

JAMB Registrar resolves over 5,000 pending complaints in 5 days

ABUJA This is disclosed in a statement issued on Sunday in Abuja by the Acting Director, Public Affairs and Protocol, JAMB, Fabian Benjamin. Benjamin said the development followed Aina's decision to strengthen the Board's Service Compact with All Nigerians (SERVICOM) Unit to ensure the prompt resolution of outstanding complaints. He said the Registrar had relocated his seat to the SERVICOM Unit to gain first-hand knowledge of the nature of services being sought by candidates and other clients and to facilitate the resolution of pending cases. According to him, the move is in line with the Registrar's Five Enduring Pillars, particularly the second pillar, "Service at Heart". He added that the Registrar's move was to ensure his commitment to leveraging strategic communication to reposition the Board and deliver services commensurate with the fees paid by candidates. He noted that Aina had directed SERVICOM Desk Officers to address complaints holistically and promptly. Benjamin said the directive had already begun to yield positive results, with more than 5,000 pending and unresolved complaints addressed within five days. He said the complaints covered a wide range of issues, including difficulties in creating profile codes by candidates who had previously registered with telephone numbers to which

CONTINUES ON PG 4»

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#200

Oil blocks' allocation now falls under NUPRC, says NNPC

● Reports oil and gas production growth under Ojuleri

ABUJA The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Ltd. (NNPC Ltd.) says the recently concluded oil licensing round falls within the statutory mandate of the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC). The company made the clarification in a statement issued in Abuja on Saturday by its Chief Corporate Communications Officer, Mr Andy Odeh. The clarification followed recent media reports which was attributed to the Oil and Gas Professionals Forum (OGPF), questioning the performance of NNPC Ltd's management under its Group Chief Executive Officer, Mr Bayo Ojulari, particularly on the licensing round. Odeh said under the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) 2021, the conduct of oil licensing rounds and allocation of oil blocks were the statutory responsibilities of NUPRC. He said the NNPC Ltd., since its incorporation, had operated strictly as a commercial entity and did not possess regulatory or allocative powers, while its crude oil production had recorded sustained growth under the current leadership. "As of April 2025, average crude oil production stood at 1.60 million barrels per day (mbpd) inclusive of condensate. "Output rose through the second half of 2025 and stabilised at 1.67 mbpd inclusive of condensate, by April 2026. "This is an increase of approximately 80 thousand barrels per day which represents 6 per cent growth. "These figures are documented in NNPC Limited's Monthly Performance Report, which is available to the public. On Gas Production. "Gas production output increased from an average of 7,354 million standard cubic feet per day (mmscfd) in April 2025 to 7,729 mmscfd in April 2026, representing five per cent growth," he said. He added that it reflected expanding gas production to support domestic energy security and export commitments. He reiterated the company's commitment to transparency and open engagement on matters concerning its operations and performance. Odeh urged industry analysts and professional associations to verify information through appropriate channels before publication.

CONTINUES ON PG 4»



HEALTH INSURANCE: L - R: Edo State Deputy Governor, Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa, Edo State NHIA Co-ordinator, Dr. Theodore Ehannire and Hon. Omosede Igbiniedion, Member of the House of Reps (Ovia Federal Constituency) during the formal unveiling of the NHIA cards for residents of the constituency on Friday.

Idahosa underwrites NHIA health insurance cover for 4,000 Ovia residents

BENIN CITY EDWARD OSEGHE A major healthcare intervention targeted at improving access to medical services in Edo State has received a boost as no fewer than 4,000 residents of Ovia Federal Constituency are set to benefit from a fully funded health insurance programme under the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), following an intervention facilitated by the Deputy Governor of Edo State, Hon. Dennis Idahosa. In a statement, his Chief Press Secretary, Friday Aghedo, said the initiative facilitated by Idahosa during his tenure as the member representing Ovia Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives, is designed to ease the financial burden of healthcare on residents by providing access to quality medical services without out-of-pocket payments. The programme was formally unveiled in Benin City during the presentation of NHIA health insurance cards to the deputy governor and the

CONTINUES ON PG 4»

Agbebaku congratulates Etaifo on appointment as Delta CP —Pg 2

Lions District earmarks ₦100million for diabetes programme, targets 10,000 —Pg 4

Israel accused of weaponizing archaeology at ancient West Bank sites —Pg 8

WAFU-B: Edo Queens camp bubbles as Tenebe visits team —11

NEWS

Agbebaku congratulates Etaifo on appointment as Delta CP

SALIHU MARYAM SAIDU

BENIN CITY

The Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Blessing Agbebaku, has congratulated Commissioner of Police Samuel Erale Etaifo on his

appointment as the new Commissioner of Police, Delta State Police Command.

Agbebaku, in a congratulatory message issued on behalf of the Edo State House of Assembly and the people of Owan and Edo State, described Etaifo's appointment as well de-

served and a recognition of his professionalism, dedication, integrity and outstanding service to the Nigeria Police Force.

The Speaker expressed confidence in the ability of the new Delta State Commissioner of Police to bring his wealth of experience and leadership

to bear in strengthening security and promoting peace across the state.

According to him, Etaifo's leadership is also expected to enhance public confidence in policing and contribute to improved security and stability in Delta State.

Agbebaku urged the police

commissioner to approach his new responsibility with the same commitment and professionalism that have characterised his career in the Nigeria Police Force.

He also prayed for divine guidance, wisdom, strength and sound health for Etaifo as

he assumes his new position, while wishing him a successful and impactful tenure.

The Speaker further congratulated Etaifo on the new appointment and expressed optimism that his tenure would bring greater success to the Delta State Police Command.

Edo: 31 inmates apply for parole, three await FG approval

BENIN CITY

OSEMUDIAMHEN FAITH

Thirty-one inmates in Edo State have applied for parole, with three of them recommended for the programme and currently awaiting approval from the Federal Government.

The Chairman of the Edo State Parole Board, retired Justice Alero Edodo-Erauga, disclosed this during a sensitisation workshop on non-custodial measures organised by the Prisoners' Rehabilitation and Welfare Action (PRAWA), in collaboration with the Nigerian Correctional Service and with support from RoLAC.

Edodo-Erauga said the 31 applications received by the board were subjected to a thorough assessment to determine the eligibility of the inmates under the relevant provisions governing parole.

She explained that only three of the applicants successfully met the requirements and were recommended for parole, while their applications were awaiting final approval from the Federal Government.

According to her, parole is an important component of the criminal justice system that provides eligible inmates with an opportunity to reintegrate into society under specified conditions while ensuring public safety.

The board chairman urged stakeholders, particularly civil society organisations and the media, to intensify public enlightenment on parole and other non-custodial measures.

She noted that inadequate public understanding of the measures had contributed to misconceptions about their purpose and effectiveness.

Edodo-Erauga stressed that non-custodial measures were not intended to undermine justice, but rather to promote rehabilitation, responsible reintegration and more effective administration of the criminal justice system.

She called for increased collaboration among government agencies, correctional authorities, civil society organisations and the media to ensure that members of the public were adequately informed about the objectives and benefits of non-custodial measures.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP:

Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa, Edo State Deputy Governor, addressing the finalists of the second edition of Edo Youth Impact Forum (EYIF) Entrepreneurship Programme in Benin City.

Edo Govt backs youth startups as Idahosa champions innovation, ₦40million support

BENIN CITY

SALIHU MARYAM SAIDU

Edo State Deputy Governor, Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa, has called on

young entrepreneurs across the state to embrace innovation, resilience and creativity as essential tools for promoting economic growth, job creation and sustainable development.

Idahosa made the call while

addressing the 20 finalists of the second edition of the Edo Youth Impact Forum (EYIF) Entrepreneurship Programme. The programme is designed to identify, support and encourage young people with innovative business ideas and entrepreneurial potential.

In a statement issued by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr Friday Aghedo, the deputy governor said young people remained important partners in the state's economic transformation. He noted that through entrepreneurship, skills development and private enterprise, youths could contribute meaningfully to the growth of Edo State and the Nigerian economy.

Idahosa commended the state government for prioritising youth empowerment and human capital development. He said the administration was committed to creating an en-

vironment where innovation, entrepreneurship and private businesses could thrive.

The deputy governor also praised the finalists for successfully emerging from a competitive selection process. He described their participation in the programme as evidence of their creativity, determination and willingness to pursue solutions to social and economic challenges through enterprise.

While acknowledging that only some of the finalists would receive direct financial support, Idahosa encouraged all the participants to remain committed to their entrepreneurial ambitions. He advised those who might not emerge as beneficiaries to regard the programme as an opportunity to gain experience, improve their business ideas and build valuable relationships with other entrepreneurs and potential partners.

Oba Ewuare II Anniversary: 2,679 to benefit from entrepreneurship drive

BENIN CITY

SALIHU MARYAM SAIDU

No fewer than 2,679 prospective entrepreneurs have completed orientation ahead of the fourth edition of the Oba Ewuare II Two-Month Entrepreneurship Programme in Edo State.

The programme, organized by Aigubasimwin Movement World-Wide, is scheduled to commence on August 10, 2026, as part of activities

lined up to commemorate the 10th coronation anniversary of the Oba of Benin, His Royal Majesty, Omo N'Oba N'Edo Uku'Akpokpolo, Oba Ewuare II, CFR.

The orientation exercise brought together participants from different parts of Edo State and was designed to prepare them for the intensive training programme, which focuses on practical entrepreneurial and vocational skills.

Speaking at the orientation, President of Aigubasimwin

Movement World-Wide, Iyamu Osaro Culture, described the initiative as an investment in human capital capable of helping to address unemployment and promote sustainable economic development.

Iyamu urged the participants to approach the programme with commitment, discipline and determination, stressing that the skills acquired should be translated into viable businesses and sustainable sources of liveli-

hood.

He also charged the participants to uphold the values, culture and dignity of the Benin Kingdom throughout the programme, reminding them that their conduct would reflect on the institution of the Benin traditional throne.

According to him, the entrepreneurship initiative has continued to expand in scope since its inception, providing young people with opportunities to acquire practical skills and develop enterprises.

Okonofua celebrates former UNIBEN Vice-Chancellor Salami at 70

BENIN CITY

SALIHU RUKAYYA SAIDU

Professor Friday Okonofua has felicitated with the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Benin (UNIBEN), Professor Lilian Imuentiyani Salami, on the occasion of her 70th birthday, describing her as a distinguished academic and administrator.

Okonofua, in his congratulatory message, acknowledged

Salami's contributions to education, leadership and the development of the University of Benin during her years of service. He described the milestone as an opportunity to celebrate a woman whose career has made an impact in the academic community.

He commended the former Vice-Chancellor for her dedication to the growth of the university and her commitment to improving the quality of education and research. According to him, her leader-

ship reflected a strong sense of responsibility and dedication to institutional development.

Okonofua also highlighted Salami's efforts in promoting inclusiveness and creating opportunities for academics and students. He noted that her career demonstrated the important role women can play in leadership and decision-making within Nigeria's higher education sector.

He further praised her ability to combine academic excellence with effective ad-

Edo Govt moves to improve elderly welfare, introduces free pad scheme for girls

SALIHU RUKAYYA SAIDU

The Edo State Government has announced plans to strengthen welfare programmes for elderly persons and introduce a free sanitary pad initiative for girls across the state.

The Coordinator of the Office of the First Lady, Mrs. Edesili Okpebholo Anani, disclosed this when members of the Catholic Nurses Guild of Nigeria, Archdiocese of Benin, paid a courtesy visit to the Gov-

ernment House in Benin City.

Mrs. Anani said the government was committed to improving the welfare of senior citizens, adding that support had already been extended to elderly associations while additional measures were being considered to address their needs.

She commended the Catholic Nurses Guild for its contributions to healthcare delivery and public awareness, particularly in the areas of elderly care, menstrual hygiene, reproductive health and

the campaign against criminal abortion and human trafficking.

The Coordinator also revealed that her pet project, the BeLiEF and Care Foundation, would soon launch a Pad Bank Initiative to provide free sanitary pads to girls, especially those in underserved communities.

According to her, the initiative would not only provide sanitary products but also educate young girls on proper menstrual hygiene, reproductive health and personal care.

NEWS

RTEAN hails Edo SSG Umar Ikhilor on birthday, commends to good governance

BENIN CITY

BENEDICT OKATE

The Edo State chapter of the Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN) has congratulated the Secretary to the Edo State Government (SSG), Umar Musa Ikhilor (Esq.), on the occasion of his birthday, describing him as an exemplary public servant whose dedication has continued to strengthen governance in the

state.

In a statement issued on behalf of the association and its executive members, the Edo State Chairman of RTEAN, Comrade Osakpamwan Eriyo, lauded Ikhilor's leadership qualities, describing him as a dependable administrator, a committed public servant and a key driver of the state's development agenda.

Eriyo said the SSG's humility, professionalism and unwavering commitment to duty had earned him widespread

respect and contributed significantly to the success of the administration of Governor Senator Monday Okpebholo.

"Umar Musa Ikhilor is a thorough administrator, a dependable leader and an engine room of the Edo State Government. His commitment to effective governance and the progress of Edo State continues to inspire many people," Eriyo stated.

The RTEAN chairman further described Ikhilor as a devout Muslim and a leader

whose dedication to public service has remained exemplary, noting that his contributions have continued to support the delivery of good governance across the state.

While celebrating the SSG on his birthday, Eriyo prayed for God's continued guidance, protection and abundant blessings upon him.

"We pray that Almighty God grants him many more years of good health, divine wisdom, strength and greater accomplishments as he continues to

serve the people of Edo State with distinction," he said.

He also wished the celebrant continued success, fulfillment and peace, expressing optimism that Ikhilor's service would continue to yield positive results for the people of

Edo State.

According to Eriyo, members of RTEAN across the state joined Ikhilor's family, friends and well-wishers in celebrating the milestone and wished him many more years of impactful service to Edo State and Nigeria.

**COURTESY VISIT:**

Chairman of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), retired Brig.-Gen. Mohammed Marwa (M) welcome the Canadian High Commissioner to Nigeria, Dr David Sproule, during the latter's visit to NDLEA headquarters in Abuja on Friday.

Tinubu hails Nigeria's admission into World Energy Council

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu has welcomed Nigeria's formal admission as the newest National Member Committee of the World Energy Council (WEC).

Tinubu described the development as a proud moment for the country and a strong vote of confidence in Nigeria's energy reforms and leadership role in Africa.

This is contained in a statement issued by Presidential Spokesperson, Mr Bayo Onanuga, on Friday in Abuja.

The president said Nigeria's admission into the century-old global network of more than 100 countries would enable it to play a greater role in shaping global energy discourse.

According to him, the development will strengthen Nigeria's voice on issues of energy security, equity and sustainability.

Tinubu congratulated the inaugural leadership of WEC Nigeria, led by Mr Abdulrazaq Isa as Chairman and Mr Bala Wunti as Chief Executive Officer.

He also congratulated other distinguished Nigerians drawn from the energy industry, regulatory institutions, finance, academia and the Future Energy Leaders community who will

serve on the inaugural board.

The president described Isa as a distinguished patriot and trailblazing industrialist whose investments in indigenous refining and industrial energy had expanded opportunities for Nigerian enterprise.

He also praised Wunti as one of Nigeria's finest energy strategists and reform champions.

Tinubu said Wunti's more than three decades of service had been marked by landmark reforms that enhanced national revenues and restored investor confidence in the energy sector.

The president noted that the composition of the board reflected a blend of experienced industry leaders, regulators, finance experts and youth representatives.

He said the combination would provide the balance, neutrality and credibility needed for WEC Nigeria to succeed.

"Nigeria has joined the World Energy Council to lead, not just participate – to ensure Africa's voice shapes global energy decisions," Tinubu said.

The president reaffirmed the Federal Government's support for WEC Nigeria as a neutral and technology-agnostic platform for policy dialogue, investment mobilisation and innovation.

Equities market records N235bn gain

LAGOS

The equities market recorded N235 billion gain on Friday at the close of trading, reflecting sustained bullish sentiment among investors.

This marked the 3rd consecutive bullish session in the week.

The performance underscored renewed investor confidence in the stock market, driven by increased demand for blue-chip stocks and sustained positive market momentum.

Market capitalisation rose by 0.15 per cent, closing at N158.513 trillion from the N158.278 trillion recorded at the previous session.

Similarly, the All-Share Index (ASI) appreciated by 0.15 per cent, gaining 364.26 points to close at 245,573.60, compared with 245,209.34 recorded in the preceding session.

This pushed the year-to-date return to 57.81 per cent.

Meanwhile, the market breadth closed negatively, recording 24 losers against 22 gainers.

Red Star Express led the losers' chart by 10 per cent, ending the session at N18, CAP trailed by 9.98 per cent, closing at N115.45 while John Holt dipped by 9.82 per cent, finishing at N 10.10 per share.

Also, ABC Transport declined by 9.57 per cent, settling at N5.20 and Legend Internet

shed by 8.70 per cent, finishing at N4.20 per share.

On the gainers' chart, UPDC led by 9.23 per cent, closing at N3.55, Computer Warehouse Group followed by 6.56 per cent, ending the session at N19.50 and AXA Mansard Insurance advanced by 4.80 per cent, settling at N13.10 per share.

Neimeth International Pharmaceutical gained by 4.24 per cent, finishing at N8.60 while Cutix grew by 4 per cent, closing at N2.60 per share.

Market activity strengthened during the session, with total trading volume surging by 185.55 per cent to 1.52 billion shares worth N26.65 billion, exchanged in 42,580 deals.

RMAFC moves to strengthen revenue monitoring, fiscal accountability

ABUJA

The Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) says it is pursuing institutional reforms and digital transformation to improve revenue monitoring, transparency and fiscal governance.

The Chairman of the commission, Dr Mohammed Shehu, disclosed this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Friday in Abuja.

Shehu described RMAFC as a strategic constitutional body responsible for safeguarding

Nigeria's revenue architecture and ensuring proper accounting and equitable distribution of federation revenues.

According to him, RMAFC monitors revenues accruing to the federation account, tracks disbursements and advises governments on revenue enhancement strategies.

"Our constitutional responsibility is to ensure that every kobo due to the federation is properly accounted for," he said.

He said that the RMAFC's revenue monitoring covered major revenue-generating agencies and institutions responsible for collections on

behalf of the federation.

"The commission conducts monthly reconciliation exercises through the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) to verify revenues accruing to the federation account.

"The process involves representatives of the Federal Government, states, revenue agencies and other statutory stakeholders scrutinising financial records.

"Where discrepancies are identified, the commission demands explanations backed by documentary evidence until all figures are fully reconciled," he said.

Kano expends ₦1.5 billion on mass wedding, distributes furniture, grants to couples

KANO

Governor Abba Kabir-Yusuf of Kano State says the state government has expended N1.5 billion on mass wedding programme, covering medical screening, dowry, furniture, and other items for the couples.

Gov. Yusuf made the disclosure on Saturday during a reception and the distribution of furniture, among other items, to the couples at the Kano State Government House.

He said the present administration had committed over N1.5 billion to ensure the successful implementation of the

programme and to provide comprehensive support to the newly married couples.

"This expenditure covered medical screening for all the brides and grooms to safeguard their health and that of their future children.

"Similarly, we provided the payment of N100,000 as

dowry, in addition to another N100,000 as capital grant to serve as seed capital for starting a business and promoting self-reliance.

"We also provided household furniture and essential items, including beds, mattresses, and other necessities to enable the couples to begin their

married lives comfortably.

"Government has also provided food items and other essential commodities to cushion the hardship they may encounter during the early days of their marriage," he said.

The governor called on the new couples to strive to maintain peace, harmony, mutual

respect, and understanding in their homes.

He reminded the couples that marriage "is an act of worship", while urging them to conduct their matrimonial lives in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

Lions District earmarks N100M for diabetes programme, targets 10,000

LAGOS

Lions Clubs International District 404B4 has earmarked N100 million for a diabetes-focused programme targeting 10,000 beneficiaries in the 2026/2027 service year.

Its District Governor, Mrs Patience Ngene, said this on Saturday in Lagos while unveiling her leadership team and agenda for the new service year.

Ngene said the initiative would prioritise children living with diabetes, with the district partnering health centres in communities to provide screening, treatment support and sponsorship where necessary.

"Our key focus is on children with diabetes because we know a lot of people are dying slowly," she said.

She also said the district had so far reached about 100

people through its diabetes interventions but would significantly scale up its efforts during her tenure.

According to her, diabetes screening will remain a major priority, alongside interventions in vision care, youth and women empowerment and community development.

Ngene also unveiled plans to empower 50 widows with sewing and branding machines to enable them establish sustainable livelihoods.

She stressed that the success of her administration would

be measured by the tangible impact of its projects on beneficiaries by the end of the service year.

"What I would like is the impact service I have put in place," she said.

Ngene said the administration would operate under the theme, "Passion for Service, Service Without Limits".

The immediate past District Governor, Mr Adebawale Afolayan, said his administration screened residents for diabetes and glycaemic conditions and referred those at risk

to health centres.

Afolayan said the district also conducted vision screening and supported beneficiaries with surgeries, medication and lifestyle interventions.

He said the projects were driven by community needs, covering healthcare, hunger relief, vision care and childhood cancer.

Afolayan said the district also recorded a membership growth of 236 during his tenure, rising from 1,591 members at the beginning of the service year.

The First Vice District Governor, Mr Wale Obisesan, appealed to members, donors and friends of the district to support the new administration's service projects.

He said wider support was essential to executing the programmes planned for the service year.

The Head of the Department of Political Science, Federal University Otuoke, Prof. John Kalama, said Lions' community interventions complemented government efforts in healthcare and other sectors.

Oil blocks' allocation now falls...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

He said that NNPC Ltd. reserved the right to take necessary steps to protect its reputation and that of its leadership against false or unsubstantiated claims.

"Such verification will help ensure that public commentary remains factual, balanced and constructive to informed discourse on Nigeria's energy sector," the statement quoted Odeh as saying.

JAMB Registrar resolves...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

they no longer had access.

He added that biometric verification challenges were also addressed, including genuine cases of biometric failures encountered during the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) registration or examination.

He further said that the Registrar also scrutinised the operations of the Central Admissions Processing System (CAPS), where issues relating to lost phones and SIM cards, candidates who converted from Direct Entry (DE) to UTME, and candidates omitted from the National Matriculation List after graduation were identified and addressed.

He also noted that some

previously unresolved payment-related issues were swiftly resolved, alongside complaints concerning inappropriate examination venues, e-PINs, technical challenges and difficulties with the uploading of documents.

According to him, other recurring complaints relating to changes of name, date of birth, state and local government of origin were also addressed.

The acting director said the initiative underscored the Registrar's commitment to placing candidates and other clients at the centre of the Board's operations.

He said JAMB would continue to strengthen its complaint-resolution mechanisms to ensure that candidates received timely and efficient services.

Idahosa underwrites NHIA...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

current member representing Ovia Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives, Hon. Omosede Gabriella Igbiniedion, by the Edo State Coordinator of NHIA, Dr. Theodore Ehannire.

Speaking at the presentation, Idahosa said the programme reflects his commitment to improving the welfare of the people through strategic investments in healthcare and human capital development.

"This intervention is aimed at ensuring that our people have access to quality healthcare without the financial burden that often prevents many from seeking timely medical

attention," he said.

He added that responsive leadership should prioritise investments in human capital and public health alongside physical infrastructure.

Presenting the cards on behalf of the Director-General of NHIA, Dr. Kelechi Ohiri, the Edo State Coordinator, Dr. Theodore Ehannire, described the programme as the first initiative of its kind in the state since the establishment of the NHIA.

Ehannire disclosed that he personally led the enrolment team across the nooks and crannies of Ovia Federal Constituency, noting that over 2,000 of the projected 4,000 beneficiaries had already been



INSPECTING FLOOD CONTROL FACILITIES:

From left: Chief Executive Director, Ogun Oshun River Basin Development Authority, Mr Adedeji Ashiru; Minister of Water Resources and Sanitation, Prof. Joseph Utsev; Special Adviser to Lagos State Governor on Environment, Mr Olakunle Rotimi-Akodu, during the inspection of the flood control facilities and flood-affected communities by the minister in Lagos on Friday.

Ondo: Reps member involved in auto crash, 2 injured — FRSC

AKURE

JUDE EHEBHA

The lawmaker representing Ilaje/Ese-Odo Federal Constituency of Ondo State, Donald Ojogo, was on Saturday involved in an auto crash along Ore-Ondo Road.

Dr Samuel Ibitoye, Ondo State Sector Commander of Federal Road Safety Corps

(FRSC), confirmed the incident to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on telephone.

Ibitoye, who said the crash involved three vehicles and 19 people, explained that preliminary investigation revealed that the incident happened by wrongful overtaking and over-speeding.

"19 people were involved in total, made up of 15 males and 4 females. Out of the 19 people, two female commuters were

injured.

"The injured victims were subsequently rushed to a nearby hospital, where they received medical attention.

"Meanwhile, the lawmaker with the remaining 16 others were not injured. Two buses and a Toyota land Cruiser Prado were involved," he said.

The sector commander, therefore, called on motorists to have patience while driving and engage in defensive driv-

ing techniques to avoid unnecessary crashes.

"Speeding could be thrilling, but it also kills as well, people should avoid speeding while they are driving and also shun wrongful overtaking," Ibitoye said.

NAN gathered that the accident occurred while the lawmaker was travelling to Arogbo in Ese-Odo Local Government Area of the state for a political engagement.

Kidnappers walk into security ambush in Edo, gunman neutralized, hostage rescued

BENIN CITY

MIKE OSAROIGABON

The Police in Edo State have said a member of a gang of kidnappers has

been killed after the gang walked into an ambush by a joint security team while attempting to collect a N1.5m ransom.

The police also said a gun battle ensued, forcing two other suspects to flee into the

forest with suspected gunshot wounds, while their victim was rescued unhurt.

According to the Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Eno Ikoedem, the incident occurred around 9:20pm on Thursday in the Onogolo/Oria Forest, Esan South-East Local Government Area of Edo State.

The victim, Lucky Egbeki, was abducted from Urueun Quarters, Ubiaja, on August 5.

Ikoedem said the operation was carried out by personnel of the Police, Nigerian Army and Edo State Security Network (ESSN).

The joint team, acting on credible intelligence and technical surveillance, positioned itself along the route the kidnappers were expected to use for the ransom collection.

She further stated that as the suspects emerged, they opened fire on the security operatives, trigger-

ing a fierce gun duel in the forest.

ASP Ikoedem said one of the suspected kidnappers was neutralised during the exchange while two others escaped into the forest with suspected gunshot injuries, as a manhunt was launched for them.

Meanwhile, the security team rescued Egbeki unhurt.

The N1.5m ransom brought for his release was also recovered intact at the scene.

She stated that the victim was reunited with his family after medical evaluation.

"The hostage was rescued without injury, while the entire ransom sum of N1.5m brought for his release was recovered intact at the scene," ASP Ikoedem said.

The police commended the personnel involved in the operation for their bravery and seamless coordination.

NPHCDA maps zero-dose hotspots for targeted vaccination

ABUJA

The National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) says it has mapped areas with high burdens of zero-dose children to guide targeted immunisation interventions across Nigeria and improve routine vaccination coverage among vulnerable populations.

Dr Garba Rufai, Director of

Disease Control and Immunisation at NPHCDA, said this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Saturday in Abuja, outlining strategies adopted to reach unreached children.

Rufai said the agency was deploying the Identify, Enumerate and Vaccinate (IEV) approach to locate unreached children, document their vaccination status and provide health workers with reliable data for inter-

ventions nationwide.

"In some states where we have the highest number of zero-dose children, we went out there and registered every child that was under five, male or female.

"With that list, the local government authority and health workers can look at the settlements, know their catchment areas and use that information to plan," Rufai said.

He said the data generated

through the exercise was also supporting maternal and child health programmes, while providing other agencies with accurate information required for planning interventions effectively.

"The best thing to plan for children is just the line list. They don't know where they are. So, you know there are 10 children here, three of them are under one, five of them are under two," he said.

NEWS

Banditry: Protesters block Mokwa-Bida highway

MOKWA (NIGER)

It was a harrowing tale of hardship for commuters on the ever busy Mokwa-Bida highway on Sunday as protest-

ers blocked the highway over claims of persistent banditry.

Our correspondent who was at the scene, reports that all entry points into Mokwa were blocked by the angry

protesters.

It gathered that many travellers had been stranded since Saturday night.

One of the protesters, Salihu Mohammed, claimed that

suspected bandits recently abducted 15 residents of the community.

This could not be independently verified.

He alleged that security

agencies had not been able to rescue the victims.

Mohammed vowed that the protest would be sustained until the victims were rescued.

A commuter heading to Abuja from Ilorin, Joy Amaechi, lamented that she had spent five hours at Mokwa with no solution in sight.

She called for urgent gov-

ernment intervention to rescue the victims.

A driver with a popular mass transit company, Henry Nwachuckwu, said he had arrived at Mokwa at about 7 am on Sunday.

As at the time of filing this report at about 10.30 am, the protesters had yet to leave the highway.

**INSPECTION TOUR:**

From left: Project Coordinator of HITECH, Jabbour Chidac; Minister of Works, David Umahi; Deputy Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Works, Usman Banye; Controller of Works Lagos, Olufemi Dare; Senior Special Assistant to the President on Community Engagement, North Central, Abiodun Essiet, during an inspection tour to Section 1, 2 and 3 of Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway by the minister and members of the national assembly in Lagos on Friday.

NDPHC urges power infrastructure optimisation

LAGOS

The Managing Director of Niger Delta Power Holding Company (NDPHC), Mrs Jennifer Adighije, has called for optimisation of Nigeria's electricity infrastructure to accelerate socio-economic development.

Adighije made the call on Sunday during the Distinguished Alumni Lecture organised by the Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, University of Lagos (UNILAG).

The lecture, titled 'Optimising Electricity for Powering Nigeria's New Socio-Economic Frontiers,' was held at the Engineering Lecture Theatre of the institution.

She said reliable electricity remained critical to industrialisation, investment attraction, job creation and sustainable economic growth across the country.

Describing the occasion as an honour and homecoming, Adighije thanked UNILAG for providing the academic foundation that shaped her career and leadership journey.

She said the lecture theme was timely, considering ongoing reforms aimed at expanding electricity access, attracting investment and improving service delivery nationwide.

According to her, electricity has become the currency of development in the global economy, influencing competitiveness and economic transformation.

"Countries with reliable and affordable power are better positioned to create jobs, attract investment, drive industrialisation and strengthen healthcare and education," she said.

Adighije identified the Electricity Act 2023 as a landmark reform, noting that it empowers states to establish and regulate their electricity markets.

"The legislation has created unprecedented opportunities for investment, innovation, competition and improved service delivery," she said.

She added that the law was accelerating the emergence of vibrant sub-national electricity markets capable of attracting increased private-sector participation.

The NDPHC chief executive

said the company was repositioning itself to maximise asset value through operational efficiency, improved governance and strategic partnerships.

She reaffirmed NDPHC's commitment to supporting the transformation of Nigeria's electricity supply industry through efficient asset management and infrastructure optimisation.

Looking ahead, Adighije expressed confidence in the next generation of engineers to drive innovation and sustainability in the energy sector.

She said technologies such as artificial intelligence, automation, battery storage, smart metering and advanced power electronics would shape future electricity systems.

Chief Franklin Obah for burial August 15

ETSAKO

The family of the late Chief Engr. Okhumhode Franklin J. Obah has announced the funeral arrangements for the deceased, who passed away at the age of 80 after what relatives described as a life of service, dedication and lasting impact on his family and community.

According to a funeral invitation released by the family, activities in honour of the late elder will begin with a Service of Songs on Friday, August 14, 2026, at 5 p.m.

The final burial ceremony and interment are scheduled to take place on Saturday, August 15, 2026, at 12 noon at

Obah's Compound, Imioko Quarters, Afokella, in Etsako East Local Government Area of Edo State. A reception for guests will follow immediately after the burial.

The expressed gratitude to God for the godly life led by their father, and called on relatives, friends, associates and well-wishers to join them in celebrating the life and legacy of the deceased.

According to the family, Chief Obah lived a life marked by commitment to humanity, strong family values and positive contributions to those around him.

Although his passing had left a deep void, his memories and the values he upheld will continue to inspire future generations.

Ediawe Joins Nigeria's Legal Profession

SALIHU MARYAM SAIDU**LAGOS**

Precious Eshiozehnameh Ediawe has been called to the Nigerian Bar, officially qualifying as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Nigeria after successfully completing the mandatory legal training and meeting the requirements for admission into the legal profession.

The call to the Bar marks the successful completion of the academic and professional stages of legal education

in Nigeria, enabling Ediawe to practise law and represent clients in courts across the country.

A congratulatory message issued in her honour described the achievement as the reward for years of hard work, resilience, discipline and commitment to academic excellence. It noted that her success was made possible through dedication, perseverance and God's grace.

The message further expressed confidence that the new legal practitioner would uphold the ethics and values of the legal profession while making meaningful contributions to justice, the rule of law and national development.

Family members, friends, colleagues and well-wishers also celebrated the milestone, describing it as a source of pride and inspiration to young people aspiring to pursue careers in law.

They encouraged Ediawe to remain committed to integrity, professionalism and continuous learning as she begins her legal career.

The call to the Nigerian Bar is regarded as one of the highest professional milestones for law graduates in the country. It signifies their admission into legal practice after fulfilling the academic requirements of a recognised university, completing vocational training at the Nigerian Law School and satisfying the conditions prescribed by the Council of Legal Education.

Centre urges FG to strengthen security at ports, borders

ABUJA

The Sea Empowerment and Research Centre (SEREC) has urged the Federal Government to strengthen security at Nigeria's ports, borders and trade corridors.

SEREC's Head of Research, Mr Eugene Nweke, who made the call in a statement on Sunday in Abuja, commended the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) for its intelligence-led interventions.

Nweke lauded the Comptroller-General (C-G) of NCS, Bashir Adeniyi and the NCS management for sustained vigilance, intelligence-led interventions and remarkable interceptions of prohibited

and dangerous consignments.

He said the seizures increasingly constituted a critical first line of defence in Nigeria's national-security architecture.

Nweke said recurring interceptions of arms, ammunition, illicit drugs, prohibited goods, unreported currency and other sensitive consignments should no longer be regarded as isolated smuggling incidents.

"It is increasingly difficult to regard the recurring interception of arms and ammunition, weapons, illicit drugs, prohibited goods, unreported currency and other sensitive consignments as isolated incidents of smuggling," he said.

According to him, Nigeria's maritime and land-frontier

networks are being persistently tested and exploited by transnational criminal syndicates, arms traffickers, drug cartels and organised smuggling networks.

"A prohibited weapon intercepted at a port is potentially a weapon denied to a criminal, terrorist or violent extremist network," Nweke said.

He urged the Federal Government to intensify intelligence gathering, border surveillance, inter-agency coordination and preventive security measures, particularly ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Nweke said election periods could create additional vulnerabilities through increased movement of people and goods, illicit financing,

proliferation of small arms and light weapons and communal tensions.

"The recurring interceptions should trigger deeper national-security assessment, intelligence coordination and preventive action," he said.

Nweke called for increased investment in customs intelligence and risk-management systems, real-time information sharing, advance cargo information analysis, non-intrusive inspection technologies, maritime and land-border surveillance.

He also advocated stronger intelligence fusion, regional and international customs co-operation, specialised training and improved logistics and welfare for officers de-

ployed to sensitive locations.

Nweke said freight forwarders, customs brokers, bonded operators, shipping and logistics companies should also be integrated into the national security framework because they occupy strategic positions within the supply chain.

According to him, they often possess information about consignors, consignees, cargo descriptions, documentation and routing.

He, however, said while some legitimate operators could be unknowingly exploited by criminal networks, "there are instances where unscrupulous industry actors knowingly facilitate, participate in or profit from illicit trade".

CSO coalition urges credible, violence-free Osun election

MINNA

The Campaign for Democracy Human Rights Advocacy Civil Society (CD-CSO) Coalition, Niger Chapter, has urged the Federal Government and relevant agencies to ensure credible, peaceful and violence-free elections in Osun State.

The coalition made the call in a communiqué issued after its State Executive Committee meeting held over the weekend

in Minna.

The communiqué issued to newsmen on Sunday in Abuja was jointly signed by the State Chairman, Dr Abdullahi Mohammed and Secretary-General, Mr Tayo Ayobami.

It urged the Federal Government and agencies involved in the Aug. 15 Osun Governorship Election to ensure fairness, justice and security while protecting voters' freedom and participation.

The coalition called on the

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and other stakeholders to ensure a free, fair, transparent and credible election, with zero tolerance for malpractice and violence.

It also urged the media to ensure that its reportage reflected accurate information to the public and follow-up on the activities from the polling units to the announcement of the final result.

The coalition said it was working with civil society or-

ganisations involved in voter mobilisation and media advocacy, alongside the newly approved and registered Democratic Leadership Alliance, to provide opportunities for interested individuals.

It said the platform would provide opportunities for ideologically focused, service-oriented, transparent, credible and honest individuals interested in elective public offices to participate in the 2027 general elections.

The coalition also advised opposition political parties in Niger to unite and mobilise citizens behind alternative leaders capable of competing favourably with the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in 2027.

It commended the Niger Government for its performance and achievements under Gov. Mohammed Umar Bago's administration in the past three years.

The coalition, however, urged the administration to do more in social welfare, healthcare, education, pension matters, potable water supply, electricity, transportation and human security.

It said improved delivery in those areas would help strengthen public confidence and improve the welfare of citizens ahead of the 2027 general elections.



MOKWA- BIDA HIGHWAY:

Commuters trekking long distances on the ever busy Mokwa- Bida highway after protesters blocked the road to traffic for several hours on Sunday.

Lekki residents decry two-week power outage, urge EKEDC to restore supply

MAXWELL OKECHUKWU

LAGOS

Some residents of Lekki Phase 1 have decried the prolonged power outage that has crippled activities in parts of the neighbourhood for almost two weeks following a transformer fault.

The residents also condemned what they described as negligence, poor communication and indifference on the part of the Eko Electricity Distribu-

tion Company (EKEDC) during the blackout.

They expressed their displeasure in separate interviews with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Sunday, saying the prolonged outage had imposed significant financial burdens on residents.

According to them, the blackout has resulted in spoiled food items, while residents who depend on private generators have been forced to spend more on fuel.

The residents appealed to the

management of EKEDC to urgently restore electricity supply to Alhaji Hakeem Odumosu Street and other affected parts of the Lekki 1 area.

One of the residents, Mr Taiwo Bolodeoku, described the situation as disturbing and disheartening.

"It has been almost two weeks now since a transformer blew up with a loud bang. The transformer services our home and quite a number of other houses in the area.

"No information has been given, no apology has been sent out, and we wonder what is going on

as we continue to wait endlessly.

"EKEDC has just been going back and forth without providing information or a plan on when the transformer will be fixed," Bolodeoku said.

Another resident, Mrs Margaret Sogbesan, accused the EKEDC management of playing politics with the situation.

"The system is somehow. We have spoken to everyone that needs to be spoken to; they have given updates and made promises to restore power, but here we are, still without a solution. So, it is really frustrating," she said.

Varsity explains circumstances behind death of expectant mother

AWKA

The Anambra-owned Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital (COOUTH), Awka, says the unfortunate death of a pregnant woman, Mrs Amarachi Uche-Chukwudokwe, in its facility was caused by nephrotic syndrome.

The Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the hospital, Ms Henrietta Agbai, disclosed this in a statement issued in Awka on Sunday.

Agbai was reacting to a recent

social media report alleging that the woman, who passed on on March 26, died of cold and catarrh, rather than a severe medical condition.

The statement read in part, "COOUTH, Amaku, Awka, has noted with concern the misleading narratives circulating on social media, regarding the unfortunate demise of Mrs. Uche-Chukwudokwe Amarachi.

"Contrary to claims that the patient presented to our hospital at 14 weeks of pregnancy

with 'cold and catarrh', hospital records show that she was presented to our facility after having been managed at a private hospital for generalised body swelling and difficulty in breathing.

"Further investigations conducted at our hospital revealed significant anaemia, with a Packed Cell Volume of 20 per cent, proteinuria of 3+ (+++), haematuria of 3+ (+++), and pleural effusion.

"Based on these clinical findings and investigations, a diagnosis of nephrotic syndrome was made."

Nephrotic syndrome "is a kidney disorder, defined by high

protein in the urine, low blood protein, and body swelling.

"It is caused by damage to the tiny blood vessels in the kidneys that filter waste."

The PRO, who acknowledged the public interest generated by the incident, urged individuals and social media users to "refrain from circulating unverified and misleading information".

According to her, such information could cause unnecessary public anxiety or damage the reputation of healthcare professionals and institutions committed to saving lives.

Joint intelligence operation key to curbing insecurity – Ndarani

ABUJA

Mohammed Ndarani, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), says joint intelligence sharing and operation remains key to curbing insecurity in Nigeria.

Ndarani, who said this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Saturday in Abuja, was reacting to the recent rescue of 308 kidnapped victims from Kwara and Niger states.

He said that the security challenge faced in the country requires collective effort, not only from the security agencies but also from Nigerians.

"I was worried but now delighted over the rescue of the victims abducted in separate attacks in Kwara and Niger states.

"With the release, Nigerians, and not just the families of the victims, will breathe a sigh of relief, and for that, we give thanks to God Almighty."

He commended the efforts of President Bola Tinubu, National Security Adviser, Nuhu Ribadu, and all the security agencies involved in the largest single-day

rescue mission in Nigeria.

"Ribadu's style of security approach to protecting lives and properties is one of the best in the world.

"If we must have victory against rural criminality, people in our local communities must be prepared to share information with the relevant authorities.

"If you see something, say something. Intelligence gathering is key as some of these criminals have relatives and friends who know what they are doing or are suspicious of some of their activities.

"These suspicious activities should be reported to grow efficiency and collaboration among citizens and our security agencies."

He said the rescue has given Nigerians hope and urged security agencies to sustain the momentum and intensify efforts to prevent further attacks and abductions across the nation.

"I urge Nigerians to continue to share useful security information with the authorities to stop these criminal attacks and make our nation safer and more peaceful.

Kano task force arrests 28, recovers illicit substances

KANO

The Kano State Multi-Agency Task Force on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking has arrested 28 suspects and recovered assorted illicit substances in Rimin Gado and Doka communities of the State.

This is contained in a statement by the Chairman of the Task Force, Mr Muhuyi Malawi and issued by the Secretary, Mr Ibrahim Garba-Muhammad on Sunday in Kano.

Magaji, who led the operation, said it was aimed to tackle drug-related criminality and protect communities from the effects of drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

"On Aug. 7, the task force raided five drug joints in Rimin Gado and Doka in Tofa Local Government Area of the state.

The targeted operation was aimed to demonstrate the task force's impartial enforcement mandate and to send a clear mes-

sage that no one is above the law.

"We are treating every community equally and enforcing the law without bias.

"Our guiding principle is Kano First and we are determined to ensure a peaceful, prosperous and drug-free state inline with the vision of Gov. Abba Kabir-Yusuf," he said.

Magaji said the task force recovered various assorted illicit substances during the raids.

He said that he commenced the operations from his hometown Rimin Gado saying it was deliberate and symbolic.

"Sanitising my own community is the first step to a wider campaign," he added.

He said that the campaign would be extended beyond Kano Metropolis to all 44 Local Government Areas of the state.

The chairman noted that the operation combined kinetic interventions to disrupt criminal activities with coordinated follow-up.

NEWS

Osun 2026: APC chieftain calls for restraint, credible poll

OSOGBO

A Chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Osun, Mr Olatunbosun Oyintiloye, has called for peace among political parties, candidates and their supporters ahead of Aug. 15 governorship election.

Oyintiloye, who spoke with newsmen on Sunday in Osogbo, urged stakeholders to refrain from violence and ensure a peaceful electoral process, stressing that no political ambition is worth the life of any

citizen.

Speaking against the backdrop of rising political tension in the state, he said such tension should not create fear or discourage citizens from exercising their constitutional right to vote.

The former lawmaker said the deployment of security personnel across the state should be seen as a preventive measure, not a cause for alarm.

He noted that such deployments were not unusual during elections and could be based

on intelligence available to the Federal Government. "Osun voters must not allow fear to discourage them from exercising their civic rights."

"They should come out in large numbers to vote."

"The presence of security that's should reassure our people that adequate measures are in place to protect them and ensure a peaceful process", he said.

Oyintiloye urged eligible voters to remain calm, vigilant and courageous, noting that

their participation was essential to sustaining democracy.

He, however, expressed concern over reports of violent attacks, killings and alleged extrajudicial actions linked to political activities, adding that security agencies were making efforts to address the situation.

He called on security agencies to discharge their duties with professionalism, neutrality and accountability.

"Anyone found to have violated the law, irrespective of political affiliation or status,

should face appropriate legal consequences. There must be no impunity," he said.

Oyintiloye also urged government and relevant agencies to intensify public sensitisation and provide accurate information to counter rumours and misinformation.

He said security arrangements should remain intelligence-driven, especially in vulnerable communities, while rapid-response mechanisms should be strengthened.

The APC chieftain condemned all acts of violence, killings, intimidation, and destruction linked to political activities.

He further urged political leaders and supporters to moderate their language and avoid inflammatory rhetoric capable of heightening tension.

Oyintiloye called on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to ensure transparency, impartiality, and credibility throughout the electoral process.

He said whoever emerged through a credible process should be accepted, while aggrieved parties should seek redress through legal channels.

"The responsibility for a peaceful election rests on all stakeholders. Let every eligible voter come out. Let every vote count. Let every citizen return home safely."

Oyintiloye expressed optimism that the election would be credible and reflect the will of the people, adding that the APC and its candidate, Bola Oyebamiji, were confident of victory based on grassroots support and mobilisation.

**GIFT TO A WIDOW**

Technical Adviser to Kogi Governor on Donors and Multilateral Affairs, Dr Ozomata Abdullahi (middle), unveiling a house gift to a widow, donated by the My People First Foundation (MPFF) on Sunday in Okehi, Kogi.

Foundation donates house to octogenarian widow in Kogi

KOGI

A non-governmental organisation, My People First Foundation, has donated a room-and-parlour apartment to an 80-year-old widow, Mrs Mariyamo Azuo, in Inata Community, Obeiba, Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi.

The foundation made the donation on Sunday, barely two months after it provided a similar house to another vulnerable woman in the community.

Hajiya Aishat Omade, founder of the foundation, said

the gesture was in fulfilment of her promise during the organisation's first outreach to provide shelter for at least four widows before the end of the year.

Omade, who is also the State Coordinator and Chief Executive Officer of the Kogi State Social Investment Programme Agency (KOSSIP), said that she was delighted to put smiles on the faces of people who might never be able to repay her kindness.

She said that she was only replicating the kindness of strangers who had contributed

to changing her own story.

According to her, her position at KOSSIP has provided her with an opportunity to make meaningful impact, particularly in the lives of women and other vulnerable members of society.

"Women constitute a significant proportion of dedicated voters and should benefit from government, either directly or through those appointed to serve," she said.

Omade appealed to well-to-do individuals to extend support to vulnerable people in their communities, stressing

that the true measure of wealth was not how much one accumulated but the number of lives one was able to touch and transform.

She pledged to remain committed to improving the living conditions of elderly women living in dilapidated homes and facing uncertainty.

Speaking at the handover ceremony, Dr Ozomata Abdullahi, Technical Adviser to Gov. Ahmed Ododo on Donors and Multilateral Affairs, commended Omade for providing two homes to vulnerable women within two months.

SEREC commends Customs chief over intelligence-led seizures

LAGOS

The Sea Empowerment and Research Center (SEREC) has commended the Comptroller-General of Customs, Bashir Adeniyi, for intelligence-led seizures of arms, drugs and prohibited goods. The Head of Research of the centre, Dr Eugene Nweke, made this known in a statement on Sunday in Lagos.

He said the interceptions reflected vigilance and served as a critical first line of defence in Nigeria's national security architecture.

Nweke said recurring seizures of arms, drugs and prohibited goods should no longer be treated as routine customs enforcement matters. He noted that transnational syndicates were testing the nation's maritime and land borders to establish supply channels through legitimate trade infrastructure.

Nweke said intercepted consignments of weapons and narcotics potentially denied criminals and terrorist networks

access to dangerous materials and illicit financing.

He therefore called on the Federal Government to conduct deeper security assessments and improve intelligence coordination across all entry points.

The research head warned that election periods increased vulnerabilities through arms proliferation, illicit financing and the movement of people and goods.

He urged proactive surveillance ahead of the 2027 general elections to prevent trade corridors from becoming conduits for terrorism, banditry and election-related violence.

"There is a need for investment in risk-management systems, technology, data analytics, inter-agency information sharing and the welfare of officers at sensitive locations."

"Freight forwarders, customs brokers and bonded operators must be integrated into the national border security and compliance framework," Nweke said.

Lagos 2027: Afenifere seeks stronger Yoruba-Igbo ties, warns against opposition

LAGOS

Chief Deji Wellington, Lagos State Chairman of the Yoruba socio-cultural organisation, Afenifere, says the group has initiated dialogue with Igbo leaders to rebuild trust and promote peaceful coexistence ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Wellington disclosed this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Sunday while explaining the rationale behind Afenifere's recent meeting with leaders of the Igbo community in Lagos.

He said the initiative was informed by growing mutual suspicion between the Yoruba and Igbo communities, which he described as unhealthy for national unity and peaceful

political participation.

"We strongly believe that our organisation, as a cultural, political and social group, should go beyond what our predecessors have done by promoting peaceful coexistence with the Igbo and other ethnic groups."

"Our observation is that there is mutual suspicion between the Yoruba and the Igbo."

"We believe this should not be the case because those of us who lived through the 1960s and 1970s witnessed a different relationship," Wellington said.

According to him, the relationship between both ethnic groups was once characterised by mutual trust, friendship and communal living.

"The Yoruba and the Igbo lived together harmoniously before."

Exam malpractice undermines Nigeria's education credibility – Stakeholders

BAUCHI

Some stakeholders in the education sector have said that examination malpractice undermined the credibility of the education system in Nigeria.

They said that the spate of exam malpractice was eroding global trust in the nation's education system, as students who obtained grades through fraudulent ways lacked the knowledge and competence to defend their qualifications.

The stakeholders, including educationists, government officials, students and activists, stated this in separate interviews with our correspondents

on Sunday in Bauchi, Dutse and Gombe.

Mr Ibrahim Labaran, Deputy Director of Examinations, Bauchi State Ministry of Education, said that examination malpractice produced graduates whose academic qualifications might not reflect their actual abilities. He said that the consequences of exam malpractice went beyond obtaining inflated scores, as students who could not genuinely defend their grades lack the competence expected of holders of such qualifications.

Labaran attributed the trend to the proliferation of "miracle centres," largely patronised due to the candidates' lack of

confidence in their academic abilities.

He said that the Bauchi state government has adopted strict measures to check the menace, including a two-year sanction and a N500 000 fine, to be imposed on defaulting schools.

"Principals found involved in exam malpractice could also face dismissal," he said.

Labaran underscored the need for regular engagement with school administrators and other stakeholders to educate them on the ills of the examination fraud.

"Improving the quality of education from the basic level will enable students to acquire the knowledge and confidence

required to pass examinations," he said.

Mr Joseph Adetipe, a veteran teacher in Gombe, alleged that exam fraud was being perpetrated by some examination officials and parents, who pressured their students to score higher grades.

Adetipe, who is also a school proprietor, alleged that corruption and compromise on the part of government officials aided the growth of the miracle centres.

While dismissing the trend as worrisome, Adetipe said that the existence of the miracle centres discouraged many students to study and prepare adequately for examinations.

FOREIGN

NEWS

**ANCIENT SITE OF SEBASTIA:**

Roman columns of the ancient site of Sebastia, in the occupied West Bank, are olive fields that have been cultivated for generations by Palestinian families.

Israel accused of weaponizing archaeology at ancient West Bank sites

Up in the hills above the Roman columns of the ancient site of Sebastia, in the occupied West Bank, are olive fields that have been cultivated for generations by Palestinian families.

One of the landowners, Abu Mudif, says he has received notification that his land is part of a tranche of about 450 acres that the Israeli authorities are taking possession of in order, they say, to protect and develop the site for a major new national park.

Typically, Palestinian landowners receive little or no payment for such land expropriation.

And even when it is offered, most refuse it as they see accepting it as giving recognition and legitimacy to the loss of what they see as their patrimony.

It's a vital income for Abu Mudif to lose of course, but it goes deeper than that for him.

Palestinian landowner Abu Mudif in Sebastia, in the occupied West Bank

Abu Mudif says his land is part of a tranche of about 450 acres being expropriated by Israeli authorities

"If I wanted to describe it, the closest description I can give is that it is like having your soul ripped away. I cannot imagine myself without my land."

Nahed Sakha owns a local restaurant that is under threat of demolition.

He says the Israeli plan seems to be to cut Palestinian residents off from the archaeological site, which dates back thousands of years and has significant remains from the ancient Jewish past, as well as many other eras including the Romans, the Crusaders and the Ottomans.

"Restoration work has now begun along with excavations," he says. "Landowners were told that no-one would be allowed to use or plough their land."

The concerns of the village that surrounds Sebastia have been echoed by the United Nations culture and education agency, Unesco, which has now

declared it not just a World Heritage Site but also added it to the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Unesco says that the main threat facing the site concerns what it calls the "planned expropriation and creation of the 'Samaria' (Shomron) national park, which could divide the property".

Standing on a path between the entrance car park in Sebastia on one side - where the Roman-era forum once stood - and the columns of the basilica on the other, the village mayor, Mohammed Azem, looks down to his right at some rubbish left in the ruins.

He says locals are now worried about reaching down to clean the area as it might cause problems with Israeli security forces and settlers.

The path on which he stands divides the site between Area B of the West Bank - which is under Palestinian civil and Israeli security control - and Area C, which is under full Israeli civil and security control.

Last week, Israel allocated roughly 113 million shekels (£27.8m) to expanding its control over archaeological sites in the West Bank. Some projects involve sites in areas administered by the Palestinian Authority.

In the remains of the Roman theatre, Israeli activist Alon Arad - who heads Emek Shaveh, an Israeli group that aims to ensure that the ancient heritage of the region belongs to all communities - says that the Israeli authorities have bypassed consultation with the local administration and residents of Sebastia.

"The thing is that Israel is not the owner of this place. This is a Palestinian heritage site.

And in order to develop it in a positive way, it has to be done with the local community, with the municipality, so they can benefit."

The Israeli plans would see Sebastia's entrance moved to the other side of the vast site, away from the village and current car park and shops.

Hormuz talks positive, Oman says, as Iran warns deal would not open strait

Oman has said positive talks have been taking place with Iran over an agreement to secure a shipping route through the Strait of Hormuz, as Tehran warned that any deal would not see an immediate reopening of the vital waterway.

Both sides suggested on Saturday that discussions were progressing, but a timeline on any deal being finalised remained unclear. Oman's foreign ministry warned against attacks on shipping that could hamper that.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said talks were in their final stages but the reopening of the strait remained "subject to other conditions".

Tehran has effectively blockaded the waterway, through which around a fifth of the world's oil and natural gas usually flows, since the US and Israel began attacking it in February.

Talks in recent days have focused on the possibility of a deal between Iran and Oman on a new route through the strait, which they would both have responsibility for and is hoped would lead to progress in resuming shipping traffic.

But Araghchi said a full reopening of the typically busy maritime route depended on other conditions being met, of which he provided a cursory

appraisal. He said the conditions included Iran receiving compensation from the US for what Tehran described as violations of the deal both sides signed in June to cease fighting and advance talks to end the war.

That deal - called a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) - quickly fell through, as did diplomatic talks, with tit-for-tat attacks resuming just days after it was signed.

Separately, Mohammad Baqer Zolqadr, Iran's security chief, told the semi-official news agency Tasnim that the Strait of Hormuz would not reopen until the US "corrects" its behaviour.

He said the US needed to meet six Iranian demands, including a halt to threats against Iran, removal of its naval blockade of Iranian ports and release of Iran's frozen assets.

Another blockade, on Saudi Arabia's ports in the Red Sea, had been imposed by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis since 20 July.

Earlier this week, US President Donald Trump said a deal with Iran "could be soon", but Vice-President JD Vance appeared to be more sceptical on Saturday, telling Fox News that work remained to be done even if progress was being made.

"We're really in the middle of the game here," he said.

Hundreds arrested over French wildfires, but who is to blame?

After wildfires caused more damage in France this year than at any time since World War Two, many are left asking a single question: Why?

A major driver is that climate is changing as a result of the well-documented way humanity is burning fossil fuels. Temperatures are only rising.

But with records showing that nine out of 10 French wildfires are started by humans, the government in Paris is trying to attribute blame - although it is itself accused of being under-prepared for the infernos that have now scorched more than 300,000 acres this summer.

The interior ministry has announced 420 arrests of people alleged to have either started the fires deliberately or by accident. Among them are 166 minors.

In one case, a 23-year-old man has been accused of deliberately starting 10 fires in the space of five days in the south-eastern Var area last month. He faces 15 years in prison and a €150,000 (£128,000) fine, if convicted.

Many others have been tried and immediately sentenced, such as a man who received a three-year jail sentence for starting three recent fires in

the Raon-L'Étape forest in the Vosges region.

"Only a few square metres of vegetation went up in smoke," noted L'Est Républicain, the newspaper that reported the story.

Other prosecutions have been perceived as heavy-handed and unjust. A homeless man and someone with severe autism have reportedly been handed jail terms for throwing cigarette butts.

"I was amazed at the number of arrests, it feels excessive," admits Muriel Gestas, a lawyer who has represented several people accused of arson, including two firefighters. She doubts many will lead to a conviction. The newspaper Le Monde is also unconvinced. It questions to what extent police have examined these cases, given the short time frame.

The authorities' silence on the details - the specific charges, notably whether they involve intent and how the numbers compare with past seasons - rules out any meaningful comparison with previous years, it argues.

But Bordeaux prosecutor Renaud Gaudeul told Le Monde that a tough approach was justified by current circumstances.

Spain imposes border controls against Italy as row over Ceuta migrant influx intensifies

Both countries say their border checks will remain in place for one month

Spain has imposed border controls on all air and sea travel from Italy as a row between the two EU countries intensifies.

The measures - which started at midnight (22:00 GMT) and will last for a month - come a week after Italy introduced similar restrictions following an influx of about 78,000 migrants from Morocco into the Spanish exclave of Ceuta.

Spanish officials said the documents of 5%-10% of passengers were being checked

before they were allowed to disembark planes. Italy has also said its border controls are random.

The crisis has pitted Spain's socialist leader Pedro Sanchez against Italy's conservative leader Giorgia Meloni - who has long called for stricter EU migration rules.

Italy does not share a land border with Spain. Its government said last week that decision to temporarily suspend the border-free Schengen arrangement was to prevent any of the migrants who had entered Ceuta from travelling on to Italy.

Madrid dismissed this position, saying it was based on "spurious arguments" that lacked any basis in fact because the migrants who entered Ceuta had no way of entering the Schengen area.

On Friday, Spain demanded Italy reverse its checks by Sunday. Rome said they would stay until at least 15 August - when, it said, Spain "expects a new wave of migration" to hit Ceuta.

Italy has said that Spanish and EU citizens are exempt from additional checks when arriving in Italy, with these extra steps only for non-EU res-

idents.

However, it is not clear how border officials were meant to distinguish between EU and non-EU travellers and El Pais has reported that several Italian airport terminals have seen long queues and waiting times in recent days, with passengers arriving from Spain directed to a specific line for checks. As for Spanish controls, the authorities insist the immigration checks are random. However, a passenger arriving in Madrid on Saturday told national broadcaster RTVE that all passengers on her flight had had to show their passports.

NEWS**FOREIGN****State of emergency declared as fast-moving Canada wildfire doubles in size**

A state of emergency has been declared after thousands of people were forced to flee their homes as a fast-moving wildfire in a remote part of western Canada spread rapidly, doubling in size since it was first detected on Friday.

The Bald Range fire now occupies more than 39 sq miles (103 sq km) across the Summerland, Peachland and other districts of British Columbia, according to the BC Wildfire Service.

British Columbia Premier David Eby told a news conference on Saturday that one fire official had likened the fire to "a bomb going off".

The flames were so high that they had created their own weather systems, which creates lightning, Eby said.

The Bald Range wildfire burns, as seen from a vehicle, northwest of Summerland, British Columbia, Canada

"Homes have been lost, and properties have been destroyed. Some people became trapped as conditions changed very quickly, and needed to be rescued," the premier said.

A state of emergency allows the provincial government access to special powers including travel restrictions and supply protections to prevent price gouging, and extra resources to coordinate rescue work.

Summerland has a population of about 12,000 people, according to the 2021 census, and Peachland is home to about 6,500 residents.

The Bald Range wildfires triggered the largest evacuation

event this summer and more than 20,000 people across British Columbia have evacuated their homes, officials say.

"A lot of farms have been affected. We don't know how many structures have been lost. They're still busy fighting the fire," Summerland Mayor Doug Holmes told Reuters.

"We have to brace ourselves for the worst."

Hundreds of residents living in Summerland care facilities, including senior housing, were being relocated to safer areas, according to Interior Health, a publicly funded health authority in BC.

It was not yet clear how many structures had been destroyed in the blaze.

The nearby districts of Okanagan, Peachland, and Okanagan-Similkameen also issued evacuation orders, as well as evacuation alerts in some areas.

In Okanagan, there are a lot of horses that residents have been struggling to evacuate, Canadian broadcaster CBC reported.

Those unable to relocate their animals left their gates open in the hope the animals would find their own way to safety, local residents told CBC.

Some owners also painted markings on their animals to make them easier to identify later, according to the outlet.

Hundreds of wildfires have raged across Canada this summer, with nearly 200 burning in Ontario in July, sending air quality in Toronto to one of the worst levels in the world for a few days.

Japan marks 81st anniversary of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki

Bells tolled in Nagasaki on Sunday to mark the 81st anniversary of the day the United States dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city.

A moment of silence was observed at 11h02, the exact time it exploded in the air killing an estimated 70,000 people by December 1945.

It came three days after the bombing of Hiroshima on 6 August 1945 destroyed the city and killed 140,000 people.

Representatives from more than 90 countries attended a memorial event at Nagasaki Peace Park, which was marked amid heightened geopolitical tensions.

Mayor Shiro Suzuki denounced growing support for nuclear deterrence in the global community, including Japan and demanded his own government do more for nuclear disarmament.

"To all leaders of the nuclear states and nations relying on nuclear deterrence, you must face the reality that the more

you rely on nuclear deterrence, the more you increase the risk of a nuclear war," he said in his speech.

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi in her address said "the devastation caused by the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki 81 years ago must never be repeated".

She reiterated her message from Thursday's Hiroshima commemoration that Japan was continuing to uphold its three non-nuclear principles.

Takaichi said that the country would promote "realistic and practical" efforts toward realising a world free of nuclear weapons.

Her comments come amid a growing debate over whether Japan should rethink its long-standing principles of not producing, possessing, or allowing nuclear weapons.

Ageing survivors have expressed concern over increasing support for the possession of nuclear weapons for deterrence by the international community, including Japan.

Freed hostages in Nigeria describe their ordeal during captivity

More than 300 people who were kidnapped in separate attacks across northern Nigeria have been rescued in what President Bola Tinubu called the country's largest single-day rescue operation.

Among those freed were 163 people taken from the Woro community in Kwara state's Kaiama area in February and 145 others, most of whom were kidnapped in neighbouring Niger state.

Officials did not share details about the rescue, only saying that the hostages were freed from a forest after months in captivity. Speaking to the media

in Ilorin, Kwara State, on Friday, kidnap victim Amira Saliu described her ordeal:

"They kept us by the river, and aircraft would often fly over the area. Whenever they spotted an aircraft overhead, they ordered us to put out any fires we had lit and remain completely silent so we would not be seen.

"Sometimes they gave us food, but other times they didn't, and we went to bed with our children hungry. There were sick people among us, and several pregnant women gave birth while we were in captivity. They asked if there were any nurses besides me, and I told

them there were not. I was the only nurse there, so I assisted the pregnant women during delivery.

I helped about 10 women deliver their babies without gloves. I used my hands to help them."

"This is one gathering that evokes mixed feelings," said Kwara State Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq. "It's regrettable that the whole incident happened at all. But at the same time, we are grateful to God and just that our collective effort has paid off. Everyone has been rescued alive."

Improved coordination President Tinubu said the

rescue was driven by intelligence and reflected improved coordination among Nigeria's security agencies.

Mass abductions and kidnappings for ransom are still a major security problem in Nigeria, especially in the northwest and north-central areas.

Armed criminal groups, known locally as bandits, often raid villages, highways, and schools looking for victims to hold for ransom.

Authorities say many of these groups started from conflicts between nomadic herders and farmers over shrinking land and water, then grew into organised crime networks.

**RESCUED CHILDREN**

Kwara state Gov. Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq greets children at a hotel in Ilorin, Nigeria, Friday, August 7, 2026, where they are staying after being rescued.

Suspected crime boss Daniel Kinahan returning to Ireland in high-security operation

The Irish government jet carrying suspected crime boss Daniel Kinahan has departed Dubai for Dublin.

The 49-year-old was arrested in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in April and is being extradited to the Republic of Ireland to face a charge of directing a criminal organisation.

Kinahan will be immediately charged upon his arrival in Dublin and then brought by Gardaí (Irish police) to appear before the the non-jury, three judge Special Criminal Court on Sunday evening.

A large-scale security operation is in place. Ahead of the extradition the Irish Prison Service bought a bulletproof and bombproof van which can be used to escort prisoners who are considered high-risk

According to flight tracking data, the plane carrying Kinahan departed Dubai at 13:19 local time and is expected to land in Dublin before 19:00 local time on Sunday.

Irish authorities are expected to prosecute him for his involvement in leading an organised crime group.

Kinahan is not only wanted by the authorities in Ireland - the US Treasury Department once described the Kinahan cartel as one of the most dangerous in the world.

The US government imposed sanctions on Kinahan in April 2022 after he and other members of his family were identified as leaders of the Kinahan organised crime cartel.

He fought attempts to extradite him back to his native country, where the Kinahan cartel was involved in a long-running gangland feud that claimed 18 lives.

Kinahan himself became a target for murder and escaped an attempt on his life during a fatal shooting at a Dublin hotel in 2016.

He left Ireland and spent time living in Spain and more recently in Dubai, where a war-

rant for his arrest was issued by the Irish courts in April.

He appealed the extradition order over the past few months but his attempts were unsuccessful.

Gangland rivals tried to shoot Daniel Kinahan during a boxing weigh-in event in Dublin's Regency Hotel 10 years ago

Sunday's security operation will involve armed gardaí (Irish police) and members of the Irish Defence Forces as well as the Irish Prison Service, according to RTÉ News.

The broadcaster also said facilities have been upgraded in the maximum-security Portlaoise Prison in County Laois where he is expected to be held on remand.

An extradition agreement is in place between the UAE and Ireland and it was previously used to extradite Sean McGovern, a "senior lieutenant" in the organised crime group.

He was sentenced to 24 years in prison in June for directing

the activities of a criminal organisation.

What is the Kinahan cartel?

For more than 20 years the group has been responsible for importing tonnes of drugs and firearms around the world, the National Crime Agency (NCA) previously said.

The NCA said the crime group is linked to more than a dozen gangland murders.

According to former Gardaí (Irish police) Commissioner Drew Harris, the gang is estimated to have made more than €1bn (£836,590,000) globally from its activities.

The US Treasury Department has in the past compared the gang to crime organisations such as Italy's Camorra, Mexico's Los Zetas and Japan's Yakuza.

A reward of up to \$5m (£3.84m) has also been offered by the US for information on the three most senior Kinahan gang members - Daniel, his father Christopher Snr, 65, and brother Christopher Jnr.

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WAFU-B: Edo Queens camp bubbles as Tenebe visits team ● Redeems pledge, task team to go for glory

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Nigeria women premier league football champions Edo Queens' preparation for WAFU-B continental football tournament received a big boost today as the Chairman of All Progressives Congress APC, Edo State, Emperor Jarrett Tenebe



EDO QUEENS

paid a surprise visit to their camp and redeemed the pledge he made during the Nigeria Women Football League (NWFL) Super Six in Port Harcourt.

Delivering the morale boosting package to the Nigeria champions, the sports loving Edo APC boss charged the team to be good ambassadors

at the forthcoming West Africa Football Union (WAFU-B) play-off in Burkina Faso.

Tenebe who did not want the cash prize for the team announced urged the players to remain focused and take their training programme seriously as they fine-tune their readiness for the CAF champions league prelim campaigns.

He commended the players for making Edo State proud during the NWFL Super six showpiece in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Tenebe, who was accompanied by the Executive Chairman of Edo State Sports Commission, Hon. Amadin Enabulele, revealed that the State government has put all logistics in place for the team to excel in Burkina Faso, adding that the girls have all it takes to face any team in Africa.

According to him: "We are very proud of you girls. I can see you are doing very well in your build up to the continental engagement. You made the state proud during the regular league season. For Edo Queens to have won the league trophy in a battle involving six NWFL premierships giants goes to show that we are fully ready for the Continental challenge."

"I am very happy with your level of preparation for the WAFU-B play-off in Burkina Faso. So, I urge you all to show total commitment, go there and conquer again as you did in 2024. We are solidly behind you. Also know that the State governor, His Excellency Senator Monday Okpebholo, is waiting to receive the WAFU-B trophy. I wish us the very best of luck."



Lagos hosts 250 fencers from 20 nations

At least 250 athletes from more than 20 countries will compete at the Commonwealth Fencing Championships in Lagos from Sunday, Aug. 9, to Friday, Aug. 14.

President of the Nigerian Fencing Federation, Adeyinka Samuel, disclosed this on Saturday at a press conference held at Rugby School, Eko Atlantic City.

Samuel said Nigeria was ready to host a successful championship and expressed confidence that the country's athletes would capitalise on home advantage.

He said the Nigerian team had prepared extensively and possessed the quality needed to challenge for medals across several categories.

"I think we have a good chance. We have a number of athletes that are very strong and have been training hard."

"They are focused, hungry to win and determined. All these qualities give them a very good chance of success," he said.

Samuel said Nigeria was targeting medals in the under-23, veterans and wheelchair fencing events, with ambitions of winning gold.

NPFL 2026/27: Bendel Insurance FC set to begin Campaign against Warri Wolves In Benin

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

It is certain that the 2026/27 Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) season will kick off as planned as the league management body has officially announced Friday, August 28 as the kick off date with Shooting Stars SC of Ibadan and Inter Lagos FC paired against each other for the opening match in Ibadan.

The announcement was made during the draws ceremony held on the sidelines of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Nigeria Premier Football League in Ibadan, Oyo State on Friday, August 7, 2026.

The draws also have Bendel Insurance Football Club of Benin at home against Warri Wolves in their first game of the season. The match is scheduled for Sunday, August 30. The Niger Delta derby is followed by a trip to Lafia for Match Day two with Nasarawa Utd.

Kun Khalifat(H), Ranchers Bees (A) and Ikorodu City (H) are next in the first five fixtures involving the Benin Arsenal.

Bendel Insurance FC now expect their fans to return to the stadium to cheer them up against their opponents as the club have served out the three match behind closed doors punishment.

Meanwhile, the Executive Chairman, Edo State Sports Commission Hon. Amadin Desmond Enabulele has commended the NPFL management under the leadership of Hon. Otunba Gbenga Elegbeleye for his visionary and pragmatic leadership which is evident in the stability and sustainable progress the topflight league has recorded in the recent past.

Enabulele said that Elegbeleye

has distinguished himself, having succeeded in establishing a stable calendar that has seen season kick-off and conclusion going as planned without any major hiccups.

"Our premier league has impressed tremendously in the operational standard and has been stable and consistent following the calendar for the past three seasons with a clear sense of direction. Elegbeleye's management committee deserves commendation". He said



BENDEL INSURANCE FC

Edo set to launch Youth Tennis Championship 2026

● as Tennis Association chairman Dr Jackson hails sponsors 82.ng

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Edo State Tennis Association under the leadership of Dr Elo Jackson has announced their readiness to launch a 3-day Tennis Championship on Wednesday, August 12, 2026.

The championship, tagged, 'Edo Youth Tennis Championship' which is opened to U-12 and U-16 male and female players is scheduled

to run from Wednesday 12 to Saturday 15th, August 2026 at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium in Benin.

According to the chairman of Edo Tennis Association Dr Elo Jackson the maiden Tennis championship is aimed at providing a competitive platform for talent discovery, nurturing, and to celebrate the next generation of tennis talents in Edo State and Nigeria in general.

Dr Jackson expressed grat-

itude to the sponsors of the Tennis Championship 82.ng Ltd for adding values to the Edo Tennis development plan.

He said that lack of funds is the major hiccup in the development of tennis, revealing that hosting a major tennis championship is quite expensive.

Speaking on the initiative, Mr. Victor Ezewoko Ugwuala, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of 82.ng Ltd, said the championship reflects the company's vision of creating opportunities that transform lives.

"At 82.ng, we believe businesses should create lasting value beyond commercial success. Through 82 Sports, we are investing in grassroots sports because we see it as a powerful platform for developing young people, promoting excellence, and strengthening social development in our host communities. This championship is the beginning of a long-term commitment to youth sports development in Edo State." He assured.



Nigeria League must embrace commercial model to survive – NPFL boss

The Chairman of the Nigeria Premier Football League, Chief Gbenga Elegbeleye, has said the financial sustainability of NPFL clubs remains the biggest challenge facing the league, as only seven of the 20 teams are privately owned.

Elegbeleye stated this on Friday at the 2026 NPFL Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Reviewing the 2025/2026 season, which ended on May 24, the NPFL boss said that the campaign tested the league, but also showed what could be achieved through collaboration.

"The title race went down to the wire and there was improved matchday organisation, better security, and increased fan engagement across venues," the chairman said.

On broadcast, Elegbeleye described the season as a mixed experience.

He said that for the first time, the league's Over-The-Top (OTT) broadcaster, Propel Sports Africa, achieved 80 percent matchday coverage.

Elegbeleye, however, added that the relationship was terminated midway due to the broadcaster's failure to fulfil its rights obligations.



CHIEF GBENGA ELEGBELEYE

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Boxing in Nigeria is like hell fire, National Welterweight Champion Ikechukwu raises alarm

Nigeria's national welterweight champion, Michael Ikechukwu (Odogwu) has raised alarm over the current state of the pugilist's sport and submitted that boxing in the country is like hell fire.

Sports247 reports that the outspoken pugilist, who had his first professional fight in 2021, lamented over the low amounts that Nigerian boxers currently get as contract fees after their bouts.

Ikechukwu spilt the beans on the sordid state of professional boxing in Nigeria while speaking on Athlete's Corner segment of Sports247's television programme, Inside Naija Sports.

He added during the programme that airs weekly on YouTube and NTA News24 that Nigerian boxers are in the sport just because of passion they have for it, while relying on other jobs to stay alive.

'Odogwu' recalled that he actually ventured into boxing five years ago after he was motivated by a dramatic scene he observed at Lagos National Stadium.

"Back then, I used to go for swimming sessions at the National Stadium. One day, I saw a female boxer fighting a male boxer, and she was doing it very well.

"I was amazed to see what a woman could do against a man. So, I went to the coach and asked how I could join his club. He agreed to take me, and I quickly registered.

"It was not easy at the beginning and, even after three months, I kept on having bruises and cuts; but I didn't give up. I had a lot of passion for it.

"I even told myself that one day, I'll not only be national champion, but I will also be world champion. I thank God that I'm now a national champion in my weight category," Ikechukwu retorted.

However, while revealing his strong passion for the sport and how he has grown since his professional debut in 2021, 'Odogwu' confessed that the biggest challenge for him is the issue of paltry payments handed to boxers in Nigeria.

"I'm happy with my journey so far in boxing. It's now five years for me, but I just have to confess that, in Nigeria, boxing is hell.

"Yes, boxing is like hell fire in Nigeria, but I've enjoyed my five years in it because I love boxing with a strong passion. Many of us like the sport, but Nigeria is not helping us.

"Number one, the income we get as boxers is too low. It's interesting to be a boxer but, in Nigeria, you must have a side-job in order to stay alive.



MICHAEL IKECHUKWU

ABA urges Taraba Basketball coaches to unite, build Grassroots Talent

A member of the Taraba House of Assembly, Tanko Yusuf, has urged basketball coaches to unite and support grassroots development of the sport.

A statement by Kayode Adeniyi, Head of Media and Public Relations, Amateur Basketball Academies (ABA), said Tanko made the call during a two-day coaching clinic in Jalingo.

Tanko, who is also Chairman, Taraba Basketball Association, said Taraba had talented coaches, players and referees capable of competing favour-

ably with their counterparts within and outside Nigeria.

"We know that we have talented coaches, players and excellent referees, but we must remain focused, united and committed to continuous learning," Tanko said.

He urged coaches to embrace modern coaching methods, share knowledge and create opportunities for young players to develop their skills and achieve their potential.

According to him, unity among stakeholders was critical to rebuilding basketball

from the grassroots and positioning Taraba as a major basketball hub in Nigeria.

Tanko commended ABA for bringing the coaching clinic to Taraba, describing the initiative as timely and important to developing coaches and young basketball players.

"I encourage other stakeholders to support ABA's vision because sustainable basketball development requires collective efforts, proper training and consistent investment in coaches and players," he said.



TARABA BASKETBALL GRASSROOTS TALENT

Nigeria's Samuel becomes president of Commonwealth Fencing Federation

Nigeria has recorded a historic achievement in international sports ad-

ministration with the election of Adeyinka Samuel as President of the Commonwealth Fencing

Federation (CFF).

This is contained in a statement issued by the federation on Sunday in Lagos.

Samuel defeated the incumbent, Marie-France Dufour, at the federation's elective Annual General Meeting, held at Rugby School Nigeria, Atlantic City, Lagos, on Saturday.

He secured 14 votes against Dufour's six.

Samuel has become the first Nigerian and African to lead the CFF, breaking the long-standing tradition of leadership from

countries such as Scotland, Australia and Canada.

"This is a great honour and a responsibility that I do not take lightly," the statement quoted Samuel as saying.

"I am grateful to the Commonwealth fencing family for the confidence placed in me," Samuel added.

He said his election would provide an opportunity to further develop fencing across the Commonwealth and create greater opportunities for athletes.



ADEYINKA SAMUEL

Basketball: MFM clinch maiden Louis Edem title

Mountain of Fire and Miracles (MFM) Basketball Club defeated First Bank 49-41 on Saturday to win the maiden Louis Edem West Africa Women's Basketball Championship.

Both sides produced an entertaining final, battling fiercely for the trophy at the tournament's inaugural edition.

MFM captain, Ukamaka Okoh, described the victory as a major confidence booster ahead of the forthcoming Nigeria Women's Basketball League season.

She said First Bank provided the ideal test and helped her team demonstrate its readiness to challenge for domestic honours.

"It's a great competition. We thank the organisers for giving us the opportunity to showcase our skills and prove ourselves.

"We have been preparing all year for opportunities like this and

we are delighted with the result at the end of the day," she said.

Earlier, Victoria Queens of Lagos defeated GRA of Ghana 54-48 in the third-place match at the Indoor Sports Hall, National Stadium, Surulere.

Founder of the championship, Louis Edem, praised all participating teams and described the tournament as another landmark achievement for the Louis Edem Foundation.

"It is another great moment for all the teams that came for this year's championship," Edem said.

He noted that the participation of teams from other West African countries would strengthen competition and improve basketball development across the region.

"For example, the team from Ghana competing against elite Nigerian teams will return home better prepared for its domestic league.

FG backs Onyeka Ikenga football academy to nurture future talents

The Federal Government has thrown its weight behind the newly unveiled Onyeka Ikenga Football Academy, saying the initiative will provide a platform to discover and develop Nigeria's next generation of football stars.

The Minister of Youth Development, Ayodele Olawande stated this at the unveiling of the academy's Under-17 team in Abuja on Saturday.

Olawande represented by his Special Adviser on Public Engagement, Omoleye Adedoyin, said the initiative demonstrated the commitment of individuals and stakeholders to football development and youth

empowerment.

"Being here today is an opportunity for me. Being right here shows that there are people who are committed to football and sports, and we want our young children to grow and be proud of us," he said.

He said the academy would enable young footballers to showcase their abilities, develop their skills and pursue professional careers.

"This is a platform where talents can be identified. There are also many young people who are willing to do more.

"From here, it is a stepping stone for them to go higher and put into practice whatever they have learned," he said.



ONYEKA IKENGA