

73 Heads of State, 45 Heads of Gov't expected at UNGA

NEW YORK

No fewer than 73 Heads of State and 45 Heads of Government are expected to participate in the high-level week of the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) at the UN Headquarters in New York.

UN Spokesperson, Stéphane Dujarric, disclosed this while briefing correspondents ahead of the annual gathering of world leaders.

Dujarric said 49 ministers, 11 vice-presidents and one crown prince were also expected to participate in the high-level engagements.

"So far, we expect about 73

Heads of State, 45 Heads of Government, 49 Ministers, 11 Vice-Presidents and one Crown Prince," he said.

Nigeria is expected to present its national statement on Wednesday, September 23, moving two places up from the previous 10th position to eighth in the provisional list of speakers obtained by news-

men.

The figures underscore the diplomatic significance of the General Assembly high-level week, which annually transforms the UN Headquarters into a major centre of global diplomacy.

The General Debate of the 81st Session is scheduled to hold from September 22 to 26

and September 28 at the UN Headquarters in New York.

Heads of State, Heads of Government and other senior representatives will use the debate to present their countries' positions on major international political, economic, security and development challenges.

Beyond the mandated

high-level meetings, Dujarric said about 168 other events had been scheduled for the high-level week.

"Alongside the mandated meetings, there are about 168 events that are scheduled during the high-level week," he said.

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That The People May Know

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Okpebholo reclaims Iwogban-Ute from robbers, kidnappers

1.7km road, 5.5km drainage project restores access, security — Residents

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Residents of the Iwogban-Ute axis of Benin City have applauded Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, for restoring access and improving security in the area through the reclamation of a devastating gully and reconstruction of the road.

The residents said the intervention had transformed

a once-dangerous corridor, which had become a hideout for robbers and kidnappers, into a more accessible and secure community.

Speaking with newsmen on Friday, the residents recalled that the deplorable condition of the road and the deepening gully had virtually cut the community into two, leaving sections inaccessible and creating isolated spots allegedly exploited by criminal elements.

They said the situation had become so frightening that residents avoided the area, particularly in the early morning and late evening, while some property owners were forced to sell their houses and relocate.

A resident, Mrs. Esosa Odigie, who has lived in the area for over 10 years, described the former condition of the road as a "no-go area", recalling that residents had to construct a make-

shift bridge to cross the gully.

According to her, the poor access worsened insecurity as criminals took advantage of the difficult terrain and deserted portions of the road to operate.

She said the situation had changed significantly following the intervention, noting that residents could now move freely without the fear that previously characterised the area.

"Now, things have improved.

No more robbery, no more fear of coming out early in the morning to hustle. People have started coming to rent here," she said.

Another resident, Mrs. Bridget Ogbeide, said residents previously relied on pieces of wood to construct makeshift bridges because the road had become impassable.

She said the gully constituted both an environmental danger and a security challenge,

providing cover for criminal elements while restricting the movement of residents, motorists and security personnel.

Ogbeide said the reclamation of the gully, construction of drainage infrastructure and reconstruction of the road had significantly changed the situation, reconnecting previously isolated sections of the community.

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Edo Assembly moves to raise judicial officers' retirement age to 65

GODSENT OMOFOMA

BENIN CITY

The Edo State House of Assembly has commenced moves to raise the retirement age of magistrates, presidents of area customary courts and state counsels from 60 to 65 years.

The proposed change followed the consideration of a bill seeking to amend the existing state legislation governing the retirement age of the affected judicial and legal officers.

The bill was presented to the House after the Joint Committee on Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal Matters; and Rules,

Business and Government House submitted its report on the proposed amendment.

Following the presentation of the report, the lawmakers resolved into the Committee of the Whole to consider the provisions of the bill.

If passed into law, the amendment will raise the retirement age of state counsels serving in the Ministry of Justice from 60 to 65 years. Magistrates and presidents of area customary courts would also be covered by the proposed amendment.

The proposed extension

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UNGA:

73 Heads of State, 45 Heads of Government expected at the UN General Assembly.

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Nigeria missing as Egypt, rivals clash for glory at 2026 ITTF Africa Championships —Pg 13

NEWS

Okpebholo reclaims Iwogban-Ute...

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Speaking at the project site, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Edo State Flood, Erosion and Watershed Management Agency, EDOFEWMA, Hon. Mohammed Bawa Okoyomon, said the area was previously virtually inaccessible because of the gully and poor road condition.

Okoyomon said the intervention, undertaken with the support of Governor Okpebholo, had reclaimed the gully and restored access to the community, which he said had previously become a den for

criminals and kidnappers.

He disclosed that the reconstructed road measures about 1.7 kilometres, while the drainage network covers approximately 5.5 kilometres.

According to him, the project was designed to tackle both the erosion menace and the access problem, adding that restoring the corridor had also helped to strengthen security by opening up previously isolated areas.

Okoyomon said the Iwogban-Ute project was part of the wider infrastructure interventions being implemented by the Okpebholo administration across Edo State.

73 Heads of State, 45 Heads...

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He added that Member States had submitted about 1,000 requests for bilateral meetings among themselves, while bilateral engagements involving UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, were also being scheduled.

The high-level week will feature major meetings on development, climate action, sea-level rise, pandemic preparedness, racial justice and other global priorities.

The UN said the 81st Session would convene world leaders at a time of continuing geopolitical tensions, conflicts, development financing challenges and growing pressure on the multilateral system.

The 81st Session is being presided over by Khalilur Rahman of Bangladesh under the theme, "Restoring trust, managing transformation: A United Nations that delivers for all."

Dujarric also disclosed that

thousands of journalists had been accredited to cover the gathering.

"We have issued 1,935 press passes for visiting journalists and an additional 1,290 press passes for official media," he said.

The figures bring the total number of media accreditations to 3,225, in addition to journalists permanently accredited to cover the United Nations.

Dujarric said the figures could still change as additional delegations, events and media arrangements were finalised.

"We will keep updating you on numbers as they evolve," the UN spokesperson said.

The General Assembly high-level week remains the largest annual diplomatic gathering at the United Nations, bringing together world leaders for national statements, negotiations, bilateral engagements and discussions on pressing global challenges.

Edo Assembly moves to raise...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

comes against the backdrop of wider discussions on the retention of experienced personnel within Nigeria's justice system.

Supporters of longer service periods have argued that retaining experienced legal and judicial officers could help preserve institutional knowledge and professional expertise accumulated over the years.

However, the proposed extension could also have implications for succession and ca-

reer opportunities for younger lawyers seeking appointments within the judiciary and other legal institutions.

The bill is still undergoing the legislative process, with its final provisions subject to the outcome of the remaining stages of consideration and approval by the House.

The proposed amendment has consequently attracted attention within Edo State's legal sector, particularly among judicial officers, lawyers and other stakeholders.

Ikpoba Hill tanker crash injures three, damages six vehicles

BENIN CITY

At least three people were injured and six vehicles damaged on Sunday, 20th September, 2026 when a 40-foot tanker reportedly suffered brake failure and crashed into several vehicles at the popular Ikpoba slope in Benin City, Edo State.

The tanker, said to be laden with groundnut oil, was reportedly descending from the

Ikpoba Hill/Ramat Park axis when the driver lost control of the vehicle, triggering a multiple-vehicle collision around the Ikpoba River Bridge.

An eyewitness, Mr Ken Omusi, said the driver appeared to have struggled to regain control of the tanker before it reportedly entered a pothole on the bridge.

According to Omusi, the impact caused the steering wheel to jerk, sending the

2027: By-elections put INEC's electoral machinery to test — Amupitan

ABUJA

The Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Joash Amupitan, has described Saturday's legislative by-elections in Gombe, Kano, Bauchi and Delta states as critical operational benchmarks for testing the nation's electoral infrastructure ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Amupitan stated this at the INEC headquarters in Abuja while presiding over operations at the commission's National Situation Room during the by-elections.

The Chief Press Secretary to the INEC Chairman, Adedayo Oketola, quoted Amupitan as stressing that no electoral con-

test should be regarded as trivial or routine.

The legislative by-elections were conducted in Gombe/Kwami/Funakaye Federal Constituency of Gombe State; Dawakin Kudu State Constituency of Kano State; Sakwa and Disina State Constituencies of Bauchi State; and Udu State Constituency of Delta State.

According to the INEC chairman, every off-cycle election provides the commission with an opportunity to test and strengthen its systems ahead of nationwide polls.

"These four by-elections provide indispensable operational lessons for the commission as we systematically chart our roadmap toward the 2027 general election.

"We must resist the temptation to view any exercise as merely an ordinary by-election.

"Every election is a critical component of our broader preparations for the 2027 general elections, allowing us to continuously audit our logistics framework, stress-test our technological deployment and evaluate administrative field readiness," he said.

Amupitan also reassured Nigerians of the commission's commitment to electoral integrity, saying operational bottlenecks identified before the polls were promptly addressed.

"Our primary mandate in the Situation Room is monitoring and proactive crisis resolution.

"Whatever administrative or field challenges arose before

the day of the elections, the commission was able to nip them in the bud effectively.

"We remain committed to refining our processes so that every subsequent exercise reflects higher standards of efficiency and public confidence," he said.

The INEC chairman commended members of the Situation Room, particularly the technical team, for ensuring effective monitoring of the multi-state exercise and enabling the commission to assess field performance.

Amupitan, accompanied by national commissioners and senior management officials, monitored the by-elections as operational reports were received from various field locations.



ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT:
Iwogban - Ute axis in Benin City.

Dangote to build 600km offshore gas pipeline, doubles refinery to 1.4m bpd

OSEMUDIAMHEN FAITH

LAGOS

Dangote Industries Limited is to construct a 600-kilometre offshore gas-gathering pipeline to connect stranded gas wells to shore, as its Lagos complex now generates over 650 megawatts of electricity for its own operations.

Group Vice President, Oil, Gas and Fertiliser, Mr. Devakumar Edwin, disclosed this during a tour of the Dangote Petroleum Refinery on Friday 18 September 2026.

Edwin said the East-West offshore project has completed engineering design and construction will commence soon.

"We want to run, in the first

place, a 600-kilometre pipeline in the sea," he said. Offshore producers, he explained, would be able to tie into the line to deliver gas for processing. The gas can be treated and returned to the producers or purchased by Dangote for utilisation.

The initiative targets Nigeria's acute gas evacuation gap, which has left many discoveries undeveloped.

"When we strike a gas well, if it is full of gas, we just cap the well and sit it," Edwin said.

On power, he said the refinery generates 501MW and the fertiliser complex over 150MW, bringing total captive generation to more than 650MW.

"All of it is going for our own consumption, including standby capacity," he said.

He said the group could venture into commercial power generation, but distribution and revenue collection chal-

lenges remain a disincentive.

"The opportunity is there to generate power and go into it as a business," he said, adding that Dangote has expertise across gas turbines, gas engines, coal and thermal technologies.

Edwin also outlined expansion under the group's Vision 2030 industrialisation plan.

The refinery capacity will be doubled from 700,000 barrels per day to 1.4 million bpd within three years, with major equipment already ordered. The expansion is part of a wider funding plan that includes raising about N2.15 trillion via an Initial Public Offering.

Fertiliser production will scale from three million tonnes to 12 million tonnes per annum, driven by four additional trains in Nigeria and new plants in Ethiopia and another African country. The product portfolio will be expanded to include Diammonium Phosphate and Single Super Phosphate.

NEWS

Edo prepares to bid final farewell to Dan Orbih

OJO HAPPY

BENIN CITY

The final Funeral arrangements for Chief Daniel Osi Orbih, the former National Vice Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), South-South, who died

on August 31, 2026, at the age of 64, have been announced

According to the funeral programme released by his family, the funeral rites will commence in Abuja on Wednesday, October 7, 2026, with a Requiem Mass at the Catholic Church of the As-

sumption, Asokoro.

A Night of Tributes will later hold at the Bola Ahmed Tinubu International Conference Centre in Garki.

The funeral activities would then move to Edo State on Friday, October 9, with the arrival of Orbih's remains in Benin

City. It will subsequently be taken to Ogbona (his hometown), in Etsako Central Local Government Area.

A Vigil Mass is scheduled to hold at St. John's Catholic Church, Ogbona, later that day.

The main Funeral Mass is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on

Saturday, October 10, at the same church, after which the final burial rites will take place.

The funeral programme will conclude with a Thanksgiving Mass on Sunday, October 11, at St. John's Catholic Church, Ogbona.

Orbih was a prominent figure in Edo politics and served as National Vice Chairman of the PDP for the South-South zone. He previously served as Chairman of the Edo State chapter of the party.

Until his death, he was

Chairman of the Governing Council of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma.

His death prompted condolences from political associates, leaders and institutions, who paid tribute to his decades of involvement in Edo State and national politics.

The funeral ceremonies are expected to bring together family members, political associates, friends and well-wishers to honour the late politician and witness his final interment in his home community.

**PRESENTATION OF THE BOOK:**

From left: Corps Commander, Nigerian Army Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (NAEME), Maj.- Gen. Adeyinka Adereti; representative of the Minister of Defence, retired AVM Nkem Aguiyi; former Chief of Army Staff, Lt.-Gen. Tukur Buratai; former Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Lucky Irabor; Gen. Martin Luther-Agwai; book Presenter, BA Shemang and Chairman of the Occasion, Prof. Barth Nnaji, during the presentation of the book 'We Can Do It, Towards Nigeria's Self-reliance in Science and Technology', in Abuja.

Police charge eight to court over missing baby in Bayelsa

YENAGOA

PHILIP EKE

The Bayelsa State Police Command has charged eight suspects to court over the disappearance of a one-year, 10-month-old girl, Amara Blessing Ogbonna, from a church premises in the state.

The child reportedly disap-

peared from the church premises on June 21, 2026, prompting an investigation by the police command.

The command, in a statement issued on Friday by its Public Relations Officer, DSP Musa Mohammed, said the Violent Crime Response Unit took over the investigation from the Ekeki Division on the directive of the Commissioner

of Police.

According to the statement, the unit commenced intensive investigations, leading to the identification and arrest of suspects allegedly connected to the child's disappearance.

The police said eight suspects had been charged before the High Court of Bayelsa State, Yenagoa Judicial Division,

"Based on the facts and evi-

dence so far established, eight suspects have been charged to court and are awaiting arraignment before the High Court of Bayelsa State, Yenagoa Judicial Division, in Charge No. BYHC/YHC/CR./81/2026," the Command said.

The command explained that other persons whose involvement was not established were released on bail.

Kwankwaso extends olive branch to Kabir Yusuf

ABUJA

Leader of the Kwankwasiyya Movement, Senator Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, has extended an olive branch to Kano State Governor, Abba Kabir Yusuf, declaring his readiness to forgive and reconcile with his former political associate if the governor wishes to restore their relationship.

Kwankwaso made the disclosure in an interview with the BBC Hausa Service, which he subsequently shared on his verified social media handle.

The former Kano State governor said he had neither abandoned Yusuf nor asked him to leave the political platform, insisting that despite their differences, he still has affection for the governor.

"I didn't abandon him, didn't ask him to go or dismiss him, I still like him," he said.

The development follows the political differences that emerged between the two men after Yusuf, a prominent mem-

● Says "I still like him",

ber of the Kwankwasiyya political movement who had worked closely with Kwankwaso for decades, moved from the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP), under which he won the 2023 governorship election, to the All Progressives Congress (APC).

The development subsequently strained the relationship between the former political associates.

However, Kwankwaso said he was not a vindictive politician and remained willing to forgive those who had offended him.

He cited his past relationship with former Kano State Governor, Abdullahi Ganduje, as an example, recalling that despite several political disagreements between them, he eventually supported Ganduje's emergence.

"How many times did I have issues with Ganduje? He challenged me on several occasions.

"In 2007, when we were in the Ministry of Defence, he

was my Special Assistant (SA), but they held meetings to bring me down because I contested with them.

"In spite of the misgivings, I put Ganduje forward and supported him but he failed," he said.

Kwankwaso, who is the running mate to Peter Obi, presidential candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), said political leadership required patience, understanding and a large heart.

He stressed that leaders could not expect everyone around them to think or act in exactly the same manner.

"I'm not God. So, if Yusuf or whoever wishes to come, you need to have patience, have a large heart and compassion because not all will play along your line.

"You don't expect everybody to act, behave or think like you do, because everyone has his way of reasoning, age, background and educational qualifications," he said.

Police storm Edo hotel, nab suspected kidnapper with \$1,500, ₦897,500

BENIN CITY

MIKE OSAROGIAGBON

Operatives of the Edo State Police Command have arrested a suspected kidnapper, Sunday Irabor, at a hotel near Oluku Market, Benin City.

The suspect was arrested following actionable intelligence received by operatives of the Ekiadolor Division at about 1pm on September 8, 2026.

ASP Eno Ikoedem, spokesperson for Edo Police Command confirmed that a search conducted during the oper-

ation led to the recovery of several mobile phones, a Samsung tablet, a Cartier wristwatch, ₦897,500 cash and \$1,500 in 15 \$100 bills, among other valuables.

"Following actionable intelligence, operatives of Ekiadolor division arrested a suspected kidnapper, Sunday Irabor, at a hotel near Oluku Market, Benin City", ASP Ikoedem said.

She said the suspect has since been handed over to the Violent Crime Response Unit (VCRU) for further investigation into his alleged involvement in kidnapping activities.

Bayelsa APC dismisses rainbow coalition, backs Tinubu's 2027 bid

YENAGOA

PHILIP EKE

The Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Bayelsa State, Warman Weri Ogoriba, has dismissed the relevance of the emerging "Rainbow Coalition" in the state, saying the party has the organisational capacity and grassroots support to deliver President Bola Tinubu and other officially nominated APC candidates in the 2027 general elections.

Ogoriba, in a statement, said the Bayelsa APC remained focused and organised, with an established presence across the state's eight local government

areas and political wards.

He said the party would not be distracted by political alliances outside its fold, adding that its priority was to consolidate its membership, strengthen internal cohesion and intensify grassroots mobilisation ahead of the elections.

"The task before the party is to remain organised, disciplined and committed to the collective objective of advancing the APC and supporting its candidates at all levels.

"We are confident that the combination of the party's existing structures, committed members, stakeholders and grassroots networks would provide the foundation for a strong electoral campaign in 2027," he said.



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu

NEWS

Jehovah's Witnesses relax blood policy, give members choice on 4 components

NEW YORK

IYALEKHUE GRACE

Jehovah's Witnesses have announced a significant adjustment to their longstanding position on blood, allowing individual members to decide, according to personal conscience, whether to accept or donate four major blood components.

The organisation's Governing Body announced the change on September 18, 2026, from its World Headquarters in Warwick, New York.

Under the revised position, members may personally decide whether to accept red blood cells, white blood cells, plasma or platelets derived from another person's blood during medical or surgical treatment.

Members may also decide whether to donate blood specifically for the purpose of providing these components or blood fractions for another person's medical treatment.

However, the organisation stressed that its position on whole-blood transfusions remains unchanged.

Jehovah's Witnesses continue to base their refusal of whole-blood transfusions on their religious interpretation of the Biblical command to "abstain from blood," citing Acts 15:20.

International spokesman Paul Gillies said the adjustment does not alter the organisation's belief that life and blood are sacred. He explained that decisions involving the four primary blood components are now regarded as matters of individual

conscience between each Witness and their God.

According to the organisation, the latest decision follows an earlier adjustment concerning the use of a member's own blood during medical procedures.

In 2026, Jehovah's Witnesses clarified that members could

personally decide whether to have their own blood removed, stored and later returned to them during medical care. The latest announcement extends that principle of personal decision-making to the four primary components obtained from another person's blood.

The organisation said the Bible does not specifically address these medical decisions and that individual members should

therefore make their own choice according to conscience.

It also stated that congregations would not interfere in individual decisions involving the four blood components.

Jehovah's Witnesses said they accept medical treatment and encourage members to seek professional healthcare while making medical decisions consistent with their religious beliefs and personal convictions.

The September 18 announcement represents a substantial adjustment to the organisation's previous position concerning the four primary blood components, while retaining its longstanding prohibition on transfusion of whole blood.

The organisation reports millions of members worldwide across more than 200 countries.

Gas flaring rises to 7.48% in August

GODSENT OMOFOMA

ABUJA

Nigeria's gas flaring rate rose to 7.48 per cent in August 2026, the highest level recorded since October 2025, according to data from the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC).

The figure increased from 6.72 per cent in July, indicating a rise in the amount of natural gas burnt during oil and gas

production activities.

According to the NUPRC data, Nigeria produced 245,439.13 million standard cubic feet (mmscf) of gas in August, while 18,350.55 mmscf was flared.

The volume flared was 2,763.01 mmscf higher than the 15,587.54 mmscf recorded in July, representing a 17.7 per cent increase.

Despite the rise in flaring, about 92.5 per cent of the total gas produced, equivalent to 227,088.59 mmscf, was utilised for field operations, domestic supply and exports.

Imasuen launches Amagba Market, moves to boost security

OSAHENIRO OFUWENGBE

BENIN CITY

Senator representing Edo South Senatorial District, Neda Imasuen, has broken ground for the construction of an ultra-modern market in Amagba community, Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, as part of efforts to improve commercial activities and living conditions in the area.

Imasuen performed the groundbreaking ceremony on Thursday, September 17, 2026, for the market, which is expected to comprise 30 lock-up shops and 40 open stores. The project is being implemented as a federal constituency intervention to provide residents with a functional trading centre.

Speaking at the ceremony, Imasuen said the rapid growth in the population and economic activities in Amagba had made the construction of a modern market necessary. He noted that residents currently travel outside the community to purchase and sell essential commodities.

The senator said the project would provide a more organised environment for traders,

improve access to goods and services, and contribute to the economic development of the community.

Imasuen also announced plans to facilitate the construction of a police station in Amagba as part of efforts to address security concerns. He explained that residents currently depend on the Ugbor Police Station, located around Benson Idahosa University, for police services.

According to him, the proposed police station would serve Amagba and neighbouring communities, particularly by improving residents' access to security services during emergencies.

The Project Manager, Engr. Hassan Bakr Shugaba, assured residents that the market would be completed within one month. Community leaders, including the Chairman of the Amagba Landlords Association, Dr Vincent Abah, welcomed the intervention and called for more development projects.

The market and proposed police station are expected to address some of Amagba's pressing infrastructure and security needs as the community continues to experience population and commercial growth.

**FASHION EXHIBITION:**

Cultural fashion display at Made In Edo 6.0 Fashion and Award Festival in Benin City.

PHOTO: EMMANUEL IJEBAI

Catholic bishops urge FG to tackle insecurity and rising poverty

ABUJA

GRACE IYALEKHUE AND FUNMILAYO MUYIDEEN

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) has called on governments at all levels to take urgent steps to address insecurity, poverty and other challenges affecting Nigerians.

The bishops made the call in a communiqué issued after their Second Plenary Meeting held

from September 10 to 18, 2026, at Our Lady and St. Kizito Pastoral Centre, Ede, Osun State.

The CBCN expressed concern over the continued cases of kidnapping, banditry, violence, illegal mining and other criminal activities across the country, warning that they pose threats to peace and national development.

The bishops also condemned attacks on schools and places of worship, as well as the abduction and killing of students and worshippers. They called for strong-

er security measures to enable displaced Nigerians to safely return to their communities.

On the economy, the bishops urged the government to create more employment opportunities and introduce policies capable of reducing the financial burden on poor and vulnerable Nigerians. They also called for greater investment in infrastructure, including roads, electricity, water and rail transportation.

The bishops further appealed

to Nigerians to support security agencies by providing useful information on suspicious activities and to reject ethnic and religious divisions capable of threatening national unity.

Ahead of the 2027 general elections, the CBCN urged political actors and other stakeholders to work towards free, fair and credible elections. The bishops also declared December 8, 2026, as a national day of prayer and fasting for the success of the elections.

2027 Elections: ADC, NDC leave gaps in NASS race

ABUJA

IYALEKHUE O GRACE

The African Democratic Congress (ADC) and Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) have failed to field candidates in some senatorial districts and Federal Constituencies for the 2027 National Assembly elections, according to the final candidate list released by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

The NDC, which has candidates for 99 of the 109 senatorial districts, is absent from 10 senatorial contests. It also failed to nominate candidates in 33 of the 360 House of Representatives constituencies, leaving the party with candidates in 426 of the 469 National Assembly seats.

The affected senatorial districts include the three districts in

Bauchi State, Benue North-East, Ekiti South, Jigawa North-East, Kaduna South, Katsina Central, Yobe East and Yobe North.

For the House of Representatives, the NDC's gaps are spread across 16 states, including Bauchi, Borno, Ekiti, Enugu, Jigawa, Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Lagos, Osun, Oyo, Plateau, Sokoto, Taraba and Yobe.

The ADC, on its part, did not field a candidate in one senatorial district — Delta South — and 13 Federal Constituencies. The affected constituencies include Etsako East/Etsako West/Etsako Central in Edo State, as well as constituencies in Bayelsa, Kano, Lagos, Niger and Zamfara states.

The final list shows a contrast with the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), which has candidates across all 109 senatorial districts and 360 House of Representatives constituencies.

The development comes as political parties intensify preparations for the January 16, 2027 National Assembly elections, with candidates and parties expected to begin consolidating their campaigns ahead of the

polls.

INEC's final list also shows that 462 women are contesting federal parliamentary seats, comprising 121 senatorial candidates and 341 House of Representatives candidates.



NEWS

Ekpeson redeems ₦20m pledge to family of fallen soldier in Etsako East

LAMAI CASSIUS

AGENEBODE

The Executive Chairman of Etsako East Local Government Council, Agenebode, Rt. Hon. Sunny Ekpetika Ekpeson, has said that no officer who risks and lays down his life to protect the people should be forgotten, whether alive or dead.

The Chairman stated this during the presentation of N20 million earlier promised to the family of late LCPL Fahad Sani

of the 195 Battalion, Agenebode, who died in an accident after a successful rescue operation in Okpella bushes.

The Chairman reiterated that true honour goes beyond words.

"The family of late LCPL Fahad Sani must be cared for. It is our collective responsibility to show compassion and reward the selfless service and sacrifice of our fallen hero," he said.

The Council boss, who is also the Chairman of ALGON, Edo State, assured the fami-

ly that the sacrifices of their beloved husband, father and colleague did not go unnoticed and will never be in vain.

He explained that the N20 million support package is structured to secure the future of the family, adding that part of the money is to empower the wife to establish a sustainable business, while the sum of N10 million will be placed in a fixed deposit account for the education and future up-

bringing of his two children.

Speaking during the presentation, the Commanding Officer of the 195 Battalion, Agenebode, Major S.D. Balafama, commended the Council Chairman for his fatherly role since the unfortunate incident.

He expressed appreciation to the Chairman for his kind gesture, noting that it clearly shows that the selfless service and ultimate sacrifice of the late officer was not in vain.

According to him, "By fulfilling his promise, the Chairman has not only brought hope and succour to the bereaved family, but has also revitalised and re-motivated the entire battalion to continue to give their very best in the service of the nation."

The Commanding Officer also expressed gratitude to the State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, for his continued support for securi-

ty agencies and for providing leadership that cares for both the living and the fallen.

The family, in their response, expressed joy and thanked the Chairman for standing by them in their most difficult time and for keeping hope alive.

It would be recalled that the Executive Chairman made the promise when he paid a condolence visit to the family of the deceased, late LCPL Fahad Sani.

Etsako West Chairman to partner Rotary Club for projects development

AUCHI

LAMAI CASSIUS

The Executive Chairman of Etsako West Local Government Council, Auchi, Hon. Romeo Aloaye Omoike, has said that government alone cannot undertake the enormous task of development, calling for partnerships with organisations such as Rotary Club International to develop the local government.

The Chairman stated this when he received members of Rotary Club International who paid him a courtesy visit in his office. He noted that the Rotary Club remained invaluable to the progress and development of Etsako West.

The Chairman, who is also a Rotarian, thanked the members for the visit and pledged to collaborate with the organisation in transforming Etsako West.

He assured the Rotary Club of the Council's support in its drive to bring development to the area.

"As an elite organisation, I urge you to promote moral values among youths and support efforts towards moral rearmament in our society," he

added.

Speaking earlier, the leader of the delegation and newly elected President of the club, Rotarian Yahaya Dirisu, said Rotary International, a philanthropic organisation, had executed several projects in Etsako West, including public toilets, construction of roundabouts at strategic road junctions and other community-based interventions.

Rotarian Dirisu pledged the Club's support for the development initiatives of the new administration in Etsako West Local Government Area.

He said the organisation was ready to partner with the Council in implementing strategic development initiatives aimed at improving the welfare of residents.

"Unnecessary maiming, extrajudicial killings and other forms of politically motivated violence aimed at creating fear and suppressing the will of the people must be firmly rejected," he said.

He stressed the need for an issue-based campaign anchored on credible ideas and practical solutions, urging that voters be allowed to exercise their rights freely in a peaceful atmosphere.

**UNN 252ND LECTURE:**

From left: Member Governing Council University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN), Prof. Emmanuel Ejim; representative of the Vice Chancellor UNN, Prof. Josaphat Onwumere; Keynote Speaker, Prof. Theresa Ukamaka-Nwagba and former Provost of UNN Medical School, Prof. Uche Nwagha during UNN 252nd Lecture on 'The Balance of Blood Fluidity: From Bleeding to Clotting in Health and Disease' in Enugu on Saturday.

Bayelsa Deputy Gov links building collapse to negligence

YENAGOA

Bayelsa State Deputy Governor, Dr Peter Akpe, has attributed buildings collapse and failed projects in the state to the failure to engage qualified engineers and the compromise of professional standards.

Akpe stated this over the weekend when members of the Yenagoa branch of the Nigerian Society of Engineers paid him a courtesy visit at the Government House, Yenagoa.

He stressed that engineers had a critical role to play in the development of the state,

particularly the New Yenagoa City project, describing them as "master planners" whose expertise was essential to achieving sustainable urban development.

The deputy governor said, "Most of these failed buildings are because professionals were not engaged or standards compromised."

He urged engineers to uphold professional standards and use their expertise to support the

rapid development of Bayelsa.

Akpe recalled the contributions of local engineers, including Engr Moses Dika and Engr Olice Kemenanabo, to the state's gas turbine project, noting that the government held the engineering profession in high esteem.

He assured the NSE of government support for its programmes and advised the association to channel requests for

training and other support collectively through its central body.

Earlier, the NSE Yenagoa Branch Chairman, Engr Eluanatein Mac-Jokori, sought government support for members to attend NSE and COR-EN training programmes, as well as assistance for engineering education and the construction of a 500-metre access road to the association's Engineering Resource Centre.

NDC Gov Candidate condemns attack

ENUGU

The Governorship candidate of the Nigeria Democratic Congress in Enugu State, Chinyeaka Ohaa, has visited members of the party who were injured during an attack on a ward meeting in Obuoffia, Nkanu West Local Government Area of the state.

Ohaa, who condemned the attack, pledged to take responsibility for the medical expenses and other necessary costs incurred by the victims during their treatment and recovery.

The incident occurred on September 12, 2026, at Ihuani

Awkunanaw, Obuoffia, where armed men reportedly disrupted the NDC ward meeting. According to the NDC, eight of its members sustained gunshot injuries during the attack.

The Enugu State Police Command confirmed that armed men disrupted the meeting and subsequently ordered an investigation into the incident.

Speaking during his visit to the victims on Sunday, Ohaa said he was at the hospital not only as the party's governorship candidate, but also as a citizen and indigene of Nkanu-land. "I saw their pain. No political ambition is worth the

blood of an Enugu citizen.

"No political disagreement should ever lead to this. No ambition is worth the blood of an Enugu citizen," he said.

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The NDC candidate assured the injured persons that they would not be left to bear the financial burden of their treatment.

"On behalf of my family, I want to personally assure you that we will stand with you. We will take responsibility for your medical care and every necessary obligation connected to your treatment and recovery," he assured.

Sunny Ekpeson awards scholarship to 150 Etsako East students, says no child should be left behind

LAMAI CASSIUS

AGENEBODE

The Executive Chairman of Etsako East Local Government Council, Rt. Hon. Sunny Ekpetika Ekpeson, has announced the award scholarship to 150 students from the three zones of the Local Government Area to study at the College of Agriculture, Agenebode.

Hon. Ekpeson disclosed this during a meeting with staff and stakeholders of the institution, where he reiterated his administration's commitment to expanding access to education and creating opportunities for young people across the local government.

He said the scholarship slots would be distributed across the Okpella, Ibie and Weppa-Wanno zones to ensure broad rep-

resentation and give deserving students from different communities the opportunity to benefit.

The Council Chairman further explained that some of the slots would be allocated to traditional rulers, community leaders and other stakeholders to nominate deserving students from their respective communities.

He, however, charged them to ensure that the beneficiaries are genuinely in need of the assistance, particularly orphans and indigent students whose families cannot afford their school fees.

"When selecting the beneficiaries, let us look at those who cannot pay their school fees, the orphans and those who genuinely need this opportunity. Let us not give it to people who already have the capacity to pay for themselves," he em-

phasised.

The Chairman stressed that the scholarship programme was designed to remove financial barriers that could prevent young people from pursuing higher education and acquiring skills that would improve their future prospects.

According to him, "no child should be left behind simply because his or her family cannot afford school fees," adding that education remains a key pathway to empowering the younger generation.

He said the intervention will enable 150 students from across Etsako East to pursue studies at the College of Agriculture, Agenebode, while strengthening the council's ongoing emphasis on education, skills acquisition and youth empowerment.

NEWS**Falana urges prosecution of suspects linked to 37 miners' deaths****ABUJA**

Human rights lawyer, Femi Falana, SAN, has called on the Attorney-General of Niger State, Nasiru Mu'azu, to ensure the speedy investigation and prosecution of all persons found culpable in the deaths of 37 suspected illegal miners who

died in the custody of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in Minna.

Falana, in a statement at the weekend, said the Attorney-General should direct the relevant authorities to investigate the circumstances surrounding the deaths and prosecute any NSCDC personnel or other individuals indicted

by the investigation.

The call came amid a Federal Government investigation into the deaths, which occurred on Thursday, September 17, after scores of people arrested during raids on suspected illegal mining sites were detained at an NSCDC facility in Minna.

The government has since

constituted a 10-member independent committee to investigate the incident and suspended officers linked to it pending the outcome of the probe.

The Niger State Governor, Umaru Bago, also confirmed the death of 37 detainees and said forensic and medical examinations, including autopsies,

were being conducted to establish the cause of the deaths.

The incident has generated protests in Minna, with reports indicating that some of the detainees were teenagers. Accounts from survivors and relatives have raised concerns about overcrowding and poor ventilation in the detention

facility, although authorities have yet to establish a definitive cause of death.

Falana said, "The Attorney-General of Niger State, Nasiru Mu'azu Esq. should ensure a speedy investigation by the State Police Command and immediate prosecution of all indicted suspects by the State Ministry of Justice."

**PRESENTATION OF BOOK:**

Book author, retired Maj.- Gen. Nnaemeka Maduegbunana; former Chief of Army Staff, retired Lt.-Gen. Azubuike Ihejirika; wife of the author, Uchenna and former Chief of Army Staff, retired Lt.-Tukur Buratai, during the presentation of the book 'We Can Do It, Towards Nigeria's Self-reliance in Science and Technology', in Abuja.

FG warns of high flood in 15 states in seven days**ABUJA**

The Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency has warned of a high riverine flood risk across 15 states between September 19 and 25, 2026, urging residents in vulnerable communities to relocate to safer and higher ground.

The warning was contained in the agency's National Flood Advisory issued on Saturday by its Director-General and Chief Executive Officer, Arch Umar Mohammed.

Mohammed said rising river levels were expected to trigger flooding in several communities, putting schools, healthcare facilities, markets, farms and religious buildings at risk.

He urged affected state governments to urgently relocate residents living in vulnerable communities to safer locations ahead of the forecast.

He said, "High riverine flood risk is forecast for the next seven days across Imo, Cross River and 13 other states. Rising river stages are expected to cause flooding. Communities on the floodplain should prepare to move to higher ground. Stations include Obubra, Itigidi and Epento on the Cross River."

In Imo State, NiHSA listed Aboh-Mbaise, Ahiazu-Mbaise, Ehime Mbano, Ezinihitte, Ideato North, Ihitte/Uboma and Ikeduru local government areas as being at risk.

The agency said 958 communities, 1,022 schools, 553 healthcare facilities, 161 markets and 198 religious buildings were exposed in the state.

In Cross River State, the affected LGAs are Abi, Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Biase, Calabar, Calabar South, Ikom and Obubra.

NiHSA identified 2,471 communities, 703 schools, 344

healthcare facilities, 145 markets, 453 religious buildings and 854 hectares of farmland as exposed to the flood risk.

In Ebonyi State, Abakaliki, Afikpo, Afikpo South, Ebonyi, Ezza North and Ezza South LGAs were identified as vulnerable.

The agency said 2,574 communities, 1,064 schools, 422 healthcare facilities, 480 markets, 629 religious buildings and 1,882 hectares of farmland were exposed.

In Benue State, the affected LGAs are Buruku, Gboko, Guma, Katsina-Ala, Logo and Ukum, with 303 communities, 100 schools, 48 healthcare facilities, 32 markets, 151 religious buildings and 55 hectares of farmland exposed.

NiHSA also identified Aguata, Anambra East, Anambra West, Anaocha, Awka North, Awka South and Ayamelum local government areas in Anambra State

as vulnerable.

It listed 1,314 communities, 1,308 schools, 1,089 healthcare facilities, 280 markets, 610 religious buildings and 1,529 hectares of farmland as exposed.

In Akwa Ibom State, Abak, Eket, Etinan, Ibeno, Ibesikpo Asutan, Ibiono Ibom, Ika and Ikono LGAs were listed among the affected areas.

The agency identified 249 communities, 323 schools, 211 healthcare facilities, 74 markets and 289 religious buildings as exposed in the state.

Other states listed by NiHSA as facing severe flood risks during the forecast period are Edo, Bayelsa, Enugu, Kogi, Delta, Abia, Taraba, Rivers and Lagos.

The agency advised residents in flood-prone areas, particularly communities located on floodplains, to take precautionary measures and move to higher ground where necessary.

APC wins Kano Assembly seat in by-election**KANO**

The All Progressives Congress has won the Dawakin Kudu/Warawa State Constituency by-election in Kano State by a margin of 22,620 votes, with its candidate, Hussaini Yusuf-Datti, polling 22,890 votes.

The result announced by the Independent National Electoral Commission on Saturday showed that Yusuf-Datti defeated his closest challenger, Habib Hamisu of the Peoples Redemption Party, who secured 270 votes.

The returning officer for the election, Ibrahim Tajo-Suraj, declared the APC candidate the winner in Dawakin Kudu after the collation of the results.

The Peoples Democratic Party candidate, Abdullahi Adamu, came third with 108 votes, while Bala Mohammed-Sani of the Action Democratic Party scored 89 votes.

Aliyu Abdullahi of the All

Peoples Party polled 53 votes, while the Labour Party candidate, Abubakar Yahya-Mohammed, received 39 votes.

Declaring the result, Tajo-Suraj said Yusuf-Datti had satisfied the requirements of the law and secured the highest number of votes cast in the election.

"Therefore, Mr Hussaini Yusuf-Datti of the APC, having satisfied the requirements of the law and scored the highest number of votes, is hereby declared the winner and returned elected," the returning officer said.

The by-election was conducted to fill the vacant seat in the Kano State House of Assembly following the movement of the former occupant, Shuaibu Rabi Nagoggo, popularly known as Abba Gano, to the House of Representatives.

The election thus returns the APC to the Dawakin Kudu/Warawa State Constituency seat, with Yusuf-Datti set to represent the constituency in the Kano State House of Assembly.

FRSC disowns viral fake recruitment notice, warns against fraudsters**ABUJA**

The Federal Road Safety Corps has disowned a viral notice directing applicants who were not shortlisted or did not receive invitation messages for the 2026 recruitment exercise to report to the nearest FRSC camp for verification.

FRSC, in a statement posted on its X handle on Sunday, described the notice as fake and unauthorised, warning applicants against acting on it. The Corps said the circulating notice directed affected applicants to report to the nearest FRSC camp for verification on or before September 25, 2026.

It said, "The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) has categorically disowned a viral notice circulating on social media directing applicants who were not shortlisted or did not receive invitation messages to report to the nearest FRSC camp for verification on or before 25 September 2026. The notice is fake, unauthorised and should be disregarded."

The Corps reiterated that it had not issued any such directive and advised applicants not to report to any FRSC office, camp or training institution based on the

circulating message.

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"The public is advised to rely only on official FRSC communication channels for information concerning the 2026 recruitment exercise," it said.

FRSC launched its 2026 nationwide recruitment exercise in July, inviting qualified Nigerians to apply for positions across three cadres: Officer Cadre (including Superintendent Route Commander, Route Commander/Deputy Route Commander and Assistant Route Commander), Marshal Inspectorate Cadre, and Road Marshal Assistant Cadre.

FRSC's recruitment portal currently states that applications are closed and that existing applicants will be contacted for further steps.

Meanwhile, the corps warned applicants against making payments, sharing personal information or following links circulated by unauthorised individuals claiming to facilitate recruitment.

It said anyone found using the recruitment exercise to deceive or defraud members of the public would be reported to the appropriate law-enforcement authorities.

Police arrest 22-year-old woman over self-kidnap in Anambra**AWKA**

The Anambra State Police Command has arrested a 22-year-old woman, identified as Nwachukwu Blessing, in connection with an alleged case of conspiracy, fraud and suspected self-kidnapping, following the payment of N3 million ransom by her family.

It was gathered that the suspect allegedly conspired with a female associate identified as "Onyinye" and another male accomplice, whose identity is presently unknown, to stage

her own kidnapping and obtain money from her family.

In a press statement released on Sunday, the spokesperson for the state police command, SP Tochukwu Ikenga, said she was arrested on Friday by operatives of the Rapid Response Squad, Awkuzu, following credible intelligence.

Ikenga added that the suspect was reportedly abducted along the Onitsha-Asaba Expressway on August 29, but despite the payment of N3 million ransom by her family, she was allegedly not released, prompting further investigation by the police.

He said, "The suspect was arrested by Operatives of the Rapid Response Squad, Awkuzu, following credible intelligence received in the course of an investigation into a reported kidnapping incident."

"The lady was reportedly abducted along the Onitsha-Asaba Expressway on 29th August 2026. However, despite the payment of N3 million ransom by her family, she was allegedly not released, prompting further investigation by the Police."

"Following sustained intelli-

gence gathering and investigative efforts, Police Operatives, in the afternoon of September 18, 2026, traced and located the alleged victim in a room in Asaba, Delta State, where she was recovered.

"Preliminary findings from the investigation indicated that the lady allegedly conspired with a female associate identified as Onyinye, whose other names are yet to be established, and another male accomplice, whose identity is presently unknown, to stage her own kidnapping and obtain money from her family."

NEWS

Yilwatda hails candidates as APC wins four of five by-elections

ABUJA

The National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress, Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda, has congratulated the party's four candidates who won seats in the legislative by-elections conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission on Saturday.

Yilwatda, in a statement posted on his X handle on Sunday, congratulated Kallamu Maijama'a, Hussein Datti, Okolosi Ator and Yakubu Ali, who emerged victorious in Gombe, Kano, Delta and Bauchi states, respectively.

The five bye-elections were held across four states, comprising one federal constituency and four state constituencies.

APC won four of the five seats, while the Allied Peo-

ples Movement won the Sakwa State Constituency seat in Bauchi State.

Yilwatda said the victories reflected the confidence placed in the party and its candidates by the electorate.

He said, "I warmly congratulate the four APC candidates who emerged victorious in the five legislative bye-elections conducted by INEC on Saturday, 19 September 2026.

"My congratulations go to: 1. Hon. Kallamu Usman Maijama'a of Gombe/Kwami/Funakaye Federal Constituency, Gombe State; 2. Hon. Hussein Datti of Dawakin Kudu State Constituency, Kano State; 3. Hon. Okolosi Ator of Udu State Constituency, Delta State; and 4. Hon. Yakubu Ali of Disina State Constituency, Bauchi State.

"These victories reflect the

confidence placed in our candidates and the APC by the electorate. I commend our candidates, party leaders, state chapters, campaign teams and, most importantly, the voters for their commitment to the democratic process.

"I also commend INEC, the security agencies and all stakeholders for their roles in the conduct of the elections."

In Gombe, Kallamu won the Gombe/Kwami/Funakaye Federal Constituency bye-election with 41,121 votes, while the Labour Party scored 3,553 votes and the Allied Peoples Movement polled 872 votes.

In Kano, Datti won the Dawakin Kudu State Constituency bye-election with 22,890 votes. The Peoples Redemption Party scored 270 votes, while the Peoples Democratic Party

polled 108 votes.

Ator won the Udu State Constituency bye-election in Delta with 8,724 votes, while the PDP scored 214 votes.

In Bauchi, Ali won the Disina State Constituency bye-election with 5,846 votes, while the APM scored 5,225 votes and the PRP polled 3,701 votes.

However, the APM won the Sakwa State Constituency bye-election in Zaki Local Government Area of Bauchi State with 8,515 votes. APC scored 3,771 votes, while the PDP and PRP polled 2,076 and 727 votes, respectively.

The APC chairman urged the victorious candidates to remain committed to their constituents.

"To our victorious candidates, this victory is a call to service. I urge you to remain humble and committed to delivering purposeful representation to your constituents.

Atiku pledges scholarship to viral Niger teen miner

ABUJA

Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar on Sunday said his "heart breaks" each time he watches a viral video of a teenage artisanal miner, Yusuf Aliyu, speaking at a mining site in Niger State after the deaths of 37 miners in the state.

Atiku, in a statement posted on his X handle, said he was prepared to support the boy's education, describing him as a child whose intelligence and confidence should be nurtured in a classroom rather than by working at a mining site.

"I have watched Yusuf Aliyu's video repeatedly, and each time, my heart breaks. A child with such intelligence, clarity and confidence should be in a classroom building his future—not struggling for survival in a community surrounded by gold but buried in poverty.

"I cannot look at him and see an 'illegal miner'. I see a Nigerian child failed by the country that should have protected him. I see

brilliance trapped by poverty and enormous promise abandoned by leadership," the African Democratic Congress presidential candidate said.

The former vice president also appealed for the boy's safety, warning that his public statements should not expose him or his family to intimidation or retaliation.

"I appeal specifically for his safety. His courage must not expose him or his family to intimidation or retaliation. I am prepared to support his education and ensure that the brilliance we have witnessed is not buried by poverty," Atiku said.

"Any effort to reach him must be handled responsibly through his family and appropriate child-protection channels."

The teenager, who spoke to News Central Television in a video that has circulated online, alleged that personnel of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps had been shooting at miners at a gold mining site in Niger State.

NDLEA intercepts N3.4bn drugs, arrests fake cop, mechanic

ABUJA

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency has intercepted over 1.3 million pills of tramadol and other opioids, as well as about 6,000kg of cannabis, with a combined street value of more than N3.4bn in operations across several states and the Federal Capital Territory.

The NDLEA also intercepted 1,200 parcels of Canadian Loud, a potent strain of cannabis, weighing 603.75kg and valued at N1.81bn at the Tin-Can Island Port in Lagos.

The agency disclosed this in a statement released by its Director, Media and Advocacy, Femi Babafemi, on Sunday.

Babafemi said the shipment, which arrived from Montreal, Canada, on September 12, was placed under intensive monitoring following intelligence received by the agency.

He said the container was subjected to a joint physical examination with the Nigeria Customs Service and other security agencies on Wednesday, September 16.

"The search uncovered 1,200 parcels of Canadian Loud concealed inside 31 black jumbo bags loaded in two Toyota Sienna vehicles within the 40-foot container," the statement added.

In Delta State, he said

NDLEA operatives arrested a 49-year-old man, Innocent Ekpe, who allegedly impersonated a senior police officer to evade scrutiny at checkpoints while transporting illicit drugs.

According to him, Ekpe was arrested on Wednesday, September 16, along the Benin-Onitsha Expressway in Asaba, with 292.48kg of skunk concealed in his silver Toyota Sienna bus.

Babafemi said investigation revealed that Ekpe had allegedly been parading himself as Godwin Emeka, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, using a forged police identification card.

"The 49-year-old fake police officer Innocent Ekpe was arrested on Wednesday 16th September 2026 by NDLEA operatives along the Benin-Onitsha Expressway in Asaba, Delta State, with 292.48 kilograms of skunk hidden in his silver Toyota Sienna bus.

"Investigation established that Ekpe had long paraded himself as Godwin Emeka, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, using a forged ID card to escape scrutiny at checkpoints while transporting illicit consignments. An accomplice, 39-year-old Nduka Joseph, was arrested along with him," he said.

In Edo State, operatives acting on intelligence raided an auto-repair workshop on Agbor Road, Benin City, where they arrested 45-year-old Matthew Ossai.



AMBASSADOR PESTHER PODCAST:

Anchorperson, Amb. Mike Pesther (R), with the Deputy Governor of Yobe State, Alhaji Idi Gubana, during the Deputy Governor's appearance on Ambassador Pesther Podcast after he was honoured as "National Patron of Mr. President Podcast" at Pesther Studio in Abuja on Sunday.

2027: Ignore opposition, just tackle insecurity, APC chieftain urges Tinubu

OSOGBO

An APC chieftain in Osun State, Olatunbosun Oyintiloye, has urged President Bola Tinubu not to be distracted by the tactics of the opposition ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Oyintiloye said the President should instead focus on governance and tackle security threats identified by security agencies head-on.

The APC chieftain, according to a statement, made the call while speaking with newsmen on Sunday in Osogbo, against the backdrop of a recent intelligence alert by the Department of State Services over possible attacks on vulnerable locations, particularly in the southern part of the country.

Reports published last week said the DSS had alerted Muslim and Christian leaders in Osun State to an alleged plan

by terrorists to attack places of worship and other public gathering centres.

Oyintiloye said "the President must urgently support security agencies to intensify surveillance, strengthen inter-agency collaboration and take proactive measures to safeguard lives and property amid emerging security concerns.

He said "security agencies should be reinforced through heightened vigilance, improved intelligence gathering and coordinated preventive action nationwide."

Oyintiloye, a former lawmaker, also called on all relevant security agencies to work closely together, share intelligence and strengthen surveillance and rapid-response mechanisms.

He particularly urged increased security around schools, places of worship, NYSC facilities, parks, garages and other vulnerable locations, especially

with schools in session.

The APC chieftain also called for an immediate, thorough and transparent investigation into the recent killings in Osun State.

He urged security agencies to identify all persons suspected to have participated in, sponsored or facilitated the violence and ensure that anyone against whom sufficient evidence was established was prosecuted in accordance with the law.

He appealed to all stakeholders, including transport workers,

community leaders, traditional rulers and religious leaders, to remain calm and cooperate with security agencies by providing credible information that could assist investigations and prevent further violence.

"If necessary, service chiefs should review and adjust their operational strategies without hesitation, as time is of the essence," he added.

He also called on state governors to complement the President's efforts by providing adequate support and resources to security agencies within their jurisdictions.

Police warn cultists against planned protest in Osun

OSOGBO

The Osun State Police Command has warned against a planned protest allegedly linked to a group identified as the "Congress of Cultists", said to be associated with the Neo-Black Movement, also known as Black Axe.

The command, in a statement issued on Sunday by its spokesperson, Abiodun Ojelabi, described the group as faceless and said intelligence indicated its alleged association with the cult group.

The police warned individuals or groups planning to cause chaos, disrupt public peace or

engage in criminal activities to reconsider their actions.

"The police and other security agencies will not fold their hands and allow miscreants to use any opportunity to disrupt the peaceful atmosphere and destruction of lives and properties.

"Our operatives will respond

decisively and appropriately to any action capable of threatening the peace and security of the state," the statement said.

The command advised individuals or groups with grievances or disputes to seek lawful means of resolving them, warning against violence, self-help or reprisal attacks.



INVITATION TO TENDER

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Edo State University, Iyamho (ESUI), Edo State, in accordance with Edo State Public Procurement Law 2012/Public Procurement Act 2007 as amended, hereby invites interested and competent contractors with history of timely delivery and execution of the following Projects

2.0 SCOPE OF SUPPLIES AND WORK (G & W)

LOT NO	JOB DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	SOURCE OF FUND
LOT 1	Procurement and execution of year 2024 Tetfund ICT Support Intervention projects	IYAMHO	Tetfund
LOT 2	Contract for Physical Deployment, installation, testing, training and commissioning of Campus Wide Security Network Video Surveillance System (CCTV)	IYAMHO	Internally generated revenue (IGR)
LOT 3	Procurement, Supply and Installation of computer Science Laboratory Equipment (Hardware and Software)	IYAMHO	Internally generated revenue (IGR)
LOT 4	Proposed Construction/Drilling of four (4) Industrial boreholes plus three (3) stanchions (H BEAM) capable of supporting 40,000 liters with considerable height.	IYAMHO	Internally generated revenue (IGR)
LOT 5	Proposed renovation of roof and Ceiling at Halls of Residence 7 and 8 buildings	IYAMHO	Internally generated revenue (IGR)
LOT 6	Proposed construction of 600 Capacity Lecture Theater	IYAMHO	Internally generated revenue (IGR)
LOT 7	Proposed construction of 1,216 Bed space Hall of Residence	IYAMHO	Internally generated revenue (IGR)
LOT 8	Proposed Landscaping of Hall of Residence 4	IYAMHO	Internally generated revenue (IGR)
LOT 9	Proposed Landscaping of Hall of Residence 7	IYAMHO	Internally generated revenue (IGR)
LOT 10	Proposed Landscaping of Hall of Residence 8	IYAMHO	Internally generated revenue (IGR)

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR LOT 2

The contractor shall:

1. Supply and install all approved CCTV cameras, accessories and supporting infrastructures. Establish a central monitoring and control room with video wall, work stations, recording servers and storage Devices.
2. Conduct comprehensive system testing, commissioning and performance verification.
3. Train designated university personnel on system operation, maintenance and troubleshooting.
4. Install CCTV poles, brackets, wall mounts and protective housing. Integrate all cameras into a unified Video management system (VMS).
5. Install waterproof outdoor cabinets, network switches, media converters and fiber termination boxes.
6. Provide uninterrupted power supply (UPS), surge protection and backup power systems
7. Configure network connectivity between all camera locations and the central control room.
8. Ensure that the deployed infrastructure provides 24 hour surveillance coverage and support high definition IP cameras including fixed, PTZ Infrared cameras where required.

3.0 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

Interested Companies/Vendors should submit the following documents/information with verifiable evidences for assessment and consideration:

- a. Evidence of Certificate of Incorporation with the Cooperate Affairs Commission (CAC) including Form CAC2 and CAC7;
- b. Evidence of Company's Income Tax Clearance Certificate for the last three (3) years (2023, 2024 & 2025).
- c. Evidence of current Pension Compliance Certificate valid till 31st December, 2026. This requirement is only applicable to bidders whose number of staff is fifteen (15) and above.
- d. Evidence of current Industrial Training Fund (ITF) Compliance Certificate valid till 31st December, 2026. This requirement is only applicable to bidders whose number of staff is five (5) and above or the bidders annual turnover is fifty million (#50,000,000) and above.
- e. Evidence of current Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) Compliance Certificate valid till 31st December, 2026;
- f. Evidence of Registration with Edo State Public Procurement Agency (Edo PPA) /National Database of Federal Contractor and Service Providers or valid Certificate issued by BPP/Edo PPA.
- g. Sworn Affidavit.
 - disclosing whether or not any officer of the relevant committees of the Edo State University, Iyamho or Edo State Public Procurement Agency is a former or present Director, shareholder or has any pecuniary interest in the bidder and to confirm that all information presented in its bid are true and correct in all particulars;
 - that no Director has been convicted in any Country for any criminal offence relating to fraud or financial impropriety or criminal misrepresentation or falsification of facts relating to any matter;
 - that the company is not in receivership, the subject of any form of insolvency or bankruptcy proceedings or the subject of any form of winding up petition or proceedings;
 - that the company does not have existing loan of financial liability with a bank, other financial institution or third party that is classified as doubtful, non-performance, bad or whose repayment portion has been outstanding for the last four (4) month.
- h. Company's Audited Accounts for the last three (3) years – (2023, 2024 & 2025);
- i. Evidence of financial capability to execute the project including Reference Letter from a reputable commercial bank indicating willingness to provide credit facility for the execution of the project when needed;
- j. Letter of consent to allow for verification of all the documents submitted including CAC, Tax Clearance certificate, PENCON, Industrial Training Fund (ITF), NSITF and Interim registration report (IRR).
- k. LOT 2: Company's profile with the curriculum vitae of key staffs to be deployed for the general contract and campus wide CCTV security surveillance project, including copies of their academics/ professional qualifications such as COREN, Security and Network Certificate etc.;
- l. LOT 2: Verifiable documentary evidence of registration with Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC) to operate as a registered network contractor/vendor on security surveillance projects etc.
- m. LOTS 1 & 3: Letter of authorization as representative of the original equipment manufacturers (OEMs)
- n. LOTS 2 & 4: Presentation / Submission of list of plants/equipment with prove of ownership/lease agreement.
- o. Verifiable documentary evidence of at least three (3) similar jobs executed in the last five (5) years including letter of award, valuation certificate, job completion certificate and photograph of the projects.
- p. All documents for submission must be transmitted with a Covering/Forwarding letter under the Company/Firm's Letter Head Paper bearing amongst others, the Registration Number (RC) as issued by

the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), Contract Address, Telephone Number (preferably GSM No.), and e-mail address. The Letterhead Paper must bear the Names and Nationalities of the Directors of the Company at the bottom of the page, duly signed by the authorized officer of the firm.

4.0 COLLECTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS

Interested companies are to collect the standard Bidding Document (SBD) from the Procurement Unit of Edo State University, Iyamho on evidence of payment of a non-refundable tender fee of #20,000.00 (Twenty Thousand Naira) only paid into the account of Edo State University, Iyamho through remita account in any reputable commercial bank in Nigeria. The photocopy of the receipt should be attached to the tender documents.

5.0 SUBMISSION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS

The tenderer shall enclose two hard copies each of the technical and financial bids, packaged separately in sealed envelope and clearly marked as "Technical & Financial bids", thereafter, put the two sealed envelopes together in a bigger sealed envelope addressed to The Vice Chancellor Edo State University, Iyamho. The lot number and the title of the project/contract should be written at the top – left corner of the envelope and should bear the name of the tendering contractor on the reverse side of the envelope. The completed and sealed tender documents should be deposited in the Tender Box in the office of Head of Procurement, Rooms 6 and 8 on the 3rd Floor, of the Muhammadu Buhari Administrative Building not later than 12:00 noon on Friday, October 9th 2026.

6.0 OPENING OF BID

The Technical and Financial bid will be opened immediately after the deadline for submission at 1:00pm on Friday, 9 October, 2026 at the Senate Chambers, 4th floor, Muhammadu Buhari Administrative Building in the presence of bidders or their representatives.

ENQUIRES: All enquires on the advertisement are to be directed to the Head of Procurement, Edo State University, Iyamho
TEL: 08051458525 (WhatSapp only)

GENERAL INFORMATION:

- i. Bids must be in English Language and signed by an official authorized by the bidder.
- ii. Bids submitted after the deadline for submission will be returned un-opened.
- iii. All cost will be borne by the bidder.
- iv. The University Tenders Board will only open the financial bids of the pre-qualified bidders after the technical exercise.
- v. A contractor should not apply for more than one LOT
- vi. Presentation of Technical /Financial Document in hard copies should follow strictly the order in the list above and appropriately paged. The Technical/Financial document should have a table of contents indicating the pages where various items are to be found. Failure to comply with these directives will result in disqualification of the bidder.
- vii. Failure to provide any of the above listed documents will lead to the disqualification of the bidder.
- viii. Edo State University, Iyamho is not bound to pre-qualify any bidder and reserves the right to annul the procurement process at any time/stage without incurring any liability in accordance with section 28 of the Public Procurement Act, 2027/Edo State Public Procurement Law, 2012.

7.0 DISCLAIMER

This advertisement is published only for information and invitation purposes. The Edo State University, Iyamho will not be responsible for any cost or expenses incurred by any interested party/parties in connection with any response to this invitation / submission of the tenders' documents.

Signed: **HEAD OF PROCUREMENT**
For: Vice Chancellor

NEWS

FOREIGN



EXIT POLLS:

Merz delivered a statement shortly after exit polls were announced from Berlin and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

Largest attack on Moscow sees Ukraine fire hundreds of drones, says Mayor

Ukraine has fired its largest drone attack on the Moscow region, the mayor has said, hitting the city's main oil refinery and a residential building.

Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said 450 drones heading for the capital had been shot down in what he called "the most massive" attack. The region's governor said at least two people were killed and 20 injured.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky confirmed Kyiv had hit a "key" Russian oil facility and a logistics site in the region with drones and missiles, representing "billions of dollars that sustain the war machine".

Ukrainian officials meanwhile said nine people, including three children, had been killed in Russian attacks

in the Kyiv and Sumy regions on Saturday.

Russia and Ukraine have recently intensified their strikes, targeting energy-generating and transport facilities, as well as major logistics hubs.

A 44-year-old woman was killed in Sofyino on Sunday after a drone hit a three-storey residential building, regional head Andrei Vorobyev said. Another five people - including two children - were injured.

An elderly man died after a private house was hit in the Orekhovo-Zuevo district, Governor Andrei Vorobyev added.

Videos verified by the BBC on social media show explosions in the night skies above Moscow, and a burning warehouse.

Mayor Sobyenin said a

drone had struck a building near one of the capital's boulevards and the oil refinery - where Ukrainian military officials said three key units had been damaged.

The site supplies more than a third of the Moscow region's fuel, according to the defence ministry in Kyiv, and some of its petrol, diesel and aviation fuel go to Russia's military.

Ukraine's defence minister said attacking such facilities "directly undermines the enemy's ability to continue its war of aggression and supply its military formations".

Sobyenin said the major attack was "an attempt to disrupt" Russia's parliamentary election, which was in its third day on Sunday. The vote is tightly controlled by

the Kremlin and has been dismissed by critics as neither free, fair nor transparent.

Russian state media reported that an election official was one of two people killed by a drone attack on a bus in a Moscow-controlled part of Kherson in Ukraine on Sunday, citing the head of Russia's election commission.

It comes after a mother and her two small children, a boy and a girl, were killed in a Russian attack in the city of Fastiv, Kyiv on Saturday, according to regional head Tymur Tkachenko.

German elections under way which could decide fate of Chancellor Merz

Local elections are taking place in two German states on Sunday which could increase the political pressure on Chancellor Friedrich Merz.

Opinion polls in Berlin and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern suggest Merz's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) is at risk of damaging defeats, which would raise further questions about the chancellor's future.

These latest elections come after the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party won a major victory in the state of Saxony-Anhalt two weeks ago, while the CDU saw its vote halved.

There has been speculation in Germany that Merz could be replaced as chancellor mid-term unless the CDU's political fortunes improve.

He has said he will carry on but is facing poor approval ratings amid rumours of a so-called chancellor swap, though his challengers are "still hesitating", writes German news site Tagesschau.

According to the polls, Merz's conservatives could lose power in Berlin as it tussles with Die Linke (The Left) over first place.

Meanwhile in the north-eastern state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the CDU has only just been hovering above the 5% threshold needed for a party to enter the

state parliament. It could spell their worst ever result in a state election.

How did it come to this after just 16 months in power? Friedrich Merz is having to answer for the tumbling popularity of his own party, while the political force that he aimed to counter - the AfD - continues its rise.

Some branches of the AfD are classed as right-wing extremist by domestic intelligence, a designation it strongly rejects.

But its anti-immigration, Russian-friendly, Germany-first agenda has found fertile ground in the country's former communist east.

The AfD is hoping to build on its recent landslide win in Saxony-Anhalt by topping the polls in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

However, the centre-left SPD has staged a late comeback to be in contention for the top spot through its lead candidate, Manuela Schwesig.

Currently the state premier, Schwesig is trying to sweep up the anti-AfD vote as she bills herself as the "Die Frau gegen Blau" - "Woman against Blue", the AfD's party colours.

But her local popularity belies the far poorer fortunes of her national party which is locked in a loveless coalition with Merz's CDU.

Trump says his planned triumphal arch will double as a military complex to store ammunition

US President Donald Trump has said his proposed triumphal arch will double as a complex to store military equipment, complete with the ability to deploy snipers and drones.

In a Sunday morning post, Trump said he is updating the plans at the "strong request" of the US military and for "national security purposes".

The "top grade" military complex and arch will "house, store, and have the rapid ability to use large numbers of drones, plus Snipers, on both the roof and plaza areas, and additionally have and hold large quantities of sniper ammunition in storage", he said.

He did not provide details on construction plans or timing, and it's not clear if he needs further approval for the facility.

"There will be no facility like this anywhere in the World," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform. He added that out of "the 59 top cities and Capitals", Washington DC is "the only one in the world that does not have a triumphal arch", without specifying what those cities are.

Construction on Trump's 250-foot arch, planned for a site across the Potomac River from Washington DC just outside the Arlington National Cemetery, was expected to begin this month.

A rendering of the design from earlier this year includes a golden, winged Lady Liberty on the top of the arch, flanked by two gold eagles, and with the phrases "One Nation Under God" and "Liberty and Justice for All" inscribed in gold on either side of the structure.

It will stand 250-feet (76m) from its base to the top of the golden lady statue.

At that height, the structure would dwarf the 99-foot Lincoln Memorial nearby and be half as high as the Washington Monument.

Satellite image with 3D buildings visible showing a model of the proposed Triumphal Arch in Washington DC, positioned south of the Potomac River at the end of Arlington Memorial Bridge.

The Lincoln Memorial, on the other side of the bridge, the Washington Monument, further to the east, and the White House, to the north east, are all labelled.

Plans for the arch from earlier this year feature a golden, winged Lady Liberty on the top, flanked by two gold eagles.

The Department of Defence declined to provide additional details when reached for comment.

Nato welcomes Greenland deal as Trump says it will give US 'permanent security control'

Greenlanders protested against Trump's ambitions for the territory in the country's capital, Nuuk, earlier this year

The US and Denmark have announced a deal on Greenland's security, resolving a diplomatic dispute sparked by President Donald Trump's threats to seize it by force.

Nato said the deal would help stabilise the region, as Trump said Denmark would grant the US "permanent control over security, and all other needs" in the semi-autonomous Danish territory in the Arctic.

The leaders of Denmark and Greenland welcomed the deal to "strengthen security", saying it was expected to be signed next week - but did not outline its contents.

This comes after months of threats by Trump to "take" Greenland over national security concerns, citing its strategic location for defence purposes and its mineral wealth.

No text of the agreement has been released. Trump said the deal came with "no cost to the United States" and would grant it the ability "to do what is nec-

essary" to "secure and defend the security of Greenland", in a post on Truth Social.

He said it included a rule that no US adversary could maintain a military presence in Greenland or "make sensitive investments in Greenland, without our express written approval".

A Nato spokesperson said the military alliance welcomed the deal, which would "help advance security, stability and cooperation in this vital region".

Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said she was "pleased that there is a prospect of a good agreement" for all three parties, which was expected to be signed at the UN General Assembly next week.

The deal "strengthens our common security in the Arctic and the North Atlantic area" while also recognising "the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Kingdom and the right of the Greenlandic people to self-determination", she said in a joint statement with Greenland's Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen.

The agreement would still need to go through "the nec-

essary parliamentary procedures to enter into force" once signed, the statement noted.

Nielsen said it was "gratifying that we are about to enter into an agreement that ensures and strengthens the security of Greenland, the Kingdom of Denmark, the United States and the Western alliance".

"The agreement recognises Greenland's interests and our place in international co-operation. It is for the benefit of us all," he said.

Meanwhile, French President Emmanuel Macron said the deal helped "to reaffirm Danish sovereignty" over the island.

"I simply note that Danish sovereignty is respected, that international law is respected, and that this is what we were asking for. So it's a good thing," Macron was quoted as saying by the AFP news agency.

Trump had tried for months to purchase or annex the semi-autonomous territory, arguing that it was vulnerable to adversaries, including Russia and China.

His repeated demands to take Greenland earlier this year prompted an outcry from Greenlanders, Danes and other Nato members.

FOREIGN

NEWS

**RIYADH'S INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT:**

Thick black plumes of smoke rise from near Riyadh's International Airport.

Uganda suspends military cooperation with Turkey amid political tensions

Uganda's army said Saturday it had suspended military cooperation with Turkey, after demands for Ankara to hand over a prominent political blogger and fierce critic of President Yoweri Museveni.

Army chief Muhoozi Kainerugaba, Museveni's son and widely seen as his father's likely successor, has repeatedly clashed with Turkish authorities over efforts to extradite

Fred Lumbuye.

The political commentator faces 15 criminal charges, including incitement to violence, spreading false information and computer misuse.

On Friday, thousands of Ugandans affiliated with the Patriotic League of Uganda, a civic and political pressure group associated with Muhoozi, protested outside the Turkish embassy in the capital Kampala.

"The Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) has with immediate effect suspended all and any Defence and Military cooperation with the Republic of Turkey," army spokesman Chris Magezi said in a statement.

"The measure will remain in force until outstanding issues of mutual defence and military cooperation between the two countries are resolved," Magezi added, without providing further details.

Kainerugaba reposted the statement on X.

The two countries have maintained close defence ties for nearly a decade, covering military training, arms and surveillance equipment, technology transfers and cooperation on counter-terrorism and security.

The directive follows threats to cancel a \$3 billion railways contract with Turkish firm Yapi Merkezi, and to expel Turkish nationals from Uganda

Journalists denied White House access after Trump banned some media outlets

Politico, CNN and MS NOW journalists have been denied access to the White House after US President Donald Trump announced he was banning the outlets.

An MS NOW reporter and a photographer tried entering the White House grounds on Saturday morning, but their badges would not scan and an officer confiscated them, the outlet reported.

Both CNN and Politico also said Saturday morning that their reporters were denied access and had their badges seized.

Trump said on Friday he was barring all three major US media outlets from the White House, accusing them of writing "fiction or lies" about his administration.

"The officer asked me to hand over my badge. He said that it was disabled," MS NOW reporter Akayla Gardner said. "I asked why I was not able to get inside. He said it was above him."

Gardner added that while her and her colleague's badges were disabled, an MS NOW producer was still able to scan her badge to get in, though she was not given an explanation as to why the producer's badge still worked.

CNN reporter Betsy Klein said a Secret Service agent told her her

badge had been deactivated.

Later on Saturday morning, Politico said its reporter Cheyenne Haslett was denied entry and Secret Service revoked her pass.

All three outlets have spoken out against the decision, accusing Trump of violating their constitutional rights to free speech and freedom of the press.

An MS NOW spokesperson said in a statement that the White House "belongs to the American people and the de-

cisions made inside are funded by our tax dollars".

MS NOW said it "intends to take any and all steps necessary to defend our First Amendment rights and the essential role of independent journalism in our democracy".

Politico Editor-in-Chief Jonathan Greenberger said in an internal email, shared in the outlet's Playbook newsletter, that the company stands by its reporters and will "vigorously defend" their First Amend-

ment rights.

And CNN said, "we have a right under the US Constitution to do our reporting without hindrance or interference from the government and this ban is an illegal assault on this fundamental right".

In his announcement, Trump did not mention specific stories or reporting from the three outlets that prompted the move, but later said "it's really just cumulative stories over the last few years".

Houthis say they targeted Saudi capital with ballistic missiles

Iran-backed Houthi militants in Yemen say they carried out drone and ballistic missile attacks on the Saudi capital Riyadh, as well as energy sites on the country's Red Sea coast.

Saudi authorities said they intercepted and destroyed a ballistic missile fired at Riyadh on Saturday, without confirming any further strikes or casualties.

Earlier, a column of black smoke was seen rising from fuel tanks near the Saudi capital's international airport, where flights were disrupted temporarily on Saturday.

Air raid alerts had sounded in the capital for the first time since the Iran-backed Houthis increased their attacks on Saudi Arabia in July.

The US state department urged Americans in the Middle East to "exercise vigilance and be prepared for potential flight cancellations and other travel disruptions".

"Iranian-supported Houthis have engaged in hostilities against Saudi Arabia, including civilian airports. This military conflict has the potential to escalate rapidly," it said in a

Nigeria gold miner deaths spark protests in Niger state

Survivors of a Nigerian disaster that saw 37 suspected illegal gold miners die while in the custody of a paramilitary civil defence group recounted their panic on Friday as they struggled to breathe inside the cell.

Police fired shots to disperse protests as tensions spilled onto the streets of Minna, the capital of mineral-rich Niger state in central Nigeria.

It was not immediately clear whether police were firing anti-riot pellets or live ammunition in Minna, where mobs blocked a main street and attacked a transport depot, a bank, political party offices and private businesses.

Government has imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew to curtail the unrest.

Nigeria's government suspended a civil defence commander as President Bola Tinubu ordered a "thorough", "urgent and 'full and transparent investigation' over Thursday's deaths. But anger erupted among sympathisers as testimony from survivors suggested the miners may have suffocated in packed cells.

"We were jam-packed in the cell, no ventilation for us to breathe well," Dauda Shehu told journalists at a city hospital.

"All of a sudden we realised that we could not breathe and we were all scampering for

where to get fresh air, we even appealed to them several times, banged the cell door but they refused to answer us.

"Several times, we raised alarm that some people are already dying because of suffocation, nobody answered us."

Another survivor, who asked not to be named, said he made it out alive because he was near the cell entrance where he could breathe better.

"We were screaming for help," he said, telling guards that "people are dying one after the other, they did not believe us".

Another survivor told the state governor, Mohammed Umaru Bago, at his residence that their cell was overcrowded and they were ordered to stand so they could fit.

"They locked the door and then sprayed a form of perfume and ... some began collapsing and we kept telling them we were thirsty, there was no water," he said speaking in Hausa.

He said their throats and eyes hurt. "Some of us kept sneezing and coughing."

A 40-second video shared online purporting to show the victims of Thursday's incident featured bodies of dozens of young men clad only in shorts.

Most of them appeared to be teenagers and the figures were sprawled on the ground out in the open.

Congo launches Ebola vaccination campaign for frontline workers

Congo began vaccinating health care workers against Ebola on Saturday in Bunia, the epicenter of the fastest-growing outbreak of the disease in the country's history.

Health care and other frontline workers are being prioritized for the Ervebo vaccine, which has proved effective in previous outbreaks caused by the more common Zaire strain.

Nikole Landu, a healthcare worker said that she wanted to get vaccinated because she is in constant contact with sick people and she is at high risk of catching this disease.

"So the vaccine I received today will help protect me. I might still get the disease, but I'm less likely to develop a severe case", she added.

Health authorities said Ervebo could offer some protection against the Bundibugyo virus because the two viruses are related. But whether the vaccine can actually prevent illness in people infected with Bundibugyo Ebola is still being studied.

The vaccine is being used under a compassionate-use program, which allows a medical product to be used in a serious disease situation even though it has not been specifically approved for that particular use.

The rollout is targeting the Bunia and Mongbwalu zones in Ituri province, health authorities said Saturday. Both areas are among the hardest-hit

by the virus.

As of Saturday, the country had recorded 7,541 confirmed cases, including 3,639 deaths, according to government figures. The outbreak is concentrated in Ituri province and is known to be the deadliest of all past 17 Ebola outbreaks in the country.

The outbreak is spreading under extremely difficult conditions, fueled by insecurity, displacement, a health workers' strike and intense population movements.

The World Health Organization has said it remains out of control and is on track to surpass the 2014-2016 West Africa Ebola outbreak, the deadliest on record, which killed more than 11,000 people, primarily in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The military governor of Ituri, Maj. Gen. Gaby Kasongo Mulumba said that the launch of this vaccination drive for front-line staff in Ituri is not an arbitrary choice, as these workers are particularly exposed and deeply involved in the response.

"Together, we can defeat Bundibugyo virus disease and protect our community," he said. Mulumba got himself vaccinated on Saturday in Bunia.

Last month, the Ervebo vaccine has been rolled out in Kisangani in the Tshopo province. The campaign was expected to cover 14 health zones in Tshopo, Bas-Uele and Haut-Uele provinces.

What Okpebholo's E-Governor Award means for Digital Governance

DR. PATRICK AKHERE EBOJELE

Edo State was celebrated recently following the recognition of Governor Monday Okpebholo, as E-Government Governor of the Year – Digital Transformation Award 2026. It is an award that places his administration's digital governance reforms at the center of its broader effort to rebuild the state's public service.

For Governor Okpebholo, the award is not simply an honor for adopting new technology. It is a recognition of an approach that puts digital infrastructure at the heart of how the Edo State government delivers services, manages information, and responds to citizens.

Close to two years into the administration, this is one recognition that has provided external validation for one of the key components of the governor's SHINE Agenda — building a government that can operate with greater efficiency, transparency and accountability.

The administration's approach has been simple: to move beyond introducing isolated digital services and instead establish an integrated government system that is owned and controlled by the state. That thinking informed the development of EdoGov 2.0, also known as Edo Cloud. The inherited digital governance initiatives from the previous government had limitations, particularly around ownership and access to the technology behind the systems.

In the words of the Edo State Head of Service, Dr Anthony Okungbowa, external vendors controlled intellectual property and backend access under the arrangements, limiting the state's ability to independently manage and expand its digital infrastructure. This informed the Okpebholo administration's option for a new approach: build a platform that the Edo State Government owns and manages.

Edo Cloud was this designed as a scalable and secure platform for government operations, giving the state greater control over its data, systems, and future expansion. It is a distinction that is important. The reason is



EDO STATE GOVERNOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLO

that digital transformation is not simply about putting government services online. It is about ensuring that the government itself has the capacity and institutional ownership required to sustain those services.

And so much has happened. The progress recorded reflects that ambition. More than 36,000 civil and public servants have been integrated into the EdoGov Enterprise Resource Planning platform, while more than 125,000 transactions have been processed since its inception.

All 18 local government areas have also been connected through fibre-optic infrastructure, while ministries, departments, and agencies are being moved from paper-based processes towards a paperless system. Dr Okungbowa describes the transition as unique among Nigerian states.

Governor Okpebholo reforms can not be separated from the delivery

of his SHINE Agenda — Security, Healthcare, Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Agriculture, and Education. This is because the scale of government programs requires information to move quickly between officials, institutions, and communities.

In healthcare, for example, the administration has reopened several general hospitals and primary healthcare centres, absorbed hundreds of health workers into permanent positions, recruited more than a thousand clinical and non-clinical workers and equipped myriads of secondary health facilities with modern medical equipment. These investments require systems capable of managing personnel, records, procurement, and service delivery efficiently.

The same principle applies to education, security, and other sectors. For the governor, digital government is, therefore, less about computers

and more about making the machinery of government work. It is about reducing the movement of paper files between offices, providing quicker access to records, and allowing officials to monitor transactions and processes more effectively. It has also recognised that technology alone can not deliver those results.

That is why it is investing in people. That is why one of the notable features of the digital transformation program has been its emphasis on training government workers. The state has conducted intensive workshops for more than 70 e-governance champions drawn from ministries, departments, and agencies to familiarise them with Edo Cloud and its deployment strategy.

The Edo State Information Communication Technology Agency has also trained close to a thousand of not more civil and public servants in digital skills required to operate the

system. All these reflect the administration's position that successful digital transformation depends as much on people as it does on technology. Sophisticated software without workers who understand how to use and maintain the systems can make the technology another abandoned public-sector project.

The e-Government award gives the Okpebholo administration recognition, but the bigger test lies outside government offices. For Edo residents, the value of digital transformation is being viewed from how fast, simple, and more transparent interactions with government become.

Citizens can now obtain a government document without repeated visits to an office. Their public payments can be tracked more easily, records can be accessed when needed, and government agencies can respond more quickly because information is available when they need it.

Evolving is a paperless government that's accessible to people who are not digitally proficient. For Governor Okpebholo, the significance of the award lies in what it says about the direction of his administration. The government has sought to establish digital infrastructure, train personnel, and create systems that can support the wider delivery of its development agenda. The recognition provides a measure of progress, but it does not remove the responsibility to deliver results.

As the administration enters the difficult phase: ensuring that Edo Cloud remains functional, secure, and accessible, translating improvements inside government offices into measurable changes for citizens is key. The award recognises the infrastructure being built under Okpebholo. It is to make the government more responsive in the daily lives of Edo residents.

For the governor, the work is therefore not finished with the award. It has only established a foundation on which the wider SHINE Agenda is expected to operate.

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

NEWS

Lebarty American Leadership Academy Lauded for Building students with strong moral values

The wife of the Speaker of the Oyo State House of Assembly,

Olamidun Majekodunmi-Ogundoyin has stressed on the importance of building students with strong moral values.

The wife of the Speaker made the appeal during her visit to the American Leadership Academy in Benin city at the weekend.

According to her, the vision should go beyond the physical structure and she commended the management of Lebarty American Leadership Academy for building students with strong moral values.

There was excitement at the school as the students and

teachers welcomed Olamidun Majekodunmi-Ogundoyin, wife of the Speaker of the Oyo State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Adebo Ogundoyin.

The visit brought together the school management, teachers and students, as the Speaker wife, toured the academy to see the world class structure built by the Proprietor of the school, Okenfe Aigbe Lebarty and took part in some of the activities by the students to welcome their visitor.

She interacted with students and staff while observing activities across the academy.

In an interview, she expressed excitement at the

growth of the academy, saying her vision goes beyond physical expansion and stressing the importance of building students with strong values and morals.

The Executive Director of Lebarty Enterprise, Pst. Mrs. Ovis Enahoro, Head of School, Bini-chukwu Ozuem, and students appreciated the visit and expressed optimism for continued support for the academy and its students.

The visit ended with the Speaker wife spending time with students and staff in a lively atmosphere.

Lebarty American Leadership Academy is located at No. 16 Ogiesoba Street, Idumwovina Quarters, Benin City, Edo State.



VISIT:

The wife of the Speaker of Oyo State House of Assembly, Olamidun Majekodunmi-Ogundoyin (Middle) with management, staff and students during her visit to the Lebarty American Leadership Academy in Benin City at the weekend.

 The Nigerian OBSERVER That The People May Know					ADVERTISEMENT RATES (PRINT)					
SIZES	COLOUR		BLACK AND WHITE		BLACK AND WHITE		MULTI NATIONALS			
			PUBLIC NOTICE		PRODUCT		COLOUR		BLACK & WHITE	
	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)
FULL PAGE	417,344	448,645	369,500	397,213	325,150	349,536	565,156	607,542	443,440	476,698
13 X 4	369,500	397,213	295,600	317,770	206,938	222,458	443,500	476,763	369,550	397,266
10 X 4	340,000	365,500	273,500	294,013	177,400	190,705	370,000	397,750	295,600	317,770
HALF PAGE	295,600	317,770	236,500	254,238	147,800	158,885	340,000	365,500	273,450	293,959
10 X 3	221,700	238,328	147,800	158,885	118,300	127,173	266,000	285,950	251,300	270,148
13 X2	206,900	222,418	133,000	142,925	103,500	111,263	221,800	238,435	147,810	158,896
QUARTER PAGE	192,150	206,561	118,250	127,119	88,690	95,342	236,500	254,238	133,000	142,975
FRONT PAGE POSITIONS					OTHER SIZES					
SIZES	PRODUCTS		PUBLIC NOTICE		PUBLIC NOTICE			PRODUCTS		
	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	SIZES	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	
FP 6X2	89,800	96,535	105,450	113,359	6 X 2	60,640	65,188	49,140	52,826	
FP 5X2	81,100	87,183	97,300	104,598	5 X 2	51,950	55,846	42,120	45,279	
FP 4X2	73,000	78,475	80,700	86,753	4 X 2	45,260	48,655	34,400	36,980	
FP 3X2	64,870	69,735	73,000	78,475	3 X 2	30,900	33,218	26,600	28,595	
FP 2X2	59,000	63,425	64,900	69,768	2 X 2	18,680	20,081	15,600	16,770	
SPECIAL POSITIONS					2 X 1	12,400	13,330	15,600	16,770	
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● Football ● Athletics ● Golf ● Basketball ● Tennis ● Boxing

Nigeria missing as Egypt, rivals clash for glory at 2026 ITTF Africa Championships

The stage is set in Tangier, Morocco, where the 2026 ITTF Africa Championships will unfold from October 18 to 26. Yet one of the continent's traditional powerhouses, Nigeria, will be conspicuously absent from the

team events - a void that speaks volumes about the challenges facing African sport.

Nigeria's exclusion stems from its failure to attend the regional qualifiers in Conakry, Guinea earlier this year. Financial constraints and soaring

ticket prices kept the contingent grounded. Under ITTF Africa's rules, missing zonal qualifiers means automatic disqualification

from the continental showpiece. That absence reshapes the competitive landscape.

Defending champions Egypt, long the standard-bearers of African table tennis, now brace for stiff resistance from Algeria, Tunisia, Uganda, Angola, Cameroon, and others, all eager to seize the spotlight inside Tangier's 10,000-capacity Salle Omnisports Arena. Introduced four years ago, the qualifiers have become the unforgiving gateway to the Championships, ensuring only those who fight through the zonal battles earn a place on the grand stage.

Still, Nigeria's story is not one of total silence. The singles categories will feature familiar names. Quadri Aruna, the talismanic captain, and Olajide Omotayo secured their berths through world rankings, while Matthew Kuti and Sultan Agunbiade earned wildcards after standout performances at the Africa Youth Champion-

ships in Accra.

On the women's side, Fatimo Bello and Sukurat Aiyelabegan qualified via rankings, while Kabirat Ayoola, Favour Ojo, and Aziza Sezuo received wildcards thanks to their performances in Ghana.

This year's tournament promises fireworks across seven events, particularly in the singles. Rising stars and seasoned veterans alike - Hana Goda, Omar Assar, Mehdi Bouloussa, and the Morice sisters, Jade and Tania - are expected to light up Tangier.

The singles competition doubles as a qualifier for the 2027 World Championships in Astana, offering veterans like Aruna a chance to reassert themselves after returning to full action with new clubs in France, Italy, and the United States.

Meanwhile, ITTF Africa has praised Morocco's meticulous preparations. Following a recent inspection, officials commended the facilities, hotels, and logistics, declaring Tangier ready to host what promises to be a memorable celebration of African table tennis.

Nigeria crush Madagascar to book Quarterfinal ticket

Nigeria's Under-18 Men's Handball team produced a dominant second-half display to emphatically defeat Madagascar 45-27 at the ongoing Africa Men's Youth Handball Championship in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on Friday.

The Nigerian youngsters faced a tough challenge in the opening half as Madagascar stayed within touching distance, with Nigeria holding a narrow 16-13 lead at the break.

Nigeria returned stronger after the interval, raising the tempo and producing an impressive attacking display to pull away from Madagascar.

The team eventually secured a convincing 45-27 victory to book their place in the quarter-finals of the championship.

Akibu Muhammed was named Man of the Match for his outstanding performance in the encounter as Nigeria continued their impressive campaign in Abidjan.



NIGERIA'S UNDER-18 MEN'S HANDBALL TEAM

Amusan ends season with \$35,000 after narrow Athlos defeat in London

Nigeria's Tobi Amusan has rounded off her season with a second-place finish in the women's 100 metres hurdles at the Athlos meeting in London, taking home \$35,000.

The former world record holder clocked 12.51 seconds with a legal +1.2m/s wind at StoneX Stadium on Friday, finishing just one-hundredth of a second behind American Alaysha Johnson, who crossed the line in 12.50 seconds.

It was a closely contested race, with Johnson claiming the Athlos hurdles title after completing her 40th race of the season.

Bahamas star Devynne Charlton, the Commonwealth Games champion and world indoor record holder, finished

third in 12.63 seconds, the same time recorded by Jamaica's former world champion Danielle Williams in fourth.

Another Jamaican, Megan Simmonds, was fifth in 12.66 seconds, while American Rayniah Jones finished sixth in 12.83 seconds.

Amusan's second-place finish brings the curtain down on a season in which she remained among the world's leading hurdlers, despite losing her long-standing world record to Masai Russell.

Russell lowered Amusan's 12.12-second world record from the 2022 World Championships in Eugene, running 12.09 seconds in Zurich. Amusan had held the global mark for four years.

The Nigerian also finished

runner-up to Russell at the World Athletics Ultimate Championship in Budapest, clocking 12.34 seconds against

the American's 12.22. That performance earned Amusan \$75,000, while Russell took home the \$150,000 top prize.



TOBI AMUSAN

Nigeria, 190 others to feature as FIFA launches historic U-15 World Cup in Azerbaijan

FIFA is set to stage a historic U-15 World Cup and Festival in Baku, Azerbai-

jan, with a record 191 member associations expected to participate in the inaugural edition of



NIGERIA U-15

the new youth competition.

The tournament, designed to provide international competitive opportunities for young players from across FIFA's membership, will bring more than 3,000 players, coaches and officials to Azerbaijan.

The event will be played in October, with teams arriving in Baku ahead of the competition. FIFA's latest information states that the first matches will be played from October 24, while the event will conclude on October 30.

The Hovsan Competition Complex will host the majority of the matches, while the opening match and tier finals are scheduled

for the iconic Crystal Hall in Baku.

The tournament introduces a new format to youth international football, with matches played eight-a-side rather than the traditional 11-a-side format. Games will consist of two 20-minute halves, with the format designed to maximise playing opportunities and development for the youngsters.

FIFA expects almost 1,000 matches to be played across six matchdays, with the tournament infrastructure capable of staging up to 20 matches simultaneously across multiple pitches.

Falconets exit FIFA Under 20 Women's World Cup

Nigeria's campaign in the FIFA Under 20 Women's World Cup ended today 20 September 2026 in the quarter final stage.

The Falconets fell 0-1 to their Colombian opponents at the Stadion ŁKS in Lodz, Poland to exit the tournament.

The Nigerian women proved dominant on the ball in the encounter before Kafayat Mafisere bagged a red card in the 76th minute for a serious foul.

Going a woman down, allowed Colombia to step up their attacking forays in search of the decisive moment.

The South Americans broke the deadlock in added minutes of the second half after Valerin Lobo latched

onto a through ball from midfield to put the Colombians ahead.

Her initial effort bounced off the onrushing Nigeria goalie Christiana Uzoma but the ball fell again into the path of Lobia who prodded home for the only goal of the match.

The Falconets threw numbers upfront to get back in the game, but the Colombians stood their ground to secure the much needed victory.

Colombia will now keep a date with either defending champions North Korea or Canada in the semis.

Nigeria are left to rue a hugely missed opportunity in a game they looked good to come out victorious.



FALCONETSPLAYER VS COLOMBIAN PALYER

SPORTS



NPFL 2026/27 MD4: 10-man Bendel Insurance succumb to Ranchers Bees 2-1 in Kano

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Bendel Insurance Football Club, weekend, suffered a 2-1 defeat to

newly promoted Ranchers Bees FC on Saturday in Matchday 4 of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL). The result came against

expectations for the Benin Arsenal, who had made an impressive start to the new season. Insurance went into the encounter with confidence following their 4-2 home victory over Kunkalifat FC on Sunday.

From the opening whistle at the Sani Abacha Stadium in Kano, the Benin Arsenal put up a strong challenge and resisted the hosts effectively, with both sides going into the break goalless.

Ranchers Bees eventually broke the deadlock five minutes after the restart, with Jude Okorie putting the hosts ahead in the 50th minute.

Bendel Insurance remained composed despite falling behind and were rewarded for their persistence when hard-working right-back Lekan Gabriel drew them level in the 65th minute.

However, Ranchers Bees continued to push for a second goal and regained the lead in the 76th minute through Zilkifilu Mohammed, whose strike ultimately secured all three points for the newly promoted side.

Insurance's afternoon took another turn for the worse in the 80th minute when goalscorer Lekan Gabriel was sent off following a harsh infringement, leaving the Benin Arsenal to finish the game with 10 men.

The defeat leaves Bendel Insurance on six points from their opening four matches of the season.

The Benin Arsenal will now turn their attention to Matchday 5, when they host Ikorodu City in Benin on Wednesday. The fixture will be their first midweek match of the new season.



BENDEL INSURANCE VS RANCHERS BEES



VICTOR OSIMHEN

Super Eagles confirm Osimhen's absence from AFCON Qualifying

Super Eagles have confirmed unavailability of striker Victor Osimhen for Nigeria's double header AFCON 2027 Qualifying.

Coach Eric Chelle had listed the Galatasaray striker for the continental qualifying games at home to Madagascar on 25 September and away to Guinea Bissau on 29 September 2026.

However, the Super Eagles' media have reported that Osimhen is unavailable for the games after missing out on club duties on Saturday 19 September 2026.

Eagles' media officer Promise Efoghe explained that Osimhen's absence was down to slow recovery from an injury sustained two weeks ago while playing for Gala.

"Victor Osimhen's recovery from a muscle strain has been slower than expected. He was included in Nigeria's squad for

the AFCON qualifiers because Galatasaray and Super Eagles technical crew were hopeful he would be fit for the Super Lig game versus Trabzonspor and ready for the international window," Promise wrote.

"But his absence from tonight's match confirms Galatasaray's correspondence to Super Eagles manager Eric Chelle that the striker is still recovering and will not be ready for Nigeria's matches."

In the absence of Osimhen in Nigeria's attack for the AFCON Qualifying, coach Eric Chelle will make do with Akor Adams (Venezia FC, Italy); Samuel Chukwueze (AC Milan, Italy); Ademola Lookman (Atletico Madrid, Spain); Tolu Arokodare (Ajax FC, The Netherlands); George Ilhenikina (Al Ittihad, Saudi Arabia); and Moses Usor (LASK FC, Austria).

Okowa hails Nairobi 2029 World Athletics hosting rights as win-win for Africa

Senior Vice President of the Confederation of African Athletics (CAA) and the Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN) has congratulated Athletics Kenya on the award of the hosting rights for the 2029 World Athletics Championships in Nairobi, describing the decision as a landmark moment for Kenya and a major victory for African athletics.

AFN President and Senior Vice President of the Confederation of African Athletics (CAA), Chief Tonobok Okowa, expressed delight over Nairobi's successful bid, saying the hosting rights represent a "win-win" outcome for the continent.

"Congratulations, Athletics Kenya. This is a great moment for Kenya and, indeed, for the whole of Africa," Okowa said.

"Bringing the World Athletics Championships to Nairobi in 2029 is not just about Kenya hosting a global competition. It is a victory for African athletics and an opportunity to showcase the enormous talent, passion and organisational capacity that exist on our continent."

Okowa also commended World Athletics for selecting Nairobi, saying the decision would open a new chapter for the sport in Africa.

"We must commend World Athletics for entrusting Nairobi and Kenya with this historic responsibility. It is a bold and important decision that will

have a lasting impact on athletics across Africa," he added.

The AFN President noted that Nigeria was proud to have supported Athletics Kenya's successful bid and said the development should be embraced by every member of the African athletics family.

"AFN is proud to have supported the Kenyan bid, and we are delighted to celebrate this achievement with Athletics Kenya and the entire African athletics family," Okowa said.



CHIEF TONOBOK OKOWA

Volleyball: Nigeria to face Morocco in Q/finals At 2026 African Nations Championship

Nigeria will take on Morocco in the quarterfinals of the 2026 African Men's Nations Volleyball Championship on Monday, September 21.

Morocco sealed a place in the last eight after beating the Democratic Republic of Congo 3-0 (25-20, 25-21, 29-27) in the Round of 16 on Saturday, September 19.

Speaking ahead of the tie, head coach of Nigeria men's team, Ryan Masajedi identified the weakness of his opponents. Masajedi said Nigeria stands a chance of creating an upset and progressing to the semi-finals.

He said: "I watched the match between Morocco and DR Congo in the Round of 16 with the players and saw their weaknesses and their strengths."

"They understand volleyball, they play with a system and they are consistent," Masajedi said.

"The North Africans side were many points behind, but they came back and eventually won 3-0."

"I think the serve is very important for us. They have a problem with their reception" he added.



NIGERIA VOLLEYBALL TEAM

NFF Reform: FIFA, CAF begin waiting game after Abuja stakeholders' talks

The conclusion of the FIFA and Confederation of African Football (CAF) assessment mission in Nigeria has heightened expectations over the next phase of the country's football reforms, with stakeholders now awaiting a formal position from the two governing bodies.

The four-man delegation, comprising FIFA officials Ahmed Harraz, Rolf Tanner and El Hadj Wack Diop, alongside CAF Legal Manager Nnaemeka Olu, spent two days in Abuja consulting widely on the legal, administrative, governance and electoral issues surrounding the crisis in the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF).

The mission followed the Au-

gust 27 resignation of NFF President Ibrahim Gusau, General Secretary Mohammed Sanusi and members of the Executive Committee, which triggered the suspension of the federation's electoral process and prompted calls for a comprehensive restructuring of Nigerian football.

FIFA had earlier made clear that the visit was a fact-finding and consultation exercise. The governing body said the assessment would help it and CAF understand the circumstances surrounding the leadership changes, hear the views of stakeholders and determine whether recommendations should subsequently be submitted to their competent decision-making bodies.