

EFCC freezes Osun Govt account – Gov. Adeleke

OSOGBO

Gov. Ademola Adeleke of Osun has accused the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) of freezing the bank account of the state, without explanation.

Adeleke made this allegation at a news conference, on Wednesday in Osogbo.

The governor stated that he got a letter from the state's banker that the anti-graft commission had instructed it to freeze the state's account.

"This morning, we received

a letter from our banker, forwarding a letter from the EFCC, instructing the bank to freeze Osun State Government account.

"This action was taken without any court order," he stated.

The governor decried the situation where due process

was not followed in a democracy, stating that the Rule of Law must always prevail.

Adeleke said that his government would not accept a situation where federal agencies trample on the constitutional rights of sub national governments.

He said that the EFCC's action was a threat to democracy and if allowed, it would destroy the fabric of Nigeria's democracy.

Adeleke requested that the EFCC chairman should explain why the state account was frozen and also show proof to support whatever reason(s) for

its action.

The governor said that the state Attorney General has been instructed to challenge the EFCC's action at the Federal High Court, Osogbo.

The commission could not be reached for comment as at press time yesterday.

The Nigerian OBSERVER

That The People May Know

f t i s NigerianObserver @Nigerian_Observer @NigerianObserver www.nigerianobservernews.com

PUBLISHED SINCE MAY 29, 1968

VOL. 47, NO. 1,322

THURSDAY 6TH AUGUST, 2026.

#200

FG promises payment of outstanding wage awards before mid-August

ABUJA

The Federal Government has assured public servants that payment of outstanding wage awards will be made before the middle of August.

This is contained in a statement on Wednesday in Abuja issued by Efe Ovukporie, Head of Information and Public Relations in the Federal Ministry of Finance.

According to the statement, the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr Taiwo Oyedele, gave the assurance during a meeting with labour leaders led by the National President of the Joint Public Service Negotiating Council (JPSNC), Trade Side, Comrade Kabiru Minjibir.

Oyedele said the government had already begun addressing several labour con-

cerns before receiving the council's formal communication.

He reaffirmed the Tinubu administration's commitment to fulfilling promises to Nigerian workers through constructive engagement and dialogue.

"The objective is to build confidence by ensuring the government honours every commitment made," he said.

The minister said the release for payment of the outstand-

ing wage award was at its final stage and expressed confidence that eligible workers would begin receiving payments before mid-August.

He directed relevant officials to review the council's submissions and fast-track action on all outstanding matters.

He also acknowledged concerns over implementation delays and pledged greater transparency, consultation and prompt action.

The government further assured workers that outstanding promotion arrears were being processed in line with approved procedures.

The Permanent Secretary, Finance, Mr Raymond Omachi, pledged closer collaboration with organised labour and said approved entitlements would be processed without avoidable delays.

Also speaking, the Permanent Secretary, Special Duties, Mr Mohammed Danjuma, said progress had been made on workers' entitlements.

He added that batch seven promotion arrears, previously omitted, were being processed alongside batch nine.

Danjuma said the government was also working with relevant agencies to address peculiar allowances and other labour-related issues.

The Director of Cash Management, Mrs Christiana Osho, said reconciliation for the outstanding wage award had been completed and that payment release was at its final stage.

CONTINUES ON PG 4»



COURTESY VISIT:

Edo State Deputy Governor, Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa (3rd left) in a handshake with the Commissioner for Budget and Economic Planning, Dr. Elizabeth Ebosele, the team lead NEC, IMC, Busayo Awotunde (2nd left) and other members of the monitoring team during a courtesy visit to the Deputy Governor in Benin City.

PHOTO: OKONDOH TALLE EBOSE

NEC committee lauds Okpebholo's efforts to put smiles on faces of Edo residents

BENIN CITY

The National Economic Council (NEC) Implementation Monitoring Committee (IMC) has commended Gov. Monday Okpebholo for his commitment to improving the lives of the people of the state.

The NEC/IMC team lead by, Mrs Busayo Awotunde, made the remark on Tuesday in Benin after being taken on an inspection tour of some legacy projects by the Commissioner for Budget and Economic Planning, Dr Elizabeth Ebosele.

According to Awotunde, saying i was impressed would be an understatement.

"For a government that is barely two years old and has

achieved so much, it shows that it is committed to improving the lives of Edo people.

"We are going to report that the Edo government is committed to and aligned with efforts to improve the livelihoods of its people.

"Edo has invested resources and demonstrated commitment to ensuring that the objectives of the council's resolutions are being achieved," she said.

Earlier, Ebosele explained that the monitoring team was in Edo not to witch-hunt anyone but to assess the legacy projects undertaken by the Okpebholo administration in line with NEC resolutions.

She said the Ramat Park Fly-

CONTINUES ON PG 4»

We're transforming Abuja into Nigeria's most investor friendly business environment –Wike —Pg 2

Tinubu's reforms drive strong corporate earnings –Presidency —Pg 4

Drone carrying explosives found at German airport, police say —Pg 9

NPFL set to unveil new \$7.5m title sponsorship as Elegbeleye confirms August kick-off —Pg 11

NEWS



GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY:

From left: Deputy Governor of Kaduna State, Hadiza Balarabe; Gov. Uba Sani of Kaduna State; Minister of Works, David Umahi and Minister of Environment, Balarabe Abbas-Lawal, during the Ground-breaking ceremony of the newly approved Reconstruction of Mando-Birnin Gwari Road in Kaduna State.



Gov. Uba Sani of Kaduna State (M); his Deputy, Hadiza Balarabe (2nd L) Minister of Works, David Umahi (3rd L) and other dignitaries, during the Ground-breaking ceremony of the newly approved Reconstruction of Mando-Birnin Gwari Road in Kaduna State.

Anxiety, curiosity as joint security operatives flood Benin's Ring Road

● Residents seek clarification

BENIN CITY

BENEDICT OKATE

Confusion and curiosity gripped residents and commuters in Benin City on Wednesday as an unusual presence of joint security personnel was noticed around the popular Ring Road area of the Edo State capital.

The sight of heavily armed security operatives drawn from different formations attracted attention from traders, motorists, pedestrians and business owners who gathered in small groups to speculate on the reason behind the deployment.

A trader who identified herself as Mrs. Blessing Omoregie said the development caught many people by surprise.

"We are used to seeing police officers around this area, but today's presence of different security agencies made people start asking questions. We just want to know what is happening and whether residents are safe."

A commercial driver operating around the Ring Road axis, Mr. Osahon Imade, said passengers were also concerned.

"Some people were afraid when they saw the number of security men. Nobody wants trouble, but security presence is also good if it is meant to protect the people."

Another resident, who simply gave his name as Eghosa, urged the authorities to communicate better with the public whenever major security movements take place.

"When people see soldiers, police and other security personnel in large numbers without information, rumours will spread. A simple explanation from the authorities will calm people down."

Security analysts say joint deployments are sometimes carried out to strengthen visibility, deter criminal activities, respond to intelligence reports or reassure residents during sensitive periods.

Contacted for comments on the development Police Public Relations Officer, Edo State Police Command, Eno Ikoedemen said the situation is not unusual but part of broader efforts to guarantee the safety of lives and property in the State.



From left: Gov. Uba Sani of Kaduna State; Minister of Works, David Umahi; Minister of Environment, Balarabe Abbas-Lawal and Minister of State for Works, Bello Muhammad-Goronyo, during the Ground-breaking ceremony of the newly approved Reconstruction of Mando-Birnin Gwari Road in Kaduna State.

We're transforming Abuja into Nigeria's most investor friendly business environment – Wike

ABUJA

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Mr Nyesom Wike, says the FCT Administration is transforming Abuja into Nigeria's most investor-friendly business environment through infrastructure development and governance reforms.

Wike said this on Wednesday in Abuja at the opening of the Abuja Business and Investment Expo 3.0, organised by the Abuja Investments Company Limited (AICL).

Represented by the Minister of State for FCT, Dr Mariya Mahmoud, Wike declared that Abuja remained open to credible local and international investors seeking sustainable business opportunities.

He, however, warned that land speculators, fraudulent developers and individuals undermining the Abuja Master Plan would find no refuge within the Federal Capital Territory.

The minister said the ongoing transformation of the nation's capital under President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda had laid a strong foundation for sustainable economic growth.

According to him, infrastructure development remains the bedrock of economic advancement, prompting the administration to embark on an extensive urban renewal programme across the territory.

He said the administration was investing heavily in road construction, water supply expansion, transportation infrastructure, healthcare services and educational development to strengthen Abuja's competitiveness and attractiveness.

Wike explained that the administration had moved beyond promises by completing abandoned projects, opening new development corridors and extending critical infrastructure to satellite towns and area councils.

He said the efforts had yielded results, citing the FCT Administration's performance in the 2025 Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council subnational ease of doing business assessment.

According to him, the FCT ranked fourth nationally with a 61 per cent performance score, reflecting the administration's commitment to governance reforms and investment facilitation.

The minister said the administration would continue working until Abuja emerged as Nigeria's leading investment destination and one of Africa's most competitive business hubs.

"The ongoing reforms in land administration, digital governance, revenue collection and institutional accountability are designed to eliminate bureaucratic bottlenecks."

"They are also meant to enhance transparency and provide investors with a predictable and secure business environment," he said.

Wike reiterated the administration's commitment to supporting genuine investors while maintaining strict regulatory standards to safeguard investment confidence and sustainable urban development.

INEC: NDC insists Osayuki remains Edo South senatorial candidate

ABUJA

The Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) says Mrs. Epelle-Asemota Osayuki, remains its duly nominated candidate for the Edo South Senatorial District.

The party attributed the discrepancies in the Independent National Electoral Commission's (INEC) publication of candidates' particulars to an error on the part of the commission.

The party, in a statement issued on Wednesday in Abuja by its Director of New Media and Strategic Communication,

Agada Theophilus, said INEC correctly published Osayuki's name and personal details.

It, however, added that INEC mistakenly attached the photograph of another aspirant and the credentials of a different individual.

The party maintained that it had duly submitted Osayuki's name, passport photograph and credentials to INEC in accordance with the Constitution and the Electoral Act.

It added that the commission alone was responsible for publishing candidates' particulars.

The party said the successful

upload of her details to the INEC portal served as proof of her formal sponsorship and called on the electoral body to explain how the mix-up occurred.

The NDC also dismissed attempts to question Osayuki's eligibility on ethnic grounds, describing such claims as an orchestrated campaign aimed at discrediting her candidacy.

The party maintained that Osayuki was a Nigerian of Benin ancestry who had lived and worked in Benin throughout her career, "and is married into the Asemota family of Benin."

The party described her as

a seasoned public servant who spent 35 years in the Edo public service and previously served in key leadership positions, including Chairman of the Principals' Association of Edo.

"The first female National Chairperson of the Academic Staff Union of Secondary Schools (ASUSS), and Secretary of the Trade Union Congress in the state."

It added that she was a prominent member of the Obidient Movement and emerged winner of the NDC primary for the Edo South Senatorial District.

NEWS

Catholic medical professionals warn against AI abuse

AWKA

The Association of Catholic Medical Practitioners of Nigeria (ACMPN) rose its 20th Annual Scientific Conference and General Meeting with a call on doctors and other medical professionals to apply Artificial Intelligence (AI) with caution.

In a Communiqué issued after the conference titled: "The Catho-

lic Physician in the Era of Artificial Intelligence' with sub-themes "Ethical Consideration in Artificial Intelligence" and "Celebrating 21 years of ACMPN," it cautioned that medical professionals should not outsource their intelligence and humanity to AI.

The communiqué made available to newsmen in Awka on Wednesday was signed by Prof. Hadiza Agbo, Dr James

Ojile, the National President and National Secretary of ACMPN respectively.

The conference had no fewer than 150 participants from Abakaliki, Abuja, Benin, Ibadan, Jos, Lagos, Lokoja, Nnewi, Yola, Oshogbo, Nnewi and Ondo, Makurdi Archdiocese/Diocese, diaspora members with Ibadan as host.

The association advised that

physicians should be responsible for the choices they make, adding that professionalism could be achieved by upholding ethical and moral guides.

ACMPN said bioethics of the Catholic Church should guide the use of AI by preserving the dignity of life, and addressing decisions on end of life care in line with Pope Leo XIV's 'Encyclical Magnifica Humanitas'.

"AI is an innovation that should be used to support medical practice but the doctor should ensure moral wisdom, charity and retention of our humanity.

"Doctors should not outsource their intelligence and humanity to artificial intelligence.

"Medicine is a vocation of healing rooted in Christ and guided by the sanctity of life made in the image of God, thus physicians must have compassion in patient-doctor relationships which no algorithm can replace," it said.

ACMPN reiterated that naprotechnology was still the

best and natural method of planning for the family and this should be studied by doctors and adopted.

Recall that naprotechnology is a new branch of women's health science that monitors and maintains woman's procreative and gynaecology health.

ADDITION/ CORRECTION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that my correct name is **OKHAMAFE PIUS OHIRENUME** and not **OKAHAMAFE PIUS** as wrongly written in some of my documents. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

**EXHIBITION OF FASHION:**

Cross-section of models and students during the 13th year of Transforming Talent into Enterprise with Creative Economy Exhibition and Fashion Showcase organized by Binley and Bramble Limited and School Hunters TVET Academy, at the Inspire Business Incubation Centre, African University of Science and Technology (AUST), Galadimawa, Abuja on Wednesday.

Oyo hospitals board disowns fake internship circular, warns applicants

IBADAN

The Oyo State Hospitals' Management Board (OYSHMB) has disowned a fake online circular requesting applications for internship and housemanship programmes in the state owned hospitals.

In a statement issued on Wednesday in Ibadan, the board described the circular as false, misleading and the handiwork of fraudsters seeking to deceive unsuspecting applicants.

It clarified that it had not commenced any recruitment process for internship or housemanship programmes, advising

members of the public to disregard the publication.

The board urged students, parents and the general public to ignore the fake circular and rely only on official information.

The Permanent Secretary of the board, Dr Anifat Ibraheem, advised members of the public seeking information on internships, the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) and other programmes to visit the Oyo State Hospitals' Management Board at the State Secretariat, Agodi, Ibadan.

"The Board is open to enquiries and clarifications on all its programmes," Ibraheem said.

Consumers willing to pay for electricity if transparently metered – Survey

ABUJA

An expert on power, Mr Ayotomiwa Adekahunsi, says survey conducted by his firm revealed that consumers are willing to pay for electricity consumed if they are metered transparently.

Adekahunsi, who is the Chief Executive Officer, Q-Tech Nigeria Limited said this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Wednesday in Abuja.

He said that poor metering had remained a challenge in the country's power sector.

According to him, a survey

was carried out by my company, and it was discovered that a lot of consumers are willing to pay their bills if the metering system is made more transparent and accurate.

"This means that the payment can only be done if the consumers are appropriately metered.

"We use metering to secure revenue. As you well know, within the Nigerian Electricity Supply Industry (NESI) liquidity is a big problem.

"This means the power that is being generated, transmitted and distributed is not being paid for accurately.

"And this is not good for the business and in no time, the problem might affect some operators to fold up," he said.

Adekahunsi said that with accurate metering, the Electricity Distribution Companies (DisCos) as well as the government would be able to secure revenue and improve the power supply in the country.

He said that Q-Tech has deployed smart meters to some DisCos, adding, that the company's target was government and large corporate entities,

"When you look at aggregate, technical and commercial losses, you would see that some of

the sub-segments of customers who contribute to the revenue loss are with government or large corporate organisations.

"So, if we are able to adequately meter the consumers using powerful software and analytics application then you would be able to track and secure revenue for the DisCos and government.

"This also applies to the government organisations and corporate entities, with our smart meters, that will allow visibility into their consumption, usage payment and billing," he said.

According to him, with the initiative, there is now a trans-

parent platform and the willingness to pay is there.

"It is no longer a black box, where people just send you a bill and you don't even know how it came about.

"But with this platform which is the "power track", you are able to see what you are using daily and monthly.

"As Nigeria's energy landscape has evolved, demand has shifted toward smarter technologies capable of improving efficiency, transparency and accountability," he said.

Adekahunsi said that Q-Tech in making sure that the issue of liquidity is addressed in the

power sector as it is expanding its expertise in intelligent metering and automation.

He said that the company would continue to strengthen its capabilities in conventional electrical engineering and power infrastructure.

"Looking ahead, Q-Tech's commitment remains unchanged: to provide reliable power solutions and strengthen lasting partnerships.

"With this innovation, we continue to earn the trust of clients and communities through consistent performance, technical excellence and service delivery."

Armed forces pay rise will boost troop morale – Gov's aide

SOKOTO

Col. Ahmed Usman (Rtd), the Special Adviser to Gov. Ahmad Aliyu of Sokoto State on Security Matters, has commended President Bola Tinubu for approving an upward review of the salaries and welfare packages of armed forces personnel.

Speaking to newsmen on Wednesday in Sokoto, Usman described the development as a timely and strategic intervention capable of improving the morale, dedication and operational efficiency of personnel engaged in the fight against insecurity.

He said security operatives

had continued to make enormous sacrifices in protecting lives and property, often working under difficult and dangerous conditions.

He added that improving their welfare was not only a reward for their patriotism but also a necessary investment in national peace and stability.

"A motivated security workforce is essential for effective intelligence gathering, rapid response to threats, and sustained counter-banditry and anti-crime operations," he stated.

Usman noted that renewed attention to the welfare of security personnel would encourage professionalism, reduce frus-

tration among operatives and strengthen public confidence in the nation's security architecture.

He, however, cautioned that salary increments alone should not be seen as the sole solution to the country's security challenges.

The governor's aide urged the Federal Government to complement the gesture with improved operational equipment, regular training and retraining, adequate insurance coverage, quality healthcare services, and decent housing schemes for security personnel and their families.

He also called on security op-

eratives to reciprocate the government's gesture with greater commitment, discipline, integrity and respect for human rights in the discharge of their duties.

Speaking on the security situation in the country, Usman stressed the need for the adoption of both kinetic and non-kinetic approaches in tackling banditry and other violent crimes.

According to him, recent attacks in parts of the North-West and other regions indicate that sustained military operations alone may not be sufficient to achieve lasting peace.

He said the kinetic approach should include intelligence-led

military operations, improved border surveillance, deployment of modern technology, and stronger coordination among the military, police, intelligence agencies and local security outfits.

On the non-kinetic side, he recommended youth empowerment programmes, expansion of education and vocational training opportunities, community dialogue, rehabilitation initiatives for repentant low-risk offenders, and campaigns against drug abuse and other criminal activities that sustain bandit networks.

Usman also advised governors of the North-West states

to strengthen regional collaboration in addressing insecurity, noting that bandits often operate across state boundaries.

He urged the governors to establish a joint regional security coordination platform for intelligence sharing, harmonise community policing structures, invest collectively in surveillance infrastructure, and strengthen control of forests and other ungoverned spaces.

The retired military officer further called for closer engagement with traditional rulers, religious leaders and community organisations to improve intelligence gathering and early warning mechanisms.

Tinubu's reforms drive strong corporate earnings – Presidency

OLIVER IJOGBE

ABUJA

The Presidency says the strong financial performance recorded by many companies listed on the Nigerian Exchange in the first half of 2026 reflects key economic reforms implemented by President Bola Tinubu's administration.

This is contained in a state-

ment by Presidential Spokesperson, Mr Bayo Onanuga, on Wednesday in Abuja.

According to Onanuga, one of the most significant reforms was the unification of the foreign exchange market, which established a single market-determined exchange rate.

The presidency said the policy improved price discovery and enabled firms with substantial foreign currency expo-

sure to more accurately reflect the value of their dollar-denominated revenues.

It noted that export-oriented and foreign exchange-earning firms such as Aradel Holdings and Seplat Energy particularly benefited from the reform.

The presidency said the administration further strengthened investor confidence in the energy sector through the approval of major upstream oil

and gas transactions.

Among the approvals were the Renaissance Africa Energy consortium's acquisition of Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) assets and Seplat Energy's acquisition of Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited (MPNU) assets.

According to the presidency, the transactions expanded reserves, increased production capacity and enhanced the

long-term growth prospects of the affected companies.

It said the approvals also reduced regulatory uncertainty and deepened indigenous participation in the petroleum sector.

It added that Tinubu's approval of naira payments for crude oil had supported local refining and contributed to the emergence of the Dangote Refinery as a net exporter of Pre-

mium Motor Spirit (PMS) and aviation fuel.

The presidency said manufacturing and industrial firms also benefited from improved access to foreign exchange and a more predictable currency market.

It listed companies such as Dangote Cement, BUA Cement and HBM, formerly Lafarge Africa, as beneficiaries of the improved operating environment.

FG promises payment of outstanding...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

Earlier, Minjibir urged the government to resolve pending labour issues without further delay.

He listed outstanding wage awards, promotion arrears, sal-

ary relativity for health workers and peculiar allowance among the unresolved issues.

He said timely implementation would strengthen industrial harmony and boost workers' confidence in government.

NEC committee lauds Okpebholo's...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

over was conceived out of necessity, not only to decongest traffic but also to improve the ease of doing business in the state.

Sher revealed that the flyover is nearing completion and would be inaugurated soon.

"When completed, market women and other traders will be able to carry out their businesses more efficiently, thereby improving their economic activities.

"This economic empowerment was one of the key considerations of Governor Okpebholo when he assumed

office.

"He immediately approved the construction of the flyover. The road connects to the federal highway linking Edo State to the northern part of the country," she said.

Also speaking, the Deputy Governor of Edo, Mr Dennis Idahosa, commended the monitoring team for concluding its three-day assessment visit to the state.

Idahosa said the legacy projects initiated by the governor were visible across the state.

He said that the governor was executing projects simultaneously across the state's three senatorial districts.



OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCES:

Edo State Dep. Governor, Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa, in a handshake with Master Osagobare, in Edo Government House, Benin City, Wednesday.

Edo Dep. Govt. rewards South-South best UTME candidate with ₦1million

BENIN CITY

The Edo Government has presented a cash reward of N1 million to Daniel Osagiobare, the fourth best candidate in the 2026 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME).

Osagiobare, an Edo indigene, also emerged as the highest scoring candidate from the South South region after scoring 368 in the examination conducted by the Joint Admissions and Ma-

trication Board (JAMB).

Presenting the cash reward during a reception organised in honour of the student by the state government, the Edo Deputy Governor, Dennis Idahosa said the gesture was in recognition of his outstanding academic performance.

Idahosa also said that the award was intended to encourage academic excellence among students in the state.

He reaffirmed the commitment of the state government

to promoting quality education and creating an enabling environment for young people to realise their potential.

"The future of our nation lies in the hands of brilliant young minds like Daniel. We will continue to celebrate and encourage excellence in every sector," he said.

The deputy governor urged the student to remain focused on his academic pursuits and assured him of the state's continued support for exceptional

talents.

Responding, Osagiobare thanked the deputy governor for the recognition and financial support, describing the gesture as an encouragement to strive for greater academic success.

The student's father, Christopher Osagiobare, also appreciated the Edo government for recognising his son's achievement, saying the reward would motivate other young people to pursue academic excellence.

Customs boss urges Senate committee to strengthen oversight of reforms

ABUJA

The Comptroller-General (C-G) of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Bashir Adeniyi, has urged the Senate Committee on Customs to strengthen oversight of the service's reforms.

Adeniyi made the call on Wednesday in Abuja while delivering a keynote address at the opening of a two-day retreat for the Senate Committee on Customs.

The retreat focused on the theme, 'Legislative Oversight in the Context of Nigeria Customs Service Modernisation and Reforms.'

He said effective oversight should go beyond scrutinising revenue figures and individual customs decisions to examining the systems, rules and data driving the service's modernisation.

According to him, the shift from manual to automated customs administration requires lawmakers to focus on risk-en-

gine calibration, valuation databases, cargo-release times and the impact of exemptions.

He said the service collected N7.28 trillion in 2025, exceeding its target by 10.24 per cent, while it collected N3.35 trillion between January and May 2026.

Adeniyi, however, cautioned that revenue growth alone was not sufficient to demonstrate successful reform, saying the key consideration was whether the growth was based on improved systems.

"Revenue performance is important, but it is not the only measure of success. The real question is whether the systems producing that revenue are stronger, more transparent and more predictable," he said.

He said modernisation in the NCS involved replacing discretion with rules, supported by risk management, automated valuation references and data-driven targeting.

Edo labour union commends Odior's appointment as EIRS boss

BENIN CITY

The Edo Council of the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and the Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria (ASCSN) have lauded the appointment of Mr John Odior as Executive Chairman of the Edo Internal Revenue Service (EIRS), describing him as the right choice to lead the agency.

The commendation was made on Wednesday when the state chairman of the TUC and ASCSN, Mr Joseph James Wasa, led executive members and affiliates on a courtesy visit to the EIRS headquarters in Benin City to congratulate the new chairman.

Wasa thanked Gov. Monday Okpebholo for the appointment, saying it reflected

the governor's confidence in Odior's competence and leadership abilities.

He expressed optimism that the new chairman would reposition the revenue service, describing him as a seasoned professional with the experience needed to move the agency forward.

According to Wasa, Odior has already recorded notable achievements, including prompt payment of workers' salaries, regularisation of ad hoc staff, improved office facilities, provision of modern work tools and sustained growth in the state's internally generated revenue.

"We are here to formally congratulate you on your new role. When we heard of your appointment, we were delighted because of the confidence we have in your ability to deliver. We thank the governor

for appointing you," Wasa said.

The labour leader also pledged the union's commitment to dialogue and constructive engagement in resolving labour issues.

He urged the revenue service to step up public enlightenment on tax compliance through radio and television campaigns to encourage voluntary tax payment.

"You have continued to exhibit strong character of integrity and competence through prompt payment of staff salaries, as well as overseeing consistent increase in Edo's internally generated revenue," he added.

Responding, Odior thanked the labour leaders for the visit and pledged to sustain ongoing reforms, improve operational efficiency and strengthen revenue generation in support of the state's development.

NIIA DG advocates power rebalance in Nigeria

BENIN CITY

Prof. Eghosa Osaghae, Director-General of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), on Wednesday advocated a rebalance of powers between the Federal Government and federating units to strengthen Nigeria's federal system.

Osaghae made the call while delivering the maiden Annual

Federalism Lecture of the Centre for Federalism and Democratic Studies at the University of Benin (UNIBEN).

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the lecture was titled, "Federalism: The Paradigm of a Turning Centre."

The NIIA boss noted that federal systems remained dynamic and must continually adjust the distribution of powers between

the centre and sub-national governments in response to changing political realities.

According to him, Nigeria's federalism has evolved from a region-centred structure to a highly centralised system, making the practice of federalism increasingly contested.

"The powers of the central government in every federation are dependent on the balance of forces.

"When those forces change, the powers also shift. If they do not shift, the federal system is threatened and it can collapse," he said.

The former Vice-Chancellor of Igbinedion University, Okada, explained that federal systems generally emerged through either an "aggregative" process, in which independent states voluntarily united to form a federation, or a "disaggregative" process.

NEWS

Nigeria's domestic economy expanded by 3.87% in 2025 – CBN

ABUJA

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has said that Nigeria's domestic economy expanded by 3.87 per cent in 2025, an improvement over the 3.38 per cent recorded in 2024.

The CBN said this in its re-

cently released annual report for the 2025 fiscal year.

According to the apex bank, broad-based growth followed gains from the continuing implementation of a cocktail of reforms in key sectors and the rebasing of the economy to accommodate emerging subsectors.

It said that headline inflation declined to 15.15 per cent in December 2025, from 34.80 per cent at the end of 2024.

It said that this was due to the combined effects of monetary policy tightening, exchange rate stability and revision of the methodology for computing the consumer price index (CPI).

"The revised methodology updated consumption weights in the CPI basket, thereby en-

suring a more accurate reflection of current household expenditure patterns.

"Fiscal health showed signs of improvement in 2025, with 33.67 per cent growth in federation receipts. This followed increased oil and non-oil revenue inflows.

Accordingly, allocations to the three tiers of government improved, strengthening fiscal sustainability," it said.

The CBN said that tax effort,

measured as a ratio of tax revenue to GDP, rose to 7.15 per cent in 2025, from 5.41 per cent in 2024.

It said that the rise was driven by the substantial growth in petroleum profit tax, value added tax, and corporate income tax.

"At the end of September 2025, public debt stock rose to N153,292.48 (35.55 per cent of GDP) but remained below the national ceiling of 60 per cent and the 70 per cent threshold recommended for Market-Access Countries (MACs)," it said.

The CBN said that the global economy remained stable

in 2025, in spite of heightened uncertainties.

"Although output growth was sustained at 3.30 per cent, the pace was uneven across regions.

"In advanced economies, growth slowed to 1.70 per cent, from 1.80 per cent, driven predominantly by softer demand.

"Growth momentum was, however, stronger in developing and emerging market economies (EMDEs), on the back of sustained policy support, with output expanding by 4.40 per cent, compared with 4.30 per cent in 2024," it said.

SIGNING OF MEMORANDUM:**SIGNING OF MEMORANDUM:**

From left: Former Nigeria Ambassador to Australia, Amb. Anderson Nkamakonon: Director, Jands Travels Business School (JTBS), Mrs Chioma Obi; Chief Operating Officer Enugu Air (EA), Mr Ugonna Agubuokwu; Chairman, Board of Trustees of JTBS, Chief Ben Etiaba; Head of Commercials, EA, Mr John Eze and Sales and Marketing Manager, EA, Ms Sandra Dibor, during the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of Partnership Agreement Between JBTS and EA in Enugu on Wednesday.

NESREA to enforce EPR regulations against environmental pollution – D-G

KANO

The National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) says it will begin enforcement of the Extended Producers Responsibility (EPR) guidelines and regulations to combat environmental pollution in the country.

The Director-General of the agency, Dr Innocent Bariate-Barikor, disclosed this on Tuesday in Kano, during a regulatory dialogue on the implementation of National Environmental (Battery Control) Regulations, 2024.

The EPR mandates producers, importers, and brand owners to be legally responsible for the entire lifecycle of their products, particularly plastic packaging.

Under the EPR framework, companies will be required to fund and participate in Producer Responsibility Organisations (PROs), which will manage waste collection, recycling, and consumer awareness.

Bariate-Barikor described the EPR as a "global best practice that promotes shared responsibility" among government, industries and consumers in advancing the circular economy.

While assuring stakeholders that NESREA was not out to stifle businesses, the D-G said that the agency would not allow unsustainable exploitation of the environment.

He called for collective efforts from the stakeholders to address the challenges.

"It is not the intention of NESREA to thwart businesses or use the regulation to stifle businesses, but to ensure that businesses and the environment are working together.

"This is because we are all mutual beneficiaries of the exploits of the environment.

"If there is any arm of the society that attempts to over exploit it in an unsustainable manner, all of us will pay for it and every person becomes a victim of the consequences that come out of it," he said.

Bariate-Barikor said that the dialogue was organised to sensitise stakeholders on the existence of the EPR and upcoming enforcement.

He noted the importance of stakeholders' participation in the EPR framework before enforcement begins "so that nobody will say 'I didn't see it or I didn't know about it'".

The D-G further said that dialogue, organised in collaboration with the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), was also to look at Nigeria's battery control regulations.

He explained that the National Environmental (Battery Control) Regulations, 2024, aim to prevent and minimise pollution from batteries across their entire lifecycle.

This, according to him, means enforcing extended producer responsibility and the polluter-pays principle in the country.

He said that the dialogue was to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders at the federal, state and local gov-

ernment levels in implementing the battery control regulations.

According to him, effective implementation requires coordinated action.

"Every institution or stakeholder represented here has a distinct responsibility in ensuring that used batteries are collected, transported, stored and recycled in accordance with the provisions of the regulations.

"A major provision of the regulation is the institutionalisation of EPR.

"This makes it mandatory for manufacturers and importers of batteries to subscribe to the EPR and assume responsibility for the environmental parts of their products throughout their lifetime.

"This is a global movement towards a global solution to the challenge of batteries and it's not just in the battery sector, it's also in other sectors," he said.

He said that to ensure implementation of EPR, Nigeria has registered the Alliance for Responsible Battery Recycling (ARBR), as a Producer Responsibility Organisation (PRO) from the battery sector in Nigeria.

Police arrest robbery suspect, launch manhunt for accomplices in Delta

WARRI

The Police Command in Delta has arrested a member of a three-man robbery syndicate and recovered firearms from him in the state.

The command's Spokesman, SP Bright Edafe disclosed this on Wednesday in Warri.

Edafe said the suspect was apprehended on Tuesday by the operatives of the Ebrumede Police Division in Uvwie Local Government Area of the state.

He said that the police team was conducting an intensive stop-and-search operation on Garki-Uri Road, Effurun, when it intercepted three suspected armed robbers.

Edafe said that two of the suspects escaped on a motorcycle during interrogation, adding that the police had launched a coordinat-

ed manhunt to apprehend the fleeing suspects.

The police spokesman said that the suspects' bag was subjected to a thorough search by the police team which led to the recovery of some exhibits.

Edafe said: "Exhibits recovered from the suspects include two locally made double-barrel guns, 11 live cartridges, one expended cartridge, one axe, two Android phones.

"Others are two power banks, two wristwatches, one lighter and one camouflage military polo".

He said that preliminary investigation revealed that the suspects were transporting the exhibits to their hideout in Sapele Road.

He said that the arrested suspect was currently in police custody, while efforts were on course to arrest other members of the criminal gang.

NSCDC sanctions 79 officers, arrests 18 suspects

ABUJA

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) has sanctioned 79 personnel for various offences and arrested 18 suspects over alleged pipeline vandalism, infrastructure sabotage and illegal firearms dealings.

The NSCDC Commandant-General, Ahmed Audi, said this during a news conference on Wednesday at the corps' National Headquarters in Abuja.

Audi, represented by the NSCDC Public Relations Officer, Babawale Afolabi, said disciplinary proceedings involving 75 personnel had been concluded, while four others were undergoing administrative processes over separate allegations.

He said the sanctioned officers comprised one Assistant Commandant-General, two Deputy Commandants, 35 other senior officers and 37 junior officers.

According to him, the of-

fences included job racketeering, illegal recruitment, financial misconduct, sabotage, theft, negligence, dishonesty, absenteeism and other violations of service regulations.

He said penalties imposed ranged from dismissal and compulsory retirement to dismissal with recommendations for criminal prosecution where criminal liability was established.

Audi disclosed that 37 personnel were dismissed after disciplinary proceedings, including two operatives of the Mining Marshals Unit linked to a February operational incident in Nasarawa State that resulted in the death of their commander.

He said investigations found no evidence of premeditated intent but established that the operatives unlawfully engaged illegal miners with firearms without operational authorisation, contrary to approved procedures.

"Their actions constituted grave misconduct, negligence and indiscipline," he said.

NDC to inaugurate 7-man reconciliation c'ttee over post-primary dispute

ABUJA

The Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) has constituted a seven-member National Reconciliation Committee to address grievances that arose from the party's recent primaries across the country.

A statement issued on

Wednesday by the party's National Chairman, Sen. Moses Cleopas and National Secretary, Mr Ikenna Enekweizu, said the committee would engage aspirants nationwide with a view to resolving all outstanding issues and fostering unity within the party.

According to the statement, renowned political economist,

Prof. Pat Utomi, will chair the committee, while Buba Galadima will serve as co-chairman.

Other members are Mohammed Takori (Vice Chairman), Mr Babatunde Alli (Secretary), Mrs Dudu Manuga, Salvador Moshood and Alhaji Haruna Pai.

The party also announced

the establishment of three sub-committees to oversee reconciliation efforts in the North, South-South and South-East geopolitical zones.

The NDC said the committee would be inaugurated at the party's national secretariat in Abuja at noon on Thursday, August 6.

Northern leaders seek united action to tackle insecurity at peace summit

KADUNA

Stakeholders from across Northern Nigeria have called for stronger unity, collaboration and collective action to address the persistent security challenges confronting the region.

The call was made on Wednesday at the Northern Peace Summit organised by the Arewa Cohesion for Peace, Unity and Development Initiative (ACI) in Kaduna.

The summit brought together traditional rulers, religious leaders, government officials, heads of security agencies, civil society organisations, development partners, youth and women groups, academics and policy experts.

Speaking at the opening of the summit, the Convener of the coalition, Dr Abdullahi Idris said the gathering was convened to develop practical solutions to insecurity and strengthen cooperation among stakeholders.

According to him, the sum-

mit, with the theme, "Unity, Cooperation and Collective Action Against Insecurity," seeks to chart a new course for lasting peace and development in Northern Nigeria.

He said the region had continued to suffer the devastating effects of insurgency, banditry, kidnapping and other violent crimes, which had disrupted livelihoods, weakened communities and hindered socio-economic development.

"The time has come for Northern Nigeria to rise above political, ethnic and religious differences and work together for

the common good.

"We can no longer afford the luxury of blame or silence. Our collective resolve must be stronger than the challenges confronting us," he said.

The convener said the summit would focus on developing strategies to improve dialogue between communities and government, address the root causes of insecurity, tackle corruption and strengthen community-based peacebuilding initiatives.

He stressed the need to rebuild trust among citizens and institutions through effective coordination, intelligence sharing and

grassroots vigilance.

He also urged traditional rulers and religious leaders to play more active roles in promoting reconciliation, tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

Describing young people and women as critical stakeholders in peacebuilding, the convener said they must be actively involved in designing and implementing sustainable security solutions.

He added that the summit would move beyond discussions to produce a regional peace and security framework with clear recommendations for implementation.

According to him, the coalition also plans to institutionalise quarterly peace dialogues and establish a network of community peace and youth ambassadors to

sustain engagement and monitor progress.

He expressed optimism that the initiative would help transform the narrative of Northern Nigeria from one associated with insecurity to one driven by resilience, peace and inclusive development.

The convener urged participants to contribute meaningfully to the deliberations, saying the success of the summit would depend on collective commitment to implementing its resolutions.

The summit featured participation by prominent traditional rulers, religious leaders, senior government officials, security chiefs, civil society organisations, development partners and experts in peace, security and public policy.



COURTESY VISIT:

Executive Secretary, Pension Transitional Arrangement Directorate (PTAD), Tolulope Odunaiya (R), welcoming the Executive Chairman, Nigerian Revenue Service, Zacch Adedeji, during the visit of the Chairman to PTAD Office in Abuja on Wednesday.

FG to establish six regional autism centres in 2027

ABUJA

The Federal Government says it will establish Autism Centres in the six geopolitical zones in 2027 to strengthen autism care and expand specialist training across the country.

Minister of Education, Dr Maruf Alausa, disclosed this during an engagement with stakeholders in Abuja on Wednesday.

Alausa said the centres would provide diagnosis, therapy and research services, while supporting families, healthcare professionals and educational institutions.

He said the initiative formed

part of the federal government's efforts to address the shortage of professionals in audiology, speech and language therapy, and occupational therapy.

According to him, the number of universities offering the specialised programmes has increased from four to about 16 under the ongoing reforms.

"The federal government, through the Ministry of Education is supporting this by expanding the number of institutions offering programmes in audiology, speech therapy and occupational therapy.

"We have moved from four universities to about 16 univer-

sities, but we want even more institutions to train the manpower needed to support these essential services," he said.

The minister said the government would begin targeted interventions in 2027 to strengthen universities offering the specialised programmes.

He said the interventions would include expansion of infrastructure, provision of modern equipment and instructional materials to increase training capacity.

Alausa said many Nigerian families still travelled outside the country to seek specialised care for children with autism and

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) due to limited local capacity.

"Today, many families still have to travel outside Nigeria to access care for their autistic children.

"This is not acceptable, and the federal government is determined to change that," he said.

The minister also said the Federal Ministry of Education had directed the National Board for Technical Education to fast-track the accreditation of the Federal School of Occupational Therapy and the Occupational Therapy diploma programme at the University of Benin.

Sultan advocates community policing

KADUNA

A call for stronger community policing and closer collaboration among security agencies, traditional institutions and local communities dominated discussions at a peace summit in Kaduna.

Stakeholders at the security summit organised by the Arewa Cohesion for Peace, Unity and Development Initiative (ACI) on Wednesday in Kaduna sought lasting solutions to insecurity in Northern Nigeria.

The Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, represented by the Chiroma of Kano, Aminu Lamido Sanusi, said community policing remained one of the most effective approaches to tackling crime because it relied on the trust and cooperation of local residents.

Sanusi said security agencies could not succeed in combating criminality without the support of communities that possessed valuable local knowledge and intelligence.

He said his experience had shown that working closely with imams, traditional rulers, vigilantes and other community leaders had strengthened efforts to maintain law and order.

"The people know their environment better than anyone else. They know the terrain, the residents and unusual movements, making them an indispensable source of intelligence," he said.

According to him, collaboration among security agencies, religious leaders, traditional institutions and community members is critical to preventing crime and restoring peace.

He described the summit as a timely platform for exchanging ideas and strengthening partnerships capable of addressing the region's growing security challenges.

Also presenting a paper titled, "Building Lasting Peace in Northern Nigeria: Addressing Banditry, Insurgency and Communal Conflicts," Muhammad Tasiu Dansabo, on behalf of Prof. Murtala Ahmed Rufa'i of the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA), identified governance failures, poverty, arms proliferation and weak inter-agency coordination as major drivers of insecurity.

He explained that although banditry, insurgency and communal conflicts were distinct security threats, they had become increasingly interconnected through shared criminal networks, illicit economies and overlapping operational territories.

According to him, banditry remains prevalent in the North-West and parts of the North-Central, fuelled by kidnapping, cattle rustling and illegal control of local economies, while insurgency continues to pose a major threat in the North-East with signs of expansion into other regions.

Free eye surgery: Gov's wife to restore sight to vulnerable Kebbi residents

BIRNIN KEBBI

The Nasara Foundation, in collaboration with the Islamic Enlightenment Foundation of Nigeria, will organise a free cataract surgery outreach for patients suffering from cataract-related eye conditions in Kebbi.

Mr Dauda Vanumu, Press Secretary to the wife of the Kebbi Governor, confirmed this in a statement issued to newsmen in Birnin Kebbi on Wednesday.

It disclosed that the four-day medical outreach "is scheduled for Saturday, August 8 to Tuesday, August 11, at the General Hospital, Koko in Koko-Bese Local Government Area of Kebbi.

"The four-day exercise will start at 9:00a.m. daily."

According to the statement, the humanitarian initiative is being hosted by the Governor's wife, Hajiya Zainab Nasare Nasir Idris and Founder/Chairperson of the Nasara Foundation, as part of her unwavering commitment to improving access to quality healthcare and restoring sight to indigent and vulnerable residents across the state.

"Members of the public, particularly individuals living with cataracts and other eligible eye conditions, are encouraged to take advantage of this free medical intervention by presenting themselves for screening and surgery during the outreach period," it advised.

NEMA targets 100% disaster warning coverage by 2027

ABUJA

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) says Nigeria is targeting full coverage of all citizens with a multi-hazard early warning system by 2027, through the "Early Warnings for All" (EW4All) initiative.

Director-General (D-G) of NEMA, Mrs Zubaida Umar, stated this on Tuesday in Abuja, during a coordination meeting ahead of the official launch of EW4All in Nigeria.

EW4All is a global initiative that aims to ensure that every

human on Earth is protected from hazardous weather, water, and climate events by life-saving early warning systems by 2027.

The meeting brought together Chief Executive Officers of National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA), the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet), the Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA) and the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC).

Umar said the meeting was convened to align roles for Nigeria's multi-hazard early warn-

ing system, strengthen Nigeria's disaster risk management architecture and ensure seamless inter-agency collaboration.

She noted that Nigeria continues to face increasing risks from floods, droughts, windstorms, heat stress and disease outbreaks.

"In 2025 alone, over 1.2 million people were affected by floods in Nigeria.

"The Secretary General of the UN has called EW4All a 'survival agenda for humanity' and for Nigeria, it is also a national security and development agenda.

"We therefore gather today to agree on a common pathway towards a successful national launch, and more importantly, to ensure that in Nigeria, every person is covered by an early warning system by year 2027," Umar said.

She explained that the initiative has four pillars with clear institutional leads.

She said that NEMA and NASRDA would lead on Disaster Risk Knowledge pillar, NiMet and NIHSA would lead Detection and Forecasting, while NCC would lead Warning Dissemination.

NEWS**NHRC, CSO seek urgent legal, social action against elder abuse****ABUJA**

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the Coalition of Societies for the Rights of Older Persons in Nigeria (COSROPIN) have called for

urgent legal and social action against elder abuse.

The NHRC and the coalition made the call at a one-day training in Abuja for staff members of the commission as defenders and advocates in combating elder abuse in Nigeria.

The Executive Secretary of the commission, Dr Tony Ojukwu, SAN said the training is aimed at strengthening the capacity of staff members of the commission in their work as human rights defenders and advocates in the fight against

elder persons abuse in Nigeria. He noted that across Nigeria, and indeed globally, the population of older persons has steadily increased.

"As a National Institution, the Commission, is saddled with the mandate to promote,

protect, and enforce the human rights of all persons without discrimination.

"Older persons are rights-holders, entitled to dignity, equality, and full protection under the law.

"Yet, many continue to suffer in silence, often invisible within our communities and systems" he said.

He said therefore, that the training is designed to equip staff members with the knowledge, skills, and tools required to respond effectively to these challenges.

He noted that as frontline officers of the Commission, they play a pivotal role in ensuring that the voices of older persons are heard, their grievances addressed, and their dignity upheld.

This training, according to Ojukwu is conducted in batches to reflect the commission's commitment to inclusivity and broad-based capacity development within the Commission.

"As we move forward, let us remember that the true meas-

ure of our impact lies in the lives we improve" he said.

Similarly, Mrs Jennifer Aga, deputy director, Vulnerable groups department of the commission, Commission, said it is important for the public to take steps towards protecting the rights of older persons by providing for them.

Aga therefore, called on government to provide free healthcare and accessible welfare for the elderly.

Sen Eze Ajoku, President of COSROPIN raised concerns over how older persons are being emotionally abused, even by their own children.

"We have a lot of older persons who are financially abused by their families.

"It is disheartening to know that these abuses are under-reported.

"We are calling for support systems across every state and local government to identify and prevent elder abuse.

"We want those who are formally reported to be punished," he said.

**INAUGURATION:**

From left: Head of Department, Human Resources and Management, National Population Commission (NPC), Ms Esther Ezech; Director of NPC, Enugu State Office, Ms Jane-Francis Ugwu; Federal Commissioner, Representing Enugu State in the Commission, Chief Ejike Ezech and Head, Department of Information Communications Technology, Enugu State Office, Ms Chinelo Ifedinkor, during the inauguration of Commencement of Nationwide Full Digital Birth and Death Registration by NPC in Enugu on Wednesday

2027: Nasarawa SDP boasts of landslide victory**LAFIA**

The Social Democratic Party (SDP) in Nasarawa State has expressed confidence that the party would win the governorship seat and other elective positions in the 2027 general elections with a landslide victory.

Mr Abdullahi Ari, SDP Nasarawa South Zonal Chairman, stated this during a solidarity visit to Mohammed Adamu-Omadefu, member representing Keana Constituency at the State House of Assembly, in Lafia.

Ari led some state SDP officials, the Keana Local Government Area SDP Chairman, and 10 ward chairmen of the party in Keana LGA on the visit.

The zonal chairman said:

"The party enjoys grassroots support and wider acceptance across the state and is poised to take over the state in 2027."

He said the visit was to identify with Adamu-Omadefu and to assure him of the party's support to enable him win a third term in 2027.

Ari added that the visit was also to discuss strategies to move the party forward in the constituency and across the state.

"By God's grace, retired IGP Mohammed Abubakar-Adamu, our governorship candidate, will win the governorship seat in 2027. This is because he has grassroots support across the state," he said.

The zonal chairman also said: "The lawmaker, Adamu-Omadefu will be elected for a third term in 2027 because he has

done well and is still doing his best for the development of Keana LGA."

Ari urged party executives and members to remain united and embrace teamwork for the progress and development of the party.

Responding, Adamu-Omadefu appreciated the party executives for the visit and assured them of his support and commitment to teamwork for the victory of the party in the state beyond 2027.

The lawmaker expressed optimism that retired IGP Abubakar-Adamu and the SDP would secure a landslide victory in Nasarawa state in 2027.

He said he joined the party to add value to its progress and to ensure its victory in 2027.

Adamu-Omadefu called on

party executives and stakeholders to sensitise members and drum up support for the party's victory.

Earlier, Mr Ibrahim Ogiri, SDP Chairman, Keana LGA, assured Adamu-Omadefu of the cooperation and support of party executives in the area to ensure his success.

Ogiri said the party executives in the area would continue to work in unity for the victory of the party beyond 2027 and called on members to work tirelessly for the victory of retired IGP Abubakar-Adamu, Adamu-Omadefu, and other SDP candidates in 2027.

The visit had in attendance Mr Jerry Alex, State SDP Youth Leader, and Mr Yusuf Salihu, State SDP Welfare Officer, among others.

Oyo appoints substantive principal officers for Polytechnic Ibadan after 21 years**IBADAN**

The Oyo State Government has approved the appointment of substantive principal officers for The Polytechnic, Ibadan, ending about 21 years of acting appointments in the institution.

A statement on Wednesday by the Commissioner for Information, Mr Dotun Oyelade, said that Gov. Seyi Makinde granted the approval for confirmation of the officers to substantive position.

The officers are: Dr Lasisi Taiwo Abideen as Rector, Dr Olajide Taiwo Sherifat as Registrar, Mr Adegbola Abiodun Kolawole as Bursar and Mr Osunrinade Olukunle Akinbola as Librarian.

Oyelade quoted the Commissioner for Education, Science and Technology, Mr

Olusegun Olayiwola, as saying the selection process followed due process.

He said "the exercise began with a public advertisement in national newspapers and was followed by interviews conducted by the institution's Governing Council, chaired by Prof. Lanre Nassar."

According to Olayiwola, the institution's principal officers had served in acting capacities since 2005.

He congratulated the newly appointed officers and urged them to justify the confidence reposed in them through effective leadership and commitment to the growth of the institution.

The commissioner said that the appointments took effect from July 31, 2026, and would run for a single tenure of five years.

Man, 30, docked over alleged N5.7m fraud**SANGO-OTA**

A 30-year-old man, Chimeruche Nwokonma on Wednesday stood before an Ota Magistrates' Court in Ogun for allegedly defrauding a man of 5.7 million.

Nwokonma, whose address was not stated is standing trial on a two-count charge of fraud and stealing.

He, however, pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The prosecutor, ASP E.O. Adaraloye, told the court that the defendant committed the offences at Oja in Ota.

Adaraloye alleged that the defendant obtained the sum of N5.7 million from a complain-

ant, one Mr Adepegba Adeolu, under the pretext of supplying to him palatal materials.

He alleged that the defendant failed to make the supply but converted the money to his personal use.

The offences contravene the provisions of sections 319 (9) and 419 of the Criminal Law of Ogun State, 2006.

The Magistrate, Mrs O.O. Fadairo granted the defendant bail in the sum of N600, 000 with one surety in like sum.

Fadairo ordered that the surety must reside within the court's jurisdiction and must be gainfully employed, with evidence of tax payment to the state government.

She adjourned the case until Aug. 20, for hearing.

Police arrest 3 suspected armed robbers, recover weapons**IBADAN**

The Police Command in Oyo State has arrested three suspected armed robbers and recovered a locally fabricated pistol and other dangerous exhibits during an intelligence-led operation in Ibadan.

The Command's Public Relations Officer, DSP Olayinka Ayanlade disclosed this in a statement made available on Wednesday in Ibadan.

Ayanlade said the suspects were arrested by operatives of the Oluyole Divisional Headquarters while conducting a routine stop-and-search op-

eration around the Rhema Bridge axis of Oluyole, Ibadan on Monday around 12:30 p.m.

"During the operation, the officers intercepted a Bajaj motorcycle conveying three suspicious individuals, leading to their arrest.

"A thorough search conducted on the suspects led to the recovery of a cut-to-size locally fabricated pistol and an axe concealed inside a black school bag in their possession.

"The suspects were immediately taken into custody, while the exhibits were recovered for further investigation," the PPRO said.

He said that preliminary

investigation revealed that the suspects are members of the Aiye and Eiye cult groups respectively.

Ayanlade said that the Command had intensified investigations to establish the full extent of their involvement in armed robbery, cult-related activities, and other criminal offences.

The command's spokesman said that efforts are ongoing to identify and apprehend other members of their criminal network.

He said the state Commissioner of Police, Abimbola Olugbenga, commended the vigilance and professionalism

of the operatives whose action prevented what could have culminated in violent criminal acts.

"The CP reiterates the Command's resolve to sustain intelligence-led policing, robust visibility patrols, and strategic stop-and-search operations aimed at denying criminal elements the opportunity to operate within the state," he said.

He said the Command appreciated the continued support of residents and encourages members of the public to remain vigilant and promptly report suspicious persons or activities to appropriate police channels.

FEATURE

When survival becomes a skill: How Nigerians are adapting to hard times

FAVOUR OBADIGIE

A few years ago, many Nigerians believed that getting a good education, securing a decent job and working hard would be enough to guarantee a comfortable life. Today, that belief has been challenged by the realities of a struggling economy. The rising cost of food, transportation, electricity, rent and other necessities has forced many people to rethink how they survive. For countless families, survival is no longer just about earning a salary; it has become a skill that must be learned, improved and practised every day.

Across the country, the effects of economic hardship are visible in almost every home and community. A visit to the local market tells the story. Items that once seemed affordable now come with prices that leave buyers surprised. Families who once bought food in large quantities now purchase only what they can afford for the day. Some have adjusted their diets, while others have reduced the number of meals they eat just to keep up with the increasing cost of living.

Transportation has become another challenge. Many workers and students now spend a significant part of their income on commuting. Some trek longer distances to save money, while others rely on carpooling or public transport even when it is less convenient. What used to be ordinary daily expenses have gradually become difficult financial decisions.

Yet, despite these challenges, Nigerians have continued to demonstrate one quality that has earned them admiration around the world—resilience. Rather than surrendering to hardship, many people have chosen to adapt. Across cities and towns,



individuals are discovering creative ways to earn a living and support their families.

It is now common to find students running small businesses alongside their studies. Some sell thrift clothing, perfumes, pastries, wigs or skincare products through social media. Others offer graphic design, photography, video editing, tutoring or virtual assistance services. Many young Nigerians have embraced digital skills such as web design, programming, content creation and digital marketing, recognising that learning a valuable skill can open

doors to opportunities beyond traditional employment.

For others, entrepreneurship has become more than a choice—it has become a necessity. Roadside food vendors, hairdressers, fashion designers, POS operators and countless small business owners continue to work tirelessly every day, not because business is easy, but because they understand that every opportunity to earn an income matters. These businesses, no matter how small they appear, have become important sources of livelihood for many households.

The growing interest in skill acquisition also reflects a change in mindset. Increasingly, people are realising that relying on a single source of income is no longer enough in today's economy. Learning a skill is no longer viewed as an option reserved for those without formal education; it has become an important tool for financial stability and personal growth. Whether through vocational training or digital education, Nigerians are investing in themselves in the hope of building a better future.

However, while resilience deserves to be celebrated, it should not be-

come an excuse to overlook the realities facing millions of citizens. Hard-working people should not have to struggle endlessly to afford basic necessities. Economic policies that encourage job creation, support small businesses and improve the overall standard of living remain essential. Citizens can adapt, but lasting progress also requires an environment where honest work is rewarded and opportunities are accessible.

Despite these difficulties, one thing remains remarkable about Nigerians—they rarely give up. Every morning, markets open, buses leave their parks, shops welcome customers and entrepreneurs continue chasing their dreams. Behind every small business is a story of determination. Behind every side hustle is someone refusing to allow hardship to define their future. This spirit of perseverance continues to inspire hope even during uncertain times.

The economic challenges facing Nigeria are real, but so is the determination of its people. Every challenge has also inspired innovation, creativity and courage. While many continue to hope for improved economic conditions, they have refused to remain idle. Instead, they continue to learn, create and build.

Survival should never have to become a skill, but today's realities have made adaptability one of life's greatest necessities. As Nigerians continue to navigate difficult times, one lesson stands out clearly: those who are willing to learn, grow and embrace new opportunities are often better equipped to face whatever tomorrow brings. With determination, practical skills and collective effort, today's struggles can become the foundation for a brighter and more prosperous future.

Beyond the laughter: Preserving the legacy of Nollywood's screen legends

AKURE

FAVOUR OBADIGIE

For many Nigerians, growing up meant gathering around the television to watch actors who made us laugh, cry and learn valuable lessons. Names like Sam Loco Efe and Mr. Ibu were more than just actors—they were part of many people's childhood. Their movies were funny, entertaining and, most times, carried messages about family, honesty, respect and life. Today, Nollywood has grown bigger than ever, with new actors, better cameras and movies reaching audiences around the world. But as the industry continues to change, many people believe something important is gradually disappearing: the kind of storytelling that made old Nollywood movies unforgettable.

Over the years, Nollywood has grown into one of the largest film industries in the world. Better production quality, streaming platforms and international recognition have opened new doors for Nigerian filmmakers. Today's actors and actresses

are reaching audiences far beyond Africa, proving that the industry has come a long way from its early days.

However, as Nollywood continues to evolve, many movie lovers often find themselves comparing the stories of today with those of the past.

One reason for these comparisons is the way stories are told. Many older Nigerian films were built around everyday life and often ended with clear lessons about honesty, patience, hard work and family values. While modern Nollywood has introduced fresh ideas, better visuals and a wider range of genres, some viewers believe that many films now focus more on romance and entertainment than on messages that leave a lasting impression.

Others disagree, arguing that today's filmmakers are simply reflecting the realities and tastes of a new generation.

Watching Nigerian movies has also changed over the years. Before the era of streaming platforms and smartphones, many families bought CDs and VCDs from movie shops just to watch the latest Nollywood releases. It was common to hear people asking for "Part One" and "Part Two" before settling down with family and friends

to enjoy a movie. Today, technology has changed everything. With just a phone and an internet connection, people can watch thousands of Nigerian films from anywhere in the world. This has made Nollywood more accessible and has helped the industry reach a global audience.

Despite these achievements, many viewers believe something has changed in the way stories are told. Some argue that a large number of recent movies place greater emphasis on romance, luxury and entertainment than on the life lessons that older films were known for. However, that does not mean meaningful movies no longer exist. Many modern filmmakers continue to produce powerful stories that address family, culture, crime, history and social issues. The difference is that these films now compete with a much larger volume of content, making them less noticeable to some audiences.

The impact of these screen legends goes beyond the awards they won or the number of movies they acted in. They created characters that people still remember years later.

Mention the name Sam Loco Efe,

and many people immediately remember his unique sense of humour and natural acting style. Mention Mr. Ibu, and for many Nigerians, the first reaction is a smile because of the laughter his movies brought into homes. Their performances created memories that continue to live on in the hearts of millions.

Beyond entertainment, many of these veteran actors helped shape the identity of Nollywood during its formative years. Their dedication, creativity and ability to connect with ordinary Nigerians made their movies relatable. They proved that great acting was not only about making people laugh or cry, but also about telling stories that reflected society and encouraged people to think differently about everyday life.

As someone who grew up watching many of these movies, I still remember the excitement of seeing familiar faces like Sam Loco Efe or Mr. Ibu appear on the screen. The moment they showed up, you already knew you were about to laugh, but beyond the humour, their performances often carried messages that stayed with viewers long after the movie ended. That experience is one of the reasons

many Nigerians still speak fondly of old Nollywood today.

It is also important to recognise that every generation brings something new. Today's Nollywood has produced talented actors, directors and filmmakers who continue to raise the industry's standard and earn international recognition. Many recent films have received praise for their quality, storytelling and production. Rather than comparing generations to decide which is better, perhaps the focus should be on preserving the strengths of the past while embracing the opportunities of the present.

Nollywood's greatest achievement is not only that it has become one of the world's largest film industries but that it has continued to tell Nigerian stories to audiences across the globe. As new actors, directors and producers shape the future of the industry, the memories and lessons left behind by legends like Sam Loco Efe and Mr. Ibu should remain a source of inspiration. Great actors may leave the stage, but the stories they told and the impact they made continue to live on through every generation that watches their films.

FOREIGN

NEWS

**SPECIAL ROBOT:**

A special robot was sent to remove the detonator from the device

Drone carrying explosives found at German airport, police say

A drone carrying an explosive device has been found at a German airport, police say.

A robot was deployed at Leipzig/Halle Airport after the device was spotted by an employee near Ukrainian cargo planes overnight, according to Saxony police.

A second unidentified object then collided with a cargo aircraft near the same airport. Minor damage was detected on the aircraft after it landed in Hanover.

German airports are on high alert following a series of unauthorised drone flights in recent months over sensitive sites including military bas-

es, airports, energy terminals, seaports and logistics companies. Police have warned that the overflights could have been organised by Russian agents.

Leipzig/Halle Airport in eastern Germany is used by the Germany military and Nato allies for the transport of military goods and also serves as a base for Ukraine's Antonov Airlines - which carry most of the country's aerial cargo.

A police spokesman told the BBC that the explosive-laden object had been spotted close to parked Antonov planes.

A robot was used to remove the detonator from the explosive device.

Flights on the northern runway resumed at 01:55 (23:55 GMT on Tuesday). The southern runway, which is a major hub for the logistic group DHL, remains closed.

The mid-air collision happened not long afterwards.

"A suspected second unidentified flying object collided with a cargo aircraft after it had taken off again following the previous closure of the runway," a police statement said.

Saxony's Interior Minister Armin Schuster has described the situation as a "very serious security incident".

German authorities have given no other details.

But Ukraine's Ambassador to Germany Oleksii Makeiev told Welt TV: "Who else could it be but Russia?"

Russia has not commented.

In July 2024 a parcel burst into flames on the ground at Leipzig/Halle Airport before it could be loaded onto a DHL cargo plane, one of a series of parcel fires that targeted the UK and EU countries.

There are suspicions it could have been sabotage linked to Moscow.

The parcels had contained explosive devices that were set off by electronic timers hidden in vibrating massage pillows, according to authorities.

Russia has denied any involvement in those incidents.

Last year a Chinese woman was convicted for passing on information about flight schedules and cargo movements at Leipzig/Halle Airport to a man spying for Beijing.

Left-wing political outsider wins Democratic Senate primary in Michigan

Left-wing political outsider Abdul El-Sayed is projected to win the Democratic Senate primary in Michigan, which exposed bitter divisions over the party's direction.

The former public health official is on course to beat moderate four-term Democratic congresswoman Haley Stevens, according to CBS News, the BBC's US partner.

El-Sayed voiced support for left-wing causes like universal healthcare and abolishing US Immigration and Customs Enforcement. He also called for ending unconditional US military aid to Israel.

If officially confirmed as the primary's winner, he will face Republican and Trump ally Mike Rogers, in November's midterm elections.

The son of Egyptian immigrants would be the first Muslim US senator if he wins in November.

"We won," El-Sayed posted on X on Wednesday morning, writing that he was "proud to be your Democratic nominee for US Senate".

"Money out of politics. Money in your pocket. Medicare for All," he added, a refrain he had recited to voters on the campaign trail.

"I want to congratulate Abdul El-Sayed on winning the Democratic nomination for US Senate," Stevens said in a statement. "He is a doctor, a community health official, a Rhodes Scholar, and a dedicated Michigander. I am proud to offer my support as he takes on Mike Rogers in the general election."

The November midterm

elections will determine the balance of power in Washington for the last two years of President Donald Trump's time in office.

Trump declared the Michigan Senate result "Great news for the Republican Party".

In his post on Truth Social, Trump referred to the Democratic Party as the "Dumocrats", and claimed their "crazy policies will only get worse!"

After a bruising and sometimes bitter campaign, El-Sayed hinted at bridge-building when he addressed supporters on Tuesday night, before the outcome was known.

"Whatever happens tonight, we have a responsibility to ensure that we unite, unite to make sure that [Republican] Mike Rogers never sees the inside of the US Senate."

Voters in Michigan, Virginia and Washington state also cast their ballots in Democratic primaries on US House of Representatives candidates on Tuesday.

Both candidates in Michigan have offered a different vision for the state and for the country.

El-Sayed was endorsed by left-wing politicians including Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders and New York City congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Stevens, 43, took a more moderate approach, pitching herself as the middle-of-the-road candidate who would appeal to voters unsure of which party to back in November. She made a promise to save manufacturing jobs in Michigan, should she be elected.

Russia strike kills 21 as Ukraine says it needs more missile interceptors

Russia has attacked Ukraine with ballistic missiles and drones, killing at least 21 people, as Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky said interceptors "could have saved lives".

Kyiv and the surrounding region experienced the deadliest strikes it had seen this year overnight, with 17 people reported dead. Attacks in Kharkiv and Donetsk also killed one and three people respectively.

Ukraine, who has consistently urged allies for more US-made Patriot missile interceptors to defend against Russian ballistics, has not reported intercepting any of the missiles in the overnight attack.

Zelensky added delays in receiving anti-ballistic systems from partners leads to "horrific casualties and destruction".

The president later said the supply of interceptors from allies had been "significantly

reduced" this year.

Russia's defence ministry said it had struck logistics hubs and supply centres in Kyiv and the surrounding region.

"These centres were involved in the storage, delivery of various weapons and military supplies, as well as in the production and distribution of unmanned aerial vehicles," it said.

It also said it had hit three cargo vessels "which were transporting weapons and military equipment" near the Black Sea port of Odesa.

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said there were fears people could be trapped under rubble, after residential buildings, a railway station and warehouses were hit.

Ukraine's emergency services said one person had died in the city of Kyiv and at least 16 injured, with a further 16 dead and 29 injured in the wider region.

Meanwhile, one person had died and several were injured - including one who was in a

critical condition - from Russian shelling in Kharkiv, the regional head Oleh Syniehubov said.

Three people were also killed in Donetsk and 27 injured, the governor Vadym Filashkin said.

Fires were still being extinguished in five locations across the Kyiv region on Wednesday, covering an area of approximately 230,000 sq m, it added.

EPA/Shutterstock Rescuers work at the site of a Russian missile strike on a goods storage in Kyiv. A large stream of water can be seen coming from a hose one of the individuals is holding.EPA/Shutterstock

Ukraine's air force said in a post on Telegram that Russia had launched 24 ballistic missiles and four anti-ship missiles during the attack on the capital.

It added that 115 drones had been launched by Russia during last night's attack and air defence systems intercepted 98 of them.

Ukrainian air force data analysed by BBC Verify shows missile interceptions over the last

month have fallen compared with the same period last year (44.4% in 2026, 66.7% in 2025).

Ukraine intercepted 156 of 351 Russian missiles launched between 6 July and 5 August 2026 compared with 128 of 192 during the same period in 2025.

The data also represents an increase in Russian missile launches of 83% this month compared with last year.

Analysis of drone interceptions from the air force for the same period shows a much smaller decline, dropping by almost three percentage points (85.8% in 2026, 88.4% in 2025).

Russia has intensified attacks on Kyiv in recent weeks, while Ukraine has also increased its attacks on Russian civilian infrastructure, including power facilities.

Dmitry Milyaev, the governor of Russia's Tula region, said on Wednesday that a drone had crashed into a warehouse of e-commerce giant Wildberries in the region overnight and caused a fire.

Mexican influencer shot dead during livestream

A Mexican influencer, César Gastélum, has been shot dead while livestreaming on TikTok.

Gastélum was filming with two friends outside a fast food restaurant in Tres Ríos, in the northern city of Culiacán, on Tuesday evening when two men on a motorbike drove up to him and one shot him at close range.

He had more than half a million followers on TikTok and mainly uploaded comedy videos.

It is not the first time a social media influencer has been killed in Mexico. Last year, 23-year-old Valeria Márquez was shot dead at a beauty salon while she was livestreaming on TikTok.

On the livestream, Gastélum and his friends were wearing bright orange coats and bags typically used by delivery drivers.

Local media reported that their outfits originally led police to believe that the victim was a delivery driver, but of-

ficials were later alerted to his identity.

Police and forensic experts cordoned off the area and are examining the cartridge casings and CCTV footage for any clues.

No arrests have so far been made and the two people on the motorbike fled the scene.

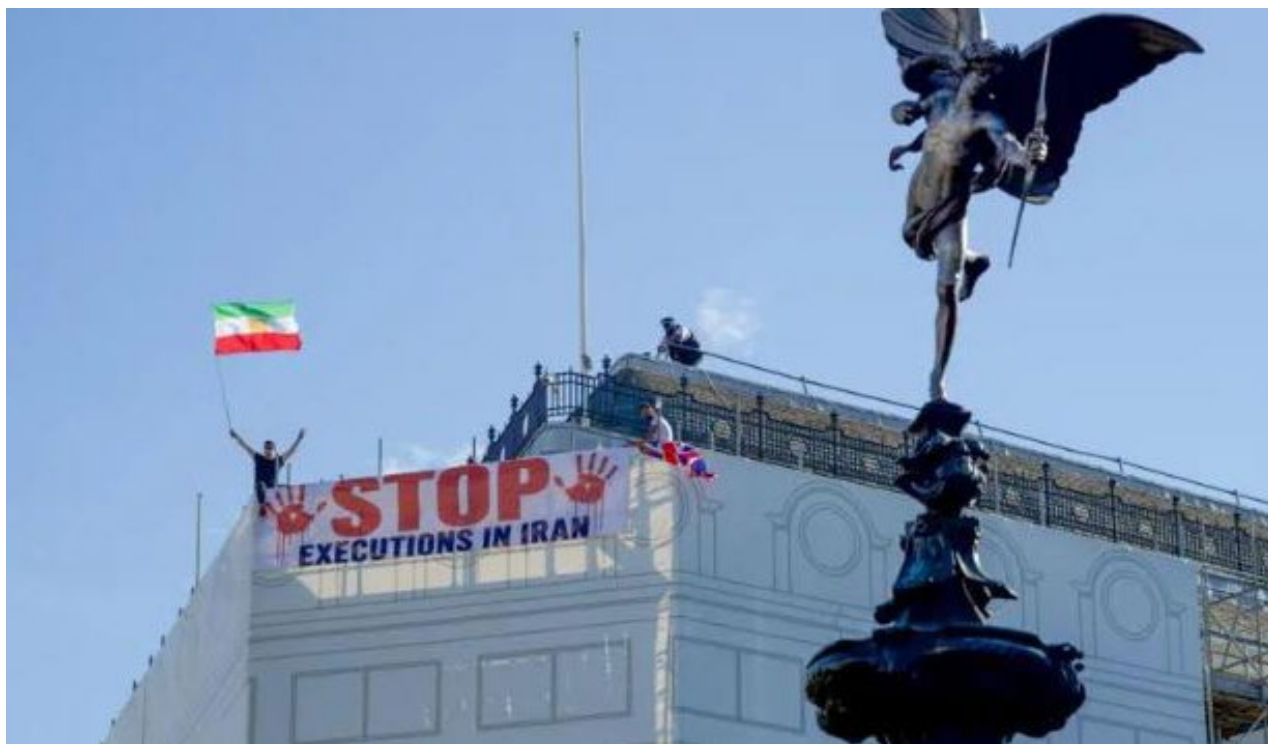
It is not yet clear whether Gastélum had received any threats.

On his Instagram account he often shared pictures of his travels and nights out, or posing in front of luxury cars.

In one of his posts, he could be seen at the grave of Leobardo Aispuro, an influencer known as "El Gordo Peruci".

Aispuro was shot dead in December 2024, in a killing which police said may have been linked to the rivalry between two warring factions of the Sinaloa cartel.

Violence in the state of Sinaloa, of which Culiacán is the capital, has spiralled since the two factions - Los Chapitos and La Mayiza - fell out in September 2024.

NEWS**FOREIGN****IRAN EXECUTION:**

Opponents of the death penalty in Iran staged a protest in London's Piccadilly Circus last week

Police raid Starbucks Korea headquarters over 'Tank Day' fiasco

South Korean police have raided the national headquarters of Starbucks over defamation claims surrounding a controversial marketing campaign.

Starbucks Korea had in May launched a coffee tumbler promotion called "Tank Day" on the anniversary of the 1980 Gwangju Uprising, where hundreds were believed to have been killed by military forces.

Many felt the "tank" was a reference to vehicles deployed to crush pro-democracy protesters and the promotion sparked a mass boycott movement.

Starbucks quickly rolled it back, saying it was unintentional but civic groups filed a criminal complaint against the company,

demanding the police investigate it for defaming victims of the military dictatorship.

Shinsegae Group, which operates Starbucks in Korea, said it had launched an internal investigation into the campaign and concluded that the mistake was unintentional.

It added the team that had planned the promotion did not draw the connection to the historical event, and the upper management had failed to spot it as well.

In June, Starbucks stores across the country closed for half a day to allow staff to attend history lessons.

Shinsegae apologised for the "inappropriate marketing" and said that the Tank Day con-

troversy had led to serious decline in Starbucks sales in South Korea - one of the coffee chain's largest markets.

The company also sacked its chief executive.

Reports estimate that hundreds were killed by the forces of military dictator Chun Doo-hwan, on what is now remembered as a day of national trauma for South Koreans - and a day held sacred by many in the country.

In addition, promotional material for the tumbler used the phrase "tak on the table!", mimicking the sound of an object being slapped on a surface.

But "tak" was also the word used in a controversial statement given by police in 1987, describing the death of a student activist

in custody.

South Korea's president Lee Jae Myung was among those who criticised the campaign, saying it "insults the victims and the bloody struggle" of Gwangju residents.

The scandal, which broke during the local elections season, also became a prominent talking point between the two major parties.

While the internal ministry under Lee announced a government-level boycott of Starbucks, the opposition leader responded by holding up a Starbucks cup during a speech and accusing the government of overreach.

Since then, Starbucks cups have been embraced by right-wing pundits as a symbol of opposition to the Lee Jae-myung government. It has also made appearances in right-wing rallies and live-streams.

UN rights chief alarmed by rise in Iran executions since March

The UN human rights chief has said he is alarmed by the rise in executions in Iran, with capital punishment continuing to be used "to instil fear among the population and suppress dissent".

Volker Türk said at least 56 people had been executed on national security-related charges since 19 March, including 27 in cases linked to January's nationwide anti-government protests.

More than 100 others were at risk of execution on similar charges, while executions for drug-related offences were also continuing at an alarming rate, he added.

Iran is thought to be the world's second-most prolific executioner after China. Last year, it put to death at least 2,159 people, according to Amnesty International.

The human rights group said that was the highest figure on record since 1981 and included 45 executions of suspected dissidents on national security-related charges.

Activists have warned that Iranian authorities might make greater use of executions against their opponents following January's protests, during which thousands of demonstrators were killed and tens of thousands were detained, and the US-Israeli

war with Iran on 28 February.

In a statement, Türk urged Iranian authorities to halt all executions and move toward the abolition of the death penalty, saying that "such punishment has no place in our world".

As well as expressing alarm at the rise in executions, he said the persistent lack of fair trial and due process guarantees was "deeply troubling", with confessions allegedly obtained under torture and other ill-treatment.

"Several executions have reportedly been carried out in public. Some have reportedly been carried out only weeks after arrest," he added.

"Twelve defendants were reportedly sentenced to death following a single three-hour closed-door hearing."

There was no immediate comment from the Iranian government. But it has previously defended the use of the death penalty, saying it is limited to only "the most severe crimes".

On Monday, Iran's judiciary said it executed two men convicted of spying for Israel.

Omid Behzad and Pouria Safvat were accused of sending coordinates, images and other information on sensitive military, law enforcement and security sites to Israel's Mossad foreign intelligence service during the current war and the 12-day conflict in June 2025, according to the judiciary's Mizan news agency.

South Africa plans new rules on ex-leaders' foreign trips after Zuma's visit to India

South Africa's foreign minister wants new rules and "more transparency" to apply to former heads of state undertaking foreign trips.

The recommendation to parliament follows a controversial visit to India last month by ex-President Jacob Zuma where he met one of the businessmen allegedly at the heart of a huge corruption scandal that played a role in bringing down his government.

The uproar over his meeting with Ajay Gupta prompted one minister to say that Zuma was showing the "middle finger" to South Africa.

Around a decade ago, the Gupta brothers were accused of profiting from their close links to then-President Zuma and influencing South African policy. Both parties denied wrongdoing.

The Gupta family left South Africa in 2018 after a judicial commission began investigating allegations they were involved in massive fraud, known as "state capture".

Who are the Guptas?

In 2022, the commission concluded that Zuma had hired and fired ministers central to the running of the country's economy at the behest of the Gupta family.

The South African authorities

ended up cancelling their arrest warrant for Ajay Gupta. The two younger Gupta brothers, Atul and Rajesh, went to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where a court in 2023 turned down a South African request to extradite them.

Zuma has since been expelled from the African National Congress (ANC), the party he once led, and now heads the opposition uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK).

During Zuma's visit to India, a photograph of the 84-year-old South African politician and Ajay Gupta was taken at an Indian temple.

South Africa's high commissioner to India, Anil Sooklal, was also pictured with the duo and he has since been recalled. The diplomat has denied any wrongdoing.

Foreign Affairs Minister Ronald Lamola said that his department had submitted a recommendation to parliament and the president's office for new protocols for former heads of state during foreign trips.

They would have to "provide full details" on the upcoming trip for "an informed assessment of the appropriate level of support required and any associated reputational, political, diplomatic or security risks", he said at a briefing on Wednesday.

Pakistan restricts international media reporting

Pakistani authorities have imposed new restrictions on international media reporting in the country in a move that has drawn sharp criticism from journalist organisations.

Anyone working for foreign media, including Pakistani nationals, must now seek permission to report from anywhere except the cities of Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore.

The restrictions would leave on-the-ground reporting by foreign media at the discretion and timing of the authorities across most of Pakistan, which currently ranks 153 out of 180 on the World Press Freedom Index.

"These guidelines are tantamount to choking international media in an increasingly shrinking space," said political commentator Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar.

Limitations on the media are not new, but local media are often subject to more pressure than international outlets.

"The public looks at the international media for independent reporting," Khokhar says. "Placing restrictions simply creates more room for disinformation and spread of

fake news."

Pakistan's government said the guidelines, issued on Sunday, are not to restrict media but to "provide an administrative mechanism" to verify media, facilitate access and co-ordinate reporting requirements.

The new rules - called the Foreign Media Facilitation Guidelines, 2026 - do not set out how long gaining permission, known as a No Objection Certificate or NOC, can take.

Foreign journalists already require NOCs and can wait months for permissions or never receive an answer - severely curtailing their ability to report breaking news stories from the ground in the country of 240 million people.

International media outlets often therefore rely on Pakistani nationals, who can travel more easily to - or are permanently based in - cities like Peshawar or Quetta, to verify information.

Under these new guidelines, any contributor, including freelancers, living outside the three specified cities would require NOC permissions to cover a story.

"These are ridiculous restrictions and are totally unacceptable," said Zaffar Abbas, editor of Dawn newspaper. "I have worked as a journalist in this country for over 40 years and have reported during the times of two military rulers and a number of autocratic civilian rules, but have never seen the imposition of such restrictions."

"To ask journalists to get an NOC for travelling outside the three major cities not just undermines freedom of movement but also freedom of the press."

The government says this is not a blanket restriction on the movement of individuals.

The guidelines also specify that journalists can lose their accreditation for "acts against ideology, sovereignty, security or public order of Pakistan". Khokhar describes this as "vague" and raises questions about how it might be interpreted.

But the government says any system of accreditation must retain the ability to act including when "the holder is involved in conduct affecting national security or public order".

There is no statutory framework

to support the guidelines, according to Salhuddin Ahmed, a Supreme Court lawyer.

"These 'guidelines' are merely an executive order and lack any legal backing from statute," Ahmed says.

"They refer to the rules of business; those rules are only meant to regulate the internal functioning of government, not create legal obligations on others."

"Quite clearly, these guidelines are a hastily and ill-thought-out attempt to further curb independent reporting in Pakistan."

According to the government, the guidelines are used under rules of business and that as the Information Ministry's External Publicity wing are responsible for foreign media, the guidelines regulate the ministry's administrative relationship with foreign media.

A group of international journalists and the president of Pakistan's Federal Union of Journalists are trying to arrange a meeting with the information minister to raise their concerns.

The authorities seem particularly concerned about reporting from certain locations.

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

NPFL set to unveil new \$7.5m title sponsorship as Elegbeleye confirms August kick-off

The Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) is on the verge of announcing

a new title sponsor ahead of the 2026/27 season, with Chairman Otunba Gbenga Elegbeleye re-

affirming the league's commitment to August 28 kick-off date

Speaking during an interview with journalists at the Maldron Hotel in Glasgow, Scotland, Elegbeleye disclosed that negotiations with the prospective sponsor had reached an advanced stage, with the official unveiling expected before the league's Annual General Meeting on August 7.

"We are finalising the details. I have travelled abroad to conclude discussions and ensure everything is properly put in place. Beyond becoming our title sponsor, this partnership will also strengthen our digital presence as we work to grow the league's social media platforms through influencers and strate-

gic content creation," he said.

As part of efforts to reposition the league, Elegbeleye revealed that discussions had also been held with leading Nigerian entertainers, who have agreed in principle to support the NPFL's fan engagement campaign.

"I have spoken with a couple of top entertainers, and we are expected to sign agreements with them in the coming days. They have agreed to support this initiative for the development of Nigerian football and have even indicated they would attend more than one league match. Their involvement, alongside our new title sponsor and digital campaign, will significantly increase the league's visibility and fan engagement."



GBENGA ELEGBELEYE

WAFU-B: Deputy Governor lifts Edo Queens spirit in camp ahead CAF tourney

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

As Nigeria Women Premier Football League Champions Edo Queens step up their preparations for the forthcoming West Africa Football Union WAFU-B play off, scheduled to hold later this month in Burkina Faso, Edo State Deputy Governor Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa, gingered up the players' spirit as he paid them a surprise visit in camp and joined them in their evening training session.

The sports loving Deputy Governor who visited the reigning champions in the company of Edo State Sports Commission Chairman Hon Amadin Desmond Enabulele gave the girls the pleasant surprise with his esteemed presence as part of motivation in addition to unannounced financial support to boost their morale ahead of the CSF engagement.

Idahosa who scored twice during the Tuesday evening training with the former WAFU-B champions was visibly excited to be with the champions as some fans around hailed him for his uncommon humility.

Addressing the players at the end of the evening session, the

Deputy Governor commended the players for making Edo State proud during the league ending Super six tournament in Port Harcourt where they showcased their talents and determination, coming from behind to lift the league title for the second time in three seasons.

He reassured the team that the Governor will soon host and reward them for their excellent outing, making Edo State proud.



EDO STATE DEPUTY GOVERNOR RT. HON. DENNIS IDAHOSA

NNL AGM: Owerri set to welcome Nigeria's football stakeholders

The Nigeria National League (NNL) has announced Owerri, the

Imo State capital, as the host city for the 2026/2027 Annual General Meeting (AGM).



NNL Chief Operating Officer (COO), Mr. Danlami Alanana, said His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Imo State, Distinguished Senator Hope Uzodimma has given the nod for the 17th AGM to be hosted in the Eastern Heartland.

"We are delighted that the sports-loving Governor of Imo State Distinguished Senator Hope Uzodimma has magnanimously approved NNL's request to host our AGM in Owerri. This is one of the most important events in our calendar," Danlami disclosed.

The AGM, a precursor to the 2026-2027 NNL football season is scheduled to hold on Friday, 21st August, 2026 with top officials of the nation's soccer governing body led by NFF president Alhaji Ibrahim Gusau and General Secretary Dr Mohammed Sanusi in attendance.

CAF concludes inspection of Nigeria's facilities for CAF Awards, General Assembly

A five-man delegation from the Confederation of African Football (CAF) has concluded the inspection of facilities proposed by Nigeria to host the 48th CAF Ordinary General Assembly and the 2026 CAF Awards.

This is contained in a statement issued on Tuesday by Ademola Olajire, Head of Com-

munications, Nigeria Football Federation (NFF).

According to the statement, the delegation, led by Christian Emeruwa, inspected the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, the Transcorp Hilton Hotel and the Bola Tinubu International Conference Centre (ICC) in Abuja.

Other members of the dele-

gation were Hervé Dassoundo (Commercial and Branding), Inas Ahmed (Travel and Accommodation), Salah Mostafa (Transport) and Mohammed Baker (Technology).

The statement said the team had earlier arrived in Lagos on Sunday, where, alongside officials of the NFF, it inspected the Eko Hotel and Suites, the

Murtala Muhammed International Airport and the Wole Soyinka Centre for Culture and Creative Arts.

According to Olajire, the ICC has been proposed to host the 48th CAF Ordinary General Assembly, while the Wole Soyinka Centre for Culture and Creative Arts has been designated as the venue for the 2026 CAF Awards.



ANNUAL SPORTS FIESTA

WAMUFAT/NSSF Annual Sports Fiesta begins in Ogun

The second edition of the WAMUFAT/Nigeria School Sport Federation (NSSF) Annual Sports Fiesta began on Tuesday at the Agroterra Sports Complex in Jega Orile, Ogun.

The five-day camp, which will end on Aug. 8, has attracted more than 300 students aged between six and 16 from the South-West

It is organised by WAMUFAT Youth Sports Development in partnership with the NSSF, with support from the management of the Agroterra Sports Complex.

Declaring the camp open, the traditional ruler of Owu

Kingdom, His Royal Highness, Saka Matemilola, urged the participants to make the best use of the opportunity to develop their talents and improve their sporting skills.

He also called on governments at all levels to give greater attention to school sports, describing it as the foundation of every successful sporting nation.

Founder of WAMUFAT, Fatimo Mohamed, said the decision to sustain the initiative after its successful maiden edition in 2025 was driven by her passion for giving back to society and creating opportunities for young people.

Nathaniel Idowu Foundation opens maiden summer camp for children in Lagos

The Nathaniel Idowu Foundation has launched its maiden Summer Camp in Lagos, with more than 1,000 children turning up for the programme, although only 321 registered participants were admitted.

The foundation disclosed this in a statement issued on Tuesday by its Media Officer, Lekan Okusan.

According to the statement, the one-month camp, which commenced on Monday at the New Maracana Stadium, is designed for children between the ages of eight and 16.

It stated that families began arriving at the venue from about 6:30 a.m. and were received with music, banners and an organised registration process.

The statement added that each participant received an official camp jersey, while the

camp rules were explained by the Camp Coordinator, McAnthony Anaelechukwu, who is also the Director-General of Peakline Sports World Ltd.

It said the foundation, in partnership with U.S.-based organisation, Gear 'Em Up, led by Khadija and Marvelous, distributed complete training kits to selected participants.

The kits included football boots, gloves, shin guards, jerseys and footballs.

According to the statement, the camp is being managed by 20 certified coaches, supported by medical personnel and kitchen staff to ensure the safety and welfare of participants.

It noted that after registration and group photographs, basketball participants proceeded to the courts, while football campers engaged in warm-up exercises, icebreakers and training drills.



NATHANIEL IDOWU FOUNDATION

SPORTS



NPFL2026/27: Bendel Insurance FC boss Tenebe Vows to reposition club to int'l standard



EMPEROR JARRETT TENEBE

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

As part of preparations for the 2026/2027 Nigeria Professional Football League season, the Chairman of Bendel Insurance Football Club, Emperor Jarrett Tenebe has vowed to explore all necessary avenues and pull resources together to help reposition the Edo state owned football club to an international standard.

The Benin Arsenal's chairman gave the assurance when he held a strategic meeting in London with Dr Drew Uyi, a FIFA-licensed football agent and international brand strategist.

The meeting focused on in-

novative strategies to reposition the historic Benin-based club for greater success on and off the pitch.

Tenebe who doubled as chairman of All Progressive Congress and Uyi, founder and CEO of DD Eleven Group met on how to explore possible ways of strengthening Bendel Insurance's global profile through modern player branding, international marketing, talent exposure and commercialization.

The discussions also centred on initiatives aimed at improving the international marketability of the club's players while reinforcing Bendel Insurance's reputation as one of Nigeria's premier football clubs.



HON. AMADIN DESMOND ENABULELE (LEFT)

Enabulele hails Onyema over Commonwealth Games' feat

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The Executive Chairman, Edo State Sports Commission, Hon. Amadin Desmond Enabulele, has congratulated Edo parapowerlifter Esther Onyema on her silver medal-winning performance at the just concluded, 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland.

The Edo state Sports Commission boss said he was impressed by the performance of the Edo athlete at Glasgow games, describing the medal as a significant achievement for both Edo State and Nigeria, saying that it underscores the

state's growing status as a breeding ground for world-class athletes.

Enabulele commended Onyema's determination, discipline and consistency, describing her performance as an inspiration to younger athletes across the country.

"Esther Onyema has once again demonstrated that she is a world class athlete once again on the international stage. Her outstanding performance is a source of immense pride to Edo State and Nigeria. She has shown that with hard work, discipline and motivation, our athletes can compete favourably against the very best in the world," he said.

Military Barracks Sports Championship to boost youth development, discover talents — CDS

The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Gen. Olufemi Oluyede, says the 2026 Abuja Military Barracks Youth Sports Championship will promote youth development, discipline, unity and talent discovery among young people in military barracks.

Oluyede said this on Tuesday while declaring the five-day championship open in Abuja.

Represented by the Chief of Defence Administration, Rear Adm. Saburi Lawal, the CDS said the championship would bring together youths from military barracks across the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) to foster friendship, healthy competition and mutual cooperation.

He said the initiative would also encourage participants to embrace the values of teamwork, sportsmanship and excellence.

"This competition is not just about winning or losing. It is about the journey, camaraderie and the spirit of healthy competition."

"It is about pushing oneself to greater heights, overcoming challenges and striving for excellence," he said.

The five-day championship, organised by the Defence Headquarters, began on Aug. 3 at the Mogadishu Cantonment Sports Complex and Aguiyi Ironsi Sports Complex, Abuja, and will end on Aug. 7.

Oluyede commended the organisers, coaches, trainers, officials and mentors for their

commitment to the success of the championship and urged participants to compete with discipline, fairness and respect.

He expressed confidence that the event would inspire more young people to embrace sports while strengthening friendship among youths in military barracks.

Speaking with newsmen after the day's football matches, Lawal said the championship was conceived to keep children in military barracks meaningfully engaged during the long



MILITARY BARRACKS SPORTS CHAMPIONSHIP

AFN Vice President Hails Team Nigeria's impressive Commonwealth Games Performance

● **Lauds President Tinubu for his unwavering support**

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The 2nd Vice President of the Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN), Akuchukwu Aghazu, has praised Team Nigeria for its impressive outing at the just concluded 23rd Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland, describing

the athletes' performances as reflection of their dedication, discipline and quality preparation.

Aghazu gave the commendation in a statement signed by Maxwell Kumoye, Chairman Media Committee of the Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN).

He said that the commit-

ment displayed by Team Nigeria from the build-up to the Games proper through to the end of the competition, was highly commendable, noting that the athletes remained focused on achieving success for the country.

"From the preparations to the end of the Games, our athletes demonstrated total commitment and dedication. Their work ethic was exceptional, and the relationship between the athletes and officials was excellent throughout the competition. That unity contributed greatly to our success."

She reserved special praise for the Director General of the National Sports Commission, Honourable Bukola Olopade, whose leadership she described as invaluable.



TEAM NIGERIA

Kida applauds Tinubu over Commonwealth Games success

The President of the Nigeria Basketball Federation, Ahmadu Musa Kida, has commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu over the success recorded by Team Nigeria at the just concluded Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland.

Mr. Kida, in a statement on Wednesday said the role played by the president was instrumental in the preparation and performance of Nigerian athletes.

He noted that the NSC provided technical support and capacity building that helped

boost the morale and readiness of the contingent throughout the games.

The NBBF President further applauded President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for his unwavering support for athletics and team officials during the competition.

He said the president's commitment to sports development created an enabling environment that allowed athletes to compete favorably and represent the country with pride on the global stage.

According to Kida, the Commonwealth Games in



AHMADU MUSA KIDA