

# June 30 Anti-migrant deadline: Nigerian leader in S/Africa seeks FG's intervention

ABUJA

Nigerian community leader in South Africa has urged the Federal Government to engage Pretoria ahead of a June 30 deadline announced by anti-immigration groups.

Ekos Akpokabayen, Chairman, Board of Trustees of the Nigerian Union South Africa (NUSA), who made the call in a statement, expressed concern that developments surrounding the deadline could heighten tensions and threaten the safety of foreign nationals residing in South Africa.

He clarified that the June 30 date was not set by the South African government.

According to him, the deadline was announced by anti-foreign immigration groups demanding that undocumented migrants leave the country.

He urged the Nigerian government to proactively engage South African authorities and relevant stakeholders on the matter.

"I urge the Nigerian government to take proactive measures by engaging the South African government and relevant

authorities," he said.

Akpokabayen warned that tensions linked to the deadline could escalate into violence against both documented and undocumented foreign nationals.

According to him, criminal elements could exploit any unrest to attack or loot businesses

owned by foreigners.

He also advised the Nigerian Mission in South Africa to closely monitor developments and sustain engagement with community leaders.

The NUSA leader said regular

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# The Nigerian OBSERVER

That The People May Know

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#200

## Okpebholo cautions religious leaders against pleading for suspects

● **says some residents recruit criminals to perpetrate crime in Edo**

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo has said that criminal networks operating in the state

are now being reinforced with recruits from other parts of the country with local collaborators arranging kidnap-for-ran-

som operations and handing over victims to hired gangs in the bush.

The Governor who disclosed

this at the 2026 Ministers' Conference organised by the Edo State chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)

in Benin City said that while insecurity remained a genuine concern, much of what was being circulated on social media about the situation in Edo was false and orchestrated to discredit his administration.

He cited a recent example in which he received a report of an incident along the Sapele Road and immediately deployed security operatives to the area, only to discover that nothing had happened.

"Do you know one funny

thing — our people are now going outside Edo to recruit criminals to help them do the job. They will kidnap somebody and hand the victim over to them in the bush," the governor said.

"Tomorrow you will see them driving expensive cars and building houses. How are they getting these things? They will tell you they are Yahoo Boys."

The Governor urged religious leaders not to intercede on behalf of anyone arrested in connection with criminal activity, saying such interventions would not be entertained.

"Pastors, if you hear that I have arrested somebody, don't

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SECURITY SUMMIT:

NUJ National President, Alhassan Yahya (4th left), with some members of the union in FCT ahead of NUJ-organized Thursday's security summit in Abuja, yesterday.

## 2026 UTME original result slips ready for printing, says JAMB

ABUJA

The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) says the 2026 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) Original Result Slip will be available for printing within two hours

on Wednesday.

JAMB's Public Communication Adviser, Dr Fabian Benjamin, disclosed this in a statement issued in Abuja.

Benjamin explained that the Original Result Slip contained candidates' photographs, national rankings and other

security features designed to enhance its authenticity and acceptance for official purposes.

According to him, the document is among the official requirements for post-UTME screening and admission consideration by tertiary institutions.

He advised candidates to print the slip from any internet-enabled device or accredited business centre.

The spokesman also urged candidates to verify all details on the slip immediately after printing and keep a copy for future admission-related purposes.

## Ramat Park flyover: Motorists applaud Okpebholo

● say pace, quality exceed public expectations

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

Residents, traders and motorists in Benin City have commended Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, for the ongoing construction of the Ramat Park Flyover, the first of its kind in the history of the state, which is now nearing completion well ahead of the 18-month contractual timeline.

The landmark infrastructure project, located at the busy Ramat Park axis of Benin City, has generated excitement among residents who say the flyover and the newly constructed roads around the corridor will

significantly ease traffic congestion and improve movement within the state capital.

Speaking with our correspondent, several residents expressed optimism that the project would bring lasting relief to motorists and commuters who have endured years of traffic gridlock along the strategic route connecting major parts of the city.

Mr. Osagie Egharevba, a resident of Benin City, described the project as a game-changer for transportation within the metropolis.

"For many years, this axis has been synonymous with

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Senate clears Customs of N62.2bn under-remittance query, orders reconciliation of 76 outstanding audit issues —Pg 3

1.02m voters collected PVCs for Ekiti guber election —INEC —Pg 6

Equatorial Guinea government resigns after failing to meet targets —Pgs 8

NOC unveils safeguarding policy to protect athletes —Pg 11

# Edo Govt partners schools to promote tourism education through tourism clubs

The Edo State Government has reaffirmed its commitment to youth development and educational advancement through the introduction of Tourism Clubs in secondary schools across the state.

This commitment was underscored during the signing of the Tourism School Club Partnership Agreement held at the Edo State Senior Secondary

Education Board (SSEB), Education Hub, Iyaro, Benin City.

Speaking at the event, the Director-General of the Edo State Tourism Agency, Lady Vivian Elabor, described tourism education as a vital tool for equipping young people with the confidence, exposure, and skills required to thrive in a rapidly evolving global environment.

According to her, the Tourism Club initiative is designed to promote cultural awareness, enrich students' learning experiences, and empower them with knowledge that will prepare them for future opportunities in an increasingly interconnected world.

Lady Elabor noted that students often demonstrate greater enthusiasm and engagement when given opportunities to discuss their communities, traditions, and cultural heritage. She added that the initiative would

provide a platform for students to tell the stories of their communities while fostering a deeper appreciation of Edo State's rich cultural and tourism assets.

She assured stakeholders that the programme would be both educational and engaging, enabling students to learn through tourism-based activities and experiential learning.

The Director-General further disclosed that the Tourism School Club would be inclusive and feature periodic debates, quiz competitions, and other interactive activities, with prizes awarded to outstanding participants to encourage active involvement.

Also speaking, the Chairman of the Edo State Senior Secondary Education Board, Dr. Rita Erewele, commended the initiative, describing it as a strategic programme that aligns with the developmental aspirations of the state government.

Dr. Erewele observed that children naturally possess a desire to explore and learn about the world around them, adding that the Tourism Club would help broaden their horizons and expose them to opportunities beyond their immediate environment.

She further noted that the programme could contribute to addressing the challenge of irreg-

ular migration by providing students with a better understanding of global opportunities and the pathways to achieving their aspirations through legitimate means.

The SSEB Chairman also commended the administration of Governor Senator Monday Okpebholo for its unwavering commitment to educational development, youth empowerment, and the overall growth of Edo State.

The Tourism School Club initiative is expected to foster a new generation of tourism ambassadors who will promote cultural preservation, community development, and tourism awareness across the state.

## Okpebholo cautions religious leaders...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

come to beg me," he said.

The governor acknowledged that the state was not entirely free of security challenges but insisted that the situation was being exaggerated by those with political motives.

"All of this is just to bring this government down, to give it a bad name. It is not that we are free, but not in the way they are hyping it," he said.

He assured residents that security operatives were working round the clock to prevent criminals from establishing a foothold in the state.

Governor Okpebholo also

requested a special prayer for President Bola Tinubu from the congregation, saying the President's decision to remove the fuel subsidy, though painful, was responsible for the development now visible across Edo State.

In her remarks, Pastor Margaret Agbonifo commended the governor for his commitment to faith and public service, and prayed that he would complete his tenure strong and leave Edo better than he met it.

Also speaking, the Vice Chairman of CAN in Edo, Rev. Alfred Agbonlahor, praised the governor for the ongoing rehabilitation of the Benin-Sapele Road.

## June 30 Anti-migrant deadline: Nigerian...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

consultations would help keep Nigerians informed of developments and measures aimed at safeguarding their welfare.

He urged Nigerians living in South Africa to remain calm, vigilant and law-abiding during the period.

Akpokabayen expressed confidence that proactive engagement by both governments would help manage potential tensions and protect residents.

"I believe any tensions associated with the June 30 deadline can be effectively managed through timely intervention," he said.

## Ramat Park flyover: Motorists...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

traffic congestion, especially during peak hours. What we are seeing today is remarkable. We are eager for the flyover to be opened to traffic because it will save time and improve economic activities," he said.

Another resident, Mrs. Esther Omoregie, noted that the pace and quality of work had exceeded public expectations.

"When the project was announced, many people doubted it could move this fast. Today, we can all see the progress. Governor Okpebholo deserves commendation for prioritizing infrastructure that directly impacts the lives of ordinary people," she stated.

Traders operating around the Ramat Park corridor also lauded the governor's commitment to transforming the area, saying the completed project would boost commercial activities and attract more customers to the axis.

A trader, Mr. Friday Igbino- via, said although businesses experienced temporary disruptions during construction, the long-term benefits would outweigh the challenges.

"We have endured some inconveniences, but what is coming will be beneficial to every-

one. The improved roads and flyover will make the area more accessible and attract more people and businesses," he said.

Motorists were equally enthusiastic, describing the project as a practical solution to one of the most persistent traffic bottlenecks in Benin City.

A commercial driver, Mr. Samuel Aigbe, said the flyover would drastically reduce travel time for commuters.

"Anyone who uses this route regularly knows how frustrating the traffic can be. With this flyover and the road expansion around it, movement will become smoother. We appreciate the governor for making this a reality," he said.

Many residents noted that the near-completion of the project within the stipulated 18-month contract period reflects the administration's determination to deliver critical infrastructure projects across the state.

As finishing touches continue on the Ramat Park flyover, residents, traders and motorists say they are anxiously awaiting its official commissioning and opening for public use, expressing confidence that it will permanently address the gridlock that has characterised that axis of Benin City for decades.



**PUBLIC HEARING:**

L-R: Member, House of Representatives Committee on Defence, Abubakar Makki; Deputy Chairman of the Committee, Ahmad Kalambaina, and Chairman of the Committee, Babajimi Benson, during the two-day public hearing on five critical Bills aimed at strengthening Nigeria's military institutions, enhancing veterans' welfare, promoting food security, and advancing gender inclusion in the Armed Forces at the National Assembly in Abuja.

## FG dismisses report on new telecomms, fuel taxes

**ABUJA**

The Federal Government has dismissed a report suggesting that it was considering new taxes on telecommunications services and petroleum products.

This is contained in a statement issued by the Head of Information and Public Relations, in the Federal Ministry of Finance, Efe Ovuakporie, in Abuja on Monday.

The federal government said that the reports misrepresented recommendations contained in the International Monetary

Fund (IMF) Article IV Consultation Report on Nigeria.

The government explained that IMF recommendations were advisory and do not constitute government policy or binding obligations on Nigeria.

"The tax decisions in Nigeria are made through constitutional and legislative processes, guided by national priorities and economic realities," it said.

The federal government said the Value Added Tax (VAT) waiver on petroleum products, remains in force and has not been withdrawn.

"No process is underway to

activate any fuel surcharge provided for under existing legislation.

"Any such surcharge will require a ministerial order and publication in the Official Gazette before implementation.

"The suspension of such charges has helped shield households and businesses from global energy price shocks," the federal government said.

It said domestic fuel prices have remained relatively stable due to the continued waiver and suspension measures.

It said that the telecommu-

nications excise duty introduced before 2023 had been repealed under new tax laws.

Government said the excise duty was no longer applicable, contrary to claims circulating in some reports.

The federal government reaffirmed its commitment to reforms that support economic growth, improve revenue administration and attract investment.

The government said that future tax measures, if any, would be announced through official channels and implemented in accordance with the law.

## Federal, state collaboration driving development —Onanuga

**UMUAHIA**

Mr Bayo Onanuga, Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, said that the growing collaboration between the Federal Government and sub-nationals was accelerating development across the country.

Onanuga said this on Tuesday during a reception organised by the Abia Government for members of the Renewed Hope Ambassadors Media Tour Team in Umuahia.

The presidential aide, who is also the leader of the team, said

the media team came to conduct a tour of key federal and state projects.

He added that the tour was designed to give journalists the opportunity to objectively assess the projects and witness ongoing developmental strides firsthand.

"The federal and state governments are working together for the progress of Nigerians.

"The resources now available to states are enabling them to undertake projects that improve the lives of citizens," he said.

Onanuga noted that President Bola Tinubu's economic reforms had increased resour-

ces available to states for development projects.

He emphasised the importance of synergy between the national and sub-national governments in driving development and delivering democratic dividends to the people.

Gov. Alex Otti of Abia charged members of the media tour team to discharge their duties with professionalism, objectivity and accuracy.

The governor, represented by his deputy, Mr Ikechukwu Emetu, described the visit as a significant step towards promoting public awareness of government projects and policies.

He said that the public depended on the media not only to report events but also to provide context, balance and truth.

"In carrying out this responsibility, I urge you to remain steadfast in the principles of professionalism, objectivity, fairness and accuracy.

"The pursuit of truth must always remain the guiding principle of journalism.

"As custodians of public information, your words and reports have the power to unite or divide, inspire confidence or create doubt, and promote understanding or misconceptions," he said.

# Ekiti 2026: Tinubu drums support for Oyebanji's reelection

## ADO-EKITI

President Bola Tinubu on Tuesday called on the people of Ekiti to vote massively for the reelection of Gov. Biodun Oyebanji of the state during the upcoming June 20 gubernatorial election.

Tinubu, represented by Vice President Kashim Shettima, made the call in Ado-Ekiti, at the All Progressives Congress

(APC) Grand Finale Mega Rally.

The Nigerian leader maintained that continuity for Oyebanji was an investment in the peace, progress, and future of the state.

Tinubu told the people of the state that the joint ticket of Oyebanji and his deputy, Mrs Monisade Afuye, was a ticket of balance, experience, and continuity.

The President, who said that the ticket deserves renewal, noted that instead of a routine con-

test in Saturday's governorship poll, Ekiti was standing at the gate of a larger Nigerian journey.

"The task before you is simple, sacred, and historic. Go out and vote. Speak to your neighbours. Speak to your families.

"Speak to your wards, your unions, your communities, and your friends. Tell them that continuity in Ekiti is not a favour to one man.

"It is an investment in the peace, progress, and future of

this state.

"So, I ask you, sons and daughters of this proud land, to march to the polling units in your numbers and cast your votes for Biodun Oyebanji and his worthy Deputy, Mrs Afuye.

"Give them the mandate to finish the work they have so faithfully begun. Stand with them as steadfastly as they have stood with you."

He noted that the mammoth crowd that gathered at the Ekiti

Parapo Pavilion was an indication that the people of the state are together with the APC and the government at the centre.

"Rather than approaching leadership as a theatre, the governor understands that government must touch the market woman, teacher, civil servant, farmer, students, drivers, traders, and the family waiting for hope at the end of each month."

Tinubu stated that Oyebanji has shown dedication to the welfare of Ekiti people, carried himself with humility, governed with patience, and listened with respect.

"In governor Oyebanji, Ekiti has a son who did not come to experiment with the state. He came prepared.

"He came with knowledge

of the land. He came with respect for elders, with regard for institutions, and with a heart open to the young.

"He has not spent his time fighting shadows. He has spent it building bridges, strengthening trust, and keeping the machinery of government focused on service."

The President described the joint ticket as one of balance, experience, and continuity that has worked, and therefore deserves renewal.

"APC's stability is not an accident but a product of sacrifice by noble leaders like Oyebanji, leaders who understand that politics without discipline becomes confusion and ambition without order becomes injury to the people," he said.



## TOURISM AGREEMENT:

Director-General, Edo State Tourism Agency, Lady Viviana Elabor, and Chairman, Edo State Senior Secondary Education Board, Dr. Rita Erewele, in a group photograph with other stakeholders yesterday shortly after signing Tourism School Club Partnership Agreement in Benin City.

## Senate clears Customs of N62.2bn under-remittance query, orders reconciliation of 76 outstanding audit issues

CAROLINE AMEH

### ABUJA

The Senate Public Accounts Committee (SPAC) has cleared the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) of allegations of N62.2 billion under-remittance contained in the 2019 Audit Report of the Auditor-General for the Federation.

The committee reached the decision on Tuesday during an investigative session with the Comptroller-General of Customs, Bashir Adewale Adeniyi, while examining 77 audit queries relating to alleged financial infractions raised against the service in the 2019 and 2020 audit reports.

Following deliberations on the first three audit queries and explanations provided by

the Customs leadership, the committee resolved to set up a special reconciliation panel to address the remaining 76 outstanding audit issues.

During the session, representatives of the Auditor-General's office informed the committee that Customs generated N691.242 billion in revenue in 2017 but remitted only N629.23 billion into the Federation Account, leaving an alleged balance of N62.2 billion unremitted.

Responding to the query, Adeniyi dismissed the allegation, explaining that the amount in question represented levies collected on behalf of other government agencies and special funds that were not designated for remittance into the Federation Account.

According to him, the audit

observation arose from a misclassification of revenue categories.

"The alleged under-remittance of N62.2 billion was wrongly arrived at through the misclassification of levies collected by Customs.

While some collections are meant for remittance into the Federation Account, others, including certain levies on local production of wheat, textiles, wines and related products, are not payable into the Federation Account," he said.

The Customs boss maintained that the disputed amount comprised funds legally collected for specific purposes and beneficiaries outside the Federation Account structure.

He offered similar explanations on the second and third audit

queries, which appeared to satisfy members of the committee.

A member of the panel, Senator Babangida Hussaini, expressed surprise that the issues had progressed to the stage of legislative investigation.

"I was in the civil service just like the chairman of this committee before venturing into politics. Queries one, two and three should have been resolved at the reconciliation stage with auditors and not allowed to get to this level," he said.

In response, Adeniyi noted that the period covered by the audit coincided with years in which relations between the Senate and the Nigeria Customs Service were less cordial, a situation he suggested may have contributed to unresolved issues.

## Oshiomhole denies forgery allegation in Natasha suspension saga, says remarks misrepresented

CAROLINE AMEH

### ABUJA

Senator Adams Aliyu Oshiomhole, representing Edo North Senatorial District, has distanced himself from reports suggesting that he alleged the forgery of senators' signatures in connection with the suspension of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, insisting that his comments were misrepresented.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Interior clarified that at no point did he claim that any senator's signature was forged during the process that led to Akpoti-Uduaghan's suspension.

Oshiomhole said the clarification became necessary following what he described as an "obvious misrepresentation" of comments he made during an interview on AIT's Politics Today programme on Monday, June 15, 2026.

"The insinuation that I said signatures of senators were forged is a complete misrepresentation of what I actually said," he stated.

The former Edo State governor said he fully agreed with the Senate spokesperson, Senator Yemi Adaramodu, that no senator's signature was forged in relation to the suspension matter.

According to him, no senator has ever complained to him that his or her signature was forged.

"I agree absolutely with the spokesperson of the Senate, Distinguished Senator Yemi Adaramodu, that no signature of senators was forged in Natasha Akpoti's suspension.

This is because no senator complained to me that his or her signature was forged," Oshiomhole said.

He explained that the only observation he made during the interview was that a senator who served on the relevant committee had claimed that attendance signatures of some senators were attached to the committee's final report.

"The only comment I made is that one senator, who is a member of the committee, claimed that the signatures of attendance of some senators were attached to the final report. Any suggestion that I alleged that any senator's signature was forged is completely untrue and should be disregarded," he added.

Oshiomhole further stressed that the controversy surrounding Akpoti-Uduaghan's suspension had effectively been settled and that the Senate had since moved on from the issue.

He explained that his remarks arose while responding to a claim by the programme's interviewer that Senate Leader Opeyemi Bamidele had described the matter as "the lowest point of the three years of the 10th Senate."

## Nigeria, NLNG deepen economic diplomacy partnership to attract investment, expand trade

The Federal Government has reiterated its commitment to strengthening strategic partnerships with key Nigerian institutions to advance the country's economic diplomacy agenda, following a high-level engagement between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Nigeria LNG Limited (NLNG).

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, stated this during a meeting with the management of NLNG

led by its Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Adeleye Falade, at the ministry's headquarters in Abuja.

The engagement focused on how NLNG can support Nigeria's foreign policy objectives through investment promotion, international partnerships, trade expansion, and improved projection of the country's economic potential globally.

Falade congratulated the minister on her appointment and commended the ministry's

efforts in promoting Nigeria's interests on the international stage.

He described NLNG as a key ambassador of Nigeria's economic capacity, noting that the company has continued to maintain global standards while contributing significantly to national development through taxes, dividends, levies, employment generation, and local content initiatives.

According to him, NLNG's operations have positioned the company as one of Africa's

leading energy firms, with significant contributions to Nigeria's economy.

Falade highlighted the ongoing Train 7 expansion project, which is expected to increase NLNG's production capacity from about 22 million tonnes per annum to approximately 30 million tonnes annually upon completion.

He said the expansion would generate additional revenue for government, create employment opportunities, and strengthen Nigeria's position in the global

liquefied natural gas market.

"The expansion will generate additional revenue for the Federal Government, create employment opportunities and further strengthen Nigeria's position as a leading global supplier of liquefied natural gas," he said.

The NLNG chief executive added that the company remains committed to supporting sustainable economic growth, industrial development, and skills development while projecting a positive im-

age of Nigeria internationally.

Responding, Odumegwu-Ojukwu commended NLNG for its contributions to Nigeria's economic growth and global reputation, describing the company as a strategic national asset.

She said NLNG's activities align with the government's economic diplomacy priorities, particularly in energy security, investment promotion, industrialisation, trade expansion, and sustainable development.

## NEWS

# Observer GM Odiboh pushes staff for competitiveness

BENEDICT OKATE

## BENIN CITY

The General Manager of the Nigerian Observer, Hon. Peter Odiboh, has called on members of staff of the organisation to key into ongoing efforts aimed at repositioning the state-owned media outfit to effectively compete with its counterparts across the country.

Speaking during a meeting with staff of the company at the Nigerian Observer headquarters in Benin City, Odiboh stressed the need for unity, dedication and commitment among workers in order to achieve the vision of transforming the organisation into a vibrant and competitive media establishment.

"We are embarking on a new journey to reposition the Nigerian Observer as a modern,

vibrant and competitive media organisation. This can only be achieved if every member of staff is committed to the vision and prepared to play his or her role effectively," he said.

He noted that the repositioning drive is in line with the mandate of Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, who is committed to revitalising government institutions for efficient service delivery and improved performance.

According to him, "The administration of Governor Monday Okpebholo is determined to ensure that government institutions operate efficiently and deliver value to the people. The Nigerian Observer must not be left behind in this transformation agenda."

The General Manager urged all categories of staff to see themselves as critical stake-

holders in the transformation process, emphasising that the success of the initiative would depend largely on the collective efforts of the workforce.

"Every member of staff is a stakeholder in this process. The responsibility of rebuilding and repositioning the Observer rests on all of us, not management alone," Odiboh stated.

According to him, every

member of staff must be prepared to join the "train of change" and contribute meaningfully towards restoring the Nigerian Observer to its pride of place in the media industry.

"We must all be ready to board the train of change. If we work together with sincerity and dedication, we can restore the Nigerian Observer to its rightful position as one of the

leading media organisations in the country," he added.

Odiboh particularly charged older members of staff to demonstrate greater commitment and embrace the ongoing reforms, noting that their experience and institutional knowledge would be invaluable in driving the desired change.

"Our senior colleagues possess a wealth of experience and

institutional memory. Their support and willingness to embrace change will be crucial to the success of the reforms we are implementing," he said.

He appealed to them to support management's efforts by adapting to new strategies and approaches designed to enhance productivity and operational efficiency within the organisation.

## Nigeria, Cameroon sign MoU on security

## ABUJA

The Federal Government and Cameroon have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on security.

The MoU was signed by the Minister of Defence, Gen. Christopher Musa and the Presidency in Charge of Defence of the Republic of Cameroon, Mr Joseph Assomo.

This is contained in statement issued on Wednesday in Abuja, by the Special Adviser on media to the minister, Leah Katung-Babatunde.

Musa said that the MoU was a major step to deepening bilateral defence cooperation and securing both countries shared southern border.

The News Agency of Nigeria

(NAN) reports that the signing ceremony in Yaoundé concludes two days of intensive deliberations by defence and security experts from both nations.

The agreement establishes a modernised framework to counter emerging threats across both terrestrial and maritime domains.

The MoU establishes a renewed framework for cooperation in securing the terrestrial and maritime domains along the Nigeria-Cameroon southern border and reinforces the long-standing defence relationship between both nations.

Key areas highlighted during the engagements include enhanced operational coordination, intelligence sharing, logistics support, joint military training, personnel exchange programmes, and strengthened mechanisms for collective response to emerging security challenges.

## House of Reps minority caucus urges Tinubu to overhaul security architecture

## ABUJA

The House of Representatives minority caucus has urgently called on President Bola Tinubu to overhaul the nation's security architecture.

The Minority Leader, Rep. Fred Agbedi, who made the call at a news conference in Abuja on Wednesday, said: "Nigeria is bleeding".

The lawmaker said that the life of every Nigerian matters and that politics must take the back seat to first secure the nation.

According to him, government exists primarily for the security and welfare of the people as enshrined in Section 14(2)(b) of the Nigerian Constitution.

The caucus condemned the horrendous murder of retired Maj.-Gen. Rabe Abubakar while in terrorists' captivity in Katsina State and the subsequent release of his wife under questionable circumstances.

The Reps caucus expressed condolences to the family of the victim and urged government to

work out a pragmatic pathway out of the enduring quagmire.

The caucus leader also condemned the abduction of school children and their teachers in Oyo and demanded "an immediate, coordinated, no-ransom rescue operation for their release."

"We call for an immediate overhaul of the national security architecture; though a state of emergency has been declared by the President since November 25, 2025.

"The nation requires funding on security intelligence, not propaganda, improve welfare for frontline troops, and not wildcards for appointees.

"We call for a launch a special military operation within 72 hours to rescue the school children and their teachers; no excuses," he said.

According to Agbedi, the caucus demands a full, transparent investigation into the abduction and murder of the General; saying that Nigerians deserves to know how terrorists now kill Generals with impunity.



## BILATERAL AGREEMENT:

A cross section of Nigerians in Ethiopian prisons scheduled to conclude their terms in Nigeria under the recent Transfer of Sentenced Persons Agreement between Nigeria and Ethiopia.

## Forest Guards will safeguard forests, farmlands, says Edo Govt

## BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government has assured residents that forests and farmlands across the state will soon become safer with the recruitment and ongoing training of forest guards drawn from indigenous populations in local government areas and host communities.

Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, Dr. Patrick Akhere Ebojele, disclosed this during a radio programme, 'AS E DE HOT, a pidgin English programme on OJ FM radio, explaining that the decision to recruit locals was aimed at strengthening security operations through their knowledge of the terrain.

"These are people who know

the environment. They understand the forests, the pathways, and the communities. Their local knowledge is a major advantage in securing rural areas and protecting farmers who depend on these lands," Ebojele said.

He stated that the initiative was part of Governor Okpebholo's wider security strategy to complement the efforts of conventional security agencies and improve surveillance in rural communities that have been vulnerable to criminal activities.

Speaking on last Sunday's abduction of a woman at the Vegetable Market in Benin City, the Chief Press Secretary said the Edo State Police Command had commenced investigation immediately after the Governor directed security agencies to ensure that the per-

petrators were apprehended.

According to him, the incident was receiving urgent attention, adding that security operatives were working tirelessly to track down those behind the crime.

"The Governor gave a clear directive, and the Police Command is acting on it. We want the family and members of the public to know that this matter is being treated with urgency. The perpetrators will be identified and brought to justice," he said.

Ebojele also cautioned social media users and online platforms against sensationalising security-related incidents, noting that exaggerated reports could create unnecessary panic and affect ongoing security operations.

He acknowledged that insecurity remains a challenge

in Nigeria and other parts of the world but maintained that Governor Okpebholo had made significant investments in security personnel, equipment and intelligence gathering since assuming office.

"When Governor Okpebholo came into office, the security situation in Edo State was a major concern. Since then, he has invested heavily in personnel, equipment and intelligence infrastructure. The improvement is evident. We are not where we were, and we will continue working until our people are fully protected," Ebojele said.

He urged residents to remain vigilant, report suspicious activities to security agencies and support ongoing efforts to maintain peace and security across the state.

## Relocate orientation camp to Birnin Kebbi for safety, NYSC urges Kebbi govt

## BIRNIN KEBBI

The Coordinator, National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in Kebbi, Bala Dabo-Kagarko, has appealed to the State Government to relocate the orientation camp to Birnin Kebbi metropolis for the safety of corps members.

Dabo-Kagarko made the appeal during an interaction with newsmen at the temporary orientation camp at Bausara town in Jega Local Government Area of the state.

He said security reports indicate that the town "is too exposed and the community does not have the capacity to secure the camp."

The orientation camp was relocated from Dakingari, the permanent orientation camp in Suru Local Government Area, to Basuara due to insecurity in the area.

Speaking on the relocation, Dabo-Kagarko explained that it was not his own submission but that of security agencies.

He said the security agencies reported the need to move the

camp to the state capital for the safety and security of corps members and to make the state attractive to them.

"Of recent, the NYSC requested to relocate this camp to Birnin Kebbi metropolis for the safety of the corps members.

"This area is on the outskirts of the town and the report from the security agencies was that this place is exposed and the community harbouring the

security for the camp, especially with the trend of the security

issues going on now.

"That's why we decided that the camp be relocated to Birnin Kebbi town so that corps members will do their orientation course and training at the Birnin Kebbi camp," he pleaded.

He added that a few local government areas with security challenges had been ruled out for posting.

"These include Arewa, Augie, and Sakaba. The three local government areas are ruled out; we will not be posting corps members to those areas.

# Ondo bye-election: INEC tasks stakeholders on transparency

## ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has tasked stakeholders in Ondo State on transparency and peaceful conduct during and after the Ondo South Senatorial District bye-election.

The Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) in the state, Dr Mutiu Agboke, made the call on Wednesday in Akure during the distribution of sensitive electoral materials to the six local government areas of the senatorial district.

Agboke, who tasked political parties on transparency, urged

all the stakeholders involved in the bye-election to be peaceful and desist from vote buying.

"If you are asking INEC about transparency, also ask the stakeholders, particularly political parties, to also be transparent. How? On election day, if you bring money to get people's votes, you are not transparent.

"If you want to unleash terror or you want to unleash violence, you are not transparent. If you want to harass our staff, you want to create problems in the electoral space, you are not transparent.

"So, for INEC, we have trained our staff. They are go-

ing to work with the best practices of the standard we have given them. They are going to ensure that people's votes count.

"I have always said it. Nothing should deter me, and nothing will deter me to announce what people have said through their votes. So, these are the indices for transparency," he said.

The REC also said the distribution of the sensitive materials, which was done in the presence of all political parties involved, was the last stage of the commission's preparation for the election.

Agboke noted that only four

political parties: All Progressives Congress (APC), Allied Peoples' Movement (APM), Action Peoples Party (APP) and Boot Party would participate in the election with 673,446 eligible voters.

He said there was robust collaboration with security agencies in the state to ensure that voters, INEC staff and electoral materials were well secure.

In his remarks, the state Chairman of Inter-Party Advisory Council, Mr Alex Adeniyi, expressed his satisfaction with the preparedness of INEC for the election.

Adeniyi added that the level of preparedness had shown

that the commission had improved in its conduct of elections.

Similarly, Mr Olaoluwa Adesanya, representative of Action Peoples Party (APP), said the process so far had been en-

couraging.

Also, Elder Felix Oloro, state Chairman of APM, said the party was well prepared for the election, and commended the electoral body for its preparedness.

## ITF commences business incubation programme for SUPA artisans

### JOS

Industrial Training Fund (ITF) has commenced a business incubation programme for artisans under its Skill-Up Artisans (SUPA) initiative to strengthen entrepreneurial skills and improve business management.

The Director-General (D-G) of ITF, Dr Afiz Ogun, made the disclosure in a statement signed by the fund's Head of Press and Public Relations, Mr Thomas Ngor, and made available to newsmen on Wednesday in Jos.

Ogun said that the programme is an initiative designed to support graduates of the SUPA programme in establishing and growing sustainable businesses across Nigeria.

The D-G stated that the initiative represented a major step by the Federal Government's aimed at skills development, youth empowerment, entrepreneurship promotion, and inclusive economic growth.

He added that the programme was specifically designed to bridge the gap between skills acquisition and

enterprise development by providing selected artisans with the tools, training, mentorship, business support services, and market access required to build successful and sustainable businesses.

According to him, the beneficiaries would undergo comprehensive entrepreneurship and business management training, including the internationally recognised Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) Programme.

The D-G further said that the participants would also receive support in certification and licensing processes to enhance their professional standing and competitiveness.

"The approach is to promote ownership, accountability, and sustainability while enabling beneficiaries to establish viable enterprises capable of creating employment opportunities for others.

"The programme is a strategic intervention aimed at transforming skilled artisans into successful business owners and employers of labour.

"Our goal is to nurture a new generation of artisans who will drive MSME growth, create jobs, and contribute significantly to Nigeria's industrial development," he said.



### FIVE CRITICAL BILLS:

Cross-section of military personnel during the two-day public hearing on five critical Bills aimed at strengthening Nigeria's military institutions, enhancing veterans' welfare, promoting food security, and advancing gender inclusion in the Armed Forces by the House of Representatives Committee on Defence, at the National Assembly in Abuja on Tuesday

## Customs vow to run unrepentant smugglers out of businesses in Ogun

### SANGO-OTA

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Ogun 1 Area Command, Idiroko, says it's resolved to run unrepentant smugglers engaged in sabotag-

ing the economy out of businesses in the state.

The Command's Area Controller, Mr Olukayode Afeni, said this in an interview with newsmen on Wednesday in Idiroko.

Afeni said that the command

with the support of sister security agencies was committed to dismantle supply chains and illicit channels through which contraband goods enter the country.

"The command wishes to send a stern warning to those involved in the smuggling of prohibited items because our operatives are strategically deployed

against smuggling activities.

"We therefore urge traders to desist from illicit trades and turn to engage in legitimate businesses," he said.

Afeni said that the command would not relent and tolerate any action that compromises the economy and national security of the country.

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ers and employers of labour.

"Our goal is to nurture a new generation of artisans who will drive MSME growth, create jobs, and contribute significantly to Nigeria's industrial development," he said.

According to him, the expected outcome of the programme would be the creation of sustainable artisan-owned businesses, increased employment opportunities, and accelerated growth of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

He said it would enhance youth economic inclusion, improved business survival rates among SUPA beneficiaries, and strengthened contributions to Nigeria's industrialisation agenda.

## Menstrual hygiene key to girls' health, school attendance —Foundation

### IBADAN

Wellspring Outreach and Support Foundation has stressed the importance of menstrual hygiene education for girls and women, saying proper knowledge and practices are essential for good health and improved school attendance.

The Founder, Mrs Adelayo Ojo-Nkom, stated this in an interview with newsmen in Ibadan on Wednesday.

Ojo-Nkom defined menstruation as a normal biological process that every female should understand and manage appropriately to avoid health complications.

According to her, menstruation typically begins between the ages of eight and 16 and continues monthly until menopause, making menstrual hygiene a lifelong necessity for women.

"Poor menstrual hygiene could expose women and girls to various health risks, including vaginal and urinary tract infections, rashes and other reproductive health challenges," she said.

The founder expressed con-

cern over period poverty, saying that lack of access to menstrual products and inadequate knowledge continued to affect many girls across Africa.

She cited research showing that many schoolgirls miss classes during their menstrual periods because of limited access to sanitary products, inadequate toilet facilities, and insufficient menstrual health education.

Ojo-Nkom also decried cultural and religious misconceptions surrounding menstruation, describing the practice as a natural part of life that should not attract stigma.

"People need to embrace menstruation and treat it as a normal aspect of human existence because without it, none of us would be born," she said.

She advised girls and women to monitor their menstrual cycles to better prepare for their periods and avoid emergency situations arising from lack of preparation.

Ojo-Nkom further urged women to change sanitary pads regularly, preferably every six to eight hours depending on menstrual flow, to reduce the risk of infections and discomfort.

## NEWS

# 1.02m voters collected PVCs for Ekiti guber election —INEC

### ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) says 1,028,929 out of 1,059,360 total registered voters in Ekiti have collected their Permanent Voters' Cards (PVCs) ahead of the state governorship election holding on Saturday.

Mohammed Haruna, INEC National Commissioner and Chairman, Information and Voter Education Committee, made this known in a statement on Wednesday in Abuja, following the conclusion of the PVC collection in the state.

Haruna noted that following the suspension of the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise in the State on Thursday, May 15 and the subsequent clean-up of the voters' register, the number of registered voters in the state rose from 987,647 in 2023 to 1,059,360 in 2026.

"Similarly, the number of PVCs collected rose from

958,052 in 2023, representing a collection rate of 97.0 per cent, to 1,028,929 in 2026, representing 97.1 per cent of registered voters," he said.

Haruna recalled that the PVC collection exercise, originally scheduled to end on June 11, was extended to June 14, following consultations with stakeholders at a meeting held in Ado-Ekiti.

He also said that inline with the provisions of Section 18(1) of the Electoral Act 2026, the commission made available to registered voters replacement PVCs in the event of the loss, damage or defacement of their original PVC.

Haruna stated that under the arrangement, 14,406 applications were received within the stipulated time and all the replacement PVCs were printed most of which have been collected.

"The option of a downloadable copy of the lost, damaged or defaced Voter Cards could not be implemented in this election because the necessary

technology infrastructure for this is yet to be completed.

"The option would be available to voters in subsequent elections, especially the Osun Governorship election in August 2026 and the 2027 General Election," he said.

Haruna appreciated the support of stakeholders, including traditional rulers, community leaders, civil society organisations, political parties and the media, in mobilising citizens to collect their PVCs and prepare for the forthcoming election.

He also said that for the Ekiti governorship election, all PVCs had been printed and made available for all eligible applicants, including those who requested a transfer, or applied for the replacement of lost, damaged or defaced cards.

Haruna said that a detailed breakdown of PVC collection by Local Government Area (LGA) had been uploaded on the Commission's website and social media platforms.

## 161m Nigerians lack safe water, SCI warns

### KATSINA

Save the Children International (SCI) says more than 161 million Nigerians lack safe water, exposing millions of children to preventable diseases and undermining their health, education and overall wellbeing.

SCI gave the warning in a statement issued on Wednesday in Katsina by Mogbonjubade Adesulure, Digital Media and Communications Specialist of SCI, to mark the 2026 Day of the African Child.

The theme of this year's day of the African Child is: "Ensuring Universal Access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for Every Child in Africa."

The organisation also said about 70 per cent of Nigerian

children lack access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, a gap it described as a major barrier to healthy growth and development.

The SCI said only six per cent of healthcare facilities in Nigeria have basic WASH services, while just 26.5 per cent of the population has access to improved drinking water and sanitation services.

"More than 10 million school children still lack basic sanitation facilities in their schools, a situation she said continues to negatively affect learning outcomes, particularly among girls.

"Inadequate access to clean water and sanitation has left children vulnerable to diseases such as diarrhoea, cholera and typhoid, with diarrhoeal diseases alone killing more than 70,000 children under

the age of five annually.

"The challenge is more severe in rural and underserved communities, where many families depend on unsafe water sources and lack access to improved sanitation facilities," the Organisation warned.

It further stated that about 22 per cent of Nigerians still practise open defecation, increasing the risk of disease outbreaks and environmental contamination.

The SCI reiterated that access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene is a fundamental right, calling for stronger collective action to improve the lives of children across the country.

SCI Deputy Country Director, Jane Mbagi, said the theme of the 2026 Day of the African Child underscores the urgency of sustained action by all stakeholders.

## 950 rights activists, journalists, labour unionists killed or disappeared in 2025 —UN

### NEW YORK

The UN says preliminary data indicates that some 950 human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists were killed or forcibly disappeared worldwide in 2025.

This was contained in the latest global dataset documenting attacks on rights defenders titled, "Human Rights Count", published of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

According to the most comprehensive data, one human rights defender, journalist or trade unionist is killed or disappeared every 10 hours.

"Every 10 hours, a human

rights defender, journalist or trade unionist is killed or disappeared," the report stated.

"Every hour, a child dies in armed conflict. One in five people have experienced discrimination in the past year."

Projected totals for 2025 indicate that at least 743 defenders were killed and 202 disappeared, with no sign of reversal in the upward trend.

OHCHR said civilian deaths in armed conflict documented by UN Human Rights continued at alarming levels.

At least 37,163 civilians lost their lives in 2025, from a record high of 48,011 in the preceding year.

"Every 14 minutes, a civilian

dies in armed conflict. Nearly one in five people worldwide indicate that they have experienced discrimination in the past 12 months."

OHCHR lamented that violence against human rights defenders has reached record levels, with at least 5,995 killed since 2015.

According to the UN rights agency, violence against human rights defenders has reached record levels, with at least 5,995 killed since 2015.

The UN human rights office said the number of human rights defenders who were murdered or disappeared in 2025 was more than double the number a decade ago.



### EDO STATE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION BOARD

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

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

##### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

##### 2.0 SCOPE OF WORK

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

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

##### 3.0 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

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

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

##### 4.0 COLLECTION/SUBMISSION OF BIDDING DOCUMENTS

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

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

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

All bids shall be submitted in a sealed envelope, addressed to the Executive Chairman, State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and marked boldly at the right-hand corner "BIDDING DOCUMENT" and to be submitted at the address below. All bids are to be submitted on or before 12:00 noon, 3rd July, 2026

##### 5.0 OPENING OF BIDDING DOCUMENTS

Bidding documents shall be opened immediately in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below after the close of bid submission deadline by 12:00 noon, 3rd July, 2026 .

##### 6.0 NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

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

##### 7.0 The address referred to above is:

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

Signed:

**HON. SONIA EBANEHITA OMONZANE**

Executive Chairman

Edo State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB)

# Judges Quarters: We're fortifying vital pillar of our democracy —Tinubu

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu has said that his administration is providing housing to judicial officers to fortify the vital pillar of Nigerian democracy.

Tinubu, represented by

Vice President Kashim Shetima stated this in Abuja on Wednesday, while inaugurating 10 housing units for judges of the Federal High Court, in the newly constructed Judges' Quarters, at Katampe District.

The president said that the project was a deliberate shield

against vulnerability, a statement that Nigeria values those who interpret her laws.

"We are here not just to commission buildings but to fortify a vital pillar of our democracy – the judiciary.

"When we embarked on the Renewed Hope Agenda, we

made a sacred covenant with the Nigerian people.

"We promised to revive our institutional trust, secure our nation, and ensure that the rule of law is never compromised nor delayed.

"Today, with the official inauguration of these 10 housing units for judges of the Federal

High Court, we are taking a definitive physical step towards fulfilling that promise," he said.

Tinubu noted that for too long, Nigerians have been talking about the independence of the judiciary in abstract terms, adding however, that the independence requires an independent and secure environment.

"You cannot expect judges to dispense justice without fear or favour when their basic comfort, security, and peace of mind are left to chance.

"True judicial independence is rooted in the dignity of our judicial officers. By providing this set of residential quarters, we are ensuring that our Federal High Court judges operate from a place of security, comfort, and stability.

"The Renewed Hope Agenda is anchored on equity and justice. As

we provide infrastructure to make your lives easier, we ask in return for an unwavering commitment to the swift, fair, and transparent dispensation of justice.

"May these homes be centers of deep reflection, integrity, and honour. May the judgments that emanate from your minds continue to strengthen the fabric of our democracy," he said.

Tinubu pointed out that Nigeria and the nation's capital is changing, adding that the reforms his administration was putting in place across all sectors might require patience.

He said that while the proof of the reforms were beginning to show, his administration would not relent until every sector – in justice, infrastructure, economy, or security – reflects the true greatness of Nigeria.



PROTEST:

Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State (R) with Martins Vincent Otse, popularly known as *VeryDarkMan* (L) and others, during a protest to the governor's private residence in Ibadan over the abduction of Teachers and pupils in Orire Local Government area of Oyo State.

## Man, 28, jailed six months for stealing girlfriend's phone

ABEOKUTA

An Abeokuta Magistrates' Court sitting in Isabo, on Wednesday, sentenced a man, Temitope Adebayo, 28, to six months imprisonment for stealing a phone from a deceived girlfriend.

Adebayo, who resides at Adehun Area adjacent Hybrid Hotel in Abeokuta, was convicted on a one-count charge of stealing

Delivering judgment, the Magistrate, Mrs O.T. Adeeko, said that the prosecution proved beyond reasonable doubt that the convict was guilty as charged.

She therefore convicted Adebayo to six months imprisonment with an option of N80,000 fine.

Earlier, the prosecutor, Insp Kekinde Fawunmi, had told the court that the defendant committed the offence on April 15 at about 2:00 p.m at Compro, Ay-

etoro Garage area of Abeokuta.

Fawunmi alleged that the defendant stole a Samsung S9 Android phone valued at N165,000 belonging to one Cynthia Anyanwu.

He said that the complainant, who was in a relationship with the defendant, had given him the phone for temporary use after he complained of not having one.

The prosecutor said that the complainant later discovered

that the defendant was married when a woman answered calls made to the phone and identified herself as his wife.

According to him, the complainant subsequently demanded the return of her phone, but the defendant refused and continued giving different excuses.

He said the offence contravened the provision of Section 390 (9) of the Criminal Code, Vol. 1, Laws of Ogun, 2006.

## ADC governorship aspirant sues party over primary election result in Oyo

IBADAN

Gbemileke Alagbe, a governorship aspirant of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) in Oyo State, on Wednesday, approached a Federal High Court in Ibadan to declare him as the party's flag bearer for the 2027 governorship election in Oyo State.

In a 16 paragraph exparte motion filed by Mr Abayomi Idowu, Counsel to the Applicant, Alagbe prayed the court to pronounce him as the authentic winner of the primary election that took place on May 22 in Ibadan.

Idowu also prayed the court to order the party not to present any other result other than the one in which his client won

the election.

Furthermore, the applicant's counsel also prayed the court to order the ADC in Oyo State to present certificate of return to his client.

He also asked the court to restrain the party from submitting any name other than that of Alagbe to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Idowu told the court that the matter was such an urgent one because of INEC's requirement that all political parties must submit the least of their candidates by June 26 2026.

Consequently, Justice Uche Agomoh ordered originating summons to be served on the respondents and adjourned the suit until June 25 for hearing on all applications.

## Security guard docked over alleged theft of mosque generator

ABUJA

A 21-year-old man, Shuaibu Aliyu, was on Wednesday arraigned before a Senior Magistrates' Court Dutse, Abuja for allegedly stealing a generator belonging to a mosque.

Aliyu, a security guard resident in Sagwari Duste, who is facing a one-count charge of theft pleaded not guilty when

the charge was read to him.

The prosecutor, Mr Babajide Olanipekun, told the court that the complainant, Ukasha Adam of Sagwari Duste, reported the matter at the Duste Police Station on June 10.

Olanipekun said the complainant discovered that a thermocool generator valued at N150,000, which had been kept inside the mosque was missing.

He said that while they were

searching for the generator, it was traced to the defendant.

According to the prosecutor, police investigations led to the recovery of the generator from Aliyu.

He added that the defendant claimed he purchased the generator from an unidentified person for N35,000 but could not provide any proof of purchase.

Olanipekun informed the court that the offence contra-

vened Section 287 of the Penal Code.

Counsel to the defendant, Naomi Abang, urged the court to admit her client to bail, since the generator had been recovered.

Senior Magistrate Yusuf Alkali ordered that the defendant be remanded in police custody pending ruling on his bail application.

The case was adjourned until June 29 for ruling.

## NHRC, UNHCR seek stronger community-based protection for displaced persons

MAIDUGURI

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have intensified efforts to strengthen community-based protection mechanisms for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Forcibly Displaced Persons (FDPs) in Borno.

The Executive Secretary (ES) of the NHRC, Dr Tony Ojukwu, stated this at the opening of a two-day training on Crowd-Sourcing Human Rights Protection Mechanisms under the 2026 NHRC/UNHCR Project on Wednesday in Maiduguri.

He said the community-based protection mechanism was through a capacity-building programme for key stakeholders across the state.

Ojukwu said the initiative was designed to enhance the ability of communities and partner organisations to identify, document and report human rights violations affecting displaced persons.

He noted that persistent insecurity, conflicts and displace-

ment in parts of the country had created protection challenges requiring timely and coordinated responses from both government and non-governmental actors.

Ojukwu said participants were drawn from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), Community Protection Action Groups (CPAGs) and Human Rights Monitors (HRMs).

According to him, participants will be equipped with skills in information gathering, secure reporting, ethical verification and the use of digital tools for early warning and rapid response.

Ojukwu said strengthening grassroots and reporting systems would ensure that incidents affecting displaced persons are quickly communicated to relevant authorities, thereby reducing delays in intervention and improving protection outcomes.

He added that the training was expected to improve collaboration among stakeholders and promote a more coordinated approach to protecting vulnerable populations across the project states.

## 2 brothers jailed 1 year each for assaulting Police Officer

IBADAN

An Iyaganku Chief Magistrates' Court in Ibadan, on Wednesday sentenced two brothers to one year imprisonment each for assaulting a Police Officer.

The Chief Magistrate, Mrs Olabisi Ogunkanmi, sentenced Kabiru and Ahmed Jimoh after they pleaded guilty to assault.

The police charged the Jimoh brothers with conspiracy, obstruction of duty, threat to life and assault.

Ogunkanmi did not give the convicts an option of fine.

She also ordered the convicts

to pay N50,000 each as compensation to the complainant.

Earlier, the Prosecution Counsel, PC Olapeju Durodola alleged that the brothers obstructed a police officer, Helen Ojo who was on lawful duty to recover a child over paternity issues.

She alleged that the brothers beat up Ojo and threatened to harm her with a broken bottle.

The prosecutor alleged that Ojo sustained injuries as a result of the incident.

The offence, the police said contravened the provisions of section 197, 252, 351, 356 (2) and 516 of the Criminal Law of Oyo State 2000.

## NEWS

## Foreign

## Iran sends tankers loaded with oil past US military blockade

Three Iranian tankers loaded with crude oil have passed the US blockade line in the Gulf of Oman, ship-tracking data shows.

Two were broadcasting their locations as they crossed and a third appeared to switch on its location tracker just past the line.

Despite President Donald Trump announcing on Sunday the "immediate removal" of the blockade of Iranian ports, US naval forces later confirmed it would remain in effect until the deal with Iran was signed. This is expected to take place in Switzerland on Friday.

"This is a sign that Iran is confident the blockade is over, even if the US has insisted it will be in place until Friday," Michelle Wiese Bockman, senior analyst

at Windward Maritime Intelligence, told BBC Verify.

The three Iran-flagged tankers, Diona, Hero II and Sonia I, are all owned by the National Iranian Tanker Company which has been sanctioned by the US Treasury, as have the ships themselves.

Iran has been subject to long-term US sanctions in response to fears the country is developing nuclear weapons, its support for groups designated by Washington as terrorist organisations, and alleged human rights abuses.

Data from MarineTraffic shows Hero II and Sonia I left Iran's Chabahar port on Tuesday, where several other Iranian tankers are currently anchored, and sailed past the US blockade line into the Arabian Sea in the early

hours of Wednesday morning.

Diona began broadcasting its location just past the US blockade line, which stretches from the eastern tip of Oman to the coast of Iran, yesterday.

Maritime intelligence firm Windward says this is the first time any of these Iranian tankers have broadcast their locations since March and, if they make it to their destination, will be Iran's first oil exports for two months, according to TankerTrackers.com.

The three ships are carrying a combined total of 3.8 million barrels of crude oil, according to TankerTrackers.com. They are currently not broadcasting their planned destinations.

The US blockade has cut Iran's crude exports to the

lowest amount in six years at 260,000 barrels per day in May, less than a fifth of the 2025 average of 1.67 million barrels per day, data from maritime intelligence firm Kpler shows.

US Department of Defense An image showing a helicopter landing on the deck of an oil tanker US Department of Defense

The sanctioned tanker Tifani was previously intercepted by the US more than 10 days after leaving the Gulf

The US had said early in its blockade that enforcement could happen outside of the Gulf region and BBC Verify has previously covered American forces intercepting Iran-linked vessels in the Indian Ocean, thousands of miles from the Gulf.

## Israel launches fresh strikes on Lebanon despite Trump criticism

Israeli forces have carried out new strikes in southern Lebanon, state media say, despite renewed criticism from US President Donald Trump of Israel's actions in the country.

On Wednesday, Israeli jets struck the Nabatieh al-Fawqa area and the outskirts of neighbouring Kfar Tebnit, Lebanon's National News Agency (NNA) reported. The Israeli military has not yet commented, but has previously said it is targeting the Iran-backed armed group Hezbollah.

The text of a deal between the US and Iran to end the war has not been released, but mediator Pakistan says it includes Lebanon.

On Tuesday, Trump said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu needed "to be more responsible with respect to Lebanon".

Speaking at the G7 summit in France, he also said that Israel had been fighting Hezbollah for "too long and too many people are being killed".

Both Israel and Hezbollah have carried out attacks against each other since the US-Iran agreement was announced on Sunday night.

Earlier that day, an Israeli air strike on Beirut in response to cross-border rocket attack by Hezbollah had put pressure on attempts to finalise the deal.

Trump told the G7 that he had a "great relationship" with Netanyahu but said he "didn't like that he did an attack... that

was too much".

He added: "Without the United States, there would be no Israel. Without me, there would be no Israel because no other president was willing to do what I did."

Netanyahu said on Monday that his country's forces would remain in Lebanon "for as long as necessary".

Iran's Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, has warned that it would view any Israeli attack on Lebanon or continued Israeli military presence in Lebanese territory as a violation of the interim agreement with the US.

The contents of the agreement - referred to as a memorandum of understanding - have not been officially released.

Both sides were expected to sign the deal on Friday in the Swiss resort of Bürgenstock, Switzerland's Foreign Ministry told the Schweiz Heute newspaper.

Trump said he would likely hold a news conference to publicly read the agreement between the US and Iran "word by word".

He also said the deal meant Iran would "never have a nuclear weapon" and that the crucial Strait of Hormuz waterway in the Gulf would reopen and be "toll-free".

Trump has argued this deal would be better than the one Barack Obama negotiated when he was president.

"We didn't pay for it like Obama did. He paid billions of dollars," Trump said on Tuesday.



PLAYERS AT AL-AQSA MOSQUE:

The gold-covered Dome of the Rock dominates the al-Aqsa mosque compound

## Status quo at Jerusalem's holiest site under threat as Israeli nationalists flout rules

The whole land of Israel was promised to the children of God... and this is where we are going to build a new Temple for the entire humanity to come and pray together."

Those were the potentially incendiary words of Moshe Feiglin, a right-wing nationalist Israeli politician, who spoke to me as he came down from the al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem, where he had been praying and singing religious songs with a group of around 20 other religious Jews.

Feiglin spoke openly and clearly, almost as if his argument was neither controversial nor contested.

But what he was saying and doing was in complete contravention of a sensitive agreement that seeks to maintain the peace at one of the most holy and emotionally charged places on Earth.

For Moshe Feiglin and oth-

ers like him, it is simple. They want to build a huge new Jewish temple on the very site which, for the last 1,400 years, has been one of the most sacred places in Islam - al-Aqsa.

The compound - also known to Muslims as al-Haram al-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary), and to Jews as the Temple Mount - is one of the most recognisable and visually impressive sites in the Middle East.

The gold-covered Dome of the Rock dominates the 35-acre site and can be seen for miles around. Al-Aqsa is mentioned in the Quran, and it is from where Muslims believe the Prophet Muhammad ascended to Heaven. It is also a site reserved exclusively for Muslim prayer - but is that about to change?

The site is also the most important place in Judaism. Below the compound, alongside its supporting Western Wall, Jews pray and mourn the de-

struction by the Romans of the Jewish Temple on the platform above, almost 2,000 years ago.

Under what is known as the Status Quo, a decades-old understanding, custody of the al-Aqsa compound is the responsibility of a Jordanian-administered Islamic body - the Waqf (Endowment).

Non-Muslims are allowed to visit al-Aqsa but they are not allowed to pray there or carry out religious rites. The Chief Rabbinate of Israel and most ultra-Orthodox rabbis also prohibit Jewish prayer on the site on halachic (Jewish legal) grounds.

Those are the conventions and rulings that Feiglin and others now openly flout and disregard.

'Multi-faith centre' Recent reports and claims that Israeli and US officials are working together to abandon the Status Quo have caused widespread alarm.

The news outlet, Middle East

Eye, was told by multiple sources that a new body created by the Israeli government would declare the al-Aqsa compound a "multi-faith centre".

When questioned about those reports recently at a Congressional hearing, the US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, said he had "no knowledge of them", although the high-profile US ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee, has often spoken out about Jewish connections to the holy places in Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank.

Other reports suggested that large-scale Jewish prayer would be allowed on the site and that all aspects of its governance would be gradually taken over by Israel, which captured East Jerusalem, including the Old City and its holy places, along with the rest of the West Bank, from Jordan in the 1967 Middle East War and later annexed it in a move that is not recognised by most countries.

## Equatorial Guinea government resigns after failing to meet targets

Equatorial Guinea's government has resigned after failing to meet its objectives, Vice-President Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue said.

Obiang, who is also the son of President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, said the prime minister had presented the resignation of all members of the government because it had barely reached 10% of its targets.

He did not specify the targets but a statement by the ruling party said the president had observed that the government fostered corruption and failed to diversify the economy.

President Obiang is the world's longest-serving leader who has ruled the oil-rich West African country since 1979 with a strong grip, while naming family members to key government roles.

The president appointed the outgoing government in 2024, with Manuel Osa Nsue Nsua as prime minister.

On Tuesday, the vice-president said the resignation was in line with "the principle that responsibility in public management must be accompanied by results".

"The degree of execution

achieved is clearly insufficient in relation to the expectations and commitments undertaken," he posted on X.

In a statement on Facebook, the ruling Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea (PDGE) said the president was dissatisfied with the management of the outgoing government. A new government is expected to be appointed.

The statement further cited the misuse of state resources for personal interests and stagnation in the implementation of development projects.

The president also noted that the government had not implemented policies to diversify the economy especially in the agricultural sector, which would cut reliance on imported goods that can be produced locally.

Equatorial Guinea's economy is heavily reliant on petroleum, with oil and gas accounting for most of its exports and revenues.

In spite of its oil wealth, much of its 1.8m population has not benefitted, as poverty remains rampant. In recent years, the economy has been on a decline amid reduced production and demand for oil.

## Foreign

## NEWS

## Bystanders rush to rescue aircraft passengers after fiery Texas crash

Nearly a dozen bystanders and first responders rushed to the scene of a private jet crash on a Texas motorway on Tuesday to help free trapped passengers.

Using what appeared to be a shovel and a sledgehammer, the passers-by and emergency officials helped several passengers escape through an opened door, video shows.

The aircraft was flying from Los Cabos, Mexico, to Austin, Texas, when it reported major mechanical issues to Laredo airport, Gilberto Sanchez, the airport's director, told the New York Times.

One of the six people on board died in the crash, said police. The five survivors were taken to hospital and are in a stable condition.

The individual who died has yet to be identified.

One vehicle was struck by

the aircraft as it crashed on to the motorway, though it is unclear what part of the plane struck the vehicle, said Jose Baeza, an investigator with Laredo Police Department.

Videos of the aftermath shared on social media show thick smoke and flames surrounding the plane. Five first responders were ultimately treated for smoke inhalation, said Baeza.

The crash happened near Laredo airport, 150m (240km) southwest of San Antonio.

The crash has forced the major motorway, Loop 20, to shut down while the investigation proceeds. Baeza said it was expected to remain shut to traffic on Wednesday as the investigation, which will include the FBI and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), continues.

Bystanders help rescue people at the site of the plane crash.



**DR CONGO EBOLA:**

Ebola treatment centres have come under attack several times during the ongoing outbreak.

## 'Get him out of here': Judge sends Gilgo Beach killer to prison for rest of life

Gilgo Beach killer Rex Heuermann stands and speaks in court June 17 at his sentencing on Long Island in New York.

Rex Heuermann, known as the Gilgo Beach serial killer, who admitted to brutally murdering eight women, received the maximum sentence on Wednesday.

He will serve three life sentences for first-degree murder, plus 25 years to life on four second-degree murder charges, all running consecutively.

The sentencing in New York followed a series of angry, poignant statements, as victims' family members described how the brutal losses created "life-long devastation" for them.

In April, Heuermann confirmed that he strangled and bound his victims before scattering their remains along Long Island's remote beaches.

Gilgo Beach killer Rex Heuermann is escorted away after being sentenced by Judge Timothy Mazzei.

"You are a disgusting and despicable, small man, if you're a man at all. And you're a coward," said Judge Timothy Mazzei as he handed down the sentence in a Riverhead, Long Island courtroom. "Get him out of here."

The courtroom erupted in cheers.

Heuermann, who appeared in a dark suit, blue shirt and grey tie, gave a brief statement before the sentence, claiming responsibility, then acknowledged that at this point, his words had "no meaning." When asked by the judge if he was "a little bit sorry", he replied, "yes".

The murders took place be-

tween 1993 and 2010, but the case took over a decade to solve.

After initially pleading not guilty, Heuermann ultimately admitted to the murders of: Melissa Barthelmy, 24; Megan Waterman, 22; and Amber Costello, 27; Maureen Brainard-Barnes, 25; Jessica Taylor, 20; Valerie Mack, 24; Sandra Costilla, 28; and Karen Vergata, 34.

After the hearing, Suffolk County District Attorney Ray Tierney praised the families of the victims. "I want them to get their revenge by going on to have wonderful lives...now it's time for them to heal," he said.

Suffolk County District Attorney speaks after the sentencing of Gilgo Beach killer Rex Heuermann.

Heuermann's defence attorney Michael Brown said he spoke to his client after the hearing briefly and that he will be visiting him in prison.

"From his standpoint, we saw the writing on the wall. He wanted to spare his family the ordeal of going to trial," said Brown.

The hearing started with fiery statements from victims' family members.

Amanda, sister of Barthelmy, described to the court the phone calls Heuermann made to her family after killing her sister, detailing how he was letting her sister's body "rot" and how he raped her. "I was 15," she said.

She addressed him directly: "You can look at me when I'm talking to you. It's been 17 years since we last spoke."

For the first time, Heuermann, who had been staring straight ahead blankly, turned towards the podium, then immediately back.

## Search for six-year-old Ebola patient after armed men storm DR Congo hospital

Authorities in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo are searching for a six-year-old Ebola patient and her mother after armed men stormed the hospital where they were being treated.

The child was taken from Wanamahika Hospital, in the city of Butembo, by "very angry" men with knives, local health official Dr Lubambo Maboko Gaston said in a statement.

It is unclear whether the men were known to the child, but suspicion and fear surrounding Ebola treatment centres have been rife during the current outbreak.

In an interview with the Reuters news agency, Gaston

urged the child and her mother to go to a health centre, as they risked "worsening their health" and "infecting their relatives".

Ebola treatment facilities have come under attack multiple times during the ongoing outbreak, in which almost 200 deaths and 840 cases have been confirmed.

Last month, police in the town of Mongbwali fired shots in the air after angry crowds attempted to reclaim the bodies of loved ones who had died at a health facility.

Days before, crowds set fire to isolation tents in hospital in Rwampara - a town 85km (53 miles) south-east of Mongbwali - after they were prevented

from taking the body of a man thought to have died from Ebola.

The body of a dead Ebola victim is highly infectious and can lead to the virus spreading further when prepared for burial.

"People are not properly informed or sensitised about what is happening. For a certain segment of the population, especially in remote areas, Ebola is an invention by outsiders - it does not exist," local politician Luc Malembe told the BBC last month.

"They believe it is the NGOs and hospitals creating this to make money, and this is tragic."

The outbreak has been caused by a rare species of

Ebola known as Bundibugyo. There is currently no vaccine for this species and the World Health Organisation has said it could take months for a jab to be ready.

Cases are currently concentrated in the provinces of Ituri, South Kivu and North Kivu, where the six-year-old girl was taken from the hospital on Monday.

Ituri remains the main centre of transmission.

The WHO has warned that conflict in eastern DR Congo is making it more difficult to tackle the Ebola outbreak. The M23 rebel group is in control of large parts of both North and South Kivu.

## Group planned to attack White House UFC event using snipers and drones, FBI says

The FBI thwarted a plot targeting Sunday's UFC event at the White House and has arrested five men, the US justice department said on Tuesday.

Part of the plan involved striking nearby buildings with explosive-laden drones and firing on "high value targets", prosecutors alleged.

One suspect was arrested in Ohio last week, where investigators reviewed encrypted messages involving other alleged conspirators. Prosecutors said in charging documents they had allegedly "expressed ultra-religious and antigovernment sentiments".

"Allegedly planned attacks were stopped cold," FBI Director Kash Patel posted on social media on Tuesday about the "multi-state operation".

The suspects were identified as Tycen C Proper, 19, the suspect arrested in Ohio, along with Bryan Omar Roa, 24, and Michael Alan Thomas, 32, of California, Daniel K Eskridge,

32, of Missouri and Abraham

Hermosillo Alvarez, 31, of Nebraska. They were arrested across the four US states and each have been charged with conspiracy to commit murder, the Department of Justice (DOJ) said in a statement.

By using the drones, the plotters aimed to spark panic and draw the fleeing crowd toward a sniper team, according to the court documents. A "second wave" of attackers was then allegedly supposed to storm the White House gate.

An estimated 4,300 people were present for the invite-only event on the South Lawn - and another 85,000 were able to watch nearby - during the back-to-back fights on Sunday.

Court filings related to Alvarez said the group allegedly eyed potential targets that included US President Donald Trump, Vice President JD

Vance, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Elon Musk, as well as several elected officials - though not all attend-

ed the UFC event.

The plot was discovered through Proper. His mother called local authorities late on 10 June - just days before the high-profile event - because she was concerned about his large firearms purchases and what she had seen of his online communication with a group that claimed to be made up of former military members and Christian-based.

The group allegedly wanted to "jumpstart" a revolution by shooting "high-value targets" - identified as wealthy people and politicians - attending the UFC fight. They had specifically discussed "grievances about government corruption, the handling of the Epstein files, data centers taking up all the water in communities, and other government actions," prosecutors said.

During an FBI interview on 11 June, Proper admitted to being part of planning the attack and said the group began communicating with one another

around March through a TikTok group called "Vanguard of the Old", which is named in some court documents as "Vanguard of the Old Republic".

It is unclear if the group is affiliated with any larger, established organisation. But Proper told law enforcement officials that members were primarily recruited through TikTok.

The DOJ said Alvarez was responsible for planning, organising and directing the planned UFC attack, and that he worked on drones.

The suspects also distributed maps of Washington highlighting planned sniper locations and drone launch points and identifying power grids as potential targets, court documents said.

The BBC has contacted Proper's lawyer.

Each suspect faces a maximum penalty of life in prison and a \$250,000 (£186,122) fine if convicted of conspiracy to murder, the DOJ said.



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# Sports

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

## President Federation Cup: El-Kanemi Warriors, Ikorodu City in final battle for trophy after semifinals triumph

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Three-time champions El-Kanemi Warriors of Maiduguri and Ikorodu City of Lagos yesterday bulldozed their way to the men's

Final of this year's President Federation Cup competition.

It was a hard fought victory for Ikorodu City at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium in Benin City as they managed to bundle out Nasarawa United 4-2 in pen-

alty shootout after both teams had ended the ninety minutes of the match in a 1-1 stalemate before shootout ensued.

Ibrahim Ayola put Ikorodu City in front 11 minutes into the game. Bright Amadi got an equalizer for Nasarawa Utd in 41st minute with a header

It was the second time Nasarawa Utd is losing in this fashion. Five years ago, the Solid Miners and Bayelsa United battled to a 2-2 draw in that year's Final, before the latter prevailed 5-4 on penalties against the 'Solid Miners'.

In Katsina, it was an easy ride for the 1991, 1992 and 2024 champions El-Kanemi Warriors as they thrashed Wikki Tourists 3-1 to reach their second Final in two years.

Elkanemi Warriors got off to a flying start, with Bashir Musa

opening the scoring to give the Warriors an early advantage. El-Kanemi Warriors continued to dominate proceedings and their efforts paid off again when Daddy Abdulrahman doubled the lead to make it 2-0.

El-Kanemi Warriors FC maintained their attacking momentum and added a third goal through Muktar Ismail, putting the game beyond the reach of their opponents, going into the half time break with El-Kanemi Warriors leading 3-0.

The second half resumed with El-Kanemi Warriors maintaining their impressive performance and creating several goal scoring opportunities. However, Wikki Tourists' defence and goalkeeper produced a good number of crucial saves to prevent further damage.



THE NIGERIA OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (NOC) HAS UNVEILED THE NIGERIA SAFEGUARDING IN SPORTS POLICY

## NOC unveils safeguarding policy to protect athletes

The Nigeria Olympic Committee (NOC) has unveiled the Nigeria Safeguarding in Sports Policy, a framework designed to protect athletes and other sports participants from abuse, harassment, discrimination, exploitation, neglect and related misconduct.

The policy unveiled on Tuesday in Abuja is expected to strengthen athlete protection mechanisms and promote a safer and more inclusive sporting environment across the country.

Speaking at the event, the President of the NOC, Habu Gumel, described the policy as a major step towards aligning sports governance in Nigeria

with global best practices.

"It is also targeted at safeguarding principles of the International Olympic Committee (IOC)," he said.

Gumel said the policy was aimed at establishing a zero-tolerance stance against all forms of abuse in sports.

He said it would also provide clear standards, reporting mechanisms and accountability structures across all levels of sporting activities.

According to Gumel, the welfare, dignity and safety of athletes remain at the centre of the framework, with special emphasis on children, female athletes and persons with disabilities.

## NWFLPMDF Congratulates Edo Queens FC on 2026 Premier League Triumph

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The NWFL Premiership Media Directors Forum (NWFLPMDF) congratulates Edo Queens FC on their premier title win on Sunday.

The media professionals forum described Edo Queens victory as a hard-fought and well-deserved victory at the just concluded 2026 NWFL Premiership Super Six playoffs in Port Harcourt, Rivers state.

After a hard-fought campaign marked by excellence and resilience, Edo Queens FC proved their mettle by going ahead of other equally formidable challengers to clinch the title and a ticket to represent the nation at the continent for the second time.

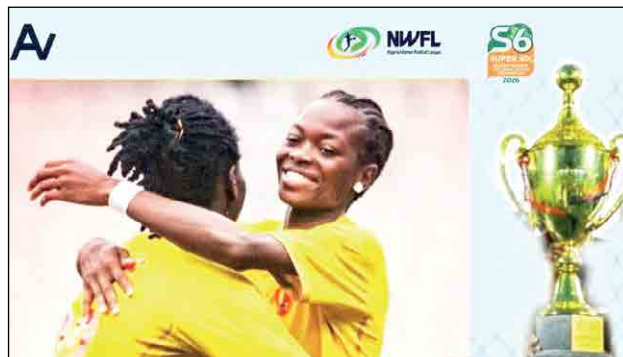
The Forum in a congratulatory message signed by its Secretary Chinedu Charles urges the champions to carry Nigeria's flag with pride and resilience as they get ready to represent the nation at the WAFU-B Women's Zonal playoffs in Burkina Faso from August 13 - September 05 where they will be expected to secure ticket for the CAF Women's champions League and a potential route to the FIFA Women's Club World Cup.

The Benin-based topflight

team were the fourth best side in Africa in their first experience in the women CAF champions league in 2024.

The Forum also commended other clubs who took part in the season's ending decisive playoffs for their commitment, competitive spirit, and sportsmanship throughout the 2026 season.

The Forum encourages all the teams to build on this momentum as preparations begin in earnest for the next league season.



EDO QUEENS FC PLAYERS

## Kylian Mbappe reaches France milestone with his goals against Senegal

Kylian Mbappe reaches France milestone with his two goals against Senegal tonight.

He has now scored 58 goals in just 99 games for France. And his goals also put it him on 14 in World Cups - just two behind Germany's Klose, who holds the record with 16.

After a barren first half, 2022 World Cup finalists, France stepped up the tempo in their opening game in New York against France with Michael Olise and Kylian Mbappe the

tormentors in chief.

Olise looked like he was close to ending the deadlock in the 50th minute but Édouard Mendy clinical save rescued Senegal.

Moments later, a penalty appeal after Senegal legend, Sadio Mane supposedly fouled Mbappe but VAR ruled otherwise in favour of the Teranga Lions.

But the pressure continued to mount and a one-on-one between Olise and Mbappe saw the Real Madrid striker

giving France the lead in the 66th minute.

Bradley Barcola scored Blues' second goal in the 81st minute to exert France revenge of the Korea/Japan 2002 World Cup opening match 1-0 defeat to the Africans.

Senegal attempted a comeback with Mbappe's added time goal to make it 2-1 but Mbappe replied with a thunderous shot outside the penalty area for France's third goal and his 58th to become his country's highest scorer in history

## 2026 World Cup: Argentina outclass Algeria 3-0 as Messi nets hat-trick

Argentina made a strong start to their FIFA World Cup 2026 campaign with a convincing 3-0 victory over Algeria in a Group J match played on Tuesday night in Kansas City, U.S.

The defending champions were in control for most of the game and

showed their quality against an Algerian side that struggled to cope with their attacking play.

Argentina enjoyed more possession, created several scoring opportunities and dictated the pace of the match from the opening whistle.

Captain Lionel Messi was the

star of the night as he scored all three goals for Argentina to register the tournament's first hat-trick.

The 38-year-old forward once again proved why he remains one of the greatest players in football history with a clinical display in front of goal.

Messi opened the scoring in the 17th minute after a well-worked move involving mid-

fielder Rodrigo De Paul.

De Paul delivered a precise pass into Messi's path and the Argentine captain calmly finished past the Algerian goalkeeper to give his side an early advantage.

Argentina continued to press for more goals after the break and their efforts paid off in the 60th minute when Messi doubled the lead.

## Football strengthens Nigeria-U.S. ties, says Consul General

The United States Consul General, Rick Swart, has reaffirmed football's role in strengthening Nigeria-U.S. relations.

Swart spoke on Tuesday during the Freedom Cup novelty football tournament in Lagos.

The event marked the United States' 250th Independence anniversary.

The tournament held at Upbeat Centre, Lekki Phase 1, featured diplomatic, media and alumni teams.

It included a friendly match between Team Lagos State and the U.S. Consulate. Other teams were Team Truth, Team Opportunity, Team Legacy and Team Liberty.

Swart praised the partnership between both countries,

describing sports as a bridge for cultural understanding.

"Football and cultural engagements remain strong bridges for mutual understanding between both nations," he said.

He said Lagos required continuous collaboration through tourism, sports and cultural exchange platforms.

"This is what we want in Lagos. We must continue to engage our people," Swart said.

The consul general added that people-to-people connections would deepen friendship and cooperation.

Swart noted Nigeria's influence in global sports in spite of the Super Eagles missing the ongoing World Cup.



TEAM LAGOS STATE



# FIFA World Cup breaks broadcast records across the board

More than 54 million viewers tuned in across Canada, Mexico and the United States for the opening FIFA World Cup 2026 matches featuring the three Host Nations, highlighting the tournament's unparalleled ability to bring people together and captivate audiences across North America

With a combined 27.5 million viewers, the United States' opening match against Paraguay became the most-watched football match ever broadcast in the country

Multiple national and international broadcast records were broken across English and Spanish-language television, underlining the unprecedented reach and momentum of the first FIFA World Cup to be hosted by three nations

The FIFA World Cup 2026

has made an extraordinary start on and off the pitch, with opening matches involving the tournament's three Host Nations delivering record-breaking audiences across North America.

While more than one million fans have already experienced the FIFA World Cup 2026 live inside stadiums, television audiences across the Host Nations have also reached unprecedented heights – and more than 54 million viewers tuned in to watch opening matches featuring Canada, Mexico and the United States, highlighting the tournament's extraordinary ability to unite and captivate audiences across North America.

Speaking of the record-breaking figures, FIFA President Gianni Infantino said: "What we are witnessing here is truly historic. The United States' open-

ing match against Paraguay was the most-watched FIFA World Cup match ever broadcast in the United States, while more than 54 million people across Canada, Mexico and the United States watched their respective nations opening matches, shattering records and showing how football is truly uniting the world."

The FIFA President continued: "These figures tell you everything about what this tournament means to these countries, this continent and the entire world. However, this is not just about numbers - this is about millions of people from every corner of the world, coming together through football. The atmosphere, energy and passion I feel in these host countries is something incredibly special. The fans inside full stadiums, those watching at home, and some cele-

brating in the streets are all part of something unique."

The United States delivered its most significant television audi-

ences in FIFA World Cup history. The host nation's opening victory over Paraguay attracted an average audience of 27.5 million view-

ers across FOX and Telemundo, making it the most-watched FIFA World Cup match ever broadcast in the United States.



## Messi equals World Cup goal-scoring record with hat-trick against Algeria

Lionel Messi scored a brilliant hat-trick to equal the World Cup all-time

goals record as Argentina humbled Algeria 3-0 on Tuesday in Kansas City.



LIONEL MESSI

The Argentina legend now joins German legend Miroslav Klose as joint record holder with 16 goals, after a magical display against the North Africans.

Messi scored in the 17th, 60th and 76th minutes of the tie.

At 38, the former Barcelona man also became the oldest player to score a World Cup hat-trick, 20 years after his debut at the World Cup in 2006.

Liverpool midfielder Mac Allister said there are no words to describe Lionel Messi.

"There are no words to describe it. I think if anyone thought this team was better without Leo, today it became clear that Leo is the most im-

portant player of all. "And that we have to build a team around him, where he feels comfortable."

Algerian defender Aissa Mandi said his side's plan to stop Messi didn't work.

"He's a player, maybe the best player of all time, so that's his efficiency, and it's formidable. We knew it, we tried to limit him as much as possible, but it didn't work."

Speaking after the game, Messi said it is an honour to be joint top goal scorer but that it is just a start.

"It is a great honor to be able to compete with all these greats, including Ronaldo Naz-

## France stun Senegal with second-half blitz to win 3-1

France defeated Senegal 3-1 in a thrilling World Cup Group I clash after exciting second-half display.

Senegal began strongly, troubling France with quick attacks and intense pressing during a lively opening period.

France dominated possession but struggled to create clear chances as Senegal defended with discipline.

The match changed after the break when France increased their tempo and attacked with greater purpose.

Kylian Mbappé opened the scoring for France in the 66th minute with a clinical finish.

Bradley Barcola doubled France's advantage in the 82nd minute after Senegal's defence was stretched.

Senegal fought back and Ibrahim Mbaye pulled one goal back in the 90th minute plus five.

Mbappé completed France's victory by scoring again in the 90th minute plus six.

The result secured France a winning start, while Senegal were punished for their second-half collapse.

France's attacking quality eventually overwhelmed Senegal after a contest that remained close for long spells.



KYLIAN MBAPPÉ

## NWFL Triumph: Utubor celebrates Edo Queens FC on remarkable sporting achievement

The Special Adviser to the Edo State Governor on Political Matters, Mobilization and Engagement, Hon. Eugene Utubor, has congratulated Edo Queens Football Club on their outstanding performance and successful representation of Edo State on the national sporting stage.

Utubor, in a statement, joined in celebrating the team's achievement, describing the victory as a reflection of discipline, strategic preparation, teamwork, and collective excellence.

He noted that the success of Edo Queens further demonstrates the potential of Edo youths

to excel when provided with the right support and opportunities, adding that the achievement has projected the values of hard work,

resilience, and determination associated with the state.

The Special Adviser said his support for the team aligns with



EDO QUEENS FOOTBALL CLUB CELEBRATE

his mandate of promoting youth engagement, strengthening grassroots mobilisation, and using sports as a tool for unity and development across Edo State.

He commended the players, coaching crew, and management of Edo Queens FC for their commitment and professionalism, while reaffirming the government's commitment to advancing sports development and creating opportunities for young talents to thrive.

"Your success is Edo's success," Utubor stated, congratulating the team and wishing them continued success in future competitions.