

Tinubu to NLNG: Translate Nigeria's abundant gas resources into cheaper energy for Nigerians

ABUJA

EJEMOGO REBECCA ANWURI

The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, on Wednesday urged the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas Limit-

ed (NLNG) to boost domestic gas utilization, tackle gas flaring and ensure the country's bountiful gas resources translate into cheaper energy for ordinary Nigerians.

President Bola Tinubu made the statement while receiving the Board of Directors and Ex-

ecutive Leadership of NLNG, led by the NLNG Managing Director, Adeleye Falade, at the State House, Abuja.

He particularly urged the company to innovate ways of converting gas currently being flared, which constitutes an environmental liability, into

an economic resource that would be beneficial to Nigerian consumers.

"I am inspired to understand that you are not limiting yourselves to the gradual objective of upgrading. My major concern is the domestic utilization. You must be

able to take out the flaring and convert potential environmental liability to what could be strategically and economically beneficial to the consumers in the republic", the President noted.

Tinubu also acknowledged the efforts NLNG has put in place in order to expand its operations and take advantage of growing interna-

tional demand, while stressing the need for Nigerians to also experience the impact of the company's Success through greater domestic availability and affordability of gas.

The President notes "Yes, you are doing great to really want the revenue up and taking advantage of international

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The Nigerian OBSERVER

That The People May Know

SPECIAL EDITION

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

PUBLISHED SINCE MAY 29, 1968

VOL. 47, NO. 1,340

SATURDAY 29TH AUGUST, 2026.

#200

Okpebholo @56: A toast to service, impactful Leadership

OUR REPORTER

BENIN CITY

Edo State will today, Saturday, August 29, 2026, reverberate with celebrations as family members, friends, political associates, supporters and well-wishers converge to honour the Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo, as he clocks 56.

But beyond the cakes, greetings, goodwill messages and ceremonial fanfare that ordinarily accompany a birthday celebration, Okpebholo's 56th birthday presents an occasion for deeper reflection on a journey that has taken him from the ordinary experiences of life into the demanding arena of public leadership.

At 56, the Governor stands at a significant point in his life's journey — a milestone marked not merely by age, but by responsibility, experience, public expecta-

tion and the opportunity to shape a legacy.

For the man occupying the Edo State Government House, the celebration comes against the backdrop of a state whose people are looking increasingly towards government for tangible development, stronger institutions, improved infrastructure, economic opportunities and a more secure and prosperous future.

It is, therefore, a birthday with a difference.

While the day belongs to the Governor as an individual, the office he occupies has inevitably made his personal milestone a moment of public reflection. Every decision taken in Government House carries consequences for families, communities, businesses, young people, workers and future generations.

THE JOURNEY TO GOVERNMENT

CONTINUES ON PG 2»

HOUSE

Leadership, as history has repeatedly shown, rarely begins on the day a public officer takes the oath of office.

It is shaped by years of experience, personal encounters, relationships, challenges, opportunities and the values acquired along the way.

Governor Okpebholo's emergence into public leadership represents such a journey. His rise through the political process and eventual attainment of the governorship placed him at the centre of Edo's political-

IPAC hails Okpebholo's fight against cultism, infrastructure drive

RICHARD EWEKA

The Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC) has commended Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, for his administration's efforts to curb cult-related killings and accelerate infrastructure development across the state.

The commendation was made by the Chairman of IPAC, Dr. Bishop Akhiamhe, when he led members of the council's executive on a courtesy visit to the governor at the Government House,

Benin City.

Akhiamhe particularly praised the administration's security interventions aimed at tackling cult-related violence among youths, as well as its road construction and other infrastructure projects, which he said were contributing to the development of the state.

He described the achievements recorded by the administration in less than two years as remarkable, stressing that the impact of the projects was visible across the state.

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NEWS

Edo Assembly reconstitutes committees, defers three bills

BENIN CITY

RAYMOND OSOGBE

The Edo State House of Assembly (EDHA), on Wednesday in Benin City, reconstituted its standing committees under the leadership of the new Speaker, Rt. Hon. Idiaye Yekini.

Under the new arrangement, Speaker Yekini will chair the Standing Committee of the House, while Hon. Atu Osamwonyi, representing

Orhionmwon I Constituency, will head the Tenders Board Committee.

Hon. Charity Iguodala, representing Ovia North-East I Constituency, was appointed Chairman of the Public Peti-

tions Committee, while Hon. Andrew Uzamere, representing Ovia North-East II Constituency, will chair the Public Accounts Committee.

Other committees allocated to members include Agriculture and Food Security, Appropriation, Water Resources

and Energy, Commerce and Industry, and Judiciary, among others.

The Arts and Tourism Committee, previously headed by former Speaker Blessing Agbebaku, has been assigned to Hon. Eric Okaka, representing Owan East Constituency.

During Wednesday's plenary, the House also deferred consideration of three bills: the Bendel State Post-Primary Education Edict 1988, the Retirement Age for Magistrates and Customary Presidents Bill, and the Landed Property and Documentation Bill.

Meanwhile, traditional rulers from Akoko-Edo Local Government Area paid a solidarity visit to the newly elected Speaker, Rt. Hon. Idiaye Yekini, who represents Akoko-Edo I Constituency in the Edo State House of Assembly.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **EHINOMEN RACHEL OMONZANE** now wish to be known as **EH I RACHEL SHAKA MOMODU**. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

Tinubu to NLNG: Translate Nigeria's...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

interest to build up what Nigeria might derive in benefits, but help us back home”

President Tinubu also commended the company's leadership and board for preserving the vision behind the establishment of NLNG, emphasizing how he was encouraged by the teamwork and direction of the organization.

He assured the NLNG leadership that his administration is eager to provide further incentives required to stimulate growth and increase the com-

pany's capacity.

Additionally, the President pledged an uninterrupted government support for the company to increase its contribution to the economy, while reiterating that the welfare of Nigerians should remain paramount to its operations.

President Tinubu, however, stressed that such expansion must above all serve the Nigerian economy and people, while emphasizing that the country's natural resources could only have significant value when harnessed productively.



HUMANITARIAN SERVICES:

The Coordinator Office of the First Lady, Edo State, Mrs. Edesili Okpebholo Anani (3rd left) receiving members of the Sir Henry Osegbowa Foundation on a courtesy visit in Government House in Benin City.

IPAC hails Okpebholo's fight...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

“In less than two years, you have summarised the achievements of a four-year term as governor. What you have done in less than two years is visible to the blind and audible to the deaf,” Akhalamhe said.

The IPAC chairman also singled out the Ramat Park Flyover as one of the administration's major legacy projects, noting that the project had become a visible symbol of the government's development agenda.

“You have embarked on legacy projects like the Ramat Park Flyover, which speaks for itself. We will speak to Edo people about the developmental projects you have embarked on. It will be credible coming from opposition parties. You are doing well, Mr. Governor,” he said.

He further commended the governor for the peaceful conduct of the recent local government election, describing the exercise as one of the best conducted in Edo State.

Akhalamhe said the peaceful election and emergence of winners demonstrated the administration's commitment to democratic processes, assuring the governor that IPAC would continue to collaborate with the state government and the newly elected local government chairmen.

“Election has come and gone, but we congratulate you on the success of the election as winners have emerged. The election was free, fair and credible with no issues,” he said.

Responding, Governor Ok-

pebholo attributed the progress recorded by his administration partly to the peaceful political environment created by stakeholders, including IPAC.

“You people have given me the peace of mind to work for Edo people, and the credit is for all of us. The local government election was peaceful and everybody is happy,” the governor said.

On security, Okpebholo said his administration had made significant progress in tackling cult-related killings, particularly among youths, describing the development as one of the areas where his government had received commendation from residents.

“Some days ago, I met an Edo woman who thanked me for stopping cult killings in the state. She thanked God for sending me to the state to put a stop to cult killings,” he said.

The governor also highlighted his administration's infrastructure programme, particularly its road construction projects designed to improve transportation, stimulate economic activities and open up communities.

He said the government was constructing a 23.5-kilometre concrete pavement road equipped with a proper drainage system, noting that the project would have a positive impact on businesses and residents in the area.

“We are doing a 23.5-kilometre concrete pavement road with a proper drainage system. The road will improve business activities in the area,” Okpebholo said.

Okpebholo @56: A toast to service...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

cal and developmental affairs, transforming personal ambition into a public mandate.

That mandate is neither light nor ordinary.

Edo is a state steeped in history and tradition, blessed with enormous human and economic potential and populated by citizens whose political consciousness and expectations of government remain high.

The Edo people want to see government beyond the pages of policy documents. They want roads that connect communities, schools that prepare their children for the future, healthcare that responds to their needs, opportunities for young people, an enabling environment for businesses and institutions capable of delivering good governance.

It is within this demanding environment that the Okpebholo administration is writing its chapter.

THE WEIGHT OF THE MANDATE

To govern is to carry the hopes and expectations of millions of people.

It means confronting difficult choices, responding to competing interests and making decisions whose consequences may extend far beyond the political season in which they are taken.

For Governor Okpebholo, the mandate therefore represents both an honour and a burden.

Edo's enormous potential provides opportunities, but those opportunities come with corresponding responsibilities. The state's youthful population requires meaningful economic prospects. Its communities require infrastructure. Its entrepreneurs need an environment in which businesses can thrive, while parents and families seek a future that offers greater hope for their children.

These are the realities against which every administration is ultimately judged.

And for Okpebholo, the most enduring measure of his leadership will not simply be the number of years spent in office, but the extent to which those years translate into improvements that Edo people can see, experience and pass on to future generations.

A LEGACY STILL IN THE MAKING

At 56, the Governor's story is far from finished.

Indeed, the most consequential chapters may still lie ahead.

A birthday provides an opportunity to celebrate the past, but for a serving governor, it is equally a moment to contemplate the future. Public legacy is seldom created by one dramatic achievement. It is built quietly and steadily through policies, projects, institutions, decisions and the cumulative impact of leadership on the lives of ordinary people.

That is why the years ahead

will be particularly important.

The Governor has the opportunity to consolidate his vision, deepen the impact of his administration, strengthen institutions and pursue initiatives capable of surviving political transitions.

For any public servant, that is the ultimate test — whether his tenure merely occupies a period in the calendar or leaves an imprint on the history of the people he was elected to serve.

BEYOND THE POLITICS

Politics will, naturally, remain politics.

Supporters will applaud. Critics will question. Political opponents will offer alternative interpretations of government policies and actions. Such is the nature of democracy.

But a birthday offers society an opportunity to look beyond the immediate contest of politics and acknowledge the human being behind the office.

At 56, Monday Okpebholo is a husband, father, Nigerian, Edo son and public servant whose life has entered a phase where personal experience and public responsibility increasingly intersect.

Leadership demands courage when decisions are difficult, patience when criticism is loud and humility when success arrives.

The office provides the platform; character determines how that platform is used.

THE ROAD AHEAD

The road ahead remains

long, but it is also filled with possibilities.

There are more communities to reach, more roads and infrastructure to develop, more young people to empower, more institutions to strengthen and more opportunities to create.

For Governor Okpebholo, 56 can therefore become more than a birthday milestone. It can be a period of consolidation — when experience gathered over the years is deployed with greater wisdom and when political leadership is translated into enduring public value.

The challenge is to ensure that today's vision becomes tomorrow's institution, and that today's projects become tomorrow's legacy.

A TOAST TO SERVICE

So, as Edo State celebrates Senator Monday Okpebholo today, the occasion deserves more than the conventional birthday greeting.

It deserves a toast.

A toast to the man and the journey that brought him to the Edo State Government House.

A toast to the mandate entrusted to him by the people.

A toast to the challenges that have tested his leadership and the opportunities that remain before him.

And, above all, a toast to the possibility of a legacy founded not merely on the power of political office, but on the quality of service rendered to the people.

Happy Birthday

Your Excellency



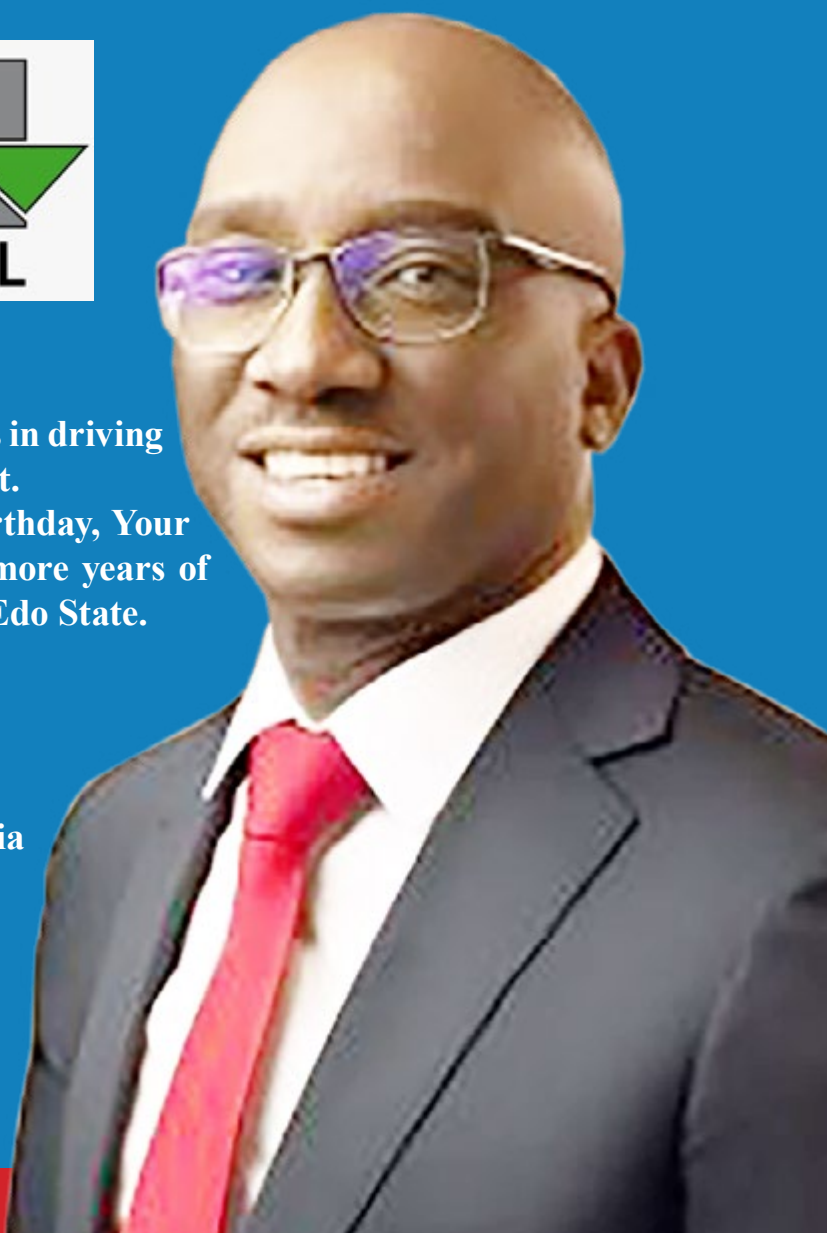
The Managing Director, OLIVIER ODOUKOU on behalf of the Board of Directors, Management, and Staff of Rubber Estates Nigeria Limited (RENL) warmly felicitate with the Executive Governor of Edo State, His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo, on the occasion of his birthday. We wish the Governor good health, wisdom and renewed strength as he continues to serve the people of Edo State. May the new age bring him greater opportunities to advance the development and wellbeing of the people, while promoting an environment that supports businesses, workers and communities across the state. As a responsible corporate organization operating in Edo State, RENL values the partnership between government, busi-

nesses and communities in driving sustainable development. Once again, Happy Birthday, Your Excellency and many more years of meaningful service to Edo State. *Happy Birthday, Your Excellency!*

*Management and Staff
Rubber Estates Nigeria
Limited (RENL)*



OLIVIER ODOUKOU,
Managing Director, RENL



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

To His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Edo State,

Today, we the management and staff of Edo Specialist Hospital count our blessings for a leader whose heart beats so genuinely for the people of Edo State, it takes a leader with genuine love for their people to prioritize the very heartbeat of a state. Today, as you celebrate another year of life, we are reflecting on the countless lives your vision has helped us save, nurture, and restore. Your dedication to healthcare has touched lives in ways words cannot fully capture, turning tears of worry into smiles of joy across countless families.

Here at Edo Specialist Hospital, your unwavering commitment to healthcare has given us the tools, the

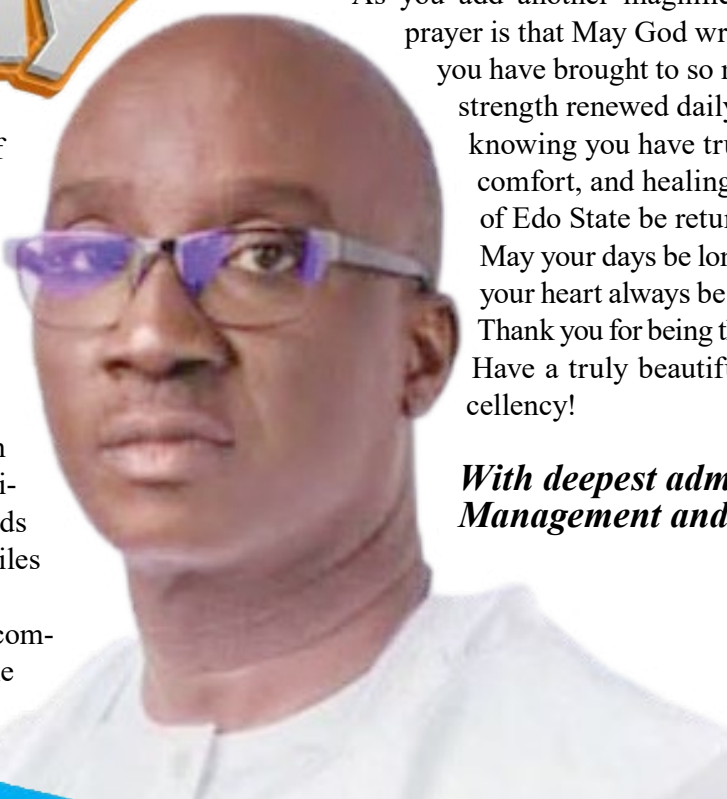
environment, and the inspiration to keep being strong. You haven't just governed; you have been a champion of healing, ensuring that every citizen of Edo State has a fighting chance at a healthy, vibrant life.

It is a rare and beautiful thing to see leadership rooted in such deep empathy. Every time a mother walks out of our ward with a healthy child, or a father recovers his strength to provide for his family, a piece of your legacy is quietly celebrated in our halls.

As you add another magnificent year to your journey, our collective prayer is that May God wrap you in the same comfort and protection you have brought to so many families. May your life be long, your strength renewed daily, and your heart filled with the pure joy of knowing you have truly made a difference. May the same care, comfort, and healing you have fought to provide for the people of Edo State be returned to you a thousand fold.

May your days be long, your own health remain unshakable, and your heart always be full of the profound joy you bring to others. Thank you for being the steady pulse of progress in our great State. Have a truly beautiful, blessed, and happy birthday, Your Excellency!

*With deepest admiration and warm wishes,
Management and Staff, Edo Specialist Hospital.*



*Signed: Dr. (Mrs.) ANTHONIA
INIBOKUN NJOKU*
Chief Medical Director

NEWS

UBTH inducts new nurses, charges graduates on professional excellence

BENIN CITY

The University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) has inducted the 2025/2026 graduating class of its College of Nursing Sciences, with the Chief Medical Director, Prof. Idia Ize-Iyamu, urging the new nurses to uphold the values of compassion, competence, integrity and selfless service.

Prof. Ize-Iyamu gave the charge at the induction and oath-taking ceremony held at the UBTH TETFund Building, where she described nursing as one of the noblest professions known to humanity.

She congratulated the in-

ductees for successfully completing the demanding academic and clinical training required to enter the profession, noting that their journey had tested their knowledge, skills, resilience and character.

According to her, becoming a nurse goes beyond acquiring professional qualifications, as the profession places a significant responsibility on practitioners to provide not only competent healthcare but also empathy, reassurance, dignity and hope to patients.

"Today, you stand ready to join one of the noblest professions known to humanity," she said.

The UBTH CMD urged the new nurses to see their induc-

tion oath as a commitment to professional excellence and responsible service, stressing that society places enormous trust in nurses.

She further challenged them to embrace lifelong learning and remain adaptable as advances in digital health, artificial intelligence, precision medicine, telehealth, simulation-based learning and evidence-based practice continue to transform healthcare delivery.

Prof. Ize-Iyamu said their ability to keep learning and adapt to emerging developments would be essential to their effectiveness and relevance in the rapidly changing healthcare environment.

Groups commend Tinubu over establishment of 83rd Army Division in Benin

BENIN CITY

The Nigeria Citizens Watch for Good Governance and the Edo People's Initiative for Peace and Security have commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for the establishment of the 83rd Division of the Nigerian Army in Benin City, describing the development as a significant step towards strengthening security in Edo State and the South-South region.

The groups made their position known during a joint peaceful rally held in Benin City to celebrate the establishment of the new Army division.

In a joint speech read by the Chairman of the Edo People's Initiative for Peace and Security, Comrade Innocent Ajayi, the groups expressed gratitude to President Tinubu for bringing a dedicated military command closer to the people of Edo and neighbouring states.

They said the establishment of the division was particularly

significant given the security challenges confronting communities in the region, including kidnapping, armed robbery, cultism and other forms of criminality.

According to the groups, the presence of the 83 Division in Benin City would facilitate faster response to security threats, strengthen intelligence gathering and improve coordination between the military, police and other security agencies.

They also said the division would enhance surveillance of major roads, farmlands, waterways and border communities, while restoring the confidence of farmers, traders and residents to pursue their legitimate activities without fear.

The groups commended the Chief of Defence Staff, General Olufemi Oluyede, and the Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Waidi Shaibu, for their leadership and commitment to strengthening Nigeria's security architecture.

They described the establishment of the division as evidence that the expansion and reorganisation of the Nigerian Army was moving from policy to practical implementation.

The groups also congratulated the General Officer Commanding the 83 Division, urging him to justify the confidence reposed in him by the military authorities and the people of Edo State.

They pledged to support the officers and soldiers of the division and to promote peaceful and lawful conduct among residents, while serving as a bridge between local communities and security agencies.

The groups, however, appealed to President Tinubu to sustain his support for the military by providing the necessary resources, equipment and institutional backing required to effectively tackle insecurity.

They stressed that the fight against insecurity could not be won through military courage alone, but required sustained funding, effective coordination and strong political support.

LIFE-ND training begins for 1,020 Edo beneficiaries

KEN ABU

BENIN CITY

The training of 1,020 beneficiaries under the Livelihood Improvement Family Enterprise in the Niger Delta (LIFE-ND) Project has commenced in Edo State, with participants receiving practical knowledge and skills to establish sustainable and profitable agribusiness enterprises.

The ongoing training is focused on four major agricultural value chains—poultry, fisheries, cassava and rice production—with emphasis on production, processing, value addition, marketing and job creation.

The National Project Coordinator of LIFE-ND, Engr. Abiodun Sani, represented by Mrs.

Esther Manure, said the project was designed to improve rural livelihoods, promote agribusiness, create employment and strengthen agricultural value chains across the Niger Delta region.

Addressing the beneficiaries on Thursday in Benin City, Manure urged them to see themselves as agricpreneurs, job creators and agents of development, stressing that the ongoing training was more than an ordinary capacity-building exercise.

She said the programme was providing participants with the knowledge, technical skills, mentorship and entrepreneurial capacity required to build sustainable enterprises and contribute to the economic development of their communities.

Also speaking, the Edo State

Director of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Mr. Friday Ehiorobo, said the training of the 1,020 beneficiaries was being conducted across the four selected agricultural value chains of poultry, fisheries, cassava and rice.

Ehiorobo said the participants were expected to acquire not only production techniques but also practical skills in processing, value addition, marketing and enterprise development.

He added that the objectives of the LIFE-ND Project aligned with the developmental mandate of the NDDC, particularly its commitment to interventions that improve livelihoods and create sustainable economic opportunities for people across the Niger Delta.



HIS EXCELLENCY

**GOVERNOR OF EDO STATE,
SENATOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLO**



On this special occasion, I extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to Your Excellency on your birthday.

May this new year of your life be filled with wisdom, good health, strength, and renewed grace as you continue to serve the good people of Edo State. May God continue to guide your decisions, bless your administration, and grant you the courage and vision to achieve greater milestones.

May your leadership be marked by lasting accomplishments, peace, progress, and prosperity for the people of Edo State.

Happy Birthday, Your Excellency. May you enjoy many more years of good health, fulfillment, and impactful service.

Congratulations and best wishes, Your Excellency!

**OKHIMAMHE ABBAS
SULEMAN (Alh.)**
*Acting Auditor-General
Edo State*



H A P P Y

94 Birthday

Cheers to Elder

JACKSON AIGBOBOH

A Life of Grace, Wisdom & Dignity

The Management and Staff of Bendel Newspapers Company Limited, publishers of **THE NIGERIAN OBSERVER** titles, heartily felicitate with Elder Jackson Aigboboh on the joyous occasion of his 94th birthday anniversary, which comes up today, Saturday, August 29, 2026.

At 94, your life stands as a remarkable testimony to the enduring grace of God, the richness of experience and the blessings of longevity. Nine decades and four years represent a rare milestone, offering abundant reasons for thanksgiving, reflection and celebration. Your journey through the years is a living chronicle of resilience, wisdom, family values and service. You have witnessed generations come and go, while remaining a revered patriarch whose presence continues to be a source of strength, counsel and inspiration to your family and community.

As you attain this enviable age, we celebrate not merely the number of years, but the life behind the years — the memories created, lives touched, lessons imparted and enduring legacy built over the decades. We particularly celebrate

you as the father of Amb. Sylvester Aigboboh, Deputy Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Edo State, whose public service and commitment to the development of Edo State have brought honour to the family.

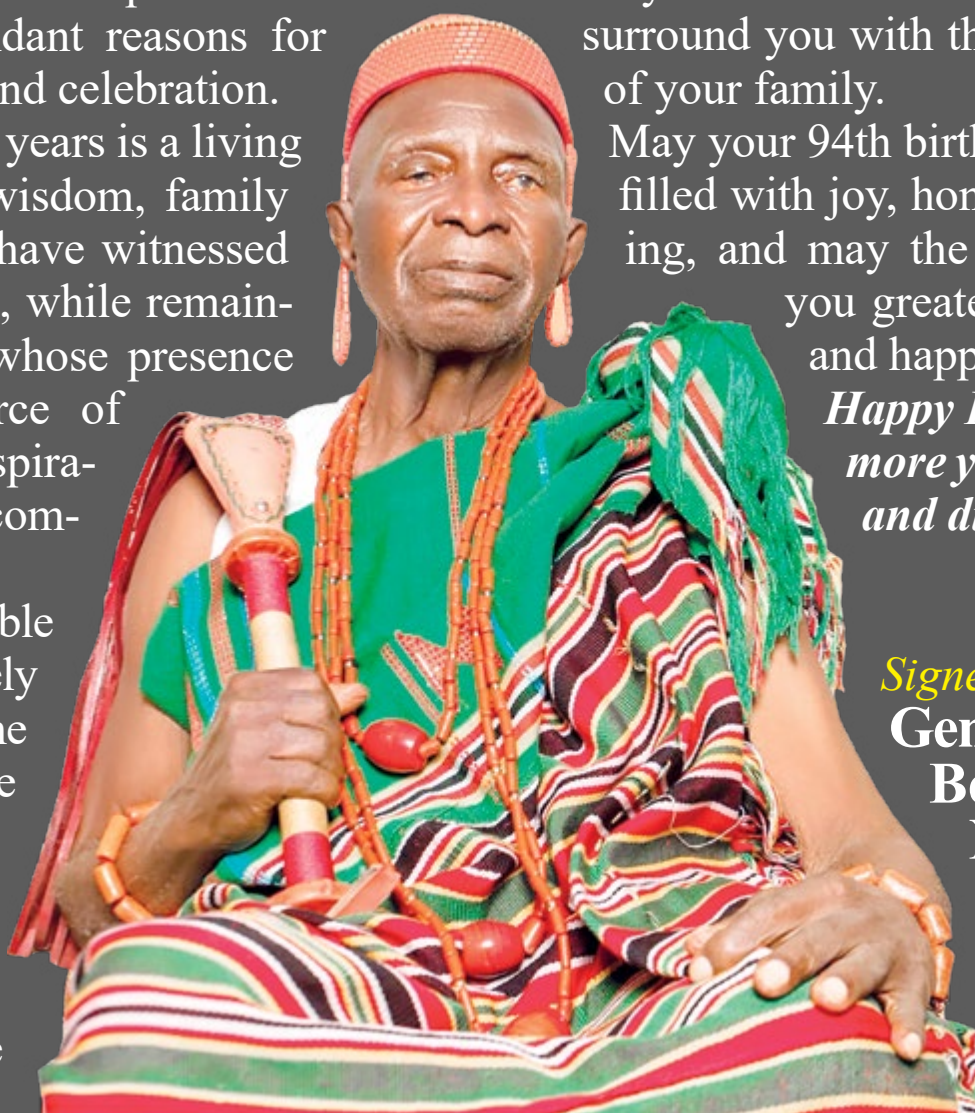
On this special occasion, we join your family, friends, associates and well-wishers in giving thanks to Almighty God for His faithfulness throughout your 94 years. We pray that the Almighty will continue to strengthen you, preserve your life in soundness and peace, and surround you with the warmth and love of your family.

May your 94th birthday celebration be filled with joy, honour and thanksgiving, and may the years ahead bring you greater peace, fulfilment and happiness.

Happy Birthday and many more years in good health and divine grace.

Signed:

**General Manager
Bendel
Newspapers
Company
Limited.**





Happy Birthday

*Goodwill
Message
to Governor*

**MONDAY
OKPEBHOLO**

@**56**

I, Hon. Thompson Osagie, on behalf of my family, the good people of Orhionmwon Local Government Area and the Council, warmly felicitate our amiable Governor, His Excellency, Senator MONDAY OKPEBHOLO, on the occasion of your 56th birthday.

Your Excellency, today we celebrate not just your birthday, but a life of courage, service and commitment to the development of Edo State. We appreciate your sacrifices and determination to build a better and more prosperous Edo.

As you mark this remarkable milestone, I pray Almighty God to grant you renewed strength, wisdom, sound health and divine guidance to continue steering the affairs of our dear state.

May your administration achieve greater milestones, and may your years ahead be filled with good health, peace, fulfilment and abundant blessings.

**Happy 56th Birthday,
Your Excellency.**

*Signed: HON. THOMPSON OSAGIE
Chairman, Orhionmwon
Local Government Council*





HAPPY BIRTHDAY

HONOURING A VISIONARY LEADER @56: UHUNMWODE COUNCIL CELEBRATES GOVERNOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLO

I, the Acting Chairman, Uhunmwode Local Government Council, Hon. Austin Imafidon (Isiwina), on behalf of the Government and good people of Uhunmwode Local Government Area, warmly felicitates with His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo, Executive Governor of Edo State, on the occasion of his 56th birthday anniversary.

Your Excellency, as you celebrate another year of life, we celebrate not only your person but also your journey of service, leadership and commitment to the development of Edo State.

Your transition from the National Assembly, where you represented the good people of Edo Central Senatorial District, to the Edo State Government House is a testament to your grassroots connection, political resilience and the confidence reposed in you by the people. Since assuming office as Governor, your administration has continued to articulate a development vision anchored on security, infrastructure, healthcare, food sufficiency and education.

As Governor, you have demonstrated a strong commitment to building an Edo State where citizens can live, work and prosper in a peaceful and conducive environment. Your administration's emphasis on grassroots development and improved public services continue to inspire confidence in the fu-

ture of our dear State.

Your Excellency, Uhunmwode Local Government Council remains proud to identify with your administration and its development agenda. We particularly appreciate your leadership and support for initiatives aimed at improving the lives of our people and strengthening development at the grassroots.

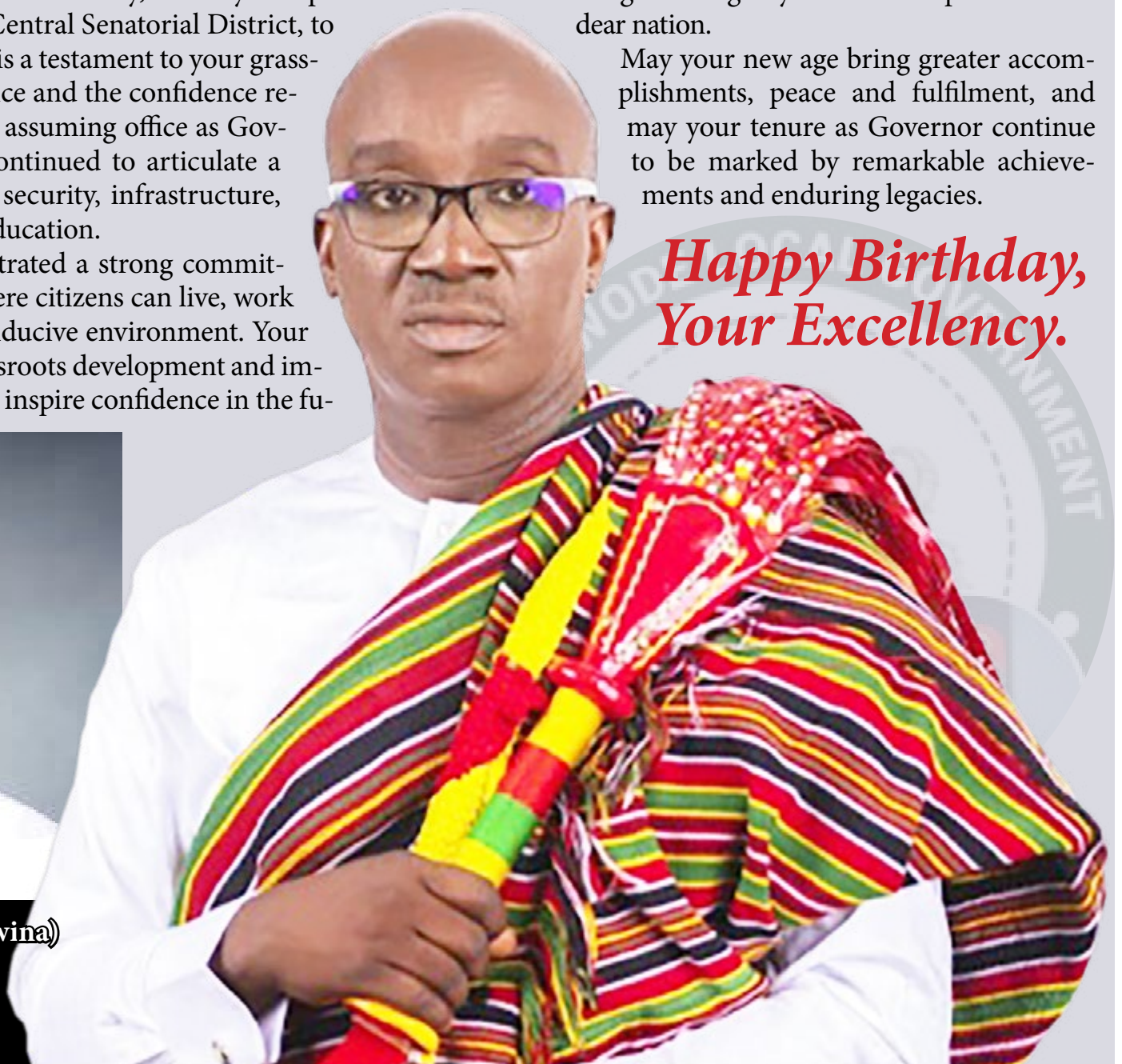
On this special occasion, we pray that Almighty God grants you long life, sound health, greater wisdom and renewed strength to continue providing purposeful leadership for Edo State and contributing meaningfully to the development of our dear nation.

May your new age bring greater accomplishments, peace and fulfilment, and may your tenure as Governor continue to be marked by remarkable achievements and enduring legacies.

*Happy Birthday,
Your Excellency.*



Hon. AUSTIN IMAFIDON (Isiwina)
*Acting Chairman
Uhunmwode Local
Government Council, Edo State.*



HAPPY Birthday

His Excellency
**SEN. MONDAY
OKPEBHOLO**

*Executive Governor
of Edo State and
Visitor to the
University*

On behalf of the Governing Council, Senate, Management, Staff and Students of Edo State University Iyamho, I warmly felicitate with His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo, Executive Governor of Edo State and Visitor to the University, on the occasion of his birthday anniversary.

Your Excellency, your administration's vision and determination to transform Edo State through purposeful governance, infrastructural and human capital development, and expanded opportunities for our people continue to inspire hope and confidence in the future of our dear State.

Your birthday anniversary offers us a special opportunity to gratefully acknowledge your compassion, humility, kindness, and generous support.

When we spoke, you listened.
When we called, you answered.
When we requested, you provided!

In the month the request was made, Your Excellency increased our monthly subvention from N100 million to N250 million. You provided vehicles to address the transportation challenges of the Vice-Chancellor, students and staff of Edo State University. You responded swiftly to our security challenges towards making our campus safe. In addition, Your Excellency has demonstrated unparalleled commitment to the infrastructural development of our university.

May the years ahead bring you greater fulfilment, more remarkable achievements, and continued success in your service to Edo State and humanity.

**PROF. VICTOR O.
ADETIMIRIN**
*Vice-Chancellor
Edo State University, Iyamho.*



Happy Birthday

GOVERNOR

On behalf of the Members of the Board, Management, and Staff of the Edo State Oil and Gas Producing Areas Development Commission (EDSOGPADEC), I join family, friends, and the good people of Edo State to celebrate Your Excellency as you mark your 56th birthday anniversary.

The SHINE Agenda stands as a quiet, yet powerful expression of your personal commitment to an Edo State that works for every citizen one where infrastructure, human capital, and industry converge to create real opportunity for everyone to thrive. At EDSOGPADEC, we witness this vision at work daily across the oil-producing communities in Orhionmwon, Ikpoba-Okha, and Ovia North East Local Government Areas, where your Administration's investments continue to transform lives.

As Your Excellency marks a new year, we celebrate the courage, foresight, and dedication that define your leadership, and we pray for continued wisdom, sound health, and strength to sustain the SHINE Agenda's promise to the people of Edo State.

Congratulations Sir!!!

*On this joyous occasion, we say
Happy 56th Birthday, Your Excellency.*



**Mr. Francis Osaretin
OSABUOHEN**
Chairman EDSOGPADEC



GOVERNOR @
56

HAPPY BIRTHDAY YOUR EXCELLENCY

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO
AN EXCEPTIONAL LEADER**

**HIS EXCELLENCY,
SENATOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLO**
EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR, EDO STATE
A.K.A. "AKPAKOMIZA"

On behalf of the Leadership, the entire Distinguished Honourable Members, and the Clerk of the 8th Edo State House of Assembly, we heartily congratulate this uncommon leader, His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpobholo, fondly referred to as MR. PROJECT and the AKPAKOMIZA of the Universe, as he clocks 56 years today, 29th August, 2026.

As a trailblazer in governance and an experienced legislator, we have noted your developmental policies and people-oriented projects that have brought succour to the good people of Edo State. We are also pleased with the peace currently pervading our dear State following your assent to the Anti-Kidnapping/Anti-Cultism Law.

May God grant you the wisdom of Solomon and the strength of David to excel in the years ahead. Amen. Once again, Happy Birthday, Your Excellency.

Rt. Hon. (Prince) Idaiye Yekini Oisayemoje
Speaker Edo State House of Assembly



RT. HON. IDAIYE YEKINI OISAYEMOJE
SPEAKER
EDO STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY



RT. HON. ATU OSAMWONYI EYIBAGUHITA
DEPUTY SPEAKER
EDO STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY



HON. GIJELE OSEZUA SUNDAY
MAJORITY LEADER
ESAN SOUTH EAST CONSTITUENCY



HON. OSAWARU NATASHA ORADOSA
MINORITY LEADER
EDO STATE CONSTITUENCY



HON. LEKKY HUSSEIN MUSTAPHA
CHIEF WHIP
ESAN WEST CONSTITUENCY



HON. INEGBEREH OKE EUGENE
DEPUTY WHIP
KOROMU CONSTITUENCY



HON. DR. EDOSA RICHARD OSARO
DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP
ESAN WEST CONSTITUENCY



HON. UZAMERE OSADOLOR A. EDOBOR
OBA NORTH-EAST CONSTITUENCY



HON. UGAB KINGSLEY OGHENAJIOKE
ETUNG EAST CONSTITUENCY



HON. OKAKA ERIC ALLISON
OBA EAST CONSTITUENCY



HON. ADDEH AMANKHU ISIDOR
ESAN NORTH-EAST CONSTITUENCY



HON. OMOSHU UYI FRANK
OREDIO CONSTITUENCY



HON. IYAMI ATTENGUBGA BRIGHT
ORIKUNWON CONSTITUENCY



HON. AGBEDO SUNDAY
OBA SOUTH-WEST CONSTITUENCY



HON. AKOKHA ABULGANJU
ETUNG WEST CONSTITUENCY



ALH. AUDU YAHAYA OMOISAI
OLENAI CONSTITUENCY



HON. OSHOMA AHMED
ETUNG CENTRAL CONSTITUENCY



HON. ASORSERE NICHOLAS FRIDAY
APAPA-OTA CONSTITUENCY



HON. EGBIREMOLEN FADA SUNDAY
ESAN CENTRAL CONSTITUENCY



HON. EDEKO MARIA OMOZELE
ESAN NORTH-EAST CONSTITUENCY



HON. IBHAMAWU JONATHAN ABIODUN
ESAN WEST CONSTITUENCY



HON. OKOGBE OJEMEN DONALD
AKPAKA CONSTITUENCY



HON. OSAMWONYI KAYCEE
ORIKUNWON CONSTITUENCY



Happy Birthday



The Honourable Commissioner for Education, the Permanent Secretary, Directors, and the entire Staff of the Ministry of Education Edo state.

we heartily felicitate with His Excellency, SENATOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLO, the Executive Governor of Edo State, on the occasion of your birthday.

Your visionary leadership, commitment to educational transformation, and dedication to the growth and development of Edo State continue to inspire us.

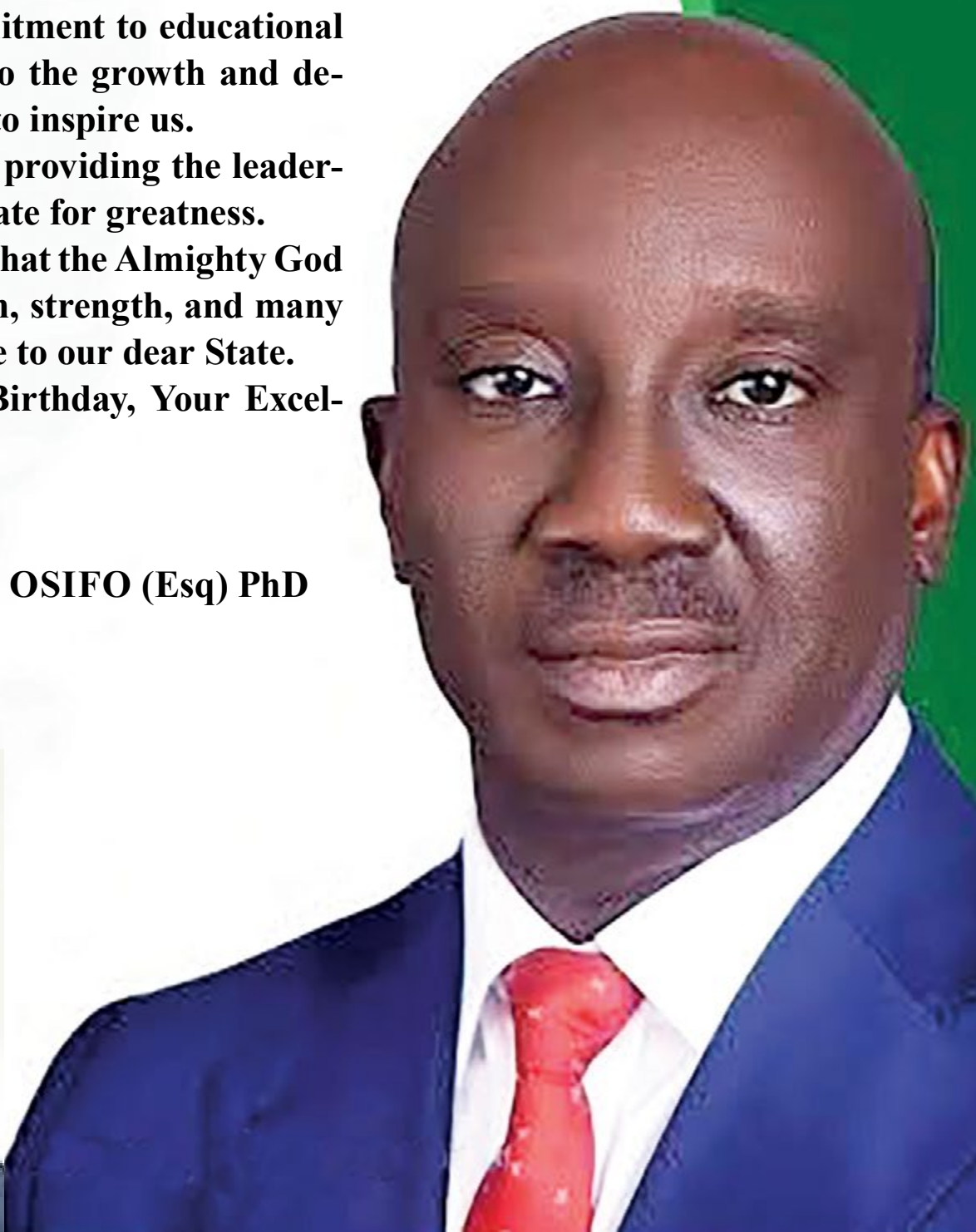
Thank you, Your Excellency, for providing the leadership that is repositioning Edo State for greatness.

As you celebrate today, we pray that the Almighty God grants you good health, wisdom, strength, and many more years of impactful service to our dear State.

Congratulations and Happy Birthday, Your Excellency.

Signed:

**Hon. WASHINGTON OSA OSIFO (Esq) PhD
Honourable Commissioner
for Education, Edo State.**



HAPPY BIRTHDAY



On behalf of myself, my family and the good people of Owan East Constituency, I warmly felicitate with our amiable Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, on the occasion of your 56th birthday.

Your Excellency, your emergence as Governor of Edo State represents a new chapter in the political and developmental history of our dear State. Since assuming office, your administration has demonstrated a strong commitment to restoring confidence in government, strengthening infrastructure, improving security and creating opportunities for our people.

As a member of the Edo State House of Assembly representing Owan East Constituency, I am particularly encouraged by your determination to pursue policies and programmes that place the interests of Edo people at the centre of governance. Your administration's SHINE Agenda continues to provide a clear political and developmental direction for the State.

Your leadership has also shown that politics can be used as an instrument for service, unity and development. The growing partnership between the Executive and Legislature is essential to achieving the Renewed Hope agenda in Edo State and ensuring that the dividends of democracy reach every constituency, community and household.

On this auspicious occasion, I commend your courage, commitment and political vision, and assure you of my continued support and

cooperation as we collectively work towards building an Edo State that is prosperous, peaceful, united and economically vibrant.

As you celebrate 56 years of God's faithfulness, may the Almighty God grant you renewed strength, wisdom and sound health to continue serving our people. May He guide your administration, protect you and your family, and grant you greater achievements in the years ahead. Once again, Happy 56th Birthday, Your Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo, Executive Governor of Edo State.

May your years ahead be filled with greater accomplishments, political wisdom and enduring legacies of service to Edo State.

Long live the Governor!

Long live Owan East Constituency!

Long live Edo State!

Hon. (Barr.) Eric Okaka

Member, Edo State House of Assembly
Representing Owan East Constituency
On behalf of himself, his family and the good people of Owan East Constituency, Edo State.



His Excellency

SEN. MONDAY OKPEBHOLO

*Executive Governor
of Edo State*



Hon. (Barr.) ERIC ALLISON OHAKA

Happy 56TH BIRTHDAY, YOUR EXCELLENCY!

On behalf of the General Overseer, Prophet Peter Israel Obaseki, and the entire members of Divine Grace of Glory Church, Benin City, we joyfully celebrate with His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo, Governor of Edo State, on the occasion of his 56th Birthday. We thank Almighty God for His faithfulness, mercy and divine preservation upon your life. As you mark another year, we pray that the Lord will continue to order your steps, strengthen you with wisdom and grace, and empower you to lead Edo State with courage, justice and compassion. May God grant you greater wisdom to make decisions that will bring lasting development and prosperity to our dear State. May He surround you with godly counsellors, protect you and your family, and shield you from every evil. As you enter this new chapter, may the Almighty God enlarge your territory, renew your strength and establish the works of your hands. May your administration continue to experience divine favour, uncommon breakthroughs and testimonies.

"The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee." — Numbers 6:24-25

Happy 56th Birthday, Your Excellency!

Signed: **Prophet Peter Israel Obaseki**
General Overseer



Prophet Peter Israel Obaseki
General Overseer



HIS EXCELLENCY
SEN. MONDAY OKPEBHOLO
GOVERNOR OF EDO STATE

CORRECTION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **Miss IKHATUA EMIGBUAN**, **Miss IKHATUA EMIGBUAN EMILY**, **Miss IKHATUA EMI** and **Mrs UWABOR IKHATUA - EMIGBUAN EMILY** are one and the same person. Henceforth I now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs UWABOR IKHATUA -EMIGBUAN EMILY**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **LUCKY GRACE ONYIYE**, now wish to be known and addressed as **EMUZOR GRACE ONYIYE**. All former documents remain valid concern authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **Miss EUNICE CHIDIMMA OKEKE** now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs EUNICE CHIDIMMA NWEZE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **OSAGIE OSAIGBOVO** now wish to be known and addressed as **EJIRO MONDAY**. due to the lost of my initial documents. All former documents remain valid and concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **NANCY EFE OGBEIDE** which was wrongly captured on my BVN now wish to be known and addressed as **NANCY EFE OMOREGIE**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME

The general public is here by notified that my correct name is **LINUS OBIORAH NWEZE** and not **LINUS OBIORAH NWEKE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note

BOX FOR SALE

ADDITION OF NAME

The general public is here by notified that my correct is **JUDE OSADOLOR FREDERICK IRORO** and not **FREDERICK JUDE** as was wrongly captured on my BVN. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

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

CHANGE OF NAME/CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH

The general public is here by notified that my correct name is **IYOBOSA DOUGLAS** and not **IYOBOSA DIAMOND** as was wrongly captured in my BVN. and my correct date of birth is 15th September, 1995. and not 15th September 1994. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Formerly known as **Miss OLUWAFEMI OLUTOLA DUNNI** now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs MORKA OLUTOLA OLUWADUNNI**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **miss AIRHUNMWUNDE UYIEMWEN CHARITY** now wish to be known as **Mrs AKPOLO UYIEMWEN CHARITY**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **miss IKHIANONSEN UDUEVBOLO**. Now wish to be known as **Mrs IKHIANONSEN UDUEVBOLO OHIKHUARE**. All former documents remain valid. concerned Authorities and the general public should please take note.

RECONCILIATION/CORRECTION OF DATA OF BIRTH

The general public is here by notified that **EVBA PRINCEWILL OSAZUWA** and **EVBAKHAYBOKUN PRINCEWILL OSAZUWA** hence now wish to be known and called **EVBA PRINCEWILL OSAZUWA**. Also my correct date of birth is 13th June, 1986 and not 29th may 1985. all former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **miss IGBINOSA IDANOSA NAOMI** now wish to be known as **Mrs OMOFONMWAN-IGBINOSA IDANOSA NAOMI**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **Miss UHUNMWUAGHO JULIET OWENAZE**, now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs OSARO-DANIEL JULIET OWENAZE**. All former documents remain valid concern authorities and the general public should please take note.

PUBLIC NOTICE DISCLAIMER

This is to inform the general public that **NELSON CHIKA OGUJIOFOR** formerly known as **CHIKA NWACHUKWU** is my late sister's son (CORDILIA NWACHUKWU). That my late sister's husband was not handy, I elected to train **NELSON CHIKA OGUJIOFOR** from primary, secondary university (BIU), all in private school and post Graduate (UNIPORT). That he is a renowned Geophysicist and I further sent him to mud school which enabled me secure a job for him in an oil service company, he earns averagely #2,000,000.00 (Two million Naira) every month. That lately he has started selling my properties, claiming to be my first son, worse is the terrific lies, Impregnation of women and shady behaviour which rub mud to my personality. That he had sold my properties sometime ago and we went to police, later on I forgave him. But this time, he sold my vehicle. I am afraid he may want to progress further in this negative trend. That what so ever I have should remain for my family, my wife and myself as listed below:

- Dr. Victor Usman kuponiyi OGUJIOFOR
- Mrs. Joy Nkem ogujiofor (my wife)
- Victoria Ibuchim ogujiofor (daughter)
- Goodluck Obroma Anointing ogujiofor (daughter)
- Nicholas ogujiofor (son)
- Manu commander ogujiofor (son)
- Mezu Papasurgeon ogujiofor (son).

This publication is for record purposes. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

Signed: **Dr. VICTOR USMAN.K. OGUJIOFOR**

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 columns; 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.

MRS. BERNADETTE GRACE AMIEBENOMO, late of Ubiaja, Esan South East L.G.A., who died on the 7th day of November, 2025 in Benin City.

MR. PETER ONOSHOAGBE BRAI IZOBON, late of Udaba-Ekperi, Etsako Central L.G.A., who died on the 24th day of April, 2026 in Benin City.

PED/627/2026

Mr. Momodu Junior Amiebenomo and Mrs. Afishetu Omozele Otrikpen of No 54, Nehizena Street, Off PZ Road, Sapele Road, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.

PED/556/2026

Mrs. Roseline Asesele Izoboh and Matthew Ikpermosimhe Izoboh of No 43B, Sapele Road, Benin City, widow and son respectively of the deceased.

DATED THIS 26th DAY OF AUGUST, 2026.

B. O. OSAWARU ESQ.
Probate Registrar

LEGAL NOTICE

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

WHEREAS the person whose name is set out in the first column hereunder died intestate on the date and at the place stated in the column; AND WHEREAS the persons whose names, addresses and claimed relationship to the deceased are set in the second column hereunder have applied to the Probate Registrar, High Court of Justice, Edo State of Nigeria for a grant of Letters of Administration of the real and personal property of the deceased. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Letters of Administration will be granted to such persons unless a NOTICE to prohibit the grant is filed in this Registry within Twenty-One (21) days from the date of the publication of this notice.

MR. OSAMWONYI AUGUSTINE EGBON, late of Ugoneki, Uhumwonde L.G.A., who died on the 16th day of November, 2025 in Benin City.

DATED THIS 26th DAY OF AUGUST, 2026.

B. O. OSAWARU ESQ.
Probate Registrar

WE CELEBRATE OUR BEACON OF HOPE



His Excellency

**SEN. MONDAY
OKPEBHOLO**

*Executive Governor
of Edo State*

The Nigerian
OBSERVER
That The People May Know

On this auspicious occasion of your 56th birthday, we at The NIGERIAN OBSERVER, the flagship of print journalism in Edo State, proudly celebrate a leader whose vision, courage and commitment to the development of Edo State continue to inspire hope and confidence.

Your Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo, your emergence as Governor has brought renewed energy to the task of rebuilding Edo and restoring faith in the possibilities of our dear state. Through your people-oriented initiatives, infrastructural interventions and determination to make a difference, you have continued to demonstrate that leadership is not merely about occupying an office, but about touching lives and leaving enduring footprints.

As the state's foremost newspaper and a trusted chronicler of Edo's history, The NIGERIAN OBSERVER takes special pride in celebrating a Governor whose administration is writing a new chapter in the story of our state.

Today, we celebrate your courage to dream, your determination to act and your commitment to serve. We celebrate the beacon of hope illuminating the path of progress.

We celebrate the people's Governor, whose administration continues to place the welfare and aspirations of Edo people at the heart of governance.

We celebrate a leader whose name, at this moment in our history, is increasingly associated with renewal, development and a new Edo spirit.

As you mark another year of life, we pray that Almighty God will continue to grant you wisdom, strength, sound health and uncommon grace to steer the affairs of Edo State.

May your years ahead be filled with greater accomplishments, greater impact and greater opportunities to serve humanity.

Happy 56th Birthday, Your Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo.

Long may you shine.

Long may you lead.

Long may Edo prosper under your watch.

Congratulations and many happy returns!

Signed: Hon. PETER ODIBOH,
General Manager,
Bendel Newspapers Corporation

FEATURE

How Okpebholo's Shine Agenda is Addressing Edo's 35-Year Reckoning (2)



THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF EDO STATE

DR. PATRICK AKHERE EBOJELE

When Governor Monday Okpebholo assumed office in November 2024, his inaugural message centred on five key pillars: Security, Healthcare, Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Agriculture, and Education. To those familiar with Edo's history, this framework carried particular significance. It was not a vague promise to "transform" the state through undefined initiatives, but a systematic acknowledgment of areas where governance challenges had persisted for decades.

Security came first, and this was deliberate. Governor Okpebholo recognised that meaningful development cannot thrive in an environment where citizens live in fear.

The administration moved swiftly on several fronts, including pursuing legislative measures for special criminal courts and state police mechanisms - interventions that had been discussed, but remained unrealised by previous administrations. It also launched coordinated operations against cultism, particularly in the Benin metropolis, where organised crime networks had taken root over the years. The deployment of security personnel and the adoption of community policing approaches demonstrated that security was being treated as a sustained priority, rather than mere rhetoric.

What distinguishes this approach from previous security efforts is its apparent commitment to continuity. Past administrations had introduced security measures that often faded after public attention shifted. The

Okpebholo administration has positioned security, not just as a campaign promise, but as a foundation for sustainable development.

Healthcare emerged as the second pillar, with increased enrolment in the Edo State Health Insurance Scheme (EdoHIS), designed to broaden access to basic healthcare across different income groups. This addresses a major challenge in the state's healthcare sector: not only the availability of facilities, but the ability of ordinary residents to afford and access services. The initiative reflects the understanding that even modern healthcare facilities have limited impact if citizens cannot utilise them due to financial barriers.

Infrastructure, the third pillar, represents one of the most visible aspects of the administration's early interventions. Ramat Park Flyover, a long-awaited project that had become a symbol of delayed development moved from plans to active construction. Road rehabilitation projects commenced across several local government areas, while drainage works targeted flood-prone areas in Benin City. The significance of these projects lies, not only in their execution, but also in the administration's attempt to integrate them into a broader urban development strategy.

The fourth pillar, Natural Resources and Agriculture, reflects an effort to diversify Edo's economic base in a manner that previous administrations had discussed, but not systematically pursued. It focuses on developing the state's forestry resources, strengthening agricultural value chains and positioning Edo as a contributor to

national food security and export-oriented agriculture. Early initiatives have included the distribution of agricultural equipment, support for farmers and strategic planning around commodity production. Whether these efforts will translate into lasting rural development and poverty

reduction remains to be seen, but the approach represents a shift from previous agricultural interventions.

Education, the fifth pillar, recognises that long-term development cannot be achieved through infrastructure alone. Edo's future depends largely on the quality of human capital it produces. Early actions by the administration include teachers recruitment, measures aimed at improving staff retention and investments in school infrastructure. The administration has also aligned with the Federal Government's Renewed Hope Agenda to attract projects and resources that support education in the state.

However, the critical question is whether these five pillars will remain a sustainable development framework that guides policy decisions, budgeting and institutional practices, or whether they will become another set of political promises disconnected from implementation. Edo's history calls for caution, as previous administrations have introduced ambitious plans that were not always sustained. The true measure of this administration's commitment will emerge beyond the initial years, when challenges increase and political attention shifts.

Several factors, however, distinguish this period from previous transitions. First, the five-pillar framework appears to be based on a practical assessment of Edo's development needs, rather than unrealistic projections. The emphasis appears to be more on problem-solving than political messaging. Second, the administration has shown interest in documenting Federal Government support and resource inflows to create accountability and preserve institu-

tional memory. The documentation of Renewed Hope Agenda projects benefiting Edo State, for instance, helps prevent the loss of important information during transitions.

Third, there is recognition that Edo's development requires collaboration among stakeholders, including diaspora communities, business leaders, traditional institutions and citizens. The diaspora engagement initiative, "SHINE Beyond Borders," reflects an understanding that Edo indigenes living abroad represent valuable resources in terms of investment, expertise, networks and advocacy.

As Edo enters another phase of its development journey, the central question remains whether an administration can break the cycle of abandoned initiatives that has characterised governance over the years. Can it sustain focus on long-term development despite pressures for quick results and short-term political gains? The Okpebholo administration's five-pillar framework suggests a commitment to strategic planning. Whether that planning will translate into consistent execution is what will define Edo's next chapter.

The coming years will be significant, not because complete transformation can happen overnight, but because they will reveal whether the administration has the discipline and institutional commitment required to overcome the patterns that have disappointed Edo residents over the past 35 years.

• **Dr. Ebojele, PhD in Public Administration, is the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor of Edo State.**

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As Edo enters another phase of its development journey, the central question remains whether an administration can break the cycle of abandoned initiatives that has characterised governance over the years.

Milestone

CELEBRATING GOVERNOR Welfare, education reforms take centre stage

RICHARD EWEKA AND
BENEDICT OKATE

As Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, marks his 56th birthday, his administration's emphasis on the welfare of citizens and interventions in the education sector have emerged among the notable areas of focus since he assumed office on November 12, 2024.

In his inaugural address, Governor Okpebholo pledged that the welfare of Edo people would remain a top priority of his administration, promising programmes aimed at strengthening the economy and improving the lives of citizens.

"The welfare of our citizens is a top priority for us," the governor declared, adding that his administration would implement programmes outlined in its five-point agenda to promote economic growth and improve the quality of life of the people.

Nearly two years into the administration, the governor's supporters point to interventions in security, infrastructure, healthcare, water supply, agriculture and education as evidence of efforts to translate the promise into action.

Security, in particular, has received considerable attention, with the administration strengthening the state's security architecture through the provision of vehicles, motorcycles and other logistics to the police and other security agencies, while also providing training and support for personnel of the Edo State Security Corps and Forest Guards. These interventions have contributed significantly to the restoration of peace and security across the state, with incidents of cultism and kidnapping now greatly reduced and no longer posing the widespread threat previously experienced by residents.

ously experienced by residents.

The administration has also embarked on road construction and rehabilitation across the state, with projects linking urban and rural communities and aimed at facilitating economic and commercial activities.

The welfare of workers has equally featured prominently in the administration's policies. In his inaugural address, Okpebholo assured civil servants that their welfare would remain a priority, with reforms aimed at promoting innovation, transparency and productivity in the public service.

Since then, the administration has continued to emphasise the payment of salaries and implementation of promotions, while workers have also benefited from training and retraining programmes designed to improve their capacity and productivity.

Education, another major pillar of the administration, has received substantial attention through interventions in infrastructure, teacher welfare, manpower development, access and quality.

Government reports indicate that more than 100 schools were constructed within the administration's first year, while several others were rehabilitated and upgraded across the three senatorial districts. The projects have included classroom reconstruction and the provision of water facilities to create more conducive learning environments.

A Benin City-based parent, Mrs Glory Ayemoba, said the physical transformation was particularly noticeable in schools that had suffered years of deterioration.

Teachers have also benefited from the administration's interventions. In February 2025, Governor Okpebholo approved

promotion letters for 8,476 primary and junior secondary school teachers, covering promotions from 2022 to January 2024.

The government also recruited or absorbed more than 6,000 teachers into the public service during its first year, according to government reports.

A secondary school teacher, Mr Lucas Egbadon, said the attention given to teachers had helped to boost morale and strengthen the workforce.

Another teacher, Mrs Priscilia Osaretin, noted that Edo's performance at the 2026 National Teachers Summit in Abuja further underscored the administration's focus on the teaching profession. Physics teacher Okhide Eugene of Imaguero College, Benin City, received a N25 million award for outstanding performance.

At the tertiary level, the administration substantially increased funding to state-owned institutions. The monthly subvention to Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, was raised from N41 million to N500 million, while Edo State University, Iyamho, received an increase to N250 million.

In April 2026, the governor also approved a N2 billion grant for infrastructural development at Edo State University and announced additional buses for the institution.

Similarly, the monthly subvention to Edo State College of Education, Igueben, was increased from N19 million to N100 million, with increased funding also extended to Edo State Polytechnic, Usen.

The administration subsequently introduced the Senator Monday Okpebholo Education Talent Hunt Competition, through which 54 outstanding students are to receive fully funded scholarships to

state-owned tertiary institutions.

For the Vice Chancellor of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, the initiatives represent an effort to broaden the scope of education policy beyond infrastructure and teacher recruitment to include the identification and reward of academic talent.

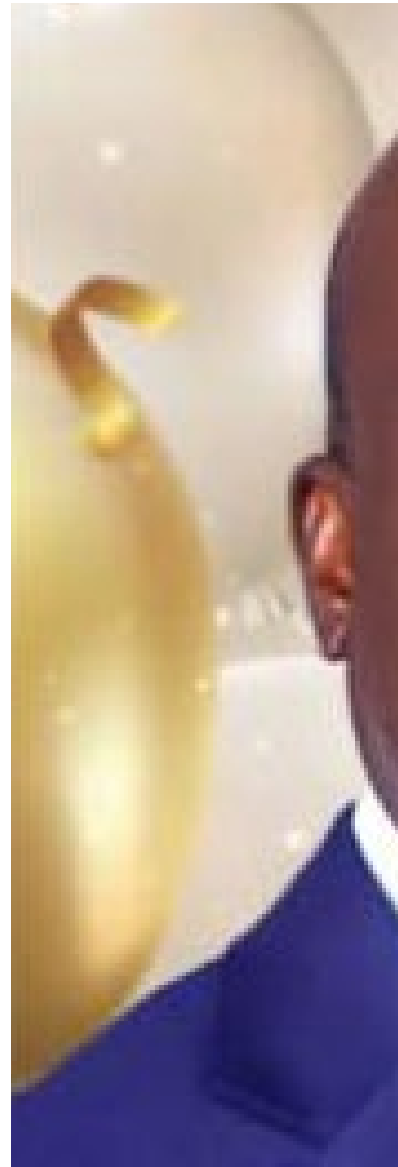
The administration has also introduced the Edo Rescue Initiative, aimed at reconnecting out-of-school children with formal education, alongside the provision of back-to-school materials and monitoring mechanisms.

A resident of Ewu in Esan Central Local Government Area, Mrs Irene Abuhlimen, described the initiative as an important step towards expanding access to education for children who had been left out of the formal school system.

For public affairs analyst, Mr Goodluck Momodu of Fugar, Etsako Central Local Government Area, the developments demonstrate what he described as deliberate investment in education. He also cited the governor's recognition as New Telegraph's Governor of the Year in Education as further acknowledgment of the administration's interventions in the sector.

As Governor Okpebholo celebrates his 56th birthday, the combination of worker-focused policies, security measures, infrastructure development and education interventions provides a basis for assessing the direction of his administration.

For many Edo citizens and stakeholders, the progress recorded so far represents an ongoing effort to make the welfare of the people, as promised at the beginning of the administration, a central feature of governance in the state.



HIS EXCELLENCY
THE EXECUTIVE

A salute to vision, courage and

ANDY EGBON

Today, Edo State joins Governor Senator Monday Okpebholo's family, friends, political associates, community leaders and well-wishers across the country to celebrate as he attains the age of 56.

This celebration is more than a birthday. It is an opportunity to reflect on the journey of a man whose character, qualities and commitment to public service have continued to attract attention and goodwill beyond the boundaries of partisan politics.

Governor Okpebholo's commitment to community development did not begin with his emergence as Governor of Edo State. His earlier involvement in community development, particularly among the Esan people, as well as his support for the Atalakpa security initiative, demonstrated a

longstanding concern for the welfare, peace and security of his people.

His experience in the Senate and subsequent emergence as Governor provided him with a broader platform to extend that commitment to the entire state. It is a responsibility he has embraced with a clear determination to contribute to the growth and development of Edo State.

At 56, therefore, Governor Okpebholo has every reason to celebrate, having been entrusted with a platform to make indelible marks in the sands of time.

Since assuming office, the Governor has continued to demonstrate his commitment to the development of the state through initiatives and projects across various sectors. His administration's focus on security, infrastructure, education, healthcare, agriculture and other areas of human

development reflects an understanding of the broad responsibilities of government.

These efforts deserve commendation and encouragement. The task of governance is enormous, and every meaningful step towards improving the lives of the people deserves the collective support of all stakeholders.

The progress recorded so far will further inspire the administration to consolidate its achievements and pursue even greater milestones in the years ahead. Edo people expect nothing less than a government that continues to provide opportunities, improve infrastructure, strengthen security and create an environment in which citizens can live and prosper.

Governor Okpebholo also has the opportunity to continue building bridges across political, ethnic and social divides. Edo State is a diverse so-

ciety, and a leadership that promotes unity, inclusion and a shared sense of purpose will undoubtedly strengthen the foundation for sustainable development.

The Governor's experience in community leadership, legislative service and now executive governance places him in a unique position to deepen the development agenda of the state. The years ahead therefore offer an opportunity to consolidate the gains already made and lay the foundation for an even more prosperous Edo State.

At 56, the Governor stands at an important point in his journey of public service. With the goodwill of the people and the support of stakeholders, there is still much more that can be achieved.

The years ahead should be devoted to further strengthening the foundations of development, expanding

opportunities for the people and creating enduring institutions that will continue to serve Edo State. Such achievements will constitute a lasting legacy and further define his place in the history of the state.

The best way to celebrate this milestone is to reaffirm our confidence in the Governor's capacity to provide purposeful leadership and to encourage him to sustain the momentum of his administration.

The Governor, should be commended for his commitment to Edo State and congratulate him on attaining the age of 56.

While wishing him good health, wisdom, strength and greater accomplishments as he continues to serve the people of Edo State, may the years ahead bring even greater opportunities to advance the development of our dear state.

Milestone

OKPEBHOLO AT 56

Happy 56th birthday, Your Excellency

RICHARD EWEKA AND
BENEDICT OKATE



SEN. MONDAY OKPEBHOLO
GOVERNOR OF EDO STATE

excellence



Since assuming office, the Governor has continued to demonstrate his commitment to the development of the state through initiatives and projects across various sectors. His administration's focus on security, infrastructure, education, healthcare, agriculture and other areas of human development reflects an understanding of the broad responsibilities of government.

As Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, marks his 56th birthday, his administration's emphasis on the welfare of citizens and interventions in the education sector have emerged among the notable areas of focus since he assumed office on November 12, 2024.

In his inaugural address, Governor Okpebholo pledged that the welfare of Edo people would remain a top priority of his administration, promising programmes aimed at strengthening the economy and improving the lives of citizens.

"The welfare of our citizens is a top priority for us," the governor declared, adding that his administration would implement programmes outlined in its five-point agenda to promote economic growth and improve the quality of life of the people.

Nearly two years into the administration, the governor's supporters point to interventions in security, infrastructure, healthcare, water supply, agriculture and education as evidence of efforts to translate the promise into action.

Security, in particular, has received considerable attention, with the administration strengthening the state's security architecture through the provision of vehicles, motorcycles and other logistics to the police and other security agencies, while also providing training and support for personnel of the Edo State Security Corps and Forest Guards.

These interventions have contributed significantly to the restoration of peace and security across the state, with incidents of cultism and kidnapping now greatly reduced and no longer posing the widespread

threat previously experienced by residents.

The administration has also embarked on road construction and rehabilitation across the state, with projects linking urban and rural communities and aimed at facilitating economic and commercial activities.

The welfare of workers has equally featured prominently in the administration's policies. In his inaugural address, Okpebholo assured civil servants that their welfare would remain a priority, with reforms aimed at promoting innovation, transparency and productivity in the public service.

Since then, the administration has continued to emphasise the payment of salaries and implementation of promotions, while workers have also benefited from training and retraining programmes designed to improve their capacity and productivity.

Education, another major pillar of the administration, has received substantial attention through interventions in infrastructure, teacher welfare, manpower development, access and quality.

Government reports indicate that more than 100 schools were constructed within the administration's first year, while several others were rehabilitated and upgraded across the three senatorial districts. The projects have included classroom reconstruction and the provision of water facilities to create more conducive learning environments.

A Benin City-based parent, Mrs Glory Ayemoba, said the physical transformation was particularly noticeable in schools that had suffered years of deterioration.

Teachers have also benefited from the administration's interventions. In February 2025, Governor

Okpebholo approved promotion letters for 8,476 primary and junior secondary school teachers, covering promotions from 2022 to January 2024.

The government also recruited or absorbed more than 6,000 teachers into the public service during its first year, according to government reports.

A secondary school teacher, Mr Lucas Egbadon, said the attention given to teachers had helped to boost morale and strengthen the workforce.

Another teacher, Mrs Priscilia Osaretin, noted that Edo's performance at the 2026 National Teachers Summit in Abuja further underscored the administration's focus on the teaching profession. Physics teacher Okhide Eugene of Imaguero College, Benin City, received a N25 million award for outstanding performance.

At the tertiary level, the administration substantially increased funding to state-owned institutions. The monthly subvention to Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, was raised from N41 million to N500 million, while Edo State University, Iyamho, received an increase to N250 million.

In April 2026, the governor also approved a N2 billion grant for infrastructural development at Edo State University and announced additional buses for the institution.

Similarly, the monthly subvention to Edo State College of Education, Igueben, was increased from N19 million to N100 million, with increased funding also extended to Edo State Polytechnic, Usen.

The administration subsequently introduced the Senator Monday Okpebholo Education Talent Hunt Competition, through which 54 out-

standing students are to receive fully funded scholarships to state-owned tertiary institutions.

For the Vice Chancellor of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, the initiatives represent an effort to broaden the scope of education policy beyond infrastructure and teacher recruitment to include the identification and reward of academic talent.

The administration has also introduced the Edo Rescue Initiative, aimed at reconnecting out-of-school children with formal education, alongside the provision of back-to-school materials and monitoring mechanisms.

A resident of Ewu in Esan Central Local Government Area, Mrs Irene Abbulimen, described the initiative as an important step towards expanding access to education for children who had been left out of the formal school system.

For public affairs analyst, Mr Goodluck Momodu of Fugar, Etsako Central Local Government Area, the developments demonstrate what he described as deliberate investment in education. He also cited the governor's recognition as New Telegraph's Governor of the Year in Education as further acknowledgment of the administration's interventions in the sector.

As Governor Okpebholo celebrates his 56th birthday, the combination of worker-focused policies, security measures, infrastructure development and education interventions provides a basis for assessing the direction of his administration.

For many Edo citizens and stakeholders, the progress recorded so far represents an ongoing effort to make the welfare of the people, as promised at the beginning of the administration, a central feature of governance in the state.

Opinion

The SSG Reflection on Edo at 35 and Governor Monday Okpebholo



EUBALDUS ENAHORO

Thirty-five years ago, on August 27, 1991, the old Bendel State was split into Edo and Delta States. For Edo people, it was the fulfillment of a long agitation: a state of our own, where our language, culture, and resources would drive our development.

Our founding fathers wanted a state that would be the pride of the Midwest. A state built on education, agriculture, industry, and culture. Benin was already a historic capital with abundant natural resources, rubber plantations, and the spirit of self-reliance.

The expectation was clear: Edo would lead in human capital, infrastructure, and good governance.

In 35 years, Edo produced national leaders, academics, artists, and athletes who have put us

on the map. Our cultural heritage - the Benin Kingdom - remains a global brand.

Now, we are seeing a renewed push by the Executive Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo led administration with transformation in all sectors of the economy, infrastructural and human capital development

For instance, the massive construction of road projects connecting the various communities and the N500m monthly subvention to Ambrose Alli University, AAU which shows the government is serious about saving our premier university.

There have been several endorsements by prominent Nigerians for the great strides of the government's intervention in critical areas in less than two years which have attracted investors to the state.

The "New Edo" is SHINING with many communities in Edo North, Edo South and Edo Central receiving attention by the government

There is no doubt that the administration of Senator Monday Okpebholo came in with a focus on roads, security, education funding, ease of doing business and other interventions that attempts to return Edo to the original Bendel blueprint

Today, Edo has taken its rightful position in Sports, Edo is number one in logistics and other areas, which means the foundation is being reset.

As Edo marks 35 years, the people have every

reason to reflect on the journey so far because the dream of 1991 was not to create just another state. It was to create a model state.

Interestingly, the first 35 years have laid the foundation for the building of the mansion which Governor Monday Okpebholo seems to be building on.

According to a Senior Special Assistant, SSA to the Governor, Henry J, the Video clip of the Secretary to the State Government SSG, Umar Musa Ikhillo Esq, trending in various social media platforms tells what reports cannot about the Journey of Edo state

In the video, the SSG disclosed that, "August 2026 positions Edo at an intersection of memory and meaning.

"On 27th August, we will mark 35 years since our separation from the defunct Bendel State three and a half decades of identity, resilience, and reinvention.

"Two days later, on 29th August, we will celebrate His Excellency, Distinguished Senator Monday Okpebholo, as he clocks plus one.

In the interval between those dates, Umar Musa Ikhilor, Esq., offered more than commentary. He offered a deposition.

"With the precision of a jurist and the cadence of a statesman, he framed governance as architecture and as anatomy, structures raised, and lives restored.

"Flyovers now define our skyline. More than 61

primary healthcare centers and More than 68 schools have been rebuilt. Roads now connect our senatorial districts. Disengaged workers were recalled and paid. Pensions and gratuities were honored. The wage floor was lifted to N75,000. And in a move that speaks to the future of thought in Edo, subvention to Ambrose Alli University was recalibrated from N41 million to N500 million and sustained.

"But data was not the destination. People who had lost hope, who had no hope, who had given up have now been brought back to life," he submitted.

"Beyond the flyovers, beyond the roads, beyond the schools... he has touched human lives."

"It was at that juncture that protocol yielded to pathos. It is indispensable. You will see the SSG pause mid-sentence, and weep with joy, not as performance, but as proof that when governance is executed with conscience, it arrests even those who administer it.

"Thirty-five years teaches a state of patience.

A Governor who governs with people at the center teaches a state possibility.

"As we commemorate our past and celebrate our present, we salute His Excellency Senator Monday Okpebholo for leadership that builds, and more importantly, for leadership that restores."

• Eubaldus Enahoro was Former Editor of the Nigerian Observer Newspaper

To preserve and present Benin ancient history to the World

AIBUEDEFE HUMPHREY USUNOBUN

My heart echoes, but too distant for the ears to hear! And you may ask, "which ears?" - The ears of those saddled with the responsibility and power to implement policies. Growing up in the streets of Benin presented us a lot of memories. You look at a building and the art that defines it, at once, you know the kind of people that inhabits it. Every family has its symbol and greeting, and you live to preserve that heritage. Benin kingdom is known to be rich in heritage, and it boasts of rich structural, economic and cultural history. The Benin Kingdom was a powerful West African state that was founded by the Edo people in now modern day Nigeria.

It emerged around the 11th century, metamorphosed painstaking phases into a major empire famous for its cultured urban development, what it considers divine monarchy, and mastery of bronze and brass art. Ruled early on by the Ogisos (sky rulers), then to when local chiefs invited a prince from the neighboring Yoruba kingdom of Ife to restore order, establishing the line of the Obas (kings). And Eweka I became the first official Oba of the new dynasty. Yet through these eras, it never lost its heritage, but rather deepened its monarchical resilience, ancient rituals and administrative titles, ancient earthworks, classical art works, traditional festivals and societal hierarchy. Transforming from a regional state into a vast empire. The capital, rebuilt by Oba Ewuare the Great, who constructed massive defensive walls and moats, and expanded military control across the region. Built entirely by manual labor, requiring an estimated 150 million hours of digging and soil movement, it consists of interlocking ditches and ramparts that created deep trenches and high embankments, protecting it from outside invasion. The kingdom maintained strong trade controls in palm oil, ivory, pepper, and textiles with the European merchants, including the Portuguese and Dutch starting in the

late 1400s.

After centuries of political peak, then came the British punitive expedition and invasion of Benin Kingdom in 1897, where they looted its capital and dispersed its iconic Benin Bronzes worldwide. That singular act destroyed Benin Kingdom structure which was severely compromised and damaged. Since then, the ancient Benin Kingdom has been suffering the consequence of modern civilization. What we now see has never matched the ideas created by existed realities passed down to this generation through told stories. And yet, the heritage we were born into is fast eluding us as different promises and roadmaps posited have never live to see the light of the day.

Needless to say that it is heart wrenching whenever we hear of countries and cities that survive on revenue generated through tourism. Whenever I visit the palace, Igun or the moat, to name but the least, I drift into deep thought wondering when and how Benin City could become an education or tourist destination like cities like Rome that boasts of site like Colosseum, Sofia that has Patriarchal Cathedral St. Alexander Nevsky, Istanbul with Hagia Sophia, Amsterdam with its Rijksmuseum...

In October 2018 when Governor Obaseki initially proposed building a museum project during the Oba's birthday, the Benin kingdom and Benin history lovers erupted with joy, anticipating a resuscitation and rehabilitation of Benin cultural heritage. We envisaged the ancient Benin kingdom evolving into a tourist destination; the emergence of a modern Benin kingdom. There were pure emotional and intellectual weight as the arrival of metal plaques, carved ivories, and royal stools back to Benin City seemed eminent. And the hope of developing architectural ancient heritage sites like the Benin Moat into vibrant cultural and economic assets in sight. As an independent historian, I could begin to imagine a new Benin heritage not as a static glance backward, but as a living, contested renaissance. The essential expectation being to spark heritage tourism, create local jobs, protect unique premechanical

history, and boost community pride.

However, the glimpses of hope started diminishing in July 2021 when the cold war broke out publicly after the Oba of Benin demanded that repatriated artifacts be handed directly to the palace. A position that challenged Governor Obaseki's museum and trust housing plans. The governor's intents which bear on the palace interest became a bone of contention between the state government and the palace of the Oba of Benin kingdom. Actually, the dispute didn't bother on whether the Benin artefacts looted during the British invasion of Benin in 1897 should return to Nigeria, and then Benin City its ancestral home, as both parties, I mean the former Edo State Governor Godwin Obaseki acting on behalf of the state government and the Oba of Benin backing the interest of the palace and ancient city of Benin at large, supported restitution. The impasse bothered on who should have authority and control over the returned artefacts, and in extension where and how they should be preserved and displayed.

While Governor Obaseki's administration supported a modern public museum through the establishment of the Edo Museum of West African Art (EMOWAA), a world-class museum and cultural district in Benin City that would involve international partnership, the Oba of Benin, Oba Ewuare II passionately believes that the original ownership and custodianship of Benin bronze rested with the Benin monarchy. I believe that Governor Obaseki's administration's argument stems from the facts that not only did Edo State's intervention help in accelerating international restitution, but also the works belonged to the Edo people and Nigeria. And on the other hand, the Oba of Benin vehemently posits that the artefacts were created within the Benin Kingdom, and many looted directly from the Royal Palace. He strictly wanted a Benin Royal Museum, associated with the Royal Palace, the principal home and custodian of the returned artefacts.

Not interested in holding argument for any of the parties, every Bini person and historians like

myself watched keenly and made silent prayer for our fast eroding heritage and hope while the war went on till the Federal government finally intervened in March 2023, recognizing the Oba of Benin as the rightful owner, custodian, and manager of the repatriated artifacts through a journal. Not wanting to hold argument as a result of the outcome, I simply said, "Yes! The fight is over". And for an ordinary Bini person, "no winner, no vanquish". Though the Museum of West African Art (MOWAA) was listed as number 25 among the top 52 travel destinations for 2025 by The New York Times, we are yet to explore and use the facility. Maybe, on personal opinion though, due to bureaucratic bottle necks. Who, to our rescue?

Then another million-dollar question, "What's Next". For me?

To Preserve and Present Benin Ancient History to the world?

Again, another thought-provoking question, "How".

At least to be able to place the ancient city of Benin Kingdom alongside other ancient civilizations.

I might not have an immediate answer, but I believe learning from others can be immensely helpful, even it means doing so at my expense.

And the questions I hope to unravel in the near future remains: -

- How did each civilization communicate its history to later generations?
- How historical narratives are presented to visitors
- How traditional heritage is incorporated into tourism
- How governments and communities protect historic sites
- How archaeological discoveries are documented
- How historical sites generate economic activity

Written by:

AIBUEDEFE HUMPHREY USUNOBUN
An Independent Historian

A BLESSED BIRTHDAY TO OUR GOVERNOR, OUR LEADER AND GOD'S SERVANT FOR A TIME AS THIS

On this auspicious occasion of your 56th birthday, I join the hosts of heaven, the Church of God and the good people of Edo State to celebrate a leader whose emergence into the governance of our dear State is, without doubt, a testimony of divine providence.

Your Excellency, the Lord who orders the steps of kings and directs the affairs of nations has brought you to this season for a purpose. Your administration is a vessel through which God is using leadership, courage and purposeful governance to restore hope and rebuild confidence in the hearts of our people.

As Scripture declares: "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." — Psalm 37:23.

On this special day, we therefore do not merely celebrate your age; we

celebrate grace, divine preservation, uncommon courage and the wisdom that comes from above. We thank God for keeping you, strengthening you and entrusting you with the sacred responsibility of leading Edo State at this critical hour.

May the Almighty God continue to enlarge your wisdom like Solomon, strengthen your courage like Joshua, grant you the discerning heart of David and surround you with the counsel of men and women who fear God and seek the welfare of the people.

May the Lord go before you and make every crooked path straight. May He preserve you from every evil, shield you from every danger and silence every voice raised against your God-ordained assignment.

As you add another year today, may your latter days be greater than your former days. May your administration continue to witness remarkable testimonies, and may the fruits of your leadership endure for generations yet unborn.

Your Excellency, may you remain a light in leadership, a voice for the voiceless, a defender of justice and an instrument of peace and development in Edo State.

On behalf of the Body of Christ, the Government House Chapel and my family, I heartily felicitate with you and pray that the Lord will grant you many more years in sound health, divine favour, uncommon wisdom and abundant grace.

Happy 56th Birthday, Your Excellency.

May the oil upon your head never run dry.

May your strength never fail.

May your vision never be dimmed.

May your hands continue to prosper.

And may the God who called you to this assignment grant you the grace to finish strong and finish well.

"The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee." — Numbers 6:24-25.

Happy Birthday, Your Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo.

Congratulations, Governor.

Congratulations, Leader.

Congratulations, Servant of the people.

Congratulations, God's chosen instrument for this season.



His Excellency
SEN. MONDAY OKPEBHOLO
Executive Governor of Edo State



APOSTLE (DR.) SULE FARADAY AZEKHUMEN

Special Adviser to the Executive Governor of Edo State on Religious Matters and Chaplain, Government House Chapel



HIS EXCELLENCY
SEN. MONDAY OKPEBHOLO
GOVERNOR, EDO STATE



Happy BIRTHDAY

— TO A —

TRUE CHAMPION OF PROGRESS

On the occasion of your birthday, I, on behalf of the management and staff of the Edo State Health Insurance Commission (EDOHIC), warmly felicitate with you and celebrate this special milestone in your life.

Your Excellency, your administration is demonstrating a steadfast commitment to building a healthier, more inclusive and economically resilient Edo State. Through the healthcare component of your SHINE Agenda, you are providing renewed direction for the transformation of the state's health sector.

Your support for health insurance reforms is strengthening financial protection for residents, ensuring that vulnerable members of society receive greater attention and support. We particularly commend your commitment to initiatives such as the State Equity Health Plan and efforts to bring healthcare services closer to communities across the state.

As you mark another year, I celebrate your life, your vision and your commitment to service. May Almighty God continue to guide your steps, bless you with good health and wisdom, protect you and your family, and grant you the grace to accomplish the vision you have for Edo State.

Happy Birthday, Your Excellency.

Dr. Mrs. Augusta Ikpea-Enaholo
Director-General
Edo State Health Insurance Commission (EDOHIC)



HAPPY Birthday to



His Excellency

**SEN. MONDAY
OKPEBHOLO**

*Executive Governor
of Edo State*

The Provost, Dr. Victoria Okojie, on behalf of the Governing Council, Management and Staff of Edo State College of Education, Igueben, warmly felicitates with His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo, Executive Governor of Edo State, on the occasion of his birthday.

We celebrate Your Excellency's exemplary leadership, commitment to good governance and dedication to the development and prosperity of Edo State.

We particularly appreciate your administration's commitment to the revival and repositioning of the College through increased monthly subvention and the provision of utility vehicles.

These interventions have renewed hope and strengthened our capacity to fulfil our mandate of ad-

vancing education and human capital development in the State.

As you mark another year of impactful service, we pray that Almighty God will grant you wisdom, strength, sound health and divine protection to accomplish even greater milestones for the people of Edo State.

Happy Birthday, Your Excellency!

May the years ahead
bring greater accomplishments
and fulfilment.

Signed:

Dr. VICTORIA OKOJIE

Provost, Edo State College
of Education, Igueben





Happy

56th

Birthday.

Your Excellency

Your Excellency, we warmly felicitate with you on your 56th birthday and celebrate your distinguished record of service, from the Senate to the Government House.

Since assuming office, your administration has pursued the SHINE Agenda, delivering progress across key sectors while strengthening infrastructure, human capital development, healthcare, education, security, agriculture and economic opportunities for Edo people.

Your people-oriented leadership, improved revenue drive and commitment to good governance have continued to inspire renewed optimism across the state.

As you celebrate, we pray that God Almighty grants you good health, wisdom and renewed strength to sustain the gains of the SHINE Agenda and lead Edo State to greater prosperity and development.

Happy 56th Birthday, Your Excellency, Our Leader.

His Excellency,

SEN. MONDAY OKPEBHOLO

Executive Governor, Edo State

Signed:

1. Chief Festus Ebea, Public Safety and Security

2. Hon Eugenia Abdallah, Women Affairs and Soc Dev

3. Dr Kenneth Ihensekhien, Special Duties

4. Hon Charity Amayaenvbo, Youth

5. Hon Etin-Osa Ogbeiwi, Science and Technolog

6. Hon Paul Ohonbamu, LG and Chieftaincy Affairs

7. Hon Andrew Momodu, Communication and Digital Economy

8. Hon Omorodion Ikponmwosa, Oil and Gas

9. Dr Washington Osa Osifo, Education

10. Hon Dr Felix Akhabue, Water Resources

11. Dr Jerry Uwangue, Agriculture and Food Security
12. Barr Vincent Osa Uwadiae, Physical Planning and Urban Dev

13. Hon Emmanuel Okoebor, Finance

14. Mr Ohimai Ehizimeton, Livestock Development

15. Hon. Martin Anayochukwu Oli, Inter-Ethnic Relations

16. Hon Marie-Olabisi Idaomi, Commissioner for Hum. Affairs and Poverty Alleviation

17. Hon Godwin Eshieshi, Labour and Productivity

18. Dr Cyril Oshiomhole, Health

19. Dr Patrick Akhere Ebojele, Chief Press Secretary

20. Hon Chris Okaeben, Arts and Culture

21. Hon Ireabekhai Kayode Jeffrey, Mining
22. Dr Elizabeth Ebosele, Budget

23. Prof Roland Otaru, Attorney general, Justice

24. Prince Kassim Afegbua, Information and Strategy

25. Mr Omon Anabor, Business, Trade and Investment

26. Barr Nosa Adams, Environment and Sustainability

27. Barr Usenbo Paul Ehigie, Power

28. Hon Saturday Uwuilekwe Idehen, Transportation

29. Hon Omorede E. Osifo, SA Women Mobilisation

30. Dr Adesuwa Urhoghhide-Edigin,CEO, EDOHERMA

31. Hon. Jerry Idahosa, Executive Secretary, EdoSEMA

32. Mr. Eghosa Urhoghhide, MD, ICTA

NEWS

EFCC arraigns man over ₦13.6m property fraud in Oyo

IBADAN

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Ibadan Zonal Directorate, has arraigned a man, Yusuf Oyepeju, before Justice Olusola Adetujoye of the Oyo State High Court, Ibadan.

Oyepeju, alongside his two companies, Alwajeez International Nigeria Limited and AIN Homes and Property Limited were arraigned on a six-count charge bordering on forgery, uttering of documents, stealing by conversion and obtaining money under false pretence to the tune of ₦13,697,900.00.

This was contained in a statement issued by the EFCC Head of Media and Publicity, Dele Oyewale, in Ibadan, the state capital, on Wednesday.

The charges, according to the statement, alleged that Oyepeju defrauded an Islamic cleric, a Dubai-based Nigerian, Fasasi Bayonle, of his monies and properties, whom he met on a WhatsApp group created for Muslims and for spreading Islamic teachings, as both were

tutors on the WhatsApp group.

The statement said one of the counts read: "That you, Yusuf Oyepeju, Alwajeez International Nigeria Limited and AIN Homes And Properties Limited between February and August, 2020, within the jurisdiction of this Hon Court, converted to your own personal use, the sum of ₦8,697,900.00, property of one Fasasi Bayonle, thereby committed an offence of stealing by conversion contrary to Section 390(9) Criminal Code Act, Cap C38, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004."

The defendant pleaded "not guilty" to the charges when they were read to him.

Following the defendant's plea, prosecution counsel, Sanusi Galadanchi, asked the Court for a date to commence trial and prayed that he be remanded in a Correctional facility.

However, counsel to the defendant, B. Ajibola, informed the Court that an application for bail has been filed and served on the prosecution, praying the Court to admit his client to bail.

Justice Adetujoye subsequently

adjourned the matter for hearing of bail application and remanded the defendant in Agodi Correctional Centre.

EFCC said, "Oyepeju's journey to the Correctional Centre began sometime in 2018, when he allegedly sought financial assistance from Bayonle to secure an accommodation for him and his newly married wife in Ibadan, and Bayonle, in turn, promised to raise some money for the accommodation but offered Oyepeju the temporary use of his house he lived in Ibadan before relocating to the United Arab Emirate, located at No. 3, road 7, Ikumapayi area of Olodo, Ibadan, Oyo State, which was unoccupied, whilst he started raising the money.

"The defendant, who had also presented himself to his victim as a property developer, took possession of the property and further convinced Bayonle to send money to him, so he could help him purchase land and build another house for him in Ibadan, and without doubt, Bayonle sent the sum of ₦8,697,900.00 to the defendant to purchase and develop the land.

Ogun community decries suspected land grabbers' invasion, farmland destruction

ADO-ODO (OGUN)

Residents of Ajogbo Akia community in Ado-Odo area of Ogun State have raised the alarm over what they describe as a violent invasion and destruction of their farmlands by hoodlums suspected to be land grabbers.

This is because, as they said, the development has left them frightened and farmers unable to access their livelihoods.

The residents who spoke in multiple interviews with PUNCH Metro on Tuesday alleged that the hoodlums invaded portions of their ancestral land, destroyed farmlands and plantations,

and threatened those who attempted to resist them.

A resident, Joel Asade, said he woke up to the presence of the hoodlums storming their community and destroying their farmlands and plantations without a justifiable reason, prompting residents to suspect that they were land grabbers.

"For about five generations, our forebears acquired the lands, which they have held onto since then; we suddenly saw land grabbers bringing confusion and claiming ownership of the land.

"They are destroying the crops we cultivate on our land and ruining everything. We have already taken this

matter to the law enforcement agents so that they can rescue us."

Another resident and community leader, Solomon Bankole, expressed surprise over the invasion, adding that the town had enjoyed relative peace since its inception.

He added that the residents had nowhere to go if they were displaced from their community while urging the police and the government to come to their aid.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **IROGUE RITA OSAYAMO**, now wish to be known and addressed as **EGHAFONA RITA OSAYAMO**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

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

ADDITION OF NAME/DATE OF BIRTH

The general public is hereby notified that my correct name is **EGBEYON CHRISTOPHER AUGUSTINE** and not **AUGUSTINE CHRISTOPHER**. also my correct date of birth is 1 August 1982 and not 1 August 1988 as was wrongly captured on my BVN. All former documents remain valid concern authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

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

CHANGE OF NAME/DATE OF BIRTH

I formerly known as **RITA UDE RICHARD** now wish to be known as **IROGHAMA OMOSIGHO SANDRA**, and my correct date of birth is September 29, 1982 and not May 13, 1970. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **Miss IGHO IBRAHIM** now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs IGHO ANWADIKE** all former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known and addressed as **INSTONY KRISTOFFERSON-OBHAFUOSO OYAILOME-ODEBA** now wish to be known and addressed as **ODEBA INSTONY KRISTOFFERSON** all former documents remain valid. The general public and concerned authorities should take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as **OGBOR LOVETH MIYENI** Now wish to be known and addressed as **OKEBUKOLA LOVETH MIYENI**. All former documents remain valid concern authorities and the general public should please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that correct name is **OKUNDAYE FRANCIS OSULA** and not **OKUNDAYE OSULA** as wrongly captured on my BVN. hence now wish to be called **OKUNDAYE FRANCIS OSULA**. All former documents remain valid concern authorities and the general public should please take note.

Birthday wishes

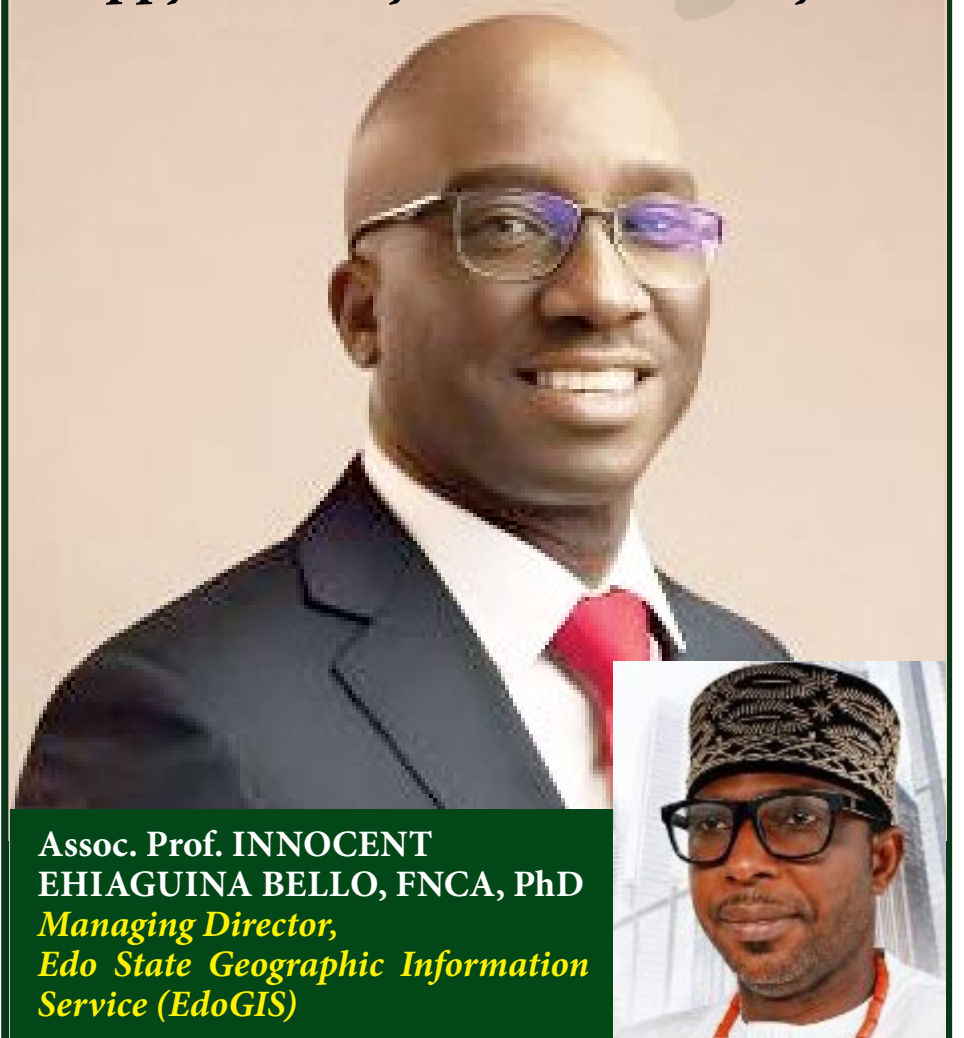


From the Managing Director, EdoGIS, to His Excellency, Governor Senator **MONDAY OKPEBHOLO** On behalf of the Management and Staff of the Edo State Geographic Information Service (EdoGIS), I extend my warmest congratulations to His Excellency, Governor Senator **MONDAY OKPEBHOLO**, on the occasion of his birthday.

Your Excellency's leadership has brought renewed direction and purpose to governance in Edo State, and EdoGIS has been a direct beneficiary of this vision. Your unwavering support for the digitisation and restructuring of land administration in our state has repositioned this agency as a model of efficiency, transparency, and innovation. Under your watch, land documentation has become faster, more secure, and more accessible to the ordinary Edo citizen a legacy that will long outlive any single administration.

As you celebrate another year of life, we join millions of Edo people in celebrating a leader whose commitment to service, integrity, and the development of our dear state continues to inspire us all. We pray for God's continued guidance, wisdom, and strength upon you as you steer the affairs of our state to greater heights.

Happy birthday, Your Excellency.



Assoc. Prof. **INNOCENT EHIAGUINA BELLO, FNCA, PhD**
Managing Director,
Edo State Geographic Information Service (EdoGIS)



EDO STATE COLLEGE OF NURSING SCIENCES
...Knowledge for Service

56TH

HAPPY

Cheers

TO OUR

INDEFATIGABLE VISITOR

On behalf of the Governing Council, Management, Staff, Students and the entire College Community of Edo State College of Nursing Sciences, I heartily felicitates with our visitor, **His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo**, the Executive Governor of Edo State on this auspicious celebration of his 56th Birthday Anniversary.

Your Excellency, as a College, we have every reason to be grateful for the enormous effort you've made in making **the institution** globally competitive in nursing and **midwifery education** as enshrined in the **SHINE AGENDA** mantra of your laudable administration.

Our institution has become a citadel of academic excellence gravitating above others in all professional licensure examinations which has earned it the reputational title as **"the best nursing college in the whole of the South South region."**

Your Excellency, we also want to appreciate you for the crop of individuals that make up the institution's Governing Council ably chaired by **Mr Johnbull Benson Ikenrria**, who has initiated policies and programs redefining the scope of the College academic and administration activities.

Apart from the upgrading of the CBT laboratory to a world class, promotion of outstanding staff, and the construction of an ultra modern hostel facility, just to mention but a few, the college has almost concluded affiliation arrangement for the award of **Bachelor of Nursing Sciences (B.NSc)** with **Edo University, Iyamho**.

Your Excellency, as college, you celebrate you on this special day of yours and wishing you more years of impact service to the good people of Edo State.

Once again, happy birthday to our indefatigable Visitor!

Signed,
Mrs. Mabel Olubunmi Omobude
Provost, Edo State College of Nursing Sciences, Benin City.



His Excellency,
Senator Monday Okpebholo
Executive Governor,
Edo State




EDPUBMA
Edo State Public Building And Maintenance Agency

BIRTHDAY

FELICITATION!!!

On behalf of the Management and Staff of the Edo State Public Building and Maintenance Agency, EDPUBMA, I, **Arc. Emmanuel Fashanu**, Managing Director, heartily felicitate with the Executive Governor of Edo State, His Excellency, **Senator Monday Okpebholo**, on the auspicious occasion of your birthday.

Your Excellency, your visionary leadership and commitment to good governance have continued to reposition Edo State on the path of sustainable growth and development. The remarkable achievements recorded in your short time in office are a testament to your dedication to the progress of our dear state.

As you celebrate this milestone, I pray that the Almighty God continues to grant you divine wisdom, good health, and the strength to lead Edo State to greater heights.

Please accept our warmest congratulations and best wishes for many more years of impactful service.

Congratulations, Your Excellency!



Signed
Arc. Emmanuel Fashanu
Managing Director
Edo State Public Building and Maintenance Agency

FEATURE

The Japa generation: why young Nigerians are leaving home in search of a better future

ODINI VIVIAN AMAKA

For some young Nigerians, the biggest dream is no longer simply to succeed in Nigeria. It is to leave.

The suitcase may be small. The destination may be uncertain. The person leaving may have spent years saying they would never abandon home. But somewhere between graduation, unemployment, rising living costs and the search for a better future, the idea of starting life somewhere else begins to look less like an escape and more like an opportunity.

In Nigeria's increasingly popular vocabulary, there is a word for it: *japa*.

It is a word that has moved beyond slang. It has become a reflection of a generation's frustrations, ambitions and hopes. To some young Nigerians, *japa* means travelling abroad for education. To others, it means securing a foreign job, pursuing permanent residency or simply finding a place where their income can provide a better quality of life.

For some, it is a carefully planned journey.

For others, it is a desperate decision. And for many, it is both.

The growing desire among young Nigerians to seek opportunities outside the country has become one of the most important social conversations of this generation. Behind every passport application, visa interview and flight ticket is a personal story: a graduate who cannot find a job, a professional searching for better pay, a student seeking quality education, a parent trying to give a child better opportunities or a young person who simply wants to live somewhere they believe the future is more predictable.

But what happens when a country begins to lose some of its most ambitious young people because they believe their dreams have a better chance of succeeding elsewhere?

That is the question behind Nigeria's *japa* generation.

WHEN LEAVING BECOMES THE DREAM

For decades, travelling abroad was often associated with adventure, education or tourism.

Today, the conversation is different.

A young Nigerian can be sitting in a university lecture hall and already be researching master's programmes abroad. A graduate can spend the day submitting job applications locally while spending the evening searching for international opportunities. A professional who has worked for several years can suddenly begin planning a move after realising that their salary is not enough to provide the lifestyle they desire.

The destination may differ—Britain, Canada, the United States, Germany, Australia, Ireland or elsewhere—but the motivation is often remarkably similar.

People want opportunity.

They want better-paying jobs.

They want functional infrastructure.

They want reliable electricity.

They want better healthcare.

They want security.

They want educational opportunities.

Nigeria *japa* youth at the airport

They want a future they can plan.

For some, the decision is not necessarily because Nigeria has nothing to offer. It is because they believe another country offers more.

That distinction matters.

The *japa* phenomenon is not simply about young Nigerians hating their country.

Many of those leaving Nigeria love home deeply.

They miss their families.

They miss Nigerian food.

They miss friends.

They miss familiar surroundings.

They miss celebrations, weddings, parties and the sense of community that comes with being surrounded by people who understand their culture.

But love for home does not always eliminate the desire for a better life.

A GENERATION CAUGHT BETWEEN LOVE AND OPPORTUNITY

There is a complicated emotional battle behind migration.

A young Nigerian may want to stay close to their parents but also want financial independence.

They may want to build Nigeria but feel that they cannot build the life they desire within the country.

They may want to contribute to society but become frustrated when opportunities appear limited.

They may want to remain with their partner, friends and family but fear that staying could mean sacrificing their ambitions.

This creates a difficult question:

Can you love your country and still decide that your future may be better somewhere else?

For many young Nigerians, the answer is yes.

Migration does not necessarily mean rejection.

Sometimes it means searching.

Searching for work.

Searching for education.

Searching for stability.

Searching for a chance.

Searching for a version of adulthood that feels financially possible.

THE ECONOMIC PUSH

Money is one of the strongest forces behind the *japa* conversation.

The rising cost of living has made

financial independence more difficult for young Nigerians. Rent, food, transportation, healthcare, education and other necessities consume a significant portion of many people's income.

For a young graduate trying to build a career, the pressure can be overwhelming.

A job may pay a salary that looks reasonable on paper, but after transportation, rent, food, electricity, data and other expenses are deducted, very little remains.

The young worker begins to wonder whether working harder will actually lead to a better life.

For some, the answer becomes migration.

If they can earn a higher income abroad, they reason, they may be able to save, support their families and achieve goals that appear difficult at home.

This is one reason migration cannot be separated from Nigeria's broader economic story.

When young people leave because they cannot see a sustainable path towards financial independence, migration becomes an economic symptom as much as a personal choice.

THE GRADUATE WHO WANTS MORE THAN A CERTIFICATE

The *japa* generation is also closely connected to Nigeria's graduate employment problem.

Every year, Nigerian universities produce graduates with degrees in different fields.

But graduation does not automatically guarantee employment.

Some graduates spend months applying for jobs.

Others accept poorly paid positions. Some work outside their fields.

Others start small businesses while continuing to search.

For a graduate who has spent years studying and still cannot see a clear professional future, migration can begin to look attractive.

A foreign university becomes more than a place to study.

It becomes a possible pathway to employment.

A foreign job becomes more than a salary.

It becomes a possible pathway to permanent residence and a different quality of life.

The decision to leave can therefore begin long before the plane ticket is purchased.

Sometimes, *japa* begins in the mind.

EDUCATION AS A TICKET OUT
Education has become one of the major pathways through which young Nigerians migrate.

For many, studying abroad is seen as a way to gain an internationally recognised qualification while simultaneously accessing a foreign labour market.

A student may leave Nigeria for a master's degree but eventually decide to remain abroad after graduation.

Another may pursue undergraduate education overseas and build their career there.

The motivation is not always simply the quality of education.

It can also be the opportunities surrounding that education.

Students consider whether they can work while studying.

They consider whether they can remain after graduation.

They consider employment opportunities.

They consider healthcare.

They consider living conditions.

They consider whether the society provides a clearer path from education to employment.

Education therefore becomes part of a larger migration strategy.

THE IOM PERSPECTIVE

The International Organization for Migration has recognised the connection between young people's aspirations, opportunities and migration.

IOM Nigeria's Youth Strategy 2023–2027 is built around six broad areas, including education and skills development, employment and entrepreneurship, health and wellbeing, civic participation, gender equality and social inclusion, and migration and mobility. The strategy aims to empower Nigerian youth and youth migrants while creating conditions in which young people can thrive and contribute to socio-economic development. (IOM Nigeria)

That approach is significant because it places migration within a much bigger picture.

Young people do not make migration decisions in isolation.

Their choices are influenced by education.

Employment.

Income.

Security.

Healthcare.

Social inclusion.

And their perception of the future.

In an IOM discussion on expanded regular migration pathways involving Nigerians, participants were asked whether they would "*japa*." The responses showed that while some were willing to migrate, others said they would rather remain in Nigeria if the economic environment provided good jobs and opportunities. IOM noted that this reflected a wider migration dilemma: when the underlying factors driving migration are not addressed, migration pressures remain. (IOM Nigeria)

That observation captures an important truth about Nigeria's *japa* generation.

Not everyone wants to leave. Many simply want a reason to stay.

THE QUESTION OF SECURITY
Economic opportunity is not the only factor influencing migration.

Security also plays a role in how people imagine their futures.

A young person deciding where to build a career does not think only about salary.

They think about where they will live.

How safe they will be.

Whether they can travel without fear.

Whether their children will be safe.

Whether their families will have access to reliable healthcare.

Nigeria's security challenges have therefore become part of the larger conversation about migration.

When people believe that another country offers greater personal security and stability, that becomes another reason to consider leaving.

This is particularly important because migration decisions are rarely caused by one factor.

FELICITATION

ON THE OCCASION OF YOUR

56th Birthday

HIS EXCELLENCY
DISTINGUISHED SENATOR
**MONDAY
OKPEBHOLO**

On behalf of the Board, Management, and entire staff of the Edo State Internal Revenue Service (EIRS), I, Mr. John Osirenimhe Odior, Executive Chairman, joyfully felicitate with Your Excellency on the momentous occasion of your 56th Birthday anniversary.

Your Excellency, your milestone birthday offers us a profound opportunity to celebrate an astute technocrat, a consummate administrator, and a visionary leader whose remarkable accomplishments across both the private and public sectors continue to shape the political, economic, and socio-cultural landscape of Edo State and Nigeria at large.

Since assuming the reins of governance, your administration has brought renewed vigor and direction to our state. Your relentless focus on efficiency, transparency, innovation, and excellence has placed Edo State on a swift trajectory toward becoming a premier economic powerhouse and regional business hub.

From aggressive infrastructural upgrades to strategic investments in education, healthcare, agriculture, security, and job creation, the tangible progress under your watch is a clear demonstration of your capacity and deep commitment to the welfare of our people.

The people of Edo State reposed their trust in your leadership, confident in your vision to rebuild, remodel, and restore the pride of our beloved state as the true Heart Beat of the Nation.

Today, your decisive actions and transformative policies evidently seen in the judicious utilization of our positively growing internally generated revenue validate that trust daily, inspiring confidence across all sectors of our economy.

As you mark your 56th year, we pray that God Almighty grants you continuous good health, divine wisdom, and long life to lead Edo State into an era of unprecedented prosperity and sustainable growth.

Happy 56th Birthday, Your Excellency!



SIGNED:

Mr. John Osirenimhe Odior FCA, ACTI

Executive Chairman
Edo State Internal Revenue Service (EIRS)



FEATURE

56 YEARS OF GRACE... 56 YEARS OF GRACE... 56 YEARS OF GRACE...

Celebrating Gov. Monday Okpebholo, the man behind Edo's new shine

OSAHENIRO MIRACLE OFUWENGBE

As Governor Monday Okpebholo clocks 56, Edo State celebrates a life of resilience and service—and a leadership journey that is steadily giving renewed meaning to hope, development and the future of the state.

There are birthdays that come and go with the calendar, and there are birthdays that invite a people to pause, look back with gratitude and look forward with renewed hope.

For the people of Edo State, the 56th birthday of Governor Monday Okpebholo on Saturday, August 29, 2026, is one of those special moments.

It is a celebration of a man whose journey from Udomi-Uwessan in Esan Central Local Government Area to the Government House in Benin City is a remarkable story of ambition, perseverance, resilience and service.

At 56, Senator Monday Okpebholo is not merely celebrating another year of life. He is celebrating a journey that has taken him through business, the National Assembly and now the highest elective office in Edo State.

And for Edo people, it is also a moment to say: Thank you, Your Excellency. Thank you for the courage to serve.

Thank you for the determination to confront difficult challenges.

Thank you for believing that Edo can be better.

And thank you for reminding the people that government can still be about hope, work and tangible results.

A Birthday Wrapped in Service

Born on August 29, 1970, Okpebholo came into public leadership after years of experience outside government and a period of service as Senator representing Edo Central.

In September 2024, Edo voters entrusted him with the governorship of the state. He secured 291,667 votes in the election and assumed office on November 12, 2024.

Since then, his administration has sought to translate its campaign promises into an agenda built around the SHINE framework—Security, Health, Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Agriculture, with education and human-capital development also receiving significant attention.

The idea behind SHINE is simple but powerful: Edo must shine, and government must create the conditions for its people to shine with it.

When Security Becomes a Gift to Families

One of the most important responsibilities of any government is to protect its people.

Okpebholo has therefore placed security at the centre of his administration.

His government has pursued measures aimed at confronting insecurity, cultism, kidnapping, armed robbery and other threats to the peace of communities.

This may sound like government policy on paper, but to the ordinary Edo family, security is something deeply personal.

It means a mother can sleep with fewer worries.

It means a trader can return home safely.

It means a farmer can go to the farm.

It means a business owner can keep the doors open.

It means a young person can move around the city without living in constant fear.

That is why security remains one of the most significant aspects of the administration's development philosophy. The Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation, in its assessment of the governor's first year, similarly identified security as a cornerstone of his leadership.

Building Roads, Connecting Communities

Across Edo, infrastructure has remained another major area of attention.

Road construction and rehabilitation, alongside major infrastructure projects and flyover construction, have featured prominently in the administration's development programme.

These are not simply concrete and asphalt.

A good road can mean the difference between a farmer getting produce to market and watching it perish.

It can mean a student arriving at school safely.

It can mean a patient reaching a hospital on time.

It can mean a small business reaching customers in another community.

It can mean an entire community becoming economically connected to the rest of the state.

Recent reporting on the administration's infrastructure programme has highlighted ongoing road and flyover projects intended to improve movement, reduce congestion and strengthen economic connections across Edo.

That is the human meaning of infrastructure.

Healthcare: Putting People First

A government is ultimately judged by how much it values human life.

Health is therefore another important pillar of the Okpebholo administration.

The governor's administration has

continued to place healthcare among its development priorities, while work has also continued on major health infrastructure.

In April 2026, reporting on the administration's progress noted that work had resumed on the state specialist hospital project, while the governor also approved a N2 billion grant for Edo State University, Iyamho, alongside an increase in the university's monthly subvention from N100 million to N250 million.

These interventions matter because development is ultimately about people.

A hospital is not merely a building.

It is a place where a mother hopes to save her child.

It is where a family prays for a sick father.

It is where doctors and nurses fight to preserve life.

And when government invests in healthcare, it invests in the dignity and survival of its people.

Education and the Hope of the Next Generation

Perhaps no investment is more important to the future of Edo than education.

Schools are where tomorrow's doctors, engineers, teachers, entrepreneurs, farmers, administrators and leaders are prepared.

The Okpebholo administration has made education part of its broader SHINE development philosophy, with interventions directed toward strengthening the sector.

Recent accounts of the administration's initiatives have pointed to education infrastructure, teacher support and efforts to improve learning conditions.

The importance of this cannot be overstated.

Every classroom improved today is an investment in tomorrow.

Every teacher supported is an investment in a child's future.

Every young Edo person given an opportunity to learn is another reason for hope.

Agriculture, Jobs and the Edo Economy

Edo is blessed with land, people and enormous economic potential.

But potential becomes meaningful only when people have opportunities to turn their abilities into livelihoods.

That is why agriculture, economic development and job creation have featured among the areas highlighted by the administration.

The governor's 2026 outlook emphasized the goal of moving Edo into a phase of what he described as "Hope and Growth," with attention to security, infrastructure, healthcare, education, agriculture, economic development and job creation.

For the young entrepreneur looking for opportunity, the farmer seeking access to markets, the artisan seeking customers and the graduate searching for a pathway into the economy, these policies are not abstract.

They are about the possibility of a better tomorrow.

The Human Side of the Governor

Beyond projects and policy is the man himself.

The most enduring political legacies are rarely created by statistics alone.



GOV. OKPEBHOLO

They are built through the connection between a leader and the people.

Okpebholo's supporters often describe him as accessible, determined and development-minded. His political journey has also shown a willingness to accept responsibility and step into difficult assignments.

But perhaps the most important thing about turning 56 in public office is the reminder that leadership is a privilege on loan from the people.

A governor has the power to approve projects, sign budgets and make policies.

But the greatest power is the opportunity to improve lives.

That is where the true meaning of service lies.

Edo is Shining

There is a beautiful symbolism in the administration's SHINE agenda.

For a state with Edo's history and heritage, to speak of shining is to speak of renewal.

It is to imagine Benin City and other communities as places where businesses can grow, young people can dream, families can feel secure and communities can look to tomorrow with confidence.

It is to believe that Edo's best days can still be ahead.

And while no administration can solve every problem overnight, the journey of development is measured by the willingness to keep moving.

That is the challenge before Governor Okpebholo as he turns 56.

The roads must continue.

The security gains must be sustained. Healthcare must continue to improve.

Education must receive even greater attention.

Agriculture must become more productive.

Young people must find more opportunities.

And the people must continue to feel that government is working for them.

A Toast at 56

So, as the people of Edo celebrate Governor Monday Okpebholo this Saturday, the occasion deserves more than political greetings.

It deserves gratitude.

Gratitude for the journey.

Gratitude for the courage to serve.

Gratitude for every road repaired, every infrastructure project pursued, every security intervention undertaken, every school and healthcare initiative supported, and every policy designed to create opportunity.

It deserves a celebration of the man, but even more importantly, a celebration of the possibilities that his leadership represents for Edo State.

At 56, Governor Okpebholo has another opportunity to write an even greater chapter in his story.

The journey is not over.

Indeed, it may only be entering its most important phase.

May the wisdom of 56 bring greater vision.

May experience bring greater humility.

May responsibility bring greater courage.

And may the love for Edo continue to inspire the work.

Happy 56th Birthday, Your Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo.

May God continue to grant you strength, wisdom, sound health and the grace to serve the people of Edo State with distinction.

May Edo continue to shine.

May the people continue to prosper. May the work of building a greater Edo continue to succeed.

And above all,

To God be all the glory.

Happy Birthday, Mr. Governor.

Happy Birthday, the People's Governor.

Happy Birthday, Senator Monday Okpebholo.

At 56, may there be more grace, more wisdom, more strength and many more years of impactful service to Edo State and humanity.



So, as the people of Edo celebrate Governor Monday Okpebholo this Saturday, the occasion deserves more than political greetings. It deserves gratitude. Gratitude for the journey.

COLUMN

That overzealous aide



I served as a political appointee on two occasions. And I understand that there is a thin line between loyalty and overzealousness and political aides must be careful not to cross it.

Loyalty to a principal is admirable; indeed, every public officer deserves aides committed to the success of the administration they serve. But when such loyalty becomes excessive, reckless and injudicious, it can transform an aide from an asset into a liability. Yes, I mean it.

The recent vituperations by one of Governor Monday Okpebholo's aides, Apostle Kassy Chukwu, following the Osun election and the controversy surrounding Davido have therefore raised serious questions about the conduct of public officials, the limits of political loyalty and the responsibilities that come with public appointments.

At the height of Osun electioneering, the aide reportedly announced a ban on Davido, the globally celebrated Nigerian music icon, from performing in Edo State. Davido had earlier allegedly cast aspersions on Governor Monday Okpebholo, prompting the governor's Senior Special Assistant on Digital Media, Apostle Chukwu, to announce the purported ban.

Yet, the declaration was, to put it mildly, uncalled for, provocative and unnecessary. It created an embarrassing spectacle and generated reactions that no responsible government should have to contend with.

No aide, regardless of how passionately he feels about the political interests of his principal, should make pronouncements capable of portraying the government as intolerant, vindictive or hostile to personalities simply because of political differences. Public office requires maturity. It demands restraint, discretion and an understanding of the weight of words.

A political appointee must constantly remember that, once appointed, he no longer speaks merely as an ordinary citizen. His words, actions and public conduct may be interpreted as reflecting the position of the government he serves. This is why public officials must be measured, particularly when speaking on controversial matters.

The controversy should serve as a lesson to those who mistakenly believe that insulting people, issuing threats and engaging in unnecessary social-media battles amount to defending a principal. Nothing could be further from the truth. Aides who genuinely want to protect the interests of their principals should not manufacture controversies that compel the government to engage in damage control.

Those familiar with the said aide

would probably not be entirely surprised by the development. He has, on several occasions, been accused of using social media to disparage and insult personalities with whom he disagrees. His combative style of engagement may appeal to those who mistake aggression for courage, but it is hardly the disposition expected of someone occupying a sensitive public position.

There is a difference between expressing an opinion and insulting people. There is a difference between political disagreement and personal abuse. There is also a difference between defending an administration and becoming a perpetual merchant of insults on its behalf.

Indeed, appointing an individual with a disposition for publicly disparaging people and casting aspersions on others may prove costly for any government. The business of governance is too serious to be reduced to the temperament of individuals who believe that the loudest insult is the strongest argument.

Governor Monday Okpebholo does not deserve aides who sow seeds of discord and create avoidable distractions for his administration. Every government has enough challenges without adding self-inflicted public-relations crises to the list. Edo State is confronted with issues that require attention, energy and resources. The people are more interested in good roads, security, employment opportunities, economic development, healthcare and other programmes that can improve their lives.

More importantly, political appointments should never be viewed as licences to insult perceived opponents or settle personal scores. Appointees are expected to add value to governance. They should bring competence, ideas, diplomacy and strategic thinking to the table. Where an appointee instead becomes famous for abusive language, social-media altercations and reckless declarations, the government must ask whether such a person is advancing its interests or undermining them.

I am delighted to hear that the Edo State Government has vehemently dissociated itself from the embarrassing episode. Reports that the government has also moved to take disciplinary action against the aide are equally encouraging, if true. Governments must be prepared to draw a clear line between their official policies and the personal excesses of individuals serving under them.

A prompt repudiation of an unauthorised declaration is important. Silence could easily have been interpreted as approval. By distancing itself from the statement, the gov-

ernment has demonstrated that the alleged ban on Davido did not represent its official position.

Edo State is not the personal property of any political office holder, political party or government appointee. It belongs to all Edo people and, in a broader sense, remains a part of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, open to citizens who are lawfully engaged in legitimate activities. The decision to ban a popular musician from performing in the state is not one that should emanate from an aide acting in anger or excitement.

Davido is not merely a political sympathiser or a social-media personality. He is one of Nigeria's most successful musical exports and an internationally recognised entertainer. Whether one likes his political associations or not is beside the point. Politics should not be used as an excuse to restrict legitimate artistic, cultural or commercial activities.

It is also important to understand that political relationships in Nigeria are often more complicated than the public imagines. Politicians know themselves. During campaign periods and elections, they may exchange words that stir emotions, create tension and generate ill feelings among supporters. Such rhetoric may sometimes be regrettable, but politicians often understand the nature of the game better than their followers do.

Those who exchange the harshest words on campaign platforms can, after an election, sit together, shake hands and engage in political banter. The same politicians whose supporters abuse one another today may form alliances tomorrow.

In politics, there are no permanent friends and no permanent foes,

only permanent interests. This is the nature of politics.

That is why aides and supporters must be careful not to take political battles beyond the boundaries of reason. One politician's statement during a heated campaign should not become an excuse for an aide to embark on a personal crusade or issue threats in the name of a government.

Elections come and go, but the responsibility to govern remains. A government must therefore rise above the temporary passions of electoral contests and focus on its larger responsibility to the people.

Unfortunately, one of the problems with contemporary politics is the emergence of what may be described as political excess enthusiasm. Some aides and supporters become more militant than the politicians they claim to defend. They insult everyone who criticises the government, attack opposing viewpoints and create enemies where none previously existed.

Governor Okpebholo needs constructive and strategic aides, not those who will turn every disagreement into a war. He needs people who can help him communicate his policies effectively, build bridges across political and ethnic divides and project Edo State positively. The governor's image should not be placed in the hands of individuals who are incapable of controlling their emotions in public discourse.

This is particularly important in the age of social media, where a reckless post can travel across the world within minutes. An unfortunate statement can be reproduced, misrepresented and weaponised against an administration before the government has the opportunity to respond. Every public official must therefore treat the keyboard with the same caution with which a diplomat approaches a microphone.

The old saying that one should think before speaking has acquired a new meaning in the digital era: think before posting.

A public appointee must understand that not every provocation requires a response. Not every criticism deserves an insult. Not every political development calls for a threat. Sometimes, the wisest response is silence. At other times, a calm and carefully worded statement is far more effective than an outburst.

The fact that someone has access to power does not mean that he has acquired the authority to abuse it. Public office is a privilege, not a weapon. The purpose of power is service, not intimidation.

Edo State deserves a government that is mature, inclusive and tolerant. It also deserves public officials who understand that criticism is an inevitable part of democracy.

The proper response to opposition is not to threaten, insult or ban. The appropriate response is to govern well.

A government that delivers good

roads, strengthens security, improves healthcare, creates opportunities and demonstrates accountability does not need an army of overzealous aides to manufacture fear or silence criticism. Good governance is the most persuasive political argument.

This is not to suggest that political appointees should become passive or refuse to defend their principals. Far from it. A government needs effective spokespersons and loyal aides who can respond intelligently to misinformation and defend legitimate policies. But loyalty must be guided by wisdom.

An aide should be able to defend without abusing, disagree without dehumanising and criticise without becoming contemptuous.

The episode involving the ban on Davido should therefore be treated as a cautionary tale. An aide who becomes overzealous can embarrass the government he claims to defend. A loyalist who lacks restraint can become a political burden. And a government that fails to call its erring officials to order may eventually be judged by their excesses.

The governor should therefore ensure that public appointees understand the limits of their authority and the expectations attached to their offices. Public service should impose a higher standard of conduct, not lower it.

They should be builders of bridges, not creators of enemies. They should help the governor to unite the people, not deepen divisions. They should promote the administration's policies, not promote themselves through controversy.

And they should remember that, in politics, today's opponent may become tomorrow's ally.

The politicians at the centre of the fiercest political battles often know when to stop fighting and where to meet afterwards. It is usually the overzealous aides and supporters who carry the battle beyond its reasonable limits.

Governor Monday Okpebholo should insist on discipline, restraint and maturity among those serving under him. Edo State needs focused governance, not unnecessary drama. It needs public officials who understand the dignity of their offices and the consequences of their words.

The Osun election may have produced passions and political disagreements, as elections often do. Davido may have expressed political views that some people dislike. But none of these circumstances justifies an aide unilaterally declaring that a Nigerian entertainer is banned from performing in Edo State.

Such overzealousness is neither loyalty nor courage. It is recklessness.

And every responsible government must know the difference.

• **Dr. Odaro is a columnist and lecturer in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State, Nigeria.**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

BIRTHDAY MESSAGE TO THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF EDO STATE

Today, we, the entire staff and management of the Edo State Ministry of Works, join millions of Edo people at home and in the Diaspora to celebrate a leader whose birthday coincides with a season of visible progress across our dear state.

Your Excellency, On this special day, we honor not just the gift of your life, but the intentional way you have turned leadership into service. Under your watch, our roads have stopped being promises and have become pathways of opportunity. From urban arteries to rural linkages, the footprint of your infrastructural drive is clear for all to see.

The Ministry of Works has felt the weight and the privilege of working under a governor who insists that quality must meet purpose. Because of your commitment to road construction and maintenance, farmers now move produce faster, students get to school safer, businesses open with confidence, and communities that were once cut off are now connected to the heartbeat of Edo's economy.

You have taught us that infrastructure is not just cement and asphalt. It is dignity. It is access. It is the quiet assurance that government remembers every community.

As you mark another year, we pray that God grants you renewed strength, wisdom, and long life. May the same hands that have shaped Edo's roads continue to shape a future where every Edo son and daughter feels the impact of good governance.

Happy Birthday, Your Excellency.

Edo is SHINING, and we are proud to be building that movement with you.

Signed: Engr DR. JOHN OBANOR
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Works, Edo State.



Happy Birthday

BIRTHDAY FELICITATIONS TO HIS EXCELLENCY, THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF EDO STATE

Your Excellency, Mr. Governor,

On the occasion of your birthday, I warmly felicitate with you and celebrate the grace of God upon your life, leadership, and service to our dear Edo State.

Your Excellency, your emergence as Governor has ushered in a renewed sense of purpose, vision, and commitment to the development of our State. In less than two years in office, your administration has recorded numerous remarkable achievements across various sectors, touching lives and laying enduring foundations for a more prosperous and resilient Edo State. These accomplishments are a testament to your dedication, courage, purposeful leadership, and unwavering commitment to the welfare of our people.

Happy Birthday, Your Excellency.

May you celebrate many more glorious years in good health, peace, prosperity, and continued service to humanity.

Amòghò!!!

Congratulations and many happy returns!

Signed: Hon. PATRICK IDIAKHE
*Chairman, Edo State Audit
Service Commission.*



H A P P Y

Birthday

Your Excellency

Today, I join the good people of Edo State and indeed Nigerians at home and abroad to celebrate a leader whose emergence has rekindled hope and inspired confidence in the future of our dear State.

Your Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo, as you mark your 56th birthday, may the pages of your life continue to be written in golden ink, and may the years ahead blossom like flowers after the rain. Your leadership has come at a defining moment in the history of Edo State, and your commitment to development, infrastructure renewal, environmental protection and the wellbeing of our people continues to shine as a beacon of purposeful governance.

Like the morning sun that rises over the ancient walls of Benin, may your vision continue to illuminate Edo State. Like the mighty rivers that nourish our land, may divine wisdom, strength and grace continually flow through your administration.

On this special occasion, I pray that Almighty God renews your

strength, enlarges your wisdom, protects you and your family, and grants you many more years of sound health, peace and exceptional accomplishments in service to humanity.

May your administration leave footprints that generations yet unborn will proudly follow, and may the SHINE agenda continue to shine brighter, bringing prosperity, transformation and renewed dignity to the people of Edo State.

Happy 56th Birthday,
Your Excellency.

May your new year be crowned with greater grace, uncommon wisdom, abundant favour and enduring achievements.

Congratulations and many happy returns, Your Excellency!



His Excellency

**SEN. MONDAY
OKPEBHOLO**

*Executive Governor
of Edo State*



**Hon. Okoyomoh
BAWA MUHAMMED**

*CEO, Edo State Flood,
Erosion and Watershed
Management Agency (EdoFEWMA)
Project Coordinator,
Edo State NEWMAP-EIB*

SPORTS



NFF General Secretary Mohammed Sanusi resigns amid leadership shake-Up

The General Secretary of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), Dr Mohammed Sanusi, has resigned from his position amid a major leadership shake-up at the country's football governing body.

Sanusi's resignation was confirmed on Thursday by the former NFF chief scribe himself, according to reports published by Daily Sun, with Sanusi reportedly stating that the resignation of both himself and NFF President Ibrahim Musa Gusau was true.

The development comes amid growing pressure on the NFF leadership following a difficult period for Nigerian football, including the Super Eagles' failure to qualify for the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the Super Falcons' historic failure to secure qualification for the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup.

Reports earlier indicated that several members of the NFF Executive Committee had also resigned. Vanguard reported on Thursday that Gusau and other board members had stepped

down, while other reports put the number of departing Executive Committee members at eight out of the 13-member board.

Sanusi, who has served as NFF General Secretary since 2014, has been responsible for the day-to-day administration of the federation, working across national team programmes, competitions and the implementation of decisions of the NFF Executive Committee and Congress.

The reported mass departures therefore raise questions over who will take charge of the federation's as or Emergency Congress will be required to determine the next phase of the NFF's administration.

The developments also come at a critical point in the federation's electoral calendar. The NFF had earlier approved an elective congress for September 2026 in Lafia, Nasarawa State, although reports in recent weeks have indicated that the electoral process could be affected by the proposed restructuring of Nigerian football.

The leadership crisis has unfolded against the backdrop of mounting scrutiny of the NFF, including questions surrounding the management of government funds allocated to support the country's national teams. Reports have also linked security agencies to investigations into the utilisation of a Federal Government intervention fund.

For now, the immediate priority is likely to be establishing an interim administrative structure capable of keeping the federation operational while the

relevant NFF organs determine the constitutional and statutory steps to be taken.

The reported resignation of Sanusi and Gusau would represent one of the most significant leadership changes in the history of Nigerian football administration. However, the precise legal and administrative consequences will depend on the formal resignation notices, the number of Executive Committee vacancies and the application of the March 2026 NFF Statutes.



MOHAMMED SANUSI, RESIGNED NFF GENERAL SECRETARY

WAFU-B: Edo Queens book semifinals place after beating ASEC Mimosas 3-1 In CAF champions league qualifiers

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Coach Boboye hails team

Nigeria Women Football League Champions Edo Queens FC today defeated their Ivorian counterparts Asec Mimosas 3-1 in their second match of the 2026 CAF Champions League qualifiers to secure the quarter finals.

Oluwakemi Adegbuyi scored the first goal in the 23rd minute of the game to boost the confidence of her side.

Doosuur Atume increased the tally in the 43rd minute to help Edo Queens go into the

half-time break with 2-0 advantage over the Code D'voire champions.

ASEC Mimosas fought back in the second half and pulled a goal back to reduce the deficit, thereby putting pressure on Edo Queens.

Edo Queens however remained composed and determined as Oluebube Umajiaku sealed the victory in the 89th minute when she found the back of the net to make it 3-1 at full time.

The emphatic victory en-

sured Edo Queens' qualification for the semifinals of the tournament with a game to spare in group B

Edo Queens began the WAFU-B qualifying campaign on Monday with 7-0 thrashing of AS Garde Nationale of Niger Republic. They top the group with six points and 10 goals.

The Nigerians now Ampem Darkoa Ladies of Ghana as the last opponents in group B.

In a post match interview, the stand-in technical manager of Edo Queens Ken-

nedy Boboye commended his team for maintaining their composure throughout the game.

"I'm happy that our girls stood their ground. We played against a good side with quality today but thank God we were able to take our chances when they came..

Congratulations to our girls they made us proud and we hope to achieve our purpose of coming to this tournament in Burkina Faso. We promised our people five over five before we left Benin City." He enthused.

NPFL27: Tenebe confident Insurance FC will win league title as new Football season begins

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The chairman of Bendel Insurance Football Club Jarrett Tenebe has expressed high confidence that the Benin Arsenal are primed to challenge for and win the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) title in the 2026/27 season.

The Benin Arsenal boss disclosed the ambition of the club in an interview with journalists ahead of Edo Queens match against Asec Mimosas in Burkina Faso on Wednesday.

Tenebe said that he has confidence in the ability of the current team of Bendel Insurance FC to win the premier league title in 2027.

Insurance FC have their first match of the new season coming up on Sunday, August 30 against Warri Wolves. The match is scheduled to kick off at 4pm at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium in Benin.

According to the chairman, the Benin-based club is targeting its third top-flight league trophy, aiming to end a domestic title drought,

stretching back to 1979.

Insurance FC achieved back-to-back 5th-place finishes in the 2024/25 and 2025/26 seasons. The management believes recent recruitment and player incentives will elevate them to the top spot.

The Benin based premier league club have only won the league title twice -1973 and 1979.

Chairman Tenebe highlighted that tying direct monetary bonuses to goals scored turned around the team's fortunes last season, addressing scoring struggles and pushing them into upper-table contention.

"When I joined Bendel Insurance FC last year as chairman of the club, they were at the bottom of the table and I met with the players and officials and told them to wake up. I saw that they were having goal scoring problems. The first thing I did was to tie certain amount of money to a goal scored. Each goal actually attracted reasonable amount of money and that changed everything. We started getting the goals and I didn't miss redeeming my pledges.



EDO QUEENS CELEBRATING AFTER SCORING A GOAL