

Pipeline surveillance: NASS backs Tantita as Nigeria oil output hits 1.8mbpd

ABUJA
The National Assembly Joint Committees on Petroleum Resources have dismissed three petitions challenging the pipeline surveillance contract, passing a vote of confidence in Tantita Security Services, security agencies, and the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL).

The decision followed a motion moved by the Chairman of the House Committee on Petroleum Resources (Midstream), Henry Okojie, during a one-day parliamentary roundtable on pipeline security and strategies to curb crude oil theft. The committees said the surveillance arrangement has significantly boosted Nigeria's oil production, which has climbed to about 1.8 million barrels per

day as of April, up from roughly 900,000 barrels per day in 2022 when the contract commenced. Okojie stated that available data shows that Tantita and security agencies have recorded substantial success in protecting oil infrastructure, reducing vandalism, and increasing national revenue. Speaking at the event, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Abbas Tajudeen, underscored

the importance of securing Nigeria's oil sector amid global energy uncertainties. He cited geopolitical tensions such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict and instability in the Middle East as major factors driving volatility in global energy markets, noting that crude oil remains the dominant energy source, especially in transportation. Tajudeen observed that disruptions, including the closure

of the Strait of Hormuz, have contributed to price spikes and supply challenges with direct implications for Nigeria's economy. He explained that the pipeline surveillance contract was introduced to address persistent challenges in the Niger Delta, where agitation, weak enforcement, and economic hardship had fuelled vandalism, oil theft, and illegal refining. "At a point, Nigeria was los-

ing between 10 and 30 percent of its crude oil production to theft, costing billions of dollars annually and undermining its credibility," he said. The Speaker noted that the engagement of private security firms and host communities has strengthened protection of oil assets, with community participation playing a critical

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The Nigerian Observer



...that the people may know

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PUBLISHED SINCE MAY 29, 1968

VOL. 47, NO. 1,236

THURSDAY 9TH APRIL, 2026.

FEATURE

Nigeria's oil windfalls and the need to save for the future

—Pg 13

INEC records 3.44m new voters in second phase CVR

ABUJA
The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has recorded a total of 3,441,121 completed registrations in the ongoing second phase of the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise. According to the Week 13 update released by the commis-

sion on Wednesday in Abuja, the figure comprises both on-line pre-registrations and physical walk-ins at various centres nationwide as of April 3. A breakdown of the data shows that 2,068,384 citizens completed their pre-registration online, while 1,372,737 voters opted for physical registration. State-by-state figures indicated that Jigawa leads with

201,047 registrations, representing 5.84 percent of the total. Lagos followed with 181,095 registrants, while Kano ranks third with 177,681. The update further highlights strong youth participation, with citizens aged between 18 and 34 accounting for 2,354,768 registrations, representing 68.43 percent of the total. In terms of gender distribu-

tion, females constitute the majority with 1,922,143 registrants, representing 55.86 percent, while males account for 1,518,978, representing 44.14 percent. Occupational data shows that students form the largest bloc of new voters at 1,235,931 (35.92 percent), followed by those engaged in business with 701,912 (20.40 percent), and farming and fishing with

615,967 (18.28 percent). The commission also disclosed that 48,330 of the new registrants are Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). INEC explained that the 3,441,121 figure remains provisional, pending data clean-up during the claims and objections period, after which the Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS) will be deployed.

The commission noted that voter registration remains suspended in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in compliance with Section 9 (6) of the Electoral Act 2022, following the Area Council Election held on February 21. It, however, urged eligible Nigerians who are yet to register to visit its official CVR portals to complete their registration.

Edo govt defends 18-month record, cites gains in roads, health, security

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has moved decisively to reverse what his administration describes as years of developmental decay, recording significant gains across infrastructure, education, healthcare, and security within 18 months in office. The State Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Prince Kassim Afegbua, disclosed this at a press conference in Benin City, where he briefed journalists on the administration's achievements so far. Afegbua said the current trajectory of development in Edo State offers renewed hope, noting that the governor has approached leadership with purpose and delivered tangible dividends of democracy. "In the last 18 months, we can beat our chest and say this administration has done so much to advance critical infra-

structure in the state," he said. "Governor Okpebholo has intervened in arresting the rot we inherited. He has confronted developmental challenges in a manner that provides solutions to underdevelopment, infrastructural decay, poor healthcare facilities and other systemic issues." He stressed that the administration's achievements are visible and not based on propaganda, urging media practitioners to verify projects across the state. Afegbua disclosed that construction of the first flyover at Ramat Park is nearing completion, while work has commenced on another at Adesuja Junction along Sapele Road. He added that the government is also fixing the long-neglected Sapele Road, previously abandoned with a disclaimer sign attributing responsibility to the Federal Government. "We are going to complete the road very soon," he assured.

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INAUGURATION:

L-R: Deputy Governor of Lagos State, Dr Obafemi Hamzat; Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State; Senate President, Godswill Akpabio; Governor Hope Uzodima of Imo State; Governor Douye Diri of Bayelsa State and Governor Dapo Abiodun of Ogun State, during the inauguration of the Multi-Agency Building in Lagos on Wednesday.

CIT drops to N1.49trn in Q4 2025 despite year-on-year growth —NBS
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Okpebholo mourns Idahosa's mother, extends condolences
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Pension assets surge to N29.43trn, record N1.39trn monthly jump
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Oil prices plunge and shares jump on US-Iran ceasefire plan
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CIT drops to N1.49trn in Q4 2025 despite year-on-year growth —NBS

ABUJA

Nigeria's aggregate Company Income Tax (CIT) for the fourth quarter of 2025 stood at N1.49 trillion, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

The figure, contained in the NBS Company Income Tax (CIT) Q4 2025 Report released in Abuja on Wednesday, represents a sharp decline of 49.81 per cent on a quarter-on-quarter basis from the N2.96 trillion recorded in Q3 2025.

The report indicated that domestic CIT receipts accounted for N819.83 billion, while foreign CIT payments contributed N668.21 billion during the

period under review.

On a quarter-on-quarter basis, activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies recorded the highest growth rate at 75.15 percent.

This was followed by education and real estate activities at 54.20 percent and 27.25 percent respectively.

Conversely, accommodation and food services recorded the lowest growth rate at -67.11 percent.

This was followed by activities of households as employers, including undifferentiated goods and services-producing activities for own use, which stood at -63.49 percent, while mining and quarrying recorded -49.63 percent.

In terms of sectoral contributions, financial and insurance activities led with 18.17 percent, followed by manufacturing at 17.30 percent and

mining and quarrying at 15.04 percent.

At the lower end, activities of households as employers and undifferentiated goods

contributed just 0.002 percent, while water supply, sewage, waste management and remediation activities accounted for 0.04 percent.

Despite the quarterly decline, the report noted that CIT collections rose by 13.38 percent on a year-on-year basis compared to Q4 2024.



NEWS BRIEFING:

Edo State Commissioner of Information and Strategy, Prince Kasim Afegbua (right), with the Permanent Secretary in the ministry, Dr Desmond Agbama at a news briefing in Benin City on Wednesday.

Edo govt defends 18-month record...

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The commissioner further highlighted ongoing work on the Ekenwan-Gelegele Road, urging journalists to inspect the quality of construction.

He said the government is accelerating road projects during the dry season.

Across Edo Central, he noted that multiple road projects are underway, including the Ekpoma-Uromi road, which is about 95 percent completed, while Ilele Road has been completed and work continues on Irrua Township roads.

In Edo North, Afegbua said asphalt paving has commenced in Ibilio, while repair works between Ikpeshi and Igarra have made the route motorable.

On education, he said the administration has undertaken widespread rehabilitation of dilapidated schools across the state.

"Previously, we had schools without chairs, blown-off roofs, and no toilet facilities. Today, the narrative has changed," he said.

He listed institutions such as Army Day Secondary School, New Era College, and Edo Girls among those impacted, adding that nearly 80 schools have been improved since the administration's first anniversary.

Afegbua also noted that the state government held its retreat within Edo, specifically in Udomi, where a state-of-the-art facility was built, rather than spending public funds outside the state.

In the health sector, he revealed that the number of primary healthcare centres constructed by the administration has risen from 60 at its one-year

mark to 75, with a target of 160 centres across the 18 local government areas within four years.

He added that many of the centres have been equipped to deliver immediate healthcare services, especially in rural communities.

The commissioner said that work has resumed on the Stella Obasanjo Hospital, which was inherited at 55 percent completion, with plans to reach a significant stage by November or December this year. He also noted ongoing improvements at the state's specialist hospital.

Afegbua disclosed that the government recently provided equipment to all 18 local government chairmen to facilitate rural road development and improve access to remote communities.

He also announced the establishment of a Rapid Response Agency dedicated to road maintenance, particularly pothole repairs, noting that the agency has already commenced operations with newly procured equipment.

In employment, the commissioner said the administration has recruited about 6,500 teachers into the state civil service and approximately 1,000 health workers under the Edo State Health Management Board, with plans for further recruitment.

"We are applying practical governance to ensure the people feel the impact," he said.

He added that the governor flagged off new projects at Edo University, Iyamho, including a fitness centre, and committed N2 billion to infrastructure development, alongside an increase in the institution's subvention to N250 million.

has climbed to about 1.8 million barrels per day from previous lows," he added.

Beyond economic benefits, Tajudeen said the initiative has created jobs for thousands of youths in the Niger Delta, many of whom were previously involved in agitation and illegal activities.

Despite the progress, he acknowledged ongoing concerns

ABUJA

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Wednesday inducted 209 newly recruited staff members, charging them to uphold professionalism, integrity and diligence in the discharge of their duties.

The induction ceremony, held at the agency's headquarters in Abuja, marked one of the organisation's largest intakes of personnel.

The Managing Director of NAN, Malam Ali M. Ali, described the recruits as privileged to begin their careers with

Africa's largest news content provider, stressing that their selection was strictly merit-based.

"You should feel elated that you are joining this media organisation which is Africa's biggest news provider. We resisted a lot of pressure for you all to be here today. Those of us seated here today are here on merit.

"Few people have the opportunity to begin their careers with the NAN. We will, therefore, not sacrifice merit for other considerations," he said.

Ali urged the new staff to justify the confidence reposed in them by maintaining the agen-

cy's high standards, noting that many organisations depend on NAN for credible news.

"You must uphold the trust placed in you and carry out your duties diligently," he added.

The Head of Administration, Mrs Amadi Uba, formally presented the recruits, noting that all 209 staff members had completed the required documentation and were deployed across departments including editorial, finance and accounts, legal, procurement, administration/human resources, marketing and technical units.

She explained that the recruitment process had been ongoing for some time, with the first batch undergoing documentation on March 16.

Also speaking, a retired Director of Human Resources in the Office of the Head of Service, Musa Sale, emphasised discipline and adherence to public service rules, urging the recruits to remain proactive and avoid misconduct.

In his remarks, the Special Adviser to the Managing Director on Editorial Operations, Mr Ephraim Sheyin, underscored the importance of integrity, accuracy and credibility in journalism and public service.

"A good name is better than silver and gold. Integrity is our watchword here. You do not have the luxury of guessing or spreading rumours. Accuracy and credibility must guide your work at all times," he said.

ADC protests INEC's derecognition of Mark leadership

ABUJA

The African Democratic Congress (ADC) on Wednesday staged a peaceful protest in Abuja over the derecognition of the Senator David Mark-led leadership by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

The protest, which commenced from the Maitama Roundabout to INEC headquarters in the Federal Capital Territory, was led by Mark and featured prominent polit-

ical figures including former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, Mr Peter Obi, Dr Rabiu Kwankwaso, Rotimi Amaechi, Aminu Tambuwal and Dino Melaye.

Addressing protesters, Mark argued that the interpretation of court judgments rests solely with the judiciary and not the INEC chairman, warning that any attempt to assume such a role constitutes a breach of the doctrine of separation of powers.

"INEC's earlier correspondence to ADC reinforces the perception that the commis-

sion has abandoned neutrality and has instead aligned itself with factional interests. This is not only improper, it is dangerous for the credibility of our electoral system," he said.

He further noted that the individual at the centre of the dispute had attended a National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting where the National Working Committee (NWC), led by Chief Ralph Nwosu and including Nafiu Bala, was dissolved.

"Having participated in that decision, any subsequent reli-

ance on his former authority, position or signature is fundamentally flawed, contradictory and devoid of legal credibility," Mark added.

In a protest letter signed by Mark and Rauf Aregbesola and submitted to INEC, the party demanded the immediate resignation of the INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan.

The ADC also called for the withdrawal of what it described as "offensive correspondence" to the party and demanded a formal apology.

Pipeline surveillance: NASS backs Tantita as Nigeria oil...

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role in the recorded gains.

He said collaboration among stakeholders has led to the dismantling of illegal tapping points, improved production levels, and increased crude supply to export terminals.

"Today, largely due to these efforts, Nigeria's oil production

around transparency, accountability, and operational efficiency, noting that reports of continued oil theft highlight the need for sustained reforms and stronger oversight.

He reaffirmed the National Assembly's commitment to legislative and oversight actions to strengthen the sector, referencing the Petroleum In-

dustry Act, which prescribes stricter penalties for vandalism and promotes community participation through Host Community Development Trusts.

Under the Act, host communities risk losing benefits if vandalism occurs in their areas, thereby encouraging collective responsibility in safeguarding oil infrastructure.

Tajudeen added that the 10th National Assembly has intensified oversight of the Act's implementation, conducted investigative hearings, and approved funding for pipeline security.

He emphasised that crude oil theft must be treated as both an economic crime and a national security threat requiring coordinated action.

Describing the roundtable as an avenue to consolidate

progress and address gaps, the Speaker urged stakeholders to position Nigeria as a reliable global energy supplier.

"The world is searching for energy security, and Nigeria must present itself as a credible alternative. We cannot afford internal sabotage. Our message is clear: Nigeria is securing its assets, stabilising production, and remains open for business," he said.

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2026 Hajj: Welfare Board warns pilgrims on strict adherence to rules

ABDUL-KADIR ABDULLAH

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board has intensified prepara-

tions for the 2026 Hajj exercise, urging intending pilgrims to strictly adhere to all guidelines to ensure a smooth and hitch-free pilgrimage.

This was contained in a

statement issued in Benin City by the Executive Secretary of the Board, Alhaji Eranga Abdulkabir Muhammadkibir, who stressed the need for discipline, cooperation and full compliance with established regulations.

According to the statement,

the Board is collaborating with relevant authorities to put in place the necessary logistics for the successful airlift and welfare of pilgrims from Edo State.

It also conveyed the position of the Chairman of the Board, Mallam Musa Muhammad Uduimoh, who urged intend-

ing pilgrims to view the exercise as both a spiritual obligation and a responsibility to uphold the image of the state.

Mallam Uduimoh advised pilgrims to conduct themselves in an orderly manner and comply with all travel and security requirements, noting that such cooperation would ensure a seamless Hajj operation.

He emphasised the importance of adhering to guidelines on luggage and safety, warning that certain prohibited items must not be taken along for the pilgrimage.

Failure to comply, he said, could attract sanctions from aviation and security authorities.

The Chairman further urged intending pilgrims to participate actively in forthcoming orientation programmes organised by the Board to educate them on the rites of Hajj and expected conduct throughout the exercise.

The Board also called on pilgrims to be worthy ambassadors of Edo State and Nigeria by demonstrating patience, humility and respect for the laws of the host country.

While wishing all intending pilgrims a successful and spiritually rewarding Hajj, the Board urged them to pray for peace, unity and progress in Edo State and the nation.

**SIGNING THE CONDOLENCE REGISTER:**

Immediate past Edo State Deputy Governor and Director-General, National Institute for Sports, Comrade Phillip Shaibu, signing the condolence register of late Madam Esther Imaguomwanruo Idahosa, mother of the State Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa in Benin City yesterday. PHOTO: MOSES OBOH.

Okpebholo mourns Idahosa's mother, extends condolences

BENIN CITY

Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State has extended condolences to the Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa, over the death of his mother, Madam Esther Imaguomwanruo Idahosa at the age of 95.

Her passing was announced in a statement issued on April 8, 2026, by the Idahosa and Enabulele families of Ovia South-West Local Government Area of Edo State.

The family noted that her legacy of wisdom and values remains a source of pride and inspiration to all who knew her.

They expressed gratitude to God for her life and the values she imparted, which they said would continue to guide future generations.

The family also appealed for prayers and understanding as they mourn her passing, adding that details of the funeral arrangements would be announced in due course.

In a statement, the governor described her passing as a painful loss, noting that the death of a mother, regardless of age, leaves an irreplaceable void.

He acknowledged her life of love, sacrifice and devotion to family, adding that her legacy would continue to inspire those who knew her.

Governor Okpebholo prayed that God grants the Deputy Governor and his family the strength and fortitude to bear the loss, and also prayed for the peaceful repose of her soul.

He reaffirmed that the thoughts and prayers of the gov-

ernment and people of Edo State are with the family at this time.



LATE MADAM ESTHER IMAGUOMWANRUO IDAHOSA

Aiyedatiwa urges lawyers to uphold justice, conscience

AKURE

Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa of Ondo State has urged legal practitioners to pursue justice guided by conscience in order to build a society anchored on fairness and equity.

Aiyedatiwa made the call at the grand finale of the 2026 Law Week organised by the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Okitipupa Branch, on Wednesday in Akure.

The event, themed "Imperatives of Independence of the Judiciary in a Working Democracy: The Common Law

Jurisdiction and Nigerian Experience," drew members of the bar and bench, as well as other stakeholders in the justice sector.

The governor challenged legal practitioners to rise above the ordinary and remain the last hope of the common man and the first line of defence against arbitrariness.

He described the legal profession as one that demands courage, integrity and an unwavering commitment to justice, noting that expectations from the justice system remain high.

According to him, Nigerians desire a system that is accessible, timely and impartial.

"The cry of the ordinary citizen is simple but powerful: let justice be real, let it be fair, and let it be felt," he said.

Aiyedatiwa further urged lawyers to combine intellect with empathy in their practice, stressing that success should not be measured solely by courtroom victories but by the extent to which justice is served.

"As a government, Ondo State has continued to pursue reforms that strengthen our judicial institutions, deepen public trust and ensure that the temple of justice remains open to all, regardless of status or circumstance," he added.

Also speaking, legal luminary and Chairman of the occasion, Chief Wole Olanipekun, said the ultimate duty of every lawyer is the realisation of justice.

He described justice as a "three-way traffic" involving the appellant, the respondent and society, and expressed concern over the growing pressure on the judiciary, particularly in electoral matters.

Olanipekun attributed the situation to the failure of political actors to adhere to democratic principles, noting that Nigeria's judiciary is excessively burdened with politically sensitive cases.

Okpebholo leads campaign on Army recruitment, urges Edo youths to apply

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo on Wednesday led a sensitisation drive to boost participation of Edo youths in the ongoing Nigerian Army recruitment exercise.

He spoke at the Government House, Benin City, while receiving a delegation of the Nigerian Army as part of a nationwide campaign.

The governor reaffirmed his administration's commitment to ensuring the state meets its recruitment quota, noting that efforts were already underway to publicise the exercise.

"We are already creating awareness. I will also direct the Edo Broadcasting Service to grant you access for interviews if necessary," he said.

He added that the campaign would be extended to the grassroots through local government chairmen.

"It is important that we meet up with our quota. We will take this seriously to ensure our peo-

ple are well informed," he said.

Governor Okpebholo also appealed to the Army to extend the application deadline to accommodate more eligible youths, especially those in rural areas without internet access.

Earlier, the leader of the delegation, Brigadier General M. U. Ikobah, commended the governor's commitment to security and development.

He disclosed that the recruitment exercise, which began on March 30 and ends on May 17, had recorded about 38,000 applications nationwide, with Edo State contributing only 291 applicants.

He said the Army plans to recruit about 14,000 personnel, translating to 300 to 400 recruits per state, adding that Edo's current figure falls below expectations.

Other officials at the meeting included Brigadier General A. O. Balogun, Commander, 4 Brigade Nigerian Army; Secretary to the State Government, Umar Musa Ikhilor; Chief of Staff, Hon. Yakubu Musa; Commissioner for Information, Prince Kassim Afegbua; and Commissioner for Public Security, Hon. Ebea Festus Odianosen.

Navy charges personnel on sacrifice, community support in N'Delta

BETTY IDIALU

The Commander of Nigerian Navy Ship (NNS) Delta, Commodore Shehu Tasiu has urged Naval officers and ratings in the Niger Delta region to sustain their commitment to national service and strengthen support for host communities.

Commodore Tasiu gave the charge during an Easter gathering with personnel and media executives.

He described Easter as a season of sacrifice, love and forgiveness, noting that these values align with the duties of naval personnel.

"Our duty demands sacrifice for the nation, the Navy and one another," he said.

Tasiu noted that personnel

play a vital role in safeguarding economic activities in the region, stressing the need for dedication and selflessness.

He commended host communities for their cooperation in tackling insecurity and curbing vandalism, and called for sustained support.

The commander also reaffirmed the Navy's resolve to combat crude oil theft and other maritime crimes, while strengthening collaboration with security partners.

He urged residents to continue providing timely information to protect critical national assets.

"We appreciate the support of our host communities and urge them to sustain it as we remain committed to their safety and well-being," he added.

NEWS

Industrial growth: KACCIMA calls for business leaders in key economic roles

KANO

The Kano Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (KACCIMA) has urged the Kano State Government to appoint individuals with strong business backgrounds into key economic leadership positions to accelerate industrial growth.

The call was made by KACCIMA President, Alhaji Usman Hassan-Darma, during the first Quarter Council Meeting and Annual General Meeting of the Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA) on Wednesday in Kano.

Hassan-Darma argued that placing experienced business professionals, particularly as Commissioners in critical economic ministries, would

strengthen public-private collaboration, enhance policy coherence, and ensure practical, responsive governance.

"This can be achieved by ensuring that key economic leadership positions are given to individuals with strong backgrounds and active experience within the business community," he said.

He added that such appointments would boost industrialisation, attract investment, and promote job creation in the state.

Hassan-Darma also called for the full restoration of KACCIMA's rights within NACCIMA, including adequate representation, participation in key decision-making, and inclusion in federal policy consultations.

Earlier, NACCIMA National President, Jani Ibrahim, said the

association continues to engage key economic sectors, participate in fiscal and trade forums, and implement programmes like the ECOWAS Agricultural Training initiative and a planned Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) summit to strengthen enterprise development.

Represented by the Commissioner for Information and Internal Affairs, Ibrahim Abdullahi-Waiya, Kano State Governor Abba Kabir-Yusuf reaffirmed the government's commitment to improving the business environment through reforms, market upgrades, SME support, and energy development.

Meanwhile, NACCIMA launched a 20 million Economic Tree Planting Initiative aimed at promoting environmental sustainability.

ADC suspends congresses in Anambra

AWKA

The Anambra State chapter of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) has suspended all congresses until further notice.

The party's Chairman and Secretary, Patrick Obianyo and Lawrence Okeke, announced the decision in a statement on Wednesday, citing the need

to uphold the rule of law, due process, and respect for judicial authority.

The party directed members to "remain calm, law-abiding, and peaceful throughout this period" while awaiting new dates for congresses and conventions, which will be communicated after ongoing national consultations.

The statement also affirmed

the legitimacy of the Obianyo-led committee and urged the public and Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to disregard directives from other individuals.

"We urge all members and supporters of ADC to continue to uphold peace, unity, and discipline as we navigate this period," the statement added.

Ogun Police arrest man over alleged double Murder

SANGO-OTA (OGUN)

The Ogun State Police Command has arrested a 25-year-old man for allegedly killing two people and injuring three others at Olambe, Ifo Local Government Area.

DSP Okuseyi Babaseyi, the command's spokesperson, said the suspect attacked five people with a knife on Tuesday, April 7, around 1:38 a.m., reportedly

after failed business dealings.

Two victims, Gbadamasi Ibrahim (25) and Chinedu (40), died en route to the hospital.

The other three - Mohammed Abubakar (35), Ashiru Adamu (25), and Paul Lawrence (25) - are in critical condition but responding to treatment.

The suspect fled, but was later arrested and is now in police custody.

The case has been trans-

ferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID) for investigation and prosecution.

Commissioner of Police, Bode Ojajuni, condemned the attack and urged the public to report incidents threatening law and order. Emergency lines were provided for public assistance: 0800 000 9111 (Gateway Shield), 0906 283 7609, 0912 014 1706, 0915 102 7369, and 0708 497 2994.

NSCDC raises alarm over rising cybercrime, examination malpractice among students

ABUJA

The Federal Capital Territory Commandant of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Dr Olusola Odumosu, has raised concern over the increasing involvement of students in cybercrime and examination malpractice.

Odumosu expressed the concern on Wednesday in Abuja while receiving a delegation from the National Association of Northern Nigerian Students (NANNS) during a courtesy visit. He described the trend as a

undeniable," he said.

He commended NANNS for its proactive role in nation-building, particularly through sensitisation programmes such as seminars and symposia aimed at discouraging social vices among students.

Odumosu assured the association of continued collaboration to curb negative activities among youths and reduce such vices to the barest minimum.

"This recognition is not mine alone, I dedicate it to my management team and personnel, whose relentless support is

undeniable," he said.

He commended NANNS for its proactive role in nation-building, particularly through sensitisation programmes such as seminars and symposia aimed at discouraging social vices among students.

Odumosu assured the association of continued collaboration to curb negative activities among youths and reduce such vices to the barest minimum.

"This recognition further underscores the importance of synergy between security institutions and student bodies in addressing societal challenges and nurturing future leaders," he added.

FG warns broadcasters against fake news ahead of elections

ABUJA

The Federal Government has urged broadcasters to protect their airwaves against fake news and misinformation ahead of Nigeria's 2026 elections.

Minister of Information and National Orientation, Alhaji Mohammed Idris, made the call on Wednesday during the 81st General Assembly and 23rd Annual Meeting of the Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria (BON) in Abuja.

The theme of the event was, "The Management of the Airwaves: An Assessment of the

2026 Nigerian Electoral Act on Broadcast Media Coverage of the Election."

Idris stressed the importance of credible media coverage during politically charged periods. "The credibility of our democratic process depends in no small measure on the integrity of media coverage. Broadcasting institutions must guide the airwaves responsibly," he said.

He noted the rapid transformation of broadcasting through technology, digital platforms, and AI, but emphasised that the media must remain committed to informing,

educating, and uniting Nigerians.

"The airwaves is indeed a public trust, and how it is utilised impacts national cohesion, public understanding, and democratic stability," Idris said.

BON Chairman, Salihu Dembos, urged broadcasters to champion Nigerian content, enforce credibility, and embrace innovation, leadership, and sustainable content monetisation.

"Trust is now the currency of modern media, and credibility is the competitive advantage," he said.

Biotech innovations transforming Nigerian agric —Expert

ABUJA

Prof. Charles Adetunji, a leading biotechnologist, has said that Nigeria is seeing measurable gains from homegrown biotechnology innovations improving agricultural productivity.

In an interview on Wednesday, Adetunji highlighted genetically improved crops such as Bt cowpea, which reduces

pesticide use and losses from pests, boosting farmers' income and food security.

Improved maize varieties have enhanced resistance to drought and pests, particularly in northern Nigeria.

He also cited tissue culture technology for producing disease-free cassava, plantain, and banana seedlings, as well as bio-fertilisers and biopesticides as eco-friendly alternatives improv-

ing soil health and reducing costs.

Adetunji added that livestock biotechnology, including improved breeding and vaccines, is enhancing animal health, while molecular diagnostics help detect diseases early.

He urged increased farmer awareness, supportive policies, and stronger extension services to fully realise biotechnology's benefits for national food security and sustainability.



MADAM ELIZABETH OMOAYASUENIOMWAN IDEHEN
(1992 to 2026)

It is exactly **34 years** now since you went to be with the Lord, but it seems like yesterday.

We miss you dearly; all the good things you taught us have been our guiding principles. We will remain grateful to you for being a wonderful mother. You will continue to be in our minds. **Rest on Mummy.**

Survived by **Osayande, Bose, Ighiwiyi** and **Ota**. Many grand and great grand children.

SIGNED: DELE OLAYE

Pension assets surge to N29.43trn, record N1.39trn monthly jump

LAGOS

Nigeria's pension assets climbed to N29.43 trillion in February, marking a significant month-on-month increase of N1.39 trillion, according to latest figures released by the National Pension Commission (PenCom).

The increase represents the strongest monthly expansion since the introduction of the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) more than two decades ago, surpassing the previous record of N1.18 trillion recorded in January 2024.

Data from PenCom showed

that total pension assets rose from N28.04 trillion in January, driven largely by fresh contributions and valuation gains, particularly within the equities segment.

Investment in domestic equities grew to N5.41 trillion, highlighting sustained pension fund participation in the Nigerian stock market.

In contrast, foreign equity exposure remained relatively modest at N261.99 billion, reflecting a cautious investment approach by fund managers amid global economic uncertainties.

Further breakdown indicated increased allocations to

non-sovereign debt instruments. Corporate debt securities rose to N2.25 trillion, while investments in state government bonds stood at N368.99 billion.

Liquidity levels in the system also remained strong, with money market instruments rising to N2.74 trillion.

Fixed deposits and bank acceptances accounted for N2.50 trillion, while investments in commercial papers stood at N209.23 billion.

Meanwhile, investments in alternative asset classes remained comparatively low. Infrastructure funds were valued at N300.02 billion, private equi-

ty at N258.31 billion, real estate investments at N169.52 billion, and Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) at N77.64 billion.

On fund performance, RSA Fund IV maintained its position as the largest contributor to total asset growth, with assets valued at N12.67 trillion, reflecting its concentration of active contributors.

RSA Fund II also accounted for a significant share of the total pension pool.

In addition, total Retirement Savings Account (RSA) membership rose to over 11.13 million as of February, signalling continued growth in pension enrolment nationwide.

GenCos laud N501bn bond, signal renewed confidence in power reforms

LAGOS

Power Generation Companies (GenCos) have hailed the N501 billion raised through a Federal Government bond issuance in January, describing it as a strong indicator of growing investor confidence in ongoing power sector reforms.

The GenCos said the development underscores confidence in the Presidential Power Sector Financial Reforms Programme (PPSFRP), designed to address the sector's estimated N3.3 trillion debt burden.

Mr Seyi Sobogun, Managing Director of First Independent Power Ltd., made this known in a statement issued on behalf of the generation companies.

He explained that the reform programme targets longstanding structural challenges in the power sector, including mounting unpaid debts, ageing infrastructure, underinvestment, and poor service delivery.

According to him, the accumulation of liabilities over the years has weakened GenCos and gas suppliers, reduced available generation capacity, and slowed efforts to deliver reliable electricity to consumers.

"In response, the Federal Government has launched the Power Sector Bond Programme aimed at clearing verified legacy debts and strength-

ening the entire sector," the statement said.

The government also confirmed that settlement agreements have been reached covering 15 power plants, including Egbin Power Plc, Geregu Power Plc, Niger Delta Power Holding Company, Ibom Power Company, and First Independent Power Ltd.

Reacting, Sobogun described the initiative as a critical step towards restoring stability and sustainability in the industry.

"We welcome the progress in implementing the Presidential Power Sector Financial Reforms Programme as an important step toward restoring stability in Nigeria's power sector," he said.

He noted that the sector had operated under severe financial strain for years due to accumulated unpaid obligations across the electricity value chain.

"Addressing these legacy issues is essential to improving system performance," he added.

Sobogun confirmed that GenCos are actively participating in the programme and have executed the necessary settlement agreements, expressing optimism over the progress recorded so far.

"The progress to date is encouraging and reflects tangible momentum that is rebuilding confidence across the industry," he said.



MANDATORY CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING:

L-R: Chairman, Board of Fellow of Chartered Institute of Treasury Management (CITM), Dr Mohammed Buba; Registrar, Chartered Institute of Information and Strategy Management, Dr Adelanke Oyintoke; and Registra, CITM, Dr Adedoyin Olumide, during a Mandatory Continuous Professional Training and induction programme in Abuja on Wednesday.

End of an era: Last surviving child of 48th Ooni dies at 102

ILE-IFE (OSUN)

The last surviving child of Ooni Ademiluyi Ajagun, the 48th Ooni of Ife, Princess Rafatu Awofisayo, has died at the age of 102, bringing to a close a historic royal lineage.

The Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Ogunwusi, Ojaja II, paid glowing tribute to the deceased, describing her passing as the end of a remarkable era.

In a statement issued by the Director of Media and Public

Affairs at the Ooni's Palace, Mr Moses Olafare, the monarch noted that the late princess lived a fulfilled life worthy of celebration rather than mourning.

He said she dedicated over a century to the service of humanity, her faith, and the preservation of Yoruba royal heritage.

Reflecting on her lineage, Oba Ogunwusi stated that Princess Awofisayo upheld the legacy of her father, Ooni Ademiluyi Ajagun, with dignity and pride, describing her as a custodian of culture who preserved the traditions and values of the Oodua race with

exceptional grace.

He further extolled her virtues of humility, wisdom, and motherly love, noting that she nurtured generations and provided guidance to many, earning widespread respect across religious and cultural divides.

The monarch also highlighted her pivotal role as the Iya Adinni of Ifeland, where she served as a pillar within the Muslim community.

He recalled her unwavering commitment to the growth of Islam, emphasising her contributions to promoting unity, discipline, and compassion among adherents within Ile-Ife

and beyond.

"Mama was more than a royal figure; she was a spiritual beacon and a bridge between generations, whose life reflected divine grace and purpose," the Ooni said.

He urged the people of Ifeland and beyond to honour her memory by living purposeful lives rooted in service, unity, and faith, adding that her 102 years on earth stood as a testament to a richly blessed life.

The royal father prayed for the peaceful repose of her soul and expressed confidence that her legacy would continue to inspire future generations.

Abia moves to revamp heritage sites, targets tourism boost

UMUAHIA

The Abia State Government has commenced the rehabilitation of key heritage sites as part of efforts to reposition its tourism sector and attract more visitors.

Commissioner for Information, Mr Okey Kanu, disclosed this while briefing journalists

on the outcome of the State Executive Council (SEC) meeting in Umuahia.

He said the council approved the first phase of the modernisation of the Arochukwu Waterfall, a major tourist attraction in the state.

According to him, the development is aimed at enhancing the site's tourism value through

improved infrastructure and visitor experience.

"The first phase will include the construction of entrance gates, souvenir shops, a bush bar, and other convenience facilities to improve accessibility and comfort for visitors," Kanu said.

He added that in line with the government's broader strategy to transform heritage

assets, the historic Ojukwu Bunker would also undergo renovation to bring it up to international standards.

Kanu explained that the initiative aligns with an agreement between the state government and the Secretary-General of the National War Museum to transform the bunker into a world-class tourist destination.

N-HYPPADEC moves to end Dukku Water scarcity with urgent intervention

DUKKU (GOMBE)

The National Hydroelectric Power Producing Areas Development Commission (N-HYPPADEC) has pledged swift intervention to tackle persistent water shortages in Dukku by upgrading existing water infrastructure.

Director of Operations of the commission, Malam Ilyasu Wara, disclosed this during an assessment visit to Dukku, headquarters of Dukku Local Government Area, following complaints of acute water scarcity.

Wara said the commission is considering a rapid intervention approach focused on repairing and expanding the existing Dukku water scheme rather than embarking on an entirely new project.

"From what we have seen, this is something we can act on quickly. I will report back and push for immediate support," he said.

He noted that current measures by local and state authorities are temporary and inadequate to meet the needs of the growing population.

According to him, over-reliance on boreholes remains a major challenge, describing them as unreliable for sustainable water supply.

"Our plan is to improve existing facilities by drawing water directly from the river with proper intake and distribution systems," he added.

He also disclosed that the town's reservoir may be expanded to increase storage capacity and improve supply coverage.

On project timelines, Wara stressed the urgency of intervention, noting that work should commence within six weeks to avoid delays during the rainy season.

Gombe State Commissioner for Water, Environment and Forest Resources, Mr Mohammed Fawu, said the intervention would complement ongoing efforts by the state government.

He explained that the Dukku water scheme had long been planned but was stalled due to funding constraints.

"The support from N-HYPPADEC is timely and will accelerate progress while expanding our capacity," he said.

Fawu noted that population growth has outpaced existing supply infrastructure, adding that current storage capacity is inadequate.

He expressed concern over residents' dependence on expensive water vendors who transport supplies from distant locations.

NEWS

Expert warns against misuse of treated nets for farming, cites health risks

AWKA

A public health expert has warned that the misuse of Insecticide-Treated Nets (ITNs) for farming and other non-medical purposes poses serious health risks to consumers.

Mr Patrick Folorunsho of Malaria Consortium gave the warning during an awareness campaign organised by the Anambra State Ministry of Health in partnership with the organisation in Awka on Wednesday.

He cautioned residents against deploying the chemically treated nets on farms or around food items, stressing

that the nets are impregnated with potent insecticides designed to kill mosquitoes on contact.

"The nets are laden with chemicals meant to eliminate mosquitoes. When used on farms or around food, there is a risk that these chemicals could contaminate what people consume, leading to potential health hazards," he said.

Folorunsho emphasised that proper use of the nets remains one of the most effective methods of preventing malaria, urging residents to comply with usage guidelines to reduce infection rates.

He advised that nets should

be aired for 24 hours before use and properly installed in sleeping areas.

Also speaking, the Permanent Secretary of the Anambra State Ministry of Health, Dr Obiageli Uchebo, decried the widespread misuse of the nets for activities such as farming,

transporting plastic containers and use as window blinds.

She noted that each net costs about N5,000, but is distributed free of charge as part of government malaria prevention efforts, warning that misuse undermines these interventions.

Uchebo reiterated that the

nets are specifically designed for use in homes, particularly bedrooms, to protect against mosquito bites responsible for malaria and lymphatic filariasis (elephantiasis).

In the same vein, the Integrated Vector Management Officer, Mr Okechukwu Ezike,

urged residents to consistently sleep under the nets to guard against bites from female Anopheles mosquitoes, the primary vectors of malaria.

He stressed the need for strict adherence to proper usage to maximise health benefits.

Stakeholders project 20,000 jobs from climate-smart agric, bamboo drive

AWKA

Stakeholders in Anambra State have projected that the effective implementation of climate-smart agriculture and bamboo development strategies could generate over 20,000 jobs and significantly boost the state's economy.

The projection was made during a sensitisation programme held in Nnewi North Local Government Area on Wednesday, themed "Sowing Seeds, Growing Future."

The programme was organised by the Nigeria Youth Parliament in collaboration with the Sahelian Institute for Bamboo Research and Entrepreneurial Development (SIBRED).

Delivering the keynote address, a former Commissioner for Agriculture, Dr Forster Ihejiofor, said structured investment in bamboo and climate-smart agriculture could transform rural economies while addressing environmental challenges.

He explained that climate-smart agriculture is built on three pillars — productivity enhancement, climate adaptation and mitigation.

Ihejiofor proposed a phased implementation plan spanning 2026 to 2030, including state-wide awareness campaigns, pilot youth demonstration farms and the establishment of bamboo plantation clusters across the state's three senatorial zones.

"If fully implemented, this initiative will reduce erosion in vulnerable communities, create more than 20,000 youth jobs, improve food security and increase rural incomes," he said.

He added that the initiative would also boost internally generated revenue through value chain development and

export opportunities.

Describing bamboo as "Anambra's green gold," Ihejiofor highlighted its wide applications in erosion control, land restoration, construction, furniture production, renewable energy and international trade.

Also speaking, the Vice-Chancellor of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Prof. Joseph Ikechebelu, represented by Prof. Kingsley Ubajoi, said the initiative aligns with efforts to revive youth interest in agriculture and reduce dependence on food imports.

The Permanent Secretary, Anambra Ministry of Agriculture, Mrs Ifeyinwa Uzoka, called for greater commitment to organic farming to promote healthy living.

She warned against harmful food processing practices such as the use of detergents in cassava processing and dye in palm oil, urging stakeholders to prioritise agriculture in community development plans.

Uzoka also disclosed a proposed Public-Private-Community Partnership with Honda Agro and Power Products to support farmers, encouraging participants to take advantage of the initiative.

Earlier, Mr Chibuikwe Obiwuzie, representing Anambra South in the Nigeria Youth Parliament, said the programme was designed to empower youths to harness opportunities in agriculture.

Dr John Ogbodo, Director of SIBRED, emphasised the importance of youth engagement in bamboo entrepreneurship.

The event featured a practical field demonstration of Honda motorised back sprayers and tiller equipment, showcasing modern tools to enhance agricultural productivity.



NEWS CONFERENCE:

L-R: Coordinator, Concerned Independent Enrolment Agents, National Identity Management Commission, Mrs Ebele Alaka; the Chairman, Mr Paul Odebunmi and Member, Organizing Committee, Mrs Olubunmi Omojokun, during a news conference by Enrolment Agents on their challenges with NIN enrolment and NIRSAL Loan in Ibadan on Wednesday.

Kano Fire Service saves N1bn property, rescues four in March

KANO

The Kano State Fire Service says it rescued four persons and saved property worth N1 billion from fire incidents and related emergencies in March.

The Director of the Service, Alhaji Sani Anas, disclosed this in a statement issued by the Public Relations Officer, Alhaji Saminu Abdullahi, on Wednesday.

According to the statement, five persons lost their lives to fire outbreaks, road accidents

and incidents involving ponds during the period.

It added that while property worth N1 billion was saved, assets valued at N355 million were destroyed by fire.

The service responded to seven emergency calls and re-

corded three false alarms from residents within the month under review.

The agency urged shop owners and residents to install fire detection systems and adopt preventive safety measures to reduce the incidence of fire outbreaks.

Plateau ADC backs Mark's leadership, dismisses rival claims

JOS

The Plateau State chapter of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) has reaffirmed its support for the leadership of Sen. David Mark, dismissing contrary claims as attempts to sow confusion within the party.

State Chairman of the party, Mrs Hanatu Gagara, said Mark and Mr Rauf Aregbesola were duly nominated as National Chairman and Secretary, respec-

tively, by the party's National Executive Committee (NEC).

She described any individual claiming leadership outside the recognised structure as an impostor bent on causing disaffection.

"As far as I am concerned, I know who the leaders are, and we do not have any other leadership. That is Sen. David Mark and his team," she said.

Gagara explained that she participated in the NEC meeting where the leadership was

ratified, noting that all state chairmen were present and endorsed the decision.

"I was part of the NEC meeting; we were with them, and we all accepted them. I cannot now say I am not aware," she added.

She distanced herself from reports suggesting that some state chairmen opposed Mark's leadership, insisting that the Plateau chapter remains united.

The chairman expressed optimism that the party would

emerge stronger from its current challenges and reposition itself as a credible alternative to the ruling party.

She also expressed confidence in the outcome of the party congresses held on Tuesday, noting that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was duly notified in line with the Electoral Act.

Gagara urged party members to actively participate in party activities and remain committed to its growth.

WRAHP trains media executives on ethical reporting, documentation of SGBV cases

IJEOMA UMEH

BENIN CITY

The Women's Rights and Health Project (WRAHP) has trained media executives from both print and electronic organisations, with a charge to strengthen accurate documentation, ethical reporting and sustained follow-up of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) cases.

The two days training held in Benin City, Edo State,

brought together practitioners across media platforms as part of efforts to improve access to justice and support services for survivors of SGBV.

Facilitators explained that the programme was designed to scale up justice-related social services for women and girls in Lagos and Edo states, which remain the organisation's focal areas. They added that the initiative also seeks to deepen media practitioners' understanding of advocacy

required in pursuing justice for survivors, while equipping them with best practices for reporting SGBV cases.

In his remarks, the Programme Manager of WRAHP in Lagos, Festus Umoh, described the organisation as a non-governmental body committed to promoting the health and overall development of women, girls and communities, while also including men in its interventions.

He outlined WRAHP's vision as the pursuit of a just society

where the dignity of women, young people and communities is upheld, with access to quality healthcare and opportunities to maximise their potential.

Umoh identified the organisation's key thematic areas to include health—covering both communicable and non-communicable diseases, women's rights, safeguarding principles to protect women from SGBV, sexual and reproductive health, as well as the promotion of gender equality and inclusivity.

JUDICIARY

NEWS

Court sentences 4 Boko Haram terrorists to life, convicts 14 others

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja sentenced four Boko Haram terrorists to life imprisonment, while convicting 14 others to various jail terms ranging from 20 to 25 years.

Justice James Omotosho handed down the judgments after the convicts pleaded guilty to charges brought by the Federal Government.

The Department of State Services (DSS) also presented key evidence during the trial.

Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Mr Lateef Fagbemi, SAN,

led the prosecution team, supported by Rotimi Oyedepo, SAN, Director of Public Prosecutions of the Federation.

Confessional statements and investigation reports were tendered through the DSS witness and admitted as exhibits.

The four terrorists sentenced to life are Ali Abiso, Bakura Abah Kabiru, Ado (a.k.a Luka Garba), and Babagoni Masawai.

In one case, marked FHC/KNJ/CR/509/2026, the Federal Government sued Ali Abiso as the sole defendant. After the counts were read, Abiso pleaded guilty to all four charges.

Justice Omotosho sentenced him to life imprisonment on

counts two and four, and 25 years each on counts one and three, to run concurrently.

"The defendant's guilty plea aligns with his confessional statement. The court finds him guilty on all four counts beyond reasonable doubt," the judge ruled.

The court noted that Abiso, a 30-year-old from Bama Local Government Area of Borno State, participated in Boko Haram attacks in Bama, Gwoza, Konduga, Bita, Baza, and Aulari on or before July 8, 2022.

His offences contravened Section 17 of the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022.

Bakura Abah Kabiru also received life imprisonment for count two, along with 25-year terms for counts one and three.

Ado (Luka Garba) was sentenced to life in count two and 25 years in count one.

Babagoni Masawai received life terms on counts six and seven, 20 years on counts one and two, and 10 years each on counts three, four, and five.

Justice Omotosho also convicted 14 other suspects, including Ali Mustapha, who received 20 years for count one and 10 years each for counts two through seven, to run concurrently after a plea for mercy.

Other convicts include Danbawa Salisu, Modu Ali, Sanda Bello, Mustapha Fali, Modu Musa, Bidal Modu, Moham-

med Abdullahi, Umar Garba, Usman Ahmadu, Hussaini Bukar, Baba Manye, Musa Mai Modu, and Ali Musa.

The court emphasised that

all 14 had pleaded guilty and submitted confessional statements and investigation reports as evidence through the DSS investigator.

Court remands man over alleged theft of 'Iyere seeds

ILE-IFE (OSUN)

An Ile-Ife Magistrates' Court on Wednesday, remanded a 38-year-old man, Godwin Bonde, for allegedly stealing 'Iyere seeds.'

The defendant pleaded not guilty to a one-count charge of stealing

Magistrate Abosede Sarumi did not grant the bail of the defendant, but ordered for his remand at the Nigerian Correctional Service, Ile-Ife.

She adjourned the case until

April 13 and to be mentioned at Modakeke Magistrates' Court.

Earlier, the prosecutor, CP Feyisola Akinwoye, told the court that the defendant committed the offence on April 7, around 4p.m. at Oduren area via Modakeke.

Akinwoye alleged that the defendant stole Iyere seeds valued at N100, 000, property of one Lawal Jelili.

He added that the offence is contrary to Section 383 and punishable under Section 390(9) of the Criminal Code, Laws of Osun, 2002.

Ibadan man, 26, docked over alleged possession of toy gun

IBADAN

Godwin Cletus, 26, appeared before an Iyaganku Magistrates' Court in Ibadan on Wednesday for allegedly possessing a toy gun with intent to commit offences.

He pleaded not guilty.

Prosecutor ASP Femi Omi-

lana said the offence occurred on April 6 at Bodija area, Ibadan, contravening Section 509 of the Criminal Law of Oyo State, 2000.

Magistrate Mrs Adebola Adeola granted Cletus bail of N500,000 with two sureties of equal sum and adjourned the case until May 26.

Organisation urges media to advocate 12yr basic education policy

KADUNA

The Participatory Communication for Gender Development Initiative (PAGED Initiative) on Wednesday called on media professionals to advocate for the extension of basic education in Nigeria from nine to 12 years.

The Programme Director, Ummi Bukar, made the call during a two-day workshop for journalists on the media advocacy project for married adolescents and young mothers in Kaduna, Kano and Borno states.

Bukar said extending Nigeria's Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy to 12 years would improve access to secondary education, especially for girls in the three states.

She explained that while the current UBE policy guarantees free and compulsory education, it only covers junior secondary school, leaving many girls vulnerable to early marriage and school dropout.

"Extending the policy to

senior secondary education would ensure that girls remain in school longer and emerge as more productive members of society," Bukar said.

She noted that many girls are withdrawn from school around adolescence, often between ages 13 and 15, with limited opportunities for personal development or economic independence.

Bukar stressed that expanding UBE to 12 years would legally guarantee access to full secondary education and reduce the prevalence of child marriage.

She also highlighted gaps in the implementation of the Child Rights Act, noting that although the law sets 18 as the minimum age for marriage and supports re-entry for young mothers, enforcement remains weak across states.

"While the law exists, there are hardly any consequences for violations. Cases of parents being sanctioned for marrying off underage girls are extremely rare," she said.

Bukar acknowledged government efforts to promote girls' education through increased budgetary allocations and gender-sensitive policies, including life skills programmes.

She, however, noted challenges such as limited coverage and social barriers from families and communities.



EASTER CELEBRATION WITH TROOPS:

Reprehesive of the Chief of Army Staff/Director-General, Nigerian Army Future and Heritage Center, Maj-Gen. Tariweriye Gagariga (L), being welcomed by Miss Chidima Asogwa with a flower bouquet and accompanied by members of Nigerian Army Officers Wives Association, during the COAS Special Easter Celebration with Troops of the Nigerian Army 6 Division, in Elele River State.

Ibadan man, 21, jailed 4 months for stealing potatoes, electric cable

IBADAN

Grade A Customary Court sitting at Mapo in Ibadan has sentenced 21-year-old Maruf Qudri to four months in prison for stealing four bags of potatoes worth

N96,000 and an electric cable valued at N15,000.

Court President Mrs O.E. Owoseni said Qudri was convicted based on evidence presented by the prosecution and his guilty plea. He was sentenced to four months for each

of the four counts or an alternative of six months of community service.

The prosecutor, Insp Ayodele Ayeni, told the court that the theft occurred on March 2, at Bere area, Ibadan, with the convict acting alongside an accomplice, Tobi, who remains at large.

Other stolen items included an electric cable valued at N100,000, which the convicts sold for N3,000, splitting the proceeds.

The offences contravene Sections 516, 249, and 390(9) of the Criminal Code, Cap 38, Vol. II, Law of Oyo State, 2000.

Ibadan man, 40, arraigned for allegedly beating wife

IBADAN

John Ogele, 40, of Alagba Community, Ido, was arraigned on Wednesday at Iyaganku Magistrates' Court for

allegedly assaulting his wife, Mrs Opeyemi Ogele, and destroying a Samsung TV worth N250,000.

Ogele faces a three-count charge under the Oyo State Violence Against Persons (Prohi-

bition) Law, 2020.

He pleaded not guilty. Magistrate Mrs Olanmibo Sanusi granted him bail of N200,000 with three sureties, including his parents and two elder sisters.

She cautioned that domestic violence can traumatizes children and urged couples to maintain peace at home.

The case was adjourned until May 19 for mention.

Ondo man, 30, faces trial for alleged malicious damage to computers

OKITIPUPA (ONDO)

Tolu Akinlose, 30, appeared before Okitipupa Chief Magistrates' Court on Wednesday over alleged malicious

damage to computers at a BetNaija shop in Ayeka, Okitipupa.

The offence, which occurred on January 25, involved damaging desktop and laptop computers valued at N110,000

while playing games.

Prosecutor ASP Ayodeji Omoyeigha cited Section 451 of the Criminal Law of Ondo State, 2006.

Akinlose pleaded not guilty and was granted bail of

N50,000 with one surety who must provide evidence of two years' tax payment and reside within the court's jurisdiction.

The case was adjourned to April 24 for hearing.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known and addressed as AIRHIENBUWA GLORIA, now wish to be known and addressed as EKOGLIWE GLORIA. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please note.

NEWS

Foreign

Oil prices plunge and shares jump on US-Iran ceasefire plan

Global oil prices have fallen sharply and stock markets have jumped after the US and Iran agreed to a conditional two-week ceasefire deal that includes the reopening of the key Strait of Hormuz waterway.

The price of benchmark Brent crude fell by about 13% to \$94.80 (£70.73) a barrel, while US-traded oil was more than 15% lower at \$95.75.

But oil prices remain higher than before the conflict started on 28 February. At the time, it was trading at around \$70 a barrel.

The cost of energy has jumped as oil and gas supplies from the Middle East have been severely disrupted after Iran threatened to attack ships trying to use the strait

in retaliation to US and Israeli airstrikes.

Stock markets in Europe opened higher following sharp rises in Asia. London's FTSE 100 share index jumped by 2.53% in opening trade. In France, the Cac gained 4% while Germany's Dax rose by nearly 5%.

Japan's Nikkei 225 gained 5% while South Korea's KOSPI jumped nearly 6%. Hong Kong's Hang Seng was up 2.8%, while the ASX 200 in Australia gained 2.7%.

US stock market futures also pointed to a higher open for Wall Street.

Futures contracts are an agreement to buy an asset for a set price at a later point in time. In the case of US stock futures, they can indicate the direction

of the market before it opens.

In a social media post on Tuesday evening, Trump said: "I agree to suspend the bombing and attack of Iran for a period of two weeks... subject to the Islamic Republic of Iran agreeing to the COMPLETE, IMMEDIATE, and SAFE OPENING of the Strait of Hormuz".

He had set a deadline for 20:00 EDT on Tuesday (00:00 GMT on Wednesday), threatening that "a whole civilisation will die tonight" if no deal was reached.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on social media that Tehran will agree to a ceasefire "if attacks against Iran are halted", adding that safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz "will be possible".

Despite his threats, Trump

was likely to be wary about letting energy prices "skyrocket" by escalating the conflict, said Xavier Smith from market research firm AlphaSense.

That could have led to a "self-inflicted economic wound" that few would risk, especially given the looming pressure of approval ratings on Trump's leadership, said Smith, a research director.

More oil tankers stranded near the strait may be able to pass through the waterway during the ceasefire, providing some relief for markets in the coming weeks, said analyst Saul Kavonic from financial services firm MST Marquee.

Despite the conflict, some ships have passed through the Strait of Hormuz, although far fewer than usual.

What is contained in the two-week ceasefire between the US and Iran

Iran and the US have agreed to a conditional two-week ceasefire, during which shipping traffic will be allowed through the Strait of Hormuz.

This comes more than a month after the US and Israel launched co-ordinated attacks on Iran, and hours after US President Donald Trump threatened "a whole civilisation will die tonight" if Iran did not reopen the Strait.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who has been mediating negotiations, said early on Wednesday that the ceasefire was effective immediately.

Here's what we know so far about the deal.

What have the US and Iran each said?

Trump said he'd agreed to "suspend the bombing and attack of Iran for a period of two weeks" if Tehran agrees to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping route for oil and other exports from the Gulf.

In a post on Truth Social, Trump said he agreed to the provisional ceasefire because "we have already met and exceeded all military objectives".

This comes after he earlier warned the US could take Iran out "in one night" and that a "whole civilisation will die tonight, never to be brought back again" - threats that drew condemnation from the United

Nations chief and Pope Leo XIV.

Iran agreed to allow vessels through the Hormuz Strait for two weeks, with their passage co-ordinated by the Iranian military.

The country has also issued a 10-point plan, which includes, among other things, the complete cessation of war in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen; "full commitment" to lifting sanctions on Iran; the release of Iranian funds and frozen assets held by the US; and a "full payment of compensation for reconstruction costs" to Iran.

It also says, "Iran fully commits to not seeking possession of any nuclear weapons".

"Iran's victory in the field would also be consolidated in political negotiations," Tehran's Supreme National Security Council said in a statement.

According to Sharif, the ceasefire will also take effect in Lebanon, where Israel has been fighting the Iranian-backed armed group Hezbollah.

Israel has backed the deal but says it "does not include Lebanon", renewing strikes on Wednesday in the Tyre and Nabatieh areas in the south of the country.

What has Israel said?

Sirens sounded in Israel shortly after Trump's announcement, with the Israel Defense Forces saying they were intercepting missiles launched from Iran.



STRIKE SOUTHERN LEBANON:

Israeli attacks on several areas of Lebanon have left communities devastated during the current conflict

Iran ceasefire deal gives Trump a way out of war - but at a high cost

In the end, cooler heads prevailed - at least for now.

At 18:32 Washington time, President Donald Trump posted on his social media website that the US and Iran were "very far along" with a "definitive" peace agreement and that he had agreed to a two-week ceasefire to allow negotiations to proceed.

It wasn't exactly the last minute, but with Trump's looming 20:00 EDT (00:00 GMT on Wednesday) deadline to reach a deal or the US would launch massive strikes against Iranian energy and transportation infrastructure, it came pretty close.

All of this is contingent on Iran also suspending hostilities and fully opening the Strait of Hormuz to commercial shipping traffic, which the regime says it will do, while insisting it

still exerts "dominion" over the waterway.

The deal allowed Trump to extricate himself from what was shaping up to be a treacherous choice - either escalating with his promise that a "whole civilisation will die tonight" or backing down and undermining his credibility. The US president may have only bought himself a temporary reprieve, however.

The US and Iranians now will engage in negotiations over the next two weeks, buying some time to try to reach a permanent settlement. It is likely to be a bumpy ride, but in after-hours trading, the price of a barrel of oil dropped below the \$100 mark for the first time in days and US stock futures soared. There appears to be a sense of optimism that the worst is over.

Follow the latest developments live

Even this kind of progress was far from certain as recently as Tuesday morning, when Trump threatened the death of Iranian civilisation, "never to be brought back again".

Whether such a jaw-dropping threat from an American president pressured Iran to agree to the kind of ceasefire they had previously rejected is uncertain. What is clear is that Trump's astounding, inflammatory declaration - just two days after a similar obscenity-laced Truth Social demand - is unlike anything a modern US president has ever levelled or hinted at.

And even if the two-week ceasefire does result in a permanent peace, the Iran war - and Trump's recent words - may have fundamentally altered the way the rest of the

world views the US.

A nation that once styled itself as a force for stability around the globe is now shaking the foundations of the international order. A president who has seemingly relished shattering norms and traditions in domestic politics is now doing the same on the world stage.

Democrats were quick to condemn Trump's words on Tuesday, with some going so far as to call for his removal.

"It is clear that the president has continued to decline and is not fit to lead," wrote Congressman Joaquin Castro on X.

Chuck Schumer, the top Democrat in the US Senate, said any Republican who did not join in voting to end the Iran war "owns every consequence of whatever the hell this is".

Israel strikes southern Lebanon after US-Iran ceasefire

Israeli attacks on several areas of Lebanon have left communities devastated during the current conflict

The Israeli military has carried out a large wave of air strikes across Lebanon, an indication that, for Israel, the US-Iran ceasefire deal does not apply to the country where it is fighting the Iranian-backed armed group Hezbollah.

Attacks hit the southern suburbs of Beirut, southern Lebanon and the eastern Bekaa Valley, areas where Hezbollah holds sway.

Israel described it as the largest wave of air strikes in this conflict, hitting more than 100 of what it called Hezbollah command centres and military sites in 10 minutes.

This happened hours after the office of the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, denied the assertion by Pakistan, which helped mediate the ceasefire, that the deal also covered the devastating conflict here.

Across Lebanon, more than 1,500 people have been killed, including 130 children. Over 1.2 million people have been displaced - one in five of the population - most of them from Shia Muslim communities.

More than 1.2 million people have been displaced - one in five of the population - most of them from Shia Muslim communities in the south, the eastern Bekaa Valley and the south-

ern suburbs of Beirut, areas where Hezbollah holds sway.

Villages near the border have been destroyed, as invading Israeli troops aim to create what the Israeli authorities said a security buffer zone, to destroy Hezbollah's infrastructure and push its fighters away. This has raised concerns that some areas may be occupied even after the end of the war, and that many residents may never be able to return.

After the announcement of a ceasefire in the war between the US and Israel against Iran, which had started in late February, the Lebanese presidency said it would continue "efforts to include Lebanon in regional peace".

Hezbollah, which has not claimed any attack since the deal was announced, said the group was on the "threshold of a major historic victory" and warned displaced families to wait for a formal ceasefire announcement before trying to return home.

In Lebanon, the latest escalation in the decades-long conflict between Hezbollah and Israel erupted when the group fired rockets into Israel in retaliation for the killing of the Iranian supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in the opening stages of the war, and in response to near-daily Israeli attacks on Lebanon despite a ceasefire in the country that had been agreed on November 2024.

Top Australian soldier charged with war crimes to remain in jail on remand

Ben Roberts-Smith - Australia's most-decorated living soldier - will remain behind bars after his lawyers did not seek bail over charges of alleged war crimes in Afghanistan.

Roberts-Smith, 47, was arrested at Sydney Airport on Tuesday and charged with five counts of the war crime of murder before being transferred to a police cell.

On Wednesday, lawyers for the Victoria Cross recipient did not immediately apply for bail. Roberts-Smith denies all wrongdoing, previously calling the claims "egregious".

The criminal case comes after a defamation judgement in 2023 found the former corporal in Australia's Special Air Service Regiment (SAS) killed several unarmed Afghans between 2009 and 2012.

The years-long defamation proceedings - initiated by Roberts-Smith - marked the first time in history that any court had examined claims of war crimes by Australian forces.

Roberts-Smith's lawyers argued that the alleged killings were either legal, as they took place during combat, or did not happen at all.

Defamation cases are typically dealt with in the civil

court system which requires a lower burden of proof.

The judge in the defamation case found that, on the balance of probabilities, there was substantial truth to allegations of war crimes by Roberts-Smith, who received Australia's highest military honour for bravery in 2011.

In the criminal case, Roberts-Smith faces one charge of the war crime of murder, one of jointly commissioning a murder, and three of aiding, abetting, counselling or procuring a murder. The maximum penalty for the charges is life in prison.

Earlier, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) confirmed the case had involved a complex and thorough investigation.

"It will be alleged the victims were shot by the accused or shot by subordinate members of the ADF [Australian Defence Force] in the presence of, and acting on the orders of, the accused," AFP Commissioner Krissy Barrett said on Tuesday.

She added that the allegations of misconduct were confined to a "very small section" of the ADF and that the majority of the country's armed forces "do our country proud".

Roberts-Smith is due back in court on 17 April, and will appear via a video link.



ZIMBABWE PRESIDENT:

Emmerson Mnangagwa to remain in office beyond 2028

Plan to scrap presidential elections puts Zimbabweans at loggerheads

Fears are growing in opposition circles in Zimbabwe that the ruling Zanu-PF party is making a new grab for power as it presses ahead with constitutional amendments aimed at giving parliament - rather than voters - the right to elect the president and to extend his term from five to seven years.

"This is a coup, a slow coup that is unfolding in Zimbabwe," veteran opposition politician and former finance minister Tendai Biti told the BBC.

But Zanu-PF - in power since independence in 1980 - has vehemently defended the proposed changes.

"There's nothing that stops us to change, to go to another system that's less costly, less controversial," party official Patrick Chinamasa said.

The conflicting views highlight the deep polarisation that draft legislation - aimed at changing the constitution - has caused, pitting Zanu-PF and opposition supporters against each other.

This became clear during public hearings that parliament held recently to give people a chance to express their views on the proposed shake-up that will lead to:

Presidential elections - held since 1990 - being scrapped

Parliamentary and presidential terms being extended from five to seven years

Parliamentary elections scheduled for 2028 being delayed to 2030

President Emmerson Mnangagwa, whose second and final term is due to end in 2028, remaining in office until 2030

The new parliament electing

the next president.

"I support the bill in its entirety," a woman said, at a public hearing in a sports arena in the capital, Harare, last week.

Thousands filled the venue, with speaker after speaker taking the microphone to echo calls for Mnangagwa to remain in office beyond 2028.

A shot of a crowd of people at a public meeting. Many are smiling and waving their arms in the air.

At a recent public hearing in Harare people cheered speakers who back the changes but opponents were intimidated.

Mnangagwa took power in 2017 after ousting long-time ruler Robert Mugabe with the backing of the military - and went on to win disputed elections in 2018 and 2023.

"Term limits must be ex-

tended from five to seven years and the MPs that we vote in, must be allowed to elect the president," a man said at the public hearing.

When the microphone was moved to the area where leading critics of the bill were sitting, there were scenes reminiscent of the violence and intimidation that has often marred Zimbabwean politics, with pushing, shoving and fighting - along with the snatching of mobile phones and journalists being ordered to delete videos of the chaos.

Leading opposition member and lawyer Fadzayi Mahere told the BBC that Zanu-PF supporters had caused the "commotion" in order to prevent critics from registering their disagreement with the bill.

Cross-border travel hit by second day of fuel protests

Slow-moving convoys protesting against high fuel prices caused by the US and Israeli war against Iran are in Dublin and various locations on main roads leading to the city, as well as near other large urban areas.

Gardaí (Irish police) said O'Connell Street and O'Connell Bridge in Dublin were at a standstill.

Dublin Airport advised passengers to allow extra time for their journey while Translink said cross-border services were subject to delays and disruption.

All of the public transport provider's X1/X2/X3/X4 services will terminate at Dublin Airport until further notice.

There are also a number of delays and diversions to Dublin Express coach services between Dublin and Belfast.

The company advised customers to allow "significant extra time" for their journeys.

The protests started on Tuesday morning.

The conflict in the Middle East has caused rapid price rises for both petrol and diesel.

Some 20% of the world's oil trade, the raw ingredient for producing both petrol and diesel, has been halted by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Prices in the Republic of Ireland have surged to about €2.14 (£1.86) a litre for diesel and roughly €1.91 (£1.66) a li-

tre for petrol, with higher prices in some places.

Tánaiste (Irish Deputy Prime Minister) Simon Harris is holding a meeting on Wednesday dedicated to the issue of energy.

Maelisa McGettigan, of McGettigan's Travel, led a convoy out of Letterkenny in County Donegal on Tuesday.

She described the price of fuel as "absolute madness" and said the protesters wanted the Irish government to cap the cost.

Speaking on Radio Foyle's North West Today, she said: "Our overheads have gone through the roof to a point where we're just wondering how we're going to afford to go back after the Easter break."

Maelisa McGettigan Maelisa is taking a selfie. She has blond hair that is styled in curls. She's wearing a brown top. Maelisa McGettigan

Maelisa McGettigan, of McGettigan's Travel, says "overheads have gone through the roof"

Taoiseach Micheál Martin said the government does "understand the pressures that people are under", but also said that it's not acceptable to turn O'Connell Street into a car park, RTÉ is reporting.

He said the protests are preventing "people from accessing livelihoods, medical appointments, [and] disrupting day-to-day activities".

Starmer to visit Middle East after US and Iran reach ceasefire deal

Sir Keir Starmer has welcomed the ceasefire agreement between Iran and the US as he travelled to meet with leaders of countries in the Gulf.

The prime minister is expected to "discuss diplomatic efforts to support and uphold the ceasefire", according to No 10. He will return to the UK on Friday.

The ceasefire comes after Donald Trump threatened "a whole civilisation will die" if Iran did not agree to end the war and unblock the Strait of Hormuz - comments that led Downing Street to call again for "de-escalation".

Sir Keir said: "I welcome the ceasefire agreement reached overnight, which will bring a moment of relief to the region and the world."

He added: "Together with our partners we must do all we can to support and sustain

this ceasefire, turn it into a lasting agreement and reopen the Strait of Hormuz."

Sir Keir is also expected to meet UK military personnel in the region as part of his Gulf trip, which was planned before the ceasefire announcement.

For the Conservatives, shadow housing secretary Sir James Cleverly told BBC Breakfast the ceasefire is an "opportunity for Iran to make some serious choices" about how it behaves at home and abroad.

Former foreign secretary Sir James said the war was initiated to ensure Iran "never acquires a nuclear weapon" and that remains an "absolute priority", adding: "So we'll welcome this two-week ceasefire, but it's time that mustn't be wasted."

Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey welcomed the cease-

fire but questioned whether the UK could trust Trump, labelling him a "totally unreliable ally".

Sir Ed said the Strait of Hormuz needed to be opened otherwise people would "pay a heavy price in inflation and lower growth", adding: "So whatever it takes, but I do think we've got to stand up to America."

"America has caused this problem so we've got to work with allies who we can trust."

Last week the UK hosted a virtual summit in which representatives from more than 40 countries began work to assemble a coalition capable of ensuring security in the Strait after the fighting has stopped.

This was followed by a military planning conference on Tuesday.

Iran and the US agreed to the conditional ceasefire on Tues-


day, just over an hour before the expiry of the deadline Trump had set for Iran to make a deal.

In a post on Truth Social, Trump said the ceasefire was "subject to the Islamic Republic of Iran agreeing to the COMPLETE, IMMEDIATE, and SAFE OPENING of the Strait of Hormuz".

Meanwhile, the Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi announced Iran would agree to a ceasefire "if attacks against Iran are halted".

"For a period of two weeks, safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz will be possible," he added.

The war began in February, when the US and Israel launched co-ordinated attacks on Iran over concerns Tehran was accelerating efforts towards building a nuclear weapon.

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EFFECTIVE FROM FEBRUARY 1, 2023

Feature

Edo State: Solutions to Climate Change

RAYMOND OSOGBE

Climate change has become one of the most serious environmental challenges facing the world today, and Edo State is not left out. The effects are already being felt in the form of rising temperatures, unpredictable rainfall patterns, flooding, soil erosion, and loss of biodiversity. These changes not only affect the environment but also threaten agriculture, human health, and economic stability.

Therefore, it is important for Edo State to adopt effective and sustainable solutions to combat climate change and protect the future of its people.

One of the most effective solutions is afforestation and reforestation. Trees play a vital role in absorbing carbon dioxide, one of the major greenhouse gases responsible for global warming.

Edo State, which is naturally blessed with forest resources, must take deliberate steps to plant more trees and protect existing forests. Government agencies, schools, and community groups should organize tree-planting campaigns regularly. At the same time, strict laws should be enforced to prevent illegal logging and deforestation, ensuring that forest reserves are preserved for future generations.

Another major solution is proper waste management. Poor waste disposal methods, such as open dumping and burning of refuse, contribute significantly to environmental pollution and climate change.

Edo State should invest in modern waste management systems that encourage recycling, reuse, and reduction of waste.

Households should be educated on separating biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste. Organic waste can be converted into compost for farming, while plastics and other materials can be recycled into useful products.

This not only protects the environment but also creates job opportunities.

The promotion of renewable energy is also crucial in addressing climate change. Many residents and businesses in Edo State rely heavily on generators powered by fossil fuels, which release harmful gases into the atmosphere.

The government should encourage the use of clean energy sources such as solar power, wind energy, and small-scale hydro systems. Providing incentives, subsidies, or support programs can help individuals and businesses transition to renewable energy. Solar panels,



for instance, can be installed in homes, schools, and hospitals to provide reliable and environmentally friendly electricity.

In addition, public awareness and environmental education are key to solving climate change. Many people are not fully aware of how their daily activities impact the environment.

Schools should include climate education in their curriculum, while media campaigns and community programs should be used to inform the public about sustainable practices. Simple actions such as conserving energy, reducing waste, planting trees, and avoiding bush burning can make a significant difference when practiced collectively.

Sustainable agriculture is another important strategy. Agriculture is a major source of livelihood in Edo State, but it is also highly vulnerable to climate change.

Farmers should be encouraged to adopt climate-smart agricultural practices such as crop rotation, agroforestry, use of organic fertilizers, and efficient irrigation systems. These methods help maintain soil fertility, reduce environmental damage, and improve crop yield despite changing weather conditions.

Furthermore, the government must implement and enforce strong environmental policies and regulations. Laws should be put in place to control pollution, prevent illegal mining, and protect water bodies and forests. Environmental agencies should be properly funded and equipped to monitor activities and ensure compliance. Industries and companies must also be held accountable for their environmental impact.

Urban planning and infrastructure development also play a role in addressing

climate change. Proper drainage systems should be constructed and maintained to reduce flooding during heavy rainfall. Cities and towns should be designed to include green spaces, parks, and proper waste disposal facilities. This will improve air quality and create a healthier living environment for residents.

Another important solution is community participation and partnership. Climate change cannot be solved by the government alone; it requires the involvement of individuals, communities, and private organizations. Community leaders should encourage local initiatives such as environmental sanitation, tree planting, and awareness campaigns. Partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international bodies can also bring in funding, expertise, and innovative solutions.

In conclusion, climate change is a serious issue that requires urgent and collective action in Edo State.

By investing in afforestation, improving waste management, promoting renewable energy, educating the public, supporting sustainable agriculture, and enforcing environmental laws, Edo State can reduce the effects of climate change and build a more sustainable future. Every individual has a role to play, and together, meaningful progress can be achieved.

Edo State as a matter of urgency, should de-emphasize the habits of giving, her forest Reserve, to potential investors. The subsequent deforestation exercise, following such is detrimental. The State government, should prioritize People's health and wellness above revenue derivations.

BEDC: Cries and pains of the people

RAYMOND OSOGBE

Electricity is a basic necessity in modern society, yet for many people under the Benin Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC), it has become a source of frustration, hardship, and daily struggle.

The cries and pains of the people continue to grow louder as unreliable power supply affects homes, businesses, education, and overall quality of life.

One of the major concerns is the irregular and inconsistent power supply. Many households experience long hours, sometimes days, without electricity, yet are still expected to pay high bills.

This situation creates anger and confusion among consumers who feel they are being exploited rather than served.

The estimated billing system, in particular, has been widely criticized for being unfair and inaccurate.

Small and medium-scale businesses are among the worst hit. Barbers, tailors, welders, and shop owners depend heavily on electricity to run their daily operations.

With constant outages, they are forced to rely on expensive alternatives like generators, increasing their cost of production and reducing their profits. For many, this has led to business closure and loss of livelihood.

Students also suffer greatly from poor electricity supply. In a world driven by technology and information, lack of power limits their ability to study at night, access online resources, and complete assignments.

This puts them at a disadvantage and affects their academic performance.

Furthermore, the issue of poor customer service adds to the frustration. Complaints are often ignored or delayed, leaving customers feeling helpless. There is a growing perception that the voices of the people are not being heard by those in charge.

Despite these challenges, the people continue to hope for change. They desire

a system where electricity supply is stable, billing is fair, and customer concerns are treated with urgency and respect.

The government and relevant authorities must step in to ensure accountability, transparency, and improvement in service delivery.

The ugly situation with BEDC reflects the broader struggles faced by many Nigerians in accessing basic amenities. The cries and pains of the people should not be ignored. It is time for action, reform, and a commitment to providing reliable electricity for all.

Most annoying, BEDC infrastructure are being maintained by the People and BEDC reaps the benefits. From AL-

MOND CABLES to TRANSFORMER repairs and out right purchase, the frustrated People bear the cost.

Amidst all of these confusing scenarios, BEDC come with outrageous estimated bills. Recently, the Federal government, claimed to have paid trillions of Naira, to the nation's Power providers. The question is how objective is that payment? Amidst cries and pains of dissatisfaction among consumers, why must such sum of money, be given? As a matter of urgency, relevant authorities should pursue a compulsory pre-paid meter policy for all.

If Nigeria fails in power provisions for all, we are yet to commence operations.

Scaling access to justice: WRAHP advocates for Ethical Reporting of cases of Gender-Based Violence

GRACE IJEOMA UMEH

Media Executives, drawn from both print and electronic media, have been tasked on accurate documentation, ethical reporting of, and proper follow up on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Cases.

This formed part of a 2-day training organized by the Women's Rights and Health Project, WRAHP, held in Benin City, the Edo State capital.

The project, according to the Facilitators, was aimed at scaling access to justice-related social services for women and girls who had survived SGBV in Lagos and Edo states, being the organization's focal areas at the moment.

It further stated that the training will also strengthen the capacity of media practitioners in both states on understanding the extent of work needed to be done in advocating for justice for the survivors and best practices in the pursuit of justice.

In his opening remarks, Festus Umoh, Programme Manager, WRAHP, Lagos stated that the organization is an NGO that promotes health and general development of women, girls and communities, but not excluding men.

He enumerated the visions, mission and achievements of the organization to include the pursuit of a just society where the dignity of women, young people and communities are respected and they enjoy sound health and maximize their potentials.

He also listed the Key Thematic areas to include: health - squaring up with communicable and non communicable diseases, women's rights, safeguarding principles towards protecting women from SGBV and SRH and promoting gender equality and inclusivity.

Among the organizations accomplishments, he stated, included the launch of the Ireti Resource Centre in 2020, provision of psychosocial support services to over 1000 survivors of SGBV and conviction of 2 perpetrators, including the ongoing training of advocates to respond to SGBV cases, make appropriate referrals and implement community level awareness sessions on SGBV and other cases of assault unleashed on women and the Girl-Child, among other accomplishments.

Chris Igbinoso Irogue, Program Manager, WRAHP, in his presentation of an overview of the The Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) project, stated that it is a European Union-funded initiative implemented by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA). The project's primary goal is to consolidate the rule of law and anti-corruption reforms in Nigeria, and listed its Objectives to include:

1. ***Enhanced Performance of the Criminal Justice System***: Improve the quality and oversight of the criminal justice system and justice service delivery.

2. ***Improved Access to Justice***: Enhance access to justice for vulnerable groups, including women, children, juveniles, persons with disabilities, and victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

3. ***Increased Transparency and Accountability***: Strengthen anti-corrup-



THE PROTESTERS

tion systems and reforms, promoting transparency and accountability^{1 2 3}.

He also enumerated its activities to include:

- Supporting policy and legislative reforms
- Building capacity of justice sector institutions
- Promoting access to justice for vulnerable groups
- Enhancing anti-corruption efforts and transparency
- Supporting civil society organizations and citizen engagement

IMPLEMENTATION:

RoLAC II is being implemented in six focal states: Adamawa, Anambra, Edo, Kano, Lagos, and Plateau, with possible extension to two other states. The project is expected to run from 2023 to 2027.

Taking the media Executives on their role in addressing SGBV through effective documentation and reporting, Dr Nosakhare Erhunmwunsee stated that it is not just about learning but demonstrating the learning by saying the truth.

He stated that the media plays a crucial role in addressing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) through effective reporting and documentation. He further highlighted some key aspects:

RAISING AWARENESS

- ***Breaking the silence***: Media coverage can help break the silence surrounding SGBV, bringing attention to the issue and encouraging victims to speak out.

- ***Informing the public***: Accurate and sensitive reporting can educate the public about SGBV, its causes, and its consequences.

INFLUENCING PUBLIC OPINION

- ***Shaping attitudes***: Media representation can shape public attitudes and perceptions about SGBV, promoting empathy and understanding.

- ***Promoting positive change***: Me-

dia can highlight successful initiatives and interventions, inspiring positive change and community engagement.

SUPPORTING SURVIVORS

- ***Safe reporting***: Media can provide a platform for survivors to share their stories, promoting safe and supportive reporting practices.

- ***Resource provision***: Media outlets can share resources and support services for survivors, connecting them with help.

HOLDING PERPETRATORS ACCOUNTABLE

- ***Exposing perpetrators***: Media can expose perpetrators and highlight cases of SGBV, promoting accountability and justice.

- ***Monitoring response***: Media can monitor the response of authorities and institutions, pushing for effective action.

BEST PRACTICES

- ***Sensitive reporting***: Report SGBV cases with sensitivity, avoiding victim-blaming language and stereotypes.

- ***Accuracy and fact-checking***: Ensure accuracy and fact-check information to avoid spreading misinformation.

- ***Respect for survivors***: Prioritize survivors' dignity, safety, and consent when reporting.

By adopting these practices, the scholar noted, the media can play a powerful role in addressing SGBV and promoting a culture of respect, empathy, and accountability.

He also gave some key ethics and practices for SGBV reporting:

ETHICS

1. ***Do no harm***: Prioritize the safety and well-being of survivors and victims.

2. ***Respect dignity and autonomy***: Treat survivors with respect and dignity, ensuring their autonomy in deci-

sion-making.

3. ***Confidentiality***: Protect survivors' identities and personal information.

4. ***Accuracy and truthfulness***: Ensure accurate and truthful reporting, avoiding sensationalism and misinformation.

BEST PRACTICES

1. ***Obtain informed consent***: Get explicit consent from survivors before sharing their stories or images.

2. ***Use sensitive language***: Avoid victim-blaming language and stereotypes.

3. ***Focus on facts***: Report facts, avoiding speculation or assumptions.

4. ***Provide resources***: Share resources and support services for survivors.

5. ***Protect identities***: Use pseudonyms, blur faces, or omit identifying details to protect survivors' identities.

6. ***Avoid graphic details***: Avoid graphic descriptions of violence or abuse.

7. ***Contextualize***: Provide context about SGBV, including root causes and prevalence.

GUIDELINES

1. ***UNICEF Guidelines***: Use guidelines for reporting on children and SGBV.

2. ***WHO Guidelines***: Follow WHO guidelines for reporting on SGBV.

3. ***Media Code of Ethics***: Adhere to media code of ethics and industry standards.

RESOURCES

1. ***Survivor support services***: Provide resources and contact information for support services.

2. ***Expert sources***: Consult experts, including survivors, advocates, and professionals.

3. ***Training and education***: Seek training and education on SGBV reporting and ethics.

He stated that by following these eth-

ics and practices, journalists and media professionals can report on SGBV responsibly and respectfully, promoting a culture of empathy and accountability.

Dr. Erhunmwunsee highlights key aspects of SGBV journalists should focus on, including:

- ***Conflict-Related SGBV***: prioritize dignity, safety, and well-being of survivors, avoiding re-traumatizing language and ensuring accuracy¹.

- ***Types of SGBV***: physical, emotional, and psychological violence, child marriage, femicide, trafficking, rape, and socio-economic violence².

- ***Causes of SGBV***: poverty, patriarchal privilege, cultural norms, and power imbalance³.

- ***Consequences of SGBV***: physical injuries, psychological trauma, sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies, and unsafe abortions³.

When reporting SGBV, journalists should:

- Obtain informed consent from survivors

- Use sensitive language, avoiding victim-blaming

- Focus on facts, avoiding speculation

- Provide resources and support services

- Protect survivors' identities and dignity^{4 1}

In her goodwill message, Uchenna Nwokedi, RoLAC Coordinator Efo stated that RoLAC is working with CSOs to increase awareness and to support with necessary resources for reporting and documentation of cases. She tasked journalists on the need to protect the identity of victims/survivors, stop lack of confidence, stigma. She also encouraged them to be abreast of the trend of SGBV cases.

Earlier in her opening remark, Uchenna Bose Ironsi, Executive Director, WRAHP, stated the organization works on 3 key pillars, including prevention to mitigate risks and work efficiency. She noted that violence against women.

FEATURE

Nigeria's oil windfalls and the need to save for the future

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Nigeria's current economic story is, in many ways, a paradox, particularly in today's volatile global environment. Blessed with vast crude oil resources and intermittent periods of substantial revenue inflows, especially following the removal of oil subsidies the country nevertheless continues to struggle with fiscal instability, rising debt, and recurring economic shocks. At the heart of this contradiction lies a persistent policy inconsistency: the inability to save oil windfalls during boom periods for use in times of crisis.

At present, oil remains the backbone of Nigeria's public finances, accounting for a significant share of government revenue and foreign exchange earnings. However, global oil prices are notoriously volatile, influenced by geopolitical tensions, shifts in energy demand, and technological changes in production. For a country so heavily dependent on a single commodity, the implications are profound. When prices rise, revenues surge; when they fall, the economy contracts. Rather than deliberately insulating itself from these fluctuations, Nigeria has historically expanded spending patterns instead of instituting a strategic expenditure policy.

The unfolding crisis in the Middle East though temporarily eased following Iran's 10-point demands has demonstrated how fragile global energy markets can be. The Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly one-fifth of the world's oil supply passes, became a flashpoint amid military escalation. At the height of tensions, shipping disruptions triggered panic across global markets, sending crude prices soaring. For oil-exporting countries like Nigeria, this translated into a sudden surge in revenue a classic windfall yet concerns about preparedness for future downturns remain palpable.

Successive Nigerian governments have often responded to such windfalls by increasing public expenditure, expanding recurrent spending, and embarking on ambitious sometimes unsustainable projects. These decisions are frequently driven by political pressures, short-term development goals, and the demands of a growing population. Unfortunately, this approach leaves little room for savings. When oil prices inevitably decline, the country is forced to borrow, cut spending abruptly, or abandon critical infrastructure projects.

To break this cycle, Nigeria must institutionalise a culture of saving, anchored in strong fiscal frameworks

and credible institutions, as often advised by the World Bank. One such institution already exists in the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority, which manages the nation's Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF). Established to promote long-term savings, infrastructure development, and economic stabilisation, the SWF represents a step in the right direction. However, its impact has been limited by inconsistent funding and relatively small capital inflows compared to the scale of oil revenues generated over the years.

Similarly, the Excess Crude Account, created to serve as a buffer against oil price volatility by saving revenues earned above a predetermined benchmark, has been repeatedly drawn down often without strict adherence to clear rules. Political considerations and competing fiscal demands have weakened its effectiveness, turning what should have been a robust stabilisation tool into a frequently depleted reserve.

The lesson from Nigeria's experience is clear: saving oil windfalls requires more than simply establishing accounts or funds. It demands discipline, transparency, and enforceable rules. Without these, even well-designed institutions can falter.

Looking beyond Nigeria, valuable

lessons can be drawn from countries that have successfully managed their natural wealth. Norway stands out as a global benchmark through its Government Pension Fund. The key to its success lies in a combination of strict fiscal rules, political consensus, and a commitment to transparency. Oil revenues are not spent directly; instead, they are invested globally, with only a small, regulated portion used to support the national budget. This approach has allowed Norway to shield its economy from oil price volatility while building wealth for future generations.

For Nigeria, adopting a similar model would require significant adjustments to its fiscal governance framework. First, the country needs a legally binding fiscal rule that sets a conservative benchmark oil price. Revenues earned above this benchmark should be automatically saved, rather than subjected to discretionary spending. Such a rule would help depoliticise the saving process and ensure consistency across administrations, with potentially transformative effects on Nigeria's economic development.

Transparency must be at the core of these policies to ensure that funds are used for their intended purposes. Equally important is how those sav-

ings are utilised. Strategic investments in infrastructure, education, health-care, and technology can yield long-term economic benefits, reducing dependence on oil revenues. Investment in security and economic diversification is also essential to building a more resilient economy capable of withstanding external shocks. Saving for the future should be seen not as a constraint, but as a strategic investment in national growth and prosperity.

The general populace must also understand the importance of saving excess revenues and hold leaders accountable for fiscal decisions. A well-informed public can serve as a powerful check against the misuse of national resources, especially in the face of currency pressures, rising inflation, and increased borrowing.

In sum, saving windfalls provides stability and reduces vulnerability to external economic shocks, with due consideration for both present and future generations. With the right policies and a renewed commitment to fiscal discipline, Nigeria can transform its oil wealth from a source of volatility into a foundation for long-term prosperity. Nigeria needs to wholeheartedly embrace a future defined by strategic savings, prudent investment, and economic resilience.

