

Civil Service remains critical to national development —Edo Govt

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo says resourceful Civil and Public Service remain strategic in the implementation of government's policies and programmes hence his sustained concern for the

training and enhanced welfare for the state's workforce. The governor stated this in Benin- city during the public presentation of a book written by the Edo State Head of Service, Barrister Anthony Okungbowa, titled "Rebuilding the Nigerian Civil Service: A Reformer's Perspective,"

The governor who was represented by the Secretary to the State Government, Barrister Musa Ikhiror, said his administration is fully committed to the overall growth and development of the state's workforce and commended Barrister Anthony Okungbowa for his resourcefulness as well as his

dedication to the development of the Edo State Civil Service. He described the book as a significant intellectual contribution to public administration and praised the author for documenting practical experiences and reform strategies that would benefit future generations of public servants.

In her remarks, the Chairperson of the occasion and Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, Mrs. Ndidi Esther Walson-Jack, described the book as a well-researched and timely contribution to the ongoing discourse on public sector reforms in Nigeria. She commended the author

for his intellectual depth and commitment to public service, noting that the publication would not only contribute to rebuilding the Edo State Civil Service but also serve as a national reference document for reform initiatives across the country.

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That The People May Know



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Oil and Gas: Marketers in limbo over operations of Dangote Refinery, economic challenges

● Total Energies' 2025 revenue and sales volume fell by over 20 per cent ● Says downstream market has dramatic challenges

LAGOS

Several major and independent petroleum marketers in the country have seen their sales volume and

revenue suffered a sharp decline in 2025 as operation of Dangote Refinery altered the marketing dynamics coupled with difficult operation environment.

The Chairman of the Board of Total Energies Marketing Nigeria PLC, Mr Jean-Philippe Torres, disclosed this at the company's 48th Annual General Meeting (AGM), held virtually on Thursday.

Torres attributed the company's decline in revenue and sales volumes in 2025 to a combination of macroeconomic challenges, supply disruptions, price volatility and in-

tense competition in Nigeria's downstream petroleum sector, the operating environment remained difficult throughout the year.

According to him, the company's revenue fell by more than 20 per cent, while product sales volumes declined even more sharply.

"This performance, which is obviously not satisfactory for the management of the com-

pany and for the shareholders as well, is the consequence of several factors," Torres said.

He explained that persistent supply challenges and volatile fuel prices exposed the company to significant inventory losses, adversely affecting profitability.

Torres noted that the start of local refining operations altered market dynamics, while aggressive price competition

among industry players further pressured sales and margins.

"As you all know, the downstream market in the country has dramatically changed with the refinery coming on stream.

"The market conditions changed and some operators decided to start price wars during the peak part of the year, which had a significant impact on our

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'I will sign your execution warrant,' Okpebholo warns criminals

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo has issued a blunt warning to criminals operating in the state: those who persist in crime will face prosecution, and he will personally sign their execution warrant.

Okpebholo made the declaration yesterday during a parade of suspects at the Edo State Police Command headquarters in Be-

nin City, where he also rewarded officers who arrested a suspect linked to Sunday's kidnapping at the Vegetable Market.

"We are going to set up a special court to prosecute kidnappers and cultists. Within two weeks, the court is done with proceedings. I will sign your execution. We will take you to Ring Road roundabout so that Edo people can watch.

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Governors' Forum backs State Police, meets AGF to review constitutional amendments

ABUJA

The Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) says the proposed establishment of State Police must be constitutionally sound, and fully aligned with the principles of true federalism.

The group said in Abuja on

Thursday that the initiative should also protect citizens' fundamental human rights.

The forum stated this in a communiqué signed by its Chairman, Gov. AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq of Kwara, at the end of its meeting in Abuja and read

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INSECURITY:

Governor Monday Okpebholo (in white T-shirt), speaking during a parade of suspected kidnappers at the Edo State Police Command headquarters in Benin City on Thursday.

FG targets N200bn cooperative capital, unveils digital registry —Pg 2

Nigerian SMEs drive growth through digitalisation —MasterCard —Pg 6

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How home-based Athletes are helping AFN to power Nigeria's Athletics Renaissance —Pg 22

NEWS

FG targets N200bn cooperative capital, unveils digital registry

KADUNA

The Federal Government says it is mobilising N200 billion share capital from cooperative societies nationwide to facilitate the take-off of the proposed Cooperative Bank of Nigeria.

The Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Security, Sen. Aliyu Abdullahi, disclosed this on Thursday in Kaduna at the North-West Zonal

Engagement of the Ministerial Advocacy Tour on Cooperative Bank of Nigeria Share Capital Mobilisation and Cooperative Sector Digitalisation Drive.

Abdullahi said the capital mobilisation initiative was being supported by a nationwide cooperative digitalisation programme aimed at strengthening governance, transparency and accountability in the sector.

According to him, the government has unveiled the Na-

tional Cooperative Digital Architecture Platform (NCDAP) under the Renewed Hope Cooperative Reform and Revamp Programme (RH-CRRP).

He said the platform would create a National Cooperative Smart Registry to serve as a central database for registered cooperative societies and their members across the country.

The minister said the programme would introduce a Cooperative Verification

Number (CVN) for societies and a Cooperative Member Identification Number (Coop-ID) for individual cooperators.

"The CVN will strengthen regulation, eliminate ghost cooperatives, improve transparency and facilitate access to structured financial and government interventions.

"Every registered cooperator will also receive a CoopID to support identity management, accountability, access to

financing and participation in the digital economy," he said.

Abdullahi said the digital platform would be linked to national identity systems and supported by a cooperative credit reporting framework to improve trust and reduce lending risks.

He noted that inadequate and fragmented data had remained a major obstacle to investment, planning and financial inclusion in the cooperative movement.

"The success of the digitalisation programme will improve governance, strengthen credibility and support the long-term sustainability of the proposed Cooperative Bank of Nigeria," he said.

Representing Gov. Uba Sani, the Kaduna State Commissioner for Agriculture, Murtala Dabo, said technology-driven coopera-

tives would enhance agricultural productivity, financial inclusion and rural development.

Dabo said Kaduna had opened more than 2.5 million accounts for previously excluded residents and enrolled over 100,000 smallholder farmers in crop insurance schemes through digital platforms.

Also speaking, President of the Cooperative Federation of Nigeria, Mrs Hannatu Mershak, said digitalisation would improve record-keeping, transparency and confidence in cooperative institutions.

Earlier, the Provost of the Federal Cooperative College, Kaduna, Dr Mohammed Awwal, reaffirmed the institution's commitment to supporting cooperative reforms through training, research and capacity development.



NATIONAL ECONOMIC COUNCIL MEETING:

Cross Section of State Governors and Deputy Governors, during the National Economic Council meeting at the Presidential Villa in Abuja on Thursday.

No citizen should be made victim of national devt —Tinubu

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu has warned that no citizen should be made a victim of national development, stressing that national progress must not come at the expense of ordinary citizens.

Tinubu gave the warning in Abuja on Thursday, while inaugurating the newly constructed seven-kilometre access road, from Airport Road (Bill Clinton Drive) to Tungan Madaki, bypassing the second runway

of the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport.

The President, represented by the President of the Senate, Sen. Godswill Akpabio, explained that the connected communities that for years were cut off from the economic heart of the Federal Capital Territory.

He said that when it became necessary to construct the second runway of the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, the original inhabitants of the area willingly surrendered their ancestral lands.

"They sacrificed for the collective good of the entire nation, and for this, yet, they had no motorable road for their own feet and their own vehicles and motorcycles.

"They were cut off from the FCT and from the very airport they gave up their lands to witness.

"Let me state this clearly: no citizen should be made a victim of national development.

"When the Minister of the FCT, Nyesom Wike, brought this matter to my attention, my directive was clear and unequivocal — 'whatever the communities ask for to make their lives

better and whole, give it to them'.

"My administration will not only take from the communities; we will build the communities. We shall also replace, and we will also elevate the standard of living of the communities. Today, I must say that we have fulfilled that solemn promise," he said.

He said that the seven-kilometre access road is not just an engineering strip of tar, but an economic artery.

He added that the project would ease traffic, particularly the gridlock along Bill Clinton Drive, providing seamless convenience for airport users and travellers.

FG expands support for indigenous airlines, international routes

LAGOS

The Federal Government says it is expanding support for indigenous airlines through improved access to aircraft financing and international routes to boost the competitiveness of Nigerian carriers.

The Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Mr Festus Keyamo (SAN), said this on Thursday in Lagos at the unveiling of two newly acquired Next Generation (NG) Boeing 737-800 aircraft by United Nigeria Airlines (UNA).

Keyamo said the acquisition reflected the positive impact of reforms introduced by the administration of President Bola Tinubu to reposition the aviation sector.

The aircraft were named in honour of the Obi of Onitsha, Nnaemeka Achebe, and the late Chinua Achebe, renowned author and literary icon.

According to the minister, the administration inherited an aviation industry characterised by disputes, litigation and strained relationships among stakeholders, including airlines, unions and regulatory authorities.

He said one of the government's early interventions was to promote collaboration among stakeholders and encourage the resolution of disputes to create an enabling environment for industry growth.

"It took about two and a half years for us to begin to reap the fruits of the policy direction that we laid down.

"We did not do it alone. We worked closely with industry players and listened to their concerns before formulating policies," he said.

Keyamo said support for indigenous airlines remains a major pillar of the ministry's agenda, noting that government policies are assessed based on their impact on local operators.

Edo retirees commend pension reforms

BENIN CITY

The Nigeria Union of Pensioners Contributory Pension Scheme Sector (NUPCPSS) has inaugurated its Edo State Chapter with strong commendation of pension reforms.

Speaking at the event, the National Secretary of the union, Comrade Bisan Olufemi, who represented the National Chairman, Comrade Sylva C. Nwaiwu, described the inauguration as a significant milestone in the union's drive to strengthen its presence across the country and advance the interests of retirees under the Contributory Pension Scheme.

He noted that the union had recorded notable successes in its advocacy for improved welfare for CPS retirees, including the pay-

ment of pension increments dating back to 2007 and the restoration of gratuity for eligible retirees.

The NUPCPSS national chairman urged members of the newly inaugurated Edo State Chapter to remain united, dedicated and committed to the union's vision of securing a better life for pensioners.

He expressed confidence that the Edo chapter would become one of the most vibrant branches of the union nationwide and reaffirmed the organisation's commitment to protecting the welfare, dignity and rights of retirees under the Contributory Pension Scheme.

In his remarks, the Secretary of the Edo State Chapter, Comrade Sunday Idugboe, described NUPCPSS as the umbrella body that caters for the welfare and well-being of all retirees, both federal and state, under the Contributory Pension Scheme.

Construction of new Carter Bridge begins Monday

LAGOS

Physical work on the new Carter Bridge in Lagos will start on Monday, Dang Yinan, Project Manager of China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation, has disclosed.

The contractor, who gave the assurance on Thursday in Lagos during inspection of the bridge by the Minister of Works, Sen. Dave Umahi, revealed that preliminary works had been ongoing, and at the instruction of the minister, his team would access the site on Monday.

He said: "We will follow your excellency's direction and our mobilisation plan and make a report. Next week, Monday, we will start accessing the site. We will try our best."

Earlier, Director, Advanced Engineering Consultant, Mr Olatinwo Tomilola, gave the assurance that optimisation on the alignment of the bridge had been done.

"The first design had major stakeholder issues, particularly on the Lagos Island side, but we have been able to optimise the design and adjust the right-

of-way and the alignment of the bridge to minimise the negative impact on the existing settlement," he said.

He said that the new design that had taken care of challenges.

He said that the set-run span of the bridge was about 105 metres on either side, providing better navigation under the bridge.

"What currently exists is about 35 metres on either side, but the bridge that will be constructed will be 105 on either side; that provides for better navigation."

He noted that the bridge was

a major route for badges moving from the ports in Apapa, to the Bonded terminal in Ikorodu.

"We have created a better navigation space, not just in terms of horizontal space, but even in terms of the vertical clearance.

"The existing bridge is about six metres from the water level. The new bridge will be 12 metres high. It takes care of both today's demands and future demands.

The Controller of Works in Lagos, Mr Olufemi Dare, noted that construction of the new Carter Bridge was flagged off some weeks ago.

Edo Speaker debunks rumoured attack on schools in Owan West

RAYMOND OSOGBE

BENIN CITY

The Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Blessing Agbebaku, has dismissed as false reports circulating on social media alleging that bandits attacked schools in Owan West Local Government Area of the state.

Speaking with journalists in Benin City, Agbebaku described the reports as malicious

and capable of creating unnecessary fear among residents, parents and school authorities.

According to him, Owan West remains peaceful and secure, stressing that there is no threat to schools or communities in the area.

"The report is completely false and should be disregarded by members of the public. Owan West is peaceful, and there has been no attack on any school in the local government area," he said.

The Speaker disclosed that security agencies have already identified the individual responsible for spreading the rumour and are currently investigating the matter.

He assured residents that the administration of Governor Monday Okpebholo remains committed to safeguarding lives and property across Edo State.

"Security remains a top priority of the Governor Monday Okpebholo-led administration, and every necessary step is being

taken to ensure the safety of our people," Agbebaku stated.

The lawmaker further noted that the Edo State House of Assembly under his leadership gives prompt attention to security-related issues whenever they arise.

Highlighting the government's investment in security infrastructure, Agbebaku revealed that the state government has procured 100 Hilux patrol vehicles, hundreds of motorcycles, six Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs), and five drones to

strengthen security operations and combat criminal activities across the state.

He reiterated the government's resolve to rid Edo State of criminal elements and maintain a secure environment for residents and investors.

On the issue of cultism, the Speaker said ongoing efforts by the government and security agencies are yielding positive results, adding that measures have been intensified to curb

criminal activities in various parts of the state.

He warned those involved in crime to desist immediately or face the consequences of their actions.

"The government is fully prepared to smoke out criminals from every part of Edo State. Those involved in cultism and other criminal activities should either abandon such acts or be ready to face the full weight of the law," Agbebaku warned.



CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION:

National Secretary, National Union of Pensioners Contributory Pension Scheme Sector (NUPCPS), Comrade Sam Olufemi (right), presenting certificate of registration of Edo State Chapter to the chairman, Comrade Charles Olumese (2nd left), during the inauguration of the State chapter and its executive officers. vice Chairman, Azuka.

3 months after, Bayelsa Govt yet to decide tariff of its independent power plant

YENAGOA

The Bayelsa Government says it has yet to decide on the tariffs for usage of its gas-powered 60 megawatts electricity plant.

Mrs Ebiuwou Koku-Obiyai, the Commissioner for Information, Orientation and Strategy, made this known in Yenagoa on Thursday.

It would be recalled that the Gov. Duoye Diri-led government in April inaugurated a 60-megawatts independent gas-fired power plant, which has commenced phased test-running of the power plant with reliable electricity supply to parts of Yenagoa City.

Koku-Obiyai stated that the major concern of the state government was to ensure that electricity got transmitted to communities.

"We have yet to decide on the tariff structure for various categories of users. That is a technical area, not everyone should delve into it.

"Our major concern now is to ensure that the electricity gradu-

ally gets to communities. Once we achieve this, we can then work out the tariff," he said.

Meanwhile some residents of Yenagoa have decried alleged aggressive revenue drive by the Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company (PHEDC) since the return of regular power supply to the city.

Ebitimi Noah, a resident of Opolo Area of Yenagoa, expressed worry that the company was demanding electricity bills payment even when customers had not been metered.

"We understand that they are serving as the DISCO for the project, but the right thing should be done.

"The plant is still under test-run, it's too early to start harassing customers. Left for PHEDC alone, we won't have electricity," he said.

He called for metering of electricity users in the city to ensure that residents only paid for what they consumed.

Another resident, Ilayefaa Ajoko, alleged that electricity users in the state had faced extortion for several years

INEC assures Enugu North of fair, credible by-election

ENUGU

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has assured the people of Enugu North Senatorial District of a free, fair and credible by-election scheduled for this Saturday, June 20, 2026.

The Head of Department, Voter Education, INEC Enugu, Mr Chuka Achumie, gave the assurance in an interview on Thursday in Enugu.

He said the by-election to fill the vacant Enugu North Sena-

torial seat following the demise of Sen. Okey Ezea, is expected to take place across the six local government areas in the Enugu North Senatorial District which includes Igbo-Etiti, Igbo-Eze North, Igbo-Eze South, Nsukka, Udeni Uzo-Uwani

The INEC chieftain added that no fewer than seven candidates on the platforms of different political parties had been cleared by the electoral body to contest the election.

Achumie said that INEC had concluded necessary preparations and remain committed to

conducting a transparent and credible electoral process.

"If we are not prepared to conduct free and credible elections, we will not conduct them," he said.

According to him, all arrangements for the exercise were progressing as planned, without major challenges currently confronting the commission.

He disclosed that the distribution of sensitive election materials was expected to commence on Thursday ahead of the poll.

The head of voters' education also noted that all cleared

political parties and candidates would be given a level playing field during the election.

On voter education, he said the commission had continued to sensitize eligible voters on the importance of participating in the electoral process and conducting themselves peacefully during the exercise.

He urged residents of the senatorial district to come out and exercise their civic responsibility, assuring them that adequate measures had been put in place to ensure a smooth and credible election.

Oyo Assembly cancels 3rd anniversary celebrations over security concerns

IBADAN

The Oyo State House of Assembly has cancelled the elaborate activities lined up to mark its third anniversary, citing prevailing security concerns particularly in the Oke-Ogun and Ogbomoso axis as reasons.

The legislature inaugurated on June 14, 2023, however

Reflected on its performance over the last three legislative years as a critical arm of government.

The speaker of the House, Mr Adebo Ogundoyin, at plenary on Thursday, said that the decision of the state legislature was

informed by the recent security challenges in the state and the need to show solidarity with affected areas and residents.

Ogundoyin said that the occasion would ordinarily have been marked with celebrations and public engagements, but the law makers had resolved to focus attention on governance, legislative responsibilities and efforts geared towards addressing the security situation.

"Thirty-six bills have been passed into law, covering various sectors of governance and development. We passed 276 resolutions, which were transmitted to the executive arm and other relevant government in-

stitutions for implementation.

"The resolutions are being monitored through the oversight activities of various committees to ensure compliance and effectiveness," he said.

Ogundoyin noted that in efforts to strengthen governance and accountability, the assembly's Post Legislative Scrutiny (PLS) Unit conducted inquiries into the implementation of the Open Rearing and Grazing Regulation Law, 2019, as well as the Oyo State Security Agency Law, 2020.

He said that legislature organized a security summit as one of its notable interventions during the period under review.

"The summit was convened

in response to persistent and recurring security challenges affecting parts of the state.

"We conducted nine public hearings on various bills under consideration, providing stakeholders, civil society groups and members of the public opportunities to contribute to the legislative process," the speaker said.

Ogundoyin also reaffirmed the commitment of the legislature to law making, oversight and effective representation.

"The Assembly remains focused on delivering democratic dividends and supporting policies that promote peace, security and socio-economic development in Oyo State.

Nigerian Army revises recruit training curriculum to end terrorism

ZARIA

The Nigerian Army has reviewed recruit training curriculum to strengthen the capacity of newly enlisted soldiers to effectively tackle terrorism, insurgency and emerging security threats nationwide.

Major General Oluyemi Olatoye, Commandant, Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA), said this on Thursday during the Beating of Retreat and Award Ceremony for the 90 Regular Recruits Intake at Depot Nigerian Army, Zaria.

Olatoye said the curriculum review was part of efforts to align recruit training with Nigeria's evolving security environment.

He said that through the revised training curriculum the recruits had acquired relevant competencies required for contemporary military operations nationwide.

The commander said greater

emphasis had been placed on counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations, to prepare recruits for emerging threats and enhance the army's capacity to respond effectively to security challenges.

According to Olatoye, the revised curriculum reflects current operational realities and equips recruits with the foundational knowledge, discipline and professional skills required for modern military engagements across theatres.

"I am delighted to note that your training curriculum was reviewed to reflect the current security realities facing our country. As a result, greater emphasis was placed on counterterrorism operations," he said.

Olatoye said the training had equipped recruits with competencies required to support ongoing operations against terrorists, bandits and other criminal elements threatening national security and public safety.

Microsoft tasks Nigeria to move beyond AI policies, pushes for real-world digital impact

CAROLINE ÀMEH

ABUJA

Microsoft Corporation has urged Nigeria to move beyond the development of artificial intelligence (AI) policies and focus on deploying the technology in ways that create measurable benefits for government, businesses and citizens.

The call was made by the Director of Government Affairs for West Africa at Microsoft, Mrs Nonye Ujam, at the AI Summit Nigeria held in Abuja on Tuesday.

The summit, organised by Microsoft in partnership with the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) and , was themed: "From Policy to Progress: Accelerating

Responsible AI Adoption for Nigeria's Digital Decade."

Ujam said Nigeria had taken important steps towards becoming a key player in the global AI ecosystem through initiatives such as the National AI Strategy, data governance frameworks and regulatory reforms.

She, however, stressed that the next phase must focus on implementation, with emphasis on building systems, infrastructure and institutional capacity required to scale AI adoption.

"As the focus shifts from strategy to implementation, the priority is to translate ambition into impact by operationalising AI in ways that deliver real and measurable outcomes," she said.

According to her, responsible AI adoption must be built around reliability, safety, fair-

ness, privacy, security, inclusiveness, transparency and accountability to earn public trust.

She noted that AI presents Nigeria with an opportunity to strengthen national capabilities, improve public service delivery, expand access to knowledge and boost productivity across sectors.

Ujam added that trusted AI solutions must reflect local

realities, align with national priorities and be developed through collaboration between government, industry and other stakeholders.

In his speech, the Director-General of NITDA, Kashifu Inuwa, represented by the Acting Director of Regulation and Compliance, Emmanuel Edet, said artificial intelligence had become a general-purpose technology

capable of transforming virtually every sector of the economy.

Inuwa said Nigeria possesses the human capital and innovation potential needed to lead Africa's AI advancement but warned that public trust, transparency and accountability would determine the sustainability of AI adoption.

"Without public trust, AI adoption will be stalled. Without accountability, innovation will not scale sustainably, and without transparency, citizens will lose confidence in the systems

designed to serve them," he said.

He emphasised the need for Nigeria to pursue digital sovereignty by developing local AI capabilities rather than depending solely on technologies created outside the country.

"We must become creators of intelligence rooted in our realities and responsive to our aspirations. We must build local talent, strengthen research ecosystems and create an enabling environment where Nigerian and African solutions can thrive," he added.

Facility deliveries surge 100 per cent in Edo

EDWARD OSEGHE

BENIN CITY

Healthcare facility-based deliveries have attained over 100 per cent increase following the implementation of the World Bank-supported Immunization Plus and Malaria Progress by Accelerating Coverage and Transforming Services (IM-PACT) Project.

Dr. Coulson Oahimire Osoikhia, Executive Secretary of the Edo State Primary Health Care Development Agency (ED-SPHCDA), disclosed this while unveiling the project's far-reaching impact on the state's healthcare system since 2024.

According to Osoikhia, the initiative has revitalised 61 Primary Healthcare Centres across the three senatorial districts and extended support to

146 healthcare facilities with essential drugs, medical commodities, immunisation outreach activities, and critical infrastructural upgrades.

He revealed that the project had facilitated the procurement and distribution of over 200 laptops and tablets to health facilities across the state in a significant stride towards modernizing healthcare administration.

The Executive Secretary also pointed out that monitoring and evaluation officers were trained to enhance data collection, reporting, and evidence-based decision-making.

"We are witnessing improved service delivery in immunization, with outreach activities becoming more targeted and reaching more communities across the state," Osoikhia said.

The project, he added, has addressed the critical shortage of

skilled maternal care providers through the deployment of 192 Skilled Birth Attendants (SBAs) to health facilities statewide.

"The deployment of Skilled Birth Attendants has significantly improved maternal and newborn healthcare outcomes.

"More women are now delivering in healthcare facilities under the care of trained professionals, which is helping to reduce preventable maternal and infant health complications," he stated.

He added: "Malaria testing and treatment are now provided free of charge in all 146 IM-PACT-supported health facilities. Healthcare workers have received comprehensive training to ensure quality service delivery across all participating centres."

The Executive Secretary also hailed the intervention as particularly significant in hard-to-reach communities through

targeted outreach programmes designed to expand immunization coverage and ensure no child is left behind.

Osoikhia emphasised that the gains recorded under the IM-PACT Project complement the broader healthcare reform agenda of Governor Monday Okpebholo's administration, which has prioritized access to quality primary healthcare for all residents.

"Our commitment is to sustain these gains and ensure that communities across Edo State continue to enjoy access to quality primary healthcare services," he affirmed.

Osoikhi, who described the World Bank-supported initiative as one of the most comprehensive primary healthcare interventions in Edo State's history, to combine infrastructure development, workforce strengthening, digital innovation, and free essential services to transform health outcomes at the grassroots level.

Oil and Gas: Marketers in limbo...

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sales and margins," he said.

In spite of the setbacks, Torres said the company had begun to recover following measures taken by management to improve operational efficiency and restore profitability.

"We can see that in the first quarter of this year, 2026, we have a very significant improvement in the profitability of the company and it really makes us quite optimistic for

the future," he said.

The chairman said the company would continue to focus on operational excellence, customer satisfaction, reliable product supply and prudent cost management.

He reaffirmed Total Energies' commitment to long-term investments aimed at sustaining profitability and growth.

"We keep investing for the future and to ensure sustainable profitability of the company over the long run," Torres said.

Civil Service remains critical to national...

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Mrs. Walson-Jack also applauded Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, for providing purposeful leadership anchored on the SHINE Agenda and for supporting the implementation of the Edo Public Service Reforms Programme (EDOPREP).

She emphasized the importance of collaboration among the various tiers of government, stating that no level of government can succeed in isolation.

According to her, the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation has continued to implement policies, capacity-building programmes and training initiatives aimed at improving service delivery and enhancing professionalism within the public service.

In a welcome address, Barrister Anthony Okungbowa said the event was not only about the launch of a publication but also an opportunity to reflect on his journey and experiences in the Civil Service.

He recalled the various reforms that have been implemented across the country over the years and noted that the book captures critical recommendations and strategies required to reposition the Civil Service for greater efficiency and effectiveness.

According to him, the publication provides practical solutions to the challenges confronting the

service and offers insights into what should be done to achieve sustainable reforms.

Okungbowa also highlighted the Edo Public Service Reforms Programme (EDOPREP), an initiative aimed at enhancing the capacity and productivity of the Edo State Civil Service, noting that the programme aligns with the ideals contained in the book.

He described the Civil Service as the life wire of the nation, stressing that the best policies, training and welfare packages should be provided for civil servants to enable them deliver quality services to citizens.

"The Civil Service remains the engine room of governance and national development. This book is intended to serve as a guide for policymakers, administrators and reformers committed to building a more responsive and efficient public service," he said.

The event attracted prominent personalities from across the country, including government officials, senior civil servants, academics, policy experts and members of the public.

Among those in attendance was the General Manager of the Nigerian Observer, Hon. Peter Odiboh.

The presentation of "Rebuilding the Nigerian Civil Service: A Reformer's Perspective" was widely regarded as a major addition to the growing body of literature on public sector reforms and governance in Nigeria.

'I will sign your execution warrant,'...

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I will have no regret about it. Don't take my simplicity for granted," the governor said.

Governor Okpebholo said he acted swiftly after the Sunday incident, immediately directing the Commissioner of Police to ensure the perpetrators were caught. One suspect was subsequently arrested, one was neutralised during the operation, and two others remain at large.

"They will never find peace in Edo. The message to all criminals is that they will not go free after committing crime in this state. You will be arrested.

ed. We are ready for you and your sponsors. We are working day and night to make sure this land is safe," he said.

The governor also pushed back against criticism of the federal government's handling of security, arguing that the results being recorded on the ground are evidence that President Bola Tinubu's administration is funding security operatives effectively.

"I wonder why people keep complaining that the president is not working. The president is funding the security operatives to function well. That is why we are happy about the results we are getting today," Okpebholo said.

He appealed to Edo residents to steer clear of criminal activity, saying it is cheaper to live within one's means than to gamble one's life on crime.

As a mark of commendation, the governor presented the sum of N10 million to the police operatives who apprehended the kidnap suspect.

The State Commissioner of Police, Mr Monday Agbonika confirmed that investigations are ongoing and that efforts are being intensified to track down the remaining members of the kidnap gang.

Items recovered from the arrested suspect include a red

Lexus RX 350 with registration number EKP 848 AE, a pump-action shotgun, two live cartridges, a motorcycle, and cash totalling N2,250,000 suspected to be proceeds of crime.

Agbonika expressed appreciation to Governor Okpebholo for his continued support to the command and to Inspector-General of Police Olatunji Disu for his guidance, reaffirming the command's commitment to protecting lives and property.

He urged members of the public to keep providing timely and credible information to the police."

Governors' Forum backs State Police, meets AGF to review...

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by Gov. Dapo Abiodun of Ogun.

The governors said they were actively consulting with the Attorneys-General of the 36 states of the federation to review the proposed constitutional amendments required for the establishment of state police.

"The forum received a presentation from the NGF Secretariat and a delegation of the honourable Attorneys-General of the States on efforts to support establishing State Police in Nigeria.

"It noted a dedicated consultation with the Attorneys-General to review the proposed constitutional amendments and frameworks.

"Governors emphasised the

need for the State Police to be constitutionally sound and aligned with federalism and citizens' rights.

"The forum noted the collaborative effort and added that the consultation outcomes would strengthen the States' collective position," Abiodun said.

On health and human development, Abiodun reaffirmed the governors' commitment to improving nutrition outcomes and reducing child malnutrition across Nigeria.

He said the forum received a progress report from the Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning on the National Nutrition 774 (N-774) Initiative.

According to him, the forum acknowledged the ongoing

work on the National Nutrition Bill and encouraged continued engagement with relevant stakeholders to strengthen the legal and policy framework for nutrition governance.

Abiodun also expressed the governors' commitment to enhancing food security, agricultural value chains, and citizens' access to reliable electricity supply.

He said the forum received a briefing by the World Bank Country Office on the proposed Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Nigeria, covering the period FY2026-2032, alongside the proposed Nigeria Sustainable Agricultural Value-Chains for Growth (AGROW) Programme.

The AGROW Programme

is a results-based initiative designed to improve agricultural productivity, strengthen value chains, increase private sector participation, enhance food security, and boost Early Childhood Development (ECD).

"The forum supports ongoing collaboration with the Federal Government, the World Bank, and other stakeholders to ensure successful implementation and deliver benefits to participating states.

"Governors approved state-specific interventions and stressed the importance of better coordination across sectors like health, nutrition, education, water and sanitation, social protection, and family support," he said.

Independent power plant: Bayelsa Govt. yet to decide tariff

YENAGOA

The Bayelsa Government says it has yet to decide on the tariffs for usage of its gas-powered 60 megawatts electricity plant.

Mrs Ebiuwou Koku-Obiyai, the Commissioner for Information, Orientation and Strategy, made the statement in an

interview with newsmen in Yenagoa on Thursday.

It would be recalled that the Gov. Duoye Diri-led government in April inaugurated a 60-megawatts independent gas-fired power plant

Phased test-running of the power plant has already commenced with reliable electricity supply to parts of Yenagoa City.

Koku-Obiyai stated that the major concern of the state government was to ensure that electricity got transmitted to communities.

"We have yet to decide on the tariff structure for various categories of users. That is a technical area, not everyone should delve into it.

"Our major concern now is to

ensure that the electricity gradually gets to communities. Once we achieve this, we can then work out the tariff," he said.

Meanwhile some residents of Yenagoa have decried alleged aggressive revenue drive by the Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company (PHEDC) since the return of regular power supply to the city.

Ebitimi Noah, a resident of Opolo Area of Yenagoa, expressed worry that the company was demanding electricity bills payment even when customers had not been metered.

"We understand that they are serving as the DISCO for the project, but the right thing should be done.

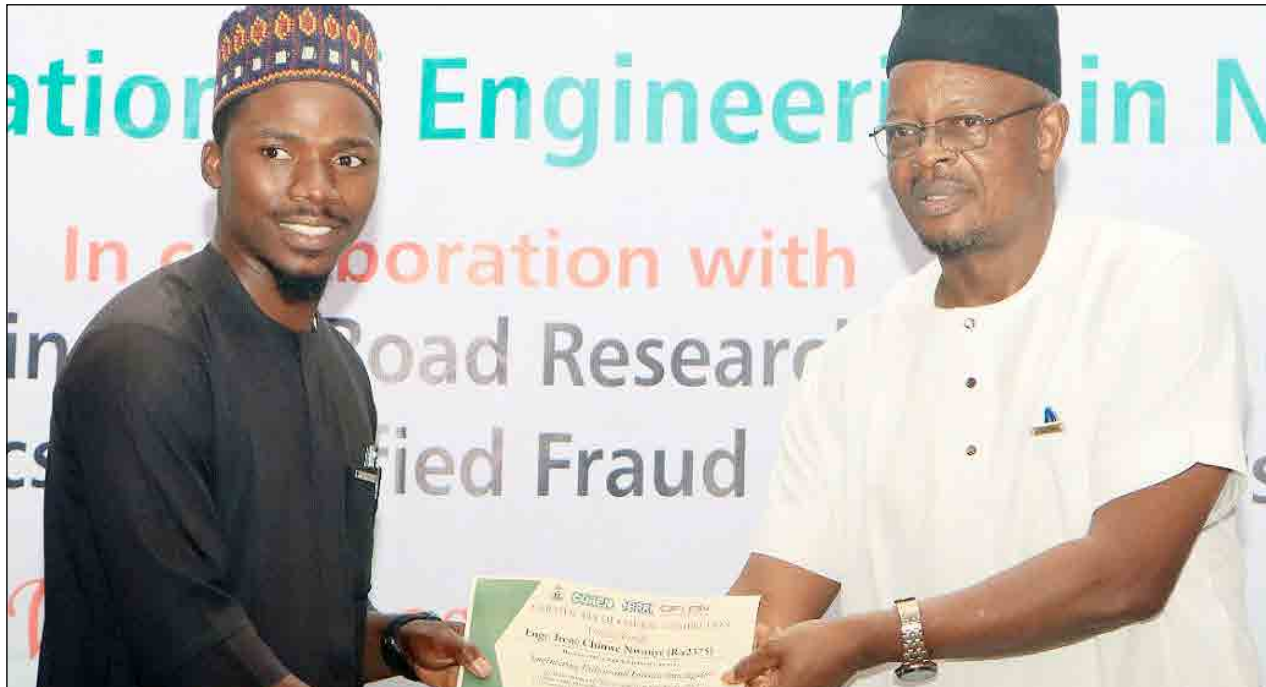
"The plant is still under test-run, it's too early to start harassing customers. Left for PHEDC alone,

we won't have electricity," he said.

He called for metering of electricity users in the city to ensure that residents only paid for what they consumed.

Another resident, Ilayefaa Ajoko, alleged that electricity users in the state had faced extortion for several years

"That is the reason that people are resisting this move. We ask for metering, this will settle the whole matter," he said.



PRESENTING A CERTIFICATE:

Registrar, Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN), Prof. Okorie Augustine-Uche (R), presenting a certificate to one of the participants, during a workshop on Engineering Failure and Forensic Investigation organised by COREN in Abuja.

COREN reforms to tackle quackery, building collapse

ABUJA

The Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN), has rolled out reforms to tackle quackery, strengthen project monitoring and prevent building collapse and other engineering-related failures.

The Registrar of COREN, Prof. Uche Okorie disclosed this on Thursday in Abuja at the end of COREN's 189th Ordinary Council Meeting

Okorie said major reforms were unveiled to strengthen engineering regulation, public safety, and professional standards.

He explained that the meeting also addressed issues on how to improve professional standards, and advance key institutional reforms.

"Among the key decisions approved by Council is the establishment of a 90-Day Engineering Regulation Monitoring and Enforcement (ERM&E) Rapid Response Task Force.

"The task force will intensify the fight against quackery, strengthen project monitoring, and support efforts aimed at preventing building collapse and other engineering-related failures," he said.

Okorie said the Council also approved the launch of a nation-

wide public awareness campaign to educate Nigerians on promoting compliance with engineering regulations and standards.

He said the campaign will also focus on the dangers of engaging unregistered engineering practitioners.

Okorie added that the Council approved the activation of the Engineering Disciplinary Tribunal to provide a framework for addressing cases of professional misconduct and enforcing accountability within the engineering profession.

According to him, the setting up of the disciplinary tribunal is a major step towards

strengthening professional discipline and ethical conduct.

The COREN Registrar also disclosed that the Council approved the registration of 3,328 engineering practitioners across various categories and 107 engineering firms to deepen regulation and improve service delivery.

He said the Council also directed a review of existing registration guidelines to reflect emerging industry realities and global best practices.

The Registrar said the Council further reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining the integrity of the engineering profession in the country.

INEC assures adequate security, transparent process ahead of Rivers South-East bye-election

PORT HARCOURT

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Rivers has assured stakeholders of adequate security and transparent electoral process ahead of the June 20 Rivers South-East Senatorial District by-election.

The Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) in the state, Mr Johnson Sinikiem, gave the assurance during inspection, distribution and collection of sensitive election materials at the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Port Harcourt branch on Thursday.

Sinikiem, while addressing party agents, electoral officers and media representatives, said

the commission had a joint Inter-Agency Consultative Committee meeting on Election Security (ICCES) on Wednesday.

According to him, security agencies have assured the commission of adequate deployment across both land and riverine areas within the senatorial district.

He said "we have received assurances from all the security agencies. They will provide coverage on land and water, especially in riverine local government areas where the polling units seem difficult-to-reach.

"We do not anticipate any major security challenge, but even if any arises, we are confident that it can be effectively managed."

The commissioner added that all sensitive materials re-

ceived from the CBN were intact and ready to be distributed to electoral officers in charge of the senatorial district where the election would be taking place.

He said "the pallets containing the election materials have not been tampered with. I urge all party agents to inspect them properly and raise any concerns if any.

"After this exercise, the materials will be distributed to the seven local government areas participating in the election and subsequently moved to the Registration Area Centres (RACs)."

The REC urged stakeholders to cooperate with INEC to ensure peaceful and hitch-free electoral process.

Responding to Journalists

on concerns about alleged non-availability of result sheets at polling units, the REC dismissed the fears, stating that under his watch, Rivers had not experienced issues relating to missing result sheets during previous elections.

He explained that INEC often handles result sheets carefully to prevent theft or snatching by political thugs.

"The reason result sheets are not openly displayed during distribution is to prevent unauthorised persons from stealing them.

"When elections are concluded at polling units, results will be entered appropriately, and the same procedure will be followed at collation centres in line with electoral guidelines," he said.

Mother of 3 jailed 10 years for stabbing neighbour to death

ABUJA

An Abuja High Court on Thursday, sentenced a 27-year-old mother of three, Immaculate Chukwudi to 10 years imprisonment for stabbing and causing the death of her neighbour, Salamatu Yinusa.

The FCT Commissioner of Police charged Chukwudi with culpable homicide.

Delivering judgment, Justice Idris Mohammed, held that Chukwudi caused the death of Yinusa.

The judge cited the provisions of Section 225 of the Penal Code, which states: "whosoever causes the death of a person by doing an act not amounting to culpable homicide but done with the intention of causing hurt or grievous hurt, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 14 years or with fine or with both.

Mohammed sentenced Chukwudi.

Earlier, the Defence Counsel, O. Oluwakemi told the court that the convict had no past criminal record before the court and was a young woman with potential for rehabilitation.

Oluwakemi added that Chukwudi was a mother of three young children who depend on her for survival and care, urging the court to tem-

per justice with mercy.

Mohammed however sentenced the convict to 10 years imprisonment which starts from the day she was arraigned in May, 2024.

The Prosecution Counsel, Adama Musa told the court that Chukwudi caused the death of her 18-year-old neighbour, Yinusa, by stabbing her in the chest with a knife.

Musa said that Chukwudi's action caused Yinusa severe bodily injury which eventually led to her death on March 12, 2024 in, Kubwa, Abuja.

He added that Chukwudi did same with the knowledge that death would be the probable and not only a likely consequence of her act.

The offence, he said contravened the provisions of Section 220 (a) (b) of the Penal Code Law and punishable under 221 of the same Law.

In her defence, Chukwudi told the court that the deceased and her siblings who were her friends, fought her in her house while she was trying to prepare food for her son in the morning.

She said that the deceased and siblings beat her up and while trying to defend herself.

She begged the court for leniency saying that she got sick while in custody and needed proper care.

Lagos intensifies waste evacuation amidst refuse build-up

LAGOS

The Lagos State Government has said that has intensified waste evacuation efforts across the state following the recent build-up of refuse in some communities.

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu disclosed this in a statement posted on his official Facebook page on Thursday.

Sanwo-Olu said he had directed relevant agencies to immediately scale up waste clearance operations in affected areas.

According to him, the Lagos Waste Management Authority, Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency and the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources are working to address the situation.

The governor said additional trucks and personnel had been deployed to clear waste backlogs

and restore cleanliness across affected neighbourhoods.

He expressed optimism that residents would begin to notice improvements as the evacuation exercise progresses.

Sanwo-Olu acknowledged the scale of the waste management challenge in the state, noting that Lagos generates more than 13,000 tonnes of waste daily.

He said managing such volume required significant resources and sustained efforts, assuring residents of the government's commitment to resolving the challenge.

The governor urged residents to support ongoing efforts by disposing of waste properly and refraining from dumping refuse on roads and in drainage channels.

He reiterated the government's commitment to maintaining a clean and safe environment for all residents.

NEWS

Nigerian SMEs drive growth through digitalisation —MasterCard

LAGOS

The Country Manager, West Africa, Mastercard, Mrs Folasade Femi-Lawal, says Nigerian Small and Medium-scale Enterprises (SMEs) are driving growth through digital payments, workforce investments and expansion plans.

Femi-Lawal said this in a statement made available to newsmen, citing findings from the Mastercard SME Confidence Index.

According to the report, 81 per cent of Nigerian SMEs are confident about their business prospects over the next 12 months, while 68 per cent expect revenue growth within the period.

Femi-Lawal said Nigerian businesses continue to demon-

strate resilience and a clear understanding of the factors required for growth.

“Nigerian businesses have never been short on ambition. “They are investing in their people, embracing digital payments and seeking the capital to expand,” she said.

She said Mastercard remained committed to supporting SME growth through partnerships and accessible financial solutions.

“We are working to put accessible and secure financial tools within reach of every entrepreneur,” she said.

The report showed that 100 per cent of respondents considered digital and online payments critical to business growth.

It indicated that mobile payments led adoption at 67 per cent, followed by card pay-

ments at 45 per cent and online payments at 42 per cent.

According to the findings, 57 per cent of SMEs now operate across both physical and digital channels.

The report also showed that 79 per cent of SMEs prioritise staff training and upskilling, while 78 per cent are investing in digitisation initiatives.

It added that 73 per cent focus on expanding digital payment acceptance to improve efficiency and customer experience.

The report identified security as a major concern, with 60 per cent of SMEs prioritising stronger cybersecurity and fraud prevention systems.

It further revealed that 52 per cent of respondents sought mentorship and business advisory support.

On financing, the report showed that 69 per cent of SMEs were seeking access to credit to support expansion,

while 34 per cent obtained external funding in the past year.

However, 63 per cent still rely on personal cards for business spending, highlighting persistent financing gaps.

Also, Mastercard’s Executive Vice-President, Market Development, Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa, Mr Gabriel Swanepoel, described Nigerian SMEs as among the most entrepreneurial globally.

“Nigeria is home to one of the most entrepreneurial SME communities anywhere in the world. “When every business agrees that digital payments matter, it highlights opportunities to accelerate SME development,” he said.

Swanepoel said Mastercard remained focused on providing SMEs with the tools, financing solutions and partnerships needed to scale sustainably.

The report noted that 56 per cent of SMEs recorded revenue growth in the past year, supported by improvements in infrastructure and government interventions.

However, inflation and broader financial pressures remained key challenges facing businesses.

The index emphasised the need for more inclusive financial

systems to sustain SME growth and unlock the sector’s contribution to economic development.

Mastercard said it continues to support SMEs through digital solutions and partnerships, including Tap on Phone, QR Pay-by-Link, tokenisation and cybersecurity initiatives.

Osun residents turn to firewood as cooking gas hits N2,000/kg

OSOGBO

Residents in Osun have turned to alternative cooking methods following a sharp increase in the cost of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), commonly known as cooking gas.

Some residents, who spoke with our correspondent on Thursday in Osogbo, said they now rely on charcoal and firewood, as they can no longer afford cooking gas, which is currently sold for about ₦2,000 per kilogram.

The respondents noted that the rising cost of cooking gas has placed additional financial strain on household budgets and negatively impacted their businesses.

Mrs Rukayat Abiola, a fast-food vendor at Owode-Ede Market, said the surge in gas prices had significantly increased her operational costs.

According to Abiola, the rising cost has forced her and other food vendors to slightly increase menu prices to remain in business. She added that she

now supplements her cooking with charcoal and firewood to minimise expenses.

She appealed to the Federal Government to address the situation and provide lasting solutions to the persistent increase in gas prices.

Similarly, Mrs Folasade Adebayo, a resident of Owode-Ede, expressed frustration over the price hike, describing the cost of refilling a gas cylinder as comparable to paying school fees.

Adebayo said she had switched to using a coal pot for cooking.

“From ₦1,400 to ₦2,000 per kilogram, how do they expect us to survive?” she asked.

Mrs Juliet Adeosun, a housewife in Osogbo, also lamented the impact of the price increase on her family.

“Things are extremely expensive. In my household, we plan our spending based on my husband’s salary as a civil servant.

“Now, the increase in gas prices has affected other essential needs. We have decided to get a coal pot at the end of the month if prices do not drop,” she said.

Another resident, Mrs Foluke Olugbemiga, a petty trader in Osogbo, said she had reverted to using firewood.

“The high cost of kerosene made us stop using it years ago and switch to gas. Now that gas is becoming unaffordable, we have no choice but to return to firewood,” she said.

Colleagues of Late Gen. Rabe call for stronger action against terrorism

KADUNA

Colleagues, friends and associates of the late Retired Maj.-Gen. Abubakar Rabe have called for urgent reforms in the Nigeria’s security architecture, following his death in the hands of bandits after being kidnapped in Katsina State.

The group made the call at a press briefing on Thursday in Kaduna while mourning the the demise of the retired military officer, who died after he was abducted alongside his wife, Hajiya Amina, around the Matazu area of Katsina State.

Speaking on behalf of the group, retired Brig.-Gen. Ismaila Abdullahi described the late officer as a distinguished

military professional whose career was defined by loyalty, integrity and dedication to national service.

According to him, the death of Gen. Rabe is not merely an isolated incident but a reflection of the broader security challenges confronting the country.

“Kidnappings, banditry and terrorism have become a daily reality for many Nigerians, while public confidence in government’s ability to protect lives and property continues to decline,” he said.

The group acknowledged the efforts of the Federal Government and the Katsina State Government, particularly the operation that led to the rescue of the late officer’s wife.

They also commended President Bola Tinubu for his strong reaction to the incident and his pledge to take an uncompromising stance against terrorism and kidnapping.

However, the group expressed concern over what it described as persistent shortcomings in the nation’s counter-insurgency and anti-banditry efforts.

According to them, insecurity has spread across the country to the extent that it is increasingly difficult to distinguish between conflict zones and peaceful regions.

They noted that successive

administrations had struggled to implement effective measures against terrorism and banditry, resulting in recurring attacks, abductions and loss of lives.

The group cautioned against politicising the nation’s security challenges or giving them ethnic and regional interpretations, stressing that terrorism and kidnapping are national problems requiring collective action.

They urged Nigerians to engage in deeper reflection on the root causes of insecurity and support efforts aimed at strengthening national unity and security cooperation.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MISS OSHOGWE MARIA**, now wish to be known and called as **MRS. OHIWERE MARIA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **IDAHOR CHRISTIANA IRO**, now wish to be known as **IGBINIDU CHRISTIANA IROGHAMA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **MISS EMMANUEL- IKPONMWOSA EDITH**, now wish to be known as **MRS. EDWARD EDITH OSATOHANMWEN**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

RE-ARRANGEMENT OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that the correct arrangements of my name is **OMORHIERHIEN WILLIAMS DOLANKI**, not **WILLIAMS DOLANKI OMORHIERHIEN** as wrongly arrange in my NIN. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **OSEGHAE TINA**, now wish to be known as **KADIRI TINA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME/DATE OF BIRTH

I, formerly known as **EDEMA FAITH UCHE**, now wish to be known as **GEORGE FAITH UCHECHUKWU**, also my correct date of birth is **23/2/1993**, not **25/8/1993** as wrongly written on my BVN. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

ADDITION OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MRS. BELLO EITUAJIE GLORIA**, now wish to be known as **MRS BELLO-EHIMEN EITUAJIE GLORIA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME/DATE OF BIRTH

I, formerly known as **EDEDE IMADE**, now wish to be known as **EDED IMADE**. Also, my correct date of birth is **12/3/1982**, not **26/11/1983** as wrongly written on my BVN. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **IJEOMA ASSUMPTA EZE**, now wish to be known as **IJEOMA ASSUMPTA IHEUKWUMERE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH

I, **OBASOHAN OSBERT OSAGIATOR**, wish to bring for the information of the general public that my correct date of birth is **19/4/1997**, not **19/4/1987** as was wrongly captured in my West Africa Examination Council Certificate (WAEC) Registration and some of my documents, hence this publication for record purpose. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME

I, formerly known as **IGHAVBOTA EVELYN OBAPORORO**, now wish to be known and addressed as **ALEX EVELYN OBAPORORO**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

RECONCILIATION OF NAME

The general public is here by notified that I am the same person known as **EMMAR ELOHOR OKPAKPOR OMEH**, **EMMA ELOHOR OKPAKPOR**, **EMMAR ELOHOR OKPAKPOR**, **ELOHOR OKPAKPOR** and **ELOHOR OMEH**. I wish to be known as **EMMAR ELOHOR OKPAKPOR OMEH**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MISS OLABODE PRECIOUS EDILE**, now wish to be known as **MRS. AYODELE PRECIOUS EDILE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH

I, **BELLO ADESUWA** wish to bring for the information of the general public that my correct date of birth is **31/7/1992**, not **31/7/1983** as wrongly captured in my International Passport, hence this publication for record purpose. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **BLESSING EHIGIE**, now wish to be known as **ALBERT BLESSING**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

LEGAL NOTICE
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE EDO STATE OF NIGERIA
PROBATE REGISTRY, BENIN CITY

WHEREAS the person whose name is set out in the first column hereunder died intestate on the date and at the place stated in the column;

AND WHEREAS the persons whose names, addresses and claimed relationship to the deceased are set in the second column hereunder have applied to the Probate Registrar, High Court of Justice, Edo State of Nigeria for a grant of Letters of Administration of the real and personal property of the deceased.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Letters of Administration will be granted to such persons unless a NOTICE to prohibit the grant is filed in this Registry within Twenty-One (21) days from the date of the publication of this notice.

1. MR. JOHNSON IGUEVBOMWENYAYIN AGBONLAHOR, late of Ohowbe, Ikpoba-Okha L.G.A., who died on the 4th day of February, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/370/2026 Mr. Eric Evbaemwen Agbonlahor and Mr. Lawrence Orhue Agbonlahor of NO 10, John Asien Uwazare Street, Off Irhiri Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased.
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DATED THIS 18TH DAY OF JUNE, 2026.


B. O. OSAWARU ESQ.
PROBATE REGISTRAR

LEGAL NOTICE
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE, EDO STATE OF NIGERIA
PROBATE REGISTRY, BENIN CITY

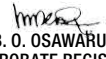
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AND WHEREAS the persons whose names, addresses and claimed relationship to the deceased are set in the second column hereunder have applied to the Probate Registrar, High Court of Justice, Edo State of Nigeria for a grant of Letters of Administration of the real and personal property of the deceased.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Letters of Administration will be granted to such persons unless a NOTICE to prohibit the grant is filed in this Registry within Twenty-One (21) days from the date of the publication of this notice.

1. MR. VINCENT OSAZUWA, late of Igweoviobo, Uhumwonde L.G.A., who died on the 4th day of May, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/441/2026 Mr. Osayomore Bright Osazuwa and Miss Cynthia Osazuwa of No 6, Edokpolor lane, Off Aifuwa Street, Upper Sakponba Road, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased
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DATED THIS 18TH DAY OF JUNE, 2026.


B. O. OSAWARU ESQ.
PROBATE REGISTRAR

NNPC, TotalEnergies renew decarbonisation agreement

ABUJA

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC Ltd.) has renewed its agreement with TotalEnergies for a 24-month extension of technology deployment for the detection, measurement and reduction of methane and carbon emissions.

The agreement was signed by NNPC Ltd.'s Executive Vice President, Upstream, Udy Ntia and TotalEnergies Country Chair and Managing Director, Matthieu Bouyer in Abuja.

Ntia, in a statement by Andy

Odeh, Chief Corporate Communications Officer, NNPC Ltd. said the duo renewed the agreement to extend the deployment of Airborne Ultralight Spectrometer for Environmental Applications (AUSEA) technology across its upstream operations.

The agreement is aimed at helping NNPC Ltd. meet its gas flare reduction obligation in keeping with its Oil & Gas Decarbonisation Charter (OGDC) commitments, Oil & Gas Methane Partnership (OGMP) 2.0 participation and near-zero methane ambition by 2030.

It is a follow up on an ear-

lier agreement signed in 2023 for the adoption of the AUSEA technology.

Ntia expressed satisfaction with the first phase of the deployment of the technology, and hoped it would scale across more assets.

"Today's signing represents a practical step in NNPC Limited's journey to build a credible, transparent and action-oriented decarbonisation programme.

"Through the AUSEA initiative, we are strengthening our ability to detect, quantify and prioritise methane abatement opportunities using advanced

measurement technology," Ntia said in the statement.

He also called for the institutionalisation of progress reporting, in line with compliance requirements and the possibility of leveraging transfer of the AUSEA technology.

The statement also quoted Mike Sangster, TotalEnergies' Senior Vice President, Africa, as expressing satisfaction with the cooperation his company has been enjoying from the NNPC over the years.

He said TotalEnergies was the first oil producing company in Nigeria to end gas flaring

in all its assets.

Sangster said the AUSEA technology was instrumental to that feat, even as the company looked forward to near-zero methane emissions by 2030.

AUSEA is a drone-based technology developed by TotalEnergies in partnership with the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS)

and the University of Reims.

It helps in the identification of unaccounted emission sources, establishment of basis for querying and improving current emission reporting processes.

It also helps in the provision of data to review operational system and implement corrective actions, as well as estimation of flare combustion efficiency.

Kwankwaso demands decisive response to insecurity in Katsina

KATSINA

The vice presidential candidate of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Sen. Rabiu Kwankwaso, has called for renewed efforts by the Federal and state governments to tackle insecurity in Katsina and across the country.

Kwankwaso made the call in Katsina while addressing loyalists, during a condolence visit to Katsina, over the death of Maj.-Gen. Rabe Abubakar.

He stressed that insecurity remained Nigeria's greatest challenge and urged governments at all levels to take decisive steps to end banditry and other violent crimes.

"This security issue is very important. I urge the Federal Government and all the state governments to do everything possible to end insecurity and banditry in Nigeria," he said.

The former Kano governor, also described late Gen. Rabe, as a patriotic military officer who served Nigeria with dedication and distinction.

Kwankwaso prayed for the peaceful repose of the de-

ceased's soul and prayed to God to grant his family the strength to bear the irreparable loss.

According to him, an NDC-led government would prioritise security, youth empowerment and good governance to improve the living conditions of Nigerians.

Kwankwaso also said the party's presidential candidate, Mr Peter Obi, and the Obedient movement shared the same vision with the Kwankwasiyi movement for quality leadership and national development.

The NDC vice presidential candidate who also inaugurated the party's new state office in the Katsina metropolis, urged supporters to remain united ahead of the 2027 general elections.

He urged them to intensify grassroots mobilisation to ensure victory for the party.

"Our ambition is to see our youths realise their dreams by becoming doctors, engineers, pilots, successful businessmen and professionals in different fields.

"We want a better Nigeria, and that is why we are committed to this struggle," he said.



SECURITY ASSESSMENT VISIT:

Commissioner of Police, Lagos State Command, Mr Fatai Tijani (right) led a security assessment visit to the university.

Iyabo Obasanjo returns to PDP, gets Ogun central senatorial ticket

ABEOKUTA

Former senator, Prof. Iyabo Obasanjo, has rejoined the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Ogun and pledged loyalty to the party.

Obasanjo was received by party leaders and supporters at the party secretariat in Abeokuta, where the party also presented her with its Ogun Central Senatorial District ticket for the 2027 general elections.

Speaking at the ceremony, Obasanjo pledged allegiance to the party's constitution, manifesto and code of conduct.

She promised to uphold the ideals of the PDP and serve with integrity, humility and dedication.

"I shall prioritise the welfare of the people above personal and sectional interests," she said.

NAN reports that Obasanjo represented Ogun Central in the Senate from 2007 to 2011

on the platform of the PDP.

She returned to Nigeria after some years abroad and joined the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) in January.

The former APC governorship aspirant said she left the party due to unfair treatment and disrespect.

Earlier, Ogun PDP Chairman, Abayomi Tella, formally presented the party flag to her.

Tella said the flag symbolised the party's authority for her candidature in Ogun Central.

He described Prof Obasanjo

as a valued member and expressed confidence in her contribution to the party's fortunes.

Also speaking, the governorship candidate of the PDP, Ladi Adebute, commended the doggedness and selfless service of Sen. Obasanjo, saying she remained a true daughter of the soil.

Adebute, however, assured that when he eventually emerged as the governor of the state, he would ensure that local government autonomy worked in the state.

Renewed Hope Media Tour showcases transformative projects in Abia

UMUAHIA

The Renewed Hope Media Tour has continued its nationwide assessment of developmental projects with the inspection of key infrastructure and housing projects in Abia.

The tour is designed to provide Nigerians with firsthand information on projects being implemented under President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda and their impact on citizens across the country.

This was contained in a statement issued by Mr Tunde Rahman, Director, Media and Publicity, Renewed Hope Ambassadors, on Thursday.

The projects inspected were the Ohafia-Umuahia Federal Road, a major transportation route linking communities and commercial centres in the state.

The delegation also visited the 67.6km Umuahia-Uzuakoli-Akara-Ohafia Road, a strategic state-financed corridor connecting several communities across Abia.

The road is expected to improve connectivity, facilitate movement of agricultural produce, reduce travel time, stimulate commerce and open rural communities to greater economic opportunities.

At the Omenuko Bridge along the Ohafia-Umuahia corridor, the team observed ongoing efforts to

strengthen critical transportation infrastructure serving thousands of commuters and businesses.

A major highlight of the tour was the inspection of the Renewed Hope Housing Estate in Umuahia, a flagship Federal Government project comprising 1,200 housing units.

Managing Director of the Federal Housing Authority, Mr Oyetunde Ojo, said procurement had been completed and contractors would soon commence work at the site.

According to him, the Abia Government provided the land and paid compensation to affected landowners, while the Federal Government is undertaking the

construction through the FHA.

The project is expected to expand access to affordable housing, create jobs and stimulate economic activities within the state.

The delegation also visited the Onuinyan Bende Renewed Hope Housing Project, another major housing development aimed at addressing Nigeria's housing deficit while promoting local economic growth.

The team further inspected the newly commissioned Nnenna Oti Bus Terminal in Umuahia, a modern transport hub expected to improve traffic management, enhance commuter convenience and boost commercial activities.

Group trains 140 Rivers women entrepreneurs on AI, marketing

PORT HARCOURT

The Women Entrepreneurs Accelerate Africa (WEAA) has concluded a two-day training of 140 women entrepreneurs in Rivers on AI, financial management and marketing intelligence to strengthen their businesses.

A Lecturer in Management at Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, Scotland, Dr Chima Onoshakpor, said the workshop aims to equip women entrepreneurs with practical skills for business growth and sustainability.

Onoshakpor, also the founder of Boss Babes Nigeria, said the training was sponsored by the university to support women entrepreneurs across Africa.

She explained that the programme addresses challenges facing women-owned businesses, including limited access to finance, digital technologies and market information.

According to her, the training will move beyond Rivers to other places, including Lagos, Kenya and South Africa.

Onoshakpor urged the participants to apply the knowledge gained to improve their business performance and competitiveness.

She listed alternative financing options for entrepreneurs and expressed satisfaction with participants' engagement during the sessions.

A Researcher, Data Analyst and Lecturer at Aberdeen Business School, Dr Imabong James, encouraged the women to adopt AI tools and structured social media strategies.

James said that many business entrepreneurs use social media platforms but lacked organised approaches to content creation, audience engagement and brand development.

She introduced planning frameworks to help entrepreneurs create professional content, strengthen brand visibility and maximise digital opportunities.

She also identified multiple responsibilities, such as family, employment and business management, as barriers to consistent social media engagement by entrepreneurs.

NEWS

Nigerian Army revises recruit training curriculum to end terrorism

ZARIA (KADUNA)

The Nigerian Army has reviewed recruit training curriculum to strengthen the capacity of newly enlisted soldiers to effectively tackle terrorism, insurgency and emerging security threats nationwide.

Maj.-Gen. Oluyemi Olatoye, Commandant, Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA), said this on Thursday during the Beating of Retreat and Award

Ceremony for the 90 Regular Recruits Intake at Depot Nigerian Army, Zaria.

Olatoye said the curriculum review was part of efforts to align recruit training with Nigeria's evolving security environment.

He said that through the revised training curriculum the recruits had acquired relevant competencies required for contemporary military operations nationwide.

The commander said greater

emphasis had been placed on counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations, to prepare recruits for emerging threats and enhance the army's capacity to respond effectively to security challenges.

According to Olatoye, the revised curriculum reflects current operational realities and equips recruits with the foundational knowledge, discipline and professional skills required for modern military engagements across theatres.

"I am delighted to note that your training curriculum was reviewed to reflect the current security realities facing our country. As a result, greater emphasis was placed on counterterrorism operations," he said.

Olatoye said the training had equipped recruits with competencies required to support ongoing operations against terrorists, bandits and other criminal elements threatening national security and public safety.

He expressed confidence

that the recruits would contribute meaningfully to operational success upon deployment, having undergone training tailored to contemporary battlefield requirements and emerging security realities.

The commander reiterated the commitment of the Nigerian Army toward producing personnel capable of responding professionally to threats through continuous improvements in training doctrine, instructional methods and oper-

ational preparedness.

He commended the Commandant of Depot Nigerian Army, Maj.-Gen. Ahmadu-Bello Mohammed, instructors and staff for successfully implementing the revised training programme and maintaining standards.

He said the demonstrations and drills displayed at the event reflected the effectiveness of the training curriculum and the preparedness of recruits for future operational responsibilities nationwide.

Police arrest 30 suspected cultists, recover four vehicles in Isara-Remo

ABEOKUTA

The Police Command in Ogun has arrested 30 suspected cult members during an initiation rite in Isara-Remo, recovering four vehicles and other exhibits.

The command's spokesperson, DSP Oluseyi Babaseyi, said in a statement on Thursday in Abeokuta, that operatives of the Violent Crime Response Unit, Isara Area Command and Isara Division, carried out the operation on Tuesday.

He said that the operation followed credible intelligence that suspected cultists had gathered in an uncompleted building for an unlawful meeting and initiation activities.

Babaseyi said that the suspects were found drinking alcohol, chanting and engaging in activities allegedly linked to cult initiation when the police team stormed the location.

According to him, on sighting the operatives the gathering broke up with some taking to their heels, but 30 male suspects

were arrested in a coordinated intelligence-led operation.

Babaseyi said that four vehicles abandoned during the suspects' attempted escape were recovered from the scene.

He added that one jack-knife, a local drum, and bottles suspected to have contained alcoholic drinks were also recovered.

The police spokesperson said the suspects had been transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department, Abeokuta, for further investigation.

He said that the suspects would be charged to court after investigations were concluded, while efforts continue to arrest other fleeing suspects.

Babaseyi said that the Commissioner of Police, Bode Ojajuni, commended the operatives for their professionalism and swift response.

He quoted the commissioner as reaffirming the command's zero tolerance for cultism, violent crime and other unlawful activities across the state.



NIGERIA GOVERNORS FORUM:

L-R: Governors: Bassey Otu, Cross River State; Dapo Abiodun, Ogun State, and Abdullahi Sule, Nasarawa State, at the monthly Nigeria Governors Forum in Abuja on Thursday.

Police assess Pan-Atlantic University security after viral forest video

LAGOS

The Police command in Lagos State has reviewed security measures at Pan-Atlantic University, Lekki, following a viral video involving masked individuals.

The Commissioner of Police, Lagos State Command, Mr Fatai Tijani, led the assessment visit following a footage showing two masked individuals emerging from a nearby forest that raised security concerns.

Tijani, according to a statement by the command's spokesperson, SP Abimbola Adebisi, inspected the university's security arrangements alongside senior operational officers during the visit.

He engaged the university management and emphasised the need for stronger security structures around the campus.

The police commissioner advised the institution to improve perimeter security and strengthen access control measures.

He said proactive steps were essential to prevent potential

threats and protect students, staff and visitors.

Tijani also cautioned against acts of self-sabotage capable of weakening existing security arrangements.

He urged the university community to support security agencies through cooperation and timely information sharing.

The Lagos State Security Trust Fund (LSSTF), supported by the state government, has deployed surveillance drones.

The drones will boost aerial monitoring, intelligence gathering and crime prevention around the university environment.

The deployment is aimed at strengthening security within the Lekki axis amid emerging concerns.

Tijani reassured the university management, students, staff and parents of the command's commitment.

He said the police would continue protecting lives and property across Lagos State.

The commissioner urged residents to remain vigilant and report suspicious activities to security agencies.

Oyo Assembly cancels 3rd anniversary celebrations over security concerns

IBADAN

The Oyo State House of Assembly has cancelled activities lined up to mark its third anniversary, citing prevailing security concerns particularly in the Oke-Ogun and Ogbomoso axis as reasons.

Instead, the legislature reflected on its performance over the last three legislative years as a critical arm of government.

The 10th Assembly was inaugurated on June 14, 2023.

The speaker of the House, Mr Adebo Ogundoyin, at plenary on Thursday, said that the decision of the state legislature was informed by the recent se-

curity challenges in the state and the need to show solidarity with affected areas and residents.

Ogundoyin said that the occasion would ordinarily have been marked with celebrations and public engagements, but that members resolved to focus attention on governance, legislative responsibilities and efforts geared towards addressing the security situation.

"Thirty-six bills have been passed into law, covering various sectors of governance and development.

"We passed 276 resolutions, which were transmitted to the executive arm and other rele-

vant government institutions for implementation.

"The resolutions are being monitored through the oversight activities of various committees to ensure compliance and effectiveness," he said.

Ogundoyin said that in efforts to strengthen governance and accountability, the Post Legislative Scrutiny (PLS) Unit conducted inquiries into the implementation of the Open Rearing and Grazing Regulation Law, 2019, as well as the Oyo State Security Agency Law, 2020.

He said that legislature organised a security summit as one of its notable interventions

during the period under review.

"The summit was convened in response to persistent and recurring security challenges affecting parts of the state.

"We conducted nine public hearings on various bills under consideration, providing stakeholders, civil society groups and members of the public opportunities to contribute to the legislative process," the speaker said.

Ogundoyin also reaffirmed the commitment of the legislature to law making, oversight and effective representation.

"The Assembly remains focused on delivering democratic dividends and supporting policies that promote peace, security and socio-economic development in Oyo State."

Woman in police net for allegedly causing her grandmother's death

KATSINA

The Katsina Police Command has arrested a 20-year-old woman, Aisha Hassan, for allegedly causing the death of her 97-year-old grandmother, Hajiya Um-mukhulsum Hassan.

Sadiq-Aliyu said the suspect allegedly struck the elderly woman on the head with a wooden chair during the altercation.

This was contained in a statement issued by the Command Public Relations Officer,

DSP Abubakar Sadiq-Aliyu, in Katsina.

He said the incident occurred on June 12 at about 7p.m. when the suspect allegedly had a misunderstanding with her paternal grandmother, Hajiya Um-mukhulsum Hassan.

Sadiq-Aliyu said the suspect allegedly struck the elderly woman on the head with a wooden chair during the altercation.

He said the matter was reported to the Sabon Garin Daura Police Station by the suspect's father, Muktar Muhammad-Hassan, on the same day.

According to Sadiq-Aliyu, police operatives immediately visited the scene and found the victim unconscious in a pool of blood.

"The victim was rushed to a hospital but was later confirmed dead by the doctor on

duty," he said.

The police spokesman said the suspect was arrested during the investigation and allegedly confessed to committing the offence.

He added that the suspect remained in police custody and would be charged to court after the conclusion of the investigation.

According to him, further developments on the case would be communicated in due course.



LEGAL RUDIMENTS

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Marriage concept in Nigeria

Marriage is an institution between two partners that has a bond for family structures and raising of children. It is one of the oldest institutions in the society which is recognised legally, socially and traditionally between partners or spouses that creates legal obligations, responsibilities and fundamental rights. These include the right of consortium, unity and protection amongst other rights.

The contract of marriage is broad enough to encompass the different types of marriage that are currently recognised in varying cultures, places, religion and systems of law operated in different countries. Nevertheless, most people are into marriages at their convenience within the system that suit the area or religion they evolve.

The union of marriage is usually for life but may be terminated depending on the community of right that flows from the union. Today, some marriages are involved in the controversy of cultural traditions, religious beliefs, legal pronouncements, ideas about fairness and basic fundamental human rights.

Most people, particularly the male adults are also scared of entering into the contract of marriage, as a result of their yet personal accomplishment, controversies with spouse, economic hardship, selection of spouses, amongst others, but all these are not enough to put it off the mind.

Marriage in the Nigerian law only recognises the matrimony or union of a man and woman as any other form other than this is alien to marriage in the country. Same sex marriage in Nigeria is prohibited pursuant to Section 5(1) of the Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act, 2013. This Act establishes the criminal penalties for any offender with a sentence of 14 years imprisonment. While Section 7 Same Sex (Prohibition) Act, 2013 which is the "Interpretation Clause and definition" extensively explained the terms used, as it refers to the prohibition of gay marriages in Nigeria.

FURTHER PUNISHMENT INCLUDES:

- * Solemnizing, witnessing, or abetting a same – sex marriage to at-

tract 10 years imprisonment.

- * Operating, registering, or participating in a gay club, society, or organisation is punishable by 10 years imprisonment.
- * Publicly displaying a same – sex amorous relationship is punishable by 10 years imprisonment.

In Nigeria, Item 61 Part 1 Exclusive Legislative List, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 as amended empowers the National Assembly to make Laws on the formation, annulment and dissolution of marriages other than marriages under Islamic Law and Customary Law including matrimonial proceedings relating thereto. This provision however became important as it defines the three types of marriages in Nigeria to include statutory, customary and Is-

lamic marriages.

We shall at this juncture briefly adumbrate on the three types of marriages but mainly to be focused on Statutory Marriage otherwise known as Marriage under the Act in the next edition.

In Marriage under the Act, its major feature is that of monogamous which is the marriage of one man and woman to the exclusion of others during the continuance of the marriage. It is the union of one man and woman as opposed to other types of marriages in Nigeria which are essentially polygamous.

However, the case is not the same as in Customary Marriage where the parties must be of a marriageable age, the consent of parents and parties must be sought, no relationship of

consanguinity and affinity depending on the custom and most significantly of it all is the payment of dowry and the handing over of the bride to the man. This type of marriage is polygamous in nature and the man can decide to marry another woman as much as he could.

The marriage may be dissolved by death or through legal means in the customary court that has jurisdiction to terminate such marriages. It can also come to an end by the woman returning the dowry paid on her to the man in the presence of the man's family members.

Similarly, the marriage contracted in the Islamic Law and by its nature is polygamous. The tenets of entering into the marriage is by Islamic injunction. This type of marriage can have it

dissolved through extra – judicial or judicial annulment in Sharia Court. The divorce may come to an end by mutual agreement of both parties known as mubarah.

To this end, marriage by all context may be sweet and bitter at different times depending on how you handle it. We must bring to your realisation that nobody can stay with any person without having friction. Spouse should know that your partner was not born from the same womb of your mother. Let's ponder on understanding, patience, maturity on how to play the fool's role at all time in your marriage.

To this end, we shall dwell to a great extent on Statutory Marriage that has become the admiration of most people in our society. See you next week.



TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE IN NIGERIA

DEFENCE OF ALIBI

This material "Defence of Alibi" is republished again following the plea from our numerous readers who claimed that they could not get the hard copy of The Nigerian Observer of last edition for keep. Here is it again

Most people often say or use the word "alibi" without having recourse of its usage. It is a latin word which means "elsewhere". The word when used in legal terms connotes a defence one can

raise in a criminal matter to prove the physical impossibility of placing the defendant in a location other than the scene of crime.

However, the plea of alibi must be raised timeously by the defendant when arrested. When an accused relies on the defence of alibi, it means he has exonerated himself from the locus criminis, that is the scene of crime. The onus is usually on the prosecution to prove its case beyond reasonable doubt the guilt of the accused and failure to do so is tantamount to the discharge of the accused person.

When the accused pleads the defence of alibi, the accused is saying that he knows nothing about the facts constituting the offence. He is only allowed in law to furnish the investigating authority or agency with the

particulars of alibi at the earliest possible time that he was not at the scene of crime as at the time or the commission of the crime by stating in clear terms the place he was, the date, time and also mention who was or were with him that can testify in his favour at that particular time. "Yanor v State", "Mohammed v State", "Akpan v State", "Osuagwu v State"

However, the defence must be raised early enough to enable the prosecution carry out its investigation on time, as well as to enable him call evidence and necessary witnesses, in proof of the defence. The suspect must state his defence early enough even at the time of his arrest or when making his statement to the police in proof of his alibi. "Sunday v The State"

It must be noted that failure to raise

the plea at the earliest possible time or make conflicting statement to the police on his whereabouts at the commission of the crime will be fatal to his case. Nevertheless, the plea of alibi is not an automatic defence that must be set out for the suspect to exonerate himself from the crime, as thorough investigation must be carried out to ensure that the suspect was not maliciously mentioned or fixed in the commission of the crime.

The Prosecution must be alive to investigate the plea of alibi when it is properly raised by the suspect and failure to do so will be fatal to the case of the prosecution during trial. This is because the defence succeeds where the trial court is satisfied that it is probable that the accused was not at the scene of the crime on the day the crime was

committed. "Almu v The State"

In other words, where there is a valid confessional statement, with a direct, positive and unequivocal evidence which fixed the suspect at the scene of the crime at the time the offence was committed, the plea of alibi will not fly, prosecution will therefore be relieved of the duty of calling any further evidence to quash the alibi raised. "Archibong v State", "Ogoala v State"

It must also be pointed out that alibi is not a defence to criminal crimes such as aiding, abetting and conspiring for an offence but only relates to the physical commission of the crime. In all these, the investigating officer must not be carried away with laziness or self – aggrandizement to willfully arraign a suspect or accused who raised the defence of alibi timeously.

LEGAL NOTICE
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE , EDO STATE OF NIGERIA
PROBATE REGISTRY, BENIN CITY

WHEREAS the persons whose names are set out in the first column hereunder died intestate on the date and at the place stated in the column;

AND WHEREAS the persons whose names, addresses and claimed relationship to the deceased are set in the second column hereunder have applied to the Probate Registrar, High Court of Justice, Edo State of Nigeria for a grant of Letters of Administration of the real and personal property of the deceased.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Letters of Administration will be granted to such persons unless a NOTICE to prohibit the grant is filed in this Registry within Twenty-One (21) days from the date of the publication of this notice.

1.	MRS. ROSE OMORUYI, late of Evbozegbo, Uhumwon-de L.G.A., who died on the 22nd day of May, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/202/2026 Mrs. Iriowen Tracy Victor and Mr. Desmond Omoruyi of No 9, John Okhe Street, off Lucky Way, Ikpoba Hill, Benin City, daughter and son respectively of the deceased.	29.	ENGR. ANTHONY ALEOGHO OBOH, late of Jattu-Uzairue, Etsako West L.G.A., who died on the 20th day of August, 2025 in Jattu-Uzairue.	PED/311/2026 Joy Emoshigwe Oboh, Patience Ikpmosimhe Oboh and Madam. Florence Ikhaوبا of No Beside Baba Petrol Filling Station, Jattu, daughters and widow respectively of the deceased.
2.	MRS. VIOLET OKHIRIA AZEKE, late of Iruekpen, Esan West L.G.A., who died on the 22nd day of February, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/242/2026 Mrs. Hope Aidoelen Akwedegbe and Miss. Vivian Azeke of No 38, Pipeline, Eyaen., Benin City, daughters of the deceased.	30.	MR. ISAAC ONUORA OZOBEME, late of Isheagu, Aniocha South L.G.A., Delta State, who died on the 4th day of May, 2026 in Isheagu.	PED/369/2026 Mr. Theophilus Chukwuwinke Ozobeme and Miss. Chika Christabel Ozobeme of No 96, Edaiken Street, Musheshe, Upper Sokponba Road, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.
3.	MR. WILLIAM OYEMHHONLAN, late of Uromi, Esan North L.G.A., who died on the 3rd day of March, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/299/2026 Mr. Godspower Oyemhonlan, Mrs Angela Sunday, Miss Jennifer iyoha Oyemhonlan and Mr. Vincent Oyemhoalan of No 26, Imasuen Street, Urrora, Benin Auchi Road, Benin City, son, daughters and son respectively of the deceased.	31.	MRS. JULIET AJEGBEOKPA UNUIGBOJE late of Uromi, Esan North East L.G.A, who died on the 21st day of January, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/343/2026 Mr. Kenneth Ilevbabor Unuiigboje and Mr. Thomas Onoshioagbe Unuiigboje of No 1, Osasere/Unuiigboje Close, Aso-Rock, Isihor, Benin City, son and widower respectively of the deceased.
4.	MADAM. ELIZABETH EJEHI ORIATARE, late of Uhile, Esan West L.G.A., who died on the 11th day September, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/841/2025 Mr. Prince Kingsley Sunny Aigbokhan and Miss. Josephine Osa Aigbokhan of No 19, Aigbuhumwese Street, Off College Road, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.	32.	MR. BENEDICT ERHUMWOMOANA ODIANOSE, late of Ewatto, Esan South East L.G.A., who died on the 29th day of April, 2024 in Benin City.	PED/336/2026 Mrs. Osarugue Doris Benedict and Mr. Eric Oodianose of No 6, Achebor Close, Off Oando Filling Station, Ikpoba Hill, Benin City, widow and son respectively of the deceased.
5.	MR. SIMON OKOEGUALE OKOYO, late of Ugboha, Esan South East L.G.A., who died on the 2nd day of January, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/308/2026 Miss. Jennifer Omonigho Okoyo and Mr. Kenneth Aziegbemhin Okoyo of No 6, Igunbor Street, Off Waec Road, Aduwawa, Benin City, daughter and son respectively of the deceased.	33.	MR. ROLAND IDEMUDIA, late of Ora, Ovia South West L.G.A., who died on the 17th day of September, 2024 in Benin City.	PED/331/2026 Mr. Thompson Ayinomwan Idemudia and Miss. Precious Idemudia of No. 101, Okabere Street, Off Sapele Road, Benin City, daughter and son respectively of the deceased.
6.	MRS. MERCY AIREN ENATAMAN, late of Aragua, Oredo L.G.A., who died on the 12th day of December, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/326/2026 Mr. Anthony Osayande Idugboe and Miss. Confidence Ogbijesunu Enataman of No 22, Iginovia Street, Off Debekemen Road, Upper Ekehuan Road, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.	34.	MISS. JOY OMON AZIEGBEMHIN late of Okhuodua, Esan South East L.G.A., who died on the 13th day of December, 2019 in Lagos.	PED/42/2026 Mr. Jacob Paul Ekoba Aziegbemhin and Mrs. Jacob Augustina Aziegbemhin of No 91, Benin Agbor Road, Benin City, father and mother respectively of the deceased.
7.	MADAM. HELEN TAIWO AUGUSTINE, late of Ibillo, Akoko-Edo L.G.A., who died on the 18th day of March, 2025 in Fugar.	PED/714/2025 Mr. Jonathan Lerama and Miss. Faith Eshemhenije Lerama of No 2A. Odami Street, Uwhozi Quarters, Ibillo, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.	35.	MR. ESEMUDE GODWIN AGBONKINA, late of Uyinmwendin, Orhionmwon L.G.A., who died on the 14th day of June, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/270/2026 Mrs. Sandra Osas Idemudia and Mr. Osahenrumwen Prayer Esemuede of No 15, Odigie Avenue, Omomo Street, St Saviour Road, Benin City, daughter and son respectively of the deceased.
8.	DR. ANDREW OGHENERUKEVWE OROVWIGHO, late of Okpara, Ethiope East L.G.A., who died on the 2nd day of January, 2026 in Enugu.	PED/323/2026 Barr. Ufuoma Jennifer Orovwigho and Oghenetejiri Merit Orovwigho of No 2, Ikonagbon Street, Off PZ Road, Off Sapele Road, Benin City, widow and daughter respectively of the deceased.	36.	MR. FRANKLYN ABHULUIMEN OMENAI, late of Ibore, Esan Central L.G.A., who died on the 6th day of January, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/250/2026 Mrs. Joyce Ilaweagbon Omenai and Mr. Franklyn Oselumese Omenai of No 1, Omenai Franklyn Street, UBTH Cooperative Quarters, Iguosa, benin City, widow and son respectively of the deceased.
9.	MR. EDWIN EVBAROUVBOKHANRE OVBIEDO, late of Ogbese, Ovia North East L.G.A., who died on the 18th day of March, 2022 in Benin City.	PED/319/2026 Mr. Cyril Esosa Oviebo and Mr. Emmanuel Eghe Ovbiebo of No 39, Eresoyen Street, Off Jesus Christ Road, Upper Sakponba Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased.	37.	MRS. BOMA MIRIAM OJI, late of Nibo, Akwa South L.G.A., Anambra State, who died on the 25th day of February, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/795/2025 Barr. Okundaye Happy Oji and Ashley Imhoudu Oliomogbe of Okundaye Law Firm, No 10, Ugbague Street, Benin City, widower and family friend respectively of the deceased.
10.	MR. DANIEL OSHUKE IKEKE, late of Iviiegbeui, Etsako East L.G.A., who died on the 4th day of April, 2026 in Sapele.	PED/322/2026 Mr. Dennis Ikeke and Mr. Moses Osikhena Ikeke of No 8, Deeper Life Street, Off Limit Road, Benin City, brothers of the deceased.	38.	MR. STEPHEN UTSOMRE OKOTIE, late of Ugborodo, Warri South West L.G.A., Delta State, who died on the 31st day of October, 2023 in Benin City.	PED/739/2025 Mr. August Oritsejolomi Okotie and Mr. Edward Omaresola Okotie of No 11, Anyim Pius Avenue, CBS Estate, Lugbe, Abuja, sons of the deceased.
11.	MRS. ENOGUESE DORIS OMOREGIE, late of Ikhueni, Uhumwonde., who died on the 9th day of June, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/307/2026 Miss. Eghe Blessing Omoregie and Mr. Radiant Obazee John of No 96, Old Benin Agbor Road, Ikhueni, Benin City, daughter and son respectively of the deceased.	39.	MADAM. ANGELINA EDOKHAMHEN (A.K.A) PHILO OMOZEE, late of Ugboha, Esan South East L.G.A., who died on the 18th day of August, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/60/2026 Mr. Eigbedion Edokhamhen and Dr. Ehichoya Edokhamhen of No 10, Egbadon Street, Eyaen, Benin City, sons of the deceased.
12.	MR. MATHEW OMORUYI, late of Siluko, Ovia South West L.G.A., who died on the 4th day of September, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/287/2026 Arnold Osazee Omoruyi and Miss. Success Omoruyi of No 20, Osamede Street, Off Urumwon Road, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.	40.	MR. EDWARD OKO-OBOH, late of Uromi, Esan North East L.G.A., who died on the 1st day of June, 2025 in Auchi.	PED/222/2026 Mrs. Victoria Abinotse Oko-Oboh and Miss. Blessing Ehiremen Oko-Oboh of No 9, Chief Allah Dey Street, Aviele, Edo State, widow and daughter respectively of the deceased.
13.	MR. FELIX OLAJIDE SOWORE, late of Kiribo, Ese Odun L.G.A., Ondo State, who died on the 4th day of September, 2021 in Benin City.	PED/303/2026 Madam. Roseline Idongesit Udoh and Mr. Christian Oladimeji Sowore of No 8, off gabano Hotel Road, Iguosa, Benin City, widow and son respectively of the deceased.	41.	MR. AMBROSE IMIRAH IRIBHOGBE, late of Igueben, Igueben L.G.A., who died on the 23rd day of November, 2025 in Irrua.	PED/381/2026 Mr. Rufus Eromosele Iribhogbe and Mr. Kizito Osemudiamen Iribhogbe of No 24, Elebesunu Street, Irrua, Edo State, sons of the deceased.
14.	MS. JULIET IFEOMA EZEDIKE, late of Akama Osili, Enugu-Ukwu L.G.A., Anambra State, who died on the 20th day of January, 2019 in Auchi.	PED/163/2026 Mr. Ikechukwu Ignatus Ezedike and Mr. Ikenna Kingsley Ezedike of No 17, Egerton Road, Onitsha, brother and nephew respectively of the deceased.	42.	MR. ISRAEL OKOISE, late of Idumuje-Unor, Aniocha North L.G.A, Delta State, who died on the 4th day of June, 2025, in Benin City.	PED/309/2026 Mr. Eziafa Harry Onyibe and Mr. Chima Prosper Onyibe of No 20, Okunzuwa Street, Upper Ekenhuan Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased.
15.	MR. CHRISTOPHER FRIDAY OKUN, late of Uzebba, Owan West L.G.A., who died on the 29th day of July, 2024 in Ihiala.	PED/200/2026 Mrs. Caroline Eruke Okun, Miss Christabel Ohita Efemena Okun and Miss. John-Paula Ikhuolegbe Okun of No 10, Ikponmwon Street, Off Benin Auchi Road, Aduwawa, Benin City, widow and daughters respectively of the deceased.	43.	MRS. FELICIA OMOZE ODIGIE, late of Ewohimi, Esan South East L.G.A., who died on the 14th day of January, 2026, in Ewohimi.	PED/377/2026 Mr. James Iwaegbe and Pastor. George Iyamabo of Ogbe, Eguare, Ewohimi, Edo State, sons of the deceased.
16.	MRS. MAGDALENE OSEMOTA EGBON late of Okada, Ovia North East L.G.A., who died on the 30th day of August, 2023 in Benin City.	PED/161/2025 Miss. Faith Osayamen Egbon and Miss. Abiemwense Hope Egbon of No 33, Boundary Road, Off Paulson School Road, Off Benin Auchi Road, Idokpa, Benin City, daughters of the deceased	44.	MRS. VICTORIA OMOROWA, late of Iyekezee, Ovia North East L.G.A., who died on the 5th day of May, 2025, in Benin City.	PED/86/2026 Mrs. Helen Iyamu and Mrs. Kehinde Igbedion of No 288, Ofumwengbe Street, Evbuotubu Quarters, Benin City, daughters of the deceased.
17.	MRS. NOSAKHARE FLORENCE IGBINOSA, late of Ekiadolor, Ovia North East L.G.A., who died on the 16th day of February, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/45/2026 Mr. Osazee Francis Igbinosa and Aisosa Praise Igbinosa of No 9, Engineer Imanah Close, Off Okhunmwun Road, Iguosa, Benin City, widower and mother respectively of the deceased.	45.	BARR. AUGUSTUS OTOKHINE OGBIDI, late of Ekpoma, Esan West L.G.A., who died on the 10th day of December, 2023, in Ekpoma.	PED/375/2026 Mr. Augustus Osemudiamen Ogbidi and Miss. Victoria Omonefe Ogbidi of No 6, Okmaurobo Street, Off Edo Street, Ekosodin, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.
18.	MALLAM. AKASHAT SULAIMAN OKHIMAMHE, late of South Ibie, Etsako West L.G.A., who died on the 17th day of May, 2025 in Abuja.	PED/345/2026 Miss. Haleemah Sulaiman Ukashah, Madam latifat Dauda Okhayole, Madam Khadijat Ali and Mr. Suleman Abbas Okhimamhe of No 1, Akpa Quarters, Iyakpi, South-Ibie, Etsako West L.G.A., Edo State, daughter, widows and brother respectively of the deceased.	46.	MR. LAWRENCE EKABA, late of Ahroko, Owan East L.G.A., who died on the 30th day of September, 2025, in Benin City.	PED/70/2026 Mr. Kelvin Ayemere Ekaba and Mr. Augustine Ekaba of No 1, Ohanmu Close, Off Etete Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased.
19.	MRS. ILOBEKEMEN BLESSING EDJENEKPO, late of Uromi, Esan North West L.G.A., who died on the 26th day of August, 2025 in Lagos	PED/211/2026 Onanefe Benedict Edjenekpo and Ononorghene Kurtis Edjenekpo of No 14A, Amadasun Street, Off Etete Road, GRA, Benin City, sons of the deceased.	47.	MR. JULIUS ORIBO, late of Uniaro, Egor L.G.A., who died on the 18th day of March, 2020, in Benin City.	PED/398/2026 Atekha Bello-Osagie and Mrs. Juliana Amashiohu Izevbuwa of No 69, Etete Road, Benin City, daughter and widow respectively of the deceased.
20.	MR. ALEXANDER ERHINMWINROSE, late of Obahenren, Uhumwonde L.G.A., who died on the 13th day of June, 2024 in Benin City.	PED/184/2026 Mr. Osazuwa Erhinmwirose and Mr. Osagiator Erhinmwirose of No 5, Ogbeide Street, Off Old Sapele Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased.	48.	MRS. HENRIETTA OMOZELE OTOIBHI, late of Ewu, Esan Central L.G.A., who died on the 31st day of January, 2026, in London.	PED/373/2026 Miss. Ehi Katherine Otoibhi and Mr. Oyakhiobhen Julius Emiasegen of No. 14, Okundia Street, Ogbeson Quarters, Benin City, daughter and family friend respectively of the deceased.
21.	MR. YUSUF ONAIDO IDRIS, late of Jattu, Etsako West L.G.A., who died on the 25th day of March, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/355/2026 Mr. Nurudeen Oshiolene Yusuf and Mrs. Catherine Sewuese Idris of No 1, Oviasogie Street, Off Ohogua Road, Benin City, son and widow respectively of the deceased.	49.	MADAM. IRENE AIYOBALO OBASEKI, late of Ogbe, Oredo L.G.A., who died on the 19th day of January, 2023, in New York.	PED/360/2026 Festus Amadin Uwanomen and Osaro Frank Obaseki of No 6, Mother Mary Way, Benin City, widower and brother respectively of the deceased.
22.	MR. VICTOR EDEMARIA OROBOR, late of Isi, Uhumwonde L.G.A, who died on the 1st day of February, 2024 in Benin City.	PED/183/2026 Mr. Dickson Edemaria and Miss. Osazee Edemaria of No 32, Oviasogie Street, Off Ewah Road, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.	50.	MRS. CATHERINE ISI AMIOLEMEN, late of Egoro-Naoka, Esan West L.G.A., who died on the 2nd day of July, 2023, in Abuja.	PED/399/2026 Mr. Thaddeus Aitafo Amiolemen and Mrs. Blessing Ebi Ahuruonye of Eweka, New Benin, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased
23.	MR. JOSEPH IWEBENDU IBEJI, late of Igbo, Ika L.G.A, Delta State, who died on the 11th day of September, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/44/2026 Miss. Glory Ngozi Ibeji and Miss. Kanayo Annetth Ibeji of No 3, Bright Ikhuorutwen Street, Ohoghobi Quarters, Benin City, daughters of the deceased.	51.	MR. AUGUSTINE ENOGIE AGBONTAEN, late of Ebo, Oredo L.G.A., who died on the 1st day of December, 2025, in Benin City.	PED/339/2026 Mrs. Bella Osarumwense Ehi and Mr. Osazuwa Agbontaen of No 9, Ekoragbon Street, Evbotubu., Benin City, daughter and son respectively of the deceased
24.	MR. MATTHEW ONYEKA ELUE, late of Ubulu-Uku, Aniocha South L.G.A., Delta State, who died on the 15th day of May, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/395/2026 Mrs. Cordilia Elue and Mr. Christian Eziafa Aduba of No 15, Yoruba Street, Ekae, Off Sapele Road, Benin City, widow and cousin respectively of the deceased.	52.	MR. IBRAHIM AUDU EKHAR, late of Imiegba, Etsako East L.G.A., who died on the 14th day of December, 2022, in Benin City.	PED/450/2025 Mr. Ma'aruf Faisal Ibrahim-Ekhar and Miss. Muhsinah Ibrahim-Ekhar of Otaru Road, Behind New Uyi Grand Hotel, G.R.A., Auchi, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased
25.	MR. ADAMU AGBOLENIH, late of Ebelle, Igueben L.G.A., who died on the 12th day of February, 2026 in Ebelle.	PED/282/2026 Mr. Ikponmwosa Agbonlenin and Mrs. Maria Akhere Oguma of No 5, Ayemwenre Street, Off Ohovbe Primary School, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.	53.	MR. DESMOND IDIDIDI, late of Okpekepe, Etsako East L.G.A., who died on the 6th day of January, 2026, in Ibusa.	PED/312/2026 Mrs. Sefya Idididi and Mr. Joseph Adoh Ichibor of No 113, Police Estate, AGG Road, Off Sapele Road Bypass, Ikhueni, Benin City, widow and brother respectively of the deceased
26.	MR. EMMANUEL OSOBA ASUELIMHEN, late of Ubiurumu-Oke, Esan North East L.G.A., who died on the 10th day of July, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/304/2026 Mr. Valentine Odion Asuelimhen and Mr. Joseph Osezua Asuelimhen of No 20, Owolo Street, Off Benin Auchi Road, Eyaen, Benin City, sons of the deceased.	54.	REV. NOSA PULLEN ENOGIERU, late of Ugo, Orhionmwon L.G.A., who died on the 18th day of October, 2021, in Benin City.	PED/394/2026 Mr. Elijah Enogieru and Mr. Moses Osariemen Enogieru of No 41, Calvary Street, Off Upper Sakponba Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased
27.	MRS. GRACE IBIZUGBE, late of Utekon, Ovia North East L.G.A., who died on the 17th day of December, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/363/2026 Mr. Shina Osamudiamen Ade and Miss. Precious Ibizugbe of No 10, Iregie Street, Off Wire Road, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.	55.	MRS. ROSELINE OBASOGIE, late of Iruekpen, Esan West L.G.A., who died on the 10th day of March, 2025, in Benin City.	PED/472/2025 Mr. Jeremiah Omoruyi and Mrs. Mary Abieyuwa Ede of No 25, Ediae Street, Off Uwa Street, M.M. Way, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased
28.	EFFIONG NSEOBONG, late of Ikot Offiong, Odukpani L.G.A., Cross River State, who died on the 4th day of May, 2016 in Benin City.	PED/92/2017 Madam. Ofonmbok Oboh Akpan and Mr. Godwin Nseobong Effiong of Adesuwa Police Barrack, Block 1, flat 1, Behind AIG Zone 5, Benin City, widow and son respectively of the deceased.	56.	ENOGHEGHASE SAMSON OKUNDAYE, late of Udo, Ovia South West L.G.A., who died on the 19th day of November, 2025, in Benin City.	PED/238/2026 Mr. Omorodion Perry Enogheghase and Mr. Happy Enogheghase of No 1, Okundaye Street, Egor, Benin City, sons of the deceased
			57.	MR. EMMANUEL MARY UGERAH ENAKHENA, late of Agenebode, Etsako East L.G.A., who died on the 6th day of May, 2018, in Benin City.	PED/818/2022 Mrs. Queen Ostebolu Enakhena and Mr. Peter-Mary Ikpaboghena Enakhena of No 14B, Oghenosa Street, Off Aragua Street, Off Ore-oghene Street, Benin City, widow and son respectively of the deceased

DATED THIS 17TH DAY OF JUNE, 2026.


B. O. OSAWARU ESQ.
PROBATE REGISTRAR

Entertainment

— with Davidson Imosime Izegaegbe —

Film credit is a brand: Never lose it

I remember how talks about films are usually seen from two perspectives: tangible and intangible. I also indeed remember how the script, a blueprint like the house design by an architect, is called tangible while other film elements are squeezed into intangible space. I am not talking about tangibles and intangibles from the point of view of the banks when it comes to investment and loans to filmmakers. Right here, I am talking about script a tangible film element in the form of a blueprint from which the producer, director and others come in as intangible film elements.

Have we noticed as filmmakers that in the glittering, fast-paced world of cinema, it is easy for those in the creative industry to get caught up in the tangible markers of success? I am talking about the box office numbers, the return on investments, the fanciful festival laurels, the paparazzi and red-carpet madness, as well as the upfront paychecks for the investors. But, sincerely, in all these when the lights fade and the theatre empties, what truly remains? It is the scrolling of white text against a black screen. Your film credit.

To the uninitiated though, a film credit is nothing but merely a legal obligation to fulfil all righteousness, a rolling list of cast followed by crew names that the cinema audiences use as a cue to exit the theatre. Whereas, to the industry professional, a film credit is something infinitely more powerful than a bullet. It is currency. It is both private and public signature. Film credit is a brand for everyone involved in the creation of a film and in the creative industry, it is the only thing you truly own. It is the scars of your creative ingenuity and identity. Lose it, and you lose your face, your relevance and future in film history.

In the corporate world, a brand is defined by trust, consistency, and identity. Some promise innovation while others promise performance. In the film industry, your name functions exactly the same way a brand functions in the corporate world. When a

producer sees "Edited by Broadside Productions" or "Cinematography by Davidson Izegaegbe" on a deck, trust me, they are not just reading a resume. They are buying into a promise.

The Director's name as a Brand signals a specific kind of film vision, leadership style, and storytelling capability via the camera compositions. It is also in the same way the Producer's Brand signals financial stewardship, problem-solving, and the ability to lead a film project to the finish line. The film Crew Member's Brand also signals technical mastery, professional efficiency, and collaborative synergy.

Always learn to know that each time your name appears in the credits of a finished project, you are adding boldly adding a brick to the foundation of your personal brand. If the film is a masterpiece, your brand appreciates. If the film is a troubled production but you delivered exceptional work under pressure, your brand as a reliable professional skyrockets sharply.

The film industry sadly, thrives on a paradox. Oh yes! It is an incredibly massive global business, yet it operates like a small, unrecognised tight-knit village. However, word travels faster than a digital script leaks. We see this happen around in Nollywood every time, especially when it comes to hiring cast and crew. Filmmakers alike rely confidently on word-of-mouth as well as track records of the cast and crew, and in this regards, your film credit is your passport. We see how in a field where hundreds of people vie for a single film audition, the producer and director look for reasons to narrow the field. A compromised brand easily become the decisive factor. This could be due to a reputation for being difficult on set, delivering subpar work, or walking away from a film project mid-way, fighting or molesting other members of cast and crew, ultimately this becomes the fastest way to get blacklisted. Conversely, a reputable film credit history acts as an automated recommendation letter.



As your film credits grow through each film you are involved in, so does your brand through your creative and financial leverage. A strong brand allows you to command higher fees, secure creative balance and control, and get your passion projects green lit. Once you are able to guard your creative integrity early on, trust me, your film credit would dictate the market. Every filmmaker knows that his paycheck funds his present, while his film credit finances his future. Therefore, do not ever trade long-term brand equity for a short-term payout. If you do that, you just comfortably shot your kneel cap off with a pump action rifle.

In our film chaotic ecosystem, our brand will constantly face threats like, compromised visions, toxic sets, budget cuts, and creative disputes. Therefore, guarding our film credit would require strategy, emotional intelligence, and sometimes even, a fierce backbone. Always remember that no matter the budget, the size of the role, or the chaos behind the scenes, your work must remain uncompromised

because it is your brand. If the film hits the cinema, it won't tell the audience the chaos that fought you hard. If you are a sound designer on a low-budget film, let the film still sound like millions of dollars production. Certainly, you cannot control the director's cut, but at least you can control the quality of creative assets you deliver.

In the early stages of a career, it is tempting to take every job that comes your way. But as you grow, you later realise that you have become your own gatekeeper for your own name. You will find it very difficult attaching your credit to a project that violates your ethical standards, treats your crew members poorly, or fundamentally fraudulent and may tarnish your brand by association. No matter how brilliant a cinematographer you may be, but if your creative work is a nightmare to your director or other members of crew, you will eventually stop getting hired. Always know that your brand is not just what you create; it is how you make people feel on any film set while creating it. Protect your

brand by being the person who brings solutions to the set, not ego.

Sometimes, walking away with your name not appended in a film can help protect your brand. This could be a hard choice to make as a filmmaker, but if a film project you are handling has been butchered to the point that it no longer reflects your professional standards, or creative integrity, you must be prepared to walk away. I strongly believe it is better to have a blank space in your filmography than a permanent stain on your brand.

The film industry is fickle. Many may not believe this. Don't fashions change, as technology evolves, and box office trends come and go at will? In all, one thing is constant, your name. Therefore, learn to treat your film credit with the same reverence a major corporation treats its trademark. Protect it fiercely, polish it constantly, and never, under any circumstances, let it be compromised. After all, when the final frame of your creative ability fades to black, your credit remains; it is your legacy. NEVER LOSE IT.

Wia stage and film productions for jam sef?

Wai stage productions com be laik desert for Naija? Abi na so e be for oda kontris? Wai e be say, as univasi ti graduate tieta students reach evri year, still yet we no de see ogbonge stage productions? Wai pipo no de point hand and de hala join, de tell pipo say "see dat bros and dat sista, na koret stage actor?" Wai stage actors no fit popular laik film actors? Shebi una no say once una waka enta eni cinema hall for Benin or Lagos, or una nak play on top mani online streaming platforms, una mus to see how de Naija film industry wey we de call Nollywood, de scatter evriwia with koret quality and ogbonge tori wey una fit aline with? Una go see how de film pishur clear, the sound de enta bodi, and de actors de act laik say tomorrow no de. But all dis wey I yan so, no go make sense to meni pipo bicos, as far as dem konsan, na tieta naim born film for naija. Again, is dat so? Dis nor be case of to wia ovasize agbada on top person wey nor suppose wia am?

Meni pipo ajument be say, it have tey

wen stage or tieta drama don de shele for awa kontri. Dem even yan say, bifer camera and green screen start to reign, na stage play be de king of entertainment. But nawadays, e com be like say dis two cousins, Stage and Film, com de live for two diffrent world. Dem com be laik two brodas wey hustle tey and wella, but one com get kuza pass de oda one. Film, as all of us no am, get all de money and hype, while Stage de fight and struggle to fill up eni hall wia him for de hustle. Dem don com be laik north and south for distance as far as kuza is konsan. But again de big kwesion wey de skatabalance person brain na: Wia dis two industri for jam? How dem take relate?

Una even no say de first place wia stage and film for hold hand like brodas na inside de body of the actors? Stage na wia de ogbonge training ground for actors de. E be laik wia dem for de train army korofo to take de strong gidigba. Meni of us don no say Director for stage, no be laik Director for film wia him go de go hala "Cut!

Take two!" once you forget ya line for stage, na only you and ya god no wetin you go do to cover ya face bicos of shame. Una even de use style take notice de way stage actors de wia one kain disiplin for bodi eni time dem liv tieta enta film set? No be shakara at all at all! Na wetin stage disiplin de do to dem be dat. Walahi, dat dia kain disiplin no be wetin you go see eniway. Dem nor de see am buy for market laik kuli kuli.

Stage de teach how you go take de control ya voice, ya presence, and how to grab de audience attenshon for meni hours. As for Film, dat one get e own style. E get as e take de him de. Film de take dat ya raw energy wella and com use diffrent type of shots to gbag de deep emotions wey de inside de actor eyes. Meni big actors for Naija and oda kontris na old-skool stage legends bifer dem bicom film supa stars. Even dis awa new generashon stars still de always run go back to stage jus to recharge dia acting battery.

Anoda major junshon wia stage

and film for jam again na for tori mata. Meni beta films wey we de wosh today na stage plays wey dem arrange to bicom ogbonge film wey pipo take de jolly for house. Meni of us no say dem don carri Wole Soyinka stage play take do films na and de rison be say wen film producers de luk for solid, deep, and cultural tori, na theater script dem de always run go meet.

Stage scripts de always deep bicos dem de rely on heavy dialogue and karacta mata. Forget about fine locations or to use bomb blow-up cars. Wen film de gidigba for beta writing, de result de always get morzul. De teknika mata wey de bitwin film and stage no be small somtin at all. Abi na de pipo wey de do lighting design for tieta wey de work laik magicians? Abi na de ones wey de build de set for film and tieta? Make Una join me rison dis mata na! Person wey fit use light to make audience believe say empty stage na forest for night, tell me wetin dat kain person no fit do for film set wia editing software de do abaracadabra?

Now, make we yan truth to awasef on dis mata bicos dis na wia de two sides for de get small kasala. Film de make kuza quick bicos one film fit show for meni cinemas and online at de same time. Stage nor get dat kain level and e get wai. Afta all we no say stage get e limit as you mus to rent hall, and na only de pipo wey buy ticket and enta de hall fit watch de stage productions. De mata of stage and film don serious reach say some Naija producers sef de record stage plays with ogbonge cameras and stream am for pipo to watch online. Dis na wia de monetizashon for stage fit meet de level of film.

Stage and Film no suppose de fight for space at all! True true dem suppose de rub each oda back. Stage as we don de see am so, na de root, wai Film na de branches and leaves wey evribodi de see. If Nollywood want make her tori get weight wella wey go fit com de win intanashonal awards laik Oscars dem, e must to kontinu to invest inside tieta.

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

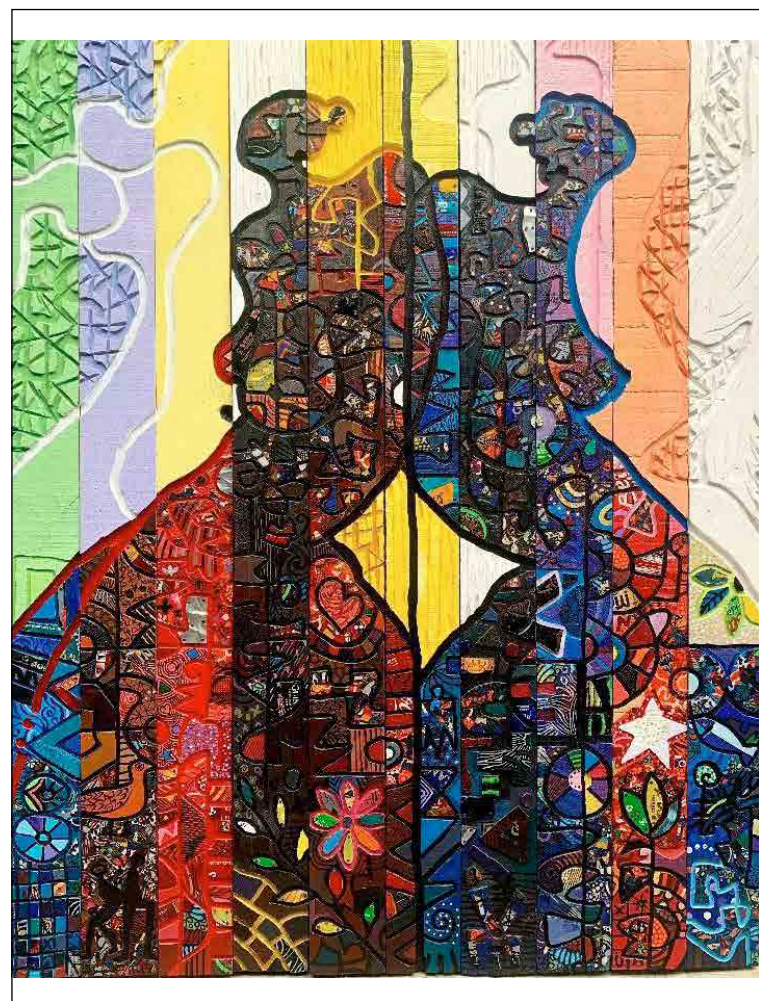
one already possesses.

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 yan-ings 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 bifer 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? Bifer 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 bifer. Na so dem open mouth for grand gbuoor 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 bifer.

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, business 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 ghab 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 Kpatakpata, 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.

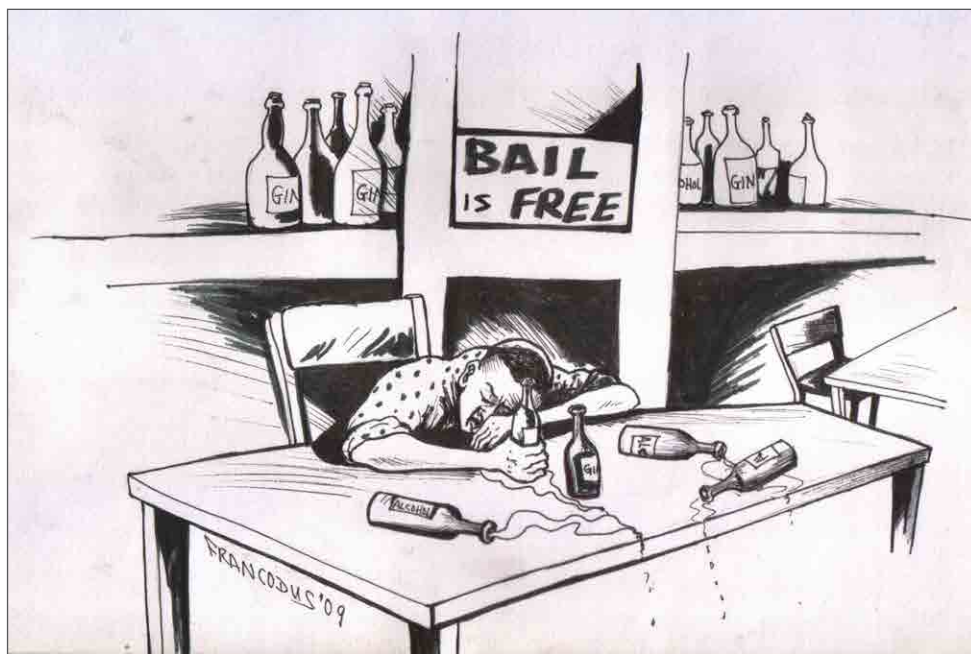
I no say, de Benin Moat suppose de for UNESCO World Heritage list proper-proper. If we fit get international support, de funding to restore am go even de easier. Make we nor forget to teach awa pikin dem for school say de Moat na treasure, na awa history plus heritage. If de younger generashon value 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

CATTOONS



NEWS**Foreign****Hegseth announces US review of Europe forces, says some allies will fail**

US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has severely criticised some of America's Nato allies, while announcing a six-month review of US forces in Europe.

"Some countries will fail, and others will pass with flying colours," he said at a meeting of Nato defence ministers in Brussels, singling out allies that he suggested had been "free-riding".

Hegseth was also highly critical of Nato member states that had imposed limits on help to US forces during the war with Iran.

His announcement follows a US decision to scale back its commitments to a high readiness force within the alliance known as the Nato Force Model (NFM).

New UK defence secretary meets Nato allies without investment plan in place

The aim of the review, which Hegseth termed Nato 3.0, was to "ensure that Nato is moving fast and irreversibly toward Europe leading" on security on the continent.

The US wants Nato members to contribute more to defence spending in Europe and says some countries have not shown how they will reach an agreed target of 5% of national economic output (GDP) which includes 3.5% on core defence and

1.5% on related infrastructure.

Nato Secretary-General Mark Rutte said defence spending had already gone up €90bn (£78bn; \$103bn) last year - a rise of almost 20% - and Europeans were "already backfilling" resources that the US was cutting back on.

Details of how the US will reduce its commitments have not been made public but it has been indicated they include air and naval capabilities.

Hegseth said Nato's annual dues would be "contingent on other countries meeting their defence spending targets; where other allies do not spend with urgency, our dues contributions will go down".

"Some of Nato's largest economies, some of our richest countries, allies that are happiest to go on about the rules-based international order and middle powers banding together, still seem to think the era of free-riding is here," he added.

He did not single out which countries he meant.

UK Defence Secretary Dan Jarvis attended the summit without a UK defence investment plan, after his predecessor John Healey resigned, warning that the plan fell "well short" of what was needed to protect the UK.

Suspected gang leader shot dead in flower bouquet ambush at airport

An Ecuadorean man, who police accuse of leading a faction of one of the country's most feared criminal gangs, has been shot dead as he was leaving the airport in Ecuador's largest city, Guayaquil.

Security footage shows two young men waiting outside the arrivals terminal holding stuffed toys and flowers before one of them approaches the victim, pulls his gun from behind a teddy and shoots him point-blank.

Police have detained two teenagers in connection with the crime, the latest in a widespread wave of gang violence.

This latest deadly shooting came just a day after Ecuador's president declared a fresh state of emergency in 10 provinces, including Guayas, where the attack unfolded.

Ecuador's interior minister, John Reimberg, identified the victim of Wednesday's attack as 39-year-old Carlos Alberto Suástegui Villanueva, who he said was the leader of the Los Águilas gang in El Triunfo, a region east of Guayaquil.

Los Águilas, which was designated as a "terrorist organisation" by Ecuador's President Daniel Noboa in 2024, is accused of being heavily involved in drug trafficking and extortion.

It is one of several gangs whose criminal activities have turned Ecuador from a relatively safe haven to a crime hotspot with one of the highest

murder rates in the Western Hemisphere over recent years.

Ecuador is located between Colombia and Peru, the world's two largest producers of coca, the base ingredient in cocaine, and has become the key corridor for the drug to be smuggled to the US, Europe and beyond.

While Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest city, has been particularly badly hit by drug and gang-related violence, the daylight attack right outside the airport's arrival hall has shocked locals.

Newspaper El Universo described how passengers scattered in panic as the shots rang out.

Police said one bystander was injured in the attack and video footage of the incident showed a man pulling a suitcase collapsing on the floor as the shooting unfolded.

The security footage also captures the first gunman running away while the second fires another shot at Suástegui.

The arrivals hall was closed for more than two hours while forensic experts and police carried out investigations at the scene.

President Noboa has been trying to quell the gang violence by declaring states of emergency, which give the security forces extra powers such as being able to search homes without a search warrant provided they have reasonable grounds to suspect illicit activity.



KAPOTNYA REFINERY:

The fire at the Kapotnya refinery was visible to motorists on the Moscow ringroad

Moscow hit by largest Ukrainian attack since start of Russia's full-scale war

Moscow has come under the largest Ukrainian attack since the start of the full-scale war, with close to 200 drones hitting targets around the Russian capital and setting columns of thick smoke billowing high into the sky.

Seventeen people were wounded in the Moscow region, according to local governor Andrei Vorobyov.

Almost 1,000 drones and four Ukrainian cruise missiles were intercepted and destroyed across the country in 24 hours, Russia's defence ministry was quoted as saying. An oil depot was struck in the southern Rostov region, where one person was killed.

Volodymyr Zelensky said Kyiv had once again hit the Moscow region with "long-range sanctions" - a euphemism for Ukrainian long-dis-

tance strikes on Russia.

"It's time to end this war, and Russia must take the necessary steps in diplomacy," he added.

He said the massive drone strike was in response to last week's Russian attack on Kyiv, which set a major religious landmark ablaze.

"We don't want this war and have never wanted it," Zelensky said. "But if Ukraine burns, your Moscow will burn too."

Fires broke out as the Kapotnya refinery in south-east Moscow was hit for the third time in a month and the second time this week, colouring the sky black with smoke. Numerous videos showed the lid of a large oil storage tank blown dozens of metres into the air by the force of an explosion.

A nearby shopping centre was also burning, reportedly after drone debris fell on the

building, and several residential high-rise blocks were evacuated.

Moscow's four airports were temporarily shut and more than 500 flights were cancelled or delayed.

Although local authorities across Russia have banned publication of images of the aftermath of drone strikes, dozens of videos were posted on social media showing drones flying across the sky in broad daylight and explosions over industrial areas on the outskirts of Moscow.

It has been a regular Ukrainian tactic to launch a large number of reconnaissance decoy drones to map out the density of air defences and vulnerable areas, before the main air strikes begin.

Four and a half years since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the war

of attrition on the front line in Ukraine grinds on, out of sight for many in Russia. Kyiv's long-range strikes on targets across Russia as well as Moscow and St Petersburg are an indication of Zelensky's aim of "bringing the war home" to ordinary Russians.

Drone attacks on Moscow - about 500km (310 miles) from the Ukrainian border - have become more frequent as Kyiv has developed its long-range capabilities. Ukraine's first successful drone strikes reached the Russian capital in spring 2023, although they were sporadic and rarely involved more than a handful of drones.

Since then, extensive air defences have been set up around Moscow - but the number of drones used by Ukraine in its attacks has also multiplied and some have penetrated those defences.

First Russian shadow fleet tanker enters Channel since Smyrtos boarding

A Russian "shadow fleet" tanker has entered the English Channel for the first time since UK forces boarded the Smyrtos on Sunday morning, ship tracking data shows.

Forwarder, a Russian-flagged ship that left port in Primorsk last week, entered the Channel on Wednesday evening and sailed south. It is broadcasting its final destination as China's Dongying port.

The shadow fleet is used by Russia to avoid Western sanctions on oil exports imposed following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. It is formed of hundreds of tankers, many of which are aging and obscure who owns them.

UK-sanctioned tankers have avoided the Channel since the Smyrtos was intercepted with tracking data showing several vessels altering course to avoid

the waterway.

A Ministry of Defence (MoD) spokesperson told BBC Verify that they would not comment on the Forwarder or "on specific operational planning".

They cited the danger that commenting publicly could limit their "ability to successfully take action against these ships".

But ship-tracking data appeared to show a Royal Navy warship, HMS Tyne, operating in the area near the tanker's location.

Forwarder was sanctioned by the UK, the US and the EU in 2025. Since the British government accused it of smuggling oil from Russia, the vessel has changed its name twice.

Satellite imagery showed Forwarder left Primorsk on 12 June after loading oil. The refinery is the largest in the Baltic

Sea and is a critical export hub for Russia's energy industry.

Shadow fleet tankers such as Forwarder have provided a critical lifeline for the Kremlin helping to fund it war in Ukraine and keep its economy afloat.

The clandestine fleet of more than 700 ageing tankers is responsible for carrying 75% of Russia's sanctioned oil, according to the MoD.

A Nato official has previously told BBC Verify that the Russian warship, Admiral Grigorovich, has been assigned to escort sanctioned oil tankers. But it is unclear whether the frigate is accompanying the Forwarder.

Admiral Grigorovich was involved in an incident on Tuesday when it fired warning shots towards a British yacht that had apparently moved towards it in the Channel.

A Nato official told BBC Verify that, as of Wednesday evening, Admiral Grigorovich had not moved far from the location of the incident.

In March, UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer announced that British armed forces "are now able to board sanctioned vessels that are passing through our waters" which were not operating in accordance with international law. But experts told BBC Verify it was unlikely the UK or France would seek to intercept the tanker.

"Going after vessels that are falsely flagged or misusing a flag of convenience is one thing, but this would be going after Russia directly which would be a further step up in escalation," said Frederik Van Lokeren, a former Belgian naval officer and maritime analyst.

Foreign

NEWS

Weapons, money and ships: How is this Iran deal different from others?

President Donald Trump has formally signed a deal with Iran to end the conflict that began on 28 February when the US and Israel launched air strikes against Tehran and across the country. The terms of the 14-point Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the US and Iran have been criticised over what is included and what is left out.

There have also been questions about how the agreement - which lays the groundwork for talks on Iran's nuclear weapons programme - will also affect economic sanctions and access to the Strait of Hormuz.

Comparisons have inevitably been made between this deal and the 2015 Obama-era nuclear accord known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) which Trump scrapped in his first term.

To make sense of the current deal, BBC Verify has looked

through key details of the documents to compare it with the situation during three distinct periods:

1. When the JCPOA was in force between 2016 and 2018
2. Before the war began on 28 February 2026
3. Now the MoU has been signed

Weapons

The whole point of the JCPOA - which included the UK, France, the EU, China and Russia - was to impose specific limitations on Iran's nuclear programme.

That highly technical document restricted Iran's stockpile of nuclear material to 300kg and said it could not enrich its uranium above 3.67% for 15 years. This level of enrichment is not high enough to be used in nuclear warheads but can be used in reactors to generate electricity.

The JCPOA also allowed the

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) access to Iran's nuclear programme to ensure it was complying with the agreement.

The IAEA said Iran had been complying until Trump withdrew the US from the JCPOA in 2018, calling it "decaying and rotten".

Following the collapse of that deal Iran stepped up its nuclear programme.

At the start of the war on 28 February 2026, Iran possessed approximately 440kg of uranium enriched to 60%, according to US officials. The material can be fairly quickly enriched to the 90% threshold needed for weapons-grade uranium.

Iran attacks damage 20 US military sites since start of war, satellite images show

While the new MoU text, as read out by the White House to the BBC and other media organisations, states that Iran "reaffirms that it shall not procure

or develop nuclear weapons" there is little detail about the issue in the document.

There is similar language in the JCPOA, which stated "Iran reaffirms that under no circumstances will Iran ever seek, develop or acquire any nuclear weapons".

The new MoU also says the two parties "agreed to discuss the issue of enrichment" and to "resolve the disposition of stockpiled enriched material pursuant to a mechanism that will be mutually agreed upon" - again, suggesting this will be included in forthcoming negotiations.

In recent weeks Trump has said that Iran's remaining nuclear material will be removed from the country.

US officials briefed that the deal "sets a minimum standard where... the enriched stockpile will be destroyed". But the MoU actually makes no mention of this happening.

Gunfire and explosions heard at Niger capital's airport

Explosions and gunfire were heard early on Thursday at the airport in Niger's capital, Niamey, residents have told the BBC.

"I heard the first gunshots at 06:00 local time (05:00 GMT) while I was at the mosque. But the current situation is under control," one person said.

The gunfire, which lasted for two hours, came from the entrance at the Diori Hamani international airport, a witness told the AFP news agency.

Niger has been fighting an Islamist insurgency for a decade and in January suspected jihadists launched an attack on the same airport. Like its neighbours, Burkina Faso and Mali, Niger is run by a military junta that came to power in part because of a failure to deal with the violence.

Residents have told the BBC that Thursday's attack was repelled by the army, which is now hunting down the fleeing assailants who reportedly abandoned their weapons.

The authorities have not

yet commented and no group has said it was responsible but an affiliate to the Islamic State group said it had carried out January's assault.

Niger's defence ministry said that in January's attack, four military personnel were injured and 20 attackers killed.

At the time, the head of Niger's military government, which has been in power for three years, thanked Russia for its help in foiling the attack. Abdourahmane Tiani also accused the presidents of France, Benin and Ivory Coast of backing those responsible.

He did not give details of what help Russia had provided, or provide any evidence to support his accusations against the other countries.

In recent weeks, authorities in Niger have demolished neighbourhoods near the airport, citing "terrorist risks".

They have also extended the airport's perimeter fence and installed more than 350 surveillance cameras, AFP reports.

US-Iran initial deal to end war sparks mixed reactions in Tehran and Tel Aviv

The signature of an initial deal to end the war between Iran and the United States has sparked divided reactions in Tehran and Tel Aviv.

US President Donald Trump and his Iranian counterpart Masoud Pezeshkian separately signed the text on Wednesday.

It calls for Tehran to dilute its stockpile of highly enriched uranium and waives US-backed sanctions on the country, immediately allowing Iran to sell its oil freely in a major concession from Washington, according to details released by both countries.

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission welcomed the agreement in a statement on Thursday, "describing it as an important step towards ending hostilities, reducing tensions, and advancing lasting peace and stability in the Middle East."

The agreement appears to offer Iran several benefits up front while extracting little in return.

In Tehran, some residents welcomed the deal. "I was happy to hear the news of the agreement because no matter how you look at this, war and tension won't benefit anyone. Neither the people, nor the ruling system," said Rabi Esmaili.

But others expressed skepticism whether it will be honored by the US.

"I have no hope at all that this agreement will be carried out, because America has proven numerous times that it's nothing but a liar," said 42-year-old Farideh Hajian.

The initial agreement also

calls for a permanent end to hostilities and starts a 60-day negotiating clock to reach a final deal on the future of Iran's nuclear program.

Disappointment in Israel Israel was squeezed out of the negotiations with Iran, and Israelis from across the political spectrum have called the deal a disaster, directing their fury at Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"I think this is a bad agreement for Israel because we didn't achieve our goals in this conflict and we will suffer the attacks from Lebanon and maybe from Iran," said Eduard Dubinil, a resident from Harish.

"I really think it's bad, bad, bad, bad," said Tehila Ben Haroush from Jerusalem.

Ohad Buber from Tel Aviv said that he's "very disappointed in what happened."

The deal has been shrouded in secrecy and confusion for days.

US officials refused to disclose the terms even after saying Trump and Vice President JD Vance digitally signed it over the weekend.

Trump signed a physical copy Wednesday while dining with French President Emmanuel Macron at Versailles, the palace where many historic agreements have been signed over the centuries, ending wars or territorial disputes.

In Tehran, a stone-faced President Masoud Pezeshkian signed the deal on behalf of Iran, according to the state-run IRNA news agency, which posted an image of him holding up the deal with his signature and Trump's.



ANCHORED VESSELS:

A small motorboat passes anchored vessels in the Strait of Hormuz off Bandar Abbas, Iran, recently.

(Amirhosein Khorgooi/ISNA via AP)

Lawyer in high-profile Ugandan treason case charged with related offence

A former Ugandan mayor and lawyer representing detained opposition figure Kizza Besigye, who is on trial for treason, has himself been charged with a treason-related offence.

Erias Lukwago appeared before a magistrate's court in the capital Kampala looking visibly weak, local media reported, days after he was arrested at his home.

He denied the charges of failure to report treason and was remanded in prison until next week when his case will be heard.

His arrest on Monday sparked condemnation after Gen Muhoozi Kainerugaba,

the country's military chief and son of the president, boasted about it on social media.

Bobi Wine, a Ugandan opposition politician who fled the country fearing for his life after contesting the January presidential election, alleged that Lukwago had been arrested on Kainerugaba's orders as he was preparing to serve a court summons on the military chief.

"I call upon all of us to reject and resist this brazen impunity," he posted on X.

Lukwago's family went to court seeking an order compelling security officers, whom they accused of abducting him,

to disclose his whereabouts and release him whether "dead or alive".

The family argued that Kainerugaba had claimed responsibility for Lukwago's seizure and boasted about mistreating him on social media.

On X, Kainerugaba shared photos appearing to be of Lukwago blindfolded in an unknown location.

In another post he said: "I'm proud of all the hurt and pain I will inflict on the criminal Lukwago!"

Kainerugaba has a history of controversial posts, some of which have later been deleted,

and has boasted of abducting and torturing opposition figures in the past.

Lukwago has been representing Besigye, who has been jailed on treason charges since being abducted in neighbouring Kenya and forcibly returned to Uganda in late 2024.

Besigye is a long-standing political opponent of President Yoweri Museveni. He once served as Museveni's personal doctor before breaking ranks with him in 1999.

He has run against Museveni in several presidential elections and has been detained multiple times.

Opinion

Gov. Okpebholo and the Danger of False Narratives



EUBALDUS ENAHORO

In recent months, social media platforms have been flooded with stories, videos, and false claims about the administration of Governor Senator Monday Okpebholo. Some reports are genuine concerns that deserve scrutiny and others are fabricated narratives designed to mislead, provoke anger, and tarnish reputations.

We all know that false stories thrive on three things: emotion, anonymity, and speed. A sensational headline gets more clicks than a boring fact. A faceless account can post what a real person would not say in public. And by the time the facts are verified, the lie has already circled the world twice, as the old proverb says.

A desperado seeking attention can go any length to cook up stories oblivious of the damage that singular action will do to the state. They have said Governor Monday Okpebholo has done nothing and whip up sentiments about the insecurity in the nation.

The damage is not just to one person. When false stories target a sitting governor, the target is Edo State itself. Investors hesitate. Development partners ask questions. Citizens lose trust. The image of our state — the Heartbeat of the Nation — takes the hit.

It is therefore very appalling that some persons have made themselves serial critics of

the government closing their eyes to the giant strides of the administration so far.

They have deliberately refused to understand that no government anywhere is perfect.

The state was not entirely free of security challenges, but the situation has been exaggerated by those with political motives.

According to the Governor, "All of this is just to bring this government down, to give it a bad name. It is not that we are free, but not in the way they are hyping it."

When we ignorantly succeed in destroying what we should build, it is the people that suffer indirectly.

In as much as constructive criticism makes democracy stronger, such criticism should be anchored on facts. Every allegation must pass the test of verification.

Now, in Edo state some people obviously in the opposition political parties are not happy with the great strides of the Governor whom they least expect will perform excellently beyond their expectations.

Also, there are others, including a fellow who has been going about for the past eighteen years or so claiming to be the chairman of an inconsequential organization, Conference of registered political parties, using the platform to mislead the public with falsehood.

Several statements have been issued by the organization to Journalists to pull down the government of Senator Monday Okpebholo. They have among others accused the Governor of not doing anything and being unable to curb the insecurity in the state.

In an engagement with Journalists in Benin City, the Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Prince Kassim Afegbua advised Journalists to always interrogate the source of their reports and not to be used to mislead the public.

The same standard should apply to every citizen with a smartphone, because we now live in a nation where anybody can send stories through

the social media

They are not seeing how the transformative blueprint for Edo state development, Project SHINE, which stands for Security, Health Care, Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Food Sufficiency and Education is impacting on Edo people.

The Governor is not just interested in having a blue print on paper, but transforming it into projects and programmes that Edo Citizens can see, like the Ramat Park Flyover and several projects across the state.

Interestingly, the Governor is focused on the successful implementation of the five points "SHINE" agenda for the state development and has refused to be distracted.

It must be noted that Governor Okpebholo, like every public official, can be held accountable through verifiable data, official records, and responsible journalism. That is how democracy grows.

But the Spread of unverified claims does the opposite — it distracts the government from work, divides communities, and wastes energy that should go into building roads, schools, and hospitals.

One would have expected the critics of the Governor to praise the administration for the bold initiative that has transformed Edo to a construction site in less than twenty months with the massive construction and renovation of roads, schools, hospitals, two Flyover bridges, revival of the New Edo Line Transport Service, boosting of agriculture and food security, supporting local farmers and tackling food scarcity with sustainable food production.

The Governor has intervened to arrest the wrought inherited by his administration, providing solutions to under development across the state.

The people should talk about the progress of work on the Gelegele road, the completion of the Evbuotubu road in Egor local government area, linking Ekenwan to Siluko road, a major relief that has restored economic activities in the

area. The construction of the road linking 14 villages in Uhumwode, the Uromi axis, Ekpo-ma down to Uromi which are almost completed. The transformation of the rural community of Udomi in Esan Central.

In Edo North, the Ibilo road, Ekpeshi/Igarra roads now wearing new look and over 80 schools, 160 primary health care centers spread across the 18 local government areas to provide health care to rural folks.

The work at the Stella Obasanjo hospital is nearing completion after the state government paid off the huge debt inherited, and the Oredo Health Center has been adequately equipped to serve general purpose.

For those who still want to go ahead to misinform the public that Governor Okpebholo has done nothing, they should talk about projects spread across the 18 local government areas.

It would be recalled that earth moving equipment were handed over to the local government areas to open the rural areas to complement the state government in critical infrastructural development.

In the words of Prince Kassim Afegbua, "what the government is doing are verifiable and not propaganda. Governor Okpebholo is applying practical governance approach which can be seen by everyone."

But, if anyone claims not to see what the Governor is doing and insists nothing has been done, Edo people have no choice than to tell them to wake up from their slumber because Edo is Shining.

As patriotic Edo people we must always ask for evidence of any allegations against the state government. For example, a video without context is not proof.

Irrespective of our political inclination let us protect our collective image because Edo's reputation is built by all of us.

When false stories go viral, they become the first result when someone Googles "Edo State". Let the truth be the first story we tell.

The imperative of State Police in Nigeria's Federal System



OBOH SYLVESTER

Nigeria today faces one of the most challenging security environments in its history. From terrorism in the North-East to banditry in the North-West, kidnapping across major highways, communal clashes in various regions, and increasing incidents of armed robbery and violent crimes nationwide, the country's security architecture is under immense pressure. Despite the commitment and sacrifices of the nation's security agencies, the existing centralized policing system has struggled to adequately address these diverse and evolving threats. Consequently, the establishment of State Police has become not merely a political debate but a national necessity.

As a federation comprising 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria is characterized by vast geographical diversity, multiple ethnic nationalities, different languages, cultures, and unique security challenges. A centralized policing structure designed and controlled solely from Abuja often lacks the flexibility and local responsiveness required to effectively manage security

situations across such a complex federation.

The Nigeria Police Force remains the primary institution responsible for maintaining internal security. However, with a population exceeding 220 million people and a police-to-citizen ratio below international recommendations, the force is overstretched. Security challenges frequently outpace available manpower, logistics, and operational capacity. In many cases, officers posted to unfamiliar environments face language barriers and limited knowledge of local customs, making intelligence gathering and community engagement difficult.

One of the greatest strengths of State Police would be its proximity to the people. Security is most effective when those responsible for maintaining law and order understand the communities they serve. Officers recruited from their states and localities are more likely to possess the cultural awareness, linguistic competence, and geographical knowledge necessary to identify security threats before they escalate. Such familiarity fosters trust between law enforcement agencies and citizens, thereby enhancing intelligence gathering and crime prevention.

Intelligence remains the backbone of modern policing. Criminals often exploit gaps in local intelligence to carry out kidnappings, robberies, and other violent crimes. State Police, working closely with traditional rulers, community leaders, youth groups, and local vigilante networks, would significantly improve the flow of information needed to combat crime effectively. Communities are generally more willing to cooperate with officers they know and trust than with outsiders who may only have temporary assignments in their areas.

Furthermore, the current constitutional arrangement presents a contradiction. Governors are officially recognized as the Chief Security Officers of

their respective states, yet they exercise little direct control over security agencies operating within their jurisdictions. During emergencies, governors often rely on requests and approvals through federal command structures before critical actions can be taken. Such bureaucratic processes may delay responses to urgent threats. State Police would empower state governments to take swift and decisive action in protecting lives and property.

The economic implications of insecurity cannot be overlooked. Investors seek stable environments where businesses can operate without fear of violence or disruption. Farmers require secure farmlands to cultivate crops and contribute to national food security. Communities need peace to support commerce, education, tourism, and social development. Persistent insecurity has discouraged investment, disrupted agricultural activities, and increased poverty in many parts of the country. A decentralized policing framework would help create safer environments that support economic growth and development.

Opponents of State Police often express concerns about potential abuse by state governments. Critics fear that subnationals could use state-controlled police forces to intimidate political opponents or suppress dissent. These concerns are legitimate and deserve careful consideration. However, the possibility of abuse should not be sufficient reason to reject a reform that could substantially improve national security.

Rather than abandoning the idea, Nigeria can establish strong constitutional safeguards to prevent misuse. Such safeguards could include independent police service commissions, legislative oversight, judicial review mechanisms, clear operational procedures, transparent recruitment processes, and strict penalties for political inter-

ference. Accountability structures must be designed to ensure that State Police serve the public interest rather than partisan interests.

Many federal countries successfully operate decentralized policing systems. Nations such as the United States, Canada, Australia, Germany, and India maintain state, provincial, or regional police services alongside federal law enforcement agencies. These models demonstrate that multiple layers of policing can coexist effectively when supported by clear legal frameworks and inter-agency cooperation.

Importantly, State Police should not be viewed as a replacement for federal security institutions. Rather, it should complement existing agencies within a coordinated security framework. Federal agencies would continue to address national security matters, interstate crimes, terrorism, border protection, and other strategic concerns, while State Police focus on local law enforcement and community security. Such a layered approach would strengthen overall security management and improve response capabilities across all levels.

The urgency of security reform in Nigeria cannot be overstated. Every day, communities suffer the devastating consequences of criminal activities that undermine public confidence and national development. The growing sophistication of criminal networks requires innovative approaches that reflect modern realities and local conditions.

State Police represent a practical and constitutionally compatible solution that aligns with the principles of federalism. By bringing security closer to the people, enhancing intelligence gathering, improving accountability, and enabling rapid response to threats, State Police can significantly contribute to national stability and development.

Feature

Corporate Social Responsibility: Why companies must give back to society

REBECCA EJEMOGO

Many times, the cause of poor roads, unemployment, lack of healthcare, poor schools as well as environmental pollution are usually attributed to bad government, while that might be part of the major contribution to it, the people in society should be aware that pointing a finger at the government denotes that four fingers are pointing towards their direction which implies that aside from the government there are other subtle contributors to some of the problems that are ravaging society, but hardly spoken about.

In many communities today there are a lot of well-established profit-making companies, industries and organizations that generate huge profits as a result of operating in those communities, yet many of these communities suffer from poor roads, air and water pollution, unemployment, poor healthcare and lack of basic amenities i.e. water supply that will help to improve their standard of living. This raises an important question on whether companies should only focus on profit-making or should they also contribute to the development of society?

According to The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Corporate Social Responsibility is a management concept that integrates social and environmental concerns in business operations and a company's interactions with its stakeholders. It can also be seen as a strategy to balance economic, environmental and social imperatives while at the same time addressing the expectations of shareholders.

The Input of Corporate Social Responsibility cannot and should not be underrated because when they venture into investing and contributing to the communities where they operate, the results will be glaring.

One of the importance of Corporate Social Responsibility is in its ability to contribute meaningfully to community development. Due to the presence of some companies in most communities, one will begin to see certain developments and changes that will be attributed to them. This can lead to massive investment in schools, roads, healthcare, water supply, scholarships, even youth and women empowerment.

For example Seplat Energy through its National Undergraduate Scholarship and other education initiatives has awarded numerous scholarships to secondary and university students, which also includes those from host communities. We also have Total Energies in partnership with NNPC, MTN Foundation in building schools and libraries etc. These initiatives are often established to give back to students from host communities.

Another importance of CSR is that companies benefit from society. This is due to the fact that companies that operate within that environment are making profit from that location, if not it would have caused them to relocate to another site, but since they are benefitting from there, they have a responsibility to sup-



port the society in the best way possible because CSR should not just be used as a medium to recall a company's brand name or identity, there should be a quota that they are adding to the community where they make their profit from the people, operate in their environment and even make use of the community's resources. One thing to note is that no company can really succeed without considering communities as much as they prioritize their workers and customers.

CSR also helps to build good reputation. When a company is known for its goodwill in the areas of empowerment, healthcare, scholarships, etc. it will help the company to gain the public trust, support, loyalty, respect, and better image. The community can go as far as defending and standing in for those companies if the need arises i.e. when crisis arises. In so doing, it will not be difficult for them to earn their support, it will come naturally only for businesses that care for society.

Aside from building good reputation, Corporate Social Responsibility contributes immensely in reducing social problems. When companies incorporate CSR into their business, it will help to solve problems that look quite tedious to solve, hence they assist the government indirectly to alleviate poverty, unemployment, reduce crime as well as illiteracy. For example, Dangote Group / Aliko Dangote Foundation provides numerous educational scholarships i.e. girls' education, and also vocational training, and creates jobs within various sectors of his com-

pany. Also, Seplat Energy focuses on youth empowerment, education and skills in the Niger Delta. It will help to inculcate a sense of belonging and shape their conducts in society.

In addition, environmental protection is another important benefit of CSR. In the sense that there are some organizations and industries that were

once criticized for pitching their tents in their communities, build structures and use sophisticated equipment and machines that began to affect the well-being of the host community i.e. oil spillage which affected drinking water, as well as fishing as an occupation in oil-producing regions like Niger Delta. Hence CSR in such situation will help to proffer measures that will protect the environment such that their activities do not affect the host community in a negative manner by engaging in recycling, reuse and remanufacturing of products using that waste to cut raw material expenses for them.

Despite the laudable benefits of CSR, it has however been criticized for engaging in it only for publicity i.e. increasing their brand image, not necessarily because they have the communities in their hearts to give back to which results in investing heavily in advertising their CSR activities while they allocate minimal resources to the causes. Also, some companies are being criticized for selectively highlighting their successes and downplaying or hiding their failures. This will create skepticism in the heart of the members of the community on whether their CSR initiatives are for genuine impact or there is an ulterior motive attached to it.

Also, CSR has been criticized for neglecting workers while helping communities. In as much as companies are expected to perform certain duties to their host community, they should however not be quick to neglect the welfare of their workers

who serve as the major machinery that keeps the business rolling. Some ignore internal issues like low wages, poor working conditions, discrimination or unsafe workplaces. Hence, companies should also channel or allocate funds to improve employee welfare, training or work-life.

Furthermore, CSR has been criticized for embarking on temporary projects. Some companies upon realizing that they have gained a massive physical and social media presence withdraw once media attention fades leaving communities without sustained support. Also, resources are wasted on one-off events instead of creating a system of continuity of the ongoing programs. Companies that exploit communities and later donate insignificant items is another problem of Corporate Social Responsibility. This is because some industries extract resources from host communities and leave them in a very bad shape, pollute environments i.e. water then give minor donations or embark on projects as a form of 'Compensation' which cannot be compared to the damage that has been created after those companies have made profits from exploitation, leading to vengeance and resentment from the host community.

Companies should always have it at the back of their mind that the success of businesses is not measured by profit alone, but how well they are willing to contribute positively in society, because their sincere impacts and intervention will help build communities to a great extent, reduce social problems, and enhance national development.

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When a company is known for its goodwill in the areas of empowerment, healthcare, scholarships, etc. it will help the company to gain the public trust, support, loyalty, respect, and better image.

The mission of South East Development Commission in Nigeria: It's the same!

JOSEPH ESIVWENUGHWU

Without strong watchdog institutions, impunity becomes the very foundation upon which systems of corruption are built. And if impunity is not demolished, all efforts to bring an end to corruption are in vain". —Rigoberta Menchú, Nobel Prize laureate.

Since the establishment of Niger Delta Development Commission by a previous government to ensure the area which contributes more than One Hundred and Ninety-Nine percent of the national cake is developed, a visit to the area presents the picture of abandonment due to the rascality of those appointees directed to preside over the entity.

The more the commission earns more money from the federation account by way of derivation the more those in charge go for traditional titles while travelling to the European countries becomes a daily movie.

With the act setting up the agency the elaborate functions of the agency were clearly spelt out. Historically the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) which came on board in 2000 is a federal intervention agency established in 2000 to facilitate the rapid, even, and sustainable development of Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta region. Its core mission is to offer lasting solutions to the socio-economic and environmental difficulties facing the region.

It was former President Goodluck Jonathan that once said "stealing is not corruption". However, with the establishment of South East Development Commission the people did not expect any miracle because since NDDC presided over by treasure looters over the years have nothing to show for all the money received the possibility of the South East Development Commission performing and providing the needed infrastructure is zero.

To many easterners it is a case of a man I arrested in my farm stealing my yam only for him to recommend that I should take him to court because he knows that his father is there to handle the case. The South East Development Commission (SEDC) was



SEDC, MD, CEO, Mark Okoye II and UNDP Resident Representative Elsie Attafua (right)

officially established on July 24, 2024, when President Bola Ahmed Tinubu signed the establishment bill into law. The commission subsequently became fully operational following the inauguration of its governing board on February 12, 2025. With Senator Orji Uzor Kalu, former governor of Abia State and Akpabio daughter in charge the people of the south-east became so helpless and nothing is heard from the commission till date. However, within the last days when the senate started investigating some government agency some of the ants that have occupied the agencies let loose, hauling insults on anyone that dared to question the fund received by the body.

According to Arise News titled: SENATE QUIZZES SEDC MD OVER N16 BILLION BUDGET RELEASE "The Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of newly established Southeast Development Commission, SEDC, Mark Okoye, has come under heavy scrutiny of the Senate over alleged misuse of funds in the commission's appropriated budget of N16.6 billion for the 2025 fiscal year. The senate through its committee on Southeast Development Commission chaired by Senator Orji Uzor Kalu accused the Managing Director of spending a whopping N153 million to rent a one -room office apartment in Abuja, while the commission's corporate headquarters is in Enugu.

Responding to how much has been spent so far from the total sum of N16.6 billion released to the commission last December, Okoye explained that roughly N12 billion is left in the commission's account. The Senate Committee was however not satisfied with Okoye's explanation and subsequently asked him to go and put his documents in order and return next week Tuesday for further scrutiny.

Also, the N153 million SEDC office issue is a controversial expenditure that the Senate Committee on the South-East Development Commission queried during a legislative oversight session. The Allegation: The Senate Committee, chaired by Senator Orji Uzor Kalu, accused the SEDC

of spending N153 million for a "one-room liaison office" in Maitama, Abuja. The query was part of a larger legislative probe into the agency's 2025 budget, where lawmakers questioned how N3.6 billion was spent out of an allocated N16.6 billion.

The Lawmakers highlighted that the Central Bank of Nigeria records showed only about N13 billion remained from the initial N16.6 billion, leaving approximately N3.6 billion without adequate documentation.

The Senate raised concerns over billions of naira in expenditures—specifically a N2.5 billion allocations—that lacked proper procurement documentation and transparent accounting. According to google.com, Corruption is the dishonest misuse of power for personal or institutional gain. Six primary examples include Bribery, Embezzlement, Extortion, Nepotism and Cronyism, Influence Peddling and Fraud. If an agency that took less than a year is so rotten that will tell us the extent of NDDC level of corruption for the past twenty-six years of its existence.

Today, there is nowhere in the Niger Delta Region that one can find a good road, electricity, school, hospitals and empowerment programme rather than blind looting now giving rise to corporate hotels, private schools and estates to mention but a few.

Eliminating corrupt public office holders requires robust structural constraints, active citizen engagement, and a commitment to transparency. Until the nation has a law where those found guilty by tribunals put in place for that purpose are eliminated by firing squad irrespective of which office they occupied as it was done to armed robbers' years ago, Nigeria should forget about fighting corruption. "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others"—George Orwell.

However, in trying to eliminate corruption All Animals should be equal and some should not be more equal than others.

Joseph Esivwenughwu is the former Chairman of Okuetolor Community Okpe Local Government Area of Delta State Nigeria.

Strengthening state-owned media for optimum performance: Why EBS & The Nigerian Observer must rise together

MATTHEW OKAGHA

Edo State stands out. While many states watch their government-owned radio, TV, and newspapers collapse, Edo still boasts two thriving institutions — the Edo Broadcasting Service (EBS) and the Bendel Newspapers Corporation, publishers of The Nigerian Observer. In an age of misinformation, that is both rare and valuable.

Beyond informing, educating, and entertaining, state-owned media carry a strategic duty: to communicate government policies, programs, and achievements directly to

the people. But that duty demands modern tools, professional staff, and a working environment that attracts young talent.

GOVERNOR OKPEBHOLO'S COMMITMENT TO EBS

Governor Monday Okpebholo understands this. His recent visit to EBS revealed a leader ready to act. On discovering the transmitter was down, he said: "I am in pain. But whatever it is, we can make it work."

Better still, he confirmed plans are already advanced: "Designs have been made, procurement is ongoing. You will see a new facelift for EBS."

Recognizing that productivity needs mobility, he also approved two buses for the station — exceeding the request from Acting GM, Comrade Festus Alenkhe. At a time citizens need timely updates on infrastructure and development, that intervention restores EBS's capacity to serve.

NOW, THE NIGERIAN OBSERVER

While EBS receives urgent attention, the same vision must extend to The Nigerian Observer. As Edo's flagship paper and one of Nigeria's oldest surviving newspapers, it remains a strategic asset.

Unlike many papers, The Observer already has modern production equipment. Its needs are less capital-intensive but equally critical: steady supply of newsprint, improved transportation, operational support, and take-off grants.

With 2027 elections approaching, a revitalized Nigerian Observer will be more than a newspaper. It will be Edo's platform for credible information, civic engagement, and documentation of this administration's development strides.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

Strong institutions need strong

voices. Governor Okpebholo has started the work at EBS. Completing the circle by empowering The Nigerian Observer will create a formidable communication network for Edo — electronic + print, broadcast + analysis, reaching every corner of the state.

"A government that builds roads must also build the microphones and newspapers that tell the story. Infrastructure without information is silence."

The reward? A stronger, more professional state-owned media system that serves Edo people effectively in 2027 and beyond.

FEATURE

The paradox of the endangered Obo festival in Ozalla clan

OSUMAH AUGUSTINE AND
DAUDA PETER IBRAHIM

The interesting paradox of Obo festival was making maidens to undergo the ritual of going out naked in order to keep them as virgins before marriage.

This annual ritual observed in the month of November used to be popular among the people of Ozalla clan several decades ago. Ozalla clan is Ward One in Owan West Local Government Area (LGA) of Edo State, Nigeria. This community shares boundaries northwards with Ora in Owan West LGA, eastwards with Erah in Owan West LGA, southwards with Ekpoma in Esan West LGA, and westwards with Uhumwode LGA. Eight villages make up the clan of Ozalla to date.

They include Uhonmoke, Igbidin, Ekeke, Iraede, Ivbihere, Usuamen, Ekhor, and Uwiara. The traditional ruler of Ozalla clan is called the Onotare.

Obo festival was celebrated by unmarried females irrespective of age with the exemption of widows and single mothers. A group of maidens publicised Obo festival every year by singing at nightfall to keep fellow young ladies informed and prepared. This was after the festival day had been fixed by the community head. On the eve of the festival, maidens were tattooed with dark liquid substance on the skin from their faces to the feet by women skilled in the art. This tattooing substance is called Asun in Ozalla language. It was made by grinding some bulbous fruits and charcoals together. Asun fruits were plucked from its tree in the forest. Its fruiting season often coincided with Obo festival period.

cided with Obo festival period.

A night before the D-Day, dancing and singing sprees were organised for maidens in which elderly men played the drums. All celebrants slept outside the home till dawn in a secluded place close to the shrine. While all celebrants were asleep, the mother or guardian of the oldest maiden stayed awake till daybreak to keep the oil lamp burning by refilling it with oil. It was a taboo to allow the lamp go off. All maidens woke up in the morning to start the main ceremony. Celebrants stepped out naked later in the day in grand procession. They put on waist beads and beaded bracelets, necklaces, and anklets. As they moved from one house to another, people greeted and gave them cash gifts.

In the advent of worldwide modernisation, the much celebrated ancient Obo festival was misjudged as a harbinger of sexual immorality owing to the ritual of nudity involved. On the contrary, Ozalla ancestors instituted it on purpose to discourage premarital sex. There lies the paradox. Sexual purity entailing total abstinence from fornication was maintained in ancient Ozalla clan through Obo festival. All unmarried girls proved their virginity by going naked while the ceremony lasted. Maidens that declined celebrating the festival were believed to have defiled themselves with sexual immorality and were thus too ashamed to go naked for fear of exposing desecrated bodies. Such girls were not highly esteemed.

It was during Obo festival that most maidens of marriageable ages were noticed for betrothal by nubile bachelors. The spinsters showcased their body features as they



ITO-OGBO OBOSI FESTIVAL

carried out the rites of visiting shrines and homes within the community. Many engagements to marry thus took place after the festival as each bachelor made marriage proposal to the maiden with the physique and charisma of his choice. Obo festival was a classical beauty pageant in Ozalla clan. Maidens used it as a platform to flaunt their beautiful bodies for public admiration.

Going out naked enabled unmarried girls to display their striking skin colours, body shapes, and movements. Obo festival dodgers were written off as girls with low self-esteem who were not proud of their physical endowments. Bachelors often avoided them.

Moreover, Obo festival was a mark of veneration of the water goddess which is

among the deities still venerated and worshipped to date in Ozalla community. The water goddess is named Orhueren. River Orhueren is about ten kilometres away from the community centre. Its shrine is located beside the market square and palace of the Onotare of Ozalla kingdom. As a mark of its completion each year, all celebrants visited Orhueren shrine on the last day (seventh day) of Obo festival to collect native chalk known as Erere in Ozalla dialect. They shared the native chalk among people from house to house.

Obo festival that was once celebrated with pomp and pageantry is now in danger of extinction. The reasons are not far-fetched. Foreign cultures and other religions tagged it as barbaric, pagan

practice, and a potential cause of sexual immorality. Hence its gradual decline and eventual abandonment.

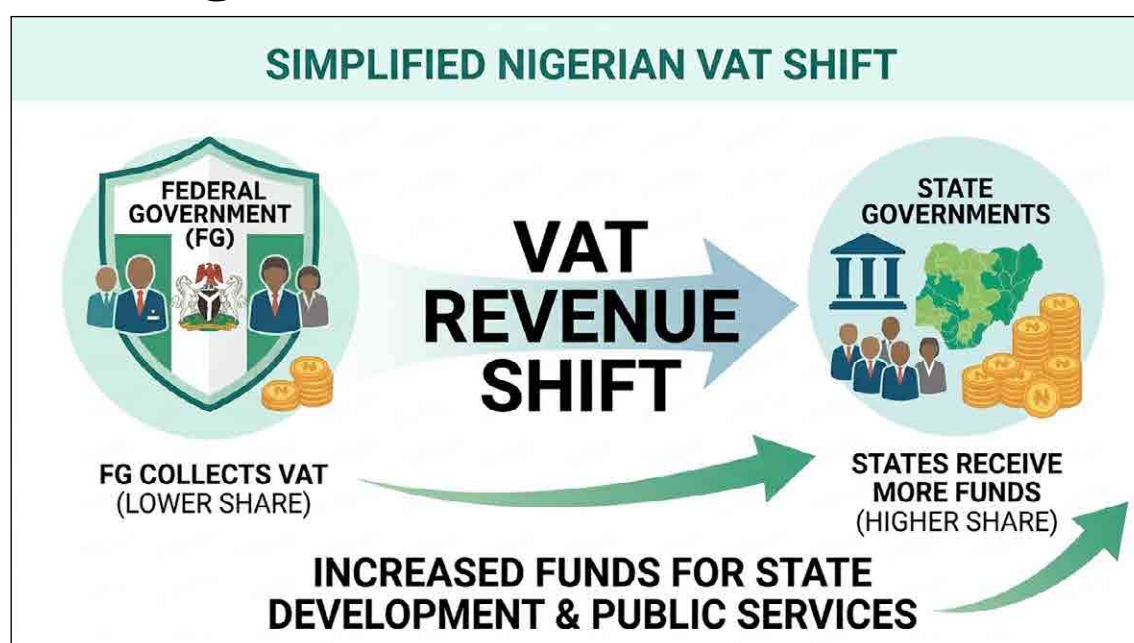
In conclusion, this article is not advocating the resuscitation of the endangered Obo festival that was characterised by nudity. But the sexual purity then upheld and imbued on the unmarried people via Obo festival should be retained. All religious institutions comprising churches, mosques, and shrines should condemn sexual immorality to help their adherents imbibe sexual purity. Practices such as seductive dances, nude dresses, and other obscenities that promote sexual misconduct should be disallowed by all managers of schools, workplace, mass media, and entertainment centres.

Shifting the accountability vector: Evaluating state governance against increased fiscal allocations

For too long, the default reaction of Nigerians has been to point fingers at the Presidency whenever the economy falters or development stalls. However, an objective look at our current political landscape reveals that our focus needs to shift toward state leadership.

Under the administration of President Bola Tinubu, federal reforms—such as the removal of the fuel subsidy—have significantly expanded the Federation Account (FAAC). As noted by political bodies like the African Democratic Congress (ADC), monthly allocations to state governments have effectively doubled, and in some cases tripled. State executives, including the Governor of Kogi State and others across the nation, are managing budgets larger than any of their predecessors.

Yet, despite these record-breaking funds, the ground reality for everyday citizens remains bleak. The promised socio-economic progress is heavily masked by low performance ratings and superficial projects that do not transition into human welfare. Why should the President bear the blame for local stagnation when state houses are overflowing with resources? If a governor cannot provide clear, undeniable proof of fund utilization—especially in critical life-sustaining sectors like agriculture—their performance should be aggressively questioned. It is time for citizens



to demand personal justice, shift the accountability to our state governors, and demand that increased federal wealth translates to a better quality of life.

Who is Really to Blame for the Lack of Development in Our States?

We need to talk about where our money is going. Many of us blame President Tinubu for the tough economic situation, but we are ignoring the real culprits: our State Governors.

Let's look at the facts. Because of recent federal policies, the money sent to states has tripled. Governors, including our own Kogi State Governor, are receiving unprecedented amounts of money every single month.

The federal administration has done its part by freeing up these funds.

So, why are people still struggling? Why isn't this money showing up on our tables or in our farms? The truth is that

state-level progress is being masked, and the developments are not reaching the human angle. We cannot keep blaming Abuja for potholes, poor agricultural support, and low living standards when our governors are sitting on massive allocations. We must judge them strictly on their actual performance. If they cannot show proof of how they used these funds to improve lives and boost the agricultural sector, we must hold them accountable!

This write-up examines the disconnect between macro-level fiscal allocations and micro-level human development within Nigerian states. Historically, public dissatisfaction with governance has been directed at the federal administration. However, contemporary fiscal data demands a reassessment of this narrative.

Under President Bola Tinubu's administration, the structural adjustment of sub-national funding has resulted in state allocations tripling compared to historical averages. Despite this influx of capital, governors across various states—notably Kogi State—continue to receive low performance ratings from civic observers. The critical issue is that increased funding has failed to translate into tangible human development or economic relief for the populace.

In analyzing the manifestos versus the actual execution of these state administrations, the agricultural sector stands out as a clear metric of under-performance. Food security and local economic stimulation are lagging despite the financial capacity to transform them. Therefore, the blame for this stagnation does not lie with the federal government, which has successfully decentralized and amplified funding. Instead, citizens must demand strict administrative accountability from state governors, insisting on verifiable proof of fund utilization to drive personal and community progress.

COLUMN

The poverty of affluence

The vicissitudes of life are often inexplicable. One moment, a man is surrounded by family, friends and purpose; the next, he finds himself abandoned by fate, left to navigate the twilight of his existence in solitude and despair. Indeed, if there is anything life teaches us with brutal consistency, it is that human existence is fragile, unpredictable and incapable of being fully understood.

Each time I take my vehicle to my mechanic at the popular Igun Motor Spare Parts Market in Benin City, my eyes are invariably drawn to a sight that evokes a deep sense of sorrow within me. It is the sight of an elderly blind man, a nonagenarian whose frail frame and forlorn appearance tell a story of suffering more eloquently than words ever could.

For several months, I observed him from a distance. He would sit quietly on a worn-out wooden bench, listening attentively to the sounds around him. Since his eyes could no longer behold the world, his ears had become his primary connection to humanity. He listened to conversations, passing vehicles, hammering tools from workshops, and the endless bustle that characterises life in the spare parts market.

Whenever I saw him, I felt a heaviness in my heart. There was something profoundly tragic about his condition. Yet, like many people, I initially resisted the temptation to pry into the affairs of a stranger. I simply felt pity and moved on.

One day, however, curiosity got the better of me. I approached some of the artisans and apprentices who appeared familiar with him and asked about his story. What I heard left me stunned.

The man, I was told, lives alone in an old mud house inherited from his late father. He is blind. He has no wife. He has no children. No close relative lives with him. There is nobody to cook for him, nobody to wash his clothes, nobody to remind him to take medication when ill, and nobody to sit beside him when loneliness becomes unbearable.

His survival depends largely on the kindness of apprentices and artisans within the compound where he lives. These young men, many of whom are struggling themselves, occasionally provide food, run errands, and assist him whenever necessary.

As I listened, I was overwhelmed by sadness and disbelief.

How does a man arrive at such a lonely destination in life? How does someone spend more than ninety years on earth and end up with nobody to call family? What twists of fate culminate in such a heartbreaking reality? These are questions for which there may never be satisfactory answers.

Yet what makes his story even more tragic is the irony that surrounds it. The old man is not entirely poor. In fact, by Nigerian standards, he is a wealthy man.

The 100-by-100-foot parcel of land on which his mud house stands on Igun Street is in a strategic area of Benin City and is reportedly worth well over one hundred million naira, having appreciated significantly over the years. What was once a modest family



compound has become a highly valuable asset.

Ironically, the owner of this fortune lives in conditions that can only be described as penurious. His house bears all the marks of neglect. The structure is old and deteriorating, and there is little evidence that the immense value of the land translates into comfort or dignity for its owner.

In other words, he is asset-rich but cash-poor. He possesses wealth on paper but experiences poverty in reality. This paradox exposes one of the greatest misconceptions of our time: the belief that wealth guarantees happiness, security or fulfilment. Society reinforces this illusion daily. We celebrate affluence, admire luxury, and often equate financial success with human worth.

Yet this blind nonagenarian reminds us that money, by itself, cannot solve many human problems. It cannot buy genuine companionship. It cannot purchase the affection of a loving spouse. It cannot replace family bonds. It cannot eliminate loneliness. It cannot stop old age. And it certainly cannot reverse blindness.

He possesses what many Nigerians desperately desire—a valuable property worth a fortune, yet he depends on the kindness of apprentices whose combined wealth may not amount to a fraction of his. Life, indeed, has a peculiar sense of irony.

His predicament also raises deeper questions about the changing nature of family and community life in contemporary society. More importantly,

it compels reflection on the gradual collapse of the African extended family system, once a protective shield for the vulnerable and the elderly.

There was a time when no elderly person was left to suffer in isolation. In traditional African society, family extended beyond the nuclear unit to include grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins and even distant relations. Every member had obligations towards the other, especially the vulnerable.

An ageing man who became blind would not have been abandoned. Younger relatives would have shared responsibility for his care. Someone would prepare his meals, accompany him to the hospital, and ensure his house remained habitable. The burden of old age was collectively shared.

Among the Benin people, as in many African societies, old age was a blessing. The elderly were respected as custodians of wisdom and living links between the past and present. Their presence brought honour to the family.

Today, however, these values have been eroded by urbanisation, economic hardship and rising individualism. The communal spirit that once defined African society is gradually giving way to self-interest. Increasingly, people focus only on themselves and their immediate nuclear families, while the welfare of elderly relatives is often neglected.

Consequently, many elderly people now live lonely and miserable lives. Some are remembered only during festive seasons. Others are contacted only when financial assistance is

needed. Once their usefulness diminishes, they are quietly abandoned.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of this moral decline is the attitude of some relatives towards inheritance. Across many communities, it is common to find people who neglected an elderly relative in life suddenly emerging after his death to claim his estate. During his lifetime, they offered no care, no companionship, and no support. Yet in death, they become fiercely interested in his property.

They descend upon estates like vultures. Family members who ignored suffering suddenly become experts in inheritance rights. What follows are conflicts, court cases and broken relationships that sometimes last for years.

Such behaviour represents a deep moral contradiction. How can people who abandoned a man in life feel entitled to his property in death? What moral justification exists for inheriting from someone whose burdens they never shared?

The blind nonagenarian at Igun Spare Parts Market quietly embodies this uncomfortable truth. One cannot help but wonder whether distant relatives might one day emerge to contest what remains of his estate, despite having ignored him in life.

Too often, we celebrate the dead while neglecting the living. We organise elaborate burials for those whose suffering we ignored. We erect expensive tombstones for those whose loneliness we failed to notice. We shed public tears after death while withholding private compassion in life.

The truth remains simple: the greatest gift we can offer ageing relatives is not what we do after they die, but what we do while they are still alive.

A visit. A call. A meal. A helping hand. These are small acts, yet they carry immense moral weight.

The blind nonagenarian at Igun Spare Parts Market may never appear in newspaper headlines, yet his life speaks loudly to the conscience of society.

It is a story of loneliness amidst wealth. A story of broken family bonds. A story of inheritance without care. And ultimately, a story that demands we rethink what it means to be human.

For in the final analysis, the true measure of our humanity is not how much wealth we accumulate, but how we treat the vulnerable among us when they can no longer fend for themselves.

Life's vicissitudes may indeed be inexplicable, but compassion remains one response that is always within our power.

• Dr. Odaro is a columnist and lecturer in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi.

More importantly, it compels reflection on the gradual collapse of the African extended family system, once a protective shield for the vulnerable and the elderly.



PROVERTY

Sports

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

Fortress Intl' Football Academy Congratulates Enabulele, Edo Queens on 2026 NWFL Premiership Victory

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Fortress International Football Academy (Dream Team) has con-

gratulated the Executive Chairman of the Edo State Sports Commission Hon. Amadin Desmond Enabulele, and the entire Edo Queens Football

Club family on the team's historic victory in the 2025/2026 Nigeria Women Football League (NWFL) Premiership season.

In a congratulatory message signed by the Manager of the academy, FIFA Ambassador Aimuagbonrie Jimmy, the academy celebrates the landmark achievement with the management, players, and staff of Edo Queens. He commended them for emerging champions of the prestigious premier league.

The academy described the achievement as a reflection of Enabulele's visionary leadership, strategic commitment and dedication to the growth and development of sports in

Edo State

The Fortress Intl' Football Academy boss noted that Edo Queens' success has brought pride to the state while also serving as an inspiration to young talents within the academy and others across Nigeria.

"Edo Queens have not only brought immense pride to the state but have also inspired young, upcoming talents within our academy and across the nation," the statement read.

Ambassador Aimuagbonrie further expressed confidence that the triumph would propel the team to greater heights in future continental engagements, while wishing Edo Queens greater successes and global recognition.



EDO QUEENS FC

Ovia Lawmaker Aghedo celebrates Edo Queens' NWFL Premieship title triumph

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The lawmaker representing Ovia South-West Constituency at the Edo State House of Assembly, Hon. Sunday Aghedo congratulates Edo Queens Football Club for emerging champions in the recently concluded 2025/2026 Nigeria Women Football League (NWFL) Premiership season.

The Ovia Lawmaker in his congratulatory message, also commended the management, coaching crew and the entire team staff for their outstanding achievement, describing the victory as a product of hard work, discipline, resilience, and commitment to excellence.

Aghedo noted that Edo Queens' triumph as champions is a testament to the strength, talent, and sporting excellence associated with Edo State, adding that the feat would inspire young athletes across the state.

The lawmaker also commended the Executive Chairman of the Edo State Sports Commission, Hon. Amadin Desmond Enabulele, for his leadership style, vision, and dedication to sports development, stressing that his efforts have contributed significantly to the success athletes in the state have recorded recently.

Aghedo also extended his heart felt congratulations to the Executive Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo, for achievement of the state owned Edo Queens. He

commended the Governor for his support and commitment to youth empowerment and sports development, describing him as a sports-loving leader whose administration has continued to encourage sporting excellence.

According to him, the victory of Edo Queens goes beyond the football club, as it represents a proud moment for the people of Edo State and an indication that with the right support and determination, excellence can be achieved even in a difficult situation.



NBBF Elections: SEBA questions motive behind Enugu Venue Opposition, says Basketball should not be used for Politics

The South East Basketball Association (SEBA) has questioned the motive behind the continued opposition to the relocation of the second phase of the Nigeria

Basketball Federation (NBBF) Premier League Atlantic Conference to Enugu, suggesting that the debate may be linked to politics surrounding the forthcoming NBBF board elections.

SEBA, in a statement signed by its Media Manager, Kennedy Onwunali, said the controversy over the choice of Enugu as host venue was becoming unnecessarily politicised, insisting that the decision was purely about basketball development and providing a suitable platform for the competition.

The association reacted to concerns raised by Mr. Ayo Bakare, stressing that stakeholders should focus on the growth of the sport rather than turning a venue decision into a regional or political issue.

SEBA questioned why attention was being directed at Enugu instead of allowing the conversation to centre on improving basketball structures across the country.



MUSA KIDA



Ghana edge Panama 1-0 in 2026 FIFA World Cup opener

Ghana's Black Stars on Wednesday secured a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Panama in their opening match of the 2026 FIFA World Cup in Toronto.

Ghana struggled to gain control of possession in the first half as Panama dominated proceedings but failed to convert their chances, largely due to the outstanding performance of Ghanaian goalkeeper Ati Zigi.

Zigi proved instrumental for the Black Stars, commanding his defence effectively and

making crucial saves to deny Panama the opening goal.

However, the goalkeeper was unable to continue after the interval following a collision before halftime and was replaced by Benjamin Asare.

Ghana returned for the second half with renewed intensity and eventually found the breakthrough in the fifth minute of stoppage time.

Thomas Asante led a swift counter-attack and delivered a precise pass to Yirenkyi, who calmly slotted home his first international goal to seal victory.

Senegal's Issa Soumaré joins Rennes on long-term deal until 2030

Senegalese forward Issa Soumaré has completed a move to Stade Rennais, signing a contract that will keep him at the Ligue 1 club until 2030 following an impressive campaign with Le Havre.

The transfer marks a significant step in the career of the 25-year-old attacker, who earned widespread recognition through his consistent performances in France's top division last season.

Soumaré arrives in Rennes after establishing himself as one of Le Havre's most influential attacking players.

His contributions in front of goal and ability to create opportunities for teammates played a

major role in attracting interest from the Breton club, which has strengthened its squad with a player entering an important stage of his career.

Rennes have been seeking additional quality in attack and believe the Senegalese forward can add both creativity and depth to their offensive options in the coming seasons.

The former Génération Foot academy product enjoyed a productive season in Ligue 1, where he was directly involved in 13 goals. Across 34 league appearances, he scored eight times and provided five assists while featuring in every league match for Le Havre.



ISSA SOUMARÉ

How home-based Athletes are helping AFN to power Nigeria's Athletics Renaissance

MAXWELL KUMOYE

Nigeria's athletics ecosystem is experiencing a remarkable revival, with home-based athletes emerging as the driving force behind the country's resurgence on the continental and global front.

Over the past 12 months, locally assembled athletes have played a central role in restoring Nigeria's status as one of Africa's leading athletics nations.

Their outstanding performances at major regional and international competitions have highlighted the depth of talent being developed within the country and demonstrated the effectiveness of ongoing investment in grassroots and elite athlete development.

One of the defining moments of this resurgence came during Nigeria's qualification campaign for the World Athletics Relays Championships in Gaborone, Botswana.

Determined to return Nigeria to the forefront of global relay competitions, the Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN), with the unwavering support of the National Sports Commission (NSC), implemented an ambitious competition and preparation programme.

The initiative enabled athletes to compete in three major national and international events as part of the build-up to the World Relays.

The strategic investment yielded impressive results, as Team Nigeria secured qualification in six relay events for the World Athletics Relays Championships, underlining the nation's growing strength and competitiveness in relay racing.

Nigeria's success story continued in Botswana, where the country's relay teams once again rose to the occasion. Their impressive performances earned three relay qualification spots for the 2027 World Athletics Championships in China, reaffirming Nigeria's position among the world's elite relay nations.

Perhaps the most historic achievement came through the mixed relay team. Nigeria became the first African nation to qualify for the Mixed 4x100m Relay event at the inaugural World Athletics Ultimate Championship scheduled for Budapest, Hungary, in September.

The landmark feat underscores the country's sprinting pedigree and the steady progress of its relay development programme.

Even before the World Relays Championships, a predominantly home-based Team Nigeria had announced its arrival on the international stage with an outstanding performance at the Solidarity Games in Saudi Arabia.

The athletes displayed remarkable resilience, quality and determination, gaining invaluable experience and confidence ahead of bigger international assignments.

The same positive trend was evident at the CAA Senior Athletics Championships in Accra, Ghana, where home-grown athletes formed the backbone of Team Nigeria. Far from being overated by the continental stage, they delivered commendable



FEDERATION OF NIGERIA ATHLETICS

performances that justified the confidence reposed in them by coaches, administrators and stakeholders.

According to the 2nd Vice President of the Athletics Federation of Nigeria, Aku Aghazu, the recent achievements validate the federation's deliberate commitment to developing athletes within the country.

"The true strength of any athletics system is not measured by its stars or elites abroad but by the opportunities made available to athletes training in Nigeria," Aghazu said.

She stressed that home-based athletes remain at the heart of the federation's long-term vision.

"Home-based athletes represent the foundation of Nigeria's athletics future and their development remains a strategic priority for this current board of the AFN."

Aghazu noted that the federation has already commenced initiatives aimed at keeping athletes active throughout the year while identifying outstanding talents for intensive development programmes.

Gladly enough, the AFN hierarchy has long begun implementing programmes designed to keep home-based athletes engaged all year round through competitions, training camps and performance monitoring, while selecting exceptional talents for closed camping, nurturing and intensive coaching.

The federation also acknowledged the collaboration and support of the National Sports Commission during the recent training camp in Asaba, noting that the benefits were immediately evident in Nigeria's performances at the World Relays in Botswana and the African Championships in Accra, Ghana.

Despite financial constraints, Aghazu said the federation remains committed to creating opportunities for athletes based in Nigeria.

"From improved competition structures, to enhanced athlete sup-



port, to stronger partnerships with schools and other stakeholders for talent identification and development, to capacity building for coaches and officials, the AFN is primed to ensuring that our home-based athletes are given similar opportunities as their peers abroad."

She further praised the National Sports Commission for its continued support of athletics development in the country.

"The National Sports Commission under the leadership of Mallam Shehu Dikko and Hon. Bukola Olopade remains a trusted and welcome partner."

Aghazu revealed that one of the major infrastructure projects currently underway is the complete refurbishment of the athletics facility in Shagamu, Ogun State.

"Under the NSC, Nigeria is getting a fully refurbished athletics stadium in Shagamu near Babcock University. The university is also coming on board to support our athletes through scholarships and other developmental opportunities. The NSC has equally assisted greatly in ensuring that our home-based athletes gain more exposure to international competitions."

She disclosed that, for the first time in many years, prize money will be

introduced at the National Trials specifically for home-based athletes and a number of outstanding coaches as part of efforts to encourage excellence and reward performance.

At the heart of this success story is the Athletics Federation of Nigeria's deliberate and sustained commitment to talent identification and development.

Through targeted programmes and strategic exposure opportunities, the federation has continued to nurture a new generation of athletes across track and field events.

Among the athletes who have benefitted from the initiative are rising stars including Chidera Ezeakor, Tejiri Godwin, Miracle Ezechukwu, Maria Thompson, Rosemary Nwankwo, Nathaniel Samson, Sikiru Adeyemi, Asuquo Ezekiel, Esther Okon, Gafari Badmus and Toheebat Jimoh.

"We selected these athletes and exposed them to modern track and field training methods. The results have been excellent. The federation is going all out to improve on the process and keep our athletes back home busy through regular competitions and camping. It is a new beginning for the AFN and it requires all the support it can get, including corporate sponsor-

ships and strategic partnerships."

The abundance of emerging talent has also attracted growing international attention. Leading universities in the United States and some of the world's top athletics clubs are increasingly looking to Nigeria as a source of elite athletic talent, offering scholarships and professional development opportunities to promising young athletes.

To ensure these opportunities align with Nigeria's long-term objectives, the AFN's Performance Director and Technical Committee have maintained close oversight of athlete development pathways, providing guidance and support while helping athletes to maximise opportunities abroad.

Equally significant has been the renewed support from the National Sports Commission. The timely release of funds, consistent athlete grants and enhanced institutional backing have enabled programmes to run more efficiently and allowed athletes to focus fully on training and competition.

For the first time in more than a decade, the NSC and AFN have also reintroduced structured periodic camping programmes for elite home-based athletes. These camps have created a conducive environment for training, performance monitoring and preparation for major international competitions.

The impact of these initiatives is already evident.

From relay qualification successes and World Championship berths to continental medals and historic milestones, home-based athletes have become the cornerstone of a new era of optimism and achievement in Nigerian athletics.

Aghazu believes the future of the sport will ultimately be determined by how effectively the country develops talent at home.

"The future of Nigerian athletics will not be built in, nor rely solely on, international training camps. It will be built on the tracks, fields, schools and communities across Nigeria, from Anambra to Lagos, Kaduna to Akwa Ibom, Ogun State to Edo State, where talented young athletes are given the opportunity to dream, develop and succeed."

She added that while challenges remain, the federation is encouraged by the progress already achieved.

"While challenges are many, progress should be seen as a continuous marathon journey rather than a destination. The AFN, with the support of the NSC, is already making headway and is already at work putting measures in place to make that success home-grown and sustainably nurtured."

With an expanding pool of talented young athletes, improved funding mechanisms, strengthened technical support systems and a clearly defined development pathway, the future of Nigerian athletics has rarely looked brighter.

The achievements of the past 12 months provide compelling evidence that Nigeria's next generation of athletics stars is not only emerging but is already making a significant impact on the global stage.

Amaju Pinnick's "Life President" Joke on our collective intelligence

DOUGLAS BAYE-OSAGIE

As Nigerians watch the ongoing FIFA World Cup in hurt following the absence of Nigeria's Super Eagles, a video has sparked discussion from one of the men who should be quietly easing himself out of the leadership system of Nigerian football. He is the former NFF president Amaju Melvin Pinnick.

Amaju Pinnick, speaking recently on a TV station on the affairs of Nigeria's football governing body, is quoted to have said: "we work together, I work with them, and I don't have any regret." He added: "I can call the players, I talk to them. I don't wait to me, I'm the life president of the Nigerian Football Federation. So, I can also speak. I'm a very critical stakeholder."

That "life president" declaration is less funny than it is revealing. A title like that belongs in a monarchy, not in a modern football federation that should run on accountability and term limits. Even if he is allowed access to the federation's inner workings, he should be out of our notice.

Words matter when you've led an institution for 8 years. Calling yourself "life president" sounds like reality to him, but it reads like mocking our collective intelligence and sensibility as Nigerians who have watched NFF politics for decades. No one doubts his passion and love for Nigerian football, but he remains a sad part of our recent football development history.

Passion for football is not the same as competence in administration. Love for the game is common. The boy who treks two kilometres just to pay 100 naira to watch a local league game has that passion in equal measure, if not more. He knows all Nigerian players overseas and at home.

The difference is responsibility. Millions of fans carry the passion. Only a few are entrusted with structures, budgets, and decisions that determine whether that passion translates to results on the pitch. If you cannot provide the leadership that provides results then you can keep



your passion at home as an administrator.

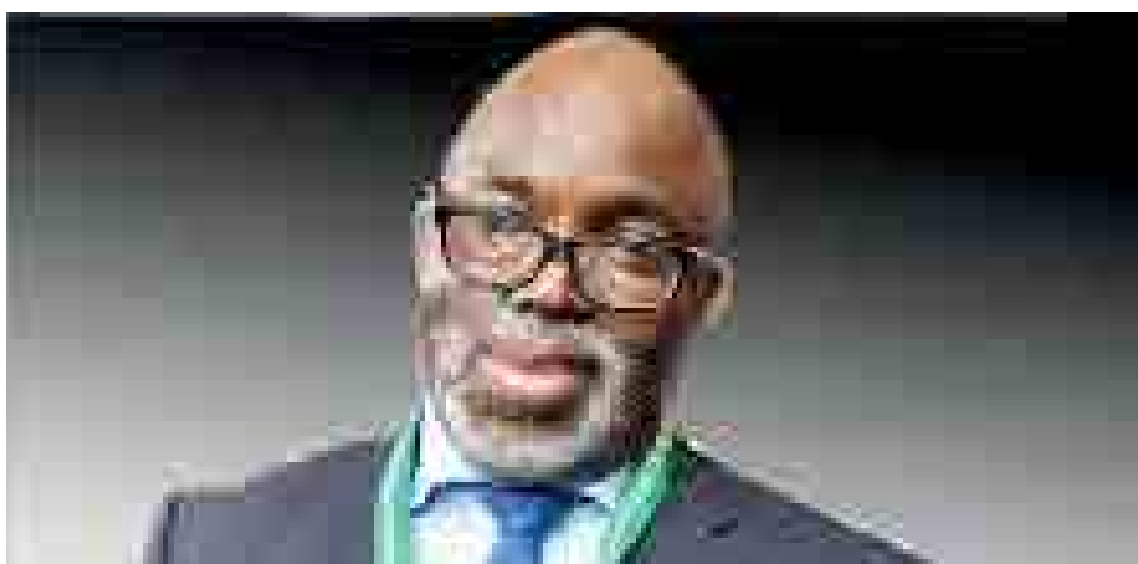
Before Amaju Pinnick arrived in 2014, Nigerian football already had problems: inconsistent planning, funding gaps, and poor grassroots development. He inherited those challenges. But leadership is judged by what changes during your watch. How did our youth teams fare? What was the state of the league? Did any referee get into a continental tournament? How many mini stadiums were built for the development of the game? These are some of the questions he needs to provide answers.

After eight years at the helm, the structure he handed over to Ibrahim Gusau in 2022 looked remarkably similar to the one he met. Same committees, same bottlenecks, same reliance on last-minute interventions.

The most painful marker came under his tenure: Nigeria failed to qualify for the 2022 World Cup after three consecutive appearances from 2010. The team now faces the same fate in 2026. For a nation of 200+ million people and a deep football culture, missing Qatar was a national disappointment and now missing out again in the North America 2026, is an administrative disaster.

That failure cannot be blamed on one man alone. Players miss chances, coaches make errors, opponents improve. But the administrator sets the environment. And the environment under his eight years did not produce a World Cup ticket.

Saying "I don't have any regret" may be honest, but honesty without reflection is not leadership. Every tenure should end with lessons, not just self-praise. This is what happens when there is no accountability. The



AMAJU MELVIN PINNICK

FIFA grant running into millions of dollars which Amaju Pinnick used in building a non-existing mini stadium in Ogborodudu would have been refunded if Nigeria had accountability.

"I can call the players, I talk to them. I don't wait." Direct access is good. But calling players cannot replace building academies, enforcing club licensing, or stabilizing the domestic league.

The federation is bigger than any individual. No one should position themselves as indispensable. Football survived before Amaju Pinnick, and it must survive after him.

Equating personal passion to administrative competence is a dangerous shortcut. Passion does not audit accounts. Passion does not negotiate broadcast deals. Passion does not design youth development pathways.

The boy paying 100 naira to watch

a match in Jos or Benin shows up every week without cameras or press releases. His loyalty deserves more humility from those who once held power, especially when they claim titles like "life president."

Leadership in football administration requires sobriety. The moment you leave office, the honorable path is to let new leaders work, offer private counsel if asked, and allow institutions to breathe.

Chasing microphones and headlines after handing over power blurs the line between stakeholder and shadow administrator. It confuses the public about who is actually in charge currently.

Ibrahim Gusau inherited the same structure in 2022. If the structure was flawed, that is part of the legacy conversation. If it was sound, then results should have been better. Either way,

self-declaration as "life president" does not help fix it.

Nigeria's football problems are structural, not personal. Solutions will come from reforms, data, investment in coaches, and protection of the domestic league, not from titles claimed in interviews.

However, Amaju Pinnick did some good things during his time: improved NFF visibility, better sponsorship conversations, and stronger CAF relations. Those should be part of his record. But they do not cancel the misses, and they do not justify crowning oneself "life president."

So let the reminder be simple: the "life president" tag is a joke that landed on the wrong milieu. Remain a critical stakeholder, yes, but do it from behind the scenes. Nigeria's football deserves sober builders, not loud echoes of the past.

“
I don't have any regret" may be honest, but honesty without reflection is not leadership. Every tenure should end with lessons, not just self-praise.



Ghana shock world football elite as Portugal plummets in 2026 World Cup power rankings

EDWARD OSEGHE

The first chapter of the expanded 2026 FIFA World Cup has delivered dramatic twists, emerging contenders and early disappointments, with Ghana making a stunning entry into the global top 10 while Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal suffered a major rankings collapse.

Following the completion of the opening matchday, all 48 participating nations have now taken to the pitch, providing the first comprehensive

assessment of the tournament's competitive landscape through the Power Performance Score matrix.

The ranking system, which goes beyond traditional results, evaluates teams based on match outcomes, goal difference, opponent strength, pre-tournament expectations and disciplinary records, producing a detailed picture of early World Cup form.

Sweden emerged as the surprise leaders after a commanding 5-1 victory over Tunisia, while Germany, Argentina and

Australia completed the top four positions with impressive opening performances.

England also made a powerful statement, climbing into fifth place after a thrilling 4-2 triumph over Croatia, while France and the United States maintained their status among the tournament's leading contenders.

However, one of the biggest stories of Matchday 1 came from Africa, as Ghana stormed into ninth position after defeating Panama 1-0.

The Black Stars, ranked

among the lower expectations heading into the tournament, earned significant recognition for their disciplined and determined victory over a higher-ranked opponent. Despite receiving a yellow card, Ghana's performance was rewarded heavily by the ranking model, placing them ahead of several established football giants.

Ivory Coast also strengthened Africa's impressive opening showing, securing 10th place after their narrow 1-0 victory over Ecuador.

Meanwhile, Portugal en-

dured one of the biggest setbacks of the opening round. Entering the tournament as the world's fifth-ranked team, Cristiano Ronaldo's side could only manage a 1-1 draw against debutants DR Congo.

The result, combined with three yellow cards and failure to meet high pre-match expectations, saw Portugal fall dramatically to 30th position.

DR Congo, in contrast, enjoyed a memorable World Cup debut, climbing to 18th place after frustrating one of football's elite nations. Their disciplined defensive display and ability to secure a point against Portugal earned them significant recognition.

Other notable performances included Colombia's convincing 3-1 victory over Uzbekistan, Morocco's impressive draw against Brazil, Egypt's resilience against Belgium, and Cape Verde's historic goalless draw with Spain.

Spain suffered one of the biggest statistical setbacks of the opening round after being held by Cape Verde. Despite avoiding defeat, the result carried a heavy expectation penalty, leaving La Roja ranked 32nd.

At the other end of the table,

Tunisia, Curaçao and Paraguay occupied the bottom positions after heavy defeats. Germany's 7-1 demolition of Curaçao was the most emphatic attacking display of Matchday 1, while Sweden's five-goal victory ensured they claimed the early tournament leadership.

2026 FIFA WORLD CUP MATCHDAY 1 TOP 10 POWER RANKINGS:

1. Sweden
2. Germany
3. Argentina
4. Australia
5. England
6. France
7. United States
8. Norway
9. Ghana
10. Ivory Coast

The Power Performance Score evaluates teams using a combination of factors, including match results, goal difference, opponent quality, pre-tournament ranking expectations and disciplinary records.

As the tournament progresses and teams complete more fixtures, the rankings are expected to shift, with emerging contenders aiming to challenge the established football powers.

Edo Queens' NWFL Triumph: Youth Commissioner hails Enabulele for impactful Leadership

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The Edo State Commissioner for Youth Affairs, Hon. Charity Amayaenbo, has congratulated the Executive Chairman of the Edo State Sports Commission Hon Amadin Desmond Enabulele and Management of Edo Queens Football Club, on the team's historic triumph in the Nigeria Women Football League (NWFL) Premiership.

The Commissioner said he was impressed with the girls performance at the Super six tournament in Portharcourt, while also acknowledging the unwavering commitment of the Chairman of Edo Sports Commission Hon Amadin Desmond Enabulele.

In his congratulatory message on behalf of the Ministry and youths of Edo State, Amayaenbo commended Edo Queens for securing their second NWFL Premiership title, describing the achievement as a reflection of strong leadership, commitment, and dedication to sports development.

The Commissioner also commended the administration of Governor Monday Okpebholo for its investment in youth empowerment and sports development in the state, noting that the support he has provided is yielding results already.

He also praised the Executive Chairman of the Edo State Sports Commission for his dedication to advancing sports in the state, while acknowledging Emperor Jarrett Tenebe's passion, strategic leadership, and support for Edo Queens and Bendel Insurance FC,

which he said contributed significantly to the team's success.

According to Amayaenbo, the victory goes beyond football, as it serves as a source of inspiration to Edo youths and as well demonstrates that discipline, hard work, effective leadership, and government support led to the outstanding achievements.

"Congratulations to Edo Queens, the Edo State Sports Commission, and the Government and people of Edo State," he said.

The Commissioner added that under Governor Okpebholo's leadership, Edo State is producing champions, inspiring young people, and strengthening its position as a hub for sporting excellence in Nigeria.



EDO QUEENS CELEBRATING

2026 Fed up: FC Robo Queens boot out Rivers Angels to set up Sunshine Queens semifinals clash

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

FC Robo Queens of Lagos yesterday evening dumped out defending champions Rivers Angels from the 2026 Women's President Federation Cup to reach

the semifinals of the challenge cup. Opayemi Ajakaeye scored the only goal of the match in the 38th minute of the encounter at the Samuel Ogbemudia

Stadium in Benin City.

Coach Tosan Blankson's Rivers Angels had no choice than to endure the pains of the lone goal defeat in Benin as they were unlucky to convert numerous scoring opportunities that came their way. Over three one-on-one with the Robo goalkeeper chances they blew up in the second half alone which showed that FC Robo Queens were destined to advance to the semifinals.

Emmanuel Osahon's side Robo Queens face Sunshine Queens as semi finals opponents.

Earlier at the same Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium in Benin, Sunshine Queens defeated Confluence Queens 1-0 to book the semifinals ticket.

