

Okpebholo scores voter turnout high as observers hail peaceful Edo LG poll

UDOMI

Governor Monday Okpebholo, has described voter turnout in the local government elections as encouraging, while accredited election observers said voting had been peaceful and orderly across the state.

The governor spoke after casting his ballot at Ward 2,

Udomi Primary School, in Esan Central Local Government Area, where voting commenced early with electoral officials and security personnel on ground.

The Governor arrived at his polling unit at about 10:24 a.m. and joined other voters in the queue before exercising his civic responsibility at exactly 10:40 a.m. He then spent sev-

eral minutes interacting with stakeholders before speaking to journalists covering the election.

He commended voters for their orderly conduct and said reports reaching him from other parts of the State indicated that the election was progressing peacefully.

"This election is very peaceful and it is going smoothly

based on the feedback we are getting from the field," he said.

"The turnout is very high. This is a demonstration of grassroots democracy. It shows that our people are interested in choosing those who will administer the affairs of their local governments. By the grace of God, a winner will emerge at the end of today's election."

He urged residents to con-

tinue conducting themselves peacefully throughout the voting process and to await the official declaration of results by the Edo State Independent Electoral Commission (EDSIEC).

Some accredited election observers also gave a positive assessment of the conduct of the poll.

Speaking with journalists in

Udomi, the Executive Director of the Initiative for Awareness of Civic Education for Citizens, Comrade Fidelis Nwoke, said many observer groups deployed across the state did not record any major security breach or disruption as voting progressed.

According to him, his or-

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Edo LG poll: APC records landslide victory • Wins all chairmanship, councillorship seats

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Independent Electoral Commission (EDSIEC) has declared candidates of the All Progressives Congress (APC) as winners of the chairmanship election in the 18 local government areas of the state, held on Saturday.

Mr Jonathan Aifuobhokhan,

Chairman of the Commission, who announced this at a news conference on Sunday in Benin, said the party also won all 192 councillorship seats in the election.

The chairman noted that the election was successfully conducted across the 18 local government areas and 192 wards in the state.

According to him, accredita-

tion, voting, sorting, counting, collation and declaration of results were carried out in accordance with the Edo State Local Government Electoral Law 2022, as amended in 2026, and other applicable regulations.

"Following the completion of collation process at the various ward and local government collation centres, the duly appointed ward and local

government returning officers announced and declared the results in their respective jurisdictions.

"Based on the official results declared by the returning officers, the commission hereby declares that the All Progressives Congress won the 18 local government chairmanship positions and all the 192 councillorship seats contested in the

election," he said.

The EDSIEC chairman expressed satisfaction with the conduct of the returning officers, saying they discharged their statutory responsibilities professionally, impartially and in accordance with the law.

He noted that the election was conducted peacefully across the state, in spite of minor operational challenges in a few locations.

"Overall, the election was conducted peacefully across

the state.

"While there were minor operational challenges in a few locations, these did not substantially affect the overall conduct or outcome of the election," he said.

Aifuobhokhan said the commission would continue to improve future electoral processes through periodic reviews and stakeholder engagement.

He lauded Gov. Monday Okpebholo for providing what he described as an enabling envi-

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LEADING BY EXAMPLE:

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, casts his ballot during the Local Government elections at his polling unit in Udomi, Esan Central Local Government Area, reaffirming his commitment to grassroots democracy and the election of council chairmen and councillors across Edo State's 18 local government areas.

Edo APC chieftains hail Okpebholo, electorate over victory

BENIN CITY

Chieftains of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in Edo State have welcomed Saturday's local government election victory of the party as reactions trail the poll conducted by the Edo State Independent Electoral Commission (EDSIEC).

The acting chairman of Oredo Local Government Council and chairmanship candidate of the APC in the July 11, 2026, election, Hon. Gabriel Iduseri, who spoke shortly after receiving his certificate of return, on Saturday, thanked Governor Monday Okpebholo for creating an atmosphere that ensured a peaceful and credible election.

He also expressed gratitude to the people of Oredo for their

overwhelming support and pledged to accelerate development across the local government in line with the Governor's SHINE Agenda.

A former military top brass, Gen. Charles Airhiavbere (rtd), reacting to the poll's outcome, attributed the victory to Iduseri's performance during his nine months as Acting Chairman.

Dr. Paddy Iyamu, APC stalwart, described the election as peaceful, transparent and credible, while Hon. Richard Edosa said the impressive voter turnout reflected the confidence of the people in the APC.

Also speaking, Hon. Martin Oli Anayochukwu said the outcome demonstrated the growing acceptance of the APC in

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Oborevwo puts smiles on Delta widows as 10,000 receive June stipends —Pg 4

Students abducted in May by Islamic militants in Nigeria recovering, governor says —Pg 9

El-Kanemi edge Ikorodu 1-0, win Federation Cup again —Pg 11

NEWS

...INEC extends deadline for submission of candidates' list by 3 days

ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has extended the deadline for submission of lists of candidates for the 2027 presidential and National Assembly elections by political parties by three days.

The commission disclosed this in a statement issued by National Commissioner and Chair, Information and Voter Education Committee, Mohammed Haruna, on Sunday in Abuja.

Haruna said that the commission approved the extension of the deadline for submission in the Revised Timetable and Schedule of Activities for the

2027 General Elections from July 11 to July 14.

He said that the decision was based on the appeal by Inter-Party Advisory Council on behalf of political parties which were unable to upload the names and personal particulars of their candidates within the scheduled timeline.

Haruna noted that the extension underscored the commission's commitment to ensuring inclusivity in its practices, while acting within the ambit of the law.

He enjoined political parties to take advantage of the window of opportunity and ensure that all necessary details were uploaded before the expiration of the new deadline.

20 year gas deal signals fresh hope for Ajaokuta revival – Group

ABUJA

Tinubu Media Support Group (TMSG) says the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Ltd deal to transport gas to Ajaokuta Steel Company Ltd (ASCL) for 20 years marks a major step toward reviving the plant.

The group said this in a statement jointly signed by its Chairman, Mr Emeka Nwankpa, and Secretary, Mr Dapo Okubango, issued to newsmen on Sunday in Abuja.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that NNPC and ASCL's Sale and Purchase Agreement will provide the critical gas infrastructure required to power the resuscitation of the nation's foremost integrated steel plant.

The development, according to the group, aligns with President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda for industrialisation, economic diversification and sustain-

able economic growth.

The group said that the deal represents a significant progress by Tinubu towards restoring operations at the company, which has remained largely dormant for 46 years.

It described the move as a "major step" that reflected Tinubu's political will to fulfil his February 2023 campaign promise to revive the steel plant and reignite Nigeria's industrialisation drive.

"We agree with the Minister of Steel Development, Prince Shuaibu Audu, that the deal for feedstock to the complex is a game changer in the Federal Government's effort to get the plant back to life after decades of inactivity.

"It also reflects NNPC's capacity under its new management, especially as it sealed strategic Memorandum of Understanding, gas supply agreements and network entry agreements with four other companies aside from the ASCL.

ICPC urges collective action against corruption in Africa

ABUJA

Dr. Musa Aliyu, SAN, Chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has called for collective action to scale up integrity and anti-corruption efforts across Africa.

Aliyu made the call at the commemoration of the African Union Anti-Corruption Day, according to a statement signed by the commission's Spokesperson, Mr John Odey, issued on Sunday in Abuja.

The event, with the theme, "Scaling Up the Promotion of Integrity and Anti-Corruption Actions Across Africa", drew stakeholders from government, civil society and development partners.

The ICPC boss said the theme reflects Africa's aspira-

tion to build a continent anchored on integrity, transparency and accountability.

According to him, integrity, transparency and the rule of law remain the foundation for sustainable development, democratic governance and economic growth in Africa.

Citing the 2025 Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Centre (CAACC) study, Aliyu noted that 80 per cent of respondents across 14 African countries believe corruption occurs "always or often."

He added that the study identified lack of integrity as one of the leading drivers of corruption on the continent.

"These findings remind us that promoting integrity is not merely aspirational; it is an evidence-based imperative," he said.

2027: PDP uploads presidential, NASS candidates into INEC portal

ABUJA

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) says it has successfully uploaded the names of its 2027 presidential candidate, his running mate and National Assembly candidates into the INEC nomination portal.

The party's National Chair-

man, Abdulrahman Mohammed, who made this known in a statement issued on Sunday in Abuja, was however silent of the names of the party's presidential candidate and his running mate.

Mohammed described the successful uploading of the candidates' details as a clear demonstration of commitment

to the promise by his leadership that the PDP would fully participate in the 2027 general elections.

"Today, we have taken another decisive step toward fulfilling that promise.

"As we await the conclusion of the upload of our governorship and state Houses of As-

sembly candidates, I, on behalf of the National Working Committee of our party, extend my heartfelt congratulations to all PDP members across Nigeria and around the world.

"Together, we will continue to build a stronger, more united party and a better future for our nation," Mohammed said.



PEOPLE - CENTRED LEADERSHIP:

Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State (right) during Local Government Election at Ward 2, Udomi Primary School, Esan Central LGA, on Saturday.

How APC cruised to victory in Ovia S/W, Oredo, other LGs

BENIN CITY

The dreams of the 11 opposition parties that participated in last Saturday's local government election in Edo State have ended in tatters as the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) cruised to a clean sweep of the poll.

Several political pundits, who spoke with this correspondent on the condition of anonymity before and after the election, were confident that the victory of the ruling party in the contested chairmanship and councillorship positions of the 18 local government areas across Edo state in Saturday, July 11, 2026, was a victory foretold because of the development efforts of the state government among other

socio-political factors.

Mr. Jerry Osahon, a resident of Benin metropolis, said the results declared at the various local government councils' headquarters by their returning officers, were widely anticipated by keen political observers.

In line with the prediction, reports from our correspondents who monitored the election at the weekend underscored the fact that the success of the 30-year-old chairmanship of the APC Ovia South West Local Government, Anthony Osarobo, is a testament to the confidence of the party ahead of the poll.

The Returning Officer for Ovia South West Local Government Area, Dr. Arodoye Nosakhare, on Saturday, declared the APC

chairmanship candidate, winner of the local government election, having clinched a total of 98,994 votes across the 10 wards that make up the area.

Declaring the result at the Edo State Independent Electoral Commission (EDSIEC) Local Government Collating Centre, the Returning Officer, Dr. Arodoye Nosakhare, read out the field details of the 12 political parties that fielded candidates in the election.

"After the collation of results across different party lines, the APC Chairmanship candidate having scored the majority of valid votes, is returned elected," he stated.

The Returning officer read out the election results from the ten wards across party lines as follows: Party "A" got 28 votes; party

"AA" got 42 votes, party "AAC" got 32 votes; ADP got 26 votes; APC got 98,994 votes; APGA got 25 votes; APM got 5 votes; APP got 12 votes; NNPP got 1 vote; PRP got 1 vote; YPP got 1 vote while ZLP got 15 votes.

Similarly, in Oredo Local Government Area, the APC chairmanship candidate, Hon. Gabriel Iduseri, polled 262,573 votes to secure a decisive victory at the poll.

His closest rival, Asoro Isi of the PRP clinched 2,045 votes, followed by Joseph Osaretin (APN) with 1,953 votes and Okoro Osas (AA) with 1,199 votes.

Similarly, the election ended with the defeat of the opposition parties by the APC in other local government areas according to reports.

Edo Assembly Speaker cherishes Aikpokpo's victory

SABONGIDA-ORA

The Speaker of Edo State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Blessing Sheriff Agbebaku, has described the victory of the chairmanship candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Owan West Local Government Area in the just concluded election, Hon. Enahoro Aikpokpo, as a reflection of the confidence and trust of the people.

In a congratulatory message, yesterday, the Speaker also celebrated the newly elected Owan West Local Government chairman, vice chairman and councilors, while urging the council leadership to see their mandate as a call to serve with humility, sincerity and a genuine commitment to the growth and development of our local government.

"The people of Owan West have high expectations, and I believe that, working together,

you can build a stronger, more united and prosperous local government.

"Let your decisions always be guided by the interest of the people, and ensure that every ward feels the impact of good governance.

"As representatives of the people, I encourage you to remain accessible, listen to the concerns of your constituents and work tirelessly to deliver meaningful development that will improve

the lives of our people.

"I pray that God grants you wisdom, strength and good health as you begin this important responsibility," he wrote

The speaker however assured the council leadership of continued support for every genuine effort aimed at advancing the development of Owan West and improving the welfare of their people as he wished them a peaceful, successful and impactful tenure in office.

NEWS

Edo assures S/Africa returnees of reintegration, employment support

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government has assured citizens who recently returned from South Africa following xenophobic attacks of its commitment to their reintegration, security, and economic empowerment.

Speaking while receiving the

returnees in Benin City, the Co-ordinator, Office of the First Lady, Edo State, Mrs. Edesili Okpebholo Anani, described the xenophobic attacks in South Africa as unfortunate and welcomed the returnees back to their homeland.

She conveyed the goodwill of Governor Monday Okpebholo, assuring them that the administration remains committed to protecting the lives and welfare of all Edo people through the SHINE Agenda.

According to her, the Governor operates a zero-tolerance policy against crime and is focused on creating a safe, peaceful, and prosperous Edo State where citizens can thrive through education, employment, and empowerment.

Edo First Lady assured the returnees that the government would facilitate their reintegration into society and encouraged them to remain focused and contribute positively to the de-

velopment of the state.

She further stated that qualified returnees would be considered for employment opportunities, while others would benefit from empowerment programmes designed to help them rebuild their lives.

"There is no place like home. We welcome you back and encourage you to be law-abiding citizens as we work together to develop Edo State," she said.

The Coordinator also com-

mended the Director-General, Edo State Migration Agency, Dr. Lucky Agazuma, describing him as a passionate, hardworking and dedicated to the welfare of migrants.

Earlier, the Director-General, Edo State Migration Agency, Dr. Lucky Agazuma, said Governor Monday Okpebholo had put in place the necessary mechanisms to ensure the successful reintegration of all returning migrants into society.

He noted that the govern-

ment's intervention is aimed at restoring hope, providing opportunities for self-reliance, and ensuring that returnees become productive members of society.

Speaking on behalf of the returnees, Mr. Omijie Isinero expressed gratitude to the Edo State Government for the warm reception and the support extended to them, pledging their commitment to making meaningful contributions to the development of the state.

**NEWS CONFERENCE:**

Edo State Deputy Governor Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa voting at Unit 3 at Edo National College, Iguobazuwa West Ward during Edo State Local Government Election at Iguobazuwa, Ovia South West Local Government.

PHOTO: MOSES OBOH

Ex-Defence Chief urges veterans to sustain national service

ABUJA

Former Chief of Defence Staff, retired Adm. Ola Sa'ad Ibrahim, has urged retired military personnel to remain active contributors to national development.

Ibrahim made the call at the 41st Anniversary Reunion Dinner of the 6th Regular Course Alumni Association of the Naval War College, on Saturday in Abuja.

He said that retirement from service should not mean retirement from serving Nigeria, adding that experience, knowledge and leadership acquired during military service remained invaluable to nation-building.

According to him, those virtues should be channeled into mentoring younger generations and

strengthening national institutions.

"Retirement from active service does not mean retirement from national service. Our country still needs our wisdom, mentorship and counsel," he said.

The former defence chief noted that the changing global security environment requires Nigeria to build resilient institutions, develop indigenous capabilities and invest in human resources to safeguard its sovereignty.

He said that national security no longer depend solely on external support, as countries are increasingly looking inward to protect their interests.

He described personnel as the military's greatest asset, saying character, professionalism and mutual trust remained more valuable than weapons and equipment.

"Rank may command obedience, but character earns respect. Long after retirement, people remember not the positions we occupied but the values we lived by and the lives we touched," he said.

He commended members of the 6th Regular Course for sustaining the spirit of military brotherhood over the past 41 years and for supporting one another as well as the families of deceased colleagues.

The retired admiral also acknowledged the sacrifices of military spouses and families, saying their patience and resilience were critical to the success of military careers.

He urged the alumni to continue upholding the values of integrity, discipline, loyalty and patriotism, stressing that an of-

ficer's greatest legacy lay in character, enduring friendships and positive contributions to society.

Ibrahim congratulated the alumni on the milestone and wished them many more years of unity, good health and purposeful service to the nation.

Earlier, President of the alumni association, retired Commodore Alex Nimyel, described the reunion as a celebration of a journey that began on July 8, 1985, when members assembled as young cadets united by a common commitment to serve Nigeria.

Nimyel said that the reunion provided an opportunity to reflect on shared experiences, renew friendships and strengthen the enduring bond forged through military training and service.

Abduction: CAN, hails rescue of Oyo pupils, teachers

ABUJA

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has expressed gratitude to God and security agencies for the safe rescue of pupils and teachers abducted from schools in the Oriire Local Government Area of Oyo State after 56 days in captivity.

In a statement signed on Sunday by its National President, Archbishop Daniel Okoh, the association described the safe return of the victims as a day of profound gratitude for the affected families and the nation.

Okoh commended President Bola Tinubu, the National Security Adviser, the Armed Forces, intelligence agencies, the Nigeria Police, the Department of State Services (DSS), the Amotekun Corps, and local vigilantes for their roles in the successful operation.

"The reports that the operation was guided by patience, credible intelligence, and a determination to protect innocent lives are reassuring and deserve recognition.

"Every successful rescue reminds us that when our security institutions work together with

resolve and professionalism, hope can triumph over fear," he said.

The CAN President also applauded Gov. Seyi Makinde of Oyo State for his steadfast support to the affected families and his administration's commitment to rehabilitating the rescued victims.

Okoh, however, noted that while the rescue in Oyo brought joy, it was difficult to celebrate fully without remembering other Nigerian families whose children were still held by terrorists and bandits in states like Borno and Niger.

He emphasised that compassion must not be selective, urging the Federal Government and security forces to use the success in Oyo to strengthen their determination to free all remaining captives across the country.

"Today, parents in Oriire will hold their children again after weeks of anxious waiting. We rejoice with them.

"But there are mothers and fathers in Borno, Niger, and other parts of our country who will still go to bed praying that the next knock on the door will bring news that their own children are coming home.

Ponzi scheme victims can seek legal remedies — lawyers

LAGOS

Some lawyers say victims of Ponzi schemes have legal remedies, although recovering lost funds and prosecuting perpetrators remain major challenges.

Expressing their views in separate interviews with the on Sunday in Lagos, a lawyer at Justification Chambers, Ikeja, Mr Chibuike Opara, said many Nigerians continued to fall victim to Ponzi schemes in spite of repeated warnings.

Opara said it was wrong to attribute participation in Ponzi schemes to a lack of investment opportunities, noting that promoters often exploited investors' greed through promises of unrealistic returns.

"What you cannot take away is the fact that many Nigerians have fallen and continue to fall victim to these schemes every time, and legal remedies available to victims are limited," he said.

According to him, victims may individually or collectively institute civil actions against the

beneficiary company for breach of contract or refund arising from failure of consideration.

Opara said victims could also unite to seek an order from the Federal High Court to wind up the beneficiary company.

He, however, noted that such efforts might yield little benefit if perpetrators had already siphoned the funds and left behind an empty shell.

The lawyer said available remedies largely depended on the actions of relevant authorities, adding that recipient accounts could be frozen to facilitate fund recovery and support winding-up proceedings.

Opara said regulators and law enforcement agencies often became aware of Ponzi schemes only after substantial losses had occurred.

According to him, victims frequently failed to report suspicious schemes early enough to enable timely intervention.

He added that funds were sometimes moved outside the country before authorities became aware of the fraud.

Olu Ibandan commends Tinubu, security agencies over release of Oriire abductees

IBANDAN

The Olubadan of Ibandanland, Oba Rashidi Ladoja, has commended the intervention of President Bola Tinubu, the security agencies, and local hunters, in the release of kidnapped victims in the Oriire Local Government Area of Oyo State.

This is contained a statement by his media aide, Chief Adeola Oloko, on Saturday in Ibandan.

The Olubadan said the feat had further demonstrated the Federal Government's commitment to the security of lives and property of the citizenry.

He described the release of the victims as a landmark achievement of the present administration in the country.

According to him, the administration must take security seriously, as there can be no meaningful development in an

atmosphere of insecurity.

"As a follow-up to this development, the government must ensure that all the communities that share a border with the National Park are fully secure.

"Also, the government must ensure the proper rehabilitation of the victims, so as to heal them from the trauma and psychological stress they have undergone while in captivity," he said.

The revered traditional ruler commended Gov. Seyi Makinde for standing by the victims and

their relations during their moment of trial.

He also commended the security operatives, the Chief of Defence Staff, the Inspector-General of Police, and the leadership of other security agencies for the determination and unwavering commitment which led to the safe release of the victims.

Recall that the victims, 47 in number, were kidnapped in Yawota and Ahoro Esinle communities in Oriire LGA, and their release was secured on Friday.

APC records landslide victory...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

ronment for the commission to discharge its constitutional responsibilities.

The chairman also commended political parties, candidates, traditional rulers, religious leaders, civil society organisations, community leaders, youths, women groups and the electorate for their peaceful conduct during the election.

He further praised the Nigeria Police Force and other security agencies for maintaining law and order throughout the exercise.

Aifuobhokhan also acknowledged the role of the media, election observers and EDSIEC members of staff, including electoral officers, returning officers, presiding officers, ICT personnel and logistics teams, for ensuring the successful conduct of the poll.

He urged political actors to work together in the interest of grassroots development and advised aggrieved parties to seek redress through lawful channels.

"Candidates or political parties who may have concerns regarding any aspect of the electoral process are encouraged to seek redress through lawful channels provided under the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria," he said.

The EDSIEC chairman congratulated the elected chairmen and councillors, urging them to see their victory as a call to selfless service, accountability and inclusive governance.

Responding to questions from journalists, Aifuobhokhan said certificates of return would be presented to the elected chairmen and councillors on Monday.

Okpebholo scores voter turnout...

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ganisation, alongside other accredited observer groups, monitored polling units in Udomi, Igueben and found the process to be generally peaceful.

"My organisation and several other observer groups have been fully accredited to monitor the Edo State local government election. Reports coming in from different parts of the state indicate that the process has been peaceful so far," Nwoke said.

"We have monitored Udomi, Igueben and other locations. We have observed that the exercise has been peaceful, orderly and smooth. Electoral officials arrived, voters have been able to cast their ballots and, at the end of the exercise, winners and losers will naturally emerge."

Security personnel were visible at polling centres visited by journalists, while eager voters queued patiently to cast their ballots.

At Udomi Primary School, where the governor voted, residents

expressed satisfaction with the conduct of the election, describing the process as orderly and transparent.

Three voters—Christopher Ejodamen, Timothy Uwaya and Lucky Okoawo—said they were able to vote without intimidation or harassment.

According to them, the peaceful atmosphere encouraged greater voter participation and reflected the commitment of residents to strengthening grassroots democracy.

The voters also expressed support for the administration of Governor Okpebholo, saying ongoing infrastructure projects and other development initiatives across Edo State had inspired many people to participate in the election.

Saturday's election held across the 18 local government areas of Edo State is to elect chairmen and councillors. Voting took place under the supervision of the Edo State Independent Electoral Commission, with accredited observers, journalists and security agencies deployed to monitor the exercise.

Edo APC chieftains hail Okpebholo...

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Edo State and reaffirmed confidence in the party's continued electoral strength.

Other party leaders, including Hon. Osamuade Edebiri and APC faithful, congratulated the chairman-elect and expressed optimism that his administration would consolidate on ongoing developmental efforts in Oredo Local Government Area.

Meanwhile, Edo State Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa, on Saturday thanked electorate in Ovia South West Local Government Area for their peaceful conduct and for turning up in large numbers to cast their votes during the local government election.

Speaking after he cast his vote at Iguobazuwa West Ward, Unit 3, at Edo National College Iguobazuwa voting centre, (comprising of Units 2, 3 and 4,) at exactly 10:24 am, the deputy governor praised the large turnout of voters.

Idahosa said: "We have been getting a lot of reports across the local government, and everything has been peaceful. There is no record of any vio-

lence across the local government. We pray it remains the same across the state."

At Udo Ward 5, Unit 23, eligible voters were seen filing behind the All Progressives Congress (APC) Chairmanship candidate, Mr. Anthony as he cast his vote at 10:58 am.

Anthony Osarobo when interviewed stated that he was impressed and confident of victory based on the support base of eligible voters who came out to cast votes for the APC in his Unit.

Voters were also spotted walking into voting centres at Ezoti Primary School Udo and Udo Primary School at 10:52 am and at 10:53 am to vote.

Voters interviewed expressed satisfaction with the voting process. They unanimously asserted that the election was free, fair and devoid of rancour. Checks at Units visited showed that election materials were fully deployed, and Adhoc staff of Edo State Independent Electoral Commission (EDSIEC) were on ground attending to and guiding voters with the accreditation and voting process at centres visited.

Oborevwoori puts smiles on Delta widows' faces as 10,000 receive June stipends

AJUWA VICTOR

ASABA

Delta State Governor, Rt Hon Sheriff Oborevwoori, has continued to bring relief and renewed hope to vulnerable women across the state as 10,000 beneficiaries of the Delta State Widows Welfare Scheme began receiving their June 2026 monthly stipends.

Beneficiaries drawn from the 25 Local Government Areas of the state were said to be receiving alerts during the weekend, with many expressing appreciation to the Oborevwoori administration for sustaining the intervention programme.

The scheme, designed to cushion the economic hardship

faced by widows, has provided a critical lifeline to thousands of women grappling with the emotional trauma of losing their spouses and the financial uncertainty that often follows widowhood.

Speaking with journalists in Asaba, the State Coordinator of the Widows Welfare Scheme, Elder Isioma Okonta, commended Governor Oborevwoori for what he described as exemplary and compassionate leadership.

Okonta disclosed that payment of the June 2026 stipends to the 10,000 verified widows enrolled in the first phase of the scheme had commenced, with funds already hitting beneficiaries' bank accounts.

He said the Governor's con-

sistency in releasing the monthly stipends underscored the administration's commitment to inclusive governance and the welfare of vulnerable Deltans.

"The stipends for June 2026 have started hitting the accounts of the 10,000 verified widows enrolled in the first phase of the scheme. This is another demonstration of Governor Sheriff Oborevwoori's compassion and unwavering commitment to the welfare of vulnerable citizens," Okonta said.

The State Coordinator also commended widows' monitors and Local Government Area coordinators for what he described as a thorough and successful verification exercise across the 25 councils.

He noted that the verification process had helped strengthen the credibility of the scheme and ensure that support reached genuine beneficiaries.

Okonta described the Governor's consistency in funding the programme as "highly commendable," stressing that the intervention had continued to put smiles on the faces of disadvantaged Deltans, particularly widows confronting emotional loss and economic hardship.

He added that the initiative remained a strong reflection of the Oborevwoori administration's people-centred approach to governance and commitment to ensuring that vulnerable citizens were not left behind.



18TH MEMORIAL LECTURE:

A cross-section of participant, during the 18th Memorial Lecture of former late, Chief Obienu Melford-Okilo who was the first elected Governor of Rivers State between 1979 to 1983 during the Nigerian Second Republic, at the Niger Delta University Wilberforce, Amaasoma in Bayelsa on Friday.

NELFUND debunks upkeep allowance suspension notice

ABUJA

The Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) has dismissed as fake a social media document claiming that upkeep allowances under the Federal Government's Student Loan Scheme for the 2025/2026 academic session were suspended.

The Fund said the document, dated July 10 and attributed to its Director of Strategic Communications, Mrs Oseyemi Oluwatuyi, did not originate from NELFUND and should

be disregarded.

Oluwatuyi described the document as fake and urged beneficiaries and the general public to disregard the misinformation and rely only on its official communication channels for authentic updates.

She said neither the federal government nor NELFUND had approved or announced the suspension of upkeep allowance payments to eligible beneficiaries.

She said the document further alleged that funds allocated for May, June and sub-

sequent months had not been released, insisting the suspension was temporary and promising payments after outstanding allocations were received.

She explained that the student loan and upkeep allowance disbursements were continuing in line with its mandate to provide financial support to eligible students in public tertiary institutions nationwide.

Oluwatuyi urged beneficiaries to disregard the fake document, warning that fabricated publications and AI-generated content were increasingly being

used to spread misinformation and erode public trust.

She advised students, parents, institutions and the public to verify information relating to the student loan scheme through NELFUND's official communication channels before sharing it.

She reaffirmed the Fund's commitment to transparency and accountability, assuring eligible beneficiaries that approved tuition and upkeep disbursements would continue in accordance with established guidelines.

Lawyers seek non-custodial sentencing, speedy trials to reduce prison congestion

ABUJA

Several lawyers in Abuja have called for comprehensive criminal justice reforms to address congestion in correctional centres through faster trials, improved investigations, expanded legal aid, increased non-custodial measures and plea bargaining.

In an interview on Sunday in Abuja, Mr David Shittu, identified the large number of awaiting-trial inmates as the major cause of congestion in correctional centres.

"Many suspects spend months or even years in custody because of delays in police investigations, slow court processes, inadequate legal representation and difficulties in meeting bail conditions."

"Criminal cases should be heard and concluded within a reasonable time and investigations should be completed promptly before suspects are charged to court," he said.

Shittu called for regular review of the cases of awaiting-trial inmates to identify those eligible for bail, discharge

or release.

Another legal practitioner, Mrs Nkiruka Maxwell, said offenders convicted of minor offences could be sentenced to community service, probation, restorative justice or fines instead of imprisonment where the law permits.

She said non-custodial measures were essential and would reduce pressure on correctional centres while ensuring justice was served.

"The government should continue to improve correctional infrastructure through

renovation and expansion of existing facilities where necessary.

"There should also explore rehabilitation programmes, including vocational training, education and counselling to prepare inmates for successful reintegration into society and reduce the rate of reoffending," she said.

For his part, Mr Kingsley Nwachukwu said some inmates remained in custody because they could not afford legal representation or were unaware of their rights.

NEWS

5 die in C'River landslide

CALABA

Five persons, including four children, have died after landslides triggered by 48 hours of heavy rainfall devastated Ikot Anwatim Community, Calabar Municipality, Cross River.

The landslides also destroyed two houses and injured two other residents, according to the Cross River State Emergency Management Agency (CR-SEMA).

CR-SEMA confirmed the casualties during the launch of a rapid assessment of the affected community on Saturday.

The assessment team was led by CR-SEMA Director-Gener-

al, Mr Efa Nyong, alongside officials from the Disaster Management Unit of the Nigerian Red Cross Society.

Addressing bereaved families and survivors, Nyong conveyed the Cross River Government's condolences and sympathised with victims over the tragic incident.

He described the deaths, especially those of four children, as heartbreaking and assured affected families of government support through humanitarian interventions.

"This assessment will document the disaster's impact to guide government decisions on emergency assistance and long-term disaster risk reduc-

tion," Nyong said.

He urged residents of landslide and erosion-prone communities to promptly report land cracks, remain vigilant and obey evacuation directives whenever necessary.

Nyong stressed that climate-related disasters were

becoming more frequent, requiring sustained public awareness and stronger collaboration between government and communities.

He said the rapid assessment demonstrated CR-SEMA's commitment to proactive disaster response, coordinated emergency management and protecting lives and property across Cross River.

The assessment team recommended immediate humanitarian assistance for affected families and sustained medical care for injured victims.

It also called for a comprehensive geotechnical assessment of the affected terrain to determine long-term safety and appropriate mitigation measures.

The team further advocated

intensified public sensitisation on landslide risks and possible relocation of residents living in high-risk areas as heavy rainfall persisted.

An affected resident, Mr Bassey Patrick, commended the assessment team for responding promptly in spite of the difficult circumstances confronting the devastated community.

Gbarain power plant restoration begins

YENAGOA

The Niger Delta Power Holding Company (NDPHC) has begun restoration of the 225-megawatt Gbarain National Integrated Power Project (NIPP) in Bayelsa, targeting improved electricity supply nationwide.

NDPHC officially handed the plant to Original Equipment Manufacturer, Schneider Electric/TILT Energy, for immediate rehabilitation after issuing the Notice to Proceed.

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Mrs Jennifer Adighije, confirmed the development in a statement issued on Sunday in Lagos.

Adighije described the pro-

ject as a major milestone in recovering stranded generation assets, expanding electricity capacity and strengthening power supply to the national grid.

She led the handover alongside Executive Director, Generation, Mr Abdullahi Kassim, and other senior management officials during the official site transfer.

According to Adighije, the power plant has remained idle since November 2020 after a devastating fire destroyed its Power Control Module before commissioning.

She said all statutory approvals had been secured while technical, contractual and administrative obstacles delaying the project had now been resolved.

NYCN seeks confirmation of acting MD, FMC Keffi

KEFFI

The National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN), Keffi chapter, has appealed to President Bola Tinubu to confirm Dr Usman Kana as the substantive Medical Director of the Federal Medical Centre (FMC), Keffi.

The NYCN Chairman in Keffi Local Government Area, Alhaji Mohammed Idris, made the appeal in a statement made available to newsmen on Sunday in Keffi.

Idris said Kana, who was appointed acting Medical Director of the health institution on May 6, was the most qualified among those vying for the position.

According to him, Kana's vast knowledge and experience in the health sector make him well-suited to lead the medical centre.

He described Kana as an accomplished Consultant Physician and Pulmonologist with over 20 years of experience in clinical practice,

medical administration and public health response within Nigeria's tertiary healthcare-system.

"Dr Kana is a fellow of the West African College of Physicians with extensive expertise in internal medicine, respiratory medicine, infectious diseases management and hospital administration.

PRESENTATION OF AWARD:

Senate Chief Whip, Sen. Muhammed Monguno (2nd, R), presenting an award of Most Outstanding Speaker of State Assembly (South-East) to the Speaker Anambra State House of Assembly, Hon. Somtochukwu Udeze, during the National Legislative Awards 2026, at the NAF Event Conference Centre in Abuja. With them is Executive Director of Hallow Mace Foundation Africa, Amb. Anderson Osiebe (R) and his Co-founder, Dr Chibuzo Okereke.

2027: Ezza youth assembly endorses Ebonyi PDP governorship candidate

ABAKALIKI

The Ezza Ezekuna Youth Assembly (EEYA), a socio-cultural organisation, has endorsed the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) governorship candidate for the 2027 general election, Chief Ifeanyi Chukwuma-Odii.

The endorsement took place on Sunday at a rally organised by the group in Abakaliki, where thousands of youths gathered in support of Chukwuma-Odii's governorship aspiration.

The National President of the EEYA, Mr Sunday Orogwu, said the endorsement followed the organisation's assessment of the candidate's leadership qualities, philanthropic record and contributions to human capital development.

According to Orogwu, the group believes he possesses the capacity to unite the people, rebuild public institutions, revitalise the state's economy, create employment opportunities for youths and promote peaceful coexistence across communities.

He said the assembly was convinced that Chukwuma-Odii's track record as a businessman, wealth creator and philanthropist demonstrated his commitment to the welfare of Ebonyi people.

The President added that the endorsement was aimed at supporting a candidate capable of restoring the state's dignity and laying a solid foundation for sustainable development.

"The person Ebonyi needs is one, who can harmonise, restructure, rebuild and restore the dignity of the state, indus-

trialise the economy, create jobs and ensure that public resources are used for the benefit of the people," he said.

He said the decision reflected the group's resolve to support, what it described as a leader committed to uniting Ebonyi people and accelerating the state's development.

In his remarks, the Chief of Staff to the EEYA, Chief Elechi Ngwuta, said the organisation, established in 2021, had grown to more than 7,000 registered members.

Ngwuta alleged that despite the historical significance of the Ezza people in Ebonyi, they had not received commensurate political benefits.

He said the endorsement of Chukwuma-Odii represented the aspiration of the Ezza nation to participate more actively in the state's political leadership.

Also speaking, Chairman of the Umuekumenyi Leaders

Council, Chief Christopher Ngwuta, urged members of the assembly to remain united and steadfast in pursuing their political objectives.

He said many prominent Ezza politicians had been unsuccessful in previous bids for key political offices in the state and expressed confidence in the candidate's leadership qualities.

Chukwuma-Odii, represented by Chief Ogbonnaya Igboke, a former Commissioner for Project Monitoring in Ebonyi, thanked the assembly for the endorsement.

He assured the group of his commitment to providing inclusive leadership, urging members not to be intimidated ahead of 2027 elections.

The candidate said the elections would provide an opportunity to reposition the state and promised to work for the overall development of Ebonyi, if elected.

King's College Lagos PTA rejects take over plan of institution by old boys

LAGOS

The Parents Teachers Association (PTA) of King's College Lagos, on Saturday, unanimously rejected the Federal Government's approval to concession the institution to its Old Boys Association (KCOBA), to take over the running of the college.

King's College Lagos, one of the country's foremost all boys dual campus Unity College, was established by an Act of Parliament (in Britain) on Sept. 20 1909.

It would be recalled that the Federal Government recently approved the concessioning of the 116 year-old institution to its old boys association, in what the group described as the beginning of a new era for one of Nigeria's oldest and most prestigious secondary schools.

Speaking at the college's PTA Annual General Meeting, the parents unanimously rejected the move, while appealing to President Bola Tinubu to reconsider the approval.

Mrs Nkiru Ikechukwu, a parent, urged the Old boys to invest more in the institution,

monitor and supervise its finances as a way of giving back, if they felt the standard was depreciating, rather than outright take over.

"If this should be allowed to happen, I dare say that it will trickle down to all other unity colleges in the country and by way of extension also, federal institutions of higher learning across the country.

"It will also affect the fees. Currently, several parents are still struggling to meet up with the fees, talk more of when it is taken over by a set of individuals,

"This college is one college that provides a level platform for all categories of students irrespective of their social background, or religion.

It allows students to bond well with one another, promoting unity in diversity, irrespective of class or status of their parents or guardians. So, we are saying a vehement no to the move," she said.

She asserted that King's College was a brand, a household name that gave equal opportunity to any Nigerian child who craved for quality education at heavily subsidised rate.

Mrs Loveth Nimkur-Ikilama, a teacher, said the move was against the mission of the founding fathers and therefore, should not be sustained.

"I am a product of Unity College myself.

"We enjoyed all it had to offer at the time and I am also convinced all those planning this move also enjoyed the privileges attached to it.

"I am also sure that if allowed, with time, the concession can result to privatisation, which will in one way or the other affect the teachers and of course, the fees will skyrocket.

Oyo pupils, Teachers' rescue proves Nigeria's anti-terror capacity – APC Chieftain

OSHOGBO

Achieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Osun, Mr Olatunbosun Oyintiloye, says the successful rescue of abducted pupils and teachers in Oyo State demonstrates Nigeria's capacity to defeat terrorism and other violent crimes.

Oyintiloye said this while speaking with newsmen on Sunday in Osogbo, noting that the operation had boosted public confidence in President Bola Tinubu's administration and strengthened prospects for economic growth and national stability.

He said the rescue had also neutralised attempts to politicise the incident, while praising

the courage and resilience of the pupils and their teachers during the ordeal.

The former lawmaker commended President Tinubu, Oyo State Governor, Mr Seyi Makinde, the Nigerian Army and other security agencies for securing the safe release of the victims.

Oyintiloye, however, urged

governments at all levels to strengthen the nation's security architecture through improved intelligence gathering, enhanced inter-agency collaboration and proactive responses to emerging threats.

According to him, a robust security system is critical to economic recovery and sustainable national development.

He also appealed to the Oyo State and Federal Governments to provide psychological support, rehabilitation and other

relief for the rescued victims.

"I congratulate the President, the Oyo State governor, the victims and the people of the state on this development.

"Our thoughts and prayers remain with families of those who lost their loved ones. May their souls rest in peace," he said.

Oyintiloye further urged the military and other security agencies to build on the success of the operation by intensifying efforts to secure the release of victims still in captivity in Borno and other parts of the country.

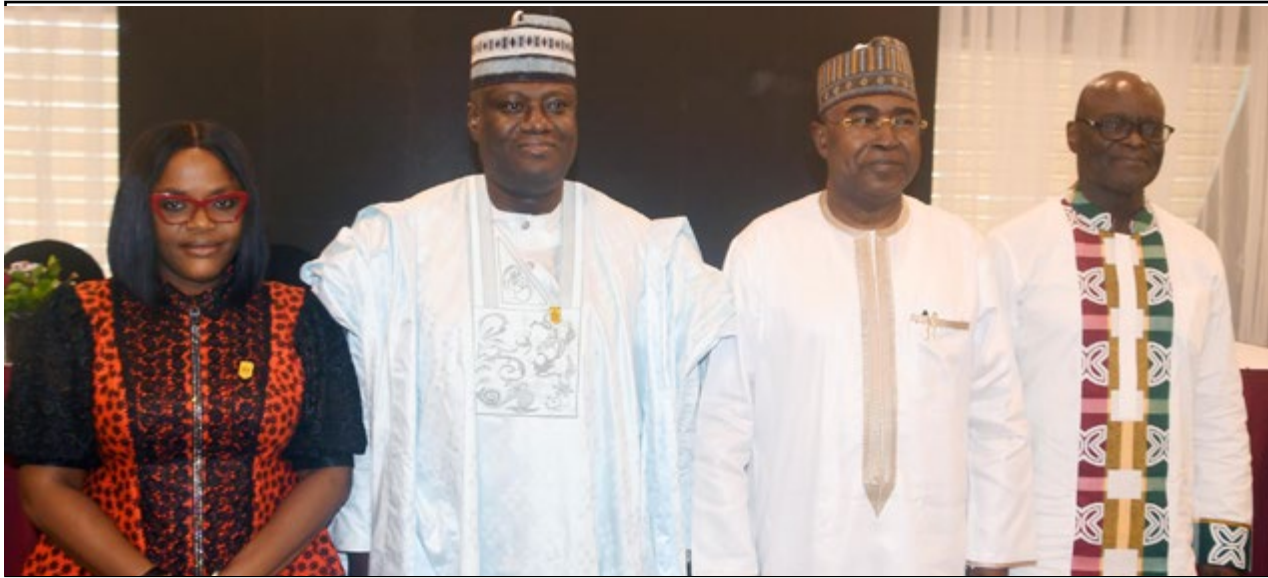
The APC chieftain, however, commiserated with the military over casualties recorded during the rescue operation, noting that their sacrifices for a safer Nigeria would be forever remembered.

He called for intensified action against those supplying weapons, vehicles and illicit drugs to criminal elements, stressing the need for international cooperation to disrupt financial networks sustaining insurgency.

"To effectively combat insecurity, it is important to target individuals and entities financing criminal activities. Disrupting these supply chains will weaken insurgent operations," he said.

Oyintiloye also urged Nigerians to remain vigilant and support security agencies with credible intelligence.

"Security is a collective responsibility. If you see something, say something. With this successful rescue, there is renewed hope for Nigeria in the fight against insecurity," he added.



NATIONAL DRUG USE SUMMIT:

From left: Representative of the Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Mrs Olufowobi-Yusuf Adeola; representative of the Secretary to Government of the Federation, Dr Ibrahim Kana; Chief Executive Officer of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), retired Brig.-Gen. Mohammed Marwa and the representative of the Country Director UNODC, Dr Akanidomo Ibanga, during the opening ceremony of the National Drug Use Summit organized by NDLEA in partnership with the ministry and UNDOC in Abuja.

Residents blame urbanisation, poor drainage for worsening Lagos floods

LAGOS

Residents of flood-prone communities in Lagos have blamed rapid urbanisation, inadequate drainage infrastructure and poor urban planning for worsening floods across the state, while an environmental advocate says climate change is compounding the risks.

The residents spoke in separate interviews with our correspondent on Sunday in Lagos.

Across communities including Surulere, Agege, Lekki and Mafoluku, they said recurring floods have trapped residents indoors, damaged

homes and businesses, and disrupted movement whenever heavy rainfall occurs.

Their concerns come as the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) listed Lagos among 27 states at risk of flash flooding during the first decade of July, following widespread rainfall in June that left soils heavily saturated.

Mr Chigozie, a resident of Surulere, said flooding had become so severe that he could hardly leave home during rainfall without wearing rain boots.

"Once the rain starts, our streets disappear beneath water. If I must leave home, my long rain boots become my

only option," he said.

According to him, floodwater frequently submerges roads leading to his shop, making movement difficult and discouraging customers.

"Without the boots, I cannot get to my shop. Many people remain trapped indoors until the water goes down, and business-

es suffer because of it," he said.

In Agege, Mrs Amanda Amos said flooding had extended beyond the streets into residential compounds.

"The flood doesn't stop on the road anymore. It enters our compound and leaves us battling dirty water inside our home," she said.

Rescue: Nigeria should immortalise Lt. Isaac, others – Lawal

LAGOS

Mr Ayoola Lawal, a former secretary, APC Committee for Diaspora Chairmen has urged the Federal Government to

immortalise Lt. Felix Isaac, Nigerian Army officer who paid the supreme price during rescue of the abducted Oyo pupils and teachers on Friday.

In a statement on Sunday in Lagos, Lawal, the immediate past APC chairman in the Scandinavian Countries,

described the late officer as a shining symbol of courage, patriotism, and selfless service.

The Nigerian Army has laid Isaac, a 28-year-old officer, who lost his life in the mission to rescue abducted schoolchildren and teachers in the Oriire Local Government Area of Oyo State to rest.

Isaac was killed by landmines while leading the initial bid to rescue the victims, who were in captivity for 56 days.

The lieutenant was at the forefront of the operation in the Old Oyo National Park, firing the first shots. His convoy was hit by IEDs set by terrorists.

The APC diaspora chieftain, who was a house of representatives candidate, said Isaac's sacrifice should inspire a renewed national commitment to honouring all those who sacrificed their lives down in defence of Nigeria.

Lawal urged the federal government to immortalise the fallen officer by naming a school, military institution, scholarship

programme, or other deserving public facility in his honour.

He noted that such recognition would serve as a lasting reminder that the nation's peace and security are sustained by the courage and sacrifice of its men and women in uniform.

Lawal said: "While I commend the security agencies for the successful rescue, I join millions of Nigerians in paying tribute to Lt. Isaac.

"His bravery, professionalism, and unwavering devotion to duty represent the finest traditions of our Armed Forces.

"By sacrificing his life to secure the freedom of innocent schoolchildren and their teachers, he demonstrated the highest ideals of military service and love for country."

He, however, emphasised that while Isaac's heroism deserved national recognition, his sacrifice should also serve as a catalyst for a broader and more enduring national policy on remembrance.

ICRC D-G advocates PPPs to bridge West Africa's infrastructure gap

LAGOS

Dr Jobson Ewalefoh, Director-General, Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) has urged West African countries to adopt Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) as a strategic mechanism for addressing the region's infrastructure deficit.

This was contained in a statement signed by Ifeanyi Nwoko, Acting Head of Media and Publicity, ICRC, in

Abuja on Sunday.

Ewalefoh made the call while speaking during a panel session at the ECOWAS Infrastructure Forum in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

He said governments across the region could no longer rely solely on public resources to provide critical infrastructure, such as roads, railways, housing, and water, needed to drive sustainable economic growth.

According to him, PPPs have become an essential al-

ternative to traditional public procurement, enabling governments to collaborate with the private sector to finance, develop, operate and maintain infrastructure projects.

He said such partnerships also provide access to private sector innovation, technical expertise and efficient risk allocation.

"As infrastructure needs continue to outpace public resources, governments must create enabling environments that attract greater private sector participation through transparent regulatory frame-

works and bankable projects."

Ewalefoh said that beyond the conventional PPP procurement process initiated by governments, well-regulated unsolicited proposals from the private sector offered an additional avenue for expanding the pipeline of infrastructure projects.

He explained that unsolicited proposals allow private investors to identify viable infrastructure needs, develop projects at their own cost and assume the associated risks, thereby reducing the financial burden on governments.

NEWS**JUDICIARY**

States- Attorneys-General forum wade into NBA leadership crisis

ABUJA

The Attorneys-General and Commissioners for Justice of the 36 states have called on parties in the dispute rocking the leadership

of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) to exercise restraint.

The body made the call in a statement jointly signed by its Chairman, Ben Uruchi-Odoh, and Secretary, Senior

Ibrahim-Sulyman, and made available to newsmen in Abuja after their meeting.

"The Body of States Attorneys-General held its meeting during which it deliberated on recent developments relating

to the leadership crisis within the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA)."

The body said it carefully considered the issues and their potential implications for the legal profession and the admin-

istration of justice in Nigeria.

"The body calls for calm and urges all parties to the dispute, members of the legal profession, and other stakeholders to refrain from making further public comments capable of escalating the situation while efforts are underway to resolve the matter through the appropriate institutional mechanisms.

"In line with the earlier directives of the court, the body urges all parties to embrace dialogue and pursue an amicable resolution of the dispute in the interest of the unity, dignity and integrity of the Nigerian Bar Association."

They also called for the urgent convening of an emergency meeting of the General Council of the Bar.

According to them, the

General Council is the statutory body established under Section 1(1) of the Legal Practitioners Act, Cap. L11, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004.

The body said it has the responsibility for the management of the affairs of NBA and to facilitate the amicable resolution of the issues giving rise to the present leadership crisis.

"The body reaffirms its relentless commitment to the rule of law, the independence of the legal profession, and the preservation of the unity and institutional integrity of the Nigerian Bar Association.

"It expresses confidence that the issues in dispute can be resolved through constructive engagement, mutual respect, and adherence to the law," they concluded.

**NABTEB 2026 MAY/JUNE:**

Registrar National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB), Dr Mohammed Aminu-Mohammed (L); Director Exams Administration NABTEB, Ms Chigozien Metu (2nd L) with students of Government Technical College (GTC) Enugu, during the NABTEB 2026 May/June In-School National Business Certificate and National Certificate Examinations, in Enugu on Saturday.

Oliserv begins off-shore installation for NLNG transmission expansion

ABUJA

Oliserv Limited has commenced work on the shallow-water section of the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) Gas Transmission System (GTS-1) expansion project aimed at strengthening supply infrastructure to Bonny Island liquefaction plant.

The Managing Director, Oilserv Limited, Dr Kenekwku Nwangwu, disclosed this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Abuja on the sidelines of the just concluded Nigeria Oil and Gas (NOG) Conference.

Nwangwu said the GTS-1 project formed part of the NLNG's strategy to expand its gas transmission network to support increased gas production and higher processing capacity, particularly with the coming on stream of Train seven.

He also said that the GTS-1 project, which involved shallow-water pipeline installation to Bonny Island, would strengthen gas supply to NLNG's processing facilities and support increased production capacity.

"Another exciting project currently underway is our par-

ticipation in the NLNG GTS-1 expansion.

"This project introduces another level of engineering complexity, particularly because it involves shallow-water pipeline installation and specialised marine construction activities.

"The project is a major milestone for both the company and Nigeria's gas industry, reflecting the growing confidence of major energy companies in indigenous engineering firms," he said.

According to him, the company is laying about six

kilometres of offshore pipeline across shallow waters using barges and other specialised installation equipment.

He added that thousands of pipeline joints had already been transported from Port Harcourt to Bonny Island, where installation activities were ongoing.

Nwangwu said the project required precision in logistics, welding, installation, testing and tie-ins with the broader gas transmission network.

He also said that the project further demonstrated Oilserv's capacity to execute complex

onshore and offshore pipeline infrastructure while expanding its technical capabilities in Nigeria's energy sector.

"Oilserv is advancing work on several strategic gas infrastructure projects, including the Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano (AKK) Gas Pipeline.

"This is even as Nigeria intensify efforts to deepen domestic gas utilisation. The project most Nigerians are familiar with is the AKK Gas Pipeline Project, which remains one of the country's most ambitious gas infrastruc-

ture developments.

NBA-SPIDEL commends judgement on deployment of Police Lawyers to formations

LAGOS

The Nigerian Bar Association Section on Public Interest and Development Law (NBA-SPIDEL) has commended the recent court judgment directing the deployment of police lawyers to police formations across the country.

The body said the judgment represented a significant milestone in advancing the rule of law, as well as the professional-

isation of police legal services.

Justice O. Y. Anuwe of the National Industrial Court in Abuja, in a judgment delivered on Friday, barred police officers who were not employed in the Specialist Legal Cadre from representing the Nigeria Police Force in civil proceedings.

The court also ordered the Police Service Commission (PSC) and the Inspector-General (I-G) of Police to deploy at least one police lawyer to every police station across the coun-

try in line with the provisions of the Police Act 2020.

Reacting to the judgment in a statement made available to newsmen in Lagos on Sunday, the Chairman of NBA-SPIDEL, Dr Uju Agomoh, said the judgment had further strengthened the place of public interest litigation.

"The judgment represents a significant milestone in the advancement of the rule of law, the professionalisation of police legal services, the protection of human rights, and the contin-

ued development of public interest litigation in Nigeria.

"As a threshold issue, the court dismissed the preliminary objection filed by the Police Service Commission challenging, among other things, the locus standi of the Nigerian Bar Association to institute the action.

"In so doing, the court affirmed the NBA's standing to institute public interest litigation for the protection of the welfare and professional interests of its members and in furtherance of the public interest," she said.

Agomoh said the pronouncement further strengthened the place of public interest litigation as an indispensable instrument for promoting constitutional governance and institutional accountability.

According to her, the judgment is expected to have far-reaching implications for the administration of justice, adding that the decision pro-

resolution mechanisms.

He said that advocacy programmes aimed at promoting fair hearing and due process in disciplinary proceedings within tertiary institutions was among the vision of the foundation.

"These initiatives will require competence, compassion, integrity and

teamwork. I am confident that this workshop will adequately prepare us for these responsibilities.

"As members of JALI, we should always remember that our mission

extends beyond legal knowledge.

"We exist to serve humanity by promoting justice, protecting rights, encouraging peaceful dispute resolution and giving hope to those, who may otherwise have no voice.

"Every positive intervention we make contributes to building a more peaceful, just and equitable society," Agya said.

The chief executive officer thanked the T. Y. Danjuma Foundation for its generous partnership with JALI.

According to him, the collaboration demonstrates the foundation's

unwavering commitment to strengthening civil society organisations and promoting sustainable community development.

Earlier, Mr Emmanuel Ishaku, One of the Resource Persons said that the TY Danjuma foundation was an intervention-based one that has impacted so much to the society.

Ishaku said that the foundation has been providing grants for education, health care and humanitarian services across Nigeria.

He advised JULI to adopt mechanism that would enhance better services to humanity, encouraging them to prioritise provision of support to the people.

Police arraign 'DJ Chicken' over alleged threats

IKEJA

A social media personality, Abiodun Ademola, popularly known as DJ Chicken has appeared before an Ikeja Magistrates' Court over alleged threats to kill Seyi Tinubu.

The 37-year-old, of Tafodi Estate, Royal Park, Lekki, Lagos, fac-

es a three-count charge of threat to life, offensive online publication and conduct likely to breach peace.

The prosecution, led by SP Okunuga, Officer-in-Charge, Legal, Command Headquarters, Ikeja, alleged the offences occurred on July 5 at about 9:00 a.m. in Lekki, Lagos.

According to the charge, Ademola allegedly posted a video on his Facebook and Instagram accounts, @djchicken, threatening to kill Seyi Tinubu. The prosecution alleged the defendant intended the message to reach Seyi Tinubu and create fear through the

publication circulated on social media platforms.

Police further alleged Ademola posted a grossly offensive and menacing video on Instagram intending to cause alarm, contrary to the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act, 2015.

FOREIGN

NEWS

Students abducted in May by Islamic militants in Nigeria recovering, governor says

Students abducted in May by Islamic militants in Nigeria's southwestern state of Oyo were rescued and receiving medical treatment, confirmed the local government on Friday.

Oyo's Governor Seyi Makinde visited the victims at the military hospital on Saturday, where they were receiving medical attention following their ordeal.

"They were happy to be out of captivity, just like any of us. When your freedom is taken away, it's a different set of minds. But they are glad to be back. Some of them are still very frail. They have to do quite a bit of medical intervention, post-traumatic issues, you know, to be addressed," Makinde said after the visit.

The abductions in the southwestern state represented an

escalation of Nigeria's security crisis as the most of the previous incidents of mass kidnappings took place in the country's north.

In the same week of the Oyo abduction, dozens of children were kidnapped in Borno State, the epicenter of Nigeria's long-running insurgency.

School abductions are common in Nigeria, where armed groups target students to put pressure on authorities and demand ransoms.

-Casualties-

Nigerian security forces suffered "casualties" during the rescue of over 40 kidnapped schoolchildren and teachers, the army said Saturday, in an operation that put an end to a major security crisis in the country's relatively safe southwest.

The pupils, whose rescue

was announced Friday, had been seized from three schools in Nigeria's Oyo state and held captive for nearly two months.

The army said the children and staff were rescued following "carefully planned and executed" operations alongside intelligence agencies, police and local vigilante groups.

"However, there were some casualties on the part of the security forces," it said, without elaborating.

The shock kidnapping, in Oyo's Oriire local government area, was blamed on militants from Ansaru, a Boko Haram splinter group known to operate in central Nigeria, extending into the southwest.

"I was almost shedding tears yesterday when I saw them. It was mental torture," Abdulfatai Buhari, a senator from Oyo state, told AFP, noting there

were two and three-year-olds among those kidnapped.

"They were so frail," he added.

Nigeria has been fighting a jihadist conflict that over the years has seen armed Islamist groups spread and fracture outside their strongholds in the northeast.

But the attack in Oyo state sent shockwaves through a country where many had long written off such violence as a problem confined to the north.

There, mass kidnappings have become an increasingly regular tactic of both jihadists and armed gangs known as "bandits".

The Oyo abduction prompted protests across the country, a state-wide teachers' strike and high-profile condemnation -- all just months before the January 2027 presidential elections.

Spain battles to contain one of its deadliest wildfires as at least 12 killed

Hundreds of firefighters in Spain are still battling to contain pockets of flames in the south east after one of the country's worst-ever wildfires.

Emergency services have been deployed around the village of Bedar where 12 people have been killed - among them four Britons, according to Spanish authorities. Another 23 people are still missing.

Local officials in the Los Gallardos area of Almeria have warned the number of dead could rise, with fears that more Britons are among those killed.

A sustained heatwave with temperatures of around 40C (104F) has caused wildfires across Southern Europe this summer, particularly in France, Portugal and Spain.

Soaring temperatures, incredibly dry ground and powerful winds led to the Los Gallardos fire spreading quickly on Thursday afternoon.

Antonio Sanz, Andalusia's health and emergencies minister, said on Saturday the fire had burned across 6,600 hectares (16,300 acres) of land.

The cause has been put down to a fallen power line, but local electricity companies have denied this.

No additional information has been given about the four people who were found dead in

a burnt-out car.

Sanz said previously they are believed to be "of British origin" and that the car had a steering wheel on the right.

He also said weather conditions had improved overnight, "allowing us to face the day with better prospects than yesterday".

He added: "This is the first day we will be able to mount a direct attack on the fire. Until now, weather conditions and the behaviour of the blaze only allowed us to work defensively."

Lucinda Curtois, who arrived in Spain with her partner Riyaz Cheytan and their teenage children for a holiday on Thursday, described their escape from Bedar.

"It was almost like there was a mushroom cloud of smoke, it was like a bomb had gone off," she said.

Curtois told the BBC she feared at least two other UK nationals had been killed.

"They left their home on foot, I don't know why," she said. "I can only presume it was probably because their road was cut off because they live out in the countryside."

Officials in Bedar said some of those who had died had not taken a recommended evacuation route - but it's not clear how well that guidance was conveyed.



DEADLIEST WILDFIRE:

Wildfire as it creeps towards residential buildings near the municipality of El Pocico.

How men with female surnames are standing up to ridicule in Kenya

Many children in Kenya traditionally inherit their father's first name as their surname, but there are an increasing number of people who are taking their mother's instead.

This is particularly the case amongst the country's largest ethnic group, the Kikuyu - and has become a subject of debate and in some cases ridicule for the men with female surnames.

Girls and women who have their mother's names do not face the same censure - and often when they marry may opt to take their husband's first name as their surname.

Some say the growing trend of men having female surnames reflects changing attitudes to women and their influence in what is a patriarchal society; others are critical of

those who have been given - or in some cases opt to take - their mother's name.

It used to be rare to see men in prominent positions with a female surname, but now there are even several politicians who have them - like MP John Njūgūna Wanjikū.

Brought up by a single mother, he was first elected in 2021 and goes by the nickname "Ka-Wanjikū", meaning child of Wanjikū.

Some like Wanjikū were given their female surname at birth, but others have chosen theirs to honour their mothers.

Peter KigiaKigia wa Esther/ Facebook

When you take your mother's name, it means you love and respect her"

Peter Kigia

One of the earlier personalities to break the norm over male surnames was Peter Kigia, a Kenyan

musician who chose his mother's name as his stage name.

Kigia wa Esther (son of Esther), now in his 60s, is known for playing benga - fast, rhythmic guitar folk music with lyrics in Kikuyu.

"When you take your mother's name, it means you love and respect her," he told the BBC, saying he had even registered his record company as Wa Esther Productions.

It now comes with a certain cachet in the music industry, with other younger male musicians following in his footsteps. Posters advertising performers with their mother's surname, such as Waithaka wa Jane and 90K Ka Msoh, are often plastered to hoardings in the capital, Nairobi.

Though in these cases the formal names of these artistes remain male.

Journalist Simon Macharia Wangui told the BBC he decided to deliberately choose his mother's name as his official surname.

"Why give somebody credit where it does not exist?" he says of his father, who was absent for most of his life and about whom he has "only heard rumours of his existence".

Mostly raised by his grandmother, he was 12 when his mother died in 2003. He had no surname until his final year of high school, when he applied for a birth certificate.

Some Kenyans still think that a child raised by a single parent "lacks certain morals", explains Evans Kibe Waceke, a broadcaster who bears a female surname.

"People perceive you as undisciplined, especially when you are raised by a single mother," he tells the BBC.

A heated debate over the pros and cons of having a female surname began two years ago when prominent motivational speaker Robert Burale said it undermined men's masculinity.

At least two killed in Toronto street festival shooting

At least two people have been killed in gunfire at a street festival in Toronto.

Police in the Canadian city initially received reports of an active shooter on St Clair Avenue at approximately 20:12 local time (01:12 BST), where a salsa festival was being held.

Six victims with gunshot wounds were found by police, who said two people had been pronounced dead at the scene.

At a press conference hours after the shooting, police said there had been an exchange of gunfire at the festival between two individuals, and two firearms had been recovered from the scene.

Police were yet to arrest anyone in connection with the shooting, and investigations were ongoing.

Toronto Deputy Police Chief Francisco Barredo described the scene as "very chaotic", and said there was an estimated 13,000 people at the festival when the shooting happened.

He said police were managing three separate crime scenes in connection with the shooting, and the public would be updated once more information was available.

People were told to stay away from the area, where a large police presence remained.

Anyone with information in connection with the shooting, including witness statements, have been urged to call police.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said he was "horrified" by the shooting, and offered his prayers to "the families grieving their loved ones, those who are in critical condition, and everyone who has been affected by this horrific event".

Doug Ford, the Premier of Ontario, condemned the "senseless violence" at the salsa festival, which he confirmed had "claimed two lives and injured others".

"The person responsible must be caught, brought to justice and spend the rest of their life behind bars," he wrote in a statement on X.

He thanked first responders who attended the scene, adding his thoughts were with "the victims, their families and everyone affected".

St Clair Avenue, located in midtown Toronto, is lined with shops and restaurants.

Between the 11 and 12 July, it was set to host the annual Salsa on St Clair Latin festival, a yearly celebration which features a host of live music and dance performances.

This year was the festival's 22nd iteration.

NEWS**FOREIGN****US Senator Lindsey Graham dies after 'brief and sudden illness', his office says**

US Republican Senator Lindsey Graham has died following a brief and sudden illness.

His office has released a statement saying he died on Saturday evening. "Senator Graham's family appreciates prayers at this time and asks for privacy during this incredibly difficult period."

Elected to the Senate in 2002, the South Carolina politician was one of Washington's most influential voices on foreign policy and a key ally of Trump.

He had just returned from Kyiv, where he met the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Friday. There were no known health concerns ahead of his trip.

In a social media post marking the senator's death, US President Donald Trump said Graham was a "true American Patriot".

Graham also served as Chairman of the Senate Budget

Committee.

He was a strong proponent of US support for Ukraine. "Putin will not stop in Ukraine," he told the BBC in 2023.

"To be weak in Ukraine means that you lose in Taiwan," he said.

In his most recent trip to Ukraine, Graham was working on a version of the Russia sanctions bill, which he said would give "tools to President Trump to end this war."

Over the years, Graham clashed with President Trump, but he became one of his staunchest backers.

He told the BBC in 2023: "There is a dark side to Donald Trump... and he was a very good president. But I am sticking with him because I saw what he did," citing Trump's record on the US southern border, the killing of Iran's Qasem Soleimani and the appointment of conservative judges.

China evacuates nearly two million people as powerful typhoon makes landfall

A powerful typhoon has made landfall in China, the second to hit the country in a week, with nearly two million people evacuated from areas in the path of the storm.

Typhoon Bavi, which spans 1,000km (620 miles) at its widest point - roughly the width of France - first came ashore in the coastal city of Taizhou on Saturday evening before making a second landfall in Wenzhou around midnight (17:00 GMT).

After pummeling a chain of remote Japanese islands, it brought heavy rainfall to Taiwan as it brushed past its northern tip.

Earlier landslides triggered by the storm killed at least 17 people in the Philippines.

Though it has weakened to a severe tropical storm, it still presents a risk because of the huge volume of moisture within its rain bands.

The storm is expected to gradually diminish in its intensity as it moves north-west.

On Sunday morning, the centre of the typhoon reached Hangzhou City in Zhejiang province, Chinese state media reported.

Forecasters said the typhoon would move to eastern Anhui on Monday, and to the northern Yellow Sea from the Shandong Peninsula on Tuesday.

More than 1.7 million people were evacuated in Zhejiang and thousands more in neighbouring provinces, state media said. Schools, work and outdoor activities have been suspended in Zhejiang, while 400 flights and dozens of train services have been cancelled.

The city of Wenzhou, home

to around 10 million people, is close to the path of the storm, with authorities evacuating hundreds of thousands of residents.

"We could hear roof tiles and tree branches falling," Li Liangxing, a resident of the city told Reuters, adding "of course we were scared."

Beijing had ordered the evacuation of 100,000 people to "avoid risk", officials said.

Bavi began as a super typhoon, battering Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands last Monday with wind speeds of 290km/h (180mph).

As it made its way through the Pacific, weakening to 144 km/h winds, it struck the Sakishima islands, part of Japan's Ryukyu island chain between the country's main islands and Taiwan. At least five people were injured and thousands were without power.

Taiwan itself did not receive a direct hit but thousands of people were forced to leave their homes and there was a danger of landslides after heavy rain. Neither country has reported any deaths.

Taiwanese authorities had warned that Bavi could bring up to 1m (39 inches) of rainfall.

Dozens of flights have been cancelled while schools have suspended classes across the region. Supermarket shelves have been wiped clean as residents stock up on supplies.

Parts of southern China are still reeling from the devastation brought by Typhoon Maysak earlier this week.

Maysak left at least 39 people dead and killed large numbers of livestock, resulting in massive agriculture loss. It also spurred two rare tornadoes in the central Hubei province.

**INDIA MUSLIM JUDGE:**

The abuse directed at Tabassum Khan attacks her religion and not the legal reasoning behind her judgment

US launches fresh strikes as Iran closes Strait of Hormuz

The US launched a fresh wave of strikes in response to Iranian forces hitting a ship passing through the Strait of Hormuz.

In response to the American strikes, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said the waterway was closed until further notice and launched attacks on US bases and allies in the region.

The IRGC said it had hit a US base in Jordan, while the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain all responded to missiles and drones from Iran.

It comes after incidents earlier this week in which three commercial tankers were attacked, prompting an exchange of strikes between the US and Iran.

Earlier on Sunday, state media said Iran had closed the Strait until further notice after firing a naval cruise missile at a vessel that was attempting to

sail along an unapproved route.

The Guards said the vessel was "hit by warning shots and stopped" after ignoring repeated instructions, according to a statement carried by state news agency.

It also warned that any US "aggression" as a result of the closure would be responded to with "severity" and new bases in the region would be targeted.

Iran's parliamentary speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, who is also the country's chief negotiator with the US, wrote on X that the "era of one-sided deals is OVER".

He went on: "We told you: keep your word or pay the price. Reality is knocking."

Launching a third round of strikes this week, US Central Command (Centcom) the IRGC "blatantly attacked" a Cyprus-flagged vessel in the Strait of Hormuz.

Centcom said the MV GFS

Galaxy was "unable to continue its journey" as a result of significant damage to the engine room. A crew member was missing, it added.

The UK's Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) said it had been informed by military authorities that the crew of the vessel were forced to abandon ship and were in a lifeboat.

"Iran was provided yet another opportunity to demonstrate adherence to the Memorandum of Understanding after being held accountable for earlier attacks on commercial vessels but has again failed," Centcom wrote in a statement shared to X.

It said US strikes hit 140 Iranian military targets, including missile and drone sites, communication networks, and coastal surveillance locations.

The statement was shared by US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, who wrote: "Iran made a poor choice. Now they pay."

The IRGC said the US had

targeted "a number of coastal bases and telecommunications towers on the southern coast".

In response, Iran said its "first phase" of retaliation included strikes on the Prince Hassan Air Base in Jordan, saying it had destroyed the base's command and control centre and MQ9 drone hangars.

Earlier this week, three commercial tankers were attacked as they tried to cross a US-recommended route through Omani waters. Iran has repeatedly said the only "safe" route is a separate route through its waters.

The incident prompted a series of US strikes in which 17 people were killed and 115 injured, according to Iranian officials. Iran responded with strikes on US allies in the Gulf.

The exchange raised tensions, with US President Donald Trump declaring the Iranian attacks mean the ceasefire is over. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has accused the US of violating the deal.

Muslim judge in India faces death threats after convicting 'cow vigilantes'

An Indian judge has become the target of online abuse and death threats days after she sentenced 14 men to life imprisonment for lynching a man to death.

On 12 June, the additional district and sessions judge of a court in Madhya Pradesh state, Tabassum Khan, found the men guilty of offences including murder, attempt to murder, rioting and wrongful restraint.

The crime took place in 2022, when 50-year-old Nazir Ahmad was transporting cattle at night and was intercepted by a group of self-styled "gau rakshaks" (cow protectors), armed with sticks and rods. Hindus consider cows sacred and killing them is illegal in many states.

The men dragged Ahmad and his two companions out

of the vehicle and brutally assaulted them on suspicion of smuggling cows. Ahmad later succumbed to his injuries while his companions survived to tell the court what happened.

In her judgement, Khan noted that the crime was a clear case of mob lynching.

But the verdict has made her the target of religious hate. In the days following the judgement, numerous videos abusing and threatening Khan, a Muslim, surfaced online. The videos implied that Khan had acted against the men because they were Hindu.

While judgments are often criticised, the attacks on Khan have focused not on her legal reasoning but on her religion. The scale of the abuse has prompted leading judicial bodies to rally

behind her, and she has been given police protection.

The attacks on Khan began soon after the verdict, when family members of the convicted men gathered outside the courtroom reportedly protested against the judgement and attempted to stop the police convoy from transporting the men to prison. They alleged that the men were being punished for "saving cows".

Then began an online campaign of abuse, as videos of Hindu right-wing influencers abusing Khan with communal slurs and issuing rape threats and death threats against her began to surface.

Hindus consider cows sacred and killing them is illegal in many states.

In one video, a man warned of "bloodshed" across the country unless the convicted men

were freed within 10 days. At the time of writing, many of the videos remained online, attracting thousands of likes and shares. The speakers' faces and social media handles were clearly visible as they issued threats and incited violence.

An anchor of Sudarshan News, a right-wing Hindi news channel, expressed solidarity with the families of the convicted men, saying that "they might have never imagined that their family members, who had put everything on the line to save cows, would be imprisoned for it". He also urged his viewers to "speak up" as "now was the time to fight for the sake of the protectors of cows".

Many self-described cow protection organisations and Hindutva groups also held massive protests against the verdict.

 The Nigerian OBSERVER That The People May Know					ADVERTISEMENT RATES (PRINT)					
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10 X 4	340,000	365,500	273,500	294,013	177,400	190,705	370,000	397,750	295,600	317,770
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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
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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	12,400	13,330	15,600	16,770	
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EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 14, 2026

Sports

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

El-Kanemi edge Ikorodu 1-0, win Federation Cup again ● as Muktari Ismail wins MVP Award



EL-KANEMI VS IKORODU

KEHINDE OSAGIEDÉ

El-Kanemi Warriors of Maiduguri, weekend defeated

Ikorodu City of Lagos 1-0 to emerge champions of the 2026 President Federation Cup.

El-Kanemi Warriors' experienced midfielder Muktari Ismail converted a first half spot kick to hand the Lagosians the 1-0 defeat at Stephen Keshi Stadium, Asaba in Delta state.

The 2026 federation cup triumph is the fourth one for the Maiduguri club. They won the third in 2024.

El-Kanemi showed determination from the start of the game in Asaba as they domi-

nated possession throughout and prevented Ikorodu City from getting equalizer despite some dangerous counterattacks they pushed forward.

In spite of creating several promising openings, Ikorodu City failed to cause El-Kanemi's disciplined defence any serious headache.

The victory earned El-Kanemi Warriors the consolation they deserved after their relegation from the Nigeria Premier Football League, winning a place in the CAF Confederation Cup.

Meanwhile, Elkanemi Warriors midfielder Muktari Ismail won Most Valuable Player Award after their 1-0 victory over Ikorodu City.



TEAM NIGERIA

Nigeria targets world fencing success

Team Nigeria will compete at the 2026 World Fencing Championships in Hong Kong from July 22 to July 30, seeking valuable international experience.

The Nigeria Fencing Federation (NFF) confirmed the country's participation in a statement issued by its Media Department yesterday.

More than 1,000 elite fencers from over 100 countries will compete at AsiaWorld-Expo in the sport's biggest event outside the Olympic Games.

The federation said the cham-

pionships would expose Nigeria's young athletes to world-class opposition while offering ranking points and invaluable competitive experience.

Eighteen-year-old Inkosi Brou will captain Nigeria's challenge after rising to 65th globally following his quarter-final finish at the African Fencing Championships in Abidjan.

Brou will compete in the men's sabre event alongside world number 120 Oluwafolayemi Akinyosoye and 16-year-old Olen Phoenix Zaku.

Nathaniel Idowu Foundation hosts maiden summer camp at Maracana Stadium

The Nathaniel Idowu Foundation will host the maiden edition of its four-week Summer Camp at the rejuvenated Maracana Sports Complex in Ajegunle, Lagos, in August.

In a statement issued on Sunday on Lagos by the foundation's Media Department, the organiser the four-week camp would hold between Aug.3 and Aug. 28.

According to the statement, the four-week camp is a youth development initiative designed to inspire, educate and empower children through sports and other life-enriching activities during the long school holiday.

It said the programme is open to boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 16, providing them with an opportunity to develop their sporting talents while learning important life skills in a safe and supportive environment.

The statement said that participants would receive professional coaching in football, basketball and athletics from experienced coaches and instructors.

It added that the camp would also feature teamwork exercises, fun games, leadership development sessions and character-building activities aimed at helping the children become confident, disciplined and responsible members of society.

The statement said the activities would be conducted in a safe, structured and friendly environment under the supervision of qualified coaches and facilitators to ensure the well-being and development of every participant.

Speaking on the initiative,

the foundation reaffirmed its commitment to using sports as a tool for positive social change and youth empowerment.

"The Summer Camp is more than just a holiday programme. It is an opportunity to nurture young talents, build confidence, encourage healthy living, promote discipline and create lasting friendships among children from diverse backgrounds.

"It also underscores the importance of inclusion through our 'Let Her Play' initiative, which is aimed at ensuring that girls are encouraged and given equal opportunities to participate, compete and develop their sporting abilities alongside boys."

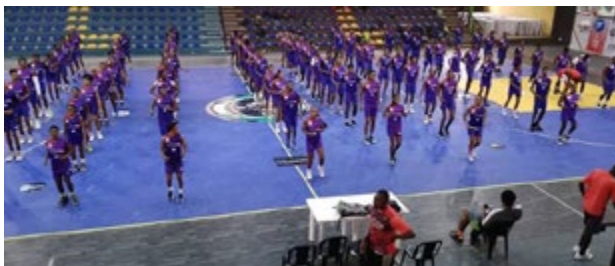
The foundation urged parents

and guardians to take advantage of the opportunity by enrolling their children.

It noted that the camp would keep them actively engaged in meaningful and productive activities throughout the holiday period while exposing them to positive values and healthy life-

styles.

It reiterated its commitment to transforming lives through education, health and sports, adding that it would continue to invest in programmes that supported the development of the next generation of leaders and athletes in Nigeria.



NATHANIEL IDOWU FOUNDATION

NTTF unveils squads for African, West African Table Tennis Championships

The Nigeria Table Tennis Federation (NTTF) has named the players who will represent the country at a series of continental and regional tournaments in Ghana and Guinea later this month.

This is contained in a statement issued on Sunday in La-

gos by the federation's Media Department.

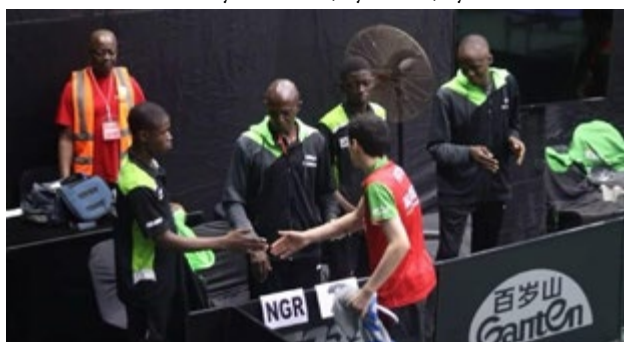
The federation named Umar Ayoola, Habeeb Adebayo, Emmanuel Shaiibu and Elizabeth Em-inike for the 2026 Africa Hopes Week and Challenge, scheduled to hold in Accra, Ghana, between July 13 and July 18.

For the West African Regional Championships in Guinea, Matthew Kuti will captain the Nigerian team alongside Abdulbasit Abdulfatai, Funmilayo Ojo and Khadijat Okanlawon.

Nigeria will be aiming to defend its men's and women's singles titles at the tournament, scheduled to hold between July 15 and July 18, where players from across West Africa will compete for singles and team honours.

Kuti will also lead Nigeria's boys' U-19 team to the African Youth Championships. Other members of the team are Sultan Agunbiade, Matthew Fabunmi and Quadri Atunwon.

The girls' U-19 team comprises Funmilayo Ojo, Khadijat Okanlawon, Kabirat Ayoola and Khadijah Musa.



WEST AFRICAN TABLE TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS

ABU appoints Nnaji basketball head coach, academy's GM

Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, has appointed basketball coach and Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF) Technical Committee member, Scott Nnaji, as Head Coach of its basketball team.

The Director of Public Affairs of the university, Malam Auwalu Umar, disclosed this in a statement issued on Sunday in Zaria.

Umar added that Nnaji was also appointed General Manager-designate of the university's proposed basketball academy.

He said that Nnaji's contract assigned him the dual responsibility of leading the universi-

ty's basketball team and overseeing the establishment of the proposed basketball academy as pioneer General Manager.

He said that Nnaji, President of the Basketball Coaches Association of Nigeria (BCAN) and a technical member of the Nigeria Basketball Federation Board, has extensive coaching and basketball administration experience.

The Vice-Chancellor of the university, Prof. Adamu Ahmed who signed the appointment letter, expressed confidence in Nnaji's capacity to reposition the university's basketball programme for greater success.



SCOTT NNAJI



World Cup: Bellingham brace fires England into semis

England reached the 2026 FIFA World Cup semi-finals after Jude Bellingham scored twice in a dramatic 2-1 extra-time victory over Norway in Miami, United States.

Norway stunned England in the 36th minute when An-

reas Schjelderup's inswinging delivery drifted beyond Jordan Pickford and into the net.

England responded deep into first-half stoppage time through Bellingham, who calmly finished after a sustained attack restored parity at 1-1.



JUDE BELLINGHAM CELEBRATE

Norway thought they had regained the lead in the 56th minute, but VAR disallowed the effort for Erling Haaland's foul during the build-up.

Pickford then produced a vital save to deny Haaland as England gradually regained control in the sweltering Miami conditions.

The match remained level after 90 minutes, forcing extra time as both sides searched desperately for a decisive breakthrough.

England struck again in the 93rd minute when Norway goalkeeper, Ørjan Nyland, fumbled, allowing Bellingham to smash home from close range.

Norway pressed relentlessly during extra time, but John Stones marshalled England's defence superbly as Pickford made further important interventions.

Thomas Tuchel introduced fresh legs late on, with England switching to a defensive shape to preserve their slender advantage.

The final whistle confirmed England's place in the semi-finals, where they will meet either Argentina or Switzerland.

Bellingham's brace took his tournament tally to six goals, underlining his growing influence on England's World Cup campaign.

England had reached the quarter-finals after defeating DR Congo and edging hosts Mexico in the previous knockout rounds.

Tuchel admitted his side fell below their usual standards in spite of progressing.

"We were too sloppy and made too many technical mistakes, but the mentality was outstanding," he said.



MOSES SIMON

Enugu Rangers debunk Moses Simon's alleged ethnic bias claim

The Management of Rangers International Football club of Enugu has debunked the claim by Nigerian International, Moses Simon, that he was once denied selection by the club because of his origin.

Simon recently alleged that he was once denied selection by Rangers technical crew after undergoing recruitment process because he hails from the north.

However, Mr Amobi Ezeaku, Rangers General Manager, in a statement on Friday in Enugu, said the club had no such inclination in their policy. He said: "While we respect

every players' right to recount his personal journey, it is important to state clearly that Rangers International does not maintain any policy of discrimination based on ethnicity, tribe, religion or place of birth."

He noted that since inception in 1970, Rangers had maintained its status as a national football institution, though based in Enugu, South East region of Nigeria.

Ezeaku maintained that the club's recruitment philosophy had always been based on football ability, character, discipline, and commitment, and not on ethnic identity.

World Cup: Argentina overcome Switzerland 3-1 after extra time

Argentina defeated Switzerland 3-1 after extra time on Sunday, reaching the FIFA World Cup semi-finals following a gripping quarter-final at Arrowhead Stadium, Kansas City, USA.

The South Americans dominated early exchanges before Switzerland rallied impressively, forcing extra time in spite of playing the closing stages with 10 men after Breel Embolo's dismissal.

Argentina struck first in the 10th minute when Alexis Mac Allister converted Lionel Messi's clever assist, rewarding their bright opening and sustained attacking pressure.

Messi orchestrated Argentina's attacks throughout the first half as Switzerland struggled defensively and found few opportunities to threaten the South American backline.

Switzerland's frustrations deepened before the interval when Embolo received a yellow card in the 44th minute following a late challenge.

The Swiss returned purposefully after halftime and levelled in the 67th minute through Dan Ndoye, who calmly finished Ricardo Rodriguez's precise pass.

Switzerland's momentum faded five minutes later after Embolo collected a second yellow card, reducing his side to 10 men for the remainder.

Argentina responded with fresh legs, introducing Nicolas Gonzalez, Lautaro Martinez and Gonzalo Montiel as coach Lionel Scaloni sought renewed

attacking impetus.

Switzerland also reshuffled, bringing on Silvan Widmer, Zeki Amdouni and Miro Muheim before Eray Comert replaced Rodriguez during stoppage time.

Neither side found a decisive goal in normal time, sending the enthralling contest into an additional 30 minutes.



Flamingos beat Benin 5-3 to reach FIFA U-17 World Cup

Nigeria's Flamingos qualified for the 2026 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup after defeating Benin's Amazons 5-3 in Lomé on Saturday, completing an 8-5 aggregate victory.

Coach Akeem Busari's side secured qualification after building on last weekend's 3-2 first-leg success in Ikenne, Ogun, with another com-

manding attacking display.

Nigeria struck first in the sixth minute through Mary Dustan, but Benin responded swiftly, levelling three minutes later to revive the fiercely contested encounter.

The Flamingos regained control through Ester Stephen's 15th-minute strike before Queen Joseph extended the advantage in the 20th minute,

giving Nigeria a commanding 3-1 lead.

Benin fought back impressively, scoring twice to reduce the deficit and threaten Nigeria's qualification hopes before the visitors responded decisively.

The Flamingos added two more goals to complete an entertaining 5-3 victory, ending Benin's resistance and confirming their place at the global tournament.

The aggregate triumph underlined Nigeria's dominance across both qualifying matches, with Busari's side scoring eight goals while conceding five over two legs.

"I'm proud of the players' determination and attacking spirit. They showed resilience and deserved this qualification," Busari said after the victory.

The FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup will take place in Rabat, Morocco, from Oct. 17 to Nov. 7, featuring the world's leading youth teams



FLAMINGOS PLAYER AND BENIN PLAYER

Nasarawa Amazons win 2026 President Federation Cup

Nasarawa Amazons on Saturday emerged champions of the 2026 President Federation Cup women's competition after defeating Heartland Queens 6-5 on penalties, following a 1-1 draw in regulation time.

The final match, played at the Stephen Keshi Stadium in Asaba, saw Heartland Queens, making their maiden appearance in the competition, taking the lead early in the second half through Chizoba Johnson.

The Lafia-based side, coached by Christopher Dan-

juma, fought back later in the match as Judith Adaobi scored the equaliser to force the keenly contested encounter into a penalty shootout.

Both teams converted their initial spot kicks before the shootout entered sudden death, with Nasarawa Amazons holding their nerve to secure a 6-5 victory and lift the trophy.

The triumph adds another President Federation Cup title to the club's achievements, while Heartland Queens earned praise for an impressive debut campaign.



2026 PRESIDENT FEDERATION CUP