

Alleged coup: Military to commence court-martial of 16 officers —DHQ

ABUJA

The Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN) has concluded investigations into cases involving 16 officers apprehended over acts of indiscipline and breaches of service regulations, with some of them to face trial before mili-

tary judicial panels.

The Director of Defence Information, Maj.-Gen. Samaila Uba, disclosed this in a statement on Monday in Abuja.

Uba recalled that the Defence Headquarters (DHQ) had, in October 2025, announced the arrest of the officers, noting that the investigations had now

been completed in line with established military procedures and extant regulations.

According to him, the investigation examined all circumstances surrounding the conduct of the affected personnel and identified a number of the officers with cases to answer, including allegations border-

ing on plotting to overthrow the government.

He said such actions were inconsistent with the ethics, values and professional standards expected of members of the Armed Forces of Nigeria.

"Accordingly, officers found to have cases to answer will be formally arraigned before appro-

priate military judicial panels to face trial in line with the Armed Forces Act and other applicable service regulations," he said.

The defence spokesman emphasised that the measures being taken were purely disciplinary and part of internal institutional mechanisms to preserve discipline, cohesion

and operational effectiveness within the ranks.

He reaffirmed the commitment of the Armed Forces to professionalism, loyalty and respect for constitutional authority, assuring the public that due process and fairness would be strictly observed throughout the proceedings.

The Nigerian Observer



...that the people may know

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Soludo shuts Onitsha Main Market for one week over sit-at-home —Pg 4

Edo awaits verdict as RMAFC moves to end oil wells dispute • Assures fairness as Edo, others stake claim to 13% derivation

ABUJA

Edo State is set to gain clarity on its oil and gas entitlements as the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission

(RMAFC) has vowed to apply fairness, equity and justice in resolving long-standing disputes over the location of oil and gas wells affecting the state and other producers.

The assurance came on Mon-

day in Abuja from the Chairman of the commission, Dr Mohammed Shehu, during a briefing on the ongoing verification and plotting of coordinates for disputed and newly drilled oil and gas wells, a process that directly determines states eligible for the constitutionally guaranteed 13 percent derivation fund.

Edo is among the oil-producing states affected by the exercise, alongside Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Bayelsa, Ondo, Rivers and Delta, as well as some offshore locations.

The outcome is expected to have significant fiscal implications for Edo, particularly in the allocation of revenue from crude oil and gas production.

Dr Shehu said the commission would act as an impartial arbiter, stressing that no state would be favoured in the process.

He urged Edo and other affected states to actively participate in the coordinate-plotting exercise to ensure transparency and broad acceptance of the final outcome.

"I want to assure the affected parties that the commission will be an unbiased umpire and will deploy justice, equity and fairness for which it is known," he said.

He explained that the verification exercise was a constitutional requirement designed to establish the rightful beneficiaries of the 13 per cent derivation, especially as new oil

fields come on stream or where ownership is disputed.

According to him, the process followed a formal request by the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) for RMAFC to verify the coordinates of new and disputed oil wells.

This led to the inauguration of an Inter-Agency Technical Committee in July 2025, involving the NUPRC, the Office of the Surveyor-General of the Federation and the National Boundary Commission.

Fieldwork was conducted between September and October 2025, during which surveyors-general from oil-producing states, including Edo,

participated as witnesses.

The technical team reportedly visited creeks, offshore locations and high seas to take verified coordinates.

Dr Shehu disclosed that reports from the field exercise had been submitted and that plotting of the coordinates would commence shortly, a process expected to last about five days. Advanced equipment, including drones, will be deployed to access difficult terrain, while data analysis will be carried out in the presence of representatives of the affected states.

He noted that although claims and counterclaims were

CONTINUES ON PG 2 >>>

Alleged cyberstalking: Court adjourns case against ex-NBA Benin Chairman to Feb 23

A Federal High Court sitting in Benin City on Monday adjourned to 23 February 2026 the cyberstalking case involving a two-count charge of cybercrime and obstruction of the course of justice against a former Chairman of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Benin Branch, Mr Ede Asenoguan.

The case, which also involves one Jessica Iguodala, currently at large, is contained in a charge sheet marked FH-C/B/121C, sighted by journalists in Benin City.

The prosecution alleged that the defendants, in March 2025, intentionally transmitted, or caused to be transmitted, communication through a computer system, particularly social media, containing allegations that harmed the reputation of Mr Uyi Oloton.

The alleged offence is said to be punishable under Section 24(2)(c) and 27(1)(b) of the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act

It was further alleged that the former Edo NBA Chair-

man, on March 11, 2023, conspired to obstruct, prevent, pervert or defeat the course of justice by taking Jessica Iguodala on police administrative bail and subsequently failing or refusing to produce her.

This action, according to the prosecution, stalled her trial at the Federal High Court and constitutes an offence punishable under Section 126(1) of the Criminal Code Act.

When the case was mentioned, Mr Olayinwola Afolabi, SAN, appeared alongside M. I. Okeke Esq for the nominal complainant, Mr Uyi Oloton, informed the court that members of the legal community had intervened in the matter.

He therefore applied for an adjournment.

The presiding judge, Justice B. O. Quadri, granted the application and consequently adjourned the case to 23 February 2026 for report on the intervention.

Asenoguan, the defendant and his counsel, F. E. Esegine Esq, with Adesuwa Ediae Esq. were present in court



INAUGURATION:

L-R: Secretary to Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), Joseph Nwaeze; Federal Commissioner of RMAFC, Zamfara State, Hon. Rabiu Garba; Chairman of RMAFC, Dr Muhammed Shehu; and the Commissioner of RMAFC, Ogun State, Hakeem Amosu, during the inauguration of the plotting of disputed and newly drilled oil and Gas wells by the coordinates Inter-Agency Technical Committee (IATC) field activities in Abuja on Monday.

FG strengthens food, nutrition policy framework —Perm Sec —Pg 3

Shell CEO praises Tinubu, unveils \$20bn fresh investment plan —Pg 6

Iran warns US not to launch military action as activists say protest death toll near 6,000 —Pg 9

Poland 2026: Aduku expresses confidence as Falconets gear up for Senegal clash —Pg 12

Erah community cries out to Okpebholo over criminal hideout in forest

Residents of Erah Community in Owan East Local Government Area of Edo State have appealed to Governor Monday Okpebholo to urgently intervene in the worsening insecurity caused by criminal gangs operating from the Erah forest.

The call was made by the traditional ruler of the community, HRH Chief Braimah Osumah Aigboje, the Odale of Erah, and the people of the area in a Save Our Souls message addressed to the state government and security agencies. In a statement signed by

Abu Momodu, Secretary to the palace, the community lamented that suspected criminals had invaded and occupied the forest, using it as a base for kidnapping, ransom-taking, killings and the destruction of farmlands.

The statement noted that some residents had been killed for attempting to protect their community, forcing others to

live in constant fear.

"The palace of HRH Chief Braimah Osumah Aigboje, the Odale of Erah Clan, once again cries out to the Edo State Government and all security agencies to urgently intervene in the insecurity in Erah land," the statement said, adding that farming activities and livelihoods had been severely threatened.

The community recalled earlier appeals to clear the forest of criminal elements, which they said yielded no positive response.

They said the latest appeal was made more compelling by the killing of their sons, including Edeki Ighalo in 2024,

Victor Ogedengbe in 2025 and Abdullahi, who were coordinators of local vigilante groups defending the community.

The people expressed hope that normal farming and economic activities would resume once security is restored in the Erah forest.



GARA'S VISIT:

Force Commander, Joint Task Force, Operation Whirl Stroke, Maj.-Gen Moses Gara (M); Team Leader, Major Audu Arigu (6th R); Component Commanders and Defence Correspondents, during the visit of the Correspondents to Joint Task Force, Operation Whirl Stroke in Makurdi.

Hajj 2026: Edo steps up upload of pilgrims' data

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board has intensified the upload of data of intending pilgrims to the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria's (NAHCON) NUSUK portal ahead of visa processing for the 2026 Hajj exercise.

The Board said the ongoing

exercise forms part of its early preparations to ensure smooth and timely processing of travel documents for pilgrims travelling to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Chairman of the Board, Mallam Musa Muhammad Uduimoh, said sustained early data upload would eliminate delays and last-minute challenges often associated with

visa processing, while ensuring compliance with NAHCON and Saudi Arabian guidelines.

The Executive Secretary, Alhaji Eranga Abdulkabir Muhammadkabir, urged registered intending pilgrims to cooperate by submitting accurate personal details and valid international passports to facilitate seamless documentation

on the NUSUK platform.

According to him, the portal serves as a centralised system for pilgrims' data management, visa issuance and coordination of Hajj services.

The Board reaffirmed its commitment to a hitch-free 2026 Hajj operation and advised intending pilgrims yet to complete their registration to do so promptly.

Military neutralises terrorists, arrests 100 suspects in one week —DHQ

ABUJA

Nigerian military has neutralised dozens of terrorists, arrested no fewer than 100 suspects and rescued at least 29 kidnapped victims in coordinated operations across the country within one week.

The Director of Defence Media Operations, Maj.-Gen. Michael Onoja, disclosed this on Monday in Abuja while briefing journalists on military operations conducted between January 19 and 23.

Onoja said the intelligence-driven operations were carried out in collaboration with other security agencies, in strict adherence to the Rules of Engagement, international humanitarian law and human rights standards.

He said the sustained offensives disrupted terrorist and criminal networks, led to the recovery of arms and ammunition and restored relative calm in several troubled communities.

In the North East, troops of Joint Task Force Operation

Hadin Kai neutralised scores of Boko Haram, ISWAP and JAS terrorists in parts of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States. Seven suspects were arrested and four kidnapped victims rescued in several local government areas.

He added that air interdiction and armed reconnaissance missions in Damboa, Abadam and Doron Duguri areas of Borno State resulted in multiple precision strikes, with battle damage assessments confirming the neutralisation of dozens of terrorists.

In the North West, troops of Operation Fansan Yamma neutralised several terrorists, arrested 10 suspects and rescued seven kidnapped victims in Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto and Kaduna States, with weapons, vehicles and rustled livestock recovered.

In the North Central, Operation Enduring Peace troops neutralised extremists, arrested 39 criminals and rescued four victims in Plateau and parts of Kaduna States, recov-

ering arms, ammunition and about 4,500 dollars traced to cattle rustling proceeds.

Similarly, troops of Operation Whirl Stroke arrested 11 suspected kidnapers and rescued six victims across Benue, Taraba, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa States and the Federal Capital Territory.

In the South-South, Operation Delta Safe troops destroyed 20 illegal refining sites and arrested 31 oil thieves across Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers and Imo States.

In the South East, Operation Udo Ka rescued eight Cameroonian nationals abducted by sea pirates in Cross River, arrested three suspects in Anambra and received the surrender of about 80 militants with their arms and ammunition.

Onoja reaffirmed the Armed Forces' commitment to defending Nigeria's sovereignty and protecting citizens, while urging the media to sustain responsible reportage in support of national security efforts.

Edo eyes renewable energy for sustainable growth

BENIN CITY

Edo State is charting a course toward sustainable development through renewable energy, officials said on the occasion of World Clean Energy Day.

Hon. Colin Tenebe, Senior Special Assistant to the Governor on Climate Change and Green Economy, highlighted the strategic importance of clean energy during a stakeholders' engagement organised by the Ministry of Science and Technology at the Secretariat Complex.

"Everyone involved in renewable energy must ensure their practices are sustainable," he said, stressing that adopting clean energy is not only an environmental priority, but a critical step to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate climate change.

He called for concerted efforts from the government, private sector, and communities to drive the energy transition.

Hon. Tenebe noted that eq-

uitable access to renewable energy is key to bridging the urban-rural energy divide, where reliance on traditional methods continues to constrain growth.

He added that clean energy could spur innovation, create jobs, and strengthen local economies if properly harnessed.

Looking ahead, he urged strategic planning, adoption of innovative technologies, and policies that make renewable energy practical and inclusive.

He stressed that Edo State has the potential to become a national model for clean energy integration through collaboration, investment, and public awareness.

The observance of World Clean Energy Day, he said, serves as both a reminder and a call to action.

For Edo State, renewable energy is not just an environmental concern but a cornerstone for economic prosperity, social progress, and a cleaner, more resilient future



Nigeria pledges stronger ties with Türkiye ahead of Tinubu visit

ABUJA

Nigeria has reaffirmed its commitment to deepening political, economic, and security ties with Türkiye, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Yusuf Tuggar, announced on Monday.

The declaration followed high-level talks in Ankara with his Turkish counterpart, Hakan Fidan, marking Tuggar's first official visit to the country. The discussions come ahead of President Bola Tinubu's upcoming state visit to Türkiye.

According to a statement issued by Alkasim Abdulkadir, Special Assistant on Media and Communications to the Foreign Minister, the talks focused on strengthening bilateral cooperation in areas including trade, investment, security, and multilateral engagement.

Fidan reportedly praised

Nigeria's role in promoting regional stability and peace in West Africa, recognising the country's leadership within regional and continental frameworks.

Tuggar stressed the need to expand bilateral trade and attract investment in sectors appealing to Turkish companies, such as construction, manufacturing, energy, and infrastructure. Both ministers also highlighted opportunities to enhance military and defence cooperation.

"This meeting reflects the growing strategic character of Nigeria-Türkiye relations," Tuggar said.

"It is anchored on shared positions on sovereignty, institutional cooperation, and pragmatic partnership, with both sides confident in prospects for deeper engagement ahead."

Edo awaits verdict as RMAFC moves...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

natural, no state was currently in open conflict, adding that where oil fields straddled boundaries, resources could be shared based on verified facts.

The RMAFC chairman expressed optimism that the final report, expected next week if there is no litigation, would significantly reduce disputes

among oil-producing states and bring clarity to Edo's oil and gas status.

He thanked Edo and other states for their cooperation throughout the process, saying the commission was committed to ensuring that revenue from the federation account, including derivation funds, was shared fairly and in line with established facts.

NEWS

Oil fields dispute: Petroleum minister, AGF, NUPRC urge court to dismiss firms' suit

ABUJA

The Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Oil), Heineken Lokpobiri, alongside the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF), Lateef Fagbemi, SAN, and the Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), has asked the Federal High Court in Abuja to dismiss a suit challenging the proposed allocation of four oil fields.

The defendants, in separate preliminary objections before

Justice Emeka Nwite, argued that the plaintiffs, Hi-Rev Oil Limited and Hi-Rev Exploration and Production Ltd, lacked the legal standing to institute the action.

The suit, marked FHC/ABJ/CS/2678/2025, lists the minister, the AGF and the NUPRC as first to third defendants.

Justice Nwite had on December 22, 2025, ordered the defendants to show cause why the reliefs sought by the plaintiffs in their ex-parte motion should not be granted, following arguments by plaintiffs'

counsel, Mr Ambrose Unaeye.

The oil firms are seeking an interim injunction restraining the defendants from selling, assigning or allocating four oil fields—Yorla South in Rivers State; Akiapiri and Diebu Creek East in Bayelsa State; and Idiok in Akwa Ibom—pending the determination of the substantive suit. They claimed the fields were meant to replace earlier allocations allegedly withdrawn by the Federal Government.

On January 5, the court ordered all parties to maintain the status quo after Unaeye argued that he had just been served with the defendants' processes and required time to respond.

At Monday's hearing, Unaeye informed the court that he had replied to all preliminary objections, prompting Justice Nwite to announce that the issue of jurisdiction would be determined first.

Arguing for the minister, Michael Numa, SAN, submitted that the court lacked jurisdiction as there was no evidence of any specific allocation of oil fields to the plaintiffs. He said allocation of oil assets must follow statutory bid processes and that promises alone did not confer enforceable rights.

The AGF's counsel, Oyinlola Kolawosho, described the suit as speculative, insisting the plain-

tiffs lacked locus standi. Similarly, NUPRC's lawyer, O.M. Atoyeji, argued that the action was statute-barred under the Public Officers Protection Act and the Petroleum Industry Act, 2021.

Responding, Unaeye maintained that the plaintiffs were entitled to court protection, noting

that substantial sums had been paid and several engagements held with government officials.

Justice Nwite adjourned the matter to April 20 for ruling on the preliminary objections, cautioning parties against actions that could affect the substance of the case.

Cyberbullying case: Court adjourns trial of Abuja lawyer, influencers

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja on Monday adjourned the trial of an Abuja-based lawyer and four social media influencers accused of cyberbullying Senator Shehu Umar until Tuesday for continuation of hearing.

Justice Rita Offili-Ajumogobia granted the adjournment following an oral application by Abueh Leyii, counsel to the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF), who requested time to properly prepare the prosecution's evidence after the Federal Government took over the case.

The AGF and Minister of Justice, Mr Lateef Fagbemi, SAN, assumed conduct of the matter in December 2025

from the Inspector-General of Police. At the resumed sitting, Leyii, a Chief State Counsel, told the court that a review of the case revealed issues in the charge requiring clarification.

She said a letter had been written to the police to address the issues but that her office was still awaiting a response.

"We have written to the police and we are waiting for their response," she said, urging the court to adjourn the case to enable proper prosecution. The defence did not oppose the application.

The defendants, led by Abdulrahman, were initially charged by the police for allegedly cyberbullying Senator Umar, Chairman of the Senate Committee on National Security and Intelligence.

2027: Northern youth group pledges funds for Tinubu's re-election

ABUJA

The Northern Nigeria Youth Leaders' Forum (NNYLF) has endorsed President Bola Tinubu for a second term, pledging to mobilise funds to support his re-election bid in 2027.

At an event in Abuja on Monday, the forum said it would collaborate with development partners and stakeholders to scale youth-driven programmes across Northern Nigeria.

A communiqué jointly signed by the forum's Nation-

al Leader, Gamji Murtala, and Director of Operations, Dr Agbana John, said the engagement aimed at strengthening youth participation in governance under the Renewed Hope Agenda.

The forum described youth-led platforms as vital for political education, grassroots mobilisation, peace-building and national integration, noting

growing demand for structured youth inclusion in governance and policy implementation.

Speaking with journalists, NNYLF National Leader, Garba, disclosed that the group had already raised N200 million to purchase President Tinubu's expression of interest and nomination forms when available.

"With the support of our Board of Trustees and patrons, we have decided to support President Tinubu with N200 million because we believe in the unity of Nigeria," he said.

Property dispute: Suit against Iyabo Obasanjo stalls as lawyers stay away

ABUJA

A property dispute suit filed against Senator Iyabo Obasanjo and others suffered a setback on Monday as no lawyer appeared before the Federal High Court in Abuja.

Justice Mohammed Umar consequently adjourned the matter to March 30 for further

mention.

The plaintiffs, ABB Electrical Systems Limited and Ambassador Yohana Margif, are contesting ownership of a parcel of land located at Plot 4254, Cadastral Zone A04, Asokoro District, Abuja.

Other defendants include former FCT Senator Philip Aduda and five others.

The case, formerly before

Justice Inyang Ekwo, had earlier stalled after the court declined to grant an ex-parte injunction restraining the defendants from accessing or altering the property.

The plaintiffs insist they are the rightful owners by virtue of a statutory right of occupancy issued by the Federal Capital Development Administration, warning that alleged activities by the defendants could cause irreparable damage.

FG strengthens food, nutrition policy framework —Perm Sec

ABUJ

The Federal Government has urged development partners and stakeholders to ensure Nigeria's food and nutrition policies align with current realities, global best practices and emerging research.

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Budget and Eco-

nomics Planning, Dr Deborah Odoh, made the call at a national validation meeting on the revised National Policy on Food and Nutrition (NPFN) in Abuja.

She said the review process would strengthen coordination, data systems and multisectoral action plans to improve nutrition outcomes, particularly for vulnerable groups.

Senior Special Assistant to

the President on Public Health, Mrs Uju Anwuka, stressed the need to bridge the gap between policy and practice, while UNICEF's Chief of Nutrition, Ms Nemat Hajeerhoy, called for evidence-driven policy-making amid rising malnutrition indicators.

Stakeholders described the revised policy, covering 2026–2035, as critical to tackling food insecurity and malnutrition nationwide.

LASU VC urges JUPEB students to uphold discipline, integrity

BADAGRY (LAGOS)

The Vice-Chancellor of Lagos State University (LASU), Prof Ibiyemi Olatunji-Bello, has urged JUPEB students to embrace discipline, integrity and hard work to succeed academically.

She spoke during the orientation programme for Joint


Universities Preliminary Examinations Board students at the LASU Basic and Advanced Studies campus in Badagry.

Olatunji-Bello warned that progression to 200 Level was not automatic but dependent on performance, conduct and compliance with university rules.

LASUSBAS Director, Prof

Yunus Dauda, said the programme was designed to prepare students for the July/August 2026 JUPEB examinations, while Badagry council chairman, Mr Babatunde Hunpe, urged students to remain focused on their studies.

Senior staff, traditional rulers and residents attended the event.



PALACE OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
HRH CHIEF BRAIMAH OSUMA AIGBOJE
THE UDALE OF ERAH KINGDOM
Motto: Unity is Power
Erah Palace, Owan East Local Government Area, Edo State, Nigeria
Tel: 08066385467, 08053075703

26th January, 2026 Ref: ERAH/PS/001/2026

PRESS STATEMENT

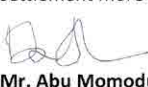
RE: INVASION/OCCUPATION OF ERAH FORESTS BY SUSPECTED CRIMINALS AND THE USE OF ERAH FOREST FOR KIDNAPPINGS, RANSOMS TAKING, KILLINGS, DEN OF CRIME AND CRIMINALITIES, DESTRUCTIONS OF FARMS, THREATS TO FARMING AND FARMERS, LIVES AND PROEPRTY IN ERAH LAND

The above subject-matter refers.

The Palace of His Royal Highness, **Chief Braimah Osumah Aigboje**, the Udale of Erah Clan, Owan East Local Government Area, Edo State has once again cry out to the Government of Edo State and all security agencies in Edo State to quickly intervene in the insecurity in Erah Land, where the Erah Forest has been invaded and occupied by suspected criminals which they use for kidnappings, ransoms taking, killings, den of crime and criminalities, destructions of farms, threats to farming and farmers, lives and property in Erah Land.

From the records, Erah community has, on several occasions, raised serious concerns, alarm and appealed for assistance to flush out suspected criminals and their base within the forests. These appeals became even more urgent following the tragic and gruesome killings of Erah sons like **Edeki Ighalo in 2024** and **Victor Ogedengbe in 2025** and **Abdullahi** whose only offence was that they were the coordinators and members of Erah Vigilante who were securing Erah Land against criminals and criminalities. Many other persons have been kidnapped and taking to the same forests. Despite these distressing incidents, timely and adequate intervention has remained insufficient.

In light of these ugly developments, the Palace and the entire Erah community herein renew their appeal to His Excellency, the Governor of Edo State, and all relevant security agencies to urgently and decisively intervene to rid the Erah Forests of suspected criminals and criminalities thereby restoring safety and security on Erah Land, which is an agrarian settlement more so as farming is about to commence this year.



Mr. Abu Momodu
Secretary,
Palace of the Udale of Erah Land

Soludo shuts Onitsha Main Market for one week over sit-at-home

ONITSHA

Anambra State Governor, Prof. Chukwuma Soludo, has ordered the immediate closure of the Onitsha Main Market for one week over the continued observance of the Monday sit-at-home by traders.

Soludo gave the directive on Monday during a visit to the market, describing the refusal of traders and market leaders to open for business as a clear violation of government orders.

According to the governor, the action represents one of the most decisive efforts to determine who controls economic activities in the South-East on Mondays.

"The enemy is the long-standing, fear-enforced Monday sit-at-home order — a ghostly mandate from non-state actors that has strangled businesses and

normalised weekly shutdowns for years," Soludo said.

He noted that despite repeated assurances of improved security and appeals to traders to reclaim public spaces, many shop owners once again kept their stalls locked.

The governor said the empty market reflected a lingering atmosphere of fear and apprehension, stressing that government would not tolerate actions that undermine public safety and official efforts to restore normalcy.

Soludo warned that if the market failed to reopen after the one-week shutdown, it would be sealed for a month, with further sanctions to follow.

"You either decide that you are going to trade here or you go elsewhere. I am very serious about this," he said.

Security operatives drawn

from the police, army and other agencies were deployed to secure the market, turning away traders

who attempted to gain access. Meanwhile, the Anambra State Government has com-

menced pro-rata salary payments for workers across the state as part of efforts to counter

the economic effects of the sit-at-home enforced by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).



OPENING CEREMONY:

L-R: Former President, Central Council of Ibadan Indigenes, Chief Bayo Oyero; Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State and Chairman of Oyo at 50, Shaheed Akinade-Fijabi, during the Opening ceremony of Oyo at 50 Anniversary in Ibadan on Monday.

Edo govt leads drive to improve electricity supply

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government has taken another decisive step to reform the power sector with a high-level engagement with the Benin Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC) aimed at improving electricity supply across the state.

During a courtesy visit to BEDC headquarters in Benin City, the Commissioner for Power, Barr. Paul Usenbo, said the engagement was part of the Edo State Government's commitment to delivering on Governor Monday Okpehlo's SHINE Agenda, which prioritises reliable public services and improved living standards.

Usenbo said the government is focusing on removing operational bottlenecks, strengthening institutional collaboration with BEDC, improving service efficiency and ensuring adequate support for electricity

projects within the state.

He stressed that the Edo State Government expects tangible improvements in power supply, adding that BEDC's financial remittances to the state must translate into better service delivery for residents.

The commissioner reaffirmed the Okpehlo administration's resolve to modernise the electricity sector, ensure transparency, and guarantee fairness and accessibility for consumers and investors alike.

He assured BEDC of the Edo State Government's support, particularly in combating vandalism, enforcing public compliance, and deepening community engagement to protect electricity infrastructure.

Responding, BEDC Managing Director, Engr. Jonathan Lawani, commended the Edo State Government for its proactive leadership, describing the visit as a clear signal of government backing.

JOHESU strike: NMA faults NLC, TUC ultimatum

GUSAU

The Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) has criticised the 14-day ultimatum issued by the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) over the ongoing strike by the Joint Health Sector Unions (JOHESU), describing it as unnecessary and potentially disruptive.

The NLC and TUC had given the Federal Government

until January 23 to implement the 2021 report of a Technical Committee on the adjustment of the Consolidated Health Salary Structure (CONHESS), threatening a nationwide strike across public and private sectors if the demand was not met.

Speaking at a press briefing in Gusau on Monday, NMA National Publicity Secretary, Dr Mannir Bature, said the issuance of public ultimatums on sensitive salary matters required caution and technical clarity.

Police foil robbery attempt, arrest suspect in Abuja

ABUJA

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Police Command has foiled an armed robbery attempt and arrested one suspect in Kado area of Abuja.

The Police Public Relations Officer in the FCT, SP Josephine Adeg, disclosed this in a statement on Monday.

She said the incident followed a distress call received

by the Mabushi Police Divisional Headquarters at about 6:15 a.m. on January 13, reporting that about three armed robbers were attacking motorists near an MRS Filling Station in Kado.

"Upon receipt of the report, a police response team swiftly mobilised to the scene. On sighting the police team, the suspects attempted to flee, leading to a hot pursuit and an exchange of gunfire," Adeg said.

She added that one of the suspects sustained gunshot injuries and was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment, while the remaining suspects escaped into nearby bushes.

Recovered items included a black Volkswagen Golf 2 with registration number JJJ 112 DW, a Beretta pistol, a locally made pistol and a Firman generator.

Other exhibits recovered were two mobile phones, an Ac-

cess Bank ATM card, a catapult, pliers, canvas shoes, slippers and several clothing items.

Adeg said efforts were ongoing to apprehend the fleeing suspects.

She added that the Commissioner of Police in the FCT, Mr Miller Dantaway, reaffirmed the command's commitment to protecting lives and property, urging residents to report suspicious activities through the police emergency lines.

Cross River senator flags off 2km road project in Yakurr

YAKURR (C'RIVER)

Senator Eteng Williams (APC-Cross River) has flagged off construction of the 2km Mkpiani Link Road in Yakurr Local Government Area of the state.

Speaking at the ceremony

on Monday, Williams said the project would connect communities and enhance social and economic interaction within the area.

The senator said the road project was part of his campaign promises, adding that it would drive economic growth

and rural transformation.

"This project forms part of my deliberate effort to improve the wellbeing of residents of this senatorial district. Roads are critical to socio-economic development," he said.

Williams noted that agrarian communities required good

road networks to enable farmers transport their produce to markets outside their localities.

Residents who spoke at the event described the project as timely, expressing optimism that it would ease transportation challenges when completed.

Police recruitment: PSC, NPF extend application deadline

ABUJA

The Police Service Commission (PSC) and the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) have extended the deadline for applications into the Nigeria Police Force by two weeks.

The Head of Protocol and

Public Affairs of the PSC, Mr Terty Kalu, announced this in a statement on Monday.

According to him, the recruitment exercise for 50,000 Constables, which began on December 15 and was scheduled to close on January 26, will now end on February 8.

Kalu said the extension

followed the receipt of over 400,000 applications and a review showing disparities in participation across states.

"While states such as Adamawa, Benue and Kaduna recorded high numbers, states including Lagos, Ogun, Bayelsa, Ebonyi and Anambra had notably lower submissions," he said.

He urged eligible Nigerians, especially from states with low participation, to apply through the official recruitment portal.

Kalu also called on state governments, local councils and community leaders to mobilise eligible applicants, assuring that the process would be fair and transparent.

INEC secures 9 convictions for vote buying in Osun

OSOGBO

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Osun State says it has secured the conviction of nine persons arrested for vote buying.

The Resident Electoral Commissioner in the state, Dr Mutiu Agboke, disclosed this

on Monday during a radio programme in Osogbo.

Agboke said the commission was intensifying efforts to ensure free, fair and credible elections ahead of the Osun governorship poll later in the year.

He called on political parties to comply strictly with INEC guidelines, warning against ac-

tions capable of undermining the electoral process.

On the ongoing Continuous Voter Registration (CVR), Agboke said INEC had upgraded its machines to prevent double or multiple registrations, adding that offenders would be arrested and prosecuted.

He urged the media to help curb misinformation by verify-

ing information with the commission before publication.

Agboke also disclosed that journalists in the state had been added to a WhatsApp platform managed by the commission's spokesperson to improve access to verified information, warning that legal action would be taken against defamatory or false reports.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known and addressed as **ANIGARA BEATRICE**, now wishes to be known and addressed as **IVONMAHAN BEATRICE ANIGARA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **MISS KEME ODUFA BLESSING**, now wish to be known and called **MRS. ONOCHIE ODUFA BLESSING**, former documents remain valid general public please take note.

Fire outbreaks kill 2, destroy N1.59bn properties in Bauchi

BAUCHI

The persons lost their lives while property worth N1.59 billion was destroyed in 167 fire incidents

recorded in Bauchi State between January and December 2025, the Federal Fire Service (FFS) has said.

The Public Relations Officer of the Bauchi State Command,

Umar Lawal, disclosed this in a fire outbreak statistics report made available to journalists on Monday.

Lawal said the command also saved four lives and property

valued at N2.86 billion during the period under review.

According to him, the incidents affected public and government buildings, private residences, educational institu-

tions, markets, petrol and gas stations, as well as automobiles.

A breakdown showed that properties worth N23 million were destroyed, while N855.1 million worth of assets were saved in 10 fire incidents involving public and government buildings.

In private dwellings, Lawal said properties valued at N605 million were lost, while N1.4 billion worth of assets were salvaged in 80 fire incidents.

He added that fire outbreaks in educational institutions led to the destruction of property worth N120 million, while N200 million was saved.

"Five market fires resulted in losses of N45 million, while N90 million worth of property

was saved. In petrol and gas station incidents, N23.7 million was lost and N53 million saved," he said.

Lawal further disclosed that 15 automobile fire incidents led to the loss of N70 million worth of vehicles, while N33 million worth of property was saved.

He attributed most of the fire outbreaks to electrical faults, power surges, illegal storage of petroleum products, accidents and refuse fires.

The spokesman advised residents to switch off electrical appliances when not in use and warned against overloading circuits, stressing that fire prevention was key to safeguarding lives, property and the environment.



TUGGAR IN TURKEY:

L-R: Amb. Hakan Fidan, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Amb. Yusuf Tuggar in Ankara, Turkey.

Minister slams slow pace of Zaria-Scheme road project

ZARIA

The Minister of State for Works, Bello Goronyo, has expressed dissatisfaction with the slow pace of work on the Zaria-Scheme Road project despite ongoing construction efforts.

Goronyo spoke during an inspection tour of the project from SHEME in Katsina State.

The road forms part of the dualisation of the Zaria-Funtua-Sokoto corridor spanning Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara and

Sokoto states, and is being handled by multiple contractors.

He explained that Mothercat Nigeria Limited is handling phases one and two from SHEME to Zaria, CBC is covering about 105 kilometres to Talatan Mafara in Zamfara, Triacta is working from Talatan Mafara to Gusau, while Setraco is handling the Gusau-SHEME axis.

While commending Mothercat for the quality of work delivered on the Zaria-SHEME section, the minister described

the pace as unacceptable, noting that project completion had only increased from seven per cent in 2025 to 17 per cent.

He said the inspection was carried out on the directive of President Bola Tinubu through the Minister of Works, Dave Umahi, warning that excuses for delays would no longer be tolerated.

Goronyo said the contractor had pledged to complete 21 kilometres on both lanes by March and about 98 kilometres within the next 11 to

12 months, assurances he said would be strictly enforced.

He added that controllers would remain on site to submit regular reports, while parts of the Triacta corridor had been reassigned to another contractor to ensure quality and timely delivery.

Earlier, the Project Manager of Mothercat Nigeria Limited, Ziad Karam, cited rising material costs, naira depreciation, outstanding compensation issues and right-of-way challenges as major setbacks.

FRSC warns motorists over hazy weather, poor visibility

ABUJA

The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) has cautioned motorists nationwide to exercise patience and caution due to prevailing hazy weather conditions affecting visibility on major highways.

The Corps Marshal, Malam Shehu Mohammed, gave the

warning in a statement issued by the Corps Public Education Officer, Olusegun Ogungbemi on Monday.

Mohammed said the dust haze, caused by seasonal atmospheric conditions, had significantly reduced visibility and increased the risk of road traffic crashes.

He urged motorists to slow down, obey speed limits and

drive defensively, stressing that speeding under poor visibility conditions was particularly dangerous.

"Drivers are advised to reduce speed, maintain safe following distances, ensure all vehicle lights are functional, and avoid dangerous driving behaviours such as wrongful overtaking and distracted driving," he said.

The FRSC boss also advised motorists to keep windscreens clean and wipers functional, while commercial drivers were urged to prioritise passenger safety.

He assured the public that FRSC patrol teams were on high alert nationwide and urged motorists to report emergencies through the toll-free number 122.

Police confirm attack on patrol team, Inspector killed at Oyo border

IBADAN

The Oyo State Police Command has confirmed an attack on a police patrol team by gunmen, which resulted in the killing of an Inspector at the Budo Masalasi Border Post.

The Command's spokesperson, DSP Ayanlade Olayinka, confirmed the incident in a

statement made available to newsmen.

According to reports, about 10 to 15 gunmen attacked ASP Entonu Shaibu and his patrol team on Saturday at about 1:30 p.m., during which Inspector Aliu Oluwole was killed.

The attackers reportedly carted away the Inspector's AK-47 rifle with 30 rounds of ammunition.

"Yes, there was an attack on police operatives during which an Inspector, while bravely repelling the assault, paid the supreme price in the line of duty," Olayinka said.

He disclosed that the Commissioner of Police, Femi Haruna, had ordered an immediate manhunt and comprehensive investigation into the incident, adding that some of the attack-

ers were believed to have sustained gunshot injuries.

The police urged residents to remain vigilant and report anyone seeking medical treatment for gunshot wounds under suspicious circumstances.

Olayinka assured the public that adequate security measures were in place and that the command was determined to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Edo govt rolls out safety drills for civil servants

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government has launched a statewide safety initiative aimed at strengthening the protection of public servants and government facilities.

At the maiden safety drill organised by the Ministry of Public Safety and Security for workers across ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), the State Commissioner, Hon. Festus Ebea, said the programme reflects the government's commitment to safeguarding lives and public assets, particularly against fire emergencies.

Ebea explained that the drill was designed to equip civil servants with modern emergency response skills, noting that prevention and preparedness remain central to the safety policy of the Governor Monday Okpebholo administration.

He directed that all emergen-

cy exit points at the State Secretariat must remain open during official working hours, stressing that the Edo State Government would not tolerate practices that endanger lives.

According to him, the Okpebholo-led administration places premium value on safety and security and will not compromise standards in public buildings.

The Edo State Fire Service demonstrated basic fire-control techniques, while the Red Cross Society also participated by offering professional emergency response support.

The exercise was attended by the Commissioner for Transport, Hon. Saturday Uwulekue, alongside staff of Block A of the State Secretariat.

The Edo State Government said the safety drills will be extended to other MDAs in the coming days as part of its proactive safety programme.

UK property forfeiture: Court stalls hearing in Useni, Ozekhome-linked suit

ABUJA

Hearing in a suit seeking the final forfeiture of a United Kingdom property linked to the late Jeremiah Useni, former Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, and Chief Mike Ozekhome, SAN, was on Monday stalled at the Federal High Court in Abuja over faulty service of court processes.

Justice Binta Nyako adjourned the matter after the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) failed to properly serve the motion for final forfeiture and hearing notice on the respondents.

The suit, marked FHC/ABJ/CS/2333/2025, lists the Administrators and Executors of the Estate of the late Gen. Useni, alongside the property at No. 79, Randall Avenue, Neasden, London NW2 7SX, as respondents.

In its application dated De-

cember 18, 2025, the CCB sought an order forfeiting the property to the Federal Government, alleging it was acquired with proceeds of unlawful activity.

CCB counsel, Sufyan Ahmad, told the court that an interim preservation order had earlier been granted on November 28, 2025, and published in a national newspaper inviting interested parties to show cause. He said no objections were filed.

However, under questioning by Justice Nyako, Ahmad admitted that service of the final forfeiture motion was effected on the deceased's daughter, who was not listed as an administrator of the estate.

The judge faulted the process and advised the CCB to apply for substituted service to enable any interested party, particularly the third respondent, to respond.

NEWS

2027: Don warns APC against dropping Tinubu/Shettima ticket

ABUJA

chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Prof. Haruna Yerima, has cautioned the ruling party against tampering with the Tinubu/Shettima presidential ticket ahead of the 2027 general elections.

In a statement issued in Abuja, Yerima said those calling for a change were the same political actors who opposed the ticket before the 2023 elections.

"There is no gainsaying the fact that tampering with the

Tinubu/Shettima presidential ticket will not augur well for the APC in 2027," he said.

The former House of Representatives member described it as "appalling" that individuals who doubted the ticket's capacity to win in 2023 were now pushing for its alteration.

"They should be stopped now, otherwise the ruling party risks its greatest defeat in 2027," he warned.

Yerima described advocates of a change as short-sighted and politically naïve, adding that the North-Central zone had been adequately compen-

sated with several Grade A federal appointments.

He also dismissed claims that remarks attributed to former United States President Donald Trump on "Christian genocide" were influencing calls to alter the ticket.

"It is not true that the President of the United States will determine who Nigeria's Vice President should be.

"This is the handiwork of political jobbers and fifth columnists," he said.

According to him, Vice

President Kashim Shettima has remained loyal, competent and dutiful in office.

"It is on record that Shettima has been a very loyal and competent deputy. Even his detractors cannot deny his intellectual depth and strong political

antecedents," Yerima added.

His comments followed recent concerns raised by Speaker of the Borno State House of Assembly, Abdulkarim Lawan, over the alleged exclusion of Shettima from certain political activities in the North-East.

Shell CEO praises Tinubu, unveils \$20bn fresh investment plan

ABUJA

Chief Executive Officer of Shell Plc, Mr Wael Sawan, has commended President Bola Tinubu for improving Nigeria's investment climate and restoring investor confidence.

Sawan spoke during a meeting with the President at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, according to a statement by presidential spokesman, Mr Bayo Onanuga.

He disclosed that Shell, with its partners, was ready to commit an additional \$20 billion to investments in Nigeria, citing the administration's economic vision.

"Nigeria under your leadership has emerged as a major destination for global oil and gas investments," Sawan said.

He highlighted ongoing projects, including \$5 billion in Bonga North, \$2 billion in HI,

and several gas projects linked to Nigeria LNG.

Sawan said Shell recently increased its stake in OML 118, the Bonga Block, following TotalEnergies' exit, and identified Bonga South West as a potential \$20 billion investment.

He described the renewed commitment as a "sea change" from previous years of declining investments, praising the President's economic and energy team for professionalism.

In response, Tinubu approved the gazetting of targeted, investment-linked incentives for the Bonga South West deep offshore project.

"These incentives are ring-fenced, investment-linked and focused on new capital and local value addition," the President said, expressing confidence that the project would reach Final Investment Decision within his first term.

UNHCR clears 3,122 Nigerian refugees in Cameroon for return

MAROUA (CAMEROON)

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other partners have cleared no fewer than 3,122 Nigerians displaced by Boko Haram attacks for voluntary repatriation from Cameroon to their home communities in Gwoza and Bama local government areas of Borno State.

Head of UNHCR Sub-Office in Maroua, Rudacogora Monique, said on Monday that all arrangements had been concluded to ensure the refugees return to Nigeria in safety, dignity and on a voluntary basis.

The refugees were screened at the Minawao Refugee Camp in Maroua by a joint team comprising officials of the Federal Government of Nigeria, the Government of Cameroon, the Borno State Government and UNHCR.

According to Monique, the week-long exercise cleared 306 persons from 71 households originally from Gwoza, and 2,816 persons from 486 households from Bama.

She assured the refugees of a safe transit under the tripartite agreement, commending the strong collaboration between the governments of Nigeria and Cameroon in ensuring the protection and wellbeing of Nigerians hosted at the Minawao camp.

Monique noted that many of the refugees had voluntarily decided to return home without any pressure, adding that fears surrounding the return process had been addressed following engagements, including the visit of Borno State Governor to the camp in December 2025.

She expressed optimism that the returnees would be well catered for during transit, describing Cameroon as a hospitable country that had provided refuge to them over the years.

Also speaking, Divisional Officer of Mayo-Tsanaga, Sone Clement Ngoe, said the voluntary repatriation exercise had been smooth and effective, adding that authorities were acting under the directive of the Governor of the Far-North Region to ensure a seamless operation.



YAM MARKET:

People buying yam at Daudu Yam Market on Makurdi Road on Monday.

World Bank renovates 749 classrooms, builds 214 solar boreholes in Sokoto

SOKOTO

The World Bank, through the Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment (AGILE) Project, has renovated 749 classrooms and constructed 214 solar-powered boreholes in schools across Sokoto State.

The AGILE Project Coordinator, Dr Mansur Isa-Buhari, disclosed this during a media roundtable with media executives on Monday.

Represented by the Assistant on System Strengthening

Component Lead, Suleiman Musa, Isa-Buhari said the project had significantly improved school infrastructure and learning environments across the state.

He said 94 out of the 161 planned activities for 2025 had been implemented.

"The project renovated 749 classrooms and constructed 214 solar-powered boreholes in 240 schools across Sokoto State," he said, adding that 1,652 toilet units were also constructed in the 23 local government areas.

Isa-Buhari said AGILE planted 4,480 trees in 224 schools, established eco-friendly clubs, and enrolled 16,528 adolescent girls out of a 17,000 target for 2025.

He added that the project supplied 11,221 desks, trained 2,240 School-Based Management Committee members, and distributed 97,446 teaching and learning materials to 240 schools.

According to him, 41,821 beneficiaries also received support under the Conditional Cash Transfer component.

Isa-Buhari noted that the state's education gap informed plans to establish 58 additional

smart secondary schools.

Presenting the performance report, the Monitoring and Evaluation Lead, Mr Muhammad Mainasara, said the project recorded 53 per cent implementation progress in 2025.

Also speaking, the Communication Component Lead, Mrs Rabi Gwadabawa, described the media as a critical partner in addressing misinformation and improving public acceptance of the project.

She added that AGILE also provided life-skills training for girls, including communication skills, menstrual hygiene management and climate change awareness.

Tinubu urges Nigerians to embrace clean energy, environmental protection

ABUJA

First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, has called on Nigerians to see environmental protection and cleanliness as a shared societal responsibility.

Tinubu made the call on

Monday in Abuja in a message to mark the International Day of Clean Energy 2026, themed "Clean Energy for People and Planet."

She said the day served as a reminder of the collective duty to preserve the environment for future generations.

"I urge us all to embrace renewable energy and sustainable technologies as essential foundations for survival, healthy living and environmental stewardship," she said.

The First Lady encouraged Nigerians to work together towards building a greener and

healthier planet, while also wishing citizens a happy International Day of Clean Energy.

The Day, marked annually on January 26, was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly to promote a just and inclusive transition to clean energy worldwide.

NSCDC reunites missing 13yr-old boy with family in Kano

KANO

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) has reunited a missing 13-year-old boy with his family at the command headquarters in Kano.

The Command's Public Relations Officer, SC Ibrahim

Idris-Abdullahi, disclosed this in a statement on Monday.

He said the boy was found wandering around Kwankwasiyya City along Zaria Road on January 20, 2026.

According to him, the minor, a Fulani from Dogon Hawa village in Kauru Local

Government Area of Kaduna State, was taken into the custody of the NSCDC Gender Unit.

"He stayed in our care for three days while efforts were made to trace his family," Idris-Abdullahi said.

He added that the parents were eventually located and

informed, after which the boy's father, Malam Saleh, accompanied by relatives, came to receive the child.

The family commended the NSCDC for its prompt intervention and humanitarian gesture, assuring that adequate measures would be taken to prevent a recurrence.

Fagbemi takes over prosecution of Ozekhome

ABUJA

The Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice, Mr Lateef Fagbemi, SAN, has formally taken over the prosecution of Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Mike Ozekhome, in the alleged fraud case instituted by the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC).

Ozekhome was scheduled to be arraigned on Monday before a High Court of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, over allegations bordering on forgery linked to a United Kingdom property transaction.

When the case was called, Dr Osuebeni Akpomesingha announced his appearance for the prosecution, while former AGF

and Minister of Justice, Chief Kanu Agabi, SAN, led other counsel for the defendant.

At that point, the Director of Public Prosecutions of the Federation (DPPF), Mr Rotimi Oyedepo, SAN, announced his appearance on behalf of the AGF and informed the court of the Federal Government's decision to take over the case from the ICPC.

Oyedepo said the takeover was pursuant to Section 174 of the 1999 Constitution, adding that the Office of the AGF would collaborate with the ICPC to ensure effective, diligent and fair prosecution in line with due process.

He said the decision was guided by public interest and aimed at promoting confidence, fairness and compe-

tence in the criminal justice system, while assuring the court that the defendant's rights would be fully protected.

Oyedepo also cited inter-agency cooperation in the fight against corruption as a key consideration and urged the court to take judicial notice of the takeover.

The AGF consequently sought an adjournment to enable his office retrieve and review the case file from the ICPC before determining the next line of action.

Counsel to the ICPC raised no objection, assuring the court of the commission's full cooperation, having investigated the matter.

By agreement of parties, Justice Peter Kekemeke adjourned the case until February 24 for

arraignment.

In the charge marked FCT/HC/CR/010/26, dated January 16, Ozekhome is the sole defendant.

In the three-count charge, ICPC alleged that Ozekhome, sometime in August 2021 in London, received a property located at No. 79, Randall Avenue, London NW2 7SX, purportedly from one Mr Shani Tali, knowing the act constituted a felony, contrary to Section 13 and punishable under Section 24 of the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act, 2000.

The second count alleged that Ozekhome made a false document, a Nigerian passport bearing the name of Mr Shani to support ownership claims over the property, an offence punishable under the Penal

Code of the FCT.

In the third count, the senior lawyer was accused of dis-

honestly using the said passport as genuine, knowing it to be false.

2 brothers jailed for stealing phone in Mosque

ABUJA

Wuse Magistrates' Court has sentenced two brothers, Adamu and Rabiu Ibrahim, to two months' imprisonment each for stealing a cellphone inside a mosque.

The Magistrate, Mr Olumide Bamisile, offered the convicts

an option of N30,000 fine each and warned them to desist from criminal activities.

Prosecutor Donatus Abah told the court that the brothers stole a Galaxy Fold 4 belonging to one Yusuf Aliyu while he was praying at Annur Mosque in Maitama.

The phone was later recovered and returned to the owner.

Trader arraigned over alleged N13.7m fraud in Ibadan

IBADAN

47-year-old trader, Esther Binuyo, on Monday appeared before an Iyaganku Chief Magistrates' Court over an alleged N13.7 million fraud.

Binuyo pleaded not guilty to two counts of fraud and stealing.

The prosecution alleged that

the defendant obtained the money from one Oluwakemisola Gbadebo under the pretext of investing it, but later absconded.

Chief Magistrate Olabisi Ogunkanmi granted the defendant bail in the sum of N7.5 million with two sureties and adjourned the case until April 8 for hearing.

Foreigner docked over alleged N22m supermarket fraud

IKORODU

38-year-old foreigner, Ramkishor Chaudi, was on Monday arraigned before an Ikorodu Magistrates' Court over alleged fraud and theft amounting to N22 million.

The defendant pleaded not

guilty to a four-count charge of intent to defraud, forgery and stealing.

The court granted him bail in the sum of N5 million with two sureties, one of whom must be a Nigerian citizen, and adjourned the case until February 19 for mention.

Police recover arms, fake currency, 25 vehicles in Lagos crackdown

LAGOS

The Lagos State Police Command has recorded major operational breakthroughs between December 2025 and January, recovering arms, suspected fake foreign currencies and 25 vehicles from criminal suspects across the state.

Commissioner of Police, Mr Olohundare Jimoh, disclosed this on Monday while briefing journalists at the command headquarters in Ikeja.

He attributed the successes to intelligence-led policing, sustained surveillance, targeted raids and swift tactical responses.

Jimoh said several suspects were arrested for offences ranging from conspiracy, robbery and armed robbery to vehicle theft, assault, smuggling, fraudulent conversion and threats to life.

He said items recovered included four locally fabricated firearms, 13 cut-to-size pistols, nine live cartridges, one expended cartridge, fetish

charms and other dangerous weapons. Bundles of suspected fake United States dollars and Euros were also seized.

The commissioner revealed that a major breakthrough was recorded in January with the arrest of 21 members of a notorious "one-chance" kidnapping syndicate in Idimu, Alimosho area. Recovered exhibits included Toyota Corolla and Camry vehicles, fetish charms, 21 bundles of suspected fake US dollars and 12 bundles of suspected fake Euros.

Jimoh also confirmed the arrest of a suspect linked to a bomb threat targeting three schools in Ikeja and Ogombo areas, adding that digital forensic investigations had traced the threat to the suspect, while further investigations were ongoing.

He said some suspects were still assisting police in probing armed robbery, one-chance operations and interstate vehicle-snatching networks, while efforts were ongoing to verify ownership of recovered vehicles and trace the sources of fake currencies.



KURUDU REFUSE:

Heaps of refuse that have taken over sections of the Nyanya-Karshi Road at Kurudu in Abuja, which severely obstruct traffic and create environmental and health hazards for residents and commuters.

EFCC files N4.3bn forex fraud case against UBA, 4 others

IKEJA

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has instituted a N4.3 billion alleged foreign exchange fraud case against United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc and four other defendants before the Ikeja Special Offences Court.

The other defendants are Muyiwa Akinyemi, Amangbo Stephen, Gesos Global Service Ltd and Fedat Global Ltd.

Justice Rahman Oshodi adjourned the case until April 21 for the arraignment of the defendants, following their absence in court on Monday.

None of the defendants was represented by counsel.

EFCC counsel, Mr Temitope Banjo, expressed surprise at their absence, stating that all the defendants had been duly served with the charge and other court processes.

He further informed the court that the second and third

defendants were on the run and that efforts were ongoing to trace their whereabouts.

Banjo sought an adjournment to enable the commission file necessary applications to establish proof of service.

Granting the application, Justice Oshodi adjourned the matter to April 21.

The defendants are facing a four-count charge bordering on conspiracy, stealing, money laundering and retention of

proceeds of crime.

According to the charge, the alleged offences were committed between September 14, 2022 and March 20, 2023 in Lagos, including the alleged fraudulent conversion of N4.3 billion belonging to Energy Shield Petrochemical Ltd.

The EFCC also alleged that the defendants sold foreign exchange above Central Bank of Nigeria rates and retained and laundered the proceeds, contrary to relevant laws.

Court jails trader, driver for mischief, theft in Jos

JOS

Magistrate's Court in Jos has sentenced a 23-year-old trader, Yusuf Musa, to two years' imprisonment for mischief and causing hurt.

Magistrate Irene Pati, how-

ever, gave the convict an option of N30,000 fine for mischief or one year in prison, and N40,000 fine for causing hurt or another one year imprisonment, with both sentences to run concurrently.

She also ordered Musa to pay N120,000 compensation to

the complainant or face an additional five months in prison.

Earlier, the prosecutor, Insp Ijupitl Thiawur, told the court that the convict damaged the complainants' vehicle and caused injury by throwing stones at them.

In a related case, the court

sentenced a 20-year-old driver, Victor Jonah, to one year imprisonment for stealing a phone from a tricycle.

Jonah was given an option of N10,000 fine or six months imprisonment for each of the offences of mischief and theft, to run concurrently.

NEWS

Foreign

Israel says it has retrieved remains of final Gaza hostage

The Israeli military says it has retrieved the body of the last hostage in Gaza, paving the way for the next phase of US President Donald Trump's peace plan to get under way.

It had been searching for Master Sgt Ran Gvili since the ceasefire with Hamas began in October.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Gvili's return "an extraordinary achievement".

The Israeli military began searching a cemetery for Gvili on Sunday morning. Hamas's armed wing said it had provided mediators with "all the details and information" about Gvili's location.

Netanyahu's office said Israel would reopen Gaza's key border crossing with Egypt once the operation to find and return Gvili was complete.

The prime minister hailed the return of Gvili's body, saying: "We promised - and I promised - to bring everyone back. We brought them all back, down to the very last captive," he said.

The Israeli military said the clarification of existing intelligence over the weekend had enabled the search of the cemetery near Gaza City. A military official said the cemetery "was located in the area of the Yellow Line", the boundary to territory still controlled by Israeli forces under the ceasefire deal.

Hamas said it had "kept updating the mediators with the necessary information, which resulted in retrieving the body".

Spokesman Hazem Qassem said the discovery "confirms Hamas's commitment to all the requirements of the cease-

fire agreement".

In Israel, Itzik Gvili, the hostage's father, paid an emotional goodbye to his son in front of his coffin.

"You had the option to stay home, but you said to me: 'Father, I'm not going to leave my friends to fight alone.'

"You came out, and you need to see the honour you have here, all the people who brought you. All the police are here with you, the entire army is here with you, the entire nation is here with you. I'm proud of you, my son," Itzik Gvili said.

Rani Gvili's sister Shira earlier told the Hostages and Missing Families Forum: "I feel an insane sense of relief. I feel relieved. I am sad. I'm very

sad that it ended this way, but it had to end at some point. I am so happy he's coming back home."

The retrieval of Gvili may bring closure to his family and it finally ends Israel's hostage agony after 843 days.

It also opens the way for further progress in Gaza's ceasefire deal. Israel had resisted moving forward until Gvili was found.

Phase two is meant to involve the reconstruction and full demilitarisation of Gaza, including the disarmament of Hamas and other Palestinian groups. The plan is also meant to see the deployment of an as-yet unconstituted International Stabilization Force (ISF) and the progressive withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.

On Friday, the Gvili family gathered in Tel Aviv's Hostages

Square, as they had every week since he and the other 250 were abducted on 7 October 2023.

"I looked them in the eyes and said: 'We will bring Rani home'," Netanyahu recounted on Monday. "I promised you, citizens of Israel: We will bring everyone home."

It is a promise finally delivered, and will be celebrated, but his critics say it has taken too long and cost too many lives - Israeli and Palestinian.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) announced Gvili's retrieval in a statement, saying: "According to the information and intelligence available to us, Sgt Maj (res) Ran Gvili... a Yamam commando fighter, aged 24 at the time of his death, fell in battle on the morning of October 7, 2023, and his body was abducted to the Gaza Strip.



RETRIEVED BODY OF GVILI:

Ran Gvili was killed on 7 October 2023 and his body held hostage in Gaza.

France debates under-15s social media ban endorsed by Macron

France is on course to follow Australia in banning social media to younger teenagers, as debate on a new law opens in the National Assembly.

The law would block access for under 15-year-olds to networks such as Snapchat, Instagram and TikTok.

President Emmanuel Macron has said he wants the ban in place by the start of the school year in September.

The French move is part of a worldwide trend towards restricting social networks for children, triggered by growing evidence of the damage they can cause to mental health.

"We cannot leave the mental and emotional health of our children in the hands of people whose sole purpose is to make money out of them," Macron said last month.

Under the new text, the state media regulator would draw up a list of social media networks that are deemed harmful. These

would be simply banned for under 15-year-olds.

A separate list of supposedly less harmful sites would be accessible, but only with explicit parental approval.

The bill is believed to have a good chance of passing, with pro-Macron parties likely to be joined by the centre-right Republicans (LR) as well as the populist right-wing National Rally (RN).

Another clause would ban the use of mobile telephones in senior schools (lycées). The ban is already in effect in junior and middle schools.

If the law is passed, France will need to agree on the mechanism for age-verification. A system is already in place that requires over 18 year-olds to prove their age when accessing online pornography.

In Europe, Denmark, Greece, Spain and Ireland are also considering following the Australian example. Earlier this month, the UK government launched a

consultation on banning social media for under 16s.

The basis of the proposed French law is a text drawn up late last year by deputy Laure Miller, who chaired a parliamentary committee enquiry into the psychological effects of TikTok and other networks.

Separately, the government was told to draw up its own legislation, after Macron decided to make the issue a centrepiece of his last year in office.

The president has been sidelined from domestic politics since the Assembly elections which he called in 2024 resulted in a hung parliament, and the social media ban has been a rare chance to court public favour.

For a time the cause risked falling victim to bickering between Macron and his one-time prime minister Gabriel Attal (Miller is an MP from Attal's party). But in the end the government appears to have rallied behind the Miller bill.

If the text is approved on Monday, it will pass before the upper house, the Senate, in the next month. Macron said he had asked the government of Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu to use a fast-track procedure to get the legislation on the books by September.

Without resort to the fast-track (which permits a single reading as opposed to two in each of the two houses), the law would have little chance of getting past the legislative backlog created by Lecornu's difficulties in passing a budget.

The bill has already had to be redrafted to take account of questions raised by the Council of State, the body which previews draft legislation to ensure it conforms with French and European law.

A 2023 law which proposed a similar ban on social media for young teenagers proved inoperable after courts decided it broke European law.

Seven people killed and one injured in private jet crash in Maine

Seven people were killed and one was seriously injured after a private jet crashed while taking off from Bangor International Airport in the US state of Maine.

The Bombardier Challenger 600 went down at around 19:45 local time (00:45 GMT on Monday), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said. The lone survivor of the crash was a member of the flight crew.

The incident came as a dangerous winter storm barreled across a large swathe of the US, killing several people and leaving hundreds of thousands without power. Pilots had reportedly been struggling with visibility at the airport before the crash.

Bangor remains under a winter storm warning until Tuesday, with heavy snowfall forecast.

In a short report issued on Monday, the FAA said that the jet carrying eight people "crashed under unknown circumstances on departure" on Sunday evening.

The statement added that the aircraft "came to rest inverted and caught fire".

Bangor International Airport said following the incident that it had closed and that emergency crews were responding. The incident re-

mains under investigation, and officials have not released the identities of the victims.

Public records show that the plane is registered to a law firm in Houston, Texas.

Audio from air traffic control, reported by the BBC's US partner CBS News and published by LiveATC.net, captured discussions between controllers and pilots minutes before the crash concerning poor visibility, though it was unclear which aircraft were heard in the communications.

Shortly afterwards, a controller was heard saying there was "a passenger aircraft upside down". Images from the scene showed smoke and flames on the runway.

The disruption came amid widespread travel chaos due to the storm, with more than 11,000 flights cancelled and nearly 5,500 delayed across the US on Sunday, according to tracker FlightAware.

Airports in Philadelphia, Washington DC, Baltimore, North Carolina, New York and New Jersey were among those affected.

Between 10 and 16 inches (25-40cm) of snow is forecast to accumulate in parts of Maine, including Bangor, by Tuesday morning, according to the National Weather Service.

Gunmen storm Mexico football pitch and kill at least 11 people

At least 11 people were killed and another dozen injured when gunmen opened fire on locals who had gathered at a football pitch in the city of Salamanca in central Mexico on Sunday.

Witnesses said armed men arrived at the grounds in several vehicles and shot at those gathered there seemingly indiscriminately.

Many families had stayed behind to socialise after a match between local clubs. At least one woman and one child were among those killed.

The motive behind the shooting is not yet clear. Guanajuato, the state in which Salamanca is located, registered the highest number of murders in the whole of Mexico last year.

Neighbours reported hearing at least 100 shots ring out as the gunmen opened fire at the Cabañas pitch in the Loma de Flores neighbourhood.

Local and federal security forces are now investigating the deadly shooting.

It came just a day after several violent incidents in the city, in which a total of five men were killed and another was abducted.

Guanajuato has seen a spike in violence committed by a number of gangs that engage in

the theft of oil and fuel, as well as other criminal activities such as drug trafficking and extortion.

Gang members frequently hold up tanker trucks carrying oil and tap oil pipelines belonging to state-run oil company Pemex.

Salamanca, which is home to a major Pemex refinery, has been particularly subjected to violent gang-related attacks.

Analysts say that the rivalry between the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) and the Cartel de Santa Rosa de Lima (CSRL) is behind many of the most brutal incidents.

Their criminal activities are not confined to Mexico, with both the smuggling of stolen fuel and illicit drugs spreading violence into the United States.

Last year, the US State Department designated the CJNG as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation and, more recently, placed sanctions on the CSRL.

US President Donald Trump has made the fight against criminal gangs sending illicit drugs such as heroin, fentanyl, methamphetamines and cocaine one of his priorities.

He has in the past alleged that "cartels are running Mexico" and has threatened to hit "narco-terrorists" with land strikes.

Foreign**NEWS****US, Nigeria diverge in details over strikes on militants**

Immediately following surprise US strikes targeting militants in Nigeria, it remained unclear who or what was actually hit as Washington and Abuja told slightly different stories.

Complicating matters was the fact that the strikes were delayed by American President Donald Trump, apparently to prioritise the symbolism of launching the attack on Christmas -- and allegations that Washington backed out of issuing a joint statement with the Nigerians.

The two countries agree the strikes hit targets linked to Islamic State, but neither immediately provided details on which of Nigeria's myriad armed groups were targeted.

"Twenty-four hours after the bombing, neither Nigeria nor its so-called 'international partners' can provide clear, verifiable information about what was actually struck," activist and former presidential candidate Omoyele Sowore said Saturday.

Nigeria is battling multiple jihadist organisations, including several linked to the Islamic State. Neighbouring countries are also fighting IS-linked groups, and there are worries that those conflicts are spilling into the country.

Mohammed Idris, the country's information minister, said late Friday that the strikes "targeted ISIS elements attempting to penetrate Nigeria from the Sahel corridor".

More official clarity started to emerge Saturday, when Daniel Bwala, a spokesman for President Bola Tinubu, told AFP the strikes targeted Islamic State militants who were in the country to work with the Lakurawa jihadist group and "bandit" gangs.

All three were targeted, and

there were casualties, though it is unknown who was killed and from which group, Bwala said.

- Trump claims credit -

Taking to social media the night of the strike, Trump was the first to take credit for the overnight Thursday-to-Friday strikes in northwestern Sokoto state -- sparking worries among Nigerians that their sovereignty had been violated.

Trump also told US outlet Politico that the strikes had been scheduled earlier than Thursday, "And I said, 'nope, let's give a Christmas present'."

The opposition People's Democratic Party slammed the government for allowing "foreign powers" to "break the news of security operations in our country before our government does".

Early Friday, Nigerian Foreign Minister Yusuf Tuggar insisted it was a joint operation, with Tinubu ultimately giving the go-ahead and Nigeria supplying intelligence for the strikes.

Tuggar later told broadcaster Arise News that, while he was on the phone ahead of the strikes with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, the two had agreed on issuing a joint statement, but Washington rushed out its own.

- Villages hit by mistake -

Late Friday, almost 24 hours after the strikes, it was Nigeria that finally provided clarity around what the targets were: "two major Islamic State (ISIS) terrorist enclaves" in Sokoto state's Tangaza district, according to Idris.

Other villages were hit by what the information minister said was debris from the strikes.

Images from an AFP photographer in Offa, in neighbouring Kwara state, showed crumbled buildings, debris-strewn streets, roofs caved in, and belongings scattered among the wreckage.

Iran warns US not to launch military action as activists say protest death toll near 6,000

Iranian authorities unveiled a new mural in central Tehran on Sunday containing a clear warning to the United States: do not attempt to strike our country.

The painting shows damaged planes on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier against the background of an American flag. It bears the slogan: "If you sow the wind, you will reap the whirlwind," in Farsi and English.

The move comes as the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency says it has confirmed that 5,848 people had been killed during the recent wave of protests in Iran. That includes 5,520 protesters, 77 minors, 209 members of the security forces and 42 bystanders.

The group says it is still investigating another 17,091 possible fatalities. At least 41,283 people have been arrested, it said.

US President Trump had

threatened military intervention if Tehran continued to kill peaceful protesters or carried out mass executions of those detained.

The protests started in late December sparked by economic grievances but turned into a mass movement against the Islamic Republic, with huge street rallies for several days in early January.

Rights groups have accused authorities of an unprecedented crackdown by shooting directly at the protesters and the demonstrations have, for now, petered out. But the two countries continue to exchange threats.

Trump says he's moved an aircraft carrier towards the region "in case" in he decides to take action.

The head of Iran's Revolutionary Guard has warned that his force is "more ready than ever, finger on the trigger."



SOCIAL MEDIA:

Under the proposal, a list of social media networks deemed harmful would be banned for under 15-year-olds.

Uganda's military chief denies army assaulted Bobi Wine's wife

Uganda's military chief Muhoozi Kainerugaba has denied claims that soldiers assaulted Barbara Kyagulanyi, the wife of opposition leader Bobi Wine, during a raid at their home.

Wine, who is in hiding, alleged on Saturday that his wife was held at gunpoint by military officers who assaulted her, taking away documents and electronic items. He said the house continued to be surrounded by the military.

Speaking from hospital, Barbara Kyagulanyi said the officers had demanded to know Wine's whereabouts and had assaulted her when she refused.

It comes after the recent landslide victory of long-serving leader, and Kainerugaba's father, President Yoweri Museveni. Wine rejected the results citing fraud.

On Monday, the general posted on X that "my soldiers did not beat up Barbie [Bobi Wine's] wife".

"First of all, we do not beat up women. They are not worth our time. We are looking for her cowardly husband not her," he said.

Since Museveni was announced the winner of the 15 January election, the military chief has demanded Wine's surrender and has issued death threats against him.

Wine said on Monday that Kainerugaba was still looking for him "and issuing threats to harm me" and thanked the people for continuing to keep him safe.

"My wife is still recovering from the trauma of an overnight raid and assault... My home is still surrounded by the military," he added in a post on X.

From her hospital bed, Barbara Kyagulanyi had described

how dozens of men had broken into her house, some in military uniform, harassing and assaulting her.

She said one of the men "hit me on the face and tore my lip". She said the officer had lifted her from behind by the waistband of her trousers while another choked her as she hung mid-air.

She said the first officer pulled off her blouse, leaving her partially naked, though it was later given back.

She said the officer also pulled her hair and "hit me on the face and tore my lip".

Barbara Kyagulanyi said she passed out after the ordeal. According to Wine, she was taken to hospital "with both physical and psychological trauma".

Since the election, the opposition has alleged that its supporters have been targeted by the security forces.

Kainerugaba said on Friday that security officers had killed 30 supporters of the opposition National Unity Party (NUP) led by Wine and detained 2,000 others.

Lawmaker Muwanga Kivumbi, who is a close Wine ally, was arrested for his alleged role in election-related violence last week, which the party denied.

The Uganda Law Society denounced the "ongoing wave of detentions, torture and enforced disappearance" of opposition leaders and supporters.

"No-one should be subjected to violence by security forces under the pretext of national security," the society said on Sunday.

Uganda has not witnessed a peaceful transfer of presidential power since independence.

Museveni first came to office as a rebel leader in 1986 and will have served for 45 years when the next term ends in 2031.

Spain slashes speed limit on popular train route after fault found

Spanish rail authorities have temporarily reduced the speed limit on part of the high-speed line between Madrid and Barcelona after a fault was detected on the track.

Transport Minister Oscar Puente said a crack had been found on Sunday night in the line 110km (68 miles) west of Barcelona, between Alcover and l'Espluga de Francolí, in the Catalonia region.

It comes days after a high-speed collision killed 45 people in southern Spain and amid severe disruption to local rail services in the north-east of the country.

The transport ministry said the fault in the line did not pose a danger to trains travelling along it and that they would continue to move along it.

This is the latest and most drastic of several speed reductions on high-speed lines in recent days, fol-

lowing the accident in Adamuz, in Andalusia, earlier this month.

The speed limit on the section of track affected will be 80km/h (50mph) until further notice. High-speed trains travel as fast as 300km/h between Madrid and Barcelona - one of Spain's most heavily used long-distance links.

Last week, the limit on several sections of the Madrid-Barcelona line was temporarily reduced to 230 km/h after drivers had reported vibrations or other anomalies on the route, before being restored to 300km/h following technical checks.

Some sections of the Madrid-Valencia line also had their speed limit cut temporarily to 160km/h and 200km/h.

Meanwhile, the local Rodalies rail service in Catalonia has been severely disrupted.

Last week, a trainee driver

was killed when a train struck a collapsed wall, the Rodalies service was grounded as drivers demanded improved safety guarantees and lines were reviewed.

On Monday, two separate incidents caused further chaos in the region, as the service was again suspended, before partially resuming later in the day. The Spanish government said it did not know the cause of the incidents - but did not rule out a cyberattack.

The Catalan Republican Left (ERC) party said the Rodalies network had suffered "decades of lack of investment".

"The reputational damage is as bad as or worse than the economic losses," said Ramon Talamàs, president of the Chamber of Commerce of Terrassa.

Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez is due to appear before Congress on 11 February to be

questioned about the rail crisis.

These measures come as the investigation continues into the Adamuz high-speed crash, in which the rear carriages of a train heading north towards Madrid were derailed on a straight section of track, causing a collision with an oncoming train.

Investigators have been examining a 40cm (16in) section of track that broke loose, apparently shortly before the derailment.

The transport ministry has said that the line on which it happened had been renovated and undergone recent technical reviews.

However, it has emerged that the piece of damaged rail, which was made in 2023, had been welded onto an older section, reportedly manufactured in 1989, and the join between the two appears to be where it cracked.

FEATURES



TRUMP'S GUNBOAT

Trump's gunboat diplomacy and the threat to global stability

MARK LONGYEN (NAN)

In recent months, growing unease has gripped the international community as global leaders, analysts and diplomats warn that the world may be edging toward one of its most dangerous moments since the end of the Second World War.

This anxiety was laid bare at the 2026 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, where Canada's Prime Minister, Mark Carney, delivered a blunt assessment of the evolving global order.

Speaking without equivocation, Carney warned that the foreign policy posture of U.S. President Donald Trump now posed a direct threat to global peace, international security and the post-war rules-based system.

According to Carney, the recent U.S. invasion of Venezuela, threats to annex Greenland and the aggressive deployment of trade tariffs all point to a troubling return to a doctrine of coercion.

"Let me be direct. We are in the midst of a rupture, not a transition.

"The global rules-based order is collapsing, or may already have collapsed, under the weight of unilateral actions," Carney said.

In a similar vein, French President Emmanuel Macron warned that the world was drifting toward lawlessness, where brute force increasingly overrides diplomacy.

"We are witnessing a shift toward a world without rules, where international law is trampled underfoot.

"The only law that seems to matter now is that of the strongest, with imperial ambitions resurfacing," Macron said.

Trump himself appeared to signal

this posture during his second-term inauguration on January 20, 2025, when he declared to thunderous applause: "Nothing will stand in our way."

Since then, analysts have described his foreign policy as defined by brinkmanship and mercantilism.

Many now characterise it as gunboat diplomacy, marked by the threat or use of military and economic force to secure strategic and territorial advantage.

As a result, America's traditional allies, especially in Europe, are reassessing their dependence on Washington.

Former Deputy Commander of NATO in Europe, Richard Shirreff, warned that the U.S. is no longer behaving like a reliable partner.

"Under Trump, the United States has shifted from a valued ally to an avaricious imperial predator," Shirreff said.

"This weakens NATO and creates dangerous opportunities for Russia."

Shirreff added that European states are now being forced to confront uncomfortable questions about security guarantees that once seemed unquestionable.

Meanwhile, critics point to a series of unilateral actions, including the bombing of Iranian nuclear facilities, the capture and extradition of Venezuela's former President, Nicolas Maduro, and the standoff with Denmark over Greenland, as developments capable of triggering wider conflicts.

Prof. Greg Grandin of Yale University says Trump's actions mark a decisive break from liberal internationalism.

"What we are seeing is the renunciation of liberal internationalism and the abandonment of a world governed by common laws," Grandin said.

He warned that Latin America is now precariously positioned between

ideological forces.

"Trump's dated strategy is putting us on a path to World War III," he added.

This concern is shared within the U.S. political establishment.

Former Republican Senator and Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Bob Corker, said many lawmakers privately fear the consequences of Trump's volatility.

"The vast majority of our caucus understands what we're dealing with here.

"They understand the volatility and the tremendous amount of work it takes by people around him just to keep him in the middle of the road," Corker said.

In Europe, tensions have further intensified over Trump's pressure on Ukraine to accept a territorial settlement with Russia, alongside threats to withdraw U.S. security guarantees from NATO.

Trump reportedly warned Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky that failure to resolve the conflict on U.S. terms could result in a loss of American support, a move analysts say resembles a stick-and-carrot strategy rather than diplomacy.

Earlier, Trump had insisted that the U.S. would accept nothing less than full ownership of Greenland, arguing that it was critical to U.S. security.

"This enormous, unsecured island is actually part of North America, That's our territory, and we need it for our missile defence," Trump said.

Although he later softened his position at Davos, the remarks sparked global criticism.

Elsewhere, the Middle East remains the most volatile flashpoint.

Trump's deployment of multiple aircraft carriers around Iran and his stark warning have raised fears of es-

calation.

"Iran will be completely wiped off the face of the earth if it threatens the United States," Trump warned.

Iran, however, has responded in equally forceful terms.

"Our hands are on the trigger," Tehran warned, pledging to respond with "all available means" to any attack.

Israel's muted contemplation of its so-called Samson Option; a last-resort nuclear response has further heightened anxieties, while Russia, China and North Korea have openly declared solidarity with Iran.

Beyond military posturing, Trump's withdrawal from international treaties and organisations has weakened global safeguards against nuclear proliferation.

Analyst Zi Enlai warned that such actions are eroding critical guardrails.

"By exiting international organisations and treaties, the U.S. has reduced the mechanisms that prevent nuclear proliferation," Enlai said.

"This risks a dangerous nuclear domino effect, particularly in Asia".

Nowhere is this risk clearer than in U.S.-China relations. Washington's record-breaking 11.1 billion-dollar arms sale to Taiwan has drawn sharp rebukes from Beijing.

"This crosses a red line," China warned, responding with large-scale military drills around the island.

Analysts caution that the inclusion of long-range offensive weapons raises the risk of miscalculation, potentially drawing the world's two largest nuclear powers into direct confrontation.

In Africa, Trump's foreign policy has been equally polarising. While military actions against terrorist groups in Nigeria and Somalia have

been welcomed by some, critics say his broader Africa strategy lacks vision.

Nigeria's former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prof. Bolaji Akinoyemi, was unsparing in his assessment.

"Trump's African foreign policy is uninspiring, shocking and depressing.

"Instead of rallying the world for peace, he is audaciously threatening it with a bouquet of hostile policies," Akinoyemi said.

Analyst Dr Olugbade Omotajo warned of historical parallels.

"When Hitler started, no one gave him a chance until he became a full-fledged monster.

"The question is whether Trump will end this world, or this world will end Trump," Omotajo said.

Observers also accuse Trump of undermining the United Nations by sidelining multilateral processes, including through the creation of a U.S.-led Gaza Board of Peace.

As regional bodies such as ECOWAS and the African Union warn of growing instability, analysts say unilateralism risks deepening geopolitical fragmentation and pushing fragile states toward alternative power blocs.

In sum, as Trump presses ahead with an assertive foreign policy rarely witnessed in recent history, the world finds itself navigating an era of profound uncertainty.

Whether these mounting tensions culminate in a catastrophic global conflict or are eventually tempered by diplomacy remains unclear.

What is certain, observers say, is that the consequences of miscalculation have never been higher. (NAN Feature)

Sports

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

NPFL26, MD22: Bendel Insurance FC succumb to Shooting Stars, host Barau midweek

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Bendel Insurance Football Club, Sunday evening suffered a 1-0 defeat in the hands of arch rivals Shoot-

ing Stars Sports Club of Ibadan after their show of resilience and strong intent to continue their nine game unbeaten run came under strong resistance. Substitute Qamar Adegoke

scored the only goal of the match in the 73rd minute to halt the Benin Arsenal's impressive run.

The Benin Arsenal started the high intensity match at

the Lekan Salami stadium with winning mentality and purpose with strength for strength and skills for skill until the second half heartbeat goal came.

Insurance FC made several good attempts to equalize but were unlucky to get it. One of the brightest opportunity was Chinedu Nwosu' 77th minute that went an inch away from the net.

Bendel Insurance FC have remained unbeaten in nine games. The last time they tasted defeat was at Plateau Utd in the first round.

Recall that Shooting Stars ran away with a point shared in the 1-1 first round encounter at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium.

The Benin Arsenal remained gallant in defeat to 3SC with 32 points and will now shift their focus to the midweek (January 28) fixture against Barau FC at the Samuel Ogbemudia stadium in Benin. Kick off time is 4pm.



Bendel Insurance FC



NVBF unveils 12 clubs for 2025 Volleyball Super Cup

The Nigeria Volleyball Federation (NVBF) has unveiled the list of 12 clubs that will participate in the 2025 NVBF Super Cup for men and women, scheduled to hold in Abuja.

The tournament will take place from Jan. 30 to Feb. 8 at the Indoor Sports Hall, Package B, Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja.

President of the federation, Musa Nimrod, said in a statement on Monday that the Super Cup, one of NVBF's flagship competitions, was designed to showcase elite volleyball talent across the country.

Nimrod said the competition was also aimed at fostering competitiveness, excellence and

the sustainable development of volleyball in Nigeria.

According to him, the invited teams were selected based on their performances and status within their respective divisions, a move expected to guarantee a highly competitive tournament.

In the Premier Division (Men), the participating teams are Chief of Naval Staff Volleyball Club (CNS), Nigeria Customs Service Volleyball Club (NCS) and Nigeria Correctional Service Volleyball Club (NCS).

The Premier Division (Women) will feature Nigeria Customs Service Volleyball Club (NCS), Chief of Naval Staff Volleyball Club (CNS) and Chief of Army Staff Volleyball Club (COAS).

ITTF World Team Finals: Nigeria draws Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, South Africa

Nigeria has been drawn alongside Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia and South Africa in Group 15 of the ITTF World Team Championships Finals in London, Apr. 28 to May 10.

The draw ceremony, held on Monday at The Shard in Southwark, London, marked the start of celebrations for 100 years of the World Championships.

ITTF President Petra Sorling said: "From London to London, we have come full circle.

"England has hosted the championships seven times, but returning to where it began makes this centenary edition truly special.

"This event is already historic, and I am confident it will also be unforgettable."

Nigeria's men's team, led by Quadri Aruna, will face strong opposition from Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia and continental rivals South Africa.

In the women's event, Fatimo Bello will captain Nigeria in Group 11 against Australia, Uzbekistan and Wales.

African champions Egypt, led by Omar Assar, were drawn against Kazakhstan, Turkey and Thailand in the men's competition.

Rising star Hana Goda will lead Egypt's women's team against Algeria, South Africa and Syria.

Reigning champions, China, headline Group 1 with hosts England, five-time winners Sweden and Korea Republic.

France, silver medallists at the last edition, were drawn in Group 2 with Japan, Germany and Chinese Taipei.

In the women's competition, England face Japan, Germany and France, while China lead Group 1 against Korea Republic, Chinese Taipei and Romania.

The ceremony was attended by ITTF and Table Tennis England officials, athletes and international sports administrators.

ITTF WORLD TEAM TABLE TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS FINALS 2026				WOMEN'S TEAMS			
GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3	GROUP 4	GROUP 5	GROUP 6	GROUP 7	GROUP 8
CHINA	GERMANY	CHINA	HONG KONG, CHINA	BRAZIL	INDIA	FINLAND	THAILAND
KOREA REPUBLIC	FRANCE	INDONESIA	MEXICO	KAZAKHSTAN	NETHERLANDS	USA	UKRAINE
CHINA TAIPEI	ENGLAND	ROMANIA	MACAO, CHINA	MONGOLIA	RUSSIA	USA	USA
GROUP 9	GROUP 10	GROUP 11	GROUP 12	GROUP 13	GROUP 14	GROUP 15	GROUP 16
CONGO DEMOCRATIC	PORTUGAL	AUSTRALIA	USA	GERMANY	NETHERLANDS	NETHERLANDS	NETHERLANDS

Nigeria to train in Scotland ahead 2026 Commonwealth Games



NIGERIA HAND BALL PLAYERS

The National Sports Commission (NSC) has confirmed Nigerian athletes will attend a four-week residential training camp in Scotland ahead of the 2026 Commonwealth Games.

NSC Director-General, Bukola Olopade, confirmed this in a statement on Sunday by Dr Kehinde Ajayi, NSC Director of

Information.

Olopade said a training base in Aberdeen would enhance coordination and reduce travel-related challenges for Team Nigeria.

"Locating the camp in the host country reflects lessons from past competitions," Olopade explained, noting early arrival helps athletes acclimatise and train under similar conditions.

Team Nigeria will arrive in Aberdeen four weeks before the opening ceremony for acclimatisation, technical preparation, and team bonding, he added.

Olopade said his recent visit to Scotland was part of early planning to secure accommodation and ensure smooth transition into competition mode.

"The Commission's preparations aim to eliminate avoidable stress for athletes and officials while supporting peak performance through proper planning," he stated.

Preparations follow recommendations from the Elite Podium Board and adhere to international best practices, the statement noted.

The 2026 Commonwealth Games will be held in Glasgow, Scotland, from July 23 to Aug. 2, featuring ten sports.

Katsina NUJ wins 2025 SWAN/Dikko football tournament

The Katsina Council of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) Football Team, on Sunday, emerged winners of the 2025 SWAN/Dikko Radda Super-Four football competition.

The match played at the Muhammadu Dikko Stadium, Katsina, was organised by the Katsina chapter of Sports Writers' Association of Nigeria (SWAN).

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the NUJ team emerged victorious after defeating the Medical Health Workers Union (MHWU), Katsina by a lone goal.

Ahmed Almustapha Bindawa of Katsina scored the de-

cisive lone goal through a free kick from 27 yards to claim the trophy for his team.

The lone goal was scored few minutes before the regulation time after a tough encounter between the two finalists.

NAN reports that at the end of the competition, trophies, comprising gold, silver, bronze medals, and two sets of balls were presented to the winners, runners-up, and third place respectively.

Presenting the trophies, the Commissioner of Sports, Sirajo Yazid-Abukur, commended the organisers for not only bringing participants, spectators and other people together but also fostering unity amongst them.



KATSINA SWAN LIFT DIKKO CUP

SPORTS

NDDC Chairman, Ebie wants future Olympians from Niger Delta Games

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Chiedu Ebie, Chairman of the board of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) has said that he desires a future where

talents discovered at the Niger Delta Games would be representing the country at international sporting events such as the Olympics, Commonwealth Games and the All Africa Games. The NDDC boss disclose this

when he made a brief stopover in Benin to witness the retreat organised by Dunamis-Icon Limited for key persons involved in the organisation of the 2nd Niger Delta Games and endorsed the idea of holding sessions to review and project forward plans for successful 2026 Games.

"We in the Board of the NDDC want to make the Games our legacy project, such that there will come a time in the future when we can have athletes from the Niger Delta Games representing Nigeria at international events such as the Olympics", Ebie told the audience comprising some members of the Main Organising Committee and the Local Organising Committee.

Commending the leadership of Dunamis-Icon Limited, Ebie, who is a former Secretary to the Delta State Government, noted that,

"when you want to institutionalize an event such as the Niger Delta Games, you have to do such reviews to ensure that gaps are closed".

In his welcome address to the NDDC Chairman, Sir Itiako Ikpokpo, KSM, the Managing Consultant at Dunamis-Icon explained that the retreat was the second to be organised to review the past Games in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State and correct mistakes and improve on the performance.

"We are working to connect the dots, ask ourselves hard questions and see how we will organise a richer Games", Ikpokpo said.

Also present at the event was the Edo State Sports Commission Chairman, Hon Desmond Amadin Enabulele, who reiterated the state's commitment to supporting the organisers to stage a memorable second edition in Benin



FROM LEFT SIR ITIAKO IKPOKPO KSM, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF DUNAMIS-ICON LIMITED, HON. DESMOND AMADIN ENABULELE, CHAIRMAN OF EDO STATE SPORTS COMMISSION AND CHIEDU EBIE, CHAIRMAN OF THE NIGER DELTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION



STEVE TIKOLO

Tikolo steps down as Nigeria cricket coach

Steve Tikolo, former Kenya international, has stepped down from his role as head coach of the Nigeria men's senior cricket team and high-performance manager of the Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF).

Tikolo, who was employed in October 2022, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja, that the decision was informed by personal responsibilities back home.

"I had to step back due to family issues that require my presence back home. It's not been an easy decision but that's life," he said.

Tikolo was appointed in 2022 on an initial two-year contract. His deal was later extended in 2024.

His appointment followed the resignation of Sri Lankan Asanka Gurusinha as Head

Coach in April 2022 due to health concerns.

During his tenure with the Yellow Greens, Tikolo led the team to two regional titles, winning the 2023 and 2025 West Africa Trophies held in Lagos and Abuja, respectively.

Nigeria also featured in the ICC T20 World Cup qualifiers under his leadership but fell short against Africa's top-ranked sides.

As high-performance manager, Tikolo's impact extended to the women's game, with the Female Yellow Greens winning a historic bronze medal at the 2023 African Games in Ghana.

The Junior Female Yellow Greens also made global headlines by finishing sixth at the 2025 ICC Under-19 Women's World Cup in Malaysia

Poland 2026: Aduku expresses confidence as Falconets gear up for Senegal clash

Head Coach Moses Aduku has expressed satisfaction with the progress of the Nigeria U20 girls, Falconets, as the two-time FIFA World Cup silver-medallists continue preparations for the third-round of the FIFA U20 Women's World Cup qualifying fixture against Senegal.

Coach Aduku said that the past weeks spent in camp have been productive, with all invited players fully present and responding positively to training.

"The technical crew has focused on tactical organization, team cohesion, and overall strategy, and the players have demonstrated commitment, discipline, and intensity throughout preparations."

Aduku emphasized that attention remains firmly on the upcoming qualifier, stressing the importance of securing a strong result in the first leg on home soil. Friendly matches have been vital in assessing and refining the team's system of play, with focus on strengthening attacking play while maintaining defensive balance. He described performances so far as encouraging.

Nigeria will host the first leg of the fixture at the Lekan Salami Stadium, Ibadan, on Saturday, 7th February, with the return leg scheduled for Saturday, 14th February in Dakar, Senegal.

The Falconets, who also reached the semi-finals of the FIFA World Cup in Japan 14 years ago, will travel to Ibadan on 27th January to continue their preparations

ahead of the fixture. While refraining from bold predictions, Coach Aduku expressed belief in the quality and mentality of the players, citing their competitive displays in recent friendly matches. He concluded by re-affirming the team's determination to make the nation proud and secure qualification.

The winner of the Nigeria/Senegal fixture will go into the last round of the qualifying series, to confront the winner of the Guinea Bissau/Malawi fixture, for one of Africa's four tickets at the final tournament.



HEAD COACH MOSES ADUKU WITH THE CAPTAIN

Apex Elite highlights facility gaps in gymnastics development

Joshua Aliyu, founder of Apex Elite Sport and Fitness Hub, says inadequate training facilities are the biggest challenge confronting gymnastics in Nigeria.

Aliyu spoke to the News

Agency of Nigeria (NAN) after Apex staged its first in-house gymnastics assessment on Saturday at Moshood Abiola Stadium, Abuja.

He expressed pride in the performances recorded in spite

of challenges, describing the event as the club's inaugural assessment for Apex gymnasts.

The maiden competition featured 29 participants, including 27 girls and two boys, competing across multiple levels.

Twenty gymnasts, including 18 girls and two boys, competed in Levels 1 to 3, while nine girls participated in advanced Levels 4 to 8.

"This has been a long time coming, and we are super excited. We prepared for this over a month ago," Aliyu said.

He recalled scheduling challenges in December 2025, noting banners and certificates still carry the original Nov. 30 date, but the event fulfilled the club's vision.



JOSHUA ALIYU WITH GYMNASTICS TRAINNEE

2025/26 NPFL SEASON
MATCH DAY 22

	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1 RIVERS UNITED FC	21	11	8	2	18	11	7	41
2 NASARAWA UNITED FC	22	11	5	6	21	16	5	38
3 ABIA WARRIORS FC	22	11	4	7	19	14	5	37
4 RANGERS INTL FC	22	10	6	6	25	18	7	36
5 IKORODU CITY FC	22	9	8	5	21	14	7	35
6 SHOOTING STARS SC	22	10	5	7	20	18	2	35
7 NIGER TORNAOES	22	10	2	10	28	19	9	32
8 BENDEL INSURANCE	22	8	8	6	25	21	4	32
9 EL KANEMI WARRIORS	22	9	4	9	19	23	-4	31
10 WARRI WOLVES FC	22	8	6	8	21	20	1	30
11 KATSINA UNITED FC	22	8	6	8	18	19	-1	30
12 ENYIMBA FC	22	7	6	9	24	24	0	27
13 BAYELSA UNITED FC	22	7	6	9	21	26	-5	27
14 WIKKI TOURISTS FC	22	6	8	8	16	19	-3	26
15 BARAU FC	22	6	8	8	19	23	-4	26
16 REMO STARS FC	21	8	1	12	20	26	-6	25
17 KWARA UNITED FC	21	6	6	9	17	19	-2	24
18 PLATEAU UNITED FC	22	7	3	12	17	25	-8	24
19 KANO PILLARS FC	22	7	4	11	15	23	-8	22
20 KUN KHALIFAT FC	21	4	6	11	17	26	-9	18