

Okpebholo bags OPAL Award for Leadership Excellence

● Inspects 4 key road projects in Edo Central

Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo, has received the OPAL Award for Excellent Performance from the St. Maria Goretti Old Girls Association in recognition of his administration's developmental strides and commitment to good governance in Edo State.

The honour was presented during the 2026 SMAGOGA Awards and Alumni Gala Night held at Madison Place in Victoria Island, Lagos, where alumni

and invited guests gathered to celebrate excellence, leadership and service.

The award ceremony attracted members of the association's alumni network, corporate leaders, professionals and other notable Nigerians who assembled to recognise individuals and institutions contributing to societal progress.

The recognition came shortly after the governor was honoured with the Best Governor of the Year in Education Award by the New Telegraph Newspaper for 2025.

The OPAL Award was received on behalf of the governor by Lady Omoredé Osifo, Special Adviser to the Governor on Women Mobilisation,

who represented the Edo State Government at the event.

Speaking after receiving the award, Osifo conveyed the governor's appreciation to the association for recognising the administration's ongoing efforts to reposition Edo State through people-centred policies and sustainable development initiatives.

According to the governor, recognition from a respected alumni body such as SMAGOGA further strengthens his administration's resolve to continue implementing programmes aimed at improving infrastructure, empowering citizens and strengthening institutions across the state.

He emphasised that his government remains committed to inclusive governance and meaningful development that

will positively impact communities throughout Edo State.

The St. Maria Goretti Girls' Grammar School alumni association is widely known for promoting education, supporting women's empowerment and encouraging initiatives that contribute to national development.

Okpebholo described the honour as a collective recognition for

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The Nigerian Observer



...that the people may know

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Int'l Women's Day: Youth group celebrates women driving community change

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Benin City wins \$1m Bloomberg Global Innovation prize

BENIN CITY

Benin City, the Edo State capital, has secured major international recognition after emerging among the top cities globally in the prestigious Bloomberg Mayor's Challenge, winning a \$1 million innovation award.

The global competition attracted participation from more than 600 cities around the world, with only 25 cities across 20 countries making the

final list.

Benin City distinguished itself as one of only four cities in Africa to reach the final stage and secure the coveted prize.

The achievement places the Edo State capital firmly on the global map of innovation and urban leadership, highlighting the city's ability to develop bold and practical solutions to pressing public challenges, particularly in healthcare delivery.

Reacting to the develop-

ment, Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo, described the award as a reflection of the state government's commitment to innovation and its ongoing efforts to strengthen healthcare systems across Edo State.

According to the governor, the recognition demonstrates that transformative ideas emerging from Benin City can compete successfully on the global stage.

"This recognition is a tes-

tament to innovation, resilience, and the unwavering commitment of our team to transform healthcare delivery in Edo State. It reinforces that bold ideas from Benin City can compete and win on the global stage," Okpebholo said.

The governor congratulated officials of the Edo State Ministry of Health and members of the team that worked on the initiative, noting that the award underscores the growing reputation of Edo State as a

hub for forward-thinking governance and impactful public sector reforms.

Okpebholo also commended the people of Edo State for their continued support and confidence in the administration's programmes and policies aimed at improving the welfare of citizens.

"Congratulations to my hardworking team and to the great people of Edo State. The

world is watching, and we are just getting started," he added.

The Bloomberg Mayor's Challenge is widely regarded as one of the most competitive global platforms for cities to present innovative solutions to urban problems, with selected cities receiving financial support and technical assistance to implement transformative ideas capable of improving public service delivery.

Fuel price changes driven by market forces —NMDPRA

ABUJA

The Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) has said that fluctuations in fuel pump prices are a direct result of market dynamics under Nigeria's deregulated downstream petroleum sector.

The authority's spokesperson, George Ene-Ita, said this in an interview with newsmen in Abuja, while reacting to the recent increase in fuel pump prices linked to the ongoing Middle East crisis.

Many motorists in Abuja have expressed concern and dissatisfaction over the recent hike in prices of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) called fuel, which were previously sold between N875 and N880 per litre.

Currently, independent marketers are selling fuel between N960 and N1,000 per litre and above, while outlets of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited are

selling at about N960 per litre.

Nigerians have expressed concern on the justification for the increase in pump price and the implications to the country.

Ene-Ita said the variations in pump prices across the country were not due to regulatory interference but were driven by supply and demand forces within the market.

"Nigeria has been operating a fully deregulated downstream petroleum regime since the inception of the current administration.

"Therefore, pump price vagaries are purely as a result of market dynamics," he said.

He explained that under a deregulated framework, petroleum product prices responded to prevailing market conditions.

He added that the policy direction was aimed at allowing market forces to determine prices while encouraging competition, efficiency and increased investment in Nigeria's downstream oil and gas sector.



MAIDEN MATRICULATION CEREMONY:

L-R: Vice Chancellor, European University of Nigeria (EUN), Prof. Emmanuel Ibezim; Pro Chancellor of EUN, Prof. Charles Esimone; Chancellor of EUN, Sen. Nicholas Ukachukwu; his wife Ugochi; wife of the former All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship aspirants in Ondo State, Dr Daisy Oke; her husband, Dr Olushola, during the maiden matriculation ceremony of EUN, at the University Auditorium in Abuja at the weekend.

Reps Power C'ttee approves NDPHC mgt following Alaoji Plant visit

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APC shocked as party member linked to kidnap, killing of Ebonyi monarch

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No popular support': China warns against government change in Iran

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NBBF crisis: Fresh controversy emerges as stakeholders demand proof of FIBA recognition

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Okpebholo pays medical bills of Ekpoma fire victim as wife delivers safely

IRRUA

Edo: Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State has settled the medical bills of a man who sustained severe burns in a fire incident in Ekpoma, while also supporting the safe delivery of the victim's pregnant wife at the Irrua Specialist Teaching Hospital.

The intervention came during the governor's visit to the hospital, where the injured man was receiving treatment. During the visit, Okpebholo also directed that the medical expenses of several other patients admitted in different wards of the facility be paid by the state government.

Speaking with journalists after the visit, the governor explained that the pregnant woman had earlier approached him

seeking financial assistance to enable her husband continue treatment for the severe burns he sustained in the fire incident.

Okpebholo said the situation became more urgent when members of his medical team noticed that the woman was heavily pregnant and due for delivery.

She was immediately taken to the hospital for proper medical care.

According to him, doctors at the hospital later carried out a successful caesarean section, resulting in the safe delivery of her baby.

"The woman came to seek help for her husband because they were looking for money to pay his hospital bills.

"When my doctors saw her and observed that she was due for delivery, they rushed her to the hospital immediately where she

later gave birth through a caesarean operation," the governor said.

Okpebholo added that after discussions with the hospital management and assessment of the patients in the wards, he directed that the medical bills of the couple be fully settled by

the state government.

He further disclosed that the intervention was extended to other patients receiving treatment in the hospital to ensure that financial difficulties would not prevent them from accessing necessary medical care.

"We have agreed with the hospital management to pay their bills and that of other patients we met in the wards so that

they will not have any reason to worry about payments and their treatment can continue without interruption," he said.

The governor expressed optimism that the fire victim and other patients, particularly those receiving treatment in the intensive care unit, would recover quickly with continued medical attention.

Okpebholo noted that the gesture forms part of his admin-

istration's commitment to supporting Edo residents, especially those facing medical emergencies and financial hardship.

Patients and relatives who benefited from the governor's intervention expressed appreciation, describing the assistance as timely relief from the burden of rising hospital bills and a demonstration of compassion by the state government.

Edo govt pledges support for land devt, dispute resolution

CLEMENTINA AGWEDA

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting land development initiatives and strengthening land administration across the state.

The Commissioner for Lands and Housing, Hon. Vincent Uwadiae, made this known during a stakeholders' meeting with representatives of the Sakponba Dukedom in Benin City to discuss land development in their community.

Uwadiae stressed the importance of synergy among stakeholders in achieving the land administration objectives of the government led by Governor Monday Okpebholo.

He said effective collaboration between government, communities and investors

was necessary to create a conducive environment for development and to promote economic growth.

The commissioner assured stakeholders of the government's readiness to address issues relating to land ownership and development, noting that prompt attention would be given to areas of concern.

He added that the state government remained committed to resolving land disputes and facilitating development projects capable of attracting investment and improving livelihoods.

Representatives of Presco Plc and Bansley Plc also presented reports during the meeting, expressing their willingness to partner with the state government to enhance service delivery and promote development.

tractors to ensure strict adherence to quality standards and project specifications.

He explained that the inspection exercise formed part of the state government's strategy to closely monitor ongoing infrastructure projects and ensure they are completed within the stipulated timeframe.

Okpebholo reiterated his administration's determination to upgrade road infrastructure across Edo State in order to enhance connectivity between communities and stimulate economic activities.

Contractors handling the projects assured the governor that work was progressing steadily and pledged to deliver the roads according to schedule.

The projects form part of the broader infrastructure development initiatives of the Edo State Government aimed at improving transportation networks, easing movement for residents and supporting commercial activities in Edo Central and surrounding communities.



VISIT OF THE CONSUL-GENERAL:

L-R: Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy, Iryn Omorgiuwa Esq.; Commissioner for Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy, Hon. Chris Okaeben; Consul-General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Daniel Krull; Commissioner for Health, Dr. Cyril Adams Oshiomhole and the Director of Entertainment and Creative Economy, Mr. Harrison Ehizoba during the visit of the Consul-General to the State.

Tinubu made your employment possible, CMD tells new Orthopaedic Hospital staff

BENIN CITY

The Chief Medical Director of the National Orthopaedic Hospital Benin, Dr Philip Ugobdaga, has reminded newly recruited staff that their employment was made possible through the approval and commitment of the Federal Government under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Ugobdaga gave the charge during the induction and orientation programme organised for newly employed workers of the hospital in Benin City, urging them to demonstrate professionalism and dedication in the discharge of their duties.

Addressing the staff, the CMD emphasised that the opportunity to work in a federal tertiary health

institution comes with enormous responsibility and requires a high level of discipline, commitment and ethical conduct.

According to him, the recruitment exercise was part of the Federal Government's broader efforts to strengthen the country's healthcare system and improve service delivery in public hospitals.

He noted that the administration of President Tinubu had continued to show commitment to the health sector through policies and approvals aimed at expanding the healthcare workforce and improving access to quality medical services for Nigerians.

Ugobdaga therefore urged the newly recruited employees to justify the confidence

reposed in them by the government by maintaining high standards of diligence, professionalism and integrity.

He said the National Orthopaedic Hospital, Benin had built a reputation as a centre of excellence in orthopaedic care, training and research, stressing that the new staff must align themselves with the institution's culture of professionalism and patient-centred care.

The CMD also encouraged the employees to take advantage of the orientation programme to familiarise themselves with the hospital's operational procedures, rules and expectations.

He explained that the programme was designed to equip them with the knowledge required to function effectively

within the system in line with the hospital's five-year strategic plan.

Ugobdaga further reminded the staff that healthcare delivery is a collective responsibility and urged them to work collaboratively across departments to ensure efficient and compassionate care for patients.

He also reaffirmed the hospital management's commitment to staff development, improved welfare and the provision of an enabling environment that would allow workers to perform optimally.

The induction programme forms part of the hospital's standard onboarding process aimed at preparing new employees for their roles while introducing them to the institution's vision, mission and core values.

Okpebholo bags OPAL Award for...

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the people of Edo State and reaffirmed his commitment to sustaining policies and programmes that will continue to drive the state's growth and development.

Meanwhile, Governor, Monday Okpebholo, has inspected four major road construction projects currently underway in Edo Central Senatorial District as part of efforts to monitor infrastructure development across the state.

The projects visited by the governor include the Uromi-Agbor Road, Ukpenu Road, Ujoelen Road and Illeh Road, which are considered critical to improving transportation and economic connectivity in the area.

During the inspection tour, Okpebholo was accompanied by government officials and contractors handling the projects, who briefed him on the progress of work and the timelines for completion.

The governor assessed the level of work done at the various sites and urged the con-

NAS decry Nigeria's low female representation in politics

The National Association of Seadogs (Pyrates Confraternity) has called for greater inclusion of women in Nigeria's political leadership and governance, warning that the country cannot achieve sustainable development while women remain largely underrepresented in decision-making positions.

The association made the call on Sunday as the world commemorated the 2026 International Women's Day (IWD), urging political leaders and institutions to remove barriers that continue to limit

women's participation in governance.

In a statement issued by the Cap'n of the organisation, Dr Joseph Oteri, the NAS said the occasion offers an opportunity, not only to celebrate the achievements and resilience of women, but also to reflect on the enduring challenges that prevent them from attaining equal representation in political leadership.

Oteri noted that although women play critical roles in maintaining family stability, driving community development, and contributing to na-

tional progress, their presence in Nigeria's political leadership structure remains significantly low.

"International Women's Day is not only a celebration of women's achievements, but also a reminder that the journey toward gender equality is far from complete. Nigerian women contribute immensely to our nation's development, yet their representation in political leadership remains disproportionately low," he said.

According to the association, the current composition of Nigeria's political institu-

tions underscores the scale of the challenge.

It stated that following the 2023 general elections, women hold only three of the 109 seats in the Senate and 17 of the 360 seats in the House of Representatives, representing about 4.2 percent of the National Assembly.

"These figures place Nigeria among countries with the lowest female representation in parliament globally, despite women constituting nearly half of the country's population and playing active roles in civic and democratic processes," Oteri said.

NEWS**Residents laud Okpebholo's projects in Esan communities****UDOMI**

Edo State: Residents and indigenes of Udomi and Uwessan communities in Esan Central Local Government Area of Edo State have commended Governor Monday Okpebholo for what they described as significant developmental

strides recorded in the area.

The commendation came during the governor's two-day working visit to the communities where he inspected several ongoing projects and assessed the level of progress achieved.

Speaking with journalists in Udomi, a youth leader, Christopher Ogbe, said the governor

had brought visible development to the community within a relatively short period in office.

"We are very grateful to Governor Okpebholo. He is a blessing to our people. In less than two years, he has provided us with things we have wished for over the years. Roads are being constructed and critical

projects are ongoing. We are proud of what he is doing for our people," Ogbe said.

Another indigene, Christina Oyemere, also expressed appreciation to the governor and offered prayers for his continued success in office.

She described Okpebholo as a compassionate leader whose

policies have had positive effects on communities across the state.

"Governor Okpebholo is a man with a good heart. We are praying for him because he always remembers us," she said.

During the inspection tour, the governor explained that his visit formed part of a broader effort to personally evaluate the progress of projects being executed across the state.

"I am here for a two-day working visit to inspect projects and see the level of work that is ongoing. I am satisfied with what I have seen so far, and we will continue to ensure that the people of Edo State enjoy the dividends of democracy," he said.

Okpebholo also attributed the progress recorded by his administration to the support and leadership of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, noting that improved federal support and funding had

enabled states to undertake critical development projects.

Among the projects inspected during the visit were the construction of a medical school, a hospital facility and several major road projects designed to improve transportation and stimulate economic activities in the area.

The governor also visited the site of the Ekpoma Market currently undergoing reconstruction after it was destroyed by fire during protests in January.

He assured traders and residents that the market would be rebuilt to modern standards in order to restore commercial activities and provide a more conducive environment for business.

The visit attracted community leaders, residents and government officials who accompanied the governor as he inspected the projects and interacted with members of the community.

**ALUMNI GALA NIGHT:**

Special Adviser to Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State, Lady Omoredede Osifo (left), proudly displays the plaque for the OPAL Award for Outstanding Leadership, received on behalf of the Governor, courtesy of the St. Maria Goretti Old Girls Association (SMAGOGA), during the Alumni Gala Night in Victoria Island, Lagos.

Edo pays N39m Insurance benefits to families of deceased workers**BENIN CITY**

The Edo State Government has disbursed a total of N39 million to families of nine deceased public servants under the state's Group Life Insurance Scheme in line with the provisions of the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS).

Presenting the cheques on behalf of Governor Monday Okpebholo, the Head of Service, Dr. Anthony Okungbowa, said the payment reflects the administration's commitment to the welfare of public servants and their families.

He noted that the gesture demonstrates the government's resolve to fulfil its financial obligations and ensure that families of workers who die in active service

receive the benefits due to them.

Dr. Okungbowa described the cheque presentation as a significant milestone, stressing that it underscores Edo State's dedication to protecting the welfare of its workforce even after their death.

He conveyed the condolences of Governor Okpebholo to the bereaved families and prayed that they find strength and comfort in the difficult period.

The Head of Service also noted that Edo State remains among the few states in the country consistently complying with the provisions of the Contributory Pension Scheme, a development that has enabled the timely processing and payment of insurance benefits.

He commended the Chair-

man and Permanent Secretary of the Edo State Pension Bureau, Mr. Washington Abbe, for his leadership in managing pension affairs in the state.

Dr. Okungbowa also acknowledged the strong collaboration between the state government and insurance companies, noting that the partnership has helped to ensure the smooth processing and payment of claims.

He advised the beneficiaries to make prudent use of the funds while conveying the appreciation of the state government for the dedication and service rendered by the deceased employees during their lifetime.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Abbe explained that the cheque presentation was in line with the provisions of the Contributory Pension Scheme Law, which mandates a Group Life Insurance policy for all public

servants enrolled in the scheme.

He said the law stipulates that when an employee dies while still in active service, a benefit equivalent to three times the employee's annual salary is paid to the designated beneficiary.

According to him, the Edo State Government has consistently fulfilled its obligations under the scheme, thereby enabling the prompt settlement of insurance claims.

Mr. Abbe, however, noted that delays sometimes occur when families of deceased workers fail to submit essential documents such as death certificates and other required records.

He reaffirmed the Pension Bureau's commitment to supporting the families of deceased employees and ensuring that all legitimate claims are processed in accordance with the law.

N'Delta women demand passage of Special Seats Bill for political inclusion

IDAHOSSA MOSES

YENAGOA (BAYELSA)

Women leaders and stakeholders from across the Niger Delta have called on the Federal Government and the National Assembly to expedite the passage of the Special Seats Bill (SSB) to enhance women's participation in governance and decision-making in Nigeria.

The call formed part of the resolutions reached at the 2026 Niger Delta Women Conference with the theme: "Empowering Niger Delta Women for Enhanced Political Inclusion, Peace and Development Through Advocacy for the Passage of the Special Seats Bill," held at Lady Daima Hall, Osiri Road, Ekeki, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.

The conference was convened by the Pan Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF) in collaboration with the Bayelsa State Government and the British Council as part of efforts aimed at bridging the widening gender gap in political representation and governance in the region.

Delegates from Edo State at the conference included the Edo State PANDEF Woman Leader, Princess Peju Erese, Hon. Osaro Obadigie, Hon. Elizabeth Abai, Barrister (Mrs) Tessy Omijie

and Pastor (Mrs) Abies Uyigue Ayela, among others.

In a communiqué issued at the end of the conference, participants noted that empowering women is not only a matter of equity but also a strategic approach to achieving sustainable peace, inclusive governance and development in the Niger Delta region.

The participants also acknowledged the historic contributions of prominent Nigerian women activists such as Margaret Ekpo and Ann-Kio Briggs, whose efforts they said laid the foundation for women's participation in the governance and nation-building in Nigeria.

While noting that the Niger Delta region currently has two female deputy governors, the conference described the development as a sign of hope but stressed that more deliberate steps must be taken to increase women's representation in elected and appointive positions across the region.

The conference resolved to intensify advocacy for the passage of the Special Seats Bill currently before the National Assembly, while also calling on political parties to institutionalize internal quotas and reduce financial barriers that hinder women from contesting elective positions.

Int'l Women's Day: Youth group celebrates women driving community change**BENIN CITY**

A youth advocacy group, the Indomitable Youths Organisation (IYO), has joined the global community in celebrating women for their contributions to community development and social transformation as the world marks International Women's Day.

In a message commemorating the day, the organisation highlighted the vital roles

women continue to play in strengthening communities through mentorship, advocacy, and everyday acts of compassion that often go unnoticed but have lasting impact.

Dr. Oniovokukor Bright of the Indomitable Youths Organisation said the group was proud to celebrate women who, despite numerous challenges, remain committed to uplifting one another and inspiring positive change within society.

According to him, women across communities are quietly shaping a better future by guiding younger generations and equipping them with valuable skills and knowledge needed to thrive. He noted that through mentoring and skill-building initiatives, many women are helping others unlock opportunities and develop confidence in their abilities.

Bright also emphasised the growing role of women in advo-

cacy and empowerment, pointing out that many are increasingly standing up for the rights and opportunities of other women and girls, thereby strengthening the collective voice for equality and social justice.

He further observed that beyond formal activism, countless women serve as "everyday heroes," carrying out small but meaningful acts of kindness and support that create a ripple effect of encouragement and

empowerment within families and communities.

While congratulating women around the world on the occasion, the youth organisation urged continued solidarity and collaboration in advancing gender equality and expanding opportunities for women and girls.

The statement echoed the words of Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN Women, who has called for sustained

global commitment to women's rights and dignity.

"We must stand up, show up, and speak up for rights, justice and action so that all women and girls can live safely, speak freely and exist equally," Bahous said.

The group concluded by encouraging society to continue supporting initiatives that empower women, noting that the progress of communities is closely tied to the advancement and wellbeing of women and girls.

2027: PDP's Adeoye declares Lagos governorship bid

LAGOS

Prince Adelaja Adeoye, a chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), formally announced his intention to contest the 2027 Lagos

State governorship election.

The announcement was made in a statement issued on Sunday in Lagos.

Adeoye, a media strategist and real estate entrepreneur, said his candidacy aims to

challenge entrenched political structures and reposition the PDP as a credible alternative in the state, where the All Progressives Congress (APC) has dominated governance for decades.

He highlighted his political experience, including serving

as pioneer State Publicity Secretary and later National Publicity Secretary of the Action Democratic Party (ADP).

In 2022, Adeoye declared his ambition to represent Oshodi-Isolo Federal Constituency II in the House of Representatives under the PDP.

Adeoye said he would leverage his grassroots connections to mobilise voters and enhance the party's engagement across Lagos communities.

He also cited ongoing internal party discussions on zoning arrangements for the 2027 elections as a critical factor in

his decision.

Political analysts note that Adeoye's entry into the race could reshape opposition dynamics in Lagos, particularly by attracting younger voters and those seeking alternatives to long-standing political elites.

Reps Power C'ttee approves NDPHC mgt following Alaoji Plant visit

LAGOS

The House of Representatives Committee on Power has passed a vote of confidence on the management of the Niger Delta Power Holding Company (NDPHC) after inspecting the Alaoji Power Plant in Abia State.

The inspection took place last week as part of the committee's constitutional oversight functions.

Mr Emmanuel Ojor, NDPHC Head of Corporate Communications, said the lawmakers evaluated ongoing upgrade works converting the plant from Open Cycle to Combined Cycle operations.

The conversion is expected

to increase electricity generation without additional fuel consumption.

The delegation, led by Committee Chairman Rep. Victor Nwokolo, received briefings from NDPHC Managing Director Mrs Jennifer Adighije, who explained the technical scope and operational objectives of the conversion. Lawmakers toured sections of the facility and engaged engineers to assess project execution.

Ojor said the committee expressed satisfaction with the transparency and progress reported by NDPHC management but emphasised the need for strict monitoring and daily reporting by the EPC contractor to ensure timely completion.

Shipping agents call for reform of abandoned cargo auction system

LAGOS

The Association of Shipping Lines Agents of Nigeria (ASLAN) has called for a formal legal framework and transparent auction process for abandoned cargo in the nation's ports.

The call was made by Mrs

Boma Alabi, SAN, chairman of the association, in an interview with newsmen on Sunday, in Lagos.

Alabi said ambiguities in the Nigeria Customs Service Act (NCSA) 2023 regarding "over-time cargo" and cargo disposal timelines create legal uncertainty and potential revenue losses.

She criticised the current practice of issuing "Direct Auction Allocation" letters to private firms without open bidding.

Allocations reportedly range from N1 million to N2 million per consignment, a practice she said could favour select importers, encourage deliberate cargo lapses, and reduce customs revenue.

Alabi called for review of cost-recovery structures for

terminal handling and agency charges, arguing that current percentage caps of 25 to 50 percent do not reflect operational costs linked to prolonged cargo storage, examination, and repositioning.

The association reaffirmed its commitment to working with the Nigeria Customs Service to prevent fraud, improve operational efficiency, and ensure fair and auditable auction processes.

IGP appoints DCP Anthony Placid Nigeria Police Force FPRO

ABUJA

Inspector-General of Police Mr Olatunji Disu has approved DCP Anthony Placid as the new Force Public Relations Officer (FPRO).

The appointment was announced by outgoing FPRO ACP Benjamin Hundeyin on Sunday in Abuja.

Placid, born December 2, 1970, in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, joined the Nigeria Police Force in 1996 as a Cadet Assistant Superintendent of Police.

He has served in various strategic capacities, including Police Public Relations Officer in Adamawa and Police Staff

College Jos, Divisional Police Officer in multiple states, ACP Operations and Intelligence, and international assignments with the African Union and United Nations missions in Sudan and Darfur.

Placid holds a B.Sc. in Geography and Regional Planning, a Bachelor of Law from the National Open University of Nigeria, and a Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy from the

University of Jos.

He is also a graduate of the Senior Executive Course at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (SEC 47, NIPSS) and a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Placid is married with children and has interests in music, football, basketball, table tennis, badminton, and community engagement.

ADC reserves 40% of party positions for women nationwide

ABUJA

The African Democratic Congress (ADC) has reserved 40 percent of party positions for women across all structures.

The announcement was made by the party's National

Publicity Secretary, Mallam Bolaji Abdullahi, on Sunday, to mark International Women's Day.

Abdullahi said the policy ensures women are fully integrated into party decision-making and leadership structures.

He noted that women in Nigeria carry disproportionate social and economic respon-

sibilities yet remain underrepresented in key national institutions.

He emphasised that the ADC's approach is aimed at increasing women's political participation and leadership, asserting that gender inclusion is critical to national development and the strengthening of Nigeria's democracy.

Economic hardship pushes FCT women into 'Kabu-Kabu' taxi business

ABUJA

Many women in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) have begun converting their private cars into informal taxis, popularly known as "kabu-kabu," in a bid to make ends meet amid worsening economic hardship.

Some of the female drivers told newsmen on Sunday in Abuja that the decision was largely driven by the rising cost of living and the need to supplement household income.

Reports indicate that the trend is becoming increasingly visible as more women are now seen at major junctions and bus stops across the city picking up passengers.

Many private car owners, a significant number of them women driving relatively comfortable vehicles, now stop to convey passengers to various parts of Abuja.

One of the drivers, Mrs Jane Nwaogara, said the development was largely fuelled by rising transportation costs following the increase in the pump price of petrol.

According to her, mounting household expenses such as

school fees, rent and food have made it necessary to seek additional sources of income.

"The economic hardship is biting hard. I have so many bills to pay, including my children's school fees, feeding, utility and medical bills, among others," she said.

"Above all this is the increasing cost of petrol. My salary cannot settle all of these, so I need to find additional income, hence my involvement in the kabu-kabu business."

Similarly, Mrs Blessing Okafor, a mother of three who operates along the Lugbe-Area 1 route, said she started conveying passengers earlier this year to cope with rising household expenses.

"Things are very difficult now. School fees, feeding and house rent are not easy to handle with just one source of income," she said.

Okafor explained that she decided to use her car to pick passengers during peak hours after realising that many commuters struggled to find affordable transportation.

"I usually park at the junction in the morning and evening. Sometimes people

are surprised when they see a woman driving kabu-kabu, but it is the only way I can support my family," she added.

Another driver, Mrs Habiba Moses, said the increase in fuel prices and the rising cost of living had made it necessary for many families to explore alternative income sources.

"When fuel price goes up, transport fares also increase. Many people cannot afford regular taxis anymore, so they enter our cars," she said.

According to her, the income from conveying passengers helps her buy fuel, pay utility bills and meet other family needs.

Mrs Erica Ekah also said that since she began conveying passengers to and from work, she no longer struggled to find money to buy fuel.

Ekah noted that more female drivers, some in very posh vehicles, were now beginning to flood major junctions where informal taxi operators usually park to pick up passengers.

"Recently, I discovered that more female drivers in very posh cars are beginning to flood the major junctions where we park to pick passengers," she said.



PUBLIC NOTICE

FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT

PUBLIC DISPLAY EXERCISE ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (ESIA) FOR THE PROPOSED 10MMSCFD GAS PROCESSING AND LNG PLANT AT OML96, GELEGELE, OVIA NORTH-EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, EDO STATE BY VTT LNG WEST AFRICA LIMITED.

In accordance with the provisions of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act CAP E12 LFN 2004, which makes it mandatory for proponents of all new major developmental activities to carry out EIA for their proposed projects, the Federal Ministry of Environment hereby announces twenty-one(21) working days public display for the draft EIA report submitted by VTT LNG West Africa Limited.

Brief Project Description:

The proposed project shall entail the development of a modular gas processing and liquefaction facility designed to process up to 10 million standard cubic feet of natural gas per day (10MMSCFD) sourced from DOC Gelegele Field at OML 96, Gelegele, Ovia North-East Local Government Area, Edo State. The facility will treat, dehydrate and liquefy the processed gas into Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) for onward distribution through a virtual pipeline system using cryogenic transport trucks. The project forms part of Nigeria's broader gas monetization strategy and aligns with the national objectives aimed at reducing routine gas flaring, enhancing domestic gas utilization, and supporting industrial and economic development.

The display centers are:

- * Ovia North-East Local Government Area Headquarters, Okada, Edo State.
- * Edo State Ministry of Environment and Sustainability, Benin City.
- * Federal Ministry of Environment Office, Benin City Field Office, Edo State.
- * Federal Ministry of Environment, Environmental Assessment Department, Environment House, Independence Way South, Central Business District, Abuja-F.C.T.
- * www.ead.gov.ng.

Duration of display:

Date: 9th March - 8th April
Time: 8am - 4pm daily.

COMMENTS SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO THE HONOURABLE MINISTER, FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT HEADQUARTERS, MABUSHI, ABUJA-FCT AND VIA info@ead.gov.ng ON OR BEFORE 15th APRIL, 2026.

**SIGNED:
PERMANENT SECRETARY
FOR: HONORABLE MINISTER**

NEWS

Army denies 40-troop death claim after Borno terror attacks

ABUJA

The Nigerian Army has dismissed reports claiming that more than 40 soldiers were killed in recent terrorist attacks in parts of Borno State, describing the allegation as exaggerated and misleading.

In a statement issued in Abuja, Lt.-Col. Sani Uba said

the report ignored the gallant efforts of troops who repelled coordinated terrorist assaults on several communities and military positions in the North-East.

Uba, the Media Information Officer at Headquarters Joint Task Force North East, Operation HADIN KAI, said the attackers were remnants of Boko Haram fighters earlier dis-

lodged from Sambisa Forest.

According to him, the terrorists regrouped and launched coordinated night assaults from multiple directions on communities and military locations around Konduga, Ngoshe, Mainok and Jakana.

He said troops responded swiftly, engaging the insurgents in intense gun battles and successfully repelling the

attackers while defending the affected communities.

"During the engagements, several terrorists were neutralised," Uba said.

"Sadly, a Commanding Officer and some brave soldiers paid the supreme price while courageously confronting the attackers and preventing devastation in other communities."

Uba stressed that contra-

ry to the claims circulating in some reports, troops were not overrun but fought from several fronts to protect civilians and restore normalcy in the affected areas.

He added that the attackers deployed indiscriminate explosives and heavy gunfire under the cover of darkness, resulting in civilian casualties as some residents were caught in the crossfire.

The army spokesman further disclosed that the Chief of Army Staff, Lt.-Gen. Waidi Shaibu, had visited Maiduguri to assess the situation and reinforce ongoing counter-terrorism operations.

According to him, the army

chief ordered the immediate reinforcement of troops and the deployment of additional equipment to sustain pressure on fleeing insurgents.

Uba said coordinated ground and air operations were ongoing to pursue the terrorists, dismantle regrouping elements and rescue civilians who might have been abducted during the attacks.

He urged the public to disregard exaggerated reports aimed at undermining the morale of troops.

"The Nigerian Army remains resolute and committed to decisively confronting the terrorists until lasting peace is restored in the North-East," he said.



2026 IJAW NATIONAL CONGRESS:

L-R: Former Deputy Governor of Bayelsa State, Mr Pereboma Ebiebi; Speaker of Bayelsa State House of Assembly, Hon. Abraham Ingobere; Governor Douye Diri of Bayelsa State; President of Ijaw National Congress, Prof. Benjamin Okaba; Commissioner for Ijaw Affairs, Chief Godspower Oporoma and Chairman, Bayelsa Traditional Rulers Council, King Bubaraya Dakolo, during the 2026 Ijaw National Congress (INC) at the Ijaw House in Yenagoa recently.

IWD 2026: Expert urges stronger governance support for women-led businesses

LAGOS

The Founder of the Centre for Enterprise Governance (CEG), Dr Adeyinka Hassan, has called for stronger governance structures, improved institutional support and wider access to finance to enable women-led enterprises in Nigeria to scale sustainably.

Hassan made the call in an interview with journalists in Lagos on Sunday to commemorate the 2026 International Women's Day (IWD).

The theme for the 2026 celebration is "Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls," with the campaign message "Give to Gain."

He noted that women play a significant role in Nigeria's en-

terprise ecosystem, particularly within the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) segment.

According to him, women are highly active as founders and operators of businesses across sectors such as trade, services, agriculture and the creative economy.

However, he observed that the major challenge lies in scaling women-owned enterprises beyond the micro and informal levels.

"While participation at the micro and informal levels is substantial, the representation of women declines significantly as businesses transition into medium-sized enterprises and large corporate structures," he said.

"Bridging this scale gap re-

quires stronger institutional support, improved access to capital and governance structures that enable women-led enterprises to grow sustainably."

Hassan said many of the barriers limiting the growth of women-led businesses are structural rather than capability-based.

He explained that limited access to collateral due to lower asset ownership, weak credit histories and informal business structures often restrict financing opportunities for women entrepreneurs.

According to him, although some financial institutions have introduced banking products targeted at women entrepreneurs, the available financing options remain insufficient relative to the scale of women-led

informal enterprises in Nigeria.

"Many women-owned businesses lack formal financial documentation, audited records or governance systems that financial institutions often require for lending decisions," he said.

He emphasised that enterprise governance remains critical to the sustainability and long-term growth of women-owned businesses.

Hassan noted that the absence of governance systems such as advisory boards, internal controls and clear decision-making frameworks often limits the ability of many small enterprises to scale.

He identified common governance gaps among female-led MSMEs to include weak separation between personal and business finances, limited documentation of policies and procedures, and the absence of formal advisory structures.

Kaduna stakeholders push State-Community partnership to tackle conflict

KADUNA

Stakeholders in peacebuilding have called for stronger collaboration between state institutions and community actors to address conflict drivers and promote sustainable peace in Kaduna State.

The call was made during an Executive Peace Roundtable held in Kaduna at the weekend under the Delimi PROSPER Project.

The dialogue, organised to generate practical solutions for peace and development, was implemented by Search for Resilience and Development with support from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's SPRiNG programme.

Participants included policymakers, youth representatives, traditional rulers, security actors, civil society organisations, development partners and disability inclusion advocates.

They examined sustainable

peacebuilding approaches and strategies to strengthen cooperation between communities and government institutions.

Project Officer of the Delimi PROSPER Project in Kaduna, Salim Yunusa, said the initiative was designed to deepen engagement between citizens and government through structured dialogue.

"Collaboration between communities and public institutions remains the most reliable pathway to sustainable progress, unity and development across Kaduna State," Yunusa said.

He added that the project had organised several engagements with government officials, youth groups and other stakeholders to strengthen dialogue and public participation in peacebuilding initiatives.

Executive Director of the Delimi PROSPER Project, Richard Ali, said many conflicts in Nigeria are often framed along ethnic or religious lines but are rooted in deeper structural challenges.

Female doctor breaks barrier in hydrocele surgery training

ABUJA

Dr Linda Nwodo has become the first woman trained by the non-governmental organisation Sightsavers to perform hydrocele surgery in Nigeria, marking a milestone in specialised healthcare and reinforcing calls for greater gender equality in the health sector.

Sightsavers Nigeria Country Director, Prof. Joy Shu'aibu, disclosed this in a statement issued in Abuja to mark the 2026 International Women's Day.

Hydrocele is a condition in which fluid accumulates around a testicle, causing swelling in the scrotum. It is commonly associated with lymphatic filariasis in many tropical countries.

Shu'aibu stressed the importance of supporting women in specialised fields where they continue to face significant barriers.

She noted that women and girls in Nigeria and across the

world still encounter major challenges in accessing healthcare, education and employment opportunities.

Citing the World Economic Forum's 2025 Global Gender Gap Report, she said it could take up to 123 years to achieve full global gender parity.

According to her, Nwodo's achievement highlights the importance of investing in women.

"When women are given the tools, training and opportunities to lead in specialised health fields, they drive transformative change not just for patients but for entire communities," Shu'aibu said.

"Nigeria cannot afford to leave half of its talent behind."

She called for increased investment in programmes that support women and girls, particularly those with disabilities, to enable them access healthcare, training and professional opportunities.

Violence disrupts Wike camp's PDP congress in Oyo

IBADAN

Hoodlums at the weekend disrupted the local government congress of the faction of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) aligned with former Rivers State governor, Nyesom Wike, leaving several party members injured and property destroyed.

The violence occurred at Bodija in Ibadan North Local

Government Area and was reportedly replicated at other designated venues across Oyo State where the congress was scheduled to hold.

A member of the faction, Mr Julius Adekunle, alleged that the attacks were coordinated and targeted almost all venues where the congresses were taking place.

"It was a planned attack because the hoodlums struck many of the venues across the

state," Adekunle said.

"Reports from Ogbomosho North, Ibarapa Central, Akinyele and Ibadan North local government areas, among others, showed that not fewer than 10 of our members were attacked."

He added that several vehicles and other property belonging to party members were vandalised during the incident.

Adekunle further alleged that the attackers also invaded the residence of the faction's

leader in the state, Chief Hazeem Gbolahunmi, located in Bodija, where property worth millions of naira was destroyed.

The faction's state chairman, Prof. Abdulrahman Akinoso, confirmed the incident and expressed concern over the development.

Akinoso described the situation as chaotic and called on security agencies to investigate the attacks and bring those responsible to justice.

APC shocked as party member linked to kidnap, killing of Ebonyi monarch

NDUFU-ALIKE (EBONYI)

The All Progressives Congress (APC) has expressed shock over the alleged involvement of one of its members in the kidnap and eventual killing of HRH, Francis Igwe, father of former Ebonyi State Deputy Governor, Dr Kelechi Igwe.

Reports had indicated that the party's publicity secretary in the state was allegedly implicated in the incident, a development that has generated outrage and disbelief within

the party and the wider community.

Reacting to the development, the Chairman of the APC in Ebonyi State, Chief Stanley Okoro-Emegha, described the situation as shocking and deeply disturbing when he led a delegation of party leaders on a condolence visit to the Igwe family in Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo Local Government Area.

Okoro-Emegha said the party was still struggling to come to terms with the allegation, noting that members had

found it difficult to believe that a party official could be linked to such a crime.

According to him, the news has left the leadership of the party embarrassed and saddened, especially given the longstanding relationship between the party and the Igwe family.

He noted that the party regarded the incident as tragic and unacceptable, stressing that it would support every

step taken by the state government and security agencies to ensure that justice is served.

"The report came to us as a shock and it is something we cannot easily explain. The party cannot condone any act that involves taking the life of another human being," he said.

Okoro-Emegha assured the bereaved family that the APC would cooperate fully with the authorities in the ongoing

investigation and would not shield anyone found culpable.

He added that the party leadership believed strongly that those responsible for the crime must face the full weight of the law.

While consoling the family, the party chairman urged them to remain strong in the face of the painful loss, noting that the entire community shared in their grief.

He also reiterated that the party would stand by the state government's efforts to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

The killing of the traditional ruler has continued to attract widespread condemnation across Ebonyi State, with community leaders and residents calling for a thorough investigation into the circumstances surrounding the incident.

ADC begins membership registration, revalidation in Anambra

AWKA

The African Democratic Congress (ADC) has commenced a membership registration and revalidation exercise in Anambra State as part of efforts to strengthen the party's structure ahead of future political contests.

The exercise was inaugurated at the weekend in Awka, the state capital, in the presence of party leaders, stakeholders and supporters.

Speaking at the event, former Governor of Anambra State, Mr Peter Obi, called on Nigerians to participate actively in the political process, noting that responsible leadership and good governance depend on the involvement of citizens.

Obi said the registration and revalidation exercise would help to expand the party's membership base and deepen its presence at the grassroots level.

According to him, democ-

racy thrives when citizens take part in political activities and hold leaders accountable.

He urged Nigerians, particularly young people, to show greater interest in politics and governance.

Also speaking, Mr John Nwosu, a chieftain of the party, described the membership exercise as a crucial step in strengthening the ADC's organisational structure across the state.

Nwosu said the exercise would provide an opportunity for existing members to reaffirm their commitment to the party while also welcoming new members who share the party's vision.

He called on party supporters across the state to take advantage of the exercise to register and participate actively in building a stronger political platform.

According to him, the party remains committed to promoting transparency, accountability and good governance in Nigeria.

Lagos govt warns actress Sarah Martins against street cooking

LAGOS

The Lagos State Government has cautioned Nollywood actress Sarah Martins over her recent activity of cooking and distributing food on the streets of the state.

The warning was issued by the Commissioner for Environment and Water Resources, Mr Tokunbo Wahab, in a letter addressed to the actress and shared on his official X handle at the weekend.

In the letter, Wahab acknowledged the charitable intentions behind Martins' efforts to provide food for vulnerable residents but noted that carrying out such activities on public roads and walkways violates the state's environmental and public order regulations.

According to the commissioner, cooking or trading on public infrastructure such as road medians and walkways poses safety, sanitation and

traffic concerns.

He explained that such activities could obstruct pedestrian movement, create environmental nuisance and expose members of the public to potential health risks.

Wahab also revealed that the actress had previously been cautioned over a similar activity in 2025, when authorities exercised understanding due to the philanthropic nature of her initiative.

However, he stressed that the state government would not tolerate actions that violate environmental laws and disrupt public order.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as MISS OSARIEMEN AGBONMWANRE SONIA, now wish to be known and address as MRS. OSAOSEMWN AGBONMWANRE SONIA. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public please take note.



WOMEN OF SUBSTANCE CONFERENCE:

L-R: Veteran Nigerian TV Journalist and Producer, Bimbo Oloyede; Deputy General Manager and Head of Terrestrial Services, Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA), Dr Felicia Agubate and Chief Executive Officer/Founder Women of Substance, Ify Onyegbule, during the Women of Substance Conference and Award in Lagos recently.

NRC seeks stronger State-Police collaboration to protect rail infrastructure

LAGOS

The Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) has called for stronger collaboration between state governments and the Railway Police Command to safeguard railway infrastructure across the country.

Managing Director of the corporation, Mr Kayode Opeifa, made the call in a statement issued in Lagos at the weekend.

Opeifa emphasised that protecting rail infrastructure was crucial to the country's economic development and the

safety of passengers, noting that the railway network serves as an important mobility corridor linking major cities and commercial centres.

According to him, the railway system remains a critical national asset that requires collective protection by federal and state authorities as well as security agencies.

He explained that the Railway Police Command currently operates across several states of the federation and plays a key role in ensuring the security of railway facilities, tracks, stations and passengers.

Opeifa said state governments must recognise the railway police as part of their broader security architecture in order to enhance coordination and effectiveness in protecting rail infrastructure.

He noted that incidents of vandalism and theft of railway components have posed challenges to the operation and expansion of rail services in some parts of the country.

The NRC managing director stressed that safeguarding railway infrastructure would not only protect public investment but also ensure the sustainability of rail services and boost economic activities.

"Railway infrastructure is

a critical national asset and its protection is essential for maintaining efficient transportation and supporting national development," he said.

Opeifa added that the corporation remained committed to strengthening partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including security agencies and state governments, to improve the safety and reliability of rail services nationwide.

He also noted that the ongoing modernisation of the railway system across the country required strong security arrangements to ensure that the facilities are protected from vandalism and illegal activities.

Ramadan: Govt must be intentional about lifting people from poverty —Jandor

IKEJA

Lagos: Dr Abdul-Azeez Adediran, popularly known as Jandor and convener of the Lagos4Lagos Movement, has called on governments at all levels to be deliberate and strategic in their efforts to lift citizens out of poverty and ensure a fair distribution of wealth.

Adediran made the call while speaking at the Lagos4Lagos Movement's 8th Annual Ramadan Public Lecture held at the premises of LTV 8 in Ikeja, Lagos.

The event attracted Islamic scholars, traditional rulers, community leaders and hundreds of Muslim faithful from different parts of the state.

Speaking on the theme of the lecture, Adediran said the primary responsibility of leadership is to improve the welfare of citizens and create opportunities that would enable people to live productive lives.

He emphasised that government policies and programmes must focus on empowering citizens economically, reducing

hardship and narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor.

According to him, leadership should be driven by the desire to uplift the less privileged and ensure that the benefits of governance are felt by the people.

"Leadership is about ensuring the well-being of the people. The purpose of government is to look at how to alleviate the suffering of citizens and create opportunities for them to prosper," he said.

Adediran noted that the Islamic principle of Zakat, which

encourages wealth redistribution to support the poor and vulnerable, offers valuable lessons for governments seeking to address poverty and inequality.

He explained that Zakat promotes social justice by ensuring that resources are shared in a way that benefits the less privileged members of society.

Adediran also encouraged wealthy individuals to support humanitarian initiatives and programmes that could help improve the living conditions of vulnerable people.

NEWS

Vigilance operative sentenced to death for killing phone repairer

OGBARU

Anambra: An Anambra State High Court sitting in Ogbaru has sentenced a vigilance operative, Onyeka Eze, to death by hanging for the murder of a phone repairer, Anayo Ugbo, following a violent altercation that occurred at the popular Shoe Site Market in Okpoko area of the state.

Delivering judgment in the case, the Administrative Judge of the Ogbaru Judicial Division, Justice Charles Okaa, held that

the prosecution had successfully established the charge of murder against the defendant beyond reasonable doubt.

Justice Okaa stated that the evidence presented before the court, including witness testimonies and medical reports, clearly showed that the convict was responsible for the fatal injuries that led to the victim's death.

The prosecution, led by Assistant Chief State Counsel in the Ministry of Justice, Mrs Chinyere Aganama-Onyeze, told the court that the incident occurred on May 5, 2022,

at the busy Shoe Site Market where the deceased worked as a cellphone repair technician.

According to the prosecution, the deceased was attending to a customer when the convict, who was attached to a local vigilance group operating within the market, summoned him to appear before their supervisor.

The prosecutor said Ugbo requested a brief moment to complete the repair of the phone he was working on, but the convict allegedly refused and insisted that he accompany him immediately to the vigilance office located in a three-storey building belong-

ing to a security outfit within the market premises.

The court heard that the convict also directed the customer whose phone was being repaired, Mr Joshua Igwe, to follow them to the office as a witness.

Upon arrival at the office, however, the vigilance boss they were supposed to meet was not present.

The deceased then pleaded with the convict to allow him return to his shop to continue his work while waiting for the boss to arrive.

The prosecutor told the court that the convict declined the request and instead demanded

that the deceased pay money over a previous fight that had occurred in the market.

Ugbo, who hailed from Ogboji Ezzagu in Ishielu Local

Government Area of Ebonyi State, reportedly denied involvement in the alleged fight and refused to pay the money demanded.

Businesswoman arraigned over alleged trespass, intimidation

ABUJA

A businesswoman, Abella Florence, has been arraigned before a Wuse Chief Magistrates' Court in Abuja over alleged criminal trespass and intimidation.

Florence pleaded not guilty to the two-count charge preferred against her.

The prosecutor, Samuel Emmanuel, told the court that the case was reported by the complainant, Elijah Chibuike, at the Mabushi Police Station on February 26.

According to the prosecution, the complainant alleged that the defendant unlawfully entered his taxi park located opposite the popular Next Cash and Carry shopping complex in Abuja.

The prosecutor said Florence allegedly began operating a Point of Sale (POS) business

within the premises without obtaining the consent or approval of the complainant.

He further alleged that the defendant's presence at the location caused tension and intimidation among workers operating within the park.

Following the complaint, police officers reportedly invited the defendant for questioning before subsequently charging her to court.

The prosecutor said the alleged offences are punishable under relevant provisions of the law.

In his ruling, the magistrate, Ekpeyong Inyang, granted the defendant bail in the sum of ₦500,000 with one surety in like sum.

The court also directed that the surety must be a person of identifiable address within Abuja.

The case was adjourned until April 16 for hearing.



PLAQUE DISPLAY:

L-R: Wife of the Senate President, Dr (Mrs) Unoma; Senate President, Godswill Akpabio; Nigeria's First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu; Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Pastor Umo Eno; Coordinator, Office of the First Lady, Akwa Ibom State, Lady Helen Eno Obareki; and Deputy Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Senator Akon Eyakenyi, displaying the plaque endorsing President Bola Tinubu, Akpabio and Eno for 2027, presented by Akwa Ibom women during the International Women's Day celebration in Uyo yesterday. Photo: Omoye Aminu.

Court fixes April 17 for adoption of addresses in Emefiele associate's trial

IKEJA

An Ikeja Special Offences Court has fixed April 17 for the adoption of final written addresses in the ongoing trial-within-trial involving Henry Omoile, an associate and co-defendant of former Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) governor, Godwin Emefiele.

The trial-within-trial is aimed at determining whether a statement allegedly made

by Omoile to operatives of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) was voluntarily given.

Emefiele is currently facing a 19-count charge bordering on alleged gratification, corrupt demands and abuse of office connected with large financial transactions that occurred during his tenure as the head of Nigeria's apex bank.

The charges, according to the prosecution, involve finan-

cial dealings estimated at about \$4.5 billion and ₦2.8 billion.

Omoile, who is listed as a co-defendant in the case, is facing a separate three-count charge relating to the alleged unlawful acceptance of gifts while acting as an agent in transactions linked to the Central Bank of Nigeria.

During the proceedings, the court heard arguments from both the prosecution and defence regarding the circumstances under which the defendant's statement was obtained.

Justice Rahman Oshodi adjourned the matter after the cross-examination of Omoile was concluded.

The judge directed both the prosecution and defence teams to file and exchange their final written addresses beginning from March 23.

The court stated that the addresses would assist in determining whether the statement obtained from the defendant by EFCC operatives would be admissible as evidence in the main trial.

Painter arraigned over alleged theft of AC cable worth ₦350,000

ABUJA

A 36-year-old painter, Friday Adams, has been arraigned before a Life Camp Chief Magistrates' Court in Abuja for allegedly stealing an air conditioner cable valued at ₦350,000 from a residential apartment.

Adams was docked on charges bordering on criminal trespass and stealing.

However, when the charges were read to him, he pleaded not guilty.

The prosecutor, Charity Nwachukwu, told the court that the case was reported by the complainant, Mr Oketunbi Samuel, who serves as the manager of Carix Estate located in Idu Karmo area of Abuja.

According to the prosecutor, the incident occurred within the estate on November 4, 2025.

She alleged that the defendant unlawfully entered an apartment within the estate premises and removed the cable connected to an air conditioning unit.

The theft was later discovered by estate management, which subsequently alerted security personnel.

Investigations led to the arrest of the defendant, who was later handed over to officers at

the Karmo Police Station for further investigation.

The prosecutor said the alleged offences contravene provisions of the Penal Code.

Chief Magistrate Musa Jobbo granted the defendant bail in the sum of ₦500,000 with one surety in like sum.

The court ordered that the surety must be a responsible person who resides within the court's jurisdiction.

Banker arraigned for allegedly defrauding customer of \$800

ABUJA

A 29-year-old banker, Dolapo Fakayi, has been arraigned before a Life Camp Chief Magistrates' Court in Abuja over allegations of fraud involving the sum of \$800 belonging to a customer.

Fakayi, who resides in Mararaba area of neighbouring Nasarawa State, is facing charges of criminal conspiracy and cheating.

The prosecutor told the court that the defendant allegedly collected the sum of \$800 from a customer with the promise of assisting in opening a dollar-denominated bank account.

However, according to the prosecution, the defendant

allegedly failed to process the account opening as agreed and instead converted the money to personal use.

The matter was later reported to law enforcement authorities after the customer repeatedly demanded the opening of the account or the return of the money without success.

Police investigations reportedly led to the arrest of the defendant and subsequent arraignment before the court.

The prosecutor said the alleged offences contravene provisions of the Penal Code.

The magistrate admitted the defendant to bail in the sum of ₦500,000 with one surety in like sum.

The case was adjourned until March 11 for hearing.

81yr-old, 2 others arraigned over alleged theft of building materials

IBADAN

An 81-year-old man, Oladejo Olayiwola, and two other defendants have been arraigned before a Mapo Grade A Customary Court in Ibadan over the alleged theft and destruction of building materials valued at ₦1 million.

The other defendants are Yakub Moshood, 47, and Olusegun Bello, 42.

They were docked on charges bordering on conspiracy, malicious damage and stealing.

However, all three defendants pleaded not guilty to the charges.

According to the prosecution, the defendants allegedly conspired to unlawfully remove and damage building materials belonging to the complainant.

The prosecutor told the court that the incident resulted in financial losses estimated at about ₦1 million.

After hearing the pleas of the defendants, the court admitted them to bail in the sum of ₦500,000 each.

The court further ordered that each defendant must provide two reliable sureties who must be relatives and residents within the jurisdiction of the court.

The case was adjourned until April 22 for hearing.

Foreign

NEWS

Heavy rains and flooding kill at least 23 in Nairobi

At least 23 people have been killed in Nairobi after heavy rain overnight caused severe flooding in Kenya's capital city.

Police said about 30 people had been rescued but many others drowned after being swept into rivers - some have been electrocuted.

Kenya's military has been deployed to help people trapped inside their cars as police described widespread damage to properties as well as road closures.

Several flights bound for Nairobi Airport had to be cancelled or diverted to the coastal city of Mombasa.

"The torrential rains have led

to significant flooding, unfortunately resulting in 23 fatalities so far, the destruction of property, road closures, and the displacement of residents," police said in a statement on Saturday afternoon.

The Kenya Meteorological Department warned of heavy rainfall in Nairobi and surrounding counties - with 30-70 mm of rain expected in the capital.

Earlier, security guard John Lomayan, 34, described seeing someone he recognised in the industrial neighbourhood of Grogan who was trapped beneath a car that had been washed away when the Nairobi River burst its banks.

"I saw him being carried by the water from up there," he told Reuters news agency, gesturing up the road.

"We didn't know where he had gone. It is only now that we see him under the car."

Key roads in the capital city, including Mombasa Road, Uhuru Highway, Kirinyaga Road, and parts of the Westlands district, have been submerged underwater.

Stalled vehicles and fast-moving floodwaters created havoc, Reuters said.

The storm left many stranded during the evening rush hour.

Kenyan authorities advised residents to avoid flooded streets and drainage channels

while emergency responders assisted stranded motorists and pedestrians.

Earlier, the Kenya Meteorological Department warned of prolonged heavy rainfall, cautioning about urban flooding, poor visibility.

River levels are expected to rise through to 9 March.

Nairobi, along with regions such as the Central Highlands, Lake Victoria Basin, and the coastal areas, remains under heightened alert for peak rainfall in the coming days, it added.

Last year, hundreds of Kenyans were killed after heavy rains caused severe flooding and landslides across the country and neighbouring Tanzania.



HEAVY RAINS AND FLOODING:

A man looks through the wreckage of private vehicles destroyed following heavy rainfall in the Grogan area of Nairobi.

Boy, 12, among six dead as tornadoes hit Michigan and Oklahoma

At least six people have died and more than a dozen others injured after tornadoes struck Michigan and Oklahoma, in severe storms that swept across parts of the US.

Officials said four people were killed in southern Michigan, including a 12-year-old boy, and two died in Oklahoma on Friday, with rescue workers continuing to assess the damage.

The storms uprooted trees, downed power lines, damaged buildings and ripped the roofs off some houses on Friday.

The National Weather Service (NWS) said the severe weather could continue into the weekend, warning of thunderstorms and flash flooding from the Great Plains to Texas.

In Michigan, the Branch County sheriff's department said three people were killed and 12 others were injured near Union City after a tornado hit on Friday. Power outages and road closures are expected this

weekend, they added.

About 50 miles (80 km) away in Cass County, Michigan, authorities reported one death and several injuries.

"Multiple large structures - including homes and pole barns - sustained damage ranging from major structural impacts to complete destruction," they said in a statement.

Hundreds of people were reported to be without power, they added.

Cass County Sheriff Clint Roach announced on Saturday that 12-year-old Silas Anderson died from unspecified weather-related injuries in Edwardsburg, Michigan.

"Silas was surrounded by family at the time of his passing," the sheriff's office said in a social media post.

Videos shared on social media showed massive whirlwinds sweeping through Union City, and large chunks of debris and dust flying across a car park in

the city of Three Rivers.

One local resident described seeing the storm approaching.

"We look out the window and saw the tornado go right down the strip and that's where my daughter is, where my parents, where I live down the road," a Three Rivers, Michigan resident told the BBC's US partner CBS News. "I was just very grateful that God protected my daughter and my mom and sister and my family."

Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer said she activated a state emergency for Branch, Cass and St Joseph counties.

"We are working with emergency teams to monitor the situation and coordinate resources for those impacted," she said.

"My heart is with the families who lost loved ones and the Michiganders who were injured yesterday."

Emergency management officials said local responders are continuing to search damaged areas and begin recovery efforts.

In Oklahoma, Jeff Moore, the county's emergency manager, said a tornado cut around a 4-mile (6.4 km) path of damage in Okmulgee county, some 30 miles (48 km) south of Tulsa.

Trump accuses Starmer of seeking to 'join wars after we've already won'

US President Donald Trump has told the UK he does not need its aircraft carriers and accused Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer of seeking to "join wars after we've already won", as the US and Israel continue to launch strikes on Iran.

In a social media post, Trump said the UK was "giving serious thought" to sending two aircraft carriers to the Middle East, before saying the US does not "need them". Downing Street has not responded.

One of the UK's two aircraft carriers has been placed on advanced readiness, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) confirmed earlier on Saturday.

Trump's comments came after US bomber jets were seen landing in the UK as the US started using British bases for "specific defensive operations".

"The United Kingdom, our once Great Ally, maybe the Greatest of them all, is finally giving serious thought to sending two aircraft carriers to the Middle East," Trump wrote on Truth Social on Saturday. "That's OK, Prime Minister Starmer, we don't need them any longer - But we will remember."

"We don't need people that join Wars after we've already won!"

Speaking on Air Force One in response to a question about the use of UK bases in the war,

Trump referred to his post on Truth Social, saying: "We don't need them," appearing to refer to the carriers.

He added: "It's not the right time. It would have been nice to have them two weeks ago."

The UK government has defended its decision not to join initial US and Israel strikes on Iran, and has remained clear that it has no interest in joining the wider offensive campaign in the Middle East.

Earlier in the week, the prime minister told MPs: "President Trump has expressed his disagreement with our decision not to get involved in the initial strikes, but it is my duty to judge what is in Britain's national interest."

While Sir Keir has not responded directly to Trump's post, he earlier wrote in the Sunday Mirror that "at moments like this, the country needs seriousness, not political games".

"While opposition parties seek to undermine Britain on the world stage, my Labour government is focused on protecting British people at home and abroad," he added.

Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch has accused the prime minister of being "too afraid" to make decisions and "sitting on the fence" over the conflict in the Middle East.

War fuels debate in Cyprus over UK military bases

A drone strike on a British airbase in Cyprus has reignited an enduring debate about the UK's presence on the island.

It's a week since the drone punched a hole in a hangar at RAF Akrotiri.

That hole, for some in Britain, symbolises embarrassing gaps in UK hard power.

For some in Cyprus, it's another unwelcome result of British military overreach.

"We just want to have an independent Cyprus," said local business owner Natasha Theodotou.

She was holding a banner that read "British Bases Out" at a demonstration outside the presidential palace in the capital, Nicosia.

"Just as we're occupied by the Turkish government," said Natasha, "we are occupied by the UK."

She wants to see a unified country where Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots live together.

Britain retained two major sovereign bases in Cyprus' south and south east, Akrotiri and Dhekelia, as part of a 1960

treaty that established the island's independence and ended its status as a British colony.

In 1974 Turkey invaded and took control of Cyprus' northern third in response to a Greece-backed military coup.

Not far from the protest tourists queue up at a checkpoint allowing passage into the Turkish-controlled part of Nicosia.

The city, which sits on the UN-patrolled buffer zone known as the Green Line, is sometimes called the world's last divided capital.

British military officials' best assessment is that the drone that hit RAF Akrotiri was launched in Lebanon by the Iranian-backed militia Hezbollah.

The UK government has said its bases in Cyprus are not being utilised by US bombers for "defensive" strikes on Iranian missile sites.

But the reported use of the base by American U-2 spy planes may explain why RAF Akrotiri was a target, as Iran and its proxies retaliated against US-Israeli strikes.

US embassy in Oslo hit by explosion, Norway police say

The US embassy in Oslo has been hit by an explosion in the early hours of the morning, Norway's police say.

"Large resources" were sent to the area in the Norwegian capital at about 01:00 local

time (00:00 GMT), police said.

"The police are in dialogue with the embassy and no injuries have been reported," a statement said.

It added that there was currently "no information about exactly what happened or who

may be involved".

The embassy sustained minor damage, media reports say. The diplomatic mission's US employees have not commented.

Michael Dellemyr, who is leading the police response,

told Norway's public broadcaster NRK the explosion was at the public entrance to the building.

The US embassy is located in the Morgedalsvegen district of Oslo, about 7km (4 miles) outside the city centre.

NEWS

Foreign

No popular support': China warns against government change in Iran

China has warned against seeking government change in Iran amid the ongoing US-Israeli offensive, saying any such move lacks public support.

"Plotting a 'colour' revolution or seeking government change will find no popular support," China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi told a news conference on the sidelines of an important annual gathering in Beijing, state-run Xinhua news agency reported on Sunday.

Wang also called for the sovereignty of Iran and all countries to be respected, and demanded an "immediate stop to military operations" in the Middle East to prevent an escalation and avoid a spillover of the conflict.

"This is a war that should not have happened, and it is a war that does no one any good," Wang said. "Force provides no solution, and armed conflict will only increase hatred and breed new crises."

The people of the Middle East are the true masters of this region, and the region's affairs should be determined by the countries there independently, he said, urging noninterference in internal affairs.

"A strong fist does not mean

strong reason. The world cannot return to the law of the jungle," he told reporters.

Wang urged "all sides" to return to the negotiating table "as quickly as possible" to resolve differences through dialogue, and work to realise common security.

China, he added, stands ready to work with the regional countries to "restore order to the Middle East, calm to its people, and peace to the world".

According to a classified US National Intelligence Council report, even a large-scale US military offensive would be unlikely to overthrow Iran's military and clerical power structure.

The report - published on Saturday by The Washington Post, citing three sources familiar with the classified document - undercuts US President Donald Trump's assertion that he could "clean out" Iran's leadership and install a preferred successor, indicating that such an outcome would be far from certain.

Wang also maintained that China's relations with Russia, which has been criticised by the West for sustaining the war in Ukraine, remained "steady and unshakeable".

Iran oil facilities hit for first time as war with US-Israel enters day 9

Thick smoke has filled the sky over Tehran after Israeli air strikes hit Iran's oil facilities for the first time since the war started, killing at least four people.

Joint attacks on Iran by Israel and the United States continued for a ninth day on Sunday, killing more than 1,300 people in Iran and about 300 in Lebanon. About a dozen people have been killed in Israel, according to officials.

The strikes on Saturday sparked large fires as they hit four oil storage facilities and an oil production transfer centre in Tehran and the province of Alborz, the Fars news agency reported, with the Iranian state media describing it as an "attack from the US and the Zionist regime".

The Aghdasieh oil warehouse in northeast Tehran, the Tehran refinery in the south, the Shahran oil depot in the west of Tehran, and an oil depot in Karaj city were the facilities targeted. Witnesses said oil from the Shahran depot had leaked into the streets.

At least four tanker drivers were killed in the attacks in Tehran and Alborz, Fars reported. Despite the attack, "there is no shortage of fuel distribution", and security forces are "currently engaged in firefighting operations", it added.

Israel said it struck "a num-

ber of fuel storage facilities in Tehran" that were used "to operate military infrastructure".

Al Jazeera's Tohid Asadi, reporting from Tehran, said the attacks on a civil industrial facility were unprecedented.

"This is not the first time. Back in June, during the 12-day war, we saw fuel depots being targeted, but this is unprecedented," Asadi said. "We are dealing with a critical situation in terms of war and environmental circumstances in the capital."

He described seeing black raindrops on his windows early on Sunday morning. "There is a high risk of being surrounded by toxic air."

Asadi said there are "serious concerns" about the rising number of casualties among civilians.

"Three days ago, the tally was at about 1,300, but we know that in the past days, intensive strikes targeting Iranian territory have continued, so it's likely that the number has gone up," he said.

Al Jazeera's Mohamed Vall, also reporting from Tehran, said the attacks on oil facilities are part of a "psychological war" against Iranians, "to frighten them and make them believe that it's really going to be the end for them".

They are also aimed at limiting the mobility of Iranian troops, he added.



NEPAL'S NEXT PRIME MINISTER:

Balendra Shah celebrating with supporters after defeating Nepalese Prime Minister Sharma KP Oli.

Rapper-politician Balendra Shah unseats Nepal's ex-PM as he heads for victory

Rapper Balendra Shah has defeated the former Nepalese Prime Minister Sharma KP Oli in his parliamentary constituency, as he takes a step closer to becoming Nepal's next prime minister.

Nepal's Election Commission confirmed on Saturday that Shah, 35, received 68,348 votes compared to Oli's 18,734 to unseat the former leader in his constituency.

Thursday's general election - the first since violent youth-led protests toppled the government in September - pitted the establishment against a new generation of politicians advocating for angry, young Gen Z voters hungry for change.

Shah's Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) is now seemingly on course to win the general election.

The party has a majority in

directly elected seats in the general election counted so far, according to partial official results on Sunday, and could be heading for a landslide, official trends suggest.

The 35-year-old is also leading in the proportional representation vote count so far, according to the election commission.

For more than two decades, Nepal has seen a revolving door of coalition governments, largely dominated by three parties, two of them communist.

Ahead of this election, it looked set to test whether Gen Z voters had succeeded in convincing the rest of the country that it is time for a new, untested generation to shape their future, or whether veteran heavyweights - who have dominated for decades - would keep hold of power.

The country's youth includ-

ed 800,000 first-time voters, making them a key voter bloc.

Shah, who is popularly known as Balen, has been a member of the Nepali hip hop scene for several years, with one of his songs "Balidan" about sacrifice in the Nepali language cultivating millions of YouTube views.

In September 2025 unrest erupted in Nepal with so-called Gen Z demonstrations, triggered by Oli's banning of social media platforms.

The demonstrations escalated with protesters criticising Nepal's political system and the symbolism of class inequality "nepo babies" - children of the country's politicians.

A total of 77 were killed during the protests, and a BBC investigation revealed the country's police chief issued an order of lethal fire against thousands of unarmed protesters.

Shah spoke in support of the protesters and at one stage called Oli a "terrorist" who had betrayed his country.

The rapper typically shuns the media, but told the Financial Times while he was on the campaign trail he would be "the candidate for all of Nepal".

Shah's RSP released its manifesto in February which vowed to create 1.2 million jobs and reduce forced migration, in an effort to tap into frustration over unemployment and low wages that has pushed millions of Nepalis to move overseas.

The party has also pledged that within five years it would raise Nepal's per capita income from \$1,447 to \$3,000, more than double the country's economy to \$100 billion GDP and provide safety nets such as healthcare insurance for the population.

Iran's Assembly of Experts says consensus reached on Khamenei's successor

The clerical body that will choose Iran's next supreme leader, following the assassination of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has reached a majority consensus, according to Assembly of Experts member Ayatollah Mohammad-Mahdi Mirbagheri.

Iran's Mehr news agency on Sunday quoted him as saying "some obstacles" still needed to be resolved regarding the process.

Under the Iranian constitution, it is the 88-member Assembly of Experts that is authorised to choose the country's supreme leader.

Khamenei, who ruled Iran for 37 years, was killed in a United States-Israeli strike on

Tehran on February 28, at the outset of the war which has now embroiled much of the Middle East.

The Israeli military, meanwhile, warned it would pursue every person in the Assembly of Experts who seeks to appoint a successor for Khamenei.

"We warn all those who intend to participate in the successor selection meeting that we will not hesitate to target you either. This is a warning!" the Israeli military said in Persian in a post on X on Sunday.

In a video posted by Fars news agency on Telegram, Mirbagheri said "great efforts to determine the leadership" have been made and that "a decisive and unanimous opinion" has

been agreed upon.

In a separate Fars interview, another member of the body, Hojjatoleslam Jafari, said he hopes "all Iranian people will be satisfied as soon as possible".

"The delay in electing the third leader is bitter and unwanted for everyone, and there is no alternative, so we should not have bad thoughts about our representatives at this difficult time," he said.

According to Iranian media reports, the group of scholars had a minor disagreement over whether their final decision must follow an in-person meeting or instead be issued without adhering to this formality.

Ayatollah Mohsen Heidari

Alekasir, another member of the Assembly of Experts, said in a video released by Nournews on Sunday that an in-person meeting by the assembly for a final vote was not possible under the current conditions.

He said a candidate had been picked, based on Khamenei's advice that Iran's top leader should "be hated by the enemy" instead of praised by it.

"Even the Great Satan [the US] has mentioned his name," Heidari Alekasir said of the chosen successor, days after US President Donald Trump said the late supreme leader's son, Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei, was an "unacceptable" choice for him.

Feature

Understanding culture and cultural practices

OHIOSIMUAN OMEJERE

Culture is generally regarded as a way of life. Spencer-Oatey (2012) argued that culture determines people's choices in areas such as food and feeding habits, clothing, music and singing, exercise and relaxation, as well as feelings and communication. It also influences how societies balance harmony and aggression and how they define what is fundamental or trivial. Tyler, as cited by Spencer-Oatey, described culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Radhika (2020) further affirmed that culture serves as a blueprint that determines how people live, reason and behave, including the customs and practices inherited from forebears and passed on to future generations.

Culture consists of different components, broadly categorised into material and non-material culture. Material culture refers to the concrete, physical and tangible creations of a people, such as shelter, fashion and artistic objects which they produce, use and exchange. Non-material culture, on the other hand, refers to the intangible aspects of human existence, including beliefs, attitudes and values that shape people's behaviour. Radhika (2020) noted that both tangible and intangible elements—such as utensils, language, knowledge and behaviour—constitute the specific components of culture. Among the major components commonly identified are values, norms, symbols and language within a particular group of people.

Values form an essential part of culture and are closely related to ethics. They include ideas about what is good or bad, acceptable or unaccept-



able, desirable or undesirable, and proper or improper behaviour expected within a society. Examples of values upheld in many societies include respect for the elderly, reverence for parents and authorities, cleanliness and generosity. These values represent guiding principles that support people's beliefs, while beliefs themselves are specific ideas that individuals or groups hold to be true (University of Peshawar, n.d.).

Norms are another important component of culture. They are rules developed by a group of people to guide behaviour in different situations, in-

dicating what individuals ought to do and what they should avoid. Such expectations help society regulate the conduct of its members. Norms generally exist in two forms: proscriptive and prescriptive. Proscriptive norms identify behaviour that is unacceptable or prohibited, while prescriptive norms describe behaviour that is approved or expected. For instance, acts such as rape, robbery, kidnapping and assassination fall under proscribed behaviour, whereas paying taxes, obeying traffic regulations and maintaining good hygiene represent proscribed norms.

Norms also exist in several forms, including folkways, mores, laws and taboos. Folkways are informal and everyday customs or practices, such as greetings and other social courtesies, which usually attract mild consequences when violated. Mores, however, are more serious and strongly sanctioned norms, such as the prohibition of rape or murder, which societies expect individuals to observe because of the grave consequences associated with their violation. Laws represent formal norms enacted by legislatures and enforced by governments through sanctions. Taboos

refer to culturally forbidden or highly offensive acts, such as adultery in certain communities. The violation of established societal norms may attract sanctions ranging from social exclusion to imprisonment (Wiley-Blackwell, 2007).

Symbols also play an important role in culture. They are representations that convey particular meanings within a society. Symbols may take the form of objects, expressions, actions or gestures that stand for something else. For instance, a flag, a phrase, a colour such as red, or a waving hand can all function as symbols. The primary purpose of symbols is to communicate meaning. For example, the crowing of a cockerel at dawn is commonly interpreted as a signal that a new day has begun and may also serve as an informal alarm prompting people to prepare for the day's activities (University of Peshawar, n.d.).

Language is another fundamental component of culture. Culture is often regarded as a social heritage transmitted from one generation to another largely through language. Language refers to the organised system of words, symbols and gestures used to convey information and meaning among people. Those who receive the message interpret and respond accordingly. Language may be verbal or non-verbal. Verbal language involves spoken communication, while non-verbal language may take written or gestural forms. For example, the spoken word "no" signifies refusal, just as the shaking of the head can convey the same meaning (FLDM, 2020).

Culture is not static. It continually evolves as societies interact, develop and experience new influences. As contacts and exchanges increase within and across societies, cultural practices and expressions also change over time.

Analysis of crimes against culture in Nigeria

OHIOSIMUAN OMEJERE

The concept of crime means different things to different people, which explains why scholars and commentators often define it from varying perspectives. Ajibade (2011) described crime as any act of omission or commission that is prohibited by the laws of a state or country and attracts punishment when committed. Most definitions of crime emphasise three key elements: the existence of an offence, the prohibition of that offence by law, and the prescribed punishment for its violation. Similarly, Oguntunde, Ojo, Okagbue and Oguntunde (2018) noted that crime refers to acts that constitute offences and are punishable under the law.

Morrison (2009) further described crime as any deed or activity that causes harm and for which individuals or groups can be held responsible and sanctioned in accordance with the existing laws of a state. From a religious perspective, any act that contravenes the commandments of

God may also be regarded as a crime, as reflected in sacred texts such as the Bible, Quran and Torah. In such interpretations, actions condemned by divine commandments remain morally wrong even if the laws of a state appear to permit them. In legal terms, however, crime generally refers to acts defined as offences under the laws of a country and for which appropriate punishment is enforced by the relevant authorities.

Over the years, numerous crimes have been recorded in Nigeria. Adisa (1994) noted that in 1993 criminals operated with considerable freedom in Lagos State, engaging in various forms of violent crime. These included highway robberies, harassment of travellers, extortion through force and the looting of supermarkets. Other parts of the country, including the Federal Capital Territory, as well as Delta, Kano, Plateau, Ondo, Oyo, Bauchi, Adamawa and Gombe states, have also experienced high levels of criminal activity (Pelumi, Oluwadare, Hilary and Omoleye, 2018).

More specifically, Oguntunde, Ojo, Okagbue and Oguntunde (2018) identified several major crimes prevalent in Nigeria, including rape, kidnapping, murder, burglary, fraud, terrorism, armed robbery, cyber-crime, bribery, corruption and money laundering. Additional forms of criminal activity include cultism, piracy, insurgency and banditry. The rising incidence of these crimes contributed to the establishment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), initially created in Lagos State and later extended to other parts of the country. Before it was disbanded in 2020, SARS was tasked with arresting and prosecuting suspected criminals involved in offences such as armed robbery, kidnapping and organised crime (Amnesty International, 2022).

Criminal activities in Nigeria, as in many parts of the world, have significant implications not only for human life but also for cultural stability and social values. Aidelohkai, Timothy, Musa and Osumah (2022) observed that the seemingly escalating rate

of crime in Nigeria has reached an alarming and widespread level. In recent years, criminal activities have expanded across virtually all regions of the country, although the types and intensity of crime vary from one area to another. Ukoji, Ayodokun and Eze (2019) noted that official statistics indicated an increase in recorded crimes between 2017 and 2018.

According to their findings, the crime rate rose by about 1.4 per cent during that period, increasing from 10,517 cases to 10,665. At the time, incidents such as cult violence, inter-state and intra-communal conflicts, bandit attacks, killings attributed to herdsmen and the insurgency led by Boko Haram were among the major threats to human security and cultural stability across the country. Bandit attacks were reported in states such as Zamfara and Kaduna, while clashes involving herdsmen affected communities in Benue and Plateau states. Cult-related violence was prevalent in Rivers and Lagos states during the same period. Inter-communal

and inter-state conflicts were also recorded in Delta, Ebonyi, Cross River and Akwa Ibom states, resulting in significant loss of lives and property.

Although Boko Haram activities reportedly declined somewhat in 2018, the insurgency still produced substantial casualties, including attacks on military bases in locations such as Tumbum Gini, Metele and Gashigar in Abadam Local Government Area; Zari and Gudumbali in Guzamala Local Government Area in Borno State. Other incidents were recorded in Kukareta in Damaturu Local Government Area of Yobe State (Ukoji, Ayodokun and Eze, 2019).

Crime continues to pose a serious challenge in Nigeria despite various interventions by the Federal Government and security agencies. The persistence of criminal activities has raised concerns, both locally and internationally, highlighting the urgent need for stronger measures to address the underlying causes of crime and restore social stability.

Sports

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

2nd Niger Delta Games title: Gov Okpebholo to receive victorious Team Edo on Tuesday

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Celebration continues in the camp of team Edo as plans have been concluded for the Edo state Governor Senator Monday Okpebholo to accord the champions of the second Niger Delta Games a grand reception.

According to the correspondence from Government House in Benin, the grand reception for the victorious team Edo led by their Executive Chairman Hon Amadin Desmond Enabulele, is scheduled for Tuesday, March 11, 2026, beginning from 12 noon inside the new Festival Hall, Government House, Benin city.

The entire Edo contingent and sports stakeholders invited are expected to be at the venue an hour before 12pm.

Confirming the state government's reception for the victorious team Edo, the Sports Commission chairman said that the state Governor has graciously



TEAM EDO CELEBRATING WITH THEIR TROPHY

invited the victorious team for reception and added that he has extended invitation to Bendel Insurance FC Supporters Club led by chief Osadolor Ogiefia to be in the train of celebration.

He expressed gratitude to the governor of the state for the opportunity given him and his board to serve. According to Enabulele, the state government's reception for team Edo in appreciation for emerging

champions at the just concluded second Niger Delta Games, is a huge motivation and encouragement for them to do more for Edo State in the subsequent national sports fiesta.

Governor Okpebholo, during the closing ceremony of the games through his deputy, Rt Hon Dennis Idahosa commended Team Edo after the state was crowned overall champions of the second edi-

tion of the Niger Delta Games, tagged 'Edo 2026'.

Receiving the overall winners' trophy on behalf of Governor Okpebholo at the closing ceremony at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium on Thursday, February 26, 2026, the Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa, commended the athletes for making the government and people of the state proud.

Edo topped the medal table with an impressive haul of 52 gold, 34 silver and 25 bronze medals, amassing a total of 111 medals to surge past traditional powerhouses, Delta and defending champions Bayelsa in a keenly contested week-long regional fiesta, ending a 24-year wait for a major multi-sport tournament title.

The triumph marks Edo's first major tournament victory since hosting and winning the 2002 National Sports Festival, breaking a title drought that had lingered for over two decades.



UGO UGOCHUKWU

Nigerian youngster clinches Formula 3 title in Melbourne

Nigerian youngster Ugo Ugochukwu was the cynosure of all eyes in the early hours of Sunday as he surprisingly emerged champion of the FIA Formula 3 Championship race in Melbourne, Australia.

The talented driver produced an impressive performance on the famous Albert Park Circuit to secure victory, further underlining his reputation

Born and raised in New York City, Ugochukwu is the son of Nigerian fashion model Oluchi Onweagba and an Italian father.

Despite his American upbringing, the youngster has strong Nigerian roots and continues to attract attention within the country's sporting community.

Before his rise to Formula 3, Ugochukwu built a solid reputation in the junior categories.

He finished third in the F4 British Championship while racing for Carlin and later emerged runner-up in the 2023

Italian F4 Championship driving for Prema Racing

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The talented driver produced an impressive performance on the famous Albert Park Circuit to secure victory, further underlining his reputation as one of the most promising young talents in international motorsport.

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Bright Amadi's late strike secures dramatic win for Nasarawa United against Ikorodu City FC

In an action-packed match-day 29 tie in the ongoing 2025/26 Nigeria Premier Football League Campaign, the Solid Miners defied the odds with a late free-kick, snatching a 1-0 victory over stubborn Ikorodu City FC of Lagos at the Lafia City Stadium on Sunday evening, and returning the team to winning ways.

Defensive midfielder, Bright Amadi's 83rd minute free-kick capped an electrifying return to win, silencing critics and igniting celebrations among the home fans.

With the maximum points garnered, the win, which moves United to the 3rd position with 47 points, five behind table-topping Rivers United, and three behind 2nd-place Enugu Rangers, revitalizes the Solid Miners' campaign, injecting momentum into their title chase, with nine matches remaining before the end of the season.

Nasarawa United will travel to Ikenne, Ogun State, for their next game against last-on-the-table Remo Stars FC who lost 4-1 on the road to Rangers in Enugu.

The match comes up on Sunday, 15th March, 2026, at the Remo Stars stadium, by 4pm.

POST-MATCH REACTIONS:

COACH MANGUT MBWAS(TA/NAS): "Before now, we were very much aware of how difficult this game would be, knowing that Ikorodu City are also a team in contention for the league title.

"We gave them a lot of respect in the first-half. We sat back a lot, no chance created, so, we decided to effect some

changes in the second half, and you saw that those changes made the difference for us.

"In all, we are grateful to God for the victory, regardless of the scoreline.

"With nine matches to end the current league season, we will continue to improve on our scoring and defending abilities to finish strong on the table."

CAUTION (YELLOW CARD):

Anthony Nwadioha(NAS)53'



NBBF crisis: Fresh controversy emerges as stakeholders demand proof of FIBA recognition

Fresh controversy has emerged within Nigerian basketball circles following claims that the world governing body, International Basketball Federation (FIBA), has reaffirmed support for the board of the Nigeria Basketball Federa-

tion (NBBF) led by Musa Kida.

The claim, circulated as "breaking news" in March 2026, suggests that FIBA has recognized the Kida-led board beyond the expiration of its tenure on January 31, 2026. However, several stakeholders have raised

questions about the authenticity and procedure surrounding the purported communication.

Observers familiar with the governance structure of Nigerian basketball argue that key details regarding the alleged correspondence remain unclear. Among the questions raised are who formally received the supposed letter from FIBA and whether it was officially transmitted to the National Sports Commission (NSC).

Stakeholders are also asking whether the Nigeria Olympic Committee (NOC), the NBBF Congress, and FIBA Africa Zone 3 were copied in the communication, as is standard procedure for official correspondence from the global basketball body.

Reports circulating within the sports community indicate that

both FIBA and the NOC have denied issuing or receiving the letter in the form being shared. If confirmed, analysts say this could undermine the credibility of the document currently in circulation.

Some analysts have also pointed out similarities between the alleged 2026 document and correspondence issued during the 2017-2018 leadership dispute within Nigerian basketball.

At the time, FIBA recognized the Kida-led board over a rival faction led by Tijani Umar following elections held in Abuja and Kano.

That decision was based on several reports and communications involving the Nigeria Olympic Committee and the then Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development.

Observers note that the rec-

ognition granted during that period was tied to the specific circumstances of the crisis and the administrative structure in place at the time, before the federation adopted its own constitution.

Since the adoption and ratification of the NBBF constitution by Congress, governance processes—including tenure limits and leadership transitions—are expected to be guided primarily by the provisions of that document.

Under the constitution, federation leadership is subject to defined tenure periods and electoral validation by the Congress. Stakeholders therefore argue that any extension or continuation of leadership beyond the constitutionally defined timeline would require clear authorization through established processes.



DTIGERS CELEBRATING

Sports

Paul Bassey gets kudos for active Sports development in Akwa Ibom State

KERESIFON ESSIEN

One year after his appointment as Commissioner for Sports in Akwa Ibom State, veteran sports journalist and football administrator, Elder Paul Bassey is being credited with steering a notable revival of the state's sporting sector through a series of reforms, competitions and infrastructure projects.



AKWA IBOM STATE SPORTS FESTIVAL

Bassey, a former FIFA and CAF official, was nominated by Governor Umo Eno and confirmed by the Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly before assuming office on February 24, 2025.

His appointment was widely welcomed within sports circles, particularly as he became the pioneer commissioner of the newly separated sports ministry after it was carved out from

the former Ministry of Youth Development and Sports.

Twelve months later, the ministry's activities have ranged from grassroots competitions to facility upgrades and athlete welfare initiatives.

One of the early highlights of Bassey's tenure was the successful hosting of the maiden edition of the Niger Delta Games in 2025.

Akwa Ibom secured the rights to stage the inaugural tournament and the commissioner played a visible role in preparations, overseeing facility upgrades, strategy meetings and logistics that led to what organisers described as a historic first edition.

Following the event, the ministry set up a review committee to assess Team Akwa Ibom's performance and identify areas for improvement in future competitions.

The Commissioner also revived the Akwa Ibom

Sports Festival, a grassroots programme that had been dormant for seven years.

The competition returned in the last quarter of 2025 and served as a major platform for talent discovery, with several emerging athletes already beginning to make an impact within and beyond the state.

Athlete motivation also received attention under Bassey's leadership.

Medalists from Akwa Ibom at the National Youth Games were rewarded on their return, a move aimed at boosting morale and demonstrating the government's commitment to athletes' welfare.

Infrastructure development has also been part of the ministry's agenda.

In January 2026, the new 'Ibom Gym' facility was officially opened at the Godswill Akpabio International Stadium in Uyo.



VICTOR OSIMHEN

Osimhen reacts to victory against Besiktas

Game hero Victor Osimhen has reacted to his side's narrow victory over Beşiktaş J.K..

Osimhen scored the only goal of the match in the 39th minute to hand Galatasaray S.K. a crucial win in the heated derby encounter.

Speaking after the game, the Nigerian international admitted that the match was difficult, especially after his team had to cope with a red card during the

contest.

It wasn't easy because we played against a strong opponent. It became even tougher after the red card," Osimhen said.

"We had to stay aggressive throughout the whole game and keep fighting for the result."

The victory further strengthened Galatasaray's position as they continue their push in the Turkish league campaign.

Niger Tornadoes succumb to Plateau United in North Central derby

Niger Tornadoes suffered their heaviest defeat of the season after falling 3-0 to Plateau United in a Matchday 29 clash of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) at the New Jos Stadium.

The hosts made their intentions clear from the opening whistle and took the lead just seven minutes into the encounter. Vincent Temitope unleashed a powerful strike from outside the box that flew into the net, despite protests from Tornadoes players who appealed for a foul on Abubakar Ibrahim in the build-up. The referee, however, waved play on, allowing Plateau United to go ahead.

The Ikon Allah Boys gradually found their rhythm midway through the first half and pushed forward in search of an equaliser. However, Plateau United's defence remained resolute, successfully dealing with the visitors' attacking efforts.

The home side soon doubled their advantage through a swift counterattack. After cutting out a Tornadoes move, Isaiah Sunday raced forward on a blistering run and calmly slotted the ball home before the visitors could recover.

Plateau United carried their two-goal lead into the break and returned for the second half with the same attacking intent, although Tornadoes also showed signs of improvement.

In a bid to change the course of the match, the Tornadoes technical crew introduced Kufre Ebong, Idris Saidu, Bashir Usman and Chima Deruo in the second half. The changes, however, failed to produce the desired impact as Plateau United maintained control.

The hosts eventually sealed the victory with a late goal

from Nenrot Silas, condemning Niger Tornadoes to their biggest defeat of the campaign.

Speaking after the match, Niger Tornadoes Technical Adviser Majin Mohammed admitted the result was disappointing, noting that the same group of players and coaching staff had earlier recorded a 4-0 victory over Plateau United earlier in the season.

He added that attention now shifts to their next fixture at home against fellow relegation battlers Kano Pillars, where the team will aim to secure maximum points.



NIGER TORNADOES

CAF Secretary-General receives presidential backing to emerge Federation President, renounces Swiss citizenship



VÉRON MOSENGO-OMBA

With one month to the presidential election of the Congolese Football Federation (FECOFA), indications have emerged that Véron Mosengo-Omba, the current secretary general of the Confederation of African Football (CAF), is preparing to contest for the top position.

So far, only one official candidacy has been submitted, that of former international striker Aziz Makukula.

However, reliable sources suggest that Mosengo-Omba is posi-

tioning himself to enter the race, reportedly with strong backing from several influential figures across the country, including support from the presidency.

Mosengo-Omba's potential bid comes at a delicate time, as he is reportedly facing an internal investigation within CAF that could threaten his future within the continental football governing body.

The move to contest the FECOFA presidency is therefore seen by some observers as a strategic return to national

football administration.

One of the major issues surrounding his possible candidacy is his previous dual nationality.

Regulations stipulate that the president of FECOFA must be solely Congolese, and Mosengo-Omba's Swiss citizenship has sparked debate within the country's sporting community.

Sources close to the situation claim that he has recently renounced his Swiss nationality and will need to present official proof of this when submitting his candidacy documents.

However, the claim has been disputed by a former football administrator, who argued that Mosengo-Omba is still receiving a retirement pension from Switzerland, raising questions about whether the renunciation process has indeed been completed.

The FECOFA presidential election is expected to shape the future direction of football governance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with attention now turning to whether Mosengo-Omba will formally enter the race in the coming weeks.

Violence erupts at DR Congo derby as supporters invade pitch, players run for safety

There was chaos during a derby clash between TP Mazembe and St Eloi Lupopo in the Linafoot on Sunday after fans invaded the pitch, forcing away players to flee the stadium.

The heated encounter, played in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, turned ugly shortly after the first half ended in a goalless draw.

According to reports, players of St Eloi Lupopo, who were playing away from home, were trapped inside the dressing room as tensions escalated in the stadium.

The situation deteriorated further when angry supporters

invaded the pitch, creating security concerns for the visiting team.

In order to avoid possible attacks from sections of the home supporters of TP Mazembe, the Lupopo players were forced to flee the stadium on foot.

Some of the players reportedly ran out barefoot without waiting for their team bus as security officials struggled to restore order at the venue.

The incident has raised serious concerns about safety and crowd control in the DR Congo top-flight league, with many expecting the league authorities to launch an investigation into the disturbances.



VIOLENCE ERUPTS AT DR CONGO DERBY

Bayelsa professionals movement launches investigation into Monimichelle Sports Facilities Construction Company Limited, alleges sabotage

In the heart of Bayelsa, a sinister plot unfolded, targeting Monimichelle Sports Facilities Construction Company Limited, a beacon of excellence in the construction industry. Despite its stellar track record, the company faced deliberate sabotage, a clear case of wicked politics.

It began with the removal of Monimichelle's signature football pitch, replaced with an inferior turf. Coach Imama Amapakabo, a renowned expert, cried foul, questioning the motives behind this move.

The answer lay in the shadows, where politics and power dined.

Monimichelle's crime? Delivering quality, exceeding expectations, and earning recognition from Nigeria's top sports officials. Its CEO, Mr. Ebi Egbe, stood firm, advocating for quality infrastructure, a threat to those benefiting from mediocrity.

As the company suffered, Bayelsa's sports development stagnated. Stadiums stood incomplete, funds misappropriated, and dreams shattered. The people whispered of a deliberate agenda, a wicked politics orchestrated to crush Monimichelle.

Yet, Monimichelle persevered, its legacy a testament to resilience. The company's commitment to excellence remained unbroken, a beacon of hope in darkness. The fight against wicked politics continues, as Monimichelle seeks justice, transparency, and accountability.

The truth, like a rising sun, will soon expose the shadows, revealing the faces behind this deliberate wickedness. Until then, Monimichelle stands tall, a symbol of integrity in a world of politics and power play.

In a bold move, the New Bayelsa Professionals Movement (NBPM) has launched a private forensic cyber security investigation into the deliberate sabotage of Monimichelle Sports Facilities Construction Company Limited, a leading Bayelsan enterprise.

The NBPM's UNAPOLOGETIC UNBIASED UNCOMPROMISED MASSES ADVOCACY MOVEMENT is committed to uncovering the truth behind the company's victimization, despite pressure from powerful interests.

With its core objective of standing for the voiceless, the NBPM vows to bring the truth to light, no matter the cost. The movement's stance is clear: justice for Monimichelle and accountability for those responsible.

The NBPM's unapologetic approach signals a new era of activism in Bayelsa, where professionals and citizens unite to demand accountability and transparency. The truth will be told, and justice will be served.

Monimichelle Sports Facilities Construction Company Limited, a proud Bayelsan enterprise, has consistently demonstrated its unwavering commitment to excellence and integrity in the construction industry. With a proven track record of delivering high-quality sports facilities, the company has earned the trust and respect of the people of Bayelsa State and beyond.

Under the visionary leadership of its Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Ebi Egbe, Monimichelle has established itself as a



trailblazer in the industry, consistently delivering top-notch sports facilities across Africa and Nigeria.

The company's philosophy of "Quality or nothing" is reflected in every aspect of its operations, from design and construction to maintenance and delivery.

Monimichelle's impressive portfolio boasts an array of iconic sports facilities, including the Remo Stars Stadium in Ikene, Enyimba International Stadium in Aba, and Mobolaji Johnson Sports Arena in Lagos. These facilities have not only met but exceeded expectations, cementing Monimichelle's reputation as a leader in the industry.

The company's commitment to quality has earned it recognition and accolades from reputable organizations and individuals, including commendation from Alhaji Ibrahim Gusau, President of the Nigeria Football Federation, for its work on the Aper Aku Stadium in Makurdi.

Despite its stellar record, Monimichelle has faced challenges, including controversy surrounding the removal of one of its football pitches and allegations of victimization by the

commissioner of sports development Daniel Igal in collaboration with his cronies in the state government.

However, the company's commitment to excellence and transparency remains unwavering.

Monimichelle's achievements and recognition within the industry make it puzzling that the company is being targeted.

The lack of transparency and accountability in this situation is concerning and warrants further investigation.

In the Bayelsa sports environment, honesty and transparency are essential for building trust among athletes, coaches, and officials. Monimichelle's commitment to quality and excellence is a testament to its dedication to sports development in Bayelsa.

The Bayelsa state government's investment in sports infrastructure has been disappointing, with little to show for it. The Asoama Sports Academy which is the oet project overview introduced to bayeksa state to convert the then constructed school by millennium development goal under governor Timipre sylvia and senatorial stadiums are incomplete abandoned, despite

huge funding. The people of Bayelsa deserve answers, and it's essential to hold those responsible accountable.

Monimichelle Sports Facilities Construction Company Limited is a Bayelsan company with a proven track record of delivering high-quality sports facilities. Its commitment to integrity, professionalism, and customer satisfaction makes it an excellent choice for sports facilities construction projects. We strongly recommend Monimichelle for any sports facilities construction project, confident that they will deliver exceptional results.

The investigation aims to Over the years, Moni-Michele Sports Facilities Construction Company has successfully completed numerous projects, showcasing its expertise and capabilities in constructing world-class sports facilities. From sports stadiums to athletic tracks, the company's portfolio is a testament to its dedication to quality and professionalism.

One notable example of the company's exceptional work is the construction of the first ever. 4th generation geo hybrid synthetic grass with geo infill, the first ever full PU athletic

track, the first ever scoreboard and floodlights, fifs approved public address system, donated 3 sports courts and 2 dressing room with a gym now dart association office all in samson siasia mainbowl Yenagoa Stadium, a proposed state-of-the-art facility that has hosted several international sporting events.

The project showcased Moni-Michele's ability to deliver complex projects on time and within budget, while meeting the highest standards of quality and safety.

The company's commitment to integrity is evident in its adherence to best practices and transparency in all its dealings.

Moni-Michele Sports Facilities Construction Company has consistently demonstrated its ability to work with stakeholders, including government agencies, communities, and clients, to deliver projects that meet their needs and expectations.

Moni-Michele's team of experienced professionals, including engineers, architects, and construction experts, possess the expertise and skills required to deliver high-quality sports facilities.

The company's emphasis on innovation, quality control, and customer satisfaction has earned it a reputation as one of the leading sports facilities construction companies in the region.

Given its proven track record, expertise, and commitment to integrity, Moni-Michele Sports Facilities Construction Company is well-positioned to deliver high-quality sports facilities that meet the needs of Bayelsa State and beyond.

The company's dedication to excellence and customer satisfaction makes it an ideal partner for government agencies, private developers, and communities seeking to develop world-class sports infrastructure.

In conclusion, Moni-Michele Sports Facilities Construction Company is a Bayelsan company with a proven track record of delivering high-quality sports facilities. Its commitment to integrity, professionalism, and customer satisfaction makes it an excellent choice for sports facilities construction projects. We strongly recommend Moni-Michele Sports Facilities Construction Company for any sports facilities construction project, and we are confident that they will deliver exceptional results.

- Uncover evidence of sabotage and corruption
- Identify those responsible for Monimichelle's victimization
- Advocate for justice and transparency
- Promote accountability and good governance in Bayelsa

The unconscionable assault on Monimichelle Sports Facilities Construction Company Limited, a bastion of excellence in Bayelsa, necessitates an unrelenting crusade for justice.

We, the New Bayelsa Professionals Movement, vehemently condemn the egregious victimization of this esteemed company, perpetrated by the duplicitous commissioner of sports development, Daniel Igal, and his cohorts in the state government.

FEATURE

Edo: Follow-up to the gains of fighting kidnapping

OTONO MOMODU

Edo State has witnessed a notable turnaround in its fight against kidnapping under the leadership of Governor Monday Okpebholo. The governor's commitment to strengthening security across the state has begun to yield visible results, with many residents expressing renewed confidence in the safety of their communities. This progress underscores the importance of decisive leadership, effective coordination among security agencies, and active community participation.

The Okpebholo administration has demonstrated a clear resolve to confront insecurity head-on.

Through close collaboration with security agencies, the government has helped disrupt kidnapping networks and ensure the arrest of suspected perpetrators. Such coordinated efforts mirror global best practices, where law enforcement institutions work in synergy, share intelligence, and deploy joint operations to tackle organised crime.

The Commissioner of Police has also played a crucial role in the progress recorded so far. Through innovative operational strategies, the command has strengthened the capacity of officers and boosted their morale, enabling them to confront criminal activities with renewed determination. Intelligence-led policing methods, including the use of data analysis to identify crime hotspots and anticipate possible threats, have contributed to the prevention of several incidents.

Local vigilante groups have also remained an important pillar in community security. Their vigilance, sacrifices and familiarity with local terrain have helped complement the work of formal security agencies. In line with evolving global security practices, these groups could be further strengthened through structured training, proper supervision and the provision of essential operational resources.

Despite the gains made, the challenge of kidnapping has not been entirely eliminated. The recent abduction of two promising young medical doctors in Auchi, in which one regained freedom while the other tragically lost his life in captivity, serves as a painful reminder that the menace remains a serious threat. The incident highlights the need for sustained vigilance and stronger cooperation between security agencies and the public.

Nonetheless, law enforcement agencies have recorded notable breakthroughs.

Joint operations involving the po-



lice, the military and other security units have led to the dismantling of several kidnapping camps within and beyond Edo State. These operations resulted in the rescue of a number of victims and the neutralization or arrest of suspected kingpins behind some kidnapping syndicates. The successes demonstrate the impact of coordinated security strategies and improved operational capabilities.

The Federal Government has also contributed to strengthening the state's security framework. Increased support for security agencies, alongside the deployment of additional personnel to vulnerable areas, has helped reinforce efforts to combat violent crime. Broader initiatives aimed at addressing underlying drivers of insecurity, such as unemployment and poverty, are equally important components of long-term stability.

Traditional institutions can also play a more active role in enhancing security. Palaces of traditional rulers can serve as platforms for community dialogue, intelligence sharing and grassroots security monitoring.

Given the respect and influence they command within their domains, traditional leaders are well positioned to encourage residents to report suspicious activities promptly to the appropriate authorities. Similar partnerships between traditional institutions and law enforcement have proved effective in promoting peace in other parts of the country.

Technology will also remain an important tool in the fight against crime.

The acquisition and deployment of modern security equipment—such as drones, surveillance cameras and forensic investigation tools—can significantly improve the capacity of security agencies. In several developed countries, including the United Kingdom and the United States, such technologies have become integral to crime detection, surveillance and evidence gathering.

Regular training programmes for security personnel, including members of community-based vigilante groups, are equally necessary. Continuous capacity building will ensure that operatives remain prepared to

confront evolving threats, including technology-driven crimes and other emerging security challenges. Such programmes should incorporate international best practices while emphasising respect for human rights and community policing principles.

At the same time, the welfare of local vigilante groups should not be overlooked. Their contributions deserve recognition and support through insurance coverage, operational equipment and appropriate incentives. However, there have also been reports that some vigilante members exploit their positions by extorting money from road users. Such behaviour undermines public trust and defeats the purpose of community policing. Authorities must therefore address these allegations decisively and ensure that vigilante groups operate with discipline, transparency and accountability.

Experiences from other countries show that community participation remains critical in crime prevention. For instance, community policing initiatives in Singapore have contributed significantly to lower crime rates by strengthening trust between residents and law enforcement agencies. Edo State could further adapt similar strategies to deepen cooperation between communities and security institutions.

The partnership between security agencies and local communities has already played an important role in the progress achieved so far. Strengthening this collaboration will be vital

to sustaining the gains recorded. Governor Okpebholo's approach suggests that with determination, cooperation and well-coordinated strategies, complex security challenges can gradually be overcome.

To consolidate these efforts, government may consider additional measures such as establishing a centralised crime database to track patterns and trends, introducing incentives for informants and whistleblowers, and providing support mechanisms for victims of kidnapping and their families. Engagement with international partners could also help the state access technical expertise and global best practices in security management. Furthermore, improved border monitoring would help curb the movement of illicit arms and criminal elements across state boundaries, while traditional rulers could be empowered to play a more proactive role in community safety.

With sustained commitment, modern technology and active public participation, Edo State has the potential to strengthen its security architecture further and serve as a model for effective crime prevention in Nigeria. Many residents already acknowledge the progress made so far, and with continued cooperation between government, security agencies and communities, the fight against kidnapping can achieve lasting success.

• Otono Momodu lectures in the Department of Mass Communication, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi.

Engagement with international partners could also help the state access technical expertise and global best practices in security management