

# CBN to launch Nigerian foreign exchange code, Jan. 28

OLUWATUNMISE OMOSEYIN

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has announced the approval and release of the Nigerian Foreign Exchange (FX) Code, a guideline aimed at regulating the conduct of authorised dealers in the country's foreign

exchange market.

In a statement issued by the apex bank on January 22, the CBN disclosed that the FX Code would be formally launched next week in Abuja.

"The Central Bank of Nigeria has approved the release of the Nigerian Foreign Exchange (FX) Code as a guideline to the

banking industry to promote the ethical conduct of authorised dealers in the Nigerian Foreign Exchange Market," CBN stated.

The bank further stated that the launch event would take place at its headquarters in Abuja.

"The Bank will formally launch the Code at the CBN

Head Office Auditorium, Abuja, on Tuesday, January 28, 2025," the apex bank added.

The FX Code is expected to serve as a standard framework for ensuring transparency and accountability among participants in the foreign exchange market.

Details of the Code's provi-

sions were not disclosed but the CBN's statement indicated that the FX is designed to align the practices of dealers with global standards and strengthen confidence in the foreign exchange market.

The event will likely attract stakeholders from the banking and financial sectors, as

the Code is seen as an essential step towards improving market discipline and boosting economic stability.

The formal launch underscores the CBN's continued efforts to enhance regulatory frameworks and ensure sustainable growth in the country's financial sector.

# The Nigerian Observer



...that the people may know

f t i g NigerianObserver @Nigerian\_Observer @NigerianObserver www.nigerianobservernews.com

**Finance Ministry, agencies push for increased budget allocation in 2025** —Pg 2

PUBLISHED SINCE MAY 29, 1968

VOL. 46, NO. 928

THURSDAY 23RD JANUARY, 2025.

**₦200**

# Edo govt approves recruitment of 500 teachers • *Raises magistrates' retirement age to 65*

RICHARD EWEKA

## BENIN CITY

The Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has approved the recruitment of 500 teachers to address the staffing challenges in public schools across the state's three senatorial districts. This initiative is aimed at improving the quality of

education and ensuring that schools are adequately staffed to meet the demands of modern learning.

The announcement was made by the newly sworn-in Commissioner for Education, Dr. Emmanuel Paddy Iyamu, during his resumption at the Ministry of Education in Benin City. Dr. Iyamu outlined the administration's priorities, emphasizing that the recruit-

ment process will be conducted in phases to systematically fill vacancies in public schools.

"Our goal is to transform the education sector by ensuring every school has sufficient qualified teachers.

"This recruitment exercise, the first of its kind under this administration, will be conducted transparently and based on merit," Dr. Iyamu stated.

The Commissioner stressed

that applicants should use the official government portal to apply and warned against paying money to intermediaries, as the process is entirely free.

He assured residents that successful candidates would be selected strictly on the basis of their qualifications and competence.

This announcement comes just one week after 360 new workers were absorbed into

the core civil service, replacing contract staff employed by the previous administration. Governor Okpebholo's swift actions in the areas of employment and governance highlight his commitment to creating sustainable jobs and addressing systemic challenges across key sectors.

Dr. Iyamu added, "The Governor's approval of these recruitments underscores his passion for education and his dedication to the future of Edo children.

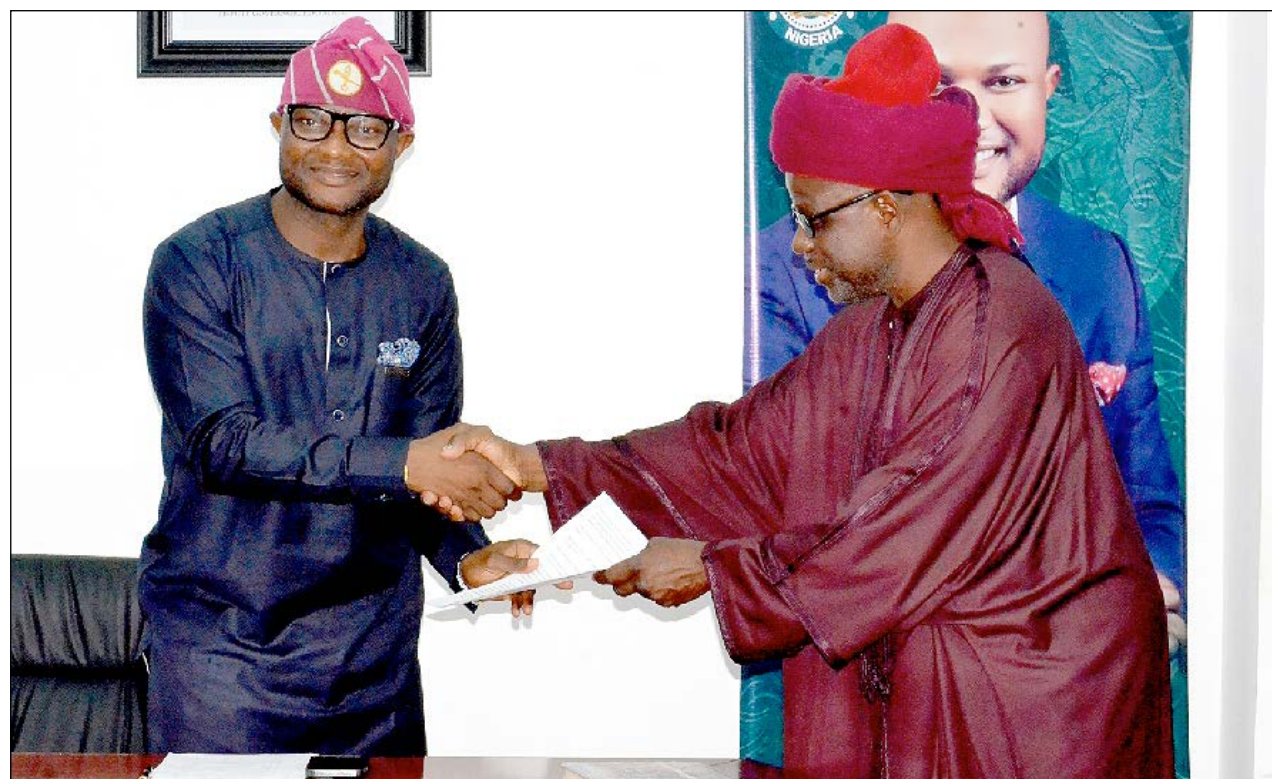
"A new dawn is here, and we are ready to drive educational

and infrastructural development across the state."

The government's proactive approach is expected to end the longstanding issue of understaffed schools in Edo State, ensuring that every child has access to quality education.

Meanwhile, the Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has signed two significant bills into law, introducing notable reforms in the state's judiciary and oil sector governance.

CONTINUES ON PG 2 >>



COURTESY VISIT:

Edo State Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa (left), receiving a copy of the speech read by the Chief Imam of Benin Central Mosque, Sheikh Abdulfatai Enabulele, who is also the leader of the delegation of Edo South League of Imams, during a courtesy visit to Government House, Benin City

## LUTH CMD calls for improved health worker salaries

JOY ODOR

The Chief Medical Director of Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), Prof. Wasiu Adeyemo, has called for increased remuneration for Nigerian health workers to curb the ongoing brain drain in the healthcare sector.

Speaking during a budget defense session with the House of Representatives Committee on Healthcare Institutions, chaired by Hon. Patrick Umoh, Prof. Adeyemo highlighted the urgent need to address the economic challenges driving skilled professionals abroad.

"Resignations happen every day. In the next one or two years, if nothing is done, all the hospitals could be empty," he warned. Similarly, Prof. Emem Bas-

sey, CMD of the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, disclosed that over ₦1 billion allocated for staff salaries in 2024 had to be returned due to unfilled vacancies caused by staff departures seeking better opportunities abroad.

Other CMDs, including those from the University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan, and University Teaching Hospital, Ila Orangun, Osun State, joined the call for better compensation packages, emphasizing the urgent need to retain skilled professionals and avert a looming healthcare crisis.

Hon. Patrick Umoh assured stakeholders of the committee's commitment to ensuring the judicious use of allocated funds while stressing the importance of fiscal responsibility for a better Nigeria.

**UI students protest 82-day power outage in UCH** —Pg 2

**Doctors declare 3-day strike in Abuja, shut hospitals** —Pg 5

**Traditional medicine is best in treating chronic illnesses —Dr. Joy Opara** —Pgs 6&7

**Women's Cricket W/ Cup: Nigeria qualify for super six despite loss to South Africa** —Pg 12

# Finance Ministry, agencies push for increased budget allocation in 2025

JOY ODOR

The Ministry of Finance, Fiscal Responsibility Commission (FRC), and other agencies have appealed to the House of Representatives Committee on Finance to increase their funding allocations for the 2025 fiscal year.

During a budget defense session at the National Assembly in Abuja on Tuesday, the Minister of State for Finance, Doris Uzoka-Anite, highlighted the ministry's achievements in 2024 and outlined its financial needs for 2025. She reported 100% performance in personnel and overhead costs

for 2024 but noted only 22% implementation of capital expenditures. For 2025, the ministry proposed a total budget of ₦13.511 trillion.

"In 2024, our total budget was ₦8.1 billion, which included ₦2.4 billion for personnel, ₦1.8 billion for overhead, and ₦3.8 billion for capital expenditure. However, only 22% of capital allocations were utilized," Uzoka-Anite explained. "For 2025, we propose ₦2.5 billion for personnel, ₦3.6 billion for overhead, and ₦7.4 billion for capital expenditure, bringing the total to ₦13.511 trillion."

She emphasized the need for increased funding to address

exchange rate pressures, international commitments, and infrastructural rehabilitation. Uzoka-Anite urged the committee to improve capital and overhead allocations, highlighting challenges such as delayed staff payments and insufficient funding for key activities.

The Fiscal Responsibility Commission (FRC) also presented its budget, requesting ₦1.697 billion for 2025. Chairman Victor Muruakor

expressed concerns about inadequate personnel and capital funding, revealing that only 38.18% of the 2024 capital allocation had been released.

"Our staff require specialized training to effectively monitor revenues and ensure compliance with the Fiscal Responsibility Act," Muruakor said. "Despite these challenges, the commission facilitated the generation of ₦1.8 trillion in revenue in 2023, and ₦1.1 trillion by September

2024. With adequate funding, we can achieve even more."

Similarly, other agencies, including the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), cc DX Nigerian Bulk Electricity Trading (NBET), and the Ministry of Interior, defended their budget of him. RMAFC Chairman Muhammad Shehu cited operational constraints and ensure effective service delivery.

For 2025, RMAFC proposed ₦5.58 billion, comprising ₦3.599 billion for personnel, ₦1.066 billion for overhead, and ₦906 million for capital projects. Shehu called for additional funding to address operational constraints and ensure effective service delivery.

The agencies collectively appealed for increased budgetary allocations to strengthen their capacities and deliver on their mandates effectively.

## FUNAAB graduates 120 first class at 32nd convocation

The Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta will on Saturday hold its 3rd convocation during which 3567 undergraduates will be graduating out of which 120 made First Class with 1626 finishing Second Class Upper.

A further breakdown shows that 1624 graduating students made Second Class Lower, 164 finished with Third Class and another 33 are graduates of Veterinary Medicine.

The Vice-Chancellor of the university, Prof Babatunde Kehinde disclosed this on Wednesday during a media briefing held to commemorate the university's 32nd convocation which holds on Saturday.

Kehinde said, "There will also be 30 Postgraduate Diplomas, 274 Masters degrees graduates, and 136 PhD holders who will be part of the convocation."

The VC explained that the university has equally added eight new academic programmes including Library and Information Science, Industrial Chemistry, Cyber Security, Software Engineering among others.

Kehinde said the university now runs 38 fully accredited programmes by the National University Commission with 54 departments.

Giving further progress of the university in the last year, the VC said that the NUC approved six research proposals of over ₦171m for its researchers while many of its scholars equally won international

grants amounting to several thousands of dollars and Euros.

Kehinde hailed Tetfund for rising to the challenge of funding the universities saying that 19 projects cutting across academics and research are currently being undertaken by Tetfund in the university.

Answering questions on the challenge of food crisis in the country, the Vice-Chancellor said "We must explore the option of Public Private Partnerships to drive an increase in food production.

"We have done that with 30 organisations and we are already seeing results. I equally encourage that we all embrace backyard farming, we all have to get involved to tackle this challenge".

The VC also said that the school has received over ₦133m from the National Education Loans Fund for the first batch of 1300 students who applied for the student loan while another batch of 1638 is waiting to be credited for the year 2025.

Highlights of the convocation include the convocation lecture to be delivered by Mohammed Ibrahim, the Executive Secretary of the National Agricultural Development Fund, an exhibition of farming machinery as well as honouring of two past Vice-Chancellors of the university; Prof Olusola Oyewole and Prof Kolawole Salako who would have some monuments named after them.



### PROTESTING STUDENTS:

Some of the University of Ibadan protesting students demanding immediate restoration of power after a two-month blackout that has crippled academic activities in Ibadan.

## INEC fixes Feb 21 for FCT area council elections

The Independent National Electoral Commission has stated that the federal capital territory area council elections will be held on February 21, 2026.

The INEC chairman, Mahmood Yakubu, stated this on Wednesday during a consultative meeting with political parties in Abuja.

According to Yakubu, the last area council election in the FCT was held on February 12, 2022, adding that the tenure of the current chairmen and councillors will end next year.

"Consequently, the commission has approved that the 2026 area council election in FCT will be held on Saturday 21st February 2026.

"Voting will take place in all the designated Polling Units across the 68 constituencies

to elect the six Area Council Chairmen and 62 Councillors.

"In compliance with the mandatory legal requirements, the notice for the election will be published next month i.e. 26th February 2025. Party primaries will be held from 9th - 30th June 2025. The candidate nomination portal will open from 9.00am on 21st July 2025 to 6.00pm on 11th August 2025," he said.

Yakubu said the final list of candidates will be published on September 22, 2025, adding that campaigns will commence on September 24 and end at midnight on February 19, 2026.

"The detailed timetable and schedule of activities for the election as well as the list of constituencies and type of elections in the FCT will be uploaded to our website before the end of this meeting.

"Hard copies of the two documents have been included in your folders for this meeting. For your guidance, we are also including the hard copies of the regulation and guidelines for political parties in 2022 in your folders while the softcopy is already available from our website [www.inecnigeria.org](http://www.inecnigeria.org).

"In due course, the commission will come up with plans for other routine activities such as the resumption of nationwide Continuous Voter registration and the conduct of outstanding bye-elections," he added.

The INEC chairman said regarding the Anambra State governorship election to be held on November 8, 2025, the next activity is the conduct of primaries by political parties.

"May I remind leaders of political parties that primaries for

the nomination of candidates for the Anambra State Governorship election begin in the next two months, that is, 20th March to 10th April 2025.

"You may similarly recall that at our last regular meeting, we agreed that you would forward your schedule of activities for the election to the commission to enable us to work together and plan better for the deployment of personnel and resources for the monitoring of your party primaries and campaign activities, to avoid the last-minute rush with the attendant inability to meet deadlines and unnecessarily dissipate our energy and lean resources.

"So far, only a few parties are in compliance. I urge those that have not done so to submit the details by the end of this week," he said.

## UI students protest 82-day power outage in UCH

Some of the protesting students demand an immediate restoration of power after a two-month blackout that has crippled academic activities in Ibadan.

Angry students of the University of Ibadan in Oyo State have staged a peaceful protest against the 82-day power outage at the University College

Hospital.

UCH Ibadan is the teaching hospital where medical students from UI are trained. The teaching hospital has been experiencing a power outage since last year due to debt owed to the Ibadan Electricity Distribution Company

CONTINUE ON PG 5 >>

## Edo govt approves recruitment of 500...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

The first bill increases the retirement age for magistrates in Edo State from 60 to 65 years.

According to a statement issued by the Governor's Chief Press Secretary, Fred Itua, the decision is intended to bolster the judiciary by retaining experienced magistrates for longer,

thereby improving the quality and efficiency of justice delivery in the state.

Governor Okpebholo stated, "These legislative actions align with our vision of enhancing judicial integrity and optimizing the benefits of our natural resources for the people of Edo State."

The second bill expands the

membership of the state's oil agency.

The expansion is designed to enhance governance, ensure better representation, and improve the operational efficiency of the agency in managing Edo's oil resources.

At the signing ceremony, the governor reaffirmed his administration's dedication to

building robust institutions that promote justice and drive economic growth.

The statement concluded that the new laws take immediate effect, with stakeholders expressing optimism about their anticipated positive impacts on governance, resource management, and service delivery in Edo State.



# EXIT OF A DISTINGUISHED STATESMAN

**W**ith gratitude to God for a life well spent, Edo State Government announces the transition to glory of **MAJOR GENERAL GODWIN ABBE (RTD) mni, CFR**  
Aged **75 Years**

*Burial Arrangements:*

**THURSDAY 23 JANUARY 2025 AT: 3PM**  
Service of songs at United Benin Baptist Church, 45 Mission Road, Benin City, Edo State.

**FRIDAY 24 JANUARY 2025 AT 11 AM**  
Commendation service at United Benin Baptist Church. Followed by interment at a private ceremony.

**SATURDAY 25 JANUARY 2025 AT 12NOON**  
Celebration of life at Nigerian Air Force Base, Off Airport Road, Benin City, Edo State.

**SUNDAY 26TH JANUARY 2025 AT 9AM**  
Outing Service and Thanksgiving at United Benin Baptist Church.

**Major General  
GODWIN  
ABBE** mni, CFR

**Signed: Major General CHARLES AIRHIAVHERE (Rtd)  
Chairman, Edo State Burial Committee.**



## NEWS

## Delta NBA arrests fake lawyer impersonating member

Vigilant members of the Nigerian Bar Association, Udu Branch, in Delta State, led by David Omage, have apprehended a fake lawyer, Olubuwe Ossai Silas.

It was further reported that Silas was caught red-hand-

ed affixing a lawyer's seal to a document and preparing legal documents using lawyers' names.

As a result, the Chairman of the NBA Udu Branch, Edmund Odohisi, reported the incident and filed a formal

complaint at the Ovwian Police Station, where Silas is currently being held.

He stated that the Divisional Police Officer assured him that "the case will be thoroughly investigated and used as a deterrent to others who engage in

similar acts."

Odohisi added that "this incident highlights the NBA's zero-tolerance policy towards quacks and infiltrators in the legal profession.

"The full extent of the law must be applied in this case,"

he stated.

He also noted that the NBA Udu Branch has been proactive in addressing issues of impersonation, having previously warned against the unlawful use of NBA

car stickers by non-lawyers.

"With this latest development, the branch reinforces its commitment to upholding the integrity of the legal profession," he said.



## DONATION TO NUJ:

Akwa Ibom State, Prince Enobong Uwah (left), presenting the key and particulars of a brand new SUV car donated by the state government to the state chairman of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Comrade Amos Etuk on behalf of Governor Umo Eno.

## AKTH refutes allegations of unauthorised womb removal

The Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital has refuted allegations circulating on social media that its medical staff removed a patient's womb without her consent in 2017.

The accusation, reportedly made by the patient during a radio programme in Kaduna, has sparked public outrage.

In a statement released on Wednesday, the hospital's Chief

Medical Director, Dr. Abdurrahman Sheshe, described the allegations as "baseless and damaging" to the hospital's reputation.

Sheshe clarified that the patient in question underwent life-saving surgery in 2012 due to complications during pregnancy.

He emphasised that proper consent was obtained before the procedure.

"The allegations are unfounded and do not reflect the hospital's standards of care. The surgery was conducted to save the patient's life, and all protocols, including obtaining informed consent, were followed," Sheshe stated.

In a move to ensure transparency, the hospital has forwarded the case details to the Federal Ministry of Health and

other relevant agencies.

"We remain committed to upholding transparency and will fully cooperate with relevant authorities to ensure the truth prevails," the management said.

The hospital urged the public to disregard the claims and assured Nigerians of its dedication to providing quality healthcare services.

## Fed lawmaker calls for stronger opposition, criticizes agric budget cuts

Hon. Marcus Onobun, the representative for Esan Central/West/Igubeen Federal Constituency of Edo State, has expressed concern over internal divisions within the People's Democratic Party (PDP), emphasizing the critical role of a united opposition in maintaining a healthy democracy.

Speaking in Abuja on Tuesday, the immediate past Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly highlighted the need for the PDP to address its leadership struggles.

"It's concerning to see the PDP in disarray, but it's not surprising. A strong opposition is crucial for holding the government accountable. Without it, even the best government can become compla-

cent," he said.

Reaffirming his loyalty to the PDP, Hon. Onobun stressed that political affiliation should never overshadow the primary duty of serving the people. "Whether you belong to the PDP, APC, or any other party, the focus should be on delivering good governance and improving lives," he stated.

The federal lawmaker also called on Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, to collaborate with local leaders and experts to ensure progress in the state.

"I hope the governor focuses on governance. The people of Edo deserve a government working to meet their aspirations," he added.

Shifting focus to the 2025 national budget, Hon. On-

obun, who chairs the House Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, criticized the drastic reduction in funding for the Ministry of Agriculture.

He warned that the cut—from over ₦200 billion in 2024 to about ₦70 billion in 2025 could hinder efforts to stabilize the economy and combat food insecurity.

"2025 is a year of hope, following the economic challenges of 2023 and the palliative measures in 2024. However, the reduced agricultural budget is shocking and could jeopardize food security and rural development," he remarked.

Hon. Onobun disclosed that his committee has raised concerns with the Appropriations

Committee and written to the executive, urging a reassessment of the allocation.

"This is not the time for excuses. Nigerians need real solutions. The budget must reflect the aspirations of the people by addressing food security and stabilizing the economy," he stressed.

He emphasized that Nigerians are yearning for tangible results. "People want a budget that instills confidence and addresses their needs—not just political interests," he concluded.

As the 2025 budget debate continues, Hon. Onobun remains optimistic that the government will prioritize the welfare of Nigerians, ensuring a future filled with hope and progress.

## Edo advances integration of traditional, orthodox medicine

OLUWATUNMISE OMOSEYIN

The Edo State Traditional Medicine Board is leading efforts to integrate traditional and orthodox medicine into the state's healthcare system to promote a more holistic approach to healthcare delivery.

Dr. Joy Amina Mike Opara, pharmacist and Secretary to the Board in a chat with newsmen in Benin City highlighted the Board's publicity campaign to promote traditional medicine and emphasize its significance in complementing orthodox medicine.

She underscored the need for a balanced approach that combines the strengths of both systems for better health outcomes.

"Traditional medicine is as old as man's existence. When God created man, He created

plants even before man. Traditional medicines are derived from natural sources, and nature is our friend—we can't go wrong with it," she explained.

Dr. Opara noted that 50% of orthodox medicines originate from natural sources, encouraging greater trust in traditional remedies.

"If we can trust orthodox medicine, we should trust the natural sources where 50% of it comes from," she added.

She emphasized that traditional and orthodox medicine are not rivals, but complementary, with each offering unique benefits.

According to her, while orthodox medicine excels in emergency care, traditional medicine can provide effective solutions in areas like blood-boosting remedies for cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy.

## Finance Ministry, agencies push for increased budget allocation in 2025

JOY ODOR

The Ministry of Finance, Fiscal Responsibility Commission (FRC), and other agencies have appealed to the House of Representatives Committee on Finance to increase their funding allocations for the 2025 fiscal year.

During a budget defense session at the National Assembly in Abuja on Tuesday, the Minister of State for Finance, Doris Uzoka-Anite, highlighted the ministry's achievements in 2024 and outlined its financial needs for 2025. She reported 100% performance in personnel and overhead costs for 2024 but noted only 22% implementation of capital expenditures. For 2025, the ministry proposed a total budget of ₦13.511 trillion.

"In 2024, our total budget was ₦8.1 billion, which included ₦2.4 billion for personnel, ₦1.8 billion for overhead, and ₦3.8 billion for capital expenditure. However, only 22% of capital allocations were utilized," Uzoka-Anite explained. "For 2025, we propose ₦2.5 billion for personnel, ₦3.6 billion for overhead, and ₦7.4 billion for capital expenditure, bringing the total to ₦13.511 trillion."

She emphasized the need for increased funding to address exchange rate pressures, international commitments, and infrastructural rehabilitation. Uzoka-Anite urged the committee to improve capital and overhead allocations, highlight-

ing challenges such as delayed staff payments and insufficient funding for key activities.

The Fiscal Responsibility Commission (FRC) also presented its budget, requesting ₦1.697 billion for 2025. Chairman Victor Muruakor expressed concerns about inadequate personnel and capital funding, revealing that only 38.18% of the 2024 capital allocation had been released.

"Our staff require specialized training to effectively monitor revenues and ensure compliance with the Fiscal Responsibility Act," Muruakor said.

"Despite these challenges, the commission facilitated the generation of ₦1.8 trillion in revenue in 2023, and ₦1.1 trillion by September 2024. With adequate funding, we can achieve even more."

Similarly, other agencies, including the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), cc DX Nigerian Bulk Electricity Trading (NBET), and the Ministry of Interior, defended their budget of him. RMAFC Chairman Muhammad Shehu cited funding shortfalls, exchange rate fluctuations, and tariff issues as significant challenges.

For 2025, RMAFC proposed ₦5.58 billion, comprising ₦3.599 billion for personnel, ₦1.066 billion for overhead, and ₦906 million for capital projects. Shehu called for additional funding to address operational constraints and ensure effective service delivery.

## NEWS

# Doctors declare 3-day strike in Abuja, shut hospitals

Association of Resident Doctors, Federal Capital Territory Administration (ARD FCTA) has commenced a three-day warning strike over unpaid salaries, allowances, and other demands.

The strike has grounded activities in government hospitals in Abuja.

The President of ARD

FCTA, Dr George Ebong, disclosed this in a press briefing in Abuja on Wednesday.

Dr Ebong said the strike came after a three-week ultimatum issued last year by the doctors elapsed.

Speaking on behalf of ARD, Dr Ebong decried the neglect of hospitals and doctors' welfare in the nation's capital.

He stressed that doctors in Abuja have abandoned projects, calling on the Minister of FCT, Nyesome Wike, to intervene to avoid an indefinite shutdown of hospitals.

According to him, the decision to embark on the three-day warning strike is a fallout from its members' Congress held on Tuesday.

"The three-day strike is being implemented across all government hospitals in Abuja. From Wuse to Asokoro, Maitama, Kubwa, Zuba, Kwali, Abaji, Nyanya, and all of our hospitals in Abuja.

"We gave the government a three-week ultimatum to meet our demands, and after that, we met with them and dia-

logue on several occasions.

"They pleaded for two weeks, but after that elapsed, nothing has been done. Not even the minimum thing. We expected them to pay for the 6 months of unpaid arrears to doctors."

Honestly, doctors have abandoned projects. Just as the roads are being constructed, the welfare of doctors should

be considered by the minister.

"After this three-day strike, we will do an appraisal. If nothing is done, we will go on an indefinite strike.

"We want the Minister of FCT to solve this problem to avert an indefinite shutdown of the hospitals in Abuja," he said during the press briefing on Wednesday.

## Gov. Umo Eno donates vehicles to Journalists

**IKOT EKPENE UDO  
(AKWA IBOM)**

Governor Umo Eno of Akwa Ibom State has once again demonstrated his commitment to fostering strong ties with the media through a generous donation during the NUJ 2025 Thanksgiving Service held at The Apostolic Church, Ikot Ekpene Udo.

The Governor presented an SUV to the State Chairman of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Comrade Amos Etuk, as a gesture of appreciation for his leadership and dedication to the union.

In a further display of support, Gov. Eno announced the donation of 10 brand-new vehicles to members of the NUJ State Working Committee (SWC).

The thanksgiving service, held in Gov. Eno's hometown, was a platform for reflec-

tion, gratitude, and goodwill. Journalists who attended the event expressed profound appreciation for the Governor's remarkable act of generosity, which has been described as unprecedented in the history of the union.

"This is a clear testament to Gov. Eno's media-friendly disposition and his understanding of the important role of journalists in society. We are grateful to God and the Governor for this extraordinary support," said Comrade Dominic Akpan, the NUJ State Secretary.

The Governor's gesture has been widely lauded as a significant boost to the morale of journalists in the state, further solidifying his reputation as a leader who values the contributions of the press.

Attendees at the service prayed for Gov. Eno, asking for divine guidance and blessings upon his administration.

## UI students protest 82-day power outage...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 2

(IBEDC).

Addressing journalists, the President of the UI Student Union Government, Comrade Bolaji Aweda, described the blackout as persistent, saying it has crumbled academic activities within the hospital and the university.

He said the situation has lingered for over 82 days as students could not study well.

Aweda said the blackout was a power play between the authorities of the IBEDC and UCH.

"The blackout has lingered for over 82 days now and for over two months, there has been no light at the University College Hospital which has affected the livelihood of our students," he said.

"The lack of electricity is why we are out on the street today. We have reached out to the school management several times. It is a kind of powerplay between the University College management and the University of Ibadan management."

Among other things, the SUG President said the demands of the protesting students were "the immediate

restoration of light to the University College Hospital and all hospitals in Nigerians who are currently facing the same blackout."

He also called for the implementation of the 50 per cent discount on tariffs announced by the Federal Ministry of Power in 2024, as well as the revamping of the nation's healthcare sector.

In his remarks, the Student Leader, Sunday Tobilola, said that the peaceful protests would be backed by a series of engagements with stakeholders to get it resolved.

He maintained that the failure to fix the power challenges would result in full action to drive home their demand.

The peaceful protesters, thereafter, moved from the UCH to the Governor's Office at the Secretariat in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital.

At the secretariat, the protesters were received by Sunday Odokoya, the Executive Assistant on Security to Governor Seyi Makinde.

He assured the protesters that the state government would liaise with the Federal Government to find a solution to the crisis.



### GRADUATION CEREMONY:

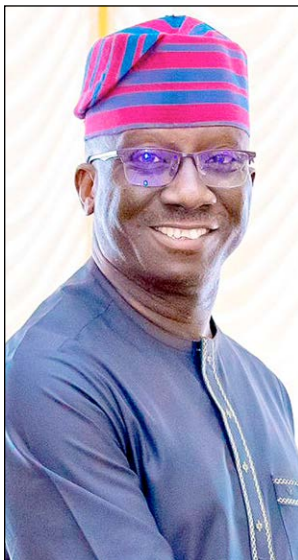
Kano State Governor, Abba Kabir Yusuf (2nd right), during the graduation ceremony and distribution of empowerment packages for 340 graduates of the Institutes of Horticulture and Livestock, in Bagauda.

## Okpebholo hails PPP at Elixir supermarket, restaurant launch

**BENIN CITY**

The Executive Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has praised the positive impact of public-private partnerships on the state's economic growth during the grand opening of Elixir Supermarket at Boundary Road by Ikpokpan Junction and Elixir Restaurant on Sapele Road, opposite the Benin High Court.

Represented by Barr. (Mrs.) F. N. Edokpolor, Permanent



OKPEBHOLO

Secretary, Ministry of Business, Trade, and Cooperatives, the governor celebrated the milestone as a testament to Edo State's thriving business environment.

"This achievement highlights the transformative role of private-sector initiatives in driving economic growth and creating opportunities for our people," the governor's message stated. He reaffirmed the government's dedication to fostering a business-friendly atmosphere that promotes job creation and improved livelihoods.

Governor Okpebholo also emphasized the importance of government-private sector collaborations in advancing sustainable development, citing the success of Elixir Supermarket and Restaurant as a model for future investments in the state.

The launch also featured former Deputy Governor of Edo State, Dr. Pius Odubu, who lauded Gregory Okunrobo, the visionary behind Elixir Supermarket and Restaurant, for his entrepreneurial foresight.

"I'm proud of the unique niche you've created. Your late father, my brother, would be immensely proud to see your success," Odubu remarked.

He also commended the state government for creating an enabling environment for businesses to thrive.

In his welcome address, Gregory Okunrobo explained the rationale behind the supermarket's 24/7 operation.

"We identified a gap where night-shift workers and residents couldn't access essential supplies after hours. Elixir Supermarket bridges this gap by offering round-the-clock services," Okunrobo shared.

He expressed gratitude to the governor and others who supported the project and called for government assistance in expediting approvals for the pharmacy section.

"In emergencies, accessing medication at night is often impossible. Our 24/7 pharmacy aims to address this critical need, and we appeal to the government to expedite approvals to make this a reality," he stated.

The event culminated with the ceremonial ribbon-cutting at the supermarket, performed by Barr. F.E. Edokpolor. Guests toured the facility, exploring the diverse goods and services offered.

ELIXIR RESTAURANT: A NEW CULINARY LANDMARK

At the Elixir Restaurant on Sapele Road, highly esteemed Zonal Director of Christ Embassy Midwest Zone, Pastor (Mrs.) Mary Owase, accompanied by Pastor Brown Ativie, performed the ribbon-cutting ceremony and prayed for the establishment's growth.

Guests were given a guided tour of the restaurant by the head chef, showcasing a diverse menu of African and continental cuisines. Positioned as a premium fine-dining destination, Elixir Restaurant promises an exceptional culinary experience for its patrons.

### CELEBRATING ECONOMIC GROWTH AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

The launch of Elixir Supermarket and Restaurant underscores Edo State's commitment to economic development through public-private collaborations, highlighting a shared vision of innovation, progress, and empowerment.

Dignitaries from politics and the hospitality industry, including, Mr. Osaretin Okunrobo, the Managing Director's eldest brother, and their elated mother, Madam Christiana Okunrobo, graced the event, marking a new chapter in the state's business landscape.

# ENCOUNTER

## Traditional medicine is best in treating chronic illnesses —Dr. Joy Opara

*In this enlightening interview session, we are privileged to speak with Dr. Joy Amina Mike Opara, a distinguished pharmacist and the Secretary of the Edo State Traditional Medicine Board. With a deep understanding of the intersection between orthodox and traditional medicine, Dr. Opara sheds light on the significance of integrating natural remedies into modern healthcare practices. This conversation explores the rich heritage of traditional medicine, its role in treating chronic illnesses, and its potential to complement conventional treatments. Dr. Opara delves into the challenges of standardization, the importance of scientific validation, and the necessity of government and public support in advancing this field. She passionately advocates for a healthcare system that embraces both traditional and orthodox approaches, emphasizing the need for accessible, affordable, and safe treatment options for all. EXCERPTS:*

My name is Dr. Joy Amina Mike Opara. I'm a pharmacist and currently the Secretary to the Edo State Traditional Medicine Board.

### **Why embrace traditional medicine?**

Thank you for that fine question. The simple answer to that question is that traditional medicine is as old as man's existence. You know, when God created man, he created plants, even before man. So, when we talk about traditional medicines, we are talking about medicines from natural sources. Plants and animals are older than even we humans.

Even scientists who do not believe in the existence of God, when they do their dating system, they agree that plants have existed longer than humans. Animals existed before humans did; so, it's a fact that traditional medicine has been there even before man. So, it's as old as man.

Something that has been there that we are made from, we are made from the soil. It is something that is natural to us. Another thing is this, in case many persons do not know, 50% of orthodox drugs are from natural sources. In other words, plants and animal origin and mineral origin. So, if these are the ingredients used to now make orthodox drugs, then why not just go back to nature itself? The point is, if we can trust orthodox, then, we should trust the source where 50% of orthodox comes from, which is nature. And we know nature is our friend. We can't go wrong with nature.

### **Making a choice between the traditional and orthodox medicine**

The fact is this, traditional medicine and orthodox medicine are different systems of healthcare, which have both their strengths and weaknesses. It's not a competition. It's about identifying which one will work best for certain conditions; which approach will work best for other conditions, and which one works better for other conditions. For me, I do not say this or that.

I say both. I'm saying complementary. They can work together. From my experience, and from what experts have to say, traditional medicine does best in handling chronic diseases. When I say chronic diseases, diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, cancer, and the rest. Diabetes, arthritis, conditions that people live with and they keep taking drugs for and they tell you, you take it for life or this disease, no, they go.

That kind of disease is the kind of condition that traditional medicines work best for. Because when you take traditional medicines, the idea is not that you just want to be managing the condition. Traditional medicine can actually help to reverse certain chronic diseases.

But for orthodox medicine, the strength orthodox medicine has is that when it comes to emergency medical care, that is their strength. They save lives. Emergency, whether it is a medical emergency, whether it is a road traffic accident or an emergency, whatever kind of emergency, they are the standard for that kind of emergency care.

That's talking about orthodox medicine. So, both of them have their place. I don't favour one over the other just arbitrarily; but, when you bring



it into context, I can now say, okay, for this situation, it's better from my experience to handle it with traditional medicine. Even for management of chronic diseases, where a person decides to opt for orthodox medical care, orthodox medicine, traditional medicine can still be used in addition to orthodox, but it has to be guided.

That in that sense now becomes complementary. So for example, a person may be taking chemotherapy for cancer, right? But then, one of the major challenges cancer patients face is severe anemia, that is low blood. Now, conventional therapy has its own remedies for boosting blood, but from experience, traditional medicine may do better or does better in that aspect.

So, a patient may say, okay, I will take chemo for my cancer treatment, but for this purpose, I will add traditional medicine and herbal medicines that boost blood while taking chemotherapy. And that's fine. It doesn't contradict each other. In that case, they are supporting each other.

The overall aim is to make the patient get well faster, and if possible, avoid dying and if the person avoids dying, the quality of life will be eventually restored. Not that you are alive, but you are as good as dead at the end of the day.

So that's the overall aim. We have places where, let me give you a good example. You know when we talk about traditional medicine, many people have a misconception, first and foremost, that traditional medicine has to do with native doctor, juju, voodoo, spiritism, and the rest.

While some aspects of traditional medicine have to do with that, but that's not all about traditional medicine. So, when we talk about traditional medicine in this context I'm speaking of,

I'm looking at it from the pure point of herbal medicine. Herbal medicines are the medicines derived from plant parts.

Leaves, roots, bark, stem, that are processed to now become the drugs you can take. Whether you can do it yourself, or whether it's a finished product you can buy off the shelf that has gotten approved. Those kinds of medicines really work.

And the practitioners that deal with them, many of them went to school. They are not illiterate. We have some places where you can walk into a hospital and say, I want to be seen by a traditional medicine doctor in a hospital that still has orthodox medicine doctors.

I don't know if you've heard of it. Yes. So, that is the idea of collaboratively working together for the good of the patient.

And it's possible that in a particular medical condition, both doctors will work as a team, checking what approach will be best. That's how it's supposed to be. It should not be just necessarily this or that. It's supposed to be this and, if necessary, this can work together. So, that's why I prefer using the word complementary medicine.

While a person can still choose that, because of my background, because of my religious belief, because of whatever, I am against this aspect of medicine. Some people are against traditional medicine, some people are against orthodox medicine, and there are many factors that trigger that.

In that case, a person who is against orthodox medicine would always only go for traditional medicine for anyone who is not thinking of orthodox at all, while others are the other way around.

If that is the case, well, fine and good. The way our healthcare system is supposed to be, it's sup-

posed to be such that the citizens of our state of Nigeria or any country of the world should be able to make a choice and say this is how I want to be treated. But not to be coerced by a system to say, okay, this is what I would have wanted, but it's not available, so I don't have a choice.

Let me go with what is there and pray that I don't have issues. We should have a system where people who favour traditional medicine can have access to quality, safe, affordable treatment.

In reality, you can see the book in front of me. It's all about the plants we see around us and how we can use them to heal ourselves. Our goal is to develop that aspect of traditional medicine in a way that is scientifically grounded. We want to be able to explain its benefits through science, clearly stating, "This plant has this effect; this is how you should use it; this is how you should prepare it." Ultimately, this will enable people to receive effective treatment.

The overall aim is universal health coverage. Organizations like the Federal Ministry of Health and the WHO have come to realize that traditional medicine cannot be ignored. For instance, in Nigeria, around 70–80% of the population uses herbal medicine in one form or another—whether as part of their diet or as treatment.

This aligns with the concept that food should serve as medicine. This idea is what allowed our grandparents and great-grandparents to live longer, healthier lives. They were closely connected to nature. However, civilization, while beneficial, has also caused some harm. It's a double-edged sword. We've drastically altered our lifestyles in the name of progress.

Today, we rely heavily on processed and synthetic foods, which are making us sicker. If we can begin returning to nature, we'll find that as a society, we'll become healthier.

### **Spiritual dimension to and scientific analysis of traditional medicine**

Now, regarding your question, there are two issues to address. First, the spiritual dimension of plants is often overlooked. Secondly, a major challenge for traditional medicine is the lack of scientific analysis and standardization. For example, when you go to a pharmacy, you're told to take a specific dose because it has been scientifically studied and standardized. However, many traditional medicines lack such detailed analysis and dosing guidelines. This makes it harder to measure their effectiveness or ensure safe usage.

The issue here isn't with the practice of traditional medicine itself but with us—the people. We are the reason our practices remain underdeveloped. Every country has its own form of traditional medicine, but Africa lags behind. Look at Chinese traditional medicine. What we see there is the result of strong government and public support.

Countries like China and Japan have embraced their traditional practices and integrated them into their healthcare systems. This requires both the will of the government and the commitment of the people. That's what we need to move forward.

Some many of them are struggling financially,

## ENCOUNTER

# Emergency medical care, strength of orthodox medicine

and it's more or less as if the people with the money that could have been able to invest are not interested in that aspect. So, they are less able to attract investors.

I must tell you with confidence, when it comes to standardization of traditional medicines, and we'll talk about this traditional medicine, we're focusing on herbal medicine now, the ones that we see, then we buy, they can be standardized.

We are committed to bringing in these research institutions to partner with our practitioners here in those states. Before, it was as if they are so far away. But now, one of our aims is to bring them close and we are starting with the University of Benin, very close to us.

In the University of Benin, we have the Faculty of Pharmacy there, and a department dedicated to traditional medicine called the Department of Pharmacognosy. It's all about drugs from plants. They do research into them. They help to standardize. They have to do testing and everything.

So, the researchers who are the lecturers and academicians are ready to now work with practitioners, who we as a board will bring to them to see what they can do to support them. Then the research institutions now that have their role, Nigeria Institutes of Pharmaceutical Research and Development is there. We have Nigeria Natural Medicine Development Agency. They are dedicated to the development of natural products. What we plan to do is to now connect with them as a board that we are up and doing now. How can you help us to help these practitioners to start standardizing?

Many of them have good products that work, but they've not been able to get the support, both financial and otherwise. As a board, we are here as an intermediary. We are not the ones who do the research. We are licensing with research institutions and calling them. That's why we are saying all practitioners should come and register with the board.

We cannot help those we do not know and those that do not pay their dues. So, we launched a publicity campaign today. We are going to also use your media house and other ones. We are announcing to the public, all practitioners in those states who are not aware, and those in traditional medicine bodies up and running, come and register with the board so that we know you.

Then we can start aligning you to programmes. We already talked to some international partners that are looking for how to assist with training traditional medicine practitioners.

Many of them are practicing in below standard conditions. They know the stuff, but their practice is not up to standard. That is where we are coming. Instead of pushing them away, we draw them.

This is how we do it as a board; that is our mission. We are here to promote traditional medicines. Traditional medicines are from God. They align with our bodies. While there may be side effects, because we still have some of these plants that can kill, that are poisonous. That is why you need a trained person to handle traditional medicines.

Many of these are our indigenous practitioners. They got their knowledge from their parents and their grandparents. We know these things well. They know them. One of the challenges we now have is because they are practicing in a crude way, because they lack education, so to speak, the knowledge is being lost as they die. It dies with them because there is no documentation. We are happy that we have books like this. This is written by a renowned researcher, Dr. Roland Ehigiamusoe. He is in his 80s now.

He is a scholar. He was an academician with UNIBEN and other schools even outside the country. He is fully into traditional medicine now. He is a herbarian. He compiled the pictures of various plants. They are documented in Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, what they are used for medicinally. All these are found in Nigeria. We know outside Nigeria. Plants in Nigeria. You can see there is so much.

This is the first indigenous book I am seeing that documents our traditional medicines. We need more things like this. If we can do that, we will start with references that we can go back to to help people to boost their confidence. Traditional medicine is not for quacks or for uneducated people.

When we had our African Traditional Medicine



Day, August 29 last year, it was renowned scholars from different fields that came to that event. A lecture was given by a professor of pharmacology. He is a traditional medicine practitioner. He is very educated. If you see the way traditional medicine practice is outside this country, you will weep for us here. You will see that it is not traditional medicine that has a problem. If we have somebody with the will, with the passion, and government to support, traditional medicine will reckon with orthodox medicine anytime.

Even though it is not a competition, it will not be in a state where it is easy to trust practitioners. You will be willing to assess the facilities and then the population will benefit more. So, this is a call to all good minded philanthropic Nigerians. Even those that are not Nigerians that know the value of traditional medicine. Traditional medicine born state is here.

We want partners. We want those with the resources and those with great ideas to help us develop the traditional medicine space.

For the purpose of helping to close up the gap we have in our healthcare. People are dying. Traditional medicine can save lives and it is saving lives even if we are not able to pinpoint this and that because they are not documented. So, we want people to support traditional medicine practitioners, but you have to work with the traditional medicine board to be able to give that support properly.

### Level of patronage

When you say patronage, you know we don't sell products here. We are dealing with the practitioners.

That last year event that I mentioned to you was the first event in the past 14 years that we held in connection with the traditional medicine board in any form at all. Although it was under such short notice, we had over 200 traditional medicine practitioners in attendance and since we started working with them, we've seen their joy. When we call for meetings, they are happy. They travel from Edo North, Edo Central, Edo South, wherever they are. They come. They spend their money.

We don't give them nothing because we don't have anything but nobody is asking, give us transport. They are happy. I got a call from one of them this morning. He's an elderly man. He called me while I was on the way to the office, telling me, 'I don't register. They say, may I come collect my certificate. I will come tomorrow' and they tell every other person.'

He was just telling me how excited he was. So, the truth is, they have been looking for government attention. Now that the government has given attention, they are excited. It's just that there are some of them that are still doubting. Is the government here to flog us? Or is the government here to support us? So, they are still watching. They are not coming out yet, but we are letting them know that we are here to work with you and support you.

Once they can trust us, I bet you, this floor where we are will not contain traditional medicine board anymore because we have so many people lining

up to do registration. Because we have thousands of practitioners hiding, doing what they are doing coded, nobody knows where they are, but we want them to come out. That is when they come out and we know this is where this person is, this is where they are. We cannot properly regulate them.

Without having them registered with us, we cannot properly regulate them and the quacks will continue doing their quackery because we have quacks among them and we are clean people.

### Traditional medicine, herbal medicine, point of departure

Herbal medicine is a subset of traditional medicine. Traditional medicine by WHO's definition or explanation. 'Any kind of treatment system that is different from conventional medicine' is traditional medicine. And it is indigenous to every country. For us here, we call our own African traditional medicine and our African traditional medicine has two phases. Herbal medicine and divination. Some herbal medicine practitioners are purely herbalists. Dealing just with the plants. They do not invoke anything. While we have diviners who we would call native doctors or spiritualists.

They use herbs or they divine with it. That is the two sides to it, but for us at the board, all of them fall under our purview. WHO recognizes that there are some aspects of traditional medicine practice that science cannot explain. WHO accepts it.

It is working. People are getting treated. People are getting well, but they know science cannot explain it. They do not argue that fact, but for us at the board, the aspect that science can explain, we want to start working in that aspect. In the herbal medicine area. Looking at the plant parts; looking at the science around it. Like I mentioned earlier, 50% of orthodox drugs are from natural sources. I will give you a typical example. You see this anti-malaria we are taking.

Artemisinin based drugs. The original plant it came from is a plant called Artemisia. It was a Chinese physician, pharmacist that was able to extract it out. It was something that changed the world. The only challenge is that, you would say, because not everybody has access to this plant and the whole world needs it. That is where science now comes to say, let's mimic what nature has.

That we can produce more of it. Otherwise, it is a simple thing to get the plant back. Boiling it and drinking, so to speak, but not everywhere that we can grow such plants. That is why they are not synthesizing locally; we also have plants that are known to have anti-malaria effects. For example, our Dogoyaro plant. Yes, I have used it before. It works. Dogoyaro, we have the leaves around us.

The leaf, you boil it, it is a very good anti-malaria. Also a very good antibiotic, anti-fungal agent. It treats a lot of conditions. Our bitter leaf that we know here, that we use to cook soup. It is a very good anti-diabetic agent. People who have diabetes can control their blood sugar. There is a way you take it, it controls your blood sugar. But these are things we eat in our diet.

Turmeric, for example. We add it as spices. It

looks like curry. It is actually a component in curry. Curry is a combination of different spices, including turmeric. Turmeric is an anti-cancer agent. If you make it as a tea and drink every day, you are fighting cancer. They use it in treating cancer patients naturally. It is a natural alternative for cancer patients.

In other words, what am I saying? These things are around us. They work. When we want to have it as a system of healthcare, that we cannot make reference to on a scientific basis, then we now need those who have advanced scientifically to come and put ideas in traditional medicine now, to help the practitioners that are cooked, to upgrade how they practice, to help them in documenting, to help them in the research.

All these things will take a long time, but we have to start from somewhere. I keep making this. This is a standard. If I tell you that currently this product, France wants to buy the patent of this product, because they know the value. This product has saved so many lives. Even patients that are giving blood, that the PCV still remains low, this product boosts the blood production. It helps your body to produce blood. It's not like putting blood into your body. Your own body, once it gets into the system, it triggers the body to begin producing blood.

They are around us. There is a producer here in Benin, he is from Edo State. He produces it here in Benin. Traditional medicine was a foundation course in pharmacy school that we did for five years. So, when you talk about pharmacy, it's about drugs; drugs from both natural source and synthesized drugs is under our purview as pharmacists.

We were taught traditional medicine from my year 2 to my final year. We did traditional medicine as a course in the Department of Pharmacognosy. All of us passed through that department. There, some specialized after they finish pharmacy school. For me, it was partly because of my exposure to that as a pharmacist and as a pharmacy student.

But then, there was something personal that happened to me too that triggered my interest and passion for traditional medicine. So, at the end of the day, I found out that most times, these synthetic drugs have so many side effects. It's a fact. We as pharmacists, we tell you. When you come to us and we give you drugs, we are telling you side effects as well. This paracetamol you see that we take, it can kill you.

It's the most, maybe one of the most accessible drugs out there that anybody takes without a prescription or whatever. If you take paracetamol with carbonated soft drinks, that's a recipe for kidney failure. Yes and if you take more than 8 tablets of paracetamol in a day, you are telling your kidney, bye-bye. For some people, it can kill them immediately. So, what am I trying to say? So, apart from the fact that this orthodox medicine has side effects, I've also come to see that for many of the conditions, it's just to keep taking it for life. They seem to treat symptomatically, more symptomatic treatment.

I look at it from a point of view that we can have something that really heals. And I see that, take for example Japan. If you Google now, the country with the highest life expectancy, Japan will pop up. They have more old people than young people in Japan. What's their secret? Their lifestyle, their diet.

Because of their lifestyle and their diet, there's a lot of illnesses that they avoid, that they don't see, that kill us faster. They go to nature, they eat natural food. You see it in movies, you see that they eat grass. You see that they eat grass; those things keep them going because they are from nature.

So, they heal. They enhance the body's system of healing. I was able to understand that nutrition plays a very big role in our health and you cannot talk about nutrition and you're not talking about traditional medicine because it's the same plants we are talking about. So, we have pharmacists that are traditional medicine practitioners. I'm one of them. They are into traditional medicine. They have developed their products that have different purposes that they use it for. They also are able to treat people with different chronic conditions. After the person has tried orthodox and is not working, or is not getting the results, they fall back to traditional medicine. These pharmacists are there. We have a network of pharmacists that are into traditional medicine

# Fashion&Style

## Fulani hairstyles in promoting African culture and fashion

OSAMUDIAME AGBONGIASEDE

The Fulani, also known as Fula, Fulbe, Peuhl, and Gorgaabe, are an ethnic group renowned for their pastoral lifestyle. They are spread across Africa, with significant populations in countries such as Nigeria, Senegal, Niger, and Mali.

Like any other ethnic group, the Fulani have distinct customs, habits, and cultural practices that form their identity. One prominent aspect of Fulani culture is the hairstyling tradition of Fulani women, commonly referred to today as Fulani braids.

Fulani hairstyling is a beauty practice that has been developed and perfected by generations of Fulani women over time. These braids are distinctive, characterized by geometric patterns and bold lines that create intricate styles. They are instantly recognizable and stand apart from other types of braids due to their unique structure.

In the early 2000s, Fulani braids gained global recognition when notable black icons such as Alicia Keys and Bo Derek popularized them. This fashion trend, initially rooted in Fulani tradition, spread worldwide and eventually returned to Africa, the birthplace of these hairstyles. African women of various nationalities embraced Fulani braids, adapting them with contemporary styling techniques and incorporating synthetic braiding hair, wool, and natural black hair. Accessories such as cowries, beads, and hair clips were added to enhance their vibrancy and appeal.

In more recent years, celebrities such as Amandla Stenberg, Beyoncé, Rihanna, Taraji P. Henson, and Cardi B have showcased various Fulani braid styles both on and off the red carpet, further cementing their popularity.

Fulani braids have been embraced not only for their beauty but also for their func-

tionality. These braids are durable and serve as an excellent protective style for natural hair. They promote hair growth, help retain length, and shield the hair from harsh environmental factors like high temperatures and dry climates. This protective quality is a major reason for their widespread adoption among African women, who often face such challenging weather conditions.

The versatility of Fulani braids is another reason for their enduring appeal. They can be styled in numerous ways, including ponytails, high buns, half-up-half-down styles, mini, midi, or jumbo braids, twists, and cornrows. Hairstylists continue to experiment with new and innovative designs, incorporating ombre or multicolored synthetic braiding hair, which many women love to flaunt.

Fulani hairstyles, with their rich cultural heritage and contemporary appeal, continue to celebrate African identity while promoting beauty and fashion on a global scale.



# Entertainment

## Nollywood actress Ini Edo opens up about surrogacy and fertility challenges

STORIES BY:  
OGISO PROMISE

Renowned Nollywood actress Ini Edo has opened up about her decision to pursue surrogacy, citing fertility challenges that made it difficult for her to carry a pregnancy. She shared her story

during an episode of the reality show *Young, Famous, and African*.

Edo, who is a proud mother of a daughter, revealed that she experienced difficulties with long-term pregnancies and endured six miscarriages despite undergoing IVF treatments. This led her to

consider surrogacy as a viable option. "I never thought I would have fertility issues, but I had problems carrying pregnancies to term," she said.

Addressing questions about her child's paternity, Ini clarified that while she is not married, the father of her

child is not involved in their lives. "He is not dead, but he has no connection to us. It's just me and my daughter," she explained.

The actress, who was married to Philip Ehiagwina from 2008 to 2014, expressed her contentment with her choice to embrace surrogacy. "I'm rais-

ing my child alone, and I am very happy with my decision," she affirmed.

Ini Edo's candid revelation has sparked conversations about fertility challenges and alternative reproductive options. Her story shines a light on surrogacy as an increasingly accepted solution for individ-

uals and couples facing infertility.

Fans and colleagues have lauded her courage for sharing her journey, emphasizing the importance of reproductive choices and the need for greater awareness and support for those dealing with fertility struggles.



INI EDO



DJ BIG N

## DJ Big N survives armed robbery in South Africa, shares harrowing tale

Nigerian disc jockey Nonso Temisan Ajufo, widely known as DJ Big N, narrowly escaped death following a robbery attack in Johannesburg, South Africa. The incident occurred on January 12 when DJ Big N was traveling to a club with an acquaintance.

Recounting the ordeal, DJ Big N revealed that they were ambushed by a gang of six armed men at a traffic light. The attackers, wielding automatic rifles, demanded valuables and shot him in the leg when he attempted to flee. The robbers made away with jewel-

ry and other possessions valued at \$114,000.

DJ Big N was rushed to a nearby hospital, where medical personnel described his survival as miraculous. The bullet passed through his leg, narrowly avoiding critical arteries and bones.

Taking to Instagram, DJ Big N shared his gratitude for surviving the life-threatening ordeal. "I credit my survival to divine intervention and my mother's prayers," he wrote. The experience has profoundly shifted his outlook on life, prompting him to embrace a more authentic and stress-free

lifestyle.

The incident has sent shockwaves through the entertainment industry, with fans and fellow artists expressing relief over his survival. It also underscores the ongoing dangers of crime and violence, while serving as a sobering reminder of life's fragility.

Despite the traumatic experience, DJ Big N remains resilient. He is determined to continue his musical journey and is expected to make a full recovery, reaffirming his commitment to his fans and his craft.

## News

## Foreign

# Trump pardons Silk Road dark web market creator Ross Ulbricht

US President Donald Trump says he has signed a full and unconditional pardon for Ross Ulbricht, who operated Silk Road, the dark web marketplace where illegal drugs were sold.

Ulbricht was convicted in 2015 in New York in a narcotics and money-laundering conspiracy and sentenced to life in prison.

Trump championed Ul-

bricht's cause, joining libertarians who said the conviction was an example of government overreach. On Tuesday, he said he had called Ulbricht's mother to inform her that he had granted a pardon to her son.

Silk Road, which was shut down in 2013 after police arrested Ulbricht, sold illegal drugs using Bitcoin, as well as hacking equipment and stolen passports.

Ulbricht was found guilty of charges including conspiracy to commit drug trafficking, money laundering and computer hacking.

During his trial, prosecutors said Ulbricht's website, hosted on the hidden "dark web," sold more than \$200m (£131m) worth of drugs anonymously.

Prosecutors said he also solicited six murders-for-hire, including one against a former

Silk Road employee, though they said no evidence existed that any killings were actually carried out.

"The scum that worked to convict him were some of the same lunatics who were involved in the modern day weaponisation of government against me," Trump said in a post on his Truth Social site on Tuesday. "He was given two life sentences, plus 40 years. Ridiculous!

Ulbricht ran Silk Road under the alias Dread Pirate Roberts, a reference to a character in the 1987 film *The Princess Bride*.

The marketplace itself took its name from the historic trade routes spanning Europe, Asia and parts of Africa.

The site achieved notoriety through media reports and on-line chatter. But users could only access the site through Tor - a system that lets people use the web without revealing who they are or which country they are in.

Court documents from the FBI said the site had just under a million registered users, but investigators said they did not know how many were active.

Ulbricht was arrested in a San Francisco public library in 2013 in an elaborate sting operation, while allegedly chatting online with someone he thought was a colleague but was in fact an undercover federal agent.

Investigators had been through a painstaking process

of piecing together the suspect's digital footprint.

Sentencing Ulbricht - who has two college degrees - District Judge Katherine Forrest said he was "no better a person than any other drug dealer".

She said the site had been his "carefully planned life's work".

The judge noted the lengthy sentence also acted as a message to copycats that there would be "very serious consequences."

"I wanted to empower people to make choices in their lives and have privacy and anonymity," Ulbricht said at his sentencing in May 2015.

Despite the judge's hope that the sentence would act as a deterrent, bigger marketplaces similar to Silk Road emerged after its closure.

Trump previously hinted that he planned to commute Ulbricht's sentence during a speech last year at the Libertarian National Convention - while seeking to court votes ahead of the 2024 presidential election.



Khan Mohammad spoke to the media on his return to Jalalabad in Eastern Afghanistan on Tuesday

## Turkey mourns hotel fire dead as efforts to identify them continue

A day of mourning is under way in Turkey for the 76 victims of a fire that engulfed a popular ski resort hotel in the country's north-west.

The fire broke out at the wooden-clad 12-storey Grand Kartal Hotel in Bolu at 03:27 local time (00:27 GMT) during a busy holiday period when 234 people were staying there. It took 12 hours to put out.

An investigation has been launched into the incident and there have been conflicting reports about whether the hotel was up to safety standards.

Nine people have been arrested, including the hotel's owner.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who visited Bolu on Wednesday, said those responsible for negligence leading to the fire "will be held accountable."

Flags are flying at half-mast across Turkey in memory of the victims of the fire, while the first funerals are being held.

Search and rescue teams are making their final efforts to find any remaining victims\*\*\*

The authorities said that they were assessing all risks, including the possibility of collapse, for the building.

Alongside the fatalities, 51 people were injured in the fire, according to health minister Kemal Memisoglu. One was

receiving treatment in intensive care, and 17 people have been discharged. Relatives have been gathering outside the hospitals where they are being treated.

A person the BBC met in front of the morgue said that he had received news that seven of his relatives had died and that he had visited hospitals looking for their bodies. He later learned that the morgue was empty.

Footage circulating showed linen hanging from windows which was used by those trying to escape the burning building. On Wednesday, these could still be seen swaying in the wind.

The cause of the fire has not yet been found, but Bolu governor Abdulaziz Aydin said initial reports suggested it had broken out in the restaurant section of the hotel's fourth floor and spread to the floors above.

Aydin said the hotel's remote location and freezing conditions meant it took more than an hour for fire engines to arrive.

The hotel was last inspected in 2024, and the tourism minister said there had been no concerns regarding the hotel's fire safety prior to Tuesday's disaster.

However, the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB) said that, according to regulations, an automatic fire

extinguisher system was needed, and it appeared from photos of the hotel that one had not been installed.

It added that it was unclear if other regulations had been complied with, but based on the statements of survivors, "it is understood that the detection and warning systems did not work and the escape routes could not be determined".

Some survivors reported that they had not heard any fire alarms.

The Bolu mountains are popular with skiers from Istanbul and Turkey's capital Ankara, which is roughly 170km (105 miles) away, and the hotel was operating at high occupancy at the start of the two-week school holidays.

Who are the victims? Information about those

who died in the fire is continuing to emerge, although some of the bodies are still to be identified. At least two people were killed after they tried to jump to safety.

Many children and young people are among the dead and, in many cases, several members of the same family have been killed.

Turkish Airlines confirmed that Zehra Sena Gültekin died along with her husband, businessman Bilal Gültekin, and three children. Boğaziçi Executives Foundation said two of Bilal's siblings were also killed.

These included Dr Enes Gültekin, who the Medical Union said had died, along with Izmir dentist Dr Kübra Tonguç Altın and his daughter Alya.

## Xi and Putin hold video call after Trump's inauguration

Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin had a video call hours after Donald Trump was sworn in on Monday, pledging to bring bilateral ties to "greater heights," according to state media on both sides.

Calling Xi a "dear friend," Putin said Russia and China were building ties "on the basis of friendship, mutual trust and support" despite external pressure.

Xi called on Putin to "continue deepening strategic coordination, firming up mutual support, and safeguarding legitimate interests."

Trump on Tuesday threatened tariffs on Beijing, calling it "an abuser," and warned that "big trouble" will come for Moscow if it does not strike a deal to end war in Ukraine.

Putin told Xi, however, that any Ukraine settlement "must respect Russian interests," according to foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov who spoke to reporters after the call.

Beijing has been accused of building up Moscow's war machine by providing it with critical components for the conflict in Ukraine.

Trade between both countries reached a record \$240bn (£191bn) in 2023, up more than 64% since 2021 - before Russia invaded Ukraine.

"Putin and Xi confirmed readiness to build relations with the US on a mutually beneficial and respectful basis, if the Trump team shows an interest," Ushakov said.

He also said, however, that the call was "not connected with Trump's inauguration in any way."

The call lasted about one-and-a-half hours, during which Putin and Xi also discussed the situations in the Middle East, South Korea and Taiwan, according to Ushakov.

Chinese state media said Xi also expressed readiness to work with Putin in response to "external uncertainties," without mentioning specifics.

Xi held a phone call with Trump last week, which the US president described as a "very good" discussion for both countries. They spoke about trade, fentanyl and TikTok, among other things, he said.

Putin has yet to speak with Trump, but congratulated him on state television hours before the inauguration.

## Election of taoiseach delayed as dáil suspended amid disorder

The election of a new taoiseach has been delayed again after a bitter row in the Dáil (Irish parliament) forced proceedings to be suspended.

The Irish parliament returned to nominate Fianna Fáil leader Micheál Martin as the new taoiseach (prime minister) before he was formally appointed to the office by President Michael D Higgins.

Ceann Comhairle Verona

Murphy called for a 15 minute suspension after Teachtaí Dála (TDs) refused to "stop shouting" at her and take their seats.

Sinn Féin and other opposition TDs voiced their anger at plans to allow independent TDs who are supporting the government to join them on the opposition benches.

Sinn Féin president Mary Lou McDonald said it was a "brazen" move by the government to al-

low the plans to happen.

After the Dáil resumed several TDs continued to challenge Murphy over a decision to allow independent TDs who are supporting the government to sit on the opposition benches.

They refused to take their seats and the proceedings were then suspended for 30 minutes.

The Dáil was adjourned for a further 45 minutes at about 13:15 local time.

Micheál Martin returning as taoiseach

The 35th Dáil will see Martin elected as taoiseach (prime minister) for the second time, replacing Fine Gael leader Simon Harris who will return as tánaiste (deputy prime minister).

Fianna Fáil - the largest party - has formed a government with Fine Gael and a range of independent regional TDs after November's election.

# Ten Palestinians killed as Israeli forces launch major operation in Jenin

At least 10 Palestinians have been killed and nearly 40 injured by Israeli forces during a major operation in the Jenin area in the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian health ministry says.

Palestinian media reported that on Tuesday there were several air strikes as a large number of troops entered the city and its refugee camp, backed by drones, helicopters and armoured bulldozers.

Israel's prime minister said it launched an "extensive and significant" operation to "defeat terrorism" in Jenin, long seen as a stronghold of Palestinian armed groups.

It comes three days after the start of a ceasefire in Gaza and

highlights the threat of more violence in the West Bank, where suspected Israeli settlers also went on the rampage on Monday night.

Jenin's governor, Kamal Abu al-Rub, told AFP news agency that "what is happening is an invasion of the camp," adding: "It came quickly, Apache [helicopters] in the sky and Israeli military vehicles everywhere."

Palestinian security personnel reportedly withdrew from some of their positions around Jenin refugee camp before the Israeli forces moved in.

The official Palestinian news agency, Wafa, later cited local sources as saying that Israeli forces were "completely besieging" Jenin camp, and that armoured bulldozers had dug

up several streets.

The director of Jenin's Government hospital, Dr Wissam Bakr, also told the agency that three doctors and two nurses were among those wounded by Israeli gunfire.

A medical worker at another hospital, al-Amal, told the British charity Medical Aid for Palestinians: "I was called in [on Tuesday] due to the surge of injuries, and the moment I stepped out of the car making my way to the emergency entrance a sniper shot me below the knee."

"Another doctor was shot

in the same spot," they added. "The Israeli army is shooting non-stop."

On Wednesday, Jenin's governor said Israeli forces had "bulldozed all the roads leading to Jenin camp, and leading to Jenin Government hospital".

Dr Bakr said earth mounds were blocking the entrances to the hospital, making it difficult to enter and leave, and preventing ambulance crews from reaching it.

The Israeli military said it was checking the reports.

The Palestinian health ministry reported on Tuesday evening

that nine men and a 16-year-old boy, whom it named as Mutaz Abu Tbeikh, had been killed by Israeli forces in Jenin.

Another man was shot and killed by Israeli troops in the village of Tianik, about 8km (5 miles) to the north-west, it added.

Sources told the BBC that most of those killed were civilians.

However, the Israeli military and Shin Bet security service said on Wednesday that they had "hit over 10 terrorists" during the operation.

"Additionally, aerial strikes on terror infrastructure sites

were conducted and numerous explosives planted on the routes by the terrorists were dismantled," they added.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement that the Jenin operation - dubbed "Iron Wall" - was an "additional step in achieving the objective we have set: bolstering security" in the West Bank.

"We are acting methodically and with determination against the Iranian axis wherever it reaches: in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and [the West Bank] - and we are still active."

## Trump considers 10% tariff on China from February

US President Donald Trump has said he is considering imposing a 10% tariff on imports of Chinese-made goods as soon as 1 February.

Trump said discussions with his administration were "based on the fact that they're sending fentanyl to Mexico and Canada."

He called China an "abuser". China responded saying trade wars have "no winners."

Despite the aggressive talk, the 10% tariff would be much less than the 60% tariff Trump mentioned on the campaign trail.

Trump's comments followed his threats to levy import taxes of 25% on Mexico and Canada, accusing them of allowing undocumented migrants and drugs to come into the US.

In a press conference in Washington on Tuesday, Trump also vowed to hit the European Union with tariffs.

He said the EU "treat us very, very badly".

"So they're going to be in for tariffs. It's the only way you're going to get back. It's the only way you're going to get fairness."

China's foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning responded to Trump's threats by promising to "safeguard its national interests."

"We have always believed

that trade wars and tariff wars have no winners," she added.

Shortly after he was sworn in on Monday, the new president also instructed federal agencies to conduct a review of existing trade deals and identify unfair practices by US trading partners.

Meanwhile, a top Chinese official spoke out against protectionism at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

China's Vice Premier, Ding Xuexiang, called for a "win-win" solution to trade disputes without mentioning the US.

The Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has promised to fight back.

"If the [US] president does choose to proceed with tariffs, Canada will respond - and everything is on the table," Trudeau said.

Ottawa is preparing counter-tariffs in response to the threat, reportedly worth billions of dollars.

Canada, China and Mexico are the top US trading partners.

Tariffs are an important part of Trump's economic plans. The president believes they can boost growth, protect jobs and raise tax revenue.

But many economists say such measures could lead to higher prices for Americans and harm companies hit by foreign retaliation.



Putin addressed Xi as his "dear friend" during the call, which lasted about one-and-a-half hours

## India court orders seizure of 'offensive' MF Husain paintings

A court in the Indian capital, Delhi, has ordered the seizure of two "offensive" paintings by MF Husain, one of India's most famous artists.

The court on Monday granted permission for the police to seize the artworks after a complaint was filed alleging that the paintings, displayed at an art gallery and featuring two Hindu deities, "hurt religious sentiments."

Husain, who died in 2011 aged 95, often faced backlash for the depictions of nude Hindu gods in his paintings.

The Delhi Art Gallery (DAG) which held the exhibition said in a statement that it is "not a

party to the legal proceedings and is seeking legal advice."

The paintings were part of an exhibition called Husain: The Timeless Modernist, showcasing more than 100 works at DAG from 26 October to 14 December.

The complainant, Amita Sachdeva, a lawyer, said on X that on 4 December, she photographed the "offensive paintings" displayed at the DAG and, after researching previous complaints against the late artist, filed a police complaint five days later.

On 10 December, Ms Sachdeva reported that she visited the gallery with the investigating officer, only to discover that the

paintings had been removed. She claimed that the gallery officials asserted they had never exhibited the paintings.

The BBC has contacted DAG for comment.

The paintings that Ms Sachdeva shared online depicted Hindu gods Ganesha and Hanuman alongside nude female figures. She also alleged that the Delhi police had failed to file a report.

She later petitioned the court to preserve the CCTV footage from the gallery during the period when the paintings were reportedly on display, according to media reports.

On Monday, a judge at Delhi's Patiala House Courts said

that the police had accessed the footage and submitted their report. According to the inquiry, the exhibition was held in a private space and was intended solely to showcase the artist's original work, the judge added.

The art gallery said in a statement that they are "reviewing the situation" and "trying to follow developments."

Maqbool Fida Husain was one of India's biggest painters and was called "Picasso of India" but his art often stirred controversy in the country. His works have sold for millions of dollars.

His career was marked by controversy when he was accused of obscenity and denounced by hardline Hindus for a painting of a nude goddess.

In 2006, Husain publicly apologized for his painting, Mother India. It showed a nude woman kneeling on the ground creating the shape of the Indian map. He left the country the same year and lived in self-imposed exile in London until his death.

In 2008, India's Supreme Court refused to launch criminal proceedings against Husain, saying that his paintings were not obscene and nudity was common in Indian iconography and history.

## Kenya eases travel requirements for nearly all African visitors

Kenya will allow citizens of nearly all African countries to visit without needing prior authorisation, according to a new directive by the cabinet.

Last year, Kenya introduced a "visa-free" policy that required most visitors to apply online for authorisation before leaving their country.

But the introduction of the Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA), which replaced the visa require-

ment for all visitors, was criticised as a "visa under another name."

On Tuesday, a cabinet statement said the ETA would be dropped for "all African countries except Somalia and Libya - due to security concerns."

It said this was part of "efforts to support open skies policies and tourism growth" and "promote regional integration and ease travel across the continent".

Despite introducing the ETA, Kenya fared worse in the latest

ranking of how open it is to visitors, dropping 17 places to 46th out of 54 nations in the 2024 Africa Visa Openness Index.

Several African countries have tried to ease travel requirements for visitors from elsewhere on the continent in recent years, with studies showing it is often easier for citizens of Western countries to visit.

Earlier this year, Ghana said all African passport holders would now be able to visit with-

out needing a visa. African visitors to Rwanda also do not need a visa to enter the country.

The move to facilitate travel within the continent is also being pushed by the African Union (AU).

Under the updated system, citizens of most African countries will be allowed to enter Kenya and stay ETA-free for up to two months.

Members of the East African Community, which include Ugan-

da, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi, can however stay for up to six months in line with the bloc's policy.

Kenya also says it will introduce an enhanced process "allowing travellers to receive approval instantly" and a maximum processing time of 72 hours.

It is not clear when this will take effect. Several ministries have been tasked to propose guidelines within a week to improve "travellers experience at all Kenyan airports", according to the cabinet statement.

# SPORTS

## Women's Cricket W/Cup: Nigeria qualify for super six despite loss to South Africa

● **To faces England Jan. 25**



KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Nigeria's Women U19 Cricket team, Wednesday qualified for the Super Six of the ongoing International Cricket Council, ICC Women's U19 T20 World Cup in Kuching, Malaysia, despite losing to their South African counterparts in the final game of Group C

Nigeria's Junior Female Yellow Greens surrendered to the South Africans who won the final group game by 41 runs to lead the group.

The Nigeria's Junior Female Yellow Greens won the toss and elected to BOWL first. The match had Edo born Lucky Piety, captain of team Nigeria picking the first wicket for the Nigerian girls before a down pour.

In the first innings, South Africa scored 49 runs for the loss of 2 wickets in 8 overs while team Nigeria in the Second innings had 24 runs, 8 wickets with 8 over, bringing the game to an end with 41 runs in favour of South Africa.

The loss to South Africa, then placed the Nigeria's Junior Female Yellow Greens in the 2nd position in the group and qualified for the round of super 6. They will now face England on Saturday, January 25, and Ireland on the 29th of January, 2025.

Recall that the Nigeria's Junior Female Yellow Greens, as the Nigerian U-19 team is fondly called, stunned the cricketing world with remarkable victory on Monday, after beating one of the tournament's favourites New Zealand.

## NWFL 25: Edo Queens consolidate on 5-0 curtain raiser victory, grab 2-1 victory at Heartland Queens

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Nigeria's Women Football League champions Edo Queens, Wednesday evening continued with their superlative Performance, beating Heartland Queens 2-1 in their second game of the season in Owerri, Imo state.

Edo thrashed Abia Angels 5-0 in the league's curtain raiser at the Samuel Ogbemudia stadium, Benin, last week Wednesday

Edo queens have defeated Heartland Queens FC 2\_1 at the 2024/2025 NWFL Premiership matchday 2 held at the Dan Anyiam Stadium, Owerri, Imo state

Emem Essien gave Edo queens a deserved lead 40th minute of the game scoring the first goal in the 40th minute of the game while Mathew

Monica pulled an equaliser goal for Heartland Queens in the 48th minute. The determination of the Benin girls showed more when Osigwe Goodness sealed Victory for the visitors in the 70th minute of play, leaving the Owerri queens stranded before their home fans

Edo Queens now have six points from two matches and will be host to Remo Ladies in the next fixture in Benin.



OFFICIAL SPONSOR

## Federation Cup: Edo FA Cup draws holds Jan 29

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The Edo state Football Association has fixed Wednesday, January 29, 2025 for the 2025 FA Cup draws ceremony ahead of the oldest football competition in the country.

The chairman of the Edo Football body, Fred Newton Erhunmwunse, the event is scheduled to hold on Wednesday January 29th, at the media centre of the Samuel Ogbemudia stadium in Benin City, beginning from 12 Noon.

According to the Edo FA, all participating teams are expected to send two persons each to represent them at

the ceremony.

The Edo FA boss disclosed that the ceremony will also witness the unveiling of Peculiar Ultimate Concern as the new sponsors of the 2025 Edo FA Cup competition.

The Edo FA revealed that a total of 24 male teams and 6 female teams registered and will compete in the Edo FA cup this year.

The 2025 Edo FA cup has been scheduled to kick off on Wednesday, February 5 and climax on Sunday, February 23rd 2025 as directed by the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF)

Bendel insurance Fc and Edo Queens are the defending champions of the Edo FA Cup.