

# Worries over voters' registration as exercise nears deadline

## ● As INEC registers 1.5m voters in 7 weeks

Rev. Dr. Sunday Emma, Chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in Nasarawa State, has called on Christians and other eligible Nigerians to take part in the ongoing voter registration exercise ahead of the 2027 election. Speaking with newsmen on Tuesday in Lafia, Emma described voting as both a civic obligation and moral respon-

sibility, urging citizens not to lose confidence in the country's electoral process. He encouraged the Christian faithful to register in large numbers, stressing that failing to vote amounts to neglecting an important civic duty. According to him, although

concerns remain about the credibility of elections, Nigerians can bring about positive change by participating actively and protecting their votes. "We should not give up by saying our votes will not count. If we all come out, defend our votes and play our part, some-

thing can change," he said. The Chairman further called on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to strengthen public confidence in the electoral system by ensuring future elections are free and fair. He also urged the judiciary to uphold justice in resolving elec-

toral disputes, insisting that elections should be decided at polling units rather than in the courts. The cleric said good leadership could only emerge through credible elections, adding that poor leadership had contributed to challenges such as insecurity, poor education, inadequate healthcare and economic hardship. Emma encouraged Nigeri-

ans to perform their civic responsibilities while leaving the outcome to God. He expressed hope that the country's democratic process would improve through collective participation. Meanwhile, The Independent National Electoral Commission

CONTINUES ON PG 4 >>

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That The People May Know

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# Tourism summit catalyses Edo SHINE agenda —Okpebholo-Anani

BENEDICT OKATE

## BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government has reaffirmed its commitment to repositioning tourism as a key driver of economic growth, with stakeholders describing the sector as a new frontier for in-

vestment, cultural preservation and job creation. Speaking at the second day of the Edo State Tourism Summit, Exhibition and Fashion Show 2026, themed "Edo Tourism: The New Frontier," the Coordinator, Office of the First Lady, Edo State, Mrs. Edesili Okpebholo Anani, represented

by the wife of the Secretary to the State Government, Barrister Nimata Umar Ikhilor, said the state was deliberately building a vibrant tourism industry capable of attracting both local and international visitors. According to her, the summit aligns with the SHINE agenda of Governor Monday Okpeb-

holo and is designed to increase tourism traffic across the state. "This forum is creating a bold and deliberate tourism agenda for Edo State. The summit will help increase tourism traffic in the state and align with the SHINE agenda of Governor Monday Okpebholo." She stressed that the success

of any tourism destination begins with the confidence and commitment of its people. "Every successful destination has one common factor—the people believe in it first before others follow. Beyond our rich history lies great tourism sites spread across Edo State." Barrister Mrs. Ikhilor also described fashion as a powerful cultural asset capable of projecting

the state's identity to the world. "Fashion is the strongest expression of our identity. Through fashion, we tell our story, preserve our heritage and promote our culture." Earlier in her welcome address, the Director of Administration and Supply, Edo State Tourism Agency, Mrs. Kushe Ojekhoa, described the event as a celebration of creativity and cultural excellence. She said fashion goes beyond clothing to reflect identity, values and heritage, urging

CONTINUES ON PG 4 >>



### PRIZE PRESENTATION:

Dennis Odion receives five hundred thousand naira from the wife of the Secretary to Edo State Government, Barr. Mrs. Ikhilor, who represented the Coordinator, Office of the Edo First Lady as overall best in the fashion show and arts exhibition in the Summit, exhibition and fashion show 2026 organised by the State Tourism Agency.

## Xenophobia: FG in high level engagements with S/Africa for safety of Nigerian nationals

### ● Says 268 evacuees arrived in Lagos Tuesday

#### ABUJA

The Federal Government on Tuesday assured Nigerian citizens residing in South Africa of their continued safety, promising sustained high-level diplomatic engagements with South African authorities to protect their interests. Mr. Kimiebi Ebienua, the Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, gave the assurance in a statement issued in Abuja to mark the arrival of the second batch of Nigerian evacuees from Johannesburg. The evacuation coincides with the June 30 deadline imposed by South African authorities for undocumented foreigners to exit the country.

According to Ebienua, the second evacuation flight, operated by Air Peace, arrived at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, at 10:48 a.m. on Tuesday with 269 returnees. This brings the total number of recent evacuees to 335, following the June 24 repatriation of 66 Nigerians via South African Airways, which was facilitated by a private citizen. The statement noted that the 269 returnees were escorted by officials from the Nigerian Mission in South Africa and received in Lagos by a federal delegation led by Amb. Haruna Ali-Gombe, Director of the African Affairs Department.

CONTINUES ON PG 4 >>

**FEC approves sweeping NYSC reforms**  
—Pg 2

**Alleged defamation: Court grants Sowore N200m bail**  
—Pg 7

**Thousands of anti-migrant protesters march in South Africa amid heavy police**  
—Pg 9

**NSC names shot put star —Pg 12 Chukwuebuka Enekwechi as Team Nigeria's male captain for 2026 Commonwealth Games**

# NEWS

## 7 years after, Delta Gov summons contractor, consultant over unfinished project

AJUWA VICTOR

**IRRI**

Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwori, has expressed displeasure over the slow pace

of work at the Technical College, Irri, in Isoko South Local Government Area, describing the delay in completing the project as unacceptable.

The governor who paid an unscheduled inspection visit to

the project site, lamented that the contract, awarded in 2019, had remained unfinished after seven years.

Received at the project site by the Chairman of Isoko South Local Government Council, Hon. Warri Ovoke Friday; the Odio-Ologbo of Irri Kingdom, HRM Simon Wajutome Odhomo, Igbogidi I; and former President-General of the Isoko Development Union (IDU), High Chief Iduh Amadhe, Oborevwori said the contractor had failed to demonstrate sufficient compe-

tence and commitment to deliver the project on record time.

Speaking with journalists after inspecting the project, the governor said he was not convinced by assurances that the project would be completed by August this year, noting that significant aspects of the work were yet to commence.

Oborevwori said; "I spoke with the commissioner and he told me he had reached out to the contractor, who said the project would be completed by August. But from what I have

seen here, I am not sure that timeline is realistic.

"The workshop has not even started. The landscaping will also take some time, and some sections of the roofing are still incomplete. What you see in front is different from what is behind the buildings, so I decided to inspect the entire project.

"I am not satisfied with what I have seen. The project was awarded in 2019, and it is a shame that after seven years it is still not completed. The question is, what is holding the contractor back?"

"If people are serious about a project, you will see them actively working on site. That was not the case here. I did not even find the contractor or workers on site. I am not satisfied with the work".

The governor said he would summon both the contractor and the project consultant to account for the prolonged delay, and also blamed the delay on poor supervision, saying he had hoped the institution would begin admitting students by September, but delays had made that impossible.

## DisCos generates N203.6bn from electricity consumers in April —NERC

**ABUJA**

The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) says Electricity Distribution Companies (DisCos) generated N203.61bn from electricity consumers in April.

The company said this in its Commercial Performance Factsheet for April on its X handle in Abuja on Tuesday.

The factsheet showed that the 11 DisCos collected N203.61bn out of total billings of N252.43bn during the month in review.

It said the collection translated to a collection efficiency of 80.66 per cent, up by 1.07 percentage point in March.

According to the report, the DisCos received electricity

worth N302.96bn and billed customers N252.43bn out of which N203.61bn was collected.

It said that the figure represented a billing efficiency of 83.32 per cent, a slight decline of 0.57 percentage point from the previous month.

The report further said that the industry's revenue recovery efficiency stood at 82.11 per cent, with the average actual collection of N102.13 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) compared to the allowed average tariff of N124.39/kWh.

It listed the top performers DisCos to include: Eko, 102.09 per cent, Abuja, 89.77 per cent and Ikeja 88.89 per cent. The factsheet said that these DisCos stood out with the highest recovery efficiency levels for April.

## How Nigeria's economy escape collapse —Oyedele

**ABUJA**

The Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr Taiwo Oyedele, says President Bola Tinubu's reforms prevented Nigeria's economy from collapsing.

Oyedele said this in Abuja during a plenary at the 2026 Nigeria Employers' Summit organised by the Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA).

Oyedele who spoke on the theme, "The Reforms in Focus: The Milestones, The Challenges, The Prospects", said Nigeria's economy was nearing collapse before the reforms, especially the removal of fuel subsidy.

"Before the subsidy removal, Nigeria had less than three months before a major fuel crisis.

"People would have had money without finding petrol because the subsidy had become unsustainable," he said.

The minister said the government had exhausted oil revenues funding fuel subsidies and resorted to borrowing against future crude production.

He said the situation left substantial national oil resources already committed.

According to him, the reforms restored economic stability after initial volatility, including higher fuel prices, inflation, transport costs and

exchange rate adjustments.

"We have moved from volatility to stability. Stability is necessary because, without it, sustainable economic growth and job creation cannot happen," Oyedele said.

He said the next phase of government's economic agenda focused on accelerated, job-rich and productive growth.

According to him, government targets seven per cent annual real Gross Domestic Product growth across sectors which will deliver at least, five per cent per capital income growth.

"The sacrifices Nigerians have made must not be wasted. We must remain focused and consolidate these reforms to achieve sustainable economic prosperity for everyone," he said.

Oyedele disclosed that government deliberately designed the reforms to protect small businesses and low-income earners, and urged wealthier Nigerians to support the reforms through greater sacrifice and responsibility.

The minister said government could not sustainably finance social welfare by printing money.

"We cannot build sustainable welfare by printing money. Government must generate adequate revenue before redistributing resources to protect vulnerable Nigerians and strengthen economic resilience," he said.

**VOLUNTARY RETURN:**

L-R: Mrs Abike Dabiri-Erewa, Chairman/CEO of Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), and Mr Hünkar Ibin, Head of Department of Removal Affairs, Türkiye Presidency of Migration Management to facilitate the voluntary return and reintegration of undocumented Nigerians.

## FEC approves sweeping NYSC reforms

● **Scheme to be led by a civilian in its operational leadership**

**ABUJA**

The Federal Executive Council (FEC), has approved a comprehensive reform of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) to align the 53-year-old scheme with Nigeria's current development priorities.

Mr Ayodele Olawande, Minister of Youth Development, disclosed this while briefing State House correspondents after the FEC meeting, presided over by President Bola Tinubu.

He said the reform followed a comprehensive review undertaken by the Federal Ministry of Youth Development and

other relevant stakeholders.

According to him, the review was conducted in collaboration with the Federal Ministries of Education and the Office of the Special Adviser to the President.

Olawande said the reforms were designed to reposition the NYSC beyond mobilisation into a platform for skills development, employment and national growth.

"We want to build an NYSC beyond just mobilisation. We are looking at strong partnerships for skill development, job creation and national growth," he said.

The minister said the reforms would strengthen digital opera-

tions, improve the welfare and security of corps members and address emerging national priorities.

"The key reforms include digital transformation, self-development for corps members, security and attention to special issues," he said.

He said the framework also provides for the upgrading of orientation camps through stronger collaboration with state governments.

"We want every state to have standard orientation camps for our young people,"

Olawande said. The minister added that the passing-out parade would be redesigned into a formal grad-

uation ceremony to reflect the skills and competencies acquired by corps members.

"The passing-out parade should be redesigned from just a parade to a proper graduation ceremony," he said.

He also disclosed that the reform would introduce a strengthened professional identity for corps members and review the NYSC Act to support the new framework.

Mrs Hadiza Bala Usman, Special Adviser to the President on Policy Coordination and Head of the Central Results Delivery Coordination Unit (CRD-CU), said with the reform, the NYSC will be led by a civilian in its operational leadership.

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# Father, 3 sons nabbed as Amotekun rescues kidnap victim

## AKURE

The Ondo State Security Network Agency, code-named Amotekun, says it has rescued a kidnap victim, and arrested a father and his three sons at Oba-Ile Akoko in Akoko South West Local Gov-

ernment Area of the state.

Mr Adetunji Adeleye, Amotekun Corps Commander made the disclosure while parading 28 suspects for kidnap-related cases and 15 others for criminal offences on Tuesday in Akure.

"Today, we have Usman, 33; Wahab, 27; Yakubu, 18; and

their father, Iliasu, 56, arrested in Oba Akoko, Ondo State.

"Not only that, we equally recovered drugs, drinks, cigarettes and what looked like camouflage used to cover the eyes of the kidnapped victim," he said.

Adeleye explained that the suspects were arrested after the victim's family reported the incident to the command.

The Amotekun commander, who said that the victim was kidnapped on his way to Oba Akoko, explained that the family arranged ransom without informing Amotekun.

"In spite of the ransom payment, the kidnapers refused to release the victim. They also threatened the family not to report the incident.

"This eventually brought the family to the Amotekun office, and we immediately swung into action.

"At the end of the day, we found a family, a father and three sons directly involved, using cattle as cover.

"In the course of the operation, they (kidnappers) attacked our men, but we succeeded in

rescuing the victim," he said.

Adeleye also said the kidnapers tortured the victim with knives and cutlasses on the head, while the victim had been rushed to a nearby hospital.

According to him, Amotekun personnel were able to recover over 75 per cent of the ransom paid.

## Pre-election cases: Federal High Court CJ issues new practice directions

### ABUJA

The Federal High Court (FHC) has issued (Pre-Election) Practice Directions, 2026, for a fair, impartial and expeditious determination of pre-election cases across the country.

The new practice direction issued by the Chief Judge (CJ), Justice John Tsoho on Tuesday is in exercise of the powers conferred on him by virtue of Sections 254, 285 (9), (10) and (14) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), Sections 29 (5) and 88 (2) of the Electoral Act, 2026 and all other powers enabling him to that regard.

The FHC's Director of Information, Dr. Catherine-Oby Christopher, made this known in a statement on Tuesday in Abuja.

The court said the practice directions are also aimed at ensuring that in all election matters, the parties focus on matters which are genuinely in issue.

The CJ said it would minimise the time spent in dealing with interlocutory matters; ensure that the possibility of amicable settlement is explored before the parties go into hearing and min-

imise undue adjournments and delays in the conduct of matters.

He also said that it was in line with the constitution, the Electoral Act, 2026, and other applicable laws.

"The Federal High Court of Nigeria hereby notifies members of the Bar, political parties, litigants and the general public that the Honourable the Chief Judge of the Federal High Court, Hon. Justice John Terhamba Tsoho, OFR, has issued the Federal High Court (Pre-Election) Practice Directions, 2026.

"It is instructive that the current Practice Directions has repealed the 2022 version," the CJ said.

According to a copy of the (Pre-Election) Practice Directions, 2026 attached to the statement, the provisions of the Federal High Court (Civil Procedure) Rules, 2019 shall apply to any issue not provided for in this Practice Directions.

"The court, in every pre-election matter before it, shall pay particular attention to the provisions of Sections 29 (5) (6) (7), 83 (5) & (6), 88 (1 4) of the Electoral Act, 2026 and Section 285 (14) (C) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended)."

## Scholarship award: Students hail Gov. Aliyu for clearing arrears

### SOKOTO

The Federated Organisation of Sokoto State Students' Associations (FOSSA) has commended Gov. Ahmed Aliyu for settling N3 billion in outstanding scholarship arrears inherited from the previous administration.

FOSSA described the payment as a lifeline that has restored hope to thousands of Sokoto students studying within and outside the state.

The association said the unpaid scholarships, which had accumulated over the years, placed many students in tertiary institutions across Nigeria and abroad under severe financial strain and disrupted their academic progress.

FOSSA President, Comrade Yusuf Sabiu, stated this on Tuesday in Sokoto during a press conference to mark the successful end of the association's 2025/2026 tenure.

Sabiu said the settlement reflected the governor's commitment to education and student welfare, noting that many beneficiaries had struggled to meet tuition and other academic costs

due to the prolonged delay.

"The non-payment of scholarship arrears by the previous administration greatly affected the academic pursuits of Sokoto State students studying both within and outside Nigeria.

"Today, that challenge is now history, as the education-friendly administration of Gov. Ahmed Aliyu has cleared all outstanding liabilities owed to our members," he said.

He also applauded the governor for sustaining the payment of school fees for Sokoto students in higher institutions within the country and overseas.

According to him, the only outstanding payments are the school fees for the 2025/2026 academic session.

He added that all eligible beneficiaries have been verified and payment is expected to begin soon.

"We have nothing to say to the governor except to express our profound gratitude.

"His support has renewed the hopes of many students and shown that education remains a priority for his administration," Sabiu said.



### COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT:

L-R: Team Lead, Secured Lending Product First Bank Plc; Mr Musiliu Olokodana; Rotary District 9111 Governor 2025-2026, Henry Akinyele; Director, Lagos State Mass Education; Mrs OluwaKemi Kalesanwo and District Governor 2026-2027, Bukola Bakare, during the First Bank Plc sponsored Rotary International District 9111 Community Empowerment of 140 beneficiaries in Lagos on Monday.

## Electricity consumers hit 12.16m in Q4 of 2025 —NBS

### ABUJA

The number of electricity consumers rose by 130,000 from 12.03 million in the third quarter of 2025 to 12.16 million in the fourth quarter of 2025 indicating 1.11 per cent.

This is contained in a fourth quarter (Q4) 2025 electricity report released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on Tuesday in Abuja.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the review focuses on energy billed, revenue generated, and customers by DIS-

COS under the reviewed period.

It stated that on a year-on-year basis, the number of electricity customers decreased by 8.52 per cent in Q4 of 2025 from 13.30 million reported in Q4 2024.

It also said that in Q4 of 2025, the number of metered customers stood at 6.97 million compared with the 6.66 million recorded in Q3 of 2025, which indicated a 4.58 per cent increase.

"On a year-on-year basis, the figure grew by 12.18 per cent from the 6.21million reported

in Q4 2024," the report said.

The report added that estimated electricity customers stood at 5.20 million in Q4 of 2025, showing a decrease of 3.20 per cent over the 5.37 million recorded in Q3 of 2025.

"On a year-on-year basis, estimated customers also decreased by 26.67 per cent in Q4 of 2025 from the 7.09 million recorded in Q4 of 2024," it said.

The NBS further said that electricity distribution companies (DISCOS), collected N630.93 billion in revenue in Q4 of 2025 compared with the N570.26 bil-

lion collected in Q3 of 2025.

It added that on a year-on-year basis, revenue collected rose by 23.75 per cent over the N509.84 billion collected in Q4 of 2024.

It said that the electricity supply was 6,627.56 (Gwh) in the fourth quarter of 2025 from 6,158.52 (Gwh) recorded in the third quarter of 2025, which represented a 7.62 per cent increase.

The report also said on a year-on-year basis, electricity supply increased by 6.76 per cent in Q4 of 2025 compared with the 6,207.85 (Gwh) reported in Q4 of 2024.

## Petroleum sector: FG seeks stronger legal ties to boost investment

### ABUJA

The Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) has called for stronger collaboration between regulators and legal professionals to enhance regulatory certainty and attract investment into Nigeria's petroleum sector.

The Chief Executive of NMDPRA, Malam Rabiu Umar, made the call at its 2026 General Counsel and Legal Advisers Forum in Abuja.

The forum, with the theme, "Beyond Compliance: Driving Regulatory Certainty and Investment Confidence in Nigeria's Petroleum Sector" brought together legal advisers, regulators, industry operators and

other stakeholders.

Umar said effective regulation could not be achieved through laws and regulations alone, stressing that legal advisers, compliance professionals and regulators had critical roles in translating regulatory requirements into practical outcomes.

"We recognise that regulation is most effective when it is informed by engagement. We recognise that implementation challenges exist. We recognise that areas of ambiguity occasionally arise within even the most carefully designed frameworks.

"I stand before you all today to make a commitment that NMDPRA will continue to engage openly with stakeholders, act transparently, regulate fairly and consistently, and remain

responsive to the realities of an evolving industry.

"We will continue to strengthen regulatory clarity, encourage responsible investment, and foster the collaborative relationships that are essential to achieving the objectives of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA).

"We cannot achieve those objectives in isolation. We will achieve them through partnership, dialogue, and collective commitment of all stakeholders represented in this room," he said.

He said while compliance remained the foundation of a well regulated petroleum industry, the broader objective was to build a sector characterised by certainty, transparency, predictability and investor con-

fidence.

He said such an environment would enable investors to commit capital with confidence while allowing operators to make long-term business decisions under clear and consistent regulatory expectations.

Umar said five years after the implementation of the PIA, attention had shifted from the provisions of the law to its practical implementation and impact on the industry.

He said discussions were now focused on how regulations were working in practice, how markets were responding to reforms, how investors viewed emerging opportunities and how institutions could work together to achieve PIA's objectives.

## NEWS

# Gov Okpebholo celebrates Odubu at 69

## BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has extended warm felicitations to former Deputy Governor of Edo State and respected leader of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Rt.

Hon. Pius Egberanmwun Odubu, on the occasion of his 69th birthday.

Governor Okpebholo described Rt. Hon. Odubu as a distinguished statesman, accomplished legal practitioner, and committed party leader whose decades of service have

positively impacted Edo State and Nigeria.

The governor noted that throughout his public life, Rt. Hon. Odubu has demonstrated exemplary leadership, integrity, and strong commitment to the growth of democratic institutions, adding that his wealth of

experience continues to serve as a source of inspiration to younger generations.

"On behalf of the government and the good people of Edo State, I heartily congratulate Rt. Hon. Pius Odubu on the joyous occasion of his 69th birthday.

"Your remarkable contribu-

tions to public service, the legal profession, and the development of our great party have earned you the respect and admiration of many. Your dedication, wisdom, and statesmanship remain invaluable assets to Edo State and our nation.

"As you celebrate another year of God's faithfulness, I pray that the Almighty grants you continued good health, strength,

wisdom, and many more years of fulfilling service to humanity," the Governor said.

Governor Okpebholo wished the elder statesman a joyful celebration with his family, friends, political associates, and well-wishers while expressing confidence that his legacy of selfless service would continue to inspire generations of leaders.



## WINNERS OF 2026 OLYMPIAD:

Modibbo Adama University, Yola, winners of the 2026 Nigerian Engineering Olympiad (NEO) flanked by stakeholders on Tuesday in Lagos.

## Money laundering: Igbinedion withdraws as Oghomwen's counsel

## BENIN CITY

Prominent Benin-based legal practitioner, Dele Igbinedion Esq., has withdrawn as counsel to Jessica Iguodala Oghomwen in an ongoing money laundering case before the Federal High Court sitting in Benin City.

The development followed the filing of a Notice of Change of Counsel by the defendant, notifying the court that she had engaged a new lawyer to handle her defence.

At the resumed hearing on Tuesday, Igbinedion informed the court, presided over by Justice B.O. Quadri, that a Notice of Change of Counsel had been filed on behalf of the defendant by C.I. Ehikioya Esq. of C.I. Ehikioya Law Firm.

He subsequently announced

his withdrawal from further appearance in the matter.

The notice, filed in Charge No. FHC/B/53/2024 between the Inspector General of Police and Jessica Iguodala Oghomwen, stated that the defendant had retained C.I. Ehikioya Esq. to take over the conduct of her defence.

Consequent upon the filing of the notice, Igbinedion formally withdrew from the case, bringing his representation of the defendant to an end.

The notice further requested that all subsequent court processes, including hearing notices and other legal correspondence, be directed to C.I. Ehikioya Esq.

It also stated that the new counsel had been fully briefed to assume responsibility for the defence of the case.

Copies of the notice were served on the prosecution, represented by Police Prosecutor P.O. Odion Esq. of the State Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Benin City, as well as on Dele Igbinedion Esq., formally notifying all parties of the change in legal representation.

Counsel to the nominal complainant, E.O. Afolabi, SAN, who appeared with Douglas Ogbankua Esq. and A.O. Enobabo Esq., did not oppose the withdrawal but submitted that the procedure ought to have been initiated by a Motion on Notice.

Following the proceedings, Justice B.O. Quadri adjourned the case until October 8, 2026, for continuation of hearing.

Recall that at the last adjourned date, the prosecutor had sought for more time to enable him gather additional information in furtherance of an earlier order of the

court for substituted service.

The prosecutor informed the court that the order had been executed through publications in The Nigerian Observer and Vanguard newspapers, as well as by pasting notices on the Federal High Court's Notice Board.

Odion told the court that his application was anchored on Section 80, Part 7 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) 2015, which empowers a prosecutor to seek the attachment of a defendant's property where such a defendant is evasive or fails to comply with a court summons. Quoting the provision, he said: "If a court has issued a summons or warrant and has reason to believe that the person has absconded or is concealing themselves to evade the service of the summons or execution of the warrant, the court may order the attachment of their property."

## Over 60 per cent of Malaria cases cause by environmental factors —Expert

## ILORIN

Dr Oluwatosin Fakayode, the Director of Public Health at the Kwara Ministry of Health, has said that about 60 per cent of

malaria cases are linked to environmental factors.

Fakayode said this in Ilorin at the Kwara State Malaria Advocacy, Communication and Social Mobilisation (ACSM) Quarterly Meeting and inau-

guration of the Malaria ACSM Working Group.

Represented by the Kwara Malaria Control Coordinator, Dr Kazeem Oladapo, Fakayode explained that malaria transmission is largely driven by environmental conditions that enable mosquitoes to breed and survive.

He noted that more than half of all malaria cases in Nigeria could be traced directly to environmental factors and quoting the National Malaria Elimination Programme, the director said effective malaria elimination and control require the commitment and

collaboration of stakeholders and policymakers to tackle the disease.

He added that, "the purpose of the meeting was to coordinate ACSM activities in the state, drive community participation and ownership of malaria prevention and increase the uptake of malaria interventions, especially in health facilities.

"Fakayode disclosed that through the efforts of the state government, malaria prevalence had reduced from 26 per cent to 13 per cent, describing the achievement as a welcome development.

## Tourism summit catalyses Edo...

## «CONTINUED FROM PG 1

stakeholders to support initiatives aimed at promoting Edo's rich cultural assets.

Delivering the keynote address, the Director-General of the Edo State Tourism Agency, Lady Vivian Elabor, said the maiden edition of the summit was conceived to showcase Edo's fashion heritage, celebrate the identity of its people and promote the creativity for which the state is renowned.

She commended Governor Monday Okpebholo for prioritizing tourism as a strategic sector for economic diversification.

"This maiden edition is designed to showcase fashion, celebrate our identity and highlight the creativity of Edo people. We appreciate Governor Monday Okpebholo for his commitment to developing the tourism sector as a means of diversifying the state's economy."

Lady Elabor disclosed that the agency had rolled out several programmes, including the establishment of tourism clubs in secondary schools across the state to nurture future tourism ambassadors.

## Worries over voters' registration as...

## «CONTINUED FROM PG 1

(INEC) had disclosed that no fewer than 1,565,873 Nigerians had successfully completed their voter registration as of June 26.

This is at the conclusion of week seven in the Phase III of its Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise. According to a statistics released by INEC on Tuesday in Abuja, the figure comprises of 620,933 citizens who completed their online pre-registration and 944,940 who registered physically. The commission however said that the statistics remained preliminary, pending a comprehensive data clean-up during the scheduled period for public claims and objections, which would be followed by the deployment of the Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS).

The state-by-state breakdown reveals that Kano State recorded the highest voter turnout, accounting for 118,207 registrants, representing 7.55 per cent of the national total. It was followed by Lagos State with 78,360 registrants representing five per cent and Delta with 76,395, representing 4.88 per cent.

INEC also said that the registration had been temporarily suspended in Ekiti and Osun due to the just concluded governorship and upcoming gov-

ernorship elections in strict compliance with Section 9 (6) of the Electoral Act 2022. The gender distribution also reveals that female registrants accounted for 821,276 representing 52.45 per cent, while males accounted for 744,597, representing 47.55 per cent of the total registrants.

The distribution also shows that the youth demographic, ages 18 to 34 dominated the exercise, with 1,082,985 representing 69.16 per of all registrants, with the middle-aged individuals between 35 and 49 followed with 33,1376 at 21.16 per cent, while the elderly and seniors made up the remainder.

The occupational breakdown also shows that students formed the largest bloc of new registrants at 384,093, representing 24.53 per cent, followed by business owners at 333,539 representing 21.30 per cent, and those engaged in farming or fishing at 273,627 representing 17.47 per cent.

The statistics also disclosed that 18,919 Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) were registered within the period. INEC urged eligible citizens who were yet to register to utilise its online portal at (<https://cvr.inec.gov.ng>) or visit designated physical CVR registration centres nationwide to ensure their votes count in the upcoming elections.

## Xenophobia: FG in high level...

## «CONTINUED FROM PG 1

"Ali-Gombe conveyed the heartfelt greetings and assurances of President Bola Tinubu to the returning nationals, reaffirming the Federal Government's steadfast commitment to ensuring the safety of Ni-

gerian nationals living outside the country," Ebienna said.

The spokesperson added that the voluntary repatriation exercise remains on course, with more flights expected in the coming days to evacuate other successfully screened and cleared Nigerian nationals.

# Residents count losses as floods hit Lagos

## LAGOS

Residents of several Lagos communities on Tuesday recounted losses caused by flooding after persistent rainfall submerged homes and roads, displaced families and disrupted businesses and schools.

The affected areas include Ago Palace Way, Okota Road, Amuwo Odofin and Ilaje in Ajah, where floodwaters left many residents stranded and made movement difficult.

Some residents who spoke with our correspondent described the situation as a recurring nightmare and urged the government to implement lasting flood-control measures.

Mrs Stella, a resident of Ago Palace Way, said Greenfield Estate remained one of the worst-

hit communities whenever heavy rainfall occurred.

"Greenfield Estate is prone to flooding. In spite of being an expensive estate, it is always badly affected whenever heavy rain falls," she said.

She said Community Road, Supersaver, Kilimanjaro and the Ago Bridge-Apple Junction corridor were also severely flooded.

According to her, many motorists now avoid the route because of rising floodwaters.

"The water was so high that buses struggled to pass. You could feel the waves pushing the buses," she said.

Stella added that many homes had been inundated, forcing some residents to pump water from their houses while others elevated their belongings to prevent damage.

She said some families had

already been displaced and warned that continued rainfall could worsen the situation.

In Amuwo Odofin, Miss Sarah Onyechonam, a resident, said flooding had kept many residents indoors and prevented them from going to work.

"I've not been able to go to work since Monday. Every-

body's just indoors. Everywhere is flooded," she said.

She said several roads had become impassable, while many homes, particularly those located behind the estate, were flooded.

According to her, the flooding had become a yearly occurrence during the rainy season.

"We are tired of watching our

homes flood every year. This is no longer a seasonal challenge; it needs to be addressed," she said.

Another resident, Chiazoo, said she almost fell from a commercial motorcycle while taking her children to school because floodwaters concealed potholes along Community Road.

"We can't even tell where the

potholes are because the whole place is flooded. Community Road is like a pond," she said.

She blamed blocked drainage channels and poor road conditions for the persistent flooding.

In Ilaje, Ajah, another resident, Blessing, said the heavy rainfall had submerged roads across the community.

## Diri to corps members: Don't jeopardise your future for temporary pleasures

### YENAGOA

Governor Douye Diri of Bayelsa State on Tuesday advised National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members deployed to the state not to jeopardise their future for mere temporary pleasures.

The governor gave the advice at the closing of the 2026 Batch B Stream 1 Orientation Course at the NYSC Permanent Orientation Camp, Boro Town, Bayelsa.

Diri, represented by his Executive Assistant on NYSC Matters, Mr Wisdom Poyeri, commended the corps members for their discipline, resilience and active participation throughout the three-week orientation programme.

He urged them to uphold the

values acquired in camp, stressing that the decisions they make during their service year could determine their future successes.

"Do not jeopardise your future for temporary pleasures. Remain law-abiding, diligent, focused and worthy ambassadors of the NYSC and your families," Diri advised.

He assured them of the state government's commitment to providing a peaceful, secure and enabling environment throughout their service year.

"Bayelsa is your home for the next one year. Make it count and make the state proud," he added.

Earlier, the Bayelsa State NYSC Coordinator, Mr Samuel Pepple, congratulated the corps members on the successful completion of their orientation course.

## Osun election: Group petitions I-G over rising political violence

### ABUJA

A group, the World Institute for Peace, has petitioned the Inspector-General of Police (I-G), Mr Olatunji Disu, over the rising political violence ahead of the August 15 governorship election in Osun.

The Executive Director of the group, Mr Lamina Omotoyosi, made content of the petition known to newsmen on Tuesday in Abuja.

He said the petition was to ensure a peaceful electoral process in the state, adding that the security threat could degenerate into a state of emergency if decisive action was not taken immediately.

Omotoyosi said a similar petition had been submitted to the Director-General of the Department of State Services (DSS) and the Commandant General of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps.

He said the idea was to en-

sure that urgent steps were taken to curb the trend and ensure a peaceful process before, during and after the election.

He said the petition followed a fresh wave of politically motivated violence as a result of political rivalry in the state, resulting in the death of several persons in recent months.

"If the current political violence and thuggery rocking Osun is not given the desired attention by security agencies, it will result in anarchy and, by extension, disrupt the electoral process.

"The current political violence in the state is emanating from the attitudes of politicians from various political parties, sponsoring political thuggery in the state," he said.

He said the group had raised similar concerns in 2023 with President Muhammadu Buhari, the Chief of Defence Staff, the Chief of Army Staff, the Chief of Air Staff and other security chiefs.



### OPENING CEREMONY:

L-R: Minister of State for Petroleum (Oil), Sen. Heineken Lokpobiri; CEO of NMDPRA, Mallam Rabiu Umar, and Authority's Secretary and Legal Adviser, Dr Joseph Tolorunse, during the opening ceremony of the General Counsel and Legal Advisers Forum, in Abuja on Monday.

## Chinedu Oga distributes farm imputes to farmers in Ebonyi, urges judicious use

MAXWELL OKECHUKWU

### Abakaliki

The Member representing Ikwo/Ezza South Federal Constituency of Ebonyi State and Chairman, House Committee on Reformatory Institutions, Comrade Chinedu Oga, has distributed 5,000 bags of fertilizer, some rice seedlings to farmers across the Federal Constituency.

The lawmaker also disbursed the sum of fifty million naira in cash as financial support to the farmers and stakeholders in the Ikwo/Ezza South to boost their capacities in their respective

farming businesses.

The Lawmaker who has made the distribution of agricultural inputs to deserving farmers in his constituency an annual event, said the gesture was his modest way of contributing to the advancement of agricultural productivity among farming population in line with Governor Francis Ogbonna Nwifuru's People's Charter of Needs in agriculture.

In his brief remarks during the presentation ceremony, Comrade Chinedu Oga said that the support for farmers was targeted at making the nation food secured which is a key

agenda of Tinubu presidency.

While urging the beneficiaries of the farm imputes to make the best of the items received, the lawmaker appealed for their continued support for the APC administrations of President Tinubu and Governor Francis Ogbonna Nwifuru.

According to him, the best way to demonstrate their support was for them to massively work for the electoral success for the President and the state Governor in Ikwo and Ezza South Local Government areas.

The distribution exercise, took place at the Lawmaker's Blessed Martins College of Nursing Sciences, Ohatekwe Amagu, Ikwo Local government Area,

the event drew stakeholders, government officials, farmers, party faithful, support groups, elders, and community leaders.

Party leaders including the State APC Chairman, Chief Stanley Okoro Emegha, Speaker, Ebonyi State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Moses Ije Odunwa, and others commended Oga's sustained commitment to grassroots development, describing him as a performing lawmaker and a model for effective representation.

The speaker particularly applauded the lawmaker's developmental strides, expressing confidence that the people would reciprocate his commitment with overwhelming support come 2027 elections.

## Foundation advocates inclusive voter registration for IDPs

### MAKURDI

The All-Rights Foundation (TAF) Africa has called for inclusive participation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria's electoral process.

The foundation made the call on Tuesday during a Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise at the Mega IDP Camp in Makurdi, organised by TAF Africa in collaboration with INEC.

Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer of TAF Africa, Tefa Tyokase, said the initiative was aimed at ensuring that displaced persons were not excluded from the democratic process because of their circumstances.

Tyokase said every eligible Nigerian, irrespective of displacement or disability, deserved the opportunity to register and vote.

"Our objective is that no one should be left behind. Every voice should be heard if we are to practise true democracy.

"Displacement should not deny anyone the constitutional right to vote. Democracy is only meaningful when every eligible citizen has the opportunity to participate," he said.

Tyokase said Benue had more than 50 IDP camps, many of them unofficial, adding that the Mega Camp exercise was designed as a model to create awareness and encourage wider voter registration among dis-

placed persons.

He stated that many camp residents already had Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) but lost them while fleeing attacks, making replacement of the cards a priority.

He urged the media to intensify public awareness on the CVR exercise ahead of the July 10 deadline to enable more displaced persons to register.

Speaking, Head of Voter Education at INEC's Benue office, Adeniji Abubakar, assured IDPs that every eligible person who presents themselves for registration before the close of the exercise would be attended to.

He said the commission had

already conducted registration in several IDP camps across the state and would continue to ensure that no eligible voter was left behind.

"I want to assure you that each and every person who presents himself or herself for registration will be attended to before the end of the exercise.

"Nobody will be left out. Voting is their civic right, and no eligible Nigerian should be denied that right because of displacement," he said.

Abubakar explained that while some displaced persons already possessed PVCs, others required fresh registration or replacement of lost or damaged cards.

**NEWS**

# Rep. Idris lauds Tinubu's approval of ₦24.7bn Kogi-Ekiti highway rehabilitation

**ABAKALIKI**

Rep. Salman Idris (APC-Kogi) has commended President Bola Tinubu for approving ₦24.7 billion for the rehabilitation of Kabba-Ifaki-Ado Ekiti highway linking Kogi and Ekiti states.

In a statement on Tuesday, Idris also commended the Minister of Works, Sen. Da-

vid Umahi, for his relentless efforts in rehabilitating critical road infrastructure across the country.

He said that the approval was in response to the resolution of the House of Representatives, following a motion he sponsored in October 2025.

The lawmaker, who represents Kabba-Bunu/Ijumu Federal Constituency of Kogi, said that the motion drew govern-

ment's attention to the strategic socio-economic importance of the road.

He said that in the motion, he had argued that the road is a major corridor linking Kogi, Ekiti, Ondo, Osun and other South-West states, while serving as a vital route to the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and Northern Nigeria.

Idris said that following the adoption of the motion,

he paid a courtesy visit to the minister of works to further advocate for urgent intervention, stating that he was able to secure assurances from the government.

"The approval of the ₦24.7 billion contract is a welcome development and a clear demonstration of the Renewed Hope administration's commitment to improving infrastructure, enhancing connectivity and stimulating economic growth across the country.

"The rehabilitation of the road will bring the much-need-

ed relief to motorists, commuters, farmers, traders and other road users who have endured years of hardship due to the deteriorating condition of the highway.

"The project will facilitate the movement of goods and services, improve road safety, boost commercial activities and strengthen security along the corridor," he said.

Idris commended Gov. Usman Ododo of Kogi, the Chairman House Committee on Finance, Rep. James Fal- eke (APC-Lagos) and Kogi

Commissioner for Works, Mr Salami Deedat, for their tireless follow-up and unwavering dedication throughout the process.

While reaffirming his commitment to effective representation, he pledged to continue working closely with the federal government and other relevant stakeholders to attract more impactful projects.

The lawmaker assured of his commitment to delivering sustainable development to the people of Kabba-Bunu/Ijumu federal constituency.

**INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION:**

L-R Corps Marshall, Shehu Mohammed and Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (NITT), Dr Bayero Farah, at the signing of an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on inter-agency cooperation, in Zaria, Kaduna State.

## UniCross ASUU meets govt over 45-day old strike

**CALABAR**

The University of Cross River chapter of the Academy Staff Union of University (ASUU) says it will meet with the state government over the ongoing industrial action they embarked upon since May 19.

The institution's ASUU chairman, Dr Patrick Ushie, said this in an interview with newsmen in Calabar on Tuesday.

He disclosed that the union had received an invitation for a meeting from the technical committee set up by the government on the matter, adding that the committee had earlier requested documents on their

grievances.

"These documents were submitted today (Tuesday), and we are preparing for the meeting before the week runs out.

"I am sure the documents are meant to prepare them for the planned meeting," Ushie said.

On the possibility of suspending the strike after the meeting, he said, "It is all we pray and hope for, just like them."

The chairman however, vowed that the industrial action would continue until the state government addressed the issues in contention.

"All I can tell you is that there is no backing down on the strike until our demands are fully met by the govern-

ment," he said.

Ushie said that the union took the decision to embark on the industrial action following the breakdown of dialogue with the management of the institution.

According to him, several meetings held with the management failed to produce any result.

"They (management) told us that their hands are tied as they don't have the funds to implement our demands.

"They also told us that they currently receive N300 million as subvention from the government and will need an additional N200 million to meet our demands.

"We wrote to the governor and as we speak, he has not responded to our letter since we did."

The UniCross chapter of ASUU had on May 19 embarked on an indefinite strike over issues bordering on welfare and non-implementation of agreement reached with the national body.

The union had listed 11 items as the reason for embarking on the industrial action.

According to the union, the total and indefinite strike is in view of the failure of the state government to implement salary structure and other welfare benefits of academic staff.

Among the demands listed by the union is that the non-financial components of the 2025 ASUU-FG renegotiated agreement be implemented without delay.

## Experts advise farmers on preventing flood-induced crop losses

**LAGOS**

Some agriculture experts have advised farmers to adopt preventive measures to minimise crop losses during flooding.

The experts gave the advice in separate interviews with our correspondent on Tuesday in Lagos.

The Acting Chairman of the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), Mr Sakin Agbayewa, urged farmers to cultivate crops on raised beds and construct drainage channels,

ditches and ridges to reduce the impact of flooding.

"To prevent crop losses during the rainy season, farmers should construct drainage channels to redirect excess water away from their farms.

"They should also plant crops on raised beds to keep roots above waterlogged soil and apply organic mulch to minimise soil erosion.

"Drainage channels, including ditches and furrows, should be created to safely divert runoff into natural waterways," he said.

Agbayewa also advised farmers in flood-prone areas to cultivate flood-tolerant or early-maturing crop varieties.

"Farmers should plant water-resistant or short-duration varieties of crops such as maize, cassava and rice that mature before the peak of the rainy season," he said.

Also speaking, an agriculture analyst, Mr Omotunde Banjoko, urged farmers to carefully assess the topography of their farmlands before cultivation.

According to him, farmers

should avoid low-lying areas where floodwater naturally collects and instead cultivates crops on higher ground.

"Farmers generally know the direction of water flow around their farms. Those cultivating flood-prone locations should consider relocating to upland areas during the rainy season," he said.

Banjoko added that where relocation was not possible, farmers could erect barriers using sandbags or stones along farm boundaries to reduce floodwater intrusion.

## AIG calls for youth-police collaboration to tackle crime, misinformation

**LAGOS**

The Assistant Inspector-General (AIG) of Police in charge of Zone 2, Mr Olohundare Jimoh, has urged youths to partner with the police in combating crime and misinformation.

Jimoh, who made the call at a summit on Tuesday at Zone 2 Police Headquarters in Lagos, described the youth as critical stakeholders in promoting peace, security and sustainable development.

The summit, titled "Youth-Police Engagement Programme Across the IBILE Divisions of Lagos", was organised by the Lagos State Office of Political, Legislative and Civic Engagement in collaboration with the Bureau of Public Defender (BPD).

The AIG said effective youth engagement was in line with global policing standards and was essential for building trust, strengthening community cooperation and improving pub-

lic safety.

According to him, young people are not only future leaders but also agents of change who have a responsibility to counter misinformation, hate speech and false narratives capable of undermining national security.

He urged youths to support law enforcement by providing credible information on criminal activities and maintaining constructive partnerships with the police in their communities.

Jimoh said policing should be anchored on respect for human rights, accountability, inclusiveness, dialogue and community partnership to encourage greater public confidence.

He commended the Lagos State Government for consistently promoting police-youth engagement through regular dialogue and sustained support for security agencies.

The AIG said the government's investments in security infrastructure and youth development had contributed significantly to the reduction of crime in the state.

## CISLAC backs NYSC reforms, calls for transparency, strong implementation

**ABUJA**

The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) has described the Federal Government's approval of comprehensive reforms to the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) as an opportunity to reposition the scheme "to better respond to contemporary realities".

The Executive Director of CISLAC, Auwal Rafsanjani, said this on Tuesday in Abuja while reacting to the reforms approved by the Federal Executive Council (FEC), noting that effective implementation would determine their impact.

Rafsanjani said that the reforms, if transparently implemented, could strengthen graduates' employability, reduce youth unemployment and align the scheme more closely with national development priorities.

"CISLAC particularly wel-

comes the government's decision to strengthen skills acquisition, entrepreneurship, digital innovation, and career development within the NYSC framework," he said.

He said that although the NYSC had, for more than five decades, promoted national unity and cultural integration, rising unemployment, insecurity and technological disruption now required urgent restructuring.

Rafsanjani commended the planned digitalisation of NYSC operations, describing it as critical to improving transparency, efficiency and service delivery, while also reducing bureaucratic bottlenecks and corruption risks.

"A transparent and technology-driven system can reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies, curb corruption in mobilisation and deployment processes and strengthen public confidence in the scheme," he said.

**JUDICIARY****NEWS**

# Alleged terrorism: Your grounds for objection are mere exaggeration, court tells defendants

**IBADAN**

Justice Nkeonye Maha of the Federal High Court, Ibadan, on Tuesday, ruled

against the objection to the admissibility of extra judicial statements made by four defendants facing trial over alleged complicity in terrorism.

The Department of State Services (DSS) is prosecuting three officials of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and a woman,

Asmau Omar, on a 15-count amended charge bordering on conspiracy, illegal arms dealing and aiding and abetting terrorism.

Other co-defendants and personnel of NSCDC are: Olamide Okesola, Emmanuel Olatunji, and Adeleke Adewale,

All the defendants, who had pleaded not guilty to the offences at their arraignment in the case, which started in 2023, had objected to the tendering of their alleged extra judicial statement, claiming it was obtained by duress.

In four separate rulings, Maha stated that she had watched and re-watched the video clips where the defendants each made their confessional statements both in the open court and in her chamber to be sure that her decision was accurate.

The judge held that the defendants grounds of objection were merely embellished in order to score a point.

Citing various sections of the law to support her deci-

sion, Maha held that the quartet had not placed any evidence before the court to warrant the rejection of the statements tendered against them by the DSS.

"Therefore, the extra judicial statements tendered against each of the defendants by the prosecution are admitted in evidence," Maha ruled.

Subsequently, the judge adjourned the matter until July 6 and July 7 for continuation of trial.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that each of Okesola, Olatunji, Adewale and Omar had during separate trial within trial told the court that the extra judicial statements tendered against them were not voluntarily made.

According to the defendants, the DSS operatives subjected them to various kinds of torture and intimidation before obtaining their statements.

**CAMPAIGN TOUR:**

Edo State Deputy Governor Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa (right) introduces Anthony Osarobo Osaro, APC Chairmanship candidate, Ovia South West LGA, (2nd right) the vice-chairmanship candidate, Isaac Bakar and the Councilorship candidate for Udo Ward, during the campaign tour of the Ward ahead the local government polls.

PHOTO: MOSES OBOH

## Court hears Wabara, others's suit against INEC July 7

**ABUJA**

The Federal High Court in Abuja on Tuesday fixed July 7 for definite hearing in a suit filed by Sen. Adolphus Wabara-led Board of Trustees (BoT) of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) against the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Justice Salim Ibrahim, who fixed the date to allow all parties file and respond to processes served on them, held that all pending applications and substantive suit would be taken together by the adjourned date.

Justice Ibrahim also ordered all the parties to file and serve their processes as agreed by July 6.

The judge, who held that the

court would not entertain further delay of proceedings on the next adjourned date, adjourned the matter until July 7 for hearing of all applications, including the substantive suit.

Justice Ibrahim had, on June 19, ordered an accelerated hearing in the case.

The judge gave the order after counsel to the plaintiffs, Chief Gordy Uche, SAN, informed the court that the suit is time bound based on INEC's revised timetable and schedule of activities for the 2027 general elections which gave July 17 as ultimatum.

Members of the Wabara-led BoT and the PDP had filed the fresh suit seeking an order of the court compelling INEC to recognise the Turaki-led interim National Working Com-

mittee (NWC) of the party in its official website.

The plaintiffs also sought an order directing the electoral umpire to, forthwith, update its records and publish on its official website the interim NWC of the party as forwarded to it by the plaintiffs and its National Executive Committee (NEC).

They said the names of members of the Kabir Turaki-led NWC was forwarded to the electoral umpire via their letters dated May 4.

The originating summons, marked: FHC/ABJ/CS/1159/2026, was filed on June 4 by a team of lawyers led by Chief Chris Uche, SAN.

The BoT members, who are plaintiffs in the suit, are

ex-Senate President Adolphus Wabara; BoT Secretary, former Gov. Muazu Babangida Aliyu of Niger; ex-Minister of Information, Prof. Jerry Gana and PDP chieftain, Olabode George as 1st to 4th plaintiffs.

Others include former Minister of Women Affairs, Hajija Maryam Ciroma; also an ex-Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, Hajija Zainab Maina; member of BoT and NEC, Dame Esther Uduehi and PDP as 5th to 8th plaintiffs respectively.

They sued INEC as sole defendant in the suit.

During Tuesday's proceeding, Mr Turaki, who is the National Chairman of PDP (8th plaintiff), and Prof. Jerry Gana (3rd plaintiff) were in court.

## Alleged defematiion: Court grants Sowore N200m bail

**ABUJA**

The Federal High Court in Abuja on Tuesday admitted Omoyele Sowore, the presidential candidate of African Action Congress (AAC), to a N200 million bail with two sureties.

Justice Mohammed Umar, in a ruling on Sowore's application for stay of execution of the order for his bail revocation, directed that one of the sureties must be a traditional ruler from Sowore's community.

Justice Umar held that the surety must have a landed property in Abuja.

The judge, who held that the

sureties must also be verified by the prosecution, ordered Sowore to also deposit his international passport with deputy chief registrar of the court.

The judge then handed over the defendant to his lawyers and adjourned the matter until July 6 for Sowore to open his defence.

Justice Umar earlier vacated the defendant's bail revocation order and the earlier order remanding him in Kuje Correctional Centre.

Justice Umar had, on June 22, ordered the remand of Sowore, also the publisher of Sahara Reporters, in Kuje Correctional Centre.

The judge, in a short ruling, ordered Sowore to be kept in the correctional centre pending the hearing and determination of his motion for stay of the order for revocation of his bail and bench warrant filed by his lawyer, Adeyinka Oluamide-Fusika, SAN.

The judge equally dismissed Sowore's earlier application seeking the judge's recusal from the case on the ground of alleged bias.

The judge then adjourned the matter until June 24 for hearing of the application for stay.

After Sowore's application was moved and argued on June 24, Justice Umar fixed today

for a ruling.

The judge ordered the defendant to remain in custody pending the ruling.

The judge had, on June 16, revoked a bail granted to Sowore following his failure to appear in court for his trial.

Justice Umar, in a ruling on an oral application made by the lawyer to DSS, Akinlolu Kehinde, SAN, also issued a bench warrant for his arrest.

The DSS is prosecuting Sowore for allegedly making false claims against the person of President Bola Tinubu by referring to him as "a criminal" in a post he made on his "X" and Facebook accounts.

## 2 plead guilty to unlawful possession of cannabis

**IBADAN**

Two men, Sunday Idowu and Dara Ojo, on Tuesday pleaded guilty before an Iyaganku Magistrates' Court in Ibadan to unlawful possession of cannabis.

Idowu, 42, and Ojo, 28, whose addresses were not provided, were charged with unlawful possession of cannabis, to which they pleaded guilty.

The Magistrate, Mrs Oluwafaranmi Raji, remanded them at the Agodi Correctional Cen-

tre and adjourned the case until July 6 for review of facts and sentencing.

The prosecutor, Insp Elisha Tellang, said the defendants committed the offence on June 28 at about 7.00 a.m. at the Toll Gate area of Ibadan.

Tellang said the defendants were found in possession of cannabis sativa in the area after it was raided by security operatives.

He said the offence contravened Section 430(1) of the Criminal Laws of Oyo State, 2000.

## Security guard docked for allegedly stealing goods worth N323,000

**ABEOKUTA**

A 36-year-old man, Joseph Babalola on Tuesday appeared before a Magistrates' Court in Isabo, Abeokuta for allegedly burgling a shop and stealing valuables worth N323,000.

The defendant whose address was not provided, is facing a two-count charge of break-in and stealing, to which he pleaded not guilty.

The Prosecutor, Insp. Opeyemi Lawal, told the court that the defendant committed the offences on June 23 at about 11:00pm at No 17, Dr. Akinsanya Gafaru street Araroma Ilugun Itoko in Abeokuta.

Lawal told the court that the defendant burgled and entered into a laundry shop and stole clothing items such as jeans, shirts and "polo", valued at N323,000 and belonging to one Mr Ayomide Odunewu.

He alleged that Babalola was once a security guard at the community where he burgled

the shop, but was disengaged for habitual stealing.

He also alleged that after the defendant was disengaged as a security guard, he returned to the community to burgle the laundry shop and fled.

"The community members, upon investigation, found out Babalola was responsible for the shop break-in and theft.

"The defendant was arrested and he made a confessional statement that he has been the one committing the previous crimes in the community," he said.

The prosecutor said the offences contravened section 390 (9) 412 of the Criminal Code Law of Ogun 2006.

The Magistrate, Miss O.T Odubanjo, granted the defendant bail in the sum of N200,000 with one surety in like sum.

Odubanjo ordered that the surety must be a licensed bondsman registered with the Ogun State Judiciary.

She adjourned the case until July 20 for hearing.

**NEWS****Foreign****US' Supreme Court upholds bans on transgender women in female school and college sports**

The US Supreme Court has ruled that states can ban transgender women from competing in female school and college sports.

The court considered cases from students in two different states who had challenged bans on participation. The two states, Idaho and West Virginia, enacted laws that required public school and college sports teams to compete in accordance with their sex recorded at birth.

One of the two challenges says the ban violates equal rights protections in the US Constitution. The other says it contradicts civil rights laws.

More than two dozen states have enacted bans since Idaho did so in 2020.

Under those state bans, a transgender woman - a biological male who identifies as a woman - is not permitted to compete in female sports at

schools and colleges.

All nine justices on the court decided the state bans do not violate a civil rights law called Title IX which prohibits sex-based discrimination in schools.

But the judges were split along ideological lines on whether the bans contravene the constitution's 14th Amendment guarantee of equal protection under the law.

The six conservative justices said it did not violate the constitution but the three liberal justices disagreed.

"The Constitution and Title IX do not require an overhaul of women's and girls' sports throughout America," wrote Justice Brett Kavanaugh who authored the ruling.

In her partial dissent, Justice Sonia Sotomayor said the majority opinion had applied "a diminished view of equal protection" to sports.

The challenge launched in Idaho came from Lindsay Hecox, a long distance runner, who lodged it shortly after the law was enacted. She was later granted an injunction by both a district court and an appeals court.

State lawmaker Barbara Ehardt, who introduced the law, said at the time of its passing that it would ensure "boys and men will not be able to take the place of girls and women in sports because it's not fair".

But in the appeals ruling, a panel of three judges found that the Idaho law violated constitutional rights. They said the state had failed to provide evidence that its ban protects "sex equality and opportunity for women athletes".

President Donald Trump made the issue of transgender athletes in women's sports a regular focus of his 2024 election campaign. Last year, he signed an executive order

that aimed to ban transgender women from competing on female sports teams.

Following that decision, the NCAA, the governing body for US college sports, banned transgender women from competing in women's sports.

Supporters of the bans argued that transgender women had a biological advantage over athletes who were recorded female at birth.

When the International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced in March it was going to limit the women's category of Olympic sports to biological females, it said its working group reviewed the latest scientific evidence over the previous 18 months and had concluded there was a "clear consensus" that "male sex provides a performance advantage in all sports and events that rely on strength, power and resistance"

**Manhunt after bomb injures Ukrainian oligarch in Monaco**

A manhunt is under way in southern France after a parcel bomb exploded at a residential building in neighbouring Monaco, injuring wealthy Ukrainian businessman Vadym Yermolaiev and two others.

Two of the injured are in a critical condition in hospital in the French city of Nice, Monaco public prosecutor Stéphane Thibault said, adding that a woman was the most seriously hurt.

He said authorities were searching for a single suspect and the incident on Monday evening was being treated as attempted murder, not as a terrorist attack.

Ukraine's foreign ministry said its embassy in France was in touch with Monaco's authorities and was working to officially identify those reportedly injured in the blast.

The blast occurred shortly before 21:00 (19:00 GMT) at an apartment building on Rue Révérend Père Louis Frolla, near the border with France.

Monaco's government said the explosion had been caused by a parcel bomb, while the head of Monaco's government, Christophe Mirmand, told AFP news agency the explosive device had appeared

to contain bolts and pellets.

Thibault said four other people had been treated by emergency services - one for shock and three for cuts from debris from nearby shop windows as a result of the blast.

On Tuesday morning, Mirmand told French broadcaster BFM TV the suspect appeared to "have left for France".

The Monaco government has said a suspect was seen on a video surveillance system fleeing towards the French commune of Beausoleil on foot after the explosion, where a major police effort to find them is now taking place.

Video surveillance images of the moments before the attack showed a man dropping a backpack in the lobby of a building shortly before the explosion, French newspaper Le Figaro reported.

More than 100 police and emergency personnel were deployed to the scene of the blast on Monday evening.

Harri Richie, who lives around 100m away from the targeted building, told the BBC she had heard an "unbelievably loud explosion" from the underground car park she was in.



**SUPREME COURT BUILDING:**  
US Supreme Court

**Angry Venezuelans accuse government of negligence over earthquake response**

"Silencio" the rescuers scream turning towards the road with their fists up in the air, motioning to everyone to remain silent.

The vehicles on the road stop plying. People stop talking. The diggers fall silent.

A rescuer puts his ear to a hole they've just managed to drill through a concrete slab. Another one shines a torch into it.

They're listening to see if they can hear any sounds of survivors calling from under the rubble of a 12-storey building that stood by the side of a busy road in the coastal town of La Guaira.

It's one of the areas worst hit by the twin earthquakes that struck Venezuela on Wednesday last week and killed at least 1,700 people.

Dramatically collapsed buildings behind a dusty roadside lined with trees

Interim President Delcy Rodríguez has called the earthquakes the "most brutal natural catastrophe" in Venezuela's history.

Standing by the side of the collapsed structure, Miguel Oscar Nunez holds his breath, huddled together with other families who had loved ones in the building. Miguel's only child - 34-year-old son Angel - lived in the building.

Moments of anticipation pass by, but the rescuers hear nothing. The silence ends and work resumes.

"My son, like hundreds of others is trapped under the rubble. But we need more support from authorities urgently

to dig them out. It's possible that the earthquake has not killed him, but can you imagine if he is killed because of the negligence of the authorities," Miguel Oscar says, anger showing on his face.

Miguel Oscar stands in front of collapsed buildings wearing a red helmet, glasses and a T-shirt that says 'Bad Choices'.

Kevin Montilla's home was also in the building. He was away at work, but his wife Luzmary and 16-year-old daughter Jhoerliyzmar were at home when the earthquake struck.

"The rescue operation started very late and it's been slow. Initially it was only people who live in the community who came in to help. The police just came to check, but they didn't help. The government's re-

sponse has been frustrating and impotent," the 34-year-old says.

When we visited the site, rescue teams from Venezuela and Colombia were conducting operations. Two diggers, as well as a crane that was lifting up concrete slabs was also there.

But the families waiting by the roadside said precious days had been wasted before this effort started.

"I have not lost hope but I feel devastated. Nature's law is that a father should die before his son. Imagine if your son dies suddenly," says Miguel.

The building was one of several in a government owned complex. This factor, as well as the structure's prominent location, is perhaps what has drawn the attention of the rescue teams to it.

**US envoys in Doha to meet mediators but not Iranians, Qatar says**

US special envoy Steve Witkoff and President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner are in Doha to discuss the US-Iran negotiations with mediators, Qatar's foreign ministry spokesman says, but they will not meet Iranian officials there.

Majed al-Ansari told reporters that no high-level meetings or direct talks between the two sides were scheduled in the coming days.

The US and Iran agreed to stop attacking each other and send delegations to the Gulf state following a four-day exchange of strikes triggered by a dispute over the reopening of the crucial Strait of Hormuz waterway.

The strikes threatened the preliminary agreement to end the four-month war between the US, Israel and Iran.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) brokered by Pakistan and Qatar less than two weeks ago committed the countries to halt military operations on all fronts, including Lebanon, and immediately reopen the Strait of Hormuz, through which about 20% of global oil and gas shipments pass.

They also gave themselves at least 60 days to reach a final deal that covers Iran's nuclear programme, US sanctions and a permanent truce.

Pakistani and Qatari mediators said encouraging progress was made at the first round

of talks held in Switzerland a week ago, which US Vice-President JD Vance and Iran's Parliamentary Speaker Mohammed Bagher Ghalibaf attended.

They also said a "communication line" had been formed to enable the safe passage of commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz.

But that failed to prevent the recent exchanges of strikes, which began when Iran attacked a cargo ship on Thursday following efforts to open Oman's territorial waters to both inbound and outbound traffic on the southern side of the strait. Iran had warned vessels that the only route was through its own waters on the northern side.

On Sunday night, a US official said both sides would "stand down for now", and that vessels could "move freely" in and around the strait. Technical talks would also "continue on all areas of the MoU", the official added.

The next day, Iran's deputy foreign minister and lead technical negotiator, Kazem Gharibabadi, denied that there were plans for technical talks this week.

US President Donald Trump responded by saying that Iran had requested a meeting in Qatar's capital on Tuesday, and White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt announced that Witkoff and Kushner would fly to Doha for "high-level meetings".

**Foreign****NEWS****Chinese tycoon sentenced to 30 years in US jail**

**G**uo Wengui, who was once believed to be one of China's richest businessmen, has been sentenced to 30 years in jail in the US for running a billion dollar scam.

The former property tycoon fled China to the US in 2017, where he reinvented himself as a Communist Party critic and built a loyal online following.

But Guo was later convicted on charges of racketeering, fraud and money laundering.

New York court judge Analisa Torres said Guo had "preyed on those seeking to bring democracy to China", taking their money to fund his lavish lifestyle.

The BBC has contacted Guo's representatives for comment.

Guo - who goes by several names, including Miles Guo and Ho Wan Kwok - was sentenced in a courtroom packed with his supporters.

US attorney Sean S Buckley said: "Rather than being satisfied with the many legitimate opportunities afforded to him, Guo exploited the trust that thousands had placed in him for his own greed."

"Today's sentence shows that fame and wealth do not place you above the law, and that fraudsters who victimise families to enrich themselves will be met with significant consequences," Buckley said.

Before fleeing China, Guo built a fortune as a property developer and had good ties with the country's government.

But he sought asylum in the US after being accused by top

Chinese officials of corruption. Guo became a critic of China's Communist regime and cultivated a wide online following among the Chinese community in the US.

Prosecutors said Guo raised more than \$1bn (£760m) from online followers, who joined him in investment and cryptocurrency schemes between 2018 and 2023.

The money he raised was used to fund Guo's lavish lifestyle which included a 50,000 square foot mansion, a \$1m Lamborghini and a \$37m yacht, they said.

Guo denied the allegations, saying the funds were used for his political activism.

He had built ties with other China critics, including Steve Bannon, a former adviser to US President Donald Trump.

Bannon and Guo often appeared in online videos and, in 2020, launched a campaign called the New Federal State of China, with the goal of overthrowing the Chinese Communist Party.

Later that year, Bannon was arrested on Guo's yacht in Connecticut. Bannon was charged in an unrelated case with fraud in an alleged scheme to defraud people who funded a not-for-profit company to build a US-Mexico border wall.

Bannon entered a guilty plea in a Manhattan court to a first degree scheme to defraud charge and received a sentence of conditional discharge for three years.

**Flooding hits Ghana's capital killing 13 people - with another storm forecast**

**A**t least 13 people have died in Ghana's capital, Accra, after torrential rain resulted in severe flooding, according to the fire service which has been involved in rescue efforts.

The government has urged people to stay indoors or move to higher ground, as the meteorological agency warned further rain was expected with a big storm approaching from the east.

Much of the water from Sunday night's downpours has begun to recede, but as the recovery operation continues, the Ghana National Fire Service (GNF) said the death toll could rise.

Low-lying areas were particularly impacted. Videos circulating on social media show homes and vehicles submerged, while many buildings have been destroyed.

Emergency response teams have been deployed to the flood-affected region, including from the police, fire service, the military and the National Disaster Management Organisation.

The interior ministry said they had been deployed to monitor the situation and to safeguard lives and property.

The GNFS said it had rescued more than 470 people so far.

The floods also triggered a major fire at a rubber factory in the city.

Some residents have also become trapped at home. The government has called for people to relocate to higher safe grounds and to avoid travelling in flooded areas.

"Stay indoors if you are in a safe location," the president's office said in a statement.

"Do not attempt to cross flooded roads, whether on foot or in a vehicle. If your home is being inundated, move immediately to higher ground and call 112 for emergency assistance."

According to Mahama, preliminary data indicated that around 140mm of rain descended on Accra.

"By comparison, the highest single-day rainfall recorded last year was about 56 mm," he wrote on X, adding the increase pointed to climate change.

The Ghana Meteorological Agency also warned that more rain was expected to affect parts of southern Ghana - where Accra is located - on Tuesday morning into the afternoon, raising the risk of further flooding.



**SOUTH AFRICA PROTESTERS:** Protesters clutching traditional weapons on Tuesday South Africa

**Thousands of anti-migrant protesters march in South Africa amid heavy police presence**

**T**housands of people have marched in South Africa's main cities to demand that all undocumented migrants leave the country.

Police officers - backed by private security guards - have been deployed because of fears that protests could turn violent. Anti-migrant groups had set Tuesday as the deadline for undocumented migrants to leave.

Many foreigners have already fled to escape violence and intimidation. South African police say 25,000 have been repatriated so far. Most are from other African countries.

One undocumented Malawian told the BBC he was "happy to be going back" but "heartbroken" to be leaving behind four young children.

The Ministry of Police said the protests have largely been peaceful across the country, with isolated incidents of looting and attempted looting.

In Johannesburg, the financial capital, shops in the city centre were closed, while police visibility is high on major streets.

The military has been deployed in Hillbrow, a suburb in Johannesburg where many African migrants live, following reports of a teenager being shot and a car being torched, local media reported.

Some protesters threw bricks, breaking the windows of some homes in Yeoville, another suburb where many African migrants live.

In a neighbourhood in Germiston, about 15km (nine miles) from Johannesburg, demonstrators went to homes, evicting residents they suspected were foreign nationals and handing them over to police officers, insisting they check their documentation.

Police said they had arrested five people for the alleged looting

of a foreign-owned shop in Johannesburg's biggest township, Soweto.

About 10 people were also arrested for looting in KwaZulu-Natal province, while a woman was arrested for assaulting a police officer and a man for "intimidation" following reports of a foreign national being beaten up, police said.

Businesses in central Durban, the main city in the province, were also shut.

Protesters handed over a memorandum listing their demands to government officials in Durban and Johannesburg.

The leader of anti-migrant group March and March, Jacinta Ngobese-Zuma, said they would protest every Thursday for the next six months to force the government to "get rid of" undocumented migrants who were still in South Africa.

A demonstrator - who is part of another anti-migrant group,

Operation Dudula - said they would "push the police" to arrest foreigners who are not legally in the country.

President Cyril Ramaphosa met some of the protest leaders on the eve of Tuesday's marches to defuse tensions.

He has repeatedly warned demonstrators to act peacefully, while also accepting the need for immigration reforms.

"Some foreign nationals who live in South Africa are here lawfully," he reminded citizens in his weekly newsletter.

"They work, study, raise families, invest in our economy and contribute positively to our society. They too are entitled to the protection of our laws and our Constitution.

"The right to protest and freedom of expression does not allow people to threaten or intimidate others, or to engage in acts of vandalism or violence," he wrote.

**Senegalese MPs move to clip presidential powers as tensions mount**

**S**enegal's lawmakers have passed a controversial constitutional reform that expands their powers while curbing those of the president, triggering protests outside parliament.

The reforms were passed by an overwhelming majority after heated exchanges in parliament, underscoring an escalating power struggle between President Bassirou Diomaye Faye and his former ally-turned-rival, parliamentary Speaker Ousmane Sonko.

The government said the reforms would be put to a national referendum, although no date has been announced.

Faye and Sonko came to power together in 2024 on the promise of sweeping reforms,

but their alliance has recently fractured, fuelling political uncertainty in the country.

Relations between the president and his now-former prime minister deteriorated over several months, with Sonko openly criticising Faye for his handling of Senegal's debt problems.

It came to a head in May when Faye fired Sonko as prime minister, but Sonko, whose Pastef party has a majority of the seats in the National Assembly, was chosen by MPs as the parliamentary speaker.

The constitutional reforms, proposed by Pastef party, would strengthen parliamentary oversight by expanding lawmakers' investigative powers, requiring the government to

disclose agreements about natural resources to parliament.

Other proposals include:

The creation of a Constitutional Court to replace the current Constitutional Council - with nine instead of seven members

Prohibiting a sitting president from serving as leader of a political party - a move seen as being aimed at President Faye, who remains a Pastef member but no longer holds an official party role. If enacted, it could make it harder for him to launch his own party ahead of the next election

Barring a president signing into law certain acts during the period between a presidential election and the inauguration of the president-elect

Expanding the powers of parliamentary committees.

Earlier on Monday, police fired tear gas to disperse scores of protesters outside parliament as lawmakers debated the constitutional amendments. Inside the chamber, tensions also ran high, with opposition MPs staging a walkout in protest.

Pastef, which has 130 of the National Assembly's 165 seats, said the changes were aimed at strengthening the separation of powers across Senegal's executive, legislature and judiciary.

But the opposition views the initiative as political revenge by the former prime minister, who retains significant influence over the parliamentary majority.



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# GOVERNANCE

## Governor Okpebholo's argument for State control of security

DR. PATRICK AKHERE EBOJELE

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, believes Nigeria's security challenges can be effectively tackled through shared responsibility, stronger state governors involvement and a security structure that gives them greater role and control as they are closer to the people.

According to him, governors must take full ownership and control of security in their states because they understand the unique challenges facing their communities and are directly accountable to the people.

"President Bola Ahmed Tinubu can not come to Edo or visit all the states at the same time because he is just one person. If I protect Edo State and every other governor protects their states, insecurity will become a thing of the past," Okpebholo said.

The governor was addressing an All Progressives Congress (APC) stakeholders' interactive session at Okaijesan Town Hall, Irrua, Esan Central Local Government Area of Edo State, and urged the 36 state governors to take greater responsibility for protecting lives and property.

Governor Okpebholo's advocacy for state police which the nation is articulating right now, is based on the argument that all security challenges are local and require responses driven by local intelligence, understanding, and personnel. He is not saying the federal government should be hands-off. No, but states should have greater



EDO STATE GOVERNOR, SENATOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLO

authority to complement federal security efforts.

Nigeria's policing system has remained largely centralised, with the Nigeria Police Force operating under federal control. Although governors are regarded as chief security officers of their states, they do not have direct operational control over police formation, though they have security votes.

Governor Okpebholo's argument is that this creates a gap between responsibility and authority, as states

are expected to address security concerns without full control over the main law enforcement institution.

His position aligns with the security pillar of his SHINE Agenda, which places the protection of lives and property at the center of governance. His administration believes a safe environment is necessary for economic growth, investment, infrastructure development, and job creation.

His administration has since inception highlighted measures aimed

at improving security in Edo State, including stronger intelligence gathering, technology-driven security operations, faster criminal justice processes, and support for community-based security initiatives.

The governor criticised those who blame President Tinubu alone for the country's security challenges, arguing that insecurity requires collective action from the federal government, state governments, and local communities.

"Many governors are working hard to solve security challenges across the nation. Governors should take charge of their various states and address the security situation. This is what is called sub-national responsibility, and it will help solve the problem," he said.

On a different terrain, supporters of state police argue that decentralising policing would allow states to respond faster to crimes such as kidnapping, banditry, cultism, and organised criminal activities. However, they have raised concerns about possible abuse of powers by state governments.

To address these concerns, ongoing efforts are for state police systems that must include strong safeguards, including independent oversight, professional recruitment, proper training, respect for human rights, and clear accountability mechanisms. In addition, effective policing requires adequate resources for personnel, equipment, technology, communication systems, and welfare.

For Governor Okpebholo, security is not only about fighting crime but also about creating an environment where development can thrive. He believes a secure state is a secure Nigeria that will attract investment, protect businesses, and improve the confidence of all citizens.

• *Dr. Ebojele has his PhD. in Public Administration and is the Chief Press Secretary to Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State.*

## Rufai Oseni backs Gov Okpebholo's push for public execution of criminals

Media personality and Arise Television anchor, Rufai Oseni, has backed Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo's plan to establish special criminal courts to fast-track the prosecution of kidnappers and armed bandits and their public execution.

Oseni, while speaking on his platform, said the proposed measure reflects the seriousness of the security challenges facing the country, although he noted that aspects of the policy may require further refinement.

"At this point in time, yes, we may have to fine-tune it, but I largely agree with Governor Okpebholo and Senator Adams Oshiomhole. This matter is more than being careful," Oseni said.

He argued that the severity of punishment should correspond with the level of violence committed by criminal groups, noting that victims of kidnapping and banditry often suffer extreme brutality.

"When they kill people, they do so publicly. It gets to the point you will need public execution because of the nature of these crimes," he said.

Oseni, however, stressed that any punishment must follow due pro-

cess, including a fair trial and conviction before execution.

"My position is grounded in fair trial and due process up to the point of conviction, and then public execution for the crime," he added.

Governor Okpebholo recently announced plans to establish special courts that would conclude criminal cases involving kidnappers and bandits within two to three weeks. He also said he would not hesitate to sign the death warrants of convicted offenders thereafter.

The proposal has also received support from former Edo State Governor and senator representing Edo North, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, who said states have the constitutional authority to determine punishments for offences within their jurisdiction.

Speaking at a campaign rally Senator Oshiomhole said, "I stand here to completely endorse the declaration by the governor of Edo State that we are in a federation where every state has the right to enact laws on punishment when it comes to state offences".

He added that kidnappers and bandits should face severe penalties for their crimes.

The proposed security measures



RUFAI OSENI

are part of the Okpebholo administration's SHINE Agenda, which iden-

tifies tackling kidnapping, cultism, armed robbery and other violent

crimes as key priorities across Edo State.

# Sports

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

## NIS to launch 8-week summer basic coaching programme in Uyo

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

In line with its mandate to develop sports through quality education and grassroots capacity building, the National Institute for Sports (NIS), in collaboration

with the Akwa Ibom State Football Association, is set to commence 8-Week Summer Basic Coaching Programme in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

The programme is part of the Institute's strategic drive to take coaching education

closer to aspiring and practicing coaches across the country. Akwa Ibom State falls within the NIS South-South Zonal Centre, headquartered in Benin City, Edo State, reflecting the Institute's commitment to making professional sports education accessible to the people of the region.

In a statement released by Ben Ogbemudia, the S.A. on media to the Director General of NIS, Participants will receive comprehensive training in the fundamentals of sports coaching, practical coaching techniques, drill organization, exercise planning, and competition management. Upon successful completion. He added that participants will be awarded an NIS Certificate of Participation/Completion.

According to the statement, the programme is open to football coaches, grassroots coaches, sports academy instructors, youth leaders, retired

athletes, club coaches, sports administrators, graduates aspiring to build careers in sports coaching, and anyone seeking a solid foundation in coaching.

Under the leadership of the Director General/Chief Executive Officer of the National Institute for Sports, H.E. Comrade Philip Shaibu, the Institute continues to expand coaching education and strengthen grassroots sports development across Nigeria through its zonal centres and strategic partnerships.

The Uyo programme reflects the DG/CEO's commitment to producing highly skilled coaches, fostering talent development, and ensuring that every geopolitical zone benefits from the Institute's professional training programmes. Interested participants are encouraged to register as further details on the commencement of the programme will be communicated by the Institute.



H.E. COMRADE PHILIP SHAIBU

## NSC names shot put star Chukwuebuka Enekwechi as Team Nigeria's male captain for 2026 Commonwealth Games

The Leadership of the National Sports Commission (NSC), has named Nigeria's Shot Put star Chukwuebuka Enekwechi as the nation's captain (Male) for the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow Scotland.

The U.S-based 2018 Commonwealth Games silver medalist will co-lead the Nigerian team alongside two time Olympic Champion, Folashade Oluwafemilayo who is the female captain for Team Nigeria at the Games.

33 year old Enekwechi is the current African Champion and he is also the 2019 African Games champion alongside his status as the reigning National Sports Festival Champion.

The Director General of the NSC Hon. Bukola Olopade said that choice of both Chukwuebuka Enekwechi and Folashade Oluwafemilayo resonates perfectly with the vision of the Commission to have a clear mentorship pathway for the country's young athletes to aspire for greatness in their chosen sports.

"We have picked individuals who do not only have a strong track records in their various sports but are also clear mentors to the young athletes for how they have sacrificially dedicated themselves to the country with utmost integrity and respect throughout their careers."

"The decision to pick them to lead Team Nigeria to the Com-

monwealth games is to also let them know that the country appreciates them for all they have been doing to put the Nation's flag on the global map and their labour will not be in vein, especially under the Renewed Hope Agenda for sports of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR", he said.

Team Nigeria is expected to depart Nigeria on Thursday, July 2nd 2026, for a three week training camp in Aberdeen, before the start of the Commonwealth games on the 23rd of July 2026 in Glasgow.



CHUKWUEBUKA ENEKWECHI

## 2026 NHSL: International exposure key to Kada Teams Success-Ndana

Abubakar Ndana, Team Manager of Kada Stars and Kada Queens Hockey Clubs, has attributed the impressive performances of both teams at the ongoing 2026 Nigeria Hockey Super League (NHSL) in Abuja to international exposure, teamwork, and quality coaching.

Ndana stated this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Monday in Abuja.

According to him, the recent success of the Kaduna-based clubs is largely due to the valuable experience gained from international competitions.

"What is key about this team is exposure. The players have been exposed to international

hockey.

"They recently returned from Ghana, where both the men's and women's teams won the maiden West African Hockey Championship. That experience has greatly improved their confidence and performance," he said.

He added that the youthful composition of the teams, combined with the guidance of experienced players, has created a strong balance.

"We have a young squad with a few new players who have blended well with our experienced players.

"The team has been together for some time, and that understanding has contributed to our success so far in the com-

petition," he said.

Ndana also commended the technical leadership of the teams under Nigeria's national hockey coach, Abdullahi Babandana.

"Kada is coached by the national team coach, Abdullahi Babandana. His technical knowledge and experience have been invaluable to the players.

"He has continued to provide the guidance and support needed for the teams to perform at a high level," he said.

The team manager, however, expressed concern over the shortage of hockey infrastructure across the country, describing it as one of the biggest challenges facing the sport in Nigeria.



CHIKELUE ILOENYOSI

## Football: Iloenyosi re-elected Anambra FA chairman

Chikelue Iloenyosi, the Chairman of Anambra State Football Association (AnSFA) has been re-elected for a second term.

Iloenyosi was returned unopposed at the AnSFA Elective Congress held in Awka yesterday.

Darlington Okeke, the returning officer of the election said Iloenyosi polled a total of 23 votes to emerge winner while Johnson Ifejika was returned as the Vice Chairman of the association.

Iloenyosi effectively assumed his first term in office in July 2022.

Also elected as members of the board were Ralph-Chidozie George and Obi Moneke,

who are both from Anambra South Senatorial District and Emmanuel Okeke and Nnamdi Igbokwe from Anambra North.

The seats of Anambra South Senatorial District were filled by Ezoakor Donatus Ezeakor, Michael Mbaezue and Ijeoma Nwosu.

In his post-election remark, Iloenyosi appreciated members of the FA for renewing their confidence in him but giving him the chance to administer the game for another four years.

He said he would work with the Anambra Government and the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN) to ensure that football retained its place as the king of sports in Anambra.

## Milo Basketball: Bayelsa, Benue set for girls' final

Bayelsa and Benue will battle for the girls' title at the 26th Nestlé Milo Secondary School Basketball Championships.

The final will feature two of the competition's most successful teams.

St. Jude Amarata, Bayelsa, will face Government Secondary School, Gboko, Benue, in the decider.

Amarata defeated Lanreleke, Ilegbo, Osun, 61-45 in their opening match at the championships.

They later lost 65-39 to Benue but progressed to the semi-finals after strong performances.

The Bayelsa girls defeated Ado Grammar School, Ado-Ekiti, 46-42 to book their place in the final.

Gboko's girls, regarded as the fans' favourites, have produced a dominant run throughout the tournament.

They defeated teams from Osun and Bayelsa before crushing Urhobo College, Efurun, Delta, 62-35.

Gboko's form has made them favourites ahead of the final scheduled for Thursday.

However, Bayelsa coach Tony Nelson expressed confidence ahead of the championship clash.

"Anything is possible. My players are no pushovers, and we are not new to this championship. We will work harder and prove our doubters wrong," Nelson said.



BAYELSA AND BENUE MILO BASKETBALL



## 2026 World Cup: late equaliser helps Morocco eliminate Netherlands on penalties

Morocco booked their place in the Round of 16 of the 2026 FIFA World Cup after defeating the

Netherlands 3-2 on penalties following a thrilling 1-1 draw in their Round of 32 encounter. The match looked set to

go the way of the Dutch after Cody Gakpo broke the deadlock in the 72nd minute.

Gakpo finished calmly after being set up by Crysencio Summerville, giving the Netherlands a deserved advantage after a tense and closely contested game.

Morocco struggled to create clear chances for much of the match but remained determined and disciplined.

Defender Ismael Diop had earlier gone into the referee's book after receiving a yellow card, but he later redeemed himself in dramatic fashion.

Deep into stoppage time, at 90+1 minutes, Diop rose to score the equaliser from a pass

by Chadi Talbi, sending Moroccan supporters into celebration and forcing the game into a penalty shootout.

The shootout proved to be a test of nerves for both sides.

Teun Koopmeiners converted the Netherlands' opening penalty, while Nabil El Aynaoui missed Morocco's first effort.

However, the Dutch failed to take advantage as Justin Kluijvert saw his spot kick saved.

Soufiane Rahimi restored parity for Morocco before Wout Weghorst scored for the Netherlands.

Talbi then kept Morocco in contention with a successful kick, while Quinten Timber failed to convert for the Dutch.



MOROCCO PLAYERS CELEBRATE



GABRIEL MARTINELLI

## World Cup: Martinelli's late strike sends Brazil past Japan 2-1

Brazil secured a dramatic 2-1 victory over Japan in the FIFA World Cup Round of 32 after a late Gabriel Martinelli winner.

The match at Houston's NRG Stadium produced an entertaining contest, with Japan pushing Brazil throughout the knockout encounter.

Brazil started with Alisson Becker, Marquinhos, Gabriel Magalhães, Casemiro, Bruno Guimarães and Vinícius Júnior.

Japan featured Zion Suzuki, Takehiro Tomiyasu, Hiroki Ito, Ritsu Doan, Kaishu Sano and Ayase Ueda.

Japan stunned the five-time champions in the 29th minute through Kaishu Sano's composed finish inside the penalty area.

Sano reacted quickly after finding space and fired past Alisson to give Japan a deserved early advantage.

Brazil dominated possession afterwards but struggled to break Japan's disciplined defensive shape before half-time.

Vinícius Júnior threatened repeatedly, but Japan's compact backline prevented Brazil from

creating clear openings.

The South Americans returned strongly after the interval, increasing pressure on Japan's defence.

Their persistence paid off in the 55th minute when Casemiro headed in Brazil's equaliser.

The midfielder connected with Gabriel's delivery, restoring hope for Brazil after Japan's impressive first-half display.

Japan continued fighting, with their counter-attacks causing problems for Brazil's defenders late in the match.

Brazil introduced Gabriel Martinelli, whose impact eventually changed the outcome of the thrilling contest.

In stoppage time, Martinelli scored in the 96th minute to complete Brazil's comeback victory.

The Arsenal forward finished a Bruno Guimarães pass, sending Brazil into the next round.

Japan left the tournament with credit after pushing Brazil to the limit with a courageous performance.

Brazil now advances after surviving a major test from a technically gifted Japanese side

## World Cup: Paraguay stun Germany on penalties to reach Round of 16

Paraguay produced one of the biggest surprises of the 2026 FIFA World Cup by defeating Germany 4-3 on penalties after a 1-1 draw in their Round of 32 encounter.

The dramatic contest ended Germany's campaign and marked a historic moment, as it was the first time the four-time world champions had ever lost a penalty shootout in FIFA World Cup history.

Paraguay took the lead in the 42nd minute through Julio Enciso, who finished calmly after receiving a fine pass from Matias Galarza to put the South Americans ahead before halftime.

Germany returned from the break with renewed determination and found the equaliser in the 54th minute.

Kai Havertz converted from close range after being set up by Florian Wirtz, bringing the Europeans back into the contest.

Both teams continued to push for a winner, but neither side could find the decisive goal in regulation time, forcing the match into a penalty shootout.

The shootout proved tense and dramatic. Havertz had an opportunity to give Germany an advantage but missed his penalty, while Mauricio converted Paraguay's opening kick.

Joshua Kimmich and Jamal Musiala successfully scored for Germany, while Gabriel Gomez and Galarza Matías kept Paraguay level.



PARAGUAY PLAYERS

## Morocco has earned respect – Ouahabi

Coach of the Moroccan national football team, Mohamed Ouahbi, said his team had earned respect after Morocco edged the Netherlands

2-3 on penalty shootouts in their round 32 clash on Monday.

The Africans came out top in the penalty shootouts after a 1-1 draw in Monterrey, Mex-

ico, setting up a round of 16 clash against co-hosts Canada.

Speaking after the game, Morocco Coach Mohamed Ouahbi said his team has done enough on the pitch to earn respect.

"Morocco has gained everybody's respect now. It's not because of what we've said. We've now shown it."

Ouahbi added that his players were driven by the support of Moroccans both at the stadium and at home.

"This team, and all the Moroccan youth teams, are fighting for much, much more than just football or simply winning a match," Ouahbi said.



MOHAMED OUAHBI

## Fosla Academy sweeps maiden national schools football championship

Fosla Academy, Abuja, emerged champions in both the male and female categories of the maiden National Schools Football Championship in Abuja, on Monday.

The tournament's final was played at the FIFA Goal Project Pitch at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja.

Goals by Ephraim Moses and Daniel Alilu earned Fosla Academy a 2-1 victory over Brilliant Academy, Toro, Bauchi State, in the boys' final.

Victor Usman scored a late consolation goal for Brilliant Academy in the keenly contested final.

In the girls' final, Fosla Academy defeated Govern-

ment Secondary School, Lugbe, 2-0 to claim the title.

Salamatu Ahmed and Patricia Habila scored the goals that sealed victory for Fosla Academy before a packed crowd.

Parliament International School, Apo, came from behind twice to defeat Divine Mercy School, Asokoro, 3-2

and secure third place.

Kelechi Onyekuru of Parliament International School won the boys' Most Valuable Player award after scoring the decisive penalty.

Alicia Francisca of Aduvie International School was named the girls' Most Valuable Player.

Sunday Mark of Divine Mercy School, Asokoro, and Patri-

cia Habila of Fosla Academy won the boys' and girls' Golden Boot awards, respectively, with eight goals each.

Nigeria Football Federation Head of Competitions, Ruth David, presented individual awards and trophies on behalf of NFF President Ibrahim Gusau.

Former NFF President and

Founder of Fosla Academy, Sani Lulu, attended the ceremony and expressed delight at his team's outstanding performance.

Lulu commended Kickstart Sports Foundation Chief Executive Officer, Ibrahim Bello, for organising the championship and promoting a high standard of school football.