

**ABUJA**

# Middle East crisis offers Nigeria oil revenue opportunity —Abe

Former Senator Magnus Abe has said Nigeria could turn the ongoing tensions in the Middle East into an economic opportunity by increasing crude oil production and expanding exports to boost national revenue.

Abe, who is President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's nominee for Chairman of the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory

Commission (NUPRC), made the remarks on Monday after appearing before the Senate Committee on Upstream Petroleum for screening.

The committee is chaired by Senator Eteng Williams.

Speaking with journalists after the screening exercise, Abe described the ongoing conflict involving the United States, Israel and Iran as a global crisis

with far-reaching economic consequences for oil-producing nations.

According to him, although the tensions have contributed to rising energy prices across the world, they also present an opportunity for oil-producing countries such as Nigeria to strengthen their position in the global market.

He explained that Nigeria

must respond strategically by expanding its crude oil production capacity and attracting more investment into the upstream petroleum sector.

Abe noted that the impact of the crisis is already being felt domestically through higher fuel and energy costs.

However, he stressed that the country must adopt what he described as a "careful balancing

act" in navigating the situation.

"If Nigeria strengthens its production capacity and positions itself properly in the international oil market, the country can increase revenue from crude oil sales," he said.

Abe added that global disruptions in oil supply often create openings for producers that are able to scale up production quickly and meet in-

ternational demand.

He therefore urged policy-makers to prioritize investments that would improve Nigeria's production output and ensure the country maximises its advantage in the evolving global energy landscape.

President Tinubu had in January nominated Abe as chair-

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# The Nigerian Observer



...that the people may know

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PUBLISHED SINCE MAY 29, 1968

VOL. 47, NO. 1,219

TUESDAY 17TH MARCH, 2026.

**INEC seeks massive voter education ahead of 2027 general elections**

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# Court orders Sowore's lawyer to kneel

## Warns of contempt during heated Abuja trial

**ABUJA**

Drama unfolded at the Federal High Court in Abuja on Monday as Justice Mohammed Umar threatened to commit Mr Marshall Abubakar, lead counsel to the publisher of Sahara Reporters, Omoyele Sowore, for contempt following a heated courtroom exchange during proceedings in Sowore's ongoing trial.

The judge's warning came after Abubakar repeatedly raised his voice while addressing the court, prompting Justice Umar

to order him to step forward and kneel down in open court.

The tense moment was eventually diffused when lawyers present in the courtroom, led by prosecuting counsel Akinlolu Kehinde, SAN, quickly intervened and pleaded with the judge to temper justice with mercy.

Sowore is being prosecuted by the Department of State Services (DSS) over allegations that he made false claims against President Bola Tinubu.

The confrontation occurred shortly after Abubakar concluded the cross-examination of the

prosecution's only witness, Mr Cyril Nosike, a DSS official.

Following the cross-examination, Kehinde informed the court that the prosecution had closed its case and urged the court to direct the defence to open its case.

Responding, Abubakar said the defence intended to file a no-case submission and suggested that the matter be adjourned until July.

The prosecuting counsel immediately opposed the request, arguing that it was part of what he described as dilatory tactics

by the defence aimed at further delaying the proceedings. He proposed that the case be heard on a day-to-day basis.

Justice Umar observed that while the prosecution had been swift in presenting its case, the defence had spent four days cross-examining a single witness.

The judge ruled that hearing the matter on a daily basis would not be feasible and consequently adjourned the case until April 13 for the adoption of final written addresses on the anticipated no-case submission.

Abubakar appeared dissatisfied

with the date fixed by the court.

While Sowore, speaking from the witness box, attempted to explain how the adjourned date might affect the primaries of his political party, his lawyer simultaneously began addressing the court, raising his voice and declaring that his client was determined to wrest political power from President Tinubu.

"This court belongs to all of us. This court is not for some people alone. It belongs to all of us," Abubakar shouted.

The judge repeatedly instructed the lawyer to lower his voice, but the warnings were ignored.

Reacting sharply, Justice Umar warned that he would not tolerate such conduct in his courtroom.

"If you shout in this court again, I will commit you for contempt. In fact, come here! Come and kneel down here!" the judge said, pointing to a spot in front of the courtroom.

The situation threatened to escalate further before several lawyers stood up to plead with the court to forgive Abubakar.

While the appeals were ongoing, Justice Umar announced

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## Credible polls key to nat'l security, democracy —INEC Chairman

CAROLINE AMEH

**ABUJA**

The Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Joash Amupitan, SAN, on Monday declared that credible elections remain critical to Nigeria's national security and the stability of its democratic system.

Amupitan made the assertion while receiving the Executive Committee of the Alumni Association of the National Institute for Security Studies (AANIS) during a courtesy visit to the INEC headquarters in Abuja.

The delegation was led by the President of the association, Mike Ejiofor.

Addressing the security experts, the INEC chairman emphasised the strong relationship between effective security management and the integrity of the electoral process, stressing that transparent elections

are fundamental to national peace and democratic stability.

He noted that the theme of AANIS's forthcoming second annual lecture, "Credible Election and National Security in Nigeria," reflects the urgent need to strengthen the link between electoral credibility and national security.

"The theme is timely and significant because it underscores the crucial connection between transparent electoral processes and a stable democratic system," Amupitan said.

He stressed that Nigeria's electoral process must be protected through sustained cooperation among security agencies, policymakers and other stakeholders in order to guarantee fairness, transparency and safety during elections.

According to him, credible elections not only reinforce public confidence in govern-

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**SENATE COMMITTEE ON PETROLEUM RESOURCES SCREENING:**

L-R: Senator Philip Aduda; Chairman-designate of the Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), Senator Magnus Abe; and Special Adviser to the President on Senate Matters, Senator Basheer Lado, during Senate Committee on Petroleum Resources screening of the Chairman and Non-Executive commissioners of the NUPRC Board at the National Assembly, Abuja, yesterday.

PHOTO: OMOYE AMINU.

**Farmers seek long-term food security strategy as FG distributes rice**

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**Expert urges Nigeria to boost local military production amid rising defence spending**

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**Iran hits key UAE oil port and Dubai airport**

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**Federal Government fulfills promises as D'Tigress receives documents of Houses and National Honours**

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# Foundations train Edo teachers to boost classroom effectiveness

JUDE EHEBHA

**IRRUA**

The Josemaria Escrivá Foundation (JOSEF), with support from the TY Danjuma Foundation, has commenced a training programme for primary school teachers in Esan West and Esan Central Local Government Areas of Edo State aimed at strengthening teaching capacity and improving education standards.

The 2026 training programme was formally flagged off at Akho Primary School in Irrua, Esan Central Local Government Area.

Chief Responsibility Officer of the Josemaria Escrivá Foundation, Dr Jude Obasanmi, disclosed that the project targets 300 teachers as well as 10 Learning and Development Officers/Master Trainers (LDOs/MTs).

Obasanmi explained that each year, 60 teachers and 10 LDOs drawn from 20 public primary schools would participate in the programme.

He noted that the initiative focuses on improving classroom effectiveness, equipping teachers with stress and time management skills and promoting healthy mental health practices.

According to him, the

Teachers for Effective Service Delivery Project (TSEP) will run from 2023 to 2027.

He added that by 2025, a total of 180 teachers had already benefited from the programme.

"After each training session, participating teachers are expected to cascade the knowledge gained to other teachers in their respective schools,"

Obasanmi said.

In her remarks, Ms Tomi Ajayi, State Officer of the TY Danjuma Foundation, described the organisation as a private philanthropic body committed to improving the quality of life of Nigerians through support for education, community health and income generation initiatives.

Ajayi emphasised that

strengthening teachers was central to building a resilient and effective education system.

She added that the training programme was designed not only to enhance teachers' professional performance but also to improve their overall well-being.

"In Edo State, we are proud of our partnership with the Josemaria Escrivá Foundation, which

has delivered impactful programmes since 2018," she said.

She listed some of the initiatives to include girl-child retention projects, the Teachers for Effective Service Delivery programme that trained over 100 teachers and the Learn-at-Home initiative which supported more than 1,200 pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown.

## Group marks world Oral Health Day with hygiene campaign in Abuja schools

**ABUJA**

The Centre for School Health Education and Environmental Hygiene (CSHEEH) on Monday marked the 2026 World Oral Health Day with a major awareness campaign for pupils in Abuja.

The event took place at LEA Primary and Junior Secondary School, Sabon-Lugbe, in collaboration with the Nigerian Dental Association (NDA), Federal Capital Territory chapter, with support from Unilever and other partners.

Executive Director of CSHEEH, Dr Folasade Momoh, said the programme was designed to promote oral hygiene awareness among pupils and encourage the adoption of healthy habits.

She explained that World Oral Health Day, celebrated annually on March 20, is aimed at raising global awareness about the importance of oral health.

According to her, the 2026

theme, "A Happy Mouth is a Happy Life," highlights the strong connection between oral hygiene and overall health and well-being.

Momoh urged pupils to brush their teeth at least twice daily, stressing that maintaining a clean mouth is essential for good health.

She added that proper oral hygiene helps prevent dental caries and gum diseases and may also reduce the risk of chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers.

She said dental professionals would educate pupils on oral hygiene practices and demonstrate correct brushing techniques during the programme.

Dental screening was also conducted for both pupils and staff, while those diagnosed with dental conditions would be referred for further medical treatment.

Momoh added that toothbrushes, toothpaste and educational materials would be distributed to participants.

**FLAG-OFF:**

Dr. Jude Obasanmi, Chief Responsibility Officer, Josemaria Escrivá Foundation, addressing participants, during the flag-off of a training programme for primary school teachers in Esan Central and Esan West Local Government Areas of Edo State, organised by the Josemaria Escrivá Foundation and the TY Danjuma Foundation in Irrua, Edo State.

## Farmers seek long-term food security strategy as FG distributes rice

**LAGOS**

Rice farmers have welcomed President Bola Tinubu's directive for the distribution of rice to Nigerians observing the Ramadan and Lenten seasons, but urged the Federal Government to adopt sustainable measures to address food security.

The farmers made the call in

separate interviews on Monday in Lagos.

President Tinubu had directed the Renewed Hope Ambassadors to distribute rice across the 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory as part of support for citizens observing Ramadan and Lent.

The Governor of Imo State and Director-General of the Renewed Hope Ambassadors, Sen-

ator Hope Uzodimma, disclosed the initiative in a statement.

According to him, the programme is intended to promote national unity and demonstrate compassion during a period of deep spiritual significance for Muslims and Christians.

Reacting to the directive, Acting Chairman of the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), Lagos State chapter, Mr Sakin Agbayewa, described the initiative as a welcome development but warned that it

offered only temporary relief. "If the government wants to cushion the cycle of hunger during the Ramadan and Lenten period through the distribution of rice, it is a welcome development."

"But it is only a short-term solution. What about the long-term strategy?" he said.

Agbayewa stressed the need for policies that would create an enabling environment for agriculture to thrive and effectively tackle hunger.

## Middle East crisis offers Nigeria oil...

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man of the NUPRC and forwarded his name to the Senate for confirmation alongside two other nominees to serve on the boards of the commission and the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority as non-execu-

tive commissioners.

Abe represented Rivers South East Senatorial District in the Senate for two terms and previously served on the board of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation.

He currently serves as Chairman of the National Agency for the Great Green Wall.

## Credible polls key to nat'l security,...

**«CONTINUED FROM PG 1**

ance but also reduce tensions that could threaten national stability.

Amupitan commended the AANIS for its efforts in strengthening the capacity of security professionals and promoting discussions on critical national issues.

He noted that such initiatives play a vital role in enhancing Nigeria's preparedness to address emerging threats capable of undermining democratic development.

The INEC chairman reaffirmed the commission's commitment to conducting free, fair and credible elections across the country.

He stressed that the success of any electoral process depends largely on the availability of a secure environment in which voters, electoral officials and other stakeholders can freely participate.

Amupitan expressed optimism that the forthcoming lecture organised by the association would deepen dialogue and promote stronger collaboration between electoral authorities and security institutions.

## Experts launch green economy training to prepare youths for emerging jobs

**ABUJA**

Stakeholders in Nigeria's renewable energy sector have launched a training programme aimed at equipping young Nigerians with skills required to participate in the country's emerging green economy.

The initiative, known as the Africa Policy Dialogues (APDs) Renewable Energy Digital Media Fellowship, is being implemented by Advocacy for Policy and Innovation in collaboration with the House Committee on Renewable Energy and the INCLUDE Knowledge Platform.

Mr Aniebiet Obot, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Consultant and Project Coordinator, disclosed this in an interview in Abuja.

Obot explained that the programme forms part of a two-phased, 12-week fellowship designed to expand access to green economy jobs for young Nigerians.

According to him, 22 youths were selected for the pilot phase of the programme.

He said the fellowship began with a two-week intensive training aimed at strengthening participants' core competencies in digital media and communication within the renewable energy sector.

Participants received training in areas such as digital media fundamentals for renewable energy communication, CV writing, the use of artificial in-

telligence in content creation, visual design and blogging.

The training was facilitated by experts including Abra Dangan, Esther Maikano, Victoria Many, Chinenye Kalu Chima, Paul Ezeani and Aniebiet Obot.

Obot noted that the programme adopted a Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) approach with practical, hands-on learning methods designed to equip participants with job-ready digital media skills.

## Court orders Sowore's lawyer to...

**«CONTINUED FROM PG 1**

the adjournment of the case to April 13 for the adoption of written addresses and subsequently rose for the day.

Earlier in the proceedings, the prosecution had raised concerns that Sowore brought a recording device into the courtroom dock.

Kehinde informed the court that the defendant appeared to be in possession of a recording gadget and urged the court to

order that it be confiscated.

Sowore, however, denied the allegation when the judge allowed him to respond, insisting that he only had his eyeglasses, a power bank and his phone with him.

Justice Umar recalled that the court had earlier directed that the defendant should not bring any gadget with him into the dock.

The judge therefore ordered Sowore to hand over the items to his lawyers, which he did

through a court official before the items were transferred to his counsel.

Earlier at the start of proceedings, Abubakar told the court that he had only learnt of the sitting shortly before the session began.

He explained that he was appearing in another court and had come without the case file.

He subsequently applied for a stand-down until 12:30 p.m. to enable him to retrieve the file from his office.

Although the prosecution objected, describing the request as another attempt to delay the trial, the judge granted the application.

When the court reconvened shortly before 1 p.m., Abubakar proceeded to cross-examine the DSS witness for about two hours.

During the cross-examination, the defence lawyer tendered several newspaper publications in evidence, some of which were handed to the witness to read aloud before the court.

## NEWS

# EFCC arraigns ex-convict for N12m laundering

## ● As witness confirms no direct interview with Emezie

**IKEJA**

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on Monday arraigned former convict, Adekola Oluokun for allegedly laundering N12 million.

Oluokun was arraigned on a one-count amended charge of money laundering, contrary to Section 330 of the Criminal Laws of Lagos State, 2011, to which he pleaded guilty. Following his plea, EFCC counsel, Muhammed Bashir requested a date to review the facts of the case and sentencing, while also praying that the defendant be remanded in a correctional centre.

The commission alleged that Oluokun, with others still at large, sometime in 2025 in Lagos, concealed and converted N12 million paid into his account through Point of Sale (POS) agents.

The sum reportedly formed part of N3.9 billion stolen from accounts at a new-generation bank through unauthorised access and fraudulent activities on its mobile banking platform.

Justice Rahman Oshodi adjourned the case until March 17 for review of facts and sentencing and ordered that Oluokun be remanded in a correctional centre.

Oluokun was previously convicted on July 23, 2020, by Justice

Joyce Abdulmalik of the Federal High Court, Ibadan, Oyo State.

He was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment for defrauding a Taiwanese national of \$22,300 following prosecution by the EFCC Ibadan Zonal Directorate.

The Ibadan office had prosecuted him on a six-count amended charge, which included obtaining money by false pretence.

Meanwhile, in the trial of a former Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor, Godwin Emezie, a prosecution witness, David Jaiyeoba, admitted that he did not personally interrogate Emezie during EFCC investigations.

Emezie faces charges of criminal breach of trust, forgery, abuse of office, conspiracy to obtain by false pretence, and obtaining money by false pretence while serving as CBN governor.

The EFCC alleged that he obtained by false pretence the sum of \$6,230,000, purportedly meant for international election observers for the 2023 general election, and conferred corrupt advantages on two companies—April 1616 Nigeria Ltd and Architekton Nigeria Ltd.

The former CBN governor pleaded not guilty.

Jaiyeoba, the 12th prosecution witness (PW12), told the court that EFCC findings were

based on documents and statements of suspects arrested during investigations.

He confirmed that Emezie was neither a signatory, director, nor shareholder of Architekton Nigeria Limited.

He further stated that he never visited the CBN Gov-

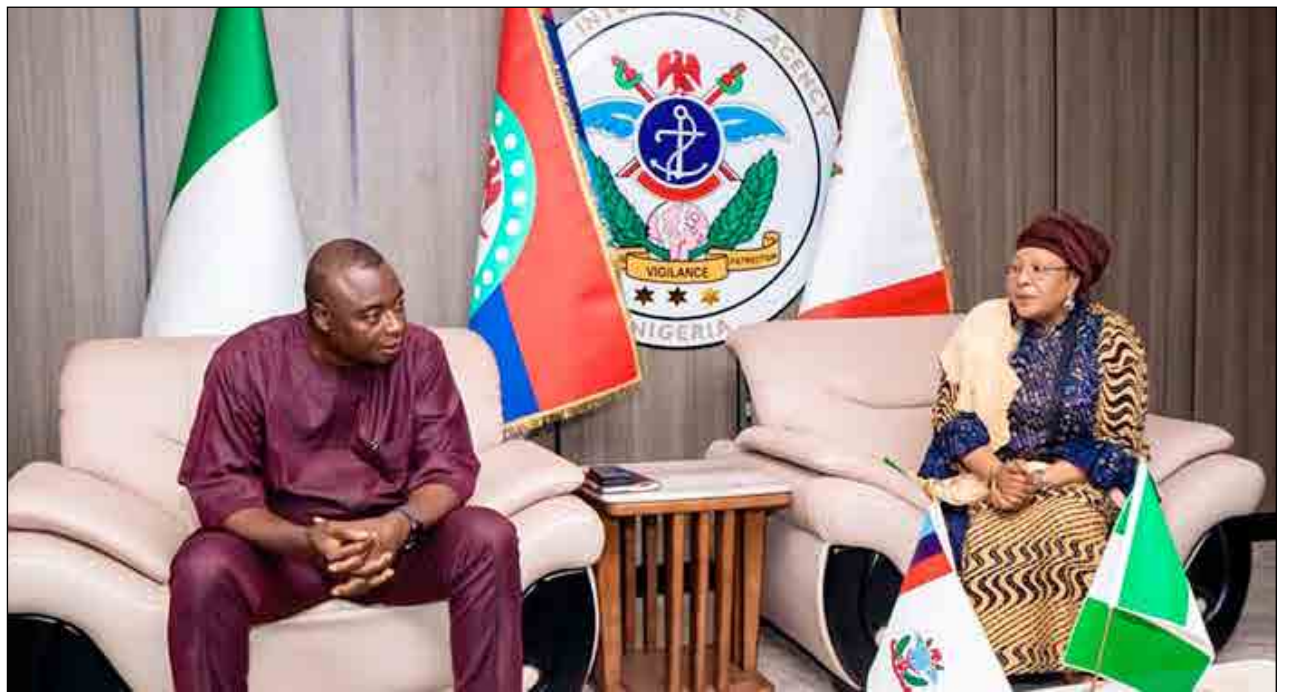
ernor's residence, the alleged "Architekton" renovation site, or other project locations, and that EFCC's findings on the renovation were based on statements provided by the company's director.

The witness also noted awareness of the commit-

tee in the CBN that vets and handles the binding process of contracts but could not recall the committee's name. He confirmed that his team conducted interviews with officers involved, while the Abuja team interacted with officials due to proximity. When asked if Emezie was a member of the Major Contract Tender Com-

mittee, Jaiyeoba replied, "I cannot remember."

During cross-examination by Matthew Burkaa SAN, counsel to Emezie, Jaiyeoba maintained that he understood the CBN procurement process, but admitted he was not a staff member and could not definitively say who ensures a company is qualified for a contract.

**LATTER'S VISIT:**

Chief of Defence Intelligence (CDI), Lt-Gen. Emmanuel Akomaye-Parker (L), with Chairman, Nigerian Legion, Morenike Grace-Henry, during the latter's visit to the CDI Office in Abuja.

## Accommodation: Delta govt approves 18 hostels for 9 State tertiary institutions

**ASABA**

The Delta State Government has approved the construction of male and female hostel blocks across nine state-owned tertiary institutions in a major move aimed at tackling the growing accommodation crisis faced by students.

The State Commissioner for Higher Education, Professor Nyerhovwo Tonukari, disclosed this while briefing journalists at the end of the State Executive Council meeting presided over by Governor Sheriff Oborevwori.

Tonukari described the decision as a significant relief for students and their parents, stressing that the increasing student population in the state's tertiary institutions has made hostel accommodation a pressing challenge.

According to him, statistics presented during the convocation ceremonies of the state's three newly established universities showed that the institutions alone currently have about 40,000 students, a development that has placed enormous pressure on available accommodation facilities.

He explained that Delta State University (DELSU), Abraka, presently has more than 35,000 students, while its existing hostel facilities can accommodate only about 2,000 students.

The commissioner added that the newer universities have even fewer hostel spaces, capable of housing only a few hundred students, thereby worsening the accommodation deficit.

To address the situation, Tonukari said the State Executive Council approved the construction of two hostel blocks—one for male students and one for female students in each of the nine state-owned tertiary institutions.

He noted that the initiative forms part of Governor Oborevwori's efforts to significantly reduce accommodation shortages and improve the learning environment across the institutions.

Tonukari also revealed that the council approved the reconstruction and completion of the abandoned Senate Building at Delta State University, Abraka.

According to him, the project was originally awarded in 2010 but had remained uncompleted for several years before the latest intervention by the state government.

"Today, that building has been approved for reconstruction and completion, which is very good news for the university," he said.

Also speaking, the State Commissioner for Housing, Hon. Godknows Angele, assured that the Ministry of Housing would ensure effective supervision of the approved projects.

## UBTH slashes dental treatment cost by 50% as CMD flags off World Oral Health Day campaign

**BENIN CITY**

The Chief Medical Director of University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH), Idia Ize-Iyamu, on Monday flagged off activities marking the 2026 celebration of World Oral Health Day 2026 with the announcement of a 50 percent reduction in the cost of selected dental treatments for patients.

The initiative, which forms part of efforts to promote oral health awareness and improve access to dental care, will run from March 16 to March 19 at the UBTH Dental Clinic.

Speaking at the flag-off cere-

mony, Prof. Ize-Iyamu said the hospital decided to introduce the discounted services to encourage more Nigerians to pay closer attention to their oral hygiene and take advantage of professional dental care.

She explained that patients visiting the dental clinic during the four-day exercise would enjoy reduced charges on a number of essential procedures, including scaling and polishing, tooth extractions, glass ionomer cement (GIC) restorations and dental radiographs.

According to her, the initiative is part of the hospital's contribution to the global observance of World Oral Health

Day and its commitment to preventive healthcare.

"This show of love and this show of strength is very heart-warming, and I am delighted to be in your midst today as you are about to flag off your walk for awareness," the CMD said while expressing support for the activities organised by dental health professionals.

She stressed that oral health remains a vital component of overall well-being, noting that increased awareness and early treatment of dental conditions would help prevent serious complications.

The global oral health campaign, observed annually on

March 20, is organised by dental professionals worldwide to highlight the importance of good oral hygiene and access to dental services.

This year's celebration, themed "A Happy Mouth is a Happy Life," aims to encourage individuals, families and communities to adopt better oral health practices and seek timely dental care.

As part of the programme, dental professionals and health advocates are also expected to embark on awareness campaigns and community engagements to educate the public on proper oral hygiene and preventive dental care.

## 4 feared dead, 4 sustain fractures as truck hits commercial bus

**LAGOS**

A tragic road accident on the Lekki-Epe Expressway in Ajah, Lagos State, on Sunday morning left four passengers feared dead and four others seriously injured after an articulated truck crashed into a commercial minibus.

The accident, which occurred around 10 a.m., involved a Suzuki commercial bus popularly called "Korope" and a truck that reportedly lost its brakes while travelling at high speed.

Eyewitness accounts indicated

that the truck driver lost control of the vehicle, which then crossed to the opposite side of the expressway and slammed into the oncoming passenger bus.

The crash left the minibus severely damaged, trapping several passengers inside the wreckage.

Confirming the incident, the Director of Public Affairs and Public Enlightenment of the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA), Adebayo Taofiq, stated that the crash involved a truck with registration number KNN 313 YL and the commercial minibus.

He said four male occupants of the bus died instantly from the impact, while four other passengers—two men and two women sustained serious leg fractures.

According to him, the injured victims were rescued from the wreckage and immediately taken to a nearby hospital for urgent medical care.

The remains of the deceased were later evacuated from the crash site and deposited at the Shency Hospital morgue by a Federal Road Safety Corps ambulance.

Eyewitnesses further dis-

closed that other motorists and passers-by joined police officers from the Elemoro Division and officials of LASTMA to rescue trapped victims before emergency responders arrived.

However, the truck driver and his assistant reportedly fled the scene shortly after the accident, making it impossible for authorities to apprehend them.

Traffic along the Lekki-Epe Expressway was temporarily disrupted as emergency teams worked to clear the wreckage and restore normal movement on the busy highway.

# UNICEF, FG train journalists on ethical reporting of children

## GOMBE

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation, on Monday commenced a training programme for journalists on the ethics of reporting issues concerning children. The two-day workshop, which is being held in Gombe, brought together journalists from the North-Central and North-East regions with the aim of strengthening child protection through responsible and ethical media reporting.

Declaring the workshop open, Mr Toye Falayi, Assistant Director at the Child Rights Bureau of the Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation, said that the training was designed to enhance the capacity of journalists to report children's issues in ways that promote and safeguard their rights.

Falayai urged participants to actively engage in the sessions and take full advantage of the training to ensure that the objectives of the programme were achieved.

"I want to commend UNICEF for this very important collaboration aimed at protecting the rights of chil-

dren through responsible reportage of their issues," he said.

One of the facilitators, Dr Geoffrey Njoku, in his presentation titled, "Privacy, Dignity and Protection of Identity: Consent and Parental Approval," stressed the need for journalists to avoid sensationalism when reporting on children.

He advised media practitioners to always prioritise the safety and well-being of children in their reports, warning that careless coverage could expose them to trauma and other long-term psychological effects.

Another facilitator, Dr Jide Johnson, who spoke on the top-

ic "Media as Protector or Violator," emphasised that the media had a crucial responsibility to safeguard children through responsible journalism.

Johnson urged journalists to exercise caution when conducting interviews involving children or publishing reports about them, noting that improper reporting could damage their reputation and future.

Also speaking, veteran broadcaster Mr Nansel Nimyel, in his presentation on "Responsibilities of Print and Electronic Media," cautioned journalists against revealing the identities or locations of

children in news reports.

According to him, such disclosures could expose children to danger or subject them to stigma within their communities.

Nimyel therefore called on journalists to uphold profes-

sionalism and ethical standards in reporting children's issues, warning that irresponsible reportage could have serious consequences and lasting negative social effects on affected children.

## INEC seeks massive voter education ahead of 2027 general elections

### UYO

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has called for intensified voter education nationwide as preparations gradually begin for Nigeria's 2027 general elections.

The Resident Electoral Commissioner in Akwa Ibom State, Mr Obo Effanga, made the call on Monday in Uyo during a meeting with members of the Directorate of Politics and Governance (DPG) of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Region 57.

Effanga said religious organisations and other civil society groups have a critical role to play in shaping public opinion and mobilising citizens to participate responsibly in the democratic process.

According to him, effective voter education by grassroots institutions will strengthen democratic participation and contribute significantly to the conduct of peaceful and credible elections.

"We are working with a very tight election schedule and we need stakeholders to help sen-

sitise the public on election procedures," Effanga said.

"We urge religious organisations and other community-based groups to educate their members and encourage them to conduct themselves in ways that promote peaceful, credible and transparent elections."

The REC disclosed that the commission would soon commence a revalidation exercise of the national voter register to determine the actual number of eligible voters in the country ahead of the next electoral cycle.

He stressed that accurate voter data is essential for effective planning and the successful conduct of elections across the federation.

Earlier, the Coordinator of the DPG, RCCG Region 57, Prof. Udeme Udofia, said the visit was aimed at strengthening collaboration between the church and INEC.

Udofia explained that the Directorate of Politics and Governance was created within the church structure to provide members with political education on governance processes, civic responsibility and voter participation.



### BRIEFING NEWSMEN:

Minister of Works, David Umahi (L), briefing newsmen on the outcome of the construction of road projects across the country in Abuja recently. With him is the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Works, Mr Rafu Adeladan.

## Navy hands over fake officers to police in C'River

### CALABAR

The Nigerian Navy has handed over two suspected military impostors to the Nigeria Police Force in Cross River State after they were arrested for allegedly posing as naval officers and parading fake identification documents.

The suspects were apprehended on March 10 by personnel of Nigerian Navy Ship VICTORY (NNS VICTORY) while dressed in military cam-

ouflage and carrying what were later discovered to be forged military identity cards.

Spokesman of the naval ship, Lt.-Cdr. Suleiman Bala, disclosed this in a statement issued to journalists in Calabar on Monday.

Bala explained that preliminary investigation revealed that one of the suspects had been impersonating a Navy lieutenant while the second claimed to be a midshipman in the service.

According to him, the two

suspects falsely claimed they were attached to Nigerian Navy Ship SAGBAMA when questioned by naval authorities.

"Further investigation led to the recovery of additional military-related items from them, including a jungle hat and a pair of military boots," Bala said.

He added that during interrogation, the suspects admitted that the camouflage vest, jungle hat and boots were purchased from open markets, while the identity cards were produced

by them in an attempt to legitimise their impersonation.

Bala said the suspects had now been formally handed over to the Criminal Investigation Department of the police in Cross River for further investigation and possible prosecution.

According to him, the action was in line with established procedures aimed at curbing impersonation and safeguarding the integrity of the armed forces.

The Navy reiterated its warning to members of the public against impersonating military personnel or using military accoutrements unlawfully, stressing that such acts constitute serious offences under Nigerian law.

## Security agencies launch massive show of force against kidnapers in Ondo

### AKURE

Security agencies in Ondo State on Monday staged a coordinated show of force across major parts of the state as part of renewed efforts to combat kidnapping and other criminal activities.

The operation involved personnel of the Nigeria Police Force, Nigerian Army, Department of State Services, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps and the Ondo State Security Network Agency (Amotekun Corps).

The Commissioner of Police in the state, Mr Adebawale Lawal, who spoke with journalists during the exercise in Akure, said the operation was designed to reassure residents and demonstrate the strong collaboration among security agencies.

"We are implementing a coordinated joint show of force involving the military, police, civil defence and the DSS to demonstrate to the good people of Ondo State that security agencies are fully in control," Lawal said.

He noted that the exercise became necessary following

recent pockets of security incidents, particularly in communities within the Akure North axis of the state.

The police chief added that the operation was also part of security preparations ahead of the forthcoming Sallah celebrations.

Also speaking, the Commander of the Amotekun Corps in the state, Mr Adetunji Adeleye, said the security agencies had resolved to intensify operations to eliminate all forms of criminal activity in the state.

According to him, the personnel would patrol urban centres and extend operations into remote areas and forested locations suspected to be hideouts for criminals.

"This is going to be a continuous exercise. We will comb the metropolis and also move into the forests and other difficult terrains to ensure that criminal elements are completely flushed out," Adeleye said.

He disclosed that the next phase of the operation, code-named "Le Won Jade," would involve extensive forest patrols aimed at driving kidnapers and other criminals away from the state.

### CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MISS FELICIA EGBE ENAHORO**, now wish to be known and address as **MRS FELICIA EGBE OZIEGBE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public please take note.

### ADDITION OF MIDDLE NAME

I, formerly known as **SUNNY EKHATOR**, now wish to be known and address as **SUNNY EKHATOR EHIME**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public please take note.

### CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MISS ENOMA ERONMWON MARIAN**, now wish to be known and address as **MRS. IRORERE ERONMWON MARIAN**. All former documents remain valid general public please take note.

### CHANGE OF NAME/DATE OF BIRTH

I, formerly known as **ESTHER ONYEBUCHI JOSEPH**, now wish to be known and address as **ONYEBUCHI ESTHER ONWORDI**, and my correct date of birth is **7/4/2001** and not **7/4/2000** as may appeared on some my documents. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public please take note.

### REMOVAL/RE-ARRANGEMENT OF NAME

I, formerly known as **IYOHA QUEEN ELIZABETH ENIYE**, now wish to be known and address as **IYOHA ENIYE QUEEN**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public please take note.

### ADDITION OF MIDDLE NAME/ CORRECTION OF SURNAME

The general public is hereby notified that **BERNARD CHINEDU** and **BENARD CHINEDU EZEKIEL**, are one and the same person as appeared on some of my documents. Henceforth, I wish to be known and address as **BENARD CHINEDU EZEKIEL**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public please take note.

### CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **CHARLES ROSEMARY**, now wish to be known and addressed as **DICKSON OSAYOMWANBOR**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public please take note.

# Train derailment on Abuja–Kaduna line injures passengers, NRC confirms

## ABUJA

Several passengers sustained injuries on Monday after a train operating on the Abuja–Kaduna rail corridor derailed, the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) has confirmed.

In a statement issued by the Managing Director of the corporation, Dr Kayode Opeifa, the incident occurred at about 10:30 a.m. near Asham and involved a rear locomotive and a passenger coach.

Opeifa said preliminary findings indicated that the derail-

ment occurred after the rear locomotive made contact with the coach immediately behind it due to a coupling problem.

“Some passengers sustained injuries and were promptly attended to and taken to a nearby medical facility for proper medical care. No fatalities were recorded,” he stated.

He added that emergency response procedures were immediately activated, while relevant technical teams were deployed to the scene to address the situation.

According to him, officials of

the Safety Investigation Bureau (SIB) were also at the site to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the incident in line with established safety protocols.

Opeifa further disclosed that despite the incident, the train eventually arrived at the Idu Station at about 10:39 a.m., about 38 minutes behind schedule, after the affected rear locomotive and the passenger coach marked SP 0006 were removed from the track.

He reassured the public that passenger safety remained the corporation's top priority.

“The Corporation assures the public that safety remains its top priority, and all necessary measures are being taken to address the situation and ensure the continued safe operation of train services.

“Further details will be communicated as more information becomes available,” he said.

The Abuja–Kaduna railway corridor is one of the country's busiest rail routes, linking the Federal Capital Territory with Kaduna State and serving thousands of passengers daily.



## 3RD MATRICULATION CEREMONY:

Vice Chancellor, Margaret Lawrence University, Prof. Ernest Izevbigie; former Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission, Prof. Abubakar Rasheed; founder of the School, Mr Paul Odili and Justice of the Court of Appeal, Justice Peter Affen, during the 3rd Matriculation ceremony of Margaret Lawrence University in Abuja on Monday.

# Expert urges Nigeria to boost local military production amid rising defence spending

## KADUNA

Defence and security expert, Dr Zulaykhah Aileru, has urged the Federal Government to prioritise local military production in order to reduce Nigeria's heavy dependence on imported defence equipment and strengthen the nation's security capability.

Aileru, a Public Safety and Certified Protection Professional, made the call on Monday in Abuja while analysing Nigeria's

defence spending and its implications for national security.

She noted that Nigeria's defence expenditure had risen sharply in recent years, reaching about 4.47 billion dollars in 2021 at the height of intensified counter-insurgency operations across parts of the country.

According to her, the Federal Government also allocated about ₦4.9 trillion to defence and security in the 2025 national budget, underscoring the strategic importance of na-

tional security.

Despite the increasing funding, she observed that Nigeria still depended heavily on imported military platforms, technologies and maintenance systems.

Aileru stressed that sustainable national security required more than procurement of weapons and equipment from foreign countries.

She argued that Nigeria must develop the capacity to design, manufacture, maintain and upgrade defence systems locally.

According to her, building a strong domestic defence industry would not only enhance national security sovereignty but would also stimulate technological advancement, industrial growth and local job creation.

She added that investment in defence industrialization would enable Nigeria to retain critical technical knowledge within its borders while reducing long-term operational and maintenance costs associated with foreign military hardware.

# NAS demands merit-based appointments, opposes non-experts heading research institutes

## LAGOS

The The Nigerian Academy of Science (NAS) has called for a review of recent appointments of non-technocrats and non-specialists as chief executives of research institutes and science-based agencies in the country.

The academy made the demand in a statement jointly signed by its President, Prof Abubakar Sambo, and the Public Affairs Secretary, Prof Chinedum

Babalola, on Monday in Lagos.

According to the academy, appointments to leadership positions in research institutes should be entrusted only to individuals with appropriate technical expertise, strong research credentials and proven capacity to advance national scientific and innovation goals.

NAS recommended that such appointments be reversed where necessary to ensure that competent professionals lead critical scientific institutions.

The academy also emphasised that the appointment of chairmen and external members of governing councils of universities and research institutions should strictly follow merit-based principles.

It said preference should be given to individuals with relevant academic qualifications and demonstrable experience in the governance and administration of tertiary institutions to ensure effective oversight, institutional stability and credibility.

The academy further expressed concern over what it described as irregularities in the appointment of vice-chancellors in some universities in recent times.

“NAS emphasises the need for due process in appointments within universities and research institutions, as well as strict adherence to standard operating procedures, to minimise controversies and ensure that decisions are merit-based, sustainable and credible,” the statement said.

# Sallah: FRSC warns motorists against speeding, reckless driving

## NASARAWA

The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) has called on motorists and other road users to drive responsibly and obey traffic regulations in order to reduce road crashes during the Sallah festive period.

The Corps Marshal of the FRSC, Malam Shehu Mohammed, gave the advice on Monday during a Sallah Mega Rally held at the Sani Abacha Park in Mararaba, Nasarawa State.

Mohammed, who was represented by the Acting Corps Public Education Officer (ACPEO), Felicia Kalu, said road crashes often increase during festive seasons because many drivers fail to comply with basic traffic rules.

According to him, accidents recorded during such periods are not caused by mysterious factors but by the behaviour of road users.

“It is not about magic or anything; it is about how we use the road. When drivers obey simple traffic rules and maintain their vehicles properly, there will be fewer road traffic crashes,” he said.

He advised motorists embarking on long-distance journeys to ensure they were well rested and that their vehicles were in good condition before travelling.

The corps marshal also warned

against using vehicles that had been parked for long periods without proper servicing.

“Some people park their vehicles for a long time without servicing them and then suddenly decide to travel with them. While we pray to God for safety, we must also do our part by ensuring our vehicles are roadworthy.

“Drivers should check their tyres, ensure vehicle components are functioning properly and avoid distractions while driving,” he said.

Mohammed further cautioned motorists against accepting packages for delivery along travel routes, noting that such actions could distract drivers and increase the risk of accidents.

He also urged passengers to play active roles in ensuring road safety by speaking up whenever drivers engaged in reckless behaviour.

“If your driver is over-speeding, driving dangerously or overtaking recklessly, question him. If he refuses to listen, calmly wait until you see the next traffic stop and report the driver to any road safety official on duty,” he advised.

Mohammed explained that Sani Abacha Park in Mararaba was selected for the rally because it served as a major transit point for travellers heading to the northern part of the country during festive periods.

# Oyo moves against illegal mining, engages operators on responsible practices

## IBADAN

The Oyo State Government has intensified efforts to curb illegal mining activities by engaging miners operating within the state to promote responsible mining practices.

The initiative is being driven by the Oyo State Mineral Development Agency (OYSMIDA) as part of measures aimed at strengthening regulation and ensuring sustainable mining operations.

In a statement issued on Monday in Ibadan by the Commissioner for Information and Civic Orientation, Mr Dotun Oyelade, the engagement was designed to ensure effective implementation of the Community Development Agreement (CDA).

The CDA is a framework intended to promote peaceful coexistence between mining operators and host communities while encouraging sustainable development in areas where mineral resources are being exploited.

According to the statement, the Director-General of OYSMIDA, Mr Abiodun Oni, raised concerns about security challenges in mining commu-

nities during a meeting with stakeholders held on Saturday in Ibadan.

Oni said the state government was placing high priority on tackling illegal exploitation of mineral resources.

He emphasised the need for stronger collaboration among miners, host communities and government agencies in order to create a safe, orderly and sustainable mining environment.

“The engagement provided an opportunity to sensitise miners and other stakeholders on their roles and responsibilities in implementing the Community Development Agreement and complying with the Executive Order guiding mineral development activities in Oyo State,” Oni said.

The director-general also expressed concern over conflicts that had occasionally arisen between miners and residents of host communities.

He urged all stakeholders to maintain peace and order in areas where mining operations were taking place.

According to him, a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities by all parties involved would help create a more sustainable and productive mining sector in the state.

## NEWS

# Bandit attacks: Sokoto community denies mass exodus as troops reinforce security

## SOKOTO

Residents of Bargaja community in Isa Local Government Area of Sokoto State have dismissed reports of a mass exodus from the town following renewed bandit attacks, insisting that the situation is not as widespread as portrayed in circulating social media videos.

A media platform had earlier claimed that residents were fleeing the community in large numbers due to persistent attacks by armed bandits.

However, a resident who spoke with newsmen on Monday said the relocation was limited and had been exaggerated online.

The source, who requested anonymity for security reasons, explained that although a few residents initially contemplated leaving the community out of fear, many later changed their minds following the deployment of military personnel and other security operatives to the area.

"Some people actually started relocating when the attack occurred, but with the presence of army personnel and other security operatives, many rescinded their decision," the resident said.

A public commentator from the area, Malam Altine Guyawa, confirmed that bandits launched

an attack on Bargaja community on Saturday, prompting concern among residents and discussions about possible relocation as a safety measure.

Guyawa noted that the community had previously confronted similar attacks with the support of local vigilante groups, adding that the arrival of security operatives had further strengthened local defence efforts.

According to him, residents, working with vigilantes, had often succeeded in containing surprise attacks in the past, and the renewed security presence had restored confidence among the people.

Another resident, who also requested anonymity, said the community had experienced sporadic bandit incursions in recent times, during which security personnel and locals confronted the attackers.

He disclosed that casualties were recorded on both sides during the confrontations, a development that heightened fears among some residents.

Meanwhile, a security source revealed that military troops deployed to the area recently engaged a group of bandits who attempted to attack Bargaja village and nearby communities within Isa Local Government Area.

The source said the army's rapid response team success-

fully repelled the attackers and subsequently reassured

residents during consultations aimed at discouraging panic relocation.

According to the source, many of those who had earlier

considered leaving the community later reversed their decision after security authorities provided assurances about safety measures in place.

He added that images circulating on social media likely showed only a few residents who had earlier relocated before security reinforcements arrived.



**PRESENTING THE PILLAR OF EXCELLENCE AWARD:**

Assistant Priest, Holy Trinity Lugbe, Rev. Stanley Okafor (R), presenting the Pillar of Excellence Award to Prof. Chidinma Henrietta Onwubere, during the Mother's Day Celebration at the Diocese of Kubwa (Anglican Communion), Church of the Holy Trinity, Lugbe, Abuja.

## Police assure forensic probe into fatal Osun shooting

## ABUJA

The Nigeria Police Force has pledged to conduct a thorough forensic investigation into the shooting incident in Osun State that resulted in the death of a civilian, assuring the public that justice will be served.

Force Public Relations Officer, DCP Anthony Placid, gave the assurance in a statement issued on Monday in Abuja.

Placid said the police were aware of the growing public interest surrounding the incident, including a recent statement issued by the Nigeria Customs

Service (NCS) regarding the unfortunate shooting.

According to him, while the police recognise the statutory responsibilities of the NCS in anti-smuggling operations, the protection of human life remains the highest priority of the state.

He disclosed that the Inspector-General of Police had taken note of the Customs Service's call for a harmonised investigation into the incident.

"The Inspector-General of Police has noted the NCS's call for a harmonised investigation. To this end, the Nigeria Police Force assures its sister agency and the public that the investi-

gation will be conducted with the highest level of forensic diligence," Placid said.

He added that suspects arrested in connection with the shooting would remain in police custody pending the outcome of a transparent investigation.

Placid further disclosed that exhibits recovered from the suspects, including a Beretta pistol with Breech Number 125024 and other 9mm ballistic materials, were currently undergoing specialised forensic examination.

According to him, the process is aimed at synchronising the physical evidence with the operational Rules of Engagement

guiding security operations.

The police spokesman stressed that the Nigeria Police Force and the Nigeria Customs Service have maintained a strong professional relationship over the years.

He therefore cautioned the public against interpreting the incident as a conflict between the two agencies.

Placid emphasised that the matter was being treated strictly as an issue of individual professional accountability.

"The Nigeria Police Force and the Nigeria Customs Service remain united in the pursuit of justice for the deceased," he said.

## Police foil highway robbery, arrest suspect in Oyo

## IBADAN

The Oyo State Police Command has foiled an armed robbery attack along the Ogbomoso-Ilorin Expressway and arrested one suspect following a gun battle with the attackers.

The command's spokesperson, DSP Ayanlade Olayinka, disclosed this in a statement made available to newsmen on Monday in Ibadan.

Olayinka said a joint patrol team comprising police operatives and local vigilantes intercepted the robbery operation at Egbeda Village near Ogbomoso.

According to him, the armed robbers had mounted a roadblock on the highway and stopped a tanker loaded with diesel driven by Surajudeen Sulaiman.

The attackers reportedly dispossessed the driver and his motor boys of their personal belongings before attempting to flee.

"A gun duel later ensued between the fleeing hoodlums and the police patrol team, which enabled one of the suspects, aged 32, to be apprehended," Olayinka said.

He added that other members of the gang escaped into the surrounding bush with suspected bullet wounds.

Following the incident, the police and vigilante team launched an intensive bush-combing operation and a manhunt to track down the fleeing suspects.

The police spokesman noted that the operation demonstrated the command's commitment to safeguarding lives and property, particularly along major highways in the state.

## APC hails Sanwo-Olu over revival of monthly environmental sanitation

## LAGOS

The All Progressives Congress (APC) in Lagos State has commended Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu for reintroducing the monthly environmental sanitation exercise across the state.

The party's spokesman, Mr Seye Oladejo, gave the commendation in a statement issued on Monday, describing the decision as a proactive measure aimed at

safeguarding public health and improving environmental cleanliness in the state.

Oladejo said the policy reflects responsible governance and a commitment to strengthening community participation in maintaining a healthy and liveable city.

"This step is a clear demonstration of responsible and responsive governance aimed at safeguarding public health, promoting environmental cleanliness, and strengthening community participation in

maintaining a liveable city," he said.

According to him, Lagos, being one of Africa's fastest-growing and most vibrant megacities, requires sustained collective commitment to environmental sustainability.

He noted that the reintroduction of the sanitation exercise underscores the determination of the state government to uphold high standards of environmental management while encouraging residents to

take responsibility for their immediate surroundings.

Oladejo recalled that for several decades, the monthly sanitation exercise had played a critical role in promoting a culture of cleanliness and civic responsibility among residents.

He added that its return would help address growing sanitation challenges while raising awareness about proper waste disposal, drainage maintenance and environmental hygiene.

## Rising temperatures threaten health, food security —Climate expert warns

## LAGOS

Climate expert, Mr Akinmayowa Shobo, has raised alarm over rising temperatures across Nigeria, warning that the trend poses serious threats to public health, agriculture and vulnerable populations.

Shobo, the Programme

Manager at HEDA Resource Centre, made the disclosure in an interview with newsmen on Monday in Lagos.

He said the warning aligns with the 2026 Seasonal Climate Prediction released by the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet).

According to him, the forecast projects warm-

er-than-normal temperatures across most parts of the country, particularly in northern and north-central states.

Shobo noted that states such as Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Jigawa and Sokoto are likely to experience daytime temperatures ranging between 37°C and 43°C during the months of March and April.

He explained that unusually warm nights accompanying the extreme daytime heat could worsen heat stress for humans, animals and crops.

Citing scientific research, the climate expert said excessive heat can cause hyperthermia in livestock, leading to damage to vital organs and sometimes death.

He also warned that prolonged temperatures above 35°C during maize reproduction could significantly reduce seed formation and crop yields.

Shobo noted that global records show a consistent warming trend over the past decade. "Between 2015 and 2025, the World Meteorological Organisation recorded the warm-

est years on record globally. In 2025, global temperatures were about 1.47°C above pre-industrial levels," he said.

He identified outdoor workers, elderly persons, young children and pregnant women as among the most vulnerable groups to heatwave impacts.

Low-income earners, he added, are also highly exposed due to limited access to cooling systems and reliable electricity.

## JUDICIARY

## NEWS

## FIDA calls for stronger laws, reforms to tackle GBV

## IKEJA

The International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Nigeria has called for the continuous

review and strengthening of gender-responsive legislation as part of efforts to effectively curb Gender-Based Violence (GBV) across the country.

The Country Vice President of

FIDA Nigeria, Mrs Eliana Martins, made the call on Monday at the second Annual Multi-Stakeholders Dialogue on the Review and Implementation of Gender-Responsive Legislations Pre-

venting GBV held in Ikeja, Lagos.

Martins explained that the dialogue, organised in collaboration with state actors from the Lagos State Ministry of Justice and its agencies, was de-

signed to explore the ministry's mandate on law reforms aimed at preventing gender-based violence in the state.

She noted that the dialogue was supported by the Ford Foundation and implemented by the FIDA Ikeja Branch.

According to her, the theme of the forum — "Promoting a Safer Environment for Women and Girls Using the Instrumentality of Gender-Responsive Legislation and Policies" — underscored the importance of legal reforms in addressing the growing menace of GBV.

Martins emphasised that effective prevention of gender-based violence required not only the enforcement of existing laws but also their continuous review, harmonization and strengthening to reflect present realities, survivor-centred approaches and prevention-oriented justice systems.

She recalled that in 2025, FIDA Nigeria convened its first annual multi-stakeholders dialogue in Lagos to assess the implementation status of gender-sensitive legislation and policy frameworks.

According to her, that forum examined how social norms, cultural practices and religious beliefs affect the enforcement of such laws at the state level.

"The dialogue provided a platform for state actors to interrogate implementation gaps, institutional constraints and contextual barriers affecting the effectiveness of GBV-related laws and policies," she said.

Martins observed that while implementation of state legislation remained critical, the success of GBV prevention efforts largely depended on the quality, relevance and coherence of legal frameworks.

She pointed out that laws addressing gender-based violence, sexual offences, harmful cultural practices and the protection of women often contain gaps or ambiguities that weaken their enforcement.

According to her, some of the laws do not sufficiently address prevention, survivor protection or institutional coordination, while others are not fully harmonised with national legislation and international human rights standards.



## NEWS CONFERENCE:

L-R: Coordinator, South East Enlightenment Group (SEEG) Ebonyi State, Dr Kenneth Nwankwo; Publicity Secretary, SEEG, Sir Victor Okolo; Group Coordinator, SEEG, Dr. Godwin Ifeanyi-Udibe; Director of Research, Planning and Strategy, SEEG, Prof. Ifeanyi Onodugo; National Secretary, SEEG, Chief John Nwobodo and Coordinator of SEEG Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State, Mr Amaechi Ezeugwu, during a news conference on 2027 Presidential candidate of South East extraction in Enugu on Monday.

## EFCC investigator tells court how businessman allegedly defrauded oil firm of \$75,000

## IKEJA

An operative of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mrs Felicia Paul, on Monday narrated before an Ikeja Special Offences Court how a businessman, Peter Otomewu, allegedly defrauded a petroleum company of \$75,000 under false pretences.

Otomewu and his company, Pebeto Enerji Ltd., are facing a two-count charge of obtaining money by false pretences and stealing.

Both defendants, however,

pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Led in evidence by the prosecutor, Mr Spiff Owede, the EFCC witness told the court that the defendant obtained the money by falsely claiming he owned a vessel named MT AYSU capable of transshipping petroleum products from a mother vessel.

According to her, Otomewu presented himself to the complainant, Virgin Forest Energy Ltd., as the owner of the vessel, which he claimed would be used to move petroleum products from another vessel during a transshipment operation.

She said the complainant paid the defendant a total of \$75,000 in two instalments to facilitate the movement of the petroleum products.

"The total amount agreed for the project was \$100,000, out of which the defendant received \$50,000 in cash and an additional \$25,000," the witness told the court.

She added that although the defendant issued receipts for the payments, he failed to complete the work as agreed.

"Consequently, the complainant demanded a refund. The defendant repaid \$25,000, leaving an outstanding balance of \$50,000," she said.

The EFCC investigator further testified that during the commission's investigation, it was discovered that the defendant's company was registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) but was not registered with the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), the regulator of the petroleum sector.

She also told the court that the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) confirmed that the vessel MT AYSU was not registered in Nigeria and was not authorised to operate in Nigerian waters.

## Woman arraigned over alleged theft of N1.7m from company

## ILE-IFE

A 40-year-old sales representative, Akinibi Tosin, was on Monday arraigned before an Ile-Ife Magistrates' Court in Osun State over the alleged theft of N1.7 million belonging to her employer.

Tosin is facing a two-count charge of stealing and breach of trust.

She pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The prosecutor, Insp. Odusina Olawole, told the court that the offences were allegedly committed between January 26 and March 9, 2026, at Lexican Investment Limited located in Omole Estate, Ile-Ife.

According to the prosecutor, the defendant stole the sum of N1,750,465 belonging to the company.

Olawole added that the defendant breached the trust reposed in her by the organisation.

He said the offences contravene Sections 383, 390(9) and 434 of the Criminal Code Laws of Osun State, 2002.

Counsel to the defendant, Mr Conscience Mume, applied for bail in the most liberal terms and assured the court that his client would not jump bail.

Chief Magistrate Abosede Sarumi granted the defendant bail in the sum of N250,000 with two sureties in like sum.

Sarumi ruled that the sureties must swear to an affidavit of means, present three years' tax clearance and own landed property.

The case was adjourned until April 1 for hearing.

## Court remands scavenger over alleged N2m CCTV damage, theft

## ILE-IFE

An Ile-Ife Magistrates' Court in Osun State on Monday ordered the remand of a 22-year-old scavenger, Jimoh Saai, over the alleged burglary of a power facility and destruction of a Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) camera valued at N2 million.

Saai, who had no legal rep-

resentation in court, pleaded guilty to a four-count charge bordering on burglary, forceful entry, damage and stealing.

The Magistrate, Mr Abosede Sarumi, ordered that the defendant be remanded at the Nigerian Correctional Service facility in Ile-Ife.

He subsequently adjourned the case until March 30 for mention.

Earlier, the prosecutor, Insp.

Irewole Jimoh, told the court that the offences were committed on March 11, 2026, at about 1:05 a.m. at AVIC Farm located in the Akinola area of Ipetumodu.

According to the prosecutor, the defendant unlawfully burgled the electric powerhouse belonging to the complainant, DCP Adedeji Fola, with the intention of stealing.

He told the court that the defendant forcefully entered

the facility and wilfully damaged a CCTV camera valued at N2 million.

Jimoh further alleged that the defendant stole eight batteries valued at N1.2 million as well as a sprayer box worth N100,000 from the premises.

He said the offences contravened Sections 383, 390(9), 411, 412 and 451 of the Criminal Code Laws of Osun State, 2002.

## Man arraigned over alleged theft of 4 motorcycles worth N4.4m

## IKORODU

A 28-year-old man, Ibrahim Babangida, was on Monday arraigned before an Ikorodu Magistrates' Court in Lagos for allegedly stealing four motorcycles valued at N4.4 million.

Babangida, whose residential address was not disclosed, is facing a six-count charge bordering

on stealing, impersonation and possession of fake currency.

He, however, pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The prosecutor, ASP Christian Okonofua, told the court that the defendant committed the offences on different dates and at various locations across Lagos.

According to him, on February 27 at about 7:00 p.m. at Sabo Market in Ikorodu, the defend-

ant allegedly stole a red Bajaj Boxer motorcycle with registration number BGD 348 valued at N1.25 million and belonging to one Saradeen Sanni.

He further alleged that the defendant also stole another red Boxer motorcycle valued at N955,000 belonging to Muawuya Usman.

Okonofua told the court that on May 15, 2025, at about

4:00 p.m. at the Powerline area, the defendant allegedly stole a black-coloured TBS motorcycle without a registration number valued at N850,000 and belonging to Masiru Adamu.

He added that on noon at Mile 12 under the bridge, the defendant allegedly stole another red Boxer motorcycle without a registration number valued at N1.35 million belonging to Umar Aliru.

## Teenager jailed 18 months for stealing door worth N10,000

## JOS

An Area Court in Jos on Monday sentenced a 19-year-old teenager, Felix Obed, to 18 months imprisonment for trespass and theft of a door valued at N10,000.

The presiding judge, Irene Pati, handed down the sentence after the defendant pleaded guilty to the offence.

Pati, however, gave the convict an option of a N30,000 fine for the theft charge.

She also sentenced him to six months imprisonment for trespass with an option of a N20,000 fine.

The judge ruled that the two

sentences would run concurrently.

Earlier, the prosecutor, Insp. Ijuptil Daniel, told the court that the case was reported at the "A" Division Police Station on February 28 by the complainant, Mr George Zuguman.

Daniel said the defendant trespassed into the complainant's house and stole a door valued at N10,000.

He added that during police investigation, the defendant confessed to committing the offence.

According to the prosecutor, the offence contravenes the Plateau State Penal Code Law of Northern Nigeria, 2017.

## NEWS

## Foreign

## Iran hits key UAE oil port and Dubai airport

The United Arab Emirates' (UAE) biggest port and oil storage facility, Fujairah, and Dubai's international airport have come under further drone attacks as Iran continues to target Gulf transport and oil infrastructure.

Flights were temporarily suspended on Monday after a fire broke out near the airport after a "drone-related incident".

A fire also raged after a drone attack on the strategically important port and industrial zone at Fujairah, one of the largest oil storage facilities in the region.

And a rocket attack on a car killed a Palestinian national on the outskirts of the UAE capital, Abu Dhabi, the city's Media Office reported.

The attack occurred in the Al Bahia area, it said.

UAE air defence systems intercepted six ballistic missiles and 21 drones on Monday, the Defence Ministry said. Iran has launched over 1,900 missiles and drones at the UAE since the war between the US and Israel, and Iran, began.

Monday's drone strike was the third incident since the start of the war near Dubai's airport, which is the world's busiest for international passengers.

Some flights were delayed, while others were cancelled altogether, in another hit to the UAE's image of safety and stability.

The country's energy sector came under attack as a drone hit an oil storage tanker on Saturday, and another drone hit the oil facilities on Monday, causing a fire.

Oil loading activities at the

port were halted for a time while damage assessments were carried out.

Fujairah sits on the UAE's eastern coast, on the Gulf of Oman - rather than the Persian Gulf - and so vessels do not need to navigate the Strait of Hormuz to reach it.

The location means the port plays a "crucial" role in "helping keep global supplies moving" when the Strait of Hormuz is blocked by Iran, Dubai-based Justin Harper, editor of CEO Middle East - who regularly speaks to Dubai's oil industry executives - told the BBC.

"If tensions with Iran disrupt the chokepoint, the UAE can still export oil through Fujairah via pipelines from the oilfields in Abu Dhabi," he said.

The port city is "ideally placed to bypass the Strait of Hormuz",

said Dubai-based oil analyst Matt Stanley, who works for commodities data provider Kpler.

"The UAE's state oil company Adnoc have their oil tankers there, it is crude grade oil which is what the Asian buyers want."

Iran hitting a storage tanker and oil facilities at Fujairah "shows the vulnerability of Gulf infrastructure", Stanley told the BBC.

"Iran wants to disrupt the flow of energy".

The port city is close to India and the "first stop out of the Middle East on the way to Singapore and China", Stanley said.

"Fujairah is on the old Silk Road, the maritime route, and it picked up a lot of business bunkering - that is providing fuel, food, water - for container ships that have been at sea for 25 or 30 days."

## Whistleblower murder suspect is former elite officer, South African police say

A former member of an elite police unit has been charged with the murder of a whistleblower who testified at a major police corruption inquiry in South Africa.

Matipandile Sotheni, 41, appeared in court accused of killing Marius van der Merwe in December last year.

Sotheni is accused of shooting dead Van der Merwe in full view of his family in a case that caused national outrage. He has not commented on the charges.

Van der Merwe, identified only as "Witness D" during his appearance at the inquiry, known as the Madlanga commission, had implicated police officials in the torture and murder of a robbery suspect in his testimony.

His testimony was seen as blowing the lid on the extent of police corruption at a local level in South Africa and led to the suspension of several of the officers he had named.

The Madlanga commission was established by President Cyril Ramaphosa after a senior police officer alleged that organised crime groups had infiltrated the government. This led to the suspension of South Africa's Police Minister Senzo Mchunu, who has denied having any links to criminal gangs.

South Africa's parliament is also investigating these allegations.

In addition to Van der Merwe, three of the 12 people

implicated in the robbery suspect's killing have since died. Two were shot dead, while one killed himself, police say.

The robbery suspect has since been identified as Emmanuel Mbense, who died in April 2022. Van der Merwe said he was ordered to dispose of Mbense's body by local police chief Julius Mkhwanazi. He has since been suspended over the accusations, which he denies. No arrests have been made in this case.

Sotheni, arrested over the weekend, was one of three suspects police had identified in Van der Merwe's murder.

Security was tight at the court as armed officers escorted Sotheni, dressed in all black, into the packed courtroom. The former officer showed no emotion and stared ahead during proceedings.

In contrast, Van der Merwe's grieving wife, also dressed in black, could be seen wiping away tears during the brief hearing.

Van der Merwe's sister, Natasha, told reporters ahead of the proceedings that the family believed the person who ordered his murder was "definitely someone my brother knew".

Police spokesperson Brig Athlenda Mathe said Sotheni was the alleged hitman while another suspect, Wiandre Pretorius, was the driver of the car used in the drive-by shooting. Pretorius is the suspect who killed himself.



IRANIAN DRONE SMOKE:

Smoke rising from the Fujairah oil industry zone on 14 March, after an Iranian drone was intercepted above the port.

## ... takes steps to prevent anti-establishment protests, Tehran residents say

Iran is taking steps to prevent anti-establishment protests, with checkpoints appearing across the streets of the capital, internet access restricted, and mass text warnings sent to residents.

In Tehran, people have been telling the BBC about new security checkpoints around the city, where they say residents are stopped and searched.

They have told BBC Persian that some checkpoints are positioned under footbridges and inside road tunnels, after reports that several checkpoints in the middle of roads had been targeted by drone strikes.

A number of Iranian security personnel were killed in Israeli strikes on four checkpoints across Tehran, the hardline Fars News Agency reported on 11 March.

Fars said unofficial counts indicated that around 10 members of the security forces were killed in strikes in four districts of the capital.

Speaking to the BBC, a man in his twenties explained his strategy for getting through a checkpoint, where he said he was once stopped and his car was searched.

"I started saying things like, 'Thanks for your hard work,' as if they were genuinely putting in a lot of effort and I appreciated it," he said.

"I always wear colourful clothes. But now I don't," said a woman, also in her twenties. "I'm scared of their patrols, worried that if I wear something too bright it might annoy them."

Restricted internet hinders co-ordination

Another man, also in his twenties, sells secure internet connections to some people, allowing them to bypass the government-imposed nationwide blackout.

It is still very difficult to contact those inside Iran during the internet outage that has been in place since the start of the war, but tech-savvy resi-

dents have been using SpaceX's Starlink devices and sharing their connection with others.

Restricting internet access not only restricts communication with the outside world, but also limits protesters' ability to mobilise, plan and communicate among each other. Encrypted messaging apps and platforms often function as tools for organising rallies, sharing protest locations, and circulating calls to action.

When these platforms are unavailable, coordination becomes far more difficult.

The man selling internet connections tells the BBC of his fear when a taxi he was travelling in passed through a checkpoint in a tunnel in Tehran.

"What I do as a job is considered a crime in the Islamic Republic," he explains. "I was really worried, because I had my laptop and phone with me."

"Luckily, they didn't search the taxi," he says.

Iranian police have arrest-

ed a person in southern Fars Province over allegedly setting up a network to sell "unfiltered" internet via Starlink, according to a report by semi-official Mehr News Agency on 12 March.

Deputy Commander of the Fars Province Police has said that a 37-year-old man who had "set up a network across several provinces of the country to sell unfiltered internet via Starlink has been arrested" and added that a "Starlink device and related equipment were discovered at the suspect's hideout".

Using Starlink in Iran carries a punishment of up to two years in prison and authorities have reportedly been searching for Starlink dishes to stop people from connecting to the internet.

Government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani said on 10 March that the authorities were working to restore internet access "for those who can broadcast the country's voice to the world".

## Ecuador deploys 75,000 soldiers and police to combat drug gangs

The Ecuadorean government has deployed more than 75,000 police officers and soldiers to four of the country's most violence-wracked provinces, the interior minister says.

The authorities have also declared a night-time curfew in these areas as part of a "new phase" in their "war" on criminal gangs.

Since coming to office in November 2023, President Daniel Noboa has tried to quell drug-related violence but nevertheless Ecuador registered a record murder rate in 2025.

Noboa has also joined a US-led alliance of 17 countries aimed at fighting criminal cartels in the Western Hemisphere.

"We're at war," Ecuadorean Interior Minister John Reimberg told residents of the provinces of El Oro, Guayas, Los Ríos and Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas.

"Don't take any risks, don't go out, stay at home," he added.

Ecuador's geographical location - sandwiched between Colombia and Peru, the world's largest producers of cocaine - has turned it into a key transit country for the illicit drug.

Around 70% of the cocaine produced in Colombia and Peru is estimated to be shipped through Ecuador.

Noboa's government has been working with the adminis-

tration of US President Donald Trump to quell the flow of cocaine from Ecuador to the US.

Last week, the FBI opened its first office in the Andean country, a move which came shortly after the two countries launched joint counter-narcotic operations.

Noboa was one of the Latin American leaders to attend an international meeting hosted by Trump in Mar-a-Lago, which the US authorities dubbed the "Shield of the Americas" summit.

At the summit, Trump likened criminal gangs to a "cancer" and urged his Latin American counterparts to use military force to root them out.

"We don't want it spreading," Trump added.

Following the meeting, Noboa posted a photo on social media of himself standing next to Trump with the words: "For too long, the mafias thought that America was their territory. That they could cross borders, move drugs, guns and [spread] violence without consequences. Their time has run out."

Since coming to office, Noboa has tried to combat criminal organisations in his country with an iron fist and has declared several states of emergency but nevertheless the murder rate rose by over 30% between 2024 and 2025.

## Foreign

## NEWS

## French national jailed for 10 years in Azerbaijan for spying

A French national has been found guilty of spying on the military in Azerbaijan and sentenced to 10 years in a maximum security prison, state media report.

Martin Ryan was accused in December 2023 of spying on behalf of Paris and collecting secret information about Baku's military co-operation with Turkey and Pakistan.

He was also accused of helping recruit French-speaking Azerbaijanis to co-operate with French intelligence.

Both France and Ryan have repeatedly denied the spying allegations.

Ryan was put on trial alongside an Azerbaijani citizen, Azad Mamedli, who was sentenced to 12 years for treason, AFP news agency reports.

France previously described Ryan's detention as "arbitrary" and demanded his immediate release.

During his trial, prosecutors alleged he had co-operated with employees of France's security services allegedly operating from the French embassy in Baku.

Prosecutors said Ryan had gathered information about Azerbaijan's relations with Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, as well as companies linked to Russia and China.

Furthermore, Ryan was accused of recruiting Mamedli and arranging for him to meet French intelligence agents, who allegedly tasked him with recruiting Azerbaijanis and Rus-

sians at a Moscow university where he studied.

In Ryan's final statement to the court, he denied spying and said he had acted unknowingly.

"I consider myself guilty only in that I should not have established contacts with some embassy employees, or that I should have shared information about them with the appropriate authorities," Ryan told the court.

"I did not spy. I am not a spy, and during the court case I tried to prove this."

France has argued that Ryan was caught in the cross-fire of diplomatic tensions, AFP notes.

Relations between the two countries soured in recent years, centred around France's apparent support for Azerbaijan's rival Armenia.

In November 2024, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev accused France of alleged "crimes" against overseas territories like New Caledonia, after riots broke out on the French colony causing the death of fourteen people.

"The crimes of France in its so-called overseas territories would not be complete without mentioning the recent human rights violations," said Aliyev during his speech at COP29 climate talks in Baku.

"The regime of President [Emmanuel] Macron killed 13 people and wounded 169... during legitimate protests by the Kanak people in New Caledonia."

## Ten killed in fire at India hospital intensive care unit

Ten people have been killed after a fire broke out in the trauma centre of a government hospital in the eastern Indian state of Odisha.

All the victims were patients, while 11 hospital staff are being treated for burns suffered while trying to rescue patients, state Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said.

The fire - suspected to have been caused by an electrical short circuit - started in the trauma care ICU of SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack city around 02:30 local time on Monday (21:00 GMT Sunday). Hospital fires are often reported in India, with many blamed on electrical faults. Last October, six critically ill patients were killed in an ICU fire in Rajasthan state.

In 2024, a blaze in the neonatal ICU of a medical college in northern Jhansi city killed at least 10 newborn babies. In 2021, a fire in the ICU of Vijay Vallabh hospital in the western city of Virar killed 13 patients receiving treatment for Covid-19. Another fire in 2021 at a newborn care unit in Bhandara district in western state Maharashtra killed 10 infants.

In Odisha, the blaze was brought under control after fire

service personnel rushed to the hospital. Patients were moved to other departments inside the same hospital, officials said.

SCB Medical College and Hospital is one of the largest government-run medical facilities in Odisha.

Speaking to reporters after visiting the hospital, Majhi said the fire affected the trauma care ICU as well as an adjoining ICU and wards.

Majhi said medical staff and security personnel "risked their lives" during the rescue operation and some of them were injured, adding that the government had directed officials to ensure proper treatment for those hurt in the incident.

The state government has announced financial compensation for the families of the victims. Majhi said he has ordered a judicial inquiry into the incident and said strict action would be taken against anyone found responsible.

Short circuits are among the most common causes of hospital fires in India. Hospitals are particularly vulnerable to fires because they contain a lot of electrical equipment, oxygen systems and patients who often cannot be moved quickly during emergencies.



## DUPED INTO FIGHTING:

Charles Ojiambo Mutoka claims his son Oscar was duped into fighting for Russia in Ukraine, and was killed in August.

## Wary allies show there's no quick fix to Trump's Iran crisis

Throughout his two terms in office, Donald Trump hasn't been shy to criticise - even to attack - Washington's Nato allies.

But his latest suggestion - that failing to secure the Strait of Hormuz would be "very bad for the future of Nato" - implies an understanding of the alliance's purpose that has already raised eyebrows.

"Nato was created as a...defensive alliance," Gen Sir Nick Carter, former Chief of the Defence Staff, told the BBC on Monday.

"It was not an alliance that was designed for one of the allies to go on a war of choice and then oblige everybody else to follow," he said. "I'm not sure that's the sort of Nato that any of us wanted to belong to."

Coming from a president who only two months ago was making strident claims to Greenland, the sovereign terri-

tory of a fellow Nato member, there's more than a little irony in his latest remarks.

This perhaps helps to explain why some responses have been fairly blunt.

In Germany, a government spokesman said the war with Iran "has nothing to do with Nato", while the Defence Minister Boris Pistorius seemed to pour scorn on the idea that Europe's modest navies could make a difference.

"What does Trump expect from a handful of European frigates that the powerful US navy cannot do?" he asked.

"This is not our war. We have not started it."

But none of this should hide the fact that there's now an urgent, and growing, need for a solution to the crisis in the Gulf. Iran's effective blocking of the Strait of Hormuz - except for a handful of vessels

carrying its own oil to allies like India and China - has left western governments scrambling to find a solution.

It may be a crisis triggered by Donald Trump's decision to go to war, but it's one that needs to be fixed quickly, before the impacts on the global economy get any worse.

But it's already clear that there is no quick fix.

At his news conference on Monday, Sir Keir Starmer said conversations aimed at working out a "viable plan" were ongoing with the US, European and Gulf partners, but that we're "not at the point of decisions yet."

The prime minister referred to autonomous mine hunting systems which he said were already in the region.

With HMS Middleton, a mine countermeasures vessel (MCMV) back in Portsmouth for major maintenance, this is the first time in decades when

no British mine-clearing ship is in the region.

Instead, the Royal Navy is expected to offer newly developed seabornedrones, designed to detect and neutralise mines without putting crews at risk.

But one of the problems Donald Trump is wrestling with is that minesweeping, once a core function of almost all navies, has long since ceased to be a top priority.

Tom Sharpe, a former Royal Navy commander, said the latest British technologies had yet to be tested in combat.

"We're probably going to find out in the next few weeks whether or not it works," he told the BBC.

Gen Carter said the last time western nations carried out a major de-mining operation at sea was in 1991, after Iraq mined the waters off Kuwait to prevent an amphibious landing in the first Gulf War.

## Russia agrees to stop using Kenyan recruits in Ukraine conflict, Kenya says

Kenya's foreign minister says Russia has agreed to stop deploying Kenyan nationals to fight in the war in Ukraine, after talks in Moscow.

Sitting beside his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, Musalia Mudavadi said both sides had agreed that Kenyans would no longer be recruited through Russia's defence ministry. "They will no longer be eligible to be enlisted," he said.

Lavrov did not comment on the deal and insisted that all foreign fighters had joined voluntarily "in full compliance with Russian law".

A Kenyan intelligence report in February warned that more than 1,000 citizens had been recruited to fight for Russia in Ukraine.

Some Kenyans have said they were lured to fight for Russia with promises of well-paid civilian jobs, only to find themselves forced into fighting in Ukraine,

Mudavadi is also seeking the repatriation of Kenyans who wish to return home.

He last month told the BBC that Kenyan authorities had closed more than 600 recruitment agencies suspected of duping Kenyans with promises of jobs overseas.

Kenyan lawmakers say rogue state officials have been working with human trafficking networks to recruit citizens to fight for Russia in Ukraine.

So far 27 Kenyans who had been fighting in Russia have been repatriated, with authorities providing psychological care to ad-

dress their trauma and "de-radicalise" them, Mudavadi said.

It is not clear how many Kenyans have died fighting for Russian forces, and Russia has not formally addressed such reports. Relatives who have approached the Russian embassy in Nairobi for answers report being turned away.

Public pressure has also grown. In February, families of Kenyans believed to be fighting in Ukraine held a protest outside parliament in Nairobi, calling for government action and the return of their relatives.

During his visit to Moscow, Mudavadi also intends to negotiate an agreement allowing Kenyans easier access to the Russian job market.


"We do not want for any

reason our partnership with Russia to be defined from the lenses of the special operation [in Ukraine] agenda only," he said. "The relationship between Kenya and Russia is much more broader than that."

Ukrainian intelligence assessment estimates that more than 1,700 people from 36 countries in Africa have been recruited to fight for Russia.

In February, South Africa repatriated 17 citizens who said they had been trapped in Ukraine's Donbas region after being deceived into fighting for Russia.

Ukraine has also previously come in for criticism for trying to recruit foreign nationals, including Africans, to fight on its side.

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## FEATURES

### MEDICAL MISDIAGNOSIS

# A silent threat in Nigeria's healthcare system

VICTOR ADEOTI (NAN)

**M**rs Titiloye Aare's near-fatal experience with a high blood pressure misdiagnosis highlights a critical flaw in Nigeria's healthcare system, where medical errors put lives at risk and strain already limited resources.

For many patients in Nigeria, a visit to the hospital is expected to bring relief and healing.

However, growing cases of medical misdiagnosis are raising concerns among experts and patients alike, as wrong diagnoses expose individuals to dangerous treatments and life-threatening complications.

Aare recounted how a wrong diagnosis at a private hospital in February 2025 led to medication that caused her to lose consciousness and nearly cost her life.

She said she was in her shop in Osogbo when she suddenly felt dizzy and fainted while attending to a customer; she was rushed to a nearby private hospital, revived, and later diagnosed with high blood pressure.

Doctors immediately placed her on medication to lower her blood pressure.

However, in April of the same year, she experienced another dizzy spell and again lost consciousness.

She was rushed to a general hospital, where doctors discovered that the medication she had been taking had lowered her blood pressure below normal levels.

"When I asked the doctor why the medication caused me to faint, he explained that it had lowered my blood pressure below the normal range," she said.

Doctors at the general hospital later informed her that she had been wrongly diagnosed at the first hospital.

Doctors later explained that her condition was vasovagal syncope, a medical condition caused by a sudden drop in heart rate and blood pressure, which reduces blood flow to the brain and leads to a brief loss of consciousness.

They warned that the continued use of medication prescribed to lower blood pressure could have severely reduced blood flow to her heart and brain, potentially resulting in death.

Aare's experience reflects a growing concern about medical misdiagnosis in Nigeria.

While some patients survive to share their stories, others are not as fortunate.

Medical experts say accurate diagnosis is the foundation of effective healthcare.

When a condition is correctly identified, appropriate treatment can begin promptly, improving recovery and reducing complications.

Yet misdiagnosis—where a patient's illness is wrongly identified or overlooked—remains a serious but often underreported problem in many parts of Nigeria.

In some cases, patients receive treatment for illnesses such as malaria or typhoid when the actual condition may be bacterial infections, viral diseases, or chronic conditions.

Misdiagnosis occurs when a healthcare professional incorrectly identifies



a disease, delays its identification, or fails to detect it entirely.

This may result in wrong treatment or no treatment at all, often leading to prolonged illness, worsening conditions, unnecessary financial costs, and sometimes death.

A Consultant Paediatrician at Osun State University Teaching Hospital, Dr Funmi Adesokan, said many hospitals, particularly public ones, lacked the diagnostic equipment needed for accurate patient evaluation.

"This leads to delays in diagnosis or the inability to make a conclusive diagnosis. Public-private partnerships may help provide equipment, but improved government funding is essential," she said.

Adesokan, however, cautioned that isolated mistakes should not define the entire healthcare system.

Similarly, a gynaecologist, Dr Nurudeen Ayanda, said many hospitals and clinics lacked modern diagnostic equipment required for accurate diagnosis.

"Many modern diagnostic tools, such as advanced laboratory equipment, imaging machines, and reliable testing facilities, are not available in many hospitals.

"Without proper equipment, healthcare providers often rely on symptoms alone, increasing the chances of error," he said.

Dr Adeniyi Fasanu, Chairman of the

Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) in Osun, said misdiagnosis is also fueled by a shortage of manpower.

"Many medical professionals have left the country due to poor remuneration and insecurity, leaving remaining doctors overworked and overstretched.

"The shortage has also created opportunities for unqualified individuals to operate medical facilities and treat unsuspecting patients.

"This is creating havoc in the health system," he said.

Fasanu noted that the WHO recommends a doctor-to-patient ratio of 1:600, but in Nigeria one doctor may serve up to 2,500 patients.

He added that many government hospitals relied on obsolete equipment, making it difficult for doctors to practise effectively, and appealed to the government to prioritise the health sector and welfare of medical personnel.

On legal remedies, a lawyer, Mr Albert Akinwale, said victims of wrong diagnosis can seek redress in court under Nigerian law.

According to Akinwale, sections 303 and 343 of the Criminal Code provide that any act of negligence that endangers life or causes harm could attract criminal liability.

He said victims could also rely on the law of tort to claim medical negligence, breach of duty of care, and compensation for pain, suffering, and financial losses.

"Victims are protected under various provisions of Nigerian law, including the Criminal Code, Penal Code, and civil laws on negligence.

"Sections 15 and 16 of the Medical and Dental Practitioners Act provide for disciplinary procedures, including warnings, suspension, or striking off a doctor's name from the medical register.

"The Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN) also has the authority to discipline erring practitioners," he said.

Akinwale urged patients who suspect misdiagnosis to seek a second medical opinion and explore legal or regulatory remedies where harm has occurred.

Public affairs analyst, Mr Olusegun Ayanda, said addressing misdiagnosis required coordinated efforts from government, healthcare institutions, and medical professionals.

Ayanda stressed the need for improved diagnostic infrastructure, investment in modern laboratories and equipment, continuous professional development programmes for healthcare workers, and recruitment of more professionals to reduce patient-to-doctor ratios.

Similarly, the Chief Medical Director of the Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital Complex (OAUTHC), Ile-Ife, called on the Federal Government to increase funding for the healthcare sector and improve the availability of modern

medical equipment.

Okeniyi said the sector had long suffered from inadequate funding, resulting in limited resources for upgrading equipment, purchasing new medical supplies, and maintaining existing infrastructure.

According to him, the healthcare system requires adequate supplies, improved infrastructure, and a comprehensive overhaul of the remuneration structure for health personnel to align with global best practices.

The CMD noted that if indeed "health is wealth," the country must invest more in the sector and implement mandatory continuous professional development programmes for healthcare workers to keep them updated with the latest medical knowledge and best practices.

Medical experts say misdiagnosis has consequences beyond individual patients. Families may spend significant sums on treatments that fail to address the actual illness.

Although misdiagnosis is a serious challenge, experts say it can be reduced through investment in medical infrastructure, improved training, stronger healthcare policies, and increased public awareness.

Obtaining an accurate diagnosis, as experts emphasise, is vital for effective treatment; it builds public confidence in Nigeria's healthcare system and ensures citizens remain safe and healthy.

# When will socialists start supporting the alien/et agenda (and new age) en masse

MICHAEL DARGAVILLE

**A**s a genuine Galactic Federation alien contactee and spiritual New Ager one of my biggest tasks has been educating especially my fellow socialists.

I'm a dedicated international spiritual socialist-communist New Ager who's mainly been based in Asia and China for nearly 30 years with short stints in the West and travelling the rest of the world widely.

Indeed I come from the Western socialist spiritual counter culture/New Age movement growing up in Australia which had a lot of people such as hippies and punks influenced by spiritual socialism.

On Galactic Federation human alien planets throughout the galaxy there is no need for ownership as planets are a living sovereign body unto itself that cannot be bought and sold to the highest bidder. Thus Galactic Federation human alien planets are inherently based on FREE SPIRITUAL COMMUNISM.

However the western leftist alternative media these days is hopelessly straight and for quite some time has not only been fervently anti spiritual but also anti alien-ET and especially hostile to alien/ET disclosure. (So much so they must be a psyop).

The spiritual New Age movement is officially totally dead in the western left wing socialist community.

This has been critical for me as it had made my job of being a genuine Galactic Federation alien spokesperson who is coming from the left extremely difficult.

This has happened also because a lot of the western left wing movement has been corrupted beyond belief and in many cases controlled by three letter agencies or just ideological dickheads bent on their own limited agenda.

The Western left wing media, and by this I mean "far left" media, because the so called Western official self described "left wing" media is not left wing in any way, shape of fashion. It overwhelmingly supports western imperialism and western capitalist corporations yet also supports a woke agenda and bigger taxes for their limited social agenda. As any true socialist knows Social Democrats are the moderate wing of fascism.

And the fact is there are currently spaceships from these benevolent human Galactic Federation aliens surrounding this planet and they want a world government in China's Sichuan based on nation sovereignty (ie, no invasion of Venezuela, Iran or Gaza genocide), freedom, free speech, peace, love, spiritual communes producing organic fruits and vegetables en masse, public housing public industry, abundance and self determinism.

We cannot join the Galactic Federation aliens, who are offering vital military protection from marauding evil reptilian aliens called Reptoids, until there is this world government.

Earth humans come from this benevolent Galactic Federation alien organization and, it must be stressed, there are HUMAN ALIENS that look like you and me right across the galaxy in tens of thousands of ADVANCED HUMAN civilisations.

Their spaceships have surrounded

this planet since 1998 urging official alien/ET disclosure. All governments know this. Galactic Federation alien leaders sent me into Asia and especially China way back in 1998 to work on the alien agenda which I've been doing for more than 25 years.

I am an utterly genuine Galactic Federation alien contactee and have had physical contact with Galactic Federation alien leaders living in human bodies on this planet with vast super powers. My best friend is a 30,000 year old "walk-in" alien with VAST super powers of psychism and healing. She can telepathically read my mind anywhere in the world and contact me. All governments know of her.

I love China. It is very different from the West. And because Chinese Government leaders know the ET truth especially regarding the Galactic Federation aliens I received huge support from them. I taught in more than 20 Chinese universities. Because of this China became part of my soul.

Because China has this vast long spiritual background of Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism it was much freer for me there and being a socialist-communist in China is of course not only acceptable but official government policy. So it was much easier to raise the ET-alien agenda there whereas the western left is utterly bereft of any New Age alien-ET consciousness. And of course the "western left wing" is also bereft of any real power as the right wing controls all political parties. Western countries are essentially uni party one party corporatist totalitarian (Harsh crackdown on free speech) capitalist states.

At the beginning of the early internet from 1999 till 2014 my stories of journalism on the Galactic Federation aliens and entire alien/ET agenda started going viral on the internet.

This was in the early days of the internet when there were literally thousands of spiritual New Age and alien/ET websites and many published my stories. A large number were sympathetic to the left wing/socialist movement but a lot were also just libertarian and published stuff from the "extreme left" and right.

There is no online record of this viral journalism outlining the truth about the Galactic Federation aliens from that period of 1999 through to 2012. Virtually all of those websites have closed. There was no social media then and algorithms were designed to support this. My Galactic Federation journalism literally went utterly everywhere.

By 2013/14 these western social media companies were invented gaining a foothold and started destroying this unique freedom on the internet where I was able to really outline and expose the Galactic Federation aliens. How many people went on to download my journalism onto their computers from that period on the internet is anybody's guess but hopefully it was enormous.

Galactic Federation alien leaders released information to me to tell world governments (and of course the people of this planet) way back in 1998 that evil bad negative aliens/ETs called reptoids, a reptilian species of alien, had a psychotronic mind control and laser weapons base on the moon and were trying to destroy our planet. The Galactic Federation aliens sent me into Beijing in 1998 and I told Chinese

Government leaders this who immediately told the USA who immediately told all other governments.

That reptilian ET base was destroyed in 1999 by the Galactic Federation and thus saved this planet. However, there is the possibility these bad reptilian ETs will return and destroy Earth once and for all if we don't join the Galactic Federation. That is our current situation.

So virtually all governments know the full alien/ET situation that Earth was nearly totally destroyed by these evil reptilian aliens but saved by the Galactic Federation.

This terrible alien war that could destroy Earth is a vast spiritual war between two Archangels and the various aliens/ETs that follow them.

Archangel Michael is the boss of the Galactic Federation and Lucifer is the boss of the bad reptilian aliens. Those aliens include human aliens, reptilian aliens, insect aliens, dragon aliens, grey aliens and other alien species.

All humans in the galaxy, and there are humans throughout the galaxy, follow Archangel Michael.

All humans in the galaxy, of whom Archangel Michael is the leader, evolved from the Vega star system about 7 million years ago, developed to a high sentient level with angelic support from Archangel Michael, and then space traveled all over the galaxy and set up space colonies coming to earth 2 million years ago. Thus, human civilizations blossomed all over the galaxy. They formed the Galactic Federation 4 million years ago to protect human planets from Luciferic reptilian ETs who had started a war with them.

There are more than 500 Galactic Federation human planets who have lifespans of between 200 and 400 years. Many speak English and use oxygen. English is the lingua franca of the galaxy and is a sacred language. When they die they reincarnate back on to their home galactic planets. Hydrans, who look African, have 500 year lifespans. Pleiadians have 700 year lifespans. Sirians, who look European, have 5000 year lifespans. My home planet (I'm a starseed...starseeds are human aliens who die on their home planet

and reborn here), which look oriental, has 10,000 year lifespans. When we die we reincarnate back on my home planet or are sent out as starseeds.

Arctureans have 30,000 year lifespans and look oriental. They are planets of virtually ascended masters. There are tens of thousands of advanced human planets with lifespans ranging from just 200 years to vast long lifespans of 30,000 years.

There is a very long history of spiritual socialism on Planet Earth. In Iran the entire 1979 revolution was based on spiritual socialism or what they call God-Worshipping Socialists. Other areas of the Middle East were also strongly impacted by this spiritual socialism and it spread widely.

In South America Libertarian Theology joined communism and spirituality together to form a new branch of socialism that was very powerful and which affected virtually every Latin American country.

In Indonesia when President Sukarno was in power from 1945 to 1967 he developed a blend of nationalism, socialism (influenced by Marxism), and religion, tailored to Indonesia's diverse society.

## HIS FIVE PRINCIPLES OF PANCASILA WERE:

Belief in one God (with religious freedom and tolerance).

Humanitarian justice.

Unity of Indonesia.

Democracy through consensus.

Social justice (explicitly populist socialism opposing capitalism).

Sukarno viewed Indonesians as inherently spiritual and religious, emphasizing that the state must acknowledge God while promoting equality and social prosperity through socialist AND COMMUNIST policies. That's why the CIA killed him. He was like a New Ager way ahead of his time.

Formulated in 1945 as the foundation of the Indonesian state the principles include:

Nasakom: In the late 1950s-1960s under "Guided Democracy," Sukarno promoted Nasakom (Nasionalisme = nationalism, Agama = religion, Komunisme = communism) as a unifying political concept. This explicitly merged religious forces with socialist/communist ones to balance factions (army nationalists, Islamic groups, and communists). He argued socialism advanced social justice and was compatible with Islamic teachings.

And there are many other examples such as the entire western counter culture with tens of millions of long-haired brilliant hippies that often merged Buddhism, Taoism or Hinduism plus Western mysticism and Theosophy with SOCIALISM.

At the heart of the Galactic Federation alien agenda is SPIRITUALITY because you cannot understand interstellar space travel without understanding spirituality. Plus their societies are built on spirituality and ascension techniques that is indelibly woven with socialism.

That's because Galactic Federation spaceships travel vast distances using bio crystal energetic COMPUTERS with telepathic captains who feed information into this computer and the spaceship teleports through the speed of light. This is a spiritual technology.

ALL matter under the speed of light is produced by THOUGHT (British New Age physicist genius David Ash said this and backed that up with quantum physics). Ash also said that matter FASTER THAN THE SPEED OF LIGHT which he called SUPER ENERGY is ALSO PRODUCED BY THOUGHT which has a spiritual base. Thought produces ALL ENERGY, whether slower or faster than the speed of light. Spirituality (or thought) creates matter. And Consciousness itself creates thought. Consciousness in this case is basically pure SPIRIT or the awareness of Spirit. The Galactic Federation aliens call super energy PLASMA ENERGY.

So just getting back to SOCIALISM and COMMUNISM. Galactic Federation human planets have no ownership and are thus based on a type of free speech SPIRITUAL COMMUNISM. That is why it's so important for left wing people anywhere in the world to realise this and merge the two (communism and spirituality) together. And that's why I'm so dogmatic on this.

As I stressed earlier there is no need for ownership on Galactic Federation human planets as these ADVANCED GALACTIC HUMAN planets are a living sovereign body unto itself that cannot be bought and sold to the highest bidder.

They are absolutely anti-materialist and everyone works together for the advancement of their planet and Galactic Federation. Of course total individual sovereignty is absolutely sacrosanct and freedom (from materialism) is the name of the game.

This is completely different from post-Soviet planet Earth with uncontrolled neo-liberalism and billionaires shoved down everyone's neck.

The Galactic Federation supported Gorbachev style Soviet Union communism of "glasnost"(openness) and "perestroika". We believed this was an admirable form of communism and were horrified when the Soviet Union fell apart. This paved the way for the Western Empire led by the USA of imposing Illuminati super capitalism on the planet creating endless wars and killing millions on Planet Earth.

The Galactic Federation aliens are highly critical of western governments especially their hypocrisy of "democracy" and "freedom" as they create untold death and destruction around the world with their invasions, wars and western multinational corporations that rape and plunder the Third World and developing countries.

There are many forms of socialism and communism and generally within the Galactic Federation human civilizations the higher and more advanced the planet is, the more communist in its structure. At the same time freedom and freedom of expression is sacrosanct as sovereign rights that is never impeded.

As I developed as a high level starseed on Earth and my activation as a starseed expanded, my commitment as a libertarian socialist-communist activist on Earth increased. I have been committed to all forms of socialist-communist countries, states and ideologies on Planet Earth from the Soviet Union, China and Vietnam to Latin American socialism. I realise that no country is perfect, nor should they be.

*So just getting back to SOCIALISM and COMMUNISM. Galactic Federation human planets have no ownership and are thus based on a type of free speech SPIRITUAL COMMUNISM*

# Sports

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

## Over 150 students participate in Ebonyi maiden Secondary School cricket training

MAXWELL OKECHUKWU

No fewer than 150 students from Knights of St. John Technical College, Agba, and Government

Girls Technical College, Agba, have taken part in the first cricket training programme organised for secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

The training, organised by



150 EBONYI STUDENTS

the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN), Ebonyi State chapter, in collaboration with the Ebonyi State Ministry of Youths and Sports Development and the Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF), marked the formal reintroduction of cricket in schools in the state.

The session signalled renewed efforts to expose students to the game and strengthen grassroots sports development among young people in Ebonyi State.

The programme, which began on March 12, 2026, was held at the schools' sports fields and forms part of activities leading to the 2026 Zonal Cricket Competition being sponsored by SWAN in partnership with the Nigeria Cricket

et Federation.

Both male and female students participated in the training, which was supervised by officials of the Nigeria Cricket Federation, sports administrators and school authorities.

Those present at the event included the games masters of the participating schools, vice principals, representatives of the Ebonyi State Cricket Association and other sports officials.

Speaking with newsmen in Abakaliki, the Ebonyi State capital, the organisers said the initiative was aimed at promoting cricket from the grassroots and expanding participation among secondary schools across the 13 local government areas of the state.

Chairman of SWAN in Eb-

onyi State, Comrade Nwogha Ndubuisi, commended the management of the participating schools for their support towards the success of the programme.

Ndubuisi, who was represented by the Vice Chairman of the association, Mrs Blessing Igidi, said the schools had created the enabling environment necessary for the growth of cricket among students.

He noted that the introduction of cricket would contribute significantly to the development of the sport among young people in the state.

According to him, "The introduction of cricket will help instil discipline, teamwork and sportsmanship among the students."

He added that the initiative would also widen opportunities for students interested in pursuing careers in sports, noting that early exposure to structured sports programmes helps in identifying and nurturing young talents.

Also speaking during the session, an official of the Nigeria Cricket Federation, Jeffta Ugwu, urged the students to show commitment to the sport.

Ugwu, who supervised the training session, told the participants that cricket offers opportunities beyond school competitions.

"Students should take the sport seriously because cricket offers opportunities for national and international exposure," he said.

He added that the Nigeria Cricket Federation remained committed to developing the game at the grassroots through regular training and competitions.

Ugwu further explained that talent discovery programmes in schools form a key part of the federation's development strategy.

Officials at the event said the training exercise was part of broader efforts to identify promising young players and build a pool of talents capable of representing Ebonyi State in future competitions.

## FIFA appoints African referee for crucial 2026 World Cup Playoff fixtures in Mexico

FIFA has appointed Algerian international referee Mustapha Ghorbal as part of the officiating team for the final playoff matches that will determine the last qualifiers for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

The FIFA Referees Committee confirmed the list of match officials for the playoff tournament, which will be staged in Monterrey and other venues in Mexico from March 26 to 31. The mini-tournament represents the final stage of qualification for the expanded 2026 FIFA World Cup.

According to reports from the WinWin platform, Ghorbal will serve as the fourth official in the playoff fixture between Bolivia and Suriname scheduled for March 26. The match will be overseen by Australian referee Alireza Faghani, assisted by compatriots George Lakrindis and James Lindsay.

Video Assistant Referee (VAR) duties for the encounter will be handled by Croatian official Ivan Bebek, with Swiss assistant VAR referee Fedayi San providing support.

The winner of the Bolivia-Suriname clash will advance to face Iraq on March 31 at Monterrey Stadium in the decisive playoff final, with the victor securing a place at the 2026 World Cup.

In another playoff fixture, the match between New Caledonia and Jamaica will be officiated by a Uruguayan refereeing team led by Gustavo Tejera, while Chilean official Juan Lara will oversee VAR operations.

Ghorbal is among ten African referees currently vying

for selection to officiate at the 2026 World Cup. The officials recently participated in a FIFA preparatory training camp in Doha aimed at finalizing the list of referees for the global tournament.

Other African referees in contention include Morocco's Jalal Jayed, Egypt's Amin Omar, Sudan's Mahmoud Ismail, Somalia's Omar Artan, Senegal's Issa Sy, South Africa's Abongile Tom, DR Congo's Jean-Jacques Ndala, Mauritania's Dahane Beida, and Gabon's Pierre Ghislain Atcho.



AFRICAN REFEREE FOR 2026 WORLD CUP

## FG fulfills promises as D'Tigress' players receive documents of houses, National Honours

African Champions D'Tigress are in a more joyous mood in Lyon, venue of the FIBA Women's World Cup Qualifying Tournament, as they received the promises made to them by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, after winning the Afrobasket in August last year in Cote d'Ivoire.

The players and their officials were presented with their certificates for National hon-

ours and title documents to their houses allocated to them in Abuja by the Chairman of the National Sports Commission, Mallam Shehu Dikko and the Director General, Hon Bukola Olopade alongside other top Government officials.

This Renewed Hope gesture is a clear departure from the experiences of the past, where Government promises take years and decades before they

are frustratingly fulfilled.

The NSC Chairman said this is a prompt fulfilment of promises made by a President who truly cares with both his words and actions, stressing that Nigerian sports wouldn't have pray for a better leader than President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, in a time and season like this in the country's sporting history.

"I want to first of all thank Mr President for making sports work again in Nigeria and giving every Nigerian athlete a renewed confidence that sports can truly change their lives and put food on their table, because it's not just a leisure but a serious business".

"Mr President is happy to give you girls these honours and houses because you have consistently placed Nigeria on the global map with your performance, your patriotic spirit and your never give up mentality".



D'TIGRESS WITH THEIR NATIONAL HONOURS

## Guardiola admits uncertainty ahead of Man City's clash with Real Madrid

Pep Guardiola has revealed that he does not have a clear tactical blueprint as Manchester City prepare for their crucial second-leg encounter against Real Madrid in the round of 16 of the UEFA Champions League.

City suffered a heavy 3-0 defeat in the first leg played in Spain, leaving them with a difficult task to overturn the deficit in the return fixture.

Speaking ahead of the match at the Etihad Stadium, Guardiola admitted that his main objective is simply to push for a victory and see how the game unfolds.

"I don't have a detailed plan for the game against Real Ma-

drid other than trying our best," Guardiola said during his pre-match press conference.

He added that football matches can take many turns and that the first priority for his side is to focus on winning the game.

The Spanish coach also stressed that his players should already understand the importance of belief after spending many years together at the club. According to him, if the squad still needs to be taught about faith after a decade, then something would be wrong.

Guardiola, however, insisted that City will approach the match with determination and try to make the most of the opportunity in front of them.



PEP GUARDIOLA

# Kwara Football Academy ready for NEXTGEN Africa Cup in Abidjan, Ivory Coast



**K**wara Football Academy (KFA) is poised to take the international stage as they will be participating at the prestigious 2026 Next-Gen Africa Cup hosted in the vibrant city of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, the tournament is scheduled to run from March 23 to March 28, 2026.

This elite competition serves as a premier gathering for eight of the continent's most distinguished football academies, offering a high-stakes environment for emerging talents to demonstrate their prowess.

The competition organizers have structured the tournament into two competitive groups of four teams each. All matches will be held at the historic Stade Robert Champroux.

The opposite side of the bracket features a formidable

lineup including Ghana's renowned Right to Dream Academy, alongside Racing Club Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), Sosso FA (Guinea), and Umbro Rising Stars (Côte d'Ivoire).

Beyond the hunt for a trophy, the NextGen Africa Cup is a strategic development platform. With the global sports-wear brand Umbro serving as the official partner, the event is designed to maximize exposure for young African athletes.

A significant draw for the participating academies is the presence of top football scouts and recruiters from elite European clubs monitoring every match, searching for stand-out players ready to make the leap into professional football abroad. For the young prospects of KFA, this tournament represents a life-changing

opportunity to secure international contracts and professional pathways.

For the Ilorin-based academy, this invitation underscores its reputation as a powerhouse of youth development in Nigeria. Participation is a testament to KFA's long-standing commitment to providing its players with world-class competition and elite-level exposure.

To ensure they are fully prepared for the opening whistle, a 25-man contingent from the Academy, comprising players, technical staff, and officials is scheduled to arrive in Abidjan ahead of the March 23rd, 2026 start date. The early arrival will allow the team to acclimatized to the Ivorian environment as they carry the hopes of Nigerian youth football on their shoulders

## Federal Government fulfills promises as D'Tigress receives documents of Houses and National Honours

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"Mr President is happy to give you girls these honours and houses because you have consistently placed Nigeria on the global map with your performance, your patriotic spirit and your never give up mentality".

The Chairman also assured the girls that the money promised to

them by the President is almost in the final stage for disbursement and that too will soon drop in their respective bank Accounts.

The Director General of the NSC, Hon Bukola Olopade added that Mr President is truly redefining what sports should be inline with what is obtainable in developed countries where sports is striving.

"Mr President is a rewarder and his reward system is already

yielding tremendous results in sports and fulfilling his promise to you girls on time is another testament to the priority he places on Nigerian sports".

"Like what I often say, with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR, be rest assured that when you do well for the country, just know a grateful and thankful Nation is waiting for you", he concluded.

President of the Nigeria Bas-

ketball Federation, NBBF, Engr Musa Kida, also thanked Mr President for laying down a legacy of a lifetime for Nigerian sports with the way he prioritizes the welfare of Nigerian athletes.

The Coach of the Team Rena Wakama said they are eternally grateful to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for the show of love and support and assured the country that there is more to come from her team.



Chairman of the NSC, Mallam Shehu Dikko and the Director General, Hon Bukola Olopade alongside other top Government officials.

## Chelsea fined £10.75m, handed suspended transfer ban over past rule breaches

**C**helsea have been ordered to pay a £10.75 million fine by the Premier League and also received a one-window transfer ban that will remain suspended for the next two years. The sanctions

relate to historic regulatory violations that occurred during the ownership of Roman Abramovich.

The development was confirmed on Monday in an extensive statement published on the

Premier League's official website.

According to the statement, Chelsea had earlier informed the league about possible breaches of its regulations through a voluntary disclosure.

Following that report, the west London club was formally charged by the Football Association in September last year.

After reviewing the case, an independent commission concluded that Chelsea violated several rules connected to financial reporting, third-party investments and matters involving youth development.

Chelsea are currently owned by the BlueCo consortium led by Todd Boehly, which completed the takeover of the club from Abramovich in 2022



CHELSEA PLAYERS

## Osimhen and Onuachu make history in Turkish Süper Lig victories

**N**igeria internationals Victor Osimhen and Paul Onuachu delivered standout performances in the Turkish league on Saturday, guiding their respective teams Galatasaray and Trabzonspor to important victories while setting new milestones.

Osimhen was on target as Galatasaray secured a comfortable 3-0 win against Istanbul Başakşehir in their Round 26 clash in the Süper Lig.

The Nigerian forward scored Galatasaray's second goal of the evening, taking his league tally to 12 for the season. His moment came in the 66th minute when he met a precise delivery from Yunus Akgün inside the penalty area. With a controlled first touch, Osimhen calmly directed the ball into the top corner.

Earlier, Galatasaray had taken the lead in the 57th minute when Wilfried Singo finished from a free-kick situation involving Noa Lang.

Osimhen's goal further highlighted his impressive run of form. The striker has now recorded either a goal or an assist in nine straight league games. During that period, he has scored nine times and contributed four assists.

Statistics platform Opta noted that this sequence is the longest run of goal involvement by a Galatasaray player since detailed records began in the 2014-2015 campaign.

The hosts completed the scoring in the 84th minute when substitute Renato Nhanga finished off another well-worked move set up by Yunus Akgün.

Meanwhile, fellow Super Eagles striker Paul Onuachu was the difference-maker as Trabzonspor edged Çaykur Rizespor 1-0 in another Süper Lig fixture.

Onuachu struck early in the second half, scoring six minutes after the restart with a close-range finish following a smart cut-back from Oleksandr Zubkov.



OSIMHEN AND ONUACHU

# SPORTS

OKUNZUWA KEVIN

## Okpebholo's infrastructure drive rekindles Edo's devt momentum

Elders and senior citizens say the wave of infrastructure development sweeping across Edo State recalls the enduring legacy of Samuel Ogbemudia in the defunct Bendel State.

Many of Ogbemudia's projects still dot Edo and Delta states, which were carved out of the old state in 1991.

Against this backdrop, the development blueprint of Governor Monday Okpebholo — the SHINE Agenda — appears particularly fitting.

The governor says his goal is to recreate the spirit of purposeful governance of the past, but in a modern form that brings renewed hope and progress to the people of Edo State.

Indeed, Okpebholo wasted little time after assuming office. His early moves signalled a government driven by vision, mission and clear direction.

Little wonder residents and stakeholders have praised his one year and three months in office, describing him as "Mr Projects".

Across the state's 18 local government areas, infrastructure projects are currently underway. Okpebholo has been deliberate in pursuing road construction and rehabilitation as a key driver of development.

As of early 2026, verifiable data show that 28 new road projects covering about 255 kilometres have been awarded, targeting improved connectivity in both urban and rural communities.

Among the most prominent are the ongoing flyover projects at Ramat Park and along Sapele Road near Adesuwa Junction in Benin City.

Other major projects include the 36-kilometre road linking eight communities in Akoko-Edo and the rehabilitation of failed portions of the Benin-Auchi Road.

Construction and upgrade works are also progressing in Ogba-Evbuodia, Uholor, Irhue-Obagie and Amufi communities, where residents have praised the noticeable improvement in road conditions.

Additional projects include Upper Airport Road, Temboga Road, Uteh-Ekiuwa Road, Palace Road in Uteh, and drainage works along the Benin-Auchi Expressway.

Notably, several of these projects incorporate modern drainage systems aimed at tackling the persistent flooding that has plagued communities such as Uteh for years — an intervention that has drawn widespread commendation.

Determined to accelerate grassroots development, Governor Okpebholo recently procured 54 pieces of heavy equipment and distributed them across the state's 18 local gov-



GOVERNOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLO

ernment councils.

The equipment — including graders, excavators, rollers and other heavy-duty machines — is expected to boost road construction, improve rural access, support drainage rehabilitation and strengthen communi-

ty-driven infrastructure projects.

"This initiative is a strategic intervention designed to empower council leadership, stimulate economic activity in rural communities and deliver tangible dividends of democracy across Edo's three senatorial districts," Okpebholo said.

He spoke during the inauguration of the equipment, performed by the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike.

Further underscoring his commitment to infrastructure development, the governor allocated N305 billion for road projects in the 2026 state budget.

His willingness to engage some of the country's leading construction firms also signals a determination to deliver durable and high-quality infrastructure.

The Ewuare II recently acknowledged these efforts, commending the governor's developmental strides on behalf of the Edo people.

While urging the administration to sustain people-centred projects, the monarch remarked: "We haven't seen an overhead bridge like this in Edo before."

"It is during his tenure that we are seeing this kind. Some people deliberately criticise the governor."

A popular Bini proverb says that when a man pounding yam sees his strength appreciated, he is encouraged to give even more.

The message from across Edo State is clear: people are responding not to rhetoric, but to visible results.

Roads are opening up communities, drainage projects are addressing long-standing flooding, and new infrastructure is gradually restoring confidence in governance.

If the current pace is sustained, Governor Okpebholo's infrastructure drive may well mark a turning point in the state's development trajectory — echoing the enduring legacy of purposeful leadership once associated with the old Bendel State.

For the governor, however, the task is far from complete. The real test will be consistency: maintaining the momentum, ensuring quality delivery and keeping faith with the people whose expectations have now been raised.

• Okunzuwa Kevin, a journalist, writes from Lagos.

### 2027

## How surprise awaits strange bedfellows in Nigerian politics

EUBALDUS ENAHORO

When a revered general overseer of a Pentecostal church recently prophesied that 2027 would be a year of surprises, some Nigerians may have wondered what kind of surprises the cleric was referring to, considering that unexpected political developments are not uncommon in the country.

In his characteristic manner, not known for verbosity, the cleric simply said surprises await those dreaming of unsettling a sitting president who, according to him, is working hard to deliver the dividends of democracy to Nigerians.

The man of God appeared to be referring to certain strange political bedfellows—retired politicians now ganging up within a political platform.

These are individuals who have occupied one position or another in the past but, in the view of many observers, were unable to do anything meaningful for those who voted them into office.

Instead, they presided over periods when life became increasingly difficult for ordinary citizens.

According to the cleric, such politicians may ultimately find themselves dumbfounded and surprised by the outcome of the 2027 presidential election.

For clarity, the word "surprise" has several synonyms, including shock, revelation, bolt from the blue, bombshell, blow and astonishment.

Nevertheless, surprise can be a two-edged sword. The administration of President Bola Tinubu, man who once endured political persecution and exile for his role in the struggle to ensure democracy thrives in Nigeria appears determined not to disappoint Nigerians.

After a careful reflection on the prediction concerning 2027, Nigerians should remain wary of such strange political alliances. Many of these politicians, critics say, are often more interested in what they stand to gain personally, while the welfare of the people takes a back seat.



PETER OBI

EL RUFAI

ATIKU ABUBAKAR

The country has weathered many storms in the past, yet Nigeria continues to endure. The challenge, many believe, has largely been the absence of genuine leadership at critical moments.

However, faith remains strong among many citizens that the nation can overcome its challenges. There are indications that there could indeed be light at the end of the tunnel if Nigerians rise to do what they believe is right by allowing President Tinubu to consolidate on the initiatives he has begun across the country.

Today, with the growing army of supporters within the Renewed Hope Partners (RHP) and other pro-government support groups across the country, it is evident that a segment

of Nigerians appreciates the efforts of the administration so far.

In Edo State, Governor Monday Okpebholo has also been widely commended by supporters for what they describe as practical governance, with projects and policies that are gradually transforming the state into a construction hub and an attractive destination for investors.

Many residents say the Project SHINE agenda of Governor Okpebholo is already making a noticeable impact on the people, and they also acknowledge the support of President Tinubu for the state government.

Governor Okpebholo has equally demonstrated respect for political leaders, traditional institutions and the people in general, with what

many observers describe as a humble and inclusive leadership style.

When the mantle of leadership fell on the shoulders of President Tinubu and Governor Okpebholo, they assured Nigerians that things would improve with time.

Judging from the governor's performance in less than one year and six months in office, as well as the policies and programmes being implemented by President Tinubu across the country, many supporters believe the nation is being led by individuals prepared for the responsibilities of governance.

• Eubaldus Enahoro is the Publicity Secretary, Renewed Hope Partners (RHP), Edo Central Senatorial District.