

Edo power supply drive gets major boost as 100MW project targets December completion

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

OSAHENIRO OFUWENGBE

The drive to improve electricity generation and supply in Edo State received a major boost over the weekend with the granting of transmission and distribution licences to CCETC Oguwa Energy

Limited for the full utilisation of its planned 100-megawatt power project in Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area.

The development is expected to strengthen the state's electricity supply capacity, support industrial and commercial activities and improve access to more reliable power for households and businesses across Edo State.

The state government, which expressed optimism that the project would be completed and commissioned before the end of 2026, described the licensing milestone as a significant step towards unlocking the full potential of the power project.

The Commissioner for Power, Paul Usenbo, disclosed this over the weekend in Benin City while presenting the licence

certificate to the company.

Usenbo said the project had successfully met the key requirements and timelines established for its first phase, which was scheduled for completion at the end of July.

He explained that relevant government agencies had continued to provide technical guidance, regulatory support and other necessary assistance

to ensure that the developers complied with required standards, assessments and regulatory conditions.

According to him, the successful completion of the first phase had paved the way for the project's second and final phase, which would culminate in the commissioning of the facility.

The commissioner said the state government expected

the developers to complete the outstanding phase and commission the 100MW facility before the end of the year, adding that most of the major project milestones were expected to be substantially achieved by October.

He, however, acknowledged that unforeseen technical challenges or

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That The People May Know

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Umahi vows accountability for abandoned projects

MATTHEW OKAGHA

ASABA

In a renewed push to ease the hardship faced by Nigerians over deteriorating road infrastructure and ensure accountability in the execution of public projects, the Federal Government has ordered the arrest of the Managing Director of Hartland Nigeria Limited over the alleged abandonment of the Asaba-Onitsha road project despite receiving about N14 billion from government.

Minister of Works, Engr. David Umahi, who issued the

orders urgent repairs on First Niger Bridge

directive during an inspection of the First Niger Bridge and adjoining road projects, also ordered officials of the Ministry of Works to commence the recovery of funds already paid to the contractor through the banks.

The minister further directed a comprehensive review of all certificates and payments associated with the company's projects, warning that contractors entrusted with public funds must deliver projects according to agreed specifications, timelines and standards.

The affected project covers the approximately 11-kilometre stretch from Summit Junction in Asaba, Delta State, to Head Bridge in Onitsha, Anambra State.

Umahi expressed disappointment over the slow pace of work, noting that Hartland Nigeria Limited had completed only about 40 per cent of the work agreed with the Federal Government.

According to him, the contractor was engaged to complete the entire 11-kilometre stretch, including channelisation and hydraulic structures, with funds already released by the government.

"On the Summit Junction to this Head Bridge, we gave it to the contractor called Hartland and we paid them, I think, up to N14 billion.

"We reached an agreement that they would finish the 11 kilometres from the Summit Junction to this bridge with the money and do the channelisation and hydraulic structures.

"But today, they have done just about 40 per cent of the agreement," Umahi said.

The minister subsequently directed the Controller of Works to locate and arrest the

company's Managing Director. "I am going to look for him to arrest him. Controller, you look for the MD of Hartland and arrest him," he ordered.

Umahi's action underscores the Federal Government's determination to move beyond the release of funds and award of contracts to ensuring that projects are actually delivered for the benefit of Nigerians.

He said the government would no longer tolerate a sit-

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Nigeria's foreign reserves hit \$53.11 bn, highest in 17 years

ABUJA

AISHA MOMOH

Nigeria's foreign exchange reserves have risen to \$53.11 billion, their highest level in more than 17 years, strengthening the country's external liquidity position and providing a larger buffer against foreign exchange pressures.

Latest data from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) showed that gross external reserves stood at \$53.112 billion

as of August 24, 2026, up from \$49.96 billion on June 3 — an increase of about \$3.15 billion in less than three months.

The latest position is the highest since January 12, 2009, when Nigeria's reserves stood at approximately \$53.25 billion. The current balance is therefore only about \$142 million below the 2009 level.

The buildup gathered pace in July and August. Reserves rose from \$51.53 billion on July 3 to \$52 billion on July 27,

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INSPECTION VISIT:

Works Minister, Sen. David Umahi (middle), paid an inspection visit to the Asaba - Onitsha section of the Benin - Onitsha Highway recently. Here, Umahi is flanked by Director Highway, Federal Ministry of Works, Engr. Saudi Musa (left) while the minister briefed journalists during the visit.

Tinubu, APC Governors move to resolve campaign list

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Edo Govt clarifies ₦14.15bn contractors' debt claim, says inherited projects undergoing audit

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Dozens of soldiers arrested in Niger after attempted mutiny

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Bendel Insurance FC beat Warri Wolves 2-1 in season opener

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NEWS

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uation where contractors receive substantial public funds but fail to execute projects to the agreed standard, stressing that public resources must translate into infrastructure that improves the lives of citizens.

The minister also raised the alarm over the vandalism of critical components of the First Niger Bridge, saying vandals had removed expansion joints, bolts and steel components from the structure.

He said the extent of the damage was more serious than initially portrayed on social media and required urgent intervention to safeguard the bridge and protect road users.

Umahi directed officials to weld damaged components that could still be salvaged and replace missing steel and bolts. He also ordered immediate milling and asphalt works on affected portions of the bridge.

To strengthen security around the facility, the minister announced plans to install solar-powered streetlights and

CCTV cameras along the bridge.

The surveillance system, he explained, would be linked to designated officials working in collaboration with the police to enable prompt detection and arrest of vandals.

"We are going to have solar lights fixed all through. We are going to have CCTV here, and the CCTV is going to be downloaded to your phone."

"We are going to appoint people that it will be downloaded to, liaising with the police, so that if we see anybody, day and night, we can act," he said.

Umahi described vandalism of public infrastructure as a national threat rather than a political issue, urging Nigerians to take ownership of critical infrastructure and assist government in protecting it.

"This is not an APC problem. It is a national problem," he said.

He lamented that the Ministry of Works could not deploy personnel to every road and bridge across the country to guard against vandalism.

Addressing concerns over the condition of the First Niger Bridge, Umahi explained

Tinubu, APC Governors move to resolve campaign list

ABUJA

OSAHENIRO OFUWENGBE

President Bola Tinubu on Thursday met with governors elected on the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC) at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, as the ruling party intensified consultations to resolve controversy surrounding its 2027 presidential campaign council list.

The meeting, which began shortly before 4 p.m., followed moves to review and rework the 223-member campaign list re-

leased by the APC on August 23.

The composition of the list had triggered controversy within the party, with some stakeholders alleging that key sections and interests were not adequately consulted before the names were announced.

The controversy was further fuelled by the inclusion of some party members facing corruption allegations, raising questions among stakeholders over the suitability of certain individuals for positions in the campaign organisation.

The APC governors arrived at the Presidential Villa after

attending a separate National Economic Council meeting chaired by Vice President Kashim Shettima.

Following the growing concerns, further consultations were initiated involving the President, APC governors and other party stakeholders, with the objective of producing a campaign structure acceptable to the various interests within the ruling party.

The initial list was subsequently removed from the APC's X account amid the controversy, although party sources said consultations were continuing on possible adjustments.

However, the President's

Special Adviser on Media and Public Communication, Sunday Dare, said the campaign list remained valid, explaining that adjustments could still be made as several subcommittees of the campaign structure were yet to be constituted.

The latest meeting between the President and APC governors is expected to help resolve the disagreements surrounding the campaign council and pave the way for the finalisation of the party's campaign structure.

The consultations come as the APC steps up preparations for the 2027 presidential election, with the party seeking to consolidate its political machinery ahead of the contest.



21ST EXTRAORDINARY SESSION:

Vice President Kashim Shettima (R), being welcomed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Bianca Ojukwu, in Angola Capital for the 21st Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU), in Luanda, Angola on Saturday.

Edo power supply drive gets major...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

regulatory encumbrances could affect the projected completion date, assuring the developers that the government would consider an extension where significant difficulties arose.

Usenbo said the state remained encouraged by the progress of work at the project site, particularly the ongoing arrival and installation of power-generation equipment.

He expressed confidence that the generation machines being delivered to the site would be installed, tested and made operational within the projected timeframe.

Beyond the licensing milestone, the project is being viewed as an important component of the state government's efforts to address the electricity needs of a rapidly expanding economy.

With a targeted generation capacity of 100MW, the facility is expected to add substantial

power to the state's electricity ecosystem and reduce some of the supply constraints confronting homes, businesses and productive enterprises.

Reliable electricity supply is critical to Edo's industrialisation drive, particularly for manufacturers, small and medium-scale enterprises, artisans, traders, hospitals, educational institutions and other establishments whose operations depend heavily on stable power.

Improved electricity availability could also help businesses reduce their dependence on expensive alternative sources of power, thereby lowering operating costs and improving productivity.

The project is therefore expected to have implications beyond power generation, with increased electricity supply capable of stimulating investment, supporting job creation, improving the operating environment for businesses and enhancing economic activities across the state.

Nigeria's foreign reserves hit...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

before climbing to \$52.86 billion on August 21 and crossing the \$53 billion threshold three days later.

The development comes amid improved conditions in the foreign exchange market, stronger dollar inflows and renewed investor confidence following the CBN's monetary and foreign exchange reforms.

Analysts have linked the reserve accumulation partly to stronger crude oil earnings, capital inflows and increased diaspora remittances. Higher crude oil prices have also boosted Nigeria's dollar

earnings, given the country's continued dependence on oil exports as a major source of foreign exchange.

The stronger reserve position provides the CBN with greater capacity to meet external obligations, manage periods of heightened demand for foreign exchange and support liquidity in the FX market.

The development has also coincided with relative stability in the value of the naira. The currency closed at about N1,343 per dollar on August 26, according to reported CBN data, while foreign exchange turnover stood at about \$235.99 million.

Gov Okpebholo's massive road projects connect 3 senatorial districts

OVIE GIFT KESSIENA

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, is making significant strides in his administration's drive to transform the state's road infrastructure, with massive road projects across the three senatorial districts expected to improve connectivity, boost economic activities and open up rural communities.

The Special Adviser to the Governor on Project Implementation and Monitoring,

Engr. Phoebe Williams-Bello, disclosed this during a quarterly inspection tour of ongoing projects across the state, which began in Edo South, continued in Edo Central and concluded in Edo north Senatorial District.

Speaking with journalists during the inspection, Williams-Bello expressed satisfaction with the level and pace of work on several strategic road projects, commending the contractors for their commitment to delivering quality infrastructure in line with the

vision of the Okpebholo administration.

"I am satisfied with the level and pace of work on these strategic road projects. I commend the contractors for their commitment and urge them to continue delivering quality infrastructure in line with the vision of the Governor Monday Okpebholo administration."

She said the ongoing projects demonstrate Governor Okpebholo's determination to ensure balanced and sustainable development across Edo State, stressing that the administration is committed to connecting communities and im-

proving the living conditions of residents through modern road infrastructure.

The Permanent Secretary, Edo State Ministry of Works, Engr. John Obanor, assured that the inspection team would continue to closely monitor all projects to ensure that any technical observations or defects identified during construction are promptly addressed.

According to him, the government will not compromise on quality, standards and timely completion of projects, noting that effective monitoring remains key to achieving value for public funds.

ASUU-UNIMED shuts down academic activities indefinitely over unpaid arrears

ODINI AMAKA VIVIAN

ONDO

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), University of Medical Sciences, Ondo (UNIMED), has declared an indefinite strike over the failure of the Ondo State Government to fully implement the 2025 Federal Government-ASUU agreement and pay salary-related arrears accruing from January 1, 2026.

The decision is expected to

halt academic activities at the University of Medical Sciences, Ondo, as lecturers withdraw from teaching and other statutory academic responsibilities.

The decision was reached at the union's congress meeting last week Thursday, following the expiration of a 14-day ultimatum issued to the university administration and the Ondo State Government.

The ultimatum was intended to compel the authorities to im-

plement provisions of the 2025 agreement at the institution. However, the union said the deadline expired without satisfactory action from the authorities.

In a statement signed by the Chairperson of ASUU-UNIMED, Comrade Abraham O. Oladebeye, and Secretary, Comrade Adeniran O. Akinola, the union said it reviewed the outcome of the ultimatum and concluded that the agreement had not been fully implemented.

The union expressed particular concern over the outstanding arrears owed from January 1, 2026, and subsequently directed its members to withdraw from statutory academic functions and services with immediate effect.

The directive, which took effect at 11:25 a.m. on Thursday, affects lectures and classes, continuous assessments, examinations and seminars at undergraduate, conversion and postgraduate levels.

NEWS**Oyebamiji congratulates Adeleke, urges end TP post-election violence****OSOGBO**

OBAAZEE ENDURANCE,
AYENOMOH WINNER AND
FAVOUR OBADIGIE

The All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship candidate in the August 15 Osun State election, Bola Oyebamiji, has congratulated Governor Ademola Adeleke on his re-election and called for an end to post-election violence in the state.

Oyebamiji made the remarks at the weekend, while addressing APC leaders, members and supporters in Osogbo, about two weeks after the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) declared Adeleke the winner of the poll.

He said he accepted the election outcome in the spirit of democracy and congratulated Adeleke on securing a second term as governor of Osun State.

However, Oyebamiji expressed concern over alleged post-election killings, harassment and intimidation of APC members and other residents.

He urged Adeleke to use his

constitutional powers to protect lives and property across the state.

Oyebamiji also condemned attacks on innocent citizens and businesses allegedly linked to political affiliations, warning that continued insecurity could discourage investment and undermine economic development in Osun.

He called for investigations into reported cases of violence and urged security agencies to ensure that anyone found responsible for killings or attacks was brought to justice.

INEC declared Adeleke the winner with 511,067 votes, while Oyebamiji polled 444,815 votes, giving the incumbent a margin of 66,252 votes. Adeleke subsequently received his certificate of return from INEC on August 19.

Despite conceding defeat, Oyebamiji said the APC would continue to pursue justice and fairness through lawful and constitutional means.

He also urged party members to remain united, strengthen the party and prepare for the 2027 general elections.

DSS directs suspension of Sowore's prosecution, case takes fresh turn**ABUJA**

HASSAN DAISY

The Department of State Services (DSS) has directed its counsel to suspend further prosecution of human rights activist and former presidential candidate, Omoyele Sowore, in a development that has introduced a fresh twist to the legal battle involving the activist.

The directive, according to reports, was conveyed to the legal team handling the case, with the counsel instructed to put further prosecutorial action on hold pending additional directives from the security agency. The development has continued to generate reactions from legal practitioners, civil society organisations and supporters of Sowore, who have followed the case closely.

Sowore, who is also a publisher and prominent government critic, has been involved in a number of legal battles arising from his activism and public campaigns. Over the years, his activities and confrontations with government authorities have attracted considerable national attention, particularly among groups advocating for freedom of expression, human rights and democratic accountability.

The latest directive by the DSS is expected to affect the immediate direction of the case. However, the reasons for the decision to suspend the prosecution were not immediately made public. Legal observers have therefore urged caution in interpreting the

development until the security agency or the prosecution team provides further clarification on the matter.

The case has also brought renewed attention to the delicate balance between national security responsibilities and the fundamental rights of citizens. While the DSS and other security agencies are mandated to protect the country and respond to threats to national security, civil society groups have consistently called for security operations and prosecutions to be conducted in accordance with the Constitution and other relevant laws.

Sowore's supporters have described the latest development as a positive step, maintaining that the activist has faced several legal challenges as a result of his outspoken criticism of government policies. They argued that the suspension could create an opportunity for the

Okpebholo gives Edo Muslims unprecedented recognition, says Ahmed Musa**BENIN CITY**

ABDUL-KADIR ABDULLAH

The Special Adviser to Edo State Governor on Islamic Religious Matters, Hon. Ahmed Musa Momoh, has said that Governor Monday Okpebholo has given Muslims in the state unprecedented recognition through the creation of the Office of the Special Adviser on Islamic Religious Matters.

Momoh said the establishment of the office, alongside the appointment of Muslims to key positions in the administration, demonstrated Governor Okpebholo's inclusive and compassionate approach to governance and

had given the Muslim community a stronger voice in government.

The Special Adviser stated this when he received the Executive Director of Vicegerents Care Initiative, Shuaib Abdulqadir, and members of his team on a courtesy visit in Benin City.

According to Momoh, the creation of the office was a significant milestone for the Muslim community, which must work collectively to ensure that the initiative is sustained beyond the present administration.

"In the history of Edo State, since the creation of Edo State, we have never had the office of the Special Adviser on Islamic Religious Matters. By the grace of God, this office has come to

stay," he said.

He expressed the hope that, with the support and cooperation of the Muslim community, the office would become a permanent feature of successive administrations in the state, just as there is an office responsible for Christian religious matters.

"With you people, we will make it stay so that any government in power will remember the Muslims and appoint for them a Special Adviser on Islamic Religious Matters, just the way we also have Special Adviser on Christian Religious Matters," he added.

Momoh described the governor's decision as evidence of his compassionate disposi-

tion towards the people of Edo State, noting that Governor Okpebholo had demonstrated that Muslims were valued and worthy of occupying strategic positions in government.

He also commended the governor for appointing Muslims to other key positions in his administration, particularly the Secretary to the State Government and the Chief of Staff, describing the appointments as significant developments that the Muslim community should appreciate and continue to support with prayers.

The Special Adviser urged Muslims in the state to continue praying for the governor, stressing that, as a human being, he could make mistakes but deserved the support and prayers of the people to enable him succeed.

**INAUGURATION:**

From left: Deputy President, Nigerian Society of Engineers, Valerie Agberagba; newly inaugurated National President of Nigerian Institute of Engineers (NIPetE), Engr. Yetunde Aladeitan and the Guest Speaker, Chichi Emenike, during the inauguration of 6th National President of NIPetE in Abuja on Saturday.

Nestoil boosts oil output with indigenous drilling capacity**ABUJA**

MIRACLE DAVID AND
TALBORT HOPE

Nigeria's indigenous oil and gas capacity has received a major boost following the successful deployment of Nestoil Group's wholly Nigerian-crewed Pathfinder 500 drilling rig to increase crude oil production from Oil Mining Lease (OML) 42.

The Group's Chairman, Dr Ernest Azudialu-Obijesi, who disclosed this in a statement, said the Pathfinder 500 had successfully completed workover operations on two producing wells in OML 42 without recording any Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) incident.

According to him, the operation contributed to incremental oil production from the asset, while the rig has since been safely demobilised to its base.

The milestone, he said, represented a significant development in Nigeria's drive to deepen indigenous participation in the oil and gas industry and reduce dependence on foreign drilling capacity.

The Pathfinder 500 was deployed by Scorpio Drilling International, a strategic business unit of Nestoil Group.

Azudialu-Obijesi said the assignment was particularly significant because it marked the rig's first productive operation since it was acquired about eight years ago.

He explained that the Group invested about \$28 million in acquiring two drilling rigs — Pathfinder 500 and Scorpio 300 — as part of its strategy to build reliable in-house drilling capacity.

"As an asset owner in OML 42, we recognised the need to have reliable in-house drilling capacity to undertake workovers, revive older wells and ultimately drill new wells as the field matures.

"With this milestone, we are now positioned to proceed with our planned in-field drilling programme," he said.

The chairman said the investment was driven by the difficulty and cost associated with securing hired drilling rigs in

Nigeria, adding that ownership of drilling assets would enable the Group to respond more efficiently to the operational needs of its fields.

He said the development would allow Nestoil to deepen exploration activities, revive ageing wells and unlock additional in-field drilling opportunities, thereby supporting sustained growth in crude oil production.

A major feature of the project, according to him, was that the refurbishment, mobilisation, crewing and deployment of the Pathfinder 500 were carried out entirely by Nigerian personnel without foreign partnership or technical support.

He described the rig's 100 per cent Nigerian crew as evidence of the growing technical competence of Nigerian professionals in the oil and gas industry.

Azudialu-Obijesi attributed the development to decades of capacity building by international oil companies operating in Nigeria, which, he said, had produced highly skilled Nigerian drilling personnel capable of undertaking sophisticated operations locally and offering their expertise to other oil-producing countries.

JAMB extends deadline for acceptance of previous admissions**ABUJA**

FUNMILAYO MUYIDEEN,
FAVOUR OBADIGIE AND
GRACE IYALEKHUE

The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) has extended to September 30 the deadline for candidates offered admission from 2021 to date to accept or reject such offers.

This is contained in a statement issued on Saturday in Abuja by JAMB's Public Communication Adviser, Dr Fabian Benjamin.

The Board had earlier fixed August 31 as the deadline for candidates with outstanding admission offers to indicate whether they wished to accept or reject them.

Benjamin said the extension represented a final opportunity for all affected candidates, including those with regular or Centralised University International Admission (CUIIA) offers, to take necessary action before the expiration of the new deadline.

He urged candidates with pending admission offers to accept or reject them before September 30, warning that failure to

do so would have consequences for the status of such admissions.

"Candidates should not wait until the deadline, as failure to take action within the stipulated period will have consequences for the status of such admissions," he said.

According to him, candidates who accept their admission offers will be able to print and obtain their admission letters.

He said those who rejected their offers would have their dashboards reverted to "Not Admitted", allowing the Board to update its records and ensure that its admission data accurately reflected their current status.

NEWS

Edo Govt clarifies ₦14.15bn contractors' debt claim, says inherited projects undergoing audit

BENIN CITY

BENEDICT OKATE

The Edo State Government has dismissed reports alleging that the administration of Governor Monday Okpebholo is indebted to contractors to the tune of ₦14.15 billion for completed projects, describing the claim as misleading and a misrep-

resentation of facts surrounding inherited contractual obligations.

A statement by the Special Adviser to the Edo State Government on Public Affairs and Media, Hon. Haruna Braimoh, said outstanding claims relating to projects executed under the immediate past administration of former Governor Godwin Obaseki are currently undergoing verification, audit

and reconciliation, stressing that no payment will be authorised until the claims are properly established.

He said the ongoing review was necessary to address discrepancies identified between claims submitted by some contractors and records available to the state.

Hon. Braimoh said the Okpebholo administration maintained that its approach was

guided by the need to protect public resources and ensure that government only pays for work that has been duly verified and certified.

"The government has a responsibility to ensure that every claim made against the state is properly established before public funds are released. We will not compromise the integrity of the payment process simply because

a claim has been presented for payment," he said.

According to Braimoh, the Okpebholo administration had initiated a comprehensive project verification and auditing exercise through an Assets Verification Committee.

The committee was constituted to examine inherited contracts, ascertain the status and level of completion of projects, and determine the validity of outstanding financial and contractual obligations before the state commits addi-

tional funds.

The Special Adviser to the Edo State Government on Public Affairs and Media said the exercise was not intended to deny contractors legitimate payments but to ensure that genuine obligations are distinguished from claims that may require further clarification or reconciliation.

Hon. Braimoh also clarified that projects initiated under the present administration are being funded on the basis of verified job certificates.

WAEC results under scrutiny as official flags irregularities, CBT glitches

IGUNBOR GODWIN,
OBABUAYE CLEO OSASERE
AND GRACE IYALEKHUE

The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) has come under fresh scrutiny after an examination official alleged irregularities and technical glitches in the 2026 West African Senior School Certificate Examination results, raising concerns among candidates, parents and education stakeholders.

The development occurred in August 2026, following the release of the 2026 examination results, with complaints emerging over unexpected grades recorded by some candidates.

The concerns were raised by Olanrewaju Fadehan, Head of Examinations at WAEC's Anambra office, who reportedly alleged that some candidates experienced technical difficulties while taking the computer-based examination,

particularly in subjects such as Mathematics, English and Igbo.

The alleged problems occurred during the examination process, as candidates encountered glitches that may have affected their ability to complete some aspects of the test smoothly.

The controversy has intensified because the 2026 examination represents a significant shift towards computer-based testing, making the reliability of the technology crucial to the credibility of the exercise.

WAEC is now facing pressure to explain what caused the reported glitches and irregularities, how affected candidates will be treated, and whether the results of candidates who experienced difficulties will be reviewed.

For candidates and their families, the issue goes beyond examination grades, as the results could determine admission opportunities and the next stage of their education.

**INSTALLATION:**

From left: Dr Olusola Ayandele; Onidere of Idere, Oba Kingsley Onikola and Dr Fodayimika Ayandele, during the installation of the Ayandeles' as Asiwaju and Yeye Asiwaju of Idere in Oyo state on Sunday.

Abuja filling stations raise petrol prices amid fresh pump price hike

ABUJADAVID MIRACLE, FIDELIA
FREEMAN AND DIVINE JOHN

Some filling stations in Abuja have increased the pump price of Premium Motor Spirit, popularly known as petrol, amid fresh changes in the downstream petroleum market.

The development has sparked concerns among motorists and other consumers, as any increase in petrol prices is expected to have a direct impact on transportation costs and the prices of goods and services.

Checks across some filling stations in the Federal Capital Territory showed variations in the retail price of petrol, with some outlets adjusting their pump prices upward.

The latest development comes amid continued fluctuations in the price of petroleum products and changes in the cost of supplying petrol to different parts of the country.

Motorists who spoke on the development expressed concern over the frequent adjustments in petrol prices, saying the increases have continued to put pressure on household budgets and

transportation expenses.

Some motorists lamented that the latest increase would further raise the cost of commuting within Abuja, particularly for residents who rely heavily on commercial transportation.

Transport operators may also be forced to review their fares if the increase persists, a development that could further increase the financial burden on residents.

The rising cost of petrol is also expected to affect businesses that depend on petrol-powered vehicles and generators for their daily operations.

Small and medium-scale businesses, particularly those that rely on alternative power sources, could face additional operating costs if petrol prices continue to rise.

The development has also renewed concerns over the need for greater stability in the downstream petroleum sector and improved transparency in the pricing of petroleum products.

Industry stakeholders have continued to monitor developments in the petroleum market as marketers respond to changes in supply costs, logistics and other market conditions.

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

The Acting Rector of Edo State Polytechnic, Usen, Associate Professor Nosakhare Liberty Arodoye, has congratulated the Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, on the occasion of his 56th birthday anniversary, describing him as a visionary and education-friendly leader whose administration has demonstrated strong commitment to the development of the state's education sector.

In a congratulatory message, Associate Professor Arodoye commended Governor

Okpebholo for his numerous interventions at Edo State Polytechnic, Usen, noting that the initiatives have significantly enhanced the institution's capacity to provide quality teaching, learning and research.

The Acting Rector described the Governor's support for the Polytechnic as a clear demonstration of his commitment to strengthening tertiary education and equipping young people with the knowledge and skills required to contribute meaningfully to the development of Edo State and Nigeria.

According to him, "On behalf of the Governing Council, management, staff and students of Edo State Polytechnic,

Usen, I heartily congratulate our amiable Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, on the occasion of his 56th birthday anniversary.

"We are particularly grateful for the numerous interventions of His Excellency in Edo State Polytechnic. These interventions have not only improved the learning environment but have also created better opportunities for teaching, research and innovation in the institution."

Associate Professor Arodoye said the Governor's commitment to the Polytechnic had continued to inspire the management, staff and students to redouble their efforts

towards academic excellence and the production of graduates capable of meeting the manpower needs of the state and the nation.

He added, "As the only state-owned Polytechnic in Edo State, Edo State Polytechnic, Usen, occupies a strategic position in the development of technical and technological manpower. We therefore deeply appreciate the Governor's recognition of the important role the institution plays in advancing education, skills acquisition and research."

The Acting Rector prayed God to grant Governor Okpebholo continued wisdom, sound health and strength to enable him to successfully pilot the affairs of Edo State and accomplish his developmental agenda.

Army raises red flag over unauthorised posts on official X account

ABUJAIGUNBOR GODWIN,
MIRACLE JOSEPH AND
OGBUNKWU NKEM EVELYN

The Nigerian Army has warned the public against relying on unauthorised or suspicious posts appearing on its official X account after an attempted compromise of the military's social media platform.

The incident reportedly oc-

curred on Saturday, August 29, 2026, when the Army detected an attempt to gain unauthorised access to its official X account.

The Nigerian Army issued the warning to Nigerians after detecting the attempted breach, particularly because a compromised official account could be used to spread false information or misleading messages in the name of the military.

The Army urged members of the public to verify information through its recognised

communication channels before accepting or sharing posts attributed to the institution.

The military's concern stems from the potential consequences of unauthorised social media activity, particularly where posts could reveal sensitive information, create confusion or misrepresent the position of the Army.

The warning comes amid growing cybersecurity threats facing government institutions and other organisations that

rely heavily on social media to communicate with the public.

The Army is responding to the incident by securing its digital communication platform and cautioning Nigerians against engaging with suspicious content.

The development underscores the growing importance of cybersecurity in protecting official government communication channels from unauthorised access and misinformation.

NEWS

Obi sympathises with victims of Abuja market fire

ABUJA

Nigeria Democratic Congress presidential candidate, Peter Obi, has expressed sympathy with traders and business owners affected by

the fire that gutted Eda Plaza in Jabi, Abuja, on Sunday.

Obi, in a statement posted on his X handle on Sunday, said the incident highlighted the need to strengthen Nigeria's emergency-response systems, particularly the capacity

of fire services.

A fire outbreak destroyed shops and goods reportedly worth millions of naira at the plaza, a building materials market opposite Chida Hotel in Jabi.

An eyewitness told the Nigerian Television Authority that

the alarm was raised around 3am after a trader received a distress call about the fire.

The eyewitness said the fire destroyed one of his brother-in-law's two shops and a packing store, with roofing materials worth more than N20m

reportedly lost in the blaze.

There were no reported casualties.

Reacting to the incident, Obi said his "heart goes out to the traders, artisans, workers, families and business owners whose goods, investments and livelihoods may have been affected by this unfortunate incident."

He noted that the losses suffered by the traders represented more than merchandise, noting that they included years of savings, borrowing and sacrifice.

"As a country, we cannot continue to lose businesses and livelihoods repeatedly to preventable disasters. Each time this happens, we gradually lose our productive capacity," he said.

The former Anambra State governor said small businesses were "the backbone of our economy" and that losses suffered by traders could affect their families, workers and communities.

Obi urged authorities to strengthen emergency-re-

sponse systems, particularly by ensuring that fire services were properly equipped and adequately staffed.

"As we grieve what has happened at Jabi Market, let us not wait for another market to burn before we act. Let this tragedy become a reason to strengthen our emergency-response systems, especially by ensuring that our fire service is properly equipped, adequately staffed and capable of responding swiftly to emergencies."

"We must protect our small businesses and ensure that Abuja, and indeed Nigeria, becomes a safer place to live, work and invest," he added.

Obi also prayed for those affected by the incident and emergency responders.

"May God comfort every person affected by this disaster, restore the livelihoods that have been lost, and grant our emergency responders the strength and wisdom required at this difficult moment," he said.

**SEND-FORTH**

From left: Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Mr Mohammed Danjuma; Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr Taiwo Oyedele and Permanent Secretary, of the ministry, Raymond Omach, during the send-forth for the Class of 2025 and 2026 and the 2025 rewards recognition to celebrate retirees and recognise their outstanding contributions to service in Abuja on Thursday night.

Gov poll: INEC unveils 2027 guber candidates

ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission has released the names and particulars of governorship candidates and their running mates across the country.

The publication, contained in Form EC9, was pasted at INEC headquarters across the states, effectively ending uncertainty over candidates that will fly the flags of the major political parties in the country.

The All Progressives Congress, African Democratic Congress, Nigeria Democratic Congress, Peoples Democratic Party and Allied Peoples Movement dominated the lists, which contain the ages of candidates, their educational backgrounds and other cre-

dentials.

With the release, the commission has formally opened a new phase of the 2027 electoral process, with campaigns for the governorship and state House of Assembly elections expected to begin in September 2026 and end on February 4, 2027.

According to the INEC timetable, the 2027 governorship and state House of Assembly elections will hold on February 6.

State-by-state gov candidates

Sunday PUNCH gathered that 16 candidates will contest the Oyo State governorship seat.

The APC candidate, Shara-fadeen Alli, will battle Governor Seyi Makinde-backed Bimbo Adekambi of the Allied Peoples Movement and Yinusa

Ayandare of the African Democratic Party.

In Lagos, 17 candidates, including the state's current Deputy Governor, Obafemi Hamzat of the APC, and Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour of the ADC, are contesting the governorship seat.

In Kaduna State, Governor Uba Sani of the APC will face 17 other contestants, while Kebbi State has 14 governorship candidates.

In Delta State, 16 candidates are battling for the state's top political seat.

No fewer than 19 political parties will also participate in the Sokoto State governorship election.

In Kwara, 12 governorship candidates will participate in the election.

The Speaker of the Kwara

State House of Assembly, Yaku-bu Danladi-Saliu, who is the candidate of the APC, will slug it out with the PDP candidate, Bolakale Kawu, and 10 others.

Similarly, Zamfara State Governor, Dauda Lawal, is being challenged by 15 other governorship candidates in the state.

For Bauchi State, 19 candidates were listed by INEC as individuals eyeing to succeed Governor Bala Muhammed.

Among the candidates is a female politician, Lami Babagaidam of the Zenith Labour Party.

Also, Benue State Governor, Hyacinth Alia, will be contending with five other governorship candidates, including a former Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Michael Aondoakaa, SAN, of the Peoples Democratic Party.

Ebonyi commissioner harps on significance of preserving cultural heritage at Mgba Ekke festival

MAXWELL OKECHUKWU

ABAKALIKI

The Commissioner for Information, Ebonyi State Chief Ikeuwa Omebe has charged the people of Ekke Clan in Ezza North Local Government Area of Ebonyi state to use the occasion of this year's Mgba Ekke local wrestling celebration to demonstrate their commitment to the peace, reconciliation, and collective progress.

The Commissioner who spoke at the local wrestling event further urged the to build on the enduring cultural legacy bequeathed to them by elders of Ekke clan in order to place Mgba Ekke on the world's cultural festivals calendar capable of attracting tourists to the community.

Mgba Ekke wrestling festival is an annual cultural event celebrated yearly in the month of August as an indigenous cultural practice passed from

generation to generation by elders of Ekke clan.

Chief Omebe, an indigenous son of Ekke clan, addressed Journalist on the significance of the wrestling.

He said said "Mgba Ekke is a celebration of the identity of the indigenous sons and daughters of Ekke kingdom. According to him, it is a historical element that reminds the of their collective destiny and aspirations as it was inherited from their ancestors which every generation in the land of Ekke clan preserves for the future as a heritage.

He said further "it remained a unifying force, strengthening brotherhood, promoting good neighbourliness and preserving the timeless values of truth, love, unity and hard work.

He appreciated the State Governor, Francis Ogbonna Nwifuru for giving some of the sons and daughters of Ekke Community appointments in different sectors to serve in his administration.

On his part, the Coordinator Imoha Development Center Barr. Chikaodire Igboke advised youths of the area to continue in promoting the wrestling as an indigenous heritage from their forefathers through active participation.

He added, "as we celebrate this year 2026 Mgba Ekke, let us remember that no Community prospers through division, as according to him, "A broom sweeps effectively only when its strands remain together. Let us therefore renew our commitment to peace, reconciliation, and collective progress, building on the enduring legacy bequeathed to us by elders of Ekke clan"

Man on rampage, kills two at Lagos cinema

LAGOS

The Lagos State Police Command has commenced investigations into the deaths of two individuals who were reportedly killed during an altercation at Filmhouse Cinemas IMAX in Lekki, Lagos State.

It was gathered that a yet-to-be-identified man, who was believed to be under the influence of drugs, reportedly insisted on entering the cinema house located in Lekki Phase 1 on Friday evening.

The suspect was reportedly

resisted by two security personnel, who are also yet to be identified, and the man subsequently attacked them.

An eyewitness who spoke on condition of anonymity said, "We were watching *Odyssey* when it happened. He was armed with a machete and was raising an alarm outside the cinema house. I was initially afraid because I thought armed robbers were robbing someone outside. I think the man wanted to barge in, but the security man didn't allow him, and it deteriorated into a fight. He attacked the security man.

"Then people intervened and

held the guy. I didn't witness what happened afterwards because I left the place while people were fighting the guy. I didn't want police issues. I later heard that two people were dead. It was shocking," a source said.

Also sharing his ordeal at the cinema, an X user, Buchi Laba (@Buchi_Laba), who said he was an eyewitness, described the incident as "one of the worst experiences" of his life.

Laba said, "I went to watch 'Odyssey' at IMAX Filmhouse Cinema, Lekki, yesterday (Friday). The movie started at 10pm and ended around 2am in the

morning. Immediately I came out, there was a huge crowd outside with blood everywhere!

"A guy came into the place and stabbed two security men. One in the chest and the other in the back. It was crazy. I had to use my car to take them to the hospital and sadly, one of the security men died.

"We heard the guy who did the stabbing also died back at the cinema. It was one of the worst scenes I have ever seen. The last time I saw something like this was back in school. I had to stay back in my car and cry for hours!"

OOUTH resident doctors hail Abiodun over new allowances

SAGANU

EHICHIOYA STEVE ODION

The Association of Resident Doctors, Olabisi Onabanjo University Teaching Hospital, Sagamu, has commended Ogun State Governor, Dapo Abiodun, for approving, domesticating and commencing payment of the revised Professional and Specialist Allowances to its members, as earlier promised.

The association, in a state-

ment issued on Sunday by its President, Dr John Omotoso, noted that the development represented the fulfilment of commitments made by the state government following a series of engagements and meetings between the resident doctors and government representatives.

Omotoso, while expressing the association's gratitude to the state government, said the gesture affirmed the responsiveness of the present adminis-

tration to the welfare and professional concerns of doctors in the state.

The statement partly read, "The ARD, OOUTH, Sagamu, particularly commended the Governor of Ogun State, His Excellency, Prince Dapo Abiodun, CON, for his political will and timely intervention in addressing the demands of doctors and improving their welfare.

"The approval and implementation of the revised allowances will significantly improve the morale, motivation and

productivity of resident doctors at the Olabisi Onabanjo University Teaching Hospital.

"This positive development will also further enhance the attractiveness of OOUTH as a centre for postgraduate medical training and practice, thereby helping to attract and retain doctors and address the shortage of resident doctors currently experienced in several departments of the hospital."

The association also expressed its appreciation to the

Secretary to the Ogun State Government, Mr Tokunbo Talabi, for his consistent and constructive engagement with the association in addressing issues affecting its members and the healthcare sector as a whole.

Omotoso stated that the association remained committed to constructive engagement with the government and other relevant stakeholders, with the collective goal of strengthening medical residency training in the state and making Ogun State a leading destination for postgraduate medical education in Nigeria.

The association also appreciated the immediate past state Chairman of the Nigerian Medical Association, Dr Ogunjimi Lukman, and the Head of Service of Ogun State, Mr Iskeel Saka, for their respective roles and contributions towards promoting industrial harmony, improving doctors' welfare and ensuring the continued provision of quality healthcare services to the people of Ogun State.

It noted that sustained support for healthcare workers and residency training was essential to maintaining uninterrupted

healthcare delivery, particularly at the teaching hospital, the state's foremost tertiary healthcare institution and a major centre for postgraduate medical training.

Omotoso also expressed appreciation to members of the association for their continued trust in his leadership, unwavering support, commitment to the ideals of the association and dedication to unity throughout the various phases of his administration.

He reaffirmed that the association would continue to pursue the welfare and professional interests of its members through dialogue, constructive engagement and responsible advocacy, while remaining committed to the overall growth and development of the healthcare system in the state.

The association said significant interventions, such as the payment of professional allowances, would further strengthen the partnership between the government and healthcare professionals towards achieving a more efficient, motivated and resilient healthcare workforce for the benefit of the people of Ogun State.



GRADUATION CEREMONY:

Vice President Kashim Shettima (L), receiving a plaque from the Commandant of the National Defence College (NDC), Rear Admiral Abdullahi Ahmed, during the graduation ceremony for participants of National Defence College, Course 34 at the NDC Head Quarter in Abuja on Friday.

9,000 Jigawa graduates sit CBT for 500 teaching jobs

DUTSE

The Jigawa State Government has begun Computer-Based Tests for the recruitment of 500 teachers for its J-Tsangaya programme, as over 9,000 graduates and NCE holders jostle for the limited positions.

The Executive Secretary of the Jigawa State Tsangaya Education Board, Abubakar Maje, disclosed this to journalists on Sunday shortly after inspecting the ongoing CBT exercise in Dutse, Hadejia and Gumel. "The government shortlisted 3,150 applicants to sit for the CBT, from which the successful candidates will be selected,"

Maje said.

According to him, the recruitment is part of efforts to strengthen the state's Almajiri Free Zone Programme. "The teachers will support the programme which targets more than 5,000 Almajirai for enrolment in a structured education system," he explained.

Maje said the new model will combine Qur'anic studies with basic Western education and vocational training, adding that "We want to strengthen the traditional Tsangaya system and reduce the number of children engaged in street begging."

The Executive Secretary further noted that the plan is to give Tsangaya pupils education,

accommodation, healthcare and skills. "Our goal is to help them become self-reliant and have a better future," Maje stated.

Accordingly, he revealed that under the programme, three mega Tsangaya schools have been designated in Dutse, Kafin Hausa and Ringim, adding that, "Each of the three mega schools is expected to admit about 1,500 children."

He said pupils in the mega schools will study Qur'an alongside English, Mathematics, Basic Science and Computer Studies. "Vocational training will also be included to prepare them for employment and self-employment," Maje said.

On the teacher recruitment, he explained the roles to be filled. "Some of the 500 teachers will teach conventional subjects, while others will handle Qur'anic education under the new Tsangaya curriculum," he said.

Maje stressed that the state government is committed to reforming the Tsangaya system.

"We are determined to ensure that children in Tsangaya schools have opportunities comparable to those available to other children across the country," he said.

Highlighting more, the E.S stated that Jigawa currently has more than 5,481 traditional Tsangaya schools, 130 integrated Tsangaya schools, seven modern Tsangaya schools and three mega Tsangaya schools.

Ogbona Sub-Clan Head preaches peace, unity at Esi festival

OGBONA

LAMAI CASSIUS

The Okpe-Ukpi of Ogbona Community in Avianwu Clan, Etsako Central Local Government Area, HRH Edward Okhumode Umole, has urged his people to embrace peace and unity for the growth and development of the area.

HRH Umole made the call at his palace during the Esi (New Yam) Festival, noting that without peace, no meaningful devel-

opment can be achieved.

The Okpe-Ukpi highlighted the significance of the festival, saying it is a way of thanking God for a bountiful harvest after the planting season.

He explained that the festival also signifies the beginning of the generally accepted consumption of new yams in the community.

He said the occasion provides an opportunity for elders and the people to offer prayers to ancestors for the protection and guidance of their children and the entire community.

HRM Umole stated further that the date for the annual celebration is usually fixed on any date of August by the elders in conjunction with the palace.

Hereiterated his commitment as reigning Okpe-Ukpi, to ensuring the community witness more peace, unity and development.

The Okpe-Ukpi also thanked everyone who contributed to the success of this year's Esi Festival celebration, and appreciated sons and daughters of Ogbona who have brought development to the community.

Suspension: Kwara Correspondents draws battle line with state NUJ leadership

ILORIN

RAHEEM IBRAHIM

The Kwara Correspondents' Chapel has drawn a battle line with the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Kwara State Council over its alleged complicity on their alleged complexity in the suspension of three members of the union in the state by its national leadership.

The suspended members include: Mosunmola Ayobami, Correspondents Chapel Secretary, Dare Akogun (Sobi FM) and Adamu Usman Chairman State information.

The NUJ during its August 11 meeting of the National Executive Council (NEC) in Dutse, Jigawa State, suspended the Journalists on alleged anti union activities.

The Kwara NUJ members while expressing concern over the development, described the allegations as false and uninvestigated, blaming the chair-

man Kwara Council Abdulateef Ahmed and the Secretary, Yinka Alaya for unchestrating the unlawful suspension

The correspondents insisted that the suspended members were handed the punishment by the NUJ NEC without granting them opportunity to defend themselves.

Meanwhile, the Kwara Correspondents chapel, at its August congress, resolved to for the time being sever its relationship with the state council over the "unlawful suspension of its member and Secretary Mosunmola Ayobami at the Jigawa NEC meeting two weeks ago."

According to a statement jointly signed by the Chapel Chairman and Secretary Biola Azeez and Mosunmola Ayobami respectively, the chapel resolved that "until the unlawful suspension is reversed, the chapel members will not attend event organised at the State Council or treat, use any story from the council and the duo of Abdulateef Ahmed and Yinka Alaya."

NUJ FCT mourns death of former chairman, Patrick Osadebamwen

ABUJA

The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), FCT Council, has expressed sadness over the death of its former Chairman, Comrade Patrick Osadebamwen.

In a statement issued in Abuja on Saturday by the Secretary of the Council, Comrade Jide Oyekunle, the Council said it received the news of his passing

with sadness, following confirmation from his friends.

Comrade Osadebamwen worked with the Union Newspaper, Core TV, The Nigerian Tribune, Kaftan TV before joining Interceptng.com an online news platform.

He also served as Chairman of the NUJ FCT Council.

Late Patrick hailed from Ekiadolor Ovia Southwest area of Edo State and he is survived by

three children.

The NUJ FCT Council extends its condolences to his family, colleagues, friends and associates, and prays that God will grant them the strength to bear the loss.

The Council also calls on members of the Union to remember the family in their prayers and pray for the repose of his soul as plans for the burial arrangements are underway.

NEWS**Police kill two kidnappers, rescue truck driver in Ogun****OGUN**

The Ogun State Police Command said its Anti-Kidnapping Unit killed two suspected kidnappers and rescued an abducted professional truck driver during a counter-operation in the state.

The command also said two AK-47 rifles, 25 rounds of live ammunition, two mobile phones and N2m suspected to be proceeds of criminal activities were recovered during the operation.

The police disclosed this in a statement issued on Sunday by the Deputy Police Public Relations Officer of the Ogun State Command, ASP Oluborode Opeyemi.

Opeyemi said the rescued victim, a professional truck driver, was abducted on August 25, 2026, at about 11:10 pm in the Ajibawo area of Ibese, Ogun State.

He explained that upon receipt of the report, the command's Anti-Kidnapping Unit squad swung into action to secure the victim's release and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Opeyemi said, "Determined to ensure that the perpetrators did not evade justice, operatives of the Anti-Kidnapping Unit working on actionable intelligence stormed the kidnappers' hideout located along the Papalanto-Ilaro Road and in the process, two suspected kidnappers were neutralised, while other members of the gang fled the scene with dif-

ferent degrees of gunshot injuries.

"A search conducted at the hideout led to the recovery of two AK-47 rifles, twenty-five rounds of 5.6mm ammunition, two cell phones, and a cash sum of Two Million Naira (N2,000,000), reasonably suspected to be part of the proceeds of criminal activities.

"The corpses of the neutralised kidnappers have been deposited at the morgue for autopsy, while the Command has since intensified efforts to track down and apprehend the fleeing gang members."

Meanwhile, the Commissioner of Police, Bode Ojajuni, while commending the gallantry, professionalism, courage and operational effectiveness of the Anti-Kidnapping Squad, stated that the success reinforced the command's resolve to relentlessly pursue kidnappers and other violent criminals wherever they might seek refuge.

The CP reiterated that Ogun State would remain a hostile terrain for criminal elements and assured residents that the command would continue to deploy intelligence-led policing, robust tactical operations and strategic partnerships with communities to protect lives and property.

He further urged members of the public to remain security-conscious and continue to provide timely, useful and credible information, particularly regarding persons seeking treatment for gunshot wounds, to aid ongoing efforts to rid the state of criminality.

Army kills suspect, recovers two AK-47s in Plateau**JOS**

Troops of Operation ENDURING PEACE have foiled an attempt to move illicit arms through Zak Village in the Wase Local Government Area of Plateau State, recovering two AK-47 rifles and other items.

The operation was carried out on Saturday, August 29, 2026, during a stop-and-search exercise when troops intercepted a green Volkswagen Golf vehicle for a routine search.

A statement by the Nigerian Army on its X handle on Sunday, said a thorough inspection of the vehicle uncovered "a specially fabricated concealed compartment" within the dashboard.

According to the Army, the driver abandoned the vehicle and fled into a nearby bush after troops directed him to open the compartment.

"Troops immediately pursued and apprehended him," the statement said.

The Army said the suspect attempted to disarm one of the soldiers while being restrained, prompting troops to

respond.

"However, while being restrained, the suspect attempted to disarm one of the soldiers, prompting a swift response during which he was neutralised," the Army said.

A further search of the concealed compartment resulted in the recovery of two AK-47 rifles, one magazine, two wooden rifle butts, nine magazine pouches, two camel bags, six jungle hats, one mobile phone and one ATM card.

The Army described the recovery as evidence of the effectiveness of sustained security measures aimed at disrupting the movement and proliferation of illicit arms.

"The recovery underscores the effectiveness of sustained security measures aimed at disrupting the movement and proliferation of illicit arms," the statement said.

It added that the Nigerian Army, in collaboration with other security agencies, remained committed to maintaining pressure on criminal elements and securing critical routes and communities across the country.

**SANITATION:**

The Chairman of Orile-Agege Local Government, Mr. Akinola Idowu (R) with some environmental sanitation officials during the monthly environmental sanitation exercise in Lagos on Saturday.

Oyo varsity accreditation: Parents seek help from FG**OYO**

Parents of students of Atiba University, Oyo State, have called on the Federal Government to intervene in the crisis surrounding the institutions Law programme, asking authorities to facilitate the transfer of affected students to accredited institutions and prevent their years of academic efforts from being lost.

The parents, represented by their lawyer, Victor Opatola, made the demand in Abuja, urging the National Universities Commission, the Minister of Education and the Council of Legal Education to urgently resolve the matter before the commencement of the next academic session.

The parents' call followed concerns over the accreditation status of the university's Law programme and the implications of the Council of Legal Education's decision on students who have progressed to 400-Level and 500-Level.

Opatola said some students had spent up to five years studying Law, while their parents had invested substantially in their education, only to discover that the programme was not accredited by the CLE, a requirement for graduates seeking admission to the Nigerian Law School.

He said, "Atiba University admitted students over the years, running to five, six years and knowing full well that it is not accredited by the Council of Legal Education, knowing the implication that once you are not accredited by the Council of Legal Education, the students cannot go to law school."

According to him, the CLE had placed the university on a 10-year moratorium, meaning that the institution could not

admit students into the Law programme during the period, while students already enrolled face uncertainty over their progression to Law School.

He said the parents had petitioned the NUC and other relevant authorities, but were concerned about the delay in obtaining a response.

"We have written to the Nigerian University Commission. It is sad that we have written to NUC for almost two months, and our letter and series of follow-up has been embroiled in the bureaucracy of NUC," he said.

Opatola said the immediate priority was to protect the students' academic progress and en-

sure their years of study and their parents' financial investments did not go to waste.

"Our aim right now is to ensure that the years of this student do not go to waste as well as the investment of the parent on the students. So, the important thing right now is the resolution of this matter," he said.

He called for the affected students to be transferred to accredited Law faculties without restarting their studies.

"On a minimum, we are appealing on behalf of these students that their five years should not go to waste, so that these students can feasibly be put into other universities.

They can actualise their dream of becoming a lawyer," he said.

The parents also asked the authorities to direct the release of the students' academic records, facilitate their transfer to accredited Law faculties and suspend further fee demands while the matter was being resolved.

In a formal notice dated June 30, 2026, the parents' lawyers demanded the release of the students' academic transcripts and other records without charge.

They also requested that the university should facilitate and fund the transfer of affected students to accredited Law programmes and refund tuition and levies paid by the students.

SERAP, NGE threaten lawsuit over foreign aid bill**ABUJA**

The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project and the Nigerian Guild of Editors have threatened legal action if the National Assembly passes the Foreign Aids (Regulation, Transparency and Disclosure) Bill, 2026, describing the proposed legislation as a threat to civic space, media freedom and democratic participation.

The organisations urged the Senate President, Godswill Akpabio, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas, to "immediately reject and withdraw the Foreign Aids (Regulation, Transparency and Disclosure) Bill, 2026 (SB.1034), as the Bill is unnecessary, unlawful, unconstitutional and threatens civic space, media freedom and democratic participation in Nigeria."

Their position was made known in a joint open letter dated August 29, signed

by SERAP Deputy Director, Kolawole Oluwadare, and NGE General Secretary, Mr Onuoha Ukeh, according to a statement by Oluwadare on Sunday.

SERAP and NGE said, "if enacted, the Bill would establish an extensive framework for governmental control over civil society organisations, independent media, religious organisations and other organisations and private entities receiving foreign assistance."

The bill, sponsored by Senator Ibrahim Dankwambo (PDP, Gombe North), proposes mandatory registration and disclosure requirements and provides for sanctions, including a minimum fine of N20m for civil society organisations and private entities, as well as possible suspension or revocation of operating licences.

In the letter, the organisations said, "Although the Bill is presented in the guise of promoting transparency, it

would establish an extensive framework for governmental control over civil society organisations and private entities receiving foreign assistance."

They urged "the National Assembly to immediately withdraw and reject the Bill and publicly commit not to reintroduce any legislation that unjustifiably restricts civic space, media freedom or the legitimate activities of civil society organisations and private entities."

"Should the Bill be passed into law despite the serious constitutional and human rights concerns raised, SERAP and NGE will consider taking all appropriate legal action in the public interest to challenge it and protect freedom of association, media freedom and civic participation," they added.

The organisations said the proposed legislation could have implications for independent journalism and civil society organisations that rely on foreign grants.

NEWS**FOREIGN**

Iceland votes against restarting talks on joining EU

Iceland has voted against resuming talks on joining the European Union 13 years after they were broken off.

Public broadcaster RUV reported that 52.8% of 225,031 voters rejected the government's proposal, while 47.2% had said yes. Some 12,600 votes separated them.

Prime Minister Kristrún Frostadóttir's centre-left government promised to hold a referendum by 2027, but brought it forward because of international tensions, including US President Donald Trump's threats against Greenland.

However, debate in this island nation of almost 400,000 people centred more on its fishing industry rather than

security concerns.

With some 270,000 people eligible to vote, RUV reported the turnout of 82.5% was the highest in any election in Iceland since 2009.

Already part of the EU's single market and Schengen border-free zone, EU membership would bring Iceland into the customs union and eventually the euro.

Iceland began its application to join the EU in 2009 in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis and the collapse of Iceland's banking system.

Its application was already well advanced when a euro-sceptic government came to power in 2013 and put talks on hold. Fishing rights was the biggest obstacle then - as it remains today.

Fish and marine industries account for almost 40% of Iceland's exports and many No voters feared they would cede some control of their lucrative fishing grounds under the EU's common fisheries policy.

The referendum campaign fuelled debate about Iceland's place in the world, Kristrún said after casting her ballot in the capital on Saturday.

"This is a great day, we've been waiting for this for years to be able to have a vote," Kristrún said, adding that her government would continue its work regardless of the outcome.

The question on the ballot was: "Should Iceland resume accession negotiations with the European Union?"

A Yes vote would not have

been a final decision on joining the EU, but a move towards an accession agreement, which would then have to be approved by a second referendum.

Equally, the No vote does not rule out the chance of Iceland resuming talks in the future.

While economic issues dominated the referendum

campaigns, security concerns also featured.

Iceland is a founder member of Nato but it has no military and relies on its allies for defence.

The country has backed Ukraine during Russia's full-scale invasion and officials have been alarmed by Russia's increased maritime manoeuvres near the island.

Manhunt after shooting at Swiss rave kills woman, 22, and injures five

A manhunt is under way after a 22-year-old woman was killed and five others injured in a shooting at a rave in Switzerland.

The woman died at the scene in Aarau, police said. Those injured were four men and a woman aged between 24 and 27, all of whom are in hospital with injuries "ranging from minor to severe".

Organisers and performers said the shooting happened at a techno rave being held at a horse racing track in the town, which is located some 46km (29 miles) west of Zurich.

A police spokesperson told Swiss media on Sunday afternoon that they had "no concrete leads", having earlier said the shooter's identity and motives were unclear.

It is unlikely that they are still in Aarau, spokesman Bernhard Graser told Swiss newspaper Blick, but there is "no imminent danger".

The force said it had received an initial report of shots fired at the Schachen race track at 02:30 local time (01:30 BST).

A DJ who was due to perform until the scheduled end of the event at 02:00 said the incident occurred "straight after our set", in a post on social media.

Another performer, DJ Tekibo, said he had lost a friend in the incident. He wrote on Instagram that he was "still trying to process what happened".

Olivier Grein, whose firm Agency Events AG organised the event, said the company was "shaken" and would do all it could to support police.

An eyewitness told Blick that he "suddenly heard the gunshots" minutes after the music stopped at 02:30, initially believing they were fireworks.

He said he was told to hide by a man and a woman, the latter of whom was then shot.

Organisers had expected up to 3,500 people to attend. Police asked witnesses to submit photographs and video from the scene.

An area around the racing track, the town's swimming pool and sports field has been cordoned off, with the public urged to stay away.



REFERENDUM:

Iceland's Prime Minister, Kristrún Frostadóttir voted in the referendum in Reykjavik on Saturday

At least 37 dead and hundreds evacuated after strike on Kyiv weapons depot

Thirty-seven people have died and almost 400 have been evacuated after a Russian drone strike hit a depot storing weapons for Ukraine's military near a residential area on the outskirts of Kyiv.

The strike caused shells,

mines and drones to detonate late on Friday, triggering a blast that damaged nearby properties including a care home for the elderly and disabled, President Volodymyr Zelensky said.

He said the storage site "definitely shouldn't have been there" and that an investiga-

tion had been launched into "terrible negligence on the part of those who stored explosive right next to people".

The attack is the second to hit a munitions depot near Kyiv in recent months, prompting renewed anger.

Four children are among the 42 people injured in Friday night's explosion, according to regional head Tymur Tkachenko, with a rescue operation ongoing at the site, in the Bucha district, on Saturday.

Russia's Ministry of Defence said in a statement that its forces had targeted "an ammunition depot" in Myla, a village to the west of the Ukrainian capital, holding "components and launch boosters for FP-1/FP-2 long-range unmanned aerial vehicles".

The explosion damaged about 130 homes in the village.

"Everything is completely damaged," local resident Liubov Pavlenko, 45, told the BBC while inspecting her home around 200m from the ammunition warehouse.

"There are cracks all around the entire perimeter, and cracks around the windows. Basically, the structural integrity has been compromised," she added.

"I'm still kind of numb. I don't know... once I come around a little tomorrow, I'll probably have an even bigger breakdown."

Zelensky said the decision to store explosives in the village was "absolutely unacceptable", adding: "Criminal proceedings have been opened on charges of official negligence."

The office of Ukraine's prosecutor general earlier said it was reviewing the "legality of the placement and storage of explosive objects and materials" near residential buildings in Myla.

It said the "actions of officials who made the relevant decisions" would also be investigated.

However, Zelensky earlier stated that "there are regulations in place - ammunition cannot be stored near homes or other residential areas", adding "appropriate conclusions will certainly be drawn".

He referenced the strike on an ammunition warehouse in Vyshneve in July, which caused a secondary detonation that killed nine, injured dozens more and damaged more than 280 homes.

Friday night's explosion has raised fresh questions about why munitions were being stored so close to people's homes, especially given the regularity of Russian aerial attacks.

"The authorities, the Ministry of Defence - why was this allowed at the depots, in a place where there used to be food?" Borys Daniyluk, 61, said.

"Why were ammunition

and weapons stored there, next to a populated village? There are no words, just emotions."

Ukrainian Prime Minister Sergiy Korytsky expressed regret that a "lesson" had not been learned following the explosion in Vyshneve.

The investigation into that incident revealed serious failings on the part of a state-owned company that had not complied with regulations regarding storage of explosives near residential buildings.

Zelensky indicated that the Myla depot had been operated by Ukraine's armed forces.

"In the fifth year of the full-scale invasion, making the same mistakes over and over is criminal negligence," Korytsky said on Telegram.

"Everyone responsible, without exception, must face severe punishment so that such situations never happen again."

Meanwhile, Tkachenko said a 14-year-old was killed in a separate attack in the Boryspil district, while Kyiv Mayor Vitaliy Klitschko said a two-year-old had died after a Russian drone crashed in Obolonskyi.

He added that five people, including an 18-year-old girl, were injured in fresh strikes on the capital on Saturday morning. Five people have been killed across the country over the past day, according to local officials.

Large Lake Ontario sign installed in Canada in latest jab at US

Ontario Premier Doug Ford has hit back at Donald Trump by installing a large sign on Canada's shoreline with the message: "Lake Ontario. Now and Always."

The US president signed an executive order on Thursday seeking to change its name to Lake America and has shared a series of AI-generated videos about the lake that straddles both countries.

"Long before President Trump, this lake was called Lake Ontario. Long after President Trump is gone, it will still be called Lake Ontario," Ford said.

The war of words was triggered after trade talks collapsed, with the US imposing new 50% tariffs on \$20bn (C\$28bn) of Canadian goods. Canada will implement "dollar for dollar" counter-tariffs next month.

Trump said the decree was effective immediately as he signed the order to rename it Lake America.

While he has broad discretion over how the US recognises landmarks, other countries are not required to follow. Canadian officials have dismissed Trump's move.

On Saturday, Trump also posted several AI-generated videos on social media, with one showing him kicking

over a Lake Ontario sign and replacing it with one that says: "Welcome to Lake America."

Another video depicted a flock of Canada geese sporting the US president's hair and holding rifles as they patrolled the shoreline of a newly named Lake America.

Ford said Trump's renaming of the lake was because he "didn't like Ontario and Canada standing up for ourselves".

Standing in front of the newly unveiled Lake Ontario sign, Ford added: "Just in case President Trump or anyone else forgets, we've set up this sign to remind them, it's Lake Ontario, now and forever."

FOREIGN

NEWS



Unease in Niamey, Nigerien capital

Dozens of soldiers arrested in Niger after attempted mutiny

After nearly 24 hours of unrest dozens of soldiers in Niger's capital were arrested or killed on Saturday after attempting a mutiny.

The revolt was reportedly staged by young soldiers angry about worsening militant violence under the country's present government.

Russia's Africa Corps provided aerial and ground support to local forces to resist the rebellion, according to analysts and diplomats.

State broadcaster RTN showed footage of dozens of mostly young soldiers being paraded in public after sustained gunfire and explosions were heard overnight into Saturday at a key military base.

The base is located within Niamey's main airport and near the presidential palace.

The whereabouts of military leader Abdourahmane Tchiani were unclear.

Senior Nigerien military officers visited the Africa Corps base at the airport "and expressed gratitude to its servicemen for their assistance in suppressing the rebellion," Russian media quoted Moscow's Ambassador to Niger Viktor Voropayev as saying.

The rebelling soldiers had camped at the military base until late Saturday while the presidential guard secured the presidential palace and was deployed to regain control of the base, analysts and diplomats said.

The loyalist forces have regained the "upper hand at least at the airport (and base)," according to Wassim Nasr, a senior research fellow at the Soufan Center.

Some forces were, however, heading to the capital and it remained unclear if they were coming to support the mutiny or government, Nasr added.

Support for Tiani

Once order was restored, hundreds of people gathered in Niamey to show their support for the country's leader, Abdourahmane Tiani.

Ibrahim Boubacar is head of a pro-government association:

"We do not accept that ill-intentioned individuals try to destabilize us, or try to undermine this emancipatory process that we have embraced. Because the external enemies we drove out have vowed to take all necessary measures to destabilize us and create divisions among us."

Tiani came to power in a 2023 coup which he said was prompted by the elected government's inability to stem jihadist violence.

Since then Niger has severed ties with longtime Western security partners, turning instead to Russia.

But the militant violence and rampant killing of security forces has continued, reportedly fueling unrest within the military.

Some of the mutinous soldiers came from the southwest of the country, among the regions worst-hit by insecurity, diplomats and analysts said.

Reports of gun fire

Residents of Niger's capital Niamey on Saturday reported hearing gunfire overnight near a military base at the international airport, which has been attacked by jihadists twice this year.

Niger has been ruled for three years by a military leadership that has struggled to contain jihadist violence, which has blighted the west African country for around a decade.

"There is heavy gunfire and explosions at Base 101 in Niamey," one local resident told AFP, a report confirmed by several other witnesses.

Several social media posts also reported shooting and explosions in the city, par-

ticularly in the administrative area where the presidential palace and the national television station are located.

Videos online showed armoured vehicles deployed to reinforce the neighbourhood near the airport. The origin of the gunfire is still unknown, and no official communication has yet been issued.

Rival jihadist groups

Niamey airport has been targeted twice this year by jihadists, first by the Islamic State in the Sahel (EIS) in January, then again in late June by their rivals the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM), the Sahel branch of Al-Qaeda.

The rival jihadist groups not only target civilians and the military but are also struggling for dominance over the other in the Sahel, and especially in Niger.

Twenty assailants were killed and four soldiers wounded in the January assault, authorities

said at the time.

General Abdourahmane Tiani, head of the military regime that emerged from a coup in July 2023, spoke in January of "a flaw in the system" that "enabled the attack," whose "objective was to destroy all of the air capabilities" of the army.

In June, at least 11 soldiers and two civilians were killed, as well as 22 attackers, according to the defence ministry. Both attacks were repelled by the army.

The EIS and JNIM are also active in neighbouring Burkina Faso and Mali, both allies of Niger and ruled by military juntas that seized power in coups.

The three countries quit the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) bloc, turned their backs on traditional Western partners in the fight against jihadist violence, especially France, and sought closer ties with Russia -- without, however, managing to restore security.

Boat carrying 270 people capsizes off northern Cyprus

A passenger boat with some 270 people on board has capsized off northern Cyprus, with a search and rescue operation under way.

Murat Senkul, the mayor of the coastal town of Kyrenia, told broadcaster CNN Turk that 159 of those aboard had been reached.

"The situation is very serious," he said.

The vessel reportedly began taking on water about four miles off the shore. Local television has broadcast images of the upside-down ferry in the water, with people wearing life vests atop its hull.

Helicopters and coast-guard boats have been dispatched to the scene, while ambulances have been stationed on the beach.

The transport minister of the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), Erhan Arikli, told local media 100 passengers had been taken to shore.

The TRNC, which is recognised only by Turkey, controls the northern third of the island of Cyprus, which has been divided since 1974.

This breaking news story is being updated and more details will be published shortly. Please refresh the page for the fullest version.

Zambian opposition leader charged with treason

Zambian opposition leader Brian Mundubile has been charged with treason, his lawyer has said amid heightened political tensions in the country.

Mundubile was arrested on Thursday, after a deadly raid by the authorities led the opposition politician to go into hiding.

He had disputed the results of the country's recent presidential election, which saw incumbent President Hakainde Hichilema securing a second term.

The authorities then accused Mundubile's NRPUP party of planning an armed insurgency, which it denied.

On Saturday night, Mundubile's lawyer Milner Katolo announced that his client had been charged with treason. The opposition leader looks forward to answering the accusation in court, Katolo told the *Zambian Eye*.

The lawyer said 17 others, including Mundubile's running mate Makebi Zulu, had also been charged with treason.

Mundubile gained 38% of the vote in the 13 August elec-

tion, while Hichilema secured 60%, official results show.

The day after the poll, security forces raided a property in the capital, Lusaka, linked to Mundubile, killing a former cabinet minister and arresting a number of other politicians.

Following the raid, Mundubile and Zulu took refuge at a United Nations building in the city. The pair were detained after the president put pressure on the UN to hand them over.

The opposition was unable to mount a legal challenge to the election outcome as the courts were sealed off by the authorities on Monday, the final day that a case could be filed.

Hichilema is due to be sworn in for a second term on 1 September.

Regional and international observers described the election day as largely peaceful, but Zambia's Human Rights Commission has called for accountability over people whose whereabouts remain unknown following arrests and security operations around the elections.

Former Ecuadorian president imprisoned for corruption

A former president of Ecuador has been sentenced to five years in prison after being found guilty of taking bribes.

Lenín Moreno insisted he had not taken money from a Chinese firm which secured a contract to build a hydroelectric plant in the Latin American nation.

The 73-year-old will serve his sentence under house arrest due to his age and disability, and has already indicated his intention to appeal against the verdict after a court in the capital, Quito, found him and 19 others guilty of corruption.

Moreno, who was president between 2017 and 2021, is the third former Ecuadorian leader to be sentenced for corruption.

Prosecutors alleged that Sino-hydro, which is owned by the Chinese state, paid a total of \$76.1m (£56.2m) through shell companies to people involved in

the deal to secure the construction of the Coca Codo Sinclair hydroelectric dam.

Among those handed prison sentences were Moreno's wife, daughter and brother, as well as former plant managers, Sinohy-

dro representatives and a Chinese ambassador to Ecuador.

While Moreno himself was alleged to have received very little from the scheme, prosecutors said family members received tens of thousands of dollars.



A former president of Ecuador, Lenín Moreno

Those convicted of bribery will have to repay three times what they were given, while Moreno was barred from public office.

He denied involvement in the alleged bribery scheme and instead blamed another former president, Rafael Correa, under whom he served as vice-president and who was sentenced to eight years in prison in a separate bribery case in 2020.

Moreno argued that Correa had signed off on the Coca Codo Sinclair project, and that he had launched an investigation into issues with the construction when he had assumed the presidency.

The Ecuadorian government launched legal proceedings against Sinohydro in 2021 due to cracks appearing in the dam and other technical failures. It reached a \$400m settlement with the firm's owner earlier this year.

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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
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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	
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EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 14, 2026

EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 14, 2026

Sports

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

Bendel Insurance FC beat Warri Wolves 2-1 in season opener

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Bendel Insurance Football Club began the 2026/27 Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) campaign today on a positive note as they



BENDEL INSURANCE FC

defeated Warri Wolves 2-1

The Benin Arsenal came from behind with goals from Kayode Oke and Alex Oweileyefa to secure the three maximum points in the South south Derby against Warri

Wolves at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium, Benin City.

The visiting Deltans took the lead in the 3rd minute of the game through Towo Eventus before Kayode Oke converted a penalty kick to get the equaliz-

er for Bendel Insurance FC.

The battle raged on after the equalizer as the host team came all out in search of more goals but the visitors were lucky not to concede more before the half-time whistle as Insurance danger men Alex Oweileyefa Kayode missed several scoring chance.

On return from the halftime break, Insurance coaching crew effected a quick tactical switch, introducing Shimagan- de Terdoo in the place of

Shamsudeen Usman to add bite to the attack. The changes paid off immediately as Chinedu Nwosu braced through the middle with a through pass from Stanley Okorom and fired a long range shot on target which fell off the groaping hands of goal-keeper Bamidele before Alex Oweileyefa finished the task to make it 2-1 in the 47 minute of the game.

The Benin Arsenal main- tained the lead to the end of the

game with more goals attempts but the visitors' defense were alive to their responsibility.

Bendel Insurance FC will be making a trip to Lafia to face Nasarawa Utd in their second match of the season weekend.

In a post match interview, Insurance assistant coach Jolomi Atune who stood in for the Technical Manager Kennedy Boboye praised the team for their efforts, particularly being able to respond quickly to the early goal they conceded.

He said that the team is still a work in progress, noting that it will take some time for the new players in the team to blend

well with the old.

Coach Jolomi assured Bendel Insurance fans to expect free flow and beautiful football this season, maintaining that the dept and quality players in the team will help them achieve greater success this season.

"I am happy we got the important three points. First game is usually difficult. Our team will get better as the league progresses. I know we will not disappoint our people. When Warri Wolves scored very early, I remained positive because I knew we were going to come back to beat them. I believe in the boys we have.

NPFL MATCHDAY ONE OFFICIALS

The NFF Referees Committee has also released the appointments for Matchday One of the 2026/2027 NPFL season.

Shooting Stars vs Inter Lagos — 28 August 2026, Ibadan

Referee: Alex Mana (KD)

Assistant Referee 1: Bashir Salisu (KN)

Assistant Referee 2: Ahmed M. Tijani (KT)

Fourth Official: Muhd Zango (KN)

Match Assessor: Gata Muhd (NG)

Ikorodu City vs Ranchers Bees — 30 August 2026, Lagos

Referee: Amao

Assistant Referee 1: Opeyemi (KW)

Assistant Referee 2: Alohan A. (ED)

Fourth Official: Austin O. (AK)

Match Assessor: Faith A. (ED)

Additional Official: Usman A. (KW)

Abia Warriors vs Kun Khalifat — 30 August 2026, Aba

Referee: Sani Muhd (KD)

Assistant Referee 1: Joseph Ogabor (CR)

Assistant Referee 2: Aminu Salihu (FCT)

Fourth Official: Friday Abu (KG)

Match Assessor: Eze Chiononso (AN)

Barau FC vs Nasarawa United — 30 August 2026, Kano

East African Dominance continues as Kenya's Kipyego, Ethiopia's Aberu clinch 42KM titles at the 2nd Enugu City Marathon

The streets of the Coal City came alive on Saturday as over 3,000 runners converged for the highly anticipated 2nd edition of the Enugu City International Marathon. In a thrilling display of endurance and tactical brilliance, Kenya's Edwin Kipyego and Ethiopia's Zenebe Aberu claimed the ultimate prizes in the male and female 42KM elite categories, respectively.

Organized by the Enugu State Government in strategic partnership with Nilayo Sports Management, and receiving technical backing from the Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN), the marathon proved to be a massive sports tourism success for the state.

Flagged off at exactly 6:30 AM at the Shoprite Abakaliki Road axis by the Executive Governor of Enugu State, His Excellency Dr. Peter Mbah, the 42KM route tested athletes through Independence Layout, Okpara Avenue, and Nike Lake Road before culminating in a grand finish at the Michael Okpara Square.

Kenya's Edwin Kipyego executed a flawless race, making a decisive breakaway at the 37KM mark to leave a tight pack of four elite runners trailing. He crossed the finish line in a blistering time of 02:20:38, securing the gold medal, ultimate bragging rights, and the grand prize of \$15,000.

"This was a tough but beautiful course," an elated Kipyego remarked after his victory. "The hills tested us, but the people of Enugu carried us with their cheers. I will definitely return next year."

Top 3 Male 42KM Finishers:
1st: Edwin Kipyego (Kenya) — 02:20:38

2nd: Habtamu Girma (Ethiopia) — 02:23:39

3rd: Shiferaw Daltiemayu (Ethiopia) — 02:23:41

In the female 42KM category, Ethiopia's Zenebe Aberu put on a dominant performance to claim the coveted crown, further cementing East Africa's stronghold on long-distance road running.



2ND ENUGU CITY MARATHON

Ghana book quarter-final ticket after four-set battle against Zambia at CAVB Women's African Nations Championship

Ghana's Black Spikers have advanced to the quarter-finals of the 2026 CAVB Women's African Nations Volleyball Championship in Nairobi, Kenya, after overcoming Zambia in a fiercely contested Round of 16 encounter.

The Ghanaian side showed resilience when it mattered most, eventually securing a 3-1 victory over Zambia in Match 26 on Day Six of the continen-

tal championship.

Ghana edged Zambia 29-27 in a thrilling opening set before Zambia responded strongly to claim the second set 25-19.

The Black Spikers, however, regained control of the contest and finished strongly, taking the third set 25-19 before closing out the match with a 25-17 victory in the fourth set.

The hard-fought result sees Ghana move into the quarter-final

stage, keeping their hopes of making a deep run in Nairobi alive.

Elsewhere, Rwanda also booked their place in the last eight after cruising past Burkina Faso in straight sets.

Rwanda dominated from the opening whistle, winning 25-19, 25-16 and 25-8 to complete a commanding 3-0 victory.

With Ghana and Rwanda now through to the quarter-finals, attention shifts to the next stage of the competition as the remaining teams battle for continental supremacy in Nairobi.

Other teams that have punched their tickets into the last eight are host Kenya, Algeria, Uganda and Cameroon



CAVB WOMEN'S AFRICAN NATIONS CHAMPIONSHIP

National Sports Festival Mascot unveiled as Enugu signals Readiness for Games

The National Sports Commission in partnership with the Local Organising Committee (LOC) and Main Organising Committee (MOC), on Friday unveiled the official mascot for the National Sports Festival scheduled for November 2026 in Enugu State.

The unveiling ceremony was held at the Enugu State International Conference Centre, following the inspection of key facilities across the state ahead of

the glamorous multi-sport fiesta.

The Enugu State Deputy Governor, His Excellency Barr. Ifeanyi Ossai, who represented His Excellency, Governor Dr. Peter Mbah, performed the unveiling formalities of the mascot named 'ODUMEZE'.

According to the Deputy Governor, 'Odumeze' which means Boldness, Strength and Power, in Igbo land, values that reflect both the spirit of the Games and the identity of the people of Enugu State.



NATIONAL SPORTS FESTIVAL MASCOT

NPFL MATCHDAY ONE RESULTS AT A GLANCE

Shooting Stars 2-1 Inter Lagos

Kwara United 2-2 Kano Pillars

Doma United 2-0 Sporting Lagos

Abia Warriors 0-0 Kun Khalifat

Niger Tornadoes 2-1 Enyimba

Bendel Insurance 2-1 Warri Wolves

SPORTS



Enabulele hails Okpebholo at 56, says Governor has rekindled hope in Edo Youths

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The Executive Chairman of the Edo State Sports Commission, Hon. Amadin Desmond Enabulele, has joined millions of Edo people in celebrating Governor Monday Okpebholo as the Governor clocks 56.

The Sports Commission boss described the governor as a pragmatic leader who has rekindled hope among the youths through his commitment to sports development.

In a birthday message issued on Saturday by his Media Aide, Edoko Wilson Edoko, Enabulele praised the Governor for what he described as his "massive and unwavering support" for sports

development, youth empowerment and grassroots talent discovery across Edo State.

He said Governor Okpebholo's administration has demonstrated a clear understanding of the power of sports to transform the lives of young people, create opportunities and properly place Edo on the national and international sporting map.

According to Enabulele, the Governor's support for athletes, sporting programmes and infrastructure has injected fresh confidence into the state's sports community and provided an enabling environment and stronger platform for young talents to excel.

"Governor Monday Okpebholo has shown that when gov-

ernment invests in young people, the entire society benefits. His passion for sports and youth development is not just about winning competitions; it is about building confidence, creating opportunities and giving our youths a sense of purpose.

"Today, we are witnessing a renewed energy in Edo sports because of the Governor's commitment and support. We are grateful for his leadership and vision," Enabulele stated.

The Sports Commission Chairman described Okpebholo as a visionary and people-focused leader whose commitment to inclusive governance and the overall development of Edo State continues to attract commendation.

He expressed confidence that the Governor's administration would achieve greater

milestones in the areas of sports development, youth empowerment and infrastructure, adding that the Edo State Sports Commission remains committed to supporting the Governor's vision for a prosperous and sports-friendly Edo.

Enabulele prayed God to grant Governor Okpebholo longer life, sound health, wisdom and strength to continue steering the affairs of the state to an enviable height.

"On behalf of the entire Edo State Sports Commission, I warmly congratulate His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo, on his 56th birthday.

"May God continue to strengthen you, increase you in wisdom and grant you many more years of impactful service to Edo State and humanity," he added.



DESMOND ENABULELE AND GOV. MONDAY OKPEBHOLO

2026 NSF: "Coal City Games will showcase Nation-building, inclusivity and sporting excellence" – Olopade

The Director General of National Sports Commission, Hon. Bukola Olopade has expressed confidence in Enugu State's readiness to deliver a memorable 23rd National Sports Festival, which takes place later this year.

Following a three-day inspection of facilities and preparations across the host city, Hon. Olopade, said the level of enthusiasm, infrastructure development and community participation in Enugu reinforced his belief that the state is ready to host the Games.

"Every time we've been to Enugu, we've been able to leave with satisfaction. Aside from the huge enthusiasm from the Executive Governor, you'd see that there's something brewing amongst the people," Olopade said.

Addressing members of the fourth estate in Enugu, the DG highlighted the growing involvement of residents in the Games, noting that more than 500 caterers and over 500 volunteers have already signed up to participate in the event.

He added that the scale of local participation demonstrates that the National Sports Festival will extend beyond sporting competition to create significant socio-economic opportunities for the people of Enugu.

Doubling as the chair of the Main Organizing Committee, the DG described Coal City Games as an opportunity to promote inclusivity and na-

tional unity, particularly as the South East prepares to host the National Sports Festival for the first time in 28 years.

"This Games is about inclusivity, nation-building and what President Bola Tinubu has always preached, that Nigeria belongs to all of us," he said.

He added that bringing the Festival to the South East was significant for national integration and would provide an



HON. BUKOLA OLOPADE

Nigeria's pillar of sports congratulates Isaiah Benjamin on re-election as swan president

Nigeria's Pillar of Sports has congratulated Comrade Isaiah Benjamin on his re-election as President of the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN) at the Association's Triennial Delegates Conference held in Kaduna on Friday.

The Pillar of Sports de-

scribed Benjamin's emergence unopposed as a well-deserved vote of confidence in his leadership and a clear recognition of the outstanding performance he recorded during his first tenure as President of the Association.

According to the former President of the Karate Federation of Nigeria (KFN), the renewed mandate given to Benjamin reflects the confidence of SWAN delegates in his capacity to lead the Association, protect the interests of sports writers and contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of Nigerian sports.

While congratulating him on his re-election, the Anambra-born Sports philanthropist urged the SWAN President to see the new mandate not only as an honour but as a greater responsibility to surpass the achievements of his first tenure and take the Association to even greater heights.



ISAIAH BENJAMIN

NFRA charges referees to Strictly Adhere to Laws of the Game ahead of NPFL 2026/27 season

The Nigeria Football Referees Association (NFRA) has charged referees and match officials appointed for the 2026/2027 Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) season to strictly adhere to the Laws of the Game and competition rules.

The call was made by the Acting President of the NFRA, Sir Kelechi Mejuobi, in his message to referees ahead of the new NPFL season.

Mejuobi stressed that a proper understanding and consistent application of the Laws of the Game remain essential to the reform and development of Nigerian football, particularly with the league entering a new era under a new title sponsorship.

"What is expected of us is to officiate in accordance with the Laws of the Game and adhere to competition rules."

"Our job is to officiate

without fear or favour, so far as it equates to what the 17 Laws of the Game say, and respect the competition rules to ensure our actions are in tandem with the desire of the league organisers," he said.

The NFRA Acting President disclosed that referees and accompanying assessors have undergone extensive pre-season training and have been mentally prepared for the demands of the new campaign.

He urged the officials to translate the lessons from their pre-season programmes into their performances on match-days.

"Go and perform and ensure the resources, time and energy spent during the pre-season programmes are not a waste. Translate what was taught during the pre-season into action in your matches. Make NFRA proud in all your engagements," Mejuobi added.



NPFL REFEREES