

2027: INEC commences review of political parties' guidelines

IKOT EKPENE (A'IBOM)

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) said it has commenced review of the 2022 edition of political parties' guidelines to ensure integrity and transparency in electoral process.

INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan, stated this in his keynote address at the technical

workshop on revision of INEC regulations and guidelines for political parties in Ikot Ekpena on Wednesday.

Amupitan stressed the need for harmonising guidelines for political parties with the recent enactment of the Electoral Act 2026.

He called on participants to ensure that the review met the yearnings and aspirations of Nigerians to enhance active democratic process in the country.

The INEC chairman said that the commission was moving beyond the 2022 framework to address the sanitisation of operation of political parties.

"The integrity and transparency of our electoral processes are paramount to fostering public trust and ensuring that every Nigerian, regardless of political affiliation, has a voice in shaping our nation's future.

"The recent enactment of

the Electoral Act 2026, which was assented to in February, has fundamentally recalibrated our statutory windows.

"The reduction in timelines creates a compressed operational environment that demands we work at unprecedented speed and with surgical precision.

"This workshop is not merely an administrative exercise; it is a legislative and operational realignment.

"We are here to harmonise our Regulations and Guidelines for Political Parties with the 2026 Act," Amupitan said.

According to him, political parties in Nigeria face the crisis of internal democracy, thus necessitating the need for them to conduct acceptable primaries to produce credible and acceptable candidates for elections.

Amupitan noted that the

quality of internal party democracy has a direct bearing on the secondary election conducted by INEC.

"If unpopular candidates are forced upon the electorate through non-transparent processes, we face the twin monsters of voter apathy and an explosion of pre-election litigation.

"Our collective commitment is being challenged by leadership squabbles and involving

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...that the people may know

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APC swells as Okpebholo re-assures Tinubu of 2.5m Edo votes

BENIN CITY

The All Progressives Congress (APC) recorded a fresh boost in Edo State on Wednesday as Governor Monday Okpebholo received defectors from the Africa Democratic Congress (ADC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Labour Party (LP), declaring that the state is firmly positioned to deliver 2.5 million votes for President

Bola Ahmed Tinubu in 2027.

The rally, held at the Garrick Memorial Ground on Ekenwan Road, Benin City, drew party faithful and new entrants in a carnival-like atmosphere, with the defectors publicly pledging allegiance to the APC and its leadership.

Addressing the gathering, Governor Okpebholo expressed confidence in the growing strength of the party in the state, attributing the wave of

defections to what he described as visible and practical development initiatives undertaken by his administration.

"I thank members of the APC for the unity we have continued to enjoy. We have a good father in President Tinubu, and we are proud of him. We are ready to deliver Edo for the APC in 2027," he said.

Projecting ahead of the next general elections, the governor declared that the President

would not need to campaign in Edo State.

"Come 2027, 2.5 million votes are assured for Tinubu. The President should come to Edo to commission projects, not to campaign. The state is secure and settled for the APC," he stated.

He maintained that the state's development efforts have been bolstered by federal support, noting that his administration's achievements are evident to residents.

"What we are doing in Edo State is practical governance. The people can see the development. The support we receive from President Tinubu has strengthened our capacity to deliver," he added.

In a remark that drew applause, Governor Okpebholo invited Arise Television anchors Oseni Rufai and Reuben Abati to visit Edo State for an inspection tour of ongoing and completed projects, saying he was confident such a visit would validate his administration's claims.

"I invite Rufai and Abati to Edo State. I will take them round to inspect projects. After a few days, you will not only campaign but also vote for President Tinubu in 2027," he said.

The governor also pointed out that with 31 governors currently elected on the APC platform nationwide, the party remains firmly positioned ahead of 2027, adding that further political alignments are expected in the coming months.

He concluded by reaffirming his administration's commitment to the APC and the presidency, stating that Edo State remains politically secure for the ruling party, driven by unity within its ranks and sustained developmental efforts.



ADDRESSING A RALLY:

Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State (2nd left) addressing a rally held in Benin City to receive members of the various political parties into the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Benin City yesterday. With him are the State Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa (1st right); the Senator representing Edo North Senatorial District, Senator Adams Oshiomhole (2nd right) and the Chairman of APC, Edo State, Emperor Jarrett Tenebe.

Edo Assembly summons BEDC over worsening power crisis

BENIN CITY

The Edo State House of Assembly on Wednesday summoned the management of the Benin Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC) over the persistent and worsening power outages across the state.

Speaker of the House, Hon. Blessing Agbebaku, gave the directive during plenary, ordering the electricity distribution firm to appear before lawmakers on March 9 to explain the epileptic supply that has left residents and businesses groaning.

Describing the situation as unacceptable and dishearten-

ing, Agbebaku lamented that despite the intervention of some lawmakers who procured transformers for their communities, BEDC allegedly insists on payment before energising the facilities.

He said the Assembly would demand clear explanations from the company and seek practical solutions to ease the hardship being experienced by electricity consumers across the state.

Power supply in several parts of Edo has remained irregular in recent weeks, triggering mounting complaints from households and business owners over the adverse impact on livelihoods and economic activities.

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Edo, Germany deepen cultural ties as Commissioner hosts Consul-General

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West African states to create new force to fight jihadists in region

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FIFA dash Super Eagles World Cup hopes after confirming DR Congo for playoffs

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Tinubu dispatches 5-man delegation to Jackson's burial

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu has constituted a five-member delegation to attend the burial ceremonies of renowned American civil rights leader, Rev. Jesse Jackson.

The decision was conveyed in a statement issued on Wednesday in Abuja by the Presidential Spokesperson, Mr Bayo Onanuga.

Jackson died on February 17 at the age of 84 in Chicago.

The Secretary to the Gov-

ernment of the Federation, Sen. George Akume, will lead the delegation.

Other members are the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu; the Minister of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy, Hannatu Musawa; the Special Presidential Envoy for Global and Pan-African Affairs, Brian Browne; and the Senior Special

Assistant on Foreign Affairs and International Relations, Amb. Sola Enikanolaye.

The delegation is expected to deliver President Tinubu's message of condolences to the Jackson family.

In an earlier tribute, Tinubu described Jackson as a great friend of Nigeria and Africa, noting that he was a moral voice and a formidable opponent of

apartheid in South Africa.

"He played a leading role in the campaign for the release from prison of Nelson Mandela and other African National Congress leaders," the president said, adding that Jackson mobilised critical support for sanctions against the apartheid regime.

The burial programme commenced on February 26 with a lying-in-state at the Rainbow

PUSH Coalition in Chicago.

Services were also scheduled in South Carolina and Washington, D.C., including a lying-in-state at the South Carolina Statehouse.

A "People's Celebration" will hold on March 6 at House of Hope in Chicago, followed by a private homegoing service on March 7 at the Rainbow PUSH Coalition.

Ibusa community issues ultimatum to BEDC over blackouts, 'exploitative' billing

VICTOR AJUWA

IGBUZO (IBUSA)

The Igbuzo (Ibusa) Community in Oshimili North Local Government Area of Delta State has issued a stern warning to the Benin Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC) over what it described as unrelenting power outages and an unjust billing regime imposed on residents.

The warning followed the failure of the Regional Head of BEDC, Asaba Zone, to honour an invitation extended by the Obuzor of Ibuser, the Obuzor-in-Council and the Igbuzo Community Development Union (ICDU) to address the worsening electricity crisis in the town.

At the Palace of His Royal Majesty, Obi Chelunor Nwoboshi, community leaders had summoned the Regional Manager alongside his Technical and Business Managers to explain what they termed the near collapse of electricity supply in Igbuzo. They lamented that supply deteriorated sharply after the community was allegedly downgraded from Band B to Band D on the 11KV line without consultation or approval.

The President-General of ICDU Worldwide, Chief Onowu Victor Uchunor, executive members of the union, youth leaders and other stakeholders convened a crucial meeting at the palace to deliberate on the issue and map out next steps.

However, the absence of the

Regional Manager who reportedly delegated junior officials was described as a grave slight on the traditional institution and the entire community.

Community leaders recalled that at an earlier stakeholders' meeting, the BEDC Regional Manager had assured residents that operational and marketing challenges would be resolved from February 21, 2026.

They said little or no improvement has been recorded since then, deepening public frustration and eroding confidence in the distribution company.

Highlighting Igbuzo's contributions to electricity infrastructure, leaders noted that the community donated land for a substation, partnered with BEDC for over eight years on a community-based prepaid metering scheme and contributed more than N35 million towards completing the 15MVA injector substation in the town.

They said the facility was professionally certified, met safety and quality standards and was energised under BEDC's supervision.

Yet, despite these investments, residents continue to endure prolonged blackouts and what they described as exploitative estimated billing.

Igbuzo, a rapidly expanding community within the Delta State Capital Territory, hosts critical electricity infrastructure in the area and adjoining communities.



SWEARING-IN:

President Bola Tinubu (R), in a handshake with the newly appointed Inspector-General of Police, Olatunji Disu after the swearing-in at the presidential villa in Abuja on Wednesday.

Lassa fever: Enugu on high alert, issues fresh advisory

ENUGU

The Enugu State Government has placed healthcare workers and residents on high alert over the threat of Lassa fever, urging strict adherence to preventive measures to forestall any outbreak in the state.

The Commissioner for Health, Prof. George Ugwu, gave the advisory while briefing journalists on the state's preparedness.

He disclosed that neighbouring Benue State had recently recorded 250 suspected cases, 45 confirmed cases and 10 deaths, including fatalities among healthcare workers.

Ebonyi State, another neighbour, has also reported more than six confirmed cases.

Ugwu stressed that although no confirmed case has been

recorded in Enugu, the state has entered a high-alert phase due to its shared borders with affected states.

He directed all health facilities to enforce mandatory patient triage at designated entry points and ensure that individuals exhibiting symptoms of infectious diseases are referred to centres equipped to manage such cases.

According to him, tertiary institutions must establish holding areas for suspected cases and promptly notify the state through proper reporting channels.

He further urged strict compliance with Infection Prevention and Control guidelines, including the use of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment and proper waste disposal.

The commissioner advised

healthcare workers to maintain a high index of suspicion for persistent fever unresponsive to malaria treatment.

He also called on residents to maintain rodent-free environments by keeping homes clean, blocking holes in walls and floors, clearing surrounding bushes, and storing grains in tightly sealed containers. RI Residents were cautioned against drying food items in open spaces and handling rodents as food.

Other preventive measures include regular hand washing, thorough washing of fruits and vegetables, and avoiding contact with bodily fluids of infected persons.

Ugwu urged anyone experiencing persistent fever, headache, weakness, vomiting, abdominal pain, or bleeding from body openings to seek immediate

medical attention, warning against self-medication.

He appealed to media practitioners to disseminate only verified information from the Ministry of Health to prevent misinformation.

The commissioner revealed that surveillance has been upgraded to "Enhanced Mode" across all 17 Local Government Areas, with Rapid Response Teams activated statewide. Essential commodities, including PPE, medicines and body bags for safe burials, have been pre-positioned, while risk communication materials are being distributed in local languages.

Nigeria has so far recorded 1,469 suspected cases, 318 confirmed cases and over 70 deaths.

The outbreak has affected several states, including Taraba, Ondo, Bauchi, Edo, Benue, Nasarawa, Kogi and Ebonyi.

2027: INEC commences review...

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the judiciary in politics.

"We must use this workshop to embed regulatory mechanisms that encourage constructive dialogue and internal dispute resolution, reminding party leaders that cohesive leadership is not an option; it is a democratic imperative," he said.

The INEC chairman said that the commission would continue to play the role of an unbiased umpire, providing a level-playing field for all political parties in the country.

In his goodwill message, the Country Director, Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), Mr Adebawale Olorunmola, said with the recent enactment of the Electoral Act 2026, there had been some changes and improvements to meet the demands and expectations of the electorate.

Olorunmola said that there was the need for the guidelines

and regulations to also be improved upon in order to give bite to the electoral act.

"The 2022 edition of the INEC Regulations and Guidelines served us well in the conduct of the 2023 general elections and other subsequent elections.

"However, 'current realities' are no longer what they were four years ago," he said.

The WFD country director stated that the review of the guidelines should bring a new era where political parties were defined by their internal democracy and commitment to the Nigerian people.

He said that WFD remained a steadfast partner in the journey to ensure a successful outcome of the workshop to improve on Nigeria's electoral process.

In his remarks, the Resident Electoral Commissioner in Akwa Ibom, Mr Obo Effanga, said that with the new Electoral Act, INEC must review the guidelines for political parties.

Saving lives our core mandate, not just enforcement —FRSC boss

ENUGU

The Corps Marshal of the Federal Road Safety Corps, Mallam Shehu Mohammed, has reaffirmed that saving lives, protecting property and serving the public with integrity remain the overriding mandates of the Corps.

Mohammed made the assertion on Wednesday in Enugu while addressing officers and men during a sensitization programme on discipline, re-enforcement and strengthening of command and control.

Represented by Assistant Corps Marshal Uche Chuk-

wurah, Commandant of the FRSC Academy, Udi, the corps marshal said the authority of the organisation flows directly from public trust.

He expressed concern over what he described as a disturbing decline in discipline, professionalism and effective command structures in some field commands, citing misconduct, unethical practices, abuse of authority, extortion and reckless enforcement behaviours.

Such actions, he said, violate regulations, betray training and erode the public trust painstakingly built over decades.

He stressed that senior of-

ficers deployed to various commands would serve as mentors and standard-bearers to reinforce discipline and leadership accountability.

"Discipline is not punishment; it is protection. It safeguards our reputation, our careers, the corps and ultimately the lives of Nigerians who depend on us daily," he stated.

FRSC Zonal Commander, Assistant Corps Marshal Anthony Oko, urged personnel to uphold the standards established by the founding fathers of the Corps 38 years ago.

In his welcome address, the Enugu Sector Commander, Mr

Franklin Agbakoba, said the command had taken proactive steps to address reported misconduct, including directing staff to sign bonds of good conduct and convening meetings to emphasise ethical standards and prompt disciplinary procedures.

He assured the management of renewed commitment by officers and marshals in the state to professionalism, discipline and integrity.

Officers and personnel from the sector command, five unit commands, three driver licensing centres, one outpost, a zebra unit and a roadside clinic attended the event.

NUJ urges increased funding, infrastructure upgrade for FG-owned media organs

UYO

The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Akwa Ibom Council, has called for increased funding and upgrade of infrastructure in Federal Government-owned media organs across the country.

The Chairman, Mr Nsibiet John, made the call in Uyo on Wednesday at the 15th Anniversary

celebration of Atlantic Radio, 104.5 FM, Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria.

John expressed worry at the state of infrastructure in many Federal Government-owned media organisations around the country.

The NUJ chairman said that the situation had undermined quality journalism, and limited the organisation's capacity to deliver.

He called for improved funding, and provision of modern media equipment to ensure quality service delivery, and human capital development.

"Media organs, especially radio stations operate for extended hours daily, they deserve adequate financial support and modern equipment to meet competition.

"Without deliberate investment in infrastructure and per-

sonnel, government-owned stations will continue to struggle to meet contemporary broadcasting standards," he said.

John congratulated the management and staff of Atlantic 104.5 FM on the milestone, describing the anniversary as a testament to consistency and professionalism.

In his remarks, Atlantic Radio Zonal Director, South South Zone, Mr Fred Braimah, commended the workforce for their resilience and professionalism.

Braimah stated that the station would remain faithful to its mandate of informing, educating and entertaining the public.

He said that the station had played significant roles in promoting peace and unity in the South South Region.

He said that the future of Atlantic FM was pegged in innovation, digital transformation, content excellence and ethical broadcasting.

The theme of the Anniversary is: "Fulfilling Promises through Impactful Broadcasting"

Tinubu swears in Disu as 23rd I-G of Police

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu on Wednesday swore in Olatunji Disu as the 23rd Inspector-General of Police at the State House, Abuja.

At the brief ceremony, the president also administered the oath of office on six commissioners of the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission and two commissioners of the Federal Civil Service Commission.

The event preceded the meeting of the Federal Executive Council (FEC) and was attended by ministers, senior officials and family members of the appointees.

Speaking with State House correspondents after the ceremony, Disu listed welfare of officers, restoration of security and internal preparation for state police as priorities.

He expressed support for the ongoing discussions on the establishment of state police.

"The committee was set up early this morning to look into the issue of state police from the angle of the Nigerian Police.

"We don't want it to seem as if others are taking decisions and

we, the most important people concerned, did not do anything.

"State police have come to stay and the police should be able to contribute their own part in making it succeed," he said.

Disu dismissed fears that the reform would undermine the Force.

"The police are not afraid, our jobs are not being taken; it is just an issue of partnership," he said.

On welfare, he acknowledged longstanding concerns about officers' working conditions.

"One of the issues that the police have over the years is the welfare of their officers," he said.

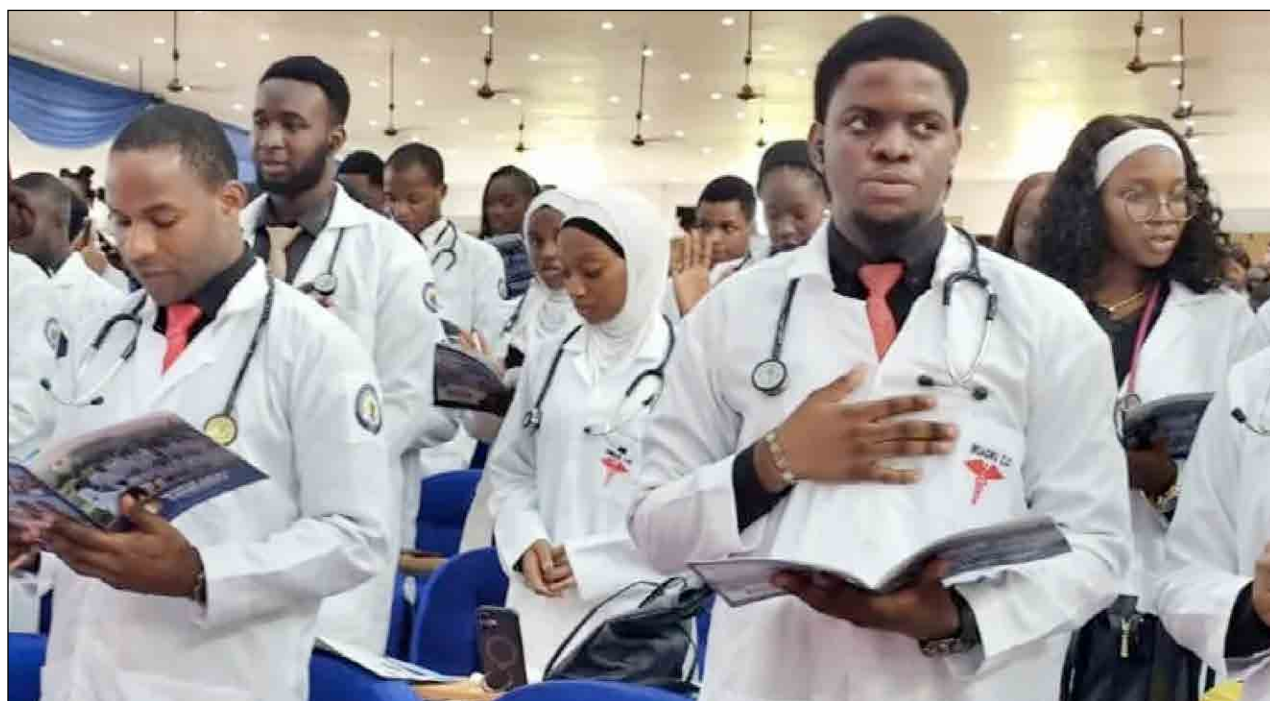
He said only those who are well motivated would put in their best.

Disu described policing as demanding and high-risk, recalling that 140 officers were lost in one year during his tenure in the FCT.

"Our jobs are very difficult; men sleep out and a lot of people don't have time to go back to their families.

"I'm lucky to be working with a president who has made up his mind to give us whatever we want," he said.

The FEC meeting commenced shortly after the ceremony.



TAKING THE PLEDGE:

400 level Medical Students of Igbinedion University, Okada taking a pledge.

400 level medical students of Igbinedion University, Okada taking a pledge

EDWARD OSEGHE

BENIN CITY

The Vice-Chancellor of Igbinedion University, Okada, Prof. Lawrence Ezemonye, has urged 400-level medical students of the institution to uphold humility, discipline and compassion as they begin the clinical phase of their training.

Ezemonye made the call on Wednesday in Okada, Edo, at the institution's 8th White Coat Ceremony for the students, transitioning from pre-clinical to clinical training.

The Vice-Chancellorship warned the students that the prestige of medicine came with a weighty moral burden.

"In medicine, pride is a poor prognosis for success," Ezemonye said, as the students donned their white coats.

He described the symbol as "a badge of competence and a cloak of compassion."

He reminded them that stepping into the wards as senior medical students meant becoming custodians of trust at a time when patients were most vulnerable.

"You will meet patients who are scared, in pain and vulner-

able. Approach every case with diligence. Do not be in a hurry to graduate without learning.

"In the rush of modern medicine, the art of listening is dying, but it is often the best diagnostic tool," he said.

The vice-chancellor stressed that the ceremony was not a mere academic ritual but a public declaration of ethical commitment.

"You are not merely changing your mode of dress; you are declaring your commitment to the art and science of medicine," he stated.

Ezemonye called for a strict adherence to integrity, punctuality and professional appearance in the wards.

In his address, Prof. Dominic

Osaghae, Provost, Oba Okunade Sijuwade Olubuse II College of Health Sciences, reinforced the message of discipline, describing the medical profession as solemn and demanding.

"You are entering a profession that demands time consciousness and proper conduct," he said.

He added that the university had remained consistent in sustaining the White Coat tradition to impress students with the seriousness of their calling.

Dean of the School of Basic Clinical Sciences, Prof. Taiwo Balogun, revealed that the university has produced over 3,000 medical doctors practising globally, and charged the students to justify that legacy.

Nigeria's obesity crisis: Experts urge immediate action

IBADAN

Nigeria is experiencing a rising obesity epidemic, prompting health-care experts to urge immediate action to prevent, manage, and mitigate the health, social, and economic consequences of this complex, chronic disease.

The experts spoke with newsmen in Ibadan, on World Obesity Day, emphasising awareness, early intervention, and coordinated strategies

across individual, community, and national levels.

Dr Victor Alebiosu, Endocrinology Resident at University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan, described obesity as a multifactorial disease influenced by genetics, calorie intake, sedentary lifestyle, hormonal imbalance, metabolic conditions, chronic stress, and poor sleep patterns.

He explained socioeconomic and environmental factors, including urbanization and lim-

ited access to healthy foods, exacerbated obesity risk, stressing that the condition was medical, chronic, and not a personal failure or moral weakness.

"Genetics account for 40 to 70 percent of susceptibility, but lifestyle factors like diet and exercise determine whether these genetic risks manifest into obesity and related health complications.

"Obesity also contributes to mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and body image

dissatisfaction, worsened by social stigma, discrimination, and societal pressure, which complicate treatment and prevention efforts," Alebiosu said.

For effective management, Alebiosu recommended structured dietary changes, consistent physical activity, and behavioural therapy, emphasising that sustainable results required long-term lifestyle adjustment, rather than short-term crash diets or fad interventions.

Edo Police dismantle kidnap syndicate, recover victim's decomposing body in forest

MIKE OSAROGIAGBON

Operatives of the Edo State Police Command have dismantled a suspected kidnap syndicate operating in Ovia South-West Local Government Area, recovering arms and the decomposed body of a 42-year-old victim, Edefe Oghenekome, weeks after his abduction.

The remains of the victim were discovered in the Igueladidi forest in Iguobazuwa, bringing a tragic end to the February 4, 2026 kidnapping that had gripped Utesi Community with anxiety.

Oghenekome was abducted alongside Favour Ighasa from their residence in Utesi Village, after Udo Community.

While Ighasa regained her freedom five days later, communication from the abductors concerning Oghenekome reportedly ceased after ransom negotiations, leaving his family and neighbours in prolonged uncertainty.

Police investigations later revealed that the victim was

allegedly shot dead by his captors.

Sources indicated that the killing may have followed an incident in which Oghenekome identified one of the suspects, said to be someone known to him, after a mask allegedly slipped off during captivity.

Confirming the development, the Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Eno Ikoedem, said the breakthrough was achieved following a directive by the Commissioner of Police, Monday Agbonika, mandating a thorough probe of all kidnapping cases in the state.

According to him, the operation led to the arrest of Abdulsalam Mohammadu, 21, who allegedly confessed and provided information that resulted in the apprehension of other members of the gang.

"Further investigation led to the arrest of Kehinde Adetunji, 45, identified as the local informant who acted as a pointer, and Nasiru Yau, 24, who supplied food to the gang while they kept the victims in the bush," she stated.

NEWS

Customs auctions N14.4m smuggled petrol seized near Cameroon border

CALABAR

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) on Wednesday auctioned 14,375 litres of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) seized from smugglers attempting to ferry the product to Cameroon.

The fuel was intercepted by

the NCS special anti-smuggling taskforce, "Operation Whirlwind," operating in the Calabar axis.

The National Coordinator of the taskforce in Zone C, Deputy Comptroller of Customs Abubakar Aliyu, said the seized product had a Duty Paid Value (DPV) of N14.4 million.

Aliyu disclosed that operatives, acting on credible intelligence in recent weeks, dismantled a coordinated network involved in the illegal exportation of PMS to Cameroon.

"During the operation, we intercepted 235 jerry-cans of 25 litres each and 40 drums of 200 litres each, amounting to 14,375 litres of PMS with a

DPV of N14.4 million," he said.

He attributed the success to sustained surveillance and strategic interdictions across flashpoints including Ikang, Bakassi, Ikom and Ikot-Idareka.

According to him, the products were being diverted for illegal export in violation of Nigeria's petroleum distribu-

tion laws.

Aliyu reaffirmed the service's commitment to safeguarding the nation's economy and combating smuggling and economic sabotage.

Also speaking, Comptroller Momoh Dauda of the River/Calabar Free Trade Zone/Akwa Ibom Area Command said smuggling undermines le-

gitimate trade and government revenue.

"Smuggling in any form is economic sabotage. It distorts the market, deprives government of critical revenue needed for national development and threatens local industries," he warned, adding that the service would deal decisively with offenders.

I-G of Police sets up c'ttee on State Police, gives one-month deadline

ABUJA

The Inspector-General of Police, Mr Olatunji Disu, has inaugurated an eight-man committee to work out modalities for the implementation of state police.

Disu said the committee has one month to submit its report, stressing that its task was timely in view of evolving security challenges across the country.

According to him, the committee will review police models within and outside Nigeria, assess community security needs and propose an operational framework for establishing and coordinating state police structures.

He said it would also address

issues of recruitment, training standards, resource allocation and oversight mechanisms to ensure professionalism and public trust.

"If thoughtfully designed and effectively implemented, state policing holds significant potential benefits for our country," he said, adding that decentralisation would enable quicker and more targeted responses to security threats.

The I-G reassured officers of the Nigeria Police Force that their roles remained indispensable, noting that federal policing would continue to focus on complex crimes such as terrorism, organised crime, cyber-crime and trafficking networks requiring national coordination.

Edo, Germany deepen cultural ties as Commissioner hosts Consul-General

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government has moved to strengthen cultural and development ties with Germany as the Commissioner for Arts, Culture and Creative Economy, Hon. Chris Okaeben, received the Consul-General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Daniel Krull in Benin City.

Welcoming the envoy, Okaeben praised Germany's sustained cultural diplomacy with Edo, noting that the state's rich heritage in arts, music and festivals has continued to attract international interest and foster mutually beneficial partnerships.

He highlighted efforts by Governor Monday Okpebholo's administration to resolve outstanding issues surrounding the Museum of West African Arts (MOWAA), and commended the German government and other donors for supporting the Archaeological Pavilion project.

The commissioner expressed optimism that stronger cultural collaboration would unlock fresh development opportunities, particularly for young people in the creative industry.

He also briefed the Consul-General on the forthcom-

ing 'Edo at 35' celebrations and the Edo Festival (EDOFEST), extending an invitation to the German government to participate.

Okaeben called for expanded partnership in youth training and skills development in film production, bronze and metal works, fine arts, woodwork and vocational exchange programmes, acknowledging previous support from German development agency GIZ in film production initiatives.

Earlier, Krull said he was in Edo State to formally introduce himself to the government and people following his assumption of office last year.

He described Benin City as a historic centre of art and culture, noting that its rich heritage makes it a fitting location for MOWAA's Archaeological Pavilion.

The Consul-General reaffirmed Germany's commitment to strengthening cultural relations and supporting Nigeria's creative and economic development.

Other officials present at the meeting included the Edo State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Cyril Adams Oshiomhole; the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Iryn Omorgiwa; and the Director of Entertainment and Creative Economy, Mr. Harrison Ehizoba.



RALLY:

Coordinator, Women Gather for Governor Peter Mbah Movement, Mrs Onyinye Mamah (4th L) with representatives of various women groups, during a rally to call on Governor Peter Mbah of Enugu State to facilitate the emergence of female candidate in the forthcoming Igbo-Eze South, Enugu North Senatorial Zone bye Election in Enugu on Wednesday.

Navy drills troops on harbour defence, emergency response

CALABAR

The Eastern Naval Command of the Nigerian Navy on Wednesday conducted a harbour defence simulation to test personnel readiness against potential maritime threats.

The exercise, flagged off at

the NNS VICTORY jetty in Calabar by the Flag Officer Commanding (FOC), Rear Admiral Chidozie Okehie, was code-named "EXERCISE EDIKPEME-MUO", meaning "safe waters" in Efik and Ibibio.

Represented by Chief Staff Officer Rear Admiral Steven Ibrahim, the FOC said the drill was designed to test alertness, coordination and inter-unit synergy in the event of an at-

tack or emergency.

He noted that the frequent exercises contributed to the recent rescue of 22 crew members of MV CHIMBA Express by NNS OSE.

During the simulation, officers and ratings carried out defence station, emergency station and man-overboard drills, as well as medical evacuation, diving, plugging and firefighting exercises.

The scenarios were executed in a coordinated manner to assess response time, communication efficiency and command-and-control effectiveness.

Participants included personnel from ships at VICTORY Jetty, the Special Boat Service detachment, NNS VICTORY Gunboat Squadron and the Nigerian Navy Reference Hospital.

Delta unveils 9% credit scheme to boost SMEs, agric

ASABA

The Delta State Government has launched a state-backed financing initiative offering single-digit interest loans to boost small and medium-scale enterprises.

Commissioner for Economic Planning, Mr Sonny Ekedayen, said the scheme, in partnership with the Bank of Industry, would provide credit at nine per cent interest—far

below prevailing commercial bank rates of about 30 per cent.

He said the high cost of borrowing had constrained many businesses from expanding operations.

The fund targets manufacturers, agro-processors, distributors and other small-scale business owners seeking working capital or expansion financing, with applications to be handled directly by the Bank of Industry to ensure

transparency.

Ekedayen described the initiative as a major intervention to stimulate productivity and strengthen the state's small business ecosystem.

He also disclosed a public-private partnership with Medium Agro Ventures Ltd. to drive large-scale mechanised farming.

According to him, about 3,500 hectares have been cleared for cassava, rice and

greenhouse vegetable cultivation, with over 1,700 hectares already prepared for planting.

Greenhouse facilities will focus on tomatoes, cucumbers and bell peppers for urban and hospitality markets.

Ekedayen further highlighted the Delta Mangrove Project, aimed at leveraging the state's mangrove forests to access the global carbon credit market and diversify revenue through climate financing.

INEC storms Lagos markets to boost voter registration

LAGOS

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has taken its "Register2Vote" awareness campaign to Tejuosho and Makoko markets in Yaba as part of efforts to boost participation in the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise.

Leading the outreach, Resident Electoral Commissioner

Prof. Ayobami Salami said the move was aimed at sensitising eligible residents, particularly traders, on the need to register.

The team moved round the markets on foot while voter education jingles blared in major Nigerian languages.

Salami said the CVR covers Nigerians who have just turned 18, those seeking fresh registration, transfer of registration due to relocation, correction of

details, or replacement of lost or damaged Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs).

He noted that while older residents appeared aware of the exercise, many young people aged 18 and 19 were either unaware or indifferent.

Although turnout in the second phase of the CVR, which began on January 5 nationwide, has improved compared to 2025, he said more effort

was needed.

Salami assured residents that votes would count in the 2027 general elections but warned that only registered voters with valid PVCs would be eligible to participate.

He added that the commission would conduct a genuine revalidation of the voter register ahead of the polls to ensure credibility, while cautioning against multiple registrations.

Man kills brother over 'dream shooting' claim

IBADAN

A 43-year-old man has been arrested by the police in Oyo State

for allegedly killing his elder brother, Mustapha Amidu, after accusing him of "shooting him" in a dream.

The incident was confirmed

in a statement issued on Wednesday in Ibadan by the state Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Ayanlade Olayinka.

According to him, the trag-

ic episode was reported at the Ago-Amodu Divisional Police Headquarters by one Badmus Yunisa of Alegunlode Compound, Sepeteri area of Oyo

State.

"The suspect allegedly approached the deceased where he was seated, picked up a heavy rock, struck him on the head, and fled the scene immediately," Olayinka stated.

The victim was rushed to Ileri Oluwa Hospital, Sepeteri, where he was confirmed dead by the attending doctor.

The police spokesman said a team of operatives led by the Divisional Police Officer of Ago-Amodu Division visited both the scene and the hospital

as part of preliminary investigations.

The suspect has since been arrested and reportedly confessed to the crime.

He is currently cooperating with investigators.

Olayinka added that the Oyo State Commissioner of Police, Femi Haruna, had directed that the case be transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department for a discreet and comprehensive probe, assuring that justice would be pursued in accordance with the law.



SENSITIZATION:

Resident Electoral Commissioner, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Ayobami Salami (2nd R) sensitizing a market woman on the need to get registered in the ongoing Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) at Tejuosho Market, Yaba in Lagos on Wednesday. With them is the INEC, Lagos State Administrative Secretary, Mrs Oluyemi Adeyemi.

Southern Kaduna APC groups back El-Rufai probe

KAFANCHAN

Women and youths under the aegis of the All Progressives Congress (APC) Unity Forum in Southern Kaduna have staged a rally in support of the ongoing investigation into former Kaduna State Governor, Nasir El-Rufai.

El-Rufai is reportedly under investigation over alleged involvement in the wiretapping of the National Security Adviser's phone lines, as well as alleged financial infractions during his tenure.

Protesters carried placards bearing inscriptions such as: "Tapping NSA phone is criminal," "ICPC, EFCC save our treasury," "Southern Kaduna people do not support evil" and "ICPC, DSS carry on."

Speaking at the rally, the forum's convener, Mr Edward Auta, said the legal process would strengthen transparency and, if guilt is established, aid the recovery of public resources for the benefit of Kaduna residents.

He said holding El-Rufai accountable would reinforce the principle that no one is above

the law under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration, adding that such accountability is essential for peace, justice and development.

Auta also urged security agencies to investigate what he described as the former governor's "divisive rhetoric" along religious and ethnic lines, warning that such tendencies threaten public peace and national cohesion.

He distanced the forum from a separate pro-El-Rufai rally held in Kafanchan, insisting that those involved did not represent the majority view in

Southern Kaduna.

According to him, most residents support the efforts of anti-graft and security agencies to ensure due process and accountability.

Auta commended the current administration of Governor Uba Sani and President Tinubu, citing projects such as a new Federal University, a Federal Medical Centre and ongoing infrastructure works as evidence of inclusive governance.

He reaffirmed Southern Kaduna's alignment with the APC and pledged strong electoral support for the party in 2027.

2027: Public Complaints Commission warns against divisive campaigns

ABEOKUTA

The Public Complaints Commission (PCC) in Ogun State has cautioned politicians against resorting to ethnic sentiments, personal attacks and misinformation ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The Federal Commissioner in the state, Morakinyo Ak-

inleye, issued the warning in a statement on Wednesday, stressing that such conduct weakens democratic institutions.

He urged political actors to embrace issue-based campaigns and peaceful engagement in order to safeguard the peace and democratic integrity of Ogun State.

Describing Ogun as a bea-

con of intellectualism and political maturity, Akinleye said campaigns should focus on concrete policy alternatives, economic strategies, youth empowerment, security and fiscal responsibility.

"The electorate deserves campaigns built on ideas and programmes rather than insults, propaganda or violence," he said.

He also warned against violence, intimidation, thuggery and vote-buying, noting that democracy thrives when citizens compete peacefully and disagree respectfully.

Akinleye called on all stakeholders to respect the rule of law and electoral guidelines, promote tolerance across party lines and uphold the sanctity of the ballot.

Accord Party launches nationwide e-registration drive

ABUJA

The Accord Party has commenced a nationwide electronic registration and revalidation of its members as part of preparations for the 2027 general elections.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, the party's National Chairman, Maxwell Mg-

budem, said the exercise began on Tuesday in compliance with the Electoral Act, which mandates political parties to maintain digital membership registers for accreditation during congresses, primaries and conventions.

He urged existing members, including those in the diaspora, as well as new entrants, to

take advantage of the exercise and obtain updated membership cards.

Mgbudem also advised members who previously registered under other platforms to participate in the fresh registration, noting that additional information is now required.

He said the national leadership had issued guidelines to

ensure a seamless process and called on ward, local government, state and zonal executives to mobilise members for an extensive membership drive.

Describing Accord as one of the fastest-growing political parties in the country, he expressed optimism that the exercise would strengthen the party ahead of forthcoming elections.

FG targets April completion for Abuja-Kaduna road

ABUJA

The Federal Government has reaffirmed its commitment to completing the reconstruction of the Abuja-Kaduna Road, with authorities expressing confidence that the project will be delivered by the end of April.

The Director of Information and Public Relations at the Ministry of Works, Mr Mohammed Ahmed, made this known during an inspection tour of the project.

He said the road is a strategic link between the North Central and other northern regions and the Federal Capital Territory, as well as a vital corridor connecting Lagos to other parts of the country.

Ahmed explained that the project was redesigned from asphalt pavement to Continuous Reinforced Concrete Pavement (CRCP) to ensure durability and long-term serviceability.

Providing technical updates, the Engineer's Representative, Chukwuma Kalu, disclosed that Section One of the project comprises a 40.5-kilometre dual

carriageway CRCP stretch, totalling 81 kilometres, alongside a 17.3-kilometre asphalt section on the Kano-Zaria Road and a 6.63-kilometre dual asphalt overlay in Kano State.

He said the 6.63-kilometre dual carriageway leading to Kano Airport has been completed with streetlights installed, while the 17.3-kilometre section is about 80 per cent complete.

According to him, 60 kilometres of the 81-kilometre CRCP stretch have been delivered, leaving 21 kilometres outstanding.

Kalu said work is ongoing day and night to meet the April deadline.

Senior Project Manager at Infioquest, Robert Turner, confirmed that overall progress on Section One stands at about 80 per cent, assuring that efforts are being intensified to ensure timely completion.

During the tour, emergency intervention projects in Bwari and Lugbe were also inaugurated, including road rehabilitation and drainage works aimed at easing congestion and tackling flooding in parts of the FCT.

Bayelsa APC unites, Ogoriba emerges Chairman, Diri predicts 2027 sweep

PHILIP EKE

YENAGOA

The All Progressives Congress in Bayelsa State has closed ranks, electing a new State Executive Council through consensus and declaring an end to internal factions, as party leaders projected total victory in the 2027 general elections.

At the state congress held at the Gabriel Okara Cultural Centre in Yenagoa, stakeholders unanimously elected Ogoriba from Odi in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area as State Chairman, alongside 35 other executive members, in line with the Electoral Act 2026.

In his acceptance speech, Ogoriba commended Bayelsa State Governor, Senator Douye Diri, for what he described as his peaceful disposition, which created a conducive atmosphere for a hitch-free congress.

He pledged that the new ex-

ecutive would consolidate the peace within the party and ensure unity ahead of the forthcoming primaries.

He dismissed fears that the primaries could trigger fresh crises, assuring members that the leadership would prioritise peaceful conduct and internal cohesion.

Ogoriba also downplayed the strength of opposition forces in the state, expressing confidence that the APC would deliver 100 per cent support for President Bola Tinubu in 2027 and secure victories for all its candidates.

Governor Diri, speaking at the congress, expressed satisfaction with the turnout of party stakeholders and declared that the era of factionalism in the Bayelsa APC was over.

He cited the presence of key political figures across the state as evidence that the party had become the dominant political force.

NEWS

Alliance, NIWA move to unlock Nigeria's marine tourism potential

LAGOS

The Allied Concessionaires and Blue Economy Alliance has pledged strategic collaboration with the National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA) to unlock Nigeria's vast but largely untapped marine tourism economy.

The commitment was made during a courtesy visit by the group's chairman, Mr Bola-ji Olasade, to the Lagos Area Manager of NIWA, Mrs Sarat Braimah, at the authority's Lagos office.

Olasade said the proposed

partnership is designed to harness the economic potential of waterfronts, particularly in Lagos, by integrating safe and efficient water transportation with enhanced recreational and hospitality services.

He explained that the alliance comprises reputable maritime tourism and transportation operators determined to redefine waterfront recreation through modern, secure and efficient water transport systems.

"We came to formally introduce our coalition, which is not a conventional association but a consortium of proven

concessionaires ready to collaborate with NIWA to grow inland waterways tourism infrastructure," he said.

He added that the group aims to open up littoral communities through destination marketing and the promotion of resorts, repositioning Ni-

geria's brown water and blue economy sectors into globally competitive industries.

In her remarks, the coalition's secretary, Mrs Dorcas Aderemi, stressed the need for a structured public-private partnership model to fast-track development and attract

sustainable investment.

She noted that deeper collaboration with NIWA would stimulate economic growth, create jobs and boost government revenue.

The delegation commended Braimah's leadership, particularly her zero-tolerance stance

on boat mishaps and security breaches, and congratulated her on her recent Nelson Mandela Pan-African Leadership Award.

Responding, Braimah welcomed the initiative, assuring the group of NIWA's readiness to explore viable opportunities.

ONICCIMA backs Soludo's market overhaul, seeks compensation for traders

ONITSHA

The Onitsha Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (ONICCIMA) has backed Governor Chukwuma Soludo's plan to remodel the Onitsha Main Market, widely regarded as West Africa's largest commercial hub.

In a statement signed by its President, Chinedu Nwonu, the chamber described the initiative as a long-overdue transformation aimed at restoring the market's prestige through modern facilities.

It noted that years of unau-

thorised encroachments had weakened the market's functionality and sustainability.

While endorsing plans for improved parking, fire-fighting systems, security posts, CCTV surveillance and ventilation, ONICCIMA expressed concern over hardship faced by affected traders.

"In many instances, individuals have lost multiple investments, leading to significant economic distress and emotional trauma," the statement read.

The chamber appealed to the governor to institute a transparent compensation framework for traders with verifiable losses.

Police raid criminal hideouts in Enugu, arrest 4

ENUGU

The Enugu State Police Command has arrested four suspects and recovered stolen mobile phones and suspected illicit substances in separate operations across the state.

In a statement, the command's spokesman, SP Daniel Ndukwe, said operatives attached to the Central Police Station, in collaboration with the Neighbourhood Watch, raided a hideout along the Holy Ghost Rail Line on March 1 at about 8 p.m.

Two suspected habitual thieves were apprehended, and

four mobile phones, Honour, Vivo, Tecno and ITEL brands, along with wraps of suspected cannabis sativa were recovered.

In a related operation on February 28, operatives of the Anti-Cultism Tactical Squad stormed a hideout at Eke-Obinagu, Emene, arresting two suspects and seizing a large quantity of dried weeds suspected to be cannabis.

The Commissioner of Police, Mamman Giwa, reiterated the command's resolve to sustain proactive operations to rid the state of criminal elements and urged residents to remain vigilant and provide useful information to security agencies.



KRULL VISITS OSHIOMHOLE:

L-R: Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy, Iryn Omorgiuwa; 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 Director of Entertainment and Creative Economy, Mr. Harrison Ehizoba when the Krull visited the Commissioner in Benin City.

Ohanaeze unveils major reforms as Otti pledges backing

NVOSSI (ABIA)

Ohanaeze Ndigbo Worldwide has announced sweeping institutional reforms aimed at strengthening its leadership structure and repositioning the organisation for greater regional impact.

President-General Senator John Azuta-Mbata disclosed this during a visit to Abia State Governor Alex Otti in Nvosi, Isiala Ngwa South.

Represented by his deputy, Chief Okey Nwadinobi, Azuta-Mbata said the leadership had prioritised consolidation since assuming office in January 2025, including a strategic retreat and the adoption of a four-year work plan.

He revealed that the organisation's modern secretariat complex is about 85 per cent complete and announced plans to establish seven professorial endowment chairs across the South-East to promote Igbo

language and culture.

A draft constitution has also been prepared for ratification, while the Igbo Investment Company and Igbo Development Foundation are being revived to drive economic initiatives.

Azuta-Mbata further announced the introduction of an annual Igbo Adoration and Thanksgiving Day to celebrate the resilience and progress of the Igbo people.

He commended Otti's per-

formance in education, health-care, infrastructure and urban renewal, citing free primary and junior secondary education, improved health centres and road rehabilitation.

Responding, Otti expressed satisfaction with the organisation's direction and pledged continued support.

"We are very happy with the progress made so far. Let him know we appreciate the work he and his team are doing," the governor said.

Ramadan lecture: Scholar charges media on peace, responsible reporting

LAGOS

A prominent Islamic scholar, Dr Abdullah Shuaib, has urged journalists to promote peace and exercise responsibility in reporting conflicts, particularly between farmers and pastoralists.

He made the call at the third Annual Ramadan Lecture of

the Nigeria Union of Journalists, Lagos State Council.

Shuaib cautioned against framing conflicts along ethnic or religious lines, describing the farmers-pastoralists crisis as largely driven by environmental and socio-economic factors.

"Religion and ethnicity are often deployed by politicians to stir sentiments. When mis-

understandings occur, instead of addressing root causes, these tools are activated," he said.

He emphasised that Nigeria's diversity should be viewed as a strength and urged the media to project balanced narratives capable of fostering unity.

Also speaking, media professional Hajia Nymat Akacha-Zibiri called for structured psychosocial support and jus-

tice for victims of ethnic and religious crises, warning that unresolved grievances could fuel further violence.

In his welcome address, Lagos NUJ Chairman, Mr Adeleye Ajayi, described journalists as custodians of truth whose duty to uphold justice and human dignity becomes even more critical in complex times.

Osifo resigns as Edo Commissioner, eyes House of Reps seat

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Commissioner for Water Resources and Sanitation, Washington Osifo, has officially resigned from his post under Governor Monday Okpebholo, citing his ambition to contest the House of Representatives seat for Uhumwonde/Orhionmwon Federal Constitu-

ency.

Osifo told journalists at the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Edo State Council, that his resignation was in full compliance with the electoral law, which mandates that all political appointees intending to run for elective office must step down at least 30 days before party primaries.

"In obedience to the law of

the Federal Republic of Nigeria, specifically the Electoral Act, and in response to the call of my people, I tendered my resignation," Osifo said.

"The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) recently revised the electoral timetable, setting primaries between April 22 and May 20. By law, it is required that holders of appointed offices resign 30

days before the primaries. Today, I am complying with that requirement."

The former commissioner emphasised that resigning ahead of time would allow him to engage meaningfully with his constituents rather than leaving mobilisation to the last minute.

Osifo also reflected on his tenure as commissioner, describing it as fulfilling but no

longer challenging.

"This is my third time serving as a commissioner. The position is substantial, but when one continues in a role for too long, the essence of living diminishes.

There are no new challenges left for me at this level. I want to go to a place where I must crack my brain, confront new challenges, and provide answers that leave a mark. This is where I seek to serve my people."

The NUJ Edo State chairman, Dr. Festus Alenkhe, commended Osifo for aiming higher in his political career and urged journalists to verify their reports as the nation prepares for the 2027 general elections.

In line with his political ambitions, Osifo announced the appointment of Evang. Tony Osazuwa, as Director General of his campaign organisation for the Orhionmwon/Uhumwode Federal Constituency.

JUDICIARY

NEWS

Owo church attack: DSS arrested me at 2:26am, suspect tells court

ABUJA

One of the five men standing trial over the June 5, 2022 attack on St. Francis Catholic Church in Owo, Ondo State, on Wednesday narrated before the Federal High Court in Abuja how operatives of the Department of State Services (DSS) allegedly arrested him.

The defendant, Idris Abdul-

malik Omeiza, opened his defence before Justice Emeka Nwite while being led in evidence by his counsel, Abdullahi Muhammad.

He testified in Ebra language, with interpretation provided in English by a court official.

No fewer than 41 worshippers were killed and over 140 others injured in the terror attack.

The DSS had earlier called 11 witnesses in the trial, which

commenced on August 1, 2025, to establish its case against the defendants.

The court also admitted the confessional statements of the accused persons after conducting a trial-within-trial to determine that the statements were made voluntarily.

An accelerated hearing earlier sought by the DSS was granted.

The five defendants are Omeiza, 25; Al Qasim Idris, 20; Jamiu Abdulmalik, 26; Abdulahaleem Idris, 25; and Momoh Otuhu Abubakar, 47.

Omeiza, who described himself as an auxiliary nurse, told the court that he was arrested on August 1, 2022, alongside two others, Hauwa and Yusuf, in the same house.

"I usually wake up early to read. That day, as I was reading, I checked the time and it was 2:26am. Suddenly, I heard noises outside. I dropped my book and opened the window to see what was happening. I saw men dressed in black with their faces covered. They forced the door open and entered," he said.

According to him, the operatives asked after his elder brother, Jamiu, and arrested two boys from a room opposite his, whom he identified as Awal and Yusuf.

He further told the court that it was at the DSS facility in Lokoja that he first met the fifth defendant, Abubakar, who had also been arrested.

At the Lokoja office, he said, they were kept in a room where their personal details, including names, schools attended,

occupations and their fathers' names, were recorded.

He added that he volunteered a statement the following day and remained in detention until August 18, 2022, when he learnt that his elder brother had also been arrested.

Omeiza claimed that before they were moved to Ondo State on August 18, the DSS did not question him about the Owo church attack or membership of ISWAP or any other terrorist group.



RECEPTION:

A crowd of supporters at the reception of members from various political parties who decamped to the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Benin City yesterday.

Court reserves judgment in suit challenging political parties' nomination fees

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja on Wednesday fixed March 25 for judgment in a suit challenging the alleged imposition of exorbitant expression of interest and nomination fees by political parties.

The suit was filed by lawyer Ejime Okolie against the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) and 19 political parties.

Justice Binta Nyako adjourned for judgment after

parties adopted their processes and presented arguments for and against the case.

Okolie, who is suing on his own behalf and on behalf of millions of Nigerians desirous of participating in the electoral process, is seeking an order restraining political parties from imposing what he described as outrageous fees for expression of interest and nomination forms.

He also asked the court to direct INEC to issue binding guidelines regulating reasonable maximum thresholds for such fees.

He further prayed the court to restrain the parties from fixing or

enforcing nomination fees for the 2027 general elections that could exclude qualified Nigerians from contesting and to order that any reliefs granted operate prospectively to safeguard constitutional rights ahead of the polls.

When the matter was called, there was no representation for the All Progressives Congress (APC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Labour Party (LP), among others. However, the African Democratic Congress (ADC), All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Young Progressive Party (YPP), Accord, Zenith Labour Party (ZLP), Action People's Party (APP), National Rescue Movement (NRM), INEC

and the AGF were represented.

Some respondents raised preliminary objections, arguing that Okolie lacked locus standi and that the court lacked jurisdiction, contending that the issue bordered on the internal affairs of political parties.

After hearing submissions, Justice Nyako adjourned until March 25 for judgment.

The suit, marked FHC/ABJ/CS/04/2026 and filed on January 5, seeks declarations that the alleged financial barriers violated Sections 40 and 42 of the 1999 Constitution by restricting freedom of association and amounting to discrimination.

Yelwata massacre: Trial of 9 suspects stalled again

ABUJA

The trial of nine suspected terrorists linked to the June 13, 2025 attack on Yelwata community in Benue State was again stalled on Wednesday at the Federal High Court in Abuja.

Authorities said that about 150 people were killed in the attack.

The matter, before Justice Joyce Abdulmalik, could not proceed after counsel to the eighth and ninth defendants, Y.A. Hassan, sought time to study the case file,

describing it as his first appearance in the matter.

The Federal Government had on February 2 arraigned the nine defendants — Ardo Lawal Mohammed Dono, Ardo Muhammadu Saidu, Alhaji Haruna Abdullahi, Yakubu Adamu, Alhaji Musa Mohammed, Abubakar Adamu, Shaibu Ibrahim, Sale Mohammed and Bako Jibrin on a 57-count charge under the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022.

When the case was called, Hassan, representing Sale Mohammed and Bako Jibrin, ap-

pealed for a short adjournment, saying he had not yet familiarised himself with the charges.

Prosecution counsel, Rotimi Oyedepo, SAN, did not oppose the request but suggested that evidence-in-chief could proceed, with cross-examination deferred. Hassan, however, insisted he was not ready.

Justice Abdulmalik cautioned the defence counsel, stressing the public interest in the matter and warning against further delays.

"Before you take up a case, you are supposed to ask neces-

sary questions so you don't waste the time of the court," she said.

The case was adjourned until March 9 and 10 for continuation of trial.

At the previous sitting on February 26, the first prosecution witness, CSP Moses Paul of the Intelligence Response Unit of the Nigeria Police Force, testified that over 100 armed attackers stormed Yelwata community with AK-47 rifles, killing about 150 persons.

He added that investigations were ongoing and more suspects might be charged.

Lagos businesswoman arraigned over alleged N1.8bn fraud

IKEJA

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on Wednesday arraigned a Lagos businesswoman, Titilayo Eboh, before an Ikeja Special Offences Court over an alleged N1.8 billion fraud.

Eboh was docked alongside Chayomi Aluminium Ltd and Abubakar Funtua, who is said to be at large, on a three-count charge of conspiracy, stealing and obtaining by false pretence. She pleaded not guilty.

The prosecution, led by Nnaemeka Omenwa, sought her remand pending trial, noting that a bail application had been filed in a related matter before another court.

Defence counsel, Emefo Etudo, urged the court to fix an ear-

ly date for hearing the bail application and multiple trial dates.

Justice Mojisola Dada ordered the defendant remanded and adjourned the matter until March 24 for hearing of the bail application.

The EFCC alleged that between December 2, 2020 and January 25, 2021, the defendant obtained N1.8 billion from two complainants under the pretext of exchanging it for dollars at N420 per dollar, knowing the representation to be false.

The agency further alleged that she converted N458.2 million to personal use.

The offences are said to contravene provisions of the Advanced Fee Fraud and Other Fraud Related Offences Act, 2006, and the Criminal Law of Lagos State, 2011.

21yr-old docked over alleged assault

IBADAN

A 21-year-old man, Ibrahim Elijah, was on Wednesday arraigned before an Iyaganku Magistrates' Court in Ibadan over alleged assault.

Elijah is facing charges of conspiracy and assault but pleaded not guilty.

The prosecutor alleged that on March 3 at E99 Event Centre, Oluyole, Ibadan, the de-

fendant conspired with others at large to assault one Chigozie Awurum with a cutlass and tear gas, causing injuries that required hospital treatment.

The offences allegedly contravene Sections 355 and 516 of the Criminal Law of Oyo State, 2000.

Magistrate Moyosore Atanda granted bail in the sum of N200,000 with two sureties in like sum and adjourned the case until April 1.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MISSUMORU EMILOBUA JUMAI**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS. AHONSI EMILOBUA JUMAI**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public please take note.

RECONCILIATION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **EMMANUEL EWALEIFOH** and **EWALEIFOH EMELUOBE EMMANUEL** are one and the same person as appeared in some of my documents. Henceforth, I wish to be known and addressed as **EMMANUEL EWALEIFOH**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **ZACCHEAUS UWAILA**, now wish to be known and addressed as **ENOBAKARE UWAILA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME/ DATE OF BIRTH

I, formerly known as **UZOBUBU INNOCENT**, now wish to be known and addressed as **UZEBU INNOCENT OSE**. Also, my correct date of birth is **28/8/1994**, not **28/8/1991**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MISS ONWUEGBU IJEOMA LILIAN**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS. EMAKUNU IJEOMA LILIAN**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public please take note.

REARRANGEMENT /REMOVAL OF NAME

I, formerly known as **EGBON KATE AJAYI**, now wish to be known and addressed as **AJAYI KATE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and general public please take note.

Spain's Pedro Sánchez hits back at Trump threat to sever trade saying 'no to war'

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has delivered a strong rebuttal to US President Donald Trump's threat to end trade with Spain by restating his opposition to war and what he called the "breakdown of international law".

Pedro Sánchez addressed the nation the morning after President Trump said he did not want 'anything to do' with Spain.

In a 10-minute televised address, Sánchez reflected on the wars in Ukraine and Gaza as well as the Iraq War more than 20 years ago and said the Spanish government's position could be summed up as "no to war".

Trump threatened to impose a full trade embargo on Spain in response to Madrid's refusal to allow the US to use the joint-

ly-run bases at Morón and Rota for strikes on Iran.

"Spain has been terrible," Trump said during a meeting with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz on Tuesday.

"We're going to cut off all trade with Spain. We don't want anything to do with Spain," he added.

Merz said later he had told Trump very clearly that he could not conclude a separate trade agreement with Germany or all of Europe but not with Spain.

In response to the US economic threat, the Élysée Palace said French President Emmanuel Macron had conveyed his "solidarity" with Spain, during a phone conversation with Sánchez on Wednesday. European Council President

António Costa also said he had spoken to the Spanish leader "to express the EU's full solidarity".

Trump accused Spain on Tuesday of being a "terrible partner" in Nato for failing to increase its defence budget in line with a target of 5% of economic output (GDP).

Earlier this year Sánchez drew Trump's anger by speaking out against the US military incursion into Venezuela.

In his televised address from the prime minister's Madrid residence at La Moncloa on Wednesday, Sánchez said the government was studying economic measures to counter the impact of the conflict on Spaniards, although he avoided directly referring to Trump's trade threat.

"The question is not if we are on the side of the ayatollahs - nobody is. The question is whether we are in favour of peace and international legality."

"You cannot answer one illegality with another, because that is how the great catastrophes of humanity begin."

Spain's Socialist prime minister explained that the government's position was comparable to its stance on Ukraine and Gaza. Sánchez has been a vociferous critic of Israel's military response to the Hamas attacks in 2023.

Spain has been among Europe's most outspoken governments on Gaza, describing Israel's actions there as "genocide" and acknowledging a Palestinian state before many other EU members did.

US and Ecuador forces launch operation to fight drug trafficking

Ecuadorian and US forces have launched operations against what it said were designated terrorist organisations in the South American country, the US military's Southern Command has said.

The Southern Command said the action was aimed at tackling illicit drug trafficking, but did not provide more details in a statement on X.

The announcement comes a day after Ecuador's President Daniel Noboa said the US was among "regional allies" taking part in a "new phase" of Ecuador's war on the drug cartels.

Noboa says around 70% of the world's cocaine now flows through Ecuador's huge ports, making it a lucrative location for drug-trafficking gangs.

It also neighbours Colombia and Peru, the world's two largest producers of cocaine.

The latest operations come four months after Ecuadoreans dashed US hopes of expanding its presence in the eastern Pacific region by voting against allowing the return of foreign military bases in the country.

The referendum result was a blow to Noboa, a close ally of US President Donald Trump, who is trying to fight organised crime and reduce soaring violence.

In recent years, the country has become one of the world's biggest drug-trafficking hotspots.

On Monday, Noboa held talks in Quito with US Southern Command chief Francis Donovan and Mark Schafer, head of US Special Operations

in Central and South America and the Caribbean.

During the meeting, they discussed plans for information sharing and operational coordination at airports and seaports, Noboa's office said in a statement.

"Together, we are taking decisive action to confront narco-terrorists who have long inflicted terror, violence, and corruption on citizens throughout the hemisphere," the US Southern Command said on Tuesday.

The announcement comes three months after the Washington announced a temporary deployment of Air Force personnel to the former US base in the port city of Manta.

Tackling drug trafficking in the region is a key priority for the US.

The Trump administration has carried out more than 40 lethal strikes on alleged drug boats in the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean since September.

In January, the US seized Venezuela's then-President Nicolás Maduro, who they accused of "narco-terrorism" and enabling the transport of "thousands of tonnes" of cocaine to the US.

And last month, Trump met his Colombian counterpart, Gustavo Petro, at the White House after months of rising tensions between the pair.

Trump has repeatedly accused Petro and his administration of failing to stem the flow of drugs to the US, suggesting that expanded strikes could also target Colombia.



SPANISH PRIME MINISTER:

Pedro Sánchez addressed the nation the morning after President Trump said he did not want 'anything to do' with Spain

Ethiopia experiments with 'smart' police stations that have no officers

The vision is for Ethiopia's smart police stations to be unmanned - but giving more people access to police services

Computer tablet screens glow inside a row of partitioned booths at a new-style Ethiopian police station.

There is no commotion. There is no front desk, no bench of anxiously waiting civilians, no officer calling out names.

It is a pilot project of what is being called a "smart" - or unmanned - police station in the Bole district of the capital, Addis Ababa, is the latest chapter in Ethiopia's bid to catch up with the digital revolution.

A large monitor on the wall cycles through welcome messages as well as images of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

But at the moment there are uniformed officers standing by to demonstrate how the sys-

tem works, which makes it feel more like a tech showroom.

Recently opened, the staff "are here to help people get used to it", the police's head of technology expansion department Cdr Demissie Yilma tells the BBC.

A head and shoulders image of a man in a blue camouflage uniform and peaked cap. A badge says "Eth Federal Police" on his chest and an Ethiopian flag is in the background. BBC

"The future police service should be near the citizens"

Police technology expansion department Inside a booth, he taps a screen and goes through the steps to make a report.

Demissie selects the type of incident - a crime, a traffic report or a general concern - enters the details and presses a button to submit the comment.

Then, an officer - who is a real person in a remote location rather

than a chatbot - pops up on the screen and begins to ask questions and take down information.

"If there is a problem, officers respond immediately and patrol the area mentioned by the reporter," Demissie says.

In its first week last month, the smart police station (SPS) received just three reports - a lost passport, a financial fraud case and a routine complaint.

But Demissie believes the number of reports will grow as locals become more aware of it.

"The future police service should be near the citizens," he says.

The use of a computer tablet to communicate with officials may mean less human-to-human contact but the authorities believe that the SPS could increase access to the police in places where there may not be enough personnel to man a fully fledged station.

At the project's launch on

9 February, the prime minister was quoted in state media as saying that it was aimed at making "law enforcement institutions competent and competitive" and he framed it as part of a wider digital reform drive.

A screen on a computer tablet showing the smart police station portal.

The smart police station is part of a broader move to change how citizens interact with the state.

The national strategy launched last year - known as Digital Ethiopia 2030 - is the government's blueprint for digitising public services, from identity systems and payments to courts and public administration.

The proportion of Ethiopians who have access to the internet remains quite low, meaning that the country has lagged behind others on the continent in terms of digital transformation.

Partner of Labour MP arrested on suspicion of spying for China, BBC told

One of three men arrested on suspicion of spying for China is the partner of a Labour MP, the BBC has been told.

The men, aged 39, 43 and 68, were arrested in London and Wales as part of a counter-terrorism policing investigation under the National Security Act, the Metropolitan Police said in a statement.

There is no "imminent or direct threat to the public", the Met added, and all three suspects are being held in custody.

Speaking in the Commons after the arrests, security minister Dan Jarvis said the UK would not "trade of security for economic access".

As part of the investigation, searches were carried out at locations in London, East Kilbride and Cardiff.

The men have been accused by officers of assisting a foreign intelligence service under section three of the National Security Act, which was introduced in 2023 to target suspects

accused of working against UK interests.

An offence is committed if someone is found to have carried out an act to "materially assist a foreign intelligence service in carrying out UK-related activities", or in conduct likely to assist that service.

Commander Helen Flanagan, head of Counter Terrorism Policing London, said the force had seen a "significant increase" in national security casework in recent years, but officers were working to "disrupt malign activity where we suspect it".

Jarvis said if Chinese interference in UK sovereign affairs were proven, "severe consequences" would be imposed.

"This government stands resolute in our resolve to counter foreign interference activity targeting the UK from any state actor," he told MPs.

British officials had informed Chinese counterparts in London and Beijing about the allegations, he added.

Starmer defends Iran response as Badenoch calls for more action

Sir Keir Starmer has defended the government's approach to the conflict in Iran, saying protecting British nationals is his "number one priority".

It comes after President Trump criticised the prime minister for refusing to allow the use of UK bases in the initial US-Israel strikes on Saturday, saying he is "no Winston Churchill".

During Prime Minister's Questions Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch accused Sir Keir of "asking our allies to do what we should be doing ourselves" by not taking "offensive action" after British bases in Bahrain and Cyprus were attacked.

But the PM said he was not prepared for the UK to join a war without "a lawful basis and a viable, thought-through plan".

On Sunday the UK agreed to a US request to use British military bases but only for defensive strikes on Iranian missile sites.

However, Trump has responded angrily to Sir Keir's refusal to be involved in the initial strikes, describing the decision as "shocking" and saying the UK-US relationship was "not what it was".

Dismissing suggestions the relationship between the two countries had been weakened, Sir Keir said US planes operating out of British bases was "the special relationship in action" not "hanging on to President Trump's latest words".

Sir Keir said: "We're taking action to reduce the threat with planes in the sky in the region intercepting incoming strikes, deploying more capability to Cyprus, and allowing US planes to use UK bases to take out Iran's capability to strike."

"What I was not prepared to do on Saturday was for the UK to join a war unless I was sat-

isfied there was a lawful basis and a viable, thought-through plan. That remains my position."

The PM said the government had also been pre-deploying capabilities in the region for a number of weeks, including radar systems, ground-based air defence, counter-drone systems and F35 jets.

He added that wildcat helicopters with anti-drone capabilities would be in Cyprus this week, with a Royal Navy warship, HMS Dragon, also deployed to the region.

However, Badenoch accused the PM of "catching arrows rather than stopping the archer" in his approach.

"I would say to Labour MPs, we are in this war whether they like it or not. What is the prime minister waiting for?" she added.

She pointed out HMS Dragon was still in Portsmouth and the government "should be doing more".

The Conservative leader also criticised the government for not investing more in defence.

In response, Sir Keir accused the Conservatives of cutting the defence budget, missing Army recruitment targets and leaving forces "hollowed out" when they were in government.

Earlier, former Conservative Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said he thought the prime minister had "made a big misjudgement" by not allowing the US to use British military bases for offensive strikes on Iran.

He told BBC Radio 4's Today programme that international law was "not settled on this issue" and depended on whether there was an imminent risk of attack from Iran.

Hunt said the Americans had a significant role in defending Europe and in this situation, "to weaken our alliance with the United States was a big mistake".

West African states to create new force to fight jihadists in region

The 12 countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have reportedly decided to create a new force to fight jihadists operating in the region.

Sources told the AFP news agency that military chiefs made the decision during a meeting in Freetown over the weekend.

Discussions focused on the rising terrorist threat, the expansion of transnational organised crime, and the persistent challenges related to maritime insecurity.

The initial goal is to have around 2,000 troops ready to fight "terrorism and insecurity" across West Africa.

Sources said they will remain stationed in their own countries, with Sierra Leone

serving as a logistical base for the group.

Officials are reportedly still thrashing out the details of how to finance the force and ECOWAS has not yet issued an official statement.

The Sahel, which cuts across Africa between the Sahara and sub-Saharan Africa, has long been plagued by jihadist insurgencies led by groups linked to Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State.

They have been particularly active in three former French colonies -- Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger -- that quit the ECOWAS in recent years following military coups.

The three countries have formed their own alliance, but a West African chief of staff says they will be encouraged to cooperate with the new force.



NUCLEAR NAVAL BASE:

Sailors await the arrival of French President Emmanuel Macron, Île Longue nuclear naval base, Brittany, France, 2 March 2026

France to deploy aircraft carrier to Mediterranean to protect shipping

French President Emmanuel Macron said on Tuesday that he is sending the country's flagship aircraft carrier to the Mediterranean in response to the widening conflict in the Middle East.

"I have ordered the Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier, its air assets, and its escort of frigates to set course for the Mediterranean," he said in a televised address to the nation.

As energy prices soar following the United States and Israel's war on Iran, he said it will help secure maritime routes and ensure Europe's economic interests in the region.

He said the action needed to be taken as the Strait of Hor-

muz has been closed and the Suez Canal and Red Sea shipping routes are threatened by the widening conflict.

"We have taken the initiative to build a coalition in order to pool the necessary resources, including military ones, so that traffic can be restored and secured in these sea lanes that are essential to the global economy," he added.

Macron said he was also sending a frigate and air defence assets to Cyprus, a day after Iranian-made drones hit the British Royal Air Force base of Akrotiri on the island.

He said French forces had also shot down drones to defend the airspace of its Gulf allies.

The French president said

that while Iran "bears primary responsibility" for the US-Israeli action, he added that it would be desirable to end the strikes as quickly as possible.

"The United States of America and Israel have decided to launch military operations, conducted outside international law, which we cannot approve of," he said.

Iran has responded by targeting Gulf states, Israel, and US facilities across the Middle East, as well as threatening shipping in the area.

Macron also noted that France has defence agreements binding it to Qatar, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates, which are facing retaliatory at-

tacks by Tehran.

Earlier, Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said France had deployed Rafale fighter jets over the UAE to protect its naval and air bases.

As well as its 700 troops serving with the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), France has 900 military personnel at air, naval and land bases in the UAE, along with Rafales, Leclerc tanks and Caesar artillery. Its Rafale aircraft are stationed at Al-Dhafra base near Abu Dhabi.

In his speech, Macron said two French bases had sustained "limited strikes causing material damage" since the start of the conflict.

South Africa's long-serving former defence minister and former Robben Island prisoner dies

South Africa's former defence minister and anti-apartheid campaigner Mosiuoa Lekota has died at the age of 77.

He played a key role in the struggle against the racist system of apartheid and was imprisoned on Robben Island alongside former President Nelson Mandela.

Lekota went on to become chairperson of the African National Congress (ANC) but broke away to form a rival party, the Congress of the People (Cope), citing allegations of corruption in the party which has led South Africa since 1994.

He died after a "period of illness", Cope said in a statement.

President Cyril Ramaphosa paid tribute to the "freedom fighter and a servant of the people".

"His life was one of resilience, courage, and steadfast belief in justice," Ramaphosa said in a statement.

Lekota was one of South Africa's longest-serving ministers, heading the defence ministry for a decade between 1998-2008.

He also served as the chairperson of the ANC for a decade and was the first premier of the newly-established Free State province after 1994, when South Africa entered the democratic era.

Lekota, nicknamed "Terror" due to his prowess on the football field, left the ANC in 2008 shortly after former South African President Thabo Mbeki was removed by the party.

Among his reasons for leaving was disillusionment with how the ANC was governing and mounting allegations of corruption against some of its senior leaders.

He founded Cope in 2008 alongside another former ANC leader Mbhazima Shilowa, who also left after Mbeki's exit. Both were staunch allies of the

former president.

The party did well in the general elections held a year later, gaining 30 seats in parliament, but its electoral fortunes declined over the years mainly due to a leadership battle between Lekota and Shilowa. By the 2024 elections, Cope failed to secure enough votes to have any seats in parliament.

Last August, Lekota stepped back from public office because of his health. At the time, his party confirmed that he was receiving treatment for an undisclosed illness.

Lekota spent most of his life in politics, first as an anti-apartheid activist and then a leading figure in the ANC and Cope.

He was first imprisoned in 1974 under the then Terrorism Act and spent several years on Robben Island, where Mandela and other senior ANC leaders were also being held.

He was again arrested a few years after his release in 1982

for his role in the United Democratic Front (UDF), of which he was one of the leaders.

The UDF was a prominent umbrella organisation made up of hundreds of groups fighting racial segregation.

He was again charged with treason in what was known as the Delmas Treason Trial, according to South African History Online. After a lengthy trial, he was among 11 people convicted but the sentences were later overturned by South Africa's Supreme Court of Appeal.

Trevor Manuel, a friend and former UDF leader, hailed Lekota as an "amazing human being", who was deeply committed to South Africa.

Speaking on local radio station 702, Manual reflected on Lekota's role in fighting apartheid.

"His commitment was deep, and I think it's that and the entire personality that kept a number of us close to him," he said.

Feature

Ambiguity as a political weapon for winning election: Tinubu's strategic approach to win 2027 election

CHARLES EDET ESQ

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is currently enjoying massive endorsements for reelection from almost all the governors in Nigeria. Evidence abounds that opposition deterrence is weak, as his reelection chances and credibility continue to soar. Meanwhile, his foot soldiers in various geopolitical zones are campaigning silently, engaging in power negotiations that have been ongoing for two years. The manifestation of these efforts is strongly emerging into reality, making it clear that it is again his turn to complete an eight-year term.

No prophetic blabbing, scientific approach, or signal flare in the fog of counter-political strategy, nor any campaign brinkmanship, will truncate President Tinubu's path to winning the 2027 election. National Detective Magazine's investigations across the six geopolitical zones reveal a paucity of opposition strength and a lack of confidence to challenge Tinubu's maximum deployment of incumbency power. His financial muscle and nervous political system are no doubt central to his strategy and strength. His mapped-out targets, particularly the



PRESIDENT BOLA TINUBU

state governors, have yielded to his advancements. Tinubu's political plurality has gone a long way to degrade and demobilize the potency of the opposition, leaving them with little choice but to succumb to the feasible reality that the 2027 presidential election is already done and

dusted in his favor.

It is glaring that the opposition, defeated for the past ten years, suffers from pitiful inertia as they watch Tinubu's machinery erase them from any formidable contest. There is no real opposition voice, no political engagement, and no confidence-build-

ing action to boost supporters' forlorn hope. The opposition is all bark and no bite, with no strategic policy action that will ignite sleeplessness in the ruling party. While they slumber, President Tinubu is using political algorithms and well-packaged, irresistible campaign gifts to win the hearts of electorates, calming their pulses with full implementation of the "Renewed Hope Agenda." Who will say no to such charismatic persuasion?

Some of his catchment victories lie in silence; most are victories of endorsement that no one announces but will spring surprises on election day. His political instinct has turned electromagnetic, his heart pulsating as his thoughts and eyes circumvent the political horizon to embrace and win the support of the electorates. This simply unveils the fact that, for the sake of electoral process, the election will be symbolic as of necessity, but Tinubu, by all political calculus, will win the election. This is my investigative outcome, encapsulated in my featured analysis. Don't argue this, it's the truth.

Tinubu's political diplomacy is his ace-card, enhancing his visible grip on confidence-building initiatives, outreach efforts, and dialogue among stakeholders and all segments of society. He encourages all parties to pursue

unity and peace, and to accept his second-term agenda in the interest of our collective prosperity, based on a reinforced, renewed Hope Agenda. "Tinubu's Government of Nigeria stands determined to solidify the hope of the masses based on mutual solidarity for his reelection in 2027. He never seems to stop encouraging Nigerians to remain patriotic, dedicated, and steadfast in their conviction that sustainable governance can only be secured through mutual trust, cooperation, and faithful adherence to the Nigerian Constitution and rule of law."

Certainly, I submit that, President Tinubu's strategic ambiguity, masterful political maneuvering, and relentless grassroots engagement have positioned him as the clear frontrunner for 2027. The opposition's weakness, combined with Tinubu's calculated approach, makes his victory not just likely, but almost inevitable. Nigerians, and especially the political class, must recognize and accept this reality, and rally behind a leader whose vision and capacity have already begun to transform the nation.

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STABILISING THE NAIRA, SECURING THE PEOPLE

An open call to the CBN Governor

BISHOP GENERAL IWU COSMOS

Your Excellency, the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, the true measure of economic policy is not found in technical reports alone but in the everyday realities of Nigerians. It is reflected in the price of food in the market, transport fares on our roads, the survival of small businesses, and the hope families nurture for tomorrow. For this reason, the recent efforts of the Central Bank to strengthen the nation's financial ecosystem deserve recognition and sustained public support.

Nigeria's financial system has faced immense strain in recent years. Ordinary citizens have borne the brunt of a volatile naira, rising prices, shrinking purchasing power, and deepening uncertainty across households and enterprises. When the financial system falters, it is not theory that suffers first; it is the people. In this context, decisive leadership from the apex bank is not only desirable but essential.

Your current reform direction signals an awareness of this responsibility. Measures aimed at improving transparency in the foreign exchange market, tightening regulatory oversight, and addressing speculative practices reflect a renewed commitment to restoring confidence. For Nigerians, confidence is the oxygen of economic activity. When people trust the system, they save, invest and plan ahead.

When trust erodes, fear takes hold and progress slows.

Particularly significant is the renewed focus on stabilising the naira. A stable currency is not merely a monetary benchmark; it is a social necessity. It influences the cost of food, medicine, school fees, rent and other essentials. Every effort by the Central Bank to reduce distortions and promote fairness in the forex market speaks directly to the concerns of millions struggling to cope with economic uncertainty.

Your Excellency, financial reform must always carry a human face. A strong financial ecosystem should serve market women, artisans, farmers, transport operators and young entrepreneurs—not only large cor-

porations and elite interests. Policies that expand access to affordable credit, strengthen microfinance institutions and deepen digital financial inclusion can unlock the vast potential of Nigeria's informal sector, which remains the backbone of the economy.

When small businesses are supported, communities prosper. When credit flows responsibly to productive sectors, jobs are created and social pressures ease. This is why many Nigerians are watching closely, hopeful that reforms at the top will translate into tangible opportunities at the grassroots.

The banking sector also requires firm but fair supervision. Citizens want assurance that their savings are secure and that banks operate as partners in national development, not as sources of anxiety. Effective regulation promotes discipline, reduces systemic risk and rebuilds trust between financial institutions and the public—trust that is vital for long-term economic stability.

History reminds us that meaningful reform is rarely easy. Monetary leadership in a complex economy such as Nigeria's demands courage, clarity and consistency. Difficult decisions taken today can shield the nation from greater hardship tomorrow. At moments like this, institutions shape their legacy through the boldness and wisdom of their actions.

Nonetheless, financial reform cannot succeed in isolation. Sustainable progress requires close coordination with



CBN GOVERNOR OLUYEMI CARDOSO

fiscal authorities, discipline in public expenditure and a collective commitment to productive economic activity. By laying a solid monetary foundation, the Central Bank under your leadership is helping to create the platform upon which broader reforms can stand.

Nigerians are not seeking miracles. They are asking for clarity, consistency and compassion in economic governance. They want policies that curb inflation, make credit more accessible, support businesses and restore hope. Clear communication from the Central Bank, alongside steady implementation of reforms, will reassure the

public that present sacrifices are paving the way for future stability.

In conclusion, Your Excellency, the ongoing efforts by the Central Bank to strengthen Nigeria's financial ecosystem represent a timely and people-centred intervention. If sustained with transparency, inclusiveness and institutional independence, these reforms can stabilise the naira, rebuild confidence and secure a more predictable future for all. A stable financial system is not merely an economic objective; it is a social promise—and Nigerians are counting on your leadership to uphold it.

They want policies that curb inflation, make credit more accessible, support businesses and restore hope

Sports

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

2nd Niger Delta Games title: Enabulele Rewards Coaches, others, urges mutual cooperation

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

In appreciation for the impressive performance and overall victory of Team Edo at the just concluded second Niger Delta Games in Benin, the Executive Chairman, Edo State Sports Commission Hon Amadin Desmond Enabulele has redeemed his pledge to reward coaches with outstanding performances at the games.

The Edo Sports Commission boss with his board members and management who are still basking in the euphoria of the second Niger Delta Games title win and for breaking 24 years jinx of major tournament title drought met with the 16 coaches that led team Edo to victory at the games and appreciated their hard work and with a surprise package worth millions of Naira as reward for them.

Enabulele told the Coaches that he invited them to be appreciated and to evaluate the

work they have done, and as well to begin strategic planning on how to improve.

He, again congratulated them and hailed the resilience, discipline and unity of Team Edo which led to the state being crowned overall champions of the second edition of the Niger Delta Games, tagged 'Edo 2026,' ending a 24-year wait for a major multi-sport tournament title.

At the meeting for a comprehensive review and evaluation team Edo's outing with the 17 coaches who represented Edo State at the just concluded 2nd edition of the Niger Delta Games, the chairman also challenged the coaches to produce new athletes that have never featured in any major tournament before the National Sports Festival in Enugu.

"I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to every one of our coaches for the dedication, teamwork, discipline, and selflessness demonstrated across

all sporting discipline.

"Our overall victory at the games were a reflection of Your technical expertise and commitment to duty with a sense of purpose. Let me single out Weightlifting head coach Ikponmwsa Omoroghomonwan for praise. The spontaneous cooperation and mutual understanding we have been preaching were seen in the camp of weightlifting and are clearly reflected in our performances and impressive medal haul.

"I particularly want to acknowledge our remarkable achievements in Weightlifting, Aquatics, Scrabble, Para Powerlifting, and Wrestling.

These successes did not happen by chance; they are the result of structured planning, professional coaching, and the resilience of our athletes.

This victory belongs to every coach who worked tirelessly behind the scenes, refining techniques, boosting morales, and instilling the winning men-

talities that defined Team Edo throughout the competition.

"However, while we celebrate, we must not relax. I emphasized during our session that preparation for upcoming tournaments must begin immediately. Like the Oliver Twist, we are asking for more. We are no longer going to be treated as underdogs in any regional and national championship after now. So we must work harder to sustain the tempo and produce new Talents in our next national outing.

At the second Niger Delta Games, 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 the keenly contested week-long regional sports fiesta which ended on Thursday, February 26, 2026 at the Samuel Ogbemudia stadium in Benin.



WOLVERHAMPTON TEAM CELEBRATE AFTER WINNING LIVERPOOL

Bottom side Wolves stun Liverpool with 2-1 win

Mohamed Salah ended his 10-game Premier League goal drought but Liverpool slipped to a 2-1 loss to bottom side Wolverhampton Wanderers.

The game played at Molineux on Tuesday proved a blow to the premiership defending champions' Champions League qualification hopes.

Liverpool have 48 points from 29 games and are fifth in the table, while Wolves' recent improvement has seen them move to 16 points from 30 matches.

Victory for Chelsea at Aston Villa on Wednesday will see champions Liverpool drop to sixth in the table following a

ninth defeat of the campaign.

They have not lost 10 league games in a season for a decade.

There is no doubt Wolves have improved under manager Rob Edwards and they scored late goals through Rodrigo Gomes and Andre either side of a strike by Salah as a dull game came to life in the final 15 minutes.

Edwards has brought out some fight in Wolves as they recorded back-to-back wins over top-five teams following their weekend win over Villa, but Liverpool put in another meek display.

The teams will meet at the same venue on Friday for their FA Cup fifth-round tie.

Champ Project: MTN introduces more cash rewards for outstanding schools

Telecommunications giant, MTN Nigeria, has introduced cash rewards for outstanding schools in its flagship youth athletics competition, MTN Champs, as it returns to Calabar for the second time.

MTN Chief Marketing Officer, Onyinye Emeka, disclosed this on Wednesday in Calabar during a press conference to herald the MTN Champs Season Four.

Onyinye said Calabar's rich sporting culture made it a natural host city for the championship, while noting that over 22,000 young athletes from more than 1,300 schools had participated in the past three seasons.

According to her, 30 Most Valuable Players are currently enrolled in the MTN Champs Academy, receiving world-class training and mentorship.

She said the academy athletes won 14 national medals within the last one year and represented Nigeria in the men's 4x400m relay.

"The athletes also clinched medals at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Saudi Arabia, African School Games in Algeria and CAA events in Ghana.

"For the first time, MTN would reward the top four schools with cash prizes; first place would receive N2 million, second N1.5 million, third N1 million and fourth N500,000.

"We are also introducing attendance rewards for schools with strong fan support; the

best-supported school would receive N5 million, second; N3 million, third school; N2 million, fourth N1.5 million and the fifth school will receive N1 million," she said.

She asserted that Schools that placed sixth to tenth would get N500,000 each to boost sports development programmes.

Some beneficiaries of MTN Champs project, during the press conference in Calabar



CHAMP PROJECT TEAM

Commonwealth Games: 128 boxers jostle for 10 slots at national trials

The Brai Ayonote Boxing Complex has come alive with intense action as no fewer than 128 boxers battle for places at the National Trials.

The athletes comprise 101 men and 27 women, including four diaspora boxers, all competing for 10 coveted spots on Team Nigeria's boxing squad

to the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland.

Secretary-General of the Nigeria Boxing Federation (NBF), Vivian Azimene, said the trials initially had provision for three male and three female boxers.

She, however, said the number was increased to five male and five female boxers following

a visit by the Director-General of the National Sports Commission, Bukonla Olopade.

"We were initially going with three women and three men, but after the visit of the Director-General of the National Sports Commission, we were assured of five female and five male slots.

"In total, 10 athletes will represent Nigeria in boxing across six weight categories," she said.

Azimene commended the boxers for their determination and noted that the inclusion of diaspora athletes had further strengthened competition.

"That is why we are conducting the trials; to give every boxer an equal opportunity to be part of the team. We will ensure that those selected will make the country proud," she said.



COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Comfort at last for Everton, Leeds beaten by Sunderland

Everton shrugged off a seven-match winless run at their new Hill Dickinson Stadium with a 2-0 victory over Burnley on Tuesday boosting their chances of European qualification.

Leeds United's Premier League relegation fears, however, deepened with a 1-0 home defeat by Sunderland.

James Tarkowski's first-half header and Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall's second-half shot gave eighth-placed Everton their first home win for almost three months to put them on 43 points, two behind sixth-placed Chelsea.

Fifteenth-placed Leeds had the chance to move nine points

clear of 18th-placed West Ham United but missed out as Sunderland took the points thanks to a second-half penalty converted by Habib Diarra at a raucous Elland Road.

Leeds had seen a goal by Joe Rodon ruled out for offside shortly before Sunderland's penalty, awarded after a VAR check for a handball by Ethan Ampadu.

The win put promoted Sunderland on 40 points, 15 ahead of the relegation zone, and seemingly safe.

Bournemouth and Brentford drew 0-0 — a result that moved Bournemouth into the top half and left Brentford seventh.



EVERTON PLAYERS CELEBRATE

NSC DG, Hon. Olopade storms secondary schools to appreciate Stellar Young Nigerian Athletes

Teenagers Aidan, Tofunmi gets reward for exceptional swimming year

The Director General of the National Sports Commission, Hon. Bukola Olopade, has embarked on an appreciation tour of secondary schools, to honour Nigeria's brightest young stars.

The initiative, which began with visit to the secondary school of standout swimmers Aidan Dumuije-Abili and To-

funmi Ibidapo (Grange School, Lagos), is part of a new Commission strategy aimed at recognizing young talents early, encouraging integrity in age-grade sports, and changing the narrative around youth development in Nigeria.

The visit on Wednesday follows Team Nigeria's commanding performance at the 2025 Africa Zone 2 Swimming Championship, where the country broke multiple continental records and showcased a new

generation of elite youth athletes.

Speaking during the presentation, Hon. Olopade said the initiative reflects the leadership example of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

"We are only emulating the great leadership of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who has shown us many times that when you do well for this country, irrespective of your field, a grateful nation will always say thank you," he said.

"Last year was an amazing year for grassroots sports development. We were able to pull together young talents across different sports, and that has given us confidence that 2028 looks very promising. Even the Commonwealth Games this year is looking good because of these young talents."

14-year-old Aidan Dumuije-Abili emerged as the standout performer of the championship, setting five new Africa Zone 2 records and winning six gold medals, one silver, and one bronze. He was voted the

Most Valuable Junior Athlete of the tournament.

Tofunmi Ibidapo also delivered a remarkable performance, outperforming her peers to secure gold, silver, and bronze medals across both individual and relay events, further cementing Nigeria's dominance at the championship.

The DG said "It was high time we started saying thank you to our young budding talents. That encouragement will inspire millions of young Nigerians who are intentional about using sport as a tool for development."

"The place of grassroots must be at the very top. We are not joking with grassroots development."

In recognition of his exceptional achievement, the NSC DG presented Aidan and Tofunmi with a N2 million and N1 million cash awards respectively.

The DG will be visiting Abeokuta, Ogun State next, as more youngsters get recognized for their exceptional abilities.



NSC DG, Hon. Bukola Olopade at Secondary Schools Stellar Young Nigerian Athletes

NWBF invites 16 players to camp ahead 2026 Commonwealth Games qualifiers

The Nigeria Wheelchair Basketball Federation (NWBF) has invited 16 players to a closed camping programme ahead of the 2026 Commonwealth Games qualifiers in Angola.

Oluwaseyi Johnson, President of the federation told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that a total of eight players in the men's category and eight players in the female category will be in camp for training.

Johnson said that the camp will take place at Package 'B' of the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja, from March 8 to March 21.

The Men's category comprised Shittu Musbau, Adetayo Kehinde, Abel Oluwaseun, Akinde Tony, Bailey Oluwasegun, D Taiwo Babalola, Mohammed Murtala and Rilwan Abubakar.

While the Women's team include Olabisi Ijigbamigbe, Nofisat Adefala, Amakor Patricia, Aishat Yahaya, Christiana Olowolagba, Grace Nwaozuzu, Olaleye Titilope and Fola-shade Obagbemi.

Johnson said he is confident that Nigeria will excel at the championship.

"We are fully prepared and determined to excel at the 2026 IWBF Africa 3x3 Championship, which serves as the Commonwealth Games qualifiers.

"Our players are committed, and the technical crew is working tirelessly to ensure we put up a strong performance," Johnson said.

The president commended the National Sports Commission (NSC) for their unwavering support.

Johnson added that with continued backing and proper

planning, Nigeria Wheelchair Basketball is on course to make the nation proud on the continental stage.

"We appreciate the leadership of the National Sports Commission in creating an enabling environment for us to prepare adequately.

"With this level of support and dedication from our athletes, I am confident Nigeria will make the nation proud on the continental stage," he said.

The Commonwealth Games qualifiers will take place in Luanda, Angola, from March 22 to March 27.



THE NIGERIA WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL FEDERATION

The 2026 Commonwealth Games will be hosted in Glasgow, Scotland, from July 23 to August 2, featuring a streamlined 11-day, 10-sport programme across four major venues.

FIBA reaffirms support for Kidan-led Nigeria Basketball Federation — Constitutional Continuity to stabilize Basketball

World basketball governing body, FIBA, has once again reaffirmed its recognition of Engr. (Dr.) Musa Kida as the legitimate President of the Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF).

The decision reinforces not only leadership clarity but also the principle of constitutional continuity within Nigerian basketball administration.

The position was clearly stat-

ed in an official correspondence addressed to the Nigeria Olympic Committee (NOC), following inquiries regarding the recognized representative of the NBBF eligible to participate in official engagements and decision-making processes.

In the letter signed by FIBA Secretary General Andreas Zaglis, the global body emphasized that it has consistently

communicated and worked with the board led by Musa Kida since July 2017. FIBA further noted that several of its events were organized in collaboration with the same board, a clear endorsement of its administrative legitimacy and operational authority.

Beyond mere recognition, this development highlights the importance of constitutional continuity in stabilizing Nigerian basketball. By maintaining strict alignment with established statutes and internationally accepted governance frameworks, the Kida-led board ensures institutional stability, protects Nigeria's standing within FIBA, and safeguards players and stakeholders from avoidable administrative disputes.

FIBA also clarified that the NBBF remains a member in good standing, enjoying full rights and privileges



NIGERIA BASKETBALL



NBBF crisis stalls annual referees' clinic, says Popoola

Tunde Popoola, President, Nigeria Basketball Referees Council, has said that the lingering crisis in the Nigeria Basketball Federation (NBBF) has stalled the annual clinic for referees in the country.

Popoola told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in an interview on Thursday that referees were expected to undergo annual training to keep abreast of developments in officiating.

"To ensure that referees are up to date with the latest officiating techniques, we are expected to have annual clinics for training and retraining, in line with recent rule changes.

"We are supposed to hold national clinics every year, but we have not organised any for some time now.

"We rely mainly on competitions and regional clinics to update our officials.

"Where possible, we also review rules during competitions," he said.

He added that Nigeria currently has six active certified referees under the FIBA.

"The six comprise five males and one female. From my assessment of their technical abilities, their performance is clearly above average."

Popoola said that common errors observed during games were being consistently addressed.

"I have observed that some referees struggle with game management, including game flow, understanding the feel of the game and controlling the team bench.

"Engaging game assessors during competitions should help to minimise issues related to game management and other challenges in our matches," he said.

FIFA dash Super Eagles World Cup hopes after confirming DR Congo for playoffs

World football governing FIFA have effectively dashed the Super Eagles hopes of playing in the 2026 World Cup after they confirmed DR Congo will feature in a final Playoffs in Mexico later this month.

FIFA are yet to announce a verdict on Nigeria's petition against DRC for fielding several ineligible players in a final CAF World Cup Playoffs in November in Morocco.

DRC will now wait for the winners of the match between Jamaica and New Caledonia to battle for a place at the Mundial.

Observers said FIFA silence on Nigeria's protest may well be that there is no substance in their petition.

The Super Eagles are scheduled to feature in an invitational tournament in Jordan during the time of the Playoffs in Mexico.



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EFFECTIVE FROM FEBRUARY 1, 2023

FEATURE

Building flood-resilient Edo: How EdoFEWMA and Okpebholo administration are strengthening urban safety

BY FOLAKE ADEBUDO

Each rainy season in Benin Metropolis unfolds with a now familiar intensity. Torrential downpours overwhelm drainage channels, roads become difficult or impossible to navigate, commercial activities slow, and households watch anxiously as water levels rise. What should be a season of renewal too often becomes a period of disruption and concern.

For years, flooding has remained one of the most persistent environmental threats in Edo State, mirroring a global pattern of climate-related urban vulnerability. Today, however, the response in Edo is undergoing a strategic shift under the leadership of Governor Senator Monday Okpebholo. The focus is gradually moving away from reactive emergency measures towards a preventive framework anchored on data, infrastructure renewal, and sustained community engagement.

At the centre of this evolving strategy is the Edo State Flood, Erosion and Watershed Management Agency (EdoFEWMA).

The agency's recent assessment of flood resilience measures across Benin Metropolis provides both a sobering reminder of the challenges and evidence of meaningful progress.

Flooding in Edo is driven by a mix of natural and human factors. Increased rainfall intensity associated with climate change, low-lying terrain, and ageing drainage infrastructure create inherent vulnerabilities. These conditions are compounded by indiscriminate waste disposal and construction on flood-prone land, which obstruct water channels and disrupt natural flow paths. The result has been recurring urban flooding that threatens lives, livelihoods, and public infrastructure.

Recognising that effective intervention must be informed by credible data, EdoFEWMA conducted a structured assessment across Oredo, Egor, and Ikpoba Okha Local Government Areas. Residents, business owners, and community leaders were engaged to provide firsthand insight into the impact of flooding and the effectiveness of existing mitigation measures. The findings are now serving as a practical planning tool for targeted government action.

One notable outcome of the assessment is the demonstrated effectiveness of structural flood control measures at the household and business levels. Residents who installed flood barriers, elevated equipment, or raised building foundations reported significantly reduced damage during heavy rainfall events. While often implemented independently, these measures align with EdoFEW-

MA's broader approach of combining large-scale infrastructure investment with localised resilience strategies.

On the government front, drainage rehabilitation and de-silting exercises have been intensified across flood-prone corridors in Benin Metropolis. Strategic interventions, including underground drainage systems along major roads, have improved storm-water flow and reduced surface flood-

ing during periods of heavy rainfall.

These projects reflect a deliberate policy direction: preventing floods is more sustainable and cost-effective than managing the aftermath of disasters.

Beyond infrastructure, the agency has placed strong emphasis on public awareness and behavioural change. Improper waste disposal emerged from the assessment as a leading

human-induced cause of flooding, underscoring the link between sanitation practices and environmental safety.

In response, EdoFEWMA has strengthened collaboration with relevant sanitation authorities to tackle drainage blockage through joint sensitization campaigns and grassroots engagement.

This integrated strategy reflects the

Okpebholo administration's understanding that flood management is not merely an engineering challenge but also a governance and civic responsibility issue. Sustainable results depend on an informed and cooperative public working alongside responsive institutions.

The assessment also highlighted ongoing constraints. Financial limitations prevent some households and businesses from adopting protective measures. Limited technical knowledge and low levels of public awareness weaken preparedness, while insufficient community participation can dilute the impact of interventions. Rather than overlooking these gaps, EdoFEWMA has incorporated them into its evolving strategy.

The agency is expanding technical guidance, capacity-building initiatives, and participatory programmes designed to equip residents with practical and affordable steps to reduce flood risks. By promoting realistic, community-based resilience, EdoFEWMA is helping to embed flood preparedness into everyday urban life.

Importantly, respondents identified improved drainage systems and effective waste management as the most critical strategies for mitigating flooding in Benin Metropolis. These priorities align closely with ongoing government efforts, reinforcing public confidence that lived experiences are informing policy direction.

Under Senator Okpebholo's leadership, environmental resilience is emerging as a core pillar of urban governance. Flood control initiatives are increasingly coordinated, data-driven, and linked to broader goals of public safety, economic stability, and sustainable development. EdoFEWMA's model demonstrates how research-backed policy, supported by political will and institutional commitment, can translate into tangible results.

Flooding affects more than roads and buildings; it disrupts livelihoods, weakens local economies, and places vulnerable populations at risk. Through strengthened drainage infrastructure, responsible environmental advocacy, and encouragement of household-level preparedness, EdoFEWMA is working to safeguard lives and property across Benin Metropolis.

As climate pressures intensify, the imperative to build flood-resilient cities will only grow stronger. In Edo State, the synergy between informed policy, active institutions, and engaged communities offers a promising path forward. The journey towards full resilience continues, but the trajectory is clear: a safer, cleaner, and more sustainable Edo driven by purposeful governance and practical action.



GOVERNOR SENATOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLO INSPECTING ONE OF THE CONSTRUCTED ROAD