

FCT Infrastructure Devt: Tinubu pledges continuous support

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu says his administration will continue to provide infrastructure in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) for the academia and professional institutions to thrive.

Tinubu gave the assurance in Abuja on Wednesday, while inaugurating the newly con-

structed Collected Road C01 with a bridge, linking the Body of Benchers, Nile University and Baze University in the Institution and Research District, Abuja.

The president, represented by Vice-President Kashim Shettima, said that the district was conceived in the Abuja Master Plan to be the intellectual hub of the nation's capital.

"But for too long, the brilliant

minds here—our custodians of legal heritage at the Body of Benchers, our future leaders, innovators, and thinkers at Nile University and Baze Universities—were cut off by infrastructure deficits.

"Before today, moving between these institutions was a daily headache for students, lecturers, and residents alike. Today, we have restored ease of movement and enhanced safety.

"But beyond that, we are creating an environment where academia and professional institutions can thrive without the baggage of structural neglect," he said.

Tinubu described infrastructure as the greatest enabler of economic prosperity saying "when you build roads, you open up districts; when you open up districts, you invite investment and when investment

comes, Nigeria grows.

"To the management and students of Nile and Baze Universities, to the Body of Benchers and all residents of this area: this road belongs to you – protect it; cherish it.

"Let it serve as a daily reminder that your government believes in your future and is committed to building the infrastructure that will carry your

dreams forward.

"We will continue to invest in our cities, our satellite towns, and our rural communities because every Nigerian deserves the dividends of good governance".

Tinubu commended the FCT Minister, Mr Nyesom Wike, for his dedication to duty and commitment to deliver

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That The People May Know

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Insecurity: Army inducts another 3,000 recruits, sustains force expansion

● Gov. Nwifuru hails the training depot in Ebonyi as strategic national asset

ABUJA

The Nigerian Army has graduated more than 3,000 recruits at Depot Nigerian Army, Amasiri-Edda, Ebonyi, as part of efforts to strengthen manpower for ongoing security operations

nationwide.

This is contained in a statement by the Acting Director, Army Public Relations, Col. Appolonia Aenele, on Wednesday in Abuja.

Speaking at the Passing out parade at the depot in Ebonyi, the Chief of Army Staff, Lt.-

Gen Waidi Shaibu, urged the recruits to uphold discipline, loyalty and professionalism throughout their military careers.

He said the graduation reinforced the army's manpower capacity under the Federal Government's efforts to tackle

insecurity and strengthen national defence.

The COAS said the exercise followed similar recruit graduations at the Depot Nigerian Army, Zaria, and the newly established training depot in Osogbo, reflecting sustained force generation.

He said the recruits underwent rigorous training designed to prepare them for modern warfare and Nigeria's evolving security environment.

Shaibu urged them to remain vigilant, disciplined and mission-focused, stressing unwavering loyalty to the Constitution and constituted authority.

He said the nation had in-

vested significantly in their training and expected them to repay that confidence through courage, professionalism and selfless service.

The COAS described the establishment of the Amasiri-Edda Depot as a strategic investment in training infrastructure and manpower de-

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ENERGY WEEK:

Chief Operating Officer, TREFIM Chemical Ohiozoje Akhibi (L), conducting the honourable ministers of Petroleum Resources and other signatories round the company's exhibition stand during the opening of the Nigerian Oil and Gas (NOG) Energy Week in Abuja on Tuesday.

Senate Rejects Terrorists' Amnesty, rehabilitation, reintegration

ABUJA

CAROLINE AMEH

The Nigerian Senate has rejected calls for the rehabilitation and reintegration of repentant terrorists, insisting that individuals responsible for terrorism, banditry and other violent crimes must face prosecution rather than receive amnesty.

The resolution followed a motion sponsored by Senator Abdulaziz Musa Yar'Adua during plenary, prompted by the abduction and killing of retired Major General Rabiu Abubakar, a former Director of Defence Information, in Katsi-

na State.

Lawmakers unanimously condemned programmes that rehabilitate former Boko Haram members and bandits, arguing that such initiatives reward criminality while denying justice to victims and their families.

Senator Adams Oshiomhole maintained that perpetrators of killings, kidnappings and attacks on communities should be prosecuted under the law instead of being reintegrated into society. His position was reinforced by Senator Joseph Ikpea, who successfully proposed an amendment urging the Senate

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NEWS

Police arrest 3 as exhumation of missing baby looms in Edo

BENIN CITY

MIKE OSAROGIAGBON

The Edo State Police Command said it has arrested two more suspects in connection with the disappearance of a preterm baby shortly after delivery in Benin City, bringing the number of suspects in custody to three.

The command said investigators are also preparing to exhume the baby's remains from a suspected burial site as part of efforts to unravel the circumstances surrounding the case.

The spokesperson for the police Command, ASP Eno Ikoedem in an exclusive chat with our correspondent, Tuesday, identified the latest suspects as Godwin Atekha, 49, and Dorcas Falade, 36.

According to her, the duo joined Osaze Okungbowa, 46, who was earlier paraded by the Commissioner of Police, CP Monday Agbonika, last Friday.

ASP Ikoedem said detectives were led to the location where the baby was allegedly buried, while efforts were ongoing to identify the exact gravesite ahead of possible exhumation.

Police had during Osaze Okungbowa's parade alleged that one Falade, a nurse, was invited by Okungbowa to assist with the delivery at his facility, but declined, directing that the expectant mother be taken to her residence, where the baby was allegedly delivered.

It was reported that Osaze Okungbowa was arrested for posing as a medical doctor, conducting childbirths and trafficking newborn babies from Grace Health Maternity Healthcare located on Upper Sokponba Road in Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area of Edo State.

While being paraded, he reportedly admitted he was not a qualified medical doctor as he was only trained as an auxiliary nurse.

Senate distances itself from PFIPC controversy, says no petition before Red Chamber

CAROLINE AMEH

The Senate has distanced itself from the controversy surrounding the alleged existence of the Presidential Foreign Intervention Promotion Council (PFIPC), saying it has received no petition that would warrant its intervention in the matter.

Chairman of the Senate Committee on Media and Public Affairs, Senator Yemi Adaramodu (Ekiti South), stated this on Tuesday while responding to questions from journalists after plenary.

The controversy has dominated public discourse in recent weeks following a dispute between the man claiming to be the Director-General of the PFIPC, Adeniyi Adeyemi Mathew, and the Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabiamila.

While Gbajabiamila has publicly disowned both the agency and its purported Director-General, Mathew has insisted that the PFIPC is known to the Presidency.

He also alleged that the Chief of Staff collected N400 million from him in connection with his appointment and later demanded 48 per cent of the N1.3 billion appropriated for the agency in the 2026 budget.

Commenting on the matter, Adaramodu said the Senate had no basis to intervene since none of the parties involved, or any concerned Nigerian, had formally petitioned the upper legislative chamber.

"The Senate, for now, has no petition before it from any of the feuding parties or con-

cerned Nigerians to warrant any form of intervention or comments," he said.

The Senate spokesman acknowledged reports that the alleged agency has a budgetary allocation in the 2026 Appropriation Act, but maintained that the matter originated within the executive arm of government and should be resolved there.

He also noted that the matter is already before a court, making it sub judice, and therefore inappropriate for legislative intervention at this stage.

"The allegations and counter-allegations over the fake agency and fake Director-General are all within the executive, which should sort them out, specifically between the Office of the Chief of Staff and the alleged Director-General," Adaramodu said.

He further explained that the National Assembly neither created nor inserted the agency into the budget and is not responsible for conducting security or background checks on individuals appointed to head ministries, departments and agencies.

"The budget line being referred to was not created or inserted by the National Assembly, and it is not the duty of the Senate or the House of Representatives to carry out security checks on those supposedly appointed to head the various MDAs," he said.

According to him, the situation would have been different if the official in question had been one of the presidential appointees requiring Senate screening and confirmation.

FG rolls out mass housing scheme

● 100 units earmarked for each LGA for vulnerable persons**KANO**

The Senior Special Assistant to President Bola Tinubu on Media and Public Enlightenment, Mr. Abdulaziz Abduaziz, says the Federal Government has commenced construction of 100 Renewed Hope Housing Units in each local government area to support vulnerable persons, including victims of insecurity.

Abdulaziz disclosed this on Tuesday during an inspection visit to Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Renewed Hope City project in Janguza, Kano.

The presidential aide said the project was already underway and designed to provide succour to vulnerable Nigerians.

"Apart from these phase 1 and 2 of the Renewed Hope City project, there are also 100 housing units per local government, which have commenced as 'Tinubu Estate'."

"They are targeted at vulnerable groups, especially victims of insecurity and other disadvantaged persons in the society. "And this is being done across all local governments in Nigeria as we speak," he said.

On the Renewed Hope City

project, Abdulaziz said it was designed to address the country's huge housing deficit.

"This is an effort by the President Bola Tinubu administration to reduce Nigeria's housing deficit and also provide affordable housing for workers and other Nigerians.

"Already, people are patronising the project and allocations have been made.

"These are part of the sustainable projects this administration is undertaking to support vulnerable Nigerians and address national challenges," Abdulaziz said.

Also speaking, the Project Manager, Builder, Awe Augustine-Babatunde, said Phase 1 of the Renewed Hope City, comprising 325 housing units, had been completed, while Phase 2, with 698 housing units, would be ready by next month, August.

He said work at the site had reached 75 per cent completion, with about 426 housing units already constructed.

He added that the project included provisions for road networks, a school, a clinic, and a playground, among other facilities, to make it habitable for prospective occupants.

**AGREEMENT SIGNING:**

Chevron Executives, Minister of State for Petroleum (Gas), Hon. Ekperikpe Ekpo (second right), Group CEO, NNPC, Bayo Ojulari (third left) and others after the agreement signing.

NNPC signs 6 strategic gas deals to boost industrialisation – Ojulari

ABUJA

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd.) has signed six strategic agreements with key industry partners to deepen gas utilisation, strengthen energy security and accelerate Nigeria's gas-based industrialisation drive.

The agreements signed on the sidelines of the 25th Nigeria Oil and Gas (NOG) Energy Week in Abuja

on Tuesday include a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and a Gas Sale and Aggregation Agreement (GSAA) with Ajaokuta Steel Company Ltd. (ASCL).

The agreements also include a Gas Sale Agreement (GSA) with UTM Floating LNG (FLNG), and three Network Entry Agreements (NENAs) with Chevron Nigeria Ltd., AGPC and NNPC Exploration and Production Ltd. (NEPL).

Speaking at the signing, Mr Bashir Ojulari, Group Chief Ex-

ecutive Officer, NNPC Ltd., described the agreements as a major step toward implementing the Federal Government's gas-based industrialisation agenda.

Ojulari said the agreements would unlock new domestic gas supply, strengthen the Nigerian Gas Transportation Network Code and position gas as a catalyst for economic transformation.

"What we are witnessing today is not just about signing agreements. It is about igniting the en-

gine of Nigeria's industrialisation.

"Gas is not only a source of revenue and profit, but also the hydrocarbon with the greatest potential to transform Nigeria's economy," he said.

He also said that the agreements reflected NNPC Ltd.'s commitment to transparency, operational efficiency and strategic partnerships that would promote local content, enhance energy security and attract investment into the country's gas value chain.

A major highlight of the ceremony was the partnership with ASCL, under which both organisations agreed to collaborate on reviving the Ajaokuta Steel Complex and expanding domestic gas utilisation.

The MoU also seeks to support local production of steel pipes required for strategic infrastructure projects, including the African Atlantic Gas Pipeline (AAGP) and the Escravos-Lagos Pipeline System (ELPS) Phase three.

The accompanying 20-year GSAA, signed by NEPL, Gas Aggregation Company of Nigeria (GACN) and ASCL, provides for the supply of three million standard cubic feet per day (MMscf/d) of gas and 47 MMscf/d of interruptible gas to power the Ajaokuta steel complex.

PSC dismisses 4 senior police officers, sanctions 31 others for misconduct

CAROLINE AMEH

The Police Service Commission (PSC) has dismissed four senior police officers and imposed various disciplinary sanctions on 31 others over acts of misconduct, as part of efforts to strengthen discipline and accountability within the Nigeria Police Force.

The decisions were taken at the Commission's plenary meeting held at its corporate headquarters in Abuja.

According to a statement is-

sued on Tuesday by the Head of Protocol and Public Relations, Terty Njoku Kalu, the four officers were dismissed after being found guilty of gross misconduct, unprofessional conduct and acts unbecoming of public officers.

The Commission also approved the reduction in rank of 10 senior officers. Three Superintendents of Police were demoted to the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police, two Deputy Superintendents of Police were reduced to Assis-

tant Superintendents of Police, while five Assistant Superintendents of Police were reduced to the rank of Inspector.

In addition, two officers were compulsorily retired in the public interest.

Other disciplinary measures included severe reprimands for 10 officers, reprimands for five officers, warning letters to three officers and a letter of advice to one officer.

The Commission also cleared seven officers of wrongdoing after reviewing their cases.

NEWS**Renaissance records Nigeria's major offshore oil discovery****YENAGOA**

Renaissance Africa Energy Company Limited has announced a significant hydrocarbon discovery following successful delivery of the JK-004 exploration well.

The energy firm said in a statement on Tuesday that preliminary evaluation indicated

that the JK-004 well encountered approximately 1,000 feet of hydrocarbon-bearing column across seven reservoirs.

Recall that Renaissance acquired onshore and shallow water assets hitherto operated by Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria.

The company said that it found the new oil and gas de-

posits in shallow waters, offshore Nigeria in Oil Mining Lease 74.

According to Renaissance, initial log interpretation and fluid analysis confirm excellent reservoir quality and light oil. The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Renaissance, Chief Tony Attah, speaking on the first exploration execution milestone under

the company's refreshed exploration strategy, described the discovery as a reflection of the company's determined effort.

Attah also said that it reflected the dedication of its staff, partners, regulators and contractors to advancing the nation's goal towards sustainable long-term liquids production.

"The success of JK-004, just

over one year after assuming operatorship of these assets demonstrates the strength of our exploration programme," he said.

He commended the Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), adding that the exploration performance reflected the collaboration with the company's joint venture partners comprising the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC), TotalEnergies Limited and Agip Energy and Natural Resources.

According to him, the NNPC

Group Chief Executive Officer, Bayo Ojulari, and the Executive Vice President, Upstream, Udobong Ntia, provided the needed strategic guidance with commitment for value delivery across the joint venture assets. Similarly, Vice President Exploration and Chief Explorer at Renaissance, Dr Johnbosco Uche, ascribed the exploration success to the company's subsurface excellence, technical rigour, and disciplined approach to reserve replacement.

**AGREEMENT SIGNING:**

Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Humanitarian Services, Rep. Akande Sadipe, members of the Committee, Rep, Moshood Oshun and Hon, Olumide Osoba at the High-level Stakeholders Technical Meeting on the Strengthening of Repatriation and Re-integration of Trafficked Nigerian from Mali and other West Africa Countries, at the National Assembly Complex in Abuja on Wednesday.

Okpebholo appoints Okoyo, Musa as special advisers**BENIN CITY**

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has appointed Francis G. Okoyo and Momoh Ahmed Musa as Special Adviser on Diaspora Affairs and Islamic Religious Matters respectively. This was disclosed yesterday in a statement signed by the Secretary to the State Gov-

ernment, Umar Musa Ikhilor, Esq.

These appointments, according to the statement, were made pursuant to the governor's "unwavering commitment to delivering purposeful, inclusive and people-centred governance, while strengthening stakeholder engagement and advancing the administration's SHINE Agenda."

Women group hails Okpebholo's developmental achievements**BENIN CITY**

A socio-political group, Edo in Safe Hands Women Wing, has thrown its weight and support behind the governor Monday Okpebholo led administration in various sectors in the State.

The group led by Hon. Evelyn Enibokun, while on a courtesy visit to the government house in Benin to show its support for the developmental stride of the governor, expressed its readiness to collaborate with him and ensure his administration's success.

The group, despite its hitherto loyalty to the previous administration of former governor Godwin Obaseki, pledged its loyalty, support, collaboration and prayers for the success of the Gov. Okpebholo led administration.

Hon. Enibokun noted that their members across the State and were ready to mobilize massive support for the governor for his developmental stride and achievements across all sectors in the State.

She continued: "As a group we love good things and thank Governor Monday Okpebholo for what his administration is doing for Edo people. As a group, we have more than 5,000 women who are ready to support development and growth."

Receiving the group in the government house, the Special Adviser to Governor Monday Okpebholo on political mobilization and engagement, Hon. Utubor Eugene, commended the group for showing its support for the Governor Okpe-

holo - led administration.

He welcomed the support of the group and others that worked for the former governor of Edo State, Godwin Obaseki, but are in love with what the current governor is doing for Edo people.

"These women are in love with what the governor is doing in the State following the developmental stride and pledge their loyalty and support for the governor.

"They love the good job of the governor and what he is doing for Edo people. I am urging them to join the All Progressive Congress (APC) so that together we can develop the state and take it to the highest level

"I urge them to vote for president Tinubu in 2027 and also Gov Okpebholo in 2028. As a vote for president Tinubu is also a vote for Senator Monday Okpebholo. President Tinubu is helping the State and Edo is on the threshold of development

"The governor is developing all sectors of the Edo economy, security, education, healthcare, infrastructure and other areas," he said.

Hon. Eugene commended the governor for his developmental stride in the State especially in the construction of the first flyover in Ramat Park in Ikpoba Hill as well as the second flyover at Adesuwa Junction in Sapele Road.

His words: "We are in politics for development and progress and I urge us to continue to support the programme and development. We are still talking to the women to enable us to receive them into our party."

EFCC arraigns PH Refinery ex-MD over alleged money laundry**ABUJA**

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on Wednesday arraigned Ahmed Dikko, the former Managing Director of the Port Harcourt Refining Company Ltd (PHRC), over alleged money laundering.

Dikko, who was arraigned before Justice Inyang Ekwo of the Federal High Court in Abuja on a 12-count charge, pleaded not guilty.

The EFCC, in the charge marked: FHC/ABJ/CR/360/2026, named Dikko and Masterpiece Projects & Investment Ltd as first and second defendants.

In the charge dated and filed on June 22 by the commission's counsel, Ekele Iheanacho, SAN, the anti-graft agency accused Dikko of using N}218. million to buy property in Abuja.

When the case was called, Iheanacho informed the court that the matter was scheduled for the defendants to take their plea and that they were ready to proceed.

Ikechukwu Ajunwa, SAN, did not oppose the application but urged the court to enter a not guilty plea for the second defendant (the company).

In view of the not guilty plea, the prosecution applied for a trial date.

Ajunwa did not oppose the application but informed the court that a bail application had been filed on behalf of Dikko.

He said a copy of the bail

application had also been served on the EFCC.

Iheanacho acknowledged receiving the process and told the court that a counter affidavit had equally been filed in opposition to the bail request.

Moving the motion, Ajunwa said it was dated and filed on July 3 in line with Sections 34(4) and 36 of the 1999 Constitution and Sections 158 and 156 of Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA), 2015. According to him, the application is seeking for a leave for the defendant to be granted bail.

"The grounds for the application are there my lord," he said. The lawyer, who said Dikko would not jump bail or

interfere with the trial, said the 1st defendant had been reporting to the EFCC's office as part of administrative bail terms.

Responding, Iheanacho said the commission, on July 7, filed a counter affidavit opposing Dikko's request.

"We rely on all the paragraphs in our counter affidavit in urging the court to deny bail to the defendant.

"We also filed a written submission and adopted same in urging the honourable court to reject the bail application," he said.

In his ruling, Justice Ekwo held that the court had the discretionary power to either grant or not to grant a bail.

He said since bail is a constitutional rights of the defend-

ant, substantial evidence must be placed before the court why the defendant ought to be denied the request.

The judge consequently admitted Dikko to a N150 million bail with one surety in the like sum who must possess a landed property within the jurisdiction of the court.

He ordered that the surety must be a responsible citizen and must submit the documents of the landed property which should be verified by the court registrar.

Justice Ekwo, who ordered Dikko to submit his international passport with the court, directed that the defendant must not travel without the permission of court.

Chevron, NGIC sign agreement to boost gas supply, strengthen national Pipeline network**LAGOS**

Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) and the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC) Gas Infrastructure Company Limited (NGIC) have signed a Network Entry Agreement (NEA) to facilitate the safe and efficient delivery of gas from the Escravos Gas Plant into the Escravos-Lagos Pipeline System.

The agreement establishes the contractual framework required under the Nigerian Gas Transportation Network Code to regulate gas delivery operations and information exchange between CNL's Escravos Gas Plant and NGIC's pipeline network.

Speaking on the development, Chairman and Managing Director of Chevron Nigeria Limited, Jim Swartz, described the agreement as a demonstration of the NNPC/CNL Joint Venture's commitment to safe, reliable and efficient gas supply in support of Nigeria's energy aspirations.

According to him, the agreement will strengthen the interface between the Escravos Gas Plant and NGIC's transportation network, enhance energy security, improve infrastructure efficiency and create long-term value for the country.

Also speaking, Chevron Nigeria's Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Olusoga Oduselu, said

the adoption of a uniform Network Entry Agreement framework places Nigeria among countries operating standardized contractual systems for gas injection and offtake.

He noted that the framework reinforces the critical role of NGIC as the gas network operator and delivery facility operators, including Chevron Nigeria Limited, in safeguarding the safety, integrity and operational efficiency of the nation's gas transportation network.

The agreement is expected to further strengthen Nigeria's gas infrastructure and support the Federal Government's drive towards increased domestic gas utilization and sustainable energy development.

Nigerian Observer, Bronze FM deepen media partnership

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

The management of the Nigerian Observer and Radio Nigeria Bronze FM, Benin, have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening collaboration for mutual growth and improved public service delivery.

The commitment was made on Wednesday when the management of Radio Nigeria Bronze FM paid a courtesy visit to the Nigerian Observer at its corporate headquarters on Airport Road, Benin City.

Speaking during the visit, the General Manager of Radio Nigeria Bronze FM, Mr. Victorson Agbenson, described the occasion as a homecoming, recalling that he completed his industrial training at the Nige-

rian Observer several years ago.

"This visit is like a homecoming for me because I had my industrial training at the Nigerian Observer years ago. It is always a pleasure to return to where one began a professional journey," Mr. Agbenson said.

He explained that the visit was aimed at exploring areas of collaboration between the two media organisations, noting that both institutions share a common mandate of informing, educating and enlightening the public.

Mr. Agbenson also congratulated the General Manager of the Nigerian Observer, Hon. Peter Odiboh, on his appointment, expressing confidence in his leadership.

He appealed to the Observer's management to make copies of its newspaper available to Radio Nigeria Bronze FM

for its daily newspaper review programme, describing the publication as a reliable source of credible local news.

"The Nigerian Observer remains a valuable source of credible local news. We request that copies of the newspaper be made available to Bronze FM to enrich our daily newspaper re-

view broadcasts," he said.

Responding, the General Manager of the Nigerian Observer, Hon. Peter Odiboh, assured the visiting team that their request would be granted promptly.

"The request to make copies of the Nigerian Observer newspaper available to Radio Nigeria Bronze FM for its daily newspa-

per review will be attended to immediately," Hon. Odiboh said.

He reaffirmed the Observer's commitment to building a stronger partnership with the federal broadcasting station.

"We are committed to strengthening the collaboration between our organisations for our mutual benefit and in

the overall interest of effective public information," he added.

The visit ended with both management teams expressing optimism that closer cooperation would enhance information dissemination and further strengthen the media landscape in Edo State and Nigeria as a whole.



COURTESY VISIT:

General Manager of the Nigerian Observer, Hon. Peter Odiboh (4th right), exchanges a handshake with the General Manager of Radio Nigeria, Bronze FM Benin, Victorson Agbenson, during a courtesy visit to the Nigerian Observer in Benin. They are joined by some members of the management teams of both organizations.

Army inducts another 3,000...

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velopment.

He commended the commandant, instructors and support staff for producing competent and combat-ready soldiers for operations across the country.

In his remarks Gov. Francis Nwifuru of Ebonyi, described the depot as a strategic national asset that had enhanced se-

curity and stimulated economic activities in the state.

Nwifuru reaffirmed his administration's commitment to strengthening collaboration with the Armed Forces and other security agencies to promote peace, stability and development.

The ceremony featured military parades, precision drills and presentation of awards to outstanding recruits.

Tinubu pledges continuous...

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quality infrastructure befitting a nation's capital.

In his remarks, Wike reiterated the commitment of the FCT Administration to ensure that every district gets the attention of Tinubu's administration.

"We have gone round to so many districts in the FCT, including satellite towns. Today we are here to inaugurate another project in another district.

"Your Excellency, we thank you for your support; we thank you for the resources made available by removing us from the Treasury Single Account which is why we are inaugurating several projects across the city.

On her part, FCT Minister of State, Dr Mariya Mahmoud, thanked Tinubu and the leadership of the National Assembly for their continued support and commitment to delivering infrastructure that could transform the lives of citizens.

Mahmoud equally praised Wike for his determination and commitment to transforming drawings into landmarks and turning Tinubu's promises into reality.

Earlier, Mr Richard Dauda, acting Executive Secretary, Federal Capital Development Authority, said that the Collector Road CO1, from the Base University junction to Nile University, a length of about 1.5 kilometres was awarded in October 2025.

Senate Rejects Terrorists'...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

to formally reject rehabilitation programmes for terrorists.

Senator Osita Izunaso also called on security agencies to move beyond issuing condolence messages and focus on apprehending and prosecuting those responsible for the killing of General Abubakar and other violent attacks across the country.

At the end of the debate, the Senate urged the Federal Government to strengthen intelligence gathering, surveillance and early warning systems, deploy modern security technology, deepen collaboration among security agencies, traditional rulers, religious leaders and local communities, and ensure the arrest and prosecution of terrorists and bandits.

The Senate further approved

a request by Senate Leader Opeyemi Bamidele for the leadership of the upper chamber to meet with President Bola Tinubu to present lawmakers' concerns over the worsening security situation.

Senators also observed a minute's silence in honour of General Abubakar and other victims of terrorism and mandated a delegation to visit the bereaved family, the Katsina State Government and the Nigerian Army.

During the debate, lawmakers expressed mixed views on the nation's security architecture. While Minority Leader Abba Moro questioned the persistence of attacks despite the presence of security forces, Deputy Senate President Barau Jibrin praised the Armed Forces for their continued sacrifices in the fight against terrorism.

Political patronage undermining youth development in Niger Delta – Chief Ariyo

WARRI

A Warri-based lawyer and development expert, Chief Robinson Ariyo, has expressed concern over what he described as the growing exploitation of young people in the Niger Delta through political patronage, warning that the trend is undermining sustainable youth development and the future of the region.

Chief Ariyo, who is also the Egogo of Warri Kingdom, said the increasing recruitment of youths as online attack dogs and political propagandists by politicians and influential individuals was diverting them from education, entrepreneurship, skills acquisition and other productive pursuits.

Speaking on the state of youth development in the region, Ari-

yo said the practice offers only temporary financial gains while exposing young people to long-term personal, professional and societal consequences.

"One of the greatest obstacles to youth development in the Niger Delta is the growing practice of recruiting young people as online attack dogs and political propagandists instead of empowering them with productive opportunities," he said.

According to him, many youths who should be engaged in meaningful education, innovation, entrepreneurship and decent employment are instead paid to insult, harass and vilify perceived opponents in defence of political or personal interests.

"While the financial rewards may appear attractive in the short term, the long-term con-

sequences are often ignored.

Beyond the moral and ethical concerns, such conduct shapes character, damages reputations and leaves a digital footprint that may hinder future opportunities," Ariyo stated.

He noted that a history of online abuse and hostility could become a liability for young people seeking career advancement, leadership positions and other opportunities in the future.

The development expert called on political leaders, public office holders and other influential stakeholders to redirect their investments toward initiatives that would genuinely empower young people.

"Those in positions of political and economic influence have a responsibility to invest in the future of young people by creating opportu-

nities that foster competence, integrity, innovation and self-reliance, rather than exploiting their energy for divisive ends," he said.

Chief Ariyo stressed that sustainable youth development could only be achieved through education, mentorship, enterprise development and the creation of decent jobs, rather than encouraging hostility and social division for political advantage.

He further warned that the consequences of misdirecting the energy and potential of young people would ultimately be borne by society.

"The future we build for our youths today will determine the future we all share. Sustainable youth development is achieved through education, mentorship, enterprise and decent jobs—not by encouraging hostility and social division," he added.

Senate declines motion on probe into PFIPC budgetary allocation

ABUJA

The Senate on Wednesday declined motion to investigate the inclusion of Presidential Foreign Intervention Promotion Council (PFIPC) in the 2026 Appropriation Act.

Senate, however, resolved to await the outcome of Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) investigation on the matter.

Senate resolution followed a motion sponsored by Sen. Kawu Sumaila, (APC- Kano) to investigate how the agency received a budgetary allocation of N1.3 billion in 2026 budget.

Sumaila, who raised the motion under urgent matter of national importance, had began

to present his motion, when Deputy President of Senate Sen. Barau Jibrin (APC-Kano), who was presiding plenary, interrupted him.

Barau said the matter ought to have come before the senate as a substantive motion.

Presenting his argument, Sumaila said the controversy surrounding the PFIPC had cast doubts on the integrity of the budget process.

He said despite the executive's public disowning of the agency, it had allocation of N1.3 billion under budget code 0111062001 in the 2026 Appropriation Act.

"Senate notes that notwithstanding the executive's public disapproval of this agency, the entirety was incorporated in the 2026 Appropriation Act under Code 0111062001 with

a budgetary allocation of N1.3 billion," he said.

He said, this is raising a serious question regarding the integrity of the budget preparation and appropriation process.

According to him, the allocation comprised more than N800 million for personnel costs, over N200 million for overheads and more than N300 million for capital expenditure.

Sumaila said the inclusion of a purportedly non-existent agency in the national budget undermined public confidence in the appropriation process and exposed weaknesses in legislative scrutiny.

He urged the Senate to mandate its committees on ethics, code of conduct and public petitions, and appropriations to investigate how the allocation was proposed, scrutinised, jus-

tified and approved.

He also sought an inquiry into whether any funds had been released, committed or spent under the budget line and whether any bank account had been opened or operated in connection with the allocation.

Responding, Barau said the presidency had already directed the ICPC to investigate the matter and that the anti-graft agency had commenced its work.

He said the Senate would wait for the outcome of the ICPC investigation before deciding on any further action.

"As I said earlier, the presidency has taken up this matter by directing that the ICPC should investigate fully how this matter came to be.

"And I think ICPC has start-

NEWS

Pineapple Farmers seek processing, exports to reduce post-harvest losses

LAGOS

Pineapple farmers have called for increased investment in processing facilities and export development to reduce post-har-

vest losses, improve farmers' incomes and strengthen the fruit value chain.

The farmers made the call in separate interviews with our correspondent on Wednesday in Lagos.

They said a significant proportion of harvested pineapples was lost before reaching consumers because of the fruit's highly perishable nature and inadequate value-addition facilities.

Mr Afolabi Odunlami, a pineapple farmer, said many producers were compelled to sell their harvest at low prices during peak production to avoid losses.

"Once pineapples are har-

vested, farmers have a limited time to sell them. When supply is high and buyers are few, prices crash and many fruits spoil before reaching the market.

"If there are more processing facilities producing juice, concentrates, dried pineapple and other products, farmers will have alternative markets and earn better incomes," he said.

Odunlami said investment in processing would absorb surplus production, reduce waste and create jobs across the value chain.

Another farmer, Mrs Iyanu

Faleye, described inadequate processing facilities as one of the biggest challenges confronting pineapple producers, particularly during the peak harvest season.

She said farmers often sold their produce below production cost because they lacked access to factories that could purchase excess fruits for processing.

"If there are more companies producing pineapple juice, dried pineapple and other products, farmers will have a ready market and fewer fruits will go to waste," she said.

**SSDC ESTABLISHMENT ACT 2025:**

From left: Rep of Governor of Bayelsa/ Mr Biriyi Dambo; Minister of State for Petroleum (Oil), Sen. Heineken Lokpobiri and the Chairman, South-South Development Commission, Mr Chibudom Nwuche, during a public hearing on A Bill for An Act to amend the SSDC Establishment Act 2025, by the House of Representatives committee on SSDC, at the National Assembly Complex in Abuja on Wednesday.

CBN warns against rejection of standard 100 Naira Banknote

LAGOS

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has warned members of the public, businesses and financial institutions against rejecting the standard N100 banknote, reaffirming its legal tender across the country.

The CBN issued the clarification in a statement made available to newsmen on Wednesday by Mrs Hakama Sidi-Ali, Acting Director, Corporate Communications.

This followed reports that some individuals and businesses had refused to accept the note over doubts about its validity.

According to the CBN, both the commemorative N100 banknote introduced to mark Nigeria's centenary and the standard N100 banknote remain legal tender and must be accepted for all transactions nationwide.

The bank explained that the commemorative note was introduced as a special issue and

did not replace the existing standard N100 note already in circulation.

The CBN therefore, cautioned that rejecting the standard N100 banknote amounts to a violation of the provisions of the CBN Act and could undermine public confidence in the national currency.

The CBN said it would not hesitate to apply appropriate enforcement measures against any individual or organisation found to be rejecting the note.

The bank reaffirmed its commitment to protecting the integrity of the Naira, maintaining confidence in all duly issued banknotes and ensuring smooth currency circulation across the country.

It urged Nigerians to continue accepting and transacting with all banknotes legally issued by the CBN.

The apex bank also advised members of the public seeking further clarification to contact it through its official communication channels.

NSCDC parades 5 suspects for unlawful possession of vandalised items

MAKURDI

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Benue Command on Wednesday paraded five male suspects for alleged criminal conspiracy and unlawful possession of vandalised materials.

The paraded suspects were Gbenda Nyiter, Tersoo Bawa, Hanmakwagh James, Jeremiah Uker and Moses Ikyobo.

The Command Public Relations Officer, Mr Michael Ejelikwu, paraded the suspects before newsmen at the command's headquarters in Makurdi.

Ejelikwu revealed that the suspects were apprehended on July 3, 2026, by operatives of the corps during a routine patrol along Tse-Ivue and Tse-

Dei communities of Guma Local Government Area of Benue.

The spokesperson explained that the arrest followed credible intelligence on the activities of a syndicate specialised in vandalising and trading in public utilities.

He said their men recovered items such as 350-metre aluminium conductors suspected to be cut from power transmission lines and two yellow-coloured unregistered tricycles used for conveying the items.

The PRO stated that a preliminary investigation revealed that the suspects conspired and vandalised power installations around Tse-Dei and Tse-Ivue communities in Guma, causing disruption to electricity supply and economic loss to the government.

Ejelikwu also said during

further investigation, one of the suspects, Bawa, admitted to the offence while two claimed to be tricycle riders operating within the Makurdi metropolis.

The PRO disclosed that an investigation into the grave economic sabotage is ongoing to apprehend other fleeing members of the syndicate, adding that the suspects would be charged to court upon completion of the investigation.

Ejelikwu reiterated the corps' zero-tolerance stance on vandalism of critical national assets, warning that the Command under the stewardship of Mrs Alice Bitrus would do all it takes to end vandalism in Benue by stepping up surveillance on all national assets in the state.

"Let me warn strongly that the State Commandant CCLA

BITRUS is personally upscaling efforts at bringing these enemies of national security to justice, and the NSCDC will not relent in its mandate to protect critical national assets and infrastructure.

"Vandalism is an act of grave economic sabotage, and anyone caught will face the full weight of the law," he said.

He also warned scrap dealers and buyers to desist from patronising vandals, saying that anyone found in possession of vandalised items would be treated as an accomplice under Section 3(6) of the Miscellaneous Offences Act.

The PRO commended members of the public for their continuous support through credible information and urged communities to remain continuously vigilant.

Benue Assembly urges Alia to review traditional rulers pay

MAKURDI

The Benue State House of Assembly has urged Governor Hyacinth Alia to approve an upward review of the salaries and allowances of traditional rulers and ensure that none earn below the N75,000 minimum wage.

The resolution followed a motion titled "Motion to Improve the Welfare of Traditional Rulers in Benue State in Line with the Prevailing Minimum Wage", sponsored by Mr Douglas Akya (APC/Makurdi South), Mr Peter Uche (APC/Guma 1) and Mrs Beckie Orpin (APC/Gboko East) on Wednesday in Makurdi.

Leading the debate, Akya described traditional rulers as indispensable partners in governance and stressed that they serve as custodians of the people's cultural heritage, promoters of peace, and mediators in communal conflicts.

The lawmaker further described traditional rulers as mobilisers for government programmes and key stakeholders in maintaining security and social harmony across Benue communities.

He argued that despite the increasing responsibilities placed on traditional rulers, their salaries and allowances had remained grossly inadequate amid rising inflation and the high cost of living.

According to him, the situation diminishes their capacity to effectively discharge their constitutional and traditional responsibilities.

Akya recalled that the Benue Government had already implemented a N75,000 minimum wage for workers in the state and maintained that traditional rulers also deserved a remuneration structure that reflects their status and invaluable contributions to peace, security and socio-economic development.

Rising food prices push consumers to cheaper alternatives

LAGOS

The rising cost of food has compelled many Lagos consumers to replace expensive food items with cheaper alternatives as they struggle to cope with increasing household expenses.

The consumers, who spoke in separate interviews with newsmen on Wednesday, said they now prioritise affordability over preference by buying less, changing meal plans and opting for cheaper food items.

Mrs Iyabode Fakunle, a loan officer and resident of Egbeda, said rising food prices had changed public perception of what constituted affordable food.

She recalled that low-income families previously had access to relatively inexpensive food options.

"I remember my stepmother always teasing my mother for buying cheaper fish. She would say she could never eat Egun fish because she consid-

ered it food for poor people.

"But my mother always told us there was no shame in buying what you could afford. She taught us that if you cannot afford the most expensive fish in the market, you should buy one that fits your budget.

"Today, many of those foods that were once considered affordable have also become expensive, leaving consumers with fewer options," she said.

Also, Mrs Agatha Madueke said frequent price increases had forced consumers to adjust their shopping lists whenever they visited the market.

"The other day, I went to buy ugu and waterleaf, but the waterleaf was too expensive. I bought only ugu and decided to cook a different soup instead.

"Gone are the days when you could budget a certain amount for the market and be sure it would be enough.

"Prices change so often that you sometimes leave without buying everything you planned for.

FG committed to dismantling drug cartels, promoting Nigerians' wellbeing – SGF

ABUJA

The Federal Government has reaffirmed its commitment to every initiative aimed at preventing illicit drug use, dismantling trafficking networks, expanding access to treatment and rehabilitation, including promoting the wellbeing of all Nigerians.

The Secretary to the Govern-

ment of the Federation (SGF) Senator George Akume gave the assurance in his remarks as Special Guest of Honour at the opening session of the ongoing National Drug Use Summit on Wednesday in Abuja.

The summit was jointly organised by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and

the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

The theme of the summit is "Addressing Illicit Drug Use and Trafficking: A Call to National Action".

Akume, who was represented by the Permanent Secretary, Office of the General Services, OSGF, Dr Ibrahim Kana, said no nation would fold its hands while its youths were under the

threat of substance abuse.

Akume reaffirmed the unwavering commitment of the government to every initiative aimed at preventing illicit drug use.

"I also reaffirm the nation's commitment to dismantling trafficking networks, expanding access to treatment and rehabilitation, and promoting the wellbeing of all Nigerians.

"No nation can achieve sustainable development when its young population is threatened by drug abuse and addiction.

"No society can attain last-

ing peace and prosperity when criminal networks engaged in illicit trafficking continue to undermine its institutions and exploit its vulnerabilities.

"This much we know, and this much must guide our resolve," he said.

Akume said that the summit, therefore, presented a timely opportunity for the nation to renew its collective commitment, deepen its partnerships and chart a clear, coordinated pathway towards

a healthier, safer and more resilient Nigeria.

He assured that the administration of President Tinubu remained firmly committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of every Nigerian.

"Under the Renewed Hope Agenda, we are building resilient communities, promoting mental health, empowering our young people and strengthening the institutions that must confront these emerging social challenges," he said.



COURTESY VISIT:

Sultan of Sokoto Saad Abubakar, (right) receives the Vatican Secretary for Relations with States, Archbishop Paul Gallagher, on Monday in Sokoto.

AfDB, Nigeria, UN women inaugurate gender equality roadmap to 2030

ABUJA

The African Development Bank (AfDB), Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and UN Women Nigeria have inaugurated the Nigeria Gender Profile and Roadmap to Equality 2030.

The framework outlines evidence-based actions to address gender disparities across the economy, education, health, governance, leadership and protection from gender-based violence.

This is contained in a statement issued on the bank's website on Wednesday.

The statement quoted the Minister of Women Affairs, Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim, as describing gender equality as a strategic investment essential for Nigeria's sustainable development and inclusive economic growth.

She said equal access to education, finance, leadership and security would strengthen families, build resilient communities and boost national economic prosperity.

"Gender equality is not a concession; it is a sound investment in the strength of our nation," the minister said.

Dr Abdul Kamara, AfDB's Acting Vice-President for Regional Development, Integration and Business Delivery, reaffirmed the bank's commitment to gender-responsive development planning in Nigeria.

Kamara said Nigeria was among the first countries where gender became a strategic pillar under the bank's Country Strategy, rather than merely a cross-cutting development issue.

He also said that gender equality was not competing with economic growth but remained a prerequisite for achieving inclusive and sustainable national development.

According to him, the roadmap provides practical interventions and measurable actions to close gender gaps and accelerate progress by 2030.

UN Women Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Beatrice Eyong, said gender equality remained central to economic transformation, democratic governance and sustainable peace.

Peace: Sultan, Gallagher chart ways against hate speech, atheism in Nigeria

SOKOTO

The Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar 111, has emphasised the need for increased cooperation among religious communities to promote peace and peaceful coexistence in Nigeria and beyond.

Abubakar, who is the President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), stated this when he received the Vatican Secretary for Relations with States, Archbishop Paul Gal-

lagher, on Monday in Sokoto.

He reaffirmed his commitment to working towards maintaining and improving the security situation, not just in Nigeria but across the world.

Abubakar praised the Catholic community, especially in Nigeria, for its cooperation and commitment to peaceful coexistence in the country.

He also acknowledged their willingness to work with him through various interfaith organisations and activities to ensure that peace and security

are promoted in Nigeria.

The Sultan frowned at the circulation of hate speech among citizens and assured of more collaboration to fight the menace.

"To a large extent, hate speech has been most injurious to peaceful coexistence in the country. It has created what may be described as perceptual and relational crises among faith communities in Nigeria.

"Therefore, there is a strong call for all religious and faith communities to work together to combat hate speech, especially the growing and unfortunate phenomenon whereby some in-

dividuals openly insult religious leaders who are highly respected within their various faith communities," he said.

According to him, there is a need to curb such behaviour and ensure that people refrain from insulting not only prominent religious figures but also ordinary individuals, who equally deserve respect.

Earlier, Gallagher said that the essence of the visit was to promote mutual understanding and emphasise the need for cooperation among religious and faith communities in promoting peaceful coexistence.

Kwara APC reconciliation committee sues for peace, unity after primaries

ILORIN

Retired Col. AbdulWahab Lawal, the Chairman of the Kwara All Progressives Congress (APC) Reconciliation Committee, has appealed to aggrieved members of the party to embrace dialogue and reconciliation.

Lawal made the appeal, on Wednesday in Ilorin, when reacting to alleged grievances arising from the party's primaries during a news conference on the committee's mandate and activities.

He said that the committee was constituted by Gov. AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq and the APC Chairman, Mr Sunday Fagbemi, to reconcile aggrieved leaders and members ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The chairman said that although the task before the committee had its challenges, members remained optimistic that peace and harmony would be restored within the party.

He described the disagreements as a family affair, noting that all parties involved remained loyal to the APC.

"We have listened to the various positions expressed publicly and are convinced

that no member has abandoned the party.

"This is a family disagreement, and we believe it can be resolved through dialogue, understanding and mutual respect," he said.

Lawal said the committee's terms of reference include engaging and mediating with aggrieved members and stakeholders across the state to identify the root causes of disputes and facilitate amicable resolutions.

He added that the committee would submit a comprehensive report with actionable recommendations to the state executive committee to promote healing and reintegration within the party.

The chairman appealed to all aggrieved members to cooperate with the committee by opening their hearts to genuine reconciliation.

He also urged party members to refrain from inflammatory statements capable of escalating tensions.

According to him, members must make the necessary sacrifices to sustain the party's electoral success in the state and maintain the confidence reposed in it by the people of Kwara.

NGO empowers 28 adolescents on life skills

LAGOS

Peace Setters Integrated Social Intervention Initiative, a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) has empowered 28 adolescents in its Teens Empowerment Literacy Tribe (TELT) programme.

Mrs Tessa Ozobialu, its founder, disclosed this in Lagos on Wednesday.

Ozobialu said that TELT, was one of the flagship projects of the NGO aimed at equipping adolescents with knowledge, life skills, and support they needed to thrive in an increasingly complex world.

According to her, the project creates a safe and interactive learning environment, where teenagers are empowered to build resilience, develop positive values, strengthen their emotional wellbeing, and acquire practical skills for per-

sonal growth and future opportunities.

"Between February and June, TELT has engaged 28 adolescents in a series of life-building sessions that focused on mental health resilience, decision-making, time management, emotional regulation, responsible social media use, and managing adolescent impulses.

"Through facilitated discussions, presentations, and peer learning activities, participants explored practical approaches to overcoming everyday challenges, making informed choices, building healthy relationships, and navigating adolescence with confidence.

"Recognising the importance of economic empowerment, the project also incorporated a practical lip balm production and branding training, introducing participants to basic entrepreneurship and vocational skills.

NEWS**JUDICIARY**

Hijab wearing: Appeal Court orders UI, ISI to maintain status quo

IBADAN

The Court of Appeal in Ibadan has ordered parties in the appeal over the use of hijab by female Muslim students of the University of Ibadan (UI) International School Ibadan (ISI)

to maintain the status quo.

The court had on July 3 by a split decision of two to one upturned the judgment of the Oyo State High Court that favoured the wearing of hijab by Muslim students of the school.

However, the Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC) ap-

plied to the court seeking stay of execution of its judgment while appeal is filed at the the Supreme Court.

Hearing the application for stay of execution, the three-man panel of justices led by Justice Kenneth Amadi, as well as Justice Fadawu Umar and Jus-

tice Binta Suberu, ordered that parties in the appeal the UI and ISI as well as MURIC should maintain the status quo.

Amadi ordered the parties to maintain status quo pending the hearing and determination of the application for stay of execution of the judgment.

"You don't have the right to do anything until the stay of execution is heard and determined.

"Once the motion of stay of execution has been filed, you can't have the right to do anything.

"I was told the school has started harassing the students on the use of hijab, I don't know why the rush.

"Have you gotten the Certified True Copy (CTC) of the judgment, the seven days stipulated by the law for the judgment to be released is still running," he said.

Amadi ordered the parties in the matter to maintain status quo and adjourned the matter till Oct.7 for the hearing of the application on stay

of execution.

Earlier, the Counsel to MURIC, Mr Yusuf Anikulapo represented by Mr Hassan Fajimite, had informed the court of his application seeking stay of execution of the judgment of the Court of Appeal delivered on July 3.

Fajimite, however, told the court of his intention to substitute the application on stay of execution, which he said was not ripe for hearing.

He urged the court to order the parties to maintain status quo and requested for an adjournment.

The Counsel to ISI and UI, Mr Damilola Akinsanya, did not oppose the application for adjournment.

**INAUGURATION ADVISORY BOARD:**

Legal Practitioner, Ja'afaru Ayifogo (L), administering oath of office to Advisory Board members, Nuts and Bolts Automobile Technical Academy, Engr Suleiman Musa; Mr Joseph Amakurugbonwo; Ms. Mchivga Lilian; and Engr. Haruna Abubakar, during the inauguration of Advisory board as part of activities to promote Automobile Technical Education Nigeria, held in Abuja.

Court awards ₦10million in damages against EFCC for defaming ex-Minister

ABUJA

Justice Peter Kekemeke of the FCT High Court on Wednesday awarded N10 million in damages against the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for defaming the reputation of former Minister of Power, Dr

Olu Agunloye.

The judge found the commission guilty of defamation while delivering judgment in a N10billion suit filed against the EFCC by Agunloye.

Agunloye claimed that the publication on the commission's Website and X (formerly Twitter) handle, entitled

"EFCC arraigns Agunloye over \$6billion fraud", damaged his reputation.

Agunloye had, through his counsel, Adeola Adedipe SAN, suit marked FCT/HC/CV/1199/2024, claimed that the EFCC caused harmed his reputation.

He added that he (Agunloye) was said to be a corrupt and fraudulent individual

through a post published on its official website and other allied online platforms, with the caption, "EFCC arraigns Agunloye over \$6billion fraud".

Delivering judgment, Justice Kekemeke held that there were elements of defamation in the posts.

The judge held that in the instant case, the contentious

Tailor docked for allegedly stealing employer's industrial sewing machine

ABUJA

Police on Wednesday arraigned a tailor, Yakubu Kabiru in a Life Camp Magistrates' Court for allegedly stealing employer's industrial sewing machine.

The Police charged Kabiru, 24, of Jabi Upstairs, Abuja, with house breaking and theft.

He, however, partially denied the charges preferred against him.

The Prosecutor Bankole Babatunde told the court that the complainant, Mr Mohammed Jibrin, of Life camp Abuja, reported the matter at the Life camp Police Station on July 4.

Babatunde said that the defendant was a former casual staff member attached to the complainant's tailoring shop at Angwan Beri-beri village

life camp, Abuja.

He told the court that on May 29, the defendant broke into the said shop, made away with Emel industrial machine and some customers' fabrics all worth N1.2 million.

During the Police investigation the defendant made a confessional statement admitting to stealing the machine and not the fabrics.

Babatunde told the court that all efforts made to recover the machine proved abortive.

According to the prosecu-

tor, the offence contravened the provision of section 346 and 288 of the penal code.

Magistrate Hauwa Aboki ordered that the bail application should be made formally to the court.

She adjourned the case to Aug. 13 for hearing.

Man docked for allegedly cheating POS operator

ABUJA

A 38-year-old man, Usman Suleiman, on Wednesday, appeared before a Life Camp Magistrates' Court in Abuja, for allegedly cheating a Point of Sale (POS) operator to the tune of N550,000.

The police dragged the defendant to court on charges bordering on cheating.

He, however, pleaded not guilty to the charge.

The prosecutor, Bankole

Babatunde told the court that a complainant, one Mr Rasiu Abdullahi, reported the matter at the Life camp police station on June 4.

He alleged that the complainant travelled and left his POS business in the care of his younger brother one Rabir, to continue.

According to him, the defendant, deceived his brother, and collected the sum of N550,000 from him, under the pretext that someone had sent the amount into his own ac-

count, knowing same was false.

The prosecutor said that during police investigation the defendant made a confessional statement admitting to the offence.

Babatunde told the court that all efforts to recover the money proved abortive.

The offence contravenes the provisions of section 322 of the Penal Code.

The defense counsel Lillian Ibrahim, orally applied for the bail of the defendant, based on his denial of the charge.

Court adjourns trial of 6 alleged coup suspects until July 20

ABUJA

Federal High Court in Abuja on Tuesday adjourned trial of six alleged coup plotters until July 20.

The case, which was fixed for continuation of trial-within-trial by Justice Joyce Abdulmalik, could not go on after repeated disputes over the interpretation of the sixth defendant's testimony.

This defence lawyer, Sanusi Musa, SAN, had complained that interpreters were not accurately translating the testimony of the 6th defendant, Abdulkadir Sani.

Sani, who spoke in Hausa Language while giving his testimony, was challenging the voluntariness of statements the prosecution sought to tender against him as evidence..

Following the complaint,

Justice Abdulmalik discharged the last interpreter and directed the parties to produce a neutral interpreter from the defendant's exact linguistic background, rather than relying on a general Hausa interpreter.

"Find out exactly where this witness is from," the judge said, explaining that the court needed a neutral interpreter who could accurately interpret the witness' evidence for both the court and the parties.

She adjourned the matter until July 20 for continuation of trial-within-trial.

The Federal Government, through the Office of the Attorney-General of Federation (AGF), had, on April 22, arraigned the defendants on 13-count charge.

The charge, marked: FHC/ABJ/CR/206/2026, was filed

7 arraigned over alleged arson

ABEOKUTA

The police on Wednesday, dragged seven people before an Isabo Chief Magistrates' Court in Abeokuta, over alleged arson.

The defendants are: Musiliu Akinsanya, 53; Nurudeen Ogunlaja, 47; Olosoju Johnson, 40; Tunde Solanke, 41; Jimoh Ogunlaja, 45; Kabiru Shobola, 38; and Mathew Akinsanya, 32.

They are standing trial on a two-count charge bordering on arson and damage to property.

They were accused of setting a complainant's car ablaze.

The defendants, however pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The prosecutor, ASP Lawrence Olu-Balogun told the court that the defendants committed the offences on May 16, at Iporo, Shopeyin village, in Owode Obafemi Local Government Area of Abeokuta.

He alleged that the defendants conspired to willfully set ablaze a Nissan Vanette C20 car valued N18 million belonging to one Mr Ebenezer David.

The prosecutor alleged that the incident occurred follow-

ing a dispute arising from an alleged love affair between the complainant and the wife of the fourth defendant (Solanke).

According to the prosecutor, the fourth defendant alleged that the complainant impregnated his wife, which prompted him and other defendants to set his car ablaze.

Olu-Balogun also alleged that the complainant claimed he had been receiving death threats from the fourth defendant which made him relocate to another community for the safety with his family.

He added that after the incident, the complainant reported the matter to the police which led to the arrest of the defendants.

The offences contravene the provisions of sections 443, 516 of the Criminal Law of Ogun State 2006.

The Chief Magistrate, Mrs A.K. Araba, granted defendants bail in the sum of two million naira each, with two sureties each in like sum.

Araba ordered that the sureties must be bondsmen registered with the Ogun State Judiciary.



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INTERVIEW

CAROLINE AMEH

Senator Joseph Ikpea has assured constituents that efforts are underway to address the persistent gully erosion threatening communities across Edo Central, revealing that he has initiated legislative action and engaged key federal authorities to secure ecological intervention for the area.

Speaking in an interview, Ikpea revealed that he had sponsored a motion on the ecological challenges facing Edo Central and held discussions with the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) and other relevant agencies responsible for ecological projects.

According to him, while lawmakers do not execute projects directly, they play a crucial role in initiating motions, advocating for interventions and ensuring sustained oversight.

"I have gone as far as making a motion to ensure this issue is addressed. As we speak, what I submitted concerning Edo Central is under consideration. I believe we have achieved about 60 per cent of the process. What remains is implementation by the executive," he said.

The senator recalled that the devastating flooding incident in Uromi in 2024, which claimed lives before he assumed office, strengthened his resolve to pursue a lasting solution to erosion and flooding across the senatorial district.

He explained that although senators cannot compel project execution or release funds, they can continue to mount pressure on the executive arm to prioritise affected communities.

He spoke further on sundry issues:

OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD LEGISLATIVE ROLE

Ikpea urged Nigerians to better understand the constitutional responsibilities of legislators, noting that many citizens wrongly assume lawmakers have direct access to project funds.

"The responsibility of legislators is to make laws, move motions and advocate for the people. Implementation rests with the executive. We don't have the authority to release funds or execute projects ourselves," he explained.

EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES AWAIT FUNDING

On youth unemployment, Ikpea said his proposed 2026 constituency empowerment programme is designed to equip young people with practical vocational skills and promote self-employment once funding is approved.

Ikpea Pushes Ecological Intervention for Edo Central, Backs Okpebholo's Infrastructure Drive

Senator Joseph Ikpea

He disclosed that the programme includes training in soap making, paint production, cosmetics, fashion design and other entrepreneurial skills, alongside start-up support for beneficiaries.

The senator also highlighted a proposed renewable energy initiative in Edo Central, which seeks to establish a training centre for solar technology to create employment opportunities while supporting Nigeria's clean energy transition.

According to him, previous empowerment initiatives conducted during his first 100 days in office trained over 250 beneficiaries across the district, many of whom have since established small businesses.

Drug Abuse Requires Early Education

As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Drugs and Narcotics, Ikpea described drug abuse as one of Nigeria's greatest threats to young people, stressing that prevention through education remains the most effective strategy.

He advocated introducing compulsory drug awareness education into Nigeria's school curriculum from an early age so children understand the dangers of narcotics before exposure to peer pressure.

"We must educate children early about the consequences of drugs. Awareness is key. Parents, schools, churches and mosques all have roles to play in protecting our youths," he said.

Ikpea also revealed plans for sustained sensitisation campaigns in schools across Edo Central and engagements with industries to strengthen workplace drug prevention measures.

"The responsibility of legislators is to make laws, move motions and advocate for the people. Implementation rests with the executive. We don't have the authority to release funds or execute projects ourselves," he explained."

OKPEBHOLO'S PERFORMANCE

The senator commended Monday Okpebholo for what he described as remarkable infrastructural development across Edo State since assuming office.

According to Ikpea, communities that previously struggled with poor road networks are now witnessing significant improvements under the governor's administration.

"I have never seen a governor perform the way Governor Monday Okpebholo is performing. He has

changed the narrative through infrastructure development across the state. Roads are being constructed in many communities, and I enjoy a very cordial working relationship with him," he said.

He added that his collaboration with the governor has strengthened efforts to attract development projects to Edo Central, expressing optimism that pending ecological interventions would soon receive the necessary executive approval and funding.

NEWS EXTRA

Senate queries ₦93m board allowances, delayed appointments at NWDC

The Senate Committee on Regional Development has expressed concern over the operations of the North West Development Commission (NWDC), questioning the delay in appointing executive directors, alleged internal disputes and the expenditure of about N943 million on board allowances.

The concerns were raised during an investigative session with officials of the commission and the Federal Ministry of Regional Development.

Lawmakers noted that despite being among the first regional development commissions established by an Act of the National Assembly, the NWDC remains the only commission yet to appoint executive directors.

Minister of State for Regional Development, Alhaji Uba Maigari Ahmadu, told the committee that the ministry had intervened in the lingering dispute over the commission's office accommodation in Kano.

He explained that the commission initially operated from offices donated by private organisations, but disagreements over which facility should serve as its headquarters created friction between the board and management.

According to the minister, the Kano State Government has now provided a fully furnished office complex, operational vehicles and a parcel of land for the commission.

He disclosed that the ministry, board and management officially took over the facility

last week and directed that all other offices be shut to resolve the dispute.

"The North West Development Commission is the only commission that does not yet have executive directors. Every other regional development commission has its full management structure in place. Something urgent must be done for the commission to function effectively," Ahmadu said.

He attributed many of the commission's operational challenges to the absence of executive directors, noting

that although the governing board was inaugurated in February 2025 to fast-track its take-off, the commission had continued to face administrative setbacks.

The minister also compared the situation with other regional commissions, stating that state governments in Enugu, Oyo and Nasarawa had provided office accommodation for their respective commissions without controversy.

During the hearing, senators also questioned delays in convening board meetings,

financial management practices and what they described as excessive spending on board-related activities.

Some lawmakers queried how the board could claim inadequate funding while embarking on official visits to governors and other stakeholders.

The committee also questioned a Duty Tour Allowance (DTA) reportedly claimed by the Managing Director for a visit to the Kano State Governor, despite the commission's headquarters being located in Kano.

FOREIGN

NEWS

Teenager arrested after two girls, 13, seriously injured in German school attack

Two 13-year-old girls have been seriously injured and a 16-year-old suspect arrested after an incident at a school in Upper Bavaria, Germany.

Police said a major operation was under way in the area of Welfen-Gymnasium secondary school in the small town of Schongau.

The suspect was carrying a knife as well as a firearm, police said, and they believe they acted alone.

Neither of the girls are in life-threatening condition, but the number of other people involved and the severity of their injuries are currently being clarified, police added.

A police spokeswoman had earlier told AFP news agency it was unclear what weapon had been used in the attack, and declined to confirm reports of a knife attack.

The identity of the suspect

is not known and it is unclear if they had links to the school.

The police spokeswoman added the force believe the incident to be a "rampage".

Bavaria's interior minister Joachim Herrmann told German public service broadcaster Bayerischer Rundfunk (BR) he believed the two girls were stabbed. This has not been confirmed by police.

Herrmann added the suspect had previously received psychiatric treatment and said there were unconfirmed indications they were a former student.

A contact point for relatives and parents of students has been set up at a fire station in the town.

According to its website, the school was founded in 1887 and had initially been almost exclusively a girls' school. It has been mixed gender for the last 40 years.



ESCALATING US-IRAN WAR:

Trump spit fire while in a meeting with Nato chief Mark Rutte.

Trump says ceasefire is 'over' after US and Iran trade strikes

US President Donald Trump says the ceasefire agreement with Iran is "over", blasting the country's leadership as "scum" and "cuckoo" after fresh exchanges of fire.

Speaking ahead of a Nato summit in Turkey, the president said US negotiators could continue talks "if they want" but said he saw it as "a waste of time".

Oil prices jumped after Trump's comments, although are still well below the highs seen during the full closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Tuesday night into Wednesday saw the worst trading of strikes between the US and Iran since they signed an interim deal in June that called for an end to the conflict and safe passage of vessels through the strait.

"I think it's over. I don't want to deal with them anymore they're scum ... they're led by sick people and they're vicious,

violent people," Trump said.

"We make a deal. They [Iran] go outside, talk to the press, they say 'we never even talked about it'. There's something wrong with them. They're cuckoo. As far as I'm concerned, it's over."

US Central Command (Centcom) said on Tuesday it had launched "powerful" strikes in response to attacks on three tankers in the Strait of Hormuz.

On Wednesday, Iran said it targeted US military sites in Bahrain and Kuwait in retaliation to the US strikes.

The US also said it had revoked its temporary suspension of sanctions on Iranian oil sales.

Trump made the comments while in a meeting with Nato chief Mark Rutte

Iran's parliamentary speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf accused the US of breaching their Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on this issue, and others,

including the attacks in southern Iran and "violating Iranian adjustments in the Strait".

"The era of bullying and extortion is over. It leads nowhere. We don't fold," he said.

Nato chief Mark Rutte described the American strikes as "absolutely necessary", saying that Iran was "basically violating the ceasefire".

It is not the first time strikes occurred after the MoU was signed on 17 June.

The US launched a series of strikes on Iran on 26 June after an Iranian projectile hit a cargo ship in the Strait of Hormuz. Further US strikes took place on 27 June, following an attack on a tanker. But later that month both sides had agreed to "stand down".

Part of the MoU's 14 points is for an "immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts".

Iran agreed to use its "best efforts for the safe passage of commercial vessels with no charge for 60 days".

Both sides had continued negotiations on the terms of a permanent end to the war, but talks were paused during funeral ceremonies for the late Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was killed on the first day of US-Israel strikes on Iran.

Ceremonies are taking place in Iraq on Wednesday, with the final rites and burial set for Mashhad in north-east Iran on Thursday.

It is not clear when talks will resume after this latest round of strikes, as Trump responded to a question about further negotiations with the comment: "I don't care".

"Frankly, I don't want to waste my time with them. Now, I'll let our wonderful negotiators keep talking if they want, but I don't see it," Trump said.

Nato allies announce £37bn for new missile project

Twelve countries, including the UK, are set to spend more than £37bn (\$50bn) over the next 10 years on a new long-range missile to protect Europe.

The Deep Precision Strike project has just been unveiled by No 10 and is due to be discussed later on Wednesday at the Nato summit in the Turkish capital, Ankara.

Sir Keir Starmer is there for his final Nato summit as prime minister. He is likely to face some criticism from US President Donald Trump for failing to set out a plan for reaching 3.5% of GDP spent on defence by 2035, a target agreed by nearly all Nato members last year.

But on Wednesday the prime minister will convene around a dozen leaders to discuss the new missile programme.

Billed as one of Nato's most advanced weapons, it is intended to strike targets nearly 200 miles (300km) away with pinpoint accuracy, possibly extending out to 1,250 miles.

Sir Keir said the UK-led initiative would "help bring European allies together to keep Nato safe for years to come".

Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper said the plan was "part of a recognition that we're in a more dangerous world".

"This is about how we make sure we have a stronger Europe within a stronger Nato," she told BBC Breakfast from Ankara.

But like many planned military projects in the pipeline, Deep Strike is not expected to be ready until the 2030s.

In June, US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth announced a six-month review of the presence of US forces in Europe.

Trump has repeatedly made clear he wants Nato members

to contribute more to defence spending in Europe and at last year's Nato summit, members of the alliance agreed to spend 5% of GDP on defence and security by 2035.

Sir Keir said he was "determined" to ensure the safety of the UK and its allies, adding: "We must step up to deliver a stronger, more European Nato."

The UK government has already committed £300bn by 2030 in the Defence Investment Plan.

At the summit, Sir Keir is expected to underline the threat posed by Russia to the UK and Nato.

The government said Nato had scrambled fighter jets to intercept Russian aircraft approaching allied airspace more than 700 times and that Russian military activity around UK waters had surged 30%.

Sir Keir is expected to stress that whilst Nato did not seek confrontation with Russia, it must be ready to defend every ally.

Cooper said: "With deep precision strike capability, the UK and our allies will be able to hit high value military targets and the logistical engines that drive armies, deterring any aggressor and strengthening our mutual security."

"At Ankara we are sending a clear message to [Russian] President [Vladimir] Putin; Nato is stronger, more European and ready to defend our citizens against the long-term threat posed by him and the Russian state."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky used a speech at the summit on Tuesday to urge Ukraine's allies to deliver the air defence systems it urgently needs to protect it from escalating Russian attacks.

German doctor jailed for murder of 15 patients and suspected of more

The 41-year-old man was found guilty of murdering 12 women and 3 men. A German palliative care doctor has been sentenced to life imprisonment for killing 15 of his patients.

A court in Berlin found the 41-year-old man, named only as Johannes M. in line with German privacy rules, guilty of murdering 12 women and 3 men between September 2021 and July 2024.

The authorities believe these killings could be just the tip of the iceberg. Prosecutors are currently investigating dozens of other incidents involving the doctor.

His victims were between the ages of 25 and 94. The court heard how they were all critically ill, but that their

deaths were not imminent.

Prosecutors said that during home visits, the doctor administered a lethal combination of various medicines without his patients' consent.

On several occasions, they said he set fires to cover his tracks.

In July 2024, shortly before his arrest, prosecutors said the doctor killed two patients in a single day - a 75-year-old man at his home in central Berlin and, a few hours later, a 76-year-old woman in a neighbouring district.

They said the doctor tried to set fire to the woman's house, but failed.

For much of the trial, which has gone on for about a year, the doctor said nothing. But last month, he confessed to

having "killed people," twelve of his severely ill patients.

He told the court he had convinced himself that he was doing the right thing, sparing them "suffering and infirmity".

"Throughout it all, I thought this was the best thing for everyone," he said.

He said he apologised for all the suffering he had caused.

The authorities suspect him of having killed further patients. Prosecutors are currently investigating 76 other cases.

German media say if the further cases are proven, and he is found guilty, it would be one of the largest incidences of serial murder in Germany's history.

The doctor told the court that he would "get involved much earlier in the forthcoming

proceedings."

Earlier in the trial, relatives of the victims told the court they still couldn't believe it.

The mother of the youngest victim, a 25-year-old woman who died in 2021, was in tears. "She never said she didn't want to live anymore," she said.

The son of a 72-year-old woman who died in 2024, said his mother had had plans to go to the Baltic Sea with her sister. "My mother wanted to keep on living," he said.

The court ruled that the doctor's guilt was particularly serious. It ordered that the doctor be put in preventive detention, following his prison sentence. It also imposed a lifetime ban on him practising medicine.

NEWS**FOREIGN**

Eight killed after landslide hits girls' school in Bangladesh

Seven students and a teacher have been killed in Bangladesh after a landslide hit a girls' school inside a refugee camp.

The Islamic study centre in the coastal city of Cox's Bazar was buried by mud and debris on Wednesday afternoon, sparking frantic search and rescue efforts. It is unclear how many people were inside the school.

The country has been battered by monsoon rains since Sunday, with several deadly

landslides reported in Cox's Bazar.

More than one million Rohingya people live there in what is the world's largest refugee settlement, having fled a deadly military crackdown in Myanmar.

Rescuers pulled 13 people from the mud that engulfed their school hut, eight of whom died, the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner Mohammed Mizanur Rahman said.

"Some of them are seven,

eight, 11 or 12 years old," Pana Akhter, a local district officer, told BBC Bangla.

The other five children were taken to hospital for treatment.

Earlier, officials said other landslides had killed at least eight Rohingya refugees, including five children, since Sunday.

Thousands of Rohingya, one of Myanmar's many ethnic minorities, were killed and more than 700,000 fled to neighbouring Bangladesh during an army crackdown in Myanmar

in 2017.

The group, which is primarily Muslim, are denied citizenship by the government of Myanmar, a Buddhist-majority country.

Many face poor living conditions in Bangladesh, living in makeshift homes of tarpaulin and bamboo on steep hillsides.

More rain is forecast for the coming days, with authorities issuing warnings for more landslides and floods, and evacuating families in high risk areas.

Cubans protest after third nationwide power cut this year

Cubans in several locations on the island banged pots on Tuesday evening to express their anger about the latest nationwide power cut.

While public dissent in the Communist-run country is often punished with long prison sentences, there have been spontaneous protests in areas worst affected by the outages.

Fuel shortages have been exacerbated by tight US sanctions and an effective US oil blockade, meaning that even those who have generators often do not have the fuel to run them during power cuts.

Cuban officials said on Tuesday that most of the country had had power restored but locals shouted "turn on the lights!" in areas still in the dark.

Cubans grapple with fuel shortages and blackouts as US steps up pressure

Monday's nationwide outage was the third this year and comes on top of state-imposed rolling electricity cuts aimed at conserving the little remaining fuel.

Some rural areas are plunged into darkness for up to 70 hours at a time, while urban areas have seen planned outages of up to 30 hours.

The state electricity company did not say what had caused this latest unplanned incident.

The country's second-largest city, Santiago de Cuba, was among places where power had not yet been restored on Tuesday evening local time.

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel has acknowledged the spreading discontent among Cubans.

"There are shortages of transport, food, medicines, there are lengthy power cuts lasting more than 20 hours, that causes dissatisfaction, nobody can be happy, the people are suffering," he told reporters from Claridad, a Spanish-language weekly newspaper based in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

But he urged Cubans to direct their anger towards the US government instead of his, add-

ing: "People bang pots, some with more anger than others. I say: direct your pot-banging towards our northern neighbours, who are the ones behind these power cuts."

The US Ambassador to the United Nations, Michael Waltz, however, placed the blame squarely with the Cuban government.

Speaking at a meeting of the UN General Assembly on Tuesday, he urged it to "change your ways and turn the lights back on for your people".

He added that "there always seems to be enough power for the Cuban dictatorship".

But Cuba's foreign minister, Bruno Rodríguez, accused the US of waging "multi-dimensional, non-conventional warfare" against Cuba, which he said had "become ever more cruel" over the last seven months.

US-Cuban relations, which have been strained for decades, have deteriorated rapidly since the start of the year, when US President Donald Trump accused the island's government of posing a threat to the national security of the US.

Shortly after US forces seized former Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro - a close ally of the Cuban government - in January, Trump also openly mused that Cuba was "ready to fall".

Since then, the Trump administration has imposed fresh sanctions on Cuba as well as an effective blockade on oil shipments to Cuba, threatening to slap tariffs on countries which provide it with fuel.

The US has also levelled murder charges against Cuba's former president, Raúl Castro, who remains an influential figure on the island despite being 95 years old.

Despite trading barbs publicly, the two countries have been holding talks over recent weeks in private.

The Cuban foreign minister said on Tuesday that those talks "show no progress", but left the door open "to dialogue based on mutual respect and non-interference in Cuba's internal affairs".



Killing in Bangladesh:

A school at a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar was hit by the landslide

Nigeria's president demands to know how fake agency was allegedly set up in his office

Nigeria's president has ordered a corruption investigation into allegations that a fictitious government agency was set up within his own office, complete with public funding worth \$950,000 (£700,000).

According to the presidency, the letter from the president's chief of staff creating the Presidential Foreign Intervention Promotion Council (PFIPC) had been forged.

The police have launched a manhunt for Adeniyi Adeyemi Matthew, who had been presenting himself as the "PFIPC director general", on suspicion of forgery, impersonation and related offences.

Before going into hiding, Adeyemi told local media that he was innocent and now feared for his life.

He also promised to show up in court to clear his name, saying the body was lawfully established. He accused senior government officials of demanding bribes during the process of his appointment and

later attempting to take control of the council's funds. The presidency has denied those allegations.

Adeyemi said the council was set up in 2024 in order to attract foreign investment to Nigeria but there is no record of any deals being done.

It has a staff of three, who have been questioned by the police.

President Bola Tinubu on Tuesday directed the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) to investigate and submit a comprehensive report within 30 days.

Checks by BBC News Pidgin showed the agency had secured office space within the Federal Secretariat - the vast government complex that houses many of Nigeria's ministries in the capital Abuja - opened bank accounts with the Central Bank of Nigeria, and appeared in the 2026 Appropriation Act with an allocation of 1.3bn naira (\$950,000; £700,000).

The presidency claimed police forensic analysis had confirmed that the signature from the president's chief of staff, Femi Gbajabiamila, on the disputed appointment letter had been forged.

According to the charges filed before the Federal High Court in Abuja, Adeyemi and two other defendants are accused of using forged official documents to establish and operate the purported council, opening multiple bank accounts in its name and seeking official recognition for an agency the government maintains does not exist.

Tinubu directed the ICPC to investigate various allegations including:

Forged appointment letters and official government documents;

Use of false claims to seek official recognition and diplomatic support, including visa facilitation;

Opening of multiple bank accounts using allegedly forged documents and

The role of any public officer, private individual, financial institution or intermediary that may have facilitated the alleged scheme.

The president also ordered investigators to examine the wider circumstances that enabled an allegedly fictitious body to acquire the appearance of official legitimacy, and to identify weaknesses in government procedures that were alleged to have been exploited.

The scandal has prompted mounting public pressure from civil society organisations, opposition politicians and senior lawyers who have demanded an independent inquiry.

Tinubu said the integrity of the presidency and federal institutions "must be protected against impersonation, forgery, abuse of official identity and the exploitation of weaknesses in the public service".

"All persons found culpable are to be treated strictly in accordance with applicable law," the president's statement read.

Tanzania purchases 28 tons of gold over past 18 months

Tanzania is rapidly building one of Africa's biggest gold reserves, with its central bank buying nearly 28 tonnes of gold over the past 18 months, worth an estimated 3.7 billion dollars.

The move forms part of a strategy to strengthen the country's foreign exchange reserves and support the Tanzanian shilling.

A key policy introduced in 2024 requires mining companies and gold traders to sell 20 percent of their exported gold directly to the Bank of Tanza-

nia, allowing the country to build reserves from its own production rather than relying on international markets.

Officials say the strategy has helped lift foreign reserves to around 6 billion dollars while also creating thousands of new bank accounts for small-scale miners and traders.

The move reflects a broader global trend, with many central banks increasing their gold holdings as they seek to diversify reserves and reduce reliance on dollar-denominated assets.

Sports

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

Bendel Insurance FC resume for 2026/27 season preparations

● **as coach Boboye tasks team on discipline, productivity**

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Bendel Insurance Football Club on Wednesday returned from their end of 2025/26 Nigeria Premier



BENDEL INSURANCE FC

Football League season break to begin preparations for the 2026/27 Season.

The technical manager Kennedy Boboye with players and officials returned to the field at

the Samuel stadium for their first training on Wednesday afternoon.

Coach Boboye who led the Benin Arsenal out of relegation zone when he took charge of the technical crew in October 2025 and finished 5th on the NPFL table, welcomed his players and officials back to work and made it clear that work has started.

He appealed to the players to make his job easy for him as the task ahead is huge considering the fact that the ambition of the club is to finish among top three and strive for the title every season.

"I welcome everyone back and thank God we are back

without health issues. Work has started. No room for indiscipline. We must do better than we did last season. The process begins today. We are expecting some new faces in the next new days. So, we have to receive them as members of Insurance family and work together as a team."

"Management has assured us of improved welfare, so, we have no reason not to deliver this time. We owe them and fans winnings and fine football." Boboye said.

He said that all the retained and new players are expected to report to the Benin Arsenal's GRA camp latest Friday, July 10, 2026.

Joseph Odobeatu offers Up to \$2,000 medal bonus for Swimmers

South-East Representative on the Board of the Nigeria Aquatics Federation (NAqF), Joseph Odobeatu Anayo, popularly known as Ojez, has announced cash rewards of up to 2,000 US dollars for Nigerian swimmers who win medals at the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland, scheduled to hold from July 23 to August 2, 2026.

Under the incentive package, every Nigerian swimmer who wins a gold medal will receive 2,000 US dollars, silver medallists will earn 1,000 US dollars, while bronze medallists will receive 500 US dollars. Ojez said the initiative is aimed at motivating the athletes and complementing government efforts to ensure Nigeria records

a successful outing at the Games. "Our swimmers deserve every encouragement as they prepare to represent Nigeria at the Commonwealth Games. This reward is my way of motivating them to aim for the podium and make the nation proud," Ojez said.

He added: "I am offering 2,000 US dollars for every gold medal, 1,000 US dollars for every silver medal and 500 US dollars for every bronze medal won by our swimmers. Excellence deserves to be rewarded."

The businessman, philanthropist and sports enthusiast stressed that the initiative goes beyond financial rewards, noting that recognition and encouragement are vital to building champions.



JOSEPH ODOBEATU

Enthusiasts say Morocco, Egypt inspire fresh hope for African football

Football enthusiasts have hailed Morocco and Egypt's outstanding 2026 FIFA World Cup campaigns, describing their performances as a landmark moment for African football.

They said both countries proved African teams can compete with the world's strongest nations rather than merely participating at the tournament.

Speaking with journalists in Lagos yesterday, Nigeria Rugby Federation General Manager, Azeez Ladipo, said their achievements reflected Africa's remarkable football progress.

He said African teams now approach the World Cup believing they can challenge and defeat leading football nations.

He said: "The performances of Morocco and Egypt show how far African football has come.

"African teams are no longer at the World Cup just to take part. They are there to compete, challenge the best teams and even win matches."

Ladipo attributed both countries' success to sustained investment, careful planning and improved football administra-

tion over several years.

"Their success is the result of investing in young players, improving coaching, running football better and giving players the chance to play in top leagues.

"It shows that African football is moving in the right direction," he said.

He said the achievements

should inspire young footballers across Africa and encourage governments and football authorities to strengthen development programmes.

According to him, the success of Morocco and Egypt has enhanced Africa's global reputation while demonstrating the continent's immense football

potential.

"This achievement is bigger than football. It has made Africa proud and shown the world the great talent we have.

"Other African countries should improve their local football, so that these kinds of achievements become common," he said.

Muibi-Appah WBO Africa title fight postponed after champion's injury

The scheduled WBO Africa Cruiserweight title fight between Nigerian contender Lekan 'The Engine'

Muibi and champion Godday Appah has been postponed after the title holder reportedly suffered an injury.



MUIBI-APPAH

The bout was originally fixed for July 31 in Lagos under Balmoral Promotions and was expected to be broadcast live on DAZN.

Quadruga Sports Management, which manages the unbeaten Muibi, confirmed the postponement in a statement issued on Tuesday.

The company said organisers informed it that Appah sustained an injury during training, making him unavailable for the championship contest.

Quadruga wished the champion a speedy and complete recovery, expressing optimism that the highly anticipated fight would be rearranged as soon as possible.

Ranchers Bees FC sign goalkeeper Alhassan Tofa from green berets

Newly promoted Nigeria Premier Football League side Ranchers Bees of Kaduna have strengthened their squad with the signing of experienced goalkeeper Alhassan Tofa from Green Berets on a one-year contract.

Speaking with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Kaduna, the General Manager of Ranchers Bees, Alhaji Kabiru

Mu'azu, said Tofa signed a one-year contract with an option for an additional year.

Mu'azu expressed confidence that his experience and leadership would strengthen the team's defensive unit.

He described the signing as another strategic step towards building a competitive squad capable of holding its own in the NPFL.

"Alhassan is a proven goal-

keeper with quality, discipline and experience. We believe he will bring stability, confidence and healthy competition to our goalkeeping department.

"Our objective is to assemble a team that can compete successfully in the league, and Tofa fits perfectly into that vision," he said.

The Head Coach, Usman Abdallah, said the goalkeeper's arrival would add depth and

quality to the squad.

"Every successful team needs reliable players in every position. Tofa has demonstrated consistency over the years, and we are pleased to have him with us.

"He is hardworking, experienced and understands the demands of top-level football. We expect him to contribute immensely both on and off the pitch," Abdallah said.

Enugu Rangers set to unveil new players ahead of new season

The Rangers International Football club of Enugu says it has begun preparations for the commencement of the 2026/27 football season.

The flying antelopes will feature both in the Confederation of African Football (CAF) Champions league and the Nigerian Premier Football League (NPFL).

Speaking yesterday in Enugu, Amobi Ezeaku, Rangers General Manager, said the team had signed a few players to prosecute the CAF champions league and the NPFL.

"We have some new players that have joined us; as usual we have a way of unveiling our new

players in line with our rules.

"When the time comes we will announce them and present our new players to the public," he said.

Ezeaku disclosed that the team had commenced training ahead of the season schedule.

On where Rangers will be playing due to the ongoing renovation at the Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium, he said that everything was under control.

"We have to assess the level of work done at the stadium before deciding what next to do.

"I know that work is progressing fast but we cannot say for now what will happen until the time comes.



ENUGU RANGERS



World Cup: Switzerland edge Colombia on penalties to reach quarter-finals

Switzerland defeated Colombia 4-3 on penalties after a goalless 120 minutes in a fiercely contested FIFA World Cup Round of 16 match in Vancouver.

Both teams displayed tactical discipline, physical resilience and defensive organisation, refusing to take unnecessary risks with a quarter-final place at stake.

Colombia started brightly, dominating possession and moving the ball quickly through midfield while looking to exploit Switzerland with swift counter-attacks.

The South Americans pressed aggressively, won second balls and disrupted Switzerland's passing rhythm throughout much of the opening half.

Their attackers stretched the Swiss defence with intelligent movement, while the wingers repeatedly threatened down both flanks.

In spite of enjoying more possession, Colombia struggled to break through Switzerland's disciplined and compact defence.

Switzerland found it difficult to settle early as Colombia's relentless pressing forced misplaced passes and isolated their forwards.

The momentum shifted after the hydration break as Switzerland grew into the contest and began controlling possession.

The Europeans patiently built attacks from the back and dictated the tempo, forcing Colombia to defend deeper.

Colombia remained dangerous on the counter and finished the first half strongly, keeping the Swiss defence under sustained pressure.

Switzerland introduced midfielder Djibril Sow for Ardon Jashari immediately after the restart to strengthen their midfield.

The substitution added energy and improved Switzerland's ability to regain possession and launch attacks.

Swiss captain Granit Xhaka received a yellow card in the 51st minute for halting a dangerous Colombian attack.

Denis Zakaria was cautioned eight minutes later before Colombia's Luis Suárez entered the referee's notebook in the 61st minute.

Colombia responded with a double substitution in the 66th minute as Juan Fernando Quintero replaced James Rodríguez and Johan Campaz came on for Jhon Arias.

The changes injected fresh attacking impetus, but Switzerland's disciplined defence continued to frustrate Colombia.

Switzerland introduced Miro Muheim for Ricardo Rodríguez



SWITZERLAND PLAYERS CELEBRATING

in the 71st minute to strengthen their left flank.

Colombia made further attacking changes in the 82nd minute, introducing Carlos Hernández and Richard Ríos for Luis Suárez and Jefferson Lerma.

Switzerland replied by bringing on Cedric Itten and Silvan Widmer before Ruben Vargas replaced

Dan Ndoye in stoppage time.

Extra time followed a familiar pattern, with Switzerland enjoying more possession while Colombia threatened through quick transitions.

Fatigue became evident as both sides battled cramps, while Davinson Sánchez received a yellow card in the 95th minute.

Neither side found a breakthrough as disciplined defending protected both goalkeepers throughout extra time.

The tie was ultimately settled by penalties after the deadlock remained unbroken.

Juan Fernando Quintero converted Colombia's opening penalty before Xhaka responded confidently for Switzerland.

Davinson Sánchez missed Colombia's second spot-kick, allowing Zeki Amdouni to give Switzerland the advantage.

Johan Campaz converted for Colombia, but Manuel Akanji failed to extend Switzerland's lead after missing his penalty.

Carlos Hernández then missed for Colombia before Cedric Itten calmly converted Switzerland's fourth penalty.

Luis Díaz kept Colombia's hopes alive by scoring, but Ruben Vargas converted the decisive penalty to seal Switzerland's 4-3 shootout victory.

Switzerland's patience, defensive discipline and composure under pressure earned a deserved place in the World Cup quarter-finals.

World Cup: Argentina fight back to eliminate Egypt 3-2 at Round of 16

Argentina staged a stirring comeback to defeat Egypt 3-2 in a thrilling FIFA World Cup Round of 16 clash on Tuesday.

Egypt made the brighter start and stunned the South American giants with disciplined defending and swift counter-attacking football.

The Pharaohs opened the scoring midway through the first half after a flowing move split Argentina's defence before a composed finish beat the goalkeeper.

Egypt doubled their advantage before the interval, capitalising on another defensive lapse to leave Argentina facing a shock elimination.

Argentina emerged transformed after the break, increasing their tempo and pinning Egypt deep inside their own half.

Their persistence paid off when they reduced the deficit through a well-worked attacking move, reigniting hopes of an unlikely comeback.

The goal shifted momentum completely as Argentina dominated possession and created chances with relentless pressure.

Egypt defended bravely but



MESSI AND TEAM MATE CELEBRATE AFTER QUALIFYING

struggled to contain Argentina's attacking intensity as fatigue began to take its toll.

The equaliser arrived midway through the second half after sustained pressure finally broke Egypt's resistance.

With confidence restored, Argentina continued pushing forward while Egypt searched desperately for relief through counter-attacks.

The decisive goal came late in the contest, sparking wild celebrations among Argentina's players and supporters.

Egypt pressed for an equalis-

er during the closing stages but Argentina defended resolutely to preserve their slender advantage.

The final whistle confirmed a dramatic 3-2 victory, completing one of the tournament's finest comebacks.

Argentina advance to the quarter-finals with renewed belief after recovering from a two-goal deficit against determined Egyptian opposition.

Egypt exit the competition with heads held high after producing a spirited display that pushed one of football's traditional powers to the limit.

Badagry earns backing to host more beach volleyball events

The President of the Nigeria Volleyball Federation, Musa Nimrod, has described Badagry, Lagos State, as the ideal venue for major beach volleyball competitions after a successful Zone 3 Championship.

Nimrod said that hosting the 2026 African Nations Cup Beach Volleyball Zone 3 Championship in Badagry proved the right decision.

He said the town's coastal terrain, beachfront courts and historical attractions created an outstanding environment for competition and preparation

ahead of international tournaments.

"We always like to bring our players to Badagry because of the condition and terrain, which are suitable for beach volleyball.

"We usually conclude our training camp here before travelling for international competitions because it provides the perfect preparation for our athletes," Nimrod said.

He said athletes also enjoyed quality accommodation, feeding and welfare throughout the championship, contributing to the tournament's overall success.



MUSA NIMROD

Anambra Commissioner mobilises for 2026 Olympic Day Run

Anambra Government has called on citizens to come out en masse and participate in this year's Olympic Day Run scheduled for Saturday, July 11.

Patrick Aghamba, Commissioner for Sports and Youth Development, made the call in a statement in Alaska, US and made available to journalists in Awka on Wednesday.

The Olympic Day is a global celebration commemorating the founding of the International Olympic Committee (IOC)

on June 23, 1894.

Aghamba said the event, which targets a community fun walk of a distance between 3km and 5km, will commence at ABS Compound, Awka at 7a.m. and terminates at the Awka Township Stadium.

"The event promotes the values of the Olympic Movement through its three pillars, Move, Learn, and Discover.

"It also encourages physical fitness, healthy living, and community participation regardless of age, gender, or athletic ability," he said.



2026 OLYMPIC DAY RUN