

Rivers ex-PDP chair raises concern over 2026 budget delay

PORT HARCOURT

Former Caretaker Committee Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Rivers, Nname Ewor, has expressed concern that the state lacks an appropriated budget for the 2026 fiscal year.

Ewor raised the issue on

Wednesday during a "thank you" visit by Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike, to Ahoada East Local Government Area, stressing the urgency of budget approval for lawful governance.

He explained that Governor Siminalayi Fubara had yet to present the 2026 budget to the State Assembly for appropri-

tion, warning that any spending of public funds without legislative approval was illegal.

Ewor added that effective administration required synergy between the executive and legislative arms, noting that co-operation among all three arms of government was essential to deliver democratic dividends to the people.

Recall that President Bola Tinubu declared a State of Emergency in Rivers in March 2025 over a prolonged political crisis, which remained a concern through September of the same year.

Although the state Executive Council approved a N1.85 trillion 2026 budget on January 2, it has not yet been submitted

to the State Assembly for appropriation, raising legal and governance concerns.

Earlier, Ahoada East Local Government Chairman, Solomon Ochoma, commended Wike for his grassroots engagement, describing the visit as a demonstration of decisive action, institutional strength, and commitment to development.

Ochoma pledged to realign with Wike's vision for the prosperity of the LGA and the overall development of Rivers State, emphasising unity and collective progress for constituents.

The State Assembly Member representing Ahoada East I, Queen Williams, thanked Wike

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The Nigerian Observer



...that the people may know

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Seme customs generates N15.6bn revenue in 2025

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THURSDAY 8TH JANUARY, 2026.

Court orders interim forfeiture of 57 property allegedly linked to Malami

The Federal High Court in Abuja has ordered the interim forfeiture of 57 property suspected to be proceeds of unlawful activities linked to Mr Abubakar Malami.

Malami, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, was the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice in the Muhammadu Buhari administration

Justice Emeka Nwite granted the order following an ex-parte motion moved by the lawyer of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Ekele Iheanacho to the effect.

The multi-billion naira landed property are located in Abuja, Kebbi, Kano and Kaduna States.

Although the order was made on Tuesday, its certified true copy (CTC) was sighted by newsmen on Wednesday.

"It is hereby ordered that an interim order of this honourable court is hereby made forfeiting to the Federal Government of Nigeria the properties described in Schedule 1 below which are reasonably suspected to be proceeds of unlawful activities," the judge said.

Nwite, in the ruling, also directed the publication of the interim order of forfeiture in any national daily.

The ruling is "inviting any person(s) or body (ies) who may have interest in the prop-

erties listed in the schedule to show cause, within 14 days of the publication, why a final order of forfeiture to the Federal Government of Nigeria of the said assets and properties, should not be made."

The judge then adjourned the matter until January 27 for report of compliance.

The assets, according to the ruling, include the following:

Luxury Duplex at Amazon Street, Plot No. 3011 Within Cadastral Zone, A06 Maitama; File No: AN enhancement 11352, which was purchased in December 2022 at N500,000,000.00 (value after enhancement at N5,950,000,000);

Two Winged Large Storey Building Situate at No. 3, Onitsha Crescent, Area 11, Garki, Cadastral Zone, A03, Abuja (formerly Harmonia Hotels Limited), FCT, which was purchased December 2018 at N7,000,000,000.00.

Plot 683, Jabi District, Cadastral Zone B04, Comprising of a five storey Building (now luxurious Meethaq Hotels Ltd, Jabi, with 53 rooms/suites), which was purchased in September 2020 at carcass level at N850,000,000.00 with additional N300,000,000.00 to take possession (value after completion N8,400,000,000.00).

Property No. 3130 within Cadastral Zone A04, Asokoro

District, FCT, Abuja, comprising of terraces, purchased in January 2021 at N360,000,000.00.

Property No. 3 Rhine Street, Maitama, Abuja (MEETHAQ HOTELS LTD, MAITAMA WITH 15 ROOMS), which was purchased on in February 2018 at N430,000,000.00 (cur-

rent value after rehabilitation is N12,950,000,000.00).

Plot No. 1241B, Asokoro District Zone (NO. 11A YAKUBU GOWON CRESCENT) ASOKORO DISTRICT, which was purchased

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EDSPHCDA targets 2m children as Measles Rubella vaccination begins Jan 20

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Primary Health Care Development Agency (EDSPHCDA) said it targets about two million children in the Measles Rubella Integrated Mass Vaccination Campaign scheduled for January 20 - 29, 2026 (10 days) across the 18 Local Government Areas of the State.

The Director of Disease Control in the agency, Dr Efeomo Eseigbe said during a media orientation organized in Benin City by the Health Education Unit, Department of Community and Family Health of the agency that the vaccination exercise is stream 2 of the phase 1 of the Measles Rubella vaccination, with Edo as one of the targeted South-South states.

He said that the media orientation became necessary because, as major stakeholder in the vaccination exercise, the me-

dia has a duty to ensure that government performs its role and as well influences the government to be conscious to its needs.

The media, he said will also help mobilise and sensitize the people on the importance of the Measles Rubella vaccination in saving lives and as well build public trust and confidence in the vaccination and other Primary Health Care interventions.

According to him, the campaign's objectives include the attainment of 95 percent coverage post-campaign coverage among children of nine months to 15 years.

A UNICEF official, Mr Yakubu said that only qualified and certified health workers will be recruited as vaccinators, noting that there are sufficient vaccines to cover the targeted population in fixed and temporary fixed posts, including schools, churches, mosques, markets, motor-parks, IDP camps



NEW YEAR VISIT:

L-R: Former Governor of Ebonyi State, Chief Sam Egwu; Sen. Ben Obi; former Labour Party Presidential Candidate, Mr Peter Obi; former Governor of Old Anambra State, Chief Jim Nwobodo; his wife, Pat; Chancellor, Coal City University, Chief Chinedu Ani and Sen. Gil Nnaji, during a new year visit to Nwobodo, at Amaechi-Uno in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State.

Police nab 3 suspects over kidnapping, rescue 76 children

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Court admits Malami, wife, son to N500m bail each

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US discussing options to acquire Greenland including using military, White House says

—Pgs 8

AFCON 2025: Gusau backs Super Eagles to handle Algeria test in Marrakesh

—Pg 12

Oshiomhole condemns killing of AAU graduate in Auchi, demands rescue of abducted doctor

CAROLINE AMEH

ABUJA

The Senator representing Edo North Senatorial District, Adams Aliyu Oshiomhole, has condemned

the killing of a young Ambrose Alli University (AAU) graduate, Abu Tahir Momoh, in Auchi, Edo State, describing the act as barbaric and deeply distressing.

Oshiomhole in a statement

by his Chief of Staff, Victor Oshioke, said that he received the news of Tahir Momoh's murder with shock and pain.

The deceased, a medical science graduate of AAU, was abducted alongside his elder brother, Dr Abu Babatunde, a medical doctor with the Edo State University Teaching Hospital, Auchi.

While Tahir Momoh was reportedly killed by his captors,

Dr Babatunde is said to remain in captivity.

Oshiomhole described the incident as a tragic irony, noting that a young man who devoted years of his life to studying medicine in order to save lives was cut down by criminals who place no value on human life.

He questioned the motive behind the killing, describing it as senseless, cruel and unjustifiable, and lamented the pain

being endured by the victim's family, who invested heavily in his education and future.

"No one can comprehend the depth of the pain the family is going through, having trained their son to become a medical doctor, only for his life and dreams to be cut short in such a horrific manner," Oshiomhole said.

The former Edo State governor commended the state government for its continued investment in security and called on security agencies to intensify ef-

orts to secure the immediate rescue of Dr Babatunde and arrest those responsible for the crime.

He stressed that the perpetrators must be tracked down and brought to justice to serve as a deterrent to others, adding that he would continue to advocate stricter penalties for kidnappers.

Oshiomhole also expressed condolences to the bereaved family and the Auchi community, praying for strength and comfort in this difficult time and for the repose of the soul of the deceased.

Court orders interim forfeiture of 57...

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July 2021 at N325,000,000.00. SHOP NO. C82 CITISCAPE — SHARIFF PLAZA, PLOT 739 CADASTRAL ZONE A07, AMINU KANO CRESCENT, WUSE II, FCT, ABUJA, which was purchased in March 2024 at N120,000,000.00.

NO. 4 AHMADU BELLO WAY, NASARAWA GRA, KANO, which was purchased in December 2022 at N300,000,000.00

PLOT 157, LAMIDO CRESCENT, NASARAWA, GRA, KANO, purchased in July 2019 with no specific amount stated.

A PLAZA, COMMERCIAL TOILETS, LAUNDERING, WAREHOUSE TANKS ADJACENT TO BIRNIN KEBBI MARKET, which was purchased in 2021 at N100,000,000.00.

100 HECTARES OF LAND ALONG BRININ KEBBI, JEGA ROAD, which was purchased in 2020 at N100,000,000.00.

4 BEDROOM BUNGALOW GESSE PHASE, BIRNIN KEBBI, which was purchased in 2023 at N101,000,000.00.

SHOPS NOS. A36, B3 VEGAS MALL, WUSE 2, ABUJA, which was purchased in July 2023 at N158,000,000.00.

NO. 26, BABBI DRIVE, BUA ESTATE, ABUJA, purchased in 2022 at N136,000,000.00.

NO. 27, EFAB ESTATES AVENUE, 59TH CRESCENT, GWARIMPA, ABUJA, purchased in January 2016 at N120,000,000.00.

4 BEDROOM/ 2 ROOMS BOYS QUARTERS AT NO. 10B, DOKA CRESCENT ABAKPA GRA, KADUNA, purchased in January 2018 at N40,000,000.00.

PLOT NO. 13, IPENT 7 ESTATE, KARSANA DISTRICT, ABUJA, purchased in June 2018 at N85,000,000.00.

A BEDROOM DUPLEX & BOYS QUARTERS AT NO. 12 YALINGA STREET, OFF ADETOKUNBO ADEMOLA CRESCENT, WUSE II, ABUJA, purchased in October 2018 at N150,000,000.00.

TWO WAREHOUSE SHOPS B40 AND B46, WUSE MARKET, ABUJA, purchased in July 2020 at N50,000,000.00.

TWIN HOUSES AT ZONE E, APO LEGISLATIVE QUARTERS, CADASTRAL ZONE B01, PLOT 14014, GUDU DISTRICT, ABUJA, purchased between February and May 2017 at N250,000,000.00.

Properties acquired by Khadimiyya for Justice and Development Initiative at the Academic Garden City, Birnin Kebbi, sold by the Federal Housing Authority Mortgage.

These are nine units of three bedroom, bungalow, three units of two bedroom, bungalow, and 5.4 hectares of land, which were purchased between February 2023 and September 2023 at N187,000,000.00.

RAYHAAN UNIVERSITY, KEBBI STATE, which include Rayhaan University Permanent Site; Rayhaan University Temporary Site; Rayhaan University Third Site and Rayhaan University Vice Chancellor House valued at N56,000,000,000.00; N 3 7 , 8 0 0 , 0 0 0 , 0 0 0 . 0 0 ; N2,450,000,000.00 and N490,000,000.00 respectively.

RAYHAAN AGRO ALLIED FACTORY IN KEBBI which include Factory Buildings, Factory Machines and Plants Units, Factory Mosque, Rayhaan Mill Staff Quarters and Rayhaan Bustan Building valued at N4,200,000,000.00; N 1 0 , 5 0 0 , 0 0 0 , 0 0 0 . 0 0 ; N 2 , 4 5 0 , 0 0 0 , 0 0 0 . 0 0 ; N1,487,500,000.00; and N3,150,000,000.00 respectively.

AZBIR ARENA, KEBBI STATE, which comprises of Azbir Hotel, Printing Press, Gallery, Gardens, Mosque, Azbir Clothing and Azbir Pharmacy and Supermarket valued at N10,325,000,000.00; N 1 , 0 5 0 , 0 0 0 , 0 0 0 . 0 0 ; N 5 8 1 , 0 0 0 , 0 0 0 . 0 0 ; N 3 9 2 , 0 0 0 , 0 0 0 . 0 0 ; N 2 5 2 , 0 0 0 , 0 0 0 . 0 0 ; N350,000,000.00 and N175,000,000.00 respectively.

OTHER PROPERTIES HELD IN KEBBI STATE include Al-Afiya Energy Tanker Garage, opposite Rayhaan University Health Centre, along Sani Abacha Bypass Road, The EFCC, in the suit

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Rivers ex-PDP chair raises concern...

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for consistently involving women during his tenure as governor, pledging continued support and collaboration with his initiatives.

In his remarks, Wike said the visit was to thank residents for supporting Tinubu in 2023 and to mobilise them for continued backing in the 2027 elections.

He highlighted achieve-

ments during his tenure, including road projects, community connectivity, and the provision of 10,000 youth jobs, some of which were reportedly stalled by his successor.

The minister urged residents to continue supporting Tinubu for sustained development and to ensure the state's projects and programmes were completed for the benefit of Rivers citizens.



2026 STORYTELLER'S CONFERENCE:

L-R: Lagos State Commissioner for Tourism Arts and Culture, Mrs Toke Benson-Awoyinka; Chairman, Board of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), Mr Idris Olorunnibe; Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State; Olu of Warri, His Majesty Ogiame Atuwatse; Lagos State Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Mr Gbenga Omotoso and Special Adviser to the Governor on Tourism, Mr Idris Aregbe, during the Lens for Good 2026 Storyteller's Conference on stories that move us in Lagos.

Information Minister fully focused on Tinubu's mandate —Aide

ABUJA

The Minister of Information and National Orientation, Alhaji Mohammed Idris, is fully focused on the responsibilities and mandate given to him by President Bola Tinubu and not the 2027 elections in Niger.

The Special Assistant on Me-

dia to the Minister, Malam Rabiu Ibrahim, said this in a statement in Abuja on Wednesday.

Ibrahim said the minister had disclaimed a write-up written by an aide, Sa'idu Enagi, entitled, 'Malagi 2027,' in which permutations for the 2027 gubernatorial elections were discussed in Niger.

"The write-up and all its

contexts are hereby vehemently disclaimed.

"The Minister is fully focused on his responsibility superintending the Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation given to him by President Bola Tinubu and has no room for political distractions.

"Please disregard the write-up as the Honourable Minister neither directed nor approved the said publication.

"The Minister has directed an immediate investigation, and the aide has been issued a letter of suspension with immediate effect," Ibrahim said.

Ibrahim explained that the minister and the governor of his state, Umaru Bago, enjoy a positive and mutual relationship for the greater good of Niger.

"Therefore, speculations about the 2027 elections will appear inimical to these noble objectives," he said.

Edo Reps member Omoruyi defects from LP to ADC

BENIN CITY

The member representing Egor/Ikpoba Okha Federal Constituency, Hon. Murphy Osaro Omoruyi, has defected to the African Democratic Congress (ADC) after resigning from the Labour Party (LP), on whose platform he was elected into the House of Representatives.

Omoruyi announced his defection at a press conference

held at the Press Centre of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), Edo State council in Benin City on Tuesday.

He said his decision was driven by what he described as intractable crises rocking the Labour Party, which had made his continued stay in the party untenable.

He pledged to work with leaders of the ADC, coalition partners and other stakeholders to promote good governance and

ensure effective representation.

The lawmaker recalled that as the only elected member of the Labour Party from Edo State in the National Assembly, he remained committed to his constitutional responsibilities of lawmaking and oversight, while ensuring that the interests of Egor/Ikpoba Okha Federal Constituency were adequately represented on the floor of the House.

"I have remained commit-

ted to the core responsibilities of lawmaking and oversight, ensuring that my constituency, Egor/Ikpoba Okha, is heard loud and clear on the floor of the Green Chamber," he said.

Omoruyi added that beyond his legislative duties, he remained a loyal party member throughout his stay in the Labour Party, noting that his steadfastness earned him the description of "the last man standing" within the party in Edo State.

Katsina to host Muslims from 15 countries for Sheikh Nyass Maulud

KATSINA

Followers of Tijaniyya Islamic Sect across 15 countries from the West and North Africa are expected to converge on Katsina for the 40th

Sheikh Ibrahim Nyass Maulud.

The Chairman of the Main Organising Committee, Sheikh Muhammad Hadi-Balarabe, made the disclosure at a press briefing, on Wednesday in Katsina.

Hadi-Balarabe explained that the Maulud was organised by the national body of "Majma'u Ahabab Sheikh Ibrahim Nyass," with the theme: "Life of Sheikh Ibrahim Nyass, His Works and Contributions to Islam."

He said that the event, scheduled to hold on Jan. 17, would host about 4 million people across 15 countries from the West and North Africa.

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EDO STATE UNIVERSITY IYAMHO, EDO STATE

KM 7, AUCHI-ABUJA ROAD, IYAMHO, EDO STATE, NIGERIA
Website: <https://www.edouniversity.edu.ng>

VACANCY

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE POSTS OF REGISTRAR AND BURSAR

PREAMBLE

The posts of the Registrar and Bursar of Edo State University, Iyamho, Edo State, Nigeria, are vacant. In accordance with the provisions of Section 6(1) (2) and (3) of Edo State University Iyamho Law 2014 as amended, the Governing Council of the Edo State University, Iyamho wishes to commence the process of appointing a new Registrar and Bursar for the University. Consequently, applications are hereby invited from suitably qualified candidates for the positions.

THE UNIVERSITY

The Edo State Government established the University with a view to developing human capital through quality education, thereby bringing meaningful development to Edo State, Nigeria and the World at large. Edo State University, Iyamho is expected to propel social, economic, political, cultural, scientific and industrial growth in the State, Nigeria and globally.

1. THE REGISTRAR

The Registrar is the Chief Administrative Officer of the University and is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the day-to-day administration of the affairs (other than financial matters) of the University. The Registrar is also the Secretary to the University Governing Council, Senate, Convocation and Congregation.

(A) ELIGIBILITY/REQUIREMENTS

The candidate for the post of Registrar must possess a good honours (minimum second class lower) degree from a recognised University, with at least fifteen (15) years relevant post qualification experience. Possession of higher degree(s), professional qualifications and membership of professional bodies will be an added advantage. The candidate is expected to:

- (i) Not be below the rank of Deputy Registrar, who has spent at least three (3) years on the post in a recognized university;
- (ii) Not be more than sixty (60) years of age at the time of assumption of duty;
- (iii) Demonstrate evidence of consummate management and leadership passion and drive in previous positions and in addition, must possess excellent communication and interpersonal relationship skills;
- (iv) Exhibit the ability to be a team leader, who can lead by example, has clear mentorship skills and plans;
- (v) Possess personal integrity, demonstrate transparency in private and public life, be able to command the respect and loyalty of staff, students and other members of the University Community;
- (vi) Be computer-literate;
- (vii) Have a good working knowledge of contemporary administrative principles, processes and practices;
- (viii) Be in excellent physical and mental health.

(B) TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE APPLICABLE TO THE POST

The Registrar shall hold office for a single term of five (5) years only on such terms and conditions as may be specified in the letter of appointment. The remuneration and other conditions of service are as applicable to the post of Registrar in public universities in Nigeria and as may be determined from time to time by Edo State Government/Governing Council of the University.

2. THE BURSAR

The Bursar is the Chief Financial Officer of the University and is directly responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the day-to-day administration and control of the financial affairs of the University. The candidate shall advise the Vice-Chancellor on finance-related matters, coordinate the development and update the University's financial management plans; coordinate the preparation of periodic income and expenditure statements, balance sheet, cash flow estimates and consolidation, when necessary.

The candidate shall ensure that accurate records are maintained of all assets and liabilities held by the University. The duties include monitoring monthly income and expenditure and balance sheet variances against the budgets and ensuring that they are reconciled; monitoring treasury activities including cash flow projections and forecasts for prudence and accountability; negotiating with financial and government institutions regarding financial matters. The candidate shall coordinate the activities of the Bursary Department for the efficient and effective management of the finances of the University.

(A) ELIGIBILITY/REQUIREMENTS

The candidate for the post of Bursar must possess a good honours (minimum second class lower) degree in Accounting, Finance or related disciplines from a recognised University, with at least fifteen (15) years relevant post-qualification experience in a university. Possession of a higher qualification will be an added advantage. The candidate must be a member of professional bodies such as ICAN

and ANAN, and must possess professional accountancy qualifications such as ACA, ACCA, CIMA, CPA or their equivalent. Possession of a Fellowship of the above-listed professional bodies shall be an added advantage. The candidate is also expected to:

- (i) Not be below the rank of Deputy Bursar or its equivalent and must have spent at least three (3) years on the post;
- (ii) Be proficient in the use of relevant Accounting software and Information Communication Technology (ICT);
- (iii) Demonstrate evidence of consummate management and leadership passion and drive in previous positions and in addition, must possess excellent communication and interpersonal relationship skills;
- (iv) Exhibit the ability to be a team leader, who can lead by example and has clear mentorship skills and plans; and should not be older than sixty (60) years at the time of assumption of duty.
- (v) Exhibit a considerable degree of competence, responsiveness, demonstrable integrity and transparency on matters of financial resource management with an outstanding experience at management level;
- (vi) Be a person with good leadership qualities who can inspire and motivate colleagues, a person with clear vision for the financial management of the University and must be ready to implement the vision and strategic goals of the University;
- (vii) Be focused, innovative and computer-literate;
- (viii) Be in excellent physical and mental health.

(B) TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE APPLICABLE TO THE POST

The Bursar shall hold office for a single term of five (5) years only on such terms and conditions as may be specified in the letter of appointment. The remuneration and other conditions of service are as applicable to the post of Bursar in public universities in Nigeria and as may be determined from time to time by Edo State Government/Governing Council of the University.

3. METHOD OF APPLICATION

Prospective applicants are expected to submit the following documents: (a) a cover letter (b) an up-to-date curriculum vitae (CV), (c) statements of their vision, not exceeding 1000 words, for effective and efficient administration (Registrar)/effective and efficient financial management (Bursar) of the University, and (d) all documents that support any claim made in the applicant's CV. All relevant details of the candidate's qualification and experience should be stated in the CV in the following order:

- Name in full (surname last and in capital letters)
- Place and Date of Birth
- Permanent Home Address
- Contact Address: Postal Address, GSM Number(s) and E-mail Address
- Nationality
- State of Origin
- Marital Status
- Number and Ages of Children (if any)
- Educational Institutions Attended (with dates)
- Academic and Professional Qualifications Obtained (with dates)
- Work Experience with dates, including full details of former and present post(s), indicating present status and salary
- Extra Curricula Activities
- Names and addresses of three (3) Referees (one of whom must be the candidate's present employer)

Applications should be submitted online on the University website and copies should also be sent to: vc@edouniversity.edu.ng. (All documents must be in PDF format)

Note that it is the responsibility of applicants to contact the three referees listed in their CV to forward a confidential report on their character as well as academic and managerial competences by filling and submitting a report via the link: <https://edouniversity.edu.ng/referees>. Referees should also submit signed electronic copies of their references in PDF format to: vc@edouniversity.edu.ng.

The University website for the submission of applications is as follows:

Registrar: <https://www.edouniversity.edu.ng/vacancies/registrar>

Bursar: <https://www.edouniversity.edu.ng/vacancies/bursar>

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION/ DEADLINE

Application closes six (6) weeks from the date of this advertisement. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Signed:
MR. VINCENT O. ERHAGBE,
Acting Registrar/Secretary to Council

NEWS

Seme customs generates N15.6bn revenue in 2025

SEME

The Seme Area Command of Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has said it generated the sum of ₦15,598,945,794.00 in revenue in 2025, being its highest-ever annual collection since inception.

Mr Tunde Ayagbalo, the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the command, disclosed this in a statement on Wednesday in Seme.

"In December 2025, the command generated a historic ₦3,628,485,590, the highest monthly revenue on record.

"This record is attributed to the effective rollout of the One-Stop Shop (OSS) initiative by the Comptroller-General of Customs, which improved the command's coordination and trade facilitation for stakeholders.

"From January to December 2025, the command generated the total of ₦15,598,945,794.00 only, marking a remarkable 117 percent increase over the ₦7,166,576,397.49 recorded in 2024," he said.

Ayagbalo said that on November 11, the command hosted the launch of the Green Border Initiative by the National President of the Customs Officers' Wives Association (COWA), Mrs Kikelomo Adeniyi.

"This featured an empowerment programme where industrial sewing machines, grinding machines, gas burners with cylinders and start-up grants were distributed to members

of COWA Seme Chapter.

"On the same day, the Comptroller-General of Customs, launched a free medical outreach under the Customs Cares Initiative.

"The outreach delivered essential healthcare to over 1,000 beneficiaries, alongside a tree-planting exercise for environmental sustainability," he said.

He said that the Seme Customs Area Controller, Comptroller Wale Adenuga, had successfully reduced checkpoints along the Lagos-Abidjan corridor to the two (2) locations approved by the Federal Government.

Ayagbalo said that the reduced checkpoints was in alignment with the Comptroller-General's directive.

According to him, this significantly eased legitimate trade, minimised delays and contributed to the command's outstanding revenue performance.

He noted that the command also maintained robust anti-smuggling operations, seizing 685 parcels of Cannabis Sativa (Marijuana), 495 packs of Tramadol in December 2025.

"Others are 2,000 packs of Super Power Sildenafil tablets (300mg), an excessively high-dosage sexual enhancement drug, through intelligence-led operations, enhanced patrols, risk profiling and inter-agency collaboration," he said.

The Seme customs spokesman quoted Comptroller Adenuga as having warned smugglers that the borders are no longer safe for illicit activities.

"With advanced intelligence, technology and unwavering vigilance, the officers and men of the command will intercept and prosecute offenders.

"So, smugglers should desist immediately or face the full weight of the law," he said.

He added that Adenuga assured legitimate traders and

compliant stakeholders of a safe, conducive and efficiently facilitated Seme corridor.

Ayagbalo quoted Adenuga further as saying that the

corridor now had seamless processes and reduced delays to support genuine cross-border commerce and economic growth.



COAS VISITS GEN ABUBAKAR:

Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt.-Gen. Waidi Shauibu (R), with the former Head of State, Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, during the visit of the COAS to Gen Abubakar in Minna, Niger State.

Delta govt begins construction of Uromi junction flyover

ASABA

Delta Government on Wednesday, said it has begun construction work on the long-awaited Uromi Junction Flyover Bridge in Agbor, Ika South Local Government Area of the state.

Director-General (DG) of the Delta State Bureau for Orientation and Communications, Dr Fred Oghenesivbe confirmed the development to newsmen in Asaba.

According to him, heavy-duty construction equipment have arrived the site, a project which is being handled by Julius Berger Nigeria PLC, one of the country's leading construction firms.

Oghenesivbe, described the flyover as a massive infrastructure project with far-reaching socio-economic benefits for the area.

He said that the project would significantly transform the Agbor metropolis by easing

traffic congestion, improving the city's aesthetics, and boosting commercial activities within the local government area.

He described Governor Sheriff Oborewori as a promise-keeper and pragmatic leader whose administration remains committed to infrastructure development and economic growth across the state.

The DG expressed confidence in Julius Berger's capacity to deliver the project within record time and according

to the highest construction standards.

"The Uromi Junction serves as a major link between different parts of the country but has recently been plagued by severe traffic congestion, making vehicular movement increasingly difficult," he said.

He urged residents to cooperate with the contractor and safeguard construction materials and equipment to ensure the timely completion of the project.

Cleric decries ethical decline, urges purposeful guidance

OYO

Rev. Fr. George Ehusani has decried the prevailing moral decline in the country, urging purposeful and deliberate efforts to guide and mentor the youth.

Ehusani, the Executive Director, Lux Terra leadership Foundation, Abuja, made the remark on Wednesday, at the 40th Priestly ordination anniversary of Most Rev. Emmanuel Badejo, Bishop, Catholic Diocese of Oyo.

Ehusani expressed concern that society is no longer as spiritual and peaceful as it was 40 years ago when Bishop Badejo was ordained as a priest.

He said: "our environment is now a more difficult one, such that is individualistic, materialistic and chaotic."

He expressed concern that the influential forces shaping Christian youths today are no longer churches or parents, but rather social media comedians, entertainers, and musicians, many of whom lack moral values.

He urged everyone, especially parents, to intentionally guide and mentor their children, investing time in nurturing them to fulfill their purpose.

"This is because the future is very challenging; parents are failing in their responsibility to raise children godly.

"Let us use today's occasion to renew our commitment to defend the true faith that Jesus left for us.

"God has created us for Himself and our hearts will remain restless until we rest in Him," the Rev. Fr. said.

He described Rev. Badejo as a dedicated, focused, friendly and people-oriented priest whose light shone everywhere he goes.

"The cooperation he enjoys in this diocese is a testament of the kind of good priest he is," Ehusani said.

The Catholic Archbishop of Ibadan, Most Rev. Gabriel Abegunrin, said Badejo's priestly journey was marked by deep faith, unwavering commitment to the gospel, pastoral sensitivity and tireless dedication to the service of God's people.

Abegunrin added that through his ministry as a priest, bishop and shepherd, countless lives were inspired, guided and strengthened in faith.

"As the bishop, your leadership continues to reflect humility, courage, wisdom and genuine love for the church," Abegunrin said.

FirstBank meets N500bn capital threshold ahead of CBN deadline

LAGOS

First HoldCo Plc has announced that its commercial banking subsidiary, First Bank of Nigeria Ltd., has met the Central Bank of Nigeria's N500 billion minimum capital requirement.

The disclosure was made in a statement on Wednesday by Mr Olayinka Ijabiye, Acting Group Head, Marketing and Corporate Communications, FirstBank.

Ijabiye said the milestone followed strategic capital initiatives, including a Rights Issue,

Private Placement and proceeds from divesting the group's merchant banking subsidiary.

He said the successful capitalisation reflected strong market confidence in FirstHoldCo's business model, long-term vision and growth prospects.

"With a fortified capital base, FirstBank is positioned to accelerate real sector support, deepen financial inclusion and deliver innovative, digitally driven customer experiences," Ijabiye said.

He added that the recapitalisation strengthens financial resilience and provides a platform for earnings growth

through expansion, technology and new opportunities.

In March 2024, the CBN directed commercial banks to raise minimum capital to N500 billion within 24 months to strengthen sector stability.

Ijabiye said FirstBank had fulfilled the requirement well ahead of the regulatory deadline.

He said FirstHoldCo plans to raise fresh funding in 2026 to inject additional capital into subsidiaries and new business adjacencies.

According to him, the move aims to enhance service offerings

and support strategic expansion.

Commenting, Chairman, Mr Femi Otedola, thanked shareholders for their trust and support throughout the capitalisation programme.

"Securing FirstBank's capital base ahead of schedule positions us firmly for our next growth phase," Otedola said, appreciating guidance from the CBN and SEC.

Group Managing Director, Mr Wale Oyediji, said the capital raise strengthens execution of strategic priorities and delivery of lasting value to stakeholders.

Katsina to host Muslims from 15 countries for...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 2

Hadi-Balarabe said: "This will be the third time Katsina is hosting the National Maulud of the revered Islamic Scholar, Sheikh Ibrahim Nyass."

According to him, it was first hosted in 2002, 2016 and current-

ly in 2026, adding that the event is mainly organised to remember the contributions made by the scholar when he was alive.

The chairman, who recalled that Sheikh Nyass was born in 1900 in Senegal, died in 1975, after making immense contributions to the progress of the

Islamic religion in the world.

He revealed that Sheikh Nyass loved the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), and adhered to his teachings, "that is why followers of Tijaniyya loved him so much.

"Historically, for the past two decades, we don't know

any scholar who has contributed more than Sheikh Nyass.

"In 2016, about 3 million people attended the Maulud here in Katsina, we are predicting that the number will now reach over 4 million."

Hadi-Balarabe revealed that activities marking the event would start one week to the date.

Police nab 3 suspects over kidnapping, rescue 76 children

ABUJA

The Nigeria Police Force said its operatives had arrested three suspects and rescued 76 victims following an attempted attack and planned kidnap of children in Kaduna State.

The Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Benjamin Hundeyin said this in a statement on Wednesday in Abuja.

He said the arrest and rescue of the victims in Kasuwan Magani area of Kaduna State on January 5, followed credible intelligence.

Hundeyin said the Police Command in Kaduna State had received credible intelligence that some suspected bandits were planning to attack and kidnap motorists conveying children through the area.

"Upon receipt of the intelligence, the Divisional Police

Officer (DPO), Kasuwan Magani Division, was promptly mobilised with a team of police personnel to the area.

"On arrival, the police team engaged and successfully repelled the suspected attackers, leading to the rescue of 76 children, comprising both males

and females, aged between seven and 20 years.

"All the rescued children were unharmed," he said.

He said preliminary investigations had revealed that the suspects were conveying the children to some parts of the country for the purpose of child labour and other domestic work.

Hundeyin said the suspects were currently in police custody.

He said the rescued children

were being kept safely at the Police Command Headquarters in Kaduna, pending the arrival and proper identification of their parents or guardians.

The police spokesman said investigations to ascertain the full circumstances surrounding the incident and arrest of other possible collaborators involved had commenced.

He said the suspects would be charged to court upon the conclusion of investigations.



DECORATION OF NEWLY PROMOTED:

L-R: Controller General, Nigeria Correctional Service, Sylvester Nwakuche; Commandant General of Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Prof. Ahmed Audi; Controller General of Federal Fire Service (FFS), Olumode Samuel and Secretary to the Civil Defence, Correctional, Fire and Immigration Services Board (CDCFIB), retired Maj.-Gen. Abdulmalik Jubrin, during the decoration of newly promoted FFS officers in Abuja on Wednesday (7/1/26).

ADC inaugurates membership revalidation c'ttee

ABUJA

African Democratic Congress on Wednesday inaugurated its Membership, Revalidation, Mobilisation and Registration committee, launching nationwide registration of new members as part of efforts to strengthen structures and expand the party's base.

The 20-member committee is chaired by Kashim Imam, with Aisha Yesufu as deputy chairman and Dr Sekonte Davies serving as its secretary.

While inaugurating the committee, National Chairman Sen. David Mark, described the exercise as a major step toward repositioning the ADC for growth, unity, stronger cohesion and improved electoral competitiveness nationwide ahead.

He said the initiative underscored the party's founding principles of justice, equity, accountability and people-centred governance, stressing that credible, verifiable membership data remained essential to legitimacy, relevance and national political success.

Mark explained that the committee, created by the NWC, would oversee nationwide revalidation, fresh registrations, grassroots mobilisation, data harmonization and deployment of electronic and manual platforms to ensure transparency and documentation.

He added that new membership cards with state-specific security features would be introduced, urging committee members to act with integrity, fairness and inclusiveness while collaborating with state

and local leaders nationwide.

Accepting the assignment, committee chairman Kashim Imam, pledged diligent and transparent service, describing the exercise as a turning point aimed at rebuilding the ADC into an inclusive, people-driven movement nationwide.

Imam said the committee had 30 days to submit its report, assuring members that work had begun immediately to mobilise and register Nigerians across cities, rural communities, deserts and creeks nationwide.

Police foil armed robbery operation, recover firearm in Nasarawa

LAFIA

The Police Command in Nasarawa State said it has foiled armed robbery operation in Mararaba, Karu Local Government Area (LGA) of the state.

Ramhan Nansel, Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) stated this in a statement to newsmen on Wednesday in Lafia.

According to the command's spokesperson, the armed robbery

operation was foiled by its operatives attached to Mararaba 'A' Division, Karu LGA at the early hours of Wednesday, January 7.

He explained that the personnel recovered a locally fabricated Beretta pistol from the scene of the operation.

Nansel noted that the police received a distress call that suspected armed robbers, numbering about four, attacked a wine shop located at Calvary Road, Mararaba, at about

4:20am, during which one person was injured.

"Upon swift response to the scene, the police operatives disrupted the robbery operation, forcing the criminals to flee in disarray upon sighting the police.

"In the process, the suspects abandoned a locally fabricated Beretta pistol, which was recovered by the police," he said.

The PPRO explained that the Commissioner of Police, Shetima Jauro-Mohammed

ordered an intensive manhunt for the fleeing suspects.

Nansel added that the Commissioner has also directed that the case and the recovered exhibit be transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), Lafia, for thorough investigation.

He reassured members of the public of the Command's unwavering commitment to combating all forms of crime and criminality in Nasarawa State.

Court orders interim forfeiture of 57...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 2

marked: FHC/ABJ/CS/20/2026 dated January 5 but filed on January 6 by J.S. Okutepe, SAN, had sought two reliefs.

In the affidavit attached to the application and deposed to by

Daniel Adebayo, an investigating officer with Special Duties Committee of EFCC, he said the commission received several petitions against Malami from different persons alleging case of corruption, abuse of office and fraud.

The investigator, who listed

three groups that wrote several petitions against the ex-minister, said upon receipt of the series of petitions, they were assigned to his team for discreet investigation.

"In carrying out the mandate of the commission, my team carried out several investigation activities which include making inquiries and receiving financial

records from commercial banks and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)," he said.

The investigator said it also included writing and receiving responses from the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), the Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS) and the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB).

CARE urges progressive taxation to protect low-income Nigerians

LAGOS

The Coalition for Affordable and Regular Electricity (CARE) has urged the Federal Government to impose heavier taxes on wealthy Nigerians while shielding low-income earners from proposed tax reforms.

CARE's National Coordinator, Mr Chinedu Bosah, made the call during an interview with newsmen on Wednesday in Lagos.

Bosah said any new tax regime must be equitable, transparent and democratically managed to protect the interests of workers and the poor.

He welcomed proposals to exempt individuals earning below ₦250,000 monthly, describing the measure as "a step in the right direction".

However, Bosah said such exemptions would only be meaningful if tax revenues were transparently deployed to improve living conditions for ordinary Nigerians.

According to him, properly managed tax proceeds could

deliver basic amenities, mass job creation and industrial development across the country.

He warned, however, that the current taxation approach risks deepening economic hardship for already struggling households.

"The new tax laws will undermine purchasing power and raise revenue that may only sustain the wasteful lifestyle of the ruling elite," Bosah said.

He argued that although tax policies may not directly affect electricity supply, they would reduce electricity consumption as consumers struggle to pay bills.

Bosah noted that the tax laws neither increase operational costs nor boost investment in power generation, transmission or distribution.

"Power companies are enjoying various tax incentives, with no new taxes imposed on them," he said.

Citing Section 187(j) of the Nigeria Tax Act, Bosah said major electricity businesses are VAT-exempt, while consumers continue to pay VAT.

Abia teachers threaten indefinite strike

UMUAHIA

The Abia chapter of the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) has threatened to embark on an indefinite strike if the state government failed to address its welfare demands within seven days.

The threat is contained in a notice of ultimatum issued on Monday and signed by the state NUT Chairman, Mr Friday Madu, and the Secretary, Mrs Nnenna Okonkwo.

The ultimatum, which expired at midnight on January 12, followed what the union described as government inaction on issues earlier raised in a communiqué dated December 19, 2025.

The union lamented that the industrial harmony currently enjoyed in the state was being endangered by the failure of relevant government officials to act on teachers' grievances.

Key among the demands are the resolution of alleged irregularities in the 65/40 years service elongation policy, including illegal disengagement of teachers, removal from payroll,

and demotion of head teachers.

Others include the payment of outstanding salary arrears owed to primary and junior secondary school teachers and reinstatement of the 27.5 percent Teachers' Special Salary Structure for primary school teachers.

The NUT also demanded salary harmonization among teachers on the same grade level and implementation of consequential minimum wage adjustments for secondary school teachers.

It also demanded release of approved running costs for head teachers, payment of outstanding leave allowances.

Part of the NUT demand is also the correction of the alleged wrongful remittance of NUT dues to the Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Associated Institutions.

It further called for the cancellation of the proposed Computer-Based Test format for promotion interviews.

The union warned that failure to meet these demands at the expiration of the ultimatum would leave it with no option but to direct its members to commence an indefinite strike.

NEWS

Bandits attack Nat'l Park Service Office in Oyo, kill personnel

IBADAN
 Suspected bandits on Tuesday night attacked the old National Park Service (NPS) office in Oloka, Orire Local Government Area of Oyo State, killing yet to be ascertained members of staff.
 The Conservator of the Park, Mr Tesleem Kareem confirmed the incident on Wednesday in Ibadan.
 Kareem said that yet to be ascertained number of the service personnel were killed.
 "Yes, it is true we are in the

process of evacuating the victims," he said.
 It was gathered that the attack occurred at about 9:00 p.m. on Tuesday and at least five of park personnel were killed during the assault.
 The source said that the bodies of the victims are yet to be recovered, as they are believed to be located within the surrounding forest area.
 The Police Public Relations officer, DSP Ayanlade Olayinka also confirmed the incident.
 Olayinka said that the Commissioner of Police, Oyo State

Command, and other service chiefs were currently on their way to the location.
 He said that the CP had de-

ployed tactical teams, personnel of the Mobile Police Force and EOD to the affected area to prevent further breakdown of law and order.

IPCR calls for collaboration with security forces to tackle insecurity

ABUJA
 The Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) has called for collaboration with security forces to defeat insecurity in the country.
 This appeal comes in the wake of terrorist attacks on communities in Agwara and Borgu local government areas (LGAs) of Niger State, which resulted in the deaths of about 60 persons and several abductions.
 The institute, in a statement issued by IPCR, described the attacks as desperate measures by fleeing bandits, insurgents, and terrorist groups who have been under severe attack by security forces.
 "These acts are meant to raise apprehension, create fear,

and intimidate citizens, particularly those in the areas of operation.
 "The Institute is calling for caution and urging more cooperation and collaboration with security forces to ensure that these elements are completely defeated. This is a clear sign that their end is in sight," the statement added.
 The IPCR also commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for giving a clear directive to security forces to end insecurity in the country.
 "We also commend the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, President Bola Tinubu, for giving a clear directive to the military, security, and all forces to ensure that these elements are apprehended and brought to book," IPCR said.



DECORATION OF PROMOTED OFFICERS:
 Controller General of Federal Fire Service (FFS), Olumode Samuel (L) decorating his Principal Staff Officer, Musa Sunday with his new rank of Controller, during the decoration of newly promoted FFS officers in Abuja on Wednesday (7/1/26). He is being assisted by the wife of the Principal Staff officer, Mercy Musa.

Psychiatrists highlight mental health expectations for 2026

LAGOS
 Two health practitioners have highlighted expectations for the mental health subsector in 2026, calling for deliberate and intentional attention to the health sector to promote overall well-being of citizens.
 The health experts made the call in an interview with newsmen on Wednesday in Lagos.
 According to them, stable economy with effective health system are keys to the progress and overall good health of citizens.
 Speaking, the immediate past President, Association of Psychiatrists of Nigeria (APN), Prof.

Taiwo Obindo, said the mental health gap was still huge at over 85 per cent, as only very few were able to access appropriate care.
 Obindo decried that the cost of care had gone astronomically high, saying that the cost of drugs had tripled and in some cases quadrupled.
 He frowned that many health practitioners had migrated out of the country – "japa," and many more were eager to follow suit, leaving the few on ground overstretched.
 According to him, stigma and discrimination are still very high for mental illness and people with mental health conditions, saying that the rights of people with mental health conditions are still being infringed upon.

"The budgetary allocation to health and, by extension, mental health is abysmally poor.
 "Remuneration is poor when compared to what our colleagues outside the country, even within Africa, are paid. This is fueling the emigration (japaing) of health professionals especially mental health professionals, who are 'hot cakes' outside the country.
 "At present, there is serious shortage of manpower in the health sector.
 "No doubt, the high inflation has made life unbearable. The cost of healthcare and drugs are not within the reach of an average Nigerian," Obindo said.
 On the way forward, Obindo urged the Federal Government to pay more attention to health,

by increasing the budget allocation to health sector and by extension to the mental health subsector.
 According to him, it's time the government stop paying lip-service to health, saying that health is the wealth of the nation and if the citizens are healthy, they will be more productive.
 He also underscored the need for decriminalisation of attempted suicide, to future give hope to people with mental health challenges.
 "Let the government revisit and ensure full implementation of the "Abuja Declaration 2001", where it was declared that a minimum of 15 percent of the budget would be allocated to health sector," Obindo said.

MISSING DOCUMENT
 This is to inform the general public that the original copy of the Certificate of Occupancy (C-of-O) with title number 09080, issued by the Edo Geographic Information Service (EDOGIS) to FRANK OMOSIGHO AMADASUN, in respect of a landed property located at Kilometre 6, Sapele Road, Benin City, has been declared missing since November 2025.
 All efforts to locate the document, including searches proved unsuccessful.
 This notice has become necessary to enable me apply for a certified true copy of C-of-O.
 Signed:
FRANK OMOSIGHO AMADASUN

ADDITION OF NAME
 I formerly known as PHILIP VICTORIA now wish to be known and called PHILIP VICTORIA SARAH. Former documents remain valid general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
 I formerly known as MISS ANTHONIA IMADE IDEGUN now wish to be known and address as MRS. ANTHONIA ODARO. Former documents remain valid general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
 I formerly known as MISS IDUBOR UFUMWEN RACHEAL now wish to be known and address as MRS. ERAIKHUEMEN RACHEAL IDUBOR. Former documents remain valid general public please take note.

RECONCILIATION OF NAME/ DATE OF BIRTH
 The general public is hereby notified that ROSATTA BONIFACE, INBIAPUSELEARI BIPIALAKA BONIFACE and ROSETTA VALENTINE UDUEBOR are one and d same person. Henceforth I now wish to be known and address as ROSETTA VALENTINE UDUEBOR. Also my correct date of birth is 21/06/1982 not 4/04/1947, as wrongly written in my NIMC. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public should please take note.

ADDITION OF MIDDLE NAME/ REARRANGEMENT OF NAME AND CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH
 I formerly known and called as OMOREGBE CLINTON. I now wish to be known and addressed as OMOREGBE OSARIEYEKEMWEN CLINTON. Also my correct date of Birth is 14/11/1997 not 14/11/1998 as wrongly written in my BVN. All former documents remain valid, concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

Classified Advert Space for Sale

Association seeks partnership to boost community devt, surveillance

EPE
 Community Development Association (CDA) in Epe, Lagos State, has appealed to government authorities, corporate organisations and well-meaning individuals for collaboration to enhance community development and strengthen security surveillance in the area.
 The Chairman of the association, Mr Afeez Lawal, made the

appeal at a stakeholders' meeting held in Epe on Wednesday.
 He said there was need for collective efforts to address developmental and security challenges confronting the community.
 Lawal said that improved collaboration with relevant stakeholders would help the CDA to execute critical projects, including the installation of surveillance equipment, regular power supply and rehabilitation of key community infrastructure.

According to him, the growing population and economic activities in the area make it imperative to adopt proactive security measures to safeguard lives and properties.
 He added that the association was committed to working with security agencies, traditional institutions and residents to ensure peaceful and conducive environment for socio-economic growth.
 Lawal urged residents to re-

main vigilant and continue to support the CDA's initiatives, adding that sustainable community development could only be achieved through unity, transparency and shared responsibilities.
 He explained that the association would focus on good working relationships with government security agencies and public office holders for infrastructure development.

Customs reiterates commitment to fight smuggling in 2026

SANGO-OTA
 The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Ogun 1 Area Command, Idiroko, has reiterated its commitment to further fight smugglers to a standstill to prevent illicit goods from coming into the country in 2026.

Mr Oladapo Afeni, the Area Comptroller, made this known in an interview with newsmen on Wednesday in Idiroko.
 Afeni reaffirmed the command's unwavering efforts to sustaining the tempo and momentum against illicit goods that pose serious threat to the country.
 "The Ogun 1 Area Command

remain vigilant, alert and ready to confront any threat to the economic, and security interests of our nation in 2026," he said.
 Afeni enjoined the public to help in providing useful information that could assist towards curbing illegal activities in the border zones.
 The comptroller also warned

the people who are fond of engaging in smuggling activities to refrain from such act and turn a life in 2026.
 Afeni assured that the command would continue to serve with integrity, courage and professionalism, guided by its mandate and committed to national development.

JUDICIARY

NEWS

Court admits Malami, wife, son to N500m bail each

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja, on Wednesday, admitted Mr Abubakar Malami, SAN, former Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF); his son, Abubakar Abdulaziz and wife, Hajia Bashir Asabe, to a N500 million bail each with two sureties each in the like sum.

Justice Emeka Nwite, in a ruling, held that the reasons adduced by the Economic and

Financial Crimes Commission for opposing the defendants' bail application were not concrete enough to deny them the request.

According to Justice Nwite, it tilts towards speculations.

The judge, therefore, granted their bail in the sum of N500 million each with two sureties who must be property owners in Asokoro, Maitama or Gwarimpa within the Federal Capital Territory.

He said that the documents of the landed property must be

verified by the deputy registrar, Litigation, of the court.

He said that the defendants must deposit all their international passports to the deputy registrar, Litigation, of the court and they must not travel outside the country without the court permission.

Justice Nwite also ordered that the defendants and their sureties must deposit two passport photographs each to the court registrar.

Besides, the judge ordered

that the residents of the sureties must be verified by the court registrar.

Justice Nwite, who ordered that the defendants must remain in Kuje and Suleja Correctional Centres pending the perfection of their bail conditions, adjourned the matter until February 17 for commencement of trial.

The EFCC had, in the charge marked: FHC/ABJ/CR/700/2025, named the ex-minister, Hajia Bashir Asabe,

his wife and an employee of a firm linked to the former minister, Rahamaniyya Properties Ltd, and his son as 1st, 2nd and 3rd defendants respectively.

The anti-graft agency, in the 16 counts, accused the defendants of carrying out various suspicious transactions and attempting to conceal the unlawful origin of billions of Naira through bank accounts and property acquisitions across Abuja, Kano and Kebbi.

They allegedly committed the offences between 2015 and 2025, a period that includes the eight years Malami served as the AGF during the late former President Muhammadu Buhari's administration.

The commission alleged that Malami, his son, and Asabe

conspired to disguise the origin of funds, acquire property indirectly, and retain sums they allegedly knew were proceeds of unlawful activity, in violation of the Money Laundering (Prohibition and Prevention) Acts of 2011 (as amended) and 2022.

In count one, the EFCC alleged that between July 2022 and June 2025, Malami and his son directed Metropolitan Auto Tech Limited to conceal over N1 billion (N1,014,848,500) in a Sterling Bank account, knowing the funds were proceeds of unlawful activity.

Count two alleged that between September 2020 and February 2021, the duo allegedly concealed more than N600 million (N600,013,460.40) through the same company.



NEWS CONFERENCE:

L-R: The founder, All Africa Music Awards (AFRIMA), Mike Dada; Commissioner for Tourism, Arts and Culture, Lagos State, Toke Benson-Awoyinka; Co-founder of AFRIMA, Olisa Adibua and Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Lagos State, Gbenga Omotoso, during a news conference on the forthcoming 9th AFRIMA, in Lagos on Wednesday.

Ex-Army Chief takes legal action over defamatory terrorism claims

ABUJA

Former Chief of Army Staff, retired Lt.-Gen. Faruk Yahaya, has initiated legal action to defend his reputation, following allegations linking him to terrorism financing.

This was contained in a state-

ment by former Army Spokesman, retired Brig.-Gen. Sani Usman, on Wednesday in Abuja.

Usman said the allegations were made by retired Major-General. Danjuma Ali-Keffi, during a broadcast interview.

He said that Yahaya served formal demand notices on the individuals and media outlets

involved, through his legal team led by Mohammed Ndayako, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN).

According to him, the notices, dated December 17, 2025, gave the parties 72 hours to retract the claims, issue unreserved public apologies, and halt further dissemination.

Sani warned the notices, will trigger legal proceedings. "False and malicious al-

legations of this nature are dangerous and capable of undermining public trust in our national institutions and those who have served the nation with distinction."

"Gen. Yahaya said his legal action was not only to protect his personal honour but also to uphold professionalism, truth, and accountability, emphasising that malicious falsehoods would not go unchallenged," he said.

FCT poll: No subsisting court order to act on, INEC tells LP

ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has said that no subsisting court order exists, compelling it to upload candidates for the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Area Council Elections.

The commission was responding to claims by the Labour Party (LP).

INEC Director of Voter Education and Publicity, Mrs Victoria Eta-Messi, gave the clarification in a statement on Wednesday in Abuja.

Recall that some LP leaders and supporters had on Monday, protested at INEC's headquarters in Abuja, following allegations of exclusion of the party's candidates for the election billed for February 21.

The protesters had also called for the issuance of access code to upload LP candidates for the election.

In response, Eta-Messi recalled that the LP had been enmeshed in prolonged internal leadership disputes since 2024.

According to her, this had culminated in the judgment of the Supreme Court in Appeal No. SC/CV/56/2025 (Usman v. Labour Party) delivered on April 4, 2025.

She noted that in that decision, the apex court held that the tenure of the Julius Abure-led National Executive Committee had expired.

She said that in spite of the clear pronouncement of court, the Abure-led faction of LP purportedly conducted primaries for the August 16, 2025, by-election nationwide as well as the

FCT area council election.

She also recalled that the Abure-led faction instituted Suit No. FHC/ABJ/1523/2025-Labour Party v. INEC at the Federal High Court, Abuja, challenging the decision of INEC excluding it from participating in the bye-election.

"Judgment was delivered on August 15, 2025, dismissing the suit and enforcing the Supreme Court's position that Abure was no longer recognised as the LP National Chairman and thus upholding the decision of INEC to exclude the LP from the by-election," she said.

Eta-Messi explained that thereafter, the LP filed multiple suits against INEC in different courts, all seeking orders compelling INEC to grant access code to upload its candidates for the FCT area council election.

According to her, when the matter at the Nasarawa State High Court was stalled, the LP approached the Federal High Court Abuja in suit FHC/ABJ/CS/2110/2025 seeking orders to compel issuance of the access codes.

"The matter was adjourned, after INEC had filed its reply, to January 15, for the hearing of the motion," she said.

Eta-Messi noted that one would have expected the party to wait for the hearing of the motion, adding that instead, the LP filed another suit at the FCT High Court, Life Camp division, seeking similar relief.

According to her, an order exparte in the latest suit, had granted an interim order on December 16, 2025, directing the commission to upload the names.

Driver, 33, docked over alleged stealing, diversion of goods worth N9.6m

IBADAN

A driver, Saheed Abiola, appeared before an Iyaganku Chief Magistrate's Court on Wednesday for allegedly diverting goods and stealing 305 bags of nylon worth ₦9.6 million from his employer.

The defendant, whose address was not disclosed, was charged with two counts of conspiracy and stealing, to which he pleaded not guilty.

The prosecutor, ASP Sikiru Ibrahim told the court that the defendant allegedly conspired with others at large to commit the offence.

Ibrahim alleged that the defendant on October 21, 2025, diverted and stole 305 bags of nylon valued at N9.6million, property of Londe Mint Nigeria Limited, Ewekoro, Ogun State.

He said that the defendant

committed the offence on October 21 at about 12:30p.m at Jagun, along Old Ife Road, Ibadan.

According to Ibrahim, the offence contravenes the provisions of Section 383 and punishable under Section 390 (9) and 516 of the Criminal Code Laws of Oyo State 2000.

The Magistrate, Mr. M. Mudashiru, admitted the defendant to bail in the sum of N2 million with two sureties in like sum.

Mudashiru said one of the sureties must be a blood relative while the second surety must be a landed property owner with Certificate of Occupancy, survey plan and building plan within the jurisdiction.

He said the original copy must be submitted to the court pending determination of the court.

He adjourned the matter until March 25, for hearing.

Judge warns lawyers, litigants against attempt to influence him

ABUJA

Justice Emeka Nwite of the Federal High Court in Abuja, on Wednesday, warned lawyers and litigants against any attempt to approach him with a view to influence court decisions or judgments.

Justice Nwite gave the warning shortly after he delivered the ruling on a consolidated bail application filed by Abubakar Malami, SAN, former Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF), and his co-defendants.

The ex-AGF's co-defendants include his wife, Hajia Bashir Asabe and his son, Abubakar Abdulaziz, who are facing alleged N8.7 billion money laundering charge.

"Before concluding, I want to admonish and warn counsel and litigants, that all judges are not the same.

"When I am handling any

case, please don't approach me.

"When you are doing your case, you can get the best lawyers in this country to do your case but don't attempt to approach me for any help.

"I am not the type of judge. I know what God has done for me by given me this job and I have vow to do it to the best of my ability.

"I have sworn before Almighty God and man that I am going to do my duty without fear or favour," he said.

The judge, who warned lawyers and litigants to desist from coming to him with the aim of perverting justice, said: "Any attempt to try this will be vehemently resisted."

Justice Nwite said instead, his judgments and decisions could be tested by approaching the Court of Appeal up to the Supreme Court.

NEWS

Foreign

US discussing options to acquire Greenland including using military, White House says

US President Donald Trump has been discussing "a range of options" to acquire Greenland, including use of the military, the White House said.

The White House told the BBC that acquiring Greenland - a semi-autonomous region of fellow Nato member Denmark - was a "national security priority".

The statement came hours after European leaders issued a joint statement rallying behind Denmark, which has been pushing back against Trump's ambitions for the Arctic island.

Trump repeated that the US "needed" Greenland for security reasons over the weekend, prompting Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen to warn that any attack by the US would spell the end of Nato.

The White House said on Tuesday: "The president and

his team are discussing a range of options to pursue this important foreign policy goal, and of course, utilising the US military is always an option at the commander-in-chief's disposal."

Nato is a trans-Atlantic military group in which allies are expected to go to each other's aid in case of external attacks.

Why does Trump want Greenland and what could it mean for Nato?

The painful questions for Nato and the EU as Trump threatens Greenland

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio also told lawmakers at a classified briefing on Capitol Hill on Monday that the Trump administration did not plan to invade Greenland, but he mentioned instead buying the island from Denmark, and the Wall Street Journal and other US media reported.

Then on Tuesday, a state department spokesperson told the BBC that the US was "eager to build lasting commercial relationships that benefit Americans and the people of Greenland".

The spokesperson added: "Our common adversaries have been increasingly active in the Arctic. That is a concern that the United States, the Kingdom of Denmark, and Nato allies share."

Greenland and Denmark previously said they had asked to meet Rubio quickly to discuss the US claims on the island.

Denmark's Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen said speaking to America's top diplomat should resolve "certain misunderstandings".

On Tuesday, six European allies expressed support for Denmark.

"Greenland belongs to its

people, and only Denmark and Greenland can decide on matters concerning their relations," the leaders of the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and Denmark said in a joint statement.

Stressing they were as keen as the US in Arctic security, the European signatories said this must be achieved by Nato allies, including the US "collectively".

They also called for "upholding the principles of the UN Charter, including sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders".

Greenland's Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen welcomed the statement and called for "respectful dialogue".

"The dialogue must take place with respect for the fact that Greenland's status is rooted in international law and the principle of territorial integrity," Nielsen said.

Yemen separatist leader accused of treason as Saudi Arabia strikes forces

The Saudi-backed presidential council in Yemen has expelled the leader of a separatist group and charged him with treason after he failed to fly to Riyadh for talks.

Six other members of the presidency accused Aidarous al-Zubaidi, head of the United Arab Emirates-backed Southern Transitional Council (STC), of "undermining the independence of the republic".

A Saudi-led military coalition said Zubaidi "fled" after not joining STC officials on a flight from Aden and "moved a large force" to al-Dahle province. Coalition aircraft launched strikes on the forces in response, it added.

The STC said the strikes, which reportedly killed four people, were "unjustified" and that Zubaidi was still in Aden.

It also expressed concern that contact had been lost with the group's delegation in Riyadh.

The past few weeks have seen southern Yemen moving to the brink of a new conflict, pitting factions battling the Iran-backed Houthi movement in the country's decade-long civil war against each other and deepening a rift between Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

STC-aligned forces have in recent years taken control of much of the south, which they want once again to be an independent state, by pushing out forces loyal to the internationally recognised government and the Presidential Leadership Council overseeing it.

In December, the STC's forces launched offensives to seize the eastern provinces of Hadramawt and al-Mahra from the government, saying they were necessary to "restore stability" in the south and combat the Houthis, al-Qaeda and Islamic State group.

However, Saudi Arabia warned last week that the advances near the kingdom's

borders constituted threats to its national security as well as the security and stability of Yemen.

It also accused the UAE of "pressuring" its separatist allies to push into eastern Yemen and expressed support for a demand from the presidential council for all Emirati forces to leave.

At the same time, the Saudi-led coalition - which was formed in 2015 by Arab states, including the UAE, after the Houthis seized control of north-western Yemen - struck what it said was a shipment of weapons and military vehicles for the STC that had arrived from the UAE.

The UAE expressed "deep regret" at the Saudi accusations and denied there were any weapons, but agreed to pull its remaining forces out of the country.

Since then, forces loyal to the government have largely retaken control of Hadramawt and al-Mahra with the help of coalition air strikes.

In order to further diffuse tensions, Zubaidi and an STC delegation had been due to fly from Aden to Riyadh on Tuesday night for talks with the government. However, the coalition said the plane left three hours late without Zubaidi, who "fled to an unknown location".

"The legitimate government and the coalition received intelligence indicating that Zubaidi had moved a large force - including armoured vehicles, combat vehicles, heavy and light weapons, and ammunition - from the Jabal Hadid and al-Solban camps [in Aden] towards al-Dhale," coalition spokesman Maj-Gen Turki al-Malki said in a statement.

"Coalition forces, in coordination with legitimate government forces and the [Saudi-backed] National Shield Forces, launched limited pre-emptive strikes to disrupt



THE PROTESTERS:

Around 1,000 Greenlanders protested over Trump's previous threats in March 2025

Venezuela's people must be heard - UN human rights chief

New York: UN Human Rights Chief, Volker Türk, has reiterated deep concerns that the military operation undermined fundamental protections for sovereign countries, noting that Venezuela's people must be heard.

Türk said this while responding to the seizure of Venezuela President Nicolás Maduro by the United States.

The U.S. action made "all States less safe around the world", Ms Ravina Shamdasani, spokesperson for the High Commissioner, said.

Speaking to journalists in Geneva, Shamdasani rejected the U.S. justification for its intervention on the grounds of the Venezuelan Government's "longstanding and appalling" human rights record.

"Accountability for human rights violations cannot be achieved by unilateral military intervention in violation of international law," she insisted.

"Far from being a victory for human rights, this military intervention, which is in contravention of Venezuelan sovereignty and the UN Charter, damages the architecture of international security... And this is a point that the Secretary-General has also made."

Shamdasani explained the High Commissioner's position that the military operation "violates the fundamental principle of international law (and) the UN Charter, which states that States must not threaten or use force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State".

The UN human rights office, OHCHR, was expelled from Ven-

ezuela in February 2024, following its consistent reporting on the deteriorating situation there.

Independent probes commissioned by the Human Rights Council have also detailed grave and ongoing abuses against opponents of the country's ruling party.

"The people of Venezuela deserve accountability through a fair victim-centred process," Shamdasani said, adding that the rights of the Venezuelan people "have been violated for too long".

The OHCHR spokesperson expressed concerns that the instability and further militarisation in the country in response to the US intervention might make the situation worse.

A state of emergency was declared on Saturday that restricts the free movement of people, the

seizure of property necessary for national defence and the suspension of the right to assembly and to protest, Shamdasani noted.

"We're particularly concerned, given the record that the Government has in suppressing free speech, protest, freedom of assembly, using the pretext of national security."

"The High Commissioner calls on the U.S. and the Venezuelan authorities, as well as the international community, to ensure full respect for international law, including human rights," she said.

She added that the future of Venezuela "must be determined by the Venezuelan people alone, with full respect for their human rights, including the right to self-determination, and sovereignty over their lives and their resources".

Oil prices fall again after Trump says Venezuela to send oil to U.S.

London: Oil prices continued to fall on Wednesday morning, on fears of a supply increase after U.S. President Donald Trump said Venezuela will send up to 50 million barrels to the United States.

In a post on his Truth Social platform on Tuesday, Trump said Venezuela's interim government would hand over between 30 million and 50 million barrels of "sanctioned oil" to the U.S., in a move he framed as benefiting both nations. A barrel contains 159 litres.

The amount is the equivalent of one to two months of Venezuelan oil production.

The oil would be sold at market prices, and proceeds would be controlled by him as president to ensure they were used "to benefit the people

of Venezuela and the United States," Trump posted.

A barrel of North Sea Brent for delivery in March fell on Wednesday morning by 56 cents, or nearly 1 per cent, to 60.14 dollars, after the price fell by nearly 2 per cent on Tuesday.

The price for a barrel of U.S. grade WTI for delivery in February fell by 73 cents, or 1.3 per cent, to 56.40 dollars.

It was initially unclear over what period the volume of crude oil cited by Trump would be made available by Venezuela.

Oil is Venezuela's most important source of revenue and foreign currency.

The new leadership in Caracas did not immediately comment on Trump's announcement.

Big freeze causes travel chaos across western Europe

Hundreds of flights have been cancelled at several airports, while Eurostar services and haulage have also been affected.

More than 700 flights were cancelled at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam, a major regional transport hub, on Wednesday. Meanwhile, France's civil aviation authority has asked airlines to cut 40% of flights scheduled for the main international airport in Paris.

At least six people have died in weather-related incidents across Europe this week - five in France and one in Bosnia.

Dutch national airline KLM warned Schiphol Airport was close to running out of de-icing fluid after days of freezing conditions.

Spokesperson Stephan Donker told news agency Reuters that it was an "exceptional situation" at the Dutch airport, where more than 1,000 travellers spent the night.

A few hundred beds have been set up there before and after security checks with food and drinks also provided, he said.

Donker warned of knock-on effects from the disruption, with further delays and cancellations possible in coming days.

In Paris, more than 100 flights were cancelled at Charles de Gaulle airport and 40 more at Orly.

Dozens of flights have been delayed or cancelled in and out

of Heathrow and Brussels.

Some Eurostar rail services between London and Paris were delayed or cancelled on Wednesday.

Almost half of mainland France was on alert for heavy snow and black ice, with lorries banned from the roads in some areas.

"It's better to be here than stuck on the road," driver Carle Bruno told news agency AFP at a roadside service station in the northern port of Le Havre.

Five people died in two separate regions of France earlier this week as a result of treacherous driving conditions, authorities said, while a woman was also killed in Bosnia's capital, Sarajevo, after 40cm (16in) of snow fell on the city.

In Paris, Guinean teenager Boubacar Camara, sleeping in a tent on the outskirts of the city, told AFP he had "no choice but to keep on going".

"You just have to stay strong [and] make sure you don't die," the 19-year-old said. "We can't do anything about the cold. I'm not used to this at all."

The rare sight of the French capital covered in snow drew residents and tourists out to ski down the slopes of Montmartre and along the Champs de Mars gardens below the Eiffel Tower.

Ugandan opposition facing 'brutal campaign of repression' ahead of Jan. 15 vote

Amnesty International says Uganda's opposition is being subject to a "brutal campaign of repression" ahead of the country's general election on 15 January.

The Ugandan presidential candidate known as Bobi Wine wears a flak jacket and helmet while campaigning to protect himself from gunfire. But the safety gear offers no protection from the stinging clouds of tear gas that often follow him on the campaign trail.

Wine is challenging President Yoweri Museveni, who has ruled Uganda since 1986 by repeatedly rewriting the rules to stay in power. Term and age limits have been scrapped, rivals jailed or sidelined, and state security forces are a constant presence at opposition rallies as Museveni seeks a seventh term in elections on January 15.

Wine, a musician-turned-politician whose real name is Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, faced similar setbacks in 2021, when he first ran for president. He was often roughed up by the police, clothes ripped from his body, and dozens of his supporters were jailed.

In a recent interview with The Associated Press, he charged that this time "the military has largely taken over the election" and that at least three of his supporters have been killed in violent campaign events.

"The police has conducted itself in the most illegal and unprofessional manner, to the extent that the police has

come out to warn the citizens of Uganda against carrying the national flag," he told the AP.

Wine also pointed out what he describes as "impunity" that prevents him to use public roads on his campaign, and also complained about being "hounded by security and followed by over 40 police and military cars," and the intimidation and beatings carried out by security among his supporters.

The human rights group Amnesty International says the use of tear gas, pepper spray, beatings and other acts of violence amount to "a brutal campaign of repression" ahead of the vote. 'Criminal opposition'

In a New Year's Eve address, the president said he recommended that the security forces use more tear gas to break up crowds of what he called "the criminal opposition."

He defended the use of tear gas to disperse Wine supporters, alleging that "it doesn't kill. It is much better than using live bullets."

Security forces, notably the military, have repeatedly broken up Wine's campaign rallies, sending his supporters scampers into ditches and swamps.

Critics note that Museveni, in contrast, campaigns without disruption and can go wherever he wants. Some charge that the election is simply a ritual to keep Museveni in power, not a fair exercise that could possibly lead to a change of government in the east African nation of 45 million.



BURKINA FASO LEADER:

Capt Traoré seized power in September 2022 and has cultivated an image of a pan-Africanist leader.

Plot to kill Burkina Faso leader foiled, says junta

A plot to kill Burkina Faso's military leader, Capt Ibrahim Traoré, has been thwarted, the West African nation has announced.

The sophisticated plan had been hatched by Lt Col Paul Henri Damiba, the military officer ousted by Traoré in September 2022, the security minister said in a late-night broadcast.

"Our intelligence services intercepted this operation in the final hours. They had planned to assassinate the head of state

and then strike other key institutions, including civilian personalities," said Mahamadou Sana, further alleging that the plot had been funded from neighbouring Ivory Coast.

There has been no comment from either Col Damiba or Ivory Coast.

Since seizing power, Capt Traoré has faced at least two coup attempts and is also grappling with growing jihadist violence that has forced millions from their homes.

Despite these challenges and his authoritarian reputation, the 37-year-old military leader maintains strong popular support and has gained a following across the continent for his pan-Africanist vision and criticism of Western influence.

According to the security minister, the authorities uncovered a leaked video showing the plotters discussing their plans.

In the footage they allegedly spoke about how they intended to assassinate the president - ei-

ther at close range or by planting explosives at his residence - just after 23:00 local time on Saturday 3 January.

Afterwards they allegedly planned to target other senior military and civilian figures.

Sana alleged that Damiba had mobilised both soldiers and civilian supporters, secured foreign funding - most significantly 70m CFA francs (\$125,000; £92,000) delivered from Ivory Coast - and planned to knock out the country's drone-launch base before foreign forces could intervene.

"We are carrying out ongoing investigations and have made several arrests. These individuals will be brought to justice soon," the minister said on national television.

Sana insisted the situation was under control and urged citizens "not to be misled, out of naivety, into dangerous schemes".

It is not clear how many people have been arrested.

Critics, both local and foreign, have accused Traoré of authoritarianism and say his government suppresses dissent - including arbitrary arrests of military officers and restrictions on the media.

It is not the first time the junta has pointed the finger of blame about foreign interference in its affairs at Ivory Coast. These continuing internal power struggles will further heighten regional tensions.

Col Damiba served as Burkina Faso's leader from January-September 2022 after seizing power from an elected government.

After being ousted he went into exile in neighbouring Togo and said in a message published on social media that he wished his successor every success.

Zelensky says he does not have clear security pledge from allies

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky says European allies have not given him sound guarantees that they will protect his country in the case of a new Russian aggression.

"I am asking this very question to all our partners and I have not received a clear, unambiguous answer yet," he told reporters on Wednesday.

His comments come a day after the UK and France signed a declaration of intent on deploying troops in Ukraine if a peace deal to end the war with Russia is agreed.

But full security guarantees have not been agreed. The US, which has been leading efforts to end the invasion, reportedly did not sign such a pledge at talks in Paris on Tuesday.

After the Paris talks, which included some 30 countries that form the so-called Coalition of the Willing, UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer said the UK and France would "establish military hubs across Ukraine"

to deter future invasion, while French President Emmanuel Macron later said thousands of

troops may be deployed.

Allies proposed that the US would take the lead in monitoring a truce. But the key issue of territorial concessions that Ukraine is being asked to grant to Russia as part of the peace proposals are still being discussed.

Moscow has not yet commented on the announcement made in the French capital.

Russian President Vladimir Putin launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, and Moscow currently controls about 20% of Ukrainian territory.

Sir Keir described the joint statement as "a vital part of our commitment to stand with Ukraine for the long-term".

He added: "It paves the way for the legal framework under which British, French and partner forces could operate on Ukrainian soil, securing Ukraine's skies and seas, and regenerating Ukraine's armed forces for the future."

Zelensky hailed that agreement as a "huge step forward".

A day later, however, he appeared less optimistic.

"I see the will, the political will, and that the partners are ready, and the partners are ready to give us strong sanctions, strong security guarantees," he said when asked if European countries would defend Ukraine.

"But as long as we don't have such security guarantees - legally binding, supported by the United States Congress - this question cannot be answered. And even if they do, you still have to rely primarily on your own strength."

The Paris talks were also notable owing to the presence of US President Donald Trump's peace envoys, Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner.

Witkoff said the allies "largely finished" their work on agreeing security protocols.

Russia continues to strike Ukrainian cities and critical infrastructure across the country on a daily basis

Last week, Zelensky said a peace deal was "90% ready".

Territorial concessions and security guarantees have been at the forefront of unresolved issues for negotiators.

Feature

Black History: How depression occasioned by economic hardship drove Elvita to suicide

GRACE IJEOMA UMEH

I have been studying about Black History for a while now: what happened to black people that drove their resolves in life...their joys, their pains, their attainments, their failures, their courage, their fears, their hopes, their nightmares...everything.

I read about a young, single mother, Elvita, how she stepped off the Empire State Building, and somehow... She Didn't Die!

This is not a legend.

This is not symbolism.

This happened.

Let me recall it.

In December 1979, a 29-year-old Black woman named Elvita Adams reached the edge of what she could carry—financially, emotionally, spiritually.

And she climbed more than 1,000 feet above New York City to let go.

A Life Pressed to the Breaking Point!

Elvita Adams was a single mother living in the Bronx, surviving on welfare at a time when New York City was unraveling—budget cuts, housing crises, rising unemployment, and a social safety net full of holes.

She was facing eviction.

She was struggling to provide for her young son.

And like many Black women then and now she was expected to be strong without support.

There were no viral fundraisers.

No emergency housing guarantees.

No trauma-informed systems.

Just pressure.

And silence.

The Decision

One cold December day, Elvita traveled to the Empire State Building.

She went up to the 86th-floor observation deck—a place meant for awe and tourism and climbed over the safety fence.

From that height, survival is not possible.

Everyone knows that.

She jumped anyway.

What Should Have Been the End

A fall from the Empire State Building is over 1,000 feet.

The sidewalk below doesn't forgive.

But as Elvita's body dropped, something impossible happened.

A powerful gust of wind, later estimated between 23 and 38 miles per hour, surged upward through the narrow corridors formed by Manhattan's skyscrapers.

Instead of pulling her down

The wind pushed her back.

Her body slammed onto a three-foot-wide exterior ledge on the 85th floor, just one story below where she had jumped.

Broken.

Injured.

Alive.

The Sound That Saved Her

Inside the building, a security guard heard something that should not exist at that height.

Moaning.

He followed the sound to a window, looked out, and saw Elvita clinging to the ledge one slip away from certain death.



SUICIDE MISSION

He pulled her through the window.

Against physics.

Against probability.

Against everything that should have happened.

The Headlines Called It a Miracle

Newspapers used words like unbelievable, freak accident, act of God.

And in some ways, it was.

But Black history asks a harder question:

What pushed her there in the first place?

Elvita Adams didn't jump because she lacked strength.

She jumped because the system demanded strength without mercy.

Her story sits at the intersection of: Black womanhood

Poverty

Housing insecurity

Mental health ignored until it becomes crisis

These are not personal failures.

They are structural ones.

Survival Without Celebration

Elvita didn't become famous.

There was no movie deal.

No inspirational speaking tour.

She survived and then returned to a world that still hadn't fixed what nearly killed her.

That part is rarely discussed.

Because survival, especially for Black women, is often treated as the end of the story when it is really the beginning of another fight.

Why This Story Belongs to Black History

Elvita Adams' story forces us to confront a truth we don't like to name:

Sometimes people don't need more

resilience.

They need relief.

Her survival wasn't proof that everything would be okay. It was proof that she wasn't done yet.

A gust of wind.

A narrow ledge.

A stranger who listened closely enough to hear pain.

That's what stood between her and death. She stepped off one of the tallest buildings on Earth.

And lived.

Not because the world became kinder but because fate intervened where systems failed.

Commentaries by Anonymous:

And here's the part that still unsettles me...

People love to call this a miracle because it's easier than asking what kind of world makes a 29-year-old mother feel like disappearing is her only option?

Elvita Adams didn't survive because the system worked.

She survived in spite of it.

Because survival, especially for Black women, is often treated as the end of the story when it is really the beginning of another fight

If the wind hadn't shifted.

If a guard hadn't listened closely enough to her pain instead of dismissing it.

If chance hadn't intervened...

We wouldn't be talking about her at all.

So the real question isn't "How did she live?"

It's "How many didn't?"

How many people are standing on emotional ledges right now—quiet, unseen, exhausted waiting for help that never comes?

Sometimes what saves a life isn't strength.

It's timing.

It's being heard.

It's relief arriving before the fall.

And that's the conversation we avoid far too often.

I have to say this and I hope everybody understands this; the day you were born the day you will die is known in The book of Life. people have survived things because it was not their time to die think about it airplane crashes what one person walked away or a car accidents where the vehicle was totally total but the person was okay I don't believe these are miracles I simply believe and don't get angry at me is that it was not the person's time to die God doesn't make mistakes the day you were born the day you will die is known as well no matter what happened people have been shot in the head ran over electrocuted they didn't live because of a miracle they live because it wasn't their time that's just my feelings so please don't get angry with me

Carolyne Richardson Short, honest answer: we don't know.

There are no reliable public records

about what happened to Elvita Adams after her survival in 1979.

What is known:

She survived her injuries and was treated in hospital.

Her case briefly made newspapers because of the "miracle," not because of concern for her life afterward.

After that, she disappeared from public view.

There were:

No follow-up interviews

No memoirs

No advocacy platform

No official updates about her later life

If she is alive today, yes—she would likely be in her mid-70s. But whether she is living quietly, relocated, or has passed away has never been made public.

And that silence is part of the story.

Elvita Adams was never treated as a person the public needed to keep checking on.

She was treated as a headline—then forgotten.

Her privacy may have been intentional.

Or it may reflect something harsher:

that once the "miracle" was printed, no one felt responsible for the woman who survived it.

So the outcome we can confirm isn't a neat ending.

It's this:

She lived.

And then the world stopped watching.

That absence of records, care, and follow-up—is itself a commentary on how Black women's survival is acknowledged briefly... and then left alone to carry the rest in silence.

FEATURE

Remodelling Edo For Greatness: SHINE agenda to the Rescue (2)

RICHARD EWEKA

In a little over a year, a tangible sense of optimism has returned to Edo State. Under the leadership of Governor Monday Okpebholo, the state has witnessed a shift toward "practical governance", a style defined by visible, high-impact projects rather than mere rhetoric. Central to this transformation is the SHINE agenda, a strategic roadmap designed to touch every corner of the state's three senatorial districts.

A NEW DAWN FOR HEALTH

Under the SHINE agenda, healthcare has emerged as a primary pillar of the administration. Recognizing that a healthy populace is the backbone of economic productivity, Governor Okpebholo has prioritized the sector by wooing private investment, upgrading derelict infrastructure, and aggressively expanding the state's health insurance coverage.

Upon assuming office on November 12, 2024, the Governor inherited a healthcare system in crisis, facilities were dilapidated, equipment was obsolete, and a severe brain drain had left hospitals understaffed. "We are rebuilding a collapsed system from the ground up," the Governor noted, signaling the start of a massive recovery effort.

BRIDGING THE MANPOWER GAP

A hospital is only as good as its personnel. To address the acute shortage of medical professionals, the Okpebholo administration embarked on a massive recruitment drive, employing over 2,000 qualified healthcare workers. These professionals, ranging from doctors, nurses to laboratory scientists and other healthcare officials have been deployed across the state to restore quality service delivery to public institutions.

REVITALIZING INFRASTRUCTURE

From Grassroots to Specialised Care, the Gov Okpebholo administration's policy is rooted in the "trin-



GOVERNOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLO

ity" of healthcare: access, equity, and sustainability.

Primary Healthcare (PHC): The government recently announced the completion of 60 new PHCs, marking a significant milestone in its goal to deliver 146 modern facilities statewide.

Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Prince Kassim Afegbua, noted that these centers are not just brick-and-mortar structures but are fully equipped hubs designed to bring quality care to the grassroots.

THE UDOMI HEALTH HUB

To position Edo as a destination for health tourism, the Governor secured legislative approval in May 2025 for the Edo State College of Nursing, Health Sciences, and Technology in Udomi, Esan Central. Simultaneously, work is also progressing on a new 150-bed Edo Specialist Hospital in the same region, which the Governor personally inspects to ensure adherence to international standards.

NATIONAL OBSTETRICS FISTULA CENTER

In a historic move for the South-South region, Governor Okpebholo facilitated the establishment of the National Obstetrics Fistula Center. By providing 25 hectares of land and a Certificate of Occupancy (C of O), the administration revived a project that had been stalled for two years, offering a lifeline to women suffering from childbirth-related complications.

STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS AND UPGRADES

The fight against preventable diseases has also seen a boost. Through a partnership with the Islamic Development Bank's Lives and Livelihoods Fund (IsDB LIF), the state is providing free malaria testing and treatment for the next two years across all 18 Local Government Areas (LGAs).

Furthermore, the administration has focused on modernizing existing

facilities: The Central Hospital Annex was relocated to a more conducive, spacious facility at the Oredo Clinic along Sapele Road. Also, modern ultrasound machines have been procured and distributed to all 18 LGAs to enhance diagnostic accuracy. Also, critical infrastructure, including industrial transformers and air conditioning units, has been installed at the Edo Specialist Hospital to ensure a stable environment for surgeries and patient recovery.

HEALTH INSURANCE: ENSURING NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND

Affordability remains a major barrier to healthcare in Nigeria. To combat this, the Okpebholo administration has enrolled over 300 highly vulnerable individuals and a growing number of pensioners into the Edo State Health Insurance Commission. By digitalizing insurance data and establishing a responsive customer support policy, the state is moving steadily toward the goal of Universal Health Coverage.

”
The model encourages a "sustainable social investment" approach, where the government and diaspora networks collaborate to subsidize medical plans for rural dwellers.

THE "SHINE" ON RURAL COMMUNITIES

The "Health" component of the SHINE agenda is perhaps most visible in underserved rural areas. Edo State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Cyril Oshiomhole, describes this as a "grassroots-driven revolution." The model encourages a "sustainable social investment" approach, where the government and diaspora networks collaborate to subsidize medical plans for rural dwellers.

A LEGACY IN THE MAKING

Governor Okpebholo's approach is holistic, it addresses the emergencies of today while building the systems of tomorrow. By focusing on long-term institutional strength rather than short-term political gains, the administration is fostering a resilient healthcare ecosystem.

With community trust growing and national partners lending their support, Edo State is rapidly becoming a blueprint for healthcare transformation in Nigeria. The SHINE agenda isn't just a slogan; for the people of Edo, it is the light at the end of a long tunnel.

Universality of Human Rights versus Absolute Sovereignty: The Trump Card

KINGSLEY JESUOROBO

The events in Caracas open new ground for thinking about the post-Cold-War-Rules-based international order, an order that elevated sovereignty and non-intervention into near sacred principles.

In practice, this framework created a wide comfort zone for authoritarian rulers. So long as electoral fraud, repression, or constitutional manipulation could be described as internal affairs, many regimes calculated, often correctly, that the international response would be limited to statements of concern and mild sanctions before attention drifted elsewhere.

Sovereignty thus became more

than a legal doctrine. It functioned as a political alibi, enabling dictators to stage elections without consequence while invoking international law to repel serious external pressure.

What has changed?

What has changed is not the international customary law itself, but the willingness to openly defy its customary restraints. Under Trump, the Venezuela saga marked a sharp, if episodic, return to raw power politics, largely stripped of diplomatic euphemism. It involved the recognition of opposition figures as legitimate leaders, the use of aggressive sanctions, and open flirtation with regime change.

This approach punctured the long

standing assumption that sovereignty alone guarantees immunity, particularly where elections are widely seen as fraudulent. For strongmen elsewhere, the message was unsettling. The old bargain of manipulated elections at home and quiet tolerance abroad could no longer be taken for granted. Whether this moment signals a durable shift or merely a historical aberration remains uncertain, but it clearly disrupted the complacency that the rule-based order had helped sustain.

There is, however, another way of reading this saga. Some argue that Trump's actions occupy the same conceptual space as the universalisation of human rights, though with important qualifications. The doc-

trine of universal human rights rests on a simple claim: sovereignty is not absolute. When a state systematically violates the basic rights of its citizens, it loses the moral immunity that non-intervention usually provides.

From humanitarian intervention in the Balkans to the later doctrine of the Responsibility to Protect, the underlying idea has been consistent. Gross abuses are not purely domestic matters; they are of legitimate international concerns. Seen through this lens, intervention in Venezuela can be framed as an extension of that logic, treating electoral fraud, repression, and economic collapse as violations that justify external involvement.

Unfortunately, Trump's approach

departed sharply from the established human rights tradition. Human rights based intervention is normally framed through multilateral action, legal reasoning, and institutional processes, even when these are contested or imperfect. The Venezuela move was largely unilateral, transactional, and openly political, driven less by universal principle than by strategic calculation and regime hostility.

Rather than advancing the universalisation of human rights, it exposed its fragility. It showed how easily moral language can be detached from consistent and principled application, and how selectively the promise of intervention is extended in a world still shaped by power rather than by principle.

Sports

● Football ● Athletics ● Golf ● Basketball ● Tennis ● Boxing

AFCON 2025: Gusau backs Super Eagles to handle Algeria test in Marrakesh

President of the Nigeria Football Federation Ibrahim Musa Gusau has expressed confidence that the Super Eagles will approach their quarterfinal clash against Algeria with the right mentality and focus at the Africa Cup

of Nations in Morocco.

Speaking ahead of the last-eight encounter, Gusau stressed that the players are fully aware of the task before them and will not underestimate the North Africans. He noted that the technical crew has consistently

reminded the squad that knockout football leaves no room for complacency.

"The players understand what is at stake now," Gusau said. "This is the quarterfinal stage, and every opponent deserves maximum respect. There is no room for underrating any team at this level."

The NFF president praised the Super Eagles' performances so far in the competition, highlighting their attacking efficiency and improved discipline, while also acknowledging that tougher tests lie ahead as the tournament progresses.

Gusau added that the federation

has full confidence in the technical crew and players to rise to the occasion, noting that the experience within the squad will be vital in managing the pressure of a high-profile knockout match.

Nigeria will face Algeria national football team in the quarterfinals on Saturday in Marrakesh, with a place in the AFCON semifinals on the line.

"Algeria are a strong and experienced side, but we believe in our team," Gusau added. "If the players stay disciplined, focused and committed, they have everything it takes to qualify for the next round."



SUPER EAGLES



STANLEY NWABALI

AFCON 2025: Nwabali calls Mozambique rout holiday night

Super Eagles goalie, Stanley Nwabali described Nigeria's 4-0 demolition of Mozambique as a night that felt more like a holiday than a high-stakes Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), after the Super Eagles cruised to a win and he walked away with his first clean sheet of the tournament.

The goalkeeper barely broke sweat as the Super Eagles turned on the style, overwhelming Mozambique with pace, control and ruthless finishing. For long spells, Nwabali was a spectator, watching his teammates dictate proceedings and turn the match into a comfortable evening under the lights.

Speaking to reporters after the game, the goalkeeper could not hide his delight, stressing that the ease of the win reflected the unity and discipline within the squad.

"First I want to say kudos to these guys from the coach, the players. I want to talk about myself first. But I'm saying kudos to these guys. They are one family, trying to fight like this, winning with a clean sheet," he said.

The relaxed nature of the contest was a sharp contrast to the tension that often defines knockout-stage football. Nwabali admitted that he was rarely called into action, likening the experience to a well-earned break.

Mahrez confident as Algeria prepares for AFCON quarter-final showdown with Nigeria

Algeria captain Riyad Mahrez has expressed confidence as the Desert Foxes prepare for a high-stakes Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) quarter-final against Nigeria, rekindling one of the tournament's most familiar rivalries.

The two former champions face off on Saturday in Marrakech, with Algeria advancing after a dramatic extra-time victory over DR Congo, sealed by Adil Boulbina's late goal, while Nigeria cruised past Mozambique 4-0 to reach the last eight.

Speaking to Ebotola after the DR Congo clash, Mahrez said Algeria had controlled much of the match. "I think that on the whole game, if the scales were to tilt on one side, it was ours," he noted, praising his team's defensive cohesion and individual quality.

"We faced a good Congolese team, who played with cohesion and left little space, but we were solid," Mahrez added, highlighting Algeria's ability to limit opponents' chances while relying on players capable of turning games in decisive moments.

Turning to the upcoming clash, the former Manchester City winger acknowledged the challenge posed by the Super Eagles, who are unbeaten in

the tournament and were runners-up at the previous AFCON.

"Nigeria? We know them well; the game will not be easy," Mahrez said. Asked if the quarter-final could be decided by another dramatic late moment, he joked, "A free kick at the last minute again? We will see, anything is possible."

The match promises to be a tightly contested affair, with both sides eyeing a place in the semi-finals and a chance to advance toward AFCON glory.



ALGERIA CELEBRATE AFTER QUALIFY FOR THE QUARTER-FINAL

AFCON 2025: Adepoju says Mozambique win proves Super Eagles' title intent

Former Nigeria international Mutiu Adepoju has described the Super Eagles' emphatic 4-0 victory over Mozambique as a strong statement of intent at the Africa

Cup of Nations, insisting the performance shows Nigeria are serious contenders for the title.

Reacting to the round of 16 win, Adepoju said he was impressed by the team's intensity,

balance and attacking efficiency, noting that it was the kind of display he has long expected from the Super Eagles.

"This performance shows desire and belief," Adepoju said. "Nigeria played with confidence, controlled the game and took their chances well. This is the way a team that wants to win the AFCON should play."

The former midfielder added that the result has boosted his confidence in the team's chances, stressing that the Super Eagles appear to be growing stronger with each match as the tournament progresses.



EAGLES CELEBRATING AFTER SCORING A GOAL

AFCON 2025: Super-sub Boulbina's late strike fires Algeria into last eight

Substitute Adil Boulbina scored in the 118th minute to send Algeria into the AFCON 2025 quarter-finals with a 1-0 win over DR Congo.

Algeria and DR Congo were locked at 0-0 after regulation time in Rabat, with both sides cancelling each other out in a tense and physical contest.

With penalties looming, Boulbina made the difference minutes after coming on, curling a superb right-footed effort beyond goalkeeper Lionel Mpsi-Nzau.

The goal finally separated two disciplined teams who showed organisation and resilience through 90 minutes and much of extra time.

Algeria enjoyed early possession but found clear chances

hard to come by against a compact Congolese defence.

DR Congo threatened on the counter, with Cedric Bakambu forcing Luca Zidane into a fine save and later heading narrowly wide.

Algeria responded through Ibrahim Maza before halftime, but his low drive drifted just off target.

The second half followed a similar rhythm, with Mohamed Amoura missing a clear chance and Zineddine Belaid denying Fiston Mayele at close range.

In extra time, Mpsi-Nzau produced superb saves to frustrate Fares Chaibi and Baghdad Bounedjah.

Boulbina's late moment of brilliance eventually broke Congolese resistance and sparked wild celebrations among Algerian supporters.

AFCON 2025: Ejiofor urges better Communication as Super Eagles brace for Algeria clash

Former Super Eagles defender Eric Ejiofor has called on the national team to improve communication at the back as they prepare for their quarterfinal showdown at the Africa Cup of Nations in Morocco.

Reacting to Nigeria's progression into the last eight, Ejiofor praised the team's overall

performance and attacking efficiency but pointed out that clearer communication, particularly in defence, will be vital as the level of opposition rises.

"The team has done well so far, no doubt," Ejiofor said. "But defending is about communication. Defenders and midfielders must constantly talk to each other to avoid con-

ceding cheap goals."

The former centre-back explained that at the knockout stage, even small lapses can be decisive. He stressed that clear instructions, constant awareness and collective organisation will help the Super Eagles stay compact and composed when under pressure.

Ejiofor also highlighted the importance of leadership

on the pitch, noting that experienced players must take responsibility in guiding teammates, especially during difficult moments in games.

Nigeria will face Algeria national football team in the quarterfinals on Saturday in Marrakesh, a fixture Ejiofor described as a true test of character and discipline.



ERIC EJIOFOR CELEBRATE WITH YEAM MATE

AFCON 2025 fallout: Broos urges South Africa to follow Nigeria's footsteps

Bafana Bafana head coach Hugo Broos has called on South Africa to adopt a model similar to Nigeria's in order to compete more effectively at the highest level of



BAFANA BAFANA HEAD COACH HUGO BROOS

African football following their AFCON 2025 campaign.

Broos admitted that South Africa began the tournament at a disadvantage, pointing to the composition of their squad compared to several rival nations.

According to the Belgian tactician, countries like Nigeria benefit significantly from having the bulk of their players based in Europe, where they are exposed to higher levels of intensity and competition on a weekly basis.

The South African coach stressed that this exposure plays a critical role in preparing players for the demands of major tournaments such as the Africa Cup of Nations, both physically and mentally.

Broos argued that for Bafana Bafana to consistently challenge Africa's elite, there must be a deliberate effort to create more pathways for locally based players to move to European leagues.

He believes such opportunities would help South African players gain valuable experience, improve their sharpness, and develop a stronger competitive edge.

Super Eagles, whose squad is largely Europe-based, were cited as a clear example of how regular involvement in top leagues can translate into stronger performances on the continental stage, a blueprint Broos wants South Africa to emulate going forward

AFCON 2025: Chuka Iwobi reflects on Son's journey as Super Eagles chase glory

Chuka Iwobi, father of Super Eagles midfielder Alex Iwobi, has spoken with pride about his son's remarkable journey in football as Nigeria continues its push at the Africa Cup of Nations in Morocco.

Reflecting on Alex's rise with the national team, Chuka admitted that while he always hoped his son would love the game, he never imagined how far his career would eventually go. He described Alex's progress as the result of dedication, discipline and consistency over the years.

"I only wanted him to enjoy football," Chuka said. "Seeing how far he has come now makes me very proud. There is still more ahead of him."

He also highlighted the influence of Nigerian football

legend Austin Jay-Jay Okocha on Alex's development, noting that Okocha served as a source of inspiration for the family. According to him, the former Super Eagles captain regularly encouraged Alex during his formative years at Arsenal, helping shape his confidence and love for expressive football. Chuka stressed, however, that Alex has grown into his own player, developing a unique style and personality distinct from his role model, while still embracing the values of hard work and creativity.

As Nigeria prepares for a crucial quarterfinal showdown against Algeria national football team on Saturday in Marrakesh, Alex Iwobi remains a key figure in the Super Eagles' midfield.

Accident forces Joshua to consider retirement — Uncle

Former world heavyweight boxing champion, Anthony Joshua, is seriously considering retiring from the sport following a fatal car accident in Nigeria that claimed the lives of two of his closest aides, his uncle Adedamola Joshua has revealed.

The 36-year-old British-Nigerian boxer narrowly escaped death last week after a Lexus SUV he was travelling in crashed into a stationary truck along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway. The crash killed two of his long-time team members and friends, Sina Ghami and Latif Ayodele, on the spot.

Speaking in an interview with journalists at the family residence in Sagamu, Ogun State, on Monday, Adedamola disclosed that the family had received news of Joshua's decision to quit boxing.

He said, "The major thing there is that he has retired from boxing. That is one thing that makes us glad because each time he's fighting in the ring, we are always carried away emotionally.

"Each time he's knocked down, it is just like the heart is coming out of our chest. All these emotional feelings whenever he's fighting, it's too much trauma for us, also. Now that he has said that he's leaving while the ovation is highest, we are happy."

When asked if Joshua had com-

municated the decision directly, Adedamola confirmed, "Yes."

In the wake of the tragedy, Joshua broke his silence via an



ANTHONY JOSHUA WITH HIS LATE FRIENDS

emotional Instagram post on Sunday, sharing photos with the grieving families. The post, captioned "My Brothers' Keep-

er", featured two heart emojis and a military helmet.

A source from his camp told UK publication The Sun, "AJ is fiercely loyal to his friends and their families and will be there for them for the rest of their lives. He's had the same team around him for his whole career, and that team included Sina and Latz."

Ghami was Joshua's strength and conditioning coach, while Ayodele served as his personal trainer — both vital parts of the boxer's support system.

Ondo sports commissioner urges protesters to embrace dialogue, peace

The Ondo State Commissioner for Youth and Sports Development, Henry Omoyofunmi, has appealed to protesting sports unions, coaches, and athletes to embrace dialogue and unity following appointment of Mrs Evelyn Lebi as Acting General Manager.

Protest had rocked Ondo State Sports Complex, Akure over the appointment of Lebi on Tuesday.

The protest, which disrupted activities at the sports complex expressed concerns that the appointment might not positively impact sports development in the state.

While addressing the issue during a crucial meeting with the management team of the

Sports Council on Wednesday, Omoyofunmi emphasised that while grievances were legitimate

in a democratic setting, grounding activities at the sports complex was unacceptable.



HON. HENRY OMOYOFUNMI



IWOBI AND HIS FAMILY

Plateau FA to boost grassroots football with equipment, coaching courses

The Plateau State Football Association (PFA) said it had concluded plans to provide technical support for grassroots teams to open a new chapter for football development in the state.

Suleiman Kwande, chairman of PFA, stated this in an interview with journalists on Wednesday in Abuja.

He said that match balls, jerseys, and training equipment would be distributed to teams across the 17 Local Government Areas of the state.

"This programme is about giving every talented youth a fair platform to express themselves and grow through football," Kwande said.

The former NFF board member urged coaches to register for the upcoming technical training course organised by the association.

"We are investing in our coaches because better coaching means better players and a stronger football structure in Plateau," he said.

Kwande announced new competitions, which include five-a-side football, beach soccer, and a female football cup, to complement the FA Cup and Governor's Cup.

"These competitions will widen participation, encourage inclusiveness, and expose our players to modern football trends," he added.

Ogenyi Onazi calls for crackdown on drunk driving after narrow escape in Lagos



OGENYI ONAZI

Former Super Eagles midfielder Ogenyi Onazi has urged the authorities to take urgent action against drunk driving in Lagos after revealing that he narrowly avoided a potentially fatal accident involving intoxicated motorists.

Onazi raised the alarm on Monday via Instagram, recounting a frightening incident from the previous night and warning that reckless driving under the influence is becom-

ing an increasingly dangerous menace on Lagos roads.

The 33-year-old, who was part of Nigeria's triumphant squad at the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), said the situation could easily have ended in tragedy and insisted that tougher measures are long overdue.

"The government has to do something about drunk people driving in Lagos," Onazi wrote.

Almost lost my life last night with two drunk boys in the car."



SPORTS

AFCON 2025 gets tougher with blockbuster Titans quarter-final fixtures in Morocco

The quarter-final line-up for the 2025 CAF Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) in Morocco is con-

firmed, setting up blockbuster encounters as the tournament reaches its decisive stage. Defending champions Côte

d'Ivoire and seven-time winners Egypt headline a formidable last eight with Senegal, Cameroon, Nigeria, Algeria, Mali, and hosts Morocco joining in.

The teams progressed after an absorbing Round of 16 concluded on Tuesday night, continuing the tradition of thrilling contests at Africa's flagship football event.

Egypt booked passage with a gritty extra-time win over Benin, while Côte d'Ivoire cruised past Burkina Faso 3-0 to keep their title defence alive. Hosts Morocco edged Tan-

zania with strong home backing, as Senegal defeated Sudan to underline their consistency since winning the 2021 edition.

Mali showed resilience by eliminating Tunisia on penalties despite playing long periods with ten men in a tense encounter.

Nigeria impressed with a commanding victory over Mozambique, Victor Osimhen scoring twice to showcase the Super Eagles' attacking strength.

Algeria needed extra time to overcome DR Congo, substitute Adil Boulbina striking late to seal qualification.



SADIQ UMAR

Sadiq Umar set to return to Valencia as Real Sociedad exit looms

Nigerian striker Sadiq Umar is poised to leave Real Sociedad and return to Valencia CF, with club-to-club agreements reportedly finalized, signaling a reunion following a productive loan spell last season.

The 27-year-old joined Real Sociedad in 2022 for €20 million after an impressive campaign with UD Almería, but he struggled to replicate that form in San Sebastián. Valencia, where he previously shone, will now look to harness his goal-scoring ability as the club fights to climb out of the La Liga relegation zone, currently sitting 18th with 16

points from 18 games. During his loan at Valencia, Sadiq featured in 19 matches, netting six goals and playing a pivotal role in helping the club retain top-flight status. The forward is expected to sign a two-and-a-half-year contract with an option for a further year, in a transfer reportedly worth €5 million, plus €1 million in performance-based bonuses tied to agreed targets.

Valencia will now be hoping Sadiq can rekindle his form and provide a decisive spark in their battle to avoid relegation, while the Nigerian international aims to reignite his La Liga career in familiar surroundings.

NFF happy over goalkeeper Arthur Okonkwo's switch from England to Nigeria

The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) has welcomed the decision of Wrexham goalkeeper Arthur Okonkwo to commit his international future to Nigeria, describing the move as a timely boost to the country's goalkeeping options.

Okonkwo, 24, was born in London to Nigerian parents and had previously represented England across several youth levels.

In December 2025, however, the highly rated shot stopper completed a change of allegiance to Nigeria, a development that has been warmly received in Abuja.

"The NFF is always excited to have another quality player committing to Nigeria and providing an option in a particular position," the federation's Director of Communications, Dr. Ademola Olajire, told ESPN.

Arthur Okonkwo is a prospect, and we believe the technical crew is delighted to have another option in the goalkeeping department."

The arrival of Okonkwo strengthens an already competitive pool that includes Stan-

ley Nwabali of Chippa United, Francis Uzoho, Amas Obasogie, Maduka Okoye and teenage prospect Ebenezer Harcourt.

Nwabali, Uzoho and Obasogie are currently on duty with the Super Eagles at the ongoing 2025 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) in Morocco, while Okoye was a notable omission from the squad.



ARTHUR OKONKWO

CAF rules put Bassey, Ndidi and Onyeka on suspension alert

Super Eagles could be without key players Calvin Bassey, Wilfred Ndidi and Frank Onyeka later in the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations

(AFCON) should they receive further disciplinary sanctions in their quarterfinal fixture.

The trio were all booked during Nigeria's emphatic 4-0

victory over Mozambique in Monday night's Round of 16 encounter. Captain Wilfred Ndidi, midfielder Frank Onyeka and defender Calvin Bassey each picked up yellow cards in the match, placing them one caution away from suspension.

Nigeria sealed the win with a dominant attacking display, as Victor Osimhen scored twice, while Man of the Match Ademola Lookman and Akor Adams added one goal apiece to send the three-time African champions into the last eight.



WILFRED NDIDI

Lagos State Sports Commission, UNILAG open strategic discussion as Lagos prepares to host National Intermediate Games

The Lagos State Sports Commission (LSSC) and the University of Lagos (UNILAG) have commenced high-level discussions as Lagos intensifies preparations to host the 2026 National Intermediate Games for Under-18 athletes.

The esteemed delegation from the Lagos State Sports Commission, led by the Director General, Mr Lekan Fatodu, was received by the Deputy

Vice-Chancellor (Development Services), Prof. Foluso Lesi, at the Senate Building of the institution and ushered into his office, where both teams, comprising senior officials of the Lagos State Sports Commission and members of the UNILAG Sports Council, engaged in discussions underscoring a shared commitment to delivering a world-class sporting event that aligns with Lagos' vision of excellence in

sports development.

Lagos State has successfully hosted several high-profile sporting events in recent years that have drawn athletes from various parts of the world, including Game X, the Festival of Table Tennis, the African Senior Fencing Championship, the Zen Archery Lagos International Open, the Africa School Games, among many others, establishing itself as a premier destination for sports

promotion in Nigeria and, by extension, Africa.

The meeting concluded with a resolve to establish joint working teams and timelines to ensure seamless coordination ahead of the Games, reinforcing Lagos State's ambition to deliver a well-organised, athlete-centred, and impactful National Intermediate Games that will contribute meaningfully to Nigeria's sports development pipeline.

Tennis: NTF targets talent discovery and growth in 2026 – Hember

Board member of the Nigeria Tennis Federation, Victor Hember, has revealed that the federation has set a clear agenda to take tennis in the country to the next level, with strong emphasis on development and competitiveness.

Speaking on the federation's plans, Hember said the focus for the new year is to expand opportunities for players through more regular tournaments, which he believes will help uncover fresh talents while also improving the level of existing players across the country.

According to him, consistent competitions are vital for growth, as they expose players to match situations, build con-

fidence and provide pathways for young athletes to progress from grassroots to elite level.

Hember also stressed the importance of collaboration, calling on stakeholders, sponsors and tennis enthusiasts to support the federation's vision. He noted that meaningful development can only be achieved if everyone works together with a shared commitment to the sport.

The NTF board member expressed optimism that with the right structure, increased competitions and stakeholder backing, Nigerian tennis can regain prominence on the continental stage and produce players capable of competing internationally.



NTF YOUNG TALENT