

MoU: Nigeria 'll not lose tax data to France —Experts

Economic and financial experts have dismissed fears that Nigeria might cede control of its tax data to France following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and French tax authorities.

Speaking with newsmen in Ibadan on Wednesday, the ex-

perts explained that the agreement is aimed at technical co-operation, knowledge transfer, and staff capacity building, not handing over sensitive tax information.

Financial consultant Mr. Tunji Adepeju said public concern largely stems from distrust in government rather than the

substance of the agreement.

He explained that the MoU is consistent with globally recognized operational frameworks and focuses on technical assistance, noting that French tax institutions have decades of experience in revenue administration.

“With FIRS increasingly taking over functions of other

revenue-collecting agencies, it cannot remain at the same level. Learning from more experienced jurisdictions is necessary,” Adepeju said.

He further noted that such agreements pass through inter-ministerial committees and extensive consultations with legal experts and key stakeholders be-

fore approval, stressing that Nigeria’s sovereignty remains intact.

He also confirmed that local Fintech stakeholders, including the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS) and major payment companies, will participate in implementing the MoU, which takes effect January 1, 2026.

Mr. Olugbenga Obatola, Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria (CITN), said that while he could not make a full assessment without access to the entire MoU, he cautioned that relying on another country for tax data is sensitive,

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The Nigerian Observer



...that the people may know

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Patients lament disruption as JOHESU strike enters third week in Lagos

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5 killed, 35 injured as suicide bomber hits Maiduguri mosque

● Edo Police deploy 5,000 personnel for yuletide security, lose 4 officers

MIKE OSAROGIAGBON WITH AGENCY REPORT

MAIDUGURI

At least five worshippers were killed and 35 others injured on Wednesday evening when a suspected suicide bomber detonated an improvised explosive device (IED) during Magrib prayers at a mosque in the Gamborun area of Maiduguri, Borno State. The Borno State Police

Command confirmed the incident, which occurred at about 6:15 p.m. in the Gamborun Market axis, one of the city’s busiest commercial centres.

Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Nahum Daso, told newsmen that the attacker struck while Muslim faithful were observing congregational prayers, leading to instant deaths and multiple casualties.

“Preliminary investigation indicates that the explosion

was caused by a suicide bomber who detonated an IED during Magrib prayers. Five persons died on the spot, while 35 others sustained varying degrees of injuries,” Daso said.

He added that the injured victims were immediately evacuated to the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital for medical attention.

Following the blast, operatives of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) unit,

alongside other security agencies, were deployed to the scene to secure the area and conduct checks to rule out the presence of secondary explosive devices.

The area was cordoned off as a joint security team commenced investigations to determine the circumstances surrounding the attack and identify those responsible.

Daso urged residents to remain calm and vigilant, and to promptly report any suspicious

persons, movements or objects to the nearest security formation.

Gamborun Market is usually crowded during evening prayers, raising concerns over public safety as investigations continue.

Meanwhile, the Edo State Police Command has announced the deployment of over 5,000 personnel across the state to ensure the safety of residents during and after the Yuletide festivities.

The deployment, which covers Benin City and other parts of the state, was disclosed in a statement issued by the Command’s spokesperson, ASP Eno Ikoedem.

According to the statement,

the security arrangement includes the mounting of roadblocks and checkpoints on major highways and strategic locations, in line with prevailing crime trends and the need to protect lives and property during the festive period.

The police said officers have been directed to conduct lawful stop-and-search operations aimed at preventing crime, intercepting criminal elements and guaranteeing the safety of law-abiding citizens.

ASP Ikoedem said the Command’s decision to strengthen security operations followed recent encounters with criminal

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ADDRESSING CONGREGANTS:

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo addressing congregants during the Festival of nine Lessons and Carols organised by the State government.

FG declares Dec 25, 26, Jan 1 public holidays

The Federal Government has declared Thursday, December 25, and Friday, December 26, 2025, as public holidays to mark Christmas and Boxing Day, as well as Thursday, January 1, 2026, for the New Year celebration.

The declaration was contained in a statement issued on Monday by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Interior, Dr Magdalene Ajani, on behalf of the Minister of Interior, Dr Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo.

Tunji-Ojo urged Nigerians to reflect on the values of love, peace, humility and sacrifice associated with the birth of Je-

sus Christ, and to use the festive season to pray for peace, improved security and national progress.

He also advised citizens to remain law-abiding and security-conscious during the celebrations, while wishing Nigerians a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

The minister extended warm felicitations to Christians in Nigeria and across the world, and to all Nigerians, noting that the season offers an opportunity to strengthen unity, show compassion and renew commitment to nation-building.

Christmas: Oborevwo harps on love, unity, Christ-like living

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Christmas: CAN urges vigilance, hope amid security concerns

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Five key tactical issues Super Eagles must fix after Tanzania win

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Edo govt holds festival of 9 Lessons and Carols

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government has held a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols as part of activities marking the 2025 yuletide season, with Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo, leading the celebration at

the Sir Victor Uwaifo Creative Hub, Benin City.

The event brought together residents, religious leaders and top government officials for an evening of worship, reflection and celebration, featuring soul-lifting carols and scriptural readings centred on peace, unity and goodwill.

Governor Okpebholo delivered a lesson from Psalm 9:3-7, reflecting on God's faithfulness and righteousness, and urged Edo people to continue trusting in God while working collectively to sustain peace, harmony and progress across the state.

He reassured residents that Edo State remains safe and secure, stressing his administra-

tion's commitment to peace, inclusive governance and the protection of lives and property.

According to him, the Christmas season offers renewed hope, unity and a sense of collective responsibility in building a stronger Edo State.

Also speaking, the Coordinator, Office of the First Lady, Edo State, Mrs. Edesili Okpebholo

Anani, described Christmas as a season of love, sharing and selfless service, and encouraged citizens to uphold values that promote peaceful coexistence and social harmony.

The festival featured performances by choristers from various churches across the state, whose renditions added solemnity and colour to the

celebration.

A raffle draw later enlivened the event, with several attendees winning prizes.

The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols was widely adjudged a success, reinforcing the message of faith, unity and peace, and serving as a prelude to Christmas celebrations in Edo State.

Lai Mohammed to donate books to 20 institutions

ABUJA

Former Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed has promised to donate copies of his book to, at least, 20 institutions of higher learning across the country.

Mohammed made the promise when he donated copies of the book, "Headlines & Soundbites: Media Moments that Defined an Administration," to the library of Yaba College of Technology, Lagos.

A statement on the event was made available to newsmen by the minister on Wednesday in Abuja.

According to the statement, the former minister said the initiative is informed by his decision to support research, teaching and critical inquiry in governance and strategic communication in tertiary institutions.

He added that the decision was part of his commitment to scholarship and knowledge-sharing.

The former Minister said the book was written out of a

strong conviction that Africans must tell their own stories from their own perspectives.

He noted that national experiences are often documented by outsiders, sometimes with distortions arising from distance, ignorance or bias.

According to him, having served for nearly eight years as Nigeria's Minister of Information and Culture, making him the longest-serving holder of the office, he felt a responsibility to document his experience in public service.

He described the book as an account of stewardship that chronicles key media moments, policy communications, crises, controversies and decisions that shaped public perception during the administration of late President Muhammadu Buhari.

According to him, 'Headlines & Soundbites' are intended for students, researchers, media professionals, public relations practitioners, historians and others interested in governance, nation-building and strategic communication.



MEDIA EXECUTIVE LUNCHEON:

Managing Director, Independent Television and Radio, Engr. Elvis Obaseki; Managing Director, Edo Broadcasting Service, (EBS), Sulaiman Aladeh; Chairman, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Edo State Council, Dr. Festus Alenke and General Manager, Vibes FM, Benin, Mrs. Peace Ifidon at a Media Executive Luncheon with Pastor Margerete Agbonifo, Iye Emohia of All Mothers International Intercessory Centre, Benin City recently.

NEMA flags off "Operation Eagle Eye" for 2025 festive season

ABUJA

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has officially flagged off "Operation Eagle Eye," a strategic search and rescue initiative.

The initiative is aimed at minimising road accidents and ensuring the safety of commuters during the busy festive period.

The Director-General of NEMA, Mrs Zubaida Umar, in her keynote address, in Abuja on Wednesday emphasised that road safety is a collective responsibility, urging Nigerians to be proactive.

Operation Eagle Eye 2025 is designed to support traffic con-

trol, prevent road traffic crashes, and ensure prompt rescue and emergency response during the festive season.

Road users were advised to strictly observe traffic regulations, avoid over-speeding and reckless driving, and cooperate with officials on duty to ensure a safe, orderly, and hitch-free Yuletide period.

Umar, who was represented by Mr Onimode Bande, Director, Planning, Research and Forecasting, said that the operation remains a critical annual initiative aimed at safeguarding lives and property during periods of increased vehicular movement.

She said that the operation

followed a recent "Operation Keep Fit" exercise led by the D-G to ensure that staff are physically prepared for the rigors of field operations.

The NEMA boss raised concerns over the mechanical fitness of vehicles and the lack of familiarity some drivers have with current road conditions.

She said that many vehicles traveling long distances, such as the Enugu-Port Harcourt route, had not undergone rigorous checks in months.

"There are cars on this road that have never been to Gwagwalada in the last six months.

"Those are the risks. There are people going to places like Lokoja who haven't been on that road in seven months, unaware that the road is under

construction," she warned.

Addressing the personnel and volunteers, Umar warned, regarding personal safety, recalling a tragic incident in Lagos where a staff member was lost during a similar exercise.

"You must keep yourself safe to help others stay alive.

"If you try to raise your hand for a trailer that is not trying to stop, jump out of the road. Your loved ones are waiting for you to return," she cautioned.

The D-G also provided specific instructions for the drivers of Mobile Intensive Care Units (MICU).

She advised that any injured person being transported to a hospital must be accompanied by a relative to ensure proper documentation and accountability.

Five killed, 35 injured as suicide...

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elements, which led to the loss of four police officers in the line of duty within the last one year, while eight others sustained injuries.

The statement explained that the fallen officers were killed during confrontations with suspects who refused to submit to lawful searches and attempted to evade security checks through reckless driving.

The Command appealed to residents to cooperate with security personnel by slowing down at checkpoints, remaining civil and patient, and complying with lawful inquiries.

It reiterated its zero-toler-

ance stance on extortion and unprofessional conduct, assuring the public that all officers deployed for the Yuletide assignment had been warned to act professionally at all times.

The public are urged to report any misconduct through the Complaint Response Unit on 08100389992, the Public Complaints Bureau on 08150999335, or the emergency lines 08077773721 and 08037646272.

The statement added that the Commissioner of Police could also be reached on 08132919576.

The Edo State Police Command wished residents a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

MoU: Nigeria 'll not lose tax data to...

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as it reveals a nation's financial strengths and weaknesses.

"On the negative side, it is like opening your financial soul to another country. But on the positive side, seeking help from a stronger partner to improve capacity is not wrong," he said, emphasizing that cooperation should focus on technical assistance, IT infrastructure, and cross-border information exchange.

Dr. Alarudeen Aminu, Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Ibadan and Chairman of the Nigeri-

an Economic Society (NES), described such agreements as standard global practice.

He noted that France has over €10 billion in investments in Nigeria, making clear tax rules and cooperation mutually beneficial.

Aminu cautioned, however, that Nigeria must remain vigilant in managing information shared under the MoU and ensure strong internal controls.

Active participation of Nigerian institutions and Fintech firms, he said, will guarantee that the country retains full ownership and control of its tax systems and data.

Nigeria's challenges surmountable, says UBTH CMD

The Chief Medical Director of the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH), Prof. Idia Ize-Iyamu, has urged Nigerians to remain hopeful, expressing confidence that the nation's challenges are surmountable with faith in Christ.

Prof. Ize-Iyamu spoke at the Nine Lessons and Carols Night and End-of-Year Party organ-

ised by UBTH for staff and students, where she said the coming year holds prospects for improvement for individuals and institutions alike.

She encouraged Nigerians to place their trust in Christ as a source of strength to overcome the country's socio-economic challenges, noting that the birth of Christ symbolises hope, joy and renewal.

The UBTH CMD thanked the hospital community for the support extended to her in her first four months in office, assuring them that greater opportunities lie ahead for the institution.

According to her, sustained hope in Christ has the capacity to transform lives daily, just as the celebration of Christmas reminds believers of the reason for the season.

She reaffirmed the hospital's commitment to excellence and professionalism, stressing that UBTH remains driven by care and compassion in service delivery.

The event was capped with a visit to hospital wards, where Prof. Ize-Iyamu, alongside management, staff and students, distributed gifts to patients and newborn babies as part of the yuletide celebrations.

Financial independence: Ohanaeze appoints Afrinvest as fundraising consultant

ENUGU

Mohammed made the promise when he donated copies of t Ohanaeze Ndigbo Worldwide has appointed Afrinvest, a capital market investment firm, as

its fundraising consultant to boost funding and enhance the organisation's financial independence.

The President-General of the group, Senator John Azuta-Mbata, disclosed this during the Ohanaeze Ndigbo World-

wide Imeobi meeting held at the International Conference Centre, Enugu, where he gave an account of his one year in office.

He said the partnership was designed to professionalise resource mobilisation, unlock new funding opportunities and

reduce dependence on political office holders.

"To demonstrate financial sustainability and institutional growth, we have appointed Afrinvest as our fundraising consultant.

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Digitalisation: FG unveils enterprise content mgt system to transform oil sector

ABUJA

The Federal Government has inaugurated the Enterprise Content Management (ECM) System at the Ministry of Petroleum Resources.

That it is a digital system to strengthen efficiency, accountability and digital governance in the Federal Public Service.

The ECM system "Go-Live" programme was unveiled on Wednesday in Abuja, by Mrs Didi Walson-Jack, Head of the

Civil Service of the Federation (HCSF), alongside Sen. Heineken Lokpobiri, Minister of State Petroleum Resources (Oil).

Also in attendance were Mrs Patience Oyekunle, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum Resources, top manage-

ment officials of the ministry, HCSF, and the Galaxy Backbone Limited, the custodian of the 1Government Cloud platform.

Speaking, Walson-Jack said the initiative placed the ministry on track to comply with the Federal Government's directive on the full digitalisation of work processes by December 31, 2025.

According to her, the system

will advance Pillar Five of the Federal Civil Service Strategy and Implementation Plan 2021-2025 (FCSSIP 2025), which prioritises digitalisation across Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

Walson-Jack said the ECM system deployment would fast-track work processes, secure records management and a significant reduction in reliance on paper-based operations, particularly in a ministry with a strategic role in Nigeria's economic stability and energy security.

She said the ministry occupied a critical position in national development through its responsibility for policy formulation, coordination and oversight of the energy sector, while its operational efficiency directly affected revenue generation, investment and national planning.

According to her, the system represents a deliberate shift in how work is organised, records are managed and decisions are supported, especially given the ministry's extensive engagement with regulatory agencies, operators and other MDAs.

Walson-Jack commended the leadership and staffers of the ministry for embracing digital transformation, saying

that its success depends on discipline, professionalism and sustained commitment to new work processes.

"With this deployment, the ministry joins other institutions across the Federal Civil Service already using the ECM system to ensure secure records, clear audit trails, efficient workflows and a reliable institutional memory," she said.

She explained that the system, deployed on the 1Gov Cloud platform, supports electronic approvals, automated workflows and interoperability across government, shifting decision-making from the physical movement of files to timely access to accurate information.

Walson-Jack added that the project aligned with the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Tinubu, which calls for an efficient, accountable and digitally enabled Public Service.

She emphasised that digital transformation goes beyond system deployment, requiring consistent use, adherence to established processes and effective utilisation of complementary digital tools, including Service-Wise GPT and the Compendium of Federal Circulars.



PRESENTING COMMITTEE'S REPORT:

Chairman, Edo State House of Assembly Committee on Appropriation, Budget and Project Monitoring, Hon Eigbiremonlen Sunday (left) presenting the Committee's report to Clerk of the House, Alhaji Yahaya Omogbai during plenary yesterday. Photo: Godwin Iseguan.

Patients lament disruption as JOHESU strike enters third week in Lagos

LAGOS

Patients seeking treatment at various public health facilities in Lagos have expressed frustration as the Joint Health Sector Unions (JOHESU) strike enters its third week in the state.

The patients, who spoke in separate interviews with newsmen on Wednesday, urged the Lagos State Government to accede to the union's requests to enable full operations to resume at hospitals.

Checks at General Hospital Gbagada, Ikorodu General Hospital, General Hospital,

Odan, Lagos, and Randle General Hospital, revealed that the strike disrupted clinical services at the health facilities.

Doctors and nurses were the only health workers seen attending to patients, mostly in emergency services.

Mr Daniel Okoh, a relative of a patient at the Gbagada General Hospital, complained that the files of patients weren't brought out as they were turned away and told to return when the strike ends.

Okoh expressed concern that the perennial strikes by health workers could worsen morbidity and mortality among patients.

Similarly, Mrs Christina Essiet, lamented that her daughter's scheduled appointment at Ikorodu General Hospital, was affected by the strike, disclosing that she would resort to the use of herbs.

"We waited for a long time to see a doctor but they are overwhelmed attending to emergency cases and I can't afford the cost of seeking treatment at the private hospital.

"A good Samaritan gave me the money we used for transport, I will use the remaining change for herbs. My appeal is that the government dialogue with the Union for quick solutions," she said.

A health worker who pleaded anonymity told newsmen that the ongoing strike had resulted in

a scarcity of blood at laboratories.

"The medical scientists who are to screen donated blood are on strike and this scarcity exposes patients who require blood transfusions to danger.

"Last week, several accidents were recorded across the state; we had to beg the public to donate blood, after which we faced another challenge of professionals that would screen the blood.

"One of the accident victims was a JOHESU member who started crying for help and this forced some members to come to their aid.

"Things shouldn't get to this stage in the health sector; the government needs to rise to its responsibility by doing right for all professionals."

NUPRC under Komolafe not den of corruption —ICPC report

ABUJA

An Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has ranked the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), under Mr Gbenga Komolafe the most transparent and ethics-compliant agency in Nigeria.

This is contained in the 2025 Ethics and Integrity Compliance Scorecard (EICS) report released in Abuja on Wednesday.

The report indicated that contrary to speculations, the commission is not a den of

corruption.

According to the report, NUPRC, with 91.83 points came tops after the evaluation of 357 Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs).

"The score reflects "Substantial Compliance" with ethics, internal control mechanisms, and statutory requirements.

"This audit covers the very period Engr. Komolafe was accused of "diverting revenues.

"It is statistically and procedurally impossible for an agency to operate "33 secret bank accounts" and "conceal \$20 billion while simultaneously passing the ICPC's rigorous fo-

rensic audit of its internal control," the report said.

"This data paints a clear picture: The regulator (NUPRC) was enforcing strict compliance and maintaining watertight books, while other players in the sector struggled with transparency.

"The narrative that Komolafe was the problem in the sector has been inverted by the facts.

"It appears his strict regulatory oversight—which likely earned him the NUPRC's high integrity score—may have been exactly what made him a target for those resisting reform," it said.

The report evaluated MDAs

on, Financial Management: Guidelines for funds and timely retirement of advances and Procurement Processes: Adherence to the Public Procurement Act.

Other indices included internal audit: verification of payments and projects.

"By scoring 91.83, the NUPRC demonstrated that its financial pipes were not leaking; they were among the most secure in government.

"While 99 other MDAs lacked guidelines for funds and 114 failed to submit financial reports, Komolafe's NUPRC stood apart as a model of fiscal responsibility," it said.

Don advocates stronger collaboration, political will to boost energy efficiency

SANGO-OTA (OGUN)

Don, Dr Romanus Osabouhien, has appealed to the Federal Government to strengthen its political will and stem corruption to stabilise the energy sector's supply chain.

Osabouhien, an Academic Researcher and Energy Expert from Covenant University, Ota, Ogun, made the appeal on Wednesday, during the pre-launch news conference of his book at the University.

The book has as its title, "Energy Efficiency in Critical Times: Security, Economics, and Transition."

Osabouhien, who is also a Post doctoral Research Fellow at Institute for Energy Research (IEPRE), Kajang, Selangor, Malaysia, stressed that curbing energy waste was a vital step toward improving the country's energy efficiency.

According to him, the idea for the book emerged from the global disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, both of which significantly affected global energy supply chains.

He said that Russia's role as a major energy supplier to Europe and other parts of the world further exposed vulnerabilities within the global energy system.

"The focus of the book is to examine how critical times such as pandemics and wars disrupt energy supply chains and what can be done to mit-

igate these challenges," he said.

Osabouhien described the book as timely, particularly given its publication by globally renowned publisher, Elsevier, which, he said, lent it international credibility.

"We need political will to make progress. There is no justification for energy insufficiency in a country such as ours, which is blessed with diverse energy options such as solar, biomass and hydro," he said.

Osabouhien emphasised that government investment did not necessarily have to be excessive, noting that creating a conducive environment for investors would attract private capital into the energy sector.

The don cited similar developments and the transformation witnessed in Nigeria's telecommunications industry.

He said, "If the right environment is created, today's challenges will become tomorrow's testimony."

While reviewing the book, Prof. Evans Osabouhien, a Professor of Economics at Covenant University, also described Dr. Romanus Osabouhien, as focused, committed and willing to learn. These qualities, he said, are reflected in the depth and relevance of the publication.

Prof. Osabouhien said that the book provided a holistic perspective on energy policy analysis and development from a global context, covering economic, security, and technological aspects.

NEWS

Christmas: Oborevori harps on love, unity, Christ-like living

ASABA

Governor Sheriff Oborevori of Delta State has called on residents of the state to embrace love, unity and Christ-like living as the foundation for peaceful co-existence and sustainable development.

The call was contained in a Christmas message issued by the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Mr Festus Ahon, in Asaba on Wednesday.

Governor Oborevori urged Nigerians to use the season to reflect on the virtues of sacrifice, compassion and selfless service exemplified by Jesus Christ, while renewing their commitment to building a more harmonious society.

He commended the people of the state for their resilience,

unity and steadfast support, noting that their cooperation had been instrumental to the progress recorded so far.

According to him, the yuletide offers an opportunity for thanksgiving and renewed hope, reassuring residents of the state of his administration's commitment to delivering good governance and inclusive development in line with its MORE Agenda.

The governor highlighted notable achievements recorded in the last two years, particularly in the areas of infrastructure development, healthcare delivery, education, youth empowerment, agriculture and security.

He said the achievements included the ongoing construction of major roads and flyovers across the state, improvements in primary and

secondary healthcare facilities, and sustained investments in human capital development.

Governor Oborevori also highlighted progress made in workers' welfare, peace-building efforts and social intervention programmes, all aimed at supporting vulnerable groups, including widows, women and youths.

"These initiatives, which have helped to promote stability and stimulate economic activities

across the state, are a demonstration of our administration's resolve to improve the well-being of the people," the statement said.

Assuring the people of better days ahead, the governor said robust provisions had been made in the 2026 budget to further enhance living conditions across the state.

According to him, the budget prioritises infrastructure expansion, job creation,

education, healthcare, agriculture and youth empowerment to drive sustainable growth and shared prosperity.

"The 2026 budget has been carefully designed to consolidate our gains and address the pressing needs of our people.

"It reflects our commitment to improving the quality of life of Deltans and ensuring that development reaches every part of the state," he said.

Governor Oborevori reaffirmed his administration's pledge to remain focused on people-oriented policies, programmes and projects, assuring that no community would be left behind.

He urged residents to continue to support his administration and uphold peace, tolerance and unity, noting that collective efforts remained vital to achieving the state's long-term development plans.

Foundation conducts free medical outreach in Akwa Ibom community

IKPA (AKWA IBOM)

A non-governmental organisation, Richard/Emem Inyang Foundation on Wednesday conducted a free medical outreach for no fewer than 1,000 vulnerable persons at the Palmer Memorial Hospital, Ikot Usen, in Ibiono Ibom Local Government Area, and extended to Ikot Ikpong Itam community, both in Akwa Ibom State.

Speaking with journalists during the exercise, the President of the Foundation, Mr Richard Inyang, said the outreach was in thanksgiving to God for preserving his life and as a way of giving back to society.

"What we are doing is a way of appreciating God for saving my life after a terrible accident. "I had third-degree burns

and multiple surgeries, and many believed I would not survive, but God saved my life for a purpose," he said.

Inyang said the programme included free medical services, distribution of food items, toiletries and clothing, as well as preaching the gospel and winning souls for Christ.

He said the programme was self-funded and not supported by government or any organisation.

The medical outreach featured free eye consultations, health education sessions, eye screening and distribution of reading glasses.

Speaking on behalf of the beneficiaries, Chief Itaobong Sampson thanked the foundation for the gesture and prayed for God's continued blessings on the team.

NCDC warns of Lassa fever, meningitis, foodborne diseases during festive season

ABUJA

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention has warned Nigerians of increased risks of Lassa fever, cerebrospinal meningitis and foodborne diseases during the festive season, urging the public to prioritise health and safety.

The warning was issued by the Director-General of NCDC, Dr Jide Idris, in a signed public health advisory released in Abuja on Wednesday.

Idris said the festive period, characterised by increased travel, large social gatherings and food sharing, coupled with dry-season conditions, heightened the risk of infectious disease transmission.

He explained that Lassa fever is an acute viral haemorrhagic illness endemic in Nigeria, often

occurring during the dry season, and transmitted through contact with food or household items contaminated by rodents.

On meningitis, he said the disease spreads through respiratory droplets and is common during the dry season, especially in overcrowded and poorly ventilated environments.

He urged Nigerians to seek immediate medical attention if symptoms such as fever, neck stiffness, vomiting or sensitivity to light occur.

The NCDC also warned against foodborne and diarrhoeal diseases linked to poor food handling and unsafe water, advising proper hygiene, thorough cooking and safe storage of food.

Idris cautioned against misuse of antibiotics, stressing that antibiotics do not treat viral infections and that misuse contributes to antimicrobial resistance.



PRESENTING REPORT:

Chairman, Edo State House of Assembly Ad-hoc Committee on the investigation of the Museum of West African Art (MOWAA), Hon Adede Isibor presenting the report of the Committee to the Clerk of the house, for house, Alhaji Yahaya Omogbai during the House plenary. Photo, Godwin Iseguan.

IFAD-LIFE-ND reduces youth restiveness in Bayelsa —Project Coordinator

YENAGOA

Mr Amos Ebiowei, Bayelsa State Project Coordinator of the Federal Government/International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) – Livelihood Improvement Family Enterprises in the Niger Delta (LIFE-ND), has said the project has contributed significantly to reducing youth restiveness in Bayelsa State.

Ebiowei made the assertion during an interview with journalists in Yenagoa, during a media tour of some LIFE-ND

project facilities in the state.

He said the project had helped to curb crime and promote economic stability by positively impacting lives across the eight local government areas of the state.

According to him, LIFE-ND, through the incubator-incubatee model, trained and empowered a large number of youths in rural communities in cassava processing, poultry and fishery.

He said beneficiaries were provided with start-up capital, feeds and other incentives upon completion of their training.

"We adopted the incubator-incubatee model, training interested individuals across the eight local government areas and providing them with resources to set up their own businesses.

"In the past five years, the project has empowered about 4,500 persons, including youths, women and persons with disabilities across the state," he said.

Ebiowei attributed the success of the project to its community-centred approach, understanding of local needs and effective use of waterways and road networks to reach beneficiaries.

He said the project's interventions had dissuaded many youths from violence, oil bunkering and other social vices,

as they now channel their energy into productive and profitable ventures.

"Bayelsa State stands out among the nine Niger Delta states where the project is being implemented.

"We have many beneficiaries who have been taken off the streets and are now doing very well in their chosen areas of interest.

"The incubator-incubatee model has gone a long way in curbing violence and youth restiveness in the state," he said.

He explained that LIFE-ND was involved in human capacity building, community development, infrastructure, nutrition and economic empowerment.

Minister assures Nigerians of prompt restoration of electricity supply

ABUJA

The Minister of Power, Mr Adebayo Adedun, has assured Nigerians of the prompt restoration of electricity supply following a recent decline caused by a temporary shortfall in power generation.

The assurance was contained in a statement issued in Abuja on Tuesday night by the Special Adviser on Strategic Communications and Media Relations to the Minister, Mr Bolaji Tunji.

According to the statement, the minister gave the assurance

during a meeting with key power sector stakeholders, including the Nigeria Independent System Operator, Transmission Company of Nigeria, Ministry of Power, Power Generation Companies and Power Distribution Companies.

Tunji said the situation was expected to be resolved within the next 24 to 48 hours.

"The drop in power supply followed an explosion on the Escravos-Lagos Gas Pipeline, compounded by acts of vandalism on critical gas infrastructure, which disrupted gas supply

to several thermal power plants across the country," he said.

Stakeholders at the meeting confirmed that repairs to the vandalised pipelines would be completed within 24 to 48 hours, enabling the resumption of gas supply.

The minister directed all relevant agencies to intensify efforts to ensure adherence to the timeline.

He acknowledged the inconveniences being experienced by households and businesses, emphasising that the disruption was temporary and linked to acute gas supply constraints af-

fecting thermal power stations.

Given the increased electricity demand during the yuletide season, Adedun stressed the urgency of restoring gas supply and ramping up generation.

He said preliminary investigations established that the shortage was caused by the pipeline explosion and acts of vandalism in the Niger Delta region.

"These incidents significantly reduced the volume of gas required to power key electricity plants, resulting in a sharp decline in overall generation on the national grid," he said.

CDS urges unity, assures Nigerians of sustained security efforts at Christmas

ABUJA

The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Olufemi Oluyede, has assured Nigerians that the Armed Forces of Nigeria remain resolute in defending the country's

sovereignty, territorial integrity and democratic institutions, despite prevailing security challenges.

Oluyede gave the assurance in his Christmas goodwill message to Nigerians and personnel of the Armed Forces on

Wednesday in Abuja.

He described Christmas as a season of love, sacrifice, hope and renewal, urging Nigerians to reflect on shared humanity, collective responsibility and commitment to peace, unity and national progress.

The CDS expressed appreciation to Nigerians for their resilience, patriotism and continued support for the military, noting that public trust and cooperation were critical to achieving sustainable peace and security.

He paid special tribute to frontline troops deployed across various theatres of operation, commending their courage, discipline and professionalism, particularly those sacrificing time with their families to safeguard the nation during the festive season.

"The nation owes our troops

an immeasurable debt of gratitude," he said.

Oluyede reaffirmed that personnel welfare remained a top priority, highlighting ongoing efforts to improve living and working conditions through enhanced welfare packages, better healthcare, improved accommodation, timely payment of allowances and sustained support for families of fallen heroes.

He said these efforts were guided by the Armed Forces' Military Strategic Philosophy, which focuses on enhanced jointness, reinforced operational posture, improved welfare and sound administration under a whole-of-government approach.

The CDS urged military personnel to uphold discipline,

professionalism, loyalty to the Constitution and the core values of honour, integrity and selfless service, in line with the teachings of Christ.

He also called on Nigerians to use the festive period to promote peace, tolerance and unity across ethnic, religious and cultural lines, describing Nigeria's diversity as a source of strength.

Oluyede expressed appreciation to President Bola Tinubu for his unwavering support to the Armed Forces and called for sustained collaboration among sister security agencies.

He wished Nigerians a joyful Christmas and a peaceful, prosperous New Year.



SIGNING A CONDOLENCE REGISTER:

Senator representing Bayelsa West Senatorial District, Sen. Henry Sherieke-Dickson (L) with his wife, Rachael signing a condolence register for the late Deputy Governor of Bayelsa State, during their condolence visit Government House Yenagoa.

Ex-senator blames PDP crisis on deviation from founding fathers' principles

CALABAR

Former Senator, Gershon Bassey, has blamed the crisis currently rocking the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on its deviation from the principles laid down by the party's founding fathers.

Bassey, who represented Cross River South in the 9th National Assembly, stated this during an interactive session with journalists on Wednesday in Calabar.

He said that the Cross River chapter of the party made a fatal error during the 2023 governorship election in the state by failing to listen to the voice of the people.

According to him, the refusal to adhere to the founding fathers' principle of power rotation cost the party dearly.

"2023 was bitter-sweet for the PDP. Bitter because the party I love made a fatal error by not listening to the people, which ended up in the virtual collapse of the party.

"The key to our success has always been that the PDP listened to the people, but in 2023, there was arrogance to believe that the people did not matter.

"The people said it was the turn of the South, but the party insisted it could be anywhere," he said.

Bassey said the sweet part of the experience was that the state kept faith with the founding principles of Cross River,

dating back to the Calabar-Ogoja Accord, which provided for power rotation among the senatorial districts.

He added that after the elections, the PDP entered a cycle of self-destruction driven largely from Abuja, with support from some elements in the state, leaving the party a shadow of its former self.

The former senator, however, expressed optimism that the party would overcome its challenges, stressing that there was still a future for the PDP.

On the performance of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), Bassey said it was too early to pass judgment.

"It is still halftime, and we cannot say what will happen at the end of the term," he said.

Osun assembly passes N723bn budget for 2026

OSOGBO

The Osun State House of Assembly on Wednesday passed the state's N723 billion budget for the 2026 fiscal year.

The budget, titled Osun State Appropriation Bill 2026, was passed following the adoption of a motion for its third

reading moved by the Chairman of the House Committee on Finance and Appropriation, Mr Saheed Fatunmise, during plenary in Osogbo.

The report of the House Committee on Finance and Appropriation had earlier been adopted at plenary.

Speaking after the passage, the Speaker of the Assembly,

Mr Adewale Egbedun, said clean copies of the budget would be forwarded to Governor Ademola Adeleke for assent.

The approved budget is N18 billion higher than the N705 billion earlier presented to the assembly by Governor Adeleke on November 12.

The governor explained

that the budget comprises N317 billion for recurrent expenditure, including N135 billion for personnel costs and N182 billion for overheads, representing 45 percent of the total budget.

He added that capital expenditure stands at N388 billion, representing 55 percent of the total budget.

NNPCL commits to peace, responsible energy development in Ogoniland

ABUJA

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd.) has reaffirmed its commitment to peace, dialogue and responsible energy development in Ogoniland.

The Group Chief Executive Officer of NNPC Ltd., Mr Bashir Bayo Ojulari, made this known during a Federal Government delegation's visit to Ogoniland in Rivers State.

Ojulari described the renewed engagement by the Federal Government as a demonstration of hope and a new beginning built on partnership and understanding.

"This visit affirms the com-

mitment of the Federal Government, under the leadership of President Bola Tinubu, to peace, dialogue and rebuilding trust.

"For NNPC Limited, it marks a new beginning grounded in partnership, mutual respect and shared responsibility," he said.

Acknowledging the painful history of Ogoniland, Ojulari said recognising the past was essential to building a different future.

He commended the Presidential Committee on Ogoni Re-entry, led by Professor Don Baridam, and the National Security Adviser, Malam Nuhu Ribadu, for their leadership in building confidence and trust.

The GCEO said NNPC Ltd.'s operations in Ogoniland would

go beyond resource extraction, placing people, livelihoods and the environment at the centre.

He disclosed that the process for the full-time employment of 30 Ogoni indigenes had reached its final stage, with employment offers already issued.

According to him, the beneficiaries would resume work in January 2026, marking a significant step towards shared progress and opportunity for host communities.

Governor Siminalayi Fubara of Rivers State expressed gratitude to President Tinubu for his commitment to resolving the long-standing Ogoniland crisis.

He said assurances had been given on confidence-building measures, including road con-

struction, establishment of a University of Environment, hospitals, an industrial park and employment opportunities.

"As of today, 30 young men and women of Ogoni origin have already been employed by NNPC Limited," Fubara said.

In his remarks, Ribadu, who represented the President, thanked the Rivers State Government and Ogoniland stakeholders for their collective efforts in addressing the region's challenges.

Ogoniland hosts Oil Mining Lease 11, Nigeria's largest onshore oil block, operated by NNPC Exploration and Production Limited, with over 40 per cent of its recoverable reserves located in the area.

Youth mentoring key to curbing social vices, says Foundation

SULEJA

The Foundation for Human Development and Innovation (FHCDI) has called for intensified youth mentoring to promote moral values and curb social vices in society.

The Chairman of the foundation, Admiral Ibrahim Hamza, the Ciroman Zazzau, made the call at the foundation's maiden end-of-year stakeholders' engagement in Suleja.

The engagement focused on addressing challenges such as youth empowerment, social welfare, health and security in Suleja and its environs.

Ciroman Zazzau assured stakeholders of the foundation's commitment to meaningful youth development, stressing that mentoring and value reorientation were critical to producing responsible and productive citizens.

In his remarks, Alhaji Adamu Tanko-Lokoja, member representing Suleja, Tafa and Gurara Federal Constituency, commended the foundation

for its foresight in tackling community challenges.

Similarly, a member of the Niger State House of Assembly representing Suleja Constituency, Alhaji Muratata Badaru, expressed readiness to partner with the foundation to improve community well-being.

Also speaking, a former Commissioner for Environment in Niger State, Alhaji Zakari Saka, urged other well-meaning individuals and organisations to emulate the initiative.

The Secretary of the foundation, Mrs Fatima Adamu, said a compendium of recommendations from the engagement had been compiled and would serve as a working document.

She added that a special committee would be constituted to ensure effective implementation of the recommendations.

The event was attended by representatives of the Suleja Emirate Council, educationists, political office holders and youth leaders.

NEWS

Christmas: CAN urges vigilance, hope amid security concerns

ABUJA

As Nigeria joins the global community to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has called on believers to balance festive joy with wisdom and vigilance.

In a Christmas message released in Abuja on Wednesday, the CAN President, Archbishop Daniel Okoh, appealed to security agencies to increase their presence around places of worship.

Okoh emphasised that while Christmas represents the triumph of light over darkness, the reality of prevailing security and economic challenges requires a practical approach to worship.

He appealed to church leaders, particularly those in high-risk areas, to prioritise the sanctity of human life over traditional gathering formats.

"In places where adequate security presence is lacking, church leaders should prayerfully consider holding services in safer locations or smaller gatherings," he said.

Okoh clarified that the counsel was rooted in respon-

sible stewardship rather than fear, urging congregations to take proactive steps to ensure the safety of every worshipper.

Beyond security, the statement also addressed the economic difficulties facing many Nigerians.

The Archbishop reminded the faithful that the birth of Christ was a reassurance that God has not abandoned His people.

"Let us remember those grieving, displaced, or facing hardship. Let us be reminded that Nigeria's future depends on our collective resolve for peaceful coexistence," he said.

Archbishop Okoh prayed for national healing and expressed hope that the coming New Year would usher in a season of lasting peace for all Nigerians.

"Nigeria is our only home, and its future depends on our collective resolve," he noted.

Meanwhile, the Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Ibadan, Most Rev. Joseph Akinfenwa, urged Nigerians to work together to rebuild trust and promote unity as Christians celebrate Christmas.

Akinfenwa gave the advice in his Christmas message released on Wednesday in

Ibadan.

He urged leaders and citizens to align and embrace the message of love, hope and peace that Christmas represents.

The bishop called on the government to take more decisive and sincere steps to secure lives and property.

According to him, security

should not be politicised, while intelligence gathering, proper equipping of security forces and a just legal system are crucial.

"Let there be a genuine commitment to good governance, equitable distribution of resources and education.

"These are long-term solutions to unrest and criminality, as banditry thrives where in-

justice, poverty and impunity reign," he said.

Akinfenwa remarked that Christmas should be celebrated with reverence and reflection, not primarily as a time for extravagance.

He enjoined Christians to use the season to show love, give to the needy, seek peace and reflect Christ's light in

their communities.

"Worship, prayer and acts of kindness should be central, especially in these challenging times.

"The essence of Christmas lies not just in the historical event, but in its spiritual impact — a reminder of God's gift to humanity and a call for us to extend love to one another," he said.

FirstPower pledges improved power supply in Anambra

AWKA

FirstPower Electricity Company, a subsidiary of the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company, has reaffirmed its commitment to improving power supply and service delivery to customers in Anambra State.

Mr Okechukwu Okafor, Managing Director of FirstPower, made the pledge on Wednesday in Awka during a performance recognition ceremony for outstanding staff in the state.

Okafor said FirstPower remained committed to the progress of Anambra, particularly in the power sector.

"Our focus is on the customer because the customer is the platform for our success.

"We will continue to work closely with the Anambra State

Electricity Regulatory Commission, residents and industrial groups to enhance power supply across the state," he said.

He charged employees to remain diligent, disciplined and customer-focused in the discharge of their duties.

Okafor commended outstanding staff for their dedication and urged them to consistently place customers at the centre of operations.

According to him, sustainable progress depends on prioritising customer satisfaction.

"The performance recognition will remain a key management tool to inspire productivity and improved service delivery.

"Excellence, integrity and customer satisfaction must guide every interaction," he said.

Financial independence: Ohanaeze...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 2

"Complementing this is our resolve to build a professionally managed media architecture that will project our values and communicate our positions effectively," he said.

Azuta-Mbata also announced that Ohanaeze had registered two companies — Alaigbo Investment Company and Ndigbo Development Foundation — which would receive a N50 million take-off grant before the end of 2025.

He said the organisation had remained actively engaged in national processes, including elections, positioning Ndigbo as key stakeholders in Nigeria's socio-economic discourse.

He further declared the last Sunday in January of every year, beginning from 2026, as Igbo Thanksgiving Day.

"This will be a platform for gratitude, unity and spiritual reflection," he said.

Members of Imeobi commended his leadership, while the retired Anglican Bishop of Enugu Diocese, Most Rev. Emmanuel Chukwuma, urged Igbo leaders to support the Azuta-Mbata-led administration.

Chukwuma advocated for Ohanaeze's financial freedom and cautioned against reliance on governors, while also calling for disciplinary action against one Isiguzoro for parading himself as President-General of Ohanaeze.



BUYING SECONDHAND CLOTHES:

People buy secondhand clothes in preparation for Christmas Celebration at Swali Market in Yenagoa on Wednesday.

Yuletide: Troops foil kidnap attempt, rescue 24 passengers in Benue

MAKURDI

Troops of the Joint Task Force, Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS), have foiled a kidnap attempt along the Otukpo-Enugu Road in Benue State and rescued 24 passengers.

Lt. Ahmad Zubairu, Acting Media Information Officer, Headquarters JTF OPWS, confirmed this in a statement made available to journalists in Makurdi on Wednesday.

Zubairu said the incident, which occurred at Amoda in Ohimini Local Government Area on Monday night, forced

the kidnapers to flee and abandon the passengers.

He said the troops, who acted on a distress call, swiftly mobilised to the scene.

"The armed criminals had emerged from the bush and briefly occupied an existing checkpoint.

"The assailants subsequently stopped two 18-seater commercial buses travelling from Jos, Plateau State, to Ibadan, Oyo State, and attempted to abduct all passengers.

"However, the timely intervention of troops of OPWS led to a firefight that compelled the kidnapers to abandon their victims and flee into the bush.

"In the initial encounter, 15 passengers were rescued and handed over to the Nigerian Police Division, Otukpo, while six adults and four minors were declared missing.

"Subsequent operations led to the rescue of an additional five adults and all four minors, now in the custody of the Police Area Command, Otukpo, with search efforts ongoing to locate the remaining missing passenger," he said.

According to the statement, the Force Commander, OPWS, Major-General Moses Gara, commended the troops for their prompt response and professionalism.

Gara reaffirmed the task force's unwavering commitment to safe-

guarding lives and property within its area of responsibility.

He said the command would sustain offensive operations, intelligence-led patrols and coordinated engagements with sister security agencies to deny criminal elements freedom of action.

The commander further assured residents of a hitch-free yuletide celebration in Benue, Nasarawa and Taraba States.

He prayed that the season would bring God's abundant mercy, peace and enduring joy to families and communities.

He urged all believers to remain united, shun all forms of violence and live by the virtues exemplified by the Lord Jesus Christ — love, humility, tolerance and compassion.

Alumni donate corps members' lodge worth N40m to Ondo school

IKARE-AKOKO

The Old Students' Association of Community Comprehensive High School, Ikaram-Akoko, Ondo State, has donated a lodge worth N40 million to accommodate National Youth Service Corps members posted to the community.

The inauguration of the lodge at the school premises was attended by government officials, alumni members and community leaders.

Speaking at the event, Mr Oyetunde Ojo, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Federal Housing Authority, commended the old

students for giving back to their alma mater and contributing to community development.

Ojo assured residents that the bad portion of the Arigidi-Ikaram road would be repaired and urged them to support the initiatives of President Bola Tinubu's administration.

"I have informed the relevant authorities to repair the bad portion of the road. I have been using the road for the past nine years.

"I commend you for giving back to your school, and I will also assist with the furniture work of the entire place.

"I urge you to support President Bola Tinubu, who has a vi-

sion of making this country great.

"I also commend the Minister of Interior, Dr Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, for the reforms he is carrying out in the ministry, and I applaud Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa for his giant strides," he said.

Also speaking, Prof. Igbekele Ajibefun, Ondo State Commissioner for Education, Science and Technology, applauded the alumni for the gesture and called on other well-meaning Nigerians to emulate them.

Ajibefun, who was represented by the Tutor-General of Ondo North, Mr Adebayo Ajimuda, said the state government had continued to strengthen the ed-

ucation sector through teacher recruitment, school renovation and other interventions.

In his remarks, the President of the Old Students' Association, Mr Festus Dada, lauded members and stressed the need for unity to attract more infrastructural development to the school.

"This project was fully sponsored by us, the members — no external funding, just our collective will and resources.

"A special appreciation goes to our immediate past president for his visionary leadership and tireless efforts that laid the foundation for this achievement.

JUDICIARY

NEWS

Court orders EFCC to produce detained Bauchi Finance Commissioner in court

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja, on Wednesday, ordered the Eco-

nomics and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to produce Yakubu Adamu, Commissioner of Finance, Bauchi State, in court on December

30 for arraignment over alleged N4.6 billion money laundering.

Justice Emeka Nwite gave the order after the EFCC's

lawyer, Samuel Chime, failed to produce Adamu in court to take his plea.

The judge threatened to sanction the prosecuting counsel if he failed to produce the defendant on the next adjourned date.

Although Adamu, alongside

a firm, Ayab Agro Products and Freight Company Ltd, was listed for arraignment on Tuesday, the case could not proceed due to the absence of the EFCC's lawyer and the defendants.

However, the defendants' legal team, led by Chief Gordy Uche, SAN, was present in court.

Justice Nwite adjourned the matter until December 24 for the defendants to take their plea.

When the matter was called on Wednesday, Adamu was again absent from court.

Chime apologized for his inability to appear the previous day and said the prosecution had challenges.

He said the prosecution intended to amend the charge to include other defendants who were still at large.

"If my lord will notice, the defendant is not in court because we intend to amend our charge and bring in other defendants who are at large," he said.

Chime added that the two persons listed as being at large had written to the EFCC, indicating their willingness to honour the agency's invitation, necessitating the amendment of the charge.

He said the remand order was about to expire and applied for its extension to enable all defendants to be arraigned together on December 30.

Responding, Uche vehemently opposed the application, arguing that it was not made in good faith.

He said the prosecution could amend its charge at any time before judgment and that a valid charge was already before the court.

He added that the prosecu-

tion had already responded to the defendants' bail application without indicating that investigations were ongoing.

"The matter is ripe for arraignment and for the motion for bail, my lord," Uche said.

He urged the court to stand down the matter to allow Adamu to be produced for arraignment.

Uche said Adamu's detention had affected the payment of salaries to over 60,000 Bauchi State workers.

"They may go on Christmas break without salaries. The entire Bauchi State has been shut down," he said, adding that the Attorney-General of Bauchi State was present in court.

Chime maintained that the investigation had been concluded.

Justice Nwite queried why the charge was filed before investigations were completed and asked for assurances that all defendants would be produced on the next adjourned date.

Justice Nwite expressed displeasure at the prosecution's conduct and warned of severe sanctions if Adamu was not produced.

The matter was adjourned until December 30.

Adamu is the first defendant, while Ayab Agro Products and Freight Company Ltd is the second defendant in a six-count charge marked FHC/ABJ/CR/694/2025, dated December 19.

The EFCC alleged that Adamu conspired with others between June and December 2023 to launder N4.65 billion linked to a Polaris Bank facility for the supply of motorcycles to Bauchi State, which were allegedly not supplied.



MEETING WITH CONTRACTORS:

L-R: Minister of State for Works, Bello Muhammad-Goronyo; Minister of Works, David Umahi and Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Works, Adeladan Rafiu-Olarinre, during a meeting with contractors in Abuja.

Land grabber docked over alleged N8m land sale scam

IBADAN

The police have arraigned a 54-year-old land grabber, Mukaila Oladele, before an Iyaganku Chief Magistrates' Court for allegedly obtaining N8 million under the pretence of selling land.

Oladele, a resident of Oyo Town, is standing trial on two counts of conspiracy and stealing, to which he pleaded not guilty.

The prosecutor, Sergeant Akeem Akinloye, told the court that the defendant and another person still at large

committed the offences between October 2024 and April 31 in Oyo.

He alleged that Oladele obtained N8 million from Adekunle Hadi under the false claim of owning 10 acres of land along the Oyo-Iseyin Road.

The offences contravene

Sections 390(8)(b) and 422 of the Criminal Code Laws of Oyo State, 2000.

The Chief Magistrate, Mrs Olabisi Ogunkanmi, granted the defendant bail in the sum of N5 million with two sureties in like sum and adjourned the case until March 11, 2026.

Petrol attendants docked for allegedly stealing PMS

IBADAN

The police on Wednesday charged two petrol attendants, Adetunji Abiodun, 48, and Olatunji Usman, 25, before an Iyaganku Chief

Magistrates' Court in Ibadan for allegedly stealing petrol valued at N40.8 million.

They were charged on two counts of conspiracy and stealing and pleaded not guilty.

The prosecutor, Assistant

Superintendent of Police Ibrahim Sikiru, said the defendants conspired with others at large on November 20 along the Ibadan-Lagos Expressway.

He alleged they stole 45,000 litres of Premium Motor Spir-

it belonging to Gastab Global Haulage Nigeria Ltd.

The Magistrate, Mr M. Mudashiru, granted them bail in the sum of N5 million each and adjourned the case until February 12, 2026.

Edo Police delays threaten justice, push aggrieved parties toward self-help

MIKE OSAROGIAGBON

BENIN CITY

Prolonged inaction on petitions at the Edo State Police Command headquarters in Benin City is denying complainants access to justice and raising fears that aggrieved parties may resort to self-help, following the insistence of the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Monday Agbonika to personally approve every complaint before investigation.

Findings revealed that petitions submitted to the command have continued to pile up for months, with some lodged as far back as November yet to receive approval, effectively stalling investigations and creating a se-

vere administrative bottleneck.

The delays, it was gathered, have crippled the operations of the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID) and other tactical units, which cannot commence inquiries without formally approved petitions.

Lawyers and other petitioners who spoke to our correspondent warned that the situation is undermining public confidence in the police and leaving complainants with no effective avenue for redress.

They cautioned that sustained inaction could push desperate citizens to take the law into their own hands, a development they described as dangerous to public order and the rule of law.

A dependable source dis-

closed that the bottleneck worsened after the Commissioner allegedly stopped routing petitions through the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Criminal Investigation Department (CID), which traditionally supervises major investigations.

Speaking on the condition of anonymity, a lawyer described the development as "absurd, unprofessional and unacceptable."

"Last week, I had to personally see the CP before my client's petition was minuted for action. That is uncalled for," he said.

"Why should I abandon my office to sit in the CP's waiting room just because I submitted a petition? Does he not have deputies and assistant commissioners to handle these matters?"

Findings further showed that some frustrated petitioners have taken their complaints to the Assistant Inspector-General of Police (AIG), Zone 5 Headquarters, Benin City.

However, checks at the Zone 5 headquarters on Adesuwa Road revealed that such petitions often attract little or no attention, as they fall outside the AIG's direct administrative jurisdiction and are expected to be handled by the State Commissioner of Police.

Contacted, CP Monday Agbonika confirmed that he personally reviews petitions before approving action.

"I need to look at the merits of the petition. You can tell the lawyer to see me," he said.

Gov Ahmadu Fintiri grants pardon to death row inmates, others

YOLA

Governor Ahmadu Fintiri of Adamawa State has granted pardon to a death row inmate, Sunday Jackson, and two other inmates.

The Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Mr Humwashi Wonosikou, said the pardon was part of activities marking

the Christmas and New Year celebrations.

He said the governor also approved full remission of the remaining sentences of five other inmates based on their good conduct.

The gesture was in exercise of the governor's constitutional prerogative of mercy and aimed at rehabilitation and reintegration.

Yuletide: FRSC deploys over 150 personnel in Badagry

BADAGRY

The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Badagry Unit Command, has deployed over 150 personnel ahead of the Christmas and New Year celebrations.

The Unit Commander, Mr Yusuf Sanni, said the deployment was to ensure free flow

of traffic and prevent road accidents.

He said personnel would be stationed at black spots, accident-prone areas and gridlock zones, including Agbara and Badagry Roundabout.

Sanni urged motorists to obey traffic rules and ensure their vehicles were in good condition before travelling.

NEWS

Foreign

Zelensky moves towards demilitarised zones in latest peace plan for Ukraine

Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky has given details of an updated peace plan offering Russia the potential withdrawal of Ukrainian troops from the east and the creation of a demilitarised zone in their place.

Detailing the 20-point plan agreed by US and Ukrainian envoys in Florida at the weekend, Zelensky said the Russians would respond on Wednesday once the Americans had spoken to them.

Describing the plan as "the main framework for ending the war", he said it proposed security guarantees from the US, Nato and Europeans for a co-ordinated military response if Russia invaded Ukraine again.

On the key question of Ukraine's eastern Donbas, Zelensky said a "free economic zone" was a potential option.

He told journalists that as Ukraine was against withdrawal, US negotiators were looking to establish a demilitarised zone or a free economic zone. Any area that Ukrainian troops pulled out of would have to be policed by Ukraine, he stressed.

"There are two options," Zelensky said, "either the war continues, or something will have to be decided regarding all potential economic zones."

The 20-point plan is seen as an update of an original 28-point document, agreed by US envoy Steve Witkoff with the Russians several weeks ago, which was widely seen as heavily geared towards the Kremlin's demands.

The Russians have insisted that Ukraine pulls out of almost a quarter of its own territory in the eastern Donetsk region in return for a peace deal. The rest

is already under Russian occupation.

Sensitive issues including questions over territory would have to be resolved "at the leaders' level", but the new draft would provide Ukraine with strong security guarantees and a military strength of 800,000, Zelensky explained.

Much of the updated plan resembles what came out of recent talks in Berlin involving US negotiators Witkoff and Jared Kushner with Ukrainian and European leaders. The setting then moved to Miami last weekend where US President Donald Trump's team spoke separately to Russian envoy Kirill Dmitriev and then Ukrainian and European officials.

There now appears to be far more detail on the territorial issue, although it is clear the Ukrainian side was unable to

reach a consensus with the Americans.

Zelensky explained that if Ukraine was prepared to pull its heavy forces back by five, 10 or 40km in the 25% of Donetsk it still held to create an economic zone, making it virtually demilitarised, then Russia would have to do the same "accordingly by five, 10, or 40km".

Russian troops are currently about 40km (25 miles) east of Ukraine's "fortress belt" cities of Sloviansk and Kramatorsk, having captured the town of Siversk.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is unlikely to be impressed by the kind of compromise being proposed for Donetsk. He said this month that Russia would take control of the entire east of Ukraine by force if Ukrainian troops did not pull out.

Two police officers killed in explosion in Mosco

Three people - including two police officers - have been killed in an explosion in Moscow, Russian authorities have said.

Two traffic police officers saw a "suspicious individual" near a police car on the city's Yeletskaya Street, and when they approached the suspect to detain him, an explosive device was detonated, Russia's Investigative Committee has said.

Reports in Russia say the third person killed was the suspect, but this has not been officially confirmed.

The blast took place close to the location where a senior Russian general was killed in a car bombing in the capital on Monday. Lt Gen Fani Sarvarov died after an explosive device - which had been planted under a car - was detonated.

Investigate Committee spokesperson Svetlana Petrenko said in a statement on Telegram that a criminal case was being investigated in Moscow "regarding an attempt on the lives of traffic police officers".

The officers have been named by Russian media as Ilya Klimanov, 24, and Maxim Gorbunov, 25.

Sources in Ukraine's military intelligence agency, HUR, told the BBC that a local resident, eliminated two representatives of the Russian law

enforcement agency, "as a sign of disagreement with the Kremlin's aggressive policy" and said that a man "threw an explosive package through the car window, causing an explosion".

According to the HUR sources, two other people were taken to hospital with serious injuries.

Ukrainian military sources also told the BBC on Wednesday that the two officers killed had "participated in hostilities against Ukraine," and added there was "evidence of their involvement in the torture of Ukrainian prisoners of war".

There are no details and Moscow has not commented.

Speaking to Reuters news agency, Alexander, a resident who lives close by, said: "There was an explosion.

"It was loud bang - like with the car a few days ago."

Russia said it suspected Ukraine was behind Monday's explosion, without providing any evidence.

However Ukraine has not said whether it was involved in Fani Sarvarov's death.

It is also not known whether the two explosions are linked.

Sarvarov, 56, was the head of the armed forces' operational training department.

He was the third military official to have been killed in bomb attacks in the Russian capital over the last year.



OFFICERS KILLED IN EXPLOSION:
Police stand guard close to the scene of the explosion.

Venezuela accuses US of 'extortion' over seizure of oil tankers

Venezuela has accused the United States of the "greatest extortion" at an emergency session of the UN Security Council in New York.

Washington's seizure of two Venezuelan oil tankers was "worse than piracy," the Venezuelan ambassador to the UN said.

The emergency meeting of the Security Council was called to discuss the seizure of the tankers, which took place off the coast of Venezuela earlier this month.

The US has also said it was pursuing a third Venezuelan oil tanker.

President Trump has accused Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro of leading a drugs cartel and said gangs had operated with impunity for too long.

On 16 December, Trump ordered a naval blockade of all

sanctioned oil tankers entering and leaving Venezuela.

The US president has said the US will keep or sell the crude oil it has taken, as well as the vessels themselves.

The US has been building up its military presence in the Pacific and Caribbean Seas in recent months, sending 15,000 troops and a range of aircraft carriers and warships to the area.

It is the largest deployment to the region since the US invaded Panama in 1989, and the stated aim is to stop the flow of fentanyl and cocaine to the US.

The US has carried out strikes on what it says are Venezuelan drug-smuggling boats, targeting more than 20 vessels and killing at least 100 people.

Some experts say the strikes could violate laws governing

armed conflict.

Venezuela's envoy to the UN said the US was subjecting his country to the "greatest extortion" in its history.

Speaking at the UN Security Council meeting on Tuesday, Samuel Moncada said "we are in the presence of a power that acts outside of international law, demanding that Venezuelans vacate our country and hand it over."

Regarding the US seizure of Venezuelan oil, he added: "We are talking about pillaging, looting and recolonisation of Venezuela."

"The government of the United States does not have jurisdiction in the Caribbean."

Referring to the Venezuelan oil industry, he said: "What does that have to do with drugs?"

In response, the US Am-

bassador to the UN, Michael Waltz, told the Security Council the US does not recognise Mr Maduro as the legitimate leader of Venezuela.

"Maduro's ability to sell Venezuela's oil enables his fraudulent claims to power and his narco-terrorist activities," Mr Waltz said.

On a visit to a trade fair in Caracas, President Maduro said "the Security Council is giving overwhelming support to Venezuela."

Russia and China accused the US of bullying and aggression.

The US was "illegally destroying" civilian vessels in the Caribbean Sea, the Russian ambassador to the UN, Vassily Nebenzia, told the UN meeting.

He warned that other countries could be next.

Libya's army chief killed in air crash in Turkey

The Libyan army chief has been killed in an air crash in Turkey, Libya's prime minister has said.

Gen Mohammed Ali Ahmed al-Haddad was on board a Falcon 50 aircraft flying out of the Turkish capital, Ankara, on Tuesday evening. He was killed along with four other military officials and three crew members.

Turkish Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said signal with the business jet was lost at 20:52 local time (17:52 GMT) - about 42 minutes after it took off from Ankara's airport.

The Tripoli-bound jet had issued an emergency landing request before contact was lost. The aircraft's wreckage was later found south-west of Ankara, and its voice recorder and black box had been recovered.

The emergency services are still trying to retrieve the bodies.

An investigation is under way into what caused the crash.

In a post on X, Yerlikaya wrote that police had spotted the debris near the village of Kesikkavak, in the Haymana district.

In Libya, Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh, the prime minister of the country's internationally-recognised Government of

National Unity (GNU), said he had received news of the deaths of Gen Haddad and other senior Libyan military officials on board the jet.

The prime minister called it a "great loss" for the nation, saying Libya had "lost men who served their country with sincerity and dedication".

Gen Haddad and his team had been in Turkey for talks aimed at further strengthening military and security co-operation between the two countries.

Turkey has played an increasingly dominant role in Libya after intervening in 2019 to prevent an army from the east of the country driving out the internationally-recognised government in Tripoli, and has built close political, military and economic ties.

Libya's rival Government of National Stability (GNS) in the east of the country is run by military strongman Khalifa Haftar.

The north African has been battered by many armed groups who emerged after the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

A series of armed uprisings that led to the long-time dictator's killing created a security vacuum, with much of the country lawless and chaotic since.

Foreign

NEWS

UN experts urge Iran to stop execution of woman activist

UN experts and 400 prominent women have urged Iran not to execute Zahra Tabari, a 67-year-old electrical engineer and women's rights activist.

Ms Tabari was arrested in April and accused of collaborating with a banned opposition group, the People's Mujahideen Organisation of Iran (PMOI), according to her family.

In October, she was convicted of "armed rebellion" by a Revolutionary Court in Rasht after a trial via video link that lasted less than 10 minutes. Her family said the verdict was based on extremely limited and unreliable evidence: a piece of cloth bearing the words "Woman, Resistance, Freedom", and an unpublished audio message.

Iranian authorities have not yet commented on the case.

At least 51 other people are known to be facing the death penalty in Iran after being convicted of national security offences including armed rebellion, as well as "enmity against God", "corruption on Earth" and espionage, according to the UN experts.

The UN Human Rights Council's special rapporteurs on human rights in Iran, violence against women and arbitrary executions, as well as the five members of the working group on discrimination against women and girls, warned in a joint statement that Ms Tabari's case showed "a pattern of serious violations of international human rights law".

She was arrested during a raid on her home without a

judicial warrant, and was interrogated for a month while held in solitary confinement and pressured to confess to taking up arms against the state and to membership in an opposition group, according to the experts.

Ms Tabari was denied access to a lawyer of her choosing and was represented by a court-appointed lawyer, they said, adding that her death sentence was issued immediately after a brief hearing.

"The severe procedural violations in this case - including the unlawful deprivation of her liberty, the denial of effective legal representation, the extraordinarily brief trial, the lack of adequate time to prepare a defence, and the use of evidence that appears insufficient to support a charge of [armed rebellion] - render any resulting conviction unsafe," they said.

They also noted that international law restricted the death penalty to the most serious crimes, meaning intentional killing.

"To execute Tabari under these circumstances would constitute arbitrary execution," the experts added. "Criminalising women's activism for gender equality and treating such expression as evidence of armed rebellion constitutes a grave form of gender discrimination."

More than 400 prominent women - including several Nobel laureates, the former presidents of Switzerland and Ecuador, and former prime ministers of Finland, Peru, Poland and Ukraine - also signed a public appeal for Ms Tabari's immediate release on Tuesday.

Sudanese nationals among prisoners to be freed in Yemen-Houthi deal

Yemen's internationally recognized government and Houthi authorities have reached an agreement to free 2,900 detainees in the largest swap during the 11-year civil war, according to Saudi and Houthi officials.

Saudi Ambassador Mohamed AlJabir said in a statement on X that the agreement was signed under the supervision of the Office of the U.N. Special Envoy for Yemen and the International Committee of the Red Cross, "which will enable all detainees to return to their families."

"I commend the efforts of the negotiation teams from both sides who succeeded in reaching an understanding and concluding this agreement, which addresses a humanitarian issue and strengthens efforts to bring calm and build confidence in Yemen," said AlJabir.

The detainees would include Saudi and Sudanese nationals, according to Abdelkader al-Murtada, the Houthi head of the National Committee for Prisoners' Affairs and Mohamed Abdul-salam, a Houthi spokesperson.

Al-Murtada said on X that the deal includes freeing Yemenis along with seven Saudi and 23 Sudanese nationals.

Yemen has been torn by a civil war since 2014, when the Houthis captured Sanaa and most of the country's north, forcing out the government. A loose regional coalition of powers - including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates - has backed the internationally recognized government in the south. The war, which has stalled over the past years, has killed more than 150,000 people, both fighters and civilians, and created one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters.

The exchange deal was agreed upon in the Omani capital of Muscat in cooperation with Saudi leaders.

The U.N. special envoy, Hans Grundberg, said the agreement was a "positive and meaningful step that will hopefully ease the suffering of detainees and their families across Yemen."

The agreement came after the warring parties concluded a 12-day meeting in Oman. It was the 10th meeting held to push the parties to meet their commitments under the 2018 Stockholm Agreement to release all conflict-related detainees, the special envoy's office said in a statement.



M23'S FULL WITHDRAWAL:

M23 rebels enter the centre of east Congo's second-largest city, Bukavu, and take control of the South Kivu province administrative office.

US doubts M23's full withdrawal from key Congo town

The Trump administration is not satisfied with the Rwanda-backed M23's withdrawal from a strategic town in eastern Congo, a senior US official told Reuters, as residents reported persistent clashes nearby on Tuesday.

M23 seized the town of Uvira, near the border with Burundi, on December 10, days after Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi and Rwandan leader Paul Kagame met President Donald Trump in Washington and reaffirmed a US-brokered peace deal.

The capture marked the rebels' biggest advance in months, fueling fears of regional spillover from fighting that has killed thousands and displaced hundreds of thousands since January.

After US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Rwanda's actions in mineral-rich eastern Congo were violating the peace deal, M23 last week pledged to withdraw to give peace talks a chance.

While most M23 combatants have left Uvira itself, Washington is "not satisfied" that the group has fully withdrawn, the senior US official said.

"There has been some movement, but we don't feel that it really amounts to a complete liberation of the town. We do believe that the M23 continues to be positioned around the city," the official said.

Gunfire in Uvira
Some M23 fighters remain in Uvira wearing police instead of military uniforms, two residents told Reuters on Tuesday.

Sporadic gunfire was heard on Tuesday morning from hills overlooking the Kalundu neighbourhood, one resident said.

Sources from M23 and the Congolese army blamed each other for the violence in recent days.

Rwanda denies backing M23 and has blamed Congolese and Burundian forces for the renewed fighting. A report by a United Nations group of experts in July assessed that Rwanda exercised command and control over the rebels.

M23 is not party to the Washington-mediated negotiations, but is negotiating separately with Kinshasa in Qatar.

REFUGEES

The recent fighting has sent over 84,000 refugees into Bu-

rundi this month, overwhelming its capacity, the UN refugee agency said last week.

About 500,000 people have been displaced in South Kivu province since early December, and the World Food Programme is scaling up aid for 210,000 vulnerable people.

M23's lightning advance this year in North and South Kivu has cost Congo 0.4 percent of GDP, while exceptional security spending nears \$3 billion, IMF mission chief Calixte Ahokpossi told Reuters.

"If (insecurity) continues in the medium term and they have to continue cutting spending, particularly on investment and social programmes, it will have an impact on growth and the future of the country," he said.

Central African Republic elections set for Dec 28 amid Russia ties

The Central African Republic will hold presidential and legislative elections on December 28, as concerns about armed groups have led to a growing reliance on Russia for security.

President Faustin-Archange Touadéra has led the country since 2016 and is considered the favorite to win a third term after a 2023 constitutional referendum removed term limits. His decision to run again earlier this year sparked street protests that drew thousands of people.

Touadéra is one of Russia's closest allies in Africa, but tensions have emerged this year over Moscow's demand to replace the Wagner private mercenary group with the Russian military unit Africa Corps.

Meanwhile, human rights organizations have expressed concerns about repression in

the lead-up to the first round of voting, while a major opposition group has vowed to boycott it.

Conflict with armed groups

This landlocked country of approximately 5.5 million inhabitants has long been plagued by clashes between pro-government forces and armed groups. In 2013, predominantly Muslim rebels seized power and forced the president to resign. A peace agreement was signed in 2019, but six of the 14 armed groups involved subsequently withdrew.

According to Human Rights Watch, the Central African government has signed peace agreements with armed groups in recent months, creating conditions of stability unseen for years.

"Thanks to the peace agreements, UN peacekeeping efforts and security support

from Wagner and Rwanda, the country is in a safer situation than during the last election cycle in 2020," said Lewis Mudge, Central Africa director for the NGO.

The UN peacekeeping mission, MINUSCA, has been present since 2014. It currently has around 14,000 military personnel and 3,000 police officers, who will help secure the polling stations.

Last month, the UN Security Council extended the force's mandate for another year, while indicating that its presence would be reduced due to budgetary constraints. MINUSCA spokeswoman Florence Marchal told the Associated Press that it was not yet clear how many peacekeepers would leave the country before the election, but that the reduction would not compromise security.

Tensions with Russia

The Central African Republic was one of the first countries where Wagner established operations, promising to fight rebel groups and restore peace. But disagreements over the nature of the Russian military presence have strained relations with Moscow.

In August, local government and military officials told the AP that Russia had asked the country to replace Wagner with Africa Corps and was demanding payment for any additional security services.

The government was reluctant to accept these demands, considering Wagner more efficient and preferring to pay for services in minerals rather than cash, local officials explained earlier this year on condition of anonymity.

The NATION'S Pulse

With
Israel Adebisi

OPINION

The day friendship died

There is a peculiar kind of pain that comes when two people who once spoke in whispers begin to shout at each other in the marketplace. It is not just the quarrel that hurts. It is the knowledge that both parties know where the bodies are buried. In our clime, we are often warned about who to trust with secrets. Journalists are frequently accused, unfairly, of being incapable of discretion. Even clergymen are sometimes mentioned in hushed tones. Yet experience has shown that the most dangerous custodians of secrets are politicians. When political love turns sour, confidentiality dies first.

Politics has a way of turning men into archivists of one another's sins. When alliances are strong, secrets are locked away like family heirlooms. When alliances break, those same secrets are dragged into the sun and weaponised. It is why Nigerian politics often feels less like a contest of ideas and more like a theatre of betrayals. The louder the quarrel, the deeper the intimacy that once existed.

The widening gulf between former Rivers State governor and now Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike, and Oyo State Governor Seyi Makinde belongs squarely in this tradition. Their falling out is not just another political disagreement. It is the unravelling of a friendship forged in the heat of opposition politics and sustained by mutual suspicion of a party they once believed had lost its moral compass. Today, that friendship lies in ruins, and the Peoples Democratic Party wanders like an orphan unsure of who will lead it home.

Not too long ago, Wike and Makinde spoke the same political language. They were comrades in rebellion, leaders of the G5 governors who openly defied their party's presidential candidate in 2023. Together with Samuel Ortom, Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi and Okezie Ikpeazu, they insisted that the PDP had violated its own sense of balance and fairness. They framed their revolt as a moral stand, not personal ambition. In that season, Makinde was often the quieter, more measured voice, while Wike was the thunder that shook the room. But thunder and silence were working toward the same end.

What held them together was not affection but necessity. Politics has always been a marriage of convenience, and like many such unions, it thrives only while interests align. The cracks between Wike and Makinde began to show once the election dust settled and the G5 project lost its urgency. With Atiku Abubakar defeated and Bola Tinubu installed as president, the question became what next. That was where the paths diverged.

Makinde remained in the PDP, speaking the language of reform, independence and internal rebirth. Wike, on the other hand, crossed the aisle, accepted a powerful ministerial role, and began to speak with the confidence of a man who believes he has finally found a system that appreciates his political weight. In itself, that choice was not the problem. Nigerian politics is littered with ideological migrations. The problem was the loose tongue that followed.



MAKINDE

In a recent disclosure, Makinde lifted the curtain on a high level meeting involving President Tinubu, Wike, the President's Chief of Staff, Femi Gbajabiamila, and other officials. According to the Oyo governor, the moment that meeting turned from routine to revealing was when Wike reportedly pledged to hold the PDP for Tinubu ahead of the 2027 elections. It was not just the audacity of the statement that stunned Makinde. It was the silence that followed. The president, Makinde said, did not ask for such loyalty, nor did he encourage it.

In that moment, the illusion of shared purpose collapsed. Makinde made it clear that while he respected Wike's personal political choices, he could not be part of any arrangement that reduced the PDP to a pawn in another party's chess game. For him, that was a line that could not be crossed. It was not merely about party loyalty. It was about the survival of democratic competition itself.

Given his political temperament, Wike is unlikely to take kindly to the public airing of private conversations. A forceful response, complete with his own version of events and pointed questions about Makinde's sincerity and political courage, should be expected. What this kind of exchange usually produces is a familiar pattern: accusations, counter-accusations, selective memory and moral grandstanding, each man speaking with the confidence of someone who knows the other too well.

This is how political betrayals often unfold. The elders say that when two brothers fight, strangers are invited to count their teeth. In exposing one another, Wike and Makinde have not only diminished themselves but also further weakened a party already struggling for relevance. The PDP today feels like a house where the elders are busy quarrelling while the roof leaks.

The tragedy is not just that these men cannot reconcile. It is that they

The elders say that when two brothers fight, strangers are invited to count their teeth. In exposing one another, Wike and Makinde have not only diminished themselves but also further weakened a party already struggling for relevance. The PDP today feels like a house where the elders are busy quarrelling while the roof leaks

no longer seem interested in trying. Politics has taught them that public disagreement attracts attention, sympathy and leverage. Silence is no longer a virtue. The louder the fight, the stronger the signal to allies and adversaries alike. In this climate, restraint is mistaken for weakness.

We have seen this script before. In Edo State, the once unbreakable bond between Adams Oshiomhole and Godwin Obaseki collapsed in spectacular fashion. What followed was not a debate over policy or governance philosophy but a parade of allegations and counter allegations. Oshiomhole turned on Obaseki with a ferocity that shocked even seasoned observers. His wife was dragged into the mud, personal matters were weaponised, and



WIKE

the private became brutally public. It was a masterclass in political scorched earth tactics.

What that episode revealed, and what the Wike Makinde saga confirms, is how casually Nigerian politicians treat secrets once loyalty expires. Words are spoken without restraint, meetings are narrated selectively, and private pledges are denied or exaggerated depending on convenience. In such an environment, trust becomes a scarce commodity. Today's ally is tomorrow's accuser.

For the PDP, the consequences are dire. A party that once bestrode the political landscape like a colossus now looks disoriented. Its leading figures speak in different tongues. Some flirt openly with the ruling party. Others preach resistance without offering a roadmap. The internal contradictions are no longer hidden. They are debated openly by men who once pretended unity.

An orphaned party is a dangerous thing. Without clear leadership or shared vision, it becomes vulnerable to infiltration, manipulation and irrelevance. The PDP's inability to manage internal dissent has left it exposed. Wike's proximity to power and Makinde's insistence on independence represent two competing instincts within the party. Neither seems willing to yield.

There is an old saying that when the drumbeat changes, the dancer must adjust his steps. The PDP's problem is that its drummers are beating different rhythms. Some want accommodation. Others want confrontation. Without consensus, the party risks becoming a footnote in future elections, remembered more for its internal quarrels than its contributions to democracy.

The personal feud between Wike and Makinde matters because it symbolises this broader crisis. Their words carry weight. Their actions send signals. When they speak loosely, they embolden others to do the

same. When they expose private conversations, they normalise betrayal as political strategy.

Yet, one is tempted to ask whether reconciliation is still possible. History suggests that political enemies can become allies again when interests realign. Today's betrayal can become tomorrow's handshake. But trust, once broken, is not easily repaired. The crack in the mirror remains even after it is glued.

Perhaps the lesson here is not about who is right or wrong but about the cost of unguarded alliances. The elders also say that a friend who knows your weakness holds your destiny in his hands. Nigerian politicians have mastered the art of intimacy without loyalty. They embrace quickly and separate violently.

As the nation watches this latest drama unfold, there is entertainment, yes, but also exhaustion. Nigerians are tired of politics as personal warfare. They yearn for substance, for ideas, for leadership that rises above vendetta. Every public spat chips away at public confidence.

The PDP still has a choice. It can continue down this path of mutual destruction, or it can find a way to impose discipline, restore trust and redefine purpose. Whether Wike and Makinde will be part of that rebirth remains uncertain. What is clear is that their feud has already done damage.

In the end, betrayal is not always about knives in the back. Sometimes it is about words spoken too freely, secrets shared too carelessly, and bridges burned too eagerly. When former friends become public enemies, everyone loses. And when a party loses its compass, it wanders until something stronger replaces it.

For now, the PDP wanders. Its loudest sons are talking past each other, not to each other. The marketplace is noisy, the whispers are gone, and the secrets are out. Whether wisdom will return before it is too late is a question only time can answer.

Feature

DIGITAL REVOLUTION

NDPC and the task of deepening data protection

IJEOMA OLORUNFEMI (NAN)

As the world continues to morph into a global village, interaction and transactions are fast moving into the digital arena. In the modern era, the internet has become the centre piece of financial, social and economic interaction.

E-governance, e-banking, inter-connectivity, among others are the order of the day. Against this background, the importance of data protection and safeguarding internet users' privacy has become critical.

Governments, financial institutions, businesses, individuals need to realise and prioritise robust data protection measures to build online trust, secure the cyber space and work towards the development of the digital economy.

The Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC), Nigeria's cyber protection, has recorded strides in ensuring the regulation of data protection, building capacity of data protection officers and licensing Data Protection Compliance Organisations (DPCO).

By so doing, it is positioning Nigeria at the apex in data protection governance in Africa.

A review of the commission's activities in 2025 showed that one of the landmark achievements was the domestication of Data Protection Officers' (DPOs) certification, a move aimed at strengthening professional competence within the data protection ecosystem.

Dr Vincent Olatunji, National Commissioner, NDPC, said the commission domesticated certification for Data Protection Officers (DPOs) with the inauguration of the National Certification Programme.

This saw the training of 500 DPOs in the first cohort which targeted bridging the deficit in data protection.

"This domestication reduced pressure on the naira by limiting the need to purchase foreign currency for international certification.

"The training was geared towards bridging the digital skills gap as projected by the World Economic Forum that said 92 million jobs would be lost in six years," he told journalists

The commission, also after a survey of data controllers and processors found that no fewer than 500,000 data controllers and processors lacked requisite skills to be certified as DPOs.

Olatunji said the commission certified hundreds of DPOs nationwide which had significantly expanding Nigeria's pool of qualified privacy professionals and supporting the effective implementation of the Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA) across sectors.

NDPC also hosted the Network of African Data Protection Authorities (NADPA) conference and annual general meeting, thereby promoting continental cooperation, knowledge exchange, and alignment of data protection regulatory frameworks among African data regulators.

Themed, "Balancing Innovation, in Africa: Data Protection and Privacy in Emerging Technologies," the conference drew participants from no fewer than 30 African countries, Eu-



DR VINCENT OLATUNJI, NATIONAL COMMISSIONER, NDPC



rope, Asia, Middle East and the U.S.

The data protection commission seems to be on top of the game but challenges persist.

An ICT expert, Mr Jide Awe, canvassed targeted awareness campaigns to raise education on data protection. Awe, also a Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Policy Advisor, gave the recommendation in an interview with newsmen in Abuja.

"Many people are not aware of the right to access, control their personal information, the potential risks associated with data breaches and misuse.

"Targeted awareness campaigns are recommended; tailored to different groups considering their specific risks

and needs," says Awe, a Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Policy Advisor in a media report.

But Olatunji says the commission has inaugurated its Virtual Privacy Academy (VPA), a Nollywood-styled initiative tailored to deliver structured online training, awareness programmes and professional development courses to build data protection and expand privacy education.

"The NDPC received study tour delegations from eight African countries, shared Nigeria's regulatory experience, institutional frameworks, practical lessons in establishing and operating an effective data protection authority."

In July 23, Somalian Data Protection

Authority came on a study tour to Nigeria, Uganda Data Protection Authority also visited in August 5, while Botswana, Kingdom of Eswatini, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and the Gambia also came for study tour in September.

Part of the regulations initiated by the commission included NDP-Act General Application and Implementation Directive to provide regulatory clarity, operational guidance and enforceable standards for compliance with the NDPA.

Olatunji recalled the commission also facilitated the translation of the NDPA into the three major local languages of the country, Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba to improve accessibility and provide better understanding of data protection to citizens even to the grass root level.

"NDPC conducted targeted capacity-building programmes for Ministries, Departments, and Agencies to enhance institutional compliance, data governance practices and the responsible handling of citizens' personal data.

"The commission received multiple recognitions, including Outstanding Data Protection Authority of the Year at the Picasso Awards Africa, affirming its leadership, regulatory impact, and commitment to data protection excellence," he said.

The National Commissioner said the commission signed a series of Memoranda of Understandings with different institutions to boost its data privacy protection campaigns.

They include Data and Knowledge Information Privacy Protection initiative, Master Card, Digital Africa Consult, Bauchi State Government, Smart Comply Technologies Solutions Limited and the Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA).

He reiterated the commission's

commitment to build a crop of citizens, data subjects who were aware of how to deal with their information, data, while supporting innovation and digital growth.

There is also the issue of legislative frameworks which many experts say remains weak.

According to Alabi Sunday, former chairman of the Nigeria Computer Society Abuja Chapter, collaboration in the key to addressing this challenge

"There should be collaboration with media outlets, schools, and community organisations to reach a wide audience.

"The relevant stakeholders should invest in training programmes for government officials, businesses, and individuals to enhance their understanding of data privacy principles and practices and encourage the development of local expertise in data protection.

He also advocated the establishment of mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing compliance with data protection laws and imposing penalties for organisations that failed to adequately protect personal data or violate data protection regulations.

"There should be policies that require certain types of sensitive data to be stored locally to ensure better control and protection.

"By addressing these areas, the Nigerian government and stakeholders can contribute to a more robust and privacy-conscious environment for individuals and businesses alike," he said.

"Many people are not aware of the right to access, control their personal information, the potential risks associated with data breaches and misuse.

"The Nigeria Data Protection Strategic Roadmap and Action Plan (NDP-SRAP) 2023-2027, charts Nigeria's course on data privacy and building a trusted digital ecosystem.

"It outlines specific steps to address awareness and capacity building and a multifaceted approach in line with these strategies could be highly effective.

"Targeted awareness campaigns are recommended; tailored to different groups considering their specific risks and needs."

"With the developments in digital communication and social media, users' personal data have been more exposed to the public than before," he said.

However, Abdulmalik Muhaimin of Chesslaw Consult, said though more frameworks were needed the most important was the religious enforcement of available data protection laws.

He spoke at the 7th Privacy Symposium, Africa, held in Lagos State, Nigeria, with the theme, 'Bridging Policy, Technology and Societal Dynamics.

The event was organised by Unwanted Witness and co-hosted by the NDPC, National Data Protection Commission of Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) and Data Protection Lawyers Association of Nigeria (DPLAN)

"One of the things we should consider is a uniform data privacy law to help with compliance obligations so that organisations don't have to start checking what the specific differences are," he said. (NAN Feature)

FEATURE

Cross River's festive glow amid deepening poverty

EHIGIMETOR IGBAUGBA (NAN)

As Christmas lights brighten major streets and public spaces across Cross River State, the festive glow projects an image of celebration and prosperity.

However, beyond the illuminated roads and decorated roundabouts, a different reality persists.

It is a reality marked by widespread poverty, long-standing infrastructural deficits, and inequality in rural communities.

Across the state, no fewer than 3,000 rural communities remain trapped in a cycle of deprivation.

Many lack access to basic infrastructure such as motorable roads, electricity, clean water, healthcare facilities, and quality education.

As a result, these deficits continue to undermine economic opportunities and reinforce intergenerational poverty.

The state covers about 20,156 square kilometres and comprises 18 local government areas, with over 3,000 communities and more than 60 languages.

With an estimated population of four million people, roughly 80 percent live in rural areas where access to basic services remains limited.

Albeit this, decades of uneven development have left many communities struggling to meet basic needs.

Recent data further underscores the challenge.

According to the 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) report by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 75.6 percent of Cross River's population (about 3.44 million people) are living in multidimensional poverty.

This indicates overlapping deprivations in health, education, living standards, and access to essential services, reflecting structural challenges that have endured across successive administrations.

Historically, Cross River has ranked among the states with the highest poverty levels in southern Nigeria, despite its prominence in tourism and cultural heritage.

The state's economy is largely driven by agriculture, tourism, and limited industrial activity.

Nevertheless, rural agricultural communities continue to grapple with poor market access, inadequate irrigation, and unreliable electricity, factors that constrain productivity and income growth.

While urban centres such as Calabar have benefited from road rehabilitation, public amenities, and beautification projects over the years, many rural communities have recorded only marginal improvements in healthcare delivery, water supply, and electricity access.

Consequently, the persistent urban-rural divide has further entrenched poverty and limited economic mobility for large segments of the population.

Comparatively, Cross River lags behind neighbouring states such as Akwa Ibom and Rivers in key human development indicators.

Rural electricity access remains below 30 percent, healthcare coverage is lower than the regional average, and literacy rates trail national benchmarks. Infant and maternal mortality rates also remain relatively high in

underserved areas.

Economists and development experts argue that redirecting even a fraction of public funds spent on ceremonial displays and festivals into human capital development could yield significant social and economic returns.

In addition, rising food prices, inflation, and weak social welfare systems have further strained household incomes, pushing more families into vulnerability.

Critics say successive administrations have prioritised high-profile events over long-term investments in infrastructure and social services.

While government officials often cite funding constraints, budget reviews suggest that spending on cer-

emonies, including the annual Carnival Calabar and elaborate festive decorations, frequently outweighs allocations to critical sectors such as health, education, and rural infrastructure.

Dr Achu Jeffrey-Achu, a medical practitioner in Calabar, said inadequate investment in human capital has deepened poverty in the state.

He added that many residents struggle to afford basic necessities and stressed the need for urgent government intervention to improve welfare outcomes.

Civil society organisations have expressed similar concerns.

Kingsley Eworo of the Budget Transparency and Accountability Initiative in Nigeria noted that rising

food prices, unstable income streams, and limited access to social protection have pushed more households into economic distress.

According to him, continued heavy spending on festive activities sends the wrong signal at a time when many citizens cannot afford food, health-care, or education.

While festivals such as Carnival Calabar are often promoted as tourism drivers, analysts argue that their economic benefits are largely concentrated in urban areas, with limited spillover effects for rural communities where poverty is most entrenched.

Some residents also blame weak civic engagement for the persistence of poor governance outcomes.

Lyord Ndoma, a Calabar-based

resident, linked the persistence of poverty in the state to citizens' failure to consistently demand accountability from political leaders.

He pointed out that beyond the festive decorations, several activities associated with the Carnival Calabar span almost a month, with huge public funds committed to preparations.

According to Ndoma, the re-asphalting of select urban roads and the extensive decorations along major routes such as Marian Road, Mary Slessor Avenue, and areas around Millennium Park stand in stark contrast to conditions in rural communities.

He added that more than 70 percent of rural roads remain non-motorable, and electricity supply has been absent for years.

In his view, resources devoted to festive ambience could have been channelled into projects with lasting impact, especially in rural areas.

The Cross River State government has rejected claims that it has neglected citizens' welfare.

Dr Erasmus Ekpang, Commissioner for Information, said the administration of Governor Bassey Otu has prioritised social welfare through its "People First" policy, implementing empowerment programmes for youths, farmers, and small business owners.

Ekpang acknowledged the existence of poverty but maintained that many of the challenges predate the current administration.

Regarding the scale of spending on the 2025 Carnival Calabar, he explained that it was influenced by the event's 20th anniversary, adding that government expenditure on the carnival would be scaled down in subsequent years.

However, Anthony Attah, immediate past chairman of the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC) in the state, said the level of opulence displayed during festive periods was troubling.

While recognising some government efforts, he said improved federal allocations have yet to translate into better welfare outcomes for many residents.

According to Attah, some civil servants are still owed salaries and gratuities, youth unemployment remains high, and insecurity continues to rise.

He likened the festive celebrations to "suffering and smiling," warning that pageantry should not distract from the urgent need to address poverty, unemployment, and declining living standards.

As Cross River residents enjoy the festive season, the contrast between the brightly lit streets and the lived reality of millions remains stark.

Analysts maintain that meaningful progress will require stronger accountability, sustained investment in infrastructure and social services, and a deliberate focus on inclusive growth.

Ultimately, while cultural celebrations remain an important part of the state's identity and tourism strategy, observers argue that long-term development will depend on how effectively public resources are deployed.

Effective resource management, they say, is key to improving livelihoods, reducing poverty, and bridging the gap between urban and rural communities.



ArtsWorld with Francis Odupute 08023680030

7 Ways to price a painting

(Different approaches to putting a price on your art)

MARION BODDY-EVANS

Getting a painting to the stage where you're satisfied with it is hard, but putting a price to it can be even harder. Under-price yourself and you may make your art look worthless, as well as lose money rather than make it. Overprice yourself and you risk never selling anything. How you decide to approach it depends somewhat on your personality, experience, and stage your art career is at. Here's how I judge the options:

1. The Simple Approach: Price Determined by Standard Sizes

All paintings that are the same size all have the same price tag, regardless of the subject, how long it took to finish it, or how much you happen to like it. Your price list set out by size, with an additional set premium for commissioned paintings over finished paintings.

2. The Accountant's Approach: Recover Your Costs

Decide on a percentage profit you want to make over your costs. Then add up the cost of everything that went into making a painting, add the percentage, and you've your selling price. The costs calculation can be basic (materials + labor) or comprehensive (materials, labor, studio space, lighting, etc.). Every painting has a different price, based on what went into creating it.

3. The Capitalist Approach: Make the Price Market Related

Do your homework by visiting galleries and studios in your area and target market(s) to see what similar type of art is selling for. Price yours to compete. If you're selling directly only (not through a gallery), offer "special deals" to make people feel like they're getting a bargain. (If you're also selling through a gallery, never undercut their prices as you'll undermine your business arrangement with them.)

4. A Mathematical Approach: Price Calculated by Area

You decide on a price for a square inch (or centimeter), then multiple the area of a painting by this, then round it up to a sensible figure. Most people will use a calculator for this approach, but if you can do it with mental arithmetic then you never have worry about a client who wanted to buy the painting off your easel getting bored standing around while you hunt for a one.

5. The Collector's Approach: Increase Your Prices Every Year

Some people who buy art do it for investment reasons, and they want to believe the value of the painting they have of yours is increasing. Read enough financial news to know what the current rate of inflation is, and be sure to increase your prices annually by at least this much.

6. The Creative Director Approach: Sell a Story, Not Just a Painting

Have a good tale to tell with every painting, hinting at it in the title, to create a sense of buying a little bit of the artist's creativity, not just a produce. Write or print it out on a little card to go with the painting to its new home. (Be sure to put your contact details on it.) Hide your prices in the



small print because it's so uncreative to talk about money.

7. An Instinctive Approach: Suck a Price Out of Your Thumb

Not recommended as a long-term approach, but to be considered if you're faced with a possible sale of a piece that's in a new medium/ground for you or totally different to your "usual" style.

8. VOTE IN THE POLL: Should Paintings be Priced by Size Alone?

1. Yes, keep it simple: same size, same price.
2. You can have different price ranges for different styles but these must have the same price for the same size.
3. No, price by style (abstract, realistic etc), forget sizes.
4. No, price by subject matter.
5. No, price by the time the painting took to finish.
6. Something else

HOW TO SET A PRICE FOR A PAINTING

Setting a price for a painting is hard. If you overprice your work, you may not sell anything but, conversely, if you under-price it you may not recoup your costs or get taken seriously.

Difficulty: Hard

Time Required: Some

Here's How:

1. Research the market to find out what other artists are charging in your area. Prices will be more in big cities such as New York or London. Price for your local market.

2. Remember the price in a gallery isn't what the artist receives; the gallery takes a lot of commission. Check how much it is.

3. Work out how much you spent making the painting excluding time. This isn't only materials such as canvas, paint and brushes but also overheads such as electricity, rent of studio space or a model.

4. Keep a record of how long it took to make a painting – time also costs money though initially you may not

get much for it.

5. Add something for your experience and reputation. If you're only setting out, you obviously can't expect as much as an artist with an established reputation.

6. If you've spent money marketing an exhibition or promoting an open-studio day, add something for this too.

7. Look at your final price and compare it again with local prices. Is it realistic given the market and your reputation? You can always increase your prices next time.

TIPS:

1. It's a harsh fact that oil paintings still generally command higher prices than other mediums. If you can't live with this, switch to oils.

2. Don't price your work too low. If you don't value it, why should a potential buyer?

3. Only sell your best work. Initially because you're trying to establish a reputation and later on because you're trying to maintain it.

4. If you want to include a painting in an exhibition because of it's one of your best but don't really want to sell it, don't be tempted to price it high in the hope it won't. What if it does?

5. It's risky significantly undercutting the price set in a gallery through a later private sale. You risk alienating the gallery owner who displayed your work in the first place.

SELLING PAINTINGS: DO LARGE OR SMALL PAINTINGS SELL MORE?

Should you use a particular size in order to sell more paintings?

If you paint smaller paintings, will you sell more than if you paint only large paintings? When Victorlm posted this question on the Painting Forum, he got some interesting responses, collated here for easy reading. (See also: Art Myths.)

SELLING PAINTINGS –THE PROBLEM:

"Some people advised me to paint smaller paintings because they are more affordable and people don't have much room in their houses to hang them. However, some subjects don't lend themselves to a small format. So, I have to keep the larger paintings until I find the right buyer and this creates both a storage and selling problem." – Victorlm.

SELLING PAINTINGS –THE ANSWERS:

"It's been my experience that all paintings sell but it's nice to have little ones or prints if you have them for those who are on a tighter budget." – Ruthie

"Smaller paintings sell for less money, but they don't take less skill and talent. If you can fill that niche, and work well, you might be happy. But look at your work and your work habits. Do they lend themselves to painting small? Or smaller? Or even little? Some work has to be large. And some painters cannot paint smaller paintings well. You will have to try it. Just do whatever you do well, and it will sell." – Starrpoint

"I really think you need to do both. I'd make the larger size formats (16" x 20" and larger) but to also offer smaller paintings (8" x 10", or even as small as 5" x 7") to be more affordable to a wider cross section of buyers. To cite an example of how good small paintings sell, I belong to the oldest watercolor society in America, and each year at Christmas time we have a special show called the 'Little Picture Show' where the maximum allowable size is 8" x 10", and we usually get around 130 or so to exhibit. The show is a sell-out nearly every year without fail! Also, we sell a few of the larger paintings because the customers will buy the small works to give as gifts, and buy the larger ones for themselves, so it's a great 'hook' to get buyers into the gallery!" – Painter421

"My smaller paintings seem to sell quicker to impulse the buyer, but per-

sonally I prefer the freedom I have painting in a larger format. I get satisfaction that the buyer really loved my work, and wasn't just filling a space."

– Artworksc

"My teacher suggested that you paint a regular size painting (16" x 20" or so) first, and work out all the problems. Then a small version can be done, without being cramped fixing errors." – Udyofeverett

"I paint only small paintings. Many tell me I should try bigger sizes, but I don't feel ready yet. I have many reasons for painting smaller sizes. Number one, they can fit in, in so many spots in a home. The cost in material is less, and they take less time." – Yvonne

"I do not think it matter what size the painting is if it gives a person the right feeling about it. Colours, subject and medium up to a point all play a part. Also if someone really does not have the room they could ask if you could paint a smaller one for them." – Artyclare27

"Many (if not most) artists price their work by the size. I think this is not a fair way of presentation. I know that the public prefers to see consistency in prices (as well as in the paintings of any artist), but I like to price based on how I consider the work in relation to my other work. Perhaps I haven't arrived at a style and when I do one that relatively pleases me artistically, I feel that this one is worth more. ... size shouldn't matter, at least in art. Leonardo da Vinci and Buonarrotti were contemporaries, yet the Mona Lisa and the Sistine Chapel are both considered major works of art after almost five centuries." – Frank

"I sold a small painting four years ago for what I thought was a large sum; it just came out very well. I have also sold large paintings for much less. I also have had paintings I didn't like very much and yet they were sold and some that I like that were never sold. Now, I'm very attentive to what happens each time and watch people's reactions before I put a price on them. I guess since you never know exactly how a painting is going to come out, the best way to find out is to keep painting as much as you can. Somewhere I heard that Matisse said that if he got one good painting out of 20, he considered himself fortunate." – Victor

"If I've toiled over a piece of work and it turns out really good in my own opinion, then I always feel that I should charge more. On the other hand though, I've sold pieces that have taken me no time at all and I feel personally that I haven't put much into them and someone will love it (as I stand shaking my head) and pay whatever price I've put on it. I think it all seems to boil down to taste." – Ruthie

"Size is not everything people choose by colour, feel, subject, does it go with what they have got and then size. Let's face it if they like it they will buy it or ask for it in a different way. Whether that would be size, shape or colours." – Clare

Entertainment

— with Davidson Imosime Izegaegbe —

Artistic blindspots and creative policies

“The creative sector in Edo State stands at a critical crossroads”
—Victor Odigie (A Creative Artist)

Until we intentionally and deliberately take an unbiased, but holistic research/dissertation into the etymology of filmmaking, bronze casting, sculpting, painting, stage production, festivals of various kinds in various villages to the Igue in Benin City, and find pathways of improving on them, instead of going in circles, we would keep repeating same formulas and expect different results.

Edo State like many others in Nigeria have great cultures, great reservoirs of intelligentsias, great people with great minds, but why are we always going in circles and celebrating them as achievements? Are the faults in us, in our stars on in the system in which we found ourselves? Is going in circles an intentional blind plan or a faulty default strategy deliberately encased in robes of progress as a propagandist ideology by those in charge?

There is hardly a state in Nigeria without duplication of functions, policies in ministries, parastatals or agencies. The difference is in nomenclature and not duties with planned progression. This means has brought about a stoppage in achieving anything at all as manpower are clustered like the many denominational churches with diverse doctrines but serving same God.

Not until, we spin the table around to see its actual size, we may think the table is as small as the part that carries the plates and cutlery of our breakfasts. We must as policy creators become researchers, digging out old models, looking at their advantages and how they can fit into new settings for same people but with a huge improvement in ideology and philosophy. This can make creative policy makers improve upon, merge or discard creative theories that are stucked in growth. Until creative policy makers deliberately become creative solutions, there can never be creative growth.

Many think location can be a barrier to innovation in the creative sector as well as for the practitioners. Certainly not. A single but well planned out policy can turn a village into a global space. The questions creative policy makers should ask is; are there creative products, dormant or active that could be activated and explored to attract global presence? If the answer is yes or no, the next question should be focused on what efforts were or have been made so far, by whom, what were the results? This question model by creative policy makers would help to shape and re-shape policies that would be devoid of channeling tax payers monies into starting all over instead of moving up the ladder of progress from whence such policy maker took the baton. What we in the creative sector have witnessed is a scenerio where an athlete has put in



Fact is, the structures are there but like the biblical handwriting on the wall, we deliberately and ignorantly ignore it. Truly, now is the time to “believe in the transformative power of art....”

so much effort to gain so much ground in a baton race, only to get to another athlete who instead of catching in on the advantage, started running backwards with so much vigor. Definitely the result will be a total disaster. At that point the problem was not that the athlete cannot run, but in the fact that he used his experience and strength to run back to the starting line. Therein lies the problem.

The creative policy makers should have the mindsets of an academic scholar whose set goals are to set machinery in place to enable him study various models, question them, query defined opinions, all in the bid to make their research works become theories that can be beneficial to mankind until such theories are either discarded for lack of relevance or improved upon. Government policies should be seen from that perspective rather than from personal mindsets and perspectives. No theory that has stood the test of time that were gotten from an emotional standpoint devoid of constructive thoughts.

We as creative do not need to create a comfort zone hoping that policy makers may be interested in the growth of the creative economy, or may be obliged to do research on progress reports on the creative industry. The reason is not far-fetched because, our country's polity is hinged on appointing faithfuls rather than professionals and that is the bane. However, a few of such “faithfuls” never planned to fail in their line of duty, many see those not in same both as non collaborators and may rather sneak into available docu-

ments to acquire knowledge or invite a round table research discussions on the journey so far in the creative industry and the way forward. Whether such is fuel by political relevance, dorminance or just holding talks is a matter for another day. Therefore, the creative industry must consider having a research and documentation institute that may compliment the one by government where research papers on various films, photography, paintings, sculptures, bronze, carvings and publications to enable avoidance of creative vacuum.

Creative policies should never be draped in the gown of myopic individualism. Its research should be intentional, its investments in the creative sector should be deliberate while monumental self-destructs like always starting from the scratch as if nothing were ever done, should not like bad impressions be forced down the throats of creatives.

“The creative sector in Edo State stands at a critical crossroads”, because policy makers may not be aware there is a research and documentation department in the Ministry of Arts and Culture. They may not even be aware the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Tourism used to have an academic journal called “IVIE”, with contributors from researchers in the creative arts, universities thereby creating a matrimony between the creatives and the academia. Fact is, the structures are there but like the biblical handwriting on the wall, we deliberately and ignorantly ignore it. Truly, now is the time to “believe in the transformative power of art....”



Gofment de wosh films?

Eni time l hia pipo de yan evri wia say dis laif nor balance, or nor be eas bodi skrash person, his de take skrash am, make l nor lai, l be tink say l undastand wetin e mean onti las las wen l com see tins wella with mai kro kro eyes.

Bifor l riliz de tin l wan yan or de yan to una, l wan let una no say okpolor eye nor bi sharp eye and e get why. I no say mani of una go de wonda or rison say, weda na evritin wey person hia or see, him must to yan? Well, dis laif nor balance but na as we take hungri we take de shopulate food only wen food de sha.

Mani of us wey dem born bifor Naija get indipendense or since de time afta am, go no say plenti wota don flote pass unda bridge. Nor bi say oyinbo dem beta pass us, but true true, dem beta pass us for mani areas laik to kip history, learn new tins, fight for wetin go benefit dem plus even dem shidren wey dem neva born.

Sometimes, l de rison say, wetin for happen to Naija if to say we nor com get krude oil, how we for fit survive without krude oil as we nor gri develop awa film industri plus awa nashura sense wey oyinbo de call krietiviti? Gofment nor bi spirit and we nor de import dem com from anoda world. Na from pipo laik us, and from de same komunity, states, church. Mosque and tradishona worship we from de select dem. Wai dem com de behave laik say dem nor grow with us for dis Naija? Abi dem nor de wosh awa films to take no say na koret bizness wey gofment fir invest in to take turn Naija to paradais for earth?

I no yan say make gofment de do films, but at least make gofment see am as bizness. Make gofment see am as wetin get level pass krude oil wey fit bring foreign kuza com Naija. Abi na bicos we get plenti analog pipo for gofment nor let dem de see tins as digita pipo? Awa world don bicom wetin oyinbo de call global village. Na small brain plus big head of technology de rule dis world nawadays. Nor be by power or who grab pass, but who get sharp brain wey fit de rison from anoda world komplitly. Gofment need to see film laik tangible bizness, laik product wey we fit esport to

Oda kontri to make kuza.

Nawadays moto cars and olden days donkey, wish one fast pass? Na so technology nawadays be to analog of olden days. Time don rish wey we as pipo suppose to de rison laik digita pipo and if gofment com de digita, naim be say, we don plug awasef into wia oda kontris dem don de since. Film na wetin awa gofment fit use to shenge awa minds to com de see tins difrently and den turn awa koshor to wetin oda kontris go wan buy. All dis tins nor hard, na for us to make up awa minds on wetin we want and wai we want am.

Eni time l de yan tins laik dis, l de laik to kompia awa kontri with oda develop kontris own laik America and mani oda ones. All dis tins nor hard if true true all of us no wetin we de do. Laif styles nor rily hard, if to say we no how to run am. If Naija gofment redi to make kuza from awa film industri, Africa na awa market for awa film products. Wetin gofment need na to begin tink laik digita gofment, and com make investment in awa film industri as part of awa nashona budget. Awa gofment need to undastand say, Africa na big market and na wai oyinbo pipo nor gri komot eye. If awa film industri fit kash Africa, naim be say we nor even need eni oda kontinet or kontris to konkra again. Las las e go com bi laik kase of wetin person de find go sokoto de for inside him shokoto.

No bodi fit yan me or konvins me say we nor de wosh awa films. Naija pipo wosh film die! Na jus small push gofment need to push awa industri for yansh for am to jus begin de kruze de go laik taya wey dem roll from top of maotain. We need to make awa laif for Naija balance by to de invest for dis awa films. Na kuza we jus de allow to pass us laik wota wey de run pass onda bridge so, as if say we de forbid kuza. If we rison dis wahala, e rish for us to begin ask awasef say who do us laik dis na?

Eni ways, tins neva too bad rish wia we nor fit do am, make e for beta for all of us. Laik l yan since, gofment nor bi spirit, na from among us we de selet dem. So dia for, l ask again; gofment nor de wosh films???

Sports

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

Ekong confirms receipt of National Honour certificate

Former Super Eagles captain William Troost-Ekong has confirmed the receipt of his national honour certificate following his conferment with the Member of the Order of the Federal Republic (MFR).

The Nigerian defender revealed that the official certificate was delivered to him on Tuesday, a day after the announcement of the national honours bestowed by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Expressing gratitude, Ekong described the recognition as a proud moment for himself and

his family, while appreciating the President for the honour.

"I am honoured and grateful to His Excellency, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, for conferring on me the MFR national honour. I have been sent the official certificate today following the announcement last night," Ekong said.

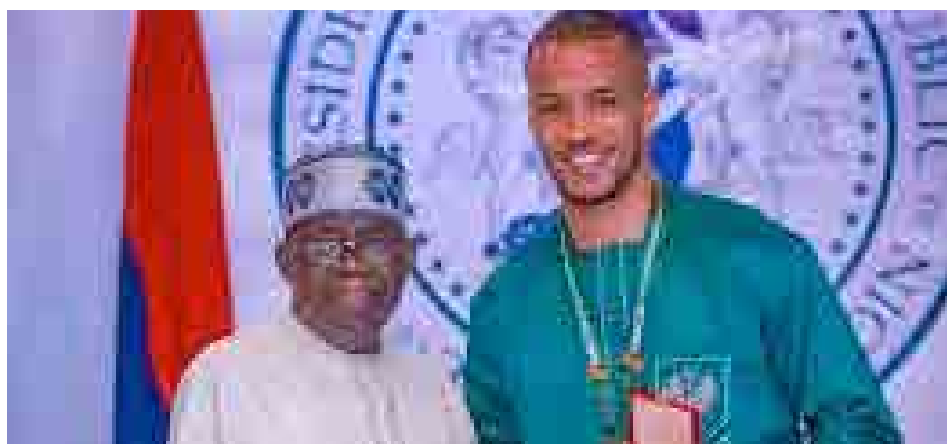
"It's a very proud moment for me and my family to receive this recognition."

The former Watford defender also reflected on what representing Nigeria has meant to his career, noting that the country gave him identity, purpose,

and the opportunity to live his dream through football.

"Nigeria gave me my identity, my purpose, and the platform to live my dream through football. Wearing the green and white has always been a great responsibility, privilege, and a promise to give everything for the badge and for our people," he added.

Ekong, who led the Super Eagles to a runner-up finish at the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations in Côte d'Ivoire, also sent words of encouragement to the national team as they begin their AFCON campaign.



WILLIAM TROOST-EKONG WITH THE PRESIDENT

AFCON: Enugu fans hail Super Eagles win, demand improvement against Tunisia

Some football fans in Enugu State have lauded the Super Eagles of Nigeria for winning their first match of the ongoing African Cup of Nations on Tuesday in Morocco.

The Nigerian team defeated Taifa Stars of Tanzania 2-1 in the first match of group C encounter at Fez, Morocco.

Speaking to NAN in separate interviews, soccer enthusiasts hailed the team for winning the opening match of the group.

Godwin Ude, an ex-footballer, said the win would boost the confidence of the team going forward.

"It's good to win first match in a tournament because it builds the confidence of the players in their subsequent matches.

"However, there is still a lot to be done in the team; they must have to improve their game, particularly against Tunisia that are now topping group C," Ude said.

In the same vein, Val Njoku, a die-hard football fan said the win was good as there are no more minors in African football.

"Ordinarily, Tanzania ought to be a pushover for Nigeria but not this time.

"Football has evolved such that no more little countries again in African football," he said.

Njoku, however, believed that the Eagles were not favorites to win the trophy in Maroc.

"From what I saw yesterday, I don't think the Super Eagles is among the top favorites for the trophy unless they really improve their game," he said.

Also speaking, a female fan, Angela Umeh, said that the Super Eagles' narrow victory against Tanzania was expected.

According to her, Nigeria had all it takes to beat Tanzania, adding that it would have been a disaster if the Super Eagles got anything short of a victory.

"I commend them but I expected it because to me, it would have been a total disappointment if they did not win.

"However, I am not yet convinced in the Super Eagles team until I watch them play against Tunisia in their next match," she said.

The Super Eagles will square up with table toppers Tunisia on Saturday in the second match of the group C.



SUPER EAGLES OF NIGERIA

AFCON: Osimhen's reaction down to self-pressure, not conflict —Ndidi

Super Eagles skipper Wilfred Ndidi has played down concerns surrounding Victor Osimhen's reaction during Nigeria's win over Tanzania, explaining that the striker was simply hard on himself.

Ndidi addressed the issue after Osimhen was substitut-

ed late in Nigeria's 2-1 victory over Tanzania at the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations on Tuesday.

Nigeria secured the win through goals from Semi Ajayi and Ademola Lookman, but attention later shifted to Osimhen's visible displeasure when head coach Eric Chelle re-

placed him with Paul Onuachu close to full time.

The Galatasaray forward appeared unhappy as he walked off, briefly exchanging words with Chelle before taking his seat on the bench, sparking talk of a possible disagreement.

Speaking at the post-match press conference, Ndidi dismissed such claims, insisting Osimhen's reaction came from his intense desire to help the team succeed.

"I didn't really notice any issue," Ndidi said. "Osimhen is a top player who always wants to give everything for the team. Maybe he was just frustrated." "These things happen. We're all human. Sometimes you feel the game isn't going your way even when you're trying your best. That's the kind of player he is, and we needed his effort."

Ndidi added that Osimhen's standards for himself might be the real issue. "I think he puts a lot of pressure on himself. I'll talk to him. He just wants to win, that's all."



WILFRED NDIDI AND VICTOR OSIMHEN'S

Mahrez double inspires Algeria back to winning ways at AFCON

Riyad Mahrez announced Algeria's return to Africa's biggest stage with a ruthless reminder of their pedigree, firing a brace as the Desert Foxes crushed Sudan 3-0 to claim their first Africa Cup of Nations victory in six years.

It took just two minutes for Algeria to strike. Mahrez ghosted into space and finished with authority, setting the tone for a performance that felt like a statement rather than a comeback.

Sudan's task grew steeper five minutes before halftime when Salaheldin Adil picked up a second yellow card, leaving them to chase the game with ten men.

Algeria pressed harder after the break and Mahrez delivered again on the hour, doubling the lead and effectively killing the contest.

Substitute Ibrahim Maza put

the result beyond doubt late on, drilling home the third to cap a dominant night.

The win marked Algeria's first at the Nations Cup since lifting the trophy in Cairo in 2019, a drought that included two painful group-stage exits. Mahrez, now featuring at his sixth AFCON, took his tournament tally to eight goals and led like a man determined to rewrite the recent script.

"We haven't come here to make up the numbers," Mahrez said. "This is just one match, but the most important thing was to win."

Algeria sits on top of Group E on three points, level with Burkina Faso after their shock victory earlier in the day.

The two meet on Sunday in what now promises to be a heavyweight clash, while Sudan looks to regroup against Equatorial Guinea.



RIYAD MAHREZ

AFCON: Amad Diallo scores as Ivory Coast edge Mozambique at AFCON 2025

Amad Diallo scored his first Africa Cup of Nations goal as defending champions Ivory Coast began their campaign with a 1-0 win over Mozambique at the Stade de Marrakech.

The Manchester United winger scored four minutes after half-time, reacting quickly to a loose ball in the box and firing a low shot into the bottom corner to finally break Mozambique's defence.

Ivory Coast started the match brightly and almost scored in the opening minute when Yan Diomande's cross drifted towards goal but hit the

side netting, with goalkeeper Ernan Siluane scrambling. Diomande went close again later in the first half, forcing Siluane to tip his effort over the bar.

Mozambique stayed organised and frustrated the Elephants for long periods. Franck Kessie was denied by an excellent save before the break as Ivory Coast struggled to turn possession into clear chances.

The goal came shortly after half-time, but Ivory Coast were not at their best despite being the reigning champions. Kessie nearly made it 2-0 just after the hour mark, heading

narrowly wide.

Mozambique fought until the end and almost equalised in stoppage time when Geny Catamo forced a fine save from goalkeeper Yahia Fofana. However, the Mambas managed only one shot on target as their winless AFCON run extended to 16 matches.

Ivory Coast will next face Cameroon, while Mozambique will look to recover when they play Gabon on 28 December. The win gives Ivory Coast a steady start to their title defence and extends their unbeaten record against Mozambique to eight matches



AMAD DIALLO CELEBRATE AFTER SCORING A GOAL

Five key tactical issues Super Eagles must fix after Tanzania win

Super Eagles began their Group C campaign at the 2025 CAF Africa Cup of Nations with a 2-1 victory over Tanzania on Tuesday night at the Moulay Abdellah Stadium in Fez.

While the result secured maximum points, the performance exposed several tactical and technical areas that head coach Eric Chelle may need to address as the tournament progresses.

With a crucial second group match against table-toppers Tunisia approaching, attention has turned to aspects of Nigeria's play that require improvement if the team is to compete consistently at the highest level.

First-choice goalkeeper Stanley Nwabali remains Nigeria's undisputed starter, but his display against Tanzania highlighted moments of uncertainty that could prove costly in tighter encounters. Increased competition for the position may be necessary to raise performance levels and sharpen concentration as the tournament intensifies.

Zaidu Sanusi and Bright Osayi-Samuel were limited in their attacking contributions from wide areas. Both players struggled to provide creativity or penetration when in possession and were hesitant to take on opponents. Defensively, their recovery pace could be tested against teams with quicker wingers, raising concerns ahead of stronger opposition.

Nigeria's counter-attacking play lacked the required speed and precision against Tanzania.

Transitions from defence to mid-field were often slow, allowing the opposition time to recover their shape. Against higher-quality sides, such inefficiency could blunt one of the Super Eagles' traditional strengths.

Winger Samuel Chukwueze was unable to consistently make decisive contributions in attacking situations. Improved decision-making—whether through timely passes to the striker or more accurate shooting—will be vital if Nigeria are to convert pressure into goals.



SUPER EAGLES CELEBRATING

NSC reveals when Super Falcons will get National Honour Certificates

The Chairman of the National Sports Commission (NSC), Malam Shehu Dikko, has revealed when members of Nigeria's Super Falcons will receive their national honours certificates and

rewards.

According to Dikko, the Super Falcons players will be presented with their certificates and accompanying rewards when they assemble for their next national assignment.

This comes after members of the Super Eagles received their own certificates and rewards on Monday in Morocco, as they prepared for their opening group game against Tanzania at the ongoing Africa Cup of Nations.

Speaking to respected sports journalist Osasu Obayiuwana, Dikko clarified that there is no cause for concern regarding the women's team, stressing that the process will be completed once they are officially camped.

"The Super Falcons will receive their certificates and rewards the moment they gather for national duty," Dikko said.

The assurance from the NSC boss is expected to allay fears among stakeholders, as the Super Falcons continue to remain one of Africa's most successful national teams.



SUPER FALCONS PLAYERS WITH THE PRESIDENT

Semenyo favours Man City move in blow to Man United after Chelsea withdrew from the race

Antoine Semenyo is understood to favour a move to Manchester City in the January transfer window.

Pep Guardiola's side look likely to win the race for the Bournemouth star amid interest from a host of Premier League sides.

Should Man City seal a deal

it would represent a blow to Manchester United, who had been battling their city rivals for the attacker's signature.

Liverpool have previously done due diligence on him too, with Tottenham having also registered interest.

Daily Mail Sport reported that Chelsea had also come to

the table on Monday evening, after Semenyo had spent a day off weighing up his options.

The Blues have now withdrawn from the race.

Semenyo is available for £65million in the January window, although his release clause expires in the second week of the month.

The Ghana international was

born in west London and has an affiliation with Chelsea, but the Blues will not take their interest in the attacker further at this stage.

Daily Mail Sport understands Chelsea have belief in Enzo Maresca's attacking options, but are open to additions, more likely in the summer transfer window.

Enabulele spreads Yuletide package to Edo SWAN

The Executive Chairman of the Edo State Sports Commission, Hon. Amadin Desmond Enabulele, has further strengthened ties with the sports media practitioners in the state, putting smiles on the faces of members of the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN), Edo State Chapter, with a surprise Christmas package.

In the spirit of the yuletide season, the Sports Commission boss sent bags of rice and gallons of groundnut oil to sports journalists in Edo State as part of his support and show of love for the sports journalists.

Hon. Enabulele said the initiative was a token of appreciation for the dedication, professionalism, and consistent support sports writers have shown in promoting sports development in Edo State and the country.

He described sports journalists as critical stakeholders in the growth of the sector, noting that their objective and timely reportage has continued to shape public perception and enhance the visibility of sporting activities in the state.

According to him, the Edo State Sports Commission under his leadership places pre-

mium value on partnership with the media, stressing that sustainable sports development cannot be achieved without credible and supportive sports journalism.

Responding on behalf of the association, Chairman of SWAN Edo State Chapter, Comrade Kehinde Osagiede, expressed profound gratitude to Hon. Enabulele for the thoughtful gesture.


Comrade Osagiede commended the Sports Commission Chairman for his pragmatic leadership style and unwavering commitment to the advancement of sports and sports journalism in Edo State.

He noted that the Christmas package would significantly ease the burden of the festive season for members and reaffirmed SWAN's resolve to continue promoting sports development through responsible and ethical journalism.

The SWAN chairman further assured the Commission of the association's continued partnership in projecting Edo State's sports programmes positively, while wishing Hon. Enabulele, the management, and staff of the Edo State Sports Commission a merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.



HON. AMADIN DESMOND ENABULELE

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Boxing Day: Beyond the ring – a cultural clarification

Today is Thursday, Christmas Day, and, somewhat eccentrically, it is not the usual day for my column, which is traditionally published every Friday. However, the crux of this piece is Boxing Day, which falls tomorrow, 26 December—a day that has been widely misconstrued by many Nigerians, a misconception subtly reinforced by the mass media, particularly television.

Growing up in Nigeria, Boxing Day carried a curious and often amusing misunderstanding. For many children and even adults, the term conjured images of boxing gloves, roaring crowds, and pugilists trading blows in a ring.

Boxing Day is not traditionally part of Nigerian culture. Since Christmas itself is an inherited Christian tradition introduced through British influence, many Nigerians and even the mass media have come to perceive Boxing Day as a day associated with boxing bouts.

The confusion was reinforced each year when Nigerian television stations filled their Boxing Day schedules with boxing bouts and other combat sports, unintentionally or perhaps carelessly, cementing the belief that the day was named after the sport. To a young mind, the logic seemed sound: Boxing Day must surely be about boxing.

Yet this widely held assumption is historically and culturally inaccurate. Boxing Day has nothing to do with boxing contests, fists, or rings. Its roots lie in charity, gratitude, and social obligation, not athletic spectacle. The day is better understood as a continuation of the Christmas spirit, one that emphasises giving, sharing, and reflection rather than entertainment and physical competition.

This article revisits Boxing Day in its proper context, unpacks how and why it became misconstrued in Nigeria, and explores what the day truly represents historically, culturally, and symbolically.

Boxing Day is traditionally observed on 26 December, the day after Christmas Day, primarily in countries with strong British historical ties. Its origins are commonly traced to United Kingdom and date back several centuries.

The term 'box' in Boxing Day refers not to a fighting ring but to a container, specifically, the boxes used to collect money, gifts, or alms. In medieval and early modern England, churches placed alms boxes to gather donations for the poor. These boxes were opened on 26 December—also known as St Stephen's Day and the contents distributed to those in need.

Another widely accepted explanation links Boxing Day to domestic service in Victorian Britain. Servants who worked tirelessly on Christmas Day to cater for their employers were traditionally given the following



day off. On that day, they received a 'Christmas box'—a gift, bonus, or leftover food from their employers, which they took home to their families.

Thus, Boxing Day emerged as a structured moment of appreciation and redistribution, an extension of Christmas generosity rather than a departure from it. At its heart, Boxing Day is about gratitude. It is a day that historically recognised those who laboured behind the scenes—servants, tradespeople, and the less privileged members of society.

Tradesmen, such as postmen, errand boys, and delivery workers, would also receive 'Christmas boxes' from households they served throughout the year. These boxes typically contained money, food, or small gifts as tokens of appreciation for loyal service.

In essence, Boxing Day was a socially embedded welfare system—informal yet meaningful, operating long before modern social security schemes. It reflected a communal ethic. Those who had more were expected to share with those who had less.

This moral underpinning sharply contrasts with the modern perception particularly in Nigeria that Boxing Day is synonymous with televised boxing matches or sporting entertainment. The misunderstanding of Boxing Day in Nigeria did not arise in a vacuum. It was shaped by a combination of colonial inheritance, media practices, and cultural reinterpretation.

Nigeria inherited Boxing Day as part of the British colonial calendar.

However, while the date and public holiday status were retained, the cultural explanation was largely lost in translation. Unlike Britain, Nigeria did not have a widespread domestic servant culture structured around Christmas traditions, nor did churches emphasise the alms-box narrative connected to St Stephen's Day.

In the early decades of Nigerian television, public holidays were often filled with sports content. Boxing, wrestling, and football were inexpensive to broadcast and popular with audiences. Over time, the repeated airing of boxing matches on 26 December subtly, but powerfully redefined the meaning of the day in the public imagination.

For children especially, the association became literal. If Boxing Day always came with boxing on TV, then Boxing Day must be about boxing. This was not deliberate deception, but it was undeniably misleading. The media play a crucial role in shaping collective understanding. When broadcasters consistently frame a day around a particular type of content, that framing becomes the meaning.

In Nigeria, Boxing Day programming rarely included documentaries, discussions, or features explaining the origin of the day. Instead, audiences were treated to sporting contests, comedy reruns, and imported entertainment. Over time, the historical and cultural significance of Boxing

Day faded into obscurity.

This phenomenon illustrates how cultural meanings can be overwritten by media habits. When explanation is absent, repetition becomes truth. Christmas Day itself is centred on celebration—religious observance, family gatherings, feasting, and festivity.

Boxing Day, by contrast, was traditionally quieter and more reflective. It was the day when generosity moved outward from the family unit to the wider community. In Britain, this distinction was well understood. Christmas Day was for the household; Boxing Day was for servants, workers, and the poor.

In Nigeria, however, the distinction blurred. Boxing Day became simply 'another public holiday.' A day to rest, watch television, or attend sporting events. Its ethical and charitable dimension was rarely highlighted.

Globally, the meaning of Boxing Day has continued to evolve. In many countries, it has become synonymous with shopping and massive sales—an economic reinvention far removed from its charitable roots.

Retailers capitalise on the public holiday to offer discounts, drawing crowds into shopping centres. While this commercialisation has created its own traditions, it further distances Boxing Day from its original purpose. Yet even within this modern shift, the day remains anchored to post-Christmas reflection—what comes after the celebration, and how abundance is redistributed or spent.

Interestingly, Nigerian cultures already possess indigenous equivalents to the spirit of Boxing Day. Many communities traditionally set aside periods after festivals for sharing leftovers, visiting neighbours, or supporting the less fortunate. In this sense, Boxing Day's core philosophy is not foreign to Nigerian values. What is missing is not cultural compatibility, but cultural explanation.

Reframing Boxing Day as a day of generosity rather than spectacle would not conflict with Nigerian traditions, it would reinforce them. Some might argue that the misconception is harmless. After all, what is wrong with enjoying sports on a public holiday? The issue, however, is not enjoyment but erasure. When the meaning of a cultural observance is lost, an opportunity for reflection and social responsibility is lost with it.

Boxing Day, properly understood, invites questions: Who served us throughout the year?

Who is less privileged in our community? How can abundance be shared more equitably? These questions are especially relevant in a society grappling with economic inequality and social tension.

Reclaiming the true meaning of Boxing Day does not require abolishing entertainment or sports. It simply requires balance. Nigerian media organisations can air short educational features explaining the origin of the day; highlight acts of charity and community service; and showcase stories of giving, gratitude, and social impact.

While families can use the day to visit extended relatives or neighbours; share food or gifts with those in need; and teach children the history behind the holiday. In doing so, Boxing Day can regain its moral and cultural weight. Boxing Day is not about boxing matches, knockouts, or sporting glory. It is about boxes opened, not to reveal punches, but presents; not to celebrate combat, but compassion.

The long-standing Nigerian misconception, reinforced by television programming, reflects a broader challenge: how imported traditions can lose their essence when stripped of context.

Understanding Boxing Day correctly does more than correct a historical error. It reconnects us to values of gratitude, service, and generosity—values that remain timeless and urgently needed.

As we move forward, perhaps Boxing Day can once again be what it was always meant to be: a quiet, purposeful reminder that celebration finds its highest meaning in sharing.

Odaro, a columnist, lectures in the Department of Mass Communication, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi.