

2027: Jonathan emerges factional PDP candidate

● Gets party clearance as sole aspirant

ABUJA
Former President Goodluck Jonathan has emerged as the presidential candidate of a factional structure within the Peoples

Democratic Party (PDP) ahead of the 2027 general election, after the party's screening committee granted him a waiver and cleared him as its sole presidential aspirant.

The decision was disclosed

in Abuja on Tuesday by a member of the Presidential Screening Committee, former Niger State Governor Babangida Aliyu, shortly after the conclusion of the party's ongoing screening exercise.

Aliyu said the committee had no reason to subject Jonathan to further scrutiny, explaining that the former president had already been granted a waiver by the party's leadership.

He noted that Jonathan's political progression—from Deputy Governor to Govern-

nor, Vice President and President made additional screening unnecessary.

"As you know, the party had already given a presidential aspirant the waiver. He has been Deputy Governor, Governor, Vice President and President. So, we didn't see anything that needed screening. Therefore, the party had given him a waiver," Aliyu said.

He further confirmed that Jonathan remained the only aspirant cleared for the presidential slot under the factional arrangement, simply responding "yes" when asked if he was the sole contender.

The development effectively positions the former president as the preferred flagbearer

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#200

Edo govt cracks down on 'Yahoo Boys'

● Vows cultism-style sanctions, expands anti-crime offensive

IDAHOUSA MUSA
BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government has declared an all-out offensive against internet fraudsters, popularly known as "Yahoo boys," warning that they will now face the same stiff sanctions and security measures currently deployed against cultists and kidnapers across the state.

The government said the move forms part of a broader strategy to stamp out criminality, restore public confidence

and protect the image of the state from activities capable of breeding insecurity and lawlessness.

The State Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Kassim Afegbua, made the declaration on Tuesday while briefing journalists in Benin City during the state government's regular media engagement.

Afegbua said the administration of Monday Okpebholo would no longer tolerate internet fraud-related crimes, particularly as emerging evidence suggested that some criminal

elements were using cybercrime as a cover for violent activities.

He cited the recent killing at the main gate of the University of Benin as a troubling example, noting that reports linked the incident to disagreements over proceeds allegedly generated from internet fraud.

Describing the development as disturbing and unacceptable, the commissioner stressed that the government would intensify surveillance and enforcement against cybercrime-related activities in the same manner cultism has

been aggressively confronted.

"Edo people must understand that our zero tolerance for cultism remains fully in force, and no amount of pressure or persuasion will make us retreat from that commitment," Afegbua declared.

"We are now extending that same attention to Yahoo Yahoo because, as cultism is being tackled head-on, some individuals are increasingly using internet fraud as a platform to perpetrate violence and criminal acts. What happened at the University of Benin Main Gate

is a clear example," he added.

He maintained that Governor Okpebholo remained resolute in restoring law and order, insisting that criticism from any quarter would not weaken the administration's resolve to rid the state of criminal networks.

According to him, although challenges still exist, residents could attest to noticeable im-

provements in security, with cult-related violence significantly reduced in many communities despite isolated kidnapping incidents in some areas.

"We are determined to sustain this momentum and ensure these criminal tendencies are nipped in the bud. While

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Dangote gives airlines lifeline

● Slashes Jet A1 price to N1,650 per litre, unveils 30-day credit, switches to naira payments

LAGOS

Nigeria's aviation industry received a major boost on Tuesday as Dangote Petroleum Refinery moved to ease mounting operational pressures on domestic carriers by reducing the price of aviation fuel and introducing a credit support scheme for airline operators.

In what industry players describe as a significant lifeline for struggling airlines, the refinery slashed the price of Jet A1 fuel from N1,750 to N1,650 per litre, while also rolling out a 30-day interest-free credit facility for marketers and airline operators.

The company further announced a major policy shift, changing its aviation fuel pricing structure from dollar-based transactions to payments in Naira, a development expected to reduce foreign exchange pressures and lower operating costs for local carriers.

The refinery disclosed the measures in a statement issued on Tuesday in Lagos by its spokesperson, Anthony Chiejina, who said the intervention was designed to cushion the growing financial strain confronting the nation's aviation sector.

According to Chiejina, the newly introduced credit facility, backed by bank guarantees, would allow marketers and airline operators to access aviation fuel without immediate payment, thereby improving cash flow and ensuring uninterrupted operations.

He noted that the decision followed growing concerns over the rising cost of aviation fuel, which accounts for a substantial share of airline operating expenses and has remained a major challenge for domestic carriers.

"Industry stakeholders have repeatedly warned that the

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A COURTESY VISIT:

L-R: Nigeria's Ambassador-designate to China, Gen. Abdul-Rahman Dambazau (rtd), receiving a National Diaspora Policy document from the Chairman/CEO, Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM), Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, during a courtesy visit to the NIDCOM office in Abuja yesterday. Photo: Omoye Aminu.

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DHQ dismisses claims of terrorist base in S'West

ABUJA

The Defence Headquarters (DHQ) has dismissed claims of the existence of a terrorist base in the South-West, assuring Nigerians that ongoing operations are targeted at rescuing abducted victims and neutralising criminal elements.

The Director, Defence Media Operations, Maj.-Gen. Michael Onoja, made the clarification in a statement on Tuesday in Abuja.

Onoja said the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Gen. Olufemi Oluyede, extended condolences to the government and people of Oyo State as well as families of victims affected by the recent attack on some schools in Oriire Local Government Area.

He described the abduction of innocent children and staff as reprehensible, assuring that the Armed Forces were deploying all necessary resources to ensure their safe and unconditional rescue.

"The full weight of the Armed Forces is being brought to bear to ensure the safe return

of all abducted victims," he said. Onoja urged Nigerians to remain calm, united and continue to support security agencies with credible information.

He said the military had earlier conducted a comprehensive clearance operation in the Old Oyo National Park, neutralising criminal elements operating within the area.

According to him, current intelligence does not support claims of any established or structured terrorist base in the South-West region.

"The incident in Oyo State remains an isolated criminal act and does not indicate the presence of an entrenched insurgent structure in the region.

"The Armed Forces caution against narratives capable of creating unnecessary panic or emboldening criminal elements," he said.

The defence spokesman disclosed that troops had already made contact with the perpetrators and were sustaining pursuit operations across forest corridors.

He added that joint operations involving other security agencies and local vigilantes were ongoing

to flush out criminal elements and restore normalcy.

He emphasised that com-

munity cooperation remained critical, noting that human intelligence from residents would

aid ongoing rescue efforts.

"The Armed Forces will not relent until all abducted

victims are rescued and those responsible are brought to justice," he added.



NEWS CONFERENCE:

L-R: Provost, St James Anglican Church, Oke Bola, Very Rev. Faley Olusegun; Chancellor, Anglican Diocese of Ibadan, Justice Helen Ogunwumiju, and Barr. Diran Adeyemo, during a news conference held as part of the retirement and 70th Birthday ceremony in honour of the Most Rev. Bishop Joseph Akinfenwa in Ibadan Anglican Diocese in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Edo govt cracks down on 'Yahoo...

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the fight may not yet be over, Edo has become relatively more peaceful," he said.

Afegbua also unveiled measures aimed at easing transportation challenges in the state, announcing that the government had acquired 50 high-capacity 52-seater buses powered by Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), with another batch of 50 expected soon.

He explained that the buses

would be distributed across the three senatorial districts to improve mobility, reduce transportation stress and enhance commuter safety within and outside major urban centres.

The commissioner further urged residents to refrain from indiscriminate refuse disposal in drains and waterways, warning that blocked drainage systems could worsen flooding, particularly following recent flood alerts issued across parts of the country.

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within the Turaki-led factional structure of the party, deepening the emerging internal divisions within the PDP.

Aliyu also disclosed that similar waivers had been extended to other aspirants for elective positions, including former Oyo State Deputy Governor Taofeek Arapaja, to enable him contest the governorship in Oyo State.

He added that the screening committee continued its nationwide exercise, covering aspirants across Taraba, Adamawa, Kano, Akwa Ibom, Delta and other states.

Despite the party's internal tensions, Aliyu expressed con-

fidence in its ability to withstand political pressure, insisting that attempts to destabilise it had failed.

"We are very happy that even those who have been attempting to kill the party cannot succeed. The party will contest this election by the grace of God and by the Constitution of Nigeria," he said.

Meanwhile, governorship aspirants screened during the exercise outlined various policy priorities, including tackling insecurity, poverty, unemployment and infrastructural decay in their respective states ahead of the 2027 elections. 2027: Jonathan emerges factional PDP candidate.

ASUP backs Edo Poly Rector

● **Hails Okpebholo, NDDC over reforms, infrastructure drive**

USEN

The Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP), Edo State Polytechnic chapter, has passed a vote of confidence on the institution's Rector, Nosakhare Liberty Arodoye, while commending the Edo State Government and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) for what it described as renewed attention to the school.

The union lauded the administration of Monday Okpebholo for swiftly taking over salary payments of staff of Edo

State Polytechnic, describing the move as unprecedented and highly impactful.

In a communiqué issued after an emergency congress held at the Usen campus, ASUP said the integration of the institution's salary structure into the Edo State payroll system came as a pleasant surprise, adding that it had restored confidence and morale among staff.

The union stressed that the governor's intervention reflected strong commitment to repositioning the institution, noting that workers were already experiencing renewed

stability and optimism.

ASUP also commended ongoing infrastructural upgrades being carried out by the Niger Delta Development Commission, particularly the construction of internal roads within the campus, describing it as the first of such large-scale intervention in recent years.

"We are glad that our school has caught the attention of the governor and the NDDC. It has never been this good," the union stated.

The congress also resolved to issue a formal letter of appreciation alongside a vote of confidence

in the Rector, noting that Arodoye's leadership had brought visible transformation across departments and academic structures.

According to ASUP, several departments are now better positioned for accreditation, especially at the Higher National Diploma level, while practical improvements are evident across the campus.

The union, however, urged the Federal Government to intensify efforts in tackling insecurity across the country, warning that rising threats were endangering academic stability and national development.

Lamai rallies Afemai for Oshiomhole

The All Progressives Congress (APC) chieftain and grassroots mobilizer, Chief Richard Oshiohai Lamai, has called for united support for the re-election bid of Senator Adams Oshiomhole, insisting that continuity in leadership remains critical to sustained development in Edo North.

Speaking at an enlarged APC stakeholders' meeting in Afemai, Lamai urged the party faithful to rally behind Adams Oshiomhole, describing him as

a tested and courageous leader whose political experience continues to benefit the region.

He said Oshiomhole had consistently represented the interests of his constituents, advocating policies aimed at empowerment, infrastructure development and improved opportunities for youths across Afemai land.

Lamai noted that the senator's accessibility, performance and commitment to public service had strengthened public trust and positioned him as the

preferred candidate for another term in the Senate.

According to him, backing Oshiomhole's re-election would ensure stronger representation at the national level, enhanced political influence for Edo North, and expanded development opportunities for local communities.

He called on party members to close ranks, remain disciplined and prioritise unity, stressing that internal cohesion within the APC would be key

to electoral success.

"Senator Adams Oshiomhole has demonstrated capacity, leadership and commitment to the welfare of our people. This is the time to come together and secure continuity for greater progress," Lamai said.

He expressed optimism that with sustained support, Edo North would witness increased federal presence in infrastructure, empowerment programmes and constituency development initiatives.

Dangote gives airlines lifeline

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

increasing cost of Jet A1 fuel was putting serious financial pressure on domestic airlines and threatening smooth flight operations," Chiejina said.

He added that the latest intervention by the refinery was expected to provide immediate relief for airline operators by lowering fuel costs, improving

operational stability and supporting efforts to moderate ticket prices for passengers.

The move comes at a critical time for Nigeria's aviation industry, where airlines have continued to grapple with soaring operational expenses, foreign exchange volatility and inflationary pressures that have significantly increased the cost of air travel.

Dambazau pledges stronger Nigeria-China diaspora relations, welfare support

CAROLINE AMEH

ABUJA

Nigeria's Ambassador-Designate to China, Abdulrahman Bello Dambazau, has pledged to prioritise the welfare and protection of Nigerians living in China while deepening bilateral cooperation between both countries.

Dambazau made the commitment during a courtesy visit to the Chairman/CEO of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission, Abike Dabiri-Erewa, ahead of his official assumption of duty in China.

According to him, China hosts a large Nigerian community mainly involved in trade and commerce, making it necessary for the Nigerian mission

to work closely with NiDCOM to provide support, guidance and protection for citizens residing in the country.

The ambassador-designate also urged Nigerians in China to conduct themselves as worthy ambassadors of Nigeria.

Speaking on Nigeria-China relations, Dambazau noted that both countries have maintained diplomatic relations

since 1971, with cooperation expanding steadily through high-level engagements and economic partnerships.

He referenced the 2024 visit of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to Beijing as a major milestone that reinforced China's support for Nigeria's Renewed Hope Agenda and Nigeria's continued commitment to the One-China Policy.



PUBLIC NOTICE

PHASE OUT/BAN ON REVENUE SCRATCH CARDS & AUTOMATION OF HAULAGE SPACE IN EDO STATE.

In line with the state government's commitment to digitization and as part of efforts to ensure transparency, and eliminate revenue leakages in the revenue system, the Edo State Internal Revenue Service (EIRS) wishes to inform the general public, particularly transport operators in the haulage space, haulage companies, drivers, and stakeholders, of a major shift in our revenue collection modality under the haulage space.

1. Phase out and Complete Ban on Revenue Scratch Cards (RSC)

With effect from Friday, May 1st, 2026, the use of physical revenue scratch cards for the payment of haulage fees across Edo State has been banned and phased out completely.

Members of the public are strongly advised against purchasing any paper scratch card, as it is no longer recognized as legal proof for the payment of haulage fees. Anyone caught in the sale or issuance of the abolished cards shall be blacklisted and prosecuted.

2. Automation of the Haulage Space

Consequent on the above ban and to simplify compliance as well as ensure a seamless transit experience for all logistics operators, the EIRS has officially automated the haulage space. This new method is fast, secure, and eliminates extortion or harassment on Edo State roads.

3. How the Automation System Works

- a. The driver approaches the vendor, gets on-boarded by registration and issuance of a QR Code which he sticks onto the right hand side of his vehicle's windshield.
- b. The vendor funds the driver's digital wallet using his Tax ID, phone or vehicle number to make payment.
- c. The QR Code is thereafter scanned with a handheld scanner to verify payment validity within seconds by a Revenue Collector or Enforcement Officer to confirm payment.

In view of the above, all haulage operators are urged to adapt to this digital transition immediately. From the effective date, any vehicle found operating without a valid, scannable QR code stuck to the windshield, will be deemed non-compliant and shall be liable to sanctions.

Signed
Odior John FCA, ACTI
Executive Chairman
Edo State Internal Revenue Service

qe18th May, 2026.

NEWS

Delta govt set to construct 3 CBT centres for enhanced digital learning

AJUWA VICTOR

ASABA

The Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborewori, has approved the construction of three additional state-of-the-art Computer-Based Testing (CBT) centres in Delta as part of efforts

to strengthen digital learning and examination infrastructure across the state.

The proposed CBT centres, which are to be located in Oleh, Warri, and Osubi, are expected to improve access to technology-driven learning and examination facilities for students and residents.

The Commissioner for Science and Technology, Dr Daniel Odinigwe, disclosed that the approval reflects the state government's commitment to expanding modern educational infrastructure and deepening digital transformation in the education sector.

According to him, the new centres are designed to provide world-class facilities capable of supporting computer-based examinations, digital training

programmes, and other technology-related activities.

The development follows the successful completion and commissioning of a similar CBT centre in Onicha-Olona, Aniocha North Local Government Area, in May 2025.

"The Ministry of Science and Technology expressed delight over the latest approval, noting that construction work on the three new centres is expected to commence in the

coming weeks."

The Commissioner further explained that the initiative would create more opportunities for students and young people to participate in technology-driven learning while addressing the growing demand for standard CBT facilities used for national and international examinations.

Stakeholders have described the approval as a major boost to digital learning in Delta State, where access to modern examination infrastructure is expected to improve significantly upon completion of the projects.

**2026 SUMMIT:**

Cross-section of participants at the Board of Nigerian Oil and Gas Midstream and Downstream 2026 Summit on Tuesday in Lagos.

Environmentalist calls for immediate clean up of N'Delta, warns of severe consequences if ignored

ELIZABETH AGBOEGBULEM

PORT HARCOURT

The Federal Government has been called upon to kick-start audit of the Niger Delta environment for cleanup of the region to start.

Nnimmo Bassey, Executive Director of Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF), and foremost environmental activist, who led groups in the environment ecosystem, said that the time to commence action on the clean up was now.

Bassey made the call at the opening ceremony of the correspondents Chapel's Week of the Rivers State Council of the

Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), Rivers Council held in Port Harcourt.

Drawing his presentation from the theme of the Chapel's Week, viz "The Imperative of Comprehensive Clean up of the Niger Delta Environment: Role of the Media," Bassey said the volume of spillage in the Niger Delta in one day was enormous calling for urgent attention and action.

According to him, the silence of oil authorities, regulators, the political leaders, etc, he asserted was deliberate, saying "Nobody cares about the environment of the Niger Delta."

He quoted Silva Opuala Charles, professor of economics

and founder/president of the Garden City Premier Business School, as having said that the blue economy would not be realized in the Niger Delta without cleanup first. Some have put the cost of the cleanup at \$20bn.

The renowned environmental activist went further to declare that Nigeria was economically and socially better off before crude oil became the country's dominant source of revenue.

He said Nigeria's dependence on oil destroyed agriculture, weakened infrastructure development, and entrenched economic dependency, despite decades of petroleum wealth.

He argued that Nigeria was

better off without oil, insisting that before oil was discovered, the nation had vibrant education, good infrastructure.

"In fact, we had the best roads built in the 50s and 60s in some places. We had agriculture. Nigeria was the main exporter of food before oil became a major revenue earner."

He recalled that Nigeria once had a thriving productive economy driven by agriculture before the country became heavily reliant on crude oil earnings. He said the problem with crude economy is that it only leads to export, just like cash crops economy that does not provide staple food nor lead to processing.

Abia inaugurates biogas pilot project to drive renewable energy

UMUAHIA

The Abia government has said that it has deployed a pilot biogas project in a secondary school at Owerrinta, Isiala Ngwa South Local Government Area, as part of efforts to promote renewable energy and innovation in the state.

The Commissioner for Science, Technology and Innovation, Mr. David Kalu, said this in Umuahia during a news conference on the outcome of the State Executive Council meeting.

Kalu described the project as a locally-driven renewable energy initiative designed to test the via-

bility, affordability and replicability of biogas technology in schools and institutions across the state.

According to him, the pilot project which was recently deployed in the school, is expected to begin gas production within four weeks.

"The idea is to determine whether it is easy to implement, cost-effective and acceptable to the school community.

"If successful, it can be replicated in other schools and institutions across the state," he said.

He said the state government would evaluate feedback from the school before considering a wider rollout of the initiative.

Kalu also spoke on the Federal Government's "Energised Commercialisation Now" an initiative aimed at promoting research and innovation across the country.

He explained that the programme encouraged states to identify viable research projects that could be recognised and commercialised at the national level.

According to him, Abia was directed to establish a committee comprising representatives from government, academia and industry to coordinate the initiative within the state.

The commissioner said

the committee would include members from institutions such as Abia State University, Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic and Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, as well as stakeholders from the private sector.

He said that the committee would identify and assemble credible and commercially viable research projects from across the state for presentation at the federal level.

Kalu further said the state government also intended to leverage the committee to develop a comprehensive research and innovation policy for Abia

Delta Police nab 11 suspected cultists, recover arms, ammunition

AJUWA VICTOR

ASABA

The Delta State Police Command has said it recorded a major breakthrough in its fight against cultism and illegal possession of firearms with the arrest of eleven suspected cultists and the recovery of weapons and ammunition in separate operations across the state.

According to the Command, nine suspected cultists; seven men and two women, were arrested during a raid on a suspected cult hideout at Eagles Square along Okpanam Road in Asaba.

The operation reportedly carried out by operatives of the Buffalo Patrol Team on Thursday

May 14 following a distress call, led to the recovery of a Beretta pistol, a battle axe, and a cutlass.

Police said the suspects and exhibits have been transferred to the Anti-Cult Unit for further investigation.

The police said also that operatives of the Safer Highway Patrol Team intercepted a Lexus Jeep during a stop-and-search exercise along the Ughelli/Patani Road. A search of the vehicle reportedly led to the recovery of an English-made pump action gun and forty rounds of live cartridges.

The driver of the vehicle, identified as Felix Ike, was immediately taken into custody while investigations continued.

APC in A'lbom intact, united — Enang

UYO

Sen. Ita Enang, an All Progressives Congress (APC) chieftain in Akwa Ibom has assured that the party is intact, united and committed to promoting the ideals of democracy.

Enang made the expression in an interview with newsmen in Uyo on Tuesday while reacting to the conduct of the party's primary elections.

He said that APC leaders in Akwa Ibom remained united, and committed to supporting all candidates that emerged from the process.

Enang, also Nigeria's Ambassador to Germany, said that

APC would field candidates that would be acceptable by the electorate at the general elections.

"The party shall present candidates that will not only be acceptable but capable of delivering good leadership and representation.

"There is no division in the party, we don't have any bitterness after the nomination process," he said.

The APC chieftain further said that Akwa Ibom people would vote massively for President Bola Tinubu in the 2027 general elections.

"Our reason to vote the president is clear. He has begun economic reforms that require being actualised, we want this country back on track," he said.

EFCC arrests fugitive, convicted ex-power minister Saleh Mamman

ABUJA

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has arrested the fugitive, convicted former minister of Power, Saleh Mamman.

EFCC Chairman, Ola Olukoyede, said Mamman was arrested somewhere in Rigasa, Kaduna on Tuesday morning around 3am

Mamman, who has been on the run, was sentenced in absentia to 75 years.

Justice James Omotosho, had on May 7 convicted Mamman in all the 12 counts preferred against him by the EFCC and ordered that the sentence shall run consecutively and not concurrently.

Omotosho had last week Wednesday said that the absence of the ex-minister in court on the day of sentencing and on the last adjourned date was a deliberate attempt to stop the wheel of justice.

The judge, who agreed with the EFCC's lawyer, Rotimi Oyedepo, SAN, that though the defendant was not in court, the provisions of Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA), 2015, gave the court the power to proceed with the sentencing.

The judge held that Mamman cannot claim to have suffered a miscarriage of justice.

He consequently sentenced the convict to seven years imprisonment on Counts one, two, three, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, 11 and 12 without option of fine.

NRS targets N40trn revenue, seeks stronger tax compliance

ABUJA

The Executive Chairman of the Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS), Dr Zacch Adedeji, has said that the service is targeting N40 trillion in tax revenue for the federation in 2026.

He stated this on Tuesday in Abuja during a national workshop on strengthening tax compliance under the new tax regime and collaborating with sub-nationals for enhanced revenue collection.

The chairman, who was

represented by Mr Mohamed Lawal, called for stronger collaboration among all tiers of government to improve tax compliance and revenue collection nationwide.

According to him, achieving the target requires intensive capacity building, improved transparency, and robust partnerships across federal, state, and local government institutions to address compliance bottlenecks.

Adedeji expressed concern over compliance imbalances among states and govern-

ment-owned enterprises, describing the trend as harmful to institutional fairness.

To drive motivation, he announced plans to reward the most tax-compliant states starting from the end of 2026.

He expressed confidence that the workshop would deliver practical roadmap for transparency, administrative excellence, and high performance nationwide.

He noted that the revenue generated by the service sustains the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) and funds critical national de-

velopment projects.

He said "the programme will improve awareness of statutory obligations on tax deductions and remittances among government agencies and enterprises."

"It will also sensitise stakeholders on the provisions of the new tax laws to reduce transition challenges and bridge compliance gaps identified during monitoring and audit activities."

He emphasised that the ultimate goal of the service is to promote voluntary compliance instead of relying solely on en-

forcement measures.

The NRS boss commended President Bola Tinubu for introducing reforms that promote fairness, inclusiveness, and sustainability in Nigeria's tax system.

He also praised the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr Taiwo Oyejede, "for his unwavering support towards ongoing fiscal and tax reforms."

The finance minister then affirmed that tax reforms remain central to Nigeria's economic recovery and fiscal sustainability. Oyejede, who was represent-

ed by his Chief of Staff, Mr Tolu Adegbe, noted that the country is currently balancing major reforms, including the naira flotation, fuel subsidy removal and inflation control, alongside growing socio-economic challenges.

He said the new tax regime was part of broader structural reforms targeting stable, predictable, and equitable revenue generation to fund roads, healthcare, education, and national security.

The minister assured that the reforms would expand the tax net without increasing the tax burden on citizens.

FRSC tackles fake number plates, mixed loading of vehicles in Oyo

IBADAN

The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Oyo Command, has begun clampdown on vehicles using fake number plates on highways in the state.

Equally, the command has decried overloading by commercial motorists and the practice of transportation of human beings and livestock in articulated vehicles.

The FRSC Sector Commander in the state, CC Kehinde Dahunsi, said this on Tuesday in Ibadan at the start of a five-day special operation tagged "Operation Guduma".

He said the exercise targets commercial and private vehicles found violating traffic and vehicle registration regulations, stressing that these violations were unsafe and unacceptable in any country.

Dahunsi said that the special operation was aimed at curbing the rising cases of vehicle identity fraud and unsafe loading practices, that endanger the lives of passengers and other

road users.

According to him, the enforcement will be sustained to ensure compliance with road traffic laws and improve safety on roads in Oyo state.

Represented by the Deputy Corps Commander, Operations, Bayode Olugbesan, the sector commander said that the intervention patrol would be carried out simultaneously in all unit commands and one outpost in the state.

He added that the special operation, which would be held in 10 states in the country, targeted vehicles with fake number plates, overloaded vehicles and mixed loading.

Speaking further, he added that the operation focused on vehicles without proper number plates, as well as those using fake registration numbers, often linked to criminal activities.

"If they use a vehicle to commit criminal offences and it is not numbered, there is no way we can apprehend such a thing.

"Absence of identifiable plates makes it impossible to trace vehicles involved in crimes."



OPERATION OF GUDUMA:

Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Oyo State Command officials inspecting vehicles with foreign and diplomatic number plates in Ibadan, during the operation of Guduma aimed at Curbing Fake Number Plates in Ibadan Oyo State on Tuesday.

IPMAN seeks establishment of oil, gas bank

ABUJA

The Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN) has advocated the establishment of an oil and gas bank or petroleum energy bank.

The National Publicity Secretary of IPMAN, Mr Chinedu Ukadike, made the call in an interview with newsmen on Tuesday in Abuja.

According to him, such bank would provide easier access to credit facilities and help stabilise the oil sector.

He identified inadequate financing, high interest rates, price volatility and limited supply sources as major challenges confronting independent marketers in the downstream oil sector following the removal of fuel subsidy.

According to him, the subsidy removal led to a sharp increase in the cost of petroleum products, placing heavy finan-

cial pressure on marketers.

He explained that the cost of purchasing 45,000 litres of petroleum products rose from about N8 million to over N50 million after deregulation.

"It made it difficult for many independent marketers to sustain operations. One of the major challenges in the oil sector is finance for independent marketers.

"Immediately after the subsidy removal the monetary value of products increased by over 400 per cent," he said.

Chinedu further explained that many marketers now pull resources to buy products from depots in order to keep their filling stations running.

He also decried what he described as unhealthy competition among depot owners, importers and independent marketers.

He alleged that some importers sell petroleum products at lower prices in their own retail outlets while selling at higher rates to independent marketers, and made it difficult for them to compete.

LAGOS

Former Managing Director of the Lagos State Coconut Development Authority (LASCODA), Mr Dapo Olakulehin, says coconut processing has become one of the most profitable agro-processing businesses in Nigeria.

Olakulehin said this in an interview with newsmen on Tuesday in Lagos.

According to him, increasing awareness of the health benefits of coconut products

has continued to drive demand and profitability in the sector.

"There is no other agro-processing crop that is as profitable as coconut now," he said.

Olakulehin said coconut oil had become more expensive than many conventional oils because of its growing acceptance as a health product.

"A litre of coconut oil is more expensive than other oils because people now understand its health benefits.

"It has become an elite product," he said.

He said the coconut value chain had expanded significantly in recent years, with processors now producing coconut flour and other specialised products.

"The market is emerging and it is profitable," he said.

Olakulehin also highlighted the economic potential of coconut farming, noting that a mature coconut tree could produce about 100 fruits annually.

According to him, a farmer with about 200 trees on one hectare can generate substantial income from coconut cul-

tivation.

He, however, identified rodents, poor plantation management and production challenges as major constraints facing farmers.

"To get the plantation to maturity, farmers encounter challenges such as rodents and management issues," he said.

Olakulehin said the coconut business remained a viable investment opportunity capable of improving livelihoods and supporting economic growth if given adequate attention.

Williams rejects results of C'River Central senatorial primaries

CALABAR

Sen. Eteng Williams has rejected the outcome of the Cross River Central Senatorial District primary election of the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Williams said at a press conference in Calabar on Tuesday that no primary election was to be held in the area but never took place, saying that any result being released elsewhere

was baseless.

He urged the national leadership of the party to critical look at the conduct of the exercise in the interest of internal democracy and good conscience.

"No voting took place in the 66 wards of the senatorial district, we went round the entire district.

"There were also no party officials to conduct the election, we kept waiting to exercise our

franchise until about 8:00pm.

"So I ask, if officials were not there, and elections did not hold, how did they get results?" he asked

The senator urged party faithful to discountenance the information that somebody had been declared winner from the process.

Williams described election as a contest and an opportunity for politicians to test their popularity and acceptability by the

people.

"What we see today is desperation. People want to become leaders through the backdoor," he said.

He said that as an aspirant, no party official on primary election duty contacted him to provide his agents.

"Our party should ensure that the right thing is done. This is how we can keep the integrity of the party afloat," he said.

NEWS

Gowon's Autobiography rakes in N3.5bn from Danjuma, Dangote

ABUJA

Former Minister of Defence, Retired Gen. Theophilus Danjuma, on Tuesday in Abuja donated N3

billion at the public presentation of the autobiography of former Head of State, Retired Gen. Yakubu Gowon.

Also, Alhaji Aliko Dangote, the Chairman of the Dangote Group, supported the book launch with a donation of N500 million.

The presentation of the

20-Chapter autobiography, titled, "My Life of Duty and Allegiance," was attended by Vice President Kashim Shettima who represented President Bola Tinubu, other top government officials, members of the Diplomatic Corps, and military top brass.

Danjuma, who served as the

Chief Presenter at the event, was represented by a former Chief of Defence Staff, Retired Gen. Martin Luther Agwai.

Apart from the financial pledge, Danjuma directed that 12 copies of the book be purchased and distributed to the libraries of each of the 20 universities that had awarded

honorary doctorate degrees to Gowon over the years.

In his tribute, Danjuma described Gowon as Nigeria's foremost living statesman, an international icon, and a wartime commander whose leadership prevented Nigeria from disintegration.

"Gen. Gowon is not only a household name in Nigeria but also a globally acknowledged leader with an impeccable record in leadership, nation-building and military strategy.

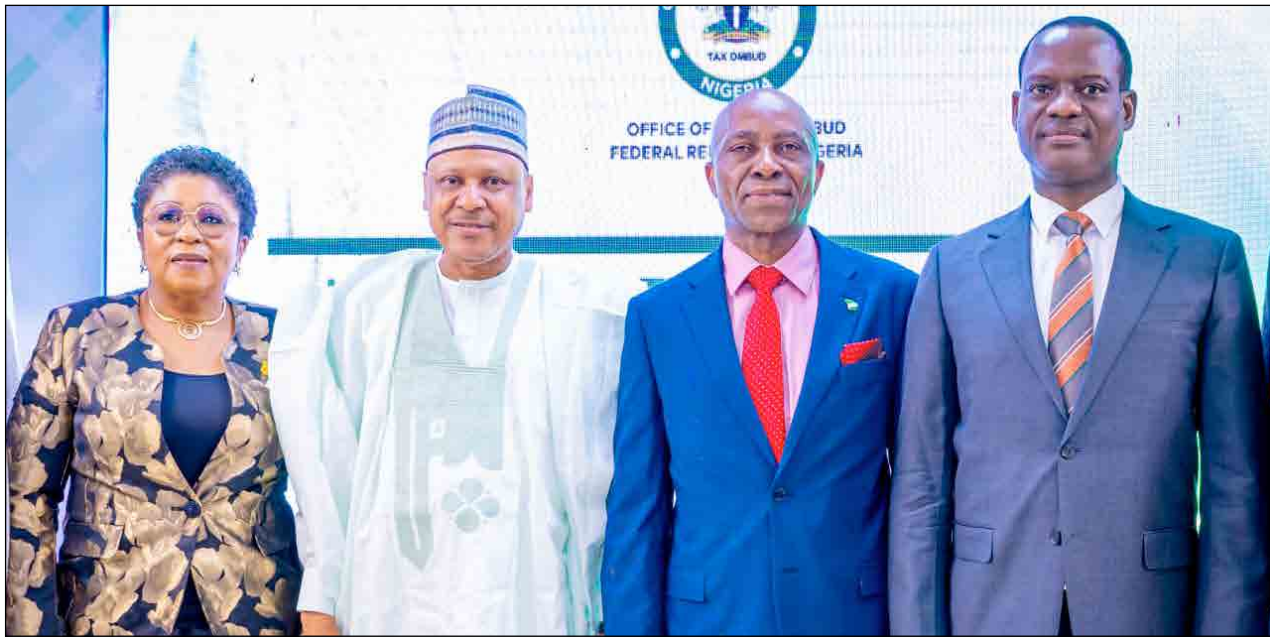
"His well-recorded slogan of 'no victor, no vanquished' after the civil war set the tone for an effective post-war policy of reconciliation, reconstruction, and rehabilitation," Danjuma

said.

The retired General noted that his friendship with Gowon spanned over 70 years, dating back to their childhood days in the Wusasa area of Zaria, adding that the memoir is a "treasure trove of history" and a gift to the world.

Similarly, Mr Mansur Ahmed, the representative of Dangote, announced the purchase of 25 copies of the book for N500 million to honour the former Head of State.

Ahmed, a Senior Adviser to the richest man in Africa stated that, his boss, Dangote was only a 10-year-old primary school pupil when Gowon was leading the nation through its most turbulent times.

**UNVEILING OF OFFICIAL WEBSITE:**

L-R: Head, Civil Service of the Federation(HCSF), Mrs Didi Walson-Jack; Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris; Chairman/CEO, Office of the Tax Ombud Nigeria, Dr John Nwabueze and Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr Taiwo Oyejede, during the unveiling of the official website and launch of the toll-free call centre and case management system of the Office of the Tax Ombud Nigeria, in Abuja

Stakeholders seek partnership model to deliver affordable homes

ABUJA

Stakeholders in the building industry have called for a stronger partnership among government, private investors, cooperatives and home buyers to increase access to affordable housing in Nigeria.

They made the call at the 2026 Cooperative Housing Summit Africa (CHOSA) on Tuesday in Abuja.

Speaking at the event, the Convener and Founder, Nigeria Integrated Social Housing Cooperative Ltd. (NISH), Mr Saheed Adelakun, said affordable housing could not be achieved through the

traditional Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model alone.

Adelakun said people who would live in the houses must also be involved in housing projects, describing the approach as a Public-Private-People Partnership (PPPP).

According to him, many Nigerians, including civil servants, can no longer afford homes because of rising housing costs.

"We need houses that low and middle-income earners can afford. This is possible if the government, developers, cooperatives and home buyers work together," he said.

Adelakun said cooperative

housing could help people access affordable homes through collective savings, better financing opportunities and stronger bargaining power.

He urged governments to continue to support affordable housing as it would go a long way in helping Nigerians own a house.

"The government must continue to encourage private sector involvement through land equity, partnerships, and tax breaks."

Also speaking, the President of the Cooperative Federation of Nigeria (CFN), Mrs Hannatu Mershak, said cooperatives remained important tools for providing affordable housing and financial services to millions of Nigerians.

Mershak said the federation

had more than 50,000 cooperatives and over 30 million members across the country they are servicing.

She called for greater collaboration among government, financial institutions, private investors and cooperatives to address housing challenges.

"Government must provide supportive policies, financial institutions must provide funding, while cooperatives will help mobilise and organise beneficiaries," she said.

She also called for transparency in the implementation of housing initiatives, noting that openness would strengthen public confidence, encourage wider participation and support efforts to deliver affordable housing to all.

UNIZIK Advancement Board restates commitment to social impact

ABUJA

The Chairman, UNIZIK Advancement Board, Dr Stanley Uzochukwu, has restated his commitment to promoting social impact through scholarships, housing support for widows, youth entrepreneurship grants and community development initiatives across Africa.

Uzochukwu stated this in an interview with newsmen on Tuesday in Abuja.

He said that through the Stanley Uzochukwu Foundation (SUF), he had implemented support for education, economic empowerment and community development.

According to him, leadership should integrate enterprise with social responsibility to improve lives and promote

sustainable development.

"Central to my leadership philosophy is a strong commitment to social impact.

"Through the Stanley Uzochukwu Foundation (SUF), I have supported scholarships, housing for widows, youth entrepreneurship grants and community development initiatives across Africa. And I will continue to do them.

"These interventions underscore a leadership model that integrates profit with purpose and enterprise with empathy.

"I attribute my success to faith, discipline, consistency and long-term thinking. From founding a business with modest beginnings to leading one of Nigeria's most recognisable conglomerates.

"My journey embodies strategic vision, ethical leadership, institutional impact and social responsibility," he said.

Pupils' abduction worries NAPATAN Board chairman

LAGOS

The National Parent Teacher Association of Nigeria (NAPTAN) has expressed worry at rising cases of abduction in schools, urging governments to act fast to address the situation.

The Chairman Board of Trustees of NAPTAN, Mr Adedolu Ogunbanjo, spoke in an interview with newsmen on Tuesday in Lagos.

Ogunbanjo said that repeated attacks on schoolchildren and teachers across Nigerian communities called for deep concerns.

"Again, gunmen invaded schools. My heart is bleeding.

"It is sad that they target schoolchildren and teachers, kidnapping them in dozens.

"From Chibok in 2014, Dapchi in 2018, Kankara in 2020 and Jangebe in 2021, among others, the kidnapping has continued unabated.

"Now, they invaded schools in the Oriire Local Government Area of Oyo State, ab-

ducting pupils and teachers in coordinated, terrifying attacks," he noted.

He said that all the tiers of government must join forces to secure schools and end the abduction.

"This unpleasant situation needs government action now.

"Schools must be secure to allow children to learn without fear, and restore public confidence in education safety," he said.

Ogunbanjo advised that arrested terrorists should not be released.

According to him, releasing such people undermines justice and endangers communities as they may not be genuinely repentant.

"Releasing such individuals back into the society creates further risks, as some allegedly continue to provide intelligence to criminal groups," he said.

Ogunbanjo urged governments to deploy armed security personnel to schools to improve safety.

Group cautions against violence in Surulere Lagos Assembly primary

LAGOS

A political group, Surulere Accountability Front, has cautioned against violence and disruption during Wednesday's APC House of Assembly primary election in Surulere Constituency 1.

The Chairman of the group, Olanrewaju Badmus, who gave the warning in a statement on Tuesday in Lagos, alleged that some politicians were plotting to create chaos and intimidation during the election.

Badmus urged party members to remain calm, vigilant and peaceful throughout the exercise across the six wards in

the constituency.

He appealed to eligible voters to mobilise massively and participate peacefully in the primary election.

"Stay calm, stay vigilant, mobilise massively and stand your ground peacefully during the exercise," he said.

Badmus urged party members to cooperate with security agencies and party officials to ensure a credible and orderly process.

According to him, accreditation is expected to be thorough, while security arrangements have been put in place across all voting centres.

"The party has assured full

security coverage across the six wards. Accreditation will be thorough, so members should be patient and orderly," he said.

He advised voters to be watchful and promptly report suspicious activities to appropriate authorities.

"Know your ward members and report any suspicious activity to party officials and security personnel on ground," he said.

Badmus also urged party faithful not to be distracted by social media narratives, insisting that elections should be decided peacefully through lawful participation.

"Elections are won on the ground, not online. Members

should come out peacefully and be counted," he said.

He reaffirmed the group's support for female participation in governance and endorsed Barakat Odunuga-Bakare for the primary election.

Badmus said the group aligned with the party's position on gender inclusion in public offices.

"We stand with the party's decision on gender inclusion and support for women in public offices. Surulere deserves peaceful and credible representation," he said.

Surulere Constituency I remains one of the flash point constituencies in Wednesday's APC primaries.

JUDICIARY**NEWS**

Insecurity, hardship threatening human rights progress —Ojukwu

ABUJA

The Executive Secretary of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Dr Tony Ojukwu, SAN, has warned that Nigeria's progress in human rights protection is being hampered by worsening insecurity and economic hardship.

Ojukwu said this during the presentation of a Dashboard report for April on violations of human rights in Nigeria.

He said these combined factors heavily restrict citizens' rights to life, dignity, and a decent standard of living.

The executive secretary said that acts of terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, and communal violence severely restrict the fundamental right to freedom of movement.

Ojukwu also said econom-

ic hardship have spiked living costs, pushing vulnerable populations deeper into marginalization and severely limiting access to healthcare and basic services.

He noted that since the introduction of the Human Rights Situation Dashboard in 2024, the Commission has continued to strengthen transparent and evidence-based human rights monitoring in Nigeria.

Ojukwu noted further that the Dashboard remains an important accountability tool for identifying trends, emerging risks, and areas requiring urgent intervention.

"For the month of April 2026, the Commission recorded a total of 266,787 complaints from across our offices nationwide.

"These complaints reflect the everyday realities faced by Nigerians and underscore

the persistence of challenges relating to discrimination, insecurity, abuse of authority, economic hardship, and access to justice.

"Beyond complaints formally received by the Commission, the Human Rights Observatory continues to monitor broader patterns of violations across the country.

"In April 2026, the human rights situation remained shaped by insecurity, communal tensions, economic hardship, and concerns around civic freedoms.

"Violent attacks, kidnappings, communal clashes, and displacement, gender-based violence, mob actions, and alleged abuses linked to law enforcement activities remained major concerns during the period under review" he said.

The commission, he said, is particularly concerned about the recent air strike incident in Borno State

which reportedly resulted in civilian casualties.

Also of similar concern Ojukwu said, is the rise in extra-judicial killings by law enforcement and security agencies.

He noted that the Commission in the month of April, in their Observatory recorded over five of such cases.

"Human life is sacred and cannot be taken away by trigger happy officers of our law enforcement and security agencies.

"We welcome actions taken by the Inspector General of Police and call for swift prosecution of all cases and compensation paid to the victims' families" he said

NSA, ICPC chair confirm El-Rufai's "open confession" in media interview —Witness

ABUJA

The Department of State Services (DSS) witness on Tuesday said that the National Security Adviser (NSA), Nuhu Ribadu, confirmed that the conversation referenced by former Governor Nasir El-Rufai of Kaduna State, in a media interview, indeed took place between them.

The witness, identified as "APC" for security reasons, made this statement in his evidence before Justice Joyce Abdulmalik of the Federal High Court in Abuja.

APC, who is the 1st prosecution witness (PW-1), told the court that following the broadcast, investigators interviewed the NSA who verbally confirmed that he actually had such discussion with the ICPC chairman, Musa Aliyu.

The DSS lawyer, Oluwale Aladedoye, SAN, then sought to tender the silver flash drive containing the media interview and a certificate of compliance in evidence.

Aladedoye, who led the witness in evidence, said the flash drive was a replacement for the one that was faulty the previous day, which the court admitted in evidence.

The judge then directed that the video in the flash drive, containing an interview granted by El-Rufai to Arise News, be played in open court.

The 43-minute long recorded video where the ex-governor allegedly stated that someone had wiretapped a conversation involving the NSA and forwarded it to him, was played.

In the interview, El-Rufai made efforts to justify the act

by arguing that governments routinely monitor communications.

The PW-1, who started giving evidence on Monday, said shortly after the interview was aired, investigators interviewed Ribadu and Aliyu.

The witness said the anchor of the programme, Charles Aniagolu; a lawyer, Deji Adeyanju, and a cameraman were invited for questioning.

The witness said Aniagolu confirmed that El-Rufai admitted during the interview that someone intercepted the conversation and passed it to him.

He said Aniagolu admitted that the former governor insisted during the interview that governments engage in such practices regularly.

Aladedoye later tendered statements obtained from Aniagolu and Adeyanju, which were admitted by the judge in evidence and marked as exhibits, without objection from the defence.

The judge also admitted another statement made by an Arise TV cameraman, Ugochukwu Agalayana, in evidence and marked as exhibit.

The witness said investigators concluded that El-Rufai made what they described as an "open confession" during the television interview regarding the interception of the NSA's conversation.

He added that the investigation team considered the act capable of undermining national security and subsequently recommended prosecution.

The prosecution counsel further tendered a preliminary investigation report, which the court also admitted in evidence and marked as exhibit.

**WORKSHOP:**

L-R: Accountant-General of Kwara State, Alhaji Abdulganiyu Sanni; representative of the Chairman, Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS), Muhammed Lawal; Accountant-General of the federation, Dr Shamseldeen Ogunjimi, and representative of the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Tolu Adegbole, during a workshop to strengthen collaboration with the sub-national in tax administration and optimisation of revenue generation in Nigeria organised by NRS in Abuja on Tuesday

Man remanded over alleged murder of farmer in Ekiti

ADO-EKITI

An Ado-Ekiti Chief Magistrates' Court on Tuesday remanded a 28-year-old man, Philip John, in a correctional centre over an alleged murder of a farmer.

The police had, through a Form K application, sought the remand of the defendant

pending legal advice from the office of the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP).

The prosecutor, ASP Akinwale Oriyomi, told the court that the defendant allegedly murdered one Adeniyi Oladunjoye on May 10 in Ijero-Ekiti.

Oriyomi alleged that the defendant entered the deceased's farm and cut several bunches

of plantain.

He alleged that when the deceased challenged the defendant for trespassing on the farmland, the defendant beat him to death.

According to the prosecutor, the offence contravenes Section 234 of the Criminal Law of Ekiti State, 2021.

He urged the court to re-

mand the defendant pending legal advice from the DPP.

The plea of the defendant was not taken.

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

Adeosun adjourned the case until June 15 for mention.

Woman docked over alleged N15m car fraud in Lagos

IKEJA

A 54-year-old woman, Mary Allen, on Tuesday appeared before an Ikeja Magistrates' Court in Lagos over alleged N15 million fraud.

Allen, whose address was not provided, is standing tri-

al on a one-count charge of obtaining money under false pretences.

The prosecutor, Supol Josephine Ikhayere, told the court that the defendant committed the offence on May 15 at Allen Avenue, Ikeja, Lagos.

Ikhayere alleged that the defendant obtained N15 million

from one Abba Sabitu under the pretext of selling a 2013 Toyota Highlander vehicle to him.

She said that the defendant neither delivered the vehicle nor refunded the money, but converted the sum to her personal use.

According to the prosecutor, the offence contravenes Section 314(3) of the Criminal

Law of Lagos State, 2015.

The defendant pleaded not guilty to the charge.

The Magistrate, Mrs L.A. Owolabi, granted the defendant bail in the sum of N800,000 with two responsible sureties.

The case was adjourned until June 30 for further proceedings.

Mother seeks custody of daughter 4yrs after alleged denied access

MARARABA (NASARAWA)

A mother, Firdausy Ibrahim, has filed a civil suit at the Upper Area Court Mararaba Gurku, seeking custody of her six-year-old daughter whom she last saw in 2022 when she was two years old.

The complainant, who resides at Orange Market, Mararaba, Karu Local Government Area, described herself as the ex-wife of Bashir Sulaiman, the defendant in the suit.

She said the defendant is a public servant residing at Sani Mainaggi B, Kano.

She averred that the marriage was blessed with two children - a 6-year-old daughter and 5-year-old son.

Ibrahim told the court that the defendant took their daughter when she was two years old and has denied her access to the child for the past four years.

She said her male child was

still suckling at the time of separation.

She said all efforts to see her daughter have proved abortive.

She, therefore, sought an order compelling her ex-husband to allow her access to their daughter, grant her custody of the girl, pay school fees for their son and cater to the children.

"I have not set my eyes on my daughter since 2022, all efforts to see her have proved abortive.

"After our divorce in Jan. 4, 2024, I have been taking him to court to provide my daughter.

"As it stands now I don't know the whereabouts of my daughter, I don't know if she is alive or not," she said.

Ibrahim said she has no pictures of her daughter nor heard her voice, adding that the daughter won't even recognise her as her mother.

She also averred that the defendant has used his connections to stop all efforts made by her to get her daughter back.

NEWS**Foreign**

Ebola outbreak may be spreading faster than first thought, WHO doctor warns

People living close to the epicentre of a deadly Ebola outbreak have spoken of their fear, as the World Health Organization (WHO) warned cases may be spreading faster than originally thought.

One man in the Democratic Republic of Congo's north-eastern Ituri province, the epicentre of the outbreak, said infected people were dying "very fast", and added: "Ebola has tortured us."

The virus has killed 131 people in the DR Congo, and officials say more than 513 cases are now suspected in the country. One person has died in neighbouring Uganda.

The WHO's Dr Anne Ancia told the BBC that the more the UN agency investigates the outbreak, the clearer it becomes cases have spread to other areas.

Modelling by the London-based MRC Centre for Global Infectious Disease Analy-

sis released on Monday suggested there had been "substantial" under-detection, and that it could not rule out there had already been more than 1,000 cases.

The study suggested that the current outbreak is "larger than currently ascertained" and that its "true magnitude remains uncertain".

A man who spoke to BBC News and identified himself as Bigboy said people are "really scared" and doing what they can to protect themselves.

He said locals are taking precautions such as washing hands with clean water, but added that he wished they could get access to other protective supplies such as face masks.

Another Ituri local, Alfred Giza, said people in the community are aware of the threat and waiting to receive face masks to protect themselves, but that he would not know what to do if a family member or friend contracted the disease.

The Red Cross warned that Ebola can escalate quickly if cases are not identified early, communities lack information and health systems are overwhelmed, adding "we are seeing all those conditions" in the current outbreak.

On Tuesday, DR Congo President Félix Tshisekedi called for "calm" and urged Congolese citizens to remain vigilant, after holding a crisis meeting on Monday evening.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who declared the outbreak an international emergency last week, said he was "deeply concerned about the scale and speed of the epidemic".

It is feared the outbreak may have been ongoing for several weeks before it was first detected on 24 April.

There is no vaccine for the strain of Ebola virus fuelling the latest rise in cases, but the WHO is evaluating whether other drugs may provide pro-

tection.

Speaking to BBC Newsday, Ancia said DR Congo's Ituri province was a "very unsecured area with lots of movement of population", making it difficult for the agency to investigate and help control the disease.

She continued: "The more we are investigating this outbreak, the more we realise that it has already disseminated at least a little bit across border and also in other provinces."

WHO is sending tonnes of health supplies to DR Congo, including personal protective equipment (PPE) and medicine.

The outbreak has spread to the province of South Kivu, where the population has been affected by a humanitarian crisis for many years, she added.

There has also been a case in eastern DR Congo's biggest city, Goma, which has a population of around 850,000 people and is under the control of Rwandan-backed rebels.

Son of Mango boss arrested over father's fatal fall from cliff

The son of Mango founder Isak Andic has been arrested in connection with his father's death.

Jonathan Andic, 45, was detained by Catalan police on Tuesday as part of a renewed investigation into the death of the fashion tycoon, which was initially treated as an accident but was later reopened.

Isak, 71, died in December 2024 after falling from a ravine while walking in the Montserrat mountains near Barcelona with his son. There have been conflicting media reports about whether they were alone or if other family members were present.

Jonathan has previously denied responsibility for his father's death.

Isak Andic pictured with Kate Moss at a 2011 Mango collection launch in Paris

A family spokesperson told Reuters that Jonathan was being questioned and that the family was confident of his innocence.

He joined Mango in 2005 and later oversaw the company's Mango Man line. He became vice-chairman of the board after his father's death.

Investigators in Catalonia initially closed the case in early 2025 after finding no evi-

dence of criminal wrongdoing but reopened it later that year, claiming there were inconsistencies in Jonathan's testimony, the La Vanguardia newspaper reported.

Jonathan was taken from his home shortly after 11:00 local time (09:00 GMT) where he was questioned by police again.

He later appeared before a judge, who ordered a detention with bail, set at €1m (£865,000), ordered the withdrawal of his passport and required him to report to the court weekly.

Born in Turkey, Isak founded Mango with the help of his brother, Nahman, in Barcelona in 1984 and the chain now operates almost 3,000 outlets in 120 countries.

At the time of his death, Forbes estimated the businessman's net worth to be \$4.5bn (£3.6bn).

Mango CEO Toni Ruiz previously said Isak's death would "leave a huge void" and added: "All of us are, in some way, his legacy and the testimony of his achievements".

"It is up to us, and this is the best tribute we can make to Isak and which we will fulfil, to ensure that Mango continues to be the project that Isak aspired to and of which he would feel proud."

**EBOLA OUTBREAK:**

People in DR Congo have said they are scared and unsure what to do to protect themselves and their families.

Father-of-eight killed in San Diego mosque shooting hailed as a hero

The bravery of a security guard who was shot dead along with two other worshippers at a San Diego mosque on Monday prevented the attack from being much worse, say police.

The guard was Amin Abdullah, a father of eight, a spokeswoman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations-San Diego (Cair-SD), Tazheen Nizam, told reporters.

"It's fair to say his actions were heroic," San Diego Police Chief Scott Wahl told a news conference. "Undoubtedly, he saved lives today."

Abdullah and two others - whom Cair-SD named as Mansour Kazihah and Nad-

er Awad - were killed by two yet-to-be-identified teenage attackers who then took their own lives, say police.

People who knew Abdullah told US media he looked after the community. Others have taken to social media to describe him as "the nicest man you'll ever meet".

The mosque called him "a courageous man who put himself on the line of the safety of others, who even in his last moments did not stop protecting our community".

Nizam, the Cair spokeswoman, told the BBC: "Amin was loved by everybody, he stood there day after day, always smiling, welcoming

everybody, welcoming the kids who came to the school.

"He was a shining light. He is a true hero, a martyr."

A friend of the family told the Associated Press that Abdullah was well-known at the mosque and had worked there for more than a decade.

"He wanted to defend the innocent so he decided to become a security guard," Shaykh Uthman Ibn Farooq, told the news agency.

Sam Hamideh knew Abdullah through the mosque and told the BBC's US partner CBS that the security guard would be remembered for his kindness.

"It didn't matter who walked

up... any random person could just walk up and, like, [Abdullah] would greet them, make sure they are OK," Hamideh said.

"Whether they were homeless off the street looking for something, whether it was a child or elderly."

An online fundraiser for him has raised more than \$1.6m (£1.2m).

Getty Images A woman in headscarf speaks to police near the mosqueGetty Images

The other two victims were worshippers at the mosque, said Cair-SD. Kazihah helped maintain its grounds and convenience store. Awad's wife teaches at the school that is part of the Islamic centre.

Trump says he called off new Iran attack at request of Gulf states

US President Donald Trump has said he is holding off a military attack on Iran planned for Tuesday at the request of Gulf states as "serious negotiations are now taking place".

In a post on Truth Social, he said he had been asked to do so by the leaders of Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

He said he had been informed a deal would be made that is "very acceptable" to the US, adding there would be "NO NUCLEAR WEAPONS FOR IRAN!"

But he warned the US would be ready to "go forward with a full, large scale assault on Iran, on a moment's notice" if there was no acceptable deal.

A senior Iranian military commander told the US not to make "strategic mistakes and miscalculations again".

Trump's latest announcement on Iran comes amid a drop in his approval rating and as polls show the war is increasingly unpopular at home.

Some 64% of voters believe it was the wrong decision to go to war with Iran, according to a New York Times/Siena poll published on Monday.

The survey also found that just 37% of voters approve of Trump's job performance as president. The polling underscores the challenge Republicans face in the midterm elections, in a moment of growing public frustration with the war

and Trump's handling of the economy and immigration, among other issues.

Israeli and US forces began massive air strikes on Iran on 28 February, while Tehran retaliated by firing drones and missiles at Israel and US targets in countries across the Gulf.

A major factor at play here is the fear Gulf Arab states have over how Iran is likely to retaliate after any further attacks by the US.

Iran is known to retain a significant number of drones and missiles with which it could resume its full-scale attacks on neighbouring states, their airports, petrochemical facilities and even the crucial desalination plants that provide drinking water as summer temperatures in the Gulf build up.

Talking to reporters later, Trump called it "a very positive development, but we'll see whether or not it amounts to anything".

He said: "We've had periods of time where we had, we thought, pretty much getting close to making a deal, and it didn't work out. But this is a little bit different."

Trump said there seemed to be "a very good chance" of an agreement with Iran, adding: "If we can do that without bombing the hell out of them, I would be very happy."

A ceasefire agreed in April meant to facilitate talks has largely been observed despite occasional exchanges of fire.

Foreign**NEWS****Uncontrolled California wildfires seen from space**

Satellite images have revealed the scale of two wildfires spreading in southern California.

The Sandy Fire ignited on Monday morning in the city of Simi Valley, north-west of Los Angeles, according to California Governor Gavin Newsom.

Satellite images taken just after noon local time (20:00 BST) on Monday show a large plume of smoke rising into the air just south of the city.

California fire officials said on Tuesday morning that 750 firefighters were being supported by "night-flying water dropping helicopters" to target hotspots.

A satellite image showing smoke rising from a fire south of Simi Valley

The Simi Valley Police Department said it had received a report that an individual "hit a rock with a tractor", which sparked the fire, according to the BBC's US news partner CBS.

The fire had since spread across 1,364 acres (550 hectares) and no part of it has been contained, officials said.

Data from Nasa's wildfire monitoring platform shows active hotspots moving further south overnight into Tuesday.

Hotspots detected by Nasa's Fire Information for Resource Management System over the last 24 hours

More than 10,000 homes have been evacuated from Simi Valley and surrounding communities, Newsom said.

A further 3,500 homes are under evacuation warnings, extending into neighbouring Los Angeles county

Los Angeles mayor Karen Bass said officials don't expect

the blaze to spread to the city but warnings have been issued "out of an abundance of caution".

The spread of the fire was helped by high winds on Monday morning that eased later in the day, a fire department spokesperson said.

Simi Valley Unified School District officials said classes would be cancelled on all of its campuses on Tuesday.

Around 30 people were killed and more than 10,000 homes were destroyed in fast-spreading fires that broke out in the Los Angeles area in January 2025.

A satellite image showing smoke rising from a fire south of Simi Valley

Satellite images also show a fire on Santa Rosa Island off the coast of Los Angeles that has burned 14,600 acres (6,000 hectares) of the Channel Islands National Park, according to the US National Park Service.

The fire was first reported on Friday, but by Monday evening, California fire officials said they had so far not got any part of the fire contained.

At least 70 firefighters and park rangers have been battling the blaze. The US Coast Guard said a 67-year-old man was rescued from the island's shore, according to CBS.

Santa Rosa Island is one of five Channel Islands situated off the southern coast of California. The island is almost uninhabited but experts say it has a unique ecosystem of animal and plant life.

Nasa's satellite-based wildfire monitoring platform shows the fire has moved north-east over the weekend and now appears to be spreading inland.

**MALDIVES CAVE VICTIM:**

Among the five who died were Giorgia Sommacal (L), her mother Monica Montefalcone (C) and diving instructor Gianluca Benedetti

Two bodies of missing Italians recovered from inside Maldives cave

The bodies of two Italians who drowned in a scuba diving accident in the Maldives last week have been brought to the surface, local officials have told the BBC.

"They were retrieved from the third chamber of the underwater cave by the specialist divers from Finland after a two-hour operation," Mohamed Hossain Shareef, a Maldivian government spokesperson told the BBC.

The two bodies were being brought to the capital Male for identification.

They were among five people who died in the accident. Two bodies remain inside.

The first body of an Italian diver, who was a member of the group, was recovered shortly after Thursday's accident near Vaavu atoll. He has been

named by Italian media as boat operations manager and diving instructor Gianluca Benedetti.

Then on Saturday a Maldivian rescue diver died during a search for the bodies.

The four missing divers were eventually found by Finnish divers on Monday in the chamber of the cave furthest from the entrance. Known locally as "shark cave", it is up to 60m (197 ft) deep.

The mission to recover the remaining two bodies will resume on Wednesday and a Maldivian official was hopeful they would be retrieved the same day.

It is hoped that discovering the bodies will provide clues as to the cause of the accident. The recovery operation has been described as complex because of the depth of the cave and the lack of space and visibility. The entrance to the cave lies at

a depth of 47m but the various chambers are at varying depths.

The Finnish divers were working with local police and coastguard, and officials said that while the specialist team had brought the two bodies to a depth of 30m, the coastguard divers had taken over the operation from that point.

The weather at the time of the dive on Thursday was described as rough and a yellow warning had been issued for passenger boats and fishermen.

Four of the divers were affiliated with the University of Genoa, which told the BBC that it did not give approval for any kind of deep-sea dive as part of their scientific research.

"The requests submitted to the Maldivian authorities... were evidently made outside the scope of the mission au-

thorised by the university," a spokesperson said. The dive was carried out "in a personal capacity", the spokesperson added, and not part of the research.

The university has said that it had suspended authorisation for any dives for scientific purposes - regardless of their depth - in March 2024, in accordance with a ministerial decree from that month giving guidelines for underwater dives.

The statement said the university is currently developing an internal protocol to govern its procedures, in compliance with those regulations.

A Maldivian government spokesperson said that the team had a permit to dive to a depth of 50m but had not mentioned the cave in their proposal.

Irish president continues first official visit to GB

The Irish president is in the second day of her three-day official visit to London and Leeds.

Catherine Connolly spent Tuesday afternoon visiting the Chelsea Flower Show, before making an appearance at the London Irish Centre in Camden.

On Monday, she met King Charles III where she invited the King to make a state visit to Ireland, which he "graciously accepted".

Connolly's visit to England comes as the King and Queen Camilla made their first visit of the year to Northern Ireland.

Connolly's trip began on Monday with a visit to the Irish Cultural Centre in Hammersmith, London, where she said some Irish people were leaving Ireland because of a lack of housing.

She also met those participating in an Irish language class, and enjoyed some musical and dance performances.

It is Connolly's first official visit to Great Britain since her inauguration in November.

On Wednesday, Connolly's trip will conclude with visits

to Leeds University and Leeds Irish Centre.

President Connolly will be briefed on the work of the Irish Health Centre in Leeds and will also meet representatives of other Irish centres in the region.

It is the third official visit the president has undertaken since commencing her term of office, following visits to Northern Ireland and Spain.

A live stream from the Global Sumud Flotilla showed armed commandos boarding a boat on Monday

The Irish president's trip comes following the detention of her sister, Dr Margaret Connolly.

Dr Connolly was part of an aid flotilla to Gaza which was intercepted in international waters and boarded by Israeli forces on Monday.

The flotilla organisers said 10 boats in a 60-vessel convoy were intercepted.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the raid was "effectively neutralising a malicious plan designed to break the isolation we have imposed on Hamas terrorists in Gaza".

American who contracted Ebola in DR Congo being treated in Germany

A US doctor who tested positive for Ebola while working with a medical missionary group in the Democratic Republic of Congo is being treated at a hospital in Germany, officials said.

The American is in a special isolation ward at Charité hospital in Berlin, Germany's Foreign Health Ministry said, after he was evacuated from Central Africa.

At least 131 deaths have been reported in an Ebola outbreak in the DR Congo, with more than 513 cases suspected, officials have said.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said it was working to evacuate at least six other Americans who were exposed to the deadly virus.

The CDC did not identify the American working in DR Congo who had been stricken

with the virus on Sunday.

But medical missionary group Serge said later on Monday that one of its US doctors, Peter Stafford, had tested positive for Ebola.

He was exposed while treating patients at Nyankunde Hospital in Bunia, where he has worked since 2023, said the charity.

Germany's Federal Ministry of Health told the BBC the US government had requested help to treat a US citizen sick with Ebola.

"Arrangements are currently being made to admit and treat the patient in Germany," the ministry said.

"For the management and care of patients with diseases caused by highly pathogenic pathogens, there is a nationwide network of experts in Germany."

Two other doctors from the medical group who were exposed while treating patients, including Stafford's wife, Dr

Rebekah Stafford, did not have symptoms and were following quarantine protocols, the group said in a statement.

Serge said the Staffords and their four young children were in a location where they can undergo risk monitoring and receive specialised medical care.

The Staffords met in medical school at Ohio State University and wed in 2013, according to Serge.

Peter specialises in general surgery and Rebekah's expertise is in obstetrics and gynaecology, said the charity in an online profile.

The couple first moved in 2019 to Africa, where they also worked in Togo.

The CDC issued a new order on Monday blocking foreign travellers from entering the US if they have visited a country affected by the outbreak in the past 21 days, including DR Congo, Uganda and South Sudan.

The agency invoked Title 42,

a law that temporarily bans non citizens from coming to the US for public health reasons.

CDC officials emphasised that the risk to the American public remained low. The CDC is sending staff from Atlanta to the epicentre of the outbreak to help with the response.

President Donald Trump said on Monday he was "concerned" by the outbreak in DR Congo, but added he believed it had not spread to the US.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the outbreak an international emergency.

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

The WHO has said the outbreak in DR Congo's eastern Ituri province is a public health emergency of international concern, but did not meet the criteria of a pandemic.



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2026 President Federation Cup: Kayode's heroic brace takes Bendel Insurance FC to round 32 after beating Katsina Utd Jnr 2-1

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Bendel Insurance Football Club, yesterday defeated Katsina United Junior Team 2-1 and sailed through to

the round of 32 in the ongoing 2026 President Federation Cup. Star striker Kayode Oke proved unstoppable to the underdogs as he fired second half goals to help the 2023 Champions regained

confidence and sealed a deserved 2-1 victory against the stubborn Katsina boys.

Katsina United Junior shocked the Benin Arsenal in the 36th minute of the encounter at Area 3 field in Abuja with a goal scored by Saidu Abdullahi, putting the favourites under pressure for the remaining part of the first half.

As the second half began, Insurance FC came out better as their manager Kennedy Boboye effected changes in his midfield, bringing in Emmanuel Akpan, Efe Ubiomo and Dung Emmanuel for Henry Oyian, Alex Oweifaleya and Anyanwu Promise.

Kayode Oke found the back of the net in the 60th minute to give the Benin Arsenal an equalizer. As they continued to

mount pressure on their opponents. Kayode got his brace in the 86th minute and sealed victory for the former Champions.

Bendel Insurance FC won the 2023 edition of the Federation Cup after defeating Enugu Rangers 1-0 at the Stephen Keshi Stadium in Asaba on June 21, 2023 and secured Nigeria's 4th ticket for CAF tournament.

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



BENDEL INSURANCE FC CELEBRATE



SHUKURAT OLADIPO

Super Falcons defender crowned Italy's best defender after title-winning season

Super Falcons defender Shukurat Oladipo has been named the Best Defender in the Italian Women's Serie A following an outstanding debut season with AS Roma Women, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

The 21-year-old Nigerian international was also included in the league's official Team of the Season after playing a key role in Roma's successful title-winning campaign.

Oladipo, who can operate as a right-back or central defender, made 18 appearances during the season as AS Roma

secured the Serie A championship and qualification for next season's UEFA Women's Champions League.

The former FC Robo Queens star adapted quickly to life in Italy, establishing herself as one of the league's standout defenders with her composure, tactical awareness and defensive consistency.

Her rise continues to highlight Nigeria's growing influence in women's football, with Oladipo also becoming an important figure for the Super Falcons at international level.

President Federation Cup: Ibom Angels, Fortress Ladies among top clashes as round of 32 takes center stage

All eyes will be on the Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium, Enugu, on Monday, May 25, 2026 when Ibom Angels from Uyo and Fortress Ladies from Benin City clash in one of the games of the women's Round of 32 of this year's President Federation Cup competition.

There will also be fireworks in Awka, where Pace-setter Queens from Ibadan will confront Bayelsa Queens, while Edo Queens from Benin City are up against Ghetto Tiger Ladies from Lagos in Akure.

Naija Ratels from Abuja will take on Mighty Jets Mata in Lafia, while Abia Angels and Ikukuoma Queens will settle scores in Enugu.

Women's Competition: Round of 32 Fixture

Rivers Angels Vs NAF Queens - Makurdi (25/05/26): 4pm

Abia Angels Vs Ikukuoma Queens - Enugu (25/05/26): 4pm

FC Robo Queens Vs Rangers Women - Benin City (25/05/26): 4pm

Remo Stars Ladies Vs Onimarg FC - Ibadan (25/05/26): 4pm

Ahudiannem Queens Vs Moje Queens - Asaba (25/05/26): 4pm

Heartland Queens Vs Dragon Fury Ladies - Benin City (25/05/26): 1pm

Ibom Angels Vs Fortress Ladies - Enugu (25/05/26): 1pm

Pacesetter Queens Vs Bayelsa Queens - Awka (25/05/26): 1pm

Osun Babes Vs Plateau

United Queens - Anyigba (25/05/26): 4pm

Sunshine Queens Vs Solo Wonders - Awka (25/05/26): 4pm

Confluence Queens Vs Gallant Queens - Minna (25/05/26): 4pm

Fuoye Queens Vs Esthington FC - Asaba (25/05/26): 1pm

Delta Queens Vs Royal Queens - Akure (25/05/26): 4pm

Edo Queens Vs Ghetto Tigers - Akure (25/05/26): 1pm

Naija Ratels Vs Mighty Jets Mata - Lafia (25/05/26): 4pm

Osklean FC Vs Nasarawa Amazons - Enugu (25/05/26): 10am



IBOM ANGELS

2026 African Cycling Championship: Zayed defies crash trauma to shine as Godwin claims glory

Egyptian women's elite cycling star, Ebtissam Zayed overcame painful memories and fresh injury setbacks to emerge as one of the standout performers at the just concluded 2026 African Track Cycling Championships in Abuja.

Zayed won five gold medals at the just concluded championships.

She described her return to the Moshood Abiola National Stadium Velodrome in Abuja as emotional after suffering what she called the biggest crash of her career during the 2019 edition of the competition in Nigeria.

"Coming back to this CAC Track Cycling Championships track was emotional for me be-

cause I had the biggest crash of my career here in 2019.

"At the same time, it was nice to reunite with my Nigerian friends and experience the love and support from the people again," she said.

The Egyptian cyclist revealed that the competition was particularly important as part of preparations for the forthcoming World Championships, which will serve as qualifiers for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games.

In spite of crashing again during the scratch race on the opening day, May 12, Zayed fought through the pain to dominate the competition.

"It was stressful and very tough for me after the crash, but I am proud that I pushed through and still managed to win five gold medals at the Confederation of African Cy-



PAMOJA 2027: Super Eagles up against Madagascar, Tanzania and Guinea Bissau

Nigeria will tango with familiar foes and joint-hosts Tanzania, Madagascar and Guinea Bissau in the race for qualification to next summer's Africa Cup of Nations finals to be jointly-hosted by Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The four teams are in Group L.

Tuesday afternoon's draw at the Egyptian Football Association headquarters in Cairo slotted the 48 teams into 12 groups of four teams each, with the two top-placed teams in each pool advancing to the finals scheduled for 19th June - 17th July next year.

Nigeria defeated Madagascar home and away in the qualifying series for the 2012 Africa Cup of Nations, and shared honours with Guinea Bissau in the race to the 2023 AFCON finals that were held in Cote d'Ivoire. Guinea Bissau won in Abuja while the Super Eagles took the full points in Bissau.

Tanzania was in the same qualifying pool with Nigeria in the race to the 2017 AFCON. Both teams played a scoreless draw in Dar es Salaam before Nigeria won 1-0 in Uyo through a Kelechi Iheanacho long-range blast.



First Nigerian on ICC Development Panel says role requires more work

Enesi Habib, the first Nigerian to be appointed to the International Cricket Council (ICC) International Development Panel of Umpires, says his new role requires more work.

An elated Habib told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Tuesday in Abuja that the opportunity also gives him a platform to continue mentorship of other umpires.

He said he was earlier shortlisted alongside 11 others from the continent and was able to make the final four that gained promotion from the regional rank.

"Honestly, I didn't see it coming because I was up against other brilliant umpires in the

continent, some of whom have started officiating many years before I took up this role.

"Twelve of us were earlier shortlisted and when I made the final eight, I felt fulfilled. We went in for the interview for the final four, I did my best and the rest is now history.

"When ICC emailed me that I was selected to be on the Panel, I couldn't contain my joy and I am only grateful to God for seeing me thus far.

"Now, this means more work. If there are ICC tournaments, the priority will fall on Development Panel A umpires to execute those matches before considering umpires at the regional level.

"I can be called upon to go

and officiate tournaments that are outside Africa. These are tournaments that are highly intensive and one needs to prepare adequately for them.

"So, I am thankful to God for the opportunity, will continue to mentor young umpires and make our country proud," Habib added.

Meanwhile, the Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF) congratulated the erstwhile cricketer on the feat describing it as a landmark and significant step for the growth of the game in the country.

"This achievement reflects years of hard work, consistency, and commitment to excellence.

"It also sets a new standard

and opens the door for the next generation of Nigerian officials to aim higher," Uyi Akpata, President of NCF, said.

The veteran umpire made his ICC debut in 2018 at the ICC Men's U19 World Cup Africa Division 2 Qualifiers in Potchefstroom, South Africa.

He has since officiated in multiple ICC tournaments, invitational, and franchise competitions across the continent, amassing over 60 T20I caps.

The ICC International Development Panel of Umpires consists of high-performing umpires from around the world who are mentored for promotion to the Emirates ICC Elite Panel.



NIGERIA FLAMINGOS

Morocco 2026: Flamingos off to Abidjan for clash with Guinea

Nigeria's U17 girls, the Flamingos, will depart for Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire on Wednesday morning as preparations enter the final stretch ahead of their FIFA U17 Women's World Cup qualifying clash against Guinea.

The team, led by Head Coach Akeem Busari, is expected to leave Lagos aboard an ASKY Airlines flight, with a stopover in Lomé, Togo, before arriving in Abidjan. The first-leg encounter against Guinea, scheduled for Saturday, 23rd May, forms part of the second-round qualifiers for the 2026 FIFA U17 Women's World Cup set to hold in Morocco later this year.

For close to a month, the Flamingos have remained in intensive camping, first in Abuja before moving to Ikenne, Ogun State, where the technical crew continued tactical drills, fitness sessions, and assessment games aimed at shaping the squad ahead of the crucial fixture. The preparations have also included a series of friendly matches that offered clear insight into the team's attacking

strength and growing chemistry.

The Flamingos recorded emphatic victories over Generation Next, Nazareth Queens, Solo Wonder Babes, Lakeside Queens FA, and YAFA U-15, while also playing out a competitive draw against Real Rising Stars SC. Beyond the scorelines, camp observers have pointed to the growing intensity and focus within the squad as the qualifiers approach. Training sessions under Busari and his assistants have largely centered around movement off the ball, pressing, quick transitions, and composure in the final third, with competition for places remaining high across the squad.

The trip to Côte d'Ivoire now signals the beginning of the final phase of preparations as Nigeria seeks another appearance at the FIFA U17 Women's World Cup. Having won bronze at the 2022 edition in India, expectations remain high around the Flamingos, and the coaching crew will hope the weeks of preparation translate into a strong first-leg performance against Guinea on May 23.

Maikaba promises more opportunities for NLO players in Flying Eagles

Newly appointed Flying Eagles Coach, Abdul Maikaba, has promised to give more players from the Nationwide League One (NLO) the opportunity to prove themselves in the national U-20 team setup.

Maikaba gave the assurance while speaking at the Area 3 centre of the ongoing 2026 NLO season in Abuja, where he monitored matches and scouted for young talents.

The coach, who recently released a 35-man list for the Flying Eagles, said the timing of the NLO season limited his chances of selecting more grassroots players before the team's camping programme commenced.

"In spite of the fact that I have released my 35-man list, that does not mean there are no other talents in the country," Maikaba said.

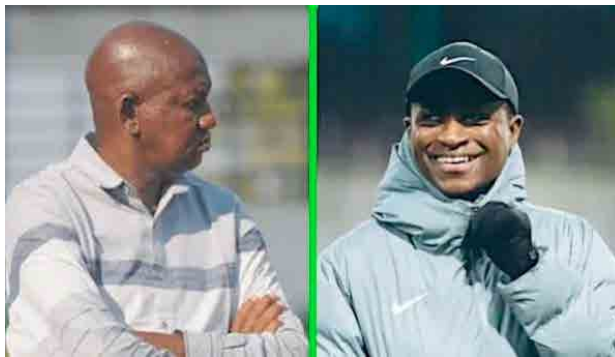
"If I see any good player, I can always give him the opportunity to come and prove himself in the national team."

He explained that he had been travelling across different centres to monitor games in search of talented young players capable of representing Nigeria at the U-20 level.

"I have seen games in Kano, Akwa Ibom, Lagos, and now Abuja. I wish I had enough time to go round more centres because I believe there are many talents in the NLO," he

said. Maikaba described the standard of competition in the grassroots league as impressive, noting that he was particularly excited by the quality displayed at the Area 3 centre in Abuja.

"I was highly impressed with what I saw here. I noticed one outstanding player, number 14 of Galadima FC, Samson Joshua, and I will give him a chance to come and compete for a place in the national team," he said.



FLYING EAGLES COACH, ABDUL MAIKABA

Maduka Okoye's form could keep Nwabali out of Super Eagles team —Ex-Eagles star

Former Nigerian international Friday Ekpo has said Super Eagles goalkeeper Stanley Nwabali will face a difficult task reclaiming the number one position in the national team due to Maduka Okoye's impressive form in Italy.

Ekpo expressed concern over Nwabali's prolonged absence from club football following his departure from South African side Chippa United in February.

The 29-year-old goalkeeper

established himself as one of Chippa United's key players after joining the club in 2020, and his performances earned him recognition with the Super Eagles. However, his lack of competitive football in recent months has raised questions about his readiness for international duty. Super Eagles merchandise

Speaking to Completesports.com, Ekpo said Okoye's consistent displays for Udinese in Serie A have strengthened the competition for the Super Eagles' starting goalkeeper role.

"There is no doubt that Nwabali is a talented goalkeeper, but his absence from the Super Eagles as a result of his inactivity with club football really makes me worried," Ekpo said.



MADUKA AND NWABALI

WTT Contender: Animashaun, Aiyelabegan, Boer, others shine amidst thrilling matches

Nigeria's Abayomi Animashaun defeated Akinwale Fagbamila 3-1 on Tuesday in the men's singles at the ongoing 2026 World Table Tennis tournament in Lagos.

The matches were played at Mola Okoya-Thomas Hall inside the Teslim Balogun Stadium, Lagos.

Animashaun displayed composure and tactical discipline during the encounter as both players

produced exciting rallies before he secured a deserved victory.

He won the match 11-5, 4-11, 11-6, 11-9 after recovering strongly from the second set defeat to dominate crucial moments.

In another men's singles fixture, Netherlands player Milo De Boer defeated Nigeria's Sodiq Adesanya in straight sets to progress comfortably.

De Boer, ranked 269 in the

world, recorded a 3-0 victory with scores of 11-8, 11-8, 11-4 against the Nigerian opponent.

Another entertaining contest saw Tobi Adebakin defeat Qudus Oladejo 3-1 after maintaining control during key stages of the match.

Adebakin secured victory with scores of 11-8, 11-4, 7-11, 11-7 to advance in the competition amid applause from spectators.

Matthew Natus also defeat-

ed Amindu Lawal in a tightly contested five-set encounter filled with long rallies and dramatic momentum swings.

Natus eventually prevailed 13-11, 8-11, 7-11, 11-6, 11-9 after recovering from setbacks to seal victory in the deciding set.

In the women's singles category, Nigeria's Sukurat Aiyebogan defeated compatriot Fatimoh Ahmed 3-0 to qualify for the next round.

Arsenal overcome Burnley to closing-in on title

Arsenal defeated Burnley 1-0 at the Emirates on Monday night to close in on winning their first Premier League title after 22 years.

Burnley resisted Mikel Arteta's men until Kai Havertz rose highest to head in Bukayo Saka's corner just before halftime.

Arsenal were scrappy for most part of the game but they held on to secure all three points in their penultimate game, moving them five points

clear of Manchester City.

With the win, Arsenal now have 82 points from 37 games, while Manchester City have 77 points from 36 games.

Arteta's men will be confirmed champions if Manchester City fail to beat Bournemouth on Tuesday.

Should City win away to Bournemouth, Arsenal will need to beat Crystal Palace away from home on the final day of the league to be confirmed champions.



ARSENAL AND BURNLEY MATCH

FEATURE



Strike actions and the future of education in Nigeria

EJEMOGO REBECCA ANWURI

Education is one of the greatest gifts that any country can offer its citizens because it is the foundation of every successful nation. It is very important such that it helps to build people who will serve as major assets to the country and contribute to its national development, yet recurrent strike actions become the barricade that threatens the future of students. In countries where strike actions are predominant, i.e. Nigeria, lecturers and educational workers suspend academic activities for a period of time which can last for about a week, two weeks, or more, which persistently affect academic activities. While the strike action is a smart move from them in order to force the government to take action for better welfare, improved educational standards, and remuneration, students on the other hand suffer the gruesome consequences that it projects, making its objective of providing quality education for its citizens appear in a false light.

Strike actions are organized refusals by workers or employees to continue working in order to protest against certain issues or demand better conditions. These actions usually occur when negotiations between workers' associations and the government fail. Strike actions are occurrences that do not spring up out of the blue without an impending cause that was left unattended or unaddressed.

Poor salaries of staff is one of the major causes of strike action which is further fueled by the reality of the economic hardship facing the country. Most of these lecturers have families to cater for, accommodation and other bills to settle, as well as transportation expenses to the location where they lecture. The poor salaries of these people spark a sense of financial insecurity in them which results in them transferring their frustration to students who are oblivious of what they are going through. It also has a way of distracting them from their duties. For instance, they would not be willing to give their all in transmitting knowledge to the students because they lack the motivation to do so.

Another cause of strike actions is unpaid allowance. Allowances are meant to serve as incentives which ought to support the main salary that is being paid. But, it is rather unfortunate that not only are their salaries below the standard and delayed in terms of payment, allowances that would have served as a means to ease their burden in hard times are being withheld by those who ought to do the needful, and it would not be sur-



THE PROTESTERS

prising to know that the allowance has been disbursed, but is in the hands of corrupt government officials.

Aside from unpaid allowance, poor educational funding has led to the occurrence of strike actions especially in Nigeria where there are limited staff, dilapidated structures, few and inconvenient classrooms, and absence of modern illustrative materials for effective learning, and many more have limited the quality of learning among students and increased the workload on lecturers. For instance, there are situations where a lecturer especially in Federal Universities might be told to lecture students, which would have been much easier if there were more hands to teach as well.

Government neglect is also a major contribution to strike action especially in Nigeria which comes in the form of poor funding of public institutions, delayed payment of salaries and allowance, inadequate provision of basic facilities, absence of staff workshops, etc. This trend has made lecturers not feel valued, thus, they have resorted to strike actions to demand better working conditions and

accountability. If the issue of strike actions is not properly addressed and curtailed, the country has a number of consequences to contend with, and in many occasions they are not prepared to handle the aftermath.

One of the major consequences of strike actions is academic disruption. Due to the inability to strictly follow the academic calendar which was disrupted due to strike actions, a lot of students will be faced with ugly experiences like delay in graduation, incomplete syllabus, loss of motivation to read and study their books, which can also lead to poor academic performance.

Also, students are on the verge of entertaining frustration and discouragement in their lives. This is because the prolonged stay at home will become worrisome and a burden which will begin to cause mental stress, anxiety about the future, depression, frustration, and loss of motivation.

Furthermore, some students might be drawn into social vices. The government fights tooth and nail in order to put an end to the vices in the society, what if there are strike

actions? How will the society look like? The country is at the verge of breeding students who are involved in cybercrime, drug abuse, gambling, unwanted pregnancies, cultism, and hooliganism, etc.

In addition, strike actions can lead to the exodus of bright minds out of the country. Some parents who are financially buoyant can decide to send their children to study abroad due to the disruptions that affect their academic calendar, thereby affecting their expected year of graduation. Lecturers are not also left out among those involved in relocating overseas to take up jobs where they receive higher pay and are given certain privileges, cared for, and supported unlike in their home country. As a result of this, competent lecturers and teachers who are good at transmitting knowledge eventually become scarce, leaving the students at the mercy of the average ones.

Loss of education quality is another factor affected by strike actions. The crippling effect of strike actions will lead to prolonged suspension of academic activities and stay at

home which will eventually result in a rushed academic session upon resumption. Students will read not with the intent to necessarily gain knowledge, but just so they can pass examinations. In such situations, it will reduce their understanding of what they ought to learn and assimilate.

Despite the devastating effects of strike actions, certain measures when put in place can help reduce their occurrence which include timely payment of salaries, improved funding for education, prioritizing students' welfare, better dialogue and understanding between government and unions as well as implementing policies that will prevent prolonged shutdowns of academic activities.

In conclusion, in as much as strike actions are conducted to agitate for better educational conditions, unions and the government must be mindful because the repeated occurrence places students at a disadvantage. Hence, this is a call for the government and unions to proffer lasting solutions that will put an end to strike actions and promote a better education system in the country.