

New Edo under construction, says Gov Okpebholo

● Inspects road projects across Edo South

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has declared that a “new Edo” is under construction as his administration pushes ahead with massive road and

drainage projects across the state to stimulate economic growth and improve the living conditions of residents.

The governor made the statement after an inspection tour of ongoing road and drainage projects across Edo South

Senatorial District, where he expressed satisfaction with the quality and pace of work, particularly along Sapele Road and its adjoining corridors.

Okpebholo said the Renewed Hope agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu was already

manifesting in Edo State, noting that residents were beginning to enjoy the dividends of democracy through improved infrastructure and connectivity.

Accompanied by the Special Adviser on Projects Implementation and Monitoring, Engr. Phoebe Williams-Bello, the governor

inspected projects at Egbhukhu, Amagba, Ohoghobi, Ogehe, Old Sapele Road, Sapele Road Bypass, Uhie Road, Okhabere, the flyover at Adesuwa Junction, Charismatic Renewal Road, Ugbiyoko and Oghede Upper Ekenhuan Road, among others.

He explained that his ad-

ministration had adopted unannounced inspection visits to ensure contractors comply strictly with approved designs, standards and project timelines.

“We have gone round inspecting so many projects today, and the jobs are progressing. I am very impressed with what we have seen so far,

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The Nigerian Observer



...that the people may know

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NELFUND extends student loan application deadline to Feb 27

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Lassa fever hits Edo, claims 17 lives across 8 states —NCDC

ABUJA

Edo State is among eight Nigerian states battling a deadly outbreak of Lassa fever, with 17 deaths reported nationwide in the first three weeks of 2026, according to the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC).

In its weekly epidemiological report for week three, the NCDC confirmed that Edo, alongside Bauchi, Taraba, Plateau, Ondo, Ebonyi, Benue, and Nasarawa states, recorded new cases of vi-

ral haemorrhagic disease.

Bauchi State accounted for the highest share of infections, representing 46 percent of confirmed cases.

The report noted 93 confirmed cases across the eight states, with Edo among the states reporting significant numbers, contributing to the national burden.

The country's case fatality rate currently stands at 18.1 percent, a slight decline from 18.2 percent during the same period in 2025.

Four health workers were infected in week three, high-

lighting the ongoing occupational risks amid the outbreak.

Overall, 89 percent of confirmed cases came from Bauchi, Ondo, Taraba, and Edo, while the remaining 11 percent were reported from five other states.

Young adults remain the most affected, with the 21–30 years age group showing the highest incidence and a median age of 27.5 years.

The NCDC has activated the national Lassa fever multi-partner Incident Management System (IMS) to coordi-

nate response efforts, including treatment of confirmed cases, distribution of antiviral drugs such as Ribavirin, and community-level risk communication.

Authorities have urged Edo residents, like others across the country, to maintain high standards of hygiene, promptly report suspected cases, and engage in community-level rodent control, noting that poor health-seeking behaviour and late hospital visits remain major challenges.

Lassa fever is an acute viral haemorrhagic illness caused

by the Lassa virus, primarily transmitted to humans through contact with rodent excreta or contaminated food. While many infections are mild, severe cases can present with fever, bleeding, organ dysfunction, and even death.

The disease peaks during the dry season, between December

and April, when human-rodent contact increases.

With no licensed vaccine currently available, public health officials stress early detection, supportive care, and prompt treatment with Ribavirin for selected patients as key strategies to limit the spread and impact of the disease in Edo and across Nigeria.

Senate sets up c'ttees to revamp Electoral Act, probe NRC operations

ABUJA

The Senate has moved decisively to address critical national issues, establishing two ad-hoc committees to finalise amendments to the Electoral Act, 2022 (Repeal and Enactment) Bill and investigate alleged decadence in the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC).

President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio, announced on Thursday that a small committee would be formed to consolidate Senators' views on the Electoral Act bill, following a closed executive session where lawmakers began examining the report of the Senate Committee on Electoral Matters chaired by Sen. Simon Lalong.

“The Senate has set up a small committee to galvanize and distill all the opinions of distinguished senators and present them for final deliberation on Tuesday,” Akpabio said.

Sen. Niyi Adegbonmire will serve as chairman, with Senators Adamu Aliero, Aminu Tambuwal, Adams Oshiomhole, Danjuma Goje, Tony Nwoye, and Titus Zam as members.

The committee is expected to complete its assignment within 48 hours or at most three days.

The Clerk of the Senate will serve as secretary.

In a separate development, the Senate also constituted an ad-hoc committee to investigate the deteriorating state of Nigeria's railway infrastructure, following a point of order raised by Sen. Abdul Ningi (PDP-Bauchi). Ningi highlighted the decline of the Kano–Kaduna rail line, commissioned by former President Goodluck Jonathan in 2015 and re-commissioned by the late President Muhammadu Buhari.

“Where there were 10,000 daily commuters, numbers

CONTINUES ON PG 2»



A DAY TRIBUTE:

L-R: Former Governor of Bayelsa State and Senator representing Bayelsa West, Seriake Dickson; former First Lady of Nigeria, Dame Patience Jonathan; former President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan; Governor Douye Diri of Bayelsa State; his wife, Dr. Gloria Diri and Justice Patience Diri, during a day of tribute by the Bayelsa State Government in honour of late deputy Governor, Laurence Ewhrudjakpo in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.

Insecurity: ECWA urges FG to end killings, kidnappings

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FCT contractors beg Wike over N5.2bn unpaid bills

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EU adds Iran's Revolutionary Guards to terrorist list

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AFCON 2025: CAF slams Senegal, Morocco for finals chaos

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Embattled pastor decries internet bullying in Nigeria, seeks regulation

LAGOS

Dr Chris Okafor, Televangelist and Founding Pastor of the Mountain of Liberation and Miracle Ministry has decried what he described as cyber bullying, and sought for regulation of the nation's cyberspace.

Okafor made the call at a news conference on Thursday in

Lagos, called to explain his displeasure with most bloggers and online influencers in Nigeria.

Recall that in November 2025, Nollywood actress, Doris Ogala accused Okafor of a long-term affair and breaking a promise to marry her.

The actress also accused the pastor of murdering her brother and also burying the head of a murdered unidentified person

at his altar, in his church, located in Ojodu area of the state.

The pastor said that while his media trial was going on, what remained most painful was the fact that the bloggers and influencers were all bullying him on an allegation without evidence or hearing from him.

"It is so sad that most of the so called influencers we have, often connived with people to come up with fabulous lies to attract traffic to their blogs.

"Many Nigerians have suffered and are still suffering from the lies of bloggers and most often, they get away with it after destroying the image of their targets.

"Very few times, some of the influencers were arrested and dragged to court but 90 per

cent of them often go free for far fetched lies against people.

"Nigeria must find a way to safeguard its internet space, especially to ensure that innocent citizens do not get shattered over lies, demeaning their image."

The pastor said there is need for the national assembly to come up with a legislation that would not only regulate the nation's internet but ensure that offenders are punished as deterrent to others.

He urged the cyber police to do more in tracing internet offences and fishing out offenders.

Recalling his ordeal, Okafor lamented that the majority of bloggers and some Nigerians failed to ask the necessary questions on the allegation.

"The same person who accused me of murder is the same person crying that I want to abandon her and marry someone else. How could she want to marry someone who allegedly killed her brother?."

"There is so much about the matter than meets the ordinary eye, and so many unanswered questions and glaring lies.

"The allegations were coming from a woman I never met. Then my ex wife joined and came up with my allegedly trying to defile one of our daughters.

"The same ex wife and daughter have gone to a popular blogger to ask that I pay for their school fees and upkeep abroad of about N80 million. The same father is trying to defile them?

Which woman will do that.

"All these began after my plans to remarry were leaked by our wedding planner. All hell broke loose and everyone tried to cash in on it.

"In our divorce proceedings in 2014, which I instituted at an Ikeja court, the reasons on the document were infidelity, violence, lack of love and the marriage was dissolved for irreconcilable differences.

"At no point during the proceedings did my ex wife mention I was trying to defile our daughter. The court awarded me custody of our children, and no one queried those allegations!

"If as a pastor I can survive these lies, what happens to an average Nigerian?"

Insecurity: ECWA urges FG to end killings, kidnappings

JOS

The Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) has called on the Federal Government to end the rising wave of attacks, killings and kidnappings across the country.

The President of ECWA, Rev. Job Ayuba, made the call in a statement issued on Thursday in Jos, decriing the persistent targeting of ECWA members and Christian communities. He urged the Federal Government and security agencies to strengthen intelligence gathering and early-warning responses.

Ayuba specifically condemned the attack and abduction of worshippers on Sunday, January 18, in Kurmin Wali community, Kajuru Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

"ECWA is deeply concerned over the worsening and pervasive

insecurity in Nigeria. We particularly condemn the persistent and targeted attacks against Christian communities, clergy and the general populace," he said.

According to him, ECWA has suffered significant losses, with pastors, church workers and members experiencing violent attacks, kidnappings, displacement and loss of lives in several states.

He reminded all tiers of government of their constitutional responsibility to protect citizens, calling for swift prosecution of perpetrators and their sponsors, as well as adequate protection for places of worship and other soft targets.

While commending security agencies for deploying personnel to Kajuru, Ayuba stressed the need for proactive, sustained and intelligence-driven preventive operations, especially in vulnerable rural communities.



INSPECTION OF PROJECTS:

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo (3rd right), during inspection of ongoing projects in Edo South Senatorial District yesterday.

New Edo under construction, says...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

especially on Sapele Road. Anyone who visits that axis will know that this administration is working," the governor said.

According to him, development is now visible across Edo State as his government continues to deliver on its infrastructure agenda.

"Our administration is changing things in Edo State. We are witnessing growth and development," Okpebholo added.

At Charismatic Renewal Road, the governor noted significant improvement in the pace of work compared to his previous visit, describing the progress as encouraging.

Reaffirming his commit-

ment to the people, Okpebholo said Edo State was fully aligned with the Renewed Hope vision of the Federal Government.

"The Renewed Hope agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is manifesting here in Edo State, and we are building on it to give Edo people a better and improved life. We are creating a new Edo, the Edo of our dreams," he said.

The governor reiterated his pledge to turn Edo State into a construction hub through sustained investment in roads and drainage projects across the three senatorial districts, stressing that the initiative is opening up communities, boosting economic activities and bringing governance closer to the people.

Communities, stakeholders unite to restore Okomu Forest landscape

ISAAC ERANGA

Support zone communities, government agencies, and development partners have come together to tackle deforestation and forest degradation in the Okomu Forest Landscape, in a bid to restore the area and improve local livelihoods.

The meeting, held at Okomu National Park under the auspices of the Okomu Biodiversity Stakeholders Platform (OBSP), marked the launch of a new project aimed at foster-

ing partnerships between communities, government, and private organisations for long-term forest restoration.

The initiative is expected to benefit over 100 households through livelihood programmes and community empowerment.

Mr. Joseph Molokwu, Technical Program Coordinator of the Society for Sustainability and Conservation Education for Rural Areas (SCERA), said the project will support the construction of nurseries and water boreholes,

participatory reforestation, and mapping of degraded areas.

A public-private partnership agreement will also formalise long-term restoration efforts for the Okomu Forest, which has suffered severe deforestation for decades.

Communities praised SCERA for its successful implementation of a previous project funded by BIOPAMA, which provided farmers with tree seedlings, beekeeping equipment, and agricultural tools.

They pledged their full support for the new project, funded by the United Nations Development Programme Global Envi-

ronment Facility Small Grants Programme (UNDP GEF-SGP) and The Rufford Foundation.

CP Lawrence Osaze, Conservator of Okomu National Park, represented by DCP Matthias Enaberue, reminded participants that Edo State once had over 40 vibrant forest reserves, but Okomu remains one of the few sustainable reserves today, emphasising the urgency of collective action.

Mr. Thomas Odemwingie, National Steering Committee member of GEF-SGP, urged communities and stakeholders to ensure the project's success, noting that government cannot do it alone.

Senate sets up c'ttees to revamp...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

have fallen to 800-900, and trips have been reduced from 10 daily shuttles to just two," Ningi told the Senate.

He added that during peak operations, the line generated N1.8 billion monthly.

Sen. Adamu Aliero (APC-Kebbi) confirmed that bandit attacks and damaged coaches had compounded NRC's revenue challenges but assured that the Federal Gov-

ernment was mobilising funds to restore railway services.

The railway ad-hoc committee is chaired by Sen. Adams Oshiomhole (APC-Edo), with Senators Enyinnaya Abaribe (APGA-Abia), Osita Ngwu (PDP-Enugu), Ibrahim Dankwambo (PDP-Gombe), Ede Dafinone (APC-Delta), and Ireti Kingibe (LP-FCT) as members. Senate President Akpabio urged the committee to submit its findings within six weeks.

UNDP backs Special Seats Bill, pushes women's inclusion in politics

ABUJA

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting evidence-based advocacy, legislative engagement and democratic reforms aimed at expanding women's participation in Nigerian politics.

The UNDP Resident Representative, Ms Elsie Atafuah, stated this on Thursday in Abuja at a one-day high-level strategic meeting on the Special Seats Bill

organised by the UN Nigeria.

The meeting was convened for the Women Political Participation Partners Working Group (WPP-PWG) in collaboration with UN Women and other partners.

Atafuah said the engagement was taking place at a critical moment as the National Assembly prepares to vote on the Constitution Alteration Bill seeking to reserve special seats for women in the legislature.

She commended UN Women, the WPP-PWG, the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs,

civil society organisations and development partners for sustained advocacy to advance women's political participation.

According to her, the Special Seats Bill represents a defining point in Nigeria's democratic and constitutional journey, bringing together years of advocacy, coalition-building and citizen mobilisation around inclusive representation.

She described the bill as a reform capable of strengthening leadership quality, institutional responsiveness and pub-

lic policy outcomes for women, men and young people.

Atafuah said the bill was also a test of political will and democratic maturity, noting that women's underrepresentation remained a constraint on human development, institutional performance and inclusive growth.

She added that inclusive governance promotes social cohesion and better development outcomes, and aligns with Nigeria's constitutional ideals as well as regional and international commitments, including the Maputo Protocol.

NEWS

Okpebholo's healthcare legacy is EDOHERMA —Agency boss

ABUJA

The Permanent Secretary and Chief Executive Officer of the Edo State

Health Regulation and Monitoring Agency (EDOHERMA), Dr Adesuwa Urhoghide, has described the establishment of the agency as a legacy

decision by Governor Monday Okpebholo.

In a statement made available to the public, Urhoghide said that the move reflected a

leadership that understands that strong health regulation saves lives, restores public confidence and builds a resilient healthcare system.

She said the governor's decision had positioned Edo State as a national pacesetter in health governance, setting a benchmark other states were likely to follow.

According to her, the creation of EDOHERMA marked a historic milestone in strengthening the SHINE Agenda in health sector governance, describing it as a bold and visionary reform that redefines healthcare regulation, monitoring and safeguarding in Nigeria.

Urhoghide explained that the agency was established to enforce standards, ensure patient safety and promote quality, accessible and affordable healthcare across the state's health ecosystem.

She said EDOHERMA's mandate covers public and private health facilities, community-based health services, public health monitoring, in-

fection prevention and control, service quality assurance and healthcare standards enforcement, making it the first unified, whole-sector health regulatory agency in Nigeria.

She commended Governor Okpebholo for what she described as extraordinary leadership, courage and foresight, noting that the agency prioritises patient safety, transparency, accountability and long-term impact.

"The establishment of EDOHERMA is more than a policy achievement. It is a legacy decision and a promise that healthcare in Edo State will be safer, ethical and worthy of public trust," she said.

Urhoghide pledged that her team would work with relevant stakeholders to deliver on the governor's vision of improved healthcare and overall wellbeing for residents of the state.



2026 ROUNDTABLE:

Director-General, Dr. Osahon Enabulele Foundation, Dr Osahon Enabulele (right), and Chairman, Board of Trustees, Dr Dominic Osaghae, unveiling the foundation's Strategic Focus/Roadmap, during the 2026 Roundtable and 1st year anniversary celebration of the foundation in Benin City yesterday.

Edo govt pushes digital governance with LGA website initiative

ABUJA

The Edo State Government has intensified inter-ministerial collaboration to drive digital governance and grassroots development in line with Governor Monday Okpebholo's SHINE Agenda.

This followed a strategic meeting between the Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy and the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs in Benin City.

At the meeting, the Com-

missioner for Communication and Digital Economy, Hon. Ohimai Ehijimotor, presented a proposal for the development of functional, standardised websites for the state's 18 local government areas.

The initiative, according to him, is aimed at modernising public administration, improving transparency and strengthening citizen participation in governance at the grassroots.

Ehijimotor said each LGA website would serve as an official communication platform,

providing information on governance structures, budgets, projects, public notices, development programmes and direct citizen engagement channels.

He described the SHINE Agenda as a governance framework that must extend beyond physical offices into accessible digital spaces.

A demo of the proposed platform was presented by Mr Donatus Igikheume, who said local governments were the closest tier of government to the people and that digitising their operations would enhance accountability, data protection and service delivery.

The Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Hon. Paul Ohonbamu, lauded the proposal, describing it as a reflection of the administration's commitment to innovation, transparency and effective local governance.

He said a strong digital presence for LGAs would improve communication, showcase grassroots development and enhance responsiveness.

The government said the project, when implemented, would bridge information gaps, boost public trust and position Edo State as a leading subnational entity in digital governance.

CCCG conference warns against apostasy, urges faithfulness

BENIN CITY

Christ's Chosen Church of God International (CCCG) has held its 2026 Annual Church Delegate Conference in Benin City, urging ministers and Christians to remain steadfast in their faith.

The conference, themed, "Apostasy in Christianity," drew delegates from across the country.

In his welcome address, the

General Overseer and Spiritual Leader, Senior Apostle Dr David Unuefe Ikhuwu, said t2025 witnessed heightened national and global tensions arising from economic, political, religious and security challenges.

He said the period was marked by intense intercessory prayers following attacks on Christians and the destruction of churches in parts of Nigeria and other countries.

According to him, these developments have negatively influenced some believers who are not firmly grounded in the word of God, exposing them to fear and false teachings.

He warned that many Christians were now at a crossroads, facing the temptation to abandon their faith or remain steadfast despite persecution.

Ikhuwu charged ministers and believers to hold firmly to

the word of God to avoid falling into unbelief, unfaithfulness or denial of Christ.

He said 2026 remained uncertain, urging Christians to remain prayerful, committed and focused on God's agenda while awaiting the return of Jesus Christ.

He also advised participants to be wise in their discussions and cautious in their movements during and after the conference.

NELFUND extends student loan application deadline to Feb 27

ABUJA

The Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) has extended the application deadline for the 2025/2026 academic session from January 31 to February 27.

The extension was announced in a statement issued on Thursday in Abuja by the Fund's Di-

rector of Strategic Communications, Mr Oseyemi Oluwatuyi.

He said the decision was taken to give prospective applicants additional time to complete and submit their applications.

According to Oluwatuyi, the extension is aimed at ensuring that no eligible student is excluded due to timing constraints.

Speaking on the develop-

ment, the Managing Director of NELFUND, Mr Akintunde Sawyerr, said the move reflected the Fund's commitment to inclusivity and access.

"We understand that some applicants may require additional time to complete their submissions, and this decision ensures that every eligible Nigerian student has a fair opportunity to

benefit from the Fund," he said.

Sawyerr urged students who were yet to apply or complete their applications to take advantage of the extended deadline and ensure all required information is submitted on or before February 27.

He added that further updates would be communicated through NELFUND's official channels.

Foundation takes free medical care to Edo market

BENIN CITY

The Dr Osahon Enabulele Foundation (DOEF) has conducted a free medical outreach at Uselu Market in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.

The outreach was aimed at providing healthcare services to indigent residents who could not afford medical care.

Director-General of the foundation, Dr Osahon Enabulele, said the initiative was designed to bridge healthcare access gaps, particularly for the multidimensionally poor.

Enabulele, a former President of the World Medical Association, said millions of Nigerians live in poverty, limiting their ac-

cess to quality healthcare.

He said the foundation's mission was centred on promoting good health, stressing that health remained fundamental to productivity and quality of life.

Beneficiaries received free consultations, treatment and basic diagnostic services during the exercise.

The medical team, led by Dr Adego Eferakeya, attended to cases of malaria, hypertension, diabetes and various skin diseases.

Eferakeya said the foundation's interventions had gained recognition and reaffirmed the importance of good health in achieving personal and societal goals.

UNIBEN records historic admission of 15,077 students

BENIN CITY

The University of Benin (UNIBEN), Benin City has admitted 15,077 students for the 2025/2026 academic session, marking the highest intake in the institution's history.

The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Edoba Omoregie, disclosed this during the matriculation ceremony in Benin City.

Omoregie said many of the newly admitted students were pioneers of about 20 newly introduced academic programmes.

"At this ceremony, a total of 15,077 students are being formally admitted into the various faculties, schools, centres and programmes," he said.

He stressed that the students were admitted strictly on merit and urged them to uphold excellence throughout their academic journey.

Describing UNIBEN as a

first-generation university and one of the most sought-after in sub-Saharan Africa, the Vice-Chancellor said the institution had sustained its reputation for quality teaching, learning and impactful research over the past 55 years.

He said the university's commitment to community engagement was captured in its motto, "Knowledge for Service."

Omoregie warned the students against cultism, drug abuse, examination malpractice and other social vices, reiterating the institution's zero-tolerance policy.

He urged them to remain focused, engage constructively with staff and make effective use of academic and extracurricular facilities.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked parents and guardians for their trust and formally welcomed the new students, wishing them success in their academic pursuits.

"Police, worst perpetrator of attacks on journalists in 2025"

LAGOS

The Media Rights Agenda (MRA) said that it documented 86 incidents of attacks against journalists, media organisations and citizens across Nigeria in 2025.

The MRA revealed this in its 2025 Annual Report on Freedom of Expression in Nigeria, titled: "The Reign of Impunity," which was released on Thursday in Lagos.

The 147-page report identified the Nigeria Police Force as the worst offender, responsible for 41 incidents, representing nearly 48 percent of all documented attacks.

It reported that the Department of State Services (DSS) followed, accounting for about seven percent of the cases, bringing the combined responsibility of the two agencies to over 50 percent of all violations recorded.

The report revealed that the incidents occurred across 27 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

It noted that Lagos State and the Federal Capital Territory recorded the highest number of attacks against journalists and citizens, with 16 and 14 incidents respectively.

The report disclosed that none of the incidents resulted in successful investigation or prosecution, even where the actions amounted to criminal offences.

According to the MRA re-

port, arrests and detentions were the most common form of attack on media freedom while suppression of freedom of expression accounted for 38 cases, representing over 44 percent of all incidents recorded.

It also documented 21 cases of physical assault and battery, making up more than 24 percent of the total incidents, ranking as the second highest form of violation during the period under review.

The report further recorded two killings, including that of a journalist killed in the line of duty and a woman murdered over alleged blasphemy.

Other grave violations, it revealed, included one case of kidnapping and the shutdown of a media outlet.

The report also highlighted emerging trends, including the continued 'weaponisation' of the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act, 2015, as amended, against journalists.

The report revealed the use of digital surveillance tools and spyware to monitor media practitioners.

It noted that security agencies often failed to intervene in attacks by non-state actors, even when present, and were also involved in the suppression of peaceful protests, during which journalists were frequently targeted.

Reacting to the report, MRA's Executive Director, Mr Edetaen Ojo, said that despite rapid change-

es in the media landscape driven by digital technologies, fundamental challenges facing journalists remained deeply entrenched.

He identified the challenges as political, legal, economic and social, marked by attacks on journalists, misuse of laws, shrinking civic space, economic pressures and increasing digital threats.

Ojo said that the persistent culture of impunity posed one of the gravest threats to media freedom in Nigeria, emboldening perpetrators and fostering fear and self-censorship within the media community.

He urged the Federal Government and relevant authorities to ensure prompt, trans-

parent investigations into all attacks against journalists and citizens and to make the outcomes public.

Ojo also called on the government to direct security agencies to refrain from harassment, intimidation and arbitrary arrests of journalists and citizens exercising their right to freedom of

expression, particularly online.

The executive director further recommended the establishment of a national mechanism for the safety of journalists in line with the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists, including early warning systems and rapid response protocols.



COMMITTEE'S SUMMON/HEARING:

L-R: Deputy Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Public Petitions, Attorney Nwogu; Deputy Clerk of the Committee, Mr Yaqub Isahaq and a member of the Committee Secretariat, Mr Victor Mkpouto, during the Committee's summon/hearing on Petition No: 732 of 2025, at the National Assembly Complex in Abuja on Thursday.

NAN reporter wins 2025 African news agencies' award for best feature article

MARRAKECH (MOROCCO)

Mr Usman Aliyu, an Assistant Chief Correspondent with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) has won the 2025 Federation of Atlantic African Press Agencies (FAAPA) Award for Best Feature Article.

The award was presented on Thursday at the 9th General Assembly of FAAPA in Marrakech, Morocco, which brought together African news agencies and media leaders to champion territorial inclusion and spatial justice on the continent.

Aliyu won the prestigious continental honour with his report entitled "Swipe to Survive: How Digital Payments Tackle Youth Unemployment in Nigeria."

The in-depth report examined how young Nigerians are

leveraging digital payment platforms to navigate unemployment, create livelihoods, and survive economic hardship.

The NAN reporter emerged as the first anglophone journalist to win the award in any of the categories since its inception.

Aliyu received the award with the Managing Director of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Mallam Ali Mohammed Ali, who was in Marrakech for the 9th General Assembly of the news agencies.

The President of FAAPA, Mr Fouad Arif, praised the winning feature for its strong human-interest angle, solutions-oriented approach.

In the Video category, Yacouba Soro of the Ivorian News Agency (AIP) won with his entry entitled "Plastic Waste: from Pollutant to Development Lever."



2025 AWARD FOR BEST FEATURE ARTICLE:

L-R: Mr Fouad Arif, President, Federation of Atlantic African Press Agencies (FAAPA) presenting the 2025 Award for Best Feature Article to Usman Aliyu of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) with the Managing Director of NAN, Mallam Ali Mohammed Ali.

LAGOS

The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) has recorded significant improvements in revenue performance and cargo operational efficiency despite a decline in cargo throughput.

The authority disclosed this in an operational report released on Thursday, attributing the gains to reforms implemented by its Cargo Development and Services Directorate.

According to the report, adjustments to legacy processes have improved revenue assur-

ance across major cargo terminals, particularly through the relocation of FAAN operational staff and revenue-collection desks back into cargo warehouses.

The report noted that enhanced monitoring of unaccompanied luggage had also blocked major revenue leakages, with positive results recorded at the Nigerian Aviation Handling Company (NAHCO) Plc and Skyway Aviation Handling Company (SAHCO) warehouses.

A senior FAAN official said the authority recorded higher

revenue and improved collection efficiency in 2025 compared to 2024, despite handling lower cargo volumes.

He disclosed that FAAN was developing a courier revenue optimisation framework that would introduce per-kilogram charges for courier operators, replacing the current system based on total shipment weight.

The official added that FAAN was strengthening collaboration with airlines, ground handling firms, customs agents and the Nigeria Customs Service to address revenue gaps, while improved access-control measures

were already yielding benefits.

He said the authority was also advancing cargo infrastructure development at the General Aviation Terminal in Lagos and implementing a structured development roadmap for Abuja airport.

FAAN is also intensifying efforts to integrate the National Single Window platform to resolve long-standing process and revenue inefficiencies.

The official confirmed that FAAN would implement its approved tariff adjustment from February 2, 2026, following the closure of major operational gaps.

NUC raises Fortune University admission quota to 2,000

OKITIPUPA (ONDO)

The National Universities Commission (NUC) has approved an increase in the admission quota of the University of Fortune, Igbotako, from 800 to 2,000 students for the 2025/2026 academic session.

The approval was conveyed in a letter dated January 28,

2026, signed by the Acting Director of Planning, Abubakar Gerei, on behalf of the NUC Executive Secretary, Prof. Abdullahi Yusufu-Ribadu, and addressed to the Registrar of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB).

The letter cited improved human and material resources as the basis for the upward re-

view and urged JAMB to grant the institution all privileges associated with the approval.

Founder of the university, Senator Jimoh Ibrahim, who made the letter available to journalists on Thursday, said the approval would expand access to quality tertiary education.

Recall that in December 2025, the NUC approved 17 under-

graduate programmes for the institution across four faculties, including Science and Computing, Social and Management Sciences, Basic Medical and Allied Health Sciences, and Law.

Ibrahim urged prospective students to select the new programmes during registration for the 2025/2026 JAMB examination.

Drivers union distributes fuel, tyres to members in C'River

CALABAR

No fewer than 37 commercial drivers in Cross River State have received free fuel and tyres from the Unified Commercial Drivers Association.

The items were distributed during the association's first meeting of the year held on Thursday in Calabar.

State Chairman of the association, Mr Etta Henshaw, said the meeting brought together drivers and affiliated transport agencies to review plans for the year and strengthen members' welfare.

He said 30 drivers received 10-litre gallons of fuel, while seven others were given brand-new tyres, adding that the initiative was supported by the

Cross River State Government.

According to Henshaw, the welfare scheme was introduced to ensure drivers benefit directly from ticket revenues and to ease operational challenges.

He acknowledged concerns raised by drivers over traffic law enforcement but noted that complete removal of enforcement was unrealistic in a law-governed society.

Also speaking, Chairman of the Commercial Transport Regulatory Agency (CTRA), Mr Efa Nyong, announced free vehicle registration and renewal for men above 60 years and all women.

Nyong said enforcement of remaining traffic offences would commence on March 1, adding that the agency had significantly reduced penalties.

NEWS

FCT contractors beg Wike over N5.2bn unpaid bills

ABUJA

Contractors handling projects for the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) have appealed to the Minister, Mr Nyesom Wike, to urgently pay over ₦5.2 billion allegedly owed them.

The Chairman of the Indigenes Contractors, Mr Adenola Benson, made the appeal at a news conference in Abuja, lamenting that members had invested huge resources into

executing the projects.

Benson said the prolonged non-payment had left many contractors unable to meet family responsibilities, adding that some members had reportedly died from stress related to financial pressure.

A member of the contractors' committee, Mr Rufai Mosuwa, said the contractors should not be facing difficulties in accessing their payments, having followed due process.

He said most of the projects

had been completed, with certificates of completion submitted, while others were near completion.

"Ordinarily, we shouldn't have issues with payment if the FCT Minister hadn't stopped it. We've written an open letter to President Bola Tinubu to intervene; the effect of non-payment is unimaginable," Mosuwa said.

He disclosed that the contractors had written several letters to the minister, the Senator representing the FCT, Sen. Ireti

Kingibe, and other authorities without response.

Mosuwa said Kingibe had attempted to intervene by forwarding their petition to the Senate Committee on Public Petitions, where they appeared once, but the FCT representative was absent.

"The case was adjourned and since then, we have not been invited again. We also wrote to the Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on FCT, Rep. Aliyu Betara," he said.

According to him, petitions were also submitted to the Department of State Services (DSS), the Senate President and the Inspector-General of Police, but no

feedback had been received.

He urged the minister to urgently settle the debt, warning that the contractors would resort to protest if ignored.

Police smash transnational prostitution trafficking syndicate in Enugu

ENUGU

The police in Enugu State have busted a transnational human trafficking syndicate linked to prostitution, arresting a 50-year-old suspect and rescuing a 20-year-old female victim.

The Command's spokesman, SP Daniel Ndukwe, said the arrest and rescue were carried out on January 16 by operatives of the Igbo-Eze South Police Division following credible intelligence.

He said investigations revealed that the victim, an Abia indigene, was deceived into resigning her job in Aba with the promise of lucrative employment in Senegal.

The offer later turned out to be prostitution-related.

Ndukwe said the suspect allegedly took the victim to a shrine in Alor-Agu community to swear an oath ahead of the planned trafficking.

"Upon receiving the information, operatives swiftly moved to the location, detained the suspect and rescued the victim," he said.

The victim has been reunited with her family, while investigations continue to dismantle the syndicate.

The Commissioner of Police, Mr Mamman Giwa, has directed the State CID to ensure all suspects connected to the crime are brought to justice.



NANTA 2026 1ST QUARTER MEETING:

L-R: Managing Director, Sandot Travels, Mrs Enyidiya Nduka; Head of Human Resources Department, Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), Mr Charles Ogazi; Deputy Director National Council for Arts and Culture, Mrs Pamela Agu; Chief Executive Officer T.G. Travels, Chief Kenechukwu Okafor; Vice President, Eastern Zone, National Association of Nigeria Travel Agencies (NANTA), Mrs Faith Essien; Enugu State Coordinator NANTA, Mrs Chioma Obi; Terminal Manager, Akanu Ibiam International Airport, Enugu, Mr Kemi Emmanuel, and Assistant Chief Transport Officer, NCAA, Mr Kingsley Ilediagu, during NANTA 2026 1st Quarter Planning Meeting in Enugu.

Onitsha market closure: Police enforce order as ONICCIMA calls for dialogue

ONITSHA

The Anambra State Police Command has vowed to enforce lawful directives and prevent any breach of public order across the state following the closure of markets in Onitsha.

The command's spokesman, SP Tochukwu Ikenga, said in a statement that the Commissioner of Police, CP Ikioye Orutugu, was in Onitsha to reinforce public safety and confidence.

Ikenga said the police chief

was on a security assessment tour, supervising the deployment of police-led joint security forces to strategic locations.

"This proactive engagement underscores our resolve to maintain peace, ensure compliance with lawful directives and prevent any breach of public order," he said.

Governor Chukwuma Soludo had ordered the indefinite closure of Onitsha markets on Monday following an unscheduled visit, amid continued observance of the Monday sit-at-home.

Ikenga assured residents, traders and commuters that the security situation in Onitsha remained calm.

Meanwhile, the Onitsha Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (ONICCIMA) has urged the Anambra Government to adopt dialogue in resolving the market closure.

In a statement signed by its President, Mr Chinedu Nwonu, the chamber acknowledged the government's responsibility to maintain law, order and an enabling business environment.

Nwonu said government records showed that the South-East loses about ₦19.6 billion

weekly to sit-at-home activities, with Anambra State accounting for approximately ₦8 billion.

He warned that prolonged market closures risk economic dislocation, noting their adverse effects on supply chains, investor confidence, livelihoods and public stability.

Nwonu said the disruption could lead to scarcity of goods, higher transportation costs and inflationary pressure nationwide.

He urged the government to balance enforcement with dialogue and restore normal Monday-to-Saturday operations at the Onitsha Main Market in a safe and sustainable manner.

Abiriba union vows to attract investors to boost Abia devt

NVOSSI (ABIA)

The Abiriba Communal Improvement Development Union (ACIDU) has pledged to support the Abia State Government by attracting investors to drive socio-economic development.

The President of ACIDU, Chief Uche Uwah, disclosed this during a visit to Governor Alex Otti in Nvosi, Isiala Ngwa South Local Government Area.

Uwah said communities should complement government efforts, noting that improved security and ease of

doing business had made Abia attractive to investors.

He revealed that Korean investors had indicated interest in establishing agricultural processing factories in the state, with plans to export products to Benin and other West African countries.

Uwah commended the Otti administration's infrastructural strides, citing the Sir Joe Irukwe Way Road as evidence of development achieved within two years.

He lamented that Abiriba had lacked electricity for about 15 years, forcing residents to

spend over ₦500 million annually on generator fuel, especially during festive periods.

He also appealed for government intervention to address erosion ravaging the community and commended the reconstruction of Akahaba General Hospital.

Responding, Otti described Abiriba as his "second home" and praised the community's unity.

He said issues of electricity and erosion were already receiving attention, disclosing that Abia had assumed full regulatory control of power supply following NERC's hand-

over on December 24.

Otti said arrangements had been concluded with the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company to take over the Umuahia ring-fenced power island covering Abiriba and other areas.

He confirmed that the state had fully taken over the Star Paper Mill and would seek credible private investors to revive it and create jobs.

The governor urged Abia indigenes at home and abroad to invest in the state, assuring them of a conducive business environment.

NSCDC dismisses claims of unpaid promotion arrears

ABUJA

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) has dismissed reports alleging non-payment of promotion arrears as misleading and baseless.

In a statement on Thursday, the corps' spokesman, Mr Babawale Afolabi, said that the publication was malicious and intended to mislead the public.

He clarified that the Commandant-General, Ahmed Audi, had no control over the payment of salary or promotion arrears, noting that such payments fall under the Presidential Committee on Arrears.

Afolabi said the current leadership inherited five years of unpaid arrears on assumption of office in 2021, adding that arrears from

2015 to 2019 had been cleared, benefiting over 37,000 personnel.

He said approval had been granted for 2020–2022 arrears, with payment awaiting release to IPPIS, while arrears for 2023–2024 were yet to receive presidential approval.

Afolabi noted that the 2025 promotion examination results were released in December 2025 and were still being processed for budgetary inclusion.

He urged media organisations to verify information and appealed to personnel to remain patient.

However, an NSCDC officer, who spoke anonymously, acknowledged welfare efforts by management but said promotion arrears had remained unpaid for years, urging intensified efforts to address the issue.

Customs intercept 45 bags of Live cartridges in Oyo/Osun

IBADAN

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Oyo/Osun Area Command, has intercepted 45 bags of live cartridges and other contraband goods, arresting six suspects.

The Acting Customs Area Controller, Deputy Comptroller Wale Adewole, disclosed this on Thursday while briefing journalists on the command's January operations.

He said other seized items included 2,234 bags of rice, 1,112 used tyres, 562 kegs of petrol, used clothes, pharmaceuticals, narcotics, foreign spaghetti and

five used vehicles.

Adewole said the seizures, with a cumulative Duty Paid Value of N2.7 billion, were made within one month of his assumption of office through intelligence-led operations.

He added that the command exceeded its 2025 revenue target of N86.2 billion, recording a surplus of N13.1 billion, representing a 15.22 per cent increase.

The intercepted cartridges were handed over to the National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, which commended Customs for its collaboration in strengthening national security.

Army, Police rescue 8 kidnap victims in Kaduna forest

ABUJA

Troops of Sector 7, Operation Safe Haven (OPSH), in collaboration with the Zango Kataf Police Area Command, the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), forest guards and local hunters, have rescued eight kidnap victims from Badurum Kasa Forest in Kauru Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

A security source said the operation was carried out following actionable intelligence

on the kidnapers' hideout.

According to the source, the joint team mobilised to the area at about 4:23 p.m. on Wednesday and engaged the criminals around 5:59 p.m.

The pressure from the security operatives forced the kidnapers to abandon their captives and flee into the surrounding bushes.

"All eight victims were rescued unharmed and have since been reunited with their families," the source said.

Those rescued include Mrs

Rashida Musa (19), Mrs Hafsat Nuhu (18), Mr Zakari Saleh (52), Miss Hasiya Yahaya (13), Mr

Ahmed Yahaya (14), Mr Ibrahim Saiba (11), Miss Salma Yahaya (14) and Mr Sophan Idris (18).

The source added that follow-up operations and pursuit of the fleeing suspects were

ongoing to apprehend those responsible and dismantle the criminal network.

2027: APC support group begins ward tour in Ondo

OKITIPUPA (ONDO)

A political support group, BTO4PBAT27, has commenced its ward tour in Okitipupa Local Government Area of Ondo State to intensify grassroots mobilisation in support of President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda.

The initiative, coordinated under the leadership of the Minister of Interior, Dr Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, is aimed at consolidating support for Tinubu's re-election while deepening political participation at the community level.

At the flag-off ceremony on Thursday, the Okitipupa LGA Coordinator of the group, Mr Olalekan Akindehin, urged members to remain steadfast in promoting the policies and achievements of the President at the grassroots.

He emphasised that unity, consistency and sustained engagement were critical to the success of the Renewed Hope Agenda.

The group's Publicity Secretary, Mr Gbenga Adewunmi-Folajimi, also called on ward coordinators to actively mobilise members and sustain community participation.

Director-General of the group, Mr Adesuyi Adojutelegan, urged members to remain united and politically active, encouraging them to formally register with the All Progressives Congress (APC) to strengthen the party's base ahead of future elections.

He announced the donation of ₦1 million to the APC in the council area to support membership registration and mobilisation. The event attracted a large turnout of party members and supporters.



TUNJI-OJO

FAMILY CHANGE OF NAMES

We formerly known and addressed as:

GODMAN DAVID JEREMIAH;

ELISHUAH ROMAMTIEZER DAVID JEREMIAH - WIFE;

TIRSAH EMET DAVID JEREMIAH - CHILD;

TZEGULAH DESTA DAVID JEREMIAH - CHILD;

SHEMAIAH MESHELEMIH DAVID JEREMIAH - CHILD,

now wishes to be known and addressed as:

DAVID ASHER YIRMEYAHU;

ELISHUAH ROMAMTIEZER DAVID YIRMEYAHU - WIFE;

TIRSAH EMET DAVID YIRMEYAHU - CHILD;

TZEGULAH DESTA YIRMEYAHU - CHILD; and

SHEMAIAH MESHELEMIH DAVID YIRMEYAHU - CHILD. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

ADDITION OF SURNAME/ DATE OF BIRTH

The general public is hereby notified that **KENNETH UWAGBOE IYERE IYERE** and **KENNETH UWAGBOE** are one and the same person. Henceforth, I now wish to be known and address as **KENNETH UWAGBOE IYERE** and also, my correct date of birth is **7/6/2007** and not **7/6/2002**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public please take note.

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AI TRAINING:

L-R: Former Chairman, Nigeria Union of Journalist (NUJ), Oyo State Council, Demola Babalola; Commissioner for Information, Prince Dotun Oyelade and Chairman, Oyo NUJ, Akeem Abas at the AI training for 120 Journalist in Oyo State in collaboration with American Open University Ibadan campus.

Digital economy must rest on trust, data privacy —Tijani

ABUJA

Nigeria's drive towards building a one trillion-dollar economy can only succeed if digital growth is anchored on trust, data protection and shared prosperity, the Minister of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, Dr Bosun Tijani, has said.

Tijani stated this in Abuja at a news conference to mark Global Privacy Day 2026, organised by the Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC).

The theme was "Privacy in the Era of Emerging Technologies:

Trust, Ethics and Innovation".

The minister said President Bola Tinubu had been clear about his economic vision and the central role of the digital sector in achieving it. He stressed that connectivity without protection was incomplete, describing data protection and privacy as the foundation of trust, safety and sustainability in the digital economy.

"When we lose trust in this sector, people will be discouraged from relying on the tools meant to drive economic growth. Citizens must trust that their personal data is respected, protected and used appropri-

ately, and NDPC is central to building that trust," he said.

Tijani noted that digital technology must serve as an enabler of shared prosperity, ensuring that all segments of society benefited from Nigeria's digital transformation.

He recalled that President Tinubu demonstrated his commitment early in his administration by signing the Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA) into law.

National Commissioner of NDPC, Dr Vincent Olatunji, said Global Privacy Day was designated to create awareness and educate citizens on responsible data handling and ethical

use of emerging technologies.

Olatunji said the commission had generated over ₦5.2 billion in compliance revenue, with Nigeria's data protection ecosystem valued at more than ₦16.2 billion.

He disclosed that 38,677 data controllers and processors of major importance had been registered, alongside 307 licensed Data Protection Compliance Organisations.

He added that over 8,155 compliance audit returns had been filed, while 246 breach investigations were concluded, resulting in 11 enforcement actions.

AU Maths Ambassador urges parents, teachers to end maths phobia

ABUJA

An African Union Mathematics Ambassador, Miss Stella Edechukwu, has called on parents and teachers to encourage pupils and students to overcome their fear of mathematics in order to achieve academic excellence.

Edechukwu, a student of Applied Mathematics at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), made the call while presenting certifi-

cates of excellence to pupils and students of Samuelson International School, Lugbe, Abuja, for outstanding performance in mathematics.

She said her decision to study mathematics was driven by a desire to help children and adults overcome maths phobia. According to her, she has written a mathematics book using poems to make the subject more relatable and engaging for learners.

"If a child can relate mathe-

matics to everyday life, the fear disappears," she said, adding that she was working with the African Mathematics Project and other partners to promote mathematical excellence across schools.

Edechukwu disclosed that the group had also published a mathematics dictionary for primary and secondary schools, alongside collections of poems aimed at building children's confidence.

The proprietress of the school, Mrs Angela Ukwu,

said Samuelson International School was honoured by the African Mathematics Project as one of the fastest-growing schools in Abuja.

She attributed the achievement to staff dedication and institutional support.

She congratulated the award recipients and encouraged other pupils to work harder, noting that the school had qualified to participate in the upcoming African Mathematics Project Competition.

APGA releases timetable for 2026 Anambra LG election primaries

AWKA

The All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) has released its provisional timetable for the 2026 Anambra State Local Government election primaries.

In a statement issued on Thursday by the party's National Publicity Secretary, Mazi Ejimofor Opara, APGA said

the timetable was approved in line with its constitution and the schedule of the Anambra State Independent Electoral Commission (ANSIEC).

According to the schedule, sale and return of Expression of Interest and Nomination Forms will take place at the party's Awka Regional Secretariat from January 27 to February 6. Screening of chairmanship and

councillorship aspirants will hold from February 7 to February 11 across the 21 local government areas and 326 wards.

Appeals from the screening exercise will be resolved on February 13, while ward congresses to elect councillorship candidates and ad-hoc delegates are slated for February 14.

The party said chairmanship primaries would hold on Feb-

ruary 15, with appeals arising from the exercise scheduled for February 16 in Awka.

APGA fixed the cost of chairmanship forms at ₦6 million and councillorship forms at ₦600,000, with female aspirants and persons with disabilities paying 50 percent of the fees. It noted that all payments were non-refundable and subject to change.

NEWS

JUDICIARY

FCT workers defy court order, resume Indefinite strike

ABUJA

Workers of the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA), under the Joint Union Action Committee (JUAC), on Thursday resumed the indefinite strike they began on January 19 over unresolved welfare issues, despite a ruling of the National Industrial Court directing them

to suspend the action.

A visit to the FCTA Secretariats, Departments and Agencies showed that only a few workers were present, a sharp contrast to the heavy turnout recorded on Wednesday, in line with JUAC's directive for workers to stay at home.

The resumption followed an appeal filed against the January 27 ruling of the National

Industrial Court, which had ordered workers to suspend the strike and adjourned the matter to March 23. The appeal was filed through JUAC's lead counsel, Mr Femi Falana, SAN.

Following the court ruling, the Acting Head of the FCTA Civil Service, Mrs Nancy Nathan, had directed workers to resume duties on Wednesday, while the FCT Minister, Mr

Nyesom Wike, warned of consequences for any worker who failed to comply.

Wike assured workers that the administration was open to reasonable negotiations, adding that most of their demands had already been addressed.

However, JUAC Secretary, Abdullahi Saleh, in a circular issued on Wednesday, informed workers that the strike would

continue from Thursday, urging them to remain at home and pray for the success of the action.

He stressed that the struggle required unity, discipline and unwavering commitment, recalling that the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) had, in a joint communiqué on January 28, urged FCT workers to defend their rights with courage and dignity.

The labour unions argued

that the interlocutory injunction obtained by Wike and the FCTA was against JUAC President, Mrs Rifkatu Iortyer, and Saleh, and not against the unions themselves.

In the communiqué signed by NLC Acting General Secretary, Mr Benson Upah, and TUC Secretary General, Mr Nuhu Toro, the unions insisted that the strike should continue until meaningful negotiations are held with the workers.



INAUGURATION:

Rivers State Deputy Governor, Prof Mrs Ngozi Odu (R), during the inauguration of Technical Committee on Okoloma (Afram) in Oyigbo Rivers State and Ban-Ogoi in Tai Local Government Area, Rivers State by the Deputy Governor in Port Harcourt.

Shell challenges court's jurisdiction in Bayelsa monarch's suit

YENAGOA

Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited (SPDC) has challenged the jurisdiction of the Federal High Court sitting in Yenagoa in a suit filed by the traditional ruler of Ekpetiama Kingdom, His Royal Majesty, Bubaraiye Dakolo.

Dakolo is contesting the divestment of Shell UK PLC from its onshore and shallow-water assets previously operated by

SPDC, alleging that the process violated provisions of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) 2021.

The monarch is also seeking remediation and redress for what he described as cumulative environmental pollution of his domain spanning over 40 years.

Ekpetiama community is a host community to the Gbarain-Ubie gas plant and Gbarain oilfields.

When the matter came up for hearing on Thursday, counsel to the defendants, Mr Michael Am-

adi, informed the court that the respondents had filed a notice of preliminary objection challenging the court's jurisdiction.

Counsel to the plaintiff, Mr Chuks Uguru, also sought leave of court to amend earlier motions to correct typographical errors and to serve the amended copies on the parties.

Justice Ayo Emmanuel adjourned the matter until March 18 to hear the preliminary objection.

The defendants listed in Suit No. FHC/YNG/CS/81/2025

include SPDC, Shell Petroleum N.V, Shell UK PLC, the Attorney General of the Federation, the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission, the Minister of Petroleum Resources and Renaissance Energy Africa Ltd.

Renaissance Energy Africa, a consortium of indigenous oil firms, acquired the onshore and shallow-water assets formerly operated by SPDC in March 2025 following Shell UK PLC's divestment.

Court remands farmer over alleged defilement of 2 toddlers

KAFANCHAN

Kaduna State High Court sitting in Kafanchan has remanded a farmer, Bulus Umaru, at the Kafanchan Correctional Facility for allegedly defiling two three-year-old girls.

Justice Michael Eugene refused the defendant's bail application and ordered his remand pending the hearing of the case.

The matter was adjourned to March 5 for trial.

Umaru is facing a two-count charge of abduction and defile-

ment, to which he pleaded not guilty.

Earlier, the state counsel, Mr Daniel Isah, told the court that the defendant allegedly committed the offences on December 18, 2025, at Zunuruk village in Kaura Local Government Area.

Isah said the defendant ab-

ducted the minors, took them to his room and defiled them before he was apprehended by neighbours and handed over to the police.

The offences, he said, contravene Sections 215 and 209 of the Kaduna State Penal Code.

Court allows Yahaya Bello to travel for lesser hajj

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja on Thursday granted former Kogi State Governor, Yahaya Bello, permission to travel to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, to observe the last 10 days of Ramadan.

Justice Emeka Nwite granted the application after Bello's

counsel, Mr Joseph Daudu, SAN, moved the motion dated January 19 and filed on January 20.

Daudu told the court that the application sought the temporary release of Bello's international passports to enable him to perform the lesser hajj between February 18 and March 19.

Counsel to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mr Kemi Pinheiro, SAN, did not oppose the application.

Bello, while addressing the court, said although he would have loved to spend the entire Ramadan in Mecca, he was mindful of his ongoing trial.

He noted that he had not

travelled outside Nigeria in the last eight years and would only spend the last 10 days of Ramadan in the Holy Land.

Justice Nwite granted the request, ruling that Bello would spend only 10 days in Mecca, commencing from March 13, and adjourned the case until January 30 for continuation of trial.

Man remanded for allegedly assaulting 5-yr-Old niece

IKEJA

An Ikeja Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Court on Thursday remanded a 40-year-old man, Emeka Ani, at the Kirikiri Correctional Centre for alleged sexual assault of his five-year-old niece.

Ani was arraigned on a one-count charge of sexual assault but pleaded not guilty.

Justice Abiola Soladoye ordered his remand and adjourned

the case until April 3 for trial.

The prosecutor, Ms Funmi Oladiran, told the court that the offence was committed on January 21, 2025, at Ijegun, Lagos, alleging that the defendant penetrated the minor's private part with his finger.

She said eight witnesses would testify for the prosecution and urged the court to remand the defendant pending trial. The offence, she added, contravenes Section 261 of the Criminal Law of Lagos State.

Emefiele trial: Witness admits role in \$2.5m withdrawal

ABUJA

A prosecution witness, Bashirudeen Maishanu, on Thursday admitted responsibility for withdrawing \$2.5 million from a \$6.2 million payment allegedly linked to procurement fraud during the tenure of former Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor, Godwin Emefiele.

Maishanu, a Deputy Director in the CBN's Banking Supervision Department, testified before Justice Hamza Muazu in the ongoing trial of Emefiele on a 20-count amended charge bordering on criminal breach of trust, forgery, abuse of office and conspiracy.

Under cross-examination by defence counsel, Mr Matthew Burkaa, SAN, the witness told the court that the loss of the funds rested solely on him,

adding that he had unknowingly been involved in the withdrawal.

He said he did not receive instructions from Emefiele but from the former governor's personal assistant, Eric Ocheme, who is currently untraceable.

Maishanu also told the court that he was unaware the transaction was fraudulent until investigators confronted him with documents showing forged signatures of former President Muhammadu Buhari and former Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha.

He added that he had refunded a substantial part of the \$2.5 million and that the \$6.2 million was never used for its intended purpose.

Justice Muazu adjourned further hearing until Friday.

Court remands man over alleged theft of EFCC exhibit

IKEJA

An Ikeja Ikeja Special Offences Court on Thursday remanded one Philip Jordan for allegedly stealing an iPhone 14 Pro from the exhibit room of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

Jordan was arraigned on a two-count charge of stealing and dealing with property subject to forfeiture without authorisation. He pleaded not guilty.

Justice Rahman Oshodi declined an oral bail application

and directed the defence to file a formal motion, remanding the defendant pending trial. The case was adjourned to March 3.

The EFCC alleged that Jordan entered the exhibit room without authorisation and took the phone for personal use.

The prosecution said CCTV footage later implicated the defendant after he initially denied the allegation.

The offences are said to contravene relevant provisions of the EFCC Act, 2004, and the Criminal Law of Lagos State.



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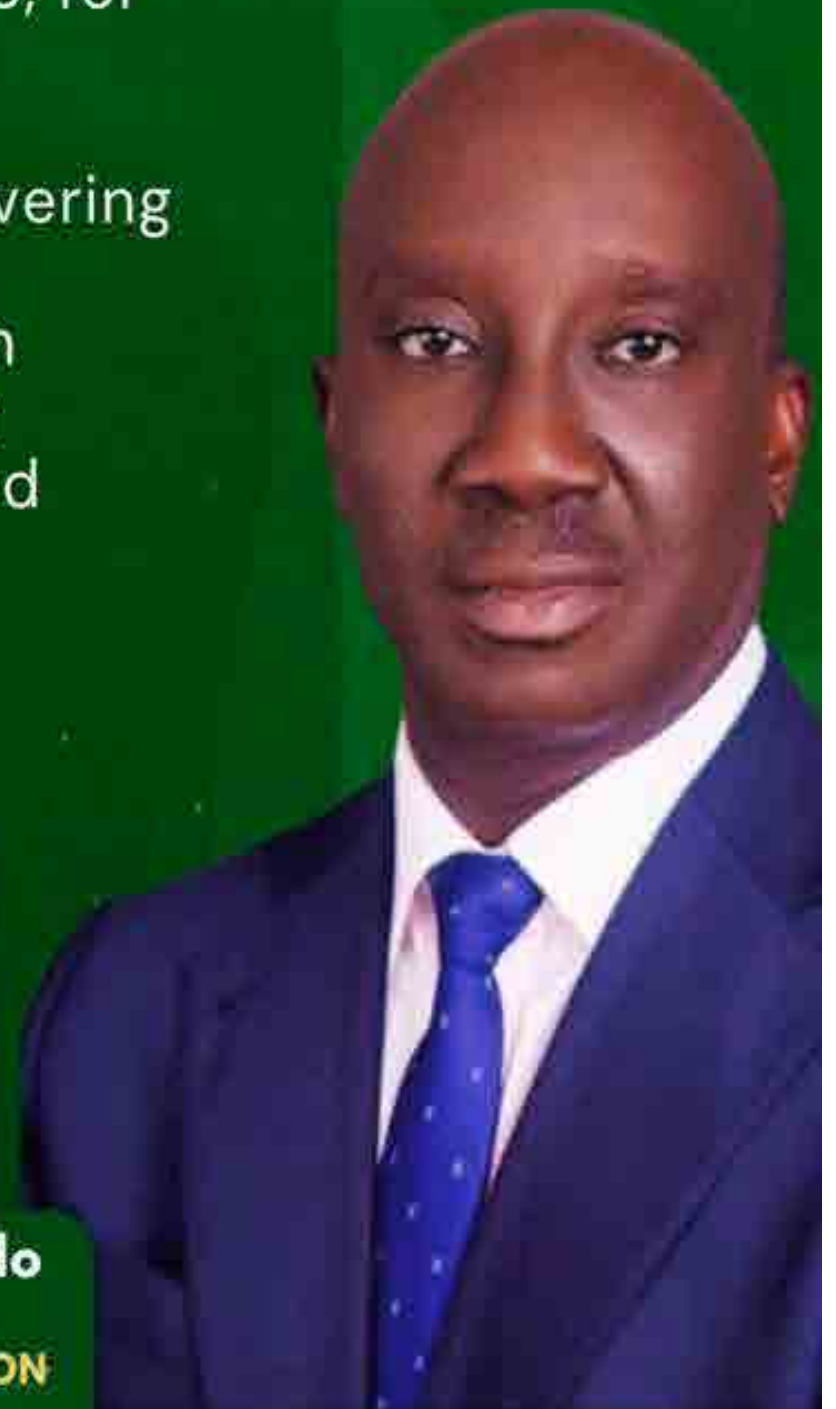
I sincerely thank His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo, for the trust and confidence reposed in me.

I remain committed to delivering diligent, accountable, and results-driven leadership in advancing Universal Health Coverage for a healthier and more inclusive Edo State.

HIS EXCELLENCY
**Senator Monday
Okpebholo**
THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR, EDO STATE.



Signed:
Dr. (Mrs.) Augusta Ikpea-Enaholo
DIRECTOR GENERAL
EDO STATE HEALTH INSURANCE COMMISSION



Foreign

NEWS

EU adds Iran's Revolutionary Guards to terrorist list

The European Union has added Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to its terrorist list in response to Tehran's deadly crackdown on protesters in recent weeks.

The bloc's top diplomat Kaja Kallas said EU foreign ministers took the "decisive step" because "repression cannot go unanswered".

She said ahead of the decision that the move would put the IRGC - a major military, economic and political force in Iran - on the same level as jihadist groups like al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group.

Human rights groups estimate thousands of protesters were killed by security forces, including the IRGC, during weeks of unrest in December and January.

Speaking in Brussels on

Thursday, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot described it as "the most violent repression in Iran's modern history" and said there could be "no impunity for the crimes committed".

France had previously been seen as hesitant to add the IRGC to the EU's terror list over fears this could put an end to all diplomatic ties with Iran.

But it changed course on Wednesday, coming out strongly behind a push to blacklist the group, which was led by Italy.

"Any regime that kills thousands of its own people is working toward its own demise," Kaja Kallas said in a brief statement on social media.

Kallas said she expected diplomatic channels to remain open with Iran, even after adding the IRGC to its list of groups involved in acts of terror.

Organisations on the EU's terrorist list are subject to sanctions including travel bans and asset freezes, with the aim of removing their support networks.

Iran's most powerful armed force, the IRGC was set up shortly after the 1979 revolution to defend the country's Islamic system. It is estimated to have about 190,000 active personnel, with capabilities across land, air and sea, as well as overseeing Iran's strategic weapons.

It exerts influence overseas by providing money, weapons, technology and advice to allied governments and armed groups, and also controls the paramilitary Basij Resistance Force inside Iran, which has hundreds of thousands of members and has been used to suppress dissent.

The EU has also placed new

sanctions on six entities and 15 individuals in Iran, including its Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni, Prosecutor General Mohammad Movahedi Azad, and Iman Afshari, a presiding judge.

"They were all involved in the violent repression of peaceful protests and the arbitrary arrest of political activists and human rights defenders," the bloc said in a statement.

Australia, Canada and the US have already classified the IRGC as a terror group but it has not been proscribed in the UK.

On Wednesday, UK Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy condemned Iran's "brutal oppression of peaceful protesters" but said it was long-standing government policy "not to comment on whether a specific organisation is being considered for proscription".

Heavy gunfire and blasts heard near airport in Niger's capital

Sustained heavy gunfire and loud explosions have been heard in Niger near the international airport outside the capital, Niamey.

Multiple eyewitness accounts and videos showed air defence systems apparently engaging unidentified projectiles in the early hours of Thursday.

The situation later calmed down, reports say, with an official reportedly saying the situation was now under control, without elaborating.

It is not clear what caused the blasts, or if there were any casualties. There has been no official statement from the military government.

The gunfire and blasts began shortly after midnight, according to residents of a neighbourhood near the Diori Hamani International Airport, the AFP news agency reports. They said calm returned after two hours.

The airport houses an air force base and is located about 10km (six miles) from the presidential palace.

One local resident told the BBC that shots had been fired from outside the airport, targeting planes.

Others described their fear as they heard the gunshots and explosions.

"We didn't sleep last night," said one resident. "Our room and the whole house was shaking from the gunshots and explosions," she said.

"Yesterday was the first time I have ever heard gunfire," another

woman said. "We were so scared."

Several unconfirmed reports said unknown assailants had thrown explosive devices towards the airport area before exchanging fire with security forces.

According to the FlightRadar24 website, several flights bound for Niamey have been diverted.

AFP reports there was a heavy security deployment around the airport on Thursday morning.

Niger is led by Abdourahmane Tiani who seized power in a 2023 coup that ousted the country's elected civilian president.

Like its neighbours Burkina Faso and Mali, the country has been fighting jihadists who have carried out deadly attacks across the region.

Early on Thursday morning, supporters of the military government took to the streets of Niamey to show their support for the authorities.

The country is a major producer of uranium.

A huge uranium shipment destined for export has been stuck at the airport amid unresolved legal and diplomatic complications with France after the military government nationalised the country's uranium mines.

"The situation is under control. There is no need to worry," the Anadolu news agency quoted a foreign affairs ministry official as saying, without elaborating.



IRAN GUARD CORPS:

Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

Talks ramp up to avert US government shutdown after Minneapolis shooting

Talks to avert a US government shutdown have intensified in Washington DC, with officials reportedly moving towards an agreement in negotiations over the Trump administration's immigration enforcement operation.

Democrats have been pushing to remove funding for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) from a \$1.2tn (£870bn) government spending package following the fatal shooting of 37-year-old Alex Pretti in Minneapolis on Saturday.

US media report that the White House and Senate Democratic leadership are nearing an agreement which would meet Democratic demands to introduce new restrictions on federal immigration agents.

It would mean five of the six spending bills could be passed before the Friday deadline, while

the DHS one would get a short-term extension to allow time for more discussion on the proposed new restrictions, like around the use of masks by agents.

If no deal is struck, the second shutdown within months will begin at one minute after midnight on Friday 30 January.

How likely is a government shutdown?

The spending bill has already passed in the House of Representatives, but needs 60 Senate votes to advance.

Among the changes Democrats are seeking are requirements that federal agents obtain warrants before making arrests and clearer rules governing how they identify themselves, according to US media reports.

There are only 53 Republican senators in the 100-member body, meaning that passing the bill will require at least some sup-

port from Democratic members.

Earlier this week, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said: "I will vote no on any legislation that funds ICE until it is reined in and overhauled, and Senate Democrats are overwhelmingly united on this issue."

Republican Senate Majority Leader John Thune has said that "productive" negotiations are ongoing.

If changes are made, the bill will need to be re-approved by the House, which is currently on recess.

On Wednesday, some Senate Democrats escalated their demands, expressly calling for DHS Secretary Kristi Noem's removal, and structural changes to both Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and US Border Patrol.

"This madness," Schumer said, "this terror must stop."

Some Republicans pushed back, with Texas's John Cornyn

saying that "any changes must not come at the expense of shutting down the government".

Averting a shutdown will require Republicans and Democrats to come to an agreement.

What is a 'partial shutdown' and who could be impacted?

The entirety of the US federal government will not be impacted by a shutdown if it does occur this weekend.

Already, legislation has been passed to fund dozens of agencies through the end of the 2026 fiscal year, which ends on 30 September.

Those agencies - including the justice department, FBI and Department of Veterans Affairs - will not be impacted.

But other branches are included in the same spending bill as DHS, including the defence department, health and human services, the treasury and the federal court system.

What could happen if the US strikes Iran? Here are seven scenarios

The US appears poised to strike Iran within days.

While the potential targets are largely predictable, the outcome is not.

So, if no last-minute deal can be reached with Tehran and President Donald Trump decides to order US forces to attack, then what are the possible outcomes?

1. Targeted, surgical strikes, minimal civilian casualties, a transition to democracy

US air and naval forces conduct limited, precision strikes targeting military bases of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and the Basij unit - a paramilitary force under the control of the IRGC - ballistic missile launch and storage sites as well as Iran's nuclear programme.

An already weakened regime is toppled, transitioning eventually to a genuine democracy where Iran can rejoin the rest of the world.

This is a highly optimistic scenario. Western military intervention in both Iraq and Libya did not bring a smooth transition to democracy. Although it ended brutal dictatorships in both cases, it ushered in years of chaos and bloodshed.

Syria, which conducted its own revolution, overthrowing President Bashar Al-Assad without Western military support in 2024, has so far fared better.

2. Regime survives but moderates its policies

This could broadly be called the "Venezuelan model" where by swift, powerful US action

leaves the regime intact but with its policies moderated.

In Iran's case, this would mean the Islamic Republic survived, which won't satisfy large numbers of Iranians, but is forced to curtail its support for violent militias across the Middle East, cease or curtail its domestic nuclear and ballistic missile programmes as well as easing up on its suppression of protests.

Again, this is at the more unlikely end of the scale.

The Islamic Republic leadership has remained defiant and resistant to change for 47 years. It appears incapable of changing course now.

3. Regime collapses, replaced by military rule

Many think this is the most likely possible outcome.

While the regime is clearly unpopular with many, and each successive wave of protests over the years weakens it further, there remains a huge and pervasive security deep state with a vested interest in the status quo.

The principal reasons why the protests have so far failed to overthrow the regime is because there have been no significant defections to their side, while those in control are prepared to use unlimited force and brutality to remain in power.

In the confusion of the aftermath of any US strikes it is conceivable that Iran ends up being ruled by a strong, military government composed largely of IRGC figures.

News

Foreign

France moves to abolish concept of marital duty to have sex

France is to enshrine in law the end of so-called "conjugal rights" – the notion that marriage means a duty to have sex.

A bill approved on Wednesday in the National Assembly adds a clause to the country's civil code to make clear that "community of living" does not create an "obligation for sexual relations".

The proposed law also makes it impossible to use lack of sexual relations as an argument in fault-based divorce.

Though unlikely to have a major impact in the courts, supporters hope the law will help deter marital rape.

"By allowing such a right or duty to persist, we are collectively giving our approval to a system of domination and predation by husband on wife," said the bill's sponsor, Green MP Marie-Charlotte Garin.

"Marriage cannot be a bubble in which consent to sex is regarded as definitive and for life."

The law will erase an ambiguity that has persisted despite there being no explicit mention of "conjugal duty" in any legal text.

Currently, the French civil code defines the duties of marriage as "respect, fidelity, support and assistance," and it says that couples commit themselves to a "community of living".

Nowhere in the texts is there any mention of "conjugal" - ie sexual - rights. The origins of that notion lie in medieval church law.

However judges in modern divorce suits have, from time to time, given a broad interpretation to the concept of "community of living" to include sexual relations.

In a famous case in 2019 a woman was found to have withheld sex from her husband for several years, and he was then granted a "fault-based" divorce implying guilt on her part.

But the woman then took her case to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), which last year condemned France for allowing refusal of sex to be grounds for a fault-based divorce.

This was hailed as an important advance by feminist campaigners.

The ECHR's decision has made it, in practice, impossible for any French divorce judge to make a similar ruling - which is why the new law is mainly intended as a clarification, with the change unlikely to have a major impact on the courts.

For campaigners, the notion that wives have a "duty" to agree to sex with their husbands is one that persists in parts of society and needs to be confronted.

The Mazan trial of 2024 - where a drugged and unconscious Gisèle Pelicot was repeatedly raped by men invited by her husband - is seen as emblematic. Several defendants said they assumed her consent because of what her husband had told them.

In France, as in most other countries, marital rape is now enshrined in law, where prior to 1990 men could argue that marriage implied consent.

Since November last year the legal definition of rape in France has also been expanded to include the notion of non-consent.

Ukraine receives 1,000 bodies in latest soldier swap with Russia

The bodies of 1,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been returned by Russia, Kyiv has said, in the latest exchange between the warring countries.

Russia received 38 bodies in return, Moscow's chief negotiator Vladimir Medinsky said.

Medinsky posted a photo on Telegram apparently showing the exchange, with individuals dressed in biohazard suits standing next to a line of white refrigerated trucks used to transport bodies.

Kyiv and Moscow have exchanged thousands of soldiers' bodies over the course of the almost four-year conflict. The latest exchange took place under an agreement reached by the two sides during negotiations in Istanbul in 2025.

Under that deal, Moscow and Kyiv agreed to return the bodies of 12,000 soldiers, as well as all sick and heavily wounded prisoners of war and those aged under 25.

The last swap took place in November last year when Russia returned 1,000 bodies to Ukraine and received 30 in return.

There has not been an ex-

change of prisoners of war since October 2025, with both sides accusing the other of stalling.

As the fourth anniversary of the start of Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022 inches closer, efforts at brokering a peace deal between the two countries continue.

Last week, Russian, Ukrainian and US negotiators met in the United Arab Emirates for the first trilateral talks since the war began.

The negotiations were described by all sides as constructive, but key territorial issues remain unresolved, including Russia's demand that Ukraine give up the 25% of the Donetsk region still under its control.

Despite the ongoing negotiations, both sides continue to exchange drone attacks.

At least five people were killed in Ukraine's Kharkiv region on Tuesday after a Russian drone struck a passenger train.

Russia has intensified its strikes on key infrastructure targets in recent months, leaving many people in Ukraine to face freezing temperatures without heating or power.



MEMBERS OF THE MING MAFIA:

Dozens of members of the Ming mafia were sentenced in 2025.

China executes 11 members of Myanmar scam mafia

China has executed 11 members of a notorious mafia family that ran scam centres in Myanmar along its north-eastern border, state media report.

The Ming family members were sentenced in September for various crimes including homicide, illegal detention, fraud and operating gambling dens by a court in China's Zhejiang province.

The Mings were one of many clans that ran the town of Laukkaing, transforming an impoverished backwater town into a flashy hub of casinos and red-light districts.

Their scam empire came crashing down in 2023, when they were detained and handed over to China by ethnic militias that had taken control of Laukkaing during an escalation in their conflict with Myanmar's army.

With these executions Beijing is sending a message of

deterrence to would-be scammers. But the business has now moved to Myanmar's border with Thailand, and to Cambodia and Laos, where China has much less influence.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been trafficked to run online scams in Myanmar and elsewhere in South East Asia, according to estimates by the UN. Among them are thousands of Chinese people, and their victims who they swindle billions of dollars from are mainly Chinese too.

Frustrated by the Myanmar military's refusal to stop the scam business, from which it was almost certainly profiting, Beijing tacitly backed an offensive by an ethnic insurgent alliance in Shan State in late 2023. The alliance captured significant territory from the military and overran Laukkaing, a key border town.

Who are the Ming family?

The eleven members of the

Ming family are the first of the Myanmar scam bosses to be executed by China.

But they will not be the last. Five members of the Bai family were also sentenced to death in November, and the trials of two other groups of defendants from the Wei and the Liu families have not yet concluded.

The Ming family's trial was held behind closed doors, although more than 160 people were allowed to attend their sentencing hearing last year, including families of victims.

The Ming mafia's scam operations and gambling dens brought in more than 10bn yuan (\$1.4bn; £1bn) between 2015 and 2023, according to China's highest court, which rejected their appeals in November. Their crimes resulted in the deaths of 14 Chinese citizens and injuries to many others, the court said.

More than 20 others from the Ming family were given jail sentences in September ranging from five years to life. Ming Xuechang, the clan's patriarch, killed himself in 2023 while trying to avoid detention, Myanmar's military had said back then.

The confessions of those who were arrested were aired in state media documentaries, to emphasise Chinese authorities' resolve to eradicate scam networks.

The Mings were among a handful of Godfather-esque families who rose to power in Laukkaing in the early 2000s. This was after the town's then warlord was ousted in a military operation led by Min Aung Hlaing, who became the leader of Myanmar's military government after the 2021 coup.

The head of the family, Ming Xuechang, ran one of the most infamous of Laukkaing's scam centres, Crouching Tiger Villa.

'I can breathe again' says Israeli hostage held for nearly 500 days in Gaza

A former Israeli hostage who was held for nearly 500 days in Gaza says the return of the body of the final hostage this week means all the released captives can "now breathe and start our lives again".

Thirty-year-old Sasha Troufanov, an Amazon electronics engineer, was taken hostage on 7 October 2023 by Palestinian Islamic Jihad gunmen. His fiancée Sapir Cohen, mother and grandmother were also kidnapped and taken to Gaza. The women were released after more than 50 days as hostages. He was freed a year ago, after 498 days in captivity.

In his first international interview, Troufanov, on a visit to London, told BBC News that with the return on Monday of Ran Gvili's body meaning all the hostages were back "it felt

wonderful. We waited so long for this to happen.

"I was carrying this burden ever since I came back. It was like a weight on my shoulders that kept me from coming back to my life. Although we were released, we didn't really come out of Gaza because our friends and brothers were still there."

But the moment was bitter-sweet for him as Monday was also the birthday of his father Vitaly. Troufanov only discovered his father had been murdered on 7 October on the day he was released in February 2025 and realised his dad wasn't there to meet him.

Troufanov and Cohen had been visiting his family on Kibbutz Nir Oz near the border with Gaza when Palestinian gunmen stormed their homes. Cohen rolled herself up in

blanket and hid under the bed but they were both captured. Troufanov was punched and also stabbed in the shoulder.

"I saw the terrorist with so much anger and hate in his face, holding his knife trying to stab me even more."

As the attackers tried to take Troufanov off the kibbutz he managed to momentarily escape but when he gave up running they still shot him twice in each leg.

"I just felt the rush of pain going through my brain and I fell to the ground then one of the terrorists hit me with the rifle from the back of my head and split it open."

When he arrived to Gaza, he says he was then beaten by civilians and thought "this is the moment you're going to die".

While in Gaza, Troufanov received almost no medical treat-

ment. He was taken once to a family home and once to a hospital where his broken leg was wrapped first with a wooden broom and then with part of a metal grill.

Unlike many other hostages, he was held almost entirely in isolation. For only two of the 498 days in captivity did Troufanov see another hostage.

Troufanov was released in February 2025 after 498 days in captivity

At the start he was held above ground, for more than six weeks locked in a cage and given barely enough food to survive. Here, he says he experienced sexual harassment where one guard repeatedly tried to encourage him to do a sexual act on himself. He also says a hidden camera filmed him when he was allowed a shower once a week.

Friday Sermon

Ramadan is Here: How Prepared Are You?

ABDUL-KADIR ABDULLAH

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. We praise Him, we seek His help, we seek His forgiveness, and we seek refuge in Allah from the evil of our souls and the consequences of our deeds. Whomsoever Allah guides, none can misguide, and whomsoever He leaves astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone, without partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad, peace be upon him is His servant and Messenger. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, his family, his companions, and all who follow them in righteousness until the Day of Judgment.

Servants of Allah, I advise you and myself to have taqwa, consciousness and fear of Allah, openly and secretly, in ease and in hardship, for taqwa is the provision that never runs out and the key to every goodness.

UNDERSTANDING THE GIFT OF RAMADAN

Beloved brothers and sisters, Allah, in His mercy, has blessed this Ummah with seasons of goodness, and among the greatest of them is the month of Ramadan which shall be witnessed in the coming weeks.

Allah says in the Qur'an: "O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may attain taqwa." (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:183)

Ramadan is not merely a month of hunger and thirst. It is a school of taqwa, a training ground for the soul, a time when hearts are softened, sins are forgiven, and ranks are raised.

The Prophet peace be upon him said: "When Ramadan comes, the gates of Paradise are opened, the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils are chained." (Bukhari and Muslim)

If the gates of mercy are opened, then preparation is required to benefit fully from what Allah has opened for us.

PREPARING THE HEART

The first and most important preparation for Ramadan is preparing the heart. And the following steps are required to prepare our hearts.

SINCERE INTENTION (NIYYAH):

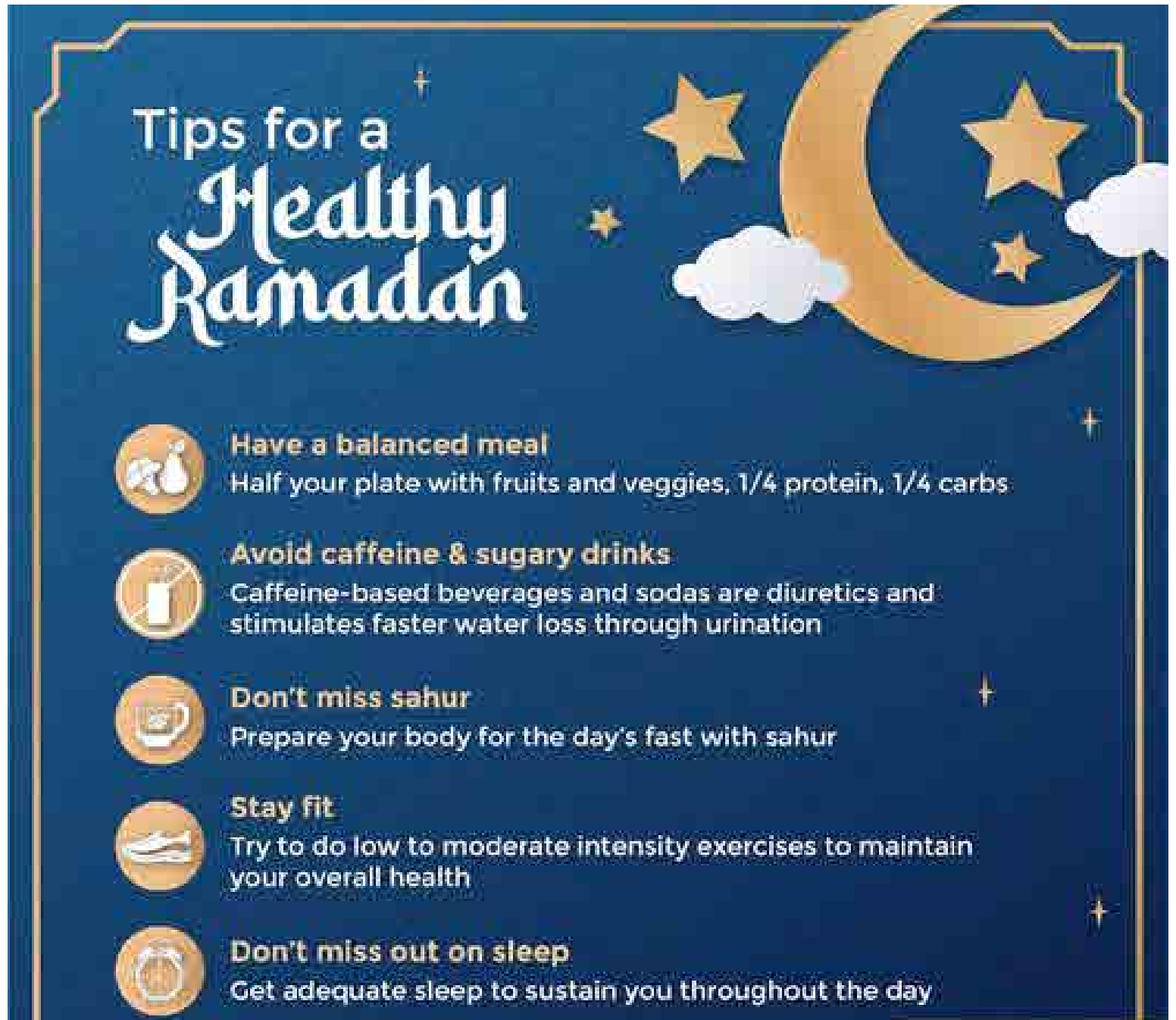
Enter Ramadan with a sincere intention to worship Allah alone. Do not fast to follow tradition, lose weight, or impress others. Fast because Allah commanded it and because you seek His pleasure.

REPENTANCE (TAWBAH):

Ramadan is a guest that may not return. How many were with us last year but are no longer alive today? Before Ramadan arrives, turn to Allah with sincere repentance. Leave sins, restore broken relationships, and purify your heart from hatred, envy, and arrogance.

FORGIVING OTHERS:

Whoever hopes for Allah's forgiveness should forgive people. Clean your heart so that Ramadan finds you



Tips for a Healthy Ramadan

- Have a balanced meal**
Half your plate with fruits and veggies, 1/4 protein, 1/4 carbs
- Avoid caffeine & sugary drinks**
Caffeine-based beverages and sodas are diuretics and stimulates faster water loss through urination
- Don't miss sahur**
Prepare your body for the day's fast with sahur
- Stay fit**
Try to do low to moderate intensity exercises to maintain your overall health
- Don't miss out on sleep**
Get adequate sleep to sustain you throughout the day

ready, not burdened with grudges.

PREPARING THE BODY AND HABITS

Islam is a religion of balance. Preparing for Ramadan also includes physical and practical readiness.

Training The Body: Begin to reduce excessive eating, sleeping, and distractions. The body that is disciplined before Ramadan will worship better during Ramadan.

GUARDING THE TONGUE AND EYES:

Fasting is not only from food and drink. The Prophet peace be upon him said: "Whoever does not give up false speech and acting upon it, Allah has no need of him leaving his food and drink." (Bukhari)

Therefore, prepare by controlling your speech, avoiding gossip, lies, insults, and harmful content.

ORGANIZING TIME:

Plan your days around salah, Qur'an, and good deeds. Ramadan rewards those who value time, not

those who waste it.

PREPARING FOR QUR'AN AND WORSHIP

Ramadan is the month of the Qur'an. Allah says: "The month of Ramadan in which the Qur'an was revealed as guidance for mankind." (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:185)

RECONNECT WITH THE QURAN:

Start reading and listening to the Qur'an before Ramadan begins. Set realistic goals, whether completing it once or more and focus on understanding and reflection, not speed alone.

STRENGTHENING SALAH:

Be consistent with the five daily prayers in congregation where possible. Prepare your heart for Taraweeh and Qiyam, knowing that standing before Allah in Ramadan is a great honour.

DU'A AND DHIKR:

Ramadan is a month when du'a is accepted. Train your tongue to remember Allah often, so that in Ramadan your

heart flows naturally with supplication.

PREPARING THROUGH CHARITY AND GOOD CHARACTER

Ramadan is also a month of generosity and mercy.

CHARITY (SADAQAH):

The Prophet, peace be upon him was the most generous of people, and he was even more generous in Ramadan. Prepare by planning how you will help the poor, support the needy, and contribute to good causes.

GOOD MANNERS:

Let Ramadan be a turning point in your character. Be patient, gentle, truthful, and kind. True fasting is seen in how we treat others.

Servants of Allah, Ramadan is approaching quickly. In a matter of weeks, we will be fasting for 29 or 39 days as the case may be. Whoever prepares early will gain much, and whoever enters it unprepared may leave it unchanged. Prepare your hearts, your habits, your worship, and your intentions, so that Ramadan transforms

you, not temporarily, but permanently.

I say these words of mine, and I seek forgiveness from Allah for me and for you. Seek His forgiveness; indeed, He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

All praise is due to Allah, abundant and pure praise as He loves and is pleased with. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, and that Muhammad, peace be upon him is His servant and Messenger.

O believers, remember that Ramadan is not guaranteed. If Allah allows you to witness it, then honour it. If He allows you to fast it, then protect it. And if He allows you to complete it, then preserve its lessons after it ends.

Ask Allah to let us reach Ramadan, to help us fast it with faith and hope, to stand in prayer during it sincerely, and to accept our deeds.

O Allah, allow us to reach Ramadan. O Allah, forgive our sins and purify our hearts.

O Allah, help us remember You, thank You, and worship You in the best manner.

O Allah, accept our fasting, our prayers, our charity, and our supplications.

Feature

THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AMONG YOUTH

Choosing quality over viral trends



CHUKWUFUMNAYAN ADIGWE

In recent years, social media has evolved from a space of casual interaction into one of the most powerful cultural forces shaping youth behaviour, values and aspirations. For today's young people, platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube and X (formerly Twitter) are not merely tools for communication; they are classrooms, marketplaces, stages and political arenas rolled into one. Influence is increasingly measured not by depth of insight or expertise, but by views, likes and the speed at which content travels. In this environment, virality has become the ultimate currency, often at the expense of quality.

The recent visit of American internet personality IShowSpeed to Nigeria offered a telling snapshot of this reality. His arrival sparked widespread excitement across social media, with content creators scrambling for proximity, visibility and relevance. Streams, skits, reaction videos and street content flooded timelines. While the enthusiasm was understandable, Speed is a global digital figure whose brand thrives on spontaneity and chaos! the moment raised an important question: what exactly are young people learning, promoting or aspiring to through such bursts of viral attention?

IShowSpeed's content style is unapologetically performative. It is loud, impulsive and deliberately unserious. Within his own context, this approach works because his audience understands the persona he plays. However, when such content becomes the

dominant template replicated by local creators, it exposes a deeper concern: a digital culture driven more by imitation than originality, and by noise rather than meaning. The rush to trend often overrides any sense of responsibility to contribute substance.

This is not an isolated phenomenon. It reflects the rise of shock-based virality in Nigerian social media spaces. Content styles popularised by creators such as Peller, known for exaggerated skits and repetitive humour, or the emergence of Egungun-style content built around spectacle, street chaos and crowd reactions, now dominate timelines. While entertaining in moderation, their saturation has crowded out more thoughtful, informative and educative material.

The issue is not that humour or entertainment has no place online. Creativity thrives on diversity. The concern arises when entertainment becomes hollow repetition, stripped of insight, purpose or cultural depth, and when influence is reduced solely to the ability to go viral, regardless of content or consequence. In such a climate, material is produced not to inform or inspire, but simply to trend.

For many young Nigerians, social media serves as both mirror and megaphone. It reflects societal values while amplifying them. When the most rewarded content is the loudest rather than the smartest, it subtly teaches that attention matters more than substance. Over time, this erodes standards, not only in content creation but also in public discourse.

There is also a clear economic di-

mension. In a country with limited opportunities and high youth unemployment, social media appears to offer a shortcut to success. A viral video can translate into brand deals, fame or short-term financial gain. Understandably, many young people chase this possibility. Yet virality is often fleeting. Algorithms shift, audiences move on, and creators without depth, skill or credibility struggle to sustain relevance. What follows is a cycle of constant chasing—the next trend, the next outrageous act, the next viral moment.

By contrast, quality-driven content—educational videos, thoughtful commentary, skill-based tutorials, cultural analysis and meaningful storytelling, often grows more slowly. It requires patience, research and consistency. It may not explode overnight, but it builds trust, authority and

long-term influence. In an ecosystem that rewards immediacy, such content is frequently undervalued.

Still, the future of social media among youth cannot be sustained on noise alone. As audiences mature, fatigue is setting in over recycled skits, forced accents, exaggerated reactions and empty trends. Increasingly, young users are seeking content that adds value—material that teaches, sharpens thinking or helps navigate real-life challenges. This subtle shift presents an opportunity.

At its best, social media is a powerful educational tool. It can democratise knowledge, amplify marginalised voices and make learning accessible beyond traditional classrooms. Nigerian youth creators already possess the creativity, cultural intelligence and lived experiences to produce engaging yet informative content. Areas such as history, finance, mental health, civic education, technology, fashion, wellness and media literacy offer space for young voices to reshape online conversations.

The responsibility, however, does not rest with creators alone. Audiences also shape digital culture. What people like, share and promote determines what thrives. When low-effort or harmful content consistently outperforms thoughtful work, it sends a clear signal about collective priorities. If better content is truly desired, it must be actively supported through engagement and amplification.

Social media platforms themselves are not neutral. Algorithms prioritise engagement, often without regard for quality or impact. This places an ethical burden on technology com-

panies to rethink how influence is rewarded, particularly in regions with large youth populations. Promoting educational creators, verifying credible voices and limiting the spread of harmful misinformation are steps that could help restore balance.

Moments like IShowSpeed's visit should not be dismissed as harmful in themselves, but they should prompt reflection. Viral events can offer insight into popular culture, but they should not define it entirely. Youth culture is richer and more complex than constant performance for clicks. If social media is to empower rather than distract, young people must reclaim intentionality in how they create and consume content.

Choosing quality over virality does not mean rejecting trends outright; it means interrogating them. It means asking what a piece of content adds, who it serves and what it normalises. Education does not have to be dull, and entertainment does not have to be empty. The most impactful creators are those who strike a balance, engaging audiences while leaving them more informed than before.

Ultimately, the future of social media among youth will be shaped by the choices made today. Will these platforms remain arenas of fleeting attention and recycled noise, or evolve into spaces of meaningful influence and collective growth? Viral trends come and go, but influence rooted in quality, knowledge and purpose endures. If young people are to truly own the future of social media, they must decide that visibility alone is not enough, impact matters more.

At its best, social media is a powerful educational tool. It can democratise knowledge, amplify marginalised voices and make learning accessible beyond traditional classrooms

Sports

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

AFCON 2025: CAF slams Senegal, Morocco for finals chaos

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) has sanctioned Senegal and hosts Morocco after disorder marred the TotalEnergies AFCON 2025 final in Rabat.

CAF said its Disciplinary Board punished the Senega-

lese and Moroccan federations, players and officials for breaching the CAF Disciplinary Code during and after the finals.

Senegal edged Morocco 1-0 after extra time, but protests, pitch confrontations and crowd unrest followed a controversial

Video Assistant Referee decision late in the match.

CAF handed Senegal coach Pape Bouna Thiaw a five-match suspension for unsporting conduct and fined him 100,000 dollars for bringing the game into disrepute.

Senegal players Iliman Ndiaye and Ismaila Sarr received two-match CAF bans for unsporting behaviour.

The Senegal federation was fined 615,000 dollars.

Morocco defender Achraf Hakimi got a two-match suspension, one suspended for a year. Midfielder Ismaël Saibari received a three-match ban and 100,000-dollar fine.

The Moroccan federation

was fined 315,000 dollars for ball boys' misconduct, VAR area invasion by officials and players, and supporters' use of laser pointers.

CAF also dismissed Morocco's protest alleging regulatory breaches by Senegal, ruling that the complaint lacked merit under AFCON regulations.

The final descended into chaos after a VAR-awarded penalty to Morocco triggered protests and a brief walk-off by Senegalese players, halting play for nearly 20 minutes.

Senegal goalkeeper Edouard Mendy later saved Brahim Díaz's penalty, before Pape Gueye scored in extra time to secure Senegal's historic victory.



SENEGAL AND MOROCCO AT THE AFCON 2025



Early Arumala goal seals Ikorodu City's Southwest derby win

Ikorodu City FC on Wednesday secured Southwest derby supremacy with a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Shooting Stars Sports Club in NPFL Match Day 23.

The encounter was played at the Mobolaji Johnson Arena, Onikan, Lagos, with a lively crowd witnessing an intense and closely contested fixture.

Joseph Arumala proved decisive, scoring in the second minute to hand the Oga Boys an early advantage they protected resolutely.

Arumala capitalised on a rebound after Shooting Stars goalkeeper Mustapha parried Tosin Oyedokun's initial shot.

Arumala reacted quickest, rifling the loose ball into the roof of the net before the Ibadan defence could recover.

The match carried emotional undertones, with former Ikorodu City Sporting Director, Tobi Adepoju, returning in Shooting Stars colours.

Also facing his former club was ex-Ikorodu City Technical Adviser Nurudeen Aweroro, now leading the Shooting Stars technical crew.

In spite of warm applause for the returning officials, sentiment gave way to competition as Ikorodu City remained focused on securing victory.

NPFL26, MD23: Bendel Insurance FC, Barau share points in Benin

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Bendel Insurance Football Club, Thursday evening experienced unexpected hitch and hiccups in their bid to bounce back to winning ways as they shared the spoils with visiting FC Barau of Kano in the match day 23 of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) that ended 0-0 in Benin.

The Benin Arsenal came into the game looking good enough to triumph over the less fancied but stubborn opponents in the first half but the visitors' resistance made it impossible.

Both teams laboured to a goalless draw after several wasted efforts in the match played at the Samuel Ogbemudia stadium. The goalless stalemate made it two games without any goal for the Benin Arsenal who have been in fine form with nine games unbeaten record until the match day 22 against Shooting Stars in Ibadan.

Coach Kennedy Boboye made five changes in the second half in his search for a goal but the visitors had their plans well executed as their defense and goalkeeper's heroics saved a point for them to take home.

Bendel Insurance Football Club, Sunday evening suffered a

1-0 defeat in the hands of arch rivals Shooting Stars Sports Club of Ibadan after their show of resilience and discipline.

Substitute Qamar Adegoke scored the only goal of the match in the 73rd minute to halt the Benin Arsenal's impressive run.

Recall that Bendel Insurance FC and Barau FC in their first round meeting on September 7, 2025 also settled for a 1-1 draw this season.



BENDEL INSURANCE FC

Edo 2026: Porbeni says 2nd Niger Delta Games not all-comers affair'

Former Director of Sports in Delta State, Seigha Porbeni has explained why the 2nd Niger Delta Games holding in Benin City from February 20-

27 is restricted to athletes below the age of 20 years only.

The maiden edition of the Games held in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, last year, was opened for

athletes below 25 years.

However, Porbeni, who is the Special Technical Adviser to the Chairman, Dunamis Icon and Consultant for the Niger Delta Games, Hon. Itiako Ikpokpo, told ND media, that after the maiden edition in Uyo, there was the need to change the format.

"The first Niger Delta Games in Uyo was U-25. We needed the elite class to embrace the program. We all know that anything above 20 years are close to retirement depending on levels of injuries, bringing us back to the problem we intend solving. Talents discovered in this U-20 category has longer competition years," he stated.



HANDBALL AT NIGER DELTA GAMES

Wellspring University makes history with Rugby

Wellspring University, Benin City, Edo State, has officially introduced Rugby Football Union, becoming the first university in the state to adopt the sport. The introduction was marked by a visit from the Edo State Rugby Team, led by Head Coach Obong Ntiense Williams, popularly known as "Mr Rugby" in Nigeria and his 5-man professional Rugby coaches from Lagos.

The university's management,

represented by Vice-Chancellor Professor Isaac Rotimi Ajayi, Registrar Dr. Mrs. Helen Uzezi Wara, and Sports Director Dr. Onuh Matthew Udaya, welcomed the team and expressed enthusiasm for the new program.

This development is timely, as the university will participate in the upcoming National Universities Games (NUGA) later this year, where rugby is a medal-winning event. The introduction of rugby is expected to enhance

sports development and promote teamwork among students.

The Edo State Rugby Team's visit was a follow-up to Wellspring College Lagos' involvement in rugby, demonstrating a growing interest in the sport. This initiative positions Wellspring University as a pioneer in rugby development in Edo State.

It will interest you to note that Edo State is a hub for rugby development in Nigeria. Last year, in recognition of the remarkable strides and

achievements recorded for the State in the Sports, an official approval was granted by the Ministry of Education to formally introduced rugby to 15 secondary schools as a pilot program of integrating Rugby into the school sports system. This has been the results of the "Catch Them Young" Rugby initiative planted since 2012 in Edo State, which has led to consecutive gold medal wins at the National U-15 Youth Games and beyond.



AKWA IBOM LIAISON COMMITTEE



Why Orhionmwon should produce Edo South's next senator

As a follow-up to last week's edition, I make a humble but firm appeal to the leadership of the All Progressives Congress (APC) to undertake a dispassionate review of the political antecedents of the Edo South Senatorial District as preparations gradually begin for the 2027 general elections. Such a review is not only timely but necessary, if the party is to uphold the principles of fairness, justice, inclusion, and internal democracy upon which it prides itself.

Edo South, often referred to as Edo Central's political and economic heartbeat, is a district with a long history of political participation and contribution to both state and national governance. Yet, when one carefully examines the pattern of senatorial representation in the district over the years, a troubling imbalance becomes evident.

Almost all the local government areas that constitute Edo South have, at one time or another, produced a senator— some even more than once. Despite its size, population, and political relevance, Orhionmwon Local Government Area has remained conspicuously sidelined in this critical aspect of political representation.

In a democracy, power-sharing and representation should reflect a sense of balance and fairness. While it is true that politics is driven by interests, negotiations, and strategy, courtesy and equity must not be completely sacrificed on the altar of political expediency. There comes a point where moral responsibility should prevail over elite consensus. That point, I submit, is now.

Orhionmwon deserves to produce the next senator for Edo South. This is not a sentimental argument, nor is it rooted in parochialism. It is a legitimate demand anchored on political justice, historical imbalance, and democratic ethics. Continually denying Orhionmwon this opportunity sends a dangerous signal that certain communities are permanently destined to remain spectators in the political process rather than active participants. Besides, Orhionmwon deserves massive development as a major oil and gas producing locality.

Even with its contribution to the economic fortunes of Nigeria, it is disheartening that large parts of Orhionmwon remain without electricity, while the Benin–Abraka Road, a major federal highway critical to the area's economic and social life, is still under prolonged construction. The slow pace of work on such an important artery continues to inconvenience residents and stifle development.

These shortcomings might have been avoided had an Orhionmwon indigene occupied the senatorial seat. With effective representation, the road project would likely have been com-



EDO STATE GOVERNOR, SENATOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLO

pleted, and electricity and other essential social amenities attracted to the area, improving the quality of life and fostering meaningful development.

More compelling, however, is the performance deficit of the current senator representing Edo South. Representation is not merely about occupying a seat in the Red Chamber; it is about advocacy, visibility, legislative contribution, and constituency engagement. By these standards, the district has been poorly served.

It is no secret that the current senator did not emerge as a result of overwhelming grassroots popularity or established political pedigree. His victory was largely circumstantial, riding on the wave of a national political movement— the so-called Obedient phenomenon, which swept through some parts of the country at the time. That movement, rather than personal credibility or long-standing engagement with the people of Edo South, provided the momentum that propelled him into office.

Elections won by providence rather than preparation often expose their weaknesses in governance. Since assuming office, there has been little evidence of robust representation. Constituency outreach has been weak, legislative presence largely unremarkable, and tangible constituency projects— those physical and social interventions that directly improve the lives of constituents are either non-existent or grossly inadequate. For a district that prides itself on political consciousness and civic awareness, this situation is deeply unsatisfactory.

Disturbingly, despite this lacklustre performance, the senator is reportedly warming up for another attempt at the

seat in 2027. This time under a different political platform, the APC. Politics, of course, allows for ideological migration, but party defection should not be mistaken for political reinvention. Changing party colours does not automatically translate into renewed legitimacy or improved capacity for representation.

Even more concerning are insinuations that the senator is allegedly banking on the support of powerful political figures at the national level, including the Senate President, to secure the APC ticket. While alliances and endorsements are part of politics, no candidate should be imposed on a politically enlightened district like Edo South through external influence. Such a strategy, if pursued, may prove to be a herculean task, given the growing awareness and assertiveness of the electorate.

Edo politics has evolved. The era when political decisions were taken exclusively in smoke-filled rooms far removed from the people is gradually fading. Today, voters are more informed, party members more vocal, and communities more determined to have a say in who represents them. Any attempt to override this reality through elite imposition risks backlash, internal party crisis, and eventual electoral defeat.

It is therefore baffling and indeed disappointing to see how some individuals still engage in backroom agreements with political bigwigs to enthrone lackeys, even when such candidates lack the political depth, grassroots acceptance, or moral authority to represent the people effectively. Worse still, some of these political demagogues are hardly rooted in the state or the district they seek to represent, yet they are packaged and projected as viable options simply be-

cause of who stands behind them.

This practice is unhealthy for democracy. It breeds resentment, deepens internal divisions, and alienates loyal party faithful who have laboured for years without recognition. When hard work, consistency, and grassroots engagement are repeatedly sacrificed for opportunism, the message sent to party members is clear: loyalty does not pay; proximity to power does.

For Edo South, and indeed for the APC, this is a dangerous precedent. Political parties thrive on trust, cohesion, and a sense of belonging. When segments of the party feel perpetually marginalised, enthusiasm wanes, mobilisation becomes difficult, and electoral fortunes suffer.

This is why the 2027 senatorial contest must be approached with wisdom and sensitivity. Orhionmwon should not merely be considered; it should be prioritised. More importantly, the ticket should be ceded to a credible personality from Orhionmwon with demonstrable political clout, grassroots acceptance, and a clear understanding of the district's socio-political dynamics.

Edo South does not need a senator who hides under the cloak of political godfathers outside the state. It needs a representative who draws strength from the people, not from distant power centres. True representation flows upward from the grassroots, not downward from imposed authority.

When candidates rely excessively on external influence, they often become disconnected from the everyday realities of their constituents. Such representatives are more accountable to their sponsors than to the people they are meant to serve. This undermines the very essence of representa-

tive democracy.

Furthermore, continued marginalisation of Orhionmwon significantly erodes the political morale of the district. Young people become disillusioned, party structures weaken, and civic participation declines. Over time, this sense of exclusion can morph into political apathy or protest voting— outcomes that no serious political party desires.

The APC must recognise that internal equity strengthens external appeal. A party that practises fairness within its ranks is better positioned to campaign credibly on justice and inclusion at the national level. Conversely, a party perceived as unfair or exclusionary internally will struggle to inspire confidence among the electorate.

Ceding the Edo South Senatorial District ticket to Orhionmwon in 2027 would therefore be more than a political decision; it would be a symbolic affirmation of fairness and corrective justice. It would demonstrate that the APC listens to its grassroots, values contribution over connection, and is committed to strengthening democracy from within.

This is not to suggest that Orhionmwon should produce just any candidate. On the contrary, competence, credibility, and character must remain paramount. The district has several individuals with proven political experience, party loyalty, and grassroots appeal— individuals who have paid their dues and are well positioned to offer purposeful representation in the Red Chamber.

As the countdown to 2027 gradually begins, the APC stands at a crossroads. It can either repeat the mistakes of the past, imposing candidates and deepening divisions or it can seize this opportunity to correct historical imbalances and restore confidence among its base.

The choice should be clear. Edo South deserves effective representation. Orhionmwon deserves inclusion. The APC deserves internal cohesion and electoral success. Aligning these interests is not only possible; it is imperative.

If democracy must truly serve the people, then justice must not only be done, it must be seen to be done. In 2027, justice demands that the Edo South Senatorial seat be ceded to Orhionmwon, represented by a candidate with genuine political clout, grassroots legitimacy, and unwavering commitment to service.

Anything less would be a disservice, not just to Orhionmwon, but to Edo South, the APC, and Nigeria's democratic journey.

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