

Progressives Forum marks 10 years of APC governance in Nigeria

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu is expected to serve as special guest of honour at the Progressives Forum's Summit slated for December 8 in Abuja.

Chairman, Organising Committee of the summit, Ismael Ahmad, in a statement made available to newsmen in Abuja on Monday, said the

summit is to celebrate 10 years of APC governance in Nigeria.

Ahmad said that the summit is in conjunction with the Bola Tinubu Legacy Conference, the Progressives Rights Group (PRG) and the Buhari New Media Centre (BNMC).

He gave the theme of the summit as: 'Summit of the Progressives' and said it was designed to reflect on a decade of the APC

leadership and chart a renewed direction for the movement.

"The event is scheduled to hold on December 8th at the NAF Conference Centre, Abuja.

"It will convene party leaders, key stakeholders and members of the broader progressive family who have contributed to shaping the party's ideals and governance philosophy over the past decade.

"Conceived as both reflec-

tive and forward-looking, the summit will undertake a comprehensive review of milestones, achievements, reforms and developmental strides recorded since the APC assumed national leadership in 2015.

"It will also draw lessons essential for reinvigorating the progressive vision for the years ahead," he said.

According to him, the pro-

gramme will feature keynote speeches on the evolution and impacts of progressive governance across major sectors.

It is also expected to feature sectoral panel discussions covering economic transformation, national security, social investment, energy transition, infrastructural development, governance reforms and political renewal.

Fireside chats with notable

leaders within fold, spotlighting leadership journeys, defining decisions, policy philosophies, and pivotal reflections that have shaped the movement will also be part of the programme.

Other attractions, according to Ahmad, are legacy documentary presentations capturing APC's rise, its signature policy interventions and landmark governance moments since 2015.

The Nigerian Observer

...that the people may know

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Killings:
Christians have right to self-protection
—Ex-PFN President

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\$100m SIAT investment reinforces Edo's agric growth

● **As Gov Okpehholo reaffirms support for Presco**
● **Ex-Commissioner Nehikhare hails investment**

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpehholo, has assured Presco PLC of the State Government's unwavering support, highlighting Edo as a prime destination for agricultural investment following a historic \$100 million Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the company.

The Governor made the assurance on Monday when he received the management team of Presco PLC, led by the Chairman, Rasheed Sarumi and Managing Director Raji George, at Government House, Benin City.

The visit coincided with the announcement of the \$100 million injection by SIAT and its parent company, a milestone described by the chair-

man as the first of its kind in Nigeria's agricultural sector.

Governor Okpehholo lauded Presco as a long-standing partner in Edo's agricultural development, dismissing recent controversies over land as politically motivated misrepresentations.

"There was a misunderstanding recently that someone tried to politicise. There was nothing in it," he said.

"Whenever there are issues, we prefer dialogue over specu-

lation or misinformation."

The Governor recalled how his administration promptly addressed previous complaints from communities on compensation, noting, "If I have anything against you, I will call you. Last time I received complaints, I contacted your MD immediately because I believe in addressing issues directly."

Highlighting his commitment to agricultural expansion, Governor Okpehholo revealed

that upon assuming office, he increased the agriculture allocation in the inherited budget from ₦5 billion to ₦70 billion.

"Agricultural revolution is the way forward. Edo has fertile land, and your investment here is not a waste," he said, stressing that the move aligns with President Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda for food security.

The Governor also condemned narratives portraying Edo as hostile to investors as

"misleading and satanic."

"I am an investor myself. I cannot be the one sending investors away. You are here by the grace of God, and you will prosper here," he assured.

Presco Chairman, Rasheed Sarumi praised the Governor for providing a stable governance structure, improved security, and an enabling environment that encouraged the \$100

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GOVERNMENT HOUSE VISIT:

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpehholo (middle), flanked by Chairman, Presco PLC, Rasheed Sarumi (2nd left); MD, Raji George (2nd right); Edo State Deputy Governor, Hon Dennis Idahosa (left) and Secretary to the State Government, Barr. Musa Umar Ikhilow when the management team of Presco PLC visited Government House, Benin City yesterday

Insecurity, climate change, almajiri crisis dominate Northern Governors' Forum meeting in Kaduna

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Edo pledges stronger collaboration with Fed Mining Cadastre to boost sector

—Pg 7

Shock in Cameroon as 74-year-old opposition firebrand dies in detention

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Nigeria suffer heavy defeat to Côte d'Ivoire in WAFU-B schools opener

—Pg 11

FG, NSITF back Social Security Bill as Senate promises inclusive legislation

CAROLINE AMEH

ABUJA

The Federal Government and the Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund

(NSITF) have expressed their support for the proposed Social Security Trust Fund Bill, aimed at harmonising the NSITF Act of 1993 with the Employees' Compensation Act (ECA) 2010

to improve service delivery.

At a public hearing on Monday, the Senate, through its Committee on Employment, Labour, and Productivity, assured stakeholders that the legislation

would result in an inclusive and widely acceptable law.

Sponsored by Senator Cyril Fasuyi (Ekiti North), the bill seeks to broaden the NSITF's mandate to cover social security comprehensively.

If enacted, the NSITF will be transformed into the Nigeria So-

cial Security Trust Fund (NSSTF).

Speaking at the hearing, NSITF Managing Director and CEO, Mr. Oluwaseun Faleye, described the bill as a "strategic and forward-looking legislative intervention" that would modernise Nigeria's social security framework in line with International Labour Organisation standards, including the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) and the Tripartite Consultation Convention, 1976 (No. 144).

A central feature of the bill is the repeal of both the NSITF Act and the ECA 2010, whose co-existence, Faleye explained, had created operational ambiguities, particularly after the Pension Reform Act (PRA) 2014 transferred contributory pension functions from NSITF to the National Pension Commission.

"The consolidation of the two Acts into a single, coherent statute is timely and necessary. It eliminates duplication, resolves conflicts, and strengthens the Fund's legal framework.

"Expanding social security coverage to informal sector workers and self-employed per-

sons is a historic step towards inclusive protection for all working Nigerians," Faleye said.

He, however, raised concerns about the use of the term "Board" throughout the bill, warning that applying it to governance, oversight, and daily administration could cause confusion and weaken accountability.

He recommended clearer definitions, similar to the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) Act, to distinguish the Board's oversight role from the Executive Chairman's administrative functions.

Minister of Labour and Employment, Alhaji Muhammadu Dingyadi, praised the Senate's initiative, urging the committee to balance the powers of management and the Board to produce a law acceptable to all stakeholders.

Although the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Nigerian Employers Consultative Association (NECA) initially opposed the bill, NLC President Joe Ajaero later indicated conditional support, stressing that outstanding concerns raised during the presentations must be addressed.



PEACE MEETING:

L-R: Commissioner for Labour and Productivity, Hon. Eshieshi Godwin; Commissioner for Mining, Hon. Andrew Ijegbaj; and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Mining, Mrs. Ese Omoruyi, during a peace meeting between Atte Community and Ogute-Okpella Community at the Ministry's corporate office in Benin City.

World AIDS Day: Edo First Lady's Office advocates awareness, support for HIV, AIDS response

BENIN CITY

As Nigeria and the world marked World AIDS Day, the Coordinator of

the Office of the Edo State First Lady, Mrs. Edesili Okpesholo Anani, has called for intensified awareness campaigns and stronger community support

for HIV and AIDS responses across the State.

Speaking to the staff of her office, Mrs. Anani stressed the importance of accurate information in combating myths and misconceptions that fuel stigma and discrimination against persons living with HIV and AIDS (PLHIV).

She urged staff and the wider public to embrace education and factual knowledge as tools to empower affected individuals.

"As we strive to combat HIV and AIDS, accurate information is our most powerful tool. We must share facts, not fear, and help dispel the myths and misconceptions that fuel stigma and discrimination.

"By doing so, we can create a society that supports and empowers those living with HIV,

rather than shaming and isolating them," she said.

Highlighting the need for a sustained and coordinated approach, Mrs. Anani encouraged staff to collaborate in promoting HIV awareness and prevention initiatives.

"As we mark World AIDS Day, I urge everyone to join us in the fight against HIV and AIDS. We can make a tangible difference in the lives of those affected by this disease. A collective effort ensures that every individual has access to information, medical services, and psychosocial support necessary to live healthy, productive lives," she added.

Mrs. Anani further emphasized the importance of knowing one's HIV status through regular testing and accessing treatment where necessary.

\$100m SIAT investment reinforces...

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million investment.

He noted that Nigeria received only \$250 million in FDI this year, making Presco's share a significant boost to the national economy.

Sarumi expressed confidence that the new investment would strengthen Presco's expansion plans and consolidate Edo's position as a centre of Nigeria's agro-industrial revolution.

Senior government officials present at the meeting included Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa, Secretary to the State Government Umar Musa Ikhilo, Chief of Staff Mallam Gani Adu, and Commissioner for Agriculture Dr. Jerry Uwangue.

Reacting to the announcement, former Edo State Commissioner for Information under ex-Governor Godwin Obaseki, Mr. Chris Osa Nehikhare, described the investment as a major boost for Edo's agricultural and economic landscape.

In a statement titled "Critique: A \$100m Investment—Good News Built on a Foundation Laid Before," Nehikhare said the move confirms Edo State's rising profile as one of Nigeria's most attractive destinations for agribusiness and long-term capital.

"The newly announced \$100 million SIAT investment into Presco PLC is a welcome development. Any credible investment that expands jobs and strengthens our agricultural base must be applauded," Nehikhare said.

He noted that Presco and its parent company have long believed in Edo's potential, but credited Governor Okpesholo for continuing to build investor confidence, maintain policy stability, and provide an enabling business environment.

Nehikhare added that the \$100 million injection is among the largest single investments in Nigeria's agricultural sector this year, demonstrating Edo's growing appeal under a government that prioritizes agriculture, food security, and private sector engagement.

He emphasized the importance of continuity, noting that stable governance and consistent policies create the environment where long-term investments can thrive.

He urged the state government to sustain its support for both new and existing investors, saying companies already operating in Edo form the backbone of the state's economy and deserve continued attention and reassurance.

Nigeria's GDP grew by 3.98% in...

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percent," the NBS said.

The report said the oil sector witnessed a growth rate of 5.84 percent in Q3 2025 on a year-on-year basis, showing an increase of 0.18 percent points compared to the 5.66 percent recorded in Q3 2024.

"However, growth decreased in the oil sector by 14.62 percent when compared to the 20.46 percent recorded in Q2 2025."

It said the oil sector contributed 3.44 percent to the total real GDP in Q3 2025, an increase from the 3.38 percent recorded in Q3 2024 and a decrease from the 4.05 percent it

contributed in Q2 2025.

The report said Q3 2025 recorded an average daily oil production of 1.64 million barrels per day (mbpd), higher than the daily average production of 1.47 mbpd recorded in Q3 2024 by 0.17 mbpd.

"However, the production volume for Q3 2025 was lower than Q2 2025, which recorded 1.68 mbpd by 0.04 mbpd."

In September 2025, the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) said crude oil production dropped to 1.58 mbpd.

According to NUPRC, the decline was primarily due to the three day industrial action

embarked upon by the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN), which led to the shutdown of several production and export facilities.

The scheduled maintenance at two major production facilities further contributed to the drop.

It said the non-oil sector contributed 96.56 percent to the GDP in Q3 2025 in real terms.

"This shows a decrease from the contribution recorded in Q3 2024 at 96.62 percent and an increase in Q2 2025 recorded at 95.95 percent," it said.

The report said the non-oil sector in Q3 2025 was driven mainly by agriculture (crop

production); information and communication (telecommunication), real estate; finance and insurance (financial institutions); trade; construction and manufacturing, all accounting for positive GDP growth.

The NBS rebased the GDP with 2019 as the base year due to the relative stability of the domestic economy.

The NBS said previous quarterly GDP estimates were benchmarked to the rebased annual estimates to align the old series with the new rebased estimates.

The bureau said this procedure provided a new quarterly GDP series compared to the 2025 third quarter estimates.

Edo steps up flood, erosion control

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government has rolled out an aggressive State-wide operation to confront flooding and erosion following Governor Monday Okpabhohlo's order for full deployment of engineering teams to maximize the dry season window for stormwater and gully-control work.

The renewed push, a major component of the Governor's SHINE Agenda, signals one of the most ambitious environmental resilience drives undertaken by the State in recent years.

The government is targeting the reinforcement of stormwater channels, expansion of erosion-retention ponds, and fast-tracking of gully reclama-

tion across the three senatorial districts.

In line with the directive, the Edo State Flood, Erosion and Watershed Management Agency (EdoFEWMA) has commenced a comprehensive inspection tour of stormwater facilities, including Ponds 1, 3, and 7; the Military Hospital stormwater channel along Airport Road; the Ewah-Eraron flood-control project; and the Iwogban gully reclamation zone, among several others.

Leading the technical team, Chief Executive Officer of EdoFEWMA and State Project Coordinator of NEWMAP, Hon. Mohammed Bawa Okoyomoh, said the State is taking advantage of the dry months to desilt key drains, rebuild

collapsed channels, remove sedimentation blocks, stabilize slopes, and improve water-retention capacity ahead of the next rainy season.

At Pond 1 in Ogunwonyi, where a major desilting operation has significantly increased water-holding capacity, Hon.

Okoyomoh expressed satisfaction with the progress and described the ongoing work as "a reflection of a Governor who listens and acts promptly."

"Last year, several communities were badly affected by flooding because the drainage systems were heavily silted," he

noted.

"This year, the narrative is changing because Governor Okpabhohlo is 100 per cent committed to safeguarding lives, properties and livelihoods."

He, however, warned that no amount of government investment will yield lasting results unless residents stop using drainage channels as waste dump sites.

"The government has done

its part. It is now up to the people to complement these efforts by keeping drainages clean and taking ownership of community infrastructure," he said. "Sustainability cannot exist in a silo."

EdoFEWMA is expected to produce a priority implementation schedule this month, focusing on desilting, channel expansion, erosion repairs and reinforcement of stormwater infrastructure across Edo State.



ASUU ESUT 2025 DAY:

L-R: Representative of retirees of Enugu State University of Technology (ESUT), Dr Ferdinand Iroegbu; representative of the National President, Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Comrade Charles Ononuju; Chairman, ASUU ESUT, Comrade Andrew Apeh; Zonal Coordinator, ASUU, Nsukka, Comrade Christian Opeh; Mass Communication Lecturer ESUT, Dr Ijeoma Ikwueze and Resource Person, Prof. Ralph Ofukwu, during ASUU ESUT 2025 Day and Celebration of retirees in Enugu on Monday

Edo distributes clean stoves to women in Edo North

AUCHI

The Edo State Government, through the Office of the First Lady, has distributed hundreds of clean stoves, pots and cash grants to women in Edo North Senatorial District in continuation of its State-wide women empowerment programme.

The event, held at the Etsako West Council Hall in Auchi, followed similar distributions in Edo Central and Edo South earlier

Coordinator of the Office of Edo State First Lady, Mrs. Edesili Okpabhohlo Anani, said the initiative, executed in partnership with the Ministry of Science and Technology aims to reduce reliance on firewood, improve health outcomes and promote clean energy adoption among rural women.

"This initiative is a collaboration between BeLiEF and Care, my pet project and the Ministry of Science and Tech-

nology," she said.

"It is part of our commitment to tackling the challenges of clean energy and environmental degradation."

She added that the Governor's empowerment programmes are deliberately targeted at vulnerable groups and hinted that educational tablets would soon be distributed to schoolchildren in the district.

"This clean stove initiative reduces carbon emissions, mitigates climate change and empowers women to thrive," she said.

Etsako West Council Chairperson, Mrs. Okwilagie Sikirat Shiny, commended the First Lady for "championing an initiative that uplifts women and promotes safer and more efficient cooking."

Several beneficiaries, including Selfiya Alhassan, Abdumalik Aisha and Love Ogedegbe shared their experiences with smoke-related health challenges and expressed gratitude to the Governor's wife.

Edo intensifies digital safety campaign across school

BENIN CITY

As part of activities marking the 2025 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, the Edo State Government has expanded its digital-safety sensitisation campaign for pupils, students and teachers across the State.

The event held at Imagquo College, Benin City, brought together, educators, advocates and officials of the Ministry of Women Affairs to address the growing threat of digital violence.

Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development, Mrs. Eugenia Abdallah, represented by the Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Joy Ihensekhi, said the theme for 2025, "Unite to End Digital Violence Against All Women and Girls" is timely as children increasingly face digital harassment, cyberbullying and harmful content.

"These forms of violence do not leave visible scars, yet they destroy confidence, disrupt education and lower self-esteem," she said.

"Young people must learn how to protect themselves and treat others with respect online."

She urged teachers to remain alert to behavioural changes in students, as digital abuse often drives children to depression, substance misuse and withdrawal.

Director of Rehabilitation, Mr. Sylvester Okoeguale, warned that digital violence is linked to drug abuse as victims often turn to substances for relief.

Executive Director of SOTAWACA, Mrs. Ronke Ojeikere, described digital abuse as "a silent destroyer," urging students to act as allies by reporting harmful content and supporting affected peers.

BENIN CITY

As the global campaign marking the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) gathers momentum, the Edo State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, in collaboration with the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) Programme, has intensified its sensitization outreach to schools in Benin City.

The exercise, held across Niger College, Edo College and

Imagquo College, focused on educating students about gender-based violence, the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law, and the Child Rights Law.

Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development, Mrs. Eugenia Abdallah, represented by the Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Joy Ihensekhi, said the outreach was designed to equip young people with the knowledge needed to understand their rights and resist harmful behaviours.

"The 16 Days of Activism is a global reminder that violence in any form is unacceptable," she said.

"Every child must understand their rights and responsibilities and know that they are protected by law."

She cautioned students to remain vigilant about digital forms of abuse, including cyberbullying, online stalking, identity theft, harmful content sharing and digital manipulation, noting that such actions leave emotional and psychological scars.

Edo flags off 2nd round of maternal, newborn, child health week

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government has flagged off the second round of the 2025 Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Week (MNCHW), reaffirming its commitment to improving the health and survival of mothers, newborns and children across the State.

The event, held at the Ekiosa

Primary Healthcare Centre, Benin City, attracted development partners, including WHO, UNICEF and the National Primary Healthcare Development Agency (NPHCDA), as well as health workers and caregivers.

Executive Secretary of the Edo State Primary Healthcare Development Agency (EDSPHCD), Dr. Coulson Oahimire Osoikhia, represented by the Director of

Disease Control and Immunisation, Dr. Efeomon Eseigbe, said that the State recorded 55.6 percent vitamin A coverage in the first round of 2025, describing it as insufficient.

"Our target in this second round is 95 percent," he said, adding that "We are determined to reduce childhood morbidity and mortality through aggressive outreach."

Representative of Oredo Local Government, Hon. Gabriel Idusere said that the Council would provide all required support to ensure successful implementation.

WHO representative, Mrs. Modupe Dosumu, reaffirmed the organisation's commitment to supporting Edo State and encouraged mothers to present their children for nutritional intervention.

Anioma leaders reject proposal for inclusion in South-East

ASABA

Lawmakers from Delta North and nine council chairmen from the Senatorial District have kicked against the proposal that the proposed Anioma State be made part of the South-East region.

In a statement jointly issued in Asaba and made available to newsmen, the group affirmed their push for Anioma State but insisted it must remain in the South-South region.

They contended that the South-South region reflected the people's historical and administrative roots.

They also said that their stance followed extensive discussions on renewed national debates surrounding the creation of new states across the country.

The leaders said the quest for Anioma State was a long-standing pursuit anchored in history and championed by past and present stakeholders.

They described the movement as a generational effort to secure political identity, protect cultural heritage, and accelerate development for the Anioma people.

The statement partly read: "Our demand for Anioma State is a just and historic aspiration passed down by our forebears."

NEWS

Killings: Christians have right to self-protection –Ex-PFN President

BENIN CITY

Former National President of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), Rev. Felix Omobude, has said that no law in Nigeria prevents citizens, including Christians, from protecting themselves.

Rev. Omobude, the General Superintendent of the Gospel Light International Ministries – New Covenant Gospel Church, made the disclosure during a media briefing in Benin City, Edo State.

"There is no law, as far as I know, in our books that says you should not protect your-

self. In the midst of the violence and the unending threats, it would be reckless and it would be naive to say that you should not protect yourself," he said.

He likened the troubling national security situation facing Nigerians, particularly Christians, to the time of Nehemiah in the Bible, when the people defended themselves against their adversaries.

"We have had a similar situation from Nehemiah in the Bible when they faced such a threat. Yes, the wisdom at that time was that some people worked and some people were on guard. So every church or

organisation must at this stage be security conscious.

"It is obvious that our security agents are overstretched and we cannot ask communities or churches or organisations not to put in place legal means of protecting themselves," he added.

On concerns that Christian leaders have remained silent in the face of unprovoked attacks on churches and Christians, Rev. Omobude said the major Christian bodies such as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the PFN were responsible for speaking for the Church to maintain unity.

He, however, acknowledged

criticisms that some key leaders may not have spoken loudly enough on the persistent killings and kidnappings across the country.

"The church has organised herself such that the main organs of the church, like CAN and PFN, should be the mouthpiece of the church in order not to have divergent views. So, we channel our opinions and suggestions through these organs.

"But as it appears now, it does not seem that these organs probably have been able to amplify our thoughts enough for the public to know our true position on this thorny issue.

Most of us leaders have been trying to be good followers, to play by the rule.

"I understand personally the effect of any negative alarm from any of the top leaders that

could have far-reaching effect or be capable of tearing the nation into pieces. So it would be irresponsible for a leader at a certain level, for example, to call for arms or to call for violence."

FRSC directs compulsory road signage at construction sites

ABUJA

The Corps Marshal of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Malam Shehu Mohammed, on Monday directed all construction companies working on Nigerian roads to install road signs at their project sites nationwide.

The directive was contained in a statement by the Corps Public Education Officer, Mr Olusegun Ogunbemide, in Abuja.

Mohammed said the directive aligns with President Bola Tinubu's ongoing nationwide road construction and rehabilitation programme aimed at improving highway safety and efficiency.

He said the measure was necessary to guarantee the safety of motorists and other

road users around active and inactive construction zones.

The Corps Marshal also instructed all Commanding Officers across FRSC formations to commence strict nationwide enforcement of the order.

He condemned the recurring failure of some construction firms to provide proper warning and diversion signs, noting that such negligence exposes road users to avoidable dangers.

Mohammed emphasised that the directive is final and enforceable, adding that FRSC field commands will intensify supervision and take regulatory action against defaulters.

He reaffirmed the Corps' resolve to work with stakeholders to ensure that the Federal Government's road investments translate into safer travel for all.

Anioma leaders reject proposal for inclusion in South-East

ASABA

Lawmakers from Delta North and nine council chairmen from the senatorial district have rejected proposals suggesting that the proposed Anioma State should be included in the South-East region.

In a statement issued in Asaba, the leaders reaffirmed their support for the creation of Anioma State but insisted it must remain in the South-South region to reflect the people's historical and administrative roots.

They said their position followed extensive discussions triggered by renewed national debates on state creation.

According to them, the agitation for Anioma State is a long-standing pursuit grounded in history and championed by generations of leaders.

"Our demand for Anioma State is a just and historic aspiration passed down by our forebears. Our quest for a distinct and autonomous Anioma State is not a fleeting political venture but a legitimate aspiration deeply rooted in history," the statement read.

The group said statehood would promote equity and accelerate development in the area.

They expressed full support for creating the proposed state strictly from the nine Delta North Local Government Areas: Aniocha North, Aniocha South, Ika North-East, Ika South, Ndokwa East, Ndokwa West, Oshimili North, Oshimili South, and Ukwani, with Asaba as capital.

They condemned suggestions linking Anioma to the South-East, calling such proposals historically inaccurate and unacceptable.

Energia unveils graduate trainee programme for young professionals

LAGOS

Energia Ltd., a leading Nigerian independent energy company, has launched a graduate trainee programme to accelerate the career development of young Nigerian professionals in the energy sector.

Chief Operating Officer, Mr Oladimeji Bashorun, said in a statement on Monday that the initiative is designed to provide graduates with hands-on experience across key operational and business functions.

He said trainees would bene-

fit from mentorship, coaching, field exposure and office-based learning covering Energia's core operations and the broader oil and gas value chain.

"At Energia, we recognise that the future of our industry lies in the hands of today's young professionals. This programme is our way of investing in Nigeria's brightest minds," Bashorun said.

General Manager, HR and Corporate Services, Mr Tope Daramola, said the programme aims to build a sustainable talent pipeline and enhance career readiness.

UCH resident doctors resume work after month-long strike

IBADAN

Resident doctors at the University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan, have resumed work after a month-long nationwide strike.

The doctors embarked on the strike on November 1 following a directive by the Nigerian Association of Resident Doctors (NARD).

The association declared an indefinite strike over the Federal Government's failure to address its long-standing demands.

NARD is demanding a 200 per cent increase in the Consolidated Medical Salary Structure (CONMESS) and full implementation of new allowances proposed since July 2022.

government a period of four weeks to re-appraise the efforts of the government as contained in the signed MoU.

"Having suspended the strike on November 29, each centre was mandated to hold a congress on December 1 to brief members. After the brief, centre pres-

idents will direct all members to resume at their duty posts.

"In compliance with this, a congress was held at 8.00 a.m. today (Monday), where members were updated and directed to resume work," Ajibola said.

He confirmed that all members have resumed duty.

Man killed over minor disagreement as community celebrates festival

ABAKALIKI

A middle-aged man, Mr Lawrence Peter, has been murdered in Amangbala, Ohaisu community in Afikpo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State following a minor disagreement with a villager.

State Police Public Relations Officer, SP Joshua Ukanu, confirmed the incident, which occurred early on Sunday.

"We are aware of the incident, and the suspect has been arrested and is in our custody. Our men have arrested some persons in the area and investigation has commenced," he said.

A community member, Mr Chukwuemeka Oyim, said the

incident happened as preparations were underway for the community's "Iko Ohaisu" festival.

He said the suspect entered the Ogo Amaokwu-Amangbala chamber around 1 a.m. and began harassing those preparing for the festival, demanding one thousand naira as levy for using the "Ogo" for their costumes.

"When the suspect accosted the deceased, he politely told him that he had no money on him. The suspect ignored the appeal and used a bottle to inflict a deep cut on the victim's head before fleeing," Oyim said.

The victim was rushed to Maranatha Hospital in Afikpo, where he died.

LAGOS

Energia Ltd., a leading Nigerian independent energy company, has launched a graduate trainee programme to accelerate the career development of young Nigerian professionals in the energy sector.

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He said trainees would bene-

REARRANGEMENT OF NAME

The General public is hereby notified that **YUSUFU IBRAHIM OGBOMIDU** and **YUSUFU OGBOMIDU IBRAHIM** are one and same person. Henceforth I now wish to be known and called **YUSUFU IBRAHIM OGBOMIDU**, former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public should please take note.

ADDITION OF NAME

I formerly known as **MISS OBUKOR PATIENCE** now wish to be known and called **MRS. EDO PATIENCE AMAKA**. Former documents remain valid. General public should please take care.

Obj, Jonathan, Osinbajo others celebrate ex-Information Minister, Jerry Gana at 80

ABUJA

Associates, political leaders and statesmen paid glowing tributes to elder statesman and former Minister of Information, Prof. Jerry Gana, as he marked his 80th birthday.

They spoke at the unveiling of a book entitled *Jerry Gana, Stewardship and Integrity*, written by Mr Simon Musa in Abuja to mark the former minister's birthday.

Former President Olusegun

Obasanjo described Gana as a man of integrity who is thorough, intelligent and uncompromising when it comes to doing what is right.

According to Obasanjo, many wrongdoings in politics are often concealed, but Gana neither hides nor condones misconduct.

"He is a man of clean, clear ideas; a man of clean, clear behaviour, clean, clear relationships. Whatever task you give him, he will do it to the best of his ability.

"So, when he says to you, if you are a teacher, teach well, he means it and if you make him a teacher, he will also teach you well.

"On behalf of my family and all of us who worked together in government, a government you were a pillar of and a party you helped to found, we wish you a very happy birthday and many happy returns," Obasanjo said.

Former President Goodluck Jonathan said Gana had remained a distinguished elder statesman who dedicated decades of his life to serving the country in various capacities.

Jonathan said that at 80,

Gana stood as a symbol of purposeful leadership and national inspiration.

"Your life of dedication, integrity and impact continues to motivate generations across different spheres of our endeavour.

"As we celebrate this milestone and unveil your book, I commend your visionary leadership and outstanding service to our country," he said.

Book reviewer and former Vice-President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, represented by former Vice-Chancellor of Benue State University, Prof. Yacobu Ocheni, said the 425-page, four-part book covers Gana's birth, early years, family, public service and political career.

Osinbajo noted, however, that the book did not explain how Gana managed to remain a friend of all administrations since the military era, nor did it address his advisory role to Obasanjo during the third term agenda period.

National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Mr Tanimu Turaki, described Gana as "a man of credibility, integrity, an icon, an enigma and an institution."

He said Gana had achieved success in academics, public life, politics, family life and private enterprise.

Turaki added that the "new PDP" would one day make "President Jerry Gana" possible.

Former Zamfara State Gov-

ernor, Sen. Abdulaziz Yari, represented by Sen. Tijani Kaura, urged Gana to join the All Progressives Congress (APC) to further advance his service to humanity.

Former Niger State Governor, Dr Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu, said that from 1983 to date, Gana had demonstrated that success begins with vision. He said Gana was God-fearing and deserving of honour.

Highlight of the event was the cutting of the birthday cake by the celebrant.

An elated Gana thanked the former presidents, former vice-president, serving and former ministers, legislators and the author for honouring him and making the ceremony successful.

Plateau recorded 2,786 new HIV infections in 2024 — Official

JOS

Plateau State Commissioner for Health, Dr Nicholas Ba'amlong, said the state recorded 2,786 new HIV infections and 460 HIV-related deaths in 2024.

Ba'amlong spoke in Jos on Monday at the 2025 World AIDS Day commemoration, marked globally on December 1, with the theme "Overcoming Disruption: Sustaining Nigeria's HIV Response."

He said 51,370 persons were living with HIV in the state as of September 2025 — 14,001 males and 33,055 females, while 47,056 adults and 1,835 children were currently on Antiretroviral Therapy (ART).

He said 98,403 persons were screened between January and September 2025, out of which 1,910 tested positive.

Ba'amlong added that 30,743 pregnant women were tested

within the period, and 39 who tested positive were linked to care.

He said the state had expanded HIV testing to more than 900 health facilities and intensified awareness campaigns.

He commended Governor Caleb Mutfwang for approving funds for HIV dual test kits distributed across the state.

Executive Director of the Plateau AIDS Control Agency (PLACA), Mrs Esther Turaki, said Plateau State achieved a 92 percent viral suppression rate as of June 2025 and described the HIV Domestic Resource Mobilisation and Sustainability Strategy as a key initiative.

Keynote speaker, Prof. Chris Isichei, urged governments to reduce dependence on donor funding and establish a dedicated HIV funding bank. He also encouraged Plateau to integrate HIV treatment into its health insurance scheme.



ON-GOING INVESTIGATIVE HEARING:

L-R: Clerk, House of Representatives Ad-hoc Committee on Power Reforms, Ike-Onuigbo Chinyere; Chairman of the Committee, Ibrahim Mustapha and a member of the committee, Muhammed Jajere, during the on-going investigative hearing on Nigeria's Power Sector Reforms and Expenditures, at the National Assembly Complex in Abuja on Monday.

FG empowers 9,870 farmers with inputs, modern rice technologies in Kano

KANO

The Federal Government, through the Kano State Special Agro-Processing Zone (SAPZ) Programme in partnership with IFAD, has empowered 9,870 rice farmers with climate-resilient inputs and modern rice production technologies.

SAPZ Knowledge Management and Communications Officer, Rabi Mustapha, made this known in a statement.

State Project Coordinator, Mr Aminu Iliyasu, speaking on Sunday during a Farmers Field Day at Chiromawa Garin Babba Cluster in Garun Malam Local Government Area, said the programme exposes farmers to practical, science-based solutions to boost yields and strengthen livelihoods.

He said the SAPZ initiative aims to expand access to improved technologies, strengthen extension services, reduce

post-harvest losses and create market opportunities for rural farmers.

Mustapha said the inputs distributed included FARO 44 improved seeds, urea and NPK fertilizers and insecticides, targeting farmers in Garun Malam, Gezawa, Bichi and Bagwai LGAs during the 2025 wet season.

Farmers were trained on soil selection, seed dressing, nursery establishment, land preparation, transplanting, fertilizer management, weed control, Integrated Pest Management, water regulation and safe harvesting practices.

A beneficiary, Salamatu Ali, said the intervention had helped farmers withstand climate pressures and increase incomes.

Another farmer, Huwaila Ibrahim, said her yield increased from 20-25 bags per acre to about 40 bags after adopting improved practices, including cultivating FARO 44.

KADUNA

The Chief of Army Staff, Lt-Gen. Waiyi Shaiju, on Sunday assured wounded-in-action soldiers of the best medical care, declaring that their sacrifices for the nation would never be in vain.

Maj-Gen. Isah Abdullahi, Chief of Administration, Army Headquarters, delivered the message during a working visit to the 44 Nigerian Army Refer-

ence Hospital in Kaduna.

Abdullahi said the visit was to assess the facility, considered a flagship hospital of the Nigerian Army, and to ascertain the condition of wounded soldiers receiving treatment.

He recalled that he had earlier visited the hospital shortly after assuming office to inspect operations and interact with the wounded-in-action soldiers.

"Following that visit, I was

directed to follow up and evaluate the conditions of these soldiers and identify challenges facing the hospital for necessary improvements.

"During my visit, I interacted with the wounded-in-action soldiers and toured the facility. It is evident that the hospital has undergone significant transformation, a complete paradigm shift from its previous state."

He said the hospital serves both military personnel and

civilians from Kaduna and beyond and had become a true centre of excellence.

Abdullahi reaffirmed the Army's commitment to ensuring that wounded-in-action soldiers receive the best possible care, with the aim of returning them to duty as soon as possible.

He toured the facilities in company with the Chief Medical Director, Brig-Gen. Godwin Ogho, and other senior officials.

Nema distributes relief materials to 300 C'River flood victims

CALABAR

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) on Monday distributed relief materials to 300 flood victims in Calabar Municipality and Odukpani Local Government Areas of Cross River State.

Director General of NEMA, Mrs Zubaida Umar, represented by Mrs Mmandu Aisueni, Head of Operations, Uyo Of-

fice, said the 2025 flood victims were urged to adhere strictly to weather forecasts from the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) to reduce flood impacts.

She warned that environmental negligence worsens flooding and stressed the need for proper waste disposal and timely response to rainfall predictions.

Umar said NEMA, in collaboration with SEMA, the Nigerian Red Cross and community leaders, conducted a needs

assessment before distributing the items.

She said the 300 relief packs contained twenty-five kilogram bags of rice, spaghetti, salt, seasoning cubes and other essential items.

Although victims exceeded available supplies, community leaders helped identify at least five beneficiaries from each community, ensuring fairness.

Member representing Calabar Municipal and Odukpani

Federal Constituency, Mr Bassey Akiba, said the materials were part of Federal Government support for 2025 flood victims, adding that over 2,000 persons were affected in his constituency.

A beneficiary, Mr Offiong Eyo from Odukpani, thanked the government, saying it was his first time receiving such assistance.

NEMA conducted a similar distribution exercise in Akamkpa a few months earlier.

NEWS

Insecurity, climate change, almajiri crisis dominate Northern Governors' Forum meeting in Kaduna

KADUNA

Insecurity, climate change and the growing Almajiri and out-of-school children crisis dominated discussions on Monday as Northern governors and traditional rulers opened a crucial joint meeting in Kaduna.

The Chairman of the Northern Governors' Forum and Governor of Gombe State, Alhaji Inuwa Yahaya, who delivered the keynote address at the event held at Sir Kashim Ibrahim House, said the region was facing an "existential threat" fuelled by terrorism, extreme poverty, environmental degradation and worsening social vulnerabilities.

Yahaya said the recent abductions of schoolchildren in Kebbi, Kwara, Kogi, Kano, Niger and Sokoto, as well as renewed Boko Haram attacks in Borno and Yobe, had again exposed the fragility of security in the region.

He commended President Bola Tinubu for the prompt rescue of some victims but insisted that education must never be surrendered to terrorists.

"An attack on education is a direct assault on our future. Terrorists target our schools and farms because they want to cripple the tools that empower our youths.

"We must work with the Federal Government, security agencies and international part-

ners to secure our children and protect livelihoods," he said.

The governor warned that insecurity had grown beyond local banditry to a national emergency threatening the survival of the North and Nigeria.

"This menace spares no one, the poor and the rich, Muslims and Christians, the young and the old. Without peace and security, there will be no politics to play and no state to govern," he added.

Yahaya linked the growing instability in the region to "deep-seated underdevelopment, illiteracy, lack of opportunities and the intensifying effects of climate change," noting that these were fueling

conflicts over land, water and other dwindling resources.

He said this informed the decision to place the Almajiri and out-of-school children crisis at the top of the forum's agenda.

"The reality of millions of Northern children roaming the streets instead of being in classrooms is unacceptable and a stain on our conscience. We must move beyond rhetoric and take coordinated actions to put every child in school," he said.

The NSGF Chairman reiterated the forum's firm support for the introduction of state policing, describing it as a critical tool for addressing widespread insecurity.

He welcomed President

Tinubu's recent directive to the National Assembly to create the constitutional framework for the reform, urging lawmakers to give it priority.

Yahaya said sustainable peace

would require cooperation among political, religious and traditional leaders, stressing that traditional rulers must continue to act as stabilisers, while religious leaders must promote tolerance.

Earlier, Governor Uba Sani, who hosted the meeting, urged participants to recommit to rebuilding a stable and economically vibrant North.

He noted that the current centralised policing structure could no longer protect a country of over 230 million citizens

with vast ungoverned spaces.

"We must reclaim the narrative of the North from those who trade in fear. Our people deserve stability, opportunity and hope," he said.

Also speaking on behalf of the Northern Traditional Rulers Council, the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar III, expressed full support for the governors' position, saying traditional rulers stood "100 per cent behind" the push for peace and unity in the region.

He urged the governors to work harder, listen to constructive criticisms and sustain interstate cooperation, stressing that there was "only one North," and leaders must act with a common voice.



STAKEHOLDERS AND PUBLIC HEARING:

L-R: Chairman, Senate Committee on Labour and Productivity, Diket Plang, and Senator Anthony Ani during a stakeholders and Public one-day hearing on the Nigerian Security Trust Fund (Establishment) Bill 2025 in Abuja yesterday.

PHOTO BY OMOYE AMINU.

Adeleke imposes 24-hour curfew on Osun community

OSOGBO

Governor Ademola Adeleke of Osun State has imposed a 24-hour curfew on Igbajo town in Boluwaduro Local Government Area following a breakdown of law and order overnight.

A statement by the Commissioner for Information and Public Enlightenment, Mr Kolapo Alimi, on Monday in Osogbo, said the decision followed an intelligence report

from the office of the governor's Special Adviser on Security.

Alimi said the crisis in the town had been linked to the death of a former Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the state, Adegboyega Famodun.

He noted that the curfew would take immediate effect and would remain until total peace was restored.

The governor condemned the development, warning that his administration would not toler-

ate any act capable of disrupting peace and harmony in the state.

He urged natives and non-natives of Igbajo to remain peaceful, adding that anyone attempting to plunge the town into chaos would be dealt with in line with the law.

The governor ordered a joint deployment of security personnel comprising the army, the police, the Department of State Services (DSS) and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) to maintain round-

the-clock surveillance in Igbajo.

Adeleke also commiserated with the family and people of Igbajo over the loss of Famodun.

Famodun died on November 28 after a brief illness at the age of 67. He was the 30th Owa of Igbajo, installed by former Governor Gboyega Oyetola before being removed in 2022 by Governor Adeleke.

On March 12, 2024, the state government approved the appointment of Ademola Makinde as the new Owa of Igbajo.

UNESCO, SUBEB begin sensitisation, school mapping exercise in Bayelsa

YENAGOA

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has inaugurated a Sensitisation and School Mapping Exercise under the EU-UNESCO Education and Youth Empowerment Project (Phase II) in Bayelsa State.

The initiative, implemented in partnership with the Bayelsa State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), targets six focus states across Nigeria

with the aim of strengthening the education system and improving learning outcomes.

Mr Jean-Paul Abiaga, UNESCO's Head of Office and Representative in Nigeria, at the inauguration on Monday, expressed appreciation to the government and people of Bayelsa for hosting the event.

He said the European Union-funded project was designed to "expand, integrate and strengthen systems" to build teachers' capacity and resilience.

Abiaga said the introduction of

Teacher Learning Teams (TLTs) was central to UNESCO's vision for sustainable teacher development, as they create platforms for collaboration, peer-learning and stronger connections with students and communities.

He noted that collaboration with SUBEB, the Ministry of Education and Local Government Education Authorities would produce vital geo-referenced data on school locations, teacher deployment and infrastructure.

Executive Chairman of SUBEB, Mr Ifidi Festus, represent-

ed by Mrs Joy Pulesi-Otowono, said the sensitisation aimed to encourage public support for the school mapping exercise.

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Simon Peter, said the ministry welcomed the partnership and urged schools involved to cooperate.

Programme Assistant, UNESCO, Esther Ikenye, said the project would address teacher shortages, working conditions and teacher training, with emphasis on resilience in fragile contexts.

She advised them to attend lectures regularly, complete assignments, avoid indecent dressing and carefully choose their friends, stressing that the university had "zero tolerance

for cultism."

The vice-chancellor congratulated the students, noting that they were selected from over 70,000 applicants.

Olatunji-Bello said LASU

remained a student-centred in-

stitution focused on producing

graduates who would contrib-

ute meaningfully to global de-

velopment.

She assured students of ade-

quate security on campus and

urged them to report suspi-

cious activities promptly.

She also emphasised LASU's

zero tolerance for sexual and

gender-based violence, an-

nouncing the establishment of

a Directorate of Response and

Prevention of Sexual and Gen-

der-Based Violence.

LASU matriculates 14,893, warns against cultism, hooliganism

LAGOS

The Lagos State University (LASU) on Monday matriculated 14,893 students for the 2025-2026 academic session, with a stern warning against cultism and all forms of deviant behaviour.

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ibiyemi Olatunji-Bello, addressing the ceremony at the main campus, Ojo, urged the students to be law-abiding, respectful and committed to their studies.

She advised them to attend lectures regularly, complete assignments, avoid indecent dressing and carefully choose their friends, stressing that the university had "zero tolerance

NRC expresses concern over fresh vandalism as court sentences 2

LAGOS

The Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) has raised concern over a fresh act of vandalism on the 33KV electricity line supplying the Rigasa Railway Station and the adjoining railway village in Kaduna State.

The Managing Director of the NRC, Dr Kayode Opeifa, disclosed this in a statement issued on Sunday in Lagos.

He said vandals struck barely 60 days after the line was restored, carting away critical components and plunging the area back into darkness after previously enduring two years

of blackout.

"NRC personnel discovered the damage in the early hours of Friday, confirming that the newly repaired line had once again been tampered with by criminal elements," he said.

Describing the situation as unfortunate, Opeifa urged security agencies in Kaduna State to intensify surveillance and ensure the arrest and prosecution of those behind the recurring

sabotage.

He lamented the increasing rate of vandalism of railway infrastructure nationwide, stressing that it undermines the corporation's capacity to deliver safe and efficient services.

He reaffirmed the corporation's commitment to sustaining rail transport services under the Renewed Hope Rail Agenda and urged vandals to desist.

Opeifa also commended the

Federal High Court in Ikoyi, Lagos State, where Justice A. I. Kala sentenced two men — Mudansuru Mutari (27) and Blorie Kokori (39) — to two years' imprisonment each for vandalising components of the Warri-Itakpe Rail Track.

The convicts were earlier apprehended around Kilometre 208 before Abraka, Delta State, and prosecuted on charges bordering on vandalism and

economic sabotage.

They were convicted under Section 36(6)(b) and Section 1(10) of the Miscellaneous Offences Act, Cap 17, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2024.

He commended the judiciary, the Railway Police Command and other security agencies for the successful prosecution, saying the judgment reaffirms the Federal Government's zero-tolerance stance on railway vandalism.

Police arraign man, 26, over alleged N450,000 fraud

BADAGRY (LAGOS)

A 25-year-old man, Anthony Agosu, was on Monday arraigned before a Badagry Chief Magistrates' Court for allegedly defrauding a complainant of N450,000.

The defendant pleaded not guilty to charges of fraud and breach of peace.

Prosecutor ASP Edet Ekpo

told the court that the defendant collected N450,000 from the complainant, Yawo Peter, at Ajah, Lagos, in 2025 to install a Plaster of Paris ceiling in Peter's house but failed to do the job.

Chief Magistrate Nurudeen Layeni granted the defendant bail in the sum of N500,000 with two sureties in like sum, one of whom must be a community leader. The case was adjourned until January 15.

Defendant docked for allegedly assaulting older brother

BADAGRY

A 24-year-old man, Israel Etuk, was on Monday arraigned before a Badagry Chief Magistrates' Court for allegedly assaulting his older brother.

According to the prosecution, the incident occurred on November 12 at Magbon, Badagry. Prosecutor ASP Edet Ekpo alleged that the defendant slapped and beat the complain-

ant, Mr Sunday Etuk, causing injuries, and threatened to attack him with a cutlass.

The offences contravene Sections 168 and 170 of the Criminal Law of Lagos State, 2015.

Chief Magistrate Nurudeen Layeni granted the defendant bail in the sum of N500,000 with three sureties in like sum, including a community leader. The matter was adjourned until December 15.

Man, 43, docked for alleged reckless driving, causing death

IKORODU

A 43-year-old man, Mubisau Idris, was on Monday arraigned before an Ikorodu Chief Magistrates' Court for alleged reckless driving resulting in the death of a woman.

Prosecutor ASP Aminu Isaac told the court that the defendant, on November 16 at about 8:30 a.m. along Sagamu Road by Power Line Junction, Sabo,

Ikorodu, drove a Volkswagen Vanagon bus with registration number EPE 494 XM without due care, resulting in the death of Mrs Tawakalit Uthman.

He pleaded not guilty.

The offences contravene Sections 50(1) and 52 of the Road Traffic Law and Regulation of Lagos State, 2018.

The court granted him bail in the sum of N500,000 with two sureties in like sum and adjourned the case until January 22, 2026.

Defendant arraigned for allegedly exhuming, interfering with son's corpse

IBADAN

A 56-year-old man, Kazeen Olalekan, was on Monday arraigned before an Iyaganku Magistrates' Court for allegedly exhuming and interfering with the corpse of his late son.

The prosecution alleged that the defendant, on November 22 at about 1:00 a.m. at Idi-Arere, Ibadan, dug up the grave

of his son, identified as the late Roqeeb, and interfered with the remains contrary to the law.

The offence contravenes Section 242(1)(b) of the Criminal Law of Oyo State, 2000.

Magistrate Kausaray Ayofe granted the defendant bail in the sum of N100,000 with two sureties in like sum. The matter was adjourned until February 10, 2026.



ADDRESSING PRESS CORPS:

Agriculturist/Founder of Davidolar Farms (DF), Olusegun Alabi (M) addressing members of the House of Representatives Press Corps, calling on government to industrialize pineapple farming and adopt briquette-based renewable energy as viable alternative to Nigeria's electricity supply, at the National Assembly Complex in Abuja on Monday (1/12/25).

Man bags 21 months' imprisonment for N50m fraud

IKEJA

A man, Chinedu Chukwudole, was sentenced to 21 months and 18 days' imprisonment for obtaining N50 million under false pretences.

Justice Rahman Oshodi imposed the sentence after the defendant pleaded guilty to a two-count charge of stealing and obtaining by false pretence filed by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). He was also given an option of a N5 million fine.

EFCC counsel, Mr Spiff Owede, told the court that Chukwudole, in January 2023 in Lagos, obtained N50 million from one Mr Chukwudi Ezeh under the pretence that he had 70,000 United States dollars to sell at the rate of N720 per dollar.

The defendant failed to supply the dollars and converted the money to personal use.

The offences violate Sections 1(1)(3) of the Advance Fee Fraud and Other Fraud Related Offences Act, 2006, and Section 287 of the Criminal Law of Lagos State, 2015.

Four men arraigned for allegedly stealing Railway irons

IBADAN

Four men, Olalekan Samadi (19), Ismail Usman (28), Abdulahi Buhari (35) and Usman Hassan (32) were on Monday arraigned before an Iyaganku Magistrates' Court in Ibadan over the alleged theft of Railway irons.

Prosecutor ASP Musbau Lawal said the defendants committed the offence on November 18 at about 9:40 a.m. at Erunmu Railway Line, Ibadan.

He alleged that Samadi stole rail pandrol clips and bolts

worth N500,000 belonging to the Nigerian Railway Corporation and wilfully damaged the railway line by removing the components.

The other defendants allegedly received the stolen items knowing they were stolen.

The offences violate Sections

390(9), 451, 427 and 516 of the Criminal Law of Oyo State, 2000.

Magistrate Olaolu Olani-pukun granted each defendant bail in the sum of N300,000 with one surety in like sum and adjourned the case until January 27, 2026.

Edo pledges stronger collaboration with Fed Mining Cadastre to boost sector

GRACE OAKHIENA

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government has reaffirmed its commitment to driving a coordinated, transparent, and economically viable mining sector through enhanced collaboration with the Federal Mining Cadastre Office (MCO).

The pledge was made by Edo State Commissioner for Mining and Chairman of the Mineral Resources and Envi-

ronmental Management Committee (MIREMCO), Hon. Andrew Ijegbui, while hosting the newly appointed South-South Zonal Coordinator of the MCO, Mr. Ifada Sunday Enehi, during a courtesy visit to the Ministry in Benin City.

Hon. Ijegbui expressed pride that an Edo indigene, Mr. Enehi now leads the zonal operations of the Cadastre Office.

He highlighted the productive working relationship between the Ministry and the MCO over

the years, a partnership that has promoted accountability and reduced unlicensed mining activities across the state.

"When we assumed office, we discovered numerous operators mining without the required licenses. We established a Task Force to identify defaulters, ensure registration with the Zonal Cadastre Office, and secure payment of royalties," Hon. Ijegbui said.

"These efforts have not only strengthened adherence to due

process, but have also boosted the state's internally generated revenue."

He further stressed that as Chairman of MIREMCO, his mandate includes ensuring alignment between federal and state objectives in solid mineral development.

"Our commitment is to collaborate closely with your office to uphold the goals of both the Federal and State governments in the Mining Sector," he added.

NEWS

Foreign

13 people arrested for suspected manslaughter over Hong Kong deadliest fire

Hong Kong: Hong Kong authorities on Monday arrested 13 people for suspected manslaughter in a probe into the city's deadliest fire in decades.

Authorities pointed to sub-standard renovation materials that fueled a blaze that has claimed at least 151 lives.

Police continued to sweep the seven towers engulfed in Wednesday's disaster at the Wang Fuk Court estate, finding bodies of residents in stairwells and on rooftops, trapped as they tried to flee the flames.

More than 40 people are still missing.

Tsung Shuk Yin, a police

official told reporters on Monday, choking up with emotion that "some of the bodies have turned into ash, therefore we might not be able to locate all missing individuals."

Tests on several samples of a green mesh that was wrapped around bamboo scaffolding on the buildings at the time of the blaze did not match fire retardant standards, officials overseeing the investigations told a news conference.

Contractors working on the renovations used these sub-standard materials in hard-to-reach areas, effectively hiding them from inspectors, said Chief Secretary Eric Chan.

Foam insulation used by contractors also fanned the flames and fire alarms at the complex were not working properly, officials have said.

Thousands have turned out to pay tribute to the victims, who include at least nine domestic helpers from Indonesia and one from the Philippines, with lines of mourners stretching more than a kilometre (a half-mile) along a canal next to the estate.

Vigils are also due to take place this week in Tokyo, London and Taipei, authorities said.

Amid pockets of public anger over missed fire risk warnings and evidence of unsafe con-

struction practices, Beijing has warned it would crack down on any "anti-China" protests.

At least one person involved in a petition calling for an independent probe among other demands was detained for around two days, sources familiar with the matter said.

Police have declined to comment on specifics, saying only that they will take action in accordance with the law.

The remaining buildings to be scoured for remains are "the difficult ones", Amy Lam, a senior police official, told reporters on Sunday, adding that the final leg of the search may take weeks.



HONDURAS ELECTION:
Rixi Moncada (left), Salvador Nasralla (centre) and Nasry "Tito" Asfura.

Four dead in Russian attack as diplomatic efforts to end Ukraine war continue

Russian missile attack on the eastern Ukrainian city of Dnipro has killed four people and injured 40, authorities have said.

Unconfirmed reports say a ballistic missile was used in the strike, which took place on Monday morning.

Videos shared online showed a large explosion occur on the side of a motorway, and local media said an office block, cars and shops were hit or badly damaged.

Dnipro, which lies around 100km (62 miles) from the front line, has frequently come under Russian attack since the start of Moscow's full-scale invasion in February 2022.

The attack came a day before US special envoy Steve Witkoff is due to meet President Vladimir Putin in Moscow for talks aimed at ending the war in Ukraine. Witkoff has visited the Russian president several times this year, but has never been to Kyiv.

On Sunday, a Ukrainian delegation met Witkoff, US Secre-

tary of State Marco Rubio and Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, in Florida.

Zelensky said on Monday that the talks had been "very constructive" but that there were some "tough issues" to be worked through - echoing Rubio's comments that the meeting had been "productive" but that there was "more work to be done".

The Florida meeting was the latest step in weeks of intense "shuttle diplomacy" which saw Ukrainian and Russian delegations separately engage with US officials to discuss a peace plan.

Despite efforts, however, substantial differences remain between Moscow and Kyiv's positions.

Russia has refused to back down from its core demand that Ukraine retreats from the areas of the Donbas region it still holds, which Kyiv maintains it will never do.

"If they don't withdraw, we'll achieve this by force of arms," Vladimir Putin said. In response,

Zelensky said that Russia "scorned" efforts "to truly end the war".

Matters surrounding Ukraine's future security are also a source of contention. Kyiv and its European partners are keen for Ukraine to be given security guarantees - such as Nato membership - that would protect it from being attacked again.

But Russia vehemently opposes this and Donald Trump too has ruled out allowing Ukraine to join the military alliance.

Meanwhile, Volodymyr Zelensky has arrived in Paris to rally support from French President Emmanuel Macron, and will head to Ireland on Tuesday.

Honduras election on a knife edge as Trump-backed man slightly ahead

Early results from the general election in Honduras show the leader of the right-wing National Party, Nasry Asfura, has a razor-thin lead.

With almost 56% of the votes counted, the conservative candidate was just 0.22 percentage points ahead of former TV host Salvador Nasralla, according to results published by the National Electoral Council (CNE).

Stressing that the results were both "preliminary and partial", the head of the CNE said that the race was on a knife-edge between cen-

tre-right Nasralla and right-wing Asfura.

Asfura has the backing of US President Donald Trump, who has threatened to cut financial aid to the Central American nation if his preferred candidate does not win.

Asfura's early lead has been narrowing and with 55.9% of votes counted his share stood at 40%, while his nearest challenger, Nasralla, was on 39.78%.

The difference between the two frontrunners currently amounts to fewer than 4,200 votes.

The outgoing president, Xi-

US lawmakers demand answers over Hegseth Venezuela boat strike claims

US lawmakers are pressuring the Trump administration for answers about military strikes on suspected Venezuelan drug boats, after a report alleged that a follow-up strike was ordered to kill survivors of an initial attack.

Republican-led committees overseeing the Pentagon have vowed to conduct "vigorous oversight" into the US boat strikes in the Caribbean, following the report.

On Friday, The Washington Post reported that a US strike on a boat on 2 September left two survivors, but that a second attack was carried out to comply with Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth's orders to "kill everybody" on board - raising fresh legality questions.

Hegseth decried the report as "fake news".

On Sunday, US President Donald Trump said he believed his defence secretary "100%".

In recent weeks, the US has expanded its military presence in the Caribbean and carried out a series of lethal strikes on suspected drug-smuggling boats in international waters off Venezuela and Colombia, as part of what it calls an anti-narcotics operation.

More than 80 people have been killed since early September.

The Trump administration says it is acting in self-defence by destroying boats carrying illicit drugs to the US.

In its report on Friday, which has not been verified by the BBC, The Washington Post wrote that Secretary Hegseth "gave a spoken directive" to "kill everybody" on board one such vessel, and a Special Operations commander overseeing the operation "ordered a second strike to comply with Hegseth's instructions".

The Trump administration has sought to justify its operations in the Caribbean by saying it is in a non-international armed conflict with the alleged drug traffickers.

The rules of engagement in such armed conflicts - as set out in the Geneva Conventions - forbid the targeting of wounded participants, saying that those participants should instead be apprehended and cared for.

Republican and Democratic lawmakers appearing on US talk shows on Sunday said they

supported congressional reviews of the boat strikes.

The leaders said they did not know whether the Washington Post's report was true, but that attacking survivors of an initial missile strike presented major legal concerns.

"This rises to the level of a war crime if it's true," said Democratic Senator Tim Kaine on CBS Face the Nation.

Republican lawmaker Mike Turner acknowledged that Congress did not have information that the follow-up strike had happened.

"Obviously if that occurred, that would be very serious, and I agree that that would be an illegal act," Turner, a former chairman of the Intelligence Committee, told CBS.

The comments follow the Republican-led Senate Armed Services Committee's announcement on Friday that it planned to conduct "vigorous oversight" on the strikes.

"The Committee is aware of recent news reports - and the Department of Defense's initial response - regarding alleged follow-on strikes on suspected narcotics vessels in the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility," the committee's Republican chair, Senator Roger Wicker, and his Democratic counterpart, Senator Jack Reed, said in a statement.

"The Committee has directed inquiries to the Department, and we will be conducting vigorous oversight to determine the facts related to these circumstances," they said.

The House Armed Services Committee followed suit, saying it was "taking bipartisan action to gather a full accounting of the operation in question".

In a post on X, Hegseth pushed back against accusations against him, calling them "fabricated, inflammatory, and derogatory". He wrote that the series of strikes on boats were "lawful under both US and international law".

"Every trafficker we kill is affiliated with a Designated Terrorist Organization," he wrote.

On Sunday, talking to reporters aboard Air Force One, President Trump defended his defence secretary, saying: "He said he did not say that."

omara Castro of the left-wing Libre party, was barred by the constitution from standing for a second term.

She backed Rixi Moncada, who is currently in third place at just under 20%.

The two remaining candidates in the running for the presidency each received less than 1% of the votes.

Many Hondurans had a sense that this would not be an entirely straightforward election but few would have foreseen the vote count being this close.

Shortly before casting their ballots, voters at a farmers' market in Tegucigalpa spoke of their desire for change.

"People must vote based on reality in front of us, and not stay blindly loyal to any party colours," insisted walnut-seller Nicole Castillo, adding that she believed that meant acknowledging the ingrained corruption in Honduran politics.

Nolvy Oriales, who owns a cheese counter nearby, said that her main motivation for voting was also to stamp out corruption and cronyism.

Foreign

NEWS

Death toll in Indonesia floods passes 500

The death toll in the floods which struck Indonesia last week has now climbed to more than 500, with rescue workers still battling to reach affected areas.

The floods, which were caused by a rare cyclone that had formed over the Malacca Strait, have hit three provinces and impacted some 1.4 million people, according to the government's disaster agency.

Another 500 people remain missing, while thousands more have been injured.

Indonesia is just one part of Asia which has been hit with torrential rain and storms in recent days, with Thailand, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka all also reporting deaths.

In Indonesia, the provinces of Aceh, North Sumatra and West Sumatra have been hardest hit, with thousands still cut off and without critical supplies.

Arini Amalia, a resident from Aceh's Pidie Jaya Regency, told the BBC the flood waters had been "like a tsunami".

"According to my grandmother, this is the worst, the worst in her life," Amalia said.

Aid workers have been trying to reach people on foot and by motorcycle, as many roads are impassable to larger vehicles.

Pictures from the region show bridges washed away, roads covered in mud and debris, and logs piled high.

At West Sumatra's Twin Bridges landmark, where flood waters swept through and deposited enormous amounts of mud and debris, Mariana watched as excavators cleared the roads, hoping they would find her missing family members including her 15-year-old son.

"Watching the excavators, seeing how thick the mud is... I keep thinking, what condition will my child be in when they find him?" she said. "Will he still be intact? My mother, my

brother-in-law... Looking at how it is here, maybe their faces won't even be recognisable any more."

Many are still waiting for food aid, with some saying they have not eaten for two to three days.

Maysanti, who lives in Central Tapanuli which is one of the worst-hit areas in North Sumatra, told the BBC that aid workers were having trouble reaching her district.

"Everything is gone; our food supplies are running out. We can't eat," she said. "Even instant noodles are being fought over now. Our food is gone; we need food and rice. Access to us is completely cut off."

She said she has to walk kilometres away from her house to get an internet connection and basic necessities, like clean water.

In Central Aceh where local authorities have provided Starlink devices, thousands were seen queuing outside the regency's office on Sunday night hoping to contact their loved ones or charge their mobile phones.

"It's been five days with no signal. We've been waiting since yesterday in case the network comes back. I'm planning to call my mother in Banda Aceh, but until now I still can't reach her," said one resident called Mar.

As rescue efforts continue, anger has started to grow towards the government's disaster response.

Critics say that authorities were ill-prepared for the floods. Some have blamed bureaucratic red tape for slowing down the distribution of food aid.

On Monday, President Prabowo Subianto - who was visiting some of the flood-affected areas in North Sumatra - acknowledged some roads were still cut off, but added "we're doing everything we can

Dozens missing as deadly landslide hits two boats in Peru

At least 12 people have died and around 50 are still missing after a landslide struck two boats docked at a river port in Peru's Amazon rainforest region, local media reports.

The landslide sank a ferry and seriously damaged another passenger vessel that had dozens of people on board, according to a police report cited by the Andina news agency.

It happened at around 05:00 local time (10:00 GMT) as passengers were set to disembark at Iparia, in the country's central Ucayali region on Monday.

The injured have been taken to hospital while national police and the Peruvian Navy look for more survivors. It is feared that children are among the missing.

The landslide was caused by "erosion" of the bank of the Ucayali River - the headwater

of the Amazon - the country's National Emergency Operations Center said on X.

Some 50 people were on board one of the boats, according to news agency AFP.

Rescue operations have been hindered by the fast-flowing river waters, a navy official told AFP.

Children, teachers and doctors were among the passengers, the Reuters news agency reports, citing Andina.

Authorities are working with families gathered at the scene of the disaster to try to determine exactly how many people still need to be found.

One of the boats had departed Pucallpa to the north on Sunday and was travelling towards the riverside communities of Caco Macaya, Curiaca del Caco, and Pueblo Nuevo del Caco, local media reports.



ECOWAS DELEGATION:

Sierra Leone President Julius Maada Bio (Left) on arrival in Bissau, capital of Guinea-Bissau on Monday, December 1, 2025.

ECOWAS delegation in Guinea-Bissau for talks with coup leaders

A delegation from the West African regional bloc known as ECOWAS arrived in Guinea-Bissau on Monday for mediation talks with the leaders of a coup over the "complete restoration of constitutional order."

The ECOWAS mission, led by its chairman and the President of Sierra Leone Julius Maada Bio, arrived as the military government — which seized power last Wednesday — banned all demonstrations, strikes and activities regarded as threat to peace and stability.

In a statement late Sunday, the military authorities also ordered public institutions and ministries to reopen. Soldiers seized power in the

West African nation three days after a hotly contested presidential election which the two main contenders claim to have won.

During the coup Guinea-Bissau's President Umaro Sissoco Embalo told French media by phone that he had been deposed and arrested. Embalo has since fled to the Republic of Congo's capital Brazzaville.

Guinea-Bissau's military has installed former army chief of staff Gen. Horta Inta-a as the head of the military government, which will oversee a one-year transition period. On Saturday Inta-a appointed a new 28-member government, most of whom are allies of the ousted president.

Nigeria said its President Bola Tinubu has granted protection for Guinea-Bissau opposition candidate Fernando Dias da Costa in response to an "imminent threat to his life."

According to a letter to ECOWAS from Nigeria's Minister of Foreign Affairs on Sunday, Dias da Costa is at the Nigerian embassy in Bissau. The letter requested an ECOWAS troop to provide security.

The day after the coup, ECOWAS said suspended Guinea-Bissau from its decision-making bodies "until the restoration of full and effective constitutional order in the country." It said its mediation team would travel to Bissau to "engage the leaders of the coup with a view to ensuring

the full restoration of constitutional order."

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed grave concern over the events in Guinea-Bissau and condemned the coup. In a statement, Guterres stressed that disregarding "the will of the people who peacefully cast their vote during the Nov. 23 general elections constitutes an unacceptable violation of democratic principles."

He called for the "immediate and unconditional restoration of constitutional order," as well as the release of all detained officials, including electoral authorities, opposition leaders and other political actors.

Shock in Cameroon as 74-year-old opposition firebrand dies in detention

Left-wing Cameroonian opposition figure Anicet Ekane has died in detention, five weeks after he was arrested, his lawyers and party have announced.

Ekane, 74, was among the leaders of an opposition coalition who endorsed Issa Tchiroma Bakary in October's presidential election.

Tchiroma Bakary says he was the rightful winner of the poll, officially won by 92-year-old incumbent Paul Biya. Tchiroma Bakary has since fled to The Gambia.

No official cause of Ekane's death has been announced. His party has accused the authorities of denying him access to his medication - a charge the government has denied.

According to a spokesman for Ekane's African Movement for New Independence and Democracy (Manidem) party, Ekane died on Monday morning at a military medical facility, after his health worsened

over the weekend.

"We have no clarification... His wife had been called to come and when she found herself there, she was just presented the corpse of her husband," he said.

He added that the family later took the corpse to the mortuary.

Defence ministry spokesman Capt Cyrille Serge Atonfack said the Manidem leader had died from illness, but did not give any further details.

"The deceased, who suffered from various chronic pathologies, had been interned at the Military Medical Centre of the National Gendarmerie," he said, adding that the politician had been well taken care of by doctors since his arrest on 24 October.

Minister of Communication and government spokesperson René Emmanuel Sadi later expressed the government's condolences to Ekane's family, as well as the Manidem party.

He also said that Ekane had received proper medical

attention from both his personal doctors and those at the military hospital where he was admitted, adding that an investigation had been launched to determine the exact circumstances of Ekane's death.

Renowned anti-corruption lawyer Akere Muna described Ekane's death as "the extinguishing of a fierce and passionate flame" that burned for democratic emancipation.

Muna said in a statement that Ekane had informed him of his ill-health during their last conversation.

"One would have thought that basic humanity, the fundamental presumption of innocence, and the undeniable evidence of his failing health would have compelled his release to his family and the care of the medical experts who knew his condition," Muna said.

According to Ekane's lawyers, he was accused of hostility against the state, incitement to revolt, and calls for insur-

rection.

"He was never presented before a judge or charged with any misdemeanour," said one of his lawyers, Hippolyte Meli, in a statement on social media, describing the detention of the Manidem party leader as "illegal".

In recent weeks, rumours had circulated that the opposition figure had died, and Ekane's party members had demanded to see him "dead or alive".

His death has sent shockwaves across the nation, with supporters gathering at the party headquarters in Douala to grieve. Others have taken to venting their anger online.

Manidem says its premises have been surrounded by security forces.

Ekane initially endorsed another vibrant opposition figure, Maurice Kamto, for the presidential election. But Kamto, who endured a long detention after disputing the previous election in 2018, had his candidacy rejected upfront



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Sports

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Nigeria suffer heavy defeat to Côte d'Ivoire in WAFU-B schools opener



WAFU-B TEAM

Nigeria's U15 team stumbled in their WAFU-B opener, losing 4-1 to a ruthless Côte d'Ivoire side in Ouagadougou.

The match was their first group stage game of the WAFU B zonal qualifiers for this year's CAF Schools Football Championship.

The Nigeria squad, made up of players from a number of schools that took part in the national competition in Abuja two months ago, took on their counterparts from Côte d'Ivoire at the Stade August 4.

The Ivorians struck first in the 6th minute when N'Goran

Yao Philippe finished calmly after a quick attacking move.

Diarrassouba Dramane doubled the lead in the 18th minute, punishing a defensive lapse with a precise low effort.

Meité Christ Loan made it 3-0 in the 22nd minute, capping Côte d'Ivoire's dominant start with a powerful strike.

Konaté Mory added the fourth in the 34th minute, leaving Nigeria with a mountain to climb before the break.

Peter Moses pulled one back for Nigeria in the 37th minute, but the late consolation failed to spark a comeback.

The Nigerian School boys now face a must-win final Group B clash against Benin Republic as they seek to revive their campaign.

The zonal qualifying tournament is taking place in Ouagadougou, capital of Burkina Faso.

The four-day fiesta will witness competition in both male and female categories, though Nigeria is taking part in only the male event.

Group A of the male competition has hosts Burkina Faso, Ghana and Niger Republic, with Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Benin Republic in Group B.

World Cup: Fae sets sights on World Cup history as Côte d'Ivoire return to global stage after 12-year absence

Côte d'Ivoire head coach Emerse Fae says the Elephants are not travelling to the 2026 FIFA World Cup "for a holiday," insisting his team is determined to make history as they return to the global showpiece for the first time since Brazil 2014.

In an interview with FIFA's online platform, the 41-year-old tactician reflected on his side's flawless qualifying campaign, their ambitions for AFCON 2025 in Morocco, and the challenge of competing against the world's best in North America next year.

Fae, who guided the Ivorians to a dominant qualifying performance—eight wins, two draws, 25 goals scored, and none conceded—believes expectations are rightfully rising following the team's resurgence.

"We're not going to the World Cup for a holiday," he said. "We're thrilled to have qualified, but that wasn't the end goal. We want to prove that Côte d'Ivoire are capable of making history on the biggest stage."

With the World Cup draw set for Friday, the Elephants' return comes after back-to-back absences in 2018 and 2022. Fae admitted that missing out again would have been "a terrible failure," especially with nine African slots now available under the expanded 48-team format.

The Ivorians' qualifying run was one of the most commanding in the world. Not only did they remain unbeaten, they also did not concede a single

goal across ten matches.

Despite having 15 different goalscorers, Fae says he is comfortable without a single talisman leading the line.

"Whether it's a centre-forward, midfielder or defender getting on the scoresheet is neither here nor there," he noted. "Spreading the goals around is a real strength. It allows us to be unpredictable and gives us many players who can step in during a long tournament."



CÔTE D'IVOIRE TEAM CELEBRATING

NBBF NSC affirms January 2026 election date, rules out third term for NBBF President

The National Sports Commission (NSC) has directed the Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF) to adhere strictly to its constitution, reaffirming that no federation president is permitted to seek a third term in office.

An insider informed BSN

Sports that in a letter addressed to NBBF President Musa Kida, the NSC clarified that the federation's next board elections will take place in January 2026.

It further stated that the tenure of the current board, which began on January 31, 2022, will officially end on January 31, 2026—effectively

ruling out any extension or attempt at a third term.

The correspondence, according to sources familiar with its content, was issued to dispel mounting uncertainty regarding the federation's electoral timeline, as well as speculation over whether the NSC would permit a third-term bid.

Rumours have circulated suggesting that Kida, who first assumed office in 2017 and has served two four-year terms, may be seeking to extend his leadership beyond the constitutional limit. Some stakeholders have also argued that the current board's tenure should expire in October 2026, citing the date of its inauguration by the former Ministry of Sports, despite the election taking place earlier in January 2022.

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PremiumTrust Bank Abuja City Half Marathon: We're prepared for world class experience – Yusuf Alli



With just five days to the PremiumTrust Bank Abuja City Half Marathon scheduled for December 6, Technical Director of the race event and 3-time Olympian, Yusuf Alli says the race is prepared to deliver a world-class experience that will further solidify its rapidly rising global profile.

He noted that the event has already distinguished itself in an

extraordinary way after its debut edition. He highlighted the exceptional achievement of the race,

"The PremiumTrust Bank Abuja City Half Marathon is the only marathon in our clime to get a label after just one edition. It's fantastic, and it's because of the structured, seamless organization of the event."

As preparations intensify ahead of the December 6 race,

Alli said the second edition will push standards even higher.

"With the second edition, we will go higher. We're expecting a number of elite runners from around the globe - those within the top 300, including from Ethiopia and Kenya."

He reaffirmed the organizers' commitment to global best practices and technical integrity:

"We will have doping tests. We've

carried out blue marking of the route and will conduct a road tour with the athletes when they arrive."

The December 6 PremiumTrust Bank Abuja City Half Marathon is expected to attract both elite and recreational runners, offering Abuja residents an opportunity to experience a celebration of athletic excellence, community spirit, and international sportsmanship.



ALEXANDER ISAK

SPORTS

Osimhen's surprise early return sparks mixed reactions among Galatasaray supporters

Galatasaray has released a series of training-ground photos featuring Victor Osimhen in high spirits, offering reassurance to supporters ahead of the club's high-stakes derby against Fenerbahçe on Monday, December 1, 2025.

The Nigerian striker partic-

ipated fully in training on Friday, continuing his accelerated return from a moderate hamstring injury.

Osimhen's early comeback has sparked mixed reactions among Galatasaray fans, who remain cautious despite their excitement. Moderate hamstring strains typically require three to four weeks of recovery, and supporters fear a potential recurrence similar to the setback suffered by Wilfried Singo, who sustained a Grade 2C hamstring injury shortly after returning to heavy minutes.

The concerns come at a crucial moment for the Turkish giants, as Mauro Icardi's fitness

remains uncertain following the club's recent fixture against Union Saint-Gilloise. Osimhen, who has been prolific in the UEFA Champions League scoring six goals in three matches continues to be Galatasaray's primary attacking option.

The club's social media update did not spotlight Osimhen alone. The photos also showed teammates Leroy Sané, Lucas Torreira, and Gabriel Sara smiling as they completed Galatasaray's penultimate training session before their trip to Kadıköy. The images were captioned with yellow and red heart emojis, reflecting the club's colours.



VICTOR OSIMHEN

AFCON: Hakimi races against time as Morocco Banks on Star defender for historic AFCON triumph

Morocco is pinning its hopes on the timely return of Achraf Hakimi as the Atlas Lions prepare for a historic home campaign at the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) in 2025.

Nasser Larguet, former coach and technical director in Moroccan football, has offered fresh insight into Hakimi's rehabilitation following the injury he sustained against Bayern Munich in the UEFA Champions League.

The Paris Saint-Germain defender has been out of action since the incident, raising concerns in both club and national team circles.

According to Larguet, Hakimi is undergoing an "intense and structured" rehabilitation programme aimed at ensuring he is fit for AFCON 2025, which Morocco will host.

He revealed that the right-back is putting in close to six hours of recovery work daily, underscoring his determination to return in peak condition.

PSG sources have also confirmed that Hakimi remains under strict medical supervision, receiving specialised treatment and closely monitored recovery sessions to accelerate his comeback.

Hakimi's absence has been strongly felt. For PSG, his pace

and tactical intelligence remain irreplaceable down the right flank.

For Morocco, the 25-year-old is a cornerstone of Walid Regragui's system—providing defensive stability, explosive attacking runs, and dangerous set-piece deliveries.

With Morocco set to host AFCON for the first time since 1988, expectations are sky-high. The Atlas Lions have not lifted the continental crown since 1976, and the presence of their most influential players is seen as essential to ending the 49-year drought.



ACHRAF HAKIMI

Five months on, NFF yet to pay ₦50m prize to Kwara United as new registration commences

Five months after Kwara United won the 2025 President Federation Cup, the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) has yet to disburse the N50 million prize

money promised to the champions.

Kwara United secured the men's title on June 28, 2025, defeating second-tier Abakaliki FC 4-3 on penalties at the



Mobolaji Johnson Arena, Onikan. On the same day, Rivers Angels claimed their 10th women's title, reinforcing their dominance in the competition.

Despite repeated expectations, the champions have still not received their prize money. This delay has drawn criticism, especially as the NFF recently announced the commencement of registration for the 2026 Federation Cup, without publicly addressing the outstanding payment to the 2025 winners.

Despite loss to Côte D'Ivoire, Nigeria U-15 boys eye semifinal spot in crucial clash with Benin

Nigeria's U-15 boys' team will seek a swift recovery when they face Benin Republic on Tuesday, following a 4-1 defeat to Côte d'Ivoire in their opening match of the CAF Schools Football Championship in

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

The Nigerian side, participating only in the boys' category of the four-day regional qualifiers, will be aiming for their first victory of the tournament as they look to remain in contention for a

place in the semifinals. The match against Benin Republic is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. at the Stade du 4 Août in Ouagadougou.

This year's zonal competition features teams from Burkina Faso, Ghana, Benin

Republic, Niger Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, and Nigeria. Matches continue through midweek, with the semifinals set for Wednesday. The third-place playoff and final are slated for Thursday, bringing the tournament to a close.



AFCON: South Africa first to unveil final squad

With exactly 20 days to the kickoff of the Africa Cup of Nations Morocco 2025, South Africa have stolen a march on the rest of the continent after head coach Hugo Broos became the first manager to officially unveil his final tournament squad.

The Belgian tactician on Monday released a 25-man list that blends proven international quality with a bold injection of youth, as Bafana Bafana aim to surpass their impressive third-place finish at the 2023 AFCON in Côte d'Ivoire.

Broos retained nine players from the bronze-winning team, including AFCON Goalkeep-

er of the Tournament Ronwen Williams, while also handing opportunities to two uncapped 20-year-olds — Shandre Campbell of Club Brugge and Queens Park Rangers' Tylon Smith. Both youngsters have had limited senior action this season, yet the coach insists their inclusion is part of a long-term plan.

"I'm also looking a little to the future with this selection," Broos said. "We have to do at least the same as we did at the last Cup of Nations, which is reaching the semi-finals. We're going with a lot more experience now, and the team has become far more mature over the last two years."

Lookman hits form ahead of AFCON as Atalanta beat Fiorentina

Ademola Lookman delivered another assured performance for Atalanta as they secured a 2-0 win over Fiorentina in Bergamo, offering a timely boost for Nigeria with the Africa Cup of Nations just three weeks away.

The forward struck early in the second half, reacting quickest inside the box after a fast Atalanta transition unsettled the Fiorentina defence. His finish doubled the lead created by Odilon Kossounou's looping opener late in the first half.

The goal also extended Lookman's personal record against the Viola to six the most he has scored against any club in his career.

Super Eagles winger Ademola Lookman hits form ahead of AFCON 2025 as Atalanta beat Fiorentina 2-0 in Bergamo.

Lookman's movement repeatedly troubled Fiorentina, and his awareness in broken play proved decisive. After the visitors failed to clear their lines, the Nigerian pounced, steering home with confidence as Atalanta took firm control of the match.

Fiorentina struggled to contain his acceleration through the channels, and Atalanta's fluid transitions left the away side exposed throughout.

The 27-year-old has looked revitalised since the arrival of Rafaella Palladino, whose approach has restored freedom to his game. It marks a clear break from his time under former manager Ivan Jurić, when tactical restrictions and a tense relationship often affected his output.



ADEMOLA LOOKMAN