

Sen. Omo-Agege's defection, good riddance to personality driven politics —Delta APC

AJUWA VICTOR

ASABA

The All Progressives Congress (APC), Delta State chapter, has declared that the resignation of former Deputy Senate President, Senator Ovie Omo-Agege, from the party inconsequential while reviewing its strength, unity, and political fortunes in the state.

The party, in a statement issued on Thursday by the State Publicity Secretary, Valentine Onojeghuo Esq., said the APC in Delta remained "strong, united, and irrevocably aligned" with the leadership and political direction of Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Elder Sheriff Oborevwori.

According to the statement, the party received news of Omo-Agege's resignation with

"unbothered equanimity," while wishing him well in his future political pursuits.

The APC maintained that the chapter had witnessed unprecedented growth, renewed political relevance, and wider grassroots acceptance since Governor Oborevwori aligned with the ruling party.

The statement noted that party faithful across wards, lo-

cal government areas, and senatorial districts had embraced what it described as a new vision of inclusion, stability, and purposeful leadership under the governor's influence.

The party further alleged that Senator Omo-Agege had contributed little to strengthening party structures or fostering unity since the governor joined the APC, insisting that his de-

parture would not weaken the party's prospects in Delta State.

"His exit does not diminish the strength, stability, or prospects of our great party," the statement said.

The APC also rejected what it described as "false and misleading narratives" suggesting that the fortunes of the party in Delta State were tied to any individual political figure.

According to the party, Delta APC had evolved beyond personality-driven politics into a formidable institution founded on collective leadership, broad participation, and commitment to the progress of Deltans.

The statement claimed that developments leading to Omo-Agege's exit had long indicated

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#200

Ogbemudia Stadium incident: No life lost, says CMD

• Okpebholo rejoices with discharged children
• Edo First Lady Office hails the facility

BENIN CITY

The Chief Medical Director, Edo Specialist Hospital, Dr Anthonia Njoku, has clarified that no life was lost on Children's Day contrary to social media reports alleging that five pupils died during the Children's Day celebration at the Samuel Ogbemudia stadium, Benin City.

Njoku made the clarification on Thursday in Benin, while addressing newsmen.

"Yesterday, we were called in

for an emergency response and we responded swiftly and appropriately to some of the children which were evacuated by our ambulance to our facility.

"Resuscitation measures started immediately and to God be the glory, we have no casualty, the children are all stable and we want to thank our governor for his continuous support", she said.

Speaking on why the children were seen on the floor of the hospital, Njoku explained that they placed them on the

floor for an effective resuscitation which some of the children needed.

"You needed to put some of these children on hard surfaces to be able to resuscitate them, that's why we even have some of them on the floor, our goal at that point was to make sure that there was no casualty.

"We want to use this medi-

um to thank our able governor for his passion for children", she added.

...Okpebholo-Anani hails hospital for saving kids' lives

The Coordinator, Office of the First Lady of Edo State, Mrs. Edesili Okpebholo Anani,

was full of praises for the personnel of Edo Specialist Hospital in Benin City, following National Children's Day incident at Ogbemudia Stadium.

Mrs Okpebholo Anani who visited the facility on Thursday on a fact finding mission concerning the incident on behalf of the Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo,

expressed happiness that all the affected children that were rushed to the hospital escaped death, were being discharged and in good health.

Speaking on Thursday with the Chief Medical Director of the hospital and the children who were about to be re-united

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Gov. Okpebholo remains committed to transformation across Edo State —Hon Adima

BENIN CITY

Special Adviser on Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Hon. Anslem Adima, has condemned as misleading and politically motivated the allegations against the administration of Governor Monday Okpebholo, insisting that the government remains committed to the development of Esanland and the entire state.

In the statement, Hon. Anslem Adima, accused critics of distorting facts and attempting to create disaffection among the Esan people

through "emotional blackmail" and sensationalism.

Responding to claims that the administration had abandoned the Esan Agenda, he maintained that Governor Okpebholo remains "one of the strongest symbols" of the agenda in contemporary Edo politics.

According to him, the Esan Agenda should be measured through sustainable development, infrastructure, security, inclusion, empowerment, and responsible governance rather than political rhetoric.

He also dismissed allega-

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IN THE MIDST OF STUDENTS:

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, in the midst of students recently in Benin City.

105 Nigerians killed in South Africa in 7 years —NCSA

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Africa's trade finance gap can exceed \$100bn again —AfDB Report

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Questions over safety as 16 pupils die in another Kenya school fire

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World Athletics releases qualification standards for Beijing 2027 World Championships

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105 Nigerians killed in South Africa in 7 years —NCSA

ABUJA

The Nigerian community in South Africa says at least 105 Nigerians have been killed in the country over the past seven years, following the wave of xenophobic attacks against migrants.

This was disclosed in a statement, signed by the community's leaders, Smart Nwobi and Frank Onyekwelu of the Nigerian Union South Africa (NUSA), and Nigerian Citizens Association South Africa

(NICASA), respectively.

The statement dismissed a South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) report attributed to South Africa's Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), which claimed that migrants were not being killed in South Africa.

"Denying or minimising the concerns raised by migrant communities risks discouraging victims and witnesses from reporting abuses and undermines efforts toward justice, reconciliation, and social co-

hesion," the statement said.

It noted that, over the years, migrants, particularly Nigerians, had been victims of fatal xenophobic incidents, including alleged extra-judicial killings, mob attacks, vigilante violence, shootings, unlawful use of force.

While acknowledging the importance of responsible public communication and the need to avoid inflammatory narratives, the community said it was equally important to un-

veil the painful realities experienced by Nigerians and other foreign nationals.

"According to records gathered from community reports, civil society engagements, media publications, and documented incidents within migrant communities, there have been numerous cases involving the deaths of Nigerians in South Africa under troubling and unresolved circumstances from 2019 till date.

"Available community re-

ports indicate that in 2019, many Nigerian businesses, shops and cars were set ablaze through mob violence in a xenophobic unrest that swept through Johannesburg, and about 12 lives were lost through direct attacks, brutality and mob justice.

"In 2022, over 17 Nigerians reportedly lost their lives through violent attacks, vigilante-style executions, criminal assaults, and alleged brutality by security personnel,

while in 2023, more than 40 Nigerians were reported dead in incidents ranging from mob violence and alleged police misconduct to unresolved violent encounters," it said.

The statement further said that about eight Nigerians reportedly lost their lives under tragic circumstances in 2024, while in 2025, eight others similarly died in shootings, violent confrontations, and deaths in police custody.

Okpebholo-Anani hails hospital...

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with their parents, she lauded the swift response of the hospital management and medical personnel for saving the lives of all the five children that were rushed there.

She further revealed, in a statement signed by Dr. Patrick Akhere Ebojele, the Chief Press Secretary to Governor Monday Okpebholo that: "The Governor would have loved to be here but he is out for other official engagements; he had directed that I should come on fact finding mission to see what is happening.

"I have had a conversation

with the CMD, the children are fine and we are happy. I want to thank the management of the hospital for their swift response."

The office of the Edo First Lady Coordinator noted that though the incident during Children's day celebration was unfortunate but the good news is that the victims received swift response, adding that safety of all children in the state remains the priority of Governor Okpebholo's administration.

Also present at the hospital is the Special Adviser to the Governor on health, Dr. Iyamu and the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Mrs. Ebomonyi.



CMD:

The Chief Medical Director (CMD), Edo Specialist Hospital, Dr Anthonia Njoku.

Sen. Omo-Agege's defection, good...

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a deliberate political separation, citing the movement of some of his close associates, including Hon. Ejaiife Odebala, Chief Ominimini Obiwevbi, and Hon. Collins Egbetamah, to the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) before the party primaries.

It further alleged that the former senator's participation in the senatorial primary was part of a calculated political strategy aimed at facilitating his eventual exit from the party after failing to secure the ticket.

The APC also accused Omo-Agege of distancing himself from crucial party activities after the primaries, including allegedly failing to support President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's electoral victory efforts.

"Let no one be deceived: the exit of one individual, regardless of past titles or political history, does nothing to diminish the strength, stability, or electoral prospects of Delta APC," the statement added.

The party reaffirmed its loyalty to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Governor Sheriff Oborewori, describing both leaders as figures whose leadership had inspired confidence and repositioned the APC as a dominant political force nationally and within Delta State.

It stressed that Delta APC remained committed to consolidating its gains and building a stronger political structure for the benefit of Deltans.

The statement concluded with the party's slogan: "APC Renewed Hope for M.O.R.E Agenda."

Gov. Okpebholo remains committed to...

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tions of division, intimidation, and betrayal within the administration, describing such claims as exaggerated and lacking factual basis.

He stated that government policies and decisions were guided by security considerations, administrative needs, and long-term planning rather than vendettas or political sentiments.

On the controversial relocation of a fire truck from Ubijaja, he explained that the temporary deployment of fire-fighting equipment to strategic locations was part of broader emergency response measures aimed at protecting lives and property across the state.

The statement stressed that

the government would not intentionally expose any community to danger and reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening emergency response infrastructure in all senatorial districts.

Addressing allegations of neglect and marginalization of Esanland, the statement disclosed that the claims were false, noting that the administration inherited significant structural and economic challenges.

It added that the governor was engaging stakeholders to improve roads, healthcare, education, security, and local governance across the state.

The statement further rejected assertions that there were no functioning state hospitals in Esanland, describing the allegation as inaccurate and misleading.

Insecurity: Criminologist recommends massive investment in security, unity

LAGOS

A criminologist, Prof. Adedeji Oyunuga, has called for increased investment in security, national unity and improved intelligence sharing to adequately address insecurity in Nigeria.

Oyunuga is a Professor of Criminology and Security Studies at the Lagos State University (LASU).

He is also the Coordinator of the Master's Programme in Criminology and Security Studies at the university.

He made the call in an interview with newsmen in Lagos on Thursday.

He said that insecurity in the country had become more complex and required both short-term and long-term strategies to effectively tackle it.

"Security requires a lot of investment. While government is investing in security, criminals are investing in insecurity; so, it becomes a battle of strategies," he said.

According to him, insecurity should remain a top priority in Nigeria's budget because of its implications for national development and citizens' safety.

The professor noted that insurgency and other forms of organised insecurity became more pronounced after Nigeria's re-

turn to democratic rule in 1999.

Oyunuga stressed the need for Nigerians to promote national unity above ethnic divisions.

"We are supposed to promote Nigerianism. Internally, we must work on reducing divisions caused by ethnicity and focus more on national identity," he said.

He said that the citizens had important roles to play in supporting security agencies through intelligence gathering and information sharing.

"Everybody expects government to protect them, but citizens also have responsibilities. If you know criminal activities happening around you, report them.

"We need to work more close-

ly with law enforcement agencies for security to improve," he said.

On digital forensic investigation, Oyunuga described forensic science as the application of scientific theories, technology and technical expertise in tackling crimes.

He explained that digital forensics emerged from the increasing relevance of the internet, databases and technology in criminal investigations.

Oyunuga said he had partnered with Mr Robert Fried, the Vice President of the Society of Professional Investigators, to distribute 100 copies of security books to students across eight Nigerian universities.

Ondo: Police arrest 5 suspected kidnappers, recover ransom

AKURE

The Police Command in Ondo State says it has arrested five suspected members of a kidnapping syndicate operating in Ore, Odibo Local Government Area of the state.

DSP Abayomi Jimoh, the spokesperson for the command made this known in a statement on Thursday in Akure.

Jimoh explained that the suspects were arrested by the command's special Anti-Kidnapping Squad following a report on May 12, at about 9.00am by Andrew Yohana, resident of Jerry Saw-

mill area in Ore.

"Yohana reported that his two sons - namely Jehu 'M', aged 10; and Yohana 'M', aged 5, were kidnapped on their way to school by unknown persons.

"Upon receipt of the report, detectives of the command swung into action. The scene was visited and intensive intelligence-driven investigations commenced.

"Through painstaking technical intelligence, tracking analysis, and coordinated investigative efforts, operatives were able to uncover the identities and locations of the suspects.

"Consequently, the investigation led to the arrest of Taofeek

Lukman 'M', aged 23; and Blessing Saturday 'M', aged 27, around the Alaba Area of Ore," he said.

Jimoh said during investigation, a sum of N251,000 suspected to be proceeds from the ransom was recovered from the suspects.

"Investigation further led detectives to another hideout linked to Blessing Saturday, where an unregistered lady motorcycle suspected to have been used in perpetrating the crime was also recovered.

"In the course investigation, additional suspects connected to the syndicate were identified and arrested.

"Efforts are currently ongoing to apprehend other fleeing members of the criminal syndicate and recover additional exhibits connected with the crime," the command's spokesperson disclosed.

He said that the suspects had made confessional statements detailing their roles in the kidnap and would be charged to court upon conclusion of investigation.

Jimoh said that the Commissioner of Police, Felix Ohagwu, had commended the operatives for their professionalism, reiterating the command's commitment to combating crimes.

Edo Fasting, Prayer Day: Gov. Okpebholo, Deputy, College of Bishops, others expected to grace event Saturday

MONDAY OISE

BENIN CITY

All roads lead to the National Museum Ground, kings Square, Benin City in Edo State on Saturday as the "Edo State Fasting and Prayer Day" brings together notable men of God from across the world and those in

government circles, businesses, academia, Civil Society Organisations among others, to pray for Edo State and Nigeria.

The Annual Prayer event which has as its theme: "Restoration of Lost Glory For Edo State" is expected to have His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Edo State, Sen. Monday Okpebholo, his Deputy,

Rt.Hon. Dennis Idahosa, Civil Commissioners and Heads of Government Parastatals, Ministries, Departments and Agencies in attendance.

Speaking to newsmen in Benin City on the preparations for the event, the President, World Christian Fellowship, and Coordinator of the Prayer Conference, Prophet Okod-

uwa Atorkpa thanked Edo people for their active participation in previous editions and urged them to come out enmasse as usual, to prayerfully join hands with the State Governor, and his Deputy, to restore the State's lost glory in the place of prayers.

Prophet Atorkpa assured that when the Saints of God and His

Elects passionately gather at the City Centre to observe the fast and prayers and to uphold the State and Country sincerely in prayers, the Lord God will look down from Heaven to have Mercy on the Land (2Chronicles 7:14) and restore its lost glory thereby, making Edo to truly begin to Shine again in all areas of human endeavours for the benefit of all.

The Man of God, who described the Edo State Fasting and Prayer Day "as a divine revelation and vision from God that has endured for many years," urged all Edo residents to key into it for their personal liberation and glorification, adding that better days await the State and the Country despite the current security and economic turbulence and uncertainty staring them in their faces.

He asserted that, from Bible days till date, Christ has put his power of prayers into the hearts

of men to save Cities, Kingdoms, Thrones and Nations from ruin, noting that the fervent and ceaseless prayers of God's Elect have always restored men to life, stopped plagues, quenched the violence of fire, shut the mouth of wild beasts, altered the course of nature, caused rain in the world and drought in the sea, among others.

He maintained that prayer rules the gods, and arrest the sun in its course and stays the chariot wheels and the moon, explaining that it has pleased God to protect the people and supply their needs through the fasting and prayers conference during which the Omnipotence of God will be revealed in Edo State.

"As we gather on Saturday, we trust there will again be a mighty move of God as people of Edo State humble themselves before His throne and seek His face on behalf of the State.

**SECURITY STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT:**

Hon. Kassim Afegbua, Edo State Commissioner for Information and Strategy, during a security stakeholders summit organized by FESH Foundation in Benin City.

PHOTO BY FRANCIS ODUPUTE

Nigerians urged to pray for the rescue of school children kidnapped in Ibadan

BENIN CITY

The President of the Forum of Nigerian Women in Politics (FONWIP), Hon Florence Gbinigie JP has called on Nigerians to Pray for the rescue of the children kidnapped recently in Ibadan

The call was made in a statement by the FONWIP President greeting Nigerian children on the celebration of the International Children's Day.

She called for the urgent res-

cue of school children reportedly kidnapped in Ibadan.

While extending heartfelt felicitations to the Muslim faithful celebrating *Eid al-Adha she prayed for peace in the nation.

"As we mark Children's Day, our thoughts turn to the children of Ibadan and across Nigeria who are missing their classrooms and their families.

"FONWIP prays for their safe rescue, and urges security agencies to act with urgency

and compassion," she added.

According to her, no child should live in fear, adding that, "to every Nigerian child, you are the promise of our nation."

She expressed her heartfelt condolences to those that have lost their lives.

"FONWIP remains committed to policies that protect your rights, your education, and your future," she noted

On Eid al-Adha, Gbinigie stated that, "May the spirit of sacrifice, mercy, and unity that

defines this season strengthen our nation. Eid Mubarak to all Muslims celebrating across Nigeria."

"FONWIP continues to advocate for safer schools, stronger child protection laws, and increased women's participation in building a secure Nigeria.

"It is a non-partisan body dedicated to advancing the welfare of women and children and promoting women's leadership in governance," the statement added

Kidnapping: Residents of Iguodia community cry out to security agencies

Ovia North East

Residents of Iguodia Community near Ekiadolor in Ovia North East Local Government Area have called on the relevant security agencies and the government to urgently intervene following the gruesome murder of a landlord, Mr. Osemwegie Asemota, and the abduction of his wife, Mrs. Patience Asemota, at their residence in the community.

Residents said the attack was part of a disturbing wave of violent crimes ravaging communities within the local government area.

According to reports, armed bandits numbering over five had

earlier invaded the residence of another resident, Mrs. Enorense Osagie, on Sunday, May 10, 2026, abducting her daughter, Mrs. Ehimwenman, alongside her granddaughter who was visiting at the time. The victims were reportedly taken into the forest after the attackers discovered the grandmother was absent from the house.

The kidnapers allegedly demanded a ransom of N50 million from the family and Mrs. Patience O. Asemota was later released after spending over one week in captivity, regaining freedom on Tuesday, May 19, 2026, reportedly after ransom negotiations and the even-

tual payment of N15 million.

Community sources disclosed that more than eight victims from Iguodia, Iwu, and Izakagbo communities in Ovia North East Local Government Area were abducted by suspected bandits and held under harsh and inhumane conditions inside forest camps.

A resident, Mrs. Florence Imo, told Edo State Residents Watch crew that victims from Iguodia, Iwu, and Izakagbo communities - including women, young girls, and a boy - were subjected to severe torture while in captivity.

According to her, disturbing video footage allegedly sent by the kidnapers to victims' families

showed the captives being mercilessly beaten and brutalized. The victims reportedly appeared weak, sick, hungry, and emotionally distressed as they cried out for help.

The video was allegedly used by the abductors to pressurize families into negotiating ransom payments for the release of their loved ones.

Residents have now appealed to the Nigeria Police Force, the military, vigilante groups, and the Edo State Government to strengthen security presence across the affected communities to prevent further bloodshed and abductions.

As of the time of filing this report, authorities are yet to

Stop and search: Edo State Police arrest man with 36 live cartridges

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Police Command have arrested a suspect with 36 rounds of live cartridges during a routine stop-and-search operation in Benin City.

This was disclosed by the spokesperson of the command, Eno Ikoedem, in a statement made available to newsmen in Benin City yesterday.

She said the arrest was made at Guobadia Junction along the Benin-Auchi Road, when the officers intercepted a mini bus conveying seven passengers from Benin-Auchi Bypass to Ring Road, Benin City.

She said that three male passengers suddenly abandoned their belongings and attempted to flee the scene but officers

gave chase and apprehended one of the fleeing suspects identified as Richard Gabriel, 36 years old, from Ovia South-West Local Government Area of Edo State.

The statement read, "The Edo State Police Command has recorded another operational success with the recovery of 36 rounds of live cartridges and the arrest of a suspect during a routine stop-and-search operation in Benin City.

"On 23rd May, 2026, at about 13:00hrs, officers attached to Ikpoba Hill Area Command, while on stop-and-search duty at Guobadia Junction along the Benin-Auchi Road, intercepted a mini bus conveying seven passengers from Benin-Auchi Bypass to Ring Road, Benin City.

FHC opens registries weekends, public holidays for pre-election cases

ABUJA

The Federal High Court (FHC) says its registries in all the divisions of the court will officially be open to lawyers on weekends and public holidays for filing of pre-election cases.

The Chief Registrar of FHC, Yahaya Shafa, made this known on Thursday in Abuja in a statement titled: "Notice to Lawyers and the General Public."

Shafa said that the court would be in operation between 10am and 2pm.

He said the development became necessary in order for the court to meet up with the limited time frame for filing pre-election matters.

"The Federal High Court of Nigeria formally notifies all legal practitioners that Registries in all Divisions of the Federal High Court would be open between 10:00am and 2:00pm Weekends and Public Holidays for Filing of Pre-Election Matters Only.

"This has become expedient to meet up with the limited time frame for filing pre-election matters," the statement reads.

Though, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) issued election timetable and schedule of activities for the conduct of the 2027 general elections, the timeline is still being challenged in court.

Opinion

The Nigerian Observer newspaper @58: The flagship comes of age



EUBALDUS ENAHORO

On May 29, 1968, the Nigerian Observer was born and its first copies appeared on newsstands across the nation.

The Nigerian Observer, one of the legacy projects of Late Dr. Samuel Osaigbovo Ogbemudia, may his soul rest in peace, is a response to the genuine demands of a people who increasingly began to feel that they need some outlet for the articulation of their own ideals, with emphasis to inform, educate and entertain.

Then, in the stable of the Nigerian Observer are Weekend Observer and the Sunday Observer with corporate headquarters situated at 24 Airport road, Benin City, where it is still located today.

It was five months after the birth of the Nigerian Observer that its sister, weekly, the Sunday

Observer was established during the Nigerian civil war.

The Paper succeeded in not only preaching the Nigerian case in the domestic conflict, it struck fear into the hearts of rebel propagandists who saw in the Observer, superior to their nefarious publicity machinery.

The newspaper, which transformed to Bendel Newspaper Company Limited, publishers of the Observer titles was published as a document for daily circulation that would inform the public on the activities of the government of the then Midwest state, educate as well as provide a forum for a two way communication.

The founder of the newspaper had observed that, "If the publication is to discharge its sacred functions effectively and efficiently too, it should be free from government control as to what it should write or not write. It should also be free to criticise any aspect of government policy which it considers worthy of criticism in public.

Ogbemudia gave the management and staff of the newspaper house free hand to operate a free press and provided all the resources needed to make it the flagship among its contemporaries. Thirty five years later, the Nigerian Observer had to its credit three editions: Daily, Sunday and Weekend Observer which were exclusively owned by the government, while the Sunday Observer was established on October 27 1968, the Sporting Observer was established in 1974 and the Weekend Observer in October 6, 1990.

Interestingly and sadly too, these stables are defunct apparently due to financial constraints and other factors.

It should be noted that during the 4th anniversary of the establishment of the Corporation, the daily circulation of the Nigerian Observer throughout the then 12 states of the federation rose to 95,000 while the Sunday Observer maintained a steady circulation of 180,000 copies weekly.

Within the first decade of its existence, the name Midwest Newspaper Corporation was subjected to geo-political changes that affected the political structure at the federal level. First, it was Midwest Mass-Communication Corporation and following the creation of more states including Bendel from the defunct Midwest state, the corporation's name was changed to Bendel Newspaper Corporation.

After several reforms, in January 1, 1989, in bid to accentuate its news value and determination, the Corporation's name was changed from Bendel Newspaper Corporation to Bendel Newspaper Company Limited BNCL, a name was taken at management level as a means to deliberately strip the company of all elements that made it a parastatal.

It was subsequently registered under the company and allied matters act. Following the creation of Edo and Delta States from the then Bendel state in 1991 and subsequently sharing of assets and liabilities by the two states, Edo State

retained Bendel Newspapers Company Limited. The government of Delta state on its part set up Delta printing press on August 8, 1994 to produce a state owned newspaper.

The newspaper which was later known as the Pointer first appeared on the news stand on October 25, 1994. It was set up basically to accommodate staff of the Bendel Newspaper Company Limited who were displaced from the company following the sharing of assets and liabilities by the two states.

The Nigerian Observer has been a training ground for journalists who later became media owners and editors in Nigeria.

Though there have been operational issues which include obsolete machines, staff shortages, limited circulation in recent years, efforts of previous administration to revamp the newspaper have not been successful.

Now, His Excellency, the Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo in his giant stride to transform the state with infrastructural development has appointed Hon Peter Odibo, the substantive General Manager to reposition the state newspaper for greater productivity and he has promised to ensure the newspaper with the Moto- "That the people may know," regain its rightful place in the nations newspaper industry.

Eubaldus Enahoro is former Editor of the Nigerian Observer newspaper

Nigeria needs willpower, intelligence to end banditry, terrorism



OBOH SYLVESTER

Nigeria's prolonged struggle with banditry and terrorism has reached a defining moment, demanding not just condemnation but a coordinated national response anchored on political will, intelligence supremacy, and the decisive application of force.

Across several parts of the country, particularly in the North-West and North-East, communities across the country have continued to face violent attacks, killings, kidnappings, and mass displacement.

Rural economies have been disrupted, farming activities curtailed, and entire villages abandoned under the weight of persistent insecurity. While security operations have recorded intermittent successes, experts insist that the absence of a synchronised and sustained national strategy has limited long-term impact.

Security analysts argue that the first and most critical requirement to end this prevailing banditry is strong and consistent political will.

This, according to concerned stakeholders, should go beyond rhetoric and visits to crime scenes long after the exit of bandits and terrorists.

This national will must entail a clear national strategic direction, continuity in policy execution, and accountability at all tiers of govern-

ment. It must be emphasised that without this, security interventions risk remaining reactive rather than strategic. A unified national doctrine that sufficiently and clearly defines existing threats, priorities operational frameworks, and must be collectively considered essential to confronting the evolving nature of killings, banditry, and terrorism in present-day Nigeria.

To this point, it is very apt to emphasise that the leadership of this country must eschew themselves from unnecessary politicking, especially as it concerns 2027, and direct their focus to solving and, if possible, ending the travails of the massive killings and banditry across Nigeria.

This is particularly so, as our Generals are being slaughtered by bandits, and to the extent that the communal victims of this terrorism need to be alive and participate in the 2027 elections and beyond. To be a leader, you must have people to lead; otherwise, the word leadership and its meaning, whether political or not, will not make any sense. And nobody wants to be the leader of dead people or an "obliterated" community.

In another sense, closely tied to political resolve to fight this banditry is the willpower of leaders, decision makers, and policy advocates. This willpower must be dissociated from political manipulated sentiments. It must transparently allow the imperative of intelligence-led operations.

Contemporary security challenges are no longer won by sheer troop deployment, but by the quality, accuracy, and timeliness of intelligence that informs action. National agencies such as the Department of State Services and the National Intelligence Agency must assume a more central and coordinated role in gathering, analyzing, and disseminating actionable intelligence.

This is particularly crucial in rural and forested regions where armed groups operate with relative ease and anonymity. This is very important, hence the need for robust human intelligence networks within our local communities.

Contemporary security challenges are no longer won by sheer troop deployment, but by the quality, accuracy, and timeliness of intelligence that informs action. National agencies such as the Department of State Services and the National Intelligence Agency

Residents must be ready to provide valuable information at every given time to determined and resolute security operatives who, on their part, must be disposed to trust-building, protection, through community engagement, guaranteed confidentiality, and intelligence flow. Surveillance systems, communication tracking, and data analytics must be enhanced and strengthened to anticipate and disrupt attacks before they occur.

Equally important is the coordination of operational forces. The Nigerian Armed Forces, Nigerian Police Force, and other related security Agencies must, of necessity, avoid fragmentation and duplication of efforts, intelligence gaps, and delayed responses.

There must be a unified or joint command structure for internal security operations, enabling real-time intelligence sharing and rapid deployment.

In sum, the Nigerian government must shift from large-scale troop movements to coordinated surveillance for targeting high-value threats. This no doubt, will sufficiently reduce collateral damage.

There is equally the need to dismantle shadow economic foundations that deliberately enable banditry and terrorism. Adequate attack must be

redirected to fight kidnap-for-ransom schemes, illegal mining, cattle rustling, and arms trafficking that fuels violence and undermines legitimate livelihoods and communal vulnerabilities.

Another dimension to this fight is the role of justice and accountability. Adequate sanctions and consequences must be seen to be central and justiciable to those concerned. In the course of this fight, our judicial process must adopt and apply modern technology; protect witnesses, and manage evidence in line with global standards. Trials must be expedited to ensure that offenders are held accountable and that public confidence is restored.

Information must be properly managed, consistent, and transparent to build public trust and counter false narratives by educating citizens and building cooperation with security agencies.

Nigeria's porous borders must be manned and controlled to limit the movement of arms, bandits, and hardened terrorists into our country.

As Nigeria navigates this complex and critical security landscape, the consensus among stakeholders is clear. No single approach will suffice. Military strength without intelligence is blind; intelligence without political will is ineffective; and both, without socio-economic and judicial support, are unsustainable.

Nigeria needs untainted political resolve, intelligence capability, disciplined force, and responsive governance. This integrated approach must be sustained over time, insulated from political cycles, and driven by a clear commitment to national security and public welfare.

Only through such a coordinated and comprehensive strategy can Nigeria hope to decisively end banditry and terrorism, restore stability to affected regions, and safeguard the lives and livelihoods of its citizens.

Sylvester Oboh is the Assistant General Manager (Admin) Nigerian Observer Newspaper

Youth empowerment drive, anti-illegal migration campaign earn Jace Owie national recognition

OUR REPORTER

BENIN CITY

Youth empowerment and anti-illegal migration advocacy efforts championed by Jace Owie has continued to attract widespread commendation, as Youth Voice Nigeria and several student and youth-based organisations celebrated his contributions to social development and youth reorientation across the country.

The groups described Owie

as a visionary youth advocate whose interventions have positively transformed the lives of many vulnerable young people in Edo State through vocational empowerment initiatives, migration awareness campaigns, and community-based enlightenment programmes.

A graduate of the American Academy of Project Management, Owie gained public attention for his proactive role in combating irregular migration and human trafficking by addressing the socio-econom-

ic conditions that often push youths into desperate migration journeys.

Through the Global Relations Foundation, he initiated several advocacy programmes and strategic international collaborations aimed at discouraging dangerous migration routes through Libya and the Mediterranean Sea, while promoting entrepreneurship and economic self-reliance among young Nigerians.

One of his major grassroots interventions took place in

2018 when he collaborated with the German Embassy to organise a large-scale migration sensitisation programme along Textile Mill Road in Benin City, Edo State.

The awareness campaign exposed hundreds of youths to the harsh realities of human trafficking, exploitation, and the deadly risks associated with irregular migration to Europe.

Following the success of the campaign, Owie launched a free digital skills and entrepre-

neurship training initiative for over 500 youths, equipping participants with practical competencies in digital marketing and other modern vocational skills capable of creating sustainable means of livelihood.

In another significant effort to discourage illegal migration, Owie also produced a documentary highlighting the traumatic experiences endured by African migrants travelling through Libya and across the Mediterranean Sea. The documentary reportedly reached thousands of viewers nationwide and became a powerful awareness tool among vulnerable youths.

Beyond local advocacy, he also engaged with international development stakeholders, including officials of the British High Commission, where

discussions focused on migration challenges, youth empowerment, and sustainable reintegration programmes for returnee migrants.

Supporters say his interventions have contributed to increased attention on migration-related concerns in Edo State, while also encouraging conversations around vocational training, youth empowerment policies, and job creation initiatives.

In its tribute, Youth Voice Nigeria described Jace Owie as "a symbol of visionary leadership, resilience, and social transformation," noting that his sustained commitment continues to inspire many African youths to embrace productive alternatives capable of delivering lasting change within their communities.

**EXCURSION:**

Director Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS), Rev. Fr. Francis Agu (L); Coordinator Daughters of Divine Love (DDL) Holy Child Association (HCA), Rev. Sr. Sochinwe Chukwu (M), Coordinator Pontifical Missionary Union Catholic Diocese of Enugu, Rev. Fr. Kevin Udenwagu (L) with other members of Holy Child Association, during an Excursion to Bigard Memorial Seminary as part of Activities by HCA to celebrate 2026 Children's Day in Enugu on Thursday, 28th May, 2026.

Lack of diagnosis before treatment leads to increase death rate —Expert

BENIN CITY

The number of deaths of patients are on the increase due to lack of laboratory diagnosis before treatment.

This was disclosed by the Director of Public Health, Edo State Ministry of Health, Dr. Ojeifo Stephenson during a Seminar organised by the Institute of Child Health, University of Benin Teaching Hospital, UBTH/ University of Benin UNIBEN held in Benin City.

According to him, people are treated without testing and this

makes treatment impossible.

Dr. Ojeifo who was the Chairman of the Seminar advised patients to always run a laboratory test to avoid untimely death.

While disclosing that the Edo State government has initiated free Malaria testing across all state hospitals he noted that it is impossible to say you have Malaria when you are not diagnosed.

"The Ministry of Health and the state government will continue to partner with the Institute of Child Health which has been consistent in Child

Health care."

The lecturer, Dr. Izehiuwa Enato in his lecture titled, "United Against Malaria: The Role of the Community in Combating Antimalarial Resistance," said the church and other religious bodies and organizations should propagate the need for testing before treatment.

While commending the Commissioner for Health for deploying the testing kit across the state, he also advocated that there should be school education to educate students about Malaria

"Malaria is caused by the

bite from the female Anopheles mosquito between 6pm to 6am and can be transmitted from mother to child

He noted that Malaria is characterized by fever, but not every fever is Malaria.

"Nigeria has the highest burden of the disease with 31.9 percent of all deaths and more than 75 percent of this death occurs in children less than five years," he added.

The Director of Public Health further appealed that people should keep their environment clean at all times to avoid the breeding of the mosquitoes parasite, and encourage children to sleep in mosquito nets.

Alleged withheld entitlements: 1,716 retired comptrollers sue Minister, NIS, others

ABUJA

Former officials of the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), who retired on the rank of Comptroller of Immigration, have sued the Minister of Interior over alleged failure to pay their withheld entitlements.

The aggrieved ex-officials, in a suit filed at the National Industrial Court of Nigeria (NICN), alleged that NIS and other relevant bodies had failed to accord them their entitlements since they retired years ago.

The 176 claimants, led by Abalaka-Betty Ajuma, through their lawyer, Maroof Giwa, named the Interior Minister, Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, as 1st defendant in the suit marked: NICN/ABJ/146/2026.

They also named the NIS' CG, Kemi Nandap; NIS; the Civil Defence; Correctional, Fire and Immigration Board (CDCFIS); the CDCFIS Chairman and the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF), Mr lateef Fagbemi, SAN, as co-defendants.

The claimants stated that by the condition of service of the NIS, published in a gazette released by the Federal Government in 2015, they were entitled to a car, domestic staff, among others, upon their retirement at the rank of Comptroller.

They, however, alleged that the entitlements had been denied since they exited service honourably years ago.

They gave the name of the gazette as: "Unified and Reviewed Conditions of Service for the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Federal Fire, Nigeria Immigration and Nigeria Prisons Services hereinafter referred to as "Conditions of Service, 2015."

The claimants stated that the gazette expressly provides that any officer of the NIS, who re-

tires on the rank of Comptroller of Immigration, shall be entitled to one official car and the services of five domestic staff on various salary levels.

The retirees, who said they satisfied all conditions for the enjoyment of the retirement entitlements, stated that "it is customary and obligatory on the defendants to give out cars to retiring personnel on the rank of Comptroller of Immigration and above."

They added that despite their retirement on the qualifying rank of Comptroller of Immigration, "the defendants have failed, refused, and neglected to provide them with the official cars or the monetary equivalents thereof."

The claimants stated that they retired at different years, adding that upon retirement, they became immediately entitled to the benefits on retirement, stipulated in the gazetted condition of service of the NIS.

They said their decision to sue was informed by the alleged failure of the defendants to heed their demands contained in the many reminders and pre-action notices sent by their lawyers.

The claimants want the court to, among others, declare that each of them is entitled to be provided with one car as benefits on retirement under the gazetted condition of service of 2015, having retired on the rank of Comptroller of Immigration.

They also seek a declaration that the defendant's alleged failure to provide them with the said entitlements as stipulated in the unified condition of service is unlawful, wrongful and unconstitutional.

The aggrieved retirees want the court to issue an order directing the defendants to provide them with the entitlements or N15 million each in the place of a physical car.

Energy, maritime reporters hold inaugural meeting in Edo

BENIN CITY

Members of the Energy and Maritime Reporters (EMR) in Edo State have held their inaugural meeting in Benin City, with a call for unity, cooperation and professional commitment among journalists covering the sector.

The meeting, which was chaired by Andy Ohwobetehe, brought together pioneer

members of the group to formally commence activities of the Edo State chapter.

Speaking at the meeting, Ohwobetehe welcomed members and outlined the objectives of the association, stressing that the group remains under the umbrella of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) and is not operating independently of the union.

He noted that the association was established to strengthen

collaboration among journalists reporting the energy and maritime sectors while contributing to informed reportage on developments within the Niger Delta region.

During the meeting, the chairman placed a call to the National Chairman and National Secretary of the group, both of whom expressed delight over the successful inauguration of the Edo State chapter.

The national leaders commended members for the initiative and dedication shown towards expanding the activities of the association across the country.

They also emphasised the importance of the group in view of the strategic role of the Niger Delta in Nigeria's oil, gas and maritime economy, urging members to remain united and cooperative in pursuing the objectives of the association.

MILESTONE



IMPERATIVES OF COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

The BNCL trajectory

MATTHEW OKAGHA

The concept of cooperative societies remains one of the most enduring and reliable vehicles for the welfare, well-being, and economic advancement of groups within any society or organisation. Across generations, cooperative societies have continued to demonstrate the immense possibilities that emerge when people unite around a common purpose and pool resources together for individual and collective benefits under a disciplined management structure.

Indeed, when a group of persons come together with trust, vision, accountability, and shared responsibility, the results can be extraordinary. This is the perfect story of the Bendel Newspapers Company Limited (BNCL) Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society.

Founded in 2006 with an initial membership of less than ten persons and an asset base of under two mil-

lion naira, the society has grown remarkably over the last two decades into one of the most successful cooperative societies within the media sector in Edo State.

Today, the BNCL Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society boasts well over 100 subscribers with an impressive asset portfolio valued at over 800 million naira.

Beyond its financial strength, the society has also acquired over 100 plots of land for members across various communities in Edo State, thereby helping many members fulfil their dreams of property ownership and long-term economic security.

These achievements did not happen by accident. They are direct products of visionary leadership, prudent financial management, transparency, accountability, and an unwavering commitment to the welfare of members.

In a society where many cooperative organisations are often plagued by controversies, mistrust, leadership

crises, and endless bickerings, the BNCL Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society has remained remarkably stable and progressive, largely unimpeded by such negative narratives.

This uncommon institutional success formed the core essence of the celebration of its 20th anniversary held on Tuesday, May 26, 2026.

The venue of the anniversary celebration, the YWCA Event Centre on Airport Road, adjacent to the Nigerian Observer premises, was filled with nostalgic and reminiscent feelings as past and present cooperators gathered to celebrate two decades of resilience, growth, sacrifice, and shared prosperity.

Amid the celebrations, one personality stood out prominently — Mrs. Marvelous Imoisili.

For sixteen uninterrupted years, Mrs. Imoisili has presided over the affairs of the BNCL Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society with passion, integrity, vision, accountability, courage, and an uncommon human face.

Under her stewardship, the cooperative society witnessed unprecedented growth, financial expansion, institutional stability, and members' confidence.

Her leadership style has been widely admired for its openness, transparency, empathy, and discipline. She did not merely function as an administrator; she became a symbol of trust and stability within the cooperative family. Through difficult economic periods and institutional challenges, she remained steadfast in her commitment to protecting the collective interests of members while ensuring that the society continued to grow from strength to strength.

Painfully, Mrs. Imoisili is expected to retire from public service within the next four years.

However, even as she gradually prepares for the next phase of her life, her greatest concern remains the sustainability of the noble legacy she helped to build. Understandably, she is determined to ensure that her successor is

a person of integrity, competence, and unquestionable commitment to the ideals of cooperative service.

Indeed, the story of the BNCL Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society is not merely about financial growth or asset accumulation. It is a powerful testament to what visionary leadership, collective trust, prudent management, and institutional discipline can achieve within a cooperative framework.

As the society celebrates twenty impactful years, the contributions of Mrs. Marvelous Imoisili and other founding cooperators will undoubtedly remain indelible in the history of the organisation. Their sacrifices, commitment, and foresight have not only transformed lives but have also established a model worthy of emulation by cooperative societies across Nigeria.

Matthew Okagha is a Benin-based journalist and media consultant

LG autonomy: Lawyers decry slow implementation of Supreme Court judgment

LAGOS

Some Lagos-based legal practitioners have expressed concern over the slow implementation of the Supreme Court judgment granting financial autonomy to local governments.

The lawyers said the landmark ruling had yet to achieve its intended impact across many states of the federation.

They spoke in separate in-

terviews with our correspondent on Thursday in Lagos.

Mr Kayode Oshiyemi, Principal Partner at Kayode Oshiyemi & Co., described the implementation as being at a “zero level,” blaming the executive arm of government for failing to enforce it.

“On a scale of one to 10, the implementation of the Supreme Court decision is zero.

“This is because the executive arm of government saddled with the responsibility of

implementing the decision has yet to take definitive action.

“It was the executive arm that took state governments to the apex court and won, but it is now failing to ensure compliance,” he said.

Oshiyemi noted that the Constitution clearly provided that local governments were entitled to direct allocations from the Federation Account.

He, however, accused state governors of continuing to obstruct

the progressive development of the third tier of government.

“The Constitution is clear and unambiguous that local governments are entitled to allocations from the Federation Account.

“However, state governors have become a clog in the wheel of development. That was the basis upon which the Federal Government approached the court,” he said.

The lawyer stated that the lingering situation had raised concerns over the relationship between constitutional provisions and the apex court’s verdict.

“The silent question now is

which takes precedence between the constitutional provisions and the decision of the apex court.

“Without much ado, the latter takes precedence and, therefore, the executive arm of government should act accordingly,” Oshiyemi stated.

The lawyer called for a comprehensive constitutional review and restructuring of Nigeria’s federal system to permanently address governance challenges.

“The applicable remedy is a total overhaul of the Constitution and the need to renegotiate Nigeria’s federal structure and system.

“When this is done, then we

can have progress as a people and as a nation,” he said.

Also speaking, Mr James Adebisi of Adebisi Chambers, Lagos, described the judgment as a major step toward strengthening grassroots governance.

According to him, evidence suggests that implementation has been uneven, with some state governments still exerting significant control over local council finances.

“The judgment was expected to empower local councils to independently execute developmental projects and provide essential services” Adebisi said.



10TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY AND THANKSGIVING:

L-R: Chief Lucky Otoide; Chief Ijiogbe Igbinoia; HRM Zaiki Solomon, Ojeaga Izumare 1, the Onojie of Ujiogba Kingdom, Edo State, Ms. Sarah Okoh-Chiuwa (the Proprietress Sachi Hospitality) and Chief Rufus Ebhodaghe at the 10th Year Anniversary and Thanksgiving Reception of Sachi Hospitality at Ogwa/Ebelle, Junction, Edo State.

Edo people tasked on investment in state as Sachi marks 10th year anniversary

KATSINA

Guests at the 10 year anniversary celebration of Sachi Hospitality Investment Ogwa/Ebelle in Igueben Local Government Area of Edo State have urged well meaning sons and daughters of the State to prioritize the growth and development of the business climate in the state.

This they said could happen

through the setting up viable investments in Edo as a way of boosting the industrial growth and development of the state, thus creating employment opportunities for the unemployed.

The guests extolled the brilliance and business acumen of Ms Okoh-Chiuwa in the choice of the site of Sachi Hospitality, a business they all agreed had brought development to the environment.

The occasion which also marked the birthday of the proprietress of the outfit Ms Sarah Okoh-Chiuwa, had a curterie of dignitaries from across the state including a prominent traditional ruler in Esan land, HRH Zaiki Ojeaga Izumare 1, The Onojie of Ujiogba Kingdom and other top ranking individuals in attendance.

In her brief remarks, Sarah Okoh-Chiuwa expressed gratitude to guests and patrons of the business who she said were behind the success story of the

investment.

She thanked the people of Ogwa/Ebelle and Ujiogba including their traditional rulers for the peace and support from them all the years they had been there.

The event climaxed with a thanks giving service at The Living Faith Church Ebelle Eguare with worshippers and guests praying for the health of Ms Sarah Okoh-Chiuwa, the success and growth of the business venture and the peace of the host community.

2027: Atiku’s ADC ticket, well-deserved, signals hope —Group

LAGOS

A group, Nigerian Youths For Atiku (NYFA) Worldwide, has described the emergence of former Vice President Atiku Abubakar as the ADC presidential candidate for the 2027 election as well-deserved.

The Director-General of NYFA Nigeria and Diaspora, Mr Dare Dada, said this in a congratulatory statement issued on Thursday in Lagos.

Dada said Abubakar’s victory at the ADC presidential primary came at a critical period in Nigeria’s political and economic history.

He described Atiku’s emergence as a landmark development capable of restoring hope, unity and economic stability in the country.

Dada said the victory comes at a defining moment in Nigeria’s history, when millions of citizens are yearning for purposeful leadership, national unity, economic revival and renewed hope.

“At a time when the nation is confronted with worsening economic hardship, insecurity, division and uncertainty, your emergence represents a beacon of hope for a more prosperous, stable and united Nigeria.

“As a former Vice President of

the Federal Republic of Nigeria with vast experience in governance, economic management, diplomacy and nation-building, we remain confident in your capacity.

“We are confident in your capacity to reposition our country and restore public confidence in leadership and democratic institutions.”

According to him, Atiku presidency will provide practical and sustainable solutions to the socio-economic and political challenges currently facing the nation.

He noted that members of the group had remained unwavering in their support for the former vice president since the conclu-

sion of the 2023 general elections.

“The continued support is based on the group’s conviction that Nigeria urgently requires competence, patriotism, experience and visionary leadership.”

Dada also commended the leadership of the ADC for conducting a transparent, peaceful and credible presidential primary election.

Atiku emerged as the ADC presidential candidate for the 2027 general election after defeating former Rivers State Governor, Rotimi Amaechi and businessman, Mohammed Hayatu-Deen in the party’s presidential primary election.

Ogun police deploy 2,500 personnel for Ojude Oba festival

ABEOKUTA

The police command in Ogun has deployed over 2,500 personnel and specialised operational assets to ensure adequate security and peaceful conduct during the 2026 Ojude Oba festival in Ijebu-Ode.

The Commissioner of Police in the state, Bode Ojajuni, disclosed this in a statement issued on Thursday in Abeokuta by the Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Oluseyi Babaseyi.

Ojajuni said the deployment formed part of proactive security measures put in place by the command to guarantee public safety and hitch-free celebration during the annual cultural festival.

According to him, the personnel comprise conventional police officers and tactical teams drawn from the Police Mobile Force (PMF), Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT), Violent Crime Response Unit (VCRU), and other specialised units.

He added that Armoured

Personnel Carriers (APCs), patrol vehicles, police motorcycles, surveillance teams, undercover operatives, and rapid response squads had also been strategically deployed across Ijebu-Ode and adjoining communities.

He explained that security personnel would be stationed at the Ojude Oba pavilion, major highways, entry and exit points, hotels, worship centres, recreational centres, motor parks, markets, residential areas, and other public locations.

He said that the operation was aimed at ensuring effective crowd control, intelligence-led policing, traffic management, anti-crime patrols, visibility policing, early threat detection, and swift response to security concerns.

The police commissioner noted that all Area Commanders, Divisional Police Officers, and Tactical Commanders had been directed to remain on maximum alert and sustain aggressive patrols, strategic stop-and-search operations.

Corps members must respect social media rules —DG

ABUJA

The Director-General of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Brig.-Gen. Olakunle Nafiu, says corps members are not exempt from Nigeria’s cyberbullying and social media laws during their mandatory national service year.

Nafiu said this during an interview with newsmen on Thursday in Abuja, emphasising that corps members remained subject to constitutional provisions and laws regulating online conduct.

According to him, corps members remain citizens of Nigeria and are fully subject to provisions of the Constitution and other extant laws regulating online conduct, cyber activities and public behaviour nationwide.

Nafiu explained that allegations of cyberbullying against corps members would be investigated and handled by relevant law enforcement agencies in accordance with the law, regardless of their status as serving corps members.

He added that the NYSC was not mandated to provide legal representation for corps members involved in criminal or civil matters arising from social media activities and other online engagements.

“The fact that they are corps members does not absolve them from being citizens bound by the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

“If someone says you cyberbullied him or her, the police will arrest you with your NYSC identity card and you will bear that responsibility.

“I am not funded to provide legal representation for you in court. “What we do is engage the Legal Aid Council to monitor proceedings,” Nafiu said while explaining the scheme’s responsibilities.

According to him, the Legal Aid Council can provide pro bono legal services for corps members where necessary, particularly in situations requiring legal support during investigations or proceedings before competent courts.

NEWS

FCT residents decry rising cost of food items, say feeding becoming difficult

ABUJA

Many Residents and food vendors in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), have expressed concern over the continued rise in the cost of vegetables and other food items.

They said that the situation was affecting both businesses and household feeding.

The respondents, who spoke with our correspondent on Thursday in Abuja, said they were adopting different strategies to remain in business amid rising costs.

Mrs Mary Augustine, owner of a local restaurant in the FCT, said the prices of tomatoes, pepper, and leafy vegetables had increased significantly in recent months.

“Previously, a big basket of tomatoes was being sold for between N45,000 and N48,000, but it is presently being sold for between N85,000 and N90,000.

“A 50kg bag of pepper which used to cost between N20,000 and N30,000 now sells for between N120,000 and N150,000,” she said.

She said the increase in the prices had made many food vendors to either increase the prices of the meals or reduce the portion.

“We use vegetables every

day for cooking soups, stew and salads, but the prices keep increasing almost every week.

“Sometimes, we spend more than twice the amount we used to spend in the market, and customers still expect food prices and quantity served to remain the same.

“To cope with this situation, I now buy vegetables in bulk directly from farmers and preserve them to limit frequent market visits,” Augustine said.

Another food vendor, Mrs

Fatima Muhammad, said that the rising cost of cooking ingredients, especially tomatoes, tatashe, shombo and pepper, had greatly affected her business, forcing her to adjust the way she prepared meals.

According to her, she no longer uses tomatoes regularly because of the high price.

“Whenever I prepare food, I usually combine tomatoes, tatashe, shombo and pepper, but the continuous increase in prices have made me change

my cooking pattern.

“I now buy smaller quantities of tatashe and rely more on shombo, although it is also expensive, also pepper have become even more costly and difficult to afford in large quantities.

“Onions is the cheapest vegetables now, but while it is important for improving the taste of food, it can cause food spoilage when used excessively without proper preservation, especially due to poor electricity supply,” Muhammad said.

Small business owners lament poor electricity supply, seek FG's intervention

ABUJA

Many Small business owners in the Federal Capital territory (FCT), have continued to lament the epileptic power supply to their business premises.

The business owners who spoke with newsmen on Thursday in Abuja, said their businesses are collapsing gradually due to poor electricity supply and high cost of alternative power sources.

NAN reports that many parts of the FCT, especially the satellite towns have been experiencing blackouts or poor power supply.

While some areas had power supply for just four hours in a day, others do not have at all.

A laundry man, Mr Muhammadu Isah, said that the lack of constant power supply was making it hard for him to sustain his business.

“We are facing serious challenges due to poor electricity supply because our business depends heavily on electricity.

“The lack of power forces us to rely on generators to carry

out our work, especially since we use washing machines for laundry,” he said.

Isah said another major challenge was the high cost of fuel needed to run the generators.

He said that the constant increase in fuel prices had made it very difficult for them to sustain the business, “large part of our income now goes into buying petrol”.

According to him, ironing customers' clothes have become one of the biggest challenges because generators cannot effectively power electric pressing irons.

“As a result, we are forced to use charcoal irons, which also create many problems for us. Sometimes, while lighting the charcoal iron, a person may get burnt, and at other times it can burn customers' clothes.

“This often makes them angry, and some even stop bringing us clothes for ironing,” Isah said.

A tailor, Mrs Amina Yusuf, said that the inconsistent power supply had slowed down production because most of the machines they use now depend on electricity.



LONE ACCIDENT:

A lone accident that claimed 5 lives, left 10 injured on Lagos-Abeokuta Expressway on Thursday morning

Policy-makers seek bold reforms to strengthen Africa's economic resilience

Senior African and European policy-makers have called for bold economic reforms to strengthen Africa's resilience, attract investment and boost domestic revenue mobilisation.

They made the call at a high-level plenary discussions at the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group's 2026 Annual Meetings in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo.

The experts warned that rising debt-servicing costs, climate shocks and declining concessional financing continued to limit fiscal space in many African countries.

AfDB President, Dr Sidi Ould Tah, said Africa's economic outlook offered reasons for optimism in spite global uncertainty.

“However, we must remain clear-headed and vigilant, both to consolidate the current performance of our economies and to address the structural challenges of financing our development,” he said.

Baroness Jenny Chapman, the United Kingdom Minister of

State for International Development and Africa, said global financing models for Africa must shift from aid dependency to investment partnerships.

“The idea that we can continue in the same way simply does not make sense anymore,” she said.

Chapman also called for reforms to global credit rating systems, arguing that inflated risk perceptions increased borrowing costs for African countries.

Tanzania's Prime Minister, Dr Mwigulu Nchemba, said his country financed more than 70 per cent of its national budget through domestic revenues.

He attributed the performance to improved tax systems, digitalisation and prudent public spending.

Botswana's Vice-President and Finance Minister, Ndaba Gaolathe, stressed the importance of institutional efficiency, warning that bureaucratic delays discouraged investment.

“Red tape is the same thing as destroying capital,” he said.

Eid-el-Kabir celebration should inspire struggle against hardship —NLC

ABUJA

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has said that the Eid-el-Kabir celebration should inspire Nigerians to intensify the struggle against hardship, insecurity and anti-people policies.

The NLC President, Mr Joe Ajaero said this in a Sallah message issued in Abuja.

Ajaero congratulated Muslim faithful on the celebration, describing Eid-el-Kabir as a season of sacrifice, obedience and sober reflection.

“As we mark Eid-el-Kabir, this celebration should be different because the working class and poor majority are bleeding under neoliberal economic policies,” he said.

He said many Nigerians were frustrated and vulnerable due worsening poverty, hardship and insecurity across the country.

“Our policy choices should reflect right understanding by placing workers over capital and people over profit,” Ajaero stated.

He urged leaders to reflect

deeply on the impact of their decisions on ordinary Nigerians struggling with hunger, unemployment and rising living costs.

“Governance is not about winning in the media or wishful thinking. It is about security of lives and provision of necessities,” he said.

The labour leader described worsening insecurity as a major threat to national survival.

“Millions cannot sleep with their eyes closed neither can they travel our roads freely without fearing for their lives,” he said.

Ajaero urged political leaders to demonstrate sacrifice and accountability, and not

place more economic burdens on already suffering citizens.

“This season demands that our leaders search themselves and decide to work for a Nigeria that serves the majority and not privileged few,” he said.

The NLC president also warned politicians ahead of the 2027 general elections, saying workers and ordinary Nigerians would not forget broken promises.

“Every vote must be a weapon against hunger, insecurity and exploitation,” he said.

Ajaero called on Nigerians to use the festive season for prayer, political education, grassroots mobilisation and national unity.

Africa's trade finance gap can exceed \$100bn again —AfDB Report

ABUJA

The African Development Bank (AfDB) Group has warned that Africa's trade finance gap could exceed 100 billion dollars again if rising geo-political tensions and disruptions to global trade and supply chains persist.

The warning is contained in the bank's fifth Trade Finance Report presented on the sidelines of the 2026 Annual Meetings of the AfDB in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo.

According to the report, Africa's unmet demand for trade

finance ranged between 74 billion dollars and 92 billion dollars in 2024, representing about 5.4 per cent of the continent's total merchandise trade value.

The report acknowledged that African financial institutions had continued supporting trade activities in spite global economic shocks, renewed geo-political tensions, higher oil and fertiliser prices.

It, however, said that weaker currencies and tighter correspondent banking conditions could widen the trade finance gap to between 86.6 billion dollars and 102.6 billion dollars by 2027.

It stated that commercial banks intermediated only 23 per cent of Africa's total trade between 2020 and 2024.

The report said this was down from 40 per cent recorded between 2011 and 2019, showing that African trade remained underserved by commercial lenders.

The AfDB, however, said Africa had made significant progress in bank-intermediated intra-African trade.

According to the report, this accounted for 34 per cent of total bank-supported trade between 2020 and 2024, com-

pared with 18 per cent before the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report identified foreign exchange liquidity shortages as the biggest obstacle to trade finance growth, with 36 per cent of surveyed banks citing limited access to foreign currency as their major constraint.

The AfDB also highlighted low adoption of digital trade finance solutions across the continent.

It said that only 28 per cent of surveyed banks had adopted digital platforms for trade finance operations due to high implementation costs and weak technological infrastructure.



LEGAL RUDIMENTS

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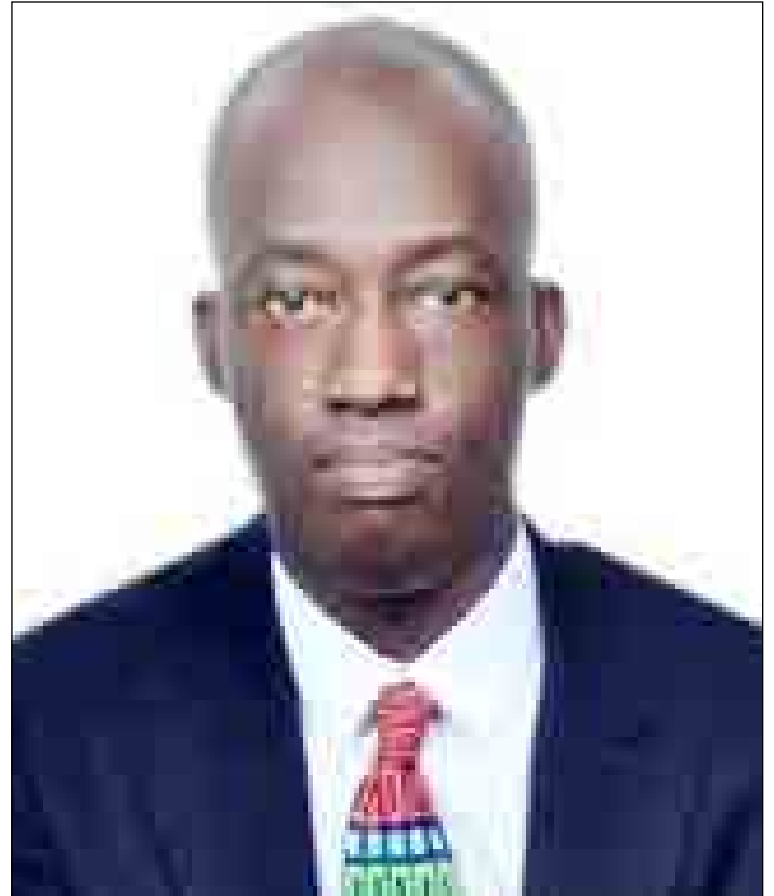
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POWER OF ATTORNEY

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



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



MR IREDIA IDEMUDIA OSIFO

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NBA BENIN UPDATE

(LION BAR)

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

2026 NBA ELECTIONS

A five -man Electoral Committee of NBA, Benin Branch

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

Election Date: 28th day of June, 2026.

The Power of Attorney is a legal document in writing not necessarily by a deed, whereby the person giving out the power is called the Donor, Principal or a Grantor while the person that the power is being conferred or donated is known as the Donee, Attorney or Agent.

The Power of Attorney is an instrument of delegation that only authorizes the donee to do specific act in the name of the donor to a third party. The Supreme Court has affirmed that power of Attorney is only an instrument of delegation which does not alienates, limit or transfer interest in land as in the case of a conveyance.

However, the donation of power may not be by a deed except where the Donee is authorized or required by the owner of the property to do so in the exercise of its power by Deed prepared by Donor's Solicitor in areas where he is expected to execute to do so, especially in the sale of land or to create a legal mortgage or lease for a period above three years to the third party, which can be referred to as alienation.

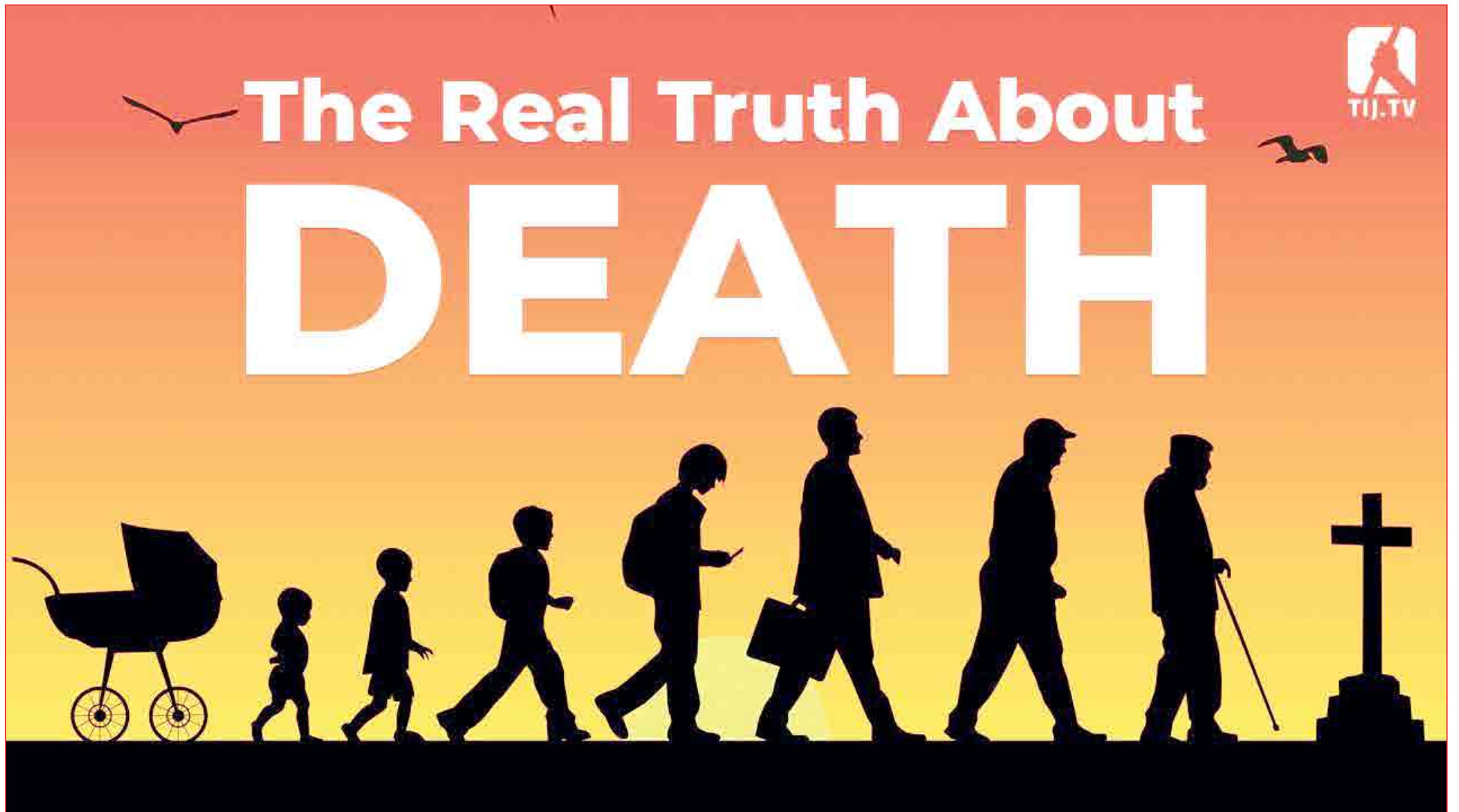
It must be noted that the parties in Power of Attorney must be juristic persons, both the Donor and the Donee at the day of creation and throughout the period covered by the power of Attorney. Therefore, a Power of Attorney given to a firm of lawyers without a named legal practitioner or to an office without a named occupant or to a named enterprise is void ab-initio.

Suffice to say that a Donee given the instrument of a specific power of Attorney is to act on the Donor's behalf on a particular or single transaction for a specific purpose, which is in contrast to a general donation of power where the Donee is empowered with the instrument in certain areas of the Donor's financial or business affairs.

These are contained in the omnibus clause of the instrument which are interpreted ejusdem generis, meaning

Friday Sermon

The reality of death



IMAM MUSAH LUKEMAN

All praise is due to Allah. We praise Him, we seek His help and His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil within ourselves and from the consequences of our bad deeds. Whoever Allah guides, none can misguide; and whoever He allows to stray, none can guide.

I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone, without a partner. And I bear witness that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is His servant and messenger.

O servants of Allah! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and do not die except in a state of Islam.

Dear brothers and sisters in Islam, Today's khutbah is about a reality that no one can escape, death.

Allah says in the Qur'an: "Every soul shall taste death. Then to Us you will be returned." (Surah Al-Ankabut 29:57)

Death is certain. It does not distinguish between the rich and the poor, the young and the old, the powerful and the weak. It is a journey that every single one of us will take.

Allah also says: "Wherever you may be, death will reach you, even if you are in fortified towers." (Surah An-Nisa 4:78)

No matter how much we try to avoid it, delay it, or forget it, death will come at its appointed time.

THE PURPOSE OF REMEMBERING DEATH

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Remember often the destroyer of pleasures, death." (Tirmidhi)

WHY SHOULD WE REMEMBER DEATH?

Because remembering death: Softens the heart; Reduces attachment to this dunya; Encourages repentance; and Motivates good deeds.

When a person truly remembers death, he begins to prepare for what comes after it.

THE SHORTNESS OF THIS LIFE

Allah reminds us: "And the life of this world is nothing but a deceiving enjoyment." (Surah Aal 'Imran 3:185)

This life is temporary. No matter how long we live, it is short compared to the Hereafter. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Be in this world as though you were a stranger or a traveler." (Bukhari).

A traveler does not become attached to the road, he is always preparing to reach his destination. Our destination is the Hereafter.

PREPARATION FOR DEATH

Dear Muslims, the intelligent person is the one who prepares for death before it comes. Allah says: "O you who believe! Fear Allah, and let every soul look at what it has sent forth for tomorrow." (Surah Al-Hashr 59:18)

Ask yourself: Are we consistent in

our prayers? Are we sincere in our actions? Are we seeking forgiveness regularly? Are we helping others and giving charity?

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Take advantage of five before five: your youth before your old age, your health before your sickness, your wealth before your poverty, your free time before your busyness, and your life before your death." (Al-Hakim)

THE REALITY AFTER DEATH

After death comes the grave, either a garden from the gardens of Paradise or a pit from the pits of Hell. Then comes resurrection, judgment, and accountability.

Allah says: "So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it." (Surah Az-Zalzalah 99:7-8)

REPENT BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE

Allah calls us to repent: "And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed." (Surah An-Nur 24:31)

Do not delay repentance. Death can come suddenly without warning.

I say these words of mine, and I ask Allah for forgiveness for me and for you. So seek His forgiveness, for He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds. And peace and blessings be upon the Prophet Muhammad

(peace be upon him), his family, and all his companions.

O servants of Allah,

Fear Allah and prepare for death. Increase in good deeds, for you do not know when your time will come.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "The wise person is the one who controls himself and works for what comes after death." (Tirmidhi)

WHAT BENEFITS AFTER DEATH?

When a person dies, all his deeds stop except three: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: ongoing charity (sadaqah jariyah), beneficial knowledge, or a righteous child who prays for him." (Muslim)

So invest in: Charity, Knowledge, Raising righteous children, and Supplication.

O Allah, make us among those who remember death and prepare for it.

O Allah, grant us a good ending (husn al-khatimah). O Allah, forgive our sins, accept our deeds, and admit us into Jannah. O Allah, protect us from the punishment of the grave and the Hellfire.

Indeed, Allah commands justice, excellence, and giving to relatives, and forbids immorality, wrongdoing, and oppression. He reminds you that you may take heed.

Imam Lukeman Musah is the Chief Imam of Central Mosque, Dawah Frontier Academy, Okpella, Etsako East.



When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: ongoing charity (sadaqah jariyah), beneficial knowledge, or a righteous child who prays for him."

Entertainment

— with Davidson Imosime Izegaegbe —

Actors strike gold, film crew are pauperised

The hall is dark. Only motion pictures with lovely sound add great glamour to the actor's performance. The colour grading and editing is perfect making the actors look like demigods. The film ends. The credits roll. Audiences stand up, brushing popcorn crumbs from their laps, discussing the breathtaking cinematography, the seamless editing, the haunting score, and inevitably the powerhouse performance of the lead actor. By the time the screen fades to black, names like: Best Boy Grip, Focus Puller, and Second Assistant Director have scrolled past unread. In these discussions, actors, scenery, cinematography, makeup, costumes, sound are in flashes as the acting prowess of the actors take centre stage. Paparazzi are possessed by the power of presence of these actors. The media is agog as if the Graces temporarily visited the cinema in human forms. The crew? Did you say the crew? The crew; these crew, these creators, these labourers in the vineyards of creativity are invisible architects not worthy of mention and visibility. Their relevance ends on film sets and editing studios. They are nothing but just dust blown by a hurried wind.

If this was all, if the sadness had ended there, the pain would have been mild, but the cut is deeper than we all think. In the modern film industry, a stark and deeply entrenched economic disparity exists which you do not know. While a single A-list actor can command 5-20 million for a few months of work, the entire crew members working longer hours every day alongside these so-called popular actors made popular by neglected crew, struggle like a knocked boxer to clear a living wage. This wage gap is more than just a footnote in Nollywood economics; it is a sad systemic crisis that painfully undervalues the technical and creative artisans who actually with their hearts and minds build the world of the film, that favours, instead, only the singular face or faces that sells the film.

Cinema, as we all know, is inherently an ensemble as well as a collaborative medium. Do you know that without a script a film making process may not happen? Even when the script writer makes a script from endless possibilities and sleepless nights, the script is still merely words on a page until a producer sees the business plan and ways to turn the pages into money, until a director decides on ways and who to use to give these written pages words and movements, a production designer builds the environment, a gaffer lights it, a costume designer dresses the performers, a sound-man ensures natural sound from his equipment follows his designs, and a cinematographer captures the frame. Yet, the cultural narrative surrounding filmmaking, sadly, has long championed the star system.

From the golden age of filmmaking to the experience of the modern blockbuster era, studios in other climes and filmmakers in Nigeria have relied on actors as the primary marketing vehicle. A bankable star, to them, guarantees a huge box office



returns, attracts investors, and also secures both local and international distribution. Because of this line of reasoning, an actor's compensation is rarely tied to the physical labour or the hours they log on set; instead, it is a reflection of their marketable likeness, public acceptance and intellectual property value.

When an actor receives a multi-million Naira pay-check, they are being paid for their brand and, sadly, the brand created by the film crew. Their duty on set, however, is undeniably vital, as they must deliver the emotional truth of the story, but their physical contribution represents only a fraction of the machinery required to make a movie.

On the other hand, the film crew is compensated strictly for their labour. They do not own a piece of the intellectual property, nor do their names appear on some posters simply because the producer thinks their names may not guarantee ticket sales. As a result, the financial structure of a film sadly creates a rigid hierarchy: the talent is treated as an irreplaceable asset, while the crew is frequently treated as an interchangeable, disposable expense. Not true? Do a research on payment and welfare of A-list cast and crew before you draw conclusions.

In industry parlance, as we know it, budgets are split into two categories: above-the-line (writers, directors, producers, and actors) and below-the-line (the technical crew). While above-the-line talent enjoys residual structures, comfortable trailers, and massive upfront fees, below-the-line workers face an entirely different reality. A thing many, not all, Nigeria filmmakers who also are producers of their films erase from their productions. They treat their crew like kings and princes alongside their cast. This is sadly few among the many as there are sad tales hanging by the side of the mouth of film crew readily accessible by any who sincerely care to hear their moody and sad stories.

A standard shoot day for a crew member rarely lasts just 8 hours and many Nigeria producers know this. Due to tight production schedules and the immense cost of renting

equipment and locations, a typical film set operates on 12-to-20-hour daily shifts. While actors have spaces in between to rest within these daily filming shifts, certainly not for the crew. In every production, the crew members are often the first to arrive (call time) and the last to leave (wrap). A makeup artist might arrive at 4:00 AM to prepare talents, while a grip may stay until midnight tearing down heavy rigging. This culture of chronic overwork creates severe physical and mental exhaustion, thereby leading to high burnout rates and dangerous driving conditions during post-work commutes. And you wonder why tension sometimes arises with the crew and most times heightened by the cast? Burnout is like a virus sucking your senses in instalments.

While unionised crew members have negotiated minimum tier rates, these wages or fees rarely match the hyper-inflation of production hubs like that of Nigeria. Furthermore, film production is often cyclical and gig-based. A crew member might work intensely for three months and then face six months or more of unemployment. This is a common occurrence we all know and see happen every now and then. If we decide to break down the actual hours logged into a single film production by members of the crew, the hourly wage of a highly skilled camera assistant or sound mixer in Nigeria for instance is far just below minimum wages, especially on independent or lower-budget features where safety and overtime rules are routinely stretched or ignored. How can the low pockets of film crew attract respect from the actors that they tirelessly ensure their various scenes come out flawless with multiple camera angle takes amid a myriad of unpardonable mistakes? Sadly, many of these crew are treated like lepers by the same actors they want to end up on screens like demigods. In spite of all, the crew do not allow a carryover of the open hate from the actors to affect their creation. To them the actors are mannequin to be dressed in appropriately before presenting them to the public. Now is it wise to keep malice with a mannequin?

To understand the severity of this

imbalance, one only needs to look at the mathematics of a standard major studio or producer's budget, their role in comparison to cast and crew, responsibility to cast and crew, average compensation to cast and crew, hours logged in a single production by cast and crew, and finally residuals for all. We do know that an actor's performance is captured in fragments. On a typical film shooting day, an actor may spend several hours in their hotels, conducive spaces around the locations, waiting for lighting setups, and only stepping onto the set when the physical environment is perfectly prepared for them. Meanwhile, the crew operates in a state of perpetual motion, lifting heavy gear, troubleshooting technical glitches, receiving insults like freebies and braving harsh weather conditions to ensure that those few minutes of performance can actually be recorded seamlessly.

This economic disparity between cast and crew is not just unfair; it is unsustainable. The film industry is currently facing a quiet mass exodus of skilled craftspeople into more lucrative industries where their skills are respected alongside better payments. The film crew are leaving the film sets after garnering more experience and moving into shooting few seconds advertisements, musical videos and getting paid far better than they get in a month for a movie. The loss of a generational knowledge is real, even though we pretend not to notice. Many veteran technicians, costumiers, and gaffers have retired or left the industry due to low pay and poor working conditions. This happens everyday. Sadly, there is a shrinking pool of mentors to train the next generation. We may not know this until a hired cameraman will be asking an actor where the record button is on his own camera. The worst hit in this sad circle of imbalance is the visual effects sector. Even though it is one of the most egregious examples of this sad circle of imbalance, do you even know that many VFX houses are now forced to bid unsustainably low prices just to win post production contracts in order to put food on their tables? The film crew bear the brunt, by working many painful hours per week without

overtime pay just to render massive blockbuster spectacles, while the actors, some even starring against their green screens in an entire production take home the lion's share of the production cost.

When crews are underpaid, many things happen and many things suffer as well. This pitiable condition makes them not be able to afford to turn down gruelling gigs. The combination of financial stress, disrespect and sleep deprivation has historically resulted in tragic, preventable accidents on set, ranging from heavy equipment failures to crew members falling asleep at the wheel on their way home. We must always remember that every movie is a miracle of collective labour involving both cast and crew. If for example you as a producer decide to remove the lead actor, you can recast almost immediately. But if you remove the crew, the cameras stop, the lights go out, the sound becomes hollow and the project ceases to exist.

The argument often pushed by producers and investors is one of basic capitalism: "People buy tickets to see the actor, not the focus puller." While this is true from a marketing standpoint, it fundamentally misunderstands the mechanics of art production. Don't people buy cars and electronics? Are we all not glued to our social handles? Does it not take a diverse team to make these arts reach the consumers? A luxury watch is valuable because of the master horologist who built the internal gears, not just the celebrity ambassador who wears it on a billboard. That is how it works. Until we realise that the actors are who they are because of the role of the driver on a film set carrying them from their hotels to various locations discovered by the location scout, the inputs of the gaffer and so on, the crew will constantly keep migrating. For the film industry to survive an era defined by streaming disruption, artificial intelligence, and shifting economic models, the compensation structure must be democratised otherwise, we may walk joyously into the film dark ages without even realising it.

Today, some film crew are part of those receiving annual residue from Audio Visual Society of Nigeria, which is a big motivation for creativity. It is also time film crew are truly paid as creators of something big from nothing. Most people remember actors and their dialogues and not the screenwriter who created the words. Is the cinema not created to truly make those working behind the camera irrelevant while those in front of the camera are the most important? Don't they know that improper shot frames or wrong placement of microphone, wrong costumes or makeup can destroy and end an actor's career? Just as directors, producers, many crew members and actors receive residuals from AVRS when a film succeeds, is streaming on different platforms or syndication, a percentage of backend profits should be pooled and distributed by the film investors on an agreed period to the above-the-line and below-the-line crew. Just thinking aloud, if anyone may hear me.

ArtsWorld with Francis Odupute 08023680030

1-98 Art Studio: A new frontier for experimental art in Lagos Island

OLUSHOLA OLAJOBI

The need for a creative collaborative space for visual artists has become important in the contemporary African art scene. While few have become a cook pot sort of or a preparation ground for emerging and professionals such as the famous

Universal Studios among several others, the limited genre of focus of these places created a gap which 1-98 Art Studio will fill.

The new bold space, located in an iconic postcolonial 15 floors storey building within the heart of Lagos Central Business District for artistic innovation and critical discourse is

taking shape gradually, further adding to the nation art development corpus.

1-98 Art Studio emerges as a dynamic incubator for young and emerging creatives, offering an immersive environment where artistic practice meets sustainability, accessibility, and intellectual exchange.

Located within the historic Fanan-

da's Tower—a relic of Lagos' postcolonial architecture—the studio stands at the intersection of

contemporary experimentation and cultural heritage, positioning itself as a vital hub for the next generation of contemporary artists.

As expressed by Taiwo Aiyedogbon, the project Convener, 1-98 Art Studio was conceived as a communal and process-driven space designed to foster self-directed residencies, cross-disciplinary dialogue, and material explorations across a spectrum of practices, including Performance Art, Sculpture, Textile & Ceramics, Installation &, Sound Art, Photography & Digital Media, and Writing & Research.

Beyond offering physical space, the 1-98 Art Studio Residency Program will provide access to critique sessions, mentorship, workshops, and public engagements such as open studios and artist talks. The studio's ethos is rooted in the belief that creative sustainability is not only about materials but also about fostering long-term ecosystems for artistic development and collaboration.

1-98 Art Studio was officially opened on the first of January, 2025 with various activities including the launch of its art residency program. Tolulope Ami-Williams is its inaugural resident artist with hope to welcome more creatives before the end of the year.

Tolulope Ami-Williams is a multidisciplinary artist who employs performance and art education whose practice deeply resonates with the studio's mission.

A 2023/2024 Chevening Scholar and recipient of the Prince Claus Fund Seed Award. Tolulope Ami-Williams' works interrogates identity, ancestry, and empowerment from a multidisciplinary perspective thereby juxtaposing body, sound, poetic writing, and symbolic materials including indigenous masks and charcoal. Her residency at 1-98 Art Studio will serve as an experimental phase in her evolving practice, culminating in a public showcase and critical dialogues.

1-98 Art Studio is uniquely positioned within Lagos Island's vibrant cultural district, surrounded by key landmarks including Tafawa Balewa Square, the National Museum Lagos, John Randle Centre for Yoruba Culture & History, the Freedom Park among other art and cultural heritage centres.

This unique location will provide a rich tapestry for creatives to engage and tap from the city's history and contemporary realities, expanding the discourse on space negotiation and artistic sustainability.

1-98 Art Studio invites artists, curators, collectors, and the wider creative community to engage with its upcoming programmes.



1-98 ART STUDIO MEMBERS AND BENEFICIARIES AT THE OPENING

Orisa je kin pe meji Obirin ko denu - (God bless my household with a second woman is a woman's false wish)

Artist:
Joshua Adeyemi

Medium:
Mixed Media on Wood Panel

“Orisa je kin pe meji Obirin ko denu.” which can be summarised with the single word “Jealousy”, a mixed media piece created on a wood panel visually conveying Joshua Adeyemi's interpretation of human experience drawing from the Yoruba worldview.

The visual composition combined well calculated lines in rhythmic and structural flows to create a balanced and visually engaging art piece spiced with the elements carefully arranged to create a harmonious whole.

The artwork at a glance shows two bold abstracted female figures in contrasting positions looking at opposite sides, bare-chested with no definitive facial features.

The artist's combination of differ-

ent materials including acrylic paint, fabric, aluminium foil, and other elements add depth and complexity to the artwork which is further enriched by the textural surface with the wood panel serving as a sturdy and natural background, enhancing the overall aesthetic quality of the piece.

The mastery combination of vibrant colours of yellow, lilac, orange, turquoise green and white in the background in contrast to the muted tones of red, blue green and few blacks highlighted by brighter shades of the same palette also add to the rhythm and overall visual experience. Placing warm colours against cooler colours, thereby evoking visual engagement and emotions synonymous to jealousy and envy.

The title of the artwork, “Orisa je kin pe meji Obirin ko denu.”, which translates to “God bless my Household with a second Woman is a Woman's false wish” provides insight into the concept of jealousy and the consequences of desiring more than what

one already possesses.

The artwork depicts various symbolic motifs and visual cues such as figures, heart shape, floral, plants, star, wheel, bird, fish and other abstracted elements that convey a sense of envy, possessiveness, or longing. The composition and arrangement of these elements contribute to the overall narrative of the artwork.

Through the use of mixed media, Joshua Adeyemi has employed the creative combination of materials to convey the emotions associated with jealousy and consequences of unsustainable human desires.

The layering of materials, the juxtaposition of colours, and the incorporation of textures all serves as avenues to evoke a sense of tension, unease, or longing.

Overall, “Orisa je kin pe meji Obirin ko denu.” is a thought-provoking artwork that invites viewers to contemplate the complexities of human emotions.



ORISA JE KIN PE MEJI OBIRIN KO DENU. (GOD BLESS MY HOUSEHOLD WITH A SECOND WOMAN IS A WOMAN'S FALSE WISH)

Wia awa moats for Benin City?

DAVIDSON IMOSIME IZEGAEGBE

Dem nor fit born you for Benin City, bury ya placenta for awa soil, and you com grow up to say, you nor no wetin Benin pipo de call "Iya" wey mean MOAT. If you nor still no say dis moat or Iya as Benin pipo de call am, na wetin evri person dem born for hia, or true son of de soil must no, naim be say, dem need to do DNA for you sharp sharp and e get why. You laik, you fit take my yanings like say na joke o! But las las nor be me go open my mouth to yan you say de Benin Moat no be just ordinary gutter or hole for ground wey gofment do for eroshon wota to de pass.

Una see dis moat I de yan about so, na one of de ogbonge man-made earthwork for de whole wide world bifor de mashin age. We de yan about somtin wey awa ancestors use dia ordinary bare hands and simple tools dig, just to protect de Great Benin Kingdom.

But today, if you waka round de City, from Akpakpava go reach Third Junction, or you pass Sapele Road go reach Sakponba, you go want cry. Abi na de one wey pass Adesogbe road? Eniways, pipo don yan am say, wetin pipo nor value, dem can't fit to take care of or protect. Jus imagine de moat wey suppose be awa pride wey we for de take make iyanga, awa own "Eiffel Tower" or "Great Wall of China," don turn emababa, wey mean somtin wey nor serious wey pikins de take play. Na who do us laik dis?

De kwesion wey evribodi dey ask now na be say, na wetin exately happen to all of awa Moats? Na wetin fit difit awa moats laik yard wey dem trowey bomb put? Bifor we start to yan about de wahala wey de ground now, make we small-small look back, and we go see say awa ancestors dem no be small pipo at all. During de time of Oba Oguola (around 1280 AD) and later Oba Ewuare de Great (around 1460 AD), naim dem dig all dis moats and na for two main risons: Defense and Boundari. During dat time so, all de moats no easy to climb, and nor also easy at all to cross. If as

at dat time, enemy wan attack de Benin Kingdom, dem go meet dis deep pit wey must to stop dem an bicom dia obstaku. Dis Moat so, long pass 15,000 kilometers and if you com join all of dem togeda for de whole old Benin Empire, na anoda tin be dat. Even de Oyinbo pipo, wey com Benin Empire for 1897 dat time, shocktalize as dem eyes see wetin dem neva see for dem life bifor. Na so dem open mouth for grand gbuor as awa moats be laik abracadabra for dem eye. De rison wey make dem shocktalize na bicos, dem neva see dat kain engineering wonder wonder work bifor.

Oya na, make we fast-forward to 2026, dis tori don change. Na we even com shocktalized pass de Oyinbo pipo dem. Instead of tourists to dey troop com see dis man-made wonder, na different tin we de see. Pipo don turn de moats to dem latrin, de trowey eni kain dorti dia, kormunities wey de nia de moats don sell dem to de pipo wey fit pay put to build dia houses, shops, and religious houses put. Dis pipo don go fill de place with sand, as dem de do for Lekki for Lagos, com block de way, and build tins put. If moat na human being, him nor go don kpai or give up since? Bicos of all dis yamayama bihavior, awa Moats wey suppose de deep don turn normal grand finish.

But afta we don abuse awa moats finish, de mata com be laik adumadubodi. De rison why be say, as pipo don block de natural flow of wota if heavy rain fall, de wota kukuma de enta pipo houses, religion centas, bizness centas, streets and evri wia. So dia for na, if small rain jus fall, you go see pipo for televishon de cry beg gofment to com helep dem as wota de fall dem houses, de carri pipo, de fall eletrik poles and many oda tins. The Moat wey suppose helep us de drain wota comot as rain fall, don turn to Wetin de carri wota com diffrent areas. De sand wey rain dey carri follow bodi don kukuma fill de remaining place, and de all de fences wey pipo build.

If we wan tell awasef de truth, de blame reach evribodi hand. From gofment wey don carri mega phone

de shout for centuries say dem wan revive awa moats but nor do eni tin as no beta law de to gbab de pipo wey sell and buy all dis moats finish. Moats wey de oda kontris wey nor reach awa own na real National Monument wey de bring billions of money to dem from tourism.

We as citizens nor jus try at all, bicos we no jus value wetin we get. We only de see dis Moats as big gutter instead of Big History. If you see ya neighbor de pour dirti inside Moat and you keep kwayet, you don join cause de problem. And pipo just feel say awa history no mata reach de shop, house or religious centas wey dem build on top dis moats.

You fit ask say, "wetin concern me for inside dis moat mata? Afta all, de Moat don old, make we move on." Whosai! E nor be laik dat! De rison na bicos say, History na Identity. If we lose lose de Moat Kpatapkata, we don lose de physical proof of how great

awa pipo be. We no fit de tell awa children tori of Great Benin when de evidence don disappear. And make we nor forget say, money dey dis Moat! If de Moats clean, and we get walkway, museums, and parks round am, walahi, tourists from Europe, America, and oda parts of Africa go de com. Hotel go full, transporters go get work, and Benin City go bubble with legit foreign exchange. And make we nor forget say, moat wey dem maintain wella na natural drainage system. E go helep to reduce de heavy flood wey de catch many parts of Benin eni time rain fall.

But sha, we fit still fix am if all of us serious. E neva too late to save wetin remain. Even doo som parts don go, we fit still protect de ones wey still dey. And dat time, na for gofment to mark out de Moat areas and pull down eni building wey de wetin oyinbo de call "Right of Way." No be to de pity enibodi; law na de law. Afta,

na for gofment to com provide beta ways for pipo to de trowey dem dirti so dat dem no go tink of to go trowey dia dirti for Moat.

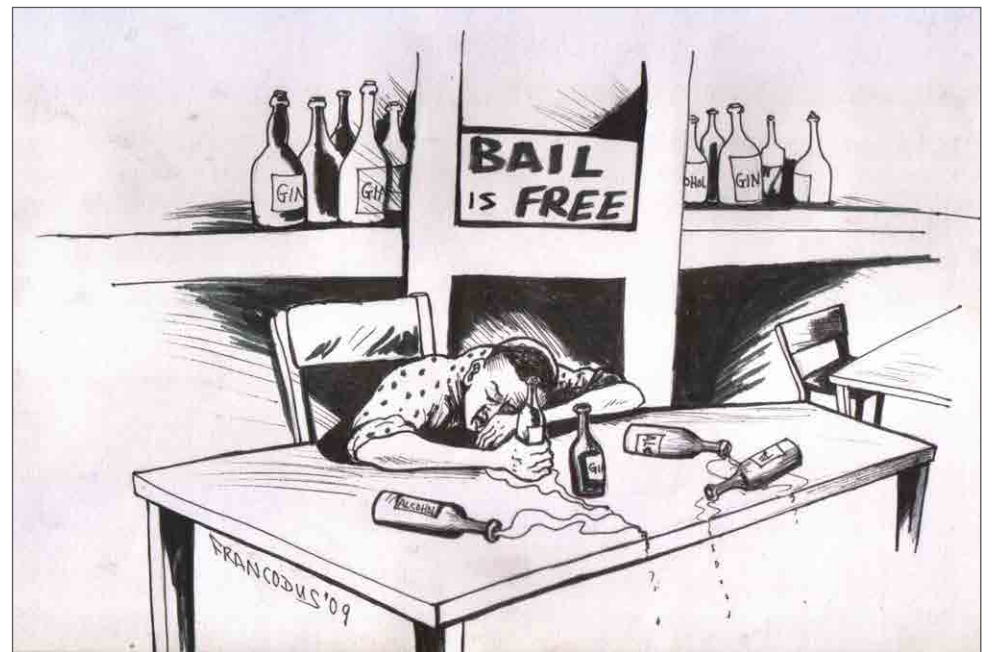
I no say, de Benin Moat suppose de for UNESCO World Heritage list proper-proper. If we fit get international support, de funding to restore am go even de easier. Make we nor forget to teach awa pikin dem for school say de Moat na treasure, na awa history plus heritage. If de younger generashon value am, dem go protect am. As e be so, awa Benin Moat dey cry. De sand and de dirti don almost cover her voice. As Benin pipo and as Nigerians, we owe awa ancestors de common duty to clear dis "Iya" and make am shine again.

Make we no wait until de only place for us to com fit see awa Moats, na inside old black-and-white foto. All of us no say we for loose-guard awa moats, but we still get small time now to save am!



CURRENT STATE OF THE BENIN MOAT

CARTOONS



NEWS**Foreign****Iran says it targeted American base after fresh US strikes**

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has said it targeted an American air base in the region, after fresh US strikes on southern Iran overnight.

Kuwait, which hosts a US base, said it had intercepted "hostile missile and drone threats", but did not confirm the target.

The Iranian missile launch came after the US shot down Iranian drones over the Strait of Hormuz and struck a military site in Bandar Abbas, a strategic port city in southern Iran.

It is the second time in three days that the US has attacked targets in Iran - saying they were conducted in self-defence. The renewed hostilities threaten a fragile ceasefire between Washington and Tehran.

The IRGC said the attack on the US air base took place in the early hours of Thursday morning and targeted "the source" of earlier US strikes on Iran, according to state broadcaster IRIB.

US Central Command (Centcom) said Iran's attack on Kuwait was an "egregious ceasefire violation" that occurred "hours after Iranian forces launched five one-way attack drones that posed a clear threat in and near the Strait of Hormuz".

It said all the drones were intercepted and that a sixth drone launched from an Iranian ground control site in Bandar Abbas was also prevented.

Centcom described its actions as "measured, purely defensive, and intended to maintain the ceasefire".

**US AIR STRIKE:**

The strikes come amid a fragile ceasefire and protracted negotiations to end the war, which began with the US and Israel striking Iran on 28 February.

Israel hits Lebanese capital in 'targeted strike'

Israel has hit the Lebanese capital, Beirut, for only the second time since the start of a ceasefire last month.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said the attack at about 14:00 (11:00 GMT) was carried out in a "targeted manner", but gave no details. Israeli media cited unnamed sources as saying the target of the strike had been the head of an Iranian militia.

Israel had spared Beirut at the request of the US and the attack came after waves of Israeli strikes aimed at Hezbollah infrastructure in southern Lebanon, according to the IDF.

Both Israel and Hezbollah - the powerful Shia group supported by Iran - have accused each other of repeated violations of a ceasefire.

Thick smoke was seen billowing across residential buildings in Dahieh, the densely populated Shia suburb that serves as Hezbollah's stronghold in the capital, after the latest Israeli attack.

Residents could be heard calling out to neighbours and relatives to check on their safety as rescue crews rushed in.

Mohamad was asleep when the strike hit.

"There's nothing here!" he said, waving his hands. "Everything happening here - all this pressure on people - is just to make us hate Hezbollah, but that's not going to happen. We're not the kind of people who turn against others like that."

According to Israeli media, the target of the strike was Ali al-Husni, head of the missile force in the Imam Hossein Division - an Iranian militia allied to Hezbollah.

The strikes came after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced an expansion of a ground operation following Hezbollah drone attacks on troops occupying part of southern Lebanon and on civilians in northern Israel.

On Wednesday, the IDF urged residents to move north of the Zahrani River, about 40km (25 miles) from the Israeli border, saying it would act "with extreme force".

At least 11 people were killed in two sets of Israeli strikes which hit Tyre and an area to the city's east early on Thursday, according to the Lebanese health ministry.

Social media videos from Tyre, one of Lebanon's biggest cities, showed streets lit orange by flames, smoke-filled roads, and at least one vehicle engulfed in fire.

By daylight, a massive fireball was filmed erupting near a cluster of high-rise residential buildings, sending a mushroom-shaped column of smoke rising above the city skyline.

Stunned residents looked on as debris spread through surrounding streets.

A Hezbollah member in Tyre told the BBC rescue and recovery crews had been forced to stop their work because conditions remain "too dangerous" and workers received calls from the Israeli military warning them to evacuate the area.

Wednesday's evacuation order was the largest since the ceasefire took effect, covering about 300 towns and villages - about 14% of Lebanese territory. Many residents, including those already displaced from other parts of southern Lebanon, have nowhere obvious to go.

The streets of Saida were oddly busy on Thursday - the marina area filled with beachgoers eating lunch, and not a tent for the displaced in sight.

But with shelters exceeding capacity, humanitarian workers and city officials told those displaced to keep going north. There is no more room here.

Saida is a coastal city north of the Zahrani River, but south of Beirut. It has not been hit as hard as other cities like Tyre or Nabatieh.

Questions over safety as 16 pupils die in another Kenya school fire

The death of 16 students in a fire on Thursday has once again sparked concerns over the safety of Kenya's boarding schools.

The tragedy, which occurred at Utumishi Girls Academy in Gilgil, about 120km (77 miles) north-west of capital city Nairobi, follows a string of deadly fires at boarding schools in recent years.

The authorities are still investigating the cause of Thursday's fire but parents of the students, along with Kenyans on social media, have been questioning how prepared boarding schools are for fires and whether dormitories meet the required safety standards.

Roughly 12 hours after the fire, several parents remained at the scene, anxiously waiting for news of their children.

"Don't you understand? I

just want to know if she is dead or alive!" one frustrated man told a police officer who was guarding the school building.

In addition to the pupils who died on Thursday, 79 youngsters were injured, although most have already been discharged from hospital. More than 800 children were in the school at the time of the fire.

Kenya has had a long history of school fires - just two years ago at least 21 people died in a dormitory fire in central Kenya.

Many fires reported in boarding schools have been the result of arson, with disgruntled pupils - angry about the discipline and living conditions - accused of being responsible, while others were caused by accident.

Overcrowding in dormitories and the failure to follow safety guidelines, such as keeping exits

clear and windows unlocked, have frequently been blamed for the high number of casualties.

"We trusted this school with our children. Right now we don't even know who is alive," one parent, waiting outside Utumishi on Thursday, told the BBC.

Roselyn Rakamba said she felt "traumatised" after a friend alerted her to the fire at the school, where her 14-year-old daughter studies.

Rakamba rushed there, but as she was on her way her daughter got in touch to say she was safe.

"I am happy now, but not really because some of the parents have lost their children and in this school, we are like a family," Rakamba said.

The response teams managed to put out the fire by about 03:00.

On Thursday morning, police commander Masoud Mwinyi said that some students who had

fled into nearby areas during the chaos were still being traced.

Wambui Nderitu, whose cousin is a student at the school, said family members coming to the scene were met with confusion and fear.

"When we arrived at the school we were told to queue. Most of us were so worried because we had heard some students had died and others were injured and in hospital."

She said some students were injured after jumping from the upper floor of the dormitory while trying to escape.

"Some of those at the top floor had to jump out, that's why they are injured."

Nderitu said her cousin survived the fire but suffered a broken leg. "I found her... she is fine... but she has a broken leg," she explained.

Gaza City hospitals say several killed in strike, as Israel targets Hamas leaders

At least 10 people, including five children, were killed in an Israeli strike on a building in Gaza City late on Wednesday, according to local hospitals.

The target of the attack appeared to have been a local Hamas battalion commander Imad Asleem, who was killed alongside his teenage daughter Israa and buried on Thursday.

Hamas has not officially commented.

The Israeli military has released a short statement saying it struck "two central Hamas terrorists in the northern Gaza Strip", without disclosing their identities.

It is the latest Israeli strike targeting senior Hamas figures in Gaza in recent days.

Footage from Thursday's attack showed a badly damaged residential building in central Gaza City

and destroyed tents in a neighbouring displaced people's camp.

Around 20 people were reportedly injured.

Raslan Bajou, who was asleep in his tent at the time of the latest strike, said: "This is a sin, I swear it's a sin."

He told BBC News his "neighbours were in pieces" as he described the chaotic aftermath of the attack in which his wife was injured.

"We didn't know what was going on," said Um Azzam al-Zaim, whose relative was visiting her for the Muslim Eid al-Adha holiday.

She continued: "We were soaked when a water tank on the roof above was hit.

"Our tent broke and rubble fell on me from outside. It was difficult for us to get out of the tent."

Um Azzam said that she had seen the bodies of children who had been blown off the top of the neighbouring building after gathering there to share their Eid chocolates.

Pictures from Gaza City on Thursday showed a large funeral procession taking place, with a body wrapped in the flag of Hamas carried on a stretcher through the crowds with a gun placed on top of it.

Several people were seen waving green flags, the colour associated with Hamas.

The Gaza City attack came a day after the newly chosen head of the Hamas military wing, Mohammed Odeh, was killed along with his wife and two sons in an Israeli strike. One other woman was reportedly killed.

On 15 May, Israel killed Odeh's predecessor, Izz al-Din al-Haddad.

Israel has targeted a long

list of Hamas leaders since the start of the Israel-Gaza war.

On Wednesday, Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz wrote on X that his country had "pledged to eliminate everyone who led the October 7 massacre" in 2023, adding: "We pledged that Hamas will not rule Gaza civilly or militarily."

The Israeli military has also said a strike on a car in Khan Younis on Tuesday killed Ihab Khruzim, the head of a Hamas funds transfer network, and Mohammed al-Habash, a unit commander in Hamas's production headquarters who was said to have been involved in weapons manufacturing.

Another Israeli attack on the same day killed at least five Palestinians in al-Meghazi refugee camp in central Gaza, according to a local hospital.

Foreign

NEWS

Learning from Ukraine, Hezbollah is now using fibre-optic drones to hit Israel

Fibre-optic drones have become Hezbollah's primary weapon against Israeli soldiers and civilians, along both sides of the Lebanese border, and are now seen as the biggest threat there, as fighting continues six weeks into a supposed ceasefire.

One Israeli soldier was killed and two others injured in a drone attack near the Israeli border community of Shomera on Wednesday.

Of the 11 Israeli soldiers and one civilian defence contractor killed since the ceasefire came into force, eight have been killed by fibre-optic drones.

Most of the attacks have targeted Israeli forces, which are currently occupying a large area of southern Lebanon, but Hezbollah is also increasingly attacking Israeli communities across the border, according to the Alma Research Center, an Israeli think tank which monitors the conflict.

It has recorded more than

100 drone attacks against communities inside Israel since the ceasefire began in April.

In Shomera, a leafy town at the western end of the border, drone attacks have left trails of fibre-optic wires along the roads – and a new sense of fear in this battle-hardened community.

"The problem is you don't feel them coming. You're sitting there, and suddenly it arrives," said Shomera's council chief, Sami Zanetti. "And if you run away, it follows you."

He showed me a bus-stop, scarred by a recent drone attack this week that struck minutes after a school bus had left.

The fibre-optic drones used by Hezbollah – also known as First-Person View or FPVs – are much harder to detect than the rockets and mortars this town is used to. The drones are loaded with explosives and fly low, without a radio signal that can be jammed by Israel's military. They are connected to their operators

by a thin optical wire, which allow them to see and chase targets on the ground. It's a tactic learned from the war in Ukraine.

Several times a day, sirens sound in these frontier communities, warning of a drone crossing the border from Lebanon. Here, the warnings and the weapons come seconds apart; sometimes there's no warning at all.

"With rockets, I've got 15 seconds to go into a bomb shelter. With drones, you have no way of knowing when it will fall," Sami Zanetti said.

The alerts on our phones said a drone had been spotted, heading straight for Shomera. From inside the public bomb shelter, we scan the sky.

Israel's army sometimes intercepts drones that cross the border, but also often loses contact with the small, low-flying devices.

This time in Shomera, the attack never arrives.

But the road we're standing in is strewn with the fine silvery

filaments left from previous drone strikes.

Just the day before, members of the community's security team were filmed chasing and firing at a drone flying along this street, right next to the house of Amichai Ben David, a peach and nectarine farmer with seven children.

"[The drone] came and we rushed into the house," he told me. "The soldiers outside shot at it, and managed to knock it out of the air. They saved us, thank god."

Amichai has lived here all his life. His home has a large hole in the roof where a rocket hit the family home last year. But the drones are a new and different threat, he says.

"The missiles stopped because of the ceasefire – and the drones started coming instead. They have cameras attached – if there's a soldier in uniform, or they don't like the look of someone, it simply drops and explodes."

Man arrested after three injured in stabbing at Swiss train station

A man has been arrested after three people were injured in a stabbing attack at a train station in Switzerland, police said.

They said the three victims – Swiss nationals aged 28, 43 and 52 – were hospitalised after the attack at Winterthur train station.

The suspect, a 31-year-old Swiss man, used a bladed weapon and that the motive was under investigation, police added.

An eyewitness working in an office building nearby told a local newspaper he heard a man yell "Allahu Akbar" – meaning "God is greatest" in Arabic – at

around 08:30 local time before attacking people with a knife.

A group of schoolchildren were passing through the area at a time and a school teacher was seen standing in front of them to protect them, according to local media.

Another eyewitness, a taxi driver, told Zurich-based daily Neue Zürcher Zeitung that a man had been walking around the station's underpass attacking people.

Photos published by Swiss news outlets show several areas around the station being cordoned off.

Ethiopia heads to polls as Abiy Ahmed eyes landslide victory

In Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa, it is hard to tell an election will happen on Monday that will decide the next five years of Africa's second most populous country.

A few people can be spotted wearing T-shirts with the wheat symbol of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's Prosperity Party (PP), but there are no election posters anywhere.

The party held its only major campaign rally in the capital on Tuesday. It was over by 8:00 am and Abiy, who has ruled since 2018, did not appear.

Few doubt he will cruise back to power with a landslide victory for the PP – no doubt why it is not wasting time and money on campaigning. Online debates between candidates garner just a few hundred views.

Ethiopia's 130 million citizens are used to votes that look pre-determined.

Almost every election since the overthrow of the brutal Derg dictatorship in 1991 has ended with one party winning 90 to 100 percent of seats in parliament, often amid allegations of fraud.

"I don't think my vote can have a significant impact on politics," said Tesfalem, a designer in the capital, saying he won't participate.

"The voice of the people has never changed anything. And I don't think it will this time either," agreed Amanuel, a teacher in the Oromia region.

They gave only their first names for fear of reprisals in a political climate that has hardened of late.

Abiy emerged from the ranks of the previous ruling party to take control in 2018, and initially showed signs of a liberal streak – freeing jailed opposition members and journalists. He even won the Nobel Peace Prize for resolving tensions with neighbouring Eritrea.

But that gave way to mounting repression, particularly of the media.

Several international media groups have been refused entry for the election, and Ethiopia

has slipped to 148th out of 180 countries in Reporters Without Borders' Press Freedom Index.

The irony is that the PP has a positive story to tell: under Abiy, Ethiopia's economy has grown by more than seven percent per year, even if this is mostly the consequences of earlier reforms. It could even top 10 percent this year – among the highest rates in the world.

Abiy has taken steps to reduce state control of the economy, modernise the capital, and inaugurated Africa's largest dam, which is expected to double electricity production.

- Violent disruptions -
But the country is also mired in conflict and tensions between its many ethnic groups.

Insurgents in Amhara and Oromia have threatened to disrupt the election, and no voting will take place in Tigray, where tensions are still high with the federal government over a civil war in 2020-2022 from which some one million people remain displaced.

In Lalibela, a city in Amhara famous for its rock-hewn churches, there have been political gatherings, said Beza, a local tour guide.

But outside the city, where the Fano insurgent group regularly clashes with federal forces, "it's going to be difficult to vote," he added.

Results are due on June 11. Surprises are unlikely: the PP won 96 percent of seats in 2021, and is running uncontested in 64 of Ethiopia's 547 constituencies this time.

There are some 40 opposition parties, but none are serious contenders. Even the largest, Ezema, will field candidates in less than 60 percent of seats, hoping to add to its current total of four MPs.

"Conducting elections under these conditions is essentially a ritual intended to show the international community that the government is elected every five years by the people," Merera Gudina, president of the 11-strong Committee of Opposition Parties, told AFP.



SWISS TRAIN STATION:

Police cordoned off parts of the Winterthur train station, northeast of Zurich, where the attack took place.

Australia charges woman who returned from Syria with joining Islamic State

A woman with links to the Islamic State group who returned to Australia from Syria last year has been charged with being a member of a terrorist organisation and entering a declared conflict zone, police have said.

The 34-year-old arrived in Australia in September along with another woman, police said, and was to appear in a Melbourne court on Thursday.

The announcement comes after two groups of women and children arrived in Australia this month after spending years in the al-Roj camp in north-east Syria where families of IS fighters have been held

since 2019.

Three of the women who returned this month also face various charges including crimes against humanity.

Both offences with which the 34-year-old was charged carry maximum penalties of up to 10 years in prison, Hilda Sirec, federal police assistant commissioner, told reporters.

She said the woman, identified by local media as Rayann El Houli, travelled to Syria in 2013 or 2014 and was detained by Kurdish forces in 2019 and held in Syria's al-Hawl camp.

Sirec said all the adult women who had arrived back in Australia recently were being

investigated, adding: "A period of time without charges being laid is not an indicator that investigations have ceased."

The group who arrived in Sydney and Melbourne on Tuesday were understood to be the last Australians in the al-Roj camp, with other Australians having returned in previous months and years.

A mother and daughter - Kawsar Ahmad and Zeinab Ahmad - who arrived in Melbourne as part of a group at the beginning of the month have been charged with enslavement and using a slave, with the mother also accused of slave trading.

Another woman who arrived in Sydney, Janai Safar was charged with entering and remaining in a declared conflict zone and joining IS.

The women and children have been the subject of heated political debate in Australia, with the government saying it had given them no help to return and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese insisting "if you make your bed, you lie in it".

Advocates argued Australia must uphold their right to return and that the children in particular should be supported and not made to pay for the decisions of their parents.

Feature

Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy: Powering a new Edo under Gov Okpebholo

NAS ODIGIE ETINOSA

In an era where governance is increasingly evaluated based on innovation, digital inclusion, and the ability to connect citizens to opportunities, the Edo State Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy, led by Hon Ohimai Ehijimeton, is steadily emerging as a key driver of Governor Monday Okpebholo's digital transformation agenda.

From enhancing digital governance to empowering EDSG staff and youths with technology-driven opportunities, the Ministry is becoming a symbol of a government committed to preparing Edo for the demands of the 21st-century economy.

At the core of this renewed vision is a clear recognition that modern development is no longer solely centered on roads and buildings but also relies on connectivity, innovation, information systems, and human capital.

The official mandate of the Ministry is to coordinate and promote digital transformation, ICT development, communication systems, and innovation-led governance across Edo State.

Under Governor Okpebholo's administration, the essence of the ministry is starting to lead to tangible actions.

The broader governance approach focused on infrastructure, education, youth empowerment, transparency, and service delivery has created an environment that allows the Ministry to expand digital opportunities throughout the State. When presenting the Edo budget, Governor Okpebholo emphasized accountability, development, and responsive governance as the key pillars of his administration.

A significant aspect of the Ministry's growing influence is its alignment with youth development and digital empowerment initiatives.

The State government reaffirmed its commitment to providing young people with the digital skills and tools needed to succeed in the digital economy. The forum featured masterclasses on digital monetization, content creation, innovation, entrepreneurship, and technology-driven business development, critical sectors that are



Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo Launches 100MW Power Plant and LNG Facility at Ologbo in Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area of the State performing a groundbreaking ceremony for the establishment of a 100MW Power Generating Plant and 300 Metric Tons Per Day LNG Facility, Taihu Industrial Park in Ologbo.

shaping the future workforce.

For many young people in Edo State, this is more than mere policy rhetoric. It signals a move toward a future where talent, creativity, and digital knowledge can serve as pathways to economic independence.

The Ministry has also continued supporting the government's push for digital literacy and technology access.

The Ministry has lined up digital programs, that reflects the Governor Okpebholo's administration commitment to expanding technological tools, coding clubs, tech hubs, and digital education programs across the State's three senatorial districts.

This effort underscores a growing understanding that digital access is no longer a luxury but a necessity for

education, commerce, governance, and employment.

Beyond culture, the Ministry's communication & digital architecture is helping reshape public engagement digitally between government and citizens. Through better digital channels, governance is becoming more visible, accessible, and citizen-focused.

Stakeholders have increasingly recognized the administration's focus on transparency, service delivery, and institutional coordination. During a stakeholders' workshop on Governor Okpebholo's achievements, officials highlighted reforms in public service efficiency, staff capacity building, and citizen accountability mechanisms.

Observers believe this emerging synergy between communication and

governance is vital in rebuilding public trust and ensuring development initiatives are effectively communicated to the people.

Importantly, the Ministry's work also aligns with the Governor's broader restructuring efforts aimed at repositioning Edo's governance framework to meet contemporary realities. The restructuring of ministries and strategic appointments reflect a deliberate effort to modernize governance structures and boost institutional efficiency.

While challenges remain, as they do in any growing digital ecosystem, the direction is becoming clearer: Edo State is positioning itself to compete in an innovation-driven future.

For a state historically renowned

for culture, enterprise, and academic excellence, the digital economy now offers a new frontier for growth.

And through the Ministry of Communication and Digital Economy, the Okpebholo administration seems determined to ensure that Edo does not fall behind in the global technological conversation.

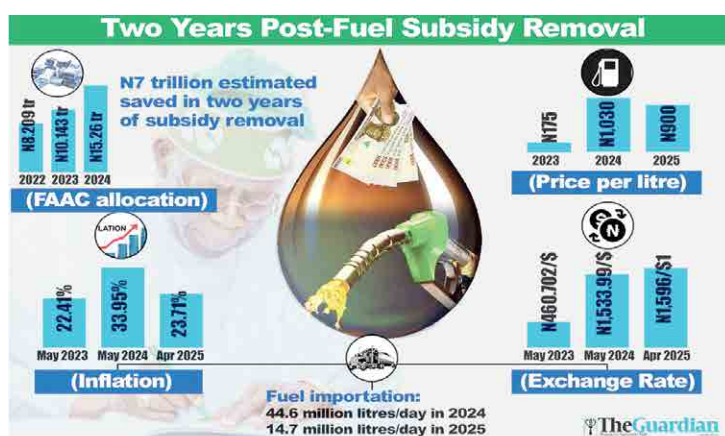
In many ways, the story unfolding in Edo today isn't just about technology.

It's about creating opportunities that previously did not exist.

It's about connecting the government more closely with the people.

And perhaps most importantly, it's about building a generation prepared not just to survive the future but to lead it.

Fuel subsidy gone, hunger remains: Nigeria's two-year reform test



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Economists say Tinubu's \$1 trillion economy dream needs 3 fixes: mechanize agriculture, fix power, and reduce SME taxes.

MARTHA OBI-DIKE

Two years after subsidy removal, the numbers are mixed. FAAC allocations hit N1.1 trillion in March 2026. Oil output is up to 1.6 million bpd. Dangote Refinery now supplies fuel locally.

But on the streets, the story is different. A bag of rice is N120,000+. Inflation is 24.23%. UN OCHA says 35 million Nigerians will face acute hunger between June-August 2026. Farmers in Borno, Zamfara, and Benue cannot access farms due to banditry.

Manufacturers are also hurting. MAN reports 23 firms shut down in 2025 due to diesel costs and FX volatility. SMEs complain of 28%+ bank loans.

Economists say Tinubu's \$1 trillion economy dream needs 3 fixes: mechanize agriculture, fix power, and reduce SME taxes. CBN targets single-digit inflation by 2027.

For Mama Nkechi in Yaba Market, reform is personal: "N200 no longer buys a full plate." The political question: Will Nigerians endure short-term pain for long-term gain before 2027?

FEATURE

'I sleep on a cement floor: The 12km walk to dreams'

GRACE IJEOMA UMEH

EKIADOLOR, EDO STATE —
4:47AM

The first cock has not crowed, but Destiny Osamede is already awake. He folds the old wrapper he uses as a blanket. The cement floor is cold. He is 14, SS2 student at Agbado Secondary School, and he has not slept in a proper bed in 11 months.

His "bedroom" is Classroom 3B. After prep closes at 9pm, the night watchman lets him in. He lays his wrapper by the teacher's table, puts his Mathematics textbook under his head, and sleeps. By 5:15am, he is gone — before the watchman's morning shift begins.

Destiny walks 12 kilometers to school. No bus fare. No bicycle. Just his legs, a pair of torn canvas, and a dream.

A WIDOW'S SON, THE HOPE OF A VILLAGE, that is who Destiny is.

Destiny's mother, Madam Osas Osamede, 41, sells akara and pap at Ekiadolor junction. She is a widow. Destiny's father died in a bike accident in 2021. She has 4 children. Destiny is the last.

"On a good day I make N1,500," she says, turning akara in hot oil. "On a bad day, rain comes and nobody buys. How will I pay transport daily? N200 go and come. That is N4,000 in a month. My whole profit."

So Destiny walks. He leaves home at 5:30am to reach school by 7:00am for morning assembly. In the evening, he walks back. That's 24km daily. His feet are hard. The soles of his canvas are gone. He ties them with nylon.

But Destiny does not complain. "Mama is trying," he says. "If I complain, who will listen? I just need to finish school."

THE CHURCH THAT PAID SCHOOL FEES

Destiny should be out of school. Agbado Secondary charges N18,500 per term. His mother could not pay. Last year, Pastor Lucky Igbinoba of New Life Baptist Church heard his story. The church paid his fees and gave him 3 exercise books.

"Destiny is different," Pastor Igbinoba says. "He came to me after service and said, 'Pastor, I want to learn. Please don't let my brain waste.' How do you say no to that?"

But the church could not pay for hostel. There is no government hostel. Private hostel in town costs N60,000 per term. So Destiny found his own solution: the classroom.

LIFE IN CLASSROOM 3B

His day starts with sweeping the classroom before students arrive. He fills the teacher's water bottle. During break, he does not buy food. He drinks water. Once a week, his mother gives him N200 to buy gala and groundnut.

"I am used to hunger," he says with a small smile. "At night, I use my torchlight to read. Sometimes NEPA brings light for 1 hour. I rush to finish all my assignments then."

His best subject is Mathematics. He



is 3rd in SS2, Class of 67. His teacher, Mr. Omoniyi, says Destiny never misses homework. "He borrows my lesson notes and returns them neat, with corrections. I have never seen that kind of hunger to learn."

At night, Destiny faces other problems. Mosquitoes. Fear. Sometimes senior students pass and knock on the door. "One day they said, 'We know you are inside.' I did not answer. I prayed until they left."

He hides his wrapper and book in the ceiling when he leaves at dawn. "If the principal knows, they may chase me. But where else will I go?"

THE DREAM: TO BUILD ROADS*

Destiny wants to be a civil engi-

neer. "The road from Ekiadolor to Benin is bad. During rain, bikes fall. Last year, my father died on that road. If I become an engineer, I will build good roads so no other child loses their father."

He has never seen a laptop. He has never touched a calculator that is not his teacher's. But he draws bridges and buildings in his exercise book during free periods.

His JAMB goal is 300+. "I know it is high. But if I score low, I will still try again. I have no other way out."

THE COST ON HIS BODY

The walk is taking a toll. Destiny has lost weight. His uniform is washed every Sunday and worn for 5

days. He has developed cough from sleeping on cement. The school clinic gave him paracetamol twice.

"I get dizzy sometimes," he admits. "But I drink water and continue. If I fall sick and stay home, I will fail. And if I fail, I will go back to farm. I don't want that."

His friends know. They share their food sometimes. "Emeka gave me half his meat pie last term. I cried that night. Not because I was hungry, but because someone saw me."

WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAYS

The village head, Pa Igihon, says Destiny's case is common. "We have over 30 children trekking long distances. SUBEB promised to build



Education is hard. But not going to school is harder. If you see a child trekking, don't insult him. Maybe he is going to become someone tomorrow."

more schools 3 years ago. We are still waiting."

Edo SUBEB Chairman, when contacted, said: "We are aware of distance issues in rural areas. In 2026 budget, we approved 12 new classrooms in Ovia North East. Ekiadolor is on the list for Phase 2. We are doing our best with limited resources."

Phase 2 has no date.

A MOTHER'S PRAYER

Madam Osas cries when she talks about her son. "I pray he does not give up. Sometimes I see him return at 7pm, tired, and he still wants to read. My heart breaks."

She has started saving N50 daily in a small plastic container. "If he gets admission, I will sell my wrapper to pay for it. I will not let his dream die."

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

WAEC is in 3 months. Destiny says he is ready. "I will write well. I will pass. Then I will find scholarship. God will help me."

When asked what he wants Nigerians to know, he looks down, then up. "Education is hard. But not going to school is harder. If you see a child trekking, don't insult him. Maybe he is going to become someone tomorrow."

As the sun rises over Ekiadolor, Destiny picks his bag. Another 12km awaits. Another day closer to his dream. He steps out of Classroom 3B, and the watchman locks the door behind him.

'Mama Amina: The gaza doctor who chooses Lagos babies'

GRACE IJEOMA UMEH

IJEDO, IKORODU — 6:30AM

The line outside Ijede Primary Health Centre is already 20 mothers long. Most carry babies wrapped in Ankara. Some have been waiting since 5am.

At the door stands Dr. Amina El-Hassan, 34. She wears a white coat over a simple hijab. Her son, Youssef, 5, sits in the corner with crayons. He is drawing a mosque. Amina has not had coffee. She has not sat down. She has been here since 6am.

Amina is from Gaza. She fled in November 2023 after an airstrike destroyed Al-Shifa Hospital where she worked as a pediatrician. She came to Lagos with Youssef, one suitcase, and \$200. Today, she is known as "Mama Amina." She treats over 40 babies daily — free.

FLIGHT FROM GAZA

"I remember the sound," Amina says, her voice quiet. "We were in the basement. The ceiling shook. When we came out, the pediatric ward was gone. Children, colleagues... gone."

She and Youssef joined a convoy to Rafah. From Egypt, she got a visa to Nigeria through an NGO. "I did not choose Nigeria. Nigeria chose me. My passport was stamped, and I entered."

Her first months in Lagos were hard. No medical license. No money. No English medical terms. She rented a room in Ijora for N15,000 per month. She sold soft drinks and Gala at Mile 2 bus stop.

"I would stand 10 hours. Cars would stop, I would sell. Then I would go home and cry," she says. "I was a doctor. I delivered babies. Now I was shouting 'Cold water, cold water!'"

THE DAY SHE DECIDED TO STAY

In February 2024, Amina saw a baby convulsing in traffic. The mother was begging for help. Amina ran, checked the child, and realized it was febrile convulsion from malaria. She used her scarf to cool the baby and told the mother to go to a clinic.

The mother knelt and kissed her hand. "You saved my child," she said.

That night Amina told Youssef: "We are not leaving. God brought us here to help."

THE EXAM THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

Nigeria's Medical and Dental Council requires foreign doctors to pass a licensing exam. Amina had no money for tutorials. She borrowed books. She studied at night after Youssef slept. She used free WiFi at a cybercafé in Mile 2.

She failed the first time. "I cried for 3 days. I thought God had abandoned me."

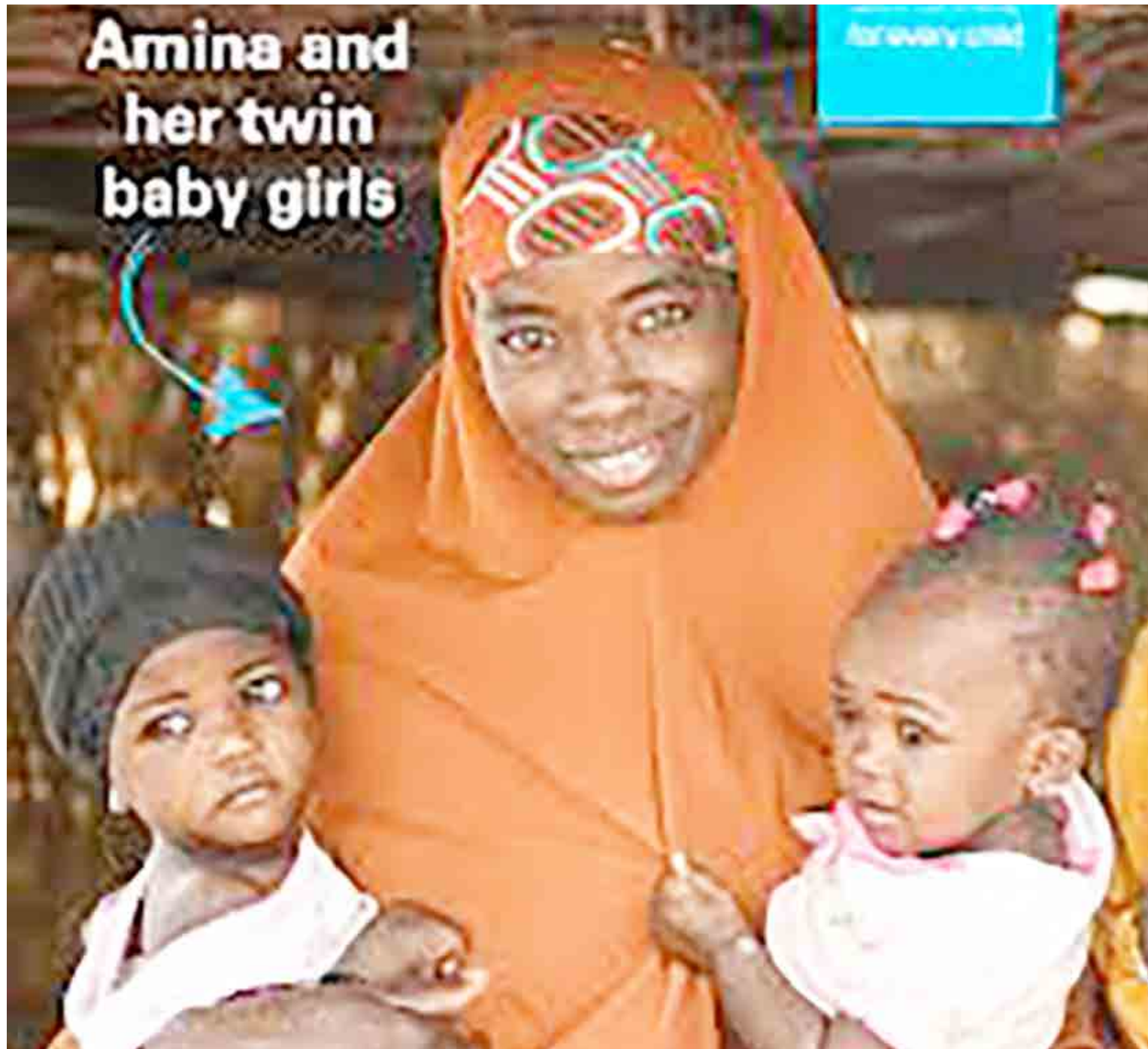
She tried again in October 2025. She passed.

The Medical Director of Ijede PHC, Dr. Tunde Adeyemi, hired her as a volunteer. "We were short-staffed. She came with her certificates and humility. In one week, mothers were asking for her," he says.

Today, Amina is not paid a salary. The PHC gives her N20,000 monthly "transport stipend." She sees it as enough.

A DAY WITH MAMA AMINA

Her clinic starts at 7am and ends at 7pm. She treats malaria, diarrhea,



Amina, 30, a mother of twins, benefits from a mother-to-mother support group in Nigeria.

pneumonia, malnutrition. Lagos has high infant mortality. Many mothers cannot afford private hospitals.

Aisha, 24, carried her 8-month-old, Faridah. "Faridah had fever for 5 days. We went to a chemist. He gave us drugs. It got worse. Mama Amina admitted her. She did not ask for money. She said, 'Pay when you have.'"

Amina's method is different. She talks to mothers for 15 minutes. She explains dosage in Yoruba and Pidgin, which she learned from Youssef's nursery school. She gives her own phone number.

"Follow up is important," she says. "In Gaza, we lost children not because we could not treat, but because mothers could not come back."

Youssef does homework in the clinic. Nurses feed him. He calls the patients "my friends."

THE WOUNDS SHE CARRIES

Amina does not talk much about Gaza. But sometimes at night, she wakes up. "I hear bombing," she says. "Youssef will shake me. He is 5, but he is older than his age."

She has not spoken to her sister in 18 months. Phone lines are down. She

does not know if her parents are alive.

"Grief is a luxury," she says. "If I start crying, who will treat the babies? So I work."

She fasts twice a week. "It reminds me of those who have nothing. And it makes me stronger."

THE STRUGGLE IN LAGOS

Life is not easy. Rent increased to N25,000. Youssef's school fees are N18,000 per term. Amina walks 40 minutes to work to save transport.

She has been offered money to work in a private hospital in Lekki. N400,000 per month. She said no.

"They treat rich people. Here, if I don't treat this baby, nobody will. In Lekki, 10 doctors will."

She lives on N1,000 per day. She cooks rice and beans on Sundays and eats it till Friday.

WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAYS

The Baale of Ijede, Chief Sikiru Olowu, says Amina is now part of the community. "She attended our last Eid. She donated drugs for 10 children during Sallah. We don't care where she is from. She is our daughter."

UNHCR Nigeria says there are over 90,000 refugees in the country. Most are from Cameroon, Niger, and Sudan. Amina is one of 12 Gazan refugees in Lagos.

"Her story shows integration is possible," says UNHCR officer Ms. Fatima Musa. "But we need more jobs and licensing support for skilled refugees."

YOUSSEF'S DREAM

Youssef wants to be a doctor like his mother. He wears her old stethoscope. He tells patients, "Mama will make you fine."

At night, Amina teaches him Arabic and Mathematics. "I want him to remember where we came from, but to love where we are."

When asked if she wants to return to Gaza, Amina is silent for a long time.

"Gaza is my home. My bones are there. But my hands are here now. These babies need me. If Gaza is rebuilt, maybe we will go. But today, my home is Ijede."

THE BABY WHO GAVE HER A NAME

Last December, a baby named Blessing was brought in. She was 3 months, severely malnourished,

weight 2.1kg. Her mother had no money. Amina stayed with her for 6 hours, feeding her through a tube.

After 3 weeks, Blessing gained weight. At discharge, the mother said: "We will call her Amina."

Amina cried. "That was the first time I felt I belonged."

Today, Blessing Amina is 1 year old. She visits the clinic monthly. She runs to Amina and shouts "Mama!"

CONCLUSION: A NEW KIND OF REFUGEE STORY

The global news from Gaza is usually about war, death, and displacement. Amina's story is different. It is about rebuilding. About a woman who lost a hospital and built a new one in a Lagos PHC.

She is not waiting for aid. She is giving it.

"I have two homes now," she says, wiping a baby's forehead. "One I left with pain. One I am building with love."

As the last mother leaves at 7:30pm, Amina locks the clinic. She holds Youssef's hand. They walk home under Ijede streetlights. Tomorrow, the line will form again.

FEATURE

My water story

FRANCIS ODUPUTE

A state governor was recently at a rural community with his political "god-son" to commission a borehole water project that the honourable lawmaker had given the community as a constituency project in about three years.

The atmosphere was gay, the people were in frenzy and the women were sweating it out as they danced, clapped and hit the maracas and other instruments of music in jubilation and praise-singing as they have been mobilised to do: Some desperate children climbed onto low-branched tree tops and dilapidated fences, just to get a good glimpse of the show. The photojournalists could not resist the temptation to capture several shots of the graceful traditional attires of the community elders thronging the mirthful number one citizen of the state, as he moved closer to the project to, be commissioned.

As the humour-loving, governor held the scissors, about to cut the tape to declare the bore hole open, amid jubilant, natives, he shot a glance at the lawmaker and the following words jumped out jokingly from his mouth, "Honourable, these tanks are big 0, how many people did you project will use this facility?" "It's up to the community and their leaders to decide", replied the lawmaker without a thought. The crowd cheered and applauded in approval. The governor quickly turned to the crowd and threw another, teaser 'in Pidgin English: "...my people, una sure say una ready, to, make maximum use of this water so?" "Yes", the crowd yelled in excitement, and the community

head standing beside the governor quipped, "Our women and girls dey kampe, we trust dem ... no more trek trek go streams and rivers ... ". The crowd clapped in support.

"Okay now", the chief executive said, "the maintenance and protection of this bore hole nko? How una go do am," he queried. The youth chairman stepped forward with his right hand waiving in the air. "Your Excellency, Sir, we have enough capable boys in this community to monitor and administer the operation, maintenance and protection of this bore hole from vandalism. I will personally supervise it, sir!" he boasted. Jubilant youths rented the air with shouts of "up chair", "Nothing do you" and some jargons.

As soon as the governor made to cut the tape to declare the bore-hole open, for consumption, the lawmaker quickly bent over to the video camera-man from the government-owned media house who was covering the event, and whispered saying, "please delete this part of the ceremony from the tape before going to press". The busy journalist didn't quite get what he meant but, as one under authority, he simply nodded his head.

"Who was fooling who?" you'd ask me. It would have sufficed to discard this as one of those FRANCODUS' jokes and laugh over it, but because the story you just read is based on true-life experiences in our society, we have to discuss it. First of all, it beats my wits how our people have been so compromised, so exploited, shortchanged and subjugated that we have become too docile and ignorant of our rights and our responsibilities

as a people. The tragedy of leadership in this country has brought it home to us that the strength of the oppressor is in the maintenance of ignorance and time has come for us to say, "Enough is Enough".

How can you explain to our neighbours in developed economies that a whole community will desert homes, roll out drums, mobilise hungry women and their children to line up in the hot sun (no thanks to climate change and global warming) and stage cultural dances and praise-singing songs, all to commission a single overdue community bore-hole provided by a politician who has only reluctantly come to fulfill his electioneering promise of giving, us so, so, so and so, as constituency projects as soon as voted into office, when actually these are basic amenities that must be on ground everywhere for the population to use? When these were actually the reasons why we voted them in to represent us? And to think that the much publicized televised and flaunted bore-hole projects (which hardly last longer than 4 months after commissioning before it 'caputs') was reported to have cost several millions of naira? Bore-hole?? Millions of naira? Think about it! Something must be fishing.

I remember vividly well that sometime in 2007 or so, my local church embarked' on a community help project in Evbuotubu community, in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, through free medical services (held at the health centre) and by sinking a formidable bore-hole water project that was situated at the heart of Evbuotubu village along the road to Igwuogie village. As I write this

now, the people of Evbuotubu are still, enjoying that borehole.

I may not be a bore hole engineer but I have a fair idea of what it might cost to sink about 6 borehole projects in 6 villages in a community. I make bold to say that I am one of the people who' were involved in that charity work in Evbuotubu, and later were deployed by our church leadership to begin evangelistic and church-planting work in the area as preachers and lay pastors. So I know to same extent, how much the church spent to sink the borehole, unannounced.

A critical look at the' story above lends a lot of credence to what experts have been saving about the need for policy formulation and planning with accurate demographic data in Nigeria. There is no gain saying that human population remains a major factor in every part of our socio economic and political life as a people.

As Nigerians, we pride ourselves in our demographic strength as the most populous black nation on the earth. But conversely, this strength seems to be a metaphor for many of our weaknesses. The apparent ignorance, apathy and lack of interest and or attention by many of our leaders to, the role actual population figures play in our collective efforts to build a better Nigeria through responsive and responsible governance and good followership is telling so much in the attitude of the general public. People do business without proper planning (that is if "proper planning" entails the knowledge and proper understanding of accurate population figures in your target market. etc).

Water shortage as well as access to safe water is a daily issue that threat-

ens the health and living standards of our teeming population of about 144 million. Coupled with other environmental and social development problems in our society, water supply has become an emergency in many parts of the country, especially in the rural areas. This is because the demand of the ever-increasing population overwhelms the supply of water.

It is a universal fact that population growth is intricately intertwined with such critical issues as water shortage, climate change, loss of biodiversity, pollution, etc. thus, globally, strong and responsive governments continue to rethink their population policies and take very concrete and proactive steps to mitigating the negative effects of rapid population growth.



*Your Excellency,
Sir, we have enough
capable boys in
this community
to monitor and
administer
the operation,
maintenance and
protection of this
bore hole from
vandalisation*

'Beyond oil: Can Nigeria's development pivot deliver the \$1 trillion dream?'

AMINA KUTI

Two years into President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's "Renewed Hope" agenda, the word development is everywhere — in budget speeches, FAAC allocations, and roadside billboards. But on the streets of Ekiadolor, Oriire, and Makurdi, the question is simpler: Where is the development I can see, touch, and live?

Nigeria stands at a crossroads. Oil still pays the bills, but it no longer defines the future. FAAC hit a record N1.1 trillion in March 2026. Dangote Refinery is supplying fuel. Solar plants are lighting villages. Yet 35 million Nigerians will face acute hunger by August, according to UN OCHA. Inflation is 24.23%. Over 300 schools are closed in Katsina.

The government says the foundation is being laid for a \$1 trillion economy by 2030. Citizens are asking: will that foundation carry us, or crack under our weight?

This feature examines Nigeria's development pivot — what is working, what is failing, and what must change in the next 24 months.

1. THE MACRO PICTURE: REFORMS, REVENUE, AND REALITY

From Subsidy to Surplus

When Tinubu removed petrol subsidy in May 2023 and unified the exchange rate, the immediate impact was pain. Transport doubled. Food prices spiked. Small businesses complained of diesel costs.

But the fiscal math changed. The Federal Government saved an estimated N5.4 trillion yearly from subsidy removal. FAAC allocations to states have averaged N900bn monthly in 2026, up from N600bn in 2022.

"The money is there," says Dr. Ike Ibe, an Abuja-based economist. "The question is what we do with it."

Oil Is No Longer King

Oil production has recovered to 1.6 million barrels per day from 1.2 million in 2023. NNPC credits security improvements in the Niger Delta and new investments. But oil now contributes less than 30% of government revenue, down from 70% a decade ago.

Non-oil revenue — VAT, customs, digital taxes — is rising. The FIRS collected N21.6 trillion in 2025, its highest ever.

"The economy is diversifying on paper," says Prof. Uche Uwaleke of Nasarawa State University. "But in real life, jobs are not diversifying fast enough."

Foreign Investment Returning, Slowly

The World Bank and AfDB have committed over \$3 billion to power, agriculture, and digital infrastructure. Dangote Refinery, operating at 500,000 bpd, has cut fuel import dependence by 40%.

But manufacturers are struggling. The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria says 23 firms shut down in 2025 due to FX volatility and energy costs. SMEs complain that bank lending rates above 28% make expansion impossible.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT FRONTLINES: WHERE CHANGE IS HAPPENING

Power: Solar As The New Rural Grid
For decades, "no light" was Nige-



PRESIDENT BOLA TINUBU

ria's development joke. That is changing in pockets.

In Sokoto, a 10MW solar plant now powers 20 villages and 15 irrigation farms. Farmers use it for boreholes and cold storage. In Kaduna, Tudun Wada Market's 50kW solar mini-grid cut traders' diesel costs by 80%. 120 shops now run POS machines and freezers without generators.

"The FG's Rural Electrification Agency has funded 40% of these projects," says Engr. Aliyu Tahir, REA Director. "We are targeting 50MW solar by 2028."

The shift matters. Where there is light, schools stay open late. Clinics refrigerate vaccines. Youths learn coding.

But challenges remain. Maintenance is weak. In some villages, panels were vandalized within months. "We trained 20 youths, but we need funding to pay them," says Kaduna's market chairman.

Agriculture: From Subsistence to Scale

Kano State distributed 2000 solar irrigation pumps to farmers in Danbatta, Gwarzo, and Bichi in May 2026. Each farmer paid N50,000 instead of N350,000. The goal: cut diesel costs and increase tomato and pepper yield.

Bayelsa gave 200 fishermen new trawlers with GPS and life jackets. The Blue Economy Ministry wants to revive fishing after 3 years of low catch.

Yet insecurity undermines gains. In Benue, Zamfara, and Borno, banditry has stopped farming on 18% of arable land. NIHSA warns of flooding as River Benue rises. In 2022, floods displaced 1.4 million people.

"We cannot have a \$1 trillion economy if our farmers cannot access their farms," says Dr. Ibe. He lists 3 priorities: mechanize agriculture, secure farmlands, and build storage.

TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE: ROADS, RAIL, AND NEW DREAMS

Maiduguri made headlines in May 2026 with the test run of Nigeria's first monorail outside Lagos. The 12km track links the airport, Monday Market, and University of Maiduguri. Funded by FG and AfDB at \$200m, it aims to reduce keke fares and create jobs.

Warri Old Port recorded a 40% cargo increase in Q1 2026 after dredging. Clearance now takes 3 days instead of 2 weeks.

But the gaps are wide. The rail link from Warri to Itakpe is incomplete. Rural roads in Oyo, Imo, and Katsina are impassable during rain. The road where Destiny Osamede's father died in Ekiadolor is still unpaved.

"Infrastructure without maintenance is waste," says Prof. Uwaleke. "We build, then we abandon."

3. THE HUMAN COST: DEVELOPMENT THAT DOESN'T REACH PEOPLE

Education: Classrooms Without Children

Edo SUBEB approved 12 new classrooms in Ovia North East. But in Katsina, 300 schools remain shut due to banditry. 90,000 pupils are out of school. In IDP camps, teachers handle 60 pupils under trees.

In Rivers, 4000 primary schools were empty on May 26 as teachers protested 5 months' unpaid salaries. "Our children are hungry," said NUT Chairman Julius Amadi. The backlog is N2.3bn.

For students like Destiny Osamede, 14, who sleeps on a classroom floor and treks 12km daily, development is a torchlight and a wrapper. "Education is hard. But not going to school is harder," he says.

Health: Doctors Strike, Patients Suffer

Resident doctors in FCT began a 3-day warning strike May 26 over 6 months' arrears. At National Hospital

Abuja, only emergencies were handled. A mother carried her feverish child away: "They said go to private hospital. Where is the money?"

In Gaza and Sudan, 35 million face hunger. But in Nigeria, primary health centres are understaffed. Dr. Amina El-Hassan, a refugee doctor from Gaza, now volunteers at Ijede PHC in Ikorodu. She treats 40 babies daily for free. "If I don't treat this baby, nobody will," she says.

Security: Development Cannot Grow in Fear

On May 15, 45 people, including toddlers aged 2 and 3, were abducted in Oriire LGA, Oyo. Amotekun and police are deployed, but forests make rescue hard. Schools closed. Residents sleep in groups.

In Imo, police rescued 8 victims in Orlu forest after a shootout. Kidnapping has increased since January.

The UN says insecurity costs Nigeria \$18 billion yearly in lost investment and displacement. The National Security Strategy 2026 now has a "Human Security Pillar" focusing on food, health, and education.

"You must remove the reasons young men pick up guns," says Prof. Bulama Bukarti. "Unemployment, poor schools, weak justice."

4. THE GLOBAL CONTEXT: WHAT NIGERIA CAN LEARN

Climate Finance: The \$1.3 Trillion Ask
At COP30 in Brazil this November, Africa will demand \$1.3 trillion yearly for climate adaptation. Africa contributes <4% of emissions but suffers 90% of climate disasters. Nigeria lost 1.4 million hectares of farmland to flooding in 2024.

Rich nations met the \$100bn pledge only in 2022, and most was loans. Brazil wants grants for dams, solar grids, and coastal walls.

"Nigeria needs part of that money for the Niger Delta cleanup and Northern green walls," says Minister of Envi-

ronment. Without it, floods and desertification will erase agricultural gains.

Jobs and Demographics: The Youth Bulge

Nigeria has 93 million registered voters. 60% are under 35. This bloc is less loyal to parties and more focused on jobs, data costs, and education.

Plateau State is trying to respond. It launched "Plateau Digital Upskill" to train 5000 youths in coding and digital marketing. Graduates get laptops and will be linked to remote jobs.

"We want Plateau youths to earn dollars from home," said Gov. Caleb Mutfwang.

If replicated, such programs could turn Nigeria's demographic pressure into a dividend. If not, the youth bulge becomes a risk.

5. WHAT MUST CHANGE: 5 NON-NEGOTIABLES FOR 2027

Economists, civil society, and citizens agree on 5 priorities if "Renewed Hope" must become real development:

1. Food Security First: Mechanize agriculture, secure farmlands, and build silos. UN OCHA says 35 million Nigerians face hunger. You cannot industrialize hungry people.

2. Power That Works: Expand solar mini-grids but fund maintenance. 50MW by 2028 is good, but only if it lasts 10 years.

3. Jobs, Not Just Growth: GDP growth means little if SMEs close. Reduce lending rates. Cut tax overreach. Link youths to tech and manufacturing jobs.

4. Security as Development: Police, vigilantes, and drones help. But long-term peace requires schools, clinics, and jobs in vulnerable LGAs.

5. Transparency and Delivery: FAAC is N1.1 trillion. Citizens must see roads, classrooms, and hospitals. Publish state budgets. Track projects. NLC warned governors against "political jamboree" ahead of 2027.

Sports

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

FG approves VAR, anti-doping lab for MKO Abiola Stadium

The Federal Government has approved the installation of Video Assistant Referee technology and an anti-doping laboratory at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium in Abuja as part of a sweeping overhaul of sports in-



MKO ABIOLA STADIUM

frastructure across Nigeria.

The development was announced on Wednesday by the National Sports Commission through its official account, which described the intervention as the first phase of a nationwide sports revival project

aimed at restoring facilities to international standards.

According to the commission, the upgrade at the Abuja stadium will go beyond VAR and anti-doping facilities. Plans also include rehabilitation of tracks and floodlights, improvements to media and athlete areas, and the construction of a High Performance Centre alongside new training pitches.

The government also approved the redevelopment of the existing 200-room athletes' hostel into a fully functional hotel. Medical facilities inside the complex are expected to re-

ceive new equipment as part of the modernisation drive.

Other projects captured in the initiative include the construction of a sports centre that will provide office space for national sports federations, as well as the rehabilitation of key sporting infrastructure in different parts of the country.

The commission said support would also be extended to states preparing to host future National Sports Festivals. Plans are equally in place for the construction of mini sports centres nationwide to improve access to sporting facilities at the grassroots level.



WILFRED NDIDI

Ndidi, Moses Simon keep Super Eagles waiting

Officials have informed that top stars Wilfred Ndidi, Moses Simon and Jerome Akor are still being expected in the Super Eagles training camp in London.

The players were among the experienced stars listed for the Unity Cup.

They are also named on the squad for the friendlies against Poland and Portugal next month.

"They have not joined camp yet. I don't know when they will," a team official said.

On Saturday, a makeshift Super Eagles led by Terem Moffi will take on Jamaica in a repeat of the 2025 Unity Cup final.

The Super Eagles stopped Zimbabwe 2-0 in the first semi-final, while Jamaica beat India by the same scoreline in the other semifinal.

World Athletics releases qualification standards for Beijing 2027 World Championships

World Athletics has officially unveiled the qualification system and entry standards for the 2027 World Athletics Championships, set to take place from September 11 to 19, 2027, at the iconic National Stadium in Beijing.

This marks the second time Beijing will host the event, following the successful 2015 edition.

The new system introduces the toughest automatic entry standards in the history of the championships, reflecting the rising global depth in athletics. Sports

It shifts the qualification balance to approximately 40% through entry standards and 60% via world rankings, moving away from the previous 50-50 split to better reward consistent performers throughout the qualification period.

Key highlights of the entry standards include:

Men's 100m: 9.95 seconds
Men's 800m: 1:43.00

Other events feature similarly ambitious targets across sprints, middle distance, distance, hurdles, jumps, throws, and combined events.

Qualification windows are open now and will run through

early August 2027, with performances counting from top-tier competitions worldwide.

Winning major titles, including from the 2025 World Championships in Tokyo, the 2026 World Athletics Ultimate Championship, and top marathon or race walk events. Sports

Continental and international tour performances.

For relay events, qualification pathways were already

partially determined through the 2026 World Relays in Gabon.

EMPHASIS ON PERFORMANCE AND ACCESSIBILITY

World Athletics officials stated that the updated principles, proposed with input from the Athletes' Commission, aim to maintain high competitive standards while providing

more opportunities through the global calendar of Continental Tour meetings.

"These standards reflect the incredible progress in our sport," a World Athletics spokesperson noted.

"We want the best athletes in Beijing, but we also want a system that rewards those who perform consistently at the highest level over the full qualification cycle."

2026 National Sports Festival: NSC Supports Enugu State for Coal City Games

The National Sports Commission (NSC) has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Enugu State's preparations for the 2026 National Sports Festival, Coal City Games, with the approval of critical sports in-

frastructure projects aimed at delivering a world-class event.

The Federal Government, through the Commission approved a series of strategic sports infrastructure projects for Enugu, further strengthening preparations for the 2026 National Sports Festival.

Among the approved projects for Enugu State are the construction of an Olympic-size swimming pool, the upgrade of the indoor sports hall, the rehabilitation of athletes' hostels, and the execution of other supporting sporting infrastructure projects. These interventions are designed to significantly enhance the state's capacity to host major national and international sporting events while creating a sustainable environment for athlete development.

The construction of an Olympic-size swimming pool represents a landmark investment in aquatic sports development, at a time where aquatics athletes are on the rise, winning medals at high-stakes championships.



HON. BUKOLA OLOPADE

Crystal Palace shock Europe with historic Conference League Triumph

Crystal Palace carved their name into European football history Wednesday night with a hard fought 1-0 victory over Rayo Vallecano in the UEFA Conference League final at the Red Bull Arena in Leipzig, Germany.

In a tense and competitive encounter from start to finish, the Eagles showed discipline,

composure, and maturity on one of the biggest nights in the club's history.

The breakthrough for their efforts however came five minutes into the second half when Jean-Philippe Mateta scored after reacting quickest to a rebound inside the penalty area.

The French forward's line strike was enough to separate

both sides in a game where clear chances were limited.

Crystal Palace defended resolutely for the remainder of the match, with the backline and goalkeeper Dean Henderson producing a composed performance under pressure.

The victory also marked the end of Oliver Glasner's successful spell at the club during which

the Austrian guided the team to the FA Cup, the Community Shield, and now the UEFA Conference League titles.

Attention now shifts to the UEFA Champions League final between Arsenal and Paris Saint-Germain, set to take place at the Puskás Aréna in Budapest, Hungary, on May 30, 2026.

Ofili makes Diamond League return in Rome Showdown

Nigerian sprint star Favour Ofili is set to return to the prestigious Diamond League circuit on Wednesday, June 4, when she competes in the women's 200 metres at the Rome leg of the series.

The 22-year-old, currently ranked world No. 8, will face a formidable field that includes reigning world champion Melissa Jefferson-Wooden of the United States, Olympic 200m champion Julien Alfred of Saint Lucia, and British sprint ace Dina Asher-Smith.

Ofili has been absent from competitive action in recent weeks after her proposed switch of athletic allegiance to

Turkey fell through.

She heads into the race with a season's best time of 22.46 seconds, set in Gainesville, Florida last month.

The highly anticipated 200m race in the Italian capital is expected to deliver strong performances, with several of the world's top sprinters lining up.

For Ofili, the event marks an important step in her build-up toward the major championships later in the season.

The Nigerian sensation will be looking to make a statement against the elite competition and improve on her current season's best as she pushes for consistency on the international.



FAVOUR OFILI

A tribute to Pep Guardiola: The architect of English Football's modern era

DOUGLAS BAYE-OSAGIE

When Pep Guardiola arrived in Manchester in 2016, English football was good. When he left in 2026, it had been rebuilt in his image. For a decade, Pep didn't just manage Manchester City. He redefined what was possible in a football field.

In ten seasons at the Etihad, Pep turned City into a machine of sustained excellence. He managed 593 games, won 416 of them, and walked away with a 70.3% win rate and 1,422 goals scored. Numbers that speak of dominance, but only begin to tell the story.

The trophy haul is staggering: Like we say in the local parlance "trophy nar water." The trophies kept coming and we almost lost count until his final day on the job. 20 pieces of silverware. More than any manager in City's history. More than most clubs win in a century.

Domestically, Pep conquered England like no one else before. Even the great Sir Alex Ferguson, arguably the greatest club manager in England, didn't get a rush of trophies like Pep did in a decade. Six Premier League titles: 2017-18, 2018-19, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24. He is the only manager to win four in a row, from 2020-21 to 2023-24.

The 2017-18 season was the statement. 100 points, 106 goals, a record that stood untouched. It wasn't just winning. It was winning with beauty, control, and relentless attacking football.

The cups followed in waves. Three FA Cups in 2018-19, 2022-23, and 2025-26. Five League Cups in 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2025-26. He now holds the record for most League Cup wins as a manager.

Three Community Shields in 2018, 2019, and 2024 completed the domestic sweep. City became the team everyone measured themselves against.

But Pep came to England to win Europe. In 2022-23, he delivered. Manchester City beat Inter Milan 1-0 in Istanbul to claim their first Champions League. It completed the historic treble: Premier League, FA Cup, and Champions League. Only the second English club to do it.

That treble put him in a club of one. Pep became the first manager to win a continental treble with two different clubs, having done it with Barcelona in 2008-09.

He added the UEFA Super Cup in 2023 and the FIFA Club World Cup the same year, making City the first English club to win five trophies in a calendar year.

Beyond the trophies, Pep changed the league. High pressing, positional play, inverted full-backs, and goal-keeping with the feet. Rivals didn't just lose to City. They spent years trying to copy them.

His impact is clearest in the coaches he shaped. Two of his assistants in Manchester have gone on to win major trophies themselves, and a generation of his former players are now doing the same in dugouts across Europe.

Mikel Arteta left City to take over



PEP GUARDIOLA

Arsenal in December 2019. In his first season, he beat Chelsea in the FA Cup final to win the 2019-20 trophy. He added Community Shields in 2020 and 2023, and guided Arsenal to the Premier League title in 2025-26.

Enzo Maresca was Pep's assistant before taking charge of Leicester and then Chelsea. In 18 months at Stamford Bridge, he led Chelsea to the UEFA Conference League and the FIFA Club World Cup in 2025. Two trophies in two finals.

The influence stretches back to Pep's playing and Barcelona days too. Xavi, Pep's midfield metronome at Barcelona, returned to manage the club in 2021. He restored Barcelona to La Liga glory in 2022-23 and won the Spanish Super Cup, instilling Pep's principles of possession and control with his own identity.

Xabi Alonso, who played under Pep at Bayern Munich from 2014-2016, made an even more immediate mark. Taking over Bayer Leverkusen in 2022, he delivered an unbeaten Bundesliga title and DFB-Pokal in 2023-24, ending Bayern's decade-long dominance with a team that played with Pep-like precision and courage.

Vincent Kompany, Pep's captain at City and later a player-coach under

him, carried those lessons forward. After stints at Anderlecht and Burnley, he was appointed Bayern Munich head coach in 2024, winning back league titles with some swash-buckling football and becoming the

first black manager ever to win the German Bundesliga.

That's the Pep effect. He doesn't just build teams. He builds managers. His coaching tree is already winning in England and across the continent.

Players speak about him with a reverence that goes beyond tactics. Bernardo Silva, John Stones, Fernandinho, and others returned just to say goodbye in 2026. Pep said, "I don't cry, but when I see Bernardo cry, I cry."

Kevin De Bruyne once said Pep made him see the game differently, that training under him felt like "chess at 100mph." Phil Foden credits Pep for turning him from a talent into a match-winner. The praise is consistent: demanding, detailed, but deeply human.

Pep himself insists it was never about the silverware. "The luggage of memories I put inside is more than any other," he said in his final press conference. "Without 20 trophies they would have sacked me before, but you are not at home and see the trophies and say 'Oh, how happy I am.'"

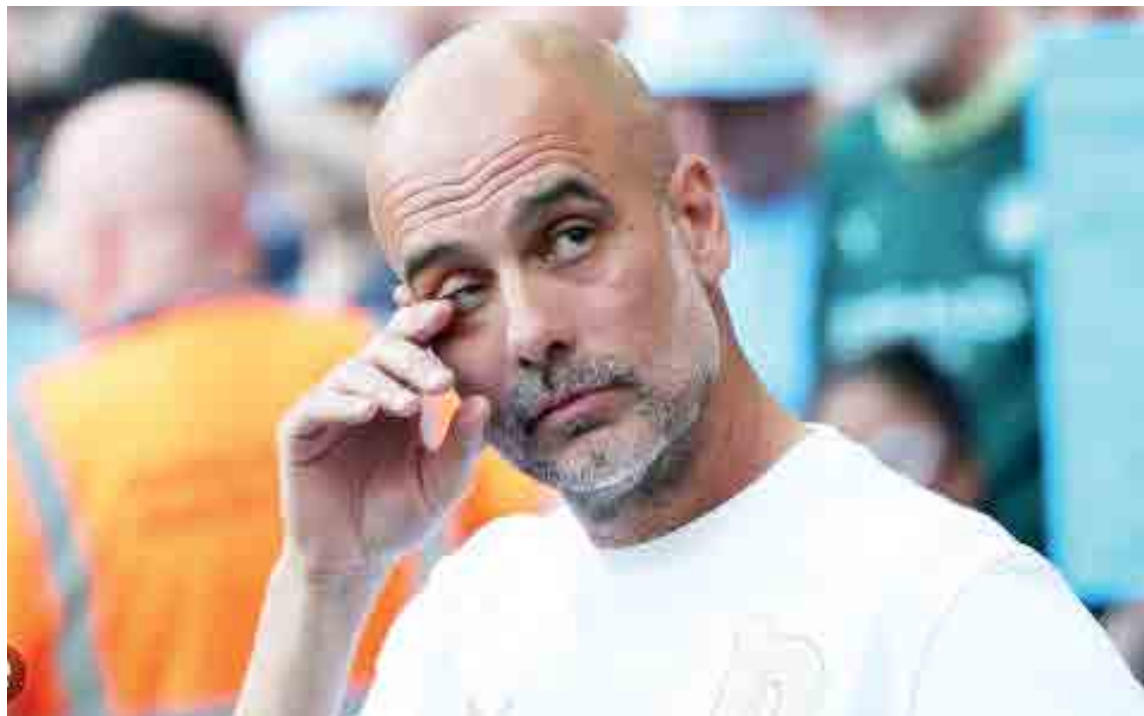
What he leaves is a standard. City's 100-point season, the four-in-a-row, and the treble. Records that may stand for decades. But more than that, he leaves a belief that football can be both beautiful and brutal, artistic and ruthless.

And now his name is etched into the stadium itself. The **Pep Guardiola Stand** at the Etihad stands as a befitting, permanent tribute to a decade that changed Manchester City and English football forever. It's more than a gesture. It's a landmark for every fan who witnessed a revolution in blue.

Erling Haaland, Manchester City's top scorer, had this to say about Pep, which aptly summarizes his work ethic:

"A coach who never stopped teaching. It sounds crazy to say this, but you made greatness feel normal. Even after hat-tricks, wins, and trophies, there was always another lesson, another challenge, and another level to reach. That mentality changed this club forever and changed me too. The honour of a lifetime to work with the best. Thank you for everything, boss."

Pep Guardiola came to England to prove a point. He leaves as the most decorated manager in the Premier League era. He raised the bar, changed the game, and inspired a generation of coaches and players. English football will never be the same. And that's his greatest trophy of all.



Sports



Kingsley Awodi welcomes Nigeria's para-powerlifting Team after Algeria championship success

Fresh from the 2026 African Open Para-Powerlifting Championship in Algeria, Nigeria's para-powerlifting team returned not just with luggage, but with 49 medals and a story of grit that had already begun to ripple across the country.

Leading the welcome was Kingsley Awodi, a philanthropist who has quietly backed Nigerian sports for years. Recall that he re-grassed the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja under Sunday Dare, restoring one of the country's key sporting venues for athletes and fans.

Awodi is also a major stakeholder in the sports industry. In the past, he single-handedly paid athletes' grants to ensure competitors could focus on training and competition without financial strain. His support has remained consistent and practical: in April, he hosted and sponsored the Kingsley Awodi Para-Powerlifting Championship in Abuja, providing the team with competitive exposure just weeks before their departure for Algeria. That same commitment was evident again at their homecoming.

Addressing the athletes, coaches, and officials gathered in the arrival hall, Awodi opened by framing their achievement within the larger narrative of Nigerian resilience and excellence on the conti-

nental stage:

"I am deeply honoured to welcome home our victorious Nigeria Para-Powerlifting Team from the 2026 African Open Para-Powerlifting Championship in Algeria. You have once again shown the world the strength, resilience, discipline, and fighting spirit that Nigerians are known for."

For four days in Oran, Nigeria's lifters competed against Africa's best and returned with 32 gold, 12 silver, and 5 bronze medals. The result secured second place overall behind Egypt and reinforced Nigeria's standing as a powerhouse in para sports. Beyond the medal count, it was the composure and precision of their performances that drew widespread praise.



PARA-POWERLIFTING TEAM



MAMMAN GIWA

Enugu CP congratulates Rangers FC on record 9th NPFL title

The Commissioner of Police in Enugu State, Mamman Giwa, has congratulated Rangers International Football Club for winning the 2025/2026 Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) title.

Rangers, popularly known as the Flying Antelopes, clinched their record ninth NPFL title after defeating Ikorodu City 2-1 in their final match of the season in Lagos to finish top of the table with 68 points.

In a congratulatory message issued on Wednesday in Enugu, Giwa described the achievement as remarkable.

He said the feat was a testament to the club's resilience, discipline, teamwork and sustained hard work throughout the season.

"I urge the team to remain focused and sustain its winning spirit as worthy ambassadors of Enugu State and Nigeria," he said.

The police commissioner noted that the victory had once again brought pride and honour to Enugu State and football fans in the state.

He commended the players, coaching crew, management, supporters and other stakeholders for their collective contributions to the success.

Giwa also reassured the club of the command's continued collaboration and commitment to providing adequate security during and after home matches at the Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium, Enugu.

Ilechukwu unsure over Rangers future after NPFL title win

Enugu Rangers coach Fidelis Ilechukwu says he will decide his future at the club after returning from Unity Cup duties with the Super Eagles in London.

Ilechukwu led Rangers to the 2025/26 Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) title on Sunday after a hard-fought 2-1 win over Ikorodu City in Lagos.

The win proved decisive as the closest challengers Rivers United F.C. beat Katsina United F.C. 3-0 in Port Harcourt. Rangers eventually finished top with 68 points, just one ahead of Rivers United.

The title was Ilechukwu's second league crown with Rangers in three seasons and the club's ninth NPFL triumph, drawing them level with Enyimba F.C. as the most successful side in league history.

Shortly after sealing the title, the coach travelled to London to join Eric Chelle and the Super Eagles as they prepared to defend the Unity Cup title won in 2025.

Despite another successful campaign, Ilechukwu admitted he remains undecided about extending his stay at Rangers, with his contract expiring at the end of the season.

"It's something we will sit down and talk about," Ilechukwu told Premium Times.

"Seriously, I'm not saying that I'm going to stay. I'm not saying I'm not going to stay. But when you have Amobi Ezeaku,

I think you have everything. The truth is, I don't want to work anywhere for more than two years. What I've done at Rangers is because of Amobi Ezeaku. It might be goodbye. It might also not be goodbye.

"After coming back from London, I will sit down and reflect on myself, every situation, everything happening around me, things I'm not okay with and things I'm okay with. Maybe yes, maybe no. That is the truth."



FIDELIS ILECHUKWU

NY Spikers upbeat after winning debut match in volleyball league

Lizzy Asemah, coach of NY Spikers Volleyball Club, says the team will continue to work hard to win all its matches at the ongoing 2026 National Division One and Two League.

Asemah said in a chat with

sports journalists in Abuja on Wednesday that the team's opening victory had given the players confidence in their debut appearance at the competition.

NY Spikers defeated Queen Aminat Spikers Volleyball Club

3-2 in their opening match on Monday at the Indoor Sports Hall of the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja.

Asemah said her players, in spite of being amateurs, overcame more experienced opponents to record their first victory.

"The team has taken us to a very high level now.

"They are amateur players and they had to play against players that have been in camp for years.

"We had limited time to prepare, but the girls delivered through hard work.

"We trained intensively in spite of the short preparation period and I am proud of them.

"Irrespective of the fact that they lost some sets, I will always be proud of them," she said.



VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE

Clubs battle for Super 4 spots in Kaduna beach soccer league

At least seven clubs will participate in the second phase of the 2026 Nigeria Beach Soccer League (NBSL) scheduled to hold in Kaduna from May 29 to May 31.

The three-day competition will take place at the Murtala Muhammed Square during the Sallah celebrations.

The participating clubs are Kada BSC, Kebbi Fishers BSC, BAM Projects BSC, Ibom BSC, Jigawa Golden Stars BSC, Niger BSC and defending champions Anambra Warriors BSC.

The teams will compete for vital points ahead of the Super Four finals later in the season.

League leaders Kada BSC

are expected to enjoy home support as they seek to maintain their lead on the table.

The first phase of the 2026 NBSL season was held in March in Kebbi, where the clubs began their campaigns.

At the end of the first phase, Kaduna-based Kada BSC emerged as the best-performing side and currently lead the standings with 10 points.

Kada BSC hold a six-point advantage over second-placed Kebbi Fishers BSC and BAM Projects BSC ahead of the Kaduna phase.

Kebbi Fishers BSC remain the most successful side in the history of the league, having won the title in 2021, 2023 and 2024.



NIGERIA BEACH SOCCER LEAGUE

NCAA East Regionals: Ajayi storms to 9.90s victory, goes top of NCAA Ranking



KANYINSOLA AJAYI

Nigerian sprint sensation Kanyinsola Ajayi produced a stunning performance at the NCAA East Regionals in Lexington, Kentucky, after blazing to a wind-assisted 9.90 seconds to win his 100m heat, BSNSports.com.ng reports. African Weightlifting medals

Running with a legal wind reading of 1.2m/s, Ajayi bounced back strongly after

missing out on the final of the event at the SEC Championships earlier this season.

The impressive time now makes the Nigerian the fastest man in the NCAA this year and the second fastest athlete in the world so far this season.

Ajayi dominated the race from start to finish, crossing the line comfortably ahead of Davonte Howell, who finished second in 10.09 seconds.



Driving relief: Okpebholo's transport revolution

Transportation remains one of the most critical drivers of economic development and social stability in any society. Beyond merely moving people and goods from one destination to another, an efficient transport system directly influences commerce, productivity, education, healthcare delivery and the overall quality of life of citizens.

In a country like Nigeria where economic realities have become increasingly harsh owing to rising inflation, astronomical fuel prices and declining purchasing power, transportation has become both a necessity and a burden for millions of ordinary citizens.

Indeed, one of the most visible consequences of the removal of fuel subsidy and the attendant increase in petrol prices has been the sharp rise in transportation fares across the country. From inter-state travel to intra-city commuting, Nigerians have been compelled to spend a significant percentage of their income on transportation alone. The situation has been particularly difficult for market women, artisans, civil servants, students and low-income earners who rely heavily on public transportation for their daily activities.

In many states, transport operators and commercial drivers have exploited the situation by imposing arbitrary fares on commuters. In some instances, the cost of transportation has doubled or even tripled within a short period. The ripple effects have been devastating. Prices of food items and other essential commodities have continued to soar because transportation costs are usually transferred to consumers. Consequently, the ordinary citizen bears the brunt of a harsh economic climate.

It is against this backdrop that the transport intervention initiatives of the Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo, deserve commendation. At a time when many Nigerians are yearning for practical governance and people-oriented policies, the governor's deliberate investment in transportation infrastructure and public mobility demonstrates a clear understanding of the economic realities confronting the people.

Transportation and motorable roads are indeed strategic instruments for cushioning economic hardship. Any government that genuinely seeks to improve the welfare of the people must prioritise road rehabilitation, transport accessibility and affordable mobility. Governor Okpebholo appears to appreciate this reality, and his recent interventions in the transport sector suggest a government determined to ease the suffering of Edo people.

One of the most notable aspects of the administration's intervention is the acquisition of the much-talked-about 50 luxury "Akpako Buses." Beyond the social media excitement and political commentaries surrounding

the buses, the initiative represents a practical response to the transportation difficulties facing residents of Edo State. The buses symbolise more than mere vehicles; they represent accessibility, affordability and government responsiveness.

The newly acquired Toyota Hiace buses for the New Edo Line Transport Company equally deserve mention. For years, the once vibrant Edo Line transport service had become a shadow of itself. What was once a pride of the state gradually drifted into near irrelevance and operational comatose. Many Edo people who remembered the glorious years of Edo Line could only lament the decline of a transport company that once provided reliable and affordable services to commuters.

The revival effort by Governor Okpebholo therefore carries both economic and symbolic significance. Economically, it provides residents with more affordable transport alternatives at a time when private transport operators have continued to increase fares indiscriminately. Symbolically, it reflects the governor's determination to revive public institutions that are capable of serving the interests of the people.

Similarly, the supply of brand new luxurious intra-city buses for the Edo City Transport Company is another commendable initiative aimed at improving urban mobility within Benin City and other parts of the state. Urban transportation is an integral component of economic productivity. When workers spend less time and money commuting, productivity improves. When traders can move their goods at reasonable costs, businesses flourish. When students can travel conveniently to schools, academic activities become less stressful. Therefore, affordable and reliable transportation has far-reaching implications for social and economic development.

It is important to note that transportation is not an isolated sector. It is interconnected with virtually every aspect of human existence. A rise in transportation costs automatically affects food prices, healthcare expenses, educational access and even housing decisions. Consequently, any intervention that reduces transport costs indirectly contributes to reducing the overall cost of living.

Market men and women are among the greatest beneficiaries of affordable transportation systems. Most traders depend on daily travel to markets and commercial centres for their livelihoods. High transportation costs reduce their profit margins and increase the prices of goods sold to consumers. In some cases, traders are compelled to reduce the quantity of goods they purchase because transportation expenses consume a substantial portion of their capital.

By introducing public transport alternatives through the Edo Line and Edo City Transport services, the

government is creating competition within the transport sector. Such competition has the potential to moderate excessive fare hikes imposed by private operators. More importantly, it gives commuters alternative options that are safer, more organised and relatively affordable.

Another dimension worthy of consideration is the role of road rehabilitation and construction in complementing transport services. Vehicles can only function effectively where roads are motorable. Across many parts of Nigeria, bad roads have become a major contributor to high transportation costs. Poor road conditions lead to frequent vehicle breakdowns, increased fuel consumption and high maintenance costs. Commercial drivers usually transfer these expenses to passengers through increased fares.

Governor Okpebholo's road rehabilitation efforts in various parts of Edo State therefore represent a strategic investment in economic relief. Good roads reduce travel time, minimise vehicle wear and tear and improve the efficiency of transport operations. They also facilitate commercial activities and attract investments.

For rural communities particularly, road construction can be transformative. Farmers in many rural areas often face difficulties transporting their produce to urban markets because of deplorable road networks. As a result, agricultural produce gets wasted while farmers suffer losses. Improved roads enhance market access and boost local economies. In this regard, road in-

frastructure is not merely about physical development; it is fundamentally about improving livelihoods.

Beyond the economic implications, the governor's transport interventions also have social significance. Public transportation systems help bridge social inequalities by providing mobility opportunities for low-income earners who cannot afford private vehicles. In societies where public transport is efficient and affordable, citizens experience greater inclusion and participation in economic and social activities.

Furthermore, organised transport systems improve safety and reduce the risks associated with unregulated transportation. Many commuters in Nigeria have fallen victim to criminal activities while using poorly regulated commercial vehicles. Government-controlled transport services usually offer better accountability, improved safety standards and greater passenger confidence.

The revival of Edo Line may also create employment opportunities for drivers, mechanics, administrative personnel and other support staff. In an economy battling unemployment challenges, every genuine effort towards job creation deserves recognition. Transportation systems do not only move people; they also sustain livelihoods for thousands of workers directly and indirectly connected to the sector.

It is equally necessary to appreciate the psychological impact of visible governance. Citizens derive hope and confidence when they see practical projects capable of addressing their immediate needs. In recent years, many Nigerians have become frustrated by governance that appears disconnected from the realities confronting ordinary people. Therefore, interventions that directly touch the lives of citizens often generate goodwill and public trust.

Governor Okpebholo's focus on transportation and road infrastructure suggests an understanding of governance as a tool for social welfare rather than mere political administration. While no government can solve all problems overnight, policies that demonstrate sensitivity to the plight of the people are usually appreciated by the public.

However, sustaining these initiatives will require proper management, transparency and maintenance culture. One of the reasons many public transport systems in Nigeria collapsed in the past was poor management and lack of maintenance. Government-owned vehicles were often neglected, mismanaged or subjected to political interference. Therefore, beyond acquiring buses and rehabilitating roads, there must be a deliberate commitment to institutional efficiency and accountability.

The Edo Line revival project, for instance, must be managed professionally to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past. Maintenance schedules should be strictly adhered to while operational transparency must be priori-

tised. Similarly, the Edo City Transport buses should be effectively monitored to ensure sustainability and efficiency.

There is also the need for government to consider policies that will guarantee affordability for commuters. The ultimate objective of public transport intervention should not merely be profitability but social relief. If properly managed, subsidised transport systems can significantly reduce the burden on low-income earners and improve urban mobility.

In addition, the government may consider expanding transport routes to underserved communities and integrating technology into the transport system. Digital ticketing, route scheduling and passenger information systems can improve operational efficiency and reduce corruption within the sector.

It is equally important for citizens to complement government efforts by protecting public infrastructure and using transport facilities responsibly. Public buses and roads belong to the people, and their sustainability depends partly on collective responsibility.

Governor Monday Okpebholo's interventions in the transport sector may not completely eliminate the economic hardship currently facing the people, but they undoubtedly represent practical steps towards alleviating the burden. In a period where many citizens feel overwhelmed by rising living costs, initiatives aimed at reducing transportation difficulties provide a measure of relief and hope.

The acquisition of the "Akpako Buses," the revival of the New Edo Line Transport Company and the introduction of luxurious intra-city buses for the Edo City Transport Company collectively underscore an administration attempting to place the welfare of the people at the centre of governance. Combined with ongoing road rehabilitation and construction projects across the state, these efforts have the potential to significantly improve mobility, stimulate commerce and reduce economic pressure on residents.

Ultimately, governance is meaningful only when it positively impacts the lives of the people. Roads that are motorable, buses that are accessible and transportation systems that are affordable are tangible indicators of responsive leadership. As Edo people continue to navigate the challenges of the present economic climate, interventions such as these may indeed help them heave a sigh of relief.

If sustained, properly managed and expanded, Governor Okpebholo's transport initiatives could become one of the defining legacies of his administration. A legacy rooted not merely in political rhetoric but in practical efforts to cushion hardship and improve the everyday lives of Edo citizens.

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