

Emerging threats: Military intensifying push for innovation, joint operations —CDS

ABUJA

The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Gen. Olufemi Oluyede, has reaffirmed commitment to deepening transformation, innovation and joint operations to effectively address evolving security

threats across the country. Oluyede stated this on Tuesday in Abuja at the Fourth Quarter Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN) Transformation and Innovation Seminar. He was represented by the Director of Search and Rescue at Defence Headquarters,

AVM Idi Sani. Oluyede described transformation as “an operational necessity, not an option,” stressing that the changing character of warfare and Nigeria’s complex security environment demanded an agile, adaptive and forward-looking military.

He said “the global security landscape is shifting rapidly, with conventional and non-conventional threats intersecting in unprecedented ways, including terrorism, insurgency, cyber warfare and information operations. “Maintaining operational superiority requires continuous

review of military doctrines, modernisation of platforms, expansion of capabilities and the integration of emerging technologies into defence operations.” The CDS added that innovation remained a critical enabler of operational effectiveness, noting that unmanned systems,

Artificial Intelligence (AI), data analytics, space-based technologies and autonomous platforms were increasingly shaping modern battlefields. He said the AFN would continue to prioritise indigenous

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...that the people may know

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Governor Okpebholo present the 2026 Budget Estimates to the Speaker and the Honourable Members
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Edo budgets ₦939.85bn for 2026 fiscal year

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, on Tuesday presented a ₦939.85 billion Appropriation Bill to the Edo State House of Assembly for the 2026 fiscal year, outlining a spending framework aimed at driving growth and consolidating development across key sectors. The budget, tagged “Budget of Hope and Growth,” ear-

marks ₦637 billion, representing 68 per cent, for capital expenditure, while ₦302 billion, or 32 per cent, is allocated to recurrent expenditure. Okpebholo said the budget would be financed through a projected Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) of ₦160 billion, Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) receipts of ₦480 billion, capital receipts and grants estimated at ₦153 billion, public-private partnerships val-

ued at ₦146 billion, alongside other revenue sources. He explained that the priorities of the 2026 fiscal plan were shaped by the achievements recorded by his administration in its first year in office. According to the governor, sectoral allocations show that the economic sector received the largest share of ₦614.2 billion, followed by the social sector with ₦148.9 billion, the administration sector with ₦157.7

billion, and the justice sector with ₦19 billion. Additional provisions were also made for regional development and local government support in line with the administration’s people-centred development agenda. Okpebholo said the budget is anchored on the administration’s SHINE Agenda—Security, Health, Infrastructure, Natural Resources/Agriculture and Education—and is designed to build a prosperous and united Edo

State where citizens feel the direct impact of governance. He commended the Speaker and members of the House for their cooperation, noting that such support facilitated the effective implementation of the 2025 budget. According to him, the 2025 fiscal year recorded strong performance in both capital and recurrent expenditure, while internally generated revenue improved significantly following reforms to block leakages and strengthen revenue collection systems. On security, the governor reiterated his administration’s resolve to ensure that Edo State is “no longer a haven for criminals,” recalling that over 300 cult-related killings were recorded in 2024. He said decisive interventions, including a strengthened

anti-cultism law, the provision of 80 Hilux patrol vehicles, 400 motorcycles and the recruitment of 2,500 security personnel, have led to a significant reduction in insecurity across the state. In the health sector, Okpebholo said the government is rebuilding the system through the construction of new primary healthcare centres, the provision of modern diagnostic equipment and the ongoing development of a 150-bed specialist hospital in Edo Central Senatorial District. He disclosed that in infrastructure, 28 road projects covering about 255 kilometres have been awarded, alongside the construction of two flyovers in Benin City, while several community roads are under construction to improve connectivity across the state.

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2026 BUDGET PRESENTATION: Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo (right) handing over the 2026 Budget and Appropriation Bill to the Clerk of the Edo State House of Assembly, Alhaji Yahaya Omogbai after its presentation before the legislators yesterday.

Edo govt disburses N50m RHI grant to 250 elderly persons

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government, through the Office of the First Lady, has disbursed N50 million to 250 elderly persons under the third edition of the Renewed Hope Initiative Elderly Support Scheme (RHI ESS). The disbursement, which took place at the New Festival Hall, Government House, Benin City, saw each beneficiary receive a cash grant of N200,000. Speaking on behalf of the First Lady of Nigeria, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, the Coordinator, Office of the Edo State First Lady and State Coordina-

tor of the Renewed Hope Initiative, Mrs. Edesili Okpebholo Anani, said the scheme was designed to support vulnerable senior citizens and promote dignified ageing. She explained that RHI ESS is a social investment programme initiated by Senator Tinubu to assist elderly Nigerians aged 65 years and above, as part of the Federal Government’s commitment to improving the welfare of senior citizens. The programme, themed “Finding Joy in Old Age,” was also used to highlight the national scope of the initiative. Senator

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Senate moves to rescue farmers as falling produce prices threaten livelihoods

CAROLINE AMEH

ABUJA

The Senate on Tuesday raised alarm over worsening economic hardship facing Nigerian farmers following a sharp drop in the prices of agricultural produce amid persistently high costs of farm inputs.

The concern followed a mo-

tion sponsored by the Senator representing Gombe Central, Mohammed Danjuma Goje, titled "The Need to Address the Falling Prices of Agricultural Produce in Relation to the Very High Cost of Farm Inputs: A Big Problem to the Livelihood of Millions of Nigerian Farmers."

Leading the debate, Goje said recent Federal Government

policies, including waivers and special permits for large-scale food imports, had helped moderate food prices and offered relief to consumers but had inadvertently hurt local farmers.

He explained that farm-gate prices of produce had continued to decline, even as the costs of key inputs such as fertilisers, pesticides and insecticides remained high, severely squeezing farmers' margins and threatening their survival.

The Senate noted that the imbalance had resulted in massive post-harvest losses, as farmers were unable to sell produce at fair or profitable prices, leading to wastage, spoilage and declining incomes across rural communities.

Lawmakers warned that the trend posed a serious threat to millions of smallholder farmers who form the backbone of Nigeria's food production system and rely almost entirely on agri-

culture for their livelihoods.

Contributing, Senator Aliyu Wamakko, representing Sokoto North, urged the government to strengthen measures to protect farmers while ensuring food availability nationwide.

He stressed that sustaining local agricultural production was critical to long-term food security and economic stability.

The Senate further cautioned that continued decline in farm-gate prices could dis-

courage farmers from investing in the next planting season, potentially leading to reduced domestic food production, rural economic stagnation and increased food insecurity.

It also warned that rising dependence on food imports could weaken national food sovereignty, undermine local agricultural value chains, distort markets and expose the economy to global price volatility and foreign exchange pressures.

Emerging threats: Military intensifying...

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research and development, strengthen partnerships with academia and industry, and invest in capacity-building initiatives to equip personnel with skills required for future warfare.

Oluyede emphasised the importance of personnel welfare and continuous development, describing them as essential to sustaining morale, discipline and the will to fight amid rapid technological advancement.

He said the current military leadership philosophy was anchored on enhanced joint operations, improved force posture and operations, and better welfare supported by sound administration.

"This philosophy guides our collective efforts to strengthen joint operations, deepen inter-service cooperation and build a balanced, resilient and mission-ready force," he said.

He acknowledged existing challenges, including limited domestic production of defence equipment, funding constraints, capacity gaps in emerging technologies and persistent asymmetric threats.

He, however, expressed optimism that with the right reforms, stronger partnerships and sustained commitment to innovation, the AFN would evolve into a future-ready and technologically-advanced force capable of addressing both present and emerging security challenges.

He commended the Department of Defence Transformation and Innovation for organising the seminar, describing it as "a strategic platform for shaping the future of the Armed Forces."

Earlier, the acting Chief of Defence Transformation and Innovation, AVM Jeff Ekwuribe, said the armed forces must accelerate transformation and innovation to stay ahead of evolving security threats confronting the nation.

Ekwuribe described the theme of the seminar, "Optimising Nigeria's Operational Capabilities through Transformation and Innovation: Issues and Prospects," as timely and compelling, noting that increasing operational complexity across multiple theatres demanded faster adaptation of military methods, systems and doctrines.

He said the military could not afford stagnation at a time when insurgents, terrorists and violent non-state actors were refining their tactics and exploiting technology and social vulnerabilities.

According to him, transformation goes beyond incremental change, stressing that it represents a continuous shift in mindset, posture, capability and institutional culture, while innovation provides the ideas and technologies needed to sustain operational advantage.

"Only through the fusion of transformation and innovation can we remain ahead of our adversaries," he added

**PLENARY:**

L-R: Chairman, Senate Committee on Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Asuquo Ekpenyong; Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations, Adeola Olamilekan; Senator Ali Ndume; Senator Francis Fadahusi; Senate President, Godswill Akpabio; Deputy Senate President, Jibrin Barau and Senate Whip, Tahir Munguno, at the Plenary yesterday.

PHOTO BY OMOYE AMINU

Igue Festival: Oba of Benin performs Ugierhoba rite

BENIN CITY

The Benin Monarch, His Royal Majesty, Oba Ewuare II has commenced the 2025 Igue festival with Ugierhoba rite

The ceremony took place at the sacred Ugharhoba axis of the Benin Palace, underscoring continuity between ancestral

tradition and contemporary Benin life.

The Chief Press Secretary to the Oba, Osaigbovo Iguobaro, said Ugierhoba denotes sacred altars honouring Oba Ewuare's forebears, venerated during Igue, also called "Ugie."

At Ugierhoba, the Oba undertook solitary introspection, offering prayers with interces-

sory groups for guidance, renewal, his family's wellbeing, the kingdom and Nigeria.

Proceedings began with a solemn procession after the Oba paid tribute to royal ancestors at Ugha-Ozolua, observing established ancient traditional norms.

Ihogbe, Ehondor, Ifiento, Ewaise and chiefs rendered stewardship accounts, as ritual ani-

mal sacrifices were performed in keeping with tradition.

Iguobaro said, "The rite binds past and present, renewing spiritual bonds that sustain Benin's heritage."

Joined by his children and royal family, the Oba inspired palace fans, his confident presence energising the traditional orchestra's rhythm.

Edo govt disburses N50m RHI grant...

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Tinubu noted that the scheme cuts across the 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory, and also includes veterans of the Defence and Police Officers Wives Association.

According to her, a total of 9,500 beneficiaries nationwide are to receive N200,000 each, bringing the overall disbursement to N1.9 billion, as approved by the Governing Board of the Renewed Hope Initiative.

She added that since the inauguration of President Bola Tinubu's administration in 2023, senior citizens have been celebrated annually in December under the scheme, in recognition of their contributions to national development.

The First Lady urged elderly Nigerians to remain active and healthy, engage in community and charitable activities, and embrace ageing with purpose, love and dignity.

In a goodwill message, the

wife of the Secretary to the Edo State Government, Barr. Nimata Umar Ikhilior, said the care and support given to elderly citizens reflected societal progress, describing them as a blessing to their communities.

Earlier, the Special Adviser to the Edo State Governor on Special Duties, Mrs. Betty Okonoboh, commended the First Lady of Nigeria and the Office of the Edo State First Lady for sustaining the initiative and honouring senior citizens in the state.

The event also featured health talks by the Special Adviser to the Governor on Health, Dr. Andrew Iyamu, and the Managing Director, Edo State Specialist Hospital, Dr. Anthonia Njoku, alongside medical outreach services.

Some beneficiaries, including Mrs. Agnes Ahamentalor, Mr. George Abulimen and Mrs. Pius Victoria, expressed gratitude for the support, describing the grant as timely and impactful, while offering prayers for the continued success of the administration.

Edo CP commissions ultra-modern police post at UBTH, hails Ize-Iyamu

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Commissioner of Police, Monday Agbonika, and the Chief Medical Director of the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH), Prof. (Mrs.) Idia Ize-Iyamu, on Tuesday jointly commissioned an ul-

tra-modern police post within the hospital premises.

Speaking at the event, Prof. Ize-Iyamu said the fully equipped police post marked a major step towards strengthening security in the hospital, which serves a large population of patients, staff, students and visitors.

She stressed that a secure

environment was essential for effective emergency response, uninterrupted clinical services, staff confidence and public trust, noting that the facility was the first of its kind in UBTH.

"As a tertiary healthcare institution operating round the clock, UBTH serves a large population. A secure environment is there-

fore critical to effective emergency response, uninterrupted clinical services, staff confidence and public trust," she said.

According to her, the police post is purpose-built, comprehensively furnished and powered by a dedicated solar installation to ensure uninterrupted operations.

Edo budgets ₦939.85bn for 2026...

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The governor said agriculture received a major boost in the 2026 budget, with its allocation rising from ₦6.9 billion to ₦57 billion.

Over 400 hectares of farmland have been cultivated, with harvesting already underway across multiple farm clusters to tackle food insecurity.

In education, he said the administration recruited 5,000 permanent teachers, upgraded 63 schools and increased monthly subvention to tertiary

institutions. Ambrose Alli University's allocation rose from ₦41 million to ₦500 million, while Edo State University, Iyamoh, increased from ₦25 million to ₦250 million.

On economic growth and job creation, Okpebholo said the state inherited substantial local and foreign debts but is gradually reducing the burden. He disclosed that over 10,000 direct and indirect jobs have been created, alongside the introduction of a ₦1 billion interest-free loan scheme for market women and traders.

On governance, the governor said public trust has been restored through reforms, including the swearing-in of previously sidelined judges, the re-establishment of Customary Courts and efforts to strengthen traditional institutions for improved cooperation across all levels of government.

Okpebholo expressed appreciation to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for reforms that have enhanced state revenue inflows and thanked the legislature, traditional rulers, religious leaders, political ap-

pointees and civil servants for their support, before formally presenting the 2026 Appropriation Bill to the lawmakers for consideration and approval.

The plenary session, presided over by the Speaker, Hon. Blessing Agbebaku, was attended by the Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa, Secretary to the State Government, Barrister Umar Musa Ikhilior, former deputy governors, a former Secretary to the State Government, members of the State Executive Council, traditional rulers and representatives of civil society.

Federal account records N23trn rise in 2025 —RMAFC boss

ABUJA

The Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) has said that Nigeria's Federation Account recorded a strong growth of N23.06 trillion within 10 months of 2025.

The Chairman of the commission, Dr Mohammed Shehu, disclosed this at a two-day National Stakeholders' Discourse on "Enhancing Fis-

cal Efficiency and Revenue Growth Under the Nigeria Tax Act, 2025" in Abuja.

Shehu said the 2025 performance marked a significant improvement on the N11.93 trillion recorded in 2023 and N21.43 trillion in 2024.

He attributed the revenue growth to fiscal reforms, improved coordination among revenue agencies, stronger audits and expanded digital tracking systems.

According to him, total gross accruals stood at N11.93 trillion in 2023, reflecting the early impact of fiscal reforms under the current administration.

He said inflows increased significantly to N21.43 trillion in 2024, driven by improved revenue coordination, stronger audits and enhanced compliance mechanisms.

"Accruals for January to October 2025 alone reached N23.06 trillion, surpassing the

full-year figures of previous years," he said.

Shehu attributed the growth to digital revenue tracking, fiscal discipline and reforms that expanded the revenue base across oil and non-oil sectors.

He said the improved inflows strengthened allocations to the federal, state and local governments, reducing volatility and dependence on oil revenues.

The RMAFC chairman reaffirmed the commission's com-

mitment to monitoring accruals and safeguarding federation revenues through transparency and accountability measures.

He said the Tax Act, which would take effect in January 2026, followed extensive consultations by the Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reform.

He added that the committee's work led to four tax reform laws, assented to in June, aimed at streamlining administration, reducing compliance costs and strengthening revenue governance.

Shehu said the new Tax Act harmonised fragmented laws, removed duplication, improved ease of doing business and would create a predictable, transparent and sustainable fiscal environment.

He explained that the discourse was convened to deepen stakeholders' understanding of the Act's implementation, urging participants to engage experts and clarify public mis-

conceptions.

The Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dr Dele Alake, said the commission's constitutional and statutory mandate remained central to Nigeria's peace and governance architecture.

According to Alake, effective implementation of the Act requires collaboration among governments, legislative agencies, institutions and the private sector to assess fiscal implications and enhance efficiency.

He said the solid minerals sector offered opportunities for renewable energy, assuring stakeholders of the government's commitment to governance reforms, investment and partnerships to strengthen Nigeria's fiscal architecture and economic benefits.

Alake was represented by Mr Peluola Olusegun.

Mr Desmond Akawor, Chairman, Fiscal Efficiency and Budget Committee of RMAFC, said the Tax Act represented a major reform milestone.



COURTESY VISIT TO OLUBADAN:

Olubadan of Ibadanland, Oba Rashidi Ladoja (L) with Chief Wole Olanipekun (SAN) during a Courtesy visit to Olubadan of Ibadanland on Tuesday.

Self-stigma major barrier to mental healthcare access —Psychiatrist

LAGOS

Consultant Psychiatrist with the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), Dr Temilade Adegbite, has identified self-stigma as a major factor limiting access to mental healthcare in Nigeria.

Adegbite said this in an interview with newsmen on the sidelines of the Annual General Meeting and Scientific Conference of Resident Doctors at the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Yaba, Lagos.

She said self-stigma not only increased the risk of relapse but also damaged the therapeutic alliance between patients and healthcare providers, stressing

the need for targeted strategies to address the challenge.

According to her, beyond societal stigma toward mental illness, which remains a major barrier to mental health development, many people living with mental health conditions stigmatise themselves.

Adegbite said psycho-education played a critical role in addressing self-stigma, adding that social support, family education and challenging negative beliefs were effective measures.

She urged people living with mental health conditions to desist from self-perceived stigmatization, including negative attitudes and internalised shame about their conditions.

"Unfortunately, negative attitudes and beliefs toward people with mental health conditions are common in Nigerian society.

"Do not let stigma create self-doubt or shame. Do not isolate yourself or equate yourself with your illness. Always seek help and speak out against stigma," she said.

Adegbite advised individuals to focus on managing symptoms and the effects of mental illness rather than allowing the condition to define their identity.

She also urged society to perceive mental illness like other treatable conditions such as malaria, ulcer or typhoid.

She warned that stigmatising people with mental illness could worsen their condition and, in extreme cases, lead to suicide or death.

The psychiatrist called for sustained educational anti-stigma interventions to correct misinformation and counter negative beliefs about mental illness in society.

She said public education should include information on the biological and genetic components of mental illnesses such as schizophrenia.

Adegbite stressed that individuals should be recognised beyond their diagnosis, noting that a person's illness did not define their identity, a goal she said could be achieved through advocacy.

"We should stop stigmatising people struggling with mental health conditions and instead show empathy, recognising that mental illness is a disease and not a choice," she said.

U.S. Embassy warns Nigerians against visa fraud, threatens permanent ban

ABUJA

The U.S. Embassy in Abuja has warned Nigerians against engaging in any form of fraud in the process of obtaining United States visas, saying offenders risk permanent.

The warning was contained in a statement posted on the embassy's official X handle, which stressed that applicants

who provide false information or fake documents could face lifelong ineligibility under U.S. immigration law.

According to the embassy, visa fraud carries serious consequences, as any form of misrepresentation during the application process may result in a permanent prohibition from entering the United States.

"Visa fraud has serious con-

sequences. Lying or providing fake documents can lead to permanent visa bans under U.S. immigration law," the statement said.

The embassy reiterated its commitment to continued cooperation with Nigeria on matters of mutual interest.

"The United States looks forward to continuing to work together with Nigeria on issues

of mutual concern," it added.

The warning comes amid efforts to curb rising cases of document falsification and misrepresentation in visa applications.

It also follows ongoing public sensitization and diplomatic engagements between Nigerian authorities and the U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr Richard Mills.

CBN revokes operating licences of aso savings, union homes

ABUJA

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has revoked the operating licences of Aso Savings and Loans Plc and Union Homes Savings and Loans Plc.

This was disclosed in a statement by the CBN's Acting Director, Corporate Communications Department, Mrs Hakama Sidi-Ali.

Sidi-Ali said the action was part of the apex bank's efforts to reposition the mortgage sub-sector and promote a culture of compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

She said the revocation was carried out in exercise of the powers conferred on the CBN under Section 12 of the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act (BOFIA) 2020, and Section 7.3 of the Revised Guidelines for

Mortgage Banks in Nigeria.

She said the affected institutions violated various provisions of the regulations.

According to her, the violations included failure to meet the minimum paid-up share capital requirement for the category of bank licence granted by the CBN.

"Others include having insufficient assets to meet liabilities and being critically undercapitalised, with capital adequacy ratios below the prudential minimum prescribed by the CBN," she added.

She said the institutions also failed to comply with several directives and obligations imposed on them by the apex bank.

Sidi-Ali said the CBN remained committed to its core mandate of ensuring financial system stability.

Senate confirms 3 nominees as non-career ambassadors

ABUJA

The Senate on Tuesday confirmed three nominees as non-career ambassadors.

They are Kayode Are (Ogun), Aminu Dalhatu (Jigawa) and Emmanuel Oke (Oyo).

The confirmation followed consideration of the report of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Presenting the report, the Chairman of the Committee, Senator Sani Bello, said the nominees displayed wide and in-depth knowledge of international diplomacy.

The President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio, thanked the chairman and members of the committee for the expeditious

consideration of the nominees.

He congratulated President Bola Tinubu "for putting square pegs in square holes," urging the ambassadors to strengthen relationships between Nigeria and countries to which they would be posted.

President Tinubu forwarded the names of the three non-career ambassadorial nominees to the Senate for confirmation on November 26, while 65 other ambassadorial nominees forwarded to the Senate and screened are yet to be confirmed.

The Senate also confirmed two commissioners of the National Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC).

They are Aisha Kanti Bello and Dr Animashaun Olayinka.

NEWS

Man tasks govts on security, good roads for business growth

UYO

The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) has urged governments at all levels to strengthen security and rehabilitate roads to promote business growth across the country.

The President of MAN, Mr Francis Meshioye, made the call at the association's 18th Annual General Meeting held in Uyo on Tuesday.

Meshioye said efficient movement of raw materials and finished goods would only be possible with improved security and quality road infrastructure.

The meeting had as its theme, "Buy Nigerian Products, Build Nigeria; A Path to Sustainable Industrial Growth."

Represented by the Director-General of MAN, Mr Segun Ajayi-Kadir, Meshioye said insecurity and poor road conditions had continued to negatively affect businesses nationwide.

According to him, the movement of raw materials and finished goods across the country has become increasingly difficult and costly.

The MAN president also called for improved power supply, noting that many small-scale businesses were operating at a loss due to the high cost of electricity.

He proposed quarterly interactive meetings between manufacturers and government officials to address operational challenges and formulate policies that would drive industrial growth.

Meshioye further urged Nigerians to demonstrate patriotism by patronising locally made products to grow the economy.

"By buying Nigerian-made goods, we are voting for jobs, innovation and economic resilience. Our industries are ready to deliver quality products that

met global standards.

"We need to be deliberate in our support, patronage and patriotism. It is our duty to take concrete steps towards growing the economy," he said.

In his remarks, Governor Umo Eno of Akwa Ibom State said his administration had improved the ease of doing business through a one-stop portal.

Represented by the Commissioner for Trade and Investment, Mr Iniobong Ekong, the governor said the portal had reduced the average time for obtaining a business licence in the state from 45 days to seven days.

Governor Eno said the state's Industrial Policy 2024-2029 provides a five-year tax holiday for new manufacturing enterprises and a 50 percent reduction in electricity tariffs for energy-intensive plants.

He reaffirmed the state government's commitment to building a vibrant and competitive manufacturing sector that would contribute significantly to the nation's GDP and improve citizens' welfare.

Earlier, the Chairman of the Akwa Ibom/Cross River Branch of MAN, Dr Inalegwu Adoga, raised concerns over multiple taxation, describing it as a major challenge confronting the business community.

Adoga said the branch had continued to promote local patronage, local content advocacy and backward integration in line with the theme of the meeting.

He said sustainable national prosperity depended on a collaborative, innovation-driven and production-based economy.

In a goodwill message, the South-South Zonal Coordinator of the Nigeria Agribusiness and Agro-Industry Development Initiative (NAADI), Mr Howard Usen, said the future of Nigeria's economy was

closely tied to a strong manufacturing sector.

Usen said manufacturers

were critical off-takers for agricultural produce and could transform raw materials into

value-added products for local consumption and export.

He said MAN remains ful-

ly committed to industrial growth, economic diversification and national development.



DISTRIBUTION OF FREE FOOD:

L-R: Managing Director, Nutrition International, Dr Oshita Okonkwo; Executive Secretary, Human Rights Commission, Dr Tony Ojukwu and former Chairman of Sure P, Enugu State, Mr Uche Agu, during the distribution of free food to 500 vulnerable households in FCT in Abuja on Tuesday.

Police arrest 5 robbery suspects in Rivers

PORT HARCOURT

The Rivers State Police Command has arrested five suspects in connection with alleged theft at a government-owned facility, the Dr Obi Wali Cultural Centre, in Port Harcourt.

The command's spokesperson, SP Grace Inging-Koko, disclosed this to journalists in

Port Harcourt on Tuesday.

She said the suspects were also linked to the robbery of the popular Tottinno Filling Station in the city.

"The five suspects were arrested at Diobu and Ikoku in November, bringing the total number of suspects in custody in connection with the crime to nine," she said.

Inging-Koko explained that the suspects stole items from

the public facility and sold them to accomplices, who are also in police custody.

"The arrests demonstrate the unwavering commitment of our operatives, who worked tirelessly through intelligence-led policing, to bring the perpetrators to justice.

"Those arrested include the gang leader, who was apprehended at the Rumuokoro fly-over with two rifles recovered

from his vehicle, a Point-of-Sale operator and the receiver of the stolen items," she added.

She said items recovered include a 30KVA generator, inverter batteries and two rifles.

Inging-Koko said the suspects and recovered exhibits were currently in police custody, adding that investigations had been expanded to apprehend other fleeing suspects linked to the crime.

Don't idolise military rule, former lawmaker tells Nigerians

ABUJA

A former federal lawmaker, Chief Sam Onuigbo, has warned Nigerians and the wider West African community against idolising coup d'état and military rule.

Onuigbo expressed the concern during an interview with journalists in Abuja on Tuesday, saying that the recent spate of coups and coup rumours across West Africa should worry all advocates of good governance.

He noted that Niger Republic,

Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea-Bissau are currently under military rule, adding that Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso have since formed the Alliance of Sahel States following sanctions imposed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The former lawmaker said the threat to democracy in the sub-region was further underscored by a recent foiled coup attempt in Benin Republic, which was thwarted with support from Nigeria, including

the deployment of airpower.

Onuigbo represented Ikwuano/Umuahia North/Umuahia South Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives from 2015 to 2023.

"Those who glamourise military regimes do not understand the implications of living under a military junta," he said. "The military can strip away your rights, and a bad military government could even impose a ban on social media."

He urged citizens to demand good governance from their

leaders while supporting President Ahmed Bola Tinubu's reform agenda.

"These reforms will yield positive results. We are already witnessing a significant inflow of foreign direct investment," he said.

Onuigbo also called on Nigerians to support the president's efforts to address insecurity.

"Insecurity benefits no one. President Tinubu has initiated bold measures to confront this challenge, and Nigerians must support these initiatives to ensure success," he said.

RHI: Tinubu supports 250 elderly persons in A'lbom

UYO

Nigeria's First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, has presented N200,000 each to no fewer than 250 elderly persons in Akwa Ibom State.

Speaking at the event held in Uyo on Tuesday, the First Lady said the gesture was part of the Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI) Social Investment Programme.

Represented by Mrs Helen Obareki, she said the initiative had become a tradition of the current administration to honour senior citizens.

"This gesture recognises the invaluable contributions of this category of people to nation-building.

"Through this scheme, we continue to express our grati-

tude and care for the men and women who laboured to build this country," she said.

She stressed the need to prioritise the welfare of the elderly, especially during the festive season.

The First Lady said senior citizens had endured difficult times to ensure a better future for younger generations.

"It is our moral duty to ensure that they live their twilight years in comfort, good health and dignity," she said.

She encouraged the elderly to embrace joy in old age, noting that ageing should be about happiness, love, support and respect.

Responding on behalf of the beneficiaries, Mr Abasiama Idiong thanked the First Lady for the support, describing it as a profound demonstration of love and honour for the elderly.

Abia enacts Startup Law, unveils electric bus scheme

UMUAHIA

Governor Alex Otti of Abia State has assented to the Startup Bill passed by the State House of Assembly, officially enacting it as the Abia State Startup Law 2025.

The Commissioner for Information, Mr Okey Kanu, disclosed this while briefing journalists on the outcome of the State Executive Council meeting in Umuahia.

Kanu said the law is aimed at domesticating and implementing the Nigerian Startup Act 2022 in Abia State.

He explained that it provides

a legal framework to foster innovation, support tech-enabled startups, nurture digital talent and position Abia as a technology and innovation hub.

"The law applies to companies with major operations in Abia and startups duly recognised and labelled under the national Act," he said.

Kanu also announced plans to launch a state-owned electric bus mass transit scheme under the Abia Transport Transformation Project.

He said the first batch of 20 electric buses arrived in November, while another 20 were expected early next year, with

about 100 buses to be deployed in the first phase.

According to him, the 40-seater buses are custom-built for Abia and can travel up to 400 kilometres on a single charge.

"They are equipped with modern safety and comfort features, including cameras, charging ports, disability access, emergency exits and fire extinguishers," he said.

Kanu said the initiative would place Abia at the forefront of clean and environmentally friendly mass transit in Nigeria.

He also disclosed that the Abia 25-Year Development Plan would be unveiled on Tuesday at the International

Conference Centre, Umuahia.

He said the event would attract development partners, advisory council members, local government chairmen, traditional rulers and other stakeholders.

On healthcare, Kanu said the Abia Global Medical Mission commenced on Monday and would run until December 20, 2025, offering free advanced medical services across designated centres.

He added that 850 youths would graduate from the second cohort of the Abia Techrise ICT Training Programme on Saturday, bringing the total number of beneficiaries in 2025 to 1,399.

AMCE achieves first open-heart surgery, pioneers SBRT in W'Africa

ABUJA

The African Medical Centre of Excellence (AMCE), Abuja, has completed its first open-heart surgery and delivered West Africa's first Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy (SBRT) for lung cancer.

This was disclosed in a statement issued by Vincent Musumba, Communications

and Events Manager at Afreximbank, on Tuesday.

According to the statement, AMCE, a world-class tertiary medical facility developed by the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) in partnership with King's College Hospital, London, achieved the milestones barely six months after commencing operations in June 2025. It said the open-heart surgery

involved a complex triple coronary artery bypass grafting procedure, while the SBRT marked a pioneering advancement in cancer care within the sub-region.

"These achievements underscore the centre's growing capacity to provide complex, life-saving treatments in Africa and significantly reduce the need for Nigerians and other Africans to seek medical care abroad," the statement said.

It explained that SBRT is an advanced radio surgical technique that delivers surgical-level

precision without incision.

The statement added that the landmark SBRT case involved an octogenarian with a localised lung tumour, treated using sophisticated imaging, real-time motion tracking and personalised radiation planning.

In cardiovascular care, AMCE disclosed that it had performed no fewer than ten successful cardiac interventions within its first six months of operation.

"These include coronary angiographies, permanent pacemaker insertions and percutaneous

coronary interventions," it said.

The successful completion of the bypass surgery, the statement noted, placed AMCE among the few centres in Africa offering fully integrated cardiac care, ranging from advanced diagnostics and interventional cardiology to complex open-heart surgery within a single facility.

The statement quoted the Chief Executive Officer of AMCE, Mr Brian Deaver, as saying that delivering the first open-heart surgery and West Africa's first SBRT treatment represented a defining moment for the centre and for health-care delivery on the continent.

"These milestones reflect the exceptional skill and dedication of our multidisciplinary teams, who have worked tirelessly to ensure that patients can access the most advanced cancer and cardiac care right here in Africa," Deaver said.

He added that with oncology systems, catheterisation laboratories and operating theatres now fully operational, AMCE was closing long-standing gaps in access to high-quality treatment.

"Our commitment remains steadfast: to invest in our people, technology and infrastructure so that Africans no longer need to travel abroad for the highest standards of care," he said.



ADDRESSING NEWSMEN:

L-R: Oba of The Yoruba United Community in Enugu State (TYUCE), Oba Isiaka Salmon; Igwe of Umuofor Community of Oguta, Imo State, Igwe Eze Abdufatah and Igwe of Eziowa Community of Ezeagu Local Government Area of Enugu State, Igwe Francis Okafor, addressing newsmen during TYUCE Cultural Week Award Ceremony in Enugu on Tuesday.

DMO takes sensitisation on borrowing guidelines to Northern States

ABUJA

The Debt Management Office has said its World Bank-assisted workshop on borrowing guidelines was designed to enlighten sub-national entities in Northern Nigeria on proper borrowing ethics.

The Director-General of the Debt Management Office, Mrs Patience Oniha, stated this at a workshop on borrowing guidelines organised for top policy-makers in Abuja on Tuesday.

She said the workshop was held under the aegis of the States Action on Business Enabling Reforms programme.

Oniha stressed the importance of aligning borrowing practices in the states with those of the Federal Government.

She explained that borrowing requires several layers of approval and that debt managers must understand why such approvals are necessary.

"Debt is such an important fiscal variable that involves several stakeholders, which is why we have a diverse group here.

"The objective is that after this workshop, collaboration within your respective states will be stronger.

"We need to keep empowering people with knowledge and skills so that work can proceed smoothly," she said.

Oniha said states must clearly understand the borrowing process in order to raise funds required for development.

"If they do not understand the process, they cannot comply, and they cannot raise the

funds," she added.

She said the goal was to equip states with the skills and knowledge required to ensure that whenever borrowing becomes necessary, the process is smooth.

"Ultimately, the expectation is that the funds raised will be used for development within the states," she said.

Oniha commended the World Bank for its sustained interest in public debt management in Nigeria.

She warned that mismanaged debt could lead to serious consequences, including debt restructuring, downgrading by international credit rating agencies and loss of access to borrowing.

"Because debt is important, there are laws guiding borrowing. The process must be transparent, with a clear purpose, proper documentation, monitoring, reporting and servicing.

"When debt is not serviced,

the consequences are not good," she said.

The Acting Head of Service of the Federal Capital Territory, Mrs Nancy Nathan, described the workshop as an intersection of opportunity and responsibility.

Nathan said the programme was aimed at equipping states and the Federal Capital Territory with the tools and knowledge needed to navigate the complexities of borrowing.

She noted that access to finance remains a critical enabler for development in a rapidly evolving economic landscape.

"This workshop is designed to demystify the borrowing process and clarify documentation requirements.

"It will empower top policymakers to make informed decisions that enhance the capacity of states to meet their financial needs," she said.

FG, Foundation move to empower women affected by violence, unveil Safe Zone Project

ABUJA

The National Counter Terrorism Centre under the Office of the National Security Adviser and the Connect Network Foundation have unveiled the Safe Zone Project, a strategic initiative aimed at protecting and empowering women affected by insecurity in Nigeria.

The National Coordinator of the National Counter Terrorism Centre, Major General Adamu Laka, said the initiative comes at a critical time as the country continues to grapple with terrorism, violent extremism, banditry, kidnapping and human trafficking.

Laka said that while security operations remain essential, sustainable peace requires people-centred interventions that address root causes, prevent radicalisation and support rehabilitation and reintegration.

He explained that the Safe

Zone Project targets women who are disproportionately affected by insecurity, including victims of trafficking, forced recruitment, sexual violence and economic deprivation.

According to him, the programme brings together government institutions, civil society organisations, digital innovation platforms and international partners to provide safe pathways, livelihood support and empowerment opportunities.

"The initiative aligns with Nigeria's Policy Framework and National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism 2017, as well as the Women, Peace and Security agenda," he said.

In her remarks, the founder of the Connect Network Foundation, Ambassador Ojiah Oguche, said the programme goes beyond rescue by providing counselling, vocational training and livelihood support.

UNIBEN shifts matriculation, orientation dates amid ongoing clearance process

ESE AMADASUN

BENIN CITY

The University of Benin (UNIBEN) reviewed key activities in its 2025/2026 academic calendar, shifting the dates for the Orientation Programme and Matriculation Ceremony for newly admitted students.

The adjustment, approved after a Management meeting on December 15, 2025, comes amid ongoing online clearance and registration for fresh students, which began with the commencement of the academic session on November 10, 2025.

The institution confirmed that lectures are already in progress across all faculties in accordance with the approved timetable.

UNIBEN explained that many newly admitted students are yet to conclude their clear-

ance and registration due to a number of challenges, prompting Management to reconsider the earlier schedule for the two programmes.

The revision was also influenced by end-of-year festivities and public holidays.

Acting on behalf of the Senate, the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Edoba B. Omoregie, SAN, approved the new dates, noting the need to ensure full participation of fresh students in the orientation and matriculation exercises.

Accordingly, the Orientation Programme will now take place on Monday, January 26, 2026, while the Matriculation Ceremony has been fixed for Wednesday, January 28, 2026.

The University has urged Deans, Directors, staff, students, parents and other stakeholders to take note of the revised schedule and comply strictly with the new arrangements.

EEDC explains recent decline in power supply across S'East

ENUGU

The Enugu Electricity Distribution Company has attributed the recent decline in power supply across the South-East to low electricity frequency caused by gas constraints affecting gener-

ation companies.

The Group Head of Corporate Communications at EEDC, Mr Emeka Ezech, said this in a statement issued in Enugu on Tuesday.

According to him, the development has necessitated the load shedding of available energy by the Transmission

Company of Nigeria.

"As a result, energy allocation to EEDC and daily service levels for customers served by its subsidiary companies, including MainPower, TransPower, FirstPower, NewEra and EastLand, have been impacted," he said.

Ezech said efforts were being

made by key stakeholders in the electricity supply industry to address the challenge and restore normal power distribution.

He apologized to customers for the inconvenience and thanked electricity consumers across the South-East for their patience and understanding.

NEWS

First lady urges Nigerians to prioritise elderly, supports 250 military veterans in Abuja

ABUJA

The First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, has called on Nigerians to prioritise the welfare of elderly citizens.

Tinubu made the call during the third edition of the Renewed Hope Initiative Elderly Support Scheme held on Tuesday at Mambilla Barracks, Abuja, where she supported two hundred and fifty elderly military and police veterans with cash and food palliatives.

She described the initiative as a social investment programme aimed at ensuring dignity, comfort and well-being for senior citizens, particularly those aged sixty-five years and above.

The First Lady emphasised the moral duty of society to ensure that older Nigerians live their twilight years in comfort, good health and dignity, highlighting the importance of community, compassion

and active engagement in promoting well-being among the elderly.

She further encouraged senior citizens to maintain healthy lifestyles, remain active and nurture both body and mind, while calling on all Nigerians to engage in charitable acts that foster joy and solidarity.

Tinubu said the initiative had, since two thousand and twenty-five, celebrated the contributions of senior citizens, recognising their sacrifices in nation-building.

According to her, this year's programme will support nine thousand five hundred selected beneficiaries nationwide, including elderly citizens in all thirty-six states, the Federal Capital Territory and veterans.

"Each beneficiary will receive two hundred thousand naira, bringing the total disbursement to one billion nine hundred million naira," she said.

The First Lady also extended her appreciation to state coor-

dinators, partners and stakeholders for their support in implementing the nationwide programme, wishing all Nigerians a peaceful holiday season and a prosperous 2026

"As we approach the festive season, it is crucial to emphasise the importance of prioritising our elderly citizens in our initiatives.

"They have walked difficult paths so that the younger generations may have smoother roads to travel. It is therefore

our moral duty, and indeed our joy, to ensure that they live their twilight years in comfort, good health and dignity.

"My advice to our senior citizens is to do all that is possible to find joy in old age. Let us also find purpose in community, compassion and care. Ageing gracefully is not just about longevity but about being surrounded by love, support and respect," she said.

In his goodwill message, the Chief of Defence Staff, represented by the Director of Defence Administration, Rear Admiral Adisa Adegbeniga, said the programme truly re-

flected compassion, patriotism and purposeful leadership.

Adegbeniga commended the First Lady for her unwavering commitment to the welfare of Nigerians, particularly the vulnerable, which continues to inspire hope and confidence across the nation.

"Today's programme, which focuses on the welfare and dignity of elderly military and police veterans, is a cause that resonates deeply with the Armed Forces of Nigeria and the Nigeria Police Force.

"These men and women served our nation with courage, discipline and selfless

sacrifice, often under very demanding conditions. Their service laid the foundation for the peace, security and stability we continue to safeguard today," he said.

In her welcome remarks, the President of the Defence and Police Officers' Wives Association, Mrs Mernan Oluyede, said the scheme reflected collective compassion, gratitude and responsibility towards elderly military and police veterans.

She described the beneficiaries as men and women who devoted the prime of their lives to the defence, security and stability of the nation.

2026: Idris signs N642.9bn budget into law

BIRNIN KEBBI

Governor Nasir Idris of Kebbi State on Tuesday signed the 2026 N642.9 billion into law following its passage by the Kebbi State House of Assembly.

The governor assented to the budget at the Government House, Birnin Kebbi, after receiving the document from the Speaker of the House of Assembly, Alhaji Usman Muhammad-Zuru.

Idris expressed appreciation to the Speaker, principal officers and members of the Assembly for the speedy passage of the budget.

He commended the legislators for their commitment to the welfare of the people and their responsiveness to legislative responsibilities.

"I am the happiest person. This government truly belongs to the people of the state. Whatever we do is done in the best interest of the people.

"We are working harmoniously with the State House

of Assembly to move the state forward and take it to greater heights, in line with people-oriented governance.

"We will also work closely with the Assembly to boost internally generated revenue, given the fact that federal allocations alone are insufficient to meet the needs of our people.

"People should understand that a budget is not physical money at hand; rather, it is a projection of expected revenue, either from internally generated revenue or federal allocations," he said.

Earlier, Muhammad-Zuru described the signing of the budget as a significant milestone in the democratic journey of the state.

He said the budget was the outcome of extensive consultations, deliberations and rigorous scrutiny by members of the Assembly.

He said recurrent expenditure stood at N163.57 billion, representing 25 percent of the total budget, while capital expenditure was N479.6 billion, accounting for 75 percent.

Gunmen attack Osun community, allegedly kidnap former customs officer, kill one

OSOGBO

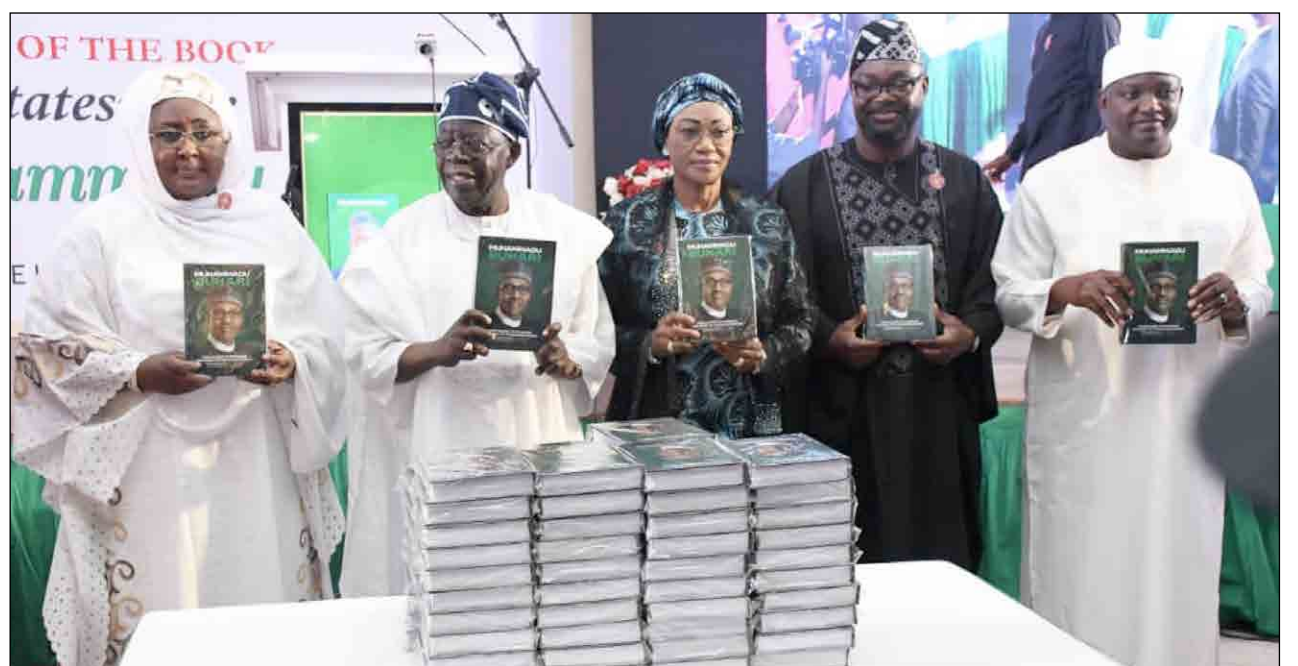
Gunmen on Monday night attacked a community in Ora-Igbomina, Ifedayo Local Government Area of Osun State, allegedly kidnapped a former customs officer and killed one person.

The Inurin of Ora-Igbomina, High Chief Sunday Fadipe, said the attackers entered the town at about 7 o'clock in

the evening and abducted the former customs officer at his residence.

He said the police had been informed and called on government to strengthen security in the area, which shares boundaries with Ekiti and Kwara states.

The Osun State Police Command confirmed the incident, saying tactical teams had been deployed to rescue the victim and track the suspects.



BOOK PRESENTATION:

L-R: Former First Lady, Aisha Buhari; President Bola Tinubu; First Lady, Oluremi Tinubu; Author of the Book, Dr Charles Omole and former President of the Gambia, Adama Barrow during official Presentation of the Book 'From Soldier to Statesman, The Legacy of Muhammad Buhari' at the State House Conference Centre in Abuja.

Fitness alone not enough to safeguard health —Expert

AWKA

A medical expert, Doctor Chukwudi Njelita, on Tuesday urged individuals to undergo regular medical evaluation in addition to physical fitness in order to safeguard their health and well-being.

Njelita, the Chief Medical Director of Rock Foundation Hospital, Awka, said engaging in physical fitness alone is not enough to guarantee good health.

He spoke at an end-of-year lecture and recognition ceremony organised by the Anambra chapter of the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria in Awka.

His lecture was titled "Sudden Death Phenomenon: Why Fitness Alone Is Not Enough".

According to him, many

people wrongly assume that being physically active automatically translates to good health, whereas several underlying medical conditions often remain undetected without routine medical examinations.

He noted that ailments such as hypertension, heart disease and metabolic disorders could remain silent for years, only to manifest suddenly with fatal consequences in the absence of early diagnosis.

He consequently warned adults above forty years of age to undertake periodic medical screening.

"People above forty years should take deliberate preventive measures against stroke and avoid excessive or strenuous exercise that could trigger unhealthy changes in blood pressure or heart rate.

"Irregular readings of vital health indicators can result in medical emergencies such as fainting, diabetes and stroke.

"Blood pressure can be managed but not cured; hence, individuals with high or low blood pressure must adhere strictly to prescribed medications," he said.

Also speaking, Doctor Henry Duru of the Department of Mass Communication, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, urged the Anambra State Government to prioritise sports as a key component of the economic sector.

Duru described sports as a major industry and image-building tool for developed nations, adding that Anambra State is yet to fully harness opportunities in the sector.

He identified strategic pub-

lic-private partnerships and purpose-driven infrastructure development as critical to transforming sports in the state.

"There is also a need for modern, multi-purpose sports infrastructure, which is essential for talent discovery, athlete development and hosting commercially viable competitions," he said.

Chairman of the occasion, Chief Paul Nwosu, commended the association and described the event as enlightening, noting that it provided a platform for robust discussions on health.

Nwosu, a former Commissioner for Information in Anambra State, urged government to consider the issues raised as constructive public feedback and encouraged participants to take their health seriously.

Dry season farming: IFAD-VCDP distribute inputs to Ebonyi farmers

ABAKALIKI

The International Fund for Agricultural Development-assisted Value Chain Development Programme has commenced distribution of farm inputs to Ebonyi farmers for 2025 dry season farming.

The distribution was launched by Governor Francis Nwifuru in Abakaliki and is aimed at strengthening food security and ensuring year-round farming in the state.

Represented by his wife, Mrs Mary-Maudlene Nwifuru, the governor commended the Federal Government and

the programme for supporting farmers with modern inputs to enhance crop production.

He said the distribution was a bold step towards food security, economic growth and sustainable rural development.

He added that dry season farming has become vital for food stability and improved

income generation for farmers.

The National Programme Coordinator of the programme, Doctor Fatima Aliyu, said more than twenty-three thousand farmers and 664 processors are actively involved in rice and cassava value chains in the state.

JUDICIARY**NEWS****Judiciary must guard credibility ahead of 2027 polls —CJN****ABUJA**

The Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Kudirat Kekere-Ekun, has urged the judiciary to maintain discipline, consistency and strict adherence to constitutional timelines in resolving election disputes ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Kekere-Ekun gave the charge in Abuja while declaring open the 2025/2026 Legal Year of the Federal High Court of Nigeria and its 41st Annual Judges' Conference.

She said the judiciary would once again be required to play a stabilising role in the electoral process, emphasising that pre-election disputes must be

resolved with clarity and balance to maintain public confidence.

"As we look ahead to the 2027 general elections, the judiciary will once again be called upon to play a stabilising national role.

"Election-related disputes must be handled with discipline, consistency, and strict adherence to constitutional and statutory timelines.

"The nation looks to the courts for clarity and balance at such critical moments.

"This court has a crucial role to play in pre-election dispute resolution," she said.

According to her, conflicting interim orders, forum shopping and the abuse of ex parte pro-

cesses undermine the credibility of the entire justice system and weaken public confidence.

She admonished heads of divisions to enforce procedural discipline firmly and fairly, emphasising that the courts must never be perceived as a theatre for political gamesmanship but as sanctuaries of constitutional order.

Kekere-Ekun also expressed concern over delays in the administration of justice, describing them as one of the most persistent complaints from the bar and the public.

"While some delays are structural, many are preventable; a judge must not see himself or herself as a passive mod-

erator of proceedings. Effective case management is central to judicial responsibility," she said.

She said the National Judicial Council would continue to strengthen oversight of case progression, not as a tool of intimidation, but to support institutional discipline and improve justice delivery.

The Chief Justice of Nigeria said judicial welfare, security and wellbeing remained critical priorities, noting that a judiciary expected to be bold, independent and impartial must also be adequately protected and equipped.

"A judge who does not feel secure cannot dispense justice

with confidence," she said.

She reiterated that ethical conduct remained the defining character of the Nigerian judiciary, adding that improved welfare must be matched with heightened responsibility.

Speaking on public perception, she said it would be unrealistic to ignore the fragility

of public confidence in judicial institutions, especially given the strategic and sensitive jurisdiction of the Federal High Court.

"Restoring confidence is not achieved by rhetoric, but by reliability, professionalism and visible order in the administration of justice," she said.

Scavenger arraigned for allegedly stealing wire valued N850,000**IBADAN**

A 20-year-old scavenger, Mudashiru Jamilu, on Tuesday appeared before an Iyaganku Chief Magistrates' Court, Ibadan, for allegedly stealing electrical wire valued at N850,000.

The defendant, whose address was not stated, is standing trial on a two-count charge of conspiracy and stealing.

An interpreter explained the charge to the defendant, who could not speak English.

The defendant, however, pleaded not guilty to the charge.

The prosecutor, Inspector Sikiru Opaleye, alleged that the defendant conspired with another person now at large

to commit the offence between December 1 and 12

He alleged that the defendant stole conduit electrical wire valued at N850,000 belonging to Mr Adebayo Oseni from the complainant's house.

The prosecutor said the defendant was eventually arrested following police investigations.

He said the offence contravened Sections 390 and 516 of the Criminal Law of Oyo State, 2000.

The Chief Magistrate, Mrs Olabisi Ogunkanmi, granted the defendant bail in the sum of N400,000, with two sureties in like sum.

Ogunkanmi ordered that one of the sureties must be a blood relation of the defendant.

Man, 42, docked over alleged defamation of sister-in-law**IBADAN**

A 42-year-old man, Heshili Segun, on Tuesday appeared before an Iyaganku Chief Magistrates' Court in Ibadan for allegedly defaming his sister-in-law by accusing her of killing his wife.

The defendant, whose address was not provided, was charged with defamation and breach of peace, to which he pleaded not guilty.

The prosecutor, Sergeant Akeem Akinloye, told the court that sometime in November at about 10.00 p.m., the defendant defamed his

sister-in-law, Ms Abosede Abiodun, during a live broadcast on Agidigbo FM at the General Gas area of Ibadan.

Akinloye alleged that the defendant wrongfully accused Abiodun of killing his late wife, Mrs Olukemi Heshili, and stealing his three children.

He further alleged that the defendant conducted himself in a manner likely to cause a breach of peace by making the defamatory statements during the live broadcast.

The prosecutor said the offences contravened Sections 249 and 375 of the Criminal Code Laws of Oyo State, 2000.

Bauchi gov mourns former CJN Tanko Muhammad**BAUCHI**

Governor Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State on Tuesday expressed sadness over the death of former Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Muhammad Tanko, aged 72.

This was contained in a statement by Mr Mukhtar Gidado, Special Adviser to the Governor on Media and Publicity, made available to newsmen in Bauchi.

The former Chief Justice of Nigeria was said to have died in a Saudi Arabian hospital after a prolonged illness.

The governor described the late Tanko as a man of integrity and steadfastness who was committed to the rule of law.

He described him as a ven-

erable jurist whose life and career exemplified dedication to duty and integrity in service.

Mohammed said the late jurist rose through the legal profession with diligence and distinction.

He added that during his illustrious career, Justice Tanko was widely respected for his legal acumen, discipline and contributions to the development of Nigeria's judicial system.

"His elevation to the national honour of Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger was a testimony to his impactful service to the nation.

"His passing is a significant loss not only to Bauchi State but to the Nigerian judiciary and the rule of law," he said.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:**

Health workers attending to members of the Nigerian Institution of Surveyors and the general public, during the institution's Community Service Relations programme to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the institution in Lagos on Tuesday.

Two men arraigned for allegedly stealing cows worth N2.4m**IBADAN**

The police on Tuesday dragged two men before an Iyaganku Magistrates' Court in Ibadan for allegedly stealing two cows valued at N2.4 million.

The defendants, Senyo Buba, 27, and Garuba Sanda, 23, are standing trial on charges bordering on conspiracy and stealing.

They both pleaded guilty to the charges.

The Magistrate, Mrs Oluwabusayo Osho, consequent-

ly ordered the remand of the defendants at the Agodi Correctional Centre, pending a review of facts.

She adjourned the case until December 22 for review of facts and judgment.

Earlier, the prosecutor, Inspector Adeshina Folaranmi, told the court that the defendants committed the offences

on December 5, between the hours of 1.25 a.m. and 5.40 a.m. at Moniya, Ibadan.

He alleged that the defendants stole two cows worth N2.4 million belonging to a cattle rearer, Mr Abubakar Sodiq.

He said the offence contravened Sections 390(9) and 516 of the Criminal Law of Oyo State, 2000.

RECONCILIATION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **PAMAH CHUKWUYEM** and **PAMAH CHUKS CHUKWUYEM** are one and the same person. Henceforth, I now wish to be known as **PAMAH CHUKS CHUKWUYEM**. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

ADDITION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **OHIOLEI ODION** and **OHIOLEI ROSEMARY ODION** are one and the same person. Henceforth, I now wish to be known as **OHIOLEI ROSEMARY ODION**. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

MISSING DOCUMENTS

The general public is hereby notified that the **Title Documents to No. 13 New Motor Spare Parts Road, Evbareke Quarters, Benin City, Edo State** have been reported missing.

The missing **Title Documents** include **Oba's Approval, Deed of Transfer** which has Two units of three bedroom flat, belongs to **OSAIGBOVO EBUN-IGBEARE**. All efforts to trace the documents proved abortive.

Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

Signed: **L.E AMAGOGO ESQ**
For: **L. E. Amagogo & Co.**
08034925968

Man, 46, docked over alleged N3m visa fraud**IBADAN**

A 46-year-old man, Adesola Adedeji, was on Tuesday arraigned before an Iyaganku Magistrates' Court, Ibadan, over an alleged N3 million visa fraud.

Adedeji, whose address was not provided, is being charged with stealing and obtaining money under false pretence, to which he pleaded not guilty.

The prosecutor, Assistant Superintendent of Police Musbau Lawal, told the court that the defendant committed the offence at about 4.00 p.m. on January 25 at Oluyole Estate, Ibadan.

Lawal alleged that the defendant obtained the money from the complainant, Damilola Ademola, on the pretext of procuring a Luxemburg visa for her.

He said the defendant, who could not procure the visa, converted the money to his personal use.

The prosecutor said the offence contravened Sections 419 and 390(9) of the Criminal Laws of Oyo State, 2000.

The Magistrate, Mr Olaolu Olanipekun, granted the defendant bail in the sum of N1 million, with one reliable surety in like sum.

He adjourned the case until February 2, 2026, for hearing.

NEWS

Foreign

Eight killed in latest strikes on alleged drug boats, US military says

The US military says it has carried out strikes on three boats it has accused of trafficking drugs in the Pacific Ocean, killing eight people.

The US Southern Command posted footage of the strikes on social media and said the vessels were "transiting along known narco-trafficking routes... and were engaged in narco-trafficking".

More than 20 vessels in the

Pacific and the Caribbean have been targeted in recent months, killing at least 90 people, as part of President Donald Trump's escalating campaign against gangs he accuses of transporting drugs in the region.

Some experts say the strikes could violate laws governing armed conflict.

The first attack by the US - on 2 September - has drawn particular scrutiny as there was not one but two strikes, with

survivors of the first killed in the second.

Several legal experts have told BBC Verify that the second strike on the alleged Venezuelan drug boat by the US military was probably illegal, and would likely be considered an extrajudicial killing under international law.

Previously, a former chief prosecutor at the International Criminal Court told the BBC that the US military campaign

more broadly had fallen into the category of a planned, systematic attack against civilians during peacetime.

In response, the White House said it had acted in line with the laws of armed conflict to protect the US from cartels "trying to bring poison to our shores... destroying American lives".

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth is expected on Tuesday to brief members of both

chambers of Congress alongside Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

Politico reported that the officials were set to show video of the controversial "double-tap" incident to all members of the armed services committees of both the House and Senate later this week. Hegseth has faced pressure to make the footage public.

In recent months, the Trump administration has accused

Venezuela of funnelling narcotics into the US and has intensified its efforts to isolate President Nicolás Maduro.

He has designated two Venezuelan criminal groups - Tren de Aragua and Cartel de los Soles - as foreign terrorist organisations.

Thousands of troops and the USS Gerald Ford, the world's largest aircraft carrier, have been positioned within striking distance of Venezuela.



ELECTRICITY SUPPLIED:

Across Ukraine electricity is being rationed – with supplies turned on for a few hours each day.

Ukraine struggling to keep lights on under Russian attack, says energy boss

Ukraine's biggest private energy provider is living in permanent crisis mode because of Russian attacks on the grid, its chief executive has told the BBC.

Most of Ukraine is suffering from lengthy power cuts as temperatures drop and Maxim Timchenko, whose company DTEK provides power for 5.6 million Ukrainians, says the intensity of strikes has been so frequent "we just don't have time to recover".

President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Tuesday that Russia knew the winter cold could become one of its most dangerous weapons.

"Every night Ukrainian parents hold their children in basements and shelters hoping our air defence will hold," he told the Dutch parliament.

As the fourth anniversary

of Russia's full scale invasion approaches, Maxim Timchenko says Russia has repeatedly targeted DTEK's energy grid with "waves of drones, cruise and ballistic missiles" and his company has found it difficult to cope.

Tens of thousands of people in the southern city of Odesa have been without electricity for three days this week, following a co-ordinated Russian attack.

"Life has been difficult, but people are very supportive of each other," says Yana, who is among those lucky enough still to have power. She has invited friends to her home to charge their phones.

Power outages also cut off heat and water supplies and Yana says those still connected to the grid have offered strangers the chance to wash or

take a shower.

Across Ukraine electricity is being rationed – with supplies turned on for a few hours each day.

Many Ukrainians rely on power banks and generators as a back-up, and the sound of generators in the capital is now more constant than the air raid warnings.

Kyiv resident Tetiana says the first thing she does in the morning is to check her phone to find out the daily schedule for when her power will be switched on. Like many she has invested in power banks to make life more bearable:

"You need to remember when you leave home to leave the powerbanks on so that you have them charged when you get back home."

About 50% of Ukraine's energy is currently supplied

by three large nuclear power plants in central and western Ukraine. But the network that transfers that power has been severely damaged.

DTEK runs about 5 power stations, most of them fuelled by coal.

One was recently targeted by five ballistic missiles and Mr Timchenko said some of their power plants and sub stations had been attacked "every three or four days".

"I don't remember a single day when I had no reports about some damage to our grid."

Finding spare parts to repair damaged equipment has become a significant challenge.

The energy provider used to be able to source equipment from within Ukraine, but now it has to scour the rest of Europe for replacement parts.

French court sentences ex-DR Congo rebel and politician to 30 years in jail

A French court has sentenced a former rebel leader and politician from the Democratic Republic of Congo to 30 years in jail after finding him guilty of complicity in crimes against humanity more than two decades ago.

Roger Lumbala headed a rebel movement backed by neighbouring Uganda accused of committing atrocities during a period known as the Second Congo War.

The judge said the 67-year-old was found guilty of ordering or aiding and abetting torture and inhumane crimes, summary executions, rape constituting torture, sexual slavery, forced labour and theft.

Lumbala, who was living in France when he was arrested nearly five years ago, has refused to accept the legitimacy of the court in Paris.

He did not attend the trial, which began last month, though he was in the dock to hear the verdict on Monday.

Lumbala also served as a minister in DR Congo's transitional government from 2003 to 2005 and later as a member of parliament.

Several years later the Congolese government issued an arrest warrant for him over his alleged support for the M23, a rebel group currently active in the eastern DR Congo, prompting him to flee to France.

The Second Congo War, which raged from 1998-2003, involved nine countries, numerous rebel groups and led to the estimated deaths of between two and five million people.

At the time Lumbala led the Rally of Congolese Democrats and Nationalists (RCD-N), which allegedly carried out atrocities during a campaign between 2002 and 2003 called "Erase the Slate".

The operation targeted mem-

bers of the Nande and Bambuti ethnic groups in the north-eastern provinces of Ituri and North Kivu who were accused of supporting a rival militia.

A UN team that investigated in its aftermath said it was characterised by "premeditated operations using looting, rape and summary execution as tools of warfare".

Lumbala's case was prosecuted under the principle of "universal jurisdiction", which allows French courts to seek justice related to crimes against humanity committed abroad.

Five non-governmental organisations, including Trial International and the Clooney Foundation for Justice, pooled their expertise to participate in the trial, helping support survivors to testify and requesting expert analyses.

Trial International, a Geneva-based justice campaign group, said 65 survivors, witnesses and experts testified before the court about the Erase the Slate operation.

After the verdict, it issued a statement from two of the survivors - David Karamay Kasereka and Pisco Sirikivuya Paluku.

"We were scared but came all the way here because the truth matters. For years, no one heard us," they said.

"We would have preferred to face Roger Lumbala, to look him in the eyes. But this verdict marks a first step toward reclaiming pieces of ourselves that were taken from us."

During the trial Mr Kasereka, 41, described how his father and neighbours were tortured killed by Lumbala's men, the AP news agency reports.

Mr Paluku, who is a now 50-year-old nurse, told of how the rebels robbed and injured him, killed his uncle and raped his friend's wife, the AFP news agency says.

'Best of our country': Australian PM visits Bondi hero in hospital

Australia's Prime Minister has visited Bondi hero Ahmed al Ahmed in hospital, after the bystander tried to disarm one of the gunmen in the nation's deadliest gun attack since 1996.

"Your heart is strong", PM Anthony Albanese told the father-of-two, later calling him

"the best of our country".

The fruit shop owner, who was born and raised in Syria, was shot several times in the shoulder after tackling one of the alleged gunmen. Albanese said Mr Ahmed would "undergo further surgery" on Wednesday.

At least 15 people have been confirmed dead after Sunday's at-

tack in Sydney during an event to mark the first night of Hanukkah.

Police have declared the attack as a terrorist incident targeting the Jewish community.

"He was trying to get a cup of coffee and found himself at a moment where people were being shot in front of him," Albanese said after the bedside visit.

"He decided to take action, and his bravery is an inspiration for all Australians. He is a very humble man."

"At a moment where we have seen evil perpetrated, he shines out as an example of the strength of humanity," the prime minister added.

"We are a brave country.

Ahmed al Ahmed represents the best of our country."

He later added: "Ahmed, you are an Australian hero."

There has been nationwide support for the 43-year-old including from US President Donald Trump who commended his courage, and a US billionaire who donated \$99,999 (US\$

65,000; £49,000) to Mr Ahmed, calling him a "brave hero".

In the footage, Mr Ahmed is seen hiding behind a parked car before he leaps out.

He runs at the alleged gunman and seizes his weapon, before turning the gun round on him. The suspected attacker then begins to retreat.

Foreign**NEWS****30 people jailed in Benin in connection with failed coup**

Some 30 people, most of them soldiers, have been jailed in Benin in connection with a failed coup attempt earlier this month, French news agency AFP is reporting.

The soldiers took over state television on 7 December and announced that the government had been dissolved. But their takeover bid was thwarted by loyalists in the military, backed by airstrikes and military assistance from Nigeria and other West African allies. France also provided logistical support.

The accused were jailed on Tuesday, AFP said, following

a pre-trial hearing. They are charged with treason, murder and endangering state security.

Lt. Col. Pascal Tigri, who reportedly led the coup, is still on the run. Beninese officials claim that he fled to Lomé, the capital of Togo. Cotonou has reportedly asked that Togo extradite him and other fugitive soldiers.

The rebel soldiers accused President Talon of mishandling the security situation in northern Benin and criticised cuts to health care and other public services. They also accused him of clamping down on political activities.



RIYADH MEETING:

Sudan's military chief Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan due in Riyadh for a meeting with Saudi Crown Prince.

Sudan's transitional leader al-Burhan holds talks with Saudi Crown Prince in Riyadh

The president of Sudan's transitional sovereignty council, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, arrived in Riyadh on Monday for talks with Saudi officials.

Saudi Arabia is part of the so-called Quad that includes the US, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates. The four nations have been working to reach a peace deal in Sudan between the armed forces, led by Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

Burhan's one day visit to Riyadh was spent in talks with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

According to the Saudi Press Agency, the two leaders reviewed the situation in Su-

dan, its regional implications, and ongoing efforts to achieve security and stability in the war-torn country.

Sudanese officials said it was a "successful, friendly" meeting centered on establishing stronger bilateral relations. At the heart of the relationship lies the Saudi-Sudanese Coordination Council, which was established in October.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed and millions displaced since fighting erupted in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the RSF. The war has created what the United Nations has described it as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.

Gunmen kidnap 13 worshippers in Kogi state, Nigeria

At least 13 people were abducted after armed men attacked Evangelical Church Winning All in Aaaaz-Kiri, a rural community in Nigeria's central Kogi state, during Sunday morning service. Witnesses said the gunmen opened fire before taking congregants.

Kogi's information commissioner, Kingsley Fanwo, said five attackers were killed, while others escaped injured. Officials describe the assailants as "bandits," criminal gangs known for kidnappings

for ransom.

This is the second church attack in two weeks in Kogi. Earlier, gunmen raided a church in Ejiba, kidnapping a pastor, his wife, and several members, who are still held.

Fanwo said military operations in neighboring states are pushing bandits toward Kogi. Recent attacks reflect growing insecurity in Nigeria's central and north-western regions, despite government efforts to deploy troops and police to high-risk areas.

Sudan's RSF trying to cover up mass killings in el-Fasher, researchers say

Sudan's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has been trying to cover up mass killings in the city of el-Fasher by burying and burning bodies, a research team from Yale University says.

The RSF had drawn international condemnation amid reports of executions and crimes against humanity when its fighters captured the city in October.

Now, analysis of satellite images by Yale's Humanitarian Research Lab (HRL) shows the RSF likely disposed of tens of thousands of bodies after seizing el-Fasher.

The RSF has not responded to the report, but its leader previously admitted his fighters had committed some violations in the city.

The HRL's report said the RSF "engaged in a systematic multi-week campaign to destroy evidence of its widespread mass killings" and "this pattern of body disposal and destruction is ongoing."

The paramilitary group has been fighting Sudan's regular army since April 2023, when a power struggle between the two parties erupted into a brutal civil war.

The United Nations (UN) has described the conflict as the world's worst humanitari-

an disaster.

After 18 months of besieging el-Fasher, the RSF captured the city - a major victory pushing the army out of its last foothold in the vast Darfur region.

The UN was among the many global voices accusing the RSF of massacring civilians as el-Fasher fell.

The HRL has been monitoring the situation in the city for months, and its latest report is part of efforts to understand the extent of the violence suffered by the city's residents.

Fresh analysis of satellite imagery found clusters in multiple locations changing in size in the weeks after el-Fasher fell, the HRL says, adding that this demonstrates continued efforts by the RSF to clean up evidence of massacres.

The images also show more than 80 clusters located outside of the city, which, the HRL says, shows that the RSF was killing people as they tried to flee.

Satellite evidence from November suggests limited civilian activity in the city since it was seized, the researchers say.

Following an international backlash, RSF leader Gen Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo declared an investigation into what he called violations committed by his soldiers during the capture of el-Fasher.

However, the group continued to deny widespread allegations that killings in the city are ethnically motivated and follow a pattern of the Arab paramilitaries targeting non-Arab populations.

The latest HRL report fol-

lows warnings from aid agencies about the low number of civilians who managed to successfully flee el-Fasher after the RSF seizure.

The UN estimates roughly 250,000 people were still trapped in the city, with less than half of that number thought to have arrived in external camps for displaced people.

The RSF has used the seizure of el-Fasher to consolidate its power in western Sudan, and has established a parallel government in Darfur's city of Nyala.

Sudan's army still controls most of the country, with fighting between the two groups rumbling on.

More than 13m people are believed to have been displaced since the war began in April 2023.

**South Sudan grounds UN aircraft and alleges illegal surveillance and smuggling**

South Sudan's government has grounded four aircraft registered under the United Nations mission there, alleging that they were used for illegal surveillance and smuggling, which the U.N. denied.

South Sudan's foreign minister, Monday Semaya Kumba, said a government committee was examining the aircraft after intelligence reports raised security concerns, and two were found with advanced

surveillance and intelligence recording systems.

U.N. mission spokesperson Priyanka Chowdhury said Monday that all air assets are used "solely in support of our mandate to help protect civilians and support lasting peace in South Sudan."

She said the U.N. mission has been talking with South Sudan's government "for a while now to resolve this issue" and said the mission works transparently with it on

U.N. operations.

South Sudan's government in 2017 grounded U.N. aircraft after peacekeepers were deployed to guard the country's main airport. The government said that was not part of their mandate.

More than 70% of South Sudan's 11 million people rely on humanitarian assistance for food, healthcare and other basics, according to the U.N., whose mandate includes helping to deliver aid.

FOR THE RECORD

Governor Okpebholo present the 2026 Budget Estimates to the Speaker and the Honourable Members

The Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly,
Honourable Members,
Members of the State Executive Council,
Traditional Rulers,
Civil Society Representatives,
Members of the Press,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to the Speaker and all Members of this Honourable House for the privilege to present the 2026 Budget Estimates.

Your cooperation, support and commitment to the Edo people made the success of the 2025 Budget possible. Without your partnership, we would not have achieved the progress we are celebrating today. On behalf of the State Executive Council, I thank you most sincerely.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the 2025 Budget made real impact on the lives of our people.

- It recorded strong performance in both capital and recurrent expenditure.
- Our Internally Generated Revenue in 2025 increased because we blocked leakages and strengthened collections.

We delivered significant achievements across key sectors - security, roads, health care, agriculture, education, and job creation.

Our experiences and achievements in this first one year drives this 2026 Budget.

On Security: We are determined that Edo will no longer be a safe place for criminals.

- Insecurity was at its worst state when we assumed office. Cult killings, kidnapping, robbery, and cybercrime were very high.
- Over 300 cult-related killings were recorded in 2024 alone.
- We passed a stronger anti-cultism law.
- Supplied 80 Hilux vans and 400 motorcycles to security agencies.
- Recruited, trained and absorbed 2,500 Officers into the Edo State Security Corps.

These efforts have drastically reduced insecurity across our state.

On Healthcare, We are rebuilding a collapsed system and it is being restored from ground up.

- We are currently constructing new Primary Health Centres across the State and providing diagnostic machines to these centres.
- We are building a new 150 bed Specialist Hospital in Edo Central.

On Infrastructure: Our administration is executing Practical Governance through massive intervention.

- We awarded 28 new road projects totalling 255 km.
- Construction of 2 new flyovers in Benin City, for the first time in the history of Edo State, at Ramat Park and Sapele Road by Adesuwa Junction.
- We are also constructing roads that connect communities.

ON AGRICULTURE

- With the encouragement of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, we expanded the agriculture budget from N 6,900,000,000.00 to N57,000,000,000.00.
 - Over 400 hectares of farmland have been cultivated.
 - Harvesting has begun across multiple farm clusters.
- We are fighting food insecurity with action, and not long speeches.

On Education, Our goal is quality education for every Edo child and we are Building the Future of Our Children at all levels.

- We recruited 5,000 permanent teachers.
- We upgraded 63 schools to modern standards and more are on-going.
- We increased monthly subvention to Ambrose Alli University from N41,000,000.00 to N500,000,000.00. Also, we increased the Edo



PRESENTATION OF THE 2026 BUDGET:

Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State (middle) flanked by the Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Hon. Blessing Agbebaku (right) and the Clerk of the House, Alhaji Yahaya Omogbai during the presentation of the 2026 Budget and Appropriation Bill to the State legislators in Benin City yesterday.

State University, Iyamoh subvention from N25,000,000.00 to N250,000,000.00 monthly.

On Economic & Job creation, we are repositioning our state for greatness and Supporting Families and Businesses to thrive.

- Our administration inherited foreign debt, local debts owed to contractors and we are gradually reducing this burden.
- We have created over 10,000 direct and indirect jobs.

We launched N1,000,000,000.00 naira interest-free loan scheme for Market women and traders.

On Governance & Institutions, we have Restored public Trust and our democracy has become more participatory.

- At the beginning of our administration, we swore in 3 judges who were illegally sidelined by the previous administration.
- We are re-establishing the Customary Court in Edo to strengthen our judiciary.
- We have strengthened traditional institutions and rebuilt relationships across government levels.

Our governance is now more stable, cooperative, and people-focused.

2026 BUDGET

Today, I stand before you to present the 2026 Budget of Hope and Growth. It is so called because it seeks to consolidate on the gains recorded during my first year in Office, expand our reach, and restore the hope of Edo people in governance.

The 2026 Budget of Hope and Growth is designed to build on the foundation we laid in 2025. It is a budget that speaks to the needs of our people. It focuses on security, infrastructure, agriculture, education, job creation and healthcare.

For the 2026 fiscal year, the Budget of Hope and Growth propose a total expenditure of N939,850,000,000.00 naira only.

- Capital Expenditure: N637 billion, representing 68%
- Recurrent Expenditure: N302 billion, representing 32%

Edo State will continue to prioritize capital projects such as roads, schools, hospitals, water, housing, and economic projects. Our people want real development they can see and feel.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

The 2026 Budget will be funded through:

- Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) of N160,000,000,000.00
 - FAAC allocations of N480,000,000,000.00
 - Capital receipts and grants of N153,000,000,000.00
 - Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) of N146,000,000,000.00
 - Other revenue windows available to the state
- We will not impose unnecessary financial pressure on citizens. Instead, we will strengthen systems and block leakages.

SECTORAL ALLOCATIONS ECONOMIC SECTOR

A total of N 614.2 billion is provided for.

This includes expenditures on agriculture, roads, transport, urban development, and energy.

Priority areas:

- Rural and urban road construction
- Completion of the two flyovers works and urban renewal
- Expansion of farm estates and irrigation
 - Support for markets, small businesses, and industrial clusters

SOCIAL SECTOR

N148.9 billion has been set aside to cater for education, health, youth development, women affairs, and social welfare.

Highlights:

- More school renovations
- More teacher's recruitment and training
- Expansion of primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare facilities
- Investment in youth skills, sports, and entrepreneurship programs
- Support for women, children and vulnerable groups

ADMINISTRATION SECTOR

We are providing N157.7 billion for this sector.

Highlights:

- This includes Civil Service Reforms
- Training and digital tools for all state employees
- Improved public finance systems and revenue collections
- Support to Ministries, Departments and Agencies

- Deployment of e-governance systems

JUSTICE SECTOR

We have set aside the sum of N19 billion.

- This includes support and strengthening of our courts for effective delivery of justice
- Legal reforms and access-to-justice programs

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT / LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Our focus would include:

- Empowerment of our Local Government Councils for grassroots development
- Community roads development
- Rural electrification
- Water and sanitation
- Security outposts in border communities

The 2026 Budget of Hope and Growth is built on our SHINE Agenda, which has five pillars, namely, Security, Health, Infrastructure, Natural Resources/Agriculture, and Education.

The vision of the 2026 Budget of Hope and Growth is simple; it is to bring about prosperity and a united Edo State where every citizen has hope and every community feels the impact of governance.

- I thank our father and leader, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, for his consistent encouragement and national reforms that has increased revenue flows to all states.
- I'm also grateful to the Speaker and Members of this House for your teamwork and patriotism
- I thank our traditional rulers and all men and women of faith for their prayers and guidance
- I sincerely appreciate my political appointees and our civil servants for their support and dedication to work

Mr. Speaker and Honourable members, it is now my pleasure and honour to present to you, the Edo State 2026 Appropriation Bill of N939,850,000,000.00 and details of the Budget proposals for your consideration and approval.

Thank you for your kind attention.

God bless Edo State.
God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Thank you.

FEATURES



Squaring up with Nigeria's economic woes and the market economy syndrome

ANGELA AMEH

Nigeria's economic challenges are multifaceted, but there are steps being taken to address them. The government has implemented reforms to stabilize the economy, including removing fuel subsidies, liberalizing the foreign exchange market, and strengthening revenue administration.

To surmount these challenges, Nigeria should focus on:

- Diversifying the economy*: Reducing dependence on oil exports and promoting non-oil sectors like agriculture and manufacturing.

- Improving infrastructure*: Investing in power supply, transportation, and digital infrastructure to boost productivity.

- Enhancing governance*: Strengthening institutions, reducing corruption, and promoting transparency.

- Increasing revenue mobilization: Implementing tax reforms, improving tax administration, and reducing tax evasion.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) recommends a neutral fiscal stance in 2025, prioritizing growth-enhancing investments and supporting vulnerable households¹.

Experts suggest that Nigeria can unleash its economic potential by:

- Increasing revenues through tax reforms

- Establishing an effective budget framework

- Scaling up cash transfer systems to support the poor

ENTER MARKET ECONOMY!

A market economy is an economic

system where private individuals and businesses own the means of production, and the government plays a limited role. Key characteristics include:

- Private ownership*: Individuals and businesses own resources and assets.

- Free market exchange*: Prices are determined by supply and demand.

- Competition*: Businesses compete for customers and resources.

- Limited government intervention*: Government regulates markets, but doesn't control them.

BENEFITS:

- Efficient allocation of resources*: Markets allocate resources based on demand and supply.

- Innovation and growth*: Competition drives innovation and economic growth.

- Increased consumer choice*: Businesses respond to consumer preferences.

CHALLENGES:

- Income inequality*: Markets can exacerbate income inequality.

- Market failures*: Externalities, monopolies, and information asymmetry can lead to market failures.

Nigeria, like many countries, has a mixed economy with elements of market and government intervention.

Would you like to know more about market economies or Nigeria's specific economic system?

IS MARKET ECONOMY GOOD FOR Nigeria?

A market economy can be beneficial for Nigeria, but its success depends on various factors. Here are some points to consider:

BENEFITS

1. Economic growth*: A market economy can drive growth, innovation, and job creation.

2. Increased competition*: Competition can improve productivity and efficiency.

3. Foreign investment*: A market-friendly environment can attract foreign investment.

CHALLENGES

1. Income inequality*: Nigeria's market economy may exacerbate income inequality.

2. Infrastructure gaps*: Inadequate infrastructure can hinder market development.

3. Regulatory framework*: Weak regulations can lead to market failures.

LET'S HAVE SOME KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Institutional strength*: Strong institutions are crucial for a successful market economy.

2. Regulatory oversight*: Effective regulation can mitigate market risks.

3. Inclusive growth*: Policies should promote inclusive growth and reduce poverty.

Nigeria's market economy has potential, but careful management and regulation are necessary to address challenges and ensure benefits are shared equitably.

DEALING WITH THE FEAR OF

MONOPOLY

The fear of monopoly is a significant concern in Nigeria's market economy. A monopoly can stifle competition, limit consumer choice, and lead to price gifting. To mitigate this risk, Nigeria can implement policies promoting competition and regulating monopolies.

Anti-Monopoly Measures

1. Competition laws*: Enforce laws preventing anti-competitive practices.

2. Regulatory bodies*: Strengthen regulatory agencies to monitor markets.

3. Encourage entrepreneurship*: Support SMEs and startups to foster competition.

BENEFITS OF COMPETITION

1. Innovation*: Competition drives innovation and better services.

2. Lower prices*: Competitive markets lead to lower prices and improved quality.

3. Increased consumer choice*: Consumers benefit from diverse products and services.

CHALLENGES

1. Enforcement*: Effective enforcement of competition laws is crucial.

2. Market dominance*: Dominant firms can influence market outcomes.

3. *Regulatory capture*: Regulators may be influenced by powerful interests.

By promoting competition and regulating monopolies, Nigeria can

create a more dynamic and inclusive market economy.

THE DANGOTE FACTOR IN A MARKET ECONOMY

The Dangote Factor refers to the significant impact of Dangote Group, led by Aliko Dangote, on Nigeria's market economy. The group has been instrumental in driving economic growth, innovation, and job creation in various sectors, including cement, oil refining, and logistics.

Dangote Group's success can be attributed to its strategic approach, including vertical integration, economies of scale, and investment in local capacity. The company's cement business, for instance, has enabled Nigeria to transition from an importer to an exporter of cement, with a production capacity of 48 million tonnes serving a 22-million-tonne market.

The group's \$19 billion refinery is expected to save Nigeria \$10 billion annually in import bills and stabilize the naira by reducing dollar demand for refined petroleum. Dangote's business model emphasizes self-sufficiency, investing in power plants, logistics, and raw material extraction to mitigate infrastructure gaps and policy inconsistencies.

Dangote Group's influence extends beyond its business operations, with the company advocating for policies promoting transparency, accountability, and fair competition. The group's listing on the Nigerian Exchange (NGX) has also deepened market liquidity and boosted investor confidence.

Nigeria's business environment?

FEATURE

The rise of the orphaned, underprivileged child

GODSPOWER EGUASA

● *an impact-driven session with Kate Okunrobo Odianese*

In contemporary society, it is widely accepted that a child's journey towards a future of purpose, leadership and fulfilment begins with a sound mindset and healthy emotional development. Such growth, however, does not occur in isolation. It requires the deliberate and sustained involvement of parents, guardians, caregivers and other critical stakeholders within the child-care system.

This shared responsibility calls for an unwavering commitment to nurturing love, warmth and emotional security, ensuring that every child develops a genuine sense of belonging within a supportive community.

The founder of God's Grace Orphanage and Motherless Babies Home, Mrs. Kate Okunrobo Odianese, underscored this reality during a recent knowledge-sharing session with members of the media. She stressed that the emotional well-being of orphans and vulnerable children, as well as the environment in which they are raised, plays a decisive role in shaping their identity, confidence and sense of social belonging.

clear vision to nurture leadership potential in every underprivileged child under its care.

"The orphanage was envisioned as a place where hope is restored, opportunities are revealed, and children are empowered to grow into the men and women God has designed them to be," she said.

Reflecting on the significance of comprehensive care, Okunrobo cited the words of former United States President, John F. Kennedy: "Victory has a thousand fathers, but defeat is an orphan." She noted that the quote highlights the urgency of providing not only quality physical care, but also strong psychosocial support for vulnerable children.

Drawing from practical experience at God's Grace Orphanage, Okunrobo observed that orphans and underprivileged children develop self-identity and self-awareness at varying stages. This process, she noted, is strongly influenced by the consistency of care, emotional warmth and stability provided within the home. She added that much of the progress recorded at the orphanage is attributable to the selfless contributions of partners and supporters

who remain committed to mentoring and nurturing the children.

The impact of these efforts has continued into 2025, with notable academic and personal achievements. According to Okunrobo, two children recently graduated from Senior Secondary School and successfully passed the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) examination in a single sitting. One of them has since secured admission into the University of Benin (UNIBEN), Benin City. Beyond academics, several children have also excelled in craft and skill-acquisition programmes—initiatives that have significantly boosted their confidence, creativity and self-esteem.

As the generosity and commitment of compassionate partners continue to transform the lives of underprivileged children, within Edo State, across Nigeria and beyond, God's Grace Orphanage and Motherless Babies Home remains resolute in its mission. The goal, Okunrobo affirmed, is to ensure that every child grows up surrounded by love, dignity and confidence, free from a sense of disadvantage and equipped with a firm belief in a hopeful and promising future.



The politicians too are under siege

OTONO MOMODU

The essay that follows takes as its thematic compass the assertion that "politicians too are under siege," a phrase I deliberately chose as a sub-editor and journalism teacher in the Department of Mass Communication, where I am responsible for the copy-editing course. The choice is neither accidental nor ornamental; it springs from professional observation and civic concern, urging us to examine the shifting dynamics of power in contemporary governance.

In the grand theatre of modern politics, the long-standing myth of politicians as untouchable demigods is steadily disintegrating. The once-impregnable aura of political authority has thinned, and the ramparts that once insulated public office holders from public judgment have collapsed under the weight of transparency, accountability, and popular awakening.

Today, politicians are no longer

distant figures enthroned beyond reproach; they stand exposed beneath the relentless glare of public scrutiny. The era in which authority reclined comfortably behind fortified walls of office has yielded to a new order where accountability storms every gate.

Governance has become a contested space where authority is constantly interrogated, and leadership is measured not by privilege but by responsibility. In this evolving dispensation, power oscillates precariously between sacred trust and crushing burden.

Indeed, in the theatre of modern governance—where power is both a privilege and a burden—the age-old narrative of politicians as untouchable demigods continues to crumble. Not only the governed but the governors themselves now stand under an unrelenting siege—scrutinised, challenged, and weighed on the unforgiving scales of public conscience.

This siege is waged not with swords or cannons, but with the sharp arrows of public opinion, amplified by

the omnipresent megaphone of social media. In this digital coliseum, every action—or inaction—of political office holders is laid bare.

Decisions once buried in bureaucratic silence are now dragged into the open and subjected to instant judgment. The politician, once distant and aloof, has been hauled into the marketplace of ideas, where excuses perish and only responsibility survives.

The pressure is further intensified by economic hardship and deepening social discontent. In a season when citizens groan under unpaid salaries, swelling arrears, and a harsh economic climate, the ostentatious deployment of public resources becomes a provocation rather than a privilege.

It is within this troubling context that public discourse has been awash with concerns surrounding the Chairman of Etsako West Local Government Area, Hon. Valentine Okwilagwe, over the lingering issue of non-payment of staff arrears. Such developments pierce the sensibility of

any conscientious society, for governance forfeits its moral authority when those who sustain the system are neglected.

Leadership, particularly at the grassroots, demands more than ceremonial visibility; it requires empathy, transparency, and the courage to engage. Even at personal inconvenience, leaders must remain present to explain, to listen, and to reassure both staff and electorate.

In moments of collective hardship, silence is often interpreted as indifference,

and distance as disdain. Thus, the siege tightens—not out of hostility, but out of wounded trust.

Yet, this siege is not solely punitive; it is also redemptive. It beckons politicians back to the sacred essence of leadership: service. True leadership is not enthronement above the people, but sacrifice among them. A leader who confronts challenges openly, prioritises welfare over flamboyance, and governs with humility can transform siege into solidarity.

Politicians are human, navigating complex systems, institutional bottlenecks, and inherited constraints. Nevertheless, public office magnifies both virtue and failure. The higher the pedestal, the louder the echo of disappointment when trust is betrayed.

In summation, politicians today are indeed under siege—but it is a siege of conscience, accountability, and public expectation. It is the people's peaceful resistance against neglect and misgovernance. Those who heed this call will emerge as statesmen, etched into history with dignity; those who ignore it will discover that no title, no convoy, and no office is fortified enough to withstand the persistent knock of an awakened populace.


For in this age, power no longer shields the politician from scrutiny; rather, it summons it. Let the electorate shun petty demands of ephemeral enjoyment and instead embrace the discipline required for enduring legacies of development—both in infrastructure and human capital—as exemplified by Chief Obafemi Awolowo during his tenure as Premier of the defunct Western Region.

• Mr. Otono Momodu is a Lecturer in the Department of Mass Communication, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi.



The protesters

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In a season when citizens groan under unpaid salaries, swelling arrears, and a harsh economic climate, the ostentatious deployment of public resources becomes a provocation rather than a privilege.

 <p>The Nigerian Observer ...That the people may know</p>	<h2 style="margin:0;">ADVERTISEMENT RATES (PRINT)</h2>
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FULL PAGE	517,344	556,145	369,500	397,213	325,150	349,536	665,156	715,043	443,440	476,698
13 X 4	369,500	397,213	295,600	317,770	206,938	222,458	443,500	476,763	369,550	397,266
10 X 4	340,000	365,500	273,500	294,013	177,400	190,705	370,000	397,750	295,600	317,770
HALF PAGE	295,600	317,770	236,500	254,238	147,800	158,885	340,000	365,500	273,450	293,959
10 X 3	221,700	238,328	147,800	158,885	118,300	127,173	266,000	285,950	251,300	270,148
13 X 2	206,900	222,418	133,000	142,925	103,500	111,263	221,800	238,435	147,810	158,896
QUARTER PAGE	192,150	206,561	118,250	127,119	88,690	95,342	236,500	254,238	133,000	142,975
CENTER SPREAD	1,356,968	1,466,992						B/W	1,148,181	1,241,276
HALF CENTER	991,590	1,071,989						B/W	887,272	959,212

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FP 6X2	89,800	96,535	105,450	113,359	6 X 2	60,640	65,188	49,140	52,826
FP 5X2	81,100	87,183	97,300	104,598	5 X 2	51,950	55,846	42,120	45,279
FP 4X2	73,000	78,475	80,700	86,753	4 X 2	45,260	48,655	34,400	36,980
FP 3X2	64,870	69,735	73,000	78,475	3 X 2	30,900	33,218	26,600	28,595
FP 2X2	59,000	63,425	64,900	69,768	2 X 2	18,680	20,081	15,600	16,770
					2 X 1	12,400	13,330	7,415	7,971
					CAC	38,000	40,850		

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SIZES	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)
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STRIP INSIDE	88,600	95,245	118,250	127,119


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EFFECTIVE FROM FEBRUARY 1, 2023

FEATURE

Gender development, equity and the SGBV menace

GRACE IJEOMA UMEH

Gender development and SGBV (Sexual and Gender-Based Violence) are closely linked in Nigeria. SGBV hinders women's empowerment and participation in economic, social, and political spheres.

ADDRESSING SGBV VIOLENCE

Nigeria needs to be adept at strengthening laws and policies, enforcing laws and policies protecting women's rights.

There are perceived gaps too in awareness and education. There is an urgent need to raise awareness about SGBV and promote gender equality.

Support services would also come handy in providing support services for SGBV survivors.

There are Gender Development Initiatives which have helped tremendously in charting way forwards in tackling SGBV cases. Among them are;

1. ***GIVE programme***: Supports vulnerable groups, including survivors of SGBV.

2. ***UNFPA-UNICEF programme***: Addresses SGBV and promotes gender equality.

3. ***NGO initiatives***: Organizations like Women Aid Collective provide support services.

MENENGAGE PROJECT

1. ***Objectives***: Engage men and boys in SGBV prevention and promote gender equality.

2. ***Activities***: Community outreach, advocacy, and capacity building.

SGBV is a significant obstacle to Nigeria's development. Addressing it requires a multi-faceted approach, including policy reforms, awareness, and support services.

Access to Justice for survivors of SGBV in Nigeria.

Access to justice for survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Nigeria is a significant challenge. Despite efforts to strengthen laws and policies, many survivors face obstacles in seeking justice, including delayed court proceedings, inadequate protection, and lack of awareness about their rights.

The Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act 2015 is a key legislation aimed at protecting survivors of SGBV. However, implementation remains a challenge, with issues such as prolonged delays in the family court system, insufficient human resources, and bureaucratic obstacles.⁸

To address these challenges, initiatives like the UNDP's Supporting Police Accountability and Transformation (SPAaT) project are working to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement agencies and improve access to justice for SGBV survivors. Additionally, organizations like the International Federation of Female Lawyers (FIDA) provide legal aid and



support services to survivors^{1 3}.

SOME NOTABLE EFFORTS INCLUDE:

- ***Training for law enforcement***: UNDP has conducted training workshops for police officers and judicial officials to improve their handling of SGBV cases.

- ***Establishment of SGBV courts***: Some states have established specialized courts to handle SGBV cases, aiming to expedite justice delivery.

- ***Support services***: Organizations like the Mirabel Centre provide medical, psychological, and legal support to SGBV survivors

- Survivors of SGBV in Nigeria face numerous challenges in accessing justice, including:

KEY CHALLENGES

1. ***Social stigma and shame***: Survivors often face stigma, shame, and blame from their communities, families, and even law enforcement agencies.

2. ***Lack of awareness about rights***: Many survivors are unaware of their rights, the laws protecting them, and the support services available.

3. ***Fear of retaliation***: Survivors may fear retaliation from perpetrators, which can prevent them from reporting incidents.

4. ***Limited access to support services***: Support services, such as medical care, counseling, and legal aid, are scarce, especially in rural areas.

5. ***Corruption and bias***: Corruption and bias within law enforcement agencies and courts can hinder access to justice.

6. ***Cultural and traditional practices***: Harmful cultural and traditional practices, such as forced marriage and female genital mutilation, can perpetuate SGBV.

7. ***Lack of trust in institutions***:

Survivors may distrust institutions, such as law enforcement and courts, due to past experiences or perceived biases.

8. ***Financial constraints***: Survivors may lack financial resources to access justice, including transportation to courts and medical facilities.

9. ***Delayed justice***: Delays in the justice system can lead to further trauma and discouragement for survivors.

10. ***Lack of data and statistics***: Inadequate data and statistics on SGBV hinder efforts to address the issue effectively.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach, including awareness-raising, capacity-building, and strengthening support services.

Would you like to explore potential solutions or discuss specific initiatives addressing these challenges?

Nigeria has several laws that protect survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). The key legislation is the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act 2015, which prohibits all forms of violence against persons, provides maximum protection and effective remedies for victims, and punishes offenders.

SOME NOTABLE PROVISIONS OF THE VAPP ACT INCLUDE:

- ***Protection Orders***: Section 28-36 provides for protection orders, which restrain perpetrators from further abusive behavior.

- ***Rape Definition***: The Act defines rape to include all non-consensual penetration, expanding the previous definition.

- ***Punishment***: The Act prescribes punishment for offenders, including imprisonment.

OTHER RELEVANT LAWS INCLUDE:

- ***Child Rights Act 2003***: Protects children's rights, including protection from sexual abuse.

- ***Criminal Code Act 2004***: Criminalizes rape and other forms of SGBV.

- ***Penal Code Act 2004***: Also criminalizes rape and other forms of SGBV.

These laws aim to provide justice and protection for SGBV survivors, but implementation and enforcement remain challenges.

What are the challenges in implementing the VAPP Act in Nigeria?

The implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act in Nigeria faces several challenges, including:

- ***Limited financial resources***: Inadequate funding hinders the effective implementation of the Act, with many organizations relying on sporadic international aid

- ***Insufficient human resources***: Shortage of personnel, including lawyers and judges, delays justice delivery.

- ***Bureaucratic obstacles***: Prolonged delays in the family court system and inadequate protection for survivors and witnesses hinder access to justice.

- ***Corruption***: Corrupt practices among law enforcement agents and judicial officials undermine the implementation of the Act.

- ***Limited awareness***: Many citizens, including survivors, are unaware of the VAPP Act and its provisions.

- ***Cultural and religious beliefs***: Harmful cultural and religious practices perpetuate SGBV and hinder implementation.

- ***Inadequate shelter and support services***: Insufficient shelter spaces and support services leave survivors vulnerable.

- ***Poor coordination***: Lack of effective coordination among stakehold-

ers hampers implementation.

It is therefore imperative to address these challenges, for effective implementation, including increased funding, capacity-building, and awareness-raising.

SGBV survivors in Nigeria can access support services through various organizations and hotlines. Here are some options:

- ***Helplines***: Call the National Gender-Based Violence Helpline on 0800404040 or the Women Safe House Helpline on 0908-569-2612 for immediate support and referrals

- ***Shelters***: Organizations like Women Safe House and Cee-Hope Nigeria provide emergency shelter and temporary accommodation for survivors.

- ***Counseling and Therapy***: Many organizations, such as the Mirabel Centre and the Bimbo Odukoya Foundation, offer counseling and therapy services.

- ***Legal Aid***: Organizations like the International Federation of Female Lawyers (FIDA) and the Women Law and Development Centre Nigeria (WLDCN) provide free legal services.

- ***Medical Services***: Some organizations, like the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH), offer medical services, including forensic examination and treatment.

Some notable organizations providing SGBV support services in Nigeria, include:

- Women Safe House
- Cee-Hope Nigeria
- Mirabel Centre
- Bimbo Odukoya Foundation
- FIDA Nigeria
- WLDCN
- Women Arise For Change Initiative
- The Women's Helping Hands Initiative (TWHHI)