

# Young adults most affected as Edo remains among Lassa fever hotspots —NCDC

## BENIN CITY

Edo State has remained one of the worst-hit states in Nigeria's 2025 Lassa fever outbreak, with young adults bearing the highest burden of the disease, according to the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC).

The NCDC, in its Lassa Fe-

ver Situation Report for Epidemiological Week 51, covering December 15 to 21, 2025, said 1,119 confirmed cases have been recorded nationwide, with Edo State listed among four states accounting for 88 percent of all infections.

The report showed that persons aged 21 to 30 years were the most affected nationwide,

with the median age of confirmed cases put at 30 years. Males were also found to be slightly more affected than females, a trend the agency attributed to differences in exposure and health-seeking behaviour.

Edo State, alongside Ondo State, Bauchi State and Taraba State, continued to record high transmission levels, with Ondo

State alone contributing 35 percent of the total confirmed cases across the country.

Nationwide, 206 deaths have been recorded among confirmed cases in 2025, representing a case fatality rate of 18.4 percent, higher than the 16.4 percent reported during the same period in 2024.

Within Epidemiological Week

51, 21 new confirmed cases and five deaths were reported from Bauchi, Ondo, Taraba, Edo, Kogi, Ebonyi and Plateau states, a slight drop from the 28 cases recorded in the preceding week.

Overall, 21 states across 105 Local Government Areas have reported at least one confirmed Lassa fever case in 2025.

The NCDC identified late

presentation at health facilities, poor health-seeking behaviour due to high treatment costs, and poor environmental sanitation in high-burden communities as major challenges hampering outbreak control, including in Edo State.

It urged healthcare workers

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# The Nigerian Observer



...that the people may know

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# You voted for devt, not stories, Okpebholo tells supporters

## BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has reaffirmed that his administration is focused on delivering visible, people-centred development, insisting that nothing would distract his government from transforming the state.

The governor spoke in Benin City at a town hall meeting with members of the Akpakomiza Movement for

Tinubu, also known as Team FIGO-Connect, where he reminded supporters that their mandate was based on development, not rhetoric.

"You voted for me for a reason, and that reason is the development of Edo State," Okpebholo said, adding that his vision is to move Edo from an ancient city to a modern one.

He said projects being executed across the state were driven by the real needs of communities rather than personal or

political interests, noting that his priorities were shaped by firsthand encounters with challenges faced by residents.

Recalling a campaign visit to Temboga, the governor said the severity of gully erosion in the area influenced his development agenda.

"I couldn't even walk inside because of the depth of the erosion. I promised the people I would return if elected, and today the results are visible," he said.

Okpebholo stressed that de-

velopment should be seen as a collective achievement of the people, not a personal success of the governor, adding that accountability remains central to his administration.

He said his government receives the same statutory allocation as previous administrations but has chosen to invest resources in projects with long-term impact.

"Our work will speak for us. A time will come when Edo people will ask questions and

demand accountability," he said.

The governor also commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's economic reforms, describing them as bold and people-focused. He cited the removal of fuel subsidy and tax reforms, noting that Nigerians earning below ₦150,000 are now exempt from paying tax.

According to him, ongoing projects such as the durable reconstruction of Sapele Road,

erosion control and road works in Oghoghe, and interventions in public schools long neglected by past administrations reflect his government's commitment to sustainable development.

The town hall meeting was attended by the Edo State Chairman of the All Progressives Congress, Emperor Jarrett Tenebe; the Commissioner

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## A TOWN HALL:

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, acknowledging cheers from well-wishers at a town hall meeting with members of the Akpakomiza Movement for Tinubu, also known as Team FIGO-Connect in Benin City.

## Bayelsa APC endorses Tinubu's 2027 re-election

### YENAGOA

Members of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Bayelsa, led by Gov. Douye Diri, on Tuesday endorsed President Bola Tinubu's re-election bid for 2027.

The endorsement followed a stakeholders' meeting convened by the governor at the Chief DSP Alamiyeseigha Banquet Hall, Yenagoa.

The Senator representing Bayelsa Central, Konbowei Benson, moved the motion, which was seconded by former Deputy Governor and ex-Speaker, Pere-mobowei Ebebi.

Key stakeholders present included APC caretaker chairman, Dennis Otio, Senator representing Bayelsa East, Ben-

son Agadaga, and Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Heineken Lokpobiri.

Other were NDDC Managing Director, Sam Ogbuku, Niger Delta Basin Development Authority Managing Director, Ebitimi Amgbare, and APC National Working Committee ex-officio member, Godbless Diriwara.

It was the first expanded meeting convened by Diri since he became Bayelsa APC leader in October 2025.

Addressing members, Diri said the party had resolved to work as one family to secure Tinubu's second term.

He urged members to embrace forgiveness, humility and unity, and to reject bitterness and divisive politics for peace

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**Army deploys resources, leverages tech to tackle security threats —COAS**  
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# Army deploys resources, leverages tech to tackle security threats —COAS

MINNA

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt.-Gen. Shuaibu Waidi, says the Nigerian Army is deploying available resources with modern technology to address emerging security threats and

improve security across the country.

The COAS stated this on Tuesday during a courtesy visit to Governor Umaru Bago of Niger at the Government House, Minna.

Waidi said the new approach was aimed at enhancing the

operational effectiveness of troops and responding proactively to evolving security challenges.

He said that his visit to Niger was to declare open the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Conference for 2026, and to commence operational visits to key military formations in the state.

According to him, the operational visit would take him to

the 31 Artillery Brigade and 18 Brigade Bida, as part of efforts to address prevailing security challenges in parts of the state.

The COAS said the visit was aimed at assessing operational gaps and providing additional resources to strengthen ongoing military operations in the state.

The army chief noted that Niger was not new to him, adding that sustained collab-

oration between the military and the state government was crucial to achieving lasting peace and stability.

He thanked the Niger government and residents for the warm reception accorded him and expressed optimism that further cooperation and collaboration would deepen security efforts in the state.

Responding, Governor Bago commended President Bola

Tinubu for his continued support for the state during difficult times.

Bago, represented by the Deputy Governor, Yakubu Garba, also appreciated the National Security Adviser (NSA) and other security chiefs for their support and commitment in addressing the security challenges in Niger.

He wished the army leadership a successful engagement.

## Nursing mother, child abducted in Ondo

AKURE

The Police Command in Ondo State has confirmed the abduction of a nursing mother and her child along Supare/Ajgunle in Akoko South West Local Government Area of the state.

The command's Spokesperson, DSP Abayomi Jimoh, who confirmed the incident to newsmen on Tuesday in Akure, said the abduction happened on Saturday.

"Yes, I can confirm to you that a nursing mother and her

child were kidnapped on Jan. 3 by unknown gunmen at Supare/Ajgunle Akoko axis.

"Efforts are already ongoing while the command has deployed security apparatus in that area in order to rescue the victims alive and unhurt," he said.

Jimoh, therefore, reiterated the command's commitment to safeguarding lives and property of all residents in the state.

Meanwhile, it was gathered that the victim, who was the wife of a popular furniture maker and her child, was kidnapped at her residence on Saturday night.

## You voted for devt, not stories, Okpebholo...

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for Energy and Water Resources, Barrister Washington Osifo; members of the Edo State Executive Council; and other party leaders.

Members of the Labour Party's Obedient Movement were also present and announced the collapse of their structures in Edo State, declaring support for the re-election of President Tinubu in 2027.

Speaking for the group, the

Edo State Obedient Movement Coordinator, Comrade Ikhuenbor Felix Igbinebo, said the decision was based on confidence in President Tinubu's reform agenda, which he said would benefit the common man.

The meeting ended with renewed assurances of support for Governor Okpebholo, as participants pledged to work together to sustain development and economic growth across Edo State.

## Young adults most affected as Edo...

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in affected states to maintain a high index of suspicion, ensure early diagnosis and prompt treatment, while calling on state governments to intensify risk communication and community engagement to curb further spread.

The agency said it would continue to coordinate a multi-sectoral national response

involving surveillance, case management, laboratory support, and infection prevention and control measures in affected and at-risk communities.

Lassa fever is an acute viral haemorrhagic illness transmitted mainly through contact with food or household items contaminated with urine or faeces of infected rodents, though human-to-human transmission can also occur.

## Bayelsa APC endorses Tinubu's 2027...

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and development.

Diri also advised aspirants to suspend ambitions, stressing consultation and adherence to party rules ahead of the next election.

"Here we are today as one big APC family. Let us truly be progressives and appreciate the old members for receiving us.

"Whatever position you want to contest for, please put it on hold for now. Our priority is ensuring President Tinubu returns for a second term," the governor said.

In brief remarks, Lokpobiri said the Bayelsa APC was now

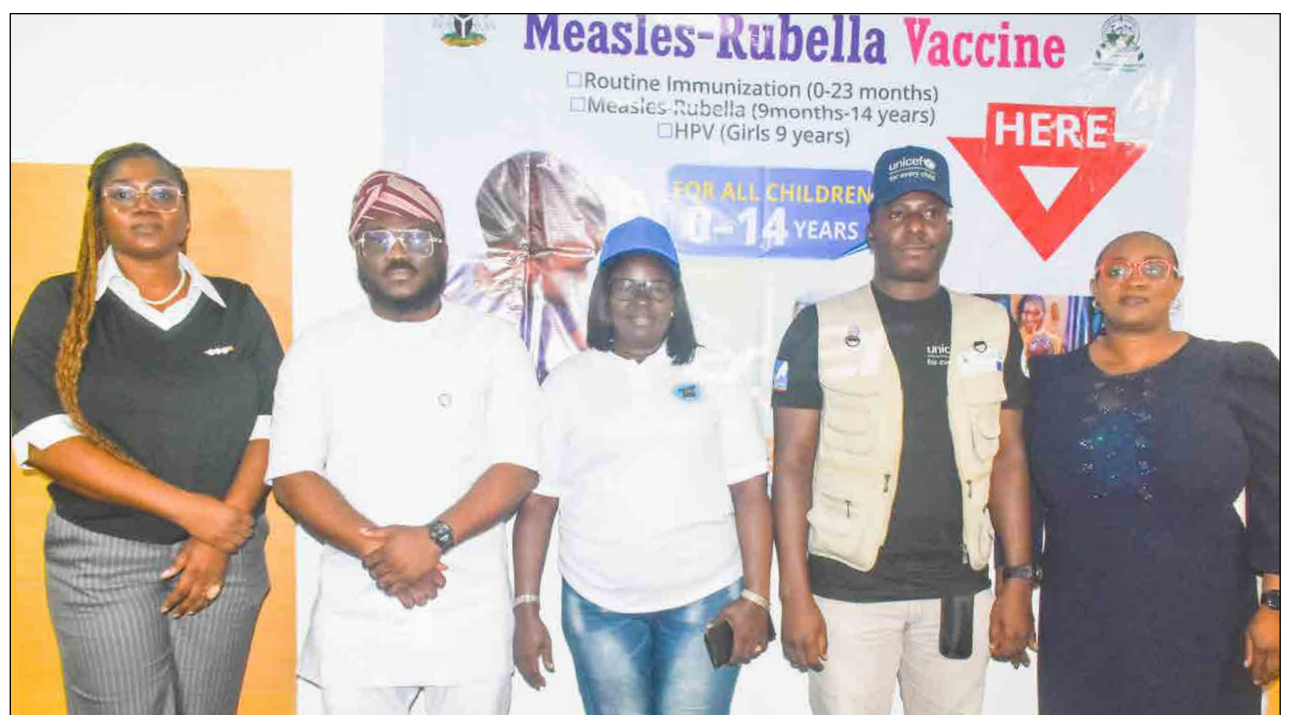
united with a clear objective to win all elective offices in 2027.

Speaker Abraham Ingobere, former governorship candidate, David Lyon and Prince Ebitimi Amgbare praised Diri's maturity and inclusive leadership.

They said his leadership style would strengthen unity and enhance the party's electoral success.

Caretaker chairman Otioth commended Diri for uniting previously fragmented party structures.

He said the meeting also aimed to mobilise members for the party's electronic registration exercise to capture genuine voters.



### ENGAGEMENT ON MEASLES-RUBELLA VACCINE:

L-R: Immunization Officer, Lagos State Primary Health Care Board (LSPHCB), Ms Oshodi Oluwakemi; Programme Coordinator, Lagos, Dr Akinpelu Adetola; Director, Health Education and Promotion, Mrs Honfor Adesola; Social Behaviour Communication (SBC), Health Consultant UNICEF, Lagos Head Office, Mr Seyi Nubi and Director, Public Affairs LSPHCB, Mrs Adetayo Akitoye-Asagba, during a Media Engagement on Measles-Rubella Vaccine in Lagos on Tuesday.

## Delta gov mourns *The Punch* correspondent

ASABA

Delta governor, Sheriff Oborevwori, has expressed deep sorrow over the death of *Punch* correspondent, Mr Matthew Ochei, describing it as a painful national loss.

Ochei, 43, a native of Uku-nzu in Aniocha North Local Government Area of the state, died in the early hours of Tuesday, January 6, after a brief

illness.

In a condolence message signed by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr Festus Ahon, the governor commiserated with the Ochei family, journalists, and the NUJ, Delta Council.

He described the late journalist as a dedicated professional who discharged his duties with courage, integrity and a strong sense of responsibility.

"Ochei's commitment to truth, public enlightenment

and ethical journalism earned him respect within and beyond the media industry.

"This is indeed a painful moment. Delta has lost a fearless voice who informed and educated the public with professionalism and integrity," he said.

The governor said Ochei's untimely death was a heavy blow to his family, the media community and all believers in responsible journalism.

He prayed that God grants the family, friends and colleagues the fortitude to bear the irreparable loss.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with those he left behind. May God comfort them and grant the departed soul eternal rest," he said.

Oborevwori assured that the Delta government stands in solidarity with the NUJ and the media community at this time of grief.

## Nigeria's economy stabilising, needs sustained reforms —Economist

LAGOS

Nigeria's economy is stabilising, but remains fragile, requiring sustained reforms to unlock its full potential, according to Dr Yemi Kale, Afreximbank's Chief Economist.

Kale spoke on Tuesday at the Nigeria Economic Outlook 2026 hybrid event organised by FirstBank in Lagos.

The event was themed "The Great Calibration: Mastering Resilience in an Era of Asynchronous Growth."

He said recent improvements in inflation trends, external reserves and exchange-rate flexibility had created "much-needed policy space" for economic management.

However, Kale warned that

macroeconomic stability alone does not eliminate deep-rooted structural vulnerabilities within the economy.

He identified infrastructure deficits, energy shortages, high logistics costs, skills mismatches and security challenges as persistent constraints on productivity.

According to him, these factors prevent economic growth from translating into broad-based welfare gains for Nigerians.

Kale said addressing the constraints could unlock opportunities in digital innovation and agro-industrial value chains.

He added that services exports and deeper regional trade integration also present significant growth prospects

for the economy.

The economist stressed that fiscal discipline and stronger institutions remain central to long-term economic resilience.

He said sustained infrastructure investment and human capital development are critical to improving productivity and competitiveness.

Kale noted that private sector participation and sustainable finance must support government efforts to drive inclusive growth.

He projected 2026 GDP growth of between 3.5 and 4.5 percent under a baseline scenario.

Under an optimistic scenario, he said growth could reach between 5 and 6 percent.

However, he warned growth could slow to between 2 and 3

percent if reforms weaken.

Kale said the unified foreign exchange framework had restored market confidence and improved transparency.

He forecast the naira exchange rate at between N1,350 and N1,450 to the dollar.

External reserves, he added, could edge toward 45 billion dollars if current policies are sustained.

Kale also warned that Nigeria's debt level, though moderate at about 40 percent of GDP, faces affordability pressures.

He attributed the concern to high debt servicing costs amid constrained fiscal revenues.

Kale urged policymakers to sustain reforms, strengthen economic resilience and ensure growth delivers large-scale job creation.

# I-G orders deployment of newly promoted DIG, 16 CPs

## ABUJA

The Inspector-General of Police (I-G), Mr Olukayode Egbetokun, has ordered the deployment of the newly promoted Deputy Inspector-General of Police (DIG), Mr Mohammed Gumel and 16 other Commissioners of Police (CPs).

The Force Public Relations Officer, CSP Benjamin Hundeyin, said this in a statement

on Tuesday in Abuja.

Hundeyin said the deployments to strategic departments, commands and formations nationwide were intended to strengthen operational capacity, effective leadership, enhance public safety, and improve service delivery.

According to him, in furtherance to the directive, Gumel has been deployed to man the Force Intelligence Department (FID), while Aina Ades-

ola has been deployed as CP in charge of Delta.

He said other newly deployed CPs are Umar Haje-dia, Kebbi; Iyama Edobor, Bayelsa; Osagie Agans-Irabor, Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, FCID Annex, Lagos; and Johnson Babalola, Special Enquiries Bureau, FCID, Abuja.

Hundeyin said others are Adepegba Adetoye, Marine Unit, Force Headquarters, Abuja; Tabitha Bako, Deputy

Commandant, Police College, Kaduna; Umar Ali Fagge, Deputy Commandant, Police College, Ikeja; and Audu Bosso, General Investigation, FCID Annex, Kaduna.

He said Edwin Ogbeghagha, Community Policing, Force Headquarters, Abuja; Arikpo Ikpi, Investment Office, Department of Logistics and Supply, Force Headquarters, Abuja; Cyril Obiozo, Maritime Command, Lagos; and Samuel

Yerima, Coordinator of Courses, Police Staff College, Jos.

According to him, others are Alhaji Danlandi, X-Squad, FCID Annex, Kaduna; Richard Gara, Inspectorate, Department of Training and Development, Force Headquarters; Lasisi Titilola, Railway Command, Lagos; and Obuagbaka John, Safer Highway, Department of Operations, Force Headquarters, Abuja.

Hundeyin said the I-G had enjoined the deployed senior officers to bring their wealth of knowledge and experience to bear by providing purposeful and result-oriented leadership.

He said the police boss had also urged the senior officers to uphold the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, ethical conduct, and ensure strict adherence to the rule of law.



## SYMPOSIUM ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

L-R: Founder, Women Support Women Community Network (WOSCONET), Mrs Amaka Nweke; Chairman, All Progressives Congress (APC), Enugu State Caretaker Committee (APCECC), Dr Ben Nwoye; Secretary to Enugu State Government, Prof. Chidiebere Onyia and Member, APCECC, Ms Oby Ajih, during a Symposium on Women Empowerment by WOSCONET in Enugu on Tuesday.

# Nasarawa govt distributes 60 electric vehicles to cooperatives, institutions

## LAFIA

The Nasarawa State Government on Tuesday distributed another tranche of 50 tricycles and 10 cars to cooperatives, youth groups, and institutions as part of its empowerment scheme.

Dr Labaran Magaji, Secretary to the State Government (SSG), presented the vehicles to the beneficiaries in Lafia.

Magaji said the empowerment scheme was meant to improve the socio-economic status of its citizens, and charged

the beneficiaries to make good use of the vehicles to improve their lives.

He said that the electric vehicle empowerment scheme was a deliberate effort by the Government Abdullahi Sule administration to adopt clean energy.

"We are all aware of climate change and the need to sanitise our environment; it must start from somewhere; and that is why the call for renewable energy is really very important.

"It is against this background that the governor has taken the

front line by first introducing the electric vehicle for all commissioners and members of the state executive council.

"I think it is the first of its kind in this country," he said.

The SSG charged the beneficiaries to maintain the vehicles for optimal performance as all accessories were provided, including charging plugs, charging points, and a maintenance office, located in the state.

Speaking on behalf of the beneficiaries, Prof. Nghargbu Kitso, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research, Innovation and Linkages, Nasarawa State University Keffi, expressed appreciation to the government.

Kitso assured the governor that they would work hard to multiply the fortune of the scheme to benefit their members.

"As a learning institution that is also focused on innovative funding, we find this empowerment programme timely.

"Through our university consultancy services and co-operative societies, we will be able to multiply the fortunes of this kind of initiative," he said.

The government last year empowered various youth and women groups as well as institutions with over 100 electric cars and 50 tricycles as revolving loans.

# Mechanisation, security key to food output, inflation control

## LAGOS

Prof. Kenneth Ife, the President, Institute of Professional Economists and Policy Management (IPEPM), has said that the Federal Government can boost food production and curb food-driven inflation by deploying tractors to farming settlements nationwide.

Ife said this in an interview with newsmen on Tuesday in Lagos.

He said that widespread deployment of tractors would accelerate farm mechanisation, expand cultivated acreage and improve yields.

According to him, mechanising existing farms remains one of the fastest ways to increase food output and stabilise prices.

"The government must ensure that the tractors are deployed across farming settlements to mechanise agriculture and boost output," Ife said.

He explained that improved security across agrarian communities was equally critical to sustaining food production, noting that many farmers still faced threats that hindered harvesting and processing.

"Many agrarian areas are still contending with insecurity, despite the decline in food prices in the hinterland.

"This is one of the major challenges confronting farmers, aside from the exorbitant cost of transportation," he said. Ife also noted a rise in grass-

roots innovation, as more Nigerians increasingly embraced small-scale farming solutions.

"More people are now planting, especially tubers, in sack bags within their homes and gardens.

"No fewer than 9,000 sack bags can be accommodated on one hectare, and these can be harvested twice a year," he said.

He attributed the growing interest in local production to the depreciation of the naira, which had made imported food items unaffordable for many households.

"Since the depreciation of the currency, people are now sourcing local alternatives because imported commodities have become too expensive," he noted.

Ife added that recent foreign exchange stability had helped restore confidence in the economy.

"The current foreign exchange stability has led to increased inflows, and people who usually hoard dollars are now selling them," he said.

Similarly, the Chief Executive Officer of African Farmers Hub, Mr African Farmer Mogaji, said increased private participation in farming would naturally help reduce food inflation.

However, Mogaji warned that rising costs of farm inputs were making farming increasingly unsustainable for many operators.

"More people are now engaged in farming, which should reduce food inflation."

# Alleged N1bn scam: Police apprehend suspect at Lagos Airport

## LAGOS

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF), Airport Police Command, has apprehended a 20-year-old suspected celebrity scammer who allegedly defrauded multiple victims in the United States (U.S.) of over one billion Naira.

The command's spokesperson, ASP Mohammed Adeola, confirmed this in a statement on Tuesday in Lagos.

He said that the suspect was apprehended on Monday by operatives of the Anti-Fraud Unit of the Airport Police Command, while attempting to board a flight out of Lagos State.

"The arrest followed months of intelligence-led surveillance and monitoring based on cred-

ible information linking the suspect to several transnational fraud schemes.

"Preliminary investigations revealed that the suspect, who previously resided in Calabar, relocated to Lagos State on February 23, 2024, from where he coordinated and executed multiple fraudulent operations targeting victims in the U.S.

"In one major case in 2024, the suspect deceived a 47-year-old female victim in the US, into transferring one million dollars under the guise of purchasing property in Florida for an orphanage.

"The funds were allegedly obtained through a cryptocurrency scheme known as 'BullRun 2.0,' formerly called '4 Way Mirror Money' he said.

The spokesperson said that

further investigations revealed that the suspect also defrauded another 70-year-old female victim in the US of 18,000 dollars (N26 million).

"The fraud was perpetrated through the purchase of gift cards, high-end mobile devices, and computer equipment, which were shipped to Nigeria at the suspect's direction.

"Items recovered in connection with the case include a MacBook Pro 14-inch, an iPhone 17 Pro Max, two Google Pixel 10 Pro XL devices, and one Google Pixel 10 Pro, with a combined estimated value of N8,141,367," he said.

Adeola said that further findings showed that the suspect posed as a 60-year-old orthopedic surgeon working with the United Nations in Nigeria,

## NEWS

# DisCos install 228,614 meters in Q3 2025 —NERC

### ABUJA

The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) has said that Electricity Distribution Companies (DisCos) installed a total of 228,614 meters in the third quarter of 2025.

The commission disclosed this in its third-quarter report published on its website in Abuja on Tuesday.

The report stated that the figure represented an increase of 0.73 per cent compared to

the 226,959 meters installed in the second quarter of 2025.

According to the report, during the quarter under review, 176,302 meters, representing 77.12 per cent of the total installations, were installed under the Meter Asset Provider framework.

It said that 44,104 meters, representing 25.01 per cent of the installations, were installed under the Vendor Financed framework, while 7,902 meters, representing 3.46 per cent, were installed under the Dis-

tribution Sector Recovery Programme.

The report further stated that 175 meters, representing 0.08 per cent, were installed under the Meter Acquisition Fund framework, while 131 meters, representing 0.06 per-

cent, were installed under the DisCo Financed framework.

"As of the end of September 2025, 6,661,564 out of the total 12,030,315 active registered customers in the Nigerian Electricity Supply Industry were metered," the report said.

According to the commission, to safeguard customers against exploitation arising from the absence of meters, it has continued to issue monthly energy caps for all feeders in each DisCo.

"This sets the maximum

amount of energy that may be billed to an unmetered customer for the respective month, based on the gross energy received by the DisCo and consumption by metered customers on their respective feeders," it stated.

## Delta Gov congratulates former lawmaker, Leo Ogor, at 67

### ASABA

The Governor of Delta State, Sheriff Oborewori, has congratulated a former Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, Hon. Leo Ogor, on his 67th birthday.

The governor, in a goodwill message signed by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr Festus Ahon on Tuesday, described Ogor as an accomplished parliamentarian, seasoned statesman and courageous advocate whose imprint on Nigeria's legislative history remains profound and enduring.

Governor Oborewori described Ogor's two-decade representation of the Isoko Federal Constituency from 2003 to 2023 as a testament to the confidence reposed in him by his constituents and his unwavering commitment to public service.

He recalled that Ogor rose through the ranks of the Green Chamber, serving with distinction as Deputy Majority Lead-

er in the Seventh Assembly and later as Minority Leader in the Eighth Assembly.

"Ogor's eloquence, depth of experience and principled leadership elevated debates in the National Assembly and strengthened democratic practice, particularly in his role as the voice of the opposition.

"As a legislator, you brought honour to Isoko Nation and Delta State; as a political leader, you have inspired a generation of young people to believe in service, discipline and purposeful leadership," the governor said.

"On behalf of my family, the government and people of Delta State, I join the Isoko Nation, your admirers and well-wishers across Nigeria in celebrating Hon. Leonard Okuweh Ogor on his 67th birthday.

"It is my earnest prayer that Almighty God grants you sound health, renewed strength and many more years of fulfilment and impactful service to humanity," he stated.

## Okowa urges unity above personal interests in Ika politics

### ASABA

A former Governor of Delta State, Senator Ifeanyi Okowa, has urged members of the All Progressives Congress in Ika Federal Constituency to prioritise unity and collective interest above personal ambitions in order to achieve sustainable development.

Senator Okowa made the call on Tuesday at the APC Ika Federal Constituency meeting held at the Vienna Arena in Agbor.

According to him, cooperation and shared purpose are critical to the continued progress of the Ika nation.

He said the true strength of the people lies in their ability to work together with mutual respect and a common vision.

Okowa cautioned against internal rivalry and divisive tendencies, stressing that collaboration must take precedence

over competition in both party affairs and broader political engagements.

"Meaningful development can only be achieved when Ika sons and daughters embrace harmony, set aside differences and commit themselves to the collective good.

"Development is a shared responsibility. Party members must build on existing foundations and leverage synergy to attract greater opportunities and dividends of democracy to the constituency.

"Collaboration is always better than competition," he said.

He urged party stakeholders to remain focused on promoting the overall interests of Ika Federal Constituency and the APC.

The meeting was attended by prominent party leaders and stakeholders, including the National Publicity Secretary of the APC, Mr Felix Morka.

## INEC begins phase two CVR in A'lbom, cautions against double registration

### UYO

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has commenced phase two of its Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise from January 5 across the 31 Local Government Area offices in Akwa Ibom State.

The Resident Electoral Commissioner in the state, Mr Obo Effanga, disclosed this in a statement issued in Uyo on Tuesday.

Effanga warned persons who completed their registration during the first phase, which ended on December 10, 2025, not to register again in another location, noting that such ac-

tion would amount to double registration.

He also cautioned those whose names were already on the voters' register as of the 2023 general election not to attempt to register again.

The REC reminded eligible voters of the provisions of Section 23 of the Electoral Act 2022, which outlines penalties for offences such as double registration, attempting to induce registration officers, providing false information, and disrupting the registration exercise.

He consequently directed all Electoral Officers to ensure that registration centres open by 9 a.m. daily throughout the

exercise.

"I am pleased to report that following my earlier directive, all 32 registration centres located at the state headquarters and the 31 INEC Local Government Area offices opened for business by 9 a.m. today, signalling the commencement of phase two of the nationwide CVR exercise in Akwa Ibom State," he said.

Effanga emphasised that phase two of the exercise provides an opportunity for citizens who were unable to register during phase one to do so.

He assured electorates that registration centres across the state would operate daily between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., ex-

cept on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.

According to him, citizens eligible to participate in the ongoing registration include those who have attained the age of 18 years and above and have not registered previously.

Others include persons seeking replacement of lost or damaged Permanent Voter Cards, as well as voters wishing to transfer their registration to new locations.

He added that individuals who intend to correct or update their voter information, such as names and addresses, are also eligible to participate in the exercise.

## A'lbom Gov inaugurates c'ttees on TSA, int'l airport status

### UYO

The Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Pastor Umo Eno, has inaugurated two inter-ministerial committees to oversee the implementation of international airport status for the Victor Attah International Airport and the Treasury Single Account for Internally Generated Revenue.

Governor Eno inaugurated the committees on Tuesday at the Government House in Uyo, expressing confidence in the capacity of the committee members to deliver on their mandates.

"The establishment of these committees marks another strategic step in our administration's drive to strengthen governance systems and fast-track the completion of major development projects in the state," the governor said.

He announced that the Inter-Ministerial Committee on International Airport Status Implementation would be chaired by the Secretary to the State Government, Mr Enobong Uwah.

Other members include the Commissioner for Finance and Special Duties, Mr Emem Bob; the Managing Director of Ibom Air, Mr George Uriesi; and the Permanent Secretary for Special Duties, Mr Ephraim Udosen, among others.

Governor Eno said the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Implementation of the Treasury Single Account for Internally Generated Revenue would be chaired by the Commissioner for Finance, Mr Emem Bob.

Other members include the Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Mr Uko Udom, SAN; the Commissioner for Science and Digital Economy, Dr Frank Ekpenyong; the Commissioner for Local Gov-

ernment and Chieftaincy Affairs, Mr Frank Archibong; and the Commissioner for Lands, Dr Ubong Inyang, among others.

The governor noted that the expertise of the committee members would significantly enhance the state's infrastructural development and finan-

cial stability.

He urged the committees to intensify efforts and ensure that all preparatory activities remain on schedule.



## MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY EDO STATE

### VACANCIES

Applications are hereby invited from suitably qualified candidates to fill the under listed vacancies in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, within its Agricultural Machinery and Equipment Operations Unit:

#### POSITIONS

1. Tractor Drivers GL.03
2. Dozer Drivers (Heavy Plant Operator) GL.04
3. Truck Drivers (Heavy Plant Operator) GL.04
4. Excavator Drivers (Heavy Plant Operator) GL.04
5. Diesel Mechanics (Craftsmen) GL. 04
6. Welders & Electricians (Craftsmen) GL. 04

#### QUALIFICATIONS

Candidates must be able-bodied, mentally and physically fit, with the ability to read and write.

- i. For 1 above, candidate must possess First School Leaving Certificate plus a valid Class 'C' Driving License and at least two years satisfactory post-qualification driving experience.
- ii. For 2-4 above, candidate must possess First School Leaving Certificate, Valid Class 'C' Driving License plus the Class III Trade Test Certificate for Motor Driver- Mechanics and at least four years' driving experience, one of which must be in the operation of heavy plants.
- iii. For 5- 6 above, candidate must possess

the Government Craft Certificate obtained from a Government Trade Centre/approved Institution or a pass Certificate of a Government Trade Test Class II, who has spent at least two years in the trade (Diesel Mechanic, Welding or Electrical works).

#### METHOD OF APPLICATION

Interested candidates are to submit handwritten applications with photocopies of relevant documents to the Functioning Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Airport Road, Oko-Ogba, Benin City.

Each application must be submitted with the following documents:

- i. Curriculum Vitae (including phone numbers)
- ii. Photocopies of credentials
- iii. One recent passport photograph

The application and accompanying documents must be submitted in triplicate.

#### CLOSING DATE

Closing date for the submission of all applications shall be 21st January, 2026.

**MR. SUNDAY I. OSAYANDE**  
Functioning Permanent Secretary

# APC e-registration 'll strengthen party's credibility says Sanwo-Olu

## LAGOS

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State on Tuesday, described the ongoing electronic membership registration of the All Progressives Congress (APC) as a civic responsibility that would strengthen the party's internal democracy.

The governor said this while

observing the exercise at his polling unit at St Stephen Adele Primary School in Lagos Island.

Sanwo-Olu said that the exercise, which began on Monday, is designed to validate genuine party members through a digital process anchored on the National Identification Number (NIN).

"This is indeed a party civic responsibility; We started this

exercise yesterday for all party members to commence an e-registration in all the wards in Lagos State and, indeed, across the federation," he said.

He explained that Lagos has 245 wards, each equipped with two registration tablets, printers, internet connectivity and alternative power supply to ensure a seamless process.

"In Lagos, all the wards are fully equipped; Once you come, the first thing requested is your NIN number, just to ensure that there is backend data

verification.

"You will also be asked if you have a voter's card or not," he said.

The governor said that, successful registrants are issued a printed temporary membership slip upon completion of the process.

"The whole essence is to encourage all our members, particularly in Lagos State, to come out and register digitally.

"That is the minimum requirement to be a real, card-carrying member of our

party," Sanwo-Olu said.

The governor noted that the party's last comprehensive membership registration exercise was conducted in 2021, adding that the current exercise was necessary to update records, accommodate new members and adopt modern digital standards.

"I believe this exercise will run throughout the month of January.

"Let everybody come out and register. It will validate and confirm your status as a bona fide member of the APC," he said.

Sanwo-Olu acknowledged minor technical glitches recorded on the first day but said that they had been resolved.

"They had a few glitches yesterday, but today the process has fully stabilised. As you can see, party faithful are registering smoothly and the exercise is ongoing," he said.

He consequently, urged both old and new members, especially youths, to take advantage of the exercise.

"This is an opportunity for existing and new members, particularly younger people, to identify with the party.

"Nobody is asking you for money. Just come, register and collect your slip," he said.

Sanwo-Olu stressed that physical presence was required to ensure authenticity.

"Because we want to see you, it cannot be done remotely.

"But it only takes five to ten minutes. Once your details are confirmed, your photograph is taken and your temporary slip is printed," he said.

According to him, this is the minimum required from those who wish to be members, adding that it was time for such persons to show sincerity and commitment to the APC.



## TRADER WAITING:

Trader waiting for Customers at Swali Market in Yenagoa Bayelsa on Tuesday.

# 54,000 pregnant women, children benefit from Abiyamo scheme —Ondo govt

## AKURE

The Ondo State Government has said that no fewer than 54,000 pregnant women and children under five have benefited from the Abiyamo Scheme under the state's Contributory Health Insurance Scheme.

The Special Adviser on Health to Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa, Prof. Simidele Odimayo, disclosed this in an interview with journalists on Tuesday in Akure.

Odimayo said the Abiyamo Scheme enables pregnant women and children under the

age of five to enjoy free health services across the state.

According to him, the scheme is an advancement of the Abiyamo programme and operates through an insurance-based system that allows the government to provide services without owing healthcare facilities or running into debt.

"With this system, all pregnant women and children below five years are able to enjoy free health services. The government registers them into an insurance system, which makes the programme sustainable," he said.

He added that thousands of

Caesarean sections had been carried out free of charge under the scheme, describing it as a major step forward in improving maternal and child health indices in the state.

The special adviser encouraged residents to embrace the programme, noting that it provides an opportunity for people across all economic strata to access healthcare without catastrophic spending.

Odimayo commended Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa for prioritising health, noting that the introduction of the informal sector into the State Contributo-

ry Health Insurance Scheme was aimed at expanding coverage.

He said the government had further strengthened the sector by approving the employment of additional health workers at all levels to meet the growing healthcare needs of the people.

According to him, the state, in collaboration with the Malaria Consortium, recently distributed about 2.5 million insecticide-treated nets and provided free malaria drugs to combat the disease.

He added that health facilities across the state had been strengthened with necessary medical supplies to effectively tackle malaria and other health challenges.

# No casualty on LBSL bus fire incident on Third Mainland Bridge —MD

## LAGOS

The Lagos Bus Services Limited (LBSL) has confirmed a fire incident involving one of its buses on the Third Mainland Bridge, with no casualty recorded.

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of LBSL, Idowu Oguntona, confirmed the incident in a statement issued on Tuesday in Lagos.

The statement, signed by the Public Affairs Officer, Afolabi Olawale, said the incident occurred at about 1:00 p.m. on the Obalende-Oshodi route.

Oguntona said the bus, with code number 240057, was consumed by fire despite the prompt response of good Samaritans and emergency re-

sponders.

"We are relieved to confirm that there was no casualty or injury as a result of this incident," he said.

He assured that passenger safety remained the organisation's utmost priority, adding that a comprehensive investigation had commenced to determine the cause of the fire.

Oguntona thanked individuals who assisted during the incident, including the Commissioner for Transportation, Lagos State, Oluwaseun Osiyemi.

He said the company would provide updates on the investigation's findings and reaffirmed LBSL's commitment to safe, reliable and comfortable transportation services across Lagos State.

# NAHCO secures fresh, renewed ground handling contracts

## LAGOS

The Nigerian Aviation Handling Company Plc (NAHCO Aviance) has confirmed signing fresh and renewed contracts for the provision of comprehensive ground handling services.

The disclosure is contained in a statement issued on Tuesday in Lagos by Mr Tayo Ajajaye, Assistant General Manager, Corporate Communications, NAHCO Plc.

According to Ajajaye, NAHCO renewed contracts with Air France, KLM, Virgin Atlantic and RwandAir for the continued provision of ground handling services.

It also signed fresh contracts with United Nigeria Airlines for regional operations, as well as Bellagio and Malaikair.

The renewed Air France and KLM contracts will run for

three years until 2028, while Virgin Atlantic's renewal is also for three years.

RwandAir's renewed contract is for three years, effective from October 1, 2025.

The new United Nigeria Airlines regional contract is for five years, effective August 1, 2025.

The contracts with Bellagio and Malaikair are for three years and five years respectively.

Mr Saheed Lasisi, Group Executive Director, Commercial and Business Development, said NAHCO was committed to exceeding customers' expectations.

"Our over 46 years of unblemished service delivery places us heads and shoulders above other service providers in the industry.

"This is what we have done for almost half a century, and we will continue to delight our customers and stakeholders," Lasisi said.

# Remembrance: Ex-service men seek Mbah's support to alleviate plights

## ENUGU

Retired military officers have appealed to Governor Peter Mbah of Enugu State to support efforts aimed at alleviating their plights and integrating them into the activities of the state.

The Chairman, Enugu State Nigerian Legion of Ex-Military Officers, Dr Emeka Igwesi, made the appeal during the 2026 Armed Forces Remembrance Day Emblem Appeal Launch held at the Michael Okpara Square, Enugu.

Igwesi said such support would improve the welfare and well-being of ex-servicemen as well as families of fallen heroes in the state.

He appealed for the donation of vehicles to the veterans' body, approval of monthly subvention, and full integration of retired military officers into state activities.

Other requests included scholarships for indigent children and orphans of fallen and living heroes, empowerment of widows, and allocation of pilgrimage quotas to military veterans.

He also urged the governor to incorporate young retired military officers into the state's security architecture, noting that veterans were disciplined, experienced and capable of contributing to development.

Igwesi described the Armed Forces Remembrance Day as an annual event set aside to honour fallen heroes and support their dependants, as well as recognise living veterans who are aged, wounded or in need.

In a message to the event, Governor Peter Mbah commended the retired officers for

their service, describing their sacrifices as vital to securing democracy and national integrity.

The governor, represented by his Deputy, Ifeanyi Ossai, advised the ex-military officers to develop structured engagement frameworks for collaboration with the state government to enhance impact.

Earlier, the Acting Chairman of the All Progressives Congress in Enugu State, Dr Ben Nwoye, urged the legion to provide account details and follow up on pledges to ensure they were redeemed.

## NEWS

## JUDICIARY

# Licence revocation: CBN, NDIC challenge court jurisdiction to hear Aso Savings, Union Homes' suits

ABUJA

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) have challenged the jurisdiction of the Federal High Court in Abuja to hear a suit jointly filed

by Aso Savings & Loans Plc and Union Homes Savings & Loans Plc over the revocation of their operating licences.

CBN's counsel, Onyeka Ezeah, and NDIC's lawyer, Abubakar Shehu, raised the objection before Justice Eme-ka Nwite shortly after the case

was called for the defendants to show cause.

Justice Nwite had, on December 29, declined to grant a motion ex parte filed by Aso Savings and Union Homes seeking to restrain the CBN and NDIC from taking further steps following the revocation of their licences.

In his ruling, the judge held that the interest of justice would be better served by placing the defendants on notice to show cause why the reliefs sought should not be granted.

The matter was consequently adjourned to January 5 for the defendants to show cause.

When the case was called on Monday, counsel to the plaintiffs, Joseph Silas, informed the court that the matter was slated for the defendants to show cause.

Silas told the court that the CBN had served the plaintiffs with an affidavit to show cause, a notice of preliminary objec-

tion and a counter-affidavit to their originating summons.

He added that the NDIC also served them earlier in the day with its counter-affidavit and a notice of preliminary objection.

The lawyer, however, maintained that the hearing was specifically for the defendants, particularly the NDIC, to show cause why the application should not be granted, insisting that the agency had failed to do so.

Silas argued that although the CBN revoked the licences, the plaintiffs still had a statutory 30-day window to appeal the decision, stressing the need to restrain the NDIC from commencing liquidation pending the determination of the substantive suit.

He contended that allowing liquidation to proceed could irreversibly prejudice his clients if the court eventually finds the CBN's action unlawful.

He, therefore, urged the

court to order parties to maintain the status quo.

Opposing the application, Ezeah described the move as premature, stressing that the issue of jurisdiction must first be resolved.

"Jurisdiction is the lifeblood of a case," she said, citing the 2022 Supreme Court decision in *Waziri v. PDP*, which held that jurisdictional issues must be determined before any other application.

Shehu aligned himself with Ezeah's submissions, insisting that the NDIC acted within its statutory mandate.

He told the court that the NDIC had filed a preliminary objection which was ripe for hearing and urged the court to adjourn to enable the plaintiffs respond.

Responding, Silas argued that while the case was pending, the NDIC was continuing with liquidation processes, urging the court to intervene

to preserve the rest.

Shehu countered that once a financial institution's licence is revoked, the NDIC is empowered by law to take over in the interest of depositors.

Silas maintained that the law allows the plaintiffs 30 days to challenge the revocation, adding that NDIC's actions were based solely on the CBN's decision.

He further argued that the application was in the interest of depositors, noting that NDIC's maximum insured payment of N2 million could not adequately cover large deposits.

Shehu said NDIC's intervention became necessary because depositors could no longer access their funds, adding that shareholders could seek damages if the plaintiffs eventually succeeded.

Justice Nwite questioned the propriety of making any interim order in the face of pending preliminary objections challenging the court's jurisdiction.

## Man, 33, docked for allegedly stealing bags of cement worth N1.1m

IKORODU

A 33-year-old man, Adegboyega Adeyanju, was on Tuesday arraigned before an Ikorodu Magistrates' Court in Lagos for allegedly stealing 103 bags of cement valued at N1,045,400.

Adeyanju pleaded not guilty

to the charge.

Prosecutor Adegeshin Famuyiwa said the offence was committed on December 29, 2025, at Oreta Road, Igbogbo, Ikorodu.

The court granted bail in the sum of N250,000 with two sureties and adjourned the case to January 22 for mention.

## Man, 56, docked over alleged theft of precious stones worth N27m

IBADAN

A 56-year-old man, Alaremu Adebowale, was arraigned before an Iyaganku Chief Magistrates' Court over alleged theft of precious stones valued at N27 million.

The defendant pleaded not guilty.

Prosecutor Tunji Olaniyi alleged that Adebowale stole 200 tonnes of mica belonging to Olaogun Mojeed at Akoya Village, Ibarapa North Local Government Area of Oyo State.

The court granted bail in the sum of N5 million with two blood-related sureties and adjourned the case to February 11.

## Man, 52, docked over alleged arms possession, breach of peace

IBADAN

A 52-year-old man, Kabiru Owoade, was on Tuesday arraigned before an Iyaganku Chief Magistrates' Court in Ibadan over alleged arms possession and breach of the peace.

Owoade pleaded not guilty to four counts including con-

spiracy and threat to life.

The prosecution alleged that he and others, armed with guns and cutlasses, terrorised a farmer at Adetinu Village.

Magistrate Olabisi Ogunkanmi granted bail in the sum of N2 million with two sureties and adjourned the matter to March 16.



### NEWS CONFERENCE:

Executive Officer, Future Africa Leaders Foundation (FALF), Dr Olajumoke Ola-Akisanya (2nd L); one of the 10 winners of the Future Africa Leaders Awards (FALA), Amb, Francis Nyong from Nigeria (3rd L); FALA 2025 Star Prize Winner from Kenya, Amb Rejoice Waithera (2nd R); Coordinator, Chris Oyakhilome Foundation International, Pastor Arinze Emmanuel (R) and others, during a news conference on the Public Presentation of the 2025 FALA Award Winners in Lagos on Tuesday.

## Travel agent drags client to court over failure to pay N1.4m loan

KADUNA

A travel agent, Zainab Abubakar, on Monday dragged a client, Murjanatu Abdullahi, before a Shari'a court sitting at Magajin Gari, Kaduna, over an alleged failure to repay a N1.4 million loan for visa processing and air ticket.

Abubakar told the court that an agreement was reached for her to assist Abdullahi with travel arrangements to Iraq, with repayment to be made in monthly instalments before her departure in December 2024.

She alleged that despite earning about 250 dollars monthly, equivalent to N350,000, the

defendant failed to honour the agreement.

Abubakar said repeated efforts to recover the money proved abortive, prompting her to sue Abdullahi's brother, Bashir Abdullahi, who stood as guarantor.

In his defence, Bashir told the court that his sister sustained an injury at work and was undergoing medical treatment.

He pleaded for time to enable her recover and resume work in order to repay the loan, tendering photographs of her hospitalisation.

The judge, Malam Mu'aw-iyya Shehu, encouraged both parties to agree on a recovery timeline, after which three months was mutually accepted.

The matter was adjourned to April 6 for a report on repayment.

### CORRECTION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **ADA OSAGIE** and **ADANIHUOMWAN SUNDAY OSAGIE** are one and the same person. Henceforth, I now wish to be known as **ADANIHUOMWAN SUNDAY OSAGIE**. All former documents remain valid and all concerned authorities and general public should please take note.

### CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **MISS VOTU OVEUDE** now wish to be known as **MRS. VOTU AKPATA**. former documents remain valid, general public should please take note.

### CHANGE OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **AGU GLADYS** and **DAVID ODERHOWHO GLADYS** are one and the same person. Henceforth, I now wish to be known and called **ODERHOWHO GLADYS**. Former documents remain valid general public should please take note.

### CORRECTION OF NAME/ DATE OF BIRTH

The general public is hereby notified that **AMADIN ERNEST** and **AMADI ERNEST** are one and the same person. Henceforth, I now wish to be known and called as **AMADIN ERNEST**. And also my correct date of birth is 8/10/1984 not 5/12/1985. As wrongly written on my BVN. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public should please take note.

### RECONCILIATION OF NAME/ DATE OF BIRTH

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

Classified  
Advert Space  
for Sale

ABEOKUTA

A 40-year-old man, Jimoh Alabi, on Tuesday appeared before an Abeokuta Chief Magistrates' Court in Ogun State for allegedly assaulting his neighbour

with a cutlass.

Alabi, a resident of the Erunwon-Ake area, pleaded not guilty to a one-count charge of assault.

Prosecutor Lawrence Olu-Balogun told the court that the incident occurred on January 2 at about 9:48 p.m.

following an argument over loud music between the defendant and the complainant, Segun Oderinde.

He alleged that Alabi attacked Oderinde with a cutlass, inflicting serious head injuries that required hospital treatment.

The offence, he said, contravened Section 355 of the Criminal Law of Ogun State, 2006.

Magistrate A.K. Araba granted bail in the sum of N100,000 with one surety and adjourned the case to January 7 for hearing.

## Foreign

## NEWS

## Six dead and hundreds of flights cancelled as snow causes chaos across Europe

Hundreds of people were stranded at Amsterdam airport

Intense snowfall and icy weather conditions have caused widespread travel disruption across Europe, with six reported killed in weather-related incidents on the continent.

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

Hundreds of flights have been cancelled across Europe, with thousands left stranded at airports in Paris and Amsterdam.

Disruption is expected to continue into Wednesday.

In France, three people died in two separate incidents in Landes, in the south-west, due

to black ice, authorities said.

Two more died in separate motor accidents in the Paris region. One was the result of a collision between a driver and a heavy goods vehicle in east Paris, police said.

The other was killed after a taxi driver hit a curb due to snow and plunged into the Marne river, the outlet said.

The Balkans has also seen snow and heavy rain. A woman died in the Bosnian capital Sarajevo on Monday after a tree weighed down with wet snow fell on her, police said.

French Transport Minister Philippe Tabarot said more snow was expected in the country on Tuesday night and Wednesday. He called on people to travel as little as possible on the roads and to work from home.

France's national weather service said 38 districts would be

placed on orange alert for snow and black ice on Wednesday. Many train services were cancelled in parts of the country.

In France's capital, authorities said Roissy-Charles de Gaulle airport would see 40% of its flights cancelled for several hours on Wednesday morning, so that staff could clear snow from the runways. The capital's Orly airport planned to cancel a quarter of its flights during the same time period.

More than 400 flights were cancelled at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport on Wednesday, causing widespread disruption to travel plans.

Hundreds of passengers were stranded, with many unable to join connecting flights. Long queues formed at airline counters as people waited for information about when flights would resume.

Thousands of passengers remain stranded after hundreds of flights were cancelled

Many of the cancelled flights were operated by Dutch airline KLM, which warned it had nearly run out of de-icing fluid for its aircraft. It blamed the "extreme" weather conditions and supply delays.

At Schiphol airport, many travellers complained of long lines and a lack of information.

Spanish passenger Javier Sepulveda, who was trying to fly from Amsterdam to Norway, told Reuters news agency the situation at the airport was "chaotic, unacceptable, frustrating, annoying" and "totally unacceptable."

He said he started queuing at the KLM help desk at 06:30 local time (07:30 GMT) on Tuesday and that six hours later he was still far from the front of the line.

## Zelensky replaces Ukraine's powerful security service chief

President Volodymyr Zelensky has reshuffled the leadership of Ukraine's Security Service (SBU), replacing influential Vasyl Malyuk and nominating Maj-Gen Yevhenii Khmara as acting head.

The SBU is primarily concerned with internal security and counter-intelligence and, since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, it has also played a prominent role in assassinations and sabotage attacks deep inside Russia.

Malyuk, who had run the SBU since 2022, gained a reputation for overseeing successful operations against Russia and for purging the SBU from alleged Russian double agents.

The latest reshuffles are the latest in a long series made by Zelensky since the start of the war.

Malyuk's name is known across Ukraine. After all, last June he co-ordinated the daring "Spider Web" attack, which saw more than 100 Ukrainian drones struck air bases deep inside Russian territory. Khmara, his replacement, was also involved in the preparation of that operation.

So it did not come as a surprise that Malyuk's dismissal earlier this week was widely criticised within Ukraine, including by several high-profile military commanders. The impression that the decision made by President Zelensky was short-sighted was cemented by reports that

Malyuk had initially refused to step down voluntarily.

Although he has been dismissed from the position of SBU chief, he has been asked to continue leading special operations against Russia. Ukraine needed more "asymmetric operations against Russian forces", Zelensky said, adding that Malyuk was "best at this".

Khmara's appointment has gone some way in quelling fears about the SBU's future effectiveness. But former SBU operative Ivan Stupak argues his reputation - though solid - is limited to a certain sphere and that it is unclear whether he will be able to translate his experience to running the wider SBU.

Stupak also believes that Malyuk's dismissal is connected with the appointment of former spy chief Kyrylo Budanov as Zelensky's new chief of staff.

"Malyuk and Budanov are at loggerheads," he told the BBC, implying that Budanov had heavily influenced Zelensky's decision and that Khmara would now be "in the hands" of Budanov.

Other analysts disagree. Oleksandr Notevskyi, political analyst for Ukrainian media outlet Grunt, praised Khmara's appointment, pointing out his successes in heading Alpha, one of the top elite divisions of the SBU: "He's young, he's experienced, he is one of the authors of the Spider Web operation."



**SECURITY SERVICE CHIEF:**

Maj-Gen Yevhenii Khmara has battlefield experience fighting the Russians in the occupied region of Donetsk.

## Venezuelan security forces detain journalists from foreign news organisations

At least 14 members of the press were detained in Venezuela on Monday as they were covering the aftermath of the seizure of Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro by US forces.

The union representing media workers in Venezuela said all but one of those detained were employed by foreign news organisations and were released later on Monday, with one reporter deported.

Foreign news media have long faced restrictions in Venezuela, with very few being granted visas to work in the country.

Their detention came as Delcy Rodríguez was sworn in as the interim president and shortly after she said that she was willing to co-operate with the Trump administration, which has said it

would "run" Venezuela.

The union said the media workers were detained by Venezuelan security forces at the National Assembly and its environs, and in the neighbourhood of Altamira - all in the capital, Caracas.

At least two of them were seized by agents working for Venezuela's military counter-intelligence agency, while others were detained by Venezuela's intelligence service.

They said they had their equipment searched, their phones checked and their social media posts and messages read, the union statement added.

A Colombian and a Spanish reporter were also detained at Venezuela's border with Colombia near Cúcuta.

The two reporters were held for hours incommunicado be-

fore being released back into Colombia, the statement said.

The union called the incidents "alarming" and called for the release of 23 media workers who remain in detention in the country.

One community leader in the neighbourhood of Petare, in Caracas, told BBC Mundo that there were "hooded men with guns patrolling, checking people's WhatsApp statuses".

Caracas resident José, 60, said that people were not able to talk freely about what was happening, with a heavy police and military presence on the streets, as well as pro-Maduro armed groups, known as "colectivos", wearing masks.

A 33-year-old masseuse, who did not want to be named, said there was "so much fear in the streets and in our homes".

Members of the government appeared keen to show that the security forces were visible in communities, with the Interior Minister, Diosdado Cabello, posting a photo of himself on Monday night posing with armed police.

Their presence has struck fear in people critical of the government.

One woman described how there are "military people on every corner and groups of armed civilians supporting the government who are causing fear among the population".

Another person who asked to remain anonymous told the BBC that "the regime is not allowing news to come out of here." They added that "there are uniformed personnel on the streets stopping people and checking their phones".

## US may intercept and seize oil tanker heading for Europe, reports say

The US may act to seize a Russian-flagged oil tanker heading across the Atlantic to Europe, CBS News, the BBC's media partner in the US, reported.

Two US officials told the broadcaster that American forces plan to intercept the ship, which historically has carried Venezuelan crude oil and is thought to be between Scotland and Iceland.

President Donald Trump said last month that he was ordering a "blockade" of sanctioned oil tankers entering and leaving Venezuela, a move the government there described as "theft".

Ahead of his seizure of the country's former leader Nicolás Maduro on Saturday, Trump had repeatedly accused Venezuela's government of using ships to bring drugs to American shores.

The US coastguard tried to board the Bella 1 last month in the Caribbean when it was believed to be heading towards Venezuela.

They had obtained a warrant to seize the ship, accused of breaking US sanctions and shipping Iranian oil.

It then dramatically changed course, as well as its name to the Marinera, reportedly reflagging from a Guyanan to a Russian vessel.

Its approach to Europe has

coincided with the arrival of around 10 US military transport aircraft in the UK as well as helicopters.

Russia says it is "monitoring with concern" the situation around the ship.

CBS News reported that the two US officials said American forces preferred to seize the ship rather than sink it.

The Marinera is believed to be between Scotland and Iceland, with the distance and weather making a boarding difficult.

If any US military operation were to be launched from the UK then Washington would be expected to inform its ally.

For now the UK Ministry of Defence says it will not comment on other nations' military activities.

They suggested that the US could mount an operation like one conducted last month when US Marines and special operation forces working with the US Coast Guard seized The Skipper, a large crude oil tanker flagged out of Guyana, after the vessel left port in Venezuela.

AIS (automatic identification system) tracking data for the tanker, which can be spoofed or faked, suggests it was in the North Atlantic approximately 2,000km (1,200 miles) west of continental Europe on Tuesday.

## NEWS

## Foreign

## CAR's President Touadéra wins third-term in office, provisional results show

Central African Republic's President Faustin-Archange Touadéra has been re-elected to a third term, according to provisional results.

Touadéra won more than 76 percent of the vote, the electoral authority said, while his opponent Anicet-Georges Dologuele came second with 15 percent. Henri-Marie Dondra was third with three percent.

Touadéra ran on a platform of steadying the nation by bringing warring groups to the table:

"Everyone knows that I am leading a policy of outreach here. Our country has suffered too much and needs all its sons to come together so that we can build. You see, I have reached out to armed groups and continue to do so, and peace is returning because of this willingness to engage in dialogue. I will keep doing this because, as the Central Africans trusted me on 28 December, I will continue this policy of reaching out and working with all my fellow citizens who wish to do so."

Some 2.4 million Central African Republic citizens were registered to vote in a first-of-its-kind election in the country, where citizens voted simultaneously for all tiers of government, including presidential, legislative, regional

and municipal seats. Turnout was around 52 percent.

Touadéra's supporters celebrated his win but opponents have called the vote a sham. Two opposition candidates have already contested the results, citing instances of alleged malpractice by the National Elections Authority and widespread fraud.

On Friday, Dologuele claimed victory, alleging polls had been marred by major irregularities. Touadéra's office has dismissed the claims and warned of the risk of "unrest."

African Union observers said last week that the elections had gone ahead peacefully.

Final results will be announced later this month after the review of any appeals.

### Consolidated power

Analysts say Touadéra has consolidated power within state institutions.

The country has been embroiled in conflict since 2013 after mostly Muslim rebels seized power and forced then-President François Bozizé out of office. The conflict was de-escalated by a 2019 peace deal between the government and 14 armed groups. Six of the 14 groups later withdrew from the agreement.

## Israel's foreign minister on historic visit to Somaliland

Israel's foreign minister has held talks with Somaliland's president on his first visit to the breakaway region since Israel controversially recognised it as an independent country.

Gideon Saar said Israel was determined to advance relations with Somaliland "with momentum", while President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi hailed his visit as a "big day".

Last month Israel became the first country in the world to recognise Somaliland, which declared independence from Somalia more than 30 years ago.

Somalia sees Somaliland as being part of its territory, and condemned Saar's visit as "unacceptable interference" in its affairs.

Saar posted on X that his talks with Abdullahi focused on the "entirety of our relations".

He also addressed the backlash to Israel recognising Somaliland as an independent state, saying the decision was not made "against anyone".

"Only Israel will determine for itself who it recognises," he added.

In a statement released by his office, Abdullahi said Israel had taken a "courageous decision" and Somaliland would cooperate with it in the "strategic interest".

Saar said Abdullahi has accepted an invitation from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to visit Israel, but the Somaliland leader's office did not confirm this.

Somaliland declared independence from Somalia in 1991, after the overthrow of Somali

military dictator Siad Barre.

Israel's recognition of Somaliland last month came as a surprise, with Netanyahu citing Somaliland's "right to self-determination".

This move sparked international condemnation and prompted an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council.

China, Turkey and the African Union were among those criticising Israel's step, while the European Union said Somalia's sovereignty should be respected.

The US defended Israel, accusing its critics of double standards.

Somaliland hopes that Israel's decision will have a domino effect, and other states will recognise its independence.

But on Saturday, India's foreign ministry dismissed as "fake" claims on social media that it intends to do so.

Abdullahi has said Somaliland would join the Abraham Accords, a deal brokered by the Trump administration in 2020, which saw a number of Arab states officially establish ties with Israel.

Israel has pledged to cooperate with Somaliland in agriculture, health, technology and the economy.

Analysts say there are strategic reasons for Israel's declaration. "Israel requires allies in the Red Sea region for many strategic reasons, among them the possibility of a future campaign against the Houthis," Israeli think tank the Institute for National Security Studies said, referring to Yemen's Iran-backed rebels, in a paper last



**CAR PRESIDENT:**

Central African Republic President Faustin Archange Touadéra.

## Children killed after drone hits home in Sudan, medics say

At least 13 people have been killed - eight of them children - after a drone strike on a house in the Sudanese city of el-Obeid, says the Sudan Doctors' Network.

Most of the dead were part of the same family, the medical group added.

Although no group has claimed responsibility, the medics say the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) carried out the attack in an area controlled by the army, and which it has been trying to

penetrate for months.

As the civil war between Sudan's army and RSF rebels approaches its third year, the scale of suffering has seen it described as the world's worst humanitarian crisis by the UN and aid agencies.

To date, more than 11 million people have been forced from their homes by the violence, and hundreds of thousands of people have been killed. Widespread sexual violence is also being used as a weapon of war.

Both the RSF and the Sudanese Armed Forces are accused of atrocities.

Witnesses say Monday's drone attack on the house in el-Obeid happened in a residential neighbourhood.

The Sudan Doctors' Network says it "reflects a dangerous escalation of the policy of indiscriminate killing and systematic bombing of safe residential areas".

The city of el-Obeid remains under army control despite the RSF's advance elsewhere in the

wider state of North Kordofan.

Analysts say it is a key target for the RSF because of its strategic location between Sudan's capital city, Khartoum, and the Darfur region where they have established a parallel government and are accused of genocide.

The attack comes days after the RSF hit a power plant in el-Obeid, and also follows what the army claims was an attempted RSF drone attack on the country's largest hydro-electric dam near the northern town of Merowe.

## European allies back Denmark over Trump's threat to annex Greenland

Six European allies have rallied to support Denmark following renewed insistence by the US that it must have control over Greenland.

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

On Sunday, Donald Trump said the US "needed" Greenland - a semi-autonomous region of fellow Nato member Denmark - for security reasons.

He has refused to rule out the use of force to take control of the territory, and Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen warned on Monday that an attack by the US would spell the end of Nato.

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

The issue of Greenland's future resurfaced in the wake of the US military intervention in

Venezuela, during which elite troops went in to seize the country's President Nicolás Maduro and take him to face drugs and weapons charges in New York.

Following the raid, Trump said the US would "run" Venezuela for an unspecified period of time.

He also said the US was returning to an 1823 policy of US supremacy in its sphere of influence in the Western hemisphere - and he warned a number of countries the US could turn its attention to them.

The US military raid in Venezuela has reignited fears that the US may consider using force to secure control of Greenland.

A day after the raid, Katie Miller - the wife of one of Trump's senior aides - posted on social media a map of Greenland in the colours of the American flag, alongside the word "SOON".

On Monday, her husband Stephen Miller said it was "the formal position of the US government that Greenland should be part of the US".

In an interview with CNN,

he also said the US "is the power of Nato. For the US to secure the Arctic region, to protect and defend Nato and Nato interests, obviously Greenland should be part of the US."

Asked repeatedly whether the US would rule out using force to annex it, Miller responded: "Nobody's going to fight the US over the future of Greenland."

Stressing they were as keen as the US in Arctic security, the seven European signatories of Tuesday's joint statement said this must be achieved by Nato allies, including the US "collectively" - whilst "upholding the principles of the UN Charter, including sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders".

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

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

Trump has claimed that making Greenland part of the US would serve American security interests due to its strategic location and its abundance of minerals critical to high-tech sectors.

The Trump administration's recent move to appoint a special envoy to Greenland prompted anger in Denmark.

Greenland, which has a population of 57,000 people, has had extensive self-government since 1979, though defence and foreign policy remain in Danish hands.

While most Greenlanders favour eventual independence from Denmark, opinion polls show overwhelming opposition to becoming part of the US.

Morgan Angaju, 27, an Inuit living in Ilulissat in the west of the country, told BBC Newsbeat it had been "terrifying to listen to the leader of the free world laughing at Denmark and Greenland and just talking about us like we're something to claim".

# Sports

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

## AFCON 2025: Lookman douses tension as Osimhen's frustration sparks brief concern

Victor Osimhen showed visible frustration during Nigeria's 4-0 win over Mozambique at Fes Sports Complex, raising brief concerns in the Super Eagles' round-of-16 AFCON clash.

Osimhen, who scored twice, reacted after Ademola Lookman missed a passing option, prompting momentary tension before the Galatasaray striker was substituted in the 70th minute.

Speaking after the match,

Lookman dismissed talk of any rift, insisting team unity and winning remained Nigeria's priority at the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations.

"Victor is our number one guy," Lookman said. "He's a top striker, vital to us. Moments like that happen, but they don't change our togetherness.

"I play for the badge and my teammates; assists or goals, the team comes first."

"Victor's hunger drives us. We understand each other and

keep pushing."

"We stay calm, respect decisions, and focus on the next game," he said.

NAN also reports that Osimhen has three goals and three assists so far, while Lookman leads with three goals and four assists, underlining Nigeria's attacking depth.

Nigeria have won all four matches at the tournament and await either DR Congo or Algeria in the quarter-finals.



## AFCON 2025: Odegbami hails Super Eagles, credits Morocco's perfect pitches

Former Nigerian international Segun Odegbami has praised the Super Eagles' 4-0 win over Mozambique, describing it as evidence of Nigeria's return to football greatness.

Odegbami who spoke to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) said the Round-of-16 victory at the Complexe Sportif de Fès showcased confident, attacking football rarely seen from the Eagles in recent years.

He noted that the team's sharp passing, movement, and composure signalled renewed belief and cohesion among the players at the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations.

According to Odegbami, beyond tactics and talent, the quality of Morocco's immaculate playing surfaces has played a major role in Nigeria's impressive performances.

"The Super Eagles reminded me of who we are when conditions are right.

"Good football starts from the ground up; the pitch is the silent hero.

"Morocco's green grass has brought Nigerian football back home.

"The difference is simple and obvious," Odegbami said, adding: "These perfect pitches allow players to express themselves without fear or restriction."

He described Morocco's lush, flat, and well-maintained turfs as among the best in the world, enabling football to be

played as an art.

Odegbami lamented Nigeria's poor pitch standards, noting that even the Uyo Township Stadium falls far below AFCON-level surfaces in Morocco and Côte d'Ivoire.

He urged Nigeria to invest seriously in world-class grass pitches across major stadia, supported by proper maintenance structures.

"Until we fix our playing surfaces, our football will continue to suffer," Odegbami warned.



SEGUN ODEGBAMI

## AFCON 2025: Amadu warns Super Eagles against complacency after big win

Hon. Kabiru Amadu, the Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Sports, has urged the Super Eagles to remain focused as they advance to the quarterfinals of the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON).

Amadu made the call fol-

lowing Nigeria's emphatic 4-0 victory over Mozambique in Monday night's Round of 16 match in Fès, Morocco.

Reacting to the performance, the lawmaker commended the players and technical crew for their discipline

and attacking efficiency.

He said "the Super Eagles deserve praise for the level of professionalism and teamwork displayed against Mozambique."

He said that the team's depth and versatility were evident, with goals coming from different players and positions.

"The quality in the squad means Nigeria can score from any department, which makes the team difficult for opponents to plan against," he added.

He, however, cautioned against complacency, stressing that the tournament had reached a critical stage, saying "the job is not done yet. There are still three matches to win before lifting the trophy, players must remain disciplined and fully focused."



HON. KABIRU AMADU

## Musa Sati, Hope Mbeabuari win 8th Opobo Marathon competition in Rivers

Musa Sati and Hope Mbeabuari have emerged winners of the eighth edition of the one-day Opobo Marathon, which featured more than 600 amateur athletes from across the country.

The Project Lead of the competition, Mr Henry Cookey, announced the winners at the end of the championship held in Opobo Town, Opobo/Nkoro Local Government Area of Rivers on Tuesday.

Sati won the top prize of N500,000 in the male category, while Azubuike Chimaobi secured the second place with a prize of N250,000, as Barinor Wibebe finished third, earning N200,000.

In the female category, Mbeabuari claimed the star prize of N500,000; Blessing Ghambor came second with N250,000, and Akpukudu Kevin placed

third, receiving N200,000.

Prizes were also awarded in the indigenous and teenage categories.

Reacting to his victory, Sati expressed surprise at winning the marathon, noting that the course was challenging and the competition also had more experienced runners.

He commended the organisers for a well-coordinated event and praised the warm reception and hospitality of the people of Opobo.

Cookey told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on the sidelines of the event that the marathon is an annual competition featuring amateur athletes nationwide.

According to him, the 2026 edition is to honour the late traditional ruler of Opobo Kingdom, King Dandison Jaja.



OPOBO MARATHON COMPETITION

## AFCON 2025: Conde admits Mozambique outclassed by Nigeria in crushing 0-4 defeat



CHIQUINHO CONDE

Mozambique head coach Chiquinho Conde admitted his team were outplayed following a crushing 0-4 loss to Nigeria, describing the encounter as one of the toughest of his coaching career.

The Super Eagles mowed down Mozambique with a master class performance underpinned by purpose, direction, urgency, and clinical de-

livery in Fès on Monday.

Victory for Nigeria on the night meant the Super Eagles reached the quarter-finals of the 35th Africa Cup of Nations finals.

"It was an extremely difficult match. We expected challenges, but not of this magnitude against such a strong and organised Nigerian side," Conde said.

He explained that Mozambique struggled early, failing to

maintain possession or dictate play as Nigeria applied sustained attacking pressure.

"From the opening minutes, we could not impose our game. Players meant to control the match did not perform at their usual level," he said.

Conde praised Nigeria's tactical discipline and clinical finishing, noting their ability to capitalise on mistakes.

"I congratulate Nigeria. They showed full strength, maturity and efficiency throughout the game," the coach said.

In spite of the heavy defeat, Conde said the experience would help his team's long-term development.

"These are lessons we must learn from. We are still growing, and matches like this reveal our weaknesses," he added.

# SPORTS

## AFCON 2025: Osimhen acted out of patriotism, Lookman cleared him —NOA DG



LOOKMAN AND VICTOR OSIMHEN

Laure Onilu, the Director-General of the National Orientation Agency (NOA), has defended Victor Osimhen, following his on-pitch altercation with

teammate Ademola Lookman during Nigeria's Round of 16 match against Mozambique.

The incident occurred in the 63rd minute of play at the Complexe Sportif de Fès, in

spite Nigeria already holding a commanding lead at the time.

Osimhen angrily confronted Lookman after the winger opted to take a shot instead of passing to the striker, who appeared unmarked in the penalty area.

Osimhen's outburst triggered widespread reaction on social media, with several Nigerian fans criticising the Galatasaray striker for what they described as indiscipline and unprofessional conduct.

Onilu however said Osimhen's reaction was driven by deep patriotism and the desire to see Nigeria succeed, stressing that it should not be misconstrued as indiscipline or disrespect.

"Victor Osimhen is a passionate Nigerian who gives his all for the green and white.

"What happened on the pitch was purely about commitment to the team and the nation," Onilu said.

He added that Lookman had since clarified the situation and absolved Osimhen of any wrongdoing.

"Lookman himself has made it clear that there was no disrespect.

"The matter was exaggerated, and both players remain united and focused on the national objective," he said.

Speaking to NAN in Fès, where he is part of a Federal Government delegation rallying support for the Super Eagles, the NOA boss said the agency's presence in Morocco was aimed at mobilising Nigerians and friends of Nigeria to stand behind the team.



CLAUDE LEROY

## Claude Leroy blasts CAF over AFCON scheduling inconsistencies

Veteran football coach Claude Leroy has strongly criticised the Confederation of African Football (CAF) over what he described as poor organisation and lack of consistency in the ongoing Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON).

Leroy voiced his frustration while reacting to the scheduling of the Algeria versus Congo fixture, noting what he considers an unfair imbalance in the competition's structure.

"This Algeria-Congo match really annoys me. One team with nine points is facing another with seven points, while at the same time some teams on seven points are playing against teams with

just two points," Leroy said.

According to the experienced tactician, such a scenario undermines the integrity of the tournament and creates unequal competitive conditions for teams battling for qualification.

"It perfectly illustrates the CAF's complete lack of consistency," he added.

Leroy's comments have reignited debates among fans and analysts over CAF's tournament planning, with critics arguing that inconsistent scheduling could influence outcomes at a crucial stage of the competition.

The Confederation of African Football has yet to respond to the remarks.

## AFCON 2025: Lawal calls for caution over Osimhen's overbearing attitude

Former Super Eagles winger, Dimeji Lawal has called for caution over the Galatasaray FC of Turkey striker Victor Osimhen's overbearing attitude in the Super Eagles camp.

Lawal in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) said that though the quality of Osimhen was never in doubt, yet the former African Footballer of the Year must exercise control.

Recall that Osimhen had an on-field outburst with fellow colleague, Ademola Lookman during the Super Eagles match against Mozambique on Monday.

Lawal, a former General Manager of the Shooting Stars SC of Ibadan, said that the former Napoli FC of Italy star must put the squad first above his personal ego.

"I am very delighted with the strong showing of the Super Eagles in the ongoing AFCON, they have shown class.

"The truth is, without doubt, we have the best attack in the world presently in terms of numbers, in terms of quality, and standard.

"In the team that you have, you have Lookman, Moses Simon, Osimhen and others.

"I also commend the technical crew for giving this type of joy we have missed in the past years," he said.

On Osimhen's outburst, Lawal said that ego could be the problem with Osimhen's attitude.

"The only problem, with the Super Eagles' team is that they must be careful this ego of Osi-

mhen, his behaviour is out of line, because he's not playing with his subordinates.

"If he keep picking fights with his teammates before we know it, they won't play for him any longer.

"I've been there before and I know what it means. If Osimhen keeps looking down on his colleagues and shouting them down, he is bullying them.

"These are big players like Osimhen and he must be careful about that," he advised.



LOOKMAN AND VICTOR OSIMHEN

## AFCON: Algeria set up quarter-final showdown with Nigeria after late DR Congo escape

Algeria booked a mouth-watering quarter-final clash with Nigeria at the Africa Cup of Nations after edging past DR Congo 1-0 in a bruising Round of 16 encounter decided deep into extra time in Rabat.

Substitute Adil Boulbina delivered the decisive blow in the

118th minute, curling home a sublime strike to break Congolese resistance and send Algeria through to the last eight of the tournament in Morocco.

The contest appeared destined for penalties after 90 minutes of regulation time, and most of extra time failed to produce a goal. But Boulbina,

introduced just five minutes earlier in place of Fares Chaibi, produced a moment of brilliance when it mattered most. The Al Duhail forward cut inside to shake off his marker before bending an unstoppable effort beyond goalkeeper Lionel Mpsi-Nzau, who had kept DR Congo in the game with a string of fine saves.

Algeria started the match on the front foot, dominating early possession and pinning DR Congo deep in their own half. Despite the pressure, clear chances were limited, and Mpsi-Nzau was rarely troubled in the opening exchanges.

DR Congo, however, looked more incisive on the counter. Cedric Bakambu went close in the 25th minute after breaking quickly, only for Luca Zidane to smother his low drive.



ALGERIA VS DR CONGO

## AFCON 2025: SWAN praises Eagles, urges discipline, focus

The Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN) has commended the Super Eagles' performance at the ongoing 2025 Africa Cup of Nations in Morocco.

SWAN President, Mr Isaiyah Benjamin, who spoke from Fès, expressed optimism that Nigeria's senior men's team can win the continental title.

Benjamin said the Super Eagles have become crowd favourites among African and global fans in Morocco.

"The Super Eagles are now the attraction of football fans across Africa and beyond because of their purposeful play," Benjamin said.

He noted that Nigeria remain unbeaten since the tournament began, describing the record as commendable.

"It is on record that the team have not lost any match since December. That is a strong statement," he said.

However, the SWAN president cautioned the team to reassess and refocus ahead of the quarter-finals.

"From the quarter-final stage, the competition takes a different shape and demands deeper preparation," Benjamin said.

He urged team officials to adopt the right tactical and mental approach for the remaining matches.

"The Eagles have abundant talents, but officials must put heads together and approach each game wisely," he said.

Benjamin also advised players to remain calm and disciplined on the pitch.

"There is no need for confrontation with teammates, opponents or officials. Mental balance and resilience are crucial now," he said.

The SWAN president commended Nigerian sports journalists covering the tournament in Morocco.

"Over 100 Nigerian journalists are here. They are projecting Nigeria positively and deserve commendation," Benjamin said.

Reacting to the Osimhen-Lookman incident, Benjamin urged stakeholders and the media to continue supporting the team.