

Oba Ewuare II reconstitutes Erediauwa Memorial Lecture Committee

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

The Oba of Benin, Ewuare II, has reaffirmed his commitment to sustaining the legacy of his late father, Oba Erediauwa, describing him as a visionary monarch whose wisdom, intellectual depth and contributions to cultural revival continue to influence the

...Pledges to uphold father's legacy

Benin Kingdom and African civilisation.

The monarch gave the assurance on Monday at the first pre-inaugural lecture of the Oba Erediauwa Memorial Lecture Series, held at the University of Benin (UNIBEN) Auditorium, Benin City, as part of activities marking the 10th anniversary of his coronation.

Represented by a delegation of palace chiefs led by Chief Enorese Ozigbo-Esere, the Eghaevbonore of Benin, Oba Ewuare II said his father belonged to the first generation of African traditional rulers whose influence and intellectual contributions transcended Nigeria's borders.

Delivering the monarch's

address, Prof. (Chief) Victor Igbneweka, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) of the University of Benin and Osasinmwinoba N'Iweguae of Benin, said the reigning monarch remained committed to preserving the values and ideals of his father.

"We pledge our commitment once again to walk in his footsteps of progress and

meaningful impact," the monarch said.

Oba Ewuare II described his father as a cerebral and versatile traditional ruler who understood the importance of balancing cultural heritage with the demands of modern society.

He also recalled Oba Erediauwa's diplomatic service and intellectual contributions,

noting that the values instilled in his children continued to inspire their engagement with contemporary African history and civilisation.

"As a former ambassador to many countries, these values cherished and instilled in us by our father of blessed memory remind us constantly of our heritage and, within our respective spheres, of the need

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#200

Okpebholo nominated for Leadership Newspaper's Gov of the Year Award

MATTHEW OKAGHA / RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Governor Monday Okpebholo's sterling leadership qualities and pragmatic approach to governance, with emphasis on practical solutions, infrastructure development and interventions in critical sectors of Edo State, has earned him a nomination for the Leadership Newspaper Governor of the Year 2026 award.

The nomination, announced during a visit by a delegation of Leadership Newspaper to the Edo State Government House in Benin City, recognises what the newspaper described as the governor's performance in security, education, healthcare, road construction and other areas of public service.

The award ceremony is scheduled for December 1, 2026, at the Bola Tinubu International Conference Centre, Abuja.

The nomination comes amid the Okpebholo administration's

drive to translate its development agenda into tangible outcomes for the people, with projects and interventions spread across the state's three senatorial districts.

Speaking during the visit, Vice-Chairman of Leadership Newspaper, Michael Okpere, said the publication's annual awards were designed to recognise individuals whose per-

formances and contributions had made significant impacts on society.

He explained that a 54-member panel assessed public officials and their performance before arriving at the nominees across 21 award categories, including Person of the Year, Governor of the Year, Civil Servant of the Year and Banker of the Year.

According to him, the panel reviewed the performances of state governors for 2026, as it did in the previous year, but shortlisted five nominees this time, compared with six in 2025.

"We've come to inform you of your nomination as Leadership Governor of the Year 2026. In the last 18 to 19 years, Leadership Newspaper sits down

every year with about 54 persons to examine policies and happenings in Nigeria, with the intention to reward society and deserving people," Okpere said.

He added that the selection process was based on the panel's assessment of the governors' performances and that Okpebholo emerged among

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Edo Gov. presents 2026 Supplementary Appropriation Bill to State Assembly

...Lawmakers refer emergency management agency bill to committee

IYALEKHUE GRACE / RAYMOND OSEGBE

BENIN CITY

The Edo State House of Assembly has received the 2026 Supplementary Appropriation Bill presented by Governor Monday Okpebholo for legislative consideration and approval.

The Speaker of the House, Mr Yekini Idaiye, announced the receipt of the proposed

legislation during Monday's plenary after reading a letter from the governor formally transmitting the bill to the leg-

islature for necessary action.

Idaiye said the bill would be listed on the House Order Paper for consideration at a later date, adding that the proposed supplementary budget would undergo the requisite legislative scrutiny before the lawmakers take a decision on its approval.

In a related development, the Assembly referred a bill seeking to establish the Edo State Emergency Management Agency to the House Committee on Environment and Sustainability for further legislative

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NOMINATION FOR AWARD:

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo (Right) in a hand shake with the Vice-chairman, Leadership Newspaper, Michael Okpere, during a visit by a delegation of the newspaper to the Government House, Benin City, on Tuesday

INEC: Over 6,000 voters collect PVCs in Edo

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Nigeria's reserves hit \$55bn, beats CBN's full-year target by \$4bn

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Russia's offensive ability is broken, Kyiv's former top general says

—Pg 8

LA Olympics Qualifier: Super falcons whip comoros, faces Morocco next

—Pg 12

NEWS



PLENARY SESSION:

Hon. Aghedo Sunday, member representing Ovia South West Constituency, Edo State House of Assembly (standing) presenting the request of the State Governor to increase the number of Local Government Special Advisers to five for each Local Government Area during the House plenary session, with Hon Natasha Irobosa Osawaru (right). Photo: Godwin Iseguan.

INEC: Over 6,000 voters collect PVCs in Edo

BY OLIVER IJIOGBE

BENIN CITY

More than 6,000 eligible voters in Edo State have collected their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) since the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) commenced its ward-to-ward collection exercise on Friday, October 9, 2026.

The commission disclosed this in a statement signed by its Public Affairs Officer in Edo State, Olaiwola Toyin.

According to the statement, the ward-to-ward collection exercise will end on Thursday, October 15, 2026, after which PVC collection will commence at the local government area

level.

Toyin described the collection process as simple and time-saving, urging eligible voters who are yet to collect their cards to take advantage of the ongoing exercise before the

deadline.

She emphasised the importance of obtaining PVCs to enable eligible voters to participate in elections, calling on members of the public who are yet to collect their cards to do

so within the stipulated period.

The commission urged eligible voters to use the remaining days of the exercise to collect their cards and avoid missing the opportunity to do so at the ward level.

SDP chairman urges Edo voters to collect PVCs before deadline

BY OLIVER IJIOGBE

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Chairman of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Comrade Imonikhe Kelly Roland-Bello, has urged eligible voters in the state who are yet to collect their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) to do so before the Thursday, October 15, 2026 deadline for the ongoing ward-level collec-

tion exercise.

Roland-Bello made the appeal while addressing journalists in Edo State, stressing the importance of PVC collection ahead of the 2027 general elections.

He urged eligible voters to take advantage of the ongoing exercise, noting that collecting their PVCs is essential for those seeking to participate in the electoral process.

The SDP chairman also ad-

vised voters to prepare for the second phase of the exercise, which will be conducted at the local government level following the conclusion of the ward-level collection.

He emphasised the need for eligible voters to take the exercise seriously and ensure they collect their cards within the stipulated period to avoid missing the opportunity before the deadline.

Ewuare II reconstitutes Erediauwa

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to remain committed as shakers and movers of modern African history and civilisation," he said.

The lecture, themed "Oba Erediauwa's Voice in Discourse: Defining His Intellectual Legacy," examined the late monarch's contributions to scholarship, governance, traditional institutions and the development of Benin society.

In a significant development ahead of the formal inauguration of the memorial lecture series, Oba Ewuare II announced the dissolution of the committee established nine years ago to organise the initiative.

The monarch attributed the decision to what he described as lethargy in the discharge of the committee's royal assignments. The dissolved committee was chaired by Prof. Sam Guobadia, with Prince Aghatise Erediauwa also playing a leading role.

He subsequently appoint-

ed Prof. Osarhiemen Benson Osadolor, a professor of history at the University of Benin and keynote speaker at the event, as the new chairman of the Oba Erediauwa Memorial Lecture Series Committee.

The inaugural edition of the lecture series is scheduled for March 23, 2027, coinciding with the anniversary of Oba Erediauwa's coronation in 1979.

The initiative is expected to provide a platform for sustained scholarly engagement with the late monarch's ideas, public service and enduring contributions to traditional governance and intellectual discourse.

In his welcome address, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Benin, Prof. Edoba Omorie, SAN, described Oba Erediauwa as an erudite scholar, a moral compass and a monarch whose intellectual depth and personal integrity enhanced the prestige of the Benin monarchy.

Omorie also commended Oba Ewuare II for his leadership and support for the university's development initiatives, particularly in endowment funding, research, the arts, technology and environmental conservation.

He stressed the importance of the monarch's continued engagement with the institution, describing such support as valuable to the advancement of scholarship and the preservation of cultural heritage.

In his keynote presentation, Prof. Osadolor described Oba Erediauwa as a monarch of outstanding reputation whose intellectual influence extended beyond the traditional institution.

He recalled that the late monarch's books and articles had contributed to public discourse and influenced government policies even before his ascension to the Benin throne.

Among the publications he cited were I Remain, Sir, Your Obedient Servant and The Cra-

dle of Ideas, which he identified as important works for understanding the late monarch's intellectual orientation and commitment to public service.

Osadolor emphasised the need to document, interrogate and preserve Oba Erediauwa's ideas for the benefit of future generations of scholars, traditional rulers and policymakers.

Chairman of the 10th coronation anniversary committee and former Deputy Governor of Edo State, Chief Lucky Imasuen, commended the management of the University of Benin for its support towards the successful organisation of the event.

The lecture attracted members of the Benin Royal Family, academics, traditional titleholders and other dignitaries, including Princes Aghatise Erediauwa, Osama Erediauwa and Ehioze Erediauwa.

Also in attendance were the Chairman of the University of Benin Governing Council, Prof. Shuaibu Umoru, and a former Secretary to the Edo State Government, Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu.

...Leadership Newspaper's Governor of the Year

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those considered worthy of the recognition.

"Our mission here is to invite you to the event and kindly ask that you make yourself available to receive the award. On the podium that day, you will have four brother governors from other states," he said.

Also speaking, the Director of Conferences and Awards, Abraham Nda-Isaiah, highlighted what he described as key interventions by the Okpebholo administration, particularly in security, education, infrastructure and healthcare.

He noted that security remained fundamental to effective governance and sustainable development, adding that the administration's interventions in the education sector, particularly at Ambrose Alli University (AAU), Ekpoma, and Edo State University, Uzairue, were among the considerations for the nomination.

Isaiah cited the reported increase in the state government's subvention to AAU from N41 million to more than N500 million, as well as an allocation of N250 million to Edo State University, Uzairue.

He also pointed to road construction and rehabilitation projects across the three senatorial districts, the Ramat Park flyover project and interventions in healthcare, including the state health insurance scheme.

"Over 500 roads are being constructed, completed and ongoing across the three senatorial districts in the state, alongside the flyover bridge at Ramat Park and healthcare interventions, especially the health insurance scheme," he said.

Isaiah said the administration's interventions across different sectors of the state's

economy informed the newspaper's decision to nominate the governor.

"Your performance is protecting the future of the state and giving it a better future. These and many more qualified you for the award, as you fitted in amongst the governors to receive the award," he added.

Responding, Governor Okpebholo expressed appreciation for the nomination, describing his commitment to developing Edo State as a responsibility he had embraced long before assuming office.

The governor said his approach to governance was rooted in a longstanding disposition towards service and a determination to continue improving the lives of Edo people.

"Welcome to Edo State. I am happy to see you, and thank you for bringing me good news. I see what I do as a way of life, and I am not doing something special," he said.

"This is how I have been behaving before I contested. I am happy to continue to develop the state."

Expressing delight over the recognition, Okpebholo pledged to sustain his administration's development efforts, praying for the strength to do more for the people.

"I am delighted with the award and so grateful, and pray for more strength to continue to work and do more for Edo people. I will be physically present on that day," the governor added.

The nomination places renewed attention on the Okpebholo administration's emphasis on practical governance, with the December ceremony expected to bring together other nominated governors and distinguished Nigerians to celebrate leadership and public service.

...Okpebholo presents 2026 budget to Edo Assembly

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consideration.

The referral followed a motion moved by the Majority Leader, Mr Sunday Ojezele, and seconded by the member representing Ovia North-East II, Mr Charity Aiguoarueghian.

Leading the debate on the proposed legislation, Ojezele said the establishment of the agency would provide a legal and operational framework for coordinating emergency response, safeguarding lives and property, and strengthening the state's capacity to manage disasters.

He identified seasonal flooding and environmental challenges arising from prolonged dry weather as some of the

emergencies that the proposed agency would be equipped to address.

Other lawmakers who contributed to the debate supported the initiative, emphasising the need for a coordinated and effective emergency management system to respond promptly to disasters and mitigate their impact on affected communities.

They noted that establishing the agency would provide the necessary legal backing for dedicated budgetary allocations and facilitate the distribution of relief materials to communities affected by emergencies.

Following deliberations, the Speaker referred the bill to the Committee on Environment and Sustainability for further legislative work.

NEWS

Nigeria's reserves hit \$55bn, beats CBN's full-year target by \$4bn

OSEMUDIAMHEN O.
FAITH

ABUJA

Nigeria's gross external reserves have risen to \$55.07 billion as of October 8, 2026, exceeding the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) full-year projection of \$51.04

billion by more than \$4 billion.

Data from the CBN showed that reserves increased by \$116 million in six days, from \$54.95 billion on October 2 to \$55.07 billion on October 8, extending the sustained accretion recorded in September.

The build-up pushed the country's external buffers to their highest level in over 18

years and took total accumulation since September 1 to about \$1.17 billion.

A breakdown of the figures showed a steady climb in the first week of October. Reserves stood at \$54.95 billion on October 2, rose to \$54.98 billion on October 5, held steady at \$54.98 billion on October 6, before climbing to \$55.05 billion on

October 7 and \$55.07 billion on October 8.

The performance follows a strong September, when reserves grew by \$1.03 billion, from \$53.90 billion at the start of the month to \$54.93 billion at month-end. Between September 24 and 30 alone, reserves rose from \$54.86 billion to \$54.93 billion.

Analysts said the sustained growth in reserves strengthens Nigeria's capacity to meet external payment obligations and boosts confidence in the foreign exchange market.

They, however, cautioned that the gross reserve figure does not imply the entire amount is freely available for market intervention, as the

composition of reserve assets and associated foreign-currency liabilities determine usability.

While daily movements may reflect foreign exchange inflows, official payments and valuation changes, the CBN data indicate that reserve accumulation has continued into the fourth quarter.



MEETING:

From left: Former Governor of Plateau, Simon Lalong; former Minister of Defence, Muhammed Abubakar; former Governor of Kano State, Ibrahim Shakarau and Vice President Kashim Shettima, during the Vice President's meeting with Arewa for Asiwaju (A4A) at the Presidential Villa in Abuja.

Dangote Refinery extends N2.1trn IPO to Oct 27 on strong demand

... Refinery offers 4.1bn shares at N525 each as SEC approves two-week extension to boost pan-African participation

OSEMUDIAMHEN O.
FAITH

LAGOS

Dangote Petroleum Refinery and Petrochemicals FZE has extended its N2.15 trillion Initial Public Offering (IPO) by two weeks to October 27, 2026, following approval by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

The offer, which opened on September 14, was initially scheduled to close on October 13, 2026.

The company said the extension is intended to expand access to the offer across African

markets and enable prospective investors to complete regulatory and account-opening requirements.

Under the offer, the refinery is selling 4.1 billion ordinary shares at N525 per share, valuing the transaction at N2.1525 trillion — one of the largest equity offerings in Nigeria's capital market history.

In a notice to the investing public, the company said it has received strong interest from eligible investors across Africa and other jurisdictions since the launch of the IPO.

It explained that the extension would support the expansion of distribution channels

and the implementation of depository receipt programmes designed to facilitate cross-border participation.

The additional time will also allow prospective investors to conclude account opening, identity verification and other regulatory procedures required to subscribe.

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Dangote Petroleum Refinery and Petrochemicals, David Bird, said the move was aimed at widening access to the offer.

"We welcome the SEC's approval of the extension, which will give more investors across Africa the opportunity to par-

ticipate in the offer. From the outset, our ambition has been to enable as many people as possible to participate in the IPO and share in DPRP's future growth. The additional time will help us extend that opportunity to more investors across Africa," Bird said.

Under the revised timetable, the application list will now close on October 27, while collation of returns is scheduled for November 3.

The submission of the basis of allotment proposal and draft allotment announcement to the SEC is slated for November 10, with the regulator's no-objection expected on November 17.

CBN tightens risk rules to safeguard recapitalization gains

OSEMUDIAMHEN FAITH /
AGHEDO IYOBOR

LAGOS

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has introduced a risk-based capital requirement framework to strengthen the resilience of the banking sector and safeguard gains from the ongoing recapitalisation exercise.

The framework, contained in guidelines issued in March 2026, requires banks to maintain capital levels that reflect the nature, scale, complexity and risk profile of their operations, rather than a uniform industry-wide Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR).

The CBN said the shift would prevent a recurrence of the financial distress that necessitated recapitalisation, while ensuring lenders have sufficient buffers to absorb losses during periods of economic stress.

Speaking at the 37th Finance Correspondents Association of Nigeria (FICAN) conference in Abuja, the Director of Banking Supervision, Dr. Olubukola Akinwunmi, said the policy would ensure banks remain resilient after recapitalisation.

"It is not just about maintaining a minimum capital requirement. It is about maintaining a capital requirement that speaks to the level of risk exposure or risk-taking that a bank has decided to embark on based on its business model," he said.

Under the new regime, banks with significant concentration risks, foreign exchange exposures, governance weaknesses or complex business operations will be required to hold higher capital buffers than less-exposed lenders.

The regulator will deploy forward-looking stress tests to assess banks' capacity to withstand losses from deteriorating loan quality, sectoral shocks and macroeconomic disruptions. The tests will cover on-balance-sheet and off-balance-sheet exposures over a 12-month horizon, factoring in exposure at default, credit classification, provisions, col-

lateral values and risk-weighted assets.

The CBN said it is also intensifying enforcement against insider lending, which it identified as a major threat to corporate governance and depositor funds.

Akinwunmi disclosed that some bank owners, shareholders and directors had exited the industry following stricter enforcement of insider credit rules introduced in February 2025.

He warned that directors risk losing their positions if insider lending persists.

"If there is poor corporate governance, if insider credit pervades the industry, in a short time, we will all live to see a repeat of the problem that we have battled or we have dealt with through recapitalisation," he said.

He added that the apex bank had ended forbearances on single-obligor limits and is enforcing stricter compliance to prevent excessive lending to individual borrowers or connected parties.

Similarly, the CBN is enforcing the 10 per cent cap on banks' investments in offshore subsidiaries relative to shareholders' funds, as provided in the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act (BOFIA) 2020. He clarified that it was not a new rule but an existing provision now being strictly enforced.

The CBN is also strengthening supervision through its Supervisory Examination Application, a digital platform that enables remote examinations, secure information exchange and auditable supervisory records.

According to Akinwunmi, the platform has artificial intelligence capabilities that capture the knowledge of senior examiners for use by younger supervisors.

The measures complement the recapitalisation programme announced in March 2024, which raised minimum capital requirements by licence category to boost banks' loss-absorption capacity and support economic growth.

INEC disowns fake governorship candidates' list in six states

AIYEVBOSE OGBEBOR

ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has dismissed as fake a publication circulating online that purportedly contains a special announcement on governorship candidates in six states ahead of the 2027 elections.

The commission, in a statement shared on its verified X handle on Monday, October 12, urged members of the public to disregard the publication,

describing it as fraudulent and not originating from the electoral body.

The affected states are Zamfara, Gombe, Delta, Plateau, Yobe and Kano.

INEC clarified that contrary to claims in the circulating document, it had not issued any special announcement concerning governorship candidates in the six states.

"The Commission wishes to categorically inform the general public that the publication is FAKE and did not originate from INEC," the statement read.

The electoral umpire advised Nigerians to rely exclusively on its official communication channels, including its website, verified social media accounts and INEC News Portal, for accurate information on electoral matters.

It also urged the public to remain vigilant and verify election-related information before sharing it to prevent the spread of misleading or fraudulent content.

The commission provided its public contact channels, including its call centre and official email address, for enquir-

ies and further clarification.

INEC's warning comes days after the release of the final list of candidates for the 2027 governorship elections, a development that has generated controversy in several states following the omission of some candidates' names.

The commission reiterated its commitment to providing accurate electoral information and called on Nigerians to disregard the fake publication and seek clarification only through its verified communication channels.



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LONG MAY HE REIGN

Tinubu transmits NDLEA, NSIB amendment bills to Senate

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu on Tuesday transmitted two bills seeking to overhaul Nigeria's drug enforcement framework and expand the investigative powers of the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau to the Senate for consideration.

The bills, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency Bill 2026 and the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau Amendment Bill 2026, were forwarded to the upper chamber in

separate letters addressed to the Senate President, Godswill Akpabio.

The proposed legislation seeks to consolidate existing laws on drug-related offences and reposition the NSIB as an independent, multimodal safety investigation authority with jurisdiction beyond aviation accidents.

Both bills were transmitted pursuant to Section 58(2) of the 1999 Constitution, as amended, which provides for the presentation of bills to the President for assent after passage by the National Assembly.

In his letter on the NDLEA Bill, Tinubu said the proposed legislation would repeal the existing NDLEA Act and the Indian Hemp Act and establish a consolidated legal framework for combating drug-related offences.

According to the President, the bill seeks to strengthen enforcement against the cultivation, processing, sale, trafficking and use of illicit drugs, while empowering the agency to investigate persons suspected of involvement in drug-related activities.

The letter reads, "The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency Bill 2026 seeks to repeal the National Drug Law

Enforcement Agency Act, Cap. N30, and the Indian Hemp Act, Cap. I16, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004, and to enact a consolidated framework to enforce the law against the cultivation, processing, sale, trafficking and use of hard drugs."

Tinubu urged the Senate to give the proposed legislation expeditious consideration.

"While looking forward to the usual expeditious consideration of this submission, please accept, Distinguished Senate President and Distinguished Senators, the assurances of my highest consideration," the letter stated.

Following its presentation,

Akpabio referred the NDLEA Bill to the Senate Committee on Rules and Business for further legislative action.

In a separate letter, the President transmitted the NSIB Amendment Bill 2026, seeking changes to the legal framework governing the bureau.

The proposed amendment seeks to amend the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (Establishment) Act No. 35 of 2022 to strengthen the bureau's independence and expand its mandate to cover accidents and incidents involving multiple modes of transportation.

Under the proposed changes, the bureau's investigative responsibilities would extend

beyond aviation to include rail, maritime and other transport-related occurrences.

The bill also seeks to transfer supervisory oversight of the bureau to the Presidency and strengthen its institutional, operational and administrative powers.

The proposed expansion comes amid renewed attention to aviation safety following the October 5 crash of a Nigerian Air Force ATR-42 aircraft near Igbokoda in Ondo State, which reportedly killed 32 people.

The Senate has since called for a comprehensive investigation into the crash and an audit of military aircraft serviceability and maintenance funding.

Edo Govt Seeks National Commission's Support for Persons With Disabilities

ABDUL-KADIR ABDUL-LAH

ABUJA

The Edo State Government has sought the support of the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) to improve the welfare, inclusion and political participation of persons with disabilities in the state.

The Special Adviser to Governor Monday Okpebholo on Disability Matters, Comrade Yunusa Abdulsalam Adepoju, made the appeal on Monday, during a courtesy visit to the Commission's Director of Social Integration, Lawrence Idemudia Edelife, in Abuja.

Adepoju said the state government was exploring ways to strengthen support for persons with disabilities, noting that government alone could not address all the challenges confronting the community.

He disclosed that the administration was planning to conduct a comprehensive data

exercise to establish the number and needs of persons with disabilities in Edo State, which would help the government attract international support and develop targeted intervention programmes.

According to him, reliable data would provide the foundation for effective planning and enable the government to identify opportunities for collaboration with development partners.

He said, "It is an effort striving to see how we can affect people of the Edo State disability community. Government alone cannot do it."

"We are planning to carry out a project to have comprehensive data on persons with disabilities in Edo. We need it to be able to attract international support."

The Special Adviser also emphasised the need to promote political participation among persons with disabilities ahead of the forthcoming elections, stressing that members of the community should be encouraged and supported to exercise their voting rights.



MEDIA ROUNDTABLE:

Gender Based Violence Officer, Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment (AGILE), Enugu State, Ms Uchenwa Aneke; Enugu State Project Coordinator of AGILE, Dr Ebele-Georgina Chukwu-Onuora; Component 1.2 Lead Enugu State AGILE, Mr Alex Ugwunnadi and Grievance Redress Officer of AGILE, Ms Nnenna Anih, during a media roundtable on Enugu State Government in collaboration with the World Bank Project on 267 Schools Safe Learning Environments in Enugu.

Airport takeover: Tinubu seeks Reps' backing for N100.5bn refund to Yobe

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu has urged the House of Representatives to approve a N100.5bn promissory note programme to reimburse the Yobe State Government for the takeover of the Muhammadu Buhari International Airport in Damaturu, the state capital.

The request was conveyed in a letter read by the Speaker, Mr Tajudeen Abbas, during plenary on Tuesday, as lawmakers resumed legislative business after their annual recess.

Under the proposal, the Federal Government would reimburse Yobe State for the cost of the airport through a promissory note to be issued by the Debt Management Office.

Tinubu said the Federal Executive Council approved the takeover of the airport, constructed by the state government, at an extraordinary meeting held on May 23, 2023, alongside a decision to reimburse the state through the

promissory note arrangement.

"I write to request the approval of the House of Representatives for the establishment of a promissory note programme for the reimbursement of the Yobe State Government for the takeover of Muhammadu Buhari International Airport, Damaturu," the letter read in part.

He disclosed that the Bureau of Public Procurement had reviewed the project and recommended N100,509,017,255 as the amount payable to the state.

"In the light of the foregoing, I urge the House of Representatives to consider and approve the establishment and issuance by the Debt Management Office of a promissory note programme in the sum of N100,509,017,255 for the reimbursement of the Yobe State Government for the takeover of Muhammadu Buhari International Airport, Damaturu," Tinubu said.

The proposed reimbursement would formalise the Federal Government's financial obligation to

Yobe State following the airport's takeover. However, the request remains subject to consideration and approval by the National Assembly.

In separate communications to the House, the President transmitted the National Research Development Fund Bill for consideration, alongside proposed legislation on the Geneva Conventions and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

The two international-law proposals are the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols Bill, 2026, and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court Enforcement Bill, 2026.

In his letter transmitting the bills, Tinubu stated, "Pursuant to Section 50A of Section 2 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), I forward herewith the Geneva Convention and Additional Protocols Bill 2026 and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court Enforcement Bill 2026 for the kind consideration of the House of Representatives."

Atiku aide questions funding sources of FCT minister's media parleys

ABUJA

Media adviser to former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, Paul Ibe, has asked the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike, to publish invoices and disclose the funding sources for live broadcasts of his media engagements.

Ibe made the call in a post on X on Tuesday, questioning the cost of a media parley featuring Wike and broadcast by several television and radio outlets.

Ibe estimated that at between 10m and 20m per station per hour, eight stations broadcasting for two hours could cost between 160m and 320m per session.

He further calculated that 12 monthly sessions could amount to between 1.92bn and 3.84bn.

However, the figures were estimates provided by Ibe and were not independently verified.

He said residents of the FCT deserved to know how much was being spent on the broadcasts

and how much airtime was devoted to issues affecting the territory.

"There is nothing wrong with a minister explaining his stewardship. But public resources must serve public purposes, not personal political battles," Ibe wrote.

He questioned the focus of Wike's media engagements, arguing that they should prioritise infrastructure and public services rather than political disagreements.

"FCT residents deserve to know how much is being spent on these broadcasts and how much airtime is devoted to FCT development, rather than Wike's political disagreements with Atiku, Amaechi, Obi, ADC and NDC," he wrote.

Ibe also called on the minister to disclose the details of payments allegedly made for the broadcasts.

"Minister Wike, publish the invoices. Identify the stations paid, the amounts, the funding

sources and the relevant budget lines," he wrote.

He argued that the public had a right to know whether the broadcasts were funded with public money and, if so, the budgetary provisions under which the expenditure was made.

"The FCT treasury is not Wike's personal political broadcasting account. Public office is not a licence to convert public funds into private political publicity," Ibe added.

The post followed Wike's media parley in Abuja, where the minister discussed his administration's projects and political support for President Bola Tinubu ahead of the 2027 general election.

Ibe's post did not provide documentary evidence of the estimated broadcast costs or establish the source of funding for the media engagement.

When contacted, the FCT Minister's spokesperson, Lere Olayinka, was unable to provide an immediate response to our correspondent's enquiry.

NEWS

Attacks: Catholic diocese shuts schools, hospital in Benue gov's hometown

MAKURDI

The Catholic Diocese of Gboko has ordered the immediate closure of its institutions in Ihugh community in the Vandeikya Local Government Area of Benue State.

The institutions affected include St Winifred Girls Secondary School, Ihugh; St Thomas Hospital, Ihugh; St Winifred Nursery and Prima-

ry School, Ihugh; and St Winifred Parish, Ihugh.

The directive also ordered the withdrawal of pastoral agents from the community.

Ihugh is the hometown of the state governor, Rev Fr Hyacinth Alia, who, before his suspension in 2023 following his interest in contesting the governorship of the state, was a Catholic priest under the Gboko Diocese.

The letter conveying the

directive was signed by the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Gboko, Most Rev William A. Avenya, and the diocesan chancellor, Rev Fr Marcellinus Wende and made available to PUNCH Online on Tuesday.

Titled "On the Temporary Closure of Catholic Institutions and the Withdrawal of Pastoral Agents from Ihugh," the letter said the diocese's decision followed repeated attacks on Catholic institutions in the community since 2024.

Parts of the letter read, "Over a considerable period, the Catholic institutions in Ihugh have suffered repeated disturbances, attacks and acts of destruction.

"Among these were the recent burning down of the students' hostels of St. Winifred Secondary School, Ihugh, October 28th, 2025, May 10th, 2026, May 15th, 2026, and October 11th, 2026, acts that have destroyed the shelter of young people entrusted to our

care, wiped out the labour and sacrifices of many years, and placed the lives and safety of students, teachers and staff in grave danger.

"The persistent burning down of St. Winifred Secondary School Students' hostels was not an isolated event. The consistent burglary issues in St. Winifred Parish, Ihugh, the repeated criminal incidents at St. Thomas Hospital, Ihugh, and the hooliganism witnessed during the time of the reopening of St. Thomas' Hospital Ihugh on 21st June, 2024, wherein, the people of Ihugh openly projected placards and chanting slogans that, 'They no longer want the Reverend Sisters to work in Ihugh'.

"These acts are identified as part of a systemic pattern of hostility and destruction directed at Church-owned properties, alongside arson and harassment. Each incident

has left behind fear, loss and uncertainty among those who serve and are served by the Church."

The diocese said that before arriving at the decision, it had met with the host community, engaged traditional rulers and elders, and presented the grievances to the relevant civil and security authorities.

"Sadly, these sincere efforts have not yielded the peace, security and guarantees that the continued presence of our institutions requires.

"We have done all that depends on us. The attacks have continued, and no assurance of lasting safety has been secured," the letter further read.

As an alternative, the diocese said pupils and students of the primary and secondary schools would be assisted to continue their education in other Catholic schools within the diocese.



OVERSIGHT VISIT:

Chairman of the Senate Committee on the South-East Development Commission, Sen. Orji Kalu (3rd,R); Managing Director of South East Development Commission (SEDC), Mr Mark Okoye (R) with members of SEDC executive management and the senate committee on SEDC, during the committee's oversight visit to the commission to assess its facilities, ongoing preparations and operational readiness in Enugu State on Tuesday.

NAF sets up 12-member board to probe Ondo air crash

ABUJA

The Nigerian Air Force has constituted a 12-member Aircraft Accident Investigation Board to investigate the crash involving its ATR 42 aircraft, NAF 931, in Igbokoda, Ondo State.

The aircraft crashed on October 5, 2026, killing all on board.

The NAF disclosed this in a press release on Tuesday, saying the board would establish the circumstances surrounding the accident, determine its causes and recommend measures to prevent a recurrence.

The statement signed by

the Director of Public Relations and Information, Headquarters Nigerian Air Force, Air Commodore Ehimen Ejodame, said the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Sunday Aneke, had directed sustained search and recovery efforts alongside a comprehensive investigation.

It added that Air Vice Marshal FO Ankeli would serve as president of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Board, while Air Vice Marshal EOE Ebiowe, head of the Investigation and Recovery Team, would coordinate the wider response.

"The 12-member board comprises experienced person-

nel with specialist expertise in aviation operations, flight safety, piloting, air traffic control, aircraft engineering, maintenance, medical services and other relevant technical disciplines," the statement read.

It added that the board included representatives of the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority and the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau to provide additional civilian aviation expertise.

According to the NAF, the board would examine operational, technical, environmental, human and organisational factors surrounding the accident.

"Its work will involve the

systematic examination, documentation and preservation of relevant evidence to establish the facts and determine the immediate and underlying causes of the occurrence," the statement read.

The investigation will also assess the emergency response, including search and rescue, medical response, recovery operations and management of the crash site.

The NAF said the board would make evidence-based recommendations to address any identified deficiencies, strengthen aviation safety and reduce the likelihood of similar accidents.

Ondo air crash: Senate seeks audit of NAF aircraft, maintenance funds

ABUJA

The Senate on Tuesday called for a comprehensive audit of Nigerian Air Force aircraft and their maintenance funding following a crash in Igbokoda, Ondo State, which killed 25 people.

The upper chamber also directed its relevant committees to scrutinise budgetary provisions for aircraft maintenance to determine whether inadequate funding or other lapses contributed to recurring military air crashes.

The resolutions followed a motion sponsored by Senator Osita Ngwu, representing Enugu West, on the October 5 crash of a Nigerian Air Force ATR-42 aircraft near the Naval Base in Igbokoda, headquarters of Ilaje Local Government Area of Ondo State.

According to the motion, the aircraft, tail number NGR 931, carried 25 passengers and seven crew members on a routine flight from Benin City to Lagos when it crashed.

The Senate noted that air traffic controllers lost contact with the aircraft at about 9:13 am, while attempts to reach the crew by radio proved unsuccessful before a search-and-rescue operation located the wreckage.

The lawmakers expressed concern over recurring military aviation accidents and the loss of personnel, raising questions about aircraft maintenance, ageing fleets, operational safety protocols and airworthiness.

They warned that failure to conduct a transparent and comprehensive investigation could prevent the authorities from identifying the under-

lying causes of the crash and taking measures to avert future occurrences.

In its resolutions, the Senate observed a minute's silence in honour of the victims and extended condolences to President Bola Tinubu, the Chief of the Air Staff, the Nigerian Air Force, the Ondo State Government and the families of those who died.

It urged the Nigerian Air Force and the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau to conduct a thorough, transparent and comprehensive investigation into the immediate and remote causes of the crash and make their findings public.

The chamber also mandated its committees on Air Force and Aviation to visit the crash site, engage NAF authorities and conduct a holistic audit of the serviceability and airworthiness of aircraft in the presidential and military fleets.

The Senate further urged the Federal Government to prioritise funding for regular maintenance and the replacement of ageing military aircraft.

Seconding the motion, the senator representing Borno North, Tahir Monguno, called on the relevant committees to "conduct a comprehensive audit of aircraft in the NAF fleet."

"The exercise should establish their serviceability, operational readiness and airworthiness to prevent a recurrence," he said.

The senator representing Edo North, Adams Oshiomhole, proposed an additional prayer asking the Senate to "direct the leadership of the Nigerian Air Force to submit its aircraft maintenance budgetary provisions to the relevant Senate committee."

FG urges varsities to adopt AI, strengthen regulatory compliance

ABUJA

The Federal Government has urged Nigerian universities to embrace artificial intelligence and digital technologies while strengthening regulatory compliance, governance and accountability to improve the quality of higher education.

The Minister of State for Education, Prof. Suwaiba Ahmad, made the call on Tuesday while declaring open the 2026 retreat of the NUC and Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian universities in Abuja.

Ahmad said the rapid trans-

formation of higher education globally, driven by artificial intelligence, digital learning, data analytics and changing research and funding models, required universities to review their policies and practices to remain competitive.

She, however, cautioned that adopting AI must go hand in hand with safeguards on academic integrity, ethics, data protection and responsible use, urging institutions to develop appropriate policies to guide its application.

The minister said, "In modern times, university systems all over the world are greatly

being influenced by artificial intelligence, digital learning, data analytics, virtual laboratories, online academic resources, quality assurance agencies' review, changing funding models, innovation, research and development, workforce productivity, graduate employability, and international competitiveness, amongst others."

She described the retreat, which is being held from October 13 to 14 at the NUC headquarters in Abuja, as timely, noting that the challenges confronting Nigerian universities could not be addressed through isolated institutional efforts or regulatory di-

rectives alone.

According to her, stronger collaboration between the commission and university managements is necessary to ensure effective policy implementation and compliance with established standards.

The retreat is themed, "Enhancing Regulatory Compliance, Governance, Leadership, and Partnership in the Nigerian University System."

Ahmad said universities must go beyond awarding degrees to become centres of knowledge creation, research, innovation, character development and industrial transformation.

Wike defends Rainbow Coalition, dismisses APC govs' fears

ABUJA

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike, has defended the Rainbow Coalition backing President Bola Tinubu's re-election, dismissing concerns that the initiative could create divisions within the All Progressives Congress.

Wike said the coalition was designed to strengthen Tinubu's electoral chances by bringing together APC members and supporters of the President from other political parties.

The former Rivers State governor spoke during a media parley in Abuja on Tuesday, explaining that the initiative was aimed at mobilising broader support for Tinubu rather than undermining the

ruling party.

"If you see that word, PBT/APC, it means those who are supporting the president who are not members of the party, together with the party, are working together to achieve that purpose," Wike said.

He cited Borno State Governor Babagana Zulum and Osun State Governor Ademola Adeleke as examples of political figures associated with the coalition's state-level coordination, alongside himself.

Wike maintained that the APC remained the platform through which Tinubu would seek re-election, while supporters from other parties could contribute to the same objective.

"The major thing is Mr President. Whatever we are going to do, whoever has any idea or anything to contribute

is to the success of Mr President. That is the whole thing," he said.

The minister also dismissed suggestions that the coalition had unsettled APC governors or could trigger defections from the ruling party.

"I don't know what concerns there are. As far as I am concerned, there is no problem," he said.

Using the FCT as an example, Wike recalled appeal-

ing to political stakeholders to support Tinubu and APC candidates for the National Assembly while allowing supporters of other parties to back candidates of their choice at other levels.

He said political circumstances differed from one state to another, making it necessary to accommodate local interests while pursuing a common national objective.

According to him, political

leadership requires persuading supporters from different backgrounds to embrace a shared goal.

Wike also rejected suggestions that the arrangement was entirely new in Nigerian politics, arguing that political figures had previously supported presidential candidates outside their parties while maintaining separate interests at the state level.

He said the current political

environment had, however, made such cooperation more visible and formalised.

The minister maintained that the coalition's primary objective was to secure Tinubu's re-election and sustain what he described as the President's achievements.

He urged Nigerians to assess Tinubu's performance on its merits rather than allow partisan considerations to determine their judgment.

Appeal Court reserves judgment in SERAP's N100m defamation case

ABUJA

The Court of Appeal in Abuja has reserved judgment in an appeal filed by the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project against the N100m defamation judgment awarded against it by the Federal Capital Territory High Court.

A three-member panel presided over by Justice Danlami SENCHI reserved judgment on Tuesday after hearing arguments from SERAP's counsel, Tayo Oyetibo, SAN, and counsel for the first and second respondents, O.S. Kehinde.

The appeal challenges the judgment delivered on May 5, 2026, by Justice Yusuf Halilu.

Arguing the appeal, Oyetibo contended that the trial court lacked jurisdiction to award damages in favour of Sarah John over a publication allegedly referring to Sarah David.

He also questioned how the trial court verified the description of a "tall, large, dark-skinned" woman without a photograph, urging the appellate court to allow the appeal.

However, Kehinde urged the court to dismiss the appeal, arguing that SERAP failed to establish that Sarah John and Sarah David were different persons.

He added that a person could identify themselves from a publication through the description provided, even if their name was not expressly mentioned.

The court also struck out applications by Columbia University, the United Nations

Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of assembly, and the Southern Africa Litigation Centre seeking to participate in the appeal as amici curiae.



Wife of the Olu of Warri, Ivie Atuwatse; Olu of Warri, Ogiame Atuwatse III; Alafin of Oyo, Oba Abimbola Owoade; Minister of Youth Development, Mr Ayodele Olawande; Gov. Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State, his wife Dr Ibijoke; President Tinubu's son, Seyi Tinubu and the Oniru of Iru Kingdom, Oba Abdulwasiiu Omogbolahan, during Seyi Tinubu's Colloquium theme: "Shaping The Future Together" in Lagos on Monday

Coronation anniversary: Hoteliers offer Oba of Benin 60% discount on 600 hotel rooms

BY ISAAC ERANGA

BENIN CITY

The Business & Hoteliers Stakeholders Forum (BHSF), Edo State, has announced a 60 per cent discount on approximately 600 hotel rooms to accommodate guests attending the forthcoming coronation anniversary of the Oba of Benin, His Royal Majesty, Oba Ewuare II.

The initiative is aimed at supporting the successful hosting of the anniversary cel-

ebration while demonstrating the hospitality sector's solidarity with the revered Benin monarch and the Benin Kingdom.

Chairman of the forum, Chief Dr. Omogiade Edokpolo, who is also the Chief Executive Officer of Canada World, announced the initiative in Benin City.

The gesture underscores the commitment of the organised hospitality and business community to promoting Edo State as a welcoming destination for visitors, tourists and

other dignitaries attending major cultural events.

The BHSF, established in 2024 and officially registered in 2025, is an advocacy and networking platform that brings together business owners, hoteliers, hospitality operators, entrepreneurs, investors and service providers across Edo State.

Operating under the slogan, "Stronger Businesses Through Unity!", the forum seeks to strengthen collective representation, promote business growth and protect the

interests of its members.

Its objectives include advocating fair economic policies, addressing concerns over multiple taxation and alleged illegal extortion, and facilitating access to business partnerships, financing, training and professional development opportunities.

The forum has also pursued advocacy initiatives concerning electricity tariffs and the operating environment for hotels and other businesses.

It previously took legal action involving the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) and the Benin Electricity Distribution

Company (BEDC) over electricity tariff increases affecting businesses.

According to the forum, it has also submitted 35 petitions to relevant state and federal authorities concerning alleged enforcement actions against hotels, calling for due process and the protection of legitimate business interests.

The 60 per cent accommodation discount represents another demonstration of the forum's stated commitment to collective action and community engagement, particularly in supporting events that showcase Edo State's rich cultural heritage.

FG unveils digital platform, targets \$100bn from tourism, creative economy

ABUJA

The Federal Government has launched a digital data platform designed to attract investment into Nigeria's tourism and creative industries, as part of its ambition to generate \$100bn in gross domestic product contribution and create over three million jobs from the sectors by

2030. The Minister of Art, Culture, Tourism and the Creative Economy, Hannatu Musawa, disclosed this on Tuesday in Abuja during the official launch of the D30 Platform, also known as Destination 2030.

Musawa said the initiative was designed to address longstanding gaps in reliable and accessible data on Nige-

ria's creative and tourism industries, which she identified as a major constraint to unlocking their economic potential.

She said the platform would provide investors, government institutions, businesses and entrepreneurs with information to identify opportunities, assess infrastructure gaps and make informed decisions about investment.

"Today, we are not simply

unveiling a technology platform. We are taking a deliberate step towards changing how Nigeria understands, measures and harnesses the economic value of its cultural and creative assets," the minister said.

According to her, Nigeria's music, film, fashion, visual arts, literature, cultural heritage and tourism attractions possess enormous potential to generate revenue, support livelihoods

and contribute to national development.

However, she said the country had not always had the comprehensive data required to determine the scale of available opportunities and the investments needed to develop them.

"We have not always had the reliable, accessible and comprehensive data required to understand the true scale of our opportunities," she said.

FOREIGN

NEWS

Russia's offensive ability is broken, Kyiv's former top general says

Ukraine has stabilised the front line and "broken Russia's ability to advance" by killing so many of its men, Ukraine's former commander-in-chief has said in an interview with the BBC.

Gen Oleksandr Syrskyi made the comments in an exclusive interview, his first since he was dramatically forced from his post in the summer.

He addressed his sacking, disagreeing with his critics who declared him too

"old school" to command Ukraine's new, technological-ly advanced forces.

He also pushed back against allegations made by soldiers who previously served under him, who told the BBC they were ordered to remain at their positions even when they were almost surrounded by Russians, leading to high losses.

Syrskyi said that Moscow's overall losses in the war were six times higher than Ukraine's. "If you count only dead, then it's up to 11 times,"

he added.

Neither Russia nor Ukraine officially release the numbers of their dead. Ukraine's military says it inflicted record losses this year on Russian soldiers in September, although that cannot be verified.

UK intelligence chiefs estimate Russia has lost around half a million men killed in Ukraine since launching its full-scale invasion in 2022. The US-based Center for Strategic and International Studies meanwhile believes Ukraine has lost up to 150,000 troops killed by June 2026.

He says this difference in death toll – as well as technological advances, and a strate-

gy of attacking weak points in Russia's lines while containing their advances in other parts – accounts for the current stalemate at the front.

In the first six months of 2026, Russia managed overall to seize 61 sq km, the general said. "It's an indication that the front line has been stabilised."

The Institute for Study of War (ISW) has also confirmed this trend. One of its recent reports says that in September 2026, Moscow lost more territory than it took.

Syrskyi was appointed Ukraine's commander-in-chief in 2024. He had previously won praise for de-

fending Kyiv at the start of Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, and for leading the successful counteroffensive east of Kharkiv in the autumn of that year.

But President Volodymyr Zelensky fired Syrskyi this summer, amid a major disagreement with then-defence minister Mykhailo Fedorov.

Fedorov had said that instead of adapting to the realities of the changing war, the army under Syrskyi had blocked his initiatives.

Zelensky initially fired Fedorov, as tensions burst into the open between the two men. But mass street protests then forced the president to

also fire Syrskyi, replacing him with Maj Gen Mykhailo Drapatyi, 43.

Syrskyi told the BBC that he had "disagreements" with Fedorov because the latter "didn't take into consideration the interests of the army" when procuring weapons and supplies.

Fedorov had created an "imbalance" in supplies, Syrskyi said. He had prioritised drones while overlooking key front-line kit such as unmanned ground vehicles, pick-up trucks and motorbikes. Even with drones, Syrskyi said, there were shortages as the army got only half of what they needed.

India 'cockroach' leaders detained after entering barricaded protest site

Leaders of India's Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) were detained early on Tuesday after they entered a heavily-guarded protest site and chanted slogans demanding the country's election chief resign over a controversial revision of electoral rolls.

Party founder Abhijeet Dipke shared a video showing Ashutosh Ranka and Saurav Das being taken away by police from Jantar Mantar, a historic Delhi observatory popular for protests.

Footage showed the two – along with others – climbing over police barricades before chanting slogans while holding the Indian flag.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's opponents allege the voter list revision benefits his party, a charge it and the Election Commission reject.

There have been days of protests demanding Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar's resignation.

Police have stepped up securi-

ty across Delhi as demonstrators challenge restrictions on where protests can be held.

Early on Tuesday, Dipke, Das and Ranka all shared videos showing Das and Ranka entering Jantar Mantar.

"You cannot denotify the resistance," Dipke wrote on X.

Das also posted a message declaring that the site had been "reclaimed" and that they were being detained.

It was not immediately clear where police had taken the leaders.

Ranka later appeared on an Instagram live broadcast from a police bus alongside other detainees where they appeared cheerful and said they would not back down.

The detentions came a day after the federal home ministry announced that Jantar Mantar, long associated with public protests in Delhi, would no longer be a designated protest venue. Authorities instead identified three alternative locations where demonstrations can be held with permission.

30 mins after we went to Delhi Police asking for a date when we can go to Jantar Mantar

Jantar Mantar was de-notified as a protest site," Ranka had earlier posted on X.

Most of the party's leadership has been in Delhi in recent days. Dipke, however, had travelled to his hometown in Maharashtra after the death of his grandmother. He was among several CJP leaders detained ahead of a planned demonstration on Saturday and was released the next day.

The CJP had called for a protest at Jantar Mantar on Saturday, but authorities imposed extensive security restrictions across the capital to prevent demonstrators from reaching the site.

Several metro stations were closed, train services were disrupted and thousands of police and paramilitary personnel were deployed.

Over the weekend, the police detained and released thousands of people, including several journalists. Some videos and photos from the protest show police

dragging people, including women, by force and pushing them into buses.

Separately, opposition parties held a march in Delhi on Monday from Connaught Place – a major shopping district in the heart of the capital – to the Supreme Court.

The Congress, India's main opposition party, also petitioned the Supreme Court on Monday, challenging the Election Commission's voter revision exercise, which has resulted in tens of millions of names being removed from electoral rolls.

Critics say the exercise risks excluding eligible voters and making it harder for them to prove their eligibility.

Anger over the revision exercise intensified after The Indian Express reported that Kumar had disregarded concerns raised by the two other election commissioners over changes to voter registration. The Election Commission has said its decisions were unanimous.



Gen Syrskyi, pictured here in Donetsk region in April 2026, lost his job over the summer after a public disagreement with the defence minister

Bulgaria summons Russian ambassador after ship sinks in Black Sea drone attack

Bulgarian Prime Minister Rumen Radev has summoned the Russian ambassador after two merchant ships were struck by drones off Bulgaria's Black Sea coast.

Eleven crew members are missing and one sailor was saved, according to local officials, after one of the vessels sank 17 nautical miles (31km) east of the village of Krapets.

The other vessel, Ukrainian owned, was hit by drones 18 nautical miles from the town of Byala and all 15 crew were rescued.

The attacks come a week after two other commercial ships were hit by sea and aerial drones

in Bulgaria's exclusive economic zone. One of the ships, the Alfa Watan, sank and all 10 crew, including nine Syrians, are presumed dead.

Radev convened an emergency meeting on Tuesday and said he had summoned Russian envoy Eleonora Mitrofanova. Although there was no conclusive evidence of blame on "either side... the logic suggests that the outcome benefits the Russian Federation", he said.

Mitrofanova was later quoted by Bulgarian media as telling Radev she had no information from Russia's defence ministry relating to the latest attacks. She

also said these strikes could have been a provocation by a third party.

Bulgaria is a Nato member, and Radev also spoke to secretary general Mark Rutte about the latest attacks.

"Nato will continue to work closely with our allies in the Black Sea," Rutte said after the talks.

"We have already strengthened our posture along the eastern flank and will continue to monitor the security environment, adjusting our deterrence and defence posture as needed," he added.

The two ships were struck just

outside Bulgarian territorial waters.

If this had happened just a few nautical miles to the west, Article 5 of the Nato treaty could have been triggered. The article defines an armed attack on one member of the military alliance as an attack on all.

Radev had earlier asked Nato and the EU for technical assistance in investigating the previous attacks that took place on 6 October, indicating it was unclear who was behind them.

Radev came to office during the summer and has since rejected suggestions that he is "pro-Russian".

US emergency call records reveal confusion after failed execution of Christa Pike

Emergency call records have revealed the confusion that developed among prison staff and emergency call handlers after the execution of convicted murderer Christa Pike went wrong last month in Tennessee.

Pike, 50, who killed Colleen Slemmer alongside her then-boyfriend in 1995, was

given two doses of lethal injection on 30 September. Once it became clear that she was not going to die from the dosage, she was taken to hospital.

The confusion resulted in part from an apparent disconnect between prison staff, according to the AP news agency, which first obtained audio of the emergency calls.

This allegedly delayed Pike's treatment. The BBC has asked the state corrections department for comment.

The department has not yet stated what it thinks went wrong in the attempted execution of Pike. Pike's legal team has offered the explanation that the pentobarbital chemical, with which she was

injected, probably spread under skin rather than reaching her bloodstream in a sufficient quantity to kill her.

Pike has now been discharged from hospital, though in their most recent update on her health, her team cautioned that she faced a "long road to recovery". It is not clear what treatment, if any, she is receiving now that she is back in prison.

Ex-president named leader of new Dr. Congo rebel coalition

Former Congolese President Joseph Kabila has been named the leader of a new rebel coalition seeking to oust the government.

The Front for the Refoundation of the Nation (FRN) said it aimed to coordinate "resistance forces" to end "tyranny" in Democratic Republic of Congo and would pursue the goal "by

all means, including force".

Its unveiling on Monday is the clearest indication so far of Kabila's direct involvement in an armed movement a year after he was sentenced to death in absentia for treason. He had previously denied having links to the M23 rebel group.

The Congolese government has not commented.

Claude Ibalanky, the coalition's adviser, announced the group's leadership at a press conference at Kabila's residence in Goma, the largest city in eastern DR Congo, which has been under the control of the M23 since last year.

Video released by the group showed Kabila signing documents at the group's declaration

along with other leaders.

M23 leader Sultani Makenga will serve as one of Kabila's four deputies in the new movement. The other three also come from the AFC-M23 alliance which last year seized much of mineral-rich eastern DR Congo.

The announcement of the new group comes days after Kabila delivered an address in which he said he would set out how Congolese people should act to "rescue" their country.

On Friday, Kabila accused President Félix Tshisekedi's government of disregarding proposals he had put forward last year, including some aimed at ending the conflict in eastern DR Congo.

Kabila also accused the government of undermining constitutional rule, mismanaging the economy and failing to improve security. He further

alleged arbitrary arrests of political opponents and military officers.

The government has not publicly responded to those claims.

Kabila, 55, ruled DR Congo from 2001 until January 2019, when Tshisekedi took office following a disputed election.

The two were once political allies, forming an informal power-sharing arrangement after the transfer of power. They later fell out and Kabila went into self-imposed exile in 2023 before returning to Goma last year.

The former president had remained largely out of public view for several years but has become increasingly critical of his successor's administration.

The formation of the new coalition comes at an uncertain time in a country that has

been wracked by violence for decades.

More than 100 militia groups are active in eastern DR Congo amid ethnic tensions and fighting for political power and control of lucrative natural resources.

The UN and Western governments accuse Rwanda of backing the M23 and controlling the rebels.

Rwanda denies supporting the M23 despite overwhelming evidence, and says its military presence in eastern DR Congo is a defensive measure against threats posed by Congolese armed groups.

Tshisekedi's second term ends in 2028 but in May he said that elections, which are due then, may not be held because of the conflict.

He also hinted that he may seek re-election for a third term "if the people want".

Eight injured in South Korea knife attack

A man has been arrested after stabbing several people in a shopping centre in Incheon, in a rare knife attack in South Korea. Eight people were wounded in the incident on Tuesday afternoon, according to local news reports.

The 59-year-old suspect was reported to have carried out the attack at 13:40 local time (05:40 BST) with knives strapped to both of his hands, according to Incheon Namdong Police Station.

Law enforcement is currently investigating the suspect's motives for the attack, which took place in a building housing an outlet of Homeplus, one of South Korea's largest discount supermarket chains.

The suspect reportedly started stabbing people while travelling on an escalator from the floor where Homeplus was located.

Pictures and clips carried by local media show him attacking people at a food court.

The man was subdued by bystanders who used chairs to block his path and was later detained by police officers.

All eight victims - six women and two men - were taken to the hospital.

One of them suffered from "cardiac arrest", while the others had injuries to their back and shoulders.

In response to the casualties, authorities had set up an emergency medical centre on the building's first floor.

According to local reports, the suspect was wearing an electronic monitoring ankle bracelet at the time of the attack.

Reports said he had been previously convicted for attempted murder after he stabbed his ex-wife, and had spent four years in prison.

He had also reportedly been booked by police last month on suspicion of carrying a knife while holding a one-man protest in front of an Incheon hospital over medical treatment he had received.

The attack happened in a country known for its high public safety standards.

South Korea recorded about 0.5 homicides per 100,000 people in 2024, according to Statistics Korea. That is about one-tenth of the global average.

However, a series of seemingly random and violent attacks across the country in 2023, which resulted in multiple fatalities and injuries, caused widespread fear.

Such attacks were known as 'Mudjima' or 'Don't Ask Why'

crimes, a term used to describe acts of violence targeting strangers conducted by people with no personal link to the victims nor had obvious motives.

In April 2025, a man in his thirties attacked random strangers at a supermarket resulting in the death of a woman in her sixties.



Joseph Kabila, DR Congo president from 2001 until January 2019

Somali-born Sagal Abdi-Wali sworn in as London's newest MP

Somali-born Sagal Abdi-Wali became London's newest member of parliament on Monday, being sworn in to represent Holborn and St Pancras in Britain's House of Commons.

The 42-year-old won last week's by-election to replace former prime minister Keir Starmer as MP for the central London constituency.

Abdi-Wali came to Britain as a child refugee. She spent much of her life in the London borough of Camden, working with charities and schools before becoming leader of the local council.

Her candidacy drew significant attention from Brit-

ain's Somali and wider African communities - reflecting her journey from refugee to senior figure in local government.

Abdi-Wali took 45 percent of the vote, beating Green Party leader Zack Polanski who secured 33 percent. The Conservatives got 7 percent and the anti-immigrant Reform Party 6 percent.

In her victory speech, Abdi-Wali said she wants to tackle homelessness and opportunities for young people.

Starmer's successor Andy Burnham congratulated Abdi-Wali after her win and said he's looking forward to working with her.

South Africa's deputy police chief resigns after being charged with sexual offences

South Africa's deputy police chief has resigned three weeks after he was charged with sexual offences.

A lawyer representing Lt Gen Shadrack Sibiyi submitted his resignation letter at his disciplinary hearing on Monday, a police spokesperson said.

Sibiyi, 59, is also accused of having links to organised crime bosses - allegations which led to him being suspended last year.

He denies those allegations, as well as charges

that he sexually groomed a 16-year-old girl and raped an 18-year-old woman. He also faces a charge of human trafficking.

Sibiyi says he did have sex with the 18-year-old but that it was consensual.

He has been in custody since he was arrested three weeks ago.

Police spokesperson Athlenda Mathe said in a post on X that his departure from the police force was regarded as a dishonourable discharge because he was still facing a disciplinary

case when he resigned.

The accusations that Sibiyi was linked to crime bosses emerged at a major public inquiry over allegations of police corruption and collusion with criminals, known as the Madlanga Commission.

Sibiyi was accused of interfering with investigations into political killings in KwaZulu-Natal province.

He was also accused of receiving a gift of cash, as well as 20 impalas, from an alleged criminal kingpin in exchange for a police con-

tract.

He denied the allegation.

The Madlanga Commission has transfixed South Africa over the past year and unearthed widespread allegations of links between police officers and crime bosses.

It was set up by President Cyril Ramaphosa after the KwaZulu-Natal police chief held a press briefing where he accused the then Police Minister Senzo Mchunu of working with criminal gangs.

Niger Delta deserves more than 13% derivation, says Obasanjo -flags-off CDU at \$1bn Azikel Refinery

Philip Jeremiah Eke

YENAGOA

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo on Monday advocated an increase in the 13 per cent derivation to oil producing states in the country, stating that the present benchmark is a starting point that can be negotiated upwards.

Obasanjo spoke at a ceremony to flag-off the Crude Distillation Unit (CDU) of Azikel Refinery at Obunagha in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

The one-billion-dollar refinery project, owned by Azikel Petroleum under Azikel Group, is expected to produce 2.5 million litres of fuel and two million litres of diesel daily among other petroleum products.

Obasanjo lauded Azikel Group President, Dr. Azibapu Eruani, for initiating the refinery project and urged him to ensure its completion within the next 12 months.

He expressed appreciation to the refinery's technical and engineering team as well as African Finance Corporation (AFC) and Afrexim Bank for their support to the project. He advocated more support to ensure its completion.

Obasanjo also lauded Bayelsa State Governor, Senator Douye Diri, for supporting the project.

Obasanjo said whenever Eruani spoke to him about the project, he always mentioned the governor's contribution.

He stated that the governor had put into proper use funds accruable to Bayelsa, as evident in the numerous projects all over the state.

The former president said, "I have told Dr. Eruani that I will be officially 90 years by next year March. It means I will take the boarding pass soon. So, he has to make sure the project is completed before I exit.

"Governor, I want to thank you most sincerely. Every time Dr. Eruani has spoken to me about this project, he has mentioned the critical role you have been playing and that is the way to go.

"You are right that the states and oil producing communities have not got a fair deal so far. Thirteen per cent is the beginning. You can continue to talk. The most important thing is that even the little you have received; you have used it well."

Obasanjo added, "I want to express appreciation to those who have given the technical and engineering support for this project. When I came here (eight years ago), there was nothing like this, but now it has become a different thing.

"I want also to thank those two financial institutions, African Finance Corporation and the Afrexim Bank. My challenge to you, Dr. Eruani, is to ensure that the refinery is completed within the next 12 months. With this done, you can even double the capacity."

Eruani stated that the refinery will kick-start Bayelsa's and Niger Delta region's in-

dustrialisation, recalling how Obasanjo laid the foundation for the refinery eight years ago.

He expressed delight at the former president's presence

for the installation of the CDU, which he described as the beginning of the completion of the refinery.

Eruani said the refinery was

conceived to ensure that the Niger Delta became an active player in the oil industry, saying it is the second largest full-scale refinery in the country.

He hailed President Bola Tinubu for supporting indigenous refineries, saying

they stand in alignment with the vision of the federal government to make petroleum products available and affordable to the people.

He also expressed appreciation to Diri as well as AFC and Afrexim Bank for their invaluable support.



MEETING

From left: Sports Editor, Mr Emmanuel Afonne; Corporate Communications Executive, Flame TV, Abigail Ekiotenne; Editor-in-Chief, News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Hajia Hadiza Aliyu; Director of Programmes Flame TV, Austine Ekanem and the Editor/Brand Ambassador, Flame Chapel, Comrade Anne Onuoha, during a meeting with the Editor-in-Chief on partnership between the two organisations at NAN Headquarters in Abuja on Tuesday

PVC collection: Low turnout hits Jos, Bayelsa, others ahead of 2027 elections

Philip Jeremiah Eke

YENAGOA

The collection of Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) recorded low turnout in some wards in Jos, Plateau State, Bayelsa, Niger and Ondo states on Monday as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) continued the exercise at Registration Area (RA) levels.

The exercise is being conducted alongside the display of the National Register of Voters to enable registered voters to scrutinise their details ahead of future elections.

In Plateau State, INEC officials at the Registration Area Centre in Giring, Jos South Local Government Area, were seen waiting for registered voters to turn up for their PVCs.

Similarly, low turnout was recorded at Akure South Ward 4 in Ondo State, where an INEC official was on ground to distribute the cards, but no voters were seen at the collection point.

In Bayelsa State, however, a resident of Yenagoa was seen collecting his PVC at the INEC office in Yenagoa Local Government Area, located in Onopa.

Niger State recorded low participation in the state though INEC officials were ground while very few residents were seen at PVCs collection center.

The ongoing collection follows INEC's announcement that PVCs are ready for collection by eligible registered

voters, including those who completed registration-related transactions in 2025.

The Commission had announced: "Registered in 2025? Your PVC is now ready for collection. The cards are available for fresh registrants, transfers, replacements, and those who carried out information up-

dates or reviews in 2025. Voters from previous registration exercises can also collect theirs.

"If you registered, requested a transfer, or applied for a replacement of a lost or damaged PVC during the first phase, your PVC will be available for collection," the Commission said.

It added that "Uncollected

PVCs from previous voter registration exercises will also be available."

According to INEC's schedule, collection at the Registration Area level runs from Friday, October 9, to Thursday, October 15, 2026. Collection will subsequently move to the Local Government Area offices from Friday, October 16.

EDSTMA announces closure of access routes to King's Square

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Traffic Control and Management Agency (EDSTMA) has temporarily closed all entrances and exits to King's Square in Benin City, the state capital.

In a notice to motorists and the general public, the agency explained that the closure was due to ongoing rehabilitation works in and around King's Square.

"The temporary closure is necessary to facilitate the smooth execution of the rehabilitation works and ensure the safety of road users, construction personnel, and other members of the public," it said.

EDSTMA advised motorists to use alternate routes to

avoid King's Square and its immediate environs, as well as plan their journeys ahead and allow additional travel time.

It also urged motorists to comply with traffic signs, diversions and directives issued by authorised traffic management personnel, and exercise patience and caution when approaching construction zones and adjoining roads.

The agency said it regrets any inconvenience the temporary closure may cause and appealed for the cooperation and understanding of road users throughout the rehabilitation period.

"Your cooperation is essential to ensuring public safety, reducing traffic congestion, and facilitating the timely completion of the road rehabilitation works," it said.

BENIN CITY

The Nigerian Institute for Oil Palm Research (NIFOR) has called the adoption of advanced breeding technologies to boost crop productivity, improve farmers' livelihoods and strengthen agricultural resilience to climate change.

The Executive Director/Chief Executive of NIFOR, Dr Isona Gold, made the call on Tuesday in Benin at a workshop on Genomic Selection in Crop Improvement: Advances and Prospects for Nigerian Food Crops.

Gold said the adoption of modern breeding techniques had become imperative to increase agricultural productivity amid climate change, rising population and urbanisation, which continued to put pressure on available agricultural land.

He said NIFOR, established in 1939, was mandated to provide scientific support for the

value chains of oil palm, coconut palm, date palm, raffia palm and shea trees.

According to him, the institute has recorded significant achievements in developing improved planting materials and technologies for the crops.

He said NIFOR had achieved palm oil yields of four tonnes per hectare annually on medium- and large-scale farms and 3.5 tonnes per hectare on smallholder farms using half the recommended fertiliser dosage.

Gold added that the institute had achieved yields of 200 coconuts per tree, equivalent to about 40,000 nuts per hectare at full maturity.

He said the institute had also developed technologies capable of enabling Date farmers to produce more than 30 tonnes of fruits per hectare annually.

He revealed that raffia palm had significant economic potential, with estimated sap yields of about 1,000 litres per tree per year.

The NIFOR chief executive said the achievements demonstrated the economic potential of the crops and the need to sustain investment in research and development.

He, however, warned that climate change, increasing temperatures, desertification, population growth and urbanisation posed challenges to agricultural production.

Gold said the institute was working to increase palm oil production from the current four tonnes per hectare annually to six tonnes, despite changing climatic conditions.

He urged participants to take advantage of the workshop to learn from the resource persons, whom he described as experienced experts in oil palm breeding.

The programme, which later moved to a question-and-answer session, during which NIFOR executive director highlighted the potential of other regions, particularly the Middle Belt, to support oil palm production.

Sports

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



TEAM NIGERIA

Team Nigeria departs for Inaugural African Boxing Elite Championships in Nairobi

Nigeria will be among the countries competing at the inaugural African Boxing Elite Championships scheduled to hold in Nairobi, Kenya, from October 15 to 28, 2026.

The Nigerian contingent will feature boxers competing in 10 weight categories, comprising five male and five female ath-

letes, as the country seeks to make a strong impression at the continental championship.

A total of 19 delegates will make up the contingent for the competition, reflecting the country's commitment to promoting elite boxing and strengthening its presence on the African boxing stage.

The team is scheduled to de-

part Nigeria on Tuesday, October 13 and arrive in Nairobi on October 14, ahead of the opening of the championship.

The competition will provide an important platform for Nigeria's elite boxers to test their abilities against some of the continent's best, gain valuable international experience

and demonstrate the depth of Nigerian boxing talent.

The National Sports Commission wishes the team a successful outing and urges the athletes to uphold the country's reputation for competitiveness, discipline and excellence as they represent the nation in Kenya.

NBBF election row deepens as Oyediji, Mark, Ugboaja seek Tinubu's intervention

The battle over the Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF) elections has escalated, with three presidential aspirants taking their grievances to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu over attempts to manipulate the composition of the federation's incoming board.

Olumide Oyediji, Igoche Mark and Ejike Ugboaja, who

are all contesting the NBBF presidency, want the Federal Government to intervene in the electoral process, stating that the exercise has been compromised ahead of the 2026-2030 tenure.

In a petition dated October 12, the candidates accused outgoing NBBF President Ahmadu Musa Kida of using his position to influence

the elections in favour of Dr. Mustapha Abdullahi, Director-General of the Energy Commission of Nigeria.

They called on Tinubu to direct the National Sports Commission (NSC) to suspend the process and investigate their complaints before the elections are conducted.

The petition, also copied to Senate President Godswill

Akpabio, House of Representatives Speaker Abbas Tajudeen and Secretary to the Government of the Federation George Akume, raises questions about the legitimacy of changes made to state representation ahead of the polls.

A major concern raised by the aspirants is the removal and replacement of state basketball association chairmen

SWAN NEC appoints Omorodion Lagos SWAN caretaker committee chairman



PATRICK OMORODION

The National Executive Council (NEC) of the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN) has announced the appointment of Mr. Patrick Omorodion as the Chairman of the Lagos State SWAN Caretaker Committee.

The appointment, approved by National President Mr. Isaiah Benjamin, takes immediate effect for a duration of three months. According to the National Secretariat, the decision recognizes Omorodion's experience and capacity to provide steady leadership during a critical period for the Lagos State chapter. The newly formed committee is tasked with restoring stability, strengthening chapter administration, protecting its interests, and paving the way for a credible election.

To achieve this, Omorodion's administration is mandated to lead efforts in recovering, securing, and documenting all assets, records, and materials belonging to the Lagos State Chapter. Furthermore, the committee will promote peace, unity, and reconciliation among members while collaborating with the National Secretariat to verify and update the membership register for electoral purposes.

The committee is also expected to facilitate the establishment of the Lagos State SWAN Electoral Committee (SWANECO) in accordance with SWAN statutes, coordinate preparations for a free and fair election, and actively engage stakeholders to build confidence and secure a peaceful transition. Additionally,

NIS to collaborate with ICAN to improve welfare of coaches, athletes

The Director-General and Chief Executive Officer of the National Institute for Sports (NIS), Comrade Philip Shaibu, on Tuesday said the collaboration between the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) and the National Institute for Sports would improve the welfare of sportsmen and women during their retirement years.

Shaibu made this known while receiving the President of ICAN, Hajiya Queensley S. Seghosime, mni, and her council team in his office at the National Institute for Sports, Athletes Development Centre package B MKO National stadium Abuja.

He explained that the partnership is aimed at equipping coaches and athletes with financial literacy and proper retirement planning, to ensure they live comfortably after their active sporting careers.

The DG disclosed that the NIS has already commenced its first sensitization programme across the North-West, North-Central and North-East zones, as part of efforts to extend its welfare and capacity-building initiatives nationwide.

Shaibu also expressed appreciation to ICAN for appointing the Bursar of the National Institute for Sports, Mrs. Nyakno Ololade Oluokun, to serve on the Governing Council of ICAN, describing it as a recognition of competence and professionalism.

He assured the ICAN delegation that the NIS remains committed to strengthening the partnership to develop sustainable welfare structures for Nigerian coaches, athletes and other sports stakeholders.

Earlier, Queensley Seghosim President and Chairman of Council, ICAN thanked NIS DG CEO, Comrade Philip Shaibu for graciously permitting the Bursar of the Institute, Mrs Nyakno Ololade Oluokun to serve on the Governing Council of ICAN describing her as a worthy Ambassador of ICAN.

"By way of feedback, I am delighted to report that she is serving with great distinction. She brings to our deliberations sound judgement, deep professional insight and an admirable sense of duty, and she has shown remarkable dedication, diligence and commitment in every assignment entrusted to her.



PHILIP SHAIBU

NFF arbitration directives: NNL warns clubs to Comply

The Nigeria National League (NNL), regarded as "The most important league in the country," has urged clubs to comply with the directives and decisions of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) Players' Status and Arbitration Committee (PSAC) as player registration continues ahead of the 2026/2027 season.

NNL Chief Operating Officer, Danlami Alanana, stressed that compliance with the committee's decisions is mandatory, warning that affected clubs risk being denied the

opportunity to register players.

"All cases of the Players' Arbitration Committee, whose decisions have been taken and communicated to clubs, must be complied with, or the NNL will not register players of the affected clubs," Alanana stated.

He added that where payments or settlements have been agreed upon with affected players and coaches through the NFF, evidence of compliance must be communicated to all parties, with the necessary clearance obtained from the federation.

SPORTS



LA Olympics Qualifier: Super Falcons whip Comoros, faces Morocco next

Nigeria national women's football team trounced Comoros 5-0 at the Remo Stars Stadium, Ikenne to qualify for the next round of the LA Olympics qualifier.

The trio of Blessing Okpe, Fatimoh Solaty and Shakirat Moshood made their debut for the Super Falcons in the second leg against Comoros.

Despite winning the first leg 2-0, both Uchenna Kanu, Tony Payne got a brace each while Tony Payne put the icing on the cake in a five star performance in the second leg.

Kanu got close by hitting the crossbar in the 38th minute

from the edge of the box to attract a thunderous uproar from the spectators at the Remo Stars Stadium, Ikenne.

Kanu stole the ball from the Comoros goalkeeper to set up Tony Payne who smashed the ball into the net for Nigeria in the 41st minute which opened the floodgate of goals in the encounter.

Substitute, Blessing Okpe raced through on goal in the 46th minute but her goal threatening pass couldn't locate any Falcons player in the box.

In the 53rd minute, Fola-shade Ijamilusi threatened the Comoros defense with her pace and her cut back to Jennifer

Echegini who's weak shot didn't pose any threat to the opposing goalkeeper.

Ijamilusi threat on the right flank for Nigeria finally proved successful as she whipped in a dangerous cross in the 57th minute which met a thumping header from Kanu to double the Falcons lead.

Kanu saw her brilliant goal ruled out for offside in the 61st minute.

Okpe mesmerizes her way past series of Comoros defenders before setting up Payne to score her brace of the match in the 63rd minute.

Ijamilusi squared play a fan-

tastic pass to the path of Kanu who powered home a scintillating header to get her brace and also Nigeria's fourth goal of the encounter.

The Comoros defense couldn't handle Okpe dazzling skills as she was brought down in the 18 yard box in the 70th minute while defender, Christy Ucheibe converted the spot kick smoothly to record the Super Falcons fifth goal of match.

The Super Falcons will face Morocco in the next round of the LA Olympics qualifier next year.

The first leg will be held on February 23, while the second leg will come up on March 6 2027.



VICTOR OSIMHEN

Osimhen caged as Yamal steals show with 2 assists

Super Eagles striker, Victor Osimhen carried the hopes of Galatasaray's fans but sadly he disappointed them on a day that matters.

Osimhen returned last week after injury spell and instantly found the net in the Turkish league but last night he was marked out as Barcelona whitewashed Galatasaray 4-1 Infront of their fans.

While Osimhen remained anonymous, Barca's Lamine Yamal, though didn't score, he contributed to two of Barca's goals.

Incidentally, It was Galatasaray that scored first through Batrakov in the 34th minute but Cancelo cancelled

the advantage two minutes before half time.

In the second half, Yamal began his magic, two assists to Fabian Lopez in the 50th minute and another for Anthony Gordon three minutes later saw the away team up 3-1 before Karim Adeyemi got Barca's fourth goal in the 65th minute.

32 years after, Galatasaray are still yet to beat Barcelona while Osimhen could also not increase his goal tally again the Spanish champions since he scored for Napoli in a 1-1 draw in the UEFA Champions League Round of 16 first leg on February 21, 2024.



VICTOR OSIMHEN

Nigeria targets Sports Tourism boost as Abuja prepares for World Polo Championship Qualifiers

Nigeria is preparing to welcome international polo competition to Abuja in November, with the National Sports Commission (NSC) exploring is preparing to welcome international polo competition to Abuja in November, with the National Sports Commission (NSC) exploring support for the hosting of the Federation of International Polo (FIP) Zone E World Cup Play-Offs.

The tournament is scheduled for November 9-16, 2026, at the Guards Polo Club in Abuja. Nigeria will compete alongside India, Iran and Pakistan for qualification for the 2027 FIP World Cup finals in Uruguay.

The hosting opportunity presents Nigeria with a chance to attract international visitors,

promote sports tourism and demonstrate its ability to organise competitions involving athletes and teams from different countries.

The Chairman of the National Sports Commission, Shehu Dikko, received a delegation of the Nigeria Polo Association (NPA), led by its chairman, Suleman Abubakar, on Monday, October 12. The delegation briefed the commission on preparations for the tournament and sought support for the event.

Dikko expressed the commission's willingness to consider areas of support within its available resources, stressing that the competition should be treated as a national event requiring co-operation among relevant stakeholders.

The hosting arrangement

comes with opportunities beyond the competition itself. International sporting events can create demand for accommodation, transportation, hospitality services and other businesses that cater to visiting teams, officials and spectators.

For Abuja, the tournament could provide an opportunity to showcase the city to an international audience while creating business opportunities around the event.

However, delivering those benefits will depend on effective planning, coordination among stakeholders and the ability to attract spectators and visitors.

The competition also gives Nigerian polo an opportunity to demonstrate its development against other countries in the Zone E qualification contest.



HOURSE RACING