

# Ebola: Nigeria strengthens nationwide surveillance amid regional outbreak

LAGOS

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) has intensified nationwide surveillance and emergency preparedness measures following renewed Ebola outbreaks in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and a confirmed imported case in Uganda, raising fresh con-

cerns over possible cross-border spread in the region.

Although no Ebola case has been recorded in Nigeria, the health agency said it was maintaining heightened vigilance due to increased population movement within West and Central Africa and the attendant risk of importation.

In a public health advisory signed by its Director-General,

Dr Jide Idris, the NCDC said it was closely tracking developments in affected countries while strengthening coordination with Port Health Services and other response stakeholders to ensure early detection and rapid containment should any case emerge locally.

Idris said response activities were ongoing in affected countries and assured that Nigeria's

public health system remained on alert, with reinforced surveillance mechanisms for Ebola and other epidemic-prone diseases.

He added that event-based surveillance had been intensified in collaboration with state health authorities to improve early warning capacity across the country.

According to him, preparedness efforts also include

enhanced laboratory and diagnostic readiness, improved infection prevention and control measures in health facilities, expanded community engagement, and strengthened public risk communication to counter misinformation and panic.

He urged healthcare workers nationwide to maintain a high index of suspicion, particularly when treating patients present-

ing with symptoms consistent with Ebola and a history of travel or contact linked to affected areas. Medical personnel were also advised to strictly adhere to infection prevention protocols, including the use of personal protective equipment, early isolation of suspected cases, and prompt reporting through es-

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# O The Nigerian OBSERVER

That The People May Know

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## APC leadership tightens grip as preferred aspirants sweep Edo Reps primaries

● **Owan zoning halts Ihonvbere's return bid** ● **APC presents certificates of return to winners**

IDAHOSA MOSES

BENIN CITY

The leadership of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Edo State, alongside Governor Monday Okpebholo, tightened its grip on the party structure on Saturday as preferred aspirants swept the House of Representatives primary elections

conducted across the state's 18 local government areas, with successful candidates issued certificates of return shortly after their emergence.

The exercise, described by party officials as peaceful, transparent and grassroots-driven, produced candidates widely seen as enjoying the backing of the state leadership ahead of the 2027 general elections, further

consolidating the influence of the ruling party hierarchy in Edo.

Chairman of the House of Representatives Primary Election Committee for Edo State, Hon. Muhammed Ajana, who announced the winners at the party's state secretariat in Benin and presented certificates of return to successful aspirants, described the exercise as one of the freest and fairest conducted by the APC.

According to him, no negative incident was recorded as committee members were deployed directly to the various federal constituencies rather than operating from Benin City.

Ajana said the process was peaceful, orderly and devoid of violence or manipulation, adding that Edo State had set a benchmark for subsequent APC primaries across the country.

"We have seen Edo as a pace-setter for subsequent elections. The election was more or less like a carnival.

"We did not just sit in Benin and write names behind closed doors. Members of the electoral committee were sent to the field to conduct the primaries, and the grassroots elected their leaders in the nine federal constituencies," he said.

Following the declaration of results, certificates of return

were issued to successful candidates across the nine federal constituencies, formally confirming their emergence as APC flagbearers for the 2027 House of Representatives election.

Those declared winners included Dr Paddy Iyamu for Oredo Federal Constituency, Hon. Omosede Igbinedion for Ovia Federal Constituency, Hon. Felix Osazee Igbinovia for Ikpo-

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A COURTESY VISIT:

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, and Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Tunji Rilwan Disu, during a courtesy visit to Government House, Benin City, as part of the IGP's official visit to Police formations in Edo State.

## 2026 Hajj: Okpebholo urges Edo pilgrims to be worthy ambassadors

● **SSG lauds Edo camp welfare**

BENIN CITY

The Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has charged intending Muslim pilgrims from the state to conduct themselves with dignity and uphold the image of the State and Nigeria as 95 pilgrims depart for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the 2026 Hajj pilgrimage.

The governor gave the admonition at the weekend during a farewell ceremony organised for the pilgrims at the Edo State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board office in Benin City, where Islamic clerics, traditional rulers and leaders of

various Muslim organisations gathered to offer prayers for a successful pilgrimage.

Representing Governor Okpebholo at the event, the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Umar Musa Ikhilor, Esq., said the administration remained committed to the welfare of Muslims in the state and to ensuring that pilgrims enjoy adequate support during the Hajj exercise.

Ikhilor said the governor's inclusive governance style had strengthened ties between the administration and the Muslim community, noting that members of the faith had continued to enjoy a sense of belonging in

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Winning trophies is non-negotiable as Super Eagles Coach —Chelle —Pg 11

# Okpebholo seeks stronger security ties as new IGP visits Edo

● **Lauds Disu's professionalism, pledges support for policing efforts**

## BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo has assured the newly appointed Inspector General of Police, Olatunji Rilwan Disu, of his administration's continued support in tackling insecurity, while calling for stronger collaboration between the state and the Nigeria Police Force to sustain peace in Edo.

The governor gave the assurance when Disu paid a courtesy visit to Government House, Benin City, as part of his official engagements with officers and men

of the Edo State Police Command. Disu, Nigeria's 23rd indigenous Inspector General of Police, visited with a delegation that included the Assistant Inspector General of Police in Charge of Zone 5, the Edo State Commissioner of Police, the Assistant Inspector General of the Nigeria Police Mobile Force and other senior police officers.

Governor Okpebholo described Disu as a professional officer whose rise through the ranks reflected competence and commitment to duty.

"Let me first congratulate you and also let you know that we are

solidly behind you. You have so far demonstrated professionalism in your work and that is why you rose to the rank at which you are today," the governor said.

Okpebholo also recalled Disu's conduct during the events surrounding the Edo governorship election, com-

mending what he described as the IGP's professionalism at a critical moment.

"I remember the night to my election as governor. You were one of those that went there to get Governor Obaseki out of that place. I was so impressed with the way you demonstrat-

ed professionalism that night. If you were not a professional police officer, maybe there would have been harassment or something else," he stated.

The governor pledged continued cooperation with the police and urged the force leadership to deepen support for security operations in Edo.

"We need more collabora-

tion. We need more support from you. When I look at the calibre of men that you have deployed to Edo State, I see people that are interested in working for their people. They want to keep the state very safe. Day and night, these people do not sleep in their houses. I want to thank you and God bless you," he added.

## APC leadership tightens grip as...

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ba-Okha/Egor Federal Constituency, Hon. Billy Osawaru for Uhummwonde/Orhionmwon Federal Constituency, Hon. Odi-anosen Okojie for Esan North-East/Esan South-East Federal Constituency, Dr. Lucky Eseigbe for Esan Central/Esan West/Igbeben Federal Constituency, Barr. Oladele Bankole-Balogun for Akoko-Edo Federal Constituency, Hon. Anamero Sunday Dekeri for Etsako Federal Constituency, and Hon. Andrew Ijegbai for Owan Federal Constituency.

In Akoko-Edo Federal Constituency, Bankole-Balogun emerged victorious after polling 3,368 votes to defeat Paul Afeghase, who scored 1,663 votes, while Adetutu Owolabi garnered 793 votes.

Declaring the result, Returning Officer, Kassim Otono, described the process as peaceful and devoid of disruption.

"I am moving round monitoring the exercise. Every-

where is calm; we do not have any issues at all," he stated.

Also speaking, APC Chairman in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area, Mr. Monday Oseh, commended party members for their orderly conduct.

In Etsako Federal Constituency, Hon. Anamero Sunday Dekeri, popularly known as Danco, defeated four other aspirants to secure the APC ticket for the 2027 House of Representatives election.

His aide confirmed that he secured the party's mandate.

In Owan Federal Constituency, the APC primary was shaped by the constituency's long-standing zoning arrangement, with stakeholders insisting on rotational representation between Owan East and Owan West.

The development effectively halted the return bid of incumbent House Majority Leader, Prof. Julius Ihonvbere, as Hon. Andrew Ijegbai emerged the party's flagbearer in line with the zoning formula.

## Ebola: Nigeria strengthens nationwide...

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established surveillance channels. Idris cautioned against panic and misinformation, stressing that Nigeria currently has no confirmed case of Ebola.

He also advised members of the public to observe regular hand hygiene, avoid contact with bodily fluids of sick persons, and refrain from handling dead animals or bushmeat from unknown sources.

The advisory comes amid heightened global concern af-

ter the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the Ebola outbreak linked to the Bundibugyo virus in parts of the DRC and Uganda a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

The declaration, issued on May 16 by WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus under the International Health Regulations (2005), followed reports of rising infections, deaths, and evidence of cross-border transmission.

## 2026 Hajj: Okpebholo urges...

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the affairs of government.

"I had to take time to mention some of those who are present to show the sense of belonging that the governor, His Excellency Senator Monday Okpebholo, has for the Muslim community and how he has integrated the Muslim community in the affairs of the state," he said.

The SSG commended Edo pilgrims for their conduct during the previous Hajj, revealing that the state's camp in Saudi Arabia became a model

for others due to the quality of welfare and feeding arrangements provided.

According to him, pilgrims and officials from other states had attested to the hospitality at the Edo camp, particularly the availability of African delicacies — an arrangement he described as uncommon during Hajj operations.

He, however, acknowledged challenges encountered in preparations for this year's pilgrimage, especially the inability of many registered intending pilgrims to complete travel arrangements on schedule.



**BNC TEAM VISIT EDO SPECIALIST HOSPITAL:**

General Manager, Bendel Newspapers Corporation (BNC), Hon. Peter Odiboh (right) presenting a copy of *The Nigerian Observer* newspaper to the Managing Director, Edo Specialist Hospital, Dr. Antonia Njoku, when the management team of BNC visited the hospital recently.

## Idahosa, dignitaries bid farewell to late Lady Aiwerioghene

BERNADETTE IDALU

### BENIN CITY

The Deputy Governor of Edo State, Dennis Idahosa at the weekend joined eminent personalities, government officials, family and friends to bid farewell to late Lady Jane Nosakhare Aiwerioghene during a social dance organised in her honour in Benin City.

Lady Aiwerioghene, née Woghiren, was the mother of the Permanent Secretary, Office of

the Edo State Deputy Governor, Mrs. Abieyuwa Oyemwense.

The social event, which climaxed the funeral activities held in honour of the deceased, followed a Christian wake and burial conducted earlier by the Diocese of Benin, Anglican Communion, under the supervision of Our Saviour's Anglican Church, off Etete, Benin City.

The event, held in Benin City, saw Mrs. Abieyuwa Oyemwense and her two siblings celebrate the life of their mother.

Friends, associates and family members paid tributes to the late matriarch, recalling her life and contributions to the family and society.

Lady Jane Nosakhare Aiwerioghene, born on October 7, 1942, died on February 19, 2026, five months before her 84th birthday.

A tribute from her husband, Mr. Osagie Aiwerioghene, was read on his behalf by their daughter, Mrs. Oyemwense, highlighting the life they

shared and the impact of her passing on the family.

Among dignitaries present at the event were the State Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa and his wife, Mrs. Osaretin; former Labour Party governorship candidate, Olumide Akpata; wife of former Edo State Governor, Mrs. Eki Igbinedion; Edo State Head of Service, Dr. Anthony Okungbowa; former Speaker, Edo State House of Assembly, Hon. Uyi Igbe; and other notable personalities.

## IGP vows end to police impunity

MIKE OSAROIGAGBON

### BENIN CITY

The Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Olatunji Disu, has vowed that indiscipline and acts of impunity within the Nigeria Police Force will no longer be tolerated, warning that officers found culpable will face strict disciplinary measures.

Disu stated this during a one-day official visit to the Edo State Police Command headquarters in Benin City.

Addressing officers and men of the command, the IGP challenged them to reflect on the public perception of the police, stressing that the Force could attain global standards if personnel remained professional, disciplined and committed to duty.

He condemned recent incidents in Delta State and Port Harcourt involving alleged misconduct by officers, describing them as embarrassing and contrary to police ethics and training.

In one of the cases in Delta State, an Assistant Superin-

tendent of Police was accused of shooting a suspect in broad daylight after the suspect had been arrested and handed over by members of the public. Disu said the officers involved had been recommended for dismissal, a decision already approved by the Police Service Commission, while the case file had been forwarded to the Directorate of Public Prosecutions for prosecution.

He also cited another incident involving officers accused of arbitrary arrests and extortion through ATM withdrawals, not-

ing that they had been tried and recommended for dismissal.

"They got vehicles and started moving around town, arresting people arbitrarily and extorting money from them. They have been tried and recommended for dismissal," he said.

The IGP reiterated that the Force must rebuild public trust through accountability and professional conduct.

"The era of impunity is over. We must build a new Nigeria Police Force that Nigerians will be proud of," he declared.

## NIMASA, hydrography agency strengthen collaboration on maritime safety

### LAGOS

Nigeria's Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) and the National Hydrographic Agency are exploring stronger collaboration to boost the use of locally developed nautical charts for safer navigation and improved maritime operations.

This was disclosed in a statement on Sunday by NIMASA Head of Public Relations, Mr

Edward Osagie, following a visit by the Hydrographer of the Nation, Rear Admiral Olumide Fadahunsi, to the agency's headquarters in Lagos.

Fadahunsi commended NIMASA for its ongoing partnership with the National Hydrographic Agency, assuring sustained cooperation in the provision of hydrographic services to the maritime sector.

He said promoting local-ly produced nautical charts

and hydrographic tools would strengthen maritime safety, security and efficient management of Nigeria's territorial waters.

"Hydrography remains a critical component of maritime safety and national development," Fadahunsi said.

"Strengthening collaboration between the National Hydrographic Agency and NIMASA will enhance navigational safety, improve maritime security, and support sustaina-

ble growth within Nigeria's maritime domain," he added.

In his remarks, the Director-General of NIMASA, Dr. Dayo Moberela, said the agency was prioritising Maritime Safety Information infrastructure, stronger enforcement systems and capacity development to improve hydrographic services.

He said collaboration with the National Hydrographic Agency remained central to achieving these objectives.

**NEWS**

# Strengthen local defence industry or risk security dependence —DIAN boss warns

**ABUJA**

The Chairman of the Defence Industries Association of Nigeria (Defence Industries Association of Nigeria), Maj.-Gen. Ibrahim Alaya, has called for sustained and deliberate efforts to strengthen Nigeria's local defence manufacturing capacity, warning that continued dependence on foreign military

hardware undermines national security.

Alaya made the call during a high-level general meeting of members of the association held in Abuja, according to a statement issued on Sunday by the General Secretary, Mr Kola Balogun.

He stressed that building indigenous defence production capacity was no longer optional but a strategic necessity for

Nigeria's security architecture.

According to him, a robust local defence industry would enhance the operational readiness of the Armed Forces of Nigeria, guarantee timely access to critical military equipment, and improve supply chain resilience in ongoing security operations nationwide.

He also reiterated that the full implementation of the DI-CON Act 2023 remained cen-

tral to achieving a self-reliant defence industrial base. The Act, he noted, provides a legal and institutional framework for local production, technology transfer, innovation, and private sector participation in defence manufacturing.

Alaya, who is also the Director-General of the Defence Industries Corporation of Nigeria (Defence Industries Corporation of Nigeria), urged

members to intensify efforts towards self-sufficiency in military hardware production, describing indigenous capability as a critical pillar of national security.

He emphasised stronger collaboration between government, industry stakeholders and regulators as essential to building a sustainable defence ecosystem capable of meeting operational needs.

The meeting also reviewed plans to expand DIAN membership to include more credible indigenous companies across the defence value chain, with members agreeing that

broader inclusion would boost innovation and deepen private sector participation.

Deliberations further focused on preparations for the forthcoming African International Defence Exhibition (AF-RIDEX), scheduled to hold in Lagos from October 26 to 29, 2026, where members were urged to showcase Nigeria's growing defence technology capacity.

The meeting ended with a collective resolve to work closely with DICON and relevant agencies to build a resilient military-industrial complex for Nigeria.

**CELEBRATING ACADEMIC FEAT:**

Friends of Dr Kelly Odaro, a lecturer with Auchu Polytechnic, Auchu who recently earned a PhD from Delta State University, poses for a photograph with him in an academic gown during his celebration of the academic feat. From left are Ozioruva Aliu of *Vanguard* newspapers; Edosa Okunbo of *Midwest Tempo*; Osehobo Ofure, Editor, *SHINE*; Dr Patrick Abojele, Chief Press Secretary to Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State; and Comrade Andy Egbon, Editor, *The Nigerian Observer* newspaper.

## Digital age must not erase human voices —Bishop Badejo warns

**IBADAN**

The Catholic Bishop of Oyo Diocese, Most Rev. Emmanuel Badejo (Emmanuel Badejo), has cautioned against the growing "artificialisation of communication" driven by digital technology and artificial intelligence, urging Nigerians to preserve human voices and faces in all forms of interaction.

Badejo spoke at the 2026 World Communications Day celebration in Ibadan, themed "Preserving Human Voices and Faces", based on a message from Pope Leo XIV, head of the Catholic Church.

He warned that modern communication trends increasingly risk replacing genuine human interaction with artificial systems, stressing that faces and voices remain sacred elements of human identity.

"Authentic communication must promote communion with God and with one another. Bad communion does the opposite, causing division, stress and conflict," he said.

The bishop cautioned against allowing artificial intelligence and digital media to substitute human presence, saying each person possesses a unique identity rooted in divine creation.

He urged Nigerians to communicate in ways that build connection rather than isolation, stressing that communication should not lead to "excommunication" or alienation.

Badejo also warned against over-dependence on digital devices, emotional manipulation through technology, and societal polarisation driven by online interactions.

He commended the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria's communications office for organising a week-long programme promoting responsible digital engagement.

He called for improved media literacy, saying technology should be critically engaged with rather than demonised.

The bishop also emphasised the importance of personal prayer, citing biblical references, and urged believers to recognise God's presence in every human encounter.

## Palm oil price drop brings 'fragile relief' for consumers in Benin

**BENIN CITY**

Consumers and traders in Benin City have described the recent drop in palm oil prices as a "fragile relief," warning that unstable supply, transport costs and inflationary pressures could trigger another round of price increases.

At Oba, New Benin and Uselu markets, a litre of palm oil, which previously sold between ₦1,500 and ₦1,600, now goes for about ₦1,200 to

₦1,300 across several outlets.

Despite the reduction, residents said the commodity remains expensive for many households, particularly low-income earners, stressing that the decline has not significantly eased economic hardship.

Traders attributed the temporary price drop to improved supplies from producing communities in the South-South and South-East, as well as better fuel availability which slightly reduced transportation costs.

At New Benin Market, trad-

er Joy Fulani said patronage had improved slightly following the reduction.

"Earlier, we sold a litre for ₦1,500 to ₦1,600. Now it is between ₦1,200 and ₦1,300," she said.

A wholesaler, Mr Ike Osinachi, described the trend as unstable, noting that prices fluctuate with supply.

"When supply improves, prices reduce, but once supply drops, everything increases again. There is still no stability," he said.

Transport operator, Mr Peter Asen, said fluctuating fuel and diesel prices continue to drive food inflation nationwide.

"Every additional transport cost eventually reflects directly in final market prices," he said.

Residents and market leaders called on government to improve rural infrastructure, boost local palm production and stabilise transport costs to sustain price reductions, adding that broader economic reforms are needed to ease cost-of-living pressures.

## 6 Benue APC Reps lose re-election tickets as primaries rock party

**MAKURDI**

Six members of the House of Representatives under the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Benue State have lost their re-election bids in the party's primaries.

The lawmakers, reportedly loyal to the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Senator George Akume, were defeated in elections largely dominated by candidates perceived to be aligned with Governor Hyacinth Alia.

According to results released by the APC National Assembly Primary Election Committee for Benue, only four out of 11

seats were retained, while one member had earlier defected to the Labour Party before the primaries.

Committee chairman, Alhaji Sabiu Mahuta, announced that Mr Austin Achado (Gwer East/Gwer West), Mr David Ogewu (Oju/Obi), Mr Terseer Ugbor (Kwande/Ushongo), Mr Sekav Iyortyom (Buruku), and Mr Dickson Tarkighir (Makurdi/Guma) all lost their return tickets.

However, four incumbents secured re-election tickets: Mrs Regina Akume (Gboko/Tarka), Mr Solomon Wombo (Katsina-Ala/Ukum/Logo), Pastor Ojotu Ojema (Apa/Ag-

atu), and Mrs Blessing Onuh (Otukpo/Ohimini).

Mahuta said the primaries were conducted in line with APC guidelines, noting that logistical and security challenges delayed the return of results from some areas.

He explained that returning officers were advised to lodge in secure locations before reconvening for collation and announcement.

In Gwer East/Gwer West, Achado lost to Mr David Nongo, who polled 17,429 votes against his 729 votes.

Some wards reportedly experienced cancellations due to overvoting and disruptions, in-

cluding incidents of snatching of electoral materials.

In Oju/Obi, Mr Peter Ogobodo defeated Ogewu with 12,993 votes to 120.

In Makurdi/Guma, Mr Christopher Ikper defeated incumbent Tarkighir with 37,844 votes to 1,746.

In Buruku, Mr Gideon Inyom defeated Iyortyom with 10,470 votes to 1,396.

Mahuta declared other winners including Mr Anthony Agom (Ado/Ogbadibo/Okpokwu), Pastor Ojotu Ojema (Apa/Agatu), Mrs Regina Akume (Gboko/Tarka) and Mrs Blessing Onuh (Otukpo/Ohimini).

## FCM Foundation awards scholarships to 20 first-class female students in S'West

**LAGOS**

The First Class Muslim (FCM) Foundation on Sunday awarded scholarships and mentorship support to 20 first-class female students from tertiary institutions across South-West Nigeria.

Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Dr Sulaimon Ogunmuyiwa, said the initiative was designed to support brilliant female students, particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds facing financial constraints.

He said beneficiaries were drawn from institutions including the University of Ibadan, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, University of Lagos and Lagos State University.

Ogunmuyiwa said the programme was aimed at bridging gender gaps in education, challenging cultural biases against

female academic success, and promoting national development through investment in women.

He noted that educated women play a critical role in raising future generations and strengthening society.

He also emphasised that female students were increasingly excelling academically and should be encouraged towards independence, self-reliance and personal development.

Beneficiaries commended the foundation, describing the scholarship and mentorship programme as a strong morale booster that enhanced confidence and academic determination.

One beneficiary, Ms Adefunke Adedeji, said the initiative would support her academic aspirations and inspire excellence, while Ms Adeyemi Ganiyah urged parents to prioritise education and disregard discouraging societal narratives.

# Lagos Police nab 6 suspected '1-Chance' robbers, recover tricycle, dummy pistol

## LAGOS

The Police Command in Lagos State has apprehended six suspected members of a notorious 'One Chance' robbery syndicate allegedly terrorising commuters

in the Okota area of the state.

The command's spokesperson, SP Abimbola Adebisi, confirmed this in a statement on Sunday in Lagos.

She said the suspects were apprehended during a stop-and-search operation carried

out by police operatives along Ago Palace Way, Okota.

Adebisi said that a tricycle with registration number AAA 720 QL, conveying about six occupants, was intercepted while the suspects were allegedly at-

tempting to rob commuters.

The spokesperson added that upon sighting the police, the suspects jumped out and abandoned the tricycle.

"The operatives recovered a cutlass allegedly used for their operations and a mobile phone at the scene.

"Further investigation led to the arrest of the six suspects, who

are between the ages 20 and 28.

"The suspects were also found in possession of a dummy pistol allegedly used in carrying out their criminal activities," she said.

According to her, the suspects will be charged to court upon completion of investigation.

She said the Commissioner of Police in the state, Mr Fa-

tai Tijani reaffirmed the command's commitment to proactive policing strategies aimed at combating crime and ensuring the safety of residents.

The image maker urged members of the public to continue providing timely and credible information to assist the police in ongoing efforts to rid the state of criminal elements.

## 2 separate murder cases rock Enugu community as Police arrest suspects

## ENUGU

The Enugu State Police Command has confirmed the arrest of suspects linked to two separate murder cases in Igbo-Etiti Local Government Area.

Police spokesman, Daniel Ndukwe, said the incidents occurred on Friday, May 15, in different communities, triggering shock among residents.

In the first case, a 40-year-old man, Onyebuchi Anikwe, allegedly attacked and killed his 60-year-old mother, Felicia Anikwe, with a cutlass.

Police operatives from the Igbo-Etiti Division responded around 3:10 p.m., recovered the victim's remains and secured the scene.

The suspect was rescued from an angry mob that had assaulted him and was taken into custody for medical treatment.

In the second incident, operatives of the Distress Response Squad acted on intel-

ligence from Agu-Ekwegbe community after reports that Joshua Eze allegedly killed his sister, Nwabuche Eze, and her young daughter.

Their bodies were recovered and taken to hospital, where doctors confirmed them dead before being deposited in the mortuary.

The suspect was also rescued from mob attack but later died while receiving treatment in hospital.

Preliminary investigations suggested the victims were buried in a shallow grave, with a dead white cock recovered from the scene, raising suspicions of ritual motives.

Commissioner of Police, Mamman Giwa, condemned the killings as barbaric and ordered a full investigation by the State Criminal Investigation Department.

He also warned residents against jungle justice, urging the public to report suspects through lawful channels.



## PRIMARY ELECTION:

Edo State Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa, alongside other members of the All Progressives Congress (APC), queuing during Saturday's House of Representatives primary election for Ovia Federal Constituency, held in Iguobazuwa, Ovia South-West Local Government Area of Edo State.

PHOTO: MOSES OBOH

## Politicians express mixed reactions over conduct of NASS by-elections by INEC

## ABUJA

Some politicians have expressed mixed reactions over the by-elections scheduled for June 20 by INEC to fill the vacant seats in the National Assembly, barely six months before the 2027 general elections.

The reactions come in the wake of the announcement by the INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan, that the commission would conduct the by-elections to fill the vacant seats in the federal legislature.

The senatorial seats are for Enugu, Nasarawa, Rivers and Ondo States, alongside a House of Representatives seat in Kano and a House of Assembly seat in Kebbi State.

The vacancies were occasioned by the deaths of three senators and the appointment of Sen. Jimoh Ibrahim as Nigeria's Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

Speaking with newsmen in Abuja on Sunday, the National Publicity Secretary of Young Progressives Party (YPP), Mr Wale Martins, described the conduct of elaborate by-elections close to the 2027 general elections as a "monumental waste" of resources.

Martins advocated for a

constitutional amendment to allow political parties to fill vacancies internally when the remaining tenure is short.

"I think it's time for the whole electoral process to be re-jigged so that there would be a way where the country will be spending less.

"The position that remain only six months to be occupied, the political party should be responsible for producing the individual.

"If that is the case, I think there's nothing wrong in the political party conducting a kind of internal primary, either through consensus or direct primary, according to what is in the Electoral Act, to be able to fill the position.

"That is the only way I feel this political debacle that we find ourselves in on account of either death, appointment or resignation, a few months into general elections," he said.

According to him, this will ensure that the position is not left empty, while it will also not constitute a financial burden on the government.

"I think there's a need for us to assess our electoral laws to be able to address this issue of conducting an elaborate election to fill a position that has been left vacant," Martins said.

## Expert wants enforcement unit to curtail activities of DisCos

## ABUJA

An Expert on Power, Mr Princewill Okorie has urged the Federal Government to establish an enforcement unit in the Ministry of Power to check activities of the Electricity Distribution Companies (DisCos).

Okorie, who is also the Executive Director, Electricity Consumers Protection Advocacy Centre, made the call in an interview with newsmen in

Abuja on Sunday.

According to him, no department in the ministry that is enforcing the penalties and offences segment of the Electricity Act 2023 as amended.

He said that a unit for enforcement of penalties and offences should be set up in the ministry to prosecute DisCos that violate the law and also punish them accordingly.

"In the first place, Section 217 of the Act is on false declaration. There is no discipline in the sec-

tor, and these DisCos are not punished for false declarations.

"That is why they do what they like at will without any consequences.

"When you declare that you have served customers on Band A who are supposed to be on 20 hours, Band B 18 to 16 hours and make them pay for services not rendered.

"When you also give bill as a non-meter consumer on estimation, and you fail to use Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) capping as approved by the regulator, these are all false declaration.

"The question is, who punishes the DisCos for violating these laws? There is no punishment for them, because they are not punished, they operate at will as criminal enterprises.

"Behaving as if the laws made for the sector should not be obeyed," he said.

Okorie also said that the ministry of power should also set up a unit for consumer protection.

According to him, there is a department for transmission, distribution and generation in the ministry, but none for consumer protection.

## Diverse automobile hub unveils tech-driven automotive centre in Benin

## BENIN CITY

A new chapter in automobile technology and clean energy transportation is set to begin in Edo State as Diverse Autocare Centre has announced plans for the unveiling of its newly developed Diverse Automobile Hub and CNG Conversion Centre in Benin City.

The announcement was made during a press conference in Benin City, where management of the company unveiled details of the ambitious automotive project aimed at transforming vehicle main-

tenance, clean energy adoption, and technical training in the South-South region.

Speaking at the briefing, officials of the company said the new facility represents the next phase in the evolution of Diverse Autocare Centre, which has operated for years within the Edo Production Centre axis, providing automobile services to customers across Edo and Delta States.

According to the company, the Diverse Automobile Hub is conceived as a modern, technology-driven automotive centre designed to provide world-class automobile solutions under one roof.

The facility will offer advanced vehicle diagnostics, servicing and repairs, wheel alignment, body works, and emergency response services.

A major highlight of the project is the establishment of a state-of-the-art Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Conversion Centre, which management described as the company's contribution towards supporting the Federal Government's clean energy and alternative fuel initiative.

The centre is expected to provide professional CNG conversion services for private car owners, commercial transport operators, corporate fleets, and

government agencies seeking more affordable and energy-efficient transportation options.

Management also disclosed that the hub is positioning itself for the future of mobility through electric vehicle (EV) marketing and charging solutions.

Beyond automobile services, the company said the facility will also function as a technical training centre for technicians, students, and artisans interested in modern automobile technologies and clean energy systems.

Company representatives noted that the project is expected to contribute significantly to employment genera-

**NEWS****Building collapse: Wike orders free treatment for casualties****ABUJA**

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Mr Nyesom Wike, has ordered free medical

treatment for casualties from a three-storey building that collapsed in Abuja on Saturday that left five people dead.

Dr Adedolapo Fasawe, Mandate Secretary, FCT Health

Services and Environment Secretariat disclosed this when she visited the site.

Fasawe noted that rescue operations were still ongoing as emergency responders con-

tinued efforts to evacuate more victims believed to be trapped beneath the rubbles.

One of the victims, who was pulled out alive after spending more than nine hours trapped

under the debris, was personally attended to by Fasawe before he was moved to the hospital for further treatment.

The FCT Emergency Management Department (FEMD), had said in a statement that the building, behind Gudu Market was under construction when it collapsed at 8:30 a.m., killing five persons while 11 others sustained injuries.

FEMD, in the statement signed by the department's Head of Public Affairs, Mrs Nkechi Isa, said that its search and rescue team had so far rescued 16 persons.

It added that 11 of the survivors have been taken to the Federal Medical Center Abuja,

Asokoro District Hospital and Maitama Hospital for treatment.

The department added that most of the persons trapped in the rubbles were labourers.

It said that other emergency personnel, including the National Emergency Management Agency, Federal Fire Service, FCT Fire Service, FCT Police Command were still carrying out search and rescue while anxious residents looked on.

"Also at the scene were personnel of the Nigerian Army, Federal Road Safety Corps, FCT Emergency Medical Services, and health officers from Wuse District Hospital," it said.

**IGBINEDION WINS PRIMARY ELECTION:**

Edo State Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa (middle); All Progressives Congress (APC) State Secretary, Hon. Lawrence Oka (R) and member representing Ovia Federal Constituency, Hon. Omosede Igbinedion, after she was declared winner of Saturday APC House of Representative primary election for the constituency held at Iguobazuwa, Ovia South West Local Government Area.

PHOTO: MOSES OBOH

**DHQ clarifies identity of neutralised terrorist commander Al-Minuki****ABUJA**

The Defence Headquarters (DHQ) has clarified concerns over the identity of a terrorist commander, Abu-Bilal Al-Minuki, recently neutralised in a joint operation with the United States Africa Command.

This was contained in a statement issued by the Director, Defence Information, Maj.-Gen. Samaila Uba, over the weekend in Abuja.

Uba stated that the clarification became necessary following media reports referencing a similar operation in 2024 involving a terrorist commander bearing the same name.

He explained that the use of identical names, aliases and nom de guerre is common among ISWAP and Boko Haram fighters, often as part of strategies to obscure identities.

According to him, the Abu-Bilal Al-Minuki eliminated on May 16, 2026 has been

positively identified through credible human intelligence and technical surveillance.

He described the neutralised commander as a senior global operative within the Islamic State network with direct links to international terrorist coordination, funding and operations across the Sahel.

"There is no ambiguity regarding the identity of the individual neutralised in the recent operation," he said.

Uba noted that the operation marked a significant milestone

in ongoing counter-terrorism efforts by the Armed Forces of Nigeria in collaboration with international partners.

He urged the public and media to rely on verified information from official sources to avoid confusion arising from name similarities.

The defence spokesman reaffirmed the commitment of the Armed Forces of Nigeria to dismantling terrorist networks and sustaining pressure on insurgent groups across the region.

**NDC senate aspirant promises to prioritise women, youth empowerment****LAFIA**

The Nasarawa North Senatorial aspirant for the forthcoming Bye-election, Arch. Duba Ishaya-Dodo has promised to prioritise women and youth empowerment, and infrastructural development.

Ishaya-Dodo stated this while speaking with newsmen on Sunday in Lafia.

According to him, the desire to contest for the Nasarawa North Senatorial Seat was based on his desire to serve the people of the zone.

Ishaya-Dodo said that he has the capacity and competence to effectively represent the people of the Senatorial District.

He explained that given the importance attached to the zone, he would bring on board innovative ideas aimed at fast-tracking development

in the District.

"I am going to bring a lot of things on board, mine is all about service, people-centred representation, women and youth empowerment.

Generally, NDC is about service to the people, we are not just singing songs," he said.

Ishaya-Dodo, while urging the electorate to be open to new ideas, said the NDC was the only party that has the capacity to save Nigeria from drowning.

"So, I will advise every electorate not to sell their vote; they shouldn't go for fake promises by the ruling party.

"We've allowed them to show us what they have but they have nothing to offer.

"NDC is here to fix Nigeria. So I advise the electorate to team up with the NDC to fix Nigeria. Let's bring Nigeria back to those old days where we refer to our fallen heroes," he said.

**VCRU: Police receives tactical support in Lagos****LAGOS**

The Police command in Lagos State has received fresh operational assets ahead of the launch of the Violent Crime Response Unit (VCRU).

The support came from the Lagos State Security Trust Fund (LSSTF) as part of efforts to strengthen policing operations.

The command spokesperson, Abimbola Adebisi, disclosed this in a statement issued on Saturday in Lagos.

Adebisi said the intervention aligned with ongoing police reforms under Inspector-General of Police, Olatunji Disu.

She said the assets included two operational vehicles, 50 ballistic helmets, 50 bulletproof vests and 50 ballistic shields.

"The equipment will strengthen crime prevention and enhance rapid response operations across the state," Adebisi said.

Presenting the items, LSSTF Executive Secretary, Ayodele Ogunsan, reaffirmed the or-

ganisation's commitment to security support.

Ogunsan said the fund would continue equipping security agencies with critical tools and logistics.

"Effective policing requires sustained support, modern equipment and institutional partnership," he said.

Receiving the assets, Commissioner of Police, Lagos State, Fatai Tijani, thanked the Lagos State Government and LSSTF.

Tijani said the support would strengthen the state's security architecture and improve operational readiness.

"These assets will boost the effectiveness of the newly established Violent Crime Response Unit," he said.

He added that the support would improve emergency response, combat violent crimes and protect lives and property.

Tijani reaffirmed the command's commitment to proactive policing, crime prevention and public safety across Lagos State.

**Hypertension: May & Baker seeks govt interventions on cost of drugs****LAGOS**

The pharmaceutical giant, May & Baker Nigeria Plc., has identified hypertension treatment as a 'lifetime medication', calling for Federal Government's interventions to reduce cost of its drugs to enhance access.

May & Baker Chief Executive Officer, Mr Patrick Ajah, made the call in an interview with newsmen on Sunday in Lagos.

He spoke on the sideline of a health walk organised by the company in commemoration of 2026 World Hypertension Day with the theme: "Controlling Hypertension Together".

World Hypertension Day is celebrated annually on May 17, to raise global awareness about the dangers of high blood pres-

sure, often termed the "silent killer."

Ajah, who lamented the high costs drugs, emphasised the need for consistency in taking Blood Pressure medications, explaining that antihypertensive drugs were lifetime medication.

He said most of the initial products for managing hypertension were manufactured by multinational companies hence their prices were high, stressing that many people could not afford those drugs now.

Ajah, also a Pharmacist, frowned at situations where hypertensive patients stopped taking the medication once they noticed improvement in their health condition, saying that people should understand that anti-hypertensive drug was a lifetime medication.

"Hypertension is not like malaria that a patient may take the medication and stop taking once he/she feels relieved.

"If an individual is diagnosed to be hypertensive, the patient remains on medication for life.

"The fact that hypertensive patients should be on antihypertensive drugs for life, a lot of people can no longer afford them giving the economic condition," he said.

Ajah, therefore, urged the Federal Government to support local manufacturers with interventions and incentives to enable them produce the products at prices that would be affordable by Nigerians.

Shedding more light on the need to encourage local manufacturers, Ajah said that a patient could save 30 to 40 per cent of the price buying brands

made by local manufacturer compared with the product brands produced by multinational companies.

The pharmacist identified cost/access to raw materials, clearance duties, loan facilities and power supply as major challenges of local manufacturers.

He, however, admitted that the Federal Government had done something to address the issue of raw materials by granting duty-free imports of raw materials to the local manufacturers, which he said, had saved about 10 to 15 per cent of the cost of production.

"The Federal Government has actually done something as part of the engagements that we made with them, which the president himself signed the Executive Order for raw materials to be imported duty-free.

# Reps: Speaker Abbas secures unanimous APC endorsement

ZARIA

Stakeholders of the All Progressives Congress (APC) have unanimously affirmed Speaker Abbas Tajuddeen as sole candidate for Zaria federal constituency ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Hamsu-Ibrahim Kubau, the Returning officer of the

APC House of Representatives primary in election in Zaria, made the confirmation in Zaria at the close of proceedings over the weekend.

Kubau said 1376 party members across 13 wards of the federal constituency affirmed the speaker as the party's sole candidate for the the position ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The election was observed by INEC Electoral Officer in Zaria, Mrs Balason Miga, the APC Primary Election Committee led by Sen. Yakubu Shuaibu, key stakeholders and security personnel.

The affirmation, which was conducted peacefully, was attended by ward executives and returning officers in the 13 wards of the constituency.

The speaker was earlier af-

firmed by 250 members at his ward (Kwarbai B) in Zaria Local Government.

In his acceptance speech, Abbas described the development as historic and a testament to the trust and support of the people on his style of leadership.

He added that the development reminded him of the 2019 primaries where delegates voted him without any

inducement.

He said "today's affirmation shows that the people appreciate and value my representation and President Bola Tinubu's quality of leadership."

The speaker expressed gratitude for the trust the people placed in him in the past 16 years.

He reiterated his commitments to redouble his efforts in effective legislation and to at-

tract people-oriented projects that would have direct bearing on the lives of the people.

The speaker added that Zaria Federal Constituency had enjoyed massive infrastructure under the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Tinubu and urged the people to reciprocate by voting massively in 2027 elections.

Abbas is seeking a fifth consecutive term in office.

## Tinubu hails Airbus plan for aircraft maintenance hub in Nigeria

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu has welcomed aircraft manufacturer Airbus' proposal to establish maintenance and hangar facilities in Nigeria to position the country as a regional aviation services hub.

The president also stressed Nigeria's urgent need for modern helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft to support security operations, logistics and national development priorities across the country.

Tinubu stated this during a meeting with an Airbus delegation led by Head of Regional Business Growth Africa and the Middle East, Thierry Cloutet, on the sidelines of the just concluded Africa CEO Forum in Kigali, Rwanda.

This was contained in a statement issued by Presidential Spokesperson, Mr Bayo Onanuga, in Abuja.

Tinubu told the delegation that his administration was determined to deepen relations with Airbus by leveraging the company's comparative advan-

tage in military aircraft and aerospace development.

The president also called for the accelerated delivery of three Apache helicopters already ordered by Nigeria to strengthen ongoing security and counterterrorism operations nationwide.

"Nigeria needs attack helicopters urgently that can be used to confront and overwhelm terrorists. That is my priority now," Tinubu said.

Discussions at the meeting also focused on Nigeria's acquisition of the Airbus C-295 platform and broader defence aviation cooperation between both parties.

The talks further covered aircraft leasing and financing models, including export credit arrangements, sale-and-lease-back structures and long-term financing solutions to improve airlines' access to aircraft.

Tinubu also discussed the possibility of establishing an aviation leasing company to unlock value across Nigeria's aviation value chain and improve financing access for domestic operators.

## APC consensus: Nwifuru not bothered over aggrieved aspirants' defection

ABAKALIKI

Governor Francis Nwifuru of Ebonyi has said he is not bothered by the gale of defections which greeted the All Progressives Congress (APC) consensus arrangement for various political positions in the state.

The consensus arrangement Nwifuru anchored did not favour many aspirants, who expressed their grievances by leaving the party.

Nwifuru, however, told newsmen while monitoring the APC primaries for the House of Representatives in areas where consensus has failed, that it was within their rights to make decisions.

"I am happy that people are willing and ready to even join other parties to test their popularity. It is allowed and that is democracy," he said.

He, however, noted that majority of the people were happy with the consensus arrangement, where the party's stakeholders were adequately engaged.

"We had several stakeholders meetings where issues were

sorted out at the zonal and consultancy levels.

"What we are presently witnessing is election of candidates to fly our party's flag and with everyone's support, competent candidates would be elected," he said.

Nwifuru dismissed the report that the consensus aspirant for the Afikpo/Edda federal constituency was disqualified, which gave rise to a parallel primaries' speculation.

"Who disqualified him? You are just telling me now. We have only one congress committee and when people are contesting elections, the normal thing is to test their popularity on the field.

"There is no need for a parallel congress and nobody is going to conduct any parallel congress," he said.

The state APC Chairman, Chief Stanley Okoro-Emegha disclosed that the party was united and the peaceful atmosphere under which the primaries was being conducted attested to such fact.

"We are one big family and will always resolve all contentious issues," he said.



### FAREWELL CEREMONY:

L-R: Executive Secretary, Edo State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board, Alhaji Eranga Abdulkabir Muhammadkabir; Amirul Hajj, HRH Mallam Ali Suleyman, the Oghieaga of Ivbie; Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Umar Musa Ikhiloh, Esq., representing the Edo State Governor; Chairman, Edo State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board, Mallam Musa Muhammad Uduimoh; and Chief Imam of Benin Central Mosque, Alhaji Abdul-Fatai Enabulele, during a farewell ceremony for the 2026 intending pilgrims in Benin City.

## APC Primaries: Gen. Abdulsalami's son wins Chanchaga reps ticket

MINNA

Mr Adamu Abubakar, son of former Head of State, Abdulsalami Abubakar, has emerged winner of the All Progressives Congress (APC) House of Representatives primary election for Chanchaga Federal Constitu-

wards of the constituency.

Returning Officer, Mr Dan Islam, said Abubakar polled 30,650 votes to defeat his closest rival, Mr Nmaa Ahmed, who secured 1,271 votes.

Islam added that another contestant, Mr Shuaibu Mairago, scored 311 votes in the exercise conducted across the 11

wards of the constituency.

He declared Abubakar winner of the primary election and returned him as the APC candidate for the 2026 House of Representatives election.

Similarly, in Lapai Federal Constituency, the Returning Officer, Mr Ibrahim Usman, announced that Alhaji Abdullahi Mahmud won the APC primary election with 8,559 votes.

Usman said Mr Sadiqu

Mustapha scored 395 votes, while Mr Mahawiya Yusuf polled 247 votes in the election conducted across the 10 wards of the constituency.

He subsequently declared Mahmud winner of the contest and returned him as the party's candidate for the constituency.

Also, Prof. Yakubu Auna emerged winner of the APC primary election for Magama/Rijau Federal Constituency.

## FG unveils new education policy to address out-of-school children's crisis

ABUJA

The Federal Government has launched a new National Policy on Alternative Learning Pathways to expand access to education for out-of-school children, youths and adults across the country.

Dr John Edeh, the Director of Literacy and Development, National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC), disclosed this in an interview with newsmen in Abuja.

Edeh, who also oversees the commission, said the policy, recently unveiled by the Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, was designed to close long-standing gaps within Nigeria's non-formal education system.

He explained that the policy focuses on mainstreaming learners, improving certification processes and creating flexible pathways that allow

beneficiaries to transition easily into higher education or vocational opportunities.

According to him, the policy compresses learning duration, enabling individuals who missed formal schooling to complete equivalent education within three to four years instead of spending over a decade in conventional school settings.

He described the initiative as a major reform capable of significantly reducing the country's large population of out-of-school youths while also addressing unemployment, insecurity, banditry and other social challenges linked to illiteracy.

"The policy is simply addressing some of the main areas of mainstreaming. It talks about the certification, how a learner can easily migrate or mainstream into another level.

"The whole vision is to address the large number of out-

of-school youth and children significantly.

"It will also ensure that the people are not only provided with education, but also empower them to reduce unemployment, insecurity, banditry, and all form of vices in the country.

"The policy is already operational, and stakeholders in the literacy and non-formal education sector must ensure strict compliance with its provisions," he said.

Edeh stressed that Nigeria operates both formal and non-formal basic education systems, noting that the formal system alone could not accommodate all learners.

He said non-formal education institutions provide second-chance opportunities for individuals who dropped out of school due to economic hardship, age limitations, social factors or lack of access to conventional education.

The Director added that many adults and youths willing to return to learning could no longer fit into the formal school structure, making alternative learning pathways critical for national development.

He, however, called on federal and state governments, development partners, and local and international non-governmental organisations to increase support for adult literacy and non-formal education programmes.

He noted that sustained investment in alternative education would help Nigeria reduce illiteracy levels and exit the group of countries with the highest number of out-of-school persons globally.

He expressed optimism that effective implementation of the policy would strengthen inclusive education and accelerate socio-economic empowerment nationwide.

## NEWS

## JUDICIARY

# Female arms courier jailed 20yrs for terrorism

## ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja has sentenced a woman, Halima Haliru Umar, to 20 years imprisonment for terrorism-related offences.

Halima was convicted on the offences of unlawful and illegal possession of 302 rounds of AK-47 live ammunition and attempt to render support for the commission of acts of terrorism.

Justice Hauwa Yilwa sentenced Halima on Friday after she pleaded guilty on May 11 to two of the four-count charge preferred against her by the Department of State Services (DSS), following her arraignment.

The convict was arrested in Plateau.

After her arraignment on May 11, the facts of the offences, charged in counts three and four, to which she pleaded guilty, were reviewed.

Justice Yilwa then adjourned for judgment in relation to the two counts that she admitted.

Delivering the judgment, the judge observed that the convict pleaded guilty to counts three and four of the four-count charge on the day of her arraignment.

The judge added that by her guilty plea, she admitted the facts as presented by the prosecution, without presenting any evidence in her defence.

"The defendant, having admitted the facts of the offence as presented by the prosecution, the court is satisfied.

"She is accordingly convicted on counts three and four," she ruled.

Earlier, the defence lawyer, Hamza Dantani, pleaded with the court to be lenient in dispensing the judgment against the defendant after her conviction.

Dantani said the convict was a first time offender, who was

remorseful.

He added that she did not waste the time of the court in relation to counts three and four.

The defence lawyer told the court that his client is a nursing mother of a one-year-old child that was arrested with her and prayed the court to tamper justice with mercy.

Prosecuting lawyer, Dr Calistus Eze, said the prosecution had no record of the convict's previous conviction.

Justice Yilwa, who suspended proceedings briefly, later returned to pronounce her sentence by sentencing the convict to 20 years on count three and to one year jail term on count four.

The judge adjourned until July 9 for the prosecution to commence trial in respect of counts one and two of the charge, which the convict pleaded not guilty.

The DSS had, in the charge marked: FHC/ABJ/CR/450/2025, sued Halima as sole defendant after her arrest.

In count three, where she pleaded guilty to, Halima of Unguwan Boka, Faskari LGA, Katsina State, adult, was accused of attempting to render support for the commission of acts of terrorism, sometime on July 7, 2025, at Barkin Ladi LGA and Jos North LGA of Plateau.

She was alleged to have provided material assistance and transportation of three hundred and two (302) rounds of AK-47 rifle live ammunition, and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 28 (1) of Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022 and punishable under Section 13 (1) of Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022.



## A NIMASA MEETING:

R-L: Director-General, Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Dr Dayo Mobereola; Hydrographer of the Federation, Rear Admiral Olumide Fadahunsi, and Executive Director, Finance and Administration, NIMASA, Mr Chudi Offodile, during a meeting at the NIMASA Headquarters to explore the development of locally produced nautical charts for enhanced maritime safety.

## Supreme Court sets aside conviction, sentence of ex-GOC 8 Division, Gen. Otiki

## ABUJA

The Supreme Court has affirmed the decision of the Court of Appeal in favour of Gen. Hakeem Otiki, former General Officer Commanding (GOC) 8 Division of the Nigerian Army, Sokoto.

The apex court affirmed the decision of the appellate court in a unanimous decision by the five-member panel of justices

Justice Baba Idris who delivered the lead judgment affirmed the judgment of the court of appeal which set aside the sentence

and conviction of Otiki by the General Court Martial (GCM).

Otiki, former GOC 8 Division, Sokoto, was accused and court martialled over the movement of N100 million on July 11, 2019.

The money was meant for the purchase of furniture for renovated military quarters, and was reported stolen by soldiers assigned to transport the money.

Following investigations initiated by the Nigerian Army, Otiki was arraigned before a General Court Martial (GCM) in Charge No. NA/COAS/

G1/39 on five counts relating to stealing, disobedience to service orders, and related military offences.

On June 16, 2020, the GCM convicted him on all counts and dismissed him from the Nigerian Army with disgrace and dishonour, reduction in rank from Maj.-Gen. to Brig.-Gen., and severe reprimand.

The findings and sentence were subsequently confirmed by the Army Council on November 24, 2020.

Dissatisfied with the decision of the GCM, Otiki, through his counsel Okechukwu Ajunwa, SAN appealed to the Court of Appeal, Abuja Division in suit

number CA/ABJ/CR/54/2022.

In the judgment delivered on the December 5, 2024, the court of appeal allowed the appeal, nullified the entire proceedings and judgment of the GCM, discharged and acquitted Otiki.

The appellate court also restored him to the rank of Maj.-Gen. and ordered payment of all his salaries, allowances, entitlements, and refund of forfeited monies.

The appeal court held that the GCM was improperly constituted because some members were junior in seniority to the appellant contrary to Section 133(3)(b) of the Armed Forces Act.

## Apapa Reps aspirant petitions party over alleged irregularities at APC primaries

## LAGOS

An aspirant in the All Progressives Congress (APC) House of Representatives primary election for Apapa Federal Constituency, Dr Adesola Adedayo, has petitioned the party leadership over alleged widespread irregularities during the exercise held on May 16.

Adedayo, who currently represents Apapa Federal Constituency, said this in a statement on Sunday in Lagos.

The lawmaker, in the petition addressed to the APC Electoral Appeals Committee, alleged that the elections in nine wards — A, C, D, E, F, G, H, I and J — were marred by electoral fraud, violence and disenfranchisement of party members.

He claimed that the irregularities substantially affected the outcome of the primary and rendered the results from the affected wards unreliable and inconclusive.

According to him, the alleged infractions included the use of forged party registration slips by unregistered persons, failure to accredit electoral officers and agents, violent attacks on supporters, and the abrupt abandonment of voting and collation processes.

"The admission of forged voters is not a procedural irregularities.

"It is a deliberate breach of the foundational requirement that primary elections reflect the will of party members only," he said.

Adedayo alleged that thousands of registered APC members were prevented from voting after electoral officers allegedly abandoned the exercise at about 6.00 p.m. while votes were still being counted.

"At the time the process was abandoned, voting had not been concluded and results had not been officially announced. While over 3,000 registered party members were still waiting in queue to vote," he said.

## DPOs are critical bridge to curbing police impunity —NHRC

## ABUJA

Dr Tony Ojukwu, the Executive Secretary of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has described Divisional Police Officers (DPOs) as "critical bridge between citizens and safety," including curbing police impunity.

Ojukwu, made this known over the weekend at a Town hall meeting in Abuja for FCT DPOs on "Rights based policing and oversight."

The meeting was organised by the NHRC and Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN).

Ojukwu who was represented by Mr Ibe Obidigwe, director, Human Resources Management of the commission, said the DPOs were the first point of contact for citizens

seeking justice, making their actions vital in determining whether citizens experience accountability or abuse.

He reminded the participants of the newly gazetted Nigeria Police Regulations 2025.

The executive secretary urged them to follow these guidelines, which include requirements for electronic recording of statements and ensuring legal counsel during interrogations.

"For you, the DPOs, these updated Regulations provide the clarity and protection you need to perform your duties within the bounds of international best practices.

"In bridging Operational Realities and Statutory Obligations, Our goal today is to harmonise these Statutory Obligations with your Operational Realities."

## CJ warns lawyers against conduct capable of undermining legal profession

## KANO

The Chief Judge of Kano State, Justice Dije Aboki, has cautioned lawyers against engaging in acts capable of exposing them to criminal investigations, disciplinary action or public ridicule.

The Chief Judge gave the warning while speaking at the 2026 Law Week of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Ungo branch in Kano.

Aboki warned that such conduct could erode public confidence in the legal profession and the justice system.

She expressed concern over what she described as rising unethical practices among

some legal practitioners.

"The courtroom, a temple of justice, is increasingly being threatened by the desperate and unethical conduct of a growing number of unscrupulous legal practitioners," she said.

According to her, while lawyers have a constitutional duty to represent clients and uphold justice, they must remain guided by ethics and avoid conduct capable of bringing the profession into disrepute.

"Counsels must consciously avoid conduct or transactions capable of exposing them to criminal disciplinary proceedings or public ridicule, which may ultimately bring the legal profession into disrepute.

"Some of the disturbing trends that have pervaded the justice sector are procurement of fraudulent judgments and orders.

"We have seen disturbing allegations involving the connivance of lawyers with corrupt elements, fake witnesses, and criminal syndicate to procure fraudulent judgments or court orders.

"Such orders are sometimes deployed to unlawfully evict vulnerable citizens, seize property, freeze legitimate bank accounts, or perpetrate land fraud under the guise of legality," she said.

The Chief Judge further stressed the need for continuous reforms and technolo-

gy-driven improvements in justice administration.

She maintained that technological advancement must complement, and not replace, the values of fairness, integrity and human judgment.

Aboki called on members of the legal profession to uphold the rule of law and support efforts aimed at strengthening institutions and public trust in the administration of justice.

On his part, Governor Abba Kabir-Yusuf reiterated the government's commitment to strengthening the justice system, enhancing security and deploying technology-driven solutions to tackle emerging legal and societal challenges.

## Foreign

## NEWS

## WHO declares Ebola outbreak in DR Congo an international emergency

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared an Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo a public health emergency of international concern.

The agency said the outbreak in DR Congo's eastern Ituri province, which has seen around 246 suspected cases and 80 deaths reported, does not meet the criteria of a pandemic emergency.

But it warned it could potentially be "a much larger outbreak" than what is currently being detected and reported, with significant risk of local and regional spread.

The current strain of Ebola is caused by the Bundibugyo virus, the health agency said, for which there are no approved drugs or vaccines.

Early symptoms include fever, muscle pain, fatigue, headache and sore throat, and are followed by vomiting, diar-

rhoea, a rash and bleeding.

The WHO said there are now eight laboratory-confirmed cases of the virus, with other suspected cases and deaths across three health zones including Bunia the capital of Ituri province, and the gold-mining towns of Mongwalu and Rwampara.

One case of the virus has been confirmed in the capital Kinshasa, believed to be in a patient returning from Ituri.

The WHO said that the virus has spread beyond DR Congo, with two confirmed cases reported in neighbouring Uganda. Ugandan officials said a 59-year-old man who died on Thursday had tested positive.

In a statement, the Ugandan government said the patient who died was a Congolese citizen whose body has already been returned to DR Congo.

A laboratory has also confirmed an Ebola case in the eastern city of Goma, currently

controlled by the M23 rebels, the AFP news agency reported on Sunday.

The WHO said the ongoing security situation and humanitarian crisis in DR Congo, combined with high population mobility, the urban location of the hotspot, and the large number of informal healthcare facilities in the region increased the risk of spread.

Countries bordering the DR Congo are considered high risk due to trade and travel.

The WHO advised that DR Congo and Uganda establish emergency operation centres to monitor, trace, and implement infection-prevention measures.

To minimise spread, the health agency said confirmed cases should be immediately isolated and treated until two Bundibugyo virus-specific tests conducted at least 48 hours apart are negative.

For countries bordering regions with confirmed cases, gov-

ernments should enhance surveillance and health reporting.

The WHO added that countries outside the affected region should not close their borders or restrict travel and trade as "such measures are usually implemented out of fear and have no basis in science".

WHO director general Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned there are currently "significant uncertainties to the true number of infected persons and geographic spread" of the outbreak.

What is Ebola and how does it spread?

What is causing this outbreak? Ebola is a disease caused by a virus - it is rare, but severe and often deadly. There are three species of Ebola virus that cause outbreaks, and this one is known as Bundibugyo

How is Ebola transmitted? It spreads between people through infected bodily fluids, such as blood and vomit

## Man drives car into pedestrians in Italy, injuring eight

A man drove his car into pedestrians in the northern Italian city of Modena on Saturday, injuring eight people, four seriously, officials said.

They included a woman who had to have both her legs amputated.

After the car came to a halt against a shop window, the driver emerged holding a knife and injured a passer-by who gave chase, before the suspect was overpowered.

The suspect, 31, has been identified by officials as an Italian national of Moroccan origin.

Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who cancelled a planned trip to Cyprus and described the incident as "extremely serious", visited the injured in hospital with President Sergio Mattarella on Sunday.

Meloni and President Mattarella visited Baggiovara hospital on Sunday

She also met Luca Signorelli, the passer-by who intervened, and thanked him for his actions.

"What makes an ordinary person heroic is the moment when the heart chooses to do good, even when that involves a risk," she wrote on X, and shared an image of them embracing.

The incident occurred around 16:30 (14:30 GMT), when the speeding car hit

the pedestrians in Via Emilia next to the iconic cathedral of Modena, south-east of Milan.

The vehicle then veered left before coming to a halt against a shop window.

Signorelli had told Italian media he was trying to help the woman when he noticed the driver trying to run away.

He said he gave chase and the attacker turned on him with a knife in hand. He received a blow to the head and one on his chest before being able to restrain the suspect, with the help of other passers-by.

At a news conference later that evening, the prefect of Modena Fabrizio Triolo said the suspect had been referred to a mental health centre in 2022 for "schizoid disorders", but had then "disappeared without a trace".

An eyewitness said: "We saw the car approaching, it was heading for the kerb.

"It suddenly accelerated - it was going at least 100km/h (62mph)."

"We saw people flying," the witness told Italian media.

Modena's Mayor Massimo Mezzetti said it appeared the driver "deliberately drove on to the pavement, hitting several people and crashing into a shop window".



### EBOLA OUTBREAK:

The WHO says the virus has spread beyond DR Congo, with two confirmed cases reported in neighbouring Uganda.

## Large-scale Ukrainian drone attack kills three in Moscow region, says Russia

At least three people were killed and several injured overnight in a large-scale Ukrainian drone attack on the Moscow region, Russian officials have said.

A woman died in Khimki, north of Moscow, and a person was trapped under rubble, regional governor Andrei Vorobiev said. A man and a woman were killed in the village of Pogorelki.

A male Indian citizen was killed and three others injured, India's Moscow embassy said, but it was not clear whether these casualties were included in Vorobiev's tally. Another person died in Belgorod region bordering Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said the strikes were an "entirely justified" response to deadly Russian attacks on Ukrainian cities.

Earlier this week, a massive Russian drone and missile attack killed 24 people in Kyiv.

In Ukraine, eight people were injured in overnight Russian drone attacks and shelling in the central Dnipropetrovsk region, officials said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and Moscow currently controls about 20% of Ukrainian territory.

In a post on Telegram early on Sunday, Vorobiev wrote

that "since three o'clock in the morning, air defence forces have been repelling a large-scale UAV [drone] attack on the capital region".

He said four people - three men and a woman - were injured in the region, and a number of houses damaged.

A private house was on fire in the village of Subbotino, south-west of Moscow, the governor added.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said 12 people were injured when drones hit an entrance to the city's oil refinery. Three nearby houses were damaged.

Russia's military said 556 drones were intercepted

around the country, about 130 of them in Moscow region.

Meanwhile, Sheremetyevo - Russia's busiest airport that serves Moscow - reported drone wreckage on its territory. It said no-one was injured.

"The situation in the passenger terminals is calm. Sheremetyevo Airport is providing stable passenger and aircraft services," airport authorities said.

Later on Sunday, Zelensky said that Ukraine's "long-range sanctions have reached the Moscow region", referring to the latest drone attack.

"We are clearly telling the Russians: their state must end its war," he wrote in a post on Telegram.

## Hezbollah drone strike videos show evolving tactics against Israel

Hezbollah has increased its use of small first-person view (FPV) drones to attack Israel, including systems controlled by fibre-optic cables to evade sophisticated defences.

BBC Verify has geolocated 35 videos shared by the Lebanese armed group since 26 March which show strikes on Israeli soldiers, armoured vehicles and air defence systems in southern Lebanon and northern Israel.

Experts told BBC Verify the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has "so far been unable to develop any effective countermeasures", as the small drones can easily bypass detection systems.

The drones can also be made from commercially available and 3D-printed components - and are cheap compared to the high-value targets they can destroy, experts also said.

The use of cheap FPV drones has become widespread during the Russia-Ukraine war and has changed modern warfare.

While the Israeli military has not published all casualty details, Israeli media reports indicate four IDF soldiers and one civilian have been killed in FPV strikes, with dozens more injured.

The IDF told BBC Verify it recognises the threat from drones and is investing "significant resources" in improving defences, developing "more effective alert models" and training soldiers for "improving readiness and increasing awareness of the threat".

According to the Institute for National Security Studies, the IDF has also been using FPV drones for several years, currently operating with them in southern Lebanon and against Hamas in Gaza.

Hisham Jaber, a military analyst and former Lebanese army general, told BBC Arabic the FPV drones can be "undetectable by radar" and the "hundreds" of them at Hezbollah's disposal have been used to disable armoured vehicles - including tanks.

Hezbollah has been using several types of larger attack drones against targets in northern Israel for many years, Jaber added, but the use of FPVs represents an "entirely different category".

BBC Verify has found videos of nearly 100 apparent FPV attacks shared on Hezbollah's Telegram channel since 26 March, 35 of which have been verified. Hezbollah does not appear to have shared any footage of similar strikes from the conflict beginning on 2 March.

Map of southern Lebanon and north Israel, showing the locations of 35 confirmed FPV drone strikes inside the area of Lebanon occupied by Israeli forces. It also marks the 20km operational range of the drones inside Israel.

One verified video shared on Thursday shows at least four FPV drones attacking an Israeli border outpost near Kiryat Shmona, targeting a series of military vehicles in sequence. At least two of them can be seen heavily damaged or destroyed in the clips.

**NEWS****Foreign****US and Nigeria presidents say senior IS leader killed in joint operation**

A senior Islamic State group leader has been killed in a joint operation by United States and Nigerian forces in the west African country, the two countries' presidents said.

US President Donald Trump, in a post on his Truth social media, said Abu-Bilal al-Minuki was killed in a "meticulously planned" joint operation with Nigerian forces.

He went on to say that al-Minuki - who has been under US sanctions since 2023 - was the second-in-command of ISIS globally and "the most active terrorist in the world".

Nigeria's President Bola Ahmed Tinubu called the strike, which took place in the early hours of Saturday morning, a "significant example of effective collaboration in the fight against terrorism".

In a statement posted on X, he confirmed al-Minuki's death along with several of his lieutenants during a strike on his compound in the Lake Chad Basin.

"Our determined Nigerian Armed Forces, working closely with the Armed Forces of the United States, conducted a daring joint operation that dealt a heavy blow to the ranks of the Islamic State," he said.

An army spokesperson said the precision air-land opera-

tion followed intelligence that al-Minuki's cell had established a "concealed and fortified enclave" at a remote village in the north-eastern Borno State.

It is the epicentre of a 17-year armed insurgency waged by Boko Haram and its splinter group, Islamic States West Africa. Thousands have been killed in the fighting which has displaced some two million people.

The military said there were no casualties or loss of assets in the strike that was conducted as part of its ongoing counter-insurgency initiative, in coordination with US Africa Command (Africom).

The Nigerian military sees al-Minuki's death as removing a "critical node through which ISIS coordinated and directed operations across different regions of the world".

Since late 2025, the Nigerian government has been under pressure from the United States, which has accused it of not doing enough to combat the Islamist militant threat.

On Christmas Day, the US in collaboration with Nigeria, carried out airstrikes in north-western Sokoto State targeting fighters from the Islamic State in the Sahel group, usually active in neighbouring Niger.

**Agency says over 40 per cent of Sudanese face acute food insecurity**

United Nations-backed global hunger monitoring agency has said that amid the ongoing civil war in Sudan, millions of people face crisis levels of acute food insecurity.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification's latest analysis shows that 19.5 million Sudanese - two out of every five citizens - are in danger.

As the conflict enters its fourth year, violence, displacement, and severe humanitarian access constraints are impacting children, families, and communities across the country.

Sudan country director for Action Against Hunger, Samy Guessabi, described the situation as "alarming".

"What is also extremely alarming is the 135,000 people that are in IPC Phase 5, which is a catastrophe phase, meaning that they are facing extreme acute malnutrition, extreme acute food insecurity," he said.

The IPC analysis found that more than 5 million people are classified in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency), while a further 14 million people are in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis).

Conditions, it said, are also expected to deteriorate further in the upcoming June-September lean season.

While no area is in famine, 14 situated in North Darfur, South Darfur, and South Kordofan are at risk.

Funding shortfalls continue to have a negative impact on the response by aid agencies to the crisis.

Only 20 per cent of Sudan's 2026 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan had been funded as of April 2026.

Humanitarian assistance remains critically inadequate compared to the scale of needs, with about 9 million people internally displaced, and an estimated 40 per cent of health facilities non-operational.

The ongoing conflict in the Middle East has added another layer of complexity to the crisis in Sudan, contributing to higher prices for fuel, food, and fertiliser.

Aid agencies, including Action Against Hunger, warn of severe consequences if more funding is not received soon.

"Not having sufficient funding will push all the humanitarian organisations to prioritise and definitely there's not enough money to support everyone," said Guessabi.

"We are pushed into a terrible situation where we need to choose who we can assist. That's a reality faced today by all the humanitarians in Sudan," he said.

The war in Sudan broke out in April 2023 after long-simmering tensions between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces erupted into a full-scale armed conflict.

**TAIWAN PRESIDENT:**

President Lai says Taiwan does not need to declare formal independence.

**Taiwan insists it is independent after Trump warning**

Taiwan has insisted it is a sovereign, independent nation, after US President Donald Trump cautioned it against formally declaring independence from China.

Trump's remarks came after a two-day summit in Beijing, after which he said he had "made no commitment either way" about the self-governing island - which China claims as part of its territory and has not ruled out taking it by force.

After talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Trump also said he would soon decide whether to approve an \$11bn (\$8bn) package of weapons to be sold to Taiwan.

The US administration is bound by law to provide Taiwan with a means of self-defence, but has frequently had to square this alliance with

maintaining a diplomatic relationship with China.

Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te has previously stated that Taiwan does not need to declare formal independence because it already sees itself as a sovereign nation.

On Saturday, presidential spokesperson Karen Kuo said it was "self-evident" that Taiwan was "a sovereign, independent democratic country".

She added, however, that Taiwan was committed to maintaining the status quo with China - in which Taiwan neither declares independence from China nor unites with it.

Many Taiwanese consider themselves to be part of a separate nation, though most are in favour of maintaining their current status.

Washington's established

position is that it does not support Taiwanese independence, with continued ties with Beijing being contingent on its acceptance that there is only one Chinese government.

In an interview with Fox News after meetings with President Xi, Trump reiterated that US policy on Taiwan had not changed, while making it clear he did not seek conflict with Beijing.

"I'm not looking to have somebody go independent," he said.

"You know, we're supposed to travel 9,500 miles (15,289km) to fight a war. I'm not looking for that. I want them to cool down. I want China to cool down."

On the flight back to Washington, the US president had told reporters that he and Xi had spoken "a lot" about the is-

land, but said he had declined to discuss whether the US would defend it.

Xi "feels very strongly" about the island and "doesn't want to see a movement for independence", Trump said.

Beijing has been vocal in its dislike of Taiwan's president, who it has previously described as a "troublemaker" and a "destroyer of cross-strait peace".

China has ramped up military drills around the island in recent years, raising tensions in the region and testing the balance that Washington has struck.

Trump said the impending arms package would be discussed with Taiwan's leadership.

He added: "I'm going to say I have to speak to the person that right now is, you know, you know who he is, that's running Taiwan."

**Trump-backed challenger defeats Republican senator who voted to convict president**

A Trump-backed challenger has defeated a two-term Republican senator who voted to convict the president at his 2021 impeachment trial.

Congresswoman Julia Letlow will advance to a runoff next month, ousting incumbent Bill Cassidy, who President Donald Trump branded a "disloyal disaster" ahead of Louisiana's high-stakes contest on Saturday.

State treasurer John Fleming, another Trump-aligned candidate, also advanced to the Republican runoff for Louisiana's Senate seat.

The top two candidates, Letlow and Fleming, will face off again in late June as neither won a simple majority. The candidate who wins the runoff will then run against a Demo-

cratic candidate in the general election.

Cassidy, 68, was one of seven Senate Republicans who voted to convict Trump when the president was impeached after the 6 January attack on the Capitol in 2021. Trump was acquitted after the Senate voted 57-43, short of the two-thirds majority required.

Of the seven Republicans who voted to convict him, only three still serve in the Senate: Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, who survived a primary challenge in 2022; Susan Collins of Maine; and Bill Cassidy.

During his re-election campaign, the Louisiana senator sought to repair his strained relationship with Trump.

"I don't really think President Trump likes me that much, but we work really well

together," Cassidy told reporters last week, pointing to several bills he sponsored that were later signed into law by the president.

But Trump had made it clear he wanted Cassidy gone, and in January encouraged Letlow, 45, to challenge the senator.

"I want to say thank you to a very special man - the best president this country has ever had, President Donald Trump," Letlow said in a speech after the late evening results.

In his election night remarks, Cassidy did not mention Trump by name. But he did allude to the president and his false claims that the 2020 election had been stolen.

"When you participate in democracy, sometimes it doesn't turn out the way you want it to," Cassidy told supporters in

Baton Rouge. "But you don't pout. You don't whine. You don't claim that an election was stolen from you."

American leaders, he said, should not be focused on loyalty to one individual, but rather to the wellbeing of the general public.

"And if someone doesn't understand that and attempts to control others through using the levers of power, they're about serving themselves," he said. "They're not about serving us. And that person is not qualified to be a leader."

Trump cheered the results on Truth Social, his social media platform, writing, "it's nice to see that his political career is OVER!"

"That's what you get by voting to Impeach an innocent man," the president added in another post.

# Sports

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

## Cricket: Northern Lions claim historic opening win

The Nigeria Super League began in thrilling fashion on Saturday, as Northern Lions defeated Southern Sharks by four wickets in the tournament's opening fixture.

The historic encounter took place at the Tafawa Balewa

Square Cricket Oval in Lagos, drawing attention from players, officials and cricket supporters.

The opening contest delivered excitement, discipline and a glimpse of the league's growing competitive quality.

Southern Sharks won the

toss and chose to bat first, hoping to set a challenging target.

Their plans quickly suffered a major setback against a disciplined Northern Lions bowling attack.

Reigneth Osagie struck almost immediately, removing two batters in the opening over as Southern Sharks collapsed to 6 for 2.

Northern Lions' fielders backed their bowlers brilliantly, maintaining pressure and limiting scoring opportunities across the early overs.

Danladi Isaac attempted to rebuild the innings with a determined knock of 26 from 33 deliveries.

Akhigbe Miracle also contributed with 22 runs, showing patience and composure at a difficult stage.

In spite of their efforts, Southern Sharks struggled to form

meaningful partnerships as wickets continued to fall regularly.

The innings eventually closed at 89 all out after 20 overs, leaving their bowlers with a modest total to defend.

Northern Lions captain Okpe Sylvester led from the front with a superb spell.

Sylvester finished with remarkable figures of three wickets for just nine runs.

Osagie also impressed with the ball, continuing his fine opening spell to finish among the wickets.

Beki Mubarak Kehinde added further pressure, ensuring Southern Sharks never found momentum.

Speaking after the innings, Sylvester praised his bowling unit. "Our plan was simple, attack early, stay disciplined, and force mistakes," he said.



CRICKET GAME



ANTOINE SEMENYO

## Semenyo fires Manchester City to second trophy of the season

Ghanaian forward Antoine Semenyo scored a 72nd minute winner as Manchester City edge Chelsea 1-0 to emerge FA cup champions on Saturday.

Chelsea held their own for the most part of the game with solid defending but Pep Guardiola's men eventually found the net through Semenyo's back-heel strike assisted by Haaland.

It is Manchester City's second trophy of the season after beating Arsenal to the Carabao cup in March.

City are still in position for a third trophy for the season as they trail Arsenal by two points in the EPL title race going into the last two games of the season.

Captain Bernardo Silva described the victory as special for him as he leaves the Club at the end of the season.

"It is just special to me in my last season to give them another trophy"

For Chelsea, the lost means their hope for European football is now slimmer as they are ninth-placed on the Premier League table.

## 2026 African Cycling Championship: South Africa leads as Nigeria maintains second place

The Cycling Federation of Nigeria (CFN) on Sunday officially released the latest results from the ongoing 2026 African Track Cycling Championships taking place in Abuja.

A total of 103 medals have so far been won at the championship, comprising 36 gold, 35 silver and 32 bronze medals.

The championship, which commenced on May 11 and ends today at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Velodrome package A, in Abuja.

The event is 12th edition of the Confederation of African Cycling (CAC) Track Cycling Championships.

South Africa currently top the medal table with 19 gold, 10 silver and nine bronze medals, amassing 38 points to maintain its dominance at the championship.

Host nation Nigeria occupies second position with seven gold, seven silver and nine bronze medals, totaling 23 points.

Egypt is placed third with seven gold, four silver and eight bronze medals, with 19 points while Algeria sits fourth with three gold, 12 silver and five bronze medals with 20 points.

Benin Republic completes the top five standings with two silver and one bronze medal with three points.

Earlier, Nigeria recorded an impressive performance at the 3rd CAC Para Cycling Championships held from May 9 to May 11 at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium Velodrome in Abuja.

The host nation finished

top of the para championship medal table with nine gold, five silver and two bronze medals to secure 16 points, ahead of Egypt, which recorded 14 medals comprising five gold, six silver and three bronze medals.

Kenya occupies third place in the para championship standings with nine medals made up of five gold, one silver and three bronze medals.

South Africa finished fourth with three gold and one bronze medal, while Algeria completed the top five standings with two silver medals.



2026 AFRICAN CYCLING CHAMPIONSHIP

## Cricket: Middle-Belt Tigers claim 4-wicket victory against Western Dolphins

Middle-Belt Tigers opened their Nigeria Super League campaign with a composed four-wicket victory over Western Dolphins on Saturday in Lagos.

The match took place at the Tafawa Balewa Square Cricket Oval, Lagos.

Western Dolphins won the toss and elected to bat first, hoping to build early pressure in the second match.

The Dolphins posted 129 for six in their allotted 20 overs after a spirited batting display.

David Abiebhode provided an explosive start, smashing 31 runs from just 17 deliveries.

Ajekun Daniel steadied the innings brilliantly, scoring 31 from 32 balls with patience and control.

Animashaun Muheez added

valuable support, contributing 25 runs to strengthen the Dolphins' total.

Middle-Belt Tigers responded with disciplined bowling and smart field placements throughout the innings.

Captain Runsewe Sulaimon led by example, returning figures of two wickets for 17 runs.

Speaking after the innings, Sulaimon said, "We remained focused and trusted our bowling plans."

Abolarin Abdulrasheed Ayomide also impressed with the ball, helping to restrict scoring opportunities.

Ndubudem, Eghosa Aghedo Destiny and Ogunnaike Fola-juwon claimed one wicket each for the Tigers.

Their collective effort prevented the Dolphins from accel-

erating during the closing overs.

Chasing 130, Middle-Belt Tigers began carefully but lost early wickets during the powerplay. Solomon Chilemanya anchored the chase with an unbeaten 33 off 30 deliveries. His innings included two boundaries and two towering sixes under pressure.

Captain Sulaimon also contributed with a calm and responsible knock during the chase. "We knew the target was achievable if we stayed patient," Sulaimon said.

Western Dolphins attempted a comeback with regular breakthroughs during the innings.

Destiny Chilemanya led their bowling effort and kept the Tigers under pressure.

However, Middle-Belt Tigers held their nerve and reached the target in 18.5 overs.

## Raji re-elected unopposed for third term as LFA President

Raji Mustapha has been re-elected unopposed as President of the Liberia Football Association, securing a third four-year term in office.

The decision was ratified during the 30th LFA Ordinary Congress held at the association's headquarters in Congo Town on Friday, May 15, extending his tenure through to 2030.

Raji's re-election follows what has been widely described as a transformative second term, during which the federation intensified its focus on infrastructure development and grassroots sustainability.

Under his leadership, the LFA has prioritized improved facilities, enhanced financial transparency, and stronger institutional ties with global football bodies such as FIFA and CAF.

These efforts have been driven by increased accountability in the management of development funds.

Significant progress has also been recorded in the expansion of youth competitions and the promotion of women's football, with increased investment aimed at broadening participation and strengthening the domestic football structure.



RAJI MUSTAPHA

Sports



# Golden Eaglets Coach targets Nigeria revival after NFF appointment

Newly appointed Golden Eaglets head coach, Eboritise Uwejamomere, has described his appointment as a dream fulfilled after the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) entrusted him with the task of

rebuilding the country's struggling U-17 national team.

The NFF recently confirmed Uwejamomere as the new coach of the Golden Eaglets, replacing experienced youth coach Manu Garba, as the federation seeks a fresh direc-

tion following years of disappointing performances at continental and global competitions.

Reacting to the appointment, Uwejamomere expressed gratitude and pride at being handed the opportunity to lead one of Nigeria's most successful national teams.

"It's a dream come true," he wrote on his X account. "Proud to become head coach of the Nigeria U-17 men's national team, the Golden Eaglets. Over 13 years of learning, patience, hard work and dedication have led to this moment." Nigeria sports events.

The young tactician arrives with experience across different levels of Nigerian football. He previously worked with the Super Eagles as a coach-analyst and also served within the Super Falcons setup. At club lev-

el, he is the Head of Academy at Sporting Lagos, where he played a key role in developing one of the country's most ambitious youth football projects.

Uwejamomere also managed Stormers FC and gained valuable coaching education and academy experience in England with Millwall, Gillingham and Nottingham Forest. He holds a UEFA B coaching licence and is regarded as part of a new generation of coaches who prioritise tactical organisation, video analysis and data-driven decision-making.

The NFF believes his modern coaching philosophy can help reposition the Golden Eaglets after years of decline in Nigeria's youth football system. Nigeria sports events



GOLDEN EAGLETS COACH



KELECHI IHEANACHO

## Iheanacho wins Scottish League with Celtic

Super Eagles Striker, Kelechi Iheanacho, has won the Scottish League with Celtic after his side defeated Hearts FC 3-1 to emerge Champions of Scotland for the 56th time.

With 79 points before the game final-day game against table toppers Hearts FC, Celtic needed to take all three points to win the league and they did that with a dramatic comeback win.

Hearts FC scored in the 42nd minute when Shankland's strike went beyond the Celtic goalkeeper to send the home fans into frenzy.

But Celtic levelled just before half time through Engels' well taken penalty.

Martin O'Neill's men

wrapped up the win with late goals from Meada and Osmand in the 86 and 97 minutes.

Former Leicester City Striker, Kelechi Iheanacho, came off the bench in the title-deciding game and almost found the back of the net but his effort hit the woodwork.

Iheanacho had brought Celtic's title hope alive in the previous game against Motherwell where he scored a 97-minute penalty to give his side a 3-2 win, putting them just 1 point behind Hearts FC.

It is a first league title for Iheanacho after spells with Manchester City and Leicester City where he won the FA Cup and the EFL Championship titles

## Winning trophies is non-negotiable as Super Eagles coach —Chelle

Super Eagles head coach Eric Chelle has said that winning trophies is the minimum expectation attached to managing Nigeria's national team as he continues preparations for the 2026 Unity Cup in London and upcoming international friendlies against Poland and Portugal.

Speaking in an interview with TBC News the Malian tactician stressed that success remains his primary objective since taking charge of the three-time African champions.

"When I took the job, my goal was to win. If you are the coach of the Super Eagles, you need to win. There is a lot of pressure, but I am ready to do my job and give my best for this country," Chelle said.

Despite reported interest from clubs and national teams across Africa as well as the French Ligue 1 following the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations, Chelle reaffirmed his commitment to Nigeria and his long-term vision for the team. Cycling championship tickets

His immediate attention is focused on the Unity Cup scheduled to hold at The Valley in London, a tournament he believes will provide an opportunity to evaluate emerging talents and expand the national team pool.

Several uncapped and fringe players are expected to feature, including Owen Oseni,

Rafiu Durosinmi, Philip Otele, Samson Tijani and Tosin Oye-dokun.

"Nigeria is blessed with a lot of talent, but not everyone can play at the same time. My responsibility is to give opportunities to players who fit into our philosophy and vision of becoming the best," the coach added.

Chelle has also been monitoring players in the Nigeria Premier Football League ahead of announcing his squad, sig-



ERIC CHELLE

## Nigeria secures third place with 29 medals at African Weightlifting Championship

Nigeria concluded its campaign at the 2026 African Senior Weightlifting Championships

in Egypt with an impressive haul of 29 medals, reinforcing the country's status as one of the continent's leading forces

in the sport.

The Nigerian contingent, made up of 10 athletes and three officials, secured 14 gold, 13 silver and two bronze medals during the championship, which began on May 10 in Ismailia and ended on Saturday, May 17.

The team added five more medals on the final days of competition through Mary Osijo and Lucky Joseph.

Competing in the women's 79kg category, Osijo claimed three silver medals after lifting 95kg in the snatch and 116kg in the clean and jerk for a combined total of 211kg.

In the men's +110kg category, Lucky Joseph won two bronze medals with lifts of



AFRICAN WEIGHTLIFTING CHAMPIONSHIP

## Super Eagles eye AFCON 2027 spot ahead of CAF draw

The Confederation of African Football will on Tuesday conduct the qualifying draw for the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations, with Nigeria's Super Eagles set to discover their group-stage opponents.

The draw ceremony, scheduled to take place in Cairo, Egypt, will officially begin the qualification campaign for the continent's premier football tournament, which will be jointly hosted by Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

In a statement published on its official website, Confederation of African Football said 48 countries would participate in the qualifiers and be divided into 12

groups of four teams each.

"The draw officially launches the next phase of the journey towards a tournament CAF hopes will unite an entire region under the spirit of 'PAMOJA' — the Swahili word for 'together,' the governing body stated.

The competition, officially branded "AFCON PAMOJA 2027," will mark the first time in the tournament's history that three nations will co-host the event.

Scheduled to run from June 19 to July 17, 2027, the championship will also signal the return of the Africa Cup of Nations to East Africa for the first time since Ethiopia hosted the tournament in 1976.

## 2026 President Federation Cup: Bendel Insurance FC begin campaign May 19, with Katsina United Junior

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

As the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) released the fixtures for the Round of 64 of the 2026 President Federation Cup on Friday, May 15, 2026, Bendel Insurance Football Club have been paired against Katsina United Junior Team, setting the stage for the former Cham-

pions to begin this year's campaign in Nigeria's oldest domestic football competition.

The Benin Arsenal, according to the fixtures, will be host to the Katsina United Junior at Area 3 field in Abuja on Tuesday, May 19. Kickoff time is 1.00 PM.

Bendel Insurance FC won the 2023 edition of the Federation Cup after defeating Enugu Rangers 1-0 at the Stephen Ke-

shi Stadium in Asaba on June 21, 2023 and secured Nigeria's 4th ticket for CAF tournament.

The prestigious football competition also known as challenge cup in the country, could be another opportunity for the Benin Arsenal to secure another slot for continental tournament as they did in Asaba three years ago. Asaba is again the chosen venue for the final match of this year's edi-

tion as the eventual champions of the Federation Cup will earn Nigeria's ticket to the 2026/27 CAF Confederations Cup.

Insurance FC currently occupy the fifth position on the table of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) with 55 points and will be host to relegation threatened Remo Stars in the last fixtures of the season on Sunday, May 24.



# FEATURE



## EDO'S DIGITAL LEAP

# ICTA's bold strides under Okpebholo

NAS ODIGIE

When Governor Monday Okpebholo assumed office in November 2024, he arrived with a clear vision — one in which technology would not be treated as an afterthought, but as a cornerstone of governance. That vision crystallised into the SHINE Agenda and, at the heart of its digital ambitions, stands the Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA).

The appointment of Mr. Eghosa Urhoghide as Managing Director of ICTA was an early signal that the Okpebholo administration meant business. A deliberate and experienced hand in the ICT sector, Urhoghide has since moved with quiet urgency, steering the agency from a support unit into a driving force for Edo State's digital transformation.

One of ICTA's most consequential early achievements was the introduction of a government-owned email system — a move that ended Edo State's long-standing dependence on third-party servers that stored sensitive public data off-site while drawing recurring licensing costs from the state treasury. Today, the state's data centre manages official email communications for all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), bringing data sovereignty from a buzzword into practical reality.

Complementing this is Edo Cloud 2.0, a platform that anchors the administration's push for impactful digital service delivery, improving security, reducing costs, and advancing the goal of paperless governance across the state bureaucracy.

But infrastructure alone does not build a digital state. People do. And on that front, ICTA's record is equally compelling. More than 1,000 civil



GOVERNOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLO

servants — from directors to support staff — have undergone training in advanced digital skills, including artificial intelligence. The message is clear: no one in Edo's public service will be left behind in the digital transition.

Beyond the walls of government, ICTA has extended its reach into

communities. About 500 young people, including children, have been trained in data analysis and Python programming, equipping them with skills that are increasingly in demand in today's knowledge-driven global economy. In another milestone, about 100 residents graduated from a Power BI Data Analysis programme or-

ganised by ICTA in partnership with Sidol Solutions and the PIP Community — a celebration not just of certificates, but of possibilities.

Internally, ICTA has also turned the mirror on itself. A comprehensive staff validation exercise was conducted to assess workforce competencies, clarify roles, and align team objec-

tives with the administration's broader strategic vision — a deliberate effort aimed at promoting transparency, accountability, and institutional efficiency from within.

Mr. Urhoghide has been unequivocal about one guiding principle: inclusivity. The agency's training programmes are designed to accommodate everyone — children discovering coding for the first time, youths building careers in data analysis, and senior citizens navigating a rapidly evolving digital world. In Edo State's digital story, no one is excluded from the script.

For Edo State, the significance of ICTA's strides goes beyond gigabytes and server rooms. It speaks to a deeper transformation — one in which a state historically rich in culture, human capital, and natural resources is now staking its claim in the digital economy of the 21st century.

Every civil servant trained in artificial intelligence represents a government better equipped to serve its people efficiently. Every young person graduating from a data analysis programme is a potential entrepreneur, future employer, and bridge between Edo and the global technology marketplace. Every email secured on a locally owned server is a statement of confidence — that Edo State can own its data, protect its citizens, and govern with modern efficiency.

Governor Okpebholo's SHINE Agenda may still be in its early chapters, but the pages being written by ICTA are bold and promising. If the foundation being laid today remains solid and the momentum is sustained, Edo State will not merely catch up with the digital age; it could well position itself among the leaders shaping it.

The digital leap has begun and for

## Okpebholo's green revolution: How Edo is rewriting its agric story

OGBEBOR TONY IKPONMWOSA

In a state long celebrated for its fertile soil and vast agricultural potential, Governor Monday Okpebholo is demonstrating how focused leadership can translate potential into measurable progress. Under his administration, Edo State is witnessing a quiet but significant agricultural transformation — one aimed at empowering smallholder farmers, strengthening food security, and positioning the state as an emerging force in Nigeria's agribusiness economy.

The Okpebholo-led administration has prioritised direct support

for farmers through improved access to quality seedlings, fertilisers, and modern farming inputs. Distribution programmes have extended to communities across Owan, Et-sako, Oredo and other parts of the state, reflecting a deliberate effort to ensure that rural farmers are not excluded from government intervention programmes. The grassroots-driven approach has continued to attract commendation from stakeholders within the agricultural sector and local farming communities.

One of the administration's most impactful interventions has been the rehabilitation and expan-

sion of rural feeder roads linking farming communities to urban markets. For years, poor road infrastructure left many farmers stranded, with large quantities of produce wasted before reaching consumers. Today, farmers in areas such as Akoko-Edo are experiencing easier access to major markets in Benin City and neighbouring communities, significantly reducing transportation challenges and post-harvest losses.

The government has also intensified efforts to attract private sector participation in agriculture by encouraging investments in processing facilities for cassava, palm oil, and

cocoa — crops in which Edo State enjoys a natural advantage. Beyond reducing post-harvest losses, these agro-processing initiatives are creating employment opportunities for youths and contributing to the broader economic development objectives of the state.

Equally important is the administration's renewed focus on agricultural extension services. Through the deployment of trained extension officers, farmers are receiving guidance on soil management, pest control, improved farming techniques, and climate-resilient agricultural practices. Governor Okpebholo has repeatedly maintained that access to

knowledge and innovation remains essential to improving productivity and ensuring long-term sustainability in the sector.

Although challenges still exist, particularly in the areas of mechanisation and large-scale funding, the ongoing transformation within Edo State's agricultural sector reflects a growing commitment to building a more productive and self-sustaining economy. For many farmers across the state, the renewed attention to agriculture signals not just government intervention, but a genuine attempt to restore confidence in farming as a viable path to prosperity and economic growth.