

# Okpebholo vows to turn Ramat Park into Benin City tourist hub

● **joins Benin electricity protest**

## BENIN CITY

Governor Monday Okpebholo on Monday unveiled plans to transform Ramat Park into a major tourist attraction, during an inspection of ongoing infrastructure projects in Edo South Senatorial District.

The governor toured the Ikpoba Hill flyover, ongoing erosion control works at Ramat Park, and the Sapele Road, linking Okhatu, Etiosa, Iyanomo, and Obaretin communities.

He said the Ramat Park redevelopment would go beyond easing traffic to reposition the

area as a centre for leisure, tourism, and recreation.

Speaking to journalists at the site, Okpebholo said the park would be redesigned to meet modern urban standards and provide a relaxation hub for residents and visitors.

“By the time we are done with this place, it will look like Dubai,” he said, stressing the administration’s commitment

to creating a landmark tourist destination.

He added, “We are not stopping at the flyover. We are building a park here to make this place useful. A lot of activities will take place here, and we are proposing structures to turn it into a tourist attraction. Edo should be known for tourism, not cultism or crises.”

The initiative aims to re-

fine Edo State’s image while promoting positive engagement, commerce, and recreation within Benin City. Mr. Lee, representing contractors CCECC, assured the project is on schedule and expected to be completed by May.

At the Sapele Road project, the governor described the reconstruction as a demonstration of the Federal Govern-

ment’s Renewed Hope Agenda, acknowledging support from President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

“Before now, this road was almost impassable. This progress is thanks to Mr President and the cooperation of Edo people,” he said.

Okpebholo reiterated that road infrastructure remains a priority, but the transformation of Ramat Park will be a signa-

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# The Nigerian Observer



...that the people may know

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**Senate backs down on sack call as CAC Registrar apologises**

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# Inflation risk looms in Nigeria amid US–Iran tensions —SEREC

## ABUJA

The Sea and Empowerment Research Centre (SEREC) has warned that inflation in Nigeria could rise by three to five percent amid ongoing tensions between the United States and Iran.

SEREC’s Head of Research, Eugene Nweke, disclosed this in a statement on Monday in Abuja, noting that the situation poses significant geopolitical and economic risks to global energy markets and maritime

trade.

Nigeria’s headline inflation eased slightly to 15.10 percent in January, down from 15.15 percent in December 2025, according to the National Bureau of Statistics’ Consumer Price Index report.

Nweke highlighted concerns over the vulnerability of the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial waterway between Iran and Oman through which roughly one-fifth of global crude oil supply transits daily.

He noted that any prolonged

disruption could trigger sustained oil price volatility, rising freight rates, surging war-risk insurance premiums, and global inflationary pressures.

“Iran’s Foreign Minister Seyed Araghchi has warned that U.S. and Israeli attacks on Iran, including any attempts on Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, could have deep and widespread consequences,” Nweke said.

According to SEREC modelling, oil prices could range between \$110 and \$140 per barrel under sustained tensions.

Global freight rates may rise 15 to 40 percent due to rerouting and risk premiums, while marine war-risk insurance could surge 200 to 400 percent in high-risk corridors.

Emerging economies may face renewed inflation and currency depreciation risks.

He added that while Nigeria could see short-term fiscal gains from elevated crude prices, these could be offset by inflation driven by logistics and imported input costs. Exchange rate volatility could in-

tensify, and food and transport prices may rise, underscoring the need for prudent fiscal management.

“At \$120 per barrel, Nigeria could earn an additional \$18 to \$22 billion in oil revenue annually, with GDP growth potentially increasing by 1 to 1.2 percent in the short term,” Nweke said.

The SEREC official noted that Nigeria’s refining capacity could

offer a competitive advantage if integrated with regional supply networks and supported by frameworks such as ECOWAS cooperation mechanisms.

He urged that oil windfall gains be channelled into stabilisation and infrastructure investment rather than recurrent expenditure, and that crude allocation to domestic refineries remain steady to maintain supply stability.

“SEREC advises strengthening maritime security co-

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## NEWS CONFERENCE:

Vice Chancellor, European University of Nigeria (EUN) Abuja, Prof. Emmanuel Ibezim (L) with Director, Innovation, Consultancy and Collaboration, EUN, Dr Mezie Okolo, during a news conference on the school progress report and the forthcoming matriculation of the University, in Abuja on Monday.

## Lassa fever: 45 Infected, 10 health workers killed in Benue as expert demands national emergency

### ABUJA

A total of 45 confirmed cases of Lassa fever have been recorded in Benue State, with 10 frontline health workers among the dead, as renowned Nigerian virologist, Prof. Oyewale Tomori, called for urgent and decisive national action to curb the deadly outbreak.

The fatalities in Benue include five doctors, three nurses and two support staff, underscoring what experts describe as deep-rooted weaknesses in infection prevention and control systems within health facilities.

Speaking to journalists in Lagos on Monday, Tomori urged both federal and state authorities to treat Lassa fever

as a national emergency, warning that repeated outbreaks and the rising death toll reflect systemic failure rather than lack of technical capacity.

According to him, no fewer than 10 health workers have died from the disease in Benue alone, exposing frontline personnel to grave risks in what he described as “deplorable healthcare conditions”.

“Nigeria will do nothing serious, positive and sustainable to control Lassa fever until the disease directly touches the political leadership,” he said.

“Let there be a case in Aso Rock, in the legislative assemblies, in the respected judicial chambers or in one of the 36 state

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**NEPL/Seplat JV graduates 623 Delta, Edo teachers under 2026 STEP**

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**FG approves N4bn each for 12 varsities to revamp engineering faculties**

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**Deadly Texas bar shooting 'potentially act of terrorism', FBI says**

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**Athletics: Athletes set new records as AFN Golden league Ignites fireworks in Benin**

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# Senate backs down on sack call as CAC Registrar apologises

## ABUJA

The Senate on Monday rescinded its earlier resolution urging President Bola Tinubu to remove the Registrar-General of the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), Hussaini Magaji, from

office, following his personal appearance and apology before lawmakers.

The decision was taken during the budget defence session of the Senate Committee on Finance in Abuja after Magaji offered what lawmakers described as a remorseful and

unreserved apology for failing to honour previous invitations.

The committee had earlier expressed strong displeasure over what it termed the registrar-general's repeated failure to personally attend its sittings and respond promptly to official correspondence.

At a previous session, the panel had resolved to recommend to the Senate in plenary that the President be formally requested to remove him from office.

Chairman of the committee, Senator Sani Musa, said lawmakers observed a pattern of reluctance on the part of

the CAC boss in responding to invitations, noting that he frequently delegated senior officials to represent him.

Musa stressed that the committee has a constitutional mandate to exercise oversight over all revenue-generating agencies of government, including government-owned enterprises, ministries, departments and agencies.

He added that shortly after the committee's pronouncement recommending his removal, Magaji appeared before the panel within a short period, a development that initially raised further concerns.

In his response, Magaji apologized unreservedly, attributing the incident to a communication gap between staff of the commission and the National Assembly liaison unit.

He explained that he was in Lagos when the letter of invitation was received but immediately cut short his engagements and directed his staff to notify the committee that he was on his way, though he arrived late.

To forestall a recurrence, the registrar-general said a dedicated liaison office had been estab-

lished to handle all matters relating to the National Assembly.

He assured lawmakers that such a lapse would not happen again, reiterating his respect for the committee and accepting full responsibility.

Several senators spoke in his defence during deliberations.

Senator Dicket Plang described the situation as unfortunate and said the registrar-general appeared genuinely remorseful and deserving of a second chance.

Senator Yahaya Abdullahi urged forgiveness but cautioned that ignoring legislative summons must never become a norm.

Senator Ned Nwoko also vouched for Magaji's disciplined disposition in public and private life, appealing to the committee to temper justice with compassion.

The motion to rescind the earlier call for his removal was moved by Senator Isa Jibrin and seconded by Senator Sani Daura, and was subsequently adopted.

Magaji was thereafter directed to reappear before the committee at a later date to defend the CAC's 2024 and 2025 budget performance as well as its 2026 budget proposal.



## ODUNAIYA'S COURTESY VISIT:

Executive Secretary, Pension Transitional Arrangement Directorate (PTAD), Tolulope Odunaiya (L), presenting souvenir to Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos, during the Executive Secretary's courtesy visit to the Governor in Lagos on Monday.

## Edo govt orders Political appointees to resign before elections

### BENIN CITY

The Edo State Government has directed all public servants, political appointees, and government functionaries seeking elective positions in the upcoming polls to resign by 1 March 2026, prior to participating in any party primaries or elector-

al process.

The directive, according to a statement by Secretary to the State Government, Umar Musa Ikhilor, Esq aligns with the Electoral Act (Amendment) 2026 and aims to ensure fairness, prevent disqualification, and maintain the neutrality of public institutions.

"The government empha-

sizes that this requirement is intended to promote fairness, transparency, and a level playing field for all aspirants, while also safeguarding the integrity and neutrality of public institutions.

"Public office holders are reminded that the responsibilities of governance must not be compromised by partisan po-

litical engagements.

"The Senator Monday Okpebholo-led Administration remains firmly committed to upholding constitutionalism, respecting the rule of law, and ensuring that due process is strictly observed in all matters of governance and political participation," the statement added.

## FG expands emergency medical services, pushes for full 112 access nationwide

### ABUJA

The Federal Government has intensified efforts to strengthen emergency medical care across the country through the National Emergency Medical Service and Ambulance System (NEMSAS), while calling for improved access and awareness of the 112 national emergency number.

The National Programme Manager of NEMSAS, Dr Emuren Doubra, disclosed this in a statement on Monday in

Abuja while responding to a recent academic review of Nigeria's emergency care system.

The review, titled "Progress in Emergency Medicine in Nigeria: Where We Are in 2025," was published in the African Journal of Emergency Medicine. It acknowledged notable advances in emergency medicine but stressed the need for stronger collaboration between out-of-hospital and in-hospital services, as well as expanded training across all professional cadres.

According to Doubra, the

commencement of residency training in Emergency Medicine marks a major milestone that will produce specialists capable of deepening integration and improving standards of care nationwide.

While the journal noted moderate gains in pre-hospital and emergency nursing training, it emphasised that more investment is required to build a resilient national emergency system. NEMSAS, Doubra explained, coordinates Emergency Medical Services nationwide and provides free emergency care to poor and vulnerable Nigerians.

He said the publication offered "a good introduction to what NEMSAS represents within the EMS ecosystem," but added that it did not fully capture federal support to states in establishing ambulance and emergency response structures.

Doubra revealed that 33 states and the Federal Capital Territory now have EMS frameworks, with 21 states fully operational and others close to take-off. He added that each state has an emergency medical treatment gateway under the Basic Healthcare Provision Fund, though some are yet to access available support.

## Okpebholo vows to turn Ramat Park into Benin City tourist...

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ture project enhancing leisure, commerce, and the aesthetic appeal of the state capital.

Meanwhile, Governor Monday Okpebholo on Monday joined youths protesting against prolonged blackouts and billing concerns by the Benin Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC), urging calm while pledging swift engagement with stakeholders.

Speaking to demonstrators at Ring Road, Okpebholo expressed solidarity and noted that electricity challenges affect all Edo residents.

"Short-changing Edo people affect everyone—our parents, siblings, and all citizens. Why should anyone frustrate Edo people?" he asked.

The governor clarified that BEDC is privately owned but promised to address the grievances.

"We aim to bring new investors into electricity distribution to break the monopoly, similar to the telecom sector. More investors will give Edo residents options and improve service," he said.

Okpebholo announced a stakeholders' meeting for Tuesday and requested the protesters to nominate five representatives.

"We need to explore how to bring in more investors so everyone can enjoy stable power. Let us remain calm and allow the en-

gagement to proceed," he urged.

The peaceful protest saw residents carrying banners condemning outages, estimated billing, and the high cost of prepaid meters. Comrade Ogbidi Emmanuel, speaking for the group, challenged BEDC to publish names of beneficiaries of the free meter scheme, citing costs between ₦150,000 and ₦400,000. Security personnel ensured order as demonstrators dispersed after the governor's address.

## Inflation risk looms in Nigeria amid...

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ordination across the Gulf of Guinea, expanding strategic petroleum and refined product reserves, and deepening regional trade integration to reduce reliance on volatile extra-African shipping routes," he said.

Nweke concluded that the U.S.-Iran confrontation represents not just a geopolitical conflict but a structural stress

test for global trade and maritime systems.

He stressed that Nigeria's resilience will depend not only on crude revenue gains but also on disciplined fiscal management, optimised domestic refining, trade diversification, and maritime competitiveness.

"The Dangote Refinery presents a strategic buffer, but its effectiveness will hinge on coherent national policy alignment," he added.

## Lassa fever: 45 infected, 10 health...

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governors' residences, and Lassa fever will become the national emergency tackled with no resource spared for its control."

Tomori stressed that while Nigeria possesses the scientific expertise to manage Lassa fever, what remains lacking is political ownership and sustained implementation of control measures.

He criticised what he described as overreliance on public advisories such as hand hygiene campaigns and avoiding physical contact, arguing that such measures are insufficient without structural reforms.

"Distributing sanitisers at hospital gates and advising people not to hug or shake hands does nothing when your hospital system has become a source of infection," he said.

He called for functional isolation wards, adequate personal protective equipment (PPE), strict adherence to infection control protocols, and routine training for health workers as long-term solutions.

Benue State Government, according to official reports, has deployed 23 health officers to contain the outbreak, even as the state grapples with mounting in-

fections and fatalities.

Nationally, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention reported a spike in cases in Epidemiological Week Six of 2026, recording 74 new confirmed infections between February 2 and February 8, up from 44 cases in Week Five.

The 74 confirmed cases were reported across Taraba, Ondo, Bauchi, Edo, Benue, Nasarawa, Kogi and Ebonyi states.

Within the same reporting week, 271 suspected cases were documented nationwide, with 15 deaths recorded. The case fatality rate for confirmed cases in Week Six stood at 20.3 per cent, according to the agency's latest situation report.

Tomori also raised concerns over inaccurate media portrayals of laboratory procedures in Lassa fever research, warning that unsafe and unethical images of animal handling could mislead the public and damage scientific credibility.

As endemic states continue to battle recurring outbreaks, he warned that Nigeria's seasonal response pattern must give way to a robust, sustained national policy framework capable of protecting both patients and the health workers who care for them.

## NEWS

**Insecurity: Expert rejects State Police, backs regional policing****PORT HARCOURT**

A police reform expert, Dr Chyma Anthony, has called for the creation of regional police structures instead of state police, warning that state-controlled forces could worsen insecurity and deepen divisions in Nigeria.

Speaking to journalists in Port Harcourt on Monday, An-

thony argued that regional policing offers a more balanced solution to Nigeria's security challenges while advancing true federalism.

His comments come amid renewed calls for state police following President Bola Tinubu's appeal to the National Assembly to fast-track constitutional amendments to the 1999 Constitution to allow states establish their own police forces.

While acknowledging the merits of decentralization, Anthony warned that creating 37 separate police formations, including one for the Federal Capital Territory, could fuel border disputes, multiple checkpoints, extortion and harassment of travellers.

He cautioned that poor-

er states might operate under-funded and poorly trained police units, while governors could deploy such forces for political vendettas, ethnic profiling and electoral manipulation.

Anthony said regional policing, structured along Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, would better reflect crime patterns and

cultural dynamics while preserving national cohesion. He cited examples from Canada, England and Wales, Germany, India and South Africa, noting that strong federal oversight remains key to accountability.

He also pointed to the achievements of the South-West security outfit,

Amotekun, as evidence of the viability of regional policing.

To safeguard professionalism, Anthony proposed replacing the Police Service Commission with a National Police Service Commission to oversee recruitment, promotion and discipline, backed by federal funding and independent oversight.

**FCTA approves ₦7.3bn waste mgt contracts****ABUJA**

The Federal Capital Territory Administration has approved ₦7.3 billion for waste collection and management services across four districts of the Federal Capital City.

The Coordinator of the Abuja Metropolitan Management Council, Chief Felix Obuah,

disclosed this while briefing journalists after the FCT Executive Committee meeting presided over by Minister Nyesom Wike.

The districts include Durumi, Wuye, Mabushi and Jabi.

The committee also approved the supply of diesel to the Wupa Basic Waste Treatment Plant for two years, alongside procurement of relief materials for flood-affected residents.

**NAFDAC secures 40yr jail term for fake alcohol dealers****LAGOS**

The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control has secured a cumulative 40-year jail sentence against two individuals convicted for peddling fake alcoholic beverages in Lagos.

The suspects, Mr Nelson Aziakpono and Mr Ikegwonu Ikechukwu, were convicted by

the Federal High Court, Ikoyi, for offences, including manufacturing and distributing unregistered and counterfeit alcoholic drinks.

NAFDAC Director-General, Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, described the judgment as a strong deterrent, reaffirming the agency's commitment to consumer safety and warning of the health risks posed by adulterated alcohol.

**Soludo reopens Nkwo Nnewi market, targets defiant traders****NNEWI**

Governor Chukwuma Soludo has ordered the reopening of the Nkwo Nnewi Motorcycle Spare Parts Market following compliance with the directive to resume business on Mondays.

The market, shut earlier over the sit-at-home order, was reopened after the Chairman of Nnewi North Local Govern-

ment Area, Mr Echezona Anazodo, confirmed widespread compliance among traders.

Officials warned that shops belonging to traders who defied the order would be sealed, stressing that collective punishment would no longer be tolerated.

The move is part of the Anambra State Government's efforts to restore economic activity and end the lingering sit-at-home culture.

**UCH shuts doors to new patients as unions begin strike over power crisis****IBADAN**

The University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan, has suspended admission of new patients following a 5-day warning strike by its workers over what they described as crippling electricity rationing within the facility.

The industrial action, which commenced at 8.00 a.m. on Monday, involves the Association of Resident Doctors (ARD), the Medical and

Health Workers Union of Nigeria (MWHUN), the National Association of Nigeria Nurses and Midwives (NANNM), and the Nigerian Union of Allied Health Professionals (NUHAP), among others.

Operating under the umbrella of the Council of UCH Union Leaders (CUUL), the unions accused hospital management of deliberately restricting power supply to

**2026 INTERNATIONAL CIVIL DEFENCE DAY:**

L-R: FRSC Deputy Commander, Oyo State Command, Bayode Olugbesan; Deputy Commissioner of Police, Oyo State, Ekanem Usen and Oyo State Commandant, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corp, Augustine Padonu, during the commemoration of the 2026 International Civil Defence Day in Ibadan on Monday.

**UBTH commissions renovated Paediatric Outpatient facility****BENIN CITY**

The University of Benin Teaching Hospital on Monday commissioned its newly renovated Paediatric Outpatient (POP) Reception and Nurses Bay to enhance service delivery for children.

The Chief Medical Director,

Prof. Idia Nibokun Ize-Iyamu, who performed the commissioning, said the renovation was funded through internally generated revenue from patient services.

She stated that the upgrade became necessary due to the need for a more welcoming and functional reception and

waiting area for paediatric patients and their caregivers.

Prof. Ize-Iyamu clarified that the project is separate from the Edo State Government's approved ₦2.5 billion legacy project for the construction of a modern paediatric centre at the hospital.

According to her, the renovated facility now provides a more child-friendly and comfortable environment designed

to reduce anxiety among young patients and their families.

The upgrade included redesigned seating arrangements, improved lighting and enhancements to the Nurses Bay to support more efficient care delivery.

The commissioning ceremony was attended by hospital staff, dignitaries and members of the community.

**NEPL/Seplat JV graduates 623 Delta, Edo teachers under 2026 STEP****BENIN CITY**

NNPC Exploration and Production Limited (NEPL)/Seplat Energy Joint Venture has graduated 623 teachers and education inspectors under the 2026 Seplat Teachers Empowerment Programme (STEP), reinforcing its multi-year investment in raising classroom standards in Edo and Delta states.

The graduation ceremony, held in Benin City at the weekend, attracted senior government officials, education administrators and development partners, who described the initiative as a strategic intervention in public education.

In her remarks, Seplat Energy's Director of External Affairs and Social Performance, Mrs Chioma Afe, urged participants to translate the training into measurable impact in their classrooms.

"Teach, inspire and transform is not a slogan, it is a responsibility," she said, charging the graduates to deploy their enhanced skills with confidence and purpose.

The Managing Director of NEPL, Mr Nicolas Foucart, represented by Mr Oluwaseyi Orimoloye, described STEP as "a partnership delivering meaningful social impact."

He said the programme equips educators with critical thinking skills, leadership capacity and technology-enabled instructional tools aimed at improving learning outcomes.

Governor Monday Okpehlo of Edo State, represented by the Commissioner for Finance, Mr Emmanuel Okoebor, said the initiative aligns with the state government's education reform priorities.

He noted that strengthening teacher quality remains central

to the administration's long-term human capital development strategy.

At the federal level, the Minister of State for Education, Suwaiba Saïd Ahmad, represented by Mrs Caroline Ikem, underscored the Federal Government's focus on improving teacher effectiveness.

She urged participants to cascade the knowledge gained, stressing that the future of the nation depends on it.

The Country Director of the British Council in Nigeria, Donna McGowan, represented by Chikodi Onyemerela, emphasised the importance of continuous professional development, particularly in digital literacy and modern pedagogy.

Delta State Commissioner for Secondary Education, Dr Kingsley Ashibogwu, and Edo State Commissioner for Education, Dr Emmanuel Paddy Iyamu, commended the joint venture

partners for sustaining the programme and encouraged beneficiaries to replicate best practices in their respective schools.

A major highlight of the ceremony was the Teacher Innovation Contest, which featured market-ready solutions developed during the training.

Stephen Egbeburu won with his Eco "Fuelless" Generator concept, while Matthew Nwokoye presented Learning Solutions and Faith Igbayo unveiled Live FaceFoods.

Launched in 2020, STEP has trained 1,957 educators to date, integrating STEAM-focused pedagogy, digital literacy, leadership development and structured mentorship.

Stakeholders agreed that the scale and continuity of the initiative position it as a significant private-sector contribution to strengthening foundational education in host communities.

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# NELFUND bows to pressure, extends student loan deadline as applications surge

ABUJA

The Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) has extended the deadline for its student loan application portal following a surge in interest nationwide.

The extension was announced in a statement issued on Monday in Abuja by the Fund's Director of Strategic Communications, Mrs Oseyemi Oluwatuyi.

She quoted the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of NELFUND, Mr Akintunde Sawyerr, as saying the decision was in line with the Fund's commitment to inclusivity and equitable access to education financing.

NELFUND had earlier announced that the portal would close on February 27, 2026.

However, Sawyerr said in-

creased awareness generated through ongoing sensitization campaigns across the country led to a sharp rise in applications and enquiries, prompting the need for additional time.

According to him, strong feedback from students and key stakeholders underscored the necessity of giving eligible applicants more time to complete the process.

He explained that the extension would accommodate students who required extra time to finalise their applications, as well as prospective beneficiaries who only recently became aware of the scheme during outreach engagements.

Sawyerr added that institutions just commencing the 2025/2026 academic session and those yet to submit verified student lists would also benefit from the extension.

He noted that sensitization efforts across the six geopo-

litical zones had significantly boosted awareness and participation in the programme, necessitating a broader application window to ensure fairness.

The managing director ad-

vised institutions that had yet to begin the 2025/2026 academic session to submit formal requests for extension, accompanied by their approved academic calendars, for consideration.

He also urged eligible students to take advantage of the extended window to complete their applications via the Fund's official portal before the final closure date.

## FG approves N4bn each for 12 varsities to revamp engineering faculties

ABUJA

The Federal Government has approved N4 billion each for 12 selected engineering and technology-focused universities to rehabilitate workshops and procure modern equipment, in a move aimed at strengthening practical training and boosting graduate employability.

The Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, announced the intervention on Monday during the inauguration of the Implementa-

tion Committee on Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) Special High-Impact Intervention Projects in Abuja.

The initiative targets the rehabilitation of engineering and technology faculties in Federal Universities of Technology and conventional universities nationwide.

Beneficiary institutions include Federal University of Technology Minna, Federal University of Technology Akure, Federal University of Technology Babura, Federal University of Technology

Ikot-Abasi, Federal University of Technology Owerri and Nigerian Army University Biu.

Others are, African Aviation and Aerospace University, Shehu Shagari University of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology and University of Ilesha.

Alausa said that the funds would be used either to upgrade existing facilities or to construct new engineering workshops where necessary. He described the project as a strategic effort to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and industry demands.

According to the minister, the intervention aligns with the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Tinubu, which places emphasis on skills development and economic diversification.

He stressed that while funding was critical, effective implementation, strict adherence to standards, transparency and accountability would deter-

mine the project's success.

"Your mandate is clear: monitor project execution, ensure compliance with approved specifications and timelines, evaluate outcomes, identify challenges and provide objective reports to guide policy decisions," he told members of the implementation committee.

"You are entrusted with safeguarding public investment and ensuring value for money. Every facility delivered under this intervention must reflect quality, sustainability and relevance to national needs."

Alausa disclosed that an additional N20 billion had been captured in the 2026 TETFund guidelines to support similar upgrades in other selected institutions.

The Executive Secretary of TETFund, Mr Sonny Echono, commended President Tinubu for approving reforms aimed at repositioning tertiary institutions and strengthening teaching and learning infrastructure.

## Tinubu orders strict PPP compliance for National Gas Command Centre

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu has directed the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) to enforce strict adherence to Public-Private Partnership (PPP) guidelines in the implementation of the National Gas Infrastructure Command Centre (NGCC).

Director-General of the ICRC, Dr Jobson Ewalefoh, disclosed this at the inaugural meeting of the NGCC Project Steering Committee in Abuja, stating that the project must be fully financed by the pri-

vate proponent, with zero public funding and no sovereign guarantees.

He said the directive underscored the Federal Government's commitment to fiscal discipline and private-sector-led infrastructure delivery.

"Technology alone does not guarantee viability. Automation does not make a project bankable. Every proposal must pass a structured PPP framework testing feasibility, risk allocation, affordability and sustainability before implementation," Ewalefoh said.

He emphasised that public interest, value for money,

financial prudence and strict regulatory compliance would guide all stages of the project, noting that its strategic importance does not override disciplined preparation.

The NGCC is designed to coordinate Nigeria's gas infrastructure, strengthen emergency response mechanisms and improve transparency in the sector.

The Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Gas), Sen. Ekperikpe Ekpo, inaugurated the Project Steering Committee and Joint Technical Working Group, comprising representatives of the Petroleum Ministry, the Nigerian Midstream

and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMD-PRA), the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd), the ICRC and the project promoter.

## CSOs seek stronger legal shield for C'River mangroves

CALABAR

A coalition of civil society organisations has called for the full protection of Cross River's mangrove forests under the state's forestry laws.

The appeal was made by Mr Ken Henshaw, Executive Director of 'We the People,' while reacting to recommendations for the review of the Cross River Forestry Law, 2010.

Henshaw recalled that 19 environmental CSOs had, over the past eight months, reviewed the law and proposed amendments aimed at strengthening forest protection across the state.

He stressed that mangroves are forests and should enjoy equal legal status and protection under the Forestry Commission framework, despite differences from rainforests.

According to him, the reviewed law empowers the Forestry Commission to designate forests as reserves through stakeholder engagement and introduces reforms to support conservation-driven restoration efforts, particularly for mangroves, without bureaucratic hurdles.

He explained that previous provisions tied forest regeneration to future logging concessions, requiring 10-year management plans and heavy

upfront payments. The proposed amendments, he said, create a new category for conservation-based restoration without logging intentions.

Under the framework, groups seeking to restore mangroves would submit management proposals for approval, after which such areas would receive official protection against illegal sales or encroachment.

Henshaw maintained that the reforms would strengthen legal backing for mangrove conservation and shield restored ecosystems from exploitation while promoting community participation in forest management.

## PUBLIC NOTICE OF VEHICLE AUCTION

This is to inform the general public that Green Vision Investment & Distribution, having been duly appointed by Edo State Inland Revenue Service as Auctioneer, will conduct a public auction for the disposal of vehicles declared to be in bad condition.

The vehicles listed will be disposed of through public auction to the highest bidders.

- **Notice Period:** Three (3) days from the date of this publication.
- **Location of Auction:** 80, New Lagos Road, Benin City, Edo State
- **Time:** 10am to 4pm

Interested members of the public are invited to participate in the auction exercise. Inspection of the vehicles may be conducted within the notice period at the designated location.

All sales shall be on an "as-is, where-is" basis.

For enquiries, please contact:

**08038723372, 08057476073**

Signed:



**OMOHAN FESTUS**

For: Management

**Green Vision Investment & Distribution**

Authorized Auctioneer to

Edo State Inland Revenue Service

### VEHICLES IN BAD CONDITION

S/N	VEHICLE TYPE	REGISTRATION NUMBER
1.	Toyota Hiace Bus	— RB 36 ED
2.	Toyota Hiace Bus	— RB 39 ED
3.	Toyota Hiace Bus	— RB 38 ED
4.	Toyota Corolla	— RB 19 ED
5.	Toyota Hilux	— RB 31 ED
6.	Toyota Camry	— RB 22 ED
7.	Toyota Hilux	— RB 32 ED
8.	Toyota Camry	— IRS 16 ED
9.	Toyota Corolla	— IRS 41 ED
10.	Toyota Corolla	— IRS 20 ED
11.	Toyota Hilux	— RB 34 ED

**MANAGEMENT**

## CLASSIFIED

### CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH

I, **HENRY SIMEON AKPAN**, wish to bring for the information of the general public that my correct date of birth is **21/11/1971**, and not **10/09/1972** as was wrongly written in some of my documents. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities Banks and the general public please note.

### CHANGE OF NAME

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

### REARRANGEMENT/ADDITION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **BROWN E OKONKWO** and **BROWN ONYEMAUCHECHUKWU E. OKONKWO** are one and the same person as appeared on some of my documents. Henceforth, I wish to be known and addressed as **BROWN ONYEMAUCHECHUKWU E. OKONKWO**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please note.

# INEC vows credible, tech-driven 2027 polls

ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission has reaffirmed its commitment to delivering credible, transparent and technology-driven elections ahead of the 2027 general polls.

The INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan, gave the assurance at the 2026 Citizens' Townhall on the Electoral Act in Abuja, stressing that electoral integrity remains central to national development and global confidence.

He said Nigeria was determined to reshape global perceptions through strong institutional performance under the 2026 Electoral Act. Recalling an academic conference at Wash-

ington University in St. Louis, he noted that Nigeria was discussed largely in the context of electoral fraud and cybercrime.

"As the only Nigerian present, I presented a narrative rooted in resilience, reform and national potential," he said, adding that perspectives shifted after the engagement, reinforcing the need for Nigeria to project a positive image through credible institutions.

Describing democracy as the foundation of legitimacy and development, Amupitan quoted former U.S. President Abraham Lincoln as saying, "The ballot is stronger than the bullet," noting that free, fair and transparent elections are instruments of stability, investor confidence and

long-term growth.

On the 2026 Electoral Act, he said INEC played an active role in the nearly three-year multi-stakeholder reform process, which involved collaboration with the National Assembly, civil society organisations and other stakeholders. He added that clarity and accessibility were central objectives of the legislation.

"In a diverse country like Nigeria, electoral laws must be simple, precise and understandable," he said.

Addressing concerns over electronic transmission of results, the chairman said infrastructure challenges, not unwillingness accounted for isolated delays.

He cited the recent Federal Capital Territory Area Council

election, where results were declared in five of six councils, while difficult terrain and network limitations delayed real-time upload in Kuje Area Council, particularly Karshi Ward.

"The delay was logistical, not systemic. Transmission did not fail. The issue was timing, not integrity," he said, noting that the Electoral Act provides safeguards to ensure proper transmission and collation of results.

He acknowledged infrastructural and human challenges but said institutional learning and reforms were ongoing.

"Perfection is our aspiration, but continuous improvement is our obligation," he stated.

Reflecting on the 2023 general elections, he said they of-

fered lessons on scaling electoral technology nationwide.

While systems performed effectively in some sub-national polls, including the Osun State governorship election, national deployment during the presidential election exposed stress-capacity limitations in certain systems.

Preparations for 2027, he said, would include nationwide stress-testing of technology, infrastructure reinforcement and scenario-based simulations.

"Nigeria in 2027 is more aware, more engaged and more determined," he said, expressing confidence that the next

general election would mark a milestone in the country's democratic evolution.

Also speaking, Yiaga Africa Executive Director, Samson Itodo, raised concerns over whether the 2026 Electoral Act would strengthen democratic credibility or leave room for manipulation ahead of 2027.

He acknowledged that the Act introduced clearer voter accreditation rules, electronic transmission of results and defined timelines for results management, as well as a digital register for party primaries to enhance transparency in candidate selection.

## Lawal abolishes cash revenue collection in Zamfara

GUSAU

Governor Dauda Lawal of Zamfara State has abolished cash revenue collection in the State, directing a full transition to digital systems to curb leakages and enhance transparency.

The governor announced the policy at a town hall meeting convened by the Zamfara Internal Revenue Service to sensitise stakeholders on the Nigeria Tax Reform Acts 2025.

Lawal said the reforms restructure tax administration nationwide by clarifying boundaries, standardising procedures and promoting coordination among the three tiers of government.

He noted that the re-enactment of the Consolidated Revenue Law strengthened the Internal Revenue Service, granting it powers for assessment, collection and accounting of state revenues while harmonising tax

and non-tax income.

"Revenue generation is a whole-of-government obligation, not a task for a single agency," he said, directing all Ministries, Departments and Agencies to ensure transparency, accuracy and prompt remittance through approved channels.

He warned that leakages, duplications and informal collections would not be tolerated, adding that MDAs must review their laws and procedures to eliminate overlaps and ambiguities.

Lawal said the state's 2025 Internally Generated Revenue figures showed progress but highlighted the need for improved systems, adding that Zamfara's IGR target ranges between ₦38 billion and ₦42 billion under the reform agenda.

Key MDAs and individuals were recognised at the meeting for exemplary revenue remittances.



### INTER-HOUSE SPORTS:

Pupils of Harvard Red House (1st position); Oxford Blue House (2nd position) and Stanford Green House (3rd position) celebrating, after their win at the Bi-Annual Inter-House Sports of Safe Heritage Crest Academy in Abuja.

## FRSC probes illegal street racing around Abuja's national Mosque

ABUJA

The Federal Road Safety Corps has commenced investigation into reports of illegal car racing and stunt driving allegedly carried out by youths around the National Mosque area of the Federal Capital Territory.

The Corps Public Education Officer, Olusegun Ogungbemide, confirmed the development, describing the reported activities as illegal and unsafe.

He said the Corps Marshal, Malam Shehu Mohammed, had directed the FCT Sector Commander, Felix Theman, to investigate the allegations and submit a

prompt report for decisive action.

Ogungbemide noted that complaints were received from residents who observed unusual racing activities in the area, although some accounts were inconsistent.

"Legally, we do not have Formula One running as a regular sport on Nigerian roads; so, if such is happening, it compromises the safety of other road users because it is not legal," he said.

He stressed that the corps had not granted permission to any organisation or group to conduct car racing or stunt driving on public roads within the territory.

He assured that once investigations were concluded, appropriate action would be taken in line with traffic laws and safety regulations, reiterating the FRSC's commitment to safeguarding road users and urging residents to provide credible information.

## 2027: ADC urges Nigerians to shun tribal, religious politics

LAGOS

The African Democratic Congress has urged Nigerians to rise above tribal and religious sentiments in choosing leaders ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The call was made at the party's 27th Ramadan Lecture and Zakat 2026, organised by Lagos chieftain, Mr Moshood Salvador, in Surulere.

Speakers at the event said the 2027 elections would de-

fine Nigeria's democratic future and determine the direction of governance for years to come.

Salvador, leader of the Conscience Forum in Lagos State and former state chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party, attributed the nation's social and economic challenges to years of poor leadership.

He said hardship, unemployment and insecurity were symptoms of leadership failure rather than fate or ethnicity,

warning against vote-buying and short-term inducements.

"When you vote for wrong leaders because of bread, rice or noodles, you will suffer and your children will also suffer," he said.

He criticised the new Electoral Act for not making electronic transmission of results mandatory in all elections, arguing that such a provision would have strengthened public trust.

Dr Jide Adeniji, an ADC leader, said ethnic and reli-

gious divisions had hindered national progress, urging citizens to focus on competence and unity.

The ADC South-West Zonal Chairman, Mr Rahman Owokoniran, described Salvador as a committed grassroots politician capable of serving Lagos State effectively, while the party's National Organising Secretary, Mr Chinedu Idigbo, said the ADC would not bar anyone from contesting its governorship ticket.

## Lagos traders demand youth empowerment, stricter street regulation

LAGOS

Mobile phone dealers and other stakeholders on Lagos Island have called for youth empowerment and stricter regulation of street trading to curb business disruptions and improve security around major commercial hubs.

Speaking with journalists, the stakeholders urged authorities to restore order while creating sustainable economic opportunities for young people.

Mr Jude Ugwah, Chairman of the Association of GSM Dealers, Saka Tinubu axis, attributed the growing number of informal street traders to unemployment, noting that many were graduates acting as middlemen.

He said the association collaborates with security agencies and vigilante groups to curb criminal activities and maintain order within the district.

However, Mr Olugeshin Shonibare, Branch Manager of Konga Retail Store on Saka Tinubu Street, said that street trading was affecting legitimate businesses that pay high rents and statutory fees.

"They drag customers, and it affects our sales. Some customers are even scared," he said, adding that theft and after-hours loitering posed security concerns.

A company Managing Director, who requested anonymity, also called for sustained government action to relocate street dwellers and miscreants from business districts on Victoria Island, citing security and environmental risks.

He advocated a comprehensive approach combining social housing, vocational training and structured employment opportunities, warning that without viable alternatives, street dwellers would continue to return.

He urged government to act urgently to restore safety and stability in Lagos' commercial areas.

## NEWS

# NAF airstrikes eliminate top terror commanders in Sambisa

ABUJA

The Nigerian Air Force (NAF) has confirmed the neutralization of several high-value terrorist operatives and the destruction of key insurgent infrastructure during precision airstrikes in the Sambisa Forest axis of the North-East.

In a statement issued in Abuja on Monday, the Director of Public Relations and Information, Air Commodore Ehimen Ejodame, said the operation was conducted on February 28 under the Joint Task Force, Operation Hadin Kai, targeting terrorist elements in the Yuwe general area of Sambisa.

Ejodame explained that the early morning Air Interdiction mission was intelligence-driven, following confirmatory

Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) which identified structures serving as hideouts for terrorist commanders and logistics warehouses.

He said strike aircraft successfully acquired and engaged the validated targets, deploying precision-guided munitions that dismantled critical infrastructure.

Post-strike battle damage assessments, supported by credible intelligence, confirmed the killing of several senior commanders and fighters coordinating hostile activities within the theatre.

The strikes, he added, significantly disrupted the terrorists' command-and-control network and degraded their logistics capacity, constraining operational effectiveness in the

region.

The Air Force disclosed that sustained ISR coverage is ongoing to track fleeing elements and identify additional verified targets for possible engage-

ment.

The Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Sunday Aneke, commended the professionalism and combat efficiency of the aircrew and supporting

personnel, reiterating the service's resolve to deny terrorists safe haven anywhere in the country.

He reaffirmed the Air Force's commitment to sustaining

aggressive, intelligence-led operations in close synergy with ground forces until all identified terrorist enclaves are dismantled and lasting peace restored.

## Rescued kidnap victim delivers twin at Kogi IDP camp

LOKOJA

The Kogi State Government has announced that a rescued kidnap victim has given birth to twin girls at the state's Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp.

Commissioner for Information and Communications, Kingsley Fanwo, disclosed in a statement that the mother, whose identity is being withheld for security reasons, and her babies are in stable condition.

He said Governor Ahmed Usman Ododo had directed that the mother and her new-

borns be transferred to the State Specialist Hospital for comprehensive medical care and postnatal support.

Fanwo explained that the IDP camp was established as a temporary rehabilitation centre for rescued kidnap victims, noting that the number of rescued persons has risen following intensified security operations.

He reaffirmed the administration's commitment to the welfare and rehabilitation of rescued victims and commended security agencies for sustained efforts in tackling criminality in Kogi State and beyond.

## INEC to hold nationwide mock presidential poll ahead of 2027

ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has announced plans to conduct a nationwide mock presidential election as part of preparations for the 2027 general elections.

INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan, disclosed this during the Citizens' Townhall on the Electoral Act 2026 in Abuja, stating that the simulation would test and strengthen the commission's result transmission infrastructure.

According to him, the exercise will serve as a comprehensive stress test of electronic

transmission systems nationwide, addressing technical challenges observed in previous electoral cycles and enhancing transparency, logistics and technological efficiency.

INEC also unveiled a revised timetable for the 2027 elections.

Presidential and National Assembly polls are scheduled for January 16, 2027, while Governorship and State Assembly elections will hold on February 6, 2027.

The commission maintained that early planning and system testing are critical to rebuilding public confidence and ensuring a seamless electoral process across the country.



**TETFund INAUGURATION:**

L-R: Minister of State for Education, Prof. Suwaiba Ahmad; Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa and Executive Secretary, TETFund, Sonny Echono, during the inauguration of Ministerial Monitoring, Evaluation and Implementation Committee on TETFund High Impact Intervention Projects for Engineering and Technology Faculties in Federal Universities of Technology and Conventional Universities in Abuja on Monday.

## Psychiatrists demand justice, compensation over colleague's killing in Enugu

LAGOS

The Association of Psychiatrists of Nigeria (APN) has condemned the killing of its member, Dr Andrew Orovwigho, a Consultant Psychiatrist at the Federal Neuro-psychiatric Hospital, Enugu, demanding justice and adequate compensation for his family.

In a statement jointly signed by its President, Dr Veronica Nyamali, and Secretary-General, Prof. Kingsley Mayowa,

the association described the incident as a brutal assault on the medical profession and Nigeria's fragile healthcare system.

Orovwigho was reportedly kidnapped from his residence on December 30, 2025, shot in the left knee, violently assaulted and abandoned at a sand evacuation site far from Enugu town.

He was found on December 31 and taken to hospital, where he died on January 2, 2026.

APN described him as a brilliant and dedicated psychiatrist committed to patient

care, teaching and mentorship, noting that his death is a colossal loss to Nigeria's mental health community.

The association lamented the country's acute shortage of psychiatrists, stating that fewer than 150 specialists currently serve a population of over 200 million.

It also decried the recurring violence against healthcare workers and inadequate security in many health facilities.

According to the statement, the mental health workforce is already critically understaffed,

with many doctors emigrating due to insecurity and poor working conditions.

The psychiatrists called on authorities in Enugu State to identify, apprehend and prosecute the perpetrators without delay, while also providing adequate support and compensation to the bereaved family.

APN warned that it would pursue all lawful measures to protect its members if justice is not served, insisting that the matter will not be allowed to fade into silence.

## Ajose rallies APC leaders in Badagry ahead of 2027 elections

BADAGRY

Lagos governorship aspirant, Dr Samuel Ajose, has urged leaders of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Badagry to embrace unity ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Ajose, popularly known as SMA Gold, made the appeal during a stakeholders' meeting attended by over 200 party

leaders from the Local Government Area and Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs) of Badagry.

He said his consultations across Lagos were aimed at fostering cohesion within party structures to ensure victory in 2027, stressing that unity remains the party's greatest strength.

According to him, the Badagry meeting was the first major gathering of apex lead-

ers since the death of Dr Sunny Ajose, former APC apex leader in the area.

Ajose expressed satisfaction with the turnout despite the short notice and declared that Badagry was ready for any timetable adjustments ahead of the polls.

He also predicted strong support for President Bola Tinubu in 2027, claiming growing consensus among par-

ty members and beyond.

Leaders present at the meeting included the lawmaker representing Badagry Federal Constituency, Mr Sesi Whingan; member of the Lagos State House of Assembly, Mr Bonu Solomon; Lagos State Commissioner for Home Affairs, Mr Ibrahim Layode; and council chairmen from Badagry, Olorunda LCDA and Badagry-West LCDA, among others.

## UCH shuts doors to new patients as unions begin strike over...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 3

service delivery areas and residential quarters, thereby paralyzing operations and endangering patients.

Co-Chairman of CUUL and UCH ARD President, Dr Uthman Adedeji, told journalists that the rationing of electricity had severely disrupted clinical

services, forcing the cancellation of routine surgeries and throwing theatre schedules into disarray.

He lamented that critical laboratory results were often unavailable when needed, while medications, reagents and vaccines were being lost due to broken cold chains.

According to him, blood do-

nors were bled under unconducive conditions, research activities had stalled, and diagnostic and life-saving equipment lay idle.

"Patients who should receive care are being turned away, procedures are referred elsewhere and lives hang in the balance. A teaching hospital in 2026 is being forced to operate like a facility from a bygone era," he said.

Adedeji further disclosed that the hospital was losing millions of naira daily in internally generated revenue as a result of rejected cases and diverted procedures, warning that what was presented as a cost-cutting measure had become a revenue-destroying policy threatening the institution's financial survival.

He highlighted additional challenges, including severe water shortages due to inability to pump water, increased risk of hospital-acquired infections, and surgeries conducted with headlamps.

Nurses, he added, were compelled to use mobile phone torch lights in wards, while laboratories handled hazardous samples without functional fume cupboards.

Staff quarters, he said, were not spared. Residents allegedly pay Band A electricity tariffs and additional management-imposed charges, yet receive barely one hour of electricity daily.

Faulty prepaid meters, he claimed, had not been replaced for over a year, while estimated monthly billing ranging between N10,000 and N25,000 persisted regardless of actual consumption.

**JUDICIARY****NEWS**

# FHC Chief Judge to appear before CCB over alleged undeclared accounts

**ABUJA**

The Chief Judge of the Federal High Court (FHC), Justice John Tsoho, has expressed readiness

to appear before the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) over alleged failure to declare certain bank accounts in his asset declaration.

In a statement on Monday

by the FHC's Director of Information, Dr Catherine Christopher, Justice Tsoho said he would honour the invitation as soon as he completes medical treatment abroad.

The statement emphasised the Chief Judge's commitment to cooperating fully with the CCB, while exercising his constitutional right to legal representation.

His legal representative, Kanu Godwin Agabi, CON, SAN, is expected to accompa-

ny him to the Bureau.

The statement further noted that the CCB has been informed that any date within the week beginning Monday, 16 March 2026, is convenient for Justice Tsoho and his counsel.

"The Hon. Chief Judge reiterates his commitment to due process, transparency, and the

rule of law," the statement added.

The summons follows an investigation by PREMIUM TIMES which alleged that Justice Tsoho failed to declare multiple bank accounts in his asset declaration, a potential breach of Nigeria's Code of Conduct law.

**NEWS CONFERENCE:**

Members of Women Gather for Governor Peter Mbah Movement, led by Coordinator, Mrs Onyinye Mamah (L), during a news conference to woo Governor Peter Mbah of Enugu State to facilitate the emergence of a female candidate for Igbo-Eze Enugu North Senatorial Zone by-election, in Enugu on Monday.

## 71yr-old faces trial over alleged N150,000 Fraud

**IBADAN**

A 71-year-old man, Isaac Kosodo, was arraigned Monday at an Iyaganku Magistrates' Court in Ibadan over alleged fraud involving N150,000.

Kosodo, whose address was not provided, pleaded not guilty to obtaining money by false pretence. Police prosecutor Insp.

Olaekan Adegbite told the court that Kosodo collected

the money from one Mr Seyi Odufuwa in January, promising to provide space for a furniture workshop but failed to deliver.

The offence contravenes Section 419 of the Criminal Law of Oyo State, 2000.

Magistrate Mrs Kausarat Ayofe granted bail of N100,000 with one surety, who must be a blood relative of the defendant.

The case was adjourned to April 27.

## Man sentenced to 5yrs for theft in Badagry

**BADAGRY (LAGOS)**

A Badagry Chief Magistrates' Court on Monday sentenced 34-year-old Joshua Michael to five years in a correctional centre for stealing gate poles and antenna poles and disturbing public peace.

Chief Magistrate Mr Nurudeen Layeni handed down the sentence after Michael plead-

ed guilty to a two-count charge.

Prosecutor ASP Edet Ekpo said the offences occurred on February 20 at Golden Estate, Mosafejo. Michael had broken the gates of a property and stolen poles, creating public disturbance.

The sentence, without an option of fine, was handed down in accordance with Sections 168 and 287 of the Criminal Law of Lagos, 2015.

## Ex-AGoF's N868m fraud case: Court sets April 13 for judgment

**ABUJA**

The Federal High Court has fixed April 13 for judgment in the N868 million money laundering case involving former acting Accountant-General of the Federation (AGoF), Mr Chukwunyer Nwabuoku.

Justice James Omotosho set the date after hearing final addresses from EFCC lawyer Ekele Iheanacho, SAN, and

Nwabuoku's counsel, Norrison Quakers, SAN.

Nwabuoku, granted N500 million bail with two sureties in like sum, faces a nine-count amended charge filed by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

The anti-graft agency alleges that Nwabuoku, while serving as Director of Finance and Accounts at the Ministry of Defence between 2019 and 2021, conspired with several compa-

nies to convert funds said to be proceeds of unlawful activities, contrary to the Money Laundering Prohibition Act, 2011 (as amended).

Nwabuoku was appointed acting AGoF on May 20, 2022, after his predecessor Ahmed Idris was suspended over an alleged N80 billion fraud.

He was removed a few weeks later, and Sylva Okolieaboh was appointed acting AGoF.

EFCC called nine witnesses

to build its case, including a Zenith Bank staff and a federal civil service director, to establish the flow of funds. In November 2025, Justice Omotosho dismissed Nwabuoku's no-case submission, confirming that the evidence presented by the EFCC warranted the continuation of the trial.

Nwabuoku began his defence on February 2, 2026, denying links to some companies allegedly connected to him and requesting acquittal.

## Kano Court rejects former commissioners' bid to keep official vehicles

**KANO**

The National Industrial Court in Kano on Monday declined an application by five former Kano State commissioners seeking to re-

strain the state government from retrieving official vehicles.

The ex-officials, Dr Yusuf Kofar-Mata, AVM Ibrahim Umar, Nasir Sule Garo, Adamu Aliyu Kibiya, and Mustapha Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso ar-

gued that the vehicles were part of their conditions of service and entitled them to retain the cars after resigning in January 2026.

Justice Mahmood Abba-Namtari ruled that the re-

spondents, including the state governor and the Attorney General, be put on notice to allow proper hearing before any interim orders.

The matter was adjourned to March 10.

## NGO hails JAMB's disability-friendly UTME reforms, seeks clearer guidelines

**CALABAR**

A Cross River-based non-governmental organisation, Hope Ability Empowerment Initiative, has commended the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) for introducing reforms aimed at protecting the interests of candidates living with disabilities.

The Executive Director of the group, Dr Martina Ntino, gave the commendation in an interview with journalists on Monday in Calabar, describing

the measures outlined for the 2026 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination as progressive and inclusive.

Ntino said the new policies would expand equal educational opportunities for candidates with physical challenges seeking admission into tertiary institutions nationwide.

She highlighted provisions such as registration refunds, transportation support, and accommodation for blind candidates and their guides as practical steps toward fairness in the examination process.

According to her, effective communication during registration is essential to ensure that eligible candidates do not miss available benefits.

She also endorsed the introduction of assistive materials, including audiobooks and customised support services for candidates with visual, hearing, cognitive, and learning challenges.

Ntino urged authorities to intensify awareness campaigns and provide logistical backing for candidates in remote communities to prevent poverty or

distance from limiting participation.

She further recommended stricter monitoring of private examination centres and the publication of detailed guidelines on concessions granted to candidates with disabilities to promote transparency and accountability.

The executive director cautioned that demanding upfront payments from blind candidates without clearly communicating refund arrangements could trigger anxiety, financial strain, and feelings of exclusion.

## One dead, 5 missing as Nigerian Tugboat sinks off S'African coast

**ABUJA**

Tragedy struck off the coast of South Africa after a Nigerian tugboat, LEO, sank in turbulent waters late on Saturday, leaving one crew member dead and five others missing.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed on Monday that 12 of the 18 crew members on board were rescued in a swift emergency response.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, said South African authorities had formally notified the Nigerian government of the incident.

She disclosed that search-and-rescue operations were ongoing for the five unaccounted crew members.

According to the minister, the South African Ministry of Transportation communicated the development, while the South African Maritime Safety Authority is leading rescue efforts.

Survivors are being transported to Port Elizabeth, where officials of the Nigerian High Commission in South Africa

are expected to receive them and provide consular assistance.

The vessel, which had travelled to South Africa for repairs, was reportedly heading back to Lagos when it encountered severe storm conditions about 18 nautical miles offshore between Cape Town and Durban.

Maritime sources describe the southern corridor between the two cities as notorious for sudden weather changes and heavy swells capable of overwhelming vessels, particularly after mechanical servicing.

As rescue efforts continue amid unpredictable sea conditions, attention is likely to turn to questions surrounding the vessel's seaworthiness, the intensity of the storm, and whether distress signals were transmitted promptly.

The Nigerian High Commission is working closely with South African authorities to support survivors and liaise with families in Nigeria as anxiety grows over the fate of the missing crew members. Further updates are expected as investigations and rescue operations progress.

## NEWS

## Foreign

### Allies of US in the Gulf bear brunt of Iran attacks

Cities in the Gulf states, like Abu Dhabi pictured here, were not built to withstand attacks from drones and ballistic missiles

In the clear blue skies above Abu Dhabi, white contrails streak high above the sand-coloured villas and well-watered gardens.

These are no incoming Dreamliners or Airbuses bringing in the next manifest of tourists and guest workers. They are incoming ballistic missiles, launched by the Emirates' giant neighbour just across the Gulf: Iran.

As of Sunday afternoon, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) defence ministry said it had so far "dealt with" 165 incoming ballistic missiles, two cruise missiles and 541 Iranian drones.

In Bahrain, a friend alerted me on Sunday morning that the airport was under attack after having a sleepless night.

"Woken by huge bangs and wailing siren," he texted. "I think maybe around 20 booms and bangs. At least two hits".

These are not familiar scenes in this region, but since this conflict began on Saturday morning, Iran appears to have expanded its target set from just hitting military targets, like the US Navy's 5th Fleet headquarters in Bahrain, to airports and other civilian sites.

Now luxury hotels and shopping malls, high-rise apartment blocks, state-of-the-art airport departure terminals are getting sporadically hit as gaps appear in the Arab states' air defences in the Gulf. These places were never

built with the prospect in mind that they would one day come under attack from drones and ballistic missiles.

Iran's Foreign Minister, Abbas Aragchi, has denied targeting his country's neighbours, telling Al Jazeera: "We are not attacking our neighbours in the Persian Gulf countries, we are targeting the presence of the US in these countries. Neighbours should direct their grievances to the decision-makers of this war".

Some of the damage to civilian infrastructure in the Gulf states is accidental - resulting from debris falling from intercepted missiles

The number of attacks on airports in Bahrain and the UAE point to more than coincidence. Iran always made it clear in

advance that, if it was attacked, it would retaliate at any country it considered to be complicit in that attack.

The Gulf states went to some lengths to show Iran they were not part, in their eyes, of this US-Israeli attack.

Yet essentially they have been punished for being long-term military partners of Washington's.

Before the Islamic Revolution, in the days of the shah, Iran was known as "the policeman of the Gulf".

Since the revolution, it has always tried to convince its neighbours that it should resume that role, "taking charge of security" in what it calls Khaleej-e-Fars, the Persian Gulf (Arabs call it the Arabian Gulf).

### Oil and gas prices jump as conflict escalates

Oil and gas prices have surged as Iran continues to launch strikes across the Middle East in response to ongoing attacks by the US and Israel.

Natural gas prices spiked by nearly 50% on Monday after QatarEnergy, one of the world's biggest exporters, halted production following "military attacks" on its facilities.

Brent crude, the global benchmark for oil prices, jumped by 10% to touch more than \$82 a barrel on Monday after at least three ships were attacked near the Strait of Hormuz at the weekend.

Iran warned vessels not to pass through the crucial waterway in the south of the country, through which about 20% of the world's oil and gas is shipped.

In the US, stock market indexes opened lower with the Dow Jones Industrial Average off nearly 1% while the Nasdaq index and S&P 500 also began trading in the red.

In London, the FTSE 100 share index fell 1%, with the owner of British Airways among the biggest fallers following the disruption to Middle East airspace.

Banks such as Barclays, Standard Chartered and HSBC also saw their share prices slide due to concerns that a sustained rise in energy prices risks fueling inflation which, in turn, could lead to fewer interest rate cuts by central banks.

Leading stock markets in Europe sustained bigger drops. In France, the CAC-40 fell by 1.8% while Germany's Dax extended earlier declines to fall by 2.1% in early afternoon trading.

Meanwhile, the price of gold, which is viewed as a safe-haven asset during periods of uncertainty, added 2% to \$5,388 an ounce.

QatarEnergy, which is owned by the state, said that it had suspended producing liquefied natural gas (LNG) after the country's Ministry of Defence (MoD) said a drone launched from Iran targeted a facility in Ras Laffan Industrial City.

Qatar's MoD also said a drone went after a water tank belonging to a power plant in Mesaieed, south of the capital Doha.

Meanwhile in neighbouring Saudi Arabia, Aramco temporarily shut its major oil refinery at Ras Tanura on the coast after being hit by a drone.



#### IRAN ATTACKS:

The strikes opened a stunning new chapter in US intervention in Iran and marked the second time in eight months that the Trump administration has used military force against the Islamic Republic.

### Deadly Texas bar shooting 'potentially act of terrorism', FBI says

Two people were killed and over a dozen injured in a shooting outside a beer garden in Austin, Texas, in an incident the FBI says may be related to terrorism.

Austin police identified the suspect as 53-year-old Ndiaga Diagne. He was a naturalised American citizen born in Senegal, according to the BBC's US partner CBS News and other US media.

After responding to calls of an active shooter at around 02:00 local time (08:00 GMT) on Sunday near Buford's bar in the southern US state's capital, police said they shot and killed the suspect, bringing the death toll to three.

Police have not offered a motive for the shooter. Of the survivors, 14 were taken to hospital, three in a critical condition.

Two sources familiar with the investigation told CBS News that the gunman was wearing a sweatshirt with the words "Property of Allah".

CBS was also told by an official with knowledge of the investiga-

tion that officers who searched the gunman's home found an Iranian flag and pictures of Iranian leaders. The attack came on the weekend that the US and its ally Israel launched multiple strikes on Iran, killing Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's son and Police Chief Lisa Davis said officers who were on patrol in the more popular, crowded bar district known as East Sixth Street quickly responded to reports of a man with a gun at Buford's, located farther down on West Sixth Street.

She said a man in a large SUV driving by Buford's put on the vehicle's hazard lights, rolled down his window and fired a pistol, striking people on the patio and pavement outside the bar.

He parked the vehicle nearby, got out with a rifle and started walking back towards the bar, according to Davis. Three police officers confronted the suspect at an intersection, and shot and killed him.

The SUV was searched and was not carrying explosives,

officials said.

However, Acting Special Agent in Charge Alex Doran, from the FBI's San Antonio office, said there were indications in the SUV and on the suspect that suggested a "nexus to terrorism".

But Doran said the investigation was in its early stages and he was "not prepared to release those details".

"We are committed to seeing this process through to the very end," he said.

Kelson Lee, 25, was within earshot when gunfire erupted at Buford's. He walked inside to look for a friend, according to the Austin Current.

"I see about seven to eight bodies on the floor," Lee told the local news outlet. "No-one should ever have to see that."

"I kind of blacked out, froze up. I felt kind of helpless because I wanted to help people."

Of the 14 people taken to the hospital, three were in a critical condition. Austin-Travis County Emergency

Management Services head Rob Luckritz said.

US President Donald Trump has been notified of the shooting, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said.

Republican Senator Ted Cruz, who represents Texas, condemned the deadly attack in a post on social media.

"What happened early this morning in Austin was a senseless act of violence. My team and I are co-ordinating with local, state, and federal authorities," he wrote.

"I'm grateful for the heroic and quick response from law enforcement."

Davis said that because of increased police and emergency resources in the entertainment area over the weekend, they were able to "rapidly" respond to the scene.

Austin Mayor Kirk Watson also praised the response by police and rescuers, which officials said took 57 seconds. "I'm very thankful for the speed," he said. "They definitely saved lives."

### Kidnapping of foreigners soars in Africa's lawless Sahel region

When Marin Petrović arrived in Bamako in early September last year, he was elated. The Bosnian national had spent years applying for tourist visas to Mali, only to be repeatedly denied on security grounds.

The West African country has long been afflicted by civil war, foreign military interventions, and Islamist insurgencies.

"Now it was finally approved and I couldn't wait to start this trip," he wrote in Bosnian in a public Instagram post on 15 November 2025.

Petrović declined to speak to the BBC for this article.

The plan was to visit some of the country's dramatic landmarks, before returning home. In Bamako, Petrović enjoyed the sights and sounds of markets, busy roads, schools, and even sampled some local beers, according to the post.

"The next day I set off for Mopti, known for its 100-year-old mud mosque," he continued, referring to the Grand Mosque of Mopti, a 15m (49ft) tall architectural feat made from mud bricks.

Marin Petrović was heading to Mopti to see its famous mosque when he was abducted by Islamist militants

On Instagram, Petrović describes himself as a "mountain rescue" expert and "guide", whose motto is not to "dream your life", but to "live your dream". But before Petrović could continue his dream of exploring Mali's ancient treasures, his trip took an unexpected turn.

"An armed attack takes place on the road between Bla

and San," he says in the same Instagram post.

"Six motorbikes with two long-bearded terrorists, each armed with Kalashnikovs, surround the vehicle and drag me into the bushes, along non-existent paths through the undergrowth, through swamps, far from the main road... I was kidnapped by al-Qaeda jihadists!!!"

Petrović had become the latest victim of a concerning trend for foreign travellers and expatriate workers in West Africa's Sahel region.

His story is not unusual. In 2025, growing insecurity and new jihadist tactics led to a notable increase in high-profile abductions of foreign nationals in the Sahel.

The latest data from Aclad, an independent global conflict monitor, shows a considerable increase in the kidnapping of foreigners in Mali and Niger in 2025, compared to previous years.

There were 30 separate kidnapping events affecting foreigners by the end of November, and the number for the whole year is likely to be even higher.

Some cases of kidnapping received considerable international media attention. Two citizens of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) - one of whom is thought to be a member of the Emirati royal family - were kidnapped in Mali in late September.

The purpose of their visit and the exact circumstances of their abduction remain murky. Some local media outlets suggested that at least one of the men was involved in a business venture, possibly gold mining.

**Foreign****NEWS****Starmer seeks to carve out distinct UK approach to this conflict**

Engaging in armed conflict in breach of international law is a precarious business."

So wrote Keir Starmer QC, as he then was, in The Guardian in March 2003 as Britain was on the cusp of joining the Iraq War.

Almost a quarter of a century on, Sir Keir Starmer KC faces his own dilemma about how to approach American military action in the Middle East.

In the speech recorded and released by Downing Street on Sunday night, it was notable that even Sir Keir - who campaigned against British involvement in Iraq and was years away from becoming an MP, let alone prime minister - felt the need to stress: "We all remember the mistakes of Iraq. And we have learned those lessons."

It was notable, too, that Sir Keir emphasised the national interest - closing his speech by invoking Britain three times in one sentence: "This is the British government, protecting British interests and British lives."

That may sound obvious. But this was the prime minister seeking to carve out the British approach to this conflict from the broader aspirations for regime change claimed by the US and Israel.

To some extent, he had already done that by not participating in or assisting the original wave of strikes - even though government ministers have resisted articulating what many see as the logical corollary of that position, which is that the strikes were wrong and potentially unlawful.

It was especially important for Sir Keir to make clear in his statement what is guiding his actions because he was announcing a new position. The prime minister said that the UK would still not join "offensive action" against Iran.

But he said that because of the "scorched earth strategy" with which Iran had responded to the US and Israel, the UK would

now permit the US to use joint UK-US bases to strike Iran.

The specific and limited purpose for which these strikes can be used, the UK government says, is to degrade Iran's capacity to launch missile and drone attacks across the region, including in Gulf countries where there are many British citizens.

This is different, those in government argue, from the previous US request, which Sir Keir resisted, to use British bases for broader strikes on Iran.

That distinction will come under strain in the House of Commons from all sides.

From one side, the government will be criticised for allowing the US to use British bases to strike Iran at all. There are MPs who fear that having allowed some strikes, it is inevitable that the UK will only become further enmeshed in this war. And there will be those who will question whether even those limited strikes the UK has permitted can truly be narrowly defined as 'defensive' when they are taking place in the wider context of American actions designed to precipitate regime change in Iran.

On the other side, there will be those who question why the government is not doing more to support strikes which could topple a regime in Iran which has menaced the region and threatened British citizens here in the UK too.

As it stands, the first group of positions are represented in the Commons by the Greens and the Liberal Democrats, and the second by the Conservatives and Reform UK.

The problem for Sir Keir is that the full spectrum of positions is represented among Labour MPs too. Partly that is the inevitable reality of having such a large parliamentary party. But it also reflects a party that is divided on foreign policy and has only grown more so since 7 October 2023.

**Guinea-Bissau's main opposition urges dialogue with military rulers**

In Guinea-Bissau, the country's two principal opposition parties have made a public appeal for dialogue with the military junta that seized power in a coup in late November 2025, seeking a way out of the ongoing political crisis.

The move comes amid deepening instability since the Haut commandement militaire pour la restauration de la sécurité nationale et de l'ordre public — the junta that ousted President Umaro Sissoco Embaló in November — took control of the government and suspended the electoral process.

Opposition leaders, including figures from the main party coalition led by Domingos Simões Pereira, have sought

to open channels of negotiation with the junta as tensions persist over the future of Guinea-Bissau's constitutional order.

This appeal follows recent events in which the junta offered positions in a transitional government to opposition politicians — an offer that was rejected by key leaders who viewed it as symbolic and insufficient in addressing the broader crisis.

Regional actors, especially the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), have repeatedly urged restraint and a swift return to civilian rule, complicating the political landscape as Guinea-Bissau navigates one of its most volatile periods in recent history.



**UNITED NATION ARMY:**

The Ruweng authorities say the attackers came before dawn on Sunday (file photo)

**At least 169 people killed in South Sudan attack**

The authorities in South Sudan have said at least 169 people, including senior officials, were killed on Sunday when a group of unidentified men launched an assault on an area in the north of the country.

Describing the attack as carried out by dozens of armed youth, Ruweng Administrative Area's Information Minister James Monyluak Mijok alleged that they came from neighbouring Unity state and were linked to the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA-IO).

The SPLA-IO has denied any involvement in the attack, accusing the Unity state authorities of politicising the violence.

The UN has repeatedly warned that the country is at risk of sliding back into full-scale civil war.

"The dead include 90 children, women and elderly peo-

ple, as well as 79 members of regional forces, including police," Mijok said.

Fifty others were wounded and the majority of them had been taken to the neighbouring Abyei Administrative Area, where they were being treated, the official added.

Mijok told the BBC that the attackers entered Abiemnom county in Ruweng before dawn on Sunday, at around 04:30 local time (02:30 GMT), when people were still sleeping and "surprised them".

He said the government forces on the ground "were outnumbered... The assailants set fire to homes and markets during fighting that lasted between three and four hours." Several senior local officials were killed including the county commissioner and executive director.

Mijok said government forces had since driven the at-

tackers out and that authorities were now in full control.

He also alleged that officials in Unity state "must have had knowledge" of the plan to target Ruweng. The Unity state authorities have not responded to this accusation. It is not clear what may have triggered the attack.

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (Unmiss) said about 1,000 civilians began seeking protection near its base in the affected area. The mission said it was alarmed by the surge in violence in the region over the past 48 hours.

"Such violence places civilians at grave risk and must stop immediately," said Anita Kiki Gbeho, officer in charge of Unmiss.

"The mission has enhanced its protective posture and is working with the government of South Sudan to support urgent efforts to restore calm and safeguard affected communi-

ties," she added.

Peacekeepers are providing emergency medical care to at least 23 people wounded in the clashes. The mission has called on all parties to cease hostilities immediately and engage in dialogue.

Local reports and the AFP news agency say victims of the attack were buried in a mass grave on Sunday due to the high number of casualties and ongoing security concerns.

A similar incident in Abiemnom county last year left more than 42 civilians dead.

Following clashes in another part of the country - Jonglei state - the medical charity MSF said 26 of its staff were missing after weeks of escalating violence between government and opposition forces.

The charity has now suspended medical services in two parts of the state - Lankien and Pieri.

**More than 100,000 Britons register for help in Middle East**

A total of 102,000 Britons have registered their presence in the Middle East with the UK government, as Iranian strikes continue across the region.

Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper told the BBC there were an estimated 300,000 British citizens in Gulf countries, where much of the airspace is closed.

She said many of those trapped were holidaymakers, passengers transiting through or people on business visits.

Foreign Office sources said no evacuation was imminent but the government was preparing for potential scenarios if commercial flights remained grounded.

British nationals in Bahrain, Israel, Kuwait, Palestine, Qatar and United Arab Emirates have been urged to register their presence to receive updates from the Foreign Office.

The government has previously used registration schemes to provide urgent updates to people affected by international crises but the number of people and countries affected in this case is unprecedented.

Cooper told BBC Breakfast the situation was "deeply stressful" for those affected.

She urged people to follow local advice, which in most countries was to shelter in place.

Asked if the government was planning to launch an evacuation, Cooper said: "We are in close contact, for example, with the travel industry, with airline companies and airports and also with the governments in the region."

She added: "But we will need to provide updates for people as we go along... That's why we're encouraging people to register their presence so we know where they are so we can get

information to them swiftly."

Cooper said that in previous similar situations the government had wanted to work with airline companies so people could fly home in the normal way.

Layla Hamood and Matthew McGinn, who are on their honeymoon with their three-year-old son, are among those stuck in Dubai.

The family have not left their hotel since the attacks started.

"It's been terrifying to be honest," Layla told BBC Breakfast. "The bombing hasn't stopped. We can hear the missiles."

She added: "No one knows what to do. We're in a limbo, we don't know how we can get home."

Layla Hamood and Matthew McGinn speak to BBC Breakfast from their hotel room in Dubai.

Nearly half of the flights scheduled to depart from London Heathrow to the region on Sunday were cancelled, ac-

cording to analytics company Cirium.

British Airways and Virgin Atlantic are among the airlines which have cancelled or re-routed some flights.

Qatar Airways said on Monday morning that all its flights remained suspended.

Emirates has suspended all operations to and from Dubai until 11:00 on Tuesday.

Dubai Airports confirmed a small number of flights would be allowed to operate for the city's two airports on Monday evening.

A limited number of flights also left Abu Dhabi's Zayed International Airport on Monday.

Iran has retaliated to US and Israeli strikes with attacks on US assets and countries in the region with a US military presence, including Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Iraq.

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**EFFECTIVE FROM FEBRUARY 1, 2023**

## FEATURES

# Gender Equity: Is Equal Work for Equal Pay Tenable?

GRACE IJEOMA UMEH

Gender equality in Nigeria involves ensuring equal opportunities, rights, and treatment for all genders. This includes addressing issues like Women's Empowerment and Participation in Politics, Education and Economic Opportunities for Girls and Women, addressing Gender-based Violence and Harassment, Promoting Inclusive Policies and Laws.

Equal pay for Equal Work is a fundamental principle of gender equality. In Nigeria, women often face significant pay gaps and limited access to economic opportunities.

### SOME CHALLENGES INCLUDE:

Pay disparities: Women earn less than men in similar roles

Limited job opportunities: Women face barriers in male-dominated in-

dustries

Unpaid care work: Women often bear the burden of unpaid domestic labor

In order to implement equal pay policies, companies try to enforce transparent salary structures and entrenching Skills training and mentorship, also make serious efforts to empower women for high-paying industries.

In addressing unpaid care work, organizations also politicize shared parental leave and affordable childcare, Make Advocacy and Policy Changes that tend to benefit both genders. They also work hard at strengthening laws against gender discrimination.

Financial inclusion is a game-changer! Increasing access to loans and funding can empower women entrepreneurs to drive economic growth and innovation. In Nigeria, initiatives like women's banks and microfinance programs are already showing promise.

Some challenges women face include:

Limited collateral: Women often lack assets to secure loans

Low financial literacy: Limited understanding of financial products

Cultural barriers: Restrictions on women's mobility and autonomy

High interest rates: Loans can be unaffordable

Potential solutions: Deliberate policies to overhaul mindsets and put in place systems that work for inclusivity are being worked put by all right thinking persons, including corporate entities and governments at all tiers.

Mobile banking and fintech: Increasing access through digital platforms

Financial education programs: Empowering women with knowledge

Alternative collateral options: Using alternative assets or guarantees

Women-focused financial products: Tailored loan products and services



## WHATSAPP GROUPS AS MICROCOSM

# A Sociopsychological and Philosophical Reading

SAM KARGBO

The reality shows called "WhatsApp groups" are not metaphors; they are diagnostics. Each group chat is a small republic of impulses—an arena where identity, ego, morality, loneliness, wit, prejudice, and longing compete for oxygen. In their compressed digital theatre, we encounter society without its formal masks.

1. The Humorists: Custodians of Collective Therapy

The finest citizens of these digital republics are the humour mongers. They tease, provoke laughter, and sometimes irritate—but they are existentially honest. Their contribution is not transactional. They do not weaponize the platform for commerce, vendetta, or moral exhibitionism.

Psychologically, they function as emotional regulators. In group dynamics theory, tension accumulates wherever identity clusters. The humorist releases that tension. Like court jesters in medieval kingdoms, they enjoy the privilege of truth cloaked in laughter. They remind the group that seriousness is not the same as significance.

Philosophically, they defend the tragicomic nature of existence: life is heavy, but it must be carried lightly.

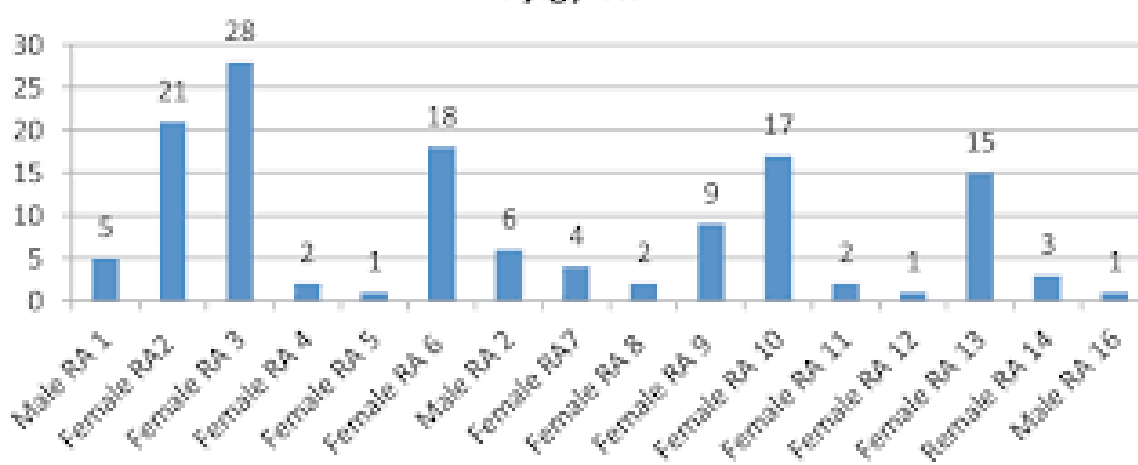
2. The Wise Neutrals: Practitioners of Psychological Non-Attachment

Next are the wise ones—those who can get along with almost anyone because they allow others to be. They neither judge reflexively nor permit themselves to be recruited into factional hostilities.

Their posture is neither apathy nor cowardice; it is disciplined neutrality. In a world addicted to outrage, they practice restraint. They understand a deep social truth: most conflicts are escalations of wounded egos seeking affirmation. By refusing to amplify grievance, they preserve equilibrium.

They embody a quiet philosophical maturity—the recognition that moral

Number of messages sent by each research assistant in WhatsApp group on quantitative data collection in Kyrgyzstan



clarity need not always be noisy.

3. The Peacemakers: Moral Volunteers

These are the custodians of collective cohesion. Whenever storms gather—political arguments, ethnic insinuations, religious provocations—they step forward at personal risk.

The peacemaker expends social capital to restore order. They remind members of shared history and shared laughter. Their virtue is not performative but sacrificial: they are willing to be misunderstood in order to prevent rupture.

Sociologically, they function as informal institutions—unwritten constitutions stabilizing the group's fragile democracy.

4. The Oxygen Depleters

Where there is society, there is pathology.

(a) The Virtue Signalers

These are moral exhibitionists. They see ugliness everywhere and assume the burden of announcing it hourly. They exhaust the atmosphere with chronic outrage, complaints, and self-advertised righteousness.

Psychologically, virtue signaling of-

ten masks insecurity. By dramatizing goodness, they attempt to purchase moral authority. But in so doing, they suffocate spontaneity and drain joy. A group cannot thrive where every joke



*Every group chat personifies the larger society. There are jesters and judges, priests and propagandists, philosophers and opportunists.*

is interrogated and every silence is suspected.

(b) The Tribalists, Bigots, and Political Foot Soldiers

These are ideologues disguised as citizens. Their justice is conditional; their fairness is tribal. What benefits their camp is universal good; what harms their camp is global evil.

Such actors transform social platforms into ideological trenches. They fragment shared humanity into hostile categories. In extreme form, they resemble cultic movements—demanding allegiance, punishing dissent, and converting conversation into propaganda.

Their tragedy lies in projection: they accuse others of bias while embodying it absolutely.

(c) The "Over-Sabi" Absolutists

These are the intellectual monopolists who must possess the final word on every matter. Their compulsion is epistemic dominance.

Philosophically, they suffer from what might be called "closure anxiety"—the inability to tolerate ambiguity. They equate silence with defeat and disagreement with ignorance. In

their universe, conversation is not exchange but conquest.

(d) The Flirts and Hunters

No social space is free from desire. Some treat the platform as a digital forest of romantic opportunity. Their engagement is strategic, selective, and privately motivated.

They remind us that beneath ideological debates and moral performances lies the ancient human drive for connection, validation, and attraction. Even in group chats, Eros finds Wi-Fi.

5. WhatsApp Groups as Society in Miniature

Every group chat personifies the larger society. There are jesters and judges, priests and propagandists, philosophers and opportunists. There is laughter and resentment, generosity and vanity.

What makes these platforms sociologically fascinating is compression. In a few hundred participants, one witnesses:

The struggle between freedom and responsibility.

The contest between identity and universality.

The dance between ego and empathy.

The perpetual negotiation between chaos and order.

Digital platforms do not create human tendencies; they amplify them. The group chat is merely society without geography—an agora without architecture.

Concluding Reflection

To study WhatsApp groups is to study humanity unfiltered. They are not trivial distractions; they are laboratories of character.

In them, one learns that the health of any community—digital or physical—depends not on the loudest voices, but on those who preserve humour, practice restraint, pursue peace, and resist the intoxication of tribal righteousness.

In the end, the "reality show" is not the group; it is us.

# Sports

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

## Athletics: Athletes set new records as AFN Golden league Ignites fireworks in Benin

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The track and field of the Samuel Ogbemudia stadium have once again been appreciated as the Athletics Federation of Nigeria, AFN's organized Golden

League begins in Benin with many athletes recording personal best following their impressive performances.

This is coming three days after the second Niger Delta Games had been concluded at the same stadium in Benin city.



EDO STATE ATHLETES

The tathan tracks were on fire with top class performance as Chidera Ezeakor powered to victory in the men's 100m, finishing in a time of 10.32 seconds with a legal wind reading of +0.4.

Tejiri Godwin finished strongly in the second place in a time of 10.37 seconds, setting a new personal best record. while Gift Bright returned in a time of 10.49 seconds to seal third; another personal best in a race that underlined the depth of sprinting talent on display.

In the women's 100m final, Chinoso Courage Odika powered to victory in 11.69s, edging out Mariam Jegede who clocked 11.74s for 2nd place. Ejiro Peter completed the podium, finishing

in 3rd in a time of 11.76s.

In the men's senior Discus Throw (2kg) final, Nyherhovwo Benaiah Ofuoku stamped his authority on the circle with a commanding throw of 45.95m to claim top spot.

The 19-year-old's effort marked a new personal best, underlining his growing reputation as one of the country's brightest prospects in the event.

Chineme Akachiukwu Nweke followed in the second place with a solid 38.10m, which is also a personal best, while Emmanuel Shakamodu Audu secured third place with 36.27m, another season's best that capped an impressive outing for the Edo State Sports Commission athlete.



3RD NATIONAL PARA GAMES

## Abuja Ready for 3rd National Para Games

The stage is set for the 3rd National Para Games, Nigeria's largest and most prestigious para sports event, scheduled to hold from March 26 to April 3, 2026, in Abuja.

For nine days, the nation's capital will host more than 3,000 athletes representing all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, competing across 15 different sports in what promises to be a vibrant celebration of resilience, excellence and inclusion. Organisers say champions will emerge, records will tumble, and new chapters will be written in Nigeria's para sports history.

The Games are being organised by the National Sports Commission, which describes the event as a critical platform for talent discovery, national unity and

the advancement of para sports development across the country.

Since its inception, the National Para Games has evolved into a cornerstone of Nigeria's sporting calendar, spotlighting the remarkable abilities of athletes living with disabilities while reinforcing the country's commitment to inclusive participation in sports.

Officials say the 2026 edition will surpass previous outings in scale, organisation and competitive intensity. With participation confirmed from every state of the federation and the FCT, the Games are expected to reveal the depth of talent spread nationwide and provide a pathway for stand-out performers to progress to continental and global competitions.

## Niger Delta Games provides glimpse into future of Nigeria track and field

Five days of keenly contested events of the 2nd edition of the Niger Delta Games (NDG) ended with funfair Thursday, February 26 at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium Benin City, Edo State.

The host state for the first time in a long while topped the medals of any national sports fiesta with 52 gold medals.

But that was not the talking point as delegates headed back to their respective states. The discussion was more about the athletics events, most especially the final day of the contest.

From day one when the 100m was decided to the last day of relay spectacle, it was fireworks all through and justifiably so, because the Niger Delta area is a forest of athletics talents, and over the years has produced some of Nigeria's best in local and international track and field contests.

Delta State dominated the competition in Benin City in the face of the strong challenge from Edo, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom and Cross River States.

Delta State athletes won 13 gold medals mostly from the sprints and relays, Edo had its success in the field events, while Akwa Ibom and Cross River shared between themselves the medals of middle and long distance races.

"Nobody can take it from Delta State in athletics, they have a very good structure that produces quality athletes every year," said Mutiu Oluwa, Edo State Athletics coach.

"If other states like Edo can do what they are doing then it is going to be a total showdown in future Niger Delta Games,"

he declared.

Just before the closing ceremony Delta State left no one in doubt that they are untouchable by winning three out of the four relay gold medals at stake.

It was Akwa Ibom State that by winning the men's 4x400m stopped Delta State from a clean sweep on the final day.

"The athletes gave it every thing that they had, because everyone wanted to make a statement.

"This is good for Nigeria athletics. Looking at the quality of the contest and running talents, the competition was very encouraging.

"This is just the start and I be-

lieve with many more to come, this country can boast of many athletes in the near future," said former Nigeria former sprint champion Seun Ogunkoya.

Some of the star athletes that kept the spectators spellbound include Ejiro Peters who won a sprint double in the women's 100m and 200m.



NIGER DELTA GAMES ATHLETES

## World Rugby applauds Nigeria's growing global impact in T1 Rugby

World Rugby has commended Nigeria for its rising global impact in the development and adoption of T1 Rugby, highlighting the country as one of the emerging success stories in the non-contact format of the game.

In a pictorial release made available to the media, World Rugby

listed Nigeria alongside countries such as England and the Netherlands as nations making significant progress in expanding T1 Rugby.

Nigeria was particularly praised for developing its own pool of certified World Rugby educators, a move that has reduced reliance on foreign experts and strengthened local capacity for training delivery. The country

has also successfully organised face-to-face T1 Rugby courses for coaches and Physical Education teachers in Delta State, increased the number of clubs offering the sport, and boosted grassroots participation.

The global body further noted that sustained efforts to reassure parents about the safety and fun nature of T1 Rugby have improved acceptance among young players, leading to more children taking up the game.

Reacting to the recognition, President of the Nigeria Rugby Football Federation, Dr. Ademola Are, commended stakeholders for their collective contributions.

"This recognition is the result of the support from everyone involved. While we are not yet where we want to be, the positive signs give us confidence that we will reach our goals," he said.



NIGERIA RUGBY TEAM

## NRFF records major grassroots boost as rugby rising hits 5,000

The Nigeria Rugby Football Federation (NRFF) has recorded a significant milestone in grassroots development, with over 5,000 girls participating in the Rugby Rising programme, which concludes this weekend.

The initiative delivered intensive training sessions to young participants across the country, sparking widespread enthusiasm and increasing female participation in the sport.

Supervised by NRFF board member Hussain Wuraola and implemented by 30 coaches nationwide, the programme took rugby to schools and academies while

strictly adhering to guidelines set by World Rugby. The effort has greatly improved acceptance of the sport among young girls.

Commending the coaches for their dedication, Wuraola noted that their commitment helped break barriers and expand the game into previously unreached areas. She expressed confidence that the future of women's rugby in Nigeria is on a strong footing given the growing interest among young players.

The four-month training programme kicked off in November and will officially conclude in February.



GRASSROOTS RUGBY TEAM

## Sports

The Nigerian  
**Observer**  
...that the people may know

## Enabulele hails Bendel Insurance's emphatic 4-0 Victory over Ikorodu City, celebrates coach Boboye

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The Executive Chairman, Edo State Sports Commission, Hon. Amadin Desmond Enabulele has expressed his delight and congratulated Bendel Insurance Fc over their emphatic 4-0 victo-

ry against visiting Ikorodu City in Benin.

The jubilant Edo State Sports Commission boss who is still basking in the euphoria of team Edo's triumph in the recently concluded second Niger Delta Games to break 24 year of near success jinx, also

celebrated with the technical manager of the Benin Arsenals whose birthday celebration coincided with the 4-0 thrashing of Ikorodu City.

It was in deed a convivial and frenzy atmosphere on Sunday evening at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium as chairman of Bendel Insurance FC Emperor Jarret Tenebe and other management officials joined Hon Enabulele in the celebration of the coach who has brought them relief after a turnaround in the season campaign.

Enabulele described the 4-0 thrashing of Ikorodu City in the Matchday 28 of the Nigeria Premier Football League in Benin on Sunday as a perfect birthday gift for coach Ken-

dy Boboye.

"I congratulate our darling team Bendel Insurance fc and we are pleased with today's overwhelming victory. The boys fought hard to win for their coach and we join them to celebrate their remarkable victory and performing coach," Enabulele said.

He attributed the resounding victory to the team's resilience, discipline and focus, noting that the performance reflects Edo State's strong sporting spirit.

Enabulele also praised Coach Boboye's impact, highlighting the club's rise from 19th to sixth position and three consecutive away wins as evidence of credible leadership.



BENDEL INSURANCE COACH KENNDY BOBOYE BIRTHDAY



HEAD COACH FINIDI GEORGE

## NPFL: Finidi focused on title despite Bayelsa United defeat

Head coach Finidi George has maintained that Rivers United remain firmly on course for the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) title despite their latest setback against Bayelsa United.

The Pride of Rivers suffered a narrow defeat to Bayelsa United on Sunday, but the former Super Eagles winger downplayed the result, insisting that the bigger objective of the season remains intact.

Reacting after the game, Finidi made it clear that he is willing to sacrifice isolated results if it ultimately delivers the league crown.

"If losing to Bayelsa United

will give us the league title, I'll accept it," he said rhetorically.

"Let's lose to Bayelsa United and win the league.

"I'm not that worried about losing to Bayelsa United twice last season and twice this season.

"We know the purpose of our campaign this season is to win the league. It's quite unfortunate that we lost today."

Despite the disappointment of the defeat, Rivers United are still in contention at the top end of the NPFL table, with Finidi emphasizing that consistency over the full campaign, rather than individual fixtures, will determine the eventual champions.

## Sportsville announces date For 2026 Sports Award ceremony

Organizers of one of Nigeria's most glamorous and credible sports award ceremony have announced a date for this year's edition! According to a release signed by Harry Iwuala, the chairman of this year's award committee, the ceremony comes up in Lagos on Saturday, March 28th, at the prestigious Lagos Country Club, Ikeja.

"We re delighted to announce a date for this year's ceremony following a painstaking planning and selection process. It has been months of planning and preparations, and I am glad that we have finally picked a date for the ceremony, Iwuala, the Media Director of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) added.

"We will be unveiling the personalities and corporate organizations to be celebrated very soon, but I can assure you that they are men and women who have done a good job in sports development in the country.

"Our selection process was thorough to keep faith with the Award motto, which is credibility, Iwuala, who also has headed the Media Committee of the highly successful Niger Delta Games in successive editions, said.

Speaking also on the awards, the Chief Executive Officer of Sportsville Communication Ltd, the organizers of the award, Frank Ilaboya, says planning for this year's award has begun assuring the sports community of exciting innova-

tions this time.

"This year will be our 6th edition, and I am happy with the impact and progress the award has made in the country.

"One thing that gives me joy is the credibility of the award we give out every year. We ensure that those truly deserving get the award. And we are determined to keep doing this year after year.

"For this year's edition, awards will be given out in seven categories, Sports Icon, Sports Personality and Sports Transformative Categories.



## No court can stop the upcoming Nigeria Football Federation elections

The growing debate surrounding the proposed 2026 elective Congress of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) has once again exposed the tension between football politics and judicial intervention in Nigeria.

Reports suggesting that a



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court may halt the September 2026 elections have generated anxiety among stakeholders.

Significantly, from a regulatory and international football governance standpoint, no court can ultimately stop the NFF elections if due process within football statutes is fol-

lowed.

Football administration operates under a distinct global framework governed by FIFA and Confederation of African Football (CAF). Both bodies strictly prohibit third-party interference in football affairs, including interference by civil courts in electoral matters.

Member associations, including the NFF, are bound by statutes that emphasize internal dispute resolution mechanisms such as arbitration panels and the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). When national courts attempt to interfere in football electoral processes, it often places the country at risk of suspension from international football.

Historically, Nigeria has faced similar turbulence. In



## NPFL26 MD28: Striker Alex Oweifaleya bags hat trick as Bendel Insurance FC thrash Ikorodu City

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Bendel Insurance Football Club, Sunday produced a spectacular and dominant display against visiting Ikorodu City, thrashing the Lagos boys 4-0 in the match day 28 of the Nigeria Premier Football League.

Young Striker Alex Oweifaleya showed character and strength as he bagged his first hat

trick in the premier league football. Alex opened scoring for the Benin Arsenals in the 15th minute of play to provide the needed bost his side who returned from Nasarawa Utd without a point.

Insurance mercurial midfielder Udom Wisdom doubled the in the 24th minute before Alex made it 3-0 in the 27th.

The Benin Arsenals went into the halftime break fulfilled after

their powerful response and revenge against the Lagosians who pipped them 1-0 in their first round encounter in Lagos.

On their return for the remaining half, the game looked balance as the visitors however came out stronger but the hosts proved ready and well prepared to avenge the first round 1-0 defeat to Ikorodu City as they frustrated all their promising moves.

In the 59th minute, Alex Oweifaleya netted his third fantastic goal and bagged his first hat-trick to seal a 4-0 victory for Insurance FC.

The captain of the team, Efe Enabulele in his remarks after the game said that the big margin victory against Ikorodu City is dedicated to the team's technical manager Kennedy Boboye as his birthday gift.

## Protests erupt in Dakar over imprisoned Senegalese AFCON fans in Morocco

Demonstrators took to the streets of Dakar on Saturday to demand the release of 18 Senegalese football supporters imprisoned in Morocco following disturbances at the final of the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) in January.

Chanting "Free the hostages," protesters marched through the Senegalese capital, voicing anger over the sentences handed down by a court in Rabat on February 19. The supporters were convicted of hooliganism after clashing with security personnel during the closing stages of the tournament's final.

The incident occurred after Morocco was awarded a late

penalty, prompting a group of Senegalese fans to confront security officials in an attempt to access the pitch. Nine of those involved received one-year prison sentences and were fined €460 (approximately \$544), while the remaining defendants were given jail terms ranging from three months to one year.

Senegal's Prime Minister, Ousmane Sonko, criticised the severity of the ruling, telling parliament that Morocco's handling of the case "does not honor" the two nations' bilateral relations. He added that the Senegalese government was doing "everything it had to do" to secure the release of its citizens.



SENEGAL FANS PROTESTING

# FEATURES

## Edo must rise and shine: A collective call for progress and responsible leadership

GENERAL IWU COSMOS JP

Edo State has always occupied a unique place in the history and identity of Nigeria. From the legacy of the ancient Benin Kingdom to the industrious spirit of its modern citizens, Edo has never lacked greatness.

What has often been required, however, is a shared determination to translate that greatness into visible development that benefits every citizen. Today, more than ever before, the moment has come for Edo people to embrace what can best be described as a "Rise and Shine Agenda."

This agenda is not merely political rhetoric. It is a moral and civic responsibility that calls on leaders and citizens alike to work intentionally toward the progress of our dear state. Edo cannot continue to operate below its potential when the resources, talents, and opportunities needed for advancement are clearly within reach.

Across our communities—from the busy streets of Benin City to the rural towns and villages—people desire the same things: good roads, security, functional schools, accessible healthcare, and economic opportunities for young people. These expectations are not unrealistic demands; they are the basic ingredients of a thriving society.

The Rise and Shine vision therefore challenges every sector of Edo society to play its part. Government must continue to pursue policies that promote transparency, infrastructure development, and social welfare. Leadership must remain people-focused and responsive to the needs of the ordinary citizen. When governance reflects sincerity and accountability, public trust naturally increases.

However, the responsibility for building Edo State does not belong

to government alone. The private sector must also step forward by creating jobs, investing in local enterprises, and supporting innovation. Edo youths are creative, intelligent, and energetic. What they require is an enabling environment where their talents can flourish without unnecessary obstacles.

Education must also remain at the heart of the Rise and Shine Agenda. A society that neglects education risks losing its future. Schools must be strengthened, teachers motivated, and students encouraged to pursue excellence. Beyond formal education, skills acquisition and entrepreneurship programs should be expanded so that young people can become productive contributors to the economy.

Security remains another essential pillar of development. Communities cannot grow when fear dominates daily life. There must be effective collaboration between security agencies, community leaders, and residents. Vigilance, information sharing, and community unity are powerful tools in preventing crime and maintaining peace.

Furthermore, Edo's cultural heritage should be recognized as a powerful asset. Our traditions, festivals, arts, and historical identity are sources of pride and tourism potential. When properly promoted, culture can become a driver of economic growth while strengthening social unity among the people.

Equally important is the need for moral rebirth within society. Development is not only about roads, buildings, and policies. It is also about values—honesty, discipline, respect, and compassion. Families, religious institutions, and community organizations must continue to nurture these virtues among the younger generation.

In my interactions with people



EDO STATE GOVERNOR, MONDAY OKPEBHOLO

across the state, one thing remains clear: Edo people are resilient. They have endured economic hardship, political disagreements, and social challenges, yet their hope for a better tomorrow remains strong. That hope must now be transformed into collective action.

The Rise and Shine Agenda therefore represents a mindset—one that encourages cooperation rather than conflict, responsibility rather than blame, and vision rather than short-term thinking. Edo's progress will not come from criticism alone; it will come from constructive participation by all.

As citizens, we must support initiatives that promote peace, development, and unity. We must also hold leadership accountable while contributing positively to our communities. When everyone performs their role faithfully, transformation becomes possible.

Edo State has the potential to become a shining example of progress in Nigeria. With the right attitude, responsible leadership, and collective commitment, the dream of a prosperous Edo can become reality.

Indeed, the time has come for Edo to rise—and truly shine for the benefit of present and future generations.

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*There must be effective collaboration between security agencies, community leaders, and residents.*

## Best Parenting Manual: A Mother's Carefulness and Thoughtfulness

ACHONU LOVETH NNENNA

Motherhood is a choice you make everyday to put someone else's happiness and well-being ahead of your own - Donna Ball.

Motherhood is a complex and multifaceted concept that can be understood in various ways. Generally, it refers to the state of being a mother, encompassing the roles, responsibilities and emotions associated with caring for and nurturing a child.

This brings us to the question of who is a mother? A mother is a woman who has given birth to a child, adopted a child or takes on a maternal role in a child's life. She is a caregiver, a nurturer and often, a child's first teacher. Mothering is no

small task or feat and it is obviously not for the weak or unprepared though many mothers today were not prepared for the role but became one according to them by mistake.

Motherhood is time consuming, right from the first week and the first trimester, it is not always easy most especially for the first time mom.

Motherhood can be "tricky" at times, no matter how prepared or calculative you are as a woman, there are times you cry quietly and there are times you lose yourself, your space and even your peace of mind; there are times you shout "leave there" like hundred times in a day(not exaggerated). Other times, when one keeps the house clean and neat and just goes out expecting to come home to a neat house then comes and meets

the opposite, it could be quite demanding and tasking. Some, cases you just want to scream and flog but you just can't react, remember how you use to flog your younger ones for doing even less than what they did but now you can't react or flog mercilessly, what changed? Your position changed. You wondered why your younger ones kept misbehaving and your mom does nothing and you took it upon yourself to be the disciplinarian of the house; mom already knew that parenting is not everyday flogging in the name of discipline.

There are times you sit them (kids) down and talk to them in a calm manner, one of the mistakes we often make is thinking they don't or won't understand, they actually do no matter their age bracket. They un-

derstand the message you are passing across and if they go back to do the thing you warned them against that doesn't mean they didn't get the message, keep emphasizing on it and let them know the consequences of their actions.

Infact, we have moved from "Strict Parenting" to "Gentle parenting". Strict parenting is a style where rules are set and kids are expected to follow it without questioning, often with punishment for disobedience while gentle parenting on the other hand is raising kids with empathy, respect and understanding rather than punishment or strict rules. But i feel that as a mom, the cultural context you find yourself have a lot to do with the method of parenting you can adopt. I would rather embrace the two methods of parent-

ing for the sake of balance.

Motherhood doesn't come with a manual, neither does raising kids and doing alot of things as a mother come with manuals. Most times, you are left to figure it out on your own ... all by yourself, with emphasis, if you are lucky to still have a mother, all good and fine. Given that you have a supportive spouse, that is amazing, what if you don't have a mother, a supportive spouse or an elderly woman close by? You can't do trial and errors because it could cost a life. The best manual you can ever have as a mother is the "Bible" read the Bible, a girl doesn't need to be a

wife or a mother before preparation starts. Read as much book as possible on parenting and you are on your way to success!