

As Gen. Rabe dies in captivity, Tinubu vows: 'No negotiation with terrorists'

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu has reaffirmed readiness to crush insurgency and insecurity across the country as he expressed deep sadness over the death of retired Major General Rabe Abubakar in terrorists' captivity.

In a statement issued by his special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, the President maintained that Nigeria would not succumb to

the demands of terrorists for the release of their members in the custody of security agencies.

Tinubu, who described the late military officer as a distinguished soldier that served the nation with honour before retiring from active service a few years ago, also expressed concern over the continued captivity of the late general's wife, who remains in the hands of the kidnapers.

The President also condemned the continued captivity of the late

general's wife, who remains in the hands of the kidnapers.

Tinubu expressed his condolences to the bereaved family, the Katsina State Government and the Nigerian Armed Forces, while praying for strength and comfort for all those affected by the tragic loss.

The statement quoted the President as saying, "while the terrorists have done their worst, the government will never bow to their demand to release their members held by

our security agencies."

Buttressing his administration's determination to defeating insecurity, Tinubu recalled his Democracy Day address of June 12, in which he warned bandits, kidnapers and sponsors of terrorism to surrender or face decisive action from the Nigerian State.

He stated: "Bandits, kidnapers, and sponsors of terror should now surrender or face the full force of the Nigerian State. These windows of sur-

render will not remain open forever. And no mercy will be shown to those who trade in the blood of Nigerians."

Tinubu urged Nigerians to remain united in the fight against terrorism, saying the country will ultimately overcome its security challenges and build a more prosperous future.

According to him, the death of General Abubakar should serve as a turning point in Nigeria's fight against terrorism, adding that criminal groups

must be treated as enemies of the state and not engaged through negotiations.

"General Abubakar's death should further serve as a defining moment in our battle against terrorists and insurgents, never to negotiate with them on any terms, but to continue to treat them as the greatest enemies of our dear nation," the President said.

The statement noted that General Abubakar was travelling to his hometown when he was abducted by terrorists.

O The Nigerian OBSERVER

That The People May Know

f t i g NigerianObserver @Nigerian_Observer @NigerianObserver www.nigerianobservernews.com

PUBLISHED SINCE MAY 29, 1968

VOL. 47, NO. 1,285

MONDAY 15TH JUNE, 2026.

₦200

Students Loan: N282bn reaches 1.5m beneficiaries nationwide, says NELFund

YOLA

The Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) says no fewer than 1.5 million students across 288 tertiary institutions have benefited from its loan scheme, with more than ₦282 billion disbursed nationwide.

Mr Awati Muhammed, Head

of Loan Repayment and Reconciliation, NELFUND, disclosed this at a Democracy Day engagement, organised by student union leaders across Northern Nigeria on Friday in Yola.

The event, themed "Thank You President Tinubu for Making Democracy Work for Students".

Muhammed said the initia-

tive aimed at bringing together students and stakeholders to discuss educational opportunities available under the Federal Government's initiatives.

He said the Northern Project Coordination Office (NPCO), in collaboration with NELFUND and the Presidential Initiative on Compressed Natural Gas (PI-CNG), had

commenced a sensitisation campaign across 25 universities in Northern Nigeria

He said the campaign was aimed at educating students on the benefits of the interest-free education loan programme and other Federal Government interventions in the education sector.

"The outreach is designed to increase awareness and en-

courage wider participation among eligible students.

"The scheme is helping to eliminate financial barriers that have historically hindered many young Nigerians from accessing tertiary education.

"The programme aligns with President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda, which prioritises access to quality education and youth empowerment," he said.

The NELFUND official reiterated the agency's commitment to transparency and

accountability in the implementation of the loan scheme.

He added that the sensitisation would also provide opportunities for students to interact directly with NELFUND officials and other stakeholders.

Muhammed assured students that the campaign would continue across institutions in the North to ensure that no eligible beneficiary was excluded from the programme.

CONTINUES ON PG 4



SLAIN GENERAL:

Chief of Administration Officer, Defence Headquarters, Major-General I. M. Abdullah, 5th I, led a high powered delegation to Katsina State on Sunday, being received by the State Deputy Governor, Far UK Lawan Jobe, 6th r.

Edo reopens 3 schools shut over kidnap threats

BENIN CITY

The Edo Government has approved the reopening of schools in Akoko-Edo LGA recently shut over security concerns, after intelligence reports indicated a plan to attack schools in the area.

The approval is contained in a circular issued by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Mr Enodolomwanyi Otamere, on Friday.

According to Otamere, the decision to reopen the schools was taken after a comprehensive review of the security situation by relevant security agencies and other stakeholders.

He said that government was satisfied that adequate measures had been put in place to guarantee the safety of students, teachers and other school personnel.

"Following the implementation of enhanced security measures and the deployment of additional safety mechanisms across the affected communities and schools, government is satisfied that necessary arrangements have been put in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of learners, teachers, and other school personnel.

"All public and private schools affected by the earlier circular

CONTINUES ON PG 4

Weekly review: Equities market gains N1.38tn

—Pg 2

Why there's so much hatred, divisions among Nigerians —Baba-Ahmed

—Pg 4

Ebola: DR Congo builds new isolation units as spread continues

—Pg 10

NWFL Super 6: Edo Queens crowned NWFL 2025/2026 League champions

—Pg 12

NEWS

Weekly review: Equities market gains N1.38tn

LAGOS

The Nigerian Exchange Ltd. All-Share Index and Market Capitalisation appreciated by 0.88 per cent to close the week at 244,738.74 and N156.970 trillion respectively.

This is compared with the previous week's 242,593.31 and N155.594 trillion.

Consequently, investors gained N1.376 trillion in market value during the week, as market capitalisation rose from N155.594 trillion to N156.970 trillion.

Similarly, all other indices finished higher with the exception of NGX Pension, NGX AFR Bank Value, NGX MERI Growth, NGX MERI Value, NGX Consumer Goods, NGX Lotus II, NGX Industrial Goods, NGX Sovereign Bond and NGX Commodity.

These depreciated by 0.03 per cent, 1.20 per cent, 0.21 per cent, 1.61 per cent, 0.54 per cent, 0.51 per cent, one per cent, 2.04 per cent and 0.34 per cent respectively while the which closed flat.

The market opened for four trading days this week as the

Federal Government declared Friday, June 1p2, as a Public Holiday to commemorate 2026 Democracy Day.

Meanwhile, a total turnover of 4.964 billion shares worth N207.521 billion in 235,966 transactions was traded this week by investors on the floor of the Exchange.

This is in contrast with a total of 3.966 billion shares valued at N175.659 billion that exchanged hands last week in 343,587 deals.

The Financial Services Industry led the activity chart with 4.116 billion shares valued at N84.607 billion traded in 96,165 deals.

This contributed 82.92 per cent and 40.77 per cent to the total equity turnover volume and value respectively.

The Services Industry followed with 232.479 million shares worth N4.955 billion in 17,614 deals.

The third place was the Industrial Goods Industry, with a turnover of 144.988 million shares worth N39.077 billion in 24,775 deals.

Trading in the top three equities, namely Sterling Financial Holdings Company Plc, FCMB

Group Plc and Access Holdings Plc accounted for 2.883 billion shares worth N36.188 billion in 15,533 transactions.

This contributes 58.09 per cent and 17.44 per cent to the total equity turnover volume and value respectively.

Forty equities appreciated in price during the week higher than 23 equities in the previous week.

Fifty-three equities depreciated in price, lower than 65 equities in the previous week, while 53 equities remained unchanged, lower than 58 record-

ed in the previous week.

Associated Bus Company, Consolidated Hallmark Holdings, Abbey Mortgage Bank, Infinity Trust Insurance and Austinlaz led the gainers' for the week, gaining N1.59, N1.55, N2.05, N1.90 and 57 Kobo.

On the other hand, Fidson Healthcare, Neimeth Pharmaceuticals, UH Real Estate Investment Trust, Sunu Assurances and Unilever Nigeria led the losers' chart, declining by N35.30, N2.05, N14.70, 51k, N16.



ANNIVERSARY:

Governor Sheriff Oborewori of Delta State (5th left) with members of the Eighth Delta House of Assembly during the third anniversary thanksgiving service of the assembly on Sunday in Asaba.

24 ships discharge petroleum products, other goods in Lagos ports

● **Additional 46 ships expected to arrive the ports before June 19**

LAGOS

A total of 24 ships have berthed at the Apapa, Lekki and Tin-Can Island ports in Lagos, discharging petroleum products and other commodities, the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) said on Friday.

Other commodities being discharged are bulk wheat, bulk salt, general cargoes, fresh fish, containers, bulk sugar, petrol, bulk gas, diesel, bulk urea and containers.

It said that nine other ships

had arrived at the ports and were waiting to berth with bulk urea, crude oil, diesel, aviation fuel, gasoline, bulk fertilizer, general cargo and petrol

The report shows that 46 other ships laden with petroleum products, food items and other goods are expected to arrive in Lagos ports between Friday and June 19.

NPA said that the expected ships would deliver general cargoes, bulk urea, crude oil, bulk gas, bulk wheat, bulk millet, bulk sugar, condensate, aviation fuel, bulk salt and petrol.

LAGOS

The equities market reversed its winning streak on Thursday, closing the week on a negative note as investors lost N73 billion.

The market traded for four days this week following the Federal Government's declaration of June 12 as a public holiday.

The downturn was driven by sustained sell-offs in banking and insurance stocks, which weighed heavily on overall market performance.

Market capitalisation declined by 0.05 per cent, closing at N156.969 trillion, down from N157.042 trillion recorded in the previous session.

The All-Share Index also shed 133.47 points, or 0.05 per cent, closing at 244,738.74 compared with 244,852.21 previously.

The market's year-to-date return weakened to 57.27 per cent, while market breadth closed flat with 32 gainers and 32 losers.

International Energy Insurance led the losers' chart, dropping 10 per cent to close at

N7.11 per share.

May and Baker followed, losing 8.51 per cent to close at N43, while Tripple Gee declined by 8.47 per cent to settle at N4 per share.

Abbey Mortgage Bank fell by 7.69 per cent to close at N11.40, while AXA Mansard shed 6.67 per cent to finish at N12.60 per share.

On the gainers' chart, Enamelware, Learn Africa, Consolidated Hallmark and University Press each advanced by 10 per cent.

The stocks closed at N40.70, N11, N8.25 and N5.50 per share, respectively.

ABC Transport also gained

9.86 per cent, ending the session at N7.80 per share.

A total of 1.70 billion shares worth N52.81 billion were traded in 49,807 deals.

This compares with 1.23 billion shares valued at N38.84 billion exchanged in 54,193 transactions during the previous session.

FCMB led the volume chart with 584.87 million shares traded, representing 33.99 per cent of total market volume.

Access Corporation topped the value chart with transactions worth N13.95 billion, accounting for 26.41 per cent of total market value traded.

Tinubu reviving abandoned South East road projects, says Umahi

ABUJA

Major South-East road projects conceived during the colonial era but abandoned are now being implemented under President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda, says Minister of Works, Sen. Dave Umahi

Umahi stated this on Saturday in Ebonyi while conducting senior journalists and government officials on an inspection tour of Federal Government projects in the state.

This is contained in a statement by Mr Tunde Rahman, Director of Media and Publicity, Renewed Hope Ambassadors, on Sunday.

The minister identified

the Calabar-Ebonyi-Benue Trans-Saharan Superhighway as one of the flagship projects expected to transform economic activities across the South-East, South-South and parts of the North-Central region.

"It is a colonial-era dream long forgotten, but President Tinubu has revived it, and construction is now underway. We must thank him immensely," Umahi said.

He disclosed that Section One of the highway, originally designed as a 118-kilometre stretch but later extended to 123.6 kilometres, is being executed at a cost of N45 billion, with dualisation works progressing steadily.

According to him, Section Two, which traverses Benue

and Kogi states to Nasarawa, has been awarded at a cost of N668 billion and has attained about 28 per cent completion in some sections.

Umahi said the adoption of concrete road technology by the Tinubu administration had enabled construction to continue in spite of the rainy season.

"The Trans-Sahara Superhighway is not just a road; it is an investment corridor that will catalyse trade in agricultural produce such as cassava, yam, cashew and palm oil from Cross River, Benue and Ebonyi, while also connecting Nigeria to Cameroon."

The minister expressed appreciation on behalf of the South-East for what he described as

the President's commitment to inclusiveness and infrastructure development in the region.

During the inspection, the team, which included the Acting Federal Controller of Works in Ebonyi, Maxwell Okoh, and Mohammed Mustafa, Project Manager of Infioquest International Limited, inspected major bridges and concrete pavement sections along the highway.

The delegation also visited the 1.3-kilometre Ndi-Egbe Bridge in Afikpo Local Government Area of Ebonyi, linking the state with Cross River.

The bridge is expected to be completed in December 2026.

Umahi and the team further inspected the N35 billion

Onueke Flyover project in Ebonyi Central Senatorial District, designed to ease traffic congestion along the corridor.

The team also toured the completed concrete-pavement link road connecting communities in Ebonyi and Cross River states.

Meanwhile, Gov. Francis Nwifuru of Ebonyi commended Tinubu for ongoing infrastructure projects in the South-East and for what he described as the administration's commitment to national renewal.

Receiving the media delegation in Abakaliki, Nwifuru said his administration had sustained development projects across all local government areas of the state, including

roads, primary healthcare centres and water schemes.

"We have kept contractors busy in the state with projects spread across every local government area, from rural roads to primary health centres and water schemes," he said.

The governor also maintained that Ebonyi remained one of the safest states in the country.

Umahi disclosed that South-East governors and leaders would converge in Abakaliki on Monday for a rally to endorse President Tinubu for a second term.

According to him, Nwifuru will lead the people of Ebonyi at the event in appreciation of the President's support for the state and the region.

NEWS

Nigeria mobilises new envoys to rescue ECOWAS unity, confront rising regional crises

CAROLINE AMEH

ABUJA

The Federal Government has charged Nigeria's newly appointed ambassadors and high commissioners to West African countries to take the lead in rebuilding regional unity, defending democratic governance and

strengthening collective efforts against terrorism and other security threats confronting the sub-region.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, gave the charge on Saturday at a strategic retreat for ambassadors and high commissioners-designate to West African countries, de-

scribing their appointments as critical to Nigeria's efforts to reposition itself as a driving force for peace, stability and economic growth within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

She said the assignments come at a defining moment for West Africa, which is grappling with political instability, military takeovers, violent extremism, transnational crimes and economic disruptions that threaten decades of regional integration.

"West Africa remains the cornerstone of Nigeria's foreign policy. Our commitment to the region is absolute and unwavering," the minister told the diplomats.

Odumegwu-Ojukwu urged the envoys to champion democratic values and support efforts to strengthen institutions, uphold the rule of law and promote good governance across the region.

She noted that democracy remains the most reliable path to

sustainable peace, development and prosperity, warning that recent political upheavals in parts of West Africa pose serious challenges to regional cohesion.

Beyond political engagement, the minister tasked the ambassadors with driving economic diplomacy by attracting investments, expanding trade opportunities and facilitating stronger economic cooperation among ECOWAS member states.

She urged them to leverage the opportunities created by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and existing ECOWAS protocols to boost commerce, industrial growth and regional competitiveness.

The minister also stressed the urgency of enhanced security collaboration, noting that terrorism, human trafficking, arms smuggling and other cross-border crimes can only

be effectively tackled through coordinated regional action.

"No nation can confront these threats alone. Stronger partnerships and intelligence-sharing are essential to securing our region," she said.

Odumegwu-Ojukwu further directed Nigerian missions to prioritise citizen diplomacy by protecting the interests of Nigerians living abroad and providing efficient consular services.

She described the Nigerian diaspora as a strategic asset whose contributions should be harnessed for national development.

Earlier, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Sola Enikanolaiye, said the retreat was designed to equip the diplomats with the knowledge and tools needed to navigate the rapidly changing political and security environment in West Africa.

**EMPOWERMENT:**

Wife of Anambra State Governor, Dr. Nonye Soludo, partners Fidelity Bank Plc to empower Anambra residents in Akwa in Friday.

Democracy Day: Ikpea pays tribute to pro-democracy activists, calls for unity

MIKE OSAROGIAGBON

BENIN CITY

The senator representing Edo Central Senatorial District, Sen. Joseph Ikpea, has called for peace, unity and patriotism as Nigeria marks 27 years of uninterrupted democratic rule.

The federal lawmaker said this in a statement on Thursday, urging Nigerians to support the Federal Government

and state governments in tackling insecurity, as security should be everyone's responsibility.

Sen. Ikpea appealed to residents of Edo Central to complement government efforts aimed at protecting lives and property.

The senator also paid tribute to the late MKO Abiola and other pro-democracy activists who sacrificed for the nation's democratic journey.

He said there was a need to

consolidate on the people-oriented programmes of Monday Okpebholo ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Ikpea paid tribute to the late MKO Abiola, whose victory in the June 12, 1993 presidential election was annulled, leading to his incarceration and eventual death in detention.

He also honoured the sacrifices of the late Kudirat Abiola and other democracy activists who fought for the nation's return to civilian rule.

"Today is a day that we cannot joke with in the democratic his-

tory of Nigeria. We must work together to sustain the democracy that people like Chief MKO Abiola, his late wife Kudirat, and several others died for. Many others were incapacitated for life in the struggle.

"Nigeria is going through trying times in the area of security, but it is obvious that the Federal Government and the Edo State Government under the leadership of Governor Monday Okpebholo are doing so much to check insecurity. These efforts should be supported by all of us," he said.

Mrs Soludo, Fidelity Bank, empower 1,950 Anambra residents to boost livelihoods

AKWA

Wife of the Anambra Governor, Dr Nonye Soludo, in collaboration with Fidelity Bank, has empowered no fewer than 1,950 residents of the state with various items to boost their livelihood.

Addressing the residents on Friday in Akwa, Soludo said the partnership is with her Healthy Living initiative, stressing that 100 women received sewing machines, another 100 women got grinding machines, 250 school children took home solar-powered school bags, while 1,500 vulnerable persons re-

ceived food bank packs under the initiative.

She explained that the gesture was beyond merely distributing items or celebrating another social impact initiative, but to reaffirm a simple truth that when we invest in people, we invest in the future.

"Every woman supported, every child empowered and every family assisted represents a step towards building a stronger, healthier and more prosperous Anambra," she said.

Soludo described the programme as a reflection of the power of partnership and shared responsibility.

She noted that Healthy Liv-

ing initiative as a non-governmental organisation, relies on collaborations and goodwill to sustain its interventions.

She commended Fidelity Bank for supporting the vision of improving the welfare of women, children and vulnerable groups in the state.

"Beyond the empowerment items being distributed today, Fidelity Bank is investing in human potential, family stability and community development," she said.

Soludo urged beneficiaries to make productive use of the items provided and become agents of positive change within their communities.

Gen. Rabe Abubakar buried in Katsina

KATSINA

The remains of Maj.-Gen. Rabe Abubakar (rtd), have been laid to rest on Saturday evening at the Gidan Dawa cemetery, Katsina, following the release of his body by kidnapers who abducted him and his wife.

The burial, conducted according to Islamic rites, took place at about 6:45 p.m. and drew a large gathering of mourners, including the Deputy Governor of Katsina, Faruq Lawal-Jobe.

Among dignitaries at the burial included senior government officials, military officers, traditional rulers, family members and sympathisers.

Also in attendance was the Commander of the 17 Brigade, Katsina, alongside other security personnel who paid their

final respects to the late senior military officer.

The funeral came just hours after the abductors released the remains of the retired General.

The circumstances surrounding his death while in captivity have continued to generate public concern and sadness across the country.

The former army spokesperson's death has been widely mourned by government officials, security stakeholders and members of the public.

Many of the sympathisers described him as a distinguished officer whose military career was marked by dedication, patriotism and service to the nation.

Condolence messages have continued to pour in from various quarters, with sympathisers praying for the repose of his soul and comfort for his bereaved family.

State Police: Sen. Izunaso, rally support for security reforms

ABUJA

Deputy Speaker House of Representatives, Benjamin Kalu, and Sen. Osiata Izunaso have called for broad support for state policing and other security reforms aimed at addressing Nigeria's evolving security challenges.

They made the call at the Nigerian People's Strategic Conference and Defence Exhibition 2026 held in Abuja on Saturday.

The theme of the conference is, "Building a Modern Security Ecosystem: Integrating Private Sector Capabilities in Nigeria's National Security Architecture".

Kalu in his remarks, urged the Senate and State Houses of Assembly to endorse the State Police Bill recently passed by the House of Representatives, describing it as a patriotic response to the country's growing security concerns.

According to him, the proposed reform represents a historic step towards strengthening Nige-

ria's security architecture and improving policing at the grassroots.

"The bill will now proceed to the senate and subsequently to the state houses of assembly for consideration."

"I urge all stakeholders to view this reform not as a political project, but a patriotic necessity."

Kalu explained that state policing would reduce response times, improve intelligence gathering and enable security personnel operate more effectively within communities they understood culturally and socially.

He noted that the overwhelming support the bill received in the house reflected a growing national consensus on the need to reform the country's security framework.

The deputy speaker emphasised that while military operations remained necessary, lasting peace required addressing poverty, unemployment, poor education, social exclusion and weak local governance.

Why there's so much hatred, divisions among Nigerians —Baba-Ahmed

ABUJA

National Chairman of Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), Dr Ha-keem Baba-Ahmed, on Sunday expressed concern over what he called growing hatred and

divisions in Nigeria.

Baba-Ahmed, in an interview in Abuja, blamed the situation on poor leadership and the exploitation of ethnic and religious differences by politicians.

According to him, many po-

litical actors deliberately deepen divisions among citizens to gain political advantage and retain power.

Baba-Ahmed, a former aide to President Bola Tinubu, said that the resultant atmosphere of distrust had weakened national unity and diverted attention from the real issues confronting the country.

He highlighted insecurity,

poverty, unemployment and declining public services as some of the factors now affecting Nigerians regardless of ethnicity, religion or zone.

"Bandits, kidnappers and criminals do not ask victims about their tribes, language or religion before attacking them," he said.

Baba-Ahmed argued that the country's problems stemmed

largely from the failure of leadership and institutions rather than differences among citizens.

While insisting that Nigerians shared more common interests than divisions, he called for a renewed commitment to national unity.

The PRP national chairman called on leaders to stop exploiting identity politics and instead, focus on policies that

would improve the lives of ordinary citizens.

"Rebuilding trust in government and strengthening institutions will go a long way in reducing tensions and fostering national cohesion.

"We need leadership that unites Nigerians and addresses the issues that affect everyone, irrespective of where they come from," he said.

Police arrest 3 over alleged murder of domestic staff in Edo

BENIN

The arrested three suspects over the alleged torture and death of a 15-year-old brought to Benin from Benue for domestic work.

The victim, identified by community sources as Tyowase Joy Mfena, was said to have died after suffering severe abuse in the residence where she worked as a domestic worker.

The command's Public Relations Officer, ASP Eno Ikoedem, confirmed the arrests on Sunday in Benin.

She noted that operatives of the command acted on credible intelligence to apprehend the suspects linked to the incident.

"On June 5, 2026, operatives acting on credible intelligence arrested three suspects in connection with the suspected murder of a 15-year-old house help, Joy, a native of Benue," she said.

Ikoedem disclosed that pre-

liminary investigations indicated that the prime suspect allegedly accused the teenager of stealing N200,000 before subjecting her to severe assault.

"Preliminary findings indicate that the prime suspect, Glory Amadasun, allegedly accused the deceased of stealing N200,000 and subjected her to severe assault which reportedly resulted in her death," she stated.

The police spokesperson said efforts were ongoing to arrest other suspects believed to have fled following the incident.

She added that the victim's remains had been deposited at Stella Obasanjo Hospital for preservation and autopsy, while investigations continued.

"The suspects have been arrested, while efforts are ongoing to apprehend others fleeing.

"The corpse has been deposited at Stella Obasanjo Hospital for preservation and autopsy, while investigation continues," she said.



GOVERNOR'S VISIT:

Governor Douye Diri of Bayelsa State, his Deputy, Dr Peter Apke (7th L); King of Ogbogoro town, King Diemeze Victor Awala (5th R) and members of Council of Chiefs, during the Governor's visit to Ogbogoro, Bayelsa State.

Students Loan: N282bn reaches 1.5m...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

Also speaking, Malam Abdulwahab Shehu, the NEL-FUND Desk Officer at Modibbo Adama University, described the initiative as a major step toward promoting equitable access to higher education.

Shehu urged students to seek clarification on eligibility requirements, application procedures and repayment conditions to enable them to make informed decisions.

He encouraged qualified students to take advantage of the

programme, describing it as a unique opportunity to pursue their academic goals without undue financial constraints.

Abbas Aminu, a beneficiary and student of Modibbo Adama University, described the scheme as a timely intervention that had reduced the burden of tuition and other educational expenses.

Aminu said the loan had enabled him to focus more on his studies, adding that the programme had significantly eased the financial challenges associated with higher education.

Edo reopens 3 schools shut over...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

are to resume normal academic and administrative activities, with effect from Monday, June 15, 2026," he added.

The permanent secretary directed school heads, proprietors and relevant education authorities to make the necessary arrangements for the safe return of students and members of staff.

He also urged them to maintain close collaboration with security agencies, community leaders and government officials to sustain a safe and conducive learning environment.

He reassured parents, guardians and other stakeholders that adequate security measures had been deployed across the affected schools.

"The Government remains fully committed to the protection of lives and property and will continue to monitor developments closely, while taking

all necessary steps to safeguard the education sector," he stated.

Otamere encouraged parents and guardians to ensure that their children and wards returned to school promptly to continue their academic activities.

NAN reports that the State Government ordered the temporary closure of Oso Grammar School, Oso Comprehensive High School and Make Secondary School, following security alerts from relevant agencies in the state.

The closure was linked to credible intelligence reports warning of imminent threats to the safety of students, staff and host communities.

The development also followed a security memo by the Department of State Services, which reportedly raised concerns over an alleged plot by suspected bandits to abduct schoolchildren in parts of Edo North Senatorial District.

NASU demand equal allowances as ASUU, FG renegotiation talks continue

GENEVA

The Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Associated Institutions (NASU) has demanded allowance parity with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in ongoing renegotiations with the Federal Government.

Mr Peters Adeyemi, General Secretary of NASU, made the position of the union known while speaking with newsmen on Sunday in Geneva, Switzerland.

Adeyemi who spoke on the sidelines of the just concluded 114th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) insist-

ed that non-academic workers deserve equal welfare benefits.

Specifically, he said the union was seeking parity in allowances following the Federal Government's approval of a 40 per cent increase in allowances for ASUU members.

According to him, NASU members perform critical roles in universities and should not be treated differently in the allocation of welfare benefits and negotiated entitlements.

"We are demanding that whatever is given to ASUU should also be given to us because we face the same economic realities," Adeyemi said.

He added that the union had rejected an earlier offer of 30 per cent increase in allowances, insisting that it fell short of what was granted to ASUU.

"Government offered us 30 per cent and we said no. Though they are our senior colleagues, but, we all go to the same market and buy the same fuel," he said.

Adeyemi said landlords and service providers do not discriminate between academic and non-academic workers when determining rents and charges.

"The cost of living affects all workers equally. We cannot accept a situation where one group receives significantly better allowances than another," he said.

The NASU general secretary said that negotiations with the

federal government had progressed substantially and were nearing conclusion at the university sector level.

He said that the outcome of the university negotiations would influence discussions covering polytechnics and colleges of education where NASU also represents workers.

"We are almost reaching the end of the renegotiation process for universities. Once we conclude that, the other sectors may not be as difficult," he said.

Adeyemi said that the government was delaying the implementation of agreements reached with unions, saying such actions often fuel industrial disputes across tertiary institutions.

Economists praise Lagos N5bn MSME loan scheme

LAGOS

Economists have commended the Lagos State Government for disbursing five billion naira to support small businesses across the state.

The experts spoke in separate interviews in Lagos on Sunday said the intervention will stimulate economic growth, promote enterprise development and strengthen the state's economy.

Dr Muda Yusuf, Chief Executive Officer of the Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise (CPPE), praised the initiative.

He described the disbursement as a commendable effort toward supporting entrepreneurs facing economic pressures.

"Disbursing the money is

commendable and it is better than doing nothing," Yusuf said.

He noted that some states had failed to introduce similar measures to assist businesses during challenging economic periods.

"The fact that government is releasing this value of credit to entrepreneurs will lead to their expansion," he said.

Yusuf said the intervention would empower businesses and help reduce the difficulties affecting many entrepreneurs.

"These interventions will cushion entrepreneurs' challenges, address unemployment and enhance the living standards of the people," he said.

He explained that such measures were needed following economic reforms that had increased pressures on many

emerging businesses.

"We had always envisaged this kind of support after reforms that strained many budding businesses," Yusuf said.

Similarly, Mr Benjamin Akinsoto, Senior Researcher at BAA Consult, welcomed the state government's support.

He said the scheme would provide critical financial assistance to small and medium-scale enterprises.

"The initiative has largely been positive because access to funds was always a constraint for most entrepreneurs," Akinsoto said.

He added that obtaining loans from commercial banks had become increasingly expensive for many business owners.

"Accessing capital from commercial banks currently has real-

ly been too expensive, so the intervention is necessary," he said.

Akinsoto urged sub-national governments to introduce more concessionary lending programmes for small businesses.

"Government at the lower levels should have these interventions for entrepreneurs," he said.

He described small businesses as major drivers of economic expansion in many countries globally.

"They are one of the major engines of growth, particularly for emerging economies facing structural challenges," Akinsoto said.

The five billion naira released by the Lagos State Government as counterpart funding is targeted at cooperative-based Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises operating within the state.

NEWS

Military airstrikes kill 27 terrorists in Tumbus enclaves of Borno as police neutralize 3 in Benue

ABUJA

Air Component of Joint Task Force Operation Hadin Kai neutralised 27 terrorists in separate air interdiction missions targeting terrorist enclaves in the Southern and Northern Tumbus areas of Borno.

The operational report of the

Nigerian Air Force (NAF) made available to newsmen on Sunday indicated that the strikes were conducted following Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) missions across the theatre.

This is as the Police Command in Benue said it has neutralised three suspected armed bandits and recovered firearms and ammunition across the state.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Edet Udeme who disclosed this in a statement issued on Sunday in Makurdi, said the achievements were recorded between June 6 and June 12 through intelligence-led policing, proactive patrols and collaborative security operations.

The Borno operation according to the report, air assets

comprising Dragon and ISR platforms, conducted an air interdiction mission at Dawoshe, a known terrorist enclave in the Southern Tumbus area, at about 12:40 a.m. on June 10.

The report stated that terrorists' vehicles were sighted during aerial surveillance and subsequently engaged by the aircraft.

It added that Battle Damage

Assessment (BDA) revealed that the vehicles were destroyed while 12 terrorists were neutralised during the operation.

The report further disclosed that the air component conducted a precision strike on terrorist positions at Metele in the Northern Tumbus area of Guzamala Local Government Area of Borno on the same day.

It stated that post-strike assessments, supported by BDA and Human Intelligence (HUMINT), confirmed that 15 terrorists were neutralised during the operation.

According to the report, the successful strikes dealt a significant blow to terrorist elements operating within the Lake Chad fringes and Tumbus hideouts.

It noted that the operations formed part of ongoing efforts to degrade terrorist capabilities, disrupt logistics networks and deny insurgents freedom of action across the North-East theatre.

The report added that a total of 27 terrorists were neutralised in the two air operations conducted within the period under review.

It reiterated the commitment of the Armed Forces of Nigeria to sustaining offensive opera-

tions against terrorist strongholds until lasting peace and security are restored in the region.

Meanwhile, the Police Command in Benue said the neutralisation of the three suspected armed bandits was the outcome of a successful operation led by officers of Gbeji Division in collaboration with members of the Community Volunteer Guards after they responded to reports of armed bandits operating along the Vaase-Chito Road in Ukum Local Government Area.

The Benue police Spokesperson Udeme, said the suspects had engaged security personnel in a gun duel, during which three of the bandits were neutralised.

According to her, one AK-47 rifle, 21 rounds of live ammunition and a motorcycle were recovered from the suspects.

She added that other members of the gang escaped with gunshot wounds and were being trailed by security operatives.

Edet further said that operatives of the Violent Crimes Response Unit (VCRU) in Makurdi also arrested a suspect found in possession of a locally fabricated revolver pistol and six rounds of live ammunition.

**PROTEST AGAINST INSECURITY:**

Human Rights Activist, Femi Falana (6th R); Women's Rights Activist, Joe Okei-Odumakin (5th R) and members of the Civil Society Organisations, protesting against insecurity and hardship in the country to mark 2026 June 12 anniversary in Lagos.

Gen. Rabe: MACBAN calls for renewed national action against insecurity

ABUJA

Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), has urged the Federal Government and security agencies to renew national security strategy against insecurity in the country.

The National President of MACBAN, Baba Othman-Ngelzarma, made the call in a statement on Sunday while reacting to the death of Maj.-Gen. Rabe Abubakar (rtd), in captivity.

Othman-Ngelzarma emphasised the need for security and law enforcement agencies to

strengthen intelligence gathering, inter-agency collaboration and community-based security initiatives.

This, according to him, will enable them to dismantle criminal networks, rescue victims still in captivity and ensure that all perpetrators and their collaborators are swiftly brought to justice.

He stressed that the fight against banditry must remain a national priority, which requires unwavering commitment and collective resolve.

"MACBAN received with profound grief and deep sorrow the tragic news of the death of Maj. -Gen. Rabe

Abubakar (rtd).

"Rabe lost his life following his abduction by armed bandits on May 30, while travelling with his wife from Kaduna state to Katsina.

"Our members nationwide extend heartfelt condolences to the immediate family of the late distinguished officer.

"The Government and good people of Katsina, his colleagues, the Nigerian military community, and the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria over this painful and irreparable loss."

Othman-Ngelzarma said that the deceased served Nigeria with honour, courage and unwavering dedication throughout his military career,

adding that his tragic demise under such distressing circumstances is a painful reminder that insecurity continues to threaten the lives of ordinary citizens.

He stressed the urgent need for intensified and sustained national action against criminal elements.

"MACBAN unequivocally and in the strongest possible terms condemns banditry, kidnapping and all forms of organised violent crime.

"These reprehensible acts have inflicted immeasurable suffering on communities across the country, devastated families, disrupted livelihoods and undermined national cohesion and economic progress.

How INEC can achieve free, fair, credible elections —Baba-Ahmed

ABUJA

National Chairman of Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), Dr Ha-keem Baba-Ahmed, has outlined measures for the conduct of free, fair and credible elections by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in 2027.

Baba-Ahmed, who spoke with newsmen in Abuja on Sunday, said that the commission must be strengthened to

insulate the commission from undue political influence.

He said that the appointment of the INEC chairman, national commissioners and resident electoral commissioners (RECs) should be reviewed to reduce executive control over the electoral body.

"The moment you handover an electoral body to a partisan administration that wants to retain power, you create serious questions about its neutrality," he said.

The PRP national chairman advocated for budgetary independence for INEC, arguing that the commission should be allowed to defend its budget independently before the National Assembly.

He also called for tougher sanctions against politicians and individuals who engage in electoral malpractices and violence.

According to him, electoral offences have continued to thrive because perpetrators are rarely punished.

"Politicians who compro-

mise the electoral process must face the consequences of their actions. The culture of impunity must end," he said.

Baba-Ahmed, a former Secretary to INEC, warned that any election lacking credibility could further weaken Nigeria's democracy and undermine public confidence in democratic institutions.

He added that broader reforms, aimed at strengthening key institutions such as INEC, would be central to the PRP's restructuring agenda for the country.

EDSIEC chairman observes Adamawa LG polls, commends electoral process

BENIN CITY

The Chairman of the Edo State Independent Electoral Commission (EDSIEC), Hon. Jonathan Aifuobhokhan, has lauded the conduct of the Adamawa State Local Government Council elections, describing the exercise as well organised and professionally managed.

Hon. Aifuobhokhan gave the commendation following his recent participation in an election observation mission that monitored the local government elections conducted across Adamawa State.

The EDSIEC Chairman joined other chairmen and representatives of State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs) from different parts of the country under the auspices of the Forum of State Independent Electoral Commissions of Nigeria (FOSIECON) to observe the electoral process coordinated by the Adamawa State Independent Electoral Commission (ADSIEC).

Speaking on the exercise, Aifuobhokhan commended ADSIEC for what he described as its high level of preparedness, organisation, and professionalism in the conduct of the elections across the state.

According to him, the Adamawa electoral body demonstrated remarkable readiness and commitment towards ensuring a smooth electoral process.

"ADSIEC has demonstrated remarkable readiness and commitment to the electoral process. The programmes and

activities we observed were well planned, properly coordinated, and reflective of a Commission that prepared extensively for the exercise," he stated.

He explained that the election observation mission provided an important platform for learning, peer review, and exchange of experiences among electoral management bodies in the country.

The EDSIEC Chairman further disclosed that lessons drawn from the Adamawa experience would help strengthen preparations for the forthcoming local government elections in Edo State.

"We have gained useful insights and best practices that will be incorporated into our preparations. The quality of planning and execution we witnessed is commendable, and we are committed to adapting relevant strategies to enhance the conduct of elections in Edo State," Aifuobhokhan added.

The Adamawa State Local Government Council Elections were conducted across the state's 21 local government areas and 226 political wards.

Reaffirming the commitment of EDSIEC to credible grassroots democracy, Aifuobhokhan assured the people of Edo State that the commission remains resolute in its determination to conduct free, fair, credible, peaceful, inclusive, and transparent local government elections.

The Deputy Governor of Adamawa State, Mrs. Kaletapwa Farauta in a chat with newsmen lauded the election which she described as peaceful.

NEWS

NACA, stakeholders demand more resources to combat rights abuses in Ebonyi

MAXWELL OKECHUKWU

ABAKALIKI

The National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) and stakeholders in Ebonyi State have called for increased funding and resources to strengthen efforts aimed at combating human rights abuses, particularly those affecting people living with HIV (PLHIV) and other vulnerable groups.

The call was made at the end of a five-day Gender and Human Rights State Response Team assessment and capacity-building workshop organised by NACA in collaboration with the Ebonyi State Agency for the Control of AIDS (EBOSACA) in Abakaliki.

The programme brought together representatives of government ministries, security agencies, traditional institutions, faith-based organisations, civil society groups, development partners, community-based organisations and the media to assess the effectiveness of the state's hu-

man rights response mechanisms and chart a way forward.

Speaking at the close of the workshop, Assistant Chief Programme Officer in NACA's Community Prevention Department, Mrs. Favour Iyamu-Obi, said the assessment was designed to evaluate the performance of the Gender and Human Rights State Response Team, identify operational gaps and strengthen stakeholders' capacity to address rights violations.

She noted that participants reviewed existing structures and developed action plans to tackle critical issues such as stigma and discrimination, access to justice, non-discriminatory service delivery, community mobilisation and advocacy.

She said, adequate resources were required to effectively implement the action plans and ensure victims of human rights violations receive the protection and support they deserve.

"We have identified key areas that require urgent attention and developed action plans to address them. The success of these interventions will de-

pend largely on the level of support and resources available to institutions and stakeholders responsible for implementation," she said.

Also speaking, the Executive Secretary of EBOSACA, Prince Chibueze Andrew Iteshi, stressed the need for improved funding of agencies and institutions involved in human rights protection.

He said organisations such as the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Health, security agencies, community groups and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) require adequate financial support to effectively discharge their responsibilities.

Iteshi noted that human rights violations often have far-reaching consequences, including stigma, discrimination, social exclusion and psychological trauma for victims.

He urged both federal and state governments to prioritise budgetary allocations to human rights institutions and programmes to enable them to respond promptly and effectively to reported cases.



EDO STATE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION BOARD

Education Hub, Iyaro, Benin City,
BENIN CITY, EDO STATE

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR PROCUREMENT OF PRIMARY ONE-THREE LITERACY AND NUMERACY TEXT BOOK AND TEACHERS GUIDE FOR PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS UNDER THE HOPE-EDU PROJECT.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Edo State Universal Basic Education Board on behalf of Edo State Government is desirous of Carrying out procurement of primary one-three literacy and numeracy textbook and teachers guide for public primary schools under the hope-edu project. Consequently, the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders.

2.0 SCOPE OF WORK

The Scope of Work for the Invitation to Tender for Procurement of Primary One-Three Literacy and Numeracy Textbooks and Teachers' Guide for Public Primary Schools under the HOPE-EDU Project includes the following:

Supply of Primary One-Three Literacy Textbooks, Supply of Primary One-Three Numeracy Textbooks, Supply of Primary One-Three Literacy and Numeracy Teachers' Guide, Packaging and delivery of all Textbooks and Teachers' Guide to designated public primary schools under the HOPE-EDU Project.

3.0 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

You are required to submit a detailed profile which should contain the following:

- Certificate of incorporation/registration with Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC)
- Evidence of registration with Edo State Public Procurement Agency.
- Evidence of payment of tax by the company for the immediate past 3 years (i.e. 2023, 2024, 2025)
- Company's audited financial account (indicating turnover) and funding information over the past 3 years endorsed by a firm of chartered accountants.
- Evidence of Industrial Training Fund (ITF) Compliance Certificate valid till 31st December 2025
- Evidence of current Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund Compliance (NSITF) Certificate valid till 31st December 2025
- PENCOM Compliance Certificate valid till 31st December 2025
- Evidence of registration on National Database of Federal Contractor, Consultants and Service Providers by submission of Contractor, Consultants and Service providers by submission of Interim Registration Report (IRR) expiring on 31st December 2025
- Company Profile including organization structure, key professional staff with their names and registration with appropriate regulatory bodies (COREN, QRBN, ARCON, CORBON etc.) with their current practicing license.
- A sworn affidavit indicating that:
 - None of the Directors of the Company has been convicted in any court for any criminal offence including fraud and financial impropriety.
 - The Company is not in receivership, insolvent or bankrupt.
 - No officer of SUBEB is a former or present Director, shareholder or has any pecuniary interest in the company.
- Bank Reference.
- All documents for submission must be transmitted with a covering letter on the company's letter head paper bearing all necessary details.
- Equipment and technology capacity, with evidence of ownership or lease.
- Letter of consent to allow verification of documents submitted.
- Evidence of payment of appropriate non-refundable tender fee of ₦100,000.00 only

4.0 COLLECTION/SUBMISSION OF BIDDING DOCUMENTS

Set of bidding documents can be picked up at the procurement office at the address below upon submission of an evidence of payment of a non-refundable fee of ₦100,000.00 (One Hundred Thousand Naira Only) into the following Edo State Government Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) bank account domiciled with the following banks:

Bank Name: Premium Trust Bank
Account Number: 0080050728
Account: EDSG Internally Generated Revenue A/C

Payers are requested to indicate the payment reference "2026 - HOPE EDU PROJECT- Bidding and Tenders - Fees" at the bank before making this payment.

All bids shall be submitted in a sealed envelope, addressed to the Executive Chairman, State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and marked boldly at the right-hand corner "BIDDING DOCUMENT" and to be submitted at the address below. All bids are to be submitted on or before 12:00 noon, 25th June, 2026

5.0 OPENING OF BIDDING DOCUMENTS

Bidding documents shall be opened immediately in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below after the close of bid submission deadline by 12:00 noon, 25th June 2026.

6.0 NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

- Electronic Bids will not be permitted.
- Late submissions will not be accepted.
- This invitation shall not be construed to be commitment on the part of State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) for contract award nor shall it entitle the bidder to make any claims whatever and seek indemnity from the Board by virtue of having responded to this advertisement.

7.0 THE ADDRESS REFERRED TO ABOVE IS:

Edo State Universal Basic Education Board
Education Hub, Iyaro, Benin City.

SIGNED:

HON. SONIA EBANEHITA OMANZANE

Executive Chairman

Edo State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB)

CAVEAT EMPTOR / PUBLIC NOTICE

FAMILY LANDED PROPERTY AT NO. 5 OGBOTOR LANE, OFF OZOLUA ROAD, OLOGBO, EDO STATE, NIGERIA, AND ALL OTHER PROPERTIES COMPRISING THE ESTATE OF LATE MR. EMMANUEL IMOHI ENAHORO

The general public is hereby notified and put on notice that all original title documents, survey plans, receipts, and other documents of title relating to the family landed property located at **No 5 OGBOTOR LANE, OFF OZOLUA ROAD, OLOGBO, EDO STATE, NIGERIA**, and all other properties comprising the estate of **Late Mr. Emmanuel Imohi Enahoro** are currently in the wrongful custody of **MR. MARTINS OSAHON ENAHORO**.

Said documents were taken without the authority, consent, or knowledge of the lawful owners and beneficiaries of the estate.

WARNING

By this publication, the general public, intending purchasers, lessees, mortgagees, financial institutions, developers, surveyors, real estate agents, and all persons howsoever described, are hereby cautioned and warned **NOT TO ENTER INTO ANY TRANSACTION, DEALING, SALE, LEASE, MORTGAGE, CHARGE, GIFT, OR ANY FORM OF ENCUMBRANCE** with respect to the said property or any other property forming part of the estate, with Mr. Martins Osahon Enahoro or any person claiming through him.

Any person or institution that deals with Mr. Martins Osahon Enahoro or anyone acting on his behalf in respect of the said property does so **AT HIS/HER OWN PERIL/RISK**, and such transaction shall be null, void, and of no effect whatsoever in law. The lawful owners will not be bound by, and will not recognize, any such transaction.

This notice is issued in compliance with due process and to protect the interest of the rightful beneficiaries/owners of the estate.

For further information, inquiries, or delivery of the said documents, please contact **Ms. Egun Enahoro** through the family solicitors:
(Meridien Partners (U.A. & E. Chambers))

Plot 13, Port Harcourt Crescent,
Off the National Industrial Court of Nigeria, Area 11, Abuja.
Tel: 09122000727-8

Dated this 15th day of June, 2026.

SIGNED

Egun Enahoro

For the Estate of Late Mr. Emmanuel Imohi Enahoro

NEWS

Taraba judiciary trains judges on application of artificial intelligence

JALINGO

The Taraba State Judiciary has commenced training of its high court judges on the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in justice delivery.

Justice Joel Agya, Chief Judge of the state, while declaring the

two-day workshop open at the weekend in Jalingo, said that AI literacy and its responsible application in Judicial process was crucial in justice delivery.

Agya described the technology as the most transformative developments of the time, nothing that the world was experiencing an unprecedented

technological revolution.

"Artificial Intelligence is rapidly reshaping the way institutions operate, decisions are made, and services are delivered. The justice sector is not immune to these developments.

'Across jurisdictions, courts and judicial institutions are increasingly examining how emerging technologies can enhance efficiency, improve access to justice, strengthen legal research, and support judicial

administration.

'However, as judicial officers entrusted with the sacred duty of dispensing justice, we must approach these innovations with caution, wisdom, and a firm commitment to the core values of judicial independence, impartiality, integrity, accountability, and fairness.

'While Artificial Intelligence presents significant opportunities, it also raises important ethical, legal, and practical con-

cerns relating to accuracy, confidentiality, transparency, bias, and judicial responsibility.

'This workshop has therefore been carefully designed to equip judges of the Taraba high courts with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand the capabilities and limitations of AI and to apply it responsibly within the judicial process.

'The objective is not to replace judicial reasoning or discretion, but to enhance our understanding of technological tools that may assist us in the performance of our duties, while preserving the human judgment that remains at the heart of justice de-

livery,' Agya said.

In his remarks, Mr Segun Meleki, Managing Director, Lex decipher Tech Ltd, who was the resource person, commended the leadership of the state judiciary for developing interest in the application of AI in its judicial process.

Meleki said that the technology had enormous opportunities and challenges but it would surely enhance justice delivery by speeding up administration of justice.

Judges, judicial officers, members of the judiciary and other stakeholders attended the workshop.

**COMMISSIONING OF AGRO PROCESSING CENTRE:**

Director-General, Maryam Babangida National Centre for Women Development, Dr Adedayo Benjamins-Laniyi (L), dancing with the Akpu Cassava Women Association, during the official commissioning of the Agro processing centre at Sheda in Kwali Area Council of FCT.

Credible elections are fundamental human rights, not privilege —Ojukwu

ABUJA

Executive Secretary of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Dr Tony Ojukwu (SAN), has said that credible elections are fundamental human right and not a privilege.

Ojukwu stated this in a statement in commemoration of the June 12 1993 presidential election, adding adding that the day serves as a reminder to this democratic fact.

The Federal Government had in 2018 declared June 12 Democracy Day to commemorate the historic annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election believed to have been

won by late Chief MKO Abola.

The election has been adjudged one of the freest, fairest and most peaceful in Nigerian electoral history.

Ojukwu said that the June 12, 1993 election remained Nigeria's clearest proof that free, fair and transparent polls are possible when institutions respect the will of the people.

He noted that late Prof. Humphrey Nwosu's option A4 and the Modified Open Ballot system demonstrated that electoral integrity could be achieved through sincerity of the Electoral Management Body, openness and fidelity to the law.

'The right to participate in

government through free elections is protected under Section 39 of the 1999 Constitution and Article 13 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

'Voter suppression, vote buying, electoral violence and result manipulation are not merely procedural flaws but direct violations of citizens' civil and political rights,' he said.

He expressed concern that three decades later, these violations continued to undermine public trust, weaken accountability and erode the dignity of Nigerian voters.

He added that when elections lacked integrity, the rights to expression, association, participation and peaceful assembly are also threatened.

The ES, therefore, called on INEC, political parties, securi-

ty agencies, the judiciary, civil society and the media to uphold neutrality, transparency and accountability.

Ojukwu affirmed that the NHRC will intensify its monitoring of electoral processes, document violations and pursue remedies for Nigerians and victims in line with its mandate.

He urged the National Assembly to strengthen laws safeguarding electoral independence and access to justice.

'Institutionalising electoral integrity is essential to realising the right to free and fair elections in Nigeria.

'NHRC stands ready to work with Government and all stakeholders to make credible elections a lived reality for every citizen,' he said

Court sentences 5 men to 25 years imprisonment each for terrorism offences

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja has convicted and sentenced five men, including a Nigerian citizen, to 25-year imprisonment for terrorism offences.

Justice Binta Nyako handed down the judgment after the convicts pleaded guilty to the four-count charge preferred against them by the Department of State Services (DSS).

The convicts are Yusuf Mohammed (aka Bature), Goni Ibrahim Bindi (aka Goni Mutuwa), Sani Tukur (aka Danladi), Mubarak Ibrahim and Musa Alhaji Adamu (aka Gado Banufe).

After their guilty plea, the prosecution sought to tender items recovered from the defendants.

With the court's permission, the prosecution tendered a forwarding letter, accompanied with the investigation report and the statements of the defendants.

The prosecution also tendered 15 units of AK 103 rifles complete with magazines and 1434 rounds of 7.62mm live ammunition, to which the defence raised no objection.

Justice Nyako admitted the items as exhibits and proceeded to convict the defendants.

The judge then asked the defendants to make a plea of allocutus each, which they did.

The prosecution, therefore, applied that a Volkswagen car, used in transporting arms and ammunition, be forfeited to the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

In her judgment, Justice Nyako found the defendants guilty as charged and convicted them.

She sentenced them to 25 years each on count one.

On counts two and three, she sentenced the 3rd, 4th and 5th defendants to seven years jail term each while, on count four, only the 1st defendant bagged 25 years imprisonment.

3 men docked for allegedly stealing patient's cellphone, cash

ABUJA

Three men were have been docked in a Senior Magistrates' Court, in Abuja, for allegedly stealing a patient's cellphone and making cash transfers.

The police charged Abdullahi Yahaya, 24; Abdullahi Bala, 25 and Aliyu Sanusi, 18, who all live in Kubwa, Abuja, with criminal trespass and theft.

The defendants however, pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The Prosecution Counsel, Mr Babajide Olanipekun, told the court that the complainant, Dr Adah Solomon of Liberty Junction, Kubwa, Abuja, reported the case at the Divisional Police Headquarters, Byazhin, Abuja, on April 16, 2025.

Olanipekun told the court that while the complainant was attending to a patient, some people came into the hospital and stole her Infinix Note 10 phone.

He said that they also stole

N700,000 from the office drawer and made two withdrawals of N300,000 and N400,000 from the patient's bank accounts.

Olanipekun also informed the court that on April 3, the first defendant (Yahaya) was arrested with the phone through an Electronic Tracking and he confessed that he bought the phone from the second defendant.

The police alleged that Sanusi, the third defendant confessed that he bought the stolen phone from a scavenger.

The Defence Counsel, Mr Umar Huseini, said the defendants were innocent until proven guilty.

He prayed the court to admit them to bail.

Olanipekun, however opposed the bail application, saying the defendants were jobless and if released, they could easily escape, except they have reliable sureties.

Man seeks shari'a court intervention to recover N100,000 refund from landlady

KADUNA

Tenant, Sa'idu Kabir, has prayed a Shari'a Court 1 sitting at Magajin Gari, Kaduna to assist him recover N100,000 from one Hajiya Binta, his landlady.

The case had earlier been adjourned to Thursday, for the complainant to present his wit-

nesses, however the defendant was not present in the court.

While speaking, Nura Ahmad, the witness presented by the complainant, explained that the defendant gave them a contract to find a tenant, adding that Kabir had liked the apartment when he saw it.

He explained that the rent was N300,000 and that kabir had

paid N50,000 cash and transferred N150,000 to her account in his presence while pledging to pay the remaining balance soon.

Ahmad said, Kabir got a different apartment and requested the landlady to refund his money which she agreed to but only paid him N100,000.

The witness further explained that the defendant

promised to refund his money to him as soon as she gets a tenant but only paid N100,000 instead of N200,000.

The Judge, Mu'awiyya Shehu, said the defendant being absent in court, with no reason for the absence, would be sent a reminder to return to court.

He adjourned the case to June 25.

Excitement in Ethiopian prisons as Nigeria secures repatriation deal for nearly 100 inmates

CAROLINE AMEH

ETHIOPIA

Excitement was visibly written on the faces of scores of Nigerians serving prison sentences in Ethiopia after the Federal Government announced a landmark prisoner transfer agreement that will allow them to return home to complete their jail terms.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, conveyed President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's message of reassurance to the inmates during a visit to Aba Sam-

uel Prison on Thursday, telling them that Nigeria had not abandoned its citizens abroad.

"Your country has not forsaken you," the minister said, delivering the president's message to the prisoners.

The visit came a day after Nigeria and Ethiopia signed a Transfer of Sentenced Persons Agreement in Addis Ababa, paving the way for the repatriation of about 100 Nigerian prisoners currently serving sentences in Ethiopian correctional facilities.

Nigeria's Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Prince Lateef Fagbemi (SAN), signed

the agreement on behalf of Nigeria, while Ethiopia's Minister of Justice, Hanna Arayaselassie, signed for her country. The deal was facilitated through diplomatic engagements led by the foreign ministers of both nations.

According to Ethiopian authorities, about 98 Nigerian inmates — including two women — are expected to benefit from the arrangement, provided they consent to the transfer and have at least one year remaining on their sentences.

Odumegwu-Ojukwu described the agreement as a product of the citizen-centred diplomacy embedded in President Tinubu's 4-D foreign policy framework of Diplomacy, Democracy, Development and Demography under the Renewed Hope Agenda.

She said the pact was founded on the principles of humanity, justice and bilateral cooperation, while emphasising that the government remained committed to protecting the rights and wel-

fare of Nigerians abroad.

The minister disclosed that four Nigerian inmates died during the period of negotiations and legal processes leading to the conclusion of the agreement.

While assuring the inmates of government support, she cautioned that the transfer should not be viewed as encouragement for unlawful behaviour.

"This is not a licence for impunity," she warned, urging the inmates to embrace rehabilitation, self-improvement

and lawful means of livelihood upon their return to Nigeria.

She encouraged them to cooperate fully with Ethiopian prison authorities by completing the necessary consent and documentation procedures required for the transfer.

The minister also reiterated the government's commitment to creating opportunities for skills acquisition, technical training and capacity building to support the reintegration of returning inmates into society.

"I implore you to chart a new path when you return home. This government re-

Obi advocates lower interest rates, stronger security measures

ABUJA

Presidential candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), Mr Peter Obi, has called for urgent measures to address insecurity, curb corruption and create a more business-friendly environment to drive entrepreneurship and economic growth.

Obi made the call on Saturday at This Generation Project 2026, the annual conference of Summit Bible Church in Abuja, themed "Thriving in the Marketplace".

He said Nigeria's vast agricultural potential remained underutilised because insecurity had prevented many farmers from accessing their farmlands.

"It is unfortunate that many farmers cannot go to their farms today because of insecurity. We must fight insecurity headlong.

"We cannot continue to have a situation where children cannot

go to school and farmers cannot cultivate their land," he said.

Obi argued that agriculture offered greater opportunities for wealth creation than crude oil, citing countries that had built prosperous economies through farming and food exports.

"We can make more money from agriculture than we make from oil. Our challenge is insecurity, and we must deal with it decisively," he said.

The former governor of Anambra said entrepreneurship was central to economic growth and societal transformation, lamenting the growing preference for politics over productive enterprise in Nigeria.

According to him, no society can prosper when politicians are more successful and influential than entrepreneurs.

"Entrepreneurs create wealth and jobs, but today people are making money without producing anything," he said.

Oyo lawmaker, Oseni rallies artisans, traders' support for Tinubu's re-election assures 1m votes

IBADAN

Rep. Remi Oseni, (Ibarapa East/Ido - APC), has mobilized thousands of artisans and traders across local governments in Oyo State to deliver one million votes for President Bola Tinubu's re-election in 2027.

Oseni said that artisans and traders' associations must see themselves as critical players in President Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda aimed at repositioning Nigeria.

The lawmaker stated this during a stakeholders' engagement meeting with members of the Remi Oseni Committee of Friends (ROCOF), and Progressive Workers, and Traders' Associations of Oyo State on Saturday in Ibadan.

Oseni, the convener of ROCOF, urged the traders to ensure they get permanent voters'

cards, which would help them to exercise their rights during forthcoming elections.

He also charged them not to trade the future of their children through vote buying and selling.

Oseni, a senatorial candidate for Oyo South Senatorial District in the forthcoming election, said that the meeting was also aimed at deliberating more on areas where members would benefit more from various empowerment programmes specially designed to support them.

He promised to obliged the request for a N250 million interest-free loan for artisans and traders' associations under ROCOF, as well as construction of an artisans' village provided with constant power supply.

Oseni also assured the group of provision of health insurance, among others.

**PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE OF RETURN:**

L-R: Labour Party (LP) Presidential candidate for the 2027 General Elections, Dr Chibuzo Okereke; Deputy Governor of Abia State, Mr Ikechukwu Emetu; National Chairman, LP, Sen. Nenadi Usman; National Secretary, LP, Mr Iheanochi Obioma, during the presentation of certificate of return to the presidential candidate of LP and others at the party secretariat in Utako, Abuja recently.

Soludo, Fidelity Bank, empower 1,950 Anambra residents to boost livelihoods

AWKA

Wife of the Anambra Governor, Dr Nonye Soludo in collaboration with Fidelity Bank Plc., empowered no fewer than 1,950 residents of the state with various items to boost their livelihood.

Addressing the residents on Friday in Awka, Soludo said

said the partnership was with her Healthy Living initiative.

A total of 100 women receive sewing machines, another 100 women receive grinding machines, 250 school children get solar-powered school bags, while 1,500 vulnerable persons received food bank packs under the initiative.

She said: "This is not merely to distribute items or celebrate

another social impact initiative, but to reaffirm a simple truth that when we invest in people, we invest in the future.

"Every woman supported, every child empowered and every family assisted represents a step towards building a stronger, healthier and more prosperous Anambra," she said.

Soludo described the programme as a reflection of the power of partnership and shared responsibility.

She noted that Healthy Liv-

ing initiative as a non-governmental organisation, relies on collaborations and goodwill to sustain its interventions.

She commended Fidelity Bank for supporting the vision of improving the welfare of women, children and vulnerable groups in the state.

"Beyond the empowerment items being distributed today, Fidelity Bank is investing in human potential, family stability and community development," she said.

Journalists mourn ex-military spokesman retired Maj.-Gen. Rabe Abubakar

ABUJA

The Defence Correspondents Association of Nigeria (DECAN) has expressed deep sorrow over the death of a former Director of Defence Information, retired Maj.-Gen. Rabe Abubakar, who reportedly died while in the captivity of bandits.

This is contained in a statement issued on Saturday in Abuja by DECAN's General Secretary, Musa Bologi.

The association described the late senior officer as a dis-

ciplined military professional and a bridge-builder who contributed significantly to strengthening civil-military relations in Nigeria.

"We received with profound sadness the news of Abubakar's death, which was announced by the Defence Headquarters (DHQ) in a statement by the Director of Defence Information, Maj.-Gen. Samaila Uba.

The association recalled that the retired general and his wife were abducted on May 30, 2026, and that efforts were ongoing to secure their release

before the tragic news of his death emerged.

According to DECAN, the unfortunate development has thrown the nation, the Armed Forces of Nigeria and the media community into mourning.

"DECAN remembers him as a disciplined officer, a gentleman and a bridge-builder who made significant contributions to strengthening civil-military relations through constructive engagement with the media," the statement said.

The association extended its heartfelt condolences to

the family of the deceased, the Chief of Defence Staff, the Armed Forces of Nigeria and all those affected by the loss.

It prayed for the peaceful repose of his soul and for divine strength for his family, friends and associates to bear the irreparable loss.

Abubakar, who served in various military and public communication appointments during his distinguished career, was widely respected within both military and media circles for his professionalism and commitment to national service.

NEWS**Foreign**

US kills leader of Venezuela's Tren de Aragua gang in air strike, Trump says

The US military has killed the leader of the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua in an air strike in the country, President Donald Trump has announced.

"At my direction, the United States Southern Command delivered a swift and lethal kinetic strike to successfully execute Niño Guerrero," Trump wrote on social media.

Niño Guerrero, whose full name is Héctor Rusthenford Guerrero Flores, was the long-time leader of Tren de Aragua. The gang is one of the most notorious criminal groups in Latin

America and has been a target of the Trump administration.

The president has accused the group of engaging in "irregular warfare" against the US and declared it a foreign terrorist organisation.

Trump posted footage of what appears to be the airstrike, showing a green building with a nearby shed being blown up, debris flying into the air. He said the military action was "coordinated closely with our friends in Venezuela, with whom we are working very well".

Venezuelan authorities confirmed their involvement in

what they described as a "joint operation".

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said on X the strike took place earlier this week on a Tren de Aragua compound in Venezuela.

Later, Venezuela's communication ministry said Guerrero was killed in a "combined operation" with the US that targeted organised crime in the country's Bolívar state.

In January, American forces seized then-Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro from his compound in a dramatic overnight raid to face criminal charges in New York. The US

accused him of collaborating with the gang. The indictment named Guerrero Flores as a co-conspirator.

Since then, the US has sought to tighten ties with Maduro's successor, Delcy Rodríguez, lifting sanctions on her and pushing to collaborate on the extraction of Venezuela's oil reserves - the most plentiful on earth.

Under Guerrero's leadership, Tren de Aragua expanded into Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Chile and diversified from extorting migrants into sex-trafficking, contract killing and kidnapping.

Switzerland votes on plan to cap population at 10 million

Switzerland was on Sunday due to answer in a referendum to decide on a proposal to cap their population at 10 million, a move that has exposed divisions about immigration in the Alpine nation.

The move is backed by the right-wing Swiss People's Party, which describes it as a "sustainability initiative" aimed at easing pressure on housing, public services and the environment. However some voters see this as the party's latest anti-immigration move.

Dubbing it a "chaos initiative", the government, other political parties, business leaders and trade unions argue it will deprive hospitals and hotels of much needed staff, and damage hard-won relations with the European Union, leaving non-EU member Switzerland isolated in a very risky world.

Switzerland's population has grown rapidly since 2002, when it stood at 7.3 million. Now it is 9.1 million, 27% of whom are Swiss residents who were born abroad.

Switzerland's system of direct democracy means all major decisions are taken via the ballot box. Campaigners simply have to gather 100,000 signatures to ensure a nationwide vote.

Many voters are concerned by overcrowded trains, expensive apartments and rising health costs.

The latest opinion polls indicate this could be a very close vote.

They suggest voters are inching towards a no vote by a wafer thin margin, with 52%

opposed - but polls remain divided, with 45% saying they are in favour of the proposal and a significant number of voters still undecided.

Helin Genis and Nils Fiechter have a good deal in common, but their diametrically opposed views on limiting the Swiss population are indicative of the polarised nature of this referendum.

Both are young local politicians from immigrant families. Genis is 31 and Fiechter is 29. Genis's parents are originally from Turkey, while Fiechter's mother is from Canada and he holds dual citizenship.

"We have lost control," complains Fiechter, who represents the Swiss People's Party in canton Bern's parliament. "Unchecked immigration is leading to Switzerland no longer being Switzerland."

He believes Switzerland's problems, which he says include a "housing shortage, gridlocked traffic, overburdened schools and strained social services", are a direct result of immigration.

Genis, who is a Social Democrat elected to Bern city council, dismisses these arguments as scapegoating.

She tells BBC News: "It is not migrants who determine rent levels. It is not migrants who raise health insurance premiums. Nor is it migrants who make political decisions on housing, infrastructure or social investment."

Viewing problems "through the lens of migration does not lead to solutions, but to division", she adds.



US-IRAN SIGNED DEAL:

US President Donald Trump at the signing of US-Iran deal

Trump says US-Iran deal to be signed on Sunday as Tehran casts doubt on timing

President Donald Trump has said a deal to end fighting between the US and Iran was being awaited on Sunday, after Iran cast doubt on the timing.

In a post on social media, Trump said the Strait of Hormuz, a key shipping route, would be "open to all" once the deal is agreed.

On Saturday, Pakistan, a key mediator, also said the deal was "likely expected" to be finalised within 24 hours and they were "preparing for the electronic signing".

Before Trump's comments, Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei expressed caution over the timeline, saying: "We will have to wait and see about the exact date of the signing of the memorandum of understanding, although it will not be tomorrow [Sunday]."

A delegation from Qatar, which has also mediated in the talks, arrived in Tehran on Sunday, Iranian media reported.

It was not clear if the visit

would affect the timing of Iran's expected signing of the deal.

In a post on Truth Social on Saturday, Trump wrote: "The Deal is scheduled to get signed tomorrow, and immediately after it is signed, the Hormuz Strait is OPEN TO ALL."

In an apparent reference to Iran's enriched uranium stockpiles, Trump said that "at the appropriate time, when all is calm, we will go in and get the Nuclear Dust", adding it would later be destroyed.

For decades, Iran has been accused by Western countries of trying to build a nuclear bomb. It has denied the accusations saying its programme is for peaceful purposes - to generate electricity and for research purposes.

Trump also warned that if things would not "work out quickly, easily and smoothly", Washington had "the ultimate alternative, hopefully never to be used again!"

Earlier on Saturday, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that "we are closer to

a peace deal than ever before".

"With finalisation likely expected in the next 24 hours, Pakistan is preparing for the electronic signing of the peace deal immediately after, followed by technical level talks next week," Sharif wrote on X.

On Friday, Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi said that a deal with the US was close.

The agreement envisaged an end to the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon, he said.

Talks on Iran's nuclear programme would begin later.

US officials have confirmed some of the details of the agreement, saying economic benefits for Iran would depend on Tehran meeting its obligations.

In recent months, variations of an agreement have been expected several times but have not been completed in the later stages.

The war began with US and Israeli strikes across Iran on 28 February, prompting Iran to attack Israel and US-allied states in the Gulf - as well as

effectively closing the Strait of Hormuz, a key shipping route for the world's oil and liquefied natural gas.

Despite having agreed a ceasefire in April, the US and Iran have exchanged intermittent fire.

Previous reports from the US had suggested that the conflict between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah Lebanon may not be part of this deal - with Iran reportedly insisting on it.

Israel is not part of the US-Iran deal and has also insisted it will continue striking Hezbollah, in response to its attacks in northern Israel.

On Sunday, Israel issued evacuation orders for 29 villages in southern Lebanon - a move that usually precedes air strikes.

"In light of Hezbollah's violation of the ceasefire agreement, the IDF is compelled to act against it with force," Israeli army spokesman Col Avichay Adraee said - a reference to two suspected drones which hit a military zone in northern Israel.

Nigerian author accuses hospital of stalling review into her son's death

Prominent Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has accused a hospital in Lagos of obstructing an inquest into the circumstances surrounding her baby son's death.

A coronial inquest into the death of her 21-month-old son, Nknau, at Euracare hospital in January had been due to start in April, Aidichie said.

The author now alleges that Euracare has "stalled and muddled and obfuscated" over the inquest and has requested Nigeria's Federal High Court block the inquiry.

The BBC has approached Euracare for comment. An investigation panel set up by the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria had previously found a possible case of medical negligence against the hospital.

Adichie recently published a letter on social media which she had sent to the hospital's director in April.

It was her first public comment since the death of her son, who was one of twin boys born in 2024, using a surrogate.

"If Euracare cares about the truth, then why create delays

and distractions and now, finally, try to stop an inquest," she wrote in her post.

Explaining why she posted the letter, she wrote: "The ultimate and utter loneliness of grief is that only you can know the true depth of your despair."

"I long for, at least, peace to mourn, but Euracare Hospital has robbed me even of that."

In her letter, Adichie said that the hospital noted her son's death was from bacterial meningitis, to which she responded: "There was no medical evidence to make such a claim on his death certificate."

Adiche and her family have accused Euracare of negligence, saying medics denied Nkanu oxygen and gave him too much sedation, causing a cardiac arrest.

The hospital has expressed its "deepest sympathies" over the death but denied wrongdoing, saying its care had been in line with international standards.

In the letter, she accuses the hospital of providing incomplete medical records, which she described as "strikingly unprofessional", adding that "one was inaccurate".

Foreign

NEWS

Armed men kidnap high-ranking security official in Haiti

Armed men in Haiti have kidnapped the defence minister's chief of staff, the highest-ranking official to be kidnapped in the violence-wracked Caribbean country in recent years.

Top security official James Boyard, who is also inspector general of Haiti's police, was seized in the island's capital Port-au-Prince on Thursday.

Both the Associated Press news agency and the New York Times confirmed his abduction via sources, with the newspaper adding Boyard's wife and six-year-old daughter were also taken.

A ransom has been requested, according to the New York Times, who cited a person familiar with the case.

Boyard, a highly respected security expert, is chief of staff to Mario Andrésol who was appointed in March.

He was tasked with helping rebuild Haiti's armed forces.

Diego Da Rin, an analyst with the International Crisis Group, told AP news agency

kidnappings are increasingly occurring in areas of Port-au-Prince once considered safe.

He added gang members have been kidnapping people with double nationalities and targeting public officials, which could mean they are trying to seek higher ransoms or possibly dissuade authorities from attacking gang-controlled areas where hostages are held.

Gang violence has ravaged the Caribbean country for years and the multinational police force sent to contain it has struggled to enter areas where gangs hold sway.

So far this year, gang-related violence has resulted in at least 2,310 deaths, 1,106 injuries and 99 kidnappings, according to the United Nations earlier this month.

It has also caused record levels of displacement with nearly 1.5 million people without a place to live, according to the latest figures released by the UN migration agency.

Somali President says Israel exploiting row with Somaliland

In an interview with a local TV station, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud said Israel's recognition of Somaliland marked one of the darkest days in Somalia's history.

He said Mogadishu remained committed to peace in its pursuit of reunification.

Israel recognized the breakaway region of Somaliland as an independent state in late December 2025, becoming the first country to do so.

But Mogadishu maintains that the recognition is null and void.

In Somaliland too, some are opposed to ties with Israel, cit-

ing atrocities in Gaza and the occupation of several Muslim countries.

Dozens have been arrested for protesting against the alliance, including religious scholars and youths waving Palestinian flags.

Somaliland's value as a strategic military and trade hub on the Gulf of Aden, close to Yemen, is coveted by Israel which has long sought a naval presence on the Red Sea Coast.

The Somali president's remarks come after days of violent clashes in the capital Mogadishu, prompted by an extension of his mandate by a year.

Romanian president picks Liberal former mayor as PM to form new government

Romanian President Nicusor Dan has nominated Adrian Veste, a National Liberal Party member and former mayor, as prime minister to form a new government after the previous choice for the post withdrew.

"Eugen Tomac withdrew his mandate this morning and as such I nominate Adrian Veste as prime minister," Dan, a centrist, said in a post on X on Sunday.

Veste, 52, is the county council president of the central Romanian county of Brasov. Eugen Tomac had been seeking to lead a government of technocrats but lacked support from the parties in parliament.

Veste, who served as a development minister from 2023 to 2024, said in a statement that he wants a "political government that will undertake real reforms and keep Romania on

a pro-Western path."

"We are the sixth largest country in Europe, and we need to put a major emphasis on development. Which I will do from day one," he said.

Dan's two nominations for the prime ministerial role this month come after a no-confidence vote toppled former Prime Minister Ilie Bolojan in May. A general election is not scheduled until 2028.

Dan said Veste was suitable for the role because he had "gone through all the administrative stages" throughout his political career.

"He was a successful mayor, a successful county council president, a successful minister, and he attracted European funds, being focused on development, for example the Brasov airport, which is a success," Dan said.

Parliamentary parties have



DR CONGO EBOLA HEALTH WORKER:

Health workers carry a patient confirmed to have Ebola to Bunia General Hospital's isolation center in Bunia, Congo, Thursday, June 11, 2026.

Ebola: DR Congo builds new isolation units as spread continues

The Ebola outbreak is spreading into new areas of the northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo and is bigger in scale than hitherto detected, the World Health Organization warned Friday.

Much more needs to be done to contain the virus, the WHO said, with isolation bed capacity far below the anticipated need, based on how it is spreading.

Since the outbreak was declared on May 15, there have been 676 confirmed Ebola cases, including 136 deaths in the DRC, according to the latest figures from the WHO.

There are a further 119 suspected cases, while 32 patients have recovered.

No approved vaccines or treatments exist for the rare

Bundibugyo species of the virus responsible for the current outbreak, which is centred on Ituri province, with cases also detected in North Kivu and South Kivu provinces.

"The outbreak continues to expand both in terms of case numbers but also in terms of geographic spread," said Olivier le Polain, the WHO's head of epidemiology and analytics for response.

Contact tracing Speaking from Beni in North Kivu, he said that cases were being identified in new health zones within the three

affected provinces on an almost daily basis.

"That reflects really the scale of this outbreak: a scale that is much bigger than what is being detected, and the high mobility of the population," he told reporters in Geneva.

Le Polain said that while in recent weeks, cases in new areas could be traced back to travel from hotspots, now "we also see local community spread in new areas".

"There are still many blind spots in some areas that are high risk," he added.

Le Polain said contact tracing remained below ideal levels,

with just over 70 percent of contacts being appropriately traced.

"That's a huge improvement from where we were about a week or two ago, but it's still too low to ensure appropriate control," he said.

"Surveillance can scale up, but if you don't have any space to put your patients safely, it becomes very difficult," he added.

He said that "compared to where the epidemiology is heading", the current capacity of 250 isolation beds across the affected provinces would not be enough and needed scaling up "quite rapidly".

UK armed forces board Russian shadow fleet oil tanker in English Channel, PM says

British armed forces boarded a Russian shadow fleet oil tanker in the English Channel in the early hours of Sunday morning, Sir Keir Starmer has said.

In an operation lasting six hours, Royal Marine Commandos and specially trained law enforcement officers from the National Crime Agency intercepted the vessel and, for the first time, boarded it, supported by the RAF.

The vessel, Smyrtos, will be held and monitored off the south coast of England as investigations continue, the MoD said in a statement.

Sir Keir Starmer said: "This successful operation delivers yet another blow to Russia and reminds those fuelling Putin's war in Ukraine that we will not let them hide."

Ministry of Defence Screen-grab from video footage depicting three people from behind. The person closest to the camera is in green tactical gear with a patch reading "Royal Marine Commandos", while the other two are in black gear. The back

of the uniform reads "NCA National Crime Agency".

Royal Marine Commandos were joined by specially trained law enforcement officers from the National Crime Agency for the operation.

According to tracking website MarineTraffic, Smyrtos sails under a Cameroon flag and is at anchor off the coast of Weymouth in the English Channel.

It began its journey on 5 June from Russia's Ust-Luga port, an oil terminal near St. Petersburg, before crossing west into the channel on Saturday, BBC Verify has found.

The vessel was sanctioned in July 2025 and has since changed its name from Myrtos to Smyrtos as well as the flag it sails under twice.

Russia has been operating a "shadow fleet" of tankers to evade international sanctions imposed on its oil exports.

Responsible for carrying 75% of Russia's sanctioned oil, the shadow fleet of over 700 vessels provides a critical lifeline for the Kremlin, the MoD said.

The prime minister an-

nounced in March that British armed forces were "now able to board sanctioned vessels that are passing through our waters".

The MoD said the UK has sanctioned more than 500 vessels.

The sanctions ban the vessels from entering UK ports and also prohibit British firms and individuals from providing financial, insurance, or brokerage services to ships that supply or deliver Russian oil.

The interception comes after a week of resignations over the government's defence investment plan (DIP), which is set to be published before the Nato summit next month after months of delay.

Ahead of its publication, John Healey resigned as defence secretary, warning on Thursday that the level of military spending proposed by Sir Keir "falls well short" of what is needed to protect the UK.

Al Carns also resigned as armed forces minister, telling the prime minister that the DIP was "neither transformative enough nor sufficiently funded".

Sports

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

NWFL Super 6: Edo Queens crowned NWFL 2025/2026 League champions

● **As Enanuele dedicated victory to Gov. Okpebholo**

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Edo Queens Football Club of Benin have been crowned champions of the 2025/26 Nigeria Women Football League Premiership after a goalless last fixture duel against defending

champions Bayelsa Queens at the NWFL Super Six tournament in Port Harcourt.

Edo Queens, with the crown on the heads, have now qualified to represent Nigeria at this year's WAFU B qualifiers for a place in the CAF Women's Champions League.

This is the second time the Benin based Queens are lifting the women premier league trophy. They lifted it in 2024 for the first time in Yenagoa, Bayelsa state.

The coach Moses Aduku led Edo Queens began the Super Six with a 1-0 defeat to Nasarawa

Amazons but quickly shrugged off the disappointment and came out stronger in the remaining fixtures. They thrashed FC Robo 4-1 in the second fixture and went ahead to hammer Abia Angels 6-2 in the third before a hard fought 2-1 victory over host team Rivers Angels in the fourth engagement to record 10 points and +7 goals advantage and ultimately secured the coveted women premier league trophy.

After the cagey encounters in Port Harcourt, bringing the super six and the league season to an end, Edo Queen's Atume Doosuur won an individual award of the highest goal scorer of the league with 13 goals.

In the other final fixtures, Abia Angels and FC Robo settled for 1-1 draw just as Nasarawa Amazons and Rivers Angels also ended their engagement in a goalless stalemate.



EDO QUEENS CELEBRATING



MEXICO VS SOUTH AFRICA

Mexico humble South Africa in World Cup Opener

Mexico defeated South Africa 2-0 in the opening match of the 2026 World Cup on Thursday night in Mexico City.

The host took the lead in the 9th minute of the tie when Julian Quinones found the back of the net after South Africa's Sphephelo Sithole made a defensive error, allowing Erik Lira to set up Quinones who made no mistake in burying the ball.

South Africa's push for an equalizer was made harder when Sithole was sent off for a foul on Brian Gutierrez, the host could not make the resulting free-kick count.

Striker Raul Jimenez scored Mexico's second in the 67th

minute when he headed the ball in from the far post.

The game saw two more red cards as South Africa's Themba Zwane was sent off for violence conduct, while Mexico's Cesar Montes was also sent off for a foul in stoppage time.

The match is a repeat of the South Africa 2010, both teams played the opener with South Africa as host. The game ended 1-1, with Siphiwe Tshabalala and Rafeal Marquez on the score sheet.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Mexico will play South Korea on Thursday, while South Africa will play Czech Republic in the second matches of group A.

Int'l friendly: Stakeholders back Super Eagles' rebuilding process despite loss to Portugal

Football stakeholders have expressed confidence in the future of Nigeria's senior national team, the Super Eagles, in spite of their 2-1 loss to Portugal on Wednesday in an international friendly in Leiria, Portugal.

Some of the stakeholders, who spoke with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja on Saturday, commended the team's performance against the World Cup-bound Portuguese side.

They urged continued support for the team's Head Coach, Eric Chelle as he rebuilds the squad ahead of future competitions.

Victor Oluwole, a Super Eagles supporter, said Nigeria's performance is commendable considering the absence of key players like Victor Osimhen and Ademola Lookman.

According to him, the emergence of Sevilla striker Akor Adams, who scored Nigeria's equaliser in the 37th minute, highlights the progress being made in rebuilding the national team.

"The team showed fighting spirit and character against Portugal. It is clear that the rebuilding process is ongoing, and if this momentum is sustained, Nigeria can become a stronger force at the next Africa Cup of Nations," he said.

Oluwole urged the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) to allow Chelle to work without undue interference and to continue selecting players based on merit.

"The NFF should give the

coach the freedom to do his job. Stability is important at this stage. If the current rebuilding process is allowed to continue, Nigerians will see a much-improved Super Eagles team in future competitions," he added.

Olanrewaju Afolabi, a sports analyst based in Kebbi, who described the match as encouraging, said that the Super Eagles gave a good account of themselves against one of Europe's top teams.

Afolabi particularly celebrat-



SUPER EAGLES

ed Alex Iwobi's achievement of earning his 100th senior inter-

national cap, describing it as a historic milestone.

Qatar earn historic first World Cup point after draw with Switzerland



QATAR TEAM

Qatar secured their first ever FIFA World Cup point after a dramatic 1-1 draw against Switzerland in their Group B encounter.

The 2022 hosts, who endured a difficult debut tournament without a point, showed greater determination to avoid another

defeat on the world stage.

Switzerland dominated much of the match and created several chances, but Qatar's defence held firm under sustained pressure.

The Swiss eventually took the lead in the 17th minute when Breel Embolo converted

from the penalty spot after a foul inside the area.

Qatar struggled to create clear opportunities but remained disciplined, frustrating Switzerland's attempts to extend their advantage.

The Asian side's persistence was rewarded deep into stoppage time when Boualem Khoukhi headed in a late equaliser to spark celebrations.

The goal secured Qatar's first point in World Cup history, marking a major improvement from their 2022 campaign on home soil.

Switzerland were left disappointed after failing to convert their dominance into victory, while Qatar celebrated a memorable result.

The draw leaves both teams with a point as they continue their Group B campaigns

Sunshine Stars unveil Duke Udi, Banjo Adepoju ahead 2026/27 NNL

The Ondo State Football Agency (ODSFA) has officially unveiled former Super Eagles midfielder, Duke Udi, as the Technical Adviser of Sunshine Stars Football Club.

This is as Banjo Adepoju was unveiled as the Head Coach of the team ahead of the 2026/2027 Nigeria National League (NNL) season.

Divine Ogbonnaya, ODSFA Chairman, at the unveiling on Friday in Akure, charged the technical crew to remain focused on the task ahead and avoid all forms of distraction in pursuit of the club's objectives in the NNL.

He also reaffirmed the agency's commitment to supporting the team by providing a conducive environment for both players and officials to excel.

"Every effort is being directed towards ensuring a successful campaign and securing the club's return to the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL).

"We have confidence in your ability and experience. We will provide you with the necessary support to excel in this assignment. Please stay focused and let us work together to achieve our target this season," Ogbonnaya said.



SUNSHINE STARS UNVEIL DUKE UDI AND BANJO ADEPOJU

Sports

NSC wants more ITF Junior events in Nigeria



SHEHU DIKKO

The National Sports Commission (NSC) has called on stakeholders to bring more International Tennis Federation (ITF) points-scoring tournaments to Nigeria to cut costs for young players to grow and strengthen the country's tennis profile.

Shehu Dikko, Chairman of the commission, made the call at the finals of the second weeks of 2026 NASCO/ITF J30 World Tennis Tour Junior Championship at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, on Saturday in Abuja.

Diko, represented by his

Special Adviser on Administration, Legal and Strategy, Musa Ahmadu congratulated all participants, saying finalists and early-round players were all winners in sports development.

"Your discipline and commitment showed the future of Nigerian and African tennis is bright.

"I commend the ITF for supporting junior tennis globally and the Nigeria Tennis Federation (NTF) for organising the event," he said.

He said that the J30 championship served as a springboard to higher ITF events, continen-

tal competitions, Grand Slam junior pathways, scholarships and professional circuits.

Dikko said that Nigerian athletes should not always travel abroad at great cost just to chase ranking points.

"When we host more recognised events in the country, our players gain access.

"Our coaches gain exposure, our officials gain experience, and our country strengthens its position as a serious sporting nation," he said.

He cited Seun Ogunsakin's run to the final qualifying round of the Junior French

Open, and his registration for Wimbledon junior qualifying as proof of what Nigerian players can achieve with the right support

Diko urged players to combine talent with discipline, education, fitness and integrity, and thanked parents and coaches for their sacrifices.

He reaffirmed the commission's commitment to reposition Nigerian sport for development, unity and economic growth, with tennis playing a key role through grassroots support and better competition pathways.

2026 World Cup: Disquiet as referee, player suffer travel restrictions

Football fans and stakeholders have lamented travel restrictions and visa ban on referees, players and fans at the ongoing FIFA World Cup in the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

Ghana's Thomas Partey is the latest as he was denied entry into Canada on grounds of his ongoing case in England, excluding him from Ghana's opening match against Panama on June 17.

The former Arsenal midfielder is set to stand trial as he had been charged with seven counts of rape and one count of sexual assault by London's Metropolitan Police.

FIFA confirmed the visa ban in a statement released on Friday, stating that hosts countries reserved the right to approve or deny visas for tournament participants.

The statement read "We confirm that Thomas Partey will not be able to leave the Ghana national team's camp in Boston (United States) to head to Canada for his country's first match against Panama on Wednesday, after the Canadian government refused to issue him visa.

"We would like to clarify that FIFA is not a party to the immigration procedures of host countries, including decisions to grant or deny visas.

"As has been the case in previous FIFA tournaments, the host government holds the final decision regarding visa issuance and allowing individuals to enter its territory."

Reacting to FIFA's statement, Kofi Adams, Ghana's Minister of Sports and Recreation says the football governing body should not allow host countries deny visas for players.

"FIFA can not say that it can not interfere with the internal affairs of the host countries as to whether they admit a person into their countries or not. This should not have been the position, especially for a player," Adams said while speaking to a local TV station.

The Ghana Ministry of Foreign Affairs has said the country is in talks with relevant Ca-

nadian authority on the matter. This was contained in a state-

ment released on Saturday by the ministry



THOMAS PARTEY AND OMAR ARTAN

2026 World Cup: Australia stun Turkey 2-0 in Group D clash

Australia made a winning start to their 2026 FIFA World Cup campaign with a hard-fought 2-0 victory over Turkey in a Group D encounter on Sunday.

The Socceroos produced a disciplined and determined performance to secure all three

points against a Turkish side that entered the match with high expectations.

Australia absorbed pressure for much of the contest and capitalised on key opportunities to claim a memorable victory.

Australia took the lead in the 27th minute through Nestory

Irakunda, who finished off a swift counter-attacking move after a well-worked build-up from midfield.

The goal lifted the Australians, who grew in confidence and continued to frustrate Turkey with their organised defensive structure.

Turkey enjoyed long spells of possession and created several scoring opportunities, but Australia's backline remained resolute.

Goalkeeper Patrick Beach was also called into action on several occasions, making important saves to preserve his side's advantage before the break.

The Turkish team pushed forward in search of an equaliser in the second half, but Australia continued to defend strongly and looked dangerous on the counter.



AUSTRALIA CELEBRATING

Zaria derby 2026: Nigeria-bred horses shine on global stage —HRFN

The Horse Racing Federation of Nigeria (HRFN) says the successful staging of the 2026 International Horse Racing Derby in Zaria has reinforced the city's position as a historic centre of the sport.

The three-day derby also showcased the growing competitiveness of locally bred horses.

Alhaji Mustapha-Abubakar Bida, National Coordinator of HRFN, made the disclosure on the sidelines of the event in Zaria on Sunday.

Bida said the event recorded remarkable improvements over previous editions held in Bida, Hadejia, Katsina and Kaduna, attracting more participants, horses and international attention.

He said the derby marked the second consecutive year of racing in Zaria after a 14-year

break, describing it as a significant step towards restoring the ancient city's status as Nigeria's traditional horse racing hub.

According to him, about 250 horses from across Nigeria and neighbouring countries participated, surpassing the 200 horses that featured in the federation's previous competition in Bida.

"Riders and jockeys from Niger Republic, Chad, Cameroon and Burkina Faso also took part, reflecting growing confidence in Nigeria's horse racing industry.

"The event rekindled fond memories for residents of Zaria and horse racing enthusiasts nationwide.

"It has demonstrated the federation's commitment to re-viving and modernising horse racing activities," Bida said.



HORSE RACING DERBY IN ZARIA

Invest Lagos 3.0: Fencing federation promotes Commonwealth championships



FENCING TEAM

The Nigerian Fencing Federation (NFF) on Sunday used the Invest Lagos 3.0 forum to promote the 2026 Commonwealth Fencing Championships.

The federation said the championship would showcase the role of sports in driving national development, investment and social inclusion.

Its Vice President, Mrs Rachael Samuel, represented the federation at the high-level investment forum.

Samuel, in a statement following the event, highlighted fencing's potential to attract partnerships and create lasting opportunities for athletes across Nigeria.

Invest Lagos 3.0 was organised by the Lagos State Government in collaboration with the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council (CWEIC).

The forum brought together investors, policymakers, diplomats, business leaders and government officials from across

Africa.

Discussions centred on strengthening partnerships, attracting investments and promoting sustainable economic development.

The summit featured prominent personalities including Jonathan Marland, Chairman of CWEIC, and Samantha Cohen, Chief Executive Officer of CWEIC.

Also present were Gov. Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State, his deputy, Obafemi

Hamzat, and Commissioner for Commerce and investment, Folashade Ambrose-Medebem.

Samuel said the event provided a platform to position sports as a key driver of development, adding that the forum helped create awareness for the 2026 championships.

"The championships present an opportunity to demonstrate how sports can contribute to growth, inclusion and investment," she said.



Ebonyi basketball court, named after Hon. Idike

MAXWELL OKECHUKWU
Abakaliki

The Ebonyi state basketball court has been officially declared open, named

after the Hon. Commissioner for Youth development and Sports, Hon. Richard Idike. This was officially declared during the flag off of 2026 South East regional basketball tournament

competition ceremony at the Ebonyi state basketball court in Abakaliki, the state Capital, for the five states in the southeast region, Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo state.

The Chairman, Ebonyi state Basketball Association, Very Rev. Fr. Obododike Maximus in his address, welcomed all members of Baseball teams that came in mass from their various states to Ebonyi state in participating for this year 2026 basketball competition also for the official opening of the basketball court named after the present Ebonyi State Hon. Commissioner for youth development and sports Hon. Richard Idike, adding that "the Commissioner who's dedication to our Community and passion for basketball have been truly Inspiring. His vision for a better and Stronger basketball culture in Ebonyi State has brought us to this moment"

The Chairman also extended his gratitude to the Southeast Zone representative, Chief. Ugo Udezue who's Commitment, dedication his vision, unwavering support and contribution made the occasion a reality.

The Hon. Richard Idike on his part, Expressing his gratitude to the Executive Governor of Ebonyi state Rt.Hon.

Francis Ogonna Nwifuru for giving him the privilege as the Hon. Commissioner he also thank the Leadership of the Nigeria basketball Federation, Distinguished guests, Sports administrators, Coaches, officials, athletes supporters of basketball a cross the Southeast region and beyond who are present in the State to mark the historic moment for our dear State Ebonyi, hosting this year 2026 Southeast region basketball competition for the very first time in the history of basketball tournament in Nigeria and beyond.

Other distinguish basketball supporters present to mark the occasion includes,

The CEO of Tycoon group of

companies Chief. Dr. Benson Okparanzekwe a business mogul and a Philanthropy, represented by his state Manager Mr. Ukada Jude Kelechi, who described his master as a sports lover mostly basketball.

The CEO. JOLLEY

a basketball player also a Coach here in Ebonyi State, while addressing Newsmen, said what interested him to grow into a basketball sporting activity was a head coach called flying soccer who despite his age always be at a basketball court playing game from morning almost to night in making sure that basketball here in Ebonyi grows to a greater height.



EBONYI BASKETBALL



SUCCESS OGUNJOBI

2026 World Cup: Scotland go top of Group C after victory as Brazil, Morocco share points

Scotland moved to the summit of FIFA World Cup Group C after recording a 1-0 victory over Haiti, following Brazil and Morocco's earlier 1-1 draw.

The Scots secured all three points in their opening match at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts, with John McGinn scoring the decisive goal in the first half.

McGinn struck in the 28th minute after Haiti goalkeeper Johnny Placide saved Che Adams' effort, leaving the Scottish midfielder to react quickest and finish.

The victory ended Scotland's long wait for a World Cup win, marking their first success in the tournament since 1990.

Haiti pushed for an equaliser after falling behind and created several late opportunities, but Scotland's defence remained strong to protect the narrow advantage.

Earlier in Group C, Brazil and Morocco played out a 1-1 draw at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

Morocco produced a strong performance against the five-time world champions and took the lead through Ismael Saibari in the 21st minute.

Brazil responded through Vinicius Junior, who equalised in the 32nd minute to rescue a point for the South Americans.

The second half saw both sides search for a winner, but Morocco's disciplined defending prevented Brazil from completing a comeback.

The results left Scotland top of Group C with three points, while Brazil and Morocco followed with one point each.

Haiti remained without a point after the opening round of matches. The group remains finely balanced, with Scotland set to face Morocco next, while Brazil will aim to recover against Haiti in their second fixture.

NASCO/ITF J30: Ogunjobi, Cui win back-to-back singles title

Nigeria's Success Ogunjobi and China's Hengzhi Cui completed a dominant week by winning back-to-back singles titles at the just concluded 2026 NASCO/ITF J30 World Tennis Tour Junior Championship, on Saturday in Abuja.

The 2026 NASCO/ITF J30 World Tennis Tour Junior Championship, commenced on Monday, and ended Saturday in Abuja.

A total of 14 countries featured in the second week of the championship at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium.

Ogunjobi swept the girls singles for the second week running after defeating compatriot Khadijat Mohammed 6-2, 6-1 in Saturday's final.

She dropped just one set all week and also won the girls doubles title with Emmanuel Kwange.

Cui mirrored the feat in the boys singles, beating Nigeria's Gbolahan Olawale 6-1, 7-6(8) to claim his second consecutive J30 Abuja crown. The Chinese star went unbeaten across both weeks.

In the Girls Doubles Final, Emmanuel Kwange (Nigeria) / Success Ogunjobi (Nigeria) defeated Khadijat Mohammed (Nigeria) / V.D. Rashmi Omaye Wijewardana (Sri Lanka) — 6-1, 6-2

In the Boys Doubles Final, Jinxuan Cheng (China) / Hengzhi Cui (China) defeated Gbolahan Oluwajuwon Olawale (Nigeria) and partner — 6-2, 4-6

"I'm happy with how I played all week," Ogunjobi said after the final. "Beating my fellow Nigerians in the final shows how much our level has improved. I'm grateful to my coaches, parents and NASCO for the support."

Tournament Coordinator Oke Joseph said the championship achieved its development goal. "About 30 per cent of our Nigerian players were first-time ITF participants and they gained ranking points.

"The round-robin format gave every player more matches, and that experience will stay with them," he said. The ITF J30 Abuja forms part of the ITF Junior Circuit that provides young players with ranking points and exposure ahead of the professional tour.

FIFA FULL MATCH FIXTURES			
CZECHIA	V	MEXICO	
SWITZERLAND	V	CANADA	
SCOTLAND	V	BRAZIL	
TURKIYE	V	USA	
ECUADOR	V	GERMANY	
TUNISIA	V	NETHERLANDS	
NEW ZEALAND	V	BELGIUM	
URUGUAY	V	SPAIN	
NORWAY	V	FRANCE	
JORDAN	V	ARGENTINA	
COLOMBIA	V	PORTUGAL	
PANAMA	V	ENGLAND	
SOUTH AFRICA	V	KOREA REP.	
BOSNIA & H	V	QATAR	
MOROCCO	V	HAITI	
PARAGUAY	V	AUSTRALIA	
CURACAO	V	COTE D'IVOIRE	
JAPAN	V	SWEDEN	
EGYPT	V	IR IRAN	
CAPE VERDE	V	SAUDI ARABIA	
SENEGAL	V	IRAQ	
ALGERIA	V	AUSTRIA	
DR CONGO	V	UZBEKISTAN	
CROATIA	V	GHANA	