

NEWS

Oborevori bags BPP, ICPC's excellence award

● **Spent ₦654.5bn on 362 projects in 2025 without borrowing**

AJUWA VICTOR

ASABA

Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevori, on Wednesday bagged an award of excellence from the Bureau for Public Procurement (BPP) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC).

The Governor received the award during the opening ceremony of a 2-Day Public Procurement and Enlightenment Workshop for Executive Council members and top government functionaries at the Unity Hall, Government House, Asaba.

Represented by his Deputy, Sir Monday Onyeme, Ph.D, the Governor reaffirmed his

administration's unwavering commitment to transparency, accountability, and the prudent management of public resources.

He revealed that the state executed projects worth over ₦654.5 billion in 2025 completely debt-free.

The Governor said: "Our administration recognises that an efficient procurement system is essential to good governance; this has informed our efforts to strengthen institutional frameworks that promote openness, fairness, competition, and value for money in project execution.

"The importance we attach to this responsibility is reflected in our investments; in 2025 alone, Delta State committed over ₦654.5 billion to procurement activities involving

contracts valued at ₦25 million and above, resulting in the award of 362 contracts across key sectors, including roads, education, healthcare, and other strategic infrastructure.

"Significantly, these achievements were recorded without borrowing; through fiscal discipline, prudent financial management, and strict adherence to due process, we have con-

tinued to fund major projects while maintaining the financial stability of the State.

"This demonstrates that responsible governance and sustainable development go hand in hand.

"As such, I am pleased to welcome you to this 2-Day Public Procurement Enlightenment Workshop for members of the State Executive Council and other top government functionaries.

"I commend the Delta State Public Procurement Commission for organising this timely programme, with the appropriate theme: Understanding the Delta State Public Procurement Law, 2020. The theme is both relevant and strategic, as it speaks directly to our administration's commitment to transparency, accountability, and prudent management of public resources.

"The Delta State Public Procurement Law, 2020, provides the legal and institutional framework

for achieving these objectives; a sound understanding of its provisions is therefore essential for all public officials involved in planning, approving, and executing government projects.

"Public procurement is one of government's most important responsibilities; it is the process through which public funds are transformed into roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, water projects, and other critical infrastructure that improve the lives of our people.

Police arrest 5 out of 7 suspects for kidnapping woman, kids in Edo

MIKE OSAROGIAGBON

BENIN CITY

Operatives of the Edo State Police Command said they have arrested three additional suspects in connection with the kidnapping of a woman at the popular Vegetable Market along Airport Road, Benin City.

With the latest arrests, the number of suspects linked to the crime has risen to six. Investigators say the only person still on the run is a community CSO accused of supplying the guns used for the operation.

According to the police, the latest suspects are Gift Raphael, female, 27, Wisdom Michael, male, and Rufus Michael, male.

Gift Raphael is alleged to be the girlfriend of the principal suspect, Marvellous Isaac, and was responsible for supplying

food to the gang and their victims while they were kept in the forest.

Police hinted that the suspects were apprehended during separate intelligence-led operations conducted in Benin City and parts of Delta State on June 20, 2026.

Recall that the Commissioner of Police in Edo State, CP Monday Agbonika, on June 18, 2026, paraded Marvellous Isaac, 32, before journalists and Governor Monday Okpebholo as a suspected member of the gang involved in the Vegetable Market kidnapping. Another suspect, identified simply as Precious, was neutralised during a gun duel with operatives of the Intelligence Response Team (IRT).

"Items recovered from the suspects included one Lexus RX 350 SUV with registration number EKP 848 AE, red in colour, which was confessed



NEWS CONFERENCE:

L-R: Lady Captain Golf Section Enugu Sports Club (ESC), Ms Nnennaya Uchenna-Okeke; Chairman, ESC, Mr Ifeanyi Nweke; Acting Chairman, Golf Section ESC, Mr George Akwada; member Local Organizing Committee (LOC) Swig for Peter Mbah 2026 Golf Tournament (SPM2026GT), Mr Ben Oranusi and member LOC SPM2026GT, Mr Paul Nnajiogor, during a news conference on SPM2026GT in Enugu on Wednesday.

Oborevori unveils workers' housing scheme

ASABA

Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevori, has announced plans to establish a Workers' Housing Scheme aimed at providing affordable housing for serving and retired civil servants in the state.

The governor made the disclosure in Asaba during the Delta State Public Service Lecture held as part of activities marking the 2026 International Public/Civil Service Week celebration.

Represented by his deputy, Sir Monday Onyeme, Governor Oborevori said the initiative was in response to the long-

standing demand by labour unions and workers' associations for affordable housing to address the accommodation challenges facing public servants.

According to him, the state government is already engaging the Ministry of Housing, the Delta State Mortgage Trust Bank and private sector partners to develop a phased and transparent housing scheme that will cater for the needs of workers.

He explained that the proposed scheme would prioritize serving officers and retirees, with flexible and salary-friendly payment arrangements.

He added that the administration would also strength-

en existing staff welfare programmes, including housing and vehicle loan schemes.

The governor further disclosed that the Workers' Owner-Occupier Housing Scheme would be revitalized through strategic partnerships with reputable real estate developers to ensure that workers have access to decent and affordable homes.

"Housing is dignity, and dignity is part of results. Having spent your careers building Delta State, our workers deserve decent shelter for their families," he said.

Speaking on the theme of the celebration, "Reforms, Resilience and Results," Oborevori described civil servants as the

backbone of governance and the driving force behind the successful implementation of the administration's M.O.R.E Agenda.

He commended public servants across the state for their dedication, professionalism and commitment to service delivery, noting that they remain the critical link between government policies and the people.

The governor said his administration had continued to pursue reforms aimed at strengthening public institutions, promoting accountability, enhancing transparency and improving service delivery across Ministries, Departments and Agencies.

Justice at last: Canadian court jails killer of 2 Nigerian youths for life

CAROLINE AMEH

ABUJA

The Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM) has welcomed the life sentence imposed by a Canadian court on the man convicted of killing two young Nigerians in a nightclub shooting in Ontario, describing the judgment as a significant milestone in the pursuit of justice for the victims and their families.

The Ontario Court of Justice sentenced the offender to life imprisonment without eligibility for parole for 25 years after finding him guilty on two counts of first-degree murder and one count of unlawfully causing bodily harm.

This was made known in a statement signed by Abdur-Rahman Balogun, Director of Media, Public Relations and

Protocols Unit of NiDCOM.

The conviction stems from a deadly shooting at a nightclub in Vaughan, Ontario, on July 23, 2022, which claimed the lives of Chibueze Momah and Tosin Amos-Arowoshegbe.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, NiDCOM said the ruling demonstrates that perpetrators of violent crimes will ultimately be held accountable, regardless of how long the judicial process takes.

The Commission noted that while the judgment cannot erase the pain of losing loved ones, it provides a measure of closure and justice for the bereaved families.

"While no judicial outcome can restore the lives of the deceased or erase the pain endured by their families, the sentencing represents a significant step toward accountability and justice for the victims and their loved ones," the statement read.

Undocumented Nigerians in Türkiye to benefit from new return, reintegration scheme

CAROLINE AMEH

ABUJA

Undocumented Nigerians living in Türkiye may soon have access to a structured voluntary return and reintegration programme as both countries move to strengthen cooperation on migration management and diaspora affairs.

The initiative, currently being developed by the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Government of Türkiye, is designed to provide undocumented mi-

grants with an alternative to deportation by offering support for their safe return and reintegration into society.

The proposal was unveiled during a high-level meeting in Abuja between officials of Türkiye's Presidency of Migration Management and the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), with discussions centered on the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on voluntary return and reintegration.

Leading the Turkish delegation, Hunkar Burkan Ibin, Head of Removal Affairs at Türkiye's

Presidency of Migration Management, said the programme reflects Türkiye's commitment to a more humane and sustainable migration policy.

He explained that although the number of undocumented Nigerian migrants in Türkiye remains relatively low, authorities are seeking to establish a framework that prioritises voluntary return over forced deportation.

According to him, undocumented migrants apprehended by Turkish authorities are currently placed in administrative detention centres while travel documents

are processed through the Nigerian Embassy before deportation procedures begin.

However, migrants who voluntarily choose to return home under the proposed arrangement would be eligible for reintegration assistance aimed at helping them rebuild their lives and secure sustainable livelihoods in Nigeria.

"The programme will provide counselling, skills assessments and tailored assistance to help returnees become self-sufficient and reintegrate successfully into their communities," Ibin said.

NSCDC arrests two suspects over abduction, sexual assault of minor

BENIN CITY

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Edo State Command, has arrested two suspects and rescued a teenage girl who was recently abducted and sexually assaulted in Ewohimi, Esan South East Local Government Area of Edo State.

The incident comes amid renewed efforts by security agencies and the Edo State Government to strengthen the fight against violent crimes, particularly offences involving women and children.

The incident was reported on June 19, 2026, after Mr Odion Enokhimion lodged a complaint at the NSCDC Ewohimi Division over the disappearance of his sister, who was allegedly taken away by unknown persons a day earlier.

Following the complaint, operatives of the command launched an investigation, which led to the arrest of two suspects identified as Orhiabor Thank-God, 20, and Saturday Freedom, 16, both residents of Ewohimi. The victim was also rescued and taken into protective care.

According to the NSCDC investigation report, the suspects

contacted the victim's relatives after her abduction and demanded a ransom. They initially requested N800,000 before reducing the amount to N300,000.

The command said the conversations between the suspects and the victim's family have been traced and recovered from a mobile phone belonging to one of the suspects, while an account allegedly linked to the suspects was also identified during the investigation.

A medical examination con-

ducted at the Edo State Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), Sen. Daisy Ehanire Danjuma Vivian Centre, Benin City, confirmed that the victim suffered sexual assault. She was provided with medical

treatment and counselling by professionals at the centre.

The NSCDC Edo State Command said the suspects remain in custody and will soon be charged to court upon completion of investigation.



A NEWS CONFERENCE:

L-R: Director, Finance and Account, Lucas Sunday; Provost Marshal and Director of Internal Affairs, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Tunde John; Chief of Staff, Lt.-Col. Shehu Mijinyawa; Director, Media and Advocacy, Femi Babafemi, and Director External Relations, Nnoroka Kenechi, during a news conference on the outcome of major operation against an international drug cartel operating in Nigeria.

FHA, developer commence construction of 213 unit estate in FCT

ABUJA

The Federal Housing Authority (FHA), in partnership with Green Pasture Homes Ltd., on Wednesday performed the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of the 213-unit FHA Green City Estate in Wasa District, Abuja.

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of FHA, Oyetunde Ojo, said the project was part of efforts to address Nigeria's housing deficit through the provision of affordable, quality and sustainable homes.

Ojo, represented by the Executive Director, Estate Services, Nya-Etok Ezekiel, spoke at the project site during the groundbreaking ceremony.

He said the initiative aligned with President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda, which identifies housing development as a key driver of economic growth and national development.

"This event is not merely the commencement of another construction project; it is the laying of a foundation for a livable environment with modern infrastructure.

"We remain resolute in our mandate to facilitate access to decent housing and transform the FHA into a viable and efficient government agency through strategic private-sector partnerships," he said.

According to him, the authority has adopted collaborations with reputable develop-

ers, including Green Pasture Homes Ltd., to accelerate housing delivery across the country.

"By adopting partnerships as a delivery model, we are underscoring the fact that housing provision cannot be left to government alone.

"There is a need for both the public and private sectors to collaborate in tackling our national housing challenges," he said.

Ojo added that the project would create jobs for artisans, engineers, architects, surveyors, suppliers and other professionals, while stimulating economic activities in Wasa and surrounding communities.

Also speaking, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Green Pasture Homes Ltd., Mr Oloyede Oluwale, said the FHA Green City Estate would comprise 213 res-

idential units on five hectares of land.

He said the development was designed to provide affordable, secure and sustainable housing for different categories of home seekers and investors.

According to him, the estate will consist of 80 two-bedroom apartments, 56 three-bedroom apartments, 35 three-bedroom terrace duplexes and 42 four-bedroom terrace duplexes.

Oluwale described the project as a successful public-private partnership aimed at addressing Nigeria's housing needs.

"Our vision is simple but ambitious. We want to create a modern, affordable, secure and sustainable residential community that meets the housing aspirations of Nigerians while delivering exceptional value for investors," he said.

Dumping refuse in moats will attract stiff penalties —Edo Tourism DG

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

The Director-General of the Edo State Tourism Agency, Mrs Vivian Elabor, has warned residents against dumping refuse in the state's moats, stating that offenders will face stiff penalties.

Elabor issued the warning on Wednesday while addressing journalists in Benin City. She expressed concern that many of the moats are currently being used as refuse dumps, despite their historical and cultural significance.

According to her, the agency is committed to educating the public on the importance of preserving the moats, which were originally constructed by the ancestors to protect communities.

"Today, many people do not appreciate the value of the moats. The outside world understands the importance of preserving tourist sites, and we want our people to have the same understanding," she said.

She emphasized that the agency is working tirelessly to restore and preserve the moats as part of Edo State's rich cultural heritage.

"There will be stiff penalties for anyone caught disposing of waste in the moats. We must preserve our heritage and restore the legacy of the moats," she added.

The Director-General noted that Edo State is blessed with numerous tourist attractions, with about 72 tourism sites spread across the state. She stressed that these sites remain largely underutilized and have great potential for economic growth.

Elabor further stated that the agency intends to use tourism as a tool for job creation and to boost the state's Internally Generated Revenue (IGR).

"Edo State must reduce its dependence on allocations from the centre. Tourism has a critical role to play in driving economic development, and we are determined to make Edo a leading tourism destination," she said.

Slow pace of Benin-Asaba highway reconstruction raises concerns

Contracting firm says work is ongoing

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

Residents, business owners, and motorists have expressed growing concern over the slow pace of the reconstruction work on the Benin-Agbor-Asaba Expressway being handled by the Benin-Asaba Expressway Concession Company (BAECC).

They lamented that despite the obvious fact that the Benin -Agbor - Asaba Expressway which is regarded as one of Nigeria's busiest transport corridors, serving as a vital gateway between the South-South, South-East, and other parts of the country, the progress of the reconstruction work on some portions of the project appears slower than expected.

Mr. Osahon Ewaka, a resident around the Blessed Way axis along Agbor Road in Benin City, said the ongoing construction has created traffic disorder and exposed road users, particularly pedestrians to safety risks.

"We appreciate that the road is being reconstructed, but many people are worried about the pace of work. There are sections where activities appear to have slowed down considerably, and road users are bearing the consequences," he said.

According to him, the situation has increased the risk of

accidents, with reports of hit-and-run incidents in some areas.

A trader, Mrs. Grace Omoregie, said the slow pace of work, particularly the unfinished drainage construction, has made access to homes and businesses difficult while also posing safety concerns during rainfall.

"Our sales have dropped because many people cannot access our business premises. We want the contractors to speed up the work so businesses can return to normal," she said.

A commercial driver, Mr. Chinedu Okafor and several private motorists also voiced frustration over the condition of some sections of the road and the restrictions associated with the construction work.

"This situation has increased fuel consumption at a time when fuel prices are already high. It has also led to greater wear and tear on vehicles," Okafor said.

Responding to the concerns, the management of the Benin-Asaba Expressway Concession Company (BAECC) reaffirmed its commitment to delivering the project as planned.

The company acknowledged concerns raised by residents, business owners, and motorists, particularly within the Amufi/Iguomo axis of the Benin-Agbor highway where localized flooding has been reported as a result of ongoing construction activities.

2027: ADC to focus on issue-based campaign —Edo ADC Chair

BENIN CITY

The Chairman of the African Democratic Congress (ADC) in Edo, Tony Alile, says the party's campaign for the 2027 general elections will focus on practical solutions to the country's challenges.

Alile, who made this known in an interview on Wednesday in Benin, described the ADC

as the only credible alternative ahead of the 2027 elections and expressed optimism about the party's chances at the polls.

According to him, the party is committed to addressing the nation's pressing issues through realistic and people-oriented policies.

"If you want something different, vote for the alternative party, which is the ADC," he said.

Alile added that the party would not rely on flashy campaigns but would instead focus on the prevailing realities in the country.

He also dismissed as false claims that there are multiple ADC chairmen in Edo State.

He maintained that the tenure of the previous administration led by Kennedy Odion ended on May 19.

Alile noted that the current

state executives emerged from a congress recognised by the party's National Headquarters in Abuja and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

On the July 11 local government elections in the state, he said the party would not participate.

He urged Nigerians to support the ADC in the forthcoming general elections.

NEWS

Court to rule on EFCC's motion seeking final forfeiture of ex-power minister's properties

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja on Wednesday fixed July 2 for ruling on the EFCC's motion seeking final forfeiture of additional five properties linked to convicted former Minister of Power, Saleh Mamman, to Federal Government.

Justice James Omotosho fixed the date after EFCC lawyer, Abbas Muhammed, and Mamman's counsel, Femi Atteh, SAN, adopted their processes and presented their arguments for and against the motion.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the properties are Walijam Apartments, located at No.43, Plot 435 Lobo Crescent, Wuse 2, Abuja; and Bloom Luxury Suites Ni-

geria Limited, located at No 5, Amana Crescent, New Estate Uguwan Rimi, Kaduna State.

Others are a mansion located at No 11, Misratak Street, Wuse 2, Abuja; another mansion on No 13, Misratak Street, Wuse 2, Abuja and A.U.A. Plaza, situated on Plot 734, Kade Street, Wuse 2, Abuja.

When the case was called, Atteh, who appeared for the ex-minister, sought the permission of the court to address the issue of affidavit of facts leading to the judgement filed on May 22 by one of the lawyers in his chamber.

The senior lawyer said though he was not around when the application was filed, he apologised to the court on behalf of the junior counsel.

"I want to apologise for this

and I want your lordship to grant a pardon to us.

"I am the leader of the team and I will want my lord to permit me to move an application for its withdrawal so that it can be struck out," he prayed.

The prosecution lawyer, Muhammed, did not oppose the application.

Justice Omotosho said though he doubted if Atteh was aware of the drafting of the affidavit when it was filed, the judge directed the lawyer, Mo-

ammed Ahmed, to address him.

"Give him the phone, let me hear him if he is sober," the judge said.

But Atteh said Ahmed was not in court.

The lawyer, who said Ahmed's absence was not out of disobedience to order of court, said he was absent because he was indisposed.

"I am sorry my lord," he said.

The judge, thereafter, struck out the affidavit of facts, having been withdrawn.

Muhammed then informed the court that he had an application seeking an order for fi-

nal forfeiture of five properties of the former minister.

He said the motion on notice was filed on May 25 and that the defence had been served.

Atteh acknowledged the receipt of the application.

He said a counter affidavit had also been filed.

"Are you ready to move it?" the judge asked.

Responding, Atteh informed the court that he had "a strange application" to make.

According to him, we raised the issue of status of court in relation to this application.

He said counsel had the

responsibility not to put the court in a state of confusion.

"My opinion is that what they (EFCC) seek to achieve after Judgement and conviction can only be done if they filed another case," he said.

He said the court is "functus officio" to hear the motion for final forfeiture of the properties.

But Muhammed disagreed with Atteh's submission.

He maintained that though the court had delivered judgement, convicted and sentenced Mamman, "the court is not functus officio to proceed on this application my lord."

'No community will be left behind...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

rienced wasted hours in traffic, while farmers could not get their produce to market on time.

"But that story ends today.

"This 7-kilometre dual carriageway with solar-powered streetlights, pedestrian walkways and proper drainage is more than a road.

"It is security; it is commerce; it is dignity. It is the economic corridor linking Abuja to three area councils and opening an exit route to Southern Nigeria.

"With the construction of

this road, we have unlocked the agricultural potential of this area, opened new residential layouts, and made it safer for mothers, students, and workers to move at any hour.

"This is a renewed hope delivered to the doorsteps of our people in the satellite towns," he said.

Tinubu commended FCT Minister Nyesom Wike for making Abuja work for all Nigerians, not just residents of Maitama and Asokoro.

"You have taken renewed hope to the grassroots. From judicial quarters in Katampe to roads in Kuje and Gwagwada.

Budget Estimates: N24.8bn covers...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

runa Braimoh, the government said the budget provision had been clearly outlined under the Ministry of Roads and Bridges and was never intended for the Ramat Park project alone.

"There is nowhere in the 2026 Budget that the Edo State Government plans to spend the sum of N24.8 billion on the Ramat Park Flyover project alone," Braimoh stated.

He explained that the allocation covers the execution of three separate flyover projects as well as the associated road networks required to support them.

According to him, the budget details were properly captured and presented in the relevant section of the budget document made available to the public.

"The allocation was well explained and allocated under the Ministry of Roads and Bridges. Unfortunately, some individuals chose to misrepresent the facts, thereby creating unnecessary controversy and public concern," he said.

The government noted that the misleading information had generated considerable debate on social media in recent days, with many users ques-

tioning the perceived cost of a single flyover project.

Braimoh urged residents and stakeholders to disregard the claims and seek clarification from official government sources before drawing conclusions.

"We urge Edo people to discountenance the misinformation being circulated. The administration of Governor Monday Okpebholo remains committed to transparency, accountability and prudent management of public resources," he said.

The government further reaffirmed its commitment to delivering critical infrastructure across the state, stressing that the proposed flyovers are designed to address growing traffic challenges in key areas of Benin City.

It assured residents that updates on the projects and other capital development initiatives would continue to be communicated through official channels as implementation progresses.

The flyover projects are among the major capital expenditure items contained in the Edo State 2026 budget and are expected to play a significant role in improving transportation efficiency and supporting economic activities within the state capital.

**SUMMIT:**

L-R: Managing Director, Steron Mining Company (SMC), Mr Abubakar Omar; Executive Director of SMC, Mr Haroun Omar; Minister of Steel Development in Nigeria, Prince Shuaibu Audu; Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dr Dele Alake; Secretary-General, Africa Minerals Strategy Group (AMSG), Mr Moses Engadu, and other participants inspecting an exhibition at Steron Mining Company's booth, during the opening of the 5th African Natural Resources and Energy Summit (AFNIS) 2026, at the State House Conference Centre, Abuja on Wednesday.

Ondo: Amotekun nabs 2 siblings, 11 suspected kidnappers, 33 others

AKURE

The Ondo State Security Network Agency, code-named Amotekun, says it has arrested two siblings, 11 suspected kidnappers, and 33 other suspects across the 18 Local Government Area of the state.

Mr Adetunji Adeleye, Amotekun Corps Commander, made the disclosure while parading 46 suspects before newsmen on Wednesday in Akure.

Adeleye explained that two suspects were arrested under the anti-open-grazing law, while 31 were arrested for different types of criminal activities, including cultism, illegal possession of firearms, breach of peace, and other domestic criminal activities.

The commander, who said the suspected kidnappers were arrested in the government reserve area of Owo in Owo Local Government Area of the state, explained that the sus-

pects were aged between 20 and 35 years.

"On the kidnap that took place at railroad access, we were able to arrest them. We have two brothers, Usman and Usman, and one Zakaria.

"As an informant, we have a Seidu that was arrested while preparing to buy food and other things for the kidnappers.

"We also have a 20-year-old Ayuba, and one Umaru, arrested on anti-open-grazing law from Owo local government.

"The success was recorded as a result of the Sallah patrol initiated by the corps through

border control patrol, the Amotekun rangers, operational department, commander squads and all operational units of the corps.

"Across board, we are happy to say that the security stability, in conjunction with all the state security agencies, is robust to the extent that the forest combing, the clearance operation, and joint patrol goes on," he said.

Adeleye, who said there was no hiding place for criminals in the state, advised anyone who intended to engage in criminality to rethink or face the long arm of the law.

NEMA, World Bank move to review Nigeria's disaster mgt

ABUJA

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), in collaboration with the World Bank and civil society partners have begun the review of Nigeria's main emergency response frameworks to tackle new climate, environmental and security threats.

The two-day stakeholders' inception workshop, which opened on Wednesday in Abuja, focuses on updating the Na-

tional Disaster Management Framework (NDMF) and the National Disaster Response Plan (NDRP).

The Director-General, NEMA, Mrs Zubaida Umar, said that Nigeria's risk environment was changing rapidly, citing severe floods, climate-related hazards, conflict-induced displacement, disease outbreaks, and complex urban emergencies.

Umar noted that while the existing NDMF and NDRP guidelines had served as vital

blueprints, evolving operational realities and lessons from recent emergencies made a comprehensive review imperative.

"This review provides us with an opportunity to strengthen coordination among stakeholders, clarify roles and responsibilities, improve early warning and early action systems, address gaps in response structures, and integrate emerging risks such as climate change and insecurity."

She added that the updat-

ed frameworks would ensure that vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities, women, children, and the elderly, were adequately factored into disaster planning and response protocols.

The Senior Disaster Risk Management Specialist for the World Bank Group, Dr Francis Nkoka, expressed the bank's commitment to supporting the review process through technical assistance and financial resources.

Oyo CAN directs churches to beef up security, suspend late activities

IBADAN

The Christian Association of Nigeria, (CAN), Oyo State Chapter, has directed churches in the state to beef up security, suspend late activities, and fence their premises amid rising cases of abduction and kidnapping in the state.

This was contained in a communique made available to newsmen in Ibadan on Wednesday.

The communique was jointly signed by the CAN Chairman, Rev. Elisha Ogundiya and Secretary, Very Rev. Samuel Owolabi, respectively.

“Due to incessant abduction and kidnapping in recent times, Oyo CAN advises churches to

be more security conscious by positioning security personnel and other electronic devices strategically within their premises and neighbourhood.

“Churches should intensify prayers towards the release of the abductees and suspend late physical activities because of the security situation in the state,” it stated.

The association further advised churches not fenced and gated to see it as their next project.

The body also enjoined church leaders, as a matter of urgency, to man their premises with trained security personnel especially during services.

It directed that every church should conduct a private security assessment of those employed as guards and other personnel on essential services.

They were further advised to disallow strangers sleeping in their sanctuary and church premises.

CAN also called on the pub-

lic to limit their travelling in times like this and avoid late night travellings.

It reiterated that the public should comply with the executive order issued by Gov. Seyi Makinde banning riding of commercial motorcycles after 10:30p.m. in the state.

The association said it viewed with concern the insecurity situation in Oyo State and sympathised with families of victims held hostage by bandits.

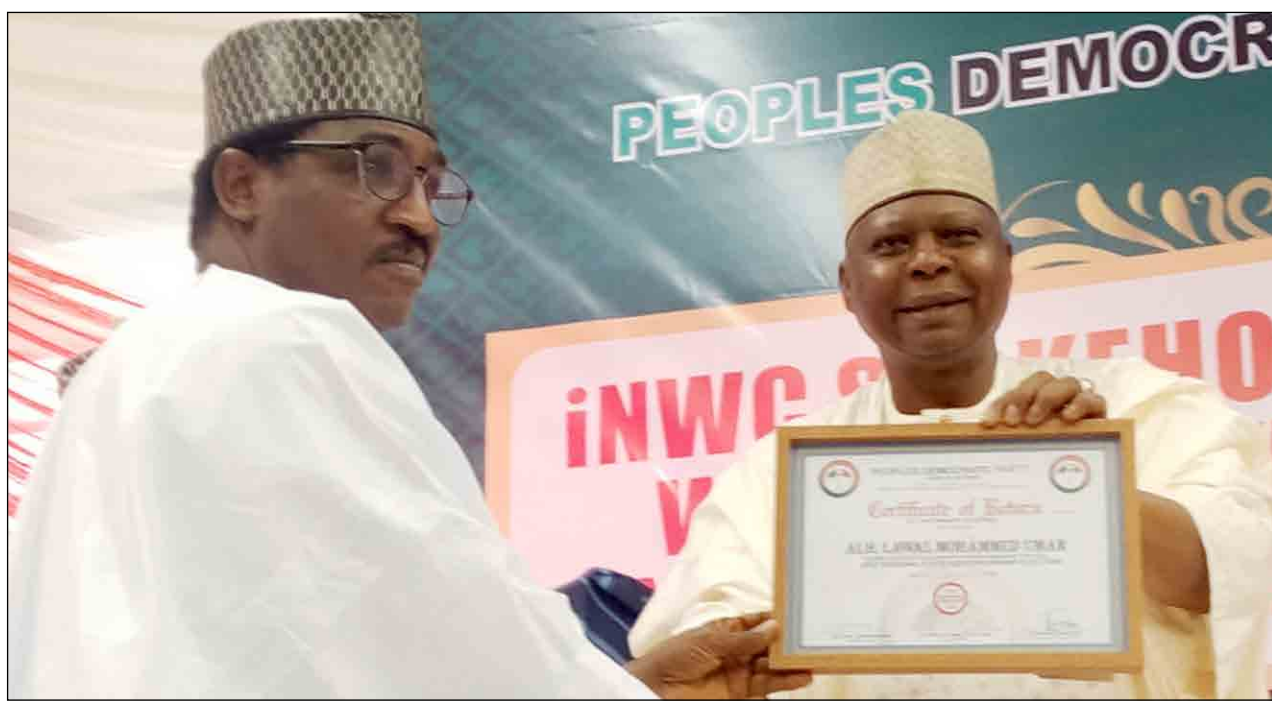
It, however, appreciated measures taken by the state and federal governments to

secure the release of abductees across the state, with special reference to the Orire Local Government saga.

The body resolved that the government should expedite actions in securing the release of the abductees and reunite them with their families.

It also urged the government to limit security information dissemination to the public.

“CAN, Oyo State chapter, will continue to collaborate with the government to see to the peace, unity and stability of the state,” the communique stated.



PRESENTING THE CERTIFICATE OF RETURN:

National Chairman, Taminu Turaki -led Interim National Working Committee of PDP, Kasim Taminu-Turaki (R), presenting the certificate of return of the party's governorship primary election in Kaduna State to Lawal Mohammed-Umar, during the stakeholders meeting with board of trustees, state chairmen and governorship candidates of the party, at Musa Ya'uda Centre in Abuja on Wednesday.

3rd anniversary: 10th Senate processed 1,286 motions, 676 Bills —Adaramodu

ABUJA

The 10th Senate has considered and resolved about 1,286 motions, while approximately 676 bills had progressed through various legislative stages, with several already signed into law by President Bola Tinubu.

Chairman of the Senate Committee on Media and Public Affairs, Sen. Yemi Adaramodu, disclosed this in an interview with newsmen on Wednesday in Abuja.

Adaramodu said that the Senate had also handled nu-

merous public petitions, debates on matters of national interest and the screening of ministerial nominees and heads of government agencies.

“All these processes are conducted openly and transparently for Nigerians to see and assess the performance of their representatives,” he said.

He said the upper chamber has recorded significant legislative milestones aimed at strengthening Nigeria's economy, governance, security and infrastructure.

Adaramodu said the Senate had remained focused on its

constitutional responsibilities and had successfully processed numerous bills and motions since its inauguration.

According to him, one of the landmark achievements of the Senate was the passage of the Tax Reform legislation, alongside efforts to reform the power sector, particularly in electricity generation and distribution.

“The 10th Senate has done extremely well. We have passed a lot of bills, many of which have been assented to and are now laws.

“We have worked to sanitise the economy, strengthen governance and improve Nigeria's infrastructure through legislation,” he said.

The senator noted that the

National Assembly has consistently scrutinised budget proposals from the executive to ensure that the needs of Nigerians were adequately reflected in government spending.

He explained that security, food security and infrastructure have remained the key priorities in budget allocations, stressing that these sectors are critical to national development.

Adaramodu who represents Ekiti South Senatorial District while commenting on the recently concluded governorship election in Ekiti, described the outcome as a clear endorsement of Gov. Biodun Oyeibanji's administration by the people of the state.

Police promise to end Plateau killings

JOS

The Nigerian Police Force (NPF), says it has put stringent measures in place to tackle the security challenges confronting Plateau.

Mr Maurice Dankwambo, the Assistant Inspector General (AIG) in charge of Zone 4, said this when he visited Governor Caleb Mutfwang on Wednesday in Jos.

Dankwambo said he was in Plateau on the directives of Mr Olatunji Disu, the Inspector General of Police, over the recent security breach in the state.

Gunmen had on Sunday attacked and killed 20 persons at Kavel community in Bokkos Local Government Area of the state, sparking outrage and grief.

The AIG described the incessant attacks and wanton destruction of lives and property in the state as unacceptable.

“The act perpetrated by this criminals is barbaric, wicked, and completely unacceptable.

“The NPF and other security agencies strongly condemn such acts of criminality and will con-

tinue to work tirelessly to ensure that those responsible are identified, arrested, and made to face the full weight of the law.

“This visit also is aimed at rebuilding our existing security plans in the affected areas to identify the possible gaps, and reinforce our operational strategies to ensure that the people are better protected and prevented from further attacks.

“Let me assure the government and the good people of Plateau that the security agencies are not resting.

“Our tactical teams and operation units are fully committed and already taking steps to restore confidence and to bring the perpetrators of these heinous acts to justice,” he said.

Dankwambo, however, called on residents of the state to support the Police and other security agencies in addressing the menace.

Responding, Mutfwang, who thanked the AIG for the visit, promised to support the efforts of the security agencies towards ensuring a peaceful Plateau.

Bayelsa agencies present tech, lab equipment to schools

YENAGOA

The Bayelsa Government on Wednesday distributed science laboratory equipment to 15 public secondary schools across the state's eight Local Government Areas to strengthen science education and improve learning outcomes.

Speaking at the presentation in Yenagoa, Prof. Ebimieowei Etebu, the Executive Secretary, Bayelsa State Education Development Trust Fund (EDTF), said effective science education depended on students gaining hands-on laboratory experience.

He said that practical experiments help students understand scientific concepts better and recalled how laboratory lessons he received decades ago continue to influence his understanding of science.

Etebu assured that the EDTF would monitor the use of the equipment to ensure they were deployed for teaching and learning rather than being left unused.

The Chairman of EDTF, Prof.

Zekieni Yelebe, described the intervention as further proof of Gov. Douye Diri's commitment to improving educational standards.

He urged school administrators and science teachers to maintain the equipment properly and provide students with opportunities to engage in practical experiments that promote innovation and scientific inquiry.

The Commissioner for Education, Mr Gentle Emelah, represented by the Permanent Secretary, Mr Simon-Peter Okene, commended the EDTF for its sustained support for educational development in the state.

He warned principals against diverting the equipment from their intended purpose, stressing that all items should remain in school laboratories for students' use.

Responding on behalf of benefiting schools, the President, All Nigeria Confederation of Principals of Secondary Schools (AN-COPSS), Bayelsa State Chapter, Mr Court Enebibodo, thanked the state government and EDTF for the intervention.

SA seeks collaboration with EDPUBMA on projects monitoring

BENIN CITY

The Special Adviser to the Governor on Building Projects Monitoring and Implementation, Hon. Irene Ojo, has called for stronger collaboration between the Edo State Public Building and maintenance Agency, EDPUBMA, to enhance oversight of government projects across the State.

Hon. Ojo stated this yesterday, during a working visit to EDPUBMA, where she was re-

ceived by the Managing Director, Arc. Emmanuel Fashanu, and senior management staff.

The visit she said would put her in an informed position to properly brief Governor Monday Okpebholo on the status of government projects, and also draw attention to areas requiring government's quick intervention.

The Special Adviser called for the creation of a comprehensive database of all government buildings for proper asset tracking. She also proposed the establishment of maintenance

units to be domiciled within Ministries, Departments, and Agencies for effective maintenance reporting system to ensure prompt repairs of government facilities.

Hon. Ojo acquainted the Managing Director with the “Edo 360 Automated Tracking System” as a tool for real-time monitoring of project completion across the state.

In his briefing, Arc. Fashanu said EDPUBMA's mandate aligns with the Governor's SHINE Agenda. He stated that

all projects are prioritised, with emphasis on health, education, markets, and security, based on the Governor's policy direction and the needs of Edo people.

The MD, however, listed inadequate technical equipment, logistics, and funding as key operational challenges.

Both officials agreed to establish a collaborative working relationship to strengthen project monitoring, reporting, and site inspections in order to strengthen the Governor's infrastructure goals.

NEWS**Expert urges urgent action on health worker exodus****ABUJA**

A public health expert has called for urgent and coordinated action to stem the growing exodus of healthcare workers from Nigeria, warning that the trend threatens service delivery and access to quality healthcare.

Mr Casmir Ifeanyi, National President of the Association of Medical Laboratory Scientists of Nigeria (AMLSN), made the call in an interview with newsmen on Wednesday in Abuja.

Ifeanyi said the continued migration of doctors, nurses and

other healthcare professionals was placing enormous pressure on the country's already strained health sector, worsening workforce shortages and affecting healthcare outcomes.

"The World Health Organization (WHO) provides what we call a 'WISN' Tool, known as World Staff Indicator, a human resource tool used to calculate exact number of health workers needed for health facilities and population.

"However, the WISN Tool has not been deployed in Nigeria," he explained.

According to him, poor work-

force planning, inadequate remuneration, weak accountability mechanisms and poor working conditions remain major factors driving the migration of healthcare professionals to countries offering better opportunities.

He added that understaffing had increased workload, burnout and fatigue among remaining health workers, thereby affecting service delivery and reducing the capacity of health facilities to meet growing demands.

Ifeanyi estimated that between 5,000 and 6,000 registered medical laboratory scientists leave Nigeria annually in search of better opportunities, contributing significantly to the country's healthcare workforce challenges.

"If the issue began from COVID 2020, take an average of 5,000 and multiply for six years, this indicates that about 30,000 will leave the country.

"Out of 160,000, only 55,000

licensed doctors remain to serve Nigeria's population sitting at one nurse for every 2,000 people below the WHO recommendations."

According to Ifeanyi, Nigerian healthcare professionals are among the best globally, but many continue to leave because they seek better remuneration, improved welfare packages and more conducive working environments.

He attributed part of the chal-

lenge to poor governance and systemic inefficiencies, emphasising that available resources must be better managed to strengthen the health sector and improve workforce retention.

Ifeanyi said teaching hospitals generated substantial revenue through card fees, laboratory services and consultancy charges, adding that placing qualified professionals in appropriate positions would enhance accountability and efficiency.

MAAN raises concerns over customs succession gaps**LAGOS**

The Maritime Arbitrators Association of Nigeria (MAAN) has raised concerns over succession gaps in the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS).

The association warned that weak leadership transition planning could threaten institutional stability and service delivery.

MAAN President, Chief Jean Anishere (SAN), spoke with newsmen in Lagos on Wednesday while reacting to recent developments within the service.

She commended President Bola Tinubu for extending the tenure of Comptroller General of Customs, Bashir Adeniyi.

However, Anishere said the extension exposed deeper challenges surrounding leadership transition and capacity building.

She noted that the situation reflected gaps within the NCS Board's succession planning framework.

According to her, younger

officers needed stronger preparation for strategic leadership positions.

"The extension provides temporary stability, but it exposes failures in preparing future leaders," she said.

Anishere stressed that training, mentoring and empowerment remained essential for institutional continuity.

She said sustainable leadership pipelines were necessary to preserve reforms and strengthen public institutions.

The MAAN president said the decision highlighted questions about knowledge transfer and institutional planning.

She added that the NCS Board must prioritise developing officers capable of assuming higher responsibilities.

Anishere described succession planning as a major lesson for public service institutions nationwide.

She said leadership should be measured beyond titles, positions and official recognition.

**OFFICIAL VISIT:**

Senator Obinna Ogba (left); Governor of Ebonyi State, Francis Nwifuru, and a Chinese contractor, during the official visit to the proposed site for the state cement factory.

Ebonyi Govt moves to set up new cement company

MAXWELL OKECHUKWU

ABAKALIKI

The Ebonyi state government has disclosed its plans with stakeholders in cement manufacturing industry to establish a new cement manufacturing plant at Nkallagu in Ischielu Local Government Area of Ebonyi state.

Disclosing this during a tour of the proposed site of the project and sources of raw materials, the State Governor Francis Ogbonna Nwifuru, said the factory would be setup within the agreed timeframe.

"We are here with the manufacturers, designers, builders

and contractors. They have seen the limestones and they have assured us on timely completion of the project", Governor Nwifuru explained.

The governor also dismissed suggestions that the proposed cement company would serve private interests, insisting that neither he nor any individual would acquire shares in the enterprise after its completion.

He commended the stakeholders for their support in his administration's industrialization efforts in the state, and particularly praised the Governor of Anambra State, Chukwuma Soludo, for sustaining his interest in the reactivation

of the old NIGERCER facility.

It would be recalled that the Ebonyi State Government earmarked N150 billion in its 2026 budget for the establishment of the new cement factory, citing the challenges in the efforts to revive the old Nigerian Cement Company (NIGERCER) as reasons for the fresh initiative.

While leading a team of Chinese investors, manufacturers, designers and contractors on an inspection tour of limestone deposits in Nkalagu, a key component for cement production, Governor Nwifuru said that preliminary geological findings revealed abundant limestone reserves in the area, enough to

sustain a cement factory for decades".

"We have 50 million tons of limestone in Nkalagu and 23 million tons at Effium, and if put together, they will sustain the factory for a minimum of 30 years"

Nwifuru explained that the proposed factory was expected to boost the state's industrialization efforts, create employment opportunities and reduce the cost of building materials in Ebonyi State, the South-East region and across the country.

He described the project as a major component of his administration's People's Charter of Needs agenda and not a politically driven venture".

NDLEA busts meth lab in Oyo forest, arrests Mexican, 4 others**ABUJA**

Operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) have struck yet another decisive blow against transnational drug syndicates following the discovery and dismantling of a fortified, industrial-scale clandestine methamphetamine laboratory in Oyo state.

The laboratory is operated by a Nigerian-Mexican cartel deep within the forest of Tapa Village, Ibarapa North Local Government Area, Oyo State.

Speaking on the development on Wednesday in Abuja, the NDLEA Chairman, retired Brig.-Gen. Buba Marwa, commended the gallantry, dedication, and clinical professionalism of the officers involved in the operation.

Marwa who was represented by the NDLEA, Director of Media and Advocacy, Femi Babafemi said that the breakthrough came barely four weeks after the agency dismantled a similar massive meth laboratory in a forest in Ijebu

East, Ogun State.

This, he said signaled a desperate attempt by drug barons to turn the Southwest axis into a synthetic drug manufacturing hub.

"On June 17, tactical operatives of the NDLEA stormed a highly fortified, industrial-scale clandestine methamphetamine laboratory operating deep within the forest of Tapa Village, Ibarapa North Local Government Area, Oyo State.

"This was not a rudimentary setup; it was a sophisticated, highly organized transnational syndicate.

"During the raid, our operatives successfully arrested five key members of the cartel on-site.

"They include a 56-year-old Mexican Methamphetamine expert brought in specifically to provide the technical expertise for large-scale synthesis and four Nigerian collaborators providing logistical support, cover, and local operations," he said.

Marwa said that the arrest of a foreign cartel specialist on Nigerian soil underscored the transnational nature of the threat.

Health concerns mount over use of chemicals to ripen fruits**LAGOS**

Some consumers in Lagos say fears over the use of chemicals to ripen fruits have prompted them to buy unripe produce and allow it to ripen naturally at home.

The consumers, alongside traders and a medical expert, expressed concern over the practice, warning that it could pose risks to public health and undermine confidence in food safety.

They disclosed this in separate interviews with newsmen on Wednesday in Lagos

Fruits such as plantains, ba-

nanas and mangoes are widely consumed across Nigeria because of their nutritional value and affordability.

However, concerns have persisted over reports that some traders use chemicals to hasten the ripening process and make fruits available for sale more quickly.

Mrs Funke Adebayo, a housewife, said that she preferred buying unripe plantains and allowing them to ripen naturally at home.

According to her, concerns about chemical use have made her more cautious when purchasing fruits.

"I prefer to buy unripe plantains and allow them to ripen naturally. That way, I am more confident about what my family consumes," she said.

Another consumer, Mr Tunde Adebayo, said reports of chemical ripening had made him more careful when buying fruits.

"We buy fruits because they are healthy, but if chemicals are used, it becomes a concern for consumers," he said.

Mrs Chioma Nwosu also urged relevant authorities to intensify public education on food safety and proper fruit handling.

Some traders said they relied on natural ripening meth-

ods and discouraged the use of chemicals.

Mrs Jadesola Akinyemi, a plantain trader at Oyingbo Market, said she allowed her plantains to ripen naturally.

"I do not use chemicals because I believe it is safer for consumers.

"Sometimes I advise customers to place plantains in black nylon bags and keep them in a dark place to speed up ripening," she said.

Another fruit trader, Mrs Kemi Balogun, said she had heard of chemical ripening practices among some traders seeking to reduce losses.

Alleged misappropriation: Court adjourns Ganduje, 7 others trial until Oct. 14

KANO

The trial of former Kano State Governor, Abdul-lahi Ganduje, and seven others over alleged misappropriation suffered a setback on Wednesday as the State High Court adjourned the case until October 14.

Ganduje is standing trial alongside his wife, Hafsat Umar, on an 11-count charge bordering on bribery, conspiracy, misappropriation and diversion of public funds amounting to billions of naira.

Other defendants in the suit are Abubakar Bawuro, Abdul-

lahi Umar, Jibrilla Muhammad, Lamash Properties Ltd, Safari Textiles Ltd and Lasage General Enterprises Ltd.

When the case came up for hearing of all pending applications, counsel to the prosecution, Mr Victor Oni, told the court that the state was ready to proceed.

Oni told the court that the prosecution had filed a motion on notice dated May 15, 2026, and sought leave to withdraw an earlier motion dated March 31, 2026.

He urged the court to substitute the earlier application with the one dated May 15, accompanied by a counter affidavit and a fresh written address in response

to the sixth defendant's preliminary objection and application for stay of proceedings.

Counsel to Ganduje, his wife and son, Mrs Lydia Oluwakemi-Oyewo, told the court that the defence was ready to proceed and had no objection to the prosecution's application.

Oluwakemi-Oyewo, who held brief for Chief M.N. Duru, SAN, counsel to the third and seventh defendants, also raised no objection to the prosecution's request.

Similarly, counsel to the fifth defendant, Mr Muhammad Shehu, said he was ready to proceed.

Counsel to the sixth defendant, Mr Abubakar Ahmad, in-

formed the court that he had filed a notice of preliminary objection, counter affidavit and written address, and consequently sought a date for hearing of the application.

Counsel to the eighth defendant, Mr Abdulrazaq A. Ahmed, also told the court that he was ready to proceed.

The presiding judge, Justice Amina Adamu-Aliyu, subsequently struck out the prosecution's motion on notice dated March 31, 2026.

She thereafter, adjourned the case until October 14, for hearing of the sixth defendant's preliminary objection.

Housewife seeks divorce over alleged neglect

MARARABA (NASARAWA)

A housewife, Hauwa Usman has prayed an Upper Area Court in Mararaba, Abuja to dissolve her marriage to husband, Habib Adamu on grounds of neglect.

Usman also want custody of their child.

She said that Adamu married her under the Sharia Islamic law.

"I have not known peace in my marriage. My husband keeps late nights. He does not provide for the family.

"He has also failed in performing his duties as my husband," she said.

She told the court that she had been responsible for the well-being of their child for five years now.

In response to the allegations, Adamu pleaded guilty to the petitioner's allegation.

The Judge, Mohammed Shomo, gave the couple two weeks to settle the matter amicably or come back for the dissolution of the marriage.

He adjourned the case until July 8 for feedback.

Farm attendant jailed 1 year for stealing turkeys, chickens, rams

IBADAN

An Iyaganku Magistrates' Court in Ibadan, on Wednesday sentenced a farm attendant, Adedotun Gbolagade, to one year imprisonment for stealing animals.

Gbolagade was arraigned on May 17, 2024, before the court on two counts charge of conspiracy and theft.

Delivering judgment, Magistrate Gladys Olanrewaju, found him guilty on count one (conspiracy) and count two (theft).

On count one, Olanrewaju sentenced him to six months imprisonment.

On count two (stealing), which carries a maximum of seven years without an option of fine, she sentenced him to one year imprisonment.

The Magistrate ordered that both sentences should run consecutively.

Olanrewaju also gave the

convict an alternative to retribute and pay the sum of N1.5 million to the complainant in lieu of the term of the imprisonment.

The magistrate said she was lenient after considering the plea of the convict to temper justice with Mercy.

The Prosecution Counsel, Insp Samuel Owolabi said, Gbolagade committed the offence on April 5, 2024, at about 7 p.m., at a poultry farm at Agbirigidi village, Moniya area of Ibadan.

Owolabi said the convict and others, at large conspired and stole turkeys, chickens and ram worth N3.1million belonging to the farm owner and complainant, Mr Arimiyu Akintola.

The offence, he said, contravened the provisions of Sections 516 and 390(9) of the Criminal Laws of Oyo State, 2000.

Gbolagade pleaded not guilty to the charge.



HISTORIC SITES:

Director-General, Edo State Tourism Agency, Mrs. Vivian Elabor, Middle, flanked by some officials of the agency, while addressing journalists in Benin City, Edo State, on Wednesday.

One remanded over alleged kidnapping, armed robbery

OLIVER IJOGBE

BENIN CITY

A Benin High Court Criminal Division has ordered the remand of a 37-year-old man, Victor John, over allegations of conspiracy, kidnapping, and armed robbery.

The prosecution told the court that the defendant, alongside others still at large, conspired among themselves on December 24, 2025, to rob

a victim of an iPhone 14 Pro Max valued at N900,000 and a black Lexus Jeep. According to the prosecution, the accused persons were armed with firearms and other dangerous weapons during the operation, an offence punishable under the relevant laws of the state.

The court also heard that the defendant and his accomplices allegedly robbed another victim of an iPhone 16 Pro Max valued at over N1.5 million, as well as a Tecno Spark 8C mo-

bile phone valued at N150,000 belonging to another victim. Other items worth more than N600,000 were also reportedly stolen by the gang. The prosecution stated that the offences are punishable under the Robbery and Firearms (Special Provisions) Act, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004.

Furthermore, the prosecution alleged that the defendant and other suspects currently at large conspired to commit the offence of kidnapping, con-

trary to and punishable under the Criminal Law of Edo State, 2022.

After the charges were read and the defendant's plea taken, the court ordered that he be remanded in custody pending further proceedings in the matter.

The court also urged Nigerians, particularly young people, to engage in legitimate and productive ventures rather than resorting to criminal activities.

Engineer docked for allegedly stealing building supplies worth N52m

ABUJA

An engineer, Joseph Danjuma, was on Wednesday docked in a Chief Magistrates' Court in Wuse, Abuja for allegedly stealing building supplies from an estate.

The police charged Danjuma, with mischief and theft.

He pleaded not guilty to the

charge.

The Prosecution Counsel, Festus Ajayi, told the court that the complainant, Mr Joshua Adelo, who is the Director of Untop Design and Home Estate in Mabushi Abuja, reported the matter at the Maitama Police station on June 4..

Ajayi informed the court that, the defendant who was employed as site engineer, stole car-

toon of tiles, bags of cement, 21 pieces of water heaters and door frames and electrical cables all worth N52 million from the site.

During police investigation, the prosecution said the defendant confessed to the crime.

The offence he said, is contrary to the provisions of Sections 289 and 326 of the Penal Code.

The Defence Counsel, P.A

Emoakpola, pleaded with the court to admit his client to bail, citing sections 158 and 162 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act.

Chief Magistrate Ekpeyong Inyang admitted the defendant to bail in the Sum of N3 million with one surety, who must be a civil servant.

Inyang adjourned the matter until July 24 for hearing.

Bail revocation: Sowore to remain in custody until June 30

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja on Wednesday fixed June 30 for ruling on a motion filed by Omoyele Sowore, the presidential candidate of African Action Congress (AAC), seeking to vacate an order for his bail revocation.

Justice Mohammed Umar fixed the date after Sowore's lawyer, Raphael Adakole, moved the motion for stay of execution of the order which was challenged by counsel to the Department of State Services (DSS), Akinkolu Kehinde, SAN.

Earlier when the case was called, Adakole informed the court that the matter was scheduled for the hearing of their application.

He said the motion on notice dated June 17, was filed June 19 pursuant to Sections 35(4), 36(1), and 66(a&b) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), including Sections 169 & 352 of Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA), 2015, and the inherent jurisdiction of the

court.

He said it prayed the court for an order setting aside the order made on June 16, revoking the bail and issuing a bench warrant against the defendant due to his non-appearance in court on the said date, and restoring the status quo before that date.

According to him, the application is accompanied by a 25-paragraph affidavit deposed to by Emmanuel Larry.

He urged the court to grant all the prayers in the application.

Upon receipt of a counter affidavit by the prosecution, Adakole said the defence filed another affidavit on 24 June.

"The defendant also filed a reply on points of law dated June 23 and filed same date.

"We adopt the said reply on points of law while placing reliance on the further affidavit and urge the court to grant the application as prayed in the interest of justice" he said.

The lawyer further urged the court to discountenance the counter affidavit filed by the prosecution.

NEWS

Foreign

UN nuclear chief says inspectors will visit Iran sites as part of war deal

The head of the global nuclear watchdog has said it will carry out inspections in Iran under the country's preliminary peace agreement with the US.

"The inspections will indeed take place," International Atomic Energy Agency director general Rafael Grossi told reporters in Japan. "We will be working on the modalities - dates, procedures, places - very soon."

The agreement signed last week said "explicitly" that the dilution of Iran's highly enriched uranium would be carried out under IAEA supervision, he added.

However, Iran's deputy foreign minister said access to its damaged nuclear facilities and nuclear material would only

be addressed within the framework of a final deal with the US.

Grossi's comments come as US Secretary of State Marco Rubio is visiting Gulf nations to discuss the deal. On Wednesday he met UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and is due to travel to Kuwait and Bahrain.

The initial US-Iran agreement also said that Iran would allow shipping to pass through the Strait of Hormuz while the US would lift a naval blockade on Iranian ports.

On Wednesday the price of Brent crude oil fell to below \$75 (£57) for first time since the US-Israeli war on Iran began.

Meanwhile the UN said some ships had already passed through the strait under a scheme to evacuate thousands

of sailors stranded by the war.

First round of US-Iran talks ends with encouraging progress, mediators say

In recent days, there has been a dispute between the US and Iran over the issue of UN nuclear inspectors visiting sites in the country.

On Monday, following talks in Switzerland with Iran's chief negotiator, US Vice-President JD Vance said Iran had "agreed to invite IAEA inspectors back into their country".

The next day, Iranian foreign ministry spokesman said there had been "no detailed discussions" and that Iran had no plans to grant IAEA inspectors access to nuclear facilities which were bombed by the US during a 12-day war between

Israel and Iran in June 2025.

US President Donald Trump then dismissed Iran's "protestations and false statements to the contrary", saying the country had "fully and completely agreed" to inspections.

"There's a war or words here. Some say 'yes', the others say 'no'," the IAEA's chief said on Wednesday. "I can understand political statements. They are part of the reality.

"But the fundamental thing... is that there has been a memorandum of understanding signed by both presidents," he added. "[It] says explicitly that the nuclear activities that are going to be carried out, with regards to nuclear material, facilities, will be supervised by the IAEA, in bold letters.

Biggest city in Crimea without power after Ukraine strikes

A Ukrainian air attack on Russian-occupied Crimea has knocked out power in its largest city, Sevastopol, Moscow-installed governor Mikhail Razvozhayev says.

Ukraine says its drones struck the city's main power substation overnight.

Razvozhayev warned some areas would be left without power until Wednesday evening.

Kyiv has been intensifying attacks on power facilities in areas held by Russia to damage oil revenues and try to force President Putin to the negotiating table.

The port city of Sevastopol is an important logistical and strategic location.

No fuel for sale as Ukraine's blockade of Russian-occupied Crimea takes effect

"We will not be intimidated by the lack of light. We have gone through more than that, and we will survive now," Razvozhayev said in a Telegram message to the public.

"The enemy is again striking vilely, trying to deprive us of our usual living conditions and sow panic."

He said a "special regime" had been put in place at the energy facilities as the damage was assessed and that all emergency services are on full alert.

Those living in Sevastopol were told to introduce power-saving measures including saving mobile phone battery by turning the screen brightness down and switching off back-

ground apps.

They were also urged to check on elderly neighbours throughout the day, when temperatures are expected to reach 30C.

Robert Brovdi, commander of Ukraine's Unmanned Systems Forces, said on Wednesday drones had targeted 48 operational and planned military sites.

He said that the main power substation of Sevastopol had been hit during the attacks.

Explosions had also been heard in Bakhchisarai, Kerch and in the area of Mount Ai-Petri, where the radio engineering battalion of the Russian Aerospace Forces is based.

It comes amid fuel shortages in the city after intense efforts by Ukraine to isolate the peninsula, annexed by Russia in 2014.

On Sunday, Russian-installed leader Sergei Aksyonov announced all petrol sales had been suspended.

It is now mostly reserved for government services, despite local residents saying garages did have supplies in its tanks.

Panic-buying has also started in some shops, with sugar said to be in especially short supply.

Kyiv has also targeted key bridges connecting the Crimean peninsula with other areas of occupied Ukraine.

Crimea is recognised internationally as Ukrainian, but since Putin's invasion it has been linked to Russia by road and rail links.



LOUVRE MUSEUM:

Tourists with umbrellas outside the Pyramid of the Louvre museum as it closes early due to the heatwave.

Air conditioning creates political divide after France records hottest day

With temperatures soaring, France is being forced to re-think its longstanding reservations about one possible answer to climate change: air-con.

This week debate about la clim (climatisation) has once again burst out, with Marine Le Pen on the populist right urging a mass subsidised roll-out and traditionally hostile Greens conceding that some air-conditioning may now be inevitable.

Currently the country has a low take-up, with only 25% of households equipped with an air-con unit. In Spain and Italy the figure is 50%, and in the US and Japan 90%.

French hospitals and schools are also only rarely equipped. Thousands of schools have had to shut this week, and medical and nursing staff complain of conditions fast becoming intolerable.

But with temperatures nudging 40C - Tuesday was France's hottest day on record - there

has been a rush to buy portable air-conditioning appliances, just to let children enjoy a few hours in class, or for suffocating apartment-dwellers to make it through the night.

And more and more, it seems, long-standing opponents of air-conditioning - mainly on the environmentalist left - recognise that it is bound to be part of the country's response to global warming.

This week the head of the Ecologists party Marie Tonderlier broke something of a taboo when she said that air-conditioning would be needed in schools and hospitals.

"There are places where we just can't do without it now," she said.

Her break with what she called "anti-clim dogma" is significant because until now the Green movement in France has regarded air-conditioning as the worst of solutions to climate change.

AFP via Getty Images A

child, in a white T-shirt and black shorts, plays in a fountain during a heatwave in Lyon, south-eastern France on 18 June 2026 AFP via Getty Images

Temperatures have been approaching danger levels in France Far from attacking the root causes of global-warming, activists said, recourse to la clim was merely attenuating the effects of global-warming.

And by making those effects more bearable, it distracted from the essential fight against the causes.

Not only that, but air-conditioning is often criticised by environmentalists for aggravating climate change.

This is because it requires electricity to run - and though most of France's electricity comes from nuclear power, elsewhere it means more fossil-fuels being burned.

There is also the question of the refrigerant gases used in air-conditioning, which are

greenhouse gases and often leak.

And there is the urban heating effect, caused by the expulsion of hot air onto the street.

Arguments rage, but some studies suggest this can raise city temperatures by two or three degrees.

Suspicion of air-conditioning has also infiltrated government policy.

New building and renovation norms focus quite naturally on insulation, greenery and hi-tech methods for air-circulation - with the express aim of making air-conditioning unnecessary.

Power outages hit France as record heatwave set to peak

From cool-down spots to chalk on windows - how Europe is coping with the heat

Six ways to keep your home and yourself cool in hot weather

A giant new hospital being built in the Brittany city of Nantes for example will have air-conditioning in only half its rooms, provoking the wrath of medical trade unions.

Clean sweep for Mamdani-backed candidates in New York's Democratic primary

US congressman Dan Goldman has been defeated in a New York primary election, capping a clean sweep for candidates backed by New York's democratic socialist Mayor Zohran Mamdani.

Goldman was beaten by progressive challenger Brad Lander in New York's 10th congressional district in a contest that laid bare the party's divisions over the Israel-Gaza war.

Lander has accused Israel of genocide in Gaza. Goldman, a two-term incumbent, was backed by pro-Israel groups.

Two other candidates, both democratic socialists endorsed by Mamdani as he seeks to tilt the Democratic party to the left, won their primary races on Tuesday, in a boost for the party's left wing in America's largest city.

Assemblywoman Claire Valdez defeated Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso in the 7th district.

Darializa Avila Chevalier, a doctoral student who has joined pro-Palestinian protests at Columbia University, won her race in New York's 13th district.

She toppled Adriano Espaillat, who had held the district for five terms and is chair of

the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, a body that advocates for legislation and resources for Hispanic Americans.

Mamdani celebrated her win, describing Chevalier as a person "of clarity, of conscience and of conviction".

Lander, who was also endorsed by Vermont's democratic socialist Senator Bernie Sanders, easily beat Goldman by 65.7% to 34.1%, with most votes counted.

He also received praise from Mamdani, who touted Lander's "vision of politics that is more than what we've seen for so long". Mamdani has described himself as a democratic socialist. The term has no clear definition but focuses on giving a voice to workers over corporations through policies like tax hikes on the rich to expand social programmes.

The endorsements were seen as a test of Mamdani's political influence, as he helps boost the profiles of progressive political candidates. Establishment Democrats in Washington, meanwhile, have warned that left-wing candidates might not appeal to swing voters in this November's midterm elections.

Foreign

NEWS

Colombia's left-wing presidential candidate concedes defeat

The left-wing candidate in Colombia's presidential run-off, Iván Cepeda, has conceded defeat three days after a record number of Colombians cast their vote.

Preliminary results released hours after the polls closed showed Cepeda had been beaten by less than a percentage point by his rival, right-wing businessman Abelardo de la Espriella.

Cepeda originally said he would wait for the legally binding final count - which is still under way - but on Wednesday announced he had "decided to accept the result".

He criticised US President Donald Trump for his endorsement of de la Espriella.

"We denounce the open and undue foreign interference in Colombia's internal affairs, in particular the interventions of President Donald Trump," he told journalists.

Trump had praised de la Espriella following his win in the first round of the election and labelled Cepeda a "radical Left Marxist".

After de la Espriella beat Cepeda in the run-off, Trump said he had won "easily", even though his 0.96-percentage-point lead was the narrowest win in recent Colombian history for a presi-

dential candidate.

Referring to the deep polarisation in the country, Cepeda said he had decided to concede "as an act of democratic responsibility; I do so to contribute to co-existence, to peace, and to dialogue among Colombians".

As the second-placed candidate he is entitled to a seat in the Senate, where he said he would exercise "a democratic, vigilant and constructive opposition".

Abelardo de la Espriella, who during the campaign had threatened to "gut the Left", also struck a conciliatory note during his victory speech, saying that those who thought differently from him would have nothing to fear.

Since Sunday's run-off de la Espriella has already established closer ties to the Trump administration than the outgoing president, Gustavo Petro, who had repeatedly clashed with his US counterpart.

Colombia's president-elect said on Tuesday that he would accept an invitation for his country to join the "Shield of the Americas", a US-led alliance of Western Hemisphere countries created to combat criminal cartels and drug-trafficking.

De la Espriella will be sworn in on 7 August.

France confirms first Ebola case

France has confirmed its first case of Ebola - a doctor who had returned from a humanitarian mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The doctor was "immediately admitted to a specialised facility" and is in a stable condition, the French health ministry said on Wednesday.

DR Congo announced an Ebola outbreak last month, but experts believe the virus had been circulating for weeks previously.

More than 260 people are confirmed to have died from the virus in the central African country, while 1,000 people have been infected.

This is the first Ebola case to have been confirmed in Europe, although an American doctor who tested positive in DR Congo was treated at a German hospital last month.

DR Congo's neighbour, Uganda, has also confirmed Ebola cases. The World Health Organization (WHO) says 20 people are known to have been infected there and two deaths have been confirmed.

Recovery of Ebola patients offers rare moments of joy at epicentre of outbreak

France's health ministry stressed that the risk to the population was "very low". Likewise, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said "the risk to the rest of the world is low" and that there was "no

need to panic".

Efforts are underway to trace people who may have been in contact with the doctor.

Healthcare workers are especially at risk from Ebola, which is spread through bodily fluids.

Last week WHO said 17 of the 75 health workers who had caught Ebola in DR Congo had died.

The current Ebola outbreak was caused by the Bundibugyo species of the virus, for which there is currently no vaccine.

France has set up a "dedicated monitoring system" for aid workers returning from DR Congo, the health ministry said.

According to both Africa's Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and US public health authorities, the current Ebola outbreak has the potential to be one of the largest ever.

In DR Congo, cases are currently concentrated in the eastern provinces of Ituri, South Kivu and North Kivu.

Ituri remains the main centre of transmission, accounting for more than 90% of confirmed infections.

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.



SENTENCED STUDENTS:

Eight students are still in police custody following their arrest last month

Eight sentenced to 450 years in prison over anti-ICE riot where officer was shot

Eight people who US prosecutors say have ties to Antifa have collectively been sentenced to 450 years in prison for their roles in a riot outside an immigration detention centre in Texas.

A former US Marine Corps reservist, who was convicted of attempted murder of a law enforcement officer, was sentenced to 100 years in prison. The others' sentences range between 30 to 70 years, according to the justice department.

Last year President Donald Trump designated Antifa - short for anti-fascist - a "domestic terrorist organisation".

A US judge called their actions on 4 July "an assault on democracy", while their families condemned the length of their sentences.

"The sentences handed down today make clear that Antifa terrorists who attack law enforcement and federal facilities will face swift and uncompromising justice," Acting US Attorney General Todd Blanche said in a statement, condemn-

ing violent extremism.

The US Department of Justice (DOJ) said the North Texas Antifa Cell operatives began shooting off and throwing fireworks at the facility in Prairieland, just south of Dallas, on the Independence Day holiday last summer, as well as vandalising vehicles and a guard kiosk on the property.

The eight were convicted on an array of charges, including rioting, using weapons and explosives, providing material support to terrorists, and obstruction.

Benjamin Hanil Song, the purported leader of the group, was sentenced to 100 years in prison. According to the justice department, he had faced a minimum penalty of 20 years.

Song said in a written statement on Tuesday that he fired his gun because he believed the police officer was preparing to shoot a protester, according to multiple media outlets and an advocacy group for the defendants.

His mother Hope Song has disputed claims that he shot the officer and said he didn't

intend to hurt anyone, according to the Associated Press.

US Department of Justice Exploding fireworks (explosives) thrown at the Prairieland facility by Antifa Cell members, captured by surveillance cameras.

US Department of Justice Exploding fireworks thrown at the Prairieland facility captured by surveillance cameras.

Maricela Rueda was sentenced to 70 years in prison; Cameron Arnold (also known as Autumn Hill), Savanna Batten, Zachary Evetts, Bradford Morris (also known as Meagan Morris) and Elizabeth Soto were each sentenced to 50 years in prison; and Daniel Rolando Sanchez-Estrada was sentenced to 30 years in prison.

A ninth defendant, Ines Soto, will be sentenced on 1 July. Seven others involved in the incident pleaded guilty before the trial to one count of providing material support to terrorists. They will also be sentenced on 1 July.

In a statement on Tuesday, the DOJ said the North Texas

Antifa Cell was part of a network of individuals and small groups ascribing to an ideology that calls for the overthrow of the US government, law enforcement and the system of law.

The defendants' supporters say the punishments were unduly harsh.

While other immigration facilities have seen numerous protests, as well as visits from Democratic lawmakers, the Prairieland site had been relatively free of disruptions.

Some of the protest's attendees said they believed that night was supposed to be a "noise demonstration" that did not include violence.

The defendants have denied any affiliation with Antifa and have said they attended the demonstration to support detained immigrants.

Antifa has long been a target for Trump. In September he signed an executive order designating the loosely organised, far-left movement as a domestic terror organisation.

Kenya to charge students with murder over deadly school fire

Eight students are still in police custody following their arrest last month.

Kenyan prosecutors say they are preparing to charge several students with the murder of their schoolmates following a suspected school arson attack last month.

Sixteen pupils, aged between 15 and 18, died and dozens more were injured when a fire broke out in a dormitory at Utumishi Girls' School in Gilgil, about 120km (77 miles) northwest of the capital, Nairobi.

Eight students were later arrested after police said they may have been involved in starting the fire by setting mattresses alight near an exit.

"Upon careful assessment

of the evidence, the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) has approved charges against the implicated students," the state prosecutor's office said in a statement.

The 28 May fire tore through the upper floor of a dormitory containing 135 bunk beds and housing 202 students, forcing them to flee through a single doorway after the emergency exit failed to open.

After interviews with students and staff and a forensic review of CCTV footage, eight pupils at the school were identified as "persons of interest in connection with the planning and execution" of the fire, police said.

The suspects, who are being

held in custody, are due to be formally charged in court on Friday, said the Office of the DPP on Wednesday following a court hearing in the central town of Naivasha.

"The suspects will face sixteen (16) counts of murder arising from the incident," the ODPP had said earlier.

The ODPP has expressed concern over a recent rise in cases of arson and related criminal conduct in learning institutions across the country, warning that those responsible would be held accountable.

Education Minister Julius Ogamba said preliminary findings indicated that there had been multiple breaches of safety measures at Utumishi Girls'

School, including overcrowding in dormitories and a locked exit door.

Kenya has a long history of school fires - just two years ago at least 21 people died in a dormitory fire in central Kenya.

Many fires reported in boarding schools have been the result of arson, with disgruntled pupils - angry about disciplinary measures and living conditions - accused of being responsible, while others were caused by accident.

Overcrowding in dormitories and the failure to follow safety guidelines, such as keeping exits clear and windows unlocked, have frequently been blamed for the high number of casualties.



ADVERTISEMENT RATES (PRINT)

SIZES	COLOUR		BLACK AND WHITE		BLACK AND WHITE		MULTI NATIONALS			
	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	PUBLIC NOTICE		PRODUCT		COLOUR		BLACK & WHITE	
			RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)
FULL PAGE	417,344	448,645	369,500	397,213	325,150	349,536	565,156	607,542	443,440	476,698
13 X 4	369,500	397,213	295,600	317,770	206,938	222,458	443,500	476,763	369,550	397,266
10 X 4	340,000	365,500	273,500	294,013	177,400	190,705	370,000	397,750	295,600	317,770
HALF PAGE	295,600	317,770	236,500	254,238	147,800	158,885	340,000	365,500	273,450	293,959
10 X 3	221,700	238,328	147,800	158,885	118,300	127,173	266,000	285,950	251,300	270,148
13 X2	206,900	222,418	133,000	142,925	103,500	111,263	221,800	238,435	147,810	158,896
QUARTER PAGE	192,150	206,561	118,250	127,119	88,690	95,342	236,500	254,238	133,000	142,975

FRONT PAGE POSITIONS **OTHER SIZES**

SIZES	PRODUCTS		PUBLIC NOTICE		PUBLIC NOTICE			PRODUCTS		
	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	SIZES	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	
FP 6X2	89,800	96,535	105,450	113,359	6 X 2	60,640	65,188	49,140	52,826	
FP 5X2	81,100	87,183	97,300	104,598	5 X 2	51,950	55,846	42,120	45,279	
FP 4X2	73,000	78,475	80,700	86,753	4 X 2	45,260	48,655	34,400	36,980	
FP 3X2	64,870	69,735	73,000	78,475	3 X 2	30,900	33,218	26,600	28,595	
FP 2X2	59,000	63,425	64,900	69,768	2 X 2	18,680	20,081	15,600	16,770	

SPECIAL POSITIONS 2 X 1

SIZES	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	CAC	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)			
						38,000	40,850			

STRIP **LOOSE INSERTS**

STRIP	118,250	127,119	147,800	158,885	LOOSE INSERTS: N40 PER SHEET MINIMUM ORDER: 5000 COPIES HANDLING CHARGES: N40,000 PER 1000 COPIES NEWSPAPER DIMENSION: 14.5" X 10.5"					
STRIP INSIDE	88,600	95,245	118,250	127,119						

SPECIAL PAGES

FRONT PAGE	ADD 70% SURCHARGE				CHANGE OF NAME					
PAGES 2 & 3	ADD 55% SURCHARGE				Type			Fridays		Other Days
PAGES 4 & 5	ADD 40% SURCHARGE				Miss to Mrs.			5,000		7,000
BACK PAGE	ADD 60% SURCHARGE				Reconciliation/Corrections of name			6,000		8,000

<p>24 Airport Road, Benin City, Edo State</p>	For advert placement contact:	
	Business Development Manager	08081986842
	Advert Manager	08051177163
	Commercial Service Manager	08033798009

EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 14, 2026

Sports

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

Journalist donates trophy for Imo Baptist Conference convention 2026

An Imo-based journalist, Mr Odowueze Ubanze, has donated a trophy to celebrate the 2026 Imo Baptist Conference convention.

Ubanze of Channels Television and a Counsellor with the Baptist Church, Avu, in Owerri West Local Government Area of Imo, handed over the trophy to the church in Owerri, on Tuesday.

In a brief remark, he said he donated the trophy to the church

as part of his contributions to keeping its youth positively busy and also curbing vices.

He expressed the hope that the trophy and the football tournament attached to it would grow into a full-blown competition, with the participants forming a club, capable of competing at the state and national levels.

He thanked the Imo Baptist Conference, the umbrella body

of all Baptist Churches in the state, for providing the platform for the tournament and promised to continue to support the church mission.

"On behalf of my family and the Baptist Church, Avu, I hereby present this trophy to the Imo Baptist Conference, to the glory of God," he said.

Receiving the trophy, the President, Imo Baptist Conference, Rev. Uzoma Uzoeshi,

said it would institutionalise support for the church's Royal Ambassador Ministry, and give its annual competition a legacy team spirit that would inspire participation for years to come.

Uzoeshi said that the donation was coming at a time when youths of the church faced pressure from idleness, drugs, and crime.

"We are raising young men, who are strong in spirit, sound in mind and fit in the body because the church that engages its youth on the field will keep them faithful at the altar," he said.

He thanked the donor for the kind gesture and appealed to good-spirited organisations and individuals to support the gesture.

"Let us join hands, sponsor a team, donate kits, support logistics, so that together we can build a Conference where our youth are won, disciplined, and deployed for Christ and community transformation," the priest said.



Mr. Ubanze of Channels Television and a counsellor with the Baptist Church, Avu, in Owerri West Local Government Area of Imo State, handed over the trophy to the church in Owerri, on Tuesday.

Johnson targets Commonwealth Games glory after trials triumph

New national men's 400m hurdles champion Tyler Johnson says representing Nigeria at the 2026 Commonwealth Games would be a dream fulfilled.

Johnson secured his maiden national title, describing the achievement as emotional after years of perseverance, faith and growth.

The Edo-born athlete said his journey had taught him patience and the importance of trusting God through challenges.

"I've learned not to try to control everything. I focus on doing my best and trust the outcome," Johnson said.

The athlete recently switched allegiance to Nigeria and competed domestically for the first time at the championships.

Johnson described the experience as memorable, in spite of adapting to a new environment, culture and food.

He said the track felt familiar, helping him settle quickly and deliver a winning performance for his new nation.

"Making Team Nigeria would be a privilege and an opportunity to fulfil a lifelong ambition," he added.

Johnson said his decision to represent Nigeria was influenced by reconnecting with his roots and strengthening family ties.

The hurdler won the men's 400m hurdles in 45.76 seconds to claim the national title.

Victory Achakpoekiri finished second in 45.91 seconds, while Emmanuel Ojeli placed third with 45.94 seconds.

Veteran Chidi Okezie also impressed, recording a season's best time of 46.25 seconds.

Meanwhile, women's 200m champion Miracle Oluebube celebrated another major victory in her remarkable season.

Oluebube attributed her success to hard work, consistency and faith throughout her developing career.



TYLER JOHNSON

We are ready for the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow – NSC DG

The Director General of the National Sports Commission, NSC, Hon Bukola Olopade, says Team Nigeria is ready to do the country proud at the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland, as the countdown to the games draws increasingly close.

The DG while speaking on

the level of preparedness for Team Nigeria for the Games, said a lot of hard-work has been put in place to ensure this year's Games is Nigeria's best ever outing in the history of the Games.

He emphasized that the NSC is very intentional about using the Commonwealth games to set new standards for the country's

participation in future international multi-sports competitions both in podium performance and athletes welfare.

"Everything we need for our athletes to be in the best frame of mind for the Games has been put in place- from the apparel that they will be donning to the team's pre-competition preparations and welfare package, we have been able to sort everything out with the full support of Mr President, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR".

"The athletes are in high spirits in their camp in Abuja and their Track and field counterparts are joining them, following the successful conclusion of their trials in Lagos by the Athletic Federation of Nigeria, AFN".



BUKOLA OLOPADE AND SHEU DIKKO



MILO BASKETBALL CHAMPIONS

Milo Basketball Championship finals tip off in Lagos

The 26th edition of the Nestlé Milo Secondary School Basketball Championships national finals will dunk off on June 26 in Lagos.

The organisers on Wednesday expressed excitement ahead of the competition, describing the championship as a major platform for youth development.

Lanreleke Academy, Ileogbo, Osun, will face St. Jude's Amarata Girls Secondary School, Bayelsa, in the opening match.

Other girls' category teams include Government Secondary School, Gboko, Benue, and Ado Grammar School, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti.

Urhobo College, Effurun, Delta, and Government Girls

College, Bauchi, will also compete in the girls' category.

The boys' category features Father O'Science College, Minna, Niger, and King Amakree Academy, Degema, Rivers.

Other participating boys' schools are Government Secondary School, Gwarinpa Life Camp, FCT, and Davidhall International College, Obalende, Lagos.

Family Support Programme Secondary School, Katsina, and Urhobo College, Effurun, Delta, complete the boys' category.

Gilbert Tweneboah-Koduah, Category Manager, Beverages, Nestlé Milo, said about 13,000 schools competed nationwide for this year's championship.

Colombia beat DR Congo 1-0 in tight world cup contest

Colombia defeated DR Congo with a narrow 1-0 in a closely fought Group K match of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, with Daniel Munoz scoring the decisive goal in the 76th minute.

The match was played on Wednesday at the Estadio Akron, Zapopan, Guadalajara, Mexico.

The match was evenly balanced for much of the game, as both teams showed determination and discipline in defence.

Colombia enjoyed more possession and looked more dangerous going forward, while DR Congo relied on quick counter-attacks and a compact defensive shape to frustrate their opponents.

The first half ended without a goal as both sides struggled to create clear scoring chances.

Colombia pushed forward through Juan Quintero and their attacking players, but DR Congo's defenders remained solid and cleared every danger that came their way.

As the second half progressed, Colombia increased the pressure and eventually found the breakthrough.

In the 76th minute, Quintero delivered a precise pass to Daniel Munoz, who made no mistake in putting the ball into the net to give Colombia the lead.

The goal lifted the South Americans and forced DR Congo to attack in search of an equaliser.



COLOMBIA PLAYERS CELEBRATE



Golf: Emir of Lafia's 70th birthday kitty produces 8 winners

Eight golfers emerged winners in various categories on Wednesday at the 70th Birthday Kitty organised in honour of the Emir of Lafia, Retired Justice Sidi Bage, at the Lafia Golf Club, Nasarawa State.

Golfers from Lafia and Makurdi clubs competed for honours in the tournament, with winners carting home prizes in different categories.

In the men's category, Ibrahim Abdullahi of Lafia Golf Club won the Best Gross prize, while Godwin Ikwe of Makurdi Golf Club claimed the Best Net title with a gross score of 66 and a net score of 63.

Ikwe also won the Longest Drive and Nearest-to-the-Pin awards in the men's category. Ibrahim Adamu emerged

runner-up in the net category with a gross score of 80 and a net score of 68.

In the ladies' category, Salome Aya won the Best Net prize with a gross score of 105 and a net score of 69, while Dorcas Malle clinched the Best Gross award with a gross score of 85.

Malle also won the Nearest-to-the-Pin prize in the ladies' category.

Precious Shimmer emerged runner-up net with a gross score of 105 and a net score of 69 and also won the Longest Drive award.

The three female winners are members of the Lafia Golf Club.

In the veterans' category, Balarabe Muhammad of Lafia Golf Club won the Best Net prize with a gross score of 102 and a net score of 74, while Tsegba of Makurdi Golf Club emerged runner-up net with a gross score of 97 and a net score of 82.

Speaking after the tournament, the Emir of Lafia congratulated the winners and commended all participants for honouring him through the game of golf.

Bage, who is also the Chairman of the Nasarawa State Traditional Rulers Council, reaffirmed his commitment to supporting the club and promoting the sport in the state.

He particularly praised the Sangarin Dedere, Balarabe Saad-Muhammad, for his dedication to the game, noting that his victory in the veterans' category reflected his determination to master the sport.

The Emir said golf offered immense health benefits, especially for elderly people, adding that he had encouraged traditional rulers in the state to take up the sport.

According to him, regular participation in golf would help improve physical fitness and reduce frequent visits to hospitals.



IBRAHIM ABDULLAHI OF LAFIA



ADAM MOUKTAR MOHAMMED

FCT FA chairman hails N1bn NPFL prize, urges reforms

The Chairman of the Federal Capital Territory Football Association (FCT FA), Adam Mouktar Mohammed, has commended the introduction of a N1 billion prize money for winners of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL).

The Chairman of the National Sports Commission (NSC), Shehu Dikko, on Tuesday announced a minimum of N1 billion prize for the champions of the 2026/2027 NPFL season.

Dikko said the runners-up would receive N500 million, while the third-placed team would earn N300 million, subject to official confirmation by league authorities.

He explained that the new prize structure forms part of broader reforms aimed at improving professionalism, commercial value, player welfare, and competitiveness in Nigerian football.

Mohammed described the initiative as a bold step towards repositioning domestic football and attracting greater investment into the league.

He said that the announcement reflected growing commitment to football development in the country.

"Full credit goes to the NSC, the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), and the NPFL for making a statement that matches the scale of our football potential," he said.

According to him, the N1 billion reward is more than prize money and should serve as a wake-up call for stakeholders to treat football as a serious business.

"A massive incentive is welcome, but it should not be mistaken for a fully functional football system," Mohammed said.

He said that sustainable progress would depend on improved governance, commercial viability, quality infrastructure, and stronger fan engagement.

"If the league is not commercially viable, properly televised, safe for players, and trusted by fans, the prize money alone will not transform it," he said.

Gusau vows to decentralise coaching education as NFF closes CAF B refresher course

President of the Nigeria Football Federation, Alhaji Ibrahim Musa Gusau MON, has reaffirmed the Federation's commitment to grassroots development and accessible coaching education pathways, following the conclusion on Wednesday evening of the CAF B-License Refresher Course organized by the nation's football-ruling body.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, Gusau thanked participants and stakeholders for their dedication to the programme. He noted that the football landscape, including coaching education, has improved significantly since his administration took office a few years ago. "When we came in, the situation was not particularly great with regards to coaching education. I believe you can all attest to the fact that significant progress has been made in this area, with the numerous courses we have had and our country's return to the CAF A-License convention," he said, adding that the NFF will continue to create the enabling environment needed for coaches and players to thrive.

The NFF boss also addressed concerns around certificate issuance for coaches who completed the CAF B course many years ago but have not been certificated. He assured all participants that

the Federation is working closely with CAF to ensure every eligible coach receives their certificate

He added that the NFF now has enough qualified instructors to take CAF B training programmes to states, zones, and local government areas across the country. This, he explained, removes the need for coaches to travel to Abuja.

"You can be in your state, and the course will be at your doorstep. We need to educate our grassroots coaches. That is the way to go for holistic development of the game," he added.



CAF B-LICENSE REFRESHER

Nigeria MiniFootball Association President Datti seeks partnership with NPFL chairman Elegbeleye

As a step towards creating collaboration with key support stakeholders, the Nigeria MiniFootball Association President Umar Yusuf Datti has paid a courtesy call to the Nigeria Premier Football League chairman Gbenga Elegbeleye in Lagos.

The visit to the league top shot is motivated by the desire of the association to seeks ways at putting up a strong representation at the Africa MiniFootball Confederation Women's Nations Cup to be hosted Cameroon in August

and the Africa Nations Cup taking place in Guinea next year.

Players, both men and women from the domestic scenes who will feature in MiniFootball events are expected to form part of the teams at the two tournaments.

One of the key competitions, the Lagos State MiniFootball League is expected to provide the platform for players' selection.

Datti in his remark during the visit commended Hon. Elegbeleye for lending a great support to the NMA as its patron.

He inundated the former Director General of the National Sports Commission on the plans of the association to prepare a solid national teams for both international competitions.

"The African MiniFootball Confederation Women's Nations Cup is holding this August and we have the men's Nations Cup next year June in Guinea. You are our Patron, we thank you for your support for all the things you have been doing for MiniFootball.



GBENGA ELEGBELEYE AND UMAR YUSUF DATTI