

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo, has flagged off the 2026 farming season with the launch of the second phase of his administration's Back-to-Farm initiative, distributing farm equipment and inputs to farmers across the 18 local government areas of the state.

The event, held at the Agricultural Hub along Oko-Ogba Road in Benin City, attracted farmers and agricultural stakeholders from across the state, who showcased a wide range of farm produce, highlighting Edo's vast agricultural potential.

Okpebholo flags off 2026 farming season

- **Distributes inputs to farmers across Edo**
- **Inspects Sapele road project, promises relief for motorists before rains**
- **Reaffirms commitment to workers' welfare**
- **Mourns Brig.-Gen. Braimah, hails sacrifice to Nigeria**

Represented by the Secretary to the State Government, Musa Ikhilor, the governor said the exercise signals the commencement of the second phase of the planting season and reaffirmed the administration's commitment to strengthening agriculture to boost food production and ensure food security.

He stressed that the government would continue to support farmers through increased fund-

ing and the implementation of agricultural programmes, noting that agriculture remains a cardinal pillar of the administration's SHINE agenda.

Ikhilor described farming as an enduring profession critical to human survival, commending the enthusiasm and participation of Edo farmers.

"Food is a necessity for survival, and agriculture is a profession that cannot fade. It is

encouraging to see the level of involvement from our people, which further motivates the government," he said.

He disclosed that upon assumption of office on November 12, 2024, the governor allocated one of the highest budgetary provisions to agriculture, underscoring his commitment to food security.

Ikhilor added that the governor was the first in two decades

to visit the Iguoriakhi Farm Settlement, where he interacted directly with farmers, noting that the administration is determined to ensure that only genuine farmers benefit from government interventions.

"We must be careful to deal with real farmers, not political farmers. The governor is personally committed to ensuring that all distributed items reach genuine beneficiaries," he said.

The Commissioner for Agriculture and Food Security, Jerry Uwangu, described the programme as a demonstration of purposeful leadership and a step towards sustainable agricultural development.

He said the initiative aims to sensitise farmers on timely planning, improved practices, and the effective use of modern inputs such as improved seedlings, fertilisers, agrochemicals, and mechanisation equipment.

A guest lecturer, Sunny Er-onseyi, delivered a lecture titled "Strengthening Agricultural Systems for Food Security in Edo State," where he examined

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APC members challenge legitimacy of Delta Assembly defectors in court

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ADC crisis: Supreme Court to decide Mark's fate Tues

ABUJA

The Supreme Court will on Tuesday determine the legal fate of Senator David Mark, embattled Na-

tional Chairman of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), as it hears his appeal seeking to halt the enforcement of a Court of Appeal judgment delivered on March 12.

The apex court has fixed April 14 for hearing in Appeal No: SC/CV/180/2026, between Senator Mark and Hon. Nafiu-Bala Gombe and four others, according to a hearing

notice issued through its Litigation Department and sighted in Abuja on Sunday.

The hearing date coincides with proceedings earlier scheduled before Justice Eme-

ka Nwite of the Federal High Court (FHC), Abuja, although court observers expect the lower court may adjourn its matter

pending the Supreme Court's determination, in line with judicial hierarchy.

Senator Mark, who is the appellant, is seeking an order staying the execution of the Court of Appeal judgment of March 12, which arose from Appeal No:

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CONDOLENCE VISIT:

Edo State Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa (left) receiving former Governor of Edo State, Chief Lucky Igbinedion, during the latter's condolence visit to the deputy governor over the death of his (Idahosa's) mother, the late Madam Esther Imaguomwanru Idahosa.

PHOTO: MOSES OBOH

Oil output falls to 1.51mbpd as NNPC remits N1.804trn amid pipeline disruptions

ABUJA

Nigeria's crude oil and condensate production declined to an average of 1.51 million barrels per day (mbpd) in February 2026, even as the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Limited) reported a sharp increase in remittances, paying N1.804 trillion into the Federation Account within the same period.

According to the company's February Monthly Report Summary released at the weekend, the production downturn was largely triggered by operational disruptions, including the Trans Forcados Pipeline outage caused by integrity issues, startup challenges at Stardeep Agbami GTC 2 and 3 following turnaround maintenance, delays at the Sterling Oquali flow station, and sludge management constraints at Enyie wells.

Despite the fall in output, the report showed improved financial inflows, with total revenue rising to N2.68 trillion in February from N2.57 trillion recorded in January.

However, Profit After Tax (PAT) dropped significantly to N136 billion in February, down from N385 billion in the previous month, reflecting volatility in earnings despite stronger top-line performance.

The company noted that statutory remittances surged markedly to N1.804 trillion in February, compared to N726 billion in January, attributing the jump to improved compliance and recent policy reforms in the oil and gas revenue framework.

It also stated that crude oil and condensate production averaged 1.51mbpd during the month under review.

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Edo govt urges youths to apply in Nigerian Army recruitment
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After Iran talks falter, the big question is 'what happens next?'
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'Now or never': Fury calls out Joshua as Mega fight hangs in balance
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ADC crisis: Supreme Court to decide...

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CA/ABJ/CV/145/2026.

He is also asking the Supreme Court to restrain the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) from acting on the appellate court's decision by recognising any individuals other than himself and the current national officers of the ADC, pending the determination of his appeal.

In addition, the former Senate President is seeking an order preventing INEC from tampering with the existing national leadership structure of the ADC as presently constituted under his leadership.

Mark further wants the apex court to stay further proceedings in Suit No: FHC/ABJ/CS/1819/2025 pending before Justice Emeka Nwite of the Federal High Court, Abuja, until the appeal is determined.

The motion on notice was filed by his counsel, Realwan Okpanachi, pursuant to Sections 6(6)(a) and 233 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), Order 4 Rule 1 of the Supreme Court Rules 7074, and under the inherent jurisdiction of the court.

In a 12-ground argument, Okpanachi told the court that the Court of Appeal delivered judgment on March 12, after which Mark, dissatisfied with the decision, filed a notice of appeal on March 16.

He added that the record of appeal was compiled and transmitted on March 31, and the appeal duly entered as SC/CV/180/2026.

He noted that one of the orders of the Court of Appeal directed parties to maintain the status quo ante bellum.

According to him, Hon. Nafiu-Bala Gombe has relied on that order to write to INEC, urging the commission not to deal with or recognise Mark and other national officers of the ADC, a move he described as an attempt to enforce the appellate court's judgment.

Okpanachi argued that unless the Supreme Court grants the application for stay of execution, the judgment of the Court of Appeal may be enforced, thereby rendering the appeal nugatory.

He further contended that the appeal raises substantial

and arguable questions of law, and that the balance of justice favours preserving the subject matter of the dispute pending determination by the apex court.

Meanwhile, INEC had on April 1 removed the names of Senator Mark and Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola from its official portal as ADC national chairman and national secretary respectively, following the Court of Appeal judgment.

In reaction, Mark filed a motion on April 7 before Justice Emeka Nwite through his new counsel, Sulaiman Usman (SAN), seeking an order compelling INEC to restore their names to the status quo prior to the institution of the suit by Gombe.

He also urged the court for accelerated hearing, with the matter fixed for April 14.

The substantive suit, marked FHC/ABJ/CS/1819/2025, was instituted by Hon. Nafiu-Bala Gombe, who joined the ADC, Senator Mark, Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola, INEC and Chief Ralph Nwosu as 1st to 5th defendants respectively.

Gombe, a former National Deputy Chairman of the ADC, is challenging the emergence of Mark and Aregbesola as party leaders, alleging that their appointment violated the party's constitution and the Electoral Act.

Chief Ralph Nwosu, the former ADC National Chairman, had stepped down to pave the way for the current leadership arrangement under dispute.

On September 4, 2025, Justice Emeka Nwite of the Federal High Court declined to grant an ex-parte motion filed by Gombe seeking to stop the Mark-led leadership of the ADC, instead ordering that the defendants be put on notice to respond and adjourning the matter to September 15, 2025, for them to show cause.

Dissatisfied with the proceedings at the trial court, the Mark-led faction approached the Court of Appeal, challenging the jurisdiction of the Federal High Court to entertain the matter.

The appellate court ordered parties to maintain status quo ante bellum pending determination of the case, setting the stage for Tuesday's crucial Supreme Court hearing.

Oil output falls to 1.51mbpd as...

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NNPC Ltd explained that ongoing stabilisation efforts across key assets, including enhanced reliability programmes, faster evacuation resolutions, and increased coordination with operators, were beginning to support gradual recovery in production performance.

It also highlighted progress on the Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Abuja (AKK) gas pipeline project, aimed at accelerating early gas delivery to Abuja as part of broader energy infrastructure expansion.

In February 2026, President Bola Tinubu signed an Executive Order restructuring revenue remittance processes in the sector.

The directive suspended the collection of management and frontier exploration fees by NNPC Ltd and mandated full remittance of oil and gas revenues to the Federation Account.

It also established an inter-agency implementation committee chaired by the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy to oversee compliance.

The reforms, government officials said, are intended to improve transparency, strengthen accountability, and ensure that revenue flows from the oil and gas sector align with constitutional provisions, even as the industry continues to grapple with operational challenges affecting output stability.

Idahosa lauds Okpebholo's compassion, receives Press Corps over mother's death

BERNADETTE IDALU

BENIN CITY

Edo State Deputy Governor, Dennis Idahosa, has commended Governor Monday Okpebholo for his compassion, as he received members of the Governor's Press Corps following the

death of his mother at the age of 95.

The delegation, led by the Chief Press Secretary, Dr Patrick Akhere Ebojele, visited Idahosa to condole with him and his family.

The deputy governor expressed gratitude for the visit and recounted how the governor per-

sonally called him within minutes of learning about the death.

"I sent a message, and within three minutes, my boss called me. I wondered if he even sleeps," he said, describing the gesture as deeply touching.

He also appreciated the press corps for their support and role in projecting govern-

ment activities.

On funeral arrangements, Idahosa said the family is consulting and would announce plans after due consultations with the governor.

Earlier, Ebojele said the visit was to identify with the deputy governor, describing him as a friend of the press corps.

**INSPECTION OF ONGOING PROJECTS:**

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo (middle) with other government officials and a representative of a contracting firm, during the governor's inspection of ongoing road infrastructural projects in Edo South Senatorial District.

Edo govt urges youths to apply in Nigerian Army recruitment • Warns against fraud**BENIN CITY**

Edo State Government has alerted the public, particularly eligible youths, that recruitment into the Nigerian Army is ongoing and urged interested applicants to follow official procedures.

In a statement by the Commissioner for Public Security and Safety, Hon. Ebea Festus Odianose, applicants were advised to submit their details to the ministry for proper documentation and guidance.

The government warned against fraudsters, stressing

that the recruitment process is free and strictly merit-based.

"No individual or group is authorised to collect money on behalf of the government or the Nigerian Army," the statement said.

Applicants were advised to meet minimum requirements,

including a school certificate and an age range of 18 to 26 years, especially for trades such as electrical work, plumbing, carpentry, and mechanics.

The government urged prospective candidates to rely only on official channels for information and assistance.

Okpebholo names 2026 Amirul Hajj, flags early planning as key to successful pilgrimage

ABDUL-KADIR ABDULLAH

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has announced the appointment of the Amirul Hajj for the 2026 pilgrimage, stressing that the choice was deliberate and anchored on proven leadership and performance.

The governor made the disclosure at Government House while receiving a delegation led by the Amirul Hajj, HRH Mallam Ali D. Suleyman, the

Oghieaga of Ivbies, who served in the same capacity in 2025 and also headed Edo State's contingent to the National Qur'anic Recitation Competition (Musaabaqah) in Maiduguri.

Receiving both the 2025 Hajj report and the Musaabaqah report, Okpebholo said the decision to reappoint Suleyman was based on confidence in his track record and leadership style.

"I said it would be good for you to be the Amirul Hajj; that is why I said you are the Amirul Hajj. I carefully selected you," the

governor stated, expressing satisfaction with his performance.

He emphasised that Hajj, being a long-established religious obligation, requires early and strategic planning, noting that delays in communication had contributed to challenges, particularly in preparations for the 2026 exercise.

"Hajj is not a new thing; it is something we grew up to meet. If we know it must happen, then we must plan ahead," he said, warning that late requests to government often limit

timely intervention.

Okpebholo expressed concern that such delays adversely affected arrangements and contributed to a reduction in the number of pilgrims for 2026. He urged stakeholders to adopt proactive planning, including early health assessments for intending pilgrims.

Reaffirming his administration's commitment to the Muslim community, the governor assured continued support for pilgrimage activities and peaceful coexistence across the state.

Okpebholo flags off 2026 farming...

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the evolution of agriculture and outlined strategies to improve productivity and sustainability.

Some beneficiaries, including Uwensuyi Monday, Godfrey Omoruyi, and Henry Ebole, commended the state government's intervention and appealed for further support.

Items distributed at the event included spraying equipment,

fertilisers, gloves, safety goggles, protective clothing, fish processing kits, gas cylinders, farm boots, and knapsack mist dusters, among other implements.

Also, Governor, Monday Okpebholo, has assured motorists of imminent relief as he inspected ongoing work on the Sapele Road Phase II project.

During the inspection, the governor expressed satisfaction with progress made on key sec-

tions of the road, particularly those handled by CBC Global.

"We have been able to drive through to the Edo-Delta boundary. A lot of work is ongoing, and the contractor has done well," he said.

He noted that work by CCECC is still at an early stage due to the recent award of its section but expressed confidence that substantial progress would be achieved before the end of the year.

The governor disclosed that sections of the road would

soon be opened to traffic.

"In the next few weeks, one section will be opened, allowing easier movement. We are working round the clock to reduce hardship, especially as the rainy season approaches," he added.

Okpebholo attributed the infrastructure drive to support from the Federal Government under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda.

Earlier, the Special Adviser

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NEWS

NOA, NAWOJ forge alliance on civic education ahead of general elections

ABUJA

The Director-General of the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Lanre Issa-Onilu, has called for strengthened collaboration with the Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ) to deepen civic education and national value reorientation ahead of the next general elections.

Issa-Onilu made the call dur-

ing a courtesy visit by NAWOJ executives led by its National President, Aishatu Ibrahim, according to a statement issued in Abuja by the agency's Director of Communication and Media, Bala Musa.

Describing the engagement as both timely and strategic, the NOA boss emphasised that effective nation-building depends on sustained partnerships between institutions re-

sponsible for public communication and citizen engagement.

He recalled the agency's origins in the former Mass Mobilisation for Self-Reliance, Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), noting that NOA has since evolved into a grassroots-driven institution with more than 800 offices nationwide.

Issa-Onilu commended women journalists for their patriotism, ethical standards, and voluntary contributions to national development, stressing that their role remains critical in shaping public consciousness.

He expressed concern over the urgent need to strengthen voter education, particularly among young Nigerians, noting that a significant proportion of the population is under 35.

According to him, the growing influence of digital platforms and foreign media content is reshaping societal values, sometimes negatively, thereby making structured civic engagement more imperative.

The DG also disclosed ongoing implementation of the Nigerian Identity Project under the National Values Charter,

anchored on a "seven-for-seven" principle of mutual responsibilities between citizens and the state.

He revealed that the Federal Executive Council had approved key initiatives under the project, including the reintroduction of Citizenship

Studies across school curricula to promote national values and civic responsibility.

In addition, he outlined plans to increase local children's media content, targeting at least 70 per cent of cartoons to reflect indigenous culture and values.



NAWOJ COURTESY VISIT

Director-General, National Orientation Agency (NOA), Malam Lanre Issa-Onilu (right), presenting a souvenir to the National Chairperson, Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), Aishatu Ibrahim, during a courtesy visit by the NAWOJ executive to the NOA headquarters in Abuja.

APC leaders, dignitaries pay tributes as Iyase's wife laid to rest

LUCKY EFESÉ

BENIN CITY

A wave of grief swept through political and social circles in Edo State as top leaders of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and other dignitaries gathered for the service of songs in honour of the late Mrs Magdalene Ebusoguiye Iyase.

Among those present at the solemn ceremony held in Benin City, were the Edo State

APC Chairman, Jaret Tenebe, and the party's State Secretary, Lawrence Okah, alongside a host of political leaders, clerics, and community stakeholders.

The deceased was the wife of the Egor APC Chairman, Chief Emmanuel Iyase.

Leading tributes, Tenebe described the late Mrs Iyase as a virtuous woman, an amazon, and a pillar of support whose compassion and generosity touched countless lives.

He noted that her partnership

with her husband contributed significantly to shaping the political landscape of the APC in Egor Local Government Area and across Edo State, adding that her legacy would remain indelible in the party's history.

Other dignitaries who paid glowing tributes included Chairman of the Local Government Service Commission, Hon. Adjoto Kabiru; Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Hon. Paul Ohonbamu; Senator Mathew Urhoghide; Chief Imam of Benin Central Mosque, Abdul-Fatai Ikonmwsa Enab-

ulele; and APC leader in Egor, Hon. Crosby Eribo.

Until her death, Mrs Iyase was widely regarded as a community leader whose philanthropic efforts contributed to the development of the Benin Kingdom.

Speakers at the event highlighted her humility, focus, and enduring legacy, describing her as a unifying force within her family and the wider community.

Also in attendance were former Commissioner for Water Resources, Hon. Washington Osifo; former Deputy Chief of Staff, Hon. Pius Alile; elders and youths from Ologbo,

Oborewori targets 24hr power supply, blames distribution gaps

AJUWA VICTOR

ASABA

Delta State Governor, Sheriff Oborewori, has unveiled a renewed push to achieve stable, round-the-clock electricity supply through strategic partnerships and policy reforms, identifying power distribution as the sector's biggest challenge.

Speaking during a high-level meeting with energy consultants and financial experts, in-

cluding Power Acumen Consulting Ltd, Detail Solicitors, and the Nigeria Infrastructure Bank, the governor said his administration was intensifying efforts to close longstanding gaps in electricity supply.

He explained that the initiative, tagged: "Light Up and Industrialise Delta State," is aimed at driving economic growth by ensuring reliable power supply.

Oborewori noted that while the state has made progress in infrastructure, healthcare, and

education, sustainable electricity remains key to unlocking broader development.

He announced plans to establish a joint technical team comprising state officials and consultants to develop a comprehensive roadmap for achieving 24/7 power supply.

"We do not want to act blindly. We need a well-structured plan that will guide our decisions and ensure long-term success," he said.

The governor disclosed that

some communities previously without electricity for over a decade had recently been reconnected to the national grid, while ongoing projects aim to extend supply to key economic corridors.

He, however, stressed that despite Nigeria's generation capacity, efficient distribution remains the major bottleneck.

To address this, the state has enacted an Electricity Law and engaged consultants to review policies and recommend practical solutions.

Ebonyi Bishop dies at 60, Gov. Nwifuru mourns 'Spiritual Colossus'

MAXWELL OKECHUKWU

ABAKALIKI

The Catholic community in Ebonyi State has been thrown into mourning following the death of the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Abakaliki, Peter Nworie Chukwu, at the age of 60.

Bishop Chukwu, the third Bishop of the diocese, was described as a devoted servant of God whose life embodied humility, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment to humanity.

Reacting to the development, Ebonyi State Governor, Francis Ogbonna Nwifuru, expressed deep sorrow, noting that the late cleric's passing marked the end of an era of profound spiritual leadership.

"It is with a heart weighed down by deep sorrow, yet comforted by the eternal promises of God, that I received the news," the governor said.

He described the late bishop as a spiritual colossus and a guiding voice whose counsel provided moral clarity and divine wisdom in times of uncertainty.

Governor Nwifuru further noted that Bishop Chukwu, a native of Ededeagu Umuezeokohu in Ezza North Local Gov-

ernment Area, distinguished himself as a promoter of peace, justice, unity, and love.

According to him, the late bishop's pastoral mission touched countless lives, strengthened families, and nurtured the spiritual growth of the people.

Quoting from 2 Timothy 4:7, the governor said the cleric "fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith," adding that he lived a life worthy of emulation.

On behalf of the government and people of Ebonyi State, Nwifuru extended condolences to the Supreme Pontiff, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, the clergy, and the family of the deceased.



BISHOP CHUKWU

APC members challenge legitimacy of Delta Assembly defectors in court

ABUJA

A fresh legal battle has erupted within the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Delta State as party members have dragged the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the party to court over the status of defected lawmakers in the State House of Assembly.

The suit, marked FHC/ABJ/CS/692/2026 and filed at the Federal High Court, Abuja, challenges the legitimacy of 22 lawmakers, including Speaker Emomotimi Guwor and Deputy Speaker Arthur Akpowovwo, to participate in APC activities.

The plaintiffs—Sunday Aminugo, Christian Emegere, and Christian Egbuchinem filed the action through their counsel, Christian Nduka, Esq.

They argue that the lawmakers, who announced their resignation from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on May 6, 2025, have not completed the process of registration as APC members.

According to the suit, the lawmakers had admitted in sworn

affidavits filed in separate cases before courts in Abuja and Asaba that their defection process, including formal registration, was yet to be concluded.

The plaintiffs are seeking judicial interpretation of several provisions of the APC Constitution, including Articles 2, 9, 12, and 13, as well as injunctive reliefs restraining both APC and INEC from recognising the lawmakers as bona fide members.

They also invoked the doctrine of lis pendens, arguing that since the matter is already before the courts, the lawmakers are legally barred from participating in party congresses, meetings, or elections until a final determination is made.

The suit further contends that allowing the lawmakers to vote or contest in APC activities would violate the party's constitution, which reserves such rights for duly registered members.

The defendants' earlier depositions, the plaintiffs argue, clearly state that while the lawmakers had expressed intention to join the APC, their membership process had not been completed.

Delta salary boost: NGO lauds Oborewori for raising Doctors' pay

LAGOS

The Ambrose Agho Empowerment and Welfare Initiative (AAEWI) has commended the Delta State

Government for increasing the monthly salaries of medical doctors, describing the move as a bold step towards strengthening healthcare delivery.

AAEWI, a Benin-based

non-governmental organisation focused on improving the lives of educationally disadvantaged individuals through advocacy, training, capacity building, and scholarships, gave the commendation in a statement issued on Sunday by its Director of Information and Communication, Mr Kevin Okunzuwa.

The salary review was earlier announced on March 7 in Asaba by the Delta State Commissioner for Health, Dr Joseph Onojaeme, during a press briefing.

Onojaeme disclosed that the administration of Governor

Sheriff Oborewori approved a N200,000 increase in doctors' monthly salaries. In addition, the government introduced a N100,000 tax-free allowance for house officers to enhance welfare and curb the exodus of medical personnel.

With the adjustment, entry-level doctors now earn N570,000 monthly, up from N370,000, while house officers' pay has risen to over N350,000 from more than N250,000.

The NGO described the initiative as a clear demonstration of the government's commit-

ment to citizens' wellbeing and improved healthcare delivery.

"We commend this development; it is one clear way to demonstrate that the government is genuinely concerned about the well-being of its citizens," the statement read.

"A healthy society promotes economic growth and development. This move is a step in the right direction to address Nigeria's shortage of medical personnel, largely driven by migration in search of better working conditions and pay abroad."

AAEWI urged other state

governments to emulate Delta's example and called on the Federal Government to take decisive steps to reduce medical tourism.

It cited figures from the Nigerian Association of Resident Doctors showing that 18,949 doctors left the country between 2005 and 2024, with 3,974 departures recorded in 2024 alone.

The Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Muhammad Pate, had also recently disclosed that Nigeria has lost billions of naira due to the migration of doctors.

NUJ Warri celebrates Tompolo at 55, hails role in N'Delta stability

WARRI

The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Warri Correspondents' Chapel, has congratulated High Chief Government Oweizide Ekpemupolo, popularly known as Tompolo, on his 55th birthday, describing him as a symbol of resilience and commitment to the Niger Delta's development.

In a statement jointly signed by the Chapel Chairman, Okakuro Akpokona Omafuaire, and Secretary, Mr Edeki Igafe, the union praised Tompolo's contributions to peace, security, and economic growth in the region.

The journalists noted that the milestone represents not just a celebration of age, but recognition of a legacy built on transformative leadership and community empowerment.

"Your contributions to the

advancement of security, economic growth, and community development in the Niger Delta remain indelible," the statement read.

"As a prominent figure whose influence transcends generations, you have continued to champion justice and sustainable development."

The Chapel commended his role in safeguarding critical national assets and promoting regional stability, noting that his efforts have strengthened national cohesion.

"As watchdogs of society and partners in nation-building, we recognise and commend your dedication to the stability of the region," it added.

The union also prayed for continued good health, wisdom, and strength for the former militant leader, wishing him greater accomplishments in the years ahead.

Osun 2026: Smear campaign won't stop APC victory —Oyintiloye

OSOGBO

chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Osun State, Mr Olatunbosun Oyintiloye, has dismissed opposition attacks against the party and its governorship candidate, Mr Bola Oyebamiji, describing them as signs of panic ahead of the August 15 election.

Speaking with journalists in Osogbo on Sunday, Oyintiloye said the alleged campaign of calumny reflects the opposition's fear of imminent defeat.

He condemned what he described as the deliberate spread of falsehoods aimed at misleading voters.

"No amount of lies, false allegations, or fabricated stories will sway the resolve of the people, who are determined to vote for the APC," he said.

"The opposition is jittery

because of the electoral defeat that awaits them on August 15, and that is why they are spreading misinformation daily."

Oyintiloye, a former lawmaker, expressed confidence that the electorate would not "repeat the mistake" of the 2022 election, adding that many residents were eager to return the APC to power.

He said the party had resolved internal differences and was well-positioned for victory.

According to him, the candidacy of Oyebamiji, whom he described as a man of integrity and diligence, has further strengthened the party's chances.

He also expressed confidence in the campaign committee led by House of Representatives member, Mr Wole Oke, to deliver victory for the party.

Oyintiloye urged residents to remain steadfast and resist attempts by "desperate individuals" to mislead them.



PRESENTING THE NEWSPAPER:

Chief Executive Officer/Publisher, Aljizrah Nigeria/London Newspaper Limited, Dr Etuk Williams (L), presenting the newspaper Outstanding Public Sector Reform of year 2025 award to the Executive Secretary, TETFUND, Sonny Echono in Abuja recently.

Edo, Toronto move to deepen cultural ties through art exchange

TORONTO

Edo State Government and the City of Toronto, Canada, have expressed readiness to strengthen cultural relations through structured exchange programmes aimed at promoting Edo art and heritage on the global stage.

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy, Mrs Iryn Omorogiuwa, disclosed this

during an engagement with officials of art councils in Toronto and Brampton.

She said the Canadian officials indicated willingness to deepen cultural ties with Edo State, further strengthening existing diplomatic relations between Canada and Nigeria.

The development followed a special art exhibition titled "Bronze City: Transnational Journeys from Benin City to Canada," organised by Benin-born art and culture ambassador, Ms Nekpen Obasogie.

The exhibition, held at Keel

Community Hub and Queen Idia Art Gallery in Brampton from April 9 to 11, 2026, showcased Benin bronzes, paintings, and other artworks.

Speaking during a CityNews Radio broadcast in Toronto monitored in Benin City, Obasogie said the exhibition was part of deliberate efforts to promote Edo's rich artistic heritage internationally.

"We have a tradition of producing bronzes in Benin City," she said.

The exhibition also under-

scored the Edo State Government's role in creating an enabling environment for private sector participation in promoting culture globally.

In a related development, a Canada-based organisation, Women of Dignity International (WODI), indicated interest in partnering with the Edo State Government through the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy to further promote Edo art and culture.

Omorogiuwa confirmed the proposed collaboration during a meeting with the group in Toronto.

Okpebholo flags off 2026 farming...

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on Projects Implementation and Monitoring, Engr. Williams-Bello Phoebe, said the visit was to assess progress and introduce palliative measures to ease movement.

She explained that due to the nature of concrete work, some sections would remain closed for curing, but stone base would be introduced in other areas to facilitate traffic

diversion.

Providing project updates, Engr. Liao of CBC Global said his section covers 23.3 kilometres, with about 9 kilometres completed within the township and 7.65 kilometres outside it, expressing optimism of completion by the end of May.

Engr. Lee of CCECC added that their portion, divided into five sections, is progressing steadily towards completion by year-end.

Okpebholo targets 15 communities as he inspects Edo Central road projects

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, on Sunday inspected the second phase of key road projects in Edo Central, aimed at expanding infrastructure and opening up rural communities for economic growth.

The roads include the Amedokhian-Iruele-Awo Road and the Unewa-Ohe-Uzea-Awo Road in Esan North East

and Esan Central, marking the next phase of development after completion of the first section.

Okpebholo said the 26-kilometre stretch would link Awo and its railway station, extending connectivity across the area.

"This is the second phase. By the end of the day, we should be able to link up with other communities," he said, noting that over 15 communities would benefit.

Special Adviser on Projects Implementation and Monitoring, Engr. Williams-Bello Phoebe, said the project would boost rural access, link communities to the railway at Ohe, and support farming activities.

She added that the largely undeveloped area holds strong potential, with contractors already conducting preliminary assessments and work set to proceed swiftly.

The governor stressed that

improved road connectivity would ease the movement of goods and people, reduce travel time, and stimulate local commerce across the benefiting communities.

He further noted that the ongoing road expansion aligns with his administration's broader agenda to strengthen infrastructure, enhance agricultural value chains, and drive inclusive development in rural parts of the state.

NEWS

Armed Forces remain pillar of Nigeria's stability

—Defence Minister

ABUJA

The Minister of Defence, retired Gen. Christopher Musa, has said the Armed Forces of Nigeria remain central to the country's stability, unity and survival.

Musa made the assertion on Saturday night in Abuja at the

gala night and 40th anniversary reunion of the Short Service Combatant Course 27 of the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA).

Represented by retired Maj.-Gen. Bala Isandu, the minister celebrated the alumni for decades of service in defence of the nation and urged both

serving and retired officers to sustain professionalism, unity and operational discipline.

He noted that the complexity of current security threats requires stronger cohesion across all levels of command, describing members of Course 27 as part of a "special brotherhood forged in sacrifice."

According to him, their contributions have remained visible in counter-insurgency operations, peace support missions and internal security engagements across the country.

Musa commended their resilience and commitment, adding that many had risen to strategic leadership positions within the Armed Forces and in other sectors of national development.

In a goodwill message, retired Maj.-Gen. John Malu described

the reunion as a deeply fulfilling experience, noting that the journey since 1986 had been marked by shared sacrifices, growth and enduring friendship.

Malu said members had served in different capacities, with some retiring early and others reaching the peak of their careers, stressing that the bond formed at the academy had remained strong over the decades.

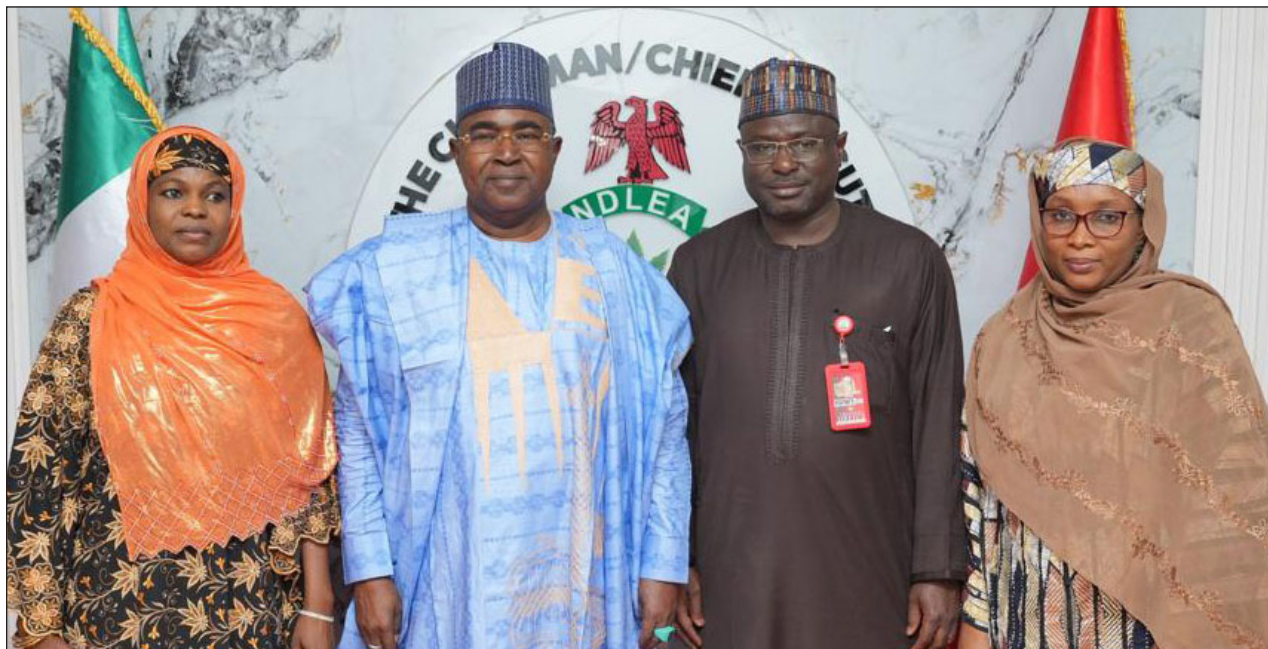
He added that physical reunions remained vital as they provide opportunities to reconnect beyond virtual platforms, refresh the mind and relive shared experiences from both operational and non-operational engagements.

Also speaking, the Course

President, retired Maj.-Gen. Okechukwu Ugo, said the reunion marked 40 years since their commissioning in 1986, describing the occasion as a reaffirmation of camaraderie and shared military heritage.

He noted that members of the course had served in various operational theatres, command appointments and international missions, underscoring the enduring value of service and sacrifice.

Ugo called for sustained bonds among coursemates, noting that such relationships remain critical for mentorship, welfare support and preservation of institutional memory within the military community.



A THANK U VISIT:

Chairman and CEO, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), retired Brig.-Gen. Mohamed Marwa (2nd L); two of the three Nigerian pilgrims who were detained in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia over illicit drugs allegedly smuggled into their luggage by a syndicate but later released by the Saudi authorities, Alhaja Abdullahi Bahijja Aminu (L); Alhaja Maryam Abdullahi (R) and Alhaji Baffa Abdullahi, who let the two women on a thank u visit to NDLEA headquarters in Abuja recently.

AIG orders crackdown on banditry in Katsina, Kaduna

KATSINA

The Assistant Inspector-General (AIG) of Police in charge of Zone 14, Katsina, Bello Shehu, has ordered a coordinated and strategic crackdown on banditry and other violent crimes across Katsina and Kaduna states.

The directive was contained in a statement issued on Sunday in Katsina by the Police Public Relations Officer of the zone, ASP Umar Muhammad,

on behalf of the AIG.

According to the statement, the directive aligns with the operational strategy of the Inspector-General of Police, Mr Olatunji Disu, aimed at proactively tackling rising security threats, particularly banditry within the zone.

Shehu directed Commissioners of Police in the affected states to deploy specialised tactical units to assert operational dominance, dismantle criminal networks and maintain

a strong and visible policing presence in identified high-risk areas.

He further instructed the commissioners to strengthen inter-agency collaboration through joint operations with other security agencies to enhance intelligence sharing and ensure swift responses to emerging threats, noting that "all tactical units have been placed on red alert."

The AIG also ordered sustained patrols across forests,

rural communities, highways, places of worship and other public spaces.

He mandated supervisory officers to uphold discipline, ensure operational efficiency and maintain accountability among personnel.

Shehu urged residents of Katsina and Kaduna states to remain vigilant and support security agencies by providing timely and useful information that could aid ongoing operations.

Katsina intensifies drive to domesticate safe schools policy

KATSINA

The Katsina State Government has intensified efforts to create safer learning environments through the domestication of the National Policy on Safety, Security and Violence-Free Schools.

The Director of Planning, Research and Statistics (PRS), Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MBase), Mr Nasir Ahmed, disclosed this in Katsina at the weekend during a visit by members of the policy review committee to the Commissioner for Basic and Secondary Education, Mr Yusuf Suleiman-Jibia.

The review process is being supported by Save the Chil-

dren International under the Education Cannot Wait First Emergency Response Project, with a strong emphasis on promoting violence-free educational spaces across the state.

The visit provided a platform for the committee to present progress made in adapting the national framework to reflect the peculiar needs and realities of the state.

The delegation said the initiative is aimed at strengthening safety standards and ensuring schools remain secure and conducive for teaching and learning.

Ahmed briefed the commissioner on key milestones achieved so far, noting that significant portions of the policy have been aligned with local realities.

He disclosed that the committee had carried out extensive consultations across the state, including focus group discussions and key informant interviews with critical stakeholders.

According to him, contributions from these engagements have enriched the draft policy, ensuring that emerging safety concerns, implementation challenges and community perspectives are adequately captured.

"The committee is expected to finalise the draft by incorporating stakeholders' inputs, conduct validation and submit the document for approval.

"Plans are also underway for statewide dissemination and implementation, alongside sustained engagement to en-

sure ownership and long-term sustainability," he said.

In his response, the commissioner commended the committee for its diligence and progress, describing the exercise as vital to protecting students and enhancing the quality of education in the state.

He reaffirmed the ministry's commitment to supporting the process and urged the committee to conclude validation of the revised policy before the end of the month to enable timely approval and implementation.

He added that the development underscores the shared resolve of the state government and its partners to guarantee safe, inclusive and violence-free schools for all learners.

Why I'm seeking re-election

—Benue lawmaker

MAKURDI

A member of the Benue State House of Assembly, Mr Peter Uche (APC/Guma I), has said he is seeking re-election to build on the experience gained as a first-time legislator and deliver more effective representation.

Uche stated this on Sunday in an interview with journalists in Makurdi.

He said his constituency requires an experienced lawmaker to enact quality legislation and attract more dividends of democracy to the area.

"There is no legislator who goes to the assembly and would not want to return, especially as a first-timer.

"The learning curve is steep, and it takes time to understand how to navigate committees, influence decisions and attract development.

"So, by the grace of God, I intend to contest again so I can

build on the experience I have gained and do more for my people," he said.

The lawmaker noted that his ongoing first tenure has recorded modest achievements, including the sinking of boreholes in Yogbo and Daudu, alongside others still in progress.

He added that he had consistently raised motions to draw the attention of relevant authorities to the security situation in his constituency and had co-sponsored bills, which he described as the core mandate of a legislator.

According to him, while the legislative system comes with challenges, experience improves effectiveness.

"If given another opportunity, I believe the narrative will change.

"There will be new members, new dynamics and, hopefully, a more cooperative legislative environment focused on development," he added.

Police launch manhunt after Imo monarch, 5 others killed

OWERRI

The Imo State Police Command has launched a manhunt for gunmen who killed a traditional ruler, Eze Paulinus Ekwueme, and five others in Ohaji/Egbema Local Government Area.

The command's Public Relations Officer, DSP Henry Okoye, disclosed this in a statement at the weekend.

Ekwueme, the Ochia I of Ochia Autonomous Community, was reportedly attacked on Friday along Asa Awara Road in Assa community.

Okoye said the Commissioner of Police, Mr Audu Bosso, had deployed tactical units in collaboration with other security agencies to track down the attackers.

"The deployment followed a distress report received from Ohaji Police Division on April 10 at about 1630 hours, indicating that armed assailants attacked Ekwueme," he said.

"Regrettably, the attack led to the death of the monarch alongside five other yet-to-be-identified victims."

He added that the victims' burnt remains had been recovered and deposited at the Federal University Teaching Hospital, Owerri, for preservation and autopsy.

According to him, a comprehensive investigation is underway, while efforts are ongoing to apprehend the fleeing suspects and recover weapons used in the attack.

The police also assured residents of strengthened security measures to prevent further incidents.

Bosso later visited the community for an on-the-spot assessment and to reassure residents of the command's commitment to security.

He sympathised with the victims' families and vowed that the perpetrators would be brought to justice.

Lagos recycles 405.17 tonnes of e-waste in 2025 —LAWMA

LAGOS

The Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) recycled 405.17 tonnes of electronic waste in Lagos State in 2025, its Managing Director, Dr Muyiwa Gbadegesin, has disclosed.

Gbadegesin made this known in an exclusive interview with newsmen in Lagos on Sunday.

Electronic waste, commonly referred to as e-waste, includes discarded, broken or obsolete electrical and electronic devices.

It covers a wide range of powered items, from laptops, mobile phones and batteries to household appliances such as refrigerators and televisions.

The waste stream is often classified as hazardous due to toxic components such as lead and mercury, requiring specialised recycling.

It is also regarded as one of the fastest-growing waste streams globally.

The LAWMA boss noted that the 2025 recycling figure represents an increase from 355.15 tonnes recorded in 2024, while 305.63 tonnes were collected in 2023, indicating a steady rise in formal recycling efforts.

He said the Lagos State Government had intensified advocacy and established structures to promote safe e-waste management across the state.

“The government is doing its best to promote safe handling of e-waste in Lagos State.

“The government recognised the importance of managing e-waste and set up an e-Waste Unit to coordinate its management in the state.

“It has increased advocacy and awareness around safe handling of e-waste and also certified recycling companies and collection centres,” Gbadegesin said.

According to him, e-waste management in Lagos is handled through 17 certified recycling companies and approved

collection centres, with the agency directing waste to certified recyclers to ensure safe handling and disposal.

He added that the e-waste unit regulates the sector by formalising informal operators, enforcing compliance and raising awareness about the hazardous nature of e-waste.

However, environmental stakeholders have raised concerns over existing gaps in the system.

Dr Leslie Adogame, Executive Director of Sustainable Research and Action for Environmental Development (SRADeV), called for urgent and holistic action to tackle the growing e-waste challenge.

He described e-waste as highly hazardous, containing toxic substances such as arsenic that pose serious health risks, particularly to women and children.

Adogame stressed the need for safe collection, transportation, recycling and disposal systems, noting that current efforts remain inadequate across the value chain.

“E-waste begins at the household level, so awareness must start from homes, not just within the informal recycling sector,” he said.

He observed that public awareness of e-waste lags behind that of plastic waste, resulting in poor disposal practices and increased environmental risks.

He also highlighted gaps in recycling capacity, noting that Lagos has limited registered recyclers relative to the volume of waste generated.

The SRADeV director called for strengthened implementation of the Extended Producer Responsibility framework nationwide and improved waste segregation systems.

“There is a need for dedicated bins and structured sorting systems to support recyclers,” he added.

Adogame identified weak collection systems, inadequate

infrastructure, low public awareness and underfunding as major challenges hindering effective e-waste management.

Similarly, Mrs Adedayo Adebayo, Director in charge of e-waste at the Lagos State En-

vironmental Protection Agency (LASEPA), emphasised the importance of awareness at the point of collection.

She noted that the state has about 30 registered collectors and a few recyclers being integrated

into a structured value chain.

According to her, LASEPA collaborates with Extended Producer Responsibility initiatives and other regulators to ensure proper handling of e-waste.

She said the agency moni-

tors corporate organisations, assesses their waste streams and directs them to certified collectors, adding that indiscriminate disposal is prohibited and operators are guided by standard procedures.



25TH OPENING SYNOD:

Chancellor, Ibadan Diocese, Anglican Church, Justice Hellen Ogunwumiju; Bishop of Ibadan Anglican Diocese, Most Rev Joseph Akinfenwa; Deputy Chancellor, Ibadan Diocese, Chief Bolaji Ayorinde (SAN) and Registrar, Ibadan Diocese, Mr Diran Adeyemo, during the 25th Opening Synod Communion Service in Ibadan recently.

Police unseal PDP secretariat as rival factions trade blame

ABUJA

The Nigeria Police Force has unsealed the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) national secretariat, Wadata Plaza, Abuja, granting access to a faction backed by the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike.

Factional National Chairman, Abdulrahman Mohammed, disclosed this in a statement issued by the National Publicity Secretary, Jungudo Mohammed, over the weekend.

He said the secretariat, along with the party's presidential campaign office, Legacy House in Maitama, was unsealed in compliance with duly issued court orders.

According to him, the property has been handed over to the Mohammed-led National Working Committee, with Senator Samuel Anyanwu recognised as National Secretary.

Mohammed commended the police for professionalism and adherence to the rule of law.

“This action is a clear demonstration of respect for constitutional order and due process,” he said.

He warned that the party would not tolerate obstruction, disruption or breach of peace at the secretariat, noting that security agencies were prepared to act against violators.

“This development reassures members that recent challenges have been effectively resolved,” he added, urging aggrieved members to sheathe their swords in the collective interest of the party.

He also thanked PDP leaders and stakeholders, particularly Wike, describing his support as invaluable.

The police had sealed the secretariat and Legacy House in November 2025 following

clashes between rival factions at Wadata Plaza.

However, the Tanimu Turaki-led faction described the unsealing as contemptuous.

Its spokesman, Ini Ememobong, said the judgment cited by the police had been appealed and all parties duly informed.

“By this action, they have tampered with the res, which could render the Court of Appeal's judgment nugatory,” he said.

Ememobong described the development as dishonourable, alleging that those tasked with upholding the law were disobeying it and suggesting partisan interference.

LIRS extends tax filing deadline to April 21

LAGOS

The Lagos State Internal Revenue Service (LIRS) has extended the deadline for filing individual annual income tax returns to April 21, 2026.

The Executive Chairman of LIRS, Mr Ayodele Subair, confirmed this in a statement issued on Saturday by the agency's Head of Corporate Communications, Monsurat Amasa-Oyelude.

Subair said the extension followed an earlier shift to April 14, citing increased traffic on the electronic tax platform as taxpayers rushed to comply.

He explained that the latest extension was aimed at giving taxpayers additional time to

complete their filings successfully.

“The extension responds to overwhelming compliance and is intended to enhance convenience while ensuring accuracy and integrity of submissions,” he said.

Subair reiterated that filing annual income tax returns remains a statutory obligation and urged taxpayers to take advantage of what he described as a final extension.

He emphasised that all returns must be filed electronically through the designated eTax platform, which remains the only approved channel.

The chairman advised taxpayers requiring assistance to visit any LIRS office or contact the agency through its official communication channels.

LAGOS

The Police Command in Lagos State has detained a driver over the alleged killing of a Lagos State University (LASU) student in a fatal motor accident in the Igando area of the state.

The command disclosed this in a post on its official X handle, @LagosPoliceNG, on

Saturday night, noting that an investigation had commenced.

It stated that the Divisional Police Officer in Igando promptly visited the scene following a report of the accident.

According to the police, the victim died as a result of the crash and her body has been deposited in a mortuary.

The driver involved has been taken into custody, while the

vehicle linked to the incident has been impounded for further investigation.

The police added that the case has been transferred to the Area Command for further handling and assured residents that all necessary legal actions would be taken in accordance with the law.

It urged members of the public to remain calm as inves-

tigations continue.

The development follows the death of a female student, identified simply as Azeezat, who was reportedly crushed by a vehicle at about 7:00 p.m. on Saturday in Igando.

In a video shared on social media by a student and posted by an X user, @Khenyibass, some students were seen storming the Area M Police Division.

ADC backs NBA, rejects court interference in party affairs

ABUJA

The African Democratic Congress (ADC) has backed the Nigerian Bar Association's position that courts lack jurisdiction over internal party disputes.

The party, in a statement issued by its National Publicity Secretary, Mallam Bolaji Abdullahi, described the NBA's warning against judicial abuse

as a validation of its stance.

Abdullahi said the NBA's intervention underscored ongoing attempts to undermine the David Mark-led leadership through judicial processes inconsistent with electoral laws.

He argued that the dispute does not constitute legitimate litigation but represents a deliberate effort to exploit judicial mechanisms for political advantage.

The ADC spokesman described such actions as abuse of court process, involving forum shopping and what he termed “malafide litigation” aimed at destabilising the party's lawful leadership structure.

He maintained that any judicial order obtained contrary to statutory provisions is invalid and cannot form the basis for decisions affecting party leadership.

Abdullahi expressed concern that certain actors continued to drag prohibited matters before the courts, creating confusion and projecting uncertainty around the party's leadership.

He commended the NBA for reaffirming the rule of law and warning legal practitioners against actions capable of undermining judicial integrity and democratic principles.

NEWS

JUDICIARY

NHRC validates complaints manual to boost access to justice

ABUJA

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), in collaboration with stakeholders, has validated a reviewed Harmonised Complaints and Redress Manual aimed at strengthening

human rights protection and enhancing access to justice.

The manual serves as an administrative handbook, encapsulating the procedural processes involved in complaint handling at the commission.

Speaking at the event, the Executive Secretary of the

commission, Dr Tony Ojukwu (SAN), said the manual is designed to accelerate the resolution of cases while ensuring a safer and more confidential process that reduces the risk of reprisals against victims.

He described the updated document as an “institutional

shield” and a crucial component of the commission’s commitment to justice, transparency and human dignity.

“We rely on a fundamental maxim, *Ubi jus ibi remedium* (where there is a right, there must be a remedy).

“For many victims of human

rights violations, including vulnerable persons in Nigeria, this maxim has historically felt like a broken promise because the courts and the administration of criminal justice have not always delivered on this right.

“The commission was established to fill this gap. We cannot simply urge people to report abuses; we must build an architecture that makes reporting safe and accountability effective.

“We must dismantle the fear of secondary victimisation and ensure that all victims of human rights violations have ac-

cess to justice,” he said.

Ojukwu highlighted the integration of the Human Rights Abuse Tracking System (HRAT) into the manual, noting that it automates the submission, filing, sorting and escalation of complaints to relevant departments for faster resolution.

Also speaking, a retired director in the commission, Mr Abdulrahman Yakubu, commended the NHRC for updating the manual, noting that it would enhance speedy resolution of cases while ensuring confidentiality and safety for victims.



2026 CONVOCATION CEREMONY:

L-R: APC, Woman Leader, Are Ekiti Ward, Chief Mrs Funmilayo Adekunle; her son, Peter Jr, and former Chairman to Ekiti State Government on Petroleum Task Force (PTF), Chief Peter Adekunle, during the graduation ceremony of his son during the 2026 convocation ceremony of Post Graduate students of Ekiti State University (EKSU), Ado Ekiti on Sunday.

ADR not threat to legal practice —Ondo Chief Judge

ORE (ONDO)

The Chief Judge of Ondo State, Justice Olusegun Odusola, has said that the adoption of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms in civil cases is not a threat to legal practice.

Odusola made this known at a stakeholders’ town hall engagement on the operations of the Ondo Multi-Door Courthouse held in Ore, Odigbo Local Government Area.

The event, themed “Access to Justice: Strengthening Public Confidence in the Justice System through the Ondo Multi-Door Courthouse,” focused on expanding justice delivery through alternative

mechanisms.

ADR involves the use of mediation, conciliation, arbitration and similar processes to resolve disputes outside conventional courtroom litigation.

The Chief Judge described ADR as an essential complement to litigation that enhances the overall effectiveness of the justice system.

He said that by embracing ADR, lawyers would not only serve their clients better but also contribute meaningfully to justice sector reforms.

“Justice should never be confined to the four walls of a courtroom; rather, it is a service that must be delivered to every corner of society,” he said.

Odusola urged stakeholders

to promote and utilise ADR, stressing that one of the judiciary’s core objectives is to ensure access to justice for all, regardless of status, location or financial capacity.

He described the Ondo State Multi-Door Courthouse as a critical tool in decentralising justice and making it more inclusive.

“The success of ADR and the effectiveness of the Multi-Door Courthouse require active collaboration and support from all stakeholders,” he said.

He noted that ADR could significantly reduce the backlog of cases in courts, which often leads to delays, potential miscarriages of justice and the disenfranchisement of citizens.

In his remarks, the Direc-

tor-General of the Ondo State Multi-Door Courthouse, Dr Dickson Ogunfuyi, said litigation is not always the most suitable option for resolving disputes.

He said ADR offers flexibility, confidentiality, speed and mutually beneficial outcomes.

Ogunfuyi added that the engagement provided an opportunity to partner with stakeholders across all sectors in improving justice delivery.

“These processes are not only faster and more cost-effective, but also help maintain relationships and promote community harmony,” he said.

He stressed that the success of ADR depends largely on public awareness, acceptance and participation.

Ex-Senatorial candidate jailed 10yrs for aiding terrorism

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja has sentenced a former senatorial candidate from Borno State, Babagana Habeeb, to 10 years imprisonment for aiding terrorism.

Delivering judgment, Justice Peter Lifu convicted Habeeb on a one-count charge filed by the Federal Government.

The charge bordered on aiding and abetting terrorist activities through the supply of petroleum products to insurgents.

Habeeb, a fuel dealer based in Maiduguri, pleaded guilty during arraignment, admitting to selling fuel in the North-East, though he claimed the

transactions may have been carried out by his attendants without his direct involvement.

During proceedings, the convict pleaded for leniency, kneeling in the dock and appealing for mercy.

He told the court he has two wives and six children and had been in detention for over 10 years without contact with his family.

The prosecuting counsel, Mr David Kaswe, opposed the plea, arguing that the support enabled attacks that led to deaths and displacement.

Kaswe urged the court to impose a 20-year sentence, despite the prolonged detention, noting that fuel supplies facilitated insurgents’ mobility and escape.

Court dissolves 18yr marriage over domestic dispute

IBADAN

A Grade ‘A’ Customary Court sitting at Mapo in Ibadan has dissolved the 18-year-old marriage between Wasiu Abdulrahim and his wife, Muibat, over allegations of hot temperament and refusal to cook.

Delivering judgment, the court president, Mrs O.E. Owoseni, held that the dissolution was granted in the interest of peace, noting that the petitioner had expressed unwillingness to continue in the marriage.

“Therefore, the marriage between both of you has ceased to be, and you can go your separate ways,” she ruled.

The court granted custody of the two male children, aged 13 and 16, to the petitioner, citing the need for paternal guidance.

Custody of the two female children, aged nine and six, was awarded to the respondent, based on the need for maternal care during their formative years.

The court directed Abdulrahim to be responsible for the education and overall welfare of the children, while both parties were ordered to grant each other access.

In his petition, Abdulrahim alleged that his wife had subjected him to psychological and physical trauma over the past three years through constant threats.

Court rules today on Abejide’s suit challenging ADC leadership

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja is set to deliver judgment today in a suit filed by Rep. Leke Abejide seeking to restrain Sen. David Mark and Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola from parading themselves as the National Chairman and National Secretary of the African Democratic Congress (ADC).

Justice Musa Liman fixed April 13 for judgment after Abejide’s counsel, Ibrahim Idris (SAN), and defence lawyers adopted their processes and presented arguments for and against the suit.

Abejide, a member of the House of Representatives on the platform of the ADC, instituted the suit marked FHC/ABJ/CS/1637/2025, filed on February 15, 2026.

The defendants in the suit are the ADC, its former National Chairman Ralph Nwosu, Sen. David Mark, Rauf Aregbesola and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Nwosu had stepped down as a former chairman for Mark, a former Senate President.

Among the reliefs sought, Abejide is asking the court to nullify the handover of the

party’s leadership to Mark and Aregbesola as interim national chairman and secretary, respectively, on July 2, 2025, at the Shehu Musa Yar’adua Centre, Abuja, describing it as illegal, unlawful, null and void.

He is also seeking a perpetual injunction restraining both men from presenting themselves as leaders of the party, as well as an order barring INEC from recognising them, arguing that their emergence did not comply with Section 82 of the Electoral Act, 2022.

Counsel to the defendants, including Shaibu Aruwa (SAN)

for ADC, P.I. Oyewole for Nwosu, Rilwan Okpanachi for Mark, I.R. Abdullahi for Aregbesola, and Anthony Onyeri for INEC, urged the court to dismiss the suit for lacking merit.

They argued in separate preliminary objections that Abejide lacked the legal standing to institute the case, adding that the matter concerns internal party affairs, which are non-justiciable.

The defendants further contended that Mark’s leadership emerged from a National Executive Committee meeting held on July 29, 2025, not July 2 as claimed by the plaintiff.

3 employees docked over alleged N12.2m farm theft

IBADAN

Three employees have been arraigned before an Iyaganku Magistrates’ Court in Ibadan over the alleged theft of farm tools and items valued at N12.2 million.

The defendants—Aishat Musa, 35; Ifedayo Osalohun, 28; and Oluwatosin Ajewole, 40—are facing charges of conspiracy and stealing.

The trio, employees of Farmway Agrotec Ltd in the Ogun-

pa area of Ibadan, pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The prosecutor, Insp. Adeshina Folaranmi, told the court that the offences were committed between November 2024 and April 2026.

He alleged that the defendants conspired to steal seeds, sprayers, chemicals and other agricultural items belonging to the company.

According to him, the items are valued at N12.2 million and were recovered following police investigations.

After Iran talks falter, the big question is 'what happens next?'

Twenty-one hours was not enough to end 47 years of hostility between Iran and the US.

The historic high-level talks in Islamabad, during a pause in weeks of grievous war, were always unlikely to end any other way.

Calling this marathon negotiating session a failure belies the scale of the challenge in narrowing wide gaps on complex issues ranging from age-old suspicion about Iran's nuclear programme to new challenges this war has thrown up - most of all Iran's control of the strategic Strait of Hormuz, whose closure is causing economic shocks worldwide.

To do a deal, they also needed to overcome a deep chasm of distrust.

A day ago, it wasn't even certain

the two sides would meet, and even more, sit down in the same room.

A longstanding political taboo was broken.

The urgent question now is: what happens next?

What happens to the contested two-week ceasefire which pulled the world back from US President Donald Trump's alarming threat to destroy a "whole civilisation" in Iran?

Would the US president be ready to send his negotiators back to the bargaining table?

We're hearing reports from sources here in Islamabad that some conversations have continued after US Vice-President JD Vance boarded his plane at sunrise, declaring the US delegation had made their "final and best offer".

Will the US now escalate or

negotiate?

We still don't know enough about what happened behind tightly closed doors in a five-star hotel in leafy locked-down Islamabad during talks that went on long into the night.

There are still few details on the disputes and discussion between the two sides, assisted by Pakistani mediators, the calls to and from experts, advisers, and, according to Vance, "dozens" of calls to Trump himself.

The vice-president spoke of the "core goal" of the US during his brief dawn news conference.

"We need to see an affirmative commitment that [Iran] will not seek a nuclear weapon and they will not seek the tools that would enable them to quickly achieve a nuclear weapon," he said.

During the last round of talks

in February, before military strikes were unleashed again, Iran had offered new concessions including the dilution of its 440kg stockpile of uranium enriched to 60% - dangerously close to weapons-grade.

But it still insists on its "right" to enrich and hasn't been willing to give up that stockpile, now said to be buried deep in the rubble after US and Israeli air strikes last year.

It's also refused repeated demands to open the Strait of Hormuz - to allow the free flow of vital traffic in oil, gas and other essential goods - in the absence of a new agreement.

Both the US and the Iranian delegations came to Islamabad emboldened by their belief that theirs was the winning side in this war.

At least 30 feared dead in crush at Haitian tourist site

At least 30 people are feared to have been killed in a stampede at a popular tourist site in Haiti on Saturday.

The incident took place on Saturday during an annual Easter gathering at the Laferrière Citadel, a Unesco World Heritage site, Jean Henri Petit, head of civil protection for Haiti's Nord department, said, warning the death toll could yet rise.

Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aimé said the incident occurred "during a tourist event attended by many young people" at the site, in the northern town of Milot.

He said an investigation had been launched and "all relevant authorities" mobilised to support those affected.

"The government sends its sincere condolences to the affected families," Fils-Aimé said in a statement.

The site had been packed with students and visitors after the event - commemorating the 19th Century fortress's

founding - was advertised on social media, local media report, citing officials.

The stampede was said to have started near the entrance to the site and was exacerbated by the onset of heavy rain.

Haiti's Le Nouvelliste newspaper first reported the death toll, citing Petit. The government statement did not say how many had died.

Citadelle Laferrière, also known as Citadelle Henry, was built by revolutionary Henri Christophe shortly after Haiti gained independence from France.

The stronghold took more than a decade to construct and was a crucial part of a network of fortifications to protect the new Caribbean island nation against attacks. The site has since become a symbol of Haitian independence.

The deadly stampede comes as Haiti grapples with widespread gang violence that has led to thousands being killed.



US-IRAN ISLAMABAD TALKS END WITHOUT DEAL

ISLAMABAD TALKS:

No deal as US Iran Islamabad talks ends

Ukraine and Russia accuse each other of hundreds of ceasefire violation

Ukraine and Russia have each accused one another of hundreds of violations of a short ceasefire coinciding with Orthodox Easter celebrations.

The Ukrainian military said on Sunday morning that Russian forces had committed 2,299 violations since the truce began at 16:00 local time (13:00 GMT) on Saturday - including shooting four unarmed soldiers.

The Russian defence ministry, in turn, said Ukrainian forces had committed 1,971 violations, including three attempted counter-attacks in Dnipropetrovsk region.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky earlier said his nation's forces would respond "symmetrically" to Russian attacks during the ceasefire, calling Easter "a time of peace".

He added that he hoped the truce could be extended beyond Easter to facilitate peace negotiations which have all but stalled with the outbreak of war in the Middle East - but Russia rejected the idea, saying its attacks would resume on Monday.

Russian troops mounted 28 attacks and carried out nearly 2,000 drone strikes, Ukraine's military said, but did not use bombs or missiles.

Russian forces in the north-eastern Kharkiv region executed four Ukrainian soldiers after the ceasefire came into force, the local prosecutor's office said, describing the incident as a "grave violation of international humanitarian law".

Ukraine's military said the troops were shot after being disarmed, calling it "another war crime by Russia".

Ukrainian authorities pub-

lished what appears to be an image taken by a drone showing four bodies lying in a clearing.

In Ukraine's northern Sumy region, which borders Russia, local authorities said a Russian drone hit an ambulance overnight, injuring three medics.

Russia's defence ministry said Ukraine had launched three overnight attacks on positions in the Pokrovsk area and Otradne in Dnipropetrovsk region.

It also said four attempts by Ukrainian troops to advance in Sumy and Donetsk were "thwarted".

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the Easter ceasefire earlier this week, having previously resisted repeated calls from Ukraine for a temporary cessation of fighting. Zelensky said his forces would act in kind.

Earlier in the year, Putin ac-

quiesced to a US request to halt strikes on energy infrastructure as Ukraine braced for bitterly cold temperatures.

Both Ukrainian and Russian sources accused each other of limited violations in the first few hours of the truce on Saturday, before making the much larger claims.

Ukrainian and Russian authorities also announced they had each swapped 175 prisoners of war on Saturday, including seven civilians a piece.

Ukrainian civilians and soldiers on the frontlines of the conflict - which has been raging since 2022 - have low expectations about the ceasefire.

Kyiv has long pushed for a more comprehensive ceasefire, which it and its European allies see as a necessary first step towards striking a lasting end to the full-scale invasion.

Why this disillusioned Trump voter spends hours searching Epstein files

After Cayden McBride finishes class in Rome, Georgia, the 19-year-old goes home, opens his laptop, and starts searching.

For the past few months, he has been spending hours at a time combing through the Jeffrey Epstein files on the US Department of Justice (DOJ) website and following others online who are doing the same.

Flight logs. Transcripts. Images. Videos. The material released by the DOJ has given new insight into the crimes of the late convicted sex offender and into his high-profile connections.

McBride believes the Epstein files still matter, even if the headlines have moved on to the Iran war recently.

"As a Christian, I don't believe anybody should endure what these women have been through," he says. "There is so much bad stuff in these files."

McBride was a self-described "Trump guy" and "very anti-establishment". He said he would always defend the US president in the belief that Donald Trump's Make America Great Again (Maga) movement stood for exposing corruption.

But the DOJ's delay in releasing all the files, and the perceived lack of accountability afterwards, has left him and many others disheartened with the movement, the president and especially with Pam Bondi, Trump's former attorney general.

Bondi was removed from her post just last week, to be replaced, in the interim, by her deputy Todd Blanche.

Trump has lauded Bondi for doing a "tremendous job" and Blanche denied reports that his predecessor's handling of the Epstein files had been a factor in her departure.

But McBride hailed the changing of the guard, expressing hope that there could now be renewed focus on the Epstein issue.

His wish was granted this week, from an unlikely quarter. The Epstein story came crashing back into the news when First Lady Melania Trump unexpectedly denied associating with him and called for a congressional hearing for his victims.

It is unclear how much that will galvanise interest, but Bondi's removal has done little to quiet the discontent amongst Trump's supporters like McBride. He thinks she needed to go because she wasn't prosecuting "the people she needed to".

He thinks there might be some "high-status arrests", but after that, other things like Iran, immigration raids and the midterms will, in his words, sweep the Epstein story under the rug.

Maga fallout over Epstein

Many Epstein conspiracy theorists have long counted themselves amongst Trump's most ardent supporters.

They believe that Epstein's death in prison was not a suicide, as the FBI concluded, and for years have insinuated that the government was involved with some sort of cover-up, protecting powerful people whom they believe participated in his crimes.

It's a belief that has been echoed by many of Trump's closest and former allies, such as Vice-President JD Vance, former Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene and Kash Patel, whom he tapped to lead the FBI.

As long ago as 2021, Vance tweeted: "What possible interest would the US government have in keeping Epstein's clients secret?"

NEWS

Foreign

Hungarians vote in big numbers on whether to end Orbán rule and elect rival

Hungarians are going to the polls in large numbers, in a vote that could bring down Prime Minister Viktor Orbán after 16 years and have significant repercussions for the rest of Europe, the US and Russia.

Most polls favour Péter Magyar, who formed a grassroots party, Tisza, after splitting from the ruling Fidesz party. After voting in Budapest, he said if he won he would bolster Hungary's position in the EU and Nato and move against corruption.

Orbán told reporters after casting his ballot "I am here to win" and, when asked if he had underestimated his rival, said: "I don't underestimate anyone."

Voting takes place until 19:00 (17:00 GMT) and results will start to come through in the evening.

With four hours to go, a record 66% of the electorate had voted, a dramatic 14-point increase on four years ago and an indication that voters are far more mobilised this time around.

Péter Magyar has promised a swift reversal of Orbán's anti-EU policies

Orbán has claimed the opposition will "stop at nothing to seize power", but Magyar told reporters voters were being posed a choice between "East and West, propaganda or honest public discourse, corruption or clean public life".

After 16 years of Orbán running Hungary with what the European Parliament termed a "hybrid regime of electoral autocracy", Magyar and his Tisza party are promising "a change of regime", a reset of relations with the EU and an end to close relations with Russia.

A local civilian observer group, the Clean Voting Coalition, said it had received reports of irregularities including vote-buying and groups of voters were being taken to polling stations against the rules.

Orbán remains highly valued by US President Donald Trump, who has called on Hungarians to "get out and vote" for his "true friend, fighter, and WINNER".

Addressing supporters on Saturday night, the Fidesz leader insisted victory was still in reach and kept to his main campaign themes of targeting Brussels and Ukraine. "We don't give our children, we don't give our weapons and we don't give our money," he said.

His message resonated with the crowd, who chanted "we won't let that happen".

One supporter, Johanna, said she backed his policies on protecting the family and particularly on the war in Ukraine.

He has proved to be a winner four times in a row, but a fifth consecutive victory may be beyond his reach.

Djibouti: A landslide victory for Guelleh according to official results

Djibouti's veteran leader Ismail Omar Guelleh won the country's presidential election with 97.8 percent of the vote, according to official results at the weekend.

Guelleh won his sixth term at the helm, beating his sole opponent Mohamed Farah Samatar, a little known figure by the general public who secured just 2.2 percent of the vote, according to interior ministry figures.

The long-term president won Friday's presidential election with 97.8 percent of the vote, according to official results.

"Re-elected", the Guelleh declared in a social media post ahead of the official results, after early results gave him a huge lead.

A long-term leader The 78-year-old has ruled the tiny nation of one million people for 27 years with an iron grip.

He has made his name leveraging Djibouti's key location to turn it into an international military and maritime hub. Its 23,000 square kilometres (8,900 square miles) hosts military bases and contingents from France, the United States, China, Japan and Italy, generating substantial financial, security and political benefits.

Guelleh won the last election in 2021, boycotted by most of the opposition, with more than

97 percent of the vote.

He had announced he would step down this year but a constitutional amendment in November removed the upper age limit of 75 for presidential candidates.

Just one opposing candidate Some polling stations stayed open an hour later because of delays opening at the start of the day.

But few people in Djibouti doubted who would win.

Amid heavy security, Guelleh, widely known by his initials IOG, voted before noon at City Hall alongside his wife, while Samatar cast his ballot earlier.

"By the grace of God, we have arrived here, and we hope that this will end in victory," Guelleh told reporters.

Guelleh has plastered the capital with campaign posters and drew thousands to his rallies, while Samatar has struggled to gain support. The national broadcaster aired one of Samatar's events, with only a few dozen people present.

Samatar is the little-known leader of the Unified Democratic Centre (CDU), a party with no seats in parliament.

"I'm going to vote for Ismail Omar Guelleh because he has a good programme for young people. I don't even know what his opponent looks like," Deka Aden Mohamed, 38, told AFP.



IRISH FUEL PROTESTERS:

Officers from the Garda's public order unit move in to clear away a barricade at Galway port on Sunday morning.

Police clear Irish fuel protesters from several locations

Fuel protesters have been removed from a number of sites in the Republic of Ireland by police.

Protesters were moved in an operation by gardai (Irish police) from from O'Connell Street in Dublin, the M50 motorway near the city and from Galway port.

A protest is still blocking the N1 southbound near Dundalk - part of the main route between Dublin and Northern Ireland.

Demonstrators have been blocking fuel distribution sites and many major motorways and roads in a protest over soaring fuel costs following the US-Israel war with Iran.

Protesters listened to speeches on Dublin's O'Connell Street on Saturday

Shortly after 03:30 gardai asked people inside tractors and trailers in O'Connell Street to leave the area, all of whom did so peacefully.

About 200 uniformed gardai, the public order unit and mounted unit surrounded O'Connell Street, while its water unit patrolled the River Liffey below and a Garda helicopter flew overhead.

A number of trucks and tractors left the area before the operation began, while several others later returned to their vehicles and then drove away under Garda escort.

Gardai cleared the blockade of the M50 motorway.

An operation to end a blockade of Galway docks began later in the morning.

Gardai said it was "to ensure critical supplies of fuel to maintain critical emergency public services, including ambulance and fire services".

Demonstrators had formed a barricade on the bridge leading to the port terminal.

It was dismantled and protesters were directed to leave.

Most did so peacefully, although some were resistant.

FUEL SHORTAGES

Meanwhile protesters at a blockade of an oil terminal at Foynes, County Limerick, announced they would end the action at 13:00.

Demonstrators restricting access to Rosslare Europort in County Wexford have said that they will allow 60 to 70 trucks

to leave the port "as a gesture of goodwill".

Hundreds of petrol stations in the Republic of Ireland have run out of fuel as the protests and blockades - involving slow-moving convoys made up of vehicles including tractors - are now in a sixth day.

On Saturday, fuel trucks regained access to an oil refinery in County Cork that had been subjected to a days-long blockade.

Protesters who had been blocking trucks leaving the Whitegate Refinery were pushed back by gardai using pepper spray, in an operation supported by the Irish Defence Forces.

The Garda commissioner said a number of arrests were made during the operation.

Manhattan prosecutor investigates abuse claims against Congressman Eric Swalwell

The Manhattan District Attorney's Office says it has launched an investigation into sexual misconduct allegations against US Congressman Eric Swalwell.

Four women have accused him of misconduct ranging from sexual harassment to rape, including an alleged incident in New York. Swalwell, a leading contender in California's governor race, denies the claims, vowing to defend himself with "facts".

"We urge survivors and anyone with knowledge of these allegations to contact our Special Victims Division," said the New York City prosecutor's office.

Representatives for Swalwell - who was elected in 2012 to a district near San Francisco - did not immediately respond to the BBC's request for comment.

In urging accusers to come forwards, the district attorney's office said on Saturday: "Our specially trained prosecutors, investigators and counsellors are well-equipped to help you in a trauma-informed, survivor-centered manner."

The investigation comes a day after Swalwell said the allegations were "false".

"For nearly 20 years, I have served the public - as a prosecutor and a congressman, and have always protected women," the married father-of-three added. "I will defend myself with the facts and where necessary bring legal action."

The first allegation against Swalwell emerged publicly on Friday in the San Francisco Chronicle.

A former staff member told the newspaper that shortly after being hired to work in his district office in Castro Valley, Swalwell began making inappropriate comments, including soliciting her for sex and sending her sexual messages.

The woman alleged to the Chronicle that she had been assaulted twice by Swalwell.

She told the newspaper the first alleged incident happened in September 2019 after they had gone out for drinks.

She said the second alleged assault occurred in 2024, when she said she met Swalwell after

a charity gala in New York. On both occasions, she said she was too intoxicated to consent.

The BBC has not been able to independently verify her account or identity, but has contacted her attorney for comment.

CNN then published accusations from four women of sexual misconduct against Swalwell.

His legal team has sent cease-and-desist letters to two of the accusers, according to the broadcaster.

Swalwell said in a video message on Facebook that he wanted the public to hear directly from him and again denied the allegations.

"I do not suggest to you that I am perfect or a saint," he said. "I've certainly made mistakes in judgment in my past. But those mistakes are between me and my wife. And to her, I apologise deeply for putting her in this position."

Within hours of the accusations surfacing, Swalwell's bid for California governor had lost the backing of prominent supporters, including Senator Adam Schiff and House Dem-

ocratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries.

California's outgoing Governor Gavin Newsom said the allegations were "deeply troubling", while former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said it was "best" they were investigated "outside of a gubernatorial campaign".

Swalwell's congressional and campaign aides said in an unsigned statement on Saturday that they were "horrified" by the allegations, US media report.

"We stand with our former colleague and the other women who have come forward," the statement read. "We believe you should stand with them, too."

"The behaviour detailed in these reports is abhorrent, beneath the dignity of those serving in public office and betrays the trust of all Californians."

The allegations surface at a crucial moment in the wide-open Democratic primary race to replace Newsom and lead the nation's most populous state - which has elected a Democrat to the role for the past 20 years - just weeks before voters receive postal ballots.

Feature

Middle East crises: Iran's govt wrong pursuit

Nation Building entails prioritising easy access to basic needs of citizens by those in Government. These include food, shelter, clothing, education, healthcare, etc. Equal rights for all citizens, freedom of expression, equality before the Law. Laws must be made for man, and not man for the Law. In other word, the Law must be flexible over NON ISSUES (you don't flog and humiliate a woman publicly because 1 strand of her hair is exposed). Laws must be progressive, and not ones that set the nation back to year zero educationally, scientifically, economically, socially, etc.

Nation Building entails making every effort to leave at peace and harmony with other Nations of the world. Not being extremely rigid when it comes to international diplomacy. Because no Nation grows or develops in isolation or by being confrontational towards others: especially those that have attained the level of sophistication (economically, scientifically, militarily, technologically, etc), that yours has not come close to - countries with the ability to cripple, crumble and destroy your own country, and send her back a 100years behind civilization.

This resonate with the wise statement of Jesus in Luke 14:31 where He said that before you go to war with an enemy, you must first sit down to calculate whether you have enough strength to fight against him. That it is wisdom to sue for peace when you know you don't have enough strength to fight and win. Because that will ultimately lead to great humiliation at the end: it will result in great losses for you in different forms.

The above qualities for building a progressive Nation, the Iranian Theocratic Government lacked ever since it came to power in 1979.

According to one Authority, "Theocracy is a form of Autocracy or Oligarchy in which one or more Deities are recognized as supreme ruling authorities giving divine guidance to human intermediaries with executive, legislative or judicial power, who manage the government daily affairs".

In a country of more than 80 million people of different ethnicity, culture and religious practices, when governmental power is concentrated in the hand of only one person all in the name of being the SUPREME Leader, there is bound to be corruption and nepotism, in line with the logic: "Power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely." That is the Iranian system of government - where there is EXTREME INEQUALITY in the country, lack of representation, suppression of oppositions, tensed political atmosphere and unrest, that ultimately resulted in the massacre of approximately 50,000 Iranian citizens within the space of 1 week by the Iranian government in January 2026, just for demanding that government make access to basic human needs easy for citizens - thereby cushioning the grinding poverty they have been subjected to for so long, in a country reputed as being one of the richest in the world in oil reserves. Whereas, the Supreme leader himself, being SECRETLY HEAVILY CORRUPT, is discovered to be worth an estimated \$200 billion.

Policies of the Theocratic govern-



IRAN PROTESTERS

ment of Iran have largely brought fear, isolation, hardship, sorrow, death, etc, to the Iranian people since it assumed power close to 50 years ago. Less than 1 year after it came to power, it embarked on an 8 years long bloody war with neighbouring Iraq. A war in which about 1 million Iranians lost their lives, several million others injured, near complete destruction of her infrastructure, and a collapsed economy. The same war the Theocratic government excused as being a DIVINE mandate from God.

With the war ongoing, the Ayatollah leadership received (according to them), another divine mandate to lead in the extermination of the state of Israel from the middle east, which she tagged a CANCER that must be eradicated. Thus, was started what later became known as the Axis of Resistance. Here, the Iranian regime sponsored and trained various paramilitary forces in various Middle East countries with countless billions of dollars, to achieve her aim of the destruction of the state of Israel, and to resist by violence Europe and America interest in the middle east: money that would have been more than enough to transform Iran into a utopia of a sort.

These Axis of Resistance included Hamas in Palestine, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Houthis in Yemen, Islamic militants in Iraq, etc. Countless atrocities were committed against humanity of all races, tribes and groups - resulting in tens of thousands of deaths, injuries, and destruction of infrastructure worth several billions of dollars, over the course of time, by these groups (the Axis of Resistance). A case in point, was the 1982 suicide bombing of American/ French military bases in Lebanon carried out by Hezbollah, in which more than 300 people lost their lives. There was also suicide bombing 6 months earlier at an Israeli military base in southern Lebanon by Hezbollah in which more than 90 IDF Soldiers lost their lives. But the most tragic and most devastating of these attacks by these axis of Resistance, was the October 7th, 2023 air, land and sea sudden attack on Israel by the Hamas militant group in which about 2000

Israelis lost their lives, with countless other thousands severely injured. In response, the Israeli military have since reduced the Palestinian city of Gaza to rubble, with death toll of the Palestinians running into tens of thousands. All of these "divine mandate" including the huge human and material cost expended, ended in waste, with all or most of these Resistance groups completely or almost completely decimated as at today, while the Jewish state they try to destroy is waxing stronger and stronger by the day.

Iran was a progressive country vis-à-vis modernity, civilization, socially, etc, with women in the country given equal rights as the men to develop their potentials to the fullest. The country had female Medical Doctors, Lawyers, Engineers, Teachers, Judges, etc. Tehran - her capital was nicknamed then, the "PARIS" of the middle east because of the level of sophistication of the city.

But the Ayatollah's autocratic regime has since taken the country back to the STONE AGE where primitivity, illiteracy, public flogging and humiliation for not conforming to some BARBARIC LAWS have since become the lot of the Iranian women. In 2022, the detention and eventual death of a young Iranian woman Masha Amini by the so called Morality Police of the country for allegedly not wearing her hijab properly in public, resulted in a nation wide protest tagged: "Women's Life Freedom" for many days - with excessive force being applied by the Iranian authorities to put down the protest. Countless hundreds others were killed as a result, with hospitals prevented from attending to the injured, several thousands others received lengthy jail term of up to 10 years.

Today, inability on the part of the Iranian leadership to properly manage the Economy has brought about the free fall of the country's currency (the Rial), now exchanging for more than a million Rial to 1 USD. Average minimum salary in the country today is about \$120, whereas the average monthly cost of surviving modestly in the country for a couple and a child is about \$450.

Ranked sometime ago by a re-

nowned think tank as one of the most corrupt government in the world, the wealth of the country have almost completely been usurped by the Ayatollah's family and his circle of loyalist. Much more so that even the little water Reserve that is left in the country as a result of severe draught, again, owing to poor management of the country's water Reserve overtime, have been shared by those in government circle, while the citizens are left to wallow in hunger and in taste.

Another reason for her crumbling economy, is owing to the crippling sanctions imposed on the country by the U.S, because of her inordinate ambition of wanting to build a Nuclear Weapon to carry out her "Divine Assignment" of destroying the state of Israel, and giving her the might to Lord it over leading Arab countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, UAE, Iraq, etc, she has always viewed as threat to her quest for military dominance and superiority there in the middle east. So strong was her quest to acquire these Nukes that an estimated \$2 Trillion have gone into the project so far: an amount large enough to safely place the country among the 10 largest economies in the world.

Not even the peaceful initiative of the US, working hand in hand with the UN, under the title: IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL, in which it was proposed for her to abandon her nuclear quest, and in turn receive economic assistance to help revive her economy, could persuade the regime otherwise as she blatantly continued her Uranium enrichment almost to the level of producing a nuclear warhead, before the Israelis stroke her nuclear facilities in June of last year that resulted in the 12 days war.

Now, the STRAIT OF HORMUZ is a narrow water ways sitting between Iran to the North, and Oman to the South, with only a wideness of about 10km, deep enough to take large ocean going vessels: much of which falls under the Iranian half of the STRAIT. About 20% of the world daily crude oil needs pass through this STRAIT. Much of the raw materials needed for manufacturing in China, Japan, India

and South Korea, countries reputed globally as the manufacturing hub of the entire world, pass through the strait of HORMUZ.

Thus, because of its strategic importance, and the severe consequences the entire world would face economically, should there be a disruption of moment of ships through this water ways at anytime, the United Nations convention in 1982 on the law of the sea, known as UNCLOS laid down certain rules to govern movements of ship across the strait of HORMUZ. According to Sylvan Domerg a Professor of Geography in one of the leading French universities, "UNCLOS made provision for RIGHT of SAFETY passage of all Vessels whether military or civilian through the strait, provided they are for peaceful purposes. Coastal states (Iran, Oman) have no right to block passage of ships through the strait, neither can they charge transit fee. Because the strait of HORMUZ unlike the SUEZ CANAL and the Panama STRAIT which are privately owned by individual country, is recognised as INTERNATIONAL STRAIT, and as such, the PRINCIPLE OF FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION IN INTERNATIONAL STRAITS APPLIES TO IT."

This being the case, for me, Iran trying to hold the whole world to ransom by blocking the strait of HORMUZ - not minding whether the entire world economy is strangled provided she had her way, slaughtering 50,000 of her own people within the space of 1 week for demanding better living condition, safely put the leadership of that AUTOCRATIC REGIME on the same rank as Adolf Hitler and other atrocious leaders of the 20th century.

Trying to champion the course of the Palestinian people with a very wrong approach that have only produced catastrophic results so far for the Palestinians, when you have reduced your own people at home to the position of slaves and servitude, to me, the Ayatollah's leadership is the one being addressed when the Bible said in Luke 4:23, "PHYSICIAN HEAL THYSELF".

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Man City thrash Chelsea to reignite title race, close gap on Arsenal

EDWARD OSEGHE

Manchester City reignited the Premier League title race with a dominant 3-0 victory over Chelsea at Stamford Bridge,



MAN CITY VS CHELSEA MATCH

cutting Arsenal's lead at the top to six points.

Pep Guardiola's side delivered a clinical second-half performance on Sunday, with Nico O'Reilly and Marc Guehi scoring within six minutes

before Jeremy Doku wrapped up an emphatic win. The result came after Arsenal's surprise 2-1 home defeat to Bournemouth, allowing City to capitalise and tighten the race with a game still in hand.

The win sets up a crucial showdown between City and Arsenal at the Etihad Stadium on April 19, a fixture that could prove decisive in the title run-in. A victory for City would move them within three points of the Gunners while holding a crucial advantage in games remaining.

After a sluggish first half, Guardiola's men returned from the break with renewed intensity. O'Reilly opened the scoring in the 51st minute, rising to meet Rayan Cherki's in-swinging cross with a well-placed header.

Cherki, who impressed with his creativity, played a key role again six minutes later, weaving past defenders before threading a precise pass to Guehi, who fired into the far corner with confidence.

Chelsea's defensive struggles were further exposed in the 68th minute when goalkeeper Robert Sanchez played a risky pass under pressure. Doku intercepted, surged into the box, and finished clinically to seal the victory.

City's resurgence comes at a crucial stage, having already beaten Arsenal in the League Cup final and thrashed Liverpool in the FA Cup quarter-finals. Their title push had faltered following draws against West Ham and Nottingham Forest, but this result restores belief.



CRISTIANO RONALDO

Ronaldo eyes 2030 World Cup, signals possible career extension

EDWARD OSEGHE

Cristiano Ronaldo has opened the door to a remarkable extension of his illustrious career, suggesting he could still be active by the time the 2030 FIFA World Cup comes around.

The Portuguese icon, currently starring for Saudi Arabian side Al-Nassr, continues to defy age at 41 with performances that remain at the highest level. His sustained form has fuelled speculation that he could push on for several more years, with the next decade's global showcase firmly on his radar.

Speaking to transfer expert Fabrizio Romano on X,

the Portugal captain made his position clear: "I haven't completely ruled out playing in the 2030 World Cup. If I'm still scoring every week at 41, then maybe I can keep going for another four years."

The 2030 tournament, set to be co-hosted by Morocco, Portugal and Spain, adds an emotional dimension to the possibility, with Ronaldo potentially featuring on home soil.

His comments have stirred both excitement and debate across the football community. Yet, given his relentless consistency and record-breaking exploits, the prospect—while ambitious—cannot be easily dismissed.

Over 3,200 athletes set for historic MTN CHAMPS grand final across two venues in Ibadan

The MTN CHAMPS Season 4 Grand Final is poised to deliver a fitting climax, with a record-breaking 3,220 athletes from 375 schools and teams set to compete across two venues in Ibadan from April 14 to 17.

A total of 8,243 event entries have been received, underlining the scale and growing influence of Nigeria's premier secondary schools Athletics competition.

Ibadan will host MTN CHAMPS for the third time, having previously staged the event in Seasons 1 and 2, further cementing its status as a key hub for grassroots athletics development in the country.

The competition will run simultaneously across the Lekan Salami Stadium and the University of Ibadan Sports Complex, ensuring a seamless and high-quality experience for athletes and spectators alike.

All four age categories will compete at the Lekan Salami Stadium on Days 1 and 4. Meanwhile, Cadet (U-14) and Youth (U-17) athletes will take centre stage at the University of Ibadan Sports Complex on Days 2 and 3. The Junior (U-20) and Senior athletes will remain at the Lekan Salami Stadium throughout the duration of the competition, and will be rejoined by the Cadets and Youths on Day 4.

As in previous editions, the spotlight will also be on the 20 Most Valuable Performers (MVPs) selected from the earlier legs of the season in Calabar and Jos.

These standout athletes will go head-to-head with the best emerging talents from across the country, setting the stage for a thrilling conclusion to what has already been a landmark season.

Find the following information below:

Final List of Registered Athletes

Final Events Schedule at the University of Ibadan Sports Complex

Final Events Schedule at the Lekan Salami Stadium

Final Entry List of Registered Schools & Teams



MLS: No magic for Messi as Inter Miami's new stadium Jinx continues

Following a familiar script, Inter Miami once again dropped points at their new stadium as a vibrant New York side fought back to secure a 2-2 draw.

This result mirrors Inter Miami's home opener against Austin FC and leaves them sitting third in the Eastern Conference, trailing

leaders Nashville SC by four points.

New York stunned the home fans just 15 minutes in. Teen-age sensation Julian Hall used his pace to pull the Inter Miami defense out of position before teeing up Jorge Ruvalcaba, who clinically finished past goalkeeper Dayne St. Clair to make it 1-0.



MESSI IN ACTION FOR INTER MIAMI

The hosts eventually found their rhythm and leveled the score just before the break. Mateo Silvestri capitalized on a cross from Rodrigo De Paul to tap home from close range.

Following the interval, Miami intensified the pressure, Maxi Falcon missed a golden opportunity, heading wide from a corner. German Berterame finally gave Miami a 2-1 lead in the 55th minute, pouncing on a deflected ball to fire home a low strike.

New York refused to back down. After having a Robert Voloder goal overturned by VAR for offside, they found a legitimate equalizer in the 77th minute. Julian Hall was again the architect, weaving through the box before finding Adri Mehmeti, who slid the ball in to level the match.

Akwa Ibom unveils Olympic-size boxing ring to boost sports

The Akwa Ibom Government has unveiled an Olympic-size boxing ring as part of efforts to boost sporting activities in the state.

Speaking at the event on Friday in Uyo, the Commissioner for Sports, Paul Bassey said that the state was committed to reviving combat sports.

Bassey said that the Gov. Umo Eno-led government was committed to creating the avenue for young talents to compete nationally and internationally.

The commissioner said that the facility would promote the development of boxing, and produce

professional boxers in the state.

He further said the equipment was expected to serve as a training hub for amateur and aspiring boxers across the state.

"Our goal is to produce boxers who would fly Akwa Ibom and Nigerian flags at global tournaments.

Also speaking, the Chairman, Nigeria Union of Journalists, Akwa Ibom Council, Nsibiet John commended the state government for their efforts in sports development.

John expressed optimism that the facility would end the era when boxers in the state trained without standard equipment.



OLYMPIC-SIZE BOXING RING

Sports

The Nigerian
Observer
...that the people may know

'Now or never': Fury calls out Joshua as Mega fight hangs in balance



ANTHONY JOSHUA AND TYSON FURY

EDWARD OSEGHE

Tyson Fury has turned up the pressure on long-time rival Anthony Joshua, insisting the much-anticipated heavyweight showdown must happen next—or not at all.

The WBC champion revealed he has already signed his part of the deal for an all-British block-

buster, but claims Joshua is yet to commit, leaving the bout in limbo.

"I don't want to put deadlines on it.

"He either wants to do it or he doesn't. Now or never," Fury said.

The rivalry between the two has simmered for over a decade. Since Fury first captured a world title in 2015 and Joshua surged to global prominence following his London

2012 Olympic triumph, calls for a clash between Britain's biggest heavyweights have only intensified.

That anticipation grew louder again on Saturday night after Fury's comeback victory over Arslanbek Makhmudov at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

With Joshua seated ringside, Fury wasted no time in issuing a direct challenge. He invited his rival into the ring for a face-off, hoping to ignite immediate confirmation of the fight.

However, Joshua declined to step forward and stopped short of publicly agreeing to the contest, though he did not rule it out entirely.

Fury interpreted the response as reluctance.

"I was openly surprised.

"He was brought here tonight for a reason—to get in the ring, face off and get the fight done. I've signed, months ago. I don't know if he has.

"He was evasive, didn't give

any definite answers. One thing I know—he wasn't saying yes," he said.

The outspoken champion went further, questioning Joshua's willingness.

"In my opinion, he didn't want it. He didn't look like he wanted it. He seemed shell-shocked, like he didn't know what to say. If it was me, I'd have jumped in there straight away—let's get it on," he stressed.

Despite years of near-misses, the fight remains elusive, even as public demand continues to grow.

"It's been 10 years in the making.

"And still there's uncertainty about whether it's going to happen next," Fury added.

Confusion deepened when streaming platform Netflix suggested on social media that the bout was pencilled in for the autumn. Fury's camp quickly distanced itself from the claim.

Arsenal suffer major blow in Premier League title charge

Arsenal suffered a "big punch in the face" in the Premier League title race on Saturday, losing 2-1 at home to Bournemouth to give Manchester City renewed hope they can catch the long-time leaders.

The visitors took the lead at a nervy Emirates through Junior Kroupi, but Mikel Arteta's men levelled through a Viktor Gyokeres penalty later in the first half.

The Gunners made multiple attacking changes early in the second period but struggled to create clear-cut chances against Andoni Iraola's enterprising team.

Bournemouth were back in front in the 74th minute after a fluid move finished off by Alex Scott, who rifled the ball past David Raya. Soccer

Arsenal pushed for a leveller but slumped to just their second home defeat in the league this season.

"Disappointing. It's a big punch in the face and it's about how we react now. They are a team who haven't lost for 11 games for a reason, they did a lot right," said Arteta on TNT Sports.

"We were far from efficient. The first chance they had to attack the box, it's a deflection, a

bad defending action and it's a goal. That's something we have to recover from.

"The second half you expect a different game. We did a lot of strange things today. We have been very consistent. This can happen, this is football."

On whether the players are hurting, he added: "A lot. It has to hurt. They have to take it on the chin. You stand up and go for the fight or you're out.



ARSENAL VS BOURNEMOUTH

Abia Soccer Fiesta uncovers 60 grassroots talents

The Abia Commissioner for Sports and Youth Development, Chief Nwaobilor Ananaba, says the maiden edition of the Abia Soccer Fiesta has uncovered at least 60 talented young footballers from the grassroots.

Ananaba disclosed this at the opening ceremony of the state finals of the competition at the Ubakala Mini Stadium, on Friday.

He said that the ministry had plans to showcase the budding soccer talents to top clubs and international scouts.

He lauded Gov. Alex Otti for his grassroots empowerment, saying that the competition aimed to grow local talents.

He said that the event featured teams from 17 LGAs, with 202 matches played across the 184 wards since August 2025.

In a remark, the Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Mr Uzor Nwachukwu, said that players were drawn from the 771 autonomous communities.

"The essence of the entire competition is to grow our talents from the various communities.

"And I am happy to say that some of the players I am seeing here are 17 years or 18 years, so we are happy that they are coming out," Nwachukwu said.



ABIA SOCCER

Nigeria clinches double glory at IHF Trophy zone 3, U-18 and U-20 teams crowned champions

Nigeria's youth handball teams delivered a commanding performance on the regional stage, clinching double glory at the IHF Trophy Africa Zone 3 Phase in Lomé, Togo on Saturday.

The Nigeria Under-18 team showcased dominance and tactical superiority in the final, defeating Ivory Coast 32-19

to emerge champions of their category.

The young side controlled proceedings from start to finish, underlining their growing reputation as a formidable force in African youth handball.

In the Under-20 category, Nigeria maintained the winning momentum with another impressive display, overcoming

Benin Republic 39-29 in the final. Their clinical execution and attacking strength ensured a comfortable victory, sealing a second title for the country at the tournament.

With these victories, both the Under-18 and Under-20 teams have been crowned champions of the IHF Trophy Africa Zone 3 Phase. Their

triumphs also secure qualification for the continental stage, where they will represent the zone against the best teams across Africa.

The double success highlights Nigeria's continued investment in grassroots handball development, as envisioned by the National Sports Commission.



BENDEL INSURANCE VS ABIA WARRIORS

NPFL26: Bendel Insurance FC pip Abia Warriors

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Bendel Insurance Football Club, weekend returned to winning ways after a back to back draws with Warri Wolves, Plateau United and 4-0 defeat to Kano Pillars as they defeated Abia Warriors 1-0 in the match day 34 of the Nigeria Premier Football League.

The NPFL match day 34 played behind closed doors at the Samuel Ogbemudia stadium lived up to its billing as both sides approached the game tactically and with strength for strength throughout the duration of the game but with the host team having an edge.

Pacy Winger Chinedu Nwosu scored the only goal of the match in the 62nd minute and eventually gave Bendel Insurance FC the deserved victory.

The visitors did everything in the last quarter of the game to get something out of it but Insurance FC remained resilient and held on to the 1-0 lead till the end of the game.

In their first round meeting in Umuahia, Insurance FC ran away with a point after a barren draw.

The Benin Arsenal however remained 7th on the league table with 49 points, and they will be guests to relegation threatened Wikki Tourists FC on Sunday, April 19, 2026.

No win, pay cut: North African Club slashes players salaries after defeat

Players and technical crew of Pyramids FC are set to face internal sanctions following their 1-1 draw against Al Masry SC in a league encounter on Sunday.

Reports emerging after the game indicate that the club's management has decided to impose salary deductions on the squad as part of disciplinary measures for failing to secure maximum points.

The situation was further compounded by the conduct of midfielder Hamed Hamdan, who has also been fined internally after receiving a red card

in the closing stages of the encounter. His dismissal left the team at a disadvantage as they pushed for a late winner.

This development mirrors a similar action previously taken against players of Al Ahly SC, who were sanctioned after falling short in a crucial CAF Champions League fixture.

With such measures now being repeatedly enforced, the trend of penalizing players for dropped points appears to be gaining ground in Egyptian football, raising questions about its long-term impact on player morale and performance.



PYRAMIDS FC

SPORTS

Union Berlin appointment Eta as first female head coach in Europe's elite leagues

EDWARD OSEGHE

Union Berlin, former club of Super Eagles striker Taiwo Awoniyi, have etched

their name into football history following the appointment of Marie-Louise Eta as head coach of their men's team — a landmark move that makes her the first

woman to manage a top-flight side across Europe's top five leagues.

The Bundesliga outfit made the bold decision after parting ways with Steffen Baumgart, whose tenure came to an end following a disappointing defeat to Heidenheim — a result that proved decisive for the club's hierarchy.

Eta assumes the role on an interim basis as Union Berlin focus on securing their Bundesliga status for next season. Although the club currently sits 11th on the table with an 11-point cushion above the relegation zone, the leadership has opted for swift action to guard against any late-season slump.

Reacting to her appointment,

the 34-year-old expressed both pride and resolve at taking on the historic responsibility.

"I'm delighted that the club has entrusted me with this challenging responsibility. A strength of Union has always been to pull all our forces together in such situations. I'm convinced that with the team, we'll secure the crucial points," she said.

Eta is no stranger to the club's structure, having previously worked with Union Berlin's U19 side. She is also set to take charge of the club's women's team in the summer, further underlining her growing influence within the organisation.



MARIE-LOUISE ETA



AJEGUNLE U-14

Football: Ajegunle U-14 League unveils Super 4

After 11 weeks of intense grassroots football, the Nathaniel Idowu-Ajegunle Under-14 League regular season ended on Sunday with the Super 4 emerging.

The Matchday 11 produced goals, standout displays and decisive outcomes, confirming the four teams set for the Super 4 showdown on April 18.

Pure Talents secured qualification in style, as Adeleke Igbowu struck twice and Ajaloleru Yesir added another to complete a commanding victory.

Nine-year-old Mujeeb Sura-

judeen pulled one back for Bright Future, earning praise as the league's youngest player. "His composure is remarkable," a coach said.

Fortune FA reinforced their title ambitions with a composed win, as Akinola Olajide opened scoring and Markson Victor netted twice.

Somtochukwu Eziukwu scored for Moore Wins, but their defeat ended hopes of reaching the decisive Super 4 stage.

Ajegunle United overturned an early deficit, with James Solomon's quick double and Eshomughe John's strike sealing qualification.

Masters 2026: Sergio Garcia damages tee box, breaks driver in Sunday Masters outburst

Paired with fellow countryman Jon Rahm on Sunday at the Masters, Garcia — the 2017 champion — pushed his tee shot at No. 2 off to the right. What followed reportedly got him a code of conduct warning from Augusta National's chairman of the competition committee.

In the course of just a few seconds, Garcia slammed his club into the tee box, then took a whack at a cooler that snapped off the head of his driver. Then, for some reason, he picked up Rahm's bag and carried it down the second fairway.

Sergio Garcia damaged the second tee box Sunday morning during the final round of the Masters, followed by breaking his driver after an errant shot.

The LIV Golf member and 2017 Masters champion made the cut this week at Augusta National, although began the day 16 shots back of co-leaders Rory McIlroy and Cameron Young. His fortunes did not improve early in Round 4, bogeying the first before spraying his drive at the second right. The ball was still in flight when the Spaniard angrily took two swipes at the turf, taking chunks out of the teeing ground in the process.

Garcia then walked to a cooler

right of the tee box and swung his driver at it, snapping the head off his club. Two holes later, the Masters' chairman of the competition committee Geoff Yang delivered a code of conduct warning to Garcia.

The incident is the latest in a career of behavior issues for Garcia, who once was disqualified at the 2019 Saudi International for "serious misconduct" after purposefully damaging several greens the day after having a meltdown in a bunker.



SERGIO GARCIA

Sinner downs Alcaraz in Monte Carlo Classic, reclaims world No.1 spot

EDWARD OSEGHE

Italy's Jannik Sinner produced a commanding performance to dethrone defending cham-

pion Carlos Alcaraz 7-6(5), 6-3 in Sunday's Monte Carlo final, securing his maiden Masters title on clay and reclaiming the world No.1 ranking from the Spaniard.



CARLOS ALCARAZ

The triumph crowned an extraordinary run for Sinner, who became only the second player in history to complete the 'Sunshine Double' and win Monte Carlo in the same season — a feat previously achieved by Novak Djokovic in 2015.

It also marked Sinner's fourth consecutive ATP Masters 1000 title, following victories in Paris, Indian Wells and Miami, bringing his overall tally at that level to eight.

Speaking after the match, the Italian acknowledged the quality of the contest and the challenging conditions.

Carlos Alcaraz first player since Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic to achieve key feat after Monte Carlo win

Carlos Alcaraz is set to renew his rivalry with Jannik Sinner on Sunday, having just secured his spot in another Monte Carlo Masters final.

He did so by beating Valentin Vacherot earlier today, ending the Monegasque star's fairytale run in his home country.

For the Spaniard, it was busi-

ness as usual, as he continued his near-faultless form on clay.

This is a surface where he truly is the one to beat, and it seems like nobody will in his current form.

Alas, Jannik Sinner will certainly try,

Carlos Alcaraz matches Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic:

It's unsurprising that, just hours

after Sinner equalled a stellar Novak Djokovic record by reaching the finals in Monte Carlo, Carlos Alcaraz has now secured his own little slice of history.

The Spaniard's latest success has seen him actually also match a Djokovic achievement, becoming just the third player to reach ten finals in ATP-1000

events before turning 23.

OptaAce claimed that the only other two since the format's introduction in 1990 were Rafael Nadal and Djokovic.

After what has been a long three and a half months, at last the tennis world will get to see Alcaraz and Sinner renew their rivalry.

Nigeria to stage largest MMA event in West African history

The Professional Fighters League (PFL) has announced its long-awaited expansion into West Africa, confirming that PFL Africa will make its debut in Lagos on June 13, 2026.

The landmark event, scheduled to take place at the Eko Convention Center, is being billed as the largest mixed martial arts showcase in West African history. It will feature the opening rounds of the bantamweight and lightweight tournaments, alongside a series of showcase bouts spotlighting top regional talent.

Headlining the card is a featherweight showcase clash between Nigeria's Wasi Adeshina and

Spain's Ignacio Campos. Adeshina, competing on home soil, is expected to draw significant local support as he looks to make a statement in the main event. Campos enters the contest in strong form following a recent victory at PFL Madrid.

In the co-main event, Nigeria's Patrick Ocheme will face Cameroon's Octave Ayinda in a lightweight first-round tournament bout. Ocheme will aim to leverage home advantage, while Ayinda seeks to secure a decisive result in his tournament opener.

Speaking ahead of the event, PFL Africa General Manager Elias Schulze described the Lagos showcase as a significant step in the promotion's global expansion.



CARLOS ALCARAZ