

Edo Police introduce new anti-crime tactical unit

● **Edo Security Squad arrests 12 suspected cultists, seals alleged initiation centres in Benin**

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Police Command has unveiled a new specialised tactical formation known as the Violent Crime Response Unit (VCRU),

tasked with tackling kidnaping, armed robbery and other violent crimes across the state.

The unit was formally launched on Tuesday in Benin City by the State Commissioner of Police, Mr Monday

Agbonika, who said it was an intelligence-driven operational team created to strengthen the force's capacity to respond to evolving security threats.

Agbonika stressed that the new outfit should not be mis-

taken for a rebranding of the disbanded SARS or SWAT units, noting that it was established strictly on a new operational philosophy anchored on professionalism, accountability and human rights compliance.

According to him, the creation of the VCRU followed directives from the Inspector-General of Police, Olatunji Disu, as part of broader national efforts to enhance specialised policing and improve response to organised violent crimes.

He explained that the unit's core mandate would focus on intelligence-led operations targeting kidnapping networks,

armed robbery gangs and other organised criminal groups operating within Edo State.

"The unit is not a rebranding of SARS or SWAT. It is a completely structured intervention designed to restore public confidence through transparency, community engagement, professionalism and strict respect

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Edo'll be modern city before end of my first term —Okpebholo

● **Congratulates Edo-born Prof on emergence as NMA Nat'l President**

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Governor Monday Okpebholo on Tuesday declared that Edo State was on course to becoming a modern city before the expiration of his administration's first four years, as he inspected several ongoing infrastructural

and erosion control projects across Edo South Senatorial District.

The governor, who expressed satisfaction with the pace and quality of work at the project sites, said his administration had recorded visible progress in road construction and environmental remediation projects aimed at transforming the

state's urban landscape.

The inspection tour took the governor round major project sites in Benin City, including the construction of the Ekiuwa-University of Benin Road, popularly known as Temboga Road Extension; Oba Eredia-owa Road off Upper Mission Road being handled by Heartland Nigeria Limited; the Ik-

poba Hill Flyover and erosion control project linking Obaseki Street and Agbo Road into Ik-poba River; as well as the ongoing Adesuwa Flyover project on Sapele Road.

Speaking with journalists during the inspection, Okpebholo pointed to the level of progress recorded at the Adesuwa Flyover, noting that por-

tions of the road had already been asphalted.

"As you can see, we are making progress. A lot has been done in Edo State. This is the Adesuwa

Flyover and you can see part of the road already asphalted. In the next few weeks, you will

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A COURTESY VISIT:

Speaker, House of Representatives, Hon. Abbas Tajudeen (right), and new Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Nigeria, Yousef bin Mohammed Al-Balawi, during a courtesy visit to the Speaker in Abuja yesterday.

PHOTO: OMOYE AMINU

COAS reaffirms Army's constitutional mandate

● **As troops seize 400 Starlink devices in major blow to terror logistics**

MAKURDI/DAMATURU

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt.-Gen. Waidi Shaibu, has restated the Nigerian Army's commitment to defend the nation's Constitution and intensify efforts to tackle insecurity across the country, even as troops in the North-East recorded a major breakthrough with the interception of over 400 Starlink communication devices allegedly used by insurgents.

Shaibu gave the assurance on Tuesday at the opening ceremony of the Nigerian Army Project Management Workshop held at the Nigerian Army School of Military Engineering (NASME), Makurdi, where he emphasised that the Army remains firmly loyal to the Constitution in the discharge of its operational duties.

The COAS, who was represented by the Force Commander, Operation Whirl Stroke, Maj.-Gen. Moses Gara, commended President Bola

Tinubu, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, for what he described as sustained and unwavering support to the Nigerian Army, noting that recent gains in the fight against terrorism, banditry and other violent crimes were largely driven by improved personnel welfare.

According to him, enhanced welfare packages, including improved accommodation, office complexes, training schools and medical facilities across Army formations, have strengthened troop morale and combat readiness.

"The unwavering willingness of our personnel to engage in combat is directly linked to the care and responsibility for their well-being," he said, adding that efficient project planning and management remained central to sustaining infrastructure development within the Army.

Shaibu said the workshop was designed to equip project officers with modern, global-standard

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Tinubu backs Nigeria's hosting of CAF congress, awards —Pg 10

New EdoGIS boss unveils reform agenda, promises faster C-of-O processing

MUYIWA AKINSANYA/
DAVINA USHERE

BENIN CITY

The new Managing Director of the Edo State Geographic Information Service (EdoGIS), Dr. Innocent Ehiaguina Bello, has met with staff of the agency, where he unveiled his vision for the organisation, assuring that the signing and issuance of Certificates of Occupancy (C-of-O) would commence soon.

Dr. Bello said his priority would be to promote staff welfare, tackle the menace of land racketeering, and drive a deliberate shift towards professionalism, regular training and retraining, transparency, discipline, and improved service delivery in land administration across the state.

He declared that the administration of Governor Monday Okpebholo maintains zero tolerance for illegal land activities, reaffirming government's commitment to the prompt issuance of C-of-Os, as well as the eradication of land grabbing, overlapping claims and systemic racketeering that have long plagued the sector.

According to him, restoring sanity and excellence in land administration would be a major game changer for the present administration, adding that EdoGIS must evolve to meet the expectations of both the public and government.

Dr. Bello also appreciated his predecessor and the immediate past Acting Managing Director of the agency, Dr. Tunde Eigbiremolen, alongside

the management team, for ensuring a smooth transition.

While cautioning against professional misconduct, negligence and lateness to duty, he also moved to boost morale by

announcing incentives for staff dedication, punctuality and commitment, as well as awards for the best-behaved and best-dressed staff members.

He commended unit heads

for their cooperation so far and urged them to sustain the momentum, assuring that improved welfare packages and necessary working tools for efficiency would be provided shortly.

Dr. Bello further pledged to maintain an open-door policy, encouraging feedback and collaboration to promote inclusiveness and strengthen good governance within the agency.

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for human rights," he said.

The commissioner further clarified that operatives of the VCRU would not engage in arbitrary stop-and-search exercises, profiling of citizens, or any form of misconduct, adding that strict operational guidelines had been put in place to regulate their conduct.

He disclosed that all personnel deployed to the unit underwent compulsory training covering human rights protection, modern investigation techniques, firearms handling and tactical operations before being cleared for duty.

Agbonika also noted that the unit would operate under a system of civilian oversight and periodic accountability reporting to ensure compliance with established standards.

The new tactical squad will be led by Chief Superintendent of Police (CSP) Osagie Etinosa, whom the commissioner described as a seasoned intelligence and tactical operations expert.

Etinosa, who joined the Ni-

geria Police Force in 2010 as a Cadet Assistant Superintendent of Police, holds Master's degrees in Peace and Conflict Resolution as well as Criminology and Security Studies.

He has also undergone several advanced security trainings, both locally and internationally, including courses in China, at the National Crime Agency, and the Police Staff College in Jos.

Agbonika said Etinosa's operational background includes key postings at the Force Intelligence Department in Abuja, Commander of 51 PMF Oghara, and Coordinator of the FID/IRT Benin Annex.

"His extensive operational experience, investigative competence and commitment to duty make him well-suited to lead the Violent Crime Response Unit," the commissioner said.

He assured residents that the Edo Police Command would continue to adopt modern policing strategies and deploy lawful resources to make the state increas-

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ICF WEEK 2026 CONFERENCE:

L-R: Keynote Speaker and Chairman, African Capital Alliance, Dr Okechukwu Enelamah; President, International Coaching Federation (ICF), Nigeria chapter, Charles Okeibunor and immediate past President, ICF, Nigeria, Akanimo Ekong at an ICF Week 2026 Conference, on Tuesday in Lagos.

NUJ Warri chapel seeks stronger media-corporate partnership with Manroy Global Services

BETTY IDIALU

BENIN CITY

The Warri Correspondents' Chapel of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) has called for deeper collaboration with Manroy Global Services Limited as part of efforts to strengthen media practice and professional development in the region.

This followed a courtesy visit by the newly elected executive members of the chapel to the company's office, aimed at formally introducing the new leadership and exploring areas of mutual support.

Leading the delegation, Chapel Chairman, Comrade Akpokona Omafuaire, said the engagement was in line with the union's drive to build strategic partnerships with organisations committed to media growth and development.

He reaffirmed the chapel's commitment to professionalism, improved information dissemination, and continuous capacity building for journalists, particularly in emerging areas such as Artificial Intelligence.

Omafuaire also appealed for support in key areas including members' welfare, transporta-

tion, internet access, and training programmes to enhance productivity within the chapel.

In his response, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Manroy Global Services, Mr. Mike Taniowho, expressed the company's readiness to collaborate with the NUJ, describing the media as a critical partner in national development.

He assured the chapel of the company's willingness to support initiatives that promote effective journalism and capacity enhancement.

Also speaking, Director of the company, Silver Ofugara,

commended journalists for their contributions to societal growth, noting that Manroy Global Services had consistently engaged in corporate social responsibility projects.

He listed some of the company's interventions to include donation of transformers, educational support programmes, medical outreaches, and sponsorship of surgeries for indigent persons.

Ofugara reaffirmed the company's commitment to supporting initiatives that improve the welfare, efficiency, and professional capacity of journalists in the country.

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skills, stressing that the integration of technology into project management would promote innovation, efficiency and sustainability in Army operations.

Reiterating his command philosophy, he said the Nigerian Army was being transformed into a more professional, adaptable, combat-ready and resilient force capable of operating effectively in a joint, multi-agency environment.

He also highlighted ongoing collaboration with sister services and other security agencies, noting that joint operations had continued to yield positive results in protecting civilians and restoring normalcy in affected communities.

"I wish to express my sincere appreciation to all security stakeholders whose relentless efforts contributed immensely

to the fight against insecurity. We will continue to work assiduously with the Nigerian Navy, Nigerian Air Force and other agencies to ensure enduring peace in our nation," he stated.

Similarly, the Commander Corps of Engineers, Maj.-Gen. Shamsideen Sharafu, represented by the Commandant, NASME, Maj. Essien Ekpenyong, said the annual workshop remained critical in strengthening the capacity of Army engineers and improving professional standards in military construction and project delivery.

The Coordinator of Nigerian Army Special Projects, Maj.-Gen. Bayo Adetoro, explained that this year's workshop, themed "Optimising Quality Project Delivery in the Nigerian Army through Comprehensive Planning, Effective Cost Management and Timely Execution," brought in experienced project managers to train participants on best practices.

Edo'll be modern city before end of my...

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see significant progress on this road," the governor stated.

He disclosed that the inspection also covered Temboga Road, Uteh Palace Road, Ramat Park and the ongoing stormwater drainage project stretching almost seven kilometres into the Ikpoba River.

"You can see the extent of what we have done in Edo State. We have achieved so much and I believe that by the grace of God, if we continue like this, Edo will become a modern city before the end of our first four years," he added.

Okpebholo also used the occasion to commend President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for what he described as unwavering support for Edo State, saying the President's Renewed Hope Agenda had played a key role

in driving ongoing development projects in the state.

"For me, I am grateful to our President who has been very supportive. Without him, we cannot do what we are doing today. As long as he continues to support us, we will continue to make progress for Edo people and turn Edo into a modern city. We are happy to associate with Mr. President," he said.

Residents of communities affected by the projects welcomed the governor with jubilation and songs of praise, expressing delight over the rehabilitation of roads previously abandoned and the erosion control interventions being carried out in their areas.

Some members of the state executive council and top government officials accompanied the governor on the inspection tour.

Meanwhile, Governor Okpebholo has congratulated Professor Afekhide Ernest Omoti on his election as the National President of the Nigerian Medical Association, describing his emergence as a deserving recognition of excellence, professionalism and dedicated service to humanity.

In a congratulatory message, Okpebholo said that Prof. Omoti's election to lead the nation's foremost medical body was a proud moment for Edo State and a reflection of the quality of professionals produced by the state.

within and outside Nigeria.

He observed that Omoti's extensive experience in leadership and professional service adequately prepared him for the national assignment.

According to the governor, the new NMA president had previously served as Chairman of the Edo State branch of the association, Chairman of the National Eye Health Committee, and former Chairman of the Medical and Dental Consultants Association of Nigeria, University of Benin Teaching Hospital chapter.

Okpebholo also commended the Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Benin and Honorary Consultant Ophthalmologist at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital for his contributions to medical research and healthcare development.

Lagos pushes mandatory health insurance to close ₦100bn health funding gap

LAGOS

The Lagos State Government has said that the introduction of mandatory health insurance, alongside stronger public-private partnerships, is central to bridging a ₦100 billion healthcare funding gap and achieving universal health coverage.

The Commissioner for Health, Prof. Akin Abayomi, stated this on Tuesday at the 2026 Ministerial Press Briefing held at the Bagauda Kaltho Press Centre, Alausa, Ikeja.

The briefing formed part of activities marking the seventh anniversary of the administration of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu and Deputy Governor Obafemi Hamzat.

Abayomi said Lagos was intensifying reforms to expand health insurance coverage, strengthen infrastructure, and position the state as a leading medical tourism hub in Africa.

He noted that the state currently allocates about eight per cent of its budget to health—below the 15 per cent benchmark under the Abuja Declaration, leaving a significant funding gap amid rising demand.

“There is a gap between what is available through our

budget and what we ideally want to spend,” he said, adding that at least ₦100 billion more was required to meet the state’s healthcare needs.

He explained that declining donor funding and the pressures of a growing megacity had made alternative financing unavoidable, stressing that health insurance and public-private partnerships remain the key solutions.

According to him, Governor Sanwo-Olu had already domesticated the National Health Insurance Authority Act through an Executive Order signed in July 2024, making health insurance mandatory for all residents.

He added that Ministries, Departments and Agencies have begun enforcement, requiring proof of accredited health insurance for access to government services.

Abayomi said the policy would deepen enrolment in the state-backed Ilera-Eko scheme, which already has about 1.46 million enrollees, though still far from universal coverage.

He also lamented that about 77 per cent of healthcare spending in Nigeria is out-of-pocket, while only two per cent is insurance-based.

Looking ahead, he said Lagos’ 2025 Development Plan targets making the state one of Africa’s top three healthcare destinations, reducing medical

tourism abroad and strengthening maternal and primary healthcare systems.

Also speaking, the Special Adviser to the Governor on

Health, Dr Kemi Ogunyemi, warned residents against patronising unaccredited health facilities, urging compliance with HEFAMAA regulations.

The Permanent Secretary, Dr Dayo Lajide, commended health workers for their resilience amid rising service demands.



CLOSING CEREMONY OF 2026 NYSC BATCH A:

A cross-section of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members administered three hearty cheers to the representative of the Minister of State for FCT, during the closing ceremony of 2026 NYSC Batch A Stream II orientation course at Kubwa orientation camp in Abuja on Tuesday.

Eno urges NYSC members to embrace patriotism, discipline in A'Ibom

NSIT ATAI

Governor Umo Eno has charged National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members posted to Akwa Ibom to demonstrate discipline, patriotism and commitment to community development.

The governor gave the charge on Tuesday at the closing ceremony of the 2026 Batch 'A' Stream II orientation course in Ikot Itie Udung, Nsit Atai Local Government Area.

Represented by the Director of Administration in the Ministry of Youth Develop-

ment, Mr Anthony Isonguyo, the governor congratulated the corps members on completing their orientation exercise.

He urged them to contribute meaningfully to national development by promoting civic responsibility, peace and progress in their host communities.

Eno assured the corps members of their safety, describing Akwa Ibom as one of the most peaceful and hospitable states in the country.

He encouraged them to embrace their postings in good faith and integrate fully with their host communities.

Osun 2026: My record sets me apart, says Oyebamiji

LAGOS

The All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship candidate for the 2026 Osun election, Mr Bola Oyebamiji, said his record of integrity, discipline and service distinguishes him from other contenders.

In a statement, Oyebamiji said his political and professional journey was built on decades of hard work, consistency and dedication to public service.

He said he did not emerge suddenly but was shaped through years of sacrifice and responsibility across education

and banking institutions, including WEMA Bank, Trans-International Bank, Spring Bank and Enterprise Bank.

“My journey has been brick by brick, built on competence and trust,” he said.

He described himself as a product of perseverance and accountability, adding that these values would guide his governance vision for Osun State if elected governor in 2026.

Oyebamiji said his administration would prioritise inclusive governance and sustainable development anchored on experience and purposeful leadership.

Navy busts illegal refining sites, recovers 3,800 litres of stolen fuel in Rivers

PORT HARCOURT

The Nigerian Navy has disrupted attempts to establish illegal refining camps and recovered thousands of litres of suspected illegally refined petroleum products in separate operations across Rivers State.

Director of Naval Information, Navy Capt. Abiodun Folorunsho, said the operations were carried out under Opera-

tion Delta Sentinel as part of ongoing efforts to curb crude oil theft and economic sabotage in the Niger Delta.

Personnel of Forward Operating Base, Bonny, acting on intelligence, foiled attempts by suspected saboteurs to establish illegal refining sites at Promise Land in Bonny Local Government Area.

The Navy said aerial and ground surveillance revealed concealed equipment hidden

within thick vegetation, as well as newly constructed refining structures with interconnected pipelines and improvised cooking installations.

The sites, still in early stages of development, were dismantled in line with operational procedures and placed under surveillance.

In a related operation, personnel of Nigerian Navy Ship (NNS) Soroh uncovered a concealed fuel dump along the Rivers-Bayelsa border axis following intelligence reports around Okarki waterside in Abua-Odual Local

Government Area.

Aerial surveillance led to the discovery of multiple sacks hidden in vegetation, with about 3,800 litres of suspected illegally refined Automotive Gas Oil recovered from 38 sacks.

Although no arrests were made as suspects fled, the Navy said the recovered products were secured in accordance with standard procedures.

The Navy reaffirmed its commitment to intelligence-driven operations aimed at dismantling illegal refining networks and protecting national economic assets.

IFAD-LIFE ND trains 32,000 agribusiness experts across N'Delta

CALABAR

The International Fund for Agricultural Development-Livelihood Improvement Family Enterprises Project in the Niger Delta (IFAD-LIFE ND) says it has produced about 32,000 agribusiness incubation experts across the region, with at least 1,250 outstanding participants in each participating state.

The National Financial Inclusion Specialist of the project,

Ms Empress Ekwelie, disclosed this at a workshop in Ikot-Edem-Ndarake, Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State.

She said the workshop was designed to equip rural farmers, traders and agribusiness owners with skills in savings culture, record keeping and access to credit facilities.

According to her, beneficiaries have also been trained in digital financial services, intentional savings and responsible

investment practices.

Ekwelie explained that participants were tracked through state officers, local government coordinators and field supervision exercises, adding that the programme also links farmers to banks, insurance firms and off-takers.

Also speaking, National Nutrition Mainstreaming Specialist, Mrs Chioma Obasi, said the initiative integrates nutrition into agribusiness development to improve household wellbe-

ing. She noted that nutrition clubs, home gardens and bio-fortified crops such as orange-fleshed sweet potatoes and vitamin-rich cassava were introduced to tackle malnutrition.

Beneficiaries including Mr Efiom Okon and Miss Emmanuela Etim described the programme as transformative, urging continued support for youth and women empowerment in rural communities.

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ingly hostile to criminals while safeguarding law-abiding citizens.

“We will continue to evolve, improve and deploy all lawful means available to confront crime and ensure Edo remains unsafe for criminals and safe for residents,” he added.

The ceremony climaxed with the presentation of an award of excellence to CSP Etinosa in recognition of his role in successful

tactical operations, including the arrest of a notorious kidnapping suspect, Yusuf Hassan, popularly known as “Dogo Yellow,” alongside nine members of his gang.

Meanwhile, men of the Special Security Squad, “Operation Flush Out Cultists and Kidnappers,” in Edo State have arrested 12 suspected cultists and sealed two apartments allegedly used for cult initiation activities during coordinated raids across several hotspots in Benin City.

The operation followed the killing of a young man in front of the gate of the University of Benin on Sunday, May 10, 2026.

The Chief Security Officer (CSO) and Principal Security Officer (PSO) to Governor Monday Okpebholo led the security team during raids carried out at Ekosodin, Isihor, Old Road off S&T Barracks, Airport Road, 19th Street Ugbowo, Ogba-Evbuodia and Evbuomere Quarters in Benin City.

Spokesperson for the squad, Noah Idemudia, accused some Okaigheles across communities in the state of allegedly aiding violent crimes, saying intelligence reports suggest that sophisticated weapons used in deadly attacks are often traced to local communities.

He warned community leaders to ensure peace within their domains, adding that any Okaighele found in possession of unlicensed weapons would be treated as a criminal.

NEWS**Tinubu, Danjuma to attend Gowon's autobiography launch in Abuja****ABUJA**

President Bola Tinubu and former Minister of Defence, Gen. Theophilus Danjuma, are to attend the public presentation of the autobiography of former Head of State, Gen. Yakubu Gowon, scheduled for May 19 in Abuja.

This was contained in a statement by Mr Yomi Odunuga, Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Sen. George Akume.

Odunuga said Tinubu would be represented at the event by Akume.

He said the event, slated for the Bola Ahmed Tinubu International Conference Centre, Abuja, is expected to attract top government officials, military veterans, diplomats and other dignitaries from across the country.

According to him, Tinubu is the Special Guest of Honour, while Danjuma, former Chief of Army Staff and ex-Minister of Defence, will unveil the au-

tobiography.

Odunuga said the 881-page book, published by Havilah Group, chronicled Gowon's life, leadership journey and reflections on key moments in Nigeria's history, including the Nigerian Civil War between 1967 and 1970.

He added that the memoir also detailed Gowon's early years and his emergence as Nigeria's leader during a critical period in the nation's history.

The statement quoted Gowon as saying that the autobiography

was written to provide clarity on decisions taken during his administration rather than reopen old wounds but to clarify my thinking on policies and plans at a period often narrated by others.

"By choosing to write, I took a conscious decision not to reopen old wounds but to clarify my thinking on policies and plans at a period often narrated by others. "My story is one of conviction evaluated by circumstances at the crossroads of expectations and reality," Gowon said.

Also quoted in the statement was the Group Chief Executive Officer of Havilah Group, Mr

Lanre Adesuyi, who described the autobiography as a major contribution to Nigeria's historical documentation and national discourse.

"We consider this project a significant milestone in our journey, one that reflects our commitment to preserving history, promoting thought leadership and contributing meaningfully to national discourse," Adesuyi said.

Born in 1934, Gowon became Nigeria's Head of State and Commander-in-Chief on August 1, 1966, serving for nine years.

After leaving office, he ob-

tained a PhD in Political Science from the University of Warwick in 1984 and later devoted himself to peacebuilding, national development and spiritual leadership.

His post-service initiatives include the "Nigeria Prays" movement and advocacy campaigns against diseases such as guinea worm, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria through the Yakubu Gowon Centre.

He also serves as the National Goodwill Ambassador for the control of viral hepatitis in Nigeria.

**INAUGURATION:**

New members of the Lagos State Physical Planning and Building Control Appeals Committee taking Oath of Office, during their inauguration at Lagos House Marina in Lagos on Tuesday.

Police confirm abduction of businessman in Oyo**IBADAN**

The Police Command in Oyo State has confirmed the abduction of a businessman, Alhaji Wasiu Aleshinloye, in his residence at Irawo, Atisbo Local Government Area (LGA) of the state.

The Command Spokesman, DSP Ayanlade Olayinka, confirmed the incident in a statement on Tuesday in Ibadan.

Olayinka said the case of the victim abducted at gunpoint was reported at Tede Police Division on Monday at about 22:20hrs.

He said a 10-year-old girl

also sustained gunshot injuries during the incident.

"However, the girl was immediately rushed to a hospital for medical attention and extraction of pellets."

Olayinka said police detectives had visited the scene and recovered three expended shells of ammunition and three face caps, adding that the recovered items were undergoing forensic investigation.

He said tactical and intelligence-driven efforts are currently ongoing to rescue the victim unhurt and apprehend the perpetrators.

Abducted Nasarawa varsity students regain freedom**LAFIA**

The Police Command in Nasarawa State has revealed that the six abducted students of Faculty of Engineering, Nasarawa State University, Keffi (NSUK), Gudi campus, have regained their freedom.

SP Rahman Nansel, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) in the state, disclosed this in a statement on Tuesday in Lafia.

According to him, the victims are currently receiving medical attention and necessary support

following their ordeal.

Nansel also revealed that two suspects have been detained in connection with the abduction.

Nansel said that the suspects, identified as Abdullahi Yeyi Haro, alleged leader of the kidnapping syndicate, and Basiru Abdullahi, both from Gudi, were arrested following sustained intelligence-led operations and coordinated tactical efforts by operatives of the command.

He said the arrests were made after diligent investigation and strategic operations aimed at dismantling the crim-

inal network responsible for the abduction.

Nansel said the Commissioner of Police in the state, CP Shetima Mohammed, commended the operatives involved in the operation for their professionalism, resilience and commitment to ensuring the safety of residents.

He said the commissioner reiterated the command's determination to rid the state of all forms of criminality, particularly kidnapping and other violent crimes.

"The commissioner further

assured members of the public that investigations are ongoing with a view to arresting other fleeing members of the syndicate and bringing all those involved in the crime to justice," he said.

Nansel appreciated members of the public for their support and timely information, which he said contributed to the success of the operation.

He urged residents to remain vigilant and continue to provide useful information to security agencies to aid proactive crime prevention and prompt response.

Ododo urges corps members to uphold discipline, announces N10,000 transport support**ASAYA (KOGI)**

Governor Ahmed Ododo of Kogi has urged members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) to uphold the values of discipline, unity, loyalty and peaceful coexistence at their places of primary assignment.

Ododo gave the charge on Tuesday at the closing ceremony of the 2026 Batch 'A' Stream II Orientation Course at the NYSC Orientation Camp in Asaya, Kogi.

The governor, who was represented by his deputy, Joel Salifu, commended the corps members for their exemplary conduct throughout the three-week orientation exercise.

He expressed satisfaction with the high level of teamwork, discipline and patriotism displayed during the programme.

According to him, the virtues exhibited during the orientation course are strong indicators of a successful and impactful service year.

Ododo noted that the orientation programme, which featured activities such as Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED), sports, drama, drills and talent exhibitions, was designed to prepare corps members for productive and self-reliant living after service.

He urged them to remain law-abiding and integrate

peacefully with their host communities, stressing that such conduct would earn them acceptance and support throughout their service year.

The governor assured the corps members of the state government's commitment to their safety and welfare, noting that both remain top priorities of his administration.

He also encouraged them to take advantage of the SAED programme, particularly post-camp entrepreneurship training, to acquire practical skills that could reduce unemployment and contribute to national development.

Ododo announced a transport support grant of N10,000 for each of the 1,807 corps members.

He further expressed appreciation to the management of the NYSC for its commitment to nation-building through youth development.

Earlier, the Kogi NYSC Coordinator, Mrs Chris-Moneke Tochi, congratulated the corps members on the successful completion of the orientation course.

Tochi advised them to accept their postings in good faith, remain security-conscious and make effective use of the SAED programme to acquire skills for self-reliance after service.

She also appreciated the state government's support, particularly in the repair of damaged camp facilities and the welfare provided for corps members.

Oyetola takes Nigeria's Blue Economy campaign to Africa Forward Summit**LAGOS**

The Minister of Marine and Blue Economy, Dr Adegboyega Oyetola, has presented Nigeria's Blue Economy Agenda at the Africa Forward Summit in Nairobi, Kenya, where he participated in a high-level panel discussion on the blue economy.

The Special Adviser to the Minister on Media, Dr Bolaji Akinola, made this known in a statement in Lagos on Tuesday.

Akinola said in the statement that the minister spoke on the topic: "Blue Economy: Maritime Sovereignty & Sustainable Valorisation."

He said that the Summit had the theme: "Africa-France Partnerships for Innovation and Growth."

Akinola quoted Oyetola as saying that the Federal Government had continued to implement deliberate measures to unlock the vast potential of Nigeria's marine and blue economy resources.

He said that the minister included the creation of the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy in August 2023 as part of government's deliberate measures.

Akinola noted Oyetola as saying: "Since its establishment, the ministry has recorded notable milestones, including the development of Nigeria's first National Policy on Marine and Blue Economy, designed to provide a strategic framework for sustainable sectoral growth.

"The agencies under the

ministry have also achieved record revenue performance, generating N1.83 trillion in the 2025 fiscal year."

Oyetola said that the Federal Government had approved a comprehensive port modernisation and upgrade programme expected to attract larger vessels and expand employment opportunities.

The minister added that government's modernisation efforts would reinforce Nigeria's position as the leading maritime hub for West and Central Africa.

The minister noted that the summit brought together African leaders, policymakers, investors and development partners to advance discussions on innovation, economic growth and strategic partnerships

across the continent.

He said the panel session also featured the French Minister of the Sea and Fisheries, Catherine Chabaud, alongside other distinguished maritime stakeholders from across Africa.

Oyetola said the landmark summit, co-hosted by William Ruto and Emmanuel Macron, had Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu present, joining fellow African leaders at the event.

He stressed that the summit, widely regarded as a significant diplomatic and economic engagement, marked a new phase in Africa-France relations.

He added that this was particularly so, as it was the first Africa-France summit hosted in an English-speaking, non-Francophone African country.

Africa loses \$89bn annually to illicit financial flows —Tax experts

ABUJA

The Experts from the West African Tax Administration Forum (WATAF) and Tax Justice Network Africa (TJNA) say African countries lose about 89 billion dollars annually to illicit financial flows (IFF).

Speaking during an interactive session with ECOWAS parliamentarians at the ongoing 2026 First Ordinary Session in Abuja, they said the losses stemmed from harmful tax practices affecting their economies.

The session also featured presentations on “Operationalising ECOWAS Tax Directives for Domestic Resource Mobilisation and Regional Tax Harmonisation,” among others.

They said the harmful tax practices included tax evasion, tax avoidance, and tax mis-invoicing, among others, adding that Africa’s persistent domestic resource mobilisation gap was about 194 billion dollars annually.

“Africa has a prevalent problem of illicit financial flows, and at least 65 per cent of these could be categorised as com-

mercially-driven.

“The main practices that could lead to IFFs are: tax evasion, tax avoidance, tax misinvoicing and other harmful tax practices.

“These harmful tax practices haemorrhage the available resources that can be used for development of the continent, and Africa loses up to eighty-nine billion dollars annually,” they said, citing a 2020 report.

According to them, advancing tax harmonisation within

the ECOWAS sub-region presents a strategic opportunity for WATAF to strengthen regional integration, enhance domestic resource mobilisation, and support sustainable development.

“Tax harmonisation is the fiscal backbone of ECOWAS integration. Without it, the region will continue to lose revenue through loopholes, smuggling, opacity, and profit shifting,” they said.

However, they emphasised that the effectiveness of such efforts would depend on strong

political commitment, effective national-level implementation, and active parliamentary oversight.

Dr Nita Belemaobgo, Research Manager, WATAF, while highlighting the session’s expected outcomes, said the organisation’s objective was to support ECOWAS’ transition on tax directives aimed at harmonising fiscal policies across member states.

“Regional cooperation and evidence-based tools can significantly enhance accountability

and reform outcomes,” she said.

Danicus Sengbeh, WATAF’s Manager, Communications and Information Technology, underscored the importance of setting regional tax harmonisation and domestic resource mobilisation.

He said the ECOWAS Parliament had an indispensable role to play in the oversight function of tax administration, adding that the engagement was about “sovereignty, fairness, accountability and West Africa’s future.”

Don urges Ebonyi govt to deepen investment in oil palm plantation

ABAKALIKI

Dr Kelechi Nwanchor, a lecturer at the Ebonyi State University (EBSU), has called on the Federal and the State Government to invest in large-scale oil palm plantation.

Nwanchor, a lecturer at the Department of Crop Production and Landscape Management, made the call on Tuesday in Abakaliki while speaking with newsmen at the University’s Campus.

According to him, Ebonyi possesses vast arable land suitable for rapid cultivation and growth of palm trees.

He described palm trees as highly valuable economic crops with enormous benefits across the agricultural, nutritional and industrial sectors.

“Oil palm is very important across the tropical region.

“Its value cuts across economic, nutritional and industrial purposes,” he said.

He explained that oil palm provided numerous products

and by-products, including palm wine, brooms, firewood, baskets, agroforestry materials, palm kernel cake, detergents, margarine, palm oil and raw materials for biscuit production.

The don added that palm products were also useful in the pharmaceutical industry.

Nwanchor described oil palm cultivation as “another oil well yet to be fully discovered.”

According to him, palm oil and related products currently command high market values nationally and internationally.

“A litre of palm oil is more expensive than a litre of fuel in national and international markets.

“Countries such as Finland and Germany are in serious need of palm oil products from Nigeria, especially from the South-East.

“I once facilitated discussions with an agency from Finland, which expressed willingness to partner with the Ebonyi Government on palm tree cultivation, beginning with 1,000 seedlings and modern equipment support,” he said.

INEC pledges credible Nasarawa North senatorial bye-election

LAFIA

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has assured residents of Nasarawa North Senatorial District of a free, fair and credible bye-election scheduled for June 20.

Alh. Muhammad Abubakar-Sadiq, Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) in Nasarawa State, gave the assurance in an interview with newsmen on Tuesday in Lafia.

The bye-election is being conducted to fill the vacant seat following the death of the senator representing the district, Sen. Godiya Akwashiki, in December 2025 after a prolonged illness.

Abubakar-Sadiq said that the commission had concluded arrangements for the successful conduct of the election across the district.

“Arrangements are in place to ensure proper coverage of the 583 polling units in the 35 elec-

toral wards across Akwanga, Nasarawa-Eggon and Wamba Local Government Areas,” he said.

The REC urged politicians, political parties, aspirants and residents of the district to conduct themselves peacefully and comply strictly with the electoral guidelines issued by the commission.

“Arrangements are ongoing to mobilise personnel and materials to ensure the conduct of a free, fair and credible bye-election.

“We are collaborating with security agencies to ensure adequate security at polling units on election day and guarantee the overall success of the exercise,” he added.

Abubakar-Sadiq further stated that campaigns by candidates and political parties would commence on June 10 and end on June 18.

He added that June 11 remains the deadline for the submission of names of polling agents by candidates.



NATIONAL SPORTS TOURISM CONFERENCE:

L-R: Museum Curator, National Park Service, Charity Kichi; representative of Minister of Arts, Culture, Tourism and Creative Economy, Mr Sunday Bidong; representatives of the Managing Director, Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), Ahmadu Danjuma; Deputy Comptroller-General of Customs, Suleman Chiroma, and other participants, during the National Sports Tourism conference and Exhibition in Abuja on Tuesday.

Only 30% of Nigerian farmers use mechanised tools —AFAN

LAGOS

The All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), Lagos State Chapter, has said that only about 30 percent of farmers in Nigeria currently use mechanised tools, while the majority still operate at subsistence level.

The Deputy Chairman of the association, Mr Shakin Agbayewa, disclosed this in an interview with newsmen on Tuesday in Lagos.

Agbayewa said low adoption of mechanisation was largely due to poor access to land, finance and modern farm equipment.

According to him, most

farmers still rely on crude implements and manual labour, limiting productivity and preventing expansion into commercial farming.

“Most farmers in Nigeria today are still subsistence farmers. We are not yet operating fully on a commercial basis.

“If you are talking about the percentage of farmers using mechanised tools, it is still very low.

“Only about 30 percent can be said to have access to mechanisation,” he said.

Agbayewa said many small-holder farmers cultivated limited land areas and could not afford tractors, planters, harvesters

and other modern equipment.

He noted that the cost of hiring tractors and paying operators had become a major burden for many rural farmers.

In spite of the challenges, he said mechanised farming offered higher productivity and stronger returns on investment over time.

“Mechanisation may be expensive in the short term, but in the long term, it is profit upon profit,” he said.

Agbayewa said farmers who embraced mechanisation were able to cultivate larger areas, save time and reduce post-harvest losses.

He said they also record-

ed better yields because land preparation and planting were carried out more efficiently.

According to him, many Nigerian farmers are unable to enjoy these benefits because of high equipment costs, foreign exchange pressures and rising fuel prices.

Agbayewa said improved mechanisation would boost food production, reduce labour stress and make farming more attractive to young Nigerians.

He urged the federal and state governments to establish tractor hiring centres, farm service clusters, affordable equipment leasing schemes and low-interest financing for farmers.

Plateau holds SWAp review to strengthen health system

JOS

The Plateau government has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening the health sector and improving service delivery through the continuous implementation of the Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) in health-care financing and governance.

Dr Nicholas Baamlong, Plateau’s Commissioner for Health, said this on Tuesday at the state’s SWAp first quarter performance dialogue review meeting.

Baamlong, said the review

was to enable government officials, development partners, and key stakeholders assess the progress made so far in the implementation of the initiative across the state’s health sector and identify gaps and ways to address same.

“The review engagement is aimed at evaluating achievements, identifying gaps, and developing strategies to improve coordination, accountability, and efficiency in health-care delivery,” he said.

The commissioner explained that SWAp was a framework

designed to align government priorities, donor interventions, and stakeholder activities under a unified health sector plan to ensure better outcomes and optimal use of resources.

He emphasized the importance of collaboration among ministries, agencies, health-care providers, and partners in achieving sustainable reforms and expanding access to quality healthcare services.

Similarly, Dr Opeyemi Fadeyibi, Monitoring and Evaluation Performance Management Lead, at the National SWAp office,

commended Plateau for being one of the states that was implementing the SWAp principles.

Fadeyibi expressed optimism that sustained implementation of SWAp principles would help Plateau strengthen its health system, address existing challenges, and improve healthcare access for residents.

The review meeting forms part of ongoing efforts by the state government to align with national health sector reforms and deliver more effective and people-centered healthcare services.

NEWS**JUDICIARY**

FIDA trains 35 Kebbi women Judges on career growth, judicial leadership

BIRNIN KEBBI

The International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Kebbi State Chapter, has trained 35 female

judicial officers on career progression and leadership pathways within Nigeria's judiciary. The workshop, held in Birnin Kebbi on Tuesday with support from Co-Impact, fo-

cused on strengthening women's inclusion and advancing gender equity through institutional reforms in the justice sector.

Speaking at the event, FIDA Country Vice President and National President, Mrs Eliana Martins, said the engagement was designed to examine bar-

riers affecting women at different stages of judicial careers.

She said the consultation provided a platform to assess issues such as entry into the judiciary, retention, promotion, leadership opportunities and professional development for women judges.

Martins noted that although

more women are entering legal practice in Nigeria, gender imbalance persists within the judiciary, particularly at senior levels.

She referenced pioneering figures such as Nigeria's first female Chief Justice, Justice Aloma Mariam Mukhtar, and Justice Zainab Bulkachuwa, describing them as milestones for women in the legal profession.

However, she expressed concern that women remain underrepresented in top judicial positions, noting that only four of the 13 Supreme Court justices are currently women.

"While the appointment of a female Chief Justice is a milestone, systemic imbalance remains," she said.

Martins attributed the challenges to socio-cultural biases, opaque promotion systems, limited mentorship, and entrenched patriarchal norms.

She added that stereotypes questioning women's competence, especially in customary and Islamic law matters, also persist.

According to her, the initiative will help generate data for evidence-based reforms aimed at improving fairness, diversity and inclusion in the judiciary.

FIDA Kebbi Chairperson, Mrs Hauwa Usman-Usara, described the workshop as timely, urging participants to actively engage in shaping better career pathways for women in the justice system.

**OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 47TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE:**

L-R: Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Lead City University, Ibadan, Prof. Omolara Campbell; President, Nigerian Institute of Physics (NIP), Joseph Coker; former President, NIP, Prof. Aboh Hyacinth; Air Vice-Marshal Edward Gabkwet, during the Opening Ceremony of the 47th Annual Conference of the institute, in Ibadan on Tuesday.

Court fixes July 13 for judgment in illegal mining case against 8 Chinese nationals

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja has fixed July 13 for judgment in the trial of eight Chinese nationals and two others over alleged illegal mining activities in Nigeria.

Justice James Omotosho fixed the date on Tuesday after counsel for both the prosecution and defence adopted their

final written addresses.

The defendants, including eight Chinese nationals, a Nigerian, and a company, are being prosecuted by the Attorney-General of the Federation on a three-count charge bordering on unlawful mining operations.

Prosecution counsel, Adeola Adedipe, SAN, urged the court to convict the defendants, while defence counsel, Oladimeji Ekegnga, asked for their

discharge and acquittal.

The defence also filed a reply on points of law seeking to discredit the prosecution's case.

Justice Omotosho adjourned for judgment, stating that the exact date would be communicated by the court registrar.

The court had earlier dismissed a no-case submission by the defendants, ruling that the prosecution had established a prima facie case requiring them

to enter their defence.

The defendants include Shen Yongchan, Mo Baixian, Xiao Bin, Huang Xu Fa, Ma Bingli, Yang Jian, Le Peiyin, Que Wenyong, Hiyk Edward Desmond, and Wanda Quarry Company Limited.

They are accused of conspiring to carry out quarrying operations without lawful authority between October 2022 and June 2024.

Court adjourns ₦14.5bn demolition suit against ex-Power Minister to June 3

ENUGU

The Enugu State High Court has adjourned a ₦14.5 billion suit filed against former Minister of Power, Prof. Barth Nnaji, over alleged demolition of property, to June 3, 2026.

Justice Veronica Ajogwu adjourned the matter on Tuesday following applications by both

parties seeking time to regularise court processes.

The suit was instituted by 25 members of the Nkomoro Onuogba community in Enugu East Local Government Area, who are demanding compensation for alleged destruction of property.

Counsel to the plaintiffs, Mr Peter Igwe, said they needed time to respond to processes served on them shortly before

the sitting.

Defence counsel, Mr Benjamin Nwobodo, also supported the request for adjournment to allow proper filing.

After the hearing, the defence maintained that the matter had already been settled in a 2013 judgment, which affirmed ownership of the disputed land.

He argued that the demolition complained of was carried

out pursuant to court judgment and execution, insisting the fresh claims lacked legal basis.

The plaintiffs, however, are seeking compensation for alleged destroyed buildings, loss of property, and deaths said to have occurred during the incident, as well as a perpetual injunction and declaration of ownership of the disputed land.

ABUJA

Stakeholders in the education sector have commended the Registrar, Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Prof. Is-haq Oloyede, for convening the board's first national stakeholder engagement on underage students admitted into universities.

The engagement was organised

Stakeholders back JAMB initiative on underage varsity admissions

by the JAMB Equal Opportunity Group (JEOG) on behalf of the registrar, on Tuesday in Abuja.

The event brought together 283 participants under the theme: "Achieving Success in Higher Education of Underage Students Admitted in the 2025/2026 Session."

Participants included

vice-chancellors, parents, education experts, child development specialists, legal practitioners and underage students.

Addressing newsmen at the end of the engagement, Prof. Emeritus Peter Okebukola, President of the Global University for Innovation (GUNI-Africa), described the initiative as

unprecedented globally.

Okebuola said no higher education system had established a coordinated national support structure for underage students comparable to the one introduced by Oloyede.

He disclosed that 96 students below the statutory admission age of 16 years were admitted

into the universities for the 2025/2026 academic session after passing a rigorous multi-layered screening process.

According to him, the admission conditions approved by the Federal Ministry of Education in 2025 required candidates to score a minimum of 320 in the Unified Tertiary

Matriculation Examination (UTME), representing 80 per cent performance.

ADDITION OF NAME

I, formerly known as **ESEBAMEN WILLIAMS**, now wish to be known as **ESEBAMAN OZIGBE WILLIAMS**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public please take note.

Woman withdraws divorce demand after Sharia court intervention

KADUNA

A housewife, Zainab Nuhu, has agreed to return to her matrimonial home following reconciliation efforts by a Sharia Court sitting in Magajin Gari, Kaduna.

Nuhu had earlier dragged her husband, Hamisu Abdullahi, to court over alleged assault and requested the dissolution of their marriage.

At Tuesday's sitting, the cou-

ple informed the court that they had reached a settlement following an earlier reconciliation directive.

In the agreement submitted to the court, Abdullahi pledged to stop physical assault and to treat his wife with respect.

Presiding Judge, Malam Yakubu Abdullahi, accepted the settlement and entered it as consent judgment, thereby restoring peace between the couple.

Domestic abuse attracts criminal charges under Nigerian law, lawyers warn

LAGOS

Legal practitioners have warned that domestic violence, including within families and marriages, can amount to criminal assault and battery under Nigerian law.

The lawyers gave the warning on Tuesday in Lagos while reacting to growing public concern over alleged domestic abuse cases circulating on social media.

Principal Partner at Kayode Oshiyemi and Co., Mr Kayode Oshiyemi, said any physical force causing injury or harm could constitute assault, regardless of family relationship.

He stressed that parental authority does not justify abuse, noting that even slight unlawful physical contact could attract criminal liability.

Oshiyemi also said video evidence, including live-

streamed incidents, could be admissible in court if properly authenticated under the Evidence Act.

Another lawyer, Mr Kehinde Nubi, Principal Counsel at Kehinde Nubi and Associates, said Nigerian law provides no immunity for abusive parents or spouses.

He cited the 1999 Constitution and the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act, noting that citizens are protected from inhuman and degrading treatment.

Nubi added that police can act on credible evidence of violence even without a formal complaint, especially where public safety is at risk.

Both lawyers attributed underreporting of domestic violence to stigma, fear of retaliation, financial dependence, and family pressure to remain silent.

Foreign**NEWS**

Zelensky's ex-chief of staff in court as Ukraine corruption probe escalates

President Volodymyr Zelensky's former right-hand man Andriy Yermak appeared in a Kyiv court on Tuesday, after he was named by Ukraine's two anti-corruption agencies as a suspect in a money-laundering scheme.

Yermak's lawyer had earlier denounced as "baseless" allegations that the former head of the presidential office had been caught up in a corruption scandal surrounding a \$10.5m (£7.5m) luxury construction project outside Kyiv.

Hours before the court hearing Yermak told reporters "I do not have any house, I only have one flat and one car", adding later that he would comment afterwards.

For years he was a close friend of Zelensky, and led Ukraine's talks with the US until an anti-corruption raid on his flat last November prompt-

ed his resignation.

Ukraine's Anticorruption Prosecutor's Office (Sapo) said it was asking the Kyiv court to either place him in preventive detention or give him bail of about \$4m (£3m).

The head of the National anti-corruption bureau (Nabu) stressed that Zelensky himself was not part of the pre-trial investigation.

Yermak had been the president's closest adviser throughout Russia's full-scale invasion, until he became caught up in a broader inquiry by Sapo and Nabu into an alleged \$100m (£74m) embezzlement scheme in Ukraine's nuclear energy sector.

He was not charged or formally named as a suspect at the time, however the swirling allegations have cast a shadow over Ukraine's bid to join the European Union. Last year, Zelensky had to scrap a law that

weakened the independence of the two anti-corruption agencies, following widespread protests and criticism from the EU.

As part of Operation Midas, ex-Deputy Prime Minister Oleksiy Chernyshov was charged with abuse of office, while businessman Timur Mindich reportedly fled the country after he was flagged as a suspect and ex-Energy Minister Herman Haluschenko was detained while trying to leave.

Like Yermak, Mindich was once part of Zelensky's inner circle and co-owned the president's former TV studio Kvar-195, before sanctions were imposed on him. Mindich denies wrongdoing.

The latest claims centre on an elite housing project called "Dynasty" in a village outside Kyiv where millions in construction funds were allegedly laundered. The anti-corruption

bureau shared part of a wire-tapped conversation as part of its case and said six more people had been identified as suspects.

Yermak's defence lawyer Ihor Fomin told Ukraine's Suspilne public broadcaster on Tuesday that the "baseless" accusations against the former chief of staff had all been triggered by public pressure, the like of which he had never witnessed before.

"When the investigative actions are over, I will provide a comment," Yermak told reporters on Monday night.

Presidential adviser Dmytro Lytvun, said as the case was ongoing it would be premature to comment on "ongoing procedural actions".

The latest revelations came as Russia ended a three-day ceasefire while it marked victory over Nazi Germany in World War Two.

Trump says Iran ceasefire is on 'massive life support'

US President Donald Trump has said the month-long ceasefire between the US and Iran is on "massive life support".

He told reporters in the Oval Office on Monday that while the ceasefire remained in place, it was "unbelievably weak".

Following Trump's comments, Iranian parliamentary speaker Mohammad Ghalibaf wrote on X that Iran's armed forces were "ready to respond and to teach a lesson for any aggression."

Iran laid out its demands to end the war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz in a counter-offer sent to the US on Sunday. Trump rejected the proposal, calling it "totally unacceptable" and a "piece of garbage".

After Trump's comments, Esmail Baghaei, a foreign ministry spokesperson for Iran, said Tehran's proposals were "responsible" and "generous".

After his comments saying Iran's armed forces ready to respond, Ghalibaf said in a separate post on X that there was "no alternative but to accept the rights of the Iranian people as laid out in the 14-point proposal".

"The longer they drag their feet, the more American taxpayers will pay for it," he said.

Tehran's offer includes an immediate end to the war on all fronts - a reference to the continued Israeli attacks against Iran-supported Hezbollah in Lebanon - a halt to the US naval blockade of Iranian ports and guarantees of no further at-

tacks on Iran, according to Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency.

It also reportedly includes a demand for compensation for war damage and an emphasis on Iranian sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump criticised the proposal, writing on Truth Social on Sunday: "I have just read the response from Iran's so-called 'Representatives.' I don't like it - TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE."

In response to Trump's comments, Baghaei said Iran would act "in any way necessary to secure our interests".

Speaking in the Oval Office later on Monday, Trump addressed the ceasefire between the two countries which has largely been observed since April despite occasional exchanges of fire.

He told reporters: "I would say the ceasefire is on massive life support... when the doctor walks in and says, 'Sir, your loved one has approximately a 1 percent chance of living'."

The US president said Iran's leaders were "very dishonourable people", adding: "Look, I've had to deal with them four or five times - they change their mind."

"That piece of garbage they sent us - I didn't even finish reading it," he said.

Trump also accused Iran of going back on an agreement to allow the US to remove its supply of enriched uranium. He insisted that Iran would "never have a nuclear weapon".



EX-CHIEF OF STAFF IN COURT:

Andriy Yermak said he had only one flat and one car, and his lawyer said the allegations were "baseless"

Dali ship operator charged over deadly Baltimore bridge collapse

Federal prosecutors have filed criminal charges against the owner of the cargo ship Dali, two years after the vessel struck Baltimore's Key Bridge, causing its collapse and killing six people.

Synergy Marine, the company that operated the ship, along with one of its employees, has been charged with conspiracy, obstruction and misconduct resulting in death, among other offences.

Prosecutors allege the company misled investigators about conditions on the ship and failed to disclose hazards and other safety concerns to the US Coast Guard.

A spokesperson for Synergy said the company "will defend

against these allegations with vigor", the New York Times reported.

The BBC has contacted Synergy for comment.

In a statement on Tuesday, Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche said the collapse of the bridge was "a preventable tragedy of enormous consequence".

"This indictment is a critical step toward holding accountable those whose reckless disregard for maritime safety regulations caused this disaster," he said.

The indictment, unsealed on Tuesday, involves the company's Singapore- and India-based operations. The Dali's technical supervisor, Radhakrishnan Karthik Nair,

also faces criminal charges.

In the early hours of 26 March, the M/V Dali container ship crashed into the landmark Francis Scott Key Bridge, sending several vehicles on the bridge plunging into the river and killing six construction workers.

The bridge collapse also caused significant economic disruption as shipping was brought to a standstill.

The city is still working to reconstruct the bridge, which is expected to take years and cost billions of dollars.

The National Transportation Safety Board has identified multiple factors, including the loss of electrical power from a faulty cable, problems with

a fuel pump on the ship and a lack of counter measures to reduce the bridge's vulnerability.

In the court filing, prosecutors say the Dali struck the bridge because the vessel lost power two times in a four-minute span.

The first power outage, prosecutors say, was caused by a loose wire in a switchboard. They allege the second black out occurred because the crew was relying on a flushing pump to supply fuel to two of the ship's generators.

Prosecutors said the vessel had not been approved to use a flushing pump for its generators, as the pump was not designed to automatically restart after a blackout.

US inflation jumps to 3.8% as energy costs surge from Iran war

US prices rose in April at their fastest rate since May 2023 as the impact of the war in Iran was increasingly felt by consumers.

A jump in the cost of gasoline and groceries pushed the consumer price index (CPI), showing the rate prices rose by in the past 12 months, to 3.8%.

It is the highest level since inflation hit 4% three years ago.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) said almost half of the rise was driven by surging energy costs, while housing and food costs also contributed.

The US-Israel war in Iran, and the resulting effective closure of the key Strait of Hormuz shipping lane, has led to a jump in oil prices and this has caused a surge in the price of gas in the US.

The national average price for a gallon of unleaded is at its highest level since July 2022, at \$4.50 (£3.33), according to data from the AAA motoring group.

The rise in April's inflation figure, from 3.3% in March, makes it increasingly unlikely the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates this year.

Isaac Stell, investment manager at the Wealth Club, said the inflation increase even left possible interest rate hikes "firmly on the table".

It comes days before Trump

appointee Kevin Warsh is set to take over from Jerome Powell as chair of the US central bank.

Stell said the incoming chair would enter the role with "little room for manoeuvre" and may be forced to take a more conservative approach.

Trump had clashed with Powell over his reluctance to cut the central bank's interest rate, which the president hoped would spur on the US economy, and has made it clear he expects Warsh to push for cuts.

It also poses a challenge for US President Donald Trump and the Republicans ahead of November's midterm elections, after Trump's 2024 re-election campaign focused largely on his plans to cut inflation.

Air fares and clothing also increased in the year to April, while the price of new cars fell slightly.

April's inflation figure also marked the first time in three years that Americans' pay packets are no longer growing faster than prices are rising.

While prices rose by 3.8% for the year to April, average paychecks grew by just 3.6%.

US stock markets opened lower on the news with the S&P 500 falling 0.6% and the Dow Jones Industrial Average down 0.7%.

NEWS

Foreign

Uganda's president sworn in for record seventh term

Yoweri Museveni is the only president many Ugandans have lived under

Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni, 81, has been sworn in for a record seventh consecutive term following his landslide victory in disputed elections in January, extending his tenure as one of Africa's longest-serving rulers.

Heavy security, including armoured tanks, were deployed in the capital, Kampala, ahead of the inauguration in what police said were measures intended to maintain public order.

Museveni told the crowd that his new term should be regarded as a time for "no more sleep for all Ugandans".

He added that people should focus on creating more wealth and jobs - and build on the progress made over last 40 years through the achievement of peace and the development of infrastructure.

Museveni was declared the winner of the election with more than 70% of the vote, with his term expected to end in 2031.

His main rival, pop star turned politician Bobi Wine, rejected the result, saying the poll was marred by "ballot-stuffing". Election officials denied the allegation.

The 44-year-old opposition leader, whose real name is Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, fled

the country after the election, saying he feared that "the regime wanted to eliminate me".

Museveni first came to power as a rebel leader in 1986 but since then has won seven elections.

He is among the few African leaders in power for more than 40 years. Others include Congo-Brazzaville's Denis Sassou Nguesso, Equatorial Guinea's Teodoro Obiang and Cameroon's Paul Biya.

The government declared the day a public holiday and the president's supporters thronged to the Kololo Independence Grounds in Kampala for the swearing-in ceremony.

In his address, Museveni said that his government would use revenue from planned oil production to grow the economy and alleviate poverty.

"We must protect what has been achieved, correct what still needs improvement and move forward together as one country," he added.

African leaders who attended the ceremony included Tanzania's President Samia Suluhu Hassan, the Democratic Republic of Congo's Félix Tshisekedi, South Sudan's Salva Kiir and Somalia's Hassan Sheikh Mohamud.

Uganda has one of the world's youngest populations, with majority of the people having known no other president.



UGANDANS PRESIDENT:

Yoweri Museveni is the only president many Ugandans have lived under.

No sign of larger hantavirus outbreak, says UN health agency

There is "no sign" of a larger hantavirus outbreak after the evacuation of the last passengers from a disease-stricken cruise ship, the head of the UN health agency has said.

But the World Health Organization's (WHO) chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned "the situation could change" and there could be more confirmed virus cases.

The MV Hondius left Spain's Tenerife island on Monday and is sailing to the Dutch port of Rotterdam. Two flights carrying the final 28 passengers landed in nearby Eindhoven on Tuesday.

Three people have died after travelling on the ship. A Spaniard and a French national who previously returned home have tested positive. The WHO has confirmed nine cases, with two others suspected.

Twelve employees at a Dutch hospital are now in quarantine

over possible exposure to the virus after treating one of the evacuated passengers.

The hospital in the city of Nijmegen said on Monday that this was a precautionary measure, as the workers did not follow strict protocols while handling the patient's blood and urine samples.

At Tuesday's press conference in Madrid, Ghebreyesus said: "At the moment, there is no sign that we are seeing the start of a larger outbreak."

"But of course the situation could change and, given the long incubation period of the virus, it's possible we might see more cases in the coming weeks."

And he stressed that "our work is not over" to contain the outbreak from the cruise ship.

Hantaviruses are usually carried by rodents, but human transmission of the Andes strain - which the WHO believes some

of the ship's passengers contracted in South America - is possible.

Symptoms can include fever, extreme fatigue, muscle aches, stomach pain, vomiting, diarrhoea and shortness of breath.

WHO officials previously said the risk of a major outbreak is very low.

On Tuesday, Spain's health ministry said one of the 14 Spaniards currently quarantining in Madrid after being evacuated from the vessel had tested positive for hantavirus.

The passenger has a "low-grade fever and mild respiratory symptoms" but is in a stable condition, the ministry added.

In Italy, biological samples are being taken from a man with symptoms who travelled on the same plane as a woman who later died from the virus.

The samples will be sent to Italy's main infectious diseases hospital, the Spallanzani in Rome, ANSA news agency reported.

Elsewhere, French Health Minister Stéphanie Rist said that a woman with deteriorating health was isolating in Paris.

Two British nationals with confirmed cases are currently being treated in the Netherlands and South Africa.

The Dutch-flagged vessel is expected to take six days to sail to Rotterdam and provisionally arrive on the evening of 17 May. Exact procedures upon arrival remain under discussion, the ship's operator Oceanwide Expedition said, but the vessel will undergo sanitation.

The final six passengers - four Australians, one Briton and one New Zealander - and some crew members left the ship on Monday.

Overall, 122 passengers and crew of the MV Hondius have been repatriated to the Netherlands and their home countries on government-chartered flights over the past few days.

Protests in India after medical entrance test scrapped over leak claims

The cancellation of a crucial exam held earlier in May for admission to medical colleges over allegations of a paper leak has sparked protests in the Indian capital, Delhi.

The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate), known as NEET-UG, is the gateway to studying medicine in India and is required for joining medical colleges across the country.

Nearly 2.28 million candidates wrote the exam on 3 May at more than 5,000 centres across India.

But within days, allegations of a paper leak sparked anger among students and parents, with protests and political backlash mounting through the week.

On Tuesday, the federal government's National Testing Agency (NTA) - which conducts the exam - said that based on its findings and an ongoing investigation, "the present examination process could not be allowed to stand".

Fresh dates for a retest have not been announced yet, raising concerns among students and parents over possible delays to the admission process.

Nearly 2.28 million students appeared for the medical en-

trance test this year

Indian media reports suggest investigators believe the alleged leak may have originated in the western state of Rajasthan, days before the exam was held.

A senior Rajasthan police official told news agency ANI that they were looking at a "guess paper", which was allegedly circulated ahead of the test. A "guess paper" is a set of questions that teachers or coaching institutes predict could appear in an exam, based on past papers and exam patterns.

The official said that the "guess paper" this year contained around 410 questions, about 120 of which are said to have appeared in the chemistry section of the actual exam.

There are four different versions or sets of the NEET paper, each containing 180 compulsory questions divided across physics, chemistry and biology sections.

The case has now been handed over to federal investigators at the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The NTA has said the decision to cancel the exam has been taken "in the interest of students and in recognition of the trust on which the national examination system rests".

Hamas 'weaponised' sexual violence in 7 October attacks, Israeli investigation says

An independent, Israeli investigation has published harrowing details of "systematic, widespread" sexual violence by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups during the attacks on 7 October 2023, and against hostages.

The 300-page report concludes that rapes, sexual assault and sexual torture were intended "to maximize pain and suffering".

While the UN and others have published reports on sexual violence during the attacks - in which about 1,200 people were killed and 251 taken hostage - this is the most comprehensive.

It draws on 430 filmed interviews with survivors and witnesses, more than 10,000 photographs and videos filmed by

attackers, and official records and material from attack sites.

Hamas has repeatedly denied that sexual and gender-based violence took place during the attacks or against those held captive. An investigation by the UN's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict concluded there were "reasonable grounds to believe" sexual violence, including gang rape, had been committed.

Accounts of sexual violence emerged soon after the Hamas-led attacks, prompting an Israeli legal expert to set up the commission.

Witnesses quoted in the Civil Commission report describe hearing and seeing violent gang rapes at the Nova dance festival, where more than 370 people were killed in

one of the deadliest attacks. A male survivor also gives an account of being used like a "sex doll" by assailants. Many of those raped or apparently assaulted were shot in the head.

There are recurring accounts from the festival site, kibbutzim and military bases which were over-run of dead women found without their underwear, and corpses with genital mutilation.

The report says that "extreme forms" of sexual and gender-based violence "continued against hostages in captivity for prolonged periods, inflicted on both women and men". It describes the attacks as "the weaponization of sexual violence".

Some former hostages including Amit Soussana, Arbel Yehud, Romi Gonen, Rom Braslavski and Guy Gilbol Da-

l have given public accounts of being sexually assaulted. However other victims have only spoken confidentially to medical staff, therapists and investigators.

The report includes many shocking new claims including that two young relatives were forced by their captors to perform sex acts on each other. That case is part of what the report says was "a distinct pattern of violence targeting family members and exploiting familial relationships as instruments of terror".

The Civil Commission found that the crimes carried out "constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocidal acts under international law." Its evidence, which is being kept in a secure archive, may aid future prosecutions.



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Tinubu backs Nigeria's hosting of CAF congress, awards

President Bola Tinubu has approved Nigeria's hosting of the 48th CAF Ordinary General Assembly and the 2026 CAF Awards Ceremony.

The approval was confirmed on Tuesday in a statement by the Nigeria Football Federation's Director of Communications, Ademola Olajire.

Olajire said Tinubu made the declaration during the Africa Forward Summit held in Nairobi, Kenya.

He said the President gave the approval after meeting CAF President, Dr Patrice Motsepe, and other senior football officials.

According to Olajire, Nigeria's selection reflects growing confidence in the country's capacity to host major continental sporting events.

He said the meetings also focused on football development, infrastructure and stronger partnerships across African football. Among those present were

Foreign Affairs Minister, Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, NFF President, Ibrahim Gusau, and former NFF President, Amaju Pinnick. Also in attendance was CAF

Acting Secretary-General, Samson Adamu, who joined discussions on preparations for future continental programmes.

The 48th CAF Ordinary

General Assembly is scheduled for October.

The gathering is expected to attract key football administrators and stakeholders from across the African continent.

Participants will include presidents of CAF's 54 member associations and representatives of the zonal football unions.

Other senior officials and administrators involved in African football governance are also expected at the event.

The assembly remains one of CAF's most important annual meetings for policy decisions and football administration.

Nigeria's hosting is expected to further strengthen its profile

within African football circles.

The 2026 CAF Awards Ceremony will also take place in Nigeria under the new arrangement.

The awards celebrate exceptional performances by players, coaches, teams and administrators in African football.

The ceremony is known for combining recognition, glamour and entertainment in honour of African football excellence.

Football stakeholders believe hosting both events will boost Nigeria's image as a destination for major sporting occasions.

"It is another opportunity to showcase Nigeria's readiness and commitment to African football," Olajire said.



President Bola Tinubu (second from right) in a handshake with CAF President Motsepe (third from right), while Mrs Odumegwu-Ojukwu (right), Gusau (third from left), Pinnick (second from left) and Samson Adamu (left)

LGAN set for 3rd Interclub Golf Championship in Port Harcourt

The Ladies Golf Association of Nigeria (LGAN) is set to host its 3rd Interclub Golf Championship from May 13 to May 16 in Port Harcourt.

The championship, themed "Swing Bold, Play Brilliant," will be held at the Port Harcourt Club 1928 Golf Section.

The tournament is sanctioned by the R&A and recognised as a World Amateur Golf Ranking event.

First Bank of Nigeria Limited is one of the major sponsors of the four-day championship, amongst other corporate partners.

The championship would attract lady golfers from clubs nationwide, with all LGAN-affiliated golf clubs across Nigeria expected to participate.

Lami Onayi Ahmed, President of LGAN, said the championship would promote friendship, discipline, and healthy competition among female golfers.

Ahmed described the event as a platform for discovering talents and strengthening women's participation in golf across Nigeria.

"We are committed to developing women's golf and creating opportunities for players to compete at higher levels," she said.

She urged participants to uphold sportsmanship and showcase excellence throughout the championship.

The Local Organising Committee Chairman, Nkoyo Igunbor, who is the 1st Vice President of LGAN, said activities on May 13 would include arrivals, practice rounds, hoisting of LGAN and club flags, ceremonial tee-off and cocktail reception.

Igunbor said participants are

expected to wear LGAN jackets on white bottoms for the flag-off ceremony scheduled for 4:30 p.m.

She added that the ceremonial tee-off would begin by 5 p.m., followed by a cocktail session with the dress theme, "Express Yourself."

According to her, round one

of the competition will take place on May 14 after breakfast scheduled between 6:30 a.m. and 7:30 a.m.

"Club uniforms and creative dressing are approved for the opening round, while lunch and karaoke night will follow later in the day," she said

Federation says funding, facilities stall grassroots rugby growth

The Nigeria Rugby Football Federation says poor funding, weak infrastructure, and low awareness still hinder grassroots rugby development across Nigeria. Its General Manager, Azeez

Ladipo, said this on yesterday in Lagos during an interview with journalists.

He said many schools and local clubs lacked quality playing fields, rugby balls, kits, and other essential training equipment.

"In many places, young people are interested in rugby, but there are no proper facilities to support them. This makes development very difficult," Ladipo added.

He said many children interested in rugby also lacked safe spaces to play or train regularly. "Funding remains one of our biggest challenges because grassroots development does not produce immediate results. "Grassroots development is a long-term investment, but commitment will eventually deliver success," Ladipo said.

He said building players from beginner to professional level requires patience, time, and sustained financial investment.

"Many programmes begin with energy and excitement, but without funding, they stop halfway.



RUGBY PLAYERS

Bayelsa Sports Commissioner Arrives in Bulgaria for United World Wrestling Assignment

The Honourable Commissioner for Sports Development in Bayelsa State, Daniel Igal, departed Nigeria on May 9, 2026 and arrived in Samokov, Bulgaria on May 10, 2026 to serve as Technical Delegate at the 2026 European U17 Wrestling Championships.

The assignment, which runs from May 11 to 17, 2026, was officially communicated by United World Wrestling through its Secretary General, Carlos Roy, in recognition of Igal's continued contributions to international wrestling administration and governance.

Aside from being a Bureau

Member of United World Wrestling, Igal is also a key member of the UWW Technical Commission, widely regarded as one of the most pivotal organs of the international federation due to its central role in the technical organization, regulation and conduct of wrestling competi-

tions across the world.

As Technical Delegate, Igal will oversee the technical organization and conduct of the championships involving some of Europe's most promising young wrestlers across freestyle, Greco Roman, and women's wrestling events.

NSC hails Nigeria's aquatics progress

The National Sports Commission (NSC) has praised Nigeria's aquatics contingent after an encouraging outing at the 17th Africa Aquatics Championships in Oran, Algeria.

The continental event was held from May 5 to May 10, drawing elite swimmers and aquatic athletes across Africa.

The commendation is contained in a statement issued on Monday by Kola Daniel, media assistant to the commission's Director-General, Bukola Olopade.

Team Nigeria finished the championships with three bronze medals and several performances that attracted continental recognition.

Olopade said the achievements reflected the steady growth of aquatics sports and improved competitive standards.

He praised the athletes, coaches, administrators, and federation officials for representing Nigeria with distinction.

"This performance is another strong indication that Nigerian sport is rising across several disciplines.

"We are proud of the federation, athletes, coaches, and stakeholders whose efforts delivered medals and recognition in Algeria.

"Winning medals is commendable, but recognition as a fastest-developing sport shows Nigeria's progress," Olopade added.

NSSF, NOC train teachers to strengthen grassroots sports

The Nigeria School Sport Federation (NSSF), in partnership with the Nigeria Olympic Committee (NOC), has launched a training programme for Physical and Health Education teachers in Kano State.

The initiative, unveiled on yesterday is aimed at strengthening grassroots sports development and improving sports education in secondary schools across the state.

President of the federation, Olabisi Joseph, disclosed this in a statement issued to journalists in Lagos on Tuesday.

Joseph said the programme was sponsored by Olympic

Solidarity and followed similar successful training sessions earlier held in Ogun and Plateau.

She said more than 100 Physical and Health Education teachers were participating in the training at Government Girls College, Dala, Kano State.

According to her, participants are being exposed to modern coaching techniques, sports science, talent identification, and Olympic Values Education.

Joseph explained that the Olympic Values Education Programme, developed by the International Olympic Committee, promotes excellence, friendship and respect.



training programme for Physical and Health Education teachers in Kano State.

NPFL NFF hands referee indefinite ban over controversial Rangers penalty

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF)'s Refereeing Development Committee has suspended

referee Yakubu Adamu indefinitely from all league and football-related activities following his performance in the Nigeria Premier Football League clash between Rangers and Bendel

Insurance.

According to the committee, the sanction takes immediate effect against the referee for awarding undeserved penalty against Bendel Insurance FC

in favour of Rangers International of Enugu during the NPFL match day 37 which was deemed inconsistent with the provisions of the Laws of the Game.

The controversial decision led to a goal and was said to have significantly influenced the outcome of the encounter which ended 2-1 against the visiting Bendel Insurance FC.

The committee further stated that the referee's action brought the game into disrepute, prompting the disciplinary measure against the match official.

The NFF reiterated its commitment to maintaining professionalism, fairness and integrity in football officiating across the country. Soccer.



BENDEL INSURANCE FC



CRICKET PLAYER

Cricket: We want Nigeria Super League to mirror IPL — NCF

The Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF) says it plans to model its inaugural Nigeria Super League (NSL) after the prestigious Indian Premier League (IPL).

Musa Ehizojé, the Public Relations Officer of the federation, said that the elite league would showcase the best of Nigerian cricket to the world.

"The NSL is an elite league structured to bring together the best players from different clubs across the country into a national club system.

"We are mirroring the IPL, a franchise league where some of the finest players in the world participate, and that is our goal in the near future.

"We want to attract players from other parts of the world who can also be bid for during the league.

"But in the meantime, the league is aimed at elevating Nigeria's cricket to new heights while creating a sustainable pathway for players to compete at the highest level," Ehizojé said.

The maiden edition of the league is scheduled to hold from Saturday to May 30 at the Tafawa Balewa Square Cricket Oval, Lagos, with six teams participating.

The teams representing different regions of the country are Central Eagles, Eastern Elephants, Middlebelt Tigers, Northern Lions, Southern Sharks and Western Dolphins.

Betting expert urges youths to embrace emerging opportunities responsibly

A betting investor, John Egbokhan, has urged Nigerians, especially youths, to explore opportunities within the nation's expanding betting and gaming industry responsibly.

Egbokhan gave the advice on Monday during an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), where he discussed regulation, taxation, and industry prospects.

He described Nigeria's betting market as one undergoing major transformation, driven by legal reforms, fiscal policies, and increased government oversight.

"Nigeria's betting industry is entering a defining period, shaped by tax reforms and regulatory changes affecting operators and everyday players," he said.

He explained that sports betting remained legal since the enactment of the National Lottery Act in 2005.

According to him, the federal regulatory framework historically placed oversight under the National Lottery Regulatory Commission.

"The commission was responsible for licensing operators and monitoring lottery and gaming activities across the country," he stated.

He, however, noted that recent legal developments had

significantly changed the industry's regulatory structure.

Egbokhan said a 2024 Supreme Court ruling shifted primary gaming oversight to state governments, reshaping the regulatory landscape.

"States are now assuming greater control over betting and gaming activities within their jurisdictions," he said.

He cited Lagos State Lotteries and Gaming Authority as an example of growing state-level oversight.



Volleyball player Ismail seeks support, targets global stage

Nigerian volleyball player Rahmatu Ismail has called for stronger grassroots support, expressing

determination to break into the international scene within five years.

Ismail, from Kwara, said

limited resources and inadequate infrastructure has continued to hinder her development and that of other female athletes nationwide.

"Talents are everywhere, but the support is not enough. We need people to believe in us and invest in our growth," Ismail said.

Ismail currently plays for NY Spikers Volleyball Club of Nyanya, Abuja, after stints with Benue Queens and Fire Service, where she contributed to their promotion.

"My journey has not been easy, but every step has prepared me for bigger challenges ahead," she said.



VOLLEYBALL PLAYER

Abia Warriors suspend Technical adviser Imama Amapakabo, Chief Coach Bethel Oji

Nigeria Premier Football League side Abia Warriors FC have suspended Technical Adviser Imama Amapakabo and Chief Coach Bethel Oji from all club activities with immediate effect over alleged acts of insubordination.

According to an official letter dated May 11, 2026, and

signed by club chairman John Sam Obuh, the suspension followed incidents that reportedly occurred during the FA Cup semi-final clash against Ahidjannem FC and the league match against Kun Khalifat FC of Owerri.

The club management stated that despite several directives and advice concerning team

line-up adjustments in both matches, the coaching crew allegedly ignored the instructions, leading to defeats that "brought embarrassment to the club and the entire state."

Abia Warriors further confirmed that both officials will remain suspended pending the conclusion of investigations into the matter.

The statement also revealed that former Super Eagles goalkeeper Ike Shorunmu and his assistants have been directed to immediately take charge of the team's management and operations until further notice.

The suspended officials were advised to fully cooperate with the investigation panel whenever required.

Grassroots Football: FASCO Cup targets record turnout, N1m prize

The Ayobo Youth Sport Association on Tuesday opened registration for the 2026 FASCO Cup, promising a bigger grassroots football spectacle in the Lagos suburb.

Tournament Coordinator, Oyetunji Suleimon, announced the registration during a media briefing in Ayobo, highlighting growing community and corporate backing.

Suleimon described the tournament as a platform for discovering young football talents and strengthening unity among youths across communities.

"We are determined to deliver our biggest competition yet in the Alimosho axis," Suleimon said.

He said no fewer than 32

teams were expected, with participating clubs set to compete for major prizes.

"The eventual champions will go home with N1 million, alongside other rewards prepared for outstanding teams and players," he said.

Suleimon acknowledged support from Kogbagidi Herbal Medicine and several political leaders who had continued backing youth sports development.

He singled out Lukman Agbaje, Executive Chairman of Ayobo-Ipaja Local Council Development Area, for his commitment.

He also praised Faruk Adebayo, community leader in Ayobo-Ipaja LCDA, for supporting the grassroots competition.



AYOBO YOUTH CELEBRATING

FEATURE



UNIBEN, cultism and cost of silence

MATHEW OKAGHA

The fatal shooting of a young man reportedly linked to the University of Benin community on Sunday, May 10, 2026, has once again drawn public attention to the persistent menace of cultism, violent crime, and the growing glorification of internet fraud among young people.

Reports circulating on social media and in sections of the media identified the deceased as Alexander Omogiate, allegedly a 200-level part-time student of the institution. The incident, which reportedly occurred near the university's main gate in broad daylight, sent shockwaves across Benin City and beyond.

While the full facts are yet to be officially established by the Nigeria Police Force, disturbing allegations have emerged suggesting the killing may be connected to disputes involving an alleged multi-million-naira fraud deal.



EGBENUSI OSAZEE DAVID

If true, the incident paints a frightening picture of how deeply criminal values and violent reprisals may be infiltrating student environments.

Young people involved in cybercrime, popularly known as "Yahoo Yahoo", must

understand one painful reality: criminal networks do not operate by moral rules. Betrayal, greed, retaliation and violence are often embedded in that underworld. What may begin as the pursuit of quick wealth can quickly spiral into intimidat-

tion, bloodshed and tragedy.

Beyond the criminal allegations, the incident has also triggered concerns over the handling of security matters within the university environment. Reports suggesting that warnings may have existed before the violence erupted deserve thorough investigation. If there were indeed signs of impending danger, then questions must be asked about whether adequate preventive measures were taken to avert the tragedy.

Equally troubling is the wider issue of cult-related activities within tertiary institutions. For years, universities across Nigeria have battled secret cult groups, violent clashes, intimidation and organised criminal behaviour operating under the guise of student associations. Many parents send their children to school with hopes of academic and moral development, not to become victims of violence or criminal influence.

The management of the University

of Benin, like other tertiary institutions, has a responsibility to strengthen internal security mechanisms, support anti-cult campaigns, and work closely with law enforcement agencies to ensure that campuses remain safe for learning.

At the same time, society must confront the growing culture that celebrates sudden wealth without questioning its source. Too many young people are being misled into believing that fraud is a shortcut to success. In reality, such lifestyles often end in fear, prison, violence or death.

As investigations continue, the public deserves transparency, justice for the victims, and concrete action aimed at preventing future occurrences.

Nigeria's institutions of learning must remain centres of knowledge and character formation, not theatres of bloodshed and criminal rivalry.

Mathew Okagha is a Benin-based journalist and media consultant.

Tackling insecurity in Nigeria

DESMOND AGBAMA (PH.D)

INTRODUCTION

Security may be defined as a condition of being free from danger, fear, or harm. It also refers to the measures put in place to protect people, assets, and systems. These measures are aimed at preventing threats, ensuring safety, and building resilience against risks affecting individuals, organisations, and the nation at large. The key idea here is protection, which takes different forms depending on the context and purpose.

For instance, there is physical security, which involves safeguarding people, infrastructure, and property. There is also personal security, which focuses on the safety and freedom of individuals. Financial security protects economic assets, while cybersecurity relates to the protection of information and communication technology (ICT) systems. Infrastructure and property protection cover buildings and other valuable assets.

In Nigeria today, the rate of insecurity is on the rise. This situation is driven by various individuals and groups. In the northern region, groups such as Boko Haram, armed herders, terrorists, and extremist organisations have been linked to several cases of violence and instability. In the southern region, cult groups, armed militants, kidnappers, and land speculators are among the major contributors to insecurity. Across the country, other criminal elements engage in offences such as theft, armed robbery, rape, arson, destruction of property, and killings.

In Edo State, insecurity has also become a growing concern. Reported cases include cult-related killings, kidnapping, armed robbery, communal clashes, cybercrime, ritual killings,

arson, rape, child trafficking, prostitution, drug peddling, as well as vandalism of pipelines and electricity infrastructure. A recent and disturbing incident was the killing of an undergraduate student by unidentified gunmen at the main gate of the University of Benin on Sunday, May 10, 2026.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

If insecurity is not addressed decisively, it has the capacity to destabilise the social, economic, and political structure of society. Many lives and properties have already been lost to criminal activities across Nigeria. Economic growth continues to suffer setbacks, while social life has been significantly weakened.

Today, many citizens sleep with one eye open due to fear. Movement for normal daily activities is increasingly affected by the fear of robbery, kidnapping, or violent attacks. Even social gatherings are now approached with caution, as people avoid wearing valuables such as gold jewellery for fear of being targeted.

The broader implication is a decline in investor confidence. Both local and foreign investors may be discouraged from coming into Nigeria or Edo State, leading to capital flight to more stable environments. Ultimately, insecurity reduces productivity and lowers the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the nation.

CAUSES OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Insecurity in Nigeria is driven by a complex mix of socio-economic and institutional factors. Key among them are high unemployment, widespread poverty, porous borders, arms trafficking, weak security institutions, and corruption. Other contributing factors include an inadequate edu-

cation system, erosion of family and societal values, and the promotion of mediocrity over merit.

These challenges have fuelled various forms of violence, including terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, and farmer-herder clashes. Ethnic tensions and poor governance further worsen the situation.

Youth unemployment and poverty remain major drivers, making many young people vulnerable to recruitment by criminal and extremist groups such as kidnappers and armed robbers. Nigeria's poorly monitored borders, especially in the north, also allow the illegal inflow of small arms and light weapons, which are used by militants, bandits, and foreign insurgents.

The security architecture of the country is also weak, characterised by inadequate manpower, poor funding, insufficient training, and lack of modern equipment. Weak governance, entrenched corruption, resource mismanagement, and lack of accountability have further eroded public trust in leadership and institutions.

Religious and ethnic divisions continue to undermine national unity, often leading to violent clashes and unhealthy rivalry. The judiciary, which is traditionally seen as the last hope of the common man, is also widely perceived as weak and sometimes compromised, contributing to a culture of impunity where justice is influenced by wealth and power.

Additionally, drug abuse and trafficking have become widespread, particularly among youths. Drug addiction is strongly linked to violent crimes, cultism, and other social vices in urban centres. These challenges have also contributed to humanitarian issues such as displacement, mental health crises, and food insecurity.

SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS

One immediate solution is job creation for the large population of unemployed youths. Meaningful employment will reduce their vulnerability to crime and redirect their energy towards productive activities.

Governments at all levels must also prioritise good governance, ensuring transparency, fairness, and accountability in public administration. When governance is just and balanced, social agitation and unrest will reduce significantly.

There is also a need to strengthen national institutions. When individuals become more powerful than institutions such as the judiciary, police, and military, corruption, injustice, and nepotism thrive. Strong institutions are essential for effective law enforcement and justice delivery.

Furthermore, Nigeria must restore core family and societal values. The continued promotion of mediocrity over excellence discourages national development. Leaders must deliberately reward hard work, integrity, patriotism, and respect for the rule of law.

LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS

In the long term, the education system must be strengthened to deliver quality and relevant learning outcomes. Security education should be introduced into the curriculum from basic to tertiary levels. This will equip citizens with the knowledge and skills to observe, identify, and report suspicious activities within their environment.

Such awareness will also promote patriotism and collective responsibility. An informed population is better positioned to contribute to national security efforts. As the saying goes, "my people perish for lack of knowledge." When citizens are educated on

security matters, they become active participants in crime prevention within their communities.

THE EDO EXPERIENCE

In Edo State, the government under Governor Monday Okpebholo has taken firm steps to address insecurity, particularly cultism and kidnapping. The administration has enacted an anti-cultism law aimed at curbing cult-related violence. Several buildings linked to cult activities have been identified and demolished, while suspects have been arrested and prosecuted.

The government has also strengthened the Edo State Security Network through the recruitment of over 2,000 personnel deployed across the 18 local government areas. The operatives have been equipped with operational vehicles, motorcycles, arms, and ammunition, and are placed on monthly salaries to enhance efficiency and motivation.

Security agencies in the state, including the Army, Police, Civil Defence Corps, and local vigilante groups, now operate in closer collaboration. Joint operations are regularly conducted to comb forests and flush out kidnappers and other criminal elements hiding within them.

At this point, it must be emphasised that security is everyone's responsibility. As the popular saying goes, "if you see something, say something." Citizens are encouraged to report suspicious persons or activities to the appropriate authorities. Vigilance and community participation remain key tools in the fight against insecurity. Criminals are not supernatural beings; they are human and live within society. A small effort from every citizen can make a significant difference in ensuring a safer Nigeria.