

Nigeria faces 480,000 data protection personnel gap —NDPC

ABUJA

The Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC) has said that the country faces a significant gap of 480,000 Data Protection Officers (DPOs), in spite of notable progress recorded in the last three years.

The National Commissioner of NDPC, Dr Vincent Olatunji, said this on Monday during the opening of one-week training for the second cohort of DPOs Training and Certification Programme in Abuja.

Olatunji, however, said the number of certified DPOs in Nigeria had increased from fewer than 1,000 three years ago to over 10,000, while more than 27,000 professionals now operate within the broader privacy ecosystem.

He, however, noted that the gap remained wide due to the increasing number of data controllers and processors in the country.

“We have identified over 500,000 data controllers and processors who require the services of data protection of-

ficers.

“At the moment, we have about 10,000 certified DPOs to work in that space.

“The gap of about 480,000 still exists, which underscores the need for sustained capacity building,” he said.

The NDPC boss said the commission was intensifying efforts to bridge the gap through continuous training programmes.

He said the initiative was aimed at positioning Nigeria as a hub for highly skilled and globally competitive data pro-

tection professionals in Africa.

“Our goal is to make Nigeria the go-to country when it comes to sourcing qualified data protection officers in Africa.

“The certification we offer meets global standards, enabling practitioners to operate not just locally but in any part of the world,” Olatunji said.

He said the programme would also contribute to job creation within the digital economy, in line with the Federal Government’s priorities.

Earlier, Dr Tolu Fadipe,

Head of Research and Development, emphasised the critical role of data protection in the digital economy.

Fadipe said that responsible data handling was fundamental to the growth of digital systems and emerging technologies.

“As we move towards a digital economy data becomes central and protecting that data is essential.

“This training is designed to build competence and ensure organisations comply with the Nigeria Data Protection Act,”

she said.

Ms Adeola Sopade, Head Trainer and Privacy/Cybersecurity Consultant, said the training would provide both foundational knowledge and practical skills required of certified DPOs.

Sopade said participants, drawn from diverse professional backgrounds, would be exposed to global best practices, including data protection principles, data subject rights and compliance requirements.

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The Nigerian Observer



...that the people may know

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No request from ADC to use Eagle Square for convention —Wike

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Ordia, supporters dump PDP for APC

● As Okpebholo hosts major political realignment in Edo

BENIN CITY

A major political shift is set to unfold in Edo State today as Senator Clifford Ordia and his supporters formally defect to the All Progressives Congress (APC) in a high-profile ceremony to be hosted by Governor Mon-

day Okpebholo.

The event, widely described as a significant political realignment, will see the Edo State Governor officially receive the senator and his political associates into the ruling party, further reshaping the state’s political landscape.

The ceremony is scheduled

for 10:00 a.m. at Eguare Primary School, Irrua, in Esan Central Local Government Area, and is expected to attract a large crowd of party faithful, political stakeholders, and supporters.

In a show of political mobilisation, a roadshow procession will precede the main event, moving from Usugbenu Junc-

tion to the venue to herald the senator’s arrival and defection into the APC fold.

An invitation released by the Senator Clifford Ordia Media Group called on family members, friends, political associates, and supporters to witness what it described as a landmark moment in the state’s

evolving political history.

Senator Odia represented Edo Central Senatorial District

under the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) from 2015 - 2023 (two tenures of four years each)

Edo Assembly gives BEDC 4-month to improve power supply

KEN ABU

BENIN CITY

The Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly, Hon. Blessing Agbekaku, has issued a four-month ultimatum to the Benin Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC) to urgently improve power supply across Edo State, amid growing public anger over persistent electricity shortages.

Agbekaku handed down the directive when the management of the power distribution company appeared before the House to respond to complaints over the worsening and unreliable electricity supply affecting residents and businesses across the state.

The Speaker warned that the current state of power delivery was unacceptable, noting that citizens were increasingly dissatisfied with the company’s performance.

He urged BEDC to take immediate and practical steps to stabilise and improve distribution, cautioning that failure to

act could trigger widespread public protests.

He stressed that the House would not hesitate to take further action if the situation does not improve within the stipulated timeframe, insisting that electricity supply remains critical to economic growth, small business survival, and household welfare across Edo State.

In his response, the Commercial Officer and leader of the BEDC delegation, Mr Akinyele Ogunleye, attributed the poor electricity supply to a significant drop in allocation from the national grid.

He explained that the company currently receives less than 300 megawatts to serve the four states under its franchise, a situation he said has severely constrained distribution capacity and service delivery.

Meanwhile, in a separate legislative decision during plenary, the House confirmed Mr Charles Omonayo as Executive Director, Projects, of the Edo State Ecological Fund and Management Commission.



CONDOLENCE VISIT:

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo (3rd left); his Deputy, Hon. Dennis Idahosa, his wife, Ambassador Osaretin (left); Edo State All Progressives Congress (APC) Secretary, Lawrence Okah (3rd right); Senator representing Edo North Senatorial District, Adams Oshiomhole (2nd right) and State APC Chairman, Jarette Tenebe, during a condolence visit to the Deputy Governor over the death of his mother recently.

Justice, honesty key to nation building —Jonathan

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Africa CDC reports 95% budget use, grants \$463m

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Pope says he has 'no fear' of Trump after scathing criticism

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Give me hope: Is Zadok Yohanna the future of Nigerian football?

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OPINION

Ordia's defection to APC signals political realignment in Edo, sparks debate on opposition future

GRACE IJEOMA UMEH,
RAYMOND OSOGBE

The defection of former Senator Clifford Ordia to the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) has stirred fresh political debate in Edo State, with supporters describing it as a strong endorsement of Governor Monday Okpebholo's leadership style, while critics warn it reflects deeper cracks within the opposition.

Ordia's move into the APC fold has been widely interpreted as another political boost for the state's ruling party and an affirmation of the influence of Governor Okpebholo's administration in reshaping the state's political landscape.

The former senator, who formally aligned with the APC alongside his supporters, has

in recent engagements praised the governor's intervention in the rebuilding of the Police Officers' Wives Association (POWA) Market in Ekpoma, Esan West Local Government Area, which was destroyed by fire. He commended what he described as Okpebholo's commitment to keeping promises and responding to the needs of affected communities.

The development has, however, generated mixed reactions across political circles. While APC supporters have described Ordia's defection as evidence of growing confidence in the ruling party, opposition voices have urged caution, insisting that political realignments should be closely watched for their wider implications.

Within Edo's political space, the defection is being viewed as part of a broader shift in

alignments that could reshape the balance of power ahead of future elections, with analysts suggesting it may further weaken opposition structures already grappling with internal disputes.

Attention has also turned to the state of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), where internal leadership disagreements, factional tensions, and ongoing legal battles have continued to fuel speculation about the party's cohesion and long-term stability. Some political observers argue that sustained defections could deepen the party's crisis, while others maintain that renewal remains possible if internal reconciliation efforts succeed.

There are growing concerns among analysts that continued fragmentation within the PDP could lead to further loss of

relevance, or trigger additional defections to the APC, thereby consolidating ruling party dominance in the state. Others, however, argue that such turbulence could eventually force restructuring and repositioning within the opposition.

The broader implications of a weakened opposition, according to political commentators, include reduced checks on the ruling party and potential shifts in democratic competition, even as Nigeria's multiparty system continues to evolve.

Meanwhile, Governor Mon-

day Okpebholo's leadership style has continued to attract both praise and scrutiny. His administration is being described by supporters as decisive and people-focused, with emphasis on infrastructure renewal, security, healthcare, education, and agriculture under the Project SHINE agenda.

Government-backed interventions cited include the deployment of special tactical security teams to curb cult-related violence and kidnappings, infrastructure development projects such as roads,

flyovers and rural electrification, as well as improvements in the health sector through hospital rehabilitation and personnel recruitment. The education sector has also witnessed increased funding, school rehabilitation, and additional teacher deployment.

As political realignments continue to unfold, Ordia's defection is expected to remain a key reference point in discussions around Edo's evolving power structure and the future strength of opposition politics in the state.

Poor telecoms coverage crippling emergency response, NEMSAS raises alarm

ABUJA

Nigeria's emergency medical response system is being severely undermined by poor telecommunications connectivity, the Nigerian Emergency Medical Services and Ambulance System (NEMSAS) has warned.

The National Coordinator of NEMSAS, Dr Doubra Emuren, raised the concern on Monday in Abuja during a media workshop organised in collaboration with the Solina Centre for International Development and Research (SCIDaR).

The workshop, themed "Strengthening Communications for Emergency Medical Services in Nigeria," focused on improving media engagement and public understanding of emergency systems.

Emuren said unreliable network coverage continues to disrupt the national emergency number, 112, coordinated by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), making it difficult to respond promptly to distress calls.

"Connectivity is critical. When networks fail, response time is delayed, and lives are endangered," he said.

He identified weak inter-agency coordination, poor

infrastructure, and inadequate regulatory enforcement as additional challenges affecting emergency response operations.

According to him, Nigeria currently has fewer than 1,000 paramedics and about 500 ambulances, far below the estimated 4,000 required to meet national needs.

He stressed the urgent need to scale up the training of Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) to strengthen pre-hospital care and bridge manpower gaps.

"In the short to medium term, expanding EMT training will improve coverage and response capability," he added.

Emuren also advocated increased private sector participation and the introduction of air ambulances to improve access in congested urban centres and hard-to-reach areas.

He further cited poor road networks, insecurity, and lack of traffic management systems as factors complicating emergency operations, calling for policies that prioritise ambulance movement.

The NEMSAS boss also pushed for the enactment of a Good Samaritan law to protect citizens who assist victims during emergencies.

Highlighting achievements, he

said NEMSAS had transported about 47,000 pregnant women and newborns across 132 local government areas under the Maternal Mortality Reduction Innovation and Initiatives (MAMII).

He added that the service provides free emergency support, including response to road accidents, snake bites, gunshot wounds, building collapses and communal clashes, and has established operational structures in 33 states and the Federal Capital Territory.

Also speaking, Dr Lawal Bakare of the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare said the Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) was designed to improve coordination and equity in healthcare delivery, in line with the National Health Act of 2014.

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"We will take them from basic awareness to practical application, including how to handle data access requests and understand legal bases for data collection," she said.

A participant, Isang Abasi-Ofong, described the training as a valuable opportunity for Nigerian youths to prepare for a technology-driven fu-

ture.

He said the programme would equip participants with the skills needed to navigate emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and strengthen Nigeria's readiness for the digital age.

The trainees would be attached to different organisations after the programme for internships and possible employment opportunities

No request from ADC to use Eagle Square for convention —Wike

ABUJA

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Mr Nyesom Wike, has dismissed claims that the African Democratic Party (ADC) was denied the use of the Eagle Square for its National Convention.

Wike, who made the reaction on Monday, after he inspected ongoing projects in Abuja, described the claims as "baseless", insisting that no formal application to use the facility was submitted.

The ADC raised concerns over difficulties in securing a venue for its national convention, scheduled for Tuesday in Abuja.

Chairman of the party's Media and Publicity Sub-Committee for the convention, Kola

Ologbondiyan, made the claim on Monday.

Ologbondiyan said that the party had yet to receive approval for a venue less than 24 hours before the event.

The Minister said: "who denied them? I am not aware of any such development."

"If it is the African Democratic Congress, such claims are their usual attempt to gain public sympathy."

He explained that the use of Eagle Square was subject to due process, which includes formal application through the Abuja Investments Company Ltd, in charge of the facility and payment of required fees.

The Minister also pointed out that the Moshood Abiola National Stadium Velodrome is not under the FCT Administration, but the National Sports

Commission.

"As we speak, no formal application has been submitted to the Abuja Investments Company Ltd."

"When the All Progressives Congress used the venue and Peoples Democratic Party used the Stadium's Velodrome, they complied with the process."

"We do not deny anyone access if the rules are followed," he added.

Speaking on the inspected projects, the Minister expressed satisfaction with the level of work done so far, assuring that key road projects would be completed by May 15.

"The contractors have assured us that road projects will be completed by May 15, while streetlight installations will be finalised before the end of May," he said.

At Gaduwa, Wike said he had directed the installation

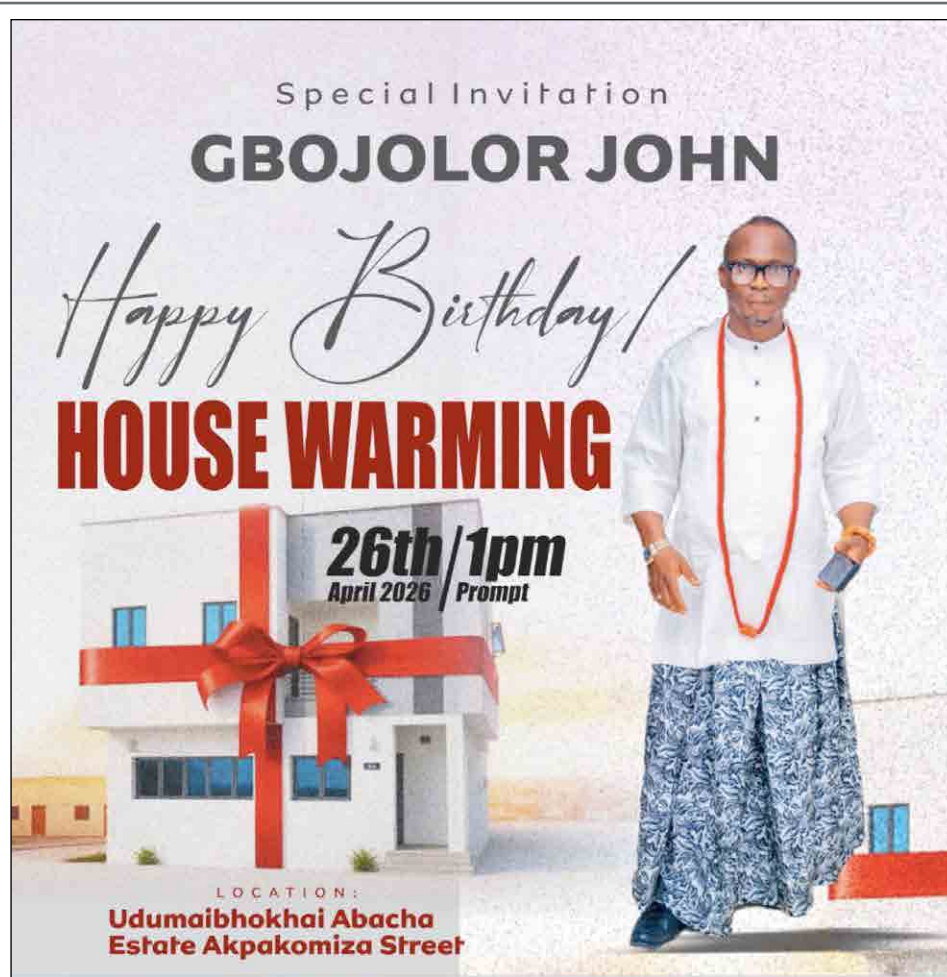
of protective mesh to prevent encroachment on the road corridors, while works on streetlights were progressing.

At Wassa, the Minister disclosed that the FCT Administration was set to relocate artisans and sparepart dealers, operating at Apo Mechanic on the Outer Southern Expressway Road corridor.

He said that traders and artisans would be relocated to a new facility equipped with necessary infrastructure.

"This project is aimed at improving the working conditions of artisans and fulfilling long-standing promises to the informal sector," he said.

Wike attributed the steady progress of projects in the FCT to effective collaboration between the government and contractors, supported by prompt payment of contractual obligations.



NEWS

Oroh declares return to House of Representatives

● Secures party endorsement in Owan

LAGOS

Former Edo State Commissioner for Information and rights activist, Hon. Abdul Oroh, has formally declared his intention to return to the National Assembly to represent Owan Federal Constituency in the 2027 general elections, receiving unanimous backing from the All Progressives Congress (APC) leadership across the 22 wards in the constituency.

Oroh, who previously served in the House of Representatives between 2003 and 2007, was endorsed during his declaration ceremony following a motion moved by Chief Alidu Ovbiose and seconded by Isekhem Francis Ozoya.

Party leaders across Owan East and Owan West described him as a credible and experienced legislator, recalling that his earlier tenure was marked by strong legislative activism, job creation opportunities for constituents, and develop-

ment-focused interventions in sectors such as education and healthcare.

They expressed confidence that his return would strengthen representation and accelerate development across the constituency, while also urging other aspirants to step down in his favour.

The former commissioner under the administration of former Governor Adams Oshiomhole also received broad-based endorsement from interest groups, including persons with disabilities, technicians, youth groups, and grassroots movements across the constituency.

Speaking at the event, Oroh said his decision to re-enter the National Assembly was driven by the urgent need to address insecurity, economic hardship, and infrastructural deficits affecting the area.

He said his experience and networks positioned him to deliver effective representation.

He pledged to prioritise the welfare of constituents and support efforts to strengthen national security, adding that he would collaborate with both federal and state authorities, including the administration of Governor Monday Okpehlo, as well as the private sector and international partners.

Oroh also called for stronger institutions, expanded job creation through agriculture and commerce, and improved utilisation of natural resources.

He further expressed support for the establishment of state police as a strategy to tackle insecurity at the local level.

He decried poor electricity supply in the constituency and promised to advocate improved performance in the power sector.

His legislative agenda also includes human rights protection, free primary healthcare for mothers and children, social welfare support for the elderly, and free and compulsory

basic and secondary education.

He further pledged to push for the creation of more Local Government Development Councils and greater financial autonomy for local gov-

ernments, while aligning his ambition with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda, particularly in security and governance reforms.

He called on party members and constituents to support his bid, assuring that he would build on his past record to deliver more impactful representation if elected.

Rotation row: Owan leader tells Ihonvbere to step aside after 8yrs

Former Chairman of Owan West Local Government, Hon. Barr. Godwin Aigbodion, has warned that any move to retain the House of Representatives seat in Owan West beyond eight years would amount to a breach of a long-standing power rotation agreement between Owan East and Owan West in Edo North.

Aigbodion, in a press statement he signed as Political Leader and former Chairman of Owan West Local Government Council, said that he had followed "with keen interest" the ongoing political discourse in the Owan East/Owan West Federal Constituency and

found it necessary to speak "clearly and firmly" as a leader from Owan West.

He recalled that leaders and stakeholders from both Owan East and Owan West had entered into a "clear, simple, and honourable understanding" that political power at the federal level would rotate between the two local government areas to ensure fairness, inclusiveness, and a sense of belonging for all parts of the constituency.

According to him, Owan East had already held the House of Representatives seat for eight years, while Owan West had also completed its own eight-year tenure, making it, by "every standard of justice, equity, and fairness," the turn of Owan East to produce the next representative.

Aigbodion, therefore, condemned reported moves by the current lawmaker representing the constituency, Prof. Julius Ihonvbere, to seek another term in the Green Chamber, describing such ambition as "completely unacceptable."

He argued that having served eight years, any attempt by Ihonvbere to remain in the House of Representatives would amount to "a breach of trust, a violation of our collective agreement, and a direct in-

sult to the spirit of equity that has guided our politics."

"A leader who has enjoyed the benefit of rotation should not be the one to destroy it," Aigbodion said, insisting that if the lawmaker wish to continue in national service, "the honourable and proper path is to aspire to a higher office, not to cling to a seat that, by agreement and by conscience, should now return to Owan East."

The former council chairman cautioned against the use of "principal positions" or "ranking status" as justification for extending tenure, warning that such arguments could undermine the foundation of trust within the constituency.

By the same reasoning, he noted, Ihonvbere's predecessor could have remained in office indefinitely.

"An agreement is an agreement," he stressed, adding that once rules are altered to favour one individual, "we destroy the very foundation of trust that holds us together."

Aigbodion further warned against what he described as creeping political greed and desperation, stressing that elective offices are not "family property" but positions held in trust for the people and subject to agreed principles of rotation.



DECLARATION:

Abdul Oroh addressing party leaders and supporters during his declaration for the Owan Federal Constituency ahead of the 2027 elections in his hometown, Ivbiano, Edo State.

Evboekhae gets caretaker c'ttee as Enogie dissolves EXCO

BENIN CITY

The Enogie of Evboekhae and Evbovbioba Dukedom, HRH Lucky Izevbokun, has dissolved the executive committee of Evboekhae community and appointed a five-member caretaker committee to oversee its affairs pending the emergence of a new leadership structure.

The development, announced in a public notice, marks a significant administrative shift in the community, with the newly constituted

caretaker committee mandated to manage day-to-day activities on an interim basis.

The committee is headed by Colonel Godfrey Etin-Osa Asemota as Chairman, while other members include Prince Kester Izevbokun, Mr Samson Emofonwan who will serve as Secretary, Pa Alex Omosigbo, and Mr Sunday Enomanyo.

The traditional ruler urged indigenes and members of the public to henceforth refrain from transacting any business with the dissolved executive committee, warning that such

dealings would no longer be recognised by the community authority.

He further called on prospective developers and property holders within the community to present themselves before the caretaker committee for verification, as part of efforts to streamline and regularise community records. However, the directive does not apply to occupants of areas currently under dispute between Evboekhae and neighbouring Ebowe community.

The Enogie also appealed to all stakeholders to cooperate fully with the caretaker committee as it undertakes its re-

sponsibilities during the transition period.

Meanwhile, a general meeting of all bona fide sons and daughters of Evboekhae community, both at home and in the diaspora, has been scheduled for Friday, April 17, 2026, at the Enogie's palace along Airport Road in Benin City, beginning at 9 a.m.

The meeting will deliberate on critical issues affecting the community, with particular focus on modalities for the installation of the Odionwere of Evboekhae, among other matters. All indigenes have been enjoined to attend promptly.

430 Residents benefit from Ebelo Foundation free medical care in Edo community

EDWARD OSEGHE

No fewer than 430 residents of Zide and Madagbayo communities in Ovia South-West Local Government Area of Edo State have benefited from a two-day free medical outreach organised by the Aaron Ponuwei Ebelo Foundation, in what organisers described as an intervention aimed at addressing critical healthcare gaps in rural areas.

The fifth edition of the foundation's outreach, which coincided with the Easter celebration, was carried out with the support of more than 35 medical personnel who provided a wide range of healthcare services to residents.

Beneficiaries were screened for blood sugar levels, HIV, Hepatitis B and C, blood pressure, weight, and eye conditions, while others received optical services, general consultations, and free medication. Patients requiring further treatment were

referred to the General Hospital in Iguobazuwa and other health facilities for continued care.

Founder of the foundation, Mr. Goodluck Ilajufi Ebelo, said the initiative was designed to bridge the healthcare gap in underserved communities, noting that many villages in the area lacked functional health facilities. He added that similar outreaches were organised during festive periods such as Christmas and Easter, and confirmed that this was the fifth edition in three years.

He also disclosed plans to refurbish and equip abandoned government health centres in the area, as well as engage qualified personnel to run them.

The intervention, describing it as unprecedented. The Chairman of Zide community, Zachariah, said the outreach was the first of its kind experienced in the area, even compared to government interventions, while also noting that the foundation had previously rehabilitated a school and employed teachers.

Editorial

The Nigerian Observer: A legacy restored

The return of The Nigerian Observer to the newsstand today marks more than the revival of a publication; it signals the reawakening of a historic institution deeply woven into the political and media landscape of Edo State and Nigeria at large.

After months of absence since November 2024, the newspaper's reappearance under the leadership of its new General Manager, Peter Odiboh, is both symbolic and substantive, reflecting a renewed sense of purpose, discipline and institutional rebuilding.

The origin of The Nigerian Observer is rooted in a broader vision that predates its actual establishment. The idea of publishing a government-owned newspaper in the then Midwest Region was first conceived during the administration of David Ejoor, who recognised the need for a structured communication platform for government policies and public engagement. That initial vision laid the intellectual foundation for what would later become one of Nigeria's most enduring media institutions.

Building on that vision, the then Midwest State Government formally established the Midwest Newspapers Corporation under an Edict dated December 2, 1967. This legal framework provided the institutional backing for the production of The Nigerian Observer, which subsequently published its first edition on May 29, 1968. In doing so, the state did not merely create a newspaper; it institutionalised a voice for governance, public accountability and civic communication.

At its inception, the then Governor of the State, Samuel Osaigbovo Ogbemudia, articulated a guiding philosophy that would define the newspaper's identity for decades. He observed that if The Nigerian Observer was to discharge its sacred function effectively and efficiently, it must be free from government control as to what to write and what not to write. That principle of editorial independence became the moral

compass of the publication and a benchmark for its journalistic credibility.

From those early years, the newspaper grew rapidly in influence and reach. At its peak in 1972, The Nigerian Observer reportedly achieved a daily circulation of over 85,000 copies, a remarkable feat that underscored its acceptance and authority among readers. It was not merely a government bulletin; it was a trusted public institution that reflected the pulse of society.

Prior to what the immediate past government called restructuring, the newspaper house had to its credit three publications: The Nigerian Observer, The Weekend Observer, and The Sunday Observer. These titles formed a robust publishing ecosystem that ensured consistent engagement with readers across the week. However, the restructuring policies introduced during that period led to the discontinuation of the subsidiary titles, with only The Nigerian Observer surviving the process.

Over time, like many long-standing institutions, the newspaper experienced periods of transition and restructuring. In the course of its evolution, particularly during administrative reforms under the immediate past government, what was described as restructuring amounted, in practical terms, to a poorly executed, but well-packaged reform agenda. While it was presented as a modernization effort, it resulted in significant operational disruptions, identity adjustments, and the contraction of its once broader publication structure.

The present return of the newspaper, courtesy of Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State, therefore, is not accidental, but the outcome of deliberate restoration efforts. Systems that had weakened over time have been reactivated, production processes stabilised, and editorial operations reorganised to ensure continuity. The result is a more coherent and structured workflow that now supports consistent publication.

A key pillar of this repositioning is the strength of its workforce. The newsroom has been reinforced by creating a dynamic balance between institutional memory and fresh journalistic energy. This collective professional capacity, rather than any single individual now defines the character and direction of the newspaper's output.

These enhancements reflect a renewed commitment to matching editorial strength with technical excellence.

Indeed, nearly six decades after its establishment, The Nigerian Observer remains the longest surviving government-owned newspaper in Nigeria. It has also earned its place as the flagship of state-owned media in the country, not merely by longevity, but by its enduring institutional relevance and historical influence in Nigerian journalism.

The newspaper continues to take pride in its legacy of producing some of the country's most renowned journalists. More importantly, it remains a reference point for ethical and responsible journalism, built on accuracy, balance and a deep sense of public duty.

Community news remains central to its editorial philosophy, ensuring that grassroots realities are consistently reflected in its coverage.

At the same time, the newspa-

per maintains a national outlook, situating local developments within broader Nigerian socio-political and economic narratives. Ultimately, the true significance of this revival lies not in nostalgia, but in continuity strengthened by renewal. A newspaper does not reclaim its place by returning to the stands alone; it does so by demonstrating sustained relevance, credibility and intellectual depth in its reporting.

What is now evident is a re-energised newsroom supported by experienced professionals, improved production systems and a restored sense of institutional purpose. These are not abstract ambitions, but tangible developments that have made the newspaper's return possible.

There is also a renewed recognition of its symbolic role in Nigerian media history. As a flagship government-owned newspaper, The Nigerian Observer carries the responsibility of demonstrating that public media can be both professionally independent in practice and publicly accountable in mission.

If this momentum is sustained, then this return will not be remembered merely as a relaunch, but as a decisive moment of institutional rebirth. And in that rebirth lies the promise that The Nigerian Observer will once again stand, not only as a witness to history, but as an active shaper of it.

Cartoon Corner



Justice, honesty key to nation building —Jonathan

EMEYAL (BAYELSA)

Former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan has stressed the critical role of justice and honesty in na-

tion building, warning that no society can make meaningful progress without both values.

Jonathan spoke during the induction of his wife, Patience Jonathan, and 15 others into

the Knighthood of Saint Paul (KSP) of the Diocese of Ogbia (Anglican Communion).

He said Nigeria's development challenges were largely tied to the absence of justice and honest-

ty in public and private life.

"Two things are basically missing in our society—justice and honesty. These two attributes are lacking. The absence of justice is one of the main issues

in Nigeria," he said.

According to him, a society that fails to uphold truth and fairness, particularly in relationships and public conduct, cannot thrive, even under a democratic system.

Jonathan congratulated the new knights and urged them not to take the honour lightly, describing knighthood as a call to higher responsibility and a commitment to defending justice.

The ceremony was held at St. Luke's Anglican Church, Emeyal 2, in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Delivering the sermon, guest preacher, Bishop Chikordi Wachukwu of the Ikwerre Diocese, urged the inductees to see their elevation as a call to deeper service to God rather than a mere ceremonial honour.

"It is not about wearing regalia but about walking with God. It is a lifelong journey of service to God and humanity," he said.

In her remarks, Mrs Jonathan thanked her husband for his continued support in her religious activities and expressed appreciation to both old and new knights.

"I thank God and the Holy Spirit for the grace to serve the church and the people. Knighthood is a call to service, and I promise to lead by example," she said.

She urged fellow knights to remain committed to God's work and uphold strong moral values regardless of circumstances.

Mrs Jonathan also confirmed the transfer of her knighthood from the Aba Diocese to the Ogbia Diocese.



NEWS CONFERENCE:

L-R: African Democratic Congress (ADC), Enugu State Chairmanship aspirant, Chief Chris Eze; ADC chieftain, Mr Kenneth Okonkwo and member, ADC, Enugu State Congress Committee, Comrade Adolphus Chidubem, during a news conference to raise alarm on party infiltration by alleged moles in Enugu recently.

Experts decry rising environmental degradation, demand proper use of ecological funds

PORT HARCOURT

Environmental experts have raised alarm over worsening environmental degradation across the South-South region, calling for stricter enforcement of laws and judicious use of ecological funds to tackle the crisis.

The stakeholders, reacting to a recent environmental survey, identified major threats to include erosion, carbon emissions, water pollution, deforestation and ocean encroachment, attributing the situation to both natural and human factors.

In Rivers State, experts expressed concern over increasing pollution, particularly groundwater contamination.

Prof. Chibuogwu Eze, Director of the Institute of Pollution Studies at Rivers State University, warned that toxic substances,

including lead, had infiltrated underground water sources.

He linked the contamination to poor maintenance of underground fuel storage tanks by filling station operators, noting that leakages often seep into boreholes widely used by households.

"Boiling water only kills pathogens, not heavy metals like lead," he cautioned, stressing the health risks.

Eze emphasised the need to enforce regulations requiring periodic testing of fuel tanks every five years and limiting their lifespan to 20 years.

Also speaking, Mr Fyneface Dumnamene, Executive Director of the Youths and Environmental Advocacy Centre (YE-AC-Nigeria), criticised what he described as poor utilisation of ecological funds by some states, particularly Rivers.

He explained that ecological funds, representing about two per cent of the federal budget, are disbursed monthly to states as part of federal allocations.

Despite receiving substantial funds between 2023 and 2025, he alleged that environmental challenges in Rivers remained largely unaddressed.

Dumnamene called for the establishment of a dedicated disaster management committee to ensure proper deployment of the funds.

In Cross River State, Prof. Francis Bissong of the University of Calabar warned that illegal logging around key forest corridors, including the Mbe Mountains, was threatening biodiversity and local livelihoods.

He noted that the state, one of the world's biodiversity hotspots, faces significant ecological risks from deforestation,

which could lead to flooding, erosion and loss of wildlife habitats, including gorilla conservation areas.

Bissong advocated stronger enforcement of forestry laws, land-use zoning and community involvement in forest management.

Responding, the Director-General of the Cross River Forestry Commission, Mr George Oben-Etchi, said measures were underway to curb illegal logging, including the introduction of a "permiteeship" system and prosecution of offenders through designated courts.

Also, environmental advocate Ken Henshaw of "We the People" called for greater community inclusion in decision-making and access to climate finance.

"When communities do not benefit from natural resources, resentment grows. There must be formal representation and participation," he said.

FRSC boss warns against overloading, unsafe highway practices

KADUNA

The newly posted Sector Commander of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) in Kaduna State, Corps Commander Andrew Longkam, has warned motorists against overloading and unsafe transport practices, describing them as major causes of road fatalities.

Longkam, who assumed duty on April 9, gave the warning while addressing journalists on Monday in Kaduna.

He assured residents of improved road safety through enhanced enforcement, public enlightenment and stakeholder collaboration.

"Our primary mandate is to reduce road traffic crashes and ensure safer roads for all users," he said.

He noted that ongoing road construction had contributed to traffic congestion but pledged

proactive deployment of personnel to ease movement.

The sector commander also expressed concern over roadside trading, saying it obstructs traffic and endangers lives.

On overloading, he described the situation as alarming, noting that vehicles designed for seven passengers are often forced to carry up to 15.

"Overloading significantly increases casualties in the event of a crash," he warned.

He further condemned mixed loading—transporting goods alongside passengers, citing cases where such practices led to fatalities.

Longkam said the command would intensify special patrols and work with transport unions and security agencies to enforce compliance.

He urged all road users to adhere to safety regulations and cooperate with authorities to reduce avoidable accidents.

Yaba Psychiatric Hospital partners Gift Health to promote eye health

LAGOS

The Federal Neuro-psychiatric Hospital Yaba has partnered with Gift Health Plus INC., to offer free eye care services, to reduce blindness and improve vision for underserved Yaba community in Lagos State.

The outreach, which took place on Monday at the hospital's premise, provided services including eye tests, screenings and distribution of recommended medicated glasses.

Speaking at the event, the Medical Director of the hospital, Dr Olugbenga Owoye, said the initiative was part of the hospital's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), aimed at giving back to the community where it operated.

Owoye reiterated that the

initiative, which had become an annual event, provided Yaba residents, including staff of the hospital and patients, with free eye tests, recommended eye glasses and treatment for various eye ailments.

According to him, the hospital in conjunction with Gift Health Plus Incorporated, put resources together to provide the services.

He, therefore, encouraged staff of the hospital, its patients and Yaba community, to seize the opportunity to check their eye health.

He said that those identified with defects that could not be handled there, would be referred to their sister hospitals for further treatment.

"We observed that a lot of peo-

FG opens applications for second phase of TVET programme

ABUJA

The Federal Government has opened applications for the second phase of its Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme aimed at boosting skills acquisition and job creation among Nigerian youths.

The Federal Ministry of Education disclosed this in a statement issued on Monday by its Director of Press and Public Re-

lations, Mrs Folasade Boriowo.

Quoting the Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, the ministry said applications commenced on April 13 for the nationwide initiative designed to strengthen technical capacity and tackle unemployment.

Alausa said the programme aligned with President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda and underscored the administration's commitment to expanding access to skills-based education.

He explained that the initiative offers six-month and one-year hands-on training in accredited centres across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.

Participants will receive a monthly stipend of N22,500 and nationally recognised certification upon completion.

Training areas include construction, ICT, automotive technology, creative media, agriculture, fashion, cosmetology, tourism and hospitality,

catering, and leather works.

The minister noted that attendance would be monitored through biometric verification, with stipends tied to compliance.

Applicants are required to provide their National Identification Number (NIN) and Bank Verification Number (BVN) during registration.

He urged eligible Nigerians to take advantage of the opportunity to gain market-relevant skills for self-reliance.

CONTINUES ON PG 4

NEWS

Army debunks sabotage claims over Soldier's death in Katsina

KATSINA

The Nigerian Army has dismissed reports alleging internal sabotage and negligence in the death of a soldier, Corporal Ude Jude, describing such claims as misleading and unfounded.

In a statement, the Acting Assistant Director, Army Public Relations, 17 Brigade, Capt. Abayomi Adisa, said the reports were "deliberately crafted to misinform the public."

He clarified that the deceased was not a Lieutenant, as widely reported, but a Corporal

enlisted in 2012 under the 67 Regular Recruit Intake.

Adisa explained that the incident leading to his death did not occur within the barracks, but outside while he was de-

ployed at a Forward Operating Base in Funtua.

"On February 16, at about 8:30 p.m., Jude, a native of Ezeagu Local Government Area of Enugu State, reported-

ly left his duty post to purchase personal items when he was attacked," he said.

He added that preliminary investigations revealed the incident resulted from a physical

altercation with a civilian over a personal dispute.

The injured soldier was given first aid and evacuated to the 17 Brigade Medical Centre, where he received sustained treatment.

He was later relieved of duty to allow for full recovery, following medical reports indicating stab wounds and other trauma.

Despite weeks of treatment, Adisa said the soldier collapsed outside his residence on March 24, 2026, shortly after receiving medical care, and was confirmed dead on arrival at the Medical Centre.

He noted that the Garrison Commander supervised arrangements, including provision of a coffin and mortuary services, while additional support came from the 82 Division Garrison in Enugu.

According to him, all military accoutrements were handed over to the next of kin, and the family was duly notified, with continuous communication maintained throughout the period.

The brigade also provided security support during the burial.

Adisa explained that the delay in issuing an official statement was to allow for proper verification of facts and consultation with relevant formations.

He assured that efforts to identify and apprehend those responsible for the attack were ongoing, vowing that justice would be served.

Abia APC endorses Dep Speaker Kalu for 2027 governorship

UMUAHIA

Stakeholders of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Abia State have endorsed the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Benjamin Kalu, as their preferred candidate for the 2027 governorship election.

The endorsement was made at a post-convention appraisal meeting in Umuahia and conveyed in a communiqué read by former Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Martins Azubuike.

Party executives, former lawmakers, serving legislators and chieftains from the 17 local government areas unanimously backed Kalu through a voice vote.

The meeting, attended by representatives from the three

senatorial zones, cited confidence in Kalu's leadership and performance.

State APC Chairman, Mr Chijioko Chukwu, commended stakeholders for their commitment and assured a level playing field for other aspirants.

He highlighted the party's growth, noting an increase in membership from 7,000 in 2023 to over 160,000, and expressed optimism of securing between 800,000 and one million votes for President Bola Tinubu in 2027.

In his response, Kalu thanked the party for the endorsement and urged continued support for Tinubu's re-election bid.

He acknowledged calls from across the state for him to contest, promising to make his position known in the coming weeks.



PRESENTING A T-SHIRT:

Member representing Uguwan Sanusi Constituency in the Kaduna State House of Assembly, Mr Auwalu Mai-kyau (L) presenting a T-shirt to Hadiza Adamu, one of the beneficiaries of his 200 WAEC Examination Scholarship in Kaduna recently.

Police bust robbery syndicate, recover 450 motorcycles in Imo

OWERRI

The Imo State Police Command has dismantled a notorious robbery syndicate, arresting five suspects and recovering 450 allegedly stolen motorcycles.

The Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Henry Okoye, disclosed this during a briefing in Owerri.

He said the operation targeted crimes including armed robbery, attempted murder and vehicle snatching.

According to him, the breakthrough followed the investigation into the disappearance of a commercial driver, Mr Paul Ohaka, who went missing on April 5.

Ohaka was later found unconscious along the Irete axis of Onitsha Road after being attacked and left for dead by assailants who made away with his vehicle.

He is currently receiving

treatment at a hospital.

Police operatives traced the stolen vehicle to a workshop in Orlu, where it was recovered as suspects attempted to repaint it.

Two suspects, identified as Olagoke Jelili and Godday Ezike, were arrested at the scene, leading to the capture of three additional gang members.

Okoye said the suspects allegedly attempted to bribe officers with N5 million, but the offer was rejected.

Further investigations led to the recovery of N6.4 million cash, various number plates, charms and other incriminating items.

He added that the suspects failed to provide proof of ownership for the motorcycles, many of which were hidden in bushes.

The Commissioner of Police has ordered their prosecution, reaffirming the command's resolve to rid the state of criminal elements.

Yaba Psychiatric Hospital partners...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 3

ple find it difficult to read and they cannot afford medicated glasses.

"So, because of transportation costs, some cannot even travel from their homes to hospitals where they can access care.

"In the course of our occupational therapy building in the hospital, our patients are

into various arts and crafts.

"Some that are into tailoring cannot put needles into the machine. Some are into computer and they cannot read on it because of sight issues.

"As a result of this, we decide to put this outreach to assist them in caring for their eyes because prevention is far better and cheaper than cure," Owoeye said.

FG, NCDC partner to unlock N'Central mining potential

ABUJA

The Federal Government has intensified efforts to harness the mining potential of the North Central region through a strategic partnership with the North Central Development Commission (NCDC).

Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Mr Dele Alake, disclosed this while receiving the commission's management team led by its Managing Director, Dr Cyril Tsenyil, in

Abuja.

In a statement by his Special Assistant on Media, Lara Owoeye-Wise, Alake said that the collaboration would boost job creation through mineral processing and other value chain activities.

He noted that the region had already benefited from the ministry's local value-addition policy, with new mineral processing projects contributing over \$2 billion to the economy.

The minister explained that the policy promotes in-country

processing and beneficiation of mineral resources, reducing raw material exports while enhancing industrial growth and economic diversification.

He reaffirmed President Bola Tinubu's commitment to building enduring institutions, including development commissions like the NCDC.

Alake also called for stronger inter-agency collaboration to maximise the sector's contribution to national development, adding that over 300 artisanal miners had been or-

ganised into cooperatives to formalise operations and curb illegal mining.

He revealed that more than 300 illegal miners had been arrested, with about 150, including foreigners, currently facing prosecution.

In his remarks, Tsenyil emphasised the need for synergy between both institutions to drive sustainable development, proposing the establishment of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to advance mining activities in the region.

FG reports rise in power generation despite supply challenges

ABUJA

The Federal Government says electricity generation has risen from 3,951 megawatts (MW) to 4,300MW between March 28 and April 10, despite persistent supply challenges across the country.

The development was disclosed in a statement by Mr Bolaji Tunji, Special Adviser to the Minister of Power on Strategic Communications and Media Relations.

He said the increase followed assurances by the Minister of Power, Mr Adebayo

Adelabu, that supply would improve within two weeks.

Tunji attributed the gains to improved gas supply to thermal power plants, which rose from about 605 million standard cubic feet per day (mmscfd) to over 704 mmscfd within the period.

He added that mechanical availability peaked at over 7,796MW, while operational availability increased from about 4,208MW to over 4,694MW, reflecting improved efficiency in electricity generation.

"Despite minor fluctuations, the overall trend indicates

gradual recovery driven by better gas supply and coordination among stakeholders," he said.

To sustain the gains, the minister recently inaugurated a Gas-to-Power Monitoring Committee to address bottlenecks in gas delivery and enhance synergy between gas producers and power generation companies.

Tunji assured Nigerians that ongoing reforms would continue to yield measurable improvements, though he admitted that more work remained to be done.

"We are not there yet, but we

will continue to ensure measurable improvements," he said.

Meanwhile, Adelabu has tasked the new management of the Nigeria Electricity Management Services Agency (NEMSA) to improve its Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) and reduce dependence on government funding.

He also called for the establishment of additional meter testing centres nationwide and stronger collaboration with the National Power Training Institute of Nigeria (NAPTIN) to address manpower shortages, particularly among meter installers.

Zulum warns residents against aiding insurgents after Jilli airstrike

MAIDUGURI

Governor Babagana Zulum of Borno State has warned residents against aiding, harbouring or providing logistics support to Boko Haram insurgents, following a recent military operation in the state.

The warning comes on the heels of an airstrike carried out by the Air Component of Op-

eration Hadin Kai in the Jilli area of Gubio Local Government Area.

Jilli, a border community between Borno and Yobe states, has been identified as a strategic location exploited by insurgents.

In a statement by his spokesperson, Dauda Iliya, Zulum described the Jilli market as a notorious hub allegedly used by insurgents and their logis-

tics suppliers.

"I have been properly briefed on the airstrike carried out on Jilli market, a border town between Borno and Yobe. Let me state categorically that the Borno State Government closed Jilli and Gazabure markets five years ago," he said.

The governor disclosed that he was in close consultation with the Yobe State Government and military authorities

over the development.

He reiterated that his administration maintains strict coordination with security agencies before reopening markets or resettling communities affected by insurgency.

Zulum reaffirmed his commitment to protecting law-abiding citizens and restoring peace, urging residents to remain vigilant and provide credible information to security agencies.



ALLEGED ENCROACHMENT PROTEST:

Retired and serving staff members of the National Orientation Agency (NOA) Office in Enugu Office, during a protest on the alleged encroachment and demolition of NOA Staff Welfare Housing Estate by CHRYSTUS Estate Developers at Obeagu-Uno, Amaechi Awkunanaw Community in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State on Monday.

Troops intercept suspected medical supplies, foil attacks, rescue victims

ABUJA

The Nigerian Army has recorded major operational successes across various theatres, including the interception of suspected logistics supplies, foiling of terrorist attacks and rescue of abducted victims within 24 hours.

According to an operational report released on Monday, troops of Operation Hadin Kai intercepted a truck loaded with medical supplies suspected to be meant for terrorists in the North-East.

The interception occurred at a checkpoint in Nguru, Yobe

State, where the driver initially presented a waybill indicating beverages and household items.

However, a search uncovered hundreds of cartons of drugs, including antibiotics, injections and bandages.

The driver and three occupants were arrested, with one suspect reportedly confessing that the consignment was destined for the Republic of Chad through Geidam.

In a related development, troops arrested a suspected ISWAP/JAS member in Ngamdu, Borno State, who confessed he was sent from Jilli to procure food for insurgents.

The suspect also disclosed that terrorists were regrouping around Gubio and Magumeri areas.

Troops further arrested two suspected collaborators in Monguno for allegedly aiding the movement of a terrorist's family members, recovering phones, cash and other items.

A woman and her three children linked to a terrorist kingpin were also apprehended.

The report added that troops foiled an attempted infiltration in Askira Uba Local Government Area, engaging insurgents in an ambush and forcing them to flee.

Follow-up operations led to the rescue of three kidnapped victims from a terrorist enclave.

In Bama, troops destroyed a terrorist camp during clearance operations, while in Plateau, Operation Safe Haven recovered weapons and arrested a suspected gunman.

Additional rescues were recorded in Bauchi, while anti-illegal mining operations in the Federal Capital Territory led to the recovery of equipment in Gwagwalada.

In the Niger Delta, troops of Operation Delta Safe restored calm after a communal clash in Delta State and intensified operations against illegal bunkering in Rivers State.

Military authorities reiterated their resolve to sustain offensive operations and disrupt terrorist logistics networks nationwide.

N-HYPPADEC donates N10m, relief items to Kebbi attack victims

SHANGA (KEBBI)

The National Hydro-Electric Power Producing Areas Development Commission (N-HYPPADEC) has donated N10 million and relief materials to victims of recent bandit attacks in Kebbi State.

The Managing Director of the commission, Alhaji Abubakar Sadiq-Yelwa, announced the donation during a condolence visit to Shanga Local Government Area.

Communities affected by the attacks include Kawara, Binuwa, Kalkami, Dabe, Kasoshi, Kafar Giwa and Sa Madubi, where several lives were lost and property destroyed.

Sadiq-Yelwa described the attacks as catastrophic and condemned the perpetrators, accusing them of attempting to destabilise communities and

livelihoods.

"As part of our modest intervention, we are donating N10 million, 100 bags of 50kg rice, and 100 bags of assorted grains, along with other essential items," he said.

Other materials include cooking oil, detergents, soap, blankets and mats.

He commended the Kebbi State Government's response and expressed confidence in Governor Nasir Idris' commitment to restoring peace.

Representing the governor, Commissioner for Rural and Community Development, Alhaji Garba Salisu-Takware, thanked the commission and assured prompt distribution of the relief materials.

The N-HYPPADEC boss also visited the Emir of Yauri, Dr Muhammad Zayyanu-Abdullahi, to commiserate with him.

Africa CDC reports 95% budget use, grants \$463m

ABUJA

The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) has said that it has achieved 95 per cent budget utilisation and expanded its grant portfolio to 463 million dollars under its Director-General, Dr Jean Kaseya.

In a statement issued by its Director of Communication and Public Information, Margaret Edwin, on Monday, Africa CDC said that the achievement reflected a significant institutional growth since 2023.

Edwin said that African heads of state and government recognised Kaseya for the achievement and leadership in advancing health security across Africa.

She said the recognition underscored a period of institutional transformation and measurable progress since Kaseya assumed office in 2023.

The official said the agency had strengthened operational performance, expanded direct programme management, and accelerated support to African Union member-states in key areas, including emergency preparedness, research and outbreak response.

She quoted Kaseya to have reacted to the honour in a message to the agency's staff, saying that Kaseya described the recognition as a collective achievement.

"I receive this recognition with great humility. It reflects the commitment, professionalism and hard work that Africa CDC teams bring everyday.

"This achievement is truly ours, and I am deeply grateful for the dedication, resilience and excellence that make our impact possible," she quoted Kaseya as saying.

She highlighted major gains recorded by Africa CDC since 2023, including increase in budget utilisation from 34 percent to 95 percent and rise in its directly managed grant portfolio from 52 million dollars to 463 million dollars.

Edwin said that the agency also reported active contribution to the mobilisation of over 40 billion dollars for African Union member-states, alongside expansion in public health infrastructure.

According to her, the number of national public health institutes grew from 19 to 36, while public health emergency operations centres increased from 15 to 36.

She added that countries with pathogen genomics capacity rose from seven in 2020 to 46 in 2026, with the Africa CDC leading 48 continental research projects from none previously.

Edward said the achievements had strengthened the agency's response to major health threats, including mpox, Marburg virus disease, Ebola and Cholera.

Police arrest suspect over alleged kidnap, rape in Rivers

PORT HARCOURT

The Rivers State Police Command has arrested a 24-year-old suspect over alleged kidnapping and rape.

The command's spokesperson, ASP Blessing Agabe, said the arrest followed a complaint by a young woman who alleged

that she was abducted and assaulted.

According to Agabe, the victim reported being taken to a bush in Ulakwo, Etche Local Government Area, where she was raped and robbed of her valuables.

She was later released and reported the incident to the

police.

Agabe said operatives deployed technology-driven investigation methods, which led to the arrest of the suspect, who allegedly confessed to the crime.

Items recovered from him include a mobile phone, a wig believed to belong to the victim, and other valuables.

She said efforts were ongoing to apprehend other members of the gang, adding that the suspect would be charged to court after investigations.

Agabe advised the public to exercise caution when interacting with strangers online and to avoid meeting unknown persons in isolated locations.

Katsina launches malnutrition centres, warns against misuse of therapeutic food

BAURE (KATSINA)

The Katsina State Government has established two stabilisation centres and 60 Outpatient Therapeutic Programme (OTP) sites across 12 local government areas to

combat malnutrition.

Governor Dikko Radda, speaking at the inauguration in Baure, said the initiative underscored his administration's commitment to child health and improved healthcare access.

The stabilisation centres are

located in Daura and Baure, while the OTP sites cover Funtua, Danja, Malumfashi, Ingawa and other councils.

Radda said the centres would provide free treatment for severe acute malnutrition and enhance early detection at

the community level.

"These communities have been underserved for too long. Today, that gap is being closed," he said.

The governor warned against diversion or sale of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF), announcing the establishment of a

mobile court to prosecute offenders.

Earlier, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health, Dr Lawal Rabe, disclosed that the state approved ₦700 million counterpart funding for the ANRIN programme.

He added that several prima-

ry healthcare centres were being upgraded across the state.

Chairperson of the State Nutrition Committee, Ruqayya Hamza, said over 600 community volunteers and 300 health workers had been trained to support the programme.

NEWS

Edo NDLEA intercepts 7.2 tonnes of skunk, leads nationwide drug crackdown across 7 States

BENIN CITY

Operatives of the Edo State Command of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) have intercepted a massive 7,245 kilogrammes of suspected skunk in Auchi, Edo State, as part of a wider nationwide operation that led to arrests and seizures of illicit drugs across seven states.

The Edo operation, which ranks among the agency's largest in recent times in the state, was carried out along Warrake Road in Auchi following credible intelligence.

Two long trucks loaded with processed cannabis were intercepted while the drugs were

concealed among cartons of beer.

One of the trucks was found to contain 3,900 kilogrammes of suspected skunk, while the second carried 3,345 kilogrammes, bringing the total to 7,245 kilogrammes.

The consignments were loaded at Sabongida-Ora in Owan West Local Government Area of Edo State and were reportedly heading to Abuja before interception.

Five suspects were arrested in connection with the seizure.

According to the agency's spokesman, Femi Babafemi, the Edo breakthrough was part of coordinated operations across multiple states targeting drug trafficking networks.

In Niger State, NDLEA operatives arrested a couple in Takuti village, Lapai Local Government Area, after discovering 118 kilogrammes of suspected skunk concealed in their kitchen during a search on April 9.

In Borno State, officers intercepted a trailer loaded with vehicle spare parts along the Damaturu-Maiduguri road.

A search uncovered 42,290 tablets of Rohypnol, 82,700 millilitres of codeine syrup and

10,000 millilitres of Pentazocine injection.

The owner of the consignment, Eleje Ibeabuchi, 43, was later arrested in a follow-up operation.

In Lagos State, operatives acting on intelligence, intercepted a luxury bus belonging to Chisco Transport along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway while it was heading to Port Harcourt.

A search revealed 15 kilogrammes of suspected "Scot-

tish Loud," a potent strain of cannabis, hidden in a compartment of the bus, leading to the arrest of two suspects.

In another Lagos operation, NDLEA officers intercepted a truck heading to Onitsha in Anambra State.

A search uncovered 26,800 bottles of codeine-based syrup, and two suspects were arrested in connection with the seizure.

In the Federal Capital Territory, a raid on the notorious

Tora Bora drug joint led to the arrest of eight suspects. Operatives recovered a combined 11,516 kilogrammes of suspected skunk from the suspects during the operation.

The agency said its nationwide crackdown reflects ongoing efforts under its War Against Drug Abuse (WADA) campaign, which combines enforcement with public sensitisation to curb drug trafficking and substance abuse across the country.

Police probe fatal shooting in Lagos

LAGOS

The Nigeria Police Force has commenced an investigation into the fatal shooting of a man known as "Agali" in the Surulere area of Lagos State.

The incident, which occurred at about 11:30 p.m. on Saturday near the National Stadium Bridge, drew public attention after a video from the scene circulated on social media, showing a damaged vehicle and a gathering of on-lookers.

The police, responding via their official X handle, said the victim was rushed to Mainland General Hospital, Yaba, where he was confirmed dead.

Authorities also addressed circulating claims suggesting the deceased was linked to cult activity and that the shooting may be connected to rival groups or political tensions, noting that such assertions remain unverified.

The command stated that investigations are ongoing to determine the circumstances surrounding the incident.

ADC targets victory in Borno ahead of 2027 elections

MAIDUGURI

The African Democratic Congress (ADC) in Borno State has declared its intention to win all elective positions in the 2027 general elections.

The party's state chairman, Alhaji Kolo Bukar, made the declaration shortly after the inauguration of the party's state executive in Maiduguri, expressing confidence in the party's understanding of the state's political terrain.

He criticised the performance of the ruling party, stating that it had failed to meet the expectations of Nigerians, and promised that the ADC would deliver good governance and address key challenges facing the people.

Also speaking, party chief-tain Alhaji Kashim Matawalle said the ADC's ambition goes beyond winning power, stressing that the party aims to tackle security challenges and improve the welfare of citizens, particularly the poor.

Yaba Psychiatric Hospital partners...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 3

Speaking, the Deputy Director Nursing Services of the hospital, Mrs Alonge Kehinde, said the idea was to reduce the number of visually impaired people in the community.

Kehinde, also the Head of Department, Nursing, described the initiative as a laudable gesture that benefited not only the patients and staff of the hospital, but the entire Yaba community.

She advised that people should take advantage of the opportunity.

"Many people are just walking, they don't know the quality of the eyes they have.

"We have so many people with cataract, glaucoma and other eye defects, some can't read without glasses.

"So, people should always explore this kind of opportunity once it comes, and even if it doesn't come regularly, they should go to government hospitals that offer such services at less cost to access care.

"This is because it's important to care for the eye in order to prevent blindness," Kehinde said.

The consulting Optometrist at the event, Dr Chukwuemeka Achimole, urged Nigerians to take their eye health very serious by going for routine check every year.



HANDING OVER:

New Sector Commander of Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Oyo State, Mr Kehinde Dahunsi (L), with the outgoing Sector Commander, Mrs Rosemary Alo, during the handing over.

Stakeholders push for women's inclusion in governance, leadership

ABUJA

Stakeholders have renewed calls for increased participation of women in governance, politics and entrepreneurship as part of efforts to promote inclusion and national development.

The call was made during an event marking the fifth anniversary of Abuja Women Dance Sunday, which focused on women's health, wellness and empowerment through free medical and mental health

checks, exercise sessions and training programmes.

Speaking at the event, Dr Omolara Fashola-Macgregor, Queen of Orile Ilawo, emphasised that women have consistently demonstrated leadership capacity across both public and private sectors.

She urged greater inclusion of women in leadership roles, noting that their ability to manage homes effectively reflects broader governance potential.

Also speaking, Dr Jophia Gupar, President of the Pan African Young Women Devel-

opment Initiative, encouraged women to remain resilient in the face of challenges, sharing her personal experience of surviving cancer and highlighting the importance of positivity and strong support systems.

In her remarks, Amb. Zainab Mohammed, Chief Executive Officer of Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WCCI) Emerging Market Hub and convener of Abuja Women Dance, called for decisive action to close gender inequality gaps.

She stressed that women's participation in governance is essential for inclusive deci-

sion-making and sustainable development.

Similarly, Evelyn Onyilo, former National President of the Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), urged women to take deliberate steps towards leadership by building capacity, joining political parties and actively positioning themselves for strategic roles.

The event featured a range of activities, including medical screenings, fitness sessions, mental health engagements and a symbolic cake-cutting ceremony to commemorate the anniversary.

Ex-PDP presidential aspirant Hayatu-Deen defects to ADC

ABUJA

A former presidential aspirant of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Mohammed Hayatu-Deen, has defected to the African Democratic Congress (ADC), citing worsening national challenges and shifting political dynamics.

In a statement issued in Abuja, Hayatu-Deen said his decision was driven by concerns over rising insecurity, increasing cost of living and what he described as a shrinking democratic space in the country.

The former aspirant, who contested the PDP's 2022 presidential primaries, said Nige-

ria urgently requires credible political alternatives focused on security, economic stability and job creation. He warned that democratic institutions were under strain, with limited room for genuine opposition.

Pledging to play an active role in the ADC ahead of the 2027 general elections, Hayatu-Deen said he would

leverage his extensive experience in business, economic reforms and philanthropy to contribute to national development.

Reflecting on his previous presidential ambition, he said it was driven by hope but lamented that Nigerians' expectations had largely been unmet.



LEGAL RUDIMENTS

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POWER OF ATTORNEY

Dear Readers, this page is mainly created by the Management of the New Branded OBSERVER Newspapers for the pleasure of our great esteemed readers, particularly legal practitioners, litigants and laymen alike to their satisfaction and engage a lawyer to handle their issues without any stress. Moreover, comments, ideas and meaningful contributions will be highly appreciated from legal luminaries or law officers which can be published on this page if necessary and authorized. Today, we shall examine this legal instrument called Power of Attorney and its usage.



JUSTICE D. I. OKUNGBOWA, HON CHIEF JUDGE, EDO STATE



MR IREDIA IDEMUDIA OSIFO

In the light of the foregoing hereof, we wish to humbly submit that where the Donor of the instrument is an illiterate, it is strongly recommended to insert a jurat clause in line with the Illiterate Protection Law. Also, when the document is to be executed outside the country, notwithstanding, a Notary Public is also advised to attest the execution

therefore that no extraneous evidence or oral argument will be allowed or entertained to vary express provisions of the instrument. The general words will not be construed to extend beyond what is necessary for doing the act.

A Power of Attorney can also be donated in respect of a family property to a Donee, which must be executed by the head of the family as one of the donors who shall be in consent with the other principal members of the family. That is to say, all heads of gates or family members must be carried along, otherwise it will be voidable.

The instrument is a Deed Poll, meaning that it is executed by the donor only. It is virtually necessary to donate Power of Attorney when the donor may not be able to act personally due to his absent of not present physically on the properties sort to be dealt with or on the other hand where the Donor has a tight schedules that it is not possible for him to devote time in handling the transaction.

Also, where the donor is sick or having challenges with physical disability, as well as the knowledge of a Donee with expert skills is required in such a cases, particularly where the

Donor donates to a Solicitor or an Estate Agent the responsibilities to put tenants in possession, collect rents, as well as evict them from the property when necessary.

It is also pertinent to know that Power of Attorney conferred on a Donee can be revoked by its Donor if he chooses to do so. Such revocation by the Donor may be done by express revocation, that is where the Donor has the legal right to deal directly with any property over which he had earlier donated power to the Donee, in which such a case the power had been impliedly revoked.

Except there is an irrevocable clause inserted in the document or coupled with an interest yet to be satisfied. Therefore, it is important to know that any such instrument created by Deed, must also be revoked by nothing else except by Deed.

Similarly, the instrument can also be extinguished by implied means or conduct of revocation by the Grantor, which infers that the power donated to a Donee is being exercised by the Donor when he goes ahead to deal with the subject matter himself and also in a manner that makes it impossible for the Donee to practically effect authority under the Power.

Thirdly, Power of Attorney can swiftly come to an end by means of operation of law on when the Donor suffers death, bankruptcy or liquidation, unsound mind, except the power is coupled with interest/consideration fixed for a period of time in which such conditions will not suffice. It can be invalidated when fraud, duress or undue influence is instituted and established, whether or not valuable consideration as been furnished.

To postulate further on the irrevocability clause, this type of instrument is for a fixed term not exceeding one year, whether given for valuable condition coupled with interest in CA and PCL States respectively, not until the fulfilment or realization of the obligation.

Nevertheless, where the Power of Attorney is expressly given for a fixed period of time with or without valuable consideration, the power cannot be revoked unless the time fixed has elapsed, however, the fixed period should not exceed one year from the date the instrument was created.

However, the third parties who have acted with the Donee in the instrument of Power of Attorney are usually protected by law when revoked by the Donor or Grantor.

The third parties or recipients of the instrument are protected when the Donee makes a statutory declaration within the period of three months that he had no information whatsoever of revocation of the Donor's death as at the time payment or act was made by the third parties.

The interest of the third parties will also be protected in Power of Attorney if he is a bona fide purchaser for value without his prior notice of the revocation of the owner or grantor of the instrument.

In the light of the foregoing hereof, we wish to humbly submit that where the Donor of the instrument is an illiterate, it is strongly recommended to insert a jurat clause in line with the Illiterate Protection Law. Also, when the document is to be executed outside the country, notwithstanding, a Notary Public is also advised to attest the execution.

I, however apologise for the non usage of authorities on this rudiments for obvious reasons. Much respect and acknowledgment to learned Seniors whose works have also aided the completion of this rudiments. Thank you for your views. For sms only 08023365483. See you next week.

NBA BENIN UPDATE

(LION BAR)

Sunday, May 31st – Friday, June 5th, 2026
NBA Benin Annual Law Week, 2026

2026 NBA ELECTIONS

A five -man Electoral Committee of NBA, Benin Branch

1. Mr Christian Oludewa Omatsone Chairman
2. Mr Longe Imoudu Secretary
3. Mr Dennis Imuetinyan Osaretin Member
4. Ms Winifred Ivie Oliha Member
5. Mr Imagbe Osasere Wilfred Member

Election Date: 28th day of June, 2026.

NEWS

Foreign

Orbán era swept away by Péter Magyar's Hungary election landslide

Viktor Orbán's 16 years in power is over and a system condemned as an "electoral autocracy" lies in tatters, defeated by a 45-year-old former party insider who convinced a majority of Hungarians to bring it to an end.

"We did it," Péter Magyar told a crowd of cheering supporters beside the River Danube, overlooking Budapest's magnificent parliament on the other side. "Together we overthrew the Hungarian regime."

Preliminary election results, based on more than 98% of counted votes, put his Tisza party on course for an extraordinary 138 seats, with Orbán's Fidesz on 55 and the far-right Our Homeland on six.

The landslide will not only allow Magyar to overturn Or-

bán's increasingly unpopular domestic policies, but reset Hungary's global relationships.

Orbán has been a close partner of both US President Donald Trump - earning an in-person appearance from US Vice-President JD Vance in the final week of the campaign - and Russia's Vladimir Putin, and he had become a big thorn in the side of the EU and Ukraine.

Magyar, on the other hand, stood on a platform of distancing Hungary from Russia in favour of more cordial ties with the EU and Ukraine.

For two years, Magyar took his burgeoning movement around villages, town squares and cities, rallying Hungarians who had had enough of the cronyism and corruption that

had become endemic in Hungary over years.

"Never before in the history of democratic Hungary have so many people voted - and no single party has ever received such a strong mandate," he said on Sunday night, after a record 79.5% of the electorate turned out to vote.

Orbán's rule was built up through four successive election victories and sweeping majorities, but it became clear it was over in a matter of minutes.

As pro-Magyar supporters waited expectantly in the square on the Buda side of the Danube, the Tisza leader posted an extraordinary message on Facebook: "Viktor Orbán just called me on the phone and congratulated us on our victory."

Budapest was filled with jubilant supporters celebrating Magyar's victory

There was barely time to digest what had just happened and only 30% of the vote had at that point been counted.

But moments later, Orbán himself appeared on a stage in a conference centre a mile down-river on the other side of the Danube, surrounded by his glum-looking Fidesz party colleagues.

"The result of the election is clear and painful," he told them, thanking the estimated 2.5 million Hungarians who stuck by him. "The days ahead of us are for us to heal our wounds."

Péter Magyar, the former Orbán ally heading for power in Hungary

Peru election drags into second day after ballot delivery fiasco

The results of the general election in Peru have been delayed after tens of thousands of people were unable to vote due to technical and logistical problems at a number of polling stations.

The electoral authorities have granted a one-day extension to more than 50,000 voters who could not cast their ballots on Sunday.

A preliminary count of half the votes that were cast put conservative candidate Keiko Fujimori slightly ahead of the right-wing former mayor of the capital, Lima, Rafael López Aliaga - but the battle for second place is still very close-run.

All candidates are far short of the 50% of votes needed to win outright, making a run-off between the top two candidates on 7 June almost certain.

Voters who experienced problems in Lima and at polling stations abroad - such as in Orlando, Florida and Paterson, New Jersey - will be able to cast their ballots on Monday, the electoral authorities ruled.

Scores of polling stations opened late or, in some cases, not at all.

Peru's current President José María Balcázar said that the company hired to deliver the voting material had failed to do so in time.

Voting is mandatory for Peruvians aged between 18 and

70, and those failing to cast their vote can incur a fine.

In total, more than 27 million of Peruvians were asked to vote for members of both houses of Congress and for a new president.

Whoever wins the presidential race will replace the 83-year-old Balcázar, who has only been in the job since February.

Peru's political establishment has been rocked by a series of scandals and impeachments that have led to the resignations, ousters and impeachments of six presidents in the last decade.

The last president to serve out his term in full was Ollanta Humala, who governed from 2011 to 2016.

Whoever wins this election will have to try to win back the trust of an electorate that is deeply suspicious of politicians, whom they often view as only serving their own interests and contributing to the political instability of the country.

A total of 35 candidates are in the running for the top job but analysts say that who gets elected to the newly re-established Senate will also be key.

Unlike the lower house of Congress, the 60-member-strong Senate cannot be dissolved by the president and is therefore expected to wield considerable political power.



POPE LEO AND TRUMP:

'I'm not a fan of Pope Leo' says Trump amidst Leo's scathing words on the American leader.

Carney on verge of Liberal majority government as votes cast in three by-elections

Mark Carney has visited the Terrebonne riding to help stump for Liberal candidate Tatiana Auguste

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's Liberals could soon have a slim majority in the House of Commons if the party is able to make gains in three by-elections held on Monday.

The outcome of the races - two in the Toronto area and one near Montreal - could solidify his hold on power, staving off a federal election until as late as 2029 and giving his party the ability to pass legislation without relying on support from opposition benches.

Liberals currently hold 171 of the 343 seats in the House, one shy of a technical majority.

The likely power shift comes a year after Carney became

prime minister and follows a series of defections by opposition members of parliament to the Liberals.

The Liberals are widely expected to win the two Toronto ridings, or constituencies, of Scarborough Southwest and University-Rosedale.

The seats were previously held by former defence minister Bill Blair - now Canada's ambassador to the UK - and Chrystia Freeland, who served as deputy prime minister under Justin Trudeau and is now an adviser to Ukraine.

The race in Terrebonne, a Montreal suburb, is considered a toss-up between the Liberals and the Bloc Québécois.

The Liberal candidate won by a single vote in last year's federal election in April. In February, Canada's top court nullified the result over a cler-

ical error involving a postal ballot by the federal election agency, Elections Canada.

Wins in Toronto will be enough for Carney to clinch a narrow majority. But the prime minister has already been able to shore up his bench with five defectors - four former Conservatives and one member of the left-wing New Democratic Party.

While it's not unusual for legislators to occasionally defect in Canadian politics, the recent rate of party-switching was "extraordinary", said Semra Sevi, who teaches political science at the University of Toronto.

"Carney has built a big tent, attracting members of parliament who would not normally be associated with the Liberal party," Sevi told the BBC.

"The complication, however, is that the tent may now be so big that there isn't a lot of ideo-

logical coherence in it."

Carney has been forced to defend the most recent floor-crosser, Marilyn Gladu, who was once seen as more socially conservative and who is "personally pro-life", though she said she supports access to abortion services.

Gladu has said she will vote in line with the Liberals on such issues, and Carney has said the party's "values" have not changed.

Polls suggest the Liberals are about 10 to 15 points ahead of the Conservatives, the official opposition, with Carney himself maintaining strong support among Canadians.

The Liberals have taken a more politically conservative shift under Carney, especially compared to Trudeau, making the party more attractive to right-of-centre MPs.

Pope says he has 'no fear' of Trump after scathing criticism

Pope Leo has said he has "no fear" of the Trump administration and will continue to speak out against what he said she supports access to abortion services.

Donald Trump accused the pontiff of being "WEAK on Crime and terrible for Foreign Policy" in a Truth Social post, later telling reporters he was "not a big fan".

The Pope told reporters en route to Algeria that he did not want to get into a debate with Trump but would continue to promote peace.

He has been a staunch critic of the Iran war, calling Trump's threat to destroy Iranian civilisation "unacceptable" and calling for him to find an "off-ramp" to end the conflict.

Pope Leo is currently visiting Algeria as part of an 11-day trip to Africa

In general, it is rare for a pope to directly address statements by world leaders.

There are more than 70 million Catholics in the US, about 20% of the population. They include Trump's Vice-President JD Vance.

Trump's remarks came as the pontiff embarked on an 11-day trip to Africa, his second major foreign trip since being elected last year.

The US president wrote in Sunday's post that the Pope "should get his act together" and said he was "weak on nuclear

weapons", apparently referring to Tehran's attempts to become a nuclear power, cited as one of the reasons for the US and Israel going to war with Iran.

He also suggested that the pontiff was elected "because he was American, and they thought that would be the best way to deal with President Donald J Trump".

"If I wasn't in the White House, Leo wouldn't be in the Vatican."

Asked by reporters to explain the post, he later said: "I don't think he's doing a very good job, he likes crime, I guess."

Trump added: "He's a very liberal person, and he's a man who doesn't believe in stopping crime, he's a man who doesn't believe we should be toying with a country that wants a nuclear weapon so they can blow up the world."

In response, the Pope told reporters on board his plane to Algeria that he did not see his role as that of a politician but as one of spreading the message of peace.

"I have no fear of the Trump administration, or speaking out loudly of the message of the gospel, which is what I believe I am here to do, what the Church is here to do," he told reporters.

"I don't want to get into a debate with [Trump]," he added. "Too many people are suffering in the world today. Too many innocent people are being killed. And I think someone has to stand up and say: there's a better way to do this."

Show Biz

With Friday Obanor - 0805 653 0243

How Shallipopi, Famous Pluto, Zerry DL set Benin aglow during Easter celebration

The 2026 Easter celebration may have come and gone but the memory of the celebration in the ancient city of Benin, the administrative Headquarters of Edo state is one that may last for a very long time to come in the minds of fun seekers who thronged the Garrick memorial play ground on Easter Friday to catch a glimpse of Edo born Nigerian rising singer and rapper, Shallipopi who took the city by storm during the Goldberg Golden fiesta.

The Easter show which boasted the solid line -up of artistes including DJs and hypemen was overwhelmingly taken over by enthusiasm lovers of good music who turnout massively to have feel of the day.

Goldberg truly delivered a golden standard experience with a well structured night that kept the crowd engaged from start to finish.

The unexpected appearance of Zerry DL alongside Shallipopi and Famous Pluto took the atmosphere to a new heights with the Uzama brothers igniting the stage.

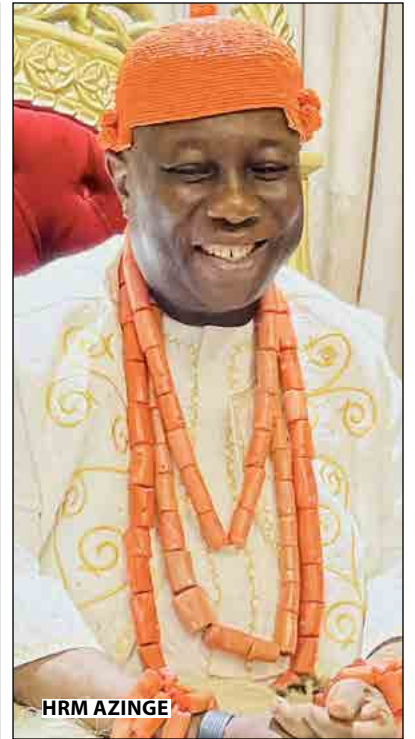
The appearance of all three Uzama brothers instantly lifted the atmosphere turning an already electrified crowd to go Gaga even louder and more alive.



SHALLIPOPI



ONYIA



HRM AZINGE

Azuka pays tribute to Onyia, Azinge In latest album

Ekobe global exponent Azuka Moweta and his Aniona brothers band of Africa have again hit the music market with a bang, titled "Kenechukwu"

"Kenechukwu" which is coming a year after the release of Ekoba global which became mince meat for rockers of African sound in the world over have seven track, featuring songs like "Kenechukwu, Lzunwanne ka, Odogwu

Ahaba and Onye zusia" a tribute to famous trumpeter Zeal Onyia.

Moweta also pays tribute to the Asagba of Asaba HRM Ephiphany Azinge (SAN) and late chief Obi Nwanze Oduah (Odogwu Ahaba),- making " Kenechukwu" an album of gratitude to God and good people.

The album is currently streaming on all music platforms globally with a remix of "Lzunwanne ka" by DJ captain plannet.

I'm here to demystify filmmaking —Chris Obi

Returnee actor and foremost Nollywood practitioner, Chris Obi - Rapu said at the just concluded coal city film festival in Enugu that his return to Nollywood was to demystify filmmaking and bring Nollywood to global standards.

With PhD in sight from Gregory university Abia state, the veterans actor said he is back to guide Nigerian filmmakers on low - budget filmmaking and Nollywood 's unique aesthetics.

According to him " my mission is to showcase Nigeria's diverse stories, highlighting untouched tribes and shaping the industry's narrative".

The veteran director whose influence on Nigeria's film industry remains significant particularly with his work on Kenneth Nnebue's 1992 blockbuster " Living in Bondage" said he got involved in the movie through Okey Ogunjiofor who was a student in his TV college lecture.

He added that he was hesitant when he was first approached but his late assistant Henry Nkwerre convinced him.



CHRIS OBI

Creative-economy: FG inaugurates c'ttees to build infrastructure

Nigerian government has inaugurated four drafting committees to build her creative - economy infrastructure so as to harness its potentials.

The minister of Art, culture, Tourism and creative - economy, Hannatu Musa Musawa (Esq), inaugurated the committee in Abuja last week.

Barrister Musawa said at the event that the creative sector which has

the potential to command global attention account for only about 2.3 percent of our national out - put, lamenting that the sector is constrained by fragmented governance, weakening enforced intellectual property rules and scarce financing.

The draft committees are policy and strategy, programmes and implementation, stakeholder Engagement, monitoring and evalu-

ation.

The committee members were charged with the responsibility of reviewing the nation's existing institutional architecture as well as proposing a coherent governance framework that would eliminates fragmentation, clarifies responsibilities and position the creative -economy as a pillar of national development.

I've a new life now —Charly Boy

Nigerian celebrity and veteran highlife music maestro, Charles Chukwuemeka Oputa, fondly known as Charly Boy has said his highly anticipated book entitled "999" where he dwells on the risks he took as an adventurous young man would soon hit the book market.

"999" which is like beginning of a new phase for the artiste dwells on his adventures for the use of big bikes and popularisation of the biking culture in Nigeria.

The controversial musical icon who spoke to some newsmen recently said he decided not to make the book an autobiography because it is his memoir of an interesting adventurous and risky lifestyle.

According to him, "the book "999" is a brutally honest story of an incredible character everybody known as Charly boy. "999" is just not a new

phase but also contains all what the artiste thinks about Nigeria and the different things we have been through as a country"

The book which is expected to hit the market in the next couple of months according to the singer and song writer contains the things about the people he had the opportunity to work with and what he thinks about them as well as the different incidents and risk he has taken which he considered as too good but crazy, stupid and foolish.

He said some part of the book which talked about his lifestyle as stupid, foolish and crazy was when he got into drugs, adding that he was blessed with the grace to know the path he should not walk.

" I tried everything I knew just once, when I started seeing the bad side of what cocaine did to a friend of mine, I knew I had to run if I don't want to end like that"



ArtsWorld with Francis Odupte 08023680030

How Youth “ArtivismWritivism” will define 8th Cartoon Africa International Biennial (1)

That unparalleled connectivity puts young people in one of the greatest positions to bring much needed change to the world is central to the global sustainable development goals (SDG). That's why youth voices must be continually heard and amplified, to secure the future. During the forthcoming 8th Cartoon Africa International Biennial (CAIB) festival, African youths and children will amplify their voices through Cartoon Africa Children's Comics and Animation Funfair (CACCAFun)

Art is a universal language, and an agent of development of any society; the adage that a picture is worth a thousand words is not far-fetched because, “One image can communicate more than dozens of pages of text or hours of speeches. One image can change the course of history. Editorial cartoons draw attention to important political, economic, and social issues like nothing else. Using symbols or visual metaphors, their reach transcends country borders and language barrier”.

All over the world, reading culture is waning and graphic communication is becoming more and more crucial in the entire business of information communication and education. In the mass media, for instance, spaces for texts are shrinking as people are more in haste to meet deadlines and have little or no time /interest in reading texts no matter how valuable they may be.

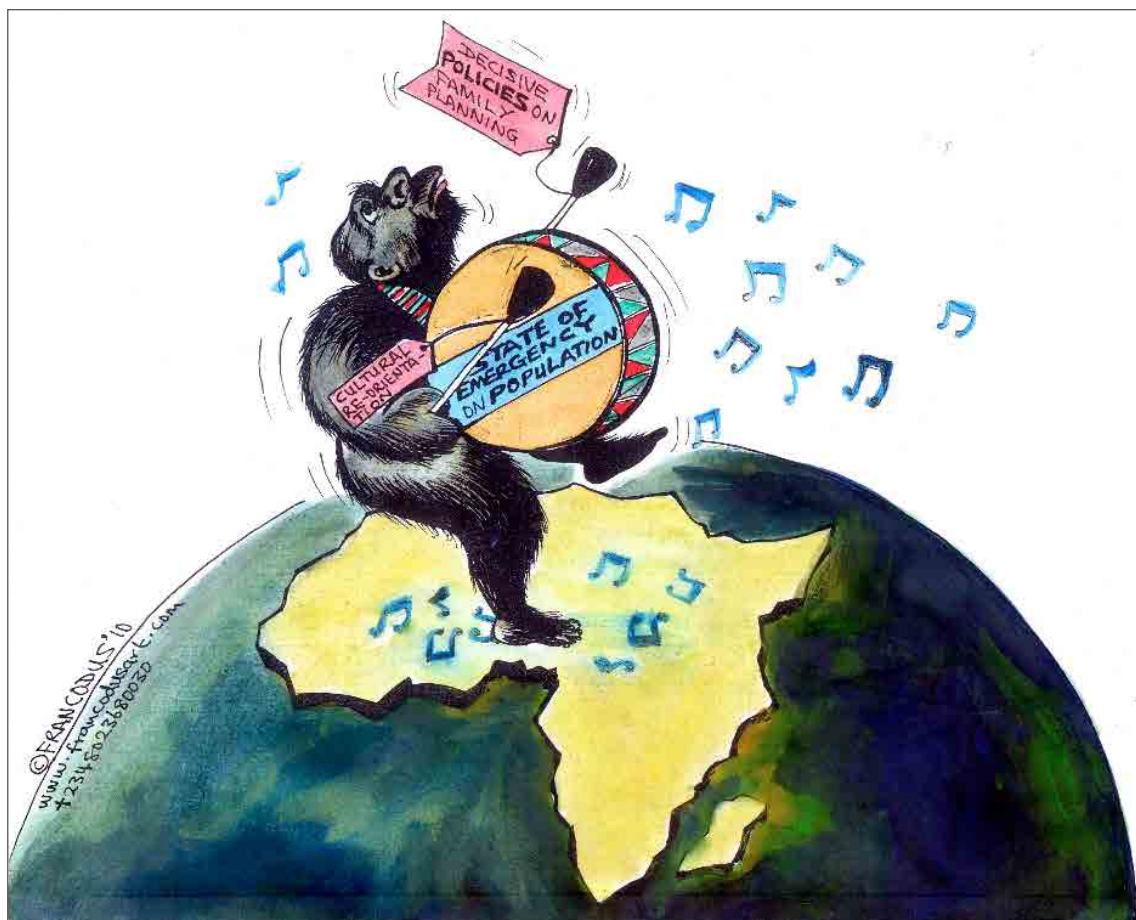
In Nigeria alone, there is an unprecedented increase in the number of online journalism platforms as well as social media use. While the printed newspapers and magazines are fast losing readers on a daily basis, on-line journalism, and social media in particular, is gaining more and more patronage. Their secrets are hidden in the power of audiovisuals cum graphic humour, on which internet service providers and their vast collaborators leverage to rake in billions of dollars annually through web cartoons, digital comics, cartoon animations, edutainment cartoon apps, political campaign info-graphics, etc.

In our educational sector, most children and youths who try to cultivate the habit wish there was a way reading could be attractive. Hence pictures, VISUAL STORYTELLING – whether still or animated- are getting more attention, especially among young people.

Unfortunately, however, the increasing dearth of wholesome indigenous Afro-centric children and young adult literature (that are rich in pictorial storytelling/visual literacy and intriguing storylines), cartoon animation films and multimedia with polemic and educative contents, continue to pose a great socio-cultural threat to Nigeria of the future as neo-colonialism - subtly served us through undue western media and literature influence - is destroying our cultural foundations and compromising sound ethical and moral capital



CARTOON ANIMATION TRAINING DURING THE 7TH CAIB FESTIVAL



development of our young generations, resulting in cultural alienation, poor creative thinking, poverty of the mind, low productivity and uncultured lifestyles among our children and youths – the future of our society.

The CAIB collaborative agenda seeks to explore how comedic Arts(-cartoons, comics, cartoon animation, photo cartoons, etc) innovations, in synergy with other allied fields of endeavour, can provide Answer to a wide

variety of development issues and concerns in favour of Africa's productivity and sustainable development within the framework of promoting moral capital development, human dignity, equality, peace and progress,

in line with the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), and in sync with the UNESCO Social and Human Sciences Sector's (SHS) call for innovative ideas in favour of Africa's development within the new decade. We're leveraging technology to broaden audience engagement, and professionally showcasing, promoting and rewarding excellence in deploying cartoon art in meeting needs, within the prism of graphic humour and edutainment, in a global context.

The quest to see how Art, in synergy with allied fields such as the media, visual arts community, the entertainment, architecture, academic, advertising, publishing and manufacturing industries, etc. can provide answer to a wide variety of development issues and concerns in Africa, we initiated the CAIB creative program as a bankable intervention to foster development dialogues within the prism of graphic humour and edutainment, and educate the general public, engage youths, draw attention to vital development issues, promote tourism cum cross cultural creative exchanges, human dignity, as well as drive productivity, moral capital development and peaceful co-existence in line with the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in the context of the UNESCO Social and Human Sciences Sector's (SHS) call for innovative ideas in favour of Africa's development within the new decade”.

Entertainment

— with Davidson Imosime Izegaegbe —

Cartoon: The silent rebel

“Laughter is the language of the soul” – Pablo Neruda

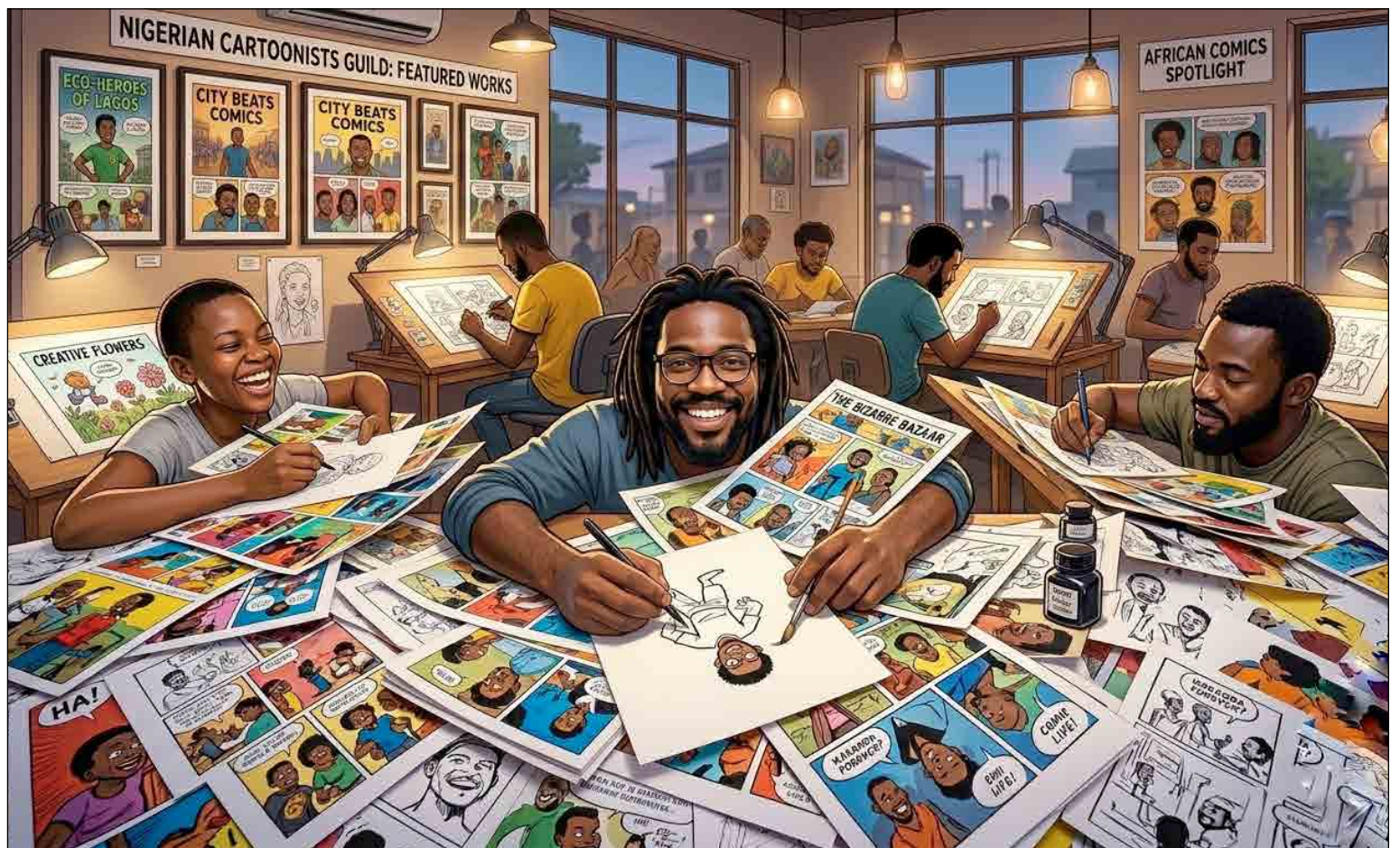
Most of us grew up to believe that cartoons are for kids and therefore miss the real messages within its fun. As adults you only realise late that cartoons have such beautiful languages that can shape your mind and focus on yourself and your environment. Truly, cartoons are meant to make you laugh and learn, but learn what, especially when you are laughing your head off? Children and adults like me who love cartoons may first be tickled by the aesthetics of laughter worn on each scene of the cartoon, but scratching the silent rebellion of fun, you would discover that words of wisdom, logical reasoning are the gasoline that makes the vehicle of a cartoon to move.

For years, the comic strip and the funny animated frame were relegated to the nursery or the weekend morning hangover slot in relegated corners of newspapers and magazines, seen only by curious minds. They were the unimportant funny papers, a deliberate trivial diversion of serious issues or critical thinking composed of exaggerated features and slapstick physics that do not make common sense to the capitalist weaving magic on making money. Maybe the craze for laughter instead of money is probably why over fifty percent of entertainers are living in penury, mark the words, “maybe”.

A lot of people see cartoons as art for unserious minded people. They see it as a moment of appreciating distraction just the same way musicians are requested to play their compositions before a large audience only when they are eating. I strongly believe that to dismiss the cartoon as mere caricature imagined by a low-life is to ignore one of the most potent tools in the history of human expression that cuts deeper than a surgeon's blade. Beneath the slow flow of the ink and the vibrant expressive pixels lies a sophisticated mechanism of societal psychology, a clean mirror that does not only just reflect who we are, but actively reshapes how we see who we are in our reflections. It makes us think.

Art, in its most traditional sense, often demands a certain level of reverence or literacy from our individual perspectives. A Renaissance oil painting would definitely require an understanding of light, mood, tonality, shadow, and religious iconography. A modern installation might require a degree in art history to decode this creative imagination through the eye of the pen or brush. You may not know this, but the cartoon, however, is the great equalizer of its surprising time in nature's real-time. It bypasses the intellectual gatekeepers and speaks directly to the subconscious of the minds of the people. It is the art of the shorthand, and in that moment of brevity, it finds its psychological power of expression of the unimaginable in a form.

Why does a newspaper or magazine cartoon of the 1970, resonate more globally than a hyper-realistic digital



render of today? The answer lies in a psychological concept popularized by theorist Scott McCloud: “amplification through simplification.” When we look at a photograph of a stranger, we see a specific person, but when we look at a cartoon, just a circle, two dots for eyes, and a line for a mouth, our sight sees a different picture. We do not see a stranger at that point in time but ourselves. By intentionally stripping away the distracting details of reality in a compressed mind, the artist provides a vacuum that the viewer's own identity rushes to fill in haste. This singular “masking effect” is the solid foundation of the cartoon's role in societal psychology. It fosters a unique level of empathy that realism in art form often struggles to achieve.

In a world like ours, increasingly divided by tribalism and chaos, the cartoon offers a universal visual language of inner peace. A caricature of a corrupt politician or an exhausted nurse is not just one expressionistic person; it becomes an archetype that is part of our daily living. This allows the audience to process complex social grievances through a simplified, digestible medium.

If we take our minds back to history, we would realise that cartoons have always functioned as the “canary in the coal mine” for social health. This is so, because cartoons are often perceived as low art or childish. However, if you are close to cartoonists, you would realise that they historically enjoyed a unique form of social immunity. They can say things in a single panel that an editorialist couldn't say in two thousand words without risking exile or litigation. Some may argue this but it is the sad truth. Just like the saying that a single photograph is

worth more than a thousand words.

Consider the political cartoon. Its power rests in its ability to dehumanize the powerful and humanize the marginalized. By distorting the features of a world leader, giving him a big head, enlarging the nose, sharpening a chubby chin, the artist strips away the aura of untouchability. Psychologically, this is a form of catharsis for the masses. It reduces the looming, often terrifying figures of authority to something thinkable, manageable, and laughable.

“A cartoon is a way of telling the truth without being arrested for it.” The above quote, as echoed by various satirists through the ages, ultimately expresses the cartoon's role as a psychological safety valve for the public. It is a unique way of allowing a society to vent its disappointments, frustrations, sadness, fears, and anxieties in a way that feels playful, funny rather than insurrectionary. As we moved from the static page to the animated screen, the psychological impact of cartoons are deepened. We know how impactful the audiovisual effects and experiences are to the diverse heterogeneous audiences. For the generations raised on the golden age of the foreign Disney, the anarchic energy of Looney Tunes, or the subversive wit of The Simpsons, cartoons are seen and appreciated at a different plane. They are seen as the primary architects of collective nostalgia

Animated cartoons are not all encased in dialogue like some episodes of Tom and Jerry, but the mood sounds help to direct your thoughts creatively to the messages behind their lose-friendship. There are many animated cartoons in that category but these visual narratives provide

the framework for our moral development. We learn about justice from Batman, love for humanity and protection from Superman, and about the absurdities of bureaucracy from SpongeBob SquarePants. The intention of the creator of these animated cartoons bypasses our natural defenses against being preached to, they have hidden meanings behind their fun as well as lessons wrapped in the safe medium of animation.

Cartoons have their own unique cultural vocabulary that is self expressive to the viewers. Ultimately, the moment a society can collectively reference a specific character to describe a real-world event, then cartoon has just moved beyond art, it has become a cognitive tool. However, do we even know that the same psychological mechanisms that make these cartoons a force for empathy by the public can also make them a weapon of mass manipulation and destruction? This is the sad truth because cartoons simplify reality. They are the perfect vessel for stereotyping and their effects are psychologically complex and deep.

Throughout the 20th century, cartoons were instrumental in the hands of the creator in dehumanizing the enemy during wartime. They do this by utilizing exaggerated, racist tropes, which were used to cement psychological biases in the public consciousness. Once a group of people is reduced to a set of jagged lines and mocking features, it becomes psychologically easier for a society with even no information at their fingertips to justify their mistreatment. I remember how a religious cartoon sparked a massacre in Nigeria and other countries some years ago. Therefore, looking at the effects of animation one

would not be far from saying that cartoons are the dual nature of societal psychology. It is a tool of extreme efficiency. It can build a bridge of peace and understanding in a heartbeat, or force a drumbeat of war with hate, or build a wall of prejudice just as quickly also. The responsibility of art as a tool of change, therefore, lies not just with the creator, but with a society that must learn to read the psychological cues hidden within the art form of cartoons and animations.

To study the science of cartoons of a particular era is to study the cultural philosophy of the subconscious of that era. As a unique art form, the cartoon has no match in its creative ability to penetrate the noise of our modern life. It does not ask for one's permission to make one's point, but simply finds its way through our eager eyes and then settles in our brains. You may yet not know, but animated mediums are the most democratic of forms of mediums. It is the most subversive of all tools, and perhaps the most honest reflection of our collective madness and majesty in our society. This is why in the end, what we experience is not just watching or reading cartoons alone, but living within its psychological frameworks. Again, the cartoon remains one of the most powerful mediums of telling ourselves the bitter truth about our reflections.

So, the next time you find yourself laughing at a distorted figure or a talking animal, take a slow step backwards, find a seat in that moment to look deeply closer. You would discover that you are not just looking at a drawing or a 3dimensional film but the blueprint of your own mind as if photocopied.

FEATURE

Alleged ₦1.5bn compensation sandal rocks Egbetua as death of Head Chief deepens crisis, EFCC probe demanded

MUSA IDAHOSA

What was once a quiet and peaceful agrarian settlement is now a community gripped by fear, anger, and deep suspicion. Egbetua-Ososo, a small town in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State, is fast becoming the epicentre of a brewing crisis that could spiral out of control if urgent intervention does not come from the government and security agencies.

Investigations revealed that the crisis is linked to the ongoing establishment of a cement plant by BUA Cement, which contracted the Chinese construction firm, Sinoma International Engineering for the construction of the facility.

When news first broke sometime in 2020 that BUA Cement intended to establish a major cement production facility in Egbetua-Ososo, jubilation swept through the community. Residents believed the project would transform their fortunes by bringing employment opportunities and economic development to the area.

For many young people, the proposed factory represented hope for a better future and a chance to escape unemployment and poverty. Farmers and landowners also expected fair compensation for lands that would be acquired for the project.

However, barely six years after the announcement, what began as excitement gradually turned into frustration and suspicion. Complaints began to emerge that some individuals had allegedly taken control of negotiations and dealings with the company, sidelining other stakeholders within the community.

Elders of the community claimed that the broader community was deliberately excluded from key decisions relating to compensation payments and land allocation. These allegations have now snowballed into a major crisis threatening the unity and stability of the community.

At the heart of the unfolding drama are allegations of massive financial irregularities, secret land deals, exclusion of genuine land/farm-owners from compensation payments, and claims that a few powerful actors within the community have hijacked the entire relationship between the host community and companies operating in the area.

Central to the controversy is the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP), otherwise known as the enumeration and subsequent compensation exercise conducted ahead of the cement project.

Members of the community insist that the entire process lacked transparency and fairness, a development that reportedly led to an open letter written and addressed to the Chairman of BUA Group, Abdul Samad Rabiu, accusing those allegedly responsible for the exercise of manipulating the enumeration process.

The letter, signed by an indigene of Egbetua, Emmanuel Oloke, alleged that many genuine landowners were deliberately excluded from the compensation arrangement. According to the letter, the exercise left several legitimate landowners "disenfranchised and disillusioned." Oloke claimed that the community had received information that BUA released about ₦1.5 billion for



Chief Peter Momoh

compensation payments to landowners and owners of economic trees.

However, the most troubling aspect of the controversy remains the alleged refusal by the company and the consulting firm that conducted the enumeration exercise to publicly disclose the full list of beneficiaries.

Community leaders say repeated demands for the list of those paid and the exact amounts disbursed have been ignored. Even more disturbing, they claim, is the refusal to provide copies of the enumeration and compensation documents to the chiefs and elders of Egbetua Community.

According to them, such documents should ordinarily be made available to the traditional leadership of the host community (Egbetua) for verification and transparency.

It was revealed that instead, the documents have remained hidden from the community up till now. This secrecy has triggered widespread suspicion and anger among the people of the community.

Community members are now asking a series of troubling questions:

Why is it so difficult for the company (BUA) and the consulting firm to publicly release the list of beneficiaries? Why has it become impossible for the chiefs and elders of the community to obtain copies of documents relating to payments made on their ancestral lands? Why is the company (BUA) unwilling to openly state how many beneficiaries were paid and the exact amounts disbursed to each person?

For many residents, these unanswered questions lie at the heart of the crisis currently rocking the community. They argue that transparency would easily resolve many of the lingering suspicions. But the alleged continued secrecy has only deepened distrust and fuelled allegations that the process may have been manipulated.

According to them, only about 30 percent of those captured during the enumeration exercise were actual members of Egbetua-Ososo, while the majority of rightful land/farm-owners were allegedly excluded, despite being present when the survey was conducted. Even more disturbing were claims that some individuals who allegedly

have no ancestral ties to the land were included as beneficiaries, triggering deep resentment among residents.

Repeated requests by elders to obtain the official list of beneficiaries and the compensation amounts have reportedly been ignored, strengthening suspicions that funds may have been diverted.

Allegations have also emerged that deductions ranging between 10 and 40 percent were made from compensation payments by agents of the consulting firm.

Some beneficiaries claimed they were misled into accepting the deductions, while others said they were not even aware such deductions would be made.

Residents are now demanding to know the legal basis for the deductions and questioning whether the consulting firm had already been fully paid by BUA Cement.

The community has also raised serious allegations of intimidation and bribery, claiming some individuals allegedly received between ₦1 million and ₦10 million to suppress opposition and silence critics.

One allegation that has generated particular outrage involves the reported payment of ₦40 million to the Head Chief, Chief Momoh Peter, alongside ₦95 million for economic trees.

These figures have angered many farm-owners in the affected area who insisted they received far less or no compensation at all. Several landowners claim their farms were allegedly destroyed without any form of payment/compensation, while others insisted that they were grossly underpaid.

Further escalation came in when the Chairman of the Community Development Agreement Committee, Engineer Fred Attah, alleged that the Head Chief, Tijjani Umar Balogun and Adeniyi Odafe secretly granted consent for limestone mining to BUA without consultation in October, 2024.

According to him, the community only discovered the approval months later, with documents from the Mining Cadastre Office reportedly confirming the development.

Attah also alleged that several contracts linked to the project, including security services, construction of security posts, staff camps, road

grading, and water extension, were concentrated in the hands of a single individual (Tijjani Umar Balogun) via several cronie companies.

Attah narrated: "My name is Engineer Fred Attah. I am the Chairman of the Egbetua Community Development Agreement (CDA). Since the inception of BUA Cement Company in Egbetua Community, I was unanimously selected as the Community Development Agreement Committee Chairman, and since then, I have remained the chairman.

"The enumeration, otherwise called the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP), is a plan for relocating people from a particular land designated for use by either the government or a company for developmental purposes. By World Bank standards, a community whose land serves as its source of livelihood and is earmarked for such use, must be relocated to another land agreed upon by both parties.

"They are then compensated based on the type of farming, crops, or property they have on that land. That is what is called a Resettlement Action Plan, or simply put, enumeration. In our case, it was carried out on about 1,700 hectares of land acquired by BUA. Out of this, about 470 hectares were to be cleared for the construction of what they called the Line Four Cement Factory.

"It behoves BUA Cement to identify the landowners, those farming on the land, and those with properties on it, estimate the total value of these assets, and compensate them accordingly. Thereafter, they are to be relocated to another area for resettlement.

"BUA attempted to do this by hiring a Lagos-based company led by one Emmanuel Ebede. I only had contact with him when the issues began. The company was engaged by BUA Cement to carry out the enumeration exercise, and I was officially notified in my capacity as CDA Chairman about the plan and process.

"Upon receiving the notification, I appointed the CLO, the Community Liaison Officer, and the Community representative, Tijjani Umar Balogun, to work with the contractor conducting the exercise. They worked with him for weeks to complete the enu-

meration. The Chief also participated on several occasions, although I did not appoint him.

"After the exercise was concluded, the next stage was compensation for those identified as having properties within the designated project area. I was invited to witness the process, but I informed them that I was in Abuja and that travelling required proper planning and cost. I therefore requested to see the list of verified individuals, their properties, and the compensation amounts before making the trip.

"I insisted on seeing the list beforehand. They said it would be made available upon my arrival, but I declined, stating clearly that I would not travel without first reviewing it. Since the list was never provided, I did not attend. On the day the exercise commenced, the Obu-Okpella Plant Director and the General Manager of BUA Cement called to ask why I was absent. I reiterated that without access to the list of enumerated persons and compensation details, there was no basis for my attendance.

"Following the exercise, protests erupted. Youths gathered at the Head Chief's residence and prevented him from returning home for several days. The Head Chief later called on me to intervene. I asked for details of the enumeration and requested the list, as many community members complained of being excluded or underpaid. Some claimed they had farms and properties on the land but were not compensated, while others without any stake reportedly received large sums.

"I again requested the list to help calm tensions and also contacted the General Manager of BUA Cement, Obu-Okpella. Although he assured me that I would receive it, the list has not been provided to date. I reminded them that, as a consultant who has handled similar work for the Azura Power Plant in Benin, I am familiar with the proper process.

"The correct procedure is to document all affected persons, assess and quantify their assets, and attach corresponding compensation values. This list should be presented to the community in the presence of legal representatives for verification before payment. After payments are made, the community should also receive the final list of beneficiaries and amounts paid. In this case, that process was not followed, as the list has never been shared.

"There are conflicting reports on the total amount disbursed—some say about ₦860 million, while others mention ₦1.5 billion. The lack of clarity has further fuelled discontent, with many still complaining. When I requested the list from BUA management, I was told they did not have it and was instead given the contact of the consultant who handled the enumeration.

"I contacted him, and he made it clear that he was engaged by BUA, not the community, and that he had already submitted the report and list to the company. He advised me to direct my request to BUA. That response was reasonable, which raises the question: why has BUA refused to release the list? Even formal requests have yielded no results.

CONTINUES ON PG 15»

«CONTINUED FROM PG 5

Alleged ₦1.5bn compensation...

"It is unfortunate that some individuals entrusted with protecting community interests are allegedly complicit in denying others their rightful entitlements. As CDA Chairman, I am not aware of any official communication inviting complaints of exclusion. Such matters are typically handled through formal correspondence, not verbal claims.

"On the issue of mining rights, the law since 1970 vests mineral ownership on the Federal Government. However, it also requires that communities grant consent before any exploration or quarrying activities commence.

"In October 2024, the Head Chief, Chief Peter Momoh, Tijjani Umar Balogun, and Adeniyi Odafe reportedly granted BUA access to a parcel of land containing limestone deposits without the knowledge of the community. Ordinarily, such requests are deliberated upon by elders, stakeholders, and the Chiefs Council before approval. In this instance, consent was allegedly granted secretly on October 14, 2024, and only came to light in February 2025.

"I subsequently directed my lawyer to obtain the consent documents from the Mining Cadastre Office and the High Court in Abuja. The records confirmed that the Head Chief and two others (Tijjani Umar Balogun and Adeniyi Odafe) signed the approval. Initial denials were later withdrawn when certified copies were presented.

"The BUA Director stated that the company believed the community was aware. However, when asked about the amount paid, he initially claimed he could not recall and later declined to comment, citing ongoing disputes. All these interactions are documented.

"When the elders convened, they expressed shock that such consent was granted without their knowledge and resolved to explore options for redress or adequate compensation.

"Additionally, there are concerns over the concentration of contracts in the hands of Tijjani. Key projects, ranging from security services and infrastructure works to recruitment outsourcing, have reportedly been handled through companies linked to him, including J&J.

"This has deepened divisions within the community. I raised the matter with BUA management, stressing that opportunities must be equitably distributed. Records indicate that at least 22 individuals have reported loss of farmland without compensation, while others claim to have been underpaid. There are also allegations that some individuals without land ownership received large sums, only to have most of the money reclaimed after minimal payments were made to them.

"Regarding the December 26, 2025 incident, where the Head Chief was attacked and compelled to sign a document, it stemmed from a dispute over recruitment outsourcing. Both Tijjani and the Head Chief sought control of the process, leading to conflict. Youths were mobilised, resulting in damage to community property, including a school bus. Some of these youths were reportedly influenced with small sums of money and substances, such as 'monkey tail,' a mixture of alcohol and cannabis.

"More recently, elders who went to welcome SINOMA, the Chinese construction firm handling the factory project, were also attacked by youths, leaving two persons injured. No legal action has been taken so far, although the Head Chief reported his alleged abduction to

the Police. The community has also formally withdrawn recognition of Tijjani Umar Balogun as its representative in communications with BUA.

"Beyond these developments, little progress has been made. Some community members are considering petitions to anti-corruption agencies, including the EFCC. I urge all concerned to remain calm and pursue lawful avenues in addressing these grievances," the CDA Chairman concluded.

On his part, Barr. Augustine Jerumeh, a member of the Chiefs and Elders Council of Egbetua Community, revealed that since the arrival of BUA Cement, the community has been engulfed in a prolonged internal crisis.

He said: "Crisis in Egbetua Community began with the entrance of BUA. Everyone is now struggling to secure positions within the company.

"We have a Community Liaison Officer (CLO) representing us at BUA, but his activities do not reflect the collective interests of the community. As a result, the people are dissatisfied with the situation.

"One of the major issues is the manner of appointments. A few individuals in the community, who have become influential, now use their positions to secure benefits for themselves from the company.

"BUA, on its part, has been supportive and responsive to our requests. However, the real challenge lies with those representing us, who are allegedly blocking some of the benefits meant for the wider community.

"The major problem we currently face is the enumeration exercise carried out by BUA. Many farmers were not captured, and the process lacked transparency.

"The list of beneficiaries entitled to compensation was not made available to the community leadership, unlike in other places where such lists are both shared with leaders and publicly displayed for accountability.

"There are also allegations that the consultant engaged by BUA for the enumeration exercise made unauthorized deductions from beneficiaries' compensation.

"Another issue fueling the crisis is the HR labour contract. Most, if not all, of the contracts are concentrated in the hands of a single individual, Mr. Tijjani Umar Balogun. This is unacceptable, as contracts should be fairly distributed among qualified contractors within the community.

"To be frank, people are not inherently bad; sometimes, circumstances within the community contribute to their actions. While some individuals may act wrongly, others are shaped by the system around them.

"The same individual alleged to have taken over dealings with BUA and SINOMA in the community, Tijjani Balogun, was initially appointed by the Head Chief of Egbetua.

"However, the situation has changed, as he is now reportedly preventing the Head Chief from carrying out responsibilities that ordinarily fall within his purview. This is what the community is trying to address, especially as the companies appear to be backing him (Umar Tijjani Balogun).

"The government should, therefore, direct both companies to engage more broadly with the community and ensure that no single individual controls the distribution of contracts."

Some of the contracts the Chiefs and Elders Council of Egbetua claimed to



The Head Chief (middle), Chiefs and Elders of Egbetua Community

have been executed/executing by Tijjani Balogun include: barbed wire fencing of the site; site clearing; construction of security quarters; provision of private security guards; perimeter fencing; development of the internal road network; security (Tango operations); stone blasting; supply of food to security personnel (including NSCDC and others); "Danger Water" project; and temporary HR contract.

The situation reportedly reached a boiling point on December 26, 2025, when the Head Chief, Peter Momoh, was allegedly attacked by some alleged sponsored youths. In a viral video, the youths, in the alleged company of Tijjani Umar Balogun, were reportedly seen forcing him to sign a document during the confrontation.

The clash was reportedly triggered by disputes over recruitment outsourcing contracts, while properties, including the Egbetua Community School bus and town hall furniture were damaged. Residents also claimed that some youths were influenced with money and drugs, including "monkey tail."

Speaking with our correspondent on the incident, the Head Chief of Egbetua Community, Chief Peter Momoh, narrated his ordeal in the hands of some of the youths. He claimed that on December 26, 2025, he was forcefully taken from his residence and held under the sun for over three hours. According to him, the youths subjected him to threats and intimidation during the incident.

The traditional ruler further alleged that he was forced to sign a document authorising Tijjani Umar Balogun to manage the HR labour contracts on behalf of the community.

Momoh maintained that he signed the document out of fear for his life, alleging that he was humiliated, assaulted, and brutalised by the youths under the supervision of Tijjani Umar Balogun.

Following the alleged attack on the Head Chief of Egbetua Community, the Community Council of Chiefs and Elders, in a letter dated January 2, 2026, addressed to the Project Manager of SINOMA Nigeria Ltd, Obu-Okpella, cautioned the company against recognising any document purportedly signed under duress.

The letter, which was also copied to the Plant Director, BUA Cement PLC, Obu-Okpella; Mr. Gidado, General Manager, BUA Cement PLC; Engr. Fred Attah, CDA Chairman and the Egbetua Lawyers Forum, was titled: "Disclaimer and caution against fraudulent docu-

ments allegedly obtained under duress from Chief Peter Momoh, the Head Chief of Egbetua Community."

A copy of the letter was sighted by our correspondent. In the letter, the community warned that any document, agreement, undertaking, or correspondence allegedly signed by Chief Peter Momoh on or about December 26, 2025, or thereafter under such circumstances, should be considered null, void, and of no effect.

The letter was signed by the Head Chief of Egbetua Community, Chief Peter Momoh Iddu-Oremeh; Elder Marcus Akinyesi (Secretary); Chief Agura Lawani (representing Anni Kindred); Elder Jacob Osheku (representing Obiomokhiye Kindred); and Chief Isaiah Somiso (representing Uduokhe Kindred).

It reads in part: "The Egbetua Community Chiefs and Elders Council hereby issues this vehement and unequivocal disclaimer to formally bring to your attention a most unfortunate and condemnable incident that allegedly occurred on December 26, 2025, in Egbetua Community.

"It is alleged that certain members of the Egbetua Community youth, allegedly sponsored and physically supervised by Mr. Tijjani Umar Balogun and Mr. James Osheku (CLO), unlawfully abducted, molested, intimidated, embarrassed, and coerced under duress the Head Chief of Egbetua Community, Chief Peter Momoh (Iddu-Oremeh Osese I), with the intent of forcefully compelling him to sign documents against his will.

"We are reliably informed that video evidence exists substantiating these alleged acts of intimidation, coercion, and duress.

"TAKE NOTICE that any document(s), agreement(s), undertaking(s), or correspondence purportedly signed by Chief Peter Momoh on or about December 26, 2025, or thereafter, under such circumstances, are hereby completely disclaimed, null, void, and of no effect."

The council further cautioned BUA Cement PLC and SINOMA Nigeria Ltd:

I. NOT to honour, rely upon, recognise, or act on any document allegedly signed by Chief Peter Momoh under duress or through any form of intimidation, coercion, or unlawful influence, particularly in relation to the HR labour contract.

II. NOT to engage with, accept representations from, or transact with

any individual, youth group, faction, or association purporting to speak for or represent Egbetua Community outside the duly constituted authority of the Chiefs and Elders Council, headed by Chief Peter Momoh.

"III. To note that the Chiefs and Elders Council remains the highest and only recognised traditional authority empowered to speak, negotiate, and enter into agreements on behalf of the Egbetua Community."

The letter added that any individual or organisation acting on such disputed documents would do so at his/her own legal risk and could face civil and criminal liabilities.

"This disclaimer is issued in good faith, in the interest of justice, lawful engagement, and to forestall avoidable disputes and legal actions. Kindly be properly guided," the statement added, directing the CDA Chairman to circulate the letter accordingly.

The community also alleged that several letters written to the management of BUA Cement PLC and SINOMA Nigeria Ltd had been treated with levity.

One such letter, dated January 30, 2026, and received on February 2, 2026, was addressed to the Project Manager of SINOMA Nigeria Ltd.

It was signed on behalf of the community by Chief Peter Momoh Iddu-Oremeh; Elder Marcus Akinyesi (Secretary); Elder Olowo Bello (representing Anni Kindred); Elder Jacob Osheku (representing Obiomokhiye Kindred); and Chief Isaiah Somiso (representing Uduokhe Kindred).

Titled: "Reminder and Notice of Liability on the Position of the Chiefs and Elders Council of Egbetua Community regarding the HR Labour Contract," the letter read in part:

"The Chiefs and Elders Council of Egbetua Community issues this letter as a final reminder and formal notice regarding the unequivocal position of the Council and the entire Egbetua Community on matters relating to the HR labour contract.

"The Council notes with grave concern the continued failure, neglect, and apparent unwillingness of SINOMA Nigeria Ltd to accord due recognition and respect to the constituted traditional authority of Egbetua Community. This persistent nonchalant conduct constitutes a direct undermining of community authority and established protocols.

...CONTINUES ON FRIDAY



EDO STATE HOSPITALS MANAGEMENT AGENCY
P.M.B 1009, BENIN CITY
CONTRACT REF. NO: HMA/ED/2026/PROC02

INVITATION FOR TENDERING FOR THE SUPPLY OF MEDICAL CONSUMABLES AND PRINTING OF MEDICAL RECORD FORMS AND MATERIALS

1. INTRODUCTION

The Edo State Hospitals Management Agency on behalf of the Edo State Government and from its approved Budget for the Fiscal year is desirous of carrying out its procurement for use in its thirty-three (33) Hospitals across Edo State and intends to apply part of the Budget for the payment of the contract.

Consequently, the Edo State Hospitals Management Agency now invites sealed Bids from eligible bidders for the Procurement of various Medical Consumables and Printing of Medical Record forms and materials as stated below:

2. PROJECT SCOPE

S/N	PROJECT IDENTIFICATION	LOT NO.
i	Laboratory Consumables	Lot-1
ii	Mortuary/ Histopathology Consumables	Lot-2
iii	Printing of Medical Record Forms and Materials	Lot-3
iv	Dental Consumables	Lot-4
v	Ear Nose and Throat, Ophthalmology and Radiology	Lot-5
vi	Theatre / O&G Consumables	Lot-6
vii	General Consumables	Lot-7

3. ELIGIBILITY AND MANDATORY REQUIREMENT

You are to submit a detailed profile which should contain the following:

- Certificate of incorporation/registration with cooperate affairs commission (CAC)
- Evidence of registration with Edo State Public Procurement Agency.
- Evidence of Registration with Edo State Health Insurance Commission
- Evidence of payment of tax by the company for the immediate past 3years (i.e. 2023, 2024, 2025)
- Company's audited financial account (indicating turnover) and funding information over the past 3 years endorsed by a firm of chartered accountants.
- Company profile which should include:
 - Names of current directors as registered with CAC
 - Names, qualification and experience of key personnel and copies of their professional certificates
- Verifiable Evidence of three previous/similar works successfully executed in the past five (5) years showing:
 - Letter of award of contract
 - Valuation Certificate
 - Certificate of completion.
- Bidders for Lot 1 must show evidence of registration with Medical Laboratory Science Council of Nigeria with current License to practice
- Affidavit of Disclosure
 - Disclosing that the company shall exercise requisite skill using genuine/specified materials and input in the execution of the contract.
 - None of the Directors of the Company has been convicted in any court for any criminal offence including fraud and financial impropriety A statement of interest including whether any director of the company has been convicted in any country for criminal offence relating to fraud or financial impropriety.
 - That the bidder is neither in receivership nor a subject of insolvency / Bankruptcy/ Winding up proceedings.
 - That all information presented in the Bid is true and correct in all particulars and can be verified.
- Prices quoted on bid document are valid for a period of three (3) months from the date of Bid Opening.

4. METHOD OF APPLICATION/ BID SUBMISSION AND OPENING

A complete set of bidding document in English Language which contains detailed information of items, their description and quantities required may be obtained by interested bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of sixty thousand naira (₦60,000.00) within 2 weeks from the date of this publication. Payment should be made into Edo State Government Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) Account, United Bank for Africa (UBA), Account Number 1010250531. Bidding document may be obtained at the Procurement Division, Edo State Hospitals Management Agency, 28 Ezoti Road, Benin City on submission of Teller for the payment of Tender fee. Electronic submission will not be permitted, please.

The completed bidding document should be enveloped in two separate envelopes marked "Technical Bid" and "Financial Bid", both bids should be placed in one envelope sealed, waxed and marked on the Top Left Hand Corner with the inscription: "Company name and address", and on the back side of the sealed envelope addressed to the Executive Secretary/Chief Executive, Edo State Hospitals Management Agency, Block B (Basement) Secretariat Complex, Sapele Road, Benin City, Edo State and to be deposited in the Bid Box at the address above not later than 12:00 noon on Tuesday 28th April, 2026.

Bidding document can be submitted at the office of the Executive Secretary/Chief Executive between the hours of 9.00am and 2.00pm on Mondays to Fridays except on public holidays. Bids will be opened immediately after the deadline of submission at Conference Room, Edo State Investment Promotion Office (ESIPO), Ground Floor, Block B, Secretariat Complex, Sapele Road, Benin City, Edo State in the presence of bidders or their representatives, members of Civil Society Organization (CSO) and any other persons who choose to attend at the address stated above.

Please note that late bids submission will be rejected. Other details will be seen in the Bidding document.

5. DISCLAIMER

This advertisement shall not be construed to mean commitment on the part of Edo State Hospitals Management Agency to award any form of contract and will not indemnify any contractor in relation to any expenses incurred therein.

SIGNED:
Executive Secretary/Chief Executive
Hospitals Management Agency.
Benin City.

Faraday buries father in Benin as tributes pour in for Elder Azekhumen

Apostle (Hon.) Sule Faraday Azekhumen, Special Adviser to Governor Monday Okpebholo on Religious Matters and Chaplain of Government House Chapel, at the weekend laid his father, Elder Ebhohimen Sylvester Azekhumen, to rest in Benin City.

Elder Azekhumen, who died at the age of 85, was honoured with a well-attended social dance held in Benin City, drawing family members, friends, associates and well-wishers who came to celebrate his life and legacy.

The burial rites were preceded by a solemn Service of Songs held on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, at Ihueghian Street, Benin City, where tributes were paid to the deceased for his impactful life and contributions to society.

Until his death, Elder Azekhumen was a retired staff of the University of Benin Teaching Hospital and was widely regarded as a dedicated professional and respected family man.

ing Hospital and was widely regarded as a dedicated professional and respected family man.



ELDER EBHOHIMEN SYLVESTER AZEKHUMEN

Police nab 50 suspects over fake checkpoints, other criminal offence

ABUJA

The Nigeria Police Force said it has arrested 50 suspects over fake checkpoints, criminal conspiracy, kidnapping, banditry, robbery and other criminal offences in three months nationwide.

The Force Public Relations Officer, DCP Anthony Placid, said this during a news conference on Monday in Abuja.

Placid said 17 rifles of various models, 111 live ammunition of various calibers, two empty magazines, 17 live cartridges and three vehicles were recovered between January and March.

According to him, three mobile phones, seven magazines, five walkie-talkies among other exhibits were also recovered within the period under review.

He said the suspects were arrested by operatives of the Force Intelligence Department- Intelligence Response Team (FID-IRT) following several coordinated operations.

Placid said operatives of the

FID-IRT, on March 3, acting on credible intelligence, arrested four suspects over armed robbery in Benue.

The police spokesman said the suspects specialise in mounting fake police checkpoints to rob unsuspecting members of the public.

He said a locally fabricated rifle, a revolver pistol, live cartridges, and a complete Police Mobile Force uniform used as a decoy were recovered from the suspects.

Placid said the suspects were currently in custody, while efforts were ongoing to apprehend other members of the gang to recover additional weapons.

He said operatives of the FID-IRT had on March 13, arrested four suspects over abduction, extortion and robbery along Deidei/Kubwa Expressway in Abuja.

"Preliminary investigation revealed that the suspects were involved in multiple cases of abduction, "one chance" extortion, robbery, and attempted murder within and around the FCT.

"The exhibits recovered were linked to their criminal activities, including property belonging to one of their victims.

"Efforts are ongoing to apprehend other members of the syndicate to recover additional operational assets," he said.

Placid said three suspected kingpins, responsible for the murder of three policemen in Taraba, had also been arrested.

The police spokesman said the suspects were arrested on March 29 by operatives of the FID-IRT following credible human and technical intelligence.

He said preliminary investigation had revealed that the suspects were the brain behind the killing of three policemen attached to Donga Divisional Police Headquarters on March 18.

Placid said the suspects had also been linked to other violent attacks and crises in Takum Local Government Area of Taraba.

He said investigations to apprehend other fleeing suspects and recovery of their operational weapons were still ongoing.

Ohanaeze Ndigbo hails Otti's transformational leadership in Abia

UMUAHIA

The Abia chapter of the apex Igbo socio-cultural organisation, Ohanaeze Ndigbo Worldwide, has lauded Governor Alex Otti's "deliberate efforts" to improve the living standards of Abia residents.

The Publicity Secretary, Mr Godwin Adindu, made the commendation when he addressed newsmen in Umuahia on Monday.

Adindu said that Otti's ad-

ministration had brought significant positive change to the state since its inception about three years ago.

He said that the group is concerned about good governance, good leadership, security of life of Ndigbo and provision of enabling environment for them to exist and operate their businesses.

He highlighted the governor's radical innovations that had enhanced various aspects of life in Abia, such as the

Umuahia Central Terminal, transformation of Aba and the civil service reform.

Adindu described as commendable, Otti's efforts to create a business-friendly environment, promote Igbo culture, and make Igbo Language compulsory in secondary schools.

"We will continue to recognise our outstanding leaders and illustrious Igbo sons and daughters, who are carving a niche for themselves in their areas of endeavour," he said.

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE OF EDO STATE
IN THE BENIN JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT BENIN**

BETWEEN *Adjourned to 2/6/2026* SUIT NO: B/549/2020
Court 14 Benin

1. MAJORITY EBOSE EZEIGBEBE
2. MASEE MEGA NIG. LTD } CLAIMANTS

1. GODWIN EKHATOR (Odionwere)
2. ISAAC EDOBOR (Ohen Ogiobe)
3. GABRIEL AGBONGHAE
4. VICTOR EDOBOR (Okaighele)
5. PATRICK ATITI
6. LOVEDAY OYOBAGIE
7. MR. OGIEVA MICHEAL
(Suing on Behalf of Obe N'evbuebo Community) } DEFENDANTS

AND

1. MR. ELVIS EDOBOR
2. MR. UNITY EKHATOR (aka ABALU)
3. MR. IGUMA ATITI (aka SUPREME)
4. MR. LOVEDAY OYOBAGIE
5. MR. OSADEBAMWEN AGBONGHAE
6. MR. CHRISTOPHER OGBOMO } DEFENDANTS


**FORM 48
NOTICE OF CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEDIENCE OF COURT ORDER**


To: **MR. UNITY EKHATOR** (aka ABALU), of Obenevuebo Community, off Peanut Road, off Sapele Road, Benin City, Edo State.

TAKE NOTICE that unless you obey the order contained in the Judgment of the High Court delivered at Benin City dated the 21st day of February, 2024, which set out hereunder, you will be guilty of contempt of court and will be liable to be committed to prison.

A copy of the Judgment is attached herewith.

DATED THIS *3rd* DAY OF *DECEMBER*, 2025


REGISTRAR



former court 13
Honourable Justice H.O GARUBA

Adjourned to 2/6/2026
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE OF EDO STATE *Court 14 Benin*
**IN THE BENIN JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT BENIN**

BETWEEN SUIT NO: B/549/2020

1. MAJORITY EBOSE EZEIGBEBE
2. MASEE MEGA NIG. LTD } CLAIMANTS

3. GODWIN EKHATOR (Odionwere)
4. ISAAC EDOBOR (Ohen Ogiobe)
5. GABRIEL AGBONGHAE
6. VICTOR EDOBOR (Okaighele)
7. PATRICK ATITI
8. LOVEDAY OYOBAGIE
9. MR. OGIEVA MICHEAL
(Suing on Behalf of Obe N'evbuebo Community) } DEFENDANTS

AND

1. MR. ELVIS EDOBOR
2. MR. UNITY EKHATOR (aka ABALU)
3. MR. IGUMA ATITI (aka SUPREME)
4. MR. LOVEDAY OYOBAGIE
5. MR. OSADEBAMWEN AGBONGHAE
6. MR. CHRISTOPHER OGBOMO } DEFENDANTS


**FORM 48
NOTICE OF CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEDIENCE OF COURT ORDER**


To: **MR. OSADEBAMWEN AGBONGHAE**, of Obenevuebo Community, Off Peanut Road, Off Sapele Road, Benin City, Edo State.

TAKE NOTICE that unless you obey the order contained in the Judgment of the High Court delivered at Benin City dated the 21st day of February, 2024, which set out hereunder, you will be guilty of contempt of court and will be liable to be committed to prison.

A copy of the Judgment is attached herewith.

DATED THIS *3rd* DAY OF *DECEMBER*, 2025


REGISTRAR



former court 13
Honourable Justice H.O GARUBA

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE OF EDO STATE
IN THE BENIN JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT BENIN**

BETWEEN *Adjourned to 2/6/2026* SUIT NO: B/549/2020
Court 14 Benin

1. MAJORITY EBOSE EZEIGBEBE
2. MASEE MEGA NIG. LTD } CLAIMANTS

1. GODWIN EKHATOR (Odionwere)
2. ISAAC EDOBOR (Ohen Ogiobe)
3. GABRIEL AGBONGHAE
4. VICTOR EDOBOR (Okaighele)
5. PATRICK ATITI
6. LOVEDAY OYOBAGIE
7. MR. OGIEVA MICHEAL
(Suing on Behalf of Obe N'evbuebo Community) } DEFENDANTS

AND

1. MR. ELVIS EDOBOR
2. MR. UNITY EKHATOR (aka ABALU)
3. MR. IGUMA ATITI (aka SUPREME)
4. MR. LOVEDAY OYOBAGIE
5. MR. OSADEBAMWEN AGBONGHAE
6. MR. CHRISTOPHER OGBOMO } DEFENDANTS


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DATED THIS *3rd* DAY OF *DECEMBER*, 2025


REGISTRAR



former court 13
Honourable Justice H.O GARUBA

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known and addressed as **OGODO JENNIFER BELIEVE**, now wish to be known and addressed as **EHIGIATOR BELIEVE JENNIFER**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MISS IBIZUGBE EVELYN ENOMA**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS. AGHEDO EVELYN ENOMA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MISS OHUCHE CHINONYEREM JULIANA**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS. ADUN CHINONYEREM JULIANA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **EBOH NKEM FESTUS**, now wish to be known and addressed as **ONYENUGWU NKEM FESTUS**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MISS ELITE IFEOMA BRIDGET**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS. MADUKA-IKE IFEOMA BRIDGET**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MISS ZAINAB IDRIS OHIKA-ABDULLAHI**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS. ZAINAB IDRIS OHIKA-ABDULLAHI**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

ADDITION OF NAME

I, formerly known as **THEOPHILUS OSEMUDIAMEN**, now wish to be known and addressed as **EHIKHUELE THEOPHILUS OSEMUDIAMEN**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

ADDITION OF MIDDLE NAME

I, formerly known as **MISS ERO ALABA**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS. ERO ALABA ESTHER**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MISS OHUCHE CHINONYEREM JULIANA**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS. ADUN CHINONYEREM JULIANA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **OSASERE PEACE AIGBE**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS. OSASERE PEACE OSARUMWENSE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MISS TINUKE LISA OJO**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS. AKINDAHUN ATINUKE LISA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

This Space for Sale

Feature

Devt: Poverty, unemployment as drivers of insecurity

FAROUQ IBN DADA

While the federal government is tackling insurgency and recent banditry attacks through a combination of military operations, intelligence gathering, and community engagement, the need to critically address the raw nerve of causal factors becomes more pressing as bandits become more emboldened.

In 2026, the government allocated N5.41 trillion to defence, policing, and related security operations to combat terrorism and banditry. This huge sum would have been properly channeled in addressing the gaps in employment and youth advancement with a view to nipping restiveness in the bud.

Some of the strategies employed by the government include:

Military Operations: The Nigerian military has launched several operations, such as Operation Hadarin Daji and Operation Thunder Strike, to neutralize armed bandits and terrorists in the Northwest and Northeast regions.

Intelligence Gathering: The government has established the Multi-Agency Anti-Kidnap Fusion Cell to coordinate intelligence and rescue missions, with an 80% success rate in anti-kidnapping operations.

Community Engagement: The government is working with local communities to gain their trust and support in the fight against insurgency and banditry.

International Cooperation: Nigeria has partnered with the United States to combat terrorism and banditry, with the US providing intelligence support and defence equipment.

Despite these efforts, the security situation remains challenging, with attacks on civilians and security personnel continuing to occur. The government has acknowledged the need for sustained efforts to address the root causes of insecurity, including poverty, unemployment, and governance deficits, and that is cheering enough.

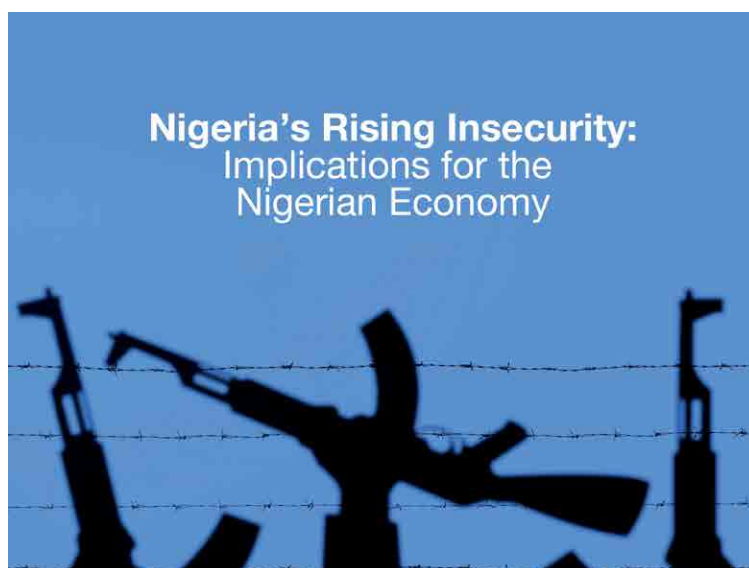
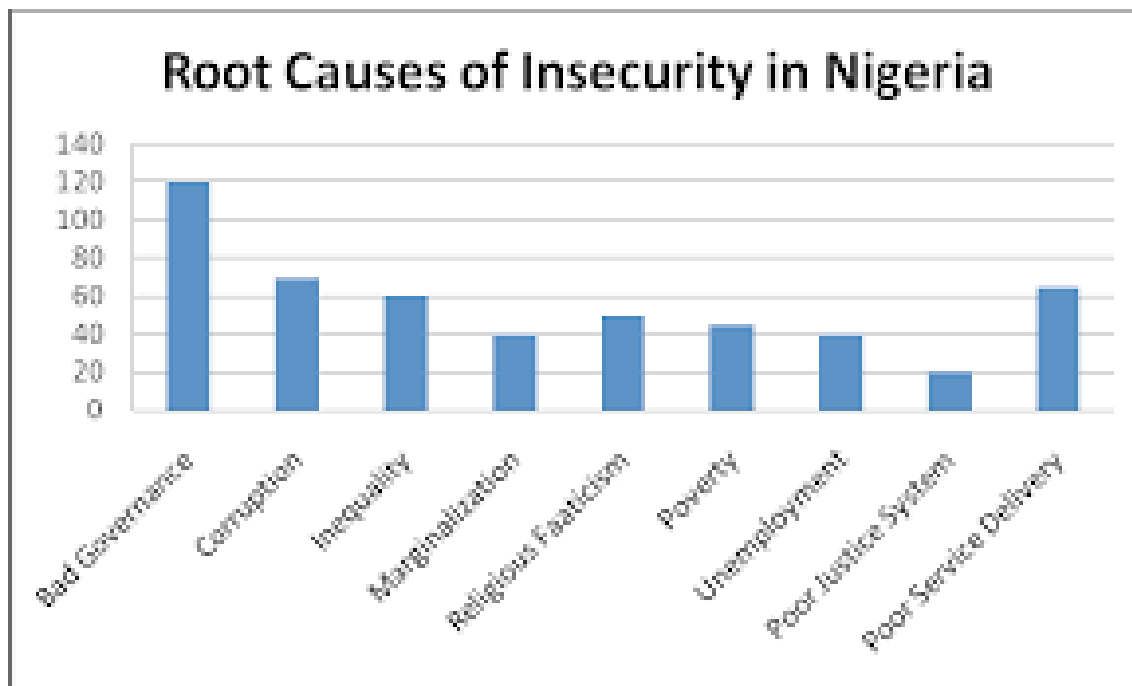
It is no doubt that Poverty and Unemployment are fingered as culprits where insecurity is predominant. High poverty rates, unemployment, and lack of economic opportunities are driving factors behind insecurity, with about 62% of Nigerians (141 million people) expected to live in poverty by 2026.

Regional Disparities: The Northern regions face higher levels of multidimensional poverty due to security challenges affecting agriculture, while urban centers in the South grapple with "working poverty."

Governance and Corruption: Weak governance, corruption, and mismanagement hinder economic development and exacerbate insecurity.

Climate-Related Shocks: Climate-related shocks and insecurity in food-producing regions contribute to high food prices and poverty.

International Cooperation: Collaboration with neighboring countries and international partners is



crucial to combat transnational criminal networks.

Youth Unemployment: Nigeria's youth unemployment rate is high, with many young people lacking access to economic opportunities, making them vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups.

Agriculture and Livelihoods: The agricultural sector, a key employer, has been hit by insecurity, further limiting livelihood options.

Economic Diversification: The economy's reliance on oil makes it vulnerable to price shocks, exacerbating poverty and unemployment.

Skills and Opportunities: There's a mismatch between skills training and job market needs, leaving many without viable livelihoods.

Some potential solutions include:

Skills Training Programs: Initiatives like vocational training could equip youth with employable skills.

Agricultural Support: Supporting farmers with resources and security could boost food production and jobs.

Entrepreneurship Support: Encouraging entrepreneurship, especially in tech and agribusiness, could create opportunities.

Skills Training Programs: Vo-

cational training, coding boot-camps, or apprenticeships could be game-changers for Nigerian youth.

”
the security situation remains challenging, with attacks on civilians and security personnel continuing to occur. The government has acknowledged the need for sustained efforts to address the root causes of insecurity

Agricultural Support: Providing farmers with resources like seeds, fertilizers, and secure land could boost production and create jobs.

Entrepreneurship Support: Funding, mentorship, and networking opportunities could help Nigerian entrepreneurs thrive, especially in tech and agribusiness.

Let's break down implementation strategies for each:

Skills Training Programs: Partner with local NGOs, tech hubs, or vocational centers to deliver training. Offer internships or job placements to ensure employability.

Agricultural Support: Collaborate with government agencies, NGOs, or private companies to provide resources. Establish secure farming zones with community involvement.

Entrepreneurship Support: Set up business incubators or accelerators with funding, mentorship, and networking opportunities. Partner with investors or corporates for funding.

There are several Challenges, but they may not be too difficult to surmount where there is will power and policy direction. Here are some potential ones:

Funding Constraints: Securing consistent funding for these initiatives can be tough.

Community Buy-in: Getting local communities to trust and participate in these programs might be a hurdle.

Security Risks: Ensuring the safety of participants, especially in agricultural initiatives, is crucial.

Sustainability: Making these programs self-sustaining or scalable can be a challenge.

Alright, let's tackle the three challenges and explore mitigation strategies:

Funding Constraints: Diversify funding sources (grants, corporate sponsorships, crowdfunding), create partnerships with investors, and prioritize cost-effective solutions.

Community Buy-in: Engage community leaders, involve locals in program design, and highlight tangible benefits to build trust.

Security Risks: Collaborate with security agencies, conduct risk assess-

ments, and establish secure zones for participants.

For insecurity in Nigeria, some potential ways forward include:

Addressing Root Causes: Tackling poverty, unemployment, and governance issues can help reduce insecurity.

Community Engagement: Building trust between communities and security agencies is key.

Multi-Stakeholder Approach: Collaboration between government, civil society, and international partners can help tackle complex security challenges.

Citizen Engagement Platforms: Create platforms for citizens to report security concerns and provide feedback on government responses.

Security Sector Reform: Reform security agencies to improve professionalism, accountability, and community trust.

Economic Empowerment: Implement programs that provide economic opportunities, especially for youth, to reduce vulnerability to extremist groups.

Dialogue and Mediation: Foster dialogue between government, communities, and armed groups to address grievances and promote peace.

Let's break down how Dialogue and Mediation could work in Nigeria's context:

Inclusive Dialogue Platforms: Establish platforms bringing together government reps, community leaders, and armed groups to address grievances.

Neutral Mediators: Use neutral mediators (local or international) to facilitate talks and build trust.

Addressing Grievances: Focus on addressing root causes like resource allocation, governance, and socio-economic disparities.

Examples of successful mediation efforts in Nigeria include:

The Niger Delta Amnesty Program: A 2009 initiative that brought militants to the negotiating table, leading to disarmament and reintegration.

The National Dialogue on Security: Efforts to address Boko Haram's roots and impacts.

Other case studies include:

The Bakassi Peninsula Mediation: Nigeria and Cameroon resolved a border dispute through ICJ and mediation, easing tensions.

The Chad Basin Joint Multinational Force: Regional efforts to tackle Boko Haram involved dialogue and cooperation.

A couple more approaches:

Leveraging Tech for Security: Using tech like surveillance systems or community reporting apps to enhance security.

Strengthening Community Policing: Building trust between communities and local police for more effective security.

Final takeaway: Addressing insecurity in Nigeria requires a multifaceted approach combining tech, community engagement, and addressing root causes like poverty and governance.

FEATURE

Ahead 2027 elections: Tinubu's unprecedented political masterstroke

RAYMOND OSOGBE

As we gravitate towards 2027 general elections, several BookMakers and political Analysts, feeding the Populace with discordant tunes, have begun making spurious assumptions. Amidst this amazing scenario, one thing is as constant as the Northern Star. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, as a political tactician, have been able to convince 32 Governors to align with his All Progressives Congress (APC), across the six geo political zones. This feat is indeed, to be honest, unprecedented in Nigeria's political history.

From the perspective of this writer, the political handwriting of the said elections are empirically self evident and evaluated. President Tinubu has achieved a political feat which eluded the foremost Fathers of modern Nigeria.

First Republic was characterized by ethnicities and Regional sentiments and bigotry. None of the existing Political Parties command absolute majority at the center. The Political Parties resort to forming coalitions, often ladden with fragments and irreconcilable ideological differences. There was no feasible coalitions among the existing Political Parties. This was exploited by the Military to push the Political Parties out of power in 1966. It's absolutely of essence to highlight that it's these geo political zones which seems not to align in the first Republic that Tinubu is sealing together now, under one political roof, with a common agenda. This, indeed, is a good idea propelled by a Political Maestro, General and an Architect. If not for wicked persons sponsoring terrorism, banditry and kidnapping, Tinubu has unprecedentedly, sealed up the much anticipated handshake across the six geo political divides. With time, all



the vices affecting Nigeria will fizzle out. It's absolutely artificial and politically motivated. Tinubu has prepared his way for triumph come 2027.

The Opposition from empirical view, appears to be very weak and fragmented. Each of the purported Leaders seems to be driven by selfish motive, rather than nationalism.

The Opposition lack grassroots base to lay their structure and reflect their strategies and manifestos. They lack national outlook and cohesion, infected with endless internal legal struggles. When shall the Opposition unite and cease internal hostilities?

Above all, the Opposition doesn't have what I may call appealing Manifestos for now. Instead of telling Nige-

rians what they as Opposition will do differently from APC led administration of Tinubu, they resort to personalized attacks.

Another advantage in favor of Tinubu is that most Nigerians are now aware that most Politicians, irrespective of the political party, are

Birds of same stock. The Devil you know is better than the one you are yet to know. This Writer is of the view that Nigerians should give President Tinubu another chance come 2027. He has always been on the side of Democracy. He was in the fore front of June 12 annulment revalidation struggle, an outstanding member of NA-DECO democrats. A Master Strategist of the ACN/CPC/ANPP Alliance that swept PDP out of power. To dream of defeating Tinubu in 2027 is like an unrealistic expectation.

Once again I dare to say, I have never seen, a bigger political realignment, such as President Tinubu is sealing together ahead of 2027.

May the Good God bless all of us.



The Opposition lack grassroots base to lay their structure and reflect their strategies and manifestos. They lack national outlook and cohesion, infected with endless internal legal struggles.

Okpebholo: The journey so far

RAYMOND OSOGBE

Governor Monday Okpebholo has since hit the ground running. From the day he was sworn in, he started to walk the talk.

The dilapidated Benin - Sapele Road has been fixed by the Okpebholo-led administration. There's now a free flow of vehicular movements in the location. Users of the Road are full of praises for Mr Governor.

Against Book Makers' expectations, he started unprecedented massive constructions of two Flyover in the ancient City of Benin. The aim is to upgrade the state capital infrastructure. We are also aware that similar developments are ongoing in Edo Central and North Senatorial Districts. Okpebholo is in a hurry to change the face of Edo state.

We are aware of how the near comatose Ambrose Alli University was revived by the present administration. The University is bubbling once again. Many academic courses have been accredited due to Mr Governor's unwavering support.

I will use this auspicious moment to kindly appeal to Governor Okpebholo to, as a matter of importance, extend

his passion for Institutional revival to the State Colleges of Education.

The College infrastructure and Personnel deserve a drastic overhaul. Above all, the approved Akpata Univer-

sity of Education that was subsumed by the Obaseki-led administration should be exhumed by his Excellency.

It is absolutely paradoxical and

amazing to see that an Institution created by Law is missing. Yes, it is absolutely true that the unprecedented incident was orchestrated by the Obaseki-led

administration. We are appealing to you, sir, to revert to status quo.

Now that there's a Federal College of Education at Ekiadolor, Mr Governor can use his discretion to relocate the University to anywhere else in Edo South Senatorial District.

Again, I want to draw Mr Governor's attention to some critical infrastructure deficit in some parts of the State. The State Capital infrastructure is under undue pressure owing to growing population. There are fast growing areas around Benin metropolis. These areas need infrastructure now and not the future. The areas need Drainage and Roads. Edo State is according to experts, the fourth fastest growing State in the Federation. It is absolutely a pragmatic and proactive measures, that will enable us get there.

This Writer briefly will like to mention that the Oshiomhole-constructed lanes attached to Benin -Lagos Roads is wearing off, in some parts. The first East Circular and third East Circular Road deserve upgrades. Of course, please, don't ignore the rural Roads. They connect our common people to the rising world.



These areas need infrastructure now and not the future. The areas need Drainage and Roads. Edo State is according to experts, the fourth fastest growing State in the Federation



GOVERNOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLO

Sports

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

Give me hope: Is Zadok Yohanna the future of Nigerian football?

DOUGLAS BAYE-OSAGIE

The video footage that emerged from the Swedish premier league (Allsvenskan) the past weekend on 5th April left the soccer world in awe. The clips went global overnight. One five-minute package hit 2.1M views on X by morning. At noon, all the big soccer handles on the Internet had announced his name. By evening, scouts from Dortmund, Brighton, Ajax, Chelsea and Atalanta were ringing AIK's sporting director.

The Yohanna madness isn't hype — it's a warning.

One game. That is all it took. Now everyone is asking: Who is this guy? Where is he from?

A Nigerian teenager, Zadok Yohanna playing for AIK left the internet in jaw-dropping surprise as he danced through a crowded defence for 90 minutes in one of the most commanding displays seen in the Swedish league in a long time, grabbing the late winner in AIK's opening day league victory over Halmstad in the 50,000-packed Strawberry Arena. Some said he was a throwback to Arjen Robben, others likened him to Michael Olise, some even called him Liamine Yamal.

Twelve months ago, he probably hadn't played football in a proper stadium but the patchy football fields in Northern Nigeria. He didn't even register as a blip on the global football radar as Kaduna State was just providing a dream for the future. After just nine months and one earth-shattering opening day masterclass, this 18-year-old Nigerian winger now rules every single Allsvenskan football headline like an emperor on his throne. Who is this kid? Why are Europe's top scouts practically camping outside his window? Let's rip it all apart and feast on the details.

Without a doubt this is a generational talent that will be around for a long time. As someone who has followed the rise of talents for a long time I strongly believe Nigeria has produced about four to five generational football talents in the 21st century: Others might have looked like superstars in the making but just Obafemi Martins, John Obi Mikel, Kelechi Iheanacho and Victor Osimhen ranks highest in my reckoning as players who took the world by storm from the very get go. A generational talent is a young athlete who leaves an indelible mark on first sight, showcasing exceptional abilities that transcend their age. They're the ones you watch and instinctively know they'll dominate the sport for years to come.

Obafemi Martins made his Inter Milan senior debut against Parma in December 2002 after moving from Lagos to Italy at 16. That was an era Italian football had some of the best attackers in World football and a host of legendary defenders. He fought for a starting shirt in a star-studded attack that featured four elite strikers: an inform Christian Vieri, the lethal Adriano, Álvaro Recoba, and Júlio Cruz. He was handed the No. 9 shirt at Newcastle worn by the great Alan Shearer when he moved to the English League in 2006. Though a descent career plagued by

injuries, his calmness in front of goal was legendary. Looking back, failure to qualify for the 2006 World Cup when Obafemi Martins was red hot didn't help his Nigerian profile.

Another great generational talent was Mikel Obi. His emergence at youth level sparked a fierce bidding war between Manchester United and Chelsea, with Sir Alex Ferguson determined to secure him as a potential successor to Paul Scholes. Mikel ultimately joined Chelsea, where he became a cornerstone of the team, winning all the club trophies. He won the Nations Cup for Nigeria and was captain in the 2018 World Cup.

Kelechi Iheanacho, on the other hand, was the undisputed MVP of the 2013 FIFA U-17 World Cup in the United Arab Emirates — tormenting defenses with 6 goals, 7 assists, and a reel of sublime, physics-defying displays that fast-tracked him straight from an Owerri academy to Pep Guardiola's Manchester City. Despite a rollercoaster career path, his raw, god-given talent has never been in doubt. He's the only player in English Premier League history to score on every single day of the week in the same season — a freakish feat he pulled off in 2020/21 with Leicester. Had he fused that once-in-a-generation ability with a monk-like work discipline, he might've single-handedly dragged Nigeria to footballing immortality in the last decade.

Victor Osimhen doesn't need too much introduction. He is one of the very best in the world at the moment. He announced himself in the U17 World Cup with a record of 10 tournament goals. He scored in every game, including a hat-trick vs Australia and the record-breaking 10th in the 2-0 final win over Mali. He has gone on to do great things in club and country. He is the first and only African to top the Serie A scoring chart in Italy — a league where African icons like George Weah, Patrick Mboma, Nwankwo Kanu, Samuel Eto'o and Mohamed Salah all played — winning Capocannoniere with 26 goals in 2022/23 for Napoli. Osimhen is currently 3 goals away from breaking the Super Eagles goal record held by Rashidi Yekini for 30 years. On this table of generational talents, honorary mention to Benjamin Federick who currently plays for the Super Eagles as the youngest defender. He has a great career ahead of him.

On our hands now is a player that will turn heads and leave football fans fulfilled for watching the round leather game. What I saw from the five-minute highlights from Sweden took me back to a winger who defined a generation — Ángel Di María. When he's gliding down the flank, ball glued to his left foot, defenders look like they're stuck in quicksand. Di María who had an illustrious club career in Benfica, Real Madrid, Manchester United, PSG and Juventus turned chaos into art: cutting inside to bend screamers, whipping outside to deliver dimes, running games from the right like he owned the touchline. He's a serial big-game merchant — man of the match in a Copa América final, Champions League final, World Cup final. The guy



ZADOK YOHANNA

lives for moments where the pressure would crush mortals.

The story of another emerging superstar is being shaped in Sweden. Watching Zadok Yohanna's clips you'll see the Di María DNA: a left-footed menace who inverts from the right to terrorize defenders, but can still go down the line and smash it with his weak foot; a final-ball killer who sees passes two seconds early; an explosive first five yards that gets instant separation; the clutch gene to demand the ball when it matters; and the tireless defensive work of a winger who tracks back like his life depends on it. Di María won the World Cup at 34 because he never stopped evolving. If Zadok keeps that hunger, Sweden league might just be chapter one of his own legend.

Zadok Yohanna wasn't known until a group of football scouts from Scandinavia arrived in Nigeria in 2025 to hunt for raw talent on the streets of Nigeria. After conquering the U17 World Cup in 2013 and 2015, Nigeria's once-talent factory production of teenage stars, have almost consistently failed to qualify and dominate at FIFA U17 levels. The only way to fetch the best of youth football now in Nigeria is to painstakingly scout soccer academies in the country, run mostly as private businesses by passionate football proprietors.

Zadok Yohanna came through Ikon Allah Football Academy based in Kaduna, owned by one of the best youth management development proprietors in Nigeria, Mr. Iya Mohammed. Zadok

I hope he can be the player that helps us this year. It is a little early still, but I genuinely hope he becomes that player.

was scouted and taken to Sweden in 2025, and his development since then has captivated the soccer world.

On arrival in Sweden, he was handed the No. 36 jersey, Number 36 at AIK carries history. It was the shirt number worn by Henok Goitom, the Ethiopian-Swedish forward who became one of the most beloved players in the club's modern era and is now serving as assistant coach. It is also the number associated with Alexander Isak during his formative years at the club before his move to Borussia Dortmund. On the day of Zadok's unveiling and presentation to the fans on June 29th, 2025, the club's chief scout, Fredrik Wisur Hansen, was quoted as saying, "Zadok has an impressive record of strengths, including his drive, close technical, outstanding 1 on 1 ability, and a sensitive left foot. We look forward to following his development with us with great excitement."

When Mikkel Thomassen was dismissed as manager in January 2026, a new chapter opened. José Riveiro took charge of the team. And Yohanna's career suddenly had the environment it needed.

When the chance came to play in the FA Cup he gave a lasting impression that a golden boy is in town.

March 9, 2026. AIK versus BK Häcken in the Swedish Cup group stage at Strawberry Arena. This was the game where Swedish football stopped and paid attention.

Coach Riveiro started Yohanna from the first minute. In a 4-3-3 system, the Nigerian played on the right wing — his normal position — with freedom to cut inside onto his strong left foot. What happened next changed everything.

*First goal: Yohanna got the ball on the right side, cut inside, went past his defenders with quick, easy touches, and curled a low shot from outside the box into the far corner. Häcken's goalkeeper, David Andersson, who just joined from IFK Norrköping, had no chance.

Second goal: Pure instinct. Yohanna was smart to get into the right spot, then hit the ball hard and accurate with his left foot into the corner. His teammate Bersant Celina, who plays for

Kosovo and has years of experience in Europe, looked shocked watching it.

AIK won 4-0. Yohanna was man of the match. He scored twice and got a 9.2 rating on one match rating website. Clips of his goals spread all over Swedish football social media right away.

"It's a great feeling to score two goals. I'm really happy, as is the whole team," Yohanna told <http://expressen.se> after the match. He also thanked AIK's fans for the support they had shown him since he arrived.

The quarter-final against GAIS came on March 14. Yohanna scored again — heading in a cross from Áron Csongvai in the second half. AIK lost 3-2 and went out, but Yohanna ended the cup with *four goals in five games* in 297 minutes. The numbers were hard to ignore.

AIK defender Sotirios Papagiannopoulos — "Sotte" to AIK fans — had seen enough. "I hope he can be the player that helps us this year. It is a little early still, but I genuinely hope he becomes that player," the 35-year-old explained to <http://svenskafans.com>.

Zadok has not looked back from that day and has paid back the trust, becoming the darling of the Strawberry Arena, one of the best soccer stadiums in Europe, with a fully sold-out home support every weekend. As a football fan, a technically gifted left-footed winger is always a joy to watch, but one that combines goal-scoring with it will keep you on your feet for 90 minutes. Zadok's commanding display during the weekend kept the Swedish press asking, "how long will he stay in Sweden?" On Sunday, Zadok was like a man on a mission. Like a schoolboy playing on the football field, he was given the license to run at defenders.

If Zadok Yohanna was unknown in January, he was unmissable by April. His Allsvenskan debut for AIK on 5 April 2026 didn't just announce him — it detonated him globally.

"He plays like he's been here 10 years," AIK captain Alexander Milošević said post-match. "The decision-making, the work rate, he doesn't look 18."

His innocence and joy towards the game were visible in the way he played. Even with the weight of 65,000 fans, Zadok didn't disappoint. He completed ten dribbles out of 14 attempted and won seventeen duels out of 23 attempted. What an incredible performance! Outside scoring the winning goal, his excellent footwork and body movement were like vintage Angel Di María, a complete genius.

The boy from Kaduna has become the face of one of the most storied and successful football clubs in Sweden in less than a year since he came from the streets of Kaduna. The club's merchandise shop now has a T-shirt fast selling in his honour, boldly written "GIMME HOPE YOHANNA", culled from the famous anti-apartheid song "Gimme Hope Jo'anna" released in 1987 by the legendary British musician Eddie Grant. This is the excitement the talents of Zadok have gripped the Swedish fans. For a player that was bought with almost nothing, expect the biggest clubs in Europe to come with tempting offers in the summer.

Sports



Onwuzurike lauds Olopade, Okowa over six relay team to botswana

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Chief Chris Onwuzurike, a United States-based athletics enthusiast and proud father of one of Nigeria's finest sprinters, Udodi Onwuzurike,



TEAM NIGERIA

has expressed satisfaction with the recent progress of Nigerian athletics, particularly the nation's outstanding performance leading to the qualification for the World Relays in all six events.

Chief Onwuzurike commended

the Director General of the National Sports Commission, Bukola Olopade, alongside the President of the Athletics Federation of Nigeria, Chief Tonobok Okowa, for what he described as a remarkable administrative and technical input leading to the achievement.

According to him, qualifying in all six relay events is no small feat and reflects a renewed sense of direction, commitment, and coordination within the system.

He noted that such success did not come by chance but through deliberate planning, improved athlete management, and timely interventions by the leadership of the sport.

He urged the administrators not to relent but to consolidate on the gains recorded so far.

Beyond commendations, Chief Onwuzurike also offered constructive advice to the federation. He emphasized the importance of maintaining con-

sistent engagement with athletes, stressing that support should go beyond financial incentives. According to him, regular communication, mentorship, welfare checks, and emotional support are equally critical in helping athletes stay focused, motivated, and loyal to the national cause.

Speaking further, he addressed the ongoing visa challenges affecting many Nigerian student-athletes based in the United States. Rather than viewing it solely as a setback, he described it as a potential opportunity for growth. He suggested that the federation could strategically develop two formidable teams — one made up of foreign-based athletes and another comprising home-based talents.

According to him, this dual-structure approach would not only ensure continuity in competitions but also foster healthy rivalry among athletes. Such internal competition, he said, would ultimately raise performance standards, deepen the talent pool.



RORY MCILROY

McIlroy makes Masters history with back-to-back Augusta triumph

EDWARD OSEGHE

Rory McIlroy etched his name deeper into golf's history books on Sunday after securing a second consecutive Masters title at Augusta National, becoming only the fourth player ever to defend the green jacket successfully.

The Northern Irishman endured a turbulent final round but held firm under pressure to clinch a one-shot victory and move alongside Jack Nicklaus, Sir Nick Faldo and Tiger Woods as the only golfers to win back-to-back Masters titles.

McIlroy had appeared in complete control after opening up a commanding six-shot lead

at the halfway stage. However, the final round quickly turned into a battle of momentum, with the defending champion briefly falling two shots behind amid surges from playing partner Cameron Young and former runner-up Justin Rose.

Rose, who was edged out by McIlroy in last year's play-off, once again emerged as a major threat, while world number one Scottie Scheffler also mounted a strong charge to set up a tense and unpredictable finish.

Responding to the pressure, McIlroy rediscovered his rhythm at a crucial point in the round. Consecutive birdies from the seventh hole steadied his challenge, before another

Fans savour thrilling moments at Heineken's most recent Champions' League activation event

Heineken has intensified its UEFA Champions League campaign in Nigeria as excitement builds ahead of the decisive quarter-final second-leg matches, promising fans an even more immersive viewing experience across key cities.

Following the success of the first-leg activations in Port Harcourt and other locations, the premium beer brand is taking the energy a notch higher with upcoming fan events scheduled for Aba and Owerri.

"Fans Have More Friends" cuts across genders as supporters connect and celebrate together during a UEFA Champions League match night at the second-round fixtures in Lagos last month."

The initial round of viewing experiences drew large crowds, with football lovers treated to a lively blend of big-screen matches, live music, interactive "predict and win" games, and a festive atmosphere anchored on the brand's global "Fans Have More Friends" campaign.

Portfolio Manager for Premium Beer at Nigerian Breweries Plc, Maria Shadako, said the brand is building on that momentum to deliver an even richer experience.

"The energy we saw during the first-leg events was incredible. Fans didn't just come to watch football — they came to connect, celebrate and be part of something bigger. For the second leg, we are raising the tempo to deliver an even more exciting experience," she said.

Fans attending the second-leg activations can expect enhanced engagement, including bigger prizes, premium Heineken merchandise, and more interactive entertainment designed to bring

supporters closer to both the action and one another.

A vibrant display of the 'Fans Have More Friends' campaign as supporters connect with their favourite clubs during a UEFA Champions League match night in Lagos.

On the pitch, the UEFA Champions League quarter-final ties remain delicately poised, setting the stage for high-stakes encounters.

Ademola Lookman has been a major talking point for Nigerian fans after inspiring Atlético Madrid to a commanding 2-0 first-leg victory over Barcelona at Camp Nou. Despite the advantage, Barcelona's reputation for dramatic

comebacks keeps the tie finely balanced.

Elsewhere, Real Madrid face a difficult task after a 2-1 home loss to Bayern Munich, while Liverpool FC must overturn a 2-0 deficit against Paris

Saint-Germain at Anfield.

Arsenal FC hold a slender edge following a 1-0 away win over Sporting CP, with the return leg set to determine who progresses to the semi-finals.



FANS SAVOUR THRILLING MOMENTS

Table Tennis Junior Aruna Shines in Luxembourg, Wins Two Medals at WTT Youth Contender

Nigerian table tennis prodigy, Junior Aruna, has announced his arrival on the international stage with an impressive two-medal haul at the 2026 WTT Youth Contender in Luxembourg. Sports

The 10-year-old sensation, son of African table tennis icon Quadri Aruna, delivered

a remarkable performance that underlines his growing reputation as one of Nigeria's brightest young talents.

Competing in the boys' U-13 singles on April 9, Junior Aruna displayed resilience and fighting spirit to secure a bronze medal. His campaign began on a difficult note with

a 3-0 defeat to Italy's Mattia Somaini, but the youngster responded in style, edging Lorenzo Armani 3-2 before overpowering Aaron Xia 3-0 to advance from the group stage.

He maintained his momentum in the knockout rounds, sweeping Poland's Antoni Zajac 3-0 in the round of 16 and defeating Bulgaria's Dan Zhelyazkov 3-1 in the quarter-finals. His impressive run, however, came to an end in the semifinals against France's Sacha Douaran, settling for a well-earned bronze.

Undeterred, Aruna returned stronger in the U-11 category on April 11, where he went a step further to claim silver. After progressing from the group stage, he produced one of the standout performances of the tournament, defeating Luxembourg's Noah Wolter 3-2 in a tense semifinal clash to book a place in the final.



JUNIOR ARUNA

Premier League: Ghana player Partey pleads not guilty to additional rape charges in UK

Ghana national team and Villarreal midfielder Thomas Partey, who is facing two additional counts of rape and has pleaded not guilty to five counts of rape and one count of sexual assault, walks outside Southwark Crown Court in London, Britain.

The Villarreal soccer player Thomas Partey appeared in a London court on Monday where he pleaded not guilty to two additional charges of rape.

Partey, a Ghana international, has previously denied five counts of rape relating to two women, plus a charge of sexual assault against a third woman, between 2021 and 2022.

The 32-year-old midfielder was

subsequently charged with two further offences of rape relating to a fourth complainant in December 2020, to which he pleaded not guilty at Southwark Crown Court.

The alleged offences took place when Partey played for Premier League soccer club Arsenal. He left the club last summer and signed for Spain's Villarreal Soccer

Partey was released on bail ahead of his trial, which was due to start in November but could be delayed.

Partey was signed by Arsenal from Atletico Madrid for N50 million euros (\$58.49 million) in 2020 and became a key member of the English side's first team, before his contract expired at the end of June



THOMAS PARTEY

Flick weighs De Jong fitness call as Barcelona chase Atletico comeback

EDWARD OSEGHE

Barcelona's bid to rescue their UEFA Champions League campaign will hinge on a crucial late fitness



FRENKIE DE JONG

decision, with manager Hansi Flick set to consult medical staff before determining whether captain Frenkie de Jong can start Tuesday's decisive clash against Atletico Ma-

drid.

The Catalan side travel to the Riyadh Air Metropolitan needing a strong response after a 2-0 defeat in the first leg of their quarter-final tie left them with a steep task to overturn the deficit.

Despite the setback, belief remains within the Barcelona camp. Flick's men have already beaten Atletico three times this season, offering hope that another turnaround is within reach.

A major boost could come in the form of De Jong, who recently returned from a hamstring injury that had sidelined him for over a month.

The Dutch midfielder made his comeback in the weekend derby victory over Espanyol, coming off the bench to set up Lamine Yamal's late winner.

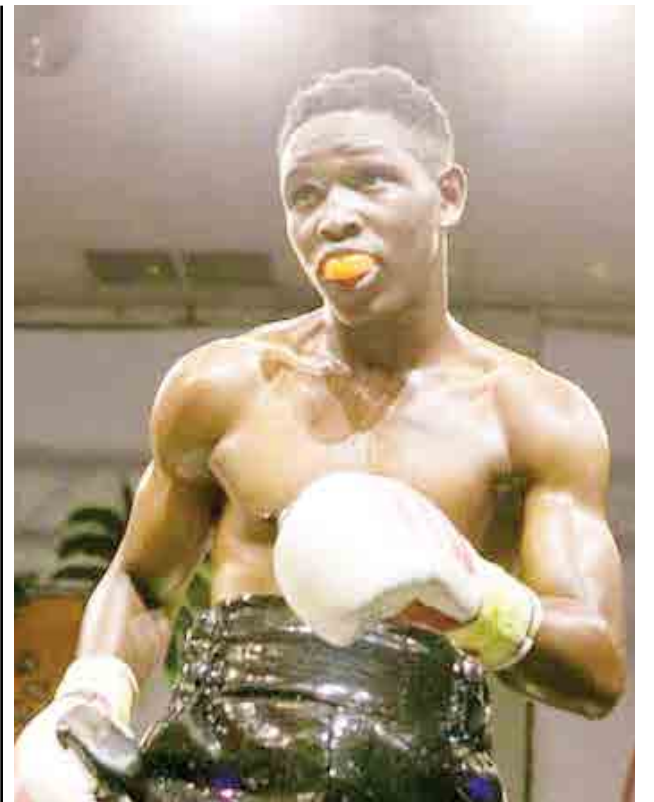
However, questions persist over his readiness to handle the

intensity of a full start in such a high-stakes encounter.

According to reports from journalist Santi Ovalle of Cadena SER, Flick will hold discussions with both De Jong and the club's medical team before making a final call. The central concern remains how many minutes the 28-year-old can safely manage, with the coaching staff assessing whether he is capable of lasting 45 to 60 minutes.

Flick is understood to be keen on including De Jong from the outset if he is deemed fit, recognising the midfielder's influence alongside Pedri in dictating Barcelona's tempo and creativity.

With their European hopes hanging in the balance, Barcelona's chances of staging a comeback may ultimately rest on whether their captain is ready to lead from the start.



RAHEEM "BADDO" ANIMASAHUN

Teenage boxing sensation Animasahun signs promotional deal with Zuffa Boxing

Nigerian boxing prospect, Raheem "Baddo" Animasahun, has signed a multi-year promotional deal with Zuffa Boxing in Lagos.

The signing marks a significant milestone in the young boxer's professional career.

Animasahun, regarded as one of Africa's promising boxing talents, made history as the youngest West African champion at the age of 16.

He recorded a sixth-round technical knockout victory over Richman Ashelley of Ghana in 2024, after his opponent failed to continue in the seventh round.

The deal places Animasahun

among a roster of elite fighters under Zuffa Boxing, including Conor Benn, Jai Opetai, Edgar Berlanga, Richardson Hitchins, Efe Ajagba, Serhii Bohachuk and Mark Magsayo.

With the new agreement, the boxer is expected to take his career to the global stage, while representing Nigeria.

The development signals a new phase in his career, with prospects of increased international exposure and higher-level competition.

Animasahun expressed determination to continue developing his skills and showcasing his talent, with the aim of projecting Nigerian boxing on the global stage.

Barcelona's financial strain puts Rashford return to Manchester United on horizon

EDWARD OSEGHE

Marcus Rashford's future at Barcelona, once expected to be a straightforward formality, is now clouded by the club's ongoing financial constraints — with a return to Manchester United increasingly likely despite an impressive loan spell in Spain.

The England forward has enjoyed a strong campaign at Camp Nou, registering 12 goals and 13 assists across all competitions, lifting the Supercopa de España, and re-establishing himself as a decisive attacking presence under Hansi Flick. Yet, even with those numbers and performances, Barcelona are struggling to make his stay permanent.

Rashford's loan move in the summer of 2025 initially looked like a fresh start after falling out of favour at Old Trafford under Ruben Amorim, who had reportedly made it clear the forward was not part of his immediate plans. In Barcelona, however, Rashford rediscovered rhythm and confidence, operating mainly from the left flank and delivering key moments in domestic and European fixtures — including a composed volley in the derby win over Espanyol.

What was expected to be a seamless transfer has instead run into Barcelona's familiar financial difficulties. LaLiga's strict financial regulations continue to limit the club's spending flexibility, and Rashford's wage package remains a significant obstacle.

The forward is among the Premier League's highest earners, with a reported £300,000-a-week contract at United, and even with a re-

duced salary during his loan spell, Barcelona have struggled to justify a permanent deal within their current wage structure.

The Catalan club do hold a €30 million purchase option, structured to be paid in three instalments. On paper, it is viewed internally as a favourable deal given Rashford's output and profile. In practice, however, activating it would require further financial adjustments that the club has yet to secure.

Barcelona's board has set a mid-June deadline to decide on the clause, but optimism within the club is fading. Manchester United, for their part,



MARCUS RASHFORD

NAWF President Olatunji assures more competitions to boost armwrestlers' performance

Samuel Olatunji, President of the Nigerian Armwrestling Federation (NAWF), says the federation will continue to organise competitions to prepare athletes for international engagements.

Olatunji said this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Monday in Abuja, while reviewing the just concluded National Armwrestling Championship held in Lagos.

He said the competition provided an opportunity to identify talented athletes who would represent the country at forthcoming international competitions.

The championship was organised to discover athletes for the All Africa Games scheduled to hold in Accra later in the year, as well as the African Armwrestling Championship

in Cairo, Egypt, next year.

According to him, the federation is satisfied with the outcome of the competition, noting that the turnout of athletes was impressive.

He said that more than 20 states and institutions participated in the championship, tagged "Lagos Open 2026".

"This year's national championship was very competitive.

"We discovered raw athletes that we will nurture for future competitions.

"The team list will be released before Wednesday, after which selected athletes will begin early preparations for the All Africa Games in Ghana.

"I am confident that they will make the country proud both in Ghana and at the championship in Egypt next year," he said.

Olatunji added that subse-

quent editions of the championship would be more elaborate, while commending officials and participants for their contributions to the success of the event.

He also appreciated the National Sports Commission (NSC) for its support.

"I want to particularly appreciate the NSC, the Chairman, Malam Shehu Dikko, and the Director-General, Bukola Olopade, for their immense support," he said.

He noted that last year's edition of the championship was held in Ibadan, while the next edition would also take place in Lagos.

World Champions Armwrestling Club, Lagos, recorded 30 points with 19 gold, 15 silver and four bronze medals to emerge overall winners.

Oyo amassed 18 points to finish second with 10 gold, six silver

and two bronze medals, while Delta came third with 10 gold, five silver and six bronze medals, after recording 21 points.

The Inspector-General of

Police (IGP) team from the Nigeria Police Force Headquarters, amassed 16 points to place fourth with seven gold, seven silver and two bronze medals.



SAMUEL OLATUNJI

Sports

The Nigerian
Observer
...that the people may know

Gunmen strike team bus, kill Berekum Chelsea winger Frimpong in highway ambush

EDWARD OSEGHE

Ghanaian football has been plunged into grief and outrage following



BEREKUM CHELSEA

the killing of Berekum Chelsea winger Dominic Frimpong in a brazen armed robbery attack on the club's team bus.

Frimpong, 20, lost his life

after gunmen ambushed the team along the Bibiani-Goaso highway as they travelled back from a league fixture against Samartex on Sunday.

According to reports, the assailants barricaded the road, forcing the bus to a halt before launching a sustained attack. The attackers, said to be masked and armed, carried out what witnesses described as a coordinated assault on the vehicle.

The driver reportedly attempted to escape by reversing, but the gunmen continued their assault, triggering panic among players and officials, who fled into nearby bushes in a desperate bid for safety.

Amid the chaos, Frimpong was critically injured. He was rushed to a medical facility

in Bibiani, where efforts were made to save his life. However, he later succumbed to his injuries.

In a statement, Berekum Chelsea recounted the terrifying ordeal, revealing how players and staff were forced to abandon the bus and scatter for safety as the attack unfolded.

The club expressed appreciation to residents, security personnel and media responders who provided immediate assistance during the crisis, and also acknowledged the support received from Bibiani Gold Stars in the aftermath.

The incident has sparked fresh concern over the safety of teams travelling for domestic fixtures, casting a dark shadow over the Ghanaian football community.



BRIGHT OZADEGBE

Ozadegbe confident of continental ticket after Ikorodu City defeat of Pillars

Bright Ozadegbe, Technical Adviser, Ikorodu City FC, has expressed optimism that the club is on course to secure a continental ticket at the end of the season.

Ozadegbe said this on Monday in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) following his side's 3-0 victory over Kano Pillars in a Matchday 34 fixture of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL).

Ikorodu City delivered a dominant performance on Sunday at the Mobolaji Johnson Arena, Onikan, Lagos, defeating the visitors convincingly.

In spite of the win, Ozadegbe said the team would remain focused, noting that the task was not yet completed.

"It is good to record such a win, but the job is not done yet. We still have a couple of matches to play.

"This season is different from last season, and so are our objectives. We will continue to push until the final game.

"If the league ended today,

we would have achieved our target, but with four matches remaining, we want to maintain our position.

"After our last game against Rangers, we will know where we stand," he said.

The coach also acknowledged Kano Pillars as a strong side, in spite of their current struggles.

"Kano Pillars are fighting to avoid relegation.

"They are a big club and deserve respect," he said.

Ikorodu City took the lead in the 29th minute through Joseph Arumala, who converted a pass from Abayomi Ayodeji.

The hosts doubled their lead in the 71st minute when Tosin Oyedokun scored from close range after an assist by substitute Tomiwa Awojobi.

Ayodeji sealed the victory in the 88th minute, finishing off a pass from Folarin Temitope.

The victory strengthens Ikorodu City's chances of securing continental football, while Kano Pillars continue to battle against relegation

Enabulele, Edo Sports Commission pay condolence Visit to Idahosa Family on Denise of Deputy Governor' mother

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE/
BERNADETTE IDALU

The Edo State Sports Commission, led by its Executive Chairman, Hon. Amadin Desmond Enabulele, yesterday paid a condolence visit to the Deputy Governor of Edo State, Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa, following the passing of his mother, Madam Esther Imaguomwanruo Idahosa, who died at the age of 95.

The Edo State Sports Commission, boss who was on the official condolence visit with a retinue of board members, coaches, top civil servants, players and officials of Bendel Insurance FC as well as Edo Queens FC, said the Sports family had to register their presence and condole with the number two Edo citizen.

Enabulele stated that he was standing on dual capacity - as a family member and Chairman of the Sports Commission, described the death of Madam Esther Imaguomwanruo Idahosa as a huge loss and big vacuum difficult to cover.

He then delegated the responsibility of addressing the bereaved Deputy Governor and Idahosa family to the Commission's Acting Permanent Secretary, Mrs. A.P. Efe-Amenze.

Delivering the Commission's message, Mrs. Efe-Amenze conveyed the Commission's heartfelt sympathy and prayed for strength and comfort for the bereaved family. She also assured the Deputy Governor of the Commission's solidarity and support throughout the burial activities, emphasizing the importance of drawing strength from God during a difficult time such as this.

Receiving the visitors, the Edo State Deputy Governor Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa expressed appreciation for the visit, describing it as a demon-

stration of goodwill and solidarity. He reflected on the fulfilled life of his late beloved mother, who lived to the age of 95, surpassing the biblical benchmark of 75 years, and thanked God for her impactful life and enduring legacy.

He shared personal memories, noting that his mother lived with him for 17 years, and acknowledged the emotional weight of her passing.

"We thank God for that my

mother loved up to the age of 95. We have to give glory to God not just for the good number of years she lived but for the quality of life she impacted on us. I had the privilege of my loving and amazing mother lived with me in my residence here for seventeen years. I have a fantastic memory of my mum.

It is a challenging time for us because no matter how old she was, we wished she could live for over hundred years so that

we could enjoy her presence more. The reason her death is really touching is that I lost my father at my tender age and she became everything to me." He said.

The Deputy Governor disclosed that funeral arrangements have been scheduled for May 8th, 9th, and 10th, 2026, adding that the family would formally communicate details to the Commission to ensure full participation.



Edo State Deputy Governor Rt Hon Dennis Idahosa receives a delegation of Edo State Sports Commission led by Hon Amadin Desmond Enabulele on a condolence visit to the bereaved family Idahosa.

Pep Guardiola credits 'Sunshine Factor' as Manchester City step up title pursuit with Chelsea rout

EDWARD OSEGHE

Pep Guardiola has pointed to an unlikely influence behind Manchester City's strong finish to the season after his side powered past Chelsea to intensify the Premier League title race.

City produced a dominant display at Stamford Bridge, securing a 3-0 victory over the Blues to keep the pressure firmly on leaders Arsenal.

The result leaves the champions well placed ahead of a potentially decisive showdown with the Gunners at the Etihad Stadium next weekend. A win in that fixture would significantly tighten the race, with City also holding a game in hand.

Reflecting on his team's late surge,

Guardiola offered a light-hearted but revealing take on what drives their end-of-season form.

"What is the key? The sun. No, no—I'm serious.

"Manchester doesn't get much sun, but when it comes, everything feels different. If we had this weather in November, maybe we'd have wrapped up the title by January. The mood improves, and that makes a difference," the City manager said.

Beyond the humour, Guardiola emphasised the mentality within his squad as the true foundation of their consistency and success.

"The mentality of these players and this club is incredible.

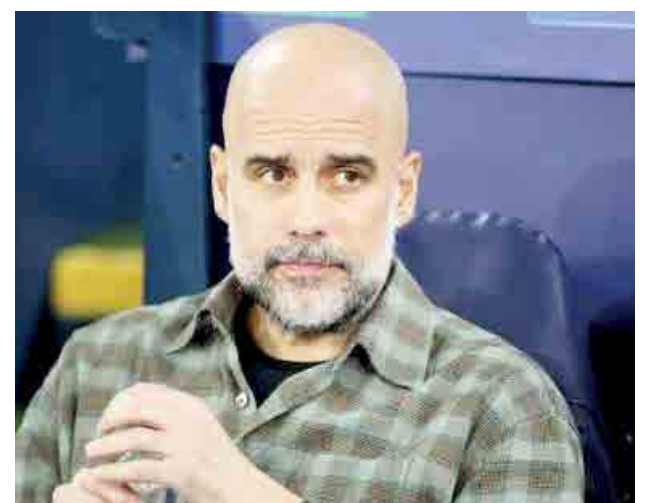
"They are competitive, they

push each other, and they push me as well. That's what keeps us going at this stage of the season," he said.

Looking ahead, the Spaniard described the upcoming clash with Arsenal as pivotal, while cautioning that the title race remains far from settled.

"It's like a final for both teams. "But there are still many games to play and many things can happen," Guardiola added.

City now trail Arsenal by six points, with the pressure mounting on the North London side as they chase a first league crown in over two decades, while Guardiola's men gather momentum at a crucial point in the campaign.



PEP GUARDIOLA

COLUMN

Development: Poverty, unemployment as drivers of insecurity

FAROUQ IBN DADA

While the federal government is tackling insurgency and recent banditry attacks through a combination of military operations, intelligence gathering, and community engagement, the need to critically address the raw nerve of causal factors becomes more pressing as bandits become more emboldened.

In 2026, the government allocated N5.41 trillion to defence, policing, and related security operations to combat terrorism and banditry. This huge sum would have been properly channeled in addressing the gaps in employment and youth advancement with a view to nipping restiveness in the bud.

Some of the strategies employed by the government include:

Military Operations: The Nigerian military has launched several operations, such as Operation Hadarin Daji and Operation Thunder Strike, to neutralize armed bandits and terrorists in the Northwest and Northeast regions.

Intelligence Gathering: The government has established the Multi-Agency Anti-Kidnap Fusion Cell to coordinate intelligence and rescue missions, with an 80% success rate in anti-kidnapping operations.

Community Engagement: The government is working with local communities to gain their trust and support in the fight against insurgency and banditry.

International Cooperation: Nigeria has partnered with the United States to combat terrorism and banditry, with the US providing intelligence support and defence equipment.

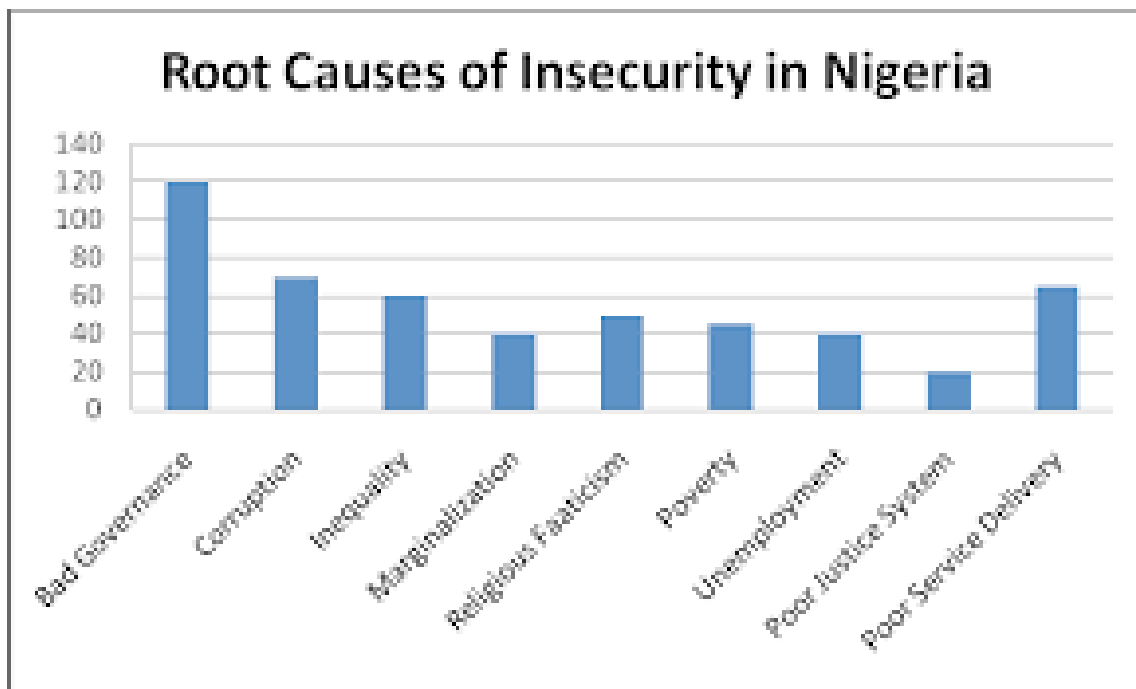
Despite these efforts, the security situation remains challenging, with attacks on civilians and security personnel continuing to occur. The government has acknowledged the need for sustained efforts to address the root causes of insecurity, including poverty, unemployment, and governance deficits, and that is cheering enough.

It is no doubt that Poverty and Unemployment are fingered as culprits where insecurity is predominant. High poverty rates, unemployment, and lack of economic opportunities are driving factors behind insecurity, with about 62% of Nigerians (141 million people) expected to live in poverty by 2026.

Regional Disparities: The Northern regions face higher levels of multidimensional poverty due to security challenges affecting agriculture, while urban centers in the South grapple with "working poverty."

Governance and Corruption: Weak governance, corruption, and mismanagement hinder economic development and exacerbate insecurity.

Climate-Related Shocks: Cli-



mate-related shocks and insecurity in food-producing regions contribute to high food prices and poverty.

International Cooperation: Collaboration with neighboring countries and international partners is crucial to combat transnational criminal networks.

Youth Unemployment: Nigeria's youth unemployment rate is high, with many young people lacking access to economic opportunities, making them vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups.

Agriculture and Livelihoods: The agricultural sector, a key employer, has been hit by insecurity, further limiting livelihood options.

Economic Diversification: The economy's reliance on oil makes it vulnerable to price shocks, exacerbating poverty and unemployment.

Skills and Opportunities: There's a mismatch between skills training and job market needs, leaving many without viable livelihoods.

Some potential solutions include:

Skills Training Programs: Initiatives like vocational training could equip youth with employable skills.

Agricultural Support: Supporting farmers with resources and security could boost food production and jobs.

Entrepreneurship Support: Encouraging entrepreneurship, especially in tech and agribusiness, could create opportunities.

Skills Training Programs: Vocational training, coding bootcamps, or apprenticeships could be game-changers for Nigerian youth.

Agricultural Support: Providing farmers with resources like seeds, fertilizers, and secure land could boost production and create jobs.

“The security situation remains challenging, with attacks on civilians and security personnel continuing to occur. The government has acknowledged the need for sustained efforts to address the root causes of insecurity”

Entrepreneurship Support: Funding, mentorship, and networking opportunities could help Nigerian entrepreneurs thrive, especially in tech and agribusiness.

Let's break down implementation strategies for each:

Skills Training Programs: Partner with local NGOs, tech hubs, or vocational centers to deliver training. Offer internships or job placements to ensure employability.

Agricultural Support: Collaborate with government agencies, NGOs, or private companies to provide resources. Establish secure farming zones with community involvement.

Entrepreneurship Support: Set up business incubators or accelerators with funding, mentorship, and networking opportunities. Partner with investors or corporates for funding.

There are several Challenges, but they may not be too difficult to surmount where there is will power and policy direction. Here are some potential ones:

Funding Constraints: Securing consistent funding for these initiatives can be tough.

Community Buy-in: Getting local communities to trust and participate in these programs might be a hurdle.

Security Risks: Ensuring the safety of participants, especially in agricultural initiatives, is crucial.

Sustainability: Making these programs self-sustaining or scalable can be a challenge.

Alright, let's tackle the three challenges and explore mitigation strategies:

Funding Constraints: Diversify funding sources (grants, corporate sponsorships, crowdfunding), create partnerships with investors, and prioritize cost-effective solutions.

Community Buy-in: Engage community leaders, involve locals in program design, and highlight tangible benefits to build trust.

Security Risks: Collaborate with security agencies, conduct risk assessments, and establish secure zones for participants.

For insecurity in Nigeria, some potential ways forward include:

Addressing Root Causes: Tackling

poverty, unemployment, and governance issues can help reduce insecurity.

Community Engagement: Building trust between communities and security agencies is key.

Multi-Stakeholder Approach: Collaboration between government, civil society, and international partners can help tackle complex security challenges.

Citizen Engagement Platforms: Create platforms for citizens to report security concerns and provide feedback on government responses.

Security Sector Reform: Reform security agencies to improve professionalism, accountability, and community trust.

Economic Empowerment: Implement programs that provide economic opportunities, especially for youth, to reduce vulnerability to extremist groups.

Dialogue and Mediation: Foster dialogue between government, communities, and armed groups to address grievances and promote peace.

Let's break down how Dialogue and Mediation could work in Nigeria's context:

Inclusive Dialogue Platforms: Establish platforms bringing together government reps, community leaders, and armed groups to address grievances.

Neutral Mediators: Use neutral mediators (local or international) to facilitate talks and build trust.

Addressing Grievances: Focus on addressing root causes like resource allocation, governance, and socio-economic disparities.

Examples of successful mediation efforts in Nigeria include:

The Niger Delta Amnesty Program: A 2009 initiative that brought militants to the negotiating table, leading to disarmament and reintegration.

The National Dialogue on Security: Efforts to address Boko Haram's roots and impacts.

Other case studies include:

The Bakassi Peninsula Mediation: Nigeria and Cameroon resolved a border dispute through ICJ and mediation, easing tensions.

The Chad Basin Joint Multinational Force: Regional efforts to tackle Boko Haram involved dialogue and cooperation.

A couple more approaches:

Leveraging Tech for Security: Using tech like surveillance systems or community reporting apps to enhance security.

Strengthening Community Policing: Building trust between communities and local police for more effective security.

Final takeaway: Addressing insecurity in Nigeria requires a multifaceted approach combining tech, community engagement, and addressing root causes like poverty and governance.