FG destroys 2,809 illicit arms, vows tougher action against traffickers

Exercise demonstrates government's commitment to transparency and national security, says NSA

ABUJA

The Federal Government on Thursday destroyed 2,809 illicit, decommissioned and unserviceable small arms and light weapons.

The federal government also reaffirmed its resolve to stem the proliferation of illegal weapons fueling insecurity across the country.

The destruction, carried out by the National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW) in Abuja, brought the cumulative number of weapons destroyed by the centre to about 19,000.

Speaking at the event, the National Security Adviser (NSA), Malam Nuhu Ribadu, said the exercise demonstrated government's commitment to transparency, accountability and national security.

Ribadu was represented by the Administrator of the Presidential Amnesty Programme, Dr Dennis Otuaro.

He said terrorism, insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, communal clashes and other violent crimes were sustained by the widespread availability of illicit arms.

According to him, every weapon recovered and permanently destroyed represents a threat eliminated from society.

"It is important to emphasise that recovering weapons alone is not enough.

"Public, transparent and verifiable destruction guarantees that these recovered weapons can never again be used against any Nigerian," he said.

Ribadu said his office, with President Bola Tinubu's support has pursued an intelligence-led national security strategy anchored on stronger inter-agency collaboration, disruption of criminal financing networks, enhanced border security and renewed international partnerships.

He said the strategy, produced measurable gains by degrading terrorist capabilities and strengthening Nigeria's security architecture.

The NSA urged Nigerians to support security agencies by reporting illegal possession, manufacture, trafficking and movement of arms.

He also called on traditional and religious leaders to promote peace, dialogue and voluntary disarmament within their communities.

Earlier, the Director-General of NCCSALW, retired DIG Johnson Kokumo, described the destruction exercise as a deliberate, transparent and irreversible step toward improving national security.

Kokumo said the destroyed

CONTINUES ON PG 4

The Nigerian OBSERVER

That The People May Know

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Human Rights Abuse: Commission receives 1.5m complaints in 6 months

Alarmed by incidents of sexual violence against children

ABUJA

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) received over 1.5 million human rights violations in six months.

This is contained in the NHRC dashboard and observatory reports from the 36 States of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) from January to June.

Reports that the commission said it recorded in 180, 341 complaints in January, 223, 144 in February and 256, 132 in March.

In April, 268, 787 complaints were received while 326,113 were received in June.

The Executive Secretary of the commission, Dr. Tony Ojukwu, SAN, in a note issued in the report, stressed that the dashboard remained a vital accountability tool for identifying trends, emerging risks, and areas requiring urgent intervention.

"We in the commission are alarmed by incidents of sexual violence against children.

"This pattern of sustained, unresolved violence demands urgent, coordinated intervention" he said.

He said May 2026 has been a "debilitative" month for human rights in Nigeria.

"Within 31 days, we witnessed incidents that deeply challenged our collective commitment to human dignity and fundamental freedoms.

"Violent attacks, kidnappings, communal clashes, and displacement, gender-based violence, mob actions, and alleged abuses linked to law enforcement activities remained major concerns during the period under review," he said.

He expressed concern over the rise in extra-judicial killings by law enforcement and security agencies.

The commission launched the dashboard in 2024 to monitor human rights violations in the country.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that I, **Mrs. BEAUTY OSAMASE** is the wife of the late **Mr. SUNNY OSAMASE**. That **Late Mr. SUNNY OSAMASE** is the lawful owner of an uncompleted building on a parcel/piece of land measuring 100ft by 200ft lying and situate at Oka–Niro plot Allotment Committee Area, Ward 33/E, Benin City, which was duly approved by the Oba of Benin, Oba Akenzua II (CMG) on October 6,1976 vide application dated June 12, 1976. That **Mrs. EDITH AGBONGIASEDE** only transferred 50ft by 100ft, covered with Beacon Nos. 909 and 910, that have the uncompleted building from the entire 100ft by 200ft The original title documents to the property in my late husband's possession was discovered missing and all efforts to trace it proved abortive, hence, this publication for record purposes. The property is not for sale. Buyers Beware!
The general public and concerned authorities should please take note.

Signed: **Mrs. BEAUTY OSAMASE**



BENIN BY-PASS:
Despite rains, repair work continued yesterday as Edo Government's swift intervention triggers rehabilitation of damaged part of Idogbo Bridge.

Phillips Consulting Report Reflects Obaseki's Legacy, Not Okpebholo's Performance —Pg 2

Special Adviser Seeks Improved Support for Edo Hajj Operations —Pg 10

Israel building new land barriers in Gaza and displacing families —Pg 15

WAFCON: Aba football fans disappointed over Super Falcons' defeat to Malawi —Pg 22

InsideEdo

Phillips Consulting Report Reflects Obaseki's Legacy, Not Okpebholo's Performance

Oliver Ijiogbe

The Chief Press Secretary to Governor Monday Okpebholo, Dr. Patrick Akhere Ebojele says that the 2026 Phillips Consulting State Performance Momentum Index largely reflects the governance realities inherited from the administration of former Governor Godwin Obaseki rather than the performance of Governor Monday Okpebholo, who had been in office for barely seven months when the assessment was conducted.

While analyzing the report, Dr Ebojele said the short period between Governor Okpebholo's inauguration on November 12, 2024, and the compilation of the index was insufficient to fairly evaluate the administration's performance across critical sectors.

According to him, governance is a continuous process that requires time for policies to be implemented, infrastructure projects completed, reforms institutionalised, and measurable outcomes achieved.

He noted that because many of the indicators used in the assessment predated the current administration, the report inevitably captured conditions inherited from the previous government.

The Chief Press Secretary to Governor Monday Okpebholo observed that Phillips Consulting described its exercise as a "Momentum Index" rather than an assessment of absolute performance, explaining that the distinction was important because momentum measures movement from an existing position rather than the full impact of ongoing reforms.

He also called for a careful interpretation of the report's methodology, noting that the index combined indicators such as citizen satisfaction, internally generated revenue, fiscal self-reliance, debt per capita and transparency into a composite score.

Dr Patrick Ebojele expressed concern over reported disparities in survey sample sizes across states, saying such differences could affect statistical confidence and margins of error.

Highlighting activities of the current administration, Ebojele said Governor Okpebholo had initiated infrastructure projects across the state's three senatorial districts, including road construction, drainage expansion, erosion-control works and the Ramat Park Flyover in Benin City.

He added that the administration had also introduced educational initiatives through the Senator Monday Okpebholo Education Talent Hunt Competition, revitalised primary healthcare centres, strengthened security operations, established a Special Criminal Court for cultism and kidnapping cases, and commenced digital governance reforms aimed at improving public service delivery and internally generated revenue.

According to him, these initiatives require time before their full impact can be reflected in governance rankings.

Ebojele maintained that while independent governance assessments remain important for promoting transparency and accountability, they should adequately take into account political transitions, inherited structural challenges and the time required for reforms to produce measurable results.

The CPS to the Governor noted that the Edo State Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Prince Kassim Afegbua, had rejected the Phillips Consulting report, describing it as reckless and misleading.

According to him, Afegbua argued that the assessment failed to sufficiently consider ongoing infrastructure projects, educational reforms, healthcare interventions, institutional restructuring and governance initiatives already being implemented by the present administration.



ANNIVERSARY:
Edo Specialist Hospital celebrating 7 years of excellence in healthcare

NHIA hails ESH new accreditation, commends Okpebholo's healthcare reforms

Edward Oseghe

The National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) has congratulated the Edo State Government and the management of Edo Specialist Hospital on its seventh anniversary, describing the hospital's accreditation as a Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (CEmONC) Facility as a significant milestone in strengthening maternal and newborn healthcare and advancing Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in Nigeria.

The commendation was conveyed by the Edo State Coordinator of the NHIA, Dr. Theodore Osas Ehannire, who represented the Director-General and Chief Executive Officer of the NHIA, Dr. Kelechi Ohiri, at the grand finale of the hospital's week-long anniversary celebration in Benin City.

In his goodwill message, Ohiri congratulated Governor Senator Monday Okpebholo, the Edo State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Cyril Adams Oshiomhole, and the hospital's Chief Medical Director and Chief Executive Officer, Dr. (Mrs.) Anthonia Inibokun Njoku, for their commitment to improving healthcare delivery in the state.

He noted that the anniversary was not only a celebration of seven years of specialist healthcare services but also a reflection of the collective efforts of government, healthcare professionals and development partners in expanding access to affordable, quality healthcare through strategic collaboration.

According to him, the NHIA remains committed to working with Edo State to ensure that every resident has access to quality healthcare without suffering financial hardship.

He disclosed that national health insurance enrolment rose from 16 million in the fourth quarter of 2023 to 22 million by the second quarter of 2026. He added that over 2.5 million Nigerians are currently covered under the Basic Healthcare Provision Fund (BHCPF), while more than 60,000 beneficiaries have received support through special intervention programmes, including the Fistula Free Programme and the Financing Access to Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (CEmONC) Programme.

"The accreditation of Edo Specialist Hospital under the Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care Programme represents another important step towards reducing maternal and newborn mortality and accelerating the attainment of Universal Health Coverage, particularly in Edo State," he said.

Ohiri urged the Edo State Government, the Edo State Health Insurance Commission and the hospital's management to sustain efforts aimed at expanding health insurance coverage and ensuring prudent implementation of NHIA intervention programmes to further improve healthcare outcomes.

In her address, the Chief Medical Director, Dr. Anthonia Inibokun Njoku, described the anniversary as a celebration of vision, resilience, partnership and service, reflecting on the hospital's steady growth since it commenced clinical operations in 2019 as Edo State's flagship multi-specialist tertiary healthcare institution.

Speaking on the theme, "Seven Years of Excellence: Celebrating the Past, Transforming the Present, Inspiring the Future," she said the hospital has continued to witness remarkable progress under the administration of Governor Senator Monday Okpebholo.

She commended the governor for sustained investments that have strengthened the hospital through improved infrastructure, acquisition of critical medical equipment, enhanced power supply, provision of over 200 air-conditioning units and recovery of adjoining land for future expansion, describing the interventions as practical demonstrations of the administration's commitment to quality healthcare under the SHINE

«CONTINUED ON PG 3

Agbonika assumes office as AIG Zone 5, seeks public support in fighting crime

Mike Osarogiagbon

Assistant Inspector-General of Police, Monday Agbonika, has assumed office as the new AIG in charge of Zone 5 Headquarters, Benin City, with responsibility for Edo and Delta States.

Agbonika succeeds AIG Salman-Dogo Garba, who retired from the Nigeria Police Force on July 22, 2026.

The Zonal Police Public Relations Officer, SP Tijani A. Momoh, disclosed this in a statement, noting that the new AIG assumed duty on July 29, 2026.

He further stated that AIG Agbonika previously served as Commissioner of Police in Edo State prior to his elevation to the rank of Assistant Inspector-General of Police.

The new AIG, a seasoned officer with over three decades of policing experience, has held several strategic positions in investigations, operations, administration and international peacekeeping. He holds degrees in Psychology, Security and Strategic Studies, and is pursuing a PhD in Peace and Conflict Studies.

SP Tijani added that AIG Agbonika called on residents of Edo and Delta states to support the Police with timely and credible information to strengthen the fight against crime and criminality across the Zone.



AGBONIKA



DOGO



LYING-IN-STATE:
R-L: The Head of Legal Department, Bendel Newspapers Corporation (BNC), and former Chairman of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Edo State Council, Sir Roland Osakue; former Vice President, Zone 'F,' Comrade Eddy Ogude; Vice President of the Zone, Comrade Opaka Dokubo; eldest son of late Comrade Pius Ede, Sam and other guest during the lying-in-state of late Comrade Pius Ede, a retired staff of BNC and former Vice President of the Zone at the NUJ, Edo State Council Press Centre, Benin City. PHOTO: FRANCIS ODUPUTE

Damaged Idogbo Bridge: **Okpebholo triggers swift repairs**

The Edo State Government's swift intervention has led to the immediate commencement of repair works on the damaged section of the Idogbo Bypass Bridge after a logistics company's truck caused significant damage to the infrastructure.

Leading a team of engineers on an inspection of the ongoing repairs, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Projects Implementation and Monitoring, Phoebe Williams-Bello, said Governor Monday Okpebholo acted promptly to safeguard both federal and state government assets across Edo State.

According to her, the Governor's directive prompted the rapid response of all relevant agencies, resulting in the logistics company accepting responsibility and beginning restoration work without delay.

"We assessed the extent of the damage, and the company has signed an undertaking to restore the affected section of the bridge. Despite the rainfall, work is progressing steadily, and we are encouraged by the commitment shown by all the agencies involved. Governor Monday Okpebholo remains committed to protecting government infrastructure across Edo State," she said.

Also speaking during the inspection, the Federal Controller of Works in Edo State, Engr. Babatunde Tajudeen, commended the logistics company for complying with the government's directive and mobilizing to the site immediately.

"Once the directive was issued for the company to repair the damaged section under the Idogbo Bridge at Kilometer 35 along the Benin Bypass, they responded promptly. We are here today to verify that the repairs are progressing in line with the directive," he stated.

The Permanent Secretary, Edo State Ministry of Works, Engr. John Obanor, appealed to motorists to cooperate with the contractor by obeying traffic signs and exercising patience while the repair work continues to ensure smooth traffic flow around the construction area.

Chairman of the Edo State Public Property Protection Committee (PPPC), Eugene Okoloise, who had earlier taken custody of the truck involved in the incident, officially returned the vehicle to the company following the commencement of repair.

NHIA hails ESH new accreditation, commends Okpebholo's healthcare reforms

«*CONTINUED FROM PG 3*

Agenda.

The CMD also praised the Commissioner for Health, Dr. Cyril Adams Oshiomhole, for providing strategic leadership and policy direction that have supported institutional reforms, improved service delivery and accelerated the state's healthcare transformation agenda.

She further acknowledged the support of the Deputy Governor, members of the Edo State Executive Council, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Health, Dr. Andrew Yamu, the Coordinator of the Office of the First Lady, Princess Edesili Okpebholo Anani, development partners and several collaborating health institutions for their contributions to healthcare delivery, medical education and research.

Highlighting recent milestones, Dr. Njoku said the hospital has strengthened specialist healthcare delivery through expanded clinical services, enhanced infrastructure and equipment, increased manpower, residency training programmes and postgraduate accreditation. She announced that the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology has secured full accreditation from both the West African College of Surgeons and the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria, while the hospital also inaugurated its In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) Centre and Premium and Wellness Services to broaden access to advanced reproductive and specialist healthcare.



GOV. OKPEBHOLO

She also disclosed that the NHIA Unit is being established within the hospital to enhance health insurance services and commended the Authority for facilitating the hospital's onboarding and accreditation as a CEmONC facility.

According to her, the anniversary activities reflected the hospital's commitment to community service through free medical and surgical outreaches, specialist interventions, correctional centre medical services, public health education campaigns and staff engagement programmes.

Reaffirming the institution's vision, Dr. Njoku said Edo Specialist Hospital remains committed to becoming one of West Africa's leading centres of excellence in specialist clinical care, postgraduate medical education, research, innovation and compassionate patient care.

The grand finale featured the presentation of awards to individuals whose contributions have shaped the hospital's growth and development.

Governor Senator Monday Okpebholo received a special honour in recognition of his administration's sustained investments in healthcare infrastructure, specialist services and institutional development, which the hospital said have further strengthened its position as one of Nigeria's leading referral and specialist healthcare facilities.

Former Edo State Governor and Senator representing Edo North Senatorial District, Comrade Senator Adams Aliyu Oshiomhole, was presented with the Foundation Pillar Award in recognition of his vision and leadership in conceiving, establishing and laying the foundation for Edo Specialist Hospital, which has grown into Edo State's flagship multi-specialist tertiary healthcare institution serving patients from within and outside the state.

NDLEA Edo seizes 1,359kg cannabis in Illushi

The Edo State Command of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), in a combined operation with men of the military army, successfully executed an intense intelligence-driven raid operation in the Illushi community, Esan South East Local Government Area.

The operation led to the discovery of a four-bedroom bungalow used as a cannabis warehouse located in a residential building area in the Illushi community, considered a cannabis hub.

NDLEA Commander Mitchell Ofoyeju, PhD, said that a staggering seizure includes fifty-two giant bags, three gallons of cannabis seeds and a bag of cannabis seeds. The cannabis is one thousand, two hundred and seventy-three kilogrammes, (1,273kg) with eighty-six killogrammes (86kg) of cannabis seeds, totaling 1,359kg were recovered at the warehouse. "During the raid on a four-bedroom bungalow that was being used as a warehouse for storing large quantities of the illegal substance, skunk cannabis weighing 1,286kg and 86kg of cannabis seeds were seized and evacuated. In addition, cannabis seeds weighing 86kg were also found in the warehouse. Two suspected drug traffickers were apprehended. They are Ojore Onweze, a 45-year-old male caught in connection with 60 kg of cannabis, and 30-year-old George Agwumede nabbed over 13kg of cannabis," Mitchell stated.

He expressed concerns over the use of residential houses in warehousing narcotic drugs. "The use of residential houses in stockpiling illicit drugs is dangerous and must be vehemently confronted by citizens. These enemies of the state must not be allowed to destroy our communities. We are pleased with the operational successes recorded because the quantity is massive and impressive.

This raid is a testament to our unwavering determination to dismantle the networks that seek to undermine our collective peace and safety," the commander assured.

The investigation into this drug operation is ongoing, with authorities working diligently to uncover connections and potential accomplices. The NDLEA's recent successes reflect a broader initiative to involve stakeholders, including community leaders, in the fight against drug abuse and trafficking. Children and other vulnerable groups must be protected.

"This fight is not just for NDLEA; it is a collective responsibility. We sincerely appreciate the Nigerian Army for the synergy and urge every citizen to take part in this campaign against drug abuse. We are resolute in our efforts to rid Edo State of this menace and will not relent until those responsible for trafficking and distributing illegal substances are brought to justice. Together, we can build a safer and healthier environment for current and future generations," Mitchell added.



NEWS

Family, friends bid farewell to mother of Edo Commissioner

MUYIDEEN FUNMILAYO

The family of Hon. Paul Ohonbamu, Edo State Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, is set to bid a final farewell to his late mother, Mrs. Victoria Ohonbamu, née Isikpojie, who will be laid to rest this weekend.

Mrs. Ohonbamu, who passed away at the age of 85, was described by her family as a devoted mother, a woman of deep faith, and a disciplinarian who dedicated her life to raising her children and positively impacting the lives of people around her.



MRS. OHONBAMU

In a statement issued by the family, the deceased was remembered as a woman whose life was built on strong moral values, humility, prayer, and service to humanity.

The family said she played a significa nt role in shaping the lives of her children and instilling in them the importance of honesty, discipline, compassion, and responsibility.

According to the family, Mrs. Ohonbamu was not only committed to the welfare of her immediate family but also extended her kindness and generosity to members of her community. Her home, they said, was always welcoming to people who needed advice, support, encouragement, or a helping hand.

The family further noted that her dedication to raising responsible children was reflected in the achievements and public service of her son, Hon. Paul Ohonbamu, a former Deputy Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly and the current Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs.

They said the values Mrs. Ohonbamu taught her children remained evident in their lives, adding that her influence went far beyond her household.

Her words of advice, acts of kindness, and prayers, according to the family, left a lasting impression on many people who had the opportunity to meet her.

The family described her as a humble and prayerful woman who believed strongly in the importance of serving others. Although she never occupied a public office, they said she played an important role in raising children who have contributed to society in different ways.

As preparations continue for her burial, family members, friends, associates, and well-wishers are expected to gather to honour her memory and celebrate the life she lived.

The family expressed appreciation for the years they shared with her and for the many lives she touched during her lifetime. They said her legacy would continue to live on through her children, grandchildren, relatives, and members of the community who benefited from her wisdom and kindness.

They prayed that the Almighty God would grant Mrs. Victoria Ohonbamu eternal rest and give the entire family the strength and courage to cope with her loss.

The family also pledged to uphold the values she represented throughout her lifetime, including integrity, faith, love, discipline, humility, and service to humanity.



TRAINING:
A cross section of participants at the Uhunmwode Council Training for 20 Youths in Printing, Graphic Design.

Uhunmwode Council Trains 20 Youths in Printing, Graphic Design, Offers Transport Stipends

SALIHU MARYAM SAIDU

The Acting Chairman of Uhunmwode Local Government Council, Hon. Austin Imafidon (Isiwina), has commenced the orientation of 20 youths selected for the council's free six-month professional printing and graphic design training programme as part of efforts to promote youth empowerment and entrepreneurship.

The orientation, held ahead of the commencement of the training, prepared the successful applicants for the programme, which begins on Monday, July 27, 2026, in partnership with IK Print, Benin City.

Addressing the beneficiaries, Imafidon congratulated them on their successful selection and urged them to make the most of the opportunity by acquiring practical skills that would enable them to become self-reliant and financially independent.

He explained that the initiative reflects the council's commitment to human capital development and its determination to reduce unemployment by equipping young people with marketable vocational skills.

The chairman encouraged the trainees to remain disciplined, committed and focused throughout the six-month programme, noting that the knowledge and experience gained would position them to establish businesses, create jobs and contribute to the socio-economic development of their communities.

To support the participants, Imafidon announced that each beneficiary would receive transportation stipends throughout the duration of the training to ease the cost of commuting to and from the training centre.

He said the transport support was designed to encourage regular attendance and ensure that financial challenges would not prevent any participant from completing the programme.

He also disclosed that monthly assessment meetings would be held to monitor the progress of the trainees.

The beneficiaries expressed appreciation to the council chairman for the opportunity and pledged to remain dedicated throughout the programme.

The training, facilitated by IK Print, will cover graphic design, commercial printing, business card production, flyers and posters, roll-up banners, T-shirt and branded wear printing, large-format printing, mug branding, frame production, cap branding and other modern printing technologies.

The Uhunmwode Local Government Council reaffirmed its commitment to implementing programmes that promote youth empowerment, entrepreneurship and sustainable economic development across the local government area.

Lebarty medi-care hospital opens in Benin, pledges world-class, patient-centred healthcare

BENIN CITY

OLIVER IJIOGBE

Nigerians have been urged to take advantage of the state-of-the-art medical facilities and advanced diagnostic equipment at the newly inaugurated Lebarty Medi-Care Hospital, Aruogba, Benin City, to improve their health outcomes and enhance access to quality healthcare services.

The call was made by the Edo State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Cyril Adams Oshiomhole, who was represented by the Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Mrs. Bisi Idaomi, during the grand commissioning of the ultra-modern healthcare facility.

The colourful ceremony attracted an array of distinguished personalities from within and outside Nigeria, including the Iyase of Benin Kingdom, Chief Sam Igbe; the Esama of Benin Kingdom, Chief Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion; and the Oliha of Benin Kingdom, among other prominent guests.

Describing the hospital as a significant addition to Edo State's healthcare infrastructure, Dr. Oshiomhole said the facility, which enjoys the support of the Edo State Government, represents far more than a medical institution.

According to him, "Lebarty Medi-Care Hospital is a symbol of compassion, hope and excellence in healthcare delivery.

In his welcome address, the Proprietor and Chief Medical Director of the hospital, Dr. Nosa Aigbe Lebarty, an internationally trained medical practitioner, said the vision behind the establishment of the hospital is to eliminate barriers to quality healthcare through affordable, inclusive and community-focused medical services, particularly for underserved populations.

Dr. Lebarty disclosed that the hospital is equipped with cutting-edge medical technology and will continually embrace innovative healthcare solutions, emerging medical advancements and evidence-based clinical practices aimed at improving patient outcomes and enhancing the overall patient experience.

He assured that the institution would uphold the highest standards of clinical excellence, patient safety and ethical medical practice while delivering comprehensive healthcare services. across various medical specialties.

While calling on Nigerians, particularly residents of Edo State, to patronise the facility, Dr. Lebarty expressed confidence that the hospital would redefine healthcare delivery through professionalism, innovation and compassionate care.

Also speaking, the Co-Proprietor and renowned pharmacist, Pharmacist Omoyemwen Aigbe Lebarty, said patients would receive exceptional pharmaceutical and clinical care from a team of highly skilled, experienced and compassionate healthcare professionals dedicated to excellence.

Speaking on behalf of the Lebarty American Leadership Academy, Mr. Okenfe Lebarty said the establishment of the hospital was inspired by a deep commitment to improving lives through accessible and quality healthcare services.

Chairman of the occasion, Mr. Eddie Osayi, commended Dr. and Pharmacist Nosa Aigbe Lebarty for investing in what he described as a world-class healthcare institution that would significantly strengthen medical service delivery in Edo State.

The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Benin, Prof. Edoba Omoregie, represented by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Prof. Victor Igbineweka, pledged the institution's support for the hospital, expressing optimism that collaboration between both institutions would advance medical education, research and quality healthcare delivery.

Earlier, the Coordinator, Office of the Edo State First Lady, Mrs. Edesili Anani Okpebholo, represented by Mrs. Amen Ajayi, said the establishment of the hospital aligns with Governor Monday Okpebholo's SHINE Agenda, particularly its commitment to improving healthcare delivery across the state.

IHIAN (OTOFURE) COMMUNITY, IHIAN. (IHIAN DUKEDOM)
Km, 44, Benin- Auchi Express Road,
Uhunmwode Local Government Area, Edo State

COMMUNITY NOTICE/INVITATION FOR LAND VERIFICATION EXERCISE

This is to inform all persons who have purchased land withtin the jurisdiction of Ihian (Otofure) Community, Ihian Dukedom Benin-Auchi Road, K44, Uhumwode Local Government Area, Edo State that the community has commenced a land verification exercise for the purpose of updating its records, confirming genuine purchasers, preventing multiple sales and protecting the interests of landowners and purchasers.
Accordingly, all persons who have purchased land in the community are requested to present themselves at the community hall from loam to 3pm daily from Wednesday 29th July 2026 to 13 th August 2026, together with the following photo copy and original documents:
1. Original community approval
2. Original Deed of assignment/ Conveyance or other title document
3. Survey plan
4. Receipts(S) evidencing of payment
5. Passport photograph(S)
6. Valid means of identification
7. Any other document relating to the land.
Failure to present the above documents for verification within the stipulated period may affect the community's ability to recognize and confirm ownership record in respect of such land.

Signed:
RT. Hon. EMMANUEL GOLD UWAGBOE, acting Odionwere of Otofure

PUBLIC NOTICE

LOSS OF DOCUMENTS

The general public is hereby notified that I **Mrs. TRUST IMUETINYAN NDUKWU** is the rightful owner of the parcel/piece of land measuring 100 feet by 100 feet, situates at Evbuodia Community, Evbuodia, Ward 2, Benin City, Edo State. The land was documented in a Deed of Transfer in the year 2017 between the seller one **Mr. LEO ENOMA OSAYOMWANBO DAVIDSON** and **Mrs. TRUST IMUETINYAN NDUKWU**, that she inadvertently misplaced the original documents of the deed of transfer and the survey plan in her custody. The only document with the owner of the landed property now is the photocopy of the deed of transfer. That all efforts to trace it has proven abortive. Hence this publication for record purposes. The property is not for sale. Buyers beware. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

Signed: Mrs. **TRUST IMUENTINYAN NDUKWU**

PUBLIC NOTICE

MISSING DOCUMENTS

This is to inform the general public that the original Oba of Benin Land Approval dated the 12th day of February 1960 covering a portion of land measuring an area of approximately 50 feet by 100 feet, lying, situate and being at no. 56, Iginuan Street, off 2nd East Circular Road, Benin City, Edo State, issued to one **Late Mr. OSAGIE OFEMU** who died on the 12th day of January 1963 and given a Final Burial Ceremony on the 27th day of March 1963 is Missing. The Missing Document was accordingly inccindented via a sworn affidavit deposed to at the High Court of Justice, Benin City, Dated the 24th Day of July 2026 and a police extract from Crime Diary Dated 24th july 2926. Any person who transacts business with the said document does so at his or her own risk.

Signed: **EFOSA UWAIFO Esq**.
Principal Partner, E. S Uwaifo and Associates Legal Clinic,
63, Muritala Muhammad Way,
Benin City, Edo State, for and on behalf of
Osabuohien Osagie Family.

PUBLIC NOTICE

MISSING DOCUMENT

The general public is hereby notified that I, **Mr. UZAMERE EDISON UWAGBOE** is the right owner of the parcel/piece of land measuring 1702.058 square metres. situated at Evbo-Ogida Village Area, Benin City, Egor Local Government Edo State, Nigeria. That the above mentioned property devolved on me by my late father, **Chief Mayor EMMANUEL UFUMWEN UZAMERE** (descend) after I performed all the burial/ funeral rites according to Benin Native Law and Customs. That the documents, covering the said property was discovered missing after the death of my father.And all efforts made to trace the document proved abortive. Hence this publication for record purposes. The property is not for sale. Buyers Beware! Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

Signed: **Mr. UZAMERE EDISON UWAGBOE**

BOX FOR SALE

CORRECTION OF NAME/DATE OF BIRTH

The general public is here by notified that my correct name is **AHMEDU YUSUF** and not **AHMADU YUSUF** hence now wish to be known and called **AHMEDU YUSUF**. and my correct date of birth is 04-02-1986.and not 01-10-1986.All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **Mrs BRIDGET OSAOSEMWEN OBASUYI**.now wish to be known and addressed as **Miss BRIDGET OSAOSEMWEN OSAYI**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME

The general public is here by notified that my correct name is **OBAFEMI FOLAKE FAVOUR** and not **OBAFEMI FOLAKEMI**. Hence now wish to be and called **OBAFEMI FOLAKE FAVOUR**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **OSIMIRY NDIDI JOYCE**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **ODIANA JOYCE NDIDI OSIMIRY**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

RE-ARRENGEMENT OF NAME

The general public is here by notified that my correct arrange name is **DANIEL NKACHUKWU CHINYERE** and not **CHINYERE NWACHUKWU DANIEL**. hence now wish to be known and called **DANIEL NWACHUKWU CHINYERE**.All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **OSARIEMEN SYLVESTER DENNIS**. Now wish to be known and called **OSARIEMEN OSAKPOLOR DIVINE**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **Miss BLESSING IYANGBE**. now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs BLESSING ATOE**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **ODEYEMI DUPE PRECIOUS** now wish to be known and addressed as **EMMANUEL DUPE PRECIOUS**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as miss **BOSSEY BEATRICE**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS IPOGAH BEATRICE**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

RE-ARRENGEMENT OF NAME

The general public is here by that my correct arrange name is **EMMANUEL FAITH IGWE** and not **IGWE FAITH EMMANUEL** as wrongly written on my NIN.All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

ADDITION OF NAME

I, formerly known as **BLESSING URHIE** now wish to be known and addressed as **BAYAGBONA BLESSING URHIE**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME

The general public is here by notified that **OIBHIA ATASEMEN** and **OKHIRIA ATASEMEN JOHN**. are one and same person.hence now wish to be called **OIBHIA ATASEMEN**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

RECONCILIATION NAME

The general public is here by notified that **OVUAKPORORO EJIRO SABASTINE** and **OVUAKPORORO EJIRO BENISON SABASTINE**.are one and same person.hence now wish to be known and called **OVUAKPORORO EJIRO SABASTINE**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as miss **IMAFIDON ADESUWA PEACE**.now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS AGHASOMWAN ADESUWA PEACE**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME

The general public is here by notified that **MADUAWIA KOSISOCHUKWU FRANKLYN**. and **MADUAWAIA KOSISOCHUKWU FRANKLYN** are one and same person hence now wish to be known and called **MADUAWIA KOSISOCHUKWU FRANKLYN**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

The general public is here by notified that **KEIVIN UYI EVBADAZEHI** and **UWAGBOE UYI EVBADAZEHI** are one and same person.hence now wish to be called **KELVIN UYI EVBADAZEHI**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **MISS OSHIOKE SARAH BLESSING** now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS ATSABOGHENA SARAH BLESSING**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

EDO STATE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

P.M.B. 1066
BENIN CITY, EDO STATE OF NIGERIA

VACANCIES

Applications are hereby invited from suitably qualified candidates to fill the following vacancies in the following posts in the Edo State Civil Service. Candidates for the posts must possess the required qualifications, experience and skills specified below:

GENERAL REQUIREMENT

Candidates must possess the Minimum Academic requirements for each role as stated below:

Holders of a Bachelor's degrees not below second clad (Lower Division) are eligible to apply for Grade Level 08 Positions and National Diplomas' not below Lower Credit for other Grade Level Positions.

HOW TO APPLY:

Interested Candidates should apply for visiting the Civil Service Commission Recruitment Portal at jobs.edostate.gov.ng and complete the online forms. All applications must be submitted within three (3) weeks from the date of this publication as at the time of application.

NOTE:

Candidates shall apply for only one (1) position as multiple applications will result in disqualification. Edo State Government does not require candidates to make payments to any person or organization and equal opportunity is guaranteed for all candidates for this free, fair and merit driven recruitment exercise.

1. AGRICULTURE OFFICER II, GL. 08

Requirements:
A Bachelor's Degree in Agriculture, Agricultural Science, Agricultural Economics, Horticulture, Crop Science or Crop Production from a recognized University.

2. ASSISTANT CAMERAMAN, GRADE LEVEL 06

Requirements:
i. Ordinary National Diploma in Cinematography
ii. Ordinary National Diploma in Mass Communication.

3. CAMERAMAN, GRADE LEVEL 07

Requirements:
i. Ordinary National Diploma in Mass Communication from a recognized Institution.
ii. Ordinary National Diploma in Cinematography plus at least one year post-qualification cognate experience.
iii. Ordinary National Diploma in Mass Communication plus at least two years' post-qualification cognate experience.

4. HIGHER CAMARAMAN, GRADE LEVEL 08

Requirement:
i. Higher National Diploma in Cinematography from a recognized Institution.
ii. Higher National Diploma in Mass Communication from a recognized Institution plus at least one year post-qualification cognate experience.

5. ASSISTANT PHOTOGRAPHER, GRADE LEVEL 06

Requirement:
i. National Technical Candidate (NTC) Modular in Photography or its equivalent, plus at least two years' post-qualification cognate experience
ii. Final Trade Test Certificate in Photography or its equivalent, plus at least two years' post-qualification cognate experience.
iii. National Skill Qualification (NSO Stage 1-3)

6. PHOTOGRAPHER, GRADE LEVEL 07

Requirement:
i. Ordinary National Diploma In Mass Communication, plus at least two years' post-qualification cognate experience

7. HIGHER PHOTOGRAPHER, GRADE LEVEL 08

Requirement:
i. Higher National Diploma in Photography or its equivalent, plus at least seven years' post-qualification cognate experience.

8. ASSISTANT FILM EDITOR, GRADE LEVEL 06

Requirement:
i. Ordinary National Diploma (OND) in Engineering or allied subject
ii. General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level) in two relevant subjects obtained in one sitting or in three subjects at two sittings.

9. FILM EDITOR, GRADE LEVEL 07

Requirement:
i. General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level) in two relevant subjects obtained in one sitting or in three subjects at least plus at least two years post-qualification cognate experience.
ii. Ordinary National Diploma (OND) in Engineering or allied subject plus at least one year post-qualification cognate experience.

10. HIGHER FILM EDITOR, GRADE LEVEL 06

Requirement:
i. Higher National Diploma in Engineering or allied subjects from a recognized Institutions.
ii. Ordinary National Diploma (OND) in Engineering or allied subject plus at least four years' post-qualification cognate experience



G. U. OBAZEE (Mrs.)
Functioning Permanent Secretary,
For Chairman
Civil Service Commission
Benin City.

NEWS

JONAPWD protests alleged neglect by Ebonyi Govt, demands monthly support

MAXWELL OECHUKWU

ABAKALIKI

The Joint National Association of People with Disabilities (JONAPWD) Ebonyi State Chapter has protested against what it called the neglect and lack of support for its members by the relevant ministries in charge of providing for their welfare.

JONAPWD named the ministry of health and its women affairs counterpart as culpable in the conspiracy of neglect its members had suffered in the state and called for an end to it.

The protesters who went round major streets in Ebonyi State capital Abakaliki, demanded among other things, payment of their monthly subvention, provision of welfare support to deserving members and immediate assent to the Disability Bill already passed by the State House of Assembly.

The group also kicked against a vacation order issued by the Commissioners for Health, Dr. Moses Ekuma, and that of the Women Affairs and Social Development, Barrister Felicia Nwamkpuma, directing them to vacate their office without providing alternative accommodation, describing it as inconsiderate and improper.

Carrying placards with various inscriptions, the protesters appealed to Governor Francis Nwifuru to intervene, stressing that disability is not a crime and called for their inclusion in government programmes and appointments.

JONAPWD State Chairman Comrade Nwovu Friday, said the group had suffered neglect despite several appeals to the government.

He alleged that the Ministry of Health and that of Women Affairs issued a quit notice to them without prior dialogue, adding that the office had been occupied by PWDs for over ten years.

Nwovu appealed to the governor to provide monthly subvention, welfare packages, assent to the Disability Bill, and appoint qualified members of the disability community into government positions.

He also reaffirmed the group's support for Governor Nwifuru's administration, saying PWDs in the state were behind him ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Reacting, the Chief of Staff to the Governor, Professor Emmanuel Echiegu, said Governor Nwifuru had approved the assent to the Disability Bill and that the process would be completed soon.

Professor Echiegu disclosed that over 300 persons with disabilities had been enrolled in the Ebonyi State Health Insurance Agency for free medical services.



FAREWELL:
The Colleagues of former Vice President of the Nigerian Union of Journalists, NUJ Zone F, late Comrade Pius Ede, bid him final farewell yesterday at the NUJ press centre in Benin City on Thursday. Here is a cross section of his erstwhile colleagues in the Nigerian Observer Newspaper. L - R: Barrister Roland Osakue, Mr. Friday Obanor, Barrister Kelvin Osemene, Barrister Thomas Anigala, Mr Monday Uwagwu, Mr. Eubaldus Enahoro and Mr. Lucky Agie. PHOTO: EMMANUEL IJEGBAI

First Lady empowers 1000 petty traders in Ile-Ife with N50m

IIE-IFE (OSUN)

The First Lady, Sen. Oluremi Tinubu, on Wednesday disbursed N50 million to 1,000 petty traders in Ile-Ife, Osun, under the Renewed Hope Initiative.

The empowerment programme, held at Kensington Hall, Ooni's Palace, Ile-Ife, provided N50,000 each to the beneficiaries to support and expand their businesses.

Represented by Alhaja Kudirat Fakokunde, the All Progressives Congress(APC) Women Leader in Osun, the First Lady urged the beneficiaries to invest the grant wisely.

Mrs Tinubu noted that the intervention was designed to improve on their economic well-being and family welfare.

Speaking, Dr Sekinat Oyebamiji, wife of the APC governorship candidate in Osun, encouraged beneficiaries to use the N50,000 to grow their businesses.

Mrs Kafayat Oyetola, wife of the Minister of Marine and Blue Economy, Adegboyega Oyetola, appealed to residents of Ile-Ife to support the APC governorship candidate for the Aug. 15 election, and President Bola Tinubu in the 2027 election.

The Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Ogunwusi, applauded the First Lady for empowering petty traders, describing the initiative as timely and capable of improving livelihoods across communities.

The traditional ruler said the Renewed Hope Initiative reflected the administration's commitment to uplifting the less privileged, adding that genuine empowerment should target the needy.

The Ooni said that all verified beneficiaries would receive the grant, urging recipients to use the fund productively to strengthen their businesses.

Four inmates freed in Ebonyi jail delivery

MAXWELL OKECHUKWU

ABAKALIKI

The Chief Judge of Ebonyi State Evis Ngene has released four inmates on awaiting trial in a jail delivery exercise in Abakaliki.

The Chief Judge while addressing newsmen said, "out of Eighteen cases, four inmates were outrightly discharged, seven were granted bail with various conditions, four were further remanded, while one sick inmate was handed over to the Department of Public Prosecution".

He also explained that the jail delivery was in the exercise of the powers Conferred on him by the provisions of the Criminal Justice Law to provide deserving inmates quick access to justice.

He added that, the exercise would be repeated when the need arises as part of efforts to decongest Custodial centers across the country.

He said the law was very clear and strict on capital offences and advised inmates with such cases to approach the regular court for justice.

The Controller of Corrections, Nigerian Correctional Service, Ebonyi State Command, Mrs. Angela Igubu, lauded the Chief Judge for the exercise, pointing out that the measure would decongest the already over stretched facilities and appealed to the people to accept the inmates who had regained their freedoms back into the society to ensure proper reintegration.

Mrs. Igubu emphasized the need for synergy among various stakeholders in the pursuit of a justice system which balances accountability and places humanity at the heart of justice delivery.

One of the accused persons who regained freedom during the exercise, Femi Ajibola, 24 who had spent over four years in the Correctional facility for alleged robbery, thanked the State Chief Judge and the Correctional Service for setting him free, adding that he learned valued lessons while in detention, and promised not to come back again.

Sterling Financial posts N50.3bn profit

LAGOS

Sterling Financial Holdings Company Plc has reported a profit after tax of N50.3 billion for the half-year ended June 30, 2026.

The group said the figure represented a 20.4 per cent increase compared with the corresponding period of 2025, reflecting sustained growth across key business segments.

In a statement issued in Lagos, the company said its profit before tax rose by 21.9 per cent to N55.5 billion.

Gross earnings increased by 31.5 per cent to N279.6 billion, supported by stronger income generation and improved performance across its operations.

Interest income grew by 33.7 per cent to N223.6 billion, driven by loan book expansion and improved asset yields during the review period.

Net interest income rose by 41.0 per cent to N137.4 billion, while non-interest income increased by 23.3 per cent to N56 billion.

The company attributed the non-interest income growth to higher fee-based earnings and increased contributions from other operating income streams.

Sterling Financial said its total assets expanded by 19.3 per cent to N4.67 trillion, bringing its balance sheet close to the N5 trillion threshold.

Customer deposits rose by 21.1 per cent to N3.62 trillion, underscoring continued confidence in the group's banking and financial services businesses.

Shareholders' funds increased by 27.8 per cent to N547.7 billion, supported largely by the N96.6 billion raised through a public share offer.

The capital was raised through the issuance of 13.8 billion ordinary shares, strengthening the group's financial position and growth capacity.

Sterling Financial said its return on average equity stood at 20.6 per cent during the period under review.

Return on average assets improved to 2.35 per cent from 2.05 per cent recorded in the corresponding half of 2025.

The company noted that its share price had appreciated by more than 15 per cent since the beginning of the year.

Leadway tasks pig farmers on African Swine Fever

LAGOS

Leadway Assurance has urged pig farmers nationwide to strengthen biosecurity measures against African Swine Fever (ASF) amid growing concerns over reported outbreaks in parts of Nigeria.

The call was made by Leadway's Global Head of Agricultural Risk Solutions, Mr Ayoola Fatona, in a statement issued in Lagos.

Fatona described ASF as a highly contagious viral disease affecting pigs, spreading rapidly through herds and often causing high mortality and significant financial losses.

He urged insured farmers to maintain strict biosecurity standards and comply with statutory disease control measures as part of responsible farm management practices.

According to him, ASF poses no risk to humans, but there is currently no approved treatment or commercially available vaccine against the disease.

He stressed that strict biosecurity remained the most effective means of preventing infection and limiting the spread of the disease among livestock.

The company advised farmers to restrict farm access, quarantine newly introduced pigs and strengthen cleaning and disinfection practices across their facilities.

Leadway also urged farmers to monitor livestock for early signs of infection and promptly report suspected cases to veterinary authorities.

Fatona said the outbreak highlighted the importance of proactive risk management in livestock farming and the need for continuous vigilance.

He noted that insurance was designed to help farmers recover from unforeseen losses, but prevention remained the company's foremost objective.

"African Swine Fever can wipe out entire pig herds within a short period," Fatona warned, urging farmers to take preventive measures seriously.

He described biosecurity as a critical investment for protecting livelihoods, ensuring business continuity and safeguarding Nigeria's livestock industry.

"Leadway remains committed to supporting farmers beyond insurance coverage through expert guidance, risk improvement initiatives and continuous engagement," he said.

Fatona added that the company would continue educational campaigns, radio programmes, webinars, town hall meetings and stakeholder partnerships across farming communities.

He said the initiatives were aimed at promoting disease awareness, encouraging preventive action and strengthening resilience within Nigeria's agricultural sector.

NEWS

Army engineers build capacity to counter IED threats in contemporary operations

KADUNA

The Nigerian Army has commenced a seminar aimed at strengthening the capacity of its engineers to counter the growing threat posed by Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in contemporary security operations.

The seminar, organised by the 41 Engineer Brigade, 1 Division Nigerian Army, was held in Kaduna on Thursday , as part of activities marking the graduation of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) X2 Course 126.

The Commander, Corps of Engineers, Maj.-Gen. S.T. Shafaru, represented by Maj.-Gen. Josiah Attah, said the seminar was part of efforts to equip Nigerian Army engineers with the requisite skills to effectively support ongoing operations across the country.

Shafaru said he had since assuming office, prioritised the training of Nigerian Army engineer personnel to enhance their capacity to provide effective combat support and sustainable engineering solutions.

According to him, the initiative aligns with his mission of enhancing the adaptability and resilience of the Nigerian Army within a joint and multi-agency environment.

He said newly posted soldiers to the Nigerian Army Corps of Engineers were sent to the Nigerian Army School of Military Engineering for basic combat engineering, field engineering and artisan training.

He added that the training was designed to ensure that every soldier there was a complete professional soldier capable of handling delicate and assigned engineering tasks in the field.

The commander said the conduct of the EOD course was aimed at reducing the shortage of EOD specialists while building the capacity of Nigerian Army engineers within available resources.

"Improvised Explosive Devices have become one of the greatest security threats confronting the Nigerian Army in ongoing counter-insurgency operations.

"The widespread use of these devices has complicated military operations and humanitarian activities in conflict-affected areas," he said.

Shafaru said Nigerian Army engineers continued to play a vital role in countering IED threats through routine clearance operations to detect and remove explosive devices before military convoys and civilians used affected roads.

He said EOD personnel were trained to employ specialised techniques to safely identify, disarm and destroy explosive devices.

The commander added that the Corps regularly collaborated with other security agencies and international partners, including the British Military Assistance Training Team and the German Training and Assistance Group, to improve technical expertise and intelligence sharing.

He said public awareness campaigns and seminars such as the one would encourage stakeholders to report suspicious objects and activities, thereby helping security forces prevent attacks and defeat adversaries.



INAUGURATION:
The Minister of State for Defence, Alhaji Bello Matawalle, inaugurating DICON Institute in Kaduna on Wednesday.

2027: Adefulire drums support for Tinubu, Hamzat

LAGOS

Mrs Adejoke Orelope-Adefulire, former deputy governor of Lagos State, has urged members of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and residents of the state to rally behind President Bola Tinubu's re-election bid.

She also called for support for the aspiration of the Lagos APC governorship candidate, Dr Obafemi Hamzat,ahead of 2027.

Orelope-Adefulire made the call in an interview with newsmen in Lagos on Thursday.

The former deputy governor said that Tinubu-led administration had laid a solid foundation for national development.

She described Hamzat as a man experience, competence,saying he possessed the leadership qualities required to sustain the state's development strides.

"President Tinubu has demonstrated courageous and visionary leadership through bold reforms aimed at repositioning Nigeria for sustainable growth.

"Also , Hamzat has consistently shown competence, loyalty and unwavering commitment to the progress of Lagos State," she said.

She said that Hamzat was a seasoned administrator, adding his years of service in government had prepared him to consolidate on the achievements of successive APC administrations in the state.

"Hamzat understands the needs and aspirations of Lagosians. His experience, humility and dedication to public service make him the right person to lead Lagos to greater heights," she said.

According to her, the APC has continued to distinguish itself through impactful governance, infrastructural development, economic growth and people-oriented policies.

"The party has earned the confidence of the people through consistent delivery of democratic dividends, and I urge Lagos residents to sustain their support for APC at all levels," she added.

She called on party leaders, stakeholders and supporters to remain united and committed throughout the electoral process.

Adefulire said that unity remained the party's greatest strength.

"Victory is assured when we remain focused, united and committed to our collective vision of building a greater Lagos and a more prosperous Nigeria," she said.

Orelope-Adefulire urged eligible Nigerians to collect their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) and actively participate in the forthcoming general election.

"Every eligible citizen has a responsibility to vote and contribute to strengthening our democracy by supporting credible and capable leaders," she said.

IOM donates Mobile Phones to improve conflict response in Katsina

KASTINA

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has donated communication gadgets to Community Peace and Resilience Committees in eight Local Government Areas in Katsina to strengthen early warning systems.

The distribution held in Danmusa on Wednesday, is aimed at improving early warning and early response mechanisms to enhance community-based conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts.

The intervention was carried out under the Conflict Prevention, Crisis Response and Resilience (CPCRR) Programme founded by the European Union Foreign Policy Instrument.

Speaking at the event, the Project Assistant, Mr Seth Elisha, said the programme is implemented by IOM in partnership with Mercy Corps and the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD).

According to him, the devices which include mobile phones and power banks, were expected to enhance the operational capacity of Community Peace and Resilience Committees across the benefiting areas.

He said the beneficiaries were drawn from Jibia, Batsari, Danmusa, Kankara, Sabuwa, Safana, Dandume and Faskari Local Government Areas.

Elisha said the gadgets would enable committee members to promptly report Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) incidents, particularly farmer-herder conflicts and other emerging security threats for timely intervention.

According to him, strengthening communication among community-based peace actors remains critical to preventing violence and promoting peaceful coexistence.

"The gadgets will improve information sharing, facilitate timely reporting of incidents and support effective responses to emerging security concerns within the communities.

Physician urges holistic approach to enhance patient's care

LAGOS

A Consultant Family Physician, Dr Fatai Olaniyan, has highlighted the need for patients to be managed within the context of their families, communities, and social environments to enhance healthcare delivery.

Olaniyan made this known at a webinar organised by the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria (NPMCN) titled "Connecting the Dots: How General System Theory Shapes Family Medicine".

Olaniyan, Chairman of NPMCN Faculty of Family Medicine described healthcare as a biopsychosocial process.

He noted that family medicine recognised the family as an entity in its own right, noting that families could experience distress, dysfunction, disruption and discrimination that affect health outcomes.

"The family itself can be recognised as a patient when we are caring for people in our clinics.

"Some health conditions require family-level interventions rather than treatment focused solely on an individual patient.

"Health is a harmonious interaction of biological, psychological and social systems," he said.

The expert explained that family medicine had evolved from traditional general practice to a modern specialty that provides holistic, comprehensive and coordinated care.

"The medical model traditionally focused on diseases, pathology and organ-specific treatment.

"Health and illness cannot be fully understood in isolation from the complex systems in which people live," he said.

He said before 1900, healthcare was largely delivered through home visits by general practitioners, noting that advancement in laboratory medicine, antibiotics and hospital care transformed medical practice during the twentieth century.

Navy honours Rear Admiral with community projects

KASTINA

The Nigerian Navy on Thursday inaugurated community development projects in Kerau Quarters, Katsina, in honour of Rear Adm. Yakubu Dahiru, an indigene of the area.

The projects executed under the Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) Special Intervention Quick Impact Projects, comprise an 80,000-litre solar-powered industrial borehole, solar-powered streetlights and renovation of a community school.

Speaking at the event, Gov. Dikko Radda, said the projects would improve access to potable water, enhance security through improved lighting and provide a better learning environment for children.

Represented by his Chief of staff, Abdulkadir Mamman-Nasir, Radda expressed appreciation to the Chief of Naval Staff for the intervention and commended Dahiru for facilitating the projects for the benefit of his community.

Radda said access to clean and safe water remained a priority of his administration, noting that the state government had embarked on reforms to strengthen water infrastructure across the state.

He said the government had rehabilitated water treatment plants, pumping stations, transmission and distribution pipelines, while ensuring the availability of diesel and essential water treatment chemicals.

Radda urged the people of Kerau to take ownership of the facilities and protect them from vandalism to ensure their sustainability and benefit to future generations.

NEWS

Abia Govt. fixes N200m for presidential campaign billboards permit

ABA

Abia State Government says every political party's presidential candidate intending to campaign through billboards and posters will pay N200 million to obtain campaign advertising permit.

The Abia State Structures for Signages and Advertising Agency (ABSSAA), disclosed this in Aba, during a "Stakeholders Forum on Political Campaign Advertising fees".

The forum has the theme: "Order in Outdoors: Partnership for Safe Campaigns, Sustainable Revenue and A Cleaner Abia".

Mr Ndubuisi Nwaogwugwu, the Head of Department, Strategy, Innovation and Design, ABSSAA, announced the rate on Wednesday in Aba.

Nwaogwugwu said that the permit rates schedule applied to all political party candidates at all levels in Abia and had its basis in ABSSAA and other Abia Laws regulating signage and advertising.

"Presidential candidates will pay N200 million, Governorship candidates will pay N150 million, Senatorial candidates will pay N100 million, House of Representatives and Assembly candidate will pay N50 and N20 million respectively.

"The schedule of Political Campaign Advertising Permit Fees contained herein has been approved by the Government of Abia State and apply throughout the approved election campaign period," he said.

Earlier, Sir Onyebuchi Ememanka, the Director General, Strategic Communications Bureau, Abia, said that the permit schedule was non-negotiable.

"It is about protecting lives on our roads, preserving the beauty of cities, and protecting the integrity of our democratic process.



FAMILIARIZATION VISIT:
Special Adviser to Governor on Islamic Matters, Hon. Ahmed Musa Momoh, (6th right) with the leadership of the APC Muslims Forum, Edo State, during a familiarization visit to his office in Benin City.

Customs begins 2026 tariff reforms

ABUJA

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has commenced implementation of the 2026 Fiscal Policy Measures and Tariff Amendments approved by President Bola Tinubu to strengthen Nigeria's trade and fiscal framework.

NCS spokesperson, Abdullahi Maiwada, disclosed this in a statement in Abuja, saying the measures would enhance economic competitiveness and boost revenue generation.

He said the reforms were also designed to align Nigeria's tariff regime with regional and international obligations while supporting legitimate trade and fiscal administration nationwide.

Comptroller-General of Customs, Bashir Adeniyi, recently announced a revised import duties while defending the service's 2026 budget proposal before lawmakers.

Adeniyi said the revised tariff regime formed part of the Federal Government's broader 2026 fiscal policy and was expected to stimulate economic activities.

Maiwada said the amendments would support domestic industrial development, facilitate legitimate trade and improve administration of fiscal and tariff policies across the country.

"The approved amendments include the Revised Import Adjustment Tax List for the implementation of the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (2022–2027)," he said.

He said other measures included the Revised National List under the ECOWAS Common External Tariff framework and the Revised Import Prohibition List (Trade).

According to him, the reforms also cover the Revised List of Goods Liable to Excise Duty, the Green Tax Surcharge on vehicles above 2000cc and the Revised Export Prohibition List.

Maiwada urged importers, exporters, manufacturers, licensed customs agents and other stakeholders to familiarise themselves with the amended tariff schedules.

He said stakeholders must ensure full compliance with the fiscal and regulatory requirements applicable to their transactions under the new regime.

"To facilitate seamless implementation and promote transparency, the service has made the complete 2026 Fiscal Policy Measures and Tariff Amendments available for download," he said.

Customs, NAFDAC, Army deepen alliance against smuggling, counterfeits

SANGO-OTA

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Ogun I Area Command, has strengthened collaboration with the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) and the Nigerian Army to combat smuggling, counterfeit products and other cross-border crimes.

The Public Relations Officer of the command, Mr Chado Zakari, disclosed this in a statement in Idiroko.

Zakari said the renewed commitment followed separate strategic visits to the command headquarters by the Director of NAFDAC's Federal Task Force on Fake and Substandard Products, Dr Martin Iluyomade, and the Commander, 35 Artillery Brigade, Nigerian Army, Brig.-Gen. Friday Onu.

The senior NAFDAC official Iluyomade, was said to have called for stronger intelligence-driven operations to intercept fake, substandard and expired products before they entered Nigerian markets during the courtesy visit to the Acting Customs Area Controller, Deputy Comptroller Olakayode Afeni.

According to him, the NAFDAC official commended the command's anti-smuggling efforts and advocated real-time intelligence sharing and coordinated enforcement to safeguard public health and protect local industries.

Responding, Afeni said effective dismantling of organised smuggling networks required sustained inter-agency collaboration.

"Our resolve to secure the nation's borders against illicit trade is unwavering.

"Strengthening our partnership with NAFDAC will enhance operational efficiency and ensure that importers of fake and substandard goods find no safe haven within our area of responsibility," he said.

He urged importers, licensed customs agents and border communities to embrace legitimate trade and report suspicious activities to security agencies.

NACA seeks sustainable financing to safeguard Nigeria's HIV response

ABUJA

The National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) has called for sustainable financing and stronger domestic resource mobilisation to safeguard Nigeria's HIV response amid declining global development assistance.

The Director-General of NACA, Dr Temitope Ilori, made the call during the Nigeria Event at the 26th International AIDS Conference (IAS 2026) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, themed: "Rethink. Rebuild. Rise."

Ilori said the theme aligned with Nigeria's commitment to building a more resilient, self-reliant and sustainable HIV programme, hence Nigeria's sub-theme "Sustainability: Strengthening Resource Mobilisation for the National HIV Response in Nigeria."

She said that the future of Nigeria's HIV response would depend not only on scientific breakthroughs and effective interventions but also on establishing resilient financing systems capable of withstanding evolving global economic realities.

"The future of the HIV response depends not only on scientific breakthroughs and effective interventions.

"It also depends on our collective ability to build resilient, sustainable financing systems that can withstand evolving global economic realities," she said.

The NACA boss acknowledged the progress Nigeria had made in the last two decades through partnerships involving the Federal Government, development partners, civil society organisations, communities of people living with HIV and the private sector.

According to her, the collaborations have significantly expanded HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services, leading to improved health outcomes for millions of Nigerians.

She, however, warned that the global financing landscape was changing as development assistance continued to decline while competing national and global priorities placed increasing pressure on available resources.

"This changing environment presents both a challenge and an opportunity. It calls on us to reimagine how we finance the HIV response and accelerate our transition toward greater domestic ownership and sustainability," she said.

The DG stressed that sustainability went beyond replacing donor funding, noting that it also required stronger institutions, improved governance, greater efficiency, innovation and expanded partnerships.

"Sustainability is not simply about replacing donor funding.

"It is about building stronger institutions, strengthening governance, improving efficiency, leveraging innovation, expanding partnerships, and ensuring that every available resource delivers maximum impact," she said.

She described the dialogue as an opportunity to deepen collaboration, identify practical solutions and forge stronger partnerships that would shape the future of Nigeria's HIV response.

Sustainable Development: Researchers want stronger investment in science education

HONG (ADAMAWA

Stakeholders at the 2026 National Annual Conference on Science and Education Research have called for increased investment in science, innovation, and quality education to drive sustainable development.

The call was made at the opening of a three-day conference organised by the School of Sciences, Adamawa State College of Education, Hong.

The conference, with the theme, "Science in Action: Transforming Life and Reshaping the Future," attracted scholars, researchers, scientists, and educationists from tertiary institutions across the country.

Declaring the conference open, the Chairman of the Local Organising Committee, Dr Ibrahim Habu, described the annual gathering as an important platform for promoting research and academic collaboration.

Habu commended the management of the college for its support and lauded members of the organising committee for the successful commencement of the conference.

In an address of welcome, the Dean of the School of Sciences in the college, Dr Larina Patrick, said the conference was organised to strengthen research capacity and promote intellectual exchange.

Patrick said it would also encourage scientific innovations capable of addressing societal challenges, and provide researchers with opportunities to share findings and build partnerships.

The Provost of the college, Prof. Benson Yusuf, represented by the Deputy Provost, Administration, Dr John Zabiri, said the conference reflected the institution's commitment to scholarship and innovation.

Zabiri urged academics to deepen the culture of quality research and scholarly publications to enhance the visibility of the college.

He described the conference theme as timely, adding that science and innovation remained critical to tackling challenges such as climate change, food insecurity, emerging diseases, and digital transformation.

According to him, colleges of education have a vital responsibility to produce teachers who can inspire innovation, critical thinking, and practical problem-solving among learners.

Delivering the keynote address, Prof. Jamu Yerima said science should be viewed as a practical instrument for transforming lives and shaping the future.

"Scientific knowledge has become indispensable in healthcare, agriculture, education, communication, governance, and economic development.

NEWS

FG to provide 25,000 free cataract surgeries by 2027

ABUJA

The Federal Government says it will conduct 25,000 free cataract surgeries nationwide by the end of 2027 to tackle avoidable blindness and expand access to quality eye care services.

Minister of State for Health and Social Welfare, Dr Iziaq Salako, said this on Thursday in Abuja at the 49th Annual Scientific Conference of the Nigerian Optometric Association and AFCO meeting.

The conference, themed "Optometrists in a Changing Africa: From Diversity to Unity," brought together eye care professionals and stakeholders to discuss strategies for strengthening optometry practice and eye healthcare delivery.

Salako said the surgeries would be delivered under the Renewed Hope Health Connect initiative, designed to take healthcare services closer to underserved communities and vulnerable populations across Nigeria.

He said funding had already been provided in the 2025 and 2026 federal budgets to support implementation of the programme and ensure timely delivery of planned interventions nationwide.

"The process is already ongoing and, all things being equal, we hope to start the implementation by late October or early November this year," he said.

The minister said eye health had remained neglected for years, in spite of preventable visual impairment continuing to deprive millions of Nigerians of productivity, independence, economic opportunities and personal dignity.

He said President Bola Tinubu had placed deliberate emphasis on expanding primary eye care services and tackling preventable blindness through sustained investments, reforms and strengthened healthcare delivery systems.

According to him, the National Eye Health Strategic Development Plan 2024–2028 is integrating eye care services across primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare levels to improve early detection nationwide.

Salako said the Federal Government had also inaugurated the Nigeria Glaucoma Guidelines and Toolkit to standardise diagnosis, treatment and referral protocols for glaucoma management across healthcare facilities nationwide.

He said ophthalmologists from the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory had already been trained on the guidelines to facilitate effective implementation and improve patient outcomes nationwide.

CEPI commits $8.5m to accelerate Bundibugyo Ebola vaccine development

ABUJA

The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) says it's providing 8.5 million dollars to support the development and production of a vaccine candidate against the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola virus.

CEPI disclosed this in a statement on Thursday, in Abuja.

It said that the funding would support the manufacture of clinical trial vaccine doses by Hilleman Laboratories.

The coalition said the investment would accelerate efforts to develop a vaccine against the Bundibugyo ebolavirus, for which no vaccine was approved despite the ongoing outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

It said Hilleman Laboratories, a Singapore-based joint venture between global biopharmaceutical company MSD and the Wellcome charitable foundation, would manufacture investigational vaccine doses using the recombinant vesicular stomatitis virus (rVSV) platform.

The statement noted that the vaccine candidate would be produced at the organisation's vaccine manufacturing facility for use in early-stage clinical trials designed to evaluate its safety and immune response.

CEPI said successful completion of the initial clinical trials would pave the way for technology transfer to a large-scale manufacturer to produce additional vaccine doses for later-stage studies.

It added that the technology transfer would also strengthen preparedness by enabling rapid, affordable vaccine production for countries affected by outbreaks, particularly low- and middle-income nations.

"Hilleman Laboratories will build on vaccine starting material generated through earlier CEPI-funded research conducted by the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI).

No project 'll be abandoned in FCT under Tinubu's administration – Wike

ABUJA

Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, on Thursday, assured residents of the territory that no project would be abandoned under President Bola Tinubu's administration.

He gave the assurance after he inspected the ongoing construction of the dual carriageway from Nile University to Ring Road III in Abuja.

He also inspected the ongoing full scope development of Arterial Road N1 from Wuye District to Ring Road II, Abuja.

The minister, who declared zero-tolerance policy for abandoned infrastructure under the current dispensation, insisted that most of the ongoing projects would be delivered to residents by the end of December.

He said "the administration is bound by strict promise to eliminate the culture of abandoned public works.

"I have said before, no project will be abandoned under Tinubu's administration and we are keeping that promise.

"This is part of a broader push by the Tinubu administration to clear the backlog of stalled infrastructure and deliver his promises to FCT residents.

"Look at the projects that were awarded since 2010, we have completed most of them and we are still working on the remaining ones."

Wike also assured residents that the construction of N20 bridge over the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Expressway would be completed.

"Is there any project that we have started and abandoned? We have started to see that all are being completed, and the ones that this administration awarded will also be completed.

"Just be patient, every project will be completed," the minister assured residents.

He commended the contractors for the quality delivery of projects in the FCT.



COMMITTEE'S PUBLIC HEARING:
From left: Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on South-South Development Commission (SSDC), Rep. Julius Pondi; Deputy Chairman of the Committee, Rep. Kabiru Yusuf and a member of the committee, Rep. Terseer Ugbor, during the committee's public hearing with oil and gas companies on the SSDC Amendment Bill 2025, at the National Assembly Complex, Abuja on Wednesday.

NAPTIP reunites 258 trafficking victims, records 78 cases in Jigawa

DUTSE

The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), says it has recorded 78 cases, rescued and reunited 258 victims with their families in the last three years in Jigawa.

The NAPTIP Commander in the state, Mr Abdulkadir Turajo, made this known on Thursday in Dutse in a statement to commemorate the 2026 World Day Against Trafficking in Persons.

Turajo said a total of 512 migrants who are indigene of the state were also returned from different countries by International Organization for Migration (IOM) between January 2025 and July 2026.

He explained that the command also secured two convictions, including that of foreign national within the period under

The commander added that the agency has conducted 150 sensitisation campaigns in schools, communities, markets and worship places across the 27 LGAs of the state.

"The command also conducted six sensitisation campaigns to commemorate the 2026 Day in Kazaure and Roni LGAs, being some of the most trafficking in persons areas in Jigawa State.

"The Command wishes to use this medium to send a strong warning to all traffickers, both within and from outside wishing to use the state as a source, route or destination for their illicit activities to desist from doing so as we are ever ready and capable of dealing decisively with anybody or group of people that try to engage in human trafficking within the state.

"We have a mandate and we shall discharge it to the later for the overall good of the state and the nation at large," the commander said

Turajo further urged the public to support the agency by reporting all suspected cases of human trafficking, child abuse and other related offences to the state command headquarters at Block 5 Old State Secretariat Dutse or via 0904 964 3905, infojigawa@naptip.gov.ng, 627 short code and through NAPTIP ireporter APP on android and ios.

He also enjoined people to desist from hiding information or harboring people that are engaging in human trafficking and related offences.

The commander, who appreciated the state government for all its support and cooperation, lauded Gov. Umar Namadi for his commitment and support to the war against human trafficking.

"We equally appreciate security agencies and all other partners in the state for their support. We urge you all to join hands with NAPTIP in this collective fight against our common enemy."

First Lady seeks Western education for Almajiri children

ABUJA

The First Lady, Sen. Oluremi Tinubu, has called for greater support to ensure that Almajiri and out-of-school children have access to formal education that combines Arabic instruction with Western education.

Tinubu made the call on Thursday in Abuja while receiving the new Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Nigeria, Amb. Yousef bin Mohammed Albalawi, and the embassy's Chief of Staff, Mr Mohammed Bukar.

She said that formal education would improve the children's standard of living and help secure Nigeria's future.

The First Lady called for a strategic partnership between Nigeria and Saudi Arabia to reform the Almajiri education system by integrating Islamic teachings with formal Western education.

She said the collaboration would help address the challenges facing Almajiri and out-of-school children while protecting the future of vulnerable children across the country.

Tinubu noted that Nigeria and Saudi Arabia had maintained cordial relations over the years and appreciated the ambassador for the visit.

"I work with women and vulnerable children in society, and my heart goes out to the Almajiri children in the North. I believe they need better care.

"This is because most of the insecurity challenges in the nation, if those particular group of children are not taken care of, I don't know what might happen.

"I believe we can still start begin to

NEWS EXTRA

Special Adviser Seeks Improved Support for Edo Hajj Operations

ABDUL-KADIR ABDULLAH

BENIN CITY

The Special Adviser to the Edo State Governor on Islamic Religious Matters, Hon. Ahmed Musa Momoh, has expressed confidence in Governor Monday Okpebholo's continued commitment to strengthening Hajj operations in Edo State.

Hon Momoh noted that the administration's track record of responding promptly to genuine needs gives assurance that the challenges facing the Edo State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board will receive the Governor's attention.

Speaking during a courtesy visit to the board on Wednesday, Momoh noted that while the state government had already demonstrated its support by providing the board with the necessary things, there was a need to further brief the Governor on the operational challenges confronting Hajj administration in the state, expressing optimism that appropriate interventions would follow.

"I am aware, as I can see, that you have a very beautiful edifice built by the government. It is also important to let the Governor know our plight in the Hajj industry in the state," he said.

According to the Special Adviser, Governor Monday Okpebholo is a leader who listens to genuine concerns and responds promptly to the needs of the people.

"The Governor is someone who listens, and when he listens and sees genuine reasons to do something, he does it almost immediately. Like when he visited the Edo Broadcasting Service (EBS), you saw what he did. He gave them buses and other support. So when we also lay our complaints about what we are lacking in the board, I am sure he will look into it," Momoh added.

Responding, the Chairman of the Edo State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board, Mallam Musa Muhammad Uduimoh, congratulated Hon. Momoh on his appointment, expressing confidence that his new role would strengthen collaboration within the state government.

"Let us once again congratulate you on your well-deserved appointment. We are happy to work together because, as a matter of fact, it is the foundation of our success together, even as the Pilgrims Welfare

Military vows neutrality ahead 2027 elections

ABUJA

The Armed Forces of Nigeria on Thursday reaffirmed their commitment to neutrality, professionalism and adherence to human rights in the conduct of the 2027 General Elections.

The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Gen. Olufemi Oluyede, said this at a seminar on "The Role of the Armed Forces of Nigeria Personnel in Conducting Free, Fair and Credible Elections: The 2027 General Elections in Perspective."

The seminar was organised by the Defence Headquarters, Department of Operations in Abuja.

The CDS who was represented by Rear Adm. Abolade Ogunleye, the Chief of Training, Defence Headquarters, said the seminar was timely given current security challenges and the need to create an enabling environment for peaceful elections.

He noted that the Constitution saddled the Armed Forces with the mandate to suppress insurrection and provide aid to civil authority when called upon.

"As we approach the election period, it is imperative that personnel are constantly reminded of their roles to ensure strict neutrality, professionalism and adherence to international human rights provisions," he said.

Oluyede added that the seminar would align commanders and staff officers with their roles and reiterate adherence to the Code of Conduct and Rules of Engagement for Operation Safe Conduct 2027.

He cited the just-concluded off-cycle and by-elections in Ekiti, Kano, Kogi, Rivers, Nasarawa, Enugu and Ondo states, saying the professional conduct of troops contributed to seamless and incident-free polls.

The defence chief urged participants to apply lessons learned to strengthen inter-agency cooperation, ensure rapid response and protect law-abiding citizens while remaining apolitical.

He also commended Presi-



DEMOCRACY ROUNDTABLE:
Chairman, Nigeria Union of Journalist (NUJ), FCT, Mrs Grace Ike (6th R); The Editor-in-Chief, News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Mr Mufutau Ojo (2nd R); Assistant Director, Voter Education and Planning, Magdalene Aku (3rd R); and other panelists and participants, during a democracy roundtable organised by NUJ, NAN Chapel in Abuja on Wednesday.

Ondo: Police arrest 3 suspected drug dealers, recover illicit substances

AKURE

The Police Command in Ondo State says it has arrested three suspected drug dealers during a routine patrol operation in Akure, the state capital.

DSP Abayomi Jimoh, the command's Spokesperson, made the disclosure in a statement on Thursday in Akure, saying the arrest was part of the command's ongoing campaign against illicit drug trafficking and other crimes.

Jimoh explained that the operation was carried out by operatives of the command's anti-cultism squad.

"This forms part of sustained efforts to dismantle criminal networks whose activities are often linked to cultism, armed robbery, violent crimes and other threats to public safety.

"On July 24 at about 2:00 p.m., while on a strategic confidence-building patrol within Akure metropolis, operatives intercepted and arrested three suspects.

"The suspects identified as Fisayo Adedamola (Female), Adeola Oluwaseun (Male), and Adeogun Olumide (Male), were allegedly involved in the distribution and sale of illicit drugs.

"A thorough search conducted during the operation led to the recovery of various substances and pharmaceutical products suspected to be illicit or abused drugs.

"Items recovered include quantities of substances suspected to be cannabis, Tramadol capsules, Codeine syrup and Tutolin syrup," he said.

The police spokesperson said the suspects were immediately taken into custody, while the recovered exhibits have been secured as evidence.

He, therefore, said preliminary investigations were ongoing to determine the source of the drugs, identify possible accomplices and uncover any criminal network connected to their activities.

Jimoh, however, said the suspects would be charged to court upon the conclusion of investigations.

Electricity subsidy benefits wealthier households than low-income communities – Expert

ABUJA

Mr Ewah Eleri, the Executive Director of International Centre for Energy, Environment and Development (ICEED), says the current electricity subsidy regime benefits wealthier households than low-income communities.

Mr Eleri said this during in an interview with newsmen on Thursday in Abuja.

He said Federal Government spent more than 10 billion dollars on electricity subsidies over the past year yet the benefits had largely gone to high-income households.

Eleri explained that 10 per cent of households received more than half of the government's electricity subsidy, estimated at about N3trillion, while 40 per cent benefited marginally.

"Subsidies are intended to support vulnerable communities and make electricity affordable, but the current framework largely benefits those who consume the most electricity," he said.

The expert said that existing subsidy structure discouraged investment in renewable energies conventional electricity sources, gas-fired generation, artificially cheaper than cleaner alternatives such as solar power.

"As a result, renewable energy becomes less competitive, limiting the diversification of Nigeria's energy mix, making it more difficult to meet climate change commitments," he said.

He urged that similar reforms in the electricity sector could deliver comparable environmental and economic benefits while improving fairness in electricity pricing.

"We need to remove harmful subsidies that ultimately hurt the poor, constrain electricity expansion and discourage investment in renewable energy.

"Whichever way you look at it the current system leaves everyone worse off," he said.

On the role of regulators, Eleri highlighted the opportunities created by the Electricity Act, which empowered state governments to regulate electricity supply within their jurisdictions.

He said that about 15 states had established functional electricity regulatory commissions to oversee electricity markets, expand access, resolve consumer complaints and managed disputes within the sector.

The expert said the success of the new framework would depend on clear regulatory boundaries between the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) and state electricity regulatory commissions.

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. **Mrs. THERESA ITEBIMIEN OKUN**, late of Uzebba, Owan West L.G.A., who died on the 21st day of July, 2026 in Benin City.	**PED/539/2026** Miss. Herieta Okun and Miss. Matilda Okun of No 2B, 2nd Owegie Lane, Off Ekenwan Road, Benin City, daughters of the deceased.

DATED THIS 29TH DAY OF JULY, 2026.

B. O. OSAWARU ESQ.
Probate Registrar

FEATURE

Phillips Consulting's Findings Lay Bare Obaseki's Governance Failures

Dr. Patrick Akhere Ebojele



MONDAY OKPEBHOLO GODWIN OBASEKI

It is not uncommon every year for all and sundry to carry out governance rankings, generate headlines, shape public opinion, and create ammunition in political debates. The Phillips Consulting 2026 State Performance Momentum Index is the latest example. While it has attracted widespread attention, its assessment of Edo State has been misconstrued and very dangerously, too.

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo assumed office on November 12, 2024. By the time Phillips Consulting compiled its Momentum Index, his administration had been in office for barely seven months. That is hardly enough time for any government to reverse inherited challenges, execute major projects, and produce measurable outcomes across critical sectors. This is the first sign that it was not about the present government in Benin City.

Of truth, governance is a process and not necessarily an event. Budgets must be passed, contracts awarded, projects mobilised, and policies implemented before citizens begin to experience their impact. Inevitably measuring a government so early in its life cycle captures more of what it inherited than what it has created.

It is clear that the report says more about the administration of former Governor Godwin Obaseki than it does about Governor Okpebholo. If Edo was underperforming on key governance indicators when the data was collected, those conditions were largely shaped by the policies and outcomes of the previous eight years before Governor Okpebholo's entrance In that sense, the report unintentionally reinforces the central argument advanced by the current administration since taking office—that it inherited significant fiscal, institutional, and governance challenges requiring time to address.

Even Phillips Consulting makes an important distinction by describing its exercise as a Momentum Index rather than an assessment of absolute performance. That distinction is germain. A state recovering from a faulty base may record rapid movement within a short period, while another embarking on deeper structural reforms may appear to move more slowly because meaningful reforms naturally take longer to produce measurable results.

It is on this score that the information about Edo must be evaluated as much of the data reflects conditions inherited from the previous administration rather than the policies of the current government. Judging a new administration almost entirely on historical indicators risks creating a misleading narrative.

What of the methodology? The index combines indicators such as citizen satisfaction, internally generated revenue, fiscal self-reliance, debt per capita, and transparency into a single composite score. While such indices are common, they often compress complex governance realities into one number, making it difficult to appreciate the unique circumstances facing individual states.

The index has other defects. Information in the public domain also points to significant differences in survey sample sizes. Lagos reportedly had more than 12,000 respondents, while some states had fewer than 100 and others fewer than 200. Such disparities affect statistical reliability. Smaller samples carry larger margins of error, making broad comparisons less dependable. That does invalidate the report and also suggests its conclusions should be interpreted with caution rather than being treated as definitive.

What of the reality on the ground? Since taking office, Governor Okpebholo has launched an ambitious infrastructure program across Edo State. Road construction and rehabilitation are ongoing in the three senatorial districts. Drainage projects are being expanded to tackle flooding, while erosion control works continue in vulnerable communities. The Ramat Park Flyover, the first of its kind in Benin City, has become a visible symbol of the administration's drive to modernise the state's infrastructure.

Education is another sector where the administration is investing for the future and has received accolades. Through the Senator Monday Okpebholo Education Talent Hunt Competition, outstanding students have received scholarships to state-owned tertiary institutions. It is an investment in human capital whose full benefits will emerge over several years, not within the narrow timeline captured by the Momentum Index.

Healthcare reforms are also underway. The government has prioritised the revitalisation of primary healthcare centers to improve access to affordable medical services, particularly in underserved communities. Better healthcare outcomes take time, but the foundations are being laid through investments that are expected to strengthen the system over the long term.

Security has received similar attention. The administration has reduced bloodbath arising from violent cult clashes and established a Special Criminal Court to accelerate the prosecution of cultism and kidnapping cases while strengthening security operations across the state. Restoring public confidence and creating a safer environment for businesses and residents can not be measured within a few months, yet these reforms are critical to sustainable development.

Governor Monday Okpebholo is equally pursuing digital governance reforms by improving public service delivery, expanding electronic government platforms, and strengthening digital capacity within the civil service. These initiatives are designed to improve transparency, revenue generation, and administrative efficiency—the same indicators future governance assessments are likely to reward once the reforms become fully operational.

This is why reducing Edo's performance to a single momentum score does not tell any part of the story. Independent assessments remain valuable because they encourage accountability and challenge governments to improve. However, accountability must also be fair. Reports should recognise political transitions, inherited conditions, and the time required for reforms to produce measurable outcomes. Without that context, statistics risk creating impressions that are incomplete or even misleading.

It was on this basis that Edo State Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Prince Kassim Afegbua, rejected the Phillips Consulting report, describing it as "reckless and misleading" He argued that the assessment overlooked ongoing infrastructure projects, educational reforms, healthcare improvements, and institutional changes already underway across the state. He also maintained that much of the data reflected the fiscal realities inherited from the previous administration rather than the direction of the current government.

His point is: Can a government that has spent barely seven months in office fairly be judged on indicators largely shaped by eight years of its predecessor? Ultimately, governments are remembered less for annual rankings than for enduring achievements. Roads, schools, hospitals, stronger institutions, and improved public services leave a more lasting legacy than league tables published once a year.

• Ebojele, PhD. in public administration, is the Chief Press Secretary to Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State.

NEWS

Chairman of Uhunmwode's knack for development speaks across LGA, says Ohen-Osa

Ejemogo Rebecca Awuri

The Ohen-Osa of Holy Aruosa Cathedral, Benin City, Dr. Harrison OKao, has applauded the Acting Chairman of Uhunmwode Local Government Council, Edo State, Hon. Austin Imafidon, popularly known as ISIWINA, on his successful election and outstanding developments taking place across the local government area.

Dr. Okao, who made this commendation on Tuesday during a courtesy visit to Hon. Austin Imafidon, described the progress in the area since the chairman assumed office as outstanding transformation.

The Ohen-Osa said the various infrastructural improvements, environmental sanitation initiatives, people-oriented policies, and youth empowerment programmes have positively impacted the lives of residents, restored public confidence and trust in grassroots governance.

Furthermore, he briefed the Chairman on the ongoing preparations ahead of the 10th anniversary celebration of the reign of His Royal Majesty, the Oba Benin, stressing the significance of the milestone in the history and cultural heritage of the Benin Kingdom.

In addition, the Ohen-Osa, in a solemn moment of prayer, committed the administration of Hon. Austin Imafidon into the hands of Almighty God, praying for divine protection, sound health, wisdom and strength to enable him remain consistent in portraying good governance and continue delivering meaningful development to the people of Uhunmwode.

He also rendered prayers for unity, lasting peace, and greater development in the Benin Kingdom, while laying special emphasis on the continuity of progress and prosperity of Uhunmwode Local Government Area.

Hon. Austin Imafidon, in response, expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Ohen-Osa for his timely visit, prayers, and words of encouragement which he described as a source of inspiration, while reiterating his administration's unwavering commitment to providing purposeful leadership and delivering democratic dividends to every community in Uhunmwode Local Government Area.

The Chairman thereafter assured the Ohen-Osa that his administration as the Local Government Chairman would continue to work diligently in collaboration with the developmental vision of the Edo State Government while promoting peace, unity, and sustainable development throughout the Local Government area.



The Ohen-Osa of Holy Aruosa Cathedral, Benin City, Dr. Harrison Okao, (right), and the Chairman of Uhunmwode LGA, Hon. Austin Imafidon.

Security

BENIN CITY

BIU research team presents drug findings to NDLEA Commander

...As students association, NGO seeks collaboration

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Edo State Command, has received a research report from a team of biomedical researchers led by Dr Success Eferavware of Benson Idahosa University (BIU), detailing the harmful effects of 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA), commonly called 'molly' on female reproduction and human organs.

Presenting the findings at the NDLEA State Command Headquarters in Benin City over the weekend, Dr. Success Eferavware, expressed gratitude to the Commander of Narcotics, Mitchell Ofoyeju, PhD, for the support and cooperation extended to the research team throughout the study.

The biomedical research revealed that MDMA significantly impairs vital body organs, causing structural damage across reproductive organs. The findings further indicated that the drug contributes to pregnancy loss and has adverse effects on fertility, among other health complications.

Receiving the research team, Commander Mitchell Ofoyeju commended them for their exceptional work, promising to present the report to the Chairman/Chief Executive Officer, Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (rtd).

He noted that drugs like MDMA, or Danabol, often referred to as "Molly" among young people, are among the substances commonly abused by youths.

He emphasised that this research, conducted by students, further validates the dangers associated with drug abuse.

"Let me assure you that your report will be conveyed to the Chairman/Chief Executive Officer, Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa. The involvement of students in this research will resonate with young people, sending a clear message that drug abuse is lethal," Mitchell said.

Commander Mitchell specifically appreciated them for exhibiting a high sense of integrity and professionalism by returning the remaining tablets of Danabol to the agency, describing it as worthy of emulation.

He urged the team to widely publicise the research findings and conduct similar studies on other drugs of abuse.

The research team comprised Arheghan Yolanda Osemen, Irabor Ehizojie Great, and Ogor Treasure Efe.

Similarly, the NDLEA commander also played host to the leadership of the Nigerian Students and Youth Association (NISAYA) Edo State chapter and a Non-Governmental Agency, Social Watch Anti-Drug Abuse Advocacy (SWADAA).

The National President of NISAYA, Comrade Ephraim Eghosa Osemwengi stated that the purpose of the visit was to establish a cordial relationship with the Command in promoting drug abuse prevention and creating greater awareness among students and youths in Edo State.

Commander Mitchell warmly welcomed the delegation and commended the leadership of NISAYA for demonstrating interest in contributing to the fight against drug abuse.

He encouraged the students and youths to remain focused despite life's challenges, stressing that perseverance and resilience are essential ingredients for success.

While emphasising the benefits of drug abuse prevention, he called on the students to become War Against Drug Abuse (WADA) advocates in their respective communities.

The visit of the SWADAA delegation was aimed at strengthening collaboration between SWADAA and the NDLEA Edo State Command in the areas of drug abuse prevention, rehabilitation advocacy, public sensitisation, capacity building, and community-based interventions against substance abuse.



REHABILITATION:
From left to right. The NDLEA Assistant State Commander Admin/Logistics, ACN Aliyu Ibrahim, Deputy State Commander, DCN Adeola Salaudeen, Dr Success Eferavware, NDLEA Edo State Commander CN Mitchell Ofoyeju PhD, Miss Arheghan Yolanda Osemen, Deputy State Commander DSC Operations and Training DCN Victor Isibor, Deputy State Commander DSC Counselling Treatment and Rehabilitation, DCN hope Aigbogun during the visit.

The State Commandant of SWADAA, Comrade Mrs. Kehinde Osifo Ayo, in her opening remarks emphasised that sustained public awareness remains one of the most effective tools in addressing the drug problem.

She called for stronger collaboration between both organisations and requested opportunities for continuous training and capacity building to enable SWADAA members to contribute more effectively to drug abuse prevention efforts.

Commander Mitchell assured the SWADAA team that the NDLEA Edo State command will partner with them because the Agency needs credible stakeholders to amplify the anti-drug abuse campaign.



Maj Gen I.O Bassey(left) presenting souvenirs to NDLEA Edo State Commander, CN Mitchell Ofoyeju PhD at the seminar.

NDLEA highlights impact of substance abuse on army effectiveness

BENIN CITY

The Army Headquarters Department of Army Transformation and Innovation hosted a strategic seminar aimed at enhancing operational effectiveness within the Nigerian Army.

The ceremony was held at the Nigeria Army School of Supply and Transport, Benin City. The session focused on the crucial topic, "Lessons Learned Process/Feedback Mechanism", with a special emphasis on the impact of drug and substance abuse.

The highlight of the seminar came from a compelling lecture delivered by the commander of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in Edo State, Commander of Narcotics Mitchell Ofoyeju, PhD.

The commander, who addressed a packed audience of military personnel, emphasising the detrimental effects of substance abuse on the operational readiness and effectiveness of the army.

"Substance use and addiction pose significant risks not just to the individual soldier but also to unit cohesion and overall mission success," Dr. Ofoyeju stated.

He elaborated on how drug abuse can impair judgement, decrease decision-making capabilities, and increase vulnerability to mental health issues among soldiers. The commander called for immediate attention to preventive measures.

The seminar was structured to facilitate open discussions and feedback mechanisms aimed at engaging military personnel.

Dr. Ofoyeju underscored the importance of creating a culture of awareness and support, where soldiers feel comfortable seeking help.

"Our focus must shift towards prevention, education, and rehabilitation," he remarked, encouraging participants to see drug abuse as a threat to national security.

In collaboration with the NDLEA, the seminar aims to reinforce existing policies related to welfare and mental health within the Nigerian Army.

The Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Waidi Shaibu, represented by the commandant, Nigeria Army School of Supply and Transport, Benin City, Major Gen. A.O. Adegbite, commended the NDLEA's proactive approach, stating, "This partnership is essential not only for the health of our soldiers but for the integrity and effectiveness of our operations."

Participants engaged in robust discussions following the lecture, sharing experiences and insights on the challenges.

The seminar concluded with a call to action, encouraging all soldiers to take personal responsibility and support their peers in creating an army that is both healthy and prepared to face the challenges ahead.

This sensitisation seminar is part of ongoing efforts by the Nigerian Army to ensure a robust feedba ck mechanism for addressing lessons learned from both operational experiences and societal challenges, reinforcing their commitment to the well-being of troops and the success of national security objectives.

Edo NDLEA uncovers drug warehouse, nabs couple

The Edo State Command of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has uncovered a large quantity of illicit drugs hidden in a warehouse in Benin City, the state capital.

Commander of Narcotics Mitchell Ofoyeju, PhD, the Edo State Commander of the NDLEA, said that the drugs were detected at a residential building along Sapele Road, Benin City, where the main targets, a husband and wife, were apprehended.

Commander Mitchell said that the discovery highlights a growing concern regarding drug trafficking and illegal drug distribution in the state.

"We arrested a husband and wife, Christian Chukwuka, 32 years old, and Nwanneka Christian, 33 years old, at the illicit warehouse where they deal in narcotic drugs.

The arrest and seizure are a reflection of growing concern over drug trafficking and abuse. Both suspects who hail from Ndokwa in Delta State were caught at the warehouse," Mitchell stated.

The successful operation was carried out following credible intelligence received on the notorious criminal activities by the above suspected couple.

NDLEA officers raided the illicit storage facility where they seized twenty-two bags of skunk cannabis weighing 219.5 kilograms and compressed blocks of Canadian Loud, a potent strain of synthetic cannabis weighing 192.67 kilograms.



One of the suspects, Christian Chukwuka, in his statement claimed that poverty and joblessness pushed him into the criminal act.

According to Christian, "I am a secondary school graduate, and I learnt how to drive trucks, but because of joblessness, a friend introduced me to drug trafficking.

"My wife has a set of twins for me, and the pressure of financial upkeep has been a challenge. If given another chance, I promise not to deal in drugs again," Christian pleaded.

The NDLEA Edo State Commander, Mitchell, confirmed that investigations into the case are underway and that the suspects will soon face charges in court. "Our efforts to combat drug trafficking remain unwavering. We will thoroughly investigate this case and ensure that justice is served," Ofoyeju stated.

The seizure is one of the most significant drug busts in the state, raising public awareness of the growing drug problem. The NDLEA remains committed to eradicating illegal drug operations and ensuring the safety and well-being of every community in the state.

SECURITY



SPECIAL SQUAD:
A cross section of opreatives of Edo Special Squad with a suspected kidnapper

Cultism, kidnapping and the special security squad

BENIN CITY

Richard Eweka

Crime is complex and difficult most times to be resolved, criminals ready to carry out their nefarious and clandestine activities unchecked because the State lacks the capabilities to check their activities due to lack of technology.

Several criminal elements go unchecked and their activities have gradually become a normal way of life as they allegedly make money from their evil acts, live large in the society, their activities has influenced the youths negatively as they emulate their lifestyle.

Nigerians especially the younger generation now gradually see crime and criminality as a way of life and the route out of poverty as criminals go most times unchallenged by the system, hence a rise in crime.

Kidnapping, banditotry, terrorism, robbery became the order of the day as successive administration fought to curtail criminal elements across the Country and the fight is yielding positive results as the scourge is being depleted and our dignity gradually being restored as Nigerians.

Governor Monday Okpebholo came into governance prepared, and steps taken in the last one year and eight months are deliberate, particularly working hard to improve the security of lives and properties in Edo State.

'Akpakomisa' as the governor is popularly called has laid the template of development through the SHINE agenda which he is using to change the narrative of the Edo people, acknowledging the rise in crime rate but courageous enough to fight the scourge to a stand still.

He acknowledged that security is critical for development and his administration is determined to improve security in the State and established "The Edo State Special Security Squad codenamed "Operation flush out Kidnappers and Cultists" appointed a leader of the group who is also his Principal Security Officer (PSO) with the mandate to restore peace and order ensuring Edo is free from crime, criminality and banditotry, particularly cultism and kidnapping.

The government targeted property seizures, sealing and demolishing properties, buildings, and hideouts used by cultists or their sponsors across Edo State, taking the fight to criminals and ensuring the State is no longer a safe haven for criminality.

For the first time in several years in Edo State, the streets are calm, society peaceful especially during celebration period. Establishing the mandate given by the governor, the squad carried out the mandate judiciously ensuring no one was victimized.

The results of several operations led by the PSO ensure there was no more blood in the streets across the State, families no longer mourn neither do parents, wives, brothers and sisters grieve over loss of loved ones as a result of violent attack from kidnapping or cultism.

The Okpebholo led administration took decisive steps to punish the offenders of kidnapping and cultism as the legislative arm of the government supporting the fight and the governor assenting to the law showing the commitment and seriousness of the administration.

A look at the law shows that death penalty awaits convicted kidnappers and cultists responsible for killings as they face execution by hanging, with the governor vowing to sign death warrants.

Jail term for Sponsors: Financial or material backers of cult groups receive 21 years in prison without an option of a fine.

Harboring Criminals: Landlords or property owners who shelter cultists or permit cult activities get 10 years in prison.

Property Demolition: Buildings, houses, and hideouts used by kidnappers or cultists are seized and demolished by the State government.

Gov Okpebholo on July 1, 2026 set up a special court in Benin City (Special Criminal Court One) to fast-track trials to speed up the prosecution of kidnapping and cultism cases within two to three weeks with strict state penalties.

Public Warning: The government has sealed several criminal hideouts and warned residents to be careful who they rent properties to, as enforcement continues across the state.

Edo North, Edo Central and Edo South Senatorial Districts have felt the impact of the Okpebholo boys searching, raiding and arresting criminals, bringing criminality to its knees ensuring the State is safe for all to live and do business.

The Security team has stormed hideout of kidnappers, cultists across the State, breaking kidnapping syndicates, arresting kingpins of dangerous gangs, shattering cultists gathering and operations to recover weapons of their evil trades and properties linked to their crimes demolished without any sentiment attached, sending a warning signal that Edo is no longer safe for criminals.

The streets and communities in Uromi, Irrua, Auchi, Aviele, Iyanomo, Uzebu, Ekenwan, Goodwill, Ogbe Ibuya, Plymouth, Uselu Shell, Okhoro, Ugbowo, Ekosodin, Oluku, Siluko, Amagba and across the three Senatorial Districts of the State has felt the impact of Governor Okpebholo's determination to keep Edo safe.

The squad and other security agencies including the Police, Army, Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corp (NSCDC) Edo State Security Corp, local vigilante and hunters embarked on several successful operations while the face and spokes person for the team Noah Idemudia always briefed the media informing the world of the success, challenges, difficulties faced at each operations.

The various operations embarked on by the security squad underscore the determination, zeal and commitment of the Governor Okpebholo led administration to stamp out kidnapping, cultism and other violent crimes across Edo State.



NEWS

FOREIGN

Why Okpebholo is taking the SHINE Agenda beyond borders

Dr. Patrick Akhere Ebojele

The UK Executive Forum, themed "Edo SHINE 2026: Shining Beyond Borders", with the Executive Governor Senator Monday Okpebholo as the Special Guest of Honour represents far more than another diaspora engagement. It signals a deliberate effort by the Edo State Governor to reposition the diaspora as a strategic partner in the state's economic transformation.

As it were for decades, diaspora engagement in many Nigerian states has often revolved around goodwill visits, cultural celebrations and occasional investment appeals. While such engagements have helped sustain emotional ties with home, they have rarely produced structured partnerships capable of driving sustainable development.

For Governor Okpebholo, SHINE 2026 sought to change that narrative. It reflects an emerging governance philosophy that sees Edo professionals and entrepreneurs abroad not simply as ambassadors of the state, but as investors, innovators, mentors and collaborators whose expertise can accelerate development.

This shift comes at an important moment. Around the world, diaspora communities have become powerful contributors to national development through investment, technology transfer, entrepreneurship and knowledge exchange. Beyond remittances, which already contribute significantly to our nation's economy, the real value lies in the skills, professional networks and international business relationships that diaspora communities possess. Governor Okpebholo is seeking to harness these assets in a more organised and purposeful manner.

The Governor's SHINE Agenda provides the framework for this lofty ambition. Built around the pillars of Security, Health, Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Agriculture, and Education, it is his blueprint, guiding government policy, public spending and development priorities; and not as isolated policy themes! Together, they represent the building blocks of his vision of a productive State economy capable of attracting investment, creating jobs and improving the quality of life for citizens.

As the Governor has articulated severally, Infrastructure is central to this vision. Roads, transportation, energy and urban renewal continue to determine the competitiveness of every modern economy. The state's ambitious capital investment programme, including new roads, flyovers, drainage systems, rural access routes and agricultural infrastructure, demonstrates an understanding that private investment follows public infrastructure. Investors are naturally drawn to locations



GOV. MONDAY OKPEBHOLO

where governments show commitment to improving the business environment.

For members of the Edo diaspora with expertise in engineering, construction, project management, renewable energy and infrastructure financing, these projects present opportunities that extend beyond philanthropy. They offer genuine commercial prospects where professional experience acquired overseas can contribute directly to development back home while generating economic returns.

Agriculture is another compelling frontier. Edo State possesses abundant arable land, favourable climatic conditions and growing domestic demand for food and agro-industrial products. The government's emphasis on ensuring that agricultural support reaches genuine farmers rather than political beneficiaries is intended to build confidence in the sector. At the same time, investments in farm estates, irrigation, processing facilities and rural connectivity are laying the foundation for modern agribusiness.

For diaspora investors with backgrounds in agricultural technology, food processing, export logistics, mechanisation or agribusiness finance, the opportunities are substantial. Beyond primary production lies an entire value chain involving storage, packaging, transportation, processing and international market access. It is within these areas that experience gained in advanced economies can become a powerful catalyst for local economic growth.

Healthcare is equally significant. Plans to expand primary healthcare facilities alongside the development of a specialist hospital underscore the administration's commitment to improving medical services. However, healthcare today extends far beyond hospital buildings. It encompasses digital health technologies, diagnostics, pharmaceutical supply chains, specialist training, health insurance systems and medical research.

The Edo diaspora includes hundreds of accomplished doctors, nurses, pharmacists, biomedical scientists and healthcare administrators working across the United Kingdom and other parts of the world. SHINE 2026 provides a platform to explore how these professionals can contribute not only through medical missions but through sustainable partnerships, institutional collaboration and investment in healthcare delivery.

Education, too, occupies a central place within Governor Okpebholo's SHINE Agenda. Every successful economy invests in developing its human capital. Expanding access to quality education, strengthening technical and vocational training, promoting digital literacy and improving tertiary education are essential components of preparing young people for an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy.

Diaspora academics, researchers, technology experts and education entrepreneurs have an important role to play in this process. Partnerships between institutions, mentorship programmes, research collaborations and technology-driven learning solutions can help bridge existing gaps while exposing Edo's young population to global opportunities.

Security, often overlooked in economic discussions, remains fundamental to investment confidence. Businesses thrive where lives and property are protected, institutions function effectively and investors have confidence in the rule of law. Strengthening security therefore becomes an economic imperative as much as a governance responsibility.

Combined with ongoing institutional reforms and structured diaspora engagement, these efforts contribute to creating an environment where investment decisions become easier.

Perhaps one of the most significant features of SHINE 2026 is its format.

Rather than relying solely on speeches and ceremonial presentations, the forum prioritises dialogue. Investors can ask difficult questions. Entrepreneurs can discuss regulatory concerns. Professionals can propose ideas. Government officials can explain policies directly while listening to constructive feedback from stakeholders.

Such conversations matter because successful investment is built on trust, transparency and access to reliable information. Many investment opportunities are lost simply because potential investors cannot obtain clear answers or identify the right institutional contacts. Forums such as SHINE help bridge that information gap while fostering relationships that can mature into long-term partnerships.

Equally valuable is the networking environment the forum creates. Some of the most impactful business ventures begin not in formal boardrooms but through conversations between people who discover shared interests and complementary expertise. Bringing together policymakers, investors, professionals, entrepreneurs and development partners under one roof increases the likelihood of collaborations that may ultimately translate into businesses, jobs and economic growth across Edo State.

The inclusion of cultural performances, music and Edo cuisine also serves an important purpose. Culture is more than entertainment; it is an economic asset. Tourism, creative industries, heritage preservation and cultural enterprises increasingly contribute to regional economies worldwide. Showcasing Edo's rich cultural heritage reinforces the state's identity while reminding participants that development is strongest when economic progress is rooted in cultural confidence.

Ultimately, SHINE 2026 is about more than a single event in London. It is about redefining the relationship between Edo State and its global community. It is an invitation to move from sentiment to strategy, from goodwill to partnership, and from conversation to measurable outcomes.

The challenges Governor Okpebholo inherited are real, but so are the opportunities. The government alone cannot deliver the future Edo people desire. Neither can the private sector nor the diaspora acting in isolation. Sustainable development requires collaboration built on shared vision, mutual trust and collective responsibility.

Governor Okpebholo is confident that SHINE 2026 will forge those partnerships, attract new investment and inspire fresh ideas. He knows that his greatest achievement will not be measured by attendance figures or speeches he delivers in London or elsewhere. It will be measured by the lives he improved across Edo State in the years he was Chief Executive. This is the true promise of shining beyond borders.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:
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Saudi Arabia's dilemma as it tries to stay out of US-Iran war

Saudi Arabia is facing a difficult dilemma. Ever since the US and Israel launched their war on Iran on 28 February, the Saudis have largely tried to stay out of it.

But now, after being attacked from three sides, the Saudis have had enough. This week, they carried out joint strikes with the US on Iranian proxy militias in Iraq who they believe have been launching drones at the Kingdom.

For Saudi Arabia the dilemma now is whether to keep on hitting back as a deterrent, or whether to try to de-escalate the situation, perhaps by paying off some of their adversaries.

So who is attacking who and why?

First, a bit of context. There are broadly two sides in the conflict that has been consuming the Gulf and other parts of the Middle East for five months now.

On one side there is Iran and its Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC). Allied to them are the Houthis in Yemen, a tribal group who took over much of the country in 2014.

Also backed by Iran are the Popular Mobilisation Forces in Iraq, the paramilitary group that has allegedly carried out 30 drone strikes on Saudi Arabia and has now been attacked in return.

Then there is Hezbollah in Lebanon, still a potent force but one that is currently lying low.

The US and Saudi Arabia carried out strikes at a site belonging to Iraq's paramilitary Popular Mobilisation Forces

On the opposite side of this conflict is the US with its immensely powerful Central Command (Centcom) forces plus - to varying degrees - the Gulf Arab states and Jordan. Israel remains a close US ally but is currently not an active participant in this war.

Iran has most recently been concentrating its drone and missile attacks on Jordan, Kuwait and Bahrain, as well as targeting any commercial shipping that tries to slip through the Strait of Hormuz while avoiding Iran's new rules and routing.

The addition of Iraqi militias and the Houthis in Yemen is a relatively new phenomenon and it shows how - without a lasting peace deal between the US and Iran - the region risks becoming ever more embroiled in a widening conflict.

There are a number of reasons why Saudi Arabia is trying not to get sucked into a full-scale conflict.

Its de facto ruler, the relatively young Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, has embarked the country on a course known as "Vision 2030".

'I thought I would die': Survivors describe shock and horror of powerful Japan earthquake

Business was winding down for the day at Sendan Shokudo, a diner in Japan's south-western city of Yatsushiro, when the whole building suddenly lurched.

Everything on the kitchen shelves cascaded to the floor; bowls and glasses shattered.

The restaurant's co-owner, 75-year-old Hiroko Ogata, had just walked in.

"I was surprised, and scared," she told BBC News. "I went under one of the tables right away, but the table moved sharply towards the right, left, right, left, with me."

There's a reason Ogata knew how to react so swiftly: she has lived in Yatsushiro, in central Kumamoto prefecture, her whole life.

The area is located on an active tectonic fault system and is no stranger to tremors. In 2016, a pair of earthquakes killed 277 people and injured 2,800 others.

But Ogata has "never experienced this big of a jolt".

"The last quake 10 years ago was nothing like this one," she said. "I thought I would die."

At least 13 people have been killed in the wake of the 6.8-magnitude earthquake that hit Kumamoto late on Tuesday.

Of that number, three died in the Aeon shopping mall in Kumamoto city, where a number of people remain unaccounted for.

Rescue efforts are under way, but Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has warned that emergency services are in a "race against time".

'Big jolts came one after another'

Just a few hundred metres away from the Aeon mall, Yui - who preferred not to use her real name for this report - was sitting in the back office of her cake shop when the quake hit.

"I couldn't tell which was the sound of the earthquake and which was the sound of the explosion," she told the BBC.

"All I could do was hold the chair I was sitting in as big jolts came one after another," she added, appearing to still be in shock.

"I didn't know what to feel; I couldn't even feel scared in such a situation. Even now I don't know what to feel, and I don't know how to explain."

Authorities and emergency responders mobilised quickly. Shortly after the tremor struck, Takaichi put 4,600 personnel on the ground to assist with recovery, and said that teams would work "tirelessly through the night" to assess and monitor the damage in affected areas.

Tens of thousands of people have experienced power and water outages across Kumamoto City and at least 45 medical facilities have been damaged.

The exterior walls of the 17th century Kumamoto Castle, in the city's centre, came toppling down in a plume of dust. The worship hall of the 19th Century Yatshushiro Shrine completely collapsed.

FOREIGN NEWS

Two children among eight dead in Russian strikes on Ukraine, officials say

Eight people, including two children, have died during a Russian missile and drone attack on Ukraine, according to local officials.

President Volodymyr Zelensky warned on Wednesday that Russia had been preparing for a "massive attack", urging people to heed air raid alerts.

In the early hours of Thursday, the Ukrainian military reported multiple missile and drone strikes around the country.

The attacks come after Zelensky met US President Donald Trump in Washington DC this week to urge the US to grant Ukraine a licence to produce Patriot interceptor missiles.

Two girls, aged 5 and 12, were among the six killed in a village near the central Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih when a ballistic missile hit a private house, a local official said.

Eight more people were injured, including two children, the official added, noting that the number of casualties could rise.

In Kyiv, one person died and fires broke out in three non-residential buildings overnight, the capital's mayor Vitali Klitschko wrote on Telegram.

The mayor of Poltava also reported a death on Telegram, which came after he said a Nova Poshta postal terminal had been attacked.

Explosions were also heard in Lviv, its mayor Andriy Sadovyi said, reporting that residential buildings had been damaged.

Multiple people were injured with some trapped under a building, he added, saying residents were helping rescuers to clear the rubble.

A building damaged by a Russian missile strike on Lviv, Ukraine, 30 July 2026

Several other cities were under attack, with missiles reaching western Ukraine, according to BBC Ukraine.

United Nations extends sanctions against armed groups in Central African Republic

The United Nations Security Council on Wednesday unanimously adopted a resolution extending sanctions against armed groups and individuals operating in the Central African Republic.

The measures include asset freezes, travel bans, and restrictions on supplying weapons and military equipment to armed groups.

Council members acknowledged Bangui's gains in democratic governance, security, and state authority.

But they warned that armed groups and cross-border arms networks continue to threaten stability, particularly in border regions.

Speaking before the vote, French Ambassador Jérôme Bonnafont said, "significant progress" has been made in recent years but said the security situation remains "fragile."

He said it was the UN's responsibility to support the CAR in the fight against armed groups and associated individuals who continue to threaten the stability of the country.

The CAR's ambassador to the UN, Marius Aristide Hoja Nzessioué, questioned how the armed groups continued to find weapons despite the sanctions.

"What are the networks for this? Who finances these activities and benefits from them? These questions are at the heart of the effectiveness of the sanctions," he said.

He urged all parties to strictly abide by the sanctions adding that it was important to identify the source of the weapons.

"If we don't find the mechanisms which feed these groups, we run the risk of reproducing the cycle in which the armed groups are sanctioned, have their capacity temporarily reduced, and then rearm themselves through new supply circuits." The resolution extends sanctions until 31 July 2027.

DR Congo: Some Kinshasa residents support controversial referendum law

Some people in Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, have expressed support for a controversial referendum law approved by the constitutional court on Tuesday.

The opposition has denounced the ruling as giving President Félix Tshisekedi the green light to seek a third term in office.

Kinshasa resident, Martine Kabangu, said that she supports the law **"**given the current political situation and the circumstances in which our country now finds itself".

"We have a lot to do and there are things we need to shake up and readjust. I support this law, I support it," she said.

The ruling comes as the country faces mounting security challenges, including renewed fighting with the Rwanda-backed M23 rebel group in the east and a growing Ebola outbreak.

The constitution currently limits the president to two terms and can't be amended.

Under the new bill, the president will be able to make changes through a constituent assembly, followed by a referendum, in the event of a "major dysfunction" of state institutions.

Another Kinshasa resident, Bosco Kimbi, said Congolese people agree with the referendum law.

"We need to have another Constitution that will protect the country, protect the people, and allow us to move forward," he said.

Israel building new land barriers in Gaza and displacing families

We've been displaced from place to place, and now we have nowhere left to go," says Umm Mohammed al-Shawish.

She is desperately searching for somewhere to live after Israel moved yellow concrete blocks that mark out where it controls in the Gaza Strip.

Families living in al-Tuffah in northern Gaza woke on Monday to find the blocks had been moved westwards into the centre of Salah al-Din road, a key north-south route through Gaza.

Nearby, an Israeli flag was flying on top of an earth barrier around 3m (10ft) tall.

The al-Shawish family home was destroyed during the war. On Sunday, they had to flee again after the Israeli military called to warn of an attack on a nearby building. Their only shelter was a tent, which was torn apart by the strike.

"We are going to die here," Mohammed al-Shawish said. "Death is better than humiliation. No-one is standing with us."

Under the terms of the US-brokered ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas last October, Israel agreed to withdraw its forces from across Gaza to a designated demarcation - the Yellow Line.

The deal was meant to leave Israel in temporary control of the area behind the Yellow Line - equating to 53% of Gaza's territory. However, the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recently said the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) controlled more than 60%. In May, he said publicly that his "directive" was to move to 70%.

Hamas accuses Israel of violating the October ceasefire agreement by moving the Yellow Line westwards. A senior Israeli government official said Israel rejected Hamas's claims outright. The BBC was told: "IDF deployments and security lines are operational measures taken to protect Israeli citizens and prevent Hamas from rebuilding its terror army. Israel will continue to act against any ceasefire violations."

The Israeli military initially marked the Yellow Line with concrete blocks, before moving some markers further into Gaza. But Israel has now constructed a network of barriers, having started soon after the ceasefire. The barriers now stretch more than 42km (26 miles) and cover 85% of Israel's Yellow Line, with the longest section already 13.8km (8.5 miles).

Experts have told the BBC that the earthworks suggest Israel is planning for a long occupation of the strip. In some areas the earth barrier effectively moves the de facto "border" - the Yellow Line - deeper into Gaza, further increasing the deadly no-go zone for Gazans.

One section of the embankment near the al-Mawasi camp is more than 1.5km beyond where the Yellow Line was originally mapped. Another section in Khan Younis is positioned more than 500m over it.

The IDF says it is working to "clearly and visually mark the location of the Yellow Line on the ground" to "reduce friction". It has previously rejected "all claims that the Yellow Line has been moved or its crossing by IDF troops".

Other incidents of displacement have been reported in Gaza in recent months as the army has moved yellow blocks further into the territory into areas where Palestinians have been living during the ceasefire.

On 18 July, dozens of families hurriedly piled motorcycles with mattresses and any belongings they could manage as they fled the Zeitoun area, east of Gaza City. The IDF had issued an order to leave, and Gazans said they assumed this was a sign that the Yellow Line was being moved again. Some simply left empty-handed in their hurry to evacuate.

Locals described shooting from Israeli military vehicles, quadcopter drones and artillery shelling.



VISION 2030:
Israel building new barriers.

US launches 'heavy' strikes on Iran after attempted attack on American troops

The US military says it launched "heavy" strikes against Iran on Wednesday in retaliation for attempted Iranian ballistic missile attacks on American forces.

Centcom said it hit "dozens" of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) targets in response to Tuesday's firing by Iran on US bases in Jordan and at ships in the Strait of Hormuz.

The latest hostilities came a day after the conflict expanded, with the first publicly announced joint US-Saudi strikes targeting Iranian proxies in Iraq.

When the US and Israel launched military strikes on Iran in February, President Donald Trump said the war would last only a few weeks, but it has gone on for five months with no end in sight.

On Wednesday, Axios reported, citing an unnamed US official, that Trump had met with Saudi defence minister Prince Khalid bin Salman, who had conveyed that Saudi Arabia wants to de-escalate tensions. The BBC has contacted the White House for comment.

The conflict has reignited after several days of relative calm.

For days, both sides halted strikes as talks apparently restarted in hopes of some type of diplomatic solution. Trump called them "very friendly negotiations", though Tehran denied any discussions were happening.

The strikes on Wednesday started at 20:00 ET (01:00 BST on Thursday) and lasted about an hour, with Centcom calling them a "powerful response to yesterday's attempted Iranian attacks on US forces based in the Middle East". All of Iran's missiles were intercepted, Centcom said.

The attack by the US targeted "military command centers, missile and drone facilities, coastal surveillance and defense sites, and maritime capabilities," Centcom wrote once the strikes were complete.

Hours before the announced strikes, Trump vowed to retaliate against Iran for their attempted attack on US troops a day earlier.

The US president told reporters at the White House: "We're going to be hitting them very hard because it's our turn to hit them.

"They know it's coming. They asked us not to do it."

The IRGC said it had targeted a US air base and a command centre in Jordan "in response to the acts of aggression of the American child-killing army".

It also said naval forces had struck three oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz after they "ignored warnings" and sailed along what it described as an "unsafe and illegal route" through the vital Gulf waterway.

Last Friday, Trump suspended an intensive bombing campaign that had lasted for 13 consecutive nights. The US said it had targeted Iranian weapons and military sites.

Opinion

Tinubu and Okpebholo are Poised to deliver Dividends of Democracy



EUBALDUS ENAHORO

There is no doubt, 2027 will definitely change the course of history of Nigeria and the major characters in this plot are President Ahmed Bola Tinubu and Senator Monday Okpebholo, the Executive Governor of Edo State.

As every day draws closer to the Presidential election in January 2027, Nigerians are realizing that they are the solution to their problems by identifying and voting for leaders who can re-write the history of Nigeria politics

It is very obvious that most Nigeria problems are self created and people are waking up to the fact that their destiny is in their hands.

In the coming election, performance and achievements of the candidate on the ballot would be rewarded by eligible voters that will cast their votes on that day

It will be a decisive year in the history of this country when voters will vote for a candidate that has done very well and not based on rhetoric or propaganda.

As we all know, every journey starts with a first small step and as time progresses, the steps increase, promises made become fulfilled and dwindled hopes are rekindled.

With a matter of time, some patience and perseverance from the people, what some thought was impossible are becoming reality.

In Edo State for instance, when Senator Monday Okpebholo told the people that he would develop the state with his campaign promises which includes construction of Fly over Bridges, network of roads, sustainable drainages and others, some doubting Thomases laughed and said it was a pipe dream which was not possible.

But today, in less than two years, there have been outstanding performances in governance which includes two fly over Bridges which are underway and several massive road works ongoing across the state, with several government interventions that have impacted the lives of the people in the state.

The same level of development is going on across the country and the friendly Policies of the Federal government led by President Ahmed Bola Tinubu are also impacting positively on the people

President Tinubu and Governor Okpebholo visionary leadership and tireless efforts to steer the country and Edo state towards greater heights should be deeply appreciated.

They are both making indelible impact that Nigerians will one day remember them for.

There is no doubt that their wealth of experience, political sagacity and unwavering resolve in addressing the challenges facing the nation and the state are yielding positive results.

It is very obvious that President Bola Tinubu and Governor Okpebholo are desirous of improving the socio- economic and political situation of the people by offering credible strategies to resolve issues and deliver dividends of democracy within the shortest time.

These are Leaders who are truly dedicating all their efforts to leave worthy legacies and foot prints on the sand of time to be remembered and cherished.

Senator Monday Okpebholo can be likened to former Governor of Delta State, Chief James Onanefe Ibori who many politicians took for granted initially when he became governor of the state.

There was this slogan, "you dey look am, he dey go, Ogidigbogbo", used to describe Ibori's rise to become the godfather of the state.

He took effective control of the machinery of governance and political structure of the state and Oghara his home town became the Mecca of Delta politics

It is that same leadership quality that Governor Okpebholo has demonstrated right from when he was a Senator and he was underestimated politically.

But today, he is making indelible impacts, building great strides while those who are mocking him are dumbfounded as he is silently working diligently building a political empire with democratic dividends without making noise.

There are indications that Okpebholo is poised to disappoint his critics with outstanding performances in all ramifications.

Edo people can see that the man is very calm with a mission to accomplish the SHINE agenda and with the rate of achievements so far recorded there is so much confidence that not less than 2.5 million voters will vote for President Bola Tinubu in 2027

Today, Edo state is SHINING with infrastructural development across the state and the people are beginning to realize that they have leaders who are desirous of delivering dividends of democracy as quick as possible.

Eubaldus Enahoro is former Editor of the Nigerian Observer

2027: Did Obi negotiate four years for Ndigbo or himself

Stanley Nkwocha

Peter Obi's latest political posture raises a question that should make every sincere believer in the long-standing quest for a Nigerian president of Igbo extraction: did he negotiate four years for Ndigbo, or did he negotiate it for himself? Politics

That question has become necessary following recent reports of a possible political understanding between Obi and Senator Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso ahead of the 2027 presidential election. If the reports are true, and Obi has indeed accepted or considered a single-term arrangement in exchange for Northern support, then the matter goes beyond personal ambition.

It touches the deeper issue of political representation, perceived political marginalisation, and the seriousness with which the South-East approaches its long quest for the presidency.

Obi, a former vice presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party and the Labour Party's presidential candidate in 2023, has spent the last few years projecting himself as the face of a new political morality. His appeal has rested largely on claims of competence, frugality, data-driven leadership, and a promise to rescue Nigeria from waste and misgovernance. Yet his recent public engagements, especially his weekend interview with a national television, have raised more questions than answers. Politics

The interview was uncomfortable to watch. Rather than clarify his record and strengthen public confidence in his capacity, Obi appeared defensive, evasive, and increasingly trapped by the burden of his own political claims. From his assertions about schools built in Anambra to his comments on the religious composition of his cabinet and his familiar summersault views about the power sector reform, the conversation exposed gaps that his admirers often prefer to explain away. For a man who has built a movement around presumptuous facts, figures and moral superiority, that interview did serious damage.

Politics is unforgiving because public trust is built slowly and lost quickly. Once a politician makes credibility his strongest selling point, every inconsistency becomes more damaging than it would have been for an ordinary aspirant. Obi's greatest challenge today is no longer whether he can excite a section of young voters on social media. It is whether he can convince the wider Nigerian electorate that he possesses the temperament, political depth, coalition-building capacity, and national reach required to govern a complex country like Nigeria. Politics

This is where the reported four-year pact with Kwankwaso becomes deeply troubling. Ndigbo have carried the burden of presidential exclusion for decades. Since the return of democratic politics in 1979, every serious attempt by an Igbo politician to reach the highest office in the land has fallen short. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe tried under the Nigerian People's Party. Dr. Alex Ekwueme came close within the PDP structure before the 1999 election, only for the political tide to shift decisively in favour of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. Ditto for Owelle Rochas Okorocha who came second after late President Umaru Yar'Adua ahead the 2007 presidential primaries of the PDP. Other Igbo aspirants have made attempts since then, but none has crossed the final line.

That history is not a small matter. It represents decades of aspiration, negotiation, disappointment, and political recalibration. The desire for an Igbo presidency is therefore bigger than Peter Obi. It is bigger than any one politician, party, campaign slogan, or social media movement. It is a national question that requires patience, alliance-building, strategic discipline, and broad acceptance across Nigeria's major political blocs. Politics

This is why Obi's reported willingness to accept a one-term arrangement should worry serious-minded observers. If Ndigbo have waited this long for the presidency, should their most visible aspirant be negotiating a four-year tenancy in Aso Rock as though the matter is a personal career bargain? Did he consult widely with Igbo political, traditional, business, and intellectual stakeholders before entering such conversations? Did he ask whether a single term satisfies the historic demand for full political inclusion, or did he simply calculate what works best for his own ambition?

The question becomes even more relevant when placed against the current political cycle. After eight years of President Muhammadu Buhari from the North, the presidency returned to the South in 2023 through President Bola Tinubu. The broad political understanding in many quarters is that the South should ordinarily complete eight years before power returns to the North. President Tinubu is currently serving his first term and is seeking a second term in 2027. In that context, Obi's reported pact raises a strategic dilemma for southern politics and, more specifically, for the South-East.

Should the South-East stake its historic presidential aspiration on a hurried four-year term or should Ndigbo pursue a broader, more patient, and more sustainable national negotiation that can produce a presidency with stronger legitimacy and a fuller mandate when the political conditions become more favourable?

No serious student of Nigerian politics should pretend that the presidency is won by enthusiasm alone. It is won through structure, numbers, alliances, timing, regional understanding and trust. Obi's 2023 performance showed that he could energise a movement, especially among young voters and urban citizens. But it also showed the limits of a campaign that could not sufficiently penetrate the North, did not command the South-West, and relied heavily on emotional momentum rather than durable political machinery.

For Obi to become president, he would need far deeper support in the North and a meaningful opening in the South-West. At the moment, that path remains narrow. President Tinubu has spent decades building relationships across northern political, religious, business and traditional networks. He did not begin his northern outreach on the eve of an election. He invested in alliances long before many of his opponents understood the weight of such groundwork. Obi, by contrast, appears to have turned to the North only after discovering that online enthusiasm does not automatically translate into national victory.

Even the reported alliance with Kwankwaso is not the magic wand some of Obi's supporters imagine it to be. Kwankwaso is a significant political figure with a defined base, especially in Kano, but it is doubtful that he possesses the northern reach required to deliver Obi to the presidency. If the price of that limited support is a four-year concession, then Obi may have accepted a poor bargain and dressed it up as strategy.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Igbo presidency is not impossible. It is possible, legitimate, and desirable within the framework of national inclusion. But it cannot be achieved through emotional blackmail, hurried bargains, or political shortcuts that isolate the South-East from the major blocs whose support will be necessary. It must be negotiated with seriousness. It must be accepted by a meaningful section of the South-West and the North. It must be built on trust, timing, competence, and national persuasion.

That is why Obi may still have a more honourable path before him. He can choose to place the collective interest of Ndigbo above his personal ambition. More emphatic, he can support President Tinubu's completion of the South's turn in 2027, work with other Igbo leaders to deepen negotiations across the country, and help prepare the ground for a stronger Igbo presidential bid in the future. Such a move would require sacrifice, but politics at its noblest level is not always about who contests now. Sometimes it is about who helps create the conditions for a more sustainable victory later.

Of course, many will disagree with this position. Some will insult, misrepresent, and attack it. That is expected. But anger does not answer the central question. If Obi has truly accepted a four-year arrangement with Kwankwaso, then Ndigbo deserve to know whether he did so on behalf of the collective aspiration of the South-East, or whether he merely negotiated a temporary political opening for himself.

FEATURE

Improper Dressing: **When Fashion Crosses the Line**

Rukayya Salihu



YOUTH IMPROPER DRESSING

Fashion has long served as a reflection of culture, history and social identity. It is more than a means of covering the body; it communicates personality, beliefs, confidence and even social status. Throughout history, clothing has evolved to reflect changing times, technological advancement and cultural exchanges. In the twenty-first century, however, the rapid growth of digital technology, globalization and social media has transformed fashion into a global phenomenon where trends emerge and spread within hours. While this has encouraged creativity and broadened fashion choices, it has also intensified concerns over the growing culture of improper dressing, particularly among young people.

Across many societies, including Nigeria, the issue of indecent or improper dressing has become the subject of public discourse. Parents, educators, religious leaders and employers have expressed concern over fashion trends that they believe undermine societal values and erode standards of decency. At the same time, many young people argue that fashion is a matter of personal choice and individual freedom. This tension raises important questions about where society should draw the line between personal expression and social responsibility.

Improper dressing refers to wearing clothing that is unsuitable for a particular environment, occasion or cultural setting. It may involve excessively revealing garments, transparent clothing, sagging trousers that expose undergarments, extremely short skirts or shorts, clothing with offensive words or obscene images, or attire that violates established dress codes in schools, workplaces, places of worship and public institutions. What constitutes improper dressing may differ from one culture to another, yet nearly every society maintains certain standards of appearance designed to promote respect, order and social harmony.

In Nigeria, dressing has traditionally reflected cultural identity, family values and respect for community norms. The country's rich ethnic diversity is expressed through beautiful traditional attire such as the agbada, isiagu, buba and iro, wrapper, kaftan, lace, Ankara and other indigenous fabrics. These garments are admired not only for their elegance but also for the dignity they convey. However, increasing exposure to foreign lifestyles and entertainment has influenced the fashion preferences of many young people, leading some to adopt styles that conflict with local cultural expectations.

One of the strongest drivers of improper dressing is the influence of social media. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat and YouTube have created a culture where appearance often determines popularity and online influence. Celebrities, musicians, reality television stars and social media influencers frequently showcase bold and provocative fashion that attracts millions of followers. Young people, eager to gain acceptance or imitate their role models, may copy these styles without considering whether they are appropriate within their own social or cultural environment.

Peer pressure further compounds the problem. Adolescence and early adulthood are periods during which many individuals seek acceptance and belonging. The fear of appearing outdated or unfashionable can compel young people to follow trends that conflict with their personal values or family upbringing. For some, dressing like friends becomes a way of avoiding ridicule or social exclusion, even when such clothing makes them uncomfortable or violates institutional regulations.

The entertainment industry also exerts considerable influence. Music videos, films, reality television programmes and celebrity award shows often celebrate extravagant and revealing fashion. While these forms of entertainment are produced primarily for artistic or commercial purposes, many viewers adopt the styles they see without recognizing that such appearances are often designed for performances, photo shoots or specific entertainment settings rather than everyday life.

Commercial advertising and the fashion industry also contribute to the normalization of provocative dressing. Some clothing brands market revealing outfits as symbols of confidence, modernity and attractiveness. Through sophisticated advertising campaigns and influencer partnerships, these products become desirable to consumers, particularly young people who wish to remain fashionable. As a result, modest clothing is sometimes unfairly portrayed as outdated, conservative or lacking in style.

Another important factor is the weakening influence of family guidance and moral instruction. In many homes, busy work schedules and changing family structures have reduced opportunities for parents to provide consistent guidance on values, behaviour and appearance. Some parents themselves encourage expensive fashion without paying sufficient attention to whether such clothing is appropriate for their children's age or environment. Consequently, many young people develop their fashion preferences primarily through social media and peer influence rather than parental mentorship.

The consequences of improper dressing extend beyond outward appearance. In educational institutions, dress codes exist to promote discipline, equality and an atmosphere conducive to learning. Students who repeatedly violate these regulations may face disciplinary action, suspension or denial of access to certain facilities. Such sanctions can affect academic performance and overall school experience.

Within the workplace, dressing appropriately is closely associated with professionalism. Employers often expect staff members to project competence, credibility and respect through their appearance. Inappropriate attire can undermine first impressions, affect workplace relationships and, in some professions, influence promotion opportunities or public confidence in an organization. Many corporate institutions therefore maintain detailed dress policies to preserve their professional image.

> The issue also has implications for cultural preservation. Every society possesses traditions that define acceptable public behaviour, including standards of dress.

Improper dressing may also influence public perception. Whether fairly or unfairly, people often form opinions about others based on appearance before any conversation takes place. Clothing that appears excessively revealing or inappropriate may distract attention from an individual's intelligence, skills, achievements and character. While it is important not to judge people solely by their appearance, society inevitably responds to visual impressions, making appropriate dressing an aspect of effective personal presentation.

The issue also has implications for cultural preservation. Every society possesses traditions that define acceptable public behaviour, including standards of dress. When these traditions are consistently ignored, communities may gradually lose important aspects of their cultural identity. Promoting decent dressing therefore contributes not only to personal respectability but also to preserving cultural heritage for future generations.

Addressing the challenge requires a collective effort rather than criticism or condemnation. Parents should cultivate confidence and self-respect in their children from an early age, helping them understand that dignity and modesty are compatible with modern fashion. Schools should continue to enforce reasonable dress codes while providing education on character development and responsible decision-making. Religious organizations, traditional institutions and community leaders should promote values of respect, moderation and personal integrity without alienating young people.

The fashion industry itself can become part of the solution. Nigerian designers have consistently demonstrated that clothing can be elegant, stylish and internationally competitive without compromising modesty. By promoting creative designs rooted in African culture while embracing modern trends, designers can inspire a new generation to appreciate fashion that combines beauty with dignity. Social media influencers and celebrities also carry enormous responsibility because their choices shape the aspirations of millions of followers. By modelling responsible fashion, they can positively influence public attitudes.

Government agencies, educational authorities and media organizations can further contribute through public awareness campaigns that encourage appropriate dressing while respecting individual rights. Such campaigns should emphasize confidence, professionalism, cultural identity and self-respect rather than relying solely on punishment or public criticism.

Ultimately, fashion should be viewed as a means of expressing individuality without sacrificing dignity or respect for others. True elegance is not measured by the amount of skin exposed or the price of one's clothing but by the confidence, character and self-respect that a person's appearance reflects. As society continues to embrace innovation and global fashion trends, striking a thoughtful balance between creativity, cultural values and personal responsibility will remain essential.

Fashion will continue to evolve, but the principles of decency, respect and good judgment are timeless. A society that encourages both creativity and responsibility is better positioned to preserve its cultural heritage while empowering individuals to express themselves with confidence and dignity. The challenge, therefore, is not to reject fashion but to ensure that fashion remains a force for positive self-expression rather than one that diminishes the values that bind society together.

FEATURE

The differing positions around a Teenager Marrying an Old Man

Bagudu Mohammed



NEWLY MARRIED COUPLES

There is a new storm in our public conversation, and it didn't start in a lecture hall. It started with a photo. A 65-year-old traditional ruler, Dan Majin Lafia, standing beside a 19-year-old bride in Nasarawa, both smiling, while the internet decided to argue for them. In 48 hours the wedding became a mirror. People saw in it everything they fear, everything they defend, and everything they won't say out loud.

One comment cut through the noise for exactly that reason. Whatsapp commenter Yusuf Idrisa wrote: "Once a girl clocks 16 years or even 15 years, she is perfectly mature enough for marriage. However, with schooling nowadays, such a girl would be in school and therefore may not be available for marriage. For your information, my father had 27 daughters and none of them clocked 20 in our house. None of them had issues with conceiving, none of them had complications with child birth. The needful is for us to give our daughters the necessary upbringing and pray for them to have RESPONSIBLE husband. If by the time a girl is blessed with a husband after finishing secondary school, she should be allowed to get married. In the past, the fear was, maybe the husband will not allow her to continue with her education. This days, it is the husband that will have interest in the education of his wife even more than the parents.

He continues "Regards the issue of age disparity, that is left for them to sort out in 'the other room'. Some of these elderly can even beat some young men (hands down) in that act. So, what is the problem and where is it? I wish the couple joyous married life FULL OF MEMORIES."

His logic is not random. It is stitched to a moral framework that sees early marriage as protection. The assumption is simple: delay invites temptation, exposure, indecency. So you marry early, under guidance, before the world touches her. This view is often rooted in religious ideas that equate a woman's biological maturity with readiness for marriage, and it is reinforced by a quieter calculation that has nothing to do with piety. In societies where power, wealth, and status are concentrated in older men like emirs, chiefs, businessmen...a young bride becomes a prized good. Parents, consciously or not, may fear that if they wait, their daughter "loses market value." The rush, then, is not only about morality. It is about economics, prestige, and access.

But the widespread unease is not misplaced either, and it comes from a very human observation. Walk into any workplace, classroom, association, or WhatsApp group and you will see it: people relax around their age mates. Shared slang, shared memories, shared life problems create a glue. Sociologists call this "homophily", the tendency to bond with those similar to us in age, stage, and experience. So when marriage breaks that pattern so sharply, people feel a jolt. What makes marriage different that a 65-year-old man can cross a 46-year gap and not see the girl across from him as someone who could be his granddaughter? What makes him unafraid of the disrespect, the different music, the different dreams?

Biology is often pulled into this argument, and it does tell part of the story. Evolutionary biologists describe what they call "asymmetrical reproductive aging." Women are born with all the eggs they will ever have. Fertility peaks in the late teens to mid-20s and declines gradually, ending with menopause around 45 to 55. Men produce sperm continuously from puberty and have no biological cutoff. Testosterone and sperm quality decline slowly, but many men remain fertile and sexually active into their 60s and 70s.

Evolutionary psychologists like David Buss argue that across cultures and history, humans have paid attention to cues linked to fertility and longevity such as youth, health, vitality, not because people are calculating, but because those cues were tied to survival of lineage. Girls also reach puberty and physical maturity earlier than boys on average. That is biological maturity, not emotional maturity, and scholars from developmental psychology remind us that the brain's prefrontal cortex, which governs judgment and long-term planning, does not fully mature until the mid-20s for both sexes.

Yet biology is not destiny. Modern life has rewritten the contract. Contraception, IVF, education, and delayed childbearing mean people now marry for companionship, shared values, and life goals more than for reproduction alone. Researchers also point out that large age gaps bring real-world trade-offs: differences in health, energy, retirement planning, and life expectancy that a couple will have to live inside for decades. So when we talk about this marriage, we are not just talking about bodies. We are talking about two entire life arcs trying to synchronize.

> "Women are born with all the eggs they will ever have. Fertility peaks in the late teens to mid-20s and declines gradually, ending with menopause around 45 to 55.

And that is where the moral scrutiny sharpens. If society celebrates a 19-year-old marrying a 65-year-old, what happens to the widows and divorcees who are already here? In Kano and Kebbi, mass weddings are often organized for young widows, divorcees, and orphans, the women made vulnerable not by choice but by death, war, or economic collapse. If every powerful man is chasing a teenager, who is left to carry those women? The same question turns forward in time. What happens to the 19-year-old when she is 45 and he is 91, or when she is widowed at 30 with children and no independent skill or education? The very vulnerability the marriage was supposed to prevent can return, compounded.

There is also the uncomfortable truth about trust. Mr. Idrisa assumes the husband will sponsor his wife's education. But economic reality in Nigeria right now tells a different story. With inflation, job losses, and families stretching one salary across many mouths, increasing numbers of men rely on wives to contribute, not the other way around. Absolute dependence can become a trap, and dependence without capacity leaves a young woman helpless if divorce comes or if the breadwinner dies.

To understand the tension, it helps to look at the example most often invoked in these debates: Prophet Muhammad. His first marriage was not to a teenager. It was to Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, a 40-year-old widow, a successful merchant, 15 years his senior. She was his partner, his protector, his only wife for 25 years. After her death and after migrating to Madinah, most of his marriages were to widows and divorcees: Sawdah, whose husband died in exile; Hafsah, widowed after Badr; Umm Salamah, left with four children after Uhud; Zaynab bint Khuzaymah, known as Mother of the Poor; Umm Habibah, widowed in Abyssinia; Juwayriyah, whose marriage led to the freeing of captives from her tribe. Islamic scholars including Ibn Kathir and Al-Nawawi explain these marriages as acts of compassion, social welfare, and community building in a time without state support systems. Only Aisha was a virgin at marriage.

There are also hadiths where the Prophet encourages marrying loving and fertile spouses, and one where he asks Jabir why he didn't marry a young girl "to play with you and you with her." Classical scholars, including Imam Nawawi, read that advice as contextual, specific to Jabir's situation, not a universal command to reject widows. The broader Prophetic model, they argue, balances two principles: build strong families, and care for the vulnerable. One does not cancel the other.

Which brings us back to Nasarawa. The problem many people feel is not marriage itself. It is motive. When a wealthy, powerful, elderly man chooses a teenager while widows and divorcees remain unsupported, it looks less like sacrifice and more like display. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu would call it "symbolic capital", a way to signal strength, capacity, entitlement. True benevolence, the kind the Prophet modeled, often looks like choosing the one with fewer options. Modesty in the presence of power is the harder test.

So both sides are reaching for a noble goal. One side wants to protect morality and family stability. The other wants to protect agency, education, and the future of girls who will one day be women with or without a husband. But if we are honest, we have to re-examine the choice. Do we want a society where every girl's safest path is to marry up in age and power, or a society where she can finish school, work, and still choose marriage on her own terms? Do we want to keep asking what happens to widows and divorcees, or do we want to be the community that answers it?

The photo from Lafia will fade from timelines. The question it raised will not. Because marriage is not just about two people. It is about what kind of future we are willing to build for the ones who come after them.

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FEATURE

The Genesis and Growth of Museums in Nigeria

Osumah Augustine

The genesis of museums is often traced to ancient Greek civilisation, but chroniclers argue that shrines akin to museums also existed in Nigeria in that era. Museion is the Greek word changed to museum. The museion was a temple of goddesses called muses. In old Greece, muse means the giver of inspiration. Zeus was king of the gods and goddesses. Nine muses were born by Zeus and Mnemosyne known as the goddess of memory. Each muse had specific inspiration. Euterpe presided over music. Erato handled love poems. Calliope produced heroic poems. Clio was in charge of history. Melpomene managed tragedy. Thalia controlled comedy. Polyhymnia tackled hymns. Terpsichore was in command of dance. Urania headed astronomy.

In Nigeria, the genesis of modern-day museums dates back to the period of colonialism. In that inventive phase, assorted items of cultural values like engraved ivory, bronze and wooden objects were preserved because they were very useful and symbolic. Havens for relics were christened colonial museums during colonial time. The surfacing of the colonial museums in Nigeria is traceable to 1913. In that period the political memorandum composed by Sir Lord Lugard acknowledged the necessity of permanent reserves that would improve the inclement climatic condition; conserve the fast fading reserve of flora and fauna; preserve the visual quality and aesthetics of the landscape; and make playing fields available.

K.C. Murray, E.H. Duckworth, J.D. Clarke, B.E.B. Fagg, Hunt-Coole and S. Milburn initiated the growth of modern museums in Nigeria. K.C. Murray took the following giant strides in 1927. First was to compile works of arts. Second was to persuade the government to enact laws that put a stop to illegal export of artefacts. Third was to convince the government to create museums in Nigeria. Soon after the abovementioned moves, the Antiquities Commission was established. Antiquities Commission was once headed by K.C. Murray, K.O. Dike, and Bernard Fagg as Directors. Via their headship, museums in Nigeria improved. Regulations and reforms were enforced to help develop the way museums should be operated.

There were Antiquities Ordinance No. 7 of 1953 and Antiquities (amendment) Decree of 1969. Antiquities Ordinance No. 7 of 1953 gave rise to the Department of Antiquities. The other rules were the Antiquities (Prohibited Transfers) Decree No. 9 of 1974 and the National Commission for Museums and Monuments NCMM) Decree No. 77 of 1979. About thirty museums were founded in Nigeria between 1945 and 1985. The Federal Government achieved this feat via agencies named the Department of Antiquities and the National Commission for Museums and Monuments. Both agencies united to set up viable museums in Nigeria.

The earliest national museums in Nigeria were founded in 1945 and 1946 in Esie (Kwara State) and Benin (Edo State) respectively. Additional ones were built in later years. Fifty two national museums currently exist in Nigeria. The said museums with different forms and features are subsumed under two key groups namely, private and public. In Nigeria, private and public museums exist side-by-side. Private museums are established and owned by individuals while public museums are founded by government as part of its onus to deliver services to the general public. Both categories of museums operate within the domain of public laws.

Each national museum in Nigeria is named according to its feature. Hence there are military and war, archaeological, historical, zoological, architectural, and ethnographic museums. In the military and war museums, objects put on show represent military histories, as well as the past civil and world wars Nigerian soldiers joined in fighting. Archaeological museums for the most part exhibit any excavated artefacts. History museums preserve for future generations all the remains of outstanding phenomena which were experienced in the previous ages. Zoological museums include collections of assorted animals for public viewing. Architectural museums put relics of local architecture on display. Ethnographic museums furnish the public with the diverse ideas about human cultures across the globe.

It is the exclusive responsibility of the Federal Government to establish and regulate national museums in Nigeria. The NCMM is the department the Federal Government established and entrusted with the responsibility of coordinating the affairs of all national museums. It is the duty of the NCMM to convert the people's vast heritage resources into abiding wealth for the country. Decree No. 77 of 1979 conferred authority on the NCMM to grant approval to any museums privately established, owned and



maintained, and at whatever time withdraw such approval if there is a proof of constitutional breach. This is done to make the private museums comply with the statutes guiding and regulating the operations of national museums.

The fifty two (52) national museums in Nigeria include the National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Abuja; National Museum of Colonial History, Aba; National Museum, Abakaliki; National Museum, Abeokuta; National Museum, Akure; National Museum, Asaba; Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Mausoleum, Bauchi; National Museum, Benin; Rock Art Interpretive Centre, Birnin Kudu; National Museum, Calabar; Slave History Museum, Calabar; National Museum, Damaturu; National Museum of Unity, Enugu; National Museum, Esie; National Museum, Gombe; and National Museum, Hong.

Others comprise National Museum of Unity, Ibadan; National Museum, ICT Centre; National Museum, Igbo-Ukwu; National Museum, Ile-Ife; National Museum, Ilorin; National Museum, Jalingo; and National Museum, Jos; Museum of Traditional Nigerian Architecture (Motna), Jos; Zoological Garden, Jos; Centre for Earth Construction Technology (CECTECH), Jos; Institute of Archaeology and Museum Studies (IAMS), Jos; National Museum, Kaduna; Gidan Makama Museum, Kano; National Museum, Kanta; National Museum, Katsina; National Museum, Koko; National Museum, Lafia; and National Museum, Lagos.

Youth Unemployment: **Causes, consequences, and solutions**

Ejemogo Rebecca Anwuri

Felix, I was informed that there is an oil company currently recruiting workers. I couldn't apply because I studied something different from what they requested. I don't like the fact that you are wasting your 2:1 certificate riding Keke NAPEP. Would you like to apply?"

"Chidi, at this point, I am not interested in applying for the job or any other white-collar jobs for that matter. I prefer riding Keke NAPEP to it and the good thing is that I am happily satisfied!" Felix said as he kept fixing the tire of his tricycle.

"What! You must be joking for rejecting this juicy offer. Omo, so you no wan enjoy oil money? Or is it because of a few failed attempts that you are giving up so soon?"

"I am not interested! To hell with their job offer."

"It is today I realised that you are such an ungrateful fellow. This is an opportunity that many youths in this country will not bat an eyelid before jumping at, but here you are with a myopic mindset. Dream big like me, Chidi! People like myself don't settle for less."

Chidi raised his head and laughed hysterically. "Did I just hear you say I should dream big like you? So you mean I, Chidi Uzochukwu, should dream big like Chukwuemeka Echidinmawakpuonwu, who finished his NYSC five years ago after studying Statistics in the university and is currently working as a primary school teacher, earning less than the country's minimum wage? It is me you should dream to be like instead, not the other way round, because I can earn your monthly salary in one week."



YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

"Chidi! I won't take any of these insults from you. My dream of having a better job is just around the corner. You will then see who will laugh last," Felix said and stormed out of the compound fuming.

"You better accept your fate, my friend. There is no job out there, and you cannot rely on the government to provide one!" Chidi hollered.

Youth unemployment, as illustrated in the story of the two friends Felix and Chidi, has highlighted the pain, frustration, anger, and irrational decisions many youths take as a result of lack of gainful employment in the society.

Despite the fact that universities graduate thousands of students each year, they struggle and compete with their peers to secure employment in the labour market — unlike in the days of our forebears when jobs awaited graduates even before convocation. This raises a concern about how the narrative of readily available jobs for youths tilted into a fierce struggle to get hired even as a secretary in an organisation.

Youth unemployment as a social issue refers to the share of the labour force between ages 15–24 without work but available for and seeking employment. This definition tells us that the problem of unemployment on the surface level is not the unavailability of job seekers, but the difficulty in securing the job itself.

The growing concern about youth unemployment in societies, especially in developing countries, has gone beyond whether there are qualified people to take up jobs in the first place. This reality has further resulted in heightened economic hardship, crimes, and social problems in many countries.

One of the major causes of youth unemployment can be traced to the lack of job opportunities. Slow industrial growth and drastic decline in business and economic activities are major contributors to why unemployed youths litter every nook and cranny of our societies, becoming so idle that they turn into the Devil's workshop. For instance, in time past, we heard of organisations and industries that once existed and thrived with many employees. But as a result of decline in business and economic activity, some of these industries could no longer pay their workers and had to lay them off. One can only imagine the aftermath when such a large number of employees suddenly join the population of the unemployed. The very company or industry that could have helped reduce unemployment has folded up.

Building on the lack of job opportunities, rapid population growth is also one of the causes of youth unemployment. Every year, many young people venture into the labour market with limited jobs available to accommodate them. As a result, a lot of them have turned to entrepreneurship instead of folding their arms and waiting for jobs to appear from nowhere.

7A poor educational system is also a major cause of unemployment in many developing countries. Schools focus more on teaching the theoretical aspects of courses than the practical approach. Hence, graduates, to a large extent, lack the required skills demanded by employers. For example, some people are excellent and eloquent in explaining concepts but fidget when asked to defend or apply them practically.

FEATURE

A sad tale of lost friendship: **An admonition to youths**

Grace Ijeoma Umeh

Advocate for Youth, Peace and Security - YPS Agenda

It is with a heavy heart that I write this.

Last week, news broke of young people — supposed friends — who took the life of one of their own over a supposedly missing phone. A phone. Not a life. Not a future. Not a brotherhood. A phone!

We buried a young man, and we also buried the dreams of those who are now behind bars. Two families destroyed. One community in mourning. All because anger won over reason.

Where did we get it wrong?

As Princess Margaret Jos-Bazuaye, former Director of Social Development and Gender Issues, once said: "it takes only a second for rage to destroy things, but heaven will not fall if we endure and bottle up bile. People should be reasonable in expressing angst.' and as someone who works with youths daily, this case broke me. Not just because a life was lost, but because of how cheaply we now value each other's lives.

This is not the Nigeria we want. And this is certainly not the future our youths deserve.

THE YPS AGENDA: A CALL BACK TO PEACE

The United Nations Youth, Peace and Security Agenda - YPS - reminds us of 5 things:

Participation, Protection, Prevention, Partnerships, and Disengagement & Reintegration.

Youths are not the problem. Youths are the solution.

But for us to be the solution, we must first choose peace over violence, dialogue over fighting, and life over anger.

A missing phone can be replaced. A life cannot.

A quarrel can be settled. A prison sentence cannot be undone.

A friend can be forgiven. A grave cannot.

MY ADMONITION TO MY FELLOW YOUTHS

Guard your anger: In this hard economy, frustration is high. But do not let frustration turn you into a monster. Walk away. Breathe. Talk to someone.

Value life above things: Phone, money, clothes, shoes — they are things. Your friend, your brother, your sister is blood. Choose blood.

Be your brother's keeper: If you see your friend boiling with rage, be the one to calm him down. Peer pressure can kill. Peer peace can save.

Use the law, not your hands: We have police, we have elders, we have community leaders. Use them. Jungle justice is not justice. It is another crime.

Remember your future: That 5 minutes of anger can cost you 25 years in prison. Who will train your children? Who will bury your parents? Think beyond now.



WHAT WE MUST DO AS A COMMUNITY

Government, schools, religious leaders, parents, and the diaspora must do more:

Mental health and anger management* must be taught in schools and churches.

Youth hubs for dialogue must be created in every LGA so youths have a place to talk, not fight.

Diaspora mentorship: Those of us abroad must come back, virtually or physically, to mentor and show youths there is life beyond violence.

To the family that lost a son: I am sorry.

To the youths in detention: I pray you find remorse and rehabilitation.

To every young person reading this: _Your life matters. Your friend's life matters.

Let us honor the YPS Agenda not just in documents, but in our daily actions.

Let your country and state shine beyond borders — not with blood, but with peace, talent, and unity.

Because when a youth kills a youth, a nation kills its own future.

May the soul of the departed rest in peace. And may we, the living, do better.

#Ladywithegoldenpen #Citizen-Journalist #positivemindset #YPS #WANEPNigeria #wanap

The Impact of Social Media on Students' Academic Performance: **Challenges and Possible Solutions**

Salihu Maryam Saidu

The rapid growth of social media has transformed the way people communicate, learn and access information. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), Snapchat, WhatsApp and YouTube have become an integral part of students' daily lives. While these platforms offer educational opportunities and promote collaboration among learners, excessive and uncontrolled use has raised concerns about their influence on academic performance. Researchers continue to debate whether social media serves as a useful learning tool or a major distraction to students.

One of the major effects of social media is distraction from academic activities. Many students spend several hours each day browsing entertainment content, watching short videos, chatting with friends and participating in online trends. This often reduces the amount of time available for studying, completing assignments and preparing for examinations. According to research published by the National Library of Medicine, excessive social media use is associated with poor study habits, reduced concentration and lower academic achievement.

Social media also contributes to procrastination. Students who intend to study for a few minutes frequently end up spending hours scrolling through social media feeds. Constant notifications and the fear of missing out (FOMO) interrupt concentration and reduce productivity. Over time, these habits can result in poor grades, missed deadlines and increased academic stress.

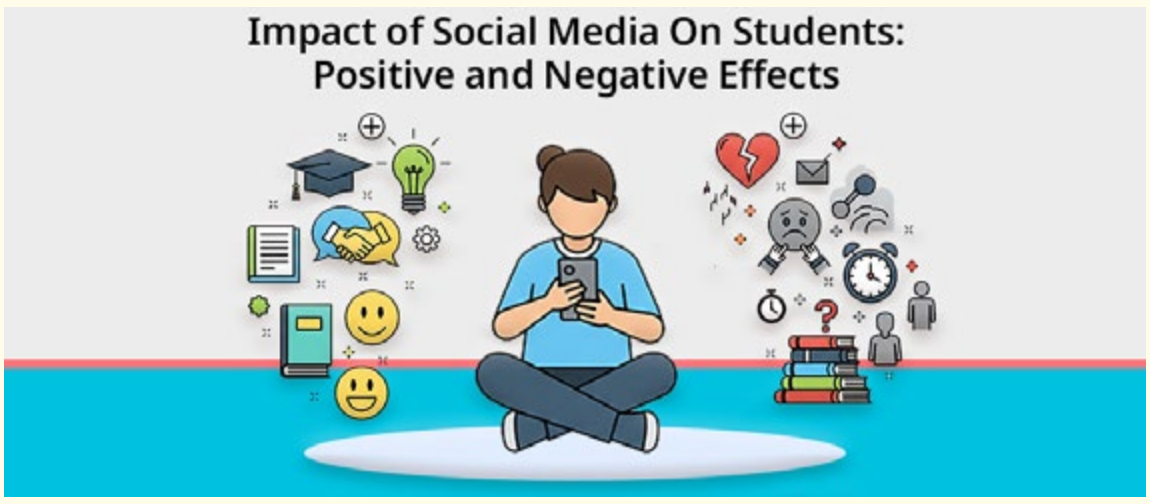
Another significant concern is the effect of social media on students' mental health. Excessive exposure to unrealistic lifestyles, cyberbullying and online comparison can lead to anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. These emotional challenges often affect students' motivation to learn and their ability to perform well academically. The American Psychological Association has reported that heavy social media use among young people is linked to increased psychological distress, especially when it interferes with sleep and face-to-face interactions.

Sleep deprivation is another factor affecting academic performance. Many students stay awake late into the night using their phones, resulting in insufficient sleep before lectures and examinations. Poor sleep affects memory, attention span and the brain's ability to process new information, making it difficult for students to excel academically.

Despite these challenges, social media also provides valuable educational benefits when used responsibly. Students can access online lectures, educational videos, digital libraries and research materials within seconds. Platforms such as YouTube provide tutorials on virtually every academic subject, while WhatsApp and Telegram enable students to participate in study groups, share lecture notes and discuss assignments. LinkedIn also offers professional networking opportunities and career development resources for university students.

Social media has further improved communication between lecturers and students. Educational institutions now use digital platforms to announce class schedules, distribute learning materials and conduct virtual lectures. During emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, social media and other online communication tools played a vital role in ensuring continuity in education across many countries.

To minimize the negative effects of social media, students should develop effective time management skills. Creating study schedules, limiting screen time and turning off unnecessary notifications during study hours can significantly improve concentration. Parents and guardians should also educate children on responsible digital behaviour while monitoring younger students' online activities.



Educational institutions have an equally important role to play by promoting digital literacy programmes that teach students how to use social media responsibly for academic purposes. Schools should encourage students to distinguish between educational and entertainment content and introduce awareness campaigns on the dangers of social media addiction.

Technology companies can also contribute by providing digital wellbeing features such as screen-time reminders, focus modes and app usage reports. These tools help users monitor their online behaviour and reduce excessive usage.

In conclusion, social media is neither entirely beneficial nor completely harmful. Its impact on students' academic performance depends largely on how it is used. When used responsibly, it serves as a powerful educational resource that enhances learning, communication and access to information. However, excessive and uncontrolled use can negatively affect academic achievement, mental health and overall well-being. Students, parents, educators and technology providers must work together to promote responsible social media use and ensure that digital platforms become tools for educational success rather than obstacles to academic excellence.

The Nigerian OBSERVER

COLUMN

The 'egiarhu' syndrome: A retrogressive mindset



Growing up, I frequently heard some Benin elders use the expression 'egiarhu' to deride and ridicule certain Benin people in positions of authority.

In Benin cultural parlance, 'egiarhu' describes the defeatist attitude of some Benin people in positions of authority who habitually tell their fellow Benin sons and daughters seeking jobs or assistance, "it cannot be done" even when they have the power to help. It is more than a phrase; it is the mindset that stifles opportunity, merit and progress.

Whether or not this perception is entirely accurate, it has persisted over the years and has shaped the belief that a lack of mutual support has hindered the emergence of many Benin sons and daughters in positions of authority.

One individual who, in my perspective, defied this misguided perception was the late Professor Osayuki Oshodin of blessed memory, who was an illustrious son of Benin Kingdom and the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Benin. Through his leadership and willingness to support others, he demonstrated that the narrative could indeed be different. May the Almighty God grant him eternal rest. His remarkable legacy will continue to stand the test of time and remain an enduring source of inspiration for generations to come.

Recently, I have read a barrage of criticisms directed at Governor Monday Okpebholo over allegations that appointments under his administration disproportionately favour people from his immediate constituency. The criticisms have been fierce, with some commentators portraying the governor's actions as nothing short of nepotism.

Let me state, unequivocally and unambiguously, from the outset that I do not support nepotism. Public office belongs to the people, and appointments should ultimately be guided by competence, integrity, experience and the public interest. Any leader who sacrifices merit on the altar of ethnic or family considerations does a disservice to both government and society.

Yet, there is another side to the conversation that deserves attention.

Many of those now expressing outrage over the governor's appointments appear to forget that previous administrations also had opportunities to empower people from their respective communities. Whether those opportunities were fully utilised is a legitimate subject for public debate. If successive leaders failed to build stronger networks of mentorship, empowerment and inclusion within their communities, should today's debate not also examine those missed opportunities?

The issue, therefore, extends beyond one governor or one administration. It raises broader questions about how communities nurture their own while remaining faithful to the principles of fairness and merit.

Across the world, successful societies thrive because they cultivate networks of mentorship. Older generations intentionally prepare younger ones for leadership. Professionals recommend qualified colleagues. Senior academics mentor junior scholars. Business leaders identify promising entrepreneurs and help them grow. Such support is neither unusual nor inherently unethical. It only becomes objectionable when competence is ignored or when public institutions become exclusive clubs. The distinction is an important one.

Supporting qualified people from one's community should never be mistaken for endorsing nepotism. Likewise, insisting on merit should never translate into indifference towards communal development. Both values can coexist when appointments are based primarily on competence while ensuring that no section of society is unnecessarily excluded.

In Edo State, stories abound of leaders who are remembered not merely for the offices they occupied but for the people whose lives they transformed. One such name frequently mentioned is the late Professor Osayuki Oshodin.

I vividly recall, that during my eight-year sojourn at the Edo State Government House as a political appointee, the late Professor Osayuki Oshodin invited me to his office. During our discussion, he informed me that the newly established Department of Mass Communication at the University of Benin required academic staff.

He encouraged me to join the department initially as a part-time lecturer, with the assurance that I would be fully integrated into the academic staff once my tenure as a political appointee came to an end. The invitation came as a pleasant surprise. I neither lobbied for the opportunity nor solicited his intervention. Indeed, I had never worked for him in any capacity that would have warranted such a gesture. Unknown to me at the time, someone had recommended me to the Vice-Chancellor.

What struck me most was not merely the offer itself but the philosophy that appeared to underpin it. Professor Oshodin seemed to believe that when capable young people are identified, they should be encouraged and provided with opportunities to realise their potential. To him, leadership was not simply about occupying a position of authority; it was about opening doors for others without expecting personal loyalty or repayment in return.

That singular act left an enduring impression on me and reinforced my conviction that genuine leadership is measured by the opportunities it creates for others.

Although I ultimately declined the offer because of my extremely demanding work schedule, I have never forgotten that act of confidence and goodwill. It remains one of the finest examples of mentorship and selfless leadership that I have witnessed.

If more leaders embraced such a culture of identifying, encouraging and empowering competent individuals, regardless of personal affiliation or immediate benefit, perhaps the perception embodied in the 'egiarhu' syndrome would gradually fade, giving way to a more progressive and inclusive society.

> Perhaps the greater challenge before us is to redefine what communal support should mean in a modern democratic society.

Similarly, many people recall the late Aburimen, a Senior Police Officer, who reportedly assisted numerous Esan sons and daughters in pursuing careers in the Nigeria Police Force. Such accounts have become part of the collective memory of many families. Whether viewed as historical fact or cherished community recollection, they illustrate the value communities place on leaders who invest in the success of others.

The late Chief Tony Anenih also earned a reputation for identifying, nurturing and mentoring young politicians, many of whom rose to occupy influential positions in government and public life. Today, several of his protégés are men of considerable political stature, including the incumbent Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo.

By contrast, how many Benin politicians can genuinely point to a legacy of mentoring individuals who have gone on to hold positions of authority? Apart from former Governor Chief Lucky Igbinedion, who to some extent followed a similar path of empowering younger politicians, it is difficult to identify many others. Who else comes to mind? I stand to be corrected.

Communities flourish when successful individuals consciously lift others. They decline when every generation is forced to begin from scratch.

This principle is by no means peculiar to Edo State. Across Nigeria, communities celebrate leaders who create pathways for younger generations without compromising standards. Such leaders leave behind more than monuments; they leave behind institutions, professionals and future leaders.

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is another compelling example. Over the years, he has consistently identified, mentored and empowered many promising politicians from his cultural background, several of whom now occupy strategic positions in government and the nation's political landscape.

Perhaps the greater challenge before us is to redefine what communal support should mean in a modern democratic society.

It should not mean appointing unqualified relatives to sensitive public offices.

It should not mean excluding deserving citizens because they come from another ethnic group.

Neither should it mean turning public institutions into family enterprises.

Rather, it should mean identifying capable individuals, mentoring them, exposing them to opportunities and ensuring that competence remains the overriding consideration.

When merit and mentorship work together, everybody benefits.

Public discourse in Edo State would also benefit from greater introspection. Instead of merely condemning today's leaders, perhaps we should ask ourselves what kind of leadership culture we have collectively encouraged over the years. Have we celebrated leaders who built institutions or merely those who distributed patronage? Have we encouraged excellence or simply proximity to power?

These questions deserve honest answers.

Our conversations should gradually move away from ethnic recriminations towards the more fundamental issue of institution-building. A state develops not because one community triumphs over another, but because every community contributes its best minds to public service.

Indeed, the future of Edo State cannot be built on suspicion, resentment or endless comparisons between ethnic groups. It must rest on mutual trust, shared prosperity and equal opportunities for all qualified citizens.

The lesson of the 'egiarhu' narrative, therefore, should not be that one people are unwilling to help another or even themselves. Rather, it should remind us of the dangers of allowing perceptions of exclusion to persist. Perceptions, whether accurate or not, eventually shape public confidence.

Leadership should inspire confidence.

Communities should inspire solidarity.

Institutions should inspire fairness.

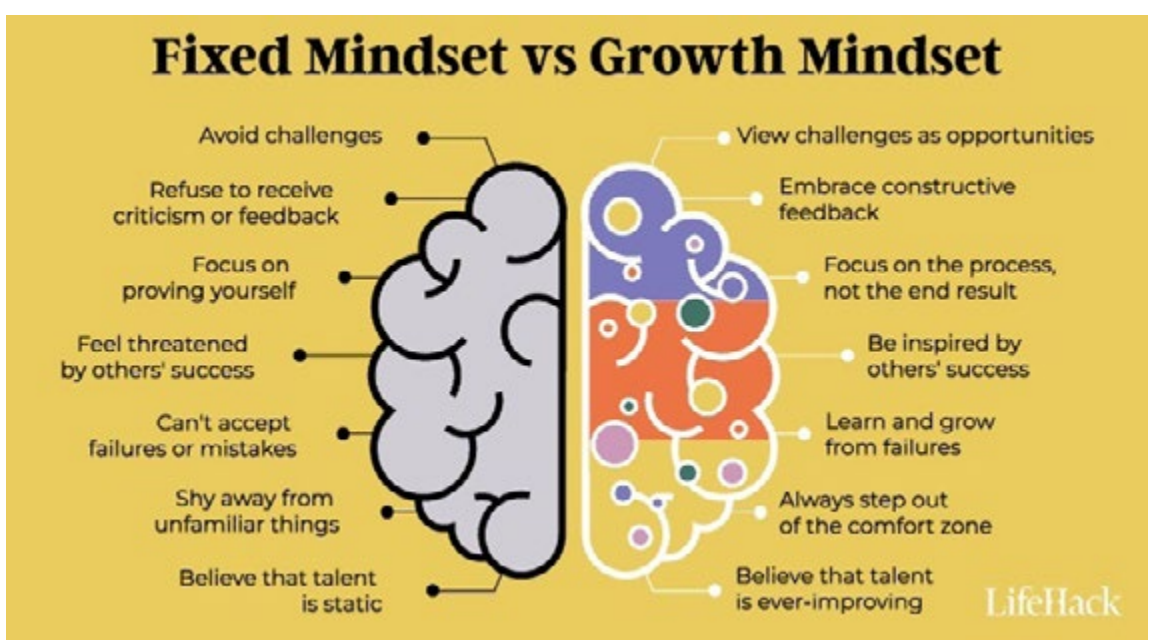
These objectives are not mutually exclusive.

Governor Okpebholo, like every governor before him and every governor after him, will ultimately be judged not by the ethnicity of those around him but by the quality of governance he delivers, the strength of the institutions he leaves behind and the confidence his administration inspires among all Edo people.

The real legacy of leadership is neither patronage nor ethnic triumph. It is the creation of a society where every child, irrespective of community or surname, can aspire to success knowing that ability, integrity and hard work will always count.

It is time for those who perpetuate the 'egiarhu' mindset to turn over a new leaf. Edo State will prosper not when opportunities are denied, but when capable men and women are encouraged to realise their full potential.

That is the kind of Edo State worthy of our collective aspirations. That is the narrative we should all strive to write.



Dr. Odaro is a columnist and lecturer in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State, Nigeria.

Sports

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

WAFCON: Aba football fans disappointed over Super Falcons' defeat to Malawi

Some football enthusiasts in Aba have expressed disappointment over the Super Falcons' 3-2 defeat to Malawi in their opening Group B match of the ongoing Women Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) in Morocco.



SUPER FALCONS PLAYER WITH MALAWI PLAYER

The debutants Malawi stunned the nine-time African champions 3-2 on Tuesday to record a memorable victory.

Some football enthusiasts who spoke with NAN on Wednesday attributed the defeat to complacency and urged the team to improve ahead of their remaining group matches.

Obialo Maduka, a grassroots football player, said the Super Falcons underestimated their opponents and paid the price.

"I feel disappointed but it is a good signal to them and for them to know that other African women national teams are growing in strength and size.

"One day, Nigeria will wake up and find out that another African women team has taken over the dominance.

"What pains me most is that the team lost to a tournament debutant. If they couldn't overcome a newcomer, how will they fare against stronger sides like Zambia, Morocco, and the other top teams?" he questioned.

Also speaking, Ikechukwu Okoro, a trader, blamed the technical crew for the loss, saying modern football requires effective tactics, solid defending and the ability to convert scoring opportunities.

Super Falcons' loss to Malawi a wake-up call, says coach

Mansur Abdullahi, Assistant Coach of Nigeria's U-20 women's team, the Falconets, has described the Super Falcons' 2-3 loss to Malawi at the 2026 Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) as a wake-up call.

The defeat at the Al-Madina Stadium in Rabat, Morocco, on Tuesday is regarded as one of the biggest upsets of the tournament, with debutants Malawi overcoming 10-time champions Nigeria.

Speaking with journalists , Abdullahi said the result underscored the growing competitiveness of women's football across Africa.

"The result was shocking, but it also shows that there are no longer any minnows in African football. Every country is improving, and the game is developing rapidly across the continent.

"The team simply had a bad day at the office. I believe this defeat will serve as a wake-up call for the players to raise their performance.

"The tournament has only just begun, and I am confident they will bounce back in their subsequent matches.

"The coach, Justin Madugu, will have to work on the players' mental state and ensure they quickly put this setback behind them. They have the quality to respond positively," Abdullahi said.

Nigeria controlled possession in the game and created several scoring chances in the opening half but failed to convert their opportunities as both sides went into the break goalless.

The match came alive in the closing stages when Malawi broke the deadlock in the



MANSUR ABDULLAHI

NSC hails Tinubu's N200bn sports facilities support, backs Unity Cup

The National Sports Commission (NSC) has commended President Bola Tinubu for approving more than N200 billion for sports facilities, describing it as unprecedented support.

NSC Chairman, Shehu Dikko, gave the commendation on Wednesday in Abuja during the unveiling of the logo for the Renewed Hope Unity Cup.



NSC CHAIRMAN, SHEHU DIKKO AND BOLA AHMED TINUBU

Dikko, represented by the NSC Director of Facilities, Mohammed Saidu, said the funding marked a major shift from previous years.

He said sports facilities maintenance received little or no budgetary allocation in earlier years.

"The National Sports Commission has never received the kind of support it is getting now from Mr President," he said.

"There was a time when facilities maintenance had a zero-naira budget for four consecutive years.

"Today, we have more than

NPFL urges clubs to enhance media, marketing strategies to improve revenue drive

The management of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) has urged the managements of the twenty premier league football clubs in the country to develop and maintain comprehensive data records to drive marketing and media strategies aimed at improving revenue generation.

The NPFL Chief Operating Officer, Davidson Owumi, made the call on Wednesday in Enugu at the NPFL-AFRINVEST Seminar on Marketing, Investment, Brand Merchandising and Media.

Owumi advised the premier league clubs to establish functional websites ,containing detailed information on players, coaches, club history, performance statistics, match highlights and other relevant records to boost their visibility.

He said that the NPFL is working towards making clubs commercially viable and less dependent on financial support from state governments.

"Good visibility and marketing in social media, mainstream media and other online platforms well-packaged will do a lot to sell a club and its branded articles," he said.

Owumi cited the partnership between Rangers International FC and AFRINVEST, which began in 2023, as an example of how strategic collaboration could improve a club's financial fortunes.

He said clubs without functional and innovative marketing and media departments would struggle to survive.

The NPFL official urged participants at the seminar to apply the knowledge gained and embrace creativity in promoting their clubs.



GUSAU

NFF shifts elective congress date

The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) has postponed its 2026 Elective Congress by 24 hours, moving the exercise from Sept. 26 to Sept. 27 in Lafia, Nasarawa State.

The federation said the decision was approved during an extraordinary virtual general assembly held on Wednesday to address a scheduling conflict involving the Super Eagles.

In a statement on Wednesday, NFF Director of Public Relations, Ademola Olajide, said the congress would still hold in Lafia but on Sunday, Sept. 27.

The Elective Congress will usher in members of the NFF Executive Committee who will oversee the federation's affairs for the next four years.

NFF President, Ibrahim Gusau, said the date change became necessary following confirmation of the Super Eagles' opening 2027 Africa Cup of Nations qualifier.

"Following interactions with the Confederation of African Football, the date agreed for the match is Friday, Sept. 25," Gusau explained.

He noted that several election candidates are expected to be involved in the national team's activities and would struggle to reach Lafia in time.

"Obviously, it will be highly impossible for a number of candidates in the election, who will be at the match, to make it to Lafia the following morning," he said.

Cricket Federation unveils 14-player squad for ICC U-19 World Cup Qualifier

The Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF) has unveiled a 14-man Junior Yellow-Greens squad for the International Cricket Council (ICC) U-19 Men's Cricket World Cup Africa Qualifier Division 2 in Rwanda.

This is contained in a statement by Zeal Ibe, Media Manager of the federation, on Thursday in Abuja.

The team's Coach, Daniel Gim said that the players emerged from a three-phase selection process held in Abuja and Lagos.

"The phases focused on technical ability, discipline, attitude and competitive performance.

"The camp featured players identified during the National-17 Championship, while we introduced them to the standards expected at international age-grade cricket.

"The second phase combined promising U-17 players with experienced age-grade cricketers, increasing competition, raising the quality and intensity of training sessions.

"The biggest improvement we've seen is their (players) attitude; their willingness to learn, compete and win has been outstanding," Gim said.



THE NIGERIA CRICKET

Sports

NPFL losing millions to inadequate Club Data — NPFL COO Owumi

Urges club mgt to empower media Department

Kehinde Osagiede

The Chief Operating Officer of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL), Chief Davidson Owumi, has lamented that the league and its clubs are losing millions of naira in sponsorship opportunities due to inadequate and unreliable data from participating clubs.

Owumi made the remarks on wednesday while delivering his welcome address at the mandatory seminar/workshop organized for media directors and marketing officers of the 20 NPFL clubs in Enugu.



NPFL CHAIRMAN GBENGA ELEGBELEYE

He charged the concerned club representatives to up their game and as well challenged the management of the premier league clubs to prioritize funding for their media department to be more equipped for the huge task on their shoulders.

Owumi stressed that clubs can no longer depend solely on government's intervention for funding, urging them to embrace modern marketing strategies and data-driven operations by their Media Department to attract sponsors and commercial partners.

According to him, the NPFL is committed to setting higher standards for club branding and visibility, with a strong emphasis on effective social media presence and digital engagement.

"There will be standards, and from the middle of the season, clubs will be expected to adhere to them," Owumi stated.

Earlier, the General Manager of Rangers International FC, Barrister Amobi Ezeaku, urged media and marketing officers to view football as a business rather than mere sporting activity.

He urged clubs to improve the availability of their branded souvenirs within their host communities and at strategic locations such as airports to boost visibility and strengthen fan engagement.

The seminar, which is a part of events preceeding 2026/27 NPFL kickoff was attended by media and marketing representatives of the 20 NPFL clubs, focused on enhancing the commercial value of Nigerian football through improved branding, data management, marketing, and stakeholder engagement.

Meanwhile, the President of the NPFL Media Directors Forum and Director,Media and Communications Strategy, Nasarawa United Eche Amos has commended the Nigeria Premier Football League management body and organisers of the Media and Marketing Workshop for the opportunity given them to learn and equip themselves more for efficient and effective service delivery.

He urged his media colleagues to see themselves as big stakeholders in the Nigeria football development and remain professional in the discharge of their duties.

...Strong Media Department Crucial to NPFL Clubs' Success – Eche

Kehinde Osagiede

The President of the NPFL Media Directors Forum, Mr Eche Amos, has stressed the importance of effective media department in the success of Nigeria Premier Football League clubs, urging media directors to discharge their responsibilities professionally and in line with ethical standards.

The President of the NPFL Media Directors Forum made the call at the seminar for Media Directors and Marketers in Enugu ahead of the 2026/27 NPFL season.

Eche, who is also the Media Director and board member of Nasarawa United, advised Media Directors not to succumb to pressure from club administrators to act contrary to professional rules and ethics.

He noted that media directors have a responsibility to guide administrators on appropriate actions that can enhance their clubs' image, visibility, and overall brand value as well as the image laundry of the league as a whole.

According to him, the growth and sustainability of any NPFL club largely depends on the effectiveness of its media department.

"For a club to continue waxing stronger in terms of visibility and data gathering, it solely lies in the effectiveness of the media department," he said.

Eche also commended the Enugu State Government for partnering the NPFL and their corporate sponsors Afrinvest to host this year's workshop and praised the league body for sustaining the programme, which is now in its fourth edition.

He assured the league management body of improvement in the performance of the Media Directors and cooperation to promote the Nigeria Premier Football League to an enviable height.



14th Women AFCON: Malawi's Scorchers edge Super Falcons in five-goal thriller in Rabat

Debutants Malawi produced one of the biggest shocks in the history of women football in Africa when they defeated 10-time champions Nigeria 3-2 in Rabat's Al Madina Stadium on Tuesday night.

Despite dominating early on and creating several scoring opportunities, the Super Falcons were unable to break the deadlock in a goalless first half. The match exploded into life in the final twenty minutes. Malawi took the lead in the 73rd minute through Temwa Chawinga, before her sister, Tabitha Chawinga, doubled the advantage six minutes later.



MALAWI PLAYERS CELEBRATING

Skipper Rasheedat Ajibade gave Nigeria hope in the 90th minute by converting a penalty, but Temwa Chawinga struck again deep in stoppage time (90+6') to restore Malawi's two-goal cushion.

A goal nine minutes into added time, assisted by a headed ball on the right, by substitute Uchenna Kanu brought the scoreline to 3-2, but time ran out for the Cup-holders to complete the comeback.

With Barbara Banda-led Zambia pumping six goals past Egypt in the opening match of Group C also on Tuesday, the Super Falcons will immediately turn their attention to their second Group C fixture against the rampant Zambians on Saturday, where maximum points will be essential to put their qualification drive back on track.



HULAYAT OMIDIRAN

WAFCON: FCC chairman urges Super Falcons to focus on 11th title

The Executive Chairman of the Federal Character Commission (FCC), Hulayat Omidiran, has urged Nigeria's Super Falcons to remain focused and united as they begin their campaign for a record-extending 11th Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) title in Morocco.

Omidiran made the call in a goodwill message to the reigning African champions, commending the team for consistently projecting Nigeria's image positively on the continent and beyond.

She urged the players to remain united, focused and committed throughout the tournament.

"We believe in your ability to make Nigeria proud once again.

"Stay united, remain focused and continue to display the fighting spirit that has made the Super Falcons the pride of Africa," she said.

Omidiran, a former member of the Executive Board of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) and former member of the FIFA Women's Football Committee, said Nigerians were firmly behind the team in their quest for another continental title.

"As you begin your quest for another Women's Africa Cup of Nations title, I extend my unwavering support and best wishes to our gallant Super Falcons.

"The entire nation is behind you as you chase a record-extending 11th WAFCON crown," she said.

She said the Super Falcons had consistently inspired Nigerians through their resilience, excellence and patriotism.

UEFA rejects FIFA stake sale plan

European football governing body UEFA has rejected plans by world football governing body FIFA to sell minority stakes in a new commercial subsidiary.

FIFA announced on Tuesday plans to establish FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE), valued at $20 billion.

FIFA said FFE would oversee its commercial and event operations, while the organisation retains control over football governance, competitions, the match calendar and sporting regulations.

The proposal, which will be presented to FIFA's 211 member associations, would allow external investors to acquire minority, non-controlling stakes in FFE.

FIFA aims to raise up to $4.2 billion from the stake sale to expand football development programmes and increase funding for member associations worldwide.

The global football body said a new optional programme would enable associations to access additional development funding and receive up to $20 million in one-off capital.

A FIFA spokesperson said funding per member association would increase from $8 million to $20 million during the 2027-2030 cycle, with further growth targeted for subsequent cycles.



GIANNI INFANTINO

Commonwealth Games: Adeshina ends Nigeria's 72-year wait for High Jump medal

Temitope Adeshina has delivered one of the most historic performances of Team Nigeria's campaign at the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games.

She won bronze in the women's high jump to end a 72-year wait for a Nigerian medal in the event.

Kola Daniel, Special Adviser on Media to the Office of the Director General, National Sports Commission (NSC) Bukola Olopade in a statement on Wednesday in Lagos, disclosed that she came behind Australia's Eleanor Patterson and Nicola Olyslagers.

"Adeshina cleared 1.90 metres to secure third place behind Australia's Eleanor Patterson and Nicola Olyslagers, becoming the first Nigerian high jumper to stand on a Commonwealth Games podium.

"This was after Emmanuel Ifeajuna won gold at the 1954 British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Vancouver.

"Her achievement also made her the first Nigerian woman ever, to win a Commonwealth Games medal in the high jump, adding a new chapter to Nigeria's rich athletics history," he said.

Daniel noted that the bronze medal by Adeshina represented a remarkable rise for the Nigerian star, who finished 10th on her Commonwealth Games debut four years ago.

"Her return to the games was marked by composure, consistency and determination, as she successfully navigated the competition to claim a place on the podium against a world-class field.

"Adeshina's medal carries significance far beyond the podium. Before her performance in Glasgow, only two Nigerians had ever won Commonwealth Games medals in the high jump.

"Josiah Majekodunmi secured silver at the 1950 British Empire Games in Auckland, earning Nigeria's first-ever medal in the history of the Commonwealth Games.

"Four years later, Emmanuel Ifeajuna made history by winning gold in Vancouver, becoming the first black African athlete to capture a Commonwealth Games gold medal," he added.

Daniel then stated that for more than seven decades, no Nigerian high jumper, male or female, had managed to add another Commonwealth medal to that distinguished legacy.

"Adeshina has now ended that long wait, becoming only the third Nigerian ever, to win a Commonwealth Games high jump medal and the first in 72 years.

"Her success also underscores the steady resurgence of Nigerian athletics on the international stage and highlights the country's growing strength in field events, alongside its traditional sprinting prowess.

"The historic bronze adds another memorable moment to Team Nigeria's campaign in Glasgow and further cements Adeshina's status as one of the nation's brightest athletics stars," he said.



TEMITOPE ADESHINA

WAFCON: Stakeholders express concern over continued decline of Falcons' dominance

The shocking 3-2 defeat of Nigeria's Super Falcons to competition debutants, Malawi's Scorchers, at the 2026 Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) in Morocco has sparked concerns among stakeholders.

This is following the team's declining dominance in African women's football.

Some stakeholders who spoke in separate interviews with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Wednesday in Lagos expressed concerns over the fitness level of some of the players.

They also questioned the appointment of Coach Justin Madugu to lead the team.

In what could rank among one of the biggest upsets in WAFCON history, debutants Malawi stunned the 10-time African champions at the Al Madina Stadium in Rabat.

The Chawinga sisters played pivotal roles in Malawi's historic victory, helping the Scorchers record their first-ever WAFCON win. Nigeria fought back but could not avoid defeat.

A United Kingdom-based journalist, Ayo Akinfe, expressed concern over the fitness of some Super Falcons players, saying a number of them appeared overweight.

"My first concern about the team is their fitness. Some of them are overweight, especially Chiamaka Nnadozie and the left-back.

"The team needs to work on its fitness. I am also worried about the justification for the appointment of Coach Justin Madugu.

"I seriously doubt his technical ability. I wonder why the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) settled for someone who does not have the pedigree of the former coach, Randy Waldrum," he said.

Coach Mark Sarafi, reacting to the loss, blamed the team's



"It's a Wake-Up Call" — Oshoala reacts to Nigeria's Opening loss to Malawi

Super Falcons forward Asisat Oshoala has described Nigeria's 3-2 defeat to Malawi in their opening match of the 2026 Women's Africa Cup of Nations in Morocco as a wake-up call, urging the team to regroup and focus on the challenges ahead

Tournament debutants Malawi stunned the defending champions with an impressive performance, taking a commanding 3-1 lead before stoppage time. Temwa Chawinga scored twice, netting the opening and third goals, while her sister, Tabitha Chawinga, added the second to put the Southern Africans in control.

Nigeria fought back late in the game through a Rasheedat Ajibade penalty and a stoppage-time strike from Uchenna Kanu, but the 10-time African champions were unable to complete the comeback.

Speaking after the match, Oshoala acknowledged the growing competitiveness of women's football across the continent.

"Smaller nations are closing the gap, but it's also a wake-up call for Nigeria. We have to understand that other teams want to win this trophy as well," she said.

The six-time African Women's Player of the Year stressed that there is still enough time for the Super Falcons to recover in the tournament.



ASISAT OSHOALA

League of African Ambassadors unveils continental agenda, to host fundraising golf tournament

The League of African Ambassadors (LAA) has unveiled its continental vision and announced plans to organise a fundraising golf tournament aimed at promoting African diplomacy, strategic partnerships and resource mobilisation.

The President of the League, Ambassador Nwanne Ominyi, disclosed this at a news conference on Tuesday in Abuja.

Ominyi said the League comprised serving and retired African ambassadors committed to advancing African unity, economic cooperation and sustainable development.

He said the organisation was inaugurated on Oct. 14, 2025, under the auspices of the African Union Economic, Social and Cultural Council (AU-ECOSOCC).

According to him, the League seeks to harness the wealth of diplomatic experience across the continent to strengthen Africa's unity, development and global influence.

He said the organisation would complement the efforts of governments, the African Union and regional organisations through dialogue, mentorship, youth empowerment and strategic partnerships.



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