

Eid-el- Maulud: Idahosa, Oborevwo, Wike, others felicitate with Muslims

BENIN CITY

Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwo; Edo State Deputy Governor, Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa, Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, and other top government functionaries dignitaries and felicitated with Muslim faithful across the state

and beyond on the occasion of Eid-el-Maulud, commemorating the birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Idahosa, in a statement signed by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr Friday Aghedo, urged Muslims to use the occasion to reflect on the exemplary life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), particularly his virtues of peace, compas-

sion, humility, tolerance and love for humanity. The Deputy Governor called on the Muslim faithful to uphold these values in their daily lives, stressing the need to strengthen bonds of brotherhood and promote peaceful coexistence among the people. He also urged Muslims to pray for the continued peace, unity and prosperity of Edo

State and Nigeria, while encouraging them to extend kindness and support to the less privileged in their communities. According to him, "This sacred occasion offers us an opportunity to reflect on the exemplary life and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW), particularly his virtues of peace, compassion, humility, tolerance and love for humanity."

Idahosa prayed that Almighty Allah would accept the prayers of the faithful, grant leaders wisdom and continue to bless Edo State with peace, progress and prosperity. He wished Muslims across the state a peaceful and fulfilling Eid-el-Maulud celebration. Similarly, Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwo, In a goodwill message

issued by his Chief Press Secretary, Sir Festus Ahon, extended warm greetings and best wishes to the Muslim faithful, urging them to use the occasion to reflect on the exemplary life, teachings and virtues of the Prophet. Oborevwo noted that the values of compassion, humil-

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Works Minister apologises over Benin-Agbor Road, orders arrest of contractors • For removing asphalt

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

The Minister of Works, David Umahi, on Tuesday apologised to commuters and residents of Edo and Delta states over the deplorable condition of the Be-

nin-Agbor Road, which has caused them undue hardship. Umahi tendered the apology in Benin City while on an inspection tour of major Federal roads in the state alongside the governor, Sen Monday Okpebholo and ordered the arrest of contractors and concession-

aires found removing asphalt from federal roads without authorisation. He commended Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo for his commitment to infrastructure development and intervention in the rehabilitation of federal roads

in the state. The minister also thanked Edo youths for remaining calm despite the hardship caused by the condition of the road, saying their restraint had helped prevent a possible breakdown of law and order. Expressing disappointment

with the concessionaire handling the road, he accused the company of lacking the technical capacity required to execute the project. He said he personally observed the removal of asphalt from the road during an earlier inspection with the governor

and directed the contractor to stop the practice. According to him, the Ministry of Works does not permit contractors to remove asphalt from federal roads without approval, describing the act

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URGENT INTERVENTION:

Works Minister, Dave Umahi (left) and Edo Governor, Okpebholo (middle) during inspection tour of Benin -Agbor Road and other deplorable federal roads across the state on Tuesday.

Tinubu orders urgent intervention on Benin-Agbor-Asaba, Ekiti-Kogi Roads

AISHA MOMOH

ABUJA

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has directed the Federal Ministry of Works to urgently intervene in the deteriorating condition of the Benin-Agbor-Asaba road and the Ifaki-Kabba-Ado-Ekiti road, describing the two federal highways as critical economic corridors that can no longer be neglected. The directive, issued on Monday, followed persistent complaints from motorists, transport unions, traders and community leaders over the worsening condition of the roads, which they said had become major impediments to economic activities and posed serious risks to road users.

In a statement by the Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, the Presidency said the condition of the roads was unacceptable and inconsistent with the objectives of the Renewed Hope Agenda. The statement quoted the President as saying that the suffering of Nigerians who spend hours in traffic, lose goods to spoilage and risk their lives daily on the affected roads could no longer be ignored. The Benin-Agbor-Asaba highway, a major link between Edo, Delta and Anambra states, has suffered extensive deterioration, with motorists confronted by potholes, failed sections and erosion along parts of

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Eid-ul Maulud: Enabulele Calls for Peace, Unity, Resilience in Edo Sports Family — 11

NEWS

NUPENG questions Atiku's fuel subsidy promise

ODINI AMAKA VIVIAN

ABUJA

The Nigeria Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) has faulted former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar's promise to restore petrol subsidy if elected president in 2027, questioning the financial sustainability of the proposal.

The union said any decision to reintroduce subsidy must be backed by a clear and realistic plan on how the government intends to finance it without worsening the country's economic challenges.

In a statement, NUPENG President, Salimon Oladiti, questioned the proposal to restore petrol subsidy, saying it would not be logical without a clear explanation of how the government intends to fund the policy. He said Nigerians need to know where the resources required for such a programme would come from, particularly at a time when the country is seeking to improve government revenue and reduce financial pressures.

Oladiti warned that bringing back the subsidy regime could place another significant burden on the nation's finances. He noted that although the policy might appear attractive because of its potential to reduce petrol prices, the

government must also consider the long-term consequences of committing huge public funds to subsidising petroleum products.

The NUPENG president also acknowledged what he described as notable achievements recorded by the administration of President Bola Tinubu, particularly in infrastructure development. He said the Federal Government's efforts in developing infrastructure could contribute to economic growth and improve living conditions if properly sustained and effectively implemented.

He further pointed to the increase in revenue allocations to state governments, saying the development had provided states with additional resources to undertake projects and address developmental challenges. According to him, the increased allocations should be properly utilised by state governments to provide infrastructure and other essential services that directly benefit citizens.

Oladiti also questioned the track record of the former Vice-President while in public office. He alleged that Atiku had previously mismanaged some of the country's assets and argued that his past record should be carefully considered by Nigerians when assessing his current political promises.

Motorists, residents urge FG to fix Edo roads

BENIN CITY

BENEDICT OKATE

Residents, motorists and other road users in Edo State have called on the Federal Government to urgently intervene in the deplorable condition of major federal highways linking communities to Benin City, saying the situation has virtually crippled movement into and across the state capital.

The appeal followed the worsening condition of the roads, including Benin-Agbor-Asaba, Benin-Warri, Benin-Abraka and Benin-Auchi-Okene, after several days of heavy rainfall, which has turned already deteriorated

sections of the highways into muddy, waterlogged and difficult-to-navigate stretches.

Commuters entering or leaving Benin City have in recent days experienced prolonged traffic gridlock, while motorists have had to contend with deep potholes, failed portions of the roads and flooded sections, particularly after rainfall.

Some concerned residents said the situation had become increasingly frustrating, with journeys that ordinarily take a few minutes now taking several hours and, in some cases, even days.

A commercial driver, Augustine Osahon, who plies one of the affected routes, said the condition of the road was tak-

ing a heavy toll on motorists, businesses and commuters.

"It is obvious that the Minister of Works, Engineer David Umahi, is deliberately marginalizing Edo and Delta States. I appeal to the relevant authorities to call him to order," he said.

Another motorist lamented the damage being done to vehicles particularly on the Benin-Agbor-Asaba highway saying drivers were spending more money on repairs because of the numerous failed sections.

"Every day, we risk damaging our vehicles. You can avoid one bad portion only to meet a more terrible one a few metres ahead. When it rains, it becomes even more dangerous because

so many sections of the road are flooded," the motorist said.

A resident, Mrs. Efe Uwadi, who operates a cold room, expressed concern about the impact of the road condition on economic activities, noting that delays in the movement of people and goods were already affecting businesses.

"I have lost frozen food items worth millions of naira in the last few days because the truck conveying them was stuck on the Benin-Agbor-Asaba highway for over four days. Benin City is a major gateway, and people travel into and out of the city every day.

The Federal Government should give the desired attention to its roads in the state," she said.



PUBLIC PRESENTATION:

From right: Former President, Goodluck Jonathan, wife Dame Patience, and Gov. Babagana Zulum of Borno State during the Public Presentation of two Books titled, *Beyond the Mandate* and *I Planted in Abuja*, on Tuesday.

Afreximbank Profit Soars 30% to \$534.7m in H1 2026

OSAHENIRO OFUWENGBE

BENIN CITY

The African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) has recorded a 30 per cent increase in net income to \$534.7 million for the first half of 2026, up from \$412.7 million recorded in the corresponding period of 2025, as stronger lending activity and increased income from interest, fees and commissions boosted the bank's financial performance.

The development was contained in Afreximbank's half-year 2026 financial results for the six months ended June 30, 2026, released by the bank, with Denys Denya, Senior Executive Vice President of Afreximbank, describing the performance as a demonstration of the group's resilience in a challenging global economic environment. The profit growth was driven mainly by the expansion of the bank's lending operations and higher interest and non-interest income, strengthening its capacity to support trade, industrialisation and investment across African markets.

According to the results, Afreximbank's net loans and advances grew by 5.7 per cent to \$35.4 billion as of June 30, 2026, from \$33.5 billion at the end of December 2025. The larger loan portfolio contributed to a

22 per cent increase in net interest income, which reached approximately \$1 billion during the six-month period.

The bank's total assets and contingencies also increased by 7.8 per cent to \$52.3 billion, reflecting continued growth in its balance sheet. Income from fees and commissions rose by 15 per cent to \$71.1 million, compared with \$61.9 million in the first half of 2025, supported by services including guarantees, letters of credit and advisory activities.

Despite the increase in lending, the bank reported an improvement in the quality of its loan portfolio. Afreximbank's non-performing loan ratio declined to 2.20 per cent, from 2.43 per cent at the end of 2025. Its return on average shareholders' equity also improved to 13 per cent, from 11 per cent in the first half of 2025, while return on average assets rose to 2.54 per cent, compared with 2.22 per cent previously.

Afreximbank said its liquidity position remained within its strategic range during the period, with liquid assets representing 13 per cent of total assets, against a target range of 10 to 15 per cent. Shareholders' funds increased to \$8.5 billion, supported by the \$534.7 million profit recorded during the period and \$13.9 million in new equity raised.

EDOHIC goes digital, trains health providers ahead September 1 portal launch

EDWARD OSEGHE

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Health Insurance Commission (EDOHIC) has intensified preparations for the digital transformation of health insurance administration in the State, training healthcare providers and facility desk officers across the three Senatorial Districts ahead of the September 1, 2026 go-live of its Online Portal Version 1.0.

The training, held on Thursday, August 20, 2026, is part of

the Commission's stakeholder-readiness strategy designed to ensure that frontline healthcare personnel are fully equipped to operate the new platform and provide seamless services to enrollees from day one.

The portal represents a major shift from EDOHIC's existing manual processes, with key operations—including enrollee verification, authorisations, referrals, claims processing and enrolment—set to be automated.

The digital transition is also consistent with the adminis-

tration of His Excellency, Sen. Monday Okpebholo, Governor of Edo State, which has prioritised improved access to quality healthcare and the use of technology to strengthen public service delivery.

The initiative is expected to contribute to the administration's efforts to build a more efficient, responsive and people-centred healthcare system capable of delivering improved services to residents across Edo State.

Speaking during the training, the Director, Health Services and Standards, EDOHIC, Dr. Osayuki Edosa-Iyayi, who delivered the

opening remarks on behalf of the Director-General of the Commission, Dr. Mrs. Augusta Ikpea-Enaholo, said the training was critical to ensuring a smooth transition from manual operations to the new digital system.

Dr. Edosa-Iyayi said the portal was developed to improve productivity within the Commission while making healthcare processes faster and more seamless for both enrollees and healthcare providers.

She explained that processes that previously required manual intervention, including verification of an enroll-

Tomatoes, yam prices stir mixed reactions in Benin markets

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

Residents of Benin City, Edo State, have expressed mixed reactions to the prices of food items in markets across the city, with tomatoes, yam and other household staples attracting particular attention as consumers struggle to cope with changing market prices.

A visit to some markets in the city showed that the cost of food remains a major consideration for households, with buyers comparing prices from one stall to another in search of cheaper alternatives. While some food items are becoming relatively affordable as supplies improve, others remain expensive, leaving many residents to adjust what they buy and, in some cases, the quantity of food prepared at home.

At Ugbor Market and other food markets, traders said prices could vary depending on the source of the produce, transportation costs and the volume available in the market.

A resident, Mrs. Jane Eboigbe, who was seen purchasing food items, said the price of tomatoes

was particularly noticeable.

"The price is not the same every time we come to the market. Sometimes you think you have enough money to buy food, but when you get here, you discover that the quantity you can afford is very small," she said.

Another resident and student at one of the tertiary institutions in the state capital, Mr. Augustine Arasonwan, said yam remained relatively expensive despite the availability of new ones in the market, although some other food items were becoming easier to afford.

"We have to compare prices before buying now. If yam is expensive, we may buy garri, rice or another food that will give us better value for the money," he said.

A trader at the popular Oba Market, Mrs. Alice Edosomean, attributed fluctuations in the prices of fresh produce to supply and transportation.

"When farmers bring enough produce into the market, the price comes down. But when supply is low and the cost of bringing the goods to Benin increases, we have to sell at a higher price," she explained.

The Nigerian **OBSERVER**

That The People May Know

INVITATION TO PLACE GOODWILL MESSAGES

FOR HIS EXCELLENCY

SEN. MONDAY OKPEBHOLO @56

The Nigerian Observer will publish a **Special Birthday Edition** on **Saturday August 29, 2026** to celebrate the **56th Birthday** of His Excellency, **Senator Monday Okpebholo**, Governor of Edo State.

We invite MDAs, Corporate Organizations, and Individuals to place goodwill/ congratulatory messages.

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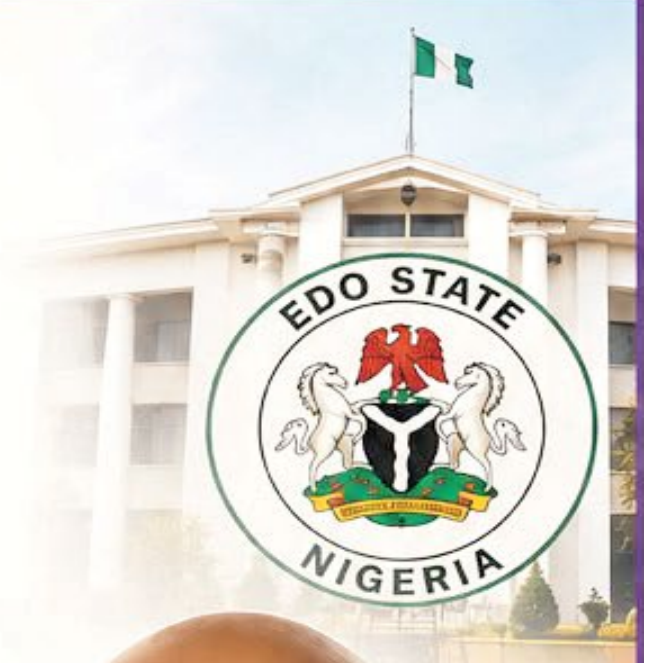


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Osinbajo, UNILAG urge wider distance learning to bridge university access gap

BERNADETTE IDALU

LAGOS

Former Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo and the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos, Prof. Folasade Ogunsola, have called for the expansion of open and distance learning as a critical solution to Nigeria's growing demand for university education.

They made the call on Tuesday at the fifth colloquium of the Distance Learning Insti-

tute of the University of Lagos, held in Lagos, with the theme, "Reimagining the Open and Distance Learning Ecosystem: Technology, Policy & Institutional Priorities."

Osinbajo, who chaired the colloquium, said Nigeria could not bridge its university access gap by relying predominantly on conventional campus-based education, given the growing number of young people seeking admission into tertiary institutions.

He noted that more than 2.2

million Nigerians seek admission through the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board annually, while the country's tertiary education system had historically admitted only about a quarter of that number.

According to him, Nigeria's projected population growth would further increase pressure on the existing university system, making it impractical to depend solely on the construction of more lecture theatres, hostels and other physical infrastructure.

He said, "The mathematics of access to university education in Nigeria simply does not work if we continue to rely mainly on conventional campus models for university education."

Osinbajo argued that open and distance learning should no longer be regarded as a peripheral alternative to conventional university education but as a national necessity.

He said emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, could help institutions

provide mass access while also offering students more personalised learning experiences.

"This is why open and distance learning can no longer be seen as something on the margins of higher education. It is now clearly a national necessity," he said.

The former VP said AI could enable students enrolled in large numbers to receive personalised academic support, including explanations, assessments, feedback and learning materials adapted to their individual pace.

He, however, warned universities against simply transferring conventional teaching methods to digital platforms, saying true transformation required a fundamental rethink of how students learn and are assessed.

CORRECTION OF NAME/DATE BIRTH

This is to notify the general public that I formerly known as **EVBAKHAVBOKUN PRINCEWILL OSAZUWA**, now wish to be known and addressed as **EVBA PRINCEWILL OSAZUWA**. Also my correct date of birth is 13 th June, 1986 and not 29 th May, 1985. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

Eid-el- Maulud: Idahosa...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

ity, peaceful coexistence, sacrifice, tolerance and service to humanity associated with the life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad remained relevant to the nation's quest for peace, unity and sustainable development.

He called on Muslims in Delta State and across the country to make the celebration an opportunity to strengthen their commitment to peaceful co-existence, love for one another and the advancement of the common good.

The Governor reaffirmed his administration's commitment to fostering an inclusive society where citizens, irrespective of religious, ethnic or political affiliations, could live and pursue

their legitimate aspirations in peace and dignity.

He urged the Muslim community to continue supporting government's efforts toward building a peaceful, prosperous and united Delta State, while praying for continued peace, stability and progress in the state and Nigeria.

Oborevori wished the Muslim faithful a joyous and spiritually rewarding celebration.

On his part, the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, urged the city's residents to uphold the foundational values of peace, unity, diversity and tolerance upon which the nation's capital was established.

Wike made the appeal on Tuesday in his message to res-



MEDIA PARLEY:

From left: Director- General Lagos State Sports Commission, Mr Lekan Fatodu; Lagos State Commissioner for Youth and Social Development/ Co-Chairman Organising Committee, Mr Mobolaji Ogunlende and Chairman Local Organising Committee/Deputy Chief of Staff to Lagos State Governor, Mr Sam Egube, during a media Parley on the Eko 2026 National International Games in Lagos.

Tinubu orders urgent intervention...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

as destruction of public infrastructure.

According to him, "I commend Governor Monday Okpebholo for his intervention in lots of federal roads across the state. He is not saying this is a federal or state road. I apologise to commuters plying this road.

The people of Edo, the people of Delta state and all the people using this road.

"I am very, very disappointed with this concession, I offer apologies, I take full responsibility for the misdeed and for the destruction of public assets, because I have the bill of quan-

tity here, I have the conditions here.

"The ministry of Works does not allow anybody to remove asphalt on the road, that is against the policies of the ministry of work, when myself and the state governor visited the contractor on site, we frown at them removing the asphalt," he said.

He therefore directed all ministry controllers to arrest any contractor or concessionaire found removing asphalt from federal roads without authorisation.

Umahi said the federal government had a responsibility to ensure that concession-

Delta inaugurates new hospital, unveils free medical care programme

DELTA

The Delta State Government has inaugurated a newly completed cottage hospital in Okpanam, Oshimili North Local Government Area, alongside a six-day free medical care programme for residents.

The hospital was commissioned on Tuesday by Governor Sheriff Oborevori, represented by his Deputy, Monday Onyeme, while the free medical programme was initiated by the Oshimili North Local Government Council.

Oborevori commended the council chairman, Innocent Esewezie, for executing the project, saying the facility would reduce the burden on residents, particularly pregnant women, children and elderly people who previously travelled long distances to access healthcare.

The governor said the project was in line with his administration's M.O.R.E. Agenda and its commitment to expanding healthcare infrastructure across the state.

He said, "Access to quality, affordable healthcare should never be a luxury determined

by location. By bringing modern medical facilities directly into our communities, we reduce the burden of travel for primary healthcare."

The governor urged residents to protect the facility and ensure that it remained useful to present and future generations.

He also promised that his administration would continue to partner with proactive local government councils to provide development projects across the state.

The Chairman of Oshimili North LGA, Esewezie, Innocent Esewezie, said the hospital

was established because a community could not develop effectively when residents lacked access to basic healthcare.

He said the six-day free medical programme would provide consultations, treatment and other services, including surgical, dental and optical care.

Esewezie also announced the immediate enrolment of 200 residents in the Delta State Contributory Health Commission.

He said 150 beneficiaries would be members of the Oshimili North Security Watch, while the remaining 50 would be children with special needs from communities across the local government area.

Tinubu's reforms creating new...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

the route.

The highway is also a major corridor for petroleum tankers, food trucks and interstate passengers. Road users said the deteriorating condition had significantly increased travel time, with some motorists reportedly spending more than five hours on journeys that ordinarily should take less than two hours.

Similarly, the Ifaki-Kabba-Ado-Ekiti road, linking Ekiti and Kogi states, has become increasingly difficult to navigate, affecting the movement of agricultural produce and other goods between the communities and major markets.

Farmers and traders said the poor condition of the highway

had resulted in vehicle breakdowns, accidents and losses, particularly in the transportation of yam, cassava and cocoa to markets in Lokoja and Abuja.

Under the directive, the Federal Ministry of Works, in collaboration with the Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA), is expected to mobilise to the affected sections for emergency palliative works within 72 hours.

The Minister of Works, Engr. David Umahi, said assessment teams would be deployed to identify the worst sections for immediate patching, grading and drainage works, while comprehensive rehabilitation would be captured in the 2026 budget.

Umahi said the President's directive was clear and that

NGO urges stronger enforcement of laws against GBV

ABUJA

FAB Treasure Foundation, a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), has urged the government to strengthen enforcement of laws addressing crimes against humanity to curb the rising incidence of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) nationwide.

Miss Festus Abigail, Executive Director of the foundation, made the call in Abuja during an interview with newsmen, expressing concern over increasing cases across Nigeria.

She said proper enforcement of laws such as the Violence

Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and other frameworks would help.

"SGBV remains one of Nigeria's most urgent social and human rights challenges, which government must take seriously. As an advocate for the girl child, I am particularly concerned by this trend."

"Violence against women and girls is still being normalised, underreported and, in many cases, poorly addressed. We continue to hear disturbing cases of abuse, rape, child marriage and exploitation," she said.

According to her, what makes

the cases more troubling is that perpetrators are often people within victims' circles of trust, including relatives, partners, neighbours, teachers, religious leaders and authority figures.

"This tells us that GBV is not simply a problem of individual behaviour. It is also a problem of systems, culture, accountability and institutional response that requires collective action."

"Nigeria has laws such as the VAPP Act and other international conventions to which it is a signatory, but legislation is only effective when it is properly enforced," she said.

"A survivor who gathers the courage to report abuse should

not be met with victim-blaming, pressure to settle the matter privately, or an ineffective justice process," she added.

She emphasised that government must move beyond awareness campaigns and strengthen the entire GBV response system to ensure survivors received protection, justice and support whenever they seek assistance nationwide.

Abigail advocated improved training for frontline institutions, particularly the police, who were often first responders to SGBV cases, alongside enhanced access to justice and comprehensive survivor support services.

NEWS

Eid-el-Maulud: CAN urges Nigerians to translate Prophet's virtues into action

ABUJA

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has urged Nigerians to translate the values of mercy, justice and compassion exemplified by Prophet Muhammad into concrete actions that address insecurity, economic hardship and national unity.

This was contained in a statement signed by CAN President, Archbishop Daniel Okoh on Tuesday in Abuja, to

mark Eid-el-Maulud.

Okoh felicitated with Muslim faithful across the country and prayed for peace and blessings upon their families and communities.

He said Eid-el-Maulud, which commemorates the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, provided an opportunity to reflect on mercy, justice, compassion for the poor and vulnerable, honesty and peaceful coexistence.

"These values are especial-

ly important today because they challenge us to care for one another, protect human dignity and pursue peace even when our differences are exploited for political or personal gain," he said.

Okoh noted that the celebration came at a difficult time for many Nigerians, citing the pressure of rising living costs and insecurity affecting homes and communities across the country.

"People are tired of promises; they want to see their lives

improve," he added.

He, therefore, urged the Federal Government and leaders at all levels to move from promises to visible action, saying Nigerians need greater security, economic relief and leadership that puts their welfare first.

"Leadership is not measured by what we promise, but by what Nigerians can see and feel," the CAN president stated.

As the country approaches the 2027 general elections, Okoh appealed to politicians

not to exploit religion or ethnicity for political advantage.

"Elections will come and go, but the bonds that hold Nigeria together must remain," he said.

The CAN leader further called on Christians and Muslims to refuse to be divided by those seeking political gain from their differences.

He stressed that both faiths share a responsibility to protect communities, care for the vulnerable and work together for peace.

"I remain hopeful about Nigeria, but our hope must be backed by action, responsible leadership, good citizenship and justice," he said.

Okoh, therefore, pray that Eid-el-Maulud would renew Nigerians' commitment to mercy, peace and compassion, and inspire the building of a Nigeria where every citizen could live with dignity and hope.

He wished Muslim brothers and sisters a happy Eid-el-Maulud celebration.



INAUGURATION OF INTERNAL ROADS:

From left: Former Deputy Governor of Rivers State, Tele Ikuru; Gov Siminalayi Fubara of Rivers State and Deputy Governor of Rivers State, Prof Ngozi Odu, during the the inauguration of the internal roads in Omademe Community on Ikwerre local government area of Rivers State.

Nigeria, other African countries dominate world's 60 poorest by GDP-PPP per capital

Nigeria and several other African countries feature prominently among the world's 60 poorest countries in a 2026 ranking by Global Finance magazine, based on GDP per capita at purchasing power parity.

Burundi ranked as the country with the lowest GDP per capita in the ranking, at \$994.23, followed by the Central African Republic with \$1,437.72 and South Sudan with \$1,467.19.

The figures are based on GDP per capita at purchasing

power parity, a measure that adjusts for differences in the cost of living and inflation across countries.

Nine of the 10 countries at the bottom of the ranking are in Africa, with Yemen the only non-African country among them.

The 10 lowest-ranked countries were Burundi, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Yemen, Mozambique, Malawi, Somalia, Liberia, Madagascar and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Nigeria ranked 56th, with a GDP per capita of \$9,532.92,

compared with 44th position in the 2025 ranking.

Niger ranked 11th with \$2,108.46, followed by Sudan at 13th with \$2,427.43 and Burkina Faso at 16th with \$3,060.34.

Lesotho ranked 17th with \$3,211.83, while Chad and Guinea-Bissau occupied the 18th and 19th positions with \$3,284.18 and \$3,304.84 respectively.

Mali ranked 20th with \$3,480.41, followed by Togo at 21st with \$3,563.31, The Gambia at 22nd with \$3,664.60 and Sierra Leone at 23rd with \$3,709.84.

Uganda ranked 26th with

\$3,923.83, while Vanuatu, Comoros, Rwanda and Tanzania occupied the 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th positions respectively.

Zambia came 31st with \$4,380.77, followed by Ethiopia at 32nd with \$4,498.55, Guinea at 33rd with \$4,746.77 and Benin at 34th with \$4,758.22.

Senegal ranked 37th with \$5,440.63, while Cameroon came 38th with \$5,782.69.

Kenya was ranked 44th with a GDP per capita of \$7,590.60, while Zimbabwe came 46th with \$7,985.23.

You're a bridge-builder across faiths, Tinubu extols Sultan @70

President Bola Tinubu has congratulated the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar III, on his 70th birthday, describing him as a stabilising voice, bridge-builder across faiths and communities.

Tinubu said the Sultan, who is also President-General of the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), had remained a moral compass and strong advocate for peace, unity and national cohesion.

The President conveyed the commendation in a statement personally signed by him in Abuja to mark the Sultan's milestone birthday.

"Today, I join millions of Nigerians in celebrating a remarkable milestone for a remarkable person: His Eminence, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III, the Sultan of Sokoto and President-General of the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, on his 70th birthday.

"You have been a stabilising voice in times of turbulence, a bridge-builder across faiths and communities, and a moral compass not only for our Mus-

lim ummah, but for our entire nation," Tinubu said.

The President congratulated the Sultan and his subjects in Sokoto and beyond on behalf of himself, First Lady Sen. Oluremi Tinubu, and the government and people of Nigeria.

Tinubu described the Sultan's 70 years as a testament to a life lived in service, wisdom and grace, noting his nearly two decades on the throne of his forebears.

He said the Sultan had embodied the finest traditions of the Sokoto Caliphate through scholarship, humility and an unwavering commitment to peace.

"I have come to know you as a leader who speaks truth with compassion, who counsels patience without weakness, and who champions unity without compromising conviction.

"Under your guidance, the Sultanate has continued to promote education, interfaith dialogue and humanitarian service.

"Your advocacy for peaceful coexistence, for the girl-child and for the dignity of every Nigerian reflects the very best of our shared values."

NAN must remain trusted source of authentic news –Editor in Chief

The News Agency of Nigeria must continue to uphold its reputation as a trusted source of authentic, objective and balanced news, the new NAN Editor-in-Chief, Hajiya Hadiza Mohammed-Aliyu, has said.

Aliyu said that the agency's strength in the era of rapid social media reporting should be its commitment to in-depth investigation, verification and truth.

She said although the agency might not always be the first to break news because of the speed of social media, it must remain the platform Nigerians can rely on for accurate and well-researched reports.

"We go with authentic news, we may not break the news because of the present social media that we have all over the place.

"We may not break the news, but we go deep, do an in-depth investigation and at the end of the day we bring out the truth of every situation, the truth of every event."

She said the agency had built a reputation for providing reliable, authentic and well-researched reports, stressing that such credibility must be sustained.

"If you get it from NAN, you know that, this is reliable, this is authentic and well-researched."

Aliyu, who has served for 34 years, also described her appointment as fulfilling, saying she is happy to become the agency's first female Editor-in-Chief more than four decades after its establishment.

"I feel happy and fulfilled, after serving for at least 34 years, and this is coming at this time, I feel good.

"I am happy that we are able to break the jinx of having the first female Editor-in-Chief of the News Agency of Nigeria after more than four decades of its establishment."

Aliyu said she never had the target of becoming Editor-in-Chief, adding that the appointment came with more responsibilities.

Stop inviting African dictators, Falana faults NBA over George Weah invitation

Human rights lawyer and Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Femi Falana, has criticised the Nigerian Bar Association for inviting former Liberian President George Weah to address its annual conference, accusing Weah's administration of undermining judicial independence in Liberia.

The senior lawyer made the remarks in a video posted on the NBA's YouTube channel

on Monday, following Weah's keynote address at the NBA's 66th Annual General Conference in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, on Sunday.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I'm delighted to be here. But let me say this, because you know I have to be frank with the audience. And this goes for the leadership of the Bar. I want to appeal that the Bar Association must stop—stop inviting dictators in Africa to come and address us," he said.

He alleged that under

Weah's regime (2018–2024), the judiciary was captured to the point that Liberians sought legal redress outside the country at the ECOWAS Court.

"Mr. Weah, George Weah, who was here yesterday and was talking about the judiciary: in his country, his regime captured the judiciary to the extent that they had to contact some of us outside the country to get legal redress in the ECOWAS Court," he said.

Falana referred to the case of Mandingo people against

Liberia, involving people whose landed properties were allegedly seized during the war.

He said the ECOWAS Court ruled in their favour but alleged that Weah refused to comply with the judgment.

"The ECOWAS Court gave them judgment. George Weah refused to comply with the judgment. The new government of Boakai has just set up a committee for the enforcement of that judgment," he said.

NAF intensifies air strikes against terrorists in Sokoto

ABUJA

The Nigerian Air Force (NAF) has intensified its air operations against terrorism, banditry, kidnapping and other criminal activities across the North-West.

This is contained in a statement on Monday in Abuja, by the Director of Public Relations and Information, NAF, Air Commodore Ehimen Ejodame.

Ejodame said that the increased air presence in Sokoto State was to support ongoing joint security operations.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the move reflects the service's resolve to

sustain pressure on hostile elements, enhance aerial surveillance, and maintain rapid response capabilities within the Joint Operations Area.

According to the NAF spokesperson, the strength-

ened deployment is critical in tackling asymmetric threats, as terrorists and bandits often exploit difficult terrain, mobility, and concealment to evade ground forces.

"By leveraging the reach,

speed, flexibility, and precision of air-power, the NAF is better positioned to locate, disrupt, and degrade hostile elements, deny them freedom of movement, and create opportunities for surface forces to consolidate gains."



NATIONAL ADDRESSING COUNCIL:

From left: Minister of Interior, Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo; Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology, Dr. Kingsley Tochukwu Udeh and Vice President Kashim Shettima, during the inauguration of the National Addressing Council at the Presidential Villa in Abuja.

FCTA, UNICEF strengthen partnership with area councils to tackle malnutrition

ABUJA

The Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) and UNICEF have urged leadership of the six area councils of the FCT to take full ownership of local food and nutrition programmes to curb malnutrition and boost food security.

Mr Ubokutom Nyah, Mandate Secretary, Economic Planning, Revenue Generation, and Public-Private Partnership (EPRGPPP) Secretariat, FCTA, made the call at the Area Council Committee on Food and Nutrition's 2nd Quarter Meeting and Capacity Building.

Nyah, who was represented at the event in Abuja on Monday, by the acting Permanent Secretary at the secretariat, Mr Uba Bala, described nutrition security as a "cornerstone of human capital development and economic growth".

While acknowledging UNICEF's financial and tech-

nical support, Nyah emphasised that policy success relies heavily on grassroots execution across local wards and households.

According to him, a healthy population serves as the true driver of economic prosperity and sustainable growth.

"While overarching strategic frameworks originate at the Secretariat level, their ultimate success depends entirely on the impact made in local wards, villages, and households."

He charged the area council leadership and specialised nutrition focal officers to take firm ownership of local initiatives, streamline inter-sectoral coordination, and ensure that vital resources directly reach the territory's most vulnerable populations.

In her remarks, the Director of Food and Nutrition Department, EPRGPPP, Princess Giza-Oluwafemi, explained that the capacity-building was designed to deepen partici-

pants' understanding of core nutrition concepts and current local malnutrition burden.

Gaza-Oluwafemi added that the workshop would also enlighten participants of high-priority nutrition interventions and the critical first 1,000 days of life.

She added that the programme focused on sharpening operational skills in monitoring, evaluation, reporting, multisectoral coordination, the Child Nutrition Fund match mechanism, and the formulation of actionable, localised work plans.

The director urged all attendees to translate their newly acquired theoretical knowledge into direct action within their respective jurisdictions, emphasising that local officers sit on the front lines of community-based health interventions.

Similarly, the acting Executive Secretary, FCT Primary Health Care Board, Dr Dan Gadzama, stressed the indis-

pensable role that local committees play in tackling nutrition challenges, particularly among vulnerable populations such as pregnant women and young children.

Gadzama pointed out that while policies were formulated at the higher tiers of government, practical execution occurs almost entirely at the area council level, making local committees the essential bridge between policy design and tangible community benefit.

He expressed sincere gratitude to the EPRGPPP Secretariat for organising the capacity-building workshop.

He also lauded UNICEF and area council chairmen for their unwavering commitment to elevating health standards across the nation's capital.

Dr Chizoba Steve-Edemba, representing the UNICEF-US Department of State Maternal and Child Health Umbrella Grant, commended the joint effort and reiterated that local committees are best positioned to drive meaningful change.

Dambazau applauds Nigerian students' performance at iCode competition

ABUJA

The Ambassador to China, Lt.-Gen. Abdulrahman Dambazau (rtd.), has commended Nigerian students for their outstanding performance at the iCode Competition held in Beijing, China.

The Executive Director of Glisten International Academy, Abba Saidu, disclosed this in a statement issued on Monday in Abuja following the participation of 17 Nigerian students from four schools in Abuja at the international competition.

Saidu said the students, led by Glisten International Academy, Abuja, and accompanied by five chaperones, represented Nigeria at the competition held on Saturday.

He said the students demonstrated their coding abilities, creativity, technological skills, problem-solving capacity and innovative ideas during the competition.

According to him, the Nigerian Embassy in Beijing was represented at the event and expressed pride in the students' impressive performance and conduct.

Saidu said the participation provided the students with an opportunity to demonstrate the potential of Nigeria's younger generation in science, technology, innovation and human capital development.

He explained that the initiative was part of efforts to promote Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education among Nigerian children.

He added that the programme also exposed the students to international technological environments, innovation ecosystems and cross-cultural learning opportunities.

Saidu quoted Dambazau as

commending the leadership of Glisten International Academy and the accompanying team for creating the opportunity for the students to participate in the international competition.

The envoy also praised the initiative for giving the students first-hand exposure to China's technological and educational environment.

Dambazau reminded the students that academic excellence must be accompanied by good character, discipline, responsibility and respect for others.

"Learning and character must always go together," he said.

He encouraged the students to recognise that representing Nigeria abroad carried responsibilities beyond winning competitions, urging them to conduct themselves in ways that reflected the values and dignity of the country.

According to him, there is a need to expose Nigerian children to learning opportunities beyond the traditional classroom.

Dambazau noted that international competitions, educational exchanges, technology programmes and cultural experiences could broaden young people's perspectives and prepare them for future challenges.

He called for greater participation of public schools across the 36 states in similar international educational and technological programmes, stressing that opportunities for innovation and exposure should not be limited to a few institutions.

The envoy described Nigeria's young population as one of the country's greatest assets, stressing that deliberate investment in STEM education, digital skills, creativity, innovation and character development would be critical to building the Nigeria of tomorrow.

Dambazau congratulated the students for their commendable representation of Nigeria and celebrated their courage, creativity, discipline and determination, saying their participation in Beijing demonstrated that Nigerian youths could compete confidently on the global stage when given the right opportunities and support.

He reiterated his commitment to strengthening people-to-people relations between Nigeria and China through educational diplomacy, youth development, technology exchange and greater global exposure.

Army launches rescue operation for abducted villagers in Niger

MINNA

The Nigerian Army has begun efforts to rescue persons abducted by terrorists in Dekara District of Borgu Local Government Area of Niger.

An operational report made available on Sunday said troops had been deployed to the area following the abduction of several residents on Friday.

The report said that Dekara, located along the Nigeria-Benin Republic border, is one of the communities on the fringes of the Kainji Lake National Park.

It said the area was also regarded as a difficult-to-reach terrain reportedly used as a mobility corridor by terrorists operating within the park forest.

The report said the Army had earlier directed the deployment of troops to Dekara to establish a blocking posi-

tion ahead of a planned clearance operation in the park.

It said some newly inducted troops from another axis were being prepared for the clearance operation aimed at denying terrorists freedom of movement in the forest.

"However, while the troops were moving towards the community on Friday, the terrorists launched an attack on the village and abducted several persons.

"The terrorists also killed some residents before troops eventually arrived at the community later that day and took up positions.

"The terrorists subsequently attacked the deployed troops but were repelled by the soldiers.

"No casualties were recorded on our side, while one AK-47 rifle and other items were recovered from the terrorists," the report said.

The Army said it was yet to

ascertain the exact number of persons abducted or killed during the attack, as some residents fled into neighbouring Benin Republic before the troops arrived.

It said efforts were ongoing to establish the whereabouts of the missing persons and determine the full extent of the attack.

The Army assured that updates on the rescue operation and other developments would be communicated as they emerge.

NEWS**Tinubu's reforms creating new opportunities for Nigerian youths — NRS Chairman****ABUJA**

The Chairman of the Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS), Dr Zacch Adedeji, has said the tax and economic reforms introduced by President Bola Tinubu's administration are creating new opportunities for Nigerian youths in business, investment and agriculture.

Adedeji stated this in Ibadan while delivering the keynote address at the Oyo State Emerging Political Leaders Summit 2026, organised with the theme: "Bridging the Gap, Uniting Political Strength, Mobilising Emerging Political Leaders for 2027."

Represented by an NRS Manager, Mr AbdulRahamon AbdulLateef, the NRS chairman highlighted areas where young Nigerians could benefit directly from the reforms and urged them to take advantage of the opportunities emerging from the new economic framework.

He said the Nigeria Tax Act 2025 and the Nigeria Tax Administration Act had removed significant tax burdens on

small businesses, thereby creating a more favourable environment for young entrepreneurs.

"If you register your own company and your revenue in a year is below N100 million, you are not expected to pay company income tax, VAT, or withholding tax," he said.

Adedeji also disclosed that institutions operating in special sectors, including education, could claim VAT refunds on eligible expenses, provided they maintained proper records.

According to him, such provisions were not available under the old tax regime, some aspects of which dated back to 1903, stressing that the new framework was designed to encourage the growth of startups, schools and other businesses.

The NRS chairman also identified the Nigerian capital market as another major avenue for wealth creation among young Nigerians.

He said reforms in the stock market had made investment more accessible to youths, adding that the market had generated significant wealth between 2023 and 2026.

Musawa mourns veteran actor 'Ogogo'**SOKOTO**

DEBORAH ENWEREM

The Minister of Art, Culture, Tourism and the Creative Economy, Han-natu Musawa, has expressed grief over the death of veteran Nollywood actor, Taiwo Hassan, popularly known as "Ogogo".

Musawa, in a statement by her Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Nneka Anibeze, on Monday in Abuja, described late Hassan, as a towering figure in the Nigerian film industry.

According to the minister, the late actor's discipline, talent and dedication helped to shape Nollywood and inspire gener-

ations of actors, directors and producers.

"Ogogo, was not just a star on our screens. He was a custodian of our culture, a proud voice of Yoruba storytelling, and a man who dedicated his life to building the Nigerian creative industry," she said.

Musawa said Hassan's works celebrated Nigerian heritage and projected the richness of Yoruba traditions to audiences in Nigeria and beyond.

"The industry has lost a giant, but his legacy will continue to live on through the countless lives he touched and the films he left behind," the minister said.

She extended condolences to Hassan's family, colleagues in Nollywood, fans and the people of Ogun State.

Soldiers arrest three gunrunners, rescue six in Zamfara**ABUJA**

Troops of the Joint Task Force North-West, Operation FANSAN YAM-MA, have arrested three suspected gun runners and rescued six kidnapped victims in separate operations in Zamfara State.

The operations, conducted on Sunday, August 23, 2026, also led to the recovery of an AK-103-2 rifle, one magazine and 30 rounds of ammunition, according to the Joint Task Force.

The Media Information Officer of the Joint Task Force, Lieutenant Colonel Al-iyu Danja, disclosed this in a statement issued on Monday.

Danja said troops from Sector 2 intercepted a vehicle

conveying three suspected gunrunners along the Kaura Namoda-Shinkafi Road.

He said a search of the vehicle uncovered the rifle, magazine and ammunition concealed inside a bag of millet.

"Preliminary investigations indicated that the weapons cache was destined for Yar-Galadima in Maru Local Government Area," he said.

According to him, the three suspects and the recovered weapons and other items are currently in military custody for further investigation.

In a separate operation, troops responded to a distress call following an attack on motorists along the Anka-Gummi Road.

Power Infrastructure: Boosting Lagos transmission to drive economic growth**LAGOS**

To ease power grid limits and boost business growth, the Federal Government recently unveiled new power transmission projects for main Lagos substations.

These updates add major power capacity to the national grid.

The projects, inaugurated on Aug. 17 and Aug. 18, by the Minister of Power, Mr Joseph Tegbe, span across strategic locations including Apapa, Ijora, Lekki and Alausa.

The interventions designed not merely to increase the amount of electricity that can be transmitted, but to strengthen power delivery to industrial, commercial and residential areas that are central to Lagos' economic activities.

The projects include a 2x60 Mega Volt Ampree (MVA) Gas Insulated Substation (GIS) at

Apapa, two 100MVA transformers at Ijora, a 100MVA transformer at Alausa and transformer installations at the Lekki Transmission Substation.

The projects represent 840MVA of new transformer capacity brought into service across the Lagos transmission network.

The projects are expected to provide additional bulk power supply to the Eko and Ikeja Electricity Distribution Companies for onward delivery to industries, businesses and households within their franchise areas.

Among the most significant interventions is the upgrade of the Lekki 330/132/33 Kilo Volt (kV) Transmission Substation, located within one of Nigeria's fastest-growing economic corridors.

The Lekki intervention comprises one 300MVA, 330/132/33kV power trans-

former and two 60MVA, 132/33kV power transformers.

Speaking at the inauguration, the minister said that the interventions represented more than the installation of new equipment.

"They represent targeted investments in capacity for businesses to grow, for industries to produce, and for communities to prosper."

At Lekki, the minister noted that the upgrade had effectively doubled the capacity of the Lekki 330/132/33kV transmission substation, a critical intervention for one of Nigeria's fastest-developing economic corridors.

"Transformer capacity at the 330/132kV level has increased from 300MVA to 600MVA, equivalent to approximately 480 Megawatts (MW), while capacity at the 132/33kV level has risen from 120MVA to

240MVA, equivalent to approximately 192MW.

"Today, we are inaugurating capacity for businesses to grow; industries to produce; communities to prosper and for one of the fastest-growing economic corridors in our country to continue to expand without electricity infrastructure becoming a brake on its progress."

The minister explained that the true measure of electricity infrastructure lied in what it enabled an economy to do.

According to him, Lekki has emerged as one of the most consequential growth corridors in Lagos and in Nigeria, driven by sustained residential, commercial and industrial expansion.

He said that the project would also deliver nine new 33kV feeders to improve bulk power delivery into the Eko Electricity Distribution Company network.

**INAUGURATION:**

From left: Director General, National Identity Management (NIMC), Dr. Abisoye Coker: Minister of Interior, Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo and Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology, Dr. Kingsley Tochukwu Udeh and Vice President Kashim Shettima during the Inauguration of the National Addressing Council at the Presidential Villa in Abuja.

Imumolen raises concerns over personal, family safety, seeks security agencies' intervention

Factional National Chairman of Accord, Prof. Chris Imumolen, has raised concerns over his personal safety and that of his family, urging law enforcement agencies to intervene.

Imumolen, in a statement on Monday in Abuja, said his attention had been drawn to developments and circumstances that had caused him serious concern about his personal safety and that of members of his family.

He also called on security agencies and Gov. Ademola Adeleke of Osun to act swiftly to prevent potential political violence or intimidation.

He also appealed to Adeleke to use his influence to ensure that his associates, supporters and political followers were

prevented from any act of intimidation, harassment, threat or violence.

Imumolen stated that his political engagements in Osun were strictly driven by his commitment to advancing the party and promoting democratic values, rather than initiating a personal conflict with the governor or any political faction.

"I make this appeal in the spirit of peace and responsibility. I seek no confrontation with Adeleke or anyone else."

"I am not an indigene of Osun. My interest in Osun is principally connected with my commitment to the development of the Accord party, the protection of its political interests and the advancement of democratic values."

"My political views and in-

terventions should not be interpreted as a personal declaration of war against anyone," he said.

Imumolen, while affirming his fundamental right as a Nigerian to participate in political activities without fear or coercion, said that he was committed to democratic political disagreement.

"I also wish to make it absolutely clear that I have not authorised anyone to engage in violence, threats or confrontation on my behalf."

"I believe political disagreements should be resolved through dialogue, democratic processes and the rule of law," he said.

Imumolen also clarified that the expression of his security concerns and the appeal was not an accusation, but for a precautionary measure.

He urged law enforcement agencies to conduct an immediate, transparent and independent investigation should any harm or security breach occur involving him, his family or his associates.

Imumolen stressed that his statement did not constitute a direct accusation against any individual regarding future occurrences, but served as a plea for peace, fairness and mutual respect among political actors in the state.

He called on all political stakeholders in Osun to prioritise dialogue, restraint and the rule of law over political intimidation.

"I believe that no political disagreement should ever become a justification for intimidation, violence or the endangerment of human life," he said.

FOREIGN

NEWS

China warns it will safeguard its interests after US widens sanctions against Iran

China has vowed to protect its interests after the US announced plans to widen economic sanctions against Iran and its trading partners, which include Beijing.

Foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian said China was firmly opposed to what it called "illegal unilateral sanctions" and would take "all necessary measures" to safeguard its rights.

This came after US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent announced the new measures on Monday, warning any nation financially partnering with Iran would be isolated.

China is the biggest buyer of Iranian oil, although the trade has declined under the US blockade of Iran's ports.

Lin said: "Cooperation between China and Iran has always been conducted within the framework of international law and should not be interfered with or disrupted."

Bessent described the new measures as "the single greatest financial offensive ever" against Iran, warning banks and businesses would share in Iran's isolation if they refused to cut ties with the country.

He declined to focus on specific nations, but said US President Donald Trump would be

phoning world leaders "with specific requests to cease their interactions with the regime".

However, responding to a question about Chinese banks, Bessent said he wanted to make clear "no one was above the reach of US sanctions".

The announcement comes ahead of planned talks between Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping next month.

Washington is likely to be wary of potential retaliation from Beijing, which processes the majority of the world's rare earths and other critical minerals, crucial in the manufacture of many high-tech products.

Beijing has already tightened export controls on rare earths as part of previous trade negotiations with the US.

China's response followed Iranian Economy Minister Ali Madanizadeh saying Tehran was "fully prepared" for the wider sanctions, which he said would lead to "another defeat" for the US.

"The government is and was ready and has a two-year plan to manage these events," he told state television.

"We also have our own tools and know how to play the game," he said, adding Tehran had been "waiting for these plans for a long time".



BOMBING:

Pan Am Flight 103 was brought down on 21 December 1988.

US firefighters say major blaze near Reno about a quarter contained

US fire crews have reported progress in their efforts to tackle a large wildfire menacing the city of Reno, Nevada - saying the blaze is about a quarter contained.

The Hawk Fire, which began

on Saturday, had spread over 15,000 acres by Monday, firefighters said.

Evacuation orders remain in place for 23,000 people, though other residents have now been allowed to return to their homes. Tens of thousands of other residents have been told to be ready to leave at any moment.

Officials are concerned that gusts of wind could drive the flames towards more homes. Unfavourable weather conditions are forecast for the next two days, meaning the fire could continue to burn during that timeframe.

No deaths have been reported, though seven people have been injured.

The fire, which was first reported on Saturday morning, spread in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains near Reno

due to those same windy and unpredictable weather conditions.

The immediate "go now" evacuation zone and wider "get set" area - where people are being warned to prepare to evacuate - do not extend to the centre of Reno, but they do affect large urban areas and part of a highway.

Large air tankers and helicopters have been flying over the affected area dropping water and fire retardants.

In their update on Monday afternoon, fire officials said the blaze had been at least 27% contained.

Chief Richard Edwards, of the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District, said those injured were four civilians and three firefighters, who suffered minor burns.

Edwards added that 32

homes had been destroyed and six damaged, and that those numbers were expected to increase. Shelters have been set up in the area to take in displaced residents.

While firefighters have made progress, more than two-thirds of the fire's perimeter remains uncontained.

The fire is thought to have been caused by humans. Edwards added on Monday that investigators did not yet know if the blaze was set intentionally.

Scientists say that human-induced climate change makes the warm, dry conditions more likely that assist the rapid spread of wildfires.

Reno's average temperature has gone up by over 4C since the 1970s, faster than any other big US city, according to Climate Central.

US-Canada trade war escalates as Trump threatens tariff hike on vehicles

President Donald Trump has threatened to hike US tariffs on automobiles originating in Canada, as the trade war between the two neighbours continues to heat up.

Trump said on Monday that he will increase tariffs on Canadian cars and trucks, as well as auto parts, from 25% to 50% as of 1 January.

It comes after US-Canada trade talks collapsed late last week, with each side accusing the other of making unreasonable last-minute demands.

Late on Monday, Canada officials announced a news conference on Tuesday where they would outline how the country would respond to the trade war and work to "protect and support Canadian workers and businesses during these challenging times".

The news conference at 11:00 ET (16:00 BST) will include government leaders in business, finance and economic development.

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Mark Carney called Trump's latest levy threat unsurprising and accused the president of wanting to destroy Canada's auto industry. He added that Canada is ready to resume talks only if the US comes with the "right attitude".

The war of words followed

several US and Canadian officials saying that talks were suspended with no set date to resume.

Canada walked away from trade negotiations late on Friday night, moments before a US-imposed deadline that would add a 50% levy on nearly \$20bn (£28bn; £14bn) of Canadian imports.

The collapse in talks marked a significant change in tone from earlier in the week, when both sides appeared optimistic that a new US-Canada trade deal could be reached.

Canadian officials have said the US introduced last-minute demands that were "unacceptable", including a clause limiting which countries Canada could sign trade deals with.

US officials, meanwhile, said it was Canada that introduced last-minute changes.

"They wanted more," US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said in an interview with CNBC on Monday.

The breakdown led to growing tensions as both sides publicly dug in their heels.

On Monday, Trump's tariff threats to Canada's auto industry followed Carney declaring the country would counter his levies with reciprocal tariffs on US goods "dollar for dollar".

Carney said he was focused on supporting Canadian busi-

nesses impacted by new 50% US tariffs after the Friday deadline expired, as well as building infrastructure to diversify Canada's trade, which historically has relied heavily on the US.

Carney announced funding of C\$11bn (\$7.95bn; £5.83bn) to build six icebreakers at a Quebec shipyard for the Canadian Coast Guard that will replace its medium and heavy ageing fleet.

The icebreakers will be used to open winter shipping routes through Canada's northern and Atlantic waters.

Meanwhile, Ontario's outspoken premier, Doug Ford, whose province is home to Canada's auto manufacturing industry, responded to Trump's tariffs and threats by telling the US president to "kiss my ass".

Ford also suggested that Canada should charge the US extra for its oil and gas, as well as electricity and critical minerals, adding that he will be speaking to Carney on ways to "fight back".

His comments appeared to catch the attention of Trump, who in a Truth Social post accused Ford of "bluster" and wrote: "Someone should get these clowns to 'fall in line' or, the consequences for Canada will be far WORSE!".

Lockerbie bombing trial postponed days before it was due to start

The trial of a Libyan man over the Lockerbie bombing has been postponed for a third time, after new evidence on the 37-year-old case came to light three days ago.

Jury selection was due to get under way in Washington DC on Wednesday but the BBC understands a new start date has been set for January next year.

Lawyers acting for Abu Agila Mohammad Kheir Al-Marimi said "newly discovered evidence" previously unknown to the defence and prosecutors from the US government emerged on Friday 21 August.

Al-Marimi has denied building the bomb that destroyed Pan Am Flight 103 on 21 December 1988, killing 270

people.

His lawyers told the court: "Constitutional and ethical obligations require the defence to investigate this development."

They said they met Al-Marimi on Sunday and he agreed that they should ask for the postponement.

Abu Agila Mas'ud Kheir Al-Marimi has been in custody since December 2022.

The trial judge, Dabney Friedrich, has agreed that the start date should be set aside, underlining the potential importance of the new evidence.

She would have been extremely reluctant to allow an 11th hour postponement after months of preparation and marathon pre-trial legal battles.

For the relatives of those

who died and Al-Marimi himself, this latest delay means a verdict might not come until next spring. It is yet another stunning development in a saga that has witnessed countless twists and turns over nearly four decades.

Pan Am 103 was flying from Heathrow to New York when the bomb exploded in its forward hold, breaking the plane apart at 31,000 feet.

All 259 passengers and crew on board were killed. Another 11 people died in Lockerbie when the wreckage fell on their homes.

Of the victims, 190 were American and 43 from the UK.

Nearly four decades later, the bombing remains the worst terror attack and mass murder in British history.

NEWS

FOREIGN

Tornado tears through French village, leaving dozens hurt and homes ravaged

A tornado has torn through the village of Pomas in south-west France, injuring 39 people and damaging hundreds of homes. Authorities said 15 people were taken to hospital and two were in a critical condition. One man said his pregnant wife was injured after their house collapsed on her.

More than 120 emergency workers were deployed to the village south of Carcassonne after winds reaching 117km/h (73mph) tore roofs off houses and damaged an estimated 300 homes on Monday. "Half the village has been destroyed," said one resident called Pierre, who described the tornado as swirling like a "huge

red and yellow chimney".

"There's a huge castle and a third of it has collapsed - even though these are stones that have stood for 1,000 years," Pierre told Ici Occitanie.

The third stage of the Vuelta a España cycle race, which was taking place in the Aude area of south-western France, had to be cancelled when a hail storm

forced the riders to take shelter about 15km from the finish line.

The extreme weather has left about 2,800 homes across 10 villages without electricity, according to officials.

Local sub-prefect Emmanuelle Plantier-Lemarchand told French radio that she was not aware of anyone missing. She lowered the number of victims from 41 to

39, and said 15 of them had been treated in hospital.

"I heard this massive noise... then I saw everything flying around in the air and my roof collapsed over my head," shocked resident Chantal told French radio. "I've got no house left, that's for sure... I was really scared. I thought that's it, this my final hour."

French authorities had issued an orange alert for thunderstorms in large parts of the country's south-west, which have already been hit by power outages and transport disruptions.

Eyewitness footage from the region captured the swirling vortex of the tornado looming in the horizon above houses and trees.

Images from the small vil-

lage of Pomas, which was the hardest hit, showed uprooted trees, damaged cars and rubble from destroyed homes.

Meanwhile there were flight delays and cancellations at airports in Bordeaux, Marseille, Nice, Toulouse and north of Paris to the north, said Transport Minister Philippe Tabarot.

On average, France experiences several dozen tornadoes per year, according to the country's national weather service Météo-France.

It comes after Europe's summer of unprecedented heatwaves and wildfires, with France's south-west region among the worst affected with an area of 42,000 hectares burnt in one of the largest forest fires since World War Two.



UNCHR VISIT:

Peacekeepers from the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) provide security during a visit of UNCHR High Commissioner.

US urges tougher UN sanctions to pressure Sudan's warring sides toward peace

The United States is pushing for tougher United Nations sanctions on Sudan's warring parties, seeking to curb foreign military support and pressure the army and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to negotiate an end to a conflict that has killed at least 59,000 people and displaced some 13 million.

Speaking to the UN Security Council on Monday, US adviser for Arab and African affairs Massad Boulos said financial, military and political backing from outside actors continues to fuel the war, now in its fourth year.

Boulos said a proposed US resolution would expand the existing UN arms embargo beyond Darfur to cover the whole of Sudan. The measure would apply to all parties operating in the country and explicitly include drones and related technologies.

The draft resolution also calls on all countries to end direct or indirect logistical, financial or military support that enables the conflict to continue.

The United States did not identify countries providing

such assistance. Egypt has openly supported Sudan's military, while the United Arab Emirates has repeatedly denied allegations that it supplies weapons to the RSF.

UN warns of worsening humanitarian crisis

UN Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo told the council that the conflict has created a devastating humanitarian crisis.

Around 13 million people have fled their homes, including 8.7 million internally displaced across all 18 states.

The UN human rights office documented about 1,400 civilian deaths between January and June this year, including around 1,100 people killed by drone strikes.

DiCarlo said mass killings, abductions of women and girls and sexual violence remain recurring features of the war. The UN has documented 838 victims of sexual violence since the conflict began, most of them women and girls.

She warned that drones operated by both sides have repeatedly struck markets, schools, fuel stations and wa-

ter infrastructure.

Fighting spreads across key states

Recent fighting has been concentrated in North Kordofan, West Darfur, North Darfur and Blue Nile states, with heavy drone attacks and localized ground combat continuing despite the rainy season.

DiCarlo said the growing number of armed groups is further complicating efforts to end the conflict.

Beyond the Sudanese Armed Forces and the RSF, numerous armed movements

US removes Syria from list of state sponsors of terrorism

The US has removed Syria from its list of state sponsors of terrorism after 47 years, lifting what it said was the "final major barriers" for private sector investment in the country and its reintegration into the global economy.

US Secretary Of State Marco Rubio said the move was in recognition of the Syrian government's positive actions to fully distance itself from acts of international terrorism.

The Trump administration has embraced Syria's new president, Ahmed al-Sharaa, a former militant who once had an American bounty on his head as the leader of an al-Qaeda offshoot.

His Islamist group, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), was also removed from the US list of global terrorist organisations.

HTS, formerly known as al-Nusra Front, was al-Qaeda's affiliate in Syria until Sharaa severed ties with the jihadist network in 2016.

In late 2024, HTS led the rebel offensive that overthrew former president Bashar al-Assad and it dominates Sharaa's transitional administration.

The US hopes to bring Syria into its orbit rather than that of Russia or China. But the risks remain significant, with Syria still far from secure and lacking representative govern-

ment. It is also at the centre of growing tensions between its neighbours Israel and Turkey.

Rubio said Monday's move, which had been initially flagged in July, would give the Syrians "a path to prosperity". US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said: "Today's action will help foster additional investment in Syria to promote political and economic stability."

Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan al-Shaibani greeted the news as a "historic step", according to state-run news agency SANA.

"We will continue working to remove the effects of isolation and create an environment based on transparency, mutual interests and respect," he said.

Last year, the US also revoked the designation of HTS as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation and removed Sharaa from its list of Specially Designated Global Terrorists.

Syria's removal from the US list of state sponsors of terrorism - where it had been since 1979 - leaves just three remaining: Cuba, North Korea and Iran.

The listing carries financial sanctions, restrictions on US foreign aid and defence exports and sales and can also penalise people and other countries that trade with the sanctioned state.

South Sudan: Two UN peacekeepers killed, seven injured

Armed men ambushed a patrol traveling to a remote area of South Sudan on Monday, killing two U.N. peacekeepers, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan said. Though violence is rampant in the African country, attacks against peacekeepers are rare.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. Seven others were wounded — three peacekeepers, two members of

the South Sudanese police and two civilian staffers, the mission known as UNMISS said in a statement. The two peacekeepers killed and three injured were from Ethiopia, U.N. spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said.

The mission said it had deployed a "Quick Reaction Force" to secure the area and support the emergency response after the attack. The patrol was going to the area of Pajut in the state of Jonglei

when it came under attack.

"Such deadly violence targeting UNMISS personnel who are serving to support peace in South Sudan is unacceptable," Anita Kiki Gbeho, the head of UNMISS, said in the statement.

The killings bring the number of peacekeepers killed by militias since Jan. 1 to nine, Dujarric said, stressing that attacks against U.N. peacekeepers may constitute war crimes under international law.

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres condemned the ambush "in the strongest possible terms" and called for a prompt investigation that would lead to the prosecution of those responsible, Dujarric said later Monday.

"The secretary-general reaffirms the United Nations' commitment to stand with the victims and their families during this profoundly difficult time," the spokesman said.

Government troops in

South Sudan have been combating fighters and militias loyal to opposition leader Riek Machar, who was suspended last year as vice president as he faces charges of treason and other offenses. Machar says the charges are politically motivated.

A 2018 peace deal between President Salva Kiir and Machar, who is under house arrest, has collapsed, leading to fears of a return to full-blown civil war.

NEWS

Edo State on the road to good roads

It has become necessary to let the good people of Edo State know that Governor Senator Monday Okpebholo and his team are working night and day to deliver all the dividends of democracy which he earlier promised, including building cosmopolitan infrastructure. Regarding the roads linking Edo state from the various entry points, we have read some commentaries from members of the public, including those who by their profession, should know what obtains on road construction, but have chosen to be uncharitable. We want all concerned to know that all roads leading to Edo state, have all been awarded to contractors for repairs. The delay in fixing them has been due to the incessant rainfall that invalidated the weather forecast. The repair works cannot progress in the rain. For example, the Benin-Ore road which is undergoing repairs, is presently halted because of the heavy rainfalls.

Ditto for the Benin- Agbor road, which is also undergoing serious re-

construction, to birth a 10-lane road under a concensionaire arrangement. Work has since begun on all these roads, but the rains have made rapid progress formidable in recent times. The Benin-Warri road suffers similar fate. It is instructive to note that all the roads leading in and out of Edo state from the different locations, have all been awarded. On assumption of office, Senator Monday Okpebholo as Governor of Edo state, announced that his first major intervention would be in the area of roads; which were obviously recklessly abandoned by his predecessor. The Benin-Irrua road that was also abandoned was immediately restored for public use, through remediation works, within two months. The Governor has invested heavily on other link roads also, across the state; and built a flyover at the Ramat Park end of the Benin-Agbor road. Inasmuch as impediments remain, expedited action is impeded.

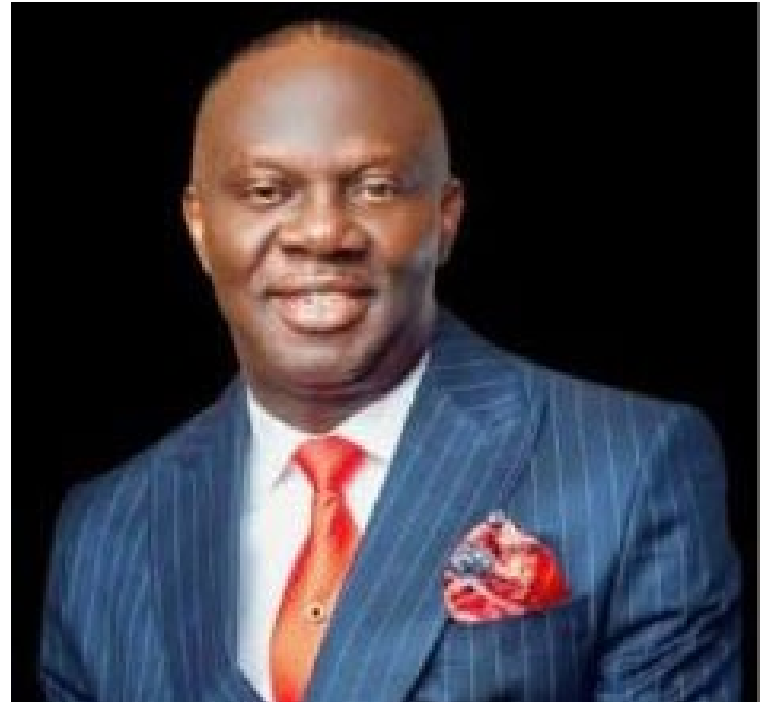
To all the members of the public, to our Edo sons and daughters, and

all others who ply these roads, we implore you to bear with us for now, as we look forward to when the rains will subside, to enable us immediately re-embark on the road works to ease mobility across the state. Due to the peculiar nature of road construction in all climes, including our dear state, our hands are tied; please bear with us.

We share in the pains of our people and are deeply concerned by the reality of the present state of our roads. Once the rains slow down, we will speed up the works on the affected roads to remedy the situation. We count on your understanding and cooperation, as we remain committed to rebuilding critical infrastructure across the state and delivering all the other dividends of democracy.

Long live the good people of Edo state.

• **Prince Kassim Afegbua, Mni-pr. Honourable Commissioner For Information And Strategy.**



PRINCE KASSIM AFEGBUA

Family, friends to celebrate Elder Jackson Aigboboh at 94

EKPOMA — Family members, friends, associates and well-wishers are expected to

converge on Illeh Primary School Field, Illeh-Ekpoma, on Saturday, August 29, 2026, to celebrate the

90th birthday anniversary of Elder Jackson Aigboboh, father of the Edo State All Progressives Congress (APC) Deputy Chairman, Amb. Sylvester Aigboboh.

The celebration is expected to be more than a birthday gathering, as it will provide an opportunity for the family, community and well-wishers to honour a nonagenarian whose life journey has spanned nine remarkable decades.

For the Aigboboh family, attaining the age of 90 is a milestone worthy of gratitude, reflection and celebration. It represents not only the gift of longevity but also the privilege of witnessing generations grow, families expand and communities evolve.

A nonagenarian celebration is, in many respects, a celebration of life itself. It offers younger generations an opportunity to honour the wisdom, sacrifices, values and experiences of an elder whose lifetime has become part of the history of his family and

community.

The occasion is also expected to provide an avenue for children, grandchildren, relatives and friends to express their appreciation for the life and contributions of Elder Aigboboh, while celebrating the bonds of family, friendship and community that have endured over the years.

At 90, the celebrant stands as a living bridge between generations — a repository of memories and experiences and a symbol of endurance, resilience and the passage of time.

The joy surrounding the celebration is therefore expected to be profound, particularly for the family, as members gather to give thanks for the life of their patriarch and to celebrate the blessing of having him present to witness the continuing journey of his family.

The invitation to the celebration was signed by Christopher Aigboboh on behalf of the family, who expressed the family's readiness to wel-

come guests to the historic occasion.

The event at Illeh Primary School Field is expected to attract dignitaries, community leaders, family members, friends and well-wishers who will join the Aigboboh family in celebrating Elder Jackson Aigboboh and wishing him continued strength, peace, good health and many more years.

Beyond the music, merriment and conviviality that will characterise the celebration, the 90th birthday anniversary is a reminder of the importance of honouring elders while they are alive to receive the love and appreciation of those whose lives they have touched.

For Elder Jackson Aigboboh, the celebration promises to be a joyful thanksgiving for nine decades of life, family and enduring relationships — a fitting tribute to a nonagenarian whose journey has become a treasured part of the Aigboboh family story.



ELDER JACKSON AIGBOBOH

NEWS

NDLEA arrests five suspects, destroys cannabis farm in Edo

BENIN CITY

Officers of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency Edo State Command have arrested five suspects and destroyed a cannabis farm in raids carried out in the state.

The Edo State Commander of the NDLEA, Mitchell Ofoyeju, in a statement on Monday, said these operations underline the NDLEA's unwavering commitment to combating drug abuse and ensuring a safer society for all citizens.

He said, "On August 18, 2026, a specialised team from the NDLEA's state headquarters stormed a cannabis sativa plantation in the Ukaro Forest of Owan

West Local Government Area, where they apprehended three male suspects: Imohimi Ugbeje, aged 50; Usihoro Saturday, aged 27; and Bala Sunday, aged 23.

"During the operation, the agency uncovered a cannabis farm spanning approximately 0.496 hectares, with an estimated yield of 1,240.9 kilograms. The plantation was swiftly destroyed, and a sample of the cannabis plant stems alongside half a bag of processed cannabis was seized, weighing in at 5.5 kilograms.

"Furthermore, on August 19, 2026, NDLEA operatives targeted an illicit drug warehouse located at Ihumudumu in Ekpoma, Esan West LGA. In

this sophisticated operation, the agency successfully recovered 319 bottles of codeine cough syrup, 1,340 capsules of tramadol, 344 tablets of Rohypnol, and 222 tablets of Danabol. While no arrests were made in this specific operation, NDLEA officials are actively pursuing the suspected owner of the drugs.

"In another significant bust on the same day in Benin City, two male suspects were apprehended while in possession of 'Canadian Loud,' a potent strain of synthetic cannabis. The individuals, Zege Japhet, aged 29, and Ifeanyi Ogashe, aged 43, were found with a total of 290 grams (185 grams for Japhet and 105 grams for Ogashe) of the controlled substance.

Police bust baby factory in Ogun, rescue pregnant women, children

Operatives of the Ogun State Police Command have dismantled an alleged baby factory in the Mowe area of the state, rescuing two pregnant women and four children.

The command also said it arrested six suspects in connection with the incident.

The command's Public Relations Officer, DSP Oluseyi Babaseyi, disclosed this in a statement released on Tuesday.

Babaseyi said the operation was carried out at about 8am on Monday, August 24, 2026, at Toluwalase Street, Abaren Village, via Gbarinmole, Mowe, following sustained

intelligence on alleged human trafficking and illegal adoption activities at the facility.

He stated that the two rescued pregnant women were Ilesanmi Foluke, 23, who was seven months pregnant, and Ejekwa Melody, 20, who was eight months pregnant.

He added that four children, comprising two boys and two girls, were also rescued during the operation.

According to Babaseyi, the suspects arrested were Florence Glory Ogbona, 58; Magdalene Julius, 63; Chidike Egwuonwu, 40; Onyechu Chidike, 35; Stephen Ogbona, 39; and an attending nurse,

Oseni Kusamotu Idaya.

The PPRO noted that further intelligence-led operations took police operatives to a hospital within the Mowe axis, where another alleged victim, Blessing Bright Effiong, 26, had reportedly given birth to a baby boy on August 20.

Babaseyi said the woman was found receiving medical treatment at the hospital, but the whereabouts of her newborn could not be established.

"The whereabouts of the newborn child could not be accounted for, prompting the arrest of the attending nurse in locating the infant," the statement said.

Sports

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

WWS reaffirms commitment to Athlete protection, NCAA compliance and transparent representation

Worldwide Scholarships (WWS) has reaffirmed its com-



WORLDWIDE SCHOLARSHIPS ATHLETE

mitment to athlete protection, NCAA compliance and transparent representation, following

recent discussions within the Nigerian athletics community concerning athlete contracts, representation and eligibility.

In a detailed public statement, WWS said it welcomed legitimate concerns about the welfare and protection of young athletes, while stressing that its operations are structured around the NCAA pathway and the academic development of student-athletes.

The organisation clarified that its agreements are student-athlete management contracts and not World Athletics agent contracts, with contract duration structured

around the athlete's scholarship and collegiate pathway.

According to WWS, its model is designed to ensure continuity of support throughout an athlete's university career while remaining within applicable NCAA eligibility and compliance requirements.

WWS explained that NCAA participation is governed by strict rules covering eligibility, amateurism, recruiting, NIL activities, international students, scholarships and immigration compliance.

The organisation said it does not act as a professional agent for

NCAA athletes and that professional representation is only introduced when an athlete makes the deliberate decision to transition into professional sport.

"Where an athlete chooses to pursue a professional career, WWS transitions them to a World Athletics-certified agent," the organisation stated, stressing that the arrangement is intended to preserve the athlete's collegiate eligibility until that transition takes place.

WWS added that its compliance process involves NCAA Bylaws 12, 13 and 14, NIL legislation, SEVIS requirements and coordination with university compliance offices.

On the representation of minors, WWS said it operates under international safeguarding principles.

Athletes aged 18 and above are encouraged to obtain independent legal advice before signing agreements, while athletes under 18 require the consent and co-signature of their legal guardians.

The organisation said the approach is intended to ensure that athletes and their families understand their contractual rights and obligations before entering into agreements.

Beyond scholarship placement, WWS said its services cover several aspects of an athlete's development, including NIL advisory, sponsorship negotiations, branding and publicity, university placement, scholarship coordination, NCAA compliance guidance, immigration and visa support, and career planning.

NPFL "In A Few Days' time, our league will get title sponsor

● **Our League players will be transferred in the Range of €500,000 to €1m", Says Elegbeleye**

The Chairman of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL), Hon. Gbenga Elegbeleye, has unveiled plans for a major transformation of the league, including a new European title sponsor, increased live broadcasts and a global player-data system designed to improve the international visibility and transfer value of Nigerian footballers.

Hon. Elegbeleye, a former Director-General of the National Sports Commission, spoke during the NPFL preseason tournament in Jos, where he explained that the competition was primarily designed to prepare Nigeria's representatives for their upcoming continental assignments and the new NPFL season.

According to him, the league is also preparing to enter a new commercial era, with a title sponsorship agreement already signed with a European company.

He said the identity of the company would be formally unveiled within days, adding that the sponsorship package would involve millions of dollars.

"In a few days' time, we will sign with what I call a title sponsor.

So our league will have a title sponsor," Elegbeleye said.

He explained that the company would be unveiled at a major ceremony in Nigeria, with the announcement expected to attract national attention.

Elegbeleye also disclosed that the NPFL has entered into an agreement with a major global data company to provide comprehensive data on league matches and players.



GBENGA ELEGBELEYE

ENUGU CITY MARATHON: 4 Days to Go! when Enugu laces up, the world watches

The countdown is real now. In just 4 days, Saturday, 28th August 2026, the heartbeat of Coal City will change. Sirens will give way to starting guns. Traffic will give way to thousands of footsteps. And Enugu will step into the spotlight once again for the 2nd Enugu City International Marathon.

This is more than a race on a calendar. This is a city deciding to tell its own story, on its own terms.

Marathons are never just about who crosses the line first. They're about the jour-

ney it takes to get there.

The Enugu City Marathon Expo started yesterday and runners are already picking up kits, connecting with brands, and feeling the race day energy build.

In 4 days, you'll see the elite athlete who traveled across continents chasing glory and a new record. You'll see the Enugu nurse who trained at 5am before hospital shifts. You'll see the university student running his first 10km because a friend dared him to. You'll see mothers, fathers, and kids lining the streets

with water, flags, and that unmistakable Enugu hospitality.

Every person on that route will be carrying something, a goal, a memory, a reason. And together, they will carry Enugu forward.

For weeks, the signs have been there. Banners across major roads. Conversations in buses. "Which part of the route are you watching from?"

Now the final pieces are locking in.

Route officials are doing last checks. Security and medical teams are fully briefed. Volunteers are ready to guide, cheer, and support.

Ex Sports Minister Dare, lauds CGC for investing in Young Volleyball Players

Former Minister of Youth and Sports Development and Senior Special Assistant to President Bola Tinubu, Chief Sunday Dare, has applauded the Comptroller-General of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Bashir Adewale Adeniyi, for investing in the development of young Nigerian volleyball players.

Dare gave the commendation on Monday in Abuja when Adeniyi hosted Nigeria's beach volleyball players

following their historic qualification for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games.

The qualification was secured by Esther Mbah and Pamela Bawa at the 2026 African Beach Volley-



SUNDAY DARE

ball Nations Championship in Alexandria, Egypt, where their impressive performance earned Nigeria its first-ever Olympic ticket in beach volleyball.

Dare praised Adeniyi for going beyond financial support, describing his passion, personal involvement and commitment to the welfare of Nigerian athletes as exceptional.

"When I was minister, if I had B.A. Adeniyi fully in my corner, I would have moved mountains, whether in football, volleyball or any other sport," Dare said.

Eid-ul Maulud: Enabulele Calls for Peace, Unity, Resilience in Edo Sports Family

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The Executive Chairman, Edo State Sports Commission, Hon. Amadin Desmond Enabulele felicitates with Muslim faithful of Edo sports community on the occasion of Eid-ul Maulud, urging them to draw inspiration from the exemplary life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by promoting peace, unity, tolerance and resilience.

In the goodwill message, Enabulele describes Eid-ul Maulud as a significant occasion for spiritual reflection, renewal of the spirit and commitment to values that strengthen individuals and communities.

He urged athletes, coaches, officials and other stakeholders in the sports sector to embrace the virtues of tolerance, discipline, perseverance

and selflessness, noting that these qualities are essential to peaceful coexistence in a multicultural society.

"Eid-ul Maulud offers us an opportunity to reflect, renew our faith and strengthen our commitment to values that unite us. The lessons from the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) remind us of the importance of peace, compassion, perseverance and service to humanity," Enabulele said.

The Sports Commission Chairman further encouraged members of the Edo sports community to see the occasion as an opportunity to renew their commitment to excellence and the continued development of sports in the state.

He wished the Muslim Ummah a peaceful, joyous and spiritually rewarding Eid-ul Maulud celebration, praying for renewed strength, wisdom and prosperity for all.



HON. AMADIN DESMOND ENABULELE

SPORTS



END OF THE MATCH



EDO
QUEENS

7-0

A.S. GARDE
NATIONALE



WAFU-B: Edo Queens Thrash AS Garde Nationale 7-0 in Champions League Qualifiers opener

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Nigeria Women Football League champions Edo Queens FC on Monday night began the 2026 CAF Champions League qualifiers on a bright note, following their commanding 7-0 victory over AS Garde Nationale of Niger Republic in their opening match WAFU-B tournament in Burkina Faso.

The Nigerians were assertive throughout the encounter as their prolific striker Chioma Moses opened scoring within five minutes into the encounter.

Moses doubled the advantage deep into first-half stoppage time when she calmly converted a spot kick in the

45+3rd minute to give Edo Queens a comfortable 2-0 lead into half time break.

The Queens resumed the second half with even greater intensity, as Atume Doosuur struck twice in quick succession to increase the tally for Edo Queens. She scored in the 47th minute and got her brace in the 56th minute to make it 4-0.

Aminat Folorunsho also registered her name on the scores sheet after netting a fine one in the 62nd minute to extend the lead for Edo Queens.

Moses completed her hat-trick in the 76th minute, giving the Nigerian champions six goals advantage before Oluwakemi Adegbuyi struck to complete the route deep into stoppage time to give Edo

Queens a resounding victory. The hat-trick earned Chioma Moses Woman of the Match award after the match.

The 7-0 emphatic result sent Edo Queens top of Group B ahead of Ghanaian champions Ampem Darkoa Ladies on goal difference.

Ampem Darkoa Ladies on the other hand defeated ASEC Mimosas of Côte d'Ivoire 1-0.

Edo Queens will be heading to the second fixture on against Code D'ivoire side ASEC Mimosas on Thursday with confidence. Kickoff time is 3pm.

The top two teams from each group advance to the semi-finals on September 2nd, with the final and third-place matches scheduled for September 5th. The tournament's

winner represents WAFU-B at the 2026 CAF Women's Champions League finals in South Africa.

In a post match interview, the stand-in technical manager of the Edo Queens Kennedy Boboye heaped praise on the girls for their superlative performance. He said that he was not surprised by the seven goals his side recorded, noting that the team is a high scoring side when they have the opportunity.

"Let me commend the girls for a job well done. I was not surprised about the goals. We did something similar during the super six and in some of the friendly matches we played before coming to Burkina Faso.

Athletics coaches demand better welfare, rewards

Growing discontent among athletics coaches and stakeholders over the treatment of coaches whose athletes represent Nigeria at major international competitions has intensified, with calls for the Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN) to introduce a structured reward system for athlete-producing coaches.

The coaches argue that while athletes who deliver outstanding performances for Nigeria are routinely recognised, the coaches responsible for developing and preparing them are often left without financial rewards, formal recognition or opportunities to join national teams.

They warned that the situation, if allowed to continue,

could affect athletes' performances and discourage coaches from investing in the development of future national stars.

One of the major suggestions being canvassed is the introduction of financial incentives for coaches whose athletes make national teams or win medals at major competitions.

Stakeholders pointed to FIFA's model as an example of how governing bodies can recognise the contribution of clubs and grassroots structures.

FIFA provides financial mechanisms that benefit clubs whose players participate in its major competitions, acknowledging the role those clubs play in developing and preparing players for international football.

AFN warns Athletes against unfavourable deals

● The welfare of athletes is a key component of AFN – Okowa

The Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN) has reaffirmed its commitment to protecting the welfare and long-term interests of Nigerian athletes, insisting that no agreement entered into by an athlete is "cast in stone."

AFN President, Chief Tonobok Okowa, said the Federation is closely monitoring agreements involving Nigerian athletes and will intervene where such deals are considered detrimental to the athlete or the interests of Nigeria.

Okowa, who is also a Senior Vice President of the Confederation of African Athletics (CAA), said the welfare of athletes remains a key component of the Federation's responsibilities.

He clarified that the AFN has not entered into any agreement with agents or agencies to provide scholarships to Nigerian athletes, urging athletes and their families to exercise caution before committing themselves to any arrangement.

The Federation also stressed that athletes who are minors should not enter into agreements without the knowledge and consent of their parents or legal guardians.

"It is necessary to protect young athletes from arrangements that could negatively affect their education, careers or national representation," Okowa stated.

Edo Queens' 7-0 Victory: SWAN Applauds Edo Government, Enabulele for Championing Sporting Excellence

The Executive and entire membership of the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN), Edo State Chapter has congratulated the Executive Chairman of the Edo State Sports Commission, Hon. Amadin Desmond Enabulele on the emphatic and historic 7-0 victory recorded by the Nigerian champions, Edo Queens FC over AS Garde Nationale of Niger Republic in their opening encounter at the 2026 WAFU-B CAF

Women's Champions League qualifiers in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

Edo SWAN noted that the commanding victory is not merely a football result; it is a powerful statement of the quality, determination and winning mentality that continues to define Edo's sporting culture under the purposeful leadership of Enabulele.

"Scoring seven goals against a continental opponent is a remarkable feat that has once

again placed Edo Queens and, by extension, Edo State, firmly in the spotlight of African women's football."

The Association particularly commended the Edo State government and the Sports Commission boss for their unwavering commitment to the development and promotion of sports in the state.

"Your vision, passion and relentless pursuit of excellence have continued to inspire athletes, coaches and sports administra-

tors, while creating an environment in which Edo athletes and teams can compete confidently at national and international levels."

"We also commend the Governor of Edo State, His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo, for his administration's commitment to repositioning sports as a veritable instrument for youth development, empowerment, social integration and positive global representation for the state.



TONOBOK OKOWA