

Think beyond Convention for sustainable revenue growth, Okpebholo charges EDOGIS

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Gov. Monday Okpebholo of Edo has charged staff of the Edo State Geographic Information Service (EDOGIS) to embrace innovation, digital transformation and strategic thinking as key drivers of sustainable revenue

generation and institutional excellence. Okpebholo gave the charge on Wednesday in Benin at a one-day workshop organised to advance his administration's SHINE Agenda. The workshop, themed "EDOGIS Revenue Increase: Thinking Outside the Box – A Strategic Framework for Sus-

tainable Revenue Growth, Digital Transformation and Institutional Excellence," brought together heads of departments, heads of units and other key officers of the agency to explore practical strategies for improving the state's internally generated revenue. Represented by his Chief of Staff, Mr Yakubu Musa, the gov-

ernor said his administration remained committed to repositioning government institutions to become more efficient, transparent and productive. He noted that EDOGIS plays a critical role in land administration, investment promotion and revenue generation, stressing that the agency must continue to align with global best

practices by embracing technology-driven solutions and innovative approaches. Okpebholo urged participants to take full advantage of the workshop by engaging actively with the resource persons and translating the knowledge acquired into measurable improvements in service delivery and revenue performance.

He reaffirmed his administration's commitment to creating an enabling environment for government agencies to thrive through capacity building, institutional reforms and the deployment of modern technology. In his remarks, the Managing

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FG inaugurates DICON institute to advance defence self-reliance

KADUNA

The Minister of State for Defence, Dr Bello Matawalle, on Wednesday inaugurated the DICON Institute of Technology in Kaduna. Matawalle said the institute was established as part of the Federal Government's deliberate efforts to achieve self-reliance in defence production and

build a robust military-industrial complex in Nigeria. He said the institute would provide the technical expertise required to design, develop and sustain platforms and systems critical to national security. The minister said Nigeria had for decades relied heavily on foreign sources for critical defence capabilities, with attendant consequences.

He said the establishment of the institute represented a significant step toward changing the narrative and strengthening the country's indigenous defence industrial base. Matawalle commended the leadership of the Defence Industries Corporation of Nigeria (DICON), under its Director-General, Maj.-Gen. Babatunde Alaya, for making

the project a reality. He also commended the DICON Board, management and staff for their commitment and sacrifices toward repositioning the corporation as the bedrock of Nigeria's military-industrial complex. According to him, the institute will serve as a vehicle for driving the innovation required for the future development of

defence-related and civil manufacturing sectors in Nigeria. "To the management and academic staff of the DICON Institute of Technology, I charge you to strive to make this institution a centre of excellence. "I further urge you to partner with industry and academia to drive innovation and let this institution become a hub where ideas are transformed into products and technologies that will serve the best interests of our nation," he said.

The minister assured DICON and the institute of the Federal Government's continued support in line with the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Tinubu. He said the government would continue to provide the necessary support, enabling environment, policy direction and resources required to enable DICON and the institute to fulfil their mandates.

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PRESENTATION:

Edo State Deputy Governor Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa Representing the Governor, His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo being presented Award of Excellence For Prioritizing and Improving HealthCare in Edo State by Dr. Eustace Oseghale on behalf of Nigeria Medical Association Edo State Branch during 2026 Annual General Meeting and Scientific Conference held in Benin City, PHOTO: MOSES OBOH

NMA recognizes, presents award to Okpebholo for prioritizing healthcare

BENIN CITY

BERNADETTE IDALU

The Nigerian Medical Association, (NMA), Edo State Chapter, on Wednesday, presented Governor Monday Okpebholo with a plaque and custom built portrait in recognition for, "Prioritizing and improving healthcare in Edo State." Receiving the award during the 2026 Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Scientific Conference, at the Doctor's House, Ugbowo, on Wednesday, Governor Monday Okpebholo appreciated the medical doctors for partnership and recognition accorded him.

In his address, on behalf of Governor Monday Okpebholo, the Edo State Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa noted that the theme for the AGM, "Safeguarding standards, advancing clinical practice: The role of public-private partnerships in our hospitals," was germane. According to the Deputy Governor "His Excellency, the Governor is honoured to receive this recognition with great humility. He considers it not only an honour personally, but also an encouragement to do even more in strengthening healthcare delivery across Edo State."

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Earlier, Alaya said the inauguration marked the culmination of a vision to build not only defence equipment but also the human capacity required to power Nigeria's military-industrial complex.

He said the institute was conceived to address critical gaps in innovation, research and development, as well as production.

The DICON director-general said sustainable industrialisation could only be achieved through the development of indigenous human capital capable of working behind the machines and driving technological advancement.

According to him, the institute will focus on training engineers, technologists, technicians and other professionals in defence-related disciplines.

He said it would also serve as a centre for research, development and innovation, supporting the operational needs of the Armed Forces of Nigeria and other security agencies, while contributing to the broader manufacturing sector.

Alaya said the approval for DICON to co-run the institute with the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), alongside its listing by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), represented a

significant milestone.

He said the development had established a formal academic pathway into Nigeria's defence industry.

The DICON boss said the institute would be fully integrated into the corporation's drive to become the nucleus of Nigeria's defence industries.

He said adequate funding, partnerships and linkages with DICON factories and those of its joint-venture partners would be established to ensure that research and innovation translated into tangible products and solutions.

Alaya expressed the vision that the institute would become a foremost centre of excellence for defence technology education, applied research and innovation.

He said the institution would be committed to producing graduates with competence, character and creativity to strengthen Nigeria's defence industrial capability and contribute to national development.

He expressed appreciation to President Tinubu, particularly for signing the DICON Act 2023, which he described as a turning point in the history and operations of the corporation.

The director-general also appreciated the Minister of Defence, Minister of State for Defence, Chief of Defence Staff and Service Chiefs for their



PRESENTATION OF AWARD OF EXCELLENCE:

The Ohen-Osa of Holy Aruosa Cathedral, Benin City, Dr. Harrison Okao, (3rd right), the Chairman of Uhumwode LGA, Hon. Austin Imafidon, (5th left) and tother top functionaries of the local council during his courtesy visit to the chairman on Tuesday.

NMA recognizes, presents...

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He commended the leadership of the NMA in Edo State for maintaining a constructive and cordial relationship with the Edo State Government, stating, "Your willingness to engage government, provide professional guidance and work collaboratively has contributed to the peace and progress we are witnessing in our health sector."

He upheld, "The ultimate measure of our success is not the number of hospitals we build or the equipment we procure, but the lives we save, the suffering we prevent, and the confidence we restore in our healthcare system."

Idahosa as part of ceremonies later commissioned the "Edo NMA History Ville" and the "Dr. Philip Ugboaga Med-

ical Library and ICT Hub."

The NMA Chairman, Dr. Eustace Oseghale while lauding the achievements of the Edo State Government in health sector delivery pointed to the promotion of doctors and provision of residency programmes at the Edo State Specialist Hospital (ESH). He declared that the AGM by the NMA marked the end and the beginning of a new tenure of executives who pilot the affairs of the association.

Also present at the meeting were the Chief Medical Director (CMD) of University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) Dr. Idia Ize-Iyamu; CMD of ESH, Dr. Anthonia Njoku who stood in for the Commissioner for Health, Dr. Cyril Oshiomole. A host of other heads of medical establishments and doctors were present.

Think beyond Convention...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

Director of EDOGIS, Dr Innocent Bello, described the workshop as an initiative designed to equip staff with practical tools for achieving sustainable revenue growth while strengthening institutional efficiency.

Bello encouraged participants to challenge conventional methods, embrace new ideas and contribute meaningfully to the agency's vision of becoming a model institution in digital land administration and public

service delivery.

The workshop featured presentations by a banking executive and strategic leadership expert, who shared insights on innovative revenue strategies, leadership, digital transformation and institutional excellence.

The event forms part of the state government's ongoing efforts to strengthen public institutions and accelerate economic development through improved governance, innovation and enhanced revenue generation.

CAROLINE AMEH

OSOGBO

Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Joash Amupitan, has announced plans to introduce cash rewards and foreign travel opportunities for outstanding staff as part of measures to boost morale ahead of the August 15 Osun State governorship election.

Prof. Amupitan made the announcement on Tuesday during a working visit to the INEC office in Osogbo, where he met with electoral officers and other members of staff shortly after a courtesy visit to the Ooni of Ife, Oba Enitan Ogunwusi.

Addressing the staff, the INEC Chairman said the commission was under immense public scrutiny and must deliver a credible, peaceful and conclusive governorship election, describing the poll as a critical test ahead of the 2027 general elections.

"We are just coming from the palace of the Ooni of Ife, and the expectation on INEC is very high. The tension is equally high. We have to do everything possible within our powers and abilities to bring down this tension," he said.

He urged staff to contribute their expertise toward ensuring the success of the election, assuring them that exceptional performance would be recognised.

Amupitan disclosed that the commission was developing a reward system that would in-

clude cash incentives and sponsored foreign trips for staff who distinguish themselves during electoral assignments.

The INEC Chairman noted that within nine months of assuming office, the commission had successfully conducted major elections in Anambra, the Federal Capital Territory and Ekiti, as well as about 11 by-elections across the country.

According to him, none of the elections had generated significant disputes, adding that the Osun governorship election must sustain that record.

He expressed concern over

recent security incidents involving the commission, including the hijacking of Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) machines and attacks on INEC personnel.

"We had a security situation last week where our BVAS were hijacked and our staff were assaulted. We are taking measures to secure our facilities, our materials and, more importantly, protect the lives of our staff and the voters," he said.

Amupitan said the commission was working closely with the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) and the National Peace Committee to ensure a peaceful exercise, noting that

security assessments in Osun had improved from "very high" to "medium" risk.

He also stressed the need for sustainable funding for the electoral body, lamenting the rising cost of conducting elections.

"The cost of conducting a state election is now even higher than that of some federal elections. We need a sustainable way of financing our operations," he said.

The INEC Chairman urged staff to remain vigilant against misinformation and disinformation, warning that false narratives could undermine public confidence and trigger unnecessary tension during the electoral process.

Finance ministry disowns fake N50,000 recruitment fee, warns applicants

ABUJA

The Federal Ministry of Finance has disowned a fake message demanding N50,000 from newly recruited staff before resumption of duty.

This was contained in a statement issued on Wednesday in Abuja, by Mrs Efe Ovuakporie, Head, Information and Public Relations in the ministry.

The ministry described the message as fraudulent and the handiwork of scammers targeting unsuspecting applicants with false recruitment claims.

According to the ministry, the fake notice is titled "Administrative Update and Compliance Notice for Newly Recruited Staff."

Ovuakporie said that the message falsely claimed the human resource management department directed new employees to pay a non-refundable administrative fee.

She said that no such directive was issued by any office or official of the ministry.

Ovuakporie explained that recruitment follows established Federal Civil Service procedures without payment of administrative, processing or resumption fees.

The ministry urged prospective employees and the public to ignore the fraudulent message and avoid making payments.

She also advised applicants not to disclose personal or financial information to individ-

uals behind the scam.

The ministry encouraged anyone with useful information to report the matter to relevant law enforcement agencies.

Ovuakporie added that such information could also be reported through the ministry's official communication channels.

She reaffirmed its commitment to transparency, fairness and integrity in all recruitment processes.

Ovuakporie pledged continued collaboration with relevant authorities to protect Nigerians from fraudsters operating in its name.

The ministry also urged Nigerians to verify recruitment information through official government channels before taking any action.

NEWS

Okpebholo celebrates Archbishop Margaret Idahosa at 83

BENIN CITY

● Hails decades of spiritual service

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo has congratulated Archbishop Margaret Idahosa on the occasion of her 83rd birthday, and described her as a symbol of unwavering faith, selfless service and enduring spiritual leadership whose contributions have transformed lives and strengthened society.

In a goodwill message to the Matriarch of the Church of God Mission International, Governor Monday Okpebholo said he joins the Benson

Idahosa family, the Christian community, and well-wishers across Nigeria in celebrating the milestone.

The governor praised Archbishop Idahosa's decades of commitment to the Christian faith, saying her ministry has inspired generations through steadfast leadership, compassion, and dedication to advancing the Gospel.

He said the renowned cleric's influence extends beyond the pulpit, citing her sustenance of her husband's vision

and contributions to education, humanitarian service, peace-building, and community development.

According to the governor, Archbishop Idahosa's motherly guidance, wisdom, and support for the vulnerable have continued to inspire hope and positively impact countless lives.

Governor Okpebholo described the Presiding Bishop of the Church of God Mission International as one of Nigeria's most respected Christian leaders, whose legacy of faith,

excellence, and service remains a model for present and future generations.

"As you celebrate this significant milestone, we pray that Almighty God will continue to grant you good health, renewed strength, abundant grace, and many more fruitful years in His service," the governor said.

He wished Archbishop Idahosa continued peace, joy, and divine favour while congratulating her on behalf of the Edo State Government and its people on attaining the age of 83.



INAUGURATION:

The Minister of State for Defence, Alhaji Bello Matawalle, inaugurating DICON Institute in Kaduna on Wednesday.

FG targets poverty reduction through skills training

LAGOS

The Federal Government says its Renewed Hope Vocational and Skills Training Programme is designed to equip participants with employable skills, promote entrepreneurship and accelerate poverty reduction nationwide.

The Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction, Dr Bernard Doro, disclosed this during Renewed Hope Vocational and Skills Training Programme on Wednesday in Agege, Lagos.

The minister was represented at the event by his Senior Technical Adviser on Information Systems and Data Analysis, Dr Abimbola Fasanu.

The programme is being implemented by the National Social Investment Programme Agency (NSIPA) under the supervision of the ministry.

NAN recalls that Doro officially inaugurated the initiative on July 13, with 18,510 Nigerians expected to benefit from the nationwide programme.

The minister described the scheme as a major milestone in addressing poverty through sustainable economic empow-

erment and long-term livelihood development.

According to him, the programme is being implemented simultaneously across the country as part of the Federal Government's commitment to creating sustainable livelihoods.

"The programme will expand economic opportunities and lift Nigerians out of poverty through skills development, enterprise support and inclusive social protection.

"Participants have begun intensive practical training designed to equip them with employable skills, promote entrepreneurship and accelerate

Nigeria's poverty reduction efforts," Doro said.

He said the initiative marked a significant shift from short-term poverty interventions to practical skills development capable of delivering lasting economic benefits.

Doro added that the training would equip beneficiaries to earn sustainable incomes, build resilient livelihoods and become economically self-reliant.

The Programme Coordinator and Centre Head, Mrs Kemilat Opasaye, said the initiative reflected President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda.

She said the programme

was empowering vulnerable Nigerians with practical skills needed to achieve economic independence and improve their quality of life.

According to Opasaye, the initiative aligns with the Federal Government's broader vision of moving vulnerable citizens from dependence to self-reliance through sustainable empowerment programmes.

She noted that the scheme also complements the ministry's One Humanitarian-One Poverty Response System (OHOPRS), which integrates humanitarian assistance, skills development and economic inclusion.

NASS Service Commission confirms Sidi as Clerk to House of Reps

ABUJA

National Assembly Service Commission (NASC) has confirmed the appointment of Mr Ibrahim Sidi as the substantive Clerk to the House of Representatives.

In a statement on Wednesday, the commission's Director of Public Affairs, Mr Nwok-

poku Anyigor, said that other four senior officers were also elevated at the 31st meeting of the 6th NASC held in Abuja.

He said that Mr Dauda Bukar was confirmed as the Deputy Clerk, Administration while Mr Siyaka Sadiq was confirmed as Deputy Clerk, Legislative, of the green chambers.

Anyigor also said that Mr Bashir Layya was confirmed as

Secretary, Estates and Works, Mrs Asien Nana as Secretary, Zonal Liaison Offices and Mrs Fortune Ihua-Maduenyi as Secretary of Protocol and Inter-Parliamentary Relations.

He recalled that the commission had, on January, 20, elevated the officers to their respective posts in acting capacity before the confirmation of their appointments now.

Tinubu's reforms, steps for Nigeria's survival

● APC National Women Leader

AKURE

The National Women Leader of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Dr Mary Idele, says the various reforms by the administration of President Bola Tinubu will guarantee the country's survival.

Idele said this on Wednesday in Akure at the sensitisation and empowerment of women in gender equality and adequate representation in governance.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the programme was organised by the Ondo State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development.

She explained that there was need for Nigerians to re-elect the president for continuity in ensuring that the reforms could achieve their targeted goals.

According to the APC national women leader, there are decisions that need to be made, irrespective of the immediate effects that might be not rosy, but with ripple blessings if they can be carried out.

"With the inauguration of 774 Exploded Initiative and Tinubu Torch Bearers Initiative across the country, Tinubu will get at least 60 per cent of votes in the 2027 election.

"The initiative is to ensure we sensitise women, inform them about various programmes and reforms of the administration, and educate them on the need for inclusive governance," she said.

Also, Gov. Lucky Aiyedatiwa of Ondo State lauded Idele for bringing 774 Exploded Initiative to the state, describing it as 'more than an intervention'.

"It is a bold declaration that the future of our country depends on unlocking the immense potential of women in every community and sphere of public life.

"There won't be sustainable

development when a significant percentage of the population is excluded or under represented at the highest levels where decisions are made," he said.

Aiyedatiwa, represented by his deputy, Mr Olayide Adelami, expressed strong belief that gender equality was neither a concession nor a favor, but a moral obligation, a democratic necessity and an economic imperative.

"Women are very critical to the uplifting and development of any society. They are the unseen architects of society. They nurture families, preserve values, sustain local economies, resolve conflict and shape crucial generations.

"Increasingly, they are also transforming public administration, entrepreneurship, technology, education, agricultural and governance. This reminds us that leadership is not a function of gender but of competence, character, vision and salvage.

As a government, we remain unwavering in our commitment to building an inclusive state where every citizen matters, where every potential is recognized and given the opportunity to try," he stated.

Earlier, the wife of the governor, Mrs Esther Aiyedatiwa, said the programme was to build a society where every woman and girl could participate fully, equally and safely in shaping the future of society.

Aiyedatiwa, represented by Mrs Seun Adelami, the wife of the deputy governor, said the time for inclusive leadership had been more compelling, when women's voices were heard in the corridors of policymaking.

According to her, communities flourish when women lead, families prosper and when women are fully represented in governance.

2027: Elections will hold in IDP camp in Plateau – INEC

JOS

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) says it will conduct the 2027 general elections in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in Plateau.

Prof. Sam Egwu, the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) in the state, disclosed this during a one-day workshop on Wednesday in Jos.

Egwu said that the commission was committed to ensuring that no eligible Nigerian, including those displaced by conflict, was disenfranchised.

"INEC is making provisions for elections to hold in IDP camps in 2027.

"We have learnt from previous experiences that displacement should not mean the loss of voting rights," he said.

He noted that electoral secu-

rity remained a major challenge in the state, particularly in communities affected by communal clashes and banditry.

The REC explained that the commission is collaborating with security agencies, traditional rulers and civil society organisations to develop strategies that would guarantee peaceful, free and credible elections.

"Capacity building for our staff and stakeholders is key. If our personnel are not secure and do not understand the security terrain, we cannot deliver credible polls," he added.

The workshop, tagged "Electoral Security and Capacity Building", had security operatives, Chairmen of Local Government Areas, traditional rulers, civil society organisations, media representatives and officials of political parties in attendance.

NEWS

Family, friends bid farewell to mother of Edo Commissioner

MUYIDEEN FUNMILAYO

The family of Hon. Paul Ohonbamu, Edo State Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, is set to bid a final farewell to his late mother, Mrs. Victoria Ohonbamu, née Isikpojie, who will be laid to rest this weekend.

Mrs. Ohonbamu, who passed away at the age of 85, was described by her family as a devoted mother, a woman of deep faith, and a disciplinarian who dedicated her life to raising her children and positively impacting the lives of people



MRS. OHONBAMU

around her.

In a statement issued by the family, the deceased was remembered as a woman whose life was built on strong moral values, humility, prayer, and service to humanity.

The family said she played a significant role in shaping the lives of her children and instilling in them the importance of honesty, discipline, compassion, and responsibility.

According to the family, Mrs. Ohonbamu was not only committed to the welfare of her immediate family but also extended her kindness and generosity to members of her community. Her home, they said, was always welcoming to people who needed advice, support, encouragement, or a helping hand.

The family further noted that her dedication to raising responsible children was reflected in the achievements and public service of her son, Hon. Paul Ohonbamu, a former Deputy Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly and the current Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs.

They said the values Mrs. Ohonbamu taught her children remained evident in their lives, adding that her influence went

far beyond her household.

Her words of advice, acts of kindness, and prayers, according to the family, left a lasting impression on many people who had the opportunity to meet her.

The family described her as a humble and prayerful woman who believed strongly in the importance of serving others. Although she never occupied

a public office, they said she played an important role in raising children who have contributed to society in different ways.

As preparations continue for her burial, family members, friends, associates, and well-wishers are expected to gather to honour her memory and celebrate the life she lived.

The family expressed ap-

preciation for the years they shared with her and for the many lives she touched during her lifetime. They said her legacy would continue to live on through her children, grandchildren, relatives, and members of the community who benefited from her wisdom and kindness.

They prayed that the Al-

mighty God would grant Mrs. Victoria Ohonbamu eternal rest and give the entire family the strength and courage to cope with her loss.

The family also pledged to uphold the values she represented throughout her lifetime, including integrity, faith, love, discipline, humility, and service to humanity.



TRAINING:

A cross section of participants at the Uhumwode Council Training for 20 Youths in Printing, Graphic Design.

Uhumwode Council Trains 20 Youths in Printing, Graphic Design, Offers Transport Stipends

SALIHU MARYAM SAIDU

The Acting Chairman of Uhumwode Local Government Council, Hon. Austin Imafidon (Isiwina), has commenced the orientation of 20 youths selected for the council's free six-month professional printing and graphic design training programme as part of efforts to promote youth empowerment and entrepreneurship.

The orientation, held ahead of the commencement of the training, prepared the successful applicants for the programme, which begins on Monday, July 27, 2026, in partnership with IK Print, Benin City.

Addressing the beneficiaries, Imafidon congratulated them on their successful selection and urged them to make the most of the opportunity by acquiring practical skills that would enable them to become self-reliant and financially independent.

He explained that the initiative reflects the council's commitment to human capital development and its determination to reduce unemployment by equipping young people with marketable vocational skills.

The chairman encouraged the trainees to remain disciplined, committed and focused throughout the six-month programme, noting that the knowledge and experience gained would position them to establish businesses, create

jobs and contribute to the socio-economic development of their communities.

To support the participants, Imafidon announced that each beneficiary would receive transportation stipends throughout the duration of the training to ease the cost of commuting to and from the training centre.

He said the transport support was designed to encourage regular attendance and ensure that financial challenges would not prevent any participant from completing the programme.

He also disclosed that monthly assessment meetings would be held to monitor the progress of the trainees.

The beneficiaries expressed appreciation to the council chairman for the opportunity and pledged to remain dedicated throughout the programme.

The training, facilitated by IK Print, will cover graphic design, commercial printing, business card production, flyers and posters, roll-up banners, T-shirt and branded wear printing, large-format printing, mug branding, frame production, cap branding and other modern printing technologies.

The Uhumwode Local Government Council reaffirmed its commitment to implementing programmes that promote youth empowerment, entrepreneurship and sustainable economic development across the local government area.

NYSC urges employers to expose corps members to practical learning

MINNA

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) has urged employers of corps members to expose them to practical learning experiences to enhance their productivity and prepare them for life after the service year.

NYSC Director-General, Brig.-Gen. Olakunle Nafiu, made the call at the 2026 NYSC Corps Employers' Workshop in Minna on Wednesday.

The workshop was organised with the theme: "Fine-Tuning Stakeholders' Collaboration to Enhance Corps Members' Welfare and Workplace Experience."

Nafiu, in his remarks deliv-

ered by Mrs Gladys Adama, Acting Director, North-Central Area Office I, said the theme was timely, given the need for stakeholders to work closely to ensure that corps members derived maximum value from their service year.

He said the contemporary workplace was rapidly evolving, requiring corps members to acquire not only technical competence but also critical thinking, adaptability, teamwork, communication, leadership and digital skills.

The NYSC DG commended employers for sustaining their commitment to corps members' welfare through the provision of accommodation,

transportation support, health-care services and mentoring opportunities.

He, however, stressed that their welfare should extend beyond physical needs to include safety, mental well-being and inclusion in the workplace.

"Equally important is the need to offer appropriate mentorship, supervision and opportunities for professional growth.

"When corps members are

effectively integrated into the workplace, they become more motivated, innovative and committed to delivering value to their host organisations and society at large," he said.

Nafiu urged participants to share experiences, identify best practices and propose actionable strategies to deepen collaboration and strengthen the effectiveness of the NYSC scheme.

EKEDC installs 3,000 meters, seeks customers' patience

LAGOS

Eko Electricity Distribution Company (EKEDC) says it has installed more than 3,000 free prepaid meters in the Gbaji and Apa communities of Badagry in the past six months to improve electricity service delivery. The Head of Distribution Operations, EKEDC, Mr Henry Ukoh, disclosed this on Wednesday during a stakeholders' meeting with electricity consumers at the Badagry Local Government Secretariat, Ajara.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the meeting was convened to address residents' concerns over erratic power supply, estimated billing and the shortage of prepaid meters in the area.

Ukoh said about 2,600 prepaid meters were installed earlier in 2026, while an additional 400 meters were recently deployed to the two communities.

He assured consumers that

all customers would eventually be metered and urged them to remain patient.

Ukoh explained that prepaid meters were deployed under different schemes, including the Federal Government's free metering programme and the Meter Asset Provider (MAP) initiative, under which customers pay for meters and recover the cost through energy credits over time.

He said the free meters were supplied in batches by the Federal Government, adding that EKEDC allocated available meters based on the quantities received.

According to him, it is not in the company's interest to withhold meters because widespread metering enhances energy accounting, reduces losses and improves operational efficiency.

"We are not keeping meters because we do not want to give customers meters. We also want every customer metered because it helps us monitor energy distribution and reduce losses," he said.

Pen down for Pius Ede: Edo NUJ rallies to honour late veteran

BENIN CITY

EDOKPAYI PERFECT

Journalism community in Edo State and across Nigeria's South-South region is preparing to bid a heartfelt farewell to one of its big wigs as funeral ceremonies commence for Comrade Pius Ede, former Vice President of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Zone F, and a distinguished advocate for press freedom and workers' rights.

Comrade Ede, who passed away at the age of 71, leaves behind an enduring legacy built on decades of exceptional service to journalism, unwavering commitment to the labour movement, and dedicated mentorship of generations of media professionals.

Before retiring, he served with distinction at the state-owned Bendel Newspapers Company Limited (BNCL), publishers of the renowned Observer titles.

Throughout his illustrious career, he earned widespread admiration for his fearless advocacy, rising through the ranks of the Nigeria Union of Journalists to serve as Secretary and later Vice President of NUJ Zone F, where he became a respected champion of journalists' welfare and media independence.

In a statement released by the Edo State Council of the NUJ, colleagues, friends, media practitioners, and members of the public have been invited to honour the life and remarkable contributions of the late union leader through a three-day funeral programme.

NEWS

Army deploys GOCs to new divisions, activates 3 brigades

ABUJA

The Nigerian Army has deployed General Officers Commanding (GOCs) to its newly established divisions and activated three new brigades as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen its operational capabilities and enhance national security.

The appointments followed President Bola Tinubu's approval for the expansion of the Nigerian Army from eight to 12 divisions to improve command and control, force projection and response to evolving security challenges.

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt.-Gen. Waidi Shaibu, approved the appointments and postings to provide leadership for the newly established formations.

According to a statement by the Acting Director, Army Public Relations, Col. Appolonia Anele, on Wednesday, the new divisions will commence operations after attaining Initial Operational Capability (IOC).

She said deliberate measures were also being implemented to ensure the formations achieved Full Operational Capability (FOC).

Anele said the Army had consequently reorganised its divisional Areas of Responsibility to improve operational effectiveness across the country.

She said 1 Division Kaduna would cover Kaduna, Kano, Katsina and Jigawa states, while 2 Division Ibadan would oversee Oyo, Osun, Ekiti and Ondo states.

According to her, 3 Division Jos will be responsible for Plateau, Bauchi and Gombe states.

Army spokesperson said the newly established 5 Division Makurdi would cover Benue, Nasarawa and Kogi states.

She added that 6 Division Port Harcourt would oversee Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Cross River states.

Anele said 7 Division Maiduguri would retain responsibility for Borno and Yobe, while 8 Division Sokoto would continue to cover Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara states.

She said the newly established 9 Division Ilorin would oversee Kwara and Niger states.

According to her, the newly established 10 Division Jalingo will be responsible for Taraba and Adamawa states.

Anele said 81 Division Lagos would continue to cover Lagos and Ogun, while 82 Division Enugu would retain responsibility for Enugu, Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi and Imo states.

She added that the newly established 83 Division Benin City would cover Edo, Delta and Bayelsa states when activated later in the year.

Anele said Maj.-Gen. Yakubu Yahaya had been redeployed to Headquarters 9 Division, Ilorin, as General Officer Commanding and Commander, Operation SAVANNAH SHIELD.

She said Maj.-Gen. Chinedu Nnebeife had been posted to Headquarters 10 Division, Jalingo, as General Officer Commanding.

According to her, Maj.-Gen. Moses Gara has been redeployed to Headquarters 5 Division, Makurdi, as General Officer Commanding and Commander, Operation WHIRL STROKE.

She added that Maj.-Gen. Auwalu Mahmuda had been

appointed General Officer Commanding, 2 Division, Ibadan.

The Army also activated three new brigades to strengthen the newly established divisions.

According to Anele, Brig.-Gen. A.O. Odubiyi will command 11 Brigade, Gboko.

She said Brig.-Gen. A.M. Haruna had been appointed

Commander, 29 Brigade, Kainji, while Brig.-Gen. R.M. Aminu would head 10 Brigade, Lafia.

The COAS congratulated the newly appointed commanders and urged them to provide visionary leadership, sustain operational momentum and uphold professionalism and discipline.

He reaffirmed the Nigerian

Army's commitment to safeguarding Nigeria's sovereignty, protecting lives and property and supporting efforts toward enduring peace and national security.

Shaibu also appreciated President Tinubu for supporting the expansion of the Army's operational capabilities. He described the establishment of the additional divi-

sions as a historic milestone in the transformation of the Nigerian Army and the country's defence architecture.

He expressed confidence that the expanded force structure would strengthen joint operations, improve operational coordination and enhance the Army's response to emerging security threats nationwide.

**METER:**

The management of Eko Electricity Distribution Company (EKEDC) with some electricity consumers in Badagry during the meeting to address electricity supply issues on Wednesday.

ABUJA

The First Lady, Sen. Oluremi Tinubu, has urged Mrs Oyinkansola Badejo-Okusanya (SAN), the first elected female President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) to set a high standard and pave the way for other aspiring women.

The first lady who received Badejo-Okusanya and a delegation of women legal team, in the State House Abuja, affirmed that her emergence reflected growing recognition of gender inclusion and example of women supporting women.

She urged Badejo-Okusan-

First Lady tasks NBA President on paving way for aspiring women

ya to use her term to create a footprint that would enable more women to earn people's trust for leadership positions.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Badejo-Okusanya, had earlier visited President Bola Tinubu at the State House ahead of her official assumption of office.

"I believe that your profession is quite conservative, mine is to wish you well and to thank all the women who stood by you.

"It is very important for

women to support each other. We pray that your tenure would bring more women in. You have to really set the bar high.

The first lady further promised to support to the association in whatever way they might need her support.

Badejo-Okusanya had earlier thanked the first Lady for receiving her and her team.

She acknowledged that the NBA members were proud of what the First Lady was doing to alleviate poverty in the society through the "Renewed

Hope" Initiative (RH).

She further said that her emergence as the NBA president was due to the selfless support of other women of the bar.

"Every body played a part in ensuring that I win in the election. Honestly, your excellency, you have set good example for others to follow, we in the legal profession know that we have a role to play too.

"We look forward to partnering with RHI," she said.

Alleged communal crisis: Enugu Govt suspends traditional ruler

ENUGU

The Enugu State Government has suspended the Traditional Ruler of Obeagu Ugwuaji Autonomous Community in Enugu South Council Area of the state, Igwe Christopher Nyia, over alleged crisis in the community.

The State Commissioner for Chieftaincy Affairs, Dr Charles Egumgbe, announced the suspension in statement issued by the ministry's Public Relation Officer, Mr Emeka Nebeife, on Wednesday in Enugu.

The ministry on July 15 suspended three traditional rulers and four Presidents-General from some communities in Ezeagu Council Area of the state for misconduct bordering on security infractions.

"The suspension of Nyia is in the interest of peace, order and good governance for Obeagu Ugwuaji community.

"The community is engulfed in crisis due to allega-

tion of gross misconduct levelled against the traditional ruler by members.

"The suspension letter was handed over to the royal father on July 28 by the commissioner following directive from Gov. Peter Mbah," he said.

The government, he said, has constituted an administrative panel of inquiry to find out the remote causes of the crisis that led to the breakdown of law and order in the community.

"The panel of inquiry is expected to ascertain the role played by the traditional ruler in connection with the breakdown of law and order.

"The panel will also identify characters involved in the crisis that led to the breakdown of law and order and to ascertain the role of traditional ruler and any other person's involved in the breakdown of law and order in the community," he said.

The government gave the panel two weeks to complete its assignment.

Consider education, poverty reduction shared national duty — NGO

ABUJA

Oma Life Rescue Foundation has called on government agencies, corporate organisations, development partners and well-meaning Nigerians to consider education and poverty reduction as a shared national duty.

The Foundation's Founder, Dr Omanibe Ameh-Sanusi, made the call at the inauguration of the "A Million Dream" Educational Scholarship Project Foundation in Abuja.

Ameh-Sanusi urged the government, and stakeholders to partner with the foundation in nation building, improved education and poverty reduction.

"Touching human lives is a national and collective responsibility and not of a single

organisation or sector alone.

"This initiative cannot and should not belong to the Oma Life Rescue Foundation alone.

"It is a national priority that belongs to every Nigerian who believes that no child's dream should end because of poverty," she said.

She said that the scholarship programme targets 100,000 beneficiaries annually over the next 10 years across the nation's six geopolitical zones.

She said 30 per cent of the beneficiaries would be in basic education while another 50 per cent would go to secondary education.

According to her, the remaining 20 per cent would be allocated tertiary institutions thus creating a continuous support pathway from early schooling through to university graduation.

Court sentences man to life imprisonment for grievous harm in Anambra

AWKA

A High Court sitting in the Ogidi Judicial Division, Anambra, has sentenced a man, Chibuike Joseph, to life imprisonment for stabbing a man in 2017, but acquitted him of a murder charge.

The judgment, delivered on Wednesday by Justice Olisaemeka Okuma, followed the defendant's trial on a two-count charge of murder and grievous harm.

The offences were brought under Sections 274(1) and 288(a), respectively, of the Criminal Code, Cap. 36, Vol. II, Laws of Anambra State, 1991.

The prosecution told the court that on June 7, 2017, at Limca Road, Nkpor, the defendant armed himself with a broken bottle and stabbed the victim on the neck, shoulder and chest during an altercation over N500.

It said the victim was initially taken to Model Hospital, Nkpor, before being referred to New Mayor Hospital and Fertility Centre, Ogidi, where he died on June 14, 2017.

The matter had initially commenced before Justice Pete Obiora but started afresh before Justice Okuma following the elevation of the former trial judge to the Court of Appeal.

During the trial, the prosecution, led by Mrs Millicent Ikeabunze, called two witnesses.

The deceased's brother testified that the victim identified the defendant as his attacker both over the telephone and while receiving treatment in the hospital.

The Investigating Police Officer tendered the defendant's confessional statement, in which he admitted threatening the deceased over an earlier quarrel and stabbing him with a broken bottle during a fight.

C'River Assembly passes anti-quackery bill, targets fake health practitioners

CALABAR

The Cross River House of Assembly has passed a bill prohibiting quackery in the state's health sector to curb illegal medical practice and protect residents from unqualified practitioners.

The legislation, sponsored by the Deputy Leader of the house,

Dr Davies Etta, also established a Health Monitoring Task Force to strengthen healthcare regulation across the state.

The bill scaled third reading after lawmakers adopted the report of the House Committee on Health, Nutrition and Food Security during plenary on Wednesday.

Presenting the report, the

committee's Chairman, Mr Hillary Bisong, Member Representing Boki 2 State Constituency said the legislation would eliminate unlicensed medical practice and improve healthcare standards.

Bisong said the committee held a public hearing where health professionals, civil society organisations and residents

expressed overwhelming support for the proposed law.

He said the bill became necessary because fake practitioners had caused wrong diagnoses, poor treatment, avoidable deaths and eroded public confidence in healthcare services.

According to him, the committee expanded the bill from three parts and 10 sections to four parts and 15 sections for greater effectiveness.

"Also, enforcement will align

with existing national laws regulating medical and allied health professions to ensure seamless implementation."

Contributing to the debate, lawmakers described the bill as timely, saying it would strengthen healthcare delivery through stricter regulation and improved enforcement.

They noted that recent cases involving unqualified persons performing medical procedures underscored the urgent need to

tackle quackery in the health sector.

Speaker of the assembly, Mr Elvert Ayambem described the legislation as one of the landmark private members' bills of the 10th Assembly and commended its sponsor.

The House subsequently considered the bill clause-by-clause in the Committee of the Whole before unanimously adopting the committee's recommendations.


SKILLS:

Participants at the Renewed Hope skill training by the Federal Government in Lagos on Wednesday.

EKEDP reaffirms commitment to stable power supply in Festac-Amuwo

LAGOS

Eko Electricity Distribution Plc (EKEDP) has reaffirmed its commitment to restoring stable and reliable electricity supply to customers in Festac Town, Amuwo Odofin and surrounding communities.

Mr Abiola Aloba, General Manager, Corporate Communications, EKEDP, disclosed this in a statement on Wednesday in Lagos.

Aloba said that the recent power supply challenges in the area are largely due to ongoing

upgrade works on the national transmission network.

He explained that the situation had also been worsened by persistent vandalism of underground electricity cables, with the Festac axis recording the highest number of such incidents across the EKEDP network.

Aloba said the company had taken several concrete steps to improve power supply.

She disclosed that the new Festac 3 Feeder, which runs from the Ojo Transmission Station to provide an alternative

source of electricity to Festac Town, had been completed and commissioned.

According to him, the feeder is currently awaiting final load-balancing arrangements and approval from the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) before it is energised.

He added that power supply on the Festac 1 33kV Feeder has been partially restored after a faulty underground cable was isolated.

He said engineers are working daily to locate and repair the remaining faults.

Aloba noted that EKEDP

had invested millions of naira in strengthening the Festac electricity network and remained committed to further investments to improve service delivery.

On the issue of vandalism, he revealed that the company had escalated the matter to the Lagos State Police Command.

He said this had already resulted in the arrest of suspected vandals, currently in police custody.

Aloba emphasised that the company had maintained regular engagement with stakeholders across the Festac-Amuwo community.

NTCA laments allocation of N28m in 3 yrs

CALABAR

The Nigeria Tobacco Control Alliance (NTCA) has disclosed that it got only N28 million as allocation for tobacco control between 2023 and 2025.

The spokesperson of the NTCA, Mr Emmanuel Onwuka, who made the disclosure in an interview with newsmen in Calabar on Wednesday, warned that the funding was grossly inadequate.

Onwuka said the allocations threaten implementation of the National Tobacco Control Act (NTCA) 2015 and weaken efforts against tobacco-related diseases nationwide.

According to him, domestic investment in tobacco control shows N4.7 million in 2023, N10 million in 2024, and N13 million in 2025 in spite of growing public health challenges linked to tobacco use.

He said the allocations contrast sharply with Nigeria's estimated N526.4 billion spent treating tobacco-related illnesses in 2019 alone, according to the Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa.

Onwuka cited the World Health Organisation (WHO) as estimating that more than 3.5 million Nigerians use tobacco, while about 16,100 people die annually from tobacco-related diseases.

"Enforcement of smoke-free laws, public awareness campaigns, cessation services, research and tobacco industry monitoring remained largely dependent on international donor funding.

"Bloomberg Philanthropies, Vital Strategies, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and the WHO have sustained advocacy, policy reforms and implementation support in Nigeria," he said.

NHRC records 276 rights violations in Adamawa

YOLA

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Adamawa office, has recorded 276 human rights violations from January to June.

Grace Mamza, the NHRC state Coordinator, made this known in Yola on Wednesday.

She stated that of the 276 cases received, 84 were solved, 12 were still pending, nine were referred to the appropriate authorities, and the remaining ones are ongoing.

Mamza listed the nature of complaints to include right to inheritance, forced Marriage, abandonment of Family, threat to Life, Domestic Violence and Unlawful Arrest and Detention.

Others are non-payment of

Benefits and entitlement, defilement, right to Health, access to children, inhuman and degrading treatment, Right to Dignity of Human Person and Right to Fair Hearing, among others.

According to her, as part of their efforts to reduce such cases in the state, the commission embarked on sensitisation and awareness-raising in schools, communities and worship centres.

"The general public is advised to treat one another with dignity and respect not just because the law says so but because humanity demands it," the state coordinator said.

She, however, called on those whose rights were violated to report the matter to the commission for redress and not to take the law into their hands.

African swine fever largely under control in Plateau – official

JOS

Director of Plateau Veterinary Services, Dr Sipak Shaseet, says African Swine Fever (ASF) is largely under control following intensified surveillance, farmers' sensitisation and strengthened biosecurity measures across the state.

The disease, which broke out in April, has affected 350 pig farms in the state, resulting in the death of more than 4,000 pigs and 2,500 piglets.

Shaseet made the disclosure in an interview with newsmen on Wednesday in Jos.

He said no major new out-

break had been recorded following recent surveillance, although isolated cases had been promptly contained in some local government areas.

"As of today, Plateau does not have any active, widespread outbreak of ASF. However, four local government areas remain under restriction.

"The affected farms were quarantined, infected pigs were safely depopulated, and disinfection was carried out.

"We have not recorded any unusual spike in pig mortality in recent times," he said.

Shaseet said the Ministry of Livestock Development Services,

through the Department of Veterinary Services, had intensified active surveillance in major pig farms and pig-producing communities across the state to prevent fresh outbreaks.

He said veterinary officers had also stepped up farmers' sensitisation on disease reporting, movement control and compliance with biosecurity protocols.

"We are telling farmers that ASF has no cure and no vaccine yet.

"The only effective defence is prevention; farmers should report sudden illness or deaths immediately to the nearest veterinary clinic," he said.

The director explained that

ASF does not affect humans but causes severe economic losses to pig farmers because of its high mortality rate among infected animals.

Makeinde names Adeniran, APM presidential campaign coordinator in Oyo

IBADAN

Governor Seyi Makeinde of Oyo State has named the Chairman of the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Dr Nureni Adeniran, as his presidential campaign coordinator in the state.

A statement on Wednesday in Ibadan by Makeinde's Special Adviser on Media, Dr Sulei-

mon Olanrewaju, said that the SUBEB chairman would equally serve as the Director-General of the Governorship Campaign Council of the Allied People's Movement (APM) in Oyo State.

The APM has presented Mr Bimbo Adekanmbi, a former Commissioner for Finance under the late Governor Abiola Ajimobi administration, as its

governorship candidate for the 2027 election.

Other members of the council, the statement said included Mr Saheed Arowosaye, a former Chairman, Oyo East LG, who will serve as the deputy coordinator while the state Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Matters, Mr Demola Ojo, as deputy D-G (South).

NEWS

Gov. Okpebholo has demonstrated genuine commitment to Muslims, says aide

ABDUL-KADIR ABDULLAH

EDO

The Special Adviser to the Edo State Governor on Islamic Religious Matters, Hon. Ahmed Musa Momoh, has commended Governor Monday Okpebholo for what he described as the administration's genuine commitment to the welfare, inclusion and development of the Muslim community in Edo State.

Hon. Momoh made the remarks when the leadership of the APC Muslim Forum, Edo State, paid him a familiarisation and congratulatory visit recently following his appointment by Governor Monday Okpebholo.

The Special Adviser expressed appreciation to the Governor for the confidence

reposed in him through the appointment, describing it as a demonstration of the administration's resolve to ensure that every segment of the state is carried along in governance.

According to him, the Okpebholo administration has continued to promote religious harmony, inclusiveness and people-oriented development through the implementation of its SHINE Agenda. He assured that his office would work closely with Islamic organisations, scholars and Muslim stakeholders to strengthen unity, promote peaceful coexistence and advance the welfare of the Ummah across Edo State.

Hon. Momoh also urged Muslims to remain united, steadfast in faith and continue to pray for Governor Monday Okpebholo, the peace of Edo State

and the progress of Nigeria.

Earlier, the Chairman of the APC Muslim Forum, Alhaji Farouk Omogbai, congratulated the Special Adviser on his appointment, describing it as well deserved and a recognition of his commitment to the Muslim community and public service.

He explained that the APC Muslim Forum is a broad-based umbrella body comprising Muslims from all ethnic groups in Edo State, including the Benin, Yoruba, Esan, Afemai, Etsako, Arewa and other Muslim communities.

Alhaji Omogbai said the Forum's core mandate is to mobilise Muslim voters across the three senatorial districts in support of the All Progressives Congress (APC). He added that the organisation has functional structures at the state, local

government and ward levels, reaffirming its commitment to the success of the APC-led administration in Edo State.

He further assured Hon. Momoh of the Forum's continued support and collaboration in promoting unity, peace and good governance while working towards the successful implementation of Governor Okpebholo's developmental agenda. The visit featured the presentation of a commemorative framed plaque to the Special Adviser in recognition of his appointment and service to the Muslim community. Special prayers were also offered for Almighty Allah's guidance, wisdom and protection for Governor Monday Okpebholo, the APC leadership, members of the APC Muslim Forum, and for lasting peace, unity and prosperity in Edo State.

**FAMILIARIZATION VISIT:**

Special Adviser to Governor on Islamic Matters, Hon. Ahmed Musa Momoh, (6th right) with the leadership of the APC Muslims Forum, Edo State, during a familiarization visit to his office in Benin City.

PDP inaugurates 9-member campaign committee, unveils deputy governorship candidate in Kaduna

KADUNA

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Kaduna State has inaugurated a nine-member committee to develop a campaign framework for the 2027 governorship election.

The party also unveiled Mr Amos Adamu Gandu as the running mate to its governorship candidate, Alhaji Usman Shehu Bawa.

Speaking at the inauguration in Kaduna on Wednesday, Bawa said the committee was tasked with producing a blueprint that would guide the party's campaign across the 23 local government areas of the state.

He said the committee would identify committed party loyalists at ward and local government levels and recommend strategies to strengthen the party's grassroots structures ahead of the election.

According to him, the PDP

has learnt lessons from previous elections and is better prepared for the 2027 governorship poll.

"We have set up a team that will block all leakages and ensure that the mistakes of the previous election do not happen again.

"The committee has been mandated to produce a blueprint on how to organise our campaign and identify committed party members who will drive the process at the grassroots," he said.

Bawa also outlined security as the party's top priority, saying restoring peace across Kaduna State would be central to its campaign promises.

He condemned the recent attacks in Kauru Local Government Area and other affected communities, describing the continued killing and abduction of innocent citizens as worrisome.

The PDP candidate called on the state government to engage political parties, traditional rul-

ers and other critical stakeholders in finding a lasting solution to insecurity.

"This is beyond politics. It requires all stakeholders to come together and contribute ideas that will bring lasting peace to Kaduna State," he said.

Bawa also urged the state and local governments to intensify efforts towards ending insecurity across the state.

The PDP State Chairman, Edward Marshal, said the committee members were

selected based on their track records and experience.

He charged them to consult widely across the state and submit a comprehensive report within two weeks.

"The committee is expected to develop a campaign template that reflects the peculiarities of different parts of Kaduna State.

"You have been carefully selected based on your performance. Consult as many people as possible and present your report within two weeks," he said.

Bus conductor to receive 10 strokes of cane for slapping passenger

KADUNA

A Magistrate, Mr Ibrahim Emmanuel, on Wednesday, imposed 10 strokes of cane on a bus conductor, Abubakar Shehu, 20, for slapping a passenger over transportation fare.

Delivering judgment in a

case at the Kaduna Magistrates' Court, Emmanuel held that the conductor should receive the strokes of cane after he pleaded guilty to the charge of assault.

The magistrate said that the court was lenient with the convict because he did not waste the court's time by his admission of guilt.

Oyo CP commends vigilante groups during operational tour

IBADAN

The Oyo State Commissioner of Police (CP), Abimbola Olugbenga, has acknowledged the contributions of local vigilante groups to grassroots security.

The acknowledgement was disclosed in a statement issued by the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Olayinka Ayanlade, in Ibadan on Wednesday.

According to the statement, the CP, while on an operational tour to police area commands, equally praised other community-based volunteers in the state security architecture.

Olugbenga acknowledged their invaluable contributions to grassroots security and reaffirmed the command's commitment to a collaborative approach to policing.

He also interacted with traditional rulers, community leaders, and representatives of diverse interest groups, among others, on security-related matters.

The engagements, said the statement, provided valuable platforms for listening to people's concerns and assessing their perspectives on the prevailing security situation.

"It also helps to evaluate measures already in place to prevent security breaches and strengthen the command's collective resolve to safeguard lives and property," said the statement.

The tour featured strategic meetings with commanders of sister security and partnering agencies to enhance inter-agency collaboration, boost operational morale, and consolidate the existing synergy.

2 men ask court to stop Gov Ododo from sacking 21 LG chairmen

ABUJA

Two indigenes of Kogi have prayed the Federal High Court in Abuja to restrain Gov. Usman Ododo from sacking the 21 chairmen of the Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the state.

They also sought an order of perpetual injunction restraining Ododo from appointing or imposing caretaker or interim committees to run the affairs of the LGAs.

The plaintiffs; Mustapha Abdul and Ahmed Haruna, through their lawyer, I. Ibrahim, filed the suit marked: FHC/ABJ/CS/1490/2026, on July 10.

They also sued the Attorney-General of Kogi, Kogi State House of Assembly, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and State Independent Electoral Commission (SIEC).

In the originating summons brought pursuant to the provisions of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) and under the inherent powers of the court, the plaintiffs sought six questions for determination.

They said considering Sections 1(1), (2) and (3), 4(7), 5(2) (a) and (b) and (3) 14 (1) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), whether Ododo can validly dissolve a democratically-elected LGA chairmen's tenure "clandestinely after two years of their election into office."

They want the court to determine whether the tenure of the chairmen of the 21 LGAs, alongside their cabinet, has expired considering the provision of Section 51 (1) Part Vi of the state's Local Government

Administration Law, 2025 viz-a-viz the 1999 Constitution.

Abdul and Haruna sought a declaration that by cumulative assessment of provisions of the constitution, the governor cannot validly dissolve democratically-elected LG chairmen's tenure "clandestinely after two years of their election into office."

They prayed the court to declare that the tenure, as executive chairmen of the 21 Kogi LGAs, alongside their cabinet, has not expired considering the provision of the state's LG Law, 2025 viz-a-viz the 1999 Constitution (as amended).

In the affidavit deposed to by Haruna, he said he and his co-plaintiff hail from the state.

He said while he is from Sharia in Bassa LGA, Abdul is from Alloma in Ofu LGA.

He said as indigenes, registered voters and taxpayers of their respective aforementioned LGAs, they were directly affected by the administration of local governments in Kogi, which constitute the third tier of government under the 1999 Constitution.

According to him, Section 7(1) of the 1999 Constitution guarantees the system of democratically elected local government councils.

He averred that there was no provision in the 1999 Constitution, the state's LG Law or any other extant law that empowers the governor, either personally or through his agents, to dissolve elected LG chairmen.

offence on July 24 at Kawo in Kaduna.

Leo said that the convict had an altercation with the complainant, Hadiza Rabi, over transportation fare and slapped her twice on the face.

He said the offence contravened the Penal Code of Kaduna State, 2017.

ThePolity

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Osun Governorship Poll: Protesters disrupt INEC stakeholders' meeting, Boo Police Commissioner

CAROLINE AMEH

Proceedings at the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) stakeholders' meeting ahead of the August 15 Osun State governorship election were briefly disrupted on Wednesday as protesters stormed the venue, demanding a credible, peaceful and violence-free poll.

The meeting, convened by INEC as part of preparations

for the election, was delayed for about 30 minutes after the protesters entered the hall shortly after the arrival of the Commission's Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan.

Carrying placards with inscriptions such as "One Man, One Vote," "We Don't Want Violence," "INEC Give Us Free Election," and "BVAS Must Work," the demonstrators marched peacefully around the venue while calling on the electoral umpire to ensure the

integrity of the election.

The protest remained orderly and did not degenerate into violence.

Drama, however, unfolded during the introduction of the Osun State Commissioner of Police, Gotan Ibrahim, as delegates reacted sharply to his presence.

While supporters of one political party rose to applaud the police commissioner, members of several other political parties booed him, reflecting the deep political

divisions ahead of the governorship election.

The atmosphere became more tense when the police commissioner attempted to address participants, with loud boos and chants from sections of the audience nearly drowning his remarks.

The reactions come amid growing concerns over security in Osun State, which has witnessed a series of politically related violent incidents in recent weeks. Some political

actors have accused the police of partisanship, allegations the security agency has consistently denied.

The incident also echoed concerns earlier raised by the Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, during a courtesy visit by the INEC chairman to his palace.

The monarch warned that political tension in the state had reached an alarming level and urged all stakeholders to ensure that the election is con-

ducted peacefully.

"Political tension in Osun is very unbearable for us. We do not want to rock the boat. We want the election to be peaceful," the royal father said.

The stakeholders' meeting is part of INEC's series of engagements with political parties, security agencies, civil society organisations and other critical stakeholders aimed at ensuring a free, fair, peaceful and credible governorship election on August 15.



COURTESY VISIT:

L-R: Ooni of Ife HRM Enitan Ogunwusi in handshake with the INEC chairman Prof Joash Amupitan during INEC courtesy visit to the Osun state Traditional Rulers on the coming governorship election in August 15th in Ife Osun state yesterday. PHOTO: OMOYE AMINU

INEC, Ooni raise concern over rising Tension ahead of Osun Governorship Election

CAROLINE AMEH

The Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Joash Amupitan (SAN), and the Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, have expressed concern over rising political tension ahead of the August 15, 2026, Osun State governorship election, urging political actors to shun violence and uphold

peaceful conduct.

The appeal came on Tuesday when the INEC chairman began a five-day readiness assessment tour of Osun State with a courtesy visit to the Ooni's palace in Ile-Ife.

Addressing the monarch, Prof. Amupitan said no political ambition was worth the loss of human lives, urging politicians and their supporters to conduct themselves peacefully throughout the electoral process.

"The blood of one innocent person is not worth a governorship election. Nobody should be killed or threatened or embarrassed because of an election," he said.

The INEC chairman said the Osun governorship poll would serve as a major test of the commission's preparedness for the 2027 general elections.

He disclosed that 2,339,233 registered voters are expected to participate in the election across 3,763 polling units, 332 registration areas and 30 local government areas.

Amupitan also warned against the spread of misinformation and disinformation, expressing concern that artificial intelligence could be used to generate fake election results capable of misleading voters and creating unnecessary tension.

He urged political parties and supporters to rely only on verified information released by INEC and cautioned against vote-buying and other electoral malpractices that could undermine the credibility of the election.

Chairman of Uhumwode's knack for development speaks across LGA, says Ohen-Osa

EJEMOGO REBECCA AWURI

The Ohen-Osa of Holy Aruosa Cathedral, Benin City, Dr. Harrison OKao, has applauded the Acting Chairman of Uhumwode Local Government Council, Edo State, Hon. Austin Imafidon, popularly known as ISIWINA, on his successful election and outstanding de-

velopments taking place across the local government area.

Dr. Okao, who made this commendation on Tuesday during a courtesy visit to Hon. Austin Imafidon, described the progress in the area since the chairman assumed office as outstanding transformation.

The Ohen-Osa said the various infrastructural improvements, environmental

sanitation initiatives, people-oriented policies, and youth empowerment programmes have positively impacted the lives of residents, restored public confidence and trust in grassroots governance.

Furthermore, he briefed the Chairman on the ongoing preparations ahead of the 10th anniversary celebration of the reign of His Royal Majesty, the Oba Benin, stressing the significance of the milestone in

the history and cultural heritage of the Benin Kingdom.

In addition, the Ohen-Osa, in a solemn moment of prayer, committed the administration of Hon. Austin Imafidon into the hands of Almighty God, praying for divine protection, sound health, wisdom and strength to enable him remain consistent in portraying good governance and continue delivering meaningful development to the people of Uhumwode.

African Union Forum: Edo pushes Decentralized Power

AYENOMOH ALUKHEI

At an African Union (AU) energy meeting, Edo State elevated its power sector reform to a continental stage by leveraging on the energy summit to showcase its decentralized power model as a key to unlocking investment, industrialization and sustainable economic growth.

Commissioner for Power, Hon. Paul Usenbo, representing the Governor Monday Okpebholo, stated that Edo's participation in the meeting was aimed at showcasing its energy reforms to investors, policy makers and development partners and to position Edo as a top destination for energy investment in Africa.

Usenbo said the state's energy plan is in line with the AU Agenda 2063, the African Contin-

ental Free Trade Area, the Mission 300 drive to expand power access across Africa and UN Sustainable Development Goal 7 on affordable and clean energy.

According to him, the continental engagement gives Edo a chance to build strategic partnerships, secure development funding and deepen ties with multilateral institutions working to expand reliable and sustainable electricity access in Africa.

The commissioner attributed Edo's invitation to the meeting to the significant progress recorded under Governor Okpebholo's administration, particularly the Edo State Electricity Law, the planned 100MW Ologbo Independent Power Project, growth in renewable energy and rural electrification, and reforms that make the state attractive to private investors.

Analyts Commends Senator Ikpea's Leadership in Edo Central

SALIHU MARYAM SAIDU

Senator Joe Ogiagbe Ikpea has continued to receive commendation for his leadership and representation of Edo Central Senatorial District, with many describing his approach to public service as one that has strengthened the bond between elected officials and the people.

His style of leadership has been widely recognized for promoting accessibility, unity and regular engagement with constituents across the district.

Supporters believe these qualities have contributed to the confidence many residents have in his representation.

Across communities including Uromi, Ekpoma, Irrua, Igubeben, Ubiaja, Ewu, Ewuhimi, Illushi, Opoji and

Ewatto, the senator has continued to maintain contact with residents through activities aimed at encouraging grassroots participation and addressing issues affecting the people.

His representation has also been associated with initiatives that promote the welfare of youths, women and other members of the communities, while encouraging peaceful coexistence and cooperation among various groups within the district.

Observers say Senator Ikpea has remained committed to listening to the concerns of his constituents and supporting programmes designed to improve their well-being. They also note that his accessibility has helped strengthen the relationship between the people and their representative.

FOREIGN

NEWS

**COLLAPSED BUILDINGS:**

Residents in Japan's Kumamoto prefecture woke on Wednesday to collapsed buildings and debris

More than 100 aftershocks hit Japan after powerful quake that killed 13

Japan's south-western Kyushu region has had more than 100 aftershocks since it was struck on Tuesday by a powerful earthquake which left at least 13 people dead.

Many others were said to be in "cardiopulmonary arrest" - a term often used in preliminary reports in Japan before a death is officially confirmed.

In searing heat, rescue crews are digging through the rubble at a paper factory and a shopping mall in Kumamoto prefecture, looking for trapped survivors. The mall suffered an explosion in the hour after the quake struck.

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi warned it was "truly a race against time" to rescue those trapped. Thousands are in evacuation centres and many are without power.

The Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) is urging residents to be alert for the possibility of strong aftershocks, public broadcaster NHK reported.

"For the next week or so, especially the next two to three

days, we would like people to watch out for potential earthquakes with a maximum seismic intensity of 7," a JMA official said.

Tuesday's quake hit the Kumamoto prefecture on Kyushu island at 16:27 local time (07:27 GMT).

One of the worst-hit buildings was the Aeon Mall in Kashima, where a portion of the second floor collapsed.

Footage of the shopping centre showed white smoke rising as people ran into the car park. Large parts of the centre's exterior were blown off, exposing the steel beams underneath.

Three people remain unaccounted for as rescuers search the rubble.

Three people who worked in Aeon Mall stores remain unaccounted for, company President Akio Yoshida says

Aeon Mall president Akio Yoshida confirmed three people were killed in the mall explosion. Some 2,700 people were employed at the mall, officials said.

Yoshida said four people were taken to hospital from the mall, adding that one person had been rescued from a bathroom and another person was in cardiopulmonary arrest.

"We sincerely apologise for this incident," Yoshida said at a press conference on Wednesday.

Other areas affected include a factory in Yatsushiro City where two people were found to have no signs of life and nine others were unaccounted for, NHK reported.

"Although more than 20 hours have passed since the earthquake, there are those still in need of help," Takaichi said on Wednesday.

More than 4,600 personnel were deployed to help with rescue efforts, Takaichi added.

Officials advised rescuers and quake survivors to take precautions against heatstroke in the clean-up work as temperatures hit about 35C (95F).

Defence Minister Shinjirō Koizumi said in a post on X that about 300 air conditioning

units would be flown to Kumamoto and distributed in the worst-hit areas.

The JMA measured the earthquake magnitude at 7.1 and the US Geological Survey later placed it at 6.8. Quake magnitude figures are often updated as seismologists obtain and analyse new data.

The quake's shallow epicentre - with a depth of 10 km (six miles) - was about 20km south of Kumamoto city.

Footage aired by NHK showed cracked roads and bridges and several buildings on fire. Train services were suspended and electricity cut off for thousands of homes.

Residents in Kumamoto prefecture awoke on Wednesday to the aftermath of the quake, with images showing debris on the streets and collapsed buildings, including the worship hall of the 19th Century Yatshushiro Shrine.

One resident, Hiroko Ogata, 75, told the BBC she was at the restaurant she runs in Yatsushiro City when the earthquake hit.

Saudi Arabia joins US in strikes on Iran-backed militias in Iraq

Saudi Arabia and the US have carried out strikes against Iran-backed militias in Iraq, in a potential escalation of the Middle East conflict.

US Central Command (Centcom) said the strikes were against "Iran-aligned terrorists that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) directed to attack US forces and Saudi energy infrastructure".

Iraq's paramilitary Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF), which is dominated by Iran-backed Shia militias, said at least 20 of its members had been killed in US-Saudi strikes on its bases.

It came hours after Centcom said Iran had launched missiles at US forces in the Middle East in an "attempted surprise attack", ending a lull in hostilities.

The US said the Iranian attack occurred at 17:45 EDT (21:45 GMT) on Tuesday, with all missiles "successfully intercepted".

The IRGC said the missiles had targeted a US air base and a command centre in Jordan "in response to the acts of aggression of the American child-killing army".

It also said that naval forces had struck three oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz after they "ignored warnings" and sailed along what it described as an "unsafe and illegal route" through the vital Gulf waterway.

Centcom said US and Saudi fighter jets had struck "multiple terrorist logistics and weapons sites across eastern Iraq in a strong response to over 30 IRGC-directed aerial drone attacks in the last 72 hours".

It called the drone attacks "unwarranted" and added that they had failed.

"The IRGC and its terrorist proxies must cease these attacks to avoid further U.S. military response," the Centcom statement said.

A spokesman for the Saudi defence ministry, Maj-Gen Turki al-Maliki, also accused "Iran-backed terrorist militias" of launching drones from Iraqi territory at oil facilities in the Eastern and Riyadh regions on Monday and Tuesday.

He said Saudi Arabia, under its "right to self-defence", had responded by conducting strikes "against specific targets belonging to those militias".

"The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reiterates that it does not seek escalation but will respond decisively to any aggression directed against it," he added.

The PMF said in a statement on Wednesday morning that at least 20 of its fighters had been killed and 32 others wounded in US-Saudi strikes on a number of its headquarters in the provinces of Baghdad, Wasit, Nineveh, Basra, Kirkuk, Karbala and Diyala.

Thousands in Spain return home but new heatwave raises wildfire fears

Spanish authorities have allowed thousands of people evacuated because of wildfires to return to their homes after restrictions were lifted in the areas of Toledo, Madrid, Ávila, and Castellón.

In the Madrid region alone, 24,000 people have been told they can return and lockdowns on another 20,000 have been lifted.

Spain and France are both braced for the start of the fourth heatwave so far this summer and some fires have continued to burn, including one at Burgo-hondo 150km (93 miles) west of Madrid.

In south-west France, the largest fires in the Gironde region are described as "still stabilised" despite several flare-ups, however officials warn of dry winds and temperatures of up to 41C (106F).

The mayor of Le Barp, south-west of Bordeaux, Blandine Sarrazin, warned that the situation was "getting harder", after two fires had broken out the day before, and said everyone had to be "hyper-vigilant".

Sixteen departments or districts are under orange heatwave alert, including in the Landes area further south.

The fire service has had to deploy special measures in Gironde to protect a number of sites linked to France's defence and aerospace industries. The

so-called "Seveso" sites include plants that manufacture hazardous materials for missiles and rockets.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has warned the next 12 hours will be "decisive" in putting out the wildfire near the capital. "Things are progressing favourably, with maximum caution," he told reporters, because of higher temperatures, lower humidity and the risk of gusts of wind.

One fire remains out of control, at Vall d'Uixó north-west of Valencia.

Meanwhile, the fire at Burgo-hondo in Ávila province has already ravaged more than 43,000 hectares (108,000 acres) - and is now considered the largest recorded wildfire in Spanish history.

It has forced 40,000 people from their homes, and one of the team directing firefighting operations, Francisco Bolaños, said that while the fire "has not moved a centimetre during the night", there were concerns it could re-ignite because of the higher temperatures, and the focus was on stabilising a perimeter of 180km (112 miles).

Many of the 2,000 people forced to flee the fires in the nearby Tiétar Valley were looked after by volunteers in the town of Talavera de la Reina, some distance south of the fire.

Russia charges Telegram founder Durov with facilitating terrorism

Russia has charged Telegram's founder Pavel Durov with facilitating terrorism over allegations the messenger app has been used for recruitment by Ukrainian secret services.

The FSB - Russia's domestic security service - said Telegram had been used "to prepare and co-ordinate acts of sabotage and terror" inside Russia and had failed to remove channels, chats and bots used by Ukraine.

An international arrest warrant has been issued for the Russian-born Durov, who lives abroad.

Shortly after the charge was announced, Telegram's account on X posted an image showing Durov holding up his middle finger. He has previously accused Russian authorities of "fabricating new pretexts to restrict Russians' access to Telegram".

Telegram is popular in Russia and is used by tens of millions of people, although authorities have been restricting access as part of a wider crackdown on internet freedom. The app is also popular in Ukraine.

Multi-billionaire Durov, 41, has lived outside of Russia for

many years and holds French and United Arab Emirates (UAE) passports.

It is unclear whether other countries or authorities would comply with an arrest warrant issued by Russia.

Durov left Russia in 2014 after refusing to comply with government demands to shut down opposition communities on the platform. He had previously founded popular Russian social media company VKontakte - dubbed the "Facebook of Russia".

Telegram is used by around 950 million people worldwide

and has previously positioned itself as an app focussed on its users' privacy, rather than the normal policies prioritised by other global social media companies.

The platform has previously faced criticism of its app moderation, but has denied having insufficient practices.

Durov was arrested and placed under formal investigation in France in 2024 over allegations of failure to properly moderate the app to reduce criminality. He was allowed to go home months later, with the investigation continuing.

NEWS**FOREIGN**

Ghana hit by nationwide blackout as power plants fail

A major fault on Ghana's national power grid has triggered widespread outages, leaving the capital, Accra, the commercial hub of Kumasi and much of north without electricity.

Several power plants across the West African nation were forced to shut down in the early hours of Wednesday morning, the state-run power distribution company said.

"Our engineers and system operators are working continuously to restore power

in the shortest time possible without compromising safety," Ghana Grid Company Limited (GRIDCo) has said in its statement.

Ghana has had regular power shortages for years - popularly known as "dumsor", meaning "on and off" in the Akan language - but the situation has been improving.

Wednesday's power cut has left homes, businesses and essential services without electricity across multiple regions of the country.

Many commuters had problems getting to work as those whose phones were not charged had difficulty paying for transport - and in some cases ordering taxis via apps such as Uber.

It has also affected small businesses and people relying on digital services, though big institutions, such as hospitals, tend to have back-up generators.

GRIDCo said it was conducting a comprehensive technical investigation to determine the outage's cause.

It did not say how long it would take for normal supplies to resume.

Ghana, one of the world's biggest producers of both gold and cocoa, has in recent years started using gas to generate electricity to help with demand as the population grows and becomes more urbanised.

Most of the country's electricity is generated by ageing hydropower plants, which have suffered from poor maintenance over years.

The addition of gas has eased power cuts, but the sector remains vulnerable to transmission failures and fuel supply interruptions.

Algerian parliament elects Khalida Boufedecche its first woman speaker

Algeria's parliament elected its first ever woman speaker on Tuesday evening, making Khalida Boufedecche the fourth-highest ranking official in the country.

Boufedecche, an allergist by training who represents the capital Algiers, is a member of the National Liberation Front (FLN), the historic party of Algerian independence and allied with the current government.

The FLN was the biggest winner in parliamentary elections earlier this month, secur-

ing 91 of the body's 407 seats.

The vote was marked by the lowest turnout ever, at 21 percent.

Boufedecche is a member of her party's central committee, and had served in local politics before entering parliament.

She assumes the speakership of a body where women are significantly underrepresented, holding just 25 seats, or six percent of the total.

The previous parliament had 38 women members, and the one before that had 118 following 2017 elections which were held under a quota system.



POWER FAILURE:

The power utility firm did not say how long it would take for normal supplies to resume

Trump's new spy chief Jay Clayton confirmed by US Senate

Jay Clayton has been confirmed as the next US director of national intelligence (DNI), after President Donald Trump's original choice was rejected by lawmakers.

The US Senate voted 51 to 47 on Tuesday to install Clayton, replacing the acting DNI Bill Pulte. Pulte was Trump's original pick but faced backlash for being a housing official with no national intelligence experience.

Clayton had been serving as US attorney for the Southern District of New York, overseeing several prominent cases including the drug trafficking case against former Venezuelan president Nicholas Maduro.

"Jay is outstanding in every way, and will do a spectacular job as Director!" Trump posted afterwards on Truth Social.

Clayton, who is also a former securities regulator and federal prosecutor, succeeds Tulsi Gabbard, who left her job last month and was replaced temporarily by Pulte.

Pulte's initial appointment in early June raised alarm for both parties, as the Trump loyalist

used his other role as federal housing regulator to refer several of the president's political opponents for possible prosecution and oversaw staffing cuts.

Shortly before the vote for Clayton's appointment passed, Pulte posted about the cuts on X, writing that "we are, this morning, executing a 5th and near final round of terminations, an approximately 30% staff reduction from weeks ago".

Shortly after the alarm in June over Pulte, Trump announced Clayton as his replacement nominee. Senators sought to move quickly with his confirmation.

However Clayton's first scheduled appearance before the Senate intelligence committee on 17 June was called off by Trump, who blamed lawmakers for allowing the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (Fisa) to lapse.

Initially, Democrats welcomed Clayton as a more conventional nominee than Pulte, though their opinion seemed to change during his confirmation hearing earlier this month.

Clayton was repeatedly

asked whether former Democratic president Joe Biden won the 2020 election, to which he replied by saying that Biden had been "certified" as the winner. "I'm not an election denier," Clayton told senators.

Senate Intelligence Committee Vice-Chair Mark Warner, a Democrat, said afterwards that he "came away from [Clayton's] confirmation hearing with serious reservations about whether he would be willing to stand up to political pressure".

"I sincerely hope he proves those concerns unfounded, because the Intelligence Community deserves steadier leadership than it has received in recent months," Warner said in his statement.

Clayton's confirmation could help revive congressional negotiations on Section 702 of Fisa. This legislation allows the US government to collect communications involving foreigners abroad without an individual warrant, and Trump has been pushing for its long-term renewal.

Israeli PM holds first meeting with US President since start of Iran war

Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu visited the White House Tuesday for his first in-person talks with President Donald Trump since the Iran war began, as the US military reported it had intercepted multiple missiles launched by Tehran.

The closed-door talks -- which the White House described as "positive and productive" -- lasted for about an hour and a half and came as Netanyahu and Trump sought to patch over public disagreements on the war.

Netanyahu said in a video message after the meeting that it was "one of the best conversations I've ever had with the president of the United States" and that it touched on "our common goal: ensuring that Iran does not obtain nuclear weapons."

The Iran war began in late February with US-Israeli strikes but has seen a recent pause in the fighting, with Washington saying it wants to give negotiations a chance.

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis rebels said Tuesday they targeted a Saudi oil tanker, the NCC Ghazal, in the Red Sea with ballistic missiles for violating a blockade on the kingdom's ports announced by the Iran-backed group.

Saudi Arabia had yet to comment on the Houthis' claim, but reported having intercepted drones targeting oil facilities in its east, blaming pro-Iran militias in Iraq.

US Central Command said

Tuesday that "Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps forces launched multiple ballistic missiles from Iran in an attempted surprise attack on US forces based in the Middle East," adding that all missiles were successfully intercepted.

A man stands next to an unexploded missile at the site where an Israeli airstrike hit a building in Dahiyeh, Beirut's southern suburb, Lebanon, Sunday, June 7, 2026.

A man stands next to an unexploded missile at the site where an Israeli airstrike hit a building in Dahiyeh, Beirut's southern suburb, Lebanon, Sunday, June 7, 2026. Hassan Ammar/Copyright 2026 The AP. All rights reserved.

Both sides had held their fire over the weekend, following nearly two weeks of nightly strikes by the United States on Iran, and repeated missile and drone salvos by Tehran targeting Washington's allies around the Gulf.

Israel has not taken part in the latest round of hostilities between the United States and Iran, which flared earlier this month as an April ceasefire collapsed.

The meeting was the eighth between the two leaders since Trump's return to office in early 2025 and came ahead of key electoral tests later this year for both Netanyahu and the US president: national elections in Israel and midterm polls in the United States.

Equatorial Guinea and Gabon resolve 50-year border dispute

Gabon and Equatorial Guinea signed an agreement on Tuesday ending a decades-long dispute over three tiny islands in potentially oil-rich waters after the top UN court backed Malabo.

The two west African nations had been squabbling over the 30-hectare island of Mbanie and two smaller low-lying islets, Cocotiers and Conga, since the early 1970s.

In May last year, the International Court of Justice (ICJ)

in The Hague, which rules in disputes between states, found in favour of Equatorial Guinea.

At a ceremony at the African Union's headquarters in Addis Ababa, Equatorial Guinean Foreign Minister Simeon Oyono Esono Angue and Gabon's head of the Constitutional Council Dieudonne Aba'a Owono signed the accord committing both countries to respect the ICJ's decision.

"This matter has been settled once and for all," the Equatorial Guinean minister said, adding

the two countries must now "move forward."

Aba'a Owono said the agreement opened "a new era of cooperation with Equatorial Guinea."

AU Commission chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, who also signed the agreement, welcomed the resolution of a border dispute that he said had gone on for too long.

Historic dispute

The spat dated back to 1900, when then colonial powers France and Spain signed a trea-

ty in Paris setting out the borders between the two countries.

Gabon argued that a later treaty, the 1974 Bata Convention, then fixed the islands' sovereignty in its favour.

The two countries asked the ICJ to decide which legal texts were valid -- the Paris Treaty of 1900 or the Bata Convention of 1974.

The court ruled that the Bata Convention did not constitute a legal title to the islands, which was held by Spain and had passed to Equatorial Guinea upon independence in 1968.

Sports

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

NPFL Losing Millions to Inadequate Club Data — NPFL COO Owumi ● Urges club mgt to empower media Department

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The Chief Operating Officer of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL), Chief Davidson Owumi, has lamented that the league and its clubs are losing millions of naira in sponsorship opportunities due to inadequate and unreliable data from participating clubs.

Owumi made the remarks on Wednesday while delivering his welcome address at the mandatory seminar/workshop organized for media directors and marketing officers of the 20 NPFL clubs in Enugu.

He charged the concerned club representatives to up their game and as well challenged the management of the premier league clubs to prioritize fund-

ing for their media department to be more equipped for the huge task on their shoulders.

Owumi stressed that clubs can no longer depend solely on government's intervention for funding, urging them to embrace modern marketing strategies and data-driven operations by their Media Department to attract sponsors and commercial partners.

According to him, the NPFL is committed to setting higher standards for club branding and visibility, with a strong emphasis on effective social media presence and digital engagement.

"There will be standards, and from the middle of the season, clubs will be expected to adhere to them," Owumi stated.

Earlier, the General Manager of Rangers International FC, Barrister Amobi Ezeaku, urged media and marketing officers to view football as a business rather than mere sporting activity.

He urged clubs to improve the availability of their branded souvenirs within their host communities and at strategic locations such as airports to boost visibility and strengthen fan engagement.

The seminar, which is a part of events preceeding 2026/27 NPFL kickoff was attended by media and marketing representatives of the 20 NPFL clubs, focused on enhancing the commercial value of Nigerian football through improved branding, data management, marketing, and stakeholder engagement.

Meanwhile, the President of the NPFL Media Directors Forum and Director, Media and Communications Strategy, Nasarawa United Eche Amos has commended the Nigeria Premier Football League management body and organisers of the Media and Marketing Workshop for the opportunity



NPFL CHAIRMAN GBENGA ELEGBELEYE

...Strong Media Department Crucial to NPFL Clubs' Success – Eche

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The President of the NPFL Media Directors Forum, Mr Eche Amos, has stressed the importance of effective media department in the success of Nigeria Premier Football League clubs, urging media directors to discharge their responsibilities professionally and in line with ethical standards.

The President of the NPFL Media Directors Forum made the call at the seminar for Media Directors and Marketers in Enugu ahead of the 2026/27 NPFL season.

Eche, who is also the Media Director and board member of Nasarawa United, advised Media Directors not to succumb to pressure from club administrators to act contrary to professional rules and ethics.

He noted that media directors have a responsibility to guide administrators on appropriate actions that can enhance their clubs' image, visibility, and overall brand value as well as the image laundry of the league as a whole.

According to him, the growth and sustainability of any NPFL club largely depends on the effectiveness of its media department.

"For a club to continue waxing stronger in terms of visibility and data gathering, it solely lies in the effectiveness of the media department," he said.

Eche also commended the Enugu State Government for

partnering the NPFL and their corporate sponsors Afrinvest to host this year's workshop and praised the league body for sustaining the programme, which is now in its fourth edition.

He assured the league management body of improvement in the performance of the Media Directors and cooperation to promote the Nigeria Premier Football League to an enviable height.



14th Women AFCON: Malawi's Scorchers edge Super Falcons in five-goal thriller in Rabat

Debutants Malawi produced one of the biggest shocks in the history of women football in Africa when they defeated 10-time champions Nigeria 3-2 in Rabat's Al Madina Stadium on Tuesday night.

Despite dominating early

on and creating several scoring opportunities, the Super Falcons were unable to break the deadlock in a goalless first half. The match exploded into life in the final twenty minutes. Malawi took the lead in the 73rd minute through Temwa Chawinga, before her sister,

Tabitha Chawinga, doubled the advantage six minutes later.

Skipper Rasheedat Ajibade gave Nigeria hope in the 90th minute by converting a penalty, but Temwa Chawinga struck again deep in stoppage time (90+6') to restore Malawi's two-goal cushion.

A goal nine minutes into added time, assisted by a headed ball on the right, by substitute Uchenna Kanu brought the scoreline to 3-2, but time ran out for the Cup-holders to complete the comeback.

With Barbara Banda-led Zambia pumping six goals past Egypt in the opening match of Group C also on Tuesday, the Super Falcons will immediately turn their attention to their second Group C fixture against the rampant Zambians on Saturday, where maximum points will be essential to put their qualification drive back on track.



MALAWI PLAYERS CELEBRATING

WAFCON: FCC chairman urges Super Falcons to focus on 11th title

The Executive Chairman of the Federal Character Commission (FCC), Hulayat Omidiran, has urged Nigeria's Super Falcons to remain focused and united as they begin their campaign for a record-extending 11th Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) title in Morocco.

Omidiran made the call in a goodwill message to the reigning African champions, commending the team for consistently projecting Nigeria's image positively on the continent and beyond.

She urged the players to remain

united, focused and committed throughout the tournament.

"We believe in your ability to make Nigeria proud once again.

"Stay united, remain focused and continue to display the fighting spirit that has made the Super Falcons the pride of Africa," she said.

Omidiran, a former member of the Executive Board of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) and former member of the FIFA Women's Football Committee, said Nigerians were firmly behind the team in their quest for another continental title.



HULAYAT OMIDIRAN

UEFA rejects FIFA stake sale plan

European football governing body UEFA has rejected plans by world football governing body FIFA to sell minority stakes in a new commercial subsidiary.

FIFA announced on Tuesday plans to establish FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE), valued at \$20 billion.

FIFA said FFE would oversee its commercial and event operations, while the organisation retains control over football governance, competitions, the match calendar and sporting regulations.

The proposal, which will be presented to FIFA's 211 member associations, would allow

external investors to acquire minority, non-controlling stakes in FFE.

FIFA aims to raise up to \$4.2 billion from the stake sale to expand football development programmes and increase funding for member associations worldwide.

The global football body said a new optional programme would enable associations to access additional development funding and receive up to \$20 million in one-off capital.

A FIFA spokesperson said funding per member association would increase from \$8 million to \$20 million during the 2027-2030 cycle, with further growth targeted for subsequent cycles.



GIANNI INFANTINO

SPORTS



Commonwealth Games: Adeshina ends Nigeria's 72-year wait for High Jump medal

Temitope Adeshina has delivered one of the most historic performances of Team Nigeria's campaign at the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games.

She won bronze in the women's high jump to end a 72-year wait for a Nigerian medal in the event.

Kola Daniel, Special Adviser on Media to the Office of the Director General, National Sports Commission (NSC) Bukola Olopade in a statement on Wednesday in Lagos, disclosed that she came behind Australia's Eleanor Patterson and Nicola Olyslagers.

"Adeshina cleared 1.90 metres to secure third place behind Australia's Eleanor Patterson and Nicola Olyslagers, becoming the first Nigerian high

jumper to stand on a Commonwealth Games podium.

"This was after Emmanuel Ifeajuna won gold at the 1954 British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Vancouver.

"Her achievement also made her the first Nigerian woman ever, to win a Commonwealth Games medal in the high jump, adding a new chapter to Nigeria's rich athletics history," he said.

Daniel noted that the bronze medal by Adeshina represented a remarkable rise for the Nigerian star, who finished 10th on her Commonwealth Games debut four years ago.

"Her return to the games was marked by composure, consistency and determination, as she successfully navigated the competition to claim

a place on the podium against a world-class field.

"Adeshina's medal carries significance far beyond the podium. Before her performance in Glasgow, only two Nigerians had ever won Commonwealth Games medals in the high jump.

"Josiah Majekodunmi secured silver at the 1950 British Empire Games in Auckland, earning Nigeria's first-ever medal in the history of the Commonwealth Games.

"Four years later, Emmanuel Ifeajuna made history by winning gold in Vancouver, becoming the first black African athlete to capture a Commonwealth Games gold medal," he added.

Daniel then stated that for more than seven decades, no

Nigerian high jumper, male or female, had managed to add another Commonwealth medal to that distinguished legacy.

"Adeshina has now ended that long wait, becoming only the third Nigerian ever, to win a Commonwealth Games high jump medal and the first in 72 years.

"Her success also underscores the steady resurgence of Nigerian athletics on the international stage and highlights the country's growing strength in field events, alongside its traditional sprinting prowess.

"The historic bronze adds another memorable moment to Team Nigeria's campaign in Glasgow and further cements Adeshina's status as one of the nation's brightest athletics stars," he said.



TEMITOPE ADESHINA

WAFCON: Stakeholders express concern over continued decline of Falcons' dominance

The shocking 3-2 defeat of Nigeria's Super Falcons to competition debutants, Malawi's Scorchers, at the 2026 Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) in Morocco has sparked concerns among stakeholders.

This is following the team's declining dominance in African women's football.

Some stakeholders who spoke in separate interviews with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Wednesday in Lagos expressed concerns over the fitness level of some of the players.

They also questioned the appointment of Coach Justin Madugu to lead the team.

In what could rank among one of the biggest upsets in WAFCON history, debutants Malawi stunned the 10-time African champions at the Al Madi-na Stadium in Rabat.

The Chawinga sisters played pivotal roles in Malawi's historic victory, helping the Scorchers record their first-ever WAFCON win. Nigeria fought back but could not avoid defeat.

A United Kingdom-based journalist, Ayo Akinfe, expressed concern over the fitness of some Super Falcons players, saying a number of them appeared overweight.

"My first concern about the team is their fitness. Some of them are overweight, especially Chiamaka Nnadozie and the left-back.

"The team needs to work on its fitness. I am also worried about the justification for the appointment of Coach Justin Madugu.

"I seriously doubt his technical ability. I wonder why the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) settled for someone who does not have the pedigree of the former coach, Randy Waldrum," he said.

Coach Mark Sarafi, reacting to the loss, blamed the team's



"It's a Wake-Up Call" — Oshoala reacts to Nigeria's Opening loss to Malawi

Super Falcons forward Asisat Oshoala has described Nigeria's 3-2 defeat to Malawi in their opening match of the 2026 Women's Africa Cup of Nations in Morocco as a wake-up call, urging the team to regroup and focus on the challenges ahead.



ASISAT OSHOALA

Tournament debutants Malawi stunned the defending champions with an impressive performance, taking a commanding 3-1 lead before stoppage time. Temwa Chawinga scored twice, netting the opening and third goals, while her sister, Tabitha Chawinga, added the second

to put the Southern Africans in control.

Nigeria fought back late in the game through a Rasheedat Ajibade penalty and a stoppage-time strike from Uchenna Kanu, but the 10-time African champions were unable to complete the comeback.

Speaking after the match, Oshoala acknowledged the growing competitiveness of women's football across the continent.

"Smaller nations are closing the gap, but it's also a wake-up call for Nigeria. We have to understand that other teams want to win this trophy as well," she said.

The six-time African Women's Player of the Year stressed that there is still enough time for the Super Falcons to recover in the tournament.

League of African Ambassadors unveils continental agenda, to host fundraising golf tournament

The League of African Ambassadors (LAA) has unveiled its continental vision and announced plans to organise a fundraising golf tournament aimed at promoting African diplomacy, strategic partnerships and resource mobilisation.

The President of the League, Ambassador Nwanne Ominyi, disclosed this at a news conference on Tuesday in Abuja.

Ominyi said the League comprised serving and retired African ambassadors committed to advancing African unity, economic cooperation and sustainable development.

He said the organisation was inaugurated on Oct. 14, 2025, under the auspices of the African Union Economic, Social and Cultural Council (AU-ECOSOCC).

According to him, the League seeks to harness the wealth of diplomatic experience across the continent to strengthen Africa's unity, development and global influence.

He said the organisation would complement the efforts of governments, the African Union and regional organisations through dialogue, mentorship, youth empowerment and strategic partnerships.



AMBASSADOR NWANNE OMINYI