nato nations Denmark and the US against one another.

Greenland is a semi-autonomous territory of Denmark. The Danish prime minister Mette Frederiksen has warned that if the US takes control of the island by force, that will be the end of the transatlantic defence alliance that Europe has relied on for security for decades.

It will also be another damaging blow to US-European relations, already badly bruised since Donald Trump's return to the

White House. And remember: Europe's leaders are desperate to keep the Trump administration onside, to back a sustainable peace deal for Ukraine too.

The potential ramifications of a fallout over Greenland are huge - but it is unclear how Washington intends to handle Wednesday's meeting. Will the spirit be one of compromise or confrontation?

President Trump insists he needs Greenland for national security. If the US doesn't take Greenland, then China or Russia will, he says.

Mindful of this, major European powers, which have vocally supported Danish sovereignty over Greenland, have also been scrambling to come up with military proposals to boost Nato's presence around the island and in the Arctic more broadly.

China announces record \$1trn trade surplus despite Trump tariffs

China announced record export numbers for 2025, a year when US President Donald Trump's tariffs and trade policy caused turmoil in the global economy.

Beijing on Wednesday reported the world's largest-ever trade surplus - the value of goods and services sold overseas compared to its imports - at \$1.19tn (£890bn).

It's the first time China's full-year trade surplus has passed \$1tn, beating 2024's record figure of \$993bn.

China's monthly export surpluses passed \$100bn seven times last year - a sign that Trump's tariff campaign have barely affected its overall trade with the rest of the world.

Trade with the US did weaken, but this was made up for by a rise in Chinese exports elsewhere, especially to South East Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Wang Jun, the deputy director of China's customs, said during a press conference on Wednesday that the figures are "extraordinary and hard-won" given the "profound changes" and challenges in global trade.

He noted a rise in exports of green technology, artificial intelligence-related products and robotics.

The huge surplus can be explained by strong overseas demand for Chinese goods as trade

with global partners including South Asian countries and others in Africa and Europe grew, as well as a weak domestic market.

China's economy has been weighed by a property crisis and rising debt, which has made businesses more hesitant to invest and consumers cautious about spending.

As a result, there is less of a need to import goods, and imports rose by just 0.5%, according to the new figures.

Meanwhile, a weaker yuan, a strong supply of goods and inflation in Western countries have also made Chinese exports more attractive.

The results are a "mixed blessing" for Beijing, said trade policy analyst Deborah Elms from the Hinrich Foundation.

China has benefited from sales and more jobs created from its business abroad, but its goods could face "greater scrutiny" from foreign markets that are under pressure to compete with its products, she said.

China's success will likely continue in 2026 as Chinese goods and services become more deeply entrenched into global businesses, said Elms.

These latest figures will be seen in Beijing as a sign that China has customers all around the world, besides the US, but Wang warned that China faces an uncertain external environment.

US delivers military aid to Nigeria after Christmas strikes

The United States said on Tuesday that it had delivered "critical military supplies" to Nigeria after carrying out strikes on Christmas Day targeting militants in the country's unstable northwest.

This delivery is the latest sign of strengthening security cooperation between Washington and Abuja, and comes as Nigeria's national security adviser signed an agreement worth \$750,000 per month with an American firm to lobby the administration of President Donald Trump.

On the evening of December 25, the U.S. struck sites in Sokoto State in what Nigeria described as a "joint" operation against targets linked to the Islamic State group.

"This delivery supports Nigeria's ongoing operations and underscores our shared security partnership," said the U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) on X, without providing further details.

The December bombings marked a turnaround after relations collapsed late last year when Trump described violence in Nigeria as "persecution" and "genocide" against Christians.

The Nigerian government and independent analysts reject this characterization, which has long been used by the American and European religious right.

Africa's most populous country, roughly divided between a predominantly Mus-

lim north and a predominantly Christian south, faces multiple, sometimes overlapping armed conflicts, including a jihadist insurgency that has been ongoing since 2009.

Southeast separatists, who have long maintained a lobbying presence in Washington, have also used the "Christian genocide" narrative.

Lobbying Effort

According to newly filed disclosure forms submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice and consulted by AFP on Tuesday, Abuja has also entered the lobbying arena.

Security chief Nuhu Ribadu hired the American lobbying firm DCI Group in mid-December to help Abuja communicate about "its actions to protect Christian communities and maintain U.S. support in the fight against West African jihadist groups and other destabilizing elements."

A few days before the U.S. strikes, Nigeria's information minister said that the "dispute" with Washington had been resolved, "resulting in a strengthened partnership between America and Nigeria."

Last week, a Nigerian source familiar with post-strike security arrangements told AFP that the Nigerian Air Force would lead future strikes, with the United States providing intelligence from reconnaissance flights.

Abuja remains open to future U.S. strikes, the source added.

Syrians displaced by deadly battles in Aleppo begin returning to the city

Displaced Syrians are returning to their contested neighbourhood of Sheikh Maqsoud in the northern city of Aleppo after days of deadly battles between the army and Kurdish-led fighters.

More than 150,000 people fled the two Kurdish-held pockets of the city in the five days of fighting that saw almost two dozen people killed.

Aleppo Governor Azzam Ghareeb said Damascus over the weekend took full control of Sheikh Maqsoud and Achrafieh where the clashes took place.

Convoys carrying families that fled to nearby Afrin entered the battered neighbourhood honking their hooters in celebration as people danced on the streets after stepping off buses.

Residents had to wait before being allowed to return after civil defence workers and security forces swept into the area to disarm mines and unexploded shells.

Though work has only just started to restore water and basic services, returnees who feared long-term displacement are elated.

"The return was very pleasant, no one questioned us or stopped us at any checkpoints," said

Anas, who returned with his wife and children from Afrin. "Before, we used to be stopped at checkpoints and questioned. Things are much better now than they were before."

Syria's President Ahmed al-Sharaa has promised to unify the country after 14 years of war, but progress has stalled on integrating the Kurds' de facto autonomous administration.

Sharaa has faced resistance from the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) who are wary of his Islamist-led government.

Meanwhile, there were reports of fresh skirmishes between the government forces and the SDF overnight in a tense area in eastern Aleppo province, marking a possible new escalation.

There were no immediate reports of casualties.

The Syrian army earlier declared an area east of Aleppo, the country's second largest city, as a "closed military zone."

Eastern Aleppo province has been a tense frontline, dividing areas under the Syrian government and the large swathes of northeastern Syria under the SDF.



MILITARY PATROL:

A Nigerian army patrol near the LEA Primary and Secondary School in Kuriga, where pupils were abducted in Kuriga, Kaduna, Nigeria, on 9 March 2024.

Uganda election chief says he has had threats over results declaration

Uganda Electoral Commission

Simon Byabakama says voters not threats will determine the election outcome

The head of Uganda's electoral body says he has received threats warning him against declaring certain presidential candidates the winners of Thursday's election.

Simon Byabakama said he would not be intimidated by such threats from senior state officials, whom he did not name.

He was responding to a BBC question about a widely shared video which shows a presidential assistant saying the electoral commission would never declare opposition candidate Robert Kyagulanyi, popularly known as Bobi Wine, as president, even if he were to win.

"Some people say if you don't

declare so-and-so as president, you will see. I tell them that I am not in the business of donating votes," said Byabakama.

President Yoweri Museveni, 81, who has ruled the country for nearly four decades, is seeking a seventh term in office.

Bobi Wine, a 43-year-old pop star turned politician, is Museveni's main challenger, seeking to unseat him for the second time after finishing runner-up in 2021 polls.

Six other candidates are also in the race, in which about 21.6 million voters are registered to vote.

Campaigning has been marked by the disruption of opposition activities, including the detention of activists and the breaking-up of rallies by police.

At the Electoral Commission headquarters in the capital, Kampala, Byabakama said he was not worried about threats from what

he called "idle people".

"You can see from my demeanour that fear is a word that does not exist in my vocabulary," said the poll chief, adding that only the will of voters and the law would guide the process.

In the video shared by the Daily Monitor newspaper on social media last week, Yiga Kisakyamukama, the special presidential assistant for service delivery and monitoring, was captured saying Museveni would never leave power through the ballot.

"Don't expect, don't even think, that Simon Byabakama would announce Bobi Wine. President Museveni, who is on the chair, will remain on the chair. Never think that Museveni would leave power through voting. No, no, no - don't waste our time," Kisakyamukama was heard saying.

But Byabakama said Ugan-

da's law, not individual opinions or threats, would determine the outcome of the presidential election.

"The law says that the candidate who receives more than 50% plus one of the total valid votes cast is the president of Uganda. It is the voters who determine how many votes a candidate gets. What the voters have said is what I will declare to the nation," he added.

The poll chief said he would declare the results within 48 hours of the close of polling, in accordance with the country's laws.

Responding to concerns about the heavy military presence in the streets, Byabakama said security forces were deployed to maintain peace and stability during the electoral process and should not intimidate voters.

FBI searches home of *Washington Post* reporter in classified documents probe

Agents with the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) raided the home of a Washington Post reporter this week as part of an investigation into a government contractor accused of leaking classified information, officials said.

In a post on X, US Attorney General Pam Bondi said agents had searched the home of a journalist who allegedly "was obtaining and reporting classified and illegally leaked information from a Pentagon contractor".

Bondi said the contractor had been arrested.

The Washington Post identified the reporter to the BBC as Hannah Natanson, who has covered how President Donald Trump's administration has drastically reduced and reshaped the federal workforce.

Natanson was at her home in

Virginia on Wednesday when federal agents came to search her home, according to the Washington Post. They took her phone, a work and personal computer and a Garmin watch, the outlet said.

Natanson was told she was not the focus of the probe, according to the Washington Post, which reported that officials were investigating Aurelio Perez-Lugones, a system administrator in Maryland with top-secret security clearance.

According to an FBI affidavit, Perez-Lugones - a systems engineer and information technology specialist on contract for the government since 2002 - accessed and printed classified intelligence reports.

Officials said they found classified information in a lunch box while searching Perez-Lugones' car, according

to court filings. The filing does not mention Perez-Lugones disseminating the information.

The court filings say Perez-Lugones has been charged with unlawful retention of national defence information. He is scheduled to appear in court on Thursday.

Bondi said the Trump administration would "not tolerate illegal leaks of classified information that, when reported, pose a grave risk to our Nation's national security and the brave men and women who are serving our country".

The search of Natanson's home sparked concerns from press freedom and free speech advocates.

"Any search targeting a journalist warrants intense scrutiny because these kinds of searches can deter and impede reporting that is vital to our democracy,"

Jameel Jaffer, the executive director of the Knight First Amendment Institute, said in a statement.

Natanson previously wrote about her experience gathering more than 1,000 sources who currently and formerly worked for the federal government, as she reported on the layoffs, buyouts and firings that Trump has used since returning to office to shrink the federal workforce and change the focus of many agencies.

Natanson wrote about sources inside government agencies sharing information they "weren't supposed to tell me" and the intensity of receiving sensitive information from so many people.

In April, Bondi ended Biden-era policies that had protected journalists from having their phone records seized or being forced to testify in leak probes.

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13 X 4	369,500	397,213	295,600	317,770	206,938	222,458	443,500	476,763	369,550	397,266
10 X 4	340,000	365,500	273,500	294,013	177,400	190,705	370,000	397,750	295,600	317,770
HALF PAGE	295,600	317,770	236,500	254,238	147,800	158,885	340,000	365,500	273,450	293,959
10 X 3	221,700	238,328	147,800	158,885	118,300	127,173	266,000	285,950	251,300	270,148
13 X2	206,900	222,418	133,000	142,925	103,500	111,263	221,800	238,435	147,810	158,896
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CENTER SPREAD	1,356,968	1,466,992						B/W	1,148,181	1,241,276
HALF CENTER	991,590	1,071,989						B/W	887,272	959,212
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PRODUCTS		PUBLIC NOTICE		SIZES	PUBLIC NOTICE		PRODUCTS			
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FP 6X2	89,800 96,535	105,450	113,359	6 X 2	60,640	65,188	49,140	52,826		
FP 5X2	81,100 87,183	97,300	104,598	5 X 2	51,950	55,846	42,120	45,279		
FP 4X2	73,000 78,475	80,700	86,753	4 X 2	45,260	48,655	34,400	36,980		
FP 3X2	64,870 69,735	73,000	78,475	3 X 2	30,900	33,218	26,600	28,595		
FP 2X2	59,000 63,425	64,900	69,768	2 X 2	18,680	20,081	15,600	16,770		
SPECIAL POSITIONS					2 X 1	12,400 13,330	7,415	7,971		
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Sports

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2nd Niger Delta Games: Delta State Poised to Dominate in Benin

As the build up to the 2nd Niger Delta Games, Edo 2026 continues across the region, Team Delta has vowed to avoid the mistakes which cost them the

title on last day of competition at the maiden edition in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, last year.

At the end of the contests in Uyo, last April, Bayelsa came from behind to snatch the title,

winning 42 gold against Team Delta's 41 gold medals.

Delta athletes and officials were already looking forward to be crowned champions in Uyo after leading the table with most total medals of 99 medals (41 gold, 26 silver, 32 bronze) before Bayelsa struck, topping the table with 42 gold, 29 silver, 15 bronze. Team Edo finished third with 23 gold, 35 silver, and 31 bronze.

With focus now on Benin City, Edo State, for the second edition, from February 20-27, 2026, Team Delta is optimistic of winning the crown.

This year's edition is featuring over 3,000 U-20 athletes from the nine Niger Delta states. They will compete in 17 sports to discover and develop regional talent, promising an even grander event, which according to the organisers, will surpass the success recorded at Uyo 2025 Games.

An official of Team Delta, Festus Ohwojoro, who is the Executive Assistant on Sports to Governor Sheriff Oborewori, said that the state is doing everything to correct the mistakes noticed at Uyo 2025.

"We lost the title last year in Uyo by one gold medal, and our athletes and coaches are working hard to ensure such does not happen again as we prepare for Benin City 2026," he stated.

Ohwojoro, who is the immediate past Director General of Delta Sports Commission, further stated that Team Delta athletes and officials are not under any form of pressure ahead the Games, adding "I am sure they will get it right this time."

The Niger Delta Games is sponsored by the Niger Delta Development Commission while Dunamis-Icon Limited owns the franchise.



EKITI QUEENS

Ekiti Queens' brace sweep 3 points against Pacesetter in Ibadan

Ekiti Queens Football Club on Wednesday defeated Pacesetter Queens of Oyo State 2-0 in match-day 6 of the 2025/2026 Nigeria Women Premier Football League (NWPFL), played at the Lekan Salami Stadium, Ibadan.

Ekiti Queens opened scoring with a sublime strike by Zainab Ismail in the 24th minute, which kept the home side on edge throughout the first half.

Pacesetter Queens missed the chance to equalise when they failed to convert a penalty awarded against their opponents in the 68th minute.

Winifred Eyebhor doubled

the lead for Ekiti Queens in the 82nd minute, sealing a convincing victory over their hosts.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Pacesetter Queens remain winless after six matches, having played goalless against Heartland Queens last week.

Ekiti Queens, on the other hand, extended their winning streak that began with a 1-0 victory over Naija Ratels FC on match-day five.

Despite expanding to 20 teams, Nigeria's Women Premier League still retains its abridged format, divided into two zones of 10.

2026 Sports Development Programme, tasks coaches, Athletes on High Performance ahead Niger Delta, Enugu Games

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

In a strategic move to expand the scope of the sporting activities of Edo State Sports Commission and to begin work in the year 2026 on a sound footing with a clear policy direction, Executive Chairman Hon. Amadin Desmond Enabulele with his management team has rolled out a development programme for the year.

The Edo Sports Commission boss unveiled the 2026 programme of activities during the General Staff meeting convened for appraisal and feedback. The interactive meeting with coaches, athletes and administrators in the various sports association held at the VIP Lounge of the Samuel Ogbemudia stadium today.

Unveiling the development programme for the year 2026, Sports Commission boss announced some new events lined up for March, which include the Okpebholo Athletes' Meet, the National Para Games, and various racket games and ball competitions spread across before the state sports festival scheduled tentatively for September, adding that deliberate initiatives are being designed to boost female participation in sports through targeted programmes and competitive platforms.

Hon. Enabulele, said the appraisal and feedback meeting was part of deliberate efforts to reset the working standards to enforce professionalism, and drive improved performance

across all sports.

According to him, the Commission has introduced strict performance-driven policies for both coaches and athletes, stressing that the era of excuses is over. He emphasized that quality work, discipline, and measurable results will now define advancement within the sports system with rewards system in place.

"We are determined to raise the bar. Coaches and athletes



NIGER DELTA ATHLETES

NPFL26 MD20: Bendel Insurance FC begins second stanza with 1-0 Victory over Kwara Utd

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Bendel Insurance Football Club on Wednesday, January 14, 2026 began the second stanza of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) on a positive note as they defeated Kwara United 1-0 at Ilorin Township stadium.

Akpan Emanuel scored the

only goal of the match day 20 encounter in the 37th minute of action after the Benin Arsenal have wasted several scoring chances.

The revised fixture against the Harmony boys was the first match of the second round of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL), and a back-to-back victory, confirming the Benin Arsenal's superiority

over the Harmony boys.

Recall that the Benin Arsenal defeated the Harmony Boys 2-0 in the Match Day 19 on Saturday, December 27, 2025 to end the first round of the 2025/2026 Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) on a winning note in Benin.

Emmanuel Akpan and Kayode Oke scored for the Benin Arsenal in the 20th and 42nd minute to secure the important three points that lifted the coach Kennedy Boboye's side to 9th position on the league table before the Midseason break.

Bendel Insurance FC have been in good shape and have continued to post impressive results. They are enjoying great performances of eight unbeaten record since coach Kennedy Boboye took over as the technical manager of the club in October, 2025.

Bendel Insurance FC who moved a step forward to 8th



BENDEL INSURANCE IN TRAINING

Kano Pillars stun Nasarawa with 1-0 away win

Kano Pillars FC edged Nasarawa United FC 1-0 in a matchday 20 Nigeria Premier Football League fixture on Wednesday.

The encounter was played at Lafia Township Stadium, where the visitors secured maximum points against the Solid Miners.

Okorie Jude scored the decisive goal in the 48th minute, sealing Kano Pillars' first away victory at Nasarawa's home ground this season.

Nasarawa United, fifth with 32 points, dominated spells but failed to convert chances against a resolute Pillars defence.

In spite of the win, Kano

Pillars remain in the relegation zone, sitting 18th on the table with 22 points.

Nasarawa coach, Mbwas Mangut, said the loss hurt. "It is painful because this is our first home defeat this season," he said.

Mangut added, "The league is a marathon. We will go back to the drawing board and correct our mistakes."

Kano Pillars coach, Baba Ganaru, praised his team. "The boys stuck to the plan and showed discipline," he said.

Ganaru promised improvement, adding that the team would "maintain this character to climb the table."



KANO PILLARS

SPORTS

The Nigerian Observer
 ...that the people may know

2025AFCON: Nigeria caged as Morocco sails through 4-2 on penalties in semifinals clash

● Famous Sports Journalist Dies in Rabat

The Atlas Lions of Morocco on Wednesday night in Rabat glided into the 35th AFCON finals after beating the Super Eagles of Nigeria in a pulsating penalty shootout which ended 4-2 in favour of the hosts after the game had ended 0-0 at 120 minutes.

It was the second penalty

shootout at this tournament, the first was between Mali and Tunisia in the R16. It was the 9th penalty shootout for Nigeria and 4th for Morocco that won her first shootout at AFCON.

Samuel Chukwueze and Bruno Onyemaechi who played well in the match but lost their kicks

were full of tears. Paul Onuachu who played just a minute of the match scored along with Dele Bashiru who was also a substitute.

Yousef En Nesri was the match winner for Morocco; Igamane, 20 year old Shegir and Hakimi scored theirs while El Aynaoui got his kick saved by Nwabali.

The match proper was beyond stats, long passes, possessions, dribbles attacks or defence but of individual skills and tactics. Morocco appeared not to want the penalty kicks as their changes were attackers who added to the pressure on Nigeria to score as they were in a hurry to end the match.

Nigerian attackers in Victor Osimhen who was injured out, Ademola Lookman and Akor Adams were thoroughly

marked out of the game. Calvin Bassey got a yellow in the 33rd minute for rough tackle and will miss the next match but Wilfred Ndidi should be back.

The Stadium was full of red colours of the Moroccan supporters who booed the Nigerian players on entering the pitch and on every good move of the Nigerians lamenting when their players were stopped from getting a goal. It has become the 2nd ever finals for Morocco to play at AFCON since 2004.

Nigeria faces their old foes Egypt in the 3rd place match on Saturday 17th January at 5pm in Casablanca and the grand finale between two Lions, Teranga Lions of Senegal and Atlas Lions will be on Sunday 18th January at 8pm in Rabat.



MOROCCO CELEBRATE AFTER QUALIFY FOR THE FINAL

Coach Aliyu Zubair makes history, qualify Telecom SC to quarter-final of Egyptian Cup

Barely three months into his reign as Head Coach of Telecom SC of Egypt, Coach Aliyu Zubair has achieved a notable feat of qualifying the team to their first-ever quarter-final appearance in the Egyptian Cup following a 2-1 victory over Pharco on Tuesday in the round of 16 game of Egyptian Cup.

The round-of-16 victory comes on the back of another major scalp for Telecom, who had earlier knocked out Egyptian giants Al Ahly in the round of 32 — a result that sent shockwaves across Egyptian football, underlined the immediate impact of Zubair since taking charge and added to his growing reputation as one of Africa's most astute young tacticians.

Telecom SC, led with composure and tactical discipline, took the lead in the 17th minute through Eid Ahmed, whose well-taken strike rewarded the team's early dominance.

Nigerian forward Nwan-na Okechukwu doubled the advantage in the 46th minute to put Telecom firmly in control. Although Karim El Tayeb pulled one back for Pharco in the 54th minute, Zubair's side held on resolutely to secure the historic qualification.

Notably, Coach Aliyu Zubair only joined Telecom SC in October last year, yet his influence has been immediate and profound. In just a few

months, he has transformed the team into a fearless and well-organised unit capable of competing with — and defeating — the best in Egypt.

Zubair's success in Egypt is a continuation of an impressive coaching résumé built in Nigeria. He is a former winner of the Nigerian Federation Cup with Elkanemi Warriors and has also achieved the rare feat of promoting two different clubs Gombe United and Elkanemi Warriors to premier league.



COACH ALIYU ZUBAIR (L) SIGNING A DEAL

Rangers, Rivers Utd share spoils 0-0 in Enugu

Rangers International FC of Enugu on Wednesday held Rivers United FC of Port Harcourt to a goalless draw in week 20 of the Nigeria Premier Football League.

The tense encounter at the Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium saw

Rivers United dominate early exchanges, forcing Rangers into repeated clearances inside their defensive half.

Rangers grew into the match midway through the first half, pushing United backwards, but the visitors' defence stayed

alert and well organised.

The defending champions maintained control and continued to trouble the Flying Antelopes until the end of the opening 45 minutes.

After the restart, Rangers pressed aggressively and searched for a breakthrough, but poor finishing denied them a deserved goal.

The contest turned end-to-end in the closing minutes as Rangers piled pressure on their visitors in search of a late winner.

Rivers United's backline, however, stood firm to secure a hard-earned scoreless draw against the Enugu side.

Rangers' stand-in coach, Kene Ekenedilichukwu, said football outcomes were unpredictable. "This is football; sometimes you win and sometimes you lose," he said.



RANGERS VS RIVERS UTD

Akwa Utd players urged on discipline, hard work for promotion

The Akwa United Football Club has urged players to maintain hard work, so as to conquer the Nigeria National League (NNL) 2025/2026, and enter next season's Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL).

Chairman of Akwa United FC, Joseph Eno, gave the charge on Wednesday, during a media chat in Uyo.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Akwa United FC currently tops the conference B table with 19 points, played 9 matches, lost 2, drew 1 and won 6.

Eno attributed the team's performance to determination and discipline on and off the field.

He said that with the mandate given to the club by Gov. Umo Eno, to move to the NPFL, the team must remain focused and resilient to actualise that mandate.

He said that with skillful and tactical players, the team would strive to get back on the NPFL table next season.

"We are equally very big on discipline that's why we decided from the onset that all players must live in camp; Camp rules are strictly enforced defaulters are promptly and decisively punished.

"As you know, discipline breeds professionalism, the very reason we are well rated in terms of discipline and professionalism in the league.



AKWA UNITED

3SC thrash Enyimba 3-0 in Ibadan

Shooting Stars Sports Club defeated Enyimba FC 3-0 in the 2025/2026 NPFL Matchday 26 at the Lekan Salami Stadium, Ibadan, on Wednesday.

Luck Emmanuel opened scoring in the 16th minute, converting a penalty. "We stayed calm and took our chance," Emmanuel said after the match.

Coach Nurudeen Aweroro reshaped his side in the 56th minute, introducing Alex Aghaowa and Joshua Akpan. "The changes gave us better balance," he said.

Sodiql Ibrahim doubled the lead in the 80th minute after sustained pressure from the

hosts, who created several chances before breaking Enyimba's resistance.

Further substitutions followed in the 87th minute, with Emmanuel Ndubueze and Qamar Adegoke replacing Ibrahim and Ayobami Junior to maintain attacking intensity.

The move paid off as Adegoke struck in stoppage time. "It was important to finish strongly," Aweroro said, as 3SC sealed a convincing win.

Shooting Stars now sit fourth with 32 points from 20 matches, behind Rivers United, Abia Warriors and Ikorodu City FC on the NPFL table.



SHOOTING STARS SPORTS CLUB