

FG orders emergency repairs on Benin-Asaba Road despite Concessionaire's objection

FAVOUR OBADIGIE

ABUJA

The Federal Government has ordered the immediate deployment of major contractors to all three sections of the Benin-Asaba Federal Road to restore damaged portions of the highway

after the road's concessionaire declined to allow government intervention.

The Minister of Works, David Umahi, gave the directive after the worsening condition of the strategic highway made it necessary for the government to put public interest first.

Umahi had visited the Benin-Asaba Road about a week earlier and brought contractors together to prepare for urgent repairs on the worst sections of the road.

However, the Federal Ministry of Works said the concession agreement requires the consent of the concessionaire

before the Federal Government can directly intervene on the road, adding that the required approval was not given.

The minister subsequently presented three options to the concessionaire, any of which would have allowed the Federal Government to intervene and address the worsening condition of the road. The ministry said none of the options was accepted.

It further said that shortly after Umahi left Asaba, the limited equipment deployed by the concessionaire on the road was reduced to just one machine.

According to the ministry, the reduction in equipment worsened the condition of the road and increased the difficulties faced by motorists and other road users.

Following the development,

Umahi directed major contractors within the corridor to immediately mobilise to all three sections of the Benin-Asaba Road and repair the damaged portions.

The Federal Government will bear the cost of the emergency intervention.

Beyond the immediate repairs, the minister also direct-

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That The People May Know

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#200

Igbinedion @92: A toast to a great son of Edo

BENIN CITY

As the Esama of Benin kingdom, Chief (Dr.) Sir, Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion, celebrates his 92nd birthday anniversary today, Friday, 11th September, 2026, Edo State and the Benin Kingdom have every reason to rejoice with one of their most prominent and illustrious son.

It is a moment to celebrate his strength, wisdom, accomplishments and the remarkable journey that has brought him to this historic milestone.

It is also a moment to appreciate the many years he has devoted to enterprise, education, community development and philanthropy.

Sir Gabriel Igbinedion's life has not been perfect, as no human life is. But what stands him out is the extraordinary scale of his journey to prosperity and the enduring footprints he has left behind.

At 92, he has earned the right to look back with satisfaction at a life filled with remarkable chapters of successes and achievements.

And for those who have been touched by his story, this birthday is an opportunity to say thank you to the Edo born business Enigma, called Chief Igbinedion

Thank you for believing in the possibilities of the future.

Thank you for investing in education when it mattered.

Thank you for building institutions that continue to serve generations.

Thank you for demonstrating that success becomes more meaningful when it creates opportunities for others.

CELEBRATING THE MAN, HONOURING HIS LEGACY

Celebrating the 92nd year anniversary of Sir Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion birthday, is not just the celebration of date of birth but that of a life of vision, courage, enterprise, service and remarkable achievements.

His journey from Okada to the apex of business, education and traditional leadership remains an inspiring story of what determination and vision can accomplish.

As we celebrate this beautiful milestone, may you be surrounded by the love and appreciation of your family, friends, associates and the countless people whose lives have been touched by your journey.

May the years ahead bring you renewed strength, peace, fulfilment and many more reasons to smile.

May the institutions you have built continue to flourish, and may the generations that come after you continue to find inspirations in your story.

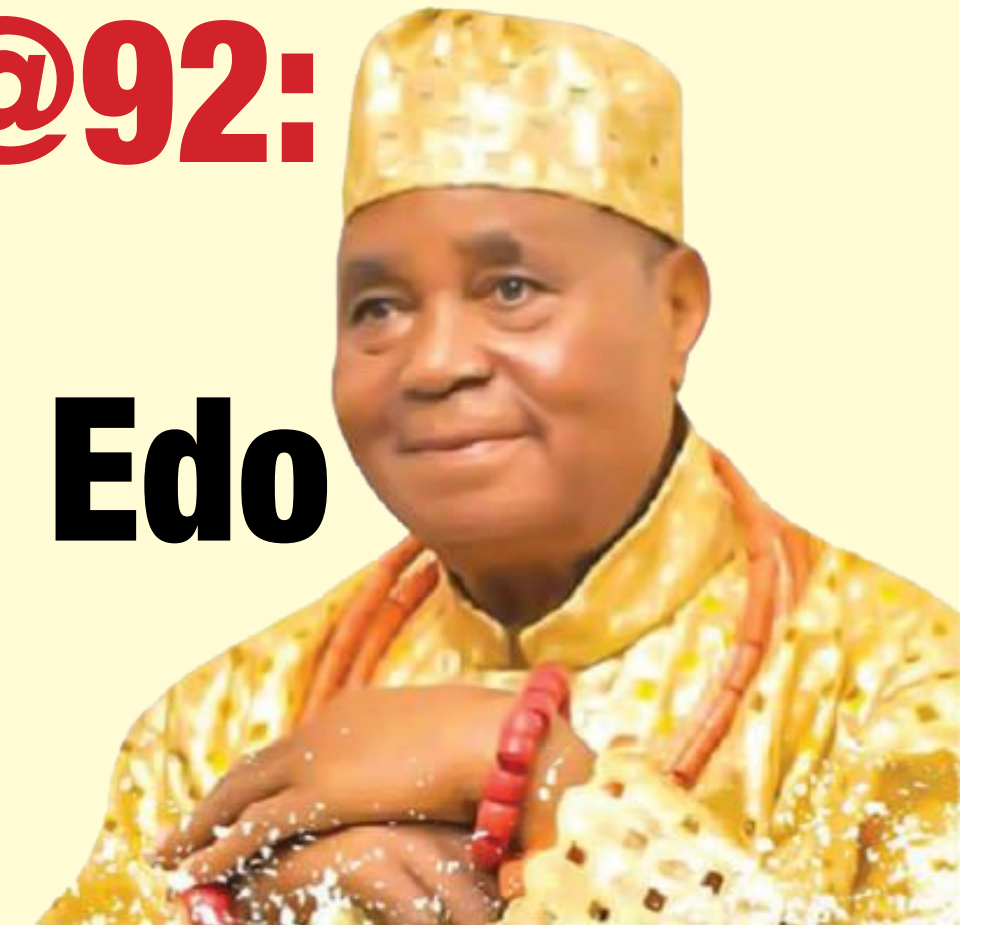
At 92, the Esama of Benin should not simply be seen as celebrating another year:

He is celebrating a legacy.

A legacy built with courage.

A legacy sustained by vision.

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Foreign envoys storm Edo for Esama

BENIN CITY

The 92nd birthday celebration of the Esama of Benin Kingdom, Sir Chief Dr. Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion, has assumed an international dimension with the arrival of a Kenyan delegation led by Dr. Ida Betty Odinga, wife of the late former Prime Minister of Kenya, Raila Odinga.

The former Prime Minister's wife, led the delegation

to convey goodwill and warm felicitations to the Esama on the occasion of his milestone birthday, and in particular, special greetings from the government and people of Kenya.

The international gesture now formed part of the tributes and goodwill messages pouring in from dignitaries, friends, associates and institutions celebrating the life and accomplishments of the renowned educationist, businessman and philanthropist,

home and abroad.

Also joining in the celebration special goodwill messages is the Governing Council of the Igbinedion University, Okada.

The Council delegation which was led by the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council, Professor Ahmed Tijani Mora, alongside members of the governing body, delivered special birthday mes-

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NAFDAC destroys ₦1.5trn fake goods, jails 64 offenders in year-long crackdown —Pg 3

Trump says every adult American will get \$5,000 if Republicans win midterms —Pg 14

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NEWS

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ed the redesign of the entire route for reconstruction with reinforced concrete pavement.

The ministry said the badly damaged sections would first be restored before the entire road is rehabilitated with reinforced concrete pavement.

The Benin-Asaba Road is a major highway linking the South-west and South-south regions with the South-east and carries heavy passenger and commercial traffic.

Meanwhile, Umahi said the Federal Government was also carrying out emergency interventions on several other major roads across the country.

On the Benin-Sapele Road, the ministry said the Federal Government, the Edo and Delta State governments and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) were working on different sections of the highway, with both temporary and permanent repairs ongoing.

For the Ifaki-Ekiti-Kabba Road, Umahi said the Federal Government was working with Gamji Nigeria Company Limited and Dangote Plc on emergency repairs and permanent work on the worst sections.

On the Sokoto-Zamfara-Katsina Road, the ministry said the inherited 350-kilometre dualisation project had been redesigned, with most sections now being rebuilt with reinforced concrete pavement.

More than 50 kilometres of one carriageway from Sokoto towards Zamfara had been

completed, while some sections between Zamfara and Katsina had also been completed.

On the Abuja-Kaduna-Zaria-Kano Road, the ministry said the 118-kilometre Lot 1 had been completed, while Lot 2, covering 164 kilometres, was more than 60 per cent complete.

The entire Abuja-Kaduna-Zaria-Kano project is expected to be completed by December 2026, with solar-powered lights also being installed along the route to improve visibility and security at night.

Other roads receiving emergency attention include the Bauchi-Jigawa Road, Sagamu-Ore Road, East-West Road and Abuja-Lokoja Road.

On the Sagamu-Ore Road, the ministry said 48 kilometres of the 96-kilometre route had been completed with reinforced concrete pavement, while the abandoned 24-kilometre section around Ore had been approved for immediate restoration.

On the Lokoja-Benin-Warri Road, Umahi said President Bola Tinubu had directed the complete redesign and procurement of the approximately 400-kilometre dualised route covering the uncompleted sections. Reinforced concrete pavement will be used, while temporary repairs continue.

In Lagos, the ministry said weekly maintenance of the underwater parts of Carter Bridge was ongoing, while the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) had started work on a permanent replacement bridge.

Foreign envoys storm Edo...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

sage that also conveyed their felicitations and appreciation to the Esama for his contributions to private university education in Nigeria.

Professor Mora and members of the Council described the 92nd birthday as an opportunity to celebrate a visionary whose commitment to education culminated in the establishment of the Igbinedion University, Okada, recognised as Nigeria's premier private university.

The Council equally commended the Esama for his enduring commitment to excellence, stressing that his vision and sacrifices had continued to inspire the growth and development of the institution.

A special birthday gift was

presented by the Chancellor as a symbol of appreciation for the Esama leadership, sacrifices and enduring contributions to the university.

The presentation, according to the Council, "underscored the strong bond between the Chancellor and the institution he founded, while celebrating a life marked by vision, enterprise, philanthropy and service."

The occasion brought together members of the university's leadership, family members, friends and associates of the Esama in an atmosphere of warmth and admiration.

Amongst those who joined the birthday homage was the Deputy Chancellor of Igbinedion University and former Governor of Edo State, Sir Chief Dr. Lucky Nosakhare Igbinedion.

Igbinedion @92: A toast to a great son of Edo...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

A legacy enriched by service and humility.

An enviable legacy worth emulating and which has become part of the success story of Edo State.

Happy 92nd birthday to the Esama of Benin, Sir Chief Dr. Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion.

Congratulations, Your Excellency, and may you continue to enjoy many more years of strength, wisdom, peace and fulfilment.

CELEBRATING A LEGACY OF SERVICE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Celebrating ninety-two years of life is no ordinary achievement. It is a remarkable testimony of grace, resilience, wisdom and purpose.

For Sir Chief Dr. Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion, the Esama of Benin Kingdom, attaining the age of 92 may not just be another birthday; indeed, it is a glorious occasion to celebrate a life that has made a remarkable

FG launches ₦180billion zero-rated data initiative for 5million Nigerian students

The Federal Government has announced a N180 billion annual zero-rated data initiative to provide five million students across Nigeria with free daily internet access to approved digital learning platforms starting October 1.

The Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, disclosed this on Thursday in Abuja during the official launch of the Zero-Rated Access to Education Platforms and Content initiative.

The event was organised in collaboration with the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) and telecommunications operators.

Alausa explained that under the scheme, five million learners would receive 100 megabytes of sponsored data daily

at 100 Naira per user, amounting to N15 billion monthly and N180 billion annually in zero-rated educational access.

"Zero-rated access has the potential to transform a mobile phone, tablet, or computer from simply a communication device into a classroom, a library, and a gateway to human capital development.

"The benefit of technology cannot be truly transformative if access remains determined by household income and geography.

"By enabling learners to access approved educational platforms without bearing the cost of data, we are removing one of the most significant barriers to digital learning in Nigeria," he said.

The minister urged interna-

tional development partners, including UNESCO, to recognise the N180 billion sponsored data commitment as an integral addition to President Bola Tinubu's national education funding allocations.

Alausa noted that the initiative aligned directly with the Nigeria Education Sector Renewal Initiative (NESRI) and the digitised Nigeria Education Management Information System (D-NEMIS).

He revealed that the Ministry had already geomapped and geolocated over 240,000 schools nationwide while deploying the Learner's Identification Number (LIN) to track students from primary to tertiary levels.

The minister added that security agencies would in the

coming weeks announce regulated internet access parameters for children under 16 years to protect underage learners from cyber threats.

Dr Bosun Tijani, Minister of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, reaffirmed the government's commitment to bridging the digital divide in rural communities.

Tijani was represented by the Director, National Frequency Management Council Secretariat, in the ministry, Adetunji Olugbenga.

He commended the NCC and telecommunication operators under the Association of Licensed Telecommunications Operators of Nigeria (ALTON) for funding and executing the technical framework.



NIGERIAN OBSERVER HONOURS IGBINEDION:

The General Manager of the Nigerian Observer, Hon. Peter Odiboh, presenting a souvenir to Sir (Dr.) Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion, the Esama of Benin Kingdom, during a courtesy visit of the Observer's top management to the icon as part of Esama @92 celebrations on Wednesday.

NTI releases 608 certificates to 2020 Bachelor Degree graduates

The National Teachers' Institute (NTI), Kaduna, has released 608 Bachelor's Degree Programme (BDP) certificates to its 2020 graduates under its affiliation with the University of Maiduguri.

The Director and Chief Executive of the institute, Prof. Sadiya Daura, announced

this in a statement issued by the Head of Public Relations and Protocol Unit, Yusha'u Ahmed, on Thursday in Kaduna.

Daura said the certificates were released to the institute by the University of Maiduguri, adding that more certificates were expected to be released soon.

"We are pleased to inform you that the University of Maiduguri has released 608 certificates to the institute, and we are expecting more very soon," she said.

Daura said the institute was aware of the anxiety and concerns caused by the delay in issuing the certificates to the affected graduates.

According to her, the management has remained in constant engagement with the University of Maiduguri and other affiliating universities to facilitate the speedy processing and release of pending certificates.

The director said the latest release was in addition to the 16,107 Bachelor's Degree and Postgraduate Diploma in Education certificates earlier released by the institute's affiliating universities.

She appreciated the patience, understanding, and co-operation of the affected grad-

uates, while commending the University of Maiduguri for its collaboration and commitment to resolving the matter.

The NTI Chief Executive reaffirmed her administration's commitment to the academic progress of students and graduates of the institute.

She said the institute would continue to work with its partner universities to ensure seamless certification processes and prevent graduates from being unduly disadvantaged by delays in certificate issuance.

Daura advised the affected 2020 graduates to proceed to NTI state offices across the country with valid identification documents to collect their certificates.

She, however, said further details on the collection schedule would be communicated through the respective NTI offices and the institute's official communication channels.

NAFDAC destroys N1.5trn fake goods, jails 64 offenders in year-long crackdown

By Osemudiamhen O. Faith

LAGOS

The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, NAFDAC, has destroyed fake and substandard regulated products worth more than N1.5 trillion and secured 64 convictions against counter-

feiters between June 2025 and June 2026.

The Director-General, Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, disclosed this on Monday, 7 September 2026 in Lagos during a briefing on the agency's enforcement activities and ongoing campaign against counterfeit products.

She said the convictions marked a major shift from

seizure-focused operations to criminal prosecution, with offenders receiving prison terms ranging from one to seven years without the option of a fine.

According to Adeyeye, the 64 convictions involved offences relating to counterfeit and unregistered regulated products.

Among the cases, two of-

fenders were sentenced to five years each for counterfeiting Global Fund Artemether and for producing a cough and cold syrup containing codeine. Another offender received a seven-year jail term for producing fake antibiotics, while a woman involved in pharmaceutical counterfeiting also got seven years.

Other offenders received 12-month sentences for offences involving fake ointments and condoms.

"The convictions represent

a significant shift from merely seizing fake products to ensuring that those behind their production and distribution faced the full weight of the law," Adeyeye said.

The DG said the agency's enforcement operations had resulted in the seizure and destruction of counterfeit and substandard products "on an unprecedented scale."

She cited coordinated raids conducted at Idumota in Lagos, Onitsha and the Ariaria International Market in Aba between February and March 2025. During the operations,

more than 137 40-foot truckloads of counterfeit and substandard products valued at over N1.5 trillion were seized and destroyed.

"Our enforcement activities are not limited to seizures. We are ensuring that offenders are investigated and prosecuted and, where found guilty, they face the consequences of their actions," she added.

Beyond seizures and prosecutions, NAFDAC said it had intensified post-market surveillance, with 47,830 facilities currently under scrutiny nationwide.



INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION:

The Esama of Benin, Sir (Dr.) Gabriel Igbinedion, receiving Her Excellency, Dr. Ida Betty Odinga, wife of late former Prime Minister of Kenya, Raila Odinga, among other dignitaries and invited guests at the 92nd birthday celebration of the Esama on Wednesday.

NNPC unveils smart fuelling station in Abuja

MIKE OSAROGIAGBON

OKADA

The NNPC Retail Ltd. has unveiled a fully smart, 24-hour self-service fuelling station designed for faster, transparent fuelling experience, volume accuracy, customer trust, direct control and energy security.

The station, located along Bill Clinton Drive, Airport Road, between the Flight Training School and the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) Headquarters, Abuja, was commissioned on Thursday with live forecourt demonstrations.

The News Agency of Nigeria

(NAN) reports that the newly commissioned smart station offers a 180,000-litre Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) storage capacity, self-service fuel dispensing, Electric Vehicle (EV) charging, Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) dispensing, automated car wash and vehicle service facility.

Dr Mumuni Dagazau, Executive Vice President, Downstream, NNPC Ltd., at the commissioning of the facility, said the project marked another milestone in NNPC Retail's drive to improve customer experience through technology and innovation.

"The NNPC Ltd. will continue

to invest in technology and strategic partnerships as Nigeria's energy needs and customer expectations evolve.

"We are embracing the future of energy retail; a future that is smarter, more convenient, technology-driven and customer-focused," he said.

He said the facility was developed through collaboration between NNPC Retail and the NIS as part of efforts to expand the company's footprint and enhance energy security.

"I thank the NIS, Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority

(NMDPRA), Presidential Initiative on Compressed Natural Gas (Pi-CNG), our contractors, technology partners, who contributed to delivering this project," he said.

In his remarks, Mr Shettima Baba-Kukawa, Executive Director, Retail Operations, NNPC Retail Ltd., said the station also had a 45,000-litre Automotive Gas Oil (AGO) capacity, with 16 pumps for PMS and two pumps for AGO dispensing.

According to him, the station is designed as an energy and mobility hub rather than a conventional filling station while plans are underway to introduce CNG facilities at the station.

FG to regulate underage internet access

ABUJA

The Federal Government says security agencies will in the coming weeks announce guidelines to regulate internet access for children under the age of 16 to safeguard minors from cyber threats and online exposure.

The Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, disclosed this on Thursday in Abuja during the launch of the Zero-Rated Access to Education Platforms initiative, organised in collaboration with the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC).

Alausa said that while the government was aggressively expanding digital learning infrastructure, establishing strict cybersecurity guardrails for minors was imperative to protect young learners.

"We will be regulating internet access for children below 16 years old, and further announcements on this will be coming from our security staff in the coming days or weeks."

"It is our duty to protect every Nigerian child, more so underage children, from all sorts of cyberattacks and digital exposure," he said.

The minister stressed that digital inclusion must be paired with strict content regulation to prevent indiscriminate exposure to unverified material.

"Zero-rated access should not mean indiscriminate access to every platform that describes itself as educational."

"The content made available to our children must be accessible, credible, safe, and aligned with our educational objectives and curriculum," Alausa added.

Also, Ikechukwu Ugwuogede, a member of the NCC Board of Commissioners, described zero-rated access as a real-time democratisation of learning comparable to the digital e-book revolution.

Ugwuogede noted that providing free connectivity

to accredited academic sites ensured that rural and urban students compete on an equal footing.

"By providing free connectivity to approved academic sites, we are ensuring that every learner, whether in a bustling city or a quiet rural community, will have equal access to knowledge."

"This is similar to the revolution of free e-books, but on a far greater scale; we are connecting dreams to opportunities and opportunities to reality," he said.

Sen. Mohammed Muntari, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Tertiary Institutions and TETFUND, commended telecommunications operators for deploying corporate social responsibility to support national education. Muntari said the initiative complemented ongoing Federal Government interventions, including the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND), to ensure that no Nigerian child was left behind due to financial constraints.

"The leadership of the National Assembly appreciates the efforts of the telecommunications industry in ensuring our children are not left behind in acquiring knowledge."

"Under President Bola Tinubu's administration, key programmes like NELFUND and zero-rated access are working together to expand opportunities for less-advantaged Nigerians," he said.

Mr Peter Akpatason, member of the House Committee on Communication, pledged parliamentary oversight to ensure telecommunication providers expand coverage to underserved communities.

"Access to information should not be determined by the ability to pay for data."

"The House of Representatives remains fully committed to regulatory and legislative frameworks that encourage innovation, affordability, and consumer protection," he said.

N930bn liquidity withdrawal yet to push up rates – expert

ABUJA

A financial expert, Dr Tunde Awesu, says the N930 billion decline in banking system liquidity has yet to significantly push up short-term interest rates, indicating that the financial system remains sufficiently liquid.

Awesu, President, Metropolitan School of Business and Entrepreneurship, said this in an interview with the newsmen on Wednesday in Lagos while assessing the recent li-

quidity tightening in the banking system.

Awesu said the development should be viewed against the significant liquidity injection recorded in August following the maturity of Treasury instruments.

Recall that the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) data showed that N2.48 trillion flowed into the banking system on Aug. 11.

This was due to the maturity of Open Market Operations (OMO) securities, pushing system liquidity to N6.81 trillion.

However, latest money-market data showed that liquidity subsequently declined by N930 billion to N3.66 trillion following the settlement of a Treasury Bills auction.

The overnight lending rate consequently rose marginally by two basis points to 22.20 per cent from 22.18 per cent, while the Open Buy Back (OBB) rate remained unchanged at 22.00 per cent.

Awesu said the modest movement in short-term rates suggested that the liquidity

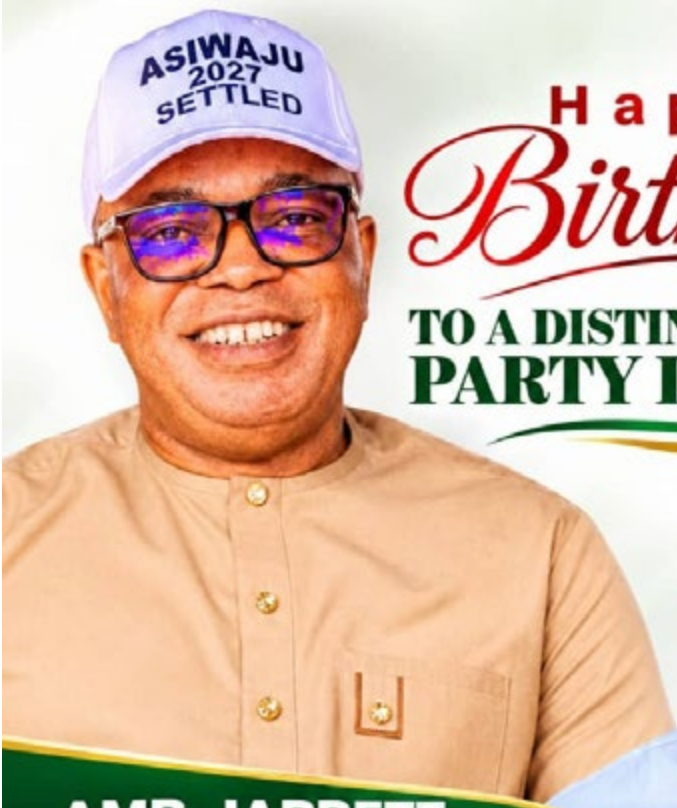
withdrawal represented more of a correction of excess liquidity than an acute funding squeeze.

"I think the immediate context is the fact that the CBN injected liquidity in the system through the retirement of some treasury instruments in August, which significantly increased liquidity in the money market."

"So, the recent operation sought to effect some 'correction' to the excess liquidity in the system," he said.



Happy Birthday
TO A DISTINGUISHED PARTY LEADER




AMB. JARRETT TENEBE

**HON. AUSTIN IMAFIDON (ISIWINA),
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, UHUNMWODE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL,
CELEBRATES EDO APC CHAIRMAN,
HON. AMB. JARRETT TENEBE**

The Executive Chairman of Uhunmwode Local Government Council, Hon. Austin Imafidon, popularly known as ISIWINA, on behalf of the Government and good people of Uhunmwode Local Government Area, heartily congratulates the Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Edo State, Hon. Amb. Jarrett Tenebe, on the joyous occasion of his birthday. As you mark this special day and begin another remarkable chapter of your life, we join your family, friends, political associates and numerous well-wishers across Edo State in giving thanks to Almighty God for His grace, protection and abundant blessings upon your life.

Your unwavering commitment to the unity, growth and progress of our great party, the All Progressives Congress, as well as your dedication to purposeful leadership and the development of Edo State, remains highly commendable and worthy of celebration.

On this auspicious occasion, I wish to assure you that the Government and good people of Uhunmwode Local Government Area stand firmly with you in this new age and in the many years ahead. We remain committed to supporting your leadership and working collectively towards the continued progress and success of our great party and Edo State.

As you celebrate this new age, it is my prayer that Almighty God will continue to bless you with sound health, divine wisdom, strength and greater accomplishments in the years ahead.

Happy Birthday, Hon. Jarrett Tenebe!

The Government and good people of Uhunmwode Local Government Area celebrate you today and wish you many more years of fulfilment, impactful leadership and service to humanity.

Congratulations and many happy returns!

Hon. Austin Imafidon (ISIWINA)
Executive Chairman
Uhunmwode Local Government Council

Happy 92nd BIRTHDAY

**CHIEF SIR DR. GABRIEL OSAWARU IGBINEDION, CFR
THE ESAMA OF BENIN**

10TH SEPTEMBER 2026

**HON. AUSTIN IMAFIDON AKA ISIWINA
CELEBRATES CHIEF SIR DR. GABRIEL
OSAWARU IGBINEDION, CFR,
THE ESAMA OF BENIN
@ 92 YEARS BIRTHDAY**

On behalf of the Government and good people of Uhunmwode Local Government Council, I warmly felicitate with Chief Sir Dr. Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion, CFR, the Esama of Benin, on the occasion of his 92nd birthday.

Your life has been a remarkable testament to visionary leadership, philanthropy, service to humanity and unwavering commitment to the development of Edo State and Nigeria.

As you celebrate this remarkable milestone, I pray Almighty God to continue to bless you with good health, wisdom, strength and many more years of fulfillment and service to humanity.

Happy 92nd Birthday, Your Excellency.



Hon. Austin Imafidon (ISIWINA)
Executive Chairman
Uhunmwode Local Government Council

One killed, two rescued in Lagos building collapse

LAGOS

One person was killed while two others were rescued after a two-storey building undergoing manual demolition collapsed in the Aboru area of Lagos State.

The Permanent Secretary of the Lagos State Emer-

gency Management Agency, Olufemi Oke-Osanyintolu, disclosed in a statement on Thursday that the incident occurred at about 12:56am on Thursday at No. 42, Governors Road, Aboru, in the Alimosho Local Government Area of the state.

Oke-Osanyintolu stated that the Alpha Eagle Re-

sponse Team of the agency was immediately dispatched to the scene after receiving a distress call.

According to the PS, preliminary findings showed that the building collapsed while it was being manually demolished.

He added, "On arrival, first responders confirmed that

the structure had collapsed during demolition activities, with workers trapped under the debris."

He noted that the agency activated the state's Emergency Response Plan and took charge of the rescue operation, coordinating other emergency responders at the scene.

The LASEMA boss said two adult males were rescued alive from the rubble and given first aid by personnel of the Lagos State Ambulance Service before they were taken to a nearby health facility.

He, however, said one adult male was recovered dead from beneath the collapsed structure.

"Through a coordinated search and rescue operation, two adult males were extricated alive from the rubble and were promptly administered life-saving first aid by personnel of the Lagos State Ambulance Service, LASAMBUS, before being moved to a nearby health facility for further medical



COURTESY VISIT:

From left: Deputy Vice-Chancellor of University of Abuja, Prof. Rosemary Udeozor; Vice-Chancellor University of Abuja, Prof. Hakeem Fawehinmi and Vice President Kashim Shettima, during a courtesy visit by delegation from Abuja University at the Presidential Villa in Abuja.

Police arrest 16 suspects in Delta, recover guns, stolen car

ASABA

The Delta State Police Command has arrested 16 suspects and recovered two firearms, a stolen Toyota Camry, and quantities of suspected illicit drugs in separate operations across the state.

The command said the operations also led to the disruption of a suspected cult gathering, the foiling of an alleged extortion attempt at a construction site, and the arrest of suspects linked to suspected drug activities.

In a statement issued on Thursday by the Police Public Relations Officer, SP Bright Edeke, the command said eight suspects were arrested during a raid on a suspected cult gathering in Aragba-Orogon.

Collins Dunkun, after receiving a report of an alleged extortion attempt at a construction site on September 8.

The operation was carried out by operatives of the Command Anti-Cult Unit, Ozoro, following credible intelligence about a planned cult gathering.

"The suspects were identified as Godspower Achubue, 27; Ziden Edem, 27; Kingsley Aniefem, 36; Omita John, 22; Onumu Happy, 22; Kenneth Ukpurakpo, 22; Juliet Festus, 26; and Oghenegueke Okuanah, 22," the statement read.

The police said a search warrant was subsequently executed at the residence of one of the suspects, leading to the recovery of a pump-action gun and one live cartridge.

In another operation, operatives of the Okpanam Division arrested a 30-year-old suspect,

the suspects allegedly invaded the site, stopped workers, seized their tools and demanded N700,000 before allowing work to continue.

The police said six other suspects fled the scene, while a search of Dunkun led to the recovery of a locally made single-barrel pistol and one cartridge.

It added that "efforts to arrest in a separate operation in Ekpan, two suspects, Destiny Suleman, 41, and Samuel Ejoro, 21, were arrested and a stolen Toyota Camry recovered.

The vehicle, a brown Toyota Camry Pencil Light with reg-

istration number BEN-572BT, was reportedly stolen in Benin City on September 7.

The command said operatives of the Ekpan Division embarked on an intelligence-led investigation and traced the vehicle to the New Era area of Jakpa Road, Ekpan, where they laid an ambush and arrested the two suspects.

The Commissioner of Police, Delta State Command, CP Samuel E. Erale, warned that cultism, unlawful possession of firearms, extortion, illicit drug activities and other criminal acts would not be tolerated in the state.

Erale said, "Cultism, unlawful possession of firearms, extortion, illicit drug activities and other criminal acts will not be tolerated in the State."

Adebutu begins 2027 Ogun gov campaign, pledges LG autonomy

ABEOKUTA

The 2027 governorship candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party in Ogun State, Oladipupo Adebutu, has unveiled an economic and social development agenda tagged "ITURA DE", promising to restore local government autonomy, improve workers' welfare and revive the state's economy if elected.

Adebutu made the declaration at the Ake Palace, Abeokuta, during the flag-off of the PDP campaign for the 2027 governorship election in the state.

The former federal lawmaker, while presenting his campaign address titled "A Call to Liberation", said the programme was designed to tackle poverty, unemployment, insecurity and what he described as poor governance in the state.

Adebutu said the PDP remained "the undisputed fortress of the masses", adding that the party's objective was to deliver tangible dividends of democracy to the people.

He said, "Delivering true, tangible dividends of democracy is

not merely our political mission; it is our unbreakable covenant with the people of Ogun State."

The candidate said the PDP administration between 2003 and 2011 promoted grassroots development through functional local governments, payment of workers' salaries, pensions and gratuities, as well as remittance of cooperative contributions.

He, however, described the period since 2011 as "15 unbroken years" of hardship and alleged neglect, blaming what he termed maladministration and corruption for the situation.

Adebutu said his administration, if elected, would reverse the trend through the implementation of the ITURA DE agenda, which he described as the blueprint for his government.

He said his government would focus on seven priority areas, including improved security, law and order; true local government financial autonomy and workers' welfare; urban and regional development, physical planning and transportation; and rural and border communities development.

SNYC endorses Tinubu, Oborevwo for second term

AJUWA VICTOR

ASABA

The Southern Nigerian Youth Congress (SNYC), an umbrella body of youths across the 17 states of Southern Nigeria, has endorsed President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwo, for a second term as President and Governor respectively.

Members of the congress made their position known during a solidarity march along major roads in Asaba, before converging in front of Government House where their resolution endorsing President Tinubu and Governor Oborevwo was made known to the Governor.

Speaking on behalf of members of the congress, the President General, Wiska Monday said the endorsement followed their assessment of political developments ahead of the 2027 general elections and the performance of the Tinubu led federal government and the Oborevwo's administration in Delta State.

Monday said the Southern

region would resist any attempt to disrupt the existing principle of rotational presidency, arguing that the South should be allowed to complete its eight-year tenure.

According to him, the endorsement of President Tinubu was not based solely on regional considerations, but also on what he described as key reforms and policies of the present administration, pointing out that the endorsement represented the collective position of its structures across the 17 Southern states and the 342 local government areas in the region.

He cited the removal of fuel subsidy, efforts to strengthen local government financial autonomy, the student loan initiative and ongoing infrastructure development as some of the measures the Congress considered significant.

Monday, however, acknowledged that some of the reforms had imposed short-term economic difficulties on Nigerians but argued that they should also be assessed against their potential long-term impact on the nation's economy.

ManRoy, Tantita donate 18-Seater Bus to NUJ Warri chapel

BETTY IDIALU

WARRI

The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Warri Correspondents' Chapel, has described an 18-seater bus donated by ManRoy Global Services Limited in partnership with Tantita Security Services Nigeria Limited as a "moving campaign" that will amplify the visibility of the union and its activities.

The vehicle, presented to the chapel at ManRoy's office along the DSC Expressway in Udu Local Government Area of Delta State, is expected to significantly improve the mo-

bility of journalists attending assignments, events and other professional engagements.

Speaking while receiving the vehicle, Chairman of the NUJ Warri Correspondents' Chapel, Okakuro Akpokona Omafuare, Esq., said the donation had given the journalists greater capacity to move collectively and project the activities of the union wherever they go.

"We are happy you have increased our propensity to do this campaign. Driving that vehicle alone everywhere is a campaign. We will drive it and use it to campaign everywhere," he said.

Omafuare expressed appreciation to ManRoy Global Services

and Tantita Security Services Nigeria Limited, describing the gesture as unprecedented in the history of the chapel.

He said journalists were not only reporters but also campaigners who use their platforms to promote issues, causes and initiatives capable of bringing about positive change in society.

According to him, the new bus would eliminate the difficulty of having members travel in different vehicles during assignments, while also strengthening the chapel's operational capacity and visibility.

He appealed to the management of ManRoy Global Services to sustain its relationship with the NUJ and continue to

NEWS

Obanikoro urges APC members to unite as 2027 campaigns begin

LAGOS

The Director-General of the All Progressives Congress Campaign Council in Lagos State, Musiliu Obanikoro, has called on members of the party to close ranks and work together as campaigns begin for the 2027 general elections.

Obanikoro urged party members to put the divisions that accompanied the party's primary elections behind them and support the APC's candidates in the elections.

He spoke on Wednesday at an interfaith prayer organised by the party in Lagos to mark the commencement of electioneering activities.

The Independent National Electoral Commission had

fixed September 9, 2026, for the commencement of campaigns for the 2027 general elections.

Obanikoro said members might have supported different aspirants during the primary elections, but the conclusion of the exercise had made it necessary for them to unite behind the party's candidates.

He urged the party faithful to conduct their campaigns peacefully and avoid allowing political disagreements to turn into personal conflicts.

"We competed with dignity. Let us campaign with respect. Let us disagree without becoming enemies," he said.

The former senator said the APC must remain united because its members would face political opponents together during the general elections.

According to him, members should therefore approach the campaign with a common purpose despite their individual interests and differences.

Obanikoro said the prayer session was organised to seek divine intervention ahead of the electioneering period, adding that political campaigns required not only planning and

hard work but also prayers.

"We are gathered yesterday for a simple but profound purpose: to place this political journey in the hands of God before the campaigns begin," he said.

He urged members to pray for wisdom, protection and guidance for the party's leaders, candidates, support-

ers and members throughout the campaign.

"Our prayer today is simple: let God go before us. Let Him go before our party; let Him go before our candidates; let Him guide our leaders and protect our members and supporters," he said.

Obanikoro urged the party's supporters to focus on the

re-election of President Bola Tinubu and the election of Obafemi Hamzat, while maintaining loyalty and discipline throughout the campaign.

He said political office was temporary, urging members to avoid actions that could damage relationships or create divisions within the party and the wider society.

Bike theft: Mob burns A'Ibom man to death

UYO

The Akwa Ibom State Police Command has commenced an investigation into the killing of an unidentified man who was allegedly attacked, set ablaze and burnt to death by a mob at Ikpe Ikot Akpan Village, along the Ikot Ekpen-Uyo Road.

The Police Public Relations Officer for the command, DSP Timfon John, disclosed this in a statement issued on Wednesday.

John stated that the incident occurred at about 7:05 am following an allegation that the deceased had attempted to steal a motorcycle belonging to one Idoroenyin Udo.

The PPRO noted that preliminary investigation revealed that the motorcycle owner allegedly resisted the attempted theft and

raised an alarm, prompting some persons in the area to pursue and apprehend the suspect.

She continued, "Instead of handing him over to the Police for proper investigation, some members of the mob allegedly took the law into their own hands, assaulted the suspect and subsequently set him ablaze, resulting in his death."

John said that upon receiving the distress report, police operatives were immediately deployed to the scene and an investigation commenced.

She added that the command had intensified efforts to identify, track down and arrest all persons involved in the mob action, adding that anyone found culpable would be brought to justice in accordance with the law.

The PPRO quoted the Commissioner of Police in the state, Baba Azare, as strongly condemning the incident and warning members of the public against jungle justice in any form.

Ex-Kogi SDP gov candidate Ajaka denies involvement in protest against INEC

LOKOJA

The 2023 governorship candidate of the Social Democratic Party in Kogi State, Alhaji Murtala Ajaka, has dissociated himself from the protest against the Independent National Electoral Commission.

Ajaka described reports linking him to the action as "false and misleading."

In a statement signed by his Head of Media and Public Communications, Prince Tijani Dauda, and made available to newsmen in Lokoja, Ajaka said he neither authorised, sponsored, directed, commissioned, nor coordinated the protest.

The statement was issued in response to a publication by a group identified as "Igala Vanguard", attributed to one Lawrence, which allegedly linked

Ajaka to the demonstration.

"For the avoidance of doubt, Alhaji Murtala Yakubu Ajaka did not authorise, sponsor, direct, commission or coordinate the protest," the statement said.

It added that attributing the actions of independent citizens to Ajaka was an attempt to mislead the public and drag his name into an issue with which he was not connected.

Ajaka's media aide also defended the right of citizens to engage in peaceful protests, stressing that Igala youths did not require the permission of any political actor to assemble and express concerns about issues affecting their communities, representation and future.

The statement questioned why citizens who independently chose to speak out on matters affecting them should automatically be associated with Ajaka.



BREAKFAST MEETING:

A cross-section of the participants during a breakfast meeting between the Investment Monitoring Committee, Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) and Stakeholders in the Nigeria's Oil and Gas Sector preparatory to the oil and gas investment summit scheduled for Beijing China on Wednesday.

2027: Peter Obi plans dual result transmission

LAGOS

The National Democratic Congress presidential candidate for the 2027 election, Peter Obi, has said his team will establish a system to independently transmit results from polling units to its situation room during the 2027 general elections.

Obi disclosed this in an exclusive interview on Arise TV on Thursday, explaining that the system would enable his team to receive and monitor results from polling units as they are recorded.

The former Anambra State governor said the arrangement would operate alongside the

official transmission of results by the Independent National Electoral Commission.

"We must make sure that at every polling unit, the votes are counted, the votes are recorded properly, the votes are transmitted properly."

"And we will have even a dual transmission so that as it's going to the proper designated INEC portal, it's also being transmitted where the people can see it," he said.

Asked whether his plan to have more IReV systems across the country amounted to establishing a parallel result-transmission system, Obi said it did not.

All we are saying is that this time around, we will make sure

that in every polling unit, we must have a system that transmits to our own situation room the correct results," he stated.

He said other organisations could also establish similar monitoring systems, adding that the aim was to prevent results from being announced that did not originate from polling units.

"And I'm sure there are so many other agencies that intend to do the same thing. So we're not going to have a situation where somebody pronounces something that didn't emanate from the polling unit. Our task is to make sure that the right things are done," Obi said.

The NDC candidate said a transparent election was

achievable, citing Ghana and other countries as examples.

Obi also framed the 2027 election as a contest between Nigerians and the government rather than one centred solely on political parties of corps members.

"I would like to commend you for all the transformation that you have brought to NYSC and the use of technology to ensure seamless operations and deployment of Corps Members," he said.

Alausa recalled that the NYSC's decision to embrace technology in its registration process initially faced resistance from some sections of the public but noted that the digitisation had significantly improved the process.

Yobe ADC demands clarification over exclusion from LG poll

DAMATURU

The Yobe State chapter of the African Democratic Congress has demanded clarification from the Yobe State Independent Electoral Commission over its alleged failure to communicate key guidelines and other electoral activities relating to the 2026 Local Government Council election to the party.

The party, however, warned that it would pursue legal action and other lawful measures if the alleged failure to notify it adversely affected its rights or participation in the election.

This was contained in a formal letter of concern signed by

the state chairman, Umar Alhaji, on Wednesday and made available to PUNCH Online.

Alhaji said the party was concerned that YSIEC had allegedly failed to adequately communicate important information relating to the 2026 local government elections to the ADC, despite the party being a duly registered political party participating in the electoral process.

He described the development as serious, stressing that equal and meaningful access to electoral information was essential to lawful political participation.

"The African Democratic Congress (ADC), Yobe State Chapter, expresses its serious

concern and disappointment over the apparent failure of YSIEC to adequately communicate to our Party the 2026 Local Government Council Election Guidelines and other material electoral activities affecting our participation as a duly registered political party," the statement partly read.

The ADC chairman said the party was demanding clarification from the electoral commission on when, how and through which official channel the relevant electoral guidelines, timetable and decisions were communicated to the party.

He said, "We therefore request clear evidence of when, how, and through what official

channel the relevant guidelines, timetable, and electoral decisions were communicated to ADC."

According to Alhaji, the party's concern was not merely about access to information but also the potential impact of any communication failure on its ability to participate fully and comply with requirements and deadlines connected with the election.

The ADC maintained that its position was supported by relevant provisions of the 1999 Constitution, as amended, including Sections 7, 40 and 197, as well as the Third Schedule and applicable electoral laws and regulations.

NEWS

Igbinedion at 92: Varsity extols legacy in private tertiary education

The Igbinedion University, Okada (IUO), on Tuesday celebrated its Chancellor and Founder, Chief Gabriel Igbinedion, at 92, highlighting his pioneering role in the emergence and growth of private university education in Nigeria.

The celebration featured a birthday lecture titled, “A Tapestry of Nine Decades of Wisdom... Still Counting: The

Journey and the Legacy.”

The lecture was delivered by Prof. Yakubu Ochefu, Professor of Economic History and Strategic Studies, at the university’s Library Conference Hall, Okada.

In his lecture, Ochefu said Igbinedion’s 92-year journey demonstrated how individual initiative and private enterprise could contribute significantly to national development.

He said the university founder belonged to a generation of African pioneers, who challenged the notion that government alone should be responsible for building major institutions and providing essential services.

“Development is too important to be left to governments alone,” Ochefu said.

He argued that private citizens with the vision and capacity to act had a responsibility to

contribute to the development of public goods, particularly when state capacity was limited.

Tracing Igbinedion’s journey, Ochefu recalled his humble beginnings, selling kerosene in bottles on the streets of Benin City before joining the Nigeria Police Force and later venturing into business.

Igbinedion, the lecturer said, founded Mid Motors Nigeria Ltd. in 1968, describing it as the country’s first indigenous motor assembly plant, before establishing Okada Air in 1983.

PUBLIC NOTICE
CAVEAT EMPTOR
The general public is hereby notified that, the property known and called as **OSEYOMON'S HOUSE** and its appurtenances, lying, situate and being opposite S.Dory Ikpasaja's house, Uromi/Ubiaja Road, Efandion, Uromi, Edo State is an inherited property by **Mr. MIRACLE OSEYOMON**. TAKE NOTICE that neither the said property nor any interest therein has been authorized for sale, transfer, assignment, mortgage, lease, joint venture or any other form of disposition by **Mr. MIRACLE OSEYOMON** or by any person lawfully authorized to act on his behalf hence a notice has been written on the building therein – **"THIS HOUSE IS NOT FOR SALE"** **THEREFORE**, any person who purports to sell, assign, transfer, mortgage, lease, market or otherwise deal with the said property without lawful authority does so at his or her own Risk. For the avoidance of doubt

THE PROPERTY IS NOT AUTHORIZED FOR SALE BY ANY UNAUTHORIZED PERSON. BUYERS BEWARE!

GIFT OSEYOMON
For: Oseyomon's Family, Uzegua, Uromi

SIGNED:
MAT I. ENEDION, ESQ
BARRISTER & SOLICITOR
On behalf of Oseyomon's Family

PUBLIC NOTICE
RENOUNCIATION OF SECRET CULT
The general public is hereby notified that I **OSAGIE OSAGIEDE DESTINY** has renounced my membership of the Black Axe Confraternity aka Aye, which I was forced to join in Benin City,Edo State. I renounced my membership due to the violent nature of the group.I am no longer a member and have ceased to engage in any of their meetings and activities. The general public, security agencies and concerned authorities should please take note

Signed: OSAGIE OSAGIEDE

PUBLIC NOTICE
The general public is hereby notified that I, **Martins Ikue-nobe Utomi** is the lawful owner of a piece/parcel of land measuring 419.5ft by 405,5ft by 319,8ft by 319.8ft, lying and situate alone at Iguosa Village, Ward 1A, shown in Survey Plan No.MWC/1315/77 dated 10/10/77 and attached to the Deed of Conveyance registered as No. 26 at page 26 in Volume 485 in the Deeds of Registry in Benin City. It is particularly described and delineated in Survey Plan No. ISO/ The land was ED/127/93 and dated 13/12/93. I bought it from **Prof. Abel Anunu**, who acquired it from **Mr. David Uhunagho**, who had earlier acquired it from **Mr. Gabriel Joshua Obanor**. The Certified True Copy of the documents is now required for use and record purposes. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

Signed: Mr Martins Ikuenobe Utomi

RECONCILIATION OF NAME
The general public is here by notified that **AILENOKHUORIA ITUA** VERITY and **AILENOKHUORIA ITUA** and **EHIBHII ITUA** is one and the same person. Now wish to be known and addressed as **AILENOKHUORIA ITUA VERITY**. concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME
I, Formerly known as **Miss. KELECHI MERCY IBE**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs. UMUDU - OBINNA KELECHI MERCY**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Formerly known as **Miss OTITOJU ADEYEMI DUPE**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs. ADEYEMI DUPE AYODELE**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

REMOVAL OF NAME/ DATE OF BIRTH
The general public is here by notified that **IGBINEDION PROMISE FRANK** and **IGBINEDION PROMISE** are one and the same person. Henceforth, I now wish to be known and addressed as **IGBINEDION PROMISE** and also my correct date of birth is 17/9/1982. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I Formerly known as **EHIBHII SUNDAY IYENMEFUORIA**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **EHIBHII SUNDAY IYENOMA**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Formerly known as **Mrs. OGUNTOYINBO OLAIDE ADEBIMPE**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **EVANGELIST Mrs. TOYINBO OLAIDE ADEBIMPE**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Formerly known as **AMENAGHAWON IMUETINYAN FAVOUR**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **ALEX IMUETINYAN FAVOUR**. All former documents remain valid, concerned authorities and the

CHANGE OF NAME
The general public is here by notified that **ALABI TAOFEEQ KOLAPO** and **ALABI TAOFEEQ** are one and the same person. Henceforth now wish to be known and called **ALABI TAOFEEQ KOLAPO**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Formerly known as **AKHIGBE OMOYE**, now wish to be known and addressed as **EHIMUAN OMOYE NAOMI**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

REARRANGEMENT/ADDITION OF NAME
The general public is here by notified that **OBOK ADEBAYO ERNEST** and **OBOK ERNEST** are one and the same person. Henceforth, I now wish to be known and addressed as **OBOK ADEBAYO ERNEST**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known as **OMORUYI ISOKEN** now wish to be known and addressed as **AJAYI JOY**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
The general public is here by notified that **IORAKAA JOY** and **IORAKAA SEEMBER JOY** are one and the same person. Henceforth, I now wish to be known and addressed as **IORAKAA SEEMBER JOY**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

PUBLIC NOTICE
LOSS OF LAND DOCUMENTS
This is to notify the general public that the original land documents i.e. Oba's Approval and Deed of Transfer Agreement; in respect of 100ft by 200ft, situate and lying at Ward 37B Evboriaria Community Ikpoba Okha Local Government Area of Edo State, bought by **OKUONGHAE PRECIOUS FAITH** on the 10th March 1999 from Bless Emezurike of No 36 Old Sapele Road Behind Exclusive Stores, Benin City, have got missed. The said documents got missed/lost in transit in Benin City in 2001. All efforts to recover same proved abortive hence this public notice.

Signed:
OKUONGHAE PRECIOUS FAITH

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

MRS. BERNADETTA GRACE AMIEBENOMO, late of Ubiaja, Esan South East L.G.A., who died on the 7th day of November, 2025 in Benin City.
MR. PETER ONOSHOAGBE BRAI IZOBH, late of Udaba-Ekperi, Etsako Central L.G.A., who died on the 24th day of April, 2026 in Benin City.

PED/627/2026
Mr. Momodu Junior Amiebenomo and Mrs. Afishetu Omozele Otirikpen of No 54, Nehizena Street, Off PZ Road, Sapele Road, Benin City, son and daughter respectively of the deceased.
PED/556/2026
Mrs. Roseline Asesele Izoboh and Matthew Ikpemosimhe Izoboh of No 43B, Sapele Road, Benin City, widow and son respectively of the deceased.

DATED THIS 26th DAY OF AUGUST, 2026.

[Signature]
B. O. OSAWARU ESQ.
Probate Registrar

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as **Miss GIFT AIMEDE IKHIDE** now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs. GIFT AIMEDE OVENSERI**. All former documents remain valid concern authorities and the general public should please take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME
The general public is here by notified that my correct name is **EDOJAWENE GODDAY** and not **EDOJAWENE GODDAY**. Henceforth now wish to be known and called **EDOJAWENE GODDY**. All former documents remain valid concerned authorities and the general public should please take note.

PUBLIC NOTICE
EKIADOLOR COMMUNITY
OFFICIAL NOTICE OF LAND VERIFICATION
VERIFICATION! VERIFICATION!! VERIFICATION!!!
The Ekiadolor Community hereby announces the commencement of an official verification exercise for lands within Ekiadolor Community. Accordingly, all individuals, families, and persons who own, occupy, or lay claim to any parcel of land within Ekiadolor Community are hereby advised to come forward and present the relevant documents establishing their ownership or legitimate interest in such property.
The documents to be presented for verification may include, but are not limited to:
1. Community Approval or Allocation Documents
2. Deed of Transfer
3. Deed of Assignment
4. Survey Plan or other relevant survey documents
5. Any other valid documents relating to the ownership or transfer of the land
All relevant documents are to be presented for proper examination and verification at the Ekiadolor Town Hall, after the market, on the designated verification days.
The exercise is intended to promote proper documentation, transparency, peaceful land ownership, and the protection of legitimate property rights within the community.
All concerned persons are therefore strongly advised to take this notice seriously and participate in the verification exercise.

CONTACT: 08131218140 OR 08120328077

Signed: IMAFIDON IMADEYOGIE STEPHEN
Committee Chairman, Ekiadolor Community
On behalf of the Odionwere and Elders Council

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

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

PED/138/2026
Mrs. Grace Osamwonyi Airohi, Mrs. Uwa Sandra Oamen, Mr. Oghosa Best Osamwonyi and Mr. Ehi Paul Osamwonyi of No 3, Ugege Street, Off Jemila Road, Ikpoba Hill, Benin City, daughters and sons respectively of the deceased.

DATED THIS 26th DAY OF AUGUST, 2026.

[Signature]
B. O. OSAWARU ESQ.
Probate Registrar

Feature

Igbinedion at 92: The Man, The Dream, The Legacy

ANDY EGBON

Today, one of the great sons of the Benin Kingdom, Chief Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion, the Esama of Benin Kingdom, clocks 92.

Ninety-two is more than a number; it is a reflection of grace, endurance and a life that has left an unmistakable imprint on Edo State and Nigeria.

To reduce the story of such a man to any single aspect of his life would be to diminish the spectrum of inspiration that can be drawn from such a titan of a man.

Chief Igbinedion is many things to many people: a philanthropist to those who have benefited from his generosity; a counsellor to those who seek his wisdom; an industrialist and entrepreneur who understands the courage required to build; an educationist who believes in investing in young minds; a mentor to those who look up to him; a reservoir of tradition and a community leader who remains connected to his roots. Yet, for all these, he has remained an excellent family man whose ability to extend his family in the true African sense is such that many who have come close to him regard him not merely as a benefactor, but as a father figure.

Reflecting on the personality and contributions of the Esama, the Chairman of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Edo State Council, Comrade Festus Alenke, said that, apart from government, the Esama remains one of the biggest employers of labour in Edo State.

According to him, through his various business interests, the Esama has contributed significantly to the economic development of the state and the country, while also helping to reduce crime by providing employment opportunities for many people.

The Deputy Director of Public Relations, Communication and Strategy, Igbinedion University Teaching Hospital, Okada, Mr Moses Uyi Osaretin, shared the NUJ Chairman's view, describing the Esama as a man of great compassion whose concern for the welfare of his workers has remained remarkable.

He recalled the COVID-19 lockdown, when many businesses were forced to shut down and workers were asked to remain at home, noting that the Esama continued to pay his workers throughout the period.

On his part, a legal practitioner in Edo State, Jefferson Uwoghien, said that Esama is a quintessential Edo leader; a man who rose from a humble background to attain prominence through enterprise, determination and courage. He also described him as a fortunate man, particularly in having children who have continued to distinguish themselves and contribute to society.

To Professor Emmanuel Eghe Egbon of Ambrose Alli University (AAU), Ekpoma, the Esama is an enigma who has adopted him (Prof) and his wife, Imuentinyan Egbon with his immediate family as a son and daughter.

To Imuentinyan, "As one privileged to be close to the family, I have come to appreciate the man behind the legend-

ary name; a man who understands the value of bringing people together, lifting others and leaving a lasting impact.

"The aura of the Esama is unmistakable. His achievements speak of vision, while his generosity reflects a belief that true greatness is measured by the lives one touches.

"To know Esama is to encounter a living legacy; to celebrate him is to celebrate a life whose impact extends far beyond himself. May the years ahead bring him continued strength, good health and joy, and the fulfilment of seeing the seeds he has planted flourish across generations."

For a man who has lived for more than nine decades, his story is not simply about what he acquired, but about what he built, what he gave and what he inspired. It is the journey of a little boy from Okada, headquarters of the present day Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State who experienced hardship early in life, whose formal education was interrupted by circumstances, but who refused to allow poverty to determine his future. That boy eventually became one of the most illustrious Nigerians of his generation, the Esama of Benin Kingdom, a businessman with interests across several sectors and a man whose name would become part of Edo's history.

His early years were far removed from the prominence that would later define his life. Born to Josiah Agharabon Oviawe Igbinedion and Madam Okunozee, he lost his father at an early age, an event that disrupted his education and forced him to depend on others for support. He later moved to Benin City, where he worked at different times in different places.

There was little at that stage to suggest the scale of the journey ahead. His was first a story of survival; survival gradually became determination, determination became ambition, and ambition became enterprise.

Perhaps what makes his story more compelling is the humility with which he speaks about his achievements. Asked about the secret of his success, his answer has been simple: "God's blessings." He has repeatedly returned to God when speaking about his life, achievements and longevity. His daily prayer is equally revealing: "God, I am a blind man, show me my next step." For a man often described as a visionary, there is humility in those words.

Behind the confidence and boldness associated with the Esama is a man who recognises the limits of human knowledge and believes that achievement is ultimately dependent on divine direction.

Igbinedion's story is also a story of courage and many firsts. At a time when indigenous participation in major businesses was limited, he ventured into areas that required considerable confidence and resources. He established Mid-Motors Nigeria

Company Limited and later ventured into the beverage production business, aviation with Okada Air, which became one of Nigeria's most talked-about private airlines. His interests would extend into manufacturing, hospitality, broadcasting, banking and real estate, reflecting an entrepreneurial spirit that was rarely satisfied with what had already been achieved.

But perhaps, his most enduring venture has been education. In 1999, he established Igbinedion University, Okada, Nigeria's first private university. It was a bold decision that added another important dimension to his legacy. For Igbinedion, education became more than another business venture; it became an investment in people and in the future.

Today, the university stands as one of the most visible expressions of that vision. Thousands of young men and women have passed through its gates, acquiring knowledge and professional qualifications that have opened doors for them in Nigeria and beyond. The significance of such an institution goes beyond its buildings and facilities. It is measured in the lives changed, the families affected and the opportunities created. The founder may be 92, but the dream continues to produce young people.

His venture into the media industry, with the establishment of the Independent Television/Radio opened another chapter in his entrepreneurial journey, as he brought the same drive and ambition to broadcasting that had characterised his other business ventures. Today, he is the Grand Patron of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Edo State Council, a body he has constantly supported, especially during periods of challenges.

There is a

story from Igbinedion's family life that says much about his philosophy of success. In 1964, while travelling with his 11 children in a Hiace bus, he asked them to observe the people they saw on the streets of Benin City, driving Mercedes, Peugeot and Volkswagen, those riding motorcycles and those walking. When they returned, he asked them which group they wanted to belong to. They all wanted to be successful. His lesson was straightforward: "You must tailor yourself to get there, don't go by cheating, but go by what you are earning."

For a man whose life would later become associated with wealth and influence, it is significant that his lesson centred on work, preparation and integrity. At a time when many young people are under pressure to acquire wealth overnight, the message remains relevant: learn, work, prepare yourself and grow.

It would, however, be limiting to describe Igbinedion simply as a businessman. He has also been a mentor and a man who is deeply invested in relationships. His circle of friends and associates has extended across traditional institutions, government, business, religion, sports and ordinary communities.

A former Edo State Governor once described him as an icon and statesman whose contributions to the peace, unity and development of Edo and Nigeria were immense.

That description captures an important part of Esama's public life, for his influence has never been confined to the boardroom.

His concern for people and traditional institutions has also remained evident.

His philanthropic outreach is legendary, and it is little wonder that he commands considerable goodwill and influence across diverse sections of society, even at global

level. His name opens door. The role he played to facilitate the release of the first civilian Governor of Bendel State, Prof. Ambrose Alli from prison in the 80s cannot be forgotten in a hurry. His relationships, generosity and willingness to identify with people have helped to make his influence extend beyond business.

For someone who has achieved so much, Igbinedion has also demonstrated courage, painstaking commitment and hard work in pursuing his goals. It takes courage to start again after hardship, to enter industries where others have greater resources and to build institutions whose benefits may not be immediately measurable. He has done all these, and his continued fascination with construction perhaps captures his character.

Even at 92, the flamboyant Esama speaks with the enthusiasm of a man who still has something to build. "As long as I have breath, I will still be working," he said.

Those words perhaps capture the man better than any title. He is still looking ahead, still thinking about what can be built, still interested in young people and still asking what the next step should be.

There is another statement attributed to him that offers an insight into his understanding of legacy: "A success without a successor is a failure." It is a powerful thought from a man who has spent much of his life building, because, at a certain stage, achievement ceases to be measured only by what one personally owns or controls.

The more important question becomes: what will remain? For Igbinedion, part of the answer can be found at Okada. Students continue to attend a university that began as his vision, graduates leave with qualifications that can change the fortunes of their families, and academics and researchers continue their work in an institution that has become part of Nigeria's private university landscape. That is a legacy in motion; an idea conceived by one man becoming an opportunity for thousands of others.

There is also a special place for The Nigerian Observer in the story of the Esama. During a recent visit of the management team of Bendel Newspapers Corporation, publishers of The Nigerian Observer, led by its General Manager, Hon. Peter Odiboh, the Esama Igbinedion recalled his involvement in the early days of the newspaper and the role he played in supporting its workers at a difficult period. His instruction to the journalists to "Go to your archives" carries a lesson beyond the newspaper itself. People make history every day, but history can easily disappear if it is not properly documented. That observation is particularly significant because Igbinedion himself has become part of the history of modern Edo, and newspapers such as The Nigerian Observer have a responsibility to preserve that history.

Perhaps the most remarkable



CONTINUES ON PG 9»

Friday Sermon

Visiting Grave

MAJOR M. Y. BABANGIDA

Praise be to Allah, the Almighty, the Sovereign, the Holy, the Strong, the Victorious, Lord of the East and the West, the Resurrector, the Inheritor, the Giver, the Withholder, who commanded us to visit graves and made it one of the best of deeds, and forbade us from innovations in every recommended and obligatory act, and made innovation in religion one of the great sins.

Among the greatest sins and most grievous calamities is the disbelief of God, as Allah Almighty says: "Say, 'Obey Allah and the Messenger.' But if they turn away, then indeed, Allah does not love the disbelievers."

O servants of Allah, Allah Almighty says in His clear revelation: He who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed - and He is the Exalted in Might.

He is the Almighty, the Forgiving. We thank Him, the Most High, who has made the ultimate outcome for the righteous. And the life of this world is but a fleeting illusion. I bear witness that there is no god but God alone, who has no partner. He knows the treachery of the eyes and what the hearts conceal. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

O servants of God, our noble Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "I used to forbid you from visiting graves, but now visit them, for they remind you of the Hereafter."

O servants of God, visiting graves is a recommended practice, especially the graves of the righteous, for it reminds one of death, fosters detachment from worldly desires, and

encourages devotion to God. And he desires the Hereafter, and that is why the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, visits the people of Al-Baqi' and says, "Peace be upon you, people of the homes, believers and Muslims. And we, God willing, will join you. I ask God for a good outcome for us and for you."

O servants of God, when you visit the graves of the righteous, remember their good deeds, how they used to sleep little at night and seek forgiveness at dawn, and that they were believers who were humble in their prayers, diligent in giving charity, and

averse to idle talk.

They stand firm in their testimonies, and they uphold their trusts and covenants. They guard their chastity from what God has forbidden. Strive to follow their example in what they say and do, in what they do and what they refrain from doing, so that perhaps you may be among those of whom God Almighty says: "Indeed, the allies of God..." They will have no fear, nor will they grieve.

O servants of God, among the greatest sins, the most grievous faults, and the most vile things that occur at the graves of the righteous is the commis-

sion of abominations and the violation of prohibitions. Beware, O noble visitor, of kissing a grave, circumambulating it, prostrating upon it, Or you call upon someone other than God, for he can neither harm nor benefit, neither give nor withhold, neither lower nor raise. None can repel, seize, or bestow except God.

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever among you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; if he is not able to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart." That is the weakest of faith.

He also said, "By Him in whose hand is my soul, you must enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, or God will soon send upon you a punishment, then you will call upon Him and He will not answer you."

May Allah grant us the ability and willingness to always visit the grave and do the right thing.

Yaa Allah, forgive those who have passed away and have mercy on their souls.

Yaa Allah, let us get the best of this world and in the Hereafter.

Major M. Y. Babangida is the 4-Brigade Central Mosque Imam in Benin City.



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By Him in whose hand is my soul, you must enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, or God will soon send upon you a punishment, then you will call upon Him and He will not answer you.

FEATURE

Igbinedion at 92: The Man, The Dream, The Legacy

«CONTINUED FROM PG 8

thing about Esama, even at 92 is that he does not speak like a man who has achieved much.

When asked what he hoped to achieve before his 100th birthday, he spoke about his love to impact society. "As long as I have breath, I will still be working," he said. Therein lies the man: 92 years old, but still looking ahead; still interested in building young people; still thinking and interested in the next step.

His long public life has not been without controversy or debate. Such a long and highly visible life will naturally attract both admiration and criticism. This is not surprising, because even Jesus Christ has its own fair share during his earthly sojourn

But no fair assessment of Esama's journey can ignore the scale of what he attempted and accomplished. He has seen Nigeria change, he has seen Benin change, and he has watched businesses rise and disappear, governments come and go, and generations succeed. Through it all, he has remained active and engaged.

The title Esama is grand. The robes are grand. The beads are grand. The birthday celebrations is also grand. The

business achievements are grand. But behind all these is a man whose story began much more simply: an ambitious young man who refused to surrender to poverty; a father who taught his children that success should be earned; an entrepreneur willing to take risks; a philanthropist who opened his doors to people; an educationist who invested in young minds; and a believer whose prayer remains, "God, I am a blind man, show me my next step."

Chief Igbinedion has dedicated himself to causes larger than personal comfort and wealth. His contributions to business, education, community development and philanthropy have earned him a place in the story of the State and Nigeria. He deserves every bit of the praise and encomium that have followed his journey, not simply because of what he has acquired, but because of what he has built, what he has given and the lives he has touched. Today, he had the privilege of receiving one of the highest Federal Government honours of CFR (Commander of the Federal Republic).

A Catholic Knight of St. John (KSJ) and a man deeply loved by God, his contributions to the work of God are nothing short of legendary. On several occasions, he has single-handedly built

and donated magnificent church complexes, leaving behind awe-inspiring monuments to his unwavering devotion and flamboyant commitment to the advancement of the Christian faith.

As activities for the 92 birthday coast to the finishing line, the 'Lion of Okada,' as he is fondly called, hosts not less than 10,000 guests who daily come to his palatial residence on No. 1 - 13 Okada Avenue in the Government Reservation Area to felicitate with a man who has had an abundance of God's Grace since September 1 when the celebration of the 92nd birthday began.

The Nigerian Observer congratulates the Esama on this auspicious and momentous occasion. His service and contributions to the growth and development of Nigeria, nay Edo, are immense and enduring.

It is our earnest hope and ardent prayer that posterity will understand and vindicate him, and that history will ultimately judge his life and legacy in a positive light and that he will continue to enjoy the fruits of the many seeds he has sown.

This celebration is more than a birthday. It is about a journey from humble beginnings to remarkable achievement; a journey marked by

faith, courage, enterprise, service and an enduring belief in what is possible. Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion dreamt beyond the circumstances of his be-

ginning and lived long enough to see many of those dreams become reality.

Happy 92nd birthday, Esama.



Chief Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion

Milestone

ESAMA @ 92

MOMENTS OF HONOUR • LOVE • CELEBRATION

A gallery of memorable moments as dignitaries, family, friends, associates and admirers join the celebration of Chief Dr. GABRIEL OSAWARU IGBINEDION'S 92nd birthday.



FEATURE

Benin–Asaba Highway: The road that put govt on trial

JOSHUA EDO

The Benin–Asaba road has become more than a failed highway. It has become a test of government responsibility, contractual discipline and the credibility of Nigeria's infrastructure policy.

For motorists, transport operators, traders and residents who depend on the strategic corridor connecting Edo and Delta states, the crisis is no longer an inconvenience. It is a daily economic and security emergency.

The situation became so critical that the Minister of Works, David Umahi, on Tuesday, August 25, 2026, undertook an on-the-spot inspection of the Benin–Asaba corridor and other troubled federal roads in Edo State following widespread public complaints and severe gridlock. He was joined by Edo State Governor Monday Okpebholo, representatives of the National Assembly and other stakeholders.

What the minister saw generated unusually strong words.

Umahi apologised to commuters and residents of Edo and Delta states and said the Federal Government would take urgent steps to restore the road. He expressed deep disappointment with the Benin–Asaba Expressway Concession Company, accusing the concessionaire of mishandling the project and lacking the required technical competence.

"I am very, very disappointed with this concessionaire. I offer apologies. I take full responsibility for the misdeed and for the destruction of public assets," Umahi said during the inspection.

The minister was particularly angered by the removal of existing asphalt without the required drainage works. He said the Ministry of Works had warned against the practice and directed ministry controllers to take action against contractors or concessionaires found removing asphalt from federal roads in violation of approved standards.

His words expose the central question surrounding the crisis: how did a project of such strategic importance get to this point?

The Benin–Asaba highway was concessioned to the Benin–Asaba Expressway Concession Company in 2025 as part of plans to transform the corridor into a major multi-lane expressway. Yet, within a relatively short period, motorists have been confronted by failed sections, prolonged gridlock and serious hardship. Recent reports indicate that some travellers have spent days on the road, while others have resorted to bush and forest routes in an attempt to escape the worst sections.

That development should concern every Nigerian because the road is not merely an Edo or Delta issue. It is a major economic artery linking the South-South and South-East with other parts of the country.

Every failed kilometre has an economic cost.

Goods arrive late. Vehicles are damaged. Businesses lose working hours. Perishable commodities are wasted. Travellers are exposed to ad-

ditional security risks. Families are separated for longer than necessary. Commercial operators spend more on fuel and maintenance. The wider economy pays for an infrastructure failure that should have been prevented or rapidly corrected.

The minister's intervention is therefore welcome. But an inspection, an apology and a promise of emergency action cannot be the end of the story.

They must be the beginning of accountability.

OSHIOMHOLE'S WARNING

Interestingly, the condition of the roads in Edo did not suddenly become a national concern on August 25.

Senator Adams Oshiomhole had already raised the issue on the floor of the Senate, drawing attention to the deteriorating condition of the Benin–Asaba, Benin–Warri and Auchi–Abuja highways and calling for greater priority to be given to the rehabilitation and maintenance of existing roads.

His argument was straightforward: government should not rush to announce new road projects while important existing corridors are allowed to deteriorate.

That is a position that deserves serious consideration.

A country cannot build sustainable infrastructure by continually creating new projects while neglecting the assets already carrying its economy.

Oshiomhole's intervention also reflects a larger concern about fairness in infrastructure allocation. If an existing highway is the principal economic link between communities and regions, allowing it to fail while attention shifts elsewhere ultimately penalises the very citizens government is supposed to serve.

His question to the wider political establishment is therefore difficult to ignore: when critical roads deteriorate, who is responsible, and what happens next?

UMAHİ, OKPEBHOLO AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Umahi also publicly commended Governor Monday Okpebholo for intervening in federal roads within Edo State.

The minister said the governor had refused to hide behind the distinction between federal and state responsibilities when the welfare of citizens was at stake. He also acknowledged the governor's interventions on other federal roads in the state.

This is an important dimension of the debate.

To the motorist, a road does not become less dangerous because it belongs to another tier of government.

To the trader whose goods are trapped in traffic, jurisdiction does not reduce the cost of delay.

To a family travelling on a dangerous road, the constitutional distribution of responsibilities provides no immediate relief.

Government, at every level, must therefore learn to cooperate around public interest.

The Federal Government has now indicated that it will review concession arrangements on major roads

following the Benin–Asaba crisis. The review should not be treated as another administrative exercise that ends with a report. It should determine, transparently, whether contractual obligations were met, whether supervision was adequate, whether technical capacity was properly assessed and what consequences should follow from any proven breach.

WHEN CONTRACTS BECOME CONFLICTS

The Benin–Asaba experience exposes a fundamental weakness that Nigeria must confront: public infrastructure contracts cannot be treated merely as commercial arrangements.

Once a strategic road is entrusted to a concessionaire, the public interest remains paramount.

Government must know who is doing the work, what technical capacity the company possesses, what standards it must meet, how performance will be measured and what happens when the contract is breached.

The public must also be able to know the cost of the contract, the duration, the milestones and the extent to which the project has actually been delivered.

Transparency is not an administrative luxury. It is an essential part of infrastructure governance.

Every major federal road project should have an accessible public record showing the contractor or concessionaire, contract value, commencement date, completion target, percentage of work completed, approved variations and the current condition of the project.

Nigerians should not have to wait until a road becomes impassable before discovering that a project is in difficulty.

ACCOUNTABILITY MUST GO BEYOND APOLOGIES

Umahi's apology was appropriate because the public is suffering.

But apologies cannot repair a failed road.

Only competent engineering, proper supervision, adequate drainage, quality materials, effective maintenance and strict contract enforcement can do that.

The Federal Government must therefore move from emergency intervention to structural correction.

Where a concessionaire is found to have breached contractual or engineering requirements, the consequences should be determined transparently and in accordance with the law.

Where public officials are found to have acted improperly, failed in their responsibilities or compromised due process, the appropriate institutions must act.

But accountability must always be evidence-based and subject to due process.

The objective should not be political punishment. The objective should be to protect public resources and prevent a repetition of the same failure.

THE 2027 QUESTION

As Nigeria moves towards its 66th anniversary of independence and the 2027 elections, infrastructure will inevitably become part of the national political conversation.

For citizens, however, the question should be simpler than the campaign rhetoric.

Not: How many roads were awarded?

But: How many were completed?

Not: How many contracts were signed?

But: Were they executed according to specification?

Not: How many inspections were conducted?

But: Did the inspection produce action?

Not: Who made the promise?

But: Can the citizen actually use the road?

For Edo and Delta motorists, the Benin–Asaba corridor may become one of the clearest measures of whether government can translate policy into performance.

The road has already exposed the gap between contractual promises and lived reality.

Now the authorities have an opportunity to close that gap.

THE ROAD AHEAD

The immediate priority must be the restoration of safe and uninterrupted movement along the Benin–Asaba corridor.

But the long-term solution must go further.

Nigeria needs a stronger system for awarding, supervising and reviewing infrastructure contracts. Technical competence must be established before strategic projects are handed over. Independent supervision must be strengthened. Contract variations must be transparent. Public assets must be protected. And citizens must have access to information about projects paid for with public resources.

The lesson from Benin–Asaba should therefore be bigger than one road.

It should be about how Nigeria manages public infrastructure.

At 66, the country should be moving beyond the politics of announcements to the politics of delivery.

The visit by the Minister of Works has brought national attention back to a crisis that citizens have been living with for months. Governor Okpebholo has demonstrated a willingness to intervene beyond narrow jurisdictional boundaries. Senator Oshiomhole has raised the matter at the Senate. The National Assembly has a responsibility to intensify oversight. The Federal Government has promised a review of concessioned roads.

CARTOON

By Francis Odupute





INSIDE EDO STATE



Uhunmwode: Imafidon constitutes Executive, Legislative machinery



The Executive Chairman of Uhunmwode Local Government Council, Hon. Austin Imafidon, popularly known as Isiwin, has received the newly sworn-in councillors of the Uhunmwode Local Government Legislative Arm and inaugurated members of the Council Executive Committee.

The ceremonies, which took place on Monday, followed the successful swearing-in and inauguration of the councillors into the Legislative Arm of the council.

Briefing the Executive Chairman on the conduct of the inauguration, the Clerk of the Legislative Arm, Mr. Iwerebor Godstime, said the process commenced with the reading of the Letter of Proclamation, followed by the election of the principal officers of the Legislative Arm.

The Clerk thereafter introduced the leadership and members of the Legislative Arm to the Executive Chairman.

They include Rt. Hon. Moses Igbino, Leader; Rt. Hon. Osasun Adaa, Deputy Leader; Hon. Ogbemudia Osabuohien, Deputy House Leader; Rt. Hon. Osarobo Patrick Osemwegie Ogbegiere, House Leader; Hon. Friday Agbonzee Ose, Chief Whip; and Hon. Okoro Felix, Deputy Whip.

Others are Hon. Irune Odese, Councillor, Ward 9; Hon. Patience Uwa Aiguobasimwin, Councillor, Ward 3; Hon. Onaghise Israel, Councillor, Ward 5; and Hon. Osifo Felix Alfred, Councillor, Ward 4.

Speaking on behalf of the Legislative Arm, its Leader, Rt. Hon. Moses Igbino, assured the Executive Chairman and the Executive Arm of the council of a cordial and productive working relationship in the overall interest of the people.

Igbino said the developmental strides recorded by Imafidon during his period in an acting capacity were evidence of his commitment to the people, assuring that the legislature would partner the Executive to ad-



vance the administration's development agenda.

Earlier, Imafidon had supervised the swearing-in of newly appointed members of the Council Executive Committee.

The ceremony, conducted by the Head of the Legal Department of the council, saw six appointees take their

oaths of office.

Those inaugurated are Hon. Amity Uwagboe Orhiakhi, Secretary to the Local Government; Comrade Oziegbe Ighodaro, Special Adviser on Humanitarian Services and Traditional Institutions; Mr. Ogiehor Ehis Tornado, Chief Press Secretary; Mr. Fola Odimayo, Chief Security Officer; Mr.

Nosa Omokaro, Special Adviser on Youth Development and Community Works; and Mr. Believe Orhiakhi, Chief of Staff.

The ceremonies were witnessed by the Uhunmwode Local Government Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Rt. Hon. Osawe Osayemwere; the party's Vice Chair-

man, Hon. Sylvester Obazee, popularly known as Dagbo; and the party's Local Government Leader, Prof. David Osarumwense Osifo.

Also present were the Head of Local Government Administration (HOLGA), Dr. Charles Okpere; the Director of Administration and General Services (DAGS), Mr. Edward Okosun; and other senior officials of the council.

Speaking after the ceremonies, Imafidon expressed confidence in the newly appointed members of the Executive Committee as well as the leadership and members of the Legislative Arm.

He assured residents that the constitution of the full machinery of government would pave the way for greater development and improved service delivery across the local government.

The chairman charged the councillors to discharge their legislative responsibilities with diligence, commitment and a strong sense of responsibility, urging them to place the interests and welfare of the people above all other considerations.

Imafidon also disclosed that he deliberately refrained from interfering in the election of the principal officers of the Legislative Arm because he believed the councillors should be allowed to freely choose their preferred leaders.

He assured the legislators of his administration's readiness to maintain a cordial and cooperative relationship with the legislature, stressing that both arms of government must work as partners in progress to achieve sustainable development across the ten wards of the local government.

The chairman reiterated his commitment to purposeful leadership and people-oriented development, assuring the people of Uhunmwode that his administration would remain focused on building a greater and more prosperous local government.

Refinery access war: Dangote, regulator clash in court

LAGOS

The Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority and the Dangote Petroleum Refinery have clashed in court over allegations surrounding the quality and distribution of propane, with the dispute centring on the regulator's directive to suspend propane loading and truck-out operations at the refinery.

The face-off came to a head at the Federal High Court in Lagos on Wednesday, where NMDPRA urged the court to discharge an interim order restraining it from enforcing the suspension, while Dangote accused the regulator of abusing its powers.

The court had on August 31 restrained NMDPRA, its officers, agents and representatives from entering, sealing, shutting down, restricting access to, obstructing, suspend-

ing, disrupting, inspecting, supervising or sanctioning the refinery's operations pending the hearing and determination of the substantive application.

NMDPRA, through its counsel, Matthew Burkaa, told the court that the interim order had been obtained through alleged misrepresentation and suppression of material facts.

The regulator also challenged the jurisdiction of Jus-

tice Akintayo Aluko to grant the order, arguing that the refinery had not filed the required motion on notice when its ex-parte application was heard.

According to the regulator, its decision to suspend propane loading and truck-out operations followed findings of alleged diversion of propane-laden trucks to unknown and unlicensed customers and the alleged illegal blending of propane at some

LPG plants.

NMDPRA said its investigation began after laboratory tests conducted on LPG samples from three plants – Selai, Tewa and Ameego Pago – allegedly showed propane content above 50 per cent.

It said industry requirements stipulated that propane should constitute no more than 20 per cent of an LPG blend, while butane should account for about 80 per cent.

The regulator said representatives of the three plants were invited to discuss the findings and identified Sublime Oil and Gas Limited, an off-taker from Dangote Refinery, as their source of propane. NMDPRA said this prompted a wider reconciliation and material-balance exercise involving propane-producing

facilities and LPG-blending plants. It further alleged that its officials were denied access when they attempted to inspect propane-loading operations and records at Dangote Refinery on August 24.

The regulator subsequently issued a notice of potential non-compliance and directed the refinery to suspend propane loading and truck-out pending the outcome of its investigation and the implementation of additional safety measures.

According to NMDPRA, an examination of the refinery's truck-out manifests revealed significant discrepancies. It alleged that Sublime Oil and Gas lifted 25 trucks of propane on August 20 and 22 for delivery to Navgas/Agasco, but Navgas confirmed receiving only six.

**CONFERENCE;**

From left: Chairman, Senate Committee on Banking, Insurance and other Financial Institutions, Sen. Mukhail Abiru; representative of the Senate President, Sen. Peter Nwobonyi; President/Chairman of Council, Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN), Dr Dele Alabi and the representative of President Bola Tinubu/Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr Taiwo Oyedele, during the CIBN's 19th Annual Banking and Finance Conference, in Abuja on Tuesday

2027: Don't portray insecurity as religious war, minister urges clerics

ABUJA

The Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, has urged religious leaders to guard against presenting Nigeria's security challenges as a religious war, warning that such narratives could undermine national unity ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Idris also called on Christian leaders to use their influence to promote truth, peace, responsible citizenship and tolerance, stressing that no Nigerian should be attacked or discriminated against because of their faith.

The minister made the call in a keynote address delivered at the grand finale of the 2026 Synod of the Charismatic Bishops Conference of Nigeria and the International Communion of Charismatic Archbishops, Bishops and Apostles at the National Christian Centre, Abuja, on Wednesday.

The Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation shared the address on its official X account on Thursday.

Speaking on religious freedom and national security, Idris said the Federal Government remained committed to protecting the constitutional rights of Nigerians to practise their faith freely.

"Nigeria's Constitution guar-

antees freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and the Federal Government remains committed to protecting every citizen's right to worship and practise their faith freely. No Nigerian should be attacked or discriminated against because of religion. Christians, Muslims and people of other faiths should be able to live and worship in peace.

The Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, speaking to a cross-section of Bishops during his keynote address delivered at the grand finale of the 2026 Synod of the Charismatic Bishops Conference of Nigeria and the International Communion of Charismatic Archbishops, Bish-

ops and Apostles at the National Christian Centre, Abuja, on Wednesday.

"At the same time, we should not allow our security challenges to be wrongly presented as a religious war. Terrorists and criminal groups have attacked Nigerians of different faiths and backgrounds, and their objective is to create fear and undermine our national unity," the statement quoted Idris as saying.

The minister said the administration of President Bola Tinubu had strengthened intelligence gathering, inter-agency cooperation and military operations, while also expanding international partnerships on security.

Police arrest woman over fake OPay shutdown notice

ABUJA

The Nigeria Police Force National Cybercrime Centre has arrested a 27-year-old woman, Hafsat Abubakar, over the creation and circulation of a forged document falsely suggesting that fintech company OPay Nigeria Limited was shutting down its operations.

The Force Public Relations Officer, Anietie Iniedu, disclosed this during a press briefing at the NPF-NCCC in Abuja.

Iniedu said the arrest followed a formal petition received from OPay Digital Services Limited on August 31, 2026, requesting an urgent investigation, tracing and apprehension of those responsible for creating and circulating the fraudulent document.

He said the petition was submitted through the office of the Deputy Inspector-General of Police in charge of the Force Criminal Investigation Department, Abuja.

According to him, the document was falsely presented as an official communication issued by OPay Nigeria Limited.

"On the 31st of August 2026, the Nigeria Police Force National Cybercrime Centre, NCCC, received a formal petition from OPAY Digital Services Limited through the office of the Deputy Inspector-General of Police in charge of the Force Criminal Investigation Department, Abuja, requesting urgent investigation, tracing and apprehension of persons responsible for the creation and simulation of a fraudulent document falsely presented as an official communication issued by OPay

Nigeria Limited," Iniedu said.

The FPRO said the NCCC immediately deployed digital forensic tools to examine the document and trace its origin.

"Upon receipt of the approved petition, the Nigeria Police Force National Cybercrime Centre, NCCC, deployed digital forensic tools to analyse the content, which was traced to a post on the X handle, @haifah_er_abba, registered and operated by one Hafsat Abubakar," he said.

Iniedu said police operatives subsequently arrested Abubakar on September 4, 2026.

"On the 4th of September 2026, police operatives of the NCCC arrested one Hafsat Abubakar, a 27-year-old female graduate of Library and Information Science from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria," he said.

He said the incident demonstrated the dangers posed by digitally fabricated information, particularly when such content could trigger public panic, financial disruption and reputational damage.

The police spokesman also warned members of the public against sharing sensitive information without first verifying it through official channels.

He said the investigation was ongoing and assured that suspects found culpable would face prosecution after the conclusion of the investigation.

PUNCH Online had reported that OPay denied a viral claim that it would shut down operations from September 1, 2026, describing the notice as false and urging customers to rely on its official communication channels.

Police arrest two over killing of Kano political commentator

KANO

The Kano State Police Command has arrested two suspects in connection with the death of a popular political commentator, Ibrahim Khalil Danshagamu, who was allegedly attacked with sharp objects at his residence in Gaida Quarters, Kumbotso Local Government Area.

The command disclosed this in a statement issued on Wednesday by its Public Relations Officer, Abdullahi Haruna Kiyawa, on behalf

of the Commissioner of Police, CP Ibrahim Adamu Bakori.

According to the statement, the incident occurred on Monday at about 11:30 pm after the command received a distress call from the Vigilante Group Commander in Gaida, reporting that unknown hoodlums had forcibly entered the deceased's residence and attacked him.

"Operatives of the Kumbotso Police Division promptly responded to the scene and rushed the victim to Murtala Mohammed Specialists Hospital, Kano,

where he qqqqwas confirmed dead on arrival by a medical doctor," the statement said.

The development had earlier attracted condemnation from opposition politicians and rights advocates, who called for an immediate investigation into the circumstances surrounding the commentator's death.

Former Kano State governor and opposition politician, Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, said in a post on X on Wednesday that Danshagamu's body was found in a pool of blood at his home.

Kwankwaso described the killing as a "horrific attack" and urged the Kano State Government to constitute an investigative panel to probe the incident and bring those responsible to justice.

Amnesty International Nigeria also condemned the killing and called for a thorough investigation, stressing that outspoken individuals and critics should be protected in a democracy.

"In a democracy, outspoken persons or critics are accommodated, listened to, not killed," the organisation said.

NEWS

FOREIGN



TOURIST HOTSPOT:

The fire broke out as the vessel was reaching the tourist hotspot of Coron in Palawan

Trump says every adult American will get \$5,000 if Republicans win midterms

US President Donald Trump says he would offer every adult American a \$5,000 (£3,700) payout if Republicans win both chambers of Congress in November's midterm elections – a plan that would cost more than a trillion dollars.

The offer was made in a speech at the party's first-ever convention in the middle of a US presidential term.

He gave no details on how it would work or be funded – saying only that the money would have to be spent in the US. Vice-President JD Vance has linked the plan to the revenue that Trump has raised from US tariffs on imported goods.

Democrats labelled it an "empty promise" and others questioned whether such a pledge was legal or feasible.

It may be the first time a US president offered such a payout to Americans, in the context of

an election year plea to get out and vote.

The idea drew raucous applause at the convention and Trump seemed to relish the moment.

There are nearly 270 million American adults, meaning a \$5,000 payout would cost the US government some \$1.3 trillion.

Questions have begun to be raised about whether his plan is feasible – especially as prices rise in the US, partially as a result of the war that the US and Israel started with Iran in February.

Iran's retaliation has included attacks against US bases and allies in the Gulf – but crucially it has largely closed the Strait of Hormuz, through which about a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas used to transit.

The blockage has caused fluctuations in oil prices worldwide and Trump has faced

pressure from his party to end the war.

On Wednesday, the US president warned his supporters that the war would not end until after the midterms and that oil prices would not come down until then.

He made the comments ahead of his speech in Texas, repeating it at the convention where he argued that short-term economic pain was worth it to prevent Tehran from developing nuclear weapons.

Trump's long speech at the Republican convention in Dallas, Texas, touched on the core of the conflict – the impact on Americans' standard of living. His pledge to increase their spending power drew raucous applause in the hall.

"If the Republicans win the House of Representatives and the United States Senate, both of them," Trump said, "I will issue a dividend to every adult

citizen in the United States of America for \$5,000."

"We don't want you going to Canada to spend the money," he said.

"We don't want you going to China, to Germany. You got to spend the money in the United States of America." It is not clear how the spending would be monitored.

The BBC has asked the White House for further clarification on how Trump's plan would work.

One former Republican strategist and pollster said the promise should be firmly seen in the context of an election that is now less than two months away.

"It is an extraordinary promise, and I'm not sure where that money is going to come from – but it is campaign season," Robert Moran told the BBC World Service's Newsday programme.

Five dead and 86 missing as fire breaks out on Philippines ferry

At least five people have died and 86 are missing after a fire broke out on a ferry in the Philippines, the country's coastguard said.

The MV June Aster, which set off from Manila ferrying 117 passengers and 17 crew members, was nearing its destination at the tourist hotspot of Coron when it caught fire.

The blaze, which erupted at 18:45 local time (10:45 GMT) Wednesday, was still burning as of 11:00 on Thursday. The strong currents and thick smoke were a challenge to those working to extinguish it, the coastguard said.

A survivor said he floated in the sea for two hours before he got rescued. "It was cold. If the rescue had been delayed, I would definitely have died," Roland Lerma told the BBC.

Video clips shared by the coastguard on Wednesday night showed the vessel engulfed in flames and people being pulled out of the water into rescue boats.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation, the coastguard said.

The coastguard said preliminary interviews with the survivors suggest the fire started in the cargo hold, which is the compartment where containers and or goods are stored, the coastguard said. Some passen-

gers were not wearing life vests, they noted.

Forty-three people have been rescued but it is unclear how many have sustained injuries.

Seven of the survivors were taken to a hospital in Culion, a larger neighbouring island, which has higher bed capacity and more comprehensive healthcare services.

A first responder told the BBC they had never seen such a disaster in Coron, calling it "really heartbreaking".

"I was one of the people who carried and transported the casualties to the hospital last night," they said, adding that the ferry was an hour away from its destination.

The survivors were taken to an evacuation centre in Barangay Turda, which sits just north of Marcilla. The state of their injuries is unclear.

"People were trampling me": Philippine ferry fire survivor recalls narrow escape

Mae Lorraine Galera-Navoa, who is the sister of Garcia's brother-in-law, had travelled to Luzon to attend her father's funeral, accompanied by her husband Elyzer Navoa and their three-year-old daughter Hiraya Joy.

They had been travelling home to El Nido in Palawan on board the vessel when it caught fire.

Iran war won't end until after crucial November elections, says Trump

US President Donald Trump has said he does not think the Iran war will end until after November's midterm elections, adding that oil prices will not come down until then.

"I think the war's going to end immediately after the election because they can't hold out any longer," Trump said of Iran's leaders on Wednesday.

He made the comments as he headed to Texas for the Republican Party's first midterm election convention – and repeated them there, arguing that short-term economic pain was worth it to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

Trump is facing falling polling numbers and pressure from within his party to end the war, which began when the US and Israel attacked Iran in February.

The conflict rapidly spread across the Middle East, as Iran retaliated by launching missiles and drones at Israel and Arab states hosting US military facilities.

The price of Brent crude oil, the global benchmark, has risen above the \$100 (£74) mark three times over the past six months, with Iranian attacks forcing production stoppages in Gulf states and disrupting exports through the vital Strait of Hormuz waterway.

The US has also imposed a naval blockade on Iran's ports and has recently begun striking Iranian tankers in response to attacks on warships and other vessels.

"Right after the election, oil prices are going to be tumbling downward," Trump told reporters. "I think it's going to take a little bit longer than the midterm."

He added that Iran was "desperate to try and affect the election, so that we can get a nice weak group of people in there" – an apparent reference to the Democrats – "and leave them alone and let them have their nuclear weapon".

He provided no proof of the election claim. Tehran has repeatedly denied it is seeking nuclear weapons and insisted its nuclear programme is solely peaceful.

At the convention in Texas, Trump echoed some of these lines, saying the price of oil would tumble "as soon as we win the war with Iran".

In his speech, he also referenced dissatisfaction among some Americans on the issue: "Guys come up to me and say, 'I wish you didn't do the war in Iran. Now gasoline is up'".

Trump also said further negotiations with Iran could possibly happen, "but it's not something we're looking at".

Muted US response to UK's West Bank sanctions may reflect simmering frustration

As the UK unveiled sanctions against Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank on Tuesday, Israel responded with fury, declaring it would shutter Britain's diplomatic mission to the Palestinians, kick out UK military staff from an international coordination base near Gaza and ban nearly a dozen left-wing British members of parliament from entering Israel.

It was a blaring signal of defiance and a remarkable diplomatic escalation.

The UK had taken the action arguing it had a moral imperative to stop the "destruction" of the two-state solution – a future independent Palestinian state – at the hands of the Israeli government. It accused Israel's

government of turning a blind eye to the "ethnic cleansing" of Palestinians by settlers.

The standoff, which by the afternoon extended to a further 11 mostly European countries set to join the settlement trade ban, raised a crucial question: When Israel becomes isolated, the US as its superpower backer often steps in to provide a diplomatic shield. Was the US, too, going to condemn Britain's policy?

Such a reprimand had been previewed by some observers. It felt even more likely when the US ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee, appeared on the BBC before the UK announcement suggesting American "sanctions, repercussions or retaliations" could be coming for Britain, albeit that he didn't know what

these were and hadn't spoken to President Trump.

But as Tuesday wore on, Washington's response was notably muted.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio, asked about the UK move by reporters on the way to Colombia, said: "Obviously, we're not going to do what the UK did. We saw their announcement today but I don't have any comment on it right now."

He added that Britain had notified the administration ahead of time (most likely during a phone call Trump had with UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham on Monday) and said the US shared "the goal of stability" at a tense time in the region and didn't "want to see some uptick in violence... in

the West Bank".

It was hardly a withering rebuke of the British move, let alone any kind of punishment. In fact, Washington seemed to be sharing some of the concerns that motivated the move.

Asked about it on Wednesday, Trump said he would be speaking to Israel to understand their thinking, adding: "I understand exactly what's going on, but I want to find out why all of a sudden has that happened."

My understanding is that discussions about the US response were taking place at a high level within the administration on Tuesday. The baseline position appeared to be against any moves that could negatively impact American companies.

FOREIGN

NEWS



TV NEWS PRESENTER:

UBC TV news presenter Prince Edward Rukidi Kijanangoma has been selected as the new Tooro monarch.

Russian drone incursion delays Zelensky flight

A plane carrying Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was delayed by a Russian drone as he prepared to fly to attend a state funeral in Oslo, Moldovan and Norwegian authorities say.

Zelensky and his wife Ole-na were on the jet at Chisinau, Moldova's capital, ahead of Wednesday's funeral of Norway's King Harald V when the unmanned aircraft crossed over the Moldovan border.

The drone prompted an immediate airspace shutdown and Zelensky's plane was left on the runway for around an hour before it could take off.

The flight was only authorised after it was confirmed the drone had come down 160km (100 miles) away. Asked by reporters on Thursday, the Kremlin said there had been no threat to the jet.

Zelensky's plane had been due to take off at around 16:30 (14:30 GMT) from Chisinau International Airport.

But Moldovan government spokesman Dumitru Ciorici said that Moldova had closed its airspace after noticing a Russian drone had entered it from the direction

of Ukraine.

"Three departures and four arrivals were delayed as a result," he added.

"After 17:20 (15:20 GMT), the authorities confirmed that the drone had come down and exploded... some 160 kilometres from Chisinau International Airport."

Zelensky and his wife arrived safely in Oslo on Tuesday evening, where he held talks with Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre and other officials about military aid.

They joined other dignitaries for King Harald's funeral before flying on to Iceland for a brief visit and then to Canada for further talks.

There had initially been concerns about the threat from the drone incursion when he was in Chisinau.

Støre had told public broadcaster NRK: "His flight was almost hit by a drone when it was taking off from Moldova."

But a Ukraine source told Agence France Presse the risk had been "exaggerated".

Ukraine has closed its airspace to civilian aircraft since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022 and Zelensky does not use air

travel in Ukraine due to the continuing threat from Russian strikes.

He typically rides by train to Poland before taking a flight to countries he is visiting.

The Ukrainian leader is said to have survived dozens of attempted assassination plots.

Russian drones have been targeting Ukraine with increasing intensity in recent weeks and an attack on a Moldovan border crossing at Starokozache killed two people overnight into Tuesday.

The Russian army has new jet-powered unmanned aircraft that are much faster and more difficult to intercept.

Analysis by BBC Verify has shown the capital Kyiv has now suffered more air raid alerts than at any time since 2022 – on average 10 times a day. Russia fired jet-powered drones at Ukraine every day in August, Ukrainian Air Force data shows.

Russia's new jet-powered drones outpacing Ukraine's air defences with daily launches

Ukraine has also had success with its use of drones and on Thursday announced what

it called a "record hit" on Russia gas plants.

Drones flew more than 3,000km (1,864 miles) into Russia on Wednesday to hit a gas processing plant in the Yamalo-Nenets autonomous district of Northern Siberia.

Ukraine's Special Operations Forces said this was its deepest attack into Russia since the war began. Yamalo-Nenets is one of Russia's key oil and gas processing regions.

Overnight Russian forces attacked a petrol station in Kyiv, seriously injuring four people.

Oil company Ukrnafta's CEO Bohdan Kukura said on Facebook: "This is terror and intimidation of the civilian population."

Russia has attacked hundreds of Ukrainian petrol stations in recent months in an attempt to disrupt the country's military forces.

It has been locked in war with Ukraine since it invaded the country in February 2022.

Peace talks, led by US President Donald Trump's special envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, are ongoing but have failed so far to find a solution to end the conflict.

Royal family rift after popular TV news presenter chosen to succeed Ugandan king

A bitter succession dispute has erupted in one of Uganda's traditional kingdoms, days before the burial of its late king, who until his death had been the world's youngest reigning monarch.

King Oyo Nyimba Kabamba Iguru Rukidi IV, who ruled the Tooro Kingdom for more than three decades, was undergoing cancer treatment in the US when he died last month aged 34.

Royal clan elders have named popular TV news presenter Prince Edward Rukidi Kijanangoma, 56, as the next monarch, but this has been rejected by Oyo's close family.

His sister, Princess Ruth Komuntale, said the late king had left a will written in 2022 naming his young son, whose identity has never been disclosed, as his successor.

Queen Best Kemigisa has appealed for the family to be allowed to bury her son in peace

"My brother did leave behind an heir to the throne, and that was very clearly stated," she said, accusing those behind the announcement on Wednesday night of creating

"confusion and turmoil" while the family was still grieving.

Meanwhile the late king's mother, Queen Best Kemigisa, has said royal guards have been withdrawn from the palace and soldiers deployed, restricting the royal family's movement and their ability to receive visitors, describing the situation as "house arrest".

She appealed to the army's leadership and President Yoweri Museveni to allow the family to mourn and bury Oyo in peace on Saturday.

"I appeal to those fighting over the throne: please, there will be time for all of that," she said. "Let us grieve and bury my son King Oyo."

Thousands of mourners are expected to attend the burial at the royal tombs near the palace in Fort Portal in western Uganda.

His body was returned to Uganda from the US on Friday, and preparations for the funeral are under way.

Tooro is one of Uganda's traditional kingdoms. Its monarch has no formal political authority but remains an important cultural figure in western Uganda.

Algeria-UAE relations collapse after months of growing strain

Algeria said Thursday it was cutting diplomatic ties with the United Arab Emirates following years of tension, with Algiers accusing Abu Dhabi of interfering in national and regional affairs.

"Algeria has decided to cut diplomatic relations with the United Arab Emirates, following the exhaustion of all means to preserve bilateral relations," Algeria's state television announced.

Algiers said it was giving the UAE ambassador to Algeria 48 hours "to comply with the decision".

President Abdelmajid Tebboune has often referred to the UAE in speeches as a "micro-state" or "statelet" seeking to destabilise several countries in the region.

"Wherever they set foot, blood flows," he said in a televised interview in July, adding that the UAE has had a "very negative impact".

"We want them to stay away, so that blood does not flow in our country," he added.

At the time, Tebboune said a diplomatic break "would have happened long ago" had Algeria not sought to avoid "deepening divisions" in the Arab world.

Twenty-five dead after fire on cargo ship in eastern China

Twenty-five people have been killed in a fire on a foreign-flagged cargo ship docked at a port in eastern China, according to Chinese state broadcaster CCTV.

Of the 42 people on board, 17 were were evacuated of which five are in hospital in stable condition, CCTV reports.

The vessel was undergoing maintenance at a shipyard in the city of Qingdao when the blaze erupted at around 11:15 local time (03:15 GMT). It was put out just over three hours later, according to CCTV.

Photos released by state media showed the vessel to be the Ocean Melody, a 190m (623ft) long Liberia-flagged

carrier which arrived in Qingdao on 31 August, according to tracking site MarineTraffic.

China's Premier Li Qiang urged the rescue of people trapped on board the ship.

Qingdao is a major trading hub and ranks among the world's busiest ports.

It is unclear what caused the fire. An eyewitness told the AFP news agency there was thick smoke rising from the ship, but he heard no explosion.

The country's leader Xi Jinping earlier called for "all-out" search and rescue efforts while Premier Li Qiang stressed the need to "prevent secondary disasters".

Presidential pardon for controversial Sri Lankan monk overturned

Sri Lanka's Supreme Court has overturned a presidential pardon granted to a hardline Buddhist monk and ordered him to serve the remainder of a six-year prison sentence for intimidating the wife of a missing political cartoonist.

Galagodaatte Gnanasara was sentenced in 2018 for contempt of court and intimidating Sanya Eknaligoda, the wife of Prageeth Eknaligoda who disappeared in 2010.

The monk had interrupted a court hearing to speak in support of military intelligence officials who were accused of abducting the cartoonist.

Gnanasara served less than a year of that sentence because he received a pardon from Maithripala Sirisena, who was the country's president at the time.

In his cartoons, Prageeth Eknaligoda depicted issues of media freedom, political

power and social disadvantage.

His work was critical of the former president Mahinda Rajapaksa, a nationalist credited with the defeat of the Tamil separatist rebels in 2009 after a bloody civil war.

Eknaligoda went missing in 2010 and has not been seen since. His wife has led a campaign to trace his whereabouts, and accuses the authorities of not doing enough to investigate his disappearance.

ance.

Gnanasara, who leads the Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) or "Buddhist Power Force", was a supporter of Rajapaksa and his brother Gotabaya, who also later served as president.

In 2025, he received a separate nine-month prison term for insulting Islam and inciting religious hatred.

Sri Lanka rarely convicts Buddhist monks, and it is almost unheard of for one to receive a custodial sentence.

Opinion

Gov. Okpebholo's Bold Pension Move: Putting Edo Workers First



EUBALDUS ENAHORO

Edo workers in the civil and public service in particular and others in the state can now see what the Governor Monday Okpebholo administration is doing to make Edo rise again with good and outstanding works across the state

It is becoming obvious to every doubting Thomases or arm chair critics of the Governor that every decision taken so far through the SHINE Agenda are products of the Governor's principles of diligence, fairness, compassion and responsibility to give back, to lift others and to be a blessing to as many people as possible.

The Governor has made it known that he made up his mind to lead with the same principle that guided his personal life, practicality, from the first day.

Okpebholo believes that leadership must be

felt, not just heard. It must produce results that touch people's lives directly. Every decision made and every policy are rooted in that same belief: that governance must serve people and not power.

In the words of the Governor, this responsibility is not one he takes lightly and he has carried it with the fear of God, guided by time tested principles, and driven by a deep passion for the ordinary Edo man and woman

Now, the directive of Gov Okpebholo that all Edo State civil and public servants employed before January 2017 be excluded from the Contributory Pension Scheme CPS and returned to the Defined Benefits Scheme DBS has revealed the act of kindness of a man who identifies with the plight of the people

With this directive it means that the government goes back to paying pensions directly instead of workers and the govt contributing monthly.

This policy initiated by the past administration of Governor Godwin Obaseki has affected thousands of workers who were "caught in the middle" for 8+ years.

There have been lamentations amongst retired workers and thousands of Edo civil servants employed before January 2017 lived in pension limbo.

They were enrolled in the Contributory Pension Scheme CPS, but with irregular remittances, unrealistic rewards for working for 35 years, confusion, and fear about retirement.

But last week Governor Monday Okpebholo ended that uncertainty by directing that all workers employed before January 2017 be excluded from CPS and returned to the Defined Benefits Scheme DBS.

What great news and relief for workers in the state. It is one of the most people-centered decisions of the "New Edo" administration.

When Edo adopted CPS in 2017, it was meant to guarantee pensions. But in reality, pre-2017 workers were the worst hit.

Many had 10, 15, even 20 years of service under DBS before being moved to CPS. Their contributions were inconsistent. Some retired and waited years for benefits. Morale collapsed.

In the past, Workers have been asking one question: "Will my years of service be wasted?" The kind-hearted Okpebholo administration has answered those workers questions and their anxiety has been put to rest with a capital "No."

The Okpebholo directive has no doubt restored dignity to Edo state civil and public service. A teacher who started work in 2005 should not retire and be told her pension calculation starts from 2017. DBS recognizes total years of service.

With DBS, the government takes direct responsibility. Workers can now plan retirement without fear of "missing contributions" or PFA issues.

A civil service that trusts its pension system works better. Doctors, teachers, and clerks will serve with peace of mind knowing their future is secure.

There is no doubt that the responsibility of the government exiting CPS and returning to DBS is not cheap. It means the Edo Government must budget seriously for pensions and gratuities.

But leadership is about priorities. Gov Okpebholo has shown that the welfare of workers comes first. The same administration that approved N500m monthly for AAU and paid salary arrears understands that a motivated workforce delivers results.

To make this work, 3 things must be followed and they include prompt payment of pensions and gratuities that must be paid as at when due. No more "pension queues." A transparent audit of all pre-2017 workers to avoid ghost names.

There must be Communication across the Ministries and LGAs and they must educate workers so there is no confusion. This directive is more than policy. It is a message: "If you serve Edo, Edo will take care of you under a responsive government"

For 35 years Edo has produced men and women who gave their best to the state. Many are retiring now. They deserve to retire with dignity, not debt.

By returning pre-2017 workers to DBS, Senator Monday Okpebholo has chosen the path of compassion over bureaucracy.

That is governance with a human face. That is ...A New Edo Has Risen

Eubaldus Enahoro was former Editor of the Nigerian Observer Newspaper.

Conservation in a Museum environment

HAFSAH EROMINA

ABSTRACT

Conservation in a museum refers to the profession and practise of safeguarding preserving and managing, cultural historical, and artistic collection and for future generations.

it involves preventive care (managing environmental conditions) and intervention treatment (direct repair) to minimise deterioration, using science and documentation to ensure longevity.

INTRODUCTION

Conservation is the careful maintenance and upkeep of a natural resources to prevent it from disappearing. A natural resources is the physical supply of something that exist in nature, such as soil, water, air, plant, animals and energy. The natural resources conservation service recognised that we don't want these things to diminish or disappear altogether, and that we must make an effort to protect and maintain natural resources.

KEY ASPECTS OF MUSEUM CONSERVATION INCLUDE

- preventive conservation (collection care): controlling the environment temperature, relative humidity, light and pests to prevent damage before it occurs.

- Intervention conservation (Remedial): direct, skilled intervention to stabilize clean, or repair fragile objects to prevent further decay.

- Documentation and research: Recording all treatment and analysing materials to understand the objects history and composition.

- Ethical practice: intervening with the least possible alteration, respecting the original and ensuring all actions are reversible or do not compromise the item's integrity.

conservation differs from restoration, as its goal is to preserve the object's current state and historical significance, not just to make it look



new.

CONSERVE, PRESERVE, RESTORE: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

Conservation, preservation and restoration are words commonly used in relation to collections.

Although they might seem interchangeable Terms there are important differences in their meanings.

CONSERVATION

Keeping objects and collections for future generations is what historical collections and museums do. The action of prolonging the existence of significant objects is generally called conservation

Conservation covers all actions aimed at safeguarding, historical objects and collections. it includes

- Retaining an objects significant, historical, social, aesthetic (beauty) and technological qualities.

- Ensuring that all actions are carried out with the least possible intervention.

- Researching, recording/cataloging and retaining all knowledge and information

related to the object context, history, manufacture, use, acquisition donors, etc.

- Documenting the object in detail, which may include photographing it.

- Identifying the needs of an object, such as storage, so that it is carried out appropriately.

- Setting strategies, perhaps in a conservation plan, and allocating resources.

- Recording and retaining all information related to the museum's treatment of an object.

PRESERVATION

All actions taken to maintain an object in its existing condition, minimise the rate of change, and slow down further deterioration and/or prevent damage are part of preservation preserving and object involves.

- Preserving the integrity and authenticity of the object.

- Creating a safe display and storage environment, which includes controlling temperature, relative humidity light level, pests, dust and other pollutions.

- Controlling the conditions of its use, including display, visitor interaction and loans.

- Making considered decisions about the treatment of an object and documenting these

decisions.

- Physically treating an object only in order to as nearly as possible, maintain the object in an unchanging state and to stabilize its condition, such as carrying out repairs or treating damaged materials or any other actions taken to prevent or delay.

deterioration or damage. This is usually carried out by trained conservators who understand the object's structure and chemistry, most treatments are reversible.

If an object is deemed to have historical, cultural, technological and/or aesthetic significance, then preservation is the preferred option to restoration

RESTORATION

Restoration involves actions taken to modify the existing material and structure of an object in order to return it to a known earlier condition, eg as new /or original.

RESTORATION USUALLY MEANS

- Removing or covering up signs of wear and use, through actions such as painting.

- Replacing and or reconstructing missing or worn parts, with spare parts and /or new materials or parts.

- Restoration is usually irreversible and can destroy or diminish the history, and therefore significance of the item.

- Responsible restoration applies minimal intervention.

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Matters-In-Focus

2027 Presidency: Obi, Atiku, Makinde reject call to step aside



Atiku Abubakar

Seyi Makinde

Peter Obi

HASSAN DAISY

As political activities ahead of the 2027 general elections continue to gather momentum, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, Labour Party presidential candidate in the 2023 election, Peter Obi, and Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde, have reportedly resisted calls for some opposition figures to step down from the emerging presidential race.

The development has further intensified discussions within opposition political circles, where stakeholders have continued to advocate for a stronger political alliance capable of challenging the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2027 elections.

Calls for some of the leading opposition politicians to withdraw their presidential ambitions have been based largely on the argument that the opposition should rally behind a single candidate in order to present a formidable challenge at the polls.

However, the three politicians have maintained their respective political positions, with their supporters insisting that the decision on who should contest should be determined through a transparent and democratic process rather than pressure from political groups or individuals.

Atiku, a former vice president and a major opposition figure,

has remained active in consultations with political stakeholders as discussions over a possible coalition continue.

Obi, who secured significant support among young Nigerians and urban voters during the 2023 presidential election, has also continued to command a strong political following. His supporters have repeatedly argued that his political base should not be disregarded in any arrangement ahead of 2027.

Similarly, Governor

Makinde remains an influential figure within the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), particularly in the South-West, where his political standing has continued to attract attention as parties prepare for the next general election.

The disagreement over who should step aside reflects the wider challenge confronting opposition parties as they seek to forge a common front ahead of 2027.

Political observers believe that while a united opposition

could improve its electoral chances, achieving such unity may prove difficult because of competing ambitions, regional interests and disagreements over the process for selecting a presidential candidate.

With the 2027 elections still ahead, consultations among political leaders, parties and various interest groups are expected to continue. The coming months are therefore likely to witness more negotiations, alliances and counter-alliances as the political

Rising prices tighten grip on FCT residents, household budgets under strain

Residents of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) are facing fresh economic pressure as rising petrol prices continue to push up transportation costs and the prices of essential goods and services, forcing many households to review their daily spending.

The development has heightened concerns among workers, traders, students, artisans and other low- and middle-income earners in Abuja, who say the increasing cost of transportation is gradually consuming a larger portion of their disposable income.

For many residents, the impact of the fuel price surge extends beyond the filling station. As the cost of petrol rises, commercial transport operators are compelled to adjust fares

to cover increased operational expenses. The higher transport costs, in turn, affect the movement of goods and people across the nation's capital.

Commuters travelling from satellite towns and neighbouring communities into the city centre are particularly affected, with some residents reporting that they now spend significantly more on transportation than they did previously.

A resident who spoke on the development said the situation had made it increasingly difficult for families to manage their monthly income.

According to the resident, "What we earn has not increased, but almost everything we spend money on is becoming more expensive. Transportation alone

takes a large part of my income before I even think about food and other household needs."

Traders have also expressed concern over the situation, explaining that higher transportation costs are affecting the prices of foodstuffs and other commodities brought into Abuja from different parts of the country.

The ripple effect is being felt across markets as traders factor transportation and logistics expenses into the final prices of their goods.

Some workers have equally resorted to cost-cutting measures, including reducing the number of trips they make, combining errands and relying more on public transportation in an effort to cope with the rising cost of living.

CBN intensifies terror financing surveillance, makes compliance top priority

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has strengthened its supervision of financial institutions as part of renewed efforts to prevent the use of Nigeria's financial system for terrorism financing and other illicit financial activities.

The apex bank said terrorism financing supervision has now been elevated as a major regulatory priority, directing banks and other financial institutions to reinforce their internal controls and ensure strict compliance with existing anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing regulations.

The move is coming amid growing concerns over the sophistication of financial crimes and the methods being employed by criminal networks to move, conceal and access funds through legitimate financial channels.

Under the renewed supervisory approach, financial institutions are expected to maintain effective systems for identifying suspicious transactions, monitoring customer activities and reporting unusual financial movements to the appropriate authorities.

The CBN is also expected to intensify its oversight of banks and other regulated institutions to ensure that existing safeguards are not merely documented but are effectively implemented.

The development underscores the importance of cooperation between the banking sector, government agencies and other stakeholders in disrupting the financial networks that support terrorism and organised crime.

Financial institutions have

consequently been urged to strengthen customer due diligence, improve transaction-monitoring systems and ensure that suspicious activities are promptly escalated through the appropriate regulatory channels.

The apex bank's position further reflects Nigeria's broader commitment to strengthening its financial integrity framework and meeting international standards on combating money laundering and terrorism financing.

Experts have consistently stressed that cutting off access to funds is critical to weakening terrorist organisations, noting that effective financial intelligence can help authorities identify networks, trace suspicious transactions and prevent illicit funds from reaching criminal groups.

The CBN's renewed focus is therefore expected to place greater responsibility on financial institutions to remain vigilant and proactive in detecting financial activities that could threaten national security.

The apex bank maintained that compliance with anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing requirements remains essential to maintaining confidence in Nigeria's financial system and protecting the economy from abuse by criminal elements.

The latest regulatory emphasis is also expected to reinforce Nigeria's efforts to improve its standing within the global financial system while ensuring that the country's banking sector remains resilient against emerging financial and security threats.



Olayemi Cardoso, CBN Governor

Court bars NMDPRA from shutting Dangote refinery in free zone

AYENOMO ALUKHEI

The Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority is weighing its next move to prevent it from losing regulatory authority over midstream and downstream companies located in free trade zones.

Last week, a Federal High Court in Lagos issued an interim injunction restraining the NMDPRA from shutting

down or interfering with the operations of the Dangote Petroleum Refinery in the Lekki Free Zone, Lagos.

Justice Akintayo Aluko made the order while ruling on a motion ex parte marked FHC/L/CS/1174/26, filed and argued by counsel to Dangote Petroleum Refinery Nigeria Limited, led by Olawale Akoni and Abimbola Akeredolu.

The refinery had approached the court following a letter dat-

ed August 24, 2026, in which the NMDPRA allegedly directed the suspension of the loading and truck-out of petroleum products from the refinery.

In his ruling, Justice Aluko said he had carefully considered the application, the affidavit evidence, exhibits and submissions of counsel, including the NMDPRA's letter. The judge noted that the refinery's case was that the NMDPRA lacked regulatory or oversight

powers over operations within free zones, including the Dangote Industrial Free Zone.

Justice Aluko also referred to a letter dated March 2, 2026, issued by the Attorney-General of the Federation, which, according to the judge, stated that the NMDPRA was not entitled to exercise regulatory powers or oversight functions over operations within free zones.

The judge further held that

the refinery had satisfied the conditions required for the grant of an interim injunction. "Accordingly, I find merit in the application, and the same is hereby granted in terms of the reliefs sought," Aluko ruled.

When contacted, the spokesman of the NMDPRA, George Ene-Ita, declined further comments on the matter, saying, "I can't comment on a case before the court."

While not denying the

NMDPRA's letter to shut the Dangote refinery, Ene-Ita refused to give details on why the regulator ordered the refinery to stop loading.

However, other senior officials within the NMDPRA disclosed that the regulator is weighing the next move as far as the case and the ruling are concerned. It was gathered that the agency's legal team and its management "will decide the next line of action".

GOVERNANCE

Okpebholo's Okpagha-AMUFI Road Reconstruction Revives Economic Activities in Benin



Residents and business owners along the Okpagha - Amufi axis in Benin City have expressed renewed optimism following the reconstruction of the long-neglected road by Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo.

The 8.6km road network, which directly affects 7 communities and connects about 10 adjoining streets, stretches from the Agbor Park axis to the Benin-Auchi Road Bypass, creating a more direct route for residents and motorists.

The reconstruction has significantly improved connectivity within the area and reduced travel time for road users. Residents of Agbor Park and adjoining communities can now access the Auchi Road corridor directly, without the need to pass through Ramak Park, providing a major boost to mobility and easing the difficulties previously associated with the deplorable road network.

For residents who endured years of deteriorating infrastructure, the intervention represents more than a road project. They said it has restored confidence, improved living conditions and revived social and economic activities in a community they described as having suffered prolonged neglect.

The impact is also being reflected in the local economy, with residents reporting the opening of new businesses and the reopening of shops that had previously closed. One resident recounted that a plot of land purchased in the area for about N150,000 two years ago is now reportedly valued at approximately N4.5 million, a development she attributed to the renewed economic prospects created by improved infrastructure.

Expressing appreciation for the governor's intervention, some residents also linked the administration's infra-

structure projects to federal support and said the development had strengthened their support for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu ahead of the 2027 presidential election. They maintained that the improved road network was tangible evidence of the benefits they associate with the collaboration between the state and federal governments.

One resident, who described Governor Okpebholo as a transformative leader, said the community had experienced a dramatic turnaround after years of declining economic and social activities. According to the resident, many property owners had previously abandoned the area or sold their properties because of the difficult living conditions, but the reconstruction has now reconnected the community and restored its attractiveness.

Another resident, Mrs. Azubuike, recalled that the road was previously almost impassable, with severe erosion, potholes and muddy conditions making access to homes extremely difficult. She expressed gratitude for the intervention, saying the improved road had eliminated many of the daily hardships residents previously faced. She further stated that the visible transformation had become a powerful demonstration of the administration's intervention in the community.

Pa Gabriel Erabor, a landlord who has lived in the area for more than 20 years, also commended the governor for addressing the longstanding problem. He described the reconstruction as a fulfilment of the administration's promises and expressed support for the governor's development agenda, while also acknowledging the role of federal support in enabling the state government to execute its projects.

The Okpagha - Amufi Road project which cut across Okpagha, Amufi, Iyanomo, Iguomon, Eyaen, Ighekpe and Ohovbe communities in Ikpoba Okha Lg Area, once regarded by residents as one of the major infrastructure challenges in the Agbor Road area, is now emerging as a catalyst for renewed economic and social activity. With improved access, returning property owners and growing commercial activity, residents say the project has brought a sense of normalcy and renewed hope to a community that had endured years of infrastructural neglect.



They maintained that the improved road network was tangible evidence of the benefits they associate with the collaboration between the state and Federal Governments.



Police arrest 23-year-old over murder of two children

Shock has gripped Ayogwiri Community in Etsako West Local Government Area of Edo State after two children, aged six and seven, were found dead, with the police arresting a 23-year-old man, Omokhodu Innocent, over the alleged murder.

The victims, identified as Praise Aloye, 7, and Oshone Ekhaesomhi, 6, were found lifeless in the community following a report received by the police.

ASP Eno Ikoedem, spokesperson for police in Edo disclosed this in a statement in Benin state.

Operatives of the Jattu Division swiftly mobilised to the scene and commenced investigation into the circumstances surrounding the children's deaths. In the course of the investigation, the police arrested Innocent in connection with the incident.

The remains of the two children have been deposited at a mortuary for preservation and further examination.

The case has been transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department for further investigation to unravel the circumstances surrounding the deaths.

Four in police net over death of community chief

The discovery of the lifeless body of a community chief has thrown Ajife Community in Edo State into shock, with four suspects now in police custody over his death.

The victim, identified as Chief Saturday of Ajife Community, Ovia South-West Local Government Area, was found dead on September 2, 2026.

Following the discovery, operatives of the Marine Police mobilised to the community and commenced investigation into the circumstances surrounding his death.

rounding his death.

The investigation led to the arrest of four suspects identified as Daniel Babatunde, Abraham Mumini, David Michael and Godwin Moses, all from Ajife Community.

The suspects have since been transferred to the Homicide Unit for further investigation.

The Edo State Police Command's spokesperson, ASP Eno Ikoedem confirmed this to journalists in Benin.

The police said investigation was ongoing to unravel the circumstances surrounding the chief's death.



Some of the suspect in Police net

Police nab nine-man robbery gang in Edo

The long arm of the law has caught up with nine suspected members of a notorious armed robbery gang terrorising residents of Benin City, Edo State.

The suspects, who reportedly operated as part of a 15-man gang, were arrested at different locations across the

Benin metropolis by operatives of the Ugbor Police Division in collaboration with the Edo State Security Corps (ESSC).

The operation, carried out following painstaking intelligence, was led by the Divisional Police Officer of the Ugbor Division.

The Command Public Relations Officer ASP Eno Ikoedem stated this on August 30, 2026.

Police said the arrest followed sustained efforts to track the gang and disrupt its activities in the City.

The remaining six members of the gang are still at large,

while the police and their security partners have intensified efforts to apprehend them.

The suspects are expected to face further investigation as detectives work to establish their involvement in robbery incidents across the metropolis.

Renewed inter-agency security collaboration yields results in Edo

The past week offered a revealing picture of Edo State's security battle, as criminals continued to test the boundaries, security agencies moved to tighten the gaps through stronger collaboration, intelligence sharing and joint operations.

At the centre of that renewed push was the Nigeria Police Force and the Nigerian Army, whose commanders in Edo reaffirmed their commitment to closer operational cooperation during CP Patrick Daaor's visit to the 4 Brigade headquarters in Benin City on September 8, 2026.

The engagement focused on intelligence sharing, joint operational strategies and co-ordinated responses to emerging threats. For a state where kidnappers exploit forests and criminal gangs move across jurisdictional boundaries, such synergy is more than ceremonial, it is operationally critical.

The week's results offered evidence of what coordinated action can achieve.

In Ibeakuma Forest, 66-year-old Obareki Emmanuel was rescued on September 6 after his wife had earlier been freed. Police, Army personnel, the Edo State Security Corps, 82 Mobile Police Force personnel and vigilantes converged on the

kidnappers' location, recovering the ransom money as the abductors fled into the forest after reportedly sustaining gunshot wounds.

Days earlier, a similar response in Onomi-Iddo, Okpella, forced kidnappers to abandon 40-year-old Patience Omonete and her three children, aged 14, 12 and 10. The victims were rescued unhurt following a coordinated forest operation by police, Edo State Security Corps (ESSC) and local hunters.

Another hostage rescue at Iruekpen saw 49-year-old Rita Emma recovered from the forest, while a suspected kidnapper, Alhassan Adamu, 32, was arrested and transferred to the Anti-Kidnapping Unit.

The arrests extended beyond kidnapping. The Police Command reported 22 arrests during the review period in connection with armed robbery, murder, attempted murder, defilement and other crimes.

Nine suspected members of a 15-man armed robbery gang allegedly terrorising the Benin metropolis were arrested in separate locations. Four suspects were also arrested over the murder of Chief Saturday of Ajife Community in Ovia South-West Local Government Area.



The Commissioner of Police, Edo State command, Patrick Daaor speaking on the success recorded by the Command



The suspects and items recovered by the Police

At Aduwawa, four suspects were arrested after a dispute arising from a minor motor accident allegedly escalated into an assault that left another driver dead. At Ewohimi, police arrested a woman following the

death of her husband, who reportedly fell into a well during an altercation.

The Command also recorded arrests in cases involving alleged sexual offences, including the defilement of an eight-year-

old girl. Separately, a Benin High Court remanded 52-year-old community head Lucky Osafamwen over the alleged defilement of a 15-year-old girl.

Taken together, the incidents suggest that Edo's security challenge remains broad-based. Kidnapping continues to exploit forests and rural spaces, while robbery, murder and sexual offences persist within urban and community environments.

Yet the week also exposed an important vulnerability, the confrontation between IRT operatives and EDSTMA personnel in Benin City, which reportedly escalated into gunshots. CP Daaor has ordered an investigation and promised sanctions for person-

nel found culpable.

That incident is a reminder that security effectiveness depends not only on firepower and arrests but also on discipline, coordination and public confidence. Security agencies cannot afford operational friction that places civilians at risk or undermines cooperation.

The lesson from the week is therefore clear. Security agencies in Edo need to deepen intelligence network, sustain joint forest operations and improve rapid-response capacity, particularly around farms, isolated communities and known criminal corridors.

Community leaders must equally strengthen early-warning systems and promptly share credible intelligence, while security agencies should ensure that rescued victims receive proper medical and psychological support and that arrested suspects are subjected to diligent investigation and prosecution.

For Edo, the week's security picture is neither one of victory nor defeat. It is evidence that coordinated security action can disrupt criminal networks, but also a warning that sustained intelligence, inter-agency discipline and community cooperation will determine whether those gains endure.

COLUMN

In defence of Rufai Oseni: ARISE TV anchoring and the paradigm shift in journalism

As a journalist and teacher of journalism, I have been reading with keen interest the scholarly writings of communication scholars, as well as the comments and reactions of netizens, concerning the broadcasting style of Rufai Oseni, an anchor with ARISE News, and I beg to add my voice to the conversation.

The debate has generated considerable interest, particularly among those who believe that his manner of conducting interviews is too aggressive, unconventional or idiosyncratic. Others have gone further to point to his academic background, noting that he studied Animal Science rather than Mass Communication or Journalism.

I find that argument rather unconvincing.

Unambiguously, Rufai Oseni is doing fine as a broadcaster. In my view, his academic background should neither be used to diminish his professional competence nor to suggest that he lacks the intellectual credentials to occupy the position he currently holds. If anything, his journey into broadcasting illustrates an important reality about journalism: professional competence is not always determined by the title of one's undergraduate degree.

Indeed, his background as an Animal Scientist may have given him an unusual perspective that has become useful in dealing with some of the more 'animalistic' tendencies that occasionally manifest in public discourse. I say this somewhat tongue-in-cheek, but there is a serious point underneath it. A person's university discipline does not necessarily determine the limits of his intellectual capacity, professional development or contribution to society.

One does not have to study Mass Communication or Journalism to become a good broadcaster, just as one does not necessarily have to study Political Science to become a competent political commentator. What matters is whether the individual acquires the requisite knowledge, develops the necessary professional skills, understands the ethics of the profession and remains committed to continuous learning.

Journalism, after all, is not merely a certificate. It is a practice. It requires curiosity, courage, critical thinking, research, communication skills, analytical ability and, above all, a commitment to the public interest.

A journalist must be able to listen, ask questions, identify contradictions, challenge claims and pursue information that powerful people may prefer to keep away from the public.

This is where Rufai's style becomes particularly relevant.

From my perspective, he represents a modern-day democratic journalist—one who is assertive, fearless and willing to engage strong-headed personalities without being overawed by their positions or political status. His approach may sometimes appear radical, confrontational or unconventional, but unconventionality should not automatically be confused with incompetence.

There is a difference between being rude and being assertive; there is also a difference between being confrontational and being persistent. The



distinction is important. Journalism is not supposed to be a beauty contest in which the interviewer is judged solely by how comfortable the guest feels. The journalist's ultimate responsibility is to the public.

Sometimes, asking a difficult question requires persistence. Sometimes, obtaining a meaningful answer requires asking the same question in a different way. An evasive answer may require a follow-up question that the guest would rather not hear. And sometimes, the journalist must interrupt a rehearsed response because the public deserves clarity rather than political rhetoric.

Iron sharpens iron. Journalism, particularly in a democracy, is not weakened by robust interrogation; rather, when properly conducted, it is strengthened by it. The contemporary journalist operates in an environment vastly different from that of previous generations. The media landscape has been transformed by digital technology, social media, citizen journalism, instant communication and the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation.

Politicians, public officials, corporate actors and other influential personalities have also become increasingly sophisticated in managing public narratives. They are often surrounded by advisers, media handlers and carefully prepared talking points. They know how to avoid questions, change subjects, appeal to emotions and deliver politically convenient answers.

The interviewer who merely asks a question and accepts the first answer without interrogation may therefore leave the public with more questions than answers. The modern journalist must be prepared to probe claims, challenge inconsistencies, demand accountability and seek clarification. This is particularly important in a democracy, where citizens depend on the media to scrutinise those who exercise public power.

This, in my opinion, is one of the strengths of Rufai's approach.

A radical or assertive anchor can sometimes elicit information that a passive interviewer may fail to obtain. The journalist is not necessarily expected to be a silent participant in an interview. He or she is, in effect, the public's proxy. The questions being asked in the studio are often questions that ordinary citizens would like to ask if they had the opportunity to sit across the table from a minister, governor, legislator, presidential candidate or other public official.

Therefore, when an interviewer presses a politician for a direct answer, I do not automatically regard that as bad journalism. If the questioning is grounded in facts and conducted within the bounds of professional ethics, it can be a legitimate and valuable form of public-interest journalism.

Of course, this is not to say that everything Rufai does should be

celebrated. No journalist is beyond criticism. Assertiveness must not become arrogance; persistence must not degenerate into harassment; and confrontation must not replace fairness. A good journalist must still respect accuracy, balance, civility and the right of a guest to be heard.

This distinction is crucial. The fact that a journalist adopts an assertive interviewing style does not exempt him from the ethical obligations of the profession. Courage must be accompanied by accuracy; interrogation by fairness; and independence by professional discipline. The journalist's adversarial posture must serve the public interest rather than become an avenue for personal hostility.

We must also be careful about creating an artificial distinction between journalists who studied Mass Communication and those who entered the profession through other academic routes. Journalism has always benefited from people with diverse educational backgrounds. Economists, lawyers, political scientists, historians, scientists, sociologists and people from numerous other disciplines have contributed meaningfully to journalism and broadcasting.

Indeed, diversity of academic backgrounds can enrich the profession. A journalist with a scientific background may approach evidence differently from one trained exclusively in the humanities. A lawyer may bring a sharper understanding of legal issues to an interview, while an economist may interrogate economic policies from a specialised perspective. What matters is how effectively the journalist translates that knowledge into responsible public communication.

Rufai's case should therefore be viewed within this broader context.

The question should not simply

”
If his approach sometimes unsettles politicians or makes interviewees uncomfortable, that should not automatically be interpreted as a failure.

be, “What did he study?” The more important questions are: Does he understand the demands of contemporary broadcasting? Can he ask relevant questions? Can he follow an argument? Can he challenge evasive responses? Can he hold powerful people to account? And does his work provide useful information to the viewing public?

In my assessment, the answer is yes.

A journalist should not become an appendage of the politician. The anchor should not be reduced to a microphone holder. The interviewer should not be intimidated by the office, wealth, popularity or political sophistication of the person sitting across the table.

The journalist must ask.

The journalist must probe.

The journalist must challenge.

And, most importantly, the journalist must serve the public interest.

I therefore find it curious when people use Rufai's academic background as a weapon against him. Studying Animal Science does not automatically disqualify anyone from becoming a broadcaster. Nor does studying Mass Communication automatically make someone an excellent journalist. Degrees provide foundations; professional competence is developed through knowledge, practice, experience, discipline and continuous learning.

It is also important to distinguish between personal preference and professional failure. One may dislike Rufai's tone, gestures, interruptions or interviewing style. That is perfectly legitimate. Broadcasting involves personality, and audiences will naturally respond differently to different styles. Such responses may be shaped by audiences' demographic and psychographic characteristics. But disliking a journalist's style is not sufficient evidence that the journalist is incompetent.

Indeed, the very fact that Rufai's interviewing style generates strong reactions suggests that he has become a significant presence in the contemporary Nigerian media landscape. He is not merely occupying studio space. He is asking questions, provoking conversations and, in his own way, participating actively in the democratic process.

His active engagement with public discourse can, in part, be understood through the lens of Democratic-Participant Media Theory, which places emphasis on broader participation, responsiveness and opportunities for citizens to engage with media institutions and public discourse.

In a democracy, the media must accommodate different approaches. We should therefore resist the temptation to dismiss Rufai simply because his style is different from what some people are accustomed to. Journalism is evolving, and the profession must evolve with it. The challenges confronting today's journalists are too complex to be met with yesterday's methods alone.

The Nigerian media needs journalists who can think independently, interrogate power, recognise propaganda, challenge misinformation and ask uncomfortable questions. It also

needs journalists who understand that being assertive does not absolve them of ethical responsibility.

Rufai, in my estimation, represents an important dimension of this emerging journalism.

His academic background in Animal Science is neither a liability nor a reason to question his place in broadcasting. Rather, it is part of the unconventional journey that brought him into the profession. If his approach sometimes unsettles politicians or makes interviewees uncomfortable, that should not automatically be interpreted as a failure. Sometimes, discomfort is the price of accountability.

The journalist's job is not necessarily to make powerful people comfortable. It is to keep the public informed.

As we enter an era in which political communication is becoming increasingly sophisticated, journalists must sharpen their skills. They must be knowledgeable, courageous and professionally disciplined. They must understand the difference between advocacy and journalism, between interrogation and intimidation, and between healthy scepticism and personal hostility.

Rufai should therefore be judged by those standards.

I may not agree with every question he asks, every interruption he makes or every mannerism he exhibits in the studio. But I will not join those who suggest that his academic background makes him unqualified to be a broadcaster. That argument does not stand up to serious scrutiny.

The journalism profession transcends academic certificates. It is a calling that demands courage, competence and commitment to the truth.

And in an age when politicians and other powerful actors are increasingly adept at controlling narratives, perhaps what journalism needs is not fewer strong voices, but more professionally disciplined journalists who are willing to ask the questions that others are afraid to ask.

That, for me, is the essence of Rufai Oseni's contribution.

He may be unconventional. He may be radical. He may be uncomfortable to some guests. But he is a product of a changing media environment, and his presence reminds us that journalism itself is changing.

The times are changing. The media are changing. Audiences are changing. Journalism must change too.

This is what I describe as my 'newscape' philosophy—the evolving understanding of journalism within an increasingly digital, interactive and audience-driven media environment.

And perhaps, in this new era, the question should no longer be whether a journalist studied Mass Communication. The more important question is whether the journalist possesses the competence, courage and professional discipline to do the job.

Rufai, in my view, does.

Odaro holds a PhD in Mass Communication. He is a columnist and lecturer in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State, Nigeria.

HURRAY!

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92!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A LEGEND

The Management and Staff of Bendel Newspapers Company Limited (BNCL), publishers of The NIGERIAN OBSERVER, heartily felicitate with the Esama of Benin Kingdom, Chief Sir Dr. Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion, on the glorious occasion of his 92nd birthday.

A royal presence.

A heart of gold.

A legacy that towers beyond generations.

May your crown of honour shine ever brighter, and may your years ahead be filled with grace, good health and enduring joy.

***Happy 92nd Birthday,
Your Excellency!***

Signed: Hon **PETER ODIBOH**
General Manager, BNCL.

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Sports

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Bassey's contract situation at Fulham catches Inter Milan's attention ahead of Winter market

Fulham of England defender Calvin Bassey's contract situation at Craven Cottage has caught the attention of Italy's Inter Milan, whose top shots are reportedly thinking of making a move for the rock-solid centre-back in the winter transfer window.

It was gathered that the Nerazzurri are encouraged by the fact that Bassey's ongoing deal with Fulham is set to expire at the end of this season and the Cottagers might like to sell him in January to avoid losing him for free.

However, with Bassey having been recently granted the London-based English Premier League's club's captain's band, The Cottagers' top echelon are not ready to let him go so easily, hence their move to open

talks with the Super Eagles' star.

Consequently, the crew at Fulham has already set in motion a formal process to commence discussions over a likely contract extension with Bassey before the end of this year.

This means Inter Milan might not hook him or they would have to cough out a lot of money if they are to get Bassey in January, as Fulham want to tie him down to a new long-term deal that will extend into the summer of 2028.

A report by Tribal Football added, "Bassey joined the Premier League side from Ajax in July 2023, as part of a four-year agreement, and he's since developed into a key player under Marco Silva and now with Alvaro Arbeloa.



CALVIN BASSEY

NFF Leadership Crisis: How FIFA's Iraq Precedent could shape Nigeria's next move

The leadership crisis engulfing the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) has brought FIFA's statutory provisions on exceptional circumstances and Normalisation Committees into sharp focus, particularly following the resignation of the federation's entire Executive Committee and General Secretary.

While the mass resignation does not automatically trigger FIFA intervention, previous cases involving Iraq and Egypt demonstrate that FIFA has used its statutes to establish temporary Normalisation Committees when the leadership structures of national football associations become severely disrupted.

At the centre of the issue is Article 8(2) of the FIFA Statutes, which provides a mechanism for an Executive Committee of a Member Association to be replaced by a Normalisation Committee in exceptional circumstances, in consultation with the relevant Confederation.

For Nigeria, the relevant Confederation is the Confederation of African Football (CAF).

The Iraqi Football Association provides perhaps the closest precedent to the current Nigerian situation.

In 2020, FIFA appointed a Normalisation Committee for the Iraqi Football Association after the resignation of all members of the IFA Executive Committee and the General Secretary.

FIFA specifically relied on

Article 8(2) of its Statutes in taking the decision.

The Normalisation Committee was mandated to administer the federation's daily affairs, review its statutes and, ultimately, organise and conduct elections for a new Executive Committee.

The process eventually culminated in elections in September 2021, bringing the Normalisation Committee's mandate to an end and restoring an elected leadership.

The Iraqi experience is therefore significant because it demonstrates that FIFA has previously regarded the simultaneous collapse of an association's Executive Committee and General Secretariat as circumstances warranting consideration of a Normalisation Committee.

In 2019, following the resignation of the president and the entire board of the Egyptian Football Association, FIFA

appointed a Normalisation Committee to oversee the association.

The committee was tasked with running the EFA's affairs, reviewing its statutes and regulations, ensuring compliance with FIFA requirements and organising elections.

The Egyptian process, however, demonstrated that normalisation does not necessarily have to be completed within a short period. FIFA extended the committee's mandate when circumstances, including restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, prevented the electoral process from being completed.

The precedent shows that FIFA can allow a Normalisation Committee additional time where its mandate cannot reasonably be completed within the original period.

What Article 8(2) could mean for Nigeria

The significance of Article

8(2) is that FIFA does not have to regard the NFF crisis solely as an ordinary succession or vacancy issue.

If FIFA and CAF determine that the mass resignation has created an exceptional circumstance or institutional paralysis that prevents the NFF from functioning effectively under its existing elected structure, the provision offers a recognised mechanism for temporary intervention.

A Normalisation Committee could then be mandated to:

- administer the NFF's daily affairs;
- examine the federation's governance structure;
- review the NFF Statutes and relevant regulations;
- identify provisions requiring clarification or amendment;
- ensure compliance with FIFA requirements;
- establish a credible electoral framework; and-
- organise and conduct elections for a new Executive Committee.



NIGERIA FOOTBALL FEDERATION (NFF) LEADERSHIP COMMITTEES

Supporters clubs face fresh confusion over election, NFF, NSC directives

Fresh confusion has engulfed the leadership of Nigeria's supporters clubs following contradictory positions issued within 48 hours over plans to conduct an election and usher in a new executive structure.

The five supporters club presidents initially announced the commencement of an electoral process, including the constitution of a Constitutional Drafting Committee and an Electoral Committee to oversee the process.

However, just two days later, the same leaders appeared to shift position, indicating that they would await directives from the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) and the National Sports Commission (NSC) before deciding the next course of action. Sports news updates

The conflicting positions have raised questions about the direction of the supporters movement and the status of the Independent Management Committee (IMC), which was originally constituted to facilitate unification and conduct an election.

In a communique issued after their meeting in Lagos on Sunday, the five presidents announced the commencement of the electoral process and constituted two committees.

The communique stated:

"A 4-man Constitutional Drafting Committee comprising Barr. Gwan Gilbert, Barr.

Segun Ogunmola, Awo Aregbesola Wasiu and Col. Olumiyiwa Michael was set up and given one month to draft and submit a constitution."

It further stated:

"An Electoral Committee made up of Phillemor Adekanda, Mr. Adu Adetunji, Famous Flint Agara Tekuma, Dibi Yinkore and Adedina Omotayo Gabriel was also set up with a three-month mandate to conduct a credible, free, and fair election in the first week of December 2026."

The announcement appeared to signal that the five organisations had finally moved to implement the electoral component of the arrangement under which they were brought together.

However, within 48 hours, the presidents issued another position suggesting that the process would not proceed independently and that they would instead await guidance from the NFF and NSC. Reserve Soccer Fields

The sudden change has further complicated an already prolonged leadership crisis within the supporters clubs.

The development is particularly significant given the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the presidents of the supporters clubs regarding their unification and interim management arrangement.



DAVID AKINTOLA

Omonia Nicosia signs Nigerian forward on free transfer

Cyprus-based club Omonia Nicosia have completed the signing of Nigerian forward David Akintola from Hull City on a free transfer.

The 30-year-old attacker has officially joined the Cypriot outfit after agreeing to a two-year contract that will keep him at the club until 2028.

Akintola, who brings expe-

rience from his spells across European and English football, is expected to add attacking quality and experience to Omonia Nicosia's squad.

The Nigerian forward will wear the number [jersey number] shirt for his new club. His move to Cyprus marks a new chapter in his career as he looks to make an impact with Omonia Nicosia.

FEATURE

Augustine Eguavoen: When interim becomes an identity

DOUGLAS BAYE-OSAGIE

Augustine Eguavoen is one of the enduring names in Nigerian football. His story stretches back to the great days of the Green Eagles in the 1980s and the Super Eagles in the 1990s, when Nigerian football was beginning to announce itself on the global stage. But for all the glory attached to Eguavoen the player, his journey as a coach has been a very different story — one marked by comebacks, departures, temporary assignments and an almost uncanny ability to become available whenever Nigerian football needs an emergency solution.

Once again, this week, his name has surfaced. Eguavoen has been handed another stop-gap assignment, this time with the Super Falcons, as Nigeria looks for a substantive coach. His latest appointment has inevitably revived the nickname that has followed him in recent years: “Mr. Interim.” It is a nickname that may have started as banter, but there is now enough history behind it to warrant serious reflection.

The context matters. Cerezo has been the Technical Director of the Nigeria Football Federation since 2020, a position that gives him the mandate to step in on a temporary basis whenever there is a vacancy across any national team. It is part of why he has had multiple spells as interim head coach of the Super Eagles in 2021-2022 and again in 2024-2025. His coaching CV runs deeper than those call-ups. He managed the Golden Eaglets to a bronze medal at the African U-17 Championship in 2003, before Nigeria suffered its only group-stage exit at the U-17 World Cup that same year, losing out to Costa Rica on the toss of a coin after a draw. He also coached the Super Eagles between 2005-2007 and again in 2010, and handled the Nigeria U-23 team from 2010-2011, a side that failed to qualify for the London 2012 Olympics. At what point, then, does being temporary cease to be a circumstance and become an identity?

Eguavoen, popularly known as Cerezo, was anything but temporary as a footballer. He was part of the generation that took Nigeria to its first FIFA World Cup in 1994. He was also part of the Super Eagles side that conquered Africa that same year, winning the Africa Cup of Nations in Tunisia. As captain, he lifted the continental trophy and became one of the defining figures of Nigerian football's golden generation.

At the heart of Nigeria's defence, Eguavoen was a colossus. He was tough, disciplined, commanding and dependable. He belonged to a generation that changed the perception of Nigerian football. They were not merely talented African footballers; they were players who believed they could compete with the best in the world. Eguavoen was central to that transformation.

His transition into coaching, however, has been a different story. Football has a cruel way of separating the greatness of the player from the success of the coach. Being an outstanding footballer does not automatically make somebody an outstanding manager. A coach must build players, establish a philosophy, manage personalities, create systems and, above all, sustain a project over time.

Eguavoen's first major opportunity



AUGUSTINE EGUAVOEN

with the Super Eagles came in difficult circumstances. In 2005, after Christian Chukwu was relieved of his duties and Nigeria's World Cup hopes had effectively disappeared, Eguavoen was brought in to take charge. He subsequently led Nigeria at the 2006 Africa Cup of Nations in Egypt, where the Super Eagles finished with a bronze medal. It was a respectable achievement under difficult circumstances, but once again, Eguavoen's role was defined by transition rather than continuity.

It would become a recurring theme. Eguavoen would return to the national team whenever there was a vacancy, a crisis or an urgent need for somebody who understood the terrain. He became the familiar face in an unfamiliar situation — the man who could step in without requiring an introduction to Nigerian football.

Then came 2021 and another major call. Gernot Rohr was dismissed and

Eguavoen was appointed interim coach of the Super Eagles ahead of the 2022 Africa Cup of Nations in Cameroon. This time, however, there was genuine optimism. Nigeria played some attractive, confident and at times exhilarating football in the group stage. There was energy, attacking intent and a feeling that Eguavoen might finally have found the formula.

Then came Tunisia. The Round-of-16 defeat was painful because of what had come before it. The Super Eagles had looked like one of the teams capable of making a serious run in the tournament, only to exit at the first knockout hurdle. The disappointment was enormous. The interim experiment had again ended without a major breakthrough.

Worse was to come. Only weeks later, Eguavoen was in charge for Nigeria's World Cup play-off against Ghana. The Super Eagles failed to qualify for Qatar 2022 after the decisive draw in Abuja. For a nation accustomed to appearing at the world's biggest football tournament, it was a devastating moment. Eguavoen had experienced the highs of international football as a player and now found himself associated with one of Nigeria's most painful failures as a coach.

Yet remarkably, his relationship with Nigerian football did not end there. When Finidi George's short tenure ended, Eguavoen was once again summoned. The circumstances were familiar: uncertainty, pressure and the need for immediate stability. And once again, he delivered what was required. As interim coach, he helped Nigeria secure qualification for the Africa Cup of Nations in Morocco before Eric Chelle took over the Super Eagles.

This is what makes the Eguavoen story so fascinating. He keeps coming back. He keeps being trusted. He keeps being asked to stabilise situations that have gone wrong. When there is uncertainty, his name somehow remains available. It would therefore be unfair

to describe every appointment as desperation. There is clearly a level of institutional confidence in his ability to handle difficult circumstances.

But trust without commitment can become a strange relationship. If Eguavoen is trusted enough to take over Nigeria's biggest football team during a crisis, trusted enough to prepare the team for major tournaments and trusted enough to qualify the country for the Nations Cup, why has he so rarely been given the opportunity to build something over several years?

Great coaching legacies are not usually constructed through a succession of short-term assignments. They are built through continuity. Coaches need time to develop players, establish tactical identities, introduce young talent, create standards and build relationships with supporters. They need time to make mistakes, correct them and see whether their ideas can produce sustained results.

Eguavoen has rarely enjoyed that uninterrupted runway. And that is not entirely his fault. Coaches do not appoint themselves. They do not determine the length of their contracts or decide whether the federation wants continuity. If an employer repeatedly uses a coach as an interim solution, responsibility for that pattern must also rest with the employer.

But there is a question for Eguavoen himself. At what point does a coach stop being satisfied with being the reliable firefighter and demand the opportunity to become the architect? There is a difference between rescuing a team and building one. One earns you gratitude in a crisis; the other creates a legacy.

Now comes perhaps the most intriguing chapter of all. After repeatedly moving in and out of the Super Eagles setup, Eguavoen has been asked to cross into the women's game and take charge

of the Super Falcons on an interim basis. This is not simply another vacancy. It is a completely different football environment, with different personalities, dynamics and tactical considerations. His immediate challenge is to get the team ready for the next stage of the Olympic qualifying campaign.

Can Cerezo make that transition successfully? His experience and knowledge of Nigerian football will certainly help, but coaching the Super Falcons will require more than familiarity with the national-team environment. He will need to establish authority quickly, understand the players, create a coherent tactical structure and give the team confidence. If he succeeds, this could become another example of his ability to answer the country's call when needed.

But perhaps Eguavoen's biggest challenge is no longer simply winning matches. It is defining his coaching legacy. His playing career is already permanent. He helped Nigeria reach its first World Cup. He won the African title as captain. He was one of the giants of the country's golden generation. His coaching career, however, remains unfinished. It risks being remembered as a succession of interim chapters rather than one great, sustained body of work.

Augustine Eguavoen has become the man Nigerian football calls when it needs somebody immediately. He has been the emergency solution, the caretaker, the bridge between coaches and, increasingly, “Mr. Interim.” But perhaps the real question is not why Nigerian football keeps coming back to Eguavoen. It is whether he can finally turn those temporary opportunities into something permanent. Because when interim becomes an identity, the danger is that a man with a permanent place in football history as a player may end up with only a temporary legacy as a coach.

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It is a nickname that may have started as banter, but there is now enough history behind it to warrant serious reflection. At what point does being temporary cease to be a circumstance and become an identity?

SPORTS



Okocha was one of the most skillful players I ever played with – Arteta

Mikel Arteta has offered a humorous glimpse into his playing days, naming Brazilian icon Ronaldinho and Nigerian legend Jay-Jay Okocha among the most skillful players he ever shared the pitch with, while picking former Nigerian international Haruna Babangida as the teammate with the worst dress sense.

The Arsenal manager, reflecting on his years as a professional footballer, highlighted the ex-

traordinary technical ability of some of the players he encountered during his career.

Arteta's admiration for Okocha comes as little surprise given the Nigerian's reputation as one of football's most entertaining and technically gifted players. Okocha was renowned for his dribbling, creativity, close control and spectacular tricks.

Ronaldinho, meanwhile, was another player whose flair and technical brilliance made him

one of the defining entertainers of his generation.

But while Arteta had plenty of praise for the footballing ability of his former colleagues, his assessment of fashion was considerably less complimentary.

The Spaniard jokingly singled out Haruna Babangida, the former Nigerian winger who came through Barcelona's famed La Masia academy, as the player

with the worst sense of dressing among his teammates.

Babangida and Arteta were teammates in Barcelona's youth setup, with the Nigerian once highly regarded at the academy. Arteta has previously described Babangida as an exceptionally talented youngster, even recalling him as the best 15-year-old player he had seen at the time.

The revelation provides an-

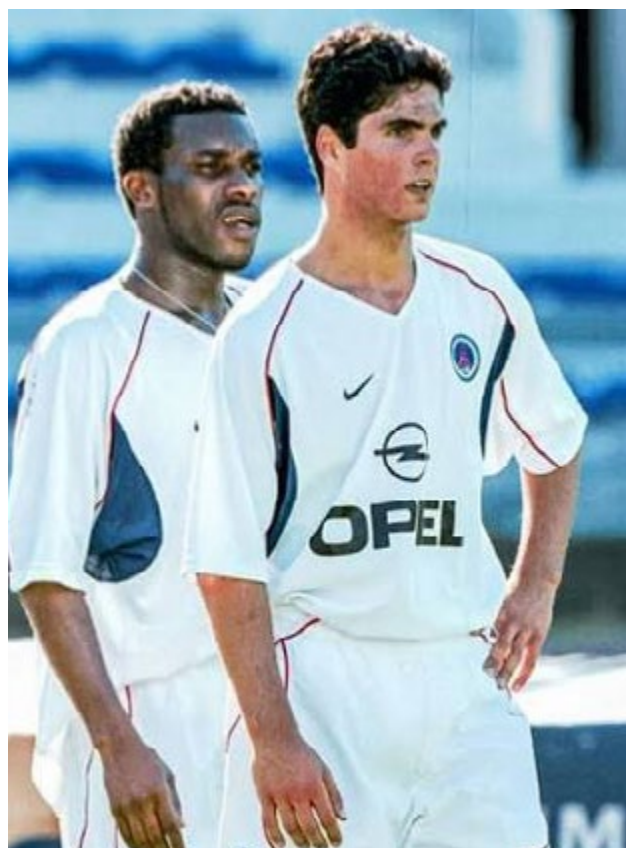
other entertaining chapter to the relationship between Arteta and Babangida, whose paths crossed during their formative years at Barcelona.

For Babangida, however, being remembered by Arteta for his football talent may ultimately outweigh the playful fashion criticism.

The former Nigerian international went on to enjoy a pro-

fessional career across Spain, Ukraine, Greece, Cyprus, Russia, Germany and the Netherlands, while also earning a senior appearance for Nigeria.

From footballing brilliance to questionable fashion choices, Arteta's revelations have certainly given fans another fascinating look into the personalities behind some of the game's familiar names.



OKOCHA AND MIKEL ARTETA

World Rugby educators arrive Nigeria for major coaching, officiating development programme

The Nigeria Rugby Football Federation (NRFF) has announced a major technical development programme as World Rugby Educators arrive in Nigeria for a three-day capacity-building exercise scheduled for September 10 to 12, 2026.

The programme, described by the NRFF as the final planned World Rugby visit under the federation's current development programme, will provide coaches, match officials and other technical personnel with opportunities to undertake World Rugby courses, assessments and quality assurance exercises.

The activities will include Level 1 and Level 2 Coaching, Level 1 and Level 2 Match Of-

ficiating, First Aid in Rugby, Intensive Care in Rugby (ICIR), Safeguarding Essentials, as well as assessments for Level 2 Match Officiating and World Rugby Educators.

The World Rugby team will also conduct quality assurance assessments for Nigerian educators, including Wuraola Hussain and Olatubosun Johnson, while Mohammed Salisu will undergo assessment to complete his Match Officiating Educator course.

Dr Fikunola Orafidiya, whose World Rugby Educator licence has been renewed after successfully completing his quality assurance assessment, will also be monitored during the Abuja programme as he prepares to deliver another Level 2 ICIR course.

NWF President Adewale Adeniyi restates commitment to building sustainable wrestling system

The president of the Nigeria Wrestling Federation (NWF), Bashir Adewale Adeniyi, has restated the governing body's commitment towards ensuring sustainable growth for the grapplers' sport in the country.

Adeniyi gave the assurance while congratulating one of the country's officials, Adebisi Anthony Olusegun, for gaining Level 2 United World Wrestling (UWW) referee certification.

Adeniyi also commended Adebisi for successfully completing the course during this year's African Wrestling Championships in Alexandria, Egypt,

thereby adding another milestone in his career as a wrestling referee.

Incidentally, Adebisi's participation in the course was part of the NWF's developmental efforts under Adeniyi, who said the federation will continue creating opportunities for Nigerian wrestling referees to achieve international exposure.

In furtherance of their objectives, the NWF's boss personally sponsored Adebisi's participation in the course, as he continues his efforts at strengthening the capacity of Nigerian wrestling officials at national and international lev-

els.

Adeniyi added that the achievement reflects the present board's vision to invest not only in wrestlers, but also referees, coaches and officials, whose expertise he admitted is essential to the growth of Nigerian wrestling.

He also encouraged young people who are interested in becoming wrestling referees to remain committed and stay focused towards achieving professional development, even as he urged them to seek opportunities to represent Nigeria on the international stage.

The NWF president averred,

"This achievement is a clear demonstration of our commitment to building a strong and sustainable wrestling system in Nigeria."

"Our focus extends beyond athletes to include referees, coaches, and other technical officials, because their competence is vital to the continued growth of the sport."

Kanu Nwankwo Boosts Enyimba Morale ahead of Doma united clash

Enyimba FC Chairman, FIFA Ambassador Kanu Nwankwo has lifted the spirits of the team with a rousing address ahead of Saturday's NPFL clash against Doma United in Gombe.

The 2-time African Player of the Year spoke to the players after an intensive final training session on Tuesday at the Enyimba Stadium, Aba.

Kanu praised the team for their performance in Minna and expressed optimism that the People's Elephant will get a good result in Gombe.

"I've watched the friendly games and I noticed that you are united; you attack and defend as a unit. Everyone of us is behind you. We are doing so because you performed well. If we did not, we would get negative reports. It depends on you to prove them wrong," he said.

The Chairman addressed the noise around the team, challenging the players to use it as fuel.

"This is a challenge to all of you. Don't look at people's comments and faces. People are saying we don't have a team. They said our fine performance in the friendly games is a fluke. That is a challenge for you."

I am here to encourage you and to tell you that we are behind you no matter what people are saying outside. I will do whatever I can to make you happy, focused and deliver," he promised.

