

ACF suspends BoT chairman, orders forensic audit over alleged financial misconduct

KADUNA

The National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Arewa Consultative Forum has suspended its Board of Trustees (BoT) Chairman, Alhaji Bashir Dalhatu, over allegations of financial and administrative misconduct, and ordered an immediate foren-

sic audit of the organisation's finances.

The far-reaching decision was taken at an emergency NEC meeting held in Kaduna on Wednesday, amid heightened tension within the influential northern socio-political group.

Briefing journalists after the meeting, ACF National Public-

ity Secretary, Prof. Tukur Mohammed Baba, disclosed that the NEC also passed a vote of no confidence on Dalhatu, citing preliminary findings from the forum's Ethics and Conduct Committee.

Baba said the suspension was not intended as punishment but as a necessary step to ensure a transparent and

unhindered investigation into allegations contained in a petition against the BOT chairman.

"The NEC has approved the suspension of the BOT chairman and ordered an immediate forensic audit of all finances of the ACF, not just the endowment fund.

"This is to ensure account-

ability and recover any funds not properly utilised in line with the constitution of the forum," he stated.

He revealed that the investigative committee uncovered indications of financial malfeasance and breaches of due process, adding that Dalhatu neither responded to queries nor appeared before the panel

to defend himself.

Despite the unfolding developments, Baba insisted that the forum was not facing a leadership crisis, describing recent claims to the contrary as deliberate attempts to misrepresent the situation and undermine constitutional authority within

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That The People May Know

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Nigeria loses N20trn yearly over revenue leakages —Agbakoba

LAGOS

Nigeria is losing as much as N20 trillion in revenue annually due to the failure to fully comply with constitutional provisions mandating remittances into the Federation Account, a former President of the Nigerian Bar Association, Dr Olisa Agbakoba (SAN), has said.

Agbakoba disclosed this

on Wednesday in Lagos at a high-level news conference where he warned that the country's fiscal crisis is largely driven by systemic leakages and weak enforcement of existing laws, rather than lack of resources.

Citing Section 162(1) of the Constitution, he stressed that all revenues collected by the Federal Government are required to be paid into the

Federation Account before any deductions or disbursement, a provision he said has been consistently breached.

According to him, current estimates indicate that up to N20 trillion in revenues that should accrue to the Federation Account never get there, as deductions are made at source or funds are diverted through alternative arrangements.

He argued that strict com-

pliance with the constitutional provision could unlock between N15 trillion and N20 trillion annually for distribution among the three tiers of government.

Agbakoba, who is the Senior Partner at Olisa Agbakoba Legal (OAL) Centre for Petroleum Governance, Regulatory and Policy Advisory Practice, called for urgent constitutional reforms to eliminate loopholes

and enforce transparency.

He proposed that all revenues accruing to the Federation must be paid into the Federation Account in gross, without any deductions for costs, charges, or offsets, while all expenses related to revenue generation should only be made after remittance and subject to appropriation by the National Assembly.

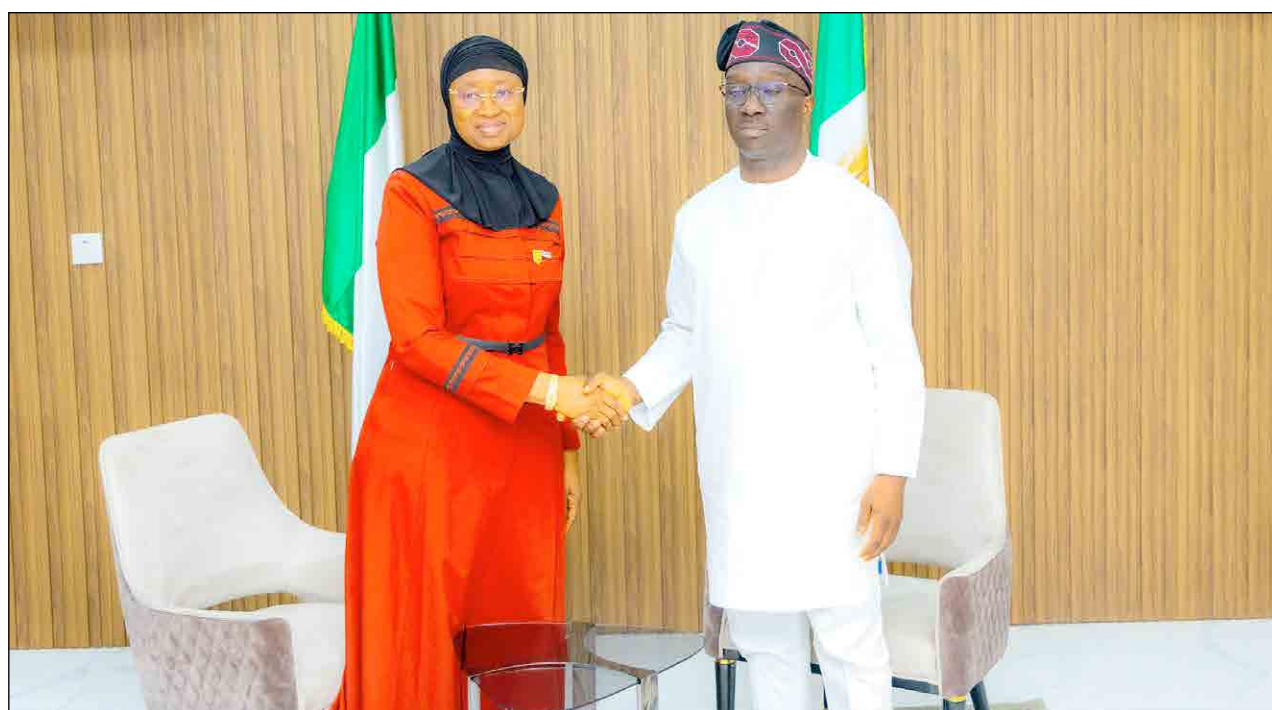
He further insisted that no executive directive, administrative policy, or government instrument should be allowed to create or operate any account parallel to the Federa-

tion Account.

"If this framework is enforced, it will shut down leakages at source. Every naira earned by the Federal Government will first enter the Federation Account before any spending occurs," he said.

Agbakoba noted that the current system has significantly worsened Nigeria's debt burden, as huge portions of federal revenue are used to service debts that could have been avoided if revenues were properly accounted for.

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RECEIVING INCOMING PRESIDENT OF ICAN:

Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo (right), receiving Edo-born incoming President, Institute of Chattered Accounts of Nigeria (ICAN), Hajia Queensley Seghosime, at Government House, Benin City.

INEC to resume nationwide voter registration May 11

CAROLINE AMEH

ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has said that the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise will resume nationwide on May 11, 2026.

According to a statement by the Chairman of INEC's Information and Voter Education Committee, Mohammed Kudu Haruna, the exercise will run from Monday, May 11 to Friday, July 10, marking the third and final phase of the registration process.

The commission explained that the CVR was temporarily

suspended on April 17 to enable the clean-up of the voters' register following its publication for claims and objections.

INEC urged all eligible Nigerians, particularly those who have recently turned 18 or missed earlier phases, to take advantage of the exercise to register.

The electoral body also encouraged already registered voters seeking to update their details to do so through its online portal or by visiting INEC offices at the state and local government levels.

This includes requests for

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Nigeria delivers strong start at 17th Africa Aquatics Championships in Oran

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Court adjourns money laundering case against Jessica to June 30

BENIN CITY

A Federal High Court sitting in Benin City has adjourned until June 30, 2026, the alleged money laundering case instituted against Jessica Iguodala Oghomwen.

The adjournment followed an oral application by the prosecutor, P. Odion, who when the case was mentioned sought more time to enable him gather additional information in furtherance of an earlier order of the court.

Prior to Wednesday's proceedings, the court had granted the order for substituted service.

The prosecutor had at the last court sitting informed the court that the order had been executed through publications in The Nigerian Observer and Vanguard newspapers, as well as by pasting notices on the Federal High

Court's Notice Board.

Odion told the court that his application was anchored on Section 80, Part 7 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) 2015, which empowers a prosecutor to seek the attachment of a defendant's property where such a defendant is evasive or fails to comply with a court summons.

Quoting the provision, he said: "If a court has issued a summons or warrant and has reason to believe that the person has absconded or is concealing themselves to evade the service of the summons or execution of the warrant, the court may order the attachment of their property."

He further cited Section 81 of the ACJA, noting that it authorises the court to order the attachment of any property, whether movable or immova-

ble, belonging to such a suspect.

At Wednesday's sitting, counsel to the defendant, Dele Igbiniedion, Esq., opposed the application, accusing the prosecution of deliberately delaying the matter through repeated requests for adjournment.

He noted that the case had

lingered since 2025 and questioned why, for over a month, the prosecution had failed to file the motion required to advance the court's earlier order.

Igbiniedion therefore urged the court to either ask the prosecutor to withdraw the case or, in the alternative, strike it out.

In response, the prosecutor described the defence counsel's submissions as contemptuous, arguing that the defendant had failed to appear in court to take her plea.

Citing the case of Dariye vs FRN (2025 NWLR), Odion maintained that a party who evades court process is not enti-

tled to be heard until he or she submits to the jurisdiction of the court and seeks its indulgence.

After listening to arguments from both the prosecution and defence counsel, the presiding judge, Justice B. Quadri, adjourned the case to June 30, 2026, for further proceedings.

Nigeria loses N20trn yearly over...

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He warned that continued failure to address the issue would further constrain funding for critical infrastructure, including roads, healthcare, and education.

"The revenues to fund government operations are already there. They are simply not getting to where the Constitution says they should be," he said.

He added that reducing rev-

enue leakages would not only ease the country's debt pressure but also stimulate economic growth, improve service delivery by states, and enhance the overall welfare of citizens.

Agbakoba maintained that Nigeria's challenge is not revenue generation but the absence of a transparent and enforceable system that ensures full remittance of what is already earned into the Federation Account.

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the organisation.

He further disclosed that delegates from 18 northern states and the Federal Capital Territory participated in the meeting, which was moved to an alternative venue following the sealing of the ACF secretariat by operatives of the Nigeria Police Force.

The forum condemned the action of the police in blocking access to its headquarters, describing it as unwarranted and a cause for concern.

Also speaking, Chairman of the ACF Ethics and Conduct Committee, Prof. Nuhu Jamo, said that the panel acted on a petition alleging serious misconduct against the BOT chairman.

According to him, Dalhatu was given 48 hours to respond to the allegations but failed to do so, compelling the committee to proceed with its investigation based on available evidence.

Jamo said the findings point-

ed to multiple violations of the ACF constitution, including interference in executive functions, irregular involvement in financial operations, and the inclusion of non-members in key decision-making processes.

"The committee observed clear violations of the constitutional provisions guiding the operations of the forum.

"In particular, the involvement of the BOT chairman in financial transactions and administrative decisions raised serious concerns," he said.

He added that the planned forensic audit would ensure due process, enhance accountability, and facilitate the recovery of any misapplied funds.

The NEC also passed a vote of confidence on the National Working Committee led by ACF Chairman, Maman Mike Osuman, and reaffirmed the tenure of the Secretary-General in line with the organisation's constitution, signalling an effort to stabilise the forum amid the crisis.

INEC to resume nationwide voter...

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transfer of registration, correction of personal data, or replacement of lost or damaged Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs).

INEC further disclosed that the updated Register of Voters will be displayed for public scrutiny from July 23 to July 29, 2026, to allow for claims and objections aimed at improving the accuracy and cred-

ibility of the register.

The commission assured Nigerians that all necessary arrangements have been put in place for a smooth exercise and called for active citizen participation.

"We once again appeal to all eligible citizens to present themselves for registration and to play their part in strengthening the foundation of our electoral process," the statement added



FLAG OFF OF RE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN:

Speaker, Edo State House of Assembly (EDHA), Hon. Blessing Agbebaku (right), and Majority Leader of the House, Hon. Jonathan Ibhamawu (left), during the flag off of his (Jonathan) re-election campaign in Ekpoma, ESAN West Local Government Area of the State.

EIRS restructures operations to boost revenue, efficiency

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Internal Revenue Service (EIRS) has unveiled a new organisational structure aimed at enhancing revenue generation and strengthening operational efficiency.

A statement by the Head of Corporate Communications and Taxpayers Enlightenment Services Department, Mr Courage Eboigbe, said the re-

structuring was announced at a management meeting held in Benin City and attended by members of the EIRS Board, senior management staff, and the State Tax Controller of the Nigerian Revenue Service (NRS), who participated as an observer.

Speaking at the unveiling, the Executive Chairman of EIRS, Mr John Odior, described the reform as a long-overdue milestone designed to improve tax

administration and address internal operational challenges. He noted that the restructuring is anchored on transparency, accountability, and improved service delivery.

The new framework introduces specialised departments, including Enforcement and Compliance; Landlord Tax and Stamp Duty; and Digital Economy and Emerging Taxpayers Intelligence Unit.

It also establishes a Facility, Security and Safety Department, as well as a Department of Corporate Communications

and Taxpayer Enlightenment Services to strengthen public engagement.

To streamline field operations, EIRS has reduced its zonal offices from 14 to eight, each headed by a Zonal Tax Controller.

However, the Service will retain its 60 existing branch offices under Tax Controllers to ensure accessibility for taxpayers.

Odior said the changes take immediate effect, signalling a new phase in the agency's drive towards a modern and efficient tax system.

Idahosa seeks divine guidance, receives AAU delegation

BERNADETTE IDALU

BENIN CITY

Edo State Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa, has sought divine guidance for himself and his guests as he received a condolence visit from the management and staff of Ambrose Alli University (AAU), Ekpoma.

Speaking at the Government House in Benin City, Idahosa prayed that God would guide them in impacting society and leaving lasting legacies in Edo

State.

"May God continually use us to better the lives of Edo people," he said.

The delegation, led by the Vice Chancellor, Professor Eunice Ebosehimen, was at the Government House to condole with the deputy governor over the death of his mother, Madam Esther Imaguomwanruo Idahosa.

Idahosa described his late mother as a unifier and a pillar of peace in the family, as well as his personal bedrock and

prayer partner, and thanked the university community for the visit.

In her remarks, Professor Ebosehimen noted the significance of parental prayers and their enduring impact across generations, adding that the late matriarch lived a fulfilled life.

The Vice Chancellor presented a gift to the family and assured them of the university's support during the burial rites.

Also speaking, the Commis-

sioner for Livestock Development, Professor Ikponmwonso Omorodion, who addressed the gathering in both family and academic capacities, appreciated the delegation for their solidarity.

He reaffirmed AAU's reputation as a centre of academic excellence and expressed optimism that ongoing efforts by Governor Monday Okpebholo would address security concerns in Ekpoma and create a conducive environment for learning and development.

UNN strike paralyses campus as students appeal for urgent resolution

NSUKKA

Academic and administrative activities at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) have been paralysed following a nationwide strike by non-teaching staff, prompting students to appeal

for urgent government intervention.

The strike, embarked upon by the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) and the Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU), has forced the closure of offices, lecture halls and classrooms

across the institution.

A visit to the campus on Wednesday showed that examinations and lectures had been suspended indefinitely, while administrative offices remained under lock and key.

Students, in separate interviews, expressed concern over

the disruption, warning that prolonged industrial action could derail the academic calendar.

Vera Eke, a student of the Department of English and Literary Studies, said the situation could mirror the 2021 disruption that significantly affected academic timelines.

Lawyer explains gale of political defections

LAGOS

A legal practitioner and development advocate, Mr Jide Ologun, has attributed the growing wave of political defections in Nigeria to weak party ideology, personal ambition, and gaps in the constitutional frameworks regulating party loyalty.

Ologun spoke with our correspondent in Lagos on Wednesday.

He said many political actors abandon their parties at the slightest internal crisis because parties lack firm ideological foundations that should ordinarily bind members together.

The lawyer described the trend as a threat to democratic stability, saying that it erodes public trust and reduces poli-

tics to a platform for personal advancement rather than national service.

"Politics, by its very nature, involves conflict and competition—primarily for power, and that power is about access to and control over resources, policy direction, and governance structures.

"In an ideal system, political parties should be driven by strong ideologies that define how a country should be run—whether along capitalist, welfare or other philosophical lines—and these beliefs should bind members together even in times of crisis.

"But what we see today is that once there is the slightest disagreement within a party, many politicians quickly abandon ship because there is no

ideological glue holding them; instead, personal ambition becomes the overriding consideration," he said.

Ologun, a Fellow, Institute of Leadership Coaching and Strategy, noted that the Nigerian Constitution attempted to curb defections but left critical loopholes that had been exploited over time.

"Section 68(1)(g) of the 1999 Constitution, as amended, clearly states that a member of the National Assembly who defects from the party that brought him or her to office should lose that seat, except where there is a division in the party.

"A similar provision exists under Section 109 for state legislators, but the major challenge has been the interpretation of what constitutes 'division,' and this has

weakened enforcement.

"In practice, we have seen situations where defecting lawmakers retain their seats, even after legal battles up to the Supreme Court, which has effectively diluted the deterrent intent of the law," he said.

The legal expert added that the absence of constitutional restrictions on executive defections had further worsened the situation.

"For the executive arm—president and governors—there are no constitutional provisions restricting defection, and this has encouraged a gale of cross-carpeting across the country.

"Today, we are witnessing a situation where politicians move freely from one party to another—be it from NNPP to APC, Labour Party to ADC or

other platforms—primarily in search of electoral advantage.

"This fluidity is not driven by national interest or party loyalty, but by personal calculations about where their ambitions can best be realised," he said.

Ologun said the trend reflected a deeper structural problem in Nigeria's political system, where, according to him, public office is often seen as a gateway to economic security.

He said: "Many politicians are motivated less by service and more by what they stand to gain from holding office, and this is why they are quick to switch platforms when their current party cannot guarantee their political future.

"This explains why individuals who have held positions such as senator or governor still seek to occupy other offices, moving from one contest to another with-

out clear ideological direction.

"The big question remains: what is attracting them so strongly to political office, and why is politics increasingly seen as the most lucrative sector of our national life?"

The lawyer stressed that governance should remain focused on citizens' welfare, in line with constitutional provisions.

He cited Section 14(2)(b) of the Constitution, which states that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government, noting that this responsibility transcends party lines.

According to him, good governance requires transparency, accountability, adherence to the rule of law, and equitable distribution of resources.

Ologun also expressed concern over rising public distrust in democratic institutions, particularly the judiciary and electoral system.



RECEIVES A SOUVENIR:

Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council, University of Port Harcourt, Sen. Mao Oluwabunwa (left), receives a souvenir from the institution's Vice Chancellor, Prof. Owunari Georgewill, during a four-day council retreat in Port Harcourt.

UNIPORT pushing for global relevance, says Pro-Chancellor

PORT HARCOURT

The University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT) says it is stepping up efforts to boost its global profile through digital innovation and strategic partnerships.

The Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council, Sen. Mao Oluwabunwa, made this known during a four-day council retreat, according to a statement issued on Wednes-

day in Port Harcourt by the university's spokesperson, Dr Sam Kpenu.

Oluwabunwa said that UNIPORT was taking deliberate steps to improve its standing among universities worldwide, noting that digital tools play a key role in achieving that goal.

"Digital transformation is no longer optional. It is critical to improving teaching, research, and governance, as well as positioning the university

for global visibility," he said.

He called for increased investment in digital infrastructure, regular training for staff, and stronger partnerships with industry and international institutions.

Oluwabunwa added that progress would require a joint effort from stakeholders within and outside the university system.

In his remark, UNIPORT's Vice Chancellor, Prof. Owunari Georgewill, said that digital transformation was key to institutional growth and

sustainability.

He said that UNIPORT has already begun taking practical steps to digitalise its academic and administrative processes.

"We are investing in innovation and digital systems to improve our teaching, research output, and global engagement," he said.

Georgewill added that sustained efforts in digital innovation would significantly enhance the university's competitiveness and international recognition.

Nigerians call for issue-based campaigns ahead of 2027 elections

ABUJA

Some Nigerians have called on political office seekers to focus on issue-based campaigns as preparations begin for the 2027 general elections.

The respondents made the calls in separate interviews with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja on Tuesday.

They said that candidates should present clear plans and programmes that would address key challenges facing the country.

A civil servant, Mr John Musa, said that voters were more interested in policies that would improve the economy and create jobs.

"We want to hear what the candidates will do differently, not just promises," he said.

Similarly, a trader, Mrs Grace Okeke, urged politicians to avoid divisive statements and focus on unity and development.

According to her, campaigns should be peaceful and based on ideas that will move the country forward.

Also speaking, a student, Ibrahim Sadiq, said young people expect leaders who understand their challenges and are ready to provide opportunities.

He added that education, employment and security should be top priorities for anyone seeking public office.

Another respondent, Mr Chinedu Eze, stressed the need for transparency and accountability in governance.

He said that candidates should clearly explain how they intend to manage public resources if elected.

The respondents also called on the electoral body to ensure a free, fair and credible process in the 2027 elections.

They expressed hope that the elections would produce leaders committed to national development and good governance.

Consensus fallout: Umahi's ally quits APC in Ebonyi

ABAKALIKI

Chief Christain Nwali, an aspirant for the Ebonyi Central Senatorial District seat has confirmed his resignation from the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Nwali, an ally of the Minister of Works, Sen. David Umahi, was among the aspirants not favoured by the consensus arrangement adopted by the Ebonyi APC in its primary elections.

In a letter addressed to the state APC Chairman, Ekpeli Ward in Ikwo LGA, he stated that his resignation was "with

immediate effect".

"This decision is personal and made after careful reflection.

"I am grateful for the opportunities and experiences I had during my time in the party.

"This serves as an official notice of my formal withdrawal from party activities and responsibilities," the letter read in part.

When contacted by our correspondent for clarification on why he dumped APC and his next political direction, he declined further comments.

"There is no need for such clarifications," Nwali, a popular APC chieftain, said.

SGF, Gov Alia's reconciliation excites academics, say 'li foster growth

ANDY ASEMOTA

ABUJA

Following the reconciliation meeting between the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Sir George Akume, and Benue State Governor, Hyacinth Alia, a group of some academics have extolled the move, de-

scribing it as such capable of advancing the collective interests of Benue people.

Coming under the umbrella of Kunav Progressive Academics, KPA, the group described the reconciliation as a landmark development, and urged all stakeholders, political actors and citizens of the state to draw inspiration from

the initiative and continue to support efforts that promote unity, peace and sustainable development.

In a statement signed by no fewer than seven professors and 22 PhD holders, the group said its members view the reconciliation as a timely and necessary intervention that reaffirm the primacy of dialogue

over discord.

The academics recognized and appreciated the roles played by President Bola Tinubu, Sen. George Akume and Governor Alia in fostering unity within the All Progressives Congress (APC), Benue State and by extension averting protracted political crisis.

NEWS**34 die in Sokoto meningitis outbreak —Commissioner****SOKOTO**

No fewer than 34 persons have died out of 254 infected in a meningitis outbreak across nine local government areas of Sokoto State, raising concerns among health authorities and residents.

The State Commissioner for Health, Dr Faruk Abubakar-Wurno, disclosed this to newsmen on Wednesday in Sokoto, noting that the outbreak had spread across multiple communities, prompting urgent government response efforts.

Abubakar-Wurno said most of the deaths occurred at home before government intervention, as many residents attributed the illness to spiritual beliefs or mysterious circumstances, delaying early treatment and

proper medical attention.

He said isolation centres were established in Dogondaji and Kurawa communities in Tambuwal and Sabon Birni LGAs, adding that all 201 persons treated at government health facilities had been discharged.

He listed affected local government areas as Dange-Shuni 26, Kebbe 16, Shagari 51, Tambuwal 34, Wamakko 60, Sabon Birni 63, Bodinga two, Kware two, and Gada one respectively.

According to him, 24 samples were sent for testing, out of which 16 returned negative results, while eight cases of meningitis were confirmed, indicating the presence of the disease in communities.

He explained that meningitis was a serious infection affecting membranes cover-

ing the brain and spinal cord, spreading through respiratory droplets during close contact, especially in crowded or poorly ventilated environments.

He said the government had intensified awareness campaigns, urging residents to sleep in well-ventilated rooms

or outside house compounds to reduce disease spread, often worsened by extreme heat conditions.

Abubakar-Wurno emphasised that children aged one to 15 were most affected, while overcrowding and seasonal dry winds significantly increased

transmission risks, raising serious public health concerns across northern states.

He added that the government had intensified surveillance through disease surveillance officers, ensured laboratory testing and medication provision, while also

strengthening laboratory capacity for improved detection and confirmation of cases.

Meningitis remains a major public health concern in Nigeria, particularly during dry seasons, with northern states most affected, according to WHO and surveillance data.

1.38m students access N242.8bn from NELFUND —Group

ANDY ASEMOTA

ABUJA

As students in the nation's public tertiary institutions continue to access funds from the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND), about 1.38 million Nigerian students have obtained N242.8 billion till date.

The milestone, a statement by the Tinubu Stakeholders Forum (TSF) said, represents a turning point in the democratisation of access to high education in Nigeria.

In the release signed by the chairman of the forum, Ahmed Sajoh and its secretary, Danjuma Sada, the forum observed that the scale of participation with over 1.77 million application, reflected both the need and credibility of the initiative among Nigerian youths.

"With over N157 billion disbursed for institutional fees and nearly N85 billion for upkeep, the programme has demonstrated a comprehensive approach that supports students throughout their academic journey not just at the point of admission.

"It is gratifying that NELFUND is helping to entrench a new national culture - one where access to tertiary education is no longer determined by economic circumstance but by ability, ambition and opportunity.

"This shift is critical to building a more inclusive society, strengthening Nigeria's human capital base and unlocking the full potential of the country's youthful population," the forum stated.

Continuing, it commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for prioritizing education as a strategic pillar of national development and for implementing reforms that deliver direct measurable impact on the lives of citizens.

TSF urged sustained funding, transparency and efficient administration of the scheme to ensure that its benefits continue to expand, particularly to students in underserved and rural communities.

"For us, the true significance of the programme lies beyond the numbers, it is more in the real-life success stories emerging from beneficiaries," they added.

**DISAPPEARING FROM MENUS:**

Fish gradually disappearing from Nigerians' menu due to high cost.

Frozen fish sellers decry rising prices, low sales in FCT**ABUJA**

Frozen fish sellers in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) have raised concerns over rising prices, saying the trend is depressing sales and putting basic protein beyond the reach of many households.

A survey conducted at selected cold rooms in the FCT indicates that the sharp increase in fish prices is affecting both traders and consumers.

The sellers described the trend as a major contributor to hardship, particularly for low-income households, as many residents now struggle to afford basic sources of protein.

Findings show that the situ-

ation worsened between 2025 and 2026, with fish; once considered one of the most affordable protein options becoming out of reach for many families.

Mrs Abigail Ade, a fish seller in Gwarinpa, said she had spent over 20 years in the business but had never witnessed such a surge in prices.

According to her, the current period is the most challenging she has experienced.

"Fish used to be affordable, but now only wealthy people can buy it in large quantities. Many families now buy fish in pieces instead of kilos.

"Titus fish, a staple for many Nigerian households, now sells for about N7,000 per kilogram,

making it difficult for average earners to sustain regular consumption," she said.

Ade urged the Federal Government to reduce shipping and port-related costs associated with fish importation.

Similarly, Mr Ibrahim Sanni, a storekeeper at a cold room in Garki, said bulk purchases had declined significantly due to rising prices.

"Many families have reduced their protein intake, while others are shifting to cheaper alternatives.

"People hardly buy cartons of fish anymore; instead, they contribute money to share among themselves.

"This has affected our sales,

and the government needs to address the situation," he said.

Mrs Esther Akoja, a fish seller at the Kado Fish Market, attributed the price increase largely to the rising cost of diesel and electricity tariffs.

"Electricity tariffs are high and keep increasing without prior notice from AEDC. The cost of diesel is also very high, and we need to break even.

"This has not been easy for us as our sales have dropped significantly. People now buy fish only when it is absolutely necessary.

"I am sure there must be something the authorities can do to address this issue because it is affecting our livelihood," she said.

Zenith Bank's Chair, Jim Ovia steps down

ANDY ASEMOTA

ABUJA

Zenith Bank's founder and Group Chairman, Mr. Jim Ovia, has retired after the expiration of his statutory tenure.

In a statement made available by the bank to newsmen on Tuesday Ovia became the bank's chairman on July 16, 2014, and returned to the position after previously serving as the bank's founder and Group Managing Director/ CEO from 1990 to 2010.

It stated that Ovia retired af-

ter completing the mandatory 12 years as a non-executive director and chairman of compliance with corporate governance guidelines issued by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

Several industry watcher, who spoke to the Nigerian Observer on the development, hailed Ovia as a renowned banker and respected business leader with proven track record of benefaction towards nurturing and empowering young Nigerians.

They also expressed believe that Ovia would bring his immense wealth of experience and professional stature to bear in his future endeavours.

Expert advocates unified directive on federal payment system integration**LAGOS**

A fintech expert, Mr Sola Fanawopo, has called for policy integration to address emerging concerns within Nigeria's federal payment architecture.

Fanawopo made the call in a statement on Wednesday in Lagos.

He advised the Federal Ministry of Finance and the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation to issue a unified directive clarifying the relationship between the Revenue Optimisation and Assurance Project (RevOP) and existing payment platforms.

"RevOP should function as

an analytical layer to enhance transparency and oversight across established payment systems, rather than replacing them," he said.

Fanawopo, also a communications entrepreneur, said integrating new oversight tools with the Treasury Single Account (TSA) framework would help sustain efficiency and avoid delays in revenue collection.

"Integrating new oversight mechanisms with the TSA will help preserve system efficiency and reduce delays in revenue flows," the expert said.

He noted that payment systems play a critical role in economic management, par-

ticularly in ensuring visibility, compliance and accountability.

"Payment systems today are not just transactional platforms; they are central to visibility, compliance and fiscal coordination," Fanawopo added.

According to him, the nation's TSA architecture remains a key milestone in public financial management, providing a centralised platform for government revenue collection.

Fanawopo said the TSA ecosystem, supported by indigenous technology such as the Remita platform, had evolved over time to support coordination among the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), deposit

money banks and taxpayers.

He cautioned that policy ambiguity could affect system efficiency and reconciliation processes, with implications for revenue administration.

"Any ambiguity in policy direction risks weakening reconciliation processes and could affect revenue administration," he said.

Fanawopo added that strengthening existing frameworks through coordinated reforms would enhance system stability and public confidence.

"Strengthening existing frameworks through coordinated reforms will improve stability and boost public confidence in the system," he said.

Expert seeks increased investment to curb Lassa fever

LAGOS

Dr Joe Tucker, a U.S.-based infectious disease physician, has emphasised the need for Nigeria to strengthen its response to Lassa fever through increased research funding, advocacy and community engagement.

Tucker spoke with reporters

on the sidelines of the ongoing 2026 Designathon organised by the Innovative Network on the Science and Practice of Implementation, Research and Engagement (INSPIRE).

The event, holding in Lagos, is aimed at scaling up Lenacavir for youth-centred HIV/AIDS prevention and care across Africa.

The physician, who works at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, U.S., said these strategies must be effectively adopted to tackle the viral infection.

Lassa fever is an acute zoonotic viral haemorrhagic illness endemic in West Africa, caused by the Lassa virus and transmitted mainly by Mastomys rats.

According to the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), as of April, the country has recorded 663 confirmed cases and 167 deaths across 22 states.

Tucker said increased investment in research is critical for Nigeria to win the fight against Lassa fever.

"Health institutions such as the Nigerian Institute of Medi-

cal Research and others should be well funded and supported to play key roles in addressing emerging and re-emerging pathogens like Lassa fever.

"Increased advocacy and community engagement are also important, as the fight against Lassa fever cannot be left to researchers alone.

"Community-based organisations and the general public must be actively involved in awareness and prevention efforts," he said.

Tucker, also a professor of global health, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Med-

icine, called for stronger training to equip researchers and healthcare workers to respond effectively to outbreaks.

On Lassa fever vaccine development, the expert acknowledged ongoing global research efforts but cautioned that a breakthrough may take time.

"There are many researchers working on vaccines, but it is not something that will happen overnight. We need sustained investment in basic science and vaccinology.

"A reliable Lassa fever vaccine will require long-term dedication and resources," he said.



GRAND OPENING KURSI GROUP HQ:

L-R: Vice President Kashim Shettima: Chairman/CEO, Kursi Group, Amb. Abdulfatai Seriki; Vice President, Kursi Group, Mrs. Fatima Abdulfatai, and others dignitaries, during the Grand Opening and Commissioning of Kursi Group Corporate Headquarters in Abuja on Wednesday

NAIP urges halt to medicine import, advocates local production

ILORIN

The Association of Industrial Pharmacists of Nigeria (NAIP), has called for a gradual halt to the importation of medicines in order to reduce dependency and boost local production.

Mr. Bankole Ezebuilo, the National Chairman of the association, made the call at the ongoing 29th Annual National Conference of NAIP, on Wednesday in Ilorin.

The theme of the conference is entitled: "Collaboration and Innovation to Build Local Solu-

tions for the Future of Nigeria's Pharmaceutical Industry."

The NAIP chairman emphasised the need to enhance global competitiveness and improve healthcare delivery within the country.

He explained that the theme was carefully selected to address the current challenges confronting the sector.

"No nation can outsource its health security, and no sector can thrive in isolation.

"We chose collaboration because the challenges before us are too complex, urgent, and interconnected for any single

entity to solve alone.

"We chose innovation because doing more of the same will not take us where we need to go, and we chose local solutions because sustainability cannot be imported, it must be built deliberately, strategically, and collectively," he said.

Ezebuilo called on the government to create enabling policies and urged industry players to invest boldly, just as he encouraged academia to align research with practical needs.

The expert on drugs and pharmaceuticals stressed the need for stakeholders to move from isolated efforts to an integrated system.

According to him, a nation that cannot produce its own medicines is a nation negotiating with its health and "negotiation is not where you want to be when lives are at stake".

He noted that Nigeria stands at a defining moment of continued dependence on importing over 70 per cent of the country's medicines.

He pointed out that this exposes the country to currency volatility, global disruptions, and external decisions.

"On the other path lies sovereignty local innovation, resilient manufacturing, and an industry that not only serves Nigeria but leads Africa," he said.

Aba long overdue for NOUN study centre—Otti

ABA

Governor Alex Otti of Abia has directed relevant officials to commence the search for a temporary site for a study centre of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) in Aba.

Otti gave the directive while receiving the Vice-Chancellor of NOUN, Prof. Uduma Uduoma, who paid him a courtesy visit at his country home in Nvosi, Isiala Ngwa South Local Government Area.

Mr Ambrose Gowong, Head, NOUN New Media Unit, said in a statement on Wednesday that the governor's decision followed a request by the vice-chancellor

for policy direction on establishing a study centre in Aba.

Otti directed the Commissioner for Tertiary Education and the Managing Director, Greater Aba Development Authority, to begin processes for a temporary site, pending a permanent facility.

The governor described Aba as a major commercial hub that should not be without a NOUN study centre.

Otti noted that open and distance learning had evolved significantly with the aid of technology, including platforms such as Google Meet and Zoom, which had enhanced knowledge sharing.

"In view of the role NOUN

is playing in advancing education, it is imperative that Aba has a study centre," he said.

He reiterated the state government's commitment to educational development through the recruitment, training and retraining of teachers.

Otti assured the University of the state government's support towards the establishment of the centre in Aba.

The governor also directed the Commissioner for Tertiary Education to liaise with the management of the Umuahia study centre of NOUN to identify areas where the state could assist in improving facilities.

Earlier, Uduoma said he was in the state to seek government

support and policy direction for the establishment of a study centre in Aba.

He said NOUN was committed to expanding access to education through open and distance learning, as well as promoting inclusiveness.

According to him, study centres serve as critical access points, and Aba, being one of the largest cities in the country, deserves such a facility.

Uduoma added that the institution was willing to partner with governments and organisations to broaden educational opportunities.

He also highlighted the growing global importance of open and distance learning, noting that many universities now operate a dual mode of education delivery.

Lagos seals Balmoral Centre, Foodies Restaurant over wastewater violations

LAGOS

The Lagos State Wastewater Management Office (LSWMO) has sealed the Balmoral Convention Centre, Victoria Island, and Foodies Restaurant, Lekki Phase I, over violations of wastewater management regulations.

The agency disclosed this in a statement made available on Wednesday in Lagos.

According to the statement, Balmoral Convention Centre was sealed for the indiscriminate discharge of untreated sewage into public drains using a pumping machine.

It said the facility also had unattended wastewater spillage from a blocked sewage chamber, resulting in environmental nuisance and offensive odour.

The statement further said that Foodies Restaurant, located at No. 32B, Admiralty Way, Lekki Phase I, was sealed for

discharging untreated wastewater laden with fat and oil into public drains.

It noted that the discharge had clogged drainage systems and contributed to environmental pollution and foul smells.

"Despite several warnings, the facility failed to comply with proper wastewater management practices.

"The indiscriminate discharge of untreated wastewater into public drains is a violation of environmental laws and constitutes a public nuisance," the statement said.

The LSWMO reiterated the need for residents and property owners to adhere strictly to approved wastewater management practices.

It warned that defaulters would face sanctions, including possible prosecution in line with extant environmental laws.

NSCDC neutralises 1, arrests 2 suspected bandits in Oyo

IBADAN

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Oyo State Command, has neutralised one suspected bandit and arrested two others in Iseyin area of Oyo State.

The Command's Public Relations Officer, Samuel Opebiyi disclosed this in a statement on Wednesday in Ibadan.

Opebiyi said that the success was recorded when operatives of the Agro-Rangers of the command deployed to Iseyin Axis engaged the suspects in a gun duel on Tuesday at about 1:20 a.m.

"At about 01:20 a.m on Tuesday, 5th May, 2026, personnel of the Agro-Rangers, Iseyin Base, responded swiftly to a distress call from Sawmill Area of Iseyin, regarding suspected bandits/kidnappers' activities.

"Following the distress call, the Agro-Rangers and other security agencies were mobilised to the area.

"Owing to the tactical swift re-

sponse and strategic deployment of the NSCDC Agro-Rangers in Iseyin Axis, the operatives were the first security team to arrive at the scene.

"On arrival, the Agro-Rangers operatives encountered a group of five armed suspects who immediately opened fire on the personnel," he said.

According to him, the Agro-Rangers team responded tactically resulting in a gun duel leading to the neutralisation of one of the suspected bandits at the scene, while two other suspects were arrested alive.

Opebiyi said that two other suspects escaped into the surrounding forest with gunshot injuries, adding that a manhunt was currently ongoing to apprehend them.

He said that no casualty was recorded among NSCDC personnel during the operation and listed items recovered from the suspects to include one cartridge gun with live and ammunition shells, two cutlasses, one metal rod and assorted charms

NEWS

Court orders temporary forfeiture of 9 properties linked to Timipre Sylva

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja has ordered the interim forfeiture of nine properties linked to former minister of state for Petroleum Resources, Timipre Sylva, to the Federal Government.

Justice Obiora Egwuatu made the order after the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)'s counsel, Oluwaleke Atolagbe, moved an ex-parte motion to that effect.

Though Justice Egwuatu delivered the ruling on April 24, the enrolled order was sighted on Wednesday.

The judge said: "It is hereby ordered as follows:

"An interim order of this honourable court is made forfeiting the properties listed in the schedule attached herein being properties suspected to be proceeds of some unlawful activities pending the publication and hearing of the motion on notice for final forfeiture order of the said properties.

"An order of this honourable court is made directing the publication of the interim order under order (1) above for anyone who is interested in the property to appear before this honourable court to show cause within 14 days why the final order of forfeiture should not be made in favour of the Federal Government of Nigeria."

Justice Egwuatu also granted the EFCC's request that the publication of the order shall

be made in any two of the following newspapers: Thisday, Guardian, Punch, Vanguard, Tribune or Independent Newspapers within 7 days from the receipt of the certified true copy of the order.

The judge then adjourned the matter until May 25 for a report of compliance.

The commission had, in the suit marked: FHC/ABJ/CS/607/2026, filed the application under provisions of the Advanced Fee Fraud and Other Related Offences Act, 2006.

Moving the motion, Atolagbe sought an interim order, forfeiting the properties to the Federal Government pending the publication and hearing of the motion on notice for final forfeiture order of the said properties.

He said the properties were suspected to be proceeds of some unlawful activities.

The lawyer urged the court to direct the anti-graft agency to make the publication of the order in any national newspaper for anyone who is interested in the properties to show cause within 14 days why the final order of forfeiture should not be made in favour of the Federal Government.

The affected assets are located across high-value areas in Abuja.

They include four blocks of terraces at Dakibiyu; a duplex with penthouse and office complex at No. 3, Niger Street, MStreet; one standalone duplex at Villa 1, Unit 1, Palm

Springs Estate, Mpape; and block of flats with 10 unit of

flats at No. 8, Sefadu Street, Wuse Zone 4, Abuja.

Others are block of flats with six units of flats at No. 1, Mubi Close, Garki, Abuja; two blocks with 12 units of

flats at Plot 1181, Thaba Tseka Crescent, Wuse II, Abuja; one standalone duplex at No. 18, Nile Lake, Plot 1271, Maitama Abuja,

The ninth property is two

blocks building, which is currently occupied by the National Information Technology Development Agency, and located at No. 5, Aguta Street, Garki, Abuja.



OFFICIAL SITE HAND OVER:

L-R: Deputy MD, CCECC, Irwin Guo; Federal Controller of Works, Lagos State, Mr Oluremi Dare; representative of the Chairman, Senate Committee on Works, Senator Osita Ngwu; Minister of Works, David Umahi; Chairman, House Committee on Works, Mr Akin Alabi, and Director, Highway and Bridges Design, Mr Musa Sa'id, during the official site handing over of the construction of new carter bridge in Lagos on Wednesday.

ADC suspension: Ireti Kingibe to know fate May 18

ABUJA

The Federal High Court, Abuja on Wednesday, fixed May 18 to deliver judgment in the suit seeking to uphold the indefinite suspension of Sen. Ireti Kingibe by the Wuse Ward chapter of the African Democratic Congress (ADC).

At the resumed hearing of the matter, Counsel to Kingibe, Mr Marshall Abubakar told the court that the case had no merit as it was purely an internal affair of the party.

According to Abubakar, the case ought to be dismissed with punitive cost.

He said that the party had a

procedure for addressing cases such as the one before the court but that that procedure was not followed by the plaintiffs.

"The defendant was never invited for anything nor was there any complaint against her," he said.

He added that the plaintiffs had no locus to institute the suit as they were themselves suspended by the party and moreover, it was only the National Working Committee, (NWC) of the party that could suspend a member and not other members.

The lawyer prayed the court to dismiss the matter in its entirety and award a N25 million punitive cost against the plain-

tiffs.

In his arguments, Counsel to the plaintiffs, Mr I.G. Ogugua prayed the court to dismiss the arguments of the defendant.

According to Ogugua, there is nothing sacrosanct about the internal affairs of a political party where the constitution is breached.

Earlier, Abubakar had argued an application challenging the jurisdiction of the court to hear the matter.

He premised his argument on the grounds that the matter at hand was an internal affair of the party.

Ogugua, however, countered the argument and prayed the court to dismiss it for being

unmeritorious as the court had requisite jurisdiction to hear and determine the matter.

The judge, Justice Peter Lifu, having listened to all the arguments, fixed May 18 to deliver judgment.

The suit is seeking an order of the court to uphold Kingibe's suspension by the Wuse Ward chapter of the ADC.

Kingibe, who represents the Federal Capital Territory in the Senate, was suspended indefinitely by the ADC Wuse Ward chapter.

The ward cited alleged anti-party activities and violations of the party's constitution as grounds for the suspension.

Court remands septuagenarian facing attempted murder charge

ADO-EKITI

The Ado-Ekiti Chief Magistrates' Court, on Wednesday, remanded one Musa Hammed, 70, in a correctional centre, over alleged attempted murder.

The defendant is facing charges over the attempted murder of Kunle Obaidu.

Hammed, whose address was not provided, is also being prosecuted for unlawful possession of arms and ammunition, malicious damage of political posters and threat to life of the complainant.

However, the plea of the defendant was not taken.

The Chief Magistrate, Mr Abayomi Adeosun, ordered the remand of the defendant in the correctional centre, pending issuance of legal advice.

He subsequently adjourned the case till June 5 for mention.

Earlier, the Prosecutor, ASP Akinwale Oriyomi, told the court that the defendant com-

mitted the alleged offences on May 4 in Ado-Ekiti.

The prosecutor said that Obaidu and some party members were pasting election posters of the governor in town, when suddenly the defendant and thugs armed with broken bottles, sticks and cutlasses attacked them.

Oriyomi further said that the defendant and his accomplices allegedly removed and tore the posters, but when the complainant tried to resist them, they attacked him and inflicted injuries on his two arms.

The prosecutor said that the offences contravened Section 241, 344(d), 354 of the Criminal Law of Ekiti State, 2021 and Section 132 of Electoral Act 2026.

The prosecutor urged the court to remand the defendant at the correctional centre, pending legal advice from the office of the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP).

Lawyers demand judicial action on unlawful killings

LAGOS

Some Lagos-based lawyers have urged urgent reforms and stronger judicial action to curb rising cases of unlawful killings across Nigeria.

The lawyers spoke separately on Wednesday and expressed concern over what they described as growing impunity among security operatives.

Kehinde Nubi, Principal Counsel at Kehinde Nubi and Associates, described extrajudicial killings as a national epidemic requiring immediate intervention.

"Extrajudicial killing has become an epidemic in Nigeria. Many incidents reported over the years amount to nothing short of murder," Nubi said.

He cited the recent killing of Mene Ogidi, describing it as evidence of deeper institution-

al failures.

"If this could happen at a motor park, one can imagine what happens behind the scenes," he added.

Nubi also referenced reports by Amnesty International on alleged abuses in detention facilities, including claims linked to Tiger Base in Imo.

He blamed persistent abuses on poor investigations and lack of accountability within the system.

"These incidents continue because they are rarely followed by transparent investigations or punishment. Impunity thrives where violations are ignored," he said.

Nubi noted that Nigeria's 1999 Constitution guarantees the right to life and condemned weak enforcement of existing laws.

He advocated body cameras for officers and stronger ac-

countability measures across security agencies.

"The courts must protect fundamental rights and ensure no officer is shielded from prosecution," he said.

Also speaking, Alozie Nwoke, Principal Counsel at Alozie Nwoke and Company Legal Practitioners, blamed weak enforcement of law.

"Extrajudicial killing goes against the Constitution. The law exists, but enforcement remains weak," Nwoke said.

He identified poor investigations and weak evidence as major obstacles to successful prosecution.

"Cases are sometimes poorly investigated. There is also reluctance in some quarters to hold officers accountable," he said.

Nwoke described the Anti-Torture Act 2017 as a strong legal framework that remained

underutilised.

"The courts must be firm. Anyone found guilty should be punished, regardless of status," he said.

He also urged families of victims to pursue available legal remedies, including compensation.

Another lawyer and development practitioner, Enitan Oluwa, described the killings as signs of a constitutional crisis.

"I am saddened by these killings. The fact that no one is immune steals my sleep," Oluwa said.

She stressed that the constitutional right to life must not be undermined by institutional authority.

"When those meant to protect citizens turn against them, it becomes not just criminal, but constitutional," she said.

Oluwa urged the judiciary to act courageously and deliver justice without delay.

JUDICIARY**NEWS****Akpabio, Oshiomhole differ over new Senate leadership rules****ABUJA**

Senate President Godswill Akpabio and Sen. Adams Oshiomhole (APC-Edo North) again on Wednesday, differed over upper legislative chamber's amended standing rules for the election of presiding and principal officers.

The upper chamber had on Tuesday amended its rules to restrict eligibility for the leadership positions to senators who have served at least two consecutive terms and uninterrupted tenure.

The amendment effectively prevents Oshiomhole from contesting for a presiding office in the 11th senate if passed.

But Oshiomhole's protest may not be unconnected with parliamentary practice, which treats

adopted votes and proceedings as the official and binding record of senate resolutions, unless subsequently reviewed.

The confrontation began at plenary when Oshiomhole attempted to raise a point of order while Akpabio called for the confirmation of the Votes and Proceedings of the previous legislative day.

Akpabio ignored the Edo north senator, prompting Oshiomhole to repeatedly shout "point of order" even after his microphone was switched off.

Attempts by Senate Chief Whip, Mohammed Monguno, to restore order failed as Oshiomhole continued interrupting proceedings.

"I am now invoking the powers conferred on me as the chief whip of the senate for you

to return to your seat. Be guided," Monguno said.

Akpabio subsequently cautioned the former Edo governor and cited the senate rules regulating conduct in the chamber.

"The rules and laws governing the Senate Chamber, including its corridors and passages are clearly defined," Akpabio said.

"The senate president is empowered to sign warrants, subpoenas, resolutions and other official documents issued by order of the Senate.

"He is also responsible for ensuring adherence to the rules of debate. Let me be clear, Sen. Oshiomhole, many people may not have seen this order, which is why I am reading it out.

"The senate president is tasked with maintaining order during debates and giving rul-

ings on points of constitutional order when they are raised.

"He also has a casting vote in the event of a tie but does not vote in any other circumstance.

"Most importantly, he has the authority to interpret the rules and this is clearly stated.

"So, senator, we should not come into this chamber, especially on matters as serious as contested elections, without a proper understanding of the rules.

"Let me emphasise once again, Sen. Oshiomhole, if any member becomes unruly in the senate, such a member will be asked to leave. This is the final warning."

Sen. Patrick Ndubueze, (APC-Imo) also attempted to draw the senate's attention to what he described as an omission in Tues-

day's votes and proceedings.

Ndubueze said one of the resolutions contained in the document was neither debated nor adopted by the senate, but Akpabio dismissed the objection.

Akpabio, thereafter, subjected the votes and proceedings to a voice vote.

The senate had on Tuesday, amended its standing orders to limit eligibility for presiding

and principal offices to senators who have served at least two consecutive terms immediately preceding nomination.

The amendment followed a closed-door session that lasted about three hours.

The revised rules stipulate that only senators with at least eight years of uninterrupted service in the chamber can contest for the offices of senate president and deputy senate president.

Suspected vandal electrocuted as PHED warns against sabotage

ELIZABETH AGBOEGBULEM

PORT HARCOURT

The Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Plc (PHED) has warned against vandalism of power infrastructure following the death of a suspected vandal who was electrocuted while tampering with a high-tension installation.

The company's Head of Corporate Communications, Olubukola Ilevbare, disclosed that the incident occurred in the early hours of April 24 at about 4:30 a.m. in Oginigba Community, Port Harcourt.

According to her, the victim, identified as Khalifa and believed to be in his late twenties, died instantly after disconnecting a pot insulator from a high-tension pole just as electricity supply was restored.

She described the incident as unfortunate, noting that the victim "was a casualty of his own actions."

Ilevbare stressed that vandalism of power infrastructure has far-reaching consequences for consumers, as it disrupts electricity supply and affects

economic activities.

She expressed hope that the incident would serve as a deterrent to others, adding that offenders risk up to 21 years' imprisonment under existing laws.

She further disclosed that investigations are ongoing to apprehend other individuals involved in vandalism.

Meanwhile, PHED announced that Mbodo Aluu Community in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area has been upgraded to Band A to improve electricity supply.

The upgrade guarantees a minimum of 20 hours of daily power supply, up from its previous Band D status.

The improvement followed the installation of six new 500KVA transformers and replacement of key infrastructure, including conductors, insulators, poles, and other accessories.

Ilevbare said the intervention underscores the company's commitment to service delivery and infrastructure development, urging residents to support the initiative by paying their electricity bills promptly.

**NUJ'S NEC MEETING:**

President, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Comrade Alhassan Yahya (left) congratulating the Chairman, Edo State Council of the Union, Comrade Festus Alenke, after his nomination as a member of the NUJ 10 years Strategic Plan of action Committee, during the union's NEC meeting in Abuja.

EIRS warns against illegal revenue collection, reaffirms cashless policy**BENIN CITY**

The Edo State Internal Revenue Service (EIRS) has reiterated that it remains the sole authority empowered to assess and collect revenue on behalf of the state government, warning against illegal cash collections.

In a public notice, the agency emphasised that its cashless policy remains the only approved

method for revenue collection under the Edo State Revenue Administration Law 2012.

It warned that any individual posing as a government agent and demanding or collecting cash for taxes, levies, or fees is acting unlawfully and should be reported to law enforcement agencies.

Taxpayers were advised to conduct all transactions through approved digital platforms and

banking institutions to ensure transparency and accountability.

EIRS also restated that the ban on revenue collection in the transport sector remains in force, including the sale of unauthorised items such as jackets, stickers, baskets, and bowls to operators of buses, tricycles, and motorcycles.

The directive applies to all local government councils, unions, and transport associa-

tions, with violations attracting sanctions under existing laws.

However, the agency clarified that levies within the haulage sector remain valid but must be paid strictly through revenue scratch cards processed via government-approved Point of Sale (POS) terminals, with receipts issued.

EIRS urged the public to remain vigilant and report illegal activities, reaffirming its commitment to improving ease of doing business and protecting taxpayers.

Stakeholders raise alarm over misuse of lawsuits to silence journalists**ABUJA**

Stakeholders in Nigeria's legal and media sectors have raised concerns over the increasing use of lawsuits to intimidate journalists and suppress civic participation.

The concerns were expressed on Wednesday in Abuja during a validation meeting on Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs), organised by Hope Behind Bars Africa (HBBA) with support from the National Endowment for Democracy to mark World Press Freedom Day 2026.

Chairperson of the FCT Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Grace Ike, described the issue as a growing threat to press freedom, noting that legal processes were increasingly being weaponised to harass journalists.

"A society where journalists are silenced is one where citizens are denied access to truth and accountability," she said.

She reaffirmed the NUJ's commitment to defending press freedom and supporting initiatives aimed at safeguarding civic space.

Human rights lawyer, Inibehe Effiong, called for financial support mechanisms and sanctions against perpetrators to curb the trend.

He proposed the establishment of a National Anti-SLAPP Endowment Fund to assist victims in funding legal defence, noting that many lacked the resources to challenge such lawsuits.

"With adequate funding, victims can mount proper defence, and this will deter frivolous and intimidatory suits," he said.

In a presentation, Ogechi Ogu, Executive Director of the Public Awareness on Rights and Rehabilitation of Vulnerable Persons Initiative (PAR-RVP), highlighted the growing use of SLAPPs to stifle dissent and discourage investigative journalism.

Housewife seeks divorce over husband's alleged lack of intimacy**MARARABA (NASARAWA)**

A housewife, Hajara Dahiru, has prayed an Upper Area Court Mararaba, near Abuja to dissolve her marriage to her husband, Yunusa Audu, for alleged lack of intimacy and defamation.

Dahiru had approached the court seeking dissolution of her marriage with Audu for lack of intimacy, defamation and public disgrace.

According to Dahiru, her husband married her under sharia Islamic law, both parties reside in Angwa Albarka Mar-

araba, within the court's jurisdiction.

Dahiru alleged that Audu failed to perform his duties as the husband.

She further alleged that he labeled her a prostitute, and accused her of having affairs.

Dahiru said he insults her

in public for no reason thereby causing her emotional trauma.

In his response, Audi denied the petitioner's allegation. The Judge, Adamu Haruna, gave the couple two weeks to settle the matter amicably and adjourned the case until May 18 for feedback.

NEWS

Foreign

China calls for Strait to be reopened 'as soon as possible' in Iran talks

Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi has called for the Strait of Hormuz to be reopened "as soon as possible" in talks with his Iranian counterpart.

The pair met in Beijing on Wednesday on what is Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araqchi's first trip to China since the Iran war began.

Wang Yi also told Araqchi that achieving a lasting ceasefire was an "urgent priority", saying it was important to persist with negotiations. He added that Beijing was ready to help de-escalate tensions.

The meeting comes a week before US president Donald Trump is set to hold a summit with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, during which the leaders are likely to discuss the Iran war and reopening of the strait.

"China believes that achieving a comprehensive ceasefire is an urgent priority, while reopening hostilities would be even more undesirable," said Wang Yi, according to a read-out by state media.

"On the issue of the Strait, the international community shares a common concern over restoring normal and secure navigation through the Strait, and China hopes relevant parties will respond as soon as possible to the strong call from the international community."

Beijing, which has tried to mediate while avoiding entanglement in the conflict, has repeatedly urged the US and Iran to hold talks - a point that Wang reiterated on Wednesday.

Wang also added that China appreciated Iran's commitment not to develop nuclear weapons,

Chinese state media reported.

Araqchi told Wang that cooperation between China and Iran would become even stronger, said Iranian state media.

Both Trump and Iranian officials have credited Beijing with securing their acceptance of a Pakistan-brokered ceasefire in April.

On Wednesday, Wang also emphasised safe passages through the Strait of Hormuz.

Since the war, the Strait of Hormuz, a busy waterway through which much of the world's oil is transported, has been largely impassable after blockades imposed by both Iran and the US.

Beijing has called the US naval blockade of Iranian ports "irresponsible and dangerous", describing it as a move that would "undermine the already

fragile ceasefire agreement".

China has been a major buyer of Iranian oil, which is sanctioned by the US. China imported 1.38 million barrels of crude per day from Iran in 2025, according to the Center on Global Energy Policy - around 12% of China's total crude oil imports.

But despite China's reliance on the Strait of Hormuz for its oil supply, Xi has been "very respectful", Trump told reporters at the White House this week.

"We haven't been challenged by China," he said, adding that Xi would not challenge the US "because of me".

The upcoming meeting between leaders of the world's two largest economies, initially set to take place in March, was postponed after the US and Israel launched wide-ranging strikes on Iran.

Massive Alaska megatsunami was second largest ever recorded

A massive 'megatsunami' wave created when part of an Alaskan mountain crumbled into the sea is the second tallest ever recorded - and a reminder of the risks posed by melting glaciers, say scientists.

Last summer a giant wave swept through a remote fjord in southeast Alaska leaving destruction in its wake.

The event went largely unreported at the time, but a new scientific analysis shows it was caused by a massive landslide.

An incredible 64 million cubic metres of rock - the equivalent of 24 Great Pyramids - splashed into the water below. The sheer power of that amount of rock plunging into the fjord in under a minute created a gigantic wave almost 500 metres tall.

Only the time it happened - in the early hours of the morning - prevented tourist cruise ships being caught up in the devastation, say the researchers.

Dr Bretwood Higman, an Alaskan geologist, who saw for himself the damage at Tracy Arm Fjord, said it was "a close call".

"We know that there were people that were very nearly in the wrong place," he said. "I'm quite terrified that we're not going to be so lucky in the future."

These huge waves, labelled megatsunamis, happen when a landslide caused by either an earthquake or loose rock hit water below. They are usually localised and dissipate quickly.

The other type of tsunamis happen in the open ocean and

are directly triggered by earthquakes, or occasionally other powerful events such as underwater volcanoes.

They, like the 2011 Japan tsunami, can travel for thousands of miles, hitting populated areas and causing widespread devastation and loss of life.

The biggest megatsunami was in the 1950s and was over 500 metres. This latest megatsunami was the second largest.

Dr Higman arrived on the scene a few weeks after the tsunami hit at the Tracy Arm Fjord - a destination popular with cruise ships exploring the natural wonders of Alaska.

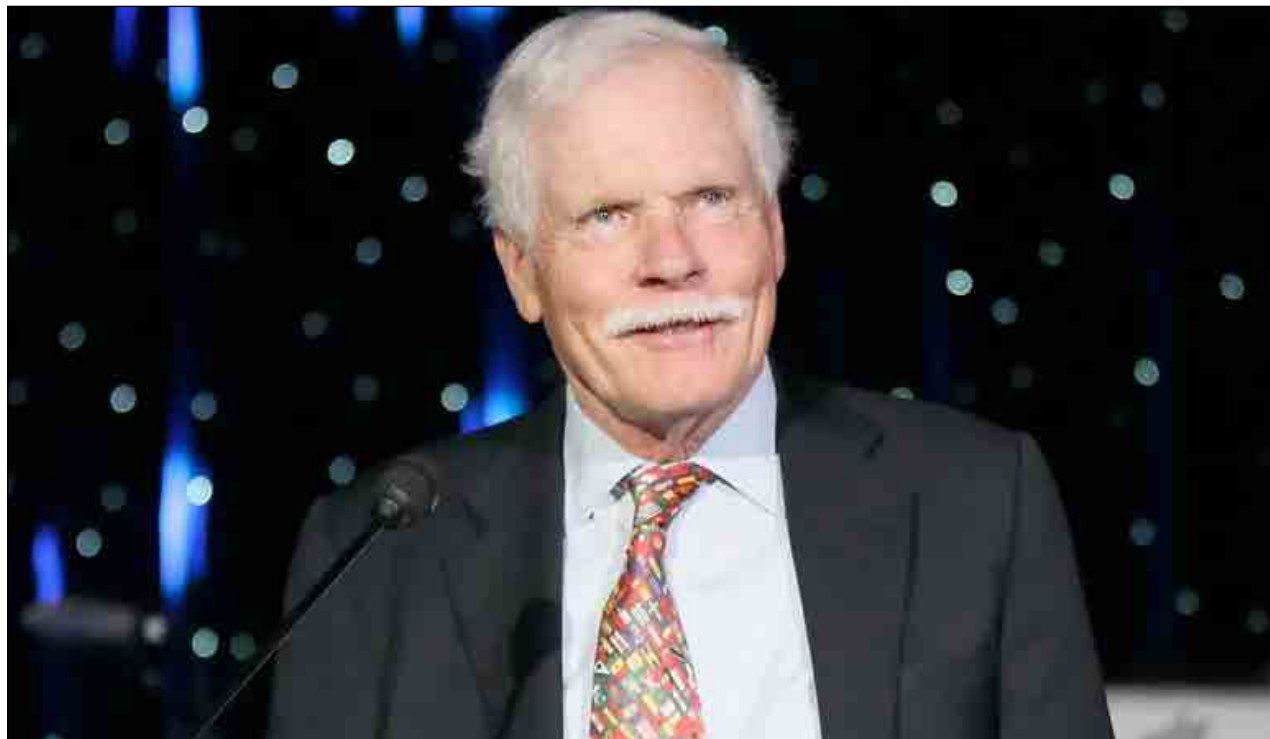
He found broken trees littering the mountainside and hurled into the water, and vast swathes of scarred rock stripped of soil and vegetation.

Alaska is especially vulnerable to megatsunamis because of its steep mountains, narrow fjords and frequent earthquakes.

Now new research published in Science suggests glacier melt driven by climate change is making such collapses far worse.

The team combined field work, seismic and satellite data to reconstruct a domino chain of events and trace the height of the wave.

Dr Stephen Hicks of University College London said the glacier was previously "helping to hold up this piece of rock", and so when the ice retreated, it exposed the bottom of the cliff face, "allowing that rock material to suddenly collapse into the fjord".



TURNER DIES AT 87:

Media mogul Ted Turner, who pioneered the modern 24-hour news culture

Oil prices drop and stock markets rise after reports of deal to end Iran war

Oil prices have dropped and global stock markets have risen following reports that the US and Iran are close to a deal to end the war.

Brent crude futures, the global benchmark oil price, fell to \$97 (£73) a barrel after the reports before rebounding. The price was over \$108 earlier in the day.

The FTSE 100 index of London's largest public firms and the equivalent German Dax had risen over 2% midway through the trading day while the French Cac 40 was up 3%. Asian stock markets closed up.

The market movements come after news outlet Axios reported that the US believes it is getting close to a one-page document which will end the war and set up more detailed nuclear negotiations.

Oil prices are still much higher than the \$70 a barrel they were hovering around before the start of the US-Israel war with Iran, which has caused caused production and transportation of oil in the region to slump.

Central to the conflict is Iran's threat to attack oil ships crossing the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow waterway south of the country, in response to US-Israeli strikes since 28 February.

About a fifth of global oil and gas shipments usually cross the strait, which has been effectively closed for weeks. Global gas prices have also soared since the conflict began.

As for stock markets, the big European bourses are lower than they were at the end of February, while the S&P 500 is higher.

The main Asian markets all

rose on Wednesday, with the South Korean Kospi closing up 6.45%, the Hong Kong Hang Seng ending the day up 1.22%, and the Japanese Nikkei finishing 0.38% higher.

The Hang Seng is down since the start of war, but the other two are up.

On 8 April, the US and Iran agreed a ceasefire, which caused oil prices to slump and stock markets to jump.

However, on Sunday, US President Donald Trump said the US military would guide ships through the Strait of Hormuz, dubbing it "Project Freedom", leading to a rise in attacks in the strait from both Iran and the US.

Trump then said on social media on Tuesday he would pause the operation "for a short period of time to see whether

or not the Agreement can be finalized and signed".

He added that "Great Progress has been made toward a Complete and Final Agreement with Representatives of Iran". Trump said the US would continue to block ships transiting to and from Iranian ports, a move designed to put pressure on Iran's economy.

On Wednesday, Axios reported that the US believes it is getting close to a one-page memorandum of understanding to end the war, citing two US officials and two other sources briefed on the issue.

That would, it is claimed, declare an end to the war in the region and start a 30-day period of negotiations on a deal to re-open the strait, limit Iran's nuclear programme, and lift US sanctions.

Ted Turner, media mogul who revolutionised TV news by launching CNN, dies at 87

Media mogul Ted Turner, who pioneered the modern 24-hour news culture when he launched the CNN channel, has died at the age of 87, the network has announced.

In 1980, Turner launched Cable News Network as the first dedicated rolling news channel, which soon became a central part of the media landscape.

US President Donald Trump paid tribute to him as "one of the greats of broadcast history, and a friend of mine".

Current CNN CEO and chairman Mark Thompson described Turner as "the giant on whose shoulders we stand, and we will all take a moment today to recognise him and his impact on our lives and the world".

In a statement, Thompson said: "Ted was an intensely involved and committed leader, intrepid, fearless and always willing to back a hunch and trust his own judgement."

"He was and always will be the presiding spirit of CNN."

President Trump has been a fierce critic of the current CNN, but said of Turner:

"Whenever I needed him, he was there, always willing to fight for a good cause!"

CNN initially faced scepticism and struggles - being mocked as the "Chicken Noodle Network" in its early years by those who thought it would not succeed.

But the channel proved its worth by providing speedy and continuous updates of stories like the assassination attempt on US President Ronald Reagan in 1981, and the Challenger space shuttle disaster in 1986.

The network truly came of age with its live rolling coverage from Iraq during the 1990-1991 Gulf War.

President George Bush once said he learned more from CNN than he did from the CIA.

CNN's success led other news channels to follow, such as Fox News, launched in 1996 by Turner's long-time rival Rupert Murdoch.

But CNN was far from Turner's only outlet. He began his career by taking over the successful family billboard company when his father took his own life, then bought a radio station in Atlanta, Georgia.

Burkina Faso junta dissolves over 200 associations

Burkina Faso's military rulers ordered on Tuesday the dissolution of around 200 associations, the latest clampdown on civic groups in the west African country.

In total, the Sahel country suspended 205 associations, all based in Burkina, involved in health, education, women's rights, farming, the environment, culture and sport.

Since taking power in the Sahel country in a coup in 2022, the ruling junta has cracked down on hundreds of NGOs, unions and the freedom of assembly, along with opposition to its military rule.

In July 2025, junta leader Ibrahim Traore signed a law restricting the workings of rights

groups and syndicates.

"During the suspension period, only actions designed to ensure the associations are respecting the law are allowed," the government said in a decree.

International NGOs and charities that receive foreign donations are regularly accused by the junta of spying or collusion with jihadists fighting the army.

In April, Burkina Faso's military authorities already banned several hundred associations — many of which involved in human rights work — from operating across the country.

That same month, Human Rights Watch said the law enabled the junta to intensify a generalised crackdown on civil society.

TPLF move to restore leadership raises tensions in Ethiopia's Tigray

Political parties and analysts in Ethiopia are deeming it illegal for the leader of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) to serve as the head of the local parliament.

TPLF leader Debretsion Gebremichael was elected to head the restored parliament on Tuesday. The Tigray parliament had been dissolved under the peace agreement.

Some now say the move by the dominant party in Ethiopia's Tigray to restore its control of the region could lead to "disastrous" renewed conflict with the federal government.

"Debretsion being in charge of the presidency of Tigray, it can worsen the political and security situation of Tigray, generally at the TPLF," said Kinfe Hadush, the Chairman of Salsay Weyane Tigray opposition party.

"The election of Debretsion

to the presidency [...] shows the structural failure of the TPLF," he added.

Analysts fear this move could restart hostilities with the federal government in Addis Ababa

"What we are witnessing right now in Tigray is that the TPLF has decided to reinstate the pre-war council, as well as to reinstate the wartime president, Mr. Debretsion Gebremichael. So, to me, this shows, symbolically and actually, that we are drifting away from the peace agreement," said Desta Gebremedhin, a Peace and Conflict student at Mekele University.

The federal government has yet to respond to the consequences of the appointment.

While still powerful regionally, the TPLF, which effectively ruled Ethiopia for three decades, was banned as a political party last year.



GERMAN POLICE:

Police took part in raids in 12 states across Germany (file pic)

German police raid neo-Nazi criminal youth groups

Police have raided around 50 homes and other locations, targeting people suspected of involvement in far-right criminal youth groups that have recently emerged in Germany.

Prosecutors said the suspects were believed to be part of two groups, "Jung & Stark" (JS), or Young and Strong, and "Deutsche Jugend Voran" (DJV), which means Forwards German Youth.

No arrests were made in Wednesday's raids, which took place in 12 states, mainly in the east and south of Germany, including Bavaria, Berlin, Brandenburg and Saxony.

In a statement, federal prosecutors said the raids targeted individuals suspected of organising violence through social

media and forming nationwide networks.

"Some of the accused are said to have attacked members of the left-wing scene or people they believed to be paedophiles. In each case, the victims were beaten by several attackers and sustained significant injuries," prosecutors said.

During their meetings, authorities say, group members have called "for acts of violence against political opponents and against alleged paedophiles".

Last year one of the leaders of DJV was sentenced to more than three years in prison after a string of violent attacks against political opponents in Berlin.

Twenty-four year-old Julian M, along with a group of 16 to 23 year olds, was convicted of

brutally beating up a number of people who appeared to be wearing emblems connected to the political left.

More than 600 police were involved in Wednesday's raids.

There is deep concern in Germany about young people being drawn into far-right activity and violence targeting both left-wing figures and LGBT communities.

Both JS and DJV operate openly, with a visible presence online, on Telegram, Instagram and other social media platforms.

Jakob Guhl, from the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, says many of those who join JS and DJV are "pretty young", in their teens or early 20s. The groups are "explicitly militant" and "not secretive", he adds.

Although far-right groups in the Germany have not in the past hidden their activities, recent groups such as JS and DJV have shared their activities more openly on social networks, in an apparent bid to recruit young disenfranchised men.

JS has hundreds of followers on social media, but similar, smaller groups have appeared in local areas, especially the east, since 2024.

Guhl told the BBC that unlike more mainstream far-right movements like the AfD and the Identitarians, which appealed to "broader audiences", JS and DJV were more focused on practising martial arts, attending protests and beating up people they saw as their enemies.

To stay or risk the 'Road of Death' - Ukrainian civilians trapped in frontline city

The road is mined. So, we're stuck here," says Ludmilla, over the phone from the rooftop of a fire-damaged house in southern Ukraine. "People are trying their best to survive."

Her frontline home city of Oleshky has, according to multiple accounts, been largely cut off from fresh supplies of food or medicine for months.

Ludmilla describes being trapped there, and watching it decaying before her eyes.

Ukraine's commissioner for human rights has warned of a "humanitarian crisis."

Some recent deliveries do seem to have gone through, organised by volunteers or aid groups. Photos seen by the BBC show a crowd of people, many of them elderly, apparently fetching fresh supplies in a city square.

A relief even if prices were

high, says Ludmilla, as people have had to forage for food in the abandoned homes of neighbours. Ludmilla is not her real name. Her name and the names of other residents who have spoken to the BBC have been changed to protect their identities.

Pasta and tinned goods, she tells us, have become a key staple for the roughly 2,000 remaining population.

Any attempt to leave Oleshky, say locals, is to gamble with your life along what's been dubbed "The Road of Death" - due to reports of heavy mining.

Oleshky is imprisoned by both geography and war; cut off by a river and wrecked bridges to the north - and dangerous or impassable roads inland.

All the while it is caught in the crossfire of opposing armies.

Ukrainian troops are dug in on the other side of the river,

just outside Kherson - the big city they recaptured in November 2022, driving the Russians back across the river.

Residents, volunteers and officials report that, as last winter set in, snowfall made the danger points harder to see amid intensified mining.

The snow is gone but the mines, people fear, are still there.

Despite the dangers, there have been some successful, recent evacuations along the 'Road of Death', south-west along the route of the Dnipro river.

"Leaving Oleshky, everyone prayed to God that we wouldn't hit a mine," says Volodymyr, who's in his 50s.

Terrorised by drones and traumatised by seeing his neighbour's body carted away after she was hit by shelling, he says his family finally took the decision to leave.

"None of us could endure it any longer."

Volodymyr recounts being driven out in an ambulance in an evacuation arranged by volunteers. Even that was horrifying.

"The entire highway from Oleshky to Hola Prystan' is littered with burnt-out cars. Some of them burned with people still inside."

Satellite imagery from November shows at least eight damaged vehicles on a 1km stretch of the road heading out of Oleshky towards Kardashynka, which is on the way to Hola Prystan'.

There is also what seems to be a large scorch mark on the road between Kardashynka and Hola Prystan' which first appeared sometime in late January.

Verified footage from the same period shows a badly damaged vehicle which appears to have veered off the

road; possibly corresponding to claims that vehicles, such as ambulances, have been blown up or strayed onto mines.

Similar scenes are replicated along the E97 road to the east of the city, although satellite imagery suggests the damage there dates back much further.

Small trench networks are visible at intersections on approaches to the city, indicating the area is militarized, but these have also been in place for many months.

The BBC has been in contact with seven people who tell us they are either still in Oleshky or recently evacuated.

The accounts we have gathered are through phone calls or messaging apps as well as questions sent through a Ukrainian official who has remained in touch with residents.

We have not been able to ful-

ly verify each account but where possible, we have sought to corroborate stories through photos, location data and online records. Ludmilla's own home was destroyed, she says, when the Kakhovka Dam further up the Dnipro river was blown up under Russian occupation in June 2023, causing catastrophic flooding.

"I'm in someone else's house, which is also burned."

She won't move because there's no point, she explains, as the destruction is still going on everywhere.

Trees hit by shelling, we're told, are at least easier to break down for firewood.

Inside the city, Russian soldiers are believed to be holed up in buildings, hiding from roving Ukrainian drones.

"They sit in basements," says Ludmilla. "We don't see them but they're there."



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Barau FC GM leads foreign experts to inspect Dambatta Stadium

The General Manager of Barau Football Club, Dominic Iorfa, has led a team of foreign football experts to inspect the Dambatta Stadium,

constructed by the Deputy President of the Senate, Senator Barau Jibrin

The foreign delegation, comprising experts from the

United Kingdom, Turkey, and Egypt, aims to collaborate with Senator Barau Jibrin on further renovations to upgrade the facility to standard.

Iorfa was accompanied by Abubakar Abubakar Dan Fulani, Coordinator of the Nigerian U-20 Flying Eagles, Abdul Adamu, and the Barau FC Secretary, Abubakar Jibrin.

It will be recalled that the foreign experts earlier witnessed Barau FC's match against El-Kanemi Warriors, demonstrating their commitment to scouting talented players for opportunities abroad.

The delegation also paid a visit to the club's Grand Patron, Senator Barau Jibrin, with plans

to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with both the club and the Senator to promote football development.

The Dambatta Stadium, built by Senator Barau Jibrin, is still undergoing development and requires further upgrades to meet international standards.

This collaboration with foreign experts is expected to accelerate its completion of the Dambatta Stadium, the home ground of the Maliya boys.

Senator Barau Jibrin has already constructed 13 stadiums across local government areas in Kano North as part of his commitment to sports development in Kano State and Nigeria at large.



The General Manager of Barau Football Club, Dominic Iorfa, led a team of foreign football experts to inspect the Dambatta Stadium.



FOUZI LEKJAA

Moroccan FA eyes FIFA Vice Presidency role

The Moroccan Football Federation is reportedly positioning itself for greater influence within global football administration, with its president, Fouzi Lekjaa, emerging as a candidate for a top role at FIFA.

According to sources, Lekjaa is being considered for the position of First Vice President under current FIFA president Gianni Infantino in the governing body's next leadership cycle.

The potential candidacy underscores Morocco's growing footprint in international football politics, following its recent successes in hosting major tournaments and its national team's strong performances on the global stage.

Lekjaa's bid would place him among the most influential figures in world football administration, further strengthening Africa's representation at the highest level of the sport

Nigeria delivers strong start at 17th Africa Aquatics Championships in Oran

The Nigeria Aquatics Federation is pleased to report a spirited and competitive outing by Team Nigeria at the ongoing 17th Africa Aquatics Championships in Oran, Algeria, with athletes already making their mark on the podium and advancing into key finals.

Team Nigeria opened its medal account on Day 1 in an impressive fashion, as Collins Ebinga clinched a bronze medal in the men's 100m butterfly, setting a new personal best record of 50.68 seconds, underlining his rising profile on the continental stage.

In another commendable performance, India Kate Brown also secured a bronze medal, boosting Nigeria's early medal tally and highlighting the team's strong start to the championships.

On Day 2, Nigeria maintained a strong presence in the finals with impressive qualifying performances. Collins Ebinga advanced to the final of the 50m butterfly, while Dorcas Oka qualified for the final of the 100m breaststroke, showcasing the team's growing depth across events.

In the 50m butterfly final, Collins Ebinga delivered a strong performance but narrowly missed out on the podium, finishing 4th, just behind competitors from Egypt and South Africa, who occupied the medal positions.

Despite determined efforts, Dorcas Oka also finished outside the podium places in the 100m breaststroke final. Nevertheless, both athletes' progression to the finals reflects Nigeria's increasing competitiveness at the continental level.

The Nigeria Aquatics Federation commends all athletes for their resilience, discipline, and commitment to excellence.

"These performances demonstrate clear progress, with podium finishes, personal bests, and multiple final appearances signaling a positive trajectory for Nigerian aquatics," the Federation stated.

Team Nigeria remains focused and motivated as the championships continue, with several events still ahead and strong medal prospects in sight.



THE NIGERIA AQUATICS CHAMPIONS

NWFL MD 18: Edo Queens beat Rivers Angels 2-1 to wrap regular season in style

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Former Champions Edo Queens FC saved the best for the last as they spanked their South-South arch-rivals Rivers Angels FC of Port Harcourt 2-1, ending the NWFL regular in an impressive fashion.

It was a breathtaking scene at the rainbow of the Samuel Ogbemudia stadium as the Match day 18 engagement went down in an

explosive manner between the two giants who wrapped up the 2025/26 (NWFL) premiers regular season with both already qualified for super six tournament that will later determine the league champions.

The NWFL leading goal scorer Atume Doosuur opened scoring for Edo Queens 21 minutes into the high profile league match as the Benin girls ended the first half with the 1-0 advantage over the visitors.



Executive Chairman, Edo State Sports Commission Hon Amadin Desmond Enabulele celebrates with Edo Queens players after their 2-1 victory over Rivers Angels

On return to the field for the remaining half, Edo Queens continued to dominate and got their second goal in the 74th minute of play through Esther Inyang who struck from a long distance to the disbelief of Rivers Angels goalkeeper who who couldn't respond to the strike.

Edo Queens maintained the 2-0 lead over Rivers Angels until the 87th minute when Patience Otubo pulled one back for Rivers Angels, following a defensive error on the part of the host team to end the game 2-1.

Recall that in the first leg played in Port Harcourt, Edo Queens suffered the same 2-1 defeat to Rivers Angels.

Edo Queens, Rivers Angels and Bayelsa Queens are the three clubs that secured tickets for Super 6 in group A.

Edo Queens finished second with 36 points while Rivers Angels finished 3rd with 34 points behind leaders Bayelsa Queens occupy 1st position with 37 points.

Tanzania move to appoint Didier Drogba as AFCON 2027 ambassador

Tanzania are planning to appoint former Ivory Coast international Didier Drogba as an ambassador for the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), as part of efforts to boost the tournament's global profile.

The move is being driven by Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan, who is keen to leverage Drogba's international reputation and influence to promote the competition.

Drogba was recently invited by the country's Minister of Sports, where he took part in discussions focused on marketing and elevating the visibility of the tournament across the continent and beyond.

Tanzania is set to co-host the 2027 AFCON alongside Kenya and Uganda, and the potential appointment of the Chelsea legend is seen as a strategic step in strengthening preparations for the prestigious continental showpiece



DIDIER DROGBA AND TANZANIAN PRESIDENT SAMIA SULUHU HASSAN

'Anambra sports was heading for collapse,' Iloenyosi hails Soludo's major reforms



CHIKELUE ILOENYOSI

Chairman of the Anambra State Football Association, Chikelue Iloenyosi, has praised the sweeping reforms introduced by Anambra State Governor Charles Chukwuma Soludo, describing them as a turning point for sports development in the state.

In a strongly worded appreciation message issued on behalf of the Anambra football community and sports stakeholders, Iloenyosi commended the governor's decision to merge the Anambra State Sports Development Commission with the Ministry of Youth Development, a move he said has restored structure, direction, and hope to the sector.

According to him, sports administration in the state had previously suffered from serious operational setbacks that negatively affected football development and access to facilities.

"Before this intervention, sports in Anambra State—especially football—was at risk of decline due to administrative inefficiencies that stifled progress," Iloenyosi stated.

He revealed that clubs and stakeholders struggled with limited access to public sports infrastructure, particularly the Awka City Stadium, where high operational costs reportedly discouraged investment and grassroots activities.

Iloenyosi cited the case of Solu-

tion FC, explaining that the club nearly lost its Nigeria National League slot before intervention from the Anambra FA leadership helped recover it from Jos.

"Even critical stakeholders like ANSFA faced difficulties accessing facilities. This weakened the growth of clubs and placed Anambra behind neighboring states," he added.

The former Super Eagles defender also applauded the appointment of Patrick Aghamba as Commissioner for Youth and Sports Development, noting that his leadership has already improved collaboration between government and sports bodies.

"There is now renewed confidence among stakeholders. The atmosphere is more inclusive, coordinated, and progressive," Iloenyosi said.

He further described the reforms as evidence of Governor Soludo's commitment to youth empowerment and sustainable sports development.

"Your actions have laid the foundation for a more functional and accessible sports system in Anambra State," the statement read.

Iloenyosi concluded by assuring the governor of the full support of the football community in driving the vision forward.

Westgate FC beat Amanda FC, advance in NFF President Federation Cup

Westgate FC recorded a solid 2-0 win over Amanda FC of Anambra State in the preliminary round of the NFF President Federation Cup, putting in a strong first-half performance to seal qualification at the Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium, Enugu.

From kickoff, Westgate showed clear intent. In the 2nd minute, Friday Omoregie came close after being set up by Idris Shittu, but his effort went off target. A few minutes later, Kelvin Idemudia tried his luck from outside the box, forcing a save from the Amanda goalkeeper.

The breakthrough arrived in the 12th minute. Elijah Opaleye struck from distance, and with a slight deflection, the ball found its way into the net to give Westgate the lead. The goal lifted the team, and they continued to push forward.

In the 23rd minute, the lead was doubled. Idemudia finished off a good move to make it 2-0, putting Westgate firmly in control of the game.

Amanda FC had a chance to respond in the 34th minute after Shittu was cautioned for a challenge. The resulting free kick hit the post, and the rebound fell kindly to an attacker who failed to convert, allowing Westgate to maintain their advantage.

Westgate created more openings before halftime. Opaleye went close after a good run but missed the target,

while Omoregie also had a late chance that was not taken. Despite the missed opportunities, Westgate went into the break with a deserved two-goal lead.

The second half saw a more even contest, especially in midfield. Westgate remained organised and controlled the tempo of the game. In the 64th minute, Festus Elegbede and Wisdom Ajayi were introduced to add fresh energy, while later substitutions brought on Michael Ikpechi and Eseosa Ulrich.



WESTGATE FC AND AMANDA FC

Team Nigeria lands in Accra for pre-Commonwealth Games boxing friendlies

Team Nigeria has arrived in Accra, Ghana, ahead of an international friendly boxing tournament against Ghana's Black Bombers and Hitters as part of preparations for the 2026 Commonwealth Games.

The Nigerian delegation touched down on Wednesday and is set to compete on Thursday, May

7, at the Accra Sports Stadium.

The bout forms a key component of the team's build-up to the Commonwealth Games scheduled to hold from July 23 to August 2 in Glasgow, Scotland.

The contingent comprises a blend of male and female boxers, alongside a full complement of technical and administrative officials.

Male Boxers: Ogunremi Michael (55kg), Sodiq Oduniyi (60kg), Abdulrahmon Abdulwahaab (65kg), Folly Hassan (70kg), Daniel Joshua (80kg)

Female Boxers: Aishat Gbadamosi (57kg), Kadijat Ajisola (54kg), Orakwe Blessing (75kg)

Officials: Tonye Ageba (Coach)

Laguda Babatunde (Technical Chairman)
Lazarus Hirekaan (Doctor)
Vivian Akohwarien (Secretary General)

Omolie Yakubu Imadu (Vice President)

The friendly tournament is expected to offer valuable competitive exposure for the Nigerian boxers as they intensify preparations for the multi-sport event in Scotland.



TEAM NIGERIA IN ACCRA, GHANA

Iloenyosi strengthens NFF campaign structure with strategic regional appointments

Former Super Eagles defender and football administrator, Chikelue Iloenyosi, who also serves as Chairman of the Anambra State Football Association, has stepped up his campaign for a seat on the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) Board representing the South East zone with the unveiling of key regional coordinators.

The appointments are part of

a broader strategy to strengthen grassroots mobilisation and build a unified support base ahead of the upcoming NFF elections.

For the South West region, Iloenyosi has named Ayodele Thomas as campaign coordinator. Thomas is a former Nigeria Women Football League (NWFL) board member, FIFA-licensed football agent, and Chief Executive Officer

of TopPro Management. His extensive experience in football administration and player management is expected to enhance campaign organisation and outreach in the region.

In the South East, the role has been assigned to Olisa Onuchukwu, an ex-international player and current Secretary General of the All Nigerian Football Players Union (ANFPU). His appointment

brings strong player representation and union leadership experience into the campaign structure.

Iloenyosi, who is contesting for a place on the NFF Board to represent the South East, says the appointments reflect his commitment to inclusivity, structured engagement, and wider stakeholder participation in Nigerian football governance.

World Cup 2026: U.S. denies Senegal FA Vice-President, others Visa

The United States Embassy in Dakar has reportedly denied visa applications for six officials of the Senegalese Football Federation ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Among those affected is a vice-president of the federation, raising fresh concerns over access and participation logistics for African football administrators in the lead-up to the global tournament.

Sources indicate that the visa refusals were issued despite existing provisions expected to facilitate entry for accredited football officials, teams, and delegates connected to the World Cup.

The development has sparked unease within African football cir-

cles, with stakeholders questioning the consistency of U.S. immigration policies as preparations intensify for the competition, which will be co-hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

The Senegalese Football Federation has yet to release an official statement on the matter, while the United States Embassy in Dakar has not publicly commented on the specific reasons for the visa denials.

The situation adds to growing concerns that visa restrictions could pose challenges for several African nations, potentially affecting smooth participation in pre-tournament activities and administrative engagements tied to the World Cup.

Home UCL: Saka's goal sends Arsenal to Budapest

Arsenal forward Bukayo Saka scored the only goal as Arsenal defeated Atletico Madrid to reach their second Champions League Final on Tuesday night.

Both teams came into the game hopeful after the 1-1 stalemate in Madrid but it was Arsenal who crossed the line at the end of the game.

Jan Oblak could not hold Le-

andro Trossard's shot in the 44th minute and Saka made no mistake in tapping it into the net.

The win sends Arsenal to Budapest where they will face the winner between Bayern Munich and defending champions PSG in the final on May 30.

Arsenal's only previous Champions League final appearance was in 2006 when they lost to Barcelona.



BUKAYO SAKA

FEATURE



TRAPPED IN THE LOOP

The effects of compulsive scrolling

RACHEAL OMIJIE

It was just one video I wanted to watch, but before I knew it, I was already watching the 30th video in the space of 30 minutes. It starts from just one clip, minutes turn to hours, hours to unstoppable moving of the thumb on screen. Many claim it is a way to relax, some say "I am staying informed", some "it helps me forget my problems", while some normalize it saying "everyone does it". They all find an excuse as to why they do it, without knowing the dangers it causes beneath.

Continuous scrolling has a very strong impact mentally and physically. It doesn't start immediately it is a process carried out by individuals consistently. Several of which stems from a lot of factors.

Lack of clear goals and direction is a major cause of continuous scrolling, if an individual picks up the phone without a purpose he or she defaults to scrolling, having no defined intent. Lack of alternatives also contributes, if the individual doesn't have strong alternatives like, reading books, practicing a skill and many

more. Constant boredom plus idle time, when your day has no clear structure, nothing mentally engaging, waiting, lying down, the brain looks for easy stimulation and scrolling is the fastest option.

Emotional discomfort adds to this, which most people ignore, loneliness, anxiety, feeling behind in life, low mood, instead of sitting with those feelings you decide to find comfort with scrolling online. Stress and mental overload, when overwhelmed with work, school, or anything, your brain avoids effort it picks something of the opposite, something low in energy and distracting.

Phone accessibility, your phone always in your hands, in your pocket, beside your bed, which makes you craving for the screen. Notification and triggers, apps like Instagram, TikTok and X constantly pulls you back for example someone liked your post, or a new video pops up. All these which acts as entry points into long scrolling sessions.

The disadvantages compulsive scrolling has on the brain is a lot, it has a lot of mental effects several which are: Reduced attention span, as the individual keeps engaging in short form

content, the brain is trained for quick consumption rather than sustained focus, leading to difficulty in concentrating on reading, studying, writing or thinking deeply. Weakened memory retention, because information is consumed quickly it gives no time for the brain to store and process it, leading in poor recall, and the feeling of I have seen a lot but learned little.

Emotional drain and restlessness, after long periods of scrolling instead of feeling refreshed or accomplished, individuals often feel restless, mentally tired, or oddly dissatisfied. Keeps the brain in a state of stimulation, giving no time for the brain to rest, leading to mental fatigue, difficulty relaxing without a screen and many more disadvantages.

It is not just with young ones, it's with every age group. Many say it is only teenagers who engage in such practices, not knowing even old people get addicted.

Research as shown that young individuals are most addicted to compulsive scrolling than other age groups. Young adults are heavy users of platforms like Instagram, TikTok and so more, which exposes

them to invite scroll and recom-

mendation algorithms.

These systems are designed to maximize attention and create dopamine driven loops which pushes an individual to doing something again and again even when you don't plan to.

Mindless scrolling among teenagers mainly disrupts focus and academic performance, increases procrastination and lowers retention of information. On adults its impact is more on productivity and mental balance, reducing work efficiency and increases stress, mental fatigue, and disrupted sleep patterns, especially late night scrolling.

Among older people it leads to isolation and misinformation risk, exposing them to misleading or false information and reduced physical activity. Additionally continuous screen use by old people can lead to eye strain. The consequences are different among all age groups, but two things are sure, lack of control over time and attention.

Compulsive scrolling doesn't start within a day, it's a continuous process and with that, addiction comes into place. It's easy to start but hard to stop, but it is still a

process which includes, setting clear time boundaries, don't rely on it to stop soon, when time is structured scrolling becomes intentional instead of automatic.

Removing easy access triggers, turning off unimportant notifications, moving social apps off your home screen. Substituting scrolling for reading books, writing short notes, watching something with a clear end, not endless reels.

Creating phone free periods, design parts of your day where scrolling is not allowed for example during work, study sessions, 30- 60 minutes before sleep, this helps the brain re-learn focus. Practicing conscious use, ask yourself "why am I opening this"; this builds awareness.

Accepting boredom as necessary, boredom allows creativity, gives you a moment to reflect, allows you to think deeply. This weakens the urge the individual has to scroll.

Tracking usage, awareness is key, when you see how much time you spend scrolling it is easier to reduce it. You don't change automatically, it is a gradual process.

It is not about abandoning technology but about regaining control.

DOOMSCROLLING: THE REAL COST

<div style="background-color: #2e7d32; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <h3 style="margin: 0;">Mental health impact</h3> <p style="color: white; font-weight: normal;">How bad news affects your mind</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #ffe0b2; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Anxiety spirals</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: normal;">Negative content fuels constant worry</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #ffe0b2; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Higher depression risk</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: normal;">Lower life satisfaction over time</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #ffe0b2; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Obsessive checking</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: normal;">Compulsive refreshing of news feeds</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #ffe0b2; padding: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Secondary trauma</p> </div>	<div style="background-color: #ffcc80; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <h3 style="margin: 0;">Physical health impact</h3> <p style="color: white; font-weight: normal;">Stress shows up in your body</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #ffe0b2; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Sleep disruption</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: normal;">Blue light and stress disrupt sleep</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #ffe0b2; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Raised blood pressure</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: normal;">Chronic stress keeps you in fight-or-flight</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #ffe0b2; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Headaches & nausea</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: normal;">Stress causes physical symptoms</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #ffe0b2; padding: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Tech neck & tension</p> </div>
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