

Okpebholo braces up to lift more less privileged out of poverty

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Edo State Government has carried out more than five thousand empowerment programmes as it continues to initiate programs that will lift people out of poverty, Governor

● Carries out over 5,000 empowerment programmes already

nor Monday Okpebholo has disclosed.

The governor made the disclosure during a two-day prayer programme tagged "the power of Love and Godly Relationship as of old" organized by the government house chapel.

The governor who participated in the all night programme, as well as the praise program noted that true Love was shown in practical acts of kindness and Genuine commitments to the needs of others.

He insisted that when individuals live their daily lives with love, most of his challenges especially as relates security will not exist, helping government focus on providing better infrastructure and empowerment to the people.

The governor represented by the coordinator office of the first Lady Mrs Edesili Anani tasked residents to demonstrate love and kindness in their daily dealings with one another, irrespective of religion, ethnicity or status.

On his part, the convener of the programme and Chaplain Government House Chapel Apostle Sule Faraday explained that the programme was designed to commit the affairs of the state into the hands of God. Faraday, who is also the Special Adviser to the Edo State Governor on Religious Matters, noted that the governor made

CONTINUES ON PG 2»

The Nigerian OBSERVER

That The People May Know

f t i s NigerianObserver @Nigerian_Observer @NigerianObserver www.nigerianobservernews.com

PUBLISHED SINCE MAY 29, 1968

VOL. 47, NO. 1,311

TUESDAY 21ST JULY, 2026.

₦200

FG dismisses claims of ₦80tn new borrowing

● Blames debt surge on Naira revaluation, accounting adjustments
● Senators raise concerns over capital budget implementation

CAROLINE AMEH

The Federal Government has dismissed claims that the Tinubu administration has borrowed nearly N80 trillion in the past three years, describing such figures as exaggerated and the result of accounting adjustments and misreporting.

Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Wale Edun, made the

clarification on Monday while briefing the Senate Committee on Finance on the state of the nation's economy.

Responding to concerns raised by Senator Adamu Aliero (Kebbi Central) over reports that the current administration had borrowed about N80 trillion in addition to the N75 trillion debt it inherited, the minister said the figures being circulated did not reflect the actual amount borrowed by the

government.

He explained that when President Bola Tinubu assumed office, Nigeria's public debt stood at about N75 trillion.

However, following the depreciation of the naira, the foreign currency component of the debt had to be revalued in naira terms, adding more than N40 trillion to the country's debt stock without any fresh borrowing.

The minister also said the securitisation of about N33 trillion in Ways and Means advances obtained by the previous administration and subsequent-

ly approved by the National Assembly further increased the reported debt profile.

According to him, the addition was an accounting exercise that formally recognised existing liabilities rather than new borrowing.

"These factors have not always been properly explained, which is why the reported public debt appears much larger," he said.

The minister further noted that much of the government's domestic borrowing had been used to refinance maturing debts rather than accumulate fresh obligations.

"The actual amount this administration has borrowed is nowhere near what many people believe. Even for domestic borrowing, much of it is refinancing. Debt that was borrowed previously matures, and government raises new debt to refinance it. That is not new borrowing," he stated.

He maintained that the Tinubu administration had adopted a prudent borrowing strategy, insisting that loans were being channelled into infrastructure and other productive investments rather than recurrent

expenditure.

"We see debt as leverage. Every naira and every dollar borrowed should generate more value than the amount borrowed," he added.

The minister's presentation, however, drew criticism from members of the Senate Committee, particularly Senate Chief Whip, Senator Tahir Monguno (Borno North), and Senator Adamu Aliero, who expressed dissatisfaction over what they described as poor

CONTINUES ON PG 2»

Edo Govt strengthens support for stranded returnees

BENIN CITY

The Edo Government has strengthened support for stranded returnees through rehabilitation; reintegration and empowerment programmes aimed at helping them rebuild their lives.

The Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development, Mrs Eugenia Abdallah, disclosed this in an interview on Monday in Benin.

Abdallah said that the ministry usually provided temporary shelter, medical care, psychosocial support, skills acquisition and business empowerment for stranded persons, particularly women and other vulnerable groups.

She also said that the government collaborated with partners, including the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the European Union (EU) and

the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), to strengthen reintegration efforts and discourage irregular migration.

According to her, the state's reintegration programme provides care, protection and opportunities for people who return to the state and require assistance.

She explained that beneficiaries were enrolled in vocational and entrepreneurial training programmes to equip them with skills for successful reintegration into society.

The commissioner said the ministry also rehabilitated vulnerable women rescued from the streets, victims of human trafficking and other vulnerable persons through medical care, counseling and, where possible, family reunification.

CONTINUES ON PG 2»



DONATION:

From left: Director of Administration, Ehigiaton Omosigbo Beauty; Chairman, Medical Advisory Committee, Dr. Victor Ohenhen; Chief Medical Director, Dr. (Mrs) Anthonia I. Njoku; and Deputy Chairman, Medical Advisory Committee, Dr. Ezesor Rebecca E., at the 7th anniversary press conference of Edo Specialist Hospital, Benin City.

PHOTO: OKONDOH TALLE EBOSE

Edo Specialist Hospital —Pg 2
lauds Okpebholo over IVF
equipment, secures full
residency accreditation

The Maritime Industry
in Nigeria is undergoing
a Paradigm Shift
— Ebhodaghe —Pg 13

US soldier killed and
one injured after
Iranian attack in Iraq
—Pg 14

Spain's World Cup
triumph caps
historic tournament
—Pg 23

NEWS



PROGRAMME:

A cross section of worshippers while the convener of the two-day-programme, Apostle Sule Faraday, delivers his message in the Edo State Government House Chapel.



GOODLY RELATIONSHIP:

The Coordinator, Office of the First Lady of Edo State, Mrs. Edesili Okpebholo Anani, representing Governor Monday Okpebholo, on Monday, during a two day prayer programme in Government House Chapel, Benin City.



POWER OF LOVE:

Mrs. Edesili Okpebholo Anani (2nd left) and other worshippers in the praise programme organised by the Government House Chapel, Benin City, on Monday.

Okpebholo braces up to lift...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

several promises during the campaign, and today's event was one of those promises.

"One of them is the provision of free medical tests and treatment for the people of Edo State.

"This programme, organised by the Edo State Government House Chapel and powered by the Governor, reflects the administration's commitment to the welfare of the people.

"The theme, 'The Power of Love and Godly Relationship as of Old,' is inspired by God's love for humanity as expressed in John 3:16.

"The free medical outreach is open to everyone, regardless of religion. Christians, Muslims and other residents are benefiting from the exercise, demonstrating the government's love and care for the people of Edo State.

"Beyond medical care, the programme also encourages people

to embrace genuine love for one another because where love exists, crime and hatred have no place. It reminds us that we cannot harm those we truly love.

"We appreciate the Governor for supporting this initiative and for his continued commitment to both the spiritual and physical well-being of Edo people. The free medical treatment is a practical demonstration of that love," he said.

The event offers prayers for the governor, and his cabinet, as well as progress of the state were offered by Ministers including Pastor Oby Okeke Apostle Favour Awun and Pastor Emanuel Ibiwoye.

There was also a medical outreach as the Medical Director Government House medical center, Dr Solomon Aigubasimwin speaks on the screening.

The Muslim Community was present, led by the Special Adviser to the Governor on Arewa Matters Alhaji Mansur Ibrahim.

Edo Specialist Hospital lauds Okpebholo over IVF equipment, secures full residency accreditation

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

The Edo Specialist Hospital (ESH), Benin, has commended Edo State Governor Monday Okpebholo for providing in vitro fertilisation (IVF) equipment to support couples experiencing infertility, saying the initiative will expand access to reproductive healthcare in the state.

The commendation came on Monday during a press conference and media tour organised to mark the hospital's seventh anniversary.

Speaking at the event, the hospital's Chief Medical Director, Dr. Anthonia Inibokun Njoku, praised the governor for what she described as his commitment to strengthening healthcare delivery across Edo State.

She said the newly acquired IVF equipment would provide hope for couples unable to con-

ceive naturally.

"In reproductive healthcare, many couples who find it difficult to have their babies will now receive assistance through the IVF programme," Njoku said.

The CMD also announced that the hospital's residency training programme in Obstetrics and Gynaecology has received full accreditation from both the West African College of Surgeons and the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria.

According to her, the hospital also recently completed accreditation for its Family Medicine and Dentistry departments.

Njoku attributed the institution's progress to the support of the state government, saying the administration had strengthened healthcare services from the primary to tertiary levels.

She said the governor approved the absorption of 126 contract workers into the Edo State workforce and granted the

hospital the authority to recruit additional medical personnel, leading to more than 290 direct employments.

The hospital has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Mudiame University, Irrua, to serve as a teaching hospital for the training of medical students.

"The partnership strengthens our role as both a healthcare provider and a training institution," she said.

Njoku added that Edo Specialist Hospital now offers Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (CEmONC)

services to improve maternal and neonatal health outcomes.

She said the hospital is enrolled on the Edo State Health Insurance Scheme (EDOHIS) platform and the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) platform, enabling it to provide services to beneficiaries of both state and federal health insurance programmes.

The event concluded with a guided tour of the hospital's facilities led by Dr. Suleman Ozemoka among others, giving journalists an opportunity to inspect the equipment and services available at the institution.

FG dismisses claims of ₦80trn new borrowing...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

implementation of the capital component of the 2026 budget.

Monguno reportedly argued that failure to implement the capital budget could amount to a constitutional breach, while

Aliero also questioned the pace of budget execution.

Chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance, Senator Sani Musa (Niger East), sought to calm concerns, assuring lawmakers that implementation of the capital projects would soon gather momentum.

Edo Govt strengthens support...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

She cited the case of Miss Elizabeth Pius, a pregnant returnee from Côte d'Ivoire, as one of the beneficiaries of the ministry's intervention.

She explained that Pius, an indigene of Akwa Ibom, travelled to Côte d'Ivoire in search of greener pastures but was abandoned and returned to Nigeria after her employer discovered she was pregnant.

According to her, Pius later arrived in Benin without accommodation or means of survival and sought assistance from the ministry.

She said the ministry took

responsibility for her welfare, ensured she received antenatal care and supported her throughout the pregnancy.

"We facilitated a successful Caesarean Section, and today both mother and baby are healthy," she said.

Abdallah reaffirmed the commitment of the administration of Gov. Monday Okpebholo to protecting vulnerable persons and ensuring that those in need received the support required to reintegrate successfully into society.

She advised Nigerians, particularly young people, to avoid irregular migration and seek accurate information and legitimate pathways before traveling abroad.

Speaking after a closed-door session with the minister and members of the government's economic team, Musa said discussions focused on improving budget management through stronger revenue mobilisation and reforms.

He disclosed that the govern-

ment was considering a shift to a performance- and priority-based budgeting system to replace the current envelope budgeting model, while also exploring a return to the previous contractor payment framework to improve project execution.

FG must follow terror sanctions with prosecution, –Lawyers, security experts

LAGOS

Some lawyers and security experts in Lagos have commended the Federal Government's response to U.S. sanctions on alleged terrorism financiers, urging sustained investigations and prosecutions where evidence exists.

The experts spoke in separate interviews with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), saying sanctions and the designation of suspects were

important steps, but should be complemented by due process.

NAN reports that the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) recently designated some Nigerians as terrorism financiers.

Following the sanctions, Nigeria's Sanctions Committee adopted the designations and placed the individuals and entities on the country's sanctions list.

The committee also direct-

ed financial institutions to identify and freeze all funds, assets and economic resources linked to them under the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022.

Reacting, a Lagos-based lawyer, Mrs Ruth Ojomo, said the government's decision demonstrated commitment to tackling terrorism financing and related security threats.

Ojomo, however, said authorities must ensure that all allegations were thoroughly investi-

gated and supported by credible evidence before prosecution.

"It is important that the government does not stop at listing suspects.

"There should be comprehensive investigations, prosecution where sufficient evidence exists and strict compliance with due process," she said.

According to her, terrorism financing remains a major threat to national security and requires coordinated efforts among security agencies, financial institutions and international partners.

Ojomo also called for greater transparency, saying public

confidence would improve when authorities provide credible and verifiable information.

Another lawyer, Mr Azeez Abdul, described the government's response as a positive step but said more practical measures were required.

Abdul urged relevant agencies to intensify intelligence gathering, improve inter-agency collaboration and strengthen monitoring of suspicious financial transactions.

According to him, Nigeria should continue working with international partners to track

illicit financial flows and identify terrorism financiers.

"The authorities have taken an important step by recognising the sanctions and acting on them. However, listing individuals alone is not enough.

"Allegations must be independently investigated and, where necessary, prosecuted before competent courts," Abdul said.

He stressed that while the fight against terrorism financing must be robust, the constitutional rights of suspects should be respected.



COURTESY VISIT:

From left: Senior Academic from the Department of Business Administration Ahmadu Bello University, (ABU) Zaria, Prof. Nasiru Maiturare; Director General, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Mrs Zubaida Umar and Vice Chancellor, ABU, Prof. Adamu Ahmed, during the visit of the University's delegation to NEMA Headquarters in Abuja.

NANS threatens shutdown of Osun tertiary institutions over alleged election violence

IBADAN

The National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), has threatened to shut down academic activities across tertiary institutions in Osun over alleged rising political violence ahead of the state's governorship election.

This is contained in a statement jointly signed by its Southwest Zone D Coordinator, Mr. Josiah Adeyemo; Secretary-General, Mr Babatunde Ojetola, and Public Relations Officer, Mr Tope Olugbemi, in Ibadan on Monday.

The association said the planned strike was intended to protect students from the growing insecurity allegedly linked to the electioneering process.

NANS said students would be directed to return home, if the situation failed to improve.

According to it, reports of alleged shootings, intimidation and politically related killings in parts of the state have created fear among students, particularly those residing on and off campuses.

The association said the alleged security situation no longer guaranteed a conducive environment for learning.

It expressed concern over what it described as the absence of comprehensive security measures in protecting campuses, student hostels, host communities and major transportation routes during the election period.

"Nigerian students can-

not be expected to continue attending lectures when violence is gradually becoming normalised.

"Innocent residents are being caught in conflicts they neither created nor participated in," the union said.

NANS also alleged that some political actors were mobilising students for voter registration and other election-related activities.

While affirming that students had the constitutional right to participate in the democratic process, the association cautioned against the exploitation of students for political purposes.

It advised students not to surrender sensitive personal information to unidentified individuals or board unmarked vehicles operated by unknown persons.

SERVICOM Decries MDA's performance, seeks improved service standards

ABUJA

The Service Compact with All Nigerians (SERVICOM) has urged Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to strengthen accountability, transparency and citizen-centred service delivery through effective implementation of their service charters.

The Acting National Coordinator of SERVICOM, Mrs Helen Lawal, made the call on

Monday at the Second Quarter Charter Performance Reporting Breakfast Meeting with SERVICOM Nodal Officers from MDAs in Abuja.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the SERVICOM quarterly performance review provides an opportunity for MDAs to assess their achievements, share experiences, identify challenges and adopt innovative approaches to improve public service delivery.

Lawal explained that the meeting focused on four key

performance areas- work plan implementation, charter performance, customer satisfaction surveys and complaint handling.

According to her, the indicators are essential for measuring institutional effectiveness, responsiveness and compliance with service standards.

"As public institutions, we have a responsibility to place citizens at the centre of everything we do.

"Nigerians expect services that are timely, accessible, transparent, courteous and efficient," she said.

Alleged N35m fraud: Court adjourns ex-SDP Chairman's trial

ABUJA

An Abuja Magistrates' Court on Monday adjourned the alleged N35 million financial misappropriation case against the immediate past National Chairman of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Shehu Gabam until Aug. 17.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Gabam was docked before Chief Magistrate Amauche Onyedum alongside Chukwuma Ogbonna Uchechukwu in suit No. DCC/10/2026 for alleged misappropriation of SDP's N35 million.

The direct criminal complaint was instituted by the current SDP under relevant

provisions of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA), 2015.

The SDP, which instituted the case, had charged Gabam with criminal breach of trust, misappropriation, theft and other financial offences.

Earlier, the court announced it would not be sitting due to unforeseen circumstances, and hence would not proceed with proceedings for the day.

Counsel agreed for Aug. 17 as the new adjourned date.

Speaking with newsmen, after the stalled proceedings, SDP National Chairman, Prof. Sadiq Gombé, said it was the first time since the trial began that the court failed to sit.

Alleged \$2.63m money laundry: Court admits Miyetti Allah president to N2bn bail

ABUJA

The Federal High Court in Abuja on Monday admitted Bello Bodejo, the National President of Miyetti Allah Kautu Kore, to N2 billion bail with two sureties in the like sum.

Justice Inyang Ekwo, in a ruling on Bodejo's bail application, ordered that one of the sureties must present three years tax clearance before the court and must reside in Abuja.

Justice Ekwo, also ordered that the second surety must have a land worth N2 billion in Abuja.

The judge equally ordered Bodejo to drop his international passport with the registrar of the court and must not travel outside the country without the leave of the court.

The judge agreed that the offence with which the defendant was charged was bailable and the court has the discretionary power to exercise this in his favour.

He adjourned the matter until Oct. 5, Oct. 6 and Oct. 7 for commencement of trial.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Justice Ekwo had, on July 9, remanded the Miyetti Allah president in

the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)'s custody.

The judge gave the order following Bodejo's arraignment by the EFCC on alleged money laundering offences.

NAN reports that the EFCC Counsel, Wahab Shittu, SAN, had named Bodejo as sole defendant in the charge dated June 24 and filed June 25.

After the charge was read to Bodejo, he pleaded not guilty to all the counts.

Shittu then applied for a trial date and urged the court to order his remand.

Mr Ahmed Raji, SAN, informed the court about the bail application for his client.

Moving the motion, Raji said the application was dated and filed on June 30.

The lawyer submitted that the offences with which Bodejo was charged bordered on money laundering.

According to him, under Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA), they are bailable offences.

He, therefore, urged the court to admit the defendant to bail.

But Shittu opposed Raji's application for bail.

CELEBRATION OF *Life*

With heavy hearts and immense gratitude to God Almighty for a greatly fulfilled life, **the Eimuan- Okojie and Osemeikhian Families** announce the passing unto glory of their beloved
Wife, Mother, Sister, Auntie and Grandmother

PROF. DAME. CHRISTIANA
OKOJIE
(NEE OSEMEIKHIAN)

1946 - 2026

Burial Arrangements to be announced by Family

https://www.forevermisseds.com/prof-christiana-okojie?short_code=Vwx5e1K6

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

BENIN CITY, EDO STATE OF NIGERIA

PROBATE REGISTRY

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

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

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

1.	MR. MONDAY UWADIAE, late of Abudu, Orhionmwon L.G.A., who died on the 25th day of September, 2019 in Abudu.	PED/364/2026	Mr. Endurance Uwadiae and Miss. Anita Uwadiae of No 12, Irubor Street, Abudu, Orhionmwon L.G. A., Edo State, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.	32.	MR. OSARO KELVIN EBOMWONYI, late of Oza, Oredo L.G.A., who died on the 24th day of September, 2024 in Benin City.	PED/189/2026	Miss. Blessing Isi Egbogun and Miss. Osazee Esther Egbogun of No 1, Osagie Street, Off Dumez Road, Benin City, nieces of the deceased.
2.	MRS. EMWENRUWA GABRIEL UWADIAE, late of Ikpe, Orhionmwon L.G.A., who died on the 6th day of September, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/365/2026	Miss. Anita Uwadiae and Mr. Endurance Uwadiae of No 12, Irubor Street, Abudu, Orhionmwon L.G. A., Edo State, daughter and son respectively of the deceased.	33.	MR. SUNDAY EBHODAGHE INEGBEBOH, late of Udo-Eguare, Igueben L.G.A., who died on the 29th day of September, 2024 in Igueben.	PED/424/2026	Mr. Clement Ebhodaghe and Mr. Gregory Ebhodaghe of Udo-Eguare, Igueben, Edo State Benin City, sons of the deceased.
3.	MR. SUNDAY EHIOSUN AMUOBONOSE, late of Ewatto, Esan South East L.G.A., who died on the 18th day of December, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/334/2026	Mr. Wisdom Osamudiamhen Sunday Ehiosun and Mr. Victory Aziegbemem Ehiosun of No 30, Ereyimwen Street, Off Otote Street, Off Textile Mill Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased.	34.	MADAM. MARIS IDOWU AIMOLA (A.K.A) MARIS IDOWUN AIMOLA late of Igue-Saleh, Owan East L.G.A., who died on the 24th day of February, 2024 in Afuze.	PED/452/2026	Donatus Atalegbe Aimola and Divine Idehai of Ben Imade Street, Upper mission Extension, Aduwawa, Benin City, brother and son respectively of the deceased.
4.	MRS. CELINE MMA ORISAKWE, late of Ebenetor-Ekewe, Isu L.G.A., Imo State, who died on the 20th day August, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/368/2026	Blessing Nkeiruka Orisakwe and Destiny Chibueze Orisakwe of No 25, Ehaekpen Street, Off Ekenhuan Road, Benin City, daughter and son respectively of the deceased.	35.	MR. SYLVESTER AIBIEYOMWANMON, late of Uhen, Ovia North East L.G.A., who died on the 1st day of January, 2025 in Uhen.	PED/461/2026	Mr. Kelly Usiomwanta and Mr. happy Usiomwanta of No 62, Odion Street, Evbuotubu Quarters, Benin City, sons of the deceased.
5.	MR. SUNDAY BEN EWALEFOH EWONE, late of Uromi, Esan North East L.G.A., who died on the 11th day of October, 2025 in Uromi.	PED/317 /2026	Mrs. Rachael Enaluna Alari and Michael Ekpen Ewaleifoh of No 6, Boundary Road, Benin City, daughter and son respectively of the deceased.	36.	MR. FRIDAY ESENE, late of Uromi, Esan North East L.G.A., who died on the 22nd day of August, 2024 in Benin City.	PED/926/2024	Joseph Odion Esene and Judith Osatohanmhen Esene of No 31, Error Uromi, Edo State, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.
6.	MR. PIUS OTUOKPAMWONYI IGBINIGIE, late of Ebelle, Igueben L.G.A., who died on the 14th day of December, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/409/2026	Mrs. Agnes Isibhakhomen Igbiginie and Mr. Joshua Osamudi-amen Igbiginie of No 2, Osakue Street, Off Upper St. Saviour Road, Benin City, widow and son respectively of the deceased.	37.	MR. CHUKWUMA NWAGWU, late of Eziam, Umuahia South L.G.A., Abia State, who died on the 24th day of May, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/459/2026	Ikechukwu Chukwuma and Mr. Okechukwu Chukwuma of no 26, Erosunye Street, Off Jesus Christ Road, Upper Sakponba Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased.
7.	MR. FRIDAY ENOTOE, late of Aihuobabekun, Ovia North East L.G.A., who died on the 26th day of May, 2025 in Fugar.	PED/66/2026	Miss. Jennifer Uwa Enotoe and Miss. Jessica Izehiese Enotoe of No 25, Osaghae Street, Off Ikponmwosa Street, Off Adolor College, Benin City, daughters respectively of the deceased.	38.	MR. JOSEPH ONOKODAFEYORHA OGUGU, late of Agbarho, Ughelli North L.G.A., Delta State, who died on the 23rd day of November, 2025 in Agbarho.	PED/348/2026	Mrs. Christy Omonike Ogugu and Miss. Ovakporiaye Ayomide Odudi of Plot 416, Pan Ocean Camp Ologbo, Benin City, widow and daughter respectively of the deceased.
8.	MADAM. OMOYENI SAIKI, late of Ibillo, Akoko-Edo L.G.A., who died on the 1st day of December, 2023 in Igarra.	PED/313/2026	Mr. Mogbo Meshack Alabi and Mr. folorunsho Alfred Owaiye of No 17, Uwhosi Quarters, ibillo, Akoko-Edo L.G.A., Edo State, son and widower respectively of the deceased.	39.	MRS. JOSEPHINE EBUEKU, late of Aduwawa, Ikpoba Okha L.G.A., who died on the 13th day of September, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/404/2026	Mr. Itohan Omoruyi Ebueku and Mr. Richard Oliseyenum Ossai of No 21, Erhummwunse Street, Uzebu Quarters, Benin City, stepson and family friend respectively of the deceased.
9.	MR. OWENAZE MOSES IDEHEN, late of Igo, Egor L.G.A., who died on the 31st day of December, 2022 in Benin City.	PED/378/2025	Mr. Idehen Divine Owenaze and Mr. Osagie Gift Owenaze of No 75, omorodion Street, Evbotubu Quarters, Benin City, sons of the deceased.	40.	MR. PETER OMORUYI IGBINEDION, late of Urhonigbe, Orhionmwon L.G.A., who died on the 22nd day of January, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/470/2026	Madam. Patience Iziengbe Omoruyi and Mrs. Esewi Ivy Osay-amwen of No 29, Tayo Street, off Oko Central Road, Benin City, widow and family friend respectively of the deceased.
10.	MR. IGBINOBA SUNDAY EHIARINWIAN, late of Igbanke, Orhionmwon L.G.A., who died on the 28th day of January, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/361/2026	Mr. Lucky Sunday Igbinoba and Mrs. Nosa Igbinoba of No 1, Ofunmwengbe Street, Okhoro Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased.	41.	MR. OSAYOMWANBOR OSAYANDE, late of Egbokor, Orhionmwon L.G.A., who died on the 9th day of January, 2026 in Egbokor.	PED/440/2026	Miss. Mercy Osayomwanbor and Mr. Friday Osayomwanbor of No 13, Ofunmwengbe Street, Egbokor, Orhionmwon L.G.A., Edo State, daughters of the deceased.
11.	MR. SUNDAY IGBINOVIA, late of Obagie-Nevbosa, Ikpoba Okha., who died on the 4th day of April 2022 in Benin City.	PED/383/2026	Mr. Saturday Ekhorogie Igbinovia and Mrs. Juliet Igbinovia of No 25, Faith Street, Off Nomayo Street, Upper Sakponba Road, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.	42.	MADAM. COMFORT ONAIWU ENAGBARE, late of Eyaen, Ikpoba Okha L.G.A., who died on the 15th day of August, 2024, in Benin City.	PED/780/2025	Mr. Christian Odigie and Mr. Sylvester Aghonghon Igiebor of No 43, Ugowe Street, Off Ekhaton Street, Obanosa, St Saviour Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased.
12.	MR. EDEKI OHIOKEDE, late of Otuo, Owan East L.G.A., who died on the 8th day of April, 2020 in Irrua.	PED/393/2026	Moses Ohiokede and Victor Ohimai Ohiokede of No 57, Eromon Street, Eguare, Ekpoma, sons of the deceased.	43.	MR. JOSEPH AUDU OLEGHE (A.KA) JOSEPH IKAZEMHE OLEGHE, late of Agenebode Etsako East L.G.A., who died on the 14th day of September, 2025, in Agenebode.	PED/469/2026	Mr. Hillary Sunday Oleghe and Mrs. Magdalene Emoshio-theamhe Arewah of Chief Joseph Oleghe House, Igide, Itogbo Quarters, Agenebode, Edo State, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.
13.	MR. AIFESEHI ORHUE, late of Ovbogie, Ovia North East L.G.A., who died on the 12th day of March, 2016 in Benin City.	PED/722/2019	Mr. Bright Orhue and Madam. Mary Afesehi of Ovbogie Community, Ovia North East L.G.A., Edo State, son and daughter respectively of the	44.	MRS. GLORIA NNEKA ANTHONY OMOKPO, late of Ebu, Oshimili North L.G.A., Delta State, who died on the 7th day of December, 2025, in Benin City.	PED/300/2026	Mr. Anthony Matthew Omokpo and Miss. Magdalene Agumele Omokpo of No 5, Osayande Street, UNIBEN Land, Iyowa, Benin City, son and daughter of the deceased.
14.	MR. EBENEZER TEMITOPE OGUNDE, late of Eruwon, Ijebu North East L.G.A., Ogun State, who died on the 11th day of October, 2025 in Ikorodu.	PED/433/2026	Miss. Damilola Serah Ogunde and Miss. Ayomide Rebecca Ogunde of No 10, Taiwo Adesanya Street, Ogijo, Ogun State, daughters of the deceased.	45.	MISS. JENNIFER ISICHEI, late of Igbanke, Orhionmwon L.G.A., who died on the 17th day of May, 2026, in Benin City.	PED/474/2026	Miss. Isioma Ruth Isichei and Miss. Nkiruka Becky Isichei of No 8, Akpata Street, Egor, Benin City, sisters of the deceased.
15.	MR. RICHARD ISERHIENRHIEN OSAREN-MWINDA, late of Okokhuo, Ovia North East L.G.A., who died on the 26th day of March, 2024 in Benin City.	PED/432/2026	Oghogho Osarenmwinda and osemwengie bright Osarenmwinda of No 7, Idemudia Street, Off Adolor College Road, Ugbowo, Benin City, daughter and son respectively of the deceased.	46.	MR. MOSES OKEREMUTE UNUKEBO, late of Agbarha, Ughelli North L.G.A., Delta State, who died on the 26th day of September, 2017, in Benin City.	PED/454/2025	Mr. Sunday White Okeremuta and Mrs. Blessing Igbako of No 1st Upstairs, Agbor Road, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.
16.	MADAM. FELICIA IGBINOVIA, late of Ukhiri, Ikpoba Okha L.G.A., who died on the 9th day of October, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/354/2026	Mr. Abraham Osasumwen Igbinovia and Mr. Collins Igbinovia Amienomahonghe of No 8, Ogiefu Street, Off Jesus Christ Road, Off Upper Sakponba Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased	47.	MR. JOSEPH ESOSA OGBEIFUN, late of Igieduma, Uhumwonde L.G.A., who died on the 13th day of November, 2025, in Benin City.	PED/466/2026	Mr. Johnbull Ogbeifun and Mr. Saturday Imuentinyan Ogbeifun of No 28, Igbinedion Street, Off Ebikade Street, Ohovbe Quarters, Benin City, sons respectively of the deceased.
17.	MR. ERNEST EGHOSA SOLOMON, late of Umaza, Ovia South West L.G.A., who died on the 19th day of January, 2026 in Lagos.	PED/77/2026	Madam. Maureen Amieoghogho Onaiwu and Miss. Anita Aitua-gie Eboh of No 2, Simon Ikechukwu Street, Alagbado, Lagos, widow and family friend respectively of the deceased.	48.	MR. OBAME ABEL OYAKHILOME, late of Irrua, Esan North L.G.A., who died on the 17th day of August, 2024, in Irrua.	PED/481/2026	Mr. Godstime Oyakhilome and Mrs. Elizabeth Oyakhilome of Old School Street, Uromi, Esan North East L.G.A., Edo State, son and widow respectively of the deceased.
18.	MR. UWA OSEMWENGIE, late of Ogheghe, Ovia North East L.G.A., who died on the 10th day of March, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/434/2026	Madam. Lilian Aimineno and Mr. Peter Osemwengie of Akala Street, Iguero, Ovia North East L.G.A., Edo State, widow and brother respectively of the deceased.	49.	DR(MRS). MABEL OMOREFE OSIFO, late of Ibiwe, Oredo L.G.A., who died on the 15th day of April, 2022, in Benin City.	PED/259/2023	Mrs. Valentina Ize Oshodin and Mrs. Gloria Izoduwa Aigbang-bee of No 27, Debekeme Street, Off Upper Ekenwan Road, Benin City, daughter and niece respectively of the deceased.
19.	MR. OSANEBI NWADUWA, late of Abbi, Ndokwa West L.G.A., Delta State, who died on the 8th day of November, 2024 in Benin City.	PED/437 /2026	Mr. Chibogu Gabriel Nwaduwa and Mr. Ifeanyi Jerry Nwaduwa of No 487, Upper Sakponba Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased.	50.	MR. OKORIE FRANCIS AYARU, late of Onu-Agu Anike, Onicha L.G.A., Ebonyi State, who died on the 23rd day of April, 2017, in Benin City.	PED/888/2024	Mr. Sunday Abel Okorie and Mr. Amarachi Abel Okorie of No 26, Agbontaen Street, off Obazeze Street, Benin City, sons of the deceased
20.	MR. SIMEON ONORIEDEODE ISAGBA, late of Otor-Owhe, Isoko North L.G.A., Delta State, who died on the 23rd day of April, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/412/2026	Mrs. Grace Orie Isagba and Miss. Onome Diana Isagba of osomon Adeoye Street, Off Usunobon Street, Isihor, widow and daughter respectively of the deceased.	51.	MR. OGUNJIMI ODEBIYI, late of Abunmere, Ovia North East L.G.A., who died on the 31st day of December, 2025, in Benin City.	PED/423/2026	Destiny Odebiyi and Promise Ogunjimi of Abunmere Commu-nity, Ovia North East L.G.A., Edo State, sons of the deceased
21.	MADAM. STELLA OLOGBOWA, late of Ig-uemokhua, Orhionmwon L.G.A., who died on the 18th day of November, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/444/2026	Miss. Cynthia Aghator and Madam. Mercy itohan Agbonzee of No 2, Ohonba Street, Off Upper Siluko Road, Benin City, sisters of the deceased.	52.	MR. AUGUSTINE OKORO ODIDIKA, late of Okpo-ro, Orlu L.G.A., Imo State, who died on the 10th day of June, 2026, in Benin City.	PED/489/2026	Mr. Kingsley Chimezie Odidika and Mrs. frances Onyebuchi Omoregie of No 17, Edebor Street, Ohovbe Quarters, Ikpoba Hill., Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.
22.	MR. FIDELIS IGHO OKHUELEGBE, late of Igueben, Igueben L.G.A., who died on the 12th day of July, 2025 in Igueben.	PED/427/2026	Mrs. Lilian Enimien Okhuelegbe and Mr. Emmanuel Oluah of No 9, Ozakpolor Street, Off S & T Road, Uselu, Benin City, widow and family friend respectively of the deceased.	53.	MR. THEOPHILUS EJIRO ENEMODIA, late of Oghara, Ethiope West L.G.A., Benin City, who died on the 13th day of May, 2022, in Benin City.	PED/497/2026	Mr. Edward Oghenerukevwe Enemodia and Miss. Susan Afoke Enemodia of No 14 Ogbeide Street, Off Upper Sakponba Road, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased
23.	MR. KELVIN EPHRAIM OKODUGHA, late of Irrua, Esan Central L.G.A., who died on the 14th day of March, 2026 in Ekpoma.	PED/380/2026	Mr. Isaac Okodugha Ehioboh and Mr. David Okodugha of No 5, Osaghai Street, Off Uwasota Street, Benin City, brothers of the deceased.	54.	MR. EDWIN FRIDAY AMODU, late of Okpe, Akoko-Edo L.G.A., who died on the 10th day of July, 2025, in Igarra.	PED/209/2026	Madam. Joy Alaba Muhammed and Mr. Ajao Gbolaga Mathew of Iron Bar, Afekhai, Igarra, Edo State, widow and family friend respectively of the deceased.
24.	MRS. QUEEN OROBOSA OVENSERI, late of Ugo, Orhionmwon L.G.A., who died on the 10th day of February, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/448/2026	Mr. Osas Ernest Ovenseri and Mrs. Rita Adesuva Osemwenkha of No 25, Eguagie Street, Upper Sakponba Road, Benin City, widower and sister respectively of the deceased.	55.	MR. ANERU MUHAMMED, late of Agbode, Etsako West L.G.A., who died on the 28th day of May, 2019, in Benin City.	PED/414/2026	Mr. Kashetu Muhammed Aneru and Mr. Tunde Muhammed Aneru of No 1, Aneru Avenue, Off Boundary Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased.
25.	MADAM. JOY IDUOZEE, late of Ekae, Oredo L.G.A., who died on the 16th day of March, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/420/2026	Miss. Sandra Oriakhi and Miss. Princess Osarugue Iduozee No 6, 2nd Nekpennkepen Street, Off 1st East Circular Road, Benin City, daughter and niece respectively of the deceased.	56.	MR. DONALD OMOROGBE, late of Isi-Ewie, Uhumwonde L.G.A., who died on the 9th day of May, 2017, in Benin City.	PED/275/2026	Mrs. Patricia Omorogbe, Miss. Theodora Omorogbe and Mr. Donald Osazuwa Omorogbe of No 5, Amadasun Lane, Off Mission Road, Benin City, widow, daughter and son respectively of the deceased.
26.	MR. GABRIEL MOMODU AMEDU, late of Imiava, Etsako Central L.G.A., who died on the 9th day of July, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/419/2026	Miss. Hope Oshone Gab Amedu and Mr. Precious Oshomole Gab-Amedu of No 31, Ekhaguere Street, Off Technical School Road, Benin City, daughter and son respectively of the deceased.	57.	MR. GREGORY OGBONMWAN OBAKPOLOR, late of Iguobe-Isi, Uhumwonde L.G.A., who died on the 2nd day of July, 2025, in Benin City.	PED/499/2026	Mrs. Florence Noyogiere Obakpolor and Mr. James Omoruyi Obakpolor of No 19-19th Street, EDPA Estate, Ugbowo, Benin City, widow and son respectively of the deceased.
27.	MR. SUNNY OVBIASOMO ERO, late of Urubi, Oredo L.G.A., who died on the 30th day of January, 2026 in Benin City.	PED/122/2026	Harry Osarodion Omo-Ero and Mr. Eghosa Anthony Omo-Ero of No 6, Irobusn Edokpayi Street, Off Country Home Road, Benin City,				
28.	MR. EKOGLIWE INOMWAN, late of Ugbogiobo, Ovia North East L.G.A., who died on the 29th day of November, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/366/2026	Mr. love Osas Ekogiawe and Mr. Lucky Ekogiawe of No 5, Evbowe Street, Ugbogiobo Community, Ovia North East L.G.A., Benin City, sons of the deceased.				
29.	MR. FRANCIS UKPODOJEIKA SUNDAY AFE-KHAI, late of Igue-Saleh, Owan East L.G.A., who died on the 5th day of December, 2020 in Warrake.	PED/324/2026	Priscilia Afekhai and Hope Olohirenuwa Afekhai of No 15, Osunbor Street, Eyaen, Benin City, daughters of the deceased.				
30.	MR. ADEWOLE SUNDAY, late of Okpella, Etsako East L.G.A., who died on the 1st day of November, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/385/2026	Emmanuel Adewole and Amos Adewole of No 23, Omogiawe Street, Upper Sokponba Road, Benin City, sons of the deceased.				
31.	MR. BERNARD OSAGIATOR OTABOR late of Iguesogban, Ovia North East L.G.A., who died on the 2nd day of December, 2025 in Benin City.	PED/439/2026	Miss. Jane Osahenomase Osagiator and Mr. Sylvester Osagiator Eghosa of No 27, Oni-Edigin, Street, Usen, Benin City, daughter and son respectively of the deceased.				

DATED THIS 20TH DAY OF JULY 2026.


B. O. OSAWARU ESQ.
PROBATE REGISTRAR

NEWS

CHIADE Calls for Collective Action to Combat Poverty, Inequality

FRANCIS ODUPUTE

BENIN CITY

The Caring Heart Initiative for Advocacy Development and Empowerment (CHIADE) has called on the governments, development partners, civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, and citizens to unite in the fight against poverty and inequality through sustained acts of compassion, inclusion, and community service.

Speaking at an event to mark the World Nelson Mandela Day, the Executive Di-

rector of CHIADE, Grace Ese Edorhe Obakina, stated that the 2026 theme, "It's still in our hands to combat poverty and inequity," was a timely reminder that lasting social change depends on the collective commitment of individuals and institutions to uplift vulnerable populations.

According to her, poverty remains one of the major drivers of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), human trafficking, child abuse, unemployment, social exclusion, and other social challenges confronting many

Nigerian communities.

"At CHIADE, we believe that combating poverty goes beyond providing financial assistance. It is about restoring hope, protecting dignity, empowering vulnerable people, and creating opportunities for sustainable livelihoods. Every act of kindness and every opportunity created has the potential to transform lives."

She said despite operating with limited resources, CHIA-

DE has continued to mobilize support from partners, supporters, and well-meaning individuals to provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable persons across Edo State and beyond.

She pointed out that through internally mobilized resources and community partnerships, the organization had procured and distributed food items and other relief materials to widows, widowers, persons with disabilities,

and economically vulnerable households, helping to alleviate hardship and restore hope to families facing difficult circumstances.

The organization, she added, has also continued to provide comprehensive support to survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence through psychosocial support, referrals, advocacy, case management, and linkages to critical services. CHIADE

has worked with women who survived severe domestic violence, abandonment, and homelessness, helping them access protection, accommodation, and opportunities to rebuild their lives.

CHIADE expressed profound appreciation to TechHer for providing financial support that enabled vulnerable survivors of violence to secure accommodation and begin their recovery journey.

Sanwo-Olu pays N3.1billion compensation to 300 Lagos property owners

LAGOS

The Lagos State Governor, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu, on Monday presented more than N3.1 billion in compensation to over 300 property owners affected by government land acquisition for strategic infrastructure projects across the state.

Speaking at the presentation ceremony in Lagos, Sanwo-Olu said the compensation underscored his administration's commitment to fairness, transparency and the protection of citizens' rights in line with the Land Use Act.

He said land acquisition for overriding public interest imposed both a legal and moral obligation on government to compensate affected per-

sons fairly, transparently and promptly.

"Today's exercise is not charity; it is justice.

"It is not a favour; it is the rightful entitlement of every verified project-affected person whose property was acquired for public purpose," he said.

The governor said all claims underwent due process, including enumeration, professional valuation and title verification, to ensure compensation reached legitimate beneficiaries.

"Behind every parcel of land is a family, a livelihood and a story. Development must always have a human face, and that is the principle guiding this administration," he said.

Police foil suspected cult attack on Rivers trader

PORT HARCOURT

The Police Command in Rivers says it has foiled a suspected cult attack targeting a trader at a market in the Mile 3 area of Port Harcourt.

The command's spokesperson, ASP Blessing Agabe, confirmed the incident while speaking with journalists in Port Harcourt on Monday.

Agabe said suspected cultists invaded a market along Bishop Okoye Street, but were prevented from carrying out their mission by officers of the Nkpolu Police Division.

"Upon receiving a distress alert, the police division mobilised officers to the scene and foiled the attack before the assailants could execute their mission," she said.

According to her, security personnel have taken control of the area and commenced a manhunt for the fleeing suspects.

She added that efforts were ongoing to identify the cult group involved and establish contact with the trader who was targeted in the attack.

"The victim also fled when

officers arrived at the scene," she said.

The police spokesperson assured residents that a thorough investigation would be conducted and those responsible brought to justice.

Agabe urged members of the public to provide credible information that could assist security agencies in tracking down the suspects.

It was gathered that the incident occurred at about 7; 30a.m., on Monday.

Witnesses said no fewer than eight suspected cultists surrounded a trader identified simply as Abraham, who operates a grinding business in the market.

An eyewitness who simply gave her name as Janet said that the attackers were armed with machetes and a locally made pistol.

She alleged that the suspects inflicted multiple machete cuts on the trader before police officers arrived at the scene.

"The attackers fled immediately they noticed the arrival of police officers and disappeared into the crowd," she said.



ESUT INNOVATION:

From left: President, Are Ekiti Progressive Union (APU), Prof. Olufemi Oke; Aare Akorewolu of Are Ekiti Kingdom, Chief Idowu Akomolede; Organising Secretary of APU, Ojo Oke, during the presentation of a roll-up banner to Are's family, in Ibadan on Monday.

EDSTMA debunks alleged false media reports, says agency designed for safety of motorists

EJEMOGO REBECCA ANWURI

BENIN CITY

The Edo State Traffic Control and Management Agency (EDSTMA) has decried the circulation of false, misleading, and malicious allegations aimed at discrediting the Agency's lawful enforcement of traffic light regulations and other traffic law enforcement operations.

In a press release issued by the EDSTMA Head of Public Relations Department, Mr. Omoruyi Frederick Eguavoen, the Agency rejected attempts to distort facts, misrepresent lawful enforcement actions, or launch coordinated media attacks against its officers who

he affirmed have been diligent in carrying out their lawful duties.

Mr. Omoruyi noted that EDSTMA is designed to protect lives, reduce road traffic crashes, maintain free flow of traffic, and ensure the safety of all road users as against the allegations of harassment or intimidation of motorists.

He emphasized that such campaigns and deliberate misinformation undermine public confidence, encourage traffic violations, and jeopardize road safety.

"EDSTMA officers are professionally trained to enforce traffic laws fairly, impartially, and with respect for the rights of all road users. But in situ-

ations where genuine complaints arise, the Agency has established procedures to investigate them thoroughly and take appropriate action where necessary," he explained.

He also revealed that unfounded accusations, deliberate misinformation, and malicious attempts to tarnish the image of the Agency and its personnel will not deter EDSTMA from carrying out its statutory responsibilities, stressing that all access roads beneath and around the ongoing flyover construction at Ramat Park, in Benin City, are fully subject to traffic laws and regulations, urging motorists to obey all traffic signs, road markings, temporary traffic

control devices, and the lawful directives of EDSTMA officers by avoiding double parking, obstruction of traffic, wrong-way driving, illegal stopping, and all other traffic violations which are prohibited.

Meanwhile, members of the public are encouraged to channel any information, enquiries, observations, complaints, or concerns regarding the Agency's operational and essential activities directly to EDSTMA through its official communication channels for verification and action.

This he said will serve as a veritable tool to preventing the spread of misinformation and ensure that accurate, balanced, and factual information is made available to the public.

Businessman docked for allegedly swindling customer N1.25m

ABUJA

A businessman, Okechukwu Kingsley, was on Monday docked in a Kubwa Magistrates' Court for allegedly swindling his customer the sum of N1.25 million.

Kingsley, of Gwagwa Tasha, Abuja, was charged with

criminal breach of trust and cheating.

The prosecutor, Mr Okpa John, told the court that one Ikenna Umeji, a businessman at DeiDei reported the matter to DeiDei Police Division on Dec. 31, 2025.

John alleged that one Okechukwu Kingsley collected stockfish worth N1.25 million

from the complainant to sell and return the money, but later diverted the proceed of the sell to his personal use.

He alleged that during police investigation and interrogation the defendant could not give a satisfactory account of his actions.

The prosecutor said that the offence contravened Sec-

tion 312 and 322 of the Penal Code.

The Magistrate, Mrs Oyepeju Mustapha, adjointed the case to enable the prosecuting counsel prepare his witness properly before the next hearing.

Mustapha adjointed the matter until Oct. 15 for cross examination and hearing.

Police nab 4 suspected kidnappers, robbers in Anambra, recover firearm

AWKA

The Police Command in Anambra says it has arrested four suspected kidnappers involved in separate kidnapping and robbery incidents across the state.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) in the state, SP Tochukwu Ikenga, disclosed this in a statement in Awka.

"As part of the ongoing se-

curity review and sustained offensive against violent crimes, the Anambra Police Command has recorded significant operational breakthroughs with the arrest of four suspected kidnappers.

"They were involved in separate kidnapping and armed robbery incidents across the state," he said.

Ikenga said that on July 16, operatives of the Rapid Re-

sponse Squad (RRS), Awkuzu, in collaboration with detectives from the Ogbaru Divisional Police Station, foiled a suspected kidnap plot in Iyiowa, Odekpe, Atani in Ogbaru Local Government Area (LGA) of the state.

"The team arrested three male suspected members of a kidnapping syndicate, and recovered a black Toyota Camry with tinted glasses and Lagos

Registration number LND 789HR, believed to have been used by the gang for its operations.

"The suspects are Chekwube Chukwu, 32, Amara-chukwu Nwobosi, 34 and Sopuluchukwu Ifeakor, 30 years respectively," he said.

He said that preliminary investigation revealed that the suspects were intercepted while actively attempting to abduct a female Point of Sale (POS) operator at Atani in Ogbaru LGA, in the morning.

The police spokesman said the victim raised an alarm, which attracted the attention of some residents and prompted a swift response by the police following a distress call.

The PPRO said that the timely intervention by the police frustrated the kidnap attempt, leading to the rescue of the victim and subsequent arrest of the suspects.

According to him, further investigation linked the suspects to the earlier kidnapping of another female POS operator, at Dominion Park, Head Bridge, Onitsha, on June 3, 2026, during which she was abducted.

He said that the suspects dispossessed the operator of two POS machines and Android phones, and compelled



ESUT INNOVATION:

From left: Representative of Vice Chancellor, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Prof. Nnenna Nwobodo-Nzeribe; General Manager, Information Communications, Technology (ICT) and Innovation Hub, ESUT, Mr Elvis Obinna-Nwankwo; Dean Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources Management, ESUT, Prof. Emeka Nzeh; Associate Prof. Mr Celestine Odenigbo and the Chief Executive Officer Crestage Limited, Mr Charles Emembolu, during ESUT Innovation Pitchathon and Stakeholders Engagement Programme Meeting, in Enugu on Saturday.

Stakeholders urge actions on healthcare challenges

LAGOS

Stakeholders, including Team Lead, Commercial Business at Leadway Health, Mr Oluwafemi Awoleye, have urged various authorities to tackle persistent healthcare challenges in the country.

They made the call during a media training organised by Leadway Assurance for members of the Nigerian Association of Insurance and Pension Editors (NAIPE) in Lagos.

Awoleye warned that inadequate access to quality healthcare could undermine Nigeria's economic productivity, human capital development and broader national develop-

ment objectives.

According to him, prevailing economic challenge has reduced disposable incomes, forcing many Nigerians to resort to self-medication and delay seeking professional medical attention.

Awoleye identified limited healthcare access, medical personnel shortages caused by brain drain, inadequate funding and weak investment in infrastructure as major challenges.

He also cited inadequate investment in healthcare technology and inefficient hospital reimbursement systems as obstacles undermining effective healthcare delivery across the country.

The Leadway Health execu-

tive further highlighted delays in claims payments to hospitals and a broken pharmaceutical supply chain affecting essential medicines.

He said persistent drug shortages and payment delays could weaken healthcare providers, restrict patient access and deepen existing inequalities across Nigeria's health system.

Awoleye warned that failure to address the challenges would continue threatening Nigerians' health while undermining the country's economic growth and productivity.

"The output of every economic activity is a function of the good health of its human capital," he said.

He urged journalists to amplify healthcare challenges through factual, evidence-based reporting capable of driving reforms and holding policymakers accountable for sectoral shortcomings.

Awoleye said sustained and responsible journalism could expose systemic deficiencies, promote innovative solutions, mobilise stakeholders and strengthen healthcare reform efforts nationwide.

ENUGU

The Presidential Candidate of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Mr Peter Obi, has urged Nigerians to place greater emphasis on improving the lives of others rather than celebrating personal milestones extravagantly.

In a statement issued on Sunday to commemorate his birthday in Enugu, Obi reflected on his gratitude to God and a renewed commitment to the service of humanity.

He described turning 65 as an opportunity for deep reflection on life's journey and on how the remaining years could be devoted more meaningfully to the service of God and humanity.

According to him, while birthdays in countries with stronger institutions and better living standards may naturally attract elaborate celebrations, Nigeria's present realities call for sober reflection and greater commitment to addressing the challenges confronting millions of citizens.

He observed that in spite of Nigeria's abundant human and natural resources, many people continue to grapple with poverty, ill health, unemployment, insecurity, and limited opportunities.

The former AAnambra Governor stressed that such conditions should inspire

greater compassion and service rather than lavish personal celebrations.

Obi reiterated his long-held philosophy of treating birthdays as occasions for thanksgiving, reflection, and service to humanity.

"The greatest celebration of life is not what we receive from others, but the lives we are able to touch positively," he said.

He noted that this conviction had shaped his conduct throughout his years in business, corporate sector, and as Governor of Anambra, where he consistently regarded public office and personal privilege as opportunities to improve the lives of others.

Obi recalled that whenever individuals or organisations sought to honour him with expensive gifts or elaborate ceremonies, he encouraged them instead to channel such resources into projects with enduring public value.

"This approach has over the years resulted in the construction of schools, hostel blocks, educational support programmes, and other facilities that continue to benefit the less privileged.

"The greatest honour anyone can receive is not found in gifts, ceremonies, or public admiration, but in knowing that one's life has contributed, however modestly, to making another person's life better," he said.

Taraba Chief Judge announces 2026 annual vacation for high Courts

JALINGO

Justice Joel Agya, Chief Judge of Taraba, has notified the public about the 2026 annual vacation of the state high courts, which will commence on Monday, August 3 and end on Sunday, October 4, 2026.

This was contained in a statement tagged; "Taraba State Legal Notice No 3 of the 2026 annual Vacation of the High Courts of Justice" by the Chief Judge in Jalingo on

Sunday.

"Whereas, it is provided under Order 8, Rules 2011 that there shall be an annual vacation of the high courts of the state on such date in August. And of such duration not exceeding six weeks as the chief judge may by notification in the gazette appoint.

"Now therefore, it is hereby notified for general information that there shall be a vacation of the high courts throughout the state commencing from Monday, Au-

gust 3, 2026, and will be ending on Sunday, October 4, 2026.

"For the avoidance of doubt, vacation in this notification means that the courts in all the divisions of the high courts of the state will not be sitting during the period, except where the action is urgent or a judge at the request of all the parties concerned agrees to bear the action," Agya added.

He also notified the public of the appointment of Justice Clara Kataps as the vacation judge during the period.

NIMCII' Track illegal operations in solid minerals sector – Alake

ABUJA

The Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dr Dele Alake, has said that partnership with National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) will help in tracking operations in the solid minerals sector.

Alake stated this when he received a delegation of NIMC led by the Director-General, Dr Abisoye Coker-Odusote on a courtesy visit at the ministry's headquarters in Abuja.

In a statement in Abuja, the Minister's Special Assistant on Media, Mrs Lara Owoeye-Wise, said the ministry and NIMC were partnering to promote digital identity in Nigeria's solid minerals sector.

She said the partnership was aimed at strengthening govern-

ance, enhancing security and accelerating reforms across the sector.

The minister, speaking at the event said that without proper identification, tracing and tracking operations would be difficult, creating an environment in which insecurity can thrive.

"In the solid minerals sector, we need effective tracking of both legal and illegal operations. A credible identity ecosystem will strengthen regulation, improve enforcement and support our efforts to sanitise the sector," he said.

He emphasised that technology, statistics, data gathering and digital identity were critical enablers for evidence-based policymaking, improved regulatory oversight, efficient licensing, investment promotion and national development.

Alake said that the ongoing

reforms in the solid minerals sector required robust collaboration with institutions such as NIMC to strengthen transparency and accountability across the mining value chain.

He described the commission as pivotal in Nigeria's development architecture.

According to Alake, effective governance is impossible without a credible identity management system.

Technology and reliable data, he emphasised, had become indispensable tools for planning, regulation, investment and national security.

"NIMC occupies a critical position in translating policy into reality. It is pivotal to the development of any nation because governance today is driven by data, technology and credible identity systems," he said.

NEWS

Kano architects call for strict enforcement of building regulations

KANO

Disturbed by recurring cases of building collapses, the Kano State chapter of Nigerian Institute of Architects (NIA) has called for strict enforcement of building regulations.

The Chairman, Arc. Mustapha Mukhtar, made the call when he led a delegation from the institute on an assessment visit to the scene of recent building collapse along Sultan Road, Nassarawa Local Government Area, Kano, to evaluate the situation.

A statement by the institute's Public Relations Officer, Salim Bashir-Abdullahi, quoted the Chairman as saying the building regulations should be enforced strictly on both private and public projects to prevent similar incidents.

Mukhtar, who expressed deep concern over the recent

building collapse, urged the Kano State Government, Architects Registration Council of Nigeria (ARCON) and other regulatory bodies to ensure that only qualified and registered professionals are engaged in construction projects.

"Following the inspection, the delegation observed that there were no visible indications of the involvement of registered construction professionals in the project.

"There were no project signboards anywhere along the roads leading to the site or on the site, there were no visible onsite safety measures present like temporary site fencing.

"The Institute noted that the apparent absence of professional oversight raises serious concerns about compliance with statutory building regulations and established professional standards."

According to him, the re-

currence of building collapse is a matter of serious public concern.

"Effective enforcement of regulatory provisions and the mandatory engagement of registered professionals are essential to protecting lives, proper-

ty, and public confidence in the construction industry."

Mukhtar further emphasised that architects and other registered built environment professionals like Engineers, Quantity Surveyors and others play critical roles in ensuring

that buildings are properly designed, coordinated, supervised, and executed in accordance with approved standards and applicable regulations.

The Chairman, who extends the chapter's sympathy to the affected persons by the unfor-

tunate incident, reaffirmed its commitment to working with government agencies, regulatory authorities, and other stakeholders to promote professionalism, public safety, and sustainable development throughout the state.



COMMITTEE MEETING:

From left: Deputy Speaker/Chairman, House Committee on Constitution Review, Rep. Benjamin Kalu; Leader/Deputy Chairman of the Committee, Rep. Julius Ihonvbere and a member of the committee, Rep. Francis Waive, during the committee's meeting on the State Police Bill at the National Assembly in Abuja on Monday.

Police foil kidnap, cattle rustling attempts, rescue victim in Katsina

KATSINA

The police Command in Katsina State has foiled separate kidnap and cattle rustling attempts in Funtua and Musawa Local Government Areas (LGAs) rescuing one kidnapped victim and recovering 15 rustled cows.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Abubakar Sadiq-Aliyu, disclosed this in a statement issued on Monday in Katsina.

Aliyu said that in the latest operation, credible intelligence received on Sunday indicated that suspected armed bandits were moving rustled cattle across the border between Funtua and Dandume LGAs.

He said the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) of the Central Police Station, Funtua, swiftly mobilised a team of operatives to the area.

"On arrival, the bandits opened fire on the operatives, who re-

sponded with superior firepower, forcing the suspects to flee into a nearby forest.

"During a search of the area, the operatives rescued one kidnapped victim, identified as Hafiza Rabi'u, unharmed, and recovered seven rustled cows.

"The victim was medically examined and reunited with her family," he said.

The police spokesman added that in a related operation on July 17, the command received a distress call that armed bandits had invaded Kuru Village in Musawa LGA and rustled cattle.

According to him, the DPO of Musawa Division, in collaboration with members of the Katsina State Community Watch Corps, mobilised to the scene and trailed the suspects into a nearby bush.

Sadiq-Aliyu said the bandits opened fire on the security team, which responded with superior firepower, forcing the criminals to abandon the stolen livestock and escape.

Farmers seek subsidised farm inputs to boost food production in Taraba

Takum (Taraba) Farmers in Takum Local Government Area of Taraba have appealed to the government to provide fertilisers and other farm inputs to enhance agricultural productivity and improve food security.

The farmers made the appeal in separate interviews with newsmen in Takum, Taraba.

They said the high cost and limited availability of fertilisers and other essential farm inputs had become major constraints as the rainy season commenced.

The farmers noted that timely access to fertilisers, herbicides, pesticides and other inputs at subsidised rates would boost agricultural activities and help reduce hunger.

Mr Micah Audu, a rice farmer, said the rising cost of

fertilisers and other farm inputs remained a major challenge confronting farmers.

Audu urged governments at all levels to subsidise the cost of farm inputs and provide greater support to farmers.

"Government should prioritise agriculture by supporting farmers financially and ensuring the availability of farm inputs at subsidised rates to boost productivity and strengthen food security," he said.

Also speaking, Mr Tanko Garba, a rice and maize farmer, appealed to the government and well-meaning individuals to support farmers with fertilisers and financial assistance.

"I appeal to the government to support farmers with chemicals, fertilisers, machinery and capital to improve production," Garba said.

KADUNA

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Kaduna State Emergency Management Agency (KADSEMA) have launched a search and rescue operation for two persons swept away by floodwaters in Kaduna River.

The operation, involving the Kaduna State Fire Service, local divers and other emergency responders, commenced early Sunday at Hayin Mallam Bello community in Kaduna South Local Government Area.

The victims were reportedly swept away on Saturday evening while attempting to cross the swollen river after heavy rainfall across parts of Kaduna metropolis.

The Head of NEMA Operations Office, Kaduna, Hajiya

NEMA, KADSEMA search for two missing persons in Kaduna River

Halima Suleiman, said the agency activated its emergency response team immediately after receiving a distress call.

She said emergency personnel and local divers had searched the river for several hours, but the victims had yet to be found as of the time of filing this report.

The missing persons were identified as Musa Musa Bawa, 27, a 200-level student of the College of Nursing, Tudun Wada, and Abubakar Ibrahim Muhammad Likoro, 25, an employee of Olam Flour Mills, Kaduna.

Suleiman assured residents that the operation would continue until the victims were found.

"We will continue the search operation until the missing persons are found. NEMA, in collaboration with other emergency response agencies, remains committed to sustaining the operation until its objective is achieved," she said.

She commended emergency responders and local volunteers for their commitment to the operation.

"I commend the dedication, professionalism and resilience of all emergency personnel and local volunteers participating in this search and rescue mission," Suleiman said.

The NEMA official said she had also visited the families of the victims to convey the agency's sympathy and encourage

them to remain hopeful.

She appealed to residents to cooperate with emergency responders and avoid crossing flooded rivers, streams and drainage channels during and after heavy rainfall.

"We urge residents to avoid attempting to cross flooded rivers, streams or drainage channels during and after heavy rainfall.

Members of the public should promptly report emergencies through the appropriate authorities to enable timely intervention," she said.

She added that NEMA would continue public sensitisation on flood safety to reduce the risk of drowning and other flood-related incidents.

Tinubu reform policies mutually benefiting, says Renewed Hope Ambassadors

LOKOJA

The National Media Tour, the Renewed Hope Ambassadors and members of the Presidential Communications Team have commenced the inspection of strategic federal and state government projects in Kogi State.

The tour which began on Sunday saw the team inspecting the Kabba Junction section of the Abuja - Lokoja Expressway, which is also the starting point of the Lokoja - Benin Expressway.

The Kogi State Commissioner for Works, Salami Dedaat, explained that the Abuja-Lokoja highway had been abandoned by past ad-

ministrations but has now been earmarked for completion by President Bola Tinubu.

Dedaat said the road has been divided into five different sections, each awarded to a different contractor to speed up its completion.

The team visited the state-owned Confluence University of Science and Technology (CUSTECH), Osara with a mixture of federal and state government projects.

According to the Director of Administration of the college, Mohammed Ahmed, the Federal Government through the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), constructed the Faculty of Science Complex, Faculty of Environmental Sciences Com-

plex, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences Complex as well as the Faculty of Anatomy, valued at over N2.3bn.

He said TETFund had also supported the institution through the 2025 Special Intervention (Renewed Hope Initiative) by the construction of the female hostel, Project Maintenance Intervention as well as in academic and research support.

The media team also inspected the Barefoot Renewable Energy College and the Green Hydrogen Research & Demonstration Pilot Plant established in the university by the Federal Government through the Energy Commission of Nigeria (ECN). The Special Adviser to

the President on Media and Public Communication and also the leader of the delegation, Sunday Dare, said the physical and academic development witnessed in the university was a fallout of the courageous reform policies taken by the President.

"When you look at the cardinal points of the eight - point Agenda of the President, education stands on a solid place in that list. There is no better adroit testimony to what we have seen at the Confluence University of Science and Technology.

"For the 21st Century economy, there is primacy for science and technology. We have seen the investments that have come here. We have seen the benefits of continuity on the part of the former governor, Yahaya Bello and we have seen Governor Usman Ododo follow through."

Obidient movement rallies support for Peter Obi, begins mobilisation for 2027

ABUJA

The Obidient Movement says it has intensified mobilisation of supporters for the presidential bid of Mr Peter Obi, ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The movement expressed confidence that its presidential candidate, Mr Peter Obi, of the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) can provide the leadership needed to address Nigeria's economic and governance challenges.

The call was made on Sunday in Abuja during the "FCT Obidient Movement Engagement Forum Towards 2027" tagged "Building Unity, Strengthening Democracy, Shaping the Future".

The event was organised by the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Obidient Movement.

National Coordinator of the Movement, Yunusa Tanko, said Nigeria's current economic hardship was worsened by the manner in which fuel

subsidy was removed without adequate measures to cushion its impact on citizens.

According to him, the policy triggered increases in transportation costs, labour costs and the prices of goods and services, while the expected benefits of subsidy savings had not been visible to ordinary Nigerians.

Tanko urged leaders to pri-

oritise investments that would improve the welfare of citizens through better public transportation, healthcare, education and other essential services.

He also called for a more equitable society where every Nigerians would have access to opportunities and public utilities regardless of social status.

Similarly, a chieftain of the NDC, Mr Peter Ameh, said that poor governance, corruption and mismanagement of public resources were responsi-

ble for Nigeria's economic and infrastructural challenges.

Ameh, a former National Chairman of Inter-Party Advisory Council said Nigeria possessed sufficient human and natural resources but lacked leaders with the competence, vision and integrity required to manage them effectively.

He criticised what he described as wasteful public expenditure and called for prudent management of national resources to improve educa-

tion, healthcare, infrastructure and security.

Ameh urged Nigerians, particularly young people, to remain actively involved in the democratic process to ensure accountable leadership.

Also speaking, the FCT Coordinator of the Obidient Movement, Daniel Dumije, said the movement had inspired greater political participation among young Nigerians who previously regarded politics as a dirty game.

UNICAL reaffirms ban on wild post-exam celebrations, warns defaulters

CALABAR

The University of Calabar (UniCal) has reiterated its ban on wild post-examination celebrations and other acts capable of disrupting peace on campus.

The Registrar of the institution, Dr Chukwuka Icha, conveyed the management's directive in a statement on Monday in Calabar.

Icha expressed concern that some students, particularly final-year students, engaged in unlawful celebrations after their final examinations.

According to her, such celebrations often involve reckless driving, flying of colours and other forms of disorderly conduct.

She advised all students especially finalists, to desist from such acts and comply with the university's regula-

tions.

"The ban on wild celebrations within the campus, around the school gates and all cult-related activities remain in force.

"The management will not hesitate to sanction any student or group found violating the directive," she said.

She added that the Acting Chief Security Officer had been directed to ensure strict enforcement across the campus and its environs.

The registrar urged members of the university community to take note of the directive and comply accordingly.

It will be recalled that in 2024, there was a serious crash in the school premises which involved final year students who just wrote their last paper and were celebrating wildly on campus.

Enugu Govt approves construction of 19,000 housing units

ENUGU

The Enugu State Government has approved the construction of 19,000 housing units aimed at addressing the housing deficit and reduce the cost of housing in the state.

The approval was granted at the State Executive Council (SEC) meeting held at the Government House, Enugu, on Sunday.

Briefing Government House correspondents after the meeting, the Commissioner for Works and Infrastructure, Mr Ben Okoh, said the housing projects would complement the ongoing development of the New Enugu City.

He explained that following the completion of the 6.5-kilometre dual carriageway for the first phase of the New Enugu City project and the ongoing construction of internal roads, the council approved the construction of 1,000 fully detached terrace housing units.

According to him, the housing units comprise

four-bedroom and five-bedroom homes.

"In addition to the 1,000 housing units, the state government is also developing 18,000 mass housing units at Gateway Estate in Enugu to further address the housing deficit and housing costs in the state," Okoh said.

According to him, the mass housing scheme will include essential infrastructure and services such as roads, water supply and electricity to create a fully serviced residential estate.

The commissioner also announced the approval for the immediate commencement of the 10.5-kilometre Igororo-Amachara-Ikpamodo-Okpo-Amaada Road project.

He said the council further approved intervention works at flash flood-prone sections of major roads in Nsukka.

This, he said, included the construction of five adjoining streets, comprehensive repairs of damaged drainage systems and the evacuation of blocked drains to address persistent flooding in the area.



HOUSE PLENARY SESSION:

Hon. Charity Aiguoabaruehian chairman Edo state house of Assembly standing Committee on public petitions, (left) presenting the report of his Committee for the house consideration, to Alhaji Yahaya Omogbai Clerk of the house on a petition titled; my undue Retirement from service and Retrospective withdrawal of my appointment as HOLGA in the Edo state local Government service Commission; A cry for intervention. during the house plenary session yesterday. Photo; Godwin Iseguan.

NCoS Spokes man urges states to embrace non-custodial measures

ABUJA

A retired Controller of Corrections, Dr Francis Enobore, has urged state governments to embrace non-custodial measures and accelerate justice delivery to tackle persistent overcrowding in custodial centres across the country.

Enobore, who was a former spokesman of the Nigeria Correction Service (NCoS) gave the charge in an interview with newsmen on Monday in Abuja.

He said the recent disclosure by the Minister of Interior, Dr Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, that 93 per cent of inmates in custody were being held for state offences highlighted the

critical role of state governments in addressing prison congestion.

He also said that with Nigeria's custodial population estimated at about 80,733 inmates, with less than 6,000 being held for federal offences, the overwhelming majority were in custody for violations of state laws.

"When concerns are raised about delays in justice dispensation and overcrowding in custodial centres, attention should naturally shift to the states whose laws have been violated and whose agencies initiated the arrests.

"What is disturbing is that many accused persons are virtually abandoned after arrest, while the machinery of justice

slows down, leaving them to spend years awaiting trial," he said.

Enobore also noted that more than 65 per cent of inmates in the country's custodial facilities were awaiting trial.

He described the development as a major contributor to overcrowding, adding that some detainees accused of minor offences remained in custody for prolonged periods in spite of the availability of alternatives that could resolve such cases without imprisonment.

"Nigeria's criminal justice system has continued to rely excessively on incarceration as a form of punishment, even in cases where non-custodial sanctions will be more appropriate.

"There is a widespread be-

lief that unless an offender is sent to prison, justice has not been served. However, there is no empirical evidence to support the notion that imprisonment is always the best deterrent.

"In many cases, excessive reliance on imprisonment creates additional challenge and undermines the objectives of correctional administration," he said.

The former NCoS spokesman warned that overcrowded custodial centres often expose minor offenders to hardened criminals, making proper classification and rehabilitation difficult.

He added that the situation increased the risk of radicalisation, recidivism and security breaches within correctional facilities.

Fire Service rescues man after wall collapse in Kano

KANO

The Kano State Fire Service on Sunday, rescued a worker, Sadiq Ahmad after a fence collapsed during a demolition exercise at Kofar Mata Zango in the Kano Municipal Local Government Area.

This was contained in a statement issued by the Ser-

vice Public Relations Officer, ACFO Saminu Yusuf Abdullahi, who said that the incident happened on Sunday.

"We received an emergency call from one Naziru Ahmad at about 08:49 a.m that a fence had collapsed and firefighters from the service headquarters were immediately deployed to the scene.

"On arrival, they discovered that a residential building measuring about 30 by 20 feet was undergoing demolition," he said.

Abdullahi said that a worker was trapped beneath the collapsed fence while attempting to escape after the structure became unstable.

The PRO said that the victim was rescued alive and con-

veyed to Murtala Muhammed Specialist Hospital, Kano for medical attention, while investigation into the cause of the incident is ongoing.

He urged residents and contractors to observe all necessary safety precautions during demolition and construction activities to prevent similar occurrences.

Ramat Park Flyover emerges Benin's newest tourist site

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

Even before its official inauguration and opening to vehicular traffic, the newly completed Ramat Park Flyover in Benin City has become an unexpected tourist destination, attracting hundreds of residents, visitors, families, students and photography enthusiasts eager to experience Edo State's latest flyover.

The landmark infrastructure, constructed by the administration of Governor Monday Okpebholo, has

transformed the Ramat Park axis into a hive of social activity, with visitors thronging the bridge daily to admire its imposing architecture, take photographs and enjoy panoramic views of Benin City.

For many, the experience of walking on the bridge has become a memorable event.

"I have travelled to other states and admired their flyovers, but today I have one in my own state. I came with my children to take pictures because this is history for Edo," said Mrs. Queen Ehanire, who visited the site with members of her family.

Another resident, Mr. James Osaigbovo, said the

completed structure had already changed public perception of the area.

"The environment has completely changed. People now come here not because they have business around Ramat Park, but simply to admire the bridge. It has become a place people want to visit," he said.

A commercial photographer, Osas Aigbe, said weekends have become particularly busy.

"People come here dressed in their best clothes to take pictures on the bridge. Some even organize family outings here. My business has improved because the flyover has become an attraction," he said.

Urban development analysts say the public fascination with the project reflects the significance of the flyover as the latest of its kind in Edo State and a major addition to Benin City's physical landscape.

Observers believe the growing public interest in the Ramat Park Flyover highlights the role of modern infrastructure in reshaping urban life beyond its primary transportation purpose.

Although the flyover is yet to be officially commissioned, anticipation continues to build among residents who see it as a unique symbol of progress and renewed development in Edo State.

NAPVID hails Okpebholo over Historic Appointment of Person with Disability as Permanent Secretary

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

The Network for the Advancement of People with Visible Disabilities (NAPVID) has commended the Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo, for what it described as a landmark step in advancing inclusive governance with the appointment of Mr. Melody Omosah, Esq., LL.M, AICMC, JP, as a Permanent Secretary in the Edo State Civil Service.

In a statement by Mr. Kingsley Okojie, Head, Media & Advocacy, and Mr. Isaac Noble Israel, Manager, Programmes & Strategy, Network for the Advancement of People with Visible Disabilities (NAPVID), Benin City, Edo State, the organisation described the appointment as a watershed moment in the history of Edo State, noting that Governor Okpebholo

had become the first governor of the state to appoint a qualified person with disability to the prestigious office of Permanent Secretary.

NAPVID said the appointment of Mr. Melody Omosah, who currently serves as Director of the Citizens' Mediation Centre in the Edo State Ministry of Justice and Executive Director of NAPVID, represents a triumph of merit, competence and inclusive leadership.

According to the organisation, "This historic appointment is not merely a personal achievement for Mr. Melody Omosah. It is a defining victory for merit, equity and inclusive governance. It sends an unmistakable message that under the present administration, disability is not a limitation where competence has been demonstrated, and that every qualified Edo citizen can aspire to the highest levels of public service."

Blocked Ramat flyover access triggers reactions

BENEDICT OKATE

BENIN CITY

The decision to barricade the two major access points leading to the newly completed Ramat Park Flyover in Benin City has generated mixed reactions among residents, with many describing the measure as necessary for public safety, while others expressed disappointment over being denied access to what has become one of the city's most talked-about landmarks.

The flyover, which is awaiting formal commissioning before being opened to vehicular traffic, has in recent weeks attracted large crowds of residents, families, students and content creators eager to climb the bridge, take photographs and enjoy panoramic views of the city.

The increasing influx of visitors reportedly prompted authorities to block pedestrian access to the structure amid concerns over safety, vandalism

and the need to preserve the integrity of the facility before its official inauguration.

Some residents who spoke with our correspondent said the restriction was inevitable considering the growing number of people treating the bridge like a recreational centre.

A civil servant, Mrs. Esther Omoruyi, said, "People were no longer just admiring the flyover; they were climbing the bridge in large numbers, taking pictures and leaving litter behind. It is a public infrastructure, not a picnic ground. Blocking the entrances is the right thing to do until it is officially opened."

A commercial driver, Mr. Friday Omoregie, noted that allowing unrestricted access could expose residents to avoidable risks.

"If anything happens to anybody on that bridge now, the government will be blamed. There are no traffic marshals or safety measures in place yet because the project has not been commissioned. Restricting access is simply

common sense," he said.

For university student, Miss Anita Egharevba, the closure was understandable but could have been better communicated. "We all wanted to experience the first flyover in Edo State because it is something many of us have never seen before. But I also understand that people started abusing the privilege. Some people were climbing the barriers and making videos in dangerous spots," she said.

A trader at the nearby Ramat Park market, Mrs. Grace Idemudia, said the excitement surrounding the project reflected residents' appreciation of improved infrastructure.

"The flyover has changed the appearance of this area completely. People come here because they are proud of it. But pride should not translate into damaging public property. We should protect it until government officially hands it over for use."

Similarly, youth leader Mr. Osaze Agho called on residents to exercise restraint.

"This bridge belongs to all of us. If everyone climbs it every day before commissioning, it could lead to damage, unnecessary wear or even accidents. Nigerians should learn to preserve public assets."

However, not everyone welcomed the barricades.

A photographer, Mr. Kelvin Igbinovia, argued that controlled access would have been preferable.

"The authorities could have stationed security personnel and allowed supervised visits instead of shutting the place completely. Many families simply wanted to appreciate the beautiful structure."

dents to exercise restraint.

"This bridge belongs to all of us. If everyone climbs it every day before commissioning, it could lead to damage, unnecessary wear or even accidents. Nigerians should learn to preserve public assets."

However, not everyone welcomed the barricades.

A photographer, Mr. Kelvin Igbinovia, argued that controlled access would have been preferable.

"The authorities could have stationed security personnel and allowed supervised visits instead of shutting the place completely. Many families simply wanted to appreciate the beautiful structure."

PUBLIC NOTICE

The general public is hereby notified that I, **Miss IGIEBOR IBUDE SANDRA**, am the biological mother of **IGIEBOR HANNAH OSAHERUWEN**, born on 29 July 2018 in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.

The child's biological father, **Mr. EFIH OBARO**, abandoned me during my pregnancy and has had no contact with, nor provided any financial, emotional, or parental support for, the child since her birth. His present whereabouts are unknown to me.

My father, **Mr. IGIEBOR ERNEST OSARUYI**, who is the child's maternal grandfather, has been the only consistent father figure in Hannah's life. He has continuously provided financial support towards her education, welfare, and essential living needs from her birth to the present date. His support has been invaluable in assisting me to care for and raise my daughter.

Following the correction of my daughter's birth record, her birth certificate now correctly reflects the identity of her biological father, **Mr. EFIH OBARO**. This correction was made to ensure that her official records accurately state the true facts regarding her biological parentage.

This Public Notice is issued solely to clarify the facts relating to my daughter's parentage and the financial support she has received from her maternal grandfather. It is intended for official record and all lawful purposes.

The general public and all concerned authorities are kindly requested to take note.

Signed: Miss IGIEBOR IBUDE

PUBLIC NOTICE DISCLAIMER

This is to inform the general public that **AMAKA CHIMA**, **VICTOR EZEUKWU ECHEZONA**, and **DESTINY EDET JACK** (a POS operator in the neighborhood), whose photographs appear above, had been involved in acts of fraud against **BUKA CODE RESTAURANT**, located at Shop 52, Opposite General practice clinic, University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH), Benin City, Edo state.

The public is hereby notified that **AMAKA CHIMA** and **VICTOR EZEUKWU ECHEZONA** are no longer the employees, agents and representative of **BUKA CODE RESTAURANT** or its proprietress, **Miss PHILOMENA EKEVERE**. Consequently, any person who engages any of the aforementioned in business transaction on behalf of **BUKA CODE RESTAURANT** or **Miss PHILOMENA EKEVERE** does so entirely at his/her own risk.

This notice is for the record, security purposes, and guidance of the general public.



Amaka Chima



Victor Ezeukwu Echezona



Destiny Edet Jack

Signed:
Miss PHILOMENA EKEVERE

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known as **FAITH ONOSETALE EIGBE** now wish to be known as **FAITH ONOSETALE IGOGONO-JOHNSON**. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as Miss **JIMOH ADESUWA JENNIFER**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs BUSARI ADESUWA JENNIFER**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take notes.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as miss **ENOFE OSAFAMWEN**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS OSAFAMWEN JOSEPH**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take notes.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as **ADEBAYO JEFFREY NUIAMI**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **ADEBAYO TUNDE UNIAM**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take notes.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known as **DANLAMI ONALO** now wish to be known as **YANUSA ALHASSAN YERIMA**. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
The general public is hereby notified that I was formerly known and addressed as **ITIOLA KEHINDE OPEYEMI** and I now want to be known and addressed as **OMENAI ROSEMARY AKWESE**. All former documents remain valid. Concern authorities, Nigerian Immigration should please, take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as miss **KWAZEMA IFEOMA DEBORAH**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS OKOME DEBORAH IFEOMA**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take notes.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as miss **IKHAYERE BLESSING EDEGHOGHO**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs EBHOTEMEN IKHAYERE BLESSING**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take notes.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **AYENI DORIS ADESUWA**, I now wish to be known and addressed as **IDEMUDIA DORIS ADESUWA**. Surname is **IDEMUDIA**, First name is **DORIS**, and Middle name is **ADESUWA**. Document bearing **AYENI DORIS ADESUWA** remains valid.

RECONCILIATION OF NAMES
This is to inform the general public that **HELEN UGBOGBO** and **HELEN EVBIKHARE UGBOGBO** are one and the same person. Henceforth, I wish to be known and addressed as **HELEN EVBIKHARE UGBOGBO**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as Miss **GRACE CHUKWU**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs NJOKU GRACE**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take notes.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as **CHUKWUNEME SABINA NNAJI**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **NNAJI SABINA CHINYERE**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take notes.

FEATURE

Mass Weddings: Charity or Capital? Assessing the Real Social and Economic Impact

BAGUDU MOHAMMED

The title reminds me of the project work that final-year students undertake in tertiary institutions. It also reminded me of a lecture that has haunted me since my secondary school days. My teacher, with the quiet confidence of someone who had lived both sides, compared the carefree life of a bachelor with the weighty responsibility of a husband and father. His verdict was simple and devastating: responsibility does not cripple a man, it forges him. Marriage, he argued, imposes discipline, teaches prudence, and turns survival into strategy. It forces you to stretch a small income, to choose between wants and needs, and to discover a version of yourself you never knew existed that is more enterprising, resilient, and stubbornly creative.

He recalled his own youth, when any money he earned vanished into clothes, gadgets, and the illusion that life was an endless runway. Without responsibility, he said, there is no scale of preference. People do not only need income to escape poverty. They need character, financial discipline, and the moral compass to turn little into enough.

That idea landed because it matched what we already felt as students. One teacher once dropped a line that felt like a verdict: "If you are not serious, no father will give you his daughter." It struck us like thunder. We were young, in love, and terrified of the thought that all our studying and dreaming would mean nothing if we could not build a home.

Somehow, instinctively, we understood what sociologists would later put into theory. Gary Becker's theory of marriage as an economic partnership argued that marriage pools resources, divides labor, and increases productivity. James Heckman's work on early childhood development showed that stable homes are the most powerful engine of human capital, shaping children's education, health, and future earnings. Robert Putnam's idea of "bonding social capital" explained why marriage connects families into networks that provide jobs, childcare, and support. In short, marriage is rarely the end of ambition. It is the reason for it.

This is the lens through which Nigeria's experiment with mass weddings becomes fascinating and controversial. The programme was first introduced in Kano State under Senator Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso between 1999 and 2003, and again from 2011 to 2015, then revived in 2023 by Governor Abba Yusuf. In 2023, over 1,800 couples were married at a cost of N854 million. In 2024, at least 3,600 people benefited. The 2025 budget earmarked N2.5 billion for quarterly ceremonies across Kano's 44 local governments, and the 2026 plan approved N1.5 billion for 3,000 couples. Out of more than 5,000 ap-



MASS WEDDINGS IN KANO STATE

plicants, only 3,000 will be selected.

The package is far more than a party. It pays dowry, provides bedroom furniture, food, clothing, and a N100,000 capital grant for each bride. Couples also undergo medical screening for HIV, hepatitis, genotype and other conditions, and receive counselling on family life, financial planning and reproductive health. Kebbi State runs a similar Inclusive Mass Wedding Programme for Muslims and Christians. Since 2024, 300 couples have been married each year, with a third edition scheduled for July 2026. The dowry has risen to N250,000 per bride, with furniture and foodstuffs included, bringing the 2026 budget to about N750 million. Both states target orphans, widows, divorcees and low-income families who have already chosen each other but cannot afford the cost of marriage.

To understand why this matters, we have to see what the money is really buying. It is not just a ceremony. It is an attempt to remove the financial wall that delays marriage and fuels social problems. In many northern communities, the cost of dowry, furniture and household setup keeps thousands of young people in limbo, which religious and moral leaders link to premarital pregnancies, prostitution and social instability. By covering these costs, the state is intervening in what economists call a market failure, where cultural expectations outpace economic capacity.

At the same time, the weddings inject money directly into local economies. Furniture makers, tailors, food vendors, and transporters all benefit, creating a short-term stimulus that

supports small and medium enterprises. The N100,000 grant to brides in Kano is designed as seed capital, a nudge toward micro-enterprise and household resilience. Health screen-

ing adds a public health layer, catching diseases early and preparing couples for healthier families. Culturally, the programme preserves the idea of marriage as a communal event, not just a private contract, making it possible for vulnerable people to marry with dignity.

Yet the debate is fierce, and it should be. Critics ask the hard question: could N2.5 billion do more in schools, hospitals, or job creation? Can government guarantee that a wedding today will not become poverty tomorrow? Scholars warn that marriage only builds human capital when it is healthy and equitable. An abusive or financially strained union can drain rather than develop people, through stress, school dropouts, and lost productivity. There is also the risk of dependency that some applicants may chase the grant more than the commitment. That is why the screening matters: couples must apply together, prove mutual intent, pass character and medical checks, and attend counselling before they are wed. The state insists it is not arranging marriages, only assisting those already determined to marry.

The Nigerian model is unusual globally. Most countries do not fund the wedding itself. Saudi Arabia supports mass weddings through charities. The UAE runs a Marriage Fund with grants and occasional ceremonies. China, Singapore and South Korea prefer housing subsidies, tax relief and childcare support to address falling birth rates. Indonesia and Malaysia hold free mass weddings for the poor to legalize unions and expand access to services. India's state schemes, like Madhya Pradesh's

Mukhyamantri Kanyadan Yojana, provide cash and household items to disadvantaged brides. Like Nigeria, they target poverty and social inclusion, but few match Kano and Kebbi in the comprehensiveness of the package. The common thread across all these countries is the belief that strong families are the bedrock of stable societies and productive economies.

So is it charity or capital? The answer refuses to sit neatly in one box. If marriage is treated as an investment in health, discipline, cooperation, and intergenerational stability, then supporting it can be a form of human capital development. But like any investment, the return depends on what happens after. Without education, skills, jobs, and follow-up support, the ceremony risks becoming a beautiful day with a fragile tomorrow. With those things, it can become a foundation.

When you hear of the next mass wedding, think beyond the crowd in matching attire. Think of young people choosing responsibility over drift, of a government betting that discipline, focus, and mutual care can be cultivated, not just preached. Marriage will not solve unemployment or fix infrastructure. But to dismiss it as trivial is to misunderstand what keeps societies standing. As my old lecturer would say, people do not just need money. They need a reason to manage it well. For many, that reason has a name, a home, and a future to build together.

• Bagudu can be reached via bagudu-mohammed15197@gmail.com or 07034943575.

”
This is the lens through which Nigeria's experiment with mass weddings becomes fascinating and controversial. The programme was first introduced in Kano State under Senator Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso between 1999 and 2003, and again from 2011 to 2015, then revived in 2023 by Governor Abba Yusuf.



LIVELIHOOD IMPROVEMENT FAMILY ENTERPRISE-EDO STATE

Edo State Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Agricultural Hub Premises.

(FGN/NDDC/ IFAD Assisted LIFE-ND Project)

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

FGN/IFAD/Assisted LIVELIHOOD IMPROVEMENT FAMILY ENTERPRISE-NIGER DELTA (LIFE-ND) PROJECT
EDO STATE PROJECT COORDINATING OFFICE (SPCO)
APPLICATION TO BE AN INCUBATEE FOR THE LIFE-ND PROJECT
REF NO: LIFE-ND/FNG/IFAD/EDO SPCO/INC/07/2026

S/NO	PARTICIPATING LGA	PARTICIPATING COMMUNITIES
01	Akoko Edo	Igarra, Imoga, Enwan, Okpe, Ojirami, Ososo, Ekpedo, Ikakumo, Ikhiran-Ile, Somorika,
02	Esan North East	Arue, Efandion, Uzea, Udomi, Amendokhian, Awo, Unuwazi, Ubierumu, Uwalor, Obiedu, Ebhoiyi
03	Esan West	Ukhun, Ikhideu-Egoro, Iruekpen, Illeh, Urohi, Ukpenu, Uke, Ogwa, Uhiele, Emaudo
04	Etsako Central	Iraokhor, Osomegbe, Iviukasa, Anegbette, Udabba, Oghomere, Ugbekpe-Ekperi, Ivhiokhile, Ivionone, Ogbona
05	Ovia North East	Obarenren, Utoka, Omi, Uhen, Ogbesse, Ozogwor, Emah, Igbobi, Ugbineh
06	Uhunmwonde	Igbogiri, Iguogbe, Urhokuosa, Evbohuan, Ehor, Ikhueniro, Orhua, Ohe, Emuhun, Ilobi
07	Esan South East	Ubiaja, Ewatto, Oghu-Ewohimi, Ekoghenyen, Ugboha, Illushi, Udakpa, Oria, Okhuesan, Ohordua, Emu
08	Ikpoba Okha	Uteh, Uhie, Ogheghe, Oka, Avbiama, Ukhiri, Utesi, Oghobaye, Ohovbe
09	Orhionmwon	Obiogba, Omolua, Iru, Urhonigbe, Ugo, Evbarue, Evbokabua, Evboesi, Urhehue, Umughun-zuagbor
10	Owan West	Uzebba, Avbiosi, Eruere, Ukhuse, Sabogida Ora, Sobe, Ozalla, Uhunmora, Emeora, Okpuje

1. INTRODUCTION

The The Federal Government of Nigeria has received financing from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) toward the implementation of the the Livelihood Improvement Family Enterprise in the Edo State (LIFE-ND) Project. This project is aimed at enhancing income, job creation and food security through Agribusiness enterprise development in a sustainable manner for the Niger Delta region. By its targeting strategy, the Project is focusing on unemployed and underemployed rural youths (aged 18-35) and women headed household with children below 15 years willing to engage in the production, processing, and marketing of selected commodities in their communities using the incubator model. Accordingly, the Edo State Project Coordinating Office of LIFE-ND invites youths and women heading households with children below 15 years to submit applications to the State office of LIFE-ND to participate as incubatees for the project.

1. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Interested youths and women should submit their applications giving the following details:

- Name
- Addresses (permanent home address)
- Age
- Sex
- State of Origin
- Local Government Area
- Community/Village
- Contact Address
- Contact Phone Number
- Marital status
- If married Number of children and their ages
- Educational background e.g. primary school, secondary school tertiary institution
- Present occupation
- Agribusiness of interest i.e. production, processing marketing. (name commodity from the list of priority commodity for the State)
- Experience in proposed business
- Evidence of local government/community identification letter
- Details of Referee/Guardian

2. PRIORITY COMMODITIES FOR EDO STATE

The priority commodities for Edo State include (I) Cassava (II) Aquaculture (III) Poultry (iv) Rice. Commodities to be covered within production, processing, and marketing value chain.

3. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. Being among LIFE-ND's target group that includes men and women between the ages of 18 and 35; or women heading households with children below 15 years.
2. Being a citizen/resident/indigene within the first-phase selected community/LGA of Edo state
3. Being ready, willing, and able to undertake apprenticeship in the enterprise.
4. Being willing to agree to sell a prescribed portion of their output to the incubator as part of developing and maintaining the mentorship relationship.
5. Being considered unemployed or grossly underemployed and disadvantaged by minuted meeting of the local community as determined by a representative of any community-based society or group.
6. Being willing to sign a prescribed code of conduct that includes environmental compliance.

4. DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications must be delivered to the address below at or before 10am local time on **Wednesday, 5th August 2026. Late applications will be rejected.**

Apply by submitting hard copy to the address below:

Edo State (LIFE-ND) Project, Coordinating Office,
Ministry Of Agriculture And Food Security, Agricultural Hub,
Oko-ogba Road, Benin City. OR
Submit to the Edo State (LIFE-ND) Project Local Government Desk Officer in the various implementing LGA.

Signed:

The State Project Coordinator.



Energy

The Maritime Industry in Nigeria is undergoing a Paradigm Shift – Ebhodaghe

The theme of the 2026 NOG Energy Week was, "Advancing Energy Ambitions for Competitive & Resilient Economies," to what extent would you say the maritime sector has helped in advancing Nigeria's energy sector vis-a-vis the economy?

The maritime sector is an umbrella term that includes shipping and logistics, port operations, offshore energy, and more. While Nigeria is mainly known as an Oil and Gas nation, we often forget that at the core of Oil and Gas lies the maritime industry, and within that sector, marine logistics is the unsung hero of our energy goals. In the upstream sector, it is not just about providing support; marine logistics is a vital part of the entire E&P activities. If we don't have reliable marine logistics—such as the prompt chartering and deployment of tugboats, platform supply vessels, and crewboats—upstream production can come to a standstill. Yet there's a disconnect: while the maritime sector is the crucial "link" to our offshore energy resources, its overall impact on the economy is currently held back by high transaction costs and operational challenges. We have made strides in our energy ambitions, but our resilience is still a work in progress.

As a stakeholder, how prepared are indigenous firms in terms of competency in value delivery to compete with foreign operators in the maritime sector?

When it comes to how ready indigenous firms are to compete with foreign operators, we have seen some impressive progress. Some of our indigenous firms have really stepped up their technical game, especially in areas like crewing and mid-level vessel operations. We have evolved from providing basic services to tackling increasingly complex technical challenges, as evidenced by the significant tonnage handled by EA Temile, Tamrose, and a couple of others.

However, there is still a gap in delivering integrated value—the ability to combine logistics, maintenance, and digital data management into a single, risk-managed service. Foreign operators often have the upper hand, not because their ships are overwhelmingly better, but because they have robust governance structures that manage risk effectively.

For indigenous firms to truly compete, they need to shift their focus. Currently, many are obsessed with owning the hardware—the vessels themselves. But I often tell my peers that the industry is undergoing a paradigm shift: it is time to transition from merely owning the hardware to mastering the "software" of maritime logistics. This means moving away from the old "run-to-fail" maintenance approach and embracing predictive, IoT-driven models and adopting advanced digital tools to track assets and optimise fuel use. To be a strategic partner rather than just an asset provider, we must prioritise that "software"—the data, the digital strategy, and the management systems—as much as the vessels themselves.

Funding was a major issue in terms of scaling up operation, what is the current situation?

Answer: Funding has been and re-

ATIEMORIA EBHODAGHE is the Lead Strategic Consultant of Acepontis Limited and a Doctoral Researcher at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge. A maritime logistics strategist with over a decade of industry experience, he specializes in bridging the gap between port operations, strategic governance, and economic development to drive sustainable growth in the energy sector. He spoke to Nigerian Observer reporter on 2026 NOG Energy Week. Excerpt:

mains the biggest obstacle to scaling up indigenous maritime logistics. Right now, we are facing a disconnect between the long-term capital demands of offshore operations and the short-term, high-interest nature of local credit options. Most indigenous firms are increasingly relying on costly spot-market opportunities just to stay afloat, making it nearly impossible to invest in long-term upgrades or new acquisitions. While I will commend NIMASA for finally getting round to disbursing the CVFF alongside the ongoing support from NEXIM Bank and the NCDMB, I think we must recognise that the solution isn't simply "more money"—what we need is de-risked financing. We require structured financial instruments that are specifically calibrated to the unique cash-flow cycles of marine logistics contracts. I am a strong proponent of asset-pooling and collaborative infrastructure models. If indigenous companies can come together to share the financial burden of adopting capital-intensive technologies or assets, we can ultimately ease the liquidity pressure on individual firms while fostering a more resilient, scalable local maritime sector.

The government seems to have a lot of hope in the maritime economy in achieving the \$1trn GDP in 2030, how realistic is the goal and what needs to be done to achieve it?

While it's an ambitious target, it can be achieved if we view the maritime economy as a cohesive digital corridor rather than a patchwork of separate ports and waterways. To hit that \$1 trillion mark, we need a complete transformation of our logistics system. Here are some things we need to do:

1. On the Ports, digitalise the entire corridor: This means not just focusing on individual terminals but streamlining the whole process from when a vessel arrives to when it reaches the inland clearance depot and when the containers leave the terminal. We need to replace outdated, manual customs and security processes with automated, AI-enabled logistics tracking. We also need to tackle the "Links vs Nodes" dilemma: We are doing a good job of optimising the ports (the nodes) through initiatives such as the National Single Window and the Lekki Deep Sea Project, but the roads and administrative routes (the links) remain bottlenecks.

2. Data Aggregation: To manage a \$1 trillion maritime economy, we need a national, aggregated data pool. It is time to move away from isolated data silos and create a unified maritime intelligence platform. Government entities like the NCDMB, NIWA, and NIMASA, need to actively encourage digital compliance and technological upgrades for local fleets. We need to focus on building



ATIEMORIA EBHODAGHE

capacity not just by acquiring more vessels, but by outfitting them with modern operational software. Additionally, the vessel chartering process is still heavily dependent on opaque, paper-based brokering. We need to move towards digital, AI-enabled chartering platforms that can transparently match vessel specifications, availability, and regulatory compliance with the specific offshore needs. I recall that the NCDMB, through its Shipping and Logistics sectoral working group, was working on a project called MAVIS to address exactly this. I certainly hope that project sees the light of day, as it is exactly the type of technological leap the sector needs.

- 3- Human capacity: We must invest heavily in training and retraining our seafarers, onshore support personnel and other relevant critical personnel in the maritime industry to confidently handle the advanced systems required to operate and support the infrastructure upon which such a \$1 trillion GDP can be built and sustained.

Some stakeholders think the active participation of private security operators in the energy and maritime sector is undermining the competent of nation's security architecture, what is your view?

Well, I believe the presence of private security operators in the maritime and energy sectors is a necessary response to existing institutional gaps. Nigeria is in an active state of war with terrorists, bandits, and kidnappers. This situation,

which appears to be stretching public security resources too thin or lacking the quick-response tech needed to safeguard offshore assets, is part of why the private sector often had to step in to fill that void and ensure operations continue smoothly. Instead of pushing to eliminate private operators, we should focus on regulatory synchronisation. The aim should be to create a hybrid model in which private operators—who have specialised, localised knowledge—are formally integrated into a collaborative oversight framework with national security agencies. For example, the Nigerian Navy has an understanding with private maritime security companies that gives the Navy the right to use their security escort vessels when the need arises. So this hybrid model is not about undermining the state; it is about ensuring operational continuity of critical national assets, the lifeblood of our economy.

How viable is the Nigerian maritime sector and what can be done to improve private sector participation?

The Nigerian maritime sector stands out as one of the most promising in Africa, thanks to our significant volume of imports, exports, and offshore oil activities. The potential here is enormous, and the odds of making a profit from investing in the sector far outweigh the odds of losing. The real issue isn't about viability; it's about the transactional friction we face. To boost private-sector involvement, we need to shift our mindset

from a "regulator-first" economy to one that prioritises enabling growth. This means we should standardise contract terms, uphold international maritime agreements, and eliminate the so-called "Nigerian Premium"—that extra burden of cost, time, and uncertainty that complicates business operations here. If we can create a more predictable regulatory environment, private companies will be more inclined to engage. By replacing uncertainty with transparent, data-driven digital systems, we can attract private investment and foster growth in the sector.

Any new findings from your research works, as it concerns the Nigerian maritime industry? If any can you share with us?

I have been delving into the Nigerian maritime industry as part of my PhD research at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, and am currently focusing on the intriguing concept of "Strategic Bypassing" in how our ports operate. One of my discoveries is what I call the "Governance Paradox." This refers to the clash between ambitious high-level policies and the sluggishness of on-the-ground operations. This paradox appears to be a major driver of private concessioning in the industry. My preliminary findings suggest that the most effective maritime players in Nigeria's port ecosystem are those that have created "ring-fenced" digital and operational spaces, enabling them to navigate the often chaotic public regulatory framework. However, there is a catch: while this approach can help individual companies survive, it does not translate well at the national level. My research indicates that for Nigeria to reach a \$1 trillion GDP, we must move beyond these isolated 'islands of efficiency' and integrate the entire logistics corridor into a single, cohesive digital infrastructure.

When it comes to embracing new technologies in the marine logistics sector, how do you perceive the operators' acceptance of these innovations?

The acceptance of new technologies among marine logistics operators in the upstream sector is quite divided. On one hand, International Oil Companies (IOCs) and leading vessel owners are jumping on board with advanced technologies like Dynamic Positioning (DP) systems, remote data exchange for vessels, and automated fuel optimisation. They recognise that offshore support vessels operate in high-risk settings where any downtime can be very costly. On the flip side, smaller indigenous operators find it tough to adopt these technologies, mainly due to financial constraints. For them, investing in sensor-based technology or satellite monitoring often feels more like a luxury than a necessity for their operations. This creates a two-tier market: the technologically savvy fleets land the lucrative, long-term offshore contracts, while the older "legacy" vessels are left to compete in the spot market, grappling with inefficiencies and higher operational costs.

NEWS

FOREIGN



NUCLEAR WATCHDOG:

Explosions were heard across several Iranian cities after the US launched strikes overnight

US soldier killed and one injured after Iranian attack in Iraq

The US military says a service member was killed after an Iranian attack in northern Iraq on Saturday, a day after an attack on a base in Jordan killed two US soldiers and left another missing.

US Central Command (Centcom) said the individual was killed during "a controlled detonation of unexploded ordnance" from a downed Iranian attack drone, which also wounded a second service member.

In its update, Centcom said it had found "unidentified remains" after a search of the location of Friday's attack in Jordan. "An examination process to verify the remains is ongoing," it added.

It comes as the US and Iran exchanged strikes for an eighth day of escalating attacks.

Both sides have been accused of striking critical infrastructure in recent days. Meanwhile, Washington has reimposed its blockade of Iranian ports and Tehran has declared the Strait of Hormuz closed and target-

ed US allies in the region, as a preliminary ceasefire collapsed less than a month after it began.

The US military said its latest attacks had been designed to "degrade Iran's ability to threaten commercial shipping" in the strait, and to "swiftly punish" Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) forces it said were responsible for the attack in Jordan.

Verified footage from inside the Jordanian facility showed at least two impacts and an explosion.

The US death toll in the conflict has now reached 17, after an American Navy pilot who went missing earlier this month was declared dead.

In Iran, at least 50 people have been killed and more than 500 injured in US strikes over the past three weeks, the country's health ministry has said.

As attacks continued on Sunday, Iranian media reported that an under-construction nuclear power plant in the south-western city of Dark-

hoveyn had been struck overnight, as well as Qeshm Island.

The UN's nuclear watchdog called for restraint, while noting that the site was "in the very early stages" and contained no nuclear material during its last visit.

Three Iranian missiles were later shot down by Jordan's military and a fourth fell in a remote area, Jordan's state news agency reported. It followed a US warning that the port of Aqaba could be targeted.

Jordan summoned Iran's charges d'affaires in Amman to demand an immediate end to what the foreign ministry called "unjustified and blatant Iranian attacks", insisting that its security was "a red line that cannot be crossed".

Israel's military meanwhile said that "several interceptors were launched toward missile debris in order to prevent debris impact within Israeli territory" after projectiles were launched towards Jordan.

It said "interceptor fragments" were subsequently identified near the southern city of Eilat, near the countries' shared border, with no damage

or injuries reported.

Separately, the IRGC said two vessels had ignored Iranian warnings not to transit the Strait of Hormuz and were consequently involved in "an accident".

It warned that all vessels "influenced" by the US and which used "unsafe routes" would "certainly face accidents".

Officials inspect a bridge damaged by a US strike in southern Iran on Saturday

In Kuwait, local officials said an electricity and water plant struck on Saturday had been hit again, resulting in a fire.

The Gulf Cooperation Council - an alliance including Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates - had accused Tehran of targeting civilian infrastructure after the first strike, calling it a violation of international law.

For its part, Iran accused the US of striking bridges, an airport and a train station earlier this week - to which Washington responded that it had "carried out strikes exclusively on military targets, including military logistics infrastructure".

Trump says US strikes hit Iran in 'honour' of American soldiers killed

President Donald Trump says the latest strikes by the US hit Iran "very hard", adding that the attacks were "in honour" of three US soldiers killed in recent days - two in Jordan, one in Iraq.

In the early hours of Monday local time, US Central Command (Centcom) said it had launched a "new wave" of strikes for the ninth consecutive night as explosions were heard across Iran.

The US said it had targeted military sites and communications networks to "further diminish" Tehran's attacks on vessels in the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran said it had responded

with a "surprise attack" in Syria and targeted US aircraft at Jordan's Aqaba airport.

Elsewhere in the region, Kuwait's armed forces said they had intercepted Iranian drones.

On the US strikes, Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency reported that several cities had been hit including Tabriz, Chabahar, Konarak, Bandar Mahshahr and Bandar Imam Khomeini.

There were also Iranian state media reports that two oil tankers had exploded as the vessels tried to cross the strait.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said the tankers were going through what it called an "unsafe and

hazardous southern route" of the strait and "exploded and were brought to a halt". Centcom disputed the claims.

The IRGC added that the strait "will not be safe for the transit of petrochemical products, nor even a single drop of oil and gas" as long as the US strikes continue and that it will respond with a "punitive operation".

Over the weekend, the US confirmed that a service member had been killed after an Iranian attack in northern Iraq on Saturday.

The death came a day after an attack on a base in Jordan where two US soldiers were killed and another was reported missing. The US said "unidentified remains" had been

found, with verification of the remains ongoing.

As the strikes continued over the weekend between the US and Iran, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that the US "always remains open to a diplomatic solution".

He also said "the world has to decide whether or not it's going to allow an international waterway to be under the control" of Iran, saying Tehran was using the crucial shipping route as leverage.

His comments come as a preliminary deal made in mid-June to stop fighting has unravelled, with negotiations for a permanent peace making little progress after Trump declared the agreement was "over" on 8 July.

Food delivery rider wins China's top literary prize

A collection of poems, some scribbled on slips of paper between food deliveries, has won Wang Jibing one of China's top literary honours.

Low Flight, inspired by the everyday challenges delivery riders face, has bagged the Lu Xun Literary Prize - named after a writer who has been referred to as the father of modern Chinese literature.

Wang, 56, who became a delivery rider around 2019, gained traction on social media for his poems and essays.

He is part of a growing group of blue-collar workers who are being celebrated for their literary works, which offer a glimpse into the pressures that they face in China's massive gig economy.

For Wang, the prestigious literary prize comes after a few difficult decades as an odd job worker.

"I held my breath and felt extremely nervous... Once it was revealed, everything was settled," Wang told state media outlet Global Times on 15 July, when news broke that he had won the award - adding that the media attention around him had created a lot of mental pressure on him.

The monetary awards for recipients of the Lu Xun Literary Prize are not publicly announced - though as of 2014 it stood at 100,000 Chinese yuan

(\$14,800; £11,000).

Born in Jiangsu province, Wang left school as a teenager due to financial hardship at home. He took on various jobs, from construction to scavenging for waste and selling things at a street stall, before becoming a food deliveryman.

But his love for reading persisted, and over the last decade he has been posting his own poems and essays on social media.

In 2022, one of his poems, titled *Man in a Hurry*, went viral online. It was inspired by an incident in 2019, in which he spent hours on a frustrating delivery after a customer entered the wrong address.

In 2023 he published his first poetry collection, *Man in a Hurry: Poems of a Food Delivery Rider*.

Despite winning the award, Wang told the outlet he had no intention of quitting his job, adding that he planned to work until he turns 60.

"Financially I don't need this job to make a living, but I love the vibe of the work and it keeps me fit," said the Global Times report. "I want a down-to-earth life and the award will never change who I am."

Low Flight, published in 2024, is a collection of poems inspired by interviews and surveys that Wang conducted with around 200 delivery riders.

Norway opens new memorial for victims of 2011 massacre

Norway has opened a new memorial for the 77 victims of the country's deadliest terror attack in peacetime, days before its 15th anniversary.

On 22 July 2011, neo-Nazi Anders Breivik killed eight people with a car bomb in Oslo and shot dead another 69 - mostly teenagers - at a youth camp on Utoeya island. Hundreds more were injured in Norway's worst atrocity in recent history.

On Sunday, survivors and relatives of the victims gathered in Oslo for the unveiling of a large artwork showing a bird native to Utoeya island.

The artist said the work was two-fold - to remember the victims and to engage the public in an act of democratic resilience against far-right ideologies that inspired the attack.

The contemporary artwork features a huge blue steel frame supporting a 12-metre (39ft) high stone mosaic that depicts a small wading bird, as well as straw and sticks reflected in the water.

Called *Upholding*, the memorial is located in Oslo's renovated government district, close to the location of the bomb blast that started the 2011 attack.

The artist Matias Faldbakken said he had seen the bird on Utoeya island. Many of those killed on the island

were teenagers involved with the Norwegian Labour Party's youth wing, the AUF.

The names of all 77 victims are engraved on the memorial.

"July 22, 2011 was a brutal attack not only on individuals, but also on our democracy," said Merete Stamneshaugen, head of a support group for victims and survivors, quoted by the AFP news agency.

Norway's Crown Prince Haakon and government officials also attended the inauguration ceremony in Oslo on Sunday.

Haakon also visited the new 22 July Centre - Norway's national memorial and education centre dedicated to the attacks.

In 2012, Breivik was sentenced to 21 years in jail, the maximum a court in Norway can impose, though it can be extended for as long as he is deemed a threat.

Over the years, Breivik has challenged the terms of his sentence.

In 2016, he partially won his human rights case against Norway before it was overturned the following year.

In 2022, he failed in his bid for parole, with the court ruling he had not changed and remained a risk to society. In 2024, he unsuccessfully sued the government over claims of isolation, as he is kept separately from other prisoners for security reasons.

FOREIGN**NEWS****India's cockroach protesters set to march to parliament**

Thousands of students, parents, activists and political leaders are set to march to the Indian parliament following a call from the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) for reforms in the education system.

The protest venue in Delhi is thronging with protesters and several hundred police and paramilitary personnel have been deployed.

Chaos erupted on Saturday when activist and educator Sonam Wangchuk, who was on day 21 of his hunger-strike in CJP's support, was forcibly taken to hospital. He continues fasting there.

The Delhi Police have said that protesters don't have permission for the march but a CJP spokesperson told the BBC that they will go ahead anyway.

Founded by Abhijeet Dipke, the CJP emerged in May as an online satirical movement to protest against paper leaks and irregularities in exams and has gained a huge following. They have been demanding that Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan take responsibility and resign.

Pradhan has dismissed the CJP and its supporters as "the B-team of disruptive elements". The government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not engaged with the

protesters yet.

On Monday morning, the atmosphere at the protest site - Jantar Mantar, a 300-year-old observatory in Delhi - was lively and spirited. The pouring rain did not dampen the spirit of hundreds of protesters, many of whom were shouting slogans demanding Pradhan's resignation.

Many protesters were waving the national flag while others held plastic roses as a peace offering.

Hundreds of policemen had been deployed and all roads leading to the venue have been sealed to traffic. Security has been stepped up across the city with barricades on a number of main streets.

Policemen were seen checking vehicles on roads leading to the area and asking questions to drivers and passengers.

Dipke, who announced he would sit on a hunger strike after Wangchuk was forcibly taken to hospital, was on the stage at Jantar Mantar, holding the Indian flag in one hand and the constitution in the other. He called the large crowd "CJP's first win".

He has demanded for Wangchuk to be released from hospital so that he can join the march. Wangchuk's wife Gitanjali Angmo is expected to participate in the march.

Vote-counting underway following Sao Tome and Principe's presidential election

Vote-counting was underway Sunday after people in the Atlantic archipelago of Sao Tome and Principe, regarded as a model of democracy in Africa, cast ballots Sunday in a presidential election.

Outgoing President Carlos Vila Nova faces party rival Nito Viegas D'Abreu, a current member of parliament backed by former prime minister Patrice Trovoada, along with two independent candidates.

If no candidate gains more than 50 percent of Sunday's vote, there will be a second-round run-off on August 9.

National Electoral Commission chief Jeudiger Nascimeto voiced concern about low turnout, saying many people had gone to polling stations without casting ballots, though he gave no official figures.

A former Portuguese colony in the Gulf of Guinea, the island nation of 200,000 inhabitants has a history marked by attempted coups including one in 2022 that was promptly thwarted by the military.

The scattering of islands off the coast of western equatorial Africa is now viewed as a model of African parliamentary democracy.

The president has a largely ceremonial role, responsible for representation and the promulgation of laws, while most executive powers lie with the prime minister.

Vila Nova, 66, elected president in 2021 with his Inde-

pendent Democratic Action (ADI) party's support, is casting himself as the guarantor of the "political stability of the country".

He has faced criticism for dismissing former prime minister Trovoada in January 2025, a move ruled one year later to be contrary to the constitution. - Commodities, tourism and aid -

Trovoada, now head of the ADI and vying to regain the prime minister post in legislative polls this coming September, has thrown his support behind Vila Nova's rival Viegas D'Abreu.

Viegas D'Abreu, the 43-year-old leader of the ADI group in parliament, is promoting himself as a representative of those born after the country's independence in 1975.

On the international stage, Sao Tome and Principe is a partner of the European Union and of former colonial power Portugal, whose slave and sugar trade it once served.

It also has partnerships with China and Russia, having signed a military pact with the latter in 2024.

The archipelago derives most of its revenue from agriculture, particularly the production of cocoa and coffee, as well as vanilla and pepper.

Its unique landscapes also make it a prime tourist destination, especially for the ultra-wealthy.

Eight worshippers die in crush at Burundi preacher's gathering

Eight people died and nine others were injured in a crush during an evangelical gathering in Burundi's largest city, Bujumbura.

Saturday's tragic incident happened at a school where prominent Burundian preacher Chris Ndikumana was appearing at the event attended by thousands of people.

Eyewitnesses and the police said a wall at the exit gate collapsed as worshippers jostled to leave the venue as the preaching ended late at night, with some being trampled in the crush.

Neither Ndikumana nor the event organisers have publicly commented on the incident.

"There were so many people and everyone wanted to leave at the same time," a teacher told the AFP news agency.

"It was late at night," the teacher from the Senior Technical School of Kamenge, the venue of the gathering, added.

In a statement, police said King Khaled Hospital in Bujumbura recorded six deaths - five females and a male - with four others being treated there. Two other deaths were recorded at a military hospital, where

five patients were treated.

The police said two people showed physical injuries, with the rest having no signs of trauma, suggesting suffocation as being the main cause of death and injuries.

Ndikumana, whose YouTube channel has more than a million subscribers, leads the Kanguka (Wake up) ministry and often attracts huge crowds for his services in several African countries.

Some of his followers believe he can cure diseases through prayers.

Crushes during religious events are not uncommon

on the continent. At least 20 people died in 2020 in neighbouring Tanzania during an outdoor religious service as attendees rushed forward to be anointed with blessed oil.

In 2022, 31 people died in Nigeria's southern city of Port Harcourt where a church was handing out food to the poor, some of whom had waited there overnight.

The same year, at least 29 people, including 11 children, were killed in a crush in Liberia after thieves targeted worshippers leaving a large evangelical gathering.



INDIA PROTESTERS:

The protest march began from Jantar Mantar, where thousands have been camping for weeks.

Dozens feared dead in another Nigeria boat disaster but why do they keep happening?

Aisha Mohammed lost three daughters in a boat disaster which killed over 100 people in Kwara state three years ago

The pattern has now become wearily familiar in Nigeria.

Many die in a boat accident; officials say the regulations should be followed; their calls are ignored; campaigners say the resources are not available; another tragedy happens.

This time, a search-and-rescue team is looking for survivors of a capsized wooden canoe in Jigawa state.

Forty were thought to be on board, mostly female farmers and labourers, when it sank on Sunday. Seven bodies have been recovered so far.

Last month, a boat accident on the River Benue in central Nigeria claimed the lives of 12 people, including a pregnant woman and six children.

Earlier this year, 14 people lost their lives when their boat capsized in Gumbi, Kebbi state. They had been returning from a wedding ceremony, accom-

panying the bride to her new husband's home.

So far this year, more than 55 people have already lost their lives in boat accidents, with dozens of bodies yet to be recovered.

For millions of Nigerians, particularly in rural areas, rivers are the most practical means of transport. With many villages on or close to waterways and few bridges and poor roads to aid travel, rickety wooden boats are often the only way for people to reach family members elsewhere, to take goods to market, or to see the outside world.

For people like Isiyaka Bello, the painful memory of losing someone to water is still fresh. Last year, his wife was returning from a village market in Kebbi state when she and eight others lost their lives.

"It seems like just yesterday. She left behind four children, and I am still struggling to adjust to raising them on my own.

"Whenever I pass by a large body of water, all I think about is her," he said.

The reasons why water

transport in Nigeria is so risky are painfully predictable:

Failure to enforce basic safety rules like wearing life jackets.

After every disaster, authorities promise to do better. But on the water there is little, if any, change.

Mallam Sala Altine holds a traditional title that carries the weight of life and death on the river. He is the Sarkin Ruwan Shiroro - the man entrusted with keeping people safe on the Shiroro Lake in Niger state, where some of Nigeria's deadliest boat tragedies have occurred.

The River Niger, the third-longest in Africa, passes through the state with which it shares a name, where it is fed by numerous smaller rivers and connected waterways, creating an environment where fatal accidents are both frequent and severe.

Between January 2023 and October 2025, Niger state accounted for a significant share of the nearly 860 deaths recorded across Nigeria. One report noted 253 deaths in the state between June 2023 and

August 2025.

Altine says there is a critical shortage of life jackets despite repeated government promises to supply them.

"Our boats usually carry well over 100 passengers. But most of the time, we can only provide life jackets for 10 people, or even fewer, because we simply don't have enough," he explains.

"We want to make it a rule that everyone who boards a boat must wear a life jacket. But we can't enforce it because we don't have any to give them."

He says that after one accident which claimed around 13 lives, the government pledged to supply more life jackets.

"But I don't know if the numbers were cut along the way, because what we eventually received was very little."

Altine says it breaks his heart to see passengers boarding boats without any protection.

As one local observer puts it: "These are not acts of fate. They are the predictable consequences of systemic negligence."

ANALYSIS

The Favour Agbro/Odogwu Asaba Case: A chilling message for young women

CHUKWUFUMNAYAN ADIGWE

As calls for an end to violence against women in Nigeria continue to gain momentum, here is one tragic development that has left a sour taste in the mouths of many.

Favour Agbro, a 20-year-old woman from Delta State who, according to her family, aspired to become a content creator and hoped social media would provide opportunities to improve her life, left Warri, where she resided with her family, to Asaba, the Delta State capital on June 1, 2026, to meet a man she connected with online who allegedly promised her content creation mentorship. Ifeanyi Ogbonna, 40, widely known as “Odogwu of Asaba,” is a content creator and boutique owner known for organizing mentorship programmes for aspiring content creators.

In a video widely circulating online, Favour recounts the story which prompted her to take her own life. The chilling video shows Favour in a distressed state as she begins by asserting that the video in question will be the last video of her the world will see, as by the time she releases the video, she would have lost her life. She goes on to narrate the ordeal with Ifeanyi Ogbonna (Odogwu of Asaba), which, according to her, had left her in the distraught state she was now in.

She states in the video that she had met him online and, upon their interaction, had confided in him about being in financial straits in hopes that he could proffer solutions on how she would solve her financial issues. She also disclosed that she had opened up to Odogwu of Asaba about being a virgin and how she had declined an earlier sexual proposition that involved payment from another unknown individual in Abuja. In her video, she says that after she disclosed all of this to him, he invited her to come over to Asaba and promised to help her. Although she explicitly states that he had never mentioned to her that he had invited her over for a sexual encounter in exchange for money, she instead alleges that he had made her believe he would help her.

Following her conversation with the content creator, she proceeded on a trip to Asaba without telling her parents exactly where she was going or the reason for her travel. She admits only to leaving the contact details of the person who had invited her over to her twin sister, exempting the intimate details of her travel. Favour, in her video, reflects on how, upon meeting Odogwu of Asaba, he took her to a hotel where seemingly the nightmare truly began. The distraught victim gets more emotional as she tearfully goes into detail about how her host, who she alleges lured her in under the guise of financial aid, allegedly raped her. She goes on to say that after the interaction he pleaded with her and promised to give her money for medical treatment, since she was bleeding nonstop but on her return to Warri, he had still failed to do so. She narrates how according to her, this event had left her traumatised. Investigators disclosed that the young woman later ingested a toxic substance in an apparent suicide attempt and was rushed for



Ifeanyi Ogbonna (Odogwu of Asaba) and Favour Agbro on Hospital bed

medical attention but eventually died.

This sequence of events led to the arrest of Odogwu of Asaba by the Delta State Police Command, triggering widespread public concern and renewed calls for justice over sexual violence and the protection of young women in Nigeria. The Command's Police Public Relations Officer, SP Bright Edeafe, said in a statement that, upon receipt of the petition, the Commissioner of Police, Delta State Command, CP Yemi Oyeniyi, directed the Area Command in Effurun to carry out an immediate investigation.

“The Command swiftly commenced investigation, leading to the arrest of Ifeanyi Ogbonna (Odogwu of Asaba). During preliminary investigation, the suspect reportedly made useful statements to the police, while further investigation is ongoing to establish the full circumstances surrounding the case.”

CP Oyeniyi assured the public of a thorough probe, declaring: “The case will be thoroughly investigated, and no aspect of the allegations will be overlooked.”

The Favour Agbro/Odogwu Asaba case comes at a time when Nigeria is grappling with a rise in Gender-Based Violence (GBV) cases. On June 18, 2026, the Federal Government disclosed that Nigeria documented 2,755 cases of gender-based violence and intimate partner violence between January and April 2026. According to the Minister of Women Affairs, Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim, more than 81% of survivors were female, while only 4% of reported cases had been successfully prosecuted, leaving 96% unresolved.

This poses a big question about how much work is being done by the government to deter offenders from continually perpetrating these crimes against women. One possible remedy is this: if more offenders are prosecuted

”
There seems to be a loud whisper in today's social space, constantly demanding more from young people, so much so that there appears to be an invisible clock that keeps ticking or a timeline that must be met.

ed and made to face the full weight of the law, then it serves as a deterrent to persons who may be harbouring such plans. You see, while it is not a total cure for this malady, it will prove very effective in curbing most of such crimes in the future.

In another widely circulated clip, Odogwu of Asaba, while in custody, is seen pleading with the parents of the deceased, saying he had made a mistake and would give anything to get himself out of the foreseen problem, with many netizens urging Nigerian law enforcement to get to the bottom of the issue and not let this become another case that is neglected or swept under the carpet. These public nudges toward justice are a clear reflection of concerns over the statistics and how the many cases left inconclusive may

empower perpetrators.

However, beyond law enforcement, a bigger picture opens on the role society has to play in ensuring that the menace of violence and exploitation of young women is eradicated from every facet of society. In my view, this case also brings to the fore the pressure society places on the younger generation to attain financial success at a certain age. There seems to be a loud whisper in today's social space, constantly demanding more from young people, so much so that there appears to be an invisible clock that keeps ticking or a timeline that must be met. In my opinion, this pressure can make some young people more vulnerable to exploitation as they seek opportunities to improve their financial situation. While it cannot be conclusively said that this alone explains what happened to Favour Agbro, it is difficult to ignore the broader social environment in which many young people are constantly driven to seek financial help, sometimes from people whose intentions may not be genuine.

Another very important question that needs to be answered is, “What can the young woman do to protect herself from becoming a victim in cases like this?” While the perpetrators of these heinous crimes against women continue to relentlessly await their next unsuspecting victim, the young woman herself must remain alert and guarded, knowing that social media is a space where one needs to tread cautiously and that not everyone behind a phone and vague promises can be trusted. Although many great opportunities come from social media, young women must deeply analyse these prospects. One good lesson revealed by this case is the scrutiny of the digital footprint and testimonials of the benefactor.

Following this particular case, more videos of the suspect, Odogwu

of Asaba, have begun to surface from his past social media postings. One, in particular, is a reaction video in which he responds to a scenario where a man attempts to force intimacy on a female friend after she refuses. In the video, he asserts boldly that he cannot be friends with a woman and that she cannot come to his house without intimacy being part of the plan, as long as she is unmarried and not a relative. While diverse reactions have emerged from the post, with some saying it does not mean he admitted he would force intimacy on a guest, in my opinion, a man with such a view is one that any young woman should be wary of. Such a digital footprint should be regarded as a tell-tale sign of potential danger and, therefore, should be seen as a strong red flag. Go through the past posts, comments, and overall digital footprint of the benefactor.

Moreover, another message young women should cull from this is to be more open with the people in their lives. If it has to be kept a secret, then it should be considered high risk. Favour, in her video, admits to not opening up fully to her family about the purpose of her trip. While her reason for not disclosing her travel plans remains unclear, there is a strong possibility that she could have been dissuaded from proceeding with the journey had she confided in someone who could help her make sense of the whole situation.

Even as law enforcement and society have their roles to play, so does the individual. The message is clear: young women must also actively take precautions to ensure they do not become unsuspecting victims of perpetrators who cloak their clandestine plans in the guise of philanthropy or opportunity. While the story continues to develop, so too do the calls for a Nigeria where the young woman is no longer an endangered species.

FEATURE

Human welfare interventions amidst rapid changes in society

OSUMAH AUGUSTINE

The society is not static. Scores of rapid changes occur in society that leave alterations in the environment. Such changes are either natural or manmade. Changes are natural if they take place without any form of human involvement. If changes are products of human activities, they are manmade. Both natural and manmade changes have particular causes. Natural changes are environmental shifts such as flooding, earthquake, erosion, and tsunami. Manmade changes are economic transformations, social movements, and technological advancement. However, changes like outbreaks of epidemics or pandemics can be natural or manmade.

Rapid changes in communities are often in the form of cultural and social variations, epidemics and pandemics, urbanisations and conurbations, economic upturn and downturn, demographic alterations, and natural catastrophes. Changes can be in the beliefs, values, and behaviours of communities. Such variations are driven by multifarious factors such as the mass media, globalisation, religion, and education. Each time values are compromised, the results include indecent dressing, preference for foreign cuisines, and display of hostilities.

Outbreaks of diseases on a national or worldwide scale culminate in sky-high morbidity. This occurrence in turn cripples healthiness of individuals, disorganises national and international communities, and causes high mortality rate. Swift population growth fans the flames of mass movement to urban centres. Such migration to towns makes overpopulated megacities to emerge. This phenomenon places strain on accessing infrastructure, acquiring lands, securing accommodations, and obtaining resources via entrepreneurship or employment.

Shifts in trades and industries can be twofold. First is a reduction in manufacturing sector. Second is an increase in service sector. Also, artificial intelligence (AI) is growing. Robots are preferred in our day as substitute of manpower in numerous manufacturing sectors. The aftermath of these occurrences encompass high level of job losses and drastic reduction in rates of earnings in communities. Variations which occur in the size of population, structure of age, and composition of ethnic groups have several ripple effects on the needs and resources of communities. These put strains on public services like education or healthcare.

Introduction of the present-day technologies described as mechanisation, computerisation or digitisation no doubt generate new opportunities; makes communication and contact easier; as well as enhances quicker, larger, and more accurate work outcomes. To resist digitisation is to be cut off from global network. Incidences encapsulating floods, earthquakes, erosions, and hurricanes bring about ruin of infrastructure such as roads, railways, hospitals,



HUMAN WELFARE IN SOCIETY

schools, workplaces, stadia, airports, and seaports. The abovementioned natural disasters displace people on a large-scale, as well as interrupt their day to day activities.

The strategies adopted to tackle rapid changes in communities determine their scale of success. Shifts in environment, innovations in technology, economic reorganisations, and reordering of social institutions modify traditional lifestyle to produce both opportunities and challenges for society. The interventions suggested by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in 2025 are education and learning, public engagement and inclusion, interdisciplinarity and teamwork, innovative digitisation, resilience and adaptability, and social impact and sustainability.

As rapid changes take place in human beliefs and values systems, museums are to educate people and help them learn to imbibe acceptable norms or conduct. The same causal factors of shifts in values like mass media, globalisation, religion, and education can be used by museums to imbue on people tolerable societal behaviours. Museums can front learning of good morals, dress culture, local cuisines, and neighbourhood ceremonies in schools, worship centres, and other allied social institutions by using physical contacts and the mass media as tools.

The onus is on museums to carry communities along in formulating and implementing strategies to help them cope with rapid changes. Museums should encourage communities to have a say in their affairs,

especially in the interpretation and conservation of collections, along with environmental sustainability such as discontinuing building houses on waterways, ending littering of streets with filths, and removing silts from drainages. Moreover, museums should persuade communities to participate in public issues when requested to do so.

Museums should harness technological advancements for communities. Virtual exhibitions need to be created for a global audience particularly the youths in this digital age. Digitisation makes a wider audience to access collections in museums. Digital technologies improve experiences of visitors. With the digitisation of collections, services of museums will continue in times of epidemics and pandemics. Museums must not be singlehanded in dealing with rapid changes in communities such as technological, political, economic, and health challenges. Pro-

fessional knowledge and experiences should be drawn from other related disciplines to tackle the aforementioned multifaceted issues with holistic approaches.

In order to stay relevant during natural and manmade disasters, museums should develop survival strategies. Enlightenment campaigns on the necessity of nonviolent coexistence, capacity building, and environmental protection are survival strategies against the mounting hostilities, economic hardships, and floods. Museums need to play their role of impacting lives in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. To adopt SDGs numbers 8, 9, and 11, museums must support local economies by creating employment opportunities and educational programmes that empower communities; fostering creativity and embracing technological advancements, museums drive innovation and enhance accessibility; and con-

tributing to sustainable urban development by acting as cultural hubs that promote inclusion, resilience, and heritage preservation.

There are however some daunting limiting factors to museums' human welfare sustainability interventions. Firstly, museums lack enough know-how to implement interventions. They are incapacitated in offering educational programmes for empowering communities through job creation to support local economies. Secondly, apathetic attitude of several communities is a hindrance to the public engagement and inclusiveness strategy of museums. This hinders the moves of museums to serve as cultural centres for inclusion, adaptability, and preservation of heritage. Thirdly, under-funding by the government encumbers museums from technological advancements that enhances innovation and improves accessibility.

In conclusion, there is the pressing necessity for prompt and persistent training and retraining of employees in museums. This will breed informed and diligent workers able and predisposed to implementing interventions as rapid changes occur in communities. Sensitisation campaigns should be carried out via physical visit and media publicity to help community members in imbibing the public engagement strategies of museums to deal with the rapid changes emerging in communities. Government should increase its budgetary allocations to museums for the effective implementation of their multiple human welfare sustainability interventions.

”

Enlightenment campaigns on the necessity of nonviolent coexistence, capacity building, and environmental protection are survival strategies against the mounting hostilities, economic hardships, and floods.

Beyond politics, what Governor Okpebholo's recent actions reveal

BUGIE OKHUEMOI

Imagine a little boy born with a visual impairment somewhere in Edo State.

Long before he is old enough to dream, people have already decided what he cannot become. He grows up believing that some doors were simply never built for people like him.

Then one day, he watches the inauguration of Edo State's new Permanent Secretaries and sees a visually-impaired lawyer, Melody Omosah, sworn into one of the highest offices in the State Civil Service.

In that moment, something changes.

Not just for him, but for every child living with a disability and every parent who has quietly wondered what the future holds. Sometimes, hope arrives in the form of one appointment.

That was the thought that crossed my mind as I watched the inauguration of the new Commissioners and Permanent Secretaries in Edo State.

For the first time in the state's history, a visually-impaired lawyer had become a Permanent Secretary.

For many, it was a landmark appointment. For those who have watched Governor Monday Okpebholo closely, it was part of a pattern.

He had earlier nominated a non-indigene - a South-Easterner - as Commissioner, reminding us that service to Edo is bigger than place of origin. He inaugurated the Edo State Persons with

Disabilities Commission and appointed a lawyer living with a disability as a State Counsel. Now comes Melody Omosah's appointment.

Different decisions. One clear message: everyone deserves a fair chance.

Politics often celebrates the loudest voices. Governor Okpebholo has nev-



HISTORY IN THE MAKING:

Governor Monday Okpebholo (left) and Barr. Melody Omosah, newly sworn-in permanent secretary (2nd right) on Friday.

er been that kind of politician. Calm, reserved and unassuming, he has often seemed more comfortable listening than talking.

Perhaps that is exactly what many Edo people saw before they voted for him.

They saw someone who understood their values - humility, empathy, respect for people and the quiet belief that actions matter more than speeches.

People do not only elect manifestos. They also elect character.

Character has a way of revealing itself after the campaign is over.

Those who have known Governor Okpebholo long before Government

House often speak of his compassion, generosity and deep faith. Increasingly, those personal values appear to be reflected in government decisions.

When xenophobic attacks forced many Edo sons and daughters to return from South Africa with painful stories and uncertain futures, he welcomed and supported them as they began again.

The same spirit can be seen in the payment of long-overdue gratuities, support for market women and small businesses, renewed investment in agriculture, and improvements in healthcare, education, transportation and security.

Taken together, these decisions tell the story of a leader whose attention naturally turns to people who are too often overlooked.

No Governor gets every decision right. That is the nature of democracy. But some decisions deserve recognition because they remind people that they matter.

A child living with a disability may now believe that becoming a Permanent Secretary is possible.

A non-indigene may feel a stronger sense of belonging.

An Edo son or daughter returning home after hardship may know they have not been forgotten.

Those are the victories that rarely make the loudest headlines, yet they leave the deepest marks on society.

If Governor Monday Okpebholo continues on this path, his greatest legacy may not simply be the roads he builds or the projects he completes. It may be the doors he opens, the barriers he removes and the hope he gives ordinary people.

For that little boy we imagined at the beginning of this piece, that may be the most important legacy of all.

Bugie Okhuemoi is the Special Adviser on Media & Publicity to the Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo (SMO).

NEWS

School Children Abduction: FONWIP calls for urgent school reforms

ABUJA

Former Edo State Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development and President of Forum of Nigerian Women in Politics, FONWIP, Hon. Deaconess Amb Florence Gbinigie has called on all stakeholders in Nigeria to convene a Safe Schools Summit.

The FONWIP President who made the call in a statement in Benin City also commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Governor Seyi Makinde, and all security agencies for the swift operation that led to the rescue of the school children and teacher abducted from Baptist Nursery and Primary School, Yawota; Community High School, Ahoro-Esiele; and L.A. Primary School in Oriire Local Government Area of Oyo State on May 15, 2026 and the arrest of 8 suspects.

According to her, "FONWIP, receives with immense relief the news of the rescue of the children. For weeks, parents, teachers, and communities in Ibadan and across Nigeria lived in fear. The abduction of over 40 pupils and teachers was a direct attack on education and the fundamental right of every child to learn in safety.

"We also appreciate the advocacy of all Non Governmental Organisations, NGO's, Child Protection Network (CPN), NUT, parents, traditional rulers, and women groups across the country, who kept the pressure on until our children were returned.

"Our children and every Nigerian deserve safety, peace and a secure future. We mourn the teacher who lost his life in captivity and pray for the bereaved family. It would be recalled that FONWIP had earlier issued a statement calling for urgent action to rescue

the kidnapped children during the celebration of the African Child June 16 this year."

While expressing her condolences to the family of the soldier that was killed while they were rescuing the children and teacher, she noted that this rescue must mark the end of school abductions in Oyo State and Nigeria.

The FONWIP President stated there should be preventive measures for all schools in Nigeria to ensure that schools in Nigeria remain safe havens for learning.

According to her, all State Governments, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Women Affairs, Traditional Institutions, and all stakeholders in Nigeria should convene a Safe Schools Stakeholders Summit within 30 days.

"There should be mandatory perimeter fencing, controlled gates, and 24-hour security posts for all public and pri-

vate schools, Installation of solar-powered lighting and CCTV cameras at strategic points in school premises and Designated safe rooms/emergency shelters in every school for immediate lock down during threats.

"There should be establishment of School Safety Committees in every school comprising head teachers, PTA, women leaders, religious leaders, vigilantes, NSCDC and the Police DPO. Women must be included as we are often first to notice unusual activity.

"There should be dedicated emergency hotlines linking every school directly to the nearest police station, Operation Burst, and Amotekun, Public sensitization: If you know something, report it to the appropriate authorities. Timely information can help save lives.

"There should be deployment of trained security per-

sonnel to schools in vulnerable and rural areas across Nigeria, Monthly safety and evacuation drills for pupils and teachers to build readiness and background checks and biometric registration of all school security staff, drivers, and vendors.

"There should be Policy, Welfare and Psycho social Support, Mandatory annual School Safety Audit by all Ministry of Education for school licensing and renewal, immediate deployment of counselors and medical teams to affected schools to support victims, families, and other pupils and Victims Support Fund for medical care, rehabilitation, and educational continuity for rescued persons.

"There should be a School Emergency Alert System: A simple USSD/App code to trigger instant alerts to security agencies and parents, risk mapping of all schools in Nigeria to guide priority deployment

of patrols and resources, Joint patrols by Police, NSCDC, Vigilante and local hunters around schools during opening and closing hours.

"There should also be Advocacy and Civic Engagement, Integration of safety education into the school curriculum to teach children personal safety and reporting channels, Mobilization of women groups, market associations, and faith-based organizations for grassroots advocacy on school safety, strengthening of intelligence gathering and inter-agency collaboration to protect learning environments.

"We believe that education is the foundation of our nation and schools must never again become targets. Let the rescue of these children be the last time we have to pray for their return from captivity. Every child deserves to go to school and return home safely," the FONWIP President added.

FEATURE

Nigerians dying daily in South Africa after ban from hospitals – Nwobi, President, Nigerian community

President of the Nigerian Union South Africa, Mr Smart Nwobi, shares his thoughts with CHUKWUDI AKASIKE on the ban on Nigerians and other foreigners in South Africa from accessing healthcare in the country's public hospitals by an anti-migrant group and measures taken to address the challenge

What is your group all about?

The group is known as the Nigerian Union South Africa. It is the apex Nigerian organisation that caters for the general interest of Nigerians in South Africa. It was established in 2008. It has been in existence for 17 years.

What is the current situation in South Africa? Is it true that foreigners, including Nigerians, are not allowed to access healthcare in government-owned hospitals?

The current situation is very appalling. I would say it is quite an unfortunate situation because the people who are carrying out this act are not government officials or officials of the department of the healthcare system.

I can tell you as a human rights lawyer that access to public healthcare is guaranteed under the South African Constitution, Section 27 of 1996, under the post-apartheid regime of South Africa's Nelson Mandela. The section clearly says that everyone, without any exception, is entitled to the public health system.

This constitution was further given flesh by the enactment of the healthcare systems and law. As you can see, it is a xenophobic and unlawful act by a set of people called 'Operation Dudula'. The group wants to take the law into their own hands.

What is the South African government saying about Operation Dudula's barring of Nigerian patients and other foreigners from accessing public hospitals in the country?

The Minister of Health in the country, Dr Aaron Mokoalele, has spoken on the matter during a national interview, saying if members of the group do not want foreigners, including Nigerians, to access the public healthcare system in the country, and it is an issue of law, they cannot come to a public health facility where pregnant women and children are helpless, and want to stop healthcare workers, including doctors, from treating the patients.

The minister said if they wanted stopping foreigners from accessing public hospitals in South Africa to become the norm, they should simply go back to the law, vie for elections, win, and implement it in the National Assembly or the parliament in South Africa. He said the law should be changed for such action to take place legally.

What else did the health minister say about the situation?

Mokoalele was of the view that they (members of the anti-migrant group) were violating the law regarding access to the healthcare system in the country. According to him, stopping doctors from attending to foreigners in the country is illegal.

The doctors also told the group that, by their oath, which was taken before they were admitted as medical practitioners, they could not simply ignore



SMART NWOBİ

anyone. But what these people are doing is that they stay at some of the health facilities and begin to unlawfully deprive foreigners of medical attention.

Let me tell you one of the consequences of what they are doing; according to statistics, there are some South Africans who have not even got their citizenship documents, so they are also not allowed to get medical attention. Indirectly, the action of the group is also affecting their people.

Whatever they are doing is not scientific; it is not researched. What they (Operation Dudula members) do is that they will come to the hospital and ask for your identification card; if you don't have the South African citizenship Green Card, they will simply say you should go out of the hospital.

Why are those who are citizens not protesting to the South African government about the situation?

A lot of people have complained that they are citizens, but they have not received their documents. For most of us who are here, even if you are a foreigner and you have earned your citizenship, for the fact that you are not speaking the language, but you are a taxpayer; they simply order you out of the hospital. It doesn't matter if you have documents or not.

So, what they are doing is simply illegal. NUSA (the Nigerian Union South Africa) has condemned it; we are collaborating with progressive associations in South Africa, the Office of the Human Rights for Refugee Affairs, and the Office of the African Diaspora Forum on the matter. We have resolved to seek legal intervention for those affected, including Nigerians.

But the Operation Dudula group you mentioned accused foreigners of overstressing public health facilities in South Africa. How would you react to this?

We disagree because for them to assert that, there must be statistics to

say, for example, that over the last 12 months, this is the percentage of foreigners who were treated, and this is the budget that was made for the entire people in the country, and this is the number of foreigners that will amount to overstressing the public health facilities that we received.

These are just claims that are not backed by facts. It is simply afro phobia and xenophobia. This is their modus operandi; they started targeting foreigners, especially Nigerians and people from other African countries.

They were saying South Africans should be allowed to trade, but nobody is stopping anybody from trading. It is just that their people do not want to trade, and this informal sector has been assisting in developing the economy of South Africa. That was the target in the past three to four months ago. Now, they have left that and come into the healthcare sector.

During one of their interviews, they (the anti-migrant group) said that by next year, they would go to schools where foreigners, including Nigerians, attend to stop them from attending public schools.

These public schools are not entirely free; foreigners pay, but it is just that the education here is subsidised. It is not actually that they (Operation Dudula) are focusing on one sector in the country; they have threatened to go to other sectors, including schools. This means that these actions are coordinated.

When did the ban on foreigners from public healthcare start?

It started at the beginning of this year, but it was intensified around July and August (this month).

How are Nigerians in South Africa affected?

As a human rights lawyer, I get numerous calls daily about the situation. This is appalling. Some of these foreigners are citizens of South Africa by naturalisation.

Apart from collaborating with some groups to find a solution to the issue, what other measures is your group taking to ensure that Nigerians begin to gain access to public hospitals for treatment?

We have written to the Nigerian Consulate to reach out to their South African counterpart on the matter. We will write to them once again to intensify efforts in reaching out to the groups involved in all this and tell them that this is unacceptable.

They (consulate officials) are politicians and diplomats; we are trying to push our diplomats from here (South Africa) to also reach out to the Nigerian President (Bola Tinubu), as well as our Senate, to be in contact diplomatically with their South African counterparts.

Secondly, internally within the country, because this is a legal issue, we are cooperating with other African migrant unions. As of last week, the Nigerian Union South Africa had an official briefing with the African Diaspora Forum, and they agreed to collaborate with my group (NUSA) to mount a legal approach and ask questions.

Are you saying no intervention has come from the Nigerian government on the issue?

No, they have not been able to intervene; the consulate and the embassy have not intervened. We tried to reach out to them, but they have not said anything; they have not given us any progress report about what they are doing so far.

We are calling on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to kindly intervene. He might be here in September for the G-20, which South Africa would be hosting; world leaders would also be there.

With the inability to access public healthcare, what alternative measures are Nigerians embracing?

Nigerians have resorted to self-medication, which is detrimental to their health. Some of them are losing their

lives every day. The statistics are there. Nigerians are now afraid of going to public hospitals in South Africa to avoid being beaten to death or assaulted. That is the unfortunate part of it. So, this requires urgent intervention.

Now, as it is getting close to election time, foreigners, especially those doing business, are always the target. That anger against the ruling party, government is transferred to foreigners. Nigerians are always among the victims when this happens.

How is your group assisting members who cannot afford high medical bills in private hospitals there?

The Nigerian Union South Africa, in one of the provinces, organised a medical outreach to assist Nigerians in the country. Under the scheme, African doctors are paid to carry out tests and treat Nigerians for free. This is done within a limited budget because we do not benefit from any funding outside of members' contributions.

In a video, a leader of a group suspected to be an anti-migrant group was heard telling some foreigners to go back to their countries, encourage their governments to fix their economies, and stop the migration surge to South Africa. Are there lessons African leaders can learn from this?

There is a great lesson to be learnt from the statement. The lesson to be learnt here is that if various governments in Africa can fix their countries, there will be less influx of migrants to other well-to-do or rich countries.

Such steps will reduce xenophobia and afro phobia, which means Africans attacking Africans. In this case, South African blacks against blacks (who are non-South Africans).

How long have you been in South Africa?

I came to South Africa in 2008; that means I have been here for 17 years. I went to school here; I did my master's here.

Are you practising law in South Africa?

Yes, I am practising law in South Africa. My chamber, Nwobi (Smart) Attorneys Inc., is one of the leading chambers in South Africa. I am an employer of labour.

What has been your experience in South Africa?

South Africa has a very good system, and the majority of South Africans are good people, especially those who have travelled far and wide. Those who are well-travelled understand what is obtainable on the continent.

Only a few of them are involved in this anti-migrant campaign. Those involved are not exposed. I always tell them that what we have in Africa are artificial boundaries because we used to be a united Africa.

What are the infrastructural facilities you enjoy there, which you think are absent here in Nigeria?

One of them is this issue at hand: health facilities. I can also tell you that 20 per cent of the doctors here are foreigners, and out of this, 40 per cent are Nigerians. Our best doctors are in South Africa just as they are in other parts of the world.

Why critical thinking matters more than memorization

EJEMOGO REBECCA ANWURI

Tunde and Covenant were close friends who both graduated from the University of Evergreen with a first-class degree in Civil Engineering. Life didn't smile at them for almost a year as they went job hunting, which was almost a fruitless effort on each day that passed, until light appeared at the end of the tunnel when a construction company sent them an invitation for a job interview via email.

On the designated day, the two friends and other job seekers were interviewed through a written examination. Upon collating the scores, the company invited the two University of Evergreen graduates for a second interview because they had the same score in the written examination. But this time around, they decided to conduct an oral test because they only needed to employ one person. After asking both of them a series of questions, Covenant got the job because he was able to proffer a solution to an existing problem of the company, while Tunde stuttered and was mostly dumbfounded when the same question was thrown at him.

The aforementioned story reveals why critical thinking matters more than memorization.

Memorization as a concept can be rightly defined as a cognitive process of committing information to memory so that it can be recalled exactly as learned, which entails taking in information, processing it, and storing it in the brain for future use.

Critical thinking, on the other hand, can be seen as applying reason and questioning assumptions in order to solve

problems, evaluate information, identify lapses, as well as proffer solutions. It is therefore important to understand that while memorization is needed so that it will serve as a well of knowledge and ideas that one can draw from, it is worthy to note that it is critical thinking that will challenge what one truly claims to have internalized and whether or not it was clearly understood and can be defended whenever the need calls. This is because overreliance on memorization alone may lead one into the ditch due to the fact that memorized information can easily be forgotten, especially when one's brain is overworked or stressed. Also, real-life situations will rarely present problems the way we actually read them in our textbooks.

Little wonder many universities employ the use of applied questions when preparing examination questions because they are fully aware that beyond the course on News Writing and Reporting, students will be faced with the real world after graduating from the four walls of the school, where the practical application of that course will be required. In the real world, it goes beyond how many principles you know to how well you can apply them. This sends a message that success often requires understanding rather than mere recall and head knowledge. For instance, the story that was shared at the beginning of this write-up shows that Tunde's memorization or head knowledge couldn't earn him a job because he stopped at just assimilating facts and figures while in the university, unlike Covenant, who was proficient in both aspects.

Critical thinking, when applied, has the capacity to resolve problems. If people were only relying on memorization, I can say for sure that many



of the societies and organizations we know to have climbed the ladder of success would have remained stagnant, underdeveloped, and in disarray. However, through critical thinking, problems that seemed like mountains were brought down to level ground because something outside memorization or consultation of books and waiting for ready-made answers was still employed.

For example, many of us give credit to Thomas Edison, who was known for his remarkable invention of the first commercially viable incandescent light bulb after one thousand failed attempts. One question to bear in mind is: Was it only his memorized knowledge that earned him such a feat?

The answer is not far-fetched because if he had only relied on it, he would have been disappointed, stuck, and frustrated such that he might have given up long before he finally

got it right. The numerous trials show that critical thinking was at work because one could imagine that at every point of failure, he could have paused to think of what was amiss and then try to solve the issue.

Aside from problem-solving, critical thinking helps combat misinformation. We live in a world where the fast pace of technology has almost blurred the line between recognizing authentic information and false information. Critical thinkers will, however, refuse to accept such information hook, line, and sinker, but will challenge the sources of such information before believing or going a step further to share it.

In addition, critical thinking encourages creativity and innovation. It challenges people to begin to think outside the box on how to make things better. The world is gradually tilting toward valuing those who have a creative and innovative mind, peo-

ple who have left a mark on the sands of time, and those who can alter and shift things because of how well they could address situations through their reasoning ability.

As a build-up to encouraging creativity and innovation, critical thinking prepares individuals for the workplace. Just as it was earlier mentioned, critical thinking helps individuals to stand out in the face of adversities where fresh graduates are job hunting. In fact, the rate of graduates from universities each year is so large that there are insufficient organizations or industries in the country, that is Nigeria, that can employ them all. Hence, for such graduates to be employed by the available organizations, there must be something unique about them that will earn them employment. Critical thinking is a means of becoming distinct and excellent in a society where unemployment is crippling development and progress.

In the modern world, information is no longer something that is far-fetched because it is now available via the internet and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Hence, the major concern today has shifted from obtaining information to correctly interpreting it. This tells us that people who truly have an edge are those who can analyze information rather than those who are only good at recalling it.

The discourse on the benefits of critical thinking, however, does not dispel the relevance of memorization.

Memorization provides the foundation of knowledge. Critical thinking builds upon that foundation, just as effective learning requires not only critical thinking but also the input of memorization.

"Beyond Campaign Promises: A development agenda Nigeria can't afford to postpone till 2027"

MARTHA OBI-DIKE

This is not about 2027. This is about today.

Development is not a campaign slogan to be dusted off every 4 years. It is water that runs. It is light that stays. It is a job that pays. It is a road that does not swallow tyres.

As Nigeria moves toward 2027, we must ask: What kind of development do we want? The kind that ends at ribbon-cutting, or the kind that changes life expectancy?

Economist Prof. Akpan Ekpo puts it plainly: "Development is not GDP. Development is a child who does not die of diarrhea. Development is a girl who finishes school and gets a job."

If we postpone this conversation until campaigns start, we will get more of the same: projects without impact.

The numbers are stubborn.

1. 133 million Nigerians are multidimensionally poor according to NBS 2022.
2. 33% youth unemployment.
3. 40% of primary health centers are not functional.
4. Power: We generate less than 5000MW for 220 million people. South Africa generates 50,000MW for 60 million.

Dr. Amina Oyagbola, Develop-

ment Consultant: "We don't have a resource problem. We have a priority problem. We build airports where there are no roads to the airport."

In Edo State, the story is mixed. The Benin Industrial Park is a hope. Edo-BEST is changing classrooms. But rural roads are failing. Farmers in Ovia still lose 40% of produce to bad roads.

Development must be measured at the kitchen table, not in Abuja press briefings.

Real development has 4 legs. Remove one, the table falls.

1. Human Capital

Health + Education + Skills.

A 2024 World Bank report says Nigeria loses \$1.2 billion yearly because children are stunted.

Prof. Grace Alele-Williams' legacy reminds us: educate a woman, you educate a nation. Yet we have 10.5 million out-of-school children.

2. Infrastructure that Works

Not just big projects. Small projects.

Solar power for PHCs. Boreholes that last 5 years, not 5 months. Roads that connect farm to market.

Engr. Chris Ogiemwonyi, former Minister: "The best road is the one

a woman can use at 5am to take her goods to market and return safely."

3. Productive Economy

We must move from sharing oil money to making things.

Agro-processing in Edo: plantain chips, garri, palm oil. Leather in Kano. Tech in Lagos.

But SMEs die because of power, tax, and access to credit.

"Give me 12 hours of power and I will employ 20 people," says Mrs. Osas, a baker in Ekpoma.

4. Institutions and Data

Development without data is guesswork. Which LGA has the worst maternal mortality? Which school has no teachers? We don't know because we don't measure.

Elections should be job interviews, not beauty contests.

Ahead of 2027, citizens must demand a "Development Contract" from every candidate:

1. *Health*: 1 functional PHC per ward with drugs and staff
2. *Education*: 1 vocational center per LGA
3. *Power*: Community solar for

markets and clinics

4. *Jobs*: Public works + SME fund with transparency
5. *Roads*: Maintain existing roads before new ones

Civil Society Leader, Comrade Agho Ibrahim: "Don't ask them what party. Ask them: what will you build in 4 years that I can touch?"

The media must also shift. Less of "who insulted who" and more of "what is your plan for erosion in Egor?"

Government cannot do it alone. Development is co-production.

In Edo South, women's cooperatives pooled money and bought a transformer. Light returned in 2 weeks.

In Owan, youths graded a 3km road themselves and got LGA to tar it.

Community Development Associations must become development watchdogs, not praise singers.

Track budgets. Attend town halls. Use FOI.

Dr. Emmanuel Osagie: "The most powerful development tool is an informed citizen with a notebook."

Also, diaspora remittances: \$20 billion yearly. If 10% was channeled to community projects with accountability, villages would transform.

The danger is "stomach infrastruc-

ture" — rice and money on election eve.

It costs more long term. A bag of rice is N80,000. A borehole is N2 million and serves 500 people for 10 years.

We also suffer from "project abandonment syndrome." New government, new projects. Old ones rot.

As Nobel Laureate Prof. Wole Soyinka warned: "The man dies in all who keep silent in the face of tyranny." The same applies to mediocrity.

2027 must not be about personalities. It must be about priorities.

To Government at all levels: Publish a 4-year development scorecard. Let us see what you met, what you did, what is left.

To Politicians: Come with a blueprint, not just billboards.

To Private Sector: Adopt a school, a clinic, a road. CSR must be real.

To Citizens: Vote with your needs, not your tribe.

To Media: Hold power to account daily, not just in October 2026.

Development is not a miracle. It is a decision. A decision to fix one street, one clinic, one school at a time.

If we start now, 2027 will meet a Nigeria that is building, not begging.

The time to talk about development is not during campaigns. The time is now.

FEATURE

The First Responders at Home: Why women must lead neighborhood watch ahead of 2027

GRACE IJEOMA UMEH

It's 2am in Egor. A generator coughs. A dog barks. Then silence. Who notices first? Mama Nkechi, preparing as early as 5am to start selling akara. She knows which tenant came in late. Which bike passed twice. Which house has new boys.

In Nigeria, security does not start at the police station. It starts at the gate, in the kitchen, at the market.

And women are already there.

As we approach 2027, with campaigns, rallies, and heightened tension, neighborhood security will decide whether we have peace or panic.

Women are not just victims of insecurity. They are the first line of intelligence.

ACP Juliet Ogedengbe, former Police PRO: "If you want to know what is happening in any community, ask the women. They see everything."

Security is about patterns. Women live in patterns.

LET'S CONSIDER THE PATTERNS:

Domestic pattern: Who is beating his wife? Who is drinking and coming home with a new phone?

Market pattern: Who is selling in bulk without a shop? Who is buying 10 SIM cards?

School pattern: Which child stopped coming? Which teenager now has money?

In Uhumwonde LGA, a women's group flagged 3 houses in 2024 where young men gathered at odd hours. Vigilantes checked. Stolen motorcycles were recovered.

Prof. Joy Ogwu, Former Foreign Minister: "Women's security work is unpaid, unthanked, and unrecorded. But it is the reason most communities sleep."

During elections, women know which youth are being mobilized with money; which compound is storing thugs; which rumors are spreading in salons and churches.

Right now, women's watch is informal. WhatsApp groups. Town criers. Church announcements.

It must become institutional.

What works should be considered:

Edo Women's Vigilante Network, Oredo.

50 women, trained by Police and NSCDC. They don't carry guns. They carry notebooks. They report. Crime in those 5 streets dropped 30% in 6 months.

AMOTEKUN WOMEN CORPS, SOUTHWEST:

Women attached to Amotekun who do search, mediation, and child protection.

FEMALE HUNTERS, NORTH-EAST:

In Borno, women hunters track and give intelligence because they can enter IDP camps where men cannot.

What we need ahead of 2027: Ward-level Women Watch Committees* in all 774 LGAs. 10 women each.

Training: Basic intelligence gathering, conflict mediation, GBV response. Partner with Police, DSS, NSCDC. **Tools:** Identity cards, torchlights, emergency lines, not weapons.

Funding: 1% of LGA security vote to women's groups.

Protection: Legal backing so they



Thousands of women stormed Abuja.

are not harassed as "busybodies."

CP Funsho Adegboye: "The police cannot be in every street. But a woman on every street can call the police."

2027 will test neighborhoods.

Women can prevent 3 things: Vote-buying: They know who is distributing rice at midnight.

Thuggery: They know which boys are recruited.

Fake news: They are the ones forwarding voice notes. They can also stop them.

In 2023, in Ikpoba-Okha, women blocked a road for 2 hours until INEC officials arrived. They said: "No election without materials." That is power.

We must include women in INEC Election Security Committee at LGA level, Peace Accords signing at ward level, Situation rooms on election day. The challenges are real.

Safety: Women who speak up are threatened.

Culture: "Security is men's job." No data: Their work is not counted in crime statistics.

There ought to be solution: Traditional rulers must publicly endorse women watch groups. Husbands must support wives. Media must profile them.

As Mrs. Betty Irabor said: "A society that ignores its women's eyes is a society that walks blind."

To Government: Recognize and fund women's watch groups. Give them a seat at the security table.

To Police: Create a toll-free line just for women informants. Protect their identity.

To Communities: Let women lead the next town hall on security.

To Women: Organize. Document. Report. You are not gossiping. You are gathering intelligence.

2027 will be peaceful if our streets

are peaceful. And our streets will be peaceful if the women watching them are empowered.

Security is not just guns. Security is grandmothers who notice.

LET'S GET IT CLEARLY AGAIN: WOMEN ARE INFORMATION GATEKEEPERS:

From Market Gossip to National Security: Women Are Ahead in Information Gathering and Dissemination By 7am, information has already traveled.

From Oba Market to Ekewan Road. From church to salon. From WhatsApp status to motor park. Who moved it? Women.

In Nigeria, women are the original social network. Before Twitter, before

radio, there was "Aunty, did you hear?"

Ahead of 2027, information will decide elections, peace, and development. Fake news will spread. So will facts. The people who decide what spreads first are women.

Dr. Chidi Odinkalu: "In any crisis, find the women. They are already 3 steps ahead in the information chain."

WOMEN RUN 4 PARALLEL INFORMATION SYSTEMS:

The Market Network:

Market women know prices, scarcity, and who is hoarding. In 2022, when fuel scarcity hit, market women in Benin knew 2 days before NNPC announced it.

THE CARE NETWORK:

Mothers, nurses, teachers. They know which child is malnourished, which family has a new gun, which teenager is depressed.

THE FAITH NETWORK:

Women lead 70% of church and mosque groups. Announcements, prayers, and warnings start there.

The Digital Network is pulling weight.

Aunties on WhatsApp. Sisters on TikTok. They forward, they debunk, they meme.

A 2024 NOI Poll found 68% of Nigerians get "community news" first from a woman in their family.

The problem is we call it "gossip." We should call it "early warning."

CLEAR EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

Health: During COVID-19, women's groups in Edo North disseminated handwashing info in Esan and Pidgin faster than NCDC flyers.

Security: In Ovia, women's flagged

unusual movement of strangers through their "susu" contribution groups.

Elections: In 2023, women in Et-sako debunked a viral video claiming INEC was thumbprinting at night. They did door-to-door verification.

Prof. Epiphany Azinge, SAN: "Information without women is like a radio without batteries."

Let us get to formalize it ahead of 2027.

Women Information Hubs should be in every LGA. Equipped with radio, data, and training on fact-checking.

Involve in Partnership with NCC, NOA, and INEC to push verified info through women's channels.

Get them some Media training: Train 1000 women as community correspondents. Learn how to Counter-disinformation teams. Women-led groups to track and respond to fake news in local languages.

With great reach comes great risk.

Women can also spread division. "They said it's Igbo people." "They said Muslims are planning."

That is why we need: Deliberate *Media literacy* for women's groups. How to verify before forwarding.

Positive storytelling should be funded for women to produce podcasts, skits, and jingles on unity.

Reward systems should recognize women who debunk falsehoods.

Nobel Laureate Malala: "One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world." Add: one woman with a phone can change a community.

I recommend therefore, that INEC should use women's associations to mobilize voters and explain BVAS.

Security Agencies should create "Women Info Desks" at DPO offices. Government should fund community radio run by women.

”
Market women know prices, scarcity, and who is hoarding. In 2022, when fuel scarcity hit, market women in Benin knew 2 days before NNPC announced it.

The Nigerian OBSERVER That The People May Know					ADVERTISEMENT RATES (PRINT)					
SIZES	COLOUR		BLACK AND WHITE		BLACK AND WHITE		MULTI NATIONALS			
			PUBLIC NOTICE		PRODUCT		COLOUR		BLACK & WHITE	
	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)
FULL PAGE	417,344	448,645	369,500	397,213	325,150	349,536	565,156	607,542	443,440	476,698
13 X 4	369,500	397,213	295,600	317,770	206,938	222,458	443,500	476,763	369,550	397,266
10 X 4	340,000	365,500	273,500	294,013	177,400	190,705	370,000	397,750	295,600	317,770
HALF PAGE	295,600	317,770	236,500	254,238	147,800	158,885	340,000	365,500	273,450	293,959
10 X 3	221,700	238,328	147,800	158,885	118,300	127,173	266,000	285,950	251,300	270,148
13 X2	206,900	222,418	133,000	142,925	103,500	111,263	221,800	238,435	147,810	158,896
QUARTER PAGE	192,150	206,561	118,250	127,119	88,690	95,342	236,500	254,238	133,000	142,975
FRONT PAGE POSITIONS					OTHER SIZES					
SIZES	PRODUCTS		PUBLIC NOTICE		PUBLIC NOTICE			PRODUCTS		
	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	SIZES	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	
FP 6X2	89,800	96,535	105,450	113,359	6 X 2	60,640	65,188	49,140	52,826	
FP 5X2	81,100	87,183	97,300	104,598	5 X 2	51,950	55,846	42,120	45,279	
FP 4X2	73,000	78,475	80,700	86,753	4 X 2	45,260	48,655	34,400	36,980	
FP 3X2	64,870	69,735	73,000	78,475	3 X 2	30,900	33,218	26,600	28,595	
FP 2X2	59,000	63,425	64,900	69,768	2 X 2	18,680	20,081	15,600	16,770	
SPECIAL POSITIONS					2 X 1	12,400	13,330	15,600	16,770	
SIZES	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	RATE	TOTAL (7.5% VAT incl)	CAC	38,000	40,850			
STRIP	118,250	127,119	147,800	158,885	LOOSE INSERTS					
STRIP INSIDE	88,600	95,245	118,250	127,119	LOOSE INSERTS: N40 PER SHEET MINIMUM ORDER: 5000 COPIES HANDLING CHARGES: N40,000 PER 1000 COPIES NEWSPAPER DIMENSION: 14.5" X 10.5"					
SPECIAL PAGES					CHANGE OF NAME					
FRONT PAGE	ADD 70% SURCHARGE									
PAGES 2 & 3	ADD 55% SURCHARGE				Type		Fridays		Other Days	
PAGES 4 & 5	ADD 40% SURCHARGE				Miss to Mrs.		5,000		7,000	
BACK PAGE	ADD 60% SURCHARGE				Reconciliation/Corrections of name		6,000		8,000	
The Nigerian OBSERVER That The People May Know 24 Airport Road, Benin City, Edo State					For advert placement contact:					
					Business Development Manager				08081986842	
					Advert Manager				08051177163	
					Commercial Service Manager				08033798009	

EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 14, 2026

EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 14, 2026

Spain's World Cup triumph caps historic tournament

KAMAL TAYO OROPO, (NAN)

Spain's 1-0 extra-time victory over Argentina brought the 2026 FIFA World Cup to a dramatic conclusion in New Jersey on Sunday, July 19, 2026.

Ferran Torres settled a tense final in the 106th minute, converting Nico Williams' decisive assist to deliver Spain their second world title.

The victory came 16 years after Spain's breakthrough triumph in South Africa, confirming a new generation's arrival on football's biggest stage.

Argentina's defeat ended Lionel Messi's final World Cup appearance without another global title, in spite of his remarkable longevity and enduring influence.

Spain controlled the final for long periods, restricting Argentina to a single shot while creating the clearer opportunities.

The match became increasingly fractious, with Enzo Fernández sent off after receiving a second yellow card late in the contest.

Argentina's defensive tactics, repeated stoppages and late confrontations intensified debate over sportsmanship, discipline and officiating.

Torres' decisive strike provided the defining image of a tournament that repeatedly challenged football's established order.

The 2026 World Cup represented football's biggest structural expansion, featuring 48 teams, 104 matches and three host nations.

The U.S., Canada and Mexico transformed the tournament into a vast continental spectacle combining football, entertainment and commercial ambition.

The expanded format created opportunities for emerging football nations while intensifying concerns about player workload, travel demands and tournament length.

At the end, the competition had produced record participation, huge global engagement and a succession of unexpected footballing stories.

The tournament produced 305 goals across 104 matches, setting a new scoring record for a single World Cup.

Spain emerged as the tournament's defining footballing force, combining possession, technical control and positional intelligence throughout their campaign.

Their 2-0 semi-final victory over France demonstrated their ability to control elite opposition without abandoning attacking ambition.

Against Argentina, Spain again dictated the rhythm, dominating possession and producing the overwhelming majority of the match's attacking opportunities.

That dominance ultimately produced the decisive moment, with Torres becoming the unlikely hero of the tournament's defining match.

Spain's triumph, therefore, represented more than a victory; it confirmed the continuing evolution of their technical footballing identity.

Rodri, Spain's midfield leader, was named the tournament's best player and received the Golden Ball.



SPAIN CELEBRATE WORLD CUP TRIUMPH

His recognition reflected the importance of control, intelligence and tactical influence beyond goals and assists.

Unai Simón won the Golden Glove after playing a central role in Spain's defensive excellence.

Pau Cubarsí claimed the Young Player Award after a remarkably composed campaign at the heart of Spain's defence.

Spain, therefore, collected the Golden Ball, Golden Glove and Young Player Award, underlining their extraordinary individual and collective dominance.

Kylian Mbappé won the Golden Boot after finishing the tournament with 10 goals for France.

The French captain's campaign further cemented his status as one of the defining attacking figures of his generation.

Mbappé's achievement became even more significant after he had already won the Golden Boot at Qatar 2022.

Messi's campaign carried enormous emotional weight, with the 2026 tournament widely regarded as his final World Cup.

The Argentine captain remained one of the competition's biggest attractions, combining extraordinary longevity with another outstanding scoring campaign.

His final appearance against Spain, however, proved unusually difficult as Argentina struggled to create meaningful attacking opportunities.

Messi's final chapter ended without another trophy, but his legacy was strengthened by longevity, competitiveness and unmatched consistency.

The African campaign provided one of the tournament's most compelling collective stories, with 10 representatives carrying the continent's hopes.

Nine African teams reached the Round of 32, a record achievement that demonstrated the continent's growing competitiveness.

CAF President Patrice Motsepe congratulated the nine survivors, call-

ing their qualification "hard-earned and well-deserved".

The achievement represented the first time that 90 per cent of Africa's World Cup representatives reached the knockout stage.

Morocco again led Africa's challenge, reaching the quarter-finals before losing 2-0 to France.

Their run confirmed that the 2022 semi-final was no isolated achievement, with Morocco again displaying organisation and tactical discipline.

The Atlas Lions' progress reflected a broader transformation in African football, built on stronger development structures and improved tactical sophistication.

Cape Verde provided arguably the tournament's most remarkable African story, reaching the Round of 32 on their World Cup debut.

Their campaign transformed the expanded tournament into a genuine platform for emerging football nations.

Cape Verde's progress became one of the competition's most compelling underdog narratives, particularly after impressive performances against established opposition.

Their achievement demonstrated how expansion could create meaningful opportunities for countries previously excluded from football's biggest stage.

Egypt also enjoyed a notable campaign, reaching the Round of 16 before losing 3-2 to Argentina.

The Pharaohs showed technical quality and resilience, although their elimination underlined the narrow margins separating progress from disappointment.

Algeria reached the Round of 32 before losing 2-0 to Switzerland in a campaign showcasing their technical ambition.

Ghana also reached the knockout phase before suffering a narrow 1-0 defeat to Colombia.

Côte d'Ivoire exited after a 2-1 defeat by Norway, in spite of show-

ing athleticism and attacking quality throughout their campaign.

The Democratic Republic of Congo were beaten 2-1 by England after reaching the knockout phase during their historic campaign.

Senegal's campaign ended with a 3-2 extra-time defeat to Belgium after the West Africans again demonstrated their competitiveness.

South Africa lost 1-0 to Canada in the Round of 32 after becoming one of Africa's nine knockout-stage representatives.

Tunisia were the only African team eliminated during the group stage, ending a campaign against an exceptionally demanding field.

Together, the 10 African representatives made the 2026 World Cup a landmark moment for the continent.

While Morocco delivered the deepest run, Egypt reached the Round of 16 and eight other African teams reached the knockout phase.

The performances strengthened arguments for greater investment, stronger domestic structures and improved pathways from youth development to elite football.

Nigeria's absence was itself a significant storyline, given the country's rich World Cup history and status as an African football powerhouse.

The Super Eagles failed to qualify, missing a tournament where Africa achieved its strongest collective performance in World Cup history.

Their absence demonstrated that expanded qualification opportunities have not eliminated the intense competition within African football.

The tournament also produced remarkable performances from outside the traditional footballing hierarchy.

Norway delivered one of the competition's most impressive campaigns before exiting in the quarter-finals.

Erling Haaland provided a devastating attacking threat, while Norway's victory over Brazil became one of the tournament's major shocks.

Brazil's defeat by Norway in the

Round of 16 represented one of the competition's major disappointments.

The five-time champions entered the tournament with enormous expectations but failed to reach the latter stages.

Their early departure reinforced the growing unpredictability of international football.

England secured third place after a remarkable 6-4 victory over France in an extraordinary bronze-medal match.

The result provided spectacular entertainment but exposed England's defensive weaknesses during a tournament of enormous expectations.

Their campaign nevertheless represented a significant achievement, with England reaching the semi-finals before losing narrowly to Argentina.

France, in spite of Mbappé's record-breaking individual campaign, were unable to convert their attacking brilliance into a place in the final.

Their defeat to Spain in the semi-finals and subsequent loss to England created one of the tournament's most dramatic conclusions.

The semi-final line-up featured Spain, France, England and Argentina, four of international football's most recognisable powers.

The line-up reflected the continuing strength of traditional footballing nations after an expanded group stage created opportunities for outsiders.

It also ensured that the decisive matches featured some of the sport's most recognisable footballing brands.

Technology remained one of the tournament's most contentious themes.

VAR decisions, high-tech match balls and increasingly data-driven officiating generated criticism from players, coaches and supporters.

The debate centred on whether technology was improving accuracy or making football increasingly difficult to understand.

Hence, the tournament reinforced a continuing football dilemma: how far should technology intervene in a sport built around human judgement?

Hydration breaks became another source of debate during the competition.

Although introduced to protect players from extreme conditions, interruptions affected match rhythm and generated criticism from some supporters.

The issue reflected growing tension between football's expanding calendar and increasingly demanding environmental conditions.

The tournament again raised questions about whether elite football can continue expanding without compromising player welfare.

Ticket prices also attracted criticism in spite of packed stadiums and enormous global demand.

The tournament demonstrated extraordinary popularity while exposing the widening gap between football's global appeal and affordability.

That tension is likely to remain central to debates surrounding future FIFA tournaments.

The competition also unfolded against a complicated international political backdrop.



World Cup 2026: Football won at last – Egypt coach takes swipe at Argentina



EGYPT COACH

Egypt head coach has taken a swipe at Argentina following Spain's 1-0 victory over the defending champions in the 2026 FIFA World Cup final, claiming that "football won" with La Roja's triumph.

Spain secured their second World Cup title after substitute Ferran Torres scored the decisive goal in extra time to hand the European champions victory over Argentina on Sunday.

Reacting after the final, the Egyptian tactician alleged that Spain had to overcome questionable officiating before lifting the trophy.

"If you notice, they tried their best to rob Spain, but it didn't just work."

"They cancelled Nico Williams' goal for a foul they wouldn't have cancelled if it was Argentina," the coach said.

He added that Spain deserved to emerge champions because of their overall display throughout the tournament.

"I am very happy Spain won because they were the better team and they won over corruption. Football won today," he stated.



KYLIAN MBAPPE

Mbappe eclipses Messi, emerges all time top scorer

French striker Kylian Mbappe is now the all time leading goal scorer in the history of the FIFA World Cup after eclipsing Lionel Messi's earlier record to top the list with 22 goals followed by Lionel Messi who has 21 goals with former record holder Miroslav Klose of Germany who scored 16 goals in 3rd place.

Portuguese striker Cristiano Ronaldo, who is seeking to become the second player to reach the 1000 goal mark

is ranked 4th after scoring 15 goals with England's Harry Kane and Germany's Gerd Muller tied in 5th position with 14 goals apiece.

Mbappe achieved the feat in 3 world cup appearances while Messi who is second did so in 6 world cup appearances same as Cristiano Ronaldo.

Mbappe could stretch the lead if France qualifies for the next world cup in 2030 and if the 25 year old Real Madrid player is picked for the tournament.

Spanish Nationals in Lagos celebrate team's World Cup win

Some Spanish nationals in Nigeria on Monday celebrated their national team's gritty 1-0 victory over Argentina at the final of the 2026 FIFA World Cup played at the MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, U.S.

The Spanish nationals gathered to watch the World Cup final between Spain and Argentina at Churrasco Restaurant, 1C Ozumba Mbadiwe Road, Victoria Island, Lagos.

our side in spite of the fact that we are the European champions. But when we defeated France, we got a lot of supporters here at the restaurant.

"The Spanish team is a silent killer. They don't have as many fans as France, but we showed that we are better by beating them and Argentina in the finals.

"Congratulations to Spain and to everybody," he said.

Another fan, who simply identified himself as Custa, said the Spanish team has some of the best midfielders in the world.



SPANISH CELEBRATE 2026 FIFA WORLD CUP

Torres fires Spain to World Cup glory, says winning goal belonged to 47 million Spaniards

EDWARD OSEGHE

Spain's World Cup hero Ferran Torres has described his extra-time winner against Argentina as "a goal scored by 47 million people" after inspiring La Roja to a historic 1-0 victory in the 2026 FIFA World Cup final at MetLife Stadium.

The Barcelona forward etched his name into Spanish

football folklore with the decisive strike that secured Spain's second FIFA World Cup title and dashed Lionel Messi's hopes of leading Argentina to consecutive world crowns.

Spain produced a commanding display from start to finish, dictating the tempo with 65 per cent possession and unleashing 20 shots, while restricting the defending champions to just

two attempts throughout the 120-minute encounter.

Argentina, however, remained in contention largely because of an outstanding performance from goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez, whose 11 saves established a new FIFA World Cup final record.

Lionel Scaloni's side suffered a major setback at the end of regulation time when midfielder Enzo Fernandez was sent off, leaving Argentina to contest the entire extra-time period with 10 men.

Spain eventually made their numerical advantage count as Torres struck the decisive goal, before Luis de la Fuente's men held firm against a late Argentine rally to reclaim football's biggest prize.

Reflecting on the defining moment of his career, Torres dedicated the goal to the Spanish people.

"It was a goal scored by 47 million people," he said.

The Spanish forward also paid tribute to Argentina captain Lionel Messi, acknowledging the challenge of overcoming one of football's greatest players.



FERRAN TORRES

Lagos 2026: CFF confirms 20 countries for championships

The Commonwealth Fencing Federation (CFF) has confirmed that 20 countries, including Nigeria and Australia, have registered for the 2026 Commonwealth Fencing Championships in Lagos.

The event is scheduled to hold between Aug. 9 and Aug. 14.

The CFF disclosed this in a statement issued to newsmen on Sunday in Lagos, by its media department.

According to the federation, India will parade the largest contingent, with 67 fencers competing in the Veteran, U-23, Para and Senior categories across the epee, foil and sabre events.

Other participating countries include Bangladesh, Botswana, Cyprus, England, Ghana, Guernsey and Jamaica.

It added that Kenya, Mauritius, Namibia, Northern Ireland, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, The Gambia, Togo and Wales, also made the list.

According to the statement, the CFF President, Dufour Marie-France, has described the championships as a landmark event, noting that it will mark the return of the competition to Africa after 10 years.

"It has been 10 years since the Commonwealth Fencing Federation held championships in Africa.



SANWO-OLU