

UNILAG produces 272 first class graduates as 16,506 earn degrees

LAGOS
The University of Lagos (UNILAG) has produced 272 first class graduates as it awarded degrees to thousands of students during its ongoing 56th convocation ceremonies, with the Faculty of Engineering accounting

for 89 first class honours. Vice-Chancellor of the university, Prof. Folasade Ogunsola, disclosed on Wednesday that UNILAG would confer degrees on a total of 16,506 students across all faculties during the convocation, which began earlier in the week.

She said 2,097 students graduated from the Faculties of Engineering, Law and Management Sciences alone. Of the 613 engineering graduates, 89 earned first class honours, while the Faculty of Law produced 321 graduates, including three first class degree holders. In the Faculty of Management

Sciences, 1,163 students graduated, with 180 attaining first class honours. Overall, Ogunsola said the graduating class comprised 272 first class graduates, 1,108 second class upper, 580 second class lower, 131 third class and six pass degree holders. The vice-chancellor also

announced that the university would confer honorary doctorate degrees on two eminent Nigerians: Mr Jubril Tinubu, who will receive a Doctor of Business degree, and Mr Kanu Agabi, former Attorney-General and Minister of Justice of the Federation, who will be awarded a Doctor of Law de-

gree. Ogunsola reaffirmed UNILAG's commitment to academic excellence, innovation and the provision of a conducive environment for teaching and learning, while thanking staff, alumni and stakeholders for their continued support of the institution.

The Nigerian Observer



...that the people may know

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Weak shipping line regulation threatens Customs reforms —SEREC

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EU targets Nigeria, W'Africa with €557m as global aid shrinks

ABUJA
Nigeria and other African countries are set to receive a major humanitarian lifeline as the European Union earmarked €557 million for West and Central Africa in its €1.9 billion humanitarian aid budget for 2026, with North-West Nigeria listed among priority areas. The allocation was announced on Wednesday by the EU Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, amid growing global humanitarian pressures and

sharp funding cuts by major donors at a time when an estimated 239 million people worldwide require urgent assistance. The €557 million package, which excludes a separate €14.6 million set aside for North Africa, forms part of the EU's initial 2026 humanitarian envelope unveiled by the European Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management, Hadja Lahbib. The funding will support emergency food assistance, shelter, healthcare, protection for vulnerable populations and

education for children affected by conflict and displacement. According to the EU, the funds will cover humanitarian needs across West and Central Africa, the Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin, North-West Nigeria, Central and Southern Africa, the Great Lakes region and the Greater Horn of Africa. The Middle East will receive €448 million, with a strong focus on Gaza, alongside Iraq, Yemen, Syria and Lebanon, while Ukraine is allocated €145 million as Russia's invasion enters its fourth year.

Additional allocations include €126 million for Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran; €95 million for Central and South America and the Caribbean; €73 million for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, particularly the Myanmar crisis; and €14.6 million for North Africa. More than €415 million has also been reserved for rapid response to sudden-onset emergencies and to maintain a global humanitarian supply chain. The EU said Lahbib took the commitment to the World Economic Forum in Davos to

mobilise private sector support and innovative financing to bridge the widening gap between record humanitarian needs and available public funding. The bloc stressed that, despite increasing strain on international humanitarian law, it remains committed to principled aid that reaches people in need wherever they are.

EFCC recovers ₦1.28bn from contractor over abandoned Enugu school projects

ENUGU
The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has recovered ₦1.28 billion from Sujimoto Luxury Construction Ltd over funds allegedly misappropriated from the Enugu State Government for the construction of Smart Green Schools across the state. The recovery followed an investigation launched after the Enugu State Government, in September 2025, accused the company's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Olanibomi Ogundele, of defrauding the state of ₦5.76 billion meant for 22 Smart Green School projects, many of which were reportedly abandoned or substantially unexecuted. Presenting the recovered cheques on Wednesday, the EFCC Zonal Director in Enugu, Mr Daniel Ise, said the commission traced and recovered ₦1,234,350,000 alongside an additional ₦50 million, bringing the total recovery to

₦1,284,350,000. Ise said the recovery was in line with EFCC's mandate to trace, recover and retribute public funds lost to economic and financial crimes, stressing that investigations into the matter were still ongoing. "This does not mark the end of the case. We will examine every facet of the petition to ensure that every kobo belonging to the Enugu State Government is accounted for. Where evidence of criminality is established, prosecution will follow," he said. Receiving the funds on behalf of the state government, Secretary to the State Government, Prof. Chidiebere Onyia, praised the EFCC for what he described as professionalism and resilience despite public controversies surrounding the case. Onyia said the recovery reflected the administration of Governor Peter Mbah's commitment to transparency and

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DEFENSE CORRESPONDENTS MEDIA VISIT: Representative of the Force Commander, Operation Whirl Stroke and Commander, 401 Special Force Brigade, Brig.-Gen. Kolawole Bukoye (8th R); team leader, Major Audu Arigu (7th L); Component Commanders of Operation Whirl Stroke and Defense Correspondents, during the Defense Correspondents media visit to the Operation headquarters in Makurdi recently.

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AFCON brouhaha: Gusau denies any altercation with CAF Vice President, Fouzi Lekjaa
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Labour Party to appeal court ruling backing Nenadi's c'ttee

ABUJA

The Julius Abure-led leadership of the Labour Party has vowed to appeal the judgment of the Federal High Court, Abuja, which recognised the Caretak-

er Committee chaired by Sen. Nenadi Usman.

The party's National Publicity Secretary, Mr Obiora Ifoh, disclosed this in a statement on Wednesday, saying the court misinterpreted the April 4, 2025, Supreme Court judgment.

According to him, the apex court had clearly held that courts lacked jurisdiction to appoint leaders for political parties, as leadership disputes were internal affairs.

Ifoh said the party would approach the Court of Appeal

once it obtained the Certified True Copy of the judgment.

"From the brief we have received so far, it is clear that the party will appeal the judgment," he said.

He alleged that the party was denied the opportunity to

respond to issues raised in a counter-affidavit before judgment was delivered.

Ifoh recalled that the Court of Appeal had earlier recognised the Abure-led National Working Committee as the party's authentic leadership,

adding that the Supreme Court never ruled that its tenure had expired.

He urged party members to remain calm, assuring them that the leadership would pursue justice through lawful means.

Court adjourns 'Auxiliary' murder trial to March 4, 5

IBADAN

An Oyo State High Court in Ibadan has adjourned until March 4 and March 5 for the continuation of hearing in the murder and armed robbery trial of Mukaila Lamidi, popularly known as Auxiliary.

Justice O.A. Adetujoye adjourned the case on Wednesday following the defendant's alleged ill health and summoned the medical doctor at the Agodi Custodial Centre to testify on Lamidi's condition.

The doctor, Dr Adeyemi Babatunde, told the court that Lamidi had been stable but reportedly slumped while waiting for his case to be called on Tuesday, adding that further medical tests were required.

Proceedings in a related case before Justice Bayo Taiwo were also stalled due to Lamidi's absence.

Lamidi is facing charges of armed robbery and murder in a case that was initially filed in Eruwa, Ibarapa Local Government Area, before being transferred to Ibadan.

IOM, DHL inaugurate training academy for African youth in Ghana

LAGOS

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and DHL Global Forwarding, the air, ocean, and road freight specialists of DHL Group, have inaugurated a new digital training academy in Ghana.

In a statement on Wednesday, the IOM said the programme aimed to equip 10,000 young Africans with logistics and workplace skills over the coming years.

The organisation said it offered a scalable model for private sector engagement to support employment opportunities for thousands of young Ghanaians, including returned migrants seeking to reintegrate into their communities.

According to IOM, while Ghana serves as a key launch market in West Africa, there are plans for further expansion across the continent.

Fatou Diallo Ndiaye, IOM Chief of Mission in Ghana, Togo and Benin, said private sector partnerships are essential to unlock the potential of young Africans and ensure migration delivered on its promise of development.

"We are deliberately reshaping what reintegration means, linking it to real labour market opportunities and sustainable growth.

"At the same time, we're showing that return can be the beginning of new journeys, opening pathways to mean-

ingful work and economic empowerment," she said.

IOM said, in the statement, that with the support of DHL's GoTeach initiative, the Ubuntu Academy leveraged Artificial Intelligence (AI) to deliver self-paced e-learning courses in supply chain management and professional skills.

It said that by combining corporate expertise with international development objectives, the initiative marked a significant step in addressing one of Africa's most pressing challenges.

IOM noted the challenge as providing economic opportunities for the growing young population while supporting the reintegration of returning migrants.

Egidio Monteiro, CEO of DHL Global Forwarding, Sub-Saharan Africa, said the launch of the Ubuntu Academy in Ghana was a clear vote of confidence in the potential of returning migrants.

"By equipping them with in-demand logistics and workplace skills, we're opening doors to new opportunities, not just within DHL, but across the wider economy.

"When these young people succeed, their families, communities and our country move forward with them. That's the spirit of Ubuntu," Monteiro said.

The academy is part of DHL's broader GoHelp Programme partnership with IOM, which includes humanitarian logistics initiatives worldwide.



VISIT TO MINISTER OF DEFENCE:

Minister of Defence, Rtd Gen. Christopher Musa (4th L); President of Gamji Heritage, Hamed Kabir (3rd R) and other executive members of the Heritage, during their visit to the Minister of Defence in his office in Abuja on Wednesday.

Ekpoma unrest: EDOHIC takes over care of gunshot victims

EDWARD OSEGHE

The Edo State Health Insurance Commission (EDOHIC) has intervened in the aftermath of the Ekpoma civil disturbance, taking over the medical treatment of gunshot victims following a social media appeal that highlighted their ordeal.

The intervention was triggered by a post on @ekpomablog on Thursday, January 15, 2026, in which a family member of one of the victims, Mr Osagie Godsent, lamented their inability to meet fresh hospital deposit demands. Godsent, who sustained a gunshot injury during the unrest,

was receiving treatment at a private healthcare facility.

Moved by the family's situation and acting in line with the people-oriented healthcare policy of Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, the Director-General of EDOHIC, Dr (Mrs) Augusta Ikpea-Enaholo, ordered an immediate response and engagement with the affected family.

The Commission's Public Relations unit promptly contacted the family through their representative, Ms Efe Abraham, to verify the patient's identity, confirm the hospital managing the case and document payments already made. The details were forwarded for

urgent operational action.

On Friday, January 16, a team from the Commission, led by the Regional Supervisor, Mr Percy Oseghale Okufo, visited the hospital to assess the situation.

The team met with hospital management, reviewed the patient's medical condition and confirmed that the family had made several deposits before being asked to pay more. Following the verification, EDOHIC facilitated a refund of all deposits paid and officially assumed responsibility for the full cost of Godsent's treatment.

During the visit, another gunshot victim from the Ekpoma disturbance, Mr Onyekwere Chibuzor, was identified at the same facility. Although

no complaint had been lodged on his behalf, the Commission extended similar support after verification, refunding deposits paid by his family and taking over his medical expenses.

EDOHIC also engaged attending medical personnel to ensure both patients continued to receive adequate care in line with required clinical standards.

The intervention, the Commission said, underscores its responsiveness to public concerns and commitment to compassionate, people-centred healthcare delivery, in line with Governor Okpebholo's directive that no Edo resident should be denied access to quality healthcare due to financial constraints, especially in emergencies.

Davido's Father dismisses Anuoluwapo paternity claim

LAGOS

Dr Adedeji Adeleke, father of music star Davido, has declared that multiple DNA tests have confirmed that the singer is not the biological father of Anuoluwapo, whose paternity claim resurfaced recently on social media.

Adeleke made the clarification on Wednesday at a news conference in Lagos, following

a January 15, 2025, letter posted on X requesting a DNA test.

He disclosed that five DNA tests were conducted - three on Davido and two on his cousin, B-Red to eliminate any possibility of error, with all results returning negative.

"I relied solely on science, and science showed he is not the father," Adeleke said, adding that he would willingly accept the child if the tests

proved otherwise.

He said the family had been aware of the claim since 2014 and had taken steps to clarify the issue, but the matter continued to resurface online.

Adeleke also revealed that he had supported Anuoluwapo's education and enrolled her mother at Adeleke University, though she later dropped out.

He accused a blogger of sponsoring the recent social

media post and said the family would take legal action for impersonation and misinformation.

EFCC recovers ₦1.28bn from contractor...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

Family returns widow's ₦1.6m after Gov's wife steps in

CALABAR

The Cross River State Government says it plans to reduce transportation costs through the introduction of electric vehicles as part of reforms in

the transport sector in 2026.

The Commissioner for Transportation, Mr Ekpenyong Cobhams, disclosed this in an interview with newsmen in Calabar while outlining the ministry's plans for the year.

Cobhams said the administration inherited a transport sector in severe decay, necessitating prioritised reforms guided by Governor Bassey Otu's People First agenda.

He said the state began procurement of electric mobility

platforms in 2025 to address urban transportation challenges, including electric tricycles, cars, shuttle buses and city buses.

According to him, some consignments of the electric vehicles have arrived at the

Onne Port, while others are expected in the coming weeks, with earlier delays attributed to documentation issues.

"The first procurement

CONTINUE ON PG 6»

accountability, adding that the funds would be reinvested in infrastructure projects to improve living standards in the state.

He also warned that contractors who fail to deliver value for public funds would face legal consequences as investigations continue.

NYSC member takes deworming, hygiene campaign to Edo girls' school

BENIN CITY

An NYSC member serving in Edo State, Monica Nku, has launched a health awareness campaign on deworming and personal hygiene for students of Anglican Girls Grammar School, Benin City.

Addressing the students on Wednesday, Nku said the sensitization was motivated by concern over the silent health burden posed by worm infections among children, noting that many school-aged pupils suffer from the condition with-

out being aware.

The NYSC member, a graduate of Arts and Social Science Education from the University of Calabar, explained that worm infections often affect children's health, growth and learning abilities.

"I carried out this project because I realised that many students suffer from worm infection without knowing it. This infection affects their health, growth and learning abilities," she said.

According to her, symptoms such as weakness, stomach pain and loss of appetite could

negatively impact students' concentration and academic performance.

Nku also identified poor hygiene practices, including walking barefoot, improper handwashing and playing in dirty environments, as major factors increasing the spread of worms among children.

She said the project was designed to protect students' health, reduce illness and help them live healthy and productive lives, adding that improved hygiene and regular deworming could boost school attendance and academic performance.

In her presentation, Mrs Faith Adegbeileke of the Edo State Ministry of Health stressed that personal hygiene

remained fundamental to healthy living.

"Personal hygiene is the bedrock of healthy living. It is what you do to avoid landing in the hospital," she said.

Adegbeileke cautioned against improper handwashing, explaining that washing hands in a bowl does not guarantee hygiene. She demonstrated proper handwashing techniques, urging students to wash thoroughly with soap and running water.

She noted that poor hygiene and contaminated food were common ways worms enter the body, describing worms as harmful parasites.

"Deworming should be done at least twice a year, except in

highly infested areas such as some rural communities," she said, adding that deworming services were available free at public health facilities.

President of the Florish Foundation for Women and Youth, Dr Frances Ben-Ushie, described the initiative as timely and impactful, particularly for young girls. Represented by the foundation's Director of New Media and Communication, Esther Adesuyi, she commended Nku for translating

knowledge into action.

She said health education on deworming and personal hygiene remained critical to the well-being, learning capacity and overall development of children and young people.

Also speaking, Mrs Theresa Ayanru, Local Government Inspector of the NYSC for Oredo, urged the students to put the lessons into practice and adopt healthy habits that would support their growth and future aspirations.

2027 Lagos guber: Jandor launches website to boost engagement

LAGOS

Dr Abdul-Azeez Adediran, popularly known as JANDOR, has unveiled a website to provide information on his aspiration, vision and public engagements ahead of the 2027 Lagos State governorship election.

The development was announced in a statement signed by his spokesman, Pastor Gbenga Ogunleye, and made available to journalists on Wednesday.

Adediran said the platform would enhance public engagement and access to information, describing it as a central hub for Lagos residents to understand his policy priorities and activities.

"This initiative reflects my

belief in open communication and inclusive governance," he said.

The APC governorship aspirant noted that technology remained critical to participatory democracy and effective leadership, adding that the website would encourage citizen interaction in building a more prosperous Lagos.

He said the platform would provide verified updates on his aspiration and public engagements, promoting transparency, accountability and people-centred governance.

Adediran urged party members, stakeholders and residents to visit the platform regularly for updates.

"Lagos residents are invited to visit www.jandoroflagos.com to engage with our vision, mission and values," he said.



NEWS CONFERENCE:

L-R: Coordinator Alliance for Credible Elections (ACE), Enugu East Local Government Area (LGA) of Enugu State, Mr Emmanuel Ugwu; National Chairman ACE, Chief Louis Okolo Jnr. and Coordinator ACE, Isu-Uzor LGA of Enugu State, Chief Mathew Nnaji, during a news conference on ACE Action Plans to Achieve a Credible 2027 Elections in Enugu on Wednesday.

BIPC reclaims Benue govt assets sold illegally

MAKURDI

The Benue Investment and Property Company (BIPC) has recovered two landed assets belonging to the Benue State Government that were sold without legal approval.

The Group Managing Director of BIPC, Dr Raymond Asemakaha, disclosed this on Wednesday in Makurdi while leading a team to secure the

affected properties.

Asemakaha said the lands were purchased on October 12 and November 2, 2016, respectively, but a forensic audit later revealed that although BIPC paid for the properties, the account into which the funds were transferred had been closed.

He explained that the investment was carried out through a proxy arrangement, but BIPC never recorded any return, as

the account was shut shortly after the transaction.

According to him, the fraudulent dealings were uncovered when BIPC reopened the account.

"The EFCC is currently handling the matter, which is why we moved quickly to secure these lands. They were about to be sold again, and we will not allow that," he said.

Asemakaha warned prospective buyers to steer clear

of the properties, stressing that the lands belonged to the Benue State Government.

He added that banks and individuals involved in the illegal transactions would be held accountable to ensure justice for the state and its citizens.

The BIPC boss further said non-performing government assets currently on lease would be recovered and put to productive use to generate revenue for the state.

Orile Agege LCDA engages head teachers on education devt

LAGOS

Authorities of Orile Agege Local Council Development Area (LCDA) have engaged nursery and primary school head teachers on strategies to improve education within the council area.

The meeting, held on Wednesday at the council secretariat, was led by the LCDA Chairman, Mr Akinola Idowu, who reaffirmed his administration's commitment to repositioning education as a key

driver of community growth.

"We are determined to make education the foundation of our community's growth," Idowu said.

He recalled touring public schools after his swearing-in to assess their needs, promising interventions in infrastructure, teaching materials, welfare and security.

Announcing new measures, Idowu said the council would provide uniforms, sportswear, solar-powered boreholes, rehabilitated toilets, furniture, whiteboards, markers and im-

proved security across schools. He also pledged laptops for head teachers and writing materials for nursery pupils.

According to him, plans are underway to establish sick bays in schools in collaboration with the Medical Officer of Health, as well as Computer-Based Test centres for academic use and revenue generation.

During the interactive session, head teachers commended the initiative and presented their challenges, with schools in Oko Oba and Ladoje appealing for access road grading and drainage

construction to prevent flooding during the rainy season.

The Vice Chairman of the LCDA, Mr Wale Fayemi, described the interventions as outcomes of the chairman's inspection tour of public schools.

Head of Education, Mrs Foluke Oguyankin, praised the proactive approach of the council, assuring that issues relating to furniture, teaching materials, welfare and security would be addressed.

She added that the engagement would be held monthly to strengthen collaboration between schools and the local authority.

Restructuring, not State creation, key to Nigeria's growth —DAWN DG

IBADAN

The Director-General of the Development Agenda for Western Nigeria (DAWN) Commission, Dr Seye Oyeleye, has called for urgent political and economic restructuring of Nigeria, rather than the creation of more states.

Speaking in Ibadan on Wednesday, Oyeleye said the country's centralised system of government was stifling development and that decentralisation would enable regions to manage their affairs more effectively.

He suggested that regions should be empowered to create states instead of leaving such decisions solely to the Federal Government, noting that this would promote sustainable development.

Oyeleye cited the achievements of the old Western Region in education, agriculture and infrastructure as evidence of the benefits of regional development.

He also backed the creation of state police, arguing that it would strengthen internal security and allow states to address local challenges more effectively.

According to him, the success of the Western Nigeria Security Network, codenamed Amotekun, has shown that regional cooperation can work and should be expanded.

Oyeleye linked Nigeria's security challenges to the centralised policing system, saying state police would help address grassroots security concerns.

He maintained that creating more states was not the solution to Nigeria's problems, stressing the need for comprehensive economic and political restructuring.

The DAWN DG also criticised the current revenue allocation system, describing it as unfair, and called for greater control of resources by states.

He added that regional development commissions could drive growth, while also advocating a more tailored approach to education and curriculum development in the South-West.

"Nigeria needs to return to the principles of accountability and good governance. Leaders must be held accountable, and citizens must demand better governance. The South-West should lead the push for these changes," he said.

NEWS

Restructure Nigeria, not create more states —DAWN Commission DG

IBADAN

The Director-General of the Development Agenda for Western Nigeria (DAWN) Commission, Dr Seye Oyeleye, has called for urgent political and economic restructuring of Nigeria, insisting that the creation of more states is not the solution to the country's challenges.

Speaking in Ibadan on Wednesday, Oyeleye said Nigeria's highly centralised system of governance was stifling development, arguing that decentralisation would enable regions to manage their affairs more efficiently.

He suggested that regions, rather than the Federal Gov-

ernment, should be empowered to create states, noting that such an arrangement would promote sustainable development.

Oyeleye cited the achievements of the old Western Region in education, agriculture and infrastructure as evidence that regional autonomy could drive growth.

He also backed the call for state police, saying it would strengthen security and enable states to respond effectively to local challenges. According to him, the success of the Western Nigeria Security Network, codenamed Amotekun, demonstrated the benefits of regional cooperation.

The DAWN boss attribut-

ed the nation's weak internal security partly to the centralised policing system, adding that state police would help address grassroots security concerns.

He maintained that economic and political restruc-

turing, rather than the creation of additional states, remained the path to national development.

Oyeleye further criticised the current revenue allocation formula as unfair, calling for greater resource control by

states, while noting that regional development commissions could serve as catalysts for growth.

He also stressed the need for education reforms and a region-specific curriculum in the South-West, urging a return

to values of accountability and good governance.

"Nigeria must undergo significant restructuring to address its challenges, and the South-West should lead the push for these reforms," he said.

C'River makes anti-drug clubs compulsory in schools

CALABAR

The Cross River Government has introduced compulsory anti-drug clubs in all public and private schools across the state to curb rising drug abuse among students.

The Commissioner for Education, Dr Stephen Odey, announced this on Wednesday while briefing journalists on ongoing education reforms.

Odey said the clubs would monitor drug-related activities, raise awareness and collaborate with authorities to enforce discipline.

He added that anti-bullying committees had also been made mandatory in all schools, warning that students found guilty of bullying would face instant expulsion.

As part of the reforms, all pupils from Kindergarten to SS3 will be assigned unique index numbers from the 2025/2026 academic session to improve data management and prevent fraud.

The commissioner also announced a ban on graduation ceremonies for non-exit classes and restricted them to Primary 6, JSS3 and SS3 to reduce costs for parents.

He said only ministry-approved textbooks would be allowed in schools, while compulsory after-school lessons had been banned to prevent student fatigue and financial burden on parents.

Odey thanked Governor Bassey Otu for approving the reforms, describing them as a major step towards quality and child-centred education in Cross River State.

Kwara Gov sets up panel to probe Poly protest

ILORIN

Kwara State Governor, AbdulRahman Abdul-Razaq, has constituted a three-member panel to investigate the causes of the recent students' protest at Kwara State Polytechnic.

The Commissioner for Tertiary Education, Hajia Saadatu Modibbo-Kawu, disclosed this in a statement on Wednesday in Ilorin.

She recalled that the governor had on Tuesday ordered the closure of the polytechnic to safeguard lives and property following unrest triggered by the protest.

According to Modibbo-Kawu, the panel is chaired by the Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Mr Senior Sulyman. Other members are the Commissioner for Environment, Mrs Nafisat Buge,

and the Permanent Secretary, Service Welfare, Dr Mercy Shittu.

She said the committee has been given two weeks to submit its report, focusing on both the immediate and remote causes of the protest, as well as how it was handled.

The panel is also expected to recommend measures to prevent a recurrence and propose steps to support the institution's growth.

The commissioner added that all relevant stakeholders would be engaged during the assignment.

She further disclosed that the governor directed the Rector of the polytechnic, Dr Abdul Jimoh, to step aside with immediate effect, pending further notice, while the most senior Deputy Rector would serve in an acting capacity.



OBALENDE UNDER BRIDGE INSPECTION:

L-R: Permanent Secretary, Office of Environmental Services, Dr Omobolaji Gaji; Lagos State Commissioner for Environment and Water Resources, Mr Tokunbo Wahab; Special Adviser on Environment, Mr Olakunle Rotimi-Akodu and Permanent Secretary, Office of the Drainage Service, Ministry of Environment, Mr Mahmood Adegbite, during the inspection of Obalende under the Bridge for reconstruction in Lagos on Wednesday.

COAS urges youth empowerment for nat'l growth, peace

ABUJA

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt-Gen. Waidi Shaibu, has underscored the importance of youth empowerment as a driver of national development, peace and security.

Shaibu made the call on Wednesday in Abuja at the combined graduation ceremony of participants in the Nigerian Army Officers' Wives Association (NAOWA) Youth

Empowerment Project.

The graduates comprised 202 participants from Batch 3 Information and Communication Technology trainees and Batch 2 Fashion Design trainees for 2025.

Represented by the Chief of Administration, Nigerian Army, Maj.-Gen. Isa Abdullahi, the COAS said empowering youths strengthened families, communities and the nation.

He said the programme, which equipped barracks

youths with practical skills, was part of the Army's effort to build resilient families and communities in support of a professional and combat-ready force.

Shaibu commended the President of NAOWA, Mrs Safiyah Shaibu, for sustaining the initiative, describing it as a reflection of the Army's commitment to human development.

Addressing the graduands, he urged them to deploy their skills productively and contribute to social stability, economic

growth and national development.

He also praised instructors and facilitators for shaping the confidence and competence of the trainees, while calling on the media to highlight initiatives that showcase civil-military cooperation.

Speaking earlier, Mrs Shaibu said the project was a strategic investment in the future of Nigerian youths, with ripple effects on families, communities and the nation.

FCT CJ charges Ares Council Election Appeal Tribunal on integrity

ABUJA

The Chief Judge of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Justice Hussein Yusuf, has charged members of the FCT Area Council Election Appeal Tribunal to uphold integrity, impartiality and strict adherence to the rule of law.

Inaugurating the tribunal on Monday, Justice Yusuf described the exercise as a sol-

emn constitutional duty with direct implications for grassroots democracy and public confidence in the judiciary.

He said electoral disputes at the area council level must be resolved promptly and fairly, warning against decisions driven by pressure, partisanship or public sentiment.

According to him, election adjudication is entrusted to specialised tribunals to ensure

peaceful resolution of disputes and preserve social cohesion.

Justice Yusuf stressed that election petitions were sui generis, governed by strict rules and timelines, adding that governance should not be stalled by prolonged litigation.

He urged tribunal members to uphold fair hearing, resist external influence and ensure their decisions were grounded in credible evidence and bind-

ing legal principles.

"Justice must not only be done, it must be seen to be done," he said.

Other judges, including Justices S.C. Orji and M.E. Anenih, also urged the panel to remain firm, fair and united in the discharge of its duties.

Members of the tribunal include Justices Sulieman Belgore, Maryam Hassan and Aliyu Shafa.

Nigeria to gain big from Nigeria-UAE trade pact —Experts

ABUJA

Economic experts have said Nigeria stands to gain significantly from the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) signed with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), particularly in boosting non-oil exports.

The experts spoke on Wednesday in Abuja, following the signing of the agreement

on January 13 in Abu Dhabi, with the Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Dr Jumoke Oduwale, leading Nigeria's delegation.

Economist Joseph Umejie said the agreement would attract foreign investment into sectors such as energy and technology, create jobs and expand access to the Middle East market.

He urged the Federal Government to ensure effective

implementation through supportive policies, improved infrastructure and capacity building for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

Similarly, President of the Society for the Promotion of People's Right, Mr Williams Osaze, said the agreement would position Nigeria as a gateway to the African Continental Free Trade Area market.

He added that CEPA would

deepen value-added trade in agriculture, manufacturing, renewable energy and services.

Another economist, Emmanuel Adedeji, said the agreement would expand market access for Nigerian products and professionals, while strengthening investment flows.

He noted that MSMEs would benefit from duty-free access, driving growth in non-oil sectors and boosting foreign exchange earnings.

Weak shipping line regulation threatens Customs reforms —SEREC

ABUJA

The Sea Empowerment and Research Centre (SEREC) has warned that poor regulation of shipping lines could undermine ongoing reforms of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS).

Speaking on Wednesday in Abuja, SEREC's Head of Research, Dr Eugene Nweke, said Customs efficiency was closely tied to the performance of Nigeria's maritime and trade ecosystem, stressing that weak oversight of shipping line prac-

tices continued to erode gains recorded by Customs.

Nweke described the NCS as central to the success of the National Single Window (NSW) initiative and other risk-based clearance and trade facilitation reforms.

However, he noted that artificial delays, speculative charges, remote cargo release approvals and opaque billing by shipping lines often transferred inefficiencies into the Customs clearance process.

According to him, such practices inflate transaction

costs, distort compliance behaviour and weaken the credibility of customs-led trade reforms.

Nweke disclosed that SEREC had submitted a white paper to the Federal Government, the National Assembly, the Minister of Marine and Blue Economy and other stakeholders, advocating that shipping line governance, port economic regulation and customs trade administration be treated as inseparable policy areas.

The white paper identified sharp practices in the sector,

including prolonged withholding of refunds, speculative demurrage billing, unauthorised container diversion, arbitrary charges and remote cargo release authorisation.

SEREC warned that Nigeria's port challenges were largely governance-related, adding that weak regulation, lack of oversight reports and unchecked discretion within systems such as the NSW could undermine reform efforts.

The centre recommended reforms including statutory refund timelines with penalties,

public release of committee findings, a ban on speculative demurrage billing, mandatory local cargo release and alignment of shipping practices with the NSW.

Nweke said the objective was to address regulatory weak-

nesses that had evolved into macroeconomic and governance risks, noting that Customs reforms could only deliver full impact if shipping practices embraced transparency, predictability, automation and accountability.

SUBEB hails impact of Jolly Phonics programme in Ondo

AKURE

The Ondo State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) has commended the positive impact of the Jolly Phonics programme on literacy development in public primary schools across the state.

The Executive Chairman of SUBEB, Mr Victor Olabimtan, spoke on Wednesday in Akure after monitoring the implementation of the programme in selected schools.

Olabimtan said the initiative had significantly improved pupils' foundational literacy skills, particularly in reading readiness, spelling and pronunciation, noting that pupils now demonstrated better understanding of letter sounds and word formation.

He explained that the interactive nature of the phonics-based approach had made learning more engaging, leading to increased attentiveness and participation among pupils.

The SUBEB chairman reaffirmed the board's commitment to sustaining and expanding the programme through regular teacher training, provision of instructional materials and intensified monitoring.

He commended teachers for embracing innovative teaching methods and acknowledged the support of development partners, especially Jolly Phonics, for sponsoring spelling and pronunciation activities.

Olabimtan also appealed for the extension of the programme to primary four and six, while commending Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa for supporting education initiatives aimed at strengthening early literacy.

Similarly, the Permanent Secretary of SUBEB, Mr Adewale Omomowo, and the Director of Teachers' Professional Development, Mrs Comfort Monilari, described the programme as impactful, noting that it had enhanced pupils' academic development and overall learning outcomes.



BLOCKED CANAL:

Blocked Canal at Obalende under Bridge in Lagos on Wednesday.

Troops uncover terrorists' mass grave in Borno

ABUJA

Troops of the Joint Task Force North East, Operation HADIN KAL, have uncovered a mass grave containing the bodies of about 20 terrorists neutralised during military operations in the Timbuktu Triangle of Borno State.

This was disclosed in a statement issued on Wednesday by the operation's Media Information Officer, Lt.-Col. Sani Uba.

According to him, the discovery further confirms the heavy casualties suffered by terrorist groups during sus-

tained military offensives in the area and exposes the scale of losses concealed by their propaganda.

Uba said troops had cleared and dominated several key terrorist locations within the Timbuktu Triangle, including Tergejeri, Chiralia and the Ajigin/Abirma axis, engaging fleeing insurgents with intense firepower.

He added that while consolidating positions north of Chiralia, troops encountered two Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs). One was successfully neutral-

ised, while the second breached defensive positions, affecting some logistics platforms.

In the incident, some soldiers and members of the Civilian Joint Task Force lost their lives, while others sustained injuries. The wounded were promptly evacuated by Nigerian Army Aviation helicopters to the 7 Division Medical Services and Hospital, with air support provided by Nigerian Air Force platforms.

Meanwhile, in the North-West, troops of Joint Task Force Operation FANSAN YAMMA have neutralised two terrorists

in Kebbi State and rescued 62 abducted persons from Munhay Forest in Zamfara State.

The spokesman of the task force, Lt.-Col. Olaniyi Osoba, said the operations were carried out with allied security agencies and local vigilantes, leading to the successful rescue of hostages held by a notorious bandit leader.

Osoba said efforts were ongoing to reunite the rescued victims with their families, stressing that the operations underscored the military's determination to dismantle terrorist networks and restore security.

Pa John Emovon marks 90th birthday

BENIN CITY

The Emovon family last weekend celebrated their father and patriarch, Pa John Ikponmwose Emovon, as he marked his 90th birthday with a Thanksgiving Service in Benin City.

The thanksgiving ceremony attracted family members, friends and well-wishers, who expressed joy and gratitude for the life and milestone age of the nonagenarian.

Speaking at the event, the Archbishop of the Mid West of The First African Church Mission, His Grace, Most Rev'd E.C. Onwuaso, described attaining the age of 90 as a rare privilege, offering prayers for the celebrant and his family while wishing them continued grace and blessings.

In a sermon and birthday message titled "Hope in the Lord," Ven. H.O. Aifuwa urged the congregation to place their trust in God, noting that those who hope in the Lord are renewed daily.

He said that despite afflictions, sorrow and life's challenges, it is by God's mercy that people endure, stressing the importance of steadfast faith.

Drawing from the Book of

Job 17:6-7 and 14, Ven. Aifuwa highlighted God's compassion, mercy and grace, encouraging worshippers to anchor their hope in the Lord, particularly in difficult times.

"In any stormy day, rest your hope in the Lord and make Him your anchor, because all other ground is sinking sand," he said.

He added that earthly things are temporary, urging believers to keep hope alive and remain committed to worship.

The celebration featured thanksgiving prayers and the cutting of the birthday cake, amid cheers from guests.

Wike-aligned PDP NWC inaugurates LGA caretaker c'ttees in Lagos

LAGOS

The factional National Working Committee (NWC) of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), aligned with the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Mr Nyesom Wike, has inaugurated Local Government Area caretaker committees across the 20 councils of Lagos State.

The development further reflects the deepening leadership crisis within the opposition party at the national level.

The faction, which dissolved the Lagos State executive of the party in December 2025, had earlier inaugurated a 19-member State Caretaker Committee.

Speaking at the inauguration in Ikeja, the Deputy National Secretary of the factional NWC, Mr Adedeji Doherty, said rebuilding the PDP must begin from the grassroots.

Doherty directed the caretaker committees to strengthen party structures at the ward, zonal and local government

levels, describing their assignment as crucial to the party's revival.

He also tasked the state caretaker committee with commencing membership registration and revalidation across the state, noting that the caretaker bodies would operate for 60 days before the conduct of congresses.

Doherty assured members that they would remain relevant in party affairs after the congresses and directed the reconstitution of women and

youth wings to enhance party operations.

In his remarks, the State Caretaker Committee Chairman, Mr Kayode Ogunbiyi, urged members to reconnect the party with the grassroots and adhere strictly to the law.

Also speaking, a former House of Representatives member, Mr Tajudeen Obasa, expressed confidence that the PDP would overcome its challenges and remain competitive ahead of the 2027 general elections.



PA EMOVON

NEWS

Troops receive rescued victims, arrest suspected gunrunner in Cross River

CALABAR

Troops of the 13 Brigade, 82 Division of the Nigerian Army, in collaboration with the Joint Task Force South-East, Operation UDO KA, have received eight rescued kidnap victims and ar-

rested a suspected gunrunner in Cross River State.

A credible Army Headquarters source told journalists that the victims were handed over to Nigerian troops by the Cameroonian Armed Forces along the Iking waterways, around the Pastors Fishing Port area.

The source explained that the victims, who were travelling from Nigeria to Cameroon, were abducted by suspected sea pirates along Cameroonian waterways but were later rescued by Cameroonian forces after a gun duel with the criminals.

"Following their handover, the victims were conveyed to

the Forward Operating Base of the troops, where they were debriefed and subsequently released," the source said.

He added that troops deployed to Abi Local Government Area also arrested a suspected gunrunner based on credible intelligence.

According to him, the suspect, identified as Mr Ojo

Friday, was apprehended on January 20, with 245 rounds of ammunition recovered from him.

Investigations revealed that the suspect is from Ochon in Obubra Local Government Area of Cross River State but resides in Abomege, Ebonyi State.

"The suspect and recovered

ammunition are currently in military custody for preliminary investigation," the source said.

He reaffirmed the Nigerian Army's commitment to sustaining offensive operations across its area of responsibility to curb criminal activities and ensure the safety of lives and property.

Navy steps up media engagement to strengthen anti-oil theft operations in Bayelsa

YENAGOA

The Nigerian Navy has intensified engagement with the media to improve public understanding of its anti-crude oil theft and maritime security operations in Bayelsa State, the Commander of Nigerian Navy Ship (NNS) SOROH, Commodore Omobamidele Akinbami, has said.

Akinbami spoke on Wednesday during a media visit to the naval base in Bayelsa, led by the Director of Defence Media Operations, Maj.-Gen. Michael Onoja, as part of activities under Operation DELTA SAFE.

He said sustained collaboration with journalists had led to more balanced and accurate reporting of naval operations, unlike in the past when incidents were sometimes reported without adequate context.

"Today, journalists reach out to us for clarification before reporting. This has helped the public to better understand that our actions are guided by our mandate and rules of engagement," he said.

The commander said the base embeds media personnel in its operations to ensure transparency and maintain verifiable records in the event of allegations.

He added that the deployment of modern technology,

including drones and other surveillance tools, had reduced response time, manpower stress and the need for constant physical patrols across difficult riverine terrain.

Akinbami noted that strong synergy among security agencies in Bayelsa had improved peace and security, despite challenges posed by swampy environments and long travel hours to remote locations.

He disclosed that the dismantling of a pipeline vandalism syndicate between June and July 2025 had significantly reduced pipeline explosions in the area, although isolated attempts were still being tackled.

Earlier, Onoja said the media tour was approved by the Chief of Defence Staff to enable journalists to carry out oversight and report objectively on military operations in the Niger Delta.

He said the initiative was aimed at bridging the communication gap between the military and the public, adding that many Nigerians were unaware of the sacrifices and challenges faced by troops.

Onoja commended officers and men of NNS SOROH for their efforts in securing waterways and curbing crude oil theft and illegal bunkering, noting that the visit would help build public confidence in military operations.



FOUNDATION'S OUTREACH:

Founder, Thelema Lion Foundation (TLF), Dr Ifeoma Agu (2nd R), presenting food items to the Big Mummy, Gifted and Talented Orphanage, Mrs Gift Nwosu, during the Foundation's outreach to the Orphanage in Abuja on Wednesday. With them are other members of the Foundation.

A'ibom Assembly seeks private sector partnership on waste recycling

UYO

The Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly has passed a resolution urging the state government to partner with the private sector to establish waste recycling plants across the state.

The resolution followed a motion moved by Mr Ukpong Akpabio, representing Essien Udim State Constituency, and seconded by Mr Eric Akpan, representing Nsit Ibom State Constituency.

In his motion titled "Waste to Wealth: Need to Partner with

the Private Sector to Establish a Recycling Plant in the State," Akpabio said there was an urgent need to convert the large volume of waste generated daily in the state into economic value.

He noted that effective implementation of the resolution would create jobs for youths while addressing flooding and environmental degradation.

"Proper waste management is critical to public health and environmental sustainability. Recycling offers significant advantages over landfills, which pose risks through greenhouse gas emissions, soil and water

contamination," he said.

Akpabio added that waste recycling had become a major economic opportunity yet to be fully tapped in the state.

According to him, the influx of scavengers who transport recyclable materials such as plastic bottles, cartons and scrap metals to other states for processing highlights the economic potential of establishing recycling plants in Akwa Ibom.

He said such facilities would minimise environmental and health risks, stimulate economic growth, generate revenue and create employment opportunities across the waste management value chain.

"This aligns with Governor Umo Eno's ARISE Agenda, particularly the Economic Consolidation and Expansion Blueprint, which promotes public-private partnerships," he added.

Lawmakers who contributed to the debate described the motion as timely and beneficial, stressing that it would promote sustainable development, environmental protection and revenue generation.

Speaker of the House, Mr Udeme Otong, commended members for their unanimous support and directed the Clerk, Mrs Nsikakabasi Orok, to transmit the resolution to the governor for necessary action.

Family returns widow's ₦1.6m...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 2

tranche includes 400 electric tricycles and 550 electric cars, while the second tranche consists of 50 electric cars, 20 shuttle buses and 10 electric city buses," he said.

He described the city buses as a strategic investment aimed at providing affordable and sustainable urban mobility.

Cobhams said the initiative would significantly reduce commuting costs within the Calabar metropolis, noting that many civil servants currently spend up to 60 per cent of their income on transportation.

According to him, fares on major routes are expected to drop from about ₦1,000 for a return trip to as low as ₦600.

He added that the move would ease financial pressure on households and help curb rising food prices linked to high transportation costs.

The commissioner said the electric buses have a range of up to 440 kilometres, which would improve efficiency and reduce operational expenses, while modern transport terminals would also be developed.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as MISS ENOMA EGHOSASERE MISAN, now wish to be known and address as MRS. EGUASA EGHOSASERE MISAN. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public please take note.

C'River plans electric vehicles to cut transport fares

CALABAR

The Cross River State Government says it plans to reduce transportation costs through the introduction of electric vehicles as part of reforms in the transport sector in 2026.

The Commissioner for Transportation, Mr Ekpenyong Cobhams, disclosed this in an interview with newsmen in Calabar while outlining the ministry's plans for the year.

Cobhams said the administration inherited a transport sector in severe decay, necessitating prioritised reforms guid-

ed by Governor Bassey Otu's People First agenda.

He said the state began procurement of electric mobility platforms in 2025 to address urban transportation challenges, including electric tricycles, cars, shuttle buses and city buses.

According to him, some consignments of the electric vehicles have arrived at the Onne Port, while others are expected in the coming weeks, with earlier delays attributed to documentation issues.

"The first procurement tranche includes 400 electric tricycles and 550 electric cars, while the second tranche consists of 50

electric cars, 20 shuttle buses and 10 electric city buses," he said.

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on households and help curb rising food prices linked to high transportation costs.

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He disclosed that the state was working with a firm to build a comprehensive transport ecosystem covering both land and water transport, adding that efforts were ongoing to regulate unapproved private motor parks before extending reforms to rural areas.

Foreign

NEWS

Israeli strike in Gaza kills three journalists, first responders say

Three Palestinian journalists have been killed in an Israeli strike in central Gaza, first responders say.

Gaza's Hamas-run Civil Defence agency said their car was hit in the al-Zahra area and named them as Mohammed Salah Qesh-ta, Anas Ghunaim and Abdul Raouf Shaat. They are understood to have been working for an Egyptian relief organisation.

The Israeli military said it struck "several suspects who operated a drone affiliated with Hamas... in a manner that posed a threat" to its troops. It added that the incident was under examination.

Another eight people, two of them children, were killed by Israeli artillery and gunfire across Gaza on Wednesday, the Hamas-run health ministry said.

Medics said three people,

including a 10-year-old boy, were killed by Israeli tank fire elsewhere in central Gaza, and that a 13-year-old boy and a woman were killed by Israeli gunfire in the southern Khan Younis area, according to Reuters news agency.

The Israeli military said on Wednesday morning that its troops had killed a "terrorist who crossed the Yellow Line and approached" them, without mentioning a location. The Yellow Line demarcates territory in Gaza still under Israeli control under the ceasefire deal.

At least 466 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas began on 10 October, according to the health ministry.

The Israeli military has said three of its soldiers have been killed in attacks by Palestinian armed

groups over the same period.

The father of Mutasem al-Shrafi, 13, said he was shot dead by Israeli troops in eastern Khan Younis.

The three photojournalists killed on Wednesday - one of whom contributed regularly to French news agency AFP - were reportedly working for the Egyptian Relief Committee in the Gaza Strip to film its camps for displaced people.

A spokesperson for the humanitarian organisation said the car that was struck was marked with its logo and that it was "targeted during a humanitarian mission, resulting in the martyrdom of three individuals".

Hamas called the strike a "dangerous escalation of the flagrant violations of the ceasefire agreement".

The Palestinian Journalists

Syndicate said it constituted a war crime and evidence of what it called "a systematic Israeli policy aimed at silencing the Palestinian voice, obstructing the transmission of facts, and concealing crimes committed against civilians in the Gaza Strip", according to Palestinian news agency Wafa.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has documented the killing of at least 206 journalists and media workers by Israeli fire in Gaza since the start of the war - the deadliest conflict for journalists ever documented.

Before Wednesday, two journalists had been killed in Israeli strikes during the ceasefire, and a third had been killed by members of a Palestinian armed group, according to the US-based organisation's data.

EU suspends approval of US trade deal

The European Parliament has suspended the approval of a key US trade deal agreed in July in protest at Donald Trump's demand to take over Greenland.

The suspension was announced in Strasbourg, France, on Wednesday, as the US president addressed the World Economic Forum in Davos.

The move marked a fresh escalation in tensions between the US and Europe, as Trump continues to threaten tariffs against European countries in his bid to acquire Greenland.

Despite Trump ruling out the use of force to take control of the territory, the stand-off has rattled financial markets, reviving talk of a trade war and the possibility of retaliation against the US.

Trade tensions between the US and Europe had eased since the two sides struck a deal at Trump's Turnberry golf course in Scotland in July.

That agreement set US levies on most European goods at 15%, down from the 30% Trump had initially threatened as part of his "Liberation Day" wave of tariffs in April. In exchange, Europe had agreed to invest in the US and make changes at on the continent expected to boost US exports.

The deal would have still required approval from the European Parliament to become official.

But on Wednesday, days after Trump threatened US tariffs over Greenland, Bernd Lange, chair of the European Parliament's International Trade Committee, said

it was "left with no alternative but to suspend work on the two Turnberry legislative proposals".

He said work to implement the trade plans would be on hold "until the US decides to re-engage on a path of cooperation rather than confrontation, and before any further steps are taken".

Lange warned that Trump's actions had "threatened the territorial integrity and sovereignty of an EU member state", and that the European Parliament was showing its "unshakable commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Denmark and Greenland".

In a press conference following the announcement, Lange said there will be "no possibility for compromise" until Trump's threats end and raised the prospect of the use of an "anti-coercion instrument" of retaliatory measures, nicknamed a "trade bazooka".

It came after Manfred Weber, an influential German member of European Parliament, said "approval is not possible at this stage".

Shares on both sides of the Atlantic had fallen on Tuesday, with European stock markets seeing a second day of losses.

But those losses were recovered on Wednesday after Trump's promise not to use military force to take over Greenland.

In the US, the Dow Jones, S&P 500 and the Nasdaq all rose by around 1% in early trading on Wednesday. Meanwhile the FTSE 100 in London was around 0.25% higher.



BODY CARRIED BY MOURNERS:

The body of one of the journalists was carried by mourners at Nasser hospital in Khan Younis

Faisal Islam: What it was like inside the room with Donald Trump at Davos

I was in the room and saw President Trump enter and it's fair to say he got a good welcome from the crowd, certainly at the beginning. A standing ovation.

On top of that, there was an astonishing scum to try to get in, with many turned away - even heads of state.

And the security was unbelievable, not letting even some of the most famous attendees in or out of the hall.

But, minutes into the speech, Trump was keeping his cool - even dropping in phrases about wanting the UK "to do great".

What some thought would be the day on which the US president laid down the laws of his new global economy was filled more with grandfatherly advice.

It was far from the mildly menacing tone of his social media posts claiming that

Greenland will be America's.

But which one is the real Donald Trump? Has he heard how badly some of his rhetoric has gone down?

As I entered, I was told of an astonishing event last night where Trump's Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick told the audience that, in terms of Europe's economy, "you're dead".

There was a walkout. Might there have been one today? He seemed to be trying to avoid that.

The Speech goes rather dark. At first, I thought Trump was trying on a diplomatic front, perhaps having heard some of the significant criticism levelled against him and trying to sound mellow.

He talked in friendly terms about the western allies that had been most perturbed by his social media posts.

He even acknowledged that he probably shouldn't speak

about the controversial issue of Greenland - which he has repeatedly vowed to take over.

But, almost as though he could not help it, the speech seemed to take a dark turn.

First he described America's role helping Greenland in the past, including being friendly to Denmark.

But he then insulted Europe's biggest economy, saying everyone in the hall "would be speaking German" if it wasn't for the US. And then it came.

He announced he was seeking immediate negotiations for the USA to acquire Greenland.

A negotiated settlement he said. No force required. But the US needed "full title".

"We want this land" to build the "greatest Golden Dome ever built" he said.

And he warned Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney

about his words a day earlier, though stressing that he would also use Greenland to defend Canada.

"I'm asking for a piece of ice.. it's a very small ask."

It was incredible to see this said out loud.

Mixed reactions in the room. There was high security, high stakes and high tension in the Alps for the arrival of the would-be sheriff of the world, brandishing his new rules.

The reaction in the room ranged.

The president's attempts at charm seemed to win him polite applause. But as he went from rigged elections to his annoyance at other leaders' Davos speeches, some sat in disbelief.

Even though he promised not to invade Greenland, many were stunned by his attempts to persuade Europe to hand over the territory.

Israel postpones demolition of Palestinian children's football pitch

The Aida Youth Centre's pitch sits next to the barrier separating the occupied West Bank from Israel

Israel has postponed the demolition of a Palestinian children's football club in the city of Bethlehem, in the occupied West Bank.

It said the Aida Youth Centre's pitch was constructed without the necessary permits.

It said the demolition was necessary for security reasons.

An international campaign to save it, including a petition with more than half a million signatures, appears to have forced the authorities to reconsider. The club, however, said it had not yet received any official notification.

It is barely a 10th of the size of a full-scale football field, there are patches of rust on the goalposts and, towering over the length of one of the touchlines, the architecture of conflict looms large in Israel's concrete security barrier.

But while it may not rank high up among the world's iconic sporting venues, this children's football club has found itself at the centre of a hard-fought international campaign for its survival.

And despite the asymmetrical odds as it took on the Israeli state, that campaign appears - for now at least - to have worked.

The club has won a reprieve against the threat of demolition by the Israeli military, which claimed that the pitch was far too close to the barrier.

On the very northern edge of Bethlehem, construction of the pitch began in 2020 with the aim of providing a place to practise football for more than 200 young players from the nearby Aida refugee camp.

The cramped and crowded streets contain the homes of the descendants of Palestinian families who were forced or who fled from their homes during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

On 3 November last year, as the children made their short walk from the camp for that day's training, they found a notice pinned to the gate of the football field declaring it to be illegal.

The notice was followed by a demolition order, issued at the end of December.

"We don't have anywhere else to play, 10-year-old Naya told me, wearing a Brazil shirt with the name of the footballing legend Neymar emblazoned on the back.

NEWS

Foreign

US to transfer Islamic State prisoners from Syria to Iraq

The US military has begun the transfer up to 7,000 Islamic State (IS) group detainees from prisons in north-eastern Syria to Iraq, as Syria's new government takes control of areas long run autonomously by Kurdish-led forces.

US Central Command (Centcom) said it had already moved 150 IS fighters from Hassakeh province to a "secure location" in Iraq.

It said the move aimed to prevent prisoners breaking out and regrouping.

The transfer follows a ceasefire agreement that has brought much of Syria's north east under Damascus control, after the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) withdrew from key areas, including detention sites holding thousands of IS suspects and their relatives.

CENTCOM said its commander Admiral Brad Cooper discussed the transfers with Syria's new president Ahmed al-Sharaa, stressing the need for Syrian forces to uphold the ceasefire and avoid any action that could interfere with what he described as an "orderly and secure transfer" of detainees.

Rights group Reprieve warned that detainees transferred to Iraq could face torture and execution and urged the UK government to establish whether any British nationals were among those being moved.

The charity said it believed there were no more than 10 British men held in the prisons, though exact numbers were unclear. Around 55 to 60 British nationals, most of them children, remain detained across camps and prisons in the region, it said.

Despite the ceasefire there have been fresh clashes, with Syria's defence ministry saying

seven soldiers were killed in a drone attack in Hassakeh on Wednesday, describing the incident a violation of the ceasefire.

The SDF denied carrying out the strike and accused Damascus of also launching attacks, including near the town of Kobane on the Turkish border.

The government and SDF had earlier blamed each other over the escape of suspected IS fighters from an SDF-run prison in Shaddadi, in southern Hassakeh.

Syria's interior ministry said on Monday night that its special forces and army soldiers had entered the town following "the escape of around 120 [IS] terrorists" from the prison. It said security forces later recaptured 81 of the fugitives.

The SDF said it had lost control of the prison following clashes with "Damascus-affiliated factions", warning of a "serious security catastrophe".

SDF spokesman Farhad Shami said around 1,500 IS members may have escaped during the clashes, according to Reuters news agency. The SDF also accused government forces of attacking al-Aqtan prison, north of the city of Raqqa, which is also holding IS members and leaders.

The SDF helped US-led forces defeat IS during Syria's 13-year civil war and, backed by the US, went on to jail around 12,000 IS members, including thousands of foreigners, while detaining tens of thousands of relatives in camps across the north east.

However US special envoy Tom Barrack has said the US alliance with the SDF had "largely expired" and that his country was currently focused on securing IS detention facilities and facilitating talks between the SDF and al-Sharaa's government.

Egypt's el-Sissi praises Trump's 'commitment' to stop Gaza

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi praised on Wednesday United States President Donald Trump for his role in the implementation of the current Gaza peace plan.

Speaking during a panel at the World Economic Forum in Davos, the Egyptian leader lauded Trump's "efforts" and "commitment" to stop the war and Gaza.

El-Sissi acknowledged Trump's work "to ease the humanitarian suffering that burdened the brotherly Palestinian people for more than two years."

The Egyptian leader also said his country sees the issue of Palestinian statehood as the "core" of the region's strive for stability and "a cornerstone to achieve a just and comprehensive peace."

A spokesperson for the Egyptian presidency said el-Sissi is expected to meet Trump

during the forum. The two leaders should discuss bilateral cooperation, and regional and international stability, according to an official statement.

The US said last week it was moving into the second phase of the Trump-led Gaza peace plan, with the goal to secure lasting peace.

On Friday, the US unveiled the composition of a "Board of Peace" designed to oversee the reconstruction and post-war transition of the Gaza Strip.

Members include several Trump allies such US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, US Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and advisor. The creation of the body has raised controversy, especially among European nations like France, Norway and Sweden, over concerns it could undermine the United Nations.



SECURITY FORCES:

Syrian government security forces in front of the al-Hol camp in Hasakeh province.

Japan restarts world's largest nuclear plant as Fukushima memories loom large

Japan has restarted operations at the world's largest nuclear power plant for the first time since the 2011 Fukushima disaster forced the country to shut all of its reactors.

The decision to restart reactor number 6 at Kashiwazaki-Kariwa north-west of Tokyo was taken despite local residents' safety concerns.

It was delayed by a day because of an alarm malfunction and is due to begin operating commercially next month.

Heavily reliant on energy imports, Japan was an early adopter of nuclear power. But in 2011 all 54 of Japan's reactors had to be shut after the most powerful earthquake it had ever recorded triggered a meltdown at Fukushima, causing one of the worst nuclear disasters in history.

This is the latest installment in Japan's nuclear power reboot, which still has a long way to go.

The seventh reactor at Kashiwazaki-Kariwa is not ex-

pected to be brought back on until 2030, and the other five could be decommissioned. That leaves the plant with far less capacity than it once had when all seven reactors were operational: 8.2 gigawatts.

The meltdown at Fukushima Daiichi, 220km (135 miles) north-east of Tokyo on the coast, led to radioactive leakage. Local communities were evacuated, and many have not returned despite official assurances that it was safe to do so.

Critics say the plant's owner Tokyo Electric Power Company, or Tepco, was not prepared, and the response from them and government was not well co-ordinated. An independent government report called it a "man-made disaster" and blamed Tepco, although a court later cleared three of their executives of negligence.

Still the fear and lack of trust fuelled public opposition to nuclear power and Japan suspended all of its reactors.

PM Sanae Takaichi is advocating for more shut reactors to be restarted.

It has now spent the past decade trying to wake up those power plants, as it seeks to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

Since 2015, Japan has restarted 15 out of its 33 operable reactors. The Kashiwazaki-Kariwa plant is the first of those owned by Tepco to be turned back on.

Before 2011, nuclear power accounted for nearly 30% of Japan's electricity and the country planned to get that up to 50% by 2030. Its energy plan last year unveiled a tamer goal: it wants nuclear power to provide 20% of its electricity needs by 2040.

Even that may be tricky.

'A drop on a hot stone'

Global momentum is building around nuclear energy, with the International Atomic Energy Agency estimating that the world's nuclear power capacity could more than double

by 2050. In Japan, as of 2023, nuclear power accounted for just 8.5% of electricity.

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, who took office in October, has emphasised the importance of nuclear power for Japan's energy self-sufficiency. Especially as it expects energy demand to surge because of data centres and semiconductor manufacturing.

Japan's leaders and its energy companies have long pushed for nuclear power. They say it's more reliable than renewable energy like solar and wind, and better suited for Japan's mountainous terrain. But critics say the emphasis on nuclear energy has come at the cost of investing in renewables and cutting emissions.

Now, as Japan tries to revive its nuclear power ambitions, the costs of running the reactors have surged, partly because of new safety checks that require hefty investments from companies trying to restart plants.

Seven more countries agree to join Trump's Board of Peace

Seven countries including Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt say they will join US president Donald Trump's Board of Peace, according to a joint statement.

They will join Israel, which also publicly confirmed its participation earlier on Wednesday.

The group of Muslim-majority countries named in the statement are Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Indonesia, Pakistan and Qatar.

The board was originally thought to be aimed at helping end the two-year war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza and oversee reconstruction. But its proposed charter does not mention the Palestinian territory

and appears to be designed to supplant functions of the UN.

However Saudi Arabia said that the countries endorsed the aim of consolidating a permanent ceasefire in Gaza, supporting reconstruction and advancing what they described as a "just and lasting peace".

Following their accession, Slovenia's prime minister Robert Golob said he had declined the invitation because the body "dangerously interferes with the broader international order".

So far Bahrain, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Morocco and Vietnam have also agreed to join.

It is not clear how many

countries have been invited to join Trump's new body - Canada, Russia and the UK are among them, but have not yet publicly responded.


The Vatican also confirmed Pope Leo has received an invitation. Speaking to reporters on Wednesday, the Vatican's Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, said the Pope would need time to consider whether to take part.

A leaked document says the Board of Peace's charter will enter into force once three states formally agree to be bound by it, with member states given renewable three-year terms and permanent seats available to those contrib-

uting \$1bn (£740m), it said.

The charter declared the body as an international organisation mandated to carry out peace-building functions under international law, with Trump serving as chairman - and separately as the US representative - and holding authority to appoint executive board members and create or dissolve subsidiary bodies.

Last Friday, the White House named seven members of the founding Executive Board, including US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff, Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and former UK prime minister Tony Blair.

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EFFECTIVE FROM FEBRUARY 1, 2023

Sports

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UCL: Man City shocked in Norway as holders PSG slips

Manchester City suffered one of the biggest upsets in the UEFA Champions League (UCL) history on Tuesday, while holders Paris Saint-Germain faltered in Portugal as the league phase neared its climax.

City arrived in Norway as overwhelming favourites but were stunned 3-1 by Bodo/Glimt in freezing conditions at the Aspmyra Stadion, north of the Arctic Circle.

A first-half brace by Kasper Høgh in the 22nd and 24th minutes as well as a second-half strike

from Jens Petter Hauge in the 58th minute sealed a famous win for the hosts, despite a late response from Rayan Cherki in the 60th minute.

City's woes deepened when Rodri was sent off for two bookings in the 62nd minute, leaving Pep Guardiola's side in disarray

and facing a damaging defeat.

In Lisbon, PSG lost 2-1 to Sporting after Luis Suarez scored twice in the 74th minute, including a 90th-minute header, to punish late defensive lapses.

Substitute Khvicha Kvaratskhelia had earlier equalised for PSG in the 79th minute, but the French champions dropped to fifth and must now fight for direct qualification.

Elsewhere, Real Madrid produced an attacking masterclass under new coach Alvaro Arbeloa to thrash Monaco and surge to second place behind Arsenal.

Kylian Mbappe scored twice against his former club in the 5th and 26th minute, while Vinicius Junior added a stunning goal in the 63rd minute to lift the 15-time champions' campaign.

Goals from Franco Mastantuono in the 51st minute and an own goal by Thilo Kehrer in the 55th minute, followed by Jude Bellingham's late strike in the 80th, sealed the rout at the Bernabeu, in spite of Jordan Teze's 72nd-minute consolation goal for Monaco.



PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN FALTERED IN PORTUGAL



GABRIEL JESUS

Jesus brace fires Arsenal past Inter, seals last-16 spot

Gabriel Jesus scored a brace as Arsenal defeated Inter Milan 3-1 on Tuesday, sealing qualification for the UEFA Champions League (UCL) last 16 with a dominant display at the San Siro.

The Brazilian struck twice from close range in the 10th and 31st minutes respectively, earning Arsenal a seventh straight league-phase victory and guaranteeing a top-eight finish ahead of the final round.

Jesus, starting ahead of Viktor Gyokeres, led Arsenal's attack confidently and was a constant threat, underlining his growing sharpness after a long injury layoff.

The 28-year-old, who had started only twice this season, appears fully recovered from a cruciate ligament injury that sidelined him for nearly a year.

He was on cloud nine after two close-range finishes in the first half to help guarantee the Gunners a top eight finish.

"It's a dream night," said the 28-year-old.

"I always dreamed of being a footballer. I watched when I was a kid.

"I watched a lot of Serie A, so to be here in this stadium and score here is tears in my eyes because I always dreamed of being here," Jesus said.

AFCON brouhaha: Gusau denies any altercation with CAF Vice President, Fouzi Lekjaa

President of the Nigeria Football Federation, Ibrahim Musa Gusau (MON) has described as 'total falsehood', a report circulating in sections of the social media that he had a public spat with President of the Federation Royale Marocaine de Football (FRMF), Mr. Fouzi Lekjaa during a CAF Executive Committee meeting in Morocco.

The unsubstantiated report alleged that Gusau, who is also President of WAFU B, engaged in a hot argument with Lekjaa, who is also the 1st Vice President of the Confederation of African Football, at a meeting that took place during the just-concluded 35th Africa Cup of Nations finals in the North African Kingdom.

"I really don't know where the report is coming from. Nigeria and Morocco have very cordial relationships in the game of football, and even at the level of government, both countries have a warm relationship. Personally, I have always had a good relationship with Mr. Lekjaa.

"There was no shouting match, neither were there any insults thrown. Whoever came up with that report engaged in mongering of total falsehood."

Gusau also denied making any comments with regards to the officiating of the second semi-final of the AFCON be-

tween Nigeria and Morocco at the Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium in Rabat on Wednesday, 14th January.

"Before the match, I had publicly made it known that the NFF was not apprehensive about the officiating. After the match, I made no comments whatsoever, and I am totally bemused at where the reporter got his story that Mr. Lekjaa and myself engaged in a shouting match because of my comments on the officiating of the game.



PRESIDENT OF THE NFF, IBRAHIM MUSA GUSAU

UCL: Man City players to reimburse travelling fans after shock defeat in Bodo/Glimt

UEFA Champions League - Bodo/Glimt v Manchester City - Aspmyra Stadion, Bodo, Norway - January 20, 2026 Manchester City fans in the stands. Action Images via Reuters/Andrew Boyers

Manchester City players will dig into their own pockets to

refund travelling fans after a humiliating 3-1 Champions League defeat to Norwegian side Bodo/Glimt in Arctic conditions.

The Premier League club suffered the upset on Tuesday as Bodo/Glimt secured a first Champions League victory thanks to Kasper Høgh's quick-

fire double and Jens Petter Hauge's stunning solo effort.

City managed a consolation through Rayan Cherki, but the second-half dismissal of 2024 Ballon d'Or winner Rodri sealed a miserable evening in the Norwegian town of Bodo.

In the aftermath, senior City players Bernardo Silva, Ruben Dias, Rodri and Erling Haaland issued a statement acknowledging the sacrifice of supporters who made the long journey north.

"Our supporters mean everything to us ... it was a lot of travelling for the fans who supported us in the freezing cold throughout a difficult evening for us on the pitch," they said on Wednesday



MAN CITY PLAYERS

Jalla hails Morocco 2025 in spite of controversies

Harrison Jala, the Chairman, Professional Footballers Association of Nigeria (PFAN) Task Force, has commended the organisation of the just concluded CAF Africa Cup of Nations 2025 in Morocco.

Jalla told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that AFCON 2025 was topnotch in his opinion, and that the Moroccans showcased world class facilities that could host any competition, including the world cup.

According to him, CAF had to quickly do an intense massive education of its federations, football fans and supporters while stamping its authority on

the officiating.

"Decision by a referee is final in the game of football that is what the rule book says, every other opinion is immaterial.

"Federations, who feel aggrieved or otherwise should follow due process to lodge their complaints.

"African Football federations must do open and massive education of their fans not to use the social media to bring African Football to disrepute," Jalla said.

He added that the unfortunate open disputations of decisions by referees almost marred the AFCON 2025, saying that was unacceptable.



MOROCCO TEAM IN CONTROVERSIES

SPORTS

Angola, Gabon emerge as leading suitors for Nigeria Super Eagles coach Éric Chelle



SUPER EAGLES COACH ÉRIC CHELLE IN TRAINING

Angola and Gabon have emerged as the leading contenders in the race to secure the services of Super Eagles head coach Éric Chelle, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

The Franco-Malian tactician, who is currently under contract with the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) until January 2027, has attracted growing interest following his impressive outing with the Super Eagles.

Reports indicate that Chelle has already turned down an

approach from Tunisia, preferring to remain focused on his current assignment with Nigeria for now.

Despite his existing deal, sources close to the situation reveal that both Angola and Gabon are keen on luring Chelle with lucrative offers as they look to strengthen their national teams ahead of upcoming international competitions.

Meanwhile, Chelle is expected to meet with officials of the

Nigeria Football Federation in the coming days to discuss his future.

The talks are understood to be aimed at reaffirming commitment, clarifying long-term plans, and possibly reviewing contractual terms amid rising external interest.

The outcome of the meeting could prove decisive in determining whether Nigeria can retain the highly-rated coach or face a potential battle to keep him beyond the short term

Senegal players to get bonuses, land for Africa Cup of Nations win

Senegal Victory Parade - Dakar, Senegal - January 20, 2026 Senegal players and staff celebrate with the trophy on the bus during the victory parade.

Senegal's President Bassirou Diomaye Faye has offered bonuses of more than \$130,000 as well as plots of coastal land to each member of the country's soccer team following their victory in Sunday's Africa Cup of Nations final against Morocco.

He spoke at a ceremony in the capital, Dakar, on Tuesday night, during which thousands of jubilant supporters took to the streets to welcome the victorious Lions of Teranga home.

Senegal beat hosts Morocco 1-0 after extra time, having staged a walk-off after they had a penalty awarded against them deep in stoppage time at the end of 90 minutes.

After the Senegal players returned to the pitch, Morocco missed the spot kick, and Pape Gueye then won the trophy with a superb strike four minutes into extra time.

Earlier on Tuesday, the Senegal players rode atop a bus emblazoned with the words "African champions" along Dakar's corniche towards the presidential palace.

The bonuses of 75 million CFA francs (\$134,892.09) for each of the squad's 28 players total 2.1 billion CFA francs or \$3.7 million. The players will also receive 1,500 square-metre plots of land.

In addition, Faye said members of Senegal's soccer federation would receive 50 million CFA francs and 1,000 square-metre plots, while members of the Senegalese delegation to Morocco would receive

20 million CFA francs and 500 square-metre plots.

He said sports ministry staff would receive 305 million CFA francs in bonuses.

SENEGAL FACES DEBT WOES

The pledges come as Senegal grapples with debts that the International Monetary Fund said hit 132% of GDP at the end of 2024 after the current leadership uncovered billions in debts that were not reported by the previous administration.

The IMF froze a \$1.8 billion lending programme over the controversy, forcing Senegal to

rely heavily on regional debt auctions to meet its financing needs.

The new IMF mission chief travelled to Senegal for an introductory visit this week.



SENEGAL VICTORY PARADE

Nigeria compounds Algerian woes with second defeat in two weeks, sustains bright start to 2026

Nigeria's Senior Men's Handball Team, the Golden Arrows, continued the nation's impressive start to the 2026 sporting calendar with a hard-fought 25-23 victory over Algeria at the 27th Africa Men's Handball Nations Cup in Kigali, Rwanda.

The Group A opener, played on Tuesday at the Petit Stade,

marked Nigeria's second defeat of Algeria in just two weeks, following the Super Eagles' resounding 2-0 win over the North Africans at the quarter-final stage of the recently concluded 2025 Africa Cup of Nations in Morocco.

Displaying composure, discipline, and tactical maturity, the Golden Arrows seized early

control of the contest, racing into a 16-13 lead at halftime, before going on to close out the game.

The victory places Nigeria in a strong position in Group A, which also includes hosts Rwanda and Zambia, as the Golden Arrows strengthen their bid for a podium finish at the continental championship.

Nigeria will return to action on Thursday against Zambia in their second group match, scheduled for 1:00pm, as they continue their push at a tournament that also serves as qualification for the 2027 IHF World Men's Handball Championship in Germany.

The handball triumph bolsters Nigeria's positive momentum in 2026, coming on the heels of Eniola Bolaji's gold medal at the Egypt Para Badminton International and the Super Eagles' spirited AFCON campaign, which culminated in a bronze-medal finish.



NIGERIA'S SENIOR MEN'S HANDBALL TEAM CELEBRATING

Edo to host 3000 athletes for 2nd Niger Delta Games

About 3,000 athletes and officials from nine oil-producing states are expected in Edo for the second edition of the Niger Delta Games, scheduled to hold from Feb. 20 to 27.

The multi-sport event, sponsored by the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), will feature 17 sports.

These include football, basketball, boxing, badminton, among others.

The event will also feature a cultural night designed to showcase the region's rich heritage.

The organiser of the event, Itiako Ikpokpo, told sports journalists on Wednesday in Benin City that the games were strictly designed for young talents.

Ikpokpo, who is the chairman of Dunamis Icons Limited, said participating athletes must be indigenous to the competing states and must not exceed 20 years of age.

According to him, meaningful sports development must begin at the grassroots, as the local government level is the true foundation for talent discovery.

"We must go back to school sports to discover more young

talents for the country," he said.

Ikpokpo, however, decried the poor commitment of state governments to sports development.

He said low budgetary allocations for sports across states had continued to undermine growth in the sector, while weak administration had prevented sports from becoming a viable economic venture.

"There is a need to elevate the conversation on sports in this country.

"The reason sports has not become a money spinner is the way it is being managed by administrators," he said.

Ikpokpo also condemned the prevalence of age cheating in sports, describing it as "shameful", and called for collective action to end the practice.

He further urged the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) to look beyond Uyo for the hosting of international matches, arguing that the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium in Benin City meets global standards.

"Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium is as good as the Uyo Stadium and should be considered for international fixtures," he said.



NIGER DELTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (NDDC)