

BNC, EBS seal strategic partnership to boost media reach in Edo

BENIN CITY

The Bendel Newspapers Corporation (BNC), publishers of The Observer titles, and the Edo Broadcasting Service (EBS) have entered into a strategic partnership aimed at strengthening information dissemination and enhancing media collaboration in Edo State.

The partnership emerged following a courtesy visit by the management of BNC to the corporate headquarters of EBS in Benin City, where both organisations expressed commitment to a mutually beneficial working relationship.

Leading the BNC delegation was the General Manager, Hon. Peter Odiboh, who said the visit was part of efforts to

seek collaboration with EBS in promoting the services and activities of both organisations to the public.

Odiboh stated that BNC had returned stronger and more resilient after a transition period experienced during the administration of the immediate past government in the state.

He explained that beyond publishing The Nigerian Ob-

server titles, the corporation had expanded its operations to include printing and publishing of books, answer scripts for higher institutions, as well as other classified documents.

According to him, the partnership with EBS would provide an effective platform for wider dissemination of information and greater public awareness of the corporation's services.

Responding, the Managing Director of EBS, Sulaiman Aledeh, commended the Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo, for revitalising BNC and restoring its operational strength.

Aledeh described BNC as a flagship institution in Nigeria's newspaper industry, noting that the organisation had produced distinguished professionals who had made remarkable con-

tributions to journalism practice in the country.

He also congratulated the BNC General Manager for facilitating the return of The Nigerian Observer to the newsstands, expressing optimism that the renewed partnership between both organisations would further strengthen media development and public communication in the state.



The Nigerian OBSERVER

That The People May Know

[f](#)
[t](#)
[i](#)
[g](#)
[globe](#) NigerianObserver @Nigerian_Observer @NigerianObserver www.nigerianobservernews.com

PUBLISHED SINCE MAY 29, 1968

VOL. 47, NO. 1,268

FRIDAY 22ND MAY, 2026.

#200

ASUU warns of fresh Varsity crisis

IBADAN

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has warned that Nigeria's public universities may be plunged into another round of industrial crisis if the Federal Government fails to fully implement the agreement reached with the union in December 2025.

The union raised the alarm on Thursday, accusing the Federal Government of reneging on key aspects of the pact five months after it was signed, despite repeated appeals and sustained efforts by the union to maintain industrial peace in the nation's tertiary institutions.

Speaking during a press con-

ference held at the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, the Ibadan Zone Coordinator of ASUU, Dr Biodun Olaniran, said the continued delay in implementing the agreement was stretching the patience of university lecturers to its limit and could spark fresh unrest across campuses.

Olaniran lamented that while some financial commitments, including the Consolidated Academic Tool Allowance (CATA) and Professorial Allowance, had only been partially implemented, several critical components of the agreement remained unattended to.

According to him, reports received from universities within the Ibadan Zone indicated either partial implemen-

tation or complete neglect of agreed provisions by both federal and state authorities.

"It is unfortunate to note that five months after signing the agreement, reports from our universities, both federal and state-owned, indicate either partial or outright non-implementation of the agreement. This glaring lack of respect for the product of collective bargaining is stretching the patience of our union to the limit," he said.

The ASUU Ibadan Zone comprises the University of Ibadan, University of Ilorin, Ladake Akintola University of Technology, Osun State University, Kwara State University and Emmanuel Alayande University of Education.

Despite mounting frustrations, ASUU said it had deliberately sustained academic activities in universities in the interest of students and national stability, warning however that the government's continued inaction could jeopardise

industrial harmony in the education sector.

The union further faulted the Federal Government for allegedly failing to inaugurate the Implementation Monitoring Committee expected to supervise and ensure compliance

with the agreement.

ASUU listed several unresolved issues, including unpaid Earned Academic Allowance (EAA), withheld salaries from the 2022 strike period, pro-

CONTINUES ON PG 2 >>

Edo health stakeholders push stronger Primary Healthcare through citizen engagement

BENIN CITY

Stakeholders in the health sector in Edo State, under the auspices of the Edo State Primary Healthcare Development Agency (EDSPHCDA), on Thursday convened a Citizens' Townhall Meeting aimed at strengthening primary healthcare services through greater public participation and community ownership.

The meeting, themed "Strengthening Primary Healthcare Services in Edo State through Citizen Engagement and Ownership," brought together health professionals, policymakers and other stake-

holders to deliberate on ways to improve healthcare delivery at the grassroots.

Executive Secretary of EDSPHCDA, Dr. Coulson Osoikhai, said the townhall was organised to create a platform for interaction with stakeholders and understand their expectations towards improving primary healthcare in the state.

According to him, engaging citizens and critical stakeholders remains key to strengthening the healthcare system and ensuring that primary healthcare centres effectively meet the needs of communities.

Special Adviser on Health

to Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo, Mr. Andrew Iyamu, said primary healthcare remains a critical component of the state government's SHINE agenda.

Iyamu noted that beyond establishing primary healthcare facilities, the state government is also focused on ensuring their effectiveness and functionality, urging stakeholders to support ongoing efforts to strengthen healthcare services across Edo State.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to implementing policies and pro-

CONTINUES ON PG 2 >>



RAMAT PARK FLYOVER: Aerial View the Ramat Park Flyover in Benin City.

INEC fixes June 20 for Rivers S'East Senatorial by-election

—Pg 4

Stock market declines by N1.62trn

—Pg 5

ASUU warns of strike over unimplemented agreement

—Pg 7

AFCON 2027: Super Eagles will survive Group L —Eguavoen

—Pg 22

Edo pilgrims visit historic sites in Madinah ahead of Umrah

ABDUL-KADIR ABDULLAH

PORT HARCOURT

Edo State pilgrims participating in the 2026 Hajj exercise on Thursday visited historic Islamic sites in Madinah ahead of their Umrah pilgrimage, with the Amirul Hajj, HRH Mallam Ali D. Suleyman, the Oghieaga of Ivbies, urging them to approach the spiritual exercise with sincerity, pure intentions and prayers for Edo State and Nigeria.

The 95 pilgrims embarked on a ziyaarah to notable Islamic landmarks including Masjid Quba, Masjid al-Qiblatain, Mount Uhud, Sab'a Masjid, and an Ajwa date farm, where they were educated on the historical and spiritual significance of the places in Islamic history.

Addressing the pilgrims during the tour, Mallam Ali Suleyman said their intentions before Allah would determine the value and impact of their worship.

According to him, "Somebody said something that triggered my sensibility. I'm tasking you and I'm telling you that once you face the Ka'aba for the first time and make your intentions before you get there, In Shaa Allah your requests will be granted.

"Tell Allah to give you the opportunity to always come and worship here. There is no prayer that you will ask that Allah will not answer. So, I'm tasking you now that once you go and you want to start your Tawaf, your intentions matter.

"Think about it before you go to Makkah because by to-

morrow, In Shaa Allah, we will be doing our Umrah. What comes from inside of you matters, not the amount of Quranic knowledge that you have. Where you put Allah in your life is where you will find Allah. May Allah make it easy for you to make the right intention

so that this time next year you will be thanking Allah for what He has done for you?"

Also speaking during the ziyaarah, the Chairman of the Edo State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board, Mallam Musa Muhammad Uduimoh, appealed to the pilgrims for

understanding over his strict approach toward ensuring compliance with schedules throughout the Hajj exercise.

He said, "I appeal to you for forgiveness in case in the course of my conversations I spoke in a way that was not too calm. It is not out of rudeness,

but because I want the best for us and to enable us meet up with timing as scheduled."

Every pilgrim participated in the ziyaarah, while the Amirul Hajj and the leadership of the board explained the significance of each site visited and their relevance to Islamic history.



ZIYAARAH (VISITATION):

Edo State pilgrims during a ziyaarah (visitation) to Masjid Quba in Madinah ahead of their Umrah pilgrimage on Thursday.

ASUU warns of fresh Varsity...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

motion arrears, unremitted third-party deductions, and outstanding 25 percent and 35 percent wage award arrears.

The lecturers described the continued withholding of salaries and deductions as unjust, especially considering the role of academics in teaching, research and manpower development in the country.

The union also expressed concern over the welfare of retired academics, revealing that many retired professors in state-owned universities were yet to access their pension benefits.

ASUU consequently called on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the National Assembly and relevant stakeholders to urgently intervene and forestall another disruption in the university system.

Beyond welfare concerns, the union criticised several education policy proposals of the Federal Government, including plans to promote the use of English Language in early childhood education instead of indigenous languages.

It also opposed the proposed Transnational Education framework expected to pave the way for the establishment of a Nigerian campus of coventry.ac.uk arguing that such initiatives require broader consultation.

ASUU equally criticised the proposed Nigeria Education Repository Databank (NERD), warning that compelling students to upload project reports before mobilisation for the National Youth Service Corps could expose them to intellec-

tual property theft and data privacy violations.

The union further condemned what it described as increasing political interference in the appointment of vice-chancellors and principal officers in Nigerian universities.

It also criticised an alleged move by the Niger State Government to reclaim the Bosso campus of the Federal University of Technology, Minna, warning that such action could undermine collaboration between federal and state governments in expanding access to university education.

On the broader state of the nation, ASUU decried worsening insecurity, rising inflation, economic hardship and mounting public debt, citing the recent abduction of teachers and pupils in Oriire Local Government Area of Oyo State as evidence of deepening insecurity in the South-West.

The union also criticised the removal of fuel subsidy without adequate social support measures, arguing that ordinary Nigerians were bearing the burden of spiralling transportation costs and inflation.

ASUU urged both federal and state governments to strengthen welfare programmes to cushion the economic hardship faced by citizens, while reiterating its readiness to continue dialogue with authorities.

However, the union warned that growing frustration among academics over unresolved issues could ultimately trigger another nationwide industrial action if urgent steps are not taken to address its grievances.

Edo health stakeholders push...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

grammes that would improve access to quality healthcare for residents.

The State Immunisation Officer (SIO), Mrs. Omogun Elfrida, stressed the need for stronger collaboration between health workers and Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) to improve healthcare delivery, particularly at the community level.

Also speaking, a represent-

ative of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency, Mr. Musa Abdullahi, disclosed that the agency is targeting the training of 120,000 frontline healthcare workers nationwide.

He revealed that out of the 78,000 healthcare workers trained so far, Edo State accounts for 999 beneficiaries, underscoring the state's participation in efforts to build a stronger frontline healthcare workforce.

Justice key to peace, Bishop Ogun tells Leaders, citizens

● **Uromi Diocese marks JDPCI's 20 years of service, launches legacy publications**

JUDE EHEBHA

UROMI

The Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Uromi, Most Rev. Dr. Donatus Ogun, has stressed the need for citizens, institutions and governments at all levels to embrace justice, fairness and compassion in their dealings, warning that lasting peace in society cannot exist without justice.

Bishop Ogun made the call during the 20th anniversary celebration of the Uromi Justice Development and Peace Caritas Initiative (JDPCI), held in Uromi, Edo State.

JDPCI is the social development arm of the Catholic Diocese of Uromi.

The cleric said that justice remains the foundation of genuine peace and urged all per-

sons, irrespective of religion, social standing or political status, to see fairness and human dignity as sacred obligations.

"Justice is the right of all and is what Jesus expects us to do. We explain justice in the words of Jesus: do unto others what you would want others to do unto you. So all of us, without distinction, are called to be agents of justice. Unless there is justice, there can be no true peace," he said.

Bishop Ogun described Uromi JDPCI as "the face of the diocese," commending the organisation for its sustained interventions in the lives of the poor, vulnerable and marginalised over the past two decades.

Drawing inspiration from a damaged crucifix following the Second World War, the bishop likened the mission of JDPCI to

Christians serving as the hands and feet of Christ in society.

"You are the hands, you are the legs of Jesus. Anywhere you go, make sure you carry Jesus," he charged.

He also praised donor agencies, government institutions, traditional rulers, civil society groups and local communities for supporting the organisation's humanitarian and justice-driven programmes over the years.

The bishop particularly urged communities to reassess cultural practices that undermine justice and human dignity, especially harmful customs affecting widows and vulnerable persons.

"If something is practised against widows and it is obsolete, please let us look at it. It is justice if a widow is happy. It is injustice if she is made unhappy," he added.

In his welcome address, the Executive Director of Uromi JDPCI, Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Fidelis Oriabure Arhedo, described the anniversary as a celebration of sacrifice, resilience, partnership and impact.

According to him, the organisation was established 20 years ago to advance social justice and improve the living conditions of poor and vulnerable groups through faith-based interventions inspired by Catholic social teachings.

He noted that JDPCI's interventions span human rights advocacy, anti-human trafficking, migration support, gender-based violence response, child protection, prison apostolate, peacebuilding, healthcare support, environmental sustainability, microcredit schemes and community development initiatives.

Defence Minister calls for collective action against terrorism

ABUJA

The Minister of Defence, Retired Gen. Christopher Musa, has called for collective national and institutional commitment in the fight against terrorism in the country.

Musa made the call in Abuja at the unveiling of a two-volume publication titled "Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency Operations in North East Nigeria," authored by Retired Maj.-Gen. Ibrahim Yusuf.

He stressed that every member of the Armed Forces and stakeholders across society must contribute to defeating insurgency in Nigeria.

The minister said the fight against terrorism remained one of the most complex security challenges in Nigeria's history and could not be won by the military alone.

He explained that success in counterinsurgency operations depends on joint efforts by the military, civil authorities, and citizens, noting that terrorists often operate within communities, making public vigilance and cooperation critical to operational success.

"The Armed Forces cannot win this fight alone. Every member of the Armed Forces and indeed the entire society must contribute to the fight against terrorism," he said.

He described the author as a senior colleague, a mentor, and respected officer whose career reflected discipline, consistency, and commitment to professional excellence, adding that such values had strengthened leadership within the Armed Forces.

He commended the Nigerian Defence Academy for producing generations of officers grounded in professionalism, patriotism, and service, noting that this foundation had sustained the effectiveness of the Armed Forces over time.

According to him, the publication contributes significantly to national security discourse by documenting operation-

al experiences and providing practical lessons for military professionals and policymakers.

He urged serving officers to study the work carefully, describing it as a valuable reference drawn from real battlefield experience.

The minister appreciated President Bola Tinubu for his continued support to the Armed Forces and security agencies, particularly in addressing evolving security threats across the country.

He further honoured fallen heroes and their families, reaffirming government's commitment to supporting those who paid the supreme price in defence of the nation.

Fight exam malpractice, education stakeholders urge new JAMB Registrar

LAGOS

An educationist, Mr Sunday Fowowe, has urged the newly-appointed Registrar of the Joint Admis-

sions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Prof. Segun Aina, to prioritise elimination of examination malpractice.

Fowowe, the National President of the Association of

Nursery and Primary Education Instructors in Nigeria, gave the advice in an interview with newsmen

President Bola Tinubu on Thursday appointed Aina the new Registrar of JAMB.

Aina, who will turn 40 in July, will succeed Prof. Is-haq Oloyede, whose second tenure

expires on July 31.

According to Fowowe, examination malpractice can be eliminated through advanced monitoring systems and Artificial Intelligence-supported proctoring tools.

He said Aina's appointment reflected the country's growing emphasis on youthful leader-

ship, innovation and technology-driven administration in public institutions.

According to him, the appointment of the new registrar presents an opportunity for fresh ideas and reforms capable of improving JAMB's operations and strengthening confidence in the nation's tertiary admission process.

He described the appointment as pivotal in Nigeria's educational landscape.

Fowowe hoped that Aina's tenure would bring transformative changes to JAMB's operations, particularly in digital examina-

tion management, transparency and candidates' welfare.

"Appointment of Aina signals a growing national emphasis on innovation and the integration of modern technology into public institutions.

"His leadership will present an opportunity to further strengthen the integrity and efficiency of the tertiary admission process in Nigeria," he said.

Fowowe noted that JAMB had continued to play a crucial role in determining access to tertiary education, with over 1.5 million candidates sitting for its examinations annually.



A COURTESY VISIT TO EBS:

General Manager of Bendel Newspapers Corporation (BNC), publishers of *The Observer* titles, Hon. Peter Odiboh (right) presenting a copy of *The Nigerian Observer* newspaper to the Managing Director of Edo Broadcasting Service (EBS), Sulaiman Aledoh, during a courtesy visit to EBS to the management team of BNC.

Okhiaro community hails Okpebholo's road projects, seeks inclusion in devt drive

BENIN CITY

Residents of Okhiaro Community in Egor Local Government Area have commended Governor Monday Okpebholo for ongoing road construction projects across Edo State, while appealing to the state government to extend similar infrastructure development to their community.

The appeal was made by the Odionwere (traditional head) of the community, Mr. Osarenren Enogieru, who said the people of Okhiaro, locat-

ed along the Ekehuan axis, had continued to face serious transportation challenges due to poor road access, especially during the rainy season.

Speaking with journalists, Enogieru praised the governor's efforts at improving road infrastructure across the state but urged him to consider constructing the access road linking Okhiaro to neighbouring communities to ease movement and improve accessibility.

According to him, the road serves as a major link to several surrounding communities, stressing that residents had en-

dured years of hardship due to its deplorable condition.

"We commend Governor Okpebholo for the roads being constructed across the state and appeal to him to extend the gesture to Okhiaro Community. Our people suffer greatly, particularly during the rainy season, because of the poor state of the access road," he said.

The community leader disclosed that beyond road infrastructure, residents were also in urgent need of a healthcare facility, noting that the community had already set aside

land for the construction of a health centre and commenced moulding blocks through communal efforts.

He explained that residents currently travel to neighbouring communities to access healthcare services, a situation he described as burdensome, especially for women, children and the elderly.

Enogieru also appealed to the state government to intervene in the area of electricity supply, lamenting that the community relies on only one transformer despite its growing population.

Reps flag-bearer Esegbe seeks APC unity, appreciates support after primary

ENUGU

The House of Representatives flag bearer of the All Progressives Congress (APC) for Esan Central, Esan West and Igbuben Federal Constituency, Sir Lucky Esegbe Esq, has called for unity among party members while expressing appreciation to party leaders, aspirants, stakeholders and supporters following the conclusion of the party's primary election.

Speaking on behalf of the Esegbe Campaign Organisation, Sir Lucky Esegbe conveyed gratitude to the leadership of the APC at the local, federal constituency and state levels for what he described as their immense support, commitment and dedication throughout the primary process.

He said the peaceful and successful conduct of the primary election demonstrated the strength, unity and organisational capacity of the party.

The House of Representa-

tives candidate also thanked party faithful, delegates and stakeholders across Esan Central, Esan West and Igbuben Federal Constituency for their overwhelming support, encouragement, trust and votes during the primary election.

According to him, the confidence reposed in him would not be taken for granted, noting that the support received represented a renewed call to responsibility, greater commitment and inclusive representation in the interest of the people and the continued growth of the APC.

Esegbe equally acknowledged the contributions of other aspirants who participated in the primary election, commending their commitment to democratic principles and loyalty to the ideals of the party.

He stated that their participation, sacrifices and contributions remained invaluable to the growth, stability and continued relevance of the APC within the constituency.

Madam Iseguan dies at 105

BENIN CITY

Madam Omomoya Iseguan (née Okosun), of Ugbiyokho community in Uhunmwode Local Government Area, has died at the age of 105 years.

According to a family announcement signed by Mr Godwin Iseguan, the cente-

narian passed away on Sunday, May 17, 2026.

The deceased, described as having "slept in the Lord," was a native of Ugbiyokho in Uhunmwode Local Government Area of Edo State.

Family sources said burial arrangements for the late Madam Iseguan would be announced at a later date.

FG hails EDOGIS as model for Nigeria's land titling reform

TUNDE EIGBIREMOLEN/
MUYIWA AKINSANYA

BENIN CITY

The Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development has praised the Edo State Geographic Information Service (EDOGIS) for its growing reputation in land administration, describing the agency as one of the shining examples of how land titling and documentation can be effectively managed in Nigeria.

The commendation came when a delegation from Abuja, led by the Director and Head of Department of Lands and

Housing Development in the ministry, ESV. Alabi Collins, paid a courtesy visit to EDOGIS in Benin City to seek stronger collaboration on the Federal Government's National Land Titling, Registration and Documentation Programme.

Speaking during the visit, Collins said the initiative was part of ongoing efforts by the Federal Government to modernise land administration across the country and make it easier for Geographic Information System (GIS) agencies in states to access World Bank support and funding.

He explained that the programme, being implemented

in partnership with the World Bank, was aimed at addressing longstanding challenges in land ownership documentation while helping states unlock economic opportunities tied to properly titled land.

According to him, the visit to Edo formed part of a nationwide sensitisation exercise to engage state governments and key land administration agencies on the importance of joining the reform programme.

Describing the initiative as a major step towards overhauling land management in the country, Collins said its core objectives include strengthening land tenure security,

expanding access to housing finance, unlocking capital tied up in untitled properties and boosting states' internally generated revenue.

He also lauded EDOGIS and the Edo State Government for what he described as their strong working relationship with the Federal Government, especially in identifying and documenting federal lands within the state.

"EDOGIS represents the kind of partnership and institutional cooperation we hope to see across the country," he said, while encouraging the agency to formally commit to the programme.



MADAM OMOMOYA ISEGUAN

NEWS**NAFDAC urges stakeholders to lead AMR, ADR campaign****ENUGU**

The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), has charged stakeholders and Nigerians to lead vigilance against Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) on drugs and Adverse Drug Reactions (ADR).

The Director-General of NAFDAC, Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, gave the charge at a one-day Pharmacovigilance workshop and stakeholders townhall meeting in Enugu.

Adeyeye, represented by NAFDAC's Director, South-East Zone, Dr Festus Ukadike, said that the "gravest consequences of irrational medicine use today is AMR."

She explained that the misuse and overuse of antibiotics had accelerated the emergence of resistant microorganisms that no longer respond to conventional treatment.

"This means that infections previously treatable with common antibiotics are becoming

increasingly difficult and expensive to manage.

"If urgent action is not taken, antimicrobial resistance may reverse decades of medical progress and place humanity at serious risk.

"This is why pharmacovigilance is extremely important.

"Pharmacovigilance refers to the science and activities relating to the detection, assessment, understanding, and prevention of adverse effects or any other medicine-related problems.

"In simple terms, pharmacovigilance helps us ensure that medicines remain safe and effective even after they have been approved and released into the market," she said.

Adeyeye said that no medicine is completely free from side effects.

"However, through effective pharmacovigilance systems, healthcare professionals and patients can identify harmful reactions early, report them appropriately, and help regulatory authorities take necessary

actions to protect the public," she said.

She also said that pharmacovigilance remains a core mandate of the agency, adding that stakeholders and the public should play active part in monitoring AMR and ADR to ensure effectiveness of medicine and treatment.

The state Coordinator of WHO, Dr Adaeze Ugwu, said that the organisation would

continue to support NAFDAC in the agency's resolve to strengthen food and healthcare in the country.

Also, the Chairman, Nigerian Association of Patent and Proprietary Medicine Dealers, Dr Oliver Ezemba, urged everybody to get concerned about the issues of AMR and ADR to guarantee quality medicines for everyone.

Ezemba called on Nigerians

to imbibe the habit of reporting any irregularities observed while using a medicine to NAFDAC for proper investigation, "which would serve the benefit of many Nigerians using same medicine."

The Chairman, Enugu State Traditional Rulers' Council, Igwe Samuel Asadu, commended NAFDAC for the workshop, and urged the agency to put more effort towards

curbing the sale of fake medicines in the hinterlands.

Asadu said that pharmacovigilance was needed more in the hinterlands to stop people peddling fake medicines and "selling outright chalk as medicine in villages in the state."

He gave the commitment of royal fathers in the state towards providing necessary support to NAFDAC to check peddlers of fake medicines "as

NSE urges engineers to embrace financial literacy**LAGOS**

The President of the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE), Mr Ali Rabi, has urged engineers to embrace financial literacy and business intelligence for improved professional relevance and economic stability.

Rabi made the call in a goodwill message at the 2026 Annual Business Luncheon of the NSE Ikeja Branch held in Lagos.

He was represented by Mrs Margaret Oguntala, immediate past president of the society, during the event attended by engineers, policymakers, investors and industry stakeholders.

The luncheon had the theme, 'Reclaiming the Built Environment Value Chain: Strengthening Regulation and Investment in Nigeria's Construction Ecosystem.'

Rabi said technical competence alone was no longer sufficient within today's increasingly competitive and rapidly evol-

ving professional environment.

According to him, engineers must develop entrepreneurial abilities, strategic thinking and sound financial management skills to remain competitive and economically relevant.

He commended the NSE Ikeja Branch leadership for sustaining the annual luncheon as a platform for professional networking and stakeholder engagement.

Rabi noted that the construction industry remained a major driver of national development and economic growth across Nigeria.

He said restoring value within the sector would require effective regulation, ethical conduct, sustainable investment and stronger collaboration among stakeholders.

"Engineers must broaden their knowledge beyond technical practice and understand the economic realities shaping the construction industry," he said.

**SIGNING OF THE EKITI STATE PEACE ACCORD:**

L-R: Convener, National Peace Committee (NPC), Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah; Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Joash Amupitan; Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Mr Olatunji Disu; and Ekiti State Governor, Mr Abiodun Oyebanji, during the signing of the Ekiti State Peace Accord with guber candidates ahead of the State June 20 governorship election in Ado Ekiti yesterday. PHOTO: OMOYE AMINU

Don urges inclusive education to address adolescent challenges**LAGOS**

Prof. Morufu Daodu has urged governments at all levels to prioritise affordable and inclusive education to tackle growing challenges confronting adolescents in society.

Daodu, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic, of Lagos State University of Education (LASUED), made the call during the institution's third inaugural lecture.

The lecture was titled, 'Stormy Seas of Adolescence: Stakeholder Contract in the Advancement of Normalcy.'

The professor of Counselling Psychology described education as a powerful instrument for shaping adolescent behaviour and building responsible, productive and disciplined citizens.

According to him, governments must guarantee equal access to quality education for both boys and girls across all communities.

He said school curricula should incorporate life skills, including decision-making, emotional intelligence and critical thinking, to prepare adolescents for modern societal realities.

Daodu observed that adolescents currently face serious

challenges, including substance abuse, cybercrime, peer pressure, anxiety, identity crises and economic hardship.

He said overcoming the challenges required deliberate and coordinated interventions involving families, schools, communities, governments and other critical stakeholders.

"Education remains one of the strongest tools for shaping adolescent behaviour and ensuring responsible adulthood," Daodu stated.

The don recommended stronger family support systems, urging parents and guardians to sustain open communication

and provide adequate emotional support for children.

He also advised parents to monitor adolescents closely to prevent exposure to harmful influences capable of affecting their future negatively.

Daodu further called for comprehensive health and counselling services tailored specifically toward the psychological and emotional needs of young people.

He advocated youth-friendly mental health services and properly equipped guidance and counselling units across schools and educational institutions nationwide.

INEC fixes June 20 for Rivers S'East Senatorial by-election**PORT HARCOURT**

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has announced plans to conduct a by-election for the vacant Rivers South-East Senatorial District seat on June 20.

The Resident Electoral Commissioner in Rivers State, Johnson Alalibo, said this in a statement issued to journalists on Thursday in Port Harcourt.

Alalibo said the election would be held between 8:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

According to him, the ex-

ercise will take place across 88 Registration Areas/Wards and 1,629 Polling Units in the seven local government areas that make up the senatorial district.

The affected local government areas are Andoni, Opobo/Nkoro, Eleme, Tai, Oyigbo, Khana and Gokana.

The REC assured residents and stakeholders of the commission's commitment to conducting a free, fair and credible by-election.

He also urged eligible voters in the senatorial district to participate peacefully in the electoral process.

Abia ex-commissioner, Agbazuere, declares support for Otti's re-election bid**NVOSI (ABIA)**

Prof. ACB Agbazuere, a former Commissioner for Information in Abia and frontline critic of Gov. Alex Otti's administration, has pledged to join the campaign for his second term bid.

He promised to fuse his political platform, called "Oweh Structure," into the governor's campaign team to secure an "overwhelming victory" for him at the poll.

Agbazuere spoke when he led members of his structure on a solidarity visit to the governor in his country home in Nvosi, Isiala Ngwa South LGA.

He said that Otti's performance in office had convinced him and his group that he deserved another term.

"Our mission is simple. I felt, and I still feel, that I am not going to allow you to do this campaign alone," Agbazuere said.

He said that the governor had distinguished himself through visible infrastructure development and impactful governance across the state.

"If somebody even looks at those aspiring to become governor, they can't match you," he said.

The former commissioner described the governor as "a good striker, who should not be substituted".

He said that his structure had over 8,000 members ready to support Otti's re-election bid.

He also said that he decided to formally identify with the governor "rather than operate from a distance", pointing out that many people had continued to laud Otti's performance in office.

Agbazuere said: "At my level, I say what I see. From FMC down to Okpara Square, you see the pedestrian pathways created to protect road users.

"You promised to make Aguiyi Ironsi Boulevard six lanes, and in less than two years you achieved it and extended beyond the Tower to Onu Imo."

He also commended the re-

construction of the Port Harcourt Road, Aba, the transformation of the former SSG's office area and the renovation of the Michael Okpara Auditorium.

"I want to congratulate you on your achievements so far. If we are not convinced, we will not come," Agbazuere said.

Responding, Otti thanked Agbazuere for acknowledging what he described as the "modest achievements" of his administration.

"We are happy that the impact has been felt because that is what governance is about.

"If you are not impactful, it means you are not doing anything," he said.

Shettima tasks military commanders on sustaining pressure on terrorists in North East

ABUJA

Vice President Kashim Shettima, has tasked military commanders on sustaining coordinated pressure on terrorist groups

while strengthening intelligence, technology and civil-military cooperation to consolidate gains in the North-East.

Shettima gave the charge in Abuja at the public presenta-

tion of "Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency Operations in North East Nigeria," volumes 1 and 2, written by retired Maj.-Gen. Ibrahim Yusuf.

Yusuf was a Force Commander, Multinational Joint

Task Force and Commandant, Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA), among other commanding appointments while in service.

Shettima, represented by the Special Adviser to the President on General Duties, Dr Aliyu Modibbo, urged commanders to remain vigilant and adaptive.

He stressed that while significant progress had been recorded in degrading terrorist capabilities, "progress must not be mistaken for final victory."

According to him, Nigeria's security challenges require a comprehensive, whole-of-society approach involving the military, intelligence services, policymakers, and civilians.

The Vice President noted that the Nigerian Armed Forces had continued to demonstrate resilience and professionalism in the face of

complex asymmetric threats.

"What Nigeria has endured in recent years is not evidence of a nation overwhelmed by danger, but a reflection of the resilience and courage of Nigerians who continue to stand firm in defence of a shared destiny," he said.

Shettima said the North-East crisis remained both a security challenge and a humanitarian tragedy, adding that it underscored the need for sustained vigilance against violent extremism.



YEAR 2026 MINISTERIAL NEWS CONFERENCE:

L-G: General Manager, Office of Disability Affairs, Lagos State, Mrs Adenike Oyetunde-Lawal; Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Youth and Social Development, Mrs Toyin Oke-Osanyintolu; Commissioner for Youth and Social Development, Mr Mobolaji Ogunlende and Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Mr Gbenga Omotoso, during the Lagos State Government Year 2026 Ministerial News Conference by the Ministry of Youth and Social Development in commemoration of the 7th Years in Office of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu in Lagos on Thursday.

Nigerian Navy celebrates 70yrs with fleet review, new task force

ABUJA

The Nigerian Navy has commenced a two-week platinum jubilee celebration to mark 70 years since its founding, describing itself as the top security provider, logistics backbone and ship-builder in Africa.

The Chief of Policy and planning, Nigerian Navy, Rear Adm. Olatunde Olodude, said this on Tuesday in Abuja, at a news conference heralding the commencement of activities to mark the 70 years anniversary of the force.

Olodude described the anni-

versary as a testament of institutional resilience and strategic adaptability, tracing the service history from a 250-man coastal policing force established in 1956 to what it was today.

He outlined the schedule to include an international fleet review to be inspected by President Bola Tinubu on June 1, and the formal flag-off of a Combined Maritime Task Force for the Gulf of Guinea.

According to him, other activities include the arrival of friendly foreign warships, inauguration of ships, and the '6th Sea Power for Africa Symposi-

um with the theme Leveraging Technology for Enhanced Maritime Security in Africa.'

"To mark the 2026 Children's Day, we will also carry out various community outreaches across the country focusing on children."

He recounted the Navy's origins as the Naval Defence Force established in 1956, its evolution to Royal Nigerian Navy and the drop of the royal prefix as the nation became a republic in 1963.

He noted the force's strategic impact during the 1967-1970 civil war, when naval blockades, amphibious operations and sealift were decisive and the subsequent peacekeeping and regional stabilisation roles

in Lebanon, Liberia and, most recently, The Gambia (2017) and Guinea-Bissau (2022).

"Those deployments helped drive a 2025 Strategic Sealift Memorandum of Understanding between Nigeria and the African Union, naming the Navy as an approved sealift provider for peacekeeping, disaster response and troop movement across the continent," he said.

The Naval chief of policy and planning also highlighted internal successes between the navy and other security agencies; a partnership he said resulted in the clamping down on oil theft and illegal refining in the Niger Delta that had led to rising crude output.

ANAMMCO urges Nigerians to patronise their vehicles

ENUGU

The Anambra Motors Manufacturing Company (ANAMMCO) has promised not compromise on the quality and standard of its products.

The Sales Manager of the company, Mrs Chinelo Igwe, made the promise in an interview with newsmen in Enugu, on Thursday.

Igwe spoke on the company's efforts to meet the expectations of Nigerians in terms of quality and standard of ANAMMCO's vehicles.

She assured Nigerians that the company would continue to manufacture vehicles that would always stand the test of time.

She also said that ANAMMCO had over the decades manufactured quality vehicles, including its latest Dongfeng heavy duty trucks and Hilux vehicles.

Igwe said that both Dongfeng heavy duty trucks and the Hilux are strong, affordable and low fuel consumption capacity, adding that the cost

of its maintenance is low compared to others.

"Some of Dongfeng products are Dongfeng KR Cargo Chassis and Dongfeng KL Tractor, capable of carrying 10,000 kg and 70,000 kg tons of load, respectively.

"We do free services for the first 5,000 km covered by our vehicles after purchase," Igwe said.

She advised customers to always get in touch with ANAMMCO, especially when they buy any of its heavy duty vehicles.

"Before the truck gets to 5,000 km, we expect a customer to call and tell us when the vehicle gets to 1,000 km, so that we can send our mechanic to check it," Igwe said.

She explained that the company had opened two branches in Lagos and Abuja and, hopefully, we will expand to other parts of the country, with the main office in Enugu.

On human capacity development, the sales manager said the company offered refresher training to enable its drivers to handle the vehicles for optimum performance.

Marwa seeks collective action against pop culture glamourising drug abuse

ABUJA

The Chairman, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), retired Brig.-Gen. Buba Marwa has urged Nigerians to rise and counter the toxic pop-culture that glamourises abuse of illicit substances as an acceptable way of life.

Marwa made the call during the official inauguration of the NDLEA's radio station, Clean Beat 91.5FM on Thursday in Abuja.

Marwa challenged stakeholders and well-meaning Nigerians to join the NDLEA in its War Against Drug Abuse (WADA) social advocacy drive.

This, he said was to save the youth population from the danger of accepting abuse of illicit drugs as an acceptable culture.

"We recognise that behind every statistic of drug abuse is a human being.

"A vulnerable teenager seeking escape, a broken family searching for answers, a bril-

liant mind derailed but capable of redirection. Through this station, we will drive our narrative softly but firmly.

"We will counter the toxic pop-culture that glamourises drug abuse by replacing it with a vibrant, alternative culture, one that celebrates sobriety, showcases real stories of recovery, and provides accurate, life-saving information.

"Let us make no mistake: the stakes could not be higher. If we do not control the narrative today, the consequences tomorrow will be catastrophic.

"Substance abuse is a hydra-headed monster that feeds insecurity, decimates public health, cripples economic productivity, and compromises the very future of our workforce,

Marwa said that the NDLEA refused to view the future through a lens of despair, expressing optimism that the present moment represented concrete action and a significant paradigm shift.

Female corps members outnumber males in NYSC since 2021 —D-G

ABUJA

The Director-General of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Brig.-Gen. Olakunle Nafiu, says female participation in the scheme has consistently surpassed male mobilisation figures since 2021 nationwide.

Nafiu said this during News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) forum in Abuja, ahead of the scheme's 53rd anniversary, describing it as a milestone in education and gender inclusion.

He said male graduates dominated mobilisation from the date of the scheme's establishment in 1973 until 2020

before the shift in 2021, when female participation began to exceed male figures annually.

"Since 2021, more females have consistently participated in the scheme than males," he said, attributing the change to progress in education and gender equality policies.

Nafiu said the development reflected sustained global and national efforts promoting girl-child education, women empowerment and improved access to higher education opportunities across Nigeria.

"It is not magic. The Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals placed premium on girl-

child education and gender equality," he said.

He added that the increasing number of female graduates demonstrated improved educational access and attainment for women as well as the impact of long-term advocacy programmes nationwide.

According to him, policymakers and employers must prepare for demographic shifts that may significantly reshape workforce composition and social policy planning in coming years.

"There are always unintended consequences. When efforts are concentrated on accelerating growth in one area, that

area may eventually overtake the other," he said.

Nafiu said Nigeria was likely to witness a larger female workforce within the next 10 to 15 years due to the ongoing educational trend across institutions nationwide.

"In the next 10 to 15 years, we are likely to have a larger female workforce with increased requests for maternity leave and childcare-related welfare support," he said.

He urged organisations and human resource systems to begin developing policies capable of addressing changing workforce realities and gender-related labour demands.

NEWS

Nigeria's current macroeconomic environment sufficient for disinflation —Cardoso

ABUJA

The Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr Olayemi Cardoso, has declared that Nigeria's macroeconomic fundamentals remain resilient enough to support a gradual return to lower inflation.

Cardoso stated this in Abuja while presenting the communiqué from the 305th meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

The MPC retained the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) at 26.5 percent and left all other monetary parameters unchanged.

The committee also retained the asymmetric corridor around the MPR at +500/-100 basis points.

Similarly, the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) was retained at 50 per cent for Deposit Money Banks and 16 percent for Merchant Banks, while the Liquidity Ratio remained at 30 per cent.

Cardoso said that the de-

terminations of the MPC were anchored on a comprehensive assessment of risks to the outlook.

According to him, although inflation has risen marginally for two consecutive months, largely induced by external shocks, the MPC recognised its transitory nature.

He said that the committee remained confident that the current macroeconomic environment was sufficiently robust to support a return to

disinflation.

"In reaching its decisions, the MPC particularly noted the spillovers from the Middle East crisis, which have exerted upward pressure on energy prices, cost of transportation and other logistics.

"However, available evidence indicates that the impact of the crisis on the Nigerian economy has been largely muted due to the benefits of prior policy reforms.

"These include exchange rate stability, improvements in external reserve buffers, strengthened monetary policy transmission, well-capitalised

banking system and ongoing fiscal consolidation.

The CBN governor said that the reforms had significantly improved the economy's ability to absorb external shocks.

"As a result, the pass-through of global commodity and energy price shocks to do-

mestic inflation has been significantly mitigated and would have been more pronounced in the absence of these reforms.

"The MPC was, therefore, convinced that the essential conditions for price stability remain firmly in place," Cardoso said.

LAGOS

The equities market reversed its recent bullish run on Wednesday as investors' wealth fell by N1.619 trillion amid widespread sell-offs in key mid- and large-cap stocks.

Selloffs in heavyweight and mid-cap stocks such as BUA Cement, CAP, E-Tranzact International, International Breweries, Deap Capital Management and 20 other stocks dragged the market lower

Market capitalisation declined by 1.02 per cent, or N1.619 trillion, to close at N159.660 trillion from N161.279 trillion in the previous session.

Similarly, the All-Share Index dropped by 2,573.05 points, also representing a

Stock market declines by N1.62trn

1.02 per cent loss, to settle at 249,062.37 compared with 251,635.42 recorded earlier.

The downturn weakened the Year-to-Date return to 60.05 percent.

However, market breadth closed positive with 41 gainers against 25 losers.

Zichis Agro Allied Industries and ABC Transport led the gainers' chart by 9.99 per cent each, settling at N32.04 and N8.26 per share respectively.

Also, Ja Paul Gold added by 9.95 per cent, ending the session at N4.09, Livingtrust Mortgage Bank increased by 9.92 per cent, closing at N4.21 while FTN Cocoa Processors gained by 9.91 per cent, finish-

ing at N10.76 per share.

On the flip side, BUA Cement led the losers' chart by 10 per cent, closing at N414, CAP trailed by 9.99 per cent, settling at N210.35 while E-Tranzact declined by 7.03 per cent, finishing at N17.20 per share.

Similarly, International Breweries lost by 5.38 per cent, ending the session at N12.30 and Deap Capital Management fell by 4.92 per cent, closing at N5.80 per share.

Market activity declined during the session, as total volume traded fell by 14.74 per cent to 600.22 million shares, valued at N32.72 billion across 58,958 deals.

Access Corporation led in trading volume with 55.96

million shares exchanged, representing 9.32 percent of total volume.

Zenith Bank topped the value chart with N4.81 billion worth of transactions, accounting for 14.69 per cent of total market value.

Reacting to the market performance, the Managing Director of Globalview Capital Ltd., Mr Aruna Kebira, attributed the market decline to profit-taking activities, particularly in oil and gas stocks.

He explained that the earlier rally in oil and gas equities was largely driven by concerns over tensions around the Strait of Hormuz, which had raised fears of supply disruptions and pushed oil prices higher.

LAGOS

Shareholders of Seplat Energy have approved a total dividend payout of N113.78 per share for the 2025 financial year.

The approval was given at the company's 13th Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in Lagos.

The dividend comprises a final payout of N68.54 and a special dividend of N45.24 per share.

Speaking at the AGM, Chairman of Seplat Energy, Mr Udoma Udo Udoma, said the company had projected delivering one billion dollars in shareholder dividends over the next four to five years.

Udoma said Seplat would continue to sustain investor returns following the integration of Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited assets.

He said the company remained on track to meet both its production and shareholder return targets.

"We have committed ourselves to delivering \$1 billion in dividends over the next four to five years, and we are well on track," he said.

Udoma said recent tensions involving Iran had pushed up global oil prices, which had benefited the company in the short term, although its long-term outlook remained resilient even if prices decline.

He said the company had completed both the acquisition and operational integration within the timelines earlier communicated to shareholders.

According to him, Seplat has moved into a single headquarters in Lagos after relinquishing its former office space as part of efforts to reduce operating costs and enhance shareholder returns.

"Our commitment is to return value to shareholders. We are constantly seeking ways to reduce costs and improve profitability," Udoma said.

Also speaking, the Chief Executive Officer of Seplat Energy, Roger Brown, said the integration had significantly expanded the company's operational scale and strengthened its balance sheet.

He said the combined business now comprises 11 oil blocks, including seven onshore and four offshore assets, with 48 producing fields and five gas plants.

On reserves, he said the company currently holds about one billion barrels of 2P reserves, evenly split between oil and gas.

He noted that Seplat's 2C resources stood at approximately 1.5 billion barrels, largely gas-based, bringing total reserves and resources to about 2.5 billion barrels.

According to him, the company has an estimated oil production lifespan of about 20 years at current output levels, while gas reserves are expected to last even longer.

Brown also outlined an ambitious medium-term production target of 200,000 barrels of oil per day (attributable production) and 500,000 barrels per day at joint venture level.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as **ORONSAYE OSAYANDE BEDIA**, now wish to be known as **ORONSAYE OSAYANDE BOBBY**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as **MISS SYLVIA ITOHAN EWKA**, now wish to be known as **MRS. SYLVIA EWKA-OJO**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME
The general public is hereby notified that **IBE CHINYERE, IBEH CHINYERE** and **IBEH CHINYERE**, are one and the same person. Henceforth, I wish to be known as **IBE CHINYERE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

ADDITION OF NAME
I, formerly known as **OKWUEZE MICHAEL**, now wish to be known as **OKWUEZE OBUH MICHAEL**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as **ETINOSA BENSON**, now wish to be known as **ODIA-OKUONGHAE ETINOSA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as **MISS PRECIOUS IVIE OMOSUKPON**, now wish to be known as **MRS. OSAYI IVIE PRECIOUS**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as **SABASTINE E. IHEANACHO**, now wish to be known as **SABASTINE EMEKA IHEANACHO**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

RECONCILIATION OF NAME
The general public is hereby notified that **AGBONZE JULIE, AGBONZE JULIE OSA'S, JULIAN AGBONZE and OSAHON JULIA**, are one and the same person. Henceforth, I wish to be known as **OSAHON JULIA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME/DATE OF BIRTH
I, formerly known as **OKORO CHICHI CHITURU**, now wish to be known as **OKORO CHIMA CHIOMA**. Also, my correct date of birth is **27/5/89** and not **27/5/86** as wrongly inserted on my BVN. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

ADDITION OF NAME
I, formerly known as **ORORIVWUROR JULIUS**, now wish to be known as **OSARENMWINDA JULIUS NOSAKHARE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as **EUNICE AGHARESE OBANOR**, now wish to be known as **EUNICE AGHARESE EBENEZER**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME
I, formerly known as **CHIJOKE ANIEMEKA**, now wish to be known as **CHIJOKE ANIEMEKE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

RECONCILIATION OF NAME
The general public is hereby notified that **CHARLES OFURE and OWA OFURE LYSA**, are one and the same person. Henceforth, I wish to be known as **OWA OFURE LYSA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME
I, formerly known as **ERHUNWNUNSE CHRISTY**, now wish to be known as **ERHUNWMUNSEE CHRISTY**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME
The general public is hereby notified that **NWOFOKE EMMANUEL and IGWE EMMANUEL JUSTICE**, are one and the same person. Henceforth, I wish to be known as **IGWE EMMANUEL JUSTICE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as **OBINNA FAVOUR ETERNAMI**, now wish to be known as **ADELOYE FAVOUR ETANAMI**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME
The general public is hereby notified that **OKOYOMO JONATHAN BENSON and OKOYOMO JONATHAN BENSON**, are one and the same person. Henceforth, I wish to be known as **OKOYOMON JONATHAN BENSON**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

ADDITION OF NAME
The general public is hereby notified that **OGBANE EMMA and OGBANE EMMANUEL IMMA**, are one and the same person. Henceforth, I wish to be known as **OGBANE EMMANUEL IMMA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as **MISS GIFT EMIKO IYOKA and MRS. GIFT EMIKO BENSON**, now wish to be known as **MRS. GIFT EMIKO ODI-OKUONGHAE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME
The general public is hereby notified that my correct name is **OSAYOMWANBOR RITA IRIAREMEN**, not **OSAYOMWANBOR IRIAREMEN RITA**. I now wish to be known as **OSAYOMWANBOR IRIAREMEN RITA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

Seplat shareholders approve N113.78 dividend for 2025

LAGOS

Shareholders of Seplat Energy have approved a total dividend payout of N113.78 per share for the 2025 financial year.

The approval was given at the company's 13th Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in Lagos.

The dividend comprises a final payout of N68.54 and a special dividend of N45.24 per share.

Speaking at the AGM, Chairman of Seplat Energy, Mr Udoma Udo Udoma, said the company had projected delivering one billion dollars in shareholder dividends over the next four to five years.

Udoma said Seplat would continue to sustain investor returns following the integration of Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited assets.

He said the company remained on track to meet both its production and shareholder return targets.

"We have committed ourselves to delivering \$1 billion in dividends over the next four to five years, and we are well on track," he said.

Udoma said recent tensions involving Iran had pushed up global oil prices, which had benefited the company in the short term, although its long-term outlook remained resilient even if prices decline.

He said the company had completed both the acquisition and operational integration within the timelines earlier communicated to shareholders.

According to him, Seplat has moved into a single headquarters in Lagos after relinquishing its former office space as part of efforts to reduce operating costs and enhance shareholder returns.

"Our commitment is to return value to shareholders. We are constantly seeking ways to reduce costs and improve profitability," Udoma said.

Also speaking, the Chief Executive Officer of Seplat Energy, Roger Brown, said the integration had significantly expanded the company's operational scale and strengthened its balance sheet.

He said the combined business now comprises 11 oil blocks, including seven onshore and four offshore assets, with 48 producing fields and five gas plants.

On reserves, he said the company currently holds about one billion barrels of 2P reserves, evenly split between oil and gas.

He noted that Seplat's 2C resources stood at approximately 1.5 billion barrels, largely gas-based, bringing total reserves and resources to about 2.5 billion barrels.

According to him, the company has an estimated oil production lifespan of about 20 years at current output levels, while gas reserves are expected to last even longer.

Brown also outlined an ambitious medium-term production target of 200,000 barrels of oil per day (attributable production) and 500,000 barrels per day at joint venture level.

MISSING TITLE DOCUMENTS

The general public is hereby notified that I, **HIGH CHIEF MUSA AMEDU** is the lawful owner of a parcel of land, measuring **463.925 Sq. Mtrs.** lying and situate at **Ogbe-Ibuya Village Area, Egor Local Government Area, Edo State**. The parcel of land is covered by **Survey Plan No.MEA/ED/542/2025** dated **February 27, 2025** and the **Deed of Transfer** dated **February 15, 2025**, made between **Mr Biggy Obakpolor and myself**. The said documents were discovered missing in **November 26, 2025** while on transit to **Abuja** from **Benin City** and all efforts to trace it has proved abortive, hence this publication for record purposes. The property is not for sale. Buyers Beware!

The general public and concerned authorities take note.

Signed:
HIGH CHIEF MUSA AMEDU

Tinubu's legacy projects transforming S'East infrastructure —Umahi

ABAKALIKI

Chief David Umahi, Minister of Works, has said that ongoing federal road and bridge projects in Ebonyi and across the South-East reflects the scale of infrastructure development being undertaken by the President Bola Tinubu's administration.

Umahi stated this on Thurs-

day during an inspection tour of ongoing federal projects in Ebonyi, particularly along the Calabar–Ebonyi–Benue–Nasarawa–Abuja corridor.

He said the third legacy project of the President extended from the Lagos–Calabar Coastal Highway corridor through Ebonyi to Abuja.

According to him, the first section from Ndibe Beach in

Afikpo Local Government Area of Ebonyi to the Ebonyi–Benue boundary spans 123 kilometres and was initially designed as a single carriageway but was now being dualised at strategic points.

The minister said the reinforced concrete road, equipped with solar streetlights, costs about N454 billion, adding that the Federal Government had already paid 50 per cent of

the contract sum.

The minister further disclosed that Section two of the project, covering 178 kilometres from the Ebonyi–Benue boundary through Benue, Kogi and Nasarawa to Oweto Bridge, is valued at N685 billion.

He said plans were underway to procure a second carriageway to transform the route into a full dual carriage highway.

The former Ebonyi governor commended contractors handling various sections of the projects, including Infiofue,

Age-Link and Gerewa, for the pace and quality of work.

He highlighted major interventions such as the Onueke flyover, the dualisation around Akpoha Bridge, hill-cutting at Timber Shade to eliminate dangerous bends and the planned expansion of roads around Amasiri.

"We are confident that many of the projects will be substantially completed between late 2025 and 2026," Umahi said.

Speaking on the Ndibe beach bridge project, the minister described it as one of the most innovative bridge projects in the South-East.

He explained that the 19-span bridge, with each span measuring about 30 metres, required advanced beam-launching technology due to difficult water currents.

Umahi said he is optimistic that the bridge would be completed by May 2027, despite funding challenges.

On the Amasiri–Okigwe road being executed under the Dangote Tax Credit Scheme, he said the 61-kilometre project, valued N193 billion, would reconnect Ebonyi, Abia and Imo, after years of severe deterioration.



CIVIL SERVICE CONFERENCE:

L-R: Head of the Civil Service of the Federation (HCSF), Mrs Didi Walsen-Jack; First Lady of Nigeria, Sen. Oluremi Tinubu and Minister of Women Affairs, Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim, during the 2026 International Civil Service Conference in Abuja on Thursday.

Katsina APC affirms Radda as governorship candidate for 2027 polls

KATSINA

The All Progressives Congress (APC) in Katsina State has affirmed Governor Dikko Radda as its consensus governorship candidate for the 2027 general elections.

The affirmation exercise was conducted on Thursday in Katsina under the supervision of officials from the party's national headquarters.

Dr Yakubu Maccido, the Chairman of the Electoral Committee for the Governorship

Consensus Exercise, said 160 delegates unanimously affirmed Radda as the party's candidate.

Maccido explained that in line with the provisions of the Electoral Act and the APC guidelines, a sole aspirant must be affirmed through a voice vote by delegates.

He subsequently declared Radda as the APC consensus governorship candidate for the 2027 election in Katsina State.

The committee chairman also presented declaration of result forms for other elective

positions to party leaders.

The APC National Vice Zonal Chairman, Alhaji Datti Garba, commended party members for conducting the consensus process peacefully and orderly.

The Chairman of the Local Organising Committee, Alhaji Abdulkadir Mamman Nasir, said Katsina is among states where consensus option was adopted without crisis.

Former Katsina Governor Aminu Masari urged party members and aspirants whose ambitions did not materialise to support Radda and work for the unity and success of the party.

Masari, who is also the

Chairman of Reconciliation Committee, appealed to the governor to carry all stakeholders along in the administration and affairs of the party.

He described the process in Katsina as successful and exemplary when compared with what obtained in some other states.

The former governor urged APC stakeholders across the state to commence grassroots mobilisation ahead of the 2027 elections.

According to him, the mobilisation is necessary to ensure the victory of President Bola Tinubu, Gov. Radda and all APC candidates during the elections.

NDPHC restores Alaoji power plant after 3yrs shutdown

LAGOS

The Niger Delta Power Holding Company has restored the 450-megawatt Alaoji Open Cycle Power Plant in Abia to the national grid after a three-year shutdown.

The plant was shut down in 2023 following gas supply disruptions caused by metering disputes and unresolved trading point disagreements with gas supplier, TotalEnergies.

Mrs Jennifer Adighije, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of NDPHC, disclosed the development during a meeting with Abia Governor, Dr Alex Otti.

A statement issued in Lagos on Thursday by NDPHC spokesman, Mr Emmanuel Ojor, said issues bordering on meeting financial obligations also contributed significantly to the prolonged shutdown of the facility.

Adighije said reviving the power plant became a critical priority after she assumed office as

NDPHC chief executive in 2024.

She said the company repaired the faulty gas pipeline and settled all outstanding debts owed to TotalEnergies to restore gas supply.

"The good news is that we have completed all remedial works and restored gas supply to the plant," Adighije said.

She added that extensive electromechanical repairs were also undertaken to return the facility to operational status after years of inactivity.

According to her, three generating units identified as GT1, GT22 and GT23 have now been fully restored and reconnected to the national grid.

She said the restored units currently have the capacity to generate about 375 megawatts of electricity for national distribution.

Adighije described the Alaoji facility as a strategic national asset with strong transmission infrastructure capable of improving electricity supply across Nigeria.

INEC suspends voter registration in Ekiti, Osun ahead of governorship polls

ABUJA

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has suspended its ongoing nationwide Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise in Ekiti and Osun ahead of the forthcoming governorship elections in both states.

According to official data released on Thursday in Abuja by the commission for Week One of Phase III of the nationwide exercise, the suspension is in line with Section 9 (6) of the Electoral Act 2022.

The data, which captures registration statistics as of May 15, reveals that a total of 149,833 citizens successfully completed their registration across the country during the first week of the current phase.

Of this figure, 94,361 voters completed their pre-registration online, while 55,472 opted for physical registration.

INEC, however, noted that those figures remained preliminary, pending a compre-

hensive data clean-up during the upcoming claims and objections window, which would be followed by the deployment of the Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS).

A review of the state performance shows that Kano State recorded the highest number of total registrants in week one, with 13,569 individuals representing 9.06 percent of the national total.

This was closely followed by Sokoto State with 9,639 representing 6.43 percent of the total number of the new registrants and Lagos with 9,206 representing 6.14 percent.

Conversely, Ebonyi recorded the lowest turnout for the week with only 601 registrants representing 0.40 per cent, followed by Akwa Ibom with 976 representing 0.65 percent.

Demographic indicators from the week-one report shows that youth between the ages of 18 and 34 dominated the exercise, accounting for 106,836 registrants, representing 71.30 percent of the total turnout.

Tinubu appoints 39-yr-old Prof Aina as JAMB registrar

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu has appointed Prof. Segun Aina as the new Registrar of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), succeeding Prof. Is-haq Oloyede.

Oloyede's tenure expires on July 31.

Aina, who turns 40 in July, is a distinguished academic and systems expert with extensive experience in examination systems, digital infrastructure, institutional reform, and public-sector technology-driven

operational transformation across Nigeria.

His appointment was announced in a statement issued by Presidential Spokesperson, Mr Bayo Onanuga, on Thursday in Abuja.

Aina holds a Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Systems Engineering from the University of Kent and earned both his MSc and PhD from Loughborough University, United Kingdom.

He obtained an MSc in Internet Computing and Network Security and a PhD in Digital Signal Processing,

before completing the Senior Management Programme at the Lagos Business School.

A Professor of Computer Engineering at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Aina began his professional engagement with JAMB during his National Youth Service, gaining experience in admissions administration and institutional systems management.

The presidency said those early experiences shaped his long-standing contributions to examination reforms, systems optimisation, and technology-driven educational admin-

istration across Nigeria's public sector and national assessment institutions.

With more than 15 years of post-graduation experience, Aina has operated at the intersection of technology, governance, and institutional transformation, advising federal and state governments on digital transition and systems reform.

At 39, he became one of Nigeria's youngest professors of Computer Engineering and will now emerge as the youngest Registrar ever appointed to lead the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board.

NEWS**ASUU warns of strike over unimplemented agreement****KANO**

The Kano Zone of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has warned of a looming industrial crisis in Nigerian universities over Federal Government's failure to fully implement the 2025 agreement signed with the union.

The body's Zonal Coordina-

tor, Prof. Abdulkadir Muhammad, issued the warning during a news conference held at Bayero University, Kano.

Muhammad said that government's delay in constituting the Implementation Monitoring Committee had led to uncoordinated execution of the agreement.

He explained that key components of the agreement, in-

cluding salary adjustments and allowances remained largely unimplemented.

He said they included the Consolidated Academic Staff Salary Structure, and Consolidated Academic Tool Allowance, and Earned Academic Allowance.

He further said that several state governments failed to comply with the terms of the

agreement.

Muhammad also expressed concern over unresolved welfare issues, including outstanding salary arrears, unpaid allowances, withheld salaries from the 2022 strike, and delayed pension payments to retired academics.

He urged President Bola Tinubu to intervene urgently.

He further criticised recent policy directives by the Minis-

ter of Education, Tunji Alausa, including the proposed National Research and Innovation Development Fund.

It also included the reversal of the mother-tongue education policy, and the planned establishment of foreign university campuses in Nigeria.

He described the policies as misguided and potentially harmful to the nation's educa-

tion system.

He reaffirmed ASUU's commitment to university autonomy and warned that failure by the government to honour the agreement could disrupt the academic calendar.

Muhammad urged Nigerians to hold the authorities accountable for breakdown of industrial peace in the nation's universities.

Open Govt Week: Groups seek presidential assent to 4th Nat'l Act Plan**ABUJA**

A coalition of civil society organisations under the auspices of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) has called on President Bola Tinubu to sign and implement Nigeria's Fourth National Action Plan (NAP 4).

The coalition made the call at the 2026 Open Government Week in Abuja, emphasising the need for government at all levels to uphold citizens' rights to information and participation in governance.

The Executive Director, Public Private Development Centre (PPDC), Lucy Abagi, described OGP as a partnership between government and civil society organisations aimed at ensuring that public institutions remain transparent and accountable to citizens.

According to her, the coalition is seeking presidential assent to the Fourth National Action Plan, improved funding for OGP implementation, and greater collaboration among ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) responsible

for executing the framework.

"We are trying to bring to the notice of Nigerians that government owes citizens the right to openness, accountability and transparency.

"We want citizens to know that they have the right to ask questions about how public funds are being used in education, health, water and other social services, from the local government level to the national level," she added.

In her remarks, Maimuna Sani, Community and Youth Engagement Coordinator at the Nigeria Youth Futures Fund (NYFF), urged the Federal Government to work closely with young people and civil society groups in policy formulation and development planning.

"We are calling on the Federal Government to work closely with the civil society to ensure the implementation of the Fourth National Action Plan for Nigeria.

"We are also using this opportunity to call on Mr President to endorse the Open Government Partnership as it serves the country at large."

ICPC warns boards, CEOs against governance failures fueling corruption**ABUJA**

Dr Musa Aliyu, SAN, Chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), has called on the federal parastatals, agencies, and commissions to strengthen institutional mechanisms for corruption prevention.

He made the call at an Induction Programme for Chief Executive Officers, Chairmen, and Members of Governing Boards of Federal Government Parastatal, Agencies, and Commissions organised by the Bureau of Public Service Reforms in Abuja.

Aliyu, who made the call while presenting a paper titled: "The Role of the ICPC in the Prevention of Corrupt Practices in the Public Service", stressed that sustainable anti-corruption efforts must prioritise prevention alongside enforcement.

While warning against governance failures that fuel corruption, he explained that the commission's preventive

mandate was as critical as its investigative and prosecutorial responsibilities.

He noted that corruption could only be effectively addressed through strong institutional safeguards, ethical leadership, and compliance mechanisms within public institutions.

"Enforcement alone will not solve the problem of corruption," he stated. "Prevention must be pursued in equal measure. We need to look inwards."

The ICPC boss drew inference from a 2025 study conducted by the Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Centre across 11 African countries, in which the ICPC and the Code of Conduct Bureau participated.

He noted that greed and lack of integrity accounted for nearly 50 per cent of corruption cases identified in public institutions.

Aliyu noted that the findings underscored the urgent need for systemic reforms to address institutional weaknesses that enable corrupt practices across the public service.

**A TOWN HALL:**

Coordinator, Nigeria Copyright Commission, Mrs Oluropo Oke (2nd L); Keynote Speaker, Dr Olusola Alimi (3rd L); President, Network of Book Clubs and Reading Culture Promoters (NBRP), Prof. Oyinkan Tasie (3rd R); Director, School Library Service, Oyo State Library Board, Mrs Hafsat Akenele (R) and others during a town hall meeting organized by NBRP in Ibadan on Thursday.

Plateau: FRSC impounds 89 vehicles over fake diplomatic number plates, others**JOS**

The Plateau Command of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) has impounded 89 vehicles for using fake diplomatic number plates.

The command also impounded other vehicles for overloading and mixloading.

The vehicles were impounded during a Strategic Intervention Patrol tagged "Operation Guduma" in Jos.

Speaking on the development, Mrs Rebecca Aremu, the Assistant Corps Marshal (ACM) on Special

Duties, FRSC Headquarters, said that the operation aimed at tackling illegal and fake diplomatic number plates, mixloading and overloading in the state.

She explained that the operation, which commenced on Monday, is currently being enforced in 10 other states of the federation, including Rivers, Delta, Anambra, Ogun, Lagos, Kano, Kaduna, Oyo, Enugu and Nasarawa.

Aremu, who decried the rise in overloading by commercial drivers, added that fake and illegal diplomatic number plates contravened the National Road

Traffic Regulation.

She said that the special operation aimed at achieving sanity and ensuring safety on highways.

"Overloading has caused untold pain for Nigerians, so we are here to address it.

"Using fake diplomatic number plates is a risk; it contravenes the national road safety regulations.

"It also poses a serious threat to national security.

"So far, we have impounded 89 vehicles; 14 over mixloading, 61 for overloading and 14

for number plate violation in Plateau," she said.

Earlier, the Sector Commander in Plateau, Dr. Adelaja Ogungbemi, said that officers and men of the command had been deployed for the special operation.

"We have given our marshals a marching order, that it is no business as usual; we have also sent out signals to the motoring bodies in the state.

"We want to stop the use of fake diplomatic number plates and other unwholesome practices by motorists on highways," Ogungbemi said.

Employees' compensation scheme: NSITF enrolls over 7.6m workers**ABUJA**

The Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) has enrolled over 7.6 million workers into the Employees' Compensation Scheme (ECS).

The Managing Director of NSITF, Mr Oluwaseun Faleye, disclosed this at the 2026 International Civil Service Conference in Abuja.

The conference had the theme: "Reforms, Resilience and Results."

Faleye said the enrolment figure represented a major milestone for the fund, with the inclusion of the Nigeria Police Force into the

scheme for the first time.

He said the enrolment of the police followed engagements with the Inspector-General of Police.

According to him, "we have enrolled over 7.6 million employees into the scheme.

"We secured the enrolment of the Nigeria Police Force into the ECS, this is a historic first, after engagements with the Inspector-General of Police.

"When our officers know that their families will be protected should they sustain injury or lose their lives in the line of duty, their confidence and gallantry will increase, and our national security will be safer

for us all," he said.

Faleye described the conference theme as a call to action for public institutions to improve service delivery and restore public confidence.

According to him, reform has become imperative for institutions to remain effective, responsive and people-centred.

"For us in Nigeria, the conversation around reform is no longer optional, but urgent.

"The future of governance and national development depends on the ability of our institutions to evolve, innovate and respond effectively to the needs of citizens," he said.

Faleye said that upon assuming office on July 15, 2024, he met an institution with enormous potential but faced with operational challenges, including slow claims processing, low public awareness and weak stakeholder confidence.

He said the management responded with deliberate reforms aimed at improving governance, transparency and service delivery.

According to him, the fund partnered with the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) to strengthen anti-corruption mechanisms within the organisation.



LEGAL RUDIMENTS

with *Roland Osakue* Esq.

rollandosakue@gmail.com

0802 336 5483

Politicians and the hook of Section 77 of the Electoral Act 2026

As part of effort to conduct a transparent and credible elections in Nigeria, the National Assembly took a bold step to enact laws that will guide and regulate the 2027 general elections in the country which is domesticated in the Electoral Act 2026 that was signed into law by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on the 18th of February, 2026.

Of course, these laws will bring about the modus that will guide candidates and their political parties towards the conduct of the general elections next year. However, the previous elections in the Nigeria had often been reported to have sailed through the history of irregularities such as snatching of ballot boxes by thugs allegedly sent by politicians, inflation of election figures to favoured or preferred candidates, shooting and killing of politicians and voters alike.

Despite the present of International observers and local journalists at every Nigeria's elections, these archaic and hooliganism persist and had often portrayed the country in bad lights, regrettably as it is seen as a country that is yet to be prepared for the conduct of a free, fair and credible elections.

Nevertheless, the ninth National Assembly after its critical reasonings took the bull by the horns to eradicate the defects in the 2022 Electoral Act which most politicians have exploited over the years to wreak havoc on the face of democracy in this country.

Although, most Nigerians greeted the new Electoral Act 2026 with mixed reactions when it was passed, with many analysts condemning part of the Sections which they supposed may be favourable to the incumbent without taking a cursory look at the essence of the current Act which was well designed to restore the once again the failing integrity the country had suffered and lost in the name of democracy.

Well, I do not concede much blame on them because of what had happened in the recent past, where they saw the winners or losers of elections declared by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in the field and yet be cancelled and upturned by the second ballot (Judiciary), as they claimed in their argument. This is where we are to discuss the issues with politicians and the significance of Section 77 of the Electoral Act 2026.

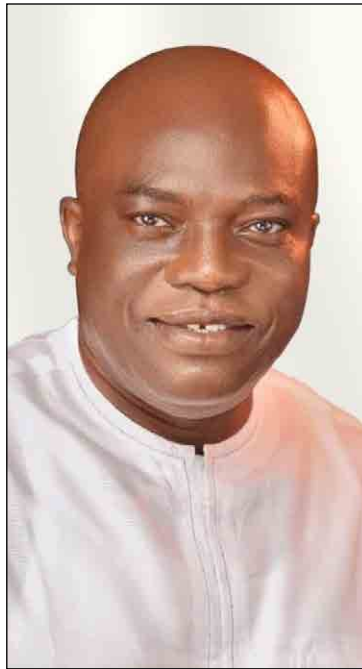
This Section 77 of the Electoral Act 2026 repealed No 13 of Electoral Act 2022 to regulate elections into the Federal, States and Area Councils in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja and was specifically redesigned to instil discipline into party members.

The House of Representative recently reamended the Electoral Act 2026 in March 2026 to criminalise the Section 77 on politicians for anyone who knowingly maintains membership of two political parties at the same time. The House prescribed 2 – year jail term or N10 million Naira (Ten Million Naira) fine or both for dual party membership.

At the session of the House, three



SENATOR NED NWOKO



SENATOR NEDA IMASUEN



PASCAL OKECHUKWU

new clauses were inserted into the Section viz: clauses 8, 9 & 10 and were considered and approved by the lawmakers. The new clauses would void any party member found to be registered as membership of the said parties.

Clause (8) of the approved amendment stipulates that "A person shall not be registered as a member of more than one political party at the same time."

Clause (9) stipulates that "Where it is established that a person is registered as a member of more than one political party at the same time, such dual membership shall be void, and the person shall cease to be recognized as a valid member of any political party pending regularization in accordance with the provisions of this Act and the constitution of the political party concerned."

Clause (10) stipulates that "A person who knowingly registers or maintains membership in more than one political party at the same time commits an offence is liable on conviction to a fine of N10,000,000 or imprisonment for a term of two years, or both."

Section 77(4) requires or mandate all the political parties to forward its registers 21 days to INEC before the day fixed for primaries, congresses and conventions the various political party as the use of alternative register is seriously prohibited by INEC.

It further introduced sanction on any political party which fails to comply with the deadline on the submission of its register would not be eligible to feature any candidate for the election, which is a clear departure from procedural requirement in the past to a more internal party enforcement.

The new Electoral Act Section 77(2) is about political parties registered under this Act will be a body corporate with a perpetual succession, as it will provides its corporate name, identification of members (name, sex, date of birth), NIN, address, date, local government, unit and photograph in both hard and e-copy form.

It is noteworthy to highlight that Section 77(5) & (6) only allow members whose names are captured in the party register shall be eligible to vote and be voted for in the party' primaries, congresses and conventions, while Section 84(2) only allows direct primaries or consensus

Simply it is significantly redesigned to enhance membership, registration of members, party regulation, discipline and internal party democracy.

It is noteworthy to highlight that Section 77(5) & (6) only allow members whose names are captured in the party register shall be eligible to vote and be voted for in the party' primaries, congresses and conventions, while Section 84(2) only allows direct primaries or consensus. Indirect primaries were removed. Similarly, most politicians hide under Section 83 (5)&(6) of the Electoral Act 2026 to take advantage of irrational decisions to forment trouble against party members, as the Act barred Court from hearing internal party matters and even restricted it from issuing an interim orders.

We therefore, we align with the factsheet thereupon submitted by the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC) on Section 77 of the Electoral Act 2026, whereupon it analyses the legal framework governing party membership register in Nigeria, explain how the 2026 reforms restructure membership documentation and verification, examines new enforcement mechanism tied to primary

elections, as well as assesses the implication for internal party democracy, compliance burden an litigation risk.

Under the current Section 77 of the Electoral Act 2026, the register format is digitalized and structured in database with detailed personal information mentioned both in hard and soft copies. The Act does not encourage dual registration but a loyalist and a committed party member whether lose or win in the party primary election. The implication is that the Act compare aspirants to stay into their political parties and jettison the age – longed "political migration" with the practice of decamping from one party to another after disputed primaries.

According to First Baba Isa, Esq, a Researcher based in Abuja, he writes "Before the election, sovereignty still belongs fully to the electorate. The ballot has not yet been cast. Preventing aspirants from seeking alternative platforms before voters make their decision only narrow democratic options and strengthens political monopolies.

Section 77, in this sense, reflects a troubling philosophy: that political parties' own political ambitions and can ration democratic participation according to internal calculations. That philosophy is dangerous.

A healthy democracy should prioritise the freedom of the electorate to choose among the widest possible pool of credible candidates.it should not empower governors and party elites to eliminate challengers from seeking the judgment of the people elsewhere."

Obviously true to his argument, but categorically, what has changed in the new Electoral act 2026 are the significant reforms in the Nigeria electoral process such as the abolition of indirect primaries, enhanced transparency in Party processes to ensure compliance with the electoral guidelines stronger internal party democracy with an improved Electoral Oversight with INEC granted clearer enforcement power to monitor the process.

Now, let us examine the ongo-

ing party's primaries elections in the Country, the Electoral Act 2026 did not categorically mention that when a candidate loses in a primary election that he should not jump to another to seek post – primary decamping. Section 77 of the Act 2026 under discussion appeared to have answered it with the provision highlighted under it. The controversy is predicated under Subsection (4),(5),(6) &(7) on the Act.

"Section 77 (4) Electoral Act 2026 provides that each political party shall make such a register available to INEC not later than 21 days before the date fixed for the party' primaries, congresses and conventions.

Section 77 (5) only members whose names are contained in the register shall be eligible to vote and be voted for in the party' primaries, congresses and conventions.

Section 77 (6) a political party shall not use any other register for party primaries, congresses and conventions except the register submitted to the Commission.

Section 77 (7) a party that fails to submit the membership register within the stipulated time shall not be eligible to field a candidate for that election."

With common sense, the Electoral Act 2026 at the face value, unequivocally prevented an aspirant from contesting for a ticket in another party having lost in his previous party. The new electoral Legislation frowns at it. For instance, an aspirant who contested primary election under the APC and lost will not be eligible to contest any position in PDP or NDC and the likes of any other parties because his name is not in the register submitted to INEC by these parties. We shall adumbrate further in the various subsections highlighted above.

The essence of these subsections is to avoid political migrants of politicians jumping from one party to another. Subsection (5) says "only members whose names are contained in register shall be eligible to vote and be voted for in the party's primaries, congresses and conventions." This is clear enough for any aspirant to understand that he cannot do otherwise should he lost in the primaries of his party.

If the aspirant also fail to realise that the register submitted to INEC by the party as deeply entrenched in Section 77 subsection (6) & (7) of the Electoral Act 2026, it will be an inference that he need not to leave that (his) party anymore but to remain a loyal and committed party man, more so to work assiduously in ensuring the victory of the candidate featured by the party.

Anyhow, we hereby submit however that this Section 77 Electoral Act 2026 did not prevent that which it was designed to prevent as it had tactically put the leaders of Political Parties at the head and masters of their game. Any aspirant rigged out of the game either by ways of political coup, direct or consensus should relax because tomorrow is another day or meet a Counsel for a brief on the way forward.

Friday Sermon

Welcoming the best days of the year, the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah

IMAM MUHAMMAD BABANGIDA

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

All praise is due to Allah, Who gives preference for certain days and months as He wishes, blessing them with virtues as He wills. This is one of the manifestations of His mercy, to be a reminder for those who contemplate. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, the Almighty, the All-Forgiving, alone without any partner. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, the Chosen and the Beloved Prophet. May Allah exalt and send peace to him, his family, and his companions all the time as long as the night and day follow each other. To proceed:

Dear brothers and sisters! Indeed, time serves as a repository for our acts of obedience to Allah, and a path to draw closer to Him.

"And it is He who has made the night and the day in succession for whoever desires to remember or desires gratitude." [Qur'an, 25: 62]

Wallahi it is a great favour from Allah to guide His believing servants to make use of good opportunities in life, because life goes by and comes to an end, and a person has nothing to retain except the righteous deeds he has kept and accumulated. Allah the Most High says:

"And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous." [Qur'an, 3: 133]

The fortunate one among us is he who makes use of the times, accumulates the acts of obedience during seasons of blessings, and exploits the waves of mercy. The night and the day do not await; they alternate without any pause. Life is a trust (amanah), and the servant of Allah will be questioned about it on the Day of Resurrection, as the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said:

"The feet of a servant will not move on the Day of Resurrection until he is asked about his life – how he spent it, his knowledge – how he acted upon it, his wealth – how he earned it and how he spent it, and his body – how he used it." [Reported by al-Tirmidhi]

THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE BE UPON HIM) ALSO ADVISED US SAYING:

"Take advantage of five things before five others: your youth before your old age, your health before your illness, your wealth before your poverty, your free time before your pre-occupation, and your life before your death." [Reported by al-Nasa'i]

Respected servants of Allah! Indeed, it is a part of Allah's wisdom that He prefers certain times over others. Thus, He blesses us with seasons for worship, in which reward is multiplied. Allah commands various forms of righteous deeds, so as to enable the Muslim believers to be raised in status, and give an opportunity for those lagging behind to make up for their lapses.

Among the preferred and blessed days that Allah raises their status are the coming first ten days of the month of Dhul-Hijjah. These are blessed and great days, incomparable by any other days, and whose deeds give a matchless reward. Our Lord, the Almighty, swears by these days in the noble Qur'an, saying:

"By the dawn, and the ten nights." [Qur'an, 89: 1-2]

IT IS ALSO NARRATED ON THE AUTHORITY OF JABIR (MAY ALLAH BE PLEASED WITH HIM) THAT:

"These ten nights refer to the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah."

These are the "known" days that Allah mentions in His saying:

"That they may witness benefits for themselves and mention the name of Allah on known days over what He has provided for them of sacrificial animals." [Qur'an, 22: 28]

IBN ABBAS SAID:

"The 'known days' are the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah."

Allah has marked these days uniquely with their great rewards, promising many blessings for the religious deeds performed during which, every righteous deed performed on these days is more beloved to Allah than those performed on other days. The Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said:

"There are no days during which righteous deeds are more beloved to Allah than these ten days." The companions asked, "O Messenger of Allah, not even Jihad in the cause of Allah?" The Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) replied, "Not even Jihad in the cause of Allah, except for a man who goes out with his life and his wealth and does not return with anything of that." [Reported by al-Tirmidhi]

ACCORDING TO ANOTHER NARRATION, THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE BE UPON HIM) SAID:

"There is no deed purer in the sight of Allah, the Almighty and Majestic, nor greater in reward, than a good deed done during the ten days of al-Adha (Sacrifice)." [Reported by al-Darimi]

These virtuous days are given such great blessings because they witness all the basic pillars of worship in Islam: prayer, fasting, charity, pilgrimage, slaughter and Zikr. All these acts cannot come together on any other days. Moreover, these days are a time for unique events that occurs on no other days.

The eighth of these days is the Day of Tarwiyah, marking the beginning of the Hajj rituals. Pilgrims start the state of Ihram and recite the Talbiyyah on this day, then proceed to Mina and Arafah. The ninth day is the great day of Arafah, about which the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said:

"There is no day on which Allah frees more servants from the Fire than the day of Arafah. He draws near, then boasts of them (i.e. His servants) to the angels, saying: 'What do these want?'" [Reported by Muslim]

THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE BE UPON HIM) ALSO SAID:

"The best supplication is the supplication on the day of Arafah, and the best of what I and the Prophets before me have said is: 'There is no deity worthy of worship but Allah, alone, without a partner. To Him belongs all sovereignty and praise, and He is over all things omnipotent.'" [Reported by al-Tirmidhi]

Fasting on the day of Arafah expiates sins for two years: the previous year and the coming one.

The tenth of these ten days is the Day of Sacrifice (Udhiyyah/Layyah). Regarding this day, the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said:

"The greatest day in the sight of Allah, the Exalted and Majestic, is the Day of Sacrifice." [Reported by Abu Dawud]

As we see, these days are blessed and full of goodness. We must turn to Allah, repent to Him, and strive through acts of worship during these blessed and virtuous times, following the command of Allah the Almighty: "And take provisions, but indeed, the best provision is fear of Allah. And fear Me, O you of understanding." [Qur'an, 2: 197]

Dear servants of Allah! Among the greatest acts that a servant should adhere to during these ten days are refining his intention and paying due attention that all be completely attentive that every single action he does is purely for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, seeking His countenance, and following the Sunnah of His beloved Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). Allah, the Exalted, says in a Qudsi Hadith:

"I am the Most Self-Sufficient, in no need of partners. Whoever performs an action in which they associate others

with Me, I shall abandon them and their association." [Reported by Muslim]

Among the legislated acts during these ten days is one's commitment to performing the obligatory acts of worship. Allah, the Exalted, says in a Qudsi Hadith:

"My servant does not draw closer to Me with anything more beloved to Me than what I have made obligatory upon them." [Reported by al-Bukhari]

Another recommended act during these ten days is fasting. Hafsa (may Allah be pleased with her) said:

"There are four acts the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) never left: fasting on the Day of Ashurah, the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah, and three days of every month, and performing two Raka'ah (units of prayer) before dawn." [Reported by Ahmad]

Among the recommended acts during these virtuous days is: pronouncing much Zikr (remembrance of Allah), Tahlil (saying: La Ilaha illallah), Tasbih (saying: Subhanallah), Takbir (saying: Allahu Akbar), Tahmid (saying: Alhamdulillah). The Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said:

"There are no days greater in the sight of Allah, nor more beloved to Him for performing deeds, than these ten days. So, increase in them your Tahlil, Takbir, Tahmid." [Reported by Ahmad]

Ibn Umar and Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with them both) used to go out to the marketplace during the first ten days, uttering the Takbir, with people following them.

The Takbir that avails one's soul is that Takbir in which the heart mirrors the tongue, that is, there is nothing in one's heart seen greater than Allah in His sovereignty, no one wiser than Allah in His judgment, no one other than Allah worthy of glorification, and no one worthy of love and fear more than Allah. This is the Takbir of the Muslim believers, which fills their hearts with submission and faith, strengthens their conviction and steadfastness in truth, and grants them abundant grace and satisfaction from their Lord.

Among the prescribed acts during these ten days is the Ibadah of Udhiyyah/Layyah, slaughtering on the day of Eid al-Adha. It is recommended for the one who intends to offer a sacrifice not to have their hair cut or nails trimmed from the beginning of Dhul-Hijjah until the day of slaughtering. Ummu Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her) reported that the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said:

"When you see the crescent of Dhul-Hijjah and if anyone has in his possession a sacrificial animal to offer as a sacrifice on Eid al-Adha, he should not get his hair cut and nails trimmed." [Reported by Muslim]

IN ANOTHER NARRATION REPORTED ALSO BY MUSLIM:

"They should not touch anything from their hair and skin."

Respected brothers and sisters! Seek the help of your Lord to make use of these ten days, and strive diligently. They are only a few days, and

the pain of your hard work will soon pass, but the great reward will remain.

And finally, dear brothers and sisters! Remember that feeding and clothing the orphans, poor and needy are among the acts that draws us close to Allah Almighty, especially in these blessed ten days of Dhul-Hijjah. We earn Allah's forgiveness, His mercies, and His blessings through those great act of charity.

It is our hope that you will continue to make this campaign a fruitful one, and help feed orphans, poor and needy Muslims during the celebration of sacrifice.

Charity/Sadaqah is a key part of first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah activities and is obligatory to all able Muslims, and feeding the orphans, poor and the needy is an act that draws us close to Allah. We earn Allah's forgiveness, mercies, and blessings through this act of charity and Sadaqah.

Then, exalt and send peace to our beloved Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), who was sent as a mercy to all worlds. O Allah, exalt and send peace to our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and all his Companions.

Ya Allah, guide us to make use of the blessed seasons through adhering to righteous deeds that bring us closer to You; fill our hearts with piety to be always mindful of You; forgive us, our parents, and all Muslim believers, for indeed, You are the Most-Forgiving, Most-Merciful. Our Lord, do not let our hearts deviate after You have guided us and bestow upon us mercy from Yourself. Indeed, You are the Bestower of all blessings.

Ya Allah, You are the One who turns hearts, so make our hearts firm on Your religion.

Ya Allah, keep us steadfast with the firm word, in this world life and in the Hereafter.

Ya Allah, we seek refuge in You from trials, both apparent and hidden!

Ya Allah, forgive all Muslim - men and women, and all believers - men and women, those who are alive and those who are dead.

Ya Allah, guide our leaders to that which pleases You, direct them to righteous and good deeds. Our Lord, give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.

Ya Allah, accept the Hajj of all our pilgrims, forgive their sins, and return them back home safely. Strengthen Islam and the Muslims worldwide. Grant us goodness in this life and the Hereafter, and protect us from the Fire, ameen Ya Hayyu Ya Qayyum!

Dear servants of Allah! Remember Allah frequently and glorify Him morning and evening, and our final supplication is that all praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

Mhammad Yusuf Babangida chief Imam 4 Brigade Central Mosque GRA Benin.

This Jumu'ah Khutbah (Friday sermon) was prepared for delivery today, Friday, Dhul-Hajj 6, 1447 AH (May 22, 2026).



Wizkid, Burna Boy, Asake, Tems nominated for BET Awards

Nigerian Afrobeats crooners, Wizkid, Burna Boy, Asake and Tems have been nominated for the 2026 BET Awards.

Nominations for the annual awards were unveiled on Tuesday with some artistes receiving recognition across music categories.

The Awards ceremony which will be held in Los Angeles on June 28th,

2026 will be hosted by comedian Druski and air live on ET, BET Television.

Following their collaborative project and a series of chart-topping releases, Asake and Wizkid earned a joint Group category.

Tems who bagged three nomination, was nominated as one of the Africa's most celebrated nominees, Best

female R&B/pop artiste, BET award for her song and first viewers' choice award for Raindance, her collaboration with Dave.

Burna Boy was nominated for Best collaboration category for his feature on Gunna's hit single WGFT.

Reports has it that BET awards is one of the Black culture's most prestigious international award platforms.



'Record label' play's significant role in artiste mental health, wellbeing —Tiwa Savage

Nigerian songstress, Tiwa Savage has said that the Record label an artistes signed play's a significant role in their mental health and wellbeing.

Speaking in a recent episode of the Afrobeats intelligence podcast with Joey Akan, Savage said she didn't realize how important the Record label signed help in the artist's mental well-being until she left Mavin Records.

The singer explained that during her stint at 'Mavins', she used to confide in the Record label boss, Don Jazzy and other mates, but no longer have such privileges at the new Record label.

According to her, "who you signed to is very important and I didn't appreciate it until after I left Mavin's".

"As at the time I was with Mavin

label, whenever there is a controversy online I'd turn to Don Jazzy's room, sit on the floor or bed with other Mavin acts and we would talk about it. I would cry if I had to cry and we would get through it".

"But being with a foreign label, they don't really care about your person, so I can't really go to the empire office and cry, I miss that part of it" she lamented.

She added that it is important for artistes to concern whether the label they are signing cares about them or just see them as money making machines.

Tiwa Savage joined Mavin Records in 2012 but left in 2019 and signed to universal music Group, despite exiting Mavin label, Savage has maintained that Mavin is still 'family'.

Wizkid hits 11 billion Spotify Streams



Prominent Nigerian Afrobeats music icon, Wizkid has made history as he becomes the first African artiste to surpass 11 billion total streams on Spotify across credits.

The music chart platform, charts Africa who made the announcement during the week described Wizkid as a global superstar in a post shared on x, chartsAfrica.

According to the announcement, "Wizkid has become the first African artiste ever to cross 11 billion Spotify streams across all credits"

Reports has it that the announcement was made four days after the release of Wizkid's collaboration with DJ Tunez on May 15, 2026.

The single surpassed 685,000 global streams on its first day on Spotify

My university education shaped my musical career —Davido

Afrobeats crooner, Davido Adeleke, popularly known as Davido has said his University education shaped his life and career.

Davido explained that being a graduate in the industry where many are not, gives him a sense of pride.

"Babcock university shaped my career, I always brag to colleagues that I went to school and graduated and not everyone who started school graduated" he boasted

Davido further boasted that he met his wife, Chioma Adeleke in Babcock university, adding that he released most of his hit songs while still in school.

Davido graduated with a degree from the musical department of Babcock university some few years ago.

He previously revealed his dad gave him condition to go to university in order to be allowed to do music.



Why I didn't go down on my knees when I proposed to my wife —Made Kuti

Afrobeats singer and son of legendary star, Fela Kuti, Made Kuti has shared his opinion on marriage proposal and the process.

The 30-year-old revealed that he didn't go down on his knees when he proposed to his wife, Inedoye Onyenso because he believes that it should be a mutual decision and not one person begging on his or her knees.

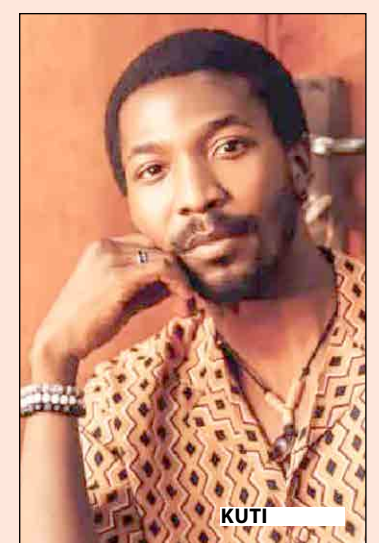
The Grammy-nominated artiste stated this at an episode of the Timeless podcast aired recently on Nix Network, YouTube channel.

According to him "I didn't go down on my knees when proposing to my wife because I told her it was a mutual decision. We are not begging each other"

Made Kuti and Inedoye Onyenso got married in a private ceremony in Lagos in November 2023.

The singer further disclosed that Inedoye was his former 'school daughter'.

In 2025, Made Kuti tackled those who accused him and his wife Inedoye, an Igbo of 'mixing blood' due to their different ethnic backgrounds even as he said ethnic bigotry is 'slave mentality'.



ArtsWorld with Francis Odupute 08023680030

HONOURING CRAFT, CELEBRATING CULTURE

A night of African grandeur at the AMVCA Cultural Showcase

AISHAT MUHAMMED

Africa's creative spirit took centre stage at the AMVCA Cultural Night, where tradition, artistry, and identity converged in a vibrant celebration of heritage. The evening brought together some of the continent's finest talents, each adorned in attire that told a story far deeper than fashion—one rooted in history, pride, and craftsmanship.

The Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards by MultiChoice has long stood as a celebration of excellence in television, film, and digital content across Nollywood and the wider African entertainment landscape. This year's Cultural Night, held on 8 May 2026 at the Federal Palace Hotel in Lagos, embraced the theme "Honouring Craft, Celebrating Culture"—a fitting tribute to the continent's artistic heritage.

Celebrities including Omowunmi Dada, Uche Jombo, Iyabo Ojo, Stan Nze, Osas Ighodaro, Linda Osifo, Lateef Adedimeji, Mercy Eke, and Uzor Arukwe graced the event in elaborate traditional outfits. Their attires—rich with beads, colourful embroidery, and regal accessories such as staffs and dramatic headpieces—transformed the venue into a living gallery of African identity.

The night was alive with cultural dance performances, live music, and traditional dishes, each element reinforcing the unity and pride that define African heritage.

A CELEBRATION OF AFRICAN IDENTITY

The cultural event was filled with traditional displays that demonstrated, once again, that Africa is a continent rich in culture—one we proudly showcase at every opportunity. This richness was evident in the detailed traditional attires worn by the celebrities, many of whom complemented their looks with symbolic accessories that elevated their presence.

One thing about the cultural festival is that it is not just about wearing something expensive; it is about presence, identity, attention to detail, and how well the entire look is brought to life.

Celebrities wore traditional attires such as Aso Oke and Isiagu, symbolising pride in African roots and visibility on the global entertainment stage. The event highlighted African traditional heritage, storytelling, and fashion, while also underscoring the continent's cultural diversity. Celebrities from across Africa—North, South, East, and West—represented their cultures with elegance and authenticity.

Nana Akua Addo of Ghana arrived in a cathedral-inspired outfit—an architectural masterpiece. Every arch, every spire, every detail told a story of artistry. She appeared not merely dressed, but sculpted into a work of art. Racheal Okonkwo, too, embodied



FROM LEFT: BISOLA AIYEOLA, OSAS IGHODARO, AND SASKAY SHINE AT THE AMVCA CULTURAL NIGHT 2026, EMBODYING AFRICAN ELEGANCE THROUGH BOLD BEADWORK, SCULPTURAL HAIRSTYLES, AND INTRICATELY CRAFTED GOWNS INSPIRED BY HERITAGE

full cultural energy; the shell details, the beading, the headpiece, and her staff all worked together to create a powerful, traditionally inspired look.

HONOURING CRAFT

The theme "Honouring Craft, Celebrating Culture" emphasized the importance of preserving traditional craftsmanship and promoting unity and cultural pride. The event portrayed Africa as a continent of astonishing excellence, particularly in the world of fashion.

Bisola Aiyoola's dress, inspired by Kingsley Okoye Rex's concept of MMIRI NDU (water of life), featured a waterfall cascading between mountains, flowing down to the ground. The intricate beadwork added elegance and depth to the entire look.

Stan Nze also stole the spotlight with his artistic outfit. The coral bead details, traditional cap, staff, and large pendant all contributed to a strong cultural statement. His attire was symbolic, rich with meaning, and a testament to African craftsmanship.

One thing about the cultural festival is that it is not just about wearing something expensive; it is about presence, identity, attention to detail, and how well the entire look is brought to life

FASHION AND CREATIVITY

Attendees dazzled in traditional outfits crafted from Aso Oke, lace, and other indigenous fabrics, showcasing the creativity and diversity of African fashion. The designs were bold, regal, and memorable—proof that cultural fashion, when done with intention, is nothing short of breathtaking.

VJ Adams exemplified this with his attire. The purple palette gave a regal feel, while the gold accents, embroidery patterns, beading, and layered fabrics were all intentionally and beautifully crafted.

CULTURAL PRESERVATION AND PAN-AFRICAN UNITY

The event promoted African traditions and encouraged younger generations to embrace their cultural heritage. Through fashion, dance, music, and storytelling, the night blended glamour with heritage.

* **Yoruba Royalty:** Coral beads, agbadas, and gele artistry reflected prestige and spirituality.

* **Igbo Sophistication:** Isiagu fabrics, Okpu Agu caps, and coral beads highlighted Eastern Nigerian elegance.

* **Pan-African Unity:** Traditions from

across the continent merged seamlessly, reinforcing shared identity.

* **Global Influence:** The night underscored African creativity's growing impact on the global stage.

CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS

* **Fashion:** Richly crafted Aso Oke, Isiagu, and beaded regalia transformed the venue into a cultural showcase.

* **Music & Dance:** Live performances and traditional dances celebrated indigenous rhythms.

* **Cuisine:** African dishes added culinary heritage to the celebration.

* **Storytelling:** Host Utu Nwachukwu emphasized the night as a platform for preserving African identity beyond film.

In the end, the AMVCA Cultural Night did more than celebrate fashion—it reaffirmed Africa's voice, its stories, and its unbroken connection to heritage. It was a reminder that culture is not merely worn; it is lived, shared, and carried forward with pride.

Entertainment

— with Davidson Imosime Izegaegbe —

Which is King: Cinematography or Storyline?



IZEGAEGBE IMOSIME DAVIDSON

As an audience, film critic, whenever you watch a film at home, cinema or from your phone, what readily comes to your mind in appreciating the film? Is it the storyline, acting, locations, sound or cinematography? In fact, let us narrow it to just two; cinematography or the storyline?

This question seems timeless especially if we take our minds back over a century ago, the cinema has always maintained its position as the premier contemporary storytelling medium before the public, unique in its ability to synthesize multiple film and artistic disciplines into a single, cohesive experience. Yet, this synthesis harbors a foundational debate that has occupied the minds of filmmakers, theorists, and audiences alike: What truly makes a film? Is it the storyline, like the narrative, dramatic arc, and the literary soul of the work? Or is it cinematography, the visual language, the manipulation of light and shadow, and the distinct plastic art that separates cinema from theater and literature? What about the real-life acting or the creative mind of the Director's inputs in coordinating the various film elements to visualize the storyline? To view this as a strict binary, however, misinterprets the mechanics of the medium. While a compelling storyline provides the intellectual and emotional framework of a movie, it is cinematography that transforms abstract narrative into an experiential, visceral reality. A film is neither solely its script nor its imagery; rather, cinema exists in the deliberate, often tense dialectic between the two, where narrative gives purpose to sight, and sight gives life to narrative. The cinema is a space where sight gives definition to a film before the public.

It is not Herculean at all to understand the argument for the primacy of the storyline, as one obviously needs to examine the fundamental human impulse toward narrative. We also know too that before the invention of the celluloid strip or the digital sensor, human culture and its assessments were organized around stories, artworks, folklores. Against the backdrop of filmmaking, the storyline which typically manifests in the screenplay, often serves as the foundational architecture for cinematography. It ultimately establishes the thematic parameters,

the psychological depth of the characters, the stakes of the conflict, and the structural pacing that keeps an audience engaged for two hours.

Without a deliberate coherent or intentionally evocative narrative structure, every motion picture risks degenerating into a series of uncoordinated and disconnected, albeit, mere beautiful, moving frames only. Like a fleshless skeleton. Now, let us mildly take our minds back to the classic narrative models derived from Aristotelian drama, and you would notice that the frameworks of those dramas somehow provided the psychological anchor for the audience.

Have you noticed also that whenever viewers weep, gasp, or celebrate a film at the cinema, they are rarely reacting to a specific focal length or a well-placed key light in isolation; they may even be reacting to what those visual elements represent within the storyline of the film. These audiences care because a character's internal world has been articulated through varied unique dialogue, diverse known conflicts, and stakes.

In addition, a great and unique storyline does possess a structural resilience that can even transcend any mediocre technical execution; again this is debatable, right? The history of independent and guerrilla filmmaking is filled to the brim with examples of movies shot on micro-budgets with rudimentary equipment, poor lighting, and inconsistent framing, which nevertheless achieved critical acclaim and deep cultural resonance. I am sure our minds are taking us back to the early days of filmmaking after the Ola Balogun, Eddie Ugbomah era, just from the period we started calling the Nigeria film industry Nollywood. I am sure you may be one of those who was more concerned with the quality of story rather than technical crossings of the vector line. However, many films then succeeded not because of visual opulence, but because of their crazily unique narrative voices, dialogue, and character dynamics which were encased in attempted suspense-filled cinematography. Anyway, as expected of the imitations, locations were real enough and arresting, and so were the costumes. Therefore, I will make bold to say here that the storyline is the intellectual currency of the film; it is the silent-loud answer to the varied fundamental questions.

From a different perspective, the argument for

the supremacy of cinematography rests on a simple, but radical truth which is: cinema is, first and foremost, a visual medium, right? If a film is to rely solely on just text to convey meaning, it is then merely a filmed theater or an illustrated audiobook. Many may argue this as if I am bothered. The true birth of cinema as an independent art form occurred when early pioneers realized that the camera was not just a passive recording device only, but an active interpreter of reality whether we liked it or not.

Cinematography which holds very tightly to its bosom, lighting, various camera movements, lens selection, composition, wardrobe, make up, sound, and color palette, is the mechanism through which a film bypasses the intellectual filters of the brain and speaks directly to the subconscious. A screenwriter can write, "Osaro is lonely and isolated," but it is the cinematographer, through the Direction, who makes the audience feel that loneliness and isolation. Through the use of appropriate varied lenses and shots that may reveal and distort the space around Osaro, to minimize his physical presence, or a unique lighting scheme that swallows him in shadow, thereby making the visuals achieve an immediate emotional impact that words can seldom replicate or achieve with the reader. Visuals, like we all know, tell more than words.

There are many films we have seen and would agree that their narrative cores explore identity and existential loneliness, while their visual landscape, the suffocating, monochromatic orange dust storms, the cold, monoliths, and the piercing, atmospheric beams of light, encodes their thematic alienation directly into the viewer's psyche. Yet you still wonder why experimental or horror movies leave a scar in your subconscious.

Similarly, in silent cinema, numerous great filmmakers have proved that profound psychological narratives could be told entirely through the keen eye of the frame and the expressive power of light and sound. Cinematography possesses a universal vocabulary that transcends language barriers; it allows a film to be felt before it is understood.

Therefore, the debate over whether cinematography or storyline makes a film, ultimately dissolves when we observe cinema at its highest level of execution. The greatest films do not treat these two ele-

ments as competing forces, but as a singular, synthesized entity. They treat them like conjoined twins whose lives depend on each other to live. While the storyline provides the text, the cinematography provides the texture. When films achieve these, cinematography becomes a narrative king in its own right, moving beyond mere illustration to actively write the story on screen. In many films, some cinematographers do address serious issues, not through conventional close-ups of grieving faces of actors, but through prolonged, unbroken, visceral long takes. You see the camera roves dynamically through chaotic environments, forcing the viewer to experience the immediate, unedited terror of the world alongside the characters. If you have experienced this in some films, then the camera technique in such films is the voice, the storyteller. The choice of a long take at that point conveys the inescapable, relentless nature of the narrative reality.

The storyline and the cinematography are so deeply intertwined like conjoined twins that separating them would cause the entire thematic structure of the film to collapse. Therefore, to now ask whether cinematography or storyline, which makes a film can be likened to asking whether the skeleton or the nervous system, or the brain and the heart, which makes a human being. In the case of the skeleton and the nervous system, one ultimately provides the structure, the form, and the internal logic, while the other provides the sensory perception, the feeling, and the immediate contact with the outside world. Trust me, any brilliant storyline stripped of cinematography is just a blueprint waiting for a builder. It would surely remain a literary exercise. We must know that a dazzling display of cinematography divorced from narrative substance is merely a technical showreel and nothing more. At that point, it is focused to capture the eye while at the same time fails to touch the soul. Cinema, in its truest definition, is the alchemy that happens to a film when these two elements embrace. It is the process or art of making ideas visible as well as images meaningful to the diverse heterogeneous film audiences. Ultimately, what makes a film is neither the script alone nor the camera alone, but the brilliant, harmonious space where the story is not only seen but the vision is told.

NEWS**Foreign****Air France and Airbus found guilty of manslaughter over 2009 plane crash**

Air France and Airbus have been found guilty of manslaughter over a 2009 plane crash which killed 228 people.

The Paris Appeals Court found the airline and aircraft manufacturer guilty of corporate manslaughter over the incident, in which flight AF447 between Rio de Janeiro and Paris crashed into the Atlantic Ocean.

The passenger jet stalled during a storm and plunged into the water, killing all on board.

A court had previously cleared the companies in April 2023 but they were found guilty after this appeal.

The Airbus A330 vanished from radars during a storm on 1 June 2009, with its wreckage found after a long search of 10,000 sq km (3,860 sq miles) of sea floor.

The black box was found after months of deep-sea searches in 2011.

All 12 crew members and 216 passengers on board the flight were killed when the plane crashed into the sea from a height of 38,000ft (11,580m), making it the deadliest incident in French aviation history.

Relatives of some of the passengers, which included mainly French, Brazilian and German nationals, gathered to hear the verdict on Thursday.

The companies have been

asked to pay the maximum fine, €225,000 (\$261,720; £194,500) each - but some of the victims' families have criticised the amount as a token penalty.

However, the ruling may be seen as causing damage to the companies' reputations.

During their closing arguments in November, the deputy prosecutors said the companies' behaviour had been "unacceptable", accusing them of "spouting nonsense and pulling arguments out of thin air".

Both Airbus and Air France had repeatedly denied the charges, and French lawyers believe they are likely to launch further appeals.

The BBC has contacted Airbus and Air France for comment.

The crash led to a complex recovery operation in a remote part of the Atlantic Ocean, more than 700 miles (1127km) from the coast of South America.

During the initial searches, the French government had been responsible for investigating the crash and Brazilian forces took charge of retrieving the bodies.

In the first 26 days of searches, 51 bodies were recovered, many still buckled into their seats.

One family member who spoke to BBC News Brasil in 2019 said he had only been able to bury his son's remains over two years after the incident.

**CUBA EX-LEADER:**

Former President Raul Castro, pictured in 2017, has been indicted by an American court, as Washington continues to ramp up pressure on Cuba.

Gaza flotilla activists set for deportation from Israel as backlash over treatment grows

Hundreds of pro-Palestinian activists who were detained in Israel after their flotilla bringing symbolic aid to Gaza was intercepted are set to be deported from the country.

It follows international backlash in response to a video posted by far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir showing himself taunting activists kneeling with their hands tied behind their backs.

On Thursday, the UK confirmed it had summoned Israel's top diplomat in Britain, charge d'affaires Daniela Grudsky Ekstein, over the incident.

In a statement, the UK Foreign Office said the move reflected the UK's "strong condemnation of [Ben Gvir's] conduct in taunting those involved in the Global Sumud Flotilla".

"We are also deeply concerned by the detention conditions depicted and have demanded an explanation from the Israeli authorities. We made clear their obligations to protect the rights of all those involved," the statement said.

There has also been condemnation from the US, France, Italy and Canada, and Ireland.

On Thursday, Italian politician Dario Carotenuto and journalist Alessandro Mantovani, who were part of the flotilla, were pictured arriving at Rome

Fiumicino Leonardo da Vinci International Airport, after first being flown to Athens.

Speaking to reporters, Carotenuto said they had been beaten after arriving in Israel.

Adalah, an Israel-based rights group representing the detainees, earlier said there had been "severe, widespread injuries", with at least three people taken to hospital for treatment.

Dario Carotenuto said detainees had been beaten after arriving in Israel.

Israeli authorities have not commented on the allegations.

Turkey's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said his country was conducting special flights that would bring Turkish citizens as well as third country participants to Turkey.

Spain's foreign minister said its diplomats in Israel had been informed that some 44 Spanish flotilla members would depart from Israel at 15:00 local time (12:00 BST).

Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Helen McEntee, said 15 Irish citizens who had been detained were expected to be flown to Turkey.

More than 50 boats taking part in the Global Sumud Flotilla (GSF) set sail from Turkey last Thursday carrying a token amount of aid. Four hundred and thirty people from more than 40 countries were on board.

Iran steps up claim to control Strait of Hormuz

Iran has said it is significantly expanding the area around the Strait of Hormuz over which it claims military control in an effort to assert its sovereignty of the key trade route.

A map published by Iran's newly-created "Persian Gulf Strait Authority" claims "Iranian armed forces oversight" across more than 22,000 sq km (8,800 sq miles).

It extends into the territorial waters of Oman and the UAE. The UAE described Iran's claims of control as "nothing but fragments of dreams".

Iran's new authority added that all transit through the strait "requires coordination with and authorization from the Persian Gulf Strait Authority".

The US and Gulf allies have repeatedly rejected Iranian attempts to assert control over the strait. The US has told ships not to comply with Iran's rules.

The diplomatic adviser to the UAE president, Anwar Gargash,

said Iran is "trying to consecrate a new reality born from a clear military defeat, but attempts to control the Strait of Hormuz or encroach on the UAE's maritime sovereignty are nothing but fragments of dreams".

Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ships are guaranteed safe passage through another country's waters - but Iran has not ratified this convention.

Media linked to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) this week published footage showing what it claimed was a "punishment" strike on a tanker in the strait.

BBC Verify analysis shows key characteristics of the vessel in the footage match with Barakah, a Liberian-flagged tanker which reported being struck by unknown projectiles in early May, according to the ship's operators.

Iran's push for greater control over the area around the Strait

of Hormuz comes as US forces boarded an Iran-bound oil tanker on Wednesday. The US military's Central Command (Centcom) said it was suspected of violating the American blockade of Iranian ports.

Footage published by Centcom shows US marines rappelling from a helicopter on to the deck of a ship, said to be the oil tanker Celestial Sea, in the Gulf of Oman.

In a post on social media Centcom said the ship was "suspected of attempting to violate the US blockade by transiting toward an Iranian port".

"US forces subsequently released the vessel after conducting a search and directing the crew to alter course," according to maritime risk management company Vanguard.

Celestial Sea has previously been sanctioned under a previous name by the US for its links with Iran.

Tracking data from Marine-

Traffic shows the ship is now reporting its destination as the port of Duqm in Oman.

Centcom said on Thursday it had redirected 94 commercial ships and disabled four vessels since the US blockade of Iranian ports came into effect on 13 April.

Donald Trump said on Monday he was holding off a military attack on Iran planned for the following day at the request of Gulf states because "serious negotiations are now taking place".

In a post on Truth Social, the US president said he had been asked to do so by the leaders of Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Pakistan's military chief is reported to be visiting Tehran on Thursday in an attempt to mediate peace efforts between Iran and the US.

Iranian state media reported Asim Munir will be continuing talks with senior Iranian officials.

China says US should stop 'threats' against Cuba after ex-leader charged

China has called on the US to stop using "coercion" and "threats" against its ally Cuba, after Washington indicted former leader Raúl Castro on murder charges.

An American court has accused the 94-year-old former president of conspiracy to kill US nationals over the 1996 downing of two planes, an incident which killed four people and fuelled diplomatic tensions between Washington and the Caribbean island.

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly sought to exert pressure on Cuba and has openly discussed toppling its communist regime.

On Thursday, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said the US should "stop threatening force at every turn", and that Beijing "firmly

supports Cuba".

On Wednesday, Castro was charged alongside five others of involvement in the shooting down of two planes travelling between Cuba and Florida three decades ago, and was indicted with offences which carry penalties of life in prison or death.

The aircraft, which were operated by the Cuban-American dissident group Brothers to the Rescue, were carrying three US citizens when they were downed, all of whom were killed.

At the time, Castro - who stepped down as president in 2018 - was head of the country's armed forces.

The incident caused outcry among Cuban exiles living in the US and has long been a source of contention between Washington and Havana.

Cuba's president Miguel Díaz-

Canel has described the charges as "a political manoeuvre, devoid of any legal foundation".

The foreign minister of China, a long-standing supporter of Cuba, said Beijing opposed "any attempt by external forces to exert pressure on Cuba under any pretext".

Guo continued: "The United States should cease using sanctions and judicial apparatus as tools of coercion against Cuba and refrain from making threats of force at every turn.

"China resolutely supports Cuba in safeguarding its national sovereignty and dignity and opposes external interference."

It comes as the White House continues to ratchet up pressure on Cuba.

The US has imposed new sanctions on the country and imposed a blockade on oil to

Cuba, a move which has resulted in blackouts and food shortages.

Earlier this month, Trump signed an executive order sanctioning officials in Cuba's energy, defence, financial and security sectors, as well as individuals the US alleges have carried out human rights abuses or stolen public assets.

Since capturing former Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro in January to face trial in the US over charges of narco-terrorism and drug trafficking, Trump has openly mused that Cuba is "ready to fall".

China has become closer to Cuba since President Xi Jinping's 2014 visit to the island.

In 2018, Cuba joined China's Belt and Road Initiative, which funded several strategic infrastructure projects on the island.

Foreign

NEWS

Dozens of vehicles burnt as Mali jihadists enforce blockade ahead of Eid holiday

Dozens of vehicles, including fuel tankers, minibuses and trucks, have been set on fire near Mali's capital, Bamako, as jihadists step up a blockade of the city, the BBC has confirmed.

Videos filmed from passing vehicles and verified by the BBC show the charred remains of the vehicles on a road about 45km (28 miles) west of Bamako. There are no reports of casualties - those on board were said to have been asked to get out before the vehicles were burnt.

Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), a jihadist group affiliated to al-Qaeda, imposed a fuel blockade on Bamako last year, which it tightened after attacking the city last month.

Mali is a landlocked country and depends heavily on fuel transported from neighbouring coastal countries like Senegal and Ivory Coast.

The militants have kidnapped drivers and burnt more than 100 fuel trucks on major highways in the country since last year, but some have made it to Bamako under military escort.

The blockade is leading to shortages and sharp increases in the price of many goods ahead of the Islamic holiday of Eid al-Adha, which falls next week.

In the latest attack, BBC Verify authenticated the videos through matching two distinctive buildings on the side of the road to satellite imagery and checking for AI manipulation.

Nasa's satellite-based platform Firms - which detects heat sources on Earth's surface - also detected a heat signature at the same location on Tuesday.

The fuel blockade is intended to suffocate Mali's economy and weaken the legitimacy of the military leaders in power, experts say.

Mali is currently led by Gen

Assimi Goïta, who first seized power in a coup in 2020, promising to restore security and push back the armed groups. He has invited Russian paramilitary group Africa Corp, which evolved out of the Wagner Group, to help fight the Islamist insurgents.

In January, he appointed 47-year-old Brig Gen Famouké Camara to head a special operation to counter the fuel blockade, but attacks on fuel convoys have continued.

Before the latest attack, the fuel crisis resulting from the blockade had appeared to be easing.

The Africa Corp has been helping to get supplies into Bamako.

The BBC has verified footage of Russian attack helicopters escorting convoys, including fuel tanks and heavy goods trucks along roads to the capital.

The Africa Corps have post-

ed daily videos on social media for the past few weeks showing troops on patrol. Analysts say the publicity blitz is to combat criticism of their failure to stop the rebel advance.

The Kremlin has pledged that Russian forces will remain in Mali to fight "extremism, terrorism, and other negative manifestations".

The fuel blockade caused shortages in the capital last year. When the jihadists imposed a fuel blockade last year, it caused shortages and a sharp increase in prices in the capital.

Last month, they ordered a total blockade, leaving residents worried.

Eyewitnesses told the BBC at the time that at least three of the six main routes into the city would be closed for hours at a time, and while the fighters moved elsewhere, some vehicles would manage to slowly get through.

Charges dismissed against official at school where 6-year-old shot teacher

A judge in the US state of Virginia has dismissed charges against a former assistant principal at a school where a six-year-old shot his teacher during class.

Ebony Parker faced felony child abuse charges for allegedly ignoring warnings that the first grade student at her elementary school had a gun.

Her defence team argued the state had not made its case against Parker, and Circuit Court Judge Rebecca Robinson agreed, striking down all eight counts including disregard for

life.

Parker put her head on the table and cried as the judge dismissed the charges against her.

"What happened that day was awful," Robinson said while reading out her ruling.

In January 2023, the child fired a single shot at teacher Abigail Zwerner, who had to have surgery after a single bullet went through her hand and struck her in the chest.

The child's mother Deja Taylor, 26, served jail time for a drug charge linked to the gun used in the attack.

DR Congo cancels World Cup training camp over Ebola outbreak

The Democratic Republic of Congo has cancelled its pre-World Cup training camp in the capital, Kinshasa, because of an Ebola outbreak in the east of the country.

The virus is thought to have killed more than 130, including a person whose case was confirmed on Thursday in the South Kivu province, signalling the spread of the virus from the outbreak's epicentre.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has called the outbreak a "public health emergency of international concern", but said it was not at pandemic level.

A spokesperson for DR Congo's football team told reporters that the training camp, part of the preparations for the team's first World Cup since 1974, would now take place in Belgium.

Jerry Kalemo added that DR Congo's pre-tournament games in Europe would go ahead as planned.

The Leopards are due to play friendly matches against Denmark, on 3 June in Belgium, and Chile, on 9 June in Spain, ahead of the World Cup finals.

They play their first match of the tournament in the US city of Houston on 17 June against Portugal.

"Originally scheduled to take place in the capital on May 26, the Leopards' public training session will not be held after all. This decision follows reports of suspected Ebola cases in the provinces of North Kivu and Ituri," a message posted by the team on social media said.

There is also uncertainty over whether the team's French coach, Sébastien Desabre, will go ahead with a press conference scheduled to take place in the capital city, the statement added.

A spokesperson for the DR Congo team told the Reuters news agency that the training camp had been cancelled due to travel restrictions imposed by the US, who are hosting the World Cup this summer, along with Mexico and Canada.

The US' public health agency has banned entry from non-Americans who have been in

the DR Congo, Uganda or South Sudan in the previous 21 days, in response to the Ebola outbreak.

All DR Congo's players are based outside the central African country and will therefore not be affected by the restrictions now the training camp has been cancelled.

Some team staff based in DR Congo left the country on Wednesday, Kalemo told the Associated Press, ahead of the 21-day deadline.

However, some fans and journalists, who applied for US visas via the Congolese ministry of sport, are concerned because the US embassy in DR Congo has paused its visa services in light of the Ebola outbreak.

A sports reporter from the national broadcaster questioned why they should be stopped from attending the World Cup when there have not yet been any reported Ebola cases where they are based, in Kinshasa.

Kinshasa is roughly 1,800 km (1,120m) away from the eastern Ituri province, the epicentre of the outbreak.

"Why should the whole country be banned?" the journalist asked.

Michel Nkuka Mbolandinga, a supporter who has gained prominence for impersonating former Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, told the BBC: "I am confident that I will be travelling, but I don't know how far the ministry is with the applications."

The training camp in Kinshasa was supposed to have been attended by fans, along with President Felix Tshisekedi, according to Reuters.

On Wednesday, the WHO said 139 people were thought to have died, out of 600 suspected cases. However, on the same day, Congolese health minister Samuel Roger Kamba told state broadcaster RTNC TV that authorities had registered 159 deaths.

On Thursday the M23, a rebel group that controls parts of eastern DR Congo, said it had confirmed the first case of Ebola in the South Kivu province, which is hundreds of kilometres away from Ituri.



BURNT VEHICLES:

Jihadist fighters have been burning vehicles on major roads leading to the capital.

Trump says he will speak to Taiwan's president in break from protocol

US President Donald Trump says he will talk to Taiwanese leader Lai Ching-te about a possible arms sale, in what would be a sharp departure from diplomatic tradition.

US and Taiwanese leaders have not spoken directly since 1979 - when Washington severed formal ties with Taiwan to recognise the Chinese government in Beijing.

China claims Taiwan as its territory and has not ruled out taking it by force. The US has long supported the self-ruled island and is bound by law to provide it with a means of self-defence, but has balanced this with maintaining diplo-

matic relations with China.

As president-elect in 2016, Trump took a phone call from Taiwan's then leader Tsai Ing-wen, angering Beijing.

President Lai, who took office in 2024, is behind one of the strongest pushes in years to strengthen the island's defence.

When asked on Wednesday if he planned to speak to Lai ahead of making a decision on US arms sales, Trump said: "I'll speak to him. I speak to everybody.. we'll work on that, the Taiwan problem."

He also hailed his relationship with China's President Xi as "amazing", on the back of a two-day summit in Beijing last week.

When asked about the potential conversation between Trump and Lai, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said on Thursday that China "firmly opposes official exchanges between the United States and Taiwan", as well as US arms sales to Taiwan.

China urges the US to "stop sending wrong signals to the separatist forces in Taiwan," the spokesperson said.

In 1979, the US passed the Taiwan Relations Act which states that the US can "provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character" - which is why it continues to sell weapons to Taiwan.

Trump has said he has yet to decide if the sale of a \$14bn

(£10.4bn) arms package to Taiwan, reportedly including anti-drone equipment and air-defence missile systems, will go ahead.

According to a report by the Financial Times, Beijing is currently holding up a proposed visit by the Pentagon's top policy official, Elbridge Colby - saying it cannot approve a visit until Trump decides how he will proceed with the arms deal.

Last week, while flying back from Beijing on Air Force One after his meeting with President Xi, Trump was similarly asked about weapons sales to Taiwan, to which he said he would "make a determination over the next fairly short period".

Feature

Good night to agents of participatory decision-making and modernization: The death of democracy in Nigeria

FAPETU OLUWADAMILOLA V.

A BITTER EXPERIENCE

Democracy anywhere in the world is not built around the interests of an individual, political party, or privileged class. It rests on universal principles: justice, participation, accountability, the rule of law, and constitutional supremacy.

Unfortunately, in Nigeria, many politicians continue to place personal ambition, ethnic loyalty, political survival, and selfish interests above these ideals.

A HISTORY OF INTERRUPTED DEMOCRATIC GROWTH

Nigeria's democratic journey has suffered repeated interruptions. The failures of political leadership and the inability of successive civilian administrations to uphold fairness, equity, justice, and responsible governance created openings for military interventions that repeatedly disrupted democratic continuity.

1. THE COLLAPSE OF THE FIRST REPUBLIC, 1966

Political instability, ethnic rivalry, electoral violence, corruption, abuse of power, and unhealthy competition among civilian leaders weakened the First Republic. The crisis in the Western Region, political intolerance, allegations of election manipulation, and the struggle for dominance further destabilized the structure. These conditions paved the way for the January 1966 coup by young military officers, who claimed to be "correcting" the nation.

2. THE ERA OF MILITARY RULE

Following the takeover, democratic governance was suspended. Most military administrations had little regard for constitutional supremacy and ruled by decree rather than democratic principles. Though often justified in the name of stability, anti-corruption, and discipline, their interventions slowed democratic development, weakened institutions, and centralized power within the military



elite.

3. THE COLLAPSE OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC, 1983

Corruption, economic hardship, electoral abuse, political greed, weak institutions, and lack of accountability led to the fall of the Second Republic. The controversial 1983 elections deepened public distrust. The military again intervened, accusing civilian politicians of destroying national values.

4. JUNE 12, 1993: A DEMOCRATIC TRAGEDY

One of the darkest moments was the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election, widely believed to have been won by the late Chief M.K.O. Abiola under the military administration of General Ibrahim Babangida. The annulment shattered

public confidence, deepened political tension, and ushered in authoritarian rule. The actions of military rulers and political elites of that era greatly hampered Nigeria's democratic, political, and economic development.

PRESENT-DAY DEMOCRATIC DEFICITS

Today, Nigeria's democracy still faces serious threats:

- Marginalization and political imposition
- Disregard for constitutional supremacy
- Weakened checks and balances
- Suppression of opposition voices
- Abuse of state institutions
- Personalization of power

Many office holders now see governance as an avenue for personal enrichment rather than national service. The National Assembly, which

should be the conscience of democracy and the voice of the people, is increasingly populated by loyalists and "rubber-stamp" legislators who rarely challenge executive excesses. Many elected representatives fail to contribute meaningfully through quality legislation, effective oversight, or people-oriented representation.

THE SECURITY AND TRUST CRISIS

As a Consultant in Public Administration and Community Development, I affirm that the primary responsibility of government is the protection of lives and property. Security and public welfare are the foremost duties of any responsible government.

Yet, many citizens no longer feel safe at home, at work, in markets, or among neighbors. Fear, uncertainty,

kidnapping, banditry, political violence, and economic hardship have eroded public trust.

Today, many Nigerians "sleep with one eye open." Citizens can no longer confidently trust the person beside them in offices, on the streets, or within their communities. When trust disappears, democratic values collapse — because democracy itself survives on public confidence, justice, participation, accountability, and the rule of law.

THE WAY FORWARD

Nigeria must return to the principles of participatory governance, institutional independence, responsible leadership, constitutional respect, and genuine national unity if democracy must survive.

A democracy without justice, opposition, accountability, equity, and people-centered governance is gradually preparing its own burial ground.



Citizens can no longer confidently trust the person beside them in offices, on the streets, or within their communities. When trust disappears, democratic values collapse.

Artificial Intelligence: Blessing or curse?

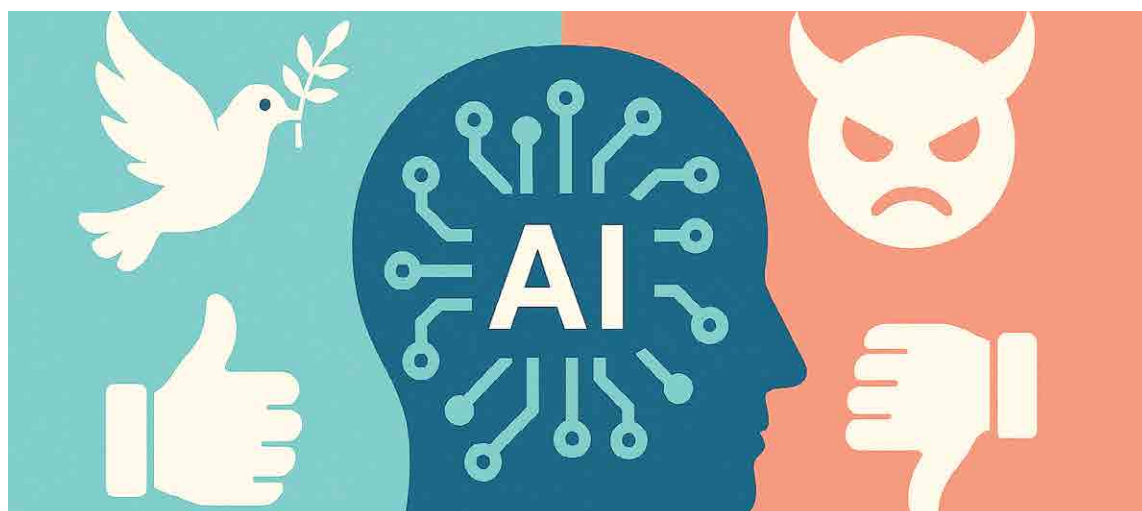
EJEMOGO REBECCA ANWURI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) now shapes our daily lives. From healthcare to education, finance to design, AI performs tasks that once required human brains. It promises speed, efficiency, and access. But it also raises a hard question: "Is AI a blessing or a curse?"

On the blessing side, AI saves time. A graphic designer can describe a client's brief and get a draft in minutes. In medicine, patients can describe symptoms and get preliminary advice instantly. In education, AI gives personalized explanations, instant feedback, and reliable sources, helping students learn at their own pace.

Yet the curse is real. Automation threatens jobs. Designers, writers, and data staff now compete with machines that never tire. Many Gen Z students over-rely on AI for assignments, weakening critical thinking. The scholars we celebrate today built their minds in libraries, not chat boxes. Worse, AI often scrapes books, music, and art without consent, violating copyright and denying creators income.

AI is not good or evil by itself. It is a tool. Its impact depends on use and regulation. If we manage it responsibly — teaching ethics, protecting jobs, and preserving human creativity — AI remains a blessing. If we don't, it becomes a curse. The choice is ours.



FEATURE

The decline of indigenous languages among Nigerian youths

RACHEAL ESEOSE OMIJIE

For generations, tradition was the thread that held African societies together. Culture, values, and language were passed from parent to child in a deliberate, unbroken cycle. It was expected that every parent would teach their children “the ways of their fathers.” This was how our heritage survived.

Today, we have a new generation. Life appears easier and more connected, but a quiet crisis is unfolding: our ancient traditions are fading. The children of this generation are not being taught what we were taught, and what our parents were taught. Slowly, our long-preserved culture, tradition, and way of life are slipping toward extinction. The responsibility lies not with outsiders, but with us — parents, guardians, and elders — for the roles we play, or fail to play, in the lives of the younger generation.

Colonization did not have to mean cultural death. Our fathers and mothers did not want our heritage to disappear. In Nigeria, one of the most endangered elements of culture is language — our mother tongue. The way we speak and communicate is disappearing, and many of us do not even notice. I once asked a young Nigerian why she does not speak her native language. Her reply: “I was never taught.” This single answer reveals the heart of the problem.

Why Indigenous Languages Are Declining

1. ENGLISH AS A SYMBOL OF STATUS

Fluent English is often linked to intelligence, education, exposure, and social class. A person who speaks polished English is seen as “sophisticated,” while those who speak their native tongue are sometimes labeled “local” or “unexposed.”

Though colonialism ended, its effect remains. English dominates schools, offices, courts, and government. Private schools emphasize English, while indigenous languages are treated as secondary subjects. Many young Nigerians now believe foreign languages are more respectable than African languages.

The irony is striking: Chinese people speak Mandarin, French people speak French, Koreans speak Korean, Indians speak their languages — proudly. Yet many Nigerian youths abandon their mother tongue for



INDIGENOUS NIGERIAN YOUTHS

what they assume is “greener pasture.”

2. SHAME, MOCKERY, AND PEER PRESSURE

Some youths avoid speaking their language in public. Native accents are mocked in schools and online, creating fear of appearing “uncivilized.” Peer pressure pushes many to “sound foreign.” For a growing number, losing their mother tongue feels more acceptable than struggling with English. Fitting in has quietly become more important than preserving identity.

3. SOCIAL MEDIA AND WESTERN INFLUENCE

Social media is no longer just a communication tool; it is a cultural environment. Young Nigerians consume more foreign content than local content. Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are filled with Western accents, slang, music, fashion, and humor.

Most viral content is in English. Indigenous languages appear mainly

in comedy or stereotypes. Over time, foreign accents receive more admiration than authentic local identity. Many youths alter their speech and behavior to seem “global.” Traditional greetings are disappearing. Moonlight storytelling and oral traditions are fading. Algorithms now shape culture faster than families do. Culture does not die suddenly — it fades through language loss, limited practice, and generational disconnect. Social media accelerates this process daily.

4. URBANIZATION AND MIXED MARRIAGES

Cities like Lagos are highly multicultural. Young people grow up around different tribes and adopt English as a neutral language. In intertribal homes, English often becomes the household language. Many Nigerian youths can understand their native language but cannot speak it fluently. All of this weakens linguistic transmission.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF LANGUAGE LOSS

Language carries memory, wisdom, proverbs, and history. When language fades, culture fades with it. The effects include:

1. Communication Gap with Elders Grandchildren and grandparents struggle to have meaningful conversations.
2. Weakened Ancestral Connection: Youths know less about their family history and heritage.
3. Endangered Languages: Some Nigerian languages now have fewer speakers. The next generation may understand but not speak them, pushing them toward extinction.
4. Loss of Literature and Oral History: Proverbs, folktales, and indigenous wisdom become difficult to preserve.
5. Reduced Cultural Diversity: Nigeria's strength lies in its diversity. Losing languages erodes that uniqueness.

Can Indigenous Languages Be Revived?

Yes — but it requires deliberate action.

1. Parents: Speak native languages at home. Make them the first language of communication.
 2. Schools: Treat indigenous languages and cultural studies as core subjects, not extras.
 3. Youths: Reject the idea that native identity is “backward.” Speak your language with pride online and offline.
 4. Media Creators: Produce more content in indigenous languages — music, film, podcasts, and education.
 5. Government & Institutions: Enforce language policies, fund research, and promote local content.
- If this trend continues unchecked, we may have no heritage left to pass to the next generation. The time to act is now.
- Our languages are not relics of the past. They are the voice of our future.

Silence at the polls: Reject apathy in 2027

EJEMOGO REBECCA ANWURI

Government is killing us!” Mr. Chinedu complains about bread prices. “You didn’t vote in 2023, abi?” a neighbor replies. “No.” “Exactly. That’s why government thinks your suffering is none of their business.”

Millions of Nigerians criticize leadership, yet stay home on election day. In 2023, only 24.9 million of 93.47 million registered voters

turned out — 26.72%, the lowest since 1999. Many collect voter’s cards for bank accounts, not voting. Political apathy — lack of interest in civic duty — is crippling democracy.

Why the silence? Distrust of leaders, disappointment from past betrayals, electoral malpractice, insecurity, and the belief that “votes don’t count.” But elections are often decided by few votes. Every ballot matters.

The result of apathy is bad governance. When citizens withdraw, self-

ish politicians dominate. Complaining on social media cannot replace participation at the polls.

2027 is a wake-up call. Nigeria faces inflation, insecurity, and youth frustration. Citizens 18+ must get voter’s cards, stay informed, reject vote-buying, and vote peacefully. Democracy does not thrive in silence — it thrives in participation.

The power to make Nigeria great is in your voter’s card. *Will you use it?*



DAYO SOBOWALE

Ogidi's death deepens concerns over extrajudicial killings

NGOZI NJOKU (NAN)

A disturbing video lasting only seconds has reopened painful conversations across Nigeria, forcing citizens to confront fears many quietly harbour about safety, justice and abuse of power.

For millions who watched online, the footage was not merely disturbing; it reflected a growing national anxiety felt in markets, streets, checkpoints and transport terminals.

At the centre of the outrage was 27-year-old Mene Ogidi, an aspiring singer whose dreams reportedly ended violently at a motor park.

Witnesses alleged that a police officer opened fire in full public view in Effurun, Delta State, leaving traders, drivers and passengers in disbelief.

The sound of the gunshot reportedly sent people running in different directions as confusion and fear spread across the crowded terminal.

"It happened openly. Nobody expected anything like that," an eyewitness said, still shaken by what unfolded before dozens of witnesses.

Within minutes, mobile phone recordings began circulating across social media platforms, triggering outrage, anger and renewed calls for justice.

For many Nigerians, Ogidi's death did not feel like an isolated tragedy. Instead, it reopened old wounds and unresolved national memories.

Over the years, allegations of unlawful killings involving security personnel have repeatedly surfaced in different parts of the country.

While some incidents attract national attention and public condemnation, others disappear quietly within communities lacking influence or visibility.

Human rights advocates say silence often protects systems that should instead deliver accountability, transparency and protection of fundamental rights.

Families of victims frequently face emotional trauma, financial burdens and prolonged legal battles in their search for justice.

For many households, the pain extends beyond loss, affecting livelihoods, education and emotional stability for years.

Lawyers who spoke with newsmen described the repeated allegations as troubling, dangerous and increasingly normalised in public life.

Legal practitioner Kehinde Nubi described extrajudicial killings as one of Nigeria's most pressing justice concerns.

"Extrajudicial killing has become an epidemic in Nigeria. Many citizens now see these incidents as outright murder," Nubi said.

According to him, Ogidi's alleged killing exposed deeper institutional weaknesses beyond the actions of a single officer.

"If this happened openly before witnesses, imagine what happens where cameras are absent," he said.

Nubi argued that weak investigations, delayed prosecution and inconsistent disciplinary procedures often encourage abuse by some officers.

"The absence of accountability continues to embolden offenders within the system," he said.

He cited the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which



guarantees the right to life.

He also referenced the Anti-Torture Act, enacted to prevent torture, abuse and unlawful treatment of citizens.

According to him, legislation alone cannot protect lives where implementation remains weak and enforcement mechanisms ineffective.

"Body cameras, stronger oversight and stricter discipline must become standard practice," Nubi said.

He added that independent monitoring systems would help rebuild public trust in security institutions.

Another legal practitioner, Alozie Nwoke, blamed weak enforcement and poor evidence gathering for repeated failures in prosecution.

"Extrajudicial killing violates the Constitution, but enforcement remains painfully weak," Nwoke said.

According to him, some cases collapse because evidence is poorly preserved or investigations are conducted without urgency.

"Sometimes there is reluctance to hold officers accountable, even when evidence exists," he said.

Nwoke also urged the judiciary to remain firm in handling cases involving state violence.

"The courts must remain fearless. Justice should never depend on rank, uniform or influence," he added.

He encouraged families of victims to pursue lawful remedies, including compensation where rights have been

”
He warned that delayed prosecution often creates opportunities for witnesses to disappear or evidence to be compromised.

violated.

Development expert and legal practitioner, Enitan Oluwa, described the trend as a constitutional crisis.

"I am saddened that citizens increasingly fear those meant to protect them," Oluwa said.

According to her, the right to life cannot be ignored because of uniform, authority or institutional position.

"When the uniform becomes a source of fear, something fundamental has broken," she said.

She warned that delayed justice often encourages repetition, weakens institutions and erodes public confidence.

"Justice delayed in such cases creates room for repeated abuse," she added.

Ogun-based lawyer, Kayode Oshiyemi, described Ogidi's alleged killing as inhuman and unacceptable.

"The public execution of a citizen is wrong. Justice must be seen to be done," Oshiyemi said.

He warned that delayed prosecution often creates opportunities for witnesses to disappear or evidence to be compromised.

According to him, Nigeria's major challenge is not the absence of laws, but weak implementation.

"We are quick to make laws but often slow to enforce them," he said.

Oshiyemi also called for better training, orientation and operational discipline among security personnel nationwide.

"There must be strict adherence to

rules of engagement," he added.

Following widespread outrage over Ogidi's alleged killing, police authorities transferred 1,332 officers from the Delta Command.

The development generated mixed reactions among citizens, lawyers and security observers across the country.

Some Nigerians welcomed the move, believing it could reduce tension and restore confidence in policing.

"The transfer is positive, but similar measures should happen elsewhere," Oshiyemi said.

He argued that some officers spend too many years in one location, gradually building unhealthy influence.

"Long postings sometimes create abuse of authority and unhealthy familiarity with power," he said.

However, Nubi strongly criticised the redeployment, describing it as collective punishment rather than meaningful reform.

"The dismissal of the officer is proper, but mass transfer is not reform," he argued.

According to him, only one officer allegedly fired the fatal shot.

He questioned the fairness of relocating hundreds of officers who had no connection to the incident.

"A handful may have failed to intervene, but many others were uninvolved," he said.

Nubi added that such decisions also affect spouses, children and elderly relatives of officers suddenly relocated.

"Many families will face hardship because of actions linked to one individual," he said.

According to him, the move appeared aimed at calming public anger rather than addressing deeper structural failures.

"The same culture may simply be moved into other states," he warned.

He referenced past allegations involving controversial police units in different parts of the country.

"Mass transfer does not dismantle impunity. It only relocates it," Nubi said.

He suggested prosecution of those directly involved, sanctions for supervisors and independent audits of affected commands.

"For me, the I-GP chose maximum disruption for minimal justice," he added.

He also urged police leadership to revisit findings from past judicial panels, including EndSARS inquiries.

According to analysts, Ogidi's death may become another defining test for Nigeria's justice system.

Beyond one family's grief, the case now represents broader questions about accountability, institutional reform and public trust.

For many citizens, fear is no longer limited to criminals, kidnappers or violent groups.

Increasingly, ordinary Nigerians fear that simple encounters with security personnel could become unexpectedly dangerous.

As public anger continues, many believe the manner in which authorities handle Ogidi's case may shape national confidence in justice.

Without sincere reform, stronger institutions and consistent accountability, experts warn that the cycle of unlawful killings may continue unchecked.

FEATURE

When cheap propaganda masquerades as Journalism

AMUNE JAMES

The very libellous report published by Standard Daily Press titled “The Death of Political Illusion—Why Okpebholo’s N1 Billion Could Not Buy Ogbode-Ihama’s Senatorial Ticket” is a glaring example of how propaganda, exaggeration and political bitterness are increasingly being packaged as journalism in Nigeria’s digital media space.

At first glance, the report for want of a better label attempts to present itself as a bold political analysis of the concluded APC Edo South Senatorial Primary. In reality, however, it is little more than an emotionally charged opinion piece built almost entirely on unverified allegations, dramatic language and blatant political bias.

The publication made dangerous claims that Edo State Governor Senator Monday Okpebholo, Deputy Governor Dennis Idahosa and unnamed political actors allegedly deployed massive sums of money to influence the outcome of the primary election. Specifically, the article alleged that N1 million was distributed to six ward leaders across 77 wards, amounting to N462 million. It further alleged that the deputy governor personally released N77 million to secure support for a preferred candidate and that another N100 million was allegedly handed to journalists shortly before the primary election.

These are not minor accusations. These are grave financial and criminal allegations involving public officials, political actors and members of the media. Yet, astonishingly, the publication failed to provide a single document, receipt, bank transfer record, audio evidence, named witness or independently verifiable source to support any of the claims.

No investigative attachments. No financial trail. No official complaint. Nothing.

What the readers were given instead was theatrical writing filled with emotionally loaded expressions such as “fire sale of political integrity,” “ghost-chasing,” “spineless political actors,” and “political theatrics.” Such language immediately exposes the article’s true intention. It was never



written to inform the public objectively. It was written to inflame passions, demonise perceived opponents and glorify a preferred political tendency within the APC.

Even the manner the primary result was presented reflected clear editorial manipulation. The article stated that Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu polled 33,399 votes, while Omoregie Ogbode-Ihama received 12,560 votes and Senator Neda Imasuen secured 5,107 votes. Rather than simply reporting the outcome and analysing the political implications responsibly, the publication turned the exercise into an exaggerated morality tale, portraying one side as heroic defenders of democracy and the other as corrupt

villains attempting to “buy the soul of Edo politics.”

This is not journalism. It is political theatre disguised as commentary.

The article also insulted the intelligence of party delegates and Edo voters by suggesting that every political decision must have been influenced solely by cash inducement. Ironically, while pretending to defend the people, the publication reduced them to helpless political commodities incapable of independent judgment.

More troubling is the reckless accusation involving journalists. Claiming that N100 million was distributed to members of the press is an extraordinary allegation capable of damaging reputations and undermining public

trust in the media profession. If Standard Daily Press possesses evidence of such misconduct, it should publish the names, transactions and proof for public scrutiny. If not, then it has merely engaged in irresponsible smear tactics under the cover of press freedom.

Political primaries are internal democratic contests shaped by alliances, negotiations, interests and delegate preferences. Candidates win and lose. That is the nature of politics. Attempting to transform the Edo South APC primary into some grand revolutionary uprising against state oppression is intellectual dishonesty taken too far.

Sadly, the publication reflects a growing decline in editorial responsibility among certain online platforms

where outrage now matters more than accuracy and propaganda travels faster than facts.

Governor Monday Okpebholo’s administration will ultimately be judged by governance, development and measurable public impact — not by sensational headlines crafted to provoke emotions and manufacture controversy.

At best, the Standard Daily Press article is a bitter reaction from disappointed political interests. At worst, it is a calculated propaganda piece built on speculation, manipulation and unsupported allegations.

Either way, it falls far below the standards of credible journalism and deserves to be treated accordingly.

Strikes and the future of education



PROTESTERS OF ASUU STRIKE

EJEMOGO REBECCA ANWURI

Education is the foundation of national development. Yet in Nigeria, recurrent strikes by lecturers keep shutting it down. While unions fight for better welfare, students pay the price.

Strikes happen because of poor salaries, unpaid allowances, inadequate funding, and government neglect. Lecturers with families to feed grow frustrated. Public universities lack classrooms, staff, and materials. One lecturer may teach thousands alone.

The consequences are severe. Academic calendars are disrupted. Graduation delays, rushed syllabi, and lost motivation follow. Students suffer anxiety and depression at home. Idle-

ness fuels cybercrime, drug abuse, and cultism. Bright students and competent lecturers leave the country for better opportunities. Learning quality drops as schools rush to cover content after resumption.

Strikes are a tool, but repeated shutdowns hurt the very people education should serve. The solution is clear: timely salaries, proper funding, student welfare, and honest dialogue between government and unions. Policies must prevent prolonged closures.

Government and unions must act now. If we don’t, we risk breeding a generation of under-educated, frustrated youth. Education is Nigeria’s future. We cannot afford to keep shutting it down.

Ize-Iyamu must respect Governor while APC must resist gambling with Edo South



IZE-IYAMU

OGBEIDE-IHAMA

DR. EBOJELE AKHERE PATRICK

It would have been proper to gloss over the recent political developments in Edo State, particularly the just-concluded APC Edo South Senatorial District primary election, in which Rt. Hon. Omoregie Ogbeide-Ihama secured the highest number of votes ahead of Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu and Senator Neda Imasuen, and remained focused on projecting the developmental strides of the administration of Governor Monday Okpebholo.

That will not be possible because the governor's name has been dragged into a matter he knows little or nothing about by supporters and agents of Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu across various social media platforms over his recent political predicament.

The fact remains and very important too that Pastor Ize-Iyamu call his supporters to order and caution them against using uncouth language against the governor. His Excellency remains the first citizen of the State and deserves all the respect due his office.

The Pastor himself cannot claim ignorance of the fact that many of these attacks reflect the views of his camp. He also cannot claim to respect the governor as the leader of the APC in Edo State while simultaneously allowing coordinated media attacks against him.

The APC primary election to

choose the party's candidate for Edo South Senatorial District has come and gone. Former member of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Omoregie Ogbeide-Ihama, defeated the incumbent senator representing Edo South, Senator Neda Imasuen, and former APC governorship candidate Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu to emerge as the party's candidate for the 2027 senatorial election.

Ogbeide-Ihama reportedly polled 27,154 votes to emerge victorious, while Senator Imasuen secured 13,580 votes to place second. Pastor Ize-Iyamu came third with 6,785 votes.

Ogbeide-Ihama is widely regarded as a politician who can work effectively for Edo South and maintain a productive relationship with the governor and the party leadership. Many party stakeholders believe he represents the type of leadership capable of strengthening the APC's structure in Edo South ahead of the 2027 general election and helping to actualise the 2.5 million votes Governor Okpebholo has pledged for President Bola Tinubu.

His emergence has also been described by supporters as a reflection of the popular choice of many voters across the Benin-speaking axis, which remains the dominant ethnic bloc in Edo South. Party leaders across the senatorial district reportedly rallied support to make the victory possible.

For this reason, many party faithful believe the APC National Working Committee should respect the outcome of the primary and allow Ogbeide-Ihama to fly the party's flag in the forthcoming election.

Edo State has witnessed recurring political patterns that party leaders in Abuja may need to study carefully before making what some consider a costly political error. Critics of Ize-Iyamu argue that the former governorship candidate has repeatedly failed to secure victory at the polls despite contesting major elections.

Pastor Ize-Iyamu contested the Edo governorship election in 2016 under the PDP and lost. He later returned in 2020 as the APC governorship candidate and again lost to former Governor Godwin Obaseki.

Analysts within the party believe these defeats reflect a declining relationship with key blocs in Edo politics and argue that the APC leadership should pay attention to the message from the electorate.

Former Governor Adams Oshiomhole had also, during previous political disagreements, publicly questioned Ize-Iyamu's loyalty and political approach. Those criticisms continue to shape perceptions among sections of the party.

Beyond this, some party stakeholders fear that handing Ize-Iyamu the Edo South senatorial ticket could create internal tensions within the APC and undermine the stability of

the Okpebholo administration.

There are concerns among some leaders that Ize-Iyamu may seek to build a parallel political structure capable of creating friction within the party and weakening governance in the state.

Supporters of Ogbeide-Ihama insist that he possesses the legislative experience, political temperament, and grassroots support needed to strengthen the APC in Edo South. A former two-term member of the House of Representatives, Ogbeide-Ihama is seen by allies as an experienced lawmaker who understands legislative negotiations and constituency development.

They also describe him as calm, measured, and loyal to the broader interests of the party and the Okpebholo administration.

Many grassroots mobilisers, ward leaders, women groups, and youth coordinators within the APC are said to favour his emergence and believe he stands a stronger chance in the general election.

The APC National Working Committee now faces a critical decision: whether to uphold the outcome of the primary election and support what many party stakeholders describe as the popular choice, or reopen internal disputes that could deepen divisions within the party ahead of 2027.

• Dr. Ebojele is the Chief Press Secretary to Governor Monday Okpebholo.



Critics of Ize-Iyamu argue that the former governorship candidate has repeatedly failed to secure victory at the polls despite contesting major elections.

Sports

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

Aston Villa win 2025/26 UEFA Europa League

Aston Villa on Wednesday night won the 2025/26 UEFA Europa League after

beating German side Freiburg 3-0 in the final at Beşiktaş Park in Istanbul. Goals from Youri Tielemans,

Emiliano Buendía, and Morgan Rogers secured the victory, ending the club's 30-year wait for a major trophy and marking manager Unai Emery's record-extending fifth Europa League title.

This is Villa's first major European honor since winning the European Cup in 1982, and their first trophy overall since the 1996 League Cup.

Unai Emery further cemented his legacy in this competition by claiming his fifth Europa League title.

With the Europa Cup triumph, Villa secured top-five status in the Premier League, their Europa League triumph means the Premier League keeps alive its chances of securing a sixth Champions League spot next season, de-

pending on the final league table.

On the other hand, Freiburg, whose 122-year existence had never been graced with a major trophy, could not live with Villa's Premier League intensity, and the gap in class between the two sides was apparent from midway through the first half.

The match was cautious in its opening exchanges, with both teams content to play direct, but Villa asserted control steadily. The deadlock broke in the 41st minute through a cleverly designed corner routine, Rogers playing short before delivering a precise delivery for Tielemans, who met the ball on the move and drove a right-footed volley through the legs of Maximilian Eggstein into the bottom corner.



Lagos govt distributes sports kits to 1,020 schools

The Lagos State Sports Trust Fund (LSSTF) yesterday distributed sports equipment to 1,020 public primary schools across the state to strengthen grassroots sports development.

The event took place at Adeyemi Bero Auditorium, Alausa Secretariat, Ikeja, with education and sports stakeholders in attendance.

Executive Secretary, LSSTF, Wahid Oshodi, said the initiative targeted equal sporting opportunities for children.

Oshodi explained that the programme was executed in partnership with the Ministry of Educa-

tion and the Lagos State Universal Basic Education Board.

He described sports as an important instrument for education, discipline, healthy living and youth development across communities in the state.

According to him, the distribution would help children discover talents early while strengthening pathways for future athletes from Lagos State.

"We believe that while talent is equally distributed, opportunity is not. By equipping schools, we are building stronger pathways for future sporting stars," he said.

2nd Phase Nigeria Beach Soccer League: Organisers announce kicks off date In Kaduna

The ancient city of Kaduna is set to host the second phase of the 2026 Nigeria Beach Soccer League (NBSL) from May 29 to 31 at the Murtala Muhammed Square during the Sallah celebrations.

The three day competition will feature seven clubs battling for vital points ahead of the Super Four finals later in the season.

Teams expected to participate in the Kaduna phase are Kada BSC, Kebbi Fishers BSC, BAM Projects BSC, Iboim BSC, Jigawa Golden Stars BSC, Niger BSC and defending champions Anambra Warriors BSC.

The first phase of the 2026 Nigeria Beach Soccer League was held earlier this year in March in Kebbi State, where the participating clubs opened their campaigns in an exciting round of fixtures.

Fixtures released ahead of the opening phase saw BAM Projects BSC face Jigawa Golden Stars BSC, while 2022 champions Kada BSC took on Niger BSC. Kebbi Fishers BSC also clashed with Iboim BSC, as defending champions Anambra Warriors BSC began the defence of their title.

The opening round also featured matches involving Kebbi Fishers BSC against BAM Projects BSC, Anambra Warriors

BSC versus Kada BSC, and Jigawa Golden Stars BSC against Kada BSC.

Following the conclusion of the first phase, former champions Kada BSC emerged as the best performing side and currently lead the standings with 10 points.

The Kaduna based club enjoy a six point advantage over second placed Kebbi Fishers BSC and BAM Projects BSC going into the second phase of the competition.



NIGERIA BEACH SOCCER

AFCON 2027: Super Eagles will survive Group L – Eguavoen

Austin Eguavoen, Technical Director of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), says the Super Eagles must remain focused to successfully navigate a tricky difficult Group L in the quali-

fiers for the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON).

Nigeria was drawn alongside co-hosts Tanzania, Madagascar and Guinea-Bissau during Tuesday's draw held at the Egyptian Football Association

headquarters in Cairo.

The 48 participating teams were drawn into 12 groups of four teams each, with the top two teams from every group qualifying for the tournament scheduled for June 19 to July 17, 2027.

Speaking with NAN on yesterday in Abuja, Eguavoen dismissed claims that Nigeria had been handed an easy group.

"A lot of people think it's an easy group, but I don't think so.

"However, considering our pedigree and our performance at the last AFCON, where we did brilliantly well, I believe we can scale through.

"We just have to approach it one game at a time," he said.



AUSTIN EGUAVOEN

AFCON Qualifiers: Aba football fans expects easy ride for Eagles

Some football enthusiasts in Aba have expressed optimism that the Super Eagles will qualify easily for the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) after being drawn in what they described as a favourable group.

The 2027 AFCON will be jointly hosted by Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda.

The draw placed Nigeria in

Group L alongside Madagascar, Tanzania and Guinea-Bissau.

The enthusiasts, who spoke with NAN on Wednesday in Aba, said the Super Eagles had a relatively easy group and should qualify as group leaders.

A football coach and proprietor of United Football Club, Christian Uduma, described the draw as favourable but stressed the need for adequate preparation.

Uduma urged the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) to commence early preparations to enable the players build understanding and cohesion.

"We have seen many foreign-based players in the national team, but this is the time to also give Nigeria Premier Football League players the opportunity to prove themselves," he said.

Another football enthusiast,

Grace Ogbu, said Nigeria had the quality to qualify comfortably from the group but advised the NFF to take the team's preparation seriously.

"The team often struggles at continental and international competitions because the NFF does not pay adequate attention to preparation and players' welfare before and during tournaments," she alleged.

Table Tennis Kim, Odo cruise into quarter-finals

South Korea's Kim Gaon defeated Netherlands' Milo de Boer in the Men's Singles Round of 16 at the ongoing WTT Lagos Contender championship.

The championship is taking place at the Sir Molade Okoya-Thomas Indoor Sports Hall inside the Teslim Balogun Stadium.

Kim secured a commanding 3-0 victory after winning the sets 11-9, 12-10, 11-8 and 13-11 to reach the quarter-finals.

Also, South Korea's Lim Jonghoon continued his strong performance with victory over Nigeria's Olajide Omotayo.

Jonghoon defeated Omotayo in straight sets, winning 11-9, 11-3 and 11-8 to complete another 3-0 triumph.

In the Women's Singles

Round of 16, Japan's Satsuki Odo overwhelmed Nigeria's Bose Odusanya in straight sets.

Odo, a right-handed player, dominated the contest with scores of 11-5, 11-2 and 11-3 to record a comfortable 3-0 victory.

Portugal's Jieni Shao also advanced after defeating India's Sutirtha Mukherjee in another women's singles encounter.

Shao, a left-handed player, claimed the match 3-0 after posting set scores of 11-8, 11-5 and 11-6.

In the Men's Doubles Round of 16, India's Thakker Manav and Manush Shah defeated Nigeria's AbdulFatai Abdulbasit and Matthew Fabunmi.

The Indian pair dominated the encounter, taking the sets 11-9, 11-5 and 11-5 to qualify for the quarter-finals.



KIM GAON DEFEATED MILO DE BOER

Nigerian Football: Transforming individual brilliance into national success

MUKHTAR SAGIR DAMBATTÀ

Nigeria's football prowess is undoubtedly acclaimed worldwide.

In Africa, Nigeria is recognised as a football giant with some of the best stars in international football to show for it.

Talent abounds on every street of the nation; its youth consistently excel in every football tournament.

From grassroots football across cities like Lagos, Kano, Jos, Kaduna, Aba, and Port Harcourt, Nigeria continues to produce players whose talent, discipline and creativity have earned global attention.

The nation has also won Olympic football gold in the male category, with its female footballers equally winning numerous continental and world tournaments.

Currently, Nigerians are among some of the best footballers in the world with the likes of Victor Osimhen, Ademola Lookman, Victor Boniface, Alex Iwobi, Wilfred Ndidi and Samuel Chukwueze shining every week in top European Leagues.

Other stars include Calvin Bassey, Ola Aina, Stanley Nwabali, Moses Simon, and Kelechi Ihenacho.

In spite of this wealth of football talent, Nigeria continues to face the challenge of transforming individual brilliance into consistent national success.

While Nigerian players are recognised as some of Africa's greatest, it has won the African Cup of Nations just three times and failed to qualify for the World in the last three editions.

The nation's soccer enthusiasts will watch, painfully, how countries with lesser talents feature in the World Cup hosted by the U.S., Canada and Mexico without their nation being represented.

Speaking on the growth of Nigerian football talent, a football development expert, Coach Samuel Bassey, said the country possessed abundant raw talent capable of competing at the highest global level.

"Nigeria remains one of the few countries in Africa where football is deeply rooted in everyday life.

"Young players grow up with passion, confidence and determination to succeed," he said.

According to him, the increasing number of Nigerian players in European leagues reflects the quality and competitiveness of local talents being discovered across the country.

Today, footballers such as Victor Osimhen, Ademola Lookman, Victor Boniface, Alex Iwobi, Wilfred Ndidi, Samuel Chukwueze, Calvin Bassey, Ola Aina and Moses Simon remain strong symbols of Nigeria's football strength on the international stage.

Abundance of talents notwithstanding, Nigeria continues to face the challenge of transforming individual brilliance into consistent national success.

While Nigerian players excel abroad, the national team has struggled at different periods with instability, poor preparation and inconsistent performances in major competitions.

Recent FIFA World Cup qualifying campaigns and Africa Cup of Nations tournaments have exposed gaps in



planning and football administration.

Speaking on the issue, Abubakar Dandago, a football journalist and analyst, noted that the growing number of Nigerian footballers changing nationality was linked to weak implementation of football policies and inadequate player support systems.

According to him, many players of Nigerian origin now choose to represent other countries because of better football structures, clearer development pathways and stronger institutional support abroad.

Increasingly, players of Nigerian descent now feature for countries such as England, Germany, Spain and the Netherlands at international level, including notable examples such as Bukayo Saka, Jamal Musiala, Karim Adeyemi and Eberechi Eze.

At the domestic level, the Nigeria Premier Football League continues to struggle with funding challenges, poor infrastructure and limited global competitiveness, affecting player development and the growth of the local game.

One major concern repeatedly raised by football followers is the poor record of clubs in away matches within the league.

Over the years, away victories have remained relatively rare, with home teams often dominating matches regardless of form or quality.

Analysts say this situation has continued to raise concerns about officiating standards, security, poor playing conditions and the overall credibility of the league.

A sports commentator, Usman Bature, said the inability of clubs to consistently secure away victories reflected deeper structural problems within Nigerian football.

"When away wins become rare in a football league, people begin to believe home advantage matters more than actual performance, and that affects the integrity of the competition," he said.

He added that strong football

“Relevant football authorities in the country should inaugurate structures to groom and expose these talents to attain desired stardom.”

leagues across the world were built on professionalism, fairness and equal competitive opportunities for all clubs regardless of venue.

In several past seasons, controversies surrounding refereeing decisions and crowd disturbances during league matches generated debates about professionalism and match security in the domestic competition.

For instance, in March 2023, reports of crowd trouble and attacks on match officials in some NPFL venues again drew national attention to security concerns within Nigerian football.

Beyond league challenges, experts also believe Nigeria's shortage of functional sports institutions has slowed football development in the country.

They argue that many successful football nations invested heavily in sports schools, football academies, coaching institutes and modern training centres to nurture young talents from an early stage.

In Nigeria, however, many talented players still rely mainly on informal grassroots football systems with limited professional guidance and inadequate facilities.

Analysts say the country lacks enough specialised sports institutions capable of combining education with structured athletic development, while investment in sports infrastructure and youth programmes remains insufficient.

Recently, a Serbian Scout, Tihomir Sloboda, acknowledged that Nigeria had abundant football talents which,

if properly harnessed, would propel the nation to global football greatness.

Sloboda, the Sports Director of Šiauliai Joniškis Football Club of Lithuania, spoke in Abakaliki during a talent hunt organised by the Salt Jewel FC, in Abakaliki, Ebonyi.

He expressed satisfaction with the quality of talent on display at the hunt, noting that the players have the potential of "hitting it big" abroad.

"The talents might lack technical finesse and tactical understanding but the passion to succeed is undeniably evident.

"Relevant football authorities in the country should inaugurate structures to groom and expose these talents to attain desired stardom," he said.

In spite of these challenges, Nigeria's reputation as a football talent hub remains strong, with its players continuing to excel across major leagues worldwide.

However, experts insist that without urgent reforms in football administration, youth development and player welfare systems, the country risks losing more talents to other nations.

Stakeholders continue to call for reforms that will strengthen football governance, improve domestic league standards and create better opportunities for young players within the country.

They believe that with proper management, Nigeria's unmatched football endowment can translate into consistent global success, reflecting its status as one of the world's greatest producers of football talent.

Sports



Super Eagles to use Unity Cup, friendlies for squad assessment — Eguavoen

Austin Eguavoen, Technical Director of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), says the forthcoming Unity Cup invitational tournament will provide an opportunity for Super Eagles Head Coach Eric Chelle to

assess new players ahead of future competitions.

Eguavoen said this yesterday in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria in Abuja.

He said the tournament, alongside the international friendly matches lined up for

the team, would enable the technical crew to evaluate fresh options ahead of the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifiers.

"It is an opportunity for the coach to see some new players. "I will not necessarily say

young players, but new players. It gives him the chance to see who can come into the team when the Nations Cup qualifiers begin properly.

"It is a good avenue for him to assess them," he said.

Chelle recently released a 27-man squad for the Unity Cup tournament scheduled to hold from May 26 to May 30 at The Valley Stadium, home ground of Charlton Athletic Football Club in London.

Among the invited players are captain Wilfred Ndidi, goalkeeper Francis Uzoho, defenders Bruno Onyemaechi and Igoh Ogbu, as well as forwards Moses Simon, Akor Adams and Terem Moffi.

The Super Eagles are expected to play international friendly matches against Poland and Portugal in Europe next month.

According to Eguavoen, the matches will help the coaching crew evaluate the players and strengthen the squad ahead of future international engagements.

The Super Eagles are preparing for the qualifiers for the 2027 AFCON tournament to be jointly hosted by Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.



GRANIT XHAKA

Khaka makes fourth Switzerland World Cup squad

Sunderland captain Granit Xhaka will be making his fourth successive Fifa World Cup appearance in the 2026 World Cup as he is included in the Switzerland squad for this summer's tournament in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Xhaka, Switzerland's most capped player with 144 appearances, is one of four Premier League players called up by manager Murat Yakin.

The Swiss captain is joined by Nottingham Forest striker Dan Ndoye, Leeds United forward Noah Okafor and Burnley attacker Zeki Amdouni.

Amdouni has made just three substitute appearances in the

Premier League this season, after returning from a long-term knee injury earlier this month.

"Medically, he is 100% fit. He knows our system. He knows his role. That's the reason why I'm very glad he can be part of it," Yakin said of Amdouni during a press conference on Wednesday.

"I think we have selected the best players for the squad and I can't wait to get going."

Yakin has selected an experienced 26-man squad, including 17 players who featured at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

Like Xhaka, Real Betis full-back Ricardo Rodriguez will compete at his fourth World Cup in a row and will look to add to his 136 caps.



SUPER EAGLES WITH THE UNITY CUP

Edo Unveils Massive Grassroots Talent Hunt Programme as Enabulele urges Edo Children To advantage of opportunities

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The Executive Chairman, Edo State Sports Commission Hon Amadin Desmond Enabulele yesterday flagged off the Commission's grassroots sports development initiative, tagged "Discovering Tomorrow's Stars" Talent Hunt Programme, with a call on Edo children to embrace the opportunity to build successful sporting careers.

Speaking at the opening ceremony held at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium in Benin, Hon. Amadin Desmond Enabulele, said the programme was designed to identify, nurture and develop hidden talents across schools and communities in the state.

He said the initiative aligns with the vision of Governor Monday Okpebholo's administration to promote youth development through sports under the government's "Catch Them Young" policy and SHINE Agenda.

According to Enabulele, grassroots sports development remains the foundation for producing future champions, stressing that the state government is committed to creating opportunities for talented youths in Edo State to excel.

The Sports Commission boss disclosed that 20 schools and over 270 athletes are participating in the maiden edition of the programme, competing in Athletics, Judo, Karate, Kung Fu, Wrestling, Taekwondo, Boxing and Kickboxing.

He urged the participants to view the competition as more than a quest for medals, describing it as a platform for self-discovery, confidence building and personal growth.

"Some of the world's greatest athletes started from platforms like this. The next national champion, African champion, Olympian and world champions could be standing among you here today," he said.



Edo State Sports Commission Hon Amadin Desmond Enabulele, with Grassroots Talent Hunt.

Chelle unveils blend of stars, home talents for Super Eagles' Unity Cup, Poland, Portugal mission

Nigeria's preparations for the upcoming Unity Cup, the friendly against Poland and Portugal have gathered momentum following the release of an impressive Super Eagles squad that blends experience, emerging talents and home-based stars.

Head coach Eric Chelle un-

veiled a 27-man list packed with notable names across Europe and the Nigeria Premier Football League, signaling the country's determination to make a strong statement at the tournament.

Leading the goalkeeping department is experienced shot-stopper Francis Uzoho

alongside Wrexham goalkeeper Arthur Okonkwo and home-based talent Michael Atata of Ikorodu United.

The defensive line features a mix of solidity and versatility with Rangers defender Emmanuel Fernandez, Slavia Prague's Igoh Ogbu, Trabzonspor's Chibuike Nwaiwu and Rivers United defender Elias Ochobi all earning invitations.

Rangers FC duo Chibueze Oputa and Obinna Igboke also made the squad, while Bruno Onyemaechi adds further quality from Greece.

In midfield, the Super Eagles will rely heavily on the experience of Wilfred Ndidi, who is expected to play a leadership role in the team. He is joined by Samson Tijani, Raphael Onyedika, Tochukwu Nnadi and Ebenezer Akinsanmiro in a youthful yet energetic midfield setup.



ERIC CHELLE

Liverpool to host 2030 Gymnastics World Championships

Liverpool has been awarded the right to host the Artistic Gymnastics World Championships in 2030.

The tournament will take place at the M&S Bank Arena and will feature more than 400 gymnasts from 80 countries.

It will be the fourth time the event has been staged in the UK, with Liverpool hosting the 2022 edition, which attracted more than 35,000 spectators and generated £5.6m for the local economy.

The city has also staged every Artistic Gymnastics British Championships since 2011.

"Hosting the Championships again in 2030 gives us a fantastic opportunity to build on that

legacy, inspire the next generation and through gymnastics support happier, healthier, and more connected communities across Liverpool and the wider UK," read a joint statement by British Gymnastics, UK Sport and Liverpool City Council.

Those bodies delivered the successful bid, with a feasibility study saying that the 2030 event could generate more than £8m.

Great Britain's best World Championships haul came in 2022 as they won six medals in Liverpool.

Olympic bronze medallist Jessica Gadirova had a hand in three of them, becoming GB's second women's world floor champion.



TEAM BRITAIN

Beyond the Headlines
With
Kelly Odaro, PhD
 08039678570 (SMS ONLY) || kelevision2015@gmail.com

The Nigerian
OBSERVER
That The People May Know

The troubling face of policing in Nigeria

Recent developments in the activities of officers of the Nigeria Police Force have once again thrown into sharp relief the troubling culture of misconduct that appears to have taken root within sections of the institution.

The arrest of eight Police Inspectors by the Rivers State Police Command for alleged involvement in extortion, stealing and kidnapping is not merely disturbing; it is a damning indictment of a security agency whose fundamental duty is to protect the lives and property of citizens.

Reports indicate that some of the arrested officers allegedly travelled from neighbouring Bayelsa State to carry out their criminal activities in Rivers State before retreating to their base at the Zone 16 Command. Such allegations, if proven, reveal a level of impunity and brazenness that should alarm every law-abiding Nigerian. When those entrusted with enforcing the law become the very perpetrators of crime, the entire moral foundation of the justice system is shaken.

Even more troubling is the recent case involving ASP Nuhu Usman, who reportedly extrajudicially killed a 28-year-old man, Mene Ogidi, in Efurun, Delta State. The incident adds to a growing list of cases in which officers of the Nigeria Police have taken the law into their own hands, dispensing instant and unlawful "justice" without due process.

These incidents are not isolated. Rather, they form part of a disturbing pattern of abuse that has persisted for decades. From illegal roadblocks to arbitrary phone searches and extrajudicial killings, the misconduct of some police officers has continued to erode public trust in the institution.

One of the most visible manifestations of police misconduct in Nigeria is the proliferation of illegal roadblocks. Across highways and urban roads, police checkpoints have gradually transformed from security points into extortion centres.

Motorists are often forced to slow down or stop not because officers are searching for criminals or dangerous weapons, but because officers are expecting financial gratification. In many instances, drivers are compelled to part with money simply to continue their journey.

Commercial drivers are particularly vulnerable. A driver transporting passengers or goods across several states may be forced to pay multiple "tolls" at different checkpoints mounted by police officers. The cumulative effect is an informal system of extortion that places an additional economic burden on already struggling citizens.

The irony is striking. In a country battling insecurity, kidnappings and armed robbery, many checkpoints appear more interested in collecting money than in preventing crime. Vehicles laden with suspicious cargo may pass through if the appropriate "settlement" is made, while ordinary citizens are harassed and delayed.

Rather than reassuring the public, the sight of a police checkpoint often evokes anxiety among motorists who fear harassment or extortion. This reality represents a tragic distortion of the very purpose of policing.

Another troubling practice that has become widespread is the indiscriminate searching of citizens' mobile phones by police officers. This behaviour is particularly common in urban centres and along highways.

Young Nigerians, especially students and professionals, have frequently reported being stopped by officers who demand to inspect their phones. Without a warrant or lawful justification, officers scroll through private messages, photographs and applications.

The practice is not only intrusive but also unlawful. The right to privacy is guaranteed under Nigerian law, yet it is routinely violated by officers who appear either unaware of the law or unwilling to respect it.

In many cases, the phone search is merely a pretext for extortion. Once an officer finds anything remotely questionable—whether it is a photograph, a message or even a banking application—the individual may be accused of involvement in internet fraud or other criminal activities.

The victim is then pressured to "settle" the matter on the spot to avoid arrest or detention. This abuse of authority has created an atmosphere in which citizens, particularly young people, fear encounters with the police.

The tragedy is that such practices alienate the very population whose cooperation is essential for effective policing. A police force that is feared and distrusted by citizens cannot effectively gather intelligence or maintain public safety.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of police misconduct in Nigeria is the recurring issue of extrajudicial killings. The reported killing of a young man by ASP Nuhu in Delta State is a stark reminder of how easily the sanctity of human life can be violated.

Extrajudicial killing occurs when a person is deprived of life by law enforcement officers without due legal process. It represents one of the gravest abuses of state power.

In a democratic society governed by the rule of law, the police do not possess the authority to act as judge, jury and executioner. Even when an individual is suspected of committing a crime, the proper procedure is arrest, investigation and prosecution through the courts.

Yet across Nigeria there have been numerous instances in which suspects have been shot under questionable circumstances. In many cases, the official explanation is that the suspect attempted to escape or resisted arrest. However, such claims are often difficult to verify.

Each case of extrajudicial killing not only deprives a family of a loved one but also diminishes public confidence in the justice system. When citizens begin to believe that the police can take lives without accountability, the legitimacy of law enforcement is severely compromised.

The strained relationship between Nigerian citizens and the police did not emerge overnight. It is the product of years of accumulated grievances, many of which stem from experiences of harassment, intimidation and corruption.

For many Nigerians, encounters with the police are rarely positive. Instead of feeling protected, citizens often feel vulnerable when confronted by officers who may demand bribes or threaten arrest.

Over time, these experiences have created a deep reservoir of distrust that continues to affect the effectiveness of policing. When citizens do not trust the police, they are less likely to report crimes, provide information or cooperate with investigations.

Addressing the problem of police misconduct requires more than occasional arrests or disciplinary actions. While the arrest of the eight inspectors in Rivers State is commendable, it represents only a small step in what must be a comprehensive reform process.

Institutional reforms are necessary to address the structural issues that enable misconduct. These reforms must include improved training, better remuneration and stronger oversight mechanisms.

Police officers must be reminded that their authority derives from the law and that they are accountable to the public they serve. Professional ethics should not merely be taught in training academies but must be consistently enforced throughout an officer's career.

Equally important is the need for transparent disciplinary procedures. Officers who engage in extortion, illegal searches or extrajudicial killings must face swift and decisive consequences. Without accountability, misconduct will continue to flourish.

The recurring incidents of extortion, illegal roadblocks, intrusive phone searches and extrajudicial killings represent a serious challenge to the credibility of policing in Nigeria. When those entrusted with enforcing the law are themselves implicated in unlawful acts, the consequences extend far beyond individual cases.

They erode public trust, weaken the rule of law and create an environment in which citizens feel unprotected and vulnerable.

For the Nigeria Police Force to regain the confidence of the people, it must confront these challenges with honesty, courage and determination. Accountability must become the cornerstone of policing, and the rights of citizens must be respected at all times.

Only then can the police truly fulfil their mandate as guardians of public safety rather than symbols of fear and abuse.

• Dr. Odaro, a columnist, lectures in the Department of Mass Communication, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi.



“
 Even when an individual is suspected of committing a crime, the proper procedure is arrest, investigation and prosecution through the courts.”