

Yekini Idaiye Emerges New Edo Speaker

● **As Agbebaku resigns, Assembly reshuffles leadership**

The Edo State House of Assembly on Monday elected Hon. Yekini Idaiye, representing Akoko-Edo Constituency I, as its new Speaker following the resignation of Rt. Hon. Blessing Agbebaku from the position.

Idaiye, a third-term lawmaker and former Deputy Speaker of the Assembly, emerged during Monday's plenary after the House formally received and accepted Agbebaku's resignation.

The former Speaker's resignation came amid moves by

lawmakers to remove him from office. Multiple reports said a significant number of members had backed the move before Agbebaku stepped down.

The sitting was presided over by the Deputy Speaker, Hon. Osamwonye Atu, following

which Hon. Sunday Ojieleze nominated Idaiye for the speakership and Hon. Eric Okaka seconded the nomination.

With no other nomination presented, Idaiye was declared Speaker and subsequently sworn into office by the Clerk

of the House, Alhaji Audu Yahaya Omogbai.

In his maiden address as Speaker, Idaiye alleged that the former leadership under Agbebaku had been characterised by poor leadership and management adding that the new administration will take steps to reorganise the leadership

structures of the House.

Idaiye also announced the suspension of Agbebaku pending the resolution of allegations against him.

Agbebaku, however, has said his resignation was based on personal reasons.

The change at the speakership was accompanied by a broader reshuffling of the lead-

CONTINUES ON PG 2»

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#200

Okpebholo charges Edo Assembly new leadership on unity, transparency, teamwork

RICHARD EWEKA

BENIN CITY

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo has charged the new leadership of the state House of Assembly to embrace humility, unity, transparency and teamwork, urging lawmakers to put

aside personal differences and focus on serving the people.

The governor gave the charge when he received the newly elected speaker, Prince Yekini Oisayemoje Idaiye, who represents Akoko-Edo Constituency 1.

The governor said political office was temporary and

should be handled with humility and a strong sense of responsibility.

According to the governor, "We must put arrogance aside to serve our people better because today we are here and tomorrow we don't know where we will be."

He urged the new leadership

to promote transparency, dialogue, and inclusiveness while advising lawmakers to resolve disagreements within the assembly rather than taking them to social media.

"It's a new leadership. I don't know what happened. Whatever must have happened in the House is for the House, and

it remains there. I was also a parliamentarian, and I know that we respect one another," he said.

Governor Okpebholo said disagreements among lawmakers should be handled internally, adding that the emergence of a new leadership presented an opportunity for members to

work together.

He then urged Speaker Idaiye to understand the responsibility that comes with his office and ensure that all members of the Assembly are carried along.

"It is not just to be a leader, but a responsible leader. You are

CONTINUES ON PG 2»

Tinubu's economic reforms push FAAC allocations above ₦2trn monthly – Minister

OWERRI

The Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Prof. Taiwo Oyeadele, says the Federal Government's economic reforms have pushed the monthly Federal Allocation to over N2 trillion from an average of N300 billion in the past administrations.

Oyeadele disclosed the fiscal shift on Monday in Owerri, while declaring open the 2026 National Council on Finance and Economic Development retreat.

He expressed delight that the positive development would help to boost national economic growth.

Speaking on the theme of the

three-day retreat, "Strengthening Fiscal Federalism for Equity, Sustainable Development and Economic Resilience in a Volatile Global Economy," the minister said that President Bola Tinubu's economic decisions, including fuel subsidy removal and foreign exchange unification, triggered off the surge in revenue, culminating in a record N2.8 trillion disbursement in June 2026.

"For nearly 30 years, it was common for many states to struggle to pay salaries," Oyeadele said.

According to him, no state currently struggles with salary obligations under the new arrangement.

CONTINUES ON PG 2»



INAUGURATION:

The new speaker, Rt. Hon. Idaiye Yekini Oisayemoje member representing Akoko Edo constituency 1 Edo State House of Assembly (right) being sworn in by Alhaji Yahaya Audu Omogbai Clerk of the house during the house plenary session yesterday.

PHOTO: GODWIN ISEGUN.

NDLEA destroys ₦301bn worth of cocaine, others in Lagos

—Pg 2

One revenue system, one Edo: Braimoh applauds Okpebholo's fiscal reforms

—Pg 4

Top Zambian opposition figures arrested days after presidential vote

—Pg 15

NFF sacks Super Falcons Technical Crew after WAFCON, World Cup disaster

—Pg 22

NEWS

NDLEA destroys ₦301bn worth of cocaine, others in Lagos

ABUJA

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has publicly destroyed 329,865.585 Kilo grammes of assorted illicit drugs. The illicit drugs with an estimated street value of N301 billion were destroyed on Monday in Lagos, following a court-ordered exercise.

This is contained in a statement by the NDLEA spokesperson, Mr Femi Babafemi on Monday in Abuja.

Babafemi said that the exercise conducted pursuant to orders of the Federal High Court, Lagos Judicial Division, disposed of uncontested concluded

cases and abandoned seizures.

He also said that speaking at the event, the NDLEA Chairman, retired, Brig.-Gen. Buba Marwa described the exercise as a bold demonstration of Nigeria's resolve to protect her people and deny criminal enterprises the resources they need to thrive.

Marwa noted that behind every kilo gramme of narcotics destroyed laid a story of a young life at risk, a family torn apart by addiction, and communities endangered by drug-related crime and impaired driving.

According to him, of the total consignment, 246,864.535 kilo grammes were seized by the Lagos Strategic Command

of the Agency between April 2025 and May 2026.

"83,001.05 kilo grammes came from the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA), Tincan and Apapa strategic commands, as well as the Marine command and a Special Operations Unit, all operating within Lagos."

Marwa said that the destroyed illicit drugs comprised mainly cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, cannabis of different strains including Canadian Loud and skunk, Ephedrine, Tramadol, Codeine syrup and other opioids, as well as Khat leaf.

The NDLEA boss said that the destroyed consignment represented more than the

elimination of contraband.

He stressed that illicit drugs weakened the labour force, raised healthcare costs, discouraged investment and drained public resources that should go into education, healthcare and infrastructure.

He added that every consignment intercepted by the agency saved the country billions of naira in potential losses linked to addiction, crime and social dislocation.

Marwa also linked the trade in illicit drugs to Nigeria's broader security challenges, noting that drug trafficking helped fund organised crime, terrorism and violent extremism globally.

Okpebholo charges Edo...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

not just assuming a new office, to be just an ordinary speaker. You should know that you are now carrying the shoulders of many people and you have to be transparent with your colleagues. You have to carry everybody along," he said.

He warned that failure to involve members in the affairs of the House could create fresh divisions.

"The only way you can have an effective leadership is for you to carry everybody along," Okpebholo said.

Urging the new speaker to live up to the positive comments made about him by his colleagues, the governor said, "Everyone is saying good things about you. I want you to remain the way they have described you," he said.

The governor identified teamwork as essential to effective legislative leadership and encouraged lawmakers to raise their concerns through

dialogue.

"Teamwork is the bedrock of effective leadership. And for you to make progress, you need to believe in yourselves. When you have anything in mind, always voice it out either in private with the Speaker or in the open. Dialogue is always the key," he said.

Okpebholo said he wanted the Assembly to remain peaceful, noting that the House had operated without a major crisis for about two years.

"I want us to have a peaceful house. For about two years, there have never been crises in the House. And I pray that in another two years, there will be no crises in the House," he said.

With elections approaching, the governor urged the lawmakers to strengthen their presence in their constituencies and work towards electoral success.

"I pray that you people will take charge of your constituencies. Elections are coming. We have to work hard to see that we record success," he said.

Yekini Idaiye Emerges New Edo...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

ership of the House.

The Assembly also made changes to the leadership of the majority caucus, with Hon. Sunday Ojizele emerging as Majority Leader, while Hon. Ojie Inegbebor was nominated as Deputy Majority Leader.

Hon. Natasha Osawaru was also approved as Minority Leader.

The leadership changes mark a significant reconfiguration of the eighth Edo State House of Assembly and come at a time when the legislature has faced concerns over political disagreements and prolonged adjournments.

The new Speaker, in his address, pledged to uphold fairness, justice and equity in the discharge of his responsibilities.

He said the new leadership would work to restore stability and improve the effectiveness of the legislative arm of government, while supporting the de-

velopment agenda of Governor Monday Okpebholo.

Idaiye's emergence also places an experienced legislator at the head of the Assembly. He has represented Akoko-Edo Constituency I for three consecutive terms and previously served as Deputy Speaker between June 2019 and August 2020.

His return to the leadership of the House comes amid political calculations around zoning and regional representation in the state. His emergence gives Edo North a prominent position in the leadership of the legislature, while Governor Okpebholo is from Edo Central.

For the new Speaker, the immediate challenge will be to stabilise the Assembly, manage competing political interests and restore confidence in the institution's capacity to effectively perform its constitutional responsibilities of lawmaking, representation and oversight.

The Edo legislature, with 24



COURTESY VISIT:

From left: Deputy APC Chairman, Edo State, Sylvester Aigboboh; APC Chairman, Edo State, Emperor Jarret Tenebe; Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo; Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly, Yekini Idaiye; Secretary to the Edo State Government, Barr. Musa Umar Ikhilior; and Chief of Staff to the Edo State Governor, Hon. Yakubu Oshiohena Musa, during a courtesy visit by members of the Edo State House of Assembly to the Governor at the Government House, Benin City, on Monday, August 17, 2026

PHOTO: OKONDOH TALLE EBOSE

Edo Govt winning the war against crime, criminality – Prince Idaomi

BENIN CITY

RICHARD EWEKA

The Edo State Government is winning the battle against crime and criminality through a combination of proactive security measures, stronger law enforcement and sustained political commitment, according to political commentator and analyst, Prince Oluwatobi Idaomi.

Idaomi, a political analyst,

activist, banker-turned-nursing practitioner and holder of multiple academic degrees, commended Governor Monday Okpebholo for what he described as a bold and determined approach to tackling insecurity across Edo State.

He said the administration's renewed focus on security has helped restore confidence among residents and created a more peaceful atmosphere for businesses and economic activities.

According to him, a secure

environment is essential to attracting both local and foreign investment, while also encouraging farmers, entrepreneurs and other residents to pursue their livelihoods without fear.

What informed Governor Okpebholo's bold approach to fighting criminality?

Governor Monday Okpebholo's determination to tackle insecurity is informed by the understanding that security is the foundation of meaningful development.

No state can achieve sustainable economic growth when residents live in fear of

kidnapping, cultism and other forms of criminality. The governor's approach demonstrates a willingness to confront these challenges directly and restore public confidence.

His administration has made security a priority because Edo must be safe for its people, businesses and investors to thrive. How would you score the Okpebholo administration in the fight against crime?

I would score the Edo State Government highly in the area of security because of the policies and measures it has introduced to tackle crime and criminality.

Okpebholo remains committed to citizenry welfare, creating enabling environment – Commissioner

BENIN CITY

LUCKY EFESÉ

The Commissioner for Business, Trade and Investment, Edo State, Hon. Omoh Anabor, has assured the commitment of Governor Monday Okpebholo, to improving the livelihood of the people and creating an enabling environment for businesses to thrive through

the government's SHINE agenda.

He gave the assurances during official inauguration of the state executive of the Nigerian Association of Small and Medium Enterprise, NASME, held at John Odigie Oye-gun Public Service Academy.

Hon. Anabor, in his remarks as the special guest of honour, said that the new responsibility comes with the opportunity to provide purposeful leadership, effective advocacy and meaningful sup-

port to MSMEs across the state.

He added that the importance of MSMEs to the economy, cannot be over-emphasised as they remain critical drivers of employment, innovation, wealth creation and economic development.

He advised the current NASME to maintain stronger ties with its national body, other MSME associations, financial institutions, development partners and donor agencies with the primary objec-

tives of promoting the growth and prosperity of its members.

The commissioner urged NASME to collaborate with his ministry in identifying the needs of its members, supporting capacity development and providing constructive advocacy on policies affecting the MSME sector, just as he had charged them to allow their advocacy to highlight challenges while also offering practical solutions that promote enterprise, investment and job creation.

Tinubu's economic reforms...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

However, the minister warned state governors that higher revenues alone did not guarantee prosperity without strategic investments in local productivity, infrastructure, human capital, and basic public services.

He challenged state and local governments to look beyond monthly oil allocations by aggressively expanding their internally generated revenue bases to weather volatile global economic pressures.

"Ultimately, the federation cannot share its way into prosperity," Oyedele said.

He, therefore, advised states to transform into active economic platforms, capable of attracting investment, supporting business,

and driving job creation.

The minister called for an urgent review of the nation's allocation formulas to ensure equity across all the 774 Local Government Areas, while promoting fiscal responsibility and debt sustainability frameworks.

He said the Federal Government had expanded targeted interventions, including cash transfer to 15 million vulnerable households and the NG-CARES programme, to cushion the effects of economic reforms on vulnerable Nigerians.

In his speech, Gov. Hope Uzodimma, represented by his deputy, Mrs Chinyere Ekomaru, commended the president for his visionary leadership and commitment to fiscal reforms that were repositioning the nation's economy.

Edo DG Idahosa inspects ongoing rehabilitation of Okhun road

BENIN CITY

BERNADETTE IDALU

The Edo State Deputy Governor, Hon. Dennis Idahosa, on Monday received accolades from motorists and passersby as he carried out an on the spot inspection of the ongoing rehabilitation of Okhun Road, Off Upper Siluko Road, Benin City.

The Deputy Governor who monitored the palliative work

being carried out at the failed portions of the road, appreciated the Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo for magnanimously putting the rehabilitation of the road on the 2026 Edo State budget way before the online sensitization and attendant controversies surrounding the need for road repairs.

Idahosa announced, "Governor Monday Okpebholo has already mandated the Ministry of Works to start

the procurement process of awarding this road.

"For those who were politicising this, this project is all about the people. The Governor is a people centred Governor. For doubting Thomas's who want to know if this work is actually going on, we urge them to come on site, we are here until this job is fully completed"

Idahosa who incidentally has been to site for the past four days to monitor and expedite on work done took time to inspect the worthi-

ness of the road project by the contracting firm and interact with the skilled workforce as they went about with the road construction using excavators to dig, widen and shovel off mud and slimy water off the main and intersecting road.

He monitored their activities as they refilled failed portions of the road with gravel and granite stones. He viewed a forged side drainage canal being put in place for drainage and erosion control.

Speaking on the pace of work being done, Idahosa informed, "Few weeks ago, I met with the leadership of Ovia Federal Constituency. I made them to understand that we were going to do palliative work pending when the rain subsides. A construction company can then go ahead and do a comprehensive work.

"In the interim, we have asked a contractor to come on

site to do a palliative work and the people of Ovia Federal Constituency have been in jubilation for the past 24 hours I have been here.

"I was here on Friday, Saturday and on Sunday. Today makes it the fourth day that I have been here. So far, what the construction company has done, i believe, has made people of Ovia Federal Constituency happy."



ROAD RECONSTRUCTION:

Edo State Deputy Governor Rt. Hon. Dennis Idahosa inspecting the on going Massive repair of the Failed portion of Upper Siluko Road by Okhun junction.

PHOTO: MOSES OBOH

FG vows zero tolerance for health sector corruption

ABUJA

Federal Government has declared zero tolerance for corruption in the health sector, warning that diversion of healthcare resources could cost lives and undermine efforts to improve services nationwide.

The Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Prof. Muhammad Pate, said this on Monday in Abuja during the inauguration of the Joint Task Team of the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC).

Pate said, "Let me be un-

quivocal: this Ministry will not tolerate corruption," adding that effective systems should identify vulnerabilities early and close loopholes before resources were lost through misconduct or diversion.

He said that principle informed the establishment of the Joint Task Team between the ministry and ICPC, with prevention at the heart of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and its mandate.

"The team is expected to identify institutional vulnerabilities, strengthen preventive controls, improve oversight across the health sector while supporting transparent management and accountability

nationwide and closing gaps before they worsen further."

Pate said the ministry was already applying the approach where significant public resources were being deployed, including BHC PF 2.0, where 774 officers, one per LGA, independently verify funds received and utilised.

He added that verified National Identification Numbers were being used to authenticate beneficiaries, reduce duplication, while tighter standards governed fund utilisation and violations attracted clear consequences across supported programmes nationwide already.

"The ministry is also digitalising processes so resources can be tracked transparently

from allocation to use, while the ICPC provides independent preventive oversight to identify weaknesses before they become failures institutionally.

"This responsibility does not rest with government alone.

"The effort also requires public servants, honest contractors, development partners and citizens willing to speak when something goes wrong promptly and openly."

He also charged members of the team to approach the assignment with professionalism, independence, courage and diligence, while ensuring recommendations outlast the team and strengthen systems beyond its lifespan through sustained implementation.

Kaduna varsity lecturers' exodus worsens as ASUU issues strike ultimatum

KADUNA

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Kaduna State University (KASU) chapter, has raised concern over the departure of more than 200 lecturers.

Chairman of ASUU-KASU, Dr Abubakar Abdullahi, disclosed this at a press conference on Monday in Kaduna.

He said the lecturers, including professors, left the institution due to poor conditions of service and non-implementation of the 2025 Federal Government-ASUU Agreement.

The Union also issued a two-week ultimatum to the Kaduna State Government and university authorities to implement and domesticate the agreement.

The union warned that failure to act within the period could result in a total and indefinite strike at the university.

Abdullahi said most of the lecturers who left the institution secured appointments in newer universities within and outside Kaduna State.

He attributed the development to poor remuneration

and declining welfare conditions in the university.

According to him, the 2025 Federal Government-ASUU Agreement took effect in January 2026.

He said the agreement provided improved conditions of service for academic staff in Nigerian universities.

The chairman, however, noted that implementation had yet to commence at Kaduna State University.

Abdullahi said the union had written several letters to the university management and governing council on the matter.

He added that the Visitor to the university, Gov. Uba Sani, had also been notified.

According to him, the union engaged various stakeholders to ensure industrial harmony and stability within the institution.

He expressed concern that more than eight months after the agreement was signed, implementation was yet to begin.

Abdullahi said many federal universities and some state-owned institutions had already commenced implementation.

No cause for fear ahead of 2027 elections, AIG Jimoh assures Nigerians

LAGOS

The Asst. Inspector-General of Police (AIG), Zone 2 Command, Mr Olohundare Jimoh, has assured Nigerians of adequate security ahead of the 2027 elections.

Jimoh says the police are fully prepared and there is no cause for fear.

The AIG gave the assurance, while receiving the 2026 Outstanding Excellence in Security Leadership Award on Monday at the command headquarters.

The award was presented to him by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Integrity Youth Alliance, Abuja, Mr Kehinde Adewole.

Jimoh said the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) had developed a broad-based security plan covering the pre-election period, campaign activities and the conduct of the elections.

According to him, the plan involves intelligence gathering, threat analysis, training and continuous engagement with political parties, candidates, community leaders and

other critical stakeholders.

He said Inspector-General of Police Olatunji Disu had directed Commissioners of Police, Asst. Inspectors-General and Deputy Inspectors-General to ensure adequate security for all stakeholders participating in the electoral process.

"Early training programmes had commenced to equip police personnel with the skills required to discharge their duties professionally during the elections," he said.

Jimoh said the NPF was also working with state com-

mands through consultative committees on election security, which had been meeting regularly to identify and address potential threats.

"There is no need for anybody to entertain fear. Everything is being put in place to ensure adequate security across the country," he said.

He said the police would continue to engage critical stakeholders to ensure a level playing field and safety of political party executives, candidates, supporters and other participants during campaign activities.

One revenue system, one Edo: Braimoh applauds Okpebholo's fiscal reforms

BENIN CITY

BENEDICT OKATE

The Special Adviser to the Edo State Governor on Public Affairs and Media, Hon. Haruna Braimoh, has commended Governor Monday Okpebholo for signing the Edo State Revenue Consolidation Account (Establishment and Operation) Law, 2026, describing the legislation as a bold and strategic reform aimed at strengthening transparency, accountability and fiscal discipline in the state.

Braimoh said the new law marked a significant step towards building a coordinated revenue system that would ensure that public funds are properly accounted for and de-

played in the collective interest of the people of Edo State.

"This landmark reform demonstrates the administration's determination to build a revenue system that serves the collective interest of the people. It is a bold step towards greater transparency, accountability and responsible management of Edo's resources," Braimoh said.

According to him, the legislation will establish a central Revenue Consolidation Account and provide a uniform framework for the collection, remittance and disbursement of government revenue.

He noted that the consolidation would eliminate fragmented revenue accounts and unauthorized retention of public funds, thereby closing loop-

holes that could undermine effective financial management.

Braimoh stressed that the reform went beyond revenue generation, describing it as an institutional measure designed to strengthen governance and improve the state's

capacity to plan and execute development programmes.

"This is not merely a revenue reform; it is an institutional reform designed to strengthen governance. Every naira generated by government must

be properly accounted for and directed towards programmes and projects that improve the welfare of Edo people," he stated.

He particularly commended Governor Okpebholo for placing the Edo State Internal Revenue Service (EIRS) at the centre of revenue coordination and supervision, saying the adoption of technology-driven col-

lection systems would improve efficiency, reduce leakages and enhance transparency.

The Special Adviser added that the reform would also help protect residents from multiple taxation, unauthorized collections and other forms of exploitation associated with fragmented revenue collection.

ECOWAS to award \$91m to startups

ABUJA

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) says it is strengthening Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through a startup competition and cash awards scheduled for Sept. 28.

ECOWAS Acting Director, Directorate of Private Sector and Industry, Mr Peter Oluonye, announced this at a news conference on Monday in Abuja.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that 60 startups will compete for a total prize of 65,000 dollars (N91 million).

The competition is being held five years after the first edition in Niamey, Niger Republic.

The overall winner will receive 30,000 dollars, while the first and second runners-up will get 20,000 dollars and 15,000 dollars, respectively.

Oluonye said the competition would focus on startups in fintech, agri-tech and food systems, ed-tech and skills development, cleantech, climate and green innovation, tourism,

hospitality and travel tech.

"The ECOWAS Start-up Awards is designed to mobilise innovation, particularly by start-ups, to inspire and address critical issues underlying business development.

"It is particularly focused on tech-led businesses across different sectors and seeks to build an innovation ecosystem in ECOWAS," he said.

According to him, the programme would help participating startups navigate the early stages of their business life cycle and scale into the growth stage.

He said the awards would showcase innovative, multisectoral solutions while promoting enabling policies.

Oluonye said startups needed to be properly organised at the early stages to create jobs, add value to the economy and contribute to economic growth and development.

"Beyond the cash reward for the best three, all 60 participants will undergo masterclass coaching as part of efforts to build the capacity of MSMEs in the West African sub-region," he said.



MOST REV. SIS NGOZI PETERS (HOST)



REV DR. AWELE PETERS (CO.HOST)

Jesus Deliverance Ministry celebrates 38th youth week, declares 'Satan lost the battle'

BENIN CITY

Jesus Deliverance Ministry, popularly known as Sis Ngozi Peters Church, is set to celebrate its 38th annual Youth Week with a series of spiritual and humanitarian activities aimed at strengthening the faith of young people and reaching out to the less privileged.

The week-long celebration, scheduled for August 23 to 30, 2026, is themed "Satan Lost the Battle," with Isaiah 40:31 as the anchor scripture: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount

up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

The organisers described the celebration as an opportunity for youths and other worshippers to renew their faith, draw closer to God and celebrate what they described as victory through Jesus Christ.

The programme will commence on Sunday, August 23, with a Global Youth Fasting and Prayer Day, during which participants are expected to seek God's direction, strength and spiritual renewal.

A major humanitarian com-

ponent of the celebration will take place on Saturday, August 29, with the ministry organising feeding of the poor and community outreach, alongside a special music and trumpet programme.

The Saturday activities are scheduled to commence at 9 a.m.

The grand finale of the 38th Youth Week celebration will hold on Sunday, August 30, beginning at 8 a.m., with worshippers expected to gather for a special thanksgiving and celebration service.

The ministry, which described its place of worship as "Mount Zion, the City of

Praise," has invited members of the public, particularly youths and lovers of peace, to participate in the celebration.

The host of the programme is the Most Rev. Sis Ngozi Peters, while Rev. Dr. Awele Peters serves as co-host. Jesus Christ is acknowledged as the Chief Host.

In a message ahead of the celebration, Sis Ngozi Peters called on worshippers and members of the public to join the ministry in celebrating God's faithfulness and victory.

She declared: "Jesus is the winner. Shame upon you Satan, enemy of the gospel of Christ; you lost the battle! We are flying higher on Angels' wings".

At 58, I've devoted 38 years to serving God — Adegbite

BENIN CITY

The Executive Secretary, Nigerian Christian Pilgrim Commission (NCPC), Bishop Stephen Adegbite, says his life and career remain a testimony of God's faithfulness, having spent 38 out of his 58 years in divine service.

Adegbite made the declaration during a thanksgiving gathering organised to mark his 58th birthday at the commission's headquarters on Monday in Abuja.

The NCPC boss described his appointment as a privilege to further serve God, contribute to national growth, and promote unity within the Body of Christ.

"Out of the 58 years I have lived on earth, I have spent 38 years serving God and I attribute my accomplishments to divine grace," he said.

He expressed gratitude to his wife, Princess Adewunmi Fadeke, his family, and NCPC staff for their unwavering support.

The cleric also acknowledged President Bola Tinubu and the First Lady, Sen. Oluremi Tinubu, for their goodwill, particularly appreciating the First Lady for personally conveying her birthday wishes.

Adegbite emphasised the need for religious harmony, peace, and national stability, urging NCPC staff to view positions of responsibility as avenues to make positive impact.

He said that pilgrimage ex-

ercises conducted under his watch over the past two and a half years had been spiritually rewarding, adding that preparations for the next exercise would commence in earnest.

Speaking at the event, former Minister of Women Affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen, congratulated Adegbite on his anniversary and commended his dedication to God and the nation.

Tallen prayed for continued strength, divine protection, and greater achievements for the celebrant.

The event featured prayers, goodwill messages, gift presentations, and the cutting of an anniversary cake.

It was attended by management staff, family members, and friends.

Motorists raise alarm over police roadblock, alleged harassment on Benin-Auchi Road

BENIN CITY

OLIVER IJIOGBE

Motorists and commuters plying the Benin-Auchi Road have raised the alarm over the activities of policemen mounting a roadblock around the Guobadia Hospital axis of the road, alleging that the manner in which the stop-and-search operation is being conducted is causing unnecessary delays, hardship and loss of man-hours.

The motorists alleged that the policemen routinely stop vehicles, compel passengers to disembark and subject them

to searches, a development they said has increasingly become worrisome, particularly because of the resulting traffic build-up along the busy highway.

According to the commuters, while they recognise the responsibility of the police to prevent crime and protect lives and property, the exercise of such powers must be conducted within the confines of the law and in a manner that does not unnecessarily inconvenience law-abiding citizens.

The Nigeria Police Act 2020 empowers police officers to stop and search persons and vehicles under specified circumstances.

The Police Act provides for stop-and-search powers where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion, including circumstances involving suspected stolen property, unlawful articles or possible serious violence.

However, the Act also prescribes safeguards governing the exercise of the power.

The law further requires the officer, before searching a detained person or vehicle, to provide his name, the name of his police station, the object of the search and the grounds or authorization for undertaking it. The officer must also be in uniform or visibly display a valid Police Identity Card.

New Commissioner for Communication and Digital Economy pledges to deepen Edo's digital transformation

BENIN CITY

ODIGIE ETINOSA

The newly appointed Commissioner for Communication and Digital Economy, Hon. Andrew Momodu, has assumed office with a pledge to build on the Ministry's achievements

and strengthen the Edo State Government's drive towards a digitally transformed, innovative, and future-ready state.

Hon. Momodu, who was recently redeployed to the Ministry by Governor Monday Okpebholo from the Ministry of Oil and Gas, committed to a formal interaction with the management and staff of the Ministry.

The new Commissioner was formally introduced by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Mrs. Jennifer E. N. Aisuan, who welcomed him and expressed confidence in his experience, leadership capacity, and ability to advance the Ministry's mandate.

Addressing the management and staff, Hon. Momodu reaffirmed his commitment to

supporting and implementing the policies and programmes of the Okpebholo administration, particularly its vision of leveraging technology, digital innovation, and modern systems to strengthen governance, improve service delivery, and promote sustainable development.

He described the Ministry as a critical driver of the State's

digital transformation agenda and emphasised the importance of teamwork, collaboration, and institutional continuity in achieving its objectives.

According to him, the Ministry already has a team with the requisite competence, experience, and institutional knowledge to deliver on its mandate, stressing that his administration would work with the existing workforce to consolidate the gains already recorded while exploring new opportunities for growth and innovation.

The Commissioner also highlighted the importance of effective communication and public enlightenment in ensuring that citizens understand and benefit from government's digital initiatives.

He noted that as government expands its Edo Cloud 0.2 programmes and technology-driven services, information must be communicated through clear, accessible, and effective channels to enable citizens to take advantage of available opportunities and services.

Hon. Momodu further pledged to strengthen the Ministry's information dissemination channels, particularly its digital and social media plat-

forms, to ensure that government policies, programmes, initiatives, and achievements reach a wider audience.

He also expressed his readiness to bring the experience and knowledge acquired during his previous assignment at the Ministry of Oil and Gas to his new role, noting that the experience would contribute to strengthening the Ministry's programmes and advancing its mandate.

Emphasising continuity, the Commissioner assured the management and staff that existing programmes and achievements would not be abandoned but rather reviewed, strengthened, and expanded where necessary.

He said his administration would focus on deepening digital transformation, encouraging innovation, strengthening technology-driven governance, and identifying new opportunities that would improve efficiency and service delivery across the State.

The engagement also provided an opportunity for the new Commissioner to familiarise himself with the Ministry's management and workforce, gain insight into its ongoing programmes and priorities, and outline his expectations for the next phase of its development.

Investment in UBTH translating into improved healthcare delivery – FG

UDO

The Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (FMoH), Dr Daju Kachollom, has commended the quality of healthcare delivery at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH), saying Federal Government investment in the hospital is translating into tangible improvements in healthcare services.

Kachollom spoke during a three-day free medical outreach organised by UBTH at its Comprehensive Health Centre (CHC), Udo, in Ovia South West Local

Government Area of Edo State.

Represented by the Medical Director, National Orthopaedic Hospital, Benin City, Dr Philip Ugboaga.

The Permanent Secretary had earlier commissioned the Dental Centre at the UBTH Comprehensive Health Centre, Udo, and other projects, including the ultra-modern Special Investigation Unit (SIU) in Benin City.

She said the projects demonstrated the UBTH management's commitment to translating the Federal Government's healthcare agenda into practical interventions covering infrastructure, clinical capacity,

equipment, workforce development, staff welfare and hospital operations.

"As I conclude this part of my official visit, I am impressed by what I have witnessed. I saw the palpable effort to strengthen UBTH as a federal tertiary institution. Today, here in Udo, I have seen that effort reaching further into the community.

"From renewed infrastructure and clinical capacity to a revitalised community health centre and direct medical services, the direction is clear. Government policy and investment are being translated into practical improvements in healthcare delivery," she said.

Kachollom said the outreach was taking UBTH's clinical

expertise directly to residents through consultations, medical screening, surgeries, health education, essential medicines and other healthcare services.

The Chief Medical Director of UBTH, Prof Idia Ize-Iyamu, expressed appreciation to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Prof Muhammad Ali Pate, for their support, particularly the acquisition of the 160-slice CT scan, which she said had significantly enhanced the hospital's diagnostic capacity.

"We are deeply grateful to the Federal Government, the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, and the Government of Japan for this intervention," Ize-Iyamu said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that I **MR KINGSLEY IRESE OKUNMWENDIA**, the eldest surviving Son/Child and the authorized family representative of the **Okunmwendia family** do hereby states that **Late VICTOR OKUNMWENDIA** was my brother and a family member of late William Erahbor Okunmwendia and that one Osazee has presented himself as to family members and third parties as the son of **Late VICTOR OKUNMWENDIA**

Please note that the family do not recognised him as a family member because of circumstances surrounding his birth to **Late VICTOR OKUNMWENDIA** and the family does not recognized him as a biological, adopted or even legally established child of **Late VICTOR OKUNMWENDIA**.

It should be noted that to the best of my knowledge, he has not produced and legal,

family documents and medical reports and written acknowledgement to the family. The family property known and situate at 184, M.M Way, Benin City, belongs to the **Late WILLIAM ERAHBOR OKUNMWENDIA** and not a personal property of **Late VICTOR OKUNMWENDIA** and the said **OSAZEE** have no rights to the family property or name as the **Late VICTOR OKUNMWENDIA** has not produced or does he possess and documents evidencing him as the property owner. And the does not recognized him and he has no authority, claim or any right to the property.

Anybody, property speculators/agents doing business with the said Osazee is doing so on his/her/their own risks.

SIGNED:

MR. KINGSLEY IRESE OKUNMWENDIA

NEWS



NIPR BRIEFING SESSION:

From left: the Philippine Ambassador to Nigeria, Mersole Mellejor; President of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Ike Neliaku; High Commissioner of the Republic of Botswana, Philda Nani Kereng; and vice President of NIPR, Prof. Emanuel Dandala, during an NIPR briefing session with the Diplomatic Community in Nigeria on the forthcoming 2026 World Public Relations Forum in Abuja on Monday.

Cleric tasks leaders on personal sacrifices, selfless service

ABUJA

The President of the Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC), Rev. Olusola Idowu, has urged leaders to make personal sacrifices and embrace selfless service in the discharge of their duties.

Idowu made the call during the 65th birthday and retirement service of his predecessor, Rev. Israel Akanji, held at the First Baptist Church, Garki, Abuja.

He noted that Akanji's 42 years of active ministry out of his 65 years of life, serves as a testament to God's Grace and a model for both the Church and leaders.

"Leaders can learn sacrificial giving, selflessness, courage, and total devotion to God and humanity from his life.

"God raised him from obscurity to the limelight, and his service remains an encouragement to those of us in leadership today," Idowu said.

He also urged young people to dedicate themselves to service, emphasising that "today belongs to them, not tomorrow,

and they must step up to take charge of their responsibilities."

Speaking at the event, the Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Christian Pilgrim Commission (NCPC), Bishop Stephen Adegbite, praised Akanji as a prudent manager of resources whose kindness impacted both Christians and non-Christians.

Adegbite called for an upward review of the retirement age for Baptist ministers beyond 65 years to allow the denomination to benefit longer from the wealth of experience of seasoned leaders.

In his remarks, the Catholic Archbishop Emeritus of Abuja, Cardinal John Onaiyekan, commended Akanji's contributions to ecumenism and inter-faith relations.

Onaiyekan called for sustained dialogue between Christian denominations and advised Akanji to utilise his retirement to deepen initiatives under the Interfaith Initiative for Peace to strengthen Christian-Muslim coexistence in Nigeria.

Also speaking, the Chairman of the Northern Christian Religious Leaders As-

sembly (NOCRELA), Bishop Daniel John-Praie, lauded Akanji's multifaceted impact across the broader body of Christ.

He described his ministry as one defined by tangible influence rather than mere oratory.

Similarly, the Federal Commissioner representing the North Central at the NCPC, Rev. Simon Dolly, described Akanji as a compassionate leader and mentor, suggesting that his peacebuilding expertise would make him a suitable Special Adviser to the President on Christian Religious Affairs.

The Special Adviser to the President on Special Duties, Mr Sunday Dare, recalled his 30-year acquaintance with Akanji from their days at the Baptist High School, Jos.

Dare, a former Minister of Sports, praised Akanji's intellectual depth and inspiring sermons, noting that his contributions would remain vital to the Christian community nationwide.

Representing the local assembly, Mrs Adenike Takpatore, wife of the Pastor-in-Charge at

First Baptist Church in Garki, highlighted Akanji's 22-year tenure as senior pastor at the parish, noting that his mentorship left an indelible mark on numerous families and church leaders.

A parishioner, Mr Jacob Oyekale, recounted how Akanji assisted him following a road accident in 1992 before later becoming his pastor, describing him as an administrator who consistently practiced his teachings.

The President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Archbishop Daniel Okoh, who was represented by the Vice-President, Rev. Baba Panya, commended the retired cleric for his selfless contributions to Christianity in Nigeria.

Responding, Akanji expressed gratitude to God for preserving him through 42 years of pastoral ministry, which began in 1984.

Reflecting on his new book, titled *Newness*, Akanji offered a message of hope for the nation, urging citizens to remain steadfast and supportive of national development.

Tinubu celebrates IBB at 85

ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu has congratulated former military Head of State, retired Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, on his 85th birthday, describing him as an outstanding Nigerian leader.

Tinubu said Babangida's remarkable military career culminated in his emergence as the nation's leader following the 1985 coup.

This was contained in a statement issued by Presidential Spokesperson, Mr Bayo Onanuga, on Monday in Abuja.

The president said Babangida had impacted Nigeria in significant ways, leaving enduring marks on the country's political, economic and geographical landscape.

"Like him or not, former President Babangida impacted Nigeria in ways no other leader has. His eight-year reign left enduring marks on our political, economic, and geographic

landscape," Tinubu said.

He said Babangida expanded Nigeria's economy, established enduring infrastructure and created agencies and institutions that continued to serve the national interest.

"But for his foresight, wisdom, and sense of equity and fairness, many states in the federation might not exist today," the president said.

Tinubu said Babangida's name and legacy would remain indelible in Nigeria's history because of his contributions to national development.

The president also acknowledged Babangida's continued contributions to national discourse, in spite of his retirement from public life.

"Even in retirement, living a quiet life at his Minna Hill-top residence in Niger State, General Babangida continues to offer valuable counsel and guidance to the nation.

Police strengthen monitoring of checkpoints

AWKA

The Police command in Anambra has introduced a monitoring mechanism to supervise checkpoints, patrol teams and other operational activities across the state.

The Commissioner of Police, Anambra command, Nnanna Ama, disclosed this in a statement in Awka by the command's spokesperson, Tochukwu Ikenga.

Ama said the initiative followed feedback from the recent Anambra Security Stakeholders' Interactive Sessions held across the three senatorial districts.

He said the measure was designed to strengthen policing, accountability and professionalism,

while eliminating extortion, harassment and other abuses.

"We have introduced a strategic monitoring mechanism through the Command's operational control rooms," Ama said.

He said the control rooms would maintain closer oversight of patrol formations and checkpoints across the state.

According to him, Area Commanders, Divisional Police Officers and Tactical Team Commanders will account for personnel deployed to strategic locations.

The CP said reports and complaints concerning misconduct, extortion and other unprofessional conduct would be promptly received, monitored and escalated.

Ohuabunwa urges Nigerians not to give up hope

ABUJA

Mr Godfrey Ohuabunwa, has urged Nigerians facing difficult circumstances to remain hopeful, prayerful and steadfast.

Ohuabunwa made the call during the Feeding the Needy Programme organised by Help Without Boundaries Initiative in collaboration with Morning Flight 97.7 FM.

The outreach was held at Okrika National Secondary School, Okrika, Rivers, for elderly people, children and other vulnerable members of the community.

In a statement on Monday, he urged participants not to abandon hope when confronted with difficult circumstances, stressing that situations could change through faith and perseverance.

Quoting Jeremiah 32:27, Ohuabunwa reminded the participants that nothing was too difficult for God and encouraged

them to continue praying.

He also advised parents not to give up on children who had gone astray, saying persistent prayer, guidance and love could help them return to the right path.

Ohuabunwa cited the biblical account of Hannah as an example of the power of persistent prayer, noting that her faith eventually brought an answer to her long-standing challenge.

He also referred to the feeding of the five thousand by Jesus Christ, saying the account demonstrated God's ability to provide for people in need.

The humanitarian urged individuals to make a difference in the lives of others by extending support and compassion to vulnerable members of society.

The programme also featured a salvation message from John 3:16, with participants encouraged to embrace the Christian faith and accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

AAU, Ekpoma Alumni protest election outcome

LAGOS

Concerned financial members and stakeholders of the Ambrose Alli University (AAU), Ekpoma, Alumni Association Home Branch have called for the immediate cancellation of the August 14 branch election, citing alleged widespread irregularities as reason.

In a statement made available to newsmen in Lagos, the members appealed to the National Executive Council (NEC) of the AAU Alumni Worldwide, the university community, security agencies and other stakeholders to intervene.

The concerned members alleged that the electoral process had been compromised before voting commenced, claiming

that the Electoral Committee was appointed without the required consensus and that the electoral timetable was repeatedly altered.

They alleged that nominations were reopened and extended until Aug. 10, followed by a manifesto presentation on Aug. 13 and the election on Aug. 14.

They also questioned the choice of a private residence belonging to an interested party as the polling venue, describing it as a potential conflict of interest.

The group further raised concerns about the financial report presented at the end-of-tenure meeting, alleging that it contained only total income and expenditure figures and was dated December 2025, in spite of being presented in August 2026.

On election day, the members alleged that more than 140 financial members arrived at the venue but were prevented from voting.

They claimed that a NEC observer took control of the proceedings and introduced voting restrictions that excluded members who, under the branch constitution, were eligible to vote.

They also alleged that the venue was heavily secured, with soldiers, police officers and armed youths present, creating an intimidating atmosphere.

According to the statement, senior academics, professionals, business leaders and other members were subjected to harassment and verbal abuse during the exercise.

The members further alleged

that an unverified list containing only 49 selected voters was used during the election.

They claimed the list was not published before the election and excluded some active financial members while including persons who had not regularly attended branch meetings.

They alleged that the arrangement favoured a particular chairmanship candidate, an allegation that has not been independently verified.

The group also questioned the vote figures, alleging discrepancies between the number of accredited voters and votes counted.

It claimed that arguments over the figures disrupted the proceedings, while results for some executive positions were not made public.

Alake warns illegal miners, woos investors to reclaim abandoned pits

ABUJA

The Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dele Alake, has warned illegal miners against extracting minerals from abandoned pits without licences.

Alake gave the warning while reacting to the collapse of an abandoned tin mine pit at Kassa in Barkin Ladi Local

Government Area of Plateau.

The warning was contained in a statement issued by his Special Assistant on Media, Lara-Owoeye-Wise in Abuja.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that seven miners died on Wednesday evening after a mining pit collapsed on them at a mining site in Kassa community, Barkin Ladi Local

Government Area of Plateau.

The minister said the tragedy could have been avoided if the illegal miners had formed a cooperative and applied for the necessary permit.

He said obtaining the permit would have enabled them to benefit from field training by the ministry's Artisanal Mining Department and secure a steady stream of income.

Alake commiserated with the Government and people of Plateau over the incident, urg-

ing artisanal miners nationwide to learn from the tragedy.

"The challenge before the state and the Federal Government is how to turn these potential pits of death into centres of joyful prosperity," he said.

The minister said there were more than 4,000 mine pits dug by Amalgamated Tin Mines Ltd. alongside their successor companies, Consolidated Tin Mines Ltd. and Nigerian Tin and Allied Products Ltd.

He called on investors to partner with the government to repur-

pose the abandoned pits for energy, tourism and fishery projects.

Alake said collaboration with the private sector remained the fastest and most proactive approach to transforming abandoned mining sites into productive assets.

He said the ministry had so far rehabilitated 59 abandoned mine pits.

According to him, the ministry, in a move to de-risk investment in the sector, has also inaugurated an initiative deploying advanced Geographic Information System satellite mapping and Artificial Intelligence.

He said that this will help to identify and characterise legacy tin pits.

The initiative, he said, being implemented through a public-private partnership with ImPPPact Nigeria Alliance and geo-

matics specialist, Intomatics, was adopting Plateau as the pilot state.

Alake said the initiative would support the design and development of workflows for reclaiming the thousands of legacy tin pits across the state.

He advised prospective investors to direct enquiries to the Nigerian Mining Cadastre Office and the ministry's Mines and Environmental Compliance Department.

He also encouraged investors to apply to the Solid Minerals Development Fund's funding programme.

To prevent the recurrence of abandoned mine pits, Alake said he had pioneered the establishment of the Environmental Protection and Rehabilitation Fund.



SEPLAT TEACHERS EMPOWERMENT:

L-R Chizoba Onyike, Subsurface Operations Advisor, NNPC Upstream Investment Management Services (NUIMS); Prof. Benard Ikegwuoha, Imo Commissioner for Education (Primary & Secondary); Samuel Chijoke, Joint Best-Graduating Teacher; Mrs. Esther Icha, General Manager, Corporate Social Investment & Social Performance, Seplat Energy Plc; Onuoha Success, Joint Best-Graduating Teacher and Dr Henry Okafor, Imo Commissioner for Niger Delta Affairs and Intelligence, at the graduation of the first set of teachers under the Seplat Teachers Empowerment Programme (STEP) in Owerri.

Seplat-NNPC empowers 127 teachers in Imo

OWERRI

The NNPC/Seplat joint venture has equipped 127 teachers and education evaluators with digital teaching techniques and alternative income-generation skills.

The beneficiaries received the training through the Seplat Teachers Empowerment Programme (STEP), with the first Imo cohort graduating in Owerri.

Seplat's Director of External Affairs and Social Performance, Ms Chioma Afe, disclosed this at the graduation ceremony in Owerri.

Afe, represented by Esther Icha, General Manager, Corporate Social Investment and Social Performance, said STEP strengthens teachers' professional development.

She added that the programme also seeks to make

teachers economically resourceful while creating lasting impact in their communities.

Afe said the joint venture's education investment reflected its belief that empowering teachers remained an effective way to transform communities.

She said STEP had previously been implemented in Edo and Delta, where more than 2,000 teachers had been trained.

She said the Imo edition represented the programme's first intervention in the state.

Afe urged the graduating teachers to see their certificates as the beginning of greater responsibility and leadership in their communities.

She said: "Take the digital skills you have acquired into your classrooms, share your knowledge with fellow teachers, encourage your students to learn, explore and innovate."

Global EITI assessors laud Nigeria's improved systematic disclosures

ABUJA

The global Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) validation assessors have lauded Nigeria for its improved systematic disclosures.

The assessors gave the commendation at a debriefing session with the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) Senior Management Team at the end of their five-day in-country mission.

Mrs Obiageli Onuora, Di-

rector Communications and Stakeholders Management, NEITI in a statement in Abuja listed the Mission team to include Mr Riley Zecca (Mission Leader), Ms Jessica Sanchez and Mr Gilbert Makore, African Country Director, EITI.

Zecca commended the breadth and quality of stakeholders' contributions during the validation exercise.

He urged Nigeria to sustain the momentum by institutionalising improved systematic disclosures to support

real-time transparency, timely publication of accessible data and greater accountability.

The mission leader also applauded NEITI's coordination of the validation consultations, noting that consistent systematic disclosures had improved access to information and enabled the mission to assess Nigeria's progress with confidence.

He said the draft validation report would be shared with the NEITI Board within three weeks, after which Nigeria would have one month to respond.

According to him, the final validation report will be present-

ed at the EITI Global Conference scheduled for October in Brussels.

EITI Africa Country Director, Mr Gilbert Makore, urged Nigeria to view the validation process positively, describing it as the backbone of EITI implementation.

Makore particularly commended the participation of the National Assembly, describing the engagement as unique and innovative.

He said the executive session with the National Assembly and public hearing on NEITI industry reports demonstrated Nigeria's commitment to open and inclusive dialogue.

Centre calls for accountability in port charges, operational delays

ABUJA

The Sea Empowerment and Research Centre (SEREC) has called for transparent port charges, accountable operators and a regulatory system where responsibility for delays follows the party that caused them.

SEREC's Head of Research, Dr Eugene Nweke, made the call in an industry bulletin on Monday in Abuja, addressing port charges, operational delays and the cost of doing business.

Nweke said that the reported N6,000-per-container charge and alleged N178 million refund

demand, alongside empty-container challenges, required proper regulatory investigation.

He said the allegations should not be treated as established facts until competent authorities verified the claims and determined the legality of the charges.

The controversy followed a demand notice dated August 6 by the National Association of Government Approved Freight Forwarders (NAGAFF) over alleged charges at bonded terminals.

NAGAFF alleged that some terminals collected N3,000 on 20-foot containers and N6,000 on 40-foot containers, with about N178 million reportedly

involved.

The association demanded documentary evidence establishing the legal authority for the charges and sought a refund of the alleged collections.

NAGAFF also issued a seven-day ultimatum to affected terminals, demanding clarification and threatening further regulatory and legal action if its demands were not addressed.

The SEREC head of research however, said the allegations required evidence-based determination, including establishing who introduced the charge, what service it represented and who received the proceeds.

"Every legitimate charge is identifiable; service measurable; delay an accountable cause; payment traceable; licensed operator meets prescribed standards," he said.

He recommended immediate regulatory fact-finding and documentary audits of relevant invoices, receipts, transaction records and payment trails to establish the facts surrounding the reported charges.

Nweke cautioned that no compulsory cargo-related charge should be collected without a valid regulatory, statutory, contractual or approved commercial basis.

CIS urges recapitalised insurers to focus on sustainable growth

LAGOS

The Chartered Institute of Stockbrokers (CIS) has advised recapitalised insurance companies to see the successful exercise as the beginning of a new phase rather than its end.

Dr Benneth Eze, Head of Research and Development, CIS, gave the advice in an interview with newsmen in Lagos.

Eze said the companies should prioritise protecting shareholders' capital and resist the temptation to pursue rapid expansion simply because of their stronger capital positions.

"My advice to recapitalised insurance firms would be simple: do not treat recapitalisation as the destination; treat it as the beginning of the next phase of the industry," he said.

He urged insurers to focus on

underwriting discipline, effective claims management, operational efficiency and risk-adjusted returns.

According to him, insurers should prioritise the quality and profitability of business underwritten rather than the volume of business written.

"The relevant question now is not merely, 'How much business can we write?' but, 'How much profitable business can we underwrite while maintaining appropriate risk and capital discipline?'" he said.

Eze also urged the boards and managements of insurance companies to maintain transparent communication with shareholders on how the fresh capital was being deployed.

He advised investors to monitor the returns expected from the additional capital and the indicators being used to measure the companies' performance.

NEWS

Troops rescue 14 kidnap victims in Kogi, Plateau operations

ABUJA

Troops of the Nigerian Army have rescued 14 kidnapped victims in separate operations in Kogi, while sustaining pressure on criminal elements across the country.

The Nigerian Army disclosed this in its latest operational update covering August 15 and August 16, made available to newsmen in Abuja.

In Kogi, the troops of 21 Battalion rescued 13 victims

abducted along the Allo-ma-Ejule Road in Ofu Local Government Area.

The troops had launched a search-and-rescue operation after the victims were abducted on Aug. 11.

The operation covered the Emeweopada-Abocho axis in Dekina Local Government Area, where sustained military pressure forced the kidnappers to flee.

"The victims were subsequently released and taken to the palace of the Onu Abocho for further action.

"In another incident in Ofu, troops responding to a suspected kidnapping attack along the Ochadamu-Okabo Road rescued a pregnant woman abandoned by kidnappers.

"The troops had discovered that four civilians, including the pregnant woman, were abducted by the criminals.

"The kidnappers abandoned

the woman and fled after sighting the advancing troops from a distance.

"The rescued woman was subsequently reunited with her family," the report said.

In Plateau, troops of Operation ENDURING PEACE responded to a report of the kidnapping of two civilians at Nhintina Village in Bokkos

Local Government Area.

The troops discovered one of the victims with gunshot wounds allegedly inflicted by the kidnappers.

The injured victim was evacuated to Bokkos Cottage Hospital for medical attention, while troops continued pursuit of the abductors.

"Meanwhile, troops of Op-

eration FANSAN YAMMA arrested another suspect linked to a notorious arms and explosives dealer in Zamfara.

"The development followed the Aug. 14 arrest of the arms dealer while transporting 180 units of 20mm Super Power explosives along the Kaura-Zurmi Road in Zurmi Local Government Area.

Police arrest man for allegedly setting wife ablaze

LOKOJA

The Police Command in Kogi has arrested a 33-year-old man, Jacob Irewa, for allegedly attempting to set his wife ablaze during a domestic dispute.

The incident occurred on Friday, August 14, at Oworo Estate, Felele, Lokoja, according to the Police Public Relations Officer, ASP Afusat Saliu.

Saliu, in a statement on Sunday in Lokoja, said the victim, Mrs Berida Irawo, sustained injuries and was receiving treatment at Honey Gold Hospital, Felele.

She said operatives of the B Division Surveillance Team, Felele, responded to a distress report and arrested the suspect at the scene.

"Preliminary investigation by the police revealed that the altercation began after Mrs Irawo burnt some of her husband's clothes without his consent.

"The disagreement escalated when the suspect allegedly threatened his wife, siphoned petrol from his motorcycle and proceeded to set her on fire.

"In his statement to the police, the suspect admitted to set-

ting his wife ablaze," Saliu said.

The police spokesperson said comprehensive investigations had begun to establish the circumstances surrounding the incident and gather further evidence.

The Commissioner of Police, CP Naziru Kankarofi, condemned the attack, describing it as "barbaric and unacceptable".

He reiterated the command's zero tolerance for violence, particularly domestic violence, and urged residents to resolve disputes through lawful channels.

"The command will not condone any action capable of endangering lives.

"We encourage citizens to seek peaceful and legal means of settling disagreements," Kankarofi stated.

The police said Irewa would be charged with attempted culpable homicide after the conclusion of investigations.

The command reassured residents of its commitment to protecting lives and property and bringing perpetrators of violent crimes to justice.

It also urged community members to report cases of domestic abuse promptly to prevent their escalation.

Woman in police net for allegedly stealing newborn baby

BIRNIN KEBBI

Operatives of the Kebbi Police Command have arrested a 19-year-old woman, Khadija Ibrahim, for allegedly stealing a newborn baby in Zuru Local Government Area of the state

This was contained in a statement issued by the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) of the command, SP Bashir Usman in Birnin Kebbi on Monday.

The incident, he said, occurred on July 23, 2025, when the suspect, while pretending to assist Fatima Muhammad, who had just given birth, offered to fetch hot water but instead fled with the newborn.

"Preliminary investigation revealed that the suspect had allegedly been under social and emotional pressure over not yet having a child, as some of her peers had already given birth.

"She consequently deceived her

husband for about nine months into believing that she was pregnant and, after the birth of Muhammad's baby, she took the child and presented it to her husband as their baby," the police said.

The suspect, he said, was arrested on Friday following sustained investigation.

"The baby was found and has been safely reunited with the biological mother," he said.

Usman said that the suspect would remain in police custody and will be charged to court upon conclusion of investigation.

The Commissioner of Police (CP), Mr Umar Hadejia, has commended the operatives for their diligence and professionalism in securing the safe return of the baby and arresting the suspect.

"The CP has assured the public that the command remains committed to protecting children and bringing anyone found culpable to justice," he said.



A DAY OUT:

Executive Director, TwentyOne Five Child Foundation (T1FF), Tolu Taiwo (R); giving a talk to the children at T1FF, during a day out with the children at the Oyo State Juvenile Correctional Home in Ibadan on Monday.

Rainbow coalition pledges inclusive Rivers reconciliation

PORT HARCOURT

The Reconciliation Committee of the Rainbow Coalition in Rivers says no member will be victimised or discriminated against during the ongoing peace process.

Committee Chairman, Sen. Magnus Abe, disclosed this after members met with Gov. Siminalayi Fubara at Government House, Port Harcourt at the weekend.

Abe said the meeting was the committee's second engagement with Fubara within two weeks to discuss modalities for the reconciliation process.

He said the committee was established by Mr Nyesom

Wike, Minister of the Federal Capital Territory and former Rivers governor, to facilitate reconciliation.

According to him, the initiative seeks to enable members of the political family to work together under a new atmosphere of peace.

Abe said all stakeholders would be treated equally, respectfully and as members of the original political family under the reconciliation arrangement.

"I'm sure that Rivers people will be very curious to understand exactly what we have been talking about.

"So, I know that this will be a very good news for all Rivers

people who are interested in the unity, progress and prosperity of the state.

"We are all in agreement and we have made very good progress," Abe said.

He described the stakeholders' renewed cooperation as a significant shift in Rivers' political atmosphere, expressing optimism about its acceptance by residents.

Abe said the development would be welcomed by Rivers people who had long desired peace and stability in the state.

Also speaking, Dr Samuel Nwanosike, APC South-South Zonal Publicity Secretary, commended Fubara for allowing the committee to meet and dialogue.

Nwanosike described the meeting as a positive develop-

ment, saying it demonstrated that the state's political family was genuinely coming together.

"I'm so excited. The last meeting went well. Today's meeting went extraordinarily well and it shows clearly to the people of Rivers that the family is back.

"Soon, they will see the working of the Rainbow Coalition. We will give Rivers people the dividends of democracy they have been expecting," he said.

Another stakeholder, Chief Ambrose Nwuzi, said members who believed in Fubara had agreed to embrace peace, stressing that nothing was better than peace.

Nwuzi described previous disagreements among stakeholders as normal occurrences in any human society.

Accord faction raises legal stakes over Adeleke's party ties

ABUJA

The Prof. Chris Imumolen-led faction of Accord says Gov. Ademola Adeleke of Osun faces legal and political risks arising from the party's leadership crisis.

Imumolen made the position known in a statement titled 'Two Reasons Gov. Adeleke is Endorsing President Bola Tinubu,' issued in Abuja.

He said Adeleke's alignment with President Tinubu was a strategic calculation aimed at avoiding political confrontation amid the ongoing political tussle in Osun.

Imumolen identified the leadership crisis within Accord as another major reason for Adeleke's endorsement of Tinubu ahead of the 2027 general elections.

He said the issue confronting Adeleke extended beyond securing votes, citing the unresolved legal dispute between his faction and the Maxwell Mgbudem-led faction.

While the Mgbudem-led group backed Adeleke, Imumolen's faction insists it remains the only legitimate and recognised executive structure of Accord.

Imumolen said a court vic-

tory for his faction could have far-reaching implications for the political foundation upon which Adeleke contested.

"Could Adeleke's political calculation be influenced by the possibility that the Accord leadership dispute may ultimately be determined by the courts?

"That is the question Osun people should be asking," he said.

He, however, cautioned that political assessments must be distinguished from established legal facts, stressing that a court victory would not automatically remove Adeleke from office.

According to him, the even-

tual legal outcome would depend on the court's explicit orders, final judgment and applicable provisions of the Electoral Act.

"What is clear is that the political battle has had two fronts: the ballot box and the courtroom," Imumolen said.

He added that while election results could settle an electoral contest, they would not automatically extinguish a separate dispute over party leadership.

"The ballot may produce a winner, but the court will determine the legal consequences," he said.

Quranic College graduates 44 students, tasks parents on children's islamic upbringing

SALIHU MARYAM &
RUKAYYA SAIDU

ABUJA

Muslim parents have been urged to prioritize Islamic education and the proper upbringing of their children to build a responsible generation capable of contributing meaningfully to the development of society.

The Proprietor of UL-UN-NUHA International College for Quran Memorisation, Imam Adamu Jibrin, made the call on Sunday, August 16, 2026, at the institution's second annual graduation, prize-giving and award ceremony held in Abuja.

The ceremony marked the graduation of 44 students from the college, comprising 35 students who completed the memorisation of the Holy Quran and nine others who completed Quranic recitation studies.

Speaking at the event, Jibrin charged the graduating students to remain God-fearing, maintain a strong relationship with Allah and put the knowledge they had acquired into

practice in their daily lives.

He urged them to become responsible and productive members of their communities, stressing that the essence of Quranic education went beyond memorisation to developing good character and positively influencing society.

Jibrin also appealed to parents to make the education and proper upbringing of their children a priority, noting that raising well-behaved children was essential to the progress and development of society.

He said, "Having good children in the community serves as a foundation for the movement and development of society."

The proprietor further encouraged the graduates to remain connected to their Creator and allow the teachings of the Holy Quran to guide their decisions and conduct as they progress in life.

The Chairman of the occasion, Major General Aminu Garba, commended the management and teachers of the institution for their commitment to Quranic education and character development.

Gender advocate says women's inclusion key to better governance

Gender advocate, Dr Adetoun Dally, says women's inclusion in decision-making complements men's role and leads to better governance and development.

Dally, who is an immediate past president of Women Community in Africa and Founder, Children Impact and Development Initiative, said in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja, on Monday, that the low representation of women in Nigeria's parliament was a cause for concern, given the large number of educated and capable women

in the country.

She said women should have greater representation in political leadership and policy-making, noting that decisions made by government affected everyone, including women.

She, therefore, called for greater inclusion of women in leadership and decision-making to build a more balanced society.

"The status of women has evolved significantly from ancient societies to the 21st century.

"Women are traditionally relegated to the background, but increasing awareness has

made them demand greater opportunities and recognition.

"The transformation is driven by women's growing awareness of their potential and desire to contribute more meaningfully to society.

"Women want to be more involved. We want to bring more value and be more supportive," she said.

Dally said that women's empowerment should begin from the girl-child, through access to quality education, skills acquisition and opportunities to start businesses and become

economically independent.

She said, however, that women's empowerment should go alongside important family and societal values, including modesty, self-discipline, responsibility and care for the family.

"Although some traditional expectations that restrict women's participation in public life are no longer acceptable in the 21st century, positive values that promote responsible behaviour and strong families should be preserved.

"Empowering women, while maintaining positive values will contribute to a more inclusive, responsible and well-rounded society," she said.

Pa Enobakhare Goes Home

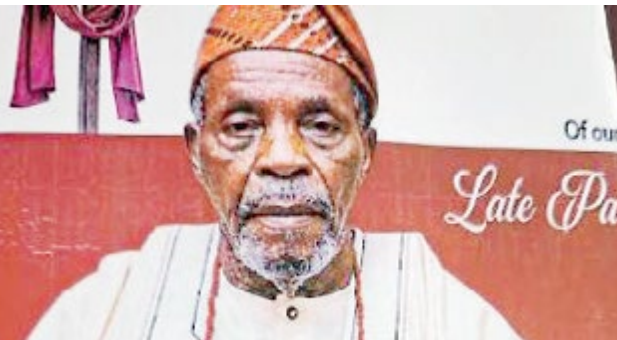
The funeral ceremony of the Community leader and philanthropist in Evboyare Community, Uhumwode local government area of Edo State, late John Enogiemwan Enobakhare comes up this weekend in Benin City.

Pa Enobakhare, a successful farmer had worked and retired as a Superintendent Officer with Ministry of Works in the then Western region. He was aged 103.

A release by his eldest son,

Efosa Enobakhare stated that the late icon passed after a brief illness and will be laid to rest on Friday at his Nosakhare Street residence, off Oguola Street, Siluko road Benin City.

He therefore enjoined friends and family members, particularly that of Erhabor Okaeben of Benin, Igukpe Village to attend. The reception takes place Saturday at Uyi Grand Event Center, Off 2nd Cemetery road in the state capital.



LATE JOHN E. ENOBAKHARE

RE-ARRANGEMENT OF NAME

The general public is here by notified that my correct arranged name is **BISHOP OGUN DONATUS AIHMOSION** and not **BISHOP AIHMOSION DONATUS OGUN**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **Miss. MERCY UWAWANI** now wish to be known and Called as **Mrs. MERCY IZIEGBE**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take notes.

CORRECTION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that my correct name is **PHILIP BLESSING EBOSOMHE** and not **OKPAKPI BLESSING**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **PHILIP BLESSING EBOSOMHE**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take notes.

CORRECTION OF NAME/ DATE OF BIRTH

The general public is hereby notified that **NWOKEJI CHIEMEKA EMMANUEL** and **NWOKEJI GODSWIL CHUKWUEMEKA** henceforth now wish to be known and addressed as **NWOKEJI GODSWIL CHUKWUEMEKA**, and also my correct date of birth is 25th December 2002 not 4th December 1997 all former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take notes.

ADDITION OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that **OLAWALE EMMANUEL** and **OLUWOLE EMMANUEL OLUWADAMILARE** are one and the same person henceforth now wish to be known and addressed as **OLAWALE EMMANUEL OLUWADAMILARE**. all former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take notes.

RECONCILIATION OF NAMES

The general public is hereby notified that **OBI ADA-OBI** and **OBI PEARL ADA -OBI** are one and the same person henceforth now wish to be known and addressed as **OBI PEARL ADA-OBI**. all former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take notes.

CORRECTION OF NAMES

NWOKEJI. I. NWOKEJI CHIEMEKA EMMANUEL is the same person bearing **NWOKEJI GODSWIL CHUKWUEMEKA**. I now wish to be known and addressed as **NWOKEJI GODSWIL CHUKWUEMEKA** as captured in my NIN. Concerned authorities, including Banks and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **MERCY EFOSA** now wish to be known and addressed as **ODOSA OSATOHAMWEN MERCY**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take notes.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **EKPU FAITH** now wish to be known and addressed as **RICHARD FAITH EKIOMON**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take notes.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **Miss ALIYU BASHIRAT** now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs. ADJOTO KABIRU BASHIRAT**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take notes.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **Miss ALUYA IYORA LOVETH** now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs. EHIZE IYORA LOVETH**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take notes.

ADDITION OF REARRANGEMENT OF NAME

The general public is hereby notified that my correct Name is **EFOSA OSASENAGA KELVIN** and not **EFOSA KELVIN OSASENAGA** Hence now wish to be known and addressed as **EFOSA OSASENAGA KELVIN** all former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take notes.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **ODIGIE OGIEKPE** now wish to be known and Addressed as **OGIDEKPE ODIGIE**. All former document remain valid concerned Authorities and general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known as **Miss STELLA OMOYOKA OKOGUN** now wish to be known as **Mrs STELLA OMOYOKA OSAGIE**. Former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

PUBLIC NOTICE

RENOUNCIATION OF SECRET CULT

The general public is hereby notified that I, **OBAZEE OZIEGBE (M)** have renounced my membership of the **Neo Black Movement of Africa Aka Black Axe** which I unknownly join sometimes in 2015. I am no longer a member of the group since I renounced as a result of the violent nature of the group. I no longer participate in any of their activities/meetings. Concerned authorities, security agencies and the general public should please take note.

Signed: **OBAZEE OZIEGBE**



The solemnization of marriage between former Miss. Imafidon Adesuwa Peace and Mr. Efosa Abraham Aghasomwan took place Friday 26th June, 2026 at the Federal Ministry of Interior (Marriage Registry), 11A, Gapiola Road, Benin City, Edo State. With the Traditional and Church ceremonies having earlier taking place on the 5th and 9th of May, 2026 respectively. Among those present were the bride's brother Mr. Imafidon Osahenoma, representing the late father, the mother Mrs. Imafidon Osemwonyenmwun and the groom's parents, Mr. & Mrs. Aghasomwan Uwuigbe, family members, relations, friends & well wishers. Picture shows the couple at the registry congratulations!

LEGAL NOTICE

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

WHEREAS the person whose names 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 Letter of Administration of the real and personal property of the deceased.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Letter 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. CHRISTIANA OSARIEMEN AWOYEGBE LATE OF OGHADA, Uhumwode L.G.A., who died on the 9th day of July, 2025 in Benin City.

PED/834/2025 MS. ESTHER EHI OHENHEN and MRS. ABIEMWENSE EHIOBOBO IYAMU of No. 142, Sapele Road, Benin City, sisters of the deceased.

DATED THIS 17th DAY OF AUGUST, 2026.

B. O. OSAWARU ESQ.
Probate Registrar

NEWS EXTRA

Nigeria unveils new strategy to dismantle organised crime networks

ABUJA

Nigeria has unveiled a five-year National Strategy for Combatting Organised Crime aimed at dismantling criminal networks, disrupting illicit financial flows and strengthening inter-agency response.

The National Security Adviser (NSA), Malam Nuhu Ribadu, represented by the National Coordinator, National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC), Maj.-Gen. Adamu Laka, unveiled the strategy on Monday in Abuja.

Ribadu said the strategy,

covering 2027 to 2031, would provide an integrated framework for confronting terrorism, drug trafficking, human trafficking, cybercrime, maritime crime, corruption and illicit financial flows.

He said the sophistication of criminal networks demanded more than institutional strength, requiring "coherence, coordination and intelligence-driven collaboration across all relevant sectors."

"Organised crime now operates in interconnected webs that undermine development, economic growth and public safety," he said.

Ribadu said the strategy adopted a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, with stronger inter-agency cooperation and enhanced collaboration with international partners.

He urged ministries, departments and agencies involved in the implementation to sustain the cooperation that produced the strategy.

"With the launch of this strategy, we are reinforcing our resolve with a clear national framework that will enable us to anticipate threats, disrupt criminal networks, strengthen institutional coordination and

ensure that those who profit from organised crime are brought to justice.

"The success of this strategy will depend on how faithfully, diligently and collaboratively it is implemented," Ribadu said.

The NSA said the Office of the National Security Adviser would support implementation through intelligence fusion, operational synergy and strengthened coordination.

He also commended the Technical Working Group for its consultations, drafting, review and validation of the strategy.

UNODC Country Rep-

Osun: NDC hails Adeleke's victory

ABUJA

The Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) has described the victory of Governor Ademola Adeleke of Osun in the Saturday's governorship election as a triumph for democracy and the will of the people.

The National Publicity Secretary of the NDC, Osa Director, in a statement on Monday, commended the people of Osun for turning out to exercise their franchise and insisting that their votes must count.

Director said the results of the election demonstrated that the people could resist what he described as "tyranny," "civilian dictatorship" and attempts to suppress their will through the electoral process.

"The victory of the Accord in the Osun State governorship election is a victory for democracy. It is a triumph of the people's will over any authoritarian leadership.

"It is a befitting crowning of the dogged efforts of the great people of Osun who resisted tyranny, who resisted civilian dictatorship, who resisted oppression and refused to be silenced and insisted that their vote must count.

"I commend Gov. Adeleke

for standing firm to insist that he has the right to contest and be voted for by his people if that is their choice, and indeed, that is actually their choice," Director said.

The NDC spokesperson said the election was significant because it shows that the people could determine the outcome of an election when they were determined to exercise their democratic rights.

He said the outcome further demonstrated the importance of protecting the sanctity of the ballot and ensuring that citizens' votes count.

Director also commended the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for the conduct of the Osun election, while cautioning the commission against allowing the outcome to become an isolated improvement ahead of the 2027 general election.

He said the NDC would hold INEC to the standard it had set with the Osun poll, urging the commission to ensure that the transparency witnessed in the election was sustained.

"I hope this is not going to be a flash in the pan on the part of INEC to make us lose our guards and think that come 2027 it will be this transparent," he said.

5 farmers drown as canoe capsizes in Niger

NIGER

Katcha (Niger) Five farmers, comprising four males and one female, are feared dead after a canoe conveying them to their farmland capsized while crossing River Kuji in Katcha Local Government Area of Niger.

Alhaji Abdullahi Baba-Arah, Director-General, Niger State Emergency Management Agency (NSEMA), disclosed this in Minna on Monday.

Baba-Arah said that the incident occurred in the morning of Saturday, Aug. 15, when the victims left Shaba Woshi village for their farmland

across the river.

He identified the victims as Yahaya Abubakar, Usman Abubakar, Lamin Hussaini, Baba Ahmadu and Salihu Aliyu, all residents of Shaba Woshi village.

According to him, the victims travelled from the village to Katcha, where they boarded a canoe to cross River Kuji to access their farmland when the canoe capsized.

He said the incident had thrown the community into mourning, adding that efforts were ongoing to ascertain the circumstances surrounding the incident and the fate of the victims.



SENDOFF PARTY:

From left: Editor-In-Chief, News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Hajiya Hadiza Aliyu; NAN Managing Director, Malam Ali M. Ali; retiring Editor-In-Chief of NAN, Mr Maftau Ojo and his Yetude, during a sendoff party in honour of the retiring Editor-In-Chief at the NAN Headquarters in Abuja on Monday.

Gov Okpebholo appoints Yunusa Adepoju Special Adviser on Disability Matters

BENIN CITY

ABDUL-KADIR ABDULLAH

The Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has approved the appointment of Yunusa Abdulsalam Adepoju as Special Adviser to the Governor on Disability Matters.

Adepoju's appointment, which took effect from August 13, 2026, was conveyed in a letter signed by the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Umar Musa Ikhilor, Esq.

Reacting to the appointment, the Chief Press Secretary (CPS) to the Governor, Dr. Eb-

ojele Akhere Patrick, congratulated Adepoju, describing his appointment as a significant step towards strengthening the administration's commitment to inclusiveness and the welfare of persons living with disabilities in Edo State.

Akhere expressed confidence that the new Special Adviser would bring his experience and knowledge to bear in advancing the interests of persons with disabilities and ensuring that their concerns receive appropriate attention within the government's programmes and policies.

He urged Adepoju to justify the confidence reposed in him

by Governor Okpebholo and contribute meaningfully to the administration's SHINE Agenda.

The CPS wished the new Special Adviser a successful tenure and urged him to use his office to promote greater inclusion, empowerment and opportunities for persons with

disabilities across Edo State.

Yunusa Abdulsalam Adepoju is a native of Jattu, Ward 11, in Etsako West Local Government Area of Edo State.

He graduated with a degree in Economics from the University of Maiduguri, Borno State.

Army profficiency competition aims to build troops combat readiness – Commander

BAUCHI

The Nigerian Army has said that its combat proficiency competition aims to prepare troops for battle readiness to tackle terrorism and other emerging security threats in the country.

Brig.-Gen. S S Shehu, Commander, 33 Artillery Brigade, Shadawanka Barracks, stated this during the inauguration of the 2026 edition of 3 Division Inter-Brigade Combat Proficiency competition, on Monday in Bauchi.

He said the armed forces accorded a premium on tactical excellence and war-fighting readiness of the troops.

Shehu said the competition provided a vital platform for testing and enhancing the combat readiness, physical fitness, teamwork, discipline and professional competence of the subalterns.

"It is also a deliberate, standards-based assessment of the core competencies that define a professional warfighter, that is, marksmanship, tactical movement, endurance under duress, battlefield first aid and above all, the mental agility to prevail when contact is made with a determined adversary.

"Beyond this competition, the event provides an opportunity to strengthen esprit de corps, foster healthy rivalry and

further consolidate the bonds of camaraderie among formations and sister agencies in 3 Division's area of responsibility.

"In an era of hybrid threats, asymmetric warfare, and rapidly evolving battlefields, the soldier who wins today is the soldier who trains hardest when no one is watching. Hence, this arena is where that training is put to the proof.

"This is not about individual glory but about raising the collective fighting power of the Nigerian Army," he said.

According to Shehu, the presence of heads of sister security agencies at the event is a demonstration of the strong

partnership and mutual support between the Nigerian Army and other stakeholders in maintaining peace and security in the state.

He charged the troops to compete with determination, discipline, courage, and the highest standard of military professionalism.

Gov. Bala Mohammed, who inaugurated the competition, lauded the synergy between the army and security agencies in the protection of lives and property in the state.

Represented by Sani Mohammed, Security Adviser on Security, Mohammed pledged continued support to the army to enable it to discharge its constitutional mandate effectively.



GOV OKPEBHOLO

FEATURE

Obj vs Atiku: From partners to foes



FORMER VICE PRESIDENT ATIKU ABUBAKAR AND FORMER PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO

BAGUDU MOHAMMED

As the dust begins to gather ahead of 2027, the old war between two titans of Nigeria's democracy has roared back to life. Former President Olusegun Obasanjo and former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, men who once held the soul of the nation in a single handshake, now throw words at each other like daggers across time.

It started again with a spark Obasanjo lit. In a recent interview, the former president alleged that Atiku had bribed the late Speaker Ghali Na'Abba with ₦5 million to engineer his impeachment. It was a grenade tossed into history. Atiku's reply was swift, surgical, and soaked in pain. He asked why Obasanjo waited until the "principal witness" was in the grave before speaking, noting that graveyards do not serve as witness boxes. Then he traced the poison to its root: his refusal to support Obasanjo's controversial third-term bid.

Obasanjo, never one to retreat, fired the deadliest shot yet. He called choosing Atiku as running mate in 1999 "one of my biggest regrets." Atiku's media aide, Phrank Shaibu, answered with a line that now circulates like scripture: "I cleaned you up when you needed me, I stood against you when Nigeria needed

me." No further interpretation needed. The mask is off.

To stand as judge between them is to stand on quicksand. Human relationships, especially those forged in power, rarely fit into neat boxes of right and wrong. Political psychologist Robert Jervis, in his theory of misperception in international politics, argues that leaders often remember the same event in completely opposing ways because ego and survival rewrite memory. What one man calls betrayal, the other calls patriotism. What one calls principle, the other calls ingratitude. Both Obasanjo and Atiku may be right, and both may be wrong, depending on which side of the throne you sat in 2003.

This is not just about two men. It is about how relationships, whether in romance, friendship, or politics, die slow deaths even after public forgiveness. Social scientists call it "cold forgiveness," the performance of peace without the healing of wounds. Research from the University of Michigan on elite conflict shows that betrayals tied to status, humiliation, and lost ambition are the hardest to reconcile because they attack identity itself. When a partner becomes the reason you fell, forgetting becomes impossible. You may shake hands for cameras, but your

nervous system never forgets.

Obasanjo has, for decades, appointed himself Nigeria's moral conscience. He speaks with the authority of a man who handed power to civilians in 1979 and again in 2007.

That double act of transition gives Obasanjo a rare moral capital. Scholars like Prof. Adebayo Olu-koshi have noted that Obasanjo's post-presidency influence rests on this "founder's privilege," the belief that because he midwived democracy twice, he earns the right to judge it. Yet that same privilege makes him inconsistent. He praises and buries the same men. He crowned Umaru Yar'Adua in 2007, who admitted later that the election was flawed, and watched Yar'Adua's short, promising tenure end in tragedy. He anointed Goodluck Jonathan, campaigned for him in 2011 against Buhari, then wrote an 18-page public indictment in 2013 and tore his PDP card in 2015. He embraced Buhari, then wrote him two open letters urging him not to run again. Each time, the nation listens, then divides, depending on whose camp we are in at that moment.

Consider the arc. A man imprisoned by Abacha in 1995, released in 1998 after Abacha's death and Abdul-salami's transition, rose from Yola prison to Aso Rock in 18 months. It

was not magic. It was kingmakers, backroom deals, and Atiku. Atiku, by every account, was the most powerful vice president Nigeria has had since 1999. He controlled governors. He could have challenged Obasanjo in 2003. Instead, he stepped back. Many analysts believe that moment of deference birthed a wound that never closed. The hope that after Obasanjo, it would be his turn. That hope slipped away, and since 2007 Atiku has run again and again, chasing what felt like a stolen destiny.

So when Obasanjo now endorses Peter Obi and criticizes Bola Tinubu, while Atiku runs again under ADC, the fight is not about policy. It is about memory. It is about the heartbreak of political divorce. Relationship therapists tell us that ex-lovers rarely forgive in the true sense. The pain is archived. A viral joke that made rounds online captured it perfectly: a boxing coach telling a fighter to "hit him like he's your ex." The crowd roared because we all know that feeling. A political coach on social media recently told single mothers, not to be too hurt to pray for the men who abandoned them, because "some of us are praying for that same helper even without marital bond." Cruel, funny, and true. That is what Obj and Atiku are doing now, praying and fighting

over the same helper called power.

The tragedy is that we, the public, are complicit. When Obasanjo turned on Jonathan, we quoted him like the Bible. When he turned on Buhari, we used him as proof of failure. Now that he attacks Atiku and questions Tinubu while praising Obi, those in Obi's camp call him a prophet, and those outside call him bitter. We do not love truth. We love vindication.

Forgiveness is noble. Emotional intelligence is a virtue. But political science and lived experience tell us something harder: humiliation, public ridicule, and the collapse of a dream are wounds that do not close. They scar. And scarred partners, whether in love or in power, do not return to rebuild. They return for payback. They return to watch.

Obj and Atiku may never fight with guns. But their words are weapons, and 2027 is the battlefield. In the end, this is not just the story of two men. It is the story of Nigeria, a nation where yesterday's allies become today's accusers, and where we all choose which version of history to believe, depending on who we need to be right today.

• Bagudu can be reached via bagudumohammed15197@gmail.com or 07034943575.



INSIDE EDO STATE



When Government Builds, Communities Must Protect: The Azagba Lesson

A government project may begin with a budget, a contract and the laying of a foundation, but its real test begins after the contractors leave the site.

Will the classrooms remain intact? Will the toilets continue to function? Will the borehole be protected? Will doors, windows, roofing sheets and other fittings survive the temptation of vandals? And, perhaps most importantly, will the community regard the facility as government property or as its own?

These questions have come to the fore in Azagba Community, Uhummwode Local Government Area, following an inspection of the ongoing construction of a six-classroom block and six toilet facilities at Aruosa Primary School by the Acting Chairman of the Local Government Council, Hon. Austin Imafidon, popularly known as ISIWINA.

The project is one of the latest interventions aimed at improving the learning environment for children in the community. But for Imafidon, the construction of the facilities is only one part of the story.

The other—and arguably more important—part is what happens when the project is completed.

Beyond construction

During the inspection, Imafidon expressed satisfaction with the quality and progress of work, commending the contractor for the work so far and assuring the people of Azagba that the project would be completed within the stipulated time.

But rather than limit his message to the progress of construction, the Acting Chairman used the occasion to draw attention to a problem that has continued to undermine public investment in many communities: the failure to adequately protect and maintain government facilities.

His message was straightforward: government can provide infrastructure, but communities must help preserve it.

Addressing elders and representatives of Azagba Community, Imafidon said government would continue to discharge its responsibility by providing infrastructure and other essential facilities, but added that the protection of such projects must be regarded as a shared responsibility.

The appeal is significant because public infrastructure does not exist in isolation from the people it is designed to serve.

A school building constructed at considerable public expense ultimately belongs to the public. A toilet facility built to improve sanitation belongs to the community. A borehole provided to address the water needs of pupils and residents is an investment in public welfare.

When such facilities are vandalised, neglected or deliberately destroyed, the consequences are therefore borne not by government alone but by the people.

The cost of vandalism

Across many communities, public facilities have often suffered from vandalism, theft and neglect. Doors are removed, electrical installations are stripped, water facilities are damaged and buildings are sometimes left to



ISIWINA INSPECTS ONGOING SIX-CLASSROOM BLOCK AND TOILET FACILITIES AT ARUOSA PRIMARY SCHOOL, AZAGBA

deteriorate because no one assumes responsibility for their protection.

The result is a familiar and frustrating cycle.

Government identifies a need, appropriates funds, awards a contract and completes a project. The facility is commissioned and handed over to the community. Over time, however, the infrastructure begins to deteriorate.

Eventually, the community complains that government has abandoned the project.

Government, on the other hand, may point to the resources already expended.

The cycle continues, with scarce public resources repeatedly being deployed to repair or replace facilities that should ordinarily have lasted much longer.

It is against this background that Imafidon's appeal to Azagba deserves attention.

His message goes beyond the immediate school project. It speaks to the broader question of how communities can become partners in development rather than mere beneficiaries of government intervention.

A school is more than a building. For the pupils of Aruosa Primary School, the new classroom block represents more than concrete walls, roofing sheets and furniture.

It represents the possibility of learning in a safer and more conducive environment.

cive environment.

A good classroom can influence attendance, concentration and the general attitude of children towards education. Proper toilet facilities can improve hygiene and help create a healthier school environment.

The planned borehole, when provided, could further strengthen the sanitation arrangements in the school.

That is why the protection of the facilities is particularly important.

A child who sits in a newly constructed classroom today may be an adult who returns to the same community tomorrow. The condition in which that child finds the facility will tell a story about how seriously the community took its responsibility.

Water, sanitation and the dignity of learning

The proposed borehole is another important component of the intervention.

The provision of toilets without a reliable water supply can limit the effectiveness of sanitation facilities. By promising a borehole within the school premises, Imafidon is seeking to address the two issues together.

Clean water is fundamental to proper hygiene, especially in a school environment where children spend a substantial part of their day.

For the pupils and teachers of Aruosa Primary School, therefore, the combination of classrooms, toilets

and water could significantly improve the school environment.

But again, infrastructure alone cannot guarantee sustainability.

The facilities must be used responsibly, maintained regularly and protected from deliberate damage.

Community ownership as a development strategy

One of the most important lessons from the Azagba project is the need to redefine the relationship between government and communities.

Development should not be viewed as something government does for the people. It is more sustainable when government and the people work together to achieve common objectives.

Community ownership does not necessarily mean that residents must finance government projects. Rather, it means developing a sense of responsibility towards facilities provided for their benefit.

Community leaders can help monitor facilities. Parents can educate their children on the importance of protecting public property. Youth organisations can discourage vandalism. Traditional institutions can mobilise residents to safeguard projects.

Such measures can make a significant difference.

The presence of the Ohen of Azagba, the Community Secretary, Mr. Eric Ogbemudia, the Ezomo of Azagba, and other community members

and stakeholders during the inspection was therefore significant.

Their participation provides an opportunity for the community to take collective responsibility for the project from its construction stage through completion and beyond.

The larger Uhummwode picture

For the Uhummwode Local Government administration, the Aruosa Primary School project also reflects its stated emphasis on interventions that have direct impact on residents.

Education, healthcare, infrastructure and social development are areas in which government investments can produce lasting benefits when properly implemented and maintained.

The inspection by the Acting Chairman demonstrates another important aspect of public administration: monitoring.

A project is not necessarily successful merely because a contract has been awarded. There must be supervision to ensure that the work is executed according to specification and that the intended beneficiaries ultimately receive value for public funds.

Imafidon's inspection, therefore, serves both purposes—monitoring the progress of the project and preparing the community for its responsibility after completion.

The real test begins after completion

The excitement that accompanies the commissioning of a new public facility can be short-lived if the community fails to protect it.

The real measure of development is not simply the number of projects commissioned but how long those projects remain functional and beneficial to the people.

This is why the appeal from Azagba deserves to resonate beyond the community.

Government has a duty to build. Contractors have a duty to deliver quality work. Officials have a duty to supervise. But communities also have a duty to protect.

It is a chain of responsibility.

Break any link in that chain and the people ultimately suffer.

For the children of Aruosa Primary School, the new classrooms and sanitation facilities could become a lasting legacy of public investment. But that legacy will depend not only on the quality of construction, but also on what Azagba does with the opportunity.

If the community protects the facilities, keeps them clean and ensures that they remain functional, the project can serve generations of pupils.

If, however, vandalism and neglect are allowed to take root, what began as a laudable investment could gradually become another abandoned symbol of wasted public resources.

The message from Uhummwode is therefore simple but profound: when government builds, communities must protect.

For Azagba, the construction of the school facilities may mark the beginning of a new chapter in the community's educational development.

But the responsibility for ensuring that the chapter remains a success belongs to everyone.

OUR STANCE

The imperative of Osun Election: Tinubu Deepening Democracy

The just-concluded governorship election in Osun State has once again placed Nigeria's fledgling democracy on the front burner of public debate.

Beyond the immediate excitement over the outcome and the victory of the candidate declared by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the election offers a broader lesson about the evolving character of Nigeria's democratic experience.

In an election where political parties and their candidates fought fiercely for the mandate of the people, the real winners may, in a broader democratic sense, not be the governor-elect, Ademola Adeleke, alone. The electorate, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and INEC all have legitimate claims to victory for different reasons.

For the people of Osun State, the election represented an opportunity to exercise one of the most fundamental rights in a democracy—the right to choose their leaders. Their participation demonstrated that, despite widespread cynicism about elections in Nigeria, the electorate has not completely lost faith in the ballot box.

The significant voter participation also sent a message to political actors that elections remain ultimately about the people. Political parties may deploy enormous resources, mobilise influential personalities and deploy sophisticated campaign machinery, but the final expression of democratic authority resides with the voters.

This is perhaps one of the most important lessons from Osun.

TINUBU AND THE 'FEDERAL MIGHT'

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu also deserves credit for what appears to have been a conscious decision not to deploy the much-feared "federal might" to influence the outcome of the election.

In Nigeria's political history, the relationship between the federal government and state-level elections has often generated controversy. There has long been a perception that the party controlling the centre possesses enormous institutional and political advantages which can be brought to bear during elections in the states.

Against this background, the Osun experience becomes significant.

President Tinubu's decision, as perceived by many observers, not to use the machinery of the Federal Government to skew the election in favour of his party's candidate represents an important contribution to democratic consolidation.

Democracy is strengthened not only when a government wins an election but also when it is prepared to accept an outcome that may not favour its political interests.

That distinction is important.

The true test of democratic leadership is not the ability to win every election. It is the willingness to create conditions in which the electorate can freely determine who governs them.

If the Federal Government deliberately allowed the Osun electorate to speak without undue interference, it is a development that should be acknowledged and encouraged.

For a president who has himself risen through the highly competitive and often bruising terrain of Nigerian politics, allowing the democratic process to take its



course sends a powerful signal to political actors at all levels.

INEC and the Test of Institutional Credibility

The election also provided another important opportunity for INEC to demonstrate its institutional independence.

The commission has, over the years, faced enormous public scrutiny. Questions surrounding electoral logistics, voter accreditation, technology, result transmission, voter intimidation and the conduct of electoral officials have continued to test public confidence in Nigeria's electoral process.

The Osun election therefore presented INEC with another opportunity to reassure Nigerians that the electoral process can work.

Despite the challenges associated with organising elections in Nigeria, the commission's adherence to established procedures and its eventual declaration of the result are important components of the democratic process.

But INEC must not rest on this achievement.

Every election is a new examination.

The credibility of the commission will ultimately be determined not by how it conducts one election, but by whether Nigerians can consistently trust it to conduct elections transparently, impartially and professionally.

The commission must therefore continue to strengthen its logistics, improve voter accreditation and result management, deepen the use of technology and, above all, ensure that its officials remain insulated from political pressure.

ADELEKE'S VICTORY AND THE PEOPLE'S MANDATE

For Ademola Adeleke, the election represents more than a personal polit-

ical triumph. It is a renewed mandate from the electorate and, consequently, a fresh obligation to justify the confidence placed in him.

Having secured the mandate of the people, the governor-elect must now rise above partisan politics and govern for all the people of Osun State.

Elections eventually end, but governance begins the moment the votes are counted.

The people who voted for him and those who voted against him are all citizens of Osun State. They are entitled to good governance, accountability, security, infrastructure, economic opportunities and an administration that treats public resources as a sacred trust.

The governor-elect must therefore see the election not as a licence for political triumphalism but as a call to greater responsibility.

THE OPPOSITION MUST ALSO LEARN

There are lessons for the opposition as well.

The outcome of the election should remind political parties that democratic victories cannot be built solely around federal influence, political godfathers or the expectation that the machinery of government will determine electoral outcomes.

Parties must return to the people. They must build structures, develop credible candidates, engage communities and convince voters through policies and programmes.

The Osun experience demonstrates that Nigerian voters are becoming increasingly conscious of their political choices. They may be poor, vulnerable or disenchanted, but they still possess the capacity to surprise political establishments at the ballot box.

This should encourage political parties to invest more in persuasion than coercion, ideas rather than intimidation, and governance rather than propaganda.

A VICTORY FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE

Perhaps the most significant implication of the Osun election is that Nigeria's democracy may be gradually moving beyond the politics of "do-or-die" elections.

For decades, elections in Nigeria have frequently been accompanied by violence, intimidation, allegations of rigging and the deployment of state resources for partisan advantage.

The country's democratic journey is far from perfect. There remain serious concerns about vote buying, electoral violence, poverty-induced manipulation, internal party democracy and the high cost of political participation.

Yet democracy is not perfected in one election.

It is built incrementally—one credible election after another, one institutional reform after another, and one peaceful transfer or retention of power after another.

The Osun election should therefore be judged within this larger context.

If the people were able to vote, if the electoral commission was able to perform its constitutional responsibilities, and if the Federal Government resisted the temptation to manipulate the process for partisan advantage, then Nigeria has every reason to regard the development as a step forward.

THE ROAD AHEAD

But the real test begins after the election.

Democracy cannot end at the polling booth. The ballot must translate into better governance.

The electorate must continue to de-

mand accountability from elected officials. INEC must continue to improve. Political parties must deepen their internal democracy. Security agencies must remain neutral and professional during elections. And the Federal Government must resist the temptation to use the enormous powers of the centre to compromise state-level electoral contests.

President Tinubu, therefore, has an opportunity to make the Osun experience part of a broader democratic legacy.

A president is remembered not only for the roads constructed, policies introduced or economic programmes implemented. He is also remembered for the institutions he strengthens and the democratic culture he leaves behind.

If the administration can consistently demonstrate that the Federal Government will not interfere with the legitimate choice of voters, it will have contributed significantly to the strengthening of Nigeria's democracy.

For the people of Osun, the message is equally clear: their votes matter.

For INEC, the responsibility is to ensure that every Nigerian continues to believe that his or her vote can determine political destiny.

For political parties, the lesson is that power must ultimately be earned from the people.

And for President Tinubu, the imperative is to ensure that the Osun experience becomes not an isolated event but part of a sustained commitment to democratic consolidation.

The greatest victory in any election is not necessarily the victory of one political party over another.

It is the victory of the people over fear, manipulation and political disenfranchisement.

That is the real imperative of the Osun election.

NEWS

FOREIGN

Russia and Ukraine trade more deadly strikes

Nine people have been killed and 23 injured, including a child, in Ukrainian strikes on Russia, local officials have said.

Eight people were killed in the western Belgorod region bordering Ukraine in the past 24 hours. A woman died overnight in the southern Astrakhan region.

Ukraine said two people were killed in Russian drone attacks on the north-eastern Sumy region, and another two in the eastern Donetsk region.

The strikes come a night after what Russia described as the "largest-scale" attack by Ukraine this year, in which at least seven people were killed. Russian attacks on Ukraine also killed at least seven people and injured more than 39 on Saturday night.

Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and currently controls approximately a fifth of Ukrainian territory.

The latest Ukrainian strikes burned a building and damaged a car in Belgorod's village of Koloskovo, acting regional Governor Alexandr Shuvaev said.

The injured child was sent to hospital while two others received medical assistance, he added.

Meanwhile, a woman was killed after a drone strike hit a home in the Astrakhan region, the local governor said on Monday.

Igor Babushkin added that the Ukrainian strike targeted an industrial facility but that it had not been damaged.

In Ukraine, two people were killed in Russian strikes on the cities of Kramatorsk and Sloviansk in the Donetsk region, the state emergencies service DSNS said.

It also reported that 54 trading pavilions were set ablaze at a local market in Sloviansk.

In the Sumy region, a man and a woman were killed in an overnight Russian drone attack, regional head Oleh Hryhorov said.

A separate overnight attack on the Black Sea port city of Odesa damaged a civilian vessel and injured four people, local officials said.

Moscow has sought to put off foreign companies from trading with Ukraine by target-

ing its ports and coastline.

Kyiv has stepped up drone strikes deep inside Russia during the past few weeks.

On Saturday night, Ukraine fired some 822 drones towards Russia, with 600 aiming for Moscow, according to its regional governor, who said the Russian capital suffered "one of the most massive drone attacks in recent memory".

During the strikes on Saturday night, five people died in Russia's south-western region of Rostov, its governor said. A woman was killed in an attack on a civilian bus in Belgorod, officials said, while an 83-year-old man died in a drone attack in the Moscow region.

A warehouse belonging to Russian online retailer Wildberries was also hit.

Since July, Ukraine has repeatedly targeted the company, known as Russia's version of Amazon. Ukraine's defence ministry said the latest attack meant that seven out of 10 of the largest Wildberries logistics centres had been "disabled".

Speaking to the BBC before the latest attacks, the deputy chief of Ukraine's intelligence service said long-range strikes in Russia would continue.

Maj Gen Vadym Skibitski defended Ukrainian attacks on distribution warehouses such as Wildberries and accused Russia of using civilian networks to supply its armed forces.

"It's one of the elements of the logistics system of the Russian Federation to wage the war, including through Wildberries - some military equipment, components and other elements," he said.

Skibitski said Ukraine did not deliberately target civilians, adding that some deaths in Russia were the accidental result of air defences shooting down incoming missiles and drones.

He claimed that drone strikes were influencing opinion among Russia's population, with concerns over the country's capability to "prevent" attacks and "to protect some areas".

Russia has also intensified missile attacks across Ukraine in recent weeks.

The Ukrainian energy company Naftogaz said on Monday that Russia had attacked its facilities 13 times during the past week.

Trump says US to reduce military drills with South Korea after it stayed out of Iran war

President Donald Trump has said the US will "substantially reduce" joint military exercises with South Korea, citing his "very good relationship" with North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un.

He also noted on Truth Social that South Korea had recently declined to join the US in the "denuclearisation" of Iran.

"These exercises are not only costly, with much of these costs paid for by the United States of America (as usual!), but send a signal that is totally inappropriate and hostile," Trump posted.

Seoul said it was reviewing Trump's comments, adding it hoped a favourable relationship between Washington and Pyongyang could lead to meaningful talks. Pyongyang has not yet commented.

Earlier, South Korea said the drills with the US would proceed "as scheduled".

It comes after North Korea this month conducted ballistic missile tests banned by the United Nations.

Trump said in his social media post on Sunday that it was "too late to cancel", as the US and South Korea were due to start their annual military exercises on Monday.

He added: "While somewhat unrelated (?), I recently asked the President of South Korea if they would like to join us in the Denuclearization of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and they said, 'No thanks!'"

Trump's announcement came less than 24 hours after he posted an old photograph of himself and Kim from 2019,

writing the two were great friends "despite the unfriendly look on this particular picture".

In its statement, South Korea's presidential Blue House said it would continue diplomatic consultations on US-Korea military cooperation related to the Strait of Hormuz, while discussing details on joint military drills with the United States.

Experts suggest the walking back of joint military exercises could carry a high cost with relatively little benefit.

"US-South Korea combined defence exercises are essential for military forces to be ready and capable of doing their jobs," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul.

"Scaling them back can damage alliance coordination,

slow the process of South Korea taking on greater responsibility for its own defence, and weaken deterrence against possible conflicts in Asia.

"The cost savings from downsizing drills are marginal, while the diplomatic benefits for relations with North Korea are doubtful."

Last week, US and South Korean military leaders held a joint press conference announcing Ulchi Freedom Shield.

They said the 11-day event would be similar in scale to previous years, with about 18,000 South Korean soldiers participating.

During the news conference, military leaders also mentioned North Korea's deployment of troops to aid Russia's war against Ukraine.



MEETING:
Trump with North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un.

Trump envoy Kushner meets Netanyahu after Hamas talks on peace plan

A meeting between Donald Trump's Middle East envoy Jared Kushner and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has ended, the premier's spokesperson has told the BBC.

Kushner arrived in Israel on Sunday night after holding rare talks with Hamas to discuss the implementation of the US-

backed Gaza peace plan.

Last week, Israel rejected Trump's 15-point plan for peace, which also calls for Israeli troops to withdraw and for Gaza to be rebuilt under a new civilian Palestinian administration.

The rejection came after the president's Board of Peace said it had reached an agreement for

the "complete disarmament" of Hamas and other armed groups in Gaza last month.

Trump leads the Board of Peace, which was created as an international organisation originally intended to bring peace to Gaza, but later expanded to include conflicts worldwide.

According to Israeli media reports, Board of Peace envoys Nickolay Mladenov and Tony Blair are also meeting Netanyahu on Monday, with the aim of advancing Trump's plan.

In a phone interview with Fox News on Monday, Trump is reported to have said that Hamas "are giving up their guns" and that Israel should not be carrying out strikes in Gaza. The US outlet did not elaborate further on his comments.

Many Israelis remain sceptical that Hamas is ready to disarm.

The US-led Board of Peace wants to show that the peace plan for Gaza can still move forward - despite Netanyahu's firm

rejection of a new roadmap.

Hamas has agreed to give up its weapons in exchange for a phased Israeli troop withdrawal. But Israel has insisted that Hamas must fully disarm before any Israeli pullout.

It also wants any weapons that Hamas gives up to be destroyed, rather than stored by a Palestinian technocratic committee, so that Hamas cannot reclaim them.

In addition, there is opposition to Turkey and Qatar being involved in checks on whether Hamas is meeting its requirements under the deal.

Pushing Netanyahu to change his position will be an uphill struggle.

He has appeared increasingly willing to defy the US - his country's closest ally - as his party struggles in polls ahead of October's Israeli general election, and with members of his governing coalition pushing for a tougher strategy in Gaza.

Aid shortages and fears of starvation as Indonesia reels from deadly earthquake

There are hundreds of disaster victims in Dampek village - but only one doctor.

When a 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck the Indonesian island of Flores on Saturday, this area was among the worst-hit. Health facilities were toppled, electricity networks cut, and after two days aftershocks still rattled the makeshift shelters while inside, medical supplies rapidly diminished.

"I am the only doctor here with hundreds of victims. I truly cannot cope," read an urgent appeal from Dr Melinda, the sole physician at the now-devastated Dampek Health Centre, on Sunday.

"I have not had any rest since yesterday because casualties keep arriving around the clock."

It is a problem that is playing out across Flores, as aid disruptions and ongoing tremors fuel fears among thousands of displaced survivors.

Refugees are sleeping out-

doors through sweltering days and frigid nights for fear that more buildings may collapse. Tents set up amid the rubble of collapsed hospitals are serving as makeshift emergency rooms for injured patients. And as landslides sever access roads and supplies dwindle in several parts of the island, there are growing concerns about how much longer survivors can hold out.

At least 68 people have been killed and some 5,000 displaced by the earthquake,

which struck shortly before 06:00 Saturday (23:00 GMT Friday) at a depth of just 15km.

It is the country's deadliest quake since 2022, when hundreds of people were killed in West Java.

Search-and-rescue teams and volunteers, including medical personnel, are continuing efforts to reach communities that were cut off by Saturday's quake, negotiating access roads that are scarred by landslides or choked with boulders.

FOREIGN

NEWS



POLLING UNIT:

The counting of votes from Thursday's poll is still going on

Top Zambian opposition figures arrested days after presidential vote

Security forces in Zambia have seized weapons and arrested 11 people, including senior opposition figures, allegedly involved in an insurrection plot, the government has said.

The leading opposition candidate in last Thursday's presidential election, Brian Mundubile, was also found at the scene of the raid in the capital, Lusaka, according to the country's top civil servant Patrick Kangwa.

In an interview with the BBC, Mundubile dismissed the accusations as "total fabrications", saying security forces staged an assassination attempt on his life during a raid at his home on Friday.

With results from more than half of the constituencies announced, he is trailing incumbent Hakainde Hichilema.

Mundubile had earlier claimed victory and alleged there were voting irregularities.

Giving details about the raid,

Kangwa said the individuals arrested were connected to "military plans involving foreign nationals and illegal military training camps".

He added that they posed "a serious threat to state security" and held "high-grade military weapons", ammunition and other materials intended for use in an armed insurrection.

He alleged that shots were fired at law enforcement officers leading to an exchange of fire.

Mundubile however told the BBC that there was no militia at his home.

"It's unfortunate that senior government officials would present themselves before the entire nation to make such falsehoods," he told BBC Focus on Africa.

According to Kangwa, among those arrested were Patrick Mwansa, the husband of Tasila Lungu, the daughter of former Zambian President Edgar Lungu, and other politicians.

The suspects are being held

in custody at various police stations in Lusaka.

Mundubile described the raid to the BBC in detail, saying armed personnel knocked down the gate with an armoured vehicle, broke doors and windows and opened fire.

"They were basically shooting indiscriminately. They directed two shots towards me. Like I've always said, it was just by God's grace that I survived.

"So they came in to kill us," he said.

Mundubile said former minister Mutotwe Kafwaya was shot while he and his wife were present. He said Kafwaya, whose whereabouts remain unknown, was bleeding and he urged the officers to take him to hospital.

Mundubile said his family remains traumatised.

"My children saw their uncle... bleeding profusely and being dragged like an animal... 80 soldiers coming into the house, shooting indiscriminately and

breaking doors and windows down is not an experience anybody would want to go through."

He said he and his family had not returned home since Friday and felt unsafe.

On the day following the election, he maintained that his campaign's parallel vote tabulation showed him in the lead and repeated allegations of irregularities, without providing detailed evidence

The authorities denied the claims of vote rigging and in preliminary statements observers described election day as largely peaceful and orderly.

They did however raise concerns about late electoral reforms, media freedom and access to the media in the run-up to the poll.

The mood remains stable as Zambians await the full results of the election, although some uncertainty has emerged following the government's announcement of the raid.

Ebola outbreak in DR Congo becomes deadliest in its history

The Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo is now the deadliest in its history, according to public health officials.

A total of 2,325 people have been killed by the virus since it was declared on 15 May, surpassing the death toll of the country's 2018-2020 outbreak.

The outbreak was already the fastest growing on record, UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher said last week, warning that "the epidemic is killing someone every 30 minutes".

There is currently no approved vaccine available for the Bundibugyo species that has caused the current epidemic but several are in development, including one based on technology used to develop the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine.

DR Congo's Institute of Public Health on Sunday said it had recorded 4,945 confirmed cases, including 101 in the previous 24 hours.

Comparatively few cases have been identified outside the country: as of 12 August, 20 cases were confirmed in neighbouring Uganda, while two people were treated in Germany and one case was declared in France.

However, the pace of the virus's transmission in DR Congo, where it has spread to six of 26 provinces, has been described as "exceptional" by the World Health Organization.

It took close to five months for the world's deadliest outbreak of 2014-2016 in West Africa to reach 1,000 fatalities. The current outbreak reached 2,000 deaths in three months, though researchers say it may

have been spreading undetected since February.

The outbreak is the 17th to have emerged in DR Congo since Ebola was discovered 50 years ago. Years of conflict and a highly mobile population have added to the country's challenges in controlling the spread of the disease.

The WHO has said it hopes to reverse the spread of the disease within three months but warned that this meant bringing transmission under control and not ending the outbreak entirely.

Ebola is a rare but deadly viral disease and the Bundibugyo species is even rarer, with only two known prior outbreaks.

Symptoms of Ebola, which are similar to the flu or malaria, include fever, headache and tiredness, and can begin suddenly within two to 21 days of infection.

As the disease progresses, vomiting and diarrhoea can develop, leading to organ failure. Contact with infected bodily fluids such as blood or vomit causes the virus to spread.

The UK's medicines regulator, the MHRA, has given permission for the first human trials of a vaccine for Bundibugyo to go ahead.

The jab is being created by a team from the University of Oxford based on the same technology used in the Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid vaccine. Three other groups are also developing different vaccines for Bundibugyo.

The WHO is also sponsoring a separate clinical trial in DR Congo to see whether two existing antiviral therapies can improve survival rates.

Record rains drench South Korean city as landslide kills one

Torrential rains have pummelled South Korea's Gyeongsang province, triggering a landslide that killed one person and wounded two others.

The landslide buried the first floor of an apartment building in the south-eastern city of Geoje on Monday morning. Rescuers pulled out three people, one of whom was later declared dead, local media report.

This comes as record rainfall triggered by back-to-back storms caused widespread flooding and landslides in parts of China, Japan and the Philippines.

Gjeje city saw 124.5mm of rain in a one-hour period, the highest since South Korea's meteorological agency started keeping records for the city in 1972.

Between Sunday and Monday, Gjeje received more than 400mm of rain overnight.

Videos on social media show cars submerged in Geje as strong currents swept the streets.

City authorities announced that some tourist attractions will be closed on Monday due to the heavy rain.

Bus operations and household waste collection have also been suspended due to flooded or

damaged roads, authorities said.

On Sunday, authorities urged residents to avoid driving, stay away from places like riverbanks and evacuate to safe areas if needed.

An apartment building was hit hard by a landslide in Geje city

Multiple storms swept through large swathes of East and South East Asia this month, causing widespread flooding and damage to infrastructure.

Forecasters said this year's typhoon season was shaping up to be more intense than usual, due to a strong El Niño that began in June. El Niño pushes up global temperatures and increases the strength of typhoons.

Late last week, "unprecedented" rainfall battered Japan's Chiba prefecture near Tokyo, leaving 10 people dead and stranding thousands at Narita Airport.

The deluge also cut power to more than 20,000 households.

On Sunday, Japanese authorities said the 10th fatality was a man in his 30s who was found dead at his home from carbon monoxide poisoning. He had been using a generator due to the power outage, public broadcaster NHK reported.

Boy, seven, among four injured after crash that killed five teenagers

A seven-year-old boy is among four seriously injured people in hospital after a crash in County Kildare in which five teenagers were killed while driving the wrong way down a motorway.

Two women are in a critical condition, while another woman and the boy are in a serious condition after the head-on crash.

It's believed the injured family - two women aged in their 30s and one in her 20s, and the young boy - were travelling to the airport to go on holiday.

Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) Micheál Martin said his thoughts and prayers were with the injured and the death of the five teenage boys brought untold grief.

The crash happened between junction 3 and junction 4 of the M9 motorway, at Moone, at about 03:00 local time on Sunday.

Ireland's Minister for Justice Jim O'Callaghan said on Monday that he condemned "in the strongest possible terms" the "reckless criminal behaviour".

"I also want to emphasise that anyone who makes the decision to drive a vehicle deliberately the wrong way down a motorway is engaged in lethally dangerous behaviour and it must stop," O'Callaghan said.

He said he spoke with the Garda Commissioner Justin Kelly on Monday and had emphasised to him that the gardai "will have whatever resources they require from government

in order to respond to this threat to public safety".

The Garda Representative Association (GRA) said tougher laws are needed to deal with people driving in dangerous ways.

GRA's James Morrisoe said people are playing "Russian roulette" with their own lives and lives of innocent members of the public through dangerous driving.

Martin added that it was the "second appalling crash we've seen on our roads in a matter of days as a result of the reckless driving of a car on the wrong side of the motorway, endangering the lives of innocent road users".

He said it was an "irresponsible and dangerous act, and it is shocking that in some cases it is being done for likes on social

media".

O'Callaghan said it was important to emphasise that social media companies "have a big responsibility in respect of this".

"They emphasise in their codes of practice that they will not allow any postings that glorify criminal behaviour.

"Regrettably, that hasn't been happening and social media companies need to step up to the mark as well in respect of their own responsibilities."

Irish broadcaster RTE is reporting that the family is from the Carlow area.

It adds that several of the boys who died in the crash had "strong links" to Carlow town and to Athy in County Kildare.

Micheál Martin said he was "shocked and saddened" over the crash

FEATURE

A clean Benin City is everyone's responsibility



ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION

SALIHU MARYAM SAIDU

A clean city is not created by government action alone. It is the result of a partnership between public authorities, residents, businesses and communities. In Benin City, the ongoing efforts to promote environmental sanitation and improve waste management provide an important foundation, but maintaining a clean environment requires the cooperation of everyone.

The Edo State Government continues to support environmental sanitation through regular sanitation exercises, waste-management initiatives and efforts to promote responsible environmental practices. These measures demonstrate the importance the government places on maintaining a cleaner and healthier environment for residents.

However, government efforts can achieve even greater results when residents actively support them.

Environmental sanitation should not be viewed simply as an official exercise. It should encourage people to develop habits that keep their surroundings clean every day. Sweeping

a street, clearing a drainage channel or removing refuse is important, but what happens afterwards is equally significant.

A resident who disposes of a plastic bottle or food wrapper properly contributes to the cleanliness of the city. In the same way, a person who avoids dumping refuse into a drainage channel helps protect the environment and reduce problems that may arise from blocked waterways.

This is particularly important in a growing city like Benin City, where increased population and commercial activities naturally generate more waste. As the city continues to develop, responsible waste disposal must develop alongside it.

The role of government remains essential. Effective waste collection, proper waste disposal facilities, environmental education and consistent enforcement of relevant regulations all help create the conditions for a cleaner city. Government agencies and waste-management personnel also deserve the cooperation of residents in carrying out their duties effectively.

Businesses have a responsibility as

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When government provides the necessary support and residents respond with responsible environmental habits, the result can be a cleaner, healthier and more attractive Benin City.

well. Shops, restaurants, markets and other establishments generate significant amounts of waste and should ensure that their waste is properly stored and disposed of. Keeping commercial surroundings clean does not only improve the appearance of the city; it also contributes to a healthier environment for customers, workers and residents.

COMMUNITIES CAN ALSO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Residents' associations, landlords, tenants, youth organisations and market groups can encourage responsible environmental practices within their neighbourhoods. Simple actions such as discouraging indiscriminate dumping, keeping shared spaces clean and reporting environmental concerns can contribute to wider improvements.

There is also a need for residents to understand that public spaces deserve the same care as private homes.

It is common to see people take great care to keep their houses clean while paying less attention to the roads, gutters and open spaces around them. Yet these areas form part of the

environment shared by everyone. Protecting them is therefore a collective responsibility.

The environmental sanitation exercise should consequently be seen not only as a time to clean the surroundings, but also as an opportunity to strengthen a culture of environmental responsibility.

The Edo State Government has an important role in providing the policies, services and structures required for effective waste management. Residents, however, have an equally important role in making sure those efforts produce lasting results.

A clean Benin City should therefore not be regarded as the responsibility of government alone. It should be a shared goal.

When government provides the necessary support and residents respond with responsible environmental habits, the result can be a cleaner, healthier and more attractive Benin City.

Ultimately, keeping the city clean begins with a simple understanding: the environment belongs to all of us, and caring for it is a responsibility we must all share.

FEATURE

Senator Francis Asekhamhe Alimikhena: from Public Service to Royal Stewardship

MATTHEW OKAGHA

There are moments in the life of a people when the past, present and future converge in one defining occasion. For Wanno Kingdom in Etsako East Local Government Area of Edo State, Saturday, August 22, 2026, will be remembered as one such historic moment.

On that day, the people of Wanno Kingdom will gather in celebration, tradition and thanksgiving to witness the coronation of Senator Francis Asekhamhe Alimikhena as the Okumagbe of Wanno Kingdom.

It is more than a coronation.

It is the formal entrustment of the heritage, dignity and collective aspirations of a people into the hands of a man whose life has traversed the worlds of enterprise, politics, philanthropy and public service.

For Senator Alimikhena, the journey to the throne is not a sudden departure from the life he has lived. Rather, it represents a new chapter in a story that has, for decades, been defined by service to humanity and an enduring commitment to the advancement of his people.

A SON OF THE SOIL

Born into a noble family in Wanno Kingdom, Francis Asekhamhe Alimikhena grew up within a cultural environment where community, respect for elders, responsibility and service were regarded as essential values.

Those early influences would later become visible in his public life.

Before politics claimed his attention, Alimikhena established himself in business, demonstrating the entrepreneurial instincts, courage and organisational ability that would eventually become useful in his political career.

But beyond business success was something deeper: an understanding that personal achievement acquires greater meaning when it is deployed for the benefit of others.

That philosophy would become a recurring theme of his public life.

FROM ENTERPRISE TO PUBLIC SERVICE

Senator Alimikhena's entry into politics brought him into the wider arena of public service, where his influence extended beyond Wanno to the entire Edo North Senatorial District.

In 2015, he entered the Nigerian Senate as the representative of Edo North, beginning a political journey that lasted until 2023.

The Senate provided him with a national platform from which he could articulate the needs and aspirations of his constituents.

As a legislator, he participated in the work of several important Senate committees and engaged in the legislative, oversight and constituency responsibilities expected of a representative of the people.

But politics, for Alimikhena, was never intended to be simply about occupying a seat in Abuja.

It was about bringing government closer to the people.

Across Edo North, his interventions focused on areas that directly affect the quality of life of ordinary citizens—roads and infrastructure,

As Wanno Kingdom prepares to crown a new custodian of its history, heritage and destiny



Senator Francis Asekhamhe Alimikhena, Okumagbe of Wanno Kingdom

education, healthcare, youth empowerment, employment opportunities and security.

His constituency projects and interventions reflected an understanding of an important reality of Nigerian politics: representation becomes meaningful only when the people can feel its impact in their communities.

THE POLITICS OF PEOPLE

One of the defining features of Senator Alimikhena's public profile has been his relationship with the people.

In an era when political office can sometimes create distance between leaders and the electorate, he has cultivated an image of accessibility and responsiveness.

His political career was therefore not built solely around speeches and parliamentary activities. It was also shaped by engagements with individuals and communities, responding to needs and maintaining links with the grassroots.

This connection with the people may prove particularly valuable in his new role as Okumagbe.

For a traditional ruler, the people are not constituents in the political sense. They are subjects, sons, daughters, families and communities whose history and future are intertwined with the throne.

The responsibilities are therefore different, but the principle of service remains the same.

A PHILANTHROPIST WITH A HUMAN FACE

Beyond the political arena lies another important dimension of Senator Alimikhena's life—his philanthropy.

Over the years, he has supported people and communities through

educational assistance, scholarships, youth and women empowerment initiatives, employment opportunities and assistance to vulnerable members of society.

Such gestures are significant because philanthropy is most meaningful when it restores hope.

For a student who receives assistance to remain in school, a young person given an opportunity to become economically independent, a woman supported to establish a livelihood, or a vulnerable family helped through a difficult period, humanitarian intervention is not merely financial assistance.

It is a statement that somebody cares.

That human dimension of Alimikhena's public life is one of the qualities that has endeared him to many of his admirers.

FROM SENATOR TO CUSTODIAN OF TRADITION

Now comes the most profound transition of his public journey.

The Senate gave Senator Alimikhena a constitutional platform to represent the people.

The throne will give him a traditional platform to preserve their identity.

As Okumagbe of Wanno Kingdom, he assumes responsibilities that extend beyond ceremonies, titles and royal regalia.

He becomes a custodian of history. He becomes a guardian of tradition. He becomes a symbol of unity.

And, perhaps most importantly, he becomes a bridge between generations.

The traditional institution remains

one of the enduring repositories of African identity. In communities such as Wanno, the palace represents continuity—a living connection between the ancestors, the present generation and those yet unborn.

The Okumagbe therefore carries not only a crown, but a responsibility.

He must preserve what is worth preserving, reform what requires reform, encourage what deserves encouragement and protect the unity and dignity of the kingdom.

A THRONE IN A CHANGING WORLD

The challenges confronting traditional institutions in contemporary Nigeria are considerably different from those of previous generations.

A modern traditional ruler must understand culture while appreciating the realities of a rapidly changing world.

He must speak to the elders without losing the young.

He must protect tradition without becoming imprisoned by the past.

He must welcome development without allowing development to destroy identity.

And he must deploy his influence to promote peace, education, economic opportunity and social cohesion.

These are responsibilities that require wisdom, patience, humility and vision.

Senator Alimikhena's experience in business and politics provides him with a broad understanding of the world beyond the palace walls. His philanthropic activities have also exposed him to the aspirations and challenges of ordinary people.

Those experiences could become

important assets as he begins his royal journey.

THE WANNO HERITAGE AND THE LARGER AFEMAI IDENTITY

The coronation of the new Okumagbe is also significant within the broader cultural landscape of the Afemai people.

Across generations, traditional institutions have played important roles in preserving indigenous values, settling disputes, maintaining communal harmony and transmitting cultural heritage.

In an increasingly globalised world, where younger generations are constantly exposed to external cultures and ideas, the preservation of indigenous identity becomes an important responsibility.

A vibrant traditional institution does not have to reject modernity.

Rather, it can provide the cultural foundation upon which modern development is built.

That is why the emergence of a new Okumagbe carries significance beyond the palace.

It is about the future of Wanno.

It is about how the kingdom preserves its stories, customs, values and communal bonds while preparing its younger generation for the opportunities and challenges of tomorrow.

A BRIDGE BETWEEN GENERATIONS

Perhaps one of the most important expectations from the reign of the new Okumagbe will be his ability to bridge generations.

The elders carry memories.

The middle generation carries experience.

The young carry the future.

2027 on the Horizon: Deep lessons from Osun guber poll for Nigeria's Democratic future

JAMES AROH

The countdown to Nigeria's 2027 General Elections has effectively begun. Though the election is still months away, political calculations, alliances, and realignments are already shaping the national conversation. In the midst of this, the Osun State Governorship Election stands out as a critical reference point. It was not merely a state election. It was a laboratory where Nigeria tested the resilience of its democracy, the maturity of its electorate, and the capacity of its institutions.

Osun 2022, and the subsequent political developments in the state, offer at least 7 major lessons that political parties, INEC, civil society, the media, and citizens must internalize if 2027 will be different, better, and more credible.

For decades, Nigerian elections were decided by the highest bidder. But Osun challenged that narrative. Yes, vote buying attempts were reported. But the outcome showed that voters were making choices beyond the envelope.

Town hall meetings in Osogbo, Ile-sa, and Ede were packed. Youths asked questions about unemployment, healthcare, and education. Women's groups demanded to know the candidate's position on gender-based violence. This is a new Nigeria.

The lesson for 2027: Parties must

present manifestos, not just merchandise. Candidates must campaign on issues. Nigerians, especially Gen Z and Millennials who make up over 60% of registered voters, are asking "What will you do for me?" If you don't have an answer, you will lose.

The introduction and deployment of BVAS and IReV changed the game in Osun. For the first time, results were uploaded in real-time. Citizens watched from their phones. The days of rewriting results at collation centers became much harder.

INEC's credibility got a boost. Voter turnout also improved because people believed their vote would count.

For 2027, the task is clear: INEC must not go backward. BVAS must be improved to handle network issues. Voter education on how the technology works must be intensified. Political parties must train their agents to understand the new system instead of fighting it.

Osun proved that incumbency is not a guarantee. Performance will be judged. Citizens kept a mental scorecard. They remembered campaign promises from 4 years ago.

This is a warning to all sitting governors, lawmakers, and even the Presidency ahead of 2027. Nigerians are watching. The era of "it's our turn" without results is ending.

The winning campaign in Osun did not just focus on TV and radio.

They went to markets, to churches, to mosques, to youth football fields. They spoke Pidgin, Yoruba, and simple English. They listened.

This is exactly what Obaland TV & Magazine stands for: *"Giving Voice to the Grassroots"*. 2027 will be won at the ward level, not just on Twitter.

Women's groups and student organizations were pivotal in Osun. They mobilized, they monitored, they spoke out against violence.

For 2027, political parties that ignore women and youth do so at their peril. The Not-Too-Young-To-Run law is maturing. We should expect more young candidates.

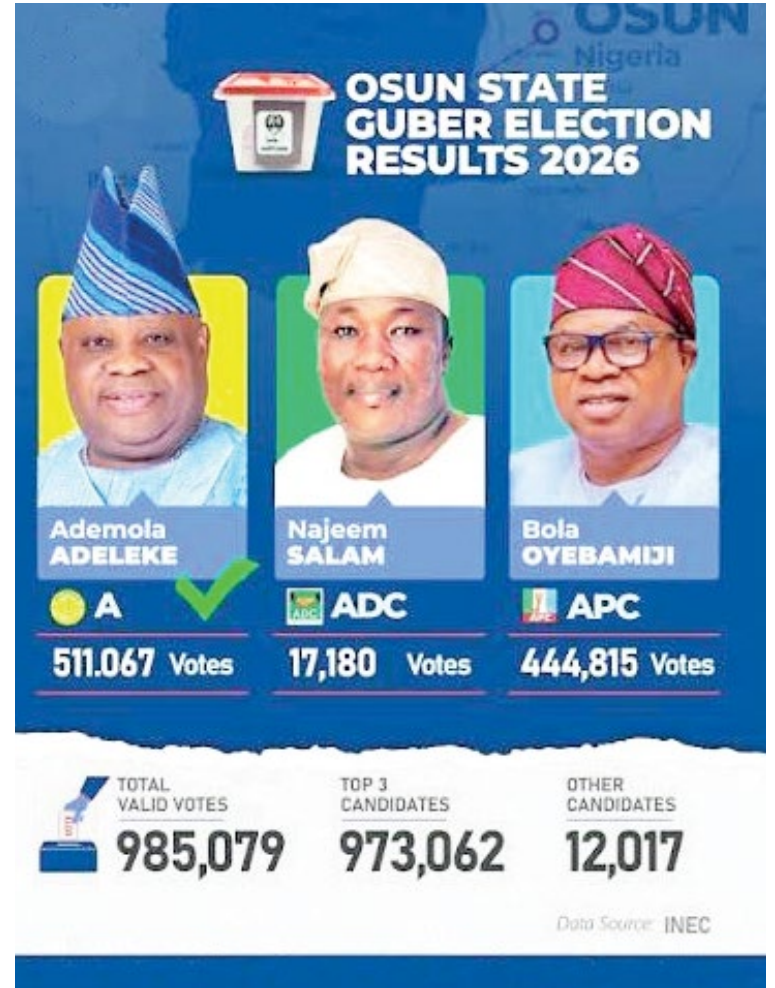
SECURITY AND PEACEFUL CONDUCT

Osun was largely peaceful because security agencies were professional and neutral. That must be the template for 2027. Any sign of partisanship will destroy public trust.

Fake news and misinformation were rampant online during Osun. But fact-checkers and responsible media helped.

2027 will define the next decade of Nigeria. The lessons from Osun are simple: respect the voter, use technology, deliver performance, and engage the grassroots. If we do this, Nigeria's democracy will be stronger.

The people are ready. Are the politicians?



Beyond 35% affirmative action: Nigerian women are Building power from the ground Up



GRACE IJEOMA UMEH

Walk through Oba Market in Benin City on a Tuesday morning and you will see it. Women running stalls, managing supply chains, negotiating with suppliers from Onitsha and Lagos, and sending their children to school with the proceeds. This is the Nigerian economy in action. And it is largely female.

Yet when we talk about "gender issues" in Nigeria, the conversation often gets stuck at politics. How many women are in the National Assembly? How many are governors? While those numbers matter, they tell only half the story.

The real gender revolution in Nigeria is happening outside the chambers of power. It is happening in tech hubs in Yaba, in farms in Edo North, in cooperatives in Edo Central, and in classrooms across the country.

Women make up nearly 50% of Nigeria's population and contribute over 40% to the GDP. In Edo State, women dominate agriculture, trading, and SMEs.

But they face a financing gap of over \$1.5 billion according to SMEDAN. Banks ask for collateral many women don't have. This is why community cooperatives and government intervention programs like EdoJobs for women are critical.

We have had female ministers,

senators, and deputy governors. But we are yet to have a female president or governor in Edo State. The 35% affirmative action remains largely aspirational.

But something is changing. Women are no longer asking for a seat at the table. They are building their own tables. Women-led NGOs are training female candidates. Media platforms like Obaland TV are giving women a voice.

The biggest barrier is still cultural. The idea that "a woman's place is in the kitchen" persists. This is why education is key. When a girl goes to school, she marries later, earns more, and raises healthier children.

Gender-based violence is another scourge. The VAPP Act exists but enforcement is weak. We need special courts, safe spaces, and community leaders to speak out.

As we approach 2027, political parties must do more than put women on posters. They must fund women candidates, protect them from violence, and include women in manifesto development.

Nigeria cannot develop if it sidelines women. The data is clear. Countries with greater gender equality grow faster.

The Nigerian woman is ready. She is trading, she is farming, she is coding, she is leading. The only question is: Will Nigeria be ready for her?

INTERVIEW

Ending Edo's Public revenue fragmentation through consolidation

DR. PATRICK AKHERE EBOJELE

Governor Monday Okpebholo has renewed his commitment to strengthen financial discipline, reduce revenue leakages and ensure that money generated by government institutions is properly accounted for. This explains his decision for the Revenue Consolidation Account (Establishment and Operation) Law, 2026.

The law is a central part of the administration's effort to tighten control over public revenue and end the fragmentation of government funds across the myriads of ministries, departments, agencies and parastatals in Edo State.

Before now, government agencies across the state operated separate revenue accounts through which they collected licensing fees, permits, fines and several other charges. Such arrangements were necessary for administrative convenience. However they also created gaps in oversight and made it difficult to establish a clear picture of the state's overall revenue position.

Governor Okpebholo has changed that system. Under the legislation, all ministries, departments, agencies and parastatals are required to surrender their revenue bank accounts to the Ministry of Finance within 14 days. Existing balances are to be consolidated into an approved Internal Generated Revenue account, after which the old accounts must be closed.

As explicated in the detailed announcement by the Secretary to the State Government, Umar Musa Ikhilor Esq, this requirement is backed by sanctions. Heads of agencies who fail to comply face immediate suspension pending investigation.

Governor Okpebholo's objective is clear: revenue generated on behalf of Edo State for the people belong to the state and must be subject to a common system of control, rather than remaining under the separate discretion of individual agencies and their management.

The Revenue Consolidation Account law also gives the Edo State Internal Revenue Service a central role in revenue collection and enforcement. Agencies will no longer be able to independently and haphazardly, appoint revenue agents, establish mobile courts or prosecute revenue-related offences without the approval of the EIRS.

This will eliminate parallel revenue collection structures, which have historically made it difficult to track collections and have provided opportunities for leakages and unauthorised deductions.

For Governor Okpebholo, this reform is not simply about moving

money from one bank account to another. It is a deliberate attempt to establish a very disciplined financial system in which the government can know how much revenue is being generated, where it comes from and how it is being spent.

The law therefore mandates agencies to submit revenue statements and supporting financial records covering the period from January 2025 to the Ministry of Finance, the State Auditor-General and the EIRS.

This audit requirement could prove particularly important. By establishing a record of revenue collected and the accounts through which such funds passed, the government will have a clearer basis for identifying discrepancies, recovering funds where necessary and improving future revenue planning.

The new development also changes the relationship between government agencies and the state treasury. Agencies that previously exercised considerable discretion over internally generated revenue will now operate within a more centralised financial framework, with the Ministry of Finance having greater visibility over government cash flows.

That arrangement could improve cash management and planning, but its success will depend heavily on implementation.

The 14-day

deadline, for instance, is to avoid complaints that MDAs with complicated revenue systems and multiple collection points may have challenges. Hospitals, educational institutions, utilities and other

large agencies now have a credible window to reconcile substantial records, transfer bal-

ances and close accounts within a reasonable period.

The government is aware that the consolidation process cannot disrupt essential public services. Agencies can still access funds required for legitimate operations while the process is on.

The legislation introduces personal responsibility for officers who authorise unauthorised revenue spending. Such officers may be held jointly liable with their agencies, strengthening the principle that public officials must account for decisions involving government funds.

This emphasis on individual accountability reflects one of the key objectives of the Okpebholo administration: to move Edo's public finances away from informal and fragmented practices and towards a system based on transparency, control and accountability.

The reform also fits into the wider push for fiscal modernisation in Nigeria, where governments at both federal and state levels are under increasing pressure to improve internally generated revenue, reduce dependence on federal allocations and strengthen public financial management.

For Edo, however, the issue is more practical. The state government wants to know exactly how much revenue its agencies generate and ensure that such funds are captured within the state's financial system.

Governor Okpebholo's consolidation law is therefore a direct attempt to close the gaps created by multiple revenue accounts and competing collection structures. Its success will ultimately be measured not by the signing of the law, but by whether revenue leakages fall, collections improve and government finances become easier to monitor.

In the coming months, the administration will be turning the law into an effective working system, in a way and manner that gives the state stronger control over its revenue, improve accountability and provide a clearer basis for planning and delivering public services.

At its core, the reform reflects Governor Okpebholo's objective of imposing greater financial discipline on the Edo State government machinery and ensuring that public revenue is treated as a collective resource that must be centrally controlled, transparently managed and fully accounted for.

• Ebojele, PhD in Public Administration and is the Chief Press Secretary to Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State.



GOVERNOR MONDAY OKPEBHOLU

NEWS

Ewu Onogieship Tussle: Court orders Jafaru Isesele, three others to show cause



PRINCE JAFARU ISESELE

BENIN CITY

OUR REPORTER

An Edo State High Court sitting in Benin City has ordered Prince Jafaru Isesele of Ewu Kingdom and three other respondents to appear before it on September 9, 2026, to show cause why they should not be restrained from allegedly violating the right to fair hearing of the applicant.

The applicant, Prince Rasak Yesufu Ogiefu, instituted the action under the Fundamental Rights provisions of the 1999 Constitution, as amended, par-

ticularly Section 36(1) and (5), relating to fair hearing.

The suit, filed by way of Originating Summons and numbered B/185 OS/2026, has Prince Jafaru Isesele, the Attorney-General of Edo State and two other persons as respondents.

In paragraph eight of the Originating Summons, the applicant stated that there is a longstanding substantive dispute concerning the stool, status, rights, interests and entitlements connected with the office of the Onogie of Ewu in Edo State.

The applicant also filed a motion seeking an interim in-

junction, containing three principal reliefs and an alternative prayer.

After hearing arguments on the motion, the court, presided over by Justice A.T. Momodu, granted the first and third reliefs sought by Prince Rasak Ogiefu.

In granting the first relief, the court ordered Prince Jafaru Isesele and the other respondents to show cause why the applicant's motion for interim injunction should not be granted pending the determination of the Motion on Notice for interlocutory injunction.

The order relates specifically

to the applicant's alleged fundamental right to fair hearing in pending contempt proceedings in Suit No. B/457/2001 before the Edo State High Court.

The court subsequently adjourned the matter to September 9, 2026, for hearing of the Motion on Notice and for Prince Jafaru Isesele and the other respondents to show cause as ordered.

The latest development is the newest legal twist in the longstanding dispute surrounding the Ewu traditional stool, with the court expected to consider the parties' respective positions at the next hearing.

Preserving Our Voices: The importance of indigenous Languages in modern Society

EJEMOGO REBECCA ANWURI

Indigenous languages in modern society, otherwise known as the 21st century, are gradually dwindling, such that the younger generations do not see the value or importance of committing themselves to actually learning them, to the extent that most of them are clueless when asked about their native languages. For those who, to some extent, can relate with others in their indigenous language, it is either a reflection of a compulsory mandate to learn it or the fact that their indigenous language was the primary means of communication in their home. For example, if a young boy grows up in a home where the parents communicate mostly in the Yoruba language, the young child will, by virtue of being brought up in that environment, automatically start communicating in Yoruba.

Indigenous languages are the native languages spoken by the original people of a particular community, region, or country.

But in recent times, we realize that instead of people using the medium of being exposed to the digital world in order to promote their indigenous languages, they see it as a thing of shame, which has pushed a lot of young people into embracing and preferring foreign languages.

Despite the proliferation of modernization and globalization, indigenous languages still take their stand in producing certain results that modernization finds difficult to express.

First and foremost, indigenous languages give people identity. Just as names become a vital aspect for identifying an individual, in like manner, indigenous language helps people know who they are. The beautiful thing about this is that there is no form of confusion because indigenous language, in a sense, is unique, and its uniqueness promotes pride in one's heritage, which creates a sense of belonging. For example, a lot of people are able to connect with others who share the same native language because



SOCIETY MEMBERS

they heard the other party speak their language. It can spark conversations, and then they might find out they are related in one way or the other. Another vital example is the Hausa language, because no matter where a Hausa man or woman goes, their mother tongue serves as a trademark that makes people easily identify them wherever they find themselves. That is the reason most of them receive favour i.e., contracts and job opportunities from their fellow Hausa brethren as a result of the identity and leverage that their indigenous language has given them.

Aside from giving people identity, indigenous languages help to preserve culture. We live in a society where the value of cultural values and traditions has drastically reduced. Indigenous language serves as a tool that has helped to preserve culture from being

quenched by modernization. Hence, if language is removed from the scene, many cultural norms and values might be displaced with it.

Hence, indigenous language serves as the last hope of truly sustaining a culture by passing it from one generation to the other. For instance, the folktales, proverbs, traditional songs, customs, and beliefs, as well as historical stories, would not have been known by many persons if they were not preserved and codified in a native language. Hence, indigenous language is important in order to keep the flame of our cultural values and traditions burning.

Additionally, indigenous languages help to enhance learning. When indigenous languages are incorporated into education, they serve as a powerful tool to improve effective learning and understanding among students

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Aside from giving people identity, indigenous languages help to preserve culture. We live in a society where the value of cultural values and traditions has drastically reduced.

who better grasp lessons taught in their native language. Hence, students are given the opportunity to participate more confidently in class.

Furthermore, indigenous languages promote development. For example, during colonial rule, the newspaper that was first published in the Yoruba language, called Iwe Irohin fun Egba ati Yoruba, contributed immensely to raising agitation among Nigerians to reject colonial rulers and expose their evils. This tells us that indigenous languages help important information reach more people, especially those located in rural areas. Another vital example can be captured in situations whereby the government intends to pass across certain information and updates. Using the widely accepted English language alone is not as effective, unlike when that information is disseminated in a language they understand. For instance, a political candidate who has good intentions to improve the well-being of a particular locality will not be able to fully win the hearts of his target audience unless they are engaged in a language they can understand.

Hence, that is the reason why, when some politicians are canvassing for votes, they go to local markets and communicate their manifestos in the predominant language in that area, lest those persons feel left out and refuse to vote. It also helps in promoting development in the areas of health campaigns, agricultural programmes, security information, etc.

While many people still have the mindset that indigenous languages belong to the past, this notion has instead been challenged due to the recent developments that have evolved from them. For example, we now have local-language radio programmes that keep people, especially in rural communities, informed about the happenings in society; the establishment of indigenous-language television broadcasts; mobile apps (i.e., the Bible) that are translated into diverse languages in order to cater for people's preferences; and the development of online dictionaries as well as social media content in native languages.

Irrespective of the beauty of indigenous languages in modern society, there are some threats posed to them, which among others include: the dominant preference for foreign languages, the rise of urbanization and globalization, and the problem of parents no longer teaching their children native languages.

However, in order to promote the preservation of indigenous languages, there are some things that ought to be put in place, which include: parents teaching children their native language; schools should endeavour to encourage indigenous language learning; and technology should be used to properly document and promote indigenous languages, etc.

Preserving indigenous languages in modern society is important because it helps connect future generations to their roots despite their engagements in modern society. Hence, indigenous languages transcend mere words to become a viable expression of people's history, culture, and identity.

Erosion, Flooding, and Hope: How Edo State can lead Nigeria's climate response

MARTHA OBI-DIKE

The 2025 rains were different. In Igueben, a road collapsed into a gully overnight. In Ikpo-ba-Okha, families woke up to water in their living rooms. In Edo North, farmers watched their yams wash away.

Climate change is not a future problem for Edo State. It is a today problem.

Nigeria is one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world. Edo State faces a triple threat: gully erosion in the central and north, flooding in the south, and deforestation across the state.

The World Bank estimates that erosion alone costs Nigeria over \$100 million annually. In Edo, entire communities are at risk of being cut off.

It is not just about roads. It is about children who cannot get to school. It is about farmers who lose a year's work. It is about women who walk 3 extra kilo-

meters to fetch water because the borehole was destroyed by flooding.

The Edo State Government, through the Ministry of Environment, has started gully erosion control projects. NEWMAP and other donor agencies are involved. But more needs to be done.

The real solution is at the grassroots. Tree planting campaigns. Proper waste disposal. Building houses away from water channels.

Traditional rulers have a role. Schools have a role. Media has a role.

Edo has abundant sunshine. Solar power can reduce our dependence on generators and firewood. This will cut emissions and create jobs.

We cannot stop the rain. But we can prepare for it. We cannot reverse climate change overnight. But we can adapt

Our land. Our future. Our responsibility.



Sports

● Football ● Athletics ● Golf ● Basketball ● Tennis ● Boxing

NIS Commence 8-week summer basic coaching programme in Uyo as stakeholders commend Shaibu

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The National Institute for Sports (NIS), in collaboration with Ray Tiding Consulting Ltd. and the Akwa Ibom State Football Association

(AKSFA), has commenced an 8-week Summer Basic Coaching Programme in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, as part of efforts to strengthen coaching capacity and promote grassroots sports development.

The programme was attended by the Akwa Ibom State Commissioner for Sports, Hon. Paul Bassey; the Registrar of the NIS, Mr. Belmont Benson, who represented the Director General and Chief Executive Officer of the Institute, H.E. Comrade Philip Shaibu; Chairman of the Akwa Ibom State Football Association, Samuel Umo; NFF Board Member representing the South-South, Hon. Utuekong Nse Essien (PhD), coaches and other stakeholders in the sports sector.

The eight-week programme, which commenced at the Godswill Akpabio International Stadium, Uyo, is designed to provide participants with foundational knowledge and practical skills in sports coaching.

According to the press statement signed by Ben Ogbemudia, the S. A. Media, Office of the Director General, National Institute for Sports ADC Abuja stated that the programme is targeted at football coaches, grassroots coaches, sports academy instructors, youth leaders, retired athletes, club coaches, sports administrators, graduates interested in a career in sports coaching and others seeking a foundation in coaching.

Speaking at the programme, the Akwa Ibom State Commissioner for Sports, Hon. Paul Bassey, expressed delight at the initiative and commended what he described as the renewed direction of the NIS under the leadership of H.E. Comrade Philip Shaibu.



THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR SPORTS COMMITTEE

Nigeria Tops Africa at 2026 Commonwealth Fencing Championship in Lagos

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Nigeria has finished third overall best team and emerged as the best African nation at the 2026 Commonwealth Fencing Championship, which came to an end in Lagos after six days of intense competition, involving 20 countries.

Team Nigeria amassed an impressive haul of 24 medals (one gold, five silver and 18 bronze medals) to finish third on the overall standings, behind India.

The performance marked a significant milestone for Nigerian fencing, highlighted by the historic achievement of 17-year-old Oghenegaren Osievwa-Thompson, who emerged as the star of the tournament after becoming the first Nigerian to win an international gold medal in fencing.

The teenager's landmark performance has already earned him recognition from the National Sports Commission, which has placed him in Elite Category A for the Commission's Olympic grants programme. Under the new arrangement, Osievwa-Thompson will receive \$10,000 quarterly as a training grant to support his preparations towards the Olympic Games.

In a statement signed by Kola Daniel,

S.A. Media, Office of the Director General, National Sports Commission

● **Finished third with over 20 medals in overall standings**

the Director General of the National Sports Commission, Hon. Bukola Olopade, said the championship again demonstrated that Nigeria's sporting potential extends well beyond football, stressing the importance of giving greater recognition and investment to emerging and non-traditional sports.



2026 World Wrestling Championships: NWF sets up training camp in U.S.

The Nigerian Wrestling Federation (NWF) has announced plans to establish a training camp in Iowa State University in the U.S., in preparation for the forthcoming 2026 World Wrestling Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan.

A statement by the Federation on Sunday in Abuja confirmed

that the President of the NWF, Bashir Adeniyi, had given the nod to establish the camp in the U.S. ahead of the World Wrestling Championships scheduled for Oct. 24 to Nov. 1.

The camp is aimed bringing together Nigerian wrestlers based in different parts of the U.S., providing opportunity

for them to train collectively ahead of the Championship.

The statement stated that Some of Nigeria's top wrestlers currently studying in the U.S. will have the opportunity to undergo effective training at the camp, while several home-based wrestlers with valid US visas will also join the training programme.

The NWF also added that the camp will also be opened to new talents willing to join the national wrestling team.

"Nigerian-born athletes residing in the U.S. who are eligible and willing to represent Nigeria will have the opportunity to participate in the training programme, providing a platform for identifying and integrating talented wrestlers of Nigerian descent into the national team setup," the statement added.



Tanzania becomes First African country to introduce FVS in Domestic League

Tanzania has become the first African country to introduce Football Video Support (FVS) technology in its domestic league, marking a significant step forward in the use of technology to improve

refereeing decisions, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

The FVS system has been deployed in the Tanzanian Premier League to assist match officials in reviewing key incidents and making more accurate

rate decisions during matches.

The technology has already proved useful, helping referees improve their decision-making on certain calls since its introduction.

Tanzania's adoption of FVS represents another major development

in African football officiating as leagues across the continent continue to explore technological solutions aimed at improving the accuracy, fairness and credibility of refereeing decisions.



JUNIOR D'TIGRESS IN ACTION

Junior D'Tigress stun hosts, seal World Cup ticket

Nigeria's Junior D'Tigress secured qualification for the 2027 FIBA U19 Women's Basketball World Cup in China after edging hosts Côte d'Ivoire 53-50 in a tense semi-final at the 2026 FIBA U18 Women's AfroBasket on Friday.

Playing in front of a passionate home crowd, the Nigerian youngsters maintained their composure throughout a closely contested encounter, with neither team able to establish a commanding advantage.

Nigeria made a bright start, narrowly winning the opening quarter 12-11 before extending their lead to four points at half-

time with a 27-23 advantage.

The Junior D'Tigress remained disciplined after the interval, taking the third quarter 14-13 to move 41-36 ahead heading into the final period.

The hosts refused to give up, mounting a late comeback and winning the fourth quarter 12-11. However, Nigeria held their nerve in the closing stages to secure the three-point victory and book their place at next year's global junior championship.

Favour Joy Anar was instrumental in the victory, leading Nigeria's scoring with 15 points while also contributing four assists and five steals.

Cameroon thrash Malawi 3-0 to win first WAFCON title

Cameroon's Indomitable Lionesses on Sunday won their first Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) title after defeating debutants Malawi 3-0 in the final in Rabat, Morocco.

Cameroon produced a dominant first-half display at the Moulay El Hassan Stadium, scoring all three goals before the break to secure the historic victory.

Marie Manga opened the scoring in the 20th minute, heading Cameroon into the lead before Naomi Eto doubled the advantage nine minutes later.

Manga then completed her brace in first-half stoppage

time, giving the Indomitable Lionesses a commanding 3-0 lead going into the interval.

Malawi, making their debut at the continental championship, attempted to fight back after the restart, with the Chawinga sisters, Temwa and Tabitha, unable to break through Cameroon's defence.

Cameroon goalkeeper, Michaely Bihina, helped preserve the clean sheet as the Indomitable Lionesses held on comfortably to secure the continental crown.

The victory ended Cameroon's long wait for the WAFCON title after three previous defeats in the final.



SPORTS

Gov Okpebholo's grassroots Sports investment yielding results as Team Edo shines at National Championships

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

The Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has been commended for his deliberate

investment in grassroots sports development as Team Edo continues to record impressive performances across various zonal and national competitions.



TEAM EDO

The Executive Chairman of the Edo State Sports Commission, Hon. Amadin Desmond Enabulele, gave the commendation while celebrating Team Edo's achievements at the National Open Championship in Abuja, the 4th South-South Under-13 Badminton Tournament in Asaba, and the 2026 FIDE World Amateur Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship.

At the traditional sports championship in Abuja, Team Edo emerged overall champions with eight gold and four silver medals in Ayo, Dambe and Kokowa.

The state athletes also recorded notable performances in the Under-13 Badminton Tournament, with Achinbong

Joel winning gold in boys' singles and mixed doubles, while Ita Bright secured gold in mixed doubles.

Enabulele also celebrated chess star Miss Omoruyi Sandra, who emerged champion in the Women's Under-20 Rapid and Blitz categories at the FIDE World Amateur Championship in Abuja.

Recall that Sandra won gold for Team Edo at the 2nd Niger Delta Games in Benin City.

Enabulele said the achievements demonstrate the positive impact of Governor Okpebholo's commitment and deliberate investment in talent hunt and grassroots sports development in Edo State.

He described the athletes'

performances as a reflection of the state's growing strength in sports and reaffirmed the Commission's commitment to the state's "Catch Them Young" programme.

"Under Governor Monday Okpebholo, we are witnessing a renewed commitment to grassroots sports development.

These achievements show that when young talents are identified, nurtured and supported, they can excel and bring honour to Edo State and Nigeria.

"We are proud of Team Edo and will continue to provide platforms for our athletes to develop and pursue excellence," Enabulele said.



The Executive Chairman of the Edo State Sports Commission, Hon. Amadin Desmond Enabulele celebrating with Team Edo

NFF sacks Super Falcons Technical Crew after WAFCON, World Cup disaster

The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) has ordered the entire technical crew of the Super Falcons, led by head coach Justine Madugu, to step down with immediate effect following the team's disappointing 2026 campaign and failure to secure qualification for the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup.

Executive Committee announced the decision on Monday in a brief statement on its official X account, but did not provide a specific reason for the sack.

However, reports indicate that the decision came after the Super Falcons suffered a poor outing at the 2026 Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) and subsequently failed to qualify for the World Cup.

Nigeria's campaign at the continental tournament ended in the quarter-finals with a 1-0 defeat to Cameroon, a result that prevented the nine-time African champions from securing an automatic ticket to the 2027 World Cup. It was the first time the Super Falcons had been eliminated at the quarter-final stage of the competition.

The Falcons had endured an unconvincing group-stage campaign, including an opening defeat by Malawi, who were appearing in the tournament for the first time. Malawi subsequently reached the final,

where they lost to Cameroon.

After missing out on automatic qualification, Nigeria had another opportunity to reach the World Cup through the African play-off route. That chance also disappeared after the Super Falcons suffered a 2-1 defeat to South Africa, leaving Nigeria without a place at the 2027 tournament in Brazil.

The outcome marked a his-

toric setback for Nigeria's senior women's team, which had previously featured at every edition of the FIFA Women's World Cup.

Madugu had been part of the Super Falcons' technical structure for years. The NFF appointed him and Edwin Okon to the team's technical crew in November 2021 as part of an effort to reorganise the coaching set-up.

The latest decision therefore represents a significant change in the management of a team that remains one of Nigeria's most successful national sides.

They are yet to announce who will take charge of the Super Falcons or whether an interim technical team will be appointed ahead of their next competitive engagements.

Rangers, Shooting Stars to host continental opponents in Abeokuta

Enugu Rangers and Shooting Stars have selected the MKO Abiola Sports Arena in Abeokuta, Ogun State, as their home venue for their respective CAF inter-club competition fixtures.

The decision means both Nigerian clubs will stage their continental home matches in Abeokuta rather than at the Remo Stars Stadium in Ikenne, which they had initially considered for the upcoming campaigns.

Rangers, the reigning Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) champions, had earlier reached an agreement with Remo Stars to use the club's stadium in Ikenne as their home ground for the preliminary rounds of the CAF Champions League. However, following further consultations with the technical

crew led by head coach Fidelis Ilechukwu, the Enugu club opted for the MKO Abiola Sports Arena.

The Flying Antelopes secured their ninth NPFL title in May after defeating Ikorodu City 2-1 in Lagos on the final day of the 2025/26 season. The victory also earned Rangers a place in the 2026/27 CAF Champions League.

CAF confirmed the club's qual-

ification after Rangers finished top of the domestic standings.

Rangers will face Benin Republic's AS Sobemap in the first preliminary round of the Champions League. The continental campaign is scheduled to begin with the preliminary rounds in September, with the clubs needing to negotiate the qualifying stages before reaching the group phase.



ENUGU RANGERS

Côte d'Ivoire, Mali wear Africa's U-18 Basketball crown

Côte d'Ivoire and Mali emerged as the kings and queens of African youth basketball after claiming the men's and women's titles respectively at the 2026 FIBA U-18 AfroBasket championships.

While Côte d'Ivoire thrilled their home supporters in Abidjan by defeating Senegal 73-51 to win

the men's crown, Mali retained their women's diadem with a 77-68 victory over Nigeria.

For Côte d'Ivoire, the triumph represented a historic breakthrough as they secured their first continental title at U18 level and their first African basketball championship since the senior men's team won the FIBA AfroBasket on home soil in 1985.

Nathan Djako was the architect of the victory, scoring a game-high 22 points as the Ivorians dominated the final from the opening minutes.

Côte d'Ivoire raced into a

6-0 lead before ending the first quarter 16-7 ahead. Senegal attempted to respond in the second period but the hosts maintained control, taking a 34-24 advantage into halftime.

The Ivorians then turned the third quarter into a decisive statement, with back-to-back three-pointers from Djako helping them build an 18-point lead.

They finished the period 55-34 ahead before further three-pointers from Karl-Randell Kouame-Zeze and Medard Dabire effectively ended Senegal's hopes of a comeback.

Grassroots: Sheu close win Lagos street football title

Sheu Close on Saturday defeated Amusa Street 2-0 to emerge champions of the Lagos State Street Soccer Stars Oshodi 2026.

Sheu Close produced a strong performance in the final to secure the title, while Amusa Street settled for the runners-up position.

In the third-place match, Oremoji Street defeated Salawu Street 6-1 to claim the bronze position in the grassroots competition.

Ezekiel Odega was named Man of the Match after helping Oremoji Street secure the convincing victory with an impressive individual performance.

Odega demonstrated determination, good ball control and strong teamwork throughout the encounter, contributing significantly to his team's emphatic victory.

"I feel good. All thanks to God for making this happen," Odega said after receiving the individual award.

He said his expectation had been to reach the final, expressing disappointment that his team failed to achieve the target.

"My expectation was to be in the final, but I am not happy we

did not get there," he said.

Odega, however, said the team remained determined despite the setback, describing the third-place encounter as a tough match.

The tournament, themed 'Oshodi Hidden Talents', featured 64 teams and 640 players drawn from communities across Lagos State.

The competition began on Aug. 2 and ended on Saturday, providing young players opportunities for talent discovery and development.

It was organised in partnership with FirstBank through its First@Sports initiative, promoting youth development, healthy living and community engagement.

Speaking with journalists, Adebajji Atewogboye, Senior Special Assistant to the Governor on Grassroots Sports Development, said the tournament achieved its purpose.

Atewogboye said the competition provided young people with productive activities during their holiday while helping them improve their football skills.



LAGOS STREET FOOTBALL



MALI CELEBRATE AFRICA'S U-18 BASKETBALL CROWN

SPORTSEXTRA

National Sports Commission (NSC) backs traditional sports, targets global recognition

The National Sports Commission (NSC) has reaffirmed its commitment to the development, promotion and internationalisation of traditional sports in the country.

Chairman of NSC, Mallam Shehu Dikko gave the assurance during a visit to the Abula venue at the Moshood Abiola

Stadium Package B in Abuja on Friday, August 15, 2026.

Dikko said a dedicated budget line has been created for the sector for the first time in the history of sports administration in the country.

He stated that traditional sports, which include Abula, Dambe, Kokuwa, Langa and

Ayo, are an important part of Nigeria's sporting heritage and deserve sustained investment, wider participation and international exposure.

He said: "For the first time in the history of sports, we have created a specific budget line for traditional sports."

"If you check the budget of the National Sports Commission, you will see a specific budget line meant to advance the cause of traditional sports."

The sports administrator further disclosed plans to encourage the leadership of the Traditional Sports Federation of Nigeria to strengthen engagement with other African countries and promote Nigerian traditional sports internationally.

Dikko explained that traditional sports should go beyond festivals and local competitions

and be developed into internationally recognised sporting disciplines.

He expressed particular optimism about the growing international interest in Nigerian traditional sports, citing interest from investors in Saudi Arabia in Dambe and other traditional sporting disciplines.

Dikko said: "It is not just about having these sports at festivals and local events. We should work to promote them and make them as international as we can."

"I am calling on traditional rulers across the country to play a greater role in promoting traditional sports, as they have to play a collective role with the relevant sports federations to expand the reach of traditional sports, just as they have done in promoting horse racing across the country."



MALLAM SHEHU DIKKO

Lagos Intermediate Games to showcase state's sports investment – Olopade

The Director-General, National Sports Commission (NSC) Bukola Olopade, says Lagos is fully prepared to host the inaugural Intermediate Games in October.

Olopade stated this in an interview with journalists in Saturday in Lagos.

According to him, the games will provide an opportunity to showcase Lagos as a state prepared for the future, through sustained investment in sports.

He added that it would also demonstrate the quality of leadership and preparation currently driving sports development in the state.

The director general noted that the initiative initially faced some reservations from the state's sports administration, before the governor personally embraced the project.

"When I introduced the Intermediate Games to the Director-General of the Lagos State Sports Commission (LSSC) Lekan Fatodu, he was sceptical," Olopade said.

"So, I went above him and called the governor and said to him 'Excellency, you own this'. And they accepted," he said.

According to Olopade, the Lagos government subsequently gave the games greater importance than the NSC initially envisaged.

"Today, they have made the Intermediate Games more

important than what the NSC made it to be. And I thank them for that," he said.

He commended the Lagos governor for his personal involvement in the preparations, particularly his inspection of facilities ahead of the competition.

"You see the governor going about inspecting facilities. Lekan Fatodu has not slept for weeks and he is not going to



BUKOLA OLOPADE

Milo, Ahmed Musa launch U-13 tournament in Kano to discover grassroots talents

The Milo-Ahmed Musa Under-13 Football Clinic and Tournament has commenced in Kano with 16 teams participating in the 17-day event aimed at discovering and nurturing grassroots football talents.

The clinic, holding at the Ahmed Musa Sports Complex, is organised by Milo, a brand of Nestlé Nigeria Plc, in partnership

with former Super Eagles captain and Milo brand ambassador, Ahmed Musa.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Milo Category Lead, Nestlé Nigeria Plc, Gilbert Tweneboah-Koduah, said the initiative was designed to develop young footballers while promoting the values of teamwork, resilience, discipline and determination.

Tweneboah-Koduah said Milo had supported sports development in Nigeria for nearly three decades, adding that its partnership with Musa was aimed at extending grassroots sports development initiatives to Northern Nigeria.

He said the participants would receive training from professional coaches in areas including shooting, tackling and teamwork, ahead of the tournament final on September 3.

"We believe that by starting with children under 13, tomorrow's top striker or football player may have started learning the skills from here."

"This is why we will not stop. It is better to catch them young, train them young and instil the right values in them so that they can make our nation proud when they grow up," he said.



MILO U-13 TOURNAMENT IN KANO

LASG links sports events to boosting tourism goals

Lagos State Government has said international sporting events are helping to drive sports tourism and showcase the state's cultural and tourism potential to global audiences.

Idris Aregbe, Special Adviser to Gov. Babajide Sanwo-Olu on Tourism, Arts and Culture, stated this on Friday while speaking with journalists in Lagos.

The governor's aide was reflecting on the successful hosting of

the 2026 Commonwealth Fencing Championships in Lagos.

The championships were held at Rugby School Nigeria, Eko Atlantic, attracting athletes and officials from 20 countries.

Aregbe described the tournament as a destination event that combined sports, tourism and cultural exchange, while promoting Lagos as a preferred destination.

"There's always a beautiful

marriage between sports tourism and culture, and I'm happy that is what Lagos is known for," he said.

According to him, international competitions provide visitors with opportunities to experience the culture, values and attractions of the host community.

"People come in to experience culture, value and also get to experience the best that Lagos has to offer," Aregbe said.

He expressed satisfaction with the experience provided by Lagos State to participants and visitors during the championships.

Aregbe said the state would intensify efforts to expose visitors to more attractions and ensure they enjoyed a memorable Lagos experience.

"We are planning to take them around and show them Lagos, making sure Lagos is home to every one of them," he said.



ALVARO ARBELOA

Fulham name Arbeloa head Coach, hails Bassey as leader

Fulham have appointed former Real Madrid and Spain defender Alvaro Arbeloa as their new head coach.

Arbeloa takes charge of a squad that includes Nigeria internationals Calvin Bassey and Alex Iwobi. In pre-season, Arbeloa has publicly praised Bassey, who has featured wearing the captain's armband for Fulham.

In comments highlighted by the club, Arbeloa said: "Calvin is a proper player. He has everything. He's a really funny guy, but when we have to work, he's the first one. I really love Calvin. He can be our leader."

The defender has established himself as a dependable presence at the heart of Fulham's defence in recent seasons.

Fulham said Arbeloa called it a real honour to begin a new stage at the oldest club in London and that he looks forward to experiencing the atmosphere at Craven Cottage. Owner Shahid Khan said the club's squad and fans will resonate with the appointment.

Fulham finished 11th last season and will begin the 2026/27 campaign under Arbeloa, who is tasked with pushing the west London side forward in his first managerial role outside Spain.

WAFCON: Algeria beat Morocco on penalties to win bronze

Algeria secured the bronze medal at the 2026 Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) after beating hosts Morocco 3-2 on penalties following a 1-1 draw in the third-place match.

Morocco took the lead through Kautar Azraf, whose first-half goal gave the Atlas Lionesses a 1-0 advantage at the break.

Morocco appeared to have doubled their lead in the second half when Maryam Atiq found the net, but the goal was disallowed, leaving the hosts with a narrow advantage.

Algeria continued to press for an equaliser and were rewarded in the 83rd minute when Lina Boussaha scored to bring the match level at 1-1.

Neither side could find a decisive goal before the final whistle, forcing the bronze-medal contest into a penalty shootout.

Algeria held their nerve from the spot, winning 3-2 to secure third place and the bronze medal at the tournament.

The final is scheduled for Sunday between Cameroon and Malawi.



ALGERIA WOMEN CELEBRATING

SPORTS



Community Shield: Arsenal beat Man City 3-0

Arsenal were the better side as the London club beat rivals Manchester City 3-0 in the Community Shield played at Cardiff's Principality



ARSENAL VS MAN CITY

Stadium on Sunday, August 16. The beating for Enzo Maresca in his first test since replacing Pep Guardiola is a painful reminder to Manchester City of

just how tough life is going to be without the Spanish genius.

These two teams were the best in the Premier League last season. But in one game in Cardiff's Principality Stadium, the bitter rivals looked poles apart.

Arsenal ripped City to shreds from start to finish, including an opening goal inside 23 seconds, on an afternoon Maresca will want to forget in a hurry.

But the pressure on the Italian to maintain the incredible standards his predecessor set, will never escape him. As for Mikel Arteta, he waited three years to end his trophy drought, and has now pocketed two inside four months.

Riccardo Califfiori opened the scoring within half a minute – and Arsenal never looked back. Kai Havertz doubled the lead, before the impressive Martin Odegaard completed the rout in style.

There was £125m worth of new talent on show, in the shape of Bruno Guimaraes, Christos Tzolis and Elliot Anderson, while Jack Grealish was named on the City bench.

There was no Rodri for City, though, with the Spanish World Cup winner still at the centre of a transfer saga between his club and Barcelona. And it took Maresca's men just 23 seconds to miss the glue Rodri provides and come unstuck.



IBRAHIM GUSAU

NSC cancels NFF election, set to name 'normalisation committee'

The National Sports Commission (NSC) has cancelled the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) electoral congress, which was scheduled to hold on September 27 in Lafia, Nasarawa State, to pave the way for a thorough reorganisation of the federation.

This move has severely jolted the Ibrahim Gusau-led executive committee, which was bidding for a second term in office, having taken the mantle four years ago.

In the interim, the NSC is set to name a "normalisation committee" to run the nation's football

affairs for three months.

The NSC arrived at this step last Thursday when the Super Falcons were eliminated from the African playoff for the 2027 World Cup by the Banyana Banyana of South Africa, in Morocco.

The Super Falcons have appeared at every edition of the FIFA World Cup since the tournament began in China in 1991.

The NSC was said to have got the permission of the World Football governing body (FIFA) after it assured the embattled President Gianni Infantino of Nigeria's support in his re-election bid.

Efunkoya championship discovered future stars, says Foundation

The Efunkoya Foundation National Cadet Championship says it has produced emerging talents capable of replacing Nigeria's table tennis stars.

Lajide Ogunranti, a Foundation Board of Trustees member, said this in an interview with journalists in Saturday in Lagos.

He said the seven-year tournament had produced players who progressed to Nigeria's national teams.

"We are achieving that. Those who were champions in this competition five or six years ago are now in the national team," Ogunranti said.

He said the foundation aimed to produce replacements for Nigeria's national team and restore the country's position in global table tennis.

Ogunranti said 132 players, comprising 81 boys and 51 girls, participated in the five-day championship, which ended on Friday at the National Stadium, Lagos.

He said some former participants had recorded impressive international performances, including Nigerian women who recently defeated Egypt in Ghana.

Ogunranti expressed confidence that the emerging players could conquer Africa and compete globally with proper training and the right attitude.

ing and the right attitude.

Waheed Ekun, former Nigerian national champion and sports administrator, said the tournament remained an important platform for discovering talents and promoting education alongside sports.

Ekun said several players discovered through the competition had progressed to national level, adding that late Adegboyega Efunkoya discovered him during the 1970s.



EFUNKOYA CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM

Invest in young squash players, Adekunle Adebisi urges stakeholders

Adekunle Adebisi, Secretary of the Nigerian Squash Players in the Diaspora, has urged individuals,

corporate organisations and other stakeholders to invest in young squash players to help produce future world champions.

Adebisi stated this while addressing newsmen on Friday in Abuja on the sidelines of the ongoing seventh edition of the Squash Ex-Pros in the Diaspora Tournament for U-11, U-13 and U-17 Boys and Girls tournament.

He said grassroots development remained central to the tournament, stressing the need for sustained support to nurture young talents and provide them with competitive opportunities.

"Some of these kids you see selling groundnuts and going about their daily activities could be the next world champion," he said.



ADEKUNLE ADEBIYI

Nigeria U-18 male handball team begins camp ahead of African Cadets Championship

KEHINDE OSAGIEDE

Head Coach of Nigeria's National Under-18 Male Handball Team, Abdulhakim Yakubu, has invited 22 players to camp in preparation for the 22nd African Cadets Men's Championship, with the selected players already in camp in Abuja ahead of the competition in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

The young national team is currently undergoing intensive training sessions as the coaching crew works to build a competitive squad capable of making a strong impression at the continental championship.

In a press statement signed by Cosmos Chukwuemeka Akisi, Media Officer and Vice Chairman, Handball Federation of Nigeria said that

Nigeria has been drawn in

Group B alongside Tunisia, Algeria and Madagascar, according to the groupings released for the championship.

The other groups have Egypt, Cameroon and Congo in Group A; Morocco, Libya and Rwanda in Group C; while Guinea, hosts Côte d'Ivoire, Zambia and Burundi make up Group D.

The Nigerian squad features players across seven positions.

In the goalkeeping department are Shuaibu Friday Micheal, Shuaibu Muhammad

and Lawal Muhammad.

The centre backs are Aliyu Rufai, Sani Muntari, Friday Pagiel and Sulaimon Abayomi Fashogbon, while Godstime Michael, Usman Umar and Samuel Achama are listed as left backs.

The right-back options are Huzafa Abdulkadir, Obieze Akunebu, Gana Abubakar Tauhidi and Muhammed Yahaya.

On the left wing are Chike-lu Chidiebere Divine, Hamza Yahaya, Aminu Dahiru and

List of U-18 players preparing for zone III national qualification in abidjan ivory coast

Goal keepers*
1 shuaibu Fridaymicheal
2 shuaibu Muhammad
3 lawal Muhammad
CENTER BACK*
4. Aliyu rufai
5. sani muntari
6. Friday pagiel
7. Sulaimon Abayomi

Fashogbon
LEFT BACK
8. Godstime Micheal
9. Usman Umar
10. Samuel Achama
RIGHT BACK
11. Huzafa abdulkadir
12 Obieze akunebu
13. Gana Abubakar
TAUHIDI

14 Muhammed yahaya
Left wing
15. Chikelu Chidiebere Divine
16. Hamza yahaya
17. Aminu dahiru
18. Abdulrahman sani
RIGHT WING
19. Umar Mohammed
20. Abdullahi abubakar
21. Zulkifilu Muhammed
PIVOT
22. Akibu Muhammad
23. Dominion abukhate
COACHES
1 Abdulhakim Yakubu
Head coach
2 Ayo Joshua
Assistant Coach



NIGERIA U-18 MALE HANDBALL TEAM