

# Edo to establish special courts to fast-track kidnapping, cultism cases

## BENIN CITY

The Edo State Judiciary is expected to constitute Special Courts for the speedy trial of cases involving cultism and kidnapping across the state.

There are indications that the Chief Judge of the State

may have received a formal request from Governor Monday Okpebholo, seeking the nomination of three judges — or any number the Chief Judge considers appropriate — to form the Special Court.

If approved, the proposed court will be mandated to hear and determine, on an accelerated

basis, criminal cases relating to cultism and kidnapping across Edo State, in a bid to reduce delays in prosecution and strengthen criminal justice delivery.

The development follows Governor Okpebholo's recent public remarks on Thursday, June 18, 2026, during the parade of suspected kidnappers

at the Edo State Police Command Headquarters in Benin City, where he announced plans to set up a dedicated court to ensure swift prosecution of offenders.

The Governor had stated: "We are going to set up a special court to prosecute kidnappers and cultists."

It could not be independently confirmed whether the Chief Judge's office has formally received the request or how soon a decision may be taken on the proposal.

The initiative has already attracted support from the legislature. Senator Joseph Ikpea, representing Edo Central

Senatorial District, described it as a decisive measure aimed at strengthening the state's response to rising insecurity.

If constituted, the Special Court would represent one of the most direct judicial interventions in recent years targeting kidnapping and cult-related crimes in Edo State.

# O The Nigerian OBSERVER

That The People May Know

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#200

## Gov. Oyebanji of APC wins Ekiti 2026 poll

● As the ruling party sweeps Saturday's NASS by-elections in Kano, Nasarawa, Enugu, Ondo ● PDP clinches Rivers

### ADO-EKITI

The candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Saturday's governorship election in Ekiti, Gov. Biodun Oyebanji, has emerged as a winner with 319,224 votes.

Oyebanji defeated his closest rival and candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Mr Wole Oluyede, who scored 40,543 vote.

Mrs Adenike Oladiji, INEC's Chief Returning Officer and Vice Chancellor, Federal University of Technology, Akure, announced the result on Sun-

day in Ado-Ekiti.

She said Oyebanji satisfied all the requirements in the election and was declared elected.

Giving a breakdown, Oladiji said the election had 988, 251 as total number of registered voters and 384, 949 as the total number of accredited voters across the 16 Local Government Areas of the state.

She gave the total number of votes cast as 382,109 while the total number of rejected votes was 6,332.

Speaking with journalists after the announcement, Sen. Cyril Fasuyi, the APC Colla-

tion Agent, urged other contenders to join the governor in building a prosperous state.

"In every contest there will only be one winner.

"I think there should be that sportsmanship spirit with all of them.

"I think nobody is a loser; we understand it's just for everybody to come on board to support the governor in his developmental drive," he said.

Meanwhile, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has declared Mr Wogu Olaka Johnson of the Peoples Democratic Party

(PDP) as winner of the Rivers South-East Senatorial District by-election held on June 20.

Prof. Rosemary Ogwu, the Returning Officer for the election, announced the result on Sunday at the Rivers South East Senatorial Collation Centre in Khana Local Government Council Secretariat in Bori.

Ogwu said that Johnson polled 47,961 votes to defeat three other candidates in the keenly contested election.

According to her, Mr Osar Erewari of the All Progressives Congress (APC) secured 1,647 votes, while Mr Douglas Fabe-

ka Beke of the Action Alliance (AA) garnered 1,175 votes.

She added that Mr Sam Barikwa of the Labour Party (LP) received 367 votes.

In Ondo South Senatorial District by-election, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Sunday declared Faduyile of the All Progressives Congress winner of the Saturday's by-election after polling 68,474 votes.

Adeolu Akinwunmi of Allied People's Movement (APM) came second with 1,411 votes while Adesanya Olaoluwa of Action People's Party (APP) and Clement Funso-Nejo of Boot Party (BP) scored 213 and 70 votes respectively.

Faduyile, while speaking with journalists in Okitipupa, thanked his constituents for

their overwhelming votes, which gave APC victory in the election.

Similarly, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has declared the All Progressive Congress (APC) candidate, Rabiu Shuaibu, winner of the Dawakin Kudu/Warawa Federal Constituency by-election.

The Returning Officer, Prof. Umar Sani, declared Shuaibu winner of the election held on Saturday.

He said that Shuaibu polled 35,356 votes to defeat Lawal Garba-Haruna of the Allied Peoples Movement (APM), who scored 268 votes, and LP's Abubakar Yahaya-Muham-

ad, with 98 votes.

"The election was contested. That Rabiu Shuaibu of APC

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### INSPECTION TOUR:

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, in a warm moment, during an inspection tour of Ogheghe Old Sapele Road, Benin City, as he gently held a baby handed to him by a smiling mother, amid aides, security personnel and project officials.

## Okpebholo urges fathers to guide children against crime

### BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has joined fathers across the state and the world to celebrate Fathers' Day, commending men who continue to raise their children with discipline, faith, responsibility and strong moral values.

The Governor, in his message to mark the occasion, urged fathers to take a more active role in shaping the lives of their children and protecting them from crime, negative peer influence and moral decline.

Governor Okpebholo described fatherhood as one of

the greatest responsibilities entrusted to men, noting that the strength and future of society depend largely on the values established within families.

"Every father who wakes up daily, works hard, sacrifices for his family and raises his children in the fear of God deserves to be celebrated. Your efforts, love and commitment are recognised and appreciated," he said.

The Governor called on fathers across Edo State to be more deliberate in their responsibilities as leaders of their homes, urging them to pay closer attention to their chil-

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# NEWS

## NUC approves medicine, other courses for Well Spring University

### BENIN CITY

The National Universities Commission (NUC) has granted Well Spring University in Benin City, Edo State, the approval to commence medicine programme and other strategic courses in the next academic session.

The Vice Chancellor of the university, Prof. Isaac Ajayi, disclosed the successful resource assessment of the proposed programmes when he received the management team of The Nigerian Observer who paid him a courtesy visit on Friday.

Prof. Ajayi hailed the landmark achievement as a reflection of the University's commitment and determination to national development through the training of high skilled man power in different academic fields.

Meanwhile, the Vice Chancellor had pledged to strengthen the ties between the university and The Nigerian Observer in the areas of printing, publishing and information dissemination among others.

Prof. Ajayi, who lauded the new management team of the Observer led by Hon. Peter Od-

iboh for charting a path quite different from the public perception of state-owned corporations, described the courtesy visit as highly enlightening and informative concerning the various avenues for mutually beneficial relationship between the institution and the company.

Recognizing the inherent challenges of public ventures, Prof. Ajayi further expressed joy that the Observer had been revamped and transformed into a formidable hub in the printing and publishing sector.

Earlier, the General Manager of The Nigerian Observer, Hon. Peter Odiboh, solicited strategic partnership aimed at providing support to academia, business and solutions that will foster the growth and development of both organizations.

Hon. Odiboh also attributed the enviable height attained by the company to a major boost it got from the state government.

He therefore sued for the partnership of Well Spring University, individuals and groups so that the immense capacity of The Nigerian Observer's ultra-modern printing press and machines would not remain under-utilized.

According to him, the media house had undergone repositioning and transformation beyond newspapers publishing to textbooks and magazines publishing including printing of question papers and sensitive documents in secured environ-

ment for customers and clients.

He also assured the Well Spring University boss of the newspaper's timely and adequate coverage of the varsity's important events and milestones as part of the collaboration.

The highlights of the courtesy visit include the presentation of copies of the day's edition of the newspaper to the vice chancellor and a group photograph.

Top management staff on the general manager's team includ-

ed the Editor of the newspaper, Andy Asemota; the company legal adviser, Barr. Rowland Osakue; Commercial Manager, Mrs. Josephine Ogbaro; Marketing Manager, Atoe Marcus, and the Chief Admin Officer, Mrs. Florence Ikekhua.



### CLOSING OF A CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP:

Executive Director, Africa Polling Institute (API), Prof. Bell Ihua (7th, R); Board Vice Chairman of API, Dr Olusoji Adeniyi (6th, L) with resource persons and participants, during the closing of a capacity building workshop on equipping media practitioners as champions of social cohesion in Abuja.

## NSCDC rescues teenager from kidnappers, arrests suspects in Edo

### BENIN CITY

Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), has rescued a 15-year-old girl, allegedly abducted in Ewohimi, Esan South-East Local Government Area of Edo and arrested two suspects in connection with the incident.

The Edo Commandant of the corps, Mr Saidi Akintayo, disclosed this on Saturday at a news conference in Benin.

Akintayo said the victim, Glory Odigie, was rescued through an intelligence-driven operation carried out by operatives of the command.

He said the command received a report on June 19 from one Mr Odion Odigie that his younger sister had gone out the previous day to purchase a phone charging cord but failed to return home.

According to him, the family subsequently received calls from unidentified persons claiming that the teenager had been abducted and demanding a ransom of N800,000.

"The callers also warned the family against informing security agencies," he said.

Akintayo said the command immediately activated intelligence and operational mechanisms to locate the victim and identify those responsible.

"During the operation, strategic communication and intelligence gathering were sustained while our officers explored available investigative leads.

"Through a combination of

technical analysis, community intelligence and tactical deployment, useful information was generated which pointed operatives to persons of interest within the locality," he said.

The commandant said investigations led to the arrest of Freedom Saturday, 16, who subsequently provided information that led to the arrest of Thankgod Oriabor, 21, at Oghu Community, Ewohimi.

"Our investigation led to the arrest of Freedom Saturday, aged 16 years, who subsequently assisted investigators with information that led to the arrest of Thankgod Oriabor, aged 21 years, at Oghu Community, Ewohimi, where the victim was successfully rescued," he said.

Akintayo said the teenager was rescued safely and was receiving necessary attention.

He added that the suspects remained in custody while investigations continued.

"The suspects are presently in our custody and preliminary investigation has yielded useful information to support ongoing investigation.

"The matter will be transferred for further investigation and handled in accordance with the law," he said.

The commandant commended officers involved in the operation for their professionalism and timely response.

He also lauded the Edo Government for supporting security agencies and strengthening security architecture across the state.

## 14 suspects arrested in connection with Auchu killings

### AUCHU

Edo State Security Squad codenamed "Operation Flush out Kidnappers and Cultists" have arrested 14 Suspects in connection with the cult related killing in Auchu, Etsako West local Government Area of Edo State.

Tension was heightened at Abiodun Motor Park, Jattu Junction as residents, commuters and business owners ran for their lives as suspected cultists shot and killed a middle-aged man.

Following the killing, the Chief Security Officer (CSO) and the Principal Security Officer (PSO) to governor Monday Okpebholo led other secu-

rity agencies to raid criminal hideout in Edo North Senatorial Districts.

At Jattu Junction, the team demolished Abiodun Motors Park and the Nigeria Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) park at Jattu Junction.

The squad also raided Triple J & J Hotel Aviele where suspects were arrested. The presence of the team was felt at Igbira Camp, Warrake road, Akpekpe and other areas raiding the hideout of criminal elements disturbing the peace of Edo North Senatorial Districts.

14 Suspects were arrested at the said hotel in Aviele following intelligence reports that the killing of the young man was planned at the hotel and the

suspects moved from the hotel to carry out the dastardly act at the Jattu motor park.

After the arrest, the hotel was sealed and the squad acting on intelligent report moved to Igbira Camp where the prime suspects Anefi Kassim lived to arrest him but met his absence.

According to investigation, the said Anefi Kassim is a member of Juris Confraternity, ESSC, while Idris Mustapha who is also at large is a member of ESSC as they are both given 24 hours to report at the Area Command Auchu.

The squad has ordered the Auchu Sector commander of ESSC under whose command they work to produce both suspects to face justice.

Speaking on the arrest, the spokesperson for the squad member of the squad Eribo Ewanta said following the Monday killing, governor Okpebholo gave the team a matching order to restore peace and arrest those behind the act.

"We are here today and have arrested some suspects connected to the killing and they are helping security agencies with useful information that will help in further arrest of all others at large including the masterminder of the killing.

"Governor Monday Okpebholo's administration will not allow any form of criminality in Edo State as criminals will no longer be safe operating in the State.

## Govt won't stop demolition of criminals' hide-outs —ESSN scribe

### UROMI

The Edo state Government has no intention to stop the demolition of buildings suspected to be hide outs for criminal activities.

Barr. John Izegaegbe, Secretary of Edo State Security Squad, code-named Operation Flushout Kidnappers and Cultists, reaffirmed the position of the State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, shortly on arrival in Uromi on Thursday in company of other of the team and security agencies to supervise the demolition of the house of an alleged kingpin of a kidnapping syndicate.

Izegaegbe disclosed that the suspect identified as Christian

Okoduwa, had been linked to several abduction cases in Uromi and its environs following ongoing efforts to tackle kidnapping, cultism and other criminal activities across the state.

He noted that the suspect was in police custody in Benin City, while his residence located off Amedokhian Road, Uromi, was to demolished as a result of investigations and intelligence.

Speaking further on the development, Izegaegbe stressed that investigations revealed that Okoduwa was allegedly connected to a chain of kidnapping activities in Uromi.

He claimed that the suspect was responsible for coordinating criminal operations by bringing suspected criminal elements

from neighbouring states and communities into Uromi to carry out kidnapping activities.

"We are in Uromi, and this building behind me, which has been demolished, belongs to one Christian Okoduwa, who has been linked severally to a kidnapping bloc chain where he imports machineries to Uromi from neighbouring states and communities to carry out kidnapping businesses.

"All arrests made in Uromi and its environs have been linked to him directly and his syndicate, who have allegedly been terrorising the people of Uromi. This is conspiracy and abetting kidnapping.

"Investigation has revealed that he is the mastermind and

culprit of some of the most serious kidnapping incidents recorded in Uromi, and the hands of the law have caught up with him," he said.

The Edo security official explained that the demolition of the building was carried out in line with government policy against the use of properties for criminal activities.

"This demolition is the result of kidnapping activities. Any building used for such nefarious activities must go down. We have a marching order, based on investigation and verified information, that this building should be demolished. This is what the law provides, and that is what we have done," he stated.

**NEWS****Ebola: FG approves N21.2m response fund for each state****ABUJA**

The Federal Government has approved the release of N21.2 million in outbreak investigation and response funds, to each state to strengthen preparedness against Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) and other public health threats.

This is contained in a statement made available to newsmen by Mr Ado Bako, Assistant Director, Information and Public Relations, Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare on Saturday in Abuja.

According to Bako, Prof. Mohammed Pate, the Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, approved the

disbursement of 50 per cent of the State Outbreak Investigation and Response Fund (S-OIRF) allocation.

He said the funds would be released through the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) gateway of the Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF).

Bako said the intervention formed part of measures to strengthen Nigeria's readiness against Ebola and other emerging public health threats.

He added that the approval complemented broader Federal Government efforts to strengthen national preparedness and response capacities.

According to the statement,

the efforts include the activities of the multi-sectoral Presidential Task Force on Ebola Preparedness and Other Health Threats.

Bako said that the task force would be chaired by the Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabiamila.

The spokesperson noted that although Nigeria had no confirmed case of the disease, the government was taking proactive measures to enhance preparedness.

He said the approval would enable states to access resources required to strengthen surveillance, preparedness and rapid response capacities during public health emergencies.

Bala further quoted Pate as

directing all beneficiary states to retire both current and previously disbursed outbreak response funds within six months.

He said states must also ensure full compliance with established financial management, reporting and accountability requirements.

"This approval reflects our commitment to both health security and accountability.

"We will continue to support states to strengthen their capacity to prevent, detect and respond to public health threats while ensuring transparency in the use of public resources," the minister said.

Pate reaffirmed the Federal Government's commitment

to safeguarding national health security through proactive preparedness, effective coordination

and sustained investments in disease prevention, detection and response capacities nationwide.

**Lagos inaugurates taskforce against indiscriminate waste dumping****LAGOS**

The Lagos State Government has inaugurated a Special Task Force to monitor bus stops, garages, lay-bys and other public spaces against indiscriminate waste dumping as part of efforts to improve environmental sanitation across the state.

The inauguration, held in Alausa on Saturday, was attended by members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers, the Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria, journalists and other stakeholders.

Speaking at the event, the Commissioner for Transportation, Mr Oluwaseun Osiyemi, said the initiative was aimed at strengthening collaboration among relevant agencies and stakeholders to address environmental abuse.

Osiyemi expressed concern over increasing cases of improper waste disposal by residents.

"This meeting is a call for greater collaboration.

"Our beautiful city is being challenged by indiscriminate refuse disposal and environmental abuse.

"We cannot fold our arms while people carry waste from their homes and dump it on roads, medians and public spaces.

"This is totally unaccept-

able," he said.

The commissioner described the practice as reckless and warned that indiscriminate dumping posed serious environmental and public health risks.

He stressed the need for stricter enforcement of sanitation regulations and increased public participation in keeping the environment clean.

According to him, sustainable sanitation efforts require the support of residents, government agencies and other stakeholders.

Also speaking, the Deputy Chief of Staff to the Governor, Mr Sam Egube, highlighted the strategic role of transport workers in maintaining order and security in the state.

According to him, transport operators form a critical part of the information and security network in major cities across the world.

"When they see something, they say something," Egube said.

He stressed the importance of timely information sharing, noting that criminals often move through roads and public transport systems, making transport workers valuable partners in identifying and reporting suspicious activities.

"When a city is breaking down, it is because there is a failure in the movement of information among all of us," he said.

**CELEBRATION OF ERGAF-AFRICA PROJECT:**

Founder, ERGAF-Africa Foundation/Labour Party 2027 Presidential candidate, Dr Chibuzo Okereke (M), with students of Junior Secondary School (JSS) Jabi, cutting the cake during the celebration of ERGAF-Africa Project Hope Alive 10 Years of Impact to commemorate the 2026 Day of the African Child (DAC) celebration in Abuja on yesterday.

**Insecurity: Oba of Benin summons native doctors, priests, others****BENIN CITY**

The Oba of Benin, Omo N'Oba N'Edo, Uku Akpolokpolo, Ewuare II, has summoned native doctors, traditional priests, and priestesses to an urgent meeting over the worsening security crisis in

Edo and Nigeria.

This is contained in a statement signed by Chief Victor Nosakhare on behalf of Benin Traditional Council Secretary Frank Irabor on Friday.

The statement noted that the meeting would hold at 12 p.m. prompt on Tuesday, June 23, 2026, at the Oba's Palace.

The palace said the meeting, convened under the authority

and directive of Oba Ewuare II, and must be treated with utmost urgency.

According to the statement, it is aimed at exploring traditional means to complement government efforts in tackling insecurity.

In a related development, the Benin Traditional Council will host youth leaders, known as Okaighele, the fol-

lowing day, Wednesday, June 24, 2026, at the same time and venue, according to another statement from the palace authority.

The development signalled involvement of the palace as traditional institutions moved to support security agencies amid rising kidnapping and cult-related violence in the state.

**Sickle-Cell: Edo Govt pledges support for indigent patient****BENIN CITY**

The Edo Commissioner for Health, Dr Cyril Oshiomhole says the state will sustain medical support for indigent sickle cell patients, while intensifying genotype screening as part of efforts to reduce new cases.

Oshiomhole made the pledge on Thursday in Benin at an event organised by the Edo Sickle Cell Foundation, in collaboration with the Edicharlson Foundation for Sickle Cell and Alphasight Initiatives to mark the 2026 World Sickle Cell Day.

He said financial assistance remained available for patients unable to afford treatment, adding that applications for support would be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The commissioner urged residents to embrace routine genotype testing and genetic counselling before marriage, stressing that public enlightenment remained key to preventing avoidable cases of the disorder.

It would be recalled that persons living with sickle cell disorder in the state had called for stronger government intervention, improved healthcare delivery and expanded public awareness campaigns.

The President of the Edo

Sickle Cell Club, Dr Charles Edigin, said persons living with the condition continued to face significant medical, social and economic challenges.

He called for closer collaboration with government to extend awareness campaigns to rural communities, markets, churches and other public spaces.

A member of the club, Dorothy Osuji, a lawyer, who lost three siblings to sickle cell complications, urged increased funding for treatment, including access to essential drugs, hospital beds and other medical support services.

She also called for broader awareness involving families, religious bodies, communities and the media.

The Special Adviser to the Governor on Health, Dr Andrew Iyamu, reaffirmed the administration's commitment to strengthening healthcare delivery in the state, saying the government remained open to collaboration with stakeholders to improve access to affordable services.

Meanwhile, a sickle cell warrior, Mr Wisdom Anyali, appealed for financial assistance to continue treatment for a chronic leg ulcer, saying his family could no longer sustain the cost of care.

**UNIBEN gets NUC's approval for 6 new undergraduate, postgraduate courses****BENIN CITY**

The National Universities Commission (NUC) has approved six new full-time undergraduate programmes and additional postgraduate courses for the University of Benin (UNIBEN), effective from the 2026/2027 academic session.

Dr. Benedicta Ehanire, Public Relations Officer of the university announced this in a statement on Saturday in Benin.

The university's spokesperson said the approval followed the successful resource assessment of the proposed pro-

grammes by the commission.

Ehanire said the development would further strengthen UNIBEN's position as a centre of excellence in manpower development.

Two of the newly approved undergraduate programmes, he said, were Bachelor of Science degrees in Speech Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy.

The programmes align with the policy initiative of the Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, aimed at training skilled manpower to address the shortage of professionals in both fields within Nigeria's healthcare sector," she said.

She noted that other undergraduate programmes approved by the NUC were Bachelor of Science degrees in International Relations; Intelligence and Security Studies; Bachelor of Education in Primary Education, and Bachelor of Nursing Science.

The nursing science programme, she said, would be offered in collaboration with the University of Benin Teaching Hospital.

She explained that the university's Centre of Excellence in Space Science Technology and Application had also received approval to offer Master's and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D)

degrees in Remote Sensing and Aeronautics Engineering.

The university's spokesperson noted that the Vice-Chancellor of UNIBEN, Prof. Edoba Omoriegie, expressed appreciation to the NUC for the approval.

She said the vice-chancellor reiterated the institution's commitment to sustaining its position as a leading hub for manpower training and development through diverse and extensive academic programmes.

Omoriegie, she asserted, said the university would continue to strengthen its academic offerings in response to national development needs.

# Adjustment: PETROAN urges refiners, importers to reflect downward price adjustment as crude falls

**ABUJA**

The Petroleum Products Retail Outlets Owners Association of Nigeria (PETROAN) has urged refiners, depot owners and fuel importers to reflect the recent drop in global crude oil prices in ex-depot and pump prices of petroleum products.

The National President of PETROAN, Mr Billy Gillis-Harry, made the call in a statement on Friday in Abuja.

Gillis-Harry said the recent drop in global crude oil prices offered an opportunity for stakeholders in the downstream sector to pass the savings on lower crude costs to Nigerian consumers.

He emphasised that market realities should be reflected in both ex-depot and retail pump prices in the interest of fairness and economic relief for the public.

"Recent developments in the global oil market indicate that

crude oil prices are experiencing a downward trend.

"Brent crude has fallen to approximately 77 to 78 dollars per barrel following the ceasefire agreement between the U.S. and Iran and expectations that oil exports through the Strait of Hormuz will gradually normalise," he said.

According to him, market analysts have noted that crude oil prices are currently under downward pressure, although geopolitical risks remain.

He explained that current projections suggested that Brent crude may trade within the range of 75 to 82 dollars per barrel next week, while West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude is expected to trade for 72 to 79 dollars per barrel.

The energy expert said factors contributing to the decline in crude oil prices included continuous implementation of the U.S.-Iran peace agreement, in-

creased crude oil exports from the Middle East and concerns over weaker global oil demand.

He said factors such as a breakdown in peace negotiations, fresh supply disruptions, or unexpected production cuts

by Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies could trigger upward price movements.

According to him, the prevailing market outlook remains relatively stable to bearish.

Gillis-Harry expressed concern that, in some instances, the landing cost of imported petroleum products appeared

to be lower than the prices offered by domestic refiners.

This development, he said was surprising and underscored the need for a more competitive downstream petroleum market that guaranteed consumers access to the most affordable products available.

He, therefore, called on the Nigerian Midstream and

Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) to continue issuing import licences to qualified marketers.

He explained that increased competition among suppliers would help moderate prices, discourage monopolistic tendencies and ensure a steady supply of petroleum products across the country.



## FREE MEDICAL OUTREACH:

Health officials attending to patients of New Kuchingoro Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), during a free medical outreach organised by Oneworld Initiative for Sustainable Development (OISDO) in collaboration with the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons in Abuja.

## Gov. Oyebanji of APC wins Ekiti...

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having certified the requirements of the law is hereby declared the winner and is returned elected," he said.

The by-election was to fill the vacuum created by the death of Muhammad Danjuma-Hassan of the NNPP.

In Enugu North Senatorial District, Chief Ikeje Asogwa, the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), emerged the winner of the June 20, 2026, by-election.

Asogwa polled 162,360 votes to defeat his closest rival, Chief Nestor Ezeme of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) who scored 9,299 votes.

The by-election was conducted to replace late Sen Okey Ezea who represented the district who died on Nov. 18, 2025 at the age of 62.

Announcing the result on Sunday in Nsukka, the Returning Officer of the election, Prof Christian Ezeibe, the Dean, Department of Students Affairs at University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN), said Asogwa

scored the highest votes in the election to emerge the winner.

In Nasarawa State, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) declared Mr Halilu Envuluanza, candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), winner of the Nasarawa North Senatorial District by-election held on Saturday.

Prf. Aminu Ali, the Returning Officer for the election, announced the result on Sunday in Akwanga.

Ali said that Envuluanza polled 45,362 votes to defeat his closest rival, Mr Labaran Maku of the Labour Party (LP), who secured 12,931 votes.

He added that Mr Emmanuel David Ombugadu of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) came third with 11,570 votes.

According to the returning officer, the senatorial district has 332,810 registered voters, out of which 80,363 were accredited to vote.

He said that a total of 75,705 valid votes were recorded, while 927 votes were rejected, bringing the total votes cast to 76,632.

## Okpebholo urges fathers to guide...

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dren's activities, friendships and decisions while providing proper guidance.

He advised parents to counsel their children against the dangers of cultism, kidnapping, internet fraud and other criminal activities, warning that the consequences of crime often affect entire families.

"We have seen families lose their peace, properties destroyed and the future of young people ruined because of involvement in criminal activities. Many of these situations could have been prevented through early guidance and proper parental supervision," the Governor said.

Governor Okpebholo noted that the Edo State Government

has intensified efforts to tackle kidnapping, cultism and other violent crimes through improved security measures and the establishment of special courts for speedy prosecution of offenders.

He warned that anyone involved in criminal activities would face the full weight of the law, stressing that the era of impunity is over.

"No father should have to watch his child lose his future because of crime. This is why parents must remain involved, provide direction and help their children make the right choices," he added.

Governor Okpebholo wished all fathers in Edo State a happy and fulfilling Fathers' Day celebration.

## Refineries: PETROAN urges NNPC to finalise refinery mgt pact with Chinese firms

**ABUJA**

The Petroleum Products Retail Outlets Owners Association of Nigeria (PETROAN) has urged the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd.) to expedite discussions with two Chinese firms that expressed interest in operating Nigerian refineries.

The National President of PETROAN, Billy Gillis-Harry, made the call on Friday in a statement following the recent

drop in global crude oil prices.

It would be recalled that the NNPC Ltd. signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with two Chinese companies for Technical Equity Partnership (TEP) to support completion and operation of the Port Harcourt and Warri refineries.

The MoU, signed with Sanjiang Chemical Company Ltd. and Xingcheng (Fuzhou) Industrial Park Operation and Management Company Ltd. in China is expected to support

a potential TEP, covering the two refineries.

Recent developments in the global oil market indicate that crude oil prices are experiencing a downward trend.

Brent crude has fallen to approximately 77 to 78 dollars per barrel following the ceasefire agreement between the U.S. and Iran, and expectations that oil exports through the Strait of Hormuz will gradually normalise.

In a bid to further encourage competition that would benefit consumers, Gillis-Harry urged the Group Chief Executive Officer of NNPC Limited, Mr Bayo

Ojulari, to finalise talks on the reviving of the two refineries.

Gillis-Harry said that if the refineries were successfully revived and operated as private-sector-driven facilities, petroleum product prices could decline further due to improved efficiency and increased domestic refining capacity.

He added that the resumption of operations at the refineries under competent private management would enhance supply stability, promote healthy competition, and lead to more affordable petroleum products for Nigerians.

## S/Africa: Nigerian community solicits help for stranded compatriots

**ABUJA**

The Nigerian Union South Africa (NUSA) and the Nigerian Citizens Association South Africa (NICASA) have appealed for urgent help for fellow citizens who are stranded in that country.

This is contained in a statement issued by the community leaders in the country and made available to newsmen on Saturday.

It explained that the 'save our soul' appeal was necessitat-

ed by the ongoing evacuation exercise, whereby vulnerable citizens, women, children, and families are stranded while awaiting further arrangements.

The statement urged well-meaning Nigerians, community leaders, and organisations across South Africa to come forward with support for fellow citizens who are stranded at the Nigerian High Commission in Pretoria.

"At this critical moment, we call upon the Nigerian community to demonstrate the true

spirit of unity, compassion, and collective responsibility.

"Any form of assistance, no matter how small, can make a meaningful difference in providing relief and restoring hope to those currently affected.

"We encourage individuals, organisations, businesses, and community groups, who are able to assist to contribute towards this humanitarian effort," the statement said.

It further said that the support included food and basic

supplies, temporary welfare, finance, essential items, humanitarian assistance, and any other form of support that can ease their current hardship.

"This is a moment where our shared humanity must rise above individual differences.

"A Nigerian in need anywhere is a responsibility for all of us.

"Together, we can uphold the dignity of our people and show that Nigerians in South Africa stand together in times of need," the statement added.

## FG modifies Deep Sea Port to minimise demolition

**LAGOS**

The Federal Government is modifying the design of Section 3 of the Deep Sea Port Access Road in Lagos State to minimise demolition at the Eleko Junction.

The Minister of Works, Sen.

Dave Umahi, disclosed this while inspecting road projects in the state.

Umahi said the government planned to construct a cloverleaf flyover at the junction as part of efforts to improve traffic flow and reduce the impact of the project on surrounding

communities.

"At that junction of the Eleko, we are going to have something very beautiful, and that is a cloverleaf flyover.

"We are modifying the design of that location. We will try to minimise a lot of demolition at that junction, and

we are taking this project all the way to the Sagamu-Benin Road," he said.

The minister said the government had also awarded an additional contract for the construction of service lanes on the corridor under the Federal Government's tax credit scheme.

**NEWS**

# Edo Waste Board MD addresses truck and payment issues, defends LGA synergy

FRANCA OSAGIE

**BENIN CITY**

The Managing Director of Edo State Waste Management Board,

Dr. Lucky Enehita-Inegbenehi, has outlined the board's strategy for a cleaner metropolis, defended its relationship with local governments, and announced a new waste educa-

tion academy for schools.

Speaking in an exclusive interview, Dr. Enehita-Inegbenehi stressed that keeping Edo clean requires proper monitoring of environmental stand-

ards. He disclosed that he had engaged private waste managers who raised complaints about operational challenges.

Reacting to claims that EWMB does not work with

LGAs, the MD said the board cannot order council chairmen because "that is an executive office." He explained that EWMB's role is to advise, inform, and find common ground with LGAs on waste policies. He cited examples including EWMB's deployment of trucks to assist Oredo LGA during the desilting of gutters along Mission Road and Oba Market, and ongoing cooperation with Egor LGA.

He emphasised that waste management is a shared responsibility: "If you are living in your own house, you are expected to clean it, you are expected to maintain it, you are expected to remove your own waste." He noted that 70% of waste is generated at the household level, with another 30% from markets, churches, mosques, and parks.

Dr. Enehita-Inegbenehi said he was the first to propose brand new trucks for committed waste collectors on single-digit, interest-free terms to replace "dead trucks." He admitted bureaucracy has delayed procurement: "The procedure is not something you can just do and then just lie... it's still in place, we are still working on it."

On payment disputes, he said the system pays collectors only for service rendered. Households pay ₦2,000-

₦3,000, and collectors receive funds only after evacuation. "If your truck is down, you are not working, nothing will go into... we will not encourage people to go and be taking money from households that you didn't work for," he stated.

The MD revealed EWMB is launching a waste management academy to teach pupils to tertiary students about waste segregation and disposal. "We want our kids to become ambassadors of waste management... when you put waste inside the gutter, it doesn't disappear, it only changes location," he said. The program will also target churches, mosques, bus parks, and markets to build a culture of sustainability.

He warned that indiscriminate dumping causes cholera, typhoid, and diarrhea, and linked poor sanitation to avoidable deaths. "If you live in a dirty environment, you expose yourself... you invite cholera, typhoid and diarrhea," he said, stressing that a clean environment is for everyone's benefit.

Dr. Enehita-Inegbenehi reaffirmed EWMB's commitment to working with stakeholders, maintaining monitoring systems, and ensuring Edo residents live in a clean and healthy environment.

**UMAHI'S INSPECTION TOUR:**

L-R: Minister of Works, David Umahi; Director, Highways Construction and Rehabilitation, Federal Ministry of Works, Mr Clement Ogbuagu; Federal Controller of Works, Ogun State, Mr Olayiwola Komolafe; Contractor in Charge of Loto Flyover bridge on Lagos Ibadan Expressway, Mr Andy Dian; Senate Deputy Chief Whip, Sen. Onyekachi Nwebonyi; Chairman, Senate Committee on Works, Sen. Allwell Onyesoh; Sen. Osita Ngwu and Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Works, Mr Akin Alabi, during Umahi's inspection tour of the Loto Flyovers on Sunday.

## Edo Muslim group backs Gov Okpebholo's special courts proposal to tackle kidnapping, cultism

ABDUL-KADIR ABDULLAH

**BENIN CITY**

A Muslim group, Edo Muslims for Equity and Good Governance (EMEGG), has commended Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, for what it described as his administration's remarkable achievements in security, infrastructure development and good governance, while expressing strong support for the proposed establishment of special courts to handle kidnapping and cultism cases in Edo.

In a letter of commendation addressed to the governor and dated June 20, 2026, the group praised the administration's efforts in combating insecurity

across the state, particularly its crackdown on cultism, kidnapping and other violent crimes.

The group said Governor Okpebholo's decisive actions and support for security agencies had sent a clear signal that criminality would not be tolerated in Edo State.

According to the letter signed by its General Coordinator, Amir Sirajudeen Muhammad and the Secretary, Abdullah Umar, the government's security interventions have helped restore confidence among residents and created a safer environment for businesses, schools, religious organizations and communities.

EMEGG also lauded the administration's ongoing road construction and rehabilitation projects across the state,

noting that the infrastructure investments were improving connectivity, stimulating economic activities and enhancing the quality of life of citizens.

The group further commended the governor's initiative in procuring construction equipment for all local government councils, describing the move as a strategic investment that would strengthen grassroots development and accelerate infrastructure delivery in both rural and urban communities.

Beyond infrastructure and security, the organization acknowledged the administration's interventions in education, healthcare, agriculture, youth empowerment and social welfare, saying the projects reflected a commitment

to building a prosperous and inclusive Edo State.

Most notably, the group threw its weight behind the governor's proposal for the establishment of special courts dedicated to the prosecution of kidnapping, cultism and related violent crimes.

The group stated, "We believe that such a measure will enhance the speedy dispensation of justice, serve as a deterrent to criminal elements, and further strengthen the fight against insecurity in our state."

EMEGG argued that the increasing threat posed by kidnapers and cult-related violence required extraordinary legal measures, describing the proposed special courts as a timely intervention deserving broad public support.

## Community reaffirms Ozukpogieva as rightful ag. Odionwere

**BENIN-CITY**

The Ag. Odionwere, elders and people of Isibor Ewua community have debunked the allegations making the rounds that the present Ozukpogieva (second-in-command) is not the rightful person to occupy the position of Odionwere of the community

The Ozukpogieva, who is the Ag. Odionwere, Pa Igbino-gun Felix Osewunu debunked the allegations in an interview with journalists after an enlarged meeting of the people at the community town hall

He said the allegations that he is not the rightful person to occupy the position of Odionwere made by one Mr William Ehigie in a paper sent to them is not only a lie but also an attempt to cause a rift in the peaceful community.

Pa Igbino-gun Felix Osewunu pointed out that according to the directive of the Oba of Benin, the eldest man in any community is entitled to be made the Odionwere, adding that the said Mr William Ehigie is a baby before him, pointing out that he (Ag. Odionwere) is even senior to the elder brother of the said William Ehigie.

While urging members of the public to disregard the said allegations, he reaffirmed that the Okaighele of the community remains Osarumen Odoruyi and that they (the people) do not have issues about that.

Also speaking, a member of the community, Comrade Sylvester Obaweki said the allegations by the said Pa Williams Ayowe Ehigie were all baseless, mischievous, and tissues of lies meant to cause chaos in the peaceful community.

"In 2026 the then late Odionwere appointed him as secretary of the community and the people supported the appoint-

ment, but immediately the Odionwere died the Ozukpogieva, now the acting Odionwere retained him as the secretary and after sometime, he voluntarily resigned saying he wanted to go and face his church work and the church was opened behind the community town hall", Comrade Sylvester explained.

"We are surprised now that the same man that had benefited immensely from the community is trying to bite the finger that fed him, we the community people overwhelmingly reject such moves as all what he had said are lies"

## Edo residents laud Okpebholo over completion of Evbuotubu road

**BENIN CITY**

Residents of Evbuotubu in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State have commended Governor Monday Okpebholo for completing the 6.5-kilometre road linking Ekenwan to Siluko, describing the project as a major relief that has restored economic activities in the area.

The residents spoke during a Media inspection tour of the roads, among many other ongoing and completed projects in Edo South recently

The tour which was led by the Chief Press Secretary to Governor Okpebholo, Dr Patrick Akhere Ebojele took the journalists to the completed Evbuotubu Road, Mechanic Road off Siluko linking Upper Erhunmwunse, and the Okhunmwun Community Road, which connects the Lagos Expressway to Siluko Road.

The residents of Evbuotubu expressed excitement over the transformation of the area, noting that the previously inaccessible road had affected businesses and movement for several years.

Chairman of Keke riders in the area, Mr Osayi Wilfred, said the poor condition of the road had caused hardship for transport operators and residents before the intervention by the state government.

"I have been driving on this road for the past 13 years, and we really suffered because of the bad condition. Every year, we tried to grade the road, but the

erosion problem was too much.

"When this government came, we were surprised one day to see graders and equipment working on the road. The project was completed quickly, and we are now enjoying it. Business activities have improved, and people who left the area are returning," he said.

He appealed to the governor to extend a similar intervention to the Owena Road leading to Ekenwan.

A business owner in the area, Mrs Blessing Monday, also praised the governor, saying the completed road had improved access to homes and shops.

"Before now, whenever it rained, we could not access our houses or shops. Sometimes we stayed back in our shops until the water was reduced. But today, we thank Governor Monday Okpebholo because the mud is gone and businesses are moving freely," she said.

At Mechanic Road, the journalists observed that stone-base work had been completed, with side drains already constructed. Workers were also seen working on major drainage channels designed to control water flow from the area into the river.

Some residents expressed confidence that the drainage system would help ensure the durability of the road when completed.

Mr Efemena Kingsley, a landlord commended the project and urged the government to continue monitoring the construction work to maintain quality standards.

# APC to replicate Ekiti guber victory in Osun —Party Chieftain

## OSOGBO

Chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Osun, Olatunbosun Oyintiloye, has said that the victory of Governor Biodun Oyebanji in Saturday's governorship election in Ekiti will be replicated in Osun on Aug. 15.

Speaking with journalists on Sunday in Osogbo, Oyintiloye described Oyebanji's victory as well deserved.

He said the outcome of the election was a resounding endorsement of the governor's performance and the people's mandate, describing it as a historic triumph achieved with an unprecedented margin in Ekiti

governorship elections.

According to him, the result reflects the people's confidence in progressive governance, noting that Oyebanji's administration had remained focused on development, inclusiveness and the welfare of citizens.

Oyintiloye said the APC's victory in Ekiti signalled the party's popularity and expressed confidence that it would secure an even more decisive win in the Osun governorship election.

He commended the party's National Working Committee (NWC), led by Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda, for providing strategic leadership that has continued to strengthen the party nationwide.

"The Ekiti result has shown

that when a party remains united, focused and committed to grassroots engagement, victory becomes inevitable.

"It is a clear lesson for us in Osun that teamwork, dedication and collective responsibility are indispensable for electoral success," he said.

Oyintiloye urged APC members and supporters in Osun to remain united and committed, stressing that every member has a role to play in ensuring victory at the polls.

He also acknowledged the role of the party leader in Osun, Alhaji Adegboye Oyetola, Minister of Marine and Blue Economy and former governor of the state, for sustaining the party since the 2022 governorship election.

He noted that Oyetola had maintained engagement with party members, stakeholders and interest groups, thereby strengthening the party's structure and boosting confidence ahead of the August 15, poll.

Oyintiloye said the party's

mobilisation strategy remained robust and result-oriented, aimed at reconnecting with the electorate and consolidating support across all wards and local government areas.

He expressed optimism that the people of Osun would support the APC candidate, Bola Oyebamiji, whom he described as competent, experienced and people-oriented.

"The people of Ekiti have reaffirmed their belief in progressive governance.

"By the grace of God, the people of Osun will do the same on August 15 by electing Oyebamiji as the next governor of the state," he said.

He added that growing party unity, grassroots strength and increasing acceptance of the candidate were clear indications of an impending victory.

Oyintiloye, a former lawmaker, said the ruling party in Osun should prepare for defeat, insisting that the APC would record a landslide victory.

## Foundation trains Enugu community leaders to boost gender justice

MAXWELL OKECHUKWU

### ABAKALIKI

The Neighbourhood Environment Watch (NEW) Foundation has trained Presidents-General of town unions from the three senatorial zones of Enugu State as part of efforts to strengthen community leadership and accelerate the fight against Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

The strategic training brought together the Presidents-General to deepen their understanding of gender equality, promote women's participation in decision-making processes and strengthen community-based interventions aimed at ending all forms of GBV.

The programme focused on equipping the community leaders with the knowledge and tools required to challenge harmful social norms, promote inclusive leadership and champion the rights of women and girls across their respective communities.

Speaking during the training,

the Executive Director of the NEW Foundation, Dr. Kelechukwu Okezie, described the fight against gender-based violence as a collective responsibility that required the active involvement of men and community leaders.

According to him, "men can no longer afford to remain passive in the face of rising cases of GBV, stressing that Presidents-General, as grassroots influencers and mobilizers, occupy strategic positions in driving behavioural change and fostering safer communities.

Okezie urged the town union leaders to commit themselves to ensuring that perpetrators of gender-based violence were not allowed to operate within their communities.

He said the training also sought to deepen participants' understanding of feminism as a framework for equity, dignity and justice, while highlighting the critical role of male allies in building more inclusive and equitable societies.

## Father's Day: Insecurity, lack of appreciation toll on Nigerian fathers

### LAGOS

Some fathers in Nigeria have lamented that national insecurity and lack of societal appreciation were taking severe physical and emotional toll on men striving to provide for their households.

The fathers, who spoke to our correspondent in separate interviews on the occasion of Father's Day, expressed hopes for greater support from both the government and their families to cushion the intensifying burdens of modern fatherhood.

A father of three, Mr Shayo Bamisetemi, urged the government to create a more habitable environment for citizens, noting that the current insecurity situation should be urgently addressed rather than being politicised.

"As a dedicated father striving to provide a fulfilling life for my family, I urge the Ni-

gerian government to create a more habitable environment for our loved ones.

"The current security issues are overwhelming, and our children deserve a safe atmosphere as they pursue their education," Bamisetemi said.

On his expectations from his family, Bamisetemi stated that a father's desire for appreciation and respect for their daily contributions was fundamental, adding that "gratitude is a catalyst for doing even more."

Also, Mr Bright Chigozie, a Factory Supervisor in Apapa who spends long hours away from home due to the nature of his job, said safety remained a major source of anxiety for many parents.

He noted that every father dreamt of seeing his children grow up in a secure environment where they could pursue their education and aspirations without fear.



### STAKEHOLDERS ADVOCACY TRAINING:

Participants at the Enugu Town Unions Presidents-General/stakeholders advocacy training against Gender Based Violence organized by Neighbourhood Environment Watch (NEW) in Enugu.

## 95 youths benefit from empowerment skills training in S'East

MAXWELL OKECHUKWU

### ABAKALIKI

Ninety five unemployed youths from across the five states in the South-East region have graduated from a vocational training and received equipment and startup support from the Federal Government's Skill-Up programme for the zone.

The beneficiaries comprising one each from the 95 local government areas in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states, completed the intensive training in tailoring and fashion design.

The event which took place at the Ebonyi state Ecumenical

Centre in Abakaliki, the state Capital, saw each of the graduates receiving a brand-new sewing machine and startup funds to begin business immediately.

The programme, an initiative of President Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda, aims to promote entrepreneurship, thus reducing unemployment and drive economic growth across the southeast region.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony, the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Community Engagement (South-East), Hon. Chioma Nweze, said the training had gone beyond vocational skills acquisition but such that create young business leaders whose

lessons on financial literacy and business management will ensure the survival of their respective ventures.

"The programme has given them more than vocational training, it has equipped them with business and financial management skills because training without the ability to sustain the business can limit their growth. Today, they leave not only been equipped with skills but also with tools and support to begin their entrepreneurial journeys," Nweze stated.

She noted that many trainees had little or no prior experience before enrolling, but now possess skills capable of transforming their economic fortunes.

She described the South-East as a region renowned for enterprise and innovation, adding that empowering youths with practical skills would boost the zone's development.

Nweze said the initiative aligns with the Renewed Hope Agenda, which prioritises human capital development, youth empowerment and inclusive growth. She also listed other FG projects in the zone to include the rehabilitation of the Enugu-Abakaliki Expressway, Enugu-Port Harcourt Expressway, Abakaliki-Afikpo Road, and approval of the South-East Investment Company under the South East Development Commission.

## N'West youth summit opens in Kaduna, pushes regional youth policy agenda

### KADUNA

Young leaders, government officials and development partners have converged in Kaduna for the Northwest Youth Summit 2026.

The summit marked the culmination of the year long Youth Leading Change Programme (YLCP) aimed at strengthening youth leadership and policy engagement.

Organised by Bridge Connect Africa Initiative (BCAI) with support from the Nigeria Youth

Futures Fund (NYFF), the summit drew participants from Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara States.

Speaking at the opening at the weekend, BCAI Executive Director, Sani Muhammad, described the summit as a milestone in advancing youth development.

Muhammad said the programme trained 35 fellows in civic engagement, policy advocacy and stakeholder coordination.

He added that 21 youth led organisations were strengthened through the Northwest Youth Development Consortium.

According to him, the initiative promotes collaboration and collective action on governance priorities across the region.

He said state level policy dialogue workshops enabled stakeholders to assess policies and identify implementation gaps.

Muhammad noted that the discussions also produced practical strategies for addressing youth development challenges.

He said the summit would consider and endorse the Northwest Youth Policy Agenda.

According to him, the agenda reflects shared regional pri-

orities and outlines strategies for implementation.

He said it would enhance coordination among institutions working on youth development in the region.

Muhammad stressed the importance of involving young people as partners in governance.

He said youths had demonstrated capacity in policy discussions, community development and accountability processes.

He urged participants to build partnerships and translate commitments into meaningful outcomes.

**NEWS**

# Court to hear suit challenging Donald Duke's presidential candidacy

**ABUJA**

The Federal High Court in Abuja is to hear a suit filed by an aspirant, Dr Yakubu Kingsley, challenging the emergence of former Governor of Rivers, Donald Duke as the presidential candidate of the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) in the 2027 general elections.

The case, which is coming up for hearing for the first time on Monday (today) was fixed by Justice Mohammed Umar.

Hearing notices to the effect had been issued and served on parties in the suit.

Kingsley, in the suit marked: FHC/ABJ/CS/1234/2026 and filed by his lawyer, D.A. Sulymann, had sued PRP, Mr Duke and Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as 1st to 3rd defendants respectively.

He sought three questions for determination in the originating summons filed on June 10.

The plaintiff wants the court to determine whether Duke

was duly returned as the presidential candidate of PRP in the May 25 primary election, in which its results was declared on the May 26, having not been a registered member of the party as at May 4, when the PRP membership register was submitted to INEC.

He also challenged alleged over voting in states like Bauchi, where the registered members of the 1st defendant in its membership database is 593 and the total votes cast was 760.

He also alleged that in Gombe State, the registered member was 348 and the votes cast was 1,431 and in Kwara State, the

registered members is 55 while the vote cast was 82 votes, will not call for the nullification of the said primary election.

He, therefore, sought a declaration that the ex-governor, not been a registered member of PRP, cannot participate in the party's primary election held on May 25 where he was declared the winner on May 26.

He sought a declaration that Duke ought not to have been cleared for the presidential primary election contest, having not complied with the guidelines of the party to physically present for the screening at its national secretariat.

Kingsley, therefore, prayed the court for an order setting aside the results of the presidential election conducted in Bauchi, Gombe and Kwara respectively on the ground of over voting.

He sought an order declaring him as the presidential candidate of PRP, having complied with all the party's guidelines and been a registered member of the party.

He also sought an order directing the commission not to recognise Duke as PRP's presidential flagbearer or to delete his name from its database as the presiden-

tial candidate of the party.

The plaintiff further sought an order directing the electoral umpire to recognise him as PRP's presidential candidate.

In the affidavit in support of the suit deposed to by Kingsley himself, the aggrieved aspirant said he is a registered member of PRP with membership card number: 2A8D8B20B2.

The plaintiff, who described himself as a "politician," said he is of Auchi III Ward, Etsako West Local Government Area of Edo State, but presently in Abuja, FCT,

**ABS BOARDROOM 2.0 MASTER CLASS:**

L-R: Head Information Technology and Media, COPEN Group (CG), Mr Chinweume Mamah; Rector, Learn to Live Business School, Mr Nelson Chukwuma; Chairman Enugu State Internal Revenue Service, Mr Ekene Nnamani; Executive Director, Amadeo Business Summit, Mr Ike Chime; Programme Lead, ABS, Mrs Gloria Chime; Managing Director, Bethel Microfinance Bank Limited, Enugu, Mr George Eze, and Head Public Sector, CG, Mr Obinna Eneh, during ABS Boardroom 2.0 Master Class for Business Executives in Enugu.

## Benin High Court Remands Two Over Alleged Rape, Attempted Murder

OLIVER IJIOGBE

**BENIN CITY**

A High Court sitting in Benin City has ordered the remand of two defendants in a correctional facility pending the determination of charges bordering on alleged criminal conspiracy, rape, and attempted murder

brought against them by the prosecution.

The defendants, Augustine Ekhaton, 36, and Ogieva Marvellous, 35, were arraigned before the Criminal Division of the High Court on a multi-count charge.

According to the prosecution, the defendants, alongside other persons said to be

at large, allegedly conspired among themselves on or about February 8, 2025, in Benin City and unlawfully raped two underaged girls.

The prosecution informed the court that the alleged offence is punishable under Section 5 of the Edo State Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Law, 2021.

The defendants were further accused of allegedly attempting to murder the two underaged victims after the commission

of the alleged rape. The prosecution stated that the offence is punishable under Section 243 of the Criminal Law of Edo State, 2022.

When the charges were read to them, Augustine Ekhaton and Ogieva Marvellous pleaded not guilty to all counts.

Following their pleas, the presiding judge ordered that both defendants be remanded in a correctional facility pending further proceedings in the matter.

## Anambra police foil alleged attempt by mother to sell newborn baby

**AWKA**

The Anambra Police Command has foiled an alleged attempt by a 21-year-old woman to sell her newborn baby girl in Igbariam, Anambra East Local Government Area of the state.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) in the state, SP Tochukwu Ikenga, disclosed this in a statement made available to newsmen on Sunday in Awka.

"Operatives of the Anambra Police Command attached to Oyi Divisional Station, acting on credible intelligence, on June 19, successfully foiled an alleged attempt by a 21-year-old woman to sell her newborn baby.

"The police promptly secured

both the mother and her infant daughter and facilitated their reunion with family members to ensure proper care, protection and support," he said.

Ikenga said the intervention followed a report from a concerned citizen, which led officers to a location in Igbariam, where the young mother and her newborn baby were found.

He said preliminary investigations revealed that the woman had concealed both her pregnancy and delivery from her parents.

According to him, it was further gathered that she had left her family home in Imo and sought refuge with a friend residing in Igbariam before the alleged plan was uncovered.

"In the course of the operation, the police immediately contacted the young woman's parents, who responded without delay," he said.

The police spokesman said that following the arrival of the parents, the mother and baby were reunited with the family to guarantee adequate care, supervision and emotional support, while investigations continue.

He said that the Commissioner of Police (CP), Anambra Command, Ikioye Orutugu, commended the vigilance and sense of responsibility demonstrated by the complainant and other members of the public, whose timely information contributed significantly to the successful intervention.

The PPRO said that the CP also reaffirmed the command's unwavering commitment to protecting children from all forms of abuse, exploitation, trafficking and neglect.

He said that Orutugu further urged residents to remain vigilant and continue partnering with law enforcement agencies by promptly reporting suspicious activities within their communities.

**RECONCILIATION OF NAME/CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH**  
The general public is hereby notified that **OKUNSUN ERHAHON OSARIEMEN** and **OKUNSUN ERHAHON OSARIEMEN** are one and the same person as appeared in some of my documents and also my correct date of birth is **26/7/2006** and not **6/8/2006** as wrongly captured in my West Africa Examination Council Certificate (WAEC). Henceforth, I wish to be known and called as **OKUNSUN ERHAHON OSARIEMEN**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

## 2014 Nyanya bomb blast: Court sentences 37-year-old culprit to death by hanging

**ABUJA**

The Federal High Court in Abuja has sentenced a 37-year-old man, Zakaria Garba, to death by hanging over his involvement in the 2014 Nyanya Motor Park bomb explosions.

No fewer than 70 people were killed while several others sustained varying degree of injuries.

Justice James Omotsoho, in a judgment delivered in the just-concluded Abuja mass trial of suspected terrorists, also handed down a life imprisonment for Garba in another count of the five-count charge.

Justice Omotosho convicted the defendant after he pleaded guilty to the five counts preferred against him by the Federal Government.

The judgement was delivered on Tuesday in the charge number: FHC/KNJ/CR/985/2026, filed by the office of the Attorney-General of three Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice.

The judge sentenced Garba to a 35-year jail term each in counts one and two, a life imprisonment in count three, a death sentence in counts four and five.

"May God have mercy on you," the judge said.

In count three which attracted a life imprisonment, Garba of Jambutu Park, Jimeta Local Government Area of Adama-wa, and others now at large, were alleged to have, sometime in 2014 while at the Nyanya Motor Park, FCT Abuja, within the jurisdiction of the court, committed the offence.

They were said to have knowingly conspired among themselves "to commit acts of terrorism by planning and coordinating the bombing of Nyanya Motor Park, Abuja through the use of explosives devices, which bombing resulted in the death of over 70 persons and injured several others."

The offence is punishable under Section 17 of the Terrorism Prevention (Amendment) Act 2013 and punishable under same Section of the Act.

## Court remands 2 men over alleged cultism, attempted murder

**IKEJA**

An Ikeja Magistrates' Court sitting in Ogba, Lagos, has remanded two men over alleged cultism and attempted murder.

The defendants, Olayemi Abdulquadri, 22, and Kelechi Olise-meke, 28, face five-count charge of alleged criminal offences.

They were charged with conspiracy, membership of an unlawful society, attempted murder, possession of live cartridges and criminal charms.

The prosecutor, Supol Josephine Ikhayere, told the court that the offences were committed on May 26.

She alleged that the defendants and others still at large committed the offences at the Lagos State University, Ojo Campus.

According to the prosecutor, the men belonged to the Neo Black Movement of Africa, also known as Black Axe or Aye.

The group is listed as a pro-

scribed organisation under Lagos State's Unlawful Societies and Cultism Prohibition Law.

Ikhayere alleged that the defendants invaded the university premises with others while armed with dangerous weapons.

She said the group attempted to kill an unidentified person during the alleged attack.

The defendants were also accused of unlawfully possessing two live cartridges in a public place.

They were further alleged to have been in possession of criminal charms during the incident.

The charges were said to contravene relevant sections of Lagos State criminal and anti-cultism laws.

The defendants were arraigned before Magistrate Lateef Owolabi on Friday.

Following their plea, the magistrate ordered their remand in a correctional facility.

The court adjourned the matter until July 1 for mention and further proceedings.

## Foreign

## NEWS

## US and Iran begin talks on initial peace deal in Switzerland

US and Iranian officials have started direct talks in Switzerland after signing an initial agreement to end the war last week.

The deal includes a commitment to reach a final agreement within 60 days, as well as an end to fighting on "all fronts" - including in Lebanon - and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

But more clashes between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon prompted Iran to announce it had shut the shipping route on Saturday - though tracking data shows vessels have continued to pass through it.

After talks started, President Donald Trump said on social

media that Iran "must immediately stop their highly paid PROXIES in Lebanon from causing trouble".

He threatened to "hit Iran very hard again" if they did not.

Before the talks began, Vice-President JD Vance had said the US hoped for progress on "the nuclear issue" and Lebanon, while Tehran said it would be "demanding that the other side fulfil its commitments".

At the Swiss resort of Bürgenstock, Vance said Trump had asked negotiators to "turn over a new leaf". He added that if Iran's leadership was willing to give up being a "driver of regional instability" and "nuclear weapons ambitions for the long term", then the US "is

willing to fundamentally transform our relationship with that country".

Iran has insisted its nuclear programme is peaceful.

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said in a statement that negotiations for a final deal were contingent on enforcing existing commitments - including stopping all military operations. Sunday's talks were focused on implementation, he said.

Vance was joined by Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and special envoy Steve Witkoff.

For the Iranians, parliamentary speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi arrived in Switzerland late on

Saturday.

The delegations were joined by Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the head of the country's armed forces, Field Marshal Asim Munir.

Pakistan has acted as a mediator throughout the war, and hosted a previous round of negotiations between the US and Iran.

The US and Iranian presidents signed the initial agreement earlier this week, aiming to end the war with immediate effect.

Under the deal, Iran was to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, the key shipping channel through which 20% of the world's oil and natural gas travels. Its effective closure had driven up fuel prices and disrupted the global economy.

## Fuel sales halted in occupied Crimea as Ukraine targets oil facilities

Russian-backed authorities have suspended fuel sales to the public in the occupied region of Crimea as Ukraine continues its attacks on the peninsula.

Fuel had already been rationed due to shortages caused by Ukraine's recent campaign against supply routes in Russian-occupied territories.

Governor Sergey Aksyonov said individuals and businesses would be turned away from petrol stations, and fuel would only be sold to government agencies ensuring Crimea's "functioning and security".

Earlier, he said four people had been killed and 28 injured by a Ukrainian drone attack on an oil depot in Kerch overnight - which President Volodymyr Zelensky called a "just response to Russia's brutal attacks".

Crimea - which Russia illegally annexed in 2014 - has been experiencing logistical difficulties and shortages, but this appears to be its most significant fuel restriction so far.

"Further decisions regarding the current situation in the republic's fuel market will be announced at a later date," Aksyonov said.

Zelensky said Kyiv had also hit a logistics facility for oil transportation in Russia's Krasnodar region, which lies adjacent to Crimea across the Kerch Strait. Local authorities said one person had been killed

on a passenger ferry.

Military logistics facilities and radar systems were also struck, the president said, without specifying where.

"Russia understands only strength, and our long-range strength is certainly working for peace," he said in a statement posted on X.

Zelensky added at least seven people had been killed in Russian attacks over the weekend, with children among more than 30 injured.

Russia's defence ministry said 239 Ukrainian drones had been shot down overnight.

Crimea is a strategically important location from which Moscow's forces have launched strikes towards the rest of Ukraine.

It is also a popular summer holiday destination for Russians - some of whom have reported struggling to find petrol to return home.

Both sides have escalated attacks in recent months as progress towards a ceasefire has stalled more than four years on from Russia's full-scale invasion.

Kyiv's focus has been to choke off revenue for Moscow's war chest by hitting its fuel export.

But it also wants to undermine the Russian war effort and maximise disruption for its population, in the hopes of applying pressure on President Vladimir Putin and bringing him to the negotiating table.



**PETROL STATION QUEUE:**

Cars queue at a petrol station on the peninsula in early June amid already restricted fuel sales.

## Colombia's escalating brutal internal conflict, defining its presidential election

Escalating violence has marked Colombia's presidential campaign

"My brother was murdered for not paying an extortion payment...in front of his children," Edilma Martinez Flores said at a support centre for displaced people in Bogotá.

She fled her home on the outskirts of Cali, in the south-west, after armed criminal groups handed out leaflets ordering residents to leave or face violence.

"We had no choice but to leave our things behind. They started placing bombs along the routes people travel."

Edilma is far from being alone, and experiences like hers are why insecurity is dominating voters' minds in key presidential election.

Colombia's six decades of conflict between armed groups, the state and cartels has killed hundreds of thousands of people.

It isn't new, but illegal armed

groups have roughly doubled their membership in the last five years.

These include Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) dissident factions, the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Clan del Golfo, who have expanded their control of rural areas key to drug trafficking and illegal mining.

A brutal offensive between the ELN and FARC dissidents near the Venezuela-Colombia border last year displaced tens of thousands of people.

The two presidential candidates have starkly different visions for tackling this violence, in a campaign marked by the assassination of a presidential candidate, homicides, kidnappings and bombings.

Left-wing senator Iván Cepeda is seen as the "architect" of the current president Gustavo Petro's "total peace" strategy, prioritising negotiation with armed groups. Critics say it has

failed and let armed groups exploit ceasefires to expand their control. Supporters argue it prevents a larger loss of life.

He also played a key role in the 2016 peace deal which disarmed thousands of FARC fighters.

He has pledged "social transformations that the country urgently cries out for" while promising to "take stock" of the peace strategy and "make the necessary changes".

His challenger is a conservative outsider, right-wing businessman and lawyer Abelardo de la Espriella, who calls himself El Tigre (The Tiger in English). He's been endorsed by Donald Trump, and is a US citizen. The signature outfit for him and his supporters is the Colombian football shirt, which the left has accused him of politicising.

He has promised 10 mega-prisons, a tough military crackdown, and an end to negotiations with armed groups, saying he has the

"balls" to take them on.

"Any criminal who does not surrender will be taken down," he has promised.

For many Colombians, how this issue is tackled will have a huge impact on their lives.

Voters narrowly backed de la Espriella in the first round over Cepeda

Isabelita Mercado Pineda, a government advisor for peace, victims and reconciliation in Bogotá, says forced displacement rose 300% between 2024 and 2025.

"We have not seen displacements like this for the last two decades," she added.

She said it has been driven by factors including rising cocaine production, the army failing to occupy territories left by the FARC after it demobilised in 2016, leaving voids for armed groups to fill, and a "failure" of the government's strategy that she argued provides criminal groups with "carrot but not enough stick".

## Half of France under red heat alert as alcohol banned at street music festival

France has issued red heatwave alerts for around half the country including Paris for Monday as a heatwave pushes temperatures towards record levels.

On Sunday temperatures in the south-western city of Bordeaux hit 40C (104F).

Earlier, French authorities banned alcohol consumption in public places during the annual Fête de la Musique, a national music festival that draws millions to the streets across the country.

"For all events organised by the state and its agencies, instructions have been given not to offer alcohol," the office of Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu said.

The limits on alcohol consumption aim "to preserve emergency and healthcare services and allow medical staff to focus on caring for the most vulnerable", the government said.

Temperatures have been forecast to peak on Monday, and authorities have warned they could match historic highs. The red alert covers much of western and central France, while many other regions are under an orange alert.

Some people have been cooling off by jumping into the Canal St Martin in Paris

The rising temperatures are being driven by hot air moving north from the Sahara desert, which is in turn trapping hot air over western and central Europe.

Italian authorities have issued red alerts for eight cities for Sunday, including Bologna, Florence, Milan, and Turin, while Spain's weather agency has also issued red and orange alerts in several regions and warned of temperatures hitting 40 degrees across large parts of the country.

The heatwave has been building for days and has disrupted some government services in France, forcing the cancellation of dozens of trains and the suspension of classes.

France's weather service Météo-France said it was "uncertain" how long the heatwave, which has been estimated to affect about three quarters of the population, would last.

To help Parisians and tourists cope with the heat, authorities are keeping parks and gardens in the French capital open through the night.

Fête de la Musique has been going for more than 40 years, and is always held on the summer solstice.

**NEWS****Foreign**

## Niger and Benin discuss normalising relations between the two countries

Following a visit to Niger earlier this month by Benin's new president, there were high-level talks in Cotonou this weekend aimed at accelerating the normalisation of relations.

There have been tensions between the two countries since the military seized power in Niger in July 2023 and closed its border with Benin, restricting trade.

Niamey accused Cotonou of hosting French military bases, aiding efforts to destabilise the new authorities, and serving as a relay for terrorist groups responsible for attacks in Niger.

The junta broke away from France, its traditional ally and

former colonial power, following the coup.

Like other states in the region, both Niger and Benin are battling jihadist violence.

But the 2 June visit by Benin's Romuald Wadagni revitalised the momentum for re-establishing relations.

On Saturday, newly established joint expert committees continued discussions aimed at reopening the shared border and resolving the crisis.

Talks focused on security and defence, diplomacy and legal affairs, and the economy, with a delegate saying the opening the border was a "done deal".

The discussions were due to continue on Sunday.

## Tight security as Indian students resit medical exam after alleged paper leak

Millions of hopeful medical students across India are resitting a crucial exam under unprecedented security, after the first paper was cancelled following allegations that the questions had been leaked.

Nervous students were met with biometric identification checks, metal detectors, armoured patrols and frisking at exam centres on Sunday morning.

Leaving nothing to chance this time, the Indian Air Force transported the new test papers to some regions, while police and paramilitary officers were deployed at the 5,440 exam centres across the country.

The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate), known as NEET-UG, is required for students to join medical colleges in India.

Of the millions who take the exam every year, only a small percentage do well enough to secure a coveted college placement.

Nearly 2.28 million candidates sat the exam on 3 May, having studied for months - in some cases years - for the notoriously difficult paper.

The news that it had been scrapped was devastating for many students, and the scandal sparked widespread protests and demands for Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to resign.

He did not, and told students before Sunday's exam: "Sit fearlessly, without worry, and you will definitely do well."

The National Testing Agency (NTA) said every exam room, of which there were more than 95,000, had been fitted with security cameras, and that more than 1.3 million cameras in total had been installed.

It added that 51,311 jammers were being used to block phone signals and electrical interference. Controversially, Telegram has been temporarily

blocked until Monday, over concerns the messaging app could be used for cheating.

Nearly 39,000 frisking staff had been employed across the country to check for any prohibited items, the NTA said, and there would be 40-50 security personnel stationed at every exam centre.

It advised students to "ignore rumours and fake 'paper leak' messages circulating on social media", saying they were designed to "mislead and cause stress".

The Indian Air Force was used to transport the new exam papers securely to some regions.

India Today reported drones and dog squads had been deployed to keep an eye on the surrounding areas of some centres.

It also said that strict dress codes were being enforced, including the banning of enclosed shoes, and that some women had been asked to remove their nose pins and wrist threads.

Pictures from outside exam centres showed security personnel inspecting candidates' hair, and taking out their earrings.

Despite the heightened security, some students said they were still worried things could go wrong again.

"There is fear because the [exam] paper has leaked once already. This is not a one-off thing, it happens every year," one student, who gave their name as Diksha, told Reuters.

"This time [the authorities] got to know about it and are holding the exam again, which is in a way a good thing because the students who worked hard should get fair results. But to study and prepare again in one month... to stay consistent is difficult."

The cancellation of the exam in May due to allegations of paper leaks sparked student protests



**ETHIOPIAN GENERAL ELECTION:**

Abiy Ahmed says he is transforming the economy of Africa's second most-populous nation.

## Nobel Peace Prize winner triumphs at Ethiopian polls but fears grow of new conflict

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is the big winner following the country's general election as his party has retained its overwhelming parliamentary majority, despite the poll being overshadowed by conflict, accusations of repression and little participation by opposition parties.

The Prosperity Party, which has 438 out of the 501 seats declared, will form the new government with Abiy set to be sworn in for another term at the beginning of October. It is a boon for Abiy's supporters, who believe he will continue with the economic gains he has overseen.

But others fear the internal divisions and security challenges facing Africa's second most-populous country are only going to get worse with Abiy at the helm.

The 49-year-old first came to power amid anti-government protests in 2018, and he was at first hailed for his campaign to heal divisions - though he upset politicians from the northern region of Tigray who had dominated the government for more than two decades.

Just a year later he won the

Nobel Peace Prize, mainly for his efforts in ending hostilities with Ethiopia's northern neighbour Eritrea.

But security experts fear the country could be heading back to war, while the violent and deadly insurgencies in Ethiopia's Amhara and Oromia regions show no sign of ending.

On election day, 143 polling stations failed to open in the country's two most-populous regions because of safety concerns caused by armed groups fighting the government.

The Fano militias in Amhara and the proscribed Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) in Oromia, which both want greater autonomy, rejected the election and its results.

The situation is also troubling in Tigray, which is still recovering from a two-year civil war that only ended in 2022. The region and its six million inhabitants, comprising 36 constituencies, were completely excluded from the poll amid rising fears that fighting could break out once more.

Tigray borders Eritrea and during the war, its troops were allied with Ethiopian government forces. They were accused of widespread atrocities against

Tigrayan civilians, which were denied. But since the conflict ended, relations between Addis Ababa and Asmara have sharply deteriorated.

Eritrea, with its 1,350km (840-mile) coastline, accuses landlocked Ethiopia of having imperial ambitions. Over the last three years Abiy has repeatedly spoken of his country's need to regain access to a Red Sea port, which it lost when Eritrea became independent in 1993.

In a dramatic about-turn, Asmara has now allied itself with Tigray's leaders - and should any new conflict erupt, it is likely that Eritrea would side with Tigrayan forces and vice-versa.

Addis Ababa has also been accused of involvement in the civil war in Sudan, which borders both Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Multiple reports have alleged that Addis Ababa has supported one of Sudan's warring factions, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), although Ethiopia has repeatedly denied this.

While Eritrea and Tigrayan forces have long been understood to have close links to the Sudanese military, which is fighting the RSF.

It all makes for a toxic cocktail which could potentially spread across the region - and it does not look like Abiy is about to play peacemaker.

The enmity between Abiy's government and the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the dominant party in the region, was supposed to have ended with the peace deal signed in November 2022.

But both sides accuse each other of violating that agreement.

The conflict was one of the most deadly this century, with the African Union's mediator estimating some 600,000 people had died as the fighting drove the region to the precipice of famine. The government was accused of blocking food aid to the region - an allegation it denied.

"The risks are real and are driven by both sides," Cameron Hudson, an Africa analyst who once worked for the US State Department, told the BBC.

People in Tigray are worried as many youths are being recruited to join the military."

Shewit Wudassie  
Opposition politician in Tigray

Just before the election, the TPLF restored its pre-war administration, disbanding an interim one appointed by Prime Minister Abiy.

"The Tigrayans bear responsibility for the growing tensions and they've been making moves and statements that suggest that they are preparing for a renewal of fighting," said Hudson.

There are reports that the TPLF is forcibly recruiting young men to join its forces.

Shewit Wudassie, a member of Salsay Weyane, an opposition political party operating in Tigray, told the BBC: "People in Tigray are worried as many youths are being recruited to join the military."

## Iran says Strait of Hormuz closed again after Israeli attacks on Lebanon

Iran on Saturday said it has closed the Strait of Hormuz again, because of deadly Israeli strikes on Lebanon that are a breach of Tehran's agreement with the United States to end the war.

The announcement comes as a high-level Iranian team arrived in Switzerland to meet with US vice-president JD Vance for a new round of peace talks.

In a statement from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps read out on Iranian state

television, it also warned vessels not to approach the Strait "otherwise, their security will be placed at risk".

The US military has, however, disputed the claim saying commercial ship traffic continued through the strait on Saturday.

It said 55 merchant ships transited, "moving large amounts of cargo and more than 17 million barrels of oil to global markets".

It was not clear when in the day they had moved through

the Strait.

Ships began transiting after the interim US-Iran agreement was signed earlier in the week, a milestone that has left plenty of questions unanswered.

Talks between Tehran and Washington are reportedly due to get underway on Sunday, following a 14-point deal they signed earlier in the week.

It started a 60-day negotiating period to resolve wider issues, including on Iran's nuclear programme.



# EDO STATE UNIVERSITY, IYAMHO

Km 7, Auchi-Abuja Road, Iyamho-Uzairue, Edo State Nigeria

## INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE POSTS OF REGISTRAR AND BURSAR

### PREAMBLE

The posts of the Registrar and Bursar of Edo State University, Iyamho, Edo State, Nigeria, are vacant. In accordance with the provisions of Section 6(1) (2) and (3) of Edo State University Iyamho Law 2014 as amended, the Governing Council of the Edo State University, Iyamho wishes to commence the process of appointing a new Registrar and Bursar for the University. Consequently, applications are hereby invited from suitably qualified candidates for the positions.

### THE UNIVERSITY

The Edo State Government established the University with a view to developing human capital through quality education, thereby is expected to propel development of human capital, social, economic, political, cultural, scientific and industrial growth in the State, Nigeria and globally.

### 1. THE REGISTRAR

The Registrar is the Chief Administrative Officer of the University and is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the day-to-day administration of the affairs (other than financial matters) of the University. The Registrar is also the Secretary to the University Governing Council, Senate, and Convocation.

#### a. ELIGIBILITY/REQUIREMENTS

The candidate for the post of Registrar must possess a good honours (minimum second class lower) degree from a recognised University, with at least fifteen (15) years relevant post-qualification experience in the university system. Possession of higher degree(s), professional qualifications, and membership of at least a professional body will be an advantage. Also, the candidate is expected to:

- (i) Have occupied the position of Deputy Registrar in a university system for a minimum of three (3) years.
- (ii) Not be more than sixty (60) years of age at the time of assumption of duty;
- (iii) Demonstrate evidence of consummate management and leadership passion and drive in previous positions, and in addition, must possess excellent communication and interpersonal relationship skills;
- (iv) Exhibit the ability to be a team leader who can lead by example, has clear mentorship skills and plans;
- (v) Possess personal integrity, demonstrate transparency in private and public life, be able to command the respect and loyalty of staff, students and other members of the University Community;
- (vi) Be proficient in the use of relevant Information Communication Technology (ICT) tools;
- (vii) Have a good working knowledge of contemporary administrative principles, processes and practices;
- (viii) Be in excellent physical and mental health.

#### b. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE APPLICABLE TO THE POST

The Registrar shall hold office for a single term of five (5) years only on such terms and conditions as may be specified in the letter of appointment. The remuneration and other conditions of service are as applicable to the post of Registrar in public universities in Nigeria and as may be determined from time to time by the Edo State Government/Governing Council of the University.

### 2. THE BURSAR

The Bursar is the Chief Financial Officer of the University and is directly responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the day-to-day administration and control of the financial affairs of the University. The candidate shall advise the Vice-Chancellor on finance-related matters, coordinate the development and update the University's financial management plans; coordinate the preparation of periodic income and expenditure statements, balance sheet, cash flow estimates and consolidation, when necessary.

The candidate shall ensure that accurate records are maintained of all assets and liabilities held by the University. The duties include monitoring monthly income and expenditure and balance sheet variances against the budgets and ensuring that they are reconciled; monitoring treasury activities including cash flow projections and forecasts for prudence and accountability; negotiating with financial and government institutions regarding financial matters. The candidate shall coordinate the activities of the Bursary Department for the efficient and effective management of the finances of the University.

#### a. ELIGIBILITY/REQUIREMENTS

*The applicant for the post of Bursar must possess a good honours (minimum second class lower) degree in Accounting, Finance or related disciplines from a recognised University, with at least fifteen (15) years relevant post-qualification experience in a university. Possession of a higher qualification*

*will be an added advantage. The applicant must be a member of either ICAN or ANAN and must possess any of the following recognized professional accountancy qualifications: ACA, ACCA, CIMA, CPA or their equivalent. Possession of a Fellowship of the above-listed qualifications shall be an added advantage. The candidate is also expected to:*

- (i) Not be below the rank of Deputy Bursar or its equivalent and must have spent at least three (3) years on the post;
- (ii) Be proficient in the use of relevant accounting software and Information Communication Technology (ICT);
- (iii) Demonstrate evidence of consummate management and leadership passion and drive in previous positions and in addition, must possess excellent communication and interpersonal relationship skills;
- (iv) Exhibit the ability to be a team leader, who can lead by example and has clear mentorship skills and plans; and should not be older than sixty (60) years at the time of appointment.
- (v) Exhibit a considerable degree of competence, responsiveness, demonstrable integrity and transparency on matters of financial resource management with outstanding experience at the management level;
- (vi) Be a person with good leadership qualities who can inspire and motivate colleagues, a person with a clear vision for the financial management of the University and must be ready to implement the vision and strategic goals of the University;
- (vii) Be focused, innovative and computer-literate;
- (viii) Be in excellent physical and mental health.

#### b. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE APPLICABLE TO THE POST

The Bursar shall hold office for a single term of five (5) years only on such terms and conditions as may be specified in the letter of appointment. The remuneration and other conditions of service are as applicable to the post of Bursar in public universities in Nigeria and as may be determined from time to time by the State Government/Governing Council of the University.

### 3. METHOD OF APPLICATION

Prospective applicants are expected to submit the following documents: (a) a cover letter (b) an up-to-date curriculum vitae (CV), (c) a statement of his/her vision, not exceeding 1000 words, for effective and efficient administration (Registrar)/effective and efficient financial management (Bursar) of the University, and (d) all documents that support any claim made in the applicant's CV should be notarised. All relevant details of the candidate's qualification and experience should be stated in the CV in the following order:

- Name in full (surname last and in capital letters)
- Place and Date of Birth
- Permanent Home Address
- Contact Address: Postal Address, GSM Number(s) and E-mail Address
- Nationality
- State of Origin and Local Government
- Marital Status
- Number and Ages of Children (if any)
- Educational Institutions Attended (with dates)
- Academic and Professional Qualifications Obtained (with dates)
- Work Experience with date, including full details of former and present post(s), indicating present status and salary
- Extracurricular Activities
- Names and addresses of three (3) Referees (one of whom must be candidate's present employer)

Applications should be submitted online on the University website and copies should also be sent to: [vc@edouniversity.edu.ng](mailto:vc@edouniversity.edu.ng). (All documents must be submitted in PDF format)

Note that it is the responsibility of applicants to contact the three referees listed in their CV to submit a confidential report on their character as well as academic and managerial competencies via the link: <https://edouniversity.edu.ng/referees>. Referees should also submit signed electronic copies of their references in PDF format to: [vc@edouniversity.edu.ng](mailto:vc@edouniversity.edu.ng).

All applications should be submitted via the university website as follows:

Registrar: <https://www.edouniversity.edu.ng/vacancies/registrar>

Bursar: <https://www.edouniversity.edu.ng/vacancies/bursar>

### SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION/ DEADLINE

Application closes six (6) weeks from the date of this advertisement. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Signed:

**VINCENT ERHAGBE**

Acting Registrar/Secretary to Council



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10 X 4	340,000	365,500	273,500	294,013	177,400	190,705	370,000	397,750	295,600	317,770
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**24 Airport Road, Benin City,  
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**EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 14, 2026**

# Sports

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

## Emerse Faé: "This defeat should serve Ivory Coast well for rest of competition"

Ivory Coast suffered a devastating 2-1 defeat to Germany after taking a halftime lead but head coach Emerse Faé chose to focus on the positives as well as the negatives in his

post-match comments.

Two second half goals from substitute forward Deniz Undav, including his winner in second half stoppage time, allowed Germany to escape from Toronto,

Canada with all three points.

All the more damaging after Ivorian substitute forward Simon Adingra failed to convert an excellent chance not long before the winner. Captain and midfielder Franck Kessié previously opened the scoring at the half hour mark for the Elephants.

"Yeah, a little bit of frustration after this defeat. Firstly because we managed to open the scoring against this great German team. Also because we conceded two goals at the end of the game, and especially because we even had the chance at 1-1 to make it 2-1, which would have allowed us to put a real blow on the Germans and perhaps win this match," Faé stated in his opening com-

ments.

"But alongside the frustration, there is still a lot of pride. Really happy with the behavior of my players during these 90 minutes. We put in a great performance against one of the big favorites in this competition and I think this defeat should serve us well for the rest of this competition."

Faé went into more detail about what allowed Germany to sneak the victory.

"I think Germany's victory came down to experience. I think they had a bit more experience than us in how to manage highs and lows. It's true that during our strong period in the second half, we could have scored the second goal which



EMERSE FAÉ



ETORO BASSEY

## Bassey wins women's singles title at 2026 CBN Open Tennis Championship

Etoro Bassey on Saturday emerged champion of the women's singles event at the 2026 Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Open National Tennis Championship after defeating Success Ogunjobi 3-6, 6-0, 6-3 in the final.

The grand finale of the 47th edition of the championship was held at the tennis courts of the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja.

Bassey began her title campaign in the Round of 32 with a 6-1, 6-0 victory over Khadijat Salami before defeating Mary Azi 6-3, 6-4 in the Round of 16.

She continued her impressive run in the quarter-finals, over-

coming Nenrot Suwa 6-1, 6-0 to reach the semi-finals.

In the last four, Bassey edged Bright Emmanuel-Essien 6-0, 1-6, 6-4 in a closely contested encounter to book her place in the final.

For Ogunjobi, she opened her campaign with a dominant 6-0, 6-0 win over Bunmi Are in the Round of 32 before defeating Gloria Samuel 6-0, 6-3 in the Round of 16.

She maintained her fine form by defeating Mary Udofa 6-2, 6-0 in the quarter-finals.

In the semi-finals, Ogunjobi upset top seed Khadijat Mohammed 6-4, 4-6, 6-1 to secure a place in the final.

## Tennis: CBN sustains 47-year legacy, reaffirms commitment to youth empowerment

Olayemi Cardoso, Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), has reaffirmed the bank's commitment to talent development, youth empowerment and national unity through sports.

Cardoso made the commitment at the grand finale of the 47th edition of the CBN Open National Tennis Championship held on Saturday in Abuja.

Represented by the Acting Director of Corporate Communications, Hakama Sidi-Ali, Cardoso said the CBN had remained a proud sponsor and steadfast supporter of the championship for more than four decades.

According to him, the bank's support is driven by its belief in the transformative power of sports, particularly tennis, as a platform for discovering talent, building character and fostering national cohesion.

"The Central Bank of Nigeria's commitment to this championship reflects our conviction that sports can inspire excellence, create opportunities for young people and strengthen national unity," he said.

Cardoso said the tournament had over the years produced champions who rose from hum-

ble beginnings to attain national and international recognition.

He recalled that the CBN launched the Junior Tennis Championship in 2006 as a platform for nurturing emerging talents, noting that some of the senior finalists at the current edition were products of the junior competition.

According to him, their success demonstrates the value of sustained investment in youth development, mentorship and continuity.



CBN JUNIOR TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIP

## Cricket: YellowGreens secure bronze after Brazil win

Nigeria's Female YellowGreens ended their 2026 Kwibuka Women's T20I Tournament campaign on a high.

They defeated Brazil Women by two wickets to claim the bronze medal in Kigali on Saturday.



YELLOWGREENS TEAM

The match was played at the Gahanga Cricket Oval, where Nigeria showed resilience.

Nigeria bounced back from difficult results before the third-place playoff with a determined performance.

After winning the toss, Nigeria opted to field and restricted Brazil to 85 all out.

The YellowGreens produced disciplined bowling before chasing 87 for eight in 19.2 overs.

The victory came with four balls remaining, securing third place for the Nigerian side.

Player of the Match, Christabel Chukwuonye, led the bowling attack with three wickets for 13 runs. She also delivered a maiden over, while Oseyande Omonkhobho, Shola Adekunle and Rachael Samson claimed two wickets each.

Captain Favour Eseigbe added a wicket as Nigeria kept Brazil under pressure throughout the innings.

## Guernsey's lone fencer eyes Commonwealth challenge in Lagos

Ahead of the 2026 Commonwealth Fencing Championships, Guernsey's sole representative, Reeve Finch, says he is looking forward to competing at the tournament scheduled for Aug. 9 to Aug. 14 in Lagos.

Fencing is a combat sport in which two competitors use swords to score points by touching their opponent while avoid-

ing being hit themselves.

It is often described as a modern version of sword fighting and is one of the sports contested at the Olympic Games.

Finch, who mainly competes in the United Kingdom, is affiliated with the University of Salford Fencing Club and previously trained at the Guernsey Fencing Academy.

The young fencer said he had taken part in several regional and national competitions, including the British Fencing Elite Épée Series and the Mercia Novice Open.

Finch, a silver medallist in the Guernsey Junior Championships U14 Épée event, will be the island's sole representative at this year's championships.

The Commonwealth Fencing

Championships have been held every Commonwealth Games year since fencing was removed from the Commonwealth Games programme in 1974.

Finch expressed excitement about participating in the tournament.

"I'm really looking forward to it. I think it's going to be a good experience," he said.

## Katsina academy's young talents head to Portugal for 6-month trial

Abdullahi Mannir, a product of the Katsina Football Academy, has secured a visa and a six-month football trial in Portugal.

The trial trip was facilitated by Mr Murtala Banye, the member representing Rimi/Charanchi/Batagarawa Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives.

The spokesperson for the Katsina State Ministry of Sports and Youth Development, Mr Gide Sani, disclosed this in a statement issued in Katsina on Sunday.

According to him, the young footballer, an indigene of Dan-

dagoro in Batagarawa Local Government Area, will undergo the trial with the possibility of signing a professional contract upon attaining the age of 18.

"The initiative was facilitated through a partnership between the Katsina Football Academy and the federal lawmaker as part of efforts to promote youth development through sports," he said.

Sani said Banye had pledged continued support for talented young footballers across his constituency by creating opportunities that would enable them to realise their dreams of playing professional football.



KATSINA ACADEMY



# Home-based athletes power Nigeria's athletics renaissance —AFN

MAXWELL KUMOYE

Nigeria's athletics ecosystem is experiencing a remarkable revival, with home-based athletes emerging as the driving force behind the country's resurgence on the continental and global stage.

Over the past 12 months, locally based athletes have played a central role in restoring Nigeria's status as one of Africa's leading athletics nations.

Their outstanding performances at major regional and international competitions have highlighted the depth of talent being developed within the country and demonstrated the effectiveness of ongoing investment in grassroots and elite athlete development.

One of the defining moments of this resurgence came during Nigeria's qualification campaign for the World Athletics Relays Championships in Gaborone, Botswana.

Determined to return Nigeria to the forefront of global relay competition, the Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN), with the unwavering support of the National Sports Commission (NSC), implemented an ambitious competition and preparation programme.

The initiative enabled athletes to compete in three major national and international events as part of the build-up to the World Relays.

The strategic investment yielded impressive results, as Team Nigeria se-

cured qualification in six relay events for the World Athletics Relays Championships, underlining the nation's growing strength and competitiveness in relay racing.

Nigeria's success story continued in Botswana, where the country's relay teams once again rose to the occasion. Their impressive performances earned three relay qualification spots for the 2027 World Athletics Championships in China, reaffirming Nigeria's position among the world's elite relay nations.

Perhaps the most historic achievement came through the mixed relay team. Nigeria became the first African nation to qualify for the Mixed 4x100m Relay event at the inaugural World Athletics Ultimate Championship scheduled for Budapest, Hungary, in September.

The landmark feat underscored the country's sprinting pedigree and the steady progress of its relay development programme.

Even before the World Relays Championships, a predominantly home-based Team Nigeria had announced its arrival on the international stage with an outstanding performance at the Solidarity Games in Saudi Arabia.

The athletes displayed remarkable resilience, quality and determination, gaining invaluable experience and confidence ahead of bigger international assignments.

The same positive trend was ev-

ident at the CAA Senior Athletics Championships in Accra, Ghana, where home-grown athletes formed the backbone of Team Nigeria. Far from being overawed by the continental stage, they delivered commendable performances that justified the confidence reposed in them by coaches, administrators and stakeholders.

According to the 2nd Vice President of the Athletics Federation of Nigeria, Aku Aghazu, the recent achievements validate the federation's deliberate commitment to developing athletes within the country.

"The true strength of any athletics system is not measured by its stars or elites abroad but by the opportunities made available to athletes training in Nigeria," Aghazu said.

She stressed that home-based athletes remain at the heart of the federation's long-term vision.

"Home-based athletes represent the foundation of Nigeria's athletics future and their development remains a strategic priority for this current board of the AFN."

Aghazu noted that the federation has already commenced initiatives aimed at keeping athletes active throughout the year while identifying outstanding talents for intensive development programmes.

Gladly enough, the AFN hierarchy has long begun implementing programmes designed to keep home-

based athletes engaged all year round through competitions, training camps and performance monitoring, while selecting exceptional talents for closed camping, nurturing and intensive coaching.

The federation also acknowledged the collaboration and support of the National Sports Commission during the recent training camp in Asaba, noting that the benefits were immediately evident in Nigeria's performances at the World Relays in Botswana and the African Championships in Accra, Ghana.

Despite financial constraints, Aghazu said the federation remains committed to creating opportunities for athletes based in Nigeria.

"From improved competition structures, to enhanced athlete support, to stronger partnerships with schools and other stakeholders for talent identification and development, to capacity building for coaches and officials, the AFN is primed to ensuring that our home-based athletes are given similar opportunities as their peers abroad."

She further praised the National Sports Commission for its continued support of athletics development.

"The National Sports Commission under the leadership of Mallam Shehu Dikko and Hon. Bukola Olopade remains a trusted and welcome partner."

Aghazu revealed that one of the major infrastructure projects cur-

rently underway is the complete refurbishment of the athletics facility in Shagamu, Ogun State.

"Under the NSC, Nigeria is getting a fully refurbished athletics stadium in Shagamu near Babcock University. The university is also coming on board to support our athletes through scholarships and other developmental opportunities. The NSC has equally assisted greatly in ensuring that our home-based athletes gain more exposure to international competitions."

She disclosed that, for the first time in many years, prize money will be introduced at the National Trials specifically for home-based athletes and a number of outstanding coaches as part of efforts to encourage excellence and reward performance.

At the heart of this success story is the Athletics Federation of Nigeria's deliberate and sustained commitment to talent identification and development.

Through targeted programmes and strategic exposure opportunities, the federation has continued to nurture a new generation of athletes across track and field events.

Among the athletes who have benefited from the initiative are rising stars such as Chidera Ezeakor, Tejiri Godwin, Miracle Ezechukwu, Maria Thompson, Rosemary Nwankwo, Nathaniel Samson, Sikiru Adeyemi, Asuquo Ezekiel, Esther Okon, Gafari Badmus and Toheebat Jimoh.



# Morocco edge Scotland to boost World Cup knockout hopes

Morocco strengthened their chances of reaching the knockout stage of the 2026 FIFA World Cup with a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Scotland in a Group C match on Saturday.

The North Africans made a bright start, taking the lead in the second minute through Ismael Saibari.

The early goal handed Morocco the advantage and set the tone for a closely contested encounter. Morocco dominated large pe-

riods of the first half, controlling possession and dictating the tempo of the game, while Scotland struggled to create clear scoring opportunities.

The Scots gradually found their rhythm and launched attacks through the flanks, but Morocco's defence remained organised to keep them at bay.

Scotland increased the pressure after the break, enjoying longer spells of possession as they searched for an equaliser.

However, Morocco's disciplined defence stood firm and denied the Europeans any breakthrough.

Morocco also posed a threat on the counterattack and came

close to increasing their lead on several occasions.

As the game approached its closing stages, Scotland pushed more players forward, but Morocco showed composure and resilience to preserve their narrow advantage.

The victory moved Morocco into a strong position in Group C after they had opened their campaign with a draw against Brazil.

For Scotland, the defeat was a setback after their opening win over Haiti, leaving them with work to do in their final group match.

Saibari's early strike ultimately proved decisive as Morocco secured a valuable three points in their quest for a place in the knockout round.



MOROCCO VS SCOTLAND



NETHERLANDS CELEBRATING

# Netherlands crush Sweden 5-1 to boost World Cup hopes

The Netherlands delivered a dominant display by defeating Sweden 5-1 in their FIFA World Cup Group F encounter.

The Dutch combined attacking quality with defensive discipline to strengthen their knockout stage ambitions.

From the opening whistle, the Netherlands showed greater urgency and purpose against a struggling Swedish side.

Their high pressing unsettled Sweden and paid off in the fifth minute when Brian Brobbey opened the scoring.

Brobbey capitalised on a de-

fensive mistake before doubling the advantage in the 17th minute.

The early goals lifted Dutch confidence as they controlled possession and stretched the Swedish defence.

Sweden pushed forward in search of a response but lacked the creativity to trouble the Dutch backline.

The Netherlands remained organised and looked threatening whenever they launched quick counter-attacks.

Cody Gakpo took control after the interval, scoring in the 47th minute and striking again seven minutes later.

# Abua dethrones defending champion to win 2026 CBN Open Tennis title

Canice Abua emerged champion of the Men's Singles event at the 2026 Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Open National Tennis Championship, defeating defending champion Emmanuel Michael 6-1, 6-2 in the final on Saturday in Abuja.

The grand finale of the 47th edition of the championship was held at the tennis courts of the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja.

The highly anticipated final, which was briefly interrupted by heavy rainfall for more than two hours, resumed with Abua maintaining his dominance to seal victory in straight sets.

From the opening game, Abua controlled proceedings with powerful groundstrokes, accurate serving and relentless consistency, leaving the defending champion struggling to find answers.

The new champion dictated rallies from the baseline and capitalised on a series of unforced errors from Michael to take the first set comfortably 6-1.

After play was suspended by rain, Abua returned with the same intensity, quickly re-establishing control of the contest before closing out the second set 6-2 to claim the title.

His aggressive approach and tactical discipline left little room for a comeback as he completed

the match without dropping a set. Abua's triumph capped an outstanding campaign throughout the 10-day championship.

His title run began in the round of 64 with a 6-2, 6-4 victory over rising youngster Nuhu Urenyang

before overcoming Sani Musa 6-4, 6-3 in the round of 32.

In the round of 16, he defeated Muhammed Dahiru 6-2, 6-4 before advancing to the quarter-finals, where he dispatched David Edwards 6-2, 6-3.



2026 CBN OPEN TENNIS TITLE

# World Cup: Viewing centre operators in Kwara lament low patronage

Viewing centre operators in Kwara have expressed concern over low patronage during the ongoing 2026 FIFA World Cup co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico.



VIEWING CENTRE OPERATORS IN KWARA

The operators, who spoke with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Saturday in Ilorin, attributed the poor turnout largely to Nigeria's failure to qualify for the tournament.

Deji Aina, a viewing centre

operator in the Amilegbe area of Ilorin, said patronage had fallen far below expectations.

"People are showing little interest in watching the matches, unlike what we used to experience in the past when viewing centres would be filled to capacity during the World Cup," he said.

Similarly, Aliyu Muritala, who operates a viewing centre in the Taiwo area, said the absence of the Super Eagles had negatively affected turnout.

"Most people are not interested because the Super Eagles failed to qualify.

"The turnout is too low and it is affecting our business," he

said.

Also speaking, another operator, Samson Adeolu, described the situation as the poorest turnout he had experienced during a World Cup competition.

According to him, patronage has dropped significantly compared to previous tournaments.

"My centre used to accommodate more than 70 people during previous World Cups and major European football competitions.

"Now, I only get about seven or eight viewers in spite of the fact that it is the World Cup. It is seriously affecting our business," he said.

# World Cup: Germany fight back to beat Ivory Coast 2-1

Germany came from behind to defeat Ivory Coast 2-1 in a thrilling FIFA World Cup Group E encounter.

The victory strengthened Germany's chances of reaching the knockout stage after another impressive tournament display.

Both teams entered the match with victories from their opening fixtures, raising expectations for a close contest.

Germany had earlier defeated Curacao 7-1, while Ivory Coast secured a 1-0 win over Ecuador.

Ivory Coast started brightly and took the lead in the 30th minute through Franck Kessié's composed finish.

Kessié capitalised on a well-built attacking move to put the African side ahead against the European giants.

Germany increased the pressure after the interval, pushing forward in search of an equaliser.

Their persistence was rewarded in the 68th minute when Deniz Undav struck to level proceedings.

The equaliser shifted momentum towards Germany as they controlled possession and created more attacking opportunities.

Ivory Coast defended resolutely and appeared capable of securing a valuable point from the encounter.

