

# ICJ opinion on strike can't override Nigeria's labour laws —NECA

● **Says Nigeria retains sovereign powers to regulate industrial actions, protect economic stability**

**ABUJA** The Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA) has declared that the recent advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) recognising strike action as a protected right under international labour standards does not override Nigeria's domestic labour laws, insisting that the country retains the sovereign authority to regulate industrial actions in line with national realities.

The position was made known by the Director-General of the Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association, Adewale Smart-Oyerinde, in a statement issued on Sunday in Abuja, where he stressed that while the ICJ acknowledged strike action under the framework of the International Labour Organization Convention 87, the advisory opinion did not supersede Nigeria's legal and regulatory architecture governing labour disputes.

Smart-Oyerinde said the ICJ's opinion merely recognised strike action as protected under Convention 87 but deliberately stopped short of defining the scope, content, or conditions that should guide the exercise of such rights among member states.

According to him, Nigeria remains fully empowered to determine lawful limitations on industrial actions in line with national interest, economic stability, and existing labour regulations.

"Although the ICJ recognised strike action under Convention 87, it deliberately avoided defining the scope, content, and conditions governing the exercise of such rights," he stated.

"Nigeria reserves the right to determine lawful limitations on strike actions in line with national interest, economic stability, and established labour regulations."

The NECA boss recalled that

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That The People May Know

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# Massive Edo APC primary turnout signals strong backing for Tinubu —Okpebholo

● **As president secures 131,096 votes**

RICHARD EWEKA  
**BENIN CITY/ UDOMI**

Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo, has declared that the massive turnout recorded during the All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential primary in Edo State reflects growing grass-

roots support for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu ahead of the 2027 presidential election, as the President coasted to a landslide victory in the exercise with 131,096 votes across all 192 wards in the state.

The APC presidential primary, conducted simultaneously with other states across the fed-

eration, saw President Tinubu emerge with a commanding lead after polling the highest number of votes in all wards of Edo State, while his sole challenger, Stanley Osifo, reportedly secured only one vote.

Governor Okpebholo, who spoke at the weekend after participating in the primary in Ward 2,

Udomi, Esan Central Local Government Area, said the enthusiasm displayed by party faithful during the exercise showed that support for President Tinubu and the APC was growing steadily across Edo State.

The governor, accompanied by the Secretary to the Edo State Government, Musa Ikhilor, alongside other APC members, participated in the presidential primary held at Udomi Primary

School, his home ward, where voting was conducted through the Option A4 system approved by the APC National Working Committee (NWC).

Speaking shortly after casting his vote, Okpebholo described the peaceful conduct of the primary and the large turnout of party members as a clear demonstration of support for President Tinubu and the ruling APC across Edo State.

"Today's (Saturday) primary was peaceful, and you could

see the happiness on the faces of our people as they came out in large numbers to vote for Mr. President," the governor said.

"They voted overwhelmingly for him, and this is exactly what is happening across Edo State. It is a clear pointer to what the 2027 general election will look like in the state."

The governor said the APC remained firmly rooted across Edo State and expressed confi-

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**RECEIVING THE RESULT SHEET:** Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo (right) receiving a result sheet from the Returning Officer for Ovia North-East Local Government Area, Engr. Edosa Enowoghomonwema, during the All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential primary held at the weekend.

## Lagos activates Ebola surveillance as Sanwo-Olu orders heightened vigilance

● **State says no confirmed case recorded** ● **Intensifies airport screening, emergency response amid E'Africa outbreak**

**LAGOS**

The Lagos State Government has activated heightened surveillance and emergency response measures against the spread of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), even as it reassured residents that there is currently no immediate threat of the deadly virus in the state despite the evolving outbreak in parts of Central and East Africa.

The state government said Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu had directed intensified surveillance, preparedness and rapid response actions across

Lagos to prevent any possible importation of the disease.

Commissioner for Health, Akin Abayomi, who disclosed this in a statement on Sunday, said Lagos had fully activated its biosecurity and emergency response systems, stressing that the state remained vigilant and outbreak-ready.

According to him, while the Ebola outbreak has reportedly claimed about 177 lives from nearly 700 suspected cases, the spread remains limited to the Democratic Republic of the

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# Okpebholo promises free shop allocation as traders celebrate reopening of rebuilt Oba Market

## BENIN CITY

Traders, residents and business operators at the reconstructed Oba Market in Benin City erupted in celebration at the weekend as Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo, inspected the rebuilt facility and assured occupants that shops would be allocated free of charge to genuine traders and former owners.

The governor, who paid an unscheduled visit to the mar-

ket, said that no trader would be required to pay for shop allocation, while promising that all previous occupants affected by the devastating fire incident that destroyed the market years ago would regain their spaces upon full completion of the project.

Governor Okpebholo was accompanied on the inspection by his deputy, Hon. Dennis Idahosa; former Deputy Governors, Pius Egberammwen Odubu and Lucky Imasuen; former Senator Matthew Urhoghide, retired

Major General Charles Ehigie Airhiavber; Edo State APC Secretary Lawrence, Okah and other party leaders from Edo South.

The visit triggered excitement among traders and market women, who welcomed the governor and members of his entourage

with songs, cheers and appreciation for the reconstruction of the once fire-ravaged market.

Explaining the purpose of the visit, Governor Okpebholo said he decided to personally inspect the market after receiving complaints from some traders regarding sections of the facility that were yet to be completed.

"I came here today after

seeing reports and complaints from some traders about the section of the market that is yet to be completed. Their concerns touched me deeply and that is why I decided to visit personally," he said.

The governor commended traders and market women for their patience, understanding and cooperation throughout

the reconstruction process, saying their support contributed significantly to the successful execution of the project.

"I want to thank the market women and traders for their cooperation and support which contributed greatly to the successful completion of the Oba Market reconstruction project," he added.

## Massive Edo APC primary turnout...

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dence that the state would play a strategic role in President Tinubu's re-election bid.

"We are ready for the 2027 general election, and we are ready to deliver Edo State to President Tinubu," he stated; "2.5 votes are possible. Some people may doubt it, but it is achievable and already settled in Edo State."

According to Okpebholo, the excitement, turnout and level of participation witnessed during the presidential primary reflected increasing public confidence in both the Edo State Government and the administration of President Tinubu.

He noted that ongoing development efforts in critical sectors such as infrastructure, healthcare, education and rural development were contributing significantly to strengthening support for the APC at the grassroots level.

"The people understand the connection between what we are doing in Edo State and the national agenda," he said.

"When they see roads being constructed, schools being improved and communities receiving development projects, they see a government that is working for them."

Meanwhile, the Returning Officer for the presidential primary in Ward 2, Esan Central Local Government Area, Ehimegbe Favour, confirmed that the exercise was conducted strictly in line with APC guidelines and regulations.

Favour explained that party members were verified using their APC membership cards before participating in the voting process under the Option A4 system.

According to him, President Tinubu secured 360 votes to emerge as the winner of the presidential primary in Ward 2, Udomi.

He further noted that the Option A4 voting method ensured transparency and credibility throughout the process, as voting and counting were conducted openly in the presence of party members and observers.

At the state level, President Tinubu maintained overwhelming dominance, polling the highest number of votes in all 18 local government areas of Edo State.

Governor Okpebholo, who also served as the returning officer for the Edo State APC presidential primary, later declared the exercise peaceful, orderly and transparent, noting that he personally participated and cast his vote in his ward.

## ICJ opinion on strike can't override....

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the right to strike was intentionally excluded during the drafting of Convention 87 in 1948, noting that historical records of the ILO reflected longstanding concerns about the possibility of supervisory bodies extending beyond their mandates in interpreting labour rights.

He further argued that the ICJ opinion was not unanimously accepted, revealing that four judges of the court dissented from the advisory position, which he described as leaning more towards human rights advocacy than a strict interpretation of treaty obligations.

Smart-Oyerinde maintained that while workers' rights remain fundamental, industrial actions must be carefully balanced against employers' rights to run businesses effectively, protect essential services, safeguard national security, and preserve economic stability.

He reaffirmed NECA's commitment to social dialogue and

tripartite engagement among government, employers, and labour unions, stressing that sustained industrial harmony remains critical to national productivity and economic growth.

The association, he said, would continue to encourage proactive grievance management, mediation, and constructive engagement as alternatives to prolonged strikes across sectors.

He disclosed that NECA was already preparing for the November 2026 session of the ILO Governing Body, where discussions on the ICJ advisory opinion and the future framework for labour relations are expected to take centre stage.

The NECA director-general also reiterated the organisation's commitment to supporting government efforts aimed at sustaining industrial peace, insisting that dialogue and negotiation remain the most effective pathways for resolving workplace disputes and preventing disruptions to economic activities.



### APC PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY:

Edo State Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa (centre), flanked by All Progressives Congress (APC), Ovia South-West Local Government Area Chairman, Hon. Emmanuel Ogbono (right) and Iguobazuwa East Ward Returning Officer, Amadin Enabulele (left), during the APC presidential primary held on Saturday in Iguobazuwa, Ovia South-West Local Government Area.

PHOTO: MOSES OBOH

## Nigeria pushes universal health coverage, ethical AI at global health summit

By EDWARD OSEGHE

### GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

Nigeria has renewed its advocacy for accelerated global action on Universal Health Coverage (UHC), stronger primary healthcare systems, and the ethical integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in healthcare delivery at the 79th World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland.

Speaking on behalf of Nigeria at the high-level global health summit, the Edo State Com-

missioner for Health, Dr. Cyril Adams Oshiomhole, called for urgent and coordinated efforts to meet health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), warning that access to essential healthcare services remains beyond the reach of billions of people worldwide.

Dr. Oshiomhole said Nigeria fully aligns with the position presented by the Democratic Republic of Congo on behalf of the African region, stressing that despite years of reforms and interventions, global

healthcare systems continue to face mounting pressure.

He disclosed that approximately 4.5 billion people globally still lack access to essential health services, adding that dwindling official development assistance has further deepened the challenges confronting healthcare systems, especially in developing countries.

According to him, Nigeria is championing stronger domestic healthcare financing, resilient people-centred health systems, and inclusive health-

care policies designed to guarantee equitable access to quality medical services for citizens.

The commissioner stressed the importance of sustaining national-level healthcare progress despite tightening financial pressures affecting the global health sector.

On digital health and emerging technologies, Dr. Oshiomhole described digital transformation as a major catalyst for strengthening healthcare delivery and achieving Universal Health Coverage in Nigeria.

## ITF, WSO intensify workplace safety campaign in Benin

EDWARD OSEGHE

### BENIN CITY

The Industrial Training Fund (ITF), Benin Area Office, in partnership with the World Safety Organization (WSO) Nigeria, has intensified efforts to deepen workplace safety culture and emergency preparedness through a specialised capacity-building programme organised as part of the 2026 Safety Week celebration.

The training, held at the ITF Benin Area Office, formed part

of activities marking a three-day Safety Week observance organised by the Edo Region of the SafERR Global Ambassadors' Network (SGAN).

The programme brought together operational staff and members of the ITF Safety Team under the leadership of the Chief Trainer of the ITF Benin Area Office, Amb. D. Edun Ogunbor, with participants receiving practical instruction on workplace safety procedures and emergency response mechanisms.

The delegation from WSO Nigeria was led by the Coun-

try Director, Amb. Dr. Soji Olalokun, and included the Edo State SafERR Network Regional Governor, Amb. Dcn. Theodore Ehiannire; Deputy Regional Governor, Amb. Mrs. Efe-Iyamu Iyabo; Amb. Osazee Okokoni; Amb. Peculiar Olotu; Tr. Charles Imekwumah; and Ms. Ejakpovi Sheila Ogagbe.

Participants were exposed to hands-on training in critical areas including safety awareness, emergency response, workplace first aid, blood pressure monitoring, and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), aimed at

improving preparedness during emergencies.

The initiative highlighted the increasing need for proactive safety practices in workplaces and communities, particularly in preventing avoidable accidents and strengthening emergency response capabilities.

Representatives of both organisations, while addressing participants, underscored the importance of sustained safety education and stronger institutional commitment to occupational health and safety standards.

## Lagos activates Ebola surveillance as Sanwo-Olu orders...

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Congo and Uganda.

He explained that the World Health Organization had classified the situation as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern due to the com-

plex terrain and operational challenges in the affected countries, factors that could complicate containment efforts.

Despite growing concerns, Abayomi maintained that Lagos had not recorded any suspected or confirmed case of Ebola.

He said the state had, over the years, built a resilient and tested public health emergency structure capable of responding to infectious disease outbreaks, including Ebola, Lassa fever, cholera, diphtheria and influenza.

"The Lagos Biosecurity Bio-

shield was built to protect and remains ready to respond to biological shocks. Preparedness for us is not a temporary reaction; it is a permanent culture embedded within our health

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## NEWS

# APC Primaries: Ogbeide-Ihama presents result sheet to Oba of Benin

## ● As Monarch calls for peace, reconciliation

## BENIN CITY

The Edo State chapter of the All Progressives Congress (APC) on Friday presented the result sheet from the recently concluded Edo South Senatorial District primary election to the Oba Ewuare II at his palace in Benin City, as the revered monarch urged party members to

embrace peace and reconciliation amid lingering disputes arising from the exercise.

The APC senatorial candidate for Edo South, Omoregie Ogbeide-Ihama, led a delegation of party leaders and faithful to the palace in what party leaders described as a traditional visit to seek royal blessings following his emergence in the primary election.

The delegation included Dennis Idahosa, Edo APC Chairman Jarrett Tenebe, former Deputy Governor Pius Odubu, APC State Secretary Lawrence Okah and other party leaders from Edo South Senatorial District.

Addressing journalists shortly after the visit, Ogbeide-Ihama said the primary election was conducted in line with the constitution, guidelines and

procedures of the APC, adding that party members participated freely in the process.

According to him, the presentation of the result sheet to the Oba was a mark of respect and an opportunity to inform the palace of the outcome of the exercise while awaiting the next stage of the process.

He noted that candidates who emerged victorious in senatori-

al primaries across the country were still awaiting Certificates of Return from the national headquarters of the ruling party.

"What awaits now is what every senatorial candidate in the country awaits, which is usually issued at the national headquarters of our party. We are all waiting for the Certificate of Return to be issued simultaneously to the 109 APC candidates," he said.

Ogbeide-Ihama also disclosed that although the APC national leadership had yet to issue the Certificate of Return, the result of the election conducted by the party showed that he emerged victorious by a wide margin.

He said that as a loyal Benin son, it was important for him to pay homage to the Oba of Be-

nin and seek prayers from the palace while awaiting the final decision of the party's highest decision-making organ.

Speaking during the visit, Jarrett Tenebe said all APC primary elections conducted in Edo State were successful, stressing that the party deemed it necessary to formally present the Edo South senatorial candidate to the palace in line with Benin customs and traditions.

"As a party that believes in and respects tradition, we have come to present our candidate who emerged in the Edo South Senatorial District, Omoregie Ogbeide-Ihama, to the palace for royal blessings so that the royal exclamation, 'Oba gha to kpere, Ise', can send him to the Red Chambers," Tenebe stated.



## YOUTH SENSITISATION PROGRAMME:

A cross section of participants, during a youth sensitisation and skills acquisition programme organised by youth advocate, Jace Owie, in Benin City, aimed at raising awareness on the dangers of irregular migration and promoting entrepreneurship and digital skills development among Edo youths.

## Jace Owie intensifies campaign against irregular migration, empowers Edo youths

MATTHEW OKAGHA

## BENIN CITY

Youth advocate and development strategist, Jace Owie, has continued to make significant impact in Edo State through advocacy, youth empowerment and campaigns aimed at tackling irregular migration and unemployment among young people.

Owie, a graduate of the American Academy of Project Management (AAPM), has gained recognition for championing practical solutions to challenges associated with youth vulnerability, particularly the growing trend of irregular migration through Libya and the Mediterranean Sea.

Through his involvement with the Global Relations Foundation, Owie has focused on addressing unemployment, poverty and limited access to opportunities, which experts say are major factors driving many youths to seek risky migration routes in search of better livelihoods.

As part of efforts to discourage unsafe migration, Owie in 2018 partnered with the German Embassy to organise a sensitisation campaign along LFC Textile Mill Road in Benin City, where

hundreds of young people were educated on the dangers of human trafficking, exploitation, detention camps and the harsh realities of irregular migration.

The awareness campaign, according to organisers, provided practical information and real-life accounts to counter misinformation often spread by traffickers and illegal migration agents who target vulnerable youths.

Recognising that awareness alone was insufficient, Owie subsequently introduced a free digital marketing and skills acquisition programme for more than 500 youths, equipping participants with practical knowledge in branding, content creation, social media management, customer engagement and entrepreneurship.

The initiative reportedly enabled many beneficiaries to explore legitimate income opportunities and small-scale business ventures within their communities, reducing dependence on unsafe alternatives abroad.

In furtherance of his advocacy, Owie also directed a documentary exposing the dangers and consequences of irregular migration from Nigeria through Libya to Europe.

## Amirul Hajj reassures Edo pilgrims of better Hajj experience

### ● As pilgrims commend smooth operations, reduced Hadaya cost

ABDUL-KADIR ABDULLAH

## BENIN CITY

The Amirul Hajj and leader of the Edo State delegation to the 2026 Hajj, HRH Mallam Ali Suleyman, the Oghieaga of Ivbie, has reassured Edo pilgrims in Makkah of a more rewarding and improved Hajj experience as preparations intensify for the major rites in Mina and Arafat.

The reassurance came as pilgrims from Edo State participating in the 2026 Hajj exercise commended the Edo State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare

Board for the smooth coordination of activities in the Holy Land, particularly the successful negotiation that reduced the cost of Hadaya for Edo pilgrims to 350 Saudi Riyals.

Speaking in Makkah shortly after the successful completion of the Umrah exercise, the Amirul Hajj expressed gratitude to Allah for the safe movement of pilgrims from Madinah to Makkah and described the operation so far as smooth and successful.

According to him, the Edo delegation enjoyed a seamless experience during their stay in Madinah before arriving safely in Makkah

on Friday after Jumma prayers.

"We are indeed grateful to Allah who made it possible for us to arrive safely. We had a very smooth operation as far as the rituals of this journey are concerned. We had a good time in Madinah and now we are in Makkah. We have just concluded our Umrah, and every pilgrim has been accounted for," he said.

Mallam Ali Suleyman noted that while some challenges were encountered during the pilgrimage, many of such issues were beyond the control of the Edo State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board, as they

fell under the jurisdiction of the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON).

He, however, said significant progress had been made through cooperation, patience and understanding among pilgrims and officials of the board.

"Most of the challenges we have here are beyond the purview and competence of the Edo Pilgrims Welfare Board. They fall within the control of NAHCON, both in Madinah and Makkah. But as far as we are concerned, so much has been done and achieved. We are grateful to the pilgrims for their cooperation," he stated.

## Edo NUJ partners NOFIC for free medical outreach on Obstetric Fistula Day

## BENIN CITY

The Nigeria Union of Journalists has partnered the National Obstetric Fistula Centre (NOFIC), Benin City, to organise a one-day free medical outreach for journalists in commemoration of the 2026 International Day to End Obstetric Fistula.

The outreach, scheduled for Monday, May 25, 2026 (Today) at the NUJ Press Centre in Benin City, is expected to provide journalists with access to free healthcare services, including blood sugar tests, blood pres-

sure checks, medical consultations and health education on obstetric fistula.

According to a statement issued by the Team Lead, Corporate Affairs of NOFIC, Mrs Yolanda Iyere, the initiative forms part of activities marking this year's International Day to End Obstetric Fistula, observed globally every May 23 to raise awareness and mobilise action against childbirth-related injuries affecting women.

The Medical Director of NOFIC, Professor Ileogben Sunday-Adeoye, said this year's theme, "Her Health is a Right:

Invest to End Fistula and Childbirth Injuries," highlights the need for governments, institutions and families to prioritise women's health.

Prof. Sunday-Adeoye described obstetric fistula as a devastating childbirth injury that causes uncontrollable leakage of urine and faeces, often leading to severe medical, psychological and socio-economic consequences for affected women.

He disclosed that Nigeria accounts for about 40 percent of the global burden of obstetric fistula, with higher prevalence in Northern Nigeria, noting

that the United Nations had targeted the elimination of the condition globally by 2030.

The medical expert stressed the importance of ending the stigma and social isolation faced by women living with the condition, while urging stakeholders to support efforts aimed at prevention and treatment.

He further explained that the Federal Government had established four national obstetric fistula centres across the country as part of efforts to tackle the scourge, adding that the Benin centre serves the South-South region and adjoining states.

## Lagos activates Ebola surveillance as...

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system," the commissioner said.

Abayomi noted that Lagos' disease response structure was first rigorously tested during the 2014 Ebola outbreak and later reinforced during the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to stronger preparedness and institutional coordination.

He explained that the response framework is anchored on the Lagos State Incident Command System, headed by Governor Sanwo-Olu as Incident Commander, to guarantee rapid deployment of resources and effective emergency coordination.

According to him, the Lagos

State Emergency Operations Centre remains operational round-the-clock, conducting disease surveillance and gathering real-time intelligence through trained epidemiologists and disease surveillance experts who can be swiftly deployed for investigation and containment.

The commissioner further disclosed that the Lagos Mainland Hospital, popularly known as the Infectious Disease Hospital in Yaba, has maintained a high level of readiness, with infectious disease specialists, dedicated triage systems, isolation infrastructure and intensive care facilities in place to manage varying levels of infectious disease cases.

# Educationist advocates risk-taking for career growth

LAGOS

An educationist, Mrs Nkechi Fakoya, has advised professionals not to be afraid of taking risks in their chosen careers.

Fakoya, a principal of a boarding school, gave the advice in an interview with newsmen on Sunday in Lagos.

She said many entrepreneurs and professionals become stagnant in growth because of fear of taking risks and losing what they already have.

According to her, the training she acquired from the Lagos-based HARDE Business School (HBS), helped her to build confidence, skills and

proficiency in her job.

She added that the Finance for Business Leaders module was one of her most valuable learning experiences.

"I joined the programme because I wanted to better understand the business side of education.

"One key lesson I took away was that I should not be afraid to take risks. I learned how to understand financial risks, what to accept and what to let go.

"As a principal in a boarding school, I found the Business Leadership Executive Programme (BLEP) and courses impactful and relevant to my work," Fakoya said.

"The negotiation course

helped me understand how to approach situations where both sides need to reach a solution.

"The AI, design thinking and critical thinking sessions also aligned strongly with what we are doing in school as a Google Reference School.

"I advise professionals like me to also take this course to avoid being afraid of taking essential risks for business

growth," she said.

Mr Dami Oguntunde, Chief Executive Officer of HBS, said that many professionals were often expected to lead or manage serious tasks before they were fully prepared or properly supported.

"So, we asked ourselves how technology can be used to make education more flexible and immediately useful. That led us to

build a system that delivers practical, job-ready skills," he said.

"BLEP gives them that structure. It helps them lead with confidence, discipline and a deeper understanding of business.

"Participants leave the programme with practical tools for decision-making, team leadership, business growth and personal effectiveness.

They also join a learning

community of professionals committed to building better organisations across their industries," he said.

The school disclosed that it had trained more than 45,000 learners within four years, issuing thousands of certificates, with completion rates exceeding industry averages due to its use of interactive and gamified learning methods.

## Council boss unveils waste compactor at 50

LAGOS

Mr Akinola Idowu, Chairman of Orile-Agege Local Council Development Area (LCDA) of Lagos State, on Saturday unveiled a 10-tonne DAF compactor to strengthen waste management across the council area.

The unveiling took place at the Orile-Agege council secretariat as part of activities marking Idowu's 50th birthday celebration.

The compactor was introduced to improve refuse collection, boost sanitation standards, and create a cleaner environment for residents of the LCDA.

Dignitaries, political associates, family members and friends attended the event to celebrate the chairman's milestone and commitment to grassroots development.

Staff and management of the council also organised surprises for Idowu in recognition of his leadership and contributions to

community development.

Speaking during the ceremony, Idowu dedicated the compactor to residents and his mother, who recently celebrated her 90th birthday.

"This compactor is dedicated to the people of Orile-Agege LCDA and to my mother, who recently turned 90," he said.

He explained that the new equipment would complement Private Sector Participation operators and strengthen environmental sanitation efforts within the council area.

According to him, the initiative will improve waste evacuation and promote healthier living conditions for residents across the LCDA.

Idowu assured residents that his administration would continue to deliver developmental projects aimed at building a progressive and sustainable council area.

A resident, Mr Gbenga Bamgboye, described the gesture as a demonstration of compassion, service and commitment to grassroots transformation.

## Deji dismisses Akure curfew rumours

AKURE

Traditional ruler, the Deji of Akure, Oba Aladetoyinbo Ogunlade has dismissed reports claiming a traditional curfew was imposed in Akure, describing the information as false and misleading.

The royal father spoke through a statement issued at the weekend in Akure by his Chief Press Secretary, Michael Adeyeye.

The Oba said no directive restricting movement or commercial activities had been announced by the traditional council.

"The traditional council wishes to state categorically that there is no traditional curfew in Akure. Such information is untrue and does not emanate from the palace," he said.

He warned residents against relying on unverified messages circulating across social media and other informal communication channels.

He stated that the rumours were capable of creating fear,

confusion and unnecessary tension among residents of Akure.

"We urge the general public to disregard such rumours, which are meant to cause unnecessary panic and unrest among residents of Akure," the Deji said.

The traditional ruler assured residents that normal activities should continue without disruption, insisting that the town remained peaceful and secure.

"Members of the public should go about their lawful duties and businesses without any iota of fear," he said.

The royal father also cautioned individuals spreading false information to desist immediately or risk facing legal and traditional consequences.

Oba Ogunlade stressed the importance of responsible communication, especially on matters affecting public peace and communal harmony.

He urged residents to verify sensitive information through official palace channels and relevant authorities before sharing such reports.



### CITIZENS' TOWNHALL MEETING:

Executive Secretary, Edo State Primary Healthcare Development Agency (EDSPHCDA), Dr. Coulson Osoikhai (right), and Ogida of Evbogida, Chief Osaruyi Ogida, during a Citizens' Townhall Meeting aimed at strengthening primary healthcare services through greater public participation and community ownership. Theme, "Strengthening Primary Healthcare Services in Edo State through Citizen Engagement and Ownership."

## Miyetti Allah seeks FG loans for butchers to curb beef cost

ABUJA

The Miyetti-Allah Fulaku Yeso Yeso Development Association (MAFYDA) has urged the Federal Government to provide loan facilities to butchers nationwide to enable them buy cows directly from farmers at livestock markets, rather than through middlemen.

The association said direct access to farmers would greatly reduce the high cost of beef, skin and offal across the country.

Speaking in an interview with newsmen, MAFYDA National Security Adviser, Comrade Pariya, identified middlemen between Fulani herders and butchers as major drivers of the rising prices.

He said most butchers could not afford to buy cattle directly from farmers due to lack of funds and were compelled to buy on credit from dealers at inflated prices.

"The dealers take advantage of the butchers' financial challenges to exploit them," Pariya

said.

"Most butchers usually pay them after selling the meat.

"But if the government supports the butchers with loans, they can go to the cattle markets and buy the number of cows they need. In the long run, prices will crash across the country," he said.

Pariya said a large cow currently costs between N500,000 and N750,000 at livestock markets, but dealers often resell them for between N1.3 million and N1.5 million, depending on location.

He also cited insecurity and high transportation costs

as contributing factors to the price hike.

"Security challenges play a role, but it's often exaggerated. They will tell you there is a security threat in a certain location, but when you get there, you find nothing.

"If butchers can go directly to the market and buy from farmers, everything will be easier," he said.

Also speaking, MAFYDA Secretary in Taraba, Mr Ibrahim Mohammed, attributed the high cost of beef to rising prices of veterinary drugs and vaccines, consultation fees, and lack of grazing land.

## Pentecost Sunday: Priest urges forgiveness to retain Holy Spirit gift

EPE, (LAGOS)

The Catholic priest in charge of St. Augustine Catholic Church, Ila-ra-Epe, Lagos State, Rev. Fr. Jude Akinwale, has admonished Nigerians to make forgiveness a culture in order to retain the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Akinwale, who celebrated the Mass for Pentecost Sunday, gave the admonition to encourage people to live in accordance with the dictates of the Holy Spirit and to foster peace in society.

Nigerian Christians on Sunday joined their counterparts across the world to mark the Feast of the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost Sunday marks the manifestation or descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles and, by extension, on Christians to carry out the works of the Gospel.

The event featured the anointing of tools of evangelism and the commissioning of people for gospel propagation aimed at reforming lives.

Speaking at the event dubbed "Holy Ghost Manifestation", Akinwale said that the gift of the Holy Spirit connotes peace and stewardship.

He stressed that the Spirit of God is made available to enable people to conduct human affairs with harmony and forgiveness of wrongdoings in order to pave the way for inner peace.

According to him, forgiveness of one another's transgressions gives room for salvation and better coexistence with others.

"The world today would be a lot better if people made forgiveness a culture and embraced stewardship in all facets

of human conduct.

"As witnesses to the great commission of Jesus Christ, the Spirit, otherwise known as the Comforter, is poured upon us to renew our strength to take the Good News to every corner of the earth," he said.

The priest described Nigeria as a project for divine intervention through faithful prayers ahead of the forthcoming general elections and amid its security challenges, urging Christians not to relent in praying for a better transition in the country.

**NEWS****FERMA begins safety intervention on Owo-Ikare-Akungba road****AKURE**

The Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA) has commenced safety intervention programme along Owo-Ikare-Akungba road, and Ekiti Southbound road in Ondo State.

The Federal Road Maintenance Engineer (FRME) in Ondo State, Abiosun Oyelami, disclosed this in an interview with our correspondent on Sunday in Akure.

Oyelami explained that the intervention programme was part of efforts to improve safety and protect federal road infrastructure.

He said the intervention, under the Operation Safe Guard the Road (OSGR) programme, marked the second phase of the initiative in the state.

According to him, the programme focuses on pothole patching, vegetation control, carriageway cleaning and drain-

age desilting to improve visibility and ensure safer movement for motorists along the route.

"The programme is designed to preserve and protect federal roads while enhancing safety for all road users.

"It will also help to reduce travel time, accident rates and vehicle maintenance costs on the corridor," he said.

Oyelami explained that FERMA engaged about 50 youths residing along the cor-

ridor to carry out the maintenance activities.

He said the workers were properly documented to ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation process.

Oyelami noted that the participants have completed their orientation and safety sensitisation before deployment to different sections of the road.

He disclosed that the workers were divided into three opera-

tional teams for effective implementation of the programme.

"The vegetation control team was deployed to bends and corners along the Owo-Ikare-Arighi axis to improve visibility for drivers and reduce criminal hideouts along the route.

"The second team is handling pothole patching, while the third team is carrying out carriageway and drainage desilting activities," he said.

Oyelami added that the initiative has an economic empow-

erment component through monthly stipends for the youths engaged under the programme.

He said the initiative aligned with the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Tinubu, and was conceived under the leadership of FERMA Managing Director, Engr Emeka Agbasi.

Oyelami reaffirmed FERMA's commitment to maintaining federal roads in Ondo State and appealed to motorists to cooperate with workers handling the intervention exercise.

**UMRAH IN MAKKAH:**

Edo pilgrims performing sa'i during Umrah in the Holy Mosque in Makkah.

**NABTEB extends 2026 NCEE registration, shifts exam to June 13****BENIN CITY**

The National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB) has extended the registration period for the 2026 National Common Entrance Examination (NCEE) into technical colleges across Nigeria to May 31.

The board also announced a shift in the examination date from June 6 to June 13.

This decision is contained in a statement issued on Sunday in Benin by the board's Assistant Director, Media and Protocol, Mr Uchechukwu Olisah.

According to him, the approval for the extension was conveyed by the Registrar and Chief Executive Officer of NABTEB, Dr Aminu Mohammed.

He noted that this approval was communicated through an internal memorandum signed by the Director of Examinations Administration, Ms

Chigoziem Metu.

"With this extension, the registration for the National Common Entrance Examination will close on Sunday, May 31, while the examination earlier scheduled for Saturday, June 6, will now hold on Saturday, June 13," he said.

The board's spokesperson explained that the extension followed requests from prospective candidates seeking additional time to complete their registration processes.

He said the registrar expected candidates to take advantage of the extension to conclude all registration formalities before the new deadline.

Olisah quoted Mohammed as encouraging entrepreneurially inclined students and candidates seeking admission into higher institutions to register for and participate in NABTEB examinations.

The examination is conducted for admission into technical colleges across the country.

**Rights activist urges FG to end unabated militia attacks across Nigeria****BENIN CITY**

Human rights and civil society activist, Dr Jude Obasanmi, has urged the Federal Government to rise to the occasion and address the unabated militia attacks on innocent Nigerians across the states of the federation.

Obasanmi made the call in a statement titled "State of the Nation," which was made available to reporters on Sunday in Benin City.

He said, "The Nigerian state can no longer credibly deny complicity, whether by action, negligence, silence, or calculated inaction, in these coordinated, systematic, and repeatedly executed attacks against inno-

cent people.

"What we are witnessing is no longer isolated violence. It bears the markings of orchestration, planning, protection, and sustained failure of responsibility."

Obasanmi called on the federal government to immediately take proactive steps to address the insecurity and restore people's trust in government.

"Today, many Nigerians increasingly feel abandoned by the very institutions sworn to protect them.

"Villages burn, communities are displaced, citizens live in fear, and yet official responses remain weak, selective, reactive, delayed, or politically sanitised.

"A nation that normalises bloodshed risks losing not only lives but also its moral legiti-

macy," he said.

He warned that "if this trajectory continues unchecked, the long-term consequences will be devastating."

According to him, a government that repeatedly fails to prevent mass killings, prosecute perpetrators, and reassure its citizens inevitably raises grave questions about its role, intent, or indifference.

The activist added that "history has repeatedly shown that when governments fail to protect their citizens, citizens eventually stop believing in the nation itself.

"And that is the greatest danger before us. We have not merely been attacked.

"We are being conquered psychologically, socially, economically, and territorially, while

those entrusted with power continue to deny, deflect, decamp, or remain silent," he said.

Obasanmi noted that unless the government reviewed its security architecture to tame the menace, it could lead to the collapse of public trust in the Nigerian state and its institutions.

He added that "it may also lead to deepening ethnic, regional, and religious divisions, the rise of self-defence militias and widespread vigilantism.

"It may further trigger economic decline as insecurity destroys farming, investment, and commerce, causes mass displacement and humanitarian crises, and fuels the radicalisation of frustrated youths who no longer believe in justice or democracy."

**APC Primary: Lagos lawmaker congratulates Tinubu on emergence as presidential candidate****LAGOS**

Mr Stephen Ogundipe, a member of the Lagos State House of Assembly, has congratulated President Bola Tinubu on his emergence as the All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential candidate for the 2027 general elections.

Ogundipe, who is also the spokesperson for the Lagos Assembly and represents Oshodi-Isolo Constituency I, gave the congratulatory message while speaking with newsmen in Lagos on Sunday.

Tinubu clinched the party's presidential ticket for the 2027 election after recording a landslide victory in the party's presidential primary held across Nigeria at the weekend.

He said: "I heartily congratulate our indefatigable leader, President Bola Tinubu, on his well-deserved re-emergence and affirmation as the flag bearer of our great party for the 2027 general election.

"Your courageous leadership, visionary governance and unwavering commitment to the Renewed Hope Agenda continue to reposition Nigeria on the path of sustainable growth, economic recovery, institutional reforms and national development.

"The bold and strategic steps being taken under your administration are already yielding positive results and laying a solid foundation for a brighter and more secure future for generations yet unborn."

Ogundipe, who recently emerged as the APC candidate for Oshodi-Isolo constituency I, said Tinubu's exemplary political mentorship, resilience and dedication to nation-building remained a source of inspiration to many of them in public service.

The lawmaker appreciated the privilege and opportunity of working with the president over the years, noting that the experience had greatly shaped and propelled his political growth and leadership journey.

**Zamfara ADC vows grassroots push for ex-VP Atiku****GUSAU**

The Shehu Maishanu-led Zamfara chapter of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) has endorsed former Vice President Atiku Abubakar as its preferred aspirant for the party's May 25 presidential primary.

Atiku was endorsed during a strategic stakeholders' meeting held at the International Conference Hall in Gusau, the Zamfara capital at the weekend.

The ADC Presidential Screening Committee had cleared Atiku Abubakar, Rotimi Amaechi, and Mohammed Hayatudeen to contest the party's primary election scheduled for Monday, May 25, in Abuja.

The meeting was attended by state executive members, national representatives from the state, and the party's candidates for Governorship, National Assembly, and State House of Assembly seats.

"After extensive deliberations on Nigeria's current challenges and the future of demo-

cratic governance, participants resolved that Atiku Abubakar possesses the experience and leadership qualities needed to address the nation's pressing issues," the stakeholders said.

They cited Atiku's track record in public service and private enterprise, describing him as a seasoned democrat, bridge-builder, and advocate of economic reform and inclusive governance.

The stakeholders expressed confidence in his ability to restore national unity, improve security, and stimulate economic growth.

They declared that the people of Zamfara would strongly support the former vice president to clinch the ticket and contest the 2027 presidency, stressing that the country requires his leadership at this critical time.

Speaking at the meeting, Abubakar Abdullahi, a former APC Zamfara Central Coordinator for the 2023 presidential election, said the electoral irregularities witnessed in previous elections would not be repeated in 2027.

# Northern insecurity can't end through military force alone —SABMF

## KADUNA

The Sir Ahmadu Bello Memorial Foundation (SABMF) has said that military operations alone cannot sustainably end insecurity in Northern Nigeria without strong grassroots intelligence, data-driven coordination and institutional collaboration.

The foundation made its posi-

tion known during the May 2026 Monthly Online Mentorship Programme held at the weekend.

The programme, themed, "An Evidence-Based Solution to the Northern Insecurity Challenges: For Regional Unity, Peace and Development," focused on practical strategies for addressing the region's persistent security challenges.

Speaking at the event, the

Director General and Chief Executive Officer of SABMF, Dr Abubakar Umar, said sustainable peace required synergy among governments, security agencies, traditional institutions and local communities.

According to him, credible grassroots intelligence, systematic use of data and active citizen participation are critical to achieving lasting security.

"Sustainable peace is not achieved on the battlefield alone.

"It requires a deeply synchronized approach where governments, formal security agencies, traditional institutions and

local communities operate as a united front," Umar said.

He added that the foundation remained committed to promoting practical and evidence based solutions to the socio economic and security challenges confronting Northern Nigeria.

The foundation also advocated the establishment of digitally equipped "Palace Situation Rooms" within emirates and chiefdoms to serve as local intelligence and early warning centres.

SABMF urged Northern governors, state assemblies, security agencies and local government

authorities to adopt the PTP Model across the 19 Northern states and deploy the PTPMiSi platform to strengthen intelligence sharing and coordination.

It also called for the enactment of laws to institutionalise community intelligence systems, protect informants and regulate data governance.

Other recommendations included sustainable funding for grassroots security structures and digital literacy training for traditional rulers, youth leaders and local vigilante groups.

The foundation stressed that security remained essential for

economic growth, agricultural productivity, investment and social stability in the region.

"Force can hold the line temporarily, but it cannot heal the crisis without coordinated leadership, reliable data systems and deep institutional synergy," it stated.

Delivering the keynote address, a security and technology expert, Dr Umar Bindir, identified the disconnect between formal security institutions and community intelligence structures as a major weakness in Nigeria's current security framework.

## Kano seizes N200m fake drugs, vows crackdown on unapproved medicines

### KANO

The Kano State Government has reaffirmed its commitment to protecting public health and curbing the circulation of substandard drugs.

This followed the seizure of counterfeit medicines worth over N200 million in the state.

The seizure was said to have been carried out by the Kano State Committee on Motor Parks and Other Public Places during a raid within the Kano metropolis.

Balarabe Abdullahi-Kiru, Director, Public Enlightenment, Ministry of Information and Internal Affairs made the disclosure in a statement issued to Newsmen in Kano on Sunday.

According to the statement, the drugs confiscated during the operation lacked approval from the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC).

It said the operation was jointly conducted by the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), the Nigeria Po-

lice Force, and the Nigeria Immigration Service.

The statement noted that the raid was led by the committee's Chairman, Maj. Adamu Abubakar-Usman (Rtd), following intelligence reports and the government's ongoing efforts to ensure only safe, approved medicines were sold to the public.

Speaking during the operation, Abubakar-Usman disclosed that the fake drugs were found in an abandoned building where they were stored under extreme heat and unhygienic conditions.

"These drugs lacked NAFDAC certification and therefore pose a serious danger to public health, especially to women and children.

"Storing drugs under excessive heat and poor sanitary conditions can compromise their efficacy and cause serious harm to consumers, particularly when they are not approved by the relevant authorities," he added.

He said the committee would continue to collaborate with security and health agencies to combat the trafficking of fake drugs and ensure that offenders are prosecuted.



**UNVEILING OF TWO BOOKS:**

R-L: Coordinator, Office of the First Lady of Edo State, Mrs Edesili Okpebholo-Anani; Bishop, Catholic Diocese of Uromi, Most Rev. Dr Donatus Ogun; and Executive Director, Uromi JDPCI, Very Rev. Fr. Dr Fidelis Oriabure Arhedo, during the unveiling of two books, "JDPCI Legacy Book" and "Esan Customary Laws and Practices," at the 20th anniversary celebration of Uromi JDPCI.

## Defence Minister to chair maiden Nigeria Private Security Conference 2026

### ABUJA

The Minister of Defence, retired Gen. Christopher Musa, will chair the Nigeria Private Security Conference (NPSC) 2026, organisers have said.

The conference, themed, "Building a modern security ecosystem: Integrating private sector capacity into Nigeria's national security architecture," is scheduled to hold on June 13 in Abuja.

According to the organisers, the event is designed to bring together a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including government officials, security agencies, private sector operators, investors and international delegates.

In a letter dated May 20 and signed by Group Capt. MK Nalle on behalf of the minister but made available to newsmen on Sunday, Musa described the conference as a structured national platform aimed at fostering collaboration among government, defence, intelligence, private sector and technology stakeholders.

He affirmed his acceptance to chair the conference and expressed the ministry's readiness to work with organisers to ensure its success.

Convener of the conference, Charles Awuzie, commended the minister for supporting the initiative, noting that his participation underscored commitment to strengthening Nigeria's security framework.

Awuzie said the conference would convene top decision-makers, including state governors and national security leaders, to drive policy discussions and partnerships.

He added that the event would also feature exhibitions aimed at connecting participants to commercial opportunities within the security sector.

According to him, the conference seeks to promote community-based security systems supported by technology and regulation, stimulate job creation in the private security industry and advance reforms to enhance safety nationwide.

## KADUNA

The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Kaduna State Sector Command, has commenced preparations for the Eid-el-Kabir Special Patrol Operations to ensure safer roads, free flow of traffic and reduction in road crashes during the festive period.

This was contained in a statement issued on Sunday in Kaduna by the Command's Public Enlightenment Officer

(PEO), Route Commander Usman Garba.

Garba said the special patrol operation was designed to enhance safety on all major highways and critical corridors across the state through increased patrol visibility, strategic deployment of personnel, prompt rescue services and sustained public enlightenment campaigns.

According to him, the command has deployed 1,462 Regular Marshals and 472 Special

Marshals for effective coverage during the operation.

He added that 25 patrol vehicles, eight ambulances, two heavy-duty tow trucks, one tow truck carrier and five motorcycles had also been deployed to strategic locations across the state for effective traffic management and quick response to emergencies during the Sallah celebrations.

The PEO further disclosed that the Command's roadside clinics had been activated and adequately stocked with medical consumables to provide immediate medical attention and

emergency response services to crash victims during the patrol period.

He advised motorists to avoid excessive speeding, dangerous overtaking, overloading, use of mobile phones while driving, lane indiscipline, tyre violations and other traffic offences capable of causing avoidable crashes on the highways.

Garba said the Sector Commander, CC Andrew Longkam, urged all road users to cooperate with FRSC personnel and other security agencies by obeying traffic rules and regulations throughout the festive period.

## Troops rescue 92 kidnapped victims, foil terrorists' IED ambush in Borno

### ABUJA

Troops of Operation Hadin Kai (OPHK), have rescued 92 kidnapped civilians and foiled an improvised explosive device (IED) ambush in a swift rescue operation along the Buratai-Kamuya road in Biu Local Government Area of Borno.

This was contained in a statement by the Media Information Officer of OPHK, Lt. Col. Sani Uba, on Sunday.

Uba said the operation was carried out by troops of the 135 Special Forces Battalion deployed at Dutse Kura, follow-

ing detection of Boko Haram/ISWAP terrorists moving abducted civilians and vehicles into the bush at about 1122 hours.

He said the troops immediately deployed a Quick Reaction Force, with reinforcement from the 27 Task Force Brigade Garrison, to intercept the terrorists.

He said the coordinated pursuit forced the insurgents to abandon their captives and flee in disarray towards the Mangari-Dora general area.

According to him, a total of 92 kidnapped victims comprising 52 males, 33 females and seven children, as well as eight vehicles, were successfully rescued.

"The fleeing terrorists, in a bid to delay pursuit, reportedly planted three improvised explosive devices (IEDs) along the Bula Zarma-Mangari axis.

"Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams swiftly responded and successfully neutralised all three devices, clearing the route for continued pursuit operations.

"Troops advanced about five kilometres beyond the Mangari general area, while follow-up search operations indicated that the terrorists had dispersed in disarray, abandoning their objectives," he said.

Uba confirmed that no personnel or equipment casualties were

recorded during the operation.

He said the rescued civilians were provided with immediate welfare support and escorted to Damaturu for onward movement to their destinations.

According to him, the military high command commended the troops for their professionalism and swift response, describing the operation as a demonstration of improved surveillance capability, operational reach and combat readiness.

He reiterated the resolve of the theatre command to sustain pressure on terrorist elements and ensure the protection of civilians across the North East theatre.

**NEWS****JUDICIARY**

# Legal experts hail court verdict nullifying INEC's 2027 election timeline

**LAGOS**

Legal practitioners have expressed divergent views over a recent Federal High Court judgment nullifying the Independent National Electoral Commission's (INEC) revised timetable and schedules for the 2027 general elections.

The lawyers shared their differing opinions in separate interviews with our correspondent in Lagos.

Recall that Justice Mohammed Umar of a Federal High Court in Abuja, on Wednesday, nullified salient provisions of INEC's revised schedule of activities for the 2027 general elections.

The Youth Party had ap-

proached the court to challenge the revised schedule issued by INEC pursuant to Section 84(1) of the Electoral Act.

Section 84(1) of the Electoral Act deals with party primaries and requires parties to give INEC notice of conventions, congresses or primaries for candidates nomination.

The court ruled that the electoral umpire lacked the powers to abridge timelines expressly provided under the

Electoral Act 2026.

Umar held that INEC could not lawfully impose timelines inconsistent with statutory provisions governing party primaries, submission of candidates' particulars, withdrawal and substitution of candidates, publication of the final candidates' list and campaign periods.

Mr Ademola Owolabi, Principal Partner at Ademola Adetokunbo & Co., argued that INEC, as a constitutional body,

possessed exclusive authority to conduct elections and was not subordinate to the legislature.

"Section 158 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) expressly guarantees INEC's autonomy.

"In my view, the National Assembly acted ultra vires by enacting restrictive provisions in the Electoral Act 2026," Owolabi said.

He further argued that the Constitution, as the grundnorm, was intended to shield INEC from legislative interference or control.

"In the locus classicus of INEC v. Musa, the Supreme Court held that the National Assembly lacks the competence to fetter INEC's constitutional powers.

"The Electoral Act 2026 cannot curtail or expand powers expressly conferred on INEC by the Constitution.

"I therefore advise the elector-

al body to appeal the judgment and test the extent of the National Assembly's legislative powers over the commission," he added.

However, Mr Chibuikem Opara, a partner at Justification Chambers, Ikeja, praised the judgment, describing it as evidence of judicial independence.

"This is one of those moments reminding Nigerians that the judiciary can assert its independence when necessary.

"It is a commendable judgment delivered without fear or favour.

"The trial judge simply declared the law as it stands, rather than as political actors would prefer," he said.

Opara maintained that the court's interpretation of the Electoral Act reflected a resurgence of progressive judicial activism in Nigeria.

**THANKSGIVING SERVICE:**

Director-General, National Youth Service Corp (NYSC), Brig.- Gen. Olakunle Nafu (R), and President, Living Faith Foundation, Rev. Joseph Olaiya, during a thanksgiving service to mark NYSC 53rd anniversary in Abuja.

## Ex-NBA Chairman tasks lawyers on prioritising physical, mental well-being

**ABUJA**

Mr Afam Okeke, former Chairman of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) Abuja (Unity Bar) has called on lawyers to engage in regular exercise for their physical and mental well-being.

Okeke made the call during the Health Walk organised by the NBA, Abuja branch as part of activities marking the NBA 2026 law week.

He said that the initiative reflected the branch's commitment to the holistic well-being of legal

practitioners and to raise awareness about the need for people to prioritise preventive measures against prevailing health challenges among colleagues.

"We are getting to those thresholds in terms of age, so we need quite a lot of attention to our health.

"There is a need to encourage the society and our members to attend to their health with all seriousness, because, a healthy nation is a wealthy nation.

"You'll be surprised that some of us have not engaged in this kind of activity in the last

couple of months or even a year.

"We are facing a lot of challenges in the world today and there's a tendency for every one of us to neglect adequate attention to what is required to take good care of our health."

He charged Nigerians to ensure that they engage in regular body exercise to keep fit and ensure longevity.

The former chairman reiterated that such activities improve physical and mental health while fostering social connections in the society.

"The event is more than just a fitness activity; it was a thoughtful reminder that a healthy mind and body are essential

to effective legal practice and meaningful service delivery.

"From the walk itself to the fun games, networking opportunities, and on-site medical checks, the initiative promoted wellness, preventive health awareness, and camaraderie among members of the Bar."

Okeke called for a more sustainable approach to promoting a healthy work-life balance among legal practitioners and Nigerians in general.

"Legal practitioners work under tight schedules that do not promote health; our commitments are overwhelmingly skewed in favour of work at the expense of our well-being.

## Federal High Court announces death of judge

**ABUJA**

The Federal High Court (FHC) has announced the death of a sitting judge, Justice Mohammed Yunusa of the Kano Judicial Division.

The Director of Information of the FHC, Mrs Catherine-Oby Christopher, made this known in a statement in Abuja at the weekend.

The Justice Yunusa died on Thursday after a brief illness at the Kano State Medical Centre.

According to the statement, he has since been laid to rest in accordance with Islamic rites.

"Justice M. N. Yunusa was a distinguished jurist who served with dedication, integrity, and an unwavering commitment to

the administration of justice."

The FHC said the deceased's immense contributions to the Bench and the legal profession would be fondly remembered.

It said his contribution would also be greatly cherished by his colleagues, members of the outer Bar, court staff, and all who had the privilege of working with him.

"The Chief Judge, judges, management, and staff of the Federal High Court extend their heartfelt condolences to his immediate family.

"We pray that Almighty God grants them the strength and fortitude to bear this irreparable loss.

"May Almighty Allah forgive his shortcomings and grant him Aljannatul Firdaus," it concluded.

## Court dissolves petitioner's marriage over claims of spouse's irresponsibility

**IBADAN**

A Grade 'A' Customary Court in Mapo Ibadan has dissolved an 18-year-old marriage between one Mrs Rodia Olasupo and her estranged husband, Mr Abas Olasupo, following claims of irresponsibility and lack of care.

In her judgment, the court President, Mrs S.M. Akintayo held that the relationship between both parties had broken down irrevocably, hence the dissolution.

The court, consequently, awarded custody of the six children of the marriage to the petitioner, and ordered the respondent to pay a monthly feeding allowance of N60,000 for the children's upkeep.

The court also held that the petitioner must give the respondent reasonable access to the children anytime he wished to see them.

She held that the respondent

must fully partake in parenting the children, by being responsible for their education rather than sharing his responsibility with relatives.

The court issued an order, restraining the respondent from harassing, threatening and disturbing the petitioner.

Earlier, Rodia a food vendor had told the court that she filed the suit to call it quits because her husband had failed to show responsibility by providing for their upkeep in the last 18 years.

"When the starvation and uncertainty continued, I decided to move out of his home with four children.

"He took away the remaining two, distributing them among his sibling and friend.

"My lord, Olasupo is too troublesome, there is no more love between us," she claimed.

On his part, the respondent was silent on the allegations preferred against him.

## Osun court sentences man to death for murder

**ILE-IFE (OSUN)**

An Osun State High Court sitting in Ile-Ife has sentenced a 30-year-old man, Agboola Taiwo, to death by hanging for murder.

Taiwo was convicted for killing a 62-year-old woman, Jadesola Olubayo, on October 11, 2023, at a palm oil processing site near the Amula River in Olokemeji Village, Ifetedo, in Ife South Local Government Area.

Delivering judgment, Justice Adedapo Adeniji held that the

prosecution proved its case beyond reasonable doubt and found the defendant guilty.

The court sentenced the convict to 14 years' imprisonment for attempted rape (Count I), two years' imprisonment for indecent assault (Count II), and death by hanging for murder (Count III).

Prosecution counsel, Omotayo Babalola of the Ministry of Justice, told the court that the deceased had gone to the processing site with her granddaughter, Latifat Adeyemo, for palm oil production.

She said the site owner, Ajibade Bashiru, later left them to attend to his nearby farm.

According to the prosecutor, the convict subsequently arrived at the site, stripped himself naked and caused panic.

Babalola said the deceased and her granddaughter tried to flee, but the convict chased and overpowered the elderly woman.

He added that the granddaughter ran to Bashiru's farm for help, but before they returned, the convict had stripped the deceased and killed her by smashing her

face with a stone and a stick.

The prosecutor said the deceased was found in a pool of blood, while the convict fled but was later apprehended near the scene.

Babalola noted that the offences contravened Sections 319, 359 and 360 of the Criminal Code, Cap. 34, Vol. II, Laws of Osun State, 2002.

Defence counsel, Oluwaseun Akintola-Philip-Idiok and Victoria Ugochi-Layi-Jacob, pleaded for leniency, but the court rejected the plea.

## Foreign

## NEWS

# Suspect killed after opening fire on Secret Service near White House

A suspect who shot at a White House checkpoint was killed in an exchange of fire with Secret Service agents on Saturday evening, officials have confirmed.

The BBC's US media partner CBS has named the suspect as Nasire Best, a 21-year-old man who was known to the protection agency and had a documented history of mental health conditions.

US President Donald Trump thanked the officers for their "swift and professional action" in apprehending the gunman, who he said in a Truth Social post had a "violent history and possible obsession with our Country's most cherished structure".

The shooting comes only a

month after a gunman opened fire at the White House Correspondents' Dinner.

The incident on Saturday remains under investigation.

Shortly before 18:00 local time (23:00 GMT), a man pulled a gun from his bag and "began firing" outside the White House at the intersection of 17th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue NW in Washington DC, near the Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

Secret Service officers posted on the corner returned fire, striking the gunman. He was then taken to hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

A bystander was also wounded in the shooting, but the Secret Service did not give further details on their condition. No officers were injured

in the attack.

Trump was at the White House at the time, but "no protectees or operations were impacted", the agency said.

The suspect was later identified in US media as Best, who had been known to both the Secret Service and the Metropolitan Police Department and had used a revolver, law enforcement sources told CBS.

A source familiar with the investigation told CBS that Best had attempted to gain entry to the White House in July 2025 and had been arrested by officers nearby, after which he spent time at a psychiatric facility. He had been living in Washington DC for 18 months.

"Thank you to our great Secret Service and Law Enforcement for the swift and profes-

sional action taken this evening against a gunman near the White House," Trump wrote on social media.

Noting that the shooting had occurred since the White House Correspondents' Dinner was disrupted by a different shooter, he said it showed how important it was "for all future Presidents, to get, what will be, the most safe and secure space of its kind ever built in Washington" - a reference to his planned White House ballroom.

After shots were heard, reporters at the White House were rushed into a briefing room. Some had been filming when the incident occurred and shots could be heard in the distance as they spoke to camera.

# Man killed in shark attack off Australia's north-east coast

A man has died after being attacked by a shark off the coast of the north-eastern Australian state of Queensland, police have confirmed.

Emergency services were called to a boat ramp on the Casowary Coast, between the cities of Cairns and Townsville, just before noon local time on Sunday, following reports of a 39-year-old being attacked while swimming out at a nearby shoal.

Queensland Police said in a statement that the man was retrieved from the water but died from his injuries.

It is the second fatal shark attack in Australian coastal waters in as many weeks, after a 38-year-old was killed while spearfishing near Perth, in Western Australia, last Saturday.

In that incident, the man had been bitten on the lower

legs and could not be revived.

Queensland Police did not reveal details of the injuries sustained by the latest victim, nor did it disclose the man's identity.

It said it will now prepare a report for the coroner on the "sudden and non-suspicious" death.

"As the matter is before the coroner, it would be inappropriate to comment further," the force added.

Shark attacks around Australia are more common than in many other parts of the world, though they are often not fatal.

There were four encounters with sharks across Australia in January, according to the Australian Shark-Incident Database, only one of which was fatal.

Popular swimming and surfing spots tend to have measures to protect against attacks.



**OPENING FIRE ON SECRET SERVICE:**

Reporters at the White House were rushed into a briefing room when shots rang out.

# One killed and many feared trapped under collapsed building in Philippines

At least one person has been killed and about 20 people are feared trapped under the rubble of a building that collapsed early on Sunday in a city near the Philippine capital, Manila.

A search operation has so far rescued 24 people from the site in Angeles and two from a nearby hotel that was struck by falling debris.

The nine-storey building had still been under construction when it suddenly gave way around 03:00 local time on Sunday (19:00 GMT on Saturday). Officials are now investigating the cause of the collapse.

Many of those trapped are thought to be construction workers who were unable to escape in time.

Later on Sunday, local officials said the person confirmed to have died was a 65-year-old man from Malaysia, who had reportedly been staying in the hotel.

He had managed to communicate with rescuers by phone while pinned under a hotel wall, acting Philippine fire chief Rico Kwan Tiu told the AFP news agency.

"When we retrieved him... he was already lifeless," he said.

Images from the scene showed a mangled heap of scaffolding and concrete splashing out onto the street, covered by green safety netting.

City information officer Jay Pelayo told AFP that the building's walls and scaffolding surrounding it had buckled, likely trapping people in a pile of debris.

"There are big chunks of concrete, and we need equipment to lift them up," he said. "That is what's challenging for the rescue right now."

Five people have been confirmed as trapped, two of whom have been able to make contact with rescue workers, according to Reuters, with more feared to be under the rubble.

An eyewitness told the Daily Tribune newspaper that she heard a loud rumbling moments before the collapse. She said she briefly lost consciousness, waking up to see debris covering two streets.

Angeles sits around 90km (50 miles) to the north-west of Manila, on Luzon, the largest and most populous island in the Philippines.

Construction work in the far east Asian nation is frequently beset by poor planning and project management, as well as design errors, research suggests.

A landfill collapse in Cebu in January killed 11 waste workers, with others pulled from under the rubbish.

# Large-scale Russian attack on Ukraine leaves four dead and dozens injured

Russia carried out a deadly large-scale wave of strikes against Ukraine, firing hundreds of drones and dozens of missiles overnight.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Kyiv was the main target, but other areas were also hit, with about 100 people injured.

Four people were killed in the capital and wider region, with loud explosions heard across the area throughout the night. Dozens of residential buildings, a school, an opera house and a museum were damaged.

Russia's defence ministry said the Oreshnik hypersonic missile was used in the strikes, which it described as coming in response to Ukraine's "attacks on civilian infrastructure". Ukraine's military denies targeting civilians.

Russian President Vladimir Putin launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Earlier this week, he accused Kyiv of hitting a student dormitory in the town of Starobilsk on Friday, in which Russian officials said 21 people were killed.

Ukraine's military said its forces did carry out an attack in Starobilsk in Russian-occupied eastern Ukraine overnight on Friday, but maintained that it struck an elite Russian drone military unit.

European leaders have condemned the overnight Russian strikes on Sunday, which came after warnings from Zelensky that Russia was planning an attack, and that it may have been preparing to use the Oreshnik missile.

It reportedly travels at more than 10 times the speed of sound, is hard to intercept, and is known to be capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear warheads.

Zelensky - who on Sunday

visited a number of damaged buildings in Kyiv - said that Russia had launched the Oreshnik missile against the city of Bila Tserkva in the Kyiv region.

Ukraine's presidential office later said it was not confirming that, saying work was ongoing to determine exactly what had been used.

It would be the third time Russia has used the Oreshnik missile in the conflict.

Both French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz condemned the reported use of the weapon, while EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas described it as a "political scare-tactic and reckless nuclear-brinkmanship".

UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper lamented the "awful scenes" in Kyiv and vowed to "keep up pressure on Russia".

At the French Open tennis tournament in Paris, tearful

Ukrainian player Marta Kostyuk said "all my heart and all my thoughts go to the people of Ukraine" after winning in the first round.

And Ukrainian boxer Oleksandr Usyk, who last night defended his heavyweight world titles in a fight against Dutchman Rico Verhoeven in Egypt, said: "I know right now, Ukrainian people are sitting in the bomb shelter, my daughter too, in a bomb shelter, sent me a message saying: 'Papa, I love you, you will win.'"

Ukraine's air force said that from 18:00 local time (15:00 GMT) on Saturday, it detected 90 missiles and 600 drones.

It said that early data showed 55 ballistic and cruise missiles and 549 drones were shot down or intercepted, while 19 missiles may not have reached their targets.

It also acknowledged that there were 16 direct missile

and 51 drone hits in 54 locations.

Residential buildings, shopping centres and emergency services buildings were reportedly struck.

Zelensky said 69 people had been injured in the capital alone, while a water-supply facility was also attacked and the Chernobyl Museum in Kyiv had been "effectively destroyed".

Ukraine's Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said the attack on the museum was "a deliberate attack on history, memory, and truth". Footage and pictures shared by the ministry showed broken glass windows and rubble scattered everywhere.

Russia's defence ministry said it did not carry out strikes against Ukraine's civilian infrastructure, but that command posts of Ukraine's ground forces and the defence ministry's main intelligence directorate were hit.

**NEWS****Foreign****Blast targeting train kills at least 20 in Pakistan**

At least 20 people have been killed and 70 others injured in an explosion targeting a train transporting military personnel in Pakistan.

The blast occurred while the train was travelling through Chaman Phatak station in Quetta, the capital of the western Balochistan region, on Sunday morning.

Railway officials told BBC Urdu that three coaches and the engine were derailed while two were overturned. The shuttle service had primarily been transporting service personnel and their families who had been returning home for Eid.

The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) separatist group claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it was a suicide bombing. Pakistani officials have not yet confirmed this.

Images from the scene show burnt-out and mangled carriages and nearby cars, as well as bomb damage to a nearby building.

"The train was moving and there were passengers on board when the explosion occurred," Naseer Ahmed, a local resident, told the BBC.

He said that, as it had been a Sunday morning, his family had been asleep when the blast happened, shattering all his windows.

Eyewitnesses said a vehicle

laden with explosives drove into the train, causing the explosion.

A police officer and civil administration official in Balochistan confirmed to BBC Urdu that 20 people had been killed, with fears the death toll could rise. Officials said three soldiers were among the dead.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif strongly condemned the attack, saying "such cowardly acts of terrorism cannot weaken the resolve of the people of Pakistan".

"The entire nation stands in solidarity with the people of Balochistan in this hour of grief," he added.

An emergency has been declared in hospitals treating victims.

Those aboard the train had been on their way to Quetta's main railway station from a nearby military encampment, officials said. From there, they were due to travel to Peshawar and then on to their home towns for the holiday.

It is not the first time the BLA has targeted trains in Balochistan. In the past two years, the Jaffar Express has come under attack from the armed group many times.

Militants hijacked a train and took a number of passengers hostage while en route to Peshawar in March 2025.



**BOMB CARS DAMAGE:**

Images from the scene show burnt-out and mangled carriages and nearby cars, as well as bomb damage to a nearby building.

**Bolivian minister's convoy ambushed while overseeing roadblock clearance**

The convoy of Bolivia's public works minister was ambushed by protesters and he briefly disappeared while overseeing the clearing of roadblocks on Saturday.

Mauricio Zamora's vehicle was intercepted in the town of Copata on Saturday afternoon and became separated from the group, local media reported. He was later located and is now safe.

He had been in command of an operation to clear barriers set up by anti-government protesters aimed at slowing the flow of goods into the administrative capital, La Paz, and nearby El Alto.

The mission to create so-called "humanitarian corridors" was met by renewed violence from demonstrators, with some convoys reportedly attacked with stones and dynamite.

Marches, protests and roadblocks by trade unions and supporters of left-wing former President Evo Morales have intensified this week, with clashes with security forces in La Paz.

The demonstrators are hoping to put pressure on Bolivia's centre-right President Rodrigo Paz to resign just six months after taking office over his government's austerity measures, with his alignment with the US another divisive issue.

Bolivia's police and military were dispatched from major cities in the early hours of Saturday

morning to clear the roadblocks, deploying bulldozers to clear rocks and concrete pillars, aiming to ease the flow of food and medicine into the capital.

But in several places, clashes with protesters broke out and roadblocks were re-established.

Zamora's convoy had been travelling through Copata, south of La Paz, when residents began pelting it with stones and dynamite, local media reported.

His vehicle became separated from the others as they retreated but was able to take a dirt road, according to Agencia Noticias Fides. Here, though, it suffered a second ambush before eventually being able to reunite with the convoy.

Elsewhere, protesters looted and burnt down a customs post in Achicha Arriba, on the highway into El Alto, after police used tear gas to attempt to disperse protesters there.

Near Caracollo, north of Oruro, a convoy was attacked with explosives. Demonstrators burnt a military truck and looted a police station, while a minibus was burnt on the La Paz-Oruro highway, according to daily newspaper La Razon.

The government denied reports - repeated by Morales - that a person had been killed in the town of Vilaque, on the same highway. Several outlets reported journalists covering the operation also coming under attack.

**Red Cross volunteers die from suspected Ebola in DR Congo**

The volunteers are thought to have been infected before the outbreak had been identified, the Red Cross said.

Three Red Cross volunteers have died in the Democratic Republic of Congo from suspected Ebola likely caught while managing dead bodies, the organisation has said.

They are believed to have contracted Ebola on 27 March while working in the eastern region of Ituri on a project unrelated to the virus, before the outbreak was identified.

The volunteers are among the first known victims of DR Congo's Ebola outbreak, which has resulted in more than 200 suspected deaths and more than 850 suspected cases.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red

Crescent Societies (IFRC) said they had died after serving their communities "with courage and humanity".

Alikana Udumusi Augustin, Sezabo Katanabo and Ajiko Chandiru Viviane had been working in the town of Mongwulu, which is now considered the epicentre of the outbreak. They died between 5 and 16 May.

Health experts warn the bodies of Ebola patients can spread the virus because bodily fluids remain highly infectious after death.

The outbreak involves a rare species of Ebola, known as Bundibugyo, which has no proven vaccine and kills about a third of those infected.

On Friday, the World Health Organization (WHO) raised the public health risk from the virus in DR Congo from "high"

to "very high".

WHO chief Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus also said the risk in the wider region in Africa was high but remained low globally.

The country's neighbour Uganda confirmed three new cases on Saturday, bringing its total infections to five, while the African Centres for Disease Control warned 10 other countries on the continent were at risk from the outbreak.

It named Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia.

Meanwhile, DR Congo suspended all commercial and private flights to and from Bunia - the provincial capital of Ituri, where most cases and deaths have been reported - to

curb "cross-border spread".

"Humanitarian, medical or emergency flights will only be authorised after special approval from the aviation and health authorities," the country's transport ministry said in a statement.

Local media reported on Saturday that the province's military governor had banned gatherings of more than 50 people and suspended funeral wakes, while stipulating that burials could be conducted only by "safe and dignified" burial teams.

It came a day after an angry crowd elsewhere in Ituri set alight part of a hospital after the family and friends of a young man thought to have died from the virus were prevented from taking his body away for burial.

**Seven flotilla activists detained in Israel arrive back in UK**

Seven activists whose Gaza-bound aid flotilla was intercepted in international waters by Israeli forces have returned to the UK after being deported.

They were among more than 422 people involved in the Global Sumud Flotilla (GSF), which aimed to break the maritime blockade of Gaza and deliver food and medical aid.

The group, who arrived at London Stansted on Saturday via Turkey, told the BBC they witnessed people being "systematically tortured and abused over two days" on Israeli vessels and in prison.

The Israeli military previously rejected similar allegations, telling the BBC that its orders "require respectful and appropriate treatment of flotilla participants".

More than 50 boats taking part in the GSF set sail from Turkey last Thursday carrying a token amount of aid.

Israel's government dismissed the action as a "PR stunt" serving the Palestinian armed group Hamas, and ordered commandos to board the boats west of Cyprus on Monday and Tuesday.

The detained activists were transferred to Israeli vessels and taken to an Israeli prison after arriving at the port of Ashdod.

The flotilla's organisers alleged there were "at least 15 cases of sexual assaults", while other people who were detained said they were beaten and mistreated.

The BBC said it has not been able to independently verify the allegations. Israel's prison service has dismissed them as false, saying all detainees were "held in accordance with the law".

Katy Davidson, 49, from Cornwall arrived in London in a grey tracksuit which she said she was made to wear after their belongings were thrown

away.

She said: "These marks are from the handcuffs. When I asked them to loosen them they said they didn't care. They didn't care about human rights, or whether I lost my hand."

"When I actually got my hands through to have them adjusted they actually tightened them and laughed."

Hannah Schafer, a 62-year-old sailing instructor, said the aim was to open the humanitarian corridor to Gaza.

She said participants in the flotilla were taken onto "two prison ships".

Schafer alleges flotilla members were "systematically tortured and abused over two days".

Israeli authorities have said there was little humanitarian aid onboard the flotilla and it was a PR stunt.

Documentary film maker Dáša Raimanová, 44, said there were moments she thought

she'd never see her daughter again but that what they faced was "nothing compared to the people of Palestine".

"It's not a PR stunt it's raising awareness and mobilising together that as civil society we have power to do something when governments are ignoring genocide," she said.

Elliott Roberts, 34, who lives in both Lincoln and Torquay, claimed the vessel he was on was fired at.

"I was taken into a small tent straight off the boat, two soldiers were crouched down ready for me to enter, they lifted me up turned me over and smashed me into the ground and now I think I've got a broken spine," he said.

He claimed he was denied medical treatment.

Israeli authorities have denied forces sexually assaulted and seriously abused people from the flotilla.

# Sports

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

## NPFL 2025/2026: Akuneto's brilliant goal saves Insurance FC from home defeat to Remo Stars

KEHINDE OSAGIIDE

**B**endel Insurance on final day of the Nigeria Premier Football League, NPFL maintained their dignity and pride as they came from behind to score a late equalizer to share the spoils with relegation threatened Remo Stars in



INSURANCE FC AND REMO STARS

### as Rangers are Crowned champions

The Benin Arsenal, though were not at their best, but fought hard to cancel the Sky-Blue Boys first half goal lead in the extra time.

Victor Mbaoma had put the desperate visitors in front

45+3rd minutes with just a minute to end of first half, raising the hope of survival for the defending Champions.

Substitute Chijioke Akuneto came to the rescue of the Benin Arsenal a minute to the final whistle when he turned inside the box to find the right corner of the net with unstoppable short to end the tensed game at 1-1.

Recall Insurance FC defeated Remo Stars 3-2 in their first round meeting in Abeokuta and the SkyBlue Boys came to Benin on the last day of the league with the mindset of getting their pound of flesh back but Chijioke Akuneto stopped them from achieving their target.

Bendel Insurance FC however retained the fifth position they also finished last season with 56 points. And the Benin

Arsenal have also served out their three match closed doors punishment.

Meanwhile, the curtains have been drawn on the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) 2025/26 season with Rangers International of Enugu being crowned champions after beating Ikorodu City 2-1 in Lagos to finish tops with 68 points while Rivers maintained the second position to the end with a 3-0 thrashing of Katsina Utd in Port Harcourt to finish with 67 points.

Shooting Stars finished 3rd on the table with 60 points as Ikorodu City settled for 4th place with 58 points, 2 points ahead of the fifth placed Benin Arsenal.

Remo Stars, El-Kanemi Warriors, Wikki Tourists and Bayelsa Utd went down to the second division.



DEFENDING CHAMPION ANDERS LIND

## Lind retains WTT Lagos men's singles title

**D**efending champion Anders Lind retained the men's singles title at the 2025 WTT Contender Lagos after defeating Oh Junsung 4-1 in Sunday's final.

The Danish star dominated the opening three sets 11-6, 11-9, 11-5 against the South Korean opponent at the Lagos tournament.

Oh responded strongly, taking the fourth set 12-10, but Lind regained control to secure the fifth set 11-8 and defend his crown.

Lind became the first player to retain the title since the tournament was introduced in Lagos in 2023.

Speaking with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Lind described the triumph as one of

the best moments of his career. "I'm so happy right now. It's one of the best feelings in the world," he said.

The Danish player also praised Lagos supporters for their energy and encouragement throughout the competition.

"I feel at home here. The fans were cheering and dancing. It gave me great motivation to fight," Lind said.

He commended Oh's performance and revealed that surviving a difficult opening-round clash against Iulian Chirita boosted his confidence.

In the women's singles final, Japan's Satsuki Odo defeated defending champion Honoka Hashimoto 4-1 to win the title.

## Popoola wins TYB captain's inaugural Golf Tournament in Abuja

**A**biola Popoola has emerged overall winner of the TYB Captain's Inaugural Golf Tournament at the Tukur Yusuf Buratai International Golf Resort and Country Club (TYB-IGRCC), Abuja.

Popoola who played off handicap 18, returned 84 gross, and 66 nett to claim the top prize at the week-long tournament, which began on Monday and ended on Saturday night.

Popoola praised the Club Captain, Brig.-Gen. Nicholas Ashinze, for providing quality leadership and improving facilities at the club.

"I feel honoured to emerge winner of this prestigious tournament. The competition was tough, but I stayed focused throughout the rounds.

"I commend the captain for the excellent work he is doing. His leadership has brought remarkable improvements to the club and inspired members," Popoola said.

Ashinze described the tournament as a celebration of leadership, sportsmanship, and unity among golfers and stakeholders.

"It is a privilege to host this inaugural tournament. Our vision is to build a world-class golfing environment for members and guests.

"We will continue to improve facilities and strengthen the spirit of camaraderie that makes this club unique," he said.

Chairman of the Local Organising Committee, Maj. Gen. Godwin Umelo (Rtd), commended participants, sponsors, and officials for supporting the successful event.

"This tournament marks a significant milestone for the

club. The overwhelming support from golfers and sponsors made the competition memorable.

"We are proud of the standard displayed throughout the tournament and grateful to everyone who contributed to its success," Umelo said.

Vice Captain of TYB-IGRCC, Ali Peters appreciated guests, sponsors, and players for making the event successful.

Ali appreciated the Grand Patron of TYB-IGRCC, Chief of Army Staff, Lt Gen. Waidi Shaibu, for his leadership and unwavering support, which made the world-class tournament possible.



ABIOLA POPOOLA (RIGHT) OVERALL WINNER

## Media practice: Fencing coach eyes breakthrough at 2026 commonwealth championships

**N**ational fencing coach, Ibrahim Alogba, has expressed confidence that Nigeria will make a strong impression at the 2026 Commonwealth Fencing Championships in Lagos as preparations continue for the competition.

Alogba said that the country's fencing team had continued to improve and was deter-

mined to compete well against more experienced nations.

He said Nigeria might still be developing in fencing when compared with countries that had spent many years in the sport, but the progress made by Nigerian athletes in recent years had been encouraging.

According to him, the focus remains on building a disciplined and competitive team

that can proudly represent the country and challenge strongly on the international stage.

"We are preparing seriously and our athletes understand the importance of this championship because it will be hosted here in Lagos.

"Our goal is to put together a team that is focused, disciplined and ready to compete at a high level.

"We know there are countries with more experience than us, but we are improving steadily and the athletes are becoming more confident with every competition," he said.

Alogba said one of the biggest factors behind the improvement in the team had been international exposure.

He said that Nigerian fencers who had competed outside the country were beginning to understand better what top-level fencing required.



NATIONAL FENCING GAME

## MTN hosts EPL watch party in Ibadan

**T**elecommunications giant, MTN Nigeria, yesterday hosted football fans in Ibadan at an exclusive English Premier League (EPL) watch party.

The football fans watched Arsenal's clash with Crystal Palace and other final-day EPL matches on giant screens.

The initiative formed part of the company's commitment to connecting with Nigerians through football and expanding its corporate social responsibility efforts.

The watch party aimed to bring EPL excitement closer to supporters in a lively and com-

munal atmosphere.

An Arsenal supporter, Mr Olagoke Ola, expressed delight over his team's victory and praised their performance this season.

"We have waited 22 years for this dream. Arsenal fans should keep hope alive in spite of past mockery from rival supporters," he said.

A Manchester United supporter, Mr Saheed Olagoke, admitted Arsenal played impressive football throughout the season.

"Manchester United will bounce back next season because reforms are ongoing within the club," he said.



EPL WATCH PARTY IN IBADAN

## Sports



# Arsenal crowned Premier League Champions at Palace



ARSENAL PLAYERS CELEBRATING

Arsenal were crowned Premier League Champions on Sunday at Selhurst Park, the home ground of Crystal Palace.

Mikel Arteta's men defeated their host 2-1 through goals from Gabriel Jesus and Noni Madueke, making it their 26th win of their title-winning campaign.

Jean-Philippe Mateta pulled one back for Crystal Palace but it was not enough to spoil Arsenal's celebration.

Arsenal were confirmed

champions Tuesday night when Manchester City failed to beat Bournemouth, falling four points behind Arsenal before Sunday's final games.

Arsenal were handed their 14th English League title after the game, 22 years after they last won it in the 2003-04 season.

Arsenal will now focus on the UEFA Champions League Final where they will face defending Champions Paris St Germain in Budapest, Hungary on May 30.



PETER MBAH

## Peter Mbah hails Rangers' 9th NPFL triumph

Governor Peter Mbah of Enugu State has congratulated Rangers International FC on winning their ninth league title and second under his administration.

Mbah said the club's players and management made Enugu proud and etched their names in gold following the path of legends.

Rangers won the 2025/2026 Nigeria Premier Football League title after defeating Ikorodu City FC 2-1 on Sunday at Onikan Stadium, Lagos.

The victory saw Rangers finish the season with 68 points, one ahead of Rivers United, which defeated Katsina United 3-0 in Port Harcourt.

Reacting in Enugu on Sunday, Mbah praised the club's determination and success

throughout the campaign.

"On behalf of the government and people of Enugu State, I convey our profound congratulations on your deserved and hard-fought ninth league title.

"You have not only reclaimed the title won in the 2023/2024 season, but restored Enugu's glory as a hub of champions.

"You have reenacted the heroics of Rangers of old and walked the path of our revered legends," he said.

The governor said the triumph justified his administration's investments in Rangers and sports development across the state.

He added that the victory was a morale booster ahead of the 27th National Sports Festival, which Enugu will host in November.

## Rangers win 9th NPFL title after dramatic final-day 2-1 victory over Ikorodu City

Rangers International F.C. on Sunday emerged champions of the 2025/2026 Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) season after defeating Ikorodu City F.C. 2-1 in a tense Matchday 38 encounter.

The decisive fixture was played at the Mobolaji Johnson Arena before a massive crowd of supporters and football enthusiasts.

Travelling supporters of the Flying Antelopes arrived in large numbers to cheer their team to victory.

The triumph secured Rangers' ninth league title and further strengthened the club's position among Nigeria's most successful football sides.

The Enugu-based club previously won the league in 1974, 1975, 1977, 1981, 1982, 1984, 2016 and 2024.

Sunday's success also marked another major achievement for Rangers Technical Adviser, Fidelis Ilechukwu.

Ilechukwu guided the Flying Antelopes to the title in 2024 and has now delivered a second league crown for the club in 2026.

Rangers began the match with confidence and controlled possession against a determined Ikorodu City side seeking to upset the title ambitions of the visitors.

The breakthrough came in the 30th minute when Chidi-ebere Nwobodo calmly finished a well-worked attacking

move to give Rangers the lead.

The goal sparked wild celebrations among Rangers supporters, who filled sections of the stadium with songs, drums and chants throughout the contest.

Rangers extended their advantage in the 52nd minute through Nwobodo, who completed his brace with another composed finish.

Ikorodu City responded strongly and reduced the deficit in the 58th minute through substitute Moses Ali.



RANGERS

## NVBF: National Volleyball League gets underway in Abuja amid funding challenges

The Nigeria Volleyball Federation (NVBF) has flagged off the 2026 Phase One Division One and Division Two National League Championship at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja.

The championship began with

a technical meeting and will feature teams from across the country competing for honours.

Speaking at a press briefing ahead of the tournament, Chairman of the League Management Committee (LMC), Tanimu Adamu, said the federation faced financial and logis-

tical challenges in organising the competition.

Adamu, who is also the NVBF Vice-President, apologised on behalf of the federation's President, Musa Nimrod, and board members over the delay in commencing the league.

According to him, a congested international volleyball calendar and inadequate funding affected preparations for the championship.

"This is a qualification year with several international competitions lined up, including Olympic qualification events in beach volleyball and the Nations Cup," he said.

He said Nigeria would participate in four international tournaments within the next three months, with events scheduled for Nigeria, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Kenya.



NATIONAL VOLLEYBALL TEAM

## Morocco 2026: Flamingos crush Guinea 5-0 as Chidi nets hat-trick



FLAMINGOS CELEBRATING

The Nigeria's under-17 women's football team, the Flamingos, beat Guinea 5-0 Saturday in their U-17 Women's World Cup qualifier in Abidjan.

The match was played at the Stade Félix Houphouët-Boigny.

The Nigerian side dominated throughout, with captain Harmony Chidi delivering a standout captain's performance.

Chidi scored immediately from kickoff, giving the Flamingos a dream start and early lead.

The forward scored again in the 13th minute with a superb

long-range strike against Guinea.

The Flamingos maintained pressure, and FC Robo Queens striker Oluwakemi Adegbuyi scored the third in the 37th minute.

Three minutes later, Chidi completed her hat-trick with a calm finish, capping a brilliant first-half display.

Nigeria kept the tempo after halftime, and Mary Dunstan sealed victory in the 56th minute.

The result gives the Flamingos a strong advantage before next Saturday's return leg in Ikenne-Remo, nearing Morocco 2026 qualification.

## Navy@ 70: Over 87 shooters participate in Novelty Championship

No fewer than 87 shooters on Saturday participated in the Air Shooting Novelty Competition held at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja.

The tournament which is part of activities marking the 70th anniversary celebration of the Nigerian Navy, featured participants from the Nigerian Navy, Nigerian Army and Nigerian Air Force.

Speaking at the event, Chef of Naval Staff, Vice-Admiral Idi Abbas, said sports remained a tool for discipline, resilience and mutual respect, which are qualities of great servicemen.

"This tournament not only provides a platform for healthy

competition but also strengthens friendship, goodwill and comradeship among participants.

"Today's event is another reminder that sports remain a powerful instrument for discipline, resilience and mutual respect, which are hallmarks of great servicemen," Abbas said.

Also speaking, Shettima Shagir, President of the Nigeria Shooting Sport Federation (NSSF), commended the Navy for including shooting sports in its anniversary activities.

"You graciously approved shooting sports as one of the events marking the Navy anniversary. Around the world, shooting sports is largely dominated by the military.



NOVELTY CHAMPIONS



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			RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)
FULL PAGE	417,344	448,645	369,500	397,213	325,150	349,536	565,156	607,542	443,440	476,698
13 X 4	369,500	397,213	295,600	317,770	206,938	222,458	443,500	476,763	369,550	397,266
10 X 4	340,000	365,500	273,500	294,013	177,400	190,705	370,000	397,750	295,600	317,770
HALF PAGE	295,600	317,770	236,500	254,238	147,800	158,885	340,000	365,500	273,450	293,959
10 X 3	221,700	238,328	147,800	158,885	118,300	127,173	266,000	285,950	251,300	270,148
13 X2	206,900	222,418	133,000	142,925	103,500	111,263	221,800	238,435	147,810	158,896
QUARTER PAGE	192,150	206,561	118,250	127,119	88,690	95,342	236,500	254,238	133,000	142,975

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FP 5X2	81,100	87,183	97,300	104,598	5 X 2	51,950	55,846	42,120	45,279	
FP 4X2	73,000	78,475	80,700	86,753	4 X 2	45,260	48,655	34,400	36,980	
FP 3X2	64,870	69,735	73,000	78,475	3 X 2	30,900	33,218	26,600	28,595	
FP 2X2	59,000	63,425	64,900	69,768	2 X 2	18,680	20,081	15,600	16,770	

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# FEATURE



## Parents as first counsellors: How to raise a daughter who can say no

GRACE IJEOMA UMEH

**T**he Home is the First Classroom. During our *Deceptive Lingua* workshop, the most emotional moment was not the drama. It was when an SS2 girl stood up and said: "Ma, I told my mum about a boy, and she shouted at me. So I stopped talking."

Her silence cost her 3 months of fear, shame, and bad decisions.

This is why I say: Parents are the first counsellors. If the home is closed, the street becomes the classroom. And the street does not teach with love — it teaches with consequences.

Every girl needs a safe adult she can run to before trouble runs to her. That adult should be you.

### Why Girls Don't Talk to Parents Anymore

I've listened to hundreds of girls. They give 3 reasons for silence:

1. **\*Fear of Judgment\***: "My mum will call me a bad girl!" Many parents react with anger, shame, or comparison: "Your sister never did this."

2. **\*Lack of Time\***: "Mummy is always busy. Daddy comes home tired." Girls interpret silence as rejection.

3. **\*Parents Don't Know\***: Many of us grew up without these conversations. We don't have the words. So we avoid the topic completely.

But *Deceptive Lingua* thrives in silence. A boy who knows your daughter cannot talk to you will have free access to her mind.

### The Goal: Raise a Daughter Who Can Say "No"

Saying "No" is a skill. It must be taught, practiced, and celebrated. A girl who can say "No" to a boy can also say "No" to drugs, fraud, and peer pressure.

Here's how parents can build that skill at home.

1. **Create a Safe Conversation Culture Early**

Don't wait until SS1 to talk. Start in JSS1 or even primary school with age-appropriate lessons.

How: - Use daily moments. While cooking: "If a boy tells you he will love you forever, what do you think?"

- Listen more than you talk. Ask: "What did you see on TikTok today?" Don't grab the phone. Grab her trust.

- No shouting rule. If she says something wrong, say: "Thank you for telling me. Let's solve it together." Anger closes doors. Calm opens them.

2. **Teach Body Ownership and Boundaries\***

A girl who knows her body belongs to her can reject touch, pressure, and "little things."

How:\* - From childhood: Teach correct names for body parts. No se-



cretts about touching.

- Practice "No". Role-play at home: "If someone asks you to keep a secret, what will you say?" Make it a game. Laugh while learning.

- Teach consent: "Your body, your rules. Nobody should touch you without permission. Nobody should ask you to do what makes you uncomfortable."

3. **Model the "No" You Want Her to Have\***

Children copy what they see. If you cannot say "No" to relatives, friends, or even your husband, your daughter learns that "No" is rude.

How:\* - Say "No" out loud. "I'm sorry, I cannot lend you that money this week." Let her hear you.

- Explain why: "I said no because I have to pay school fees first. Saying no protects our family."

- Respect her "No". If she says "No, I don't want a hug," respect it. She is learning that her "No" matters.

4. **Replace Fear with Facts**

Shouting "Don't date!" does not work. Girls will date anyway. Teach facts instead of fear.

\*How: - Explain consequences without threats. "If you have sex at 15, your body can get infections. Your education can stop. I don't want that for you because I love you."

- Teach her about periods, consent, STIs, and pregnancy. If you won't, the internet will — with wrong information.

- Use stories, not sermons. "I knew a girl who..." works better than "You will end up in trouble."

5. **Monitor Without Spying\***

Girls need privacy, but also protection. There's a difference between spying and guidance.

How: - Know her friends. Invite them home. When you know her circle, you can guide it.

- Check her phone with her, not behind her. "Let's look at TikTok together." This builds trust, not suspicion.

- Ask about her day every evening. 10 minutes is enough. "What made you laugh today? What worried you?"

6. **Build Her Identity Outside Boys**

A girl whose only value is "being liked" will do anything to be liked.

How:\* - Invest in her talent. Is she good at drawing, singing, coding, cooking? Pay for that class before you pay for the latest phone.

- Give her chores and responsibility. A girl who runs a small kitchen budget or manages her siblings learns confidence.

- Speak her identity daily: "You are intelligent. You are disciplined. You are destined for greatness." Words shape her mind.

7. **Partner with the School and Church\***

You cannot do this alone. Schools and faith groups are your allies.

How: - Attend PTA and guidance sessions. Ask: "What are you teaching our girls this term?"

- Support workshops like *Deceptive Lingua*. After the session, ask your daughter: "What did you learn? Let's talk about it."

- Tell teachers: "If my child has a problem, please call me. I won't shout." Teachers become your eyes in school.

**Common Mistakes Parents Make**

Avoid these if you want your daughter to talk:

1. **\*Comparing Her\***: "Your mate is already in university. You are here chasing boys." Comparison kills confidence.

2. **\*Ignoring Red Flags\***: Sudden mood changes, secrecy, expensive gifts, dropping grades. Ask questions early with love.

3. **\*Sharing Her Story Publicly\***: Don't use her mistake as a sermon illustration in church or WhatsApp. Shame breaks trust forever.

4. **\*Choosing Culture Over Safety\***: "What will people say?" should never be louder than "Is my child safe?"

**What to Do If She Has Already Made a Mistake**

It happens. A boy has deceived her. She is pregnant, or heartbroken, or in trouble.

Your job is not to punish. Your job is to rescue.

1. **Stay Calm\***: Your reaction will determine if she tells you the truth again.

2. **Listen First\***: "Tell me everything. I'm here." Hold her if she cries.

3. **Seek Help\***: Call the school counselor, a doctor, a pastor, or a trusted auntie. You don't have to carry it alone.

4. **Plan Forward\***: The goal is her future. School, healing, and hope must continue. Mistakes are not the end of her story.

**Fathers: Your Role is Critical**

A father's relationship with his daughter is her first template for how men should treat her.

**How fathers help:**

- Spend time. Eat with her. Attend her school events.

- Compliment her genuinely: "You're smart. I'm proud of your grades." When she gets validation at home, she doesn't hunt for it outside.

- Protect boundaries. If a male visitor is inappropriate, correct him. She is watching.

- Teach respect. Speak well of her mother. Girls marry the kind of man their father modeled.

**The Church and Community Role**

Pastors, aunties, and neighbors must stop saying "It's not my business." Every girl in your street is your daughter.

Create mentorship circles. Invite 5 girls every month. Teach them life skills, prayer, and boundaries. When the community raises girls, *Deceptive Lingua* loses power.

**Conclusion: Your Voice is Her Shield**

A boy will whisper "You're special." But if you have whispered it louder and longer at home, she will not fall.

Parents, you cannot control every boy, every phone, or every street. But you can control the home atmosphere. You can be the first safe place. You can teach her that "No" is holy, that her body is valuable, and that her future is non-negotiable.

To every mother and father reading this: Start today. Ask one question at dinner. Listen for 5 minutes without correcting. Apologize if you've been harsh before.

Because the girl who can say "No" at home will never have to say "Help me" on the street.